The younger brother

By

Charles Dibdin

1.1. CHAPTER I.

SHEWS UPON WHAT GROUNDS THE AUTHOR FOUNDS HIS PRETENSIONS TO THE READER'S INDULGENCE.

As it very often happens that readers get half through a work without knowing its drift—not unfrequently because the author does not know it himself—I hold it necessary to preclude all possibility of any such thing in the perusal of this work, by premising what, according to my conception, ought to be the tendency of productions similar to this, and what I here mean to inculcate in particular.

A novel, as the word is now understood and established, is a general title for any work which springs solely from the imagination, yet so delineates men and manners as to place all its events within view of probability. It is a kind of mean betwixt history, which records mere fact, and romance, which holds out acknowledged fiction.

As, however, pleasure and instruction are the only end that any admitted exercise of the imagination can propose, these all labour, with different materials, to produce the same effect. History not only teaches mankind to shun vice and imitate virtue, by instancing those events which are most condusive to so laudable an end, but shews the propriety of the doctrine it enforces, by authenticating the possibility of such conduct.

The novelist, who is the biographer of an imaginary hero, chuses, for his source, manners in general. His margin cannot swell with authorities, nor can he—by way of notes—cite the contrary opinions of great men concerning the vices or virtues of those characters he celebrates. So they possess the same qualities in common with the rest of mankind, and the events brought about by their means are such as our observation points out to be natural, his task is completely performed; and he has a right to expect as much credit for relating circumstances that might have happened, as he who—as far as he can clear his narrative from the cobwebs of tradition, and disentangle it from the labyrinth of contradictory authority—records facts that did happen.

Romances are, figuratively, in nature; and, literally, fictitious. They are intended, by lifting the mind above probability, to enforce moral by figure and allegory: and they attain their end—and indeed laudably—for they rouse those torpid minds into action which cannot relish writings that are kept within the bounds of simple nature.

This species of composition is remarkably gratifying to weak minds. It is—if I may be permitted so to express myself—an honourable fraud; for, exaggerate the beauty of virtue how you can, it will still be lovely; whereas vice, being ugly in itself, becomes more hideous when it is caricatured.

These three different vehicles for the conveyance of truth and morality, seem to require different conductors; and indeed it has seldom happened that any one man has equally succeeded in them.—Romance seems to require a poetic soul: strong in conception, fertile in invention, and various in expression. History wants nothing but a perspicuous style, authentic information, and invincible veracity.

He who writes novels must partake of all these qualities. He must unite in his imagination the glow of poetry with the steadiness of narrative.—The latter must be as a curb to the former: not, however, to damp its spirit, but to prevent it from running away:—like the alderman, who, at a lord mayor's feast, would have made himself sick if his physician had not sat by the side of him.

Thus I think it becomes pretty evident that novel writing holds a very respectable stand in literature, and I sincerely believe that men of considerable talents would very often practise it, were it not for those spurious productions with which the press teems under the appellation of novels, which means any love story calculated to madden the minds of sentimental country ladies, to trouble the domestic happiness of old gentlemen who marry young girls, and to overturn the purity imbibed at boarding schools.

These are sure to make their way into all the circulating libraries in the kingdom, provided they are sufficiently stuffed with dying lovers,

inexorable parents, and impertinent chambermaids; with the addition of three or four elopements, half a dozen duels, and an attempt or two at a rape; to which may be added, a little suicide, or a smattering of incest—especially if it be written by a lady—by way of zest, to make it go down the more glib.

Being about to give a novel to the world, I thought it incumbent on me to say thus much; from which the reader will naturally conclude that I intend, throughout this work, to keep nature and probability in sight, to reject that which is frivolous and impertinent, and to adopt only what, by means of amusement, may bring about instruction.

It will nevertheless be necessary to say further, that, in portraying nature, I shall make her neither a flattering likeness, nor a caricature. Nor is it necessary; for, let her sit for her picture ever so often, she never will exhibit the same face twice, yet shall the general resemblance always be striking; for it has been well observed, that she takes every various hue of the camelion, yet, torture her how you will, her form is as constant as the polypus. No two human faces, though composed of the same features, ever were known to be correctly alike, and the luminous mind of LAVATER, did he attempt the arduous and absurd task of searching for any such would exactly resemble the lanthorn of AESOP.

To these general remarks—which I conceived it expedient to place here—I shall add particular ones whenever they appear to be necessary, and now I invite the reader to the examination of a faithful, though a bold, representation of human life, for I declare upon my word as a man, there is not a character or circumstance in this whole work which I do not experimentally know from a close observation and mankind, to have virtual existence.

1.2. CHAPTER II.

CONTAINS A DESCRIPTION—TWO HOUSES—A CITIZEN—AND A REFLECTION UPON DEATH.

A BRIDGE thrown over the high road, at the entrance of a village in Warwickshire, called Castlewick, is the separation of two estates, one of which had been, at the period this history commences, for half a century in the possession of the family of Hazard, and the other, for almost treble that space, in the family of Roebuck.

Nature had been equally bountiful in the distribution of her favours on either side of the road, which fortuitous advantage art had been industriously called in to improve. If a neat hamlet and a white spire gave a more modern termination to the view, through a group of pines and cedars, from Hazard lawn; an old market town and a contiguous mouldering castle became visible, through an avenue of elms, from Roebuck park.

Every Chinese temple, urn, or statue, on one side, erected to fancy, consecrated to friendship, or dedicated to the arts, had, on the other, its rival grotto, cavern, or hermitage. Here was seen a clump of elms, there a row of oaks; while the meandering avon—lest the lord of one mansion should be jealous of its favours lavished on the other—not only by the advantage of a distant height, plunged up a rocky cliff to delight one favourite with the awful concussion of a beautiful cascade, which falling, lessened into a gurgling rivulet; but, also, opening its smooth, capacious bosom, moved on in majestic silence, through the possessions of the other; stretching out on one side a small, irregular stream, which supplied the house, watered the garden, and turned the village mill.

Old Rust, the grandfather of Lord Hazard, was a skinner in the city. His profession unluckily made him rather a bye-word; for he had such a voracious thirst, or hunger, after money—for gold can be both eaten and drank—that it was archly said he would skin any thing for profit. Nay, some are of opinion that, from this very remark, originated the epithet skinflint. Be that as it may, he certainly amassed a very large fortune,

and having run through the regular progression of livery-man, common council-man, deputy, alderman, sheriff, and lord mayor, he married in his seventy-first year, a girl of sixteen, without a sixpence, who bore him—or somebody else—a son, portioned three of her sisters, granted a pension to an Irish relation, set up a coach, and bought a villa; till at length, having expostulated, stormed, threatened, prayed, and entreated, to no purpose, poor Rust—think of it with horror ye antiquated Adonises—died raving mad in St. Luke's hospital.

Previous to his insanity, however, he took care to make a will, vesting his whole possessions in the hands of trustees, for the use of his son. His remains were, therefore, scarcely laid in the earth, when the widow, with a moderate annuity, was obliged to sink into retirement; and of her it will not be necessary to say more than that she died when her son, who was purposely kept from her by his guardians, came to be eighteen years old.

Young Rust, besides the possession of uncommon talents, was wonderfully calculated for commerce. Before he was thirty he considerably augmented his deceased father's wealth; and, a few years afterwards—having bought a large estate which gave him the entire nomination of four members of parliament—he became so material an object to the minister, that he was made one of those peers which it was then expedient to create, lest the balance of power in the constitution should be found to lean too much to the side of the people.

No longer Mr. Rust, then, but Baron Hazard, he pulled down the old mansion on the estate he had purchased, and built that very chateau we have already commemorated. As he had a towering ambition, he now married into an honourable family, not overburdened with riches; was shortly blest with several children; and had made some rapid strides towards an improvement in both church and state; but—so transitory is the felicity of lords, as well as inferior beings—he did not live long to enjoy that success his hopes seemed to promise:—for, sitting up a whole night to compose a speech, which was to have introduced a plan to destroy pluralities, and root out corruption, he caught a cold, which being followed

by a fever, he was hurried out of the world, having scarcely time to settle his affairs.

The young lord—but here, kind reader, let us both give a sigh to the memory of Lord Hazard, and admire that the wisest designs in this sublunary existence are liable, like a grain of sand, to be scattered at the will of providence!

1.3. CHAPTER III.

CONTAINING ONE APPEAL TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS—AND ANOTHER TO THE READER.

THE young lord—for we shall have no occasion for the rest of the family—saw himself his own master at a very early period of life; a circumstance which, together with dissipated company at the university, and a profligate tutor, contributed to form in him the strongest principles of debauchery and libertinism.

When he became of age, his licentiousness made him the terror of the neighbourhood. It is true he was a little checked in his wild career by the wise and wholesome counsels of his mother, to which he at first affected to listen; but, becoming more and more hardened, her precepts and conduct were altogether disregarded; till at length, worn out with preaching to no purpose, she retired into the bosom of her own family, with a firm determination to consider herself entirely alienated from her disgracious son.

Lord Hazard being now left to the unbridled influence of his headstrong passions, stopt at nothing to gratify them. The farmers' wives and daughters, if they had the smallest pretensions to beauty, were sure to become objects first of his generosity, then his gratification, and afterwards his neglect: or, if they durst dispute his impetuous wishes, his unalterable resentment. But, as the swiftest cannon ball, which neither edifices of wood nor stone can oppose, may be stopt in its very strongest velocity by the dull resistance of a wool pack, so were the vehement pursuits of Lord Hazard effectually checked by that dullest of all dull things, according to the bachelors—ay, and many of the married men too—a wife.

My lord's tutor, whose name was Viney, and who, as I hinted before, had the highest ascendancy over his pupil—having ever been cnofiderably more useful to him in the conduct of his love affairs than in his study of the classics—had also another pupil. Indeed his attention to this last

mentioned scholar, on whom he had expended a large part of that money which the bounty to Lord Hazard—for his lordship was liberal to excess—had lavished on him, would appear very enigmatical did we not derive it from its natural motive.

This scholar then was no other than his sister, who, without a penny, had married an Irish fortune hunter, and was very shortly saved the trouble of breaking his heart by a kind friend of his, who killed him in a duel. Viney had connived at this marriage, which, soon after it was consummated, was found to be a mutual bite. However, as his sister was left a blooming widow of twenty-two, he easily comforted himself by considering her market as not yet over. In a word, he had long in idea married her to Lord Hazard. This will account for his generosity: nor, when it is considered how completely this same Mr. Viney ruled his pupil, will it appear very unaccountable that the lady should become at length in reality what she had long been in imagination.

Marriage stopt for a while the excesses of Lord Hazard. He doated on his wife; and, having taken this step, Viney became his privy counsellor in a stronger degree than ever. His tone, however, was soon changed. He found her a mixture of arrogance, meanness, bridled wantonness, and ignorant affectation. Nor is it difficult to divine where it might have ended if he had not accidentally discovered, after having been about three months blessed with an heir, that she had an intrigue with his valet de chamber.

This roused him at once. She was properly detected, the necessary steps were taken, and a divorce obtained. She recriminated, indeed, but he was a lord, and his success certain. Thus, having received satisfaction for the injuries he had sustained, he legally banished her for ever from his presence, granting her only a decent provision for life.

Any one experienced in the human heart will easily see the part Viney took upon his sister's detection. He exclaimed against her with the greatest violence, and was the forwardest in procuring his lordship that redress which he knew it was not in his power to prevent.

This conduct established him more firmly than ever in the good graces and household of Lord Hazard; the first of which advantages he often declared—loudly to the world—was the ultimate end of all his wishes; because, said he—softly to himself—it brings about the other.

I have already shewn that marriage proved a pretty tight curb to the excesses of this young nobleman, and one would think his divorce had given him a reasonable surfeit of marriage; but, I know not how it is, some men seem to be the bubble of their own arts: their whole study is to overreach themselves, and if they stumble on tolerable content, it is because things take a different turn from what they designed.

Thus it happened with our peer. Every resolution he took, in consequence of being a widower, was wrong; and yet he hit upon happiness when he only meant revenge.

This was his argument. He had married a woman of spirit, who had injured him in the strongest degree, and, for this indignity, he was determined to take vengeance on her whole sex; idly forgetting that this was revenging himself on a whole hive, for the sting of a single bee. Besides, he himself was to blame: the fault lay in his own want of discernment. Had he fairly examined the ground of the business, he would have plainly seen that it originated with Viney, who had taught him nothing but what disgraced his birth, and deprived him of the use of that valuable goodness of heart which he really possessed, and which, had he fallen into proper hands, might have induced him to have dispensed the gifts of fortune nobly instead of licentiously.

To put this worthy project in execution, Lord Hazard resolved once more to try the married state, resolutely vowing to conduct himself in so authoritative a manner to his second wife, that she should not dare even to think without his previous permission. He had scarcely come to this resolution, but his uneasiness on his late disgrace vanished. He looked round for a wife with the greatest eagerness, till at length, with Viney's assistance, who was still consulted, he thought he had found one to his wish.

But how was he astonished when he plainly saw it would be impossible to avail himself of any one of those prudent determinations, those ingenious precautions he had been so long and so industriously arming himself with. He had now such a wife that to controul her was impossible; to advise her, useless!

If my readers think he was again caught, after so much wary and cautious resolution, after such anticipation of success, I hope it will be confessed he deserved it.

Certainly he was disappointed, but in that satisfactory way that a man would be at finding a lawyer who, taking a brief, should refuse a fee. Lady Hazard could not be controuled, advised, or entreated; for she had so high a sense of her duty, such equanimity of temper, and such sweetness of manners, that she anticipated her lord's very wishes. He had received her from her father, a wealthy country neighbour, who wanted to aggrandize his family. The young lady, who had all her life made it her study to please her father, found it no irksome task to watch and comply with the tempers of her husband:—so true it is that a dutiful daughter has gone a great way towards becoming a good wife.

If ever an extraordinary event new moulded a man's mind, this unexpected merit in his wife had that effect on Lord Hazard. He saw in an instant that his whole life had been one delusion; that while he had sought for pleasure, he had neglected happiness; and, therefore, resolved doubly to cherish it, since it had complacently condescended to come home to him.

Nobody had ever dared to tell him he was a dupe to Viney: he now saw it himself. He did not, however, think proper to withdraw his protection from him, but contented himself only with giving him a handsome rectory, to which that worthy incumbent shortly removed.

In about a twelvemonth after this second marriage—but hold, all great events should be ushered in with cautious preparation.

A watchmaker would have called the circumstance I am about to celebrate the main spring of this history; a sailor would have said it was its helm; and an alderman its marrow.

It is something, therefore, of material consequence; and, of course, proper to be given in a new chapter, and with a particular introduction:—all which ceremony, though it may be the limbs and outward flourishes of writing, is not without its use; and though more than PHEDRUS have said that a tree should be estimated by its fruit, and not by its leaves, yet it must be considered, that, without the proper shelter afforded by the leaves, no fruit could arrive to perfection.

1.4. CHAPTER IV.

WHICH—FIRST ADJUSTING A VERY ABSTRUSE DOGMA IN LITERATURE—INTRODUCES THE HERO TO THE READER.

IT falls out sometimes at the theatre, that, at the very moment the audience are sitting with expectation on its utmost stretch, an actor, with a woe-begone countenance, comes on the stage to announce the indisposition of the principal actress.

This once happened of Desdemona; and, as there was no lady in the company competent to the part but her whose name was in the bills, a gentleman undertook it at a very short warning. The spectators were, as usual, content per force; but, after waiting a considerable time, the apologizer was a second time obliged to come on, who assured the audience the play would soon begin, but at present Desdemona was not shaved.

I hope it will not be thought, by mentioning this case in point, that I mean to introduce in a ludicrous way, a matter of such eminent importance as that I now take the liberty of presenting to the reader's notice; but, my amour propre is wounded: for being forced—at the very critical moment I considered myself happy beyond all example in the mode of introducing my hero—to stopt short, and put my readers in the exact situation of the spectators above described, I am obliged to exculpate myself from any intentional offence by fairly laying the truth before them, and humbly appealing to their candour: or—according to the language of the standing theatrical apology—their usual indulgence.

I was going to begin this chapter in a most lovely style, by saying that the bees came about somebody's cradle, and left their honey on his lips; giving proof that he would be sweet and eloquent in discourse. But, casting in my mind who this somebody could be, it presently struck me—for I "do bear a brain"—that the point was not settled.

This prodigy is related of ST. AMBROSE of Milan. Doctor JOHNSON, who ought to have known something about the matter, says it was

PINDAR; but FENELON affirms it was said of PLATO by his preceptor SENECA, who, while the circumstance was warm in his mind, dreamt that a cygnet flew to his bosom, which, by degrees, became covered with feathers of a most beautiful and dazzling whiteness; and which, taking wing, flew with a force and rapidity superior to an eagle:—and these prodigies were so strongly verified in this great man, that CICERO said of him, when he grew up, "If JUPITER had condescended to speak like man, he would have used the language of PLATO."'

Now it cannot be denied but that here is proof upon proof on the side of FENELON; and, as he gathered this intelligence for the improvement of princes, one would think that he must have made a point of collecting his materials from the best authorities. But as there is no court of criticism to appeal to from the fiat of Dr. JOHNSON—his ipse dixit being always final upon these occasions—if the reader please it shall stand for PINDAR: not for the living PINDAR, because every body knows that, instead of honey, he deals in nothing but gall.

In this case it is melancholy to lose the beautiful dream of SENECA, and the fine saying of CICERO, but ornament and flourish must give way to truth and Dr. JOHNSON. Besides, Mr. BOSWELL informs us that the Doctor had but a pitiful opinion of FENELON, for that he would not allow Telemachus to be written more than "'pretty well."'

Having established this important point, I shall [22] regularly proceed to the business of introducing my hero, who having set the poets together by the ears before he was born, will be allowed to have given a pretty good specimen of the work he was to cut out for them afterwards.

Many and various are the portents and omens that are said to have announced the births, deaths, and marriages of great men and women; and I could muster up a long catalogue of them, from the lady who made so handsome a deluge as to swallow up all Asia, to Tom Thumb—which is a pretty touch of the bathos—who was swallowed up by a cow; but that it would insensibly draw me into an imitation of certain authors, who are fonder of shewing their reading than their good manners.

I shall be forgiven however, since a great man and a prodigy are almost synonimous terms, if I lament that nature did not go a single step out of her road to introduce our hero: neither his father nor his mother having dreamt any thing prodigious on the occasion.

Viney indeed had a confused idea in a dream of a basilisk which kept continually in his way, and the nurse, as she nodded by the fire side while Lady Hazard was in labour, dreamt that her young master— [23] for she always said it would be a boy—spoke the moment he came into the world, and that he believed any thing you said to him; which she sagaciously interpreted as a sure sign that he would be very learned, and very much imposed upon:—the truth of which observation the reader may perhaps have occasion to admire before he and I part.

Lady Hazard's being brought to bed of a son, to the great joy of that honourable family, seems then to be the event I hinted at in the third chapter. It really took place about a twelve month after the marriage, and three years and a quarter—for I love to be exact—after the birth of the first son, whom Lord Hazard called Zekiel, after his grandfather, and this, our hero, Charles, after himself.

The happiness of Lord Hazard would now have been complete, had it not been imbittered by a consideration that the whole estate being willed away with the title, he could not do his youngest son the justice he wished. To amend, however, this deficiency, he resolved to make him a paragon of learning; and, as he knew very well that had not the former part of his own life been devoted to idleness, it would have been less given to dissipation, he resolved to add a complete study of the arts to his son's education.

[24] In the contemplation of this plan he took great delight. At length, when Zekiel had attained his eleventh year, he was sent to Eaton school, to leave the coast clear for a proper attention to the education of Charles, which his lordship was determined to superintend himself.

Many essays were made upon his tender intellects, which gave very promising hopes; and now the difficulty was to get him a tutor. Lord

Hazard fairly owned he despaired of finding one to his wish. He declared he had himself witnessed so much ill conduct in men of that description, that he should be very cautious indeed how he made a choice.

These doubts he often imparted to Lady Hazard, who said she had mixed very little in the world, and therefore was happy whenever he was so good as to give her his opinion, in order that she might form hers. She could not help thinking, however, that he was warmer on that subject than he otherwise would have been, had not an ill choice been made in a tutor for him. She hoped he would be able to find a man who should have talents, and yet be honest.

"If,' said my lord, 'I could form a tutor, he should be ingenuous above all things; not ashamed [25] if he found any of those trivial vices creeping on him to which human nature is subject, to confess and amend them. Such a kind of man cannot design to do ill, because he is sorry for his own infirmity. Ingenuousness has a tendency to gratitude, which is with me the first of virtues. I declare if I was obliged to accuse a man of a crime, and he could prove his motive to be in the smallest degree similar to any thing I had ever forgiven in myself, I should instantly feel an inclination to pardon him. It is the sneaking, underhand villain I hate; the hypocrite, the deceiver, who studies to be a rascal; who stings while he fawns. But he who acts from mere intuitive principles, may correct his frailty by his judgment; and, at any rate, you have a declared enemy, and know how to be on your guard. One stands some chance with a lion, but who can provide against the venom of a slow worm?"

Thus ended a conversation which the reader may hereafter think I had a reason for inserting.

Very little passed in this family worthy relation till Master Charles was twelve years old, when one day my lord brought a gentleman who, he said, answered, in every particular, that description of person he had so long and so fruitlessly sought for, as [26] a tutor for his darling son. As to Zekiel, he did not believe him to be his son at all, though he had in vain tried to prove him legally illegitimate. He therefore took very little further notice of him than to remit him money; nor did he express either

astonishment or dissatisfaction at being told he was both an arrant dunce and an arrant puppy. On the contrary, he sarcastically observed "'he would do well enough for a lord."'

Having brought matters in the family of Lord Hazard to a sort of stand still, the reader and I will now, if he please, take a walk across the bridge into Roebuck park. But, upon recollection, being come now to the center which commands a view of the whole village of Castlewick, and its inhabitants making a part of our dramatis personae, we will take a short view of that little community, which had really something to recommend it to our notice.

1.5. CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH A VILLAGE IS DESCRIBED, NOT UNLIKE AN ANT-HILL.

THE village of Castlewick contained about five hundred inhabitants. About half the men and boys were generally employed at the trade of wool-combing; part of the women and girls in carding, spinning, twisting, and knitting; the more intelligent and experienced of the men in journeying to large towns to purchase sheep, and supply factors, clothiers, and hosiers with wool, yarn, worsted, stockings, nightcaps, socks, and such other articles as they manufactured. The lower order of the men and boys were employed in tilling, manuring, and enclosing; and the remainder of the women busied themselves in household affairs, buying and selling the necessaries of life, and such other occupations as the vicar—for this parish had no curate—pointed out to them.

The vicar had two deputies, the clerk and the schoolmaster; and these three were all the persons in the village who did no bodily labour:—for Castlewick [28] could boast neither lawyer, exciseman, nor apothecary.

Their good pastor undertook to regulate the temporal, as well as spiritual, concerns of his flock; and, by a scrupulous discharge of his duty as their treasurer, shewed them more than by a thousand precepts how much it was their interest to act with truth and integrity towards each other. Not that his preaching was not of a piece with his example, for every Sunday they heard some new lesson of sweet and comfortable morality from his mouth; for he, instead of describing religion as a denunciation of vengeance, and the deity as delighting in punishment, softened that high duty into a gentle and intelligent system of morality, by inculcating the principles of social virtue and brotherly love, and representing the creator as an indulgent father watching with anxious and tender care over the interest and happiness of his children, and regarding their virtuous endeavours with a smile of celestial benevolence:—thus troubling his hearers with nothing beyond the reach of that capacity which had fallen

to their share, and leaving the discussion of dogmas to larger communities, who better understood cavilling.

The clerk and the schoolmaster kept an account [29] of the receipts and disbursements throughout the parish. These were faithfully audited by the vicar. Ten of the most considerable of the inhabitants, who acted as a committee for the rest, were called in every week to the vestry, where the books were always forth coming for general inspection.

Every other regulation for the pleasure and advantage of this happy community was proportionably wise and salutary. Thus cheerfulness smiled on their labours; content converted their pittance into plenty; health, ease, and good humour accompanied their steps, and they passed their time in the exercise of as much moral rectitude as would have immortalized them—had they been born ancient Spartans—without dreaming they did more than a common duty, for the sake of general convenience.

By this time I believe the reader begins to suspect that the vicar, however well disposed to lend a helping hand towards the regulation of this little commonwealth, as well as the clerk and the schoolmaster, who kept the account of their finances, were but subordinate actors in this performance, and here introduced, like the centinels in Hamlet and the servants in the Orphan—both of which circumstances VOLTAIRE is very angry at—only to usher in the capital [30] personage, who, having once made his appearance, is to receive all the applause.

It must be owned that the motions of Castlewick appeared to be as regular as those of its church clock, which clock, though any blacksmith could wind it up, and set it a going, must have required a much better mechanic to have invented it originally. If there should be a hidden first cause for this, it will be announced in its proper place. In the mean time I cannot prevail upon myself to repent my having introduced these sons of industry, insignificant as they are. The mind is often both improved and amused by the most trifling objects: the smaller the mite the more worthy the curiosity of the philosopher.

1.6. CHAPTER VI.

WHICH PROVES THAT SOME OF THE OLD FASHIONS ARE NOT TO BE DESPISED.

MY reader and I having passed through the rookery that received us as we left the bridge, are now within sight of the mansion of Sir Sydney Walter Roebuck, lord of the manor of Castlewick, and member of parliament for the borough of Neitherside.

The grandfather of this gentleman—for were I to trouble the reader with any thing anterior, my description would resemble a game of chess, where bishops, knights, castles, and the king and queen are continually crossing each other. Indeed I have two other reasons for not going farther back; one is, that in the course of this history Sir Sidney will talk to us a little about the fame of his ancestors himself; and the other, that, for ought I could ever learn, their lives were, take them all in all, such a uniform mixture of morality, loyalty, and brotherly love, that the description of one would serve for the whole. Their tempers might not be unaptly [32] compared to a bowl of punch, for though made up of the same contrariety of ingredients in common with the rest of their fellow creatures, the mixture was so happily blended, that they diffused comfort and cheerfulness to all around them.

The grandfather then having taken umbrage at court for being turned out of the cabinet, only because he maintained that the Lancashire witches were harmless old women—for which indeed Dr. JOHNSON would have been as angry with him as the council were, for he tells us he will not say there never was any such thing as witchcraft, for that probably there might have been, but that it had ceased—retired to the mansion of his forefathers, which gothic and stately structure the reader and I are looking at.

There having sat contentedly down, with a quiet conscience, an active mind, and a princely fortune, he considered—which was nothing more

than his daily custom—how he might best be serviceable to his fellow creatures.

He had not deliberated long on the subject before he determined to build the village of Castlewick, and, like another Bishop Blaze, set up the trade of wool-combing. Nor was this, would he argue, a [33] project unworthy his rank; wool was the staple commodity of that country he so dearly loved, and for which his ancestors had so gallantly shed their blood; the wool sack was the emblem of honour, for it sustained the leading member of the house, and took place in that assembly of every thing but the throne. He had yet a better reason: his scheme would give employment to his tenants and other poor neighbours, and he should be sure to receive the daily blessings of many families who would owe a subsistance to their honest labours, under the auspices of his bounty.

This gentleman lived to see his benevolent plan carried into execution, and he enjoined his son to pursue it. This injunction was faithfully complied with, but the present Sir Sidney considerably increased the number of houses and inhabitants, altered the former rules and orders into a more regular and digested set of laws, and called in the vicar and his adherents, as the reader has already seen, to assist him in their execution.

Thus, burning the Lancashire witches was productive of one public benefit at least; for, had not the humanity of good old Sir Sidney taken fire at the cruel proposition, in all probability the village of Castlewick would never have been built.

[34] The surviving gentleman of this family I now take the liberty of introducing in form to the reader. He had many singularities: one I have already hinted at: another was a fixed aversion to cards and dice; yet he was a strenuous encourager of all athletic sports. He would sometimes pitch the bar himself, and was allowed to be the best bowler at cricket within ten miles. He was an admirer of the arts, and never failed to bring with him from town, at the end of every sessions, a poet, a painter, and a musician, who were obliged—and so indeed were all others who wished for his esteem—to accompany him in the different departments of

his duty, as he called the regulation of his little commonwealth. Nay sometimes he would set them to work, on which occasion he enjoyed their awkwardness.

Seeing once the wig of a counsellor catch in the girt of a twisting mill, as he was unhandily turning it round, it afforded no small diversion to the baronet, who facetiously exclaimed, "'My good old friend, you let your learning fly about at a strange rate."'

No man was more admired, nor sought less to be so, than Sir Sidney. Even the boobies, with whom he could not mix, because he never swore, gamed, nor drank pint bumpers, declared he was a gruffish odd sort of a hearty cock. In short, his heart was benevolent, his means were ample, he was in the prime of life, surrounded with hundreds of sincere friends—which is a bold thing to say-respected, valued, esteemed, adored, almost deified, and yet he was not happy. I could tell the reader why, but shall only so far indulge him as to say that, according to Sir Sidney's own account, his unhappiness was occasioned by a phantom he had seen, which had so possessed him, that he could not rest in his bed till he had opened his mind to it:—for, were I to unriddle the whole secret of this ghost, the spirit and the reader's curiosity would vanish together.

I shall therefore collect together all the leading circumstances, that I may the more adroitly introduce the time when, the place where, and the manner how, it appeared. And this has been a privilege to authors and old women time immemorial; a climax having ever been allowed the proper moment to introduce a catastrophe, and the candle's burning blue a signal for the approach of a hobgoblin.

As soon, therefore, as I shall have terrified my readers into a belief of the proper prognostic, the [36] ghost shall stalk forth. To suffer this sooner would be inartificial, and consequently an impeachment of my capacity of tantalizing the reader, which would be an indelible disgrace to the fraternity of novel writers, some of whom have excited no other sensation.

I hope, however, I shall be forgiven if I differ in the main from this mode of constructing my work, and not deemed an innovator if I endeavour to make satisfaction keep pace with expectation.

1.7. CHAPTER VII.

CONTAINING THE NECESSARY SHADOW, TO HEIGHTEN THE BEAUTIES OF CASTLEWICK.

I MEAN to lead the reader on, chapter after chapter, through this history, in the same manner as we are led, day after day, through life. They who experience the largest portions of human happiness, are sure to have some unpleasant moments in every four-and-twenty hours; whereas the same degree of misery will not so far overcome the fortitude of others: but they find now and then a transient gleam of pleasure, which, like an accidental creek through the wall of a dungeon, magnifies the light of comfort, by peeping in upon obscurity.

At the close of every dull day, we naturally look forward in hopes of finding the next more agreeable. Thus people comfort themselves with "'tomorrow is a new day;"—"we shall see how matters will go to-morrow;"' and thus cherish a laudable expectation, though it end perhaps only in disappointment.

[38] I am led to these remarks by the recollection of my having promised to tell the reader what Sir Sidney wanted to make him completely happy. To do this suddenly, and without preparation, would seem to shew that I know not the way to elevate and surprise; a mystery which more than Mr. Bayes have thought the most essential requisite of an author.

As no reader, therefore, can reasonably desire me to violate a standing rule, I shall now proceed to unfold a nice chain of circumstances, which will lead directly to the main event.

In the description that has been given of Castlewick, I more than doubt I have been shrewdly suspected of that kind of embellishment in which heroes are said to deal when speaking of their exploits, and lovers when extolling the charms of their mistresses. In fact, to suppose a body of nearly five hundred people, of different sexes, ages, and complexions, could be perfectly secure from evil in themselves, or guarded against the

temptations of others, would be to suppose an order of beings that certainly shall not intrude themselves here, my intention being to treat of human creatures, the best of whom, I am afraid, are not exempt from frailty. I would only have it understood that vices [39] existed in Castlewick no longer than till they were found out; at which time the parties were, for the first offence, reprehended; for a second, mulct; for a third, condemned to have no intercourse with their neighbours; and, for a fourth, considered as incorrigible; and, without favour or affection, banished from the place, and deprived for ever of any claim to its advantages.

When this happened, which I will say was very seldom, the offenders generally took refuge in another village, about three miles distant, called Little Hockley, the inhabitants of which place were mostly tenants of Lord Hazard; and, as that nobleman had found no great difficulty in bringing over the men, and the women too, to any of his purposes, it may easily be supposed they were a very likely people to afford such a left-handed asylum.

Little Hockley then was as famous for springes, trammel nets, and pitched battles, as Castlewick was for cricket, quoits, and tranquillity; and if one was without an attorney, that a proper number of that worthy fraternity might be kept up, the other maintained two. Nay, a spruce young man, who indeed had been porter to an obscure druggist, in a blind alley near Rosemary-lane, established himself there as an apothecary, who, when Lord Hazard [40] first began to reside at his seat, ordered a new sign, and added to his former qualifications surgeon and man-midwife.

One great pleasure of the wicked wights of Little Hockley, was to torment their more fortunate neighbours of Castlewick, This they effected by certain railings and backbitings; to which exploits of their fancy, they added others, which were achieved by means of their fingers; for scarcely a week past but some hog was hamstrung, horse lamed, or house dog hanged. Sucking pigs and chickens disappeared from their sties and roosts, without the assistance of a fox; the cows were milked in the night by two-handed urchins, and lambs ran away with by two-legged wolves.

These depredations ceased now and then, upon Sir Sidney's application to Lord Hazard, but they constantly broke out again. In the mean time, certain defiances were breathed, and sometimes a few blows exchanged.

The vicar was not without frequent apprehensions that some of his parishioners, meeting with so many insulting provocations, and being healthy, spirited men, would once for all take such a revenge as might involve the community in trouble; for one [41] or two of them had been already cited to the quarter sessions, where it required the whole interest of Sir Sidney to prevent their paying heavy damages, though what they did was perhaps in resentment of some insult offered to a wife or daughter.

At the time Lord Hazard petitioned the lords for his divorce, Sir Sidney was attending with great earnestness his duty in the lower house. Taking advantage of this opportunity, a month had scarcely passed before the Hockley men, grown more audacious than ever, had irritated their peaceable neighbours so often, that three stout bruising matches had already been the consequence; and though the Hockley boxers would have cut no contemptible figure in the learned Mr. MENDOZA's school, yet it so happened—perhaps because a right cause is half the victory—the men of Castlewick were the conquerors.

Seeing matters at this extremity, and unwilling to trouble Sir Sidney, the vicar determined to pay a visit to the curate of Little Hockley, for that parish, which was a rectory, had not been blest with a sight of its incumbent for ten years. Indeed that worthy member of the church, who was also a member of a gaming club, commuted for the tithes and all other immunities of his living, and had given up, [42] among other advantages, the right of appointing a curate.

The gentleman who made this purchase lived in the neighbourhood, and was called Major Malplaquet. He had distinguished himself in the wars of the low countries, when very young, under the famous Duke of MALBOROUGH, and was now late in life in quiet possession of his paternal seat, and a very fine fortune.

The Major had a chaplain, who, it must be confessed, did not look much like a clergyman. He had been in the wars too, and indeed he fought much better than he prayed. I will illustrate his character by an anecdote.

A clergyman being on a visit to a captain of a man of war, a smart gale sprung up so suddenly that the vessel parted her cable, and was hurried out to sea. No harm happened, but it gave the crew a great deal of trouble. The boatswain, who in the language of his messmates, was a dry hand, coming upon the forecastle, cried, "Sink me if I did not think as this would be the case. I will be keelhauled if we have had a bit of good luck since that there parson came aboard. Of all the fish that swims, I cannot abide a parson. I never sailed [43] but once before with a parson, and then we had not a fair wind the whole voyage."

"Never but once!" said one of his companions, 'why a chaplain's parson, 'ent he?"

"Avast that slack chatter,' said the boatswain, 'a chaplain a parson, hey!"

"Why I tell you he is,' says the other, 'he wears black, and says prayers."

"Why then I suppose,' retorted the boatswain, 'the devil's an alderman because he wears horns.—All the chaplains I ever knew were honest hearty cocks: good fellows, who would not mind making a curtain of their black gown, to hide a pretty lass. None of your grave thinking gentlemen; but roaring boys, who shewing you what they are, and telling you what they ought to be, leave you to your choice whether you'll go to heaven by their preaching, or to the southward by their example."

This worthy member of the church militant, whose name was Standfast, had, in his younger days—for he was now near fifty—performed as many exploits of the buckish kind as ever distinguished [44] the Mohawks, Sweaters, or any other set of desperados who used formerly to parade the streets of London, to the terror of every decrepid watchman, and the demolition of his lanthorn. He was the very man who once

proposed to give the waiter of a coffee-house a rouleau, to see how he would look.

Besides all this, he had killed his man; and, having absconded to Flanders, he ran away with a nun from a convent, married her, spent her fortune, set her adrift, and entered a volunteer in the army, where the officers—finding him a genteel man—being informed of his function, procured him a chaplaincy.

In this situation Standfast was particularly noticed by Major Malplaquet, who being a man of singular credulity, so attached himself to his new acquaintance, that he soon became his all in all. Indeed the chaplain had many qualities that rendered him agreeable to the major. He would drink claret, play at put, and beat a reveille, with any man in the corps. Besides these winning accomplishments, he had other accommodating methods of endearing himself to his patron. He often complimented him with the possession of some yielding female he had himself grown tired of, and never failed, if husbands or fathers grew impertinent and troublesome, to [45] brazen the matter out. In short, having gained a consummate knowledge of the world, by a scrupulous hardness of belief, a total want of every feeling but self-interest, and a critical exercise of observation, he penetrated every man's characteristic foible, and worked upon it as he pleased.

Such was the Rev. Mr. Standfast, private chaplain to Major Malplaquet, and curate of Little Hockley. To this person I am going to introduce the vicar of Castlewick, who, conscious of the rectitude of his own intentions, was indulging himself in the flattering hope that his efforts, in conjunction with those of the curate, would effectually make up every breach between the two contending parties.

1.8. CHAPTER VIII.

BEING FULL OF PASTIME AND PRODIGALITY.

To the qualities already celebrated in Tiger Standfast—for so had he been nicknamed by his companions, from the utter impossibility of taming him—I shall add, that, let him converse with whom he might, he, as the phrase is, knew his man; and was always provided with so many shifts and turns, that come what would he was never off his guard. Besides he had an admirable knack of siding with his enemy, the better to laugh at him,

I thought it necessary to premise this, lest the reader should wonder how it came about that the moment he saw Mr. Mildman he should not only welcome him with all imaginable courtesey, but declare he intended, the next morning, to have paid him a visit, in order to consult with him on the very subject which had now brought them together:—adding, as he took the good old vicar by the hand, that he had a hard time of it indeed, but bad examples were terrible things, and if Lord Hazard [47] would encourage his tenants in idleness—which Mr. Mildman's experience must have long taught him is the corner stone of the temple of corruption—of what avail were all his prayers, nay his tears, in enforcing either their duty towards God or their neighbour.

The astonished vicar could scarcely credit his ears. He had not to learn the general character of Standfast; but, on the contrary, had both heard and believed much ill of him: and indeed, on his way, had uncharitably, as he now thought, conjured up a number of difficulties in his mind, which he expected would be thrown in the way of his beneficent plan.

This Standfast well knew, and as the first blow in argument, as well as boxing, is a manifest advantage, he had the inward satisfaction—I say inward because his features betrayed no such sensation—of seeing his antagonist struck aghast.

To pursue this first blow, therefore, he thus went on. "I see Mr. Mildman you are shocked to find I have no more influence over my parishioners."

The vicar, to whom truth was as habitual as perjury is to an attorney, with the utmost simplicity of heart immediately answered: "You have not at all divined the subject of my astonishment. I was admiring that the world could be so unnecessarily slanderous to have described you as a dissolute and immoral character, and one who—pardon me for using the expression, was a scandal to your cloth; whereas you appear to me—"

"Ah,' cried Standfast, 'poor deluded wretches I forgive them. But what do they say? It is of consequence that I should clear my character to you. Their slander I smile at, but your ill opinion! What do they say, dear Mr. Mildman?"

"Why Sir,' replied the vicar, 'since I see you bear it with a proper firmness, I will tell you.'—' "Sit down sir,' said Standfast.'

The vicar having complied with his request, proceeded to inform him that, in the first place, it was said he drank very hard for a clergyman. "Not a drop more, in general, than two bottles at a sitting,' said Standfast, 'and never more than four." "Four bottles!" exclaimed the vicar.' "Why what is that;' cried Standfast very calmly, 'if, my dear sir, you had been in countries where I have, you must have drank. Ay, ay, it is better to be carried off to bed in liquor than in an ague. Then, between ourselves, the major is a notable toper; never stirs till the sixth bottle, though there should be only he and I to drink it: and I dare not disoblige my patron: I hate ingratitude. I only ask you Mr. Mildman if any thing could induce you to thwart the will of Sir Sidney?"

"Sir,' cried the vicar, with a look of extreme sensibility, 'it is the study of my life to deserve his bounty."

"That was spoken,' said Standfast, 'too warmly not to have come from the heart. You must, my dear sir, pledge me in a glass to Sir Sidney's health. Here bring some wine."

The vicar, who, though he never was drunk in his life, could take a glass or two, and very frequently did at Sir Sidney's table, made no great difficulty to comply.

Two bottles of wine were immediately brought, two glasses poured out, and soon emptied to the health of the vicar's patron. Standfast asked Mr. Mildman if he liked his port as well as Sir Sidney's? at the same time excusing himself from drinking any, saying that nothing but claret agreed with him.

The vicar commended the wine, but said it had a dryish sour smack after it. "Goute de la terreinne, nothing else,' said Standfast, 'it is the very excellence of it."

"Perhaps so,' said the vicar, 'but to our business." "No sir,' said Standfast, 'you shall purge me of all my secret faults. It has long been my ambition to be known to you, and I promise most truly, if you can use any fair argument before you go, to convince me of the least impropriety in my conduct, I will amend it immediately."

"Sir,' said the vicar, 'it is handsomely said; and, after this declaration, I will not believe you the man you have been represented to me. You a murderer!"

"A murderer!" echoed Standfast, 'I abhor the idea."

"I dare say you do sir,' cried the vicar, 'and yet the wicked world says you killed a man in a duel."

"Oh is that all!" said Standfast, 'I was compelled to it. Poor Ned—he was a worthy fellow—I had a great regard for him, but he would insist upon it, so I ran him through the body."

"Mercy on us,' cried the vicar, 'and do you feel no remorse for having the blood of a fellow creature upon your head?"

"Not in an affair of honour,' said Standfast. It was impossible to be avoided."

"Honour!" cried the vicar with great vehemence, 'it is a prostitution of the word. Can it be honour, because a man has perhaps unwittingly affronted me, to shed his blood, and desolate his family? Is it honour, because there are men of desperate fortunes, with whom it is safer to face a pistol than a halter that I must either fear to detect their villany, or put my life upon a footing with theirs."

"Spoken like an oracle, my dear sir,' said Standfast, 'but it will sometimes unavoidably happen that two men of perfect honour, who wish one another extremely well, shall suddenly dispute, till, grown warm, one or the other shall use an opprobious epithet, which his friend cannot brook. What is to be done?—the man must be knocked down you know."

"Knocked down!" hollowed the vicar, 'and so make the breach too wide for all possibility of reparation. No sir, the highest courage is to pity passion, not take advantage of it. Convince a man into a concession, and your triumph is doubly noble. Why should a fally of passion be sooner resented than the sally of a madman? Besides, according to your own rules, not to speak of its wickedness, can any thing be so silly as duelling? A man receives an injury: what is the satisfaction he asks? why truly he invites the aggressor in terms of perfect politeness, to meet him at a certain time, where he requests, as an attonement for the wrong, that his adversary may exert all his skill to take away his life."

The vicar, who had now drank two glasses, made the above declaration with uncommon vehemence. Standfast, in a pretended rapture embraced him, confessed he was become his convert, and filling the glasses for the third time, gave the major for a toast.

This the vicar could not avoid drinking. He determined however it should be the last; three glasses being at any time his utmost stint. He had scarcely drank when, whether it was owing to the goute de la terreinne, or being warm upon the subject, or what I shall not now take upon me to say, but certainly he gave manifest signs of being disordered from top to toe. His eyes sparkled, his head became dizzy, and his chair was of the same use to him as a pole is to a rope-dancer; for, without it, he assuredly would have tumbled down. Nor could he help testifying some

applause at the end of a littlechansonette, which Standfast had been negligently singing. At this the latter declared, with a violent oath, that he was the heartiest companion he ever knew.

The vicar blamed him severely for swearing, but, stamping his foot to enforce the rebuke, he trod upon the leg of a dog that lay before the fire. The cur having received a private intimation from his master, flew at the vicar, who, with great difficulty, and an exclamation of "damn the dog," got out of his way.

Standfast now fell foul of the vicar; telling him that he might plainly see there were provocations that might induce a man to swear; that the words themselves were no more than other words; and that men used indiscriminately God bless you, and its opposite expression, when neither a benediction nor a curse was in their hearts: which he was sure was the case in relation to the vicar, as the exclamation against the dog was certainly uttered without the smallest premeditated malice.

"Oh sir,' said poor Mildman, whose speech now became affected, 'I would not wish the destruction of the smallest reptile. As to the poor dumb creature, what he did was natural. I trod upon him, and he flew at me: I did him an injury, and he resented it."

"Just my case,' said Standfast, 'in the affair of the duel."

"Oh no,' cried the vicar; as to the duel—the duel—you see in relation to the duel—a man that is intoxicated with passion—" "is as bad,' interrupted Standfast, 'as a man intoxicated with liquor."

"Oh yes,' cried the vicar, 'that is another terrible evil. When a man is drunk, he feels—that is the liquor mounts to his head—and if the giddiness—which is the effect of—what is the matter with me—I—but it is no such thing—it is—im—im—impossible that—Oh dear me—"

Poor Mildman, sinking back in his chair, now fell fast asleep; which Standfast no sooner saw, than he ordered in two sturdy fellows, who were at [55] hand, and bid them lay the vicar in a certain field, where some of his flock would be sure to find him.

This was all that Standfast really meant; for, being a perfect school boy at a frolic, and having long indulged a desire of touching the vicar on the side of his sobriety, upon hearing of his coming to consult with him, he had infused a few grains of crude opium into a bottle of port, which caused that goute de la terreine the vicar complained of, and so acted both upon his head and his unsuspicious temper as, at the third glass, to throw him into a complete state of intoxication.

This deception I should have imparted at the beginning of this chapter, but for my constant observance of that necessary etiquette which I hinted to my readers in the beginning of the last.

The two fellows, however, who carried out the vicar, were not so easily contented. To get the parson completely into their clutches, was such a triumph, that they were determined to make the most of it. They therefore stript him of his coat, put him on an old jerkin, patched with a hundred different colours, set him in the middle of a field, upon a broken chair, propt up by a few stakes, to prevent him from falling, where he looked exactly like a figure placed to frighten the crows.

Very fortunately for the poor vicar, the clerk and the schoolmaster passed over the field a few minutes after the Hockley men had left him. They were going to Little Hockley with a view to meet the good man, and learn the success of his enterprize; and were scarcely within a hundred yards of the supposed scarecrow when they saw it move of itself, as it appeared, for there was not a breath of wind stirring. Upon this, looking with more attention, it got upon its legs, staggered two or three paces, and fell down.

Perfectly convinced it must be a human being, they went up to it; but what words can describe their astonishment when they heard the voice and beheld the features of the vicar.

The two men who had stood aloof now made their appearance. They were soon afterwards joined by almost half the village, who, seeing the vicar in the hands of his friends, began to open upon them.

"Fine doings indeed,' said one; 'ay, ay, the still sow sucks all the grains." "Yes, yes,' cried another, 'there be black sheep at Castlewick as well [57] as at other places."The clerk and schoolmaster retorted, that they were sure some trick had been played.

"Odd rot it,' said a third, 'a reare trick to be sure. Here must your parson cum to zee our parson, and nothing would zarve un, as he zed, but bleeding the zellers, and zo you do zee, after he had got mean drunk, we took and geed un an airing in our veeld, to fright away the crows.'—'

"Odds wounds,' cried another, 'your drunken parson makes a mortal good scarecrow!" at which they all set up a horse laugh.

The clerk and the schoolmaster having asked the vicar several questions, and found, from his utter incapacity to give a rational answer, they stood very little chance of knowing the truth—for as to a single tittle to his prejudice, nothing could induce them to credit it—they contented themselves with demanding his coat, hat, and wig, which were peremptorily refused; the ringleader swearing they should be put upon a figure of the vicar, and that very night burnt in effigy.

Seeing that all their attempts to recover these spoils were in vain, their next care was how to get home their charge, when, fortunately, a tilted cart happening to go by, they called the driver, who knowing them, with great readiness assisted to convey the vicar to his vehicle, heartily concerned at his deplorable condition, and vowing revenge against those who had reduced him to it.

The cart set off one way, and the crowd another, shouting in triumph as they bore away their trophies, and swearing to exhibit them upon a pile of faggots as soon as it should be dark.

Whether they did so or not will be known hereafter; but not in the next chapter, that being appropriated for another subject. Besides, the reader may wish to be released for a time from the brutes of Little Hockley. Nay it is not impossible but he may, in some small degree, revolt at these latter circumstances. What a shocking indignity to make so amiable a man drunk, let him swear, and afterwards introduce him as a scarecrow!

To these objections—for I own I am myself shocked at the facts—I must beg to plead that I am only the historian of these transactions; but, if I were the inventor, I really think that they are the very cunning of the scene; for the more attrocious the Hockley men appear, the more lustre will be thrown round the worthies of Castlewick.

As for the swearing, I own I had some idea of smothering it, but I will prove beyond contradiction that it is natural even in the excellent Mr. Mildman.

The reader cannot wish for a more truly moral character to illustrate the position than Doctor JOHNSON. This great man, we are told by Mr. BOSWEL, while on his tour once made use of the words "'what the devil:"'—I forget whether it was on that evening the young lady sat upon his knee, for then there would have been no great improbability in his feeling the gentleman he mentioned a little busy:—but he hastily recalled himself, and corrected his expression.

Now "'what the devil,"' from Dr. JOHNSON, perfectly sober, I insist upon it, is about upon a par with "'damn the dog"' from Mr. Mildman, drunk; for drunkenness has the same effect upon the spirits, whether we fall into it by accident or design. Nay drugs and charms may very likely create a stronger delirium, and I have no manner of doubt but that if Dr. JOHNSON could that evening have been prevailed upon to drink fermented liquor, it is within bare possibility—for I contend for no more—that he might have whispered to his friend BOSWELL that the lady was a damned fine girl, or some such buckishness.

1.9. CHAPTER IX.

SHEWING WHO ARE THE PROPER CONFIDENTS IN CASES OF LOVE.

STANDFAST, as soon as he understood what had been done with the vicar, appeared well enough satisfied, though he did not fail to declare that the matter had been carried a great deal too far. However, at the major's in the evening he gave the story in all its perfection; enlarging a little indeed on one article, which was in saying that the vicar drank like a fish:— "but,' said he, looking very earnestly at Mrs. Malplaquet, 'few virtues are so practicable as people would feign teach us to believe. The detection of one hypocrite has in it merit enough to atone for fifty sins openly committed. What say you major."

"Why I say,' replied the major, 'that hypocrisy is a low sin; a kind of rank and file vice; and ought to be drumed out of every regiment of honest fellows. Don't you think so chicken?' said he to his wife.'

"Certainly I do,' said she, and as no man alive has less of that meanest of vices than yourself, I may the more freely utter my detestation of it.'

"You may be assured the worst of hypocrites is he who covers his deceit with the practice of other vices. All you can do with such a man is not to trust him too far: but how dreadful it is to be always doubting a man you would wish to think well of. You will say he keeps you a stranger to his hypocrisy, and leaves you almost secure he is no such character, by openly avowing his other sins. This very circumstance ought to excite your suspicion of his honesty; for what does he see in one friend more than another, unless perhaps to make him his dupe."

"This may be all very true, madam,' said Standfast, 'but I must say it appears to me to be a very uncharitable kind of judgment: I hope there are no such persons as you describe."

"I am sure sir I should be as willing to hope so as you,' said the lady, 'but I cannot give myself that indulgence; for, uncharitable as it may be, I still insist that there is one such character at least in the world."

"Come, come, I hope not,' said the major, 'if it were only for the honour of the corps of human nature."

"Well,' said the lady, 'since it has gone so far, I beg that I may have leave to prove what I advance, merely to clear myself from Mr. Standfast's imputation of uncharitableness.'

"I will suppose a case: A gentleman shall be in your house, as Mr. Standfast is; receive your protection, countenance, and friendship; and, in the moment you are heaping benefits upon him—in full assurance that you count every thing upon his gratitude—shall harbour dishonourable designs against your wife; shall eternally teaze her when she is alone; behave himself so particular to her in company, that she is obliged to force that deportment into constraint which she could wish should be cheerfulness; and, in the mean time, she dreads to make her persecutions known, for fear of ill consequences from the anger of her husband. In what order of hypocrites would you class this man? What would he deserve?"

"Deserve!" cried the major, 'to be flogged till every thread of hemp was worn off the cat o' nine tails. But pray now chicken do you mean this as mere general conversation, or is there any thing intended by it?"

"Oh that is impossible,' said Standfast, nudging her at the same time under the table.'

"Perhaps not,' cried the lady, 'enjoying his confusion; 'at any rate you have no objection to my making it known, I hope."

"I—no—Oh no madam—I—not the least'—and then recovering himself a little—'not the smallest objection you may be assured."

"Very well sir,' said Mrs. Malplaquet, 'since it is a matter of such perfect indifference to you, I will take an opportunity when I am tete a

tete with my husband, of endeavouring to shew him his friends from his enemies. At present,' added she, 'I should be obliged to you to ring the bell, it may recover you from your fright."

Standfast did as he was desired, the lady's woman made her appearance, and she retired to her chamber, saying, as she went out, "adieu major; and for you Mr. Standfast, I wish you this and every night as sweet a repose, with all your virtues, as that of Mr. Mildman, with all his hypocrisy."

The two gentlemen being left to themselves, a silence of a few minutes ensued. At length the major got up suddenly, and having shut the door, and locked it, advanced to Standfast in a most determined stride, and uttered, in as determined a tone, "Look'e Sir—if I thought I harboured a rascal in my house, I would not wait for a court martial—his ears!—dam'me his ears should in two minutes be nailed against the wall, in terrorum to all scoundrels who dared to come as spies into a gentleman's camp! That my wife meant something is evident; that she would not run a risk of exasperating me without cause is as evident; tell me, therefore, what you know of the matter; for fire me, Mr. Standfast, but it shall be explained."

Standfast, who had taken good time to sort his cards, began now to consider how he should play his game; and knowing the major's credulity to his strongest suit, after stipulating for a patient hearing, he thus began.

"You very well know, major, you are upwards of seventy; whereas your lady is not more than twenty-five. She married you against her will, out of mere filial piety; and I sincerely believe has been as faultless in her conduct as she is beautiful in her person. You have often said our souls were congenial; and, that though there were no consanguinity between us, nature made us brothers. Is it wonderful then I should admire what you do? When the desertion of a recreant pin has displayed her spreading bosom, bursting like a lily from its pod, or a friendly stile betrayed her taper leg to my view, I will not deny but it has fired my imagination,

and in the sweet madness of that delicious moment, I have been a rascal!—have loved your wife!—have told her of it!—'

"Oh major! you do not know what it is to cherish a hopeless passion: you are happy: you possess the object of your wishes, while I pine in despair."

"In despair! ay, and so you ought,' cried the major; 'what the devil would the man have? Han't you my friendship, my credit, my purse?"

"None of which I deserve,' said Standfast.'

"Why no I think not indeed,' returned the major, 'if you cannot be content without my wife into the bargain. No, no, I chuse, if you please sir, to have her affections to myself."

"Come, come,' said Standfast, 'major that is too much; you know she did not marry you for love. She may have a friendship for you, but assure yourself no affection at her age for a man of yours."

"Why,' grumbled the major, 'there may be something in that, but still sir that is nothing to you."

"It is so far something to me,' said Standfast, 'that it serves me to exculpate myself; for if she had loved you, I would sooner have cut my tongue out of my mouth than have suffered it even to have whispered my passion. But you see how very excuseable I am: Younger than you by almost twenty years, versed all my life in the arts of pleasing women, and you know very well how many I have spared you in the charming days of our youth."

"Well, well,' said the major, 'that I do'nt pretend to deny."

"Many a delicious girl,' returned Standfast, [68] 'that doted on me have I torn from my own arms to present to my friend."

"So you have—so you have'—said the major.'

"And what thanks you gave me for it!" said Standfast. Don't you remember the little auburn haired wench at Ghent?"

"What the counsellor's wise?" cried the major. 'She was a charming woman, by my faith. Come give me some wine. I wonder what is become of her?"

"I don't know,' said Standfast; 'but major neither you nor I boggled at her being married, that I recollect.'

"True, true,' cried the major,' but that you know was a different affair."

"It was indeed,' returned Standfast, 'for I insist upon it I shewed myself, in that instance, capable of a more exalted friendship than you are; for I loved her, possessed her, and yet gave her up to you: deprived myself of a sweet felicity to oblige my friend. Ah major you never got the start of me but in this last business. How different things used to be. The gayest, the most accomplished yielded to me in the art of pleasing, and till I was satisfied none dared attempt to make a choice.—Now, a foolish woman, who loves neither of us, is to sow dissention between two friends, who are all the world to each other."

"Dam'me,' cried the major, 'but she shall not; and if it was only a mistress, curse me if I don't think that tongue of yours would prevail with me not to stand upon niceties: but you know, Standfast, as it is"

"Oh,' cried the chaplain, 'however miserable I may be, I will consume in silence rather than utter another syllable."

"Well that is friendly, said the major. However,' returned the chaplain, 'I hope you will lay an injunction on Mrs. Malplaquet to treat me with civility."

"Oh you may depend upon that,' answered the major.'

"And I think,' said Standfast, 'I may venture to insist that I am not the hypocrite the lady has thought proper to call me." "I'll answer for that,' said the major.'

"No, no,' repeated the chaplain, 'any scoundrel if you please, Mrs. Malplaquet, but a hypocrite."

After this, upon asking the major if there was any remaining animosity, his patron shook him heartily by the hand, and swore he believed him to be the worthiest fellow upon earth; "for where,' said he, 'is there another man who, being in love with your wife, would have the honesty to confess it to your face?"

Having brought this dialogue between tame credulity and unblushing impudence to an end, I shall only add that this worthy friendship seemed to be stronger cemented by what had passed.

The remainder of the conversation turned on their former exploits, in which Standfast did not lose sight of the main point; but enlarged wherever he could on the satisfaction he had always received in administering to the major's pleasures.

At length the major was led off to bed in much about the same state of inebriety as the reader may remember to have seen Mr. Mildman.

Before I take my leave of this chapter, I shall say a word or two concerning Mrs. Malplaquet.

This lady, who was one of those living sacrifices which avarice offers up at the shrine of interest, had, to say the truth, a very difficult task to perform. Her parents, though sprung from an honourable family, were of a younger branch, and, therefore, could give her but a thousand pounds. The only man she ever loved had deserted her, for a pert piece of deformity with just thirty times that sum. Thus, being perfectly indifferent what became of herself, she gave her hand, as the good chaplain has already kindly noticed, to the major, out of perfect obedience to her friends.

The life she had led since—the only pleasurable moments of which were those she passed alone—may be easily guessed. The audacious importunities of Standfast were much bolder than either he or she had described; and he having repeated them in some way that night so as extremely to offend her—though she was remarkable for complacency and sweetness of temper—her anger had so far got the better of her forbearance, as to force from her that declaration of Standfast's

dishonourable intentions, which the reader has already seen he contrived, by the power he had over his patron, so to palliate as to leave her the object of resentment rather than him.

I mention this for fear Mrs. Malplaquet, for whom I would wish to interest the reader, should be wrongfully supposed to be one of those outrageously virtuous ladies who are eternally singing forth their own praises, lest the world, from its natural uncharitableness, should unkindly imagine they are entitled to no praise at all:—a practice at present in great and general credit. And really I do not see why it should not; for who so proper to be the herald of a man's merits as himself? since he is surely competent to speak to his own motives, from a thorough knowledge of whence they originate. And if he should turn the best side outward, it ought to be considered as a meritorious expedient to put himself upon a footing with his neighbour, and so pay him in his own coin; appearance being as requisite to establish one sort of reputation as paper to establish another; neither of which could sustain any solid credit without such assistance: for honour is a commerce as well as business, and such ideal resources often prevent bankruptcies in both.

1.10. CHAPTER X.

CONTAINING TWO NEW CHARACTERS—PERFECTLY ORIGINAL.

THE worthy curate, in his way home, exulting at this new instance of his influence over the major, uttered, or rather I believe reflected, the following soliloquy.

"Zounds what an escape!—but it is nothing to a genius like mine. Poor dolt, how gloriously I ride him! As to madam, I fancy she'll tell no more tales. This is reducing things to a system: but I always said it. To palliate an accusation, if you take a man by that foible his generosity, you are sure to be safe. Men are always liberal when there is nothing required but words.'

"But to expedients. This woman is a fool: I had a scheme to her advantage. Her husband cannot live long, especially as I drench him, and would she join me, we might make a comfortable thing on't when once I should have preached his funeral sermon. Well, if she will kick down her [74] basket of glass ware, that is her business. I will try her however once more. I am secure from any impertinent tattling. The major will hear no more complaints. If she comes to, I shall be charmed; for, to say the truth, she is a lovely woman: if not, shall I stake my interest against her folly? No, not were she a Venus.'

"To-morrow I will begin the attack, and if she should not capitulate in a week, I will then appear to raise the siege; but it shall be only to prepare a mine, which, when once sprung, shall either destroy her, or make her prisoner at the mercy of her conqueror: in which case she will not find in me the continence of POMPEY or ALEXANDER.—No, no, my business is to talk of virtue; let fools practise it, who are content to take it for their reward."

Whether all or any part of Standfast's plan was put in execution will hereafter be seen. When he came to the above period, he had just finished his meditation and his walk, and having knocked at his door,

was let in by his confidential servant, who beat Scrub out of sight, in point of variety in his employments; for as Scrub had one employment for every day in the week, Mr. Flush—for that was his name—had one for almost every day in the year. Nor, to say the truth, was there ever any person better cut out for a great man's appendage, for I hope the reader already allows Mr. Standfast to be a great man; and as to Mr. Flush, or Mr. Kiddy Flush—for he had also a nick name—if a fork be necessary to a knife, fuel to a fire, a scabbard to a sword, a bucket to a well, a bailiff to an attorney, or a bully to a bawd, the services of that faithful adherent were essentially material and absolutely necessary to his worthy principal: nay I question if Kiddy was not very near, if not altogether as great an original as his master.

As, however, my opinion is of very little consequence if my good reader does not coincide with it, I think it absolutely incumbent on me to delineate the portrait of the said Flush, or Kiddy—for he was as often called one as the other—so let the claim to superiority rest either on the side of the man or master, as it shall appear by the drawing; and as it is usual in portraits to illustrate the character by some cymbolical ornament, through the means of which you can lay your finger on the canvas and say this is a general, for he has a truncheon in his hand, and this a butcher, for he has a nosegay in his bosom, so will I give the like infallible traits to know the characteristic marks of Kiddy's most striking qualities.

As to his person, it was, for his size—for he was only four feet eleven inches high—the most compact that ever was seen; but then, as if nature had been fearful, had she finished the front of this well proportioned structure equal to the rest of the work, lest she should have been tempted to have thrown down her tools in despair, his face was the most singular piece of deformity that can be conceived.

His nose and chin, like the head and tail of a weathercock, pointed different ways; yet not east and west, nor north and south, but to the zenith and nadir.

Some were of opinion that he had no mouth when he was born, but that the operator had made an incision to serve for one; and that being in a hurry, and his scissors none of the sharpest, he had not only cut it in an oblique direction, from the right side of the under jaw up to the left cheek bone, but also zig zag; so that when he laughed—indeed laugh he never did—but when he grinned—for his teeth were pretty even, which lends probability to the business of the incision—

But pray excuse me from relating how he looked when he grinned, till I have described his eyes; one of which, the left, was smaller than the other, and whether it envied the superior size of its neighbour, or was awed by conscious humility at its own insignificance, I really cannot say, but it fairly slunk into the opposite corner, without even deigning, or perhaps daring, to cast one single glance to the right, while the other, in triumphant pride, rolled, or rather goggled about, and appeared itself an Argus, looking a hundred ways at once.

To these unlovely marks—which in females are called certificates for their honesty—I must add that Kiddy was frightfully seamed with the small pox, and that he received no addition in point of beauty from an explosion of gunpowder when he was abroad, which stript the skin off his face, except on a small part of one of his cheeks, and one or two other places; and thereby left such a violent redness for ever after, that his face looked something like a rump steak, or rather like red ochre in the grinding, in which, if you take up the muller, you may see an appearance like branches of trees, which answers exactly to seams of the small pox; or, to add one more simile, which shall take in beard and all—for his beard, like that of Hudibras, was orange tawny—his complexion was like a red wine syllabub, where here and there appears a splotch of white curd, the whole gently tinged with a sprinkling of nutmeg.

As to the grinning, after I have said so much, I think I should affront the reader by describing it. He knows every feature now as well as I do, and if he chuses to call up a grin in his imagination, and when he has so done, does not grin himself, I can only say he is not the reader I took him for.

Kiddy Flush had been employed from his youth up to beat the drum, distribute the bills, and slang the figures of a puppet shew, where he had learnt a smattering of every thing. He could scrape the fiddle, vault on the slack wire, swear a good round hand, coax the girls, get boozy, and I am afraid thieve; for if he had not this last qualification, I cannot see why they should send him hand-cuffed, which they really did, on board a transport whose destination was to the American plantations.

In short, not to conceal the disgrace, Kiddy was certainly transported to America; from whence he contrived to get re-transported to Ireland. There he found means to get engaged as a drummer in the same regiment where Standfast was chaplain. Indeed Kiddy Flush was the very person who taught Tiger Standfast to beat that reveille, which has been already celebrated as a chef d'oeuvre.

Were I to run through all the scenes so full of srolic, whim, dissipation, and singular dissoluteness, which were practised by this trim tram, this horse and his rider, I might as well at once have given the world the adventures of Tiger Standfast and his man Kiddy; but as that is not totally my intention, I shall content myself with noticing that these worthy associates, finding themselves very necessary to each other, a league was entered into between them, that mutual assistance should be given—to put the matter a little technically—in all breezes, frisks, plots, queerings, tricks, humbugs, and bambouzlings, that they might find it expedient to engage in; that the agreement should be understood as a partnership between them, with this sole distinction, that Flush should be openly considered as a servant, and in that character be kept in subordination before company, but permitted to speak his mind freely, openly, and without reserve when nobody should be present.

Kiddy Flush, at the time of his first introduction to the reader—for nothing is so advantageous as to bring on your principal characters with a good grace,—was what is called half gone; in his own language a little cockish: for I must tell the reader—and that is really the last explanation I will trouble him with about Kiddy—that, among the rest of his oddities, his choice of words was the most singular. It was composed of the cant terms of both his professions, to which he occasionally added a

miserable pun, and now and then a little bad French, which he had picked up on his travels; the whole interlarded with new-fangled oaths.

Kiddy had just been witness to a curious scene in the village, and was bursting to disclose it to his master on his arrival. At the same time it must be remembered that Standfast's head was entirely filled with what had passed at the major's.

Kiddy then scarcely suffered his master to sit down before he began with "I say master, there has been rum gig going forward this evening." "Gig, what do you mean?" said Standfast:'his mind still running on his late adventure. "Nay nothing,' said Flush, 'no rang, only we had like to have come off with tats, that's all. Shiver me if we had not been cute, we should some of us have taken a leap without nobody to hold the blanket."

Standfast thinking he alluded to the scrape he had so narrowly got out of, replied, "why how the devil came you to know any thing about it?" "Why Lord love you,' said Kiddy, 'I know the whole manoeuvre of the thing, and I must say it was bunglingly managed." "Bunglingly!" said Standfast; 'dam'me if I think any man in the world ever drew himself out of such a hobble with half so much grace. To have them both upon me, the old soldier and his wife!"

"Why master, what are you upon?" said Flush. 'The jonse I means ben't no old soldiers, nor their wives; but a parcel of sheep biting poltroons—flats—mazards—who, instead of pelting it out like hearties, sneaked away to the boozing cases, and left the enemy masters of the champ of battle."

He here acquainted Standfast that, at the moment of exhibiting the effigy of the vicar on its funeral pile, a party of heroes from Castlewick, who had heard from the clerk and the schoolmaster of the indignity intended to be offered to their worthy pastor, rushed in, saved those precious relics from the flames, and bore them off in triumph; while the affrighted Hockleymen fled amazed, scarcely offering to resist:—and it was well they did, for the vicar's adherents would have died on the spot rather than have yielded.

"However,' said Flush, 'for the honour of the cause I rallied the scums, and spoke a speech to them, as near as I can remember, in these um here words.'

"Says I—Splinter your joints, what are you about? Will you, after this, pretend to call yourselves hearty culls, rum codgers, or valiant dickies? You lump the Castlewickites!—you be damned. Don't you see the queer kids have made off with the toggies! But, however, this here I will say—you had no maulers, and they took you by surprize. Don't be down hearted then. To day is for them: to-morrow may be for us. Kallenge them nolens volens to the field: fifty against fifty, like worthies. Thump it out kindly; and then if you lose, why you die like cocks, and we will sing tiddium over your graves. What say you my good master to my horation? Was it not great, high, and crackish?"

"Oh very great indeed, General Flush,' returned Standfast. 'What effect had it?" "Effect!" exclaimed Flush, 'Dam'me it took like a train. In an hour the kallenge was sent, a categorical returned, and to-morrow at five we beat to arms.'

"Bravo!" cried Standfast; 'but remember I know nothing of this. Stay, a thought strikes me: I can make this matter of use: my pretty piece of temptation yonder is squeamish: I will think on't: but it is late. Good night Flush:— hearten your soldiers, and don't forget that I must be a stranger to the whole business."

The master and man here parted; the one went to snooze, as he called it, and the other to meditate how he could make this accident of advantage to him.

In this situation, if the reader please, we will leave them, and return to the major's, late as it is; as I am anxious to make known what passed in the mind of Mrs. Malplaquet, after she retired to her appartment.

That lady had a most faithful and honest friend in her handmaid Emma, who was almost as singular a character as Flush, though a perfect contrast, for nothing in nature could be more harmless.

Emma was the daughter of a bookseller in London, who having a large family, and being in no very flourishing circumstances, was prevailed on to put her out as a lady's companion. An advantageous recommendation brought her into the care of Mrs. Malplaquet, where she had been now retained for almost three years; in which time she had made herself so necessary and so agreeable to her lady, that nothing I believe could have prevailed on her to part with so valuable an acquisition.

What made her company so particularly desirable, was the astonishing fund of information she had treasured up, by sitting in her father's shop. Her mind was a kind of circulating library in little, and I sincerely wish romances were always attended with the same good effects they produced in her; for there is scarcely a good moral inculcated by them that she did not act up to. Not that she had not formed a decided opinion of writings as well as writers; but she rarely broached that opinion, thinking with Madam DACIER that silence was the best ornament of the female sex. It was evident, however, that it was wisely and judiciously chosen, for at the head of her favourite authors she placed Dr. JOHNSON; though I rather think her great admiration of him must have been as a critic, for the Doctor is known to have entertained a rooted dislike to mythology, and indeed every figurative writing which does not square with what he calls truth and morality; whereas Emma maintained that morality being the noblest drift of literature, those writings were the most perfect which brought virtue into danger, that she might rise the more triumphant; and that such productions received an additional force and beauty from allegory and mythological allusion.

[85] The various merits of our literary Abigail will gradually unfold themselves as we go on. I thought it necessary to say so much, to account for Mrs. Malplaquet's determination of disclosing to her the business of Standfast's audacity, and to advise with her what steps she should take.

Emma heard the whole affair with great deliberation, and, pausing for some moments, her lady asked her of what she was considering?

"I am looking, madam,' said she, 'over the catalogue of my mind, to see if I have ever read any thing like it, and, upon recollection, the same

thing occurs in the Nonjuror, one of CIBBER's plays; which is taken from the Tartuffe of MOLIERE; who had it I believe from PLAUTUS:—and if I might advise, you should serve your parson as the lady in that play does hers."

"How is that?' said Mrs. Malplaquet, 'for I really forget." "Why madam,' replied Emma, 'she pretends to be caught in his snare, while she is laying one for him; and placing her husband so as to over-hear a pretended love scene between them, his villany is detected, and he is turned out of the house.'

[] "I like the idea,' said the lady 'of all things in the world, and, with thy assistance am ready to set about it. But how Emma if he should turn the tables upon us? for he is very subtle." "I know it very well madam,' said Emma, 'for at this moment he is making as strong love to me as to yourself; but I promise you he finds me a very Pamela."

The lady expressed some surprize at this intelligence, and asked her maid if she was not uneasy at it.

"On the contrary,' cried Emma, 'I am charmed; for to resist temptation is the proper exercise of virtue, and serves as a kind of moral penance to strengthen us in our duty. Oh I assure you madam you need not be uneasy: one look from virtue, though a lamb, will as surely make vice crouch, as the lion did at the sight of Una."

By this time Mrs. Malplaquet was undrest, and soon after her maid retired; which opportunity I shall seize to account for my having given two such subordinate characters as Flush and Emma so particular an introduction.

To say the truth then, I think that, though the clown should say no more than is set down for him, yet he should say all that is set down for him. The devil has been considered by some as the principal character in Paradise Lost. Comus on all hands is allowed to have the better of the lady. Will any one pretend to say Don Quixote would be any thing without Sancho. In all the Spanish plays the servants are the principal characters, and I have heard the soldier in WEST's General Wolfe

spoken of as the best figure in the groupe. Emma would have defended this argument by saying that Honor is drawn in as masterly a style as Sophia; and Flush would have told you that both man and master were human puppets, moved by the same slangs. In short, I write for all readers, and I hope I have scarcely a character but some one or other will pitch upon for my hero.

1.11. CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH THE HISTORIAN FULFILS HIS PROMISE TO THE READER.

THE challenge from the Hockleymen having been, as Mr. Flush informed us, accepted by the Castlewickites, a large plain, known by the name of the cricket green, situated near the high road, about midway between the two villages, was pitched upon for the scene of action. Thither repaired the combatants; and there were they drawn up in battle array, every man poising his hedgestake, when a gentleman in a post chaise and four, who had ordered the postilion to mend his pace, when he first saw a mob assembled, came up, and cried out in a pretty authoritative voice, that if the inhabitants of Castlewick did not desist, they should lose his favour for ever.

The Castlewickites expected a very different word of command. Finding however their present general to be no other than Sir Sidney, they thought proper to throw down what Mr. Flush called maulers. Upon this the Hockley men began to spring [forward with an exulting shout and would have dealt death among their unarmed enemies had not another authoritative voice commanded a suspension of hostilities on their part.

This voice proceeded from no less a person than Mr. Flush, who having deliberately weighed the probable consequence of such violent proceedings, began to think they would not be altogether so consistent with prudence. He considered that the quarrel had originated with Standfast, and that there would be enough to do, without this new outrage, to set matters to rights about the vicar. It was therefore his business, in quality of his master's friend—by means of which he knew he should be also his own—to soften matters; and having an excellent opportunity, owing to this piece of cowardice on the part of his adherents, he holloed out, as loud as his shrill pipe would permit him—

"Why, pink your livers, what are going for to do? Would ye, stiffen your timbers, go for to be such poltroons as to brush the jackets of a parcel of naked men! Don't you see they have canted away their whackers?"

Then speaking in a lower tone to his lieutenant general—said he "The shew is over, we must let [down the rug: so do you parley to the hearties, while I palaver the old rum kid yonder."

Upon this he came up to Sir Sidney, and was beginning to state the case in a very advantageous way to his master and himself, when their attention was drawn off by a violent screaming at a short distance. Directing their eyes to where the sound proceeded from, they saw a coach overturned, to which Sir Sidney ran, and was indeed followed by the whole mob, friends and enemies.

The coach belonged to Major Malplaquet, and there were in it, at the time of this accident, that gentleman, his lady, and the reverend Mr. Standfast. Neither the lady nor the curate received any material injury, but the major's head had pitched against a ragged stone, by which means his skull was dangerously fractured.

The combatants, their cause of quarrel, and every other consideration was now absorbed in this melancholy accident.

The major was with difficulty listed into his coach, where Sir Sidney, who had never seen him before, offered to accompany him; recommending his chaise to Mrs. Malplaquet, into which Mr. [Standfast very politely offered to accompany her, with a view, as he said, of keeping up her spirits.

The lady however thought proper to refuse both offers, and insisted upon going with her husband. She, however, did not neglect to thank Sir Sidney with tears for his kind concern, which indeed was as manifest as if the wounded person had been his own brother; for he had by this time dispatched three servants to different surgeons. Not but Mr. Standfast appeared in some concern too, but the glances he cast at the lady, and the opera tune he softly whistled while he assisted his dying patron,

pretty well evinced that his mind ran rather upon the future than the present.

Sir Sidney would not leave the major a moment, but supported him in the coach with the utmost care and tenderness all the way home, where by the time they arrived, and the major was put to bed, arrived also two of the surgeons, who agreed that the major had not many hours to live. They however bled him, prepared bandages, and one of them began to prepare for the operation of the trepan: resolved that their patient should go out of the world secundum artem. They were, however, disappointed; for falling into a delirium, he erupted a blood [vessel—which one of the surgeons very judiciously observed must have been injured by the fall—and was instantly suffocated.

Mrs. Malplaquet did not faint away, nor even go into hysterics, upon this occasion: she felt however very severely. It is true her tears did not prevent her from thanking Sir Sidney; on the contrary she acknowledged his singular goodness in terms of the most lively gratitude; yet her grief, though it appeared only decent and proper, was from the heart. She, no more than the vicar, would have wished the destruction of the vilest reptile; and though she never regarded the major with the ardour of love, yet he had ever been kind, and she grateful.

I shall pass over the funeral, at which Sir Sidney, by a particular invitation from Mrs. Malplaquet, was present, and only say that when all proper ceremonies and decent solemnities were over, the widow, after paying some legacies—the principal of which was three thousand pounds to the Reverend Mr. Standfast, as a trifling acknowledgment of his disinterested and honourable attachment—for the chaplain had frequently hinted that if a man left any thing to a friend, it had better be in money, which would prevent litigation. The widow, I say, after [discharging these obligations, found herself in the possession of a plentiful fortune.

One circumstance, however, I must not fail to mention, which is that Mr. Mildman, at the desire of Mrs. Malplaquet, preached the funeral sermon. Nor can I avoid noticing that Sir Sidney furnished the epitaph, which

was no more than what follows: 'HERE are deposited the Remains of
MAJOR MALPLAQUET,
Who feared his Maker,
Served his Country,
And left a grateful Widow to lament his Death,
And celebrate his inferior Virtues.
He died March the 1st, 1751.
Aged 71 Years.'

This epitaph Emma declared to be perfect in all its requisites; for it told who was the person buried, and very concisely pointed out his good qualities: you also learnt by it when he died, and how old he was. Nay, so much was she pleased, that she doubted not, if it had been written in latin, but that Dr. JOHNSON himself must have been perfectly content with it. For her part, she liked it as well as it was; and that for a very good reason, as she humbly conceived, namely, because she did not understand latin. Indeed she owned that this was one of the spots that candour obliged her to acknowledge were now and then to be discovered in the doctor. He was very angry that Dr. SMOLLET's epitaph was not written in latin; and when he went into an apothecary's shop with Mr. BOSWELL, instead of asking for some trifling medicine he had occasion, for, he called for paper, pen, and ink, and wrote it down in latin.

These manners and opinions she thought—for nobody was so open to conviction as Emma—were upon erudition what rust is upon a coin, which no one knows the value of but the possessor.

Nothing could be so clear, she said, as what she advanced. It was not every body's lot to be blest with so much learning as the doctor, which she maintained was very fortunate; for if all men were arrived at such perfection as himself, and were able like him of advancing incontrovertible ipse dixits, argument would be at an end, and of course literature along with it. But, as he was the only one who had ever pretended to be infallible, and who certainly was so, except in a few trifling points like this, it might so happen that latin epitaphs would prove a sarcasm where they were meant to be a panegyric; for to praise a dead person in a language he was unacquainted with while living,

though a tacit, would be a very strong satire; besides being a cruel inconvenience to his family, who must, in this case, be obliged to get the parson to construe the virtues of the deceased, who, after all, perhaps might not be able to do it off hand. She therefore clearly apprehended, that as Dr. JOHNSON had issued a literary bill, enacting that an epitaph could not be perfect which did not mention the particulars before rehearsed, the next infallible writer—if ever this country should be blest with another, should be petitioned to move, by way of rider, that, for the benefit of the public in general, all such epitaphs should be done in English. "But,' said she, finishing her harrangue, 'dear Doctor JOHNSON put me in mind at last of DOMITIUS AFER, who would be an orator when he could no longer be audible, and of whom QUINTILIAN said that he would rather sail than desist."

It is now high time I should account for that strange jumble of accidents which, in so short a time, saved an hundred men from bodily hurt, and yet killed another, who had no concern at all in the fray.

The reader will recollect that Standfast had a scheme in agitation. It was this: He knew Mrs. Malplaquet to be of a most tender and compassionate temper, and he thought he could wound her through this weak side. He had therefore lured the major and her out, by way of an afternoon's ride, intending, when they arrived at the field of battle, to exclaim against the barbarity of the disputants, to jump out of the carriage, and to insist on their going peaceably home.

This he thought the lady would take in such a light as must greatly forward his designs. The contemplation of this scheme on his side, and the hopes of detecting him on the side of Mrs. Malplaquet, made them, on that afternoon, better satisfied with each other than they had been a long time, and gave the major such real pleasure, that he declared, as they were in the carriage, that he never passed so happy a day in his life, without divining, poor man, that it would be his last.

Mr. Standfast's kind intentions were, however, forestalled by Sir Sidney, who, through an unexpected dissolution of parliament, was posting down to be rechosen for the borough of Neitherside.

Thus are men saved or destroyed by the turn of a straw. Thus the villagers slept in whole skins: thus the major was hurried into the other world: thus were the designs of Mr. Standfast frustrated: and thus—for I cannot longer refrain from declaring it—did Sir Sidney see that phantom we formerly spoke of: that disturber of his peace, to whom he longed to open his mind.

This is the secret I hinted to the reader at the end of the sixth chapter, and I only desire to be resolved, had I then divulged it—and thereby have neglected to bring him acquainted with the heartburnings of the two villages, the contrast between the two parsons, the singular friendship of Standfast and the major, the amiable cast of Mrs. Malplaquet, the extraordinary qualities of her maid, the wonderful and surprising talents of Mr. Flush, and every other person or thing that conduced to bring about that event which introduced Sir Sidney to Mrs. Malplaquet—whether it would not have been doing things in a bungling and unworkmanlike manner?

Besides I have now no further trouble with these people; the reader is perfectly acquainted with them, and if, in future, they should be thrown in his way, let them speak for themselves.

To be sure had they never appeared at all, Sir Sidney might have been heart-whole; but since a number of circumstances are likely to grow out of this accidental interview, I have even given it as it happened; and shall now tell the reader when time had fully confirmed the baronet in his first opinion of the widow, that she was a very handsome, and, what was more to him, a very valuable woman, he resolved to throw his fortune into her lap, and his person into her arms: and for this purpose he was determined to make her a proposal to that effect as soon as decency should permit it.

Several reasons urged him to this: first, there was a secret, which, to make amends for my late transgression, shall be almost immediately disclosed to the reader.

Perhaps my readiness to indulge him may be attributed to malevolence; because, in doing so, I shall be obliged to shew a speck in the character of Sir Sidney, which to some may appear black, place it in what light I will. To this accusation, however, I plead not guilty; solemnly declaring, that, in the most unrighteous moments of his life, I truly believe he had as reasonable a stock of piety as any bishop would desire; as much temperance, soberness, and chastity, even in his very excesses, as a gouty alderman under a regimen; and, at any rate, as little desire of doing an injury to man, woman, or child as a Lord Chancellor.

This however need not hinder the reader from exercising his own judgment, which I not only desire he may do, but also with the most critical care and nicety; and when all the circumstances, dangers, temptations, motives, and inducements, are clearly and fairly examined, if he should not acquit Sir Sidney of every thing worse than venial frailty, I must honestly take shame to myself for having palmed on the world, as an exemplary character, a mere mortal, made up of flesh and blood, and subject to wishes, inclinations, and desires, like other men.

I could say certainly that the very excellence of Sir Sidney's heart sprung from having as vigorous and turbulent passions as any rake in christendom, and never having improperly given them the reins, but once, in his life. But some of my readers may think that once too much. And as a blot at backgammon is no blot till it is hit, and a blot of ink is the easier discoverable in proportion to the whiteness of the paper on which it falls; and as an atom is not only magnified, but more deformed, by being seen through a microscope, so I fear this one fault will intrude itself on the reader's remembrance, in the very act of relieving distressed genius, or wiping a tear from the cheek of an orphan. If it should be so, I must submit; for a reader, like a pope, is infallible, and from his fiat there is no appeal.

The story of Sir Sidney's incontinence—for incontinence it was, and such things, like murder, will out—shall be told in the next chapter, which will finish the first book of this history; and while the reader takes time to consider what heinous crime this can possibly be, let me bespeak his charity by informing him that Sir Sidney being once foreman of a grand

jury, whom the judge recommended to find a bill against a murderer, because, as he said, such and such circumstances were, which could not have been yet proved, answered with an honest fervour,— "My Lord, in my opinion the pre-judgment of an offence is half as criminal as the commission of it."

1.12. CHAPTER XII.

WHICH CONTAINS THE TRIAL OF SIR SIDNEY—THE PLEADINGS ON BOTH SIDES—THE VERDICT AND SENTENCE—AND FINISHES THE FIRST BOOK OF THIS HISTORY.

WE are now going to enter upon action, every thing already related having happened previous to the time when the reader and I entered the rookery; or, as Mr. Bayes has it, long before the beginning of this play. We there left Sir Sidney apparently possessed of every comfort upon earth, and yet unhappy. This seeming paradox has been partly accounted for; but let us hope, as Mrs. Malplaquet is now entirely mistress of herself, that the bar to the completion of the baronet's wishes may be removed.

The major has now been dead nearly a twelve-month, and Sir Sidney has had many opportunities of confirming himself in the good opinion he originally entertained of the widow; but as, at his time of life, marriage was no maygame, he honestly solicited to be acquainted with every secret of her heart, frankly offering to encourage her by laying open the exact situation of his own.

Mrs. Malplaquet liked the proposal so well, that she did not hesitate to give him every information concerning herself, which I formerly gave the reader; not forgetting to own, with an ingenuous frankness, that she had loved before; and though, were she to form a character, she knew of no quality she would wish to make a part of it that Sir Sidney did not perfectly possess, yet that warmth of affection which she had formerly

cherished would never again, she sincerely believed, take place in her heart.

Sir Sidney scarcely heard her to an end, when he exclaimed— "Madam, in opening my own heart, I should have used the very same words. I have loved, and will imitate you by confessing that the object of my affection, whether alive or dead, is still dear to me. Your resemblance of her first induced my admiration of you, and the consonance of your sentiments with hers, inspired me with an esteem of the truest kind, which perhaps, in marriage, more securely ensures happiness than what is generally called love.'

"To conside in your tender bosom the secret of my passion is now my duty, and if you will have the patience to hear me, I shall shew you that those who are capable of most tenderness, are effectively the least happy:—but, as old AESOP said when Prometheus took the clay to form man, he tempered it with tears."

The lady testified great impatience, and the baronet proceeded to satisfy her in the following words.

"Being about ten years ago in the south of France, I became acquainted with a gentleman of the name of Le Clerc. He had a daughter, who, at the time I first visited in the family, was just come home from a convent. Conversations between French and English too often turn on the subject of religion. As to Mr. Le Clerc, he was not satisfied with continually chanting forth the praises of that only and exclusive worship, which, according to him, would procure salvation, but he daily exhorted me to embrace his faith.'

"This inconvenience I should have got rid of by renouncing his acquaintance, or removing to another town: but I had no such power. I had spoken you may be assured warmly, though not like an enthusiast, of our own mild, reasonable worship, representing it as the true medium between frantic zeal and subtle hypocrisy; and though all my arguments served but to root the father's opinion the stronger, I plainly began to perceive I had made a convert of the daughter.'

"In the convent where she boarded lived also several English ladies, who had already began to stagger her sentiments:—no wonder then her conversion was completed by the man she loved. Yes madam, plain, downright, and sincere as I was, a beautiful girl of nineteen, gentle as a cherub, and good as an angel, doated on me. Nor was I behind hand with her, I promise you; for my affection was exactly of that sort which receives its pleasure by reflecting what it has given.'

"This was the charm that withheld me. We consulted together on the most expedient means to gratify our mutual wishes, and though I dreaded the event, it was resolved that I should offer myself to her father as the husband of my dear Annette. I did so; he heard me to an end, and then very explicitly informed me that he would consent to my marriage with his daughter upon condition I changed my religion.'

"I spoke of this as an unsurmountable objection, when he candidly told me he saw how matters were, and would immediately send his daughter to a severer convent, to prevent her from throwing herself into the arms of a heretic.'

"I had scarcely returned to my lodgings, to reflect on this adventure, and the measures I ought to take in consequence of it, when my servant came running to tell me that a post chaise was waiting at the door, with a lady in it, who desired to see me immediately. Guess what was my surprize when I beheld my Annette, who told me in as few words as possible that her father was at that moment gone to the abbess of a certain convent, to agree to her entire exclusion from the world; that she had chosen the moment of his absence to come to me; and knowing how much my mind was above the false delicacy of sacrificing to ridiculous form and unnecessary ceremony, she proposed at once going off for some town where we might be married in the protestant faith.'

"You may be sure I did not hesitate, but leaving my affairs to my faithful servant, whom I ordered to stay and watch the motions of the enemy, I leaped into the chaise, and we were more than twenty leagues on our road to Geneva, when poor Annette was taken so very ill that it was impossible for us to proceed.'

"I was in hopes her indisposition had proceeded from the fatigue, the hurry of her spirits, and those fears which were natural upon having taken so precipitate a resolution: but I found myself lamentably mistaken; her disorder encreased, and I was greatly alarmed for her life. By degrees, however, she recovered, and though very weak, we apprehended no more dangerous symptoms.'

"During all this time as we were thrown among a parcel of boors, I was obliged to give her every attendance I decently could. This attention procured so free and uninterrupted an intercourse between us, that is it wonderful when the rose began to revisit her cheeks, and my whole soul was in a trance of happiness at the prospect of retrieving an inestimable treasure that, a few days before, I had dreaded to lose for ever:—Is it wonderful thus unrestrained, considering ourselves as man and wife, we became so by every tie but the ceremony. I will not comment on the circumstance: perhaps it was inexcusable: perhaps I ought not to have disclosed it: but nothing could be purer than our intentions were, and I have no opinion of secrets which are revealed after marriage."

Mrs. Malplaquet—which I think was very handsome in her—scarcely called it a fault, because of the peculiarity of their situation, and their intention of setting matters honourably to rights. Nay she undertook to defend the conduct of the lady; at which Sir Sidney was so greatly charmed, that he sung forth very lavishly in praise of the widow's generosity, liberality, and candour; and declared that, except now and then a sigh to the memory of Annette, he should never have an intruding care.

"Well madam,' returned the baronet, 'three weeks passed in pleasures which it is not in my power to describe. At the end of this time, my Annette having recovered sufficient strength to undergo the fatigue of her journey, we set out for Geneva; but scarcely had we got within a league and a half of those frontiers where, by exercising the right of a husband, I could have silenced the pretensions of a father, when being overtaken by a posse of horsemen, headed by Le Clerc, my Annette was torn from me, while I was overpowered, and carried before the general of the police of the neighbouring town.'

"This gentleman heard my story to an end; laughed at my folly for not getting sooner out of danger; took a handsome present of me; and gave me a letter to the father of Annette: advising him to make up the breach, by consenting to our marriage.'

"I scarcely gave myself time for sleep, or any other refreshment, before I threw myself at the feet of Mr. Le Clerc. I got nothing from him however but a volley of reproaches; to which I answered that his daughter was affianced to me, that I considered her as my wife, and would employ my whole fortune, as well as the interest of the English embassador, who was my particular friend, to do myself justice.'

"Every argument procured me a new insult; I therefore went to Paris for the purpose of consulting my friend, the embassador; but, as we were then upon the eve of a war, and he expected every moment to be recalled, it was out of his power to do me any service.'

"Thus disappointed, I returned once more to Provence. There I found Le Clerc ten times more furious than ever. He loaded me with a thousand invectives. It had it seems been found out that Annette was with child, and he swore he would rather see her expire than that she should bring a heretic into the world. Vainly I represented to him that he was now compelled, by every motive of honour and justice, to make us one. He vowed my destruction.'

"After hovering about the place for a considerable while—employing every emissary my purse could procure, to trace out where they had sequestered Annette—and having learnt no more than that she was admitted into a convent at a considerable distance till she should lie in, upon condition of taking the veil immediately afterwards, I was musing one day what further course to pursue, when my servant came running in, with the greatest horror pictured in his countenance, and told me if I did not immediately fly, I should be imprisoned for life, for that his dear lady—so he always called Annette—had died in childbed, after bringing forth a girl, and that her father, out of revenge, had procured a lettre de cachetagainst my person.'

"Shocked as I was at this fatal news, I did not however neglect my safety, to which I was not a little prompted by a lively desire to succour the little innocent pledge of our tender affection. I therefore followed my man through a back field, mounted a horse of my own—for I feared to go post—and made the best of my way towards Savoy.'

"On the road my man informed me that the postilion who drove us to the house where Annette was taken ill, happened to set a company down at Provence some time afterwards, where being told, among other things, of the bustle Le Clerc had made in searching after his daughter to no purpose, began to be convinced, by putting different circumstances together, that it must be her he had driven in my company: for it had been explained to him that she had gone off with an English gentleman. In hopes, therefore, of a bribe on the other side, he went to Le Clerc, confessed to him where he had taken us, informed him of Annette's illness, and assured him that, as we talked of going to Geneva, if he could not overtake us, there was a great chance of catching us as we returned, especially if we went to that house; for as we must have stopt there some time, they would, at any rate, be able to give a good account of us.'

"Le Clerc did not hesitate a moment, but set out with two friends and a party of the Marechause', who came to the inn [...]ome hours after we had left it. There they got every intelligence they wanted, and quickening their diligence, they soon overtook us, as I have already described.'

"My servant also told me that he did not believe a syllable of Annette's death. His real opinion was that she had taken the veil, for that it was a very common thing for their friends to give out, whenever that event took place, that they were dead, to prevent troublesome importunity; and in the present instance it was extremely probable; because, could I have found out the convent to which she was devoted, I should have left nothing untried to shake that vow which I was sure she never would have taken but by compulsion."

"And for heaven's sake,' said the widow, 'what is become of the child?" "She is well madam,'—answered the baronet.' "But where?' said the widow.' "At a school about twenty miles off,' replied Sir Sidney.' "You astonish me,' replied she. 'How did you preserve her?" "You shall hear,' said the baronet.'

"Having left respectable connections in Provence, I received intelligence from thence, that, very soon after I left France, Le Clerc quitted that part of the kingdom; but they never could hear to what place he retired. About two years afterwards—no longer apprehending any ill consequences from thelettre de cachet—I went again to Provence; but, however, had my journey for my pains.'

"Three other visits were made with no better success. Last year, however, I was more fortunate; for I had not been many days in the town before a nun of the order of St. Clare called at my friend's house, and demanded to speak to me.—She informed me that her order being one of those which are allowed to have intercourse at certain times with the world, she was desired by an abbess of another convent to let me know that my child would be delivered up to me.'

"You may believe I was charmed with this intelligence. I went with her to the convent, where I enquired very earnestly for Annette; but they confirmed every thing I had before heard. Nay I was even shewn her grave, which you may be assured I watered with my tears. In short, I came away, bringing with me her living model, who I sincerely believe was not out of my arms an hour at a time till my arrival in Warwickshire."

"Your doubts after this subsided, I suppose?' cried the widow.' "I cannot say they did,' returned the baronet: 'the little creature at this moment talks of Madame Le Clerc, whom she used to call mamma, in a great house, like a church. I therefore think my being shewn the grave was a religious fraud, invented to deter me from searching for her in vain.'

"She is certainly irrecoverably gone, and therefore dead to me. No, I shall never forget her, but let me not forget myself. Providence permitted this

separation perhaps to punish us for the crime of having impetuously gratified our wishes before they received the sanction of religion. It is a heavy punishment, but I will not incur a greater by repining."

Here Sir Sidney paused. Several parts of his narrative were recapitulated, and a variety of reflections grew out of them on the instability of human expectations. Sir Sidney apologized to Mrs. Malplaquet for having so freely opened his heart to her, and she sincerely assured him it had considerably augmented her esteem for him.

I shall not trouble the reader with his reply, or her rejoinder; but only say, that after a number of civil things had passed on both sides, he reminded her that he wanted a mother for his child, and she, without affectation, at length promised to undertake that task.

In a word, she shortly after became Lady Roebuck, to the great satisfaction of the baronet, the confusion of Standfast, and the universal joy of Castlewick.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

2. THE YOUNGER BROTHER.
BOOK II.
WHICH IS STILL MORE INTERESTING THAN THE FORMER.

2.1. CHAPTER I.

A CLEARING OF THE COURSE, PREPARATORY TO THE NEXT HEAT.

As a variety of circumstances—many of them very unexpectedly—will shortly present themselves to the reader, I think it necessary, as far as I may conceive it our mutual interest, to prepare him for their reception. Indeed it is my intention to adopt this practice frequently in the course of this history: not in such a way however as to anticipate any thing. Nay I will not promise that these explanations shall always be literally what they seem; for should I wish to cover or disguise any circumstance till the proper moment of making it known, I hope he will not be angry if I put him a little upon a false scent, by way of exercise, to get him an appetite to the real game, when at last he shall come up with it.

I beg however it may be understood that these false lights are not intended unnecessarily to lead him astray. I know this literary Will o' th' Wisp is often introduced; but I disclaim it as an unpardonable and impotent attempt at a spurious wit, which is really an affront to every intelligent reader. So much indeed do I hold such sort of trifling a thing that ought on no account to be excused, that I desire this work may be considered perfect only in proportion as every circumstance, even the most minute and apparently insignificant, tends to promote the general effect, and that effect holds out a laudable and improving moral.

We have heard very little of Standfast since the death of Major Malplaquet. This worthy wight, which will be very little doubted, laid strong siege to the widow; for, as I said before, she became, at her husband's decease, very wealthy. She, however, having nobody to please but herself, gave him such a reception as soon convinced him that his

hopes were like some of the projects of our late builders—fair, and elegantly finished in the estimate, but mere skeletons in practice.

Thus disappointed, he pocketed his trifle, as he called the three thousand pounds, and decamped; contenting himself with whispering that he might very easily have married the widow if he had thought proper, but knowing ones were not to be taken in: that women who would sip in the time of their first husbands, might taste when they got a second; and that perhaps, had he been fool enough to be caught, he might have doated too, and so have gotten a lusty chaplain to help him out, as somebody else did.

These gross jokes were faithfully retailed by Mr. Flush. Not however without a finish, that if the governor—meaning Standfast—had braced the drum of matrimony, a certain genteel dapper cock of an humble servant of his would not have feared coming in for a trevally, or so.

I have never told the reader that Mr. Standfast and Mr. Viney were very intimate friends; and perhaps he has divined why: if not, he will presently. The fact however was so. They had known each other for several years, and indeed upon Viney's being civilly dismissed from Lord Hazard's house, he consulted Standfast, whom he well knew to be a perfect Machiavel in domestic politics, upon the likeliest means to preserve his declining interest in that family.

The stream of Standfast's interest going, at that time, in another channel, nothing came of the negociation; but the major being dead, and he expelled from the presence of the widow, the two friends finding themselves in the same situation, and that the interest of one was the interest of both, they laid their heads together, and considered of the matter in every point of view. At length they agreed that nothing could so perfectly answer their several wishes as to get Standfast into Lord Hazard's family. Take their own words.

"It is such a damned good scheme,' said Standfast, 'that I envy you for thinking on it; but I am devlishly afraid it is not practicable."

"You are right,' cried Viney, 'let us tread sure. Go on warily: I know his foibles, that is one thing in our favour." "How is he for a first sight attack?' said Standfast.' "A very dove,' cried Viney; 'a greenhorn." "That is lucky,' said Standfast; 'we have nothing then to consider of but the introduction. Does he know any thing of me?" "Only by hearsay,' replied Viney, 'and now I recollect, what he did hear was to your advantage. Let me see what was it? Oh that the major, out of his great friendship, had left you considerably; and, in particular, had commanded his lady on his death bed to take you for her second husband."

"Ridiculous!" cried Standfast: 'the old fellow never spoke after the accident; and as to the widow, my dear Sir, she was too peery. No, no, nothing less than the title of my lady would content her."

"Odso,' said Viney, 'I wonder at it too. You used to be pretty sure of your mark when the doe was to be struck. Ha, ha, ha." "True, true,' cried Standfast, 'but this was so skittish, she would have taken more powder and shot, as well as patience, than I would spare upon any such doe, were she the transformation of a goddess. Hang her, let her go. She has enough to say against me; but, if she prattles, we must retaliate, right or wrong."

"That to be sure,' said Viney 'is but self-defence: but to our business. Lord Hazard is now seeking out a tutor for his favourite Charles, and I own I should like to gall him there. Hey my friend, am I not right? There I feel my sister's injuries." "Well hit faith,' cried Standfast.— 'They tell me it is a fine mettled boy, I will bring him up well."

"Not so fast,' interrupted Viney. 'In the first place, did he know of our intimacy, it would be an immoveable bar to our design; and then he is determined to receive none but an exemplary character."

"Me again!" exclaimed Standfast. I will give him examples of pleasure that might resuscitate old Anacreon; that is to say, behind his father's back: and lessons of morality, before his face, that might be heard and approved by listening angels."

"But still our intimacy,' said Viney.' "We must get over that,' replied Standfast. 'Let me see—I have it—can't I introduce myself to some family in town?—or make my court to any relation of the wife? Zounds, now I recollect, there is a capital house in the city—Ingot, the wire-drawer—where they make me very welcome. Lord Hazard occasionally banks there. If I can but get recommended to preach two or three charity sermons, and afterwards invited to dine with the stewards, the business is done. I am sure Mr. Ingot is under obligations enow to me; for I so did up his elder brother, by making him genteel, that, in consequence of two or three genteel faux pas, he at last genteelly finished himself, by which this remaining brother got to be head of the firm: and so you see, Viney, one good turn deserves another." "True, true,' said Viney.'

So said, so done. Standfast left a friend to officiate for him at Little Hockley, and repaired to town, where he so well set his engines to work, that, in six months, he not only got introduced to Lord Hazard, but contrived so to sustain the several essays made on his disposition and abilities, that he issued from that ordeal through which the reader may remember my lord was determined his son's tutor should pass so perfect, as to fix himself securely in that nobleman's good opinion; and indeed—which I should not think it necessary to set down, but by way of regularity—Mr. Standfast was the very gentleman introduced to Lady Hazard in the fourth chapter of the first book, in quality of tutor to her son.

If the reader should wonder how it came to pass that Lord Hazard did not know the irregularities of Standfast, especially as one was curate of Little Hockley, and the other landlord, I must inform him that his lordship had never visited his estate in Warwickshire but once after his second marriage, but repaired to a villa about twenty miles from London, which he bought soon after he came of age. Indeed, as soon as he determined to give over his excesses, Little Hockley was the last place upon earth he wished to think of. His rents were punctually remitted, and this was all he ever would hear upon the subject.

Neither his reformation, however, nor this caution altered his character in the opinion of the villagers; for as the sons and daughters of Little

Hockley were many of them of his getting, and the rest very ambitious to be thought so, they never dreamt that he had any virtues, but remembered his vices only, glorying in them, and speaking of them in so familiar and shameless a manner, as if every meal they tasted was the sweeter for being garnished with the bread of dishonour.

I will not suppose my reader to be so inexperienced as to think that Standfast's views were merely confined to his intention of becoming the tutor of Charles; nor, on the other hand, will I believe him so sagacious as to discover what they really were.—We can scarcely credit that a man of this worthy clergyman's consummate experience in human traffic had not a material point to carry, especially now he was in partnership with Viney. If it was so it will certainly come in its proper place, which, unless I had a wish—which I really have not—to destroy the reader's pleasure, cannot possibly be here.

Having fixed Mr. Standfast in the family of Lord Hazard, we will now speak of Mr. Flush. That valiant thumper of parchment having received a handsome sum and a long lesson from his quondam master, was transferred, through Viney, to the original Lady Hazard, now reduced to Mrs. O'Shocknesy, and by her again transferred to her son, at college.

I shall also say that Mrs. O'Shocknesy was present at one or two of the latter consultations relative to the grand business; nor indeed was Flush absolutely left out. It was, on the contrary, found necessary to let him partially into the matter; for said he, very archly, "If you don't let me into the maxim of the thing, how the devil shall I be able to move your figures for you?"

A letter from Flush to Standfast, after he had been six months at Eton, shall finish this chapter.—I shall give it the reader in his own words.

TO HIS HONOUR THE REV. STEPHEN STANDFAST, ESQ.

GOVERNOR,

The young one begins to be up to most things but his book; and yet, lord love you, give him but a tippling gig and an arm full of red and white, and such crackers as I and your honour could wind him about our fingers as easily as a bunch of slangs. I gave my soft master, t'other day, a trifling bit of a rap about the country ken, but Neddy seems all to go with the old Nan. Howsomdever, I ben't one of them that's easily revulsed: if he won't go by an exercise, I must beat up a charge. See ony puss poing ony gain poing, as we say abroad. Oh revawr, my shire mater,

Yours tell death, K. FLUSH.

Notey beney. Whatever gait you morrice, take the advice of a fool, and never think any more of ploughing with the heffer.

Generals have been known to settle with their aid de camps a kind of characters so unintelligible to any but themselves, that should information fall into the enemy's hand, no ill consequence could ensue. One would think Standfast and Flush had made this same agreement. In truth, did I believe the reader could make Kiddy's letter into English, I should not have inserted it. As it is, I shall leave it, by way of aenigma, which he may either stay and solve, or go on to the next chapter, and so leave the explanation of that and every thing else to what I may conceive the proper season for it.

I would nevertheless have that, as well as many other particulars in this chapter, carefully attended to. Gangrenes begin by a small spot, and the egg of a crocodile has as inoffensive an appearance as that of a goose.

2.2. CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH THE GAME BEGINS.

Mr. STANDFAST no sooner sat down in Lord Hazard's family than, like a spy in an enemy's camp, he began to reconnoitre its situation, strength, and disposition; to examine whether the body was well united, whether there were any rotten members, whether centinels dared to sleep on their posts, whether the commanding officer was most loved or feared—In short, to use his own words—though I would not have the reader infer from thence that he was a cobler in his business—he had the length of every foot in the family.

Not however to be outdone in courtesy, there was not one among them that had not something to say in his favour. My Lord declared he was a man of strong intellects and sound erudition. He did not think him a saint, nor wish him to be one. Solid argument, for ought he could see, might as well be discussed over a glass as a lamp, and as to gaiety and carelessness, he dreaded nothing from them, for they could harbour no ill designs. He was a little surprised at hearing from Standfast that he had been frequently in his life taken in, but it gave him an opportunity of exercising his sagacity by remarking that those who mix most with the world, know least of it:—as it was said of Lord ANSON, after he had been a prey to sharpers, that he had been over the world, but never in it. Upon the whole, he thought Mr. Standfast a fair, undesigning man, and both a proper tutor for his son, and companion for himself.

Lady Hazard was no less prepossessed in favour of the tutor. She looked upon him as an unaffected cheerful man, perfectly well bred; and, as she saw his being in the house gave her lord particular satisfaction, really felicitated herself upon this acquisition to the family.

The butler liked him; for though he could well distinguish the different qualities of the wine, yet he never made use of his knowledge to a poor servant's disadvantage. In short, there was not a person in the family whose good opinion he had not been anxious to procure, and one would

have thought with more care and industry than belonged to such a trifle; for he so succeeded, that he was allowed to be a true servant's friend.

Mr. Standfast had certainly no Iago to egg him on. He knew however, as well as that subtle gentleman himself, that trifles light as air in cases of art are of great use, and he doubted not but they would as much conduce to answer the purposes of one kind of hypocrisy as another.

As to the pupil, he loved Standfast like a father, and took instructions from him full as fast as the other could give it, which, between ourselves, not a little embarrassed the tutor, who, begging Lord Hazard's pardon, was not so profound a scholar as that kind patron, in his liberal warmth, had represented him.

Standfast, feeling this deficiency, pressed his lordship to carry his scheme into execution, of having Charles taught music and painting: thinking, and very rightly, that relieved by those avocations, he should be able to make his stock of learning last as long as he might have occasion for it.

Having worked his materials into a proper temper, Mr. Standfast now began to think of moulding them to his different purposes, but this required the nicest care and circumspection. My Lord plumed himself upon being no novice, and Lady Hazard's amiable heart and unconquerable duty barred all possibility of flattering the most distant hopes, had there been any such conceived, of staggering her virtue, or even her prudence.

Something Mr. Standfast was certainly hatching up, and while it was in contemplation, a most singular circumstance happened, which that gentleman did not fail to lay up as food for his project.

Lord and Lady Hazard were one night in a side box at the playhouse, where, behind them, sat a lady and two gentlemen, one of whom the fair one often called brother, and the other Sir Daniel. At the end of the amusement, while they were waiting for their carriage, one of these gentlemen, seeing a person go out of the opposite box, exclaimed, "there he goes, and by God I'll be after him." Immediately upon this he darted out of the box, followed by the other, who warmly entreated him not to be

precipitate. Almost at the same moment the lady shrieked out "Good God there will be murder," and immediately fainted away.

Neither the good offices of Lord Hazard nor his lady were wanting to restore her, which desirable event they at length happily achieved. The lady now begged for heaven's sake he would have the goodness to conduct her to her coach, which entreaty. Lady Hazard seconded with all her eloquence.—Upon this the lady's footman from the lobby summoned the coach to the door, and my lord having very politely seen her into it, returned with an intention to join Lady Hazard. In his way he encountered one of the gentlemen he had seen in the box, who accosted him with "I must thank you Sir for the civility you have done me." "Sir,' answered Lord Hazard, with great politeness, 'if you mean in respect to any attention shewn to the lady, it was but my duty, and I am already thanked." "I dare say you are,' replied the other, 'but that won't go down with me: In short, you are a scoundrel, and I insist upon deciding the matter immediately: it can be done in this tavern.'—' "Sir,' said Lord Hazard, very spiritedly, 'I do not think myself obliged to answer so unprovoked and rude an assault, but as every thing in your appearance, except this insult, calls you gentleman, I attend you Sir."

At this moment Standfast, who had been at the other theatre, and had, by promise, returned to go home with Lord Hazard, came up, and boldly enquired who it was that dared to insult that nobleman?—upon which, a crowd having gathered about, the cry was "settle it in the tavern—settle it in the tavern." There they now adjourned, but not before Lord Hazard had dispatched Standfast to his lady, to request that she would stay, for that he should be immediately with her.

When they were come to the place of explanation, Lord Hazard was more at a loss than ever.—The gentleman who had insulted him, brought against him a direct accusation of carrying on a clandestine correspondence with his sister, which he said was doubly dishonourable, as she was at the point of marriage to a worthy young baronet.

This charge was parried by a declaration that, till the present evening, the lord had never seen the lady; but the brother treated this excuse with

contempt, and was for fighting it out instantly, mixing his invectives with some insinuations about a masquerade. The company, however, opposed his warmth; and the clamour was so various and violent, that nothing distinctly could be understood. It was therefore determined, as with one voice, that the affair should not then be decided; but, as it seemed a matter of delicacy, the disputants should privately exchange addresses, and meet, with each a friend, to talk the business over in the morning. This was immediately complied with, and now arrived Standfast, with news that Lady Hazard had quitted the boxes, and he supposed was gone home.

Lord Hazard and Standfast betook themselves to a hackney coach, in which, on their way, the latter was made acquainted, as far as my lord knew it, with this mysterious business. Standfast said it must have originated in some mistake, which he supposed would be cleared up on the morrow; for, added he, "you never saw the lady before, did you my lord?" "Never in my life,' said Lord Hazard.' "Nay,' said Standfast, 'if you had, the fellow need not have made such a piece of work about it, for I am very much mistaken or she is one of the right sort; and very likely the brother is only a led knight, employed to bully in her cause; therefore, were I your lordship, I would take care, if I must be forced into a duel, it should be with a gentleman."

My Lord declared that he most sincerely believed the lady was a woman of honour; for, said he, "I never saw more unaffected signs of modesty. As to the brother, I think with you, that the whole matter will prove a mistake, and the affair blow over."

"You know, my lord,' cried Standfast, 'I always yield to you in matters of experience; however, we shall see, for I hope I am to have the honour of accompanying your lordship to-morrow."

"Why I was thinking so too,' said my lord, 'but as the gentleman may unfortunately happen to call in my absence, and as it would be a kind of tacit reflection on my honour if he should go away unsatisfied, I will get you to stay and receive him. I hope, however to prevent his coming; for I shall be out very early, to convince him that I am as anxious to bring

this business to a finish as himself. As to a second, you know, if it should be necessary, I can take our friend Colonel Tiltly."

They now arrived at Lord Hazard's house, where they found my lady, who informed them that having stayed till there was no soul in the theatre but herself, she prevailed on the box-keeper to find her servants, and see her to her coach: "But, my lord,' said she, 'what could possibly detain you?"

Lord Hazard, who had never considered that this question would certainly be asked him, was totally unprepared to answer it. After some hesitation, however, he faultered out, in great apparent confusion, "Nay not the lady, I assure you my love."

"I did not know but she might have had another fit,' said Lady Hazard: 'in that case it would have been inhumanity to have left her."

"Why if it had been so,' replied my lord, 'where would have been the great crime in it?"

"Crime!" returned her ladyship, 'I had no idea of any such thing. Charity is no crime my lord: but really your looks accuse you more than I do. I appeal to any body, if I was a jealous wife, whether a stander-by would blame me if I should be suspicious at this moment?"

"Well then upon my honour madam,' said Lord Hazard, 'I only saw the lady to her coach, and was returning to you, but a particular business, which happened very unexpectedly, prevented me. This Mr. Standfast knows to be truth."

Standfast was here beginning a very handsome excuse for his friend, when the lady stopt him, and addressing herself to my lord, said, "My dear, if you had not made this last declaration, if your friend here had not seconded you, if I had actually been told that you went home with the lady, that she was an old acquaintance of yours, and that she came into the box by your appointment, I should never have mentioned the subject again;—therefore, I beg my lord I may not hear of it from you."

"This is ridiculous,' said his lordship, 'you conjure up a parcel of imaginary stuff, and then argue upon it as if it really existed."

"God forbid it ever should exist,' said the lady, 'I only mention it to shew, if it really did, what a good wife I should be."

Supper was now brought in, and the subject of course dropt.

The three persons concerned in it, however, did not so easily dismiss it from their thoughts as they had from their tongues. They neither eat much supper, nor enjoyed much rest; and, what appears very extraordinary, Standfast, who one should think was least concerned, ruminated on it the most.

Perhaps the catastrophe of this adventure may bring out what his cogitations were. Those of Lord and Lady Hazard may be very easily guessed. I cannot help, however, remarking that this night was the first they ever slept together without speaking to each other, nor did my lord ever before leave his lady so early, or so abruptly.

If the reader wishes the matter to clear up, and that a reconciliation should take place, it is more than Mr. Standfast did, who very archly remarked, as he came down stairs in the morning, that he must be a bungling physician indeed who did not know how to irritate as well as to cure.

2.3. CHAPTER III.

A CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SPORT.

LADY Hazard having been told by my lord's gentleman that her husband was gone out, and had left word he should not return perhaps till dinner, sat down to breakfast with Mr. Standfast and her son Charles, which meal, however, was very short; for the tutor appeared exceedingly anxious to introduce his pupil to some new author, with whom the young gentleman seemed as evidently to wish himself acquainted. They therefore retired to the library, and left the lady to herself, who, for some minutes afterwards, continued in a profound reverie, not knowing what to make of her husband's having gone out so unprecedentedly; for as to the adventure of the preceding night, she had pretty well made up her mind on it.

There was not much time to reflect on that or any thing else before the door opened, and a person walked into the room, whom Lady Hazard knew immediately for the very same Sir Daniel whom she had seen at the playhouse. She was for a moment astonished, but, recollecting herself, she got up, and was making her way towards the bell, when the gentleman, who, for some reason or other, did not seem to approve of her taking that step, got the start of her, and disputed the pass.

"No, no, my dear madam,' said he, 'that cannot be; you must suffer me to prevent you. Besides, what would your servants say, if you called them about you?"

"Say Sir!" answered the lady, with a look of ineffable disdain, 'one of them was witness to your ruffian-like behaviour last night, and would want no order from me to treat you as you merit—which chastisement if you do not wish to provoke, you will begone instantly."

"Not till you have granted my pardon,' said he. 'By heaven this visit, which I have managed to a miracle, was meant only as an atonement for my last night's offence. 'Twas madness—liquor—any thing you will."

"Dare not Sir,' said the lady, 'to affront my ears with your gross insolence." "Nay then,' cried he, 'there is but a moment, and by heaven I will not lose it. Charming creature look with pity on me!" "What do you mean!" exclaimed Lady Hazard. 'Nay unhand me, or I'll raise the house!" "Never,' cried the ravisher; 'this minute shall seal my happiness." "Heavens!" cried the lady, 'shall I be treated thus!—is there no one near me!"

"Yes madam,' cried Standfast, who entered the room, 'there is one near you, and ever ready thus to treat the villain who shall dare to wrong such beauty and innocence." So saying, he flew at the ravisher as if he would have throttled him. Then pausing:— "But hold,' said he, 'my regard to Lady Hazard's character protects you in this house:—Tell me who you are, and expect me in half an hour at the Smyrna."

"I am called,' said the other, 'Sir Daniel Dog-bolt, and will not fail you may be assured. As to you madam,' said he, 'I sincerely regret that I have given you a moment's pain. What a wretch I am—last night—Oh that it had been prosperous, or that I could blot it from my memory!"

Here he left the room, and Mr. Standfast ringing the bell, a servant presently made his appearance, who asking if he was wanted, was told only to see the gentleman out; to which he answered that John had opened the door, and the gentleman offered him half a guinea, but he would not take it. "Very well,' said Standfast, 'take away the things;" which while the servant was doing, he whispered to Lady Hazard to compose herself:—for she was on a sofa, and seemed indeed extremely flurried.

When the servant was gone out of the room, Standfast advanced to Lady Hazard, and said, "I should be extremely unhappy if, zealous in your ladyship's cause, I have done any thing in this business contrary to your wishes."

"Good God!" cried the lady, 'how can you have such an idea, Mr. Standfast? A ruffian assaulted me, and you came to my assistance. Can such conduct demand any thing less from me than the warmest thanks."

"Madam I beg your pardon,' said Standfast, 'but it has been a strange business altogether. I had for one moment—perhaps for which I ought never to be forgiven—forgot the unsullied purity of Lady Hazard; and when I heard from the gentleman that insinuation concerning last night—but it is impossible—I see it—he must be a villain. I will answer with my life that if ever a heart was the mansion of innocence, yours is."

"I thank you for your opinion sir,' said the lady, 'I hope I deserve it. As to last night, I will not make a mystery of it now, though I thought I had sufficient reason for it then. After my lord left me, this bold man came back to the box, and seeing me alone, began to enquire what was become of the lady? I told him that, at my desire, my lord had conducted her to her coach; upon which he said he would remain to thank him for his civility, as well as to protect me from any insult.—He behaved very properly at first, but, as the house thinned, his conversation took quite a different turn. He first said he wondered my lord did not return; then said he was surely gone home with the lady; and at last assured me that, to his knowledge, she was an old acquaintance of his. At length he ventured at some rude freedoms, but at that moment John came to ask me if he should draw off the coach, and seeing what passed, did not hesitate to treat the ruffian pretty severely for his insolence."

"Blessings on him for it,' cried Standfast, 'as well as for refusing the money just now; I never thought it of him I confess before; but I see he is a noble fellow:—but go on madam."

"I suffered myself,' said Lady Hazard, 'to be conducted by my servant and the box-keeper to my coach, and came home, when having cautioned John never to open his lips on the subject, I took the resolution of keeping it from my husband's knowledge, for fear of his resentment."

"Nothing could be more commendable certainly,' said Standfast. 'Insufferable impudence; in a public place too, a fellow you had never seen before I suppose. And then to have recourse to that stale trick of accusing my lord!—so worthy a character; so good a husband!"

"Heaven forbid I should think him otherwise,' said the lady; 'but how came this audacious man here? Which of the servants could shew him into this apartment?"

"Oh I can account for that,' said Standfast.—' "Can you sir,' said the lady.' "That is to say,' answered the tutor, 'I think I can guess. You know my lord entrusted me with the business of last night, upon which, between ourselves, he is gone out this morning." "Well, and what then?' said the lady, a little peevishly.' "What then,' cried Standfast, 'really it is so awkward a business to answer, you had better not enquire about it; for, upon my word, I am not at liberty to tell you."

"This is the strangest mystery,' said the lady—'Surely if you know any thing of the matter, you can explain to me how this man came here?"

"Why very true,' returned Standfast, 'as far as it relates to that madam, I can have no objection. My lord, upon going out this morning, desired me to receive every person who should call, and I suppose, as I had not left the breakfast room five minutes when this pretty gentleman was shewn up here—"

"But still that is very extraordinary,' said the lady, 'for no servant announced him."

"Why then certainly he must have been previously shewn into the library,' said Standfast, while Charles and I were in the little study Suppose I ring to know: but, upon second thoughts, I had better not. One servant already has been witness of—but, however, I will quiet him."

"I cannot think of it,' said the lady, 'and whatever may be the consequence, rather than my conduct should appear so equivocal, I am resolved to acquaint my lord with every thing, just as it has fallen out."

"You would not surely be so mad,' cried Standfast. 'He has quite enough upon his hands about it already: I tremble for him at this moment.'—' "Good God,' said the lady, 'one would think you wanted to drive me distracted. Why tremble for him? What has he upon his hands?"

"I beg your pardon madam, returned Standfast; my anxiety, my warmth—Oh that I could dissemble like other men: this absurd frankness of mine is always leading me into scrapes."

"Mr. Standfast,' said the lady, very earnestly, 'if you have any thing to tell me that regards my happiness—for I now begin to suspect you have—do not keep me in this dreadful suspence: if, on the contrary, my husband has entrusted you with any thing, and enjoined you not to inform me, convince him of your friendship, by shewing you are worthy of his confidence."

"Good heaven!" said Standfast, 'where is there such another woman to be found?—of such nice prudence!—such delicate honour! What my lord entrusted me with, madam, he certainly left to my own discretion. However, as one would think it implied a wish to conceal every thing from you— and yet a breach of confidence where any thing so valuable as your peace of mind is concerned would—" "By no means,' interrupted the lady; 'nothing could induce you to forgive yourself.'—' "But, my dear madam,' cried Standfast, finding her curiosity so tardy, 'the thing cannot remain a secret, the newspapers will be full of it." "Well Sir,' cried the lady, 'it will then be time enough to tell me what I now plainly see will make me wretched whenever I know it." "I may not live perhaps till then madam,' said Standfast.' "Not live!" said Lady Hazard; 'what do you mean?" "Surely you forget my appointment,' said Standfast, 'with the gentleman at the Smyrna." "You will not be so mad,' cried she.' "How!" returned Standfast, 'my honour is engaged, and in your cause. Adieu, and if I should fall, do me the justice to reflect that my last moments were spent in your service."

So saying, he ran precipitately down stairs, regardless of Lady Hazard, who several times called after him to return. She now summoned John into her presence, told him to go immediately to the Smyrna coffee-house, and desire, in her name, that Mr. Standfast would come back, and that if he saw any mischief going on, to call any assistance he could to prevent it.

John was scarcely out of sight when Lady Hazard reflected what a strange errand she had sent him on, and was about to ring the bell to dispatch another servant after him, when she recollected this would be only making bad worse.

Thus situated, it is impossible to describe what she felt. Anger for my lord—compassion for Standfast—fear for herself, intruded all at once on her gentle mind; and yet she knew not why.

In the midst of this contention she sought for her son, with a view in his conversation to alleviate her uneasiness, when going into the library the first object that struck her was Lord Hazard, who had gone there in search of Standfast. Nothing could equal their mutual surprise; out of which my lord first recovering himself, said, "So madam, I am come home you see." "Yes,' said the lady, 'and before dinner too." "Well,' cried my lord, 'are you not obliged to me?" "My Lord,' said Lady Hazard, 'I shall never think myself obliged to you for any conduct of which I don't know the motive." "Pshaw!" cried my lord, 'you know I hate discontent." "And I dissimulation,' said the lady."

They were going on in this manner when Charles came into the room with a book. "Oh madam,' said he, 'are you here? Where is Mr. Standfast? I came to shew him the prettiest thing I ever met with in my life. Shall I read it my lord?"

"I am in no reading mood at present,' said Lord Hazard.' "Read it to me, my love,' answered the lady.'

Charles answered, with strong indications of surprise at the looks of his parents, "I would read it to you, but it is in Greek; however, I will tell you the sense of it. It is an allegorical allusion to the polity of either a kingdom or a family, and given in the way of advice by a sage to a king, who had quarrelled with his subjects.'

"There was a river,' says the author, 'that delighted to expand its smooth surface to the beams of the sun. Its banks were embossed with verdure, it nourished myriads of scaly inhabitants, and it glided through the meadows with a placid and majestic grandeur, to the surprise and delight

of every beholder. An unexpected cataract, from a neighbouring mountain, on a sudden dimmed its lustre and ruffled its tranquillity; till, hurried by the overbearing conflux, it forced itself into two distinct channels:—there murmuring, it bemoaned its sad and vagrant fate. At last, each stream, as if by joint consent, burst the banks which separated them, and they met together in affectionate reconcilement, no more to part till divided by the ocean.'

"Thus,' says our author, 'after intestine broils, may every kingdom or family, endeared by love and loyalty, unite, and never separate till received into the bosom of fate."

2.4. CHAPTER IV.

MATTER OF THE SAME COMPLEXION.

CHARLES having finished his allegory, asked his parents how they liked it? Lord Hazard said he believed there were very few kingdoms or families either that were not subject to such cataracts.—Charles answered it must then be mismanagement in not properly guarding against them.

"You are right my dear,' said his mother, 'but what can be done with inundations that force their way like miners in a town, and do mischief in proportion as their source is concealed."

Perhaps my lord took this as something meant at him, for looking very earnestly at his lady, he said "you are wonderfully sagacious madam;" and then turning to his son, asked what he had done with Mr. Standfast.

Here John entered the library, saying, "Madam, I went as your ladyship ordered me, but they were gone." "Oh,' said the lady in great apparent confusion, 'ta—'tis—very well John—and when does her ladyship—" "Ladyship!" answered John, first looking at Lord Hazard, and then at his lady.—' "But you say they were gone,' returned the lady.' "Well, tell Frill I am going to my dressing room." "Yes, my lady,' said John, and retired.' "Lord,' continued Lady Hazard, 'what could I be thinking about?" "What indeed,' said my lord. 'Something, one would imagine, not altogether so ingenuous, by your evident embarrassment." "My embarrassment!" answered she, recollecting herself, and then gathering strength from the consciousness of her integrity, 'no my lord, there is nothing disingenuous in me, as you shall very easily be convinced, when you have shewn me all that passes in your own heart." So saying she left the room.

"In my heart,' muttered my lord. 'Why zounds,"—but seeing Charles he restrained himself. Then endeavouring to give the matter a different turn, said, with a forced smile, "I suppose your mother is angry at my

going out to breakfast this morning. She would be prudent however not to threaten me."

Here Mr. Standfast came into the room, and the moment my lord saw him, he exclaimed "here I am sound." "And safe I hope my lord,' said Standfast.' "I don't know that,' answered the patron; 'but come with me, I have a great deal to tell you."

The lord and the tutor now walked out of the room, and Charles returned to his study; not however without telling Mr. Standfast he would not allow him to play truant in that manner.

The lord told his friend, as soon as they were in a room by themselves, that not finding Colonel Tiltly at home, he had been to Mr. Snaffle's house alone, where he was surprised to find that gentleman had been gone out about an hour, it being then pretty early; "and as I knew,' continued my lord, 'that if he came you would give him a proper answer, I sat down to wait his return. I had scarcely been there five minutes before his sister came in. Seeing a stranger, as she imagined, she would have retired, but presently recollecting me, she paid me some well-bred acknowledgments for the attention I had the pleasure of paying her last night. I answered this civility, and gave my visit a turn of enquiring after her health; complimenting her, at the same time, on the little prejudice her fears had done her complexion. She lamented her brother was not at home, but added that she expected him every minute, and begged I would take breakfast."

"Though I knew my hot-headed gentleman would only be still more exasperated at finding me tete a tete with his sister, I resolved to accept her invitation; nor do I repent of my resolution: for I confess to you I never met with a woman more unaffectedly captivating. You know Standfast I like a sincere candid openness of behaviour, and it was never more strongly manifested than in the sweet manner of this lovely young creature.'

"In the course of our conversation on the adventure of yesterday evening, I learnt the real cause of that strange medley of circumstances which

introduced a coolness for the first time between my wife and me, gave me a fresh proof of thy kind attachment—here Standfast bowed—and brought me in company with the most lovely woman my eyes ever beheld.'

"I was astonished to find myself a great deal more concerned in this business than I imagined, though poor thing she little knew it, but told me the matter as if to an indifferent person; imagining my conduct last night demanded from her every explanation."

"You must know this brother of hers is rigidly tenacious of his sister's honour, for he lies under very great obligations to this baronet, who is shortly to be married to her; and she, on her side, partakes so strongly of his generosity, that she consents to give her hand to a man she cannot love, to pay her brother's debt of gratitude."

"She told you all this, did she my lord?' said Sandfast.'

"Oh yes,' answered my lord; 'she has none of that sordid narrowness of mind, the result of vulgar sentiments and mean education. She is all candour and frankness. Oh you may see in a moment she has maintained a high rank in society.'

"Well, you have been told that the brother very abruptly left his sister and her intended husband in the box, and sallied after a gentleman whom he saw coming out on the opposite side. This man it seems paid some attention to this sweet girl, and was insulting enough, knowing their circumstances, to propose a settlement. This the brother resented, and a duel was the consequence: but no alarming issue came of it; for after a mutual discharge of pistols, the seconds interfered, and, upon a promise given by this gentleman, that he would never more presume to address Miss Snaffle, all anger subsided. Last week, however, at the masquerade, if you recollect, you and I paid particular attention to a lovely figure in the dress of a circassian, and to confess the truth, while you were gone to see after our party, I made no scruple to be very free with her; seeing her entirely alone, and believing her to be one of the frail sisterhood. She says indeed I took a number of indecent liberties;

and faith the fact might be so, for we had been drinking a great deal of champaigne. All this Miss Snaffle—for you have seen she was the circassian—related to her brother, when he returned from seeing after their carriage."

"The brother immediately sought after me, directed by the description of my dress, all over the rooms, and I dare say we should have had a tilting bout that evening, had I not, upon joining you, yielded to your pressing entreaty to return home.'

"Not finding me, they had nothing now for it but conjecture who it could be that had so publicly insulted the lady. The suspicion naturally lighted on the gentleman who had before affronted her, by his offer of a settlement. Mr. Snaffle therefore immediately determined upon an explanation with him whenever they should meet. The first time he saw him was last night at the play, where he joined him in that sudden manner you have heard of, and they went together into the Shakespear. Here a very singular explanation took place: the gentleman informed Mr. Snaffle that he had religiously adhered to the promise made at the conclusion of their quarrel; that however he was entirely devoted to the lady, and meant to make her honourable proposals, the moment he should, by the death of a very near relation, be released from the restraint which, till that event happened, would prevent his having so much happiness; that being nevertheless unalterably attached to her, he determined, as far as he decently could, to watch her inclinations, and being that evening at the masquerade, and noticing the particular conduct of a gentleman there—meaning me—had the curiosity to enquire who that gentleman was; in which he so well succeeded that I was described as a reformed rake, who had married after ruining a whole village.'

"Thus you see, Mr. Snaffle being told all these particulars, no wonder he should accost me in the extraordinary manner he did, or that I should find it necessary to make the handsomest apology for my conduct, which I was on the point of doing, when I considered how awkward it would be to announce myself. Besides, it would then have been necessary to inform the lady of the quarrel, which it was easy to see had been carefully

concealed from her. And again, I did not know whether an apology to her might satisfy her brother. Besides, to be ingenuous, if I had made a concession, and taken my leave, it was possible I might never see her again. All these considerations determined me still to conceal myself; so, after a thousand acknowledgments for her condescension, I left a message for the brother, and hastened home to consult thee."

"Well my lord,' said Standfast, 'I have heard you to an end, and once more I caution you not to be imposed upon. In the first place it is a very curious thing that the lady this morning should relate her love, her poverty, and her gratitude, and the Lord knows what, to a gentleman she never saw till last night. It puts me too much in mind of one of the histories of those unfortunate poor devils who always begin with—I was a clergyman's daughter."

"Faith,' said my lord, scarcely attending to Standfast, 'there was one thing escaped her that charmed me. Said she—I wish I had not gone to that masquerade, or else that this lord was not married, and a rake."

"Good God,' cried Standfast, 'cannot you see it yet? She knew you, and said this on purpose. She thought it would hit, and so it has. Such a certain shot, so well directed: but surely, my lord, it was too gross, too palpable, too little disguised to pass on you?"

"Rather say,' returned my lord, 'too ingenuous to contain the least shadow of art. Besides, every thing around the place wears the air of sober elegance. A handsome house—" "Hired,' said the tutor, 'for the purpose of gulling your lordship."

"I cannot conceive,' said Lord Hazard, 'what makes you so warm in this business. You know the world I acknowledge, but give me leave to say I know it too, Mr. Standfast."

"Infinitely better,' said the parson, with an inward sneer, 'than I do, my lord, I am ready to grant: but still I am a by-stander, and as you appear to be playing pretty deep at this game, there may be no harm in giving you a caution not to be bubbled."

"I know thy friendship and anxiety,' cried my lord, 'but what is there to fear? She is a woman of honour, and if I was inclined to think of her, there is no chance for me. Besides, I give you my word it is not my intention ever to cause Lady Hazard a moment's uneasiness:—but surely a beautiful woman may be admired without any offence to a wife's virtue."

"There my lord,' said Standfast, 'is my hope: your heart is my sheet anchor: and upon that I trust with comfort for the safety of your honour."

"Enough,' said my lord, 'it shall never deceive thee, nor any one." "Thank you my lord,' said Standfast; 'I am completely satisfied: I will not even fear it can deceive itself. And now pray what sort of an apology do you mean to make to Mr. Snaffle?" "A full and entire one,' said my lord; 'he is entitled to it, and so is the lady. You and I will go together to-morrow morning, and I dare say we shall very easily laugh off the whole matter."

This being agreed on, the conversation turned on Lady Hazard. Standfast said he conceived there was some apology due to her. My lord did not think so. He saw in her conduct all the mysterious inquisitiveness of growing jealousy. It was the first time to be sure he had ever been disingenuous with her, but circumstances required it. He now began to perceive there might be occurrences which would admit of treating her with a sort of laudable duplicity; which indeed she ought to be thankful for:—but such was the restless and unsatisfied curiosity of wives, that he plainly saw she would infallibly construe it into coldness and neglect. However, he had seen many instances of resigned acquiescence in her duty, and therefore he doubted not but this business—the truth of which he was determined to keep a secret—though it might ruffle a little, yet it would not destroy their mutual tranquillity.

He thought it, nevertheless, incumbent on him to give the matter some hue of probability, the better to appease her at once. To do this he told her, as if casually, at dinner, that an affair of honour had called him out in the morning, but that fortunately every thing had terminated without bloodshed.

The reflection that her husband had escaped such a danger, bore down in Lady Hazard's mind all other considerations, and she was in a moment perfectly at ease. She chid him however for preferring a foolish punctilio of honour to her peace of mind, and his own personal safety; saying that his courage was too well established to need any such savage and unnecessary proof of it: and she wondered a brutal custom should so prevail, which, far from exhibiting any trait of true honour, or real spirit, was generally the refuge of sharping knaves, and the last resort of desperate cowards.

Standfast acquiesced in the justice of the remark, and Lord Hazard told her with a smile that, had he known she possessed so much spirit, he would have engaged her as his second.

A silent minute, or rather a silent quarter of an hour, here ensued, which would perhaps have lasted much longer had not the arrival of some company put an end to their different cogitations, the subject of which, if the reader will but think a little, by way of making one, it is not impossible but he may be able to guess.

As the conversation now took a mixed turn, and the general topics of ministers, puppet-shews, sermons, plays, sceptres, wash-balls, lottery tickets, loaded dice, lords, monkies, speakers, parrots, duchesses, and drabs, were alternately handled with such velocity and vociferation, that the parties themselves were all talkers, and no hearers.

I shall therefore content myself with barely mentioning that, while my lord was out of the room, Mr. Standfast asked Lady Hazard when he should have the honour of communicating the result of what sent him to the Smyrna.

The lady agreed to hear it the next morning, at which Standfast said, that then, and every other moment of his life, was perfectly at the devotion of her ladyship, even though it should be attended with far greater perils than those he had that day encountered:—so saying, he heaved a profound sigh, and joined the company.

What shall I say to the reader in this place? for so far from relieving him from that suspense into which I have so completely thrown him, it is certainly my intention to heighten it:—but, however, there is a remedy for such as are over impatient; for if the tenter-hooks on which I have set them prick too hard, they have nothing to do but dip a few pages forward, and they will find them as easy as a cushion.

2.5. CHAPTER V.

WHERE THE READER BEING A LITTLE RELIEVED FROM ONE EMBARRASSMENT WILL BE THROWN INTO ANOTHER.

No sooner had the complicated din of itinerant retailers opened the eyes, or rather the ears, of the servants—for they were yet only half awake—in that square where Lord Hazard resided, than that nobleman left the partner of his bed, to seek after Standfast, who was suddenly awoke by a servant from a nap into which he had fallen about half an hour before; for the pious preceptor had been exercising that portion of his religious duty called watching the greater part of the night.

In fact, the subject which occupied his thoughts was of so complicate and nice a kind, that he had been turning it in his mind with much care and attention; and after looking at it in every possible situation—rejecting this expedient, adopting that, and at last fairly satisfying himself as to the measures to be taken—he had fallen asleep just at the very instant when Phoebus awoke, and walked abroad to cheer the world, inspire poets, and engender animalculae: three employments, according to some philosophers equally material.

Mr. Standfast understanding that his patron required his presence, now only muttered those curses which he before had been thundering against the footman. In a few minutes he joined Lord Hazard, whom he found full of impatience and anxiety.

My lord said he wanted to have five minutes conversation with him previous to their intended business that morning; adding, that he must candidly confess he wished for a pretext for continuing his visits at Mr. Snaffle's, and that he could think of nothing but the sister.

"My lord,' said Standfast, 'I am sorry to see this. It can end but one way. Good God that this Syren should get such hold of you in a moment!—Why the most inexperienced of your adventures at Little Hockley was prudence to this."

He had scarcely spoken when Lady Hazard came abruptly into the room. Addressing herself to her husband, she said, "My lord, I know not how you will receive the over anxious solicitude of a wife, whose uniform study has been to administer to your wishes; but I am impelled, by an irresistable something, to entreat that the horrid coolness you have shewn me ever since that strange business at the playhouse, may be fully explained; may be done away: that so the tranquillity which reigned in this family, till that unhappy moment, and pointed us out as fit and worthy objects for imitation may be restored to us."

"I know not what you mean,' said my lord.—You are a charming woman; I doat on you:—therefore make yourself easy, and trust to the truth of my affection."

"Heaven forbid I should doubt it,' said the lady; 'but be assured the best affections are too often endangered by the slightest misunderstandings. I believe we have all three a great deal to confess to each other, and I came to encourage you both, by frankly acknowledging all I know and all I conjecture, relative to the most extraordinary and most unpleasant business I ever yet experienced; at the same time, my lord, let me say I have no idle curiosity to indulge, no whim to gratify, no foolish feminine fears that alarm me, not even the slightest want of confidence in your lordship's lavish love or firm fidelity;—I honestly and sacredly believe that nothing could shake either;—but, as an artful train of flattering concurrent circumstances might give them, strong as they are, some slight inclination to pause, I think it my duty to endeavour what I can, to sustain them, to hold them securely where they ought, and where I am sure they wish invariably to fix."

My lord paid his lady a very elegant, and I believe a very sincere compliment, on her intentions, attachment, affection, sense of duty, and right conception of that exquisite charm in a wife's conduct who is never officiously solicitous, but ever on the watch to please. He remarked however that the breakfast would interrupt nothing.

Here Standfast interfering, said, that at breakfast Charles would necessarily make one of the party, which he apprehended was not Lady

Hazard's wish; he therefore proposed to defer it till the evening, or some other time, which the lady peremptorily declared she could not consent to. Indeed she pressed so hard for a hearing that very morning, that Standfast, at the instance of my Lord Hazard, undertook to set his pupil a task in the library immediately after breakfast, when it was agreed that the conversation should be resumed.

Perhaps Mr. Standfast was glad of a moment's pause. He certainly betrayed evident symptoms of astonishment at the first part of Lady Hazard's harrangue, which, added to an affected indifference, and a forced sprightliness, would have conveyed to an uninterrupted by-stander, a trait or two of suspicion that the lady's conduct was not altogether agreeable to him: but we have already hinted that he never suffered long under perturbation of any kind. Thus, whatever inward sensations might produce the above effects, they certainly did not remain visible long enough to be noticed either by the lord or the lady; and with the assistance of summoning his pupil to breakfast, he had so rallied his spirits, that he appeared the most cheerful and unconcerned of the whole company.

It was far otherwise with my lord. He set it down for a certainty that his lady had, by some means, discovered all that had past, and divined all that was likely to come. Nevertheless, he felt no reluctance to review his intentions either in one light or the other; but certain nameless sensations, which he felt in spight of himself gave his behaviour an awkwardness which was apparent in proportion as he endeavoured to hide it.

Charles was no sooner informed by his father that he had some particular business with Mr. Standfast, and given his task, than he retired to the library, when the lady, after an apology much in the style of the former one, acquainted her husband with all she knew relative to this strange affair: not even omitting either the insult she had received the morning before, the spirited kindness of Standfast, or the message she had sent after him to the Smyrna; which last business clearly accounted for her consusion in the library when John came back; whom she also loaded with praises, in which Standfast joined, declaring, at the same time, that the

hiring of that worthy fellow was a new instance that Lord Hazard's knowledge of the world and judgment of mankind was superior to his, for that John had what he thought a forbidding countenance, which his lordship, however, with a penetration far beyond his, had construed into a sign of bluntness and plain dealing. "But madam,' said Standfast, 'I interrupt you."

The lady went on, saying that her husband's new and extraordinary conduct had first given her the alarm. In addition to this, a servant had been privy to the treatment she had received from the baronet at the theatre. Again, he who ought to have protected her was out of the way, when Mr. Standfast stept forward in her defence. In short, such concealments and such obligations were very repugnant to her delicacy, which she hoped his lordship, in this case, would conceive was not affected or overstrained. My lord, she added, was the proper person to reward the servant and thank Mr. Standfast, who, though a gentleman in years, and perfectly exemplary in his manners, was by no means a proper confident for her who thought it her first happiness to have no wish or thought concealed from her husband.

Lord Hazard passed some very high compliments on the frankness, kindness, and great propriety of his lady's declaration and conduct. He owned he thought the business of the baronet perfectly inexplicable; but these and all other considerations were swallowed up in the obligations he thought himself under to Standfast, who took all these compliments with the same composure as he would have received his salary, or any thing else which he conceived to be perfectly his own property.

His lordship desired this worthy friend, as he called him, to relate the issue of his meeting the baronet at the Smyrna; but Standfast remarked that the harvest of domestic tranquillity this discovery promised, belonged entirely to his lordship and the amiable Lady Hazard; that at best he was but a privileged gleaner, who saw, but envied not, that abundant happiness which kindly let fall as much comfort as he desired, and more, infinitely more than he deserved:—he therefore begged to come in his place. "Besides,' added he, 'totally ignorant as your lordship is of the motives of these people for stirring up all this mischief, your story cannot

but involve some awkwardness which my after explanation may relieve; for I fancy the baronet has made me more au fait to this business than either of you."

His lordship, taking this as a friendly hint of the tutor, to clear up any embarrassment that might arise in his narrative, consented to unfold. It is but truth to say that his relation was not so ingenuous as that of his lady had been; for he did not mention the cause of the quarrel, nor that it yet existed; but, on the contrary, said that the whole was a mistake, the brother having taken him for another person, who had, it seems, offered an insult to the sister, and that every thing was amicably made up. He sunk entirely the circumstance of his having seen Miss Snaffle the day before; he also forbore to touch on his intention of paying that lady a second visit; and indeed on any one point that could give the smallest reason for conjecture that the whole was any other than a matter of a common cursory kind, which, in proportion as it was mysterious, so it sunk to nothing, the mystery being cleared away. He was very much alive however to all those matters relative to Sir Daniel Dogbolt.—He hoped his friend would be able to clear them up: for, after all, he should not consider that part of the business at an end without a full and explicit satisfaction for the insult his wife had sustained in his absence.

"I am heartily sorry you were absent,' said Standfast. 'Proud as I was of chastising his insolence, it was certainly your right."

Lord Hazard acknowledged his obligations, and proceeded to finish his account of this business, in which, upon the whole, he so well succeeded, that Lady Hazard declared she was, except a little remaining curiosity, perfectly satisfied.

Now came the tutor's turn. He began with saying he had a much longer tale to tell than either of them, and that since he was not then bound by the painful duty which had hitherto punctiliously kept him from divulging it, he thought himself obliged openly and without reserve to declare all he knew on the subject. "But,' added he, 'I believe my lord they are too artful a set for us to place any reliance on what they tell us.

What I am going now to inform you, I forced from the pretty baronet—if he be one—who had the unparalleled insolence to insult this lady, for which—and I hope your lordship will not blame my too forward zeal, I had the honour of calling him to account.'

Standfast here received the compliments he had once more fished for, and then went on: not without first exclaiming "Heavens! why my lord a perfect stranger would have been entitled to the assistance I gave, much less her ladyship. A meer common exercise of humanity. Besides, the gentleman gave me very little trouble. He fences pretty well, but I soon disarmed him; and having his life in my power, I made use of this opportunity of extorting from him an account of himself and his associates. He said he had long secretly admired Lady Hazard, that he had tried many experiments to get an opportunity of disclosing his passion, but found none which had the smallest appearance of feasibility till about three weeks ago, at the masquerade, where you may remember we were in a very large party."

"Good God,' cried Lady Hazard, 'I recollect it. A man certainly did teaze me at the masquerade, but I took it for some drunken fool, and never gave the matter a second thought."

"He told me,' said Standfast, he first accosted your lordship, drew you away from your company, and introduced you to another, that he might have better opportunity to entertain her ladyship. His words were that he had found an impregnable fortress, and therefore, from that moment, determined to give up the attack; but accident introducing him into the same box at the playhouse, his wishes revived, and resolving to make use of the occasion that presented itself through Mr. Snaffle's quarrel with the gentleman in the opposite box, he dropt him in the crowd, and returned to Lady Hazard just as your lordship had gone to conduct Miss Snaffle to her coach. He confessed that, to ingratiate himself, he had told her ladyship several falsities, such as that you my lord had an intimacy with Miss Snaffle, that you were then gone home with her, all which we have already heard. In short, first making him answer many other questions, I gave him his life, and suffered him to leave me, after he had

protested in the most solemn manner that he would never dare to mention the name of this lady in future upon any account whatever.'

"Well, my lord, these are the facts: now hear my comments on them. This man is not a baronet, neither is he upon the point of marrying this young lady, nor are they any other than three sharpers, who have in some way or other a dark plot on the conjugal peace of your worthy lady and yourself. This Sir Daniel did draw you aside from your company, and introduced you to this very Miss Snaffle: with what design is another matter: but it is very extraordinary you should be left by this baronet with his intended wife, that he might the better introduce himself to Lady Hazard.—Nor am I mistaken as to the lady, for I heard a chair called in her name.'

"You cannot forget my lord that we at that time decided that she was a woman of no character. I remember your saying with great earnestness, Standfast, let us not pay Lady Hazard so ill a compliment as to speak to a creature of this stamp;—though she is under the same roof with her.'

"Well, my lord, can it be, after what I have said, that this is a woman of honour? that her brother is a man of the nicest feelings? and that Sir Daniel Dogbolt is on the point of marriage with this woman? No, my lord, it is, as I said, a plot against you; however, thank heaven, armed with a proper confidence in each other, you may despise it."

"Mr. Standfast has placed this matter in its true light,' said the lady. 'For my part, I am perfectly at ease, and I am sure my lord will thank me for waving all absurd delicacy, and coming to this declaration."

Here several suitable remarks were made, Mr. Standfast was loaded with thanks, and the most perfect harmony was restored. After this the lady retired to her dressing room, and left the two friends together.

They were no sooner alone than Lord Hazard began anew to compliment and thank Mr. Standfast. That gentleman assured his patron his thanks were more than he deserved; and indeed he spoke truth. However, no one upon earth could have bel eved his conduct to be any other than cordial zeal and sincere friendship; conformable to which appearances, he said he

would not leave his lordship till he had made him a firm promise not to see that woman any more, who he must now very plainly perceive was a suborned wretch, to assist in some vile plot against his domestic peace.

My lord did not hesitate to make this promise; for he was charmed with the angel-like conduct of his lady, and went so far as to say that, seeing the matter now in the same light with the tutor, he felt himself at ease with relation to Sir Daniel Dogbolt, as well as the rest. Standfast hearing this, and being told that his kindness should not go unremembered, went, with the greatest air of satisfaction to seek his pupil.

As the single articles in my account with the reader begin again to be pretty numerous, I shall now, for his satisfaction, add them up, and carry them over. To speak without metaphor, Mr. Standfast please to unmask.

The preceptor then had, in conjunction with Viney, concerted this whole scheme. The masquerade, the playhouse, the interview, and every other part of it, was as regularly digested as the trial of a felon before he comes to the bar at the Old Bailey. Mr. Viney had tutored the gentleman, and Mrs. O'Shocknesy had instructed the lady.

Standfast, however, who had contrived the whole plot, was totally unknown to any of the actors in it. His argument with Viney and Mrs. O'Shocknesy was, that as they enjoyed the utmost they ever could expect from Lord Hazard, they had no measures to keep with him; especially as ever so violent a rupture could not deprive either him of his living, or her of her annuity. On the contrary, that he, Standfast, might in a moment lose both his salary and his expectations, which were not trifles. He therefore stipulated not to be seen at all, but in their privy council; and instructions were particularly given to the under villains to be more cautious in deceiving him than any other of the family.

This master stroke could be worthy of no other than Standfast. To teach his tools to look upon him as their enemy, secured him from all possibility of detection; for he knew he might laugh at the resentment of Viney, even if he had any cause to suspect him of treachery: his own ipse dixit being always sufficient to overturn any thing of that kind with his

patron. Nay, notwithstanding this information, the reader is almost obliged to confess that he is innocent; for his conduct gives the lie direct even to what I have advanced of him. It is very true that we have seen him act the part of a disinterested friend, we have heard him counsel Lord Hazard to shun that very plot he himself had laid for him, and one would think he had so far succeeded against himself—if I may be allowed the expression—that these swindlers in love seem to be turned out of employ: the gentlemen to hunt other game at the hazard table, or perhaps on the highway, and the lady to ruin apprentices, or gull libidinous elders.

If the reader thinks thus of Mr. Standfast, he is not yet half acquainted with that consummate fabricator of domestic ruin. A simple intrigue, and the common incidental train of disquietude attending it, would not have been a luxury inexorable enough for him. In short, Mr. Standfast, put on your mask again; for we will not see your naked heart till we are prepared to pronounce, by a knowledge of the species of destruction it meditates—that in the round of human conception there is not so shocking a piece of deformity as a complete hypocrite.

2.6. CHAPTER VI.

SEVERAL LETTERS, MORE PLOT AND INTRIGUE, AND SOME OF IT FROM A VERY UNEXPECTED QUARTER.

THE day on which this eclaircissement took place was distinguished by the cheerfulness that sat on every countenance. Indeed so remarkable was the prevalent good humour, that Mr. Standfast was heartily joined by a great deal of company, who dined at my lord's, when he ventured an opinion that Hazard house had the only roof in town that could boast of a couple perfectly elegant and perfectly happy. I do not pretend to assert that this declaration was truth; I only say the company then present allowed it to be so.

My lord would not read a single letter—for many were that day brought him—lest it should give a tinge of dissatisfaction that might check the general hilarity. They were all ordered to be laid in the study, and it was agreed that he and Standfast should look them over the next morning.

The whole day being like a smooth sea, which looked the more beautiful for having been a little ruffled, we will glide over it, as too uniform for any striking remarks, and come to the next, which was a little more agitated.

As soon as breakfast was over, his lordship and Standfast, according to agreement, retired to examine the letters. These were seven in number, and as four of them in some degree relate to this history, I shall insert them, together with the remarks of their examiners. Indeed it was once in my head to have given this whole history through that vehicle, but I considered that making my personages retire to their closets before they disclosed their sentiments would have thrown a frigidity over the business; besides the unavoidable necessity of relating every thing two or three times over, and always partially. Besides I may introduce some characters who cannot write, and others who will not. Mr. Standfast, for instance, would not have been possessed of half the cunning I have given

him if any thing could have induced him to disclose his sentiments upon paper.

Upon reflection, therefore, I was determined not to follow a method, however fashionable, by which I must have made villains confide their vices, and young ladies their wishes—which, if they felt delicately, they would find difficult to express at all, much less in a letter—to their confidants and clerks of the roads.

All such matters considered, I have left these penny-post men in biography to themselves, contented to jog on an old road, where what the prospects want of trimming and regulation, will, I trust, be made up in simple and natural luxuriance. But to the letters under examination.

LETTER I.

TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD HAZARD.

MY LORD,

The letter I now send you is accompanied by one from your son, who is determined to chuse a guardian—being eighteen years of age—unless you intend to do him more justice.

You have withdrawn your protection from him, in favour of your darling Charles, whom the virtuous Mr. Standfast is training in the paths of honour.

I shall forbear to reflect on either him, you, your lady, or her offspring: it is enough that I know you all. I only ask at present—which will determine to whom my son shall look in future as a protector—that you will make over to me that part of the estate in Warwickshire which includes the mansion, and the farm contiguous to it; in which case neither Zekiel nor I shall be further troublesome to you: but contentedly make his two hundred a year and my three serve us till that happy

moment when it shall please fate to unite your lordly bones to the skins of your ancestors.

I am, &c. GERTRUDE O'SHOCKNESY.

Standfast having thanked the lady for her glance at him, and my lord having laughed heartily at the good natured reflection on his extraction, in the latter part of the letter, they passed on to the next, which contained what follows.

LETTER II.

TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD HAZARD.

MY LORD AND FATHER,

For so I believe you are; at least you could not prove to the contrary, and that's enough for me to know I shall inherit in spight of my brother Charles. But, however, as I don't want to be undutiful, I shall only tell you this: I am sick of Eton; I'd rather follow a pack of hounds; and so d'ye see I have desired mother to make you a proposial concerning Warwickshire. If so be you like to agree to it, its very well: if not, I am determined to look out for a guardian; being now, as a body may say, pretty far gone towards years of discretion. So I remain

Your dutiful son, And servant to command, RUST.

"What could a guardian do?" said my lord.—' "Faith be very troublesome,' replied Standfast. 'These estates in tail, without right of waste, are, of all legal niceties, the best morsel for a litigious stomach. As to what the lady and her son want, your lordship knows best whether it is worth contending for; but I think I would not be bullied out of any thing."

"Well, we will consider what is to be done,' said his lordship; 'in the mean time let us to the next." So saying, he opened another letter, which came by the post, and was written by Sir Sidney Roebuck. These were the contents.

LETTER III.

TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD HAZARD.

MY LORD,

I take the liberty to write to you concerning your village of Little Hockley, which, since the absence of your lordship, and the death of Major Malplaquet, has risen to such maturity in singular and enormous vice as I sincerely hope cannot be paralleled.

I have been obliged to be at the pains of exerting myself very strenuously in my capacity of magistrate, but smugglers, marauders, and other lawless characters, for whom this vile place is become a remarkable asylum, are difficult to deal with. My first idea was, in conjunction with the members for the county, to beg the interference of parliament; but, conceiving that much delicacy was due to your lordship in this business, I beg previously to consult you.

If you will treat for the village, or, should that be incompatible with the conditions of your inheritance, if you will lease it to me, perhaps I may be able to bring about a reformation.

I have no doubt but your lordship will rejoice in forwarding a work so dear to the interest of humanity, and should be happy to receive your immediate answer, as I wish to make some arrangements at Castlewick, agreeable to the result of this application, before I attend my duty at the house, when I shall have the honour to call on your lordship, with a view to a further conference on this subject.

I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's Most obedient Servant, S. W. ROEBUCK.

Lord Hazard, as I formerly mentioned, received his rents regularly from his steward, and therefore did not dream of the enormities carried on at Little Hockley. He now first reflected that these seeds of vice he had himself sown; and as wickedness, like weeds, flourishes best where there are no wholesome plants to interrupt its growth, he easily perceived and felt the truth of Sir Sidney's relation; and, therefore, determined to acquaint him that he was as well disposed as himself to perfect so desirable an undertaking, and that he should be glad to see him for that purpose.

After examining another letter or two, they came to the following one.

LETTER IV.

TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD HAZARD.

MY LORD,

As you have thought proper to take no notice of what passed the other evening, when I had the honour of calling your lordship scoundrel, I suppose you acquiesce in the justice of the term:—I shall therefore, in future, speak of you as of a wretch deserving pity, and though a lord, beneath the notice of a gentleman.

I am, &c. PETER SNAFFLE.

"Oh,' said my lord, 'this is too shocking to pass. I must break the fellow's bones."

"Rather get a chairman to do it,' said Standfast. Did not you wait at the rascal's house two hours? Where was he all that time? No, no, they think

you begin to smell the matter out, and so are grown desperate. Does not all this confirm my suspicions?"

"But still,' said my lord, 'there is something cursedly unpleasant in letting such a scoundrel go on with impunity. I am determined,' continued he, 'to give him manuel chastisement whereever I meet him."

"Not at all,' cried Standfast, 'till he has established his credentials to dispute a point of honour with your lordship." "Well, well, perhaps you are right,' said my lord, 'you generally see things very properly. Let us talk no more of the damned fellow; he has set my blood in a ferment."

The conversation was interrupted by a note from Ingot, in the city, with whom—as the reader formerly heard from Mr. Standfast—Lord Hazard sometimes banked. The letter was concerning the transfer of some stock, and other business, on which he required to see his lordship at an early opportunity; and my lord, as he was anxious to advise with counsel what was best to be done with Mrs. O'Shocknesy and her son, thought he could not take a properer time than the present.

As his lordship went alone into the city, he had leisure to revolve in his mind the various business of the day, and in particular the subject of the letter from Snaffle, which he did not enter into much before Mr. Standfast: knowing that an inclination to indulge his feelings would meet with every possible opposition from that careful friend.

At the same time, however, that he gave Standfast credit for the goodness of his intentions, he could not help thinking the conjectures of that gentleman rather prescient than wise, careful than certain. What was all this mighty business? Why truly a hot-headed fellow had insulted him with great acrimony, and written to him with great impertinence. What were Standfast's ideas of this matter? That a plot was laid to disturb his domestic repose. In truth it appeared so by the assault on his lady, and looked something like it by the tempting opportunity that had been given him of addressing a very beautiful woman. Well, it was so perhaps: in that case the proper check had been given to the first; and, as to the latter, he could see no ruinous consequences that would ensue,

even were they to carry their scheme into execution. He could not be drawn into a marriage, and therefore an intrigue was the worst that could be apprehended. This it was his business to avoid; and he certainly should do so: but was this any reason why he must put up with a most provoking and impudent affront? No, no; he must beg leave to understand the etiquette of his own honour as well as Mr. Standfast. He was no school boy, and therefore took the liberty to dissent from the necessity of having his actions eternally inspected; and as to the affront, which he neither could nor would brook, a proper time should certainly be taken to resent it.

Lord Hazard had now arrived to that very pitch where Standfast wished to conduct him. The tutor knew that no longer to confide in him was the only way to keep him safe from all consequences. He waited with malicious joy for the moment when the patron would voluntarily exclaim, Oh that I had taken thy advice! Oh that thy salutary counsel had been followed!—and I say to the reader, woe be to Lord Hazard if ever the moment should arrive when such an exclamation shall be necessary. But at present let us change the scene.

In the course of his lordship's business with Mr. Ingot, a lady passed through the room, whom he remarked spoke nothing but French; for there were two gentlemen with her, one of whom told Mr. Ingot, in very broken English, that the lady wished him a good morning.

After they were gone, Ingot told my lord that there was something singular in the lady's story, which had been so interwoven with a business concerning money he had been recommended to transact for her, that he could not but be perfectly acquainted with it.

My lord, who had never any improper curiosity, seemed very indifferent about hearing it; saying there were family matters in it not proper to be divulged.

Ingot assured my lord that was not the case at all; on the contrary, he should tell it to every one he knew; because it placed in a more glaring point of view the scandalous traffic and shameful selling and buying of

consciences among the papists (a sect it seems for which Mr. Ingot had a great inveteracy) than any instance that had ever come within his knowledge.

My Lord smiled, and Mr. Ingot continued.— "This lady, when she was very young, having unfortunately an intrigue with a stranger her father had a great aversion to, she was secluded in a convent, but what convent her lover never could learn. After some time, being persuaded by her friends that her enamorato had played her false, she was prevailed on to take the veil, and shut herself up, as every one thought, for ever.'

"About a year and a half ago her father died in England, having long repented of his daughter's ill treatment, and made a will, leaving her his whole fortune, all vested in the English funds. Mind the conditions: to be spent in France, half for her own use, and half in pious donations— provided a dispensation of her vow could be obtained: but, in default of this, to go to English charities.'

"Here was manifest the cunning of the Frenchman. He thought, and rightly too, the pious donations in France would procure interest enough to obtain the dispensation of her vow. Ay, ay, the Pope shall make a bargain with any Jew in Duke's-place.'

"The dispensation was obtained, with this single proviso—which indeed grasped at the whole fortune—that she should live pensioner in the same convent, with liberty to go out when she pleased.'

"These terms the lady accepted, and giving security for her return, she was permitted to come to England, in company with a person deputed by the convent, to arrange her father's affairs. This she has now done, and, in a week or ten days will return to France."

"An extraordinary business indeed,' said Lord Hazard.' "Yes, yes,' replied Ingot, with great archness; 'the church of Rome never fails to stretch its prerogative when interest is in the case. How happy are we who live under the three estates and the protestant religion?"

"Spoken as a citizen should speak,' said my lord. 'Poor lady, I dare say she rejoices at her escape from captivity. What does she think of England?"

"Oh she knows nobody here,' cried Ingot. 'Except one gentleman, she has not enquired for a single creature. How she came to know him is a mystery to me. It is Sir Sidney Roebuck. I have promised to find him out for her if he be in town." "Then I can tell you, Mr. Ingot, that he is not,' answered my lord. 'I received a letter from him this very morning, which induces me to think it will be a fortnight first; as he only talks of coming up by the meeting of parliament." "Well, well, she will not see him then,' cried Ingot:—it is no great matter I suppose."

Here the conversation drew to an end; the lord testifying great pleasure at the lady's emancipation from confinement, and the citizen reprobating the folly of immuring healthy young girls, who ought to increase their species, and produce soldiers and sailors, and thanking his stars that he did not live under the influence of an Italian priest, not half so good a citizen as himself; a fellow who, because he wore a triple crown, could roast and barbecue any of his peaceable subjects whenever he pleased, the better to confiscate their fortunes.

2.7. CHAPTER VII.

THE LAST SUBJECT FOLLOWED UP—A LETTER FROM EMMA, AND OTHER IMPORTANT MATTER.

THAT very afternoon Lord Hazard wrote an answer to Sir Sidney's letter, the receipt of which gave the baronet such satisfaction, that it hastened his journey to town, where in a few days he arrived; for his concerns were always in so regular a state, that he could at any time leave them with very short preparation: and Lady Roebuck, who was of all women living the properest wife for such a man, never required much warning to follow him through all his duties; for such he conceived every one of his pursuits. It was a duty to discharge all trusts, to answer all letters, to return all visits: but then he took care to undertake nothing but what he could conveniently do, to receive no visits but from those he liked, and to reject all unnecessary or impertinent correspondents. It was also with him a duty to be merry, and to make others so; and he could with equal ease—ay, and without any deviation from his illustrious extraction, which I have already said he was pretty proud of—walk a minuet with a duchess, on a birth-night, or crack a facetious jest with a cobler. He might be termed an elegant oddity; and to his peculiarities, for they were all amiable, did his lady accommodate herself.

Before they set out it was agreed to leave the faithful Emma with little Annette, who had nearly reached her fourteenth year, and was grown a most beautiful young creature. Lady Roebuck loved her with an interesting and lively tenderness. She had watched her growing perfections with at least maternal care; for had she been twenty times her own daughter, she could not have paid more attention to her education, or felt more pleasure at those dawning accomplishments with which she promised to be remarkably gifted.

Emma said she had perused her little mind with profound attention, and though she was no further than the introduction, it was prefaced with a promise of such delightful matter as could not fail to charm the hearts of

all readers. She could discern that the subject was interesting, the moral instructive, and that goodness and virtue were strongly inculcated in every page.

Annette and Emma then, and the whole village of Castlewick were left under the care of the good Mildman, who had not suffered at all in the opinion of Sir Sidney, for having been turned into a scarecrow for the amusement of the Hockleyites.

Sir Sidney and his lady arrived in town, at the period above mentioned; and a card was almost instantly dispatched to Lord Hazard, purporting that the baronet intended to pay him a visit in a day or two, to talk over the business of Little Hockley.

The peer and the baronet soon came to an eligible agreement; and as leases and title deeds were obliged to be consulted in great plenty, during the course of this negociation, a sort of cordiality grew between the lessor and lessee. Sir Sidney acknowledged there was great fairness and candour in the conduct of the peer, and facetiously remarked he was glad to see so good an understanding between the upper and lower house. As to my lord, he looked up to Sir Sidney as a being of a superior kind, and while he penetrated his amiable and benignant views, his only wonder was that every man of ample possessions did not do the same, since his reward was so certain and so immense.

The ladies, who I have more than once remarked were to their husbands what an echo is to the voice, had also commenced something more than an acquaintance; which both the husbands strongly recommended. Indeed this intimacy had well nigh brought about a breach of the bargain between Lord Hazard and Sir Sidney; for the latter had proposed to the peer to wave signing the writings, and take upon himself the arrangements of Little Hockley. However, whether my lord felt the superiority of Sir Sidney's qualifications for such an undertaking, whether he thought it ridiculous to expect a harvest of virtue where he had only planted vice; whatever in short was the motive, he agreed only to return to Warwickshire with Sir Sidney, and give him possession of

his bargain, by which means the families would pass some months in the society of each other.

Even this was some acquisition, and Sir Sidney, in hopes of enticing his lordship to follow his example, eagerly catched at the proposal. Schemes of pleasure to be executed in the following spring and summer engrossed much of their conversation. Besides, Lady Hazard was with child, and it was thought the country would be likely to restore her strength, after she should have lain in; for she was in general very ill upon those occasions, and had never since Charles had a child—though she had borne in all four—that did not, after its birth, pine away, and at length die.

Pleasures were also chalked out for Charles and Annette, who was understood to be Sir Sidney's daughter by a former marriage, but that her mother died abroad; and the baronet did not spare to hint that an union between the prince and princess of the two rival villages might perhaps cement the general amnesty between all parties.

It will be easily seen that Standfast felt awkward in this society. He too well knew Lady Roebuck's prudence, to suppose that she had acquainted Sir Sidney with any of his tricks, and as there seemed no coolness on the part of the baronet, these conjectures were confirmed. Thus, supposing the business would be concluded in a short time between his patron and Sir Sidney, he was so far perfectly at ease; but when he found the ladies were to be consulted, he trembled for the consequence. How to act? Suppose he tried to prevent their meeting? but that was dangerous and difficult. He once thought of hinting at a distance that something had actually passed between him and the lady, which, if credited, would account for any rancour in her; but, upon maturer reflection, any of these would be to desert his own grand principle, which was, to be always prepared with expedients, but never to use them except in cases of emergency. It would be enough to defend himself when he should be attacked; and all things considered, since the lady had evidently kept the grand point a secret from Sir Sidney, it was possible, though barely so, that she would not tattle to any one else: yet that cursed female vanity—In short, the gentleman's combat with himself continued a considerable while, till at length the result was that he should make an excuse to go

out of town for a month, and by that means gather from Lord Hazard's letters what was going forward. Besides he had another reason for taking this resolution—indeed he had several reasons—which will in due time appear to the reader:—so, having imparted his intention to my lord, and got permission for Charles to accompany him, the tutor and the pupil set out for the west of England, where business of a particular nature demanded their presence.

Thus, most of the arrangements before related passed in the absence of Standfast and Charles, whom, as their excursion has something remarkable in it, we will join: after I have related a matter that cursorily passed between the two ladies.

They were talking of Annette, and Lady Sidney, who was by no means ashamed of confessing so much of the truth as saved the honour of Miss Le Clerc, mentioned the matter exactly as it happened, simply with the addition of their being privately married. "But,' said Lady Hazard, 'are you sure that the mother is dead?" "Sure!" said Lady Roebuck, 'what doubt can there be of that? Besides, at any rate, she is dead to the world." "Perhaps not,' said the other lady. 'Good God, have you any reason for what you say?" cried Lady Roebuck. Lady Hazard here made a very serious apology for her imprudence, saying, the great similarity between the story she had heard from her ladyship, and one recently told her by my lord, had struck her so forcibly, that she had unwarily betrayed herself into those unguarded expressions.

This redoubled Lady Roebuck's anxiety, and she entreated, in the most earnest manner, to know what all this mystery meant. "Nay,' said Lady Hazard, if it be as I conjecture, it must be known, for the lady is determined to see Sir Sidney before she leaves England." "Who?—what lady?'—cried her friend, 'for heaven's sake keep me no longer in suspence."

Lady Hazard, seeing she had advanced so far, made no scruple of relating the whole story, as Ingot told it to my lord, from first to last. When she had finished, Lady Roebuck asked the name of the lady, which

her friend confessed she did not know, but said that it would be very easy to satisfy themselves by sending to Mr. Ingot.

This was scarcely agreed on before Lady Roebuck received a letter from her handmaid Emma, which the reader shall have in her own words.

TO LADY ROEBUCK.

MADAM,

YOU would not have heard from me so soon again, but for a circumstance which wears so much the air of a romance, that, had it not been well certified, I could not have believed it:—but

'Dark and mysterious are the ways of providence,
'Puzzled with mazes, and perplexed with errors,'

As says my and Mr. VOLTAIRE's favourite Cato.—A lady called here who cried over Miss Annette, and has left a crucifix and several popish relics, which I cannot say pleased me, for I have hated the Roman catholics ever since I read the account of the massacre of the Hugunots, upon the feast of St. Bartholomew. As to the holy war, some of the kings of England were concerned in that, and therefore I shall not be so wanting in loyalty as to mention it; else I could a tale unfold:—But to return to the lady. There were two French gentlemen with her, one of whom, in very bad broken English, told me that he believed she had an important commission to execute, but he did not know the purport of it. I wish I had understood French, I would have made her all her pilgrimage relate, as faithfully as Othello did his. After she was gone, which was not till the gentleman had kissed both my cheeks, I questioned Miss concerning their conversation, and she informed me that the lady was that very same she used to call Mamma Le Clerc in the convent. The jewels she has left are for Sir Sidney, and as she had not the pleasure of seeing him, she did not think proper to leave a packet of papers, but said she would endeavour to find him in town, and there deliver it to him.

Lord, my dear lady, what can be the meaning of all this? Miss Annette was so confused and terrified, and indeed she did not understand her

very well, for they spoke it seems a different sort of French, our young lady having polished hers, and that of the stranger being a good deal provincial: but, as I said, dear Miss's confusion—though very learned writers have doubted whether this admits of a genetive case, and therefore, as I am proud to yield to great authorities, I ought to say the confusion of Miss—was so great, that she had not the courage to ask many questions; so I entreated her to go back and speak to the French lady again, who appeared greatly surprised to find that Sir Sidney was married, and when Miss Annette, at my desire, asked if she was her mother, she replied that your ladyship was now the only mother to whom she owed any duty, that she hoped you would treat her kindly, and that Miss would repay you with gratitude.

My sweet little charge is very well, and comes on surprisingly. I entreated her not to write on this subject till I had your advice. Her letter could not avoid falling into Sir Sidney's hands. This will seem only to concern household affairs, and, as the poet says,

'Escape the scythe by being low.'

I hate a falsity, but, without a little laudable deceit, how can we guard against the evils of life?—Minerva thought duplicity so necessary in the conduct of her favourite Ulysses, that she condescended to teach him that heroic quality herself.

I beg to know, my worthy lady, how I am to act in this affair, and be assured, in respect of all the requisite feminine virtues, no Emma—from Prior's nut-brown maid to Emma Corbet, can have a more extensive and proper sense than

Your very humble, And most grateful handmaid, EMMA DISTICH.

This letter seemed to clear up the whole business, and it being upon enquiry found that the name of the lady his lordship saw at Mr. Ingot's house was Le Clerc, Lady Roebuck did not ballance a moment in her mind, as to the probability of her being the mother of Annette.

In this exigence she consulted Lady Hazard on what conduct she ought to pursue, who being, as we have seen, no friend to duplicity, though even of that laudable kind recommended by Emma, advised her, without delay, to inform Sir Sidney of the whole truth, telling her she had wonderfully well succeeded with her lord by the same mode of experiment within the last fortnight.

This brought forward the story of Miss Snaffle, which the reader has seen so fully investigated, and which not being told without the highest encomiums on Mr. Standfast's attachment and integrity, and an information that his lordship had settled an additional annuity on him, Lady Roebuck testified the greatest surprise, which Lady Hazard perceiving, said, you may well shudder at the world's villany. I wish I could prevail with my lord to embrace Sir Sidney's offer, that I might live always with you in retirement.

Lady Roebuck, whose shudderings had been at hearing of Standfast's great influence in the family, was upon the point of saying something which might have led to an investigation of his conduct, not very favourable to that gentleman; but finding Lady Hazard had given her surprise another motive, she contented herself for the present with falling in with that lady's conjectures, and simply remarking that indeed the expectations of villains were so inadequate to the pains they took, and the risks they run, that she wondered men became knaves to be infamous, when, by only being honest, they might be happy.

2.8. CHAPTER VIII.

THE HERO CLEARED A LITTLE FROM THE COBWEBS OF THE LIBRARY.

I MAKE no scruple to confess that my leaving the business of Miss Le Clerc and the possibility of Standfast's detection in such a state of uncertainty as they appeared to be at the end of the last chapter, is taking a liberty with the reader, and, what is worse, with the ladies. But the consideration of having so long forborne to introduce my hero, who, by the way, would be the last to excuse me for being guilty of the smallest incivility to the fair sex, has got the better of all others:—for indeed the circumstances in this history are so various, and follow in such quick succession, that really if I do not use some expedition to bring him forward, I might as well have no hero at all. Just so far however I have nothing to reproach myself with; for, though hitherto he has said very little, I can assure the reader he has thought a great deal. To what purpose will hereafter appear. At present I shall proceed to the examination of his good and bad qualities, a portion of each—for I am afraid there is nothing perfect in this world—he certainly had; and having cleared away the shores, and made every other proper preparation—for we may well give him fair play—fairly launch him on the ocean of life, where we shall see him steming many adverse gales of fortune, in which it will be difficult to determine whether most to admire his distress or his fortitude.

I certainly had some apprehensions that having suffered a fourth part of this work to pass without approaching to such a necessary business, the reader might perhaps be given to imagine that I called Charles Hazard the hero out of facetiousness, and merely by inference and deduction, and so use him as a painter does a layman, which stands in all the attitudes, bears the helmet, drapery, or poll parrot of the hero or heroine, and yet, though he play this respectable part, is never known personally to the spectators.

To say the truth, I have often been wickedly inclined to wish that many heroes I have met with in my life had been so dealt with, and it is not impossible but some of my readers may retort the courtesy; for it so happens that particular people find in these said heroes particular qualities, which generally being adventitious, it is fifty to one if a hero-maker thinks of them, and, in the absence of these qualities, though the gentleman should be possessed of ever so long a catalogue of real and permanent virtues, he sinks to a nonentity, in the opinion of such critics, because he does not happen to be enlivened with their favourite animating principle.

I cannot give a stronger instance of what I have advanced than by producing the names of two of the greatest men in their way that ever lived:—I mean ALEXANDER of Macedon the great warrior, and ALEXANDER of Twickenham the great poet.

ALEXANDER the warrior would not have given three-pence for all the noisy applause and bellowing acclamations of the largest populace that ever assembled, if they had not hailed him son of Jupiter; and ALEXANDER the poet—according to Dr. JOHNSON—continually made himself wretched lest the world should fancy him to be the son of nobody; yet I appeal to any one if the fighting hero had been the offspring of a beggar, and the writing hero the heir of a king, whether one would have cut throats, or the other "lisped numbers" in greater perfection. Neither of these could conquer his favourite foible, which it is admirable to remark proceeded in the warrior from hope, and in the poet from fear. This imaginary honour in one, and blot in the other, nothing could efface; for vainly did ALEXANDER's mother ridicule the preposterous folly of her son, saying, "hush, hush, my dear boy, you don't consider you are bringing me into a scrape, for if you talk so loud about being the son of Jupiter, you will make Juno angry with me:"—and equally unsuccessful were the efforts of POPE's friends, who it is said told him it was ridiculous to lament that he was the son of a tradesman, when the father of ESCHINES, the Socratic philosopher, was but a sausage-maker.

A hundred instances may be adduced, perhaps a thousand, to prove upon what cobweb qualities the very essence of a hero often depends; but none

I believe can be found stronger than those I have given. Let us then settle the dispute in this way: Let all matters relative to Charles Hazard, which are totally dependant upon chance, be considered as out of his power to alter or amend, and all qualities, good, bad, or indifferent, which are the result of his serious reflections, be understood as his act and deed, and censured or praised accordingly.

Charles had been left from his infancy in the quiet and unwearied pursuit of every useful and elegant accomplishment. All these advantages had been procured for him at home, under a tutor who certainly had some taste, and a father who had more; both of whom were perfectly well satisfied with his progress. His ardour had been so unremitting, that perfection, by the help of perseverence, seemed to be within his reach. I therefore left him to himself, for why should I interrupt him in the midst of so laudable a career?—especially when those very advantages are good recommendations to the reader.

Having untied him, however, a little from his mother's apron strings, I shall now fairly trust him to the bent of his inclination:—and this for several good reasons:—one is, that my veracity as a historian obliges me to it, for Standfast declared to Viney, before he set out—first indeed giving him some other instructions—he should try what mettle the youngster was made of.

Charles was at this time something more than seventeen, so that he took the field young, as did his namesake of Sweden. He was not, however, at all like that great man in any respect, except indeed that no Charles the Twelfth upon earth could be a more rigid observer of his word; for, as the Swedish Charles could never be perswaded by any body, the English Charles placed an implicit faith in every body, and as the fighting hero hated the sight of a woman, the scientific hero was charmed with every woman he saw.

Charles—for there is no hiding it—was very amorous, and very credulous. His credulity, however, was not of that kind begot by adulation upon impudence; he was too modest to be vain; but when a plausible appeal was made to the softness of his manners, the strength of his

sensibility, or the excellence of his heart, his expanded soul cherished the fiction because it wore the garb of truth; therefore, in him, credulity was a virtue: and yet virtue would be in much less repute than it is—for which there is little necessity—if it met with no better reward. His propensity to the softer passions were, though so young, of a pretty robust kind, for he had already attacked, and that very briskly, fat Betty, who, by force of arms, or rather fists, defended her virtue. Nor was he less solicitous with Lady Hazard's woman, before whom, about a week previous to his journey, his father found him on his knees, which accident produced the following short lecture.

My lord having pretty well shamed him, said— "Charles, I am glad to see this grace in you; I never before spoke to you with the harshness of a father; hitherto you have had nothing from me but the mildness of that character. I am scarcely sorry for what has happened, because it gives me an opportunity of speaking on a subject which I could not otherwise so well have introduced.—You have heard of my excesses in my youth; they have cost me reflections bitterer than I would wish my worst enemy. I am not hurt at seeing you susceptible, nor do I expect, as you grow up, to keep you entirely continent. You are informed, your opinions are decided ones, and you have an understanding far beyond your years, or I should not be so explicit. You have conferred on me one great blessing, which I know you will never deprive me of: I mean a faithful observance of your word upon all occasions. If, upon consulting your heart, you can truly make me the promise I am going to ask of you, these are the last words you shall ever hear from me on this subject. I would naturally recommend to you to think of no idle amours; but perhaps that is impossible: if it should be so, chuse some other place than your father's house: let me know nothing of it. I should pity and perhaps forgive the frailties of my son, but I should shudder at being his confidant.'

"The promise I exact from you is to combat your inclinations upon all occasions, but to subdue them absolutely and entirely when they tempt you to the seduction of a wife or daughter, or any way tend to disturb domestic happiness."

"My dear father,' cried Charles, 'throwing himself on his knees, and taking Lord Hazard's hand, 'I promise you your advice shall be engraven on my heart, and so may I prosper as I keep or reject it."

"Enough,' said Lord Hazard, 'abundantly enough; I know you will keep your word, and therefore nothing can pass between you and I upon this subject again."

Foibles our hero certainly had in plenty, but he had also many excellent qualities. Indeed they will be well exercised in the course of this work, for though no temper was ever more tried, or mind more worked upon, yet I defy any one to detect him in the commission of either an ungenerous or a dishonourable action.

This in common heroes is nothing, for being made up entirely of sterling virtues, without alloy, what wonder if they come out of the fire of temptation pure and undeminished?—but for an elegant, handsome, fine young fellow, unsuspecting, inexperienced, sensible, accomplished, born to captivate and be captivated—for such a one neither to turn out a puppy nor a knave, is an instance that does not every day attract our admiration.

But I have often held—and many will agree with me—that is is as easy to do right as wrong, and in my hero this truth is illustrated; for know reader, this young gentleman preserved his honour, nay perhaps his life, by a strict adherence to one ruling principle, which, being so young, it is singularly admirable he should set down for himself. It was this: never to promise what was improper to perform, but having made a promise never to break it.

2.9. CHAPTER IX.

ABOUT BUNDLING AND OTHER AMCROUS MATTERS.

STANDFAST's journey into the country was to the house of a young clergyman, to whom he was patron. Read it ye great, and confess your insignificance. Your dependants have their hangers on; your very toad-eaters have their tools: nay, sometimes, you are their tools yourselves. Has not your steward his carriage, his country house, his hounds, his partridge mews, and his doxey? and do not you pay for it? Nay he is, in point of certainty, so much better off than you, that, were you to be ruined, and even through his mismanagement, he could behold the wreck from the shore, and get comfortably to a retreat which your bounty provided for him.

This young clergyman, whose name was Figgins, was originally a Bridewell boy. Standfast took a great fancy to him one evening, as he signalized himself on a rejoicing night. The peculiar address with which he broke the windows of such as would not put out lights, and threw squibs into coaches to frighten ladies, and burn their cloaths, evinced such a proneness to mischief, that Standfast felt a congenial warmth, and immediately determined to select this youth as a fit instrument, in time, for nobler daring.

It was necessary, however, that he should add to this unluckiness and audacity a necessary portion of subtilty. He therefore asked him several questions, to which he received such answers as pleased him; that is to say, full of impudence and ambiguity: and hearing him afterwards tell one of his companions that he had queered Raven Grey, his mind was so made up that he determined—to use his own phrase—upon patronizing him.

The reader however must not imagine that Mr. Standfast laid himself open to his dependant; the matter was apparently brought about through the medium of a third person, indeed Mr. Viney, to whom this hopeful

youth was a distant relation, and he was required, among other things, to consider Mr. Standfast as an exemplary character.

The tutor prevailed upon a bishop, a friend of his—I sincerely hope the bishop did not know what he was about—to ordain this spark; and this was the very friend he left in the care of Little Hockley.

At the time Charles and his tutor paid this visit to Mr. Figgins, he was in the possession of a vicarage near Poole, which living Standfast procured him from a noble earl, in some respects however owing to the young parson's own conduct, for he was so civil to introduce to his lordship a near relation, which circumstance ended in my lord's making up, for a large sum of money, a suit which the young lady commenced against him for seduction, though the earl was about her thirteenth lover. One of this number, by her advice, quitted the kingdom lest he should be taken up for the forgery of a bank note, which, after he was gone, she changed, and put the money in her pocket.

Standfast's business with Mr. Figgins was of a very particular nature, and perhaps the reader may sometime hence join with me in that opinion.—Whatever it was, Standfast did not chuse to transact it by letter, it being one of his maxims never to write any thing but what all the world might read, nor make either promises or declarations in the presence of a third person.

In conformity to this latter part of his maxim, he very frequently took his friend Figgins with him either a walk or a ride, begging Charles to take care of the ladies till their return. These ladies were, first Mr. Figgins's maiden aunt, a woman of exemplary character, an enthusiastic admirer of Drelincourt and a dram glass, and who her nephew very humanely maintained, upon her paying him down quarterly the sum of eight pounds. Secondly Mrs. Figgins the ninth—for, like Major O'Flaherty, he had them in all quarters, and all alive and merry;—and, lastly, Miss Figgins, a young lady of beauty and accomplishments, but who had not yet got a husband—though she owned twenty-seven—because the men were brutes, and her nature was so delicate that the least ill treatment would break her heart.

Charles found it no disagreeable task to entertain these ladies, in the absence of his tutor; nay he made a traffic of his complaisance, for he wrote an impromtu for a smile, and sketched their portrait for a kiss. His skill in music enchanted them, and they wished never to part with the young lord, as he was called.

As to Miss Figgins, had any one witnessed her behaviour at those unguarded moments when he sung a pathetic air—though, by the bye, he was of that age when the voice sounds more like that of a raven than a nightingale—he would have sworn she had at once conquered her aversion to love and matrimony. To say truth, her virtue was of the rampant kind, which perhaps was one reason she continually talked of the great pains she took to subdue it. Indeed she so prompted Charles in that part, which, if it had been the time to act, he knew without a cue, that the young gentleman had a kind of rebellion to quell, which gave him no little disturbance. In short, in spight of his teeth he was obliged to take a review of the promise he had made his father, and reflecting that the sister of Mr. Figgins must certainly be a woman of honour, he triumphantly carried the point, and congratulated himself on this victory over his passions. Indeed the term sister was not included in the conditions, but it was certainly implied, and it would have been dishonourable had he taken advantage of the omission.

The lady however having made good her landing, determined to lose no opportunity of improving that advantage; therefore, one day, while they sat at dinner, she slily slipt a note into the young gentleman's coat pocket, which contained these words both in form and substance.

"For hevven sake mete mee in the arburr, and lett mee, ho lett mee, unbuzzum myself."

Charles was too gallant not to attend the lady.—Indeed it was very much his wish to have a little conversation with her alone; not doubting but when the purity of his intentions were honestly made known, the young lady's quiet would be restored, which at present he made no doubt he greatly disturbed. Having therefore attended the appointment, he declared to her with the truest and most honest simplicity, his

repugnance to do that which he could not consider otherwise than as a shameful breach of hospitality. The lady acknowledged the generosity of his sentiments, and said, that as she saw her fears were unnecessary, they might now indulge in all those little innocent freedoms which to susceptible and delicate hearts gave such delight.—In short, after much simpering, stammering, blushing, and other indications of maiden bashfulness—the largest part of which, especially the blushing, was most manifest in Charles—she informed him that, upon certain conditions, he should steal to her bedchamber, and sleep with her that very night. These conditions were explained to be exactly what I am informed they practise very commonly, and very innocently in America, under the name of bundling.

Perhaps Miss Figgins had heard of Adhelm, who, to try his virtue, slept several nights with a virgin without violating his chastity, and understanding Charles was intended for a great man, determined it should not be her fault if he had not this proof of his virtue in as great perfection as his pious predecessor. If however these were her intentions, there was some how or other an infraction in the treaty, for Charles and the lady so bundled that, at the end of a fortnight, she informed him, in the most decent manner so delicate a creature could muster up words for the purpose, that she was certainly with child.

What a stroke for our hero! Must he begin already to feel the bitter reflections of having broken his promise. How to act? Which way to conceal her shame? He could not marry her—which at some intervals he had thoughts of—without consulting his father, and the consequence of such a consultation was apparent. Yet he had ruined her, and brought her into a situation that marriage alone could atone for. In so doing he had already broken his promise, and why not go farther, since there was no honourable means of retreat.

In this state, chequered with pleasure and compunction, had he passed several days, when Mr. Standfast one morning told our hero that some damned thing or other had come to his fatheris ears, who required their immediate presence in town.— "See there," said he, shewing him a letter he had that instant received.

TO THE REV. Mr. STANDFAST.

If you have the smallest regard for my peace of mind, come post to me the moment you receive this.

HAZARD.

Charles not doubting but his amour and its consequences had already reached his father's ears, without considering how the intelligence could have been conveyed, told his tutor ingenuously that he was the cause of it. Mr. Standfast seemed greatly astonished at the declaration, and demanded how it could possibly be? The pupil exacting a solemn promise from his tutor that he would carefully preserve the most profound secresy, let him into the bundling secret from first to last, and concluded with vehemently entreating his advice.

Standfast looking very sagacious, said this must be the cause of Lord Hazard's injunction sure enough, which it was a very proper thing to comply with, for fear of irritating him farther. As for the rest, he said it was a cursed unlucky affair, but fortunately the brother was under his thumb, and his best endeavours might be depended on to hush matters up.

If his father should mention it, he advised Charles to deny the whole business; though he had no doubt but he should use such arguments as would induce him not to say a word about it.

Charles was in raptures at the kindness of his tutor, who took care nevertheless to give the young gentleman a wholesome lecture, declaring his great repugnance to this duplicity of conduct, and protesting he only consented to it from the laudable view of preventing a difference between father and son.

By this time the chaise was at the door; for Standfast, zealous to obey his patron's mandate, had ordered it previous to this conversation with his pupil. The latter therefore took a hasty, but tender leave of his enamorata, who exacted a promise that he would write to her, and, if possible, see her soon again.

On the road, Standfast encouraged Charles to keep up his spirits. He told him, for one thing, that his honour was in no scrape; for that the lady, however she might have imposed upon his inexperience, was not a vestal, nor had been for a good twenty years.

"Why she is but six and twenty,' said Charles:' "and eleven added to it,' replied the tutor. 'As to the brat, if there should be one, we must see what's to be done with it. I have told you all these matters,' added he, 'lest you should be improperly drawn in, therefore you must promise me to be upon your guard. No indiscreet marriages, nor any other steps without first consulting me. Upon these and no other terms will I undertake this business."

Charles eagerly promised every thing his tutor demanded of him, and Standfast reiterated his friendly professions. They both arrived in town however with no little anxiety on their minds. That of Charles proceeded, as the reader knows, from his fear of having made his father miserable. Mr. Standfast had too hearty a contempt for every human weakness to feel the influence of any such hen-hearted sensation. Glorious mischief begat his perplexity, and all his uneasiness was lest the banquet preparing for his inexorable senses should not be seasoned high enough with domestic wretchedness.

2.10. CHAPTER X.

CONSISTING OF COMFORT AND CONSOLATION, ADMINISTERED BY THE FRIENDLY MR. STANDFAST.

IT was agreed, upon the arrival of Charles and his tutor, that the latter should go first to see how the land lay, and that the young gentleman should not see his father—thereby to give their project breath—till he had paid his respects to Lady Hazard.

Mr. Standfast immediately sought my lord, and having very opportunely found him, he was informed, with but little previous ceremony, that his patron was undone—lost—irretrievable lost, beyond all possibility of hope.

"Good God!" exclaimed Standfast, with terror in his countenance, 'whence can this unexpected blow have come? It is no diminution of your fortune my lord?"

"Of my life, of my soul, of my honour!" returned my lord. 'Oh that I had listened to thy advice. Heavenly God! that a man should murder his peace, sell his life's happiness, and render himself despicable for the brutal, villanous gratification of a single moment! Will you know the extent of my misery? the giddy precipice on which I stood, and frightful abyss into which I am plunged? Will you know my torment, my horror, my despair, my hell?"

"Be calm, my lord,' said Standfast,' with the utmost commiseration he could convey into his countenance. "Calm!" replied his lordship, 'yes, when I have destroyed myself, when the wretches have added my death to the destruction of my peace of mind.'' "Wretches! What wretches?" cried Standfast eagerly.' "Keep me not on this wrack of suspence, lest my friendship take the alarm, and I yield to my fears of that fatal evil which my boding heart has so long anticipated.'

"Hear the truth then,' said my lord, 'and let all worthy men, like thee, detest me while I utter it. I have lain with that infernal woman, she has

communicated to me a damned disease, and I have infected my dear, my innocent wife, that excellent creature, that pattern of her sex beyond all example, who never had a blemish on her heart or understanding but when she joined her unhappy fate to a worthless wretch like me."

"Angels of pity comfort me!" said Standfast.—'Ah my dear lord, why did I go this curst journey into the country? If I had been on the spot, I am sure I should have saved you."

"It would have been useless,' cried my lord, starting from a chair, into which he had thrown himself. 'I had ceased to confide in you before you left town, and was glad of a pretext to get rid of your solicitation."

Mr. Standfast now uttered a most warm and pathetic speech, lamenting general depravity, and deploring most affectingly his friend's want of resolution. So excellent indeed were his reasons, his remarks so heartfelt, and his manner so persuasive, that my lord declared there lived not his equal.—To say truth, this speech had its merit, and so it ought, for like many other speeches which are intended to surprise instead of convince, it had been some time in preparation. And now the tutor entreated to know the particulars of this unfortunate business, desirous perhaps of being satisfied whether his actors had performed their parts in the manner he had set down for them, especially as he had such an opportunity of hearing their respective merits from a critic who would be sure to do them justice.

My lord briefly told him that being informed by Colonel Tiltly and some others that a gentleman named Snaffle was traducing him in every coffee-house where he came, and that one of his friends who vindicated him had very nearly got into a duel on his account, he made it his business to seek after Snaffle, but found only the sham sister as before who it was plain was instructed to play upon him'. At length he found his man at home, when matters were very handsomely explained, and he was idiot enough to stay to supper. The presence of the sister, and the bumpers with which he was drenched produced the rest. "But,' concluded my lord, 'that a set of people should conspire the ruin of a man so little known to them, and work the destruction of his peace of mind, is a

species of wickedness and depravity that I cannot give either motive or name."

"My dear lord,' cried Standfast impatiently, I see a gleam of happiness here, a celestial and benignant ray of hope." "What do you mean?' exclaimed Lord Hazard.' "These people,' cried Standfast, 'have reaped no pecuniary advantage from their villany." "How should they?' said his lordship.' "No, none;—it is a contrivance then,' cried Standfast, 'of Mrs. O'Shocknesy; God send she may be disappointed." "Heaven and earth,' cried my lord, 'you have certainly divined the truth; it is that diabolical wretch sure enough: who else could have taken such unheard of pains to make me miserable? I knew, I felt, thou wouldst comfort me. But still is not the calamity the same, my dear Standfast?" "Not at all my lord,' answered his kind friend very confidently. 'Are you sure of what you say in relation to your lady?" "From what I may reasonably conjecture it must be so,' said my lord. 'Oh God! if I could but flatter myself there." 'Well, well, hope for the best,' cried Standfast. 'You forget my lord how artfully the snare was laid for you. I am sure if your lordship was off your guard, there is no prudence but may be surprised. My advice is this: If, for the sake of your lady's health, matters should require an explanation, honestly give it her, and lay the blame upon Mrs. O'Shocknesy; I would stake my life upon the issue. And now my lord throw off your chagrin; I dare say your lady knows no uneasiness upon this subject but that which she has felt from seeing you miserable."

"She shall see me so no longer then,' said my lord. 'By imitating thee I will grow honest, and that shall teach me to be chearful."

Having so far adjusted matters, Lord Hazard felt himself wonderfully relieved. As for Charles, all he could learn from his mother was, that her lord had, for several days, appeared very ill and very uneasy; that it certainly was caused by some disagreeable news he had heard; "but,' continued she, 'whatever it is, we must unite to comfort him. I am sure from me he deserves every thing, for his affection encreases every day."

Charles, convinced he was the cause of his father's unhappiness, took leave of his mother as early as he decently could, to go in quest of

Standfast, that common friend in the family: for surely it is the office of a friend to make people easy.

The tutor was ready to receive him, and apparently anxious to put him out of pain, for he seized him very cordially by the hand, and told him matters were in such a swimming train, that he had only to appear as if nothing had happened, and he might be assured that his father would not even mention the circumstance.

Standfast had now restored the tranquility of both father and son, and in some measure his own; for the latter part of his conversation with his patron was concerning Lady Roebuck, but as he could not gather any reason to believe she had been tatling, he fairly concluded she was afraid to attack him, or else perhaps, as chance had thrown him again in her way, the lady had wisely adopted the proverb better late than never; and so promised herself the accomplishment of what his vanity induced him to believe she wished: so difficult is it for men of Mr. Standfast's turn of mind to credit that any one can be actuated by motives purely generous, and merely disinterested.

The triumphant Mr. Standfast however had never been so near detection as while he was absent. That conversation between the two ladies which took a different turn, as the reader has seen, at the end of the seventh chapter, had introduced into the mind of Lady Roebuck a number of alarming fears for her friend. She could not give Mr. Standfast that implicit credit which he seemed to exact of Lord and Lady Hazard, for the active part he had taken in the business of Miss Snaffle. Indeed, knowing from her own experience how little pretensions he had either to gratitude, principle, or generosity, her tongue was very reluctantly reined in whenever she heard any thing in his commendation; but at length, considering Lady Hazard was a new, though a very intimate acquaintance, and that the office she longed to undertake was rather a thankless one, she took a little time for reflection, during which interval a circumstance happened which decided her wavering resolution. As however it was of sufficient consequence to require that Sir Sidney should be consulted, the reader is of course anxious to know what it was, and the result of their deliberations. The latter I am very ready to say was,

that to arm Lord and Lady Hazard against the machinations of Mr. Standfast was treading on very tender ground, and therefore they ought not to take any material steps in so weighty a business till their arrival in the country, where Sir Sidney said he would begin this Herculean labour. This then they resolved. As to the circumstance which procured this resolution, it will come better hereafter. To have mentioned it here would have been premature, and not to have said something on the suspicions of Sir Sidney and his lady, would have been tacitly to have accused the reader of a deficiency in penetration, for it is hardly possible that any one who knew Mr. Standfast should believe him capable of devoting himself so suddenly to the practise of real virtue, when his whole life had been an artful study how to keep up the appearance of it.

Standfast has been seen very solicitous to get at the particulars of Lord Hazard's unfortunate intrigue, for which I have assigned the real motive; and, to say truth, he was not pleased with the relation: for in his absence—to carry on the allusion I used at that time—his peice had been mutilated by the managers, and ill performed by the actors; a material incident had been cut out of his projecting, and another, by no means condusive to the catastrophe he wished to take place, introduced.—These alterations were principally owing to the heroine, who in real life, as well as upon the stage, is generally apt to take these sort of liberties; and though Mr. Standfast had not been present at the representation of his performance, yet, being a consummate judge of effect, he saw plainly it would have had more striking success could he have been on the spot to have conducted it.

To drop this allusion, Standfast plainly saw that Mrs. O'Shocknesy had taken the liberty to alter his plan, no doubt for private ends of her own. He had left orders for an anonymous letter to be sent to Lady Hazard on the very evening his lordship should be engaged at Snaffle's, apprizing her of the fact. This, it was plain to Standfast, had been neglected; but that something, as we before observed, should be substituted in its place, the lady had, through the means of Miss Snaffle, conferred a favour on his lordship which she thought would serve just as well to communicate the secret to Lady Hazard. To say truth, this was a coup de grace which Standfast, with all his rascallity, had not meditated. It was a vengeance

truly feminine, and greatly worthy the vindictive Mrs. O'Shocknesy.— How these conspirators answered their conduct to their ringleader will by and by be seen. At present I shall only say that Mrs. O'Shocknesy defended herself by an argument which will at least prove her to be a proper coadjutor of the great Mr. Standfast. It was no less than that the knowledge of Lady Hazard's pregnancy induced her to take that harmless step before mentioned, without her principal's privity; at which he was as much incenced as was Hecate against the witches, who dared to prompt Macbeth in his iniquity without her orders.

2.11. CHAPTER XI.

PERMANENT HAPPINESS APPEARS TO BE RESTORED, AND THE WHOLE SOCIETY SET OUT ON THEIR JOURNEY TO THE COUNTRY.

IT will now be proper to speak concerning Miss Le Clerc, whose whole history, as far as Mr. Ingot knew it, Sir Sidney learnt much about the time the two ladies were reading Emma's letter; for the good citizen being, as I observed, Lord Hazard's man of business, they were in a manner obliged to consult him upon several points relative to the property of Little Hockley. On the first of these visits every thing naturally came out, and when the baronet and his lady met, both were ripe for the discovery of what was no secret to either.

The story of Annette was no mystery, but it has been shewn in what way it was told; and if Miss Le Clerc was Sir Sidney's wife, what then was Lady Roebuck? This was a consideration of a most serious nature, and, in justice to so amiable a lady, it was admitted that it ought to be set to rights.—Lord and Lady Hazard being therefore the only persons who had it in their power to make a single comment on this subject, and that nobleman and his lady having by this time, for many reasons, become great favourites with these two friends, they were, without the alteration of a single circumstance, informed of the real truth. This led to the establishment of a most intimate and binding friendship between the two couples, and the baronet and Lady Roebuck felicitated themselves upon the certainty, as they now conceived it, of that plan which they had formed of making Lord Hazard the reformer of his own village. As preaching however cannot have half the effect of example, they resolved, as the reader has seen, to reserve their grand attack till they should arrive at the place of action, when his lordship should be assailed in such a manner as would deprive him of the means of defending himself, and oblige him—especially as his lady was already gained over—to surrender at discretion.

Lord Hazard very soon got perfectly restored to health, and as there were no reasons to believe that his suspicions concerning his lady had any foundation, he by degrees regained his usual ease and tranquility.

As to Charles, he received a quire of letters from Miss Figgins, full of sythes and wows, and flamming arts: but, convinced that under the guidance of Standfast, all he incurred was a trifling expence, he rather felt proud of the business, and was not a little pleased that, at an age under eighteen, he had given such notable proofs of his manhood. He felt however very gratefully towards both his parents, who he was convinced knew of his irregularity, and had the kindness not to upbraid him with it; and, as this imaginary conduct of theirs induced him to treat them with the most dutiful and minute attention, so it endeared him to their notice and regard ten times stronger than ever. Sir Sidney was not an idle spectator of this. He was charmed with Charles, and really began to meditate seriously that alliance which it may be recollected he mentioned formerly in jest.

These projects, which were intended to blossom in the spring, and produce fruit in the summer, laid at present dormant in their minds; we will therefore pass over the hurry of the winter, and bring them to the sign of the John of Gaunt's Head, an inn in their way to Warwickshire.

The landlord of this house, who was a great favourite of Sir Sidney, prided himself on having as distinct and ample a genealogy as any lord; nay he looked upon himself as superior to many who boast that title: for, said he, "What are lords, the creatures of yesterday, to those in my family of three hundred years standing?" adding, 'alack a day! human creatures are buckets in a well, one up, and tother down."

This landlord was not a little proud of having been a substantial yeoman of Kent. He had been indeed a considerable farmer, but having a strong inclination to indulge himself in that hospitality in which it was not within his circumstances to cut any tolerable figure, he had entertained so many poor gentlemen of high extraction, till at length, as the phrase is, he ran out; and, leaving off farming, left also his own country, and took an inn not far from High Wickham.

The house bore all the insignia of its master's fancied consequence, and the reliques of those mighty deeds which were performed by his ancestors, and in which he took so much pleasure, as he sat in his chimney corner, to record, were distributed about wherever he could find a place for them. Shields and spears glittered in the kitchen instead of potlids and spits; helmets and cuisses, in the place of stag's horns, adorned the hall, and mismatched pieces of tapestry covered the walls of every room.

Lord Hazard insisted upon being introduced in form, and Sir Sidney undertook to be gentleman usher upon the occasion. My lord confessed he could boast but of very recent extraction, being, as one might say, a junior branch of the nobility. "Why truly' answered the landlord, 'you will pardon my jocularity my lord, there is a spot of Rust on your eschuteon which perhaps, by Hazard, may be rubbed out."

The archness as well as frankness of this reply pleased his lordship so much, that he entered into a long conversation with the landlord, that ended in an explanation of all the warlike trophies before mentioned, the history of which contained a kind of summary review of the history of England; we shall therefore forbear to recite any part of what passed, except one remark. They were examining a rosary, which was said to have belonged to the unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots. My lord said that her's was a lamentable fate. "Lamentable,' said the landlord, shaking his head, 'if she had not been an angel upon earth, Bess would not have been so ready to send her to make one in heaven."

2.12. CHAPTER XII.

A NIGHT SCENE, WHICH MR. FLUSH WOULD HAVE CALLED A VERY VARIETOUS KIND OF A THING.

AT the inn where our travellers lay had arrived two musicians, just before dark, who were going to a nobleman's seat in the neighbourhood, upon a summer excursion, and where there was to be a grand concert the next day. One of the gentlemen, an Italian, had the day before been seized with a violent fever, but being told that his patron had sent express for him, he determined to go in spight of his indisposition, especially as he knew he should be taken greater care of at the house of his benefactor than at home. His companion came to acquaint him that he had received a similar summons. This put the finishing stroke to the Italian's determination; for they were both famous performers on the trumpet, and seldom played asunder.

At this meeting the two musicians talked about what fishing and shooting they should have, and, above all, what delicious burgundy they should taste at his lordship's; nor did they fail to enjoy, by anticipation, certain jokes which the Italian, being a wag, had it in contemplation to play some of his lordship's retinue. One in particular he concerted, which was to ridicule a black servant, for whom the Italian had an inveterate aversion, because he could not blow the french horn in tune. "Perdio' cried he 'I tink I see de villain cavaliero vid his vite orse and plack visage make one tammed nise oh Diavolo." For it should here be known that his lordship, though he had constantly a troop of musicians after him, and some of them men of distinguished talents, would rather have been called in at the death of a fox, by the dissonant belching of his favourite horn, than have listened to the best chorus of HANDEL, performed by five hundred and fifty-three persons, capable of realizing all that celestial rapture of which Doctor BURNEY dreamt.

The English musician took his leave of the Italian recommending him to take as much rest as possible before they should set off. In conformity

with this advice, the Italian betook himself to sleep, and passed the night in tolerable tranquility, except that he had a slight delirium, in which he fancied the above mentioned black pursued him, on his white horse, and that he escaped from him with great difficulty; and much more such stuff, evidently the effect of a distempered brain. Having, however, shook off the phantom, he afterwards obtained tolerable repose, and felt himself pretty well recovered when his friend, the English musician, came to call him up.

I thought it necessary to premise thus much, that the reader might the better account for a disturbance that happened at the inn. The house was buried in a total silence, when the Italian, whose distemper had received no mitigation from either the journey or a shower of rain which had fallen in the afternoon, all of a sudden awoke from a horrid dream, in which his inveterate enemy, the black, appeared to him on his steed, as before, but with the addition of a large sabre, with which he threatened to put him instantly to death.

Frightened at the spectre, like Chamont, he rose and called for lights, which indeed he need not have done, for there was a solitary candle glimmering in the chimney corner, by the help of which imperfect luminary, every thing could faintly be discerned. Leaping from the bed, the first object his eyes encountered being a figure in the tapestry of Edward the black prince, mounted upon a white horse, and giving directions at the battle of Poictiers, he ran in a most frantic manner along the gallery, and, owing to his corpulent form—which extremely resembled a brandy keg, or a ninepin, made a rapid descent to the hall underneath. There, being in total darkness, he groped about for a considerable time, to no purpose, in hopes of finding a door into the yard.

All this time the fever being at an alarming height, every thing he touched seemed to be the falling stroke of that monstrous instrument of death wielded by the figure in the tapestry. At length, bellowing like a bull, and bounding from one table to another, like a tost pancake, or a kicked football, he discovered, as he imagined, the door. A faint glimmering of light that beamed on him facilitated this welcome idea, and he strove, but in vain, to find the lock. Exploring this impervious

gloom, which, as far as his scattered recollection gave opportunity to notice, appeared the seat of sorcery, where all the demons of hell were assembled to torment him; for as to being in an inn, it never once occurred to his imagination, something that felt like down, and smelt intolerably bitter, fell about his ears, and tormented him the more in proportion as he attempted to defend himself from it. And now, having his eyes, nose and mouth pretty well filled with this suffocating annoyance, which, contrary to the air-drawn dagger of Macbeth, was sensible only to the feeling, he stampt, rubbed his face, raved, sputtered, and struggled, till at last he got out of the vortex of this den of Erebus, to which he seemed to have been drawn by a hellish and invisible influence.

Lifting however his hands in an extreme of distraction—indeed exactly as St. Paul is drawn preaching at Athens—something tumbled from above which fitted himself completely, like a coat of armour, without the casque or cuisses.

Fully persuaded the demon that pursued him had now got him in his clutches, he stormed, howled, foamed, and squeaked out as incongruous and inarticulate a recitative as ever Hannibal or Scipio did at the opera house.

At this moment one of the waiters, who had been to pay a visit to the bed chamber of the cook maid Molly, and who of course was the most watchful in the house, entered the hall with a lighted candle.

The Italian's singular jeopardy was occasioned by his mistaking the chimney for the door. There, struggling to get out, he had made himself as black as a soot bag, and, upon his retreat, fairly invested himself in the strange manner above mention, with a buff jerkin, which my landlord had received as a legacy from his father, who affirmed and verily believed that it was the same worne by Guy, Earl of Warwick, when he killed the dun cow.

No sooner had the waiter seen this precious relique of his master's ancestors in the hands, or rather on the back of the Italian, than, taking

him for a thief, who wanted to rob the house, he ran to fetch his master. The Italian, to be even with him, upon descrying the light and an opposite door at the same time, ran rapidly up another pair of stairs. His precipitate flight confirmed the waiter in his suspicions, and facilitated his return to his master, who, by this time, alarmed by the noise, had just issued from his apartment.

The landlord having heard the matter from his man, swore by the glory of his forefathers he would cut him up alive, and invoking the manes of Edward the black prince, and John of Gaunt, followed muttering curses all the way to the chamber of the English musician, whither the Italian had by accident directed his flight, and to where his distracted bellowing piloted both man and master.

In the mean time, the Italian had reached his brother professor's apartment, and hid himself, buff jerkin and all, under the cloaths. The Englishman, disturbed by the noise, and still more by the Italian's flouncing into bed, waked in an instant, and before he had time to recollect what could occasion so extraordinary an intrusion, saw in a confused manner, by the help of the light which dimly gleamed through the passage, what a strange hedious figure he had in bed with him, on which he had no sooner cast his eyes, than, in a dreadful fright, he all of a sudden leaped from the bed, and got under it.

The Italian, who began to perceive the light, and concluding his companion had seen the man and horse which he had no doubt still pursued him, followed him close at his heels, being under the bed almost as soon as him. The English musician being pressed hard by the same abominable figure, half dead with the fright, crawled out on the opposite side, which happened to be next to the door, still followed by the Italian.

The landlord and the waiter now came up with them, and the candle being produced, the appearance of this quadrumvirate was beyond the power of tongue or pen to describe. The distraction of the Italian, the astonishment of his companion, the paralytic fear of the landlord, who, spight of the examples of his ancestors, trembled from head to foot, and the consternation of the waiter, composed in their different countenances

such a set of unbrageous, olive, livid and cadaverous tints as surely no faces ever before exhibited.

The English trumpeter, as he encountered the landlord, was overturned, and now lay flat on the floor. The descendant of Hengist had gathered himself up into a grotesque attitude, looking at the fallen musician, and the waiter was pushing the candle forward, under his master's arm, to see what was the matter, while the Italian had crept to the other side of the bed, and having searched for something to defend himself, catched up his companion's trumpet, who had brought that instrument into his chamber, to have it safe. With this weapon he leapt upon a chest of drawers, and whether he was now wrought to such a height of phrenzy as not to know what he did, or whether instinct conducted the trumpet to his mouth without his knowledge, certain it is that his stretched companion had scarcely demanded what was the matter, and the landlord thundered out a volley of execrations, ending with "give me my jerkin," than the Italian sounded a charge, and then a defiance, and then a parley, as fast as they could succeed each other.

The moment the English musician heard the trumpet, he knew his friend as well as if he had spoken to him, and instantly guessed that the confusion must have been occasioned by the Italian's illness, who had become delirious, and thus alarmed the house.

Feeling, however, for the safety of his trumpet, which same provident sensation impelled the landlord in relation to the Earl of Warwick's habiliment, they both approached him, where he stood, trumpet in hand, like another fame in a buff jerkin, and were within an inch of their prey, when the Italian fairly made a spring over their heads, darted out of the door, and ran along the gallery, then down stairs, afterwards out of the back door into the yard, and lastly all over the village, blowing away almost without any cessation.

This was a partial last trump to the village, for all but those in their graves immediately started up to see what was the matter. As to the inn, imagination never formed so singular a confusion. The musician raved for his trumpet, the landlord stormed for his buff jerkin; here a waiter

appeared with his cloaths tumbled into the tail of his shirt, which he held by way of an apron; there a maid servant with a petticoat tied about her head instead of her waist; here John the ostler appeared in Sukey's night cap, and Sukey in John's wig:—In short there was not one person in the house—for all agreed to put o [...] manly firmness, and meet in the hall together—even to Sir Sidney and Lord Hazard, that did not cut a ludicrous figure, while the village cried out some a fight, others a fire, and all with hasty steps ran towards our inn, which thus, in a few minutes, was filled, in addition to its own company, with the major part of the village, among whom were not a few females with clouts about their heads, and children in their arms, a sort of spectators who are sure to be foremost at every sight, be it a boxing match, a lord mayor's shew, or an execution.

The English musician, getting upon the great table, now begged to be heard; and having at last obtained silence, very naturally accounted for every thing that had happened, finishing with a declaration that he apprehended the Italian must now be so far gone, that the landlord's jerkin and his trumpet were certainly in danger of being spoiled.

"Far gone!" cried a country fellow, 'why I zeed un myzel at the back of Master Clover's barn, and that's only behind thick here orchard. Oons, do but list a tiny bit; dost not hear un?" "I do,' exclaimed the musician, 'I do, and my dear trumpet is as sound as ever! Zounds, I know what I will do: shew me to his bed chamber:"—at which he jumped down, and so scampered up stairs, that the spectators began to fear lest he should be infected with the same phrenzy as his companion. A very few seconds however brought him back again, with the Italian's own trumpet, hollowing out, "This will do, this will do; here is that shall bring him back again." He now hastened to the yard door, and, putting the trumpet to his mouth, sounded a defiance, which was immediately answered at a distance. In his next essay he was answered somewhat nearer. Upon two or three repetitions the Italian came down the street, sounding all the way a parley, till at last he was caught, held fast, brought into the house, and the trumpet and buff jerkin restored to their respective owners. As to the poor devil himself, he was an object of the truest compassion. His eyes darted fire, he foamed at the mouth, and raved like a bedlamite.

At the desire of his friend, the Italian was conveyed to his bed, which, in a most emaciated condition, he made shift to leave in somewhat less than five weeks.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.