THE WOLVES AND THE LAMB.
DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Mr. Horace Milliken, a Widower, a wealthy City Merchant.
George Milliken, a Child, his Son.
Captain Touchit, his Friend.
Clarence Kicklebury, Brother to Milliken’s late Wife.
John Howell, M.’s Butler and confidential Servant.
Charles Page, Foot-boy.
Bulkeley, Lady Kicklebury’s Servant.
Mr. Bonnington.
Coachman, Cabman; a Bluecoat Boy, another Boy (Mrs. Prior’s Sons).

Lady Kicklebury, Mother-in-law to Milliken.
Mrs. Bonnington, Milliken’s Mother (married again).
Mrs. Prior.
Miss Prior, her Daughter, Governess to Milliken’s Children.
Arabella Milliken, a Child.
Mary Barlow, Schoolroom Maid.
A grown-up Girl and Child of Mrs. Prior’s, Lady K.’s Maid, Cook.
THE

WOLVES AND THE LAMB

ACT I

Scene.—Milliken’s Villa at Richmond: two drawing-rooms opening into one another. The late Mrs. Milliken’s portrait over the mantelpiece; book-cases, writing-tables, piano, newspapers, a handsomely furnished saloon. The back room opens, with very large windows, on the lawn and pleasure-ground; gate, and wall—over which the heads of a cab and a carriage are seen, as persons arrive. Fruit, and a ladder on the walls. A door to the dining-room, another to the sleeping apartments, &c.

John. Everybody out; governor in the City; governess (heigh-ho!) walking in the Park with the children; Ladyship gone out in the carriage. Let’s sit down and have a look at the papers. Buttons! fetch the Morning Post out of Lady Kicklebury’s room. Where’s the Daily News, sir?

Page. Think it’s in Milliken’s room.

John. Milliken! you scoundrel! What do you mean by Milliken! Speak of your employer as your governor if you like; but not as simple Milliken. Confound your impudence! you’ll be calling me Howell next.

Page. Well! I didn’t know. You call him Milliken.

John. Because I know him, because I’m intimate with him, because there’s not a secret he has but I may have it for the asking; because the letters addressed to Horace Milliken, Esquire, might as well be addressed John Howell, Esquire, for I read ’em, I put ’em away and docket ’em, and remember ’em. I know his affairs better than he does: his income to a shilling, pay his tradesmen, wear his coats, if I like. I may call Mr. Milliken what I please; but not
you, you little scamp of a clod-hopping ploughboy. Know your
station and do your business, or you don't wear them buttons long,
I promise you. [Exit Page.

Let me go on with the paper. (Reads.) How brilliant this
writing is! Times, Chronicle, Daily News, they're all good, blest
if they ain't. How much better the nine leaders in them three
daily papers is, than nine speeches in the House of Commons!
Take a very best speech in the 'Ouse now, and compare it with
an article in the Times! I say, the newspaper has the best of
it for philosophy, for wit, novelty, good sense too. And the party
that writes the leading article is nobody, and the chap that speaks
in the House of Commons is a hero. Lord, Lord, how the world
is 'unbugged! Popular representation! What is popular represen-
tation? Darny, it's a farce. Hallo! this article is stole! I
remember a passage in Montesquieu uncommonly like it.

[Goes and gets the book. As he is standing upon sofa to
get it, and sitting down to read it, Miss Prior and
the children have come in at the garden. Children pass across stage.

Miss Prior enters by open window, bringing flowers
into the room.

JOHN. It is like it. (He slaps the book, and seeing Miss Prior
who enters, then jumps up from sofa, saying very respectfully,) I
beg your pardon, miss.

Miss Prior (sarcastically). Do I disturb you, Howell?

JOHN. Disturb! I have no right to say—a servant has no
right to be disturbed, but I hope I may be pardoned for venturing
to look at a volume in the library, miss, just in reference to a news-
paper article— that's all, miss.

Miss P. You are very fortunate in finding anything to interest
you in the paper, I'm sure.

JOHN. Perhaps, miss, you are not accustomed to political dis-
cussion, and ignorant of—ah—I beg your pardon: a servant, I
know, has no right to speak.

[Exit into dining-room, making a low bow.

Miss Prior. The coolness of some people is really quite extra-
ordinary! the airs they give themselves, the way in which they
answer one, the books they read! Montesquieu: "Esprit des
Lois!" (Takes book up which J. has left on sofa.) I believe
the man has actually taken this from the shelf. I am sure Mr.
Milliken, or her Ladyship, never would. The other day "Hel-
vetius" was found in Mr. Howell's pantry, forsooth! It is wonder-
ful how he picked up French whilst we were abroad! "Esprit des Lois!" what is it? it must be dreadfully stupid. And as for reading "Helvetius" (who, I suppose, was a Roman general), I really can't understand how—Dear, dear! what airs these persons give themselves! What will come next? A footman— I beg Mr. Howell's pardon—a butler and confidential valet lolls on the drawing-room sofa, and reads Montesquieu! Impudence! And add to this, he follows me for the last two or three months with eyes that are quite horrid. What can the creature mean? But I forgot—I am only a governess. A governess is not a lady—a governess is but a servant—a governess is to work and walk all day with the children, dine in the schoolroom, and come to the drawing-room to play the man of the house to sleep. A governess is a domestic, only her place is not the servants' hall, and she is paid not quite so well as the butler who serves her her glass of wine. Odious! George! Arabella! there are those little wretches quarrelling again!

 children are heard calling out, and seen quarrelling in garden.

John (re-entering). See where she moves! grace is in all her steps. 'Eaven in her high—no—a-heaven in her heye, in every gesture dignity and love—ah, I wish I could say it! I wish you may procure it, poor fool! She passes by me—she tramples on me. Here's the chair she sets in. (Kisses it.) Here's the piano she plays on. Pretty keys, them fingers out-bivrories you! When she plays on it, I stand and listen at the drawing-room door, and my heart throbs in time! Fool, fool, fool! why did you look on her, John Howell? why did you beat for her, busy heart? You were tranquil till you knew her! I thought I could have been so happy with Mary till then. That girl's affection soothed me. Her conversation didn't amuse me much, her ideers ain't exactly elevated, but they are just and proper. Her attentions pleased me. She ever kep' the best cup of tea for me. She crisped my buttered toast, or mixed my quiet tumbler for me, as I sat of evenings and read my newspaper in the kitching. She respected the sanctity of my pantry. When I was a-studying there, she never interrupted me. She darned my stockings for me, she starched and folded my chokers, and she sowed on the habsent buttons of which time and chance had bereft my linning. She has a good heart, Mary has. I know she'd get up and black the boots for me of the coldest winter mornings. She did when we was in humbler life, she did.
The Wolves and the Lamb

Enter Mary.

You have a good heart, Mary!

Mary. Have I, dear John? (Sadly.)

John. Yes, child—yes. I think a better never beat in woman's bosom. You're good to everybody—good to your parents whom you send half your wages to: good to your employers whom you never robbed of a halfpenny.

Mary (whimpering). Yes, I did, John. I took the jelly when you were in bed with the influenza; and brought you the pork-wine nekgs.

John. Port, not pork, child. Pork is the hanimal which Jews ab'or. Port is from Oporto in Portugal.

Mary (still crying). Yes, John; you know everything a'most, John.

John. And you, poor child, but little! It's not heart you want, you little trump, it's education, Mary: it's information: it's head, head, head! You can't learn. You never can learn. Your ideers ain't no good. You never can hinterchange 'em with mine. Conversation between us is impossible. It's not your fault. Some people are born clever: some are born tall—I ain't tall.

Mary. Ho! you're big enough for me, John.

[Offers to take his hand.

John. Let go my 'and—my a-hand, Mary! I say, some people are born with brains, and some with big figures. Look at that great ass, Bulkeley, Lady K.'s man—the besotted, stupid beast! He's as big as a life-guard'sman, but he ain't no more education nor ideers than the ox he feeds on.

Mary. Law, John, whatever do you mean?

John. I'm! you know not, little one! you never can know. Have you ever felt the pangs of imprisoned genius? have you ever felt what 'tis to be a slave?

Mary. Not in a free country, I should hope, John Howell—no such a thing. A place is a place, and I know mine, and am content with the spear of life in which it pleases Heaven to place me, John: and I wish you were, and remembered what we learned from our parson when we went to school together in dear old Pigeoncot, John—when you used to help little Mary with her lessons, John, and fought Bob Brown, the big butcher's boy, because he was rude to me, John, and he gave you that black hi.

John. Say eye, Mary, not heye (gently).

Mary. Eye; and I thought you never looked better in all your life than you did then: and we both took service at Squire Milliken's—me as dairy-girl, and you as knife-boy: and good masters
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have they been to us from our youth hup: both old Squire Milliken and Mr. Horace as is master now, and poor Mrs. as is dead, though she had her tantrums—and I thought we should save up and take the "Milliken Arms"—and now we have saved up—and now, now, now—oh, you are a stone, a stone, a stone! and I wish you were hung round my neck, and I were put down the well! There's the upstairs bell.

[She starts, changing her manner as she hears the bell, and exit.]

John (looking after her). It's all true. Gospel-true. We were children in the same village—sat on the same form at school. And it was for her sake that Bob Brown the butcher's boy whopped me. A black eye! I'm not handsome. But if I were ugly, ugly as the Saracen's Ead, ugly as that beast Bulkeley, I know it would be all the same to Mary. She has never forgot the boy she loved, that brought birds'-nests for her, and spent his halfpenny on cherries, and bought a fairing with his first half-crown—a brooch it was, I remember, of two billing doves a-hopping on one twig, and brought it home for little yellow-haired, blue-eyed, red-cheeked Mary. Lord, Lord! I don't like to think how I've kissed 'em, the pretty cheeks! they've got quite pale now with crying—and she has never once reproached me, not once, the trump, the little tr-rump!

Is it my fault (stamping) that Fate has separated us? Why did my young master take me up to Oxford, and give me the run of his library and the society of the best scouts in the University? Why did he take me abroad? Why have I been to Italy, France, Jummany with him—their manners noted and their realms surveyed, by Jingo! I've improved myself, and Mary has remained as you was. I try a conversation, and she can't respond. She's never got a word of poetry beyond Watts' Ins, and if I talk of Byron or Moore to her, I'm blest if she knows anything more about 'em than the cook, who is as ignorant as a pig, or that beast Bulkeley, Lady Kick's footman. Above all, why, why did I see the woman upon whom my wretched heart is fixed for ever, and who carries away my soul with her—prostrate, I say, prostrate, through the mud at the skirts of her gownd! Enslaver! why did I ever come near you? O enchantress Kelipso! how you have got hold of me! It was Fate, Fate, Fate. When Mrs. Milliken fell ill of scarlet fever at Naples, Milliken was away at Petersborough, Rooshia, looking after his property. Her foring woman fled. Me and the governess remained and nursed her and the children. We nursed the little ones out of the fever. We buried their mother. We brought the children home over Halp and Happenine. I nursed 'em all three, I tended 'em all three, the orphans, and the
lovely gu-gu-governess. At Rome where she took ill, I waited on her; as we went to Florence, had we been attacked by twenty thousand brigands, this little arm had courage for them all! And if I loved thee, Julia, was I wrong? and if I basked in thy beauty day and night, Julia, am I not a man? and if, before this Peri, this enchantress, this gazelle, I forgot poor little Mary Barlow, how could I help it? I say, how the doose could I help it?

Enter Lady Kicklebury, Bulkeley following with parcels and a spaniel.

LADY K. Are the children and the governess come home?
JOHN. Yes, my Lady (in a perfectly altered tone).
LADY K. Bulkeley, take those parcels to my sitting-room.
JOHN. Get up, old stoopid. Push along, old daddylonglegs [aside to Bulkeley).
LADY K. Does any one dine here to-day, Howell?
JOHN. Captain Touchit, my Lady.
LADY K. He's always dining here.
JOHN. My master's oldest friend.
LADY K. Don't tell me. He comes from his Club. He smells of smoke; he is a low vulgar person. Send Pinhorn up to me when you go downstairs. [Exit Lady K.

JOHN. I know. Send Pinhorn to me, means, Send my bonny brown hair, and send my beautiful complexion, and send my figure—and, O Lord! O Lord! what an old tigress that is! What an old Hector! How she do twist Milliken round her thumb! He's born to be bullied by women: and I remember him henpecked—let's see, ever since—ever since the time of that little governess at Woodstock, whose pieter poor Mrs. M. made such a noise about when she found it in the lumber-room. Heh! her picture will be going into the lumber-room some day. M. must marry to get rid of his mother-in-law and mother over him: no man can stand it, not M. himself, who's a Job of a man. Isn't he? look at him!

[As he has been speaking, the bell has rung, the Page has run to the garden-door, and Milliken enters through the garden, laden with a hamper, bandbox, and cricket-bat.

MILLIKEN. Why was the carriage not sent for me, Howell? There was no cab at the station, and I have had to toil all the way up the hill with these confounded parcels of my Lady's.

JOHN. I suppose the shower took off all the cabs, sir. When did a man ever git a cab in a shower?—or a policeman at a pinch—or a friend when you wanted him—or anything at the right time, sir?
 MILLIKEN. But, sir, why didn't the carriage come, I say?
JOHN. You know.
MILLIKEN. How do you mean I know? confound your im-

JOHN. Lady Kicklebury took it—your mother-in-law took it—
went out a-visiting—Ham Common, Petersham—Twick'nam—doose
knows where. She, and her footman, and her span'l dog.
MILLIKEN. Well, sir, suppose her Ladyship did take the car-
riage? Hasn't she a perfect right? And if the carriage was gone,
want to know, John, why the devil the pony-chaise wasn't sent
with the groom? Am I to bring a bonnet-box and a hamper of
sh in my own hands, I should like to know?
JOHN. Heh! (Laughs.)
MILLIKEN. Why do you grin, you Cheshire cat?
JOHN. Your mother-in-law had the carriage; and your mother
for the pony-chaise. Your pa wanted to go and see the
Wicar of Putney. Mr. Bonnington don't like walking when he
can ride.
MILLIKEN. And why shouldn't Mr. Bonnington ride, sir, as
long as there's a carriage in my stable? Mr. Bonnington has had
the gout, sir! Mr. Bonnington is a clergymen, and married to my
mother. He has every title to my respect.
JOHN. And to your pony-chaise—yes, sir.
MILLIKEN. And to everything he likes in this house, sir.
JOHN. What a good fellow you are, sir! You'd give your head
off your shoulders, that you would. Is the fish for dinner to-day?
Lambbox for my Lady, I suppose, sir? (Looks in.) Turban,
feathers, bugles, marabouts, spangles—doose knows what. Yes,
it's for her Ladyship. (To Page.) Charles, take this lambbox to
her Ladyship's maid. (To his master.) What sauce would you like
with the turbot? Lobster sauce or Hollandaise? Hollandaise is
best—most wholesome for you. Anybody besides Captain Touchit
coming to dinner?
MILLIKEN. No one that I know of.
JOHN. Very good. Bring up a bottle of the brown hock?
He likes the brown hock, Touchit does. [Exit John.

Enter Children. They run to MILLIKEN.

Both. How d'you do, papa? How do you do, papa?
MILLIKEN. Kiss your old father, Arabella. Come here,
George— What?
GEORGE. Don't care for kissing—kissing's for gals. Have you
brought me that bat from London?
MILLIKEN. Yes. Here's the bat; and here's the ball (take one from pocket)—and—

GEORGE. Where's the wickets, papa? O-o-o—where's the wickets? (Howls.)

MILLIKEN. My dear darling boy! I left them at the office. What a silly papa I was to forget them! Parkins forgot them.

GEORGE. Then turn him away, I say! Turn him away! [He stamps.

MILLIKEN. What! an old faithful clerk and servant of your father and grandfather for thirty years past? An old man, who loves us all, and has nothing but our pay to live on?

ARABELLA. Oh, you naughty boy!

GEORGE. I ain't a naughty boy.

ARABELLA. You are a naughty boy.

GEORGE. He! he! he! he! [Grins at her.

MILLIKEN. Hush, children! Here, Arabella darling, here is a book for you. Look—are n't they pretty pictures?

ARABELLA. Is it a story, papa? I don't care for stories in general. I like something instructive and serious. Grandmamma Bonnington and grandpapa say—

GEORGE. He's not your grandpapa.

ARABELLA. He is my grandpapa.

GEORGE. Oh, you great story! Look! look! there's a cab.

[Runs out. The head of a hansom cab is seen over the garden-gate. Bell rings. Page comes. Altercation between Calman and Captain Touchit appears to go on, during which—

MILLIKEN. Come and kiss your old father, Arabella. He's hungry for kisses.

ARABELLA. Don't. I want to go and look at the cab; and to tell Captain Touchit that he mustn't use naughty words.

[Runs towards garden. Page is seen carrying a carpet-bag.

Enter Touchit through the open window, smoking a cigar.

TOUCHIT. How d'ye do, Milliken? How are tallows, hey, my noble merchant? I have brought my bag, and intend to sleep—

GEORGE. I say, godpapa—

TOUCHIT. Well, godson!

GEORGE. Give us a cigar!

TOUCHIT. Oh, you enfant terrible!

MILLIKEN (wheezeily). Ah—ahem——George Touchit; you wouldn't mind—a—smoking that cigar in the garden, would you? Ah—ah!
TOUCHIT. Hullo! What's in the wind now? You used to be most inveterate smoker, Horace.

MILLIKEN. The fact is—my mother-in-law—Lady Kicklebury doesn't like it, and while she's with us, you know—

TOUCHIT. Of course, of course (throws away cigar). I beg Ladyship's pardon. I remember when you were courting her aughter she used not to mind it.

MILLIKEN. Don't—don't allude to those times.

[He looks up at his wife's picture.

GEORGE. My mamma was a Kicklebury. The Kickleburys are the oldest family in all the world. My name is George Kicklebury Milliken, of Pigeoncot, Hants; the Grove, Richmond, Surrey; and Portland Place, London, Esquire—my name is.

TOUCHIT. You have forgotten Billiter Street, hemp and tallow merchant.

GEORGE. Oh, bother! I don't care about that. I shall leave that when I'm a man: when I'm a man and come into my property.

MILLIKEN. You come into your property?

GEORGE. I shall, you know, when you're dead, papa. I shall have this house, and Pigeoncot; and the house in town—no, I don't mind about the house in town—and I shan't let Bella live with me—no, I won't.

BELLA. No; I won't live with you. And I'll have Pigeoncot.

GEORGE. You shan't have Pigeoncot. I'll have it: and the ponies: and I won't let you ride them—and the dogs, and you shan't have even a puppy to play with—and the dairy—and won't I have as much cream as I like—that's all!

TOUCHIT. What a darling boy! Your children are brought up beautifully, Milliken. It's quite delightful to see them together.

GEORGE. And I shall sink the name of Milliken, I shall.

MILLIKEN. Sink the name? why, George?

GEORGE. Because the Millikens are nobodies—grandmamma says they are nobodies. The Kickleburys are gentlemen, and came over with William the Conqueror.

BELLA. I know when that was. One thousand one hundred and sixty-one!

GEORGE. Bother when they came over! But I know this, when come into the property I shall sink the name of Milliken.

MILLIKEN. So you are ashamed of your father's name, are you, George, my boy?

GEORGE. Ashamed! No, I ain't ashamed. Only Kicklebury sweller. I know it is. Grandmamma says so.

BELLA. My grandmamma does not say so. My dear grandmama says that family pride is sinful, and all belongs to this
wicked world; and that in a very few years what our names:
will not matter.

George. Yes, she says so because her father kept a shop
and so did pa's father keep a sort of shop—only pa's a gen-
mans now.

Touchit. Darling child! How I wish I were married! If
had such a dear boy as you, George, do you know what I wo
give him?

George (quite pleased). What would you give him, godpapa?

Touchit. I would give him as sound a flogging as ever I
had, my darling. I would whip this nonsense out of him,
would send him to school, where I would pray that he might
well thrashed: and if when he came home he was still ashamed
of his father, I would put him apprentice to a chimney-sweep
that's what I would do.

George. I'm glad you're not my father, that's all.

Bella. And I'm glad you're not my father, because you are
wicked man!

Milliken. Arabella!

Bella. Grandmanma says so. He is a worldly man, and the
world is wicked. And he goes to the play; and he smokes, as
he says——

Touchit. Bella, what do I say?

Bella. Oh, something dreadful! You know you do! I be
you say it to the cabman.

Touchit. So I did, so I did! He asked me fifteen shill
from Piccadilly, and I told him to go to—to somebody whose m
begins with a D.

Children. Here's another carriage passing!

Bella. The Lady Rumble's carriage.

George. No, it ain't; it's Captain Boxer's carriage.

[They run into the garden]

Touchit. And this is the pass to which you have bro
yourself, Horace Milliken! Why, in your wife's time, it's
better than this, my poor fellow!

Milliken. Don't speak of her in that way, George Touchit.

Touchit. What have I said? I am only regretting her
for your sake. She tyrannised over you; turned your friend
of doors; took your name out of your Clubs; dragged you al
from party to party, though you can no more dance than a l
and from opera to opera, though you don't know "God Save
Queen" from "Rule Britannia." You don't, sir; you know
don't. But Arabella was better than her mother, who has the
possession of you since your widowhood.
Milliken. My dear fellow! no, she hasn’t. There’s my her.

Touchit. Yes, to be sure, there’s Mrs. Bonnington, and they rel over you like the two ladies over the baby before King mon.

Milliken. Play the satirist, my good friend! laugh at my kness!

Touchit. I know you to be as plucky a fellow as ever stepped, liken, when a man’s in the case. I know you and I stood up to another for an hour and a half at Westminster.

Milliken. Thank you! We were both dragons of war! Monstrous champions! Perhaps I am a little soft as regards men. I know my weakness well enough; but in my case what my remedy? Put yourself in my position. Be a widower with young children. What is more natural than that the mother my poor wife should come and superintend my family? My own her can’t. She has a half-dozen of little half brothers and ers, and a husband of her own to attend to. I daresay Mr. mington and my mother will come to dinner to-day.

Touchit. Of course they will, my poor old Milliken; you don’t to dine without them.

Milliken. Don’t go on in that manner, George Touchit! Why did not my stepfather and my mother dine with me? I can t. I am a domestic man and like to see my relations about I am in the City all day.

Touchit. Luckily for you.

Milliken. And my pleasure of an evening is to sit under my vine and under my own fig tree with my own olive-branches nd about me; to sit by my fire with my children at my knees; oze over a snug bottle of claret after dinner with a friend like h to share it; to see the young folks at the breakfast-table of a ning, and to kiss them and so off to business with a cheerful rt. This was my scheme in marrying, had it pleased Heaven to er my plan. When I was a boy, and came from school and ege, I used to see Mr. Bonnington, my father-in-law, with his ng ones clustering round about him, so happy to be with him! ager to wait on him! all down on their little knees round my her before breakfast or jumping up on his after dinner. It was h should reach his hat, and who should bring his coat, and who d fetch his umbrella, and who should get the last kiss.

Touchit. What? didn’t he kiss you? Oh, the hard-hearted gre!

Milliken. Don’t, Touchit! Don’t laugh at Mr. Bonnington! i as good a fellow as ever breathed. Between you and me,
as my half-brothers and sisters increased and multiplied year after year, I used to feel rather lonely, rather bowled out, you understand. But I saw them so happy that I longed to have a home of my own. When my mother proposed Arabella for me (for she and Lady Kicklebury were immense friends at one time), I was glad enough to give up Clubs and bachelorhood, and to settle down as a married man. My mother acted for the best. My poor wife’s character and my mother used to say, changed after marriage. I was not happy as I hoped to be; but I tried for it. George, I am not comfortable now as I might be. A house without a mistress, with two mothers-in-law reigning over it—one worldly and aristocratic and another what you call serious, though she don’t mind a rubber whist; I give you my honour my mother plays a game at whist and an uncommonly good game too—each woman dragging over a child to her side: of course such a family cannot be comfortable. (Bell rings.) There’s the first dinner-bell. Go and dress, if Heaven’s sake!

TOUCHIT. Why dress? There is no company!

MILLIKEN. Why? ah! her Ladyship likes it, you see. And costs nothing to humour her. Quick! for she don’t like to be kept waiting.

TOUCHIT. Horace Milliken! what a pity it is the law declares a widower shall not marry his wife’s mother! She would make you else,—she would, on my word.

Enter John.

JOHN. I have took the Captain’s things in the blue room, sir.

[Exeunt gentlemen, John arranges tables, &c.

Ha! Mrs. Prior! I ain’t partial to Mrs. Prior. I think she’s an artful old dodger, Mrs. Prior. I think there’s mystery in her unfathomable pockets, and schemes in the folds of her umbrella. But—but she’s Julia’s mother, and for the beloved one’s sake I am civil to her.

MRS. PRIOR. Thank you, Charles (to the Page, who has been seen to let her in at the garden-gate), I am so much obliged to you. Good afternoon, Mr. Howell. Is my daughter—are the darling children well? Oh, I am quite tired and weary! Three horrid omnibuses were full, and I have had to walk the whole way. Ah, times are changed with me, Mr. Howell! Once when I was young and strong, I had my husband’s carriage to ride in.

JOHN (aside). His carriage! his coal-waggon! I know we enough who old Prior was. A merchant? yes, a pretty merchant
a lodging-house, share in a barge, touting for orders, and at a snug little place in the Gazette.

Mrs. Prior. How is your cough, Mr. Howell? I have brought some lozenges for it (takes numberless articles from her pocket), if you would take them of a night and morning—oh, indeed, would get better! The late Sir Henry Halford recommended them to Mr. Prior. He was his late Majesty’s physician and ours. I know we have seen happier times, Mr. Howell. Oh, I am tired and faint.

John. Will you take anything before the schoolroom tea, ma’am? You will stop to tea, I hope, with Miss Prior, and our guests?

Mrs. Prior. Thank you: a little glass of wine when one is so tired—a little crumb of biscuit when one is so old and tired! I never been accustomed to want, you know; and in my poor Mr. Prior’s time——

John. I’ll fetch some wine, ma’am. [Exit to the dining-room.

Mrs. Prior. Bless the man, how abrupt he is in his manner! Quite shocks a poor lady who has been used to better days. Is it here? Invitations—ho! Bills for Lady Kicklebury! They are not paid. Where is Mr. M. going to dine, I wonder? Stain and Mrs. Hopkinson, Sir John and Lady Tomkinson, rest the pleasure. Request the pleasure! Of course they do. They are always asking Mr. M. to dinner. They have daughters and own son, and Mr. M. is a widower with three thousand a year, with a shilling of it. I must tell Lady Kicklebury. He must go to these places—never, never—mustn’t be allowed.

[While talking, she opens all the letters on the table, rummages the portfolio and writing-box, looks at cards on mantelpiece, work in work-basket, tries tea-box, and shows the greatest activity and curiosity.

Re-enter John, bearing a tray with cakes, a decanter, &c.

Thank you, thank you, Mr. Howell! Oh, oh, dear me, not so ch as that! Half a glass, and one biscuit, please. What scant sherry! (Sips a little, and puts down glass on tray.) Do I know, I remember in better days, Mr. Howell, when my poor husband——

John. Beg your pardon. There’s Milliken’s bell going like a bell.

[Exit John.

Mrs. Prior. What an abrupt person! Oh, but it’s comfort—, this wine is! And—and I think how my poor Charlotte did like a little—she so weak, and ordered wine by the medical
man! And when dear Adolphus comes home from Christ's Hospital—quite tired, poor boy, and hungry, wouldn't a bit of nice cake him good? Adolphus is so fond of plum-cake, the darling child. And so is Frederick, little saucy rogue; and I'll give them my piece and keep my glass of wine for my dear delicate angel Shatty!

[Takes bottle and paper out of her pocket, cuts off great slice of cake, and pours wine from wine-glass and decanter into bottle.

Enter Page.

PAGE. Master George and Miss Bella is going to have the teas down here with Miss Prior, Mrs. Prior, and she's up in the schoolroom, and my Lady says you may stay to tea.

MRS. PRIOR. Thank you, Charles! How tall you grow! Those trousers would fit my darling Frederick to a nicety. Thank you, Charles! I know the way to the nursery. [Exit Mrs. P.]

PAGE. Know the way! I believe she do know the way. But—jolly cake, ain't it? and wine, oh, my!

Re-enter John.

JOHN. You young gorgandising cormorant! What! meals a day ain't enough for you! What! beer ain't good enough for you, hey? [Pulls boy's ears]

PAGE (crying). Oh, oh, do-o-n't, Mr. Howell! I only to half a glass, upon my honour.

JOHN. Your a-honour, you lying young vagabond! I won't the ground don’t open and swallow you. Half a glass! (Holds decanter.) You've took half a bottle, you young Ananias! Man this, sir! When I was a boy, a boy on my promotion, a child kindly took in from charity-school, a orphan in buttons like you I never lied; no, nor never stole, and you've done both, you little scoundrel! Don't tell me, sir! there's plums on your coat, crumbs on your cheek, and you smell sherry, sir! I ain't time to what you now, but come to my pantry to-night after you've took the tray down. Come without your jacket on, sir, and then I'll tell you what it is to lie and steal. There's the outer bell. Scud, you vagabond!

Enter Lady K.

LADY K. What was that noise, pray?

JOHN. A difference between me and young Page, my Lad I was instructing him to keep his hands from picking and stea
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was learning him his lesson, my Lady, and he was a-crying
by K. It seems to me you are most unkind to that boy, 
. He is my boy, sir. He comes from my estate. I will 
re him ill-used. I think you presume on your long services. 
speak to my son-in-law about you. ("Yes, my Lady; no, 
ly; very good, my Lady." John has answered each sentence 
is speaking, and exit gravely bowing.) That man must 
e house. Horace says he can't do without him, but he must 
out him. My poor dear Arabella was fond of him, but he 
es on that defunct angel's partiality. Horace says this 
keeps all his accounts, sorts all his letters, manages all his 
may be trusted with untold gold, and rescued little George 
the fire. Now I have come to live with my son-in-law, I 
ep his accounts, sort his letters, and take charge of his 
; and if little Georgy gets into the grate, I will take him 
the fire. What is here? Invitation from Captain and Mrs. 
son. Invitation from Sir John and Lady Tomkinson, who don't 
me! Monstrous! he never shall go—he shall not go!

[Mrs. Prior has re-entered; she drops a very low curtsey 
to Lady K., as the latter, perceiving her, lays the 
cards down.

s. Prior. Ah, dear madam! how kind your Ladyship's 
was to the poor lonely widow-woman! Oh, how thought-
as of your Ladyship to ask me to stay to tea!
by K. With your daughter and the children. Indeed, my 
r. Prior, you are very welcome!

s. Prior. Ah! but isn't it a cause of thankfulness to be 
welcome? Oughtn't I to be grateful for these blessings?— 
say blessings. And I am—I am, Lady Kicklebury—to the 
—of—that angel who is gone. (Points to the picture.) It 
ar sainted daughter left us—left my child to the care of Mr. 
, and—and you, who are now his guardian angel I may 
You are, Lady Kicklebury—you are. I say to my girl, Julia, 
klebury is Mr. Milliken's guardian angel, is your guardian 
for without you could she keep her place as governess to 
arling children? It would tear her heart in two to leave 
and yet she would be forced to do so. You know that some 
will I hesitate to say whom I mean?—that Mr. Milliken's 
excellent lady though she is, does not love my child because 
c her. You do love her, Lady Kicklebury, and oh! a 
s fond heart pays you back! But for you, my poor Julia 
—go, and leave the children whom a dying angel confided
LADY K. Go! no, never! not whilst I am in this house, Mrs. Prior. Your daughter is a well-behaved young woman; you have confided to me her long engagement to Lieutenant—Lieutenant What-d’you-call’im, in the Indian service. She has been very good to my grandchildren—she brought them over from Naples when my—my angel of an Arabella died there, and I will protect Miss Prior.

MRS. PRIOR. Bless you, bless you, noble, admirable woman! Don’t take it away! I must, I will kiss your dear generous hand! Take a mother’s, a widow’s blessings, Lady Kicklebury—the blessings of one who has known misfortune and seen better days and thanks Heaven—yes, Heaven!—for the protector she has found!

LADY K. You said—you had—several children, I think, in good Mrs. Prior?

MRS. PRIOR. Three boys—one, my eldest blessing, is in a wife merchant’s office—ah, if Mr. Milliken would but give him an order from this house! an order from Lady Kicklebury’s son-law!——

LADY K. It shall be done, my good Prior—we will see.

MRS. PRIOR. Another, Adolphus, dear fellow! is in Christ Hospital. It was dear good Mr. Milliken’s nomination. Frederick is at Merchant Taylors’: my darling Julia pays his school. Besides, I have two girls—Amelia, quite a little toddle, just the size, though not so beautiful—but in a mother’s eyes all children are lovely, dear Lady Kicklebury—just the size of your dear grand daughter, whose clothes would fit her, I am sure. And my second Charlotte, a girl as tall as your Ladyship, though not with so fine a figure. “Ah, no, Shatty!” I say to her, “you are as tall as your dear patroness, Lady Kicklebury, whom you long so to see; you have not got her Ladyship’s carriage and figure, child.” I have children have I, left fatherless and penniless by my poor husband—but Heaven takes care of the widow and orphan, madam—and Heaven’s best creatures feed them!—you know who mean.

LADY K. Should you not like, would you object to take a frock or two of little Arabella’s to your child? and if Pinhorn, maid, will let me, Mrs. Prior, I will see if I cannot find some against winter for your second daughter, as you say we are of a size.

MRS. PRIOR. The widow’s and orphans’ blessings upon you. I said my Charlotte was as tall, but I never said she had such a figure as yours—who has?

PAGE (announces). Mrs. Bonnington!
Enter Mrs. Bonnington.

Mrs. B. How do you do, Lady Kicklebury?

Lady K. My dear Mrs. Bonnington! and you come to dinner, of course?

Mrs. B. To dine with my own son, I may take the liberty. How are my grandchildren? my darling little Emily, is she well, Mrs. Prior?

Lady K. (aside). Emily? why does she not call the child by her blessed mother's name of Arabella? (To Mrs. B.) Arabella is quite well, Mrs. Bonnington. Mr. Squillings said it was nothing; only her Grandmamma Bonnington spoiling her, as usual. Mr. Bonnington and all your numerous young folk are well, I hope?

Mrs. B. My family are all in perfect health, I thank you. Is Horace come home from the City?

Lady K. Goodness! there's the dinner-bell,—I must run to press.

Mrs. Prior. Shall I come with you, dear Lady Kicklebury?

Lady K. Not for worlds, my good Mrs. Prior. [Exit Lady K.

Mrs. Prior. How do you do, my dear madam? Is dear Mr. Bonnington quite well? What a sweet, sweet sermon he gave us last Sunday! I often say to my girl, I must not go to hear Mr. Bonnington, I really must not, he makes me cry so. Oh! he is a great and gifted man, and shall I not have one glimpse of him?

Mrs. B. Saturday evening, my good Mrs. Prior. Don't you know that my husband never goes out on Saturday, having his sermon to compose?

Mrs. P. Oh, those dear dear sermons! Do you know, madam, at my little Adolphus, for whom your son's bounty procured his place at Christ's Hospital, was very much touched indeed, the dear child, with Mr. Bonnington's discourse last Sunday three weeks, and refused to play marbles afterwards at school? The wicked naughty boys beat the poor child; but Adolphus has his consolation! Is Master Edward well, ma'am, and Master Robert, and Master Frederick, and dear little funny Master William?

Mrs. B. Thank you, Mrs. Prior; you have a good heart, indeed!

Mrs. P. Ah, what blessings those dears are to you! I wish ur dearest little grandson—

Mrs. B. The little naughty wretch! Do you know, Mrs. Prior, his grandson, George Milliken, spilt the ink over my dear husbands' pals, which he keeps in his great dictionary; and fought with my
child, Frederick, who is three years older than George—actually beat his own uncle!

Mrs. P. Gracious mercy! Master Frederick was not hurt, I hope?

Mrs. B. No; he cried a great deal; and then Robert came up, and that graceless little George took a stick; and then my husband came out, and do you know George Milliken actually kicked Mr. Bonnington on his shins, and butted him like a little naughty ramp.

Mrs. P. Mercy! mercy! what a little rebel! He is spoiled dear madam, and you know by whom.

Mrs. B. By his Grandmamma Kicklebury. I know it. I want my son to whip that child, but he refuses. He will come to no good, that child.

Mrs. P. Ah, madam! don't say so! Let us hope for the best. Master George's high temper will subside when certain persons who pet him are gone away.

Mrs. B. Gone away! they never will go away! No, mark my words, Mrs. Prior, that woman will never go away. She has made the house her own; she commands everything and everybody in it. She has driven me—me—Mr. Milliken's own mother—almost out of it. She has so annoyed my dear husband, that Mr. Bonnington will scarcely come here. Is she not always sneering at private tutors, because Mr. Bonnington was my son's private tutor, and greatly valued by the late Mr. Milliken? Is she not making constant allusions to old women marrying young men, because Mr. Bonnington happens to be younger than me? I have no words to express my indignation respecting Lady Kicklebury. She never pays any one, and runs up debts in the whole town. Her mother Bulkeley's conduct in the neighbourhood is quite—quite—

Mrs. P. Gracious goodness, ma'am, you don't say so! And what an appetite the gormandising monster has? Mary told me that what he eats in the servants' hall is something perfectly frightful.

Mrs. B. Everybody feeds on my poor son! You are looking at my cap, Mrs. Prior? (During this time Mrs. Prior has been peering into a parcel which Mrs. Bonnington brought in hand.) I brought it with me across the Park. I could not walk through the Park in my cap. Isn't it a pretty ribbon, Mrs. Prior?

Mrs. P. Beautiful! beautiful! How blue becomes you! Would you think you were the mother of Mr. Milliken and seven of those darling children? You can afford what Lady Kicklebury cannot.

Mrs. B. And what is that, Prior? A poor clergyman's wife with a large family, cannot afford much.

Mrs. P. He! he! You can afford to be seen as you are, w
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Lady K. cannot. Did you not remark how afraid she seemed lest I should enter her dressing-room? Only Pinhorn, her maid, goes there, to arrange the roses, and the lilies, and the figure—he! he! Oh, what a sweet sweet cap-ribbon! When you have worn it, and are tired of it, you will give it me, won't you? It will be good enough for poor old Martha Prior!

Mrs. B. Do you really like it? Call at Greenwood Place, Mrs. Prior, the next time you pay Richmond a visit, and bring your little girl with you, and we will see.

Mrs. P. Oh, thank you; thank you! Nay, don't be offended! I must! I must! [Kisses Mrs. Bonnington.

Mrs. B. There, there! We must not stay chattering! The bell has rung. I must go and put the cap on, Mrs. Prior.

Mrs. P. And I may come, too? You are not afraid of my seeing your hair, dear Mrs. Bonnington! Mr. Bonnington too young for you! Why, you don't look twenty!

Mrs. B. Oh, Mrs. Prior!

Mrs. P. Well, five-and-twenty, upon my word—not more than five-and-twenty—and that is the very prime of life!

[Execut Mrs. B. and Mrs. P. hand in hand. As Captain Touchit enters dressed for dinner, he bows and passes on.

TOUCHIT. So, we are to wear our white cravats, and our varnished boots, and dine in ceremony. What is the use of a man being a widower, if he can't dine in his shooting-jacket? Poor Mill! He has the slavery now without the wife. (He speaks sarcastically to the picture.) Well, well! Mrs. Milliken! You at any rate, are gone; and, with the utmost respect for you, I like your picture even better than the original. Miss Prior!

Enter Miss Prior.

MISS PRIOR. I beg pardon. I thought you were gone to dinner. heard the second bell some time since. [She is drawing back.

TOUCHIT. Stop! I say, Julia! (She returns, he looks at her, takes her hand.) Why do you dress yourself in this odd poky way? You used to be a very smartly dressed girl. Why do you idle your hair, and wear such a dowdy high gown, Julia?

JULIA. You mustn't call me Julia, Captain Touchit.

TOUCHIT. Why? when I lived in your mother's lodging, I called you Julia. When you brought up the tea, you didn't mind singing called Julia. When we used to go to the play with the actor's the Editor gave us, who lived on the second floor——

JULIA. The wretch!—don't speak of him!
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TOUCHIT. Ah! I am afraid he was a sad deceiver, that Editor. He was a very clever fellow. What droll songs he used to sing! What a heap of play-tickets, diorama-tickets, concert-tickets, he used to give you! Did he touch your heart, Julia?

JULIA. Fiddle-deedee! No man ever touched my heart, Captain Touchit.

TOUCHIT. What! not even Tom Flight, who had the second floor after the Editor left it—and who cried so bitterly at the idea of going out to India without you? You had a tendre for him—a little passion—you know you had. Why, even the ladies here know it. Mrs. Bonnington told me that you were waiting for a sweetheart in India, to whom you were engaged; and Lady Kicklebury thinks you are dying in love for the absent swain.

JULIA. I hope—I hope—you did not contradict them, Captain Touchit?

TOUCHIT. Why not, my dear?

JULIA. May I be frank with you? You were a kind, very kind friend to us—to me in my youth.

TOUCHIT. I paid my lodgings regularly, and my bills without asking questions. I never weighed the tea in the caddy, or counted the lumps of sugar, or heeded the rapid consumption of my liqueur——

JULIA. Hush, hush! I know they were taken. I know you were very good to us. You helped my poor papa out of many a difficulty.

TOUCHIT (aside). Tipsy old coal-merchant! I did, and he helped himself too.

JULIA. And you were always our best friend, Captain Touchit. When our misfortunes came, you got me this situation with Mrs Milliken—and, and—don't you see?——

TOUCHIT. Well—what?

JULIA (laughing). I think it is best, under the circumstance that the ladies here should suppose I am engaged to be married—or, they might be—might be jealous, you understand. Women are sometimes jealous of others—especially mothers and mothers-in-law.

TOUCHIT. Oh, you arch-schemer! And it is for that you covet that beautiful hair of yours, and wear that demure cap?

JULIA (slyly). I am subject to rheumatism in the head, Captain Touchit.

TOUCHIT. It is for that you put on the spectacles, and make yourself look a hundred years old?

JULIA. My eyes are weak, Captain Touchit.

TOUCHIT. Weak with weeping for Tom Flight. You hypocrit Show me your eyes!
Miss P. Nonsense!

TOUCHIT. Show me your eyes, I say, or I'll tell about Tom Flight, and that he has been married at Madras these two years.

Miss P. Oh, you horrid man! (Takes glasses off.) There!

TOUCHIT. Translucent orbs! beams of flashing light! lovely lashes veiling celestial brightness! No, they haven't cried much for Tom Flight, that faithless captain! nor for Lawrence O'Reilly, that killing Editor. It is lucky you keep the glasses on them, or they would transfixed Horace Milliken, my friend the widower here.

Do you always wear them when you are alone with him?

Miss P. I never am alone with him. Bless me! If Lady Kicklebury thought my eyes were—well, well—you know what I mean,—if she thought her son-in-law looked at me, I should be turned out of doors the next day, I am sure I should. And then, poor Mr. Milliken! he never looks at me—Heaven help him! Why, he can't see me for her Ladyship's nose and awful caps and ribbons! He sits and looks at the portrait yonder, and sighs so. He thinks that he is lost in grief for his wife at this very moment.

TOUCHIT. What a woman that was—eh, Julia?—that departed angel! What a temper she had before her departure!

Miss P. But the wind was tempered to the lamb. If she was angry—the lamb was so very lamblike, and meek, and fleecy.

TOUCHIT. And what a desperate flirt the departed angel was! I knew half-a-dozen fellows, before her marriage, whom she threw over because Milliken was so rich.

Miss P. She was consistent at least, and did not change after marriage, as some ladies do; but flirted, as you call it, just as much as before. At Paris, young Mr. Verney, the attaché, was never out of the house: at Rome, Mr. Beard, the artist, was always drawing pictures of her: at Naples, when poor Mr. M. went away to look after his affairs at Saint Petersburg, little Count Posilippo was for ever coming to learn English and practise duets. She scarcely ever saw the poor children. (Changing her manner as Lady Kicklebury enters.) Hush—my Lady!

TOUCHIT. You may well say, "poor children," deprived of such a woman! Miss Prior, whom I knew in very early days—as your ladyship knows—was speaking—was speaking of the loss our poor friend sustained.

LADY K. Ah, sir, what a loss! [Looking at the picture.

TOUCHIT. What a woman she was—what a superior creature!

LADY K. A creature—an angel!

TOUCHIT. Mercy upon us! how she and my Lady used to quarrel! (Aside.) What a temper!
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LADY K. Hm—oh yes—what a temper! (Rather doubtfully at first.)

TOUCHIT. What a loss to Milliken and the darling children!

MRS. PRIOR. Luckily they have you with them, madam.

LADY K. And I will stay with them, Miss Prior; I will stay with them! I will never part from Horace, I am determined.

MRS. P. Ah! I am very glad you stay, for if I had not you for a protector, I think you know I must go, Lady Kicklebury. I think you know there are those who would forget my attachment to these darling children, my services to—to her—and dismiss the poor governess. But while you stay I can stay, dear Lady Kicklebury! With you to defend me from jealousy I need not quite be afraid.

LADY K. Of Mrs. Bonnington? Of Mr. Milliken’s mother; of the parson’s wife who writes out his stupid sermons, and has half-a-dozen children of her own? I should think not indeed! I am the natural protector of these children. I am their mother. I have no husband. You stay in this house, Miss Prior. You are a faithful attached creature—though you were sent in by somebody I don’t like very much.

[Pointing to Touchit, who went off laughing when Julia began her speech, and is now looking at prints, etc., in next room.

MRS. P. Captain Touchit may not be in all things what one could wish. But his kindness has formed the happiness of my life in making me acquainted with you, ma’am; and I am sure you would not have me be ungrateful to him.

LADY K. A most highly principled young woman.

[ Goes out in garden and walks up and down with Captain Touchit.

Enter Mrs. Bonnington.

MRS. P. Oh, how glad I am you are come, Mrs. Bonnington! Have you brought me that pretty hymn you promised me? You always keep your promises, even to poor governesses. I read dear Mr. Bonnington’s sermon! It was so interesting that I really could not think of going to sleep until I had read it all through; it was delightful, but oh! it’s still better when he preaches it! I hope I did not do wrong in copying a part of it? I wish to impress it on the children. There are some worldly influences at work with them, dear madam (looking at Lady K. in the garden) which I do my feeble effort to—to modify. I wish you could come oftener.

MRS. B. I will try, my dear—I will try. Emily has sweet dispositions.
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MISS P. Ah, she takes after her Grandmamma Bonnington!
MRS. B. But George was sadly fractious just now in the school-
room because I tried him with a tract.
MISS P. Let us hope for better times! Do be with your
children, dear Mrs. Bonnington, as constantly as ever you can,
for my sake as well as theirs! I want protection and advice as
well as they do. The governess, dear lady, looks up to you as well
as the pupils; she wants the teaching which you and dear Mr.
Bonnington can give her! Ah, why could not Mr. and Mrs.
Bonnington come and live here, I often think! The children would
have companions in their dear young uncles and aunts; so pleasant
it would be. The house is quite large enough: that is, if her
Ladyship did not occupy the three south rooms in the left wing.
Ah, why, why couldn’t you come?
MRS. B. You are a kind affectionate creature, Miss Prior. I do
not very much like the gentleman who recommended you to Arabella,
you know. But I do think he sent my son a good governess for his
children. [Ladies walk up and down in front garden.

TOUCHIT enters.

TOUCHIT. Miss Julia Prior, you are a wonder! I watch you
with respect and surprise.
MISS P. Me! what have I done? a poor friendless governess—
respect me?
TOUCHIT. I have a mind to tell those two ladies what I think
of Miss Julia Prior. If they knew you as I know you, O Julia
Prior, what a short reign yours would be!
MISS P. I have to manage them a little. Each separately it is
not so difficult. But when they are together, oh, it is very hard some-
times.

Enter Milliken dressed, shakes hands with Miss P.

MILLIKEN. Miss Prior! are you well? Have the children been
good? and learned all their lessons?
MISS P. The children are pretty good, sir.
MILLIKEN. Well, that’s a great deal as times go. Do not
other them with too much learning, Miss Prior. Let them have
an easy life. Time enough for trouble when age comes.

Enter John.

JOHN. Dinner, sir. [And exit.
MILLIKEN. Dinner, ladies. My Lady Kicklebury.
[Gives arm to Lady K.}
LADY K. My dear Horace, you shouldn't shake hands with Miss Prior. You should keep people of that class at a distance, my dear creature.

[They go in to dinner, Captain Touchit following with Mrs. Bonnington. As they go out, enter Mary with children's tea-tray, &c., Children following, and after them Mrs. Prior. Mary gives her tea.

MRS. PRIOR. Thank you, Mary! You are so very kind! Oh, what delicious tea!

GEORGE. I say, Mrs. Prior, I daresay you would like to dine best, wouldn't you?

MRS. P. Bless you, my darling love, I had my dinner at one o'clock with my children at home.

GEORGE. So had we; but we go in to dessert very often; and then don't we have cakes and oranges and candied peel and macaroons and things! We are not to go in to-day; because Bella ate so many strawberries she made herself ill.

BELLA. So did you.

GEORGE. I'm a man, and men eat more than women, twice as much as women. When I'm a man I'll eat as much cake as or I like. I say, Mary, give us the marmalade.

MRS. P. Oh, what nice marmalade! I know of some poor children——

MISS P. Mamma! don't, mamma. (In an imploring tone.)

MRS. P. I know of two poor children at home, who have seldom nice marmalade and cake, young people.

GEORGE. You mean Adolphus and Frederick and Amelia, ye children. Well, they shall have marmalade and cake.

BELLA. Oh yes! I'll give them mine.

MRS. P. Darling dearest child!

GEORGE (his mouth fall). I won't give 'em mine; but the can have another pot, you know. You have always got a bakk with you, Mrs. Prior. I know you have. You had it that you took the cold fowl.

MRS. P. For the poor blind black man! oh, how thankful was!

GEORGE. I don't know whether it was for a black man. May get us another pot of marmalade.

MARY. I don't know, Master George.

GEORGE. I will have another pot of marmalade. If you don't I'll—I'll smash everything. I will.

BELLA. Oh, you naughty rude boy!

GEORGE. Hold your tongue. I will have it. Mary shall and get it.
MRS. P. Do humour him, Mary; and I’m sure my poor children
some will be the better for it.
GEORGE. There’s your basket! now put this cake in, and this
of butter, and this sugar. Hurray, hurray! Oh, what jolly fun!
Adolphus and Amelia I sent it to them—tell ’em they shall never
it for anything as long as George Kicklebury Milliken, Esquire,
give it ’em. Did Adolphus like my grey coat that I didn’t want?
MISS P. You did not give him your new grey coat?
GEORGE. Don’t you speak to me; I’m going to school—I’m not
go to have no more governesses soon.
MRS. P. Oh, my dear Master George, what a nice coat it is,
how well my poor boy looked in it!
MISS P. Don’t, mamma! I pray and entreat you not to take
things!

Enter John from dining-room with a tray.

JOHN. Some cream, some jelly, a little champagne, Miss Prior!
ought you might like some.
GEORGE. Oh, jolly! give us hold of the jelly! give us a glass
champagne.
JOHN. I will not give you any.
GEORGE. I’ll smash every glass in the room, if you don’t; I’ll
my fingers; I’ll poison myself—there!—I’ll eat all this sealing-
if you don’t, and it’s rank poison, you know it is.
MRS. P. My dear Master George! [Exit John.
GEORGE. Ha, ha! I knew you’d give it me; another boy taught
that.
BELLA. And a very naughty rude boy.
GEORGE. He, he, he! hold your tongue, miss! And said he
ys got wine so; and so I used to do it to my poor mamma,
Prior. Usedn’t to like mamma much.
BELLA. Oh, you wicked boy!
GEORGE. She usedn’t to see us much. She used to say I tried
ervs; what’s nerves, Mrs. Prior? Give us some more
amagne! Will have it! Ha, ha, ha! ain’t it jolly? Now I’ll
ut and have a run in the garden. [Runs into garden.
MRS. P. And you, my dear?
BELLA. I shall go and resume the perusal of the “Pilgrim’s
ress,” which my grandpapa, Mr. Bonnington, sent me.
[Exit Arabella.

MISS P. How those children are spoilt! Goodness, what can
? If I correct one, he flies to Grandmamma Kicklebury; if
ek to another, she appeals to Grandmamma Bonnington.
When I was alone with them, I had them in something like order. Now, between the one grandmother and the other, the children are going to ruin, and so would the house too, but that Howell—the odd, rude, but honest and intelligent creature, I must say—keeps it up. It is wonderful how a person in his rank of life should have instructed himself so. He really knows—I really think he knows more than I do myself.

Mrs. P. Julia dear!

Miss P. What is it, mamma?

Mrs. P. Your little sister wants some underclothing—sadly. Julia dear, and poor Adolphus's shoes are quite worn out.

Miss P. I thought so: I have given you all I could, mamma.

Mrs. P. Yes, my love! you are a good love, and general. Heaven knows, to your poor old mother who has seen better days. If we had not wanted, would I have ever allowed you to be governess—a poor degraded governess? If that brute O'Reilly who lived on our second floor had not behaved so shamefully wickedly at you, and married Miss Flack, the singer, you might not have been editor of the Champion of Liberty at this very moment, and sat in your opera-box every night?

[She drinks champagne while talking, and excites herself.]

Miss P. Don't take that, mamma!

Mrs. P. Don't take it? why, it costs nothing; Milliken can afford it. Do you suppose I get champagne every day? I might have had it as a girl when I first married your father, and we kept our gig and horse, and lived at Clapham, and had the best of everything. But the coal-trade is not what it was, Julia. We met with misfortunes, Julia, and we went into poverty: and your poor father went into the Bench for twenty-three months—two years all but a month he did—and my poor girl was obliged to dance at the “Coburg Theatre”—yes, you were, at ten shillings a week, in the Oriental ballet of “The Bulbul and the Rose”: you were, my poor darling child!

Miss P. Hush, hush, mamma!

Mrs. P. And we kep' a lodging-house in Bury Street, Saint James's, which your father's brother furnished for us, who was an extensive oil-merchant. He brought you up; and afterwards he quarrelled with my poor James, Robert Prior did, and he died, not leaving us a shilling. And my dear eldest boy went into a wine-merchant's office; and my poor darling Julia became a governess, when you had had the best of education at Clapham: you had, Julia. And to think that you were obliged, my blessed thing, to go on in the Oriental ballet of “The Rose and the Bul”—"

Miss P. Mamma, hush, hush! forget that story.
THE WOLVES AND THE LAMB

Enter Page from dining-room.

PAGE. Miss Prior! please, the ladies are coming from the Angle Room. Mrs. B. have had her two glasses of port, and her blyship is now a-telling the story about the Prince of Wales when danced with him at Carlton House. [Exit Page.

Miss P. Quick, quick! There, take your basket! Put on your bonnet, and good night, mamma. Here, here is a half-reign and three shillings: it is all the money I have in the world; take it, and buy the shoes for Adolphus.

Mrs. P. And the underclothing, my love—little Amelia's underclothing?

Miss P. We will see about it. Good night. (Kisses her.) 'T be seen here,—Lady K. doesn't like it.

Enter Gentlemen and Ladies from dining-room.

LADY K. We follow the Continental fashion. We don't sit down, Captain Touchit.

TOUCHIT. Confound the Continental fashion! I like to sit a while after dinner. (Aside.)

Mrs. B. So does my dear Mr. Bonnington, Captain Touchit.

TOUCHIT. I'm not surprised at it, ma'am.

Mrs. B. When did you say your son was coming, Lady Kellbury?

LADY K. My Clarence? He will be here immediately, I hope, dear boy! You know my Clarence?

TOUCHIT. Yes, ma'am.

LADY K. And like him, I'm sure, Captain Touchit! Everybody likes Clarence Kicklebury.

TOUCHIT. The confounded young scamp! I say, Horace, do you like your brother-in-law?

LILIKEN. Well—I—I can't say—I—like him—in fact, I . But that's no reason why his mother shouldn't.

[During this, Howell, preceded by Bulkeley, hands round coffee. The garden without has darkened, as if evening. Bulkeley is going away without offering coffee to Miss Prior. John stamps on his foot, and points to her. Captain Touchit, laughing, goes up and talks to her now the servants are gone.

Mrs. B. Horace! I must tell you that the waste at your house is shocking. What is the need of opening all this wine? You lady Kicklebury were the only persons who took champagne.
TOUCHIT. I never drink it—never touch the rubbish! old a stager!

LADY K. Port, I think, is your favourite, Mrs. Bonnington

MRS. B. My dear lady, I do not mean that you should have champagne, if you like. Pray, pray, don't be angry! why on earth, for you, who take so little, and Horace, who drinks it to keep you company, should not Howell open a instead of a great large bottle?

LADY K. Oh, Howell! Howell! We must not mention How my dear Mrs. Bonnington. Howell is faultless! Howell has keys of everything! Howell is not to be controlled in anythi Howell is to be at liberty to be rude to my servant!

MILLIKEN. Is that all? I am sure I should have thought y man was big enough to resent any rudeness from poor little How.

LADY K. Horace! Excuse me for saying that you don't kn—the—the class of servant to whom Bulkeley belongs. I h him, as a great favour, from Lord Toddleby. That class of serv is accustomed generally not to go out single.

MILLIKEN. Unless they are two behind a carriage-perch, ti pine away, as one love-bird does without his mate!

LADY K. No doubt! no doubt! I only say you are accustomed here—in this kind of establishment, you understand to that class of—

MRS. B. Lady Kicklebury! is my son's establishment not e enough for any powdered monster in England? Is the house de British merchant?—

LADY K. My dear creature! my dear creature! it is the he a British merchant, and a very comfortable house.

MRS. B. Yes, as you find it.

LADY K. Yes, as I find it, when I come to take care of my departed angel's children, Mrs. Bonnington—(pointing to picture—of that dear seraph's orphans, Mrs. Bonnington. You cannot You have other duties—other children—a husband at home & delicate health, who—

MRS. B. Lady Kicklebury, no one shall say I don't take care of my dear husband!

MILLIKEN. My dear mother! My dear Lady Kicklebury (To T. who has come forward.) They spar so every night the meet, Touchit. Ain't it hard?

LADY K. I say you do take care of Mr. Bonnington, Mrs Bonnington, my dear creature! and that is why you can't att to Horace. And as he is of a very easy temper—except som times with his poor Arabella's mother—he allows all his trad men to cheat him, all his servants to cheat him. Howell to be }
Everybody—to me amongst other people, and why not to my aunt Bulkeley, with whom Lord Toddleby's groom of the bers gave me the very highest character?

Mrs. B. I'm surprised that noblemen have grooms in their bers. I should think they were much better in the stables. I'm sure I always think so when we dine with Doctor Clinker. The man does bring such a smell of the stable with him.

Lady K. He! he! you mistake, my dearest creature! Your mother mistakes, my good Horace. You have lived in a most respectable sphere—but not—not—

Mrs. B. Not what, Lady Kicklebury? We have lived at mond twenty years—in my late husband's time—when we had a great deal of company, and when this dear Horace was a boy at Westminster School. And we have paid for every-thing we have had for twenty years, and we have owed not a penny to any tradesman, though we mayn't have had powdered nen six feet high, who were impertinent to all the maids in place—Don't! I will speak, Horace—but servants who d'us, and who lived in our families.

Milliken. Mamma, now, my dear good old mother! I am Lady Kicklebury meant no harm.

Lady K. Me! my dear Horace! harm! What harm could I in?

Milliken. Come! let us have a game at whist. Touchit, will make a fourth? They go on so every night almost. Ain't it ity, now?

Touchit. Miss Prior generally plays, doesn't she?

Milliken. And a very good player, too. But I thought you liked it.

Touchit. Well, not exactly. I don't like sixpenny points, brace, or quarrelling with old dragons about the odd trick. I'll go and smoke a cigar on the terrace, and contemplate the river Thames, the darkling woods, the starry hosts of heaven. I like smoking better than playing whist.

[Milliken rings bell.

Milliken. Ah, George! you're not fit for domestic felicity.

Touchit. No, not exactly.

Enter Howell.

Milliken. Lights and a whist table. Oh, I see you bring in. You know everything I want. He knows everything I want, owell does. Let us cut. Miss Prior, you and I are partners!
ACT II

Scene.—As before.

Lady K. Don’t smoke, you naughty boy! I don’t like.

Besides, it will encourage your brother-in-law to smoke.

Clarence K. Anything to oblige you, I’m sure. I can’t do without it, mother; it’s good for my health. When I was in the Plungers, our doctor used to say, “You ought never to smoke more than eight cigars a day”—an order, you know, to do it don’t you see?

Lady K. Ah, my child! I am very glad you are not with those unfortunate people in the East.

K. So am I. Sold out just in time. Much better fun here, than having the cholera at Scutari. Nice house, Milliken. Snob, but good fellow—good cellar, doosid good cook. Really, it salmi yesterday, couldn’t have it better done at the “Rag” as You have got into good quarters here, mother.

Lady K. The meals are very good, and the house is very good; the manners are not of the first order. But what can you expect of City people? I always told your poor dear sister, when she married Mr. Milliken, that she might look for everything substantial, but not manners. Poor dear Arabella would marry him.

K. Would! that is a good one, mamma! Why, you mother! It’s a dozen years ago. But I recollect, when I came home from Eton, seeing her crying because Charley Tufton—

Lady K. Mr. Tufton had not a shilling to bless himself with. The marriage was absurd and impossible.

K. He hadn’t a shilling then. I guess he has plenty now. Elder brother killed, out hunting. Father dead. Tuf a baronet with four thousand a year if he’s a shilling.

Lady K. Not so much.

K. Four thousand if it’s a shilling. Why, the property adjoin Kicklebury’s—I ought to know. I’ve shot over it a thousand times. Heh! I remember, when I was quite a young un, how Arabella used to go out into Tufton Park to meet Charley—and he is a doosid good fellow, and a gentlemanlike fellow, and a doosid deal better than this City fellow.
LADY K. If you don't like this City fellow, Clarence, why do me here? why didn't you stop with your elder brother at bury?

Why didn't I? Why didn't you stop at Kicklebury, a? Because you had notice to quit. Serious daughter-in-law about management of the house—row in the building. Other interferes, and politely requests mamma to shorten her

So it is with your other two daughters; so it was with her when she was alive. What shindies you used to have her, Lady Kicklebury! Heh! I had a row with my brother about a confounded little nursery-maid.

LADY K. Clarence!

And so I had notice to quit too. And I'm in very good order here, and I intend to stay in 'em, mamma. I say—

LADY K. What do you say?

K. Since I sold out, you know, and the regiment went abroad, and me, the brutes at the "Rag" will hardly speak to me! I'm so ill, I couldn't go. Who the doose can live the life I've and keep health enough for that infernal Crimea? Besides, could I help it? I was so cursedly in debt that I was obliged to give the money, you know. You hadn't got any.

LADY K. Not a halfpenny, my darling. I am dreadfully in myself.

I. I know you are. So am I. My brother wouldn't give me not a dump. Hang him! Said he had his children to look Milliken wouldn't advance me any more—said I did him in a horse transaction. He! he! he! so I did! What had I to put to sell out? And the fellows cut me, by Jove! Ain't it bad? I'll take my name off the "Rag," I will, though.

LADY K. We must sow our wild oats, and we must sober up; and we must live here, where the living is very good and cheap, Clarence, you naughty boy! And we must get you a wife. Did you see at church yesterday that young woman in green, with rather red hair and a pink bonnet?

K. I was asleep, ma'am, most of the time, or I was bookin' up odds for the Chester Cup. When I'm bookin' up, I think of ain' else, ma'am,—nothin'.

LADY K. That was Miss Brocksopp—Briggs, Brown, and Eksopp, the great sugar-bakers. They say she will have eighty thousand pound. We will ask her to dinner here.

K. I say—why the doose do you have such old women to her here? Why don't you get some pretty girls? Such a set confounded old frumps as cat Milliken's mutton I never saw.

Here's you, and his old mother Mrs. Bonnington, and old Mrs.
THE WOLVES AND THE LAMB

Fogram, and old Miss What's-her-name, the woman with the se eye, and that immense Mrs. Crowder. It's so stoopid, that weren't for Touchit coming down sometimes, and the billiards boatin', I should die here—expire, by gad! Why don't you some pretty women into the house, Lady Kicklebury?

LADY K. Why! Do you think I want that picture to down; and another Mrs. Milliken? Wishead! If Horace man again, would he be your banker, and keep this house, now that grateful son of mine has turned me out of his? No pretty we shall come into the house whilst I am here.

K. Governess seems a pretty woman: weak eyes, bad fig poky, badly dressed, but doosid pretty woman.

LADY K. Bah! There is no danger from her. She is a faithful creature, attached to me beyond everything. And eyes—her eyes are weak with crying for some young man who in India. She has his miniature in her room, locked up in her drawers.

K. Then how the doose did you come to see it?

LADY K. We see a number of things, Clarence. Will's drive with me?

K. Not as I knows on, thank you. No, ma; drivin's too slow you're going to call on two or three old dowagers in the Fat. Thank your Ladyship for the delightful offer.

Enter John.

JOHN. Please, sir, here's the man with the bill for the two pound three.

K. Damn it, pay it- don't bother me!

JOHN. Haven't got the money, sir.

LADY K. Howell! I saw Mr. Milliken give you a cheque twenty-five pounds before he went into town this morning. Look sir. (Runs, opens drawer, takes out cheque-book.) There it is marked "Howell, £25."

JOHN. Would your Ladyship like to step down into my pant and see what I've paid with the twenty-five pounds? Did a master leave any orders that your Ladyship was to inspect accounts?

LADY K. Step down into the pantry! inspect your account I never heard such impertinence. What do you mean, sir?

K. Dummy, sir, what do you mean?

JOHN. I thought as her Ladyship kept a heye over my maste private book, she might like to look at mine too.

LADY K. Upon my word, this insolence is too much.
THE WOLVES AND THE LAMB

N. I beg your Ladyship’s pardon. I am sure I have said

Said, sir! your manner is mutinous, by Jove, sir! if I had he regiment——

M. I understood that you had left the regiment, sir, just t went on the campaign, sir.

Confound you, sir! [Starts up.

A Y K. Clarence, my child, my child!

M. Your Ladyship needn’t be alarmed; I’m a little man, dy, but I don’t think Mr. Clarence was a-goin’ for to hit me, dy; not before a lady, I’m sure. I suppose, sir, that you ay the boatman?

No, sir, I won’t pay him, nor any man who uses this sort ned impertinence!

M. I told Rullocks, sir, I thought it was jest possible you it.

That’s a nice man, that is—an impudent villain!

A Y K. Ruined by Horace’s weakness. He ruins everybody, od-natured Horace!

Why don’t you get rid of the blackguard?

A Y K. There is a time for all things, my dear. This man y convenient to Horace. Mr. Milliken is exceedingly lazy,owell spares him a great deal of trouble. Some day or other I take all this domestic trouble off his hands. But not yet: poor brother-in-law is restive, like many weak men. He is ted to other influences: his odious mother thwarts me a deal.

Why, you used to be the dearest friends in the world. I ct when I was at Eton——

A Y K. Were; but friendship don’t last for ever. Mrs. ngton and I have had serious differences since I came to live she has a natural jealousy, perhaps, at my superintending her affairs. When she ceases to visit at the house, as she very ly will, things will go more easily; and Mr. Howell will go you may depend upon it. I am always sorry when my temper out, as it will sometimes.

Won’t it, that’s all!

A Y K. At his insolence, my temper is high; so is yours, ir. Calm it for the present, especially as regards Howell.

Gad! d’you know I was very nearly pitching into him? ice, one night in the Haymarket, at a lobster-shop, where I th some fellows, we chaffed some other fellows, and there e fellah—quite a little fellah—and I pitched into him, and e me the most confounded lickin’ I ever had in my life, since
my brother Kicklebury licked me when we were at Etoi
that, you see, was a lesson to me, ma'am. Never trust those
fellows, never chaff 'em: dummy, they may be boxers.

**Lady K.** You quarrellome boy! I remember you
home with your naughty head so bruised. *(Looks at vat
must go now to take my drive.*

**K.** I owe a doose of a tick at that billiard-room; I sha
that boatman dunnin' me. Why hasn't Milliken got any ho
ride? Hang him! suppose he can't ride—suppose he's a
He ain't my tailor, though, though I owe him a doosid
money. There goes mamma with that darling nephew an
of mine.

**Enter Bulkeley.**

Why haven't you gone with my Lady, you, sir? *(to Bulkeley)

**Bulkeley.** My Lady have a-took the pony-carriage, sir
Bonnington have a-took the hopen carriage and 'orses, si
mornin', which the Bishop of London is 'olding a confirm
Teddington, sir, and Mr. Bonnington is attending the ser
And I have told Mr. 'Owell, sir, that my Lady would pret
hopen carriage, sir, which I like the hexercise myself, sir, an
the pony-carriage was good enough for Mrs. Bonnington, sir
Mr. 'Owell was very hinsolent to me, sir; and I don't think
stay in the 'ouse with him.

**K.** Hold your jaw, sir.

**Bulkeley.** Yes, sir. *(Exit Bulk.*

**K.** I wonder who that governess is—sang rather pl
last night—wish she'd come and sing now—wish she'd com
amuse me—I've seen her face before —where have I see
face?—it ain't at all a bad one. What shall I do? damn
read a book: I've not read a book this ever so long. What's
*(Looks amongst books, selects one, sinks down in easy
so as quite to be lost.*

**Enter Miss Prior.**

**Miss Prior.** There's peace in the house! those noisy chi
are away with their grandmamma. The weather is beautiful.
I hope they will take a long drive. Now I can have a quiet
hour, and finish that dear pretty "Ruth"—oh, how it make
cry, that pretty story!

*(Lays down her bonnet on table—goes to glass—take
cap and spectacles—arranges her hair—Clarence
got on chair looking at her.*
By Jove! I know who it is now! Remember her as possible. Four years ago, when little Foxbury used to the ballet over the water. Don't I remember her! She by ears behind the scenes, by jingo! (Coming forward.) Emberton! Star of the ballet! Light of the harem! you remember the grand Oriental ballet of the "Bulbul Peri"?

Miss P. Oh! (screams). No, n—no, sir. You are mistaken: he is Prior. I—never was at the "Coburg Theatre."

(seizing her hand). No, you don’t, though! What! don’t remember well that little hand slapping this face? which nature then adorned with whiskers, by gad! You pretend you forgotten little Foxbury, whom Charley Calverley used to hold, and who used to drive to the "Coburg" every night brougham. How did you know it was the "Coburg"? a good one! Had you there, I think.

Miss P. Sir, in the name of Heaven, pity me! I have to my mother and my sisters and my brothers. When—when me, we were in great poverty; and almost all the ed earnings I made at that time were given to my poor then lying in the Queen's Bench hard by. You know there thing against my character—you know there was not. Ask a Touchit whether I was not a good girl. It was he who t me to this house.

Touchit! the old villain!

Miss P. I had your sister's confidence. I tended her abroad r death-bed. I have brought up your nephew and niece. ny one if I have not been honest. As a man, as a gentle- I entreat you to keep my secret! I implore you for the sake poor mother and her children! (kneeling).

. By Jove! how handsome you are! How crying becomes eyes! Get up; get up. Of course I'll keep your secret,

Miss P. Ah! ah!

[She screams as he tries to embrace her. Howell rushes in. Howell. Hands off, you little villain! Stir a step, and I'll you, if you were a regiment of captains! What! insult this who kept watch at your sister's death-bed and has took charge r children! Don’t be frightened, Miss Prior. Julia—dear, Julia—I'm by you. If the scoundrel touches you, I'll kill I—I love you—there—it's here—love you madly—with all art—my a-heart!

Miss P. Howell—for Heaven's sake, Howell!
K. Pooh—ooh! (Bursting with laughter.) Here's by jingo! Here's John in love with the governess. Fond Miss Pemberton—ey? Gad, it's the best thing I ever Saved a good bit, ey, Jeannes? Take a public-house? I'll buy my beer there.

John. Owe for it, you mean. I don't think your to profit much by your custom, ex-Cornet Kicklebury.

K. By Jove! I'll do for you, you villain!

John. No, not that way, Captain.

K. (screams). Hallo, Bulkeley!

[Struggles with and throws

Bulkeley is seen strolling in the ga

Enter Bulkeley.

Bulkeley. What is it, sir?

K. Take this confounded villain off me, and pitch him in the Thames—do you hear?

John. Come here, and I'll break every bone in your body. (To Bulkeley.)

Bulkeley. Come, come! whatevver his hall this year row.

Miss P. For Heaven's sake, don't strike that poor man.

Bulkeley. You be quiet. What's he a-hittin' about master for?

John. Take off your hat, sir, when you speak to a (Takes up a poker.) And now come on both of you, cowards.

| Rushes at Bulkeley and knocks his hat off his he

Bulkeley (stepping back). If you'll put down that poker, you know, then I'll pitch into you fast enough. But there poker ain't fair, you know.

K. You villain! of course you will leave this house.

Miss Prior. I think you will understand that you will go to don't think my niece wants to learn dancin', you understand.

Good-bye. Here, Bulkeley! [Gets behind footman and ex-

Miss P. Do you know the meaning of that threat, Mr. Hoy?

John. Yes, Miss Prior.

Miss P. I was a dancer on, for three months, four years when my poor father was in prison.

John. Yes, Miss Prior, I knew it. And I saw you a m

 Miss P. And you kept my secret?


Miss P. Thank you, and God bless you, John Howell! Th

there. You mustn't! indeed, you mustn't!
THE WOLVES AND THE LAMB

IN. You don't remember the printer's boy who used to come to O'Reilly, and sit in your 'all in Bury Street, Miss Prior? I was a country-bred boy—that is if you called Wimbledon Common and that. I served the family seven year. I went with Master Horace to College, then I revolted against service, and I thought I'd be a man and printer like Doctor Franklin. And I got in an office: and I with proofs to Mr. O'Reilly, and I saw you. And though I have been in love with somebody else before I did—yet it I hop when I saw you.

ISS P. (kindly). You must not talk to me in that way, John.

HN. Let's tell the tale out. I couldn't stand the newspaper work. I had a mother and brothers and sisters to keep, as ad. I went back to Horace Milliken and said, "Sir, I've lost yer. I and mine want bread. Will you take me back again?" He did. He's a kind kind soul is my master.

ISS P. He is a kind kind soul.

JOHN. He's good to all the poor. His hand's in his pocket for body. Everybody takes advantage of him. His mother-in-law over him. So does his ma. So do I, I may say; but that's now; and you and I have had our notice to quit, miss, I'd say.

MISS P. Yes.

JOHN. I have saved a bit of money—not much—a hundred d. Miss Prior—Julia—here I am—look—I'm a poor feller poor servant—but I've the heart of a man—and—I love—oh! I love you!

MARY. Oh—ho—ho!

[Mary has entered from garden, and bursts out crying.

MISS P. It can't be, John Howell—my dear, brave, kind John well. It can't be. I have watched this for some time past, poor Mary's despair here. (Kisses Mary, who cries plentifully.) You have the heart of a true brave man, and must show and prove it now. I am not—am not of your—pardon me for ing so—of your class in life. I was bred by my uncle, away in my poor parents, though I came back to them after his sudden th; and to poverty, and to this dependent life I am now leading. In a servant, like you, John, but in another sphere—have to k another place now; and Heaven knows if I shall procure now that that unlucky passage in my life is known. Oh, the yard to recall it! the coward!

MARY. But John whipped him, miss! that he did. He gave him well, John did. (Crying.)
Miss P. You can't—you ought not to forego an at tack like that, John Howell. A more honest and true-hearted e never breathed than Mary Barlow.

John. No, indeed.

Miss P. She has loved you since she was a little child. you loved her once, and do now, John.

Mary. Oh, miss! you hare a hangel,—I hallways sa were a hangel.

Miss P. You are better than I am, my dear—much, better than I am, John. The curse of my poverty has bee I have had to flatter and to dissemble, and hide the faults of I wanted to help, and to smile when I was hurt, and laugh I was sad, and to coax, and to tack, and to hide my time with Mr. Milliken: he is all honour, and kindness, and simp Whom did he ever injure, or what unkind word did he eve But do you think, with the jealousy of those two ladies or house, I could have stayed here without being a hypocrite t of them? Go, John. My good dear friend, John Howell, ; Mary. You'll be happier with her than with me. There! T [They emba

Mary. O—o—o! I think I'll go and hiron hout Miss' bella's frocks now.

Enter Milliken with Clarence—who is explaining things to him.

Clarence. Here they are, I give you my word of he Ask 'em, damn 'em!

Milliken. What is this I hear? You, John Howell, I dared to strike a gentleman under my roof! Your mas brother-in-law?

John. Yes, by Jove! and I'd do it again.

Milliken. Are you drunk or mad, Howell?

John. I'm as sober and as sensible as ever I was in my sir—I not only struck the master, but I struck the man, w twice as big, only not quite as big a coward, I think.

Milliken. Hold your scurrilous tongue, sir! My good-nat ruins everybody about me. Make up your accounts. Pack y trunks—and never let me see your face again.

John. Very good, sir.

Milliken. I suppose, Miss Prior, you will also be dispor to—to follow Mr. Howell?

Miss P. To quit you, now you know what has passed? never supposed it could be otherwise. I deceived you, Mr. Millik
THE WOLVES AND THE LAMB

A secret from you, and must pay the penalty. It is a me: the sword has been hanging over me. I wish I had poor wife, as I was often minded to do.

Iliken. Oh, you were minded to do it in Italy, were you?

P. Captain Touchit knew it, sir, all along: and that my and, thank God, my life were honourable.

Iliken. Oh, Touchit knew it, did he? and thought it ble—honourable? Ha! ha! to marry a footman—and public-house? I—I beg your pardon, John Howell—I othing against you, you know. You’re an honourable man except that you have been damned insolent to my brother-

N. Oh, Heaven!

[Strikes his forehead, and walks away.

P. You mistake me, sir. What I wished to speak of was which this gentleman has no doubt communicated to you—lanced on the stage for three months.

Iliken. Oh yes. Oh, damme, yes. I forgot. I wasn’t g of that.

Klebury. You see she owns it.

P. We were in the depths of poverty. Our furniture and -house under execution—from which Captain Touchit, when e to know of our difficulties, nobly afterwards released us. mer was in prison, and wanted shillings for medicine, and I—d and danced on the stage.

Iliken. Well?

P. And I kept the secret afterwards; knowing that I never hope as governess to obtain a place after having been dancer.

Iliken. Of course you couldn’t,—it’s out of the question; ay I ask, are you going to resume that delightful profession you enter the married state with Mr. Howell?

P. Poor John! it is not I who am going to—that is, it’s the schoolroom maid.

Iliken. Eternal blazes! Have you turned Mormon, John Il, and are you going to marry the whole house?

HN. I made a bass of myself about Miss Prior. I couldn’t r being 1—1—ovely.

ICK. Gad, he proposed to her in my presence.

HN. What I proposed to her, Cornet Clarence Kicklebury, y heart and my honour, and my best, and my everything— ou—you wanted to take advantage of her secret, and you l her indignities, and you laid a cowardly hand on her—a lly hand!—and I struck you, and I’d do it again.
MILLIKEN. What? Is this true?

KICK. Gad! Well—I only—

MILLIKEN. You only what? You only insulted a lad my roof—the friend and nurse of your dead sister—the of my children. You only took advantage of a defence and would have extorted your infernal pay out of her fear miserable sneak and coward!

KICK. Hallo! Come, come! I say I won't stand this chaff. Dammy, I'll send a friend to you!

MILLIKEN. Go out of that window, sir! March! or tell my servant, John Howell, to kick you out, you wretch scamp! Tell that big brute, what's his name?—Lady Kick man, to pack this young man's portmanteau and bear's-grease and if ever you enter these doors again, Clarence Kickley the Heaven that made me!—by your sister who is dead! cane your life out of your bones. Angel in heaven! Shade Arabella—to think that your brother in your house should to insult the guardian of your children!

JOHN. By jingo, you're a good-plucked one! I knew I miss,—I told you he was.

[Exit, shaking hands with his master and with and dancing for joy. Exit Clarence, scared, window.

JOHN (without). Bulkeley! pack up the Captain's luggage.

MILLIKEN. How can I ask your pardon, Miss Prior? wife's name I ask it—in the name of that angel whose you watched and soothed—of the innocent children whom you faithfully tended since.

MISS P. Ah, sir! it is granted when you speak so to me.

MILLIKEN. Eh, eh—d—don't call me sir!

MISS P. It is for me to ask pardon for hiding what you now: but if I had told you—you—you never would have taken into your house—your wife never would.

MILLIKEN. No, no. (Weeping.)

MISS P. My dear kind Captain Touchit knows it all. by his counsel I acted. He it was who relieved our distress, him whether my conduct was not honourable—ask him w my life was not devoted to my parents—ask him when—am gone.

MILLIKEN. When you are gone, Julia! Why are you! Why should you go, my love—that is—why need you go, devil's name?

MISS P. Because, when your mother—when your mother
THE WOLVES AND THE LAMB

'hear that your children's governess has been a dancer on y, they will send me away, and you will not have the power t them. They ought to send me away, sir; but I have onestly by the children and their poor mother, and you'll f me kindly when—I—am—gone?

LIKEN. Julia, my dearest—dear—noble—dar——the devil! ld Kicklebury.

Enter Lady K., Children, and Clarence.

DY K. So, Miss Prior! this is what I hear, is it? A dancer house! a serpent in my bosom—poisoning—yes, poisoning blessed children! occasioning quarrels between my own son y dearest son-in-law; flirting with the footman! When do tend to leave, madam, the house which you have po—poll l?

ss P. I need no hard language, Lady Kicklebury: and I will no none. I have signified to Mr. Milliken my wish to leave house.

Milliken. Not, not, if you will stay. (To Miss P.)

Lady K. Stay, Horace! she shall never stay as governess in house!

Milliken. Julia! will you stay as mistress? You have known or a year alone—before, not so well, when the house had a cess that is gone. You know what my temper is, and that my are simple, and my heart not unkind. I have watched you, have never seen you out of temper, though you have been tried. e long thought you good and beautiful, but I never thought t the question which I put to you now:—come in, sir! (to nce at door):—now that you have been persecuted by those ought to have upheld you, and insulted by those who owed gratitude and respect. I am tired of their domination, and ary of a man's cowardly impertinence (to Clarence) as of a n's jealous tyranny. They have made what was my Arabella's miserable by their oppression and their quarrels. Julia! my friend, my children's friend! be mine, and make me happy! eave me, Julia! say you won't—say you won't—dearest— st girl!

Miss P. I won't—leave—you.

George (without). Oh, I say! Arabella, look here: here's papa ing Miss Prior!

Lady K. Horace—Clarence my son! Shade of my Arabella! ou behold this horrible scene, and not shudder in heaven? ey! Clarence! go for a doctor—go to Doctor Straightwaist
at the Asylum—Horace Milliken, who has married the dæse
of the Kicklebury's of the Conqueror, marry a dancing-girl
stage! Horace Milliken! do you wish to see me die in conv
at your feet? I writhe there, I grovel there. Look! look
on my knees! your own mother-in-law! drive away this fiend
Milliken. Hem! I ought to thank you, Lady Kicklebu
it is you that have given her to me.

Lady K. He won't listen! he turns away and kiss
horrible hand. This will never do. Help me up, Clare
must go and fetch his mother. Ah, ah! there she is, there s
Lady K. rushes out, as the top of a barouche, wit
and Mrs. Bonnington and Coachman, is see
the gate.

Mrs. B. What is this I hear, my son, my son? You are
to marry a—a stage-dancer? you are driving me mad, Horace
Milliken. Give me my second chance, mother, to be l
You have had yourself two chances.

Mrs. B. Speak to him, Mr. Bonnington.

Lady K. Implore him, Mr. Bonnington.

Mrs. B. Pray, pray for him, Mr. Bonnington, my love
lost abandoned boy!

Lady K. Oh, my poor dear Mrs. Bonnington!

Mrs. B. Oh, my poor dear Lady Kicklebury!

[They embrace each ot

Lady K. I have been down on my knees to him, dearest
Bonnington.

Mrs. B. Let us both—both go down on our knees—I
(to her husband). Edward, I will! (Both ladies on their b
Bonnington with outstretched hands behind them.) Look, my
boy! look, Horace! two mothers on their wretched knees b
you, imploring you to send away this monster! Speak to him,
Bonnington. Edward! use authority with him, if he will
listen to his mother—

Lady K. To his mothers!

Enter Touchit.

Touchit. What is this comedy going on, ladies and gentle
The ladies on their elderly knees—Miss Prior with her hair d
her back. Is it tragedy or comedy—is it a rehearsal for a cha
or are we acting for Horace's birthday? or, oh!—I beg; Revere
ence's pardon—you were perhaps going to a professional d
Mrs. B. It's we who are praying this child, Touchit.
THE WOLVES AND THE LAMB

With whom you used to come home from Westminster when the boys. You have influence with him; he listens to you. Him to pause in his madness.


S. B. That—that woman—that serpent yonder—that—that woman, whom you introduced to Arabella Milliken,—ah! the day:—Horace is going to mum—mum—marry her!

YCHIT. Well! I always thought he would. Ever since I a and her playing at whist together, when I came down here a ago, I thought he would do it.

S. B. Oh, it's the whist, the whist! Why did I ever play t, Edward? My poor Mr. Milliken used to like his rubber.

YCHIT. Since he has been a widower—

Y K. A widower of that angel! [Points to picture.

YCHIT. Pooh, pooh, angel! You two ladies have never given r fellow any peace. You were always quarrelling over him. ok possession of his house, bullied his servants, spoiled his ; you did, Lady Kicklebury.

Y K. Sir, you are a rude, low, presuming, vulgar man. e! beat this rude man!

YCHIT. From what I have heard of your amiable son, he is the warlike line, I think. My dear Julia, I am delighted my heart that my old friend should have found a woman , good conduct, good temper—a woman who has had many ad borne them with great patience—to take charge of him ce him happy. Horace, give me your hand! I knew Miss great poverty. I am sure she will bear as nobly her present tune; for good fortune it is to any woman to become the such a loyal, honest, kindly gentleman as you are!

Enter John.

N. If you please, my Lady—if you please, sir—Bulkeley—

Y K. What of Bulkeley, sir?

N. He has packed his things, and Cornet Kicklebury's ny Lady.

LIKEN. Let the fellow go.

N. He won't go, sir, till my Lady have paid him his book es. Here's the book, sir!

Y K. Insolence! quit my presence! And I, Mr. Milliken, a house—

N. Shall I call your Ladyship a carriage?

Y K. Where I have met with rudeness, cruelty, and fiendish ; P., who smiles and curtsies)—yes, fiendish ingratitude.
Mrs. P. My Lady: I hope your Ladyship is quite well!

Kind Mrs. Bonnington! I came to pay my duty to you: this is Charlotte, my Lady—the great girl whom your Ladyship has been so kindly pleased to make your Ladyship's attendant, and this is my Bluecoat boy, sent to the Castle by my own Ladyship. I have brought his copy book to show you. (Charlotte makes a bow.)

Lady K. Or insolence, dear Mrs. Bonnington! Mrs. P. Insolence, dear Lady K. B. (Insolence, dear Mrs. Bonnington.) Mrs. P. (Collusion, dear Lady K. B.) (Insolence, dear Mrs. Bonnington.) Mrs. P. B. (Collusion, dear Lady K. B.) (Insolence, dear Mrs. Bonnington.)

Lady K. (Insolence, dear Mrs. Bonnington.) Mrs. P. B. (Collusion, dear Lady K. B.) (Insolence, dear Mrs. Bonnington.) Mrs. P. B. (Collusion, dear Lady K. B.) (Insolence, dear Mrs. Bonnington.) Mrs. P. B. (Collusion, dear Lady K. B.) (Insolence, dear Mrs. Bonnington.) Mrs. P. B. (Collusion, dear Lady K. B.) (Insolence, dear Mrs. Bonnington.)

Charlotte's hair is down. (Begins to be jilted.)

The other matter in her is coming! I met the road with all her family. He! he! he! (Scorn.)
and running to Milliken), My son, my son! Come here,
Come, Adolphus, Amelia, Charlotte—kiss your dear children. What, my dears! How do you do, dears? (She motions off the Children, who retire towards Her manner changes to one of great patronage and atisfaction.) Most hot weather, your Ladyship, I’m sure.
K. You must find it hot weather for preachin’! Lor’! hat little wretch beatin’ Adolphus! George, sir! have ’! (Runs to separate them.) How ever shall we make Idren agree, Julia?

P. They have been a little spoiled, and I think Mr. will send George and Arabella to school, mamma: will you ace?

Milliken. I think school will be the very best thing for

P. And (Mrs. P. whispers, pointing to her own children) room, the green room, the rooms old Lady Kick has— room for us, my dear!

P. No, mamma, I think it will be too large a party,—iken has often said that he would like to go abroad, and I now he will be making his tour.

P. Oh, then! we can live in the house, you know: what’s p payin’ lodgin’, my dear?

P. The house is going to be painted. You had best live own house, mamma; and if you want anything, Horace, iken, I am sure, will make it comfortable for you. He oo many visitors of late, and will like a more quiet life, I Will you not?

iken. I shall like a life with you, Julia.

K. Cab, sir, for her Ladyship!

K. This instant let me go! Call my people. Clarence,
Bulkeley, Pinhorn! Mrs. Bonnington, I wish you ning! Arabella, angel! (looks at picture) I leave you. me to you ere long.

Exit, refusing Milliken’s hand, passes up garden, with her servants following her. Mary and other servants of the house are collected together, whom Lady K. waves off. Bluecoat boy on wall eating plums. Page, as she goes, cries, Hurray, hurray! Bluecoat boy cries, Hurray! When Lady K. is gone, John advances.
THE WOLVES AND THE LAMB

John. I think I heard you say, sir, that it was your intention to go abroad?

Milliken. Yes; oh yes! Are we going abroad, my lady? Miss P., To settle matters, to have the house painted clear. (Pointing to Children, Mother, &c.) Don't you think it is the best thing that we can do?

Milliken. Surely, surely: we are going abroad. How will come with us of course, and with your experience you make a capital courier. Won't Howell make a capital Julia? Good honest fellow, John Howell. Beg your pardon being so rude to you just now. But my temper is very hot.

John (laughing). You are a Tartar, sir. Such a tyrant, he, ma'am?

Miss P. Well, no: I don't think you have a very bad heart, Mr. Milliken, a--Horace.

John. You must--take care of him--alone, Miss Prior.--I mean Mrs. Milliken. Man and boy I've waited on for fifteen years: with the exception of that trial at the printing which--which I won't talk of now, ma'am. I never knew an angry; though many a time I have known him provoked. I knew him say a hard word, though sometimes perhaps we served it. Not often--such a good master as that is proud of getting a good servant--that is, if a man has a heart bosom: and these things are found both in and out of livery. I have been a servant to him,--haven't I, Mr. Milliken?

Milliken. Indeed, yes, John.

John. And so has Mary Barlow. Mary, my dear! (comes forward.) Will you allow me to introduce you, sir. 'Futur' Mrs. Howell?--if Mr. Bonnington does your little bit for you, as I daresay (turning to Mr. B.), hold your nose, you. Make it up with your poor son, Mrs. Bonnington, ma'am, have took a second elpmate, why shouldn't Master Horace? Mrs. B.) He--he wants somebody to help him, and take a bow, more than you do.

Touchit. You never spoke a truer word in your life, How?

John. It's my general habit, Captaining, to indulge in these statements. A true friend I have been to my master, and my friend I'll remain when he's my master no more.

Milliken. Why, John, you are not going to leave me?

John. It's best, sir, I should go. I--I'm not fit to be a servant in this house any longer. I wish to sit in my own home, with my own little wife by my side. Poor dear! your conversation, Mary, but you're a good little soul. We've said hundred pound apiece, and if we want more, I know who
us, a good feller—a good master—for whom I've saved
hundred pound myself, and will take the “Milliken Arms”
conceit—and once a year or so, at this henniversary, we
our respects to you, sir, and madam. Perhaps we will
be children with us, perhaps we will find some more in
Bless 'em beforehand! Good-bye, sir, and madam—
Mary!

[Going.
P. (entering with clothes, &c.) She has not left a single
her room. Amelia, come here! this cloak will do capital
and this—this garment is the very thing for Adolphus.

Oh, Howell! will you please to see that my children
nothing to eat, immediately! The Milliken children, I
have dined already?

Yes, ma'am: certainly, ma'am.

P. I see he is inclined to be civil to me now!

P. John Howell is about to leave us, mamma. He is
to Mary Barlow, and when we go away, he is going to
housekeeping for himself. Good-bye, and thank you, John
and (gives her hand to John, but with great reserve of manner).

have been a kind and true friend to us—if ever we can serve
a count upon us—may he not, Mr. Milliken?

Milliken. Always, always.

Miss P. But you will still wait upon us—upon Mr. Milliken,
a day or two, won't you, John? until we—until Mr. Milliken
found some one to replace you. He will never find any one more
et than you, and good kind little Mary. Thank you, Mary,
your goodness to the poor governess.

Mary. Oh, miss! oh, mum!

[Miss P. kisses Mary patronisingly.

P. (to John). And after they have had some refreshment,
for my brothers and sisters, if you please, John. Don't
that will be best, my dear?

Ken. Of course, of course, dear Julia!
P. And, Captain Touchit, you will stay, I hope, and dine
Milliken? And, Mrs. Bonnington, if you will receive as
er one who has always had a sincere regard for you, I
will aid in making your son happy, as I promise you
my heart and all my life to endeavour to do.

[Miss P. and M. go up to Mrs. Bonnington.

BONNINGTON. Well, there then, since it must be so, bless
children!

Spoken like a sensible woman! And now, as I do
to interrupt this felicity, I will go and dine at the "Star"
Miss P. My dear Captain Touchit, not for worlds! I know I mustn't be alone with Mr. Milliken until—until—Milliken. Until I am made the happiest man alive you will come down and see us often, Touchit, won't you? We hope to see our friends here often. And we will have life and spirit and gaiety in the place. Oh, mother! oh, oh, Julia! what a comfort it is to me to think that I am free from the tyranny of that terrible mother-in-law!

Mrs. Prior. Come in to your teas, children. This moment, I say.

[The Children pass, quarrelling, behind the door. Mrs. Prior summoning them: John and Mary falling on each side of the dining-room door and falling.]
LOVEL THE WIDOWER.
LOVEL THE WIDOWER

CHAPTER I

THE BACHELOR OF BEAK STREET

Who shall be the hero of this tale? Not I who write it. I am but the Chorus of the Play. I make remarks on the conduct of the characters; I narrate their simple

discontent: the scene is in the parlour, and the region beneath parlour. No: it may be the parlour and kitchen, in this case, are on the same level. There is no high life, unless, to re, you may be, while some certainly are not. I don't think there's

sin in the whole performance. There is an abominable selfish woman, certainly; an old highway robber; an old sponger on people's kindness; an old haunter of Bath and Cheltenham in-lings (about which how can I know anything, never been in a boarding-house at Bath or Cheltenham in my; an old swindler of tradesmen, tyrant of servants, bully of you—who, to be sure, might do duty for a villain, but she

herself as virtuous a woman as ever was born. The is not faultless (ah! that will be a great relief to some folk, any writers' good women are, you know, so very insipid).

principal personage you may very likely think to be no better. But is many a respectable man of our acquaintance? and do muffs know that they are what they are, or, are they unhappy? Do girls decline to marry one if he we refuse to dine with one? I listened to one at church, with all the women crying and sobbing; and, oh, dearly he preached! Don't we give him great credit for eloquence in the House of Commons? Don't we give ant commands in the army? Can you, or can you not, ie who has been made a peer? Doesn't your wife call
one in the moment any of the children are ill? Don't, dear poems, or even novels? Yes; perhaps even this and written by—-Well! Quid vis? Do you mean painting a portrait which hangs before me every morn looking-glass when I am shaving? Après! Do you suppose that I have not infirmities like my neighbour weak? It is notorious to all my friends there is a can't resist: no, not if I have already eaten twice to dinner. So, dear sir, or madam, have you your weak irresistible dish of temptation? (or if you don't know it, do). No, dear friend, the chances are that you and I are of the highest intellect, of the largest fortune, of the family, of the most consummate virtue, of the most fault in face and figure. We are no heroes nor angels; neither fiend from abodes unmentionable, black assassins, treacherous familiar with stabbing and poison—murder our amusements, our playthings, arsenic our daily bread, lies our convert forgeries our common handwriting. No, we are not a crime, or angels walking the earth—-at least I know one isn't, as can be shown any day at home if the knife the mutton comes up raw. But we are not altogether unkind, and a few folks like us. Our poetry is not Alfred Tennyson's, but we can turn a couplet for Mi-album: our jokes are not always first-rate, but Mary mother smile very kindly when papa tells his story or pun. We have many weaknesses, but we are not ruthless. No more was my friend Lovel. On the contrary, he was less and kindly a fellow as ever lived when I first knew him, present, with his changed position, he is, perhaps, rather certainly I am not asked to his best dinner-parties as I used to be, where you hardly see a commoner—but stay! I am matters). At the time when this story begins, I say, his faults—which of us has not? He had buried his wife notoriously been henpecked by her. How many men and are like him! He had a good fortune - I wish I had though I daresay many people are ten times as rich, good-looking fellow enough; though that depends, had whether you like a fair man or a dark one. He had a house, but it was only at Putney. In fact, he was in the City, and being an hospitable man, and having the spare bedrooms, some of his friends were always welcome; lands, especially after Mrs. Lovel's death, who liked me at the period of her early marriage with my friend, but g like me at last and to show me the cold shoulder. That
old like (though I have known fellows who persist in year after year, who cling hold of it, and refuse to be from it). I say, when Lovel's wife began to show me as tired of my company, I made myself scarce: used to be engaged when Fred faintly asked me to Shrublands; is meek apologies, proposals to dine en garçon at Green-club, and so forth; and never visit upon him my wrath's indifference—for, after all, he had been my friend at tch: he never stinted at "Hart's" or "Lovegrove's," s made a point of having the wine I liked, never mind price was. As for his wife, there was, assuredly, no love en us—I thought her a lean, scraggy, lackadaisical, egoconsequential, insipid creature; and as for his mother-in-stayed at Fred's as long and as often as her daughter sure her, has any one who ever knew that notorious old ter at Bath, at Cheltenham, at Brighton,—wherever nd frumps were found together; wherever scandal was wherever fly-blown reputations were assembled, and with damaged titles trod over each other for the pas;—y, ever had a good word for that old woman? What's not bored where she appeared? What tradesman was with whom she dealt? I wish with all my heart I was narrate a story with a good mother-in-law for a character; you know, my dear madam, all good women in novels are This woman certainly was not. She was not only not ut exceedingly bad-tasted. She had a foul loud tongue, a ad, a bad temper, an immense pride and arrogance, an nt son, and very little money. Can I say much more of a man this? Aha! my good Lady Baker! I was a mauvais I?—I was leading Fred into smoking, drinking, and low habits, was I? I, his old friend, who have borrowed om him any time these twenty years, was not fit company and your precious daughter? Indeed! I paid the money ed from him like a man; but did you ever pay him, I ke to know? When Mrs. Lovel was in the first column of se, then Fred and I used to go off to Greenwich and Black- said; then his kind old heart was allowed to feel for his hen we could have the other bottle of claret without the ce of Bedford and the coffee, which in Mrs. L.'s time used in to us before we could ring for a second bottle, although Lady Baker had had three glasses each out of the first. glasses each, I give you my word! No, madam, it was to bully me once—now it is mine and I use it. No, you haran, though you pretend you never read novels, some of
your confounded good-natured friends will let you know. Here you are, do you hear? Here you shall be shown so I intend to show up other women and other men offended me. Is one to be subject to slights and scorn have revenge? Kindnesses are easily forgotten; but what worthy man does not keep those in mind?

Before entering upon the present narrative, may I to inform a candid public that, though it is all true, the word of truth in it; that though Lovel is alive and pros you very likely have met him, yet I defy you to point that his wife (for he is Lovel the Widower no more) lady you imagine her to be, when you say (as you will doing), "Oh, that character is intended for Mrs. Thingam notoriously drawn from Lady So-and-So." No. You a mistaken. Why, even the advertising puffers have almost that stale stratagem of announcing "Revelations from H. The beau monde will be startled at recognising the sone of its brilliant leaders in Miss Wiggins's forthcoming société." Or, "We suspect a certain ducal house will be to guess how the pitiless author of 'Mayfair Mysteries' acquainted with (and exposed with a fearless hand) certain secrets which were thought only to be known to a few of highest members of the aristocracy." No, I say; these silly watch an unsuspecting public shall not be our arts. If you occupy yourself with trying to ascertain if a certain cap amongst ever so many thousand heads, you may possibl on the right one; but the cap-maker will perish before he t unless, of course, he has some private pique to avenge, to wreak, upon some individual who can't by any possib again; —then, indeed, he will come boldly forward and se his victim —(a bishop, say, or a woman without coarse qua male relatives, will be best) —and clasp on him, or her, su with such ears, that all the world shall laugh at the poor shuddering and blushing beetroot red, and whimpering tears of rage and vexation at being made the common society. Besides, I dine at Lovel's still; his company and are amongst the best in London. If they suspected I was them off, he and his wife would leave off inviting me. Wo man of a generous disposition lose such a valued friend or be so foolish as to show him up in a story? All persons decent knowledge of the world will at once banish the that not merely base, but absurd. I am invited to his house next week: vous concevez; I can't mention the very day, for would find me out —and of course there would be no mo
THE BACHELOR OF BEAK STREET

And friend. He would not like appearing, as it must be owned
in this memoir, as a man of not very strong mind. He
himself to be a most determined, resolute person. He is
speech, wears a fierce beard, speaks with asperity to his
(who liken him to a—to that before-named sable or ermine
ruffian, in which ladies insert their hands in winter), and takes
to task so smartly, that I believe she believes he believes
master of the house. "Elizabeth, my love, he must mean
or D," I fancy I hear Lovel say; and she says, "Yes; oh!
certainly D—his very image!" "D to a T," says Lovel
(a neat wit). She may know that I mean to depict her
plainsly in the above unpretending lines: but she will never let
any of her knowledge except by a little extra courtesy; except
say (make this pleasing exception?) by a few more invitations;
called by a look of those unfathomable eyes (gracious goodness! to
and she wore spectacles ever so long, and put a lid over them as
were), into which, when you gaze sometimes, you may gaze so
deep and deep, and deep, that I defy you to plump half-way down
their mystery.

When I was a young man, I had lodgings in Beak Street,
eager Street (I no more have lived in Beak Street than in Bel-
avy Square: but I choose to say so, and no gentleman will be so
wise as to contradict another)—I had lodgings, I say, in Beak Street,
eager Street. Mrs. Prior was the landlady's name. She had
her better days—landladies frequently have. Her husband—he
not be called the landlord, for Mrs. P. was manager of the
no had been, in happier times, captain or lieutenant in the
flying, then of Diss, in Norfolk, of no profession; then of Norwich
in a prisoner for debt; then of Southampton Buildings, London,
western; then of the Bom-Retiro Caçadores, in the service of
the Queen of Portugal, lieutenant and paymaster; then of
Place, Saint George's Fields, &c.—I forbear to give the
regulators of an existence which a legal biographer has traced step
and which has more than once been the subject of judicial
ation by certain commissioners in Lincoln's Inn Fields.
rior, at this time, swimming out of a hundred shipwrecks,
tbered on to a lighter, as it were, and was clerk to a coal-
by the river-side. "You conceive, sir," he would say,
ployment is only temporary—the fortune of war, the fortune"
He smattered words in not a few foreign languages.
on was profusely scented with tobacco. Bearded individuals,
the muddy hoof in the neighbouring Regent Street, would
times of an evening, and ask for "the Captain." He was
at many neighbouring billiard-tables, and, I imagine, not
respected. You will not see enough of Captain Prior, weary of him and his coarse swagger, to be disinclined to repeat requests for small money-laws, or to depend which you will please to suppose has happened before of our present drama draws up. I think two people were sorry for him; his wife, who still loved the handsome young man who had wooed and won her; Elizabeth, whom for the last few months of his life, fatal illness, he every evening conducted to what I call "Academy." You are right. Elizabeth is the prime in this story. When I knew her, a thin freckled girl with a lean frock, and hair of a reddish hue, she used books, and play on the First Floor's piano, when home—Shumley his name was. He was editor of the paper then published; author of a great number of poems, friend of several music-selling houses; and it was by interest that Elizabeth was received as a pupil at what called "the Academy."

Captain Prior then used to conduct his girl to school but she often had to conduct him home again. He about the premises for two, or three, or five hours whilst Elizabeth was doing her lessons, he would need to shelter himself from the cold at some neighbour's entertainment. Every Friday, a prize of a golden medallion sometimes of twenty-five silver medals, was Miss Bellenden and other young ladies for their good assiduity at this Academy. Miss Bellenden gave her to her mother, only keeping five shillings for herself, the poor child bought gloves, shoes, and her humble millinery.

Once or twice the Captain succeeded in intercepting of gold, and I daresay treated some of his whiskered clinking trampers of the Quadrant pavement. He banded fellow when he had anybody's money in his was owing to differences regarding the settlement of he quarrelled with the coal-merchant, his very kinsman Bessy, after yielding once or twice to his importunity to believe his solemn promises of repayment, had strenuously refuse her father the pound which he would have five shillings—her poor little slender pocket-money, tative of her charities and kindnesses to the little sisters, of her little toilette ornaments, may necessities; mended gloves, of those oft darned stockings, of those which had to walk many a weary mile after midni
THE BACHELOR OF BEAK STREET

knacks, in the shape of brooch or bracelet, with which the
adorned her homely robe or sleeve—her poor five shillings,
which Mary sometimes found a pair of shoes, or Tommy a
ocket, and little Bill a coach and horse—this wretched
mite, which Bessy administered amongst so many poor—
much fear her father sometimes confiscated. I charged the
with the fact, and she could not deny me. I vowed a
ous vow, that if ever I heard of her giving Prior money
would quit the lodgings, and never give those children
or pegtop, nor sixpence; nor the pungent marmalade,
the biting gingerbread-nut, nor the theatre characters, nor the
our to illuminate the same; nor the discarded clothes, which
smaller clothes upon the persons of little Tommy and
Bill, for whom Mrs. Prior, and Bessy, and the little maid,
chipped, altered, ironed, darned, mangled, with the greatest
uity. I say, considering what had passed between me and
Prior—considering those money transactions, and those clothes,
kindness to the children—it was rather hard that my jam-
were poached, and my brandy-bottles leaked. And then to
her brother with the story of the inexorable creditor—oh,
Prior!—oh, fie, Mrs. P.!

So Bessy went to her school in a shabby shawl, a faded bonnet,
poor little lean dress flounced with the mud and dust of all
thers, whereas there were some other young ladies, fellow-pupils
ers, who laid out their gold medals to much greater advantage.
Delamere, with her eighteen shillings a week (calling them
for medals” was only my wit you see), had twenty new
ets, silk and satin dresses for all seasons, feathers in abundance,
down muffs and tippets, lovely pocket-handkerchiefs and
ets, and many and many a half-crown mould of jelly, bottle
erry, blanket, or what not, for a poor fellow-pupil in distress;
for Miss Montanville, who had exactly the same sal—well,
had a scholarship of exactly the same value, viz., about fifty
id yearly—she kept an elegant little cottage in the Regent’s
brougham with a horse all over brass harness, and a groom
prodigious gold lace hat-band, who was treated with frightful
mely at the neighbouring cabstand; an aunt or a mother, I
know which (I hope it was only an aunt), always comfortably
who looked after Montanville; and she herself had
ooches, and velvet pelisses of the very richest descrip-
then Miss Montanville was a good economist. She was
to help a poor friend in distress, or give a fainting
sister a crust or a glass of wine. She allowed ten
seek to her father, whose name was Boskinson, said to
be a clerk to a chapel in Paddington; but she would never:—no, not when he was in hospital, where he was so ill; and she certainly lent Miss Wilder thirteen pounds, she had arrested upon her promissory note for twenty-four, and every stick of Wilder's furniture, so that the whole Academy shame! Well, an accident occurred to Miss Montanville, for those may be sorry who choose. On the evening of the December, eighteen hundred and something, when the end of the Academy were giving their grand Annual Christmas. I should say examination of the Academy pupils before numerous friends—Montanville, who happened to be present in her brougham this time, but in an aërial chariot of sparrow-drawn by doves, fell off a rainbow, and through the roof of the Revolving Shrine of the Amaranthine Queen, thereby very dangerously Bellenden, who was occupying the shrine attired in light-blue spangled dress, waving a wand, and uttering some verses composed for her by the Professor of Literature at the Academy. As for Montanville, let her go shrieking down trap-door, break her leg, be taken home, and never more be seen of ours. She never could speak. Her voice was as hoarse as a fishwoman's. Can that immense stout old box-keeper at the Theatre, who limps up to ladies on the first tier, and offers a horrible footstool, which everybody stumbles over, and a clumsy curtsey, and looks so knowing and hard, as if she were an acquaintance in the splendid lady who enters the box—old female be the once brilliant Emily Montanville? I say there are no lady box-keepers in the English theatres. I submit, is a proof of my consummate care and artifice in ridding the theatre of a prurient curiosity the individual personages from whose characters of the present story are taken. Montanville is box-opener. She may, under another name, keep a trinket cabinet at the Burlington Arcade, for what you know: but this secret torture shall induce me to divulge. Life has its rises and downs, and you have had yours, you hobbling old bird! Montanville, indeed! Go thy ways! Here is a shilling for thee. (Thank you, sir.) Take away that confounded footstool, and let us see thee more!

Now the fairy Amarantha was like a certain dear young of whom we have read in early youth. Up to twelve attired in sparkling raiment, she leads the dance with the (Gradini, known as Grady in his days of banishment at the Dublin). At supper, she takes her place by the prince's father (who is alive now, and still reigns occasionally, so I will not mention his reverend name). She makes believe to
gilded pasteboard, and to eat of the mighty pudding.

tes as the good old irascible monarch knocks the prime
and the cooks about: she blazes in splendour: she beams
thousand jewels, in comparison with which the Koh-i-noor
ched lustreless little pebble: she disappears in a chariot,
Lord Mayor never rode in:—and at midnight, who is
wom an tripping homeward through the wet streets in
 bonnet, a cotton shawl, and a lean frock fringed with the
winter flounces?

Cinderella is up early in the morning: she does no little
of the house-work: she dresses her sisters and brothers:
prepares papa's breakfast. On days when she has not to go to
lessons at her Academy, she helps with the dinner. Heaven
ip as! She has often brought mine when I have dined at home,
wen to having made that famous mutton-broth when I had a
Foreigners come to the house—professional gentlemen—to
in the first floor: exiled captains of Spain and Portugal,
pinions of the warrior her father. It is surprising how she has
their accents, and has picked up French, and Italian too.

ed, she played the piano in Mr. Stumley's room sometimes, as I
said; but refrained from that presently, and from visiting him
together. I suspect he was not a man of principle. His paper
ed to make direful attacks upon individual reputations; and you
nd find theatre and opera people most curiously praised and
aulted in the Swell. I recollect meeting him, several years after,
the lobby of the Opera, in a very noisy frame of mind, when he
a certain lady's carriage called, and cried out with exceeding
language, which need not be accurately reported, "Look at
woman! Confound her! I made her, sir! Got her an engage-
when the family was starving, sir! Did you see her, sir?
ouldn't even look at me!" Nor indeed was Mr. S. at that
ent a very agreeable object to behold.

Then I remembered that there had been some quarrel with this
when we lodged in Beak Street together. If difficulty there
solved ambulando. He quitted the lodgings, leaving
cellent and costly piano as security for a heavy bill which he
Mrs. Prior, and the instrument was presently fetched away
usic-sellers, its owners. But regarding Mr. S——'s valu-
aphry, let us speak very gently. You see it is "an insult
ure" to say that there are disreputable and dishonest
who write in newspapers.

ing, dear friend, escapes your penetration: if a joke is
your company, you are down upon it instanter, and your
wards the wag who amuses you: so you knew at once,
whilst I was talking of Elizabeth and her Academy, that a
was meant, where the poor child danced for a guinea or fi-
enty shillings per week. Nay, she must have had not a
skill and merit to advance to the quarter of a hundred; for sh
not pretty at this time, only a rough tawny-haired filly of
with great eyes. Dolphin, the manager, did not think much a
and she passed before him in his regiment of Sea-nymphs, or
aries, or Fairies, or Mazurka maidens (with their fluttering
and little scarlet slyboots!) scarcely more noticed than Private
standing under arms in his company when his Royal High-
Field-Marshal gallops by. There were no dramatic triumphs
Miss Bellenden; no bouquets were flung at her feet; no en
Mephistopheles—the emissary of some philandering Faustus or
—corrupted her duenna, or brought her caskets of diamonds.
there been any such admirer for Bellenden, Dolphin would no
not have been shocked, but he would very likely have raised
salary. As it was, though himself, I fear, a person of loose and
he respected better things. "That Bellenden's a good big
gurl," he said to the present writer: "works hard; gives her
her family: father a shy old cove. Very good family if
they are!" and he passes on to some other of the innum-
subjects which engage a manager.

Now, why should a poor lodging-house keeper make so
mighty a secret of having a daughter earning an honest guine
ancing at a theatre? Why persist in calling the theatre
Academy? Why did Mrs. Prior speak of it as such, to me
knew what the truth was, and to whom Elizabeth herself in
mystery of her calling?

There are actions and events in its life over which de
Poverty often chooses to cast a veil that is not unbecomi
wear. We can all, if we are minded, peer through this
flimsy screen: often there is no shame behind it: only pl
platters, poor scraps, and other threadbare evidence of want;
cold. And who is called on to show his rags to the publ:
ery out his hunger in the street? At this time (her charac
developed itself not so amiable since), Mrs. Prior was out,
respectable; and yet, as I have said, my groceries were cons
with remarkable rapidity; my wine and brandy-bottles we
leaky, until they were excluded from air under a patent le
my Morel's raspberry-jam, of which I was passionately fo
exposed on the table for a few hours, was always eaten by
cat, or that wonderful little wretch of a maid-of-all-work, so a
yet so patient, so kind, so dirty, so obliging. Was it th
who took those groceries? I have seen the "Gazza Ladra,
he poor little maids are sometimes wrongfully accused; I, in my particular case, I own I don't care who the was. At the year's end, a single man is not much poorer house-tax which he pays. One Sunday evening, being with a cold, and partaking of that mutton-broth which he made so well, and which she brought me, I entreated the ring from the cupboard, of which I gave her the key, a brandy-bottle. She saw my face when I looked at her: as no mistaking its agony. There was scarce any brandy had all leaked away; and it was Sunday, and no good was to be bought that evening.

Abeth, I say, saw my grief. She put down the bottle, and I: she tried to prevent herself from doing so at first, but y burst into tears.

"Vy dear,—dear child," says I, seizing her hand, "you don't I fancy you——"

"—no!" she says, drawing the large hand over her eyes. Io! but I saw it when you and Mr. Warrington last 'ad Oh! do have a patting lock!"

patent lock, my dear!" I remarked. "How odd that you, e learned to pronounce Italian and French words so well, make such strange slips in English! Your mother speaks ugh."

e was born a lady. She was not sent to be a milliner's was, and then among those noisy girls at that—oh! that cries Bessy, in a sort of desperation, clenching her hand. the bells of Saint Beak's began to ring quite cheerily ining service. I heard "Elizabeth!" cried out from the gions by Mrs. Prior's cracked voice. And the maiden r way to church, which she and her mother never missed nday; and I daresay I slept just as well without the nd-water.

hey being gone, Mrs. Prior came to me rather wistfully and wanted to know whether I would object to Madame lio, the opera-singer, having the first floor? This was too ide! How was my work to go on with that woman all day and roaring underneath me? But, after sending good a customer, I could not refuse to lend the Priors a re money; and Prior insisted upon treating me to a new nd making out a new and handsome bill for an amount vice as great as the last: which he had no doubt under and which he pledged his honour as an officer and a n, that he would meet. Let me see: That was how ars ago?—Thirteen, fourteen, twenty? Never mind. My
fair Elizabeth, I think if you saw your poor old father's now, you would pay it. I came upon it lately in an haven't opened these fifteen years, along with some letter—never mind by whom—and an old glove that I used absurd value by; and that emerald-green tabinet waist kind old Mrs. Macmannus gave me, and which I wore at L—t—nt's ball, Ph n-x Park, Dublin, once, when with her there! Lord! Lord! It would no more in my waist now than round Daniel Lambert's. How we things!

But as I never presented this united bill of £43 first portion of £23, &c. was advanced by me in ord an execution out of the house)—as I never expected to paid any more than I did to be Lord Mayor of London, was a little hard that Mrs. Prior should write off to he (she writes a capital letter), blessing Providence that him a noble income, promising him the benefit of her order that he should long live to enjoy his large salary forming him that an obdurate creditor, who shall be (meaning me), who had Captain Prior in his power (as in possession of that dingy scarawl, I should have known do with it), who held Mr. Prior's acceptance for £43, 14 on the 3rd July (my bill), would infallibly bring their ruin, unless a part of the money was paid up. When to my old College, and called on Sargent, at Boniface treated me as civilly as if I had been an undergraduate spoke to me in hall, where, of course, I dined at the Fello and only asked me to one of Mrs. Sargent's confounded during the whole time of my stay. Now it was by an entreaty that I went to lodge at Prior's; he talked to dinner one day, he hummed, he had, he blushed, he prap pompous way, about an unfortunate sister in London, a—and marriage—husband, Captain Prior, Knight of the Swan Necks of Portugal, most distinguished officer, but imprud lator—advantageous lodgings in the centre of London, quiet near the Clubs—if I was ill (I am a confirmed invalid). My his sister, would nurse me like a mother. So, in a way to Prior's: I took the rooms: I was attracted by some Amelia Jane (that little dirty maid before mentioned) did go-cart, containing a little dirty pair: another marching carrying a fourth well-nigh as big as himself. These having threaded the mighty flood of Regent Street, debou the quiet creek of Beak Street, just as I happened to fall. And the door at which the small caravan halted,—the v
HE BACHELOR OF BEAK STREET

 Though I am now a steady, a confirmed old bachelor (I shall myself Mr. Batchelor, if you please, in this story; and there one for—far away who knew why I will never take her title), I was a gay young fellow enough once. I was not the pleasures of youth: in fact, I learned quadrilles on one to dance with her that long vacation when I went to read my young friend, Lord Viscount Poldoody, at Dub—psih! all thou foolish heart! Perhaps I misspent my time as an undergraduate. Perhaps I read too many novels, occupied myself much with "elegant literature" (that used to be our phrase), spoke too often at the Union, where I had a considerable station. But those fine words got me no College prizes: I of my fellowship: was rather in disgrace with my relations wards, but had a small independence of my own, which I out by taking a few pupils for little-goes and the common As length, a relation dying, and leaving me a further small left the University, and came to reside in London.

Low in my third year at College, there came to Saint Boniface gentleman, who was one of the few gentlemen-pensioners of society. His popularity speedily was great. A kindly and youth, he would have been liked, I daresay, even though of been no richer than the rest of us; but this is certain, that worldlyness, mammon worship, are vices as well known to old boys; and a rich lad at school or college has his taff-hunters, led-captains, little courts, just as much as an millionaire of Pall Mall, who gazes round his Club to shall take home to dinner, while humble trencher- anxiously, thinking—Ah! will he take me this time? ask that abominable sneak and toady Henchman again? this is an old story about parasites and flatterers. God sir, I am not for a moment going to say that one; and I daresay it was very base and mean of
us to like a man chiefly on account of his money. "I knew Fred Lovel used to say—"I know fellows come to my because I have a large allowance, and plenty of my professor's wine, and give good dinners; I am not deceived at least, it is pleasanter to come to me and have good and good wine, than to go to Jack Highson's dreary tea, turnout, or to Ned Roper's abominable Oxbridge port." I admit at once that Lovel's parties were more agreeable than any meals in the College. Perhaps the goodness of the fare, by the guests, made them more pleasant. A dinner in half-pewter plate is all very well, and I can say grace before it all my heart; but a dinner with fish from London, say two or three nice little entrées, is better—and there was no cook in the University than ours at Saint Boniface, and there were appetites then, and digestions which rendered dinner doubly good.

Between me and young Lovel a friendship sprang up. I trust, even the publication of this story will not diminish is a period, immediately after the taking of his bachelors, when many a University-man finds himself embarrassed, tradesmen rather rudely press for a settlement of their account. Those prints we ordered calli juventi; those shirt-studs which the jewellers would persist in thrusting into our bosoms; those fine coats we would insist on having for our use as well as ourselves; all these have to be paid for by the goods. And my father, who was then alive, refusing to meet these, did under the—I own—just plea, that my allowance had been and that my half-sisters ought not to be mulcted of their portions in consequence of my extravagance, I should had subject to very serious inconvenience—nay, possibly, to incarceration—had not Lovel, at the risk of rustication, returned to London to his mother (who then had especial reasons for being very gracious with her son), obtained a supply of money, and brought it to me at Mr. Shackell's horrible hotel, where I lodged. He had tears in his kind eyes; he grasped my hundred and hundred times as he flung the notes into my hands. the recording tutor (Sargent was only tutor then), who was to bring him up before the master for breach of discipline away a drop from his own lid, when, with a moving eloquence, told what had happened, and blotted out the transaction with particular old 1811 port, of which we freely partook in his rooms that evening. By laborious instalments, I had the hard to pay Lovel back. I took pupils, as I said; I engaged in pursuits: I became connected with a literary periodical, and
to say, I imposed myself upon the public as a good classical
I was not thought the less learned, when, my relative
found myself in possession of a small independency; and
translations from the Greek," my "Poems by Beta," and my
in the paper of which I was part proprietor for several years,
their little success in their day.
nead at Oxbridge, if I did not obtain University honours, at
bowled literary tastes. I got the prize essay one year at
and plead guilty to having written essays, poems, and a
My College friends had a joke at my expense (a very
serves to amuse those port-wine-bibbing fogies, and keeps
thing for ever so long a time)—they are welcome, I say,
merry at my charges—in respect of a certain bargain
made on coming to London, and in which, had I been
imrose purchasing green spectacles, I could scarcely have
re taken in. My Jenkinsion was an old College acquaint-
that I was idiot enough to imagine a respectable man: the
a very smooth tongue, and sleek sanctified exterior. He
er a popular preacher, and used to cry a good deal in the
He, and a queer wine-merchant and bill-discounter, Sherrick
, had somehow got possession of that neat little literary
e Museum, which, perhaps, you remember; and this eligible
property my friend Honeyman, with his wheedling tongue,
gen to purchase. I bear no malice: the fellow is in India
ere I trust he pays his butcher and baker. He was in
traits for money when he sold me the Museum. He
ring when I told him some short time afterwards that he
windler, and from behind his pocket-handkerchief sobbed
that I should one day think better of him; whereas my
the same effect produced an exactly contrary impression
accomplice, Sherrick, who burst out laughing in my face,
"The more fool you!" Mr. Sherrick was right. He was
out mistake, who had any money-dealing with him; and
eyman was right, too; I don't think so badly of him as
fellow so hardly pinched for money could not resist the
n of extracting it from such a greenhorn. I daresay I
elf airs as editor of that confounded Museum, and proposed
the public taste, to diffuse morality and sound literature
at the nation, and to pocket a liberal salary in return for
ses. I daresay I printed my own sonnets, my own tragedy,
erses (to a Being who shall be nameless, but whose conduct
f a faithful heart to bleed not a little). I daresay I
rical articles, in which I piqued myself upon the fineness
, and criticisms, got up for the nonce out of encyclopædias
and biographical dictionaries; so that I would be actually at my own knowledge. I daresay I made a gaby of the world; pray, my good friend, hast thou never wise? If thou hast never been a fool, be sure thou wilt a wise man.

I think it was my brilliant conjuror on the first floor pecuniary transactions with Sherrick, and visited two of her Majesty's metropolitan prisons at that gentleman's first showed me how grievously I had been cheated in the matter. Shumley wrote for a paper printed at our o same boy often brought proofs to both of us—a little bit bright-eyed chap, who looked scarce twelve years old, w sixteen; who in wit was a man, when in stature he was like many other children of the poor.

This little Dick Bedford used to sit many hours as a landing-place or Shumley's, whilst we were preparing our compositions within our respective apartments. S——— nured reprobate, and gave the child of his meat and I used to like to help the little man from my breakfast to him enjoy the meal. As he sat, with his bag on his knee sunk in sleep, his little highlofs scarce reaching the made a touching little picture. The whole house was for The tipsy Captain nodded him a welcome as he swag stairs, stock, and coat, and waistcoat in hand, to his toilette in the back kitchen. The children and Dick friends; and Elizabeth patronised him, and talked with and again, in her grave way. You know Clancy the c know him better, perhaps, under his name of Fried Donner used to write music to Shumley's words, or vio would come now and again to Beak Street, where he at would try their joint work at the piano. At the s music, little Dick's eyes used to kindle. "Oh, it's p the young enthusiast. And I will say, that good-nature of a Shumley not only gave the child pence, but tick play, concerts, and so forth. Dick had a neat little suit at home; his mother made him a very nice little waist my undergraduate's gown, and he and she, a decent w in their best raiment, looked respectable enough for any in England.

Amongst other places of public amusement which Mr. Dick frequented the Academy where Miss Belled and whence poor Elizabeth Prior issued forth after mid shabby frock. And once, the Captain, Elizabeth's fat tector, being unable to walk very accurately, and noisy an
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... so that the attention of Messieurs of the police was

towards him, Dick came up, placed Elizabeth and her

cab, paid the fare with his own money, and brought the

party home in triumph, himself sitting on the box of the

taxi. I chanced to be coming home myself (from one of Mrs.

Ingham's elegant tea soirées, in Dorset Square), and reached

just at the arrival of Dick and his caravan. "Here,

I says Dick, handing out the fare, and looking with his

eyes. It is pleasant to look at that beaming little face,

at the Captain yonder, reeling into his house, supported by

a gaiter. Dick cried, Elizabeth told me, when a week after

she wanted to pay him back his shilling; and she said he

strange child, that he was.

revert to my friend Lovel. I was coaching Lovel for his

(which, between ourselves, I think he never would have

done), when he suddenly announced to me, from Weymouth,

he was passing the vacation, his intention to quit the

city, and to travel abroad. "Events have happened, dear

he wrote, "which will make my mother's home miserable

(I little knew when I went to town about your business,

caused her wonderful complaisance to me). She would have

my heart, Charles" (my Christian name is Charles), "but

inds have found a consoler!"

w, in this little chapter, there are some little mysteries

undertaken, upon which, were I not above any such artifice, I

easily leave the reader to ponder for a month.

Why did Mrs. Prior, at the lodgings, persist in calling the

at which her daughter danced the Academy?

What were the special reasons why Mrs. Lovel should be

acquainted with her son, and give him £150 as soon as he asked

money?

Why was Fred Lovel's heart nearly broken? And—

Who was his consoler?

answer these at once, and without the slightest attempt

or circumlocution. 1. Mrs. Prior, who had repeatedly

money from her brother, John Erasmus Sargent, D.D.,

of St. Boniface College, knew perfectly well that if the

(whom she already pestered out of his life) heard that she

niece of his on the stage, he would never give her

shilling.

The reason why Emma, widow of the late Adolphus Loeffel,

apel Road, sugar-baker, was so particularly gracious to

Adolphus Frederick Lovel, Esquire, of Saint Boniface

bridge, and principal partner in the house of Loeffel
LOVEL THE WIDOWER

aforesaid, an infant, was that she, Emma, was about to a second marriage with the Reverend Samuel Bonnington.

3. Fred Lovel's heart was so very much broken intelligence, that he gave himself airs of Hamlet, dressed wore his long fair hair over his eyes, and exhibited a hand of grief and desperation; until-

4. Louisa (widow of the late Sir Popham Baker, of Lark county Kilkenny, Baronet) induced Mr. Lovel to take at the Rhine with her and Cecilia, fourth and only unmarried of the aforesaid Sir Popham Baker, deceased.

My opinion of Cecilia I have candidly given in a previous I adhere to that opinion. I shall not repeat it. The is disagreeable to me, as the woman herself was in life. We found in her to admire I cannot tell; lucky for us all the men, women, vary. You will never see her alive in this. That is her picture, painted by the late Mr. Gandish. She fingering that harp with which she has often driven me, with her "Tara's Halls" and her " Poor Marianne," She bully Fred so, and be so rude to his guests, that, in order to her, he would meanly say, "Do, my love, let us have music!" and thumpity-thumpity, off would go her glide, "Tara's Halls" would begin. "The harp that once," indi accursed cat got scarce knew any other music, and "once" hundred times at least in my hearing. Then came the period I was treated to the cold joint which I have mentioned; liking it, I gave up going to Shrublands.

So, too, did my Lady Baker, but not of her own free mind you. She did not quit the premises because her heart was too cold, but because the house was made a great hot for her. I remember Fred coming to me in high spirit, describing to me, with no little humour, a great battle with Cecilia and Lady Baker, and her Ladyship's defeat and She fled, however, only as far as Putney village, where she again, as it were, and fortified herself in a lodging. Next made a desperate but feeble attack, presenting herself at Shrub lodge-gate, and threatening that she and sorrow would she before it; and that all the world should know how and treated her mother. But the gate was locked, and Bard gardener, appeared behind it, saying, "Since you are come, perhaps you will pay my missis the four-and-twenty shilling borrowed of her." And he grinned at her through the bars she fled before him, cowering. Lovel paid the little forgotten at the best four-and-twenty shillings he had ever laid out, he said.

Eight years passed away; during the last four of w
my old friend, except at clubs and taverns, where we
y, and renewed, not old warmth and hilarity, but old
One winter he took his family abroad; Cecilia's health
t, Lovel told me, and the doctor had advised that she
nd a winter in the South. He did not stay with them;
ssing affairs at home; he had embarked in many busi-
ides the paternal sugar-bakery; was concerned in com-
director of a joint-stock bank, a man in whose fire were
s. A faithful governess was with the children; a faith-
ld maid were in attendance on the invalid; and Lovel,
 wife, as he certainly did, yet supported her absence
; equanimity.
spring I was not a little scared to read amongst the
he newspaper:—"At Naples, of scarlet fever, on the 25th
, wife of Frederick Lovel, Esquire, and daughter of the late
m Baker, Baronet." I knew what my friend's grief would
ad hurried abroad at the news of her illness; he did not
des in time to receive the last words of his poor Cecilia.
onths after the catastrophe, I had a note from Shrub-
vel wrote quite in the old affectionate tone. He begged
friend to go to him, and console him in his solitude.
me to dinner that evening?
urse I went off to him straightway. I found him in deep
the drawing-room with his children, and I confess I was
shed to see my Lady Baker once more in that room.
seem surprised to see me here, Mr. Batchelor?" says her
with that grace and good breeding which she generally
s; for if she accepted benefits, she took care to insult those
n she received them.
ed, no," said I, looking at Lovel, who piteously hung
head. He had his little Cissy at his knee; he was
nder the portrait of the defunct musician, whose harp,
ed in leather, stood dimly in the corner of the room.
a here not at my own wish, but from a feeling of duty
hat—departed—angel!" says Lady Baker, pointing to
sure when mamma was here, you were always quarrel-
little Popham, with a scowl.
is the way those innocent children have been taught to
" cries grandmamma.
ace, Pop," says papa, "and don't be a rude boy."
Pop a rude boy?" echoes Cissy.
ace, Pop," continues papa, "or you must go up to Miss
CHAPTER II

IN WHICH MISS PRIOR IS KEPT AT THE DOOR

Of course we all know who she was, the Miss Prior of lands, whom papa and grandmamma called to the children. Years had passed since I had shaken the Street dust off my feet. The brass plate of "Prior" was from the once familiar door, and screwed, for what I can tell, the late reprobate owner's collar. A little eruption of niformed brass knobs I saw on the door-post when I passed it a week, and Café des Ambassadeurs was thereon inscribed three fly-blown blue teacups, a couple of coffee-pots of known Britannia metal, and two freckled copies of the Lady Belling hanging over the window-blind. Were those their licacies the Ambassadors at the door, smoking cheroots? Billiards were written on their countenances, their hands, elbows. They may have been ambassadors down on the as the phrase is. They were in disgrace, no doubt, at the of her imperial majesty Queen Fortune. Men as shabbily trieved their disgraces ere now, washed their cloudy faces, their dingy waistcoats with cordons, and stepped into quarters not a whit more reputable than the "Ambassadeurs." If I lived in the Leicester Square neighbor and kept a café, I would always treat foreigners with They may be billiard-markers now, or doing a little small business; but why should they not afterwards be great officers of state? Suppose that gentleman is at a barber, with his tongs and stick of fixature for the moust do you know he has not his epaulettes and his baton de par the same pouch! I see engraved on the second floor bill rooms, "Plugwell." Who can Plugwell be, whose feet ne at the fire where I sat many a long evening? And this with the fur collar, the straggling beard, the frank and leer, the somewhat husky voice, who is calling out on the step, "Step in, and 'ave it done. Your correct likeness, a shilling," is he an ambassador too? Ah, no: he is a chargé-d'affaires of a photographer who lives upstairs; he
little ones used to be. Bless me! Photography was an
in the nursery, too, when we lived in Beak Street.

There I own that, for old times' sake, I went upstairs, and "'ad
fence"—that correct likeness, price one shilling? Would Some
2 (I have said, I think, that the party in question is well married
a distant island) like to have the thing, I wonder, and be reminded
of the man whom she knew in life's prime, with brown curly locks, as
locked on the effigy of this elderly gentleman, with a forehead
bare as a billiard-ball?

As I went up and down that darkling stair, the ghosts of the
children peeped out from the banisters; the little faces smiled
and twirled: it may be wounds (of the heart) throbbed and bled
on, how freshly and keenly! How infernally I have suffered
for that door in that room—I mean that one where Plugwell
lives. Confound Plugwell! I wonder what that woman thinks
as she sees me shaking my fist at the door? Do you think
mad, madam? I don't care if you do. Do you think when I
knocked on the ghosts of Prior's children, I mean that any of
them are dead? None are, that I know of. A great gulping
boast-boy, with fluffy whiskers, spoke to me not long since, in
awful bass voice, and announced his name as "Gus Prior." And
how, Elizabeth?" he added, nodding his bullet head. Elizabeth,
red, you great vulgar boy! Elizabeth,—and, by the way, how
we have been keeping her waiting!

You see, as I beheld her, a heap of memories struck upon me,
I could not help chattering; when of course—and you are
feetly right, only you might just as well have left the observation
out, for I knew quite well what you were going to say—when I
much better have held my tongue. Elizabeth means a history
for. She came to me at a critical period of my life. Bleeding
wounded from the conduct of that other individual (by her
real name of Mrs. O'D—her present O'D-ons name—I say, I
never—never call her) desirously wounded and miserable on
return from a neighbouring capital, I went back to my lodgings
Beak Street, and there there grew up a strange intimacy between
of my landlady's young daughter. I told her my story—
because I told anybody who would listen. She seemed
irritate me. She would come wistfully into my rooms,
my gruel and things (I could scarcely bear to eat for
—after that affair to which I may have alluded before)—
home to me, and she used to pity me, and I used to tell
h to tell her over and over again. Days and days have I
of my heart out in that second-floor room which answers to
Plugwell now. Afternoon after afternoon have I spent
there, and poured out my story of love and wrong to
shown her that waistcoat I told you of—that glove (her
so very small either)—her letters, those two or three
meaningless letters, with "My dear sir—mamma hopes
come to tea;" or, "If dear Mr. Batchelor should be rid
Phenix Park near the Long Milestone, about 2, my sis-
will be in the car, and," &c.; or, "Oh, you kind man! the
(she called it tickets—by heaven! she did) "were too
and the bouquets too lovely" (this word, I saw, had been
on with a penknife. I found no faults, not even in hers
then); or—never mind what more. But more of this;
this humbug, of this bad spelling, of this infernal jilting,
heartless hypocrisy (all her mother's doing, I own; for my
his place, my rival was not so well received as I was)—
rubbish, I say, I showed Elizabeth, and she pitied me!

She used to come to me day after day, and I used to
her. She used not to say much. Perhaps she did not be
I did not care for that. On—and on—and on I would go
prate about my passion, my wrongs, and despair; and my
complaints were, still more constant was my little her
passion. Mamma's shrill voice would come to put an end
conversation, and she would rise up with an "Oh, bal
away; but the next day the good girl was sure to et
again, when we would have another repetition of our trage

I daresay you are beginning to suppose (what, after
very common case, and certainly no conjurer is wanted to
guess) that out of all this crying and sentimentality, this
hearted old fool of a man poured out to a young girl—on
whimpering and pity, something which is said to be ak
might arise. But in this, my good madam, you are u:
Some people have the small pox twice; I do not. In a
heart is broke, it's broke; if a flower is withered, it's
If I choose to put my grief in a ridiculous light, why not
you suppose I am going to make a tragedy of such an
battered, stale, vulgar, trivial every-day subject as a jilt
with a man's passion, and laughs at him, and leaves him;
indeed! Oh, yes! poison—black-edged note-paper—
Bridge—one more unfortunate, and so forth! No: if she
her go!—si celeres quattit pennas, I puff the what-d'ye-call?
But I'll have no tragedy, mind you.

Well, it must be confessed that a man desperately in
fear I must own I then was, and a good deal cut up by my
conduct) is a most selfish being: whilst women are so self
selfish that they can forget or disguise their own sor


they minister to a friend in affliction. I did not see, ked with her daily, on my return from that accursed my little Elizabeth was pale and distraite, and sad, She would sit quite dumb whilst I chattered, her hands knees, or draw one of them over her eyes. She would yes! Poor fellow—poor fellow!” now and again, as lancholy confirmation of my dismal stories; but mostly d quiet, her head drooping towards the ground, a hand her feet to the fender.

me day harping on the usual string. I was telling ow, after presents had been accepted, after letters had een us (if her scrawl could be called letters, if my imng could be so construed), after everything but the had passed our lips—I was telling Elizabeth how, on d day, Glorvina’s mother greeted me on my arrival in care by saying, “Dear, dear Mr. Batchelor, we look on as one of the family! Congratulate me—congratulate Dear Tom has got his appointment as Recorder of t it is to be a match between him and his cousin

cousin What?” I shriek with a maniac laugh.

cousin Glorvina! Sure the children have been fond of ever since they could speak. I knew your kind heart he first to rejoice in their happiness.”
say I—ending the story—I, who thought myself loved, without a pang of pity: I, who could mention a hundred y I thought Glorvina well disposed to me, was told she me as an uncle! Were her letters such as nieces write? heard of an uncle walking round Merrion Square for rainy night, and looking up to a bedroom window, nice, forsooth, was behind it? I had set my whole cast, and this was the return I got for it. For months me—her eyes follow me, her cursed smiles welcome and me, and at a moment, at the beck of another—she laughs saves me!

my little pale Elizabeth, still hanging down, cries, lain! the villain!” and sobs so that you might have little heart would break.
said I, “my dear, Mr. O’Dowd is no villain. His ector, was as gallant an old officer as any in the service. s a Molloy, of Molloystown, and they are of excellent gh, I believe, of embarrassed circumstances; and young

cries Elizabeth, with a pale bewildered look. “His
name wasn't Tom, dear Mr. Batchelor; his name was illiam!” and the tears begin again.

Ah, my child! my child! my poor young creature, too, have felt the infernal stroke. You, too, have passed nights of pain—have heard the dreary hours toll—have the cheerless sunrise with your blank sleepless eyes out of dreams, mayhap, in which the beloved one was you, whispering love-words—oh! how sweet and fondly bered! What!—your heart has been robbed, too, and you is rifled and empty! poor girl! And I looked in that and saw no grief there! You could do your little sweet to soothe my wounded heart, and I never saw yours was. Did you suffer more than I did, my poor little maid? I. Are you so young, and is all the flower of life blighted for cup without savour, the sun blotted or almost invisible: head? The truth came on me all at once: I felt ashamed own selfish grief should have made me blind to hers.


She nodded her poor head.

I knew it was the lodger who had taken the first flat after Shumley's departure. He was an officer in the Army. He had had the lodgings for three months. He for India shortly before I returned home from Dublin.

Elizabeth is waiting all this time—shall she come in yet. I have still a little more to say about the Priors.

You understand that she was no longer Miss Prior Street, and that mansion, even at the time of which I've been long handed over to other tenants. The Captain widow with many tears pressed me to remain with her, never having been able to resist that kind of appeal. ments regarding her affairs were not strictly correct—women sometimes incorrect about money matters? A had unjustly indignant) quickly handed over the mansion in Be to other tenants. The Queen's taxes swooped down on Prior's scanty furniture—on hers!—on mine likewise; neatly-bound College books, emblazoned with the effigy facins, our patron, and of Bishop Budgeon, our founder; elegant Raphael Morghen prints, purchased in undergraki--(ye Powers! what did make us boys go tick for fifty proofs of Raphael, Dying Stags, Duke of Wellington fame the like?); my harmonium, at which some one has wak of my composition—(I mean the words, artfully dessert passion, my hopes, or my despair); on my rich set of
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on the Zeil, Frankfort O. M.; on my picture of my late Captain Batchelor (Hoppner), R.N.; in white a telescope, pointing, of course, to a tempest, in the which was a naval engagement; on my poor mother’s old Adam Buck, in pencil and pink, with no waist to all; my tea and cream pots (bullion), with a hundred nicknacks as decorate the chamber of a lonely man. I these household treasures in possession of the myrmidons and had to pay the Priors’ taxes with this hand, before redintegrated in my own property. Mrs. Prior could me back with a widow’s tears and blessings (Prior having world where he had long ceased to be of use or ornament). and blessings, I say, she offered me freely, and they were my cell. But why go on tampering with the tea-box, madam? put your finger—your finger?—your whole paw—in the jam- And it is a horrible fact that the wine and spirit bottles just as leaky after Prior’s decease as they had been during his putable lifetime. One afternoon, having a sudden occasion to turn to my lodgings, I found my wretched landlady in the very of marauding sherry. She gave an hysterical laugh, and then into tears. She declared that since her poor Prior’s death hardly been her rent; she was; but she certainly spoke truth on this ion.

I am speaking lightly—flippantly, if you please—about this old Prior, with her hard eager smile, her wizened face, her frownlook, her cruel voice; and yet, goodness knows, I could, if I been as serious as a sermoniser. Why, this woman had once cheeks, and was well-looking enough, and told few lies, and no sherry, and felt the tender passions of the heart, and I my kissed the weak old beneficed clergyman her father very and remorsefully that night when she took leave of him to round to the back garden-gate and run away with Mr. Prior. tral instinct she had, for she nursed her young as best she from her lean breast, and went about hungrily, robbing and them. On Sundays she furbished up that threadbare own and bonnet, ironed the collar, and clung desperately She had a feeble pencil-drawing of the vicarage in and silhouettes of her father and mother, which were the lodgings wherever she went. She migrated much: went she fastened on the gown of the clergyman of spoke of her dear father the vicar, of her wealthy and ter the Master of Boniface, with a reticence which im-doctor Sargent might do more for his poor sister and her
family, if he would. She plumed herself (oh! those poor old plumes!) upon belonging to the clergy; had read a good sound old-fashioned theology in early life, and wrote hand, in which she had been used to copy her father's. She used to put cases of conscience, to present her humble Reverend Mr. Green, and ask explanation of such a passage of his admirable sermon, and bring the subject to be reminded of certain quotations of Hooker, Beveridge, Taylor. I think she had an old commonplace book with these extracts, and she worked them in very amusingly adrogsely into her conversation. Green would be interested; pretty young Mrs. Green would call, secretly rather shockingly; coldness of old Doctor Brown, the rector, about Mrs. Prior. Green and Mrs. Prior's money transactions would ensue: Mrs. Prior's visits would cease: Mrs. Prior was an expensive woman. I remember Pye of Maudlin, just before he "went over," petulantly in Mrs. Prior's back parlour with little books, medals, &c. &c. —you know. They called poor Jack at Oxbridge; but one year at Rome I met him (with a shaved out of his head, and a hat as big as Don Basilio's) said, "My dear Bachelor, do you know that person at things? I think she was an artful creature! She borrowed pounds of me, and I forget how much of—seven, I think foot, of Corpus, just—just before we were received. And she absolutely got another loan from Pummel, to be able of the hands of us Jesuits. Are you going to hear that Do—do go and hear him—everybody does: it's the most... thing in Rome." And from this I opine that there are other communions besides that of Rome.

Now Mamma Prior had not been unaware of the love between her daughter and the fugitive Bombay captain; Elizabeth, she called Captain Walkingham "villain" really; but, if I know woman's nature in the least (and I don't schemer had thrown her daughter only too frequently in this way, had done no small portion of the flirting herself, his poor Bessy to receive presents from Captain Walkingham been the manager and directress of much of the mischief endured. You see, in this humble class of life, unprincipled will coax and wheedle and cajole gentlemen whom they shall be eligible, in order to procure an establishment for their children! What the Prioress did was done from the best of course. "Never—never did the monster see Bessy will or one or two of her brothers and sisters, and Jack and I are as sharp children as any in England!" protested their
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me; "and if one of my boys had been grown up, Walker would have dared to act as he did—the unprincipled poor husband would have punished the villain as he what could he do in his shattered state of health? Oh! you men, Mr. Batchelor! how unprincipled you are!"

my good Mrs. Prior," said I, "you let Elizabeth come often enough."

we the conversation of her uncle's friend, of an educated man so much older than herself! Of course, dear sir! a mother wish every advantage for her child? and whom it, if not you, who have ever been such a friend to me asks Mrs. Prior, wiping her dry eyes with the corner liverchief, as she stands by my fire, my monthly bills in ten in her neat old-fashioned writing, and calculated prodigal liberality which she always exercised in common accounts between us. "Why, bless me!" says my Mrs. Skinner, coming to see me once when I was un-

ominating one of the just mentioned documents,—"bless es, you consume more tea than all my family, though in the parlour, and as much sugar and butter,—well, der you are bilious!"

then, my dear, I like my tea so very strong," said I; take yours so uncommonly mild. I have remarked it at es.”

shame that a man should be robbed so," cried Mrs. S. kind it is of you to cry thieves, Flora!" I reply.

my duty, Charles!" exclaims my cousin. "And I should ow who that great, tall, gawky, red-haired girl in the

the name of the only woman who ever had possession it was not Elizabeth; though I own I did think at one my little schemer of a landlady would not have objected proposed to make Miss Prior Mrs. Batchelor. And it is the poor and needy who have this mania, but the rich he very highest circles, as I am informed by the best this match-making goes on. Ah woman—woman!— wife!—ah fond mother of fair daughters! how strange is to add to thy titles that of mother-in-law! I am you have got the title, it is often but a bitterness and atment. Very likely the son-in-law is rude to you, the ateful brute! and very possibly the daughter rebels, the erpent! And yet you will go on scheming: and having ith disappointment from Louisa and her husband, you d get one for Jemima, and Maria, and down even to
little Toddles coming out of the nursery in her red shoe, you see her with little Tommy, your neighbour's child, the same Noah's ark, or clambering on the same rock, make no doubt, in your foolish silly head, you are thinking those little people meet some twenty years hence?" At Tommy a very large piece of cake, and have a fine present on the Christmas tree — you know you do, though he is a noisy child, and has already beaten Toddles, and taken away from her, and made her cry. I remember, when she was suffering from the conduct of a young woman in a which is distinguished by a viceregal Court — and from lessness, as well as that of her relative, who I once thought be my mother-in-law — shrieking out to a friend who he be spouting some lines from Tennyson's "Ulysses": "In Warrington, I have no doubt that when the young sirens green caps at the old Greek captain and his crew, who beckoning him with their white arms and glancing so wheeling him with their sweetest pipes — I make note that the mother sirens were behind the rocks (with fronts and cheeks painted, so as to resist water), and 'Now, Halcyone, my child, that air from the Piraeus, Glaukopis, dear, look well at that old gentleman at: Bathykolypos, love, there's a young sailor on the main-top, tumble right down into your lap if you beckon him!' — and so on." And I laughed a wild shriek of despair too, have been on the dangerous island, and come away mad, furious, wanting a strait-waistcoat.

And so, when a white-armed siren, named Glory, bedevilling me with her all too tempting ogling and singing, not see at the time, but now I know, that her artful nagging that artful child on.

How, when the Captain died, bailiffs and executors possession of his premises, I have told in a previous part. I care to enlarge much upon the odious theme. I think to were on the premises before Prior's exit; but he did not their presence. If I had to buy them out, 'twas no great only I say it was hard of Mrs. Prior to represent the character of Shylock to the Master of Boniface. We I suppose there are other gentlemen besides Mr. Charles I who have been misrepresented in this life. Sargent and up matters afterwards, and Miss Bessy was the cause of us together again. "Upon my word, my dear Batchelor," one Christmas, when I went up to the old College, "I know how much my — ahem! — my family was obliged
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—niece, Miss Prior, has informed me of various acts of generosity which you showed to my poor sister, and to wretched husband. You got my second—ahem!—condemn me if I forget his Christian name—into the call'em—Bluecoat School; you have been, on various occasions, my constant friend, and I am glad to know that you have been obligeable to my sister's family. I didn't take high university honours to have a good time; and, upon my word, Batchelor, I and my—ahem!—sincerely obliged to you!"

"You what, Master," said I, "there is a point upon which I really must have your attention, and in which I have been the last to put money into your pocket too."

"I fail to comprehend you," says the Master, with his usual air of surprise.

"I got you and Mrs. Sargent a very good governess for ten guineas, at the very smallest remuneration," say I.

"But I know the charges that unhappy sister of mine and I have put to me already?" says the Master, turning as hood.

"I have formed the frequent subject of your conversation," I say.

"You have had Bessy as a governess—she has learned Latin and a great deal of it in my house," cries the Master.

"Governess at the wages of a housemaid," I continued, "Co Birmingham brass.

"My niece, does my—ahem!—children's governess, comparison treatment in my College?" cries the Master.

"Dear Master," I ask, "you don't suppose I would have her complaints, or, at any rate, have repeated them?

"Why now, Batchelor, I should like to know?" says the Master, rising up and down his study in a tempest, under the influence of Holy Boniface, Bishop Budgeree, and all the defunct members of the College. "And why now, Batchelor, I should like to know?"

"Use—though after staying with you for three years, and proving herself greatly, as every woman must in your case, dear Master, Miss Prior is worth at least fifty guineas more than you give her—I would not have had her speak so as to find a better place."

"Mean to say she proposes to go away?"

"A faithful friend of mine, who was a member of our College, wants a nursery governess, and I have recommended to him, at seventy guineas a year."
"And pray who's the member of my College who will give his niece seventy guineas?" asked the Master fiercely.

"You remember Lovel, the gentleman-pensioner?"

"The sugar-baking man—the man who took you out to ja—ja—ja?"

"One good turn deserves another," say I hastily. "I had done as much for some of your family, Sargent!"

The red Master, who had been rustling up and down his study in his gown and bands, stopped in his walk as if I had struck him. He looked at me. He turned redder than ever. He drew his hand over his eyes. "Batchelor," says he, "I ask your pardon. It was I who forgot myself—may Heaven forgive me!—forgot how good you have been to my family, to my—ahem!—humble family, and—and how devoutly thankful I ought to be for the protection which they have found in you." His voice quite fell as he spoke, and of course any little wrath which I might have felt was disarmed before his contrition. We parted the best friends. He only shook hands with me at the study-door, but he actually followed me to the hall-door, and shook hands at his lodge-pole, sub jure, in the quadrangle. Huckles, the tutor (Highlow Huckles we used to call him in our time), and Botts (Trumperian professor, who happened to be passing through the court at the time), stood astounded as they witnessed the phenomenon.

"I say, Batchelor," asks Huckles, "have you been made a marquis by any chance?"

"Why a marquis, Huckles?" I ask.

"Sargent never comes to his lodge-door with any man under a marquis," says Huckles, in a low whisper.

"Or a pretty woman," says that Botts (he will have his joke). "Batchelor, my elderly Tiresias, are you turned into a lovely young lady par hasard?"

"Get along, you absurd Trumperian professor!" say I. But the circumstance was the talk not only in Computation Room that evening over our wine, but of the whole College. And further events happened which made each man look at his neighbour with wonder. For that whole term Sargent did not ask our nobleman, Lord Sackville (Lord Wigmore's son) to the lodge. (Lord W.'s father, you know, Duff, was bakir to the College.) For that whole term he was rude but twice to Perks, the junior tutor, and then only in a very mild way; and what is more, he gave his niece a present of a gown, of his blessing, of a kiss, and a high character when she went away; and promised to put one of her young brothers to school—which promise, I need not say, he faithfully kept: for he has good principles, Sargent has. He is made
ill bred: he is *bumptious* beyond almost any man I ever k:

spend the family money, his disreputable presence somehow d for good in the household. "My dear husband kept our ly together," Mrs. Prior said, shaking her lean head under meagre widow's cap. "Heaven knows how I shall provide these lambs now he is gone!" Indeed, it was not until after death of that tipsy shepherd that the wolves of the law came m upon the lambs—myself included, who have passed the age amblood and mint sauce a long time. They came down n our fold in Beak Street, I say, and ravished it. What was i do? Could I leave that widow and children in their distress? *as not ignorant of misfortune, and knew how to succour the erable. Nay, I think the little excitement attendant upon the ure of my goods, &c., the insolent vulgarity of the low persons possession—with one of whom I was very near coming to a sonal encounter—and other incidents which occurred in the eft household, served to rouse me, and dissipate some of the guor and misery under which I was suffering in consequence of ss Mulligan's conduct to me. I know I took the late Captain his final abode. My good friends the printers of the *Museum k* one of his boys into their counting-house. A blue coat and air of yellow stockings were procured for Augustus; and seeing Master's children walking about in Boniface gardens with a m-looking old wretch of a nurse, I bethought me of proposing him to take his niece Miss Prior—and, Heaven be good to me! er said one word to her uncle about Miss Bellenden and the adeny. I daresay I drew a number of long bows about her. managed about the bad grammar pretty well by lamenting that zabeth's poor mother had been forced to allow the girl to keep company with ill-educated people: and added, that she could not to mend her English in the house of one of the most disinguished scholars in Europe, and one of the best-bred women. did say so, upon my word, looking that half-bred, stuck-up Mrs. gent gravely in the face; and I humbly trust, if that bouncer been registered against me, the Recording Angel will be pleased consider that the motive was good, though the statement was justifiable. But I don't think it was the compliment: I think was the temptation of getting a governess for next to nothing at operated upon Madame Sargent. And so Bessy went to her nt, partook of the bread of dependence, and drank of the cup of
humiliation, and ate the pie of humility, and brought up her little cousins to the best of her small power, and bowed the of hypocrisy before the don her uncle, and the pompous upstart her aunt. She the best-bred woman in England, ind. She, the little vain skinflint!

Bessy’s mother was not a little loth to part with the pounds a year which the child brought home from the Acad but her departure thence was inevitable. Some quarrel had place there, about which the girl did not care to talk. Some neess had been offered to Miss Bellenden, to which Miss Prior determined not to submit: or was it that she wanted to go from the scenes of her own misery, and to try and forget Indian captain? Come, fellow-sufferer! Come, child of misfort come hither! Here is an old bachelor who will weep with tear for tear!

I protest here is Miss Prior coming into the room at last pale face, a tawny head of hair combed back, under a black a pair of blue spectacles, as I live! a tight mourning & buttoned up to her white throat; a head hung meekly down is Miss Prior. She takes my hand when I offer it. She drops a demure little curtsey, and answers my many questions humble monosyllabic replies. She appeals constantly to l. Baker for instruction, or for confirmation of her statements. We have six years of slavery so changed the frank daring young whom I remember in Beak Street! She is taller and stouter she was. She is awkward and high-shouldered, but surely she a very fine figure.

“Will Miss Cissy and Master Popham have their tea her in the schoolroom?” asks Bedford, the butler, of his master. Prior looks appealingly to Lady Baker.

“In the seh ——” Lady Baker is beginning.

“Here —— here!” bawl out the children. “Much better down here; and you’ll send us out some fruit and things for dinner, papa!” cries Cissy.

“It’s time to dress for dinner,” says her Ladyship.

“Has the first bell rung?” asks Lovel.

“Yes, the first bell has rung, and grandmamma must go, for always takes her a precious long time to dress for dinner,” says Pop. And indeed, on looking at Lady Baker, the connoisseur might perceive that her Ladyship was a highly composite person whose charms required very much care and arrangement. The are some cracked old houses where the painters and plumbers & puttyers are always at work.

“Have the goodness to ring the bell!” she says, in a majes
MISS PRIOR IS KEPT AT THE DOOR

r, to Miss Prior, though I think Lady Baker herself was
prang towards the bell myself, and my hand meets Elizabeth’s
who was obeying her Ladyship’s summons, and who retreats,
ing me the demurest curtsey. At the summons, enter Bedford
ntler (he was an old friend of mine too) and young Buttons,
ge under that butler.
ady Baker points to a heap of articles on a table, and says to
rd: “If you please, Bedford, tell my man to give those things
ott, my maid, to be taken to my room.”
 Shall not I take them up, dear Lady Baker?” says Miss Prior.
at Bedford, looking at his subordinate, says: “Thomas! tell
ley, her Ladyship’s man, to take her Ladyship’s things, and
m them to her Ladyship’s maid.” There was a tone of sarcasm,
of parody, in Monsieur Bedford’s voice; but his manner was
rdly grave and respectful. Drawing up her person, and
ng a motion, I don’t know whether of politeness or defiance,
ady Baker, followed by page, bearing bandboxes, shawls,
 parcels, parasols—I know not what. Dear Popham stands
 as grandmamma leaves the room. “Don’t be vulgar!”
 little Cissy (the dear child is always acting as a little Mentor
brother). “I shall, if I like,” says Pop; and he makes faces
.
“You know your room, Batch?” asks the master of the house.
Mr. Batchelor’s old room—always has the blue room,” says
ord, looking very kindly at me.
‘Give us,” cried Lovel, “a bottle of that Sau——”
——terne Mr. Batchelor used to like. Château Yquem. All
!” says Mr. Bedford. “How will you have the turbot done
rought down?—Dutch sauce?—Make lobster into salad? Mr.
ington likes lobster-salad,” says Bedford. Pop is winding up
butler’s back at this time. It is evident Mr. Bedford is a
leged person in the family. As he had entered it on my
nation several years ago, and had been ever since the faithful
, butler, and major-domo of Lovel, Bedford and I were always
friends when we met.
“By the way, Bedford, why wasn’t the barouche sent for me to
bridge?” cries Lovel. “I had to walk all the way home, with
 and stumps for Pop, with the basket of fish, and that bandbox
 my Lady’s——”
“He—he!” grins Bedford.
“‘He—he!’ Confound you, why do you stand grinning there
y didn’t I have the carriage, I say?” bawls the master of th
"You know, sir," says Bedford. "She had the carriage and he indicated the door through which Lady Baker had retreated.

"Then why didn't I have the phaeton?" asks Bedford's ma.

"Your ma and Mr. Bonnington had the phaeton."

"And why shouldn't they, pray? Mr. Bonnington is the one at my business all day. I should like to know why shouldn't have the phaeton?" says Lovel, appealing to me, we had been sitting talking together previous to Miss Prior's appearance, Lady Baker had said to Lovel, "Your mother and Mr. Bonnington are coming to dinner of course, Frederick?" Lovel had said, "Of course they are," with a peevish look, whereof I now began to understand the meaning. The fact is these two women were fighting for the possession of this drive, but who was the Solomon to say which should have him? No. Yonni. I put my ear in no man's boat. Give me an easy word, my dear friends, and row me gently over.

"You had better go and dress," says Bedford sternly, but at his master; "the first bell has rung this quarter of an hour. Will you have some tea?"

Lovel started up; he looked at the clock. "You are all right, Batch, I see. I hope you are going to stay some time, ain't you? And he disappeared to array himself in his sables and State, was thus alone with Miss Prior and her young charges, who resumed straightway their infantine gambols and quarrels.

"My dear Bessy!" I cry, holding out both hands, "I am heartily glad to see you."

"Ne m'appeler que de mon nom paternel devant tout combat, s'il vous plait, mon cher ami, mon bon protecteur!" she says hastily, in very good French, folding her hands and making courtsey.

"Oui, oui, oui! Parlez vous Francais? J'aime, tu aimes," cries out dear Master Popham. "What are you talking about? Here's the phaeton!" and the young innocent darts through the open window on to the lawn, whither he is followed by his sister, and where we see the carriage containing Mr. and Mrs. Bonnington rolling over the smooth walk.

Bessy advances towards me, and gives me readily enough to the hand she had refused a moment before.

"I never thought you would have refused it, Bessy," said I.

"Refuse it to the best friend I ever had!" she says, pressing my hand. "Ah, dear Mr. Batchelor, what an ungrateful world should be, if I did!"

"Let me see your eyes. Why do you wear spectacles? You
ever wore them in Beak Street," I say. You see I was very fond of the child. She had wound herself around me in a thousand fond ways. Owing to a certain Person’s conduct my heart may be a ruin—a Persepolis, sir—a perfect Tadmor. But what then? May not a traveller rest under its shattered columns? May not an Arab maid repose there till the morning dawns and the caravan passes on? Yes, my heart is a Palmyra, and once a Queen inhabited me (O Zenobia! Zenobia! to think thou should’st have been led away captive by an O’D—!). Now, I am alone, alone in the solitary wilderness. Nevertheless, if a stranger comes to me I have a spring for his weary feet, I will give him the shelter of my shade. Rest thy cheek awhile, young maiden, on my marble—then go thy ways and leave me.

This I thought, or something to this effect, as, in reply to my remark, "Let me see your eyes," Bessy took off her spectacles, and I took them up and looked at her. Why didn’t I say to her, "My dear brave Elizabeth! as I look in your face, I see you have had an awful deal of suffering. Your eyes are inscrutably sad. We who are initiated, know the members of our Community of Sorrow. We have both been wrecked in different ships, and been cast on this shore. Let us go hand-in-hand, and find a cave and a shelter somewhere together!" I say, why didn’t I say this to her? She would have come, I feel sure she would. We would have been semi-attached as it were. We would have locked up that room in either heart where the skeleton was, and said nothing about it, and pulled down the party wall and taken our mild tea in the garden. I live in Pump Court now. It would have been better than this dingy loneliness and a snuffy laundress who bullies me. But for Bessy? Well—well, perhaps better for her too.

I remember these thoughts rushing through my mind whilst I held the spectacles. What a number of other things too! I remember two canaries making a tremendous concert in their cage. I remember the voices of the two children quarrelling on the lawn, the sound of the carriage wheels grinding over the gravel; and then of a little old familiar cracked voice in my ear, with a "La, Mr. Batchelor; are you here?" And a sly face looks up at me from under an old bonnet.

"It is mamma," says Bessy.

"And I’m come to tea with Elizabeth and the dear children; and while you are at dinner, dear Mr. Batchelor, thankful—thankful for all mercies! And dear me! here is Mrs. Bonnington, I do declare! Dear madam, how well you look—not twenty, I declare! And dear Mr. Bonnington! Oh, sir! let me—let me, I must press your hand. What a sermon last Sunday! All Putney was in tears!"
And the little woman, flinging out her lean arms, seizes portly Mr. Bonnington's fat hand, as he and kind Mrs. Bonnington enter at the open casement. The little woman seems inclined to do the honours of the house. "And won't you go upstairs, and put on your cap? Dear me, what a lovely ribbon! How blue does become Mrs. Bonnington! I always say so to Elizabeth," she cries, peeping into a little packet which Mrs. Bonnington bears in her hand. After exchanging friendly words and greetings with me, that lady retires to put the lovely cap on, followed by her little jackal of an aide-de-camp. The portly clergyman surveys his pleased person in the spacious mirror. "Your things are in your old room—like to go in, and brush up a bit?" whispers Bedford to me. I am obliged to go, you see, though, for my part, I had thought, until Bedford spoke, that the ride on the top of the Putney omnibus had left me without any need of brushing; having aired my clothes, and given my young cheek a fresh and agreeable bloom.

My old room, as Bedford calls it, was that snug apartment communicating by double doors with the drawing-room, and whence you can walk on to the lawn out of the windows.

"Here's your books, here's your writing-paper," says Bedford, leading the way into the chamber. "Does sore eyes good to see you down here again, sir. You may smoke now. Clarence Baker smokes when he comes. Go and get some of that wine you like, for dinner." And the good fellow's eyes beam kindness upon me as he nods his head, and departs to superintend the duties of his table. Of course you understand that this Bedford was my young printer's boy of former days. What a queer fellow! I had not only been kind to him, but he was grateful.
CHAPTER III

IN WHICH I PLAY THE SPY

THE room to which Bedford conducted me I hold to be the very pleasantest chamber in all the mansion of Shrublands.

To lie on that comfortable cool bachelor's bed there, and see the birds hopping about on the lawn; to peep out of the French window at early morning, inhale the sweet air, mark the dewy bloom on the grass, listen to the little warblers performing their chorus, step forth in your dressing-gown and slippers, pick a strawberry from the bed, or an apricot in its season; blow one, two, three, just half-a-dozen puffs of a cigarette; hear the venerable towers of Putney toll the hour of six (three hours from breakfast, by consequence), and pop back into bed again with a favourite novel, or review, to set you off (you see I am not malicious, or I could easily insert here the name of some twaddler against whom I have a grudgekin): to pop back into bed again, I say, with a book which sets you off into that dear invaluable second sleep, by which health, spirits, appetite are so prodigiously improved:—all these I hold to be most cheerful and harmless pleasures, and have partaken of them often at Shrublands with a grateful heart. That heart may have had its grieves, but is yet susceptible of enjoyment and consolation. That bosom may have been lacerated, but is not therefore and hencenoward a stranger to comfort. After a certain affair in Dublin—nay, very soon after, three months after—I recollect remarking to myself: “Well, thank my stars, I still have a relish for '34 claret.” Once at Shrublands I heard steps pacing overhead at night, and the feeble but continued wail of an infant. I wakened from my sleep, was sulky, but turned and slept again. Biddlecombe the barrister, I knew, was the occupant of the upper chamber. He came down the next morning looking wretchedly yellow about the cheeks, and livid round the eyes. His teething infant had kept him on the march all night, and Mrs. Biddlecombe, I am told, scolds him frightfully besides. He munched a shred of toast, and was off by the omnibus to chambers. I chipped a second egg; I may have tried one or two other nice little things on the table (Strasbourg pâté I know I never can resist, and am convinced
it is perfectly wholesome). I could see my own sweet face in the mirror opposite, and my gills were as rosy as any broiled salmon.

"Well—well!" I thought as the barrister disappeared on the roof of the coach, "he has domus and placens uxor—but is she placens? Placens to walk about all night with a roaring baby? Is it pleasing to go to bed after a long hard day's work, and have your wife nagging you because she has not been invited to the Lady Chancelloress's soirée, or what not? Suppose the Glorvina whom you loved so had been yours? Her eyebrows looked as if they could scowl, her eyes as if they could flash with anger. Remember what a slap she gave the little knife-boy for upsetting the butterboat over her tabinet. Suppose parvulus audis, a little Batchelor your son, who had the toothache all night in your bedroom?"

These thoughts passed rapidly through my mind as I helped myself to the comfortable meal before me. "I say, what a lot of muffins you're eating!" cried innocent Master Lovel. Now the married, the wealthy, the prosperous Biddlecombe only took his wretched scrap of dry toast. "Aha!" you say, "this man is consoling himself after his misfortune." O cheer! and do you grudge me consolation? "Thank you, dear Miss Prior. Another cup, and plenty of cream, if you please." Of course, Lady Baker was not at table when I said, "Dear Miss Prior," at breakfast. Before her Ladyship I was as mum as a mouse. Elizabeth found occasion to whisper to me during the day in her demure way: "This is a very rare occasion. Lady B——never allows me to breakfast alone with Mr. Lovel, but has taken her extra nap, I suppose, because you and Mr. and Mrs. Biddlecombe were here."

Now it may be that one of the double doors of the room which I inhabited was occasionally open, and that Mr. Batchelor's eyes and ears are uncommonly quick, and note a number of things which less observant persons would never regard or discover; but out of this room, which I occupied for some few days, now and subsequently, I looked forth as from a little ambush upon the proceedings of the house, and got a queer little insight into the history and characters of the personages round about me. The two grandmothers of Lovel's children were domineering over that easy gentleman, as women—not grandmothers merely, but sisters, wives, aunts, daughters, when the chance is given them—will domineer. Ah! Glorvina, what a grey mare you might have become had you chosen Mr. Batchelor for your consort! (But this I only remark with a parenthetic sigh.) The two children had taken each the side of a grandmamma, and whilst Master Pop was declared by his maternal grandmother to be a Baker all over, and taught to despise sugar-baking and trade, little Cecilia was Mrs. Bonnington's
favourite, repeated Watts's hymns with fervent precocity; declared that she would marry none but a clergyman; preached infantine sermons to her brother and maid about worldliness; and somewhat fearied me, if the truth must be told, by the intense self-respect with which she regarded her own virtues. The old ladies had that love for each other, which one may imagine that their relative positions would engender. Over the bleeding and helpless bodies of Lovel and his worthy and kind stepfather, Mr. Bonnington, they skirmished and fired shots at each other. Lady B—- would give hints about second marriages, and second families, and so forth, which of course made Mrs. Bonnington wince. Mrs. B—- had the better of Lady Baker, in consequence of the latter's notorious pecuniary irregularities. She had never had recourse to her son's purse, she could thank Heaven. She was not afraid of meeting any tradesman in Putney or London: she had never been ordered out of the house in the late Cecilia's lifetime; she could go to Boulogne and enjoy the fresh air there. This was the terrific whip she had over Baker. Lady B——, I regret to say, in consequence of the failure of remittances, had been locked up in prison, just at a time when she was in a state of violent quarrel with her late daughter, and good Mr. Bonnington had helped her out of durance. How did I know this? Bedford, Lovel's factotum, told me: and how the old ladies were fighting like two cats.

There was one point on which the two ladies agreed. A very wealthy widower, young still, good-looking, and good-tempered, we know can sometimes find a dear woman to console his loneliness, and protect his motherless children. From the neighbouring Heath, from Wimbledon, Roehampton, Barnes, Mortlake, Richmond, Esher, Walton, Windsor, nay, Reading, Bath, Exeter, and Penzance itself, or from any other quarter of Britain, over which your fancy may please to travel, families would have come ready with dear young girls to take charge of that man's future happiness; but it is a fact that these two dragons kept all women off from their ward. An unmarried woman, with decent good looks, was scarce ever allowed to enter Shrublands gate. If such an one appeared, Lovel's two mothers sallied out, and crunched her hapless bones. Once or twice he dared to dine with his neighbours, but the ladies led him such a life that the poor creature gave up the practice, and faintly announced his preference for home. "My dear Batch," says he, "what do I care for the dinners of the people round about? Has any one of them got a better cook or better wine than mine? When I come home from business, it is an intolerable nuisance to have to dress and go out seven or eight miles to cold entrées, and loaded claret, and sweet port. I can't stand it, sir. I won't stand
it" (and he stamps his foot in a resolute manner). "Give me a
easy life, a wine-merchant I can trust, and my own friends, by
own fireside. Shall we have some more? We can manage anothe
bottle among us three, Mr. Bonnington?"

"Well," says Mr. Bonnington, winking at the ruby goblet, "I
am sure I have no objection, Frederick, to another bo——"

"Coffee is served, sir," cries Bedford, entering.

"Well—well, perhaps we have had enough," says worthy
Bonnington.

"We have had enough; we all drink too much," says Lovel
briskly. "Come in to coffee."

We go to the drawing-room. Fred and I, and the two ladies
sit down to a rubber, whilst Miss Prior plays a piece of Beethoven
to a slight warbling accompaniment from Mr. Bonnington's hand,
some nose, who has fallen asleep over the newspaper. During ou
play, Bessy glides out of the room—a grey shadow. Bonnington
wakens up when the tray is brought in. Lady Baker likes the
good old custom: it was always the fashion at the Castle, and she
takes a good glass of negus too; and so do we all; and the con
versation is pretty merry, and Fred Lovel hopes I shall sleep
to-night, and is very facetious about poor Biddlecombe, and the
way in which that eminent Q.C. is henpecked by his wife.

From my bachelor's room, then, on the ground-floor; or from
my solitary walks in the garden, whence I could oversee many
things in the house; or from Bedford's communications to me,
which were very friendly, curious, and unreserved; or from my own
observation, which I promise you can see as far into the millstones
of life as most folk's, I grew to find the mysteries of Shrublands no
longer mysterious to me; and, like another Diable Boiteux, had
the roofs of a pretty number of the Shrublands rooms taken off
for me.

For instance, on that very first day of my stay, whilst the
family wereattiring themselves for dinner, I chanced to find two
secret cupboards of the house unlocked, and the contents unveiled
to me. Pinhorn, the children's maid, a giddy little flirtling thing
in a pink ribbon, brought some articles of the toilette into my
worship's apartment, and as she retired did not shut the door
behind her. I might have thought that pert little head had never
been made to ache by any care; but ah! black care sits behind the
horseman, as Horace remarks, and not only behind the horseman,
but behind the footman; and not only on the footman, but on the
buxom shoulders of the lady's-maid. So with Pinhorn. You surely
have remarked respecting domestic servants that they address you
in a tone utterly affected and unnatural—adopting when they are
amongst each other, voices and gestures entirely different from those which their employers see and hear. Now, this little Pinhorn, in her occasional intercourse with your humble servant, had a brisk, quick, fluttering toss of the head, and a frisky manner, no doubt capable of charming some persons. As for me, ancillary allurements have, I own, had but small temptations. If Venus brought me a bedroom candle and a jug of hot water, I should give her sixpence, and no more. Having, you see, given my all to one woman—Psha! never mind that old story.—Well, I daresay this little creature may have been a flirt, but I took no more notice of her than if she had been a coal-scuttle.

Now, suppose she was a flirt. Suppose, under a mask of levity, she hid a profound sorrow. Do you suppose she was the first woman who ever has done so? Do you suppose because she had fifteen pounds a year, her tea, sugar, and beer, and told fibs to her masters and mistresses, she had not a heart? She went out of the room, absolutely coaxing and leering at me as she departed, with a great counterpane over her arm; but in the next apartment I heard her voice quite changed, and another changed voice too—though not so much altered—interrogating her. My friend Dick Bedford's voice, in addressing those whom Fortune had pleased to make his superiors, was gruff and brief. He seemed to be anxious to deliver himself of his speech to you as quickly as possible; and his tone always seemed to hint, "There—there is my message, and I have delivered it; but you know perfectly well that I am as good as you." And so he was, and so I always admitted: so even the trembling, believing, flustered, suspicious Lady Baker herself admitted, when she came into communication with this man. I have thought of this little Dick as of Swift at Sheen hard by, with Sir William Temple; or Spartacus when he was as yet the servant of the fortunate Roman gentleman who owned him. Now if Dick was intelligent, obedient, useful, only not rebellious with his superiors, I should fancy that amongst his equals he was by no means pleasant company, and that most of them hated him for his arrogance, his honesty, and his scorn of them all.

But women do not always hate a man for scorning and despising them. Women do not revolt at the rudeness and arrogance of us their natural superiors. Women, if properly trained, come down to heel at the master's bidding, and lick the hand that has been often raised to hit them. I do not say that brave little Dick Bedford ever raised an actual hand to this poor serving-girl, but his tongue whipped her, his behaviour trampled on her, and she cried, and came to him whenever he lifted a finger. Psha! Don't tell me. If you want a quiet, contented, orderly home, and things
comfortable about you, that is the way you must manage your women.

Well, Bedford happens to be in the next room. It is the morning-room at Shrubland. You enter the dining-room from it, and they are in the habit of laying out the dessert there, before taking it in for dinner. Bedford is laying out his dessert as Pinhorn enters from my chamber, and he begins upon her with a sarcastic sort of grunt, and a "Ho! suppose you've been making up to B., have you?"

"Oh, Mr. Bedford, you know very well who it is I cares for!" she says, with a sigh.

"Bother!" Mr. B. remarks.

"Well, Richard, then!" (here she weeps).

"Leave go my 'and!—leave go my a-hand, I say!" (What could she have been doing to cause this exclamation?)

"Oh, Richard, it's not your 'and I want—it's your ah-ah-art, Richard!"

"Mary Pinhorn," exclaims the other, "what's the use of going on with this game? You know we couldn't be a-happy together—you know your ideers ain't no good, Mary. It ain't your fault. I don't blame you for it, my dear. Some people are born clever, some are born tall: I ain't tall."

"Oh, you're tall enough for me, Richard!"

Here Richard again found occasion to cry out: "Don't, I say! Suppose Baker was to come in and find you squeezing of my hand in this way? I say, some people are born with big brains, Miss Pinhorn, and some with big figures. Look at that ass, Bulkeley. Lady B.'s man! He is as big as a Lifeguardsman, and he has no more education, nor no more ideas, than the beef he feeds on."

"La! Richard, whatever do you mean?"

"Pooh! How should you know what I mean? Lay them books straight. Put the volumes together, stupid! and the papers, and get the table ready for nursery tea, and don't go on there mopping your eyes, and making a fool of yourself, Mary Pinhorn!"

"Oh, your heart is a stone—a stone—a stone!" cries Mary, in a burst of tears. "And I wish it was hung round my neck, and I was at the bottom of the well, and—there's the upstairs bell!" with which signal I suppose Mary disappeared, for I only heard a sort of grunt from Mr. Bedford; then the clatter of a dish or two, the wheeling of chairs and furniture, and then came a brief silence, which lasted until the entry of Dick's subordinate, Buttons, who laid the table for the children's and Miss Prior's tea.

So here was an old story told over again. Here was love unrequited, and a little passionate heart wounded and unhappy. My
"WHERE THE SUGAR GOES"
poor little Mary! As I am a sinner, I will give thee a crown when I go away, and not a couple of shillings, as my wont has been. Five shillings will not console thee much, but they will console thee a little. Thou wilt not imagine that I bribe thee with any privy thought of evil? Away! "Ich habe genossen das irdische Glück—ich habe—geliebt!"

At this juncture, I suppose Mrs. Prior must have entered the apartment, for though I could not hear her noiseless step, her little cracked voice came pretty clearly to me with a "Good afternoon, Mr. Bedford! Oh, dear me! what a many—many years we have been acquainted! To think of the pretty little printer's boy who used to come to Mr. Batchelor, and see you grown such a fine man!"

Bedford. How? I'm only five foot four.

Mrs. Prior. But such a fine figure, Bedford! You are—now indeed you are! Well, you are strong and I am weak. You are well, and I am weary and faint.

Bedford. The tea's a-coming directly, Mrs. Prior.

Mrs. Prior. Could you give me a glass of water first—and perhaps a little sherry in it, please. Oh, thank you. How good it is! How it revives a poor old wretch!—and your cough, Bedford? How is your cough? I have brought you some lozenges for it—some of Sir Henry Halford's own prescribing for my dear husband, and——

Bedford (abruptly). I must go—never mind the cough now, Mrs. P.

Mrs. Prior. What's here? almonds and raisins, macaroons, preserved apricots, biscuits for dessert—and—la bless the man! how you sta—artled me!

Bedford. Don't! Mrs. Prior: I beg and implore of you, keep your hands out of the dessert. I can't stand it. I must tell the governor if this game goes on.

Mrs. Prior. Ah! Mr. Bedford, it is for my poor—poor child at home; the doctor recommended her apricots. Ay, indeed, dear Bedford: he did, for her poor chest!

Bedford. And I'm blest if you haven't been at the sherry-bottle again! Oh, Mrs. P., you drive me wild—you do. I can't see Lovel put upon in this way. You know it's only last week I whipped the boy for stealing the sherry, and 'twas you done it.

Mrs. Prior (passionately). For a sick child, Bedford. What won't a mother do for her sick child?

Bedford. Your children's always sick. You're always taking things for 'em. I tell you, by the laws, I won't and mustn't stand it, Mrs. P.
Mrs. Prior (with much spirit). Go and tell your master, Bedford. Go and tell tales of me, sir. Go and have me dismissed out of this house. Go and have my daughter dismissed out of this house, and her poor mother brought to disgrace.

Bedford. Mrs. Prior—Mrs. Prior! you have been a-taking the sherry. A glass I don’t mind: but you’ve been a-bringing the bottle again.

Mrs. Prior (whimpering). It’s for Charlotte, Bedford! my poor delicate angel of a Shatty! she’s ordered it, indeed she is!

Bedford. Confound your Shatty! I can’t stand it, I mustn’t and won’t, Mrs. P.!

Here a noise and clatter of other persons arriving interrupts the conversation between Lovel’s major-domo and the mother of the children’s governess, and I presently heard Master Pop’s voice, saying, “You’re going to tea with us, Mrs. Prior?”

Mrs. Prior. Your kind dear grandmammies have asked me, dearest Master Popham.

Pop. But you’d like to go to dinner best, wouldn’t you? I daresay you have doosid bad dinners at your house. Haven’t you, Mrs. Prior?

Cissy. Don’t say doosid. It’s a naughty word, Popham!

Pop. I will say doosid. Doo-o-o-oosid! There! And I’ll say worse words too, if I please, and you hold your tongue. What’s there for tea? jam for tea? strawberries for tea? muffins for tea? That’s it: strawberries and muffins for tea. And we’ll go into dessert besides: that’s prime. I say, Miss Prior!

Miss Prior. What do you say, Popham?

Pop. Shouldn’t you like to go in to dessert?—there’s lots of good things there, — and have wine? Only when grandmamma tells her story about—about my grandfather and King George the what-d’ye-call-im! King George the Fourth——

Cis. Ascended the throne, 1820; died at Windsor, 1830.

Pop. Bother Windsor! Well, when she tells that story, I can tell you that ain’t very good fun.

Cis. And it’s rude of you to speak in that way of your grandmamma, Pop!

Pop. And you’ll hold your tongue, miss! And I shall speak as I like. And I’m a man, and I don’t want any of your stuff and nonsense. I say, Mary, give us the marmalade!

Cis. You have had plenty to eat, and boys oughtn’t to have so much.

Pop. Boys may have what they like. Boys can eat twice as much as women. There, I don’t want any more. Anybody may have the rest.
Mrs. Prior. What nice marmalade! I know some children, by dears, who—
Miss Prior (imploringly). Mamma, I beseech you—
Mrs. Prior. I know three dear children who very—very seldom have nice marmalade and delicious cake.
Pop. I know whom you mean: you mean Augustus, and Frederick, and Fanny—your children? Well, they shall have marmalade and cake.
Cis. Oh yes, I will give them all mine.
Pop. (who speaks, I think, as if his mouth was full). I won't give 'em mine: but they can have another pot, you know. You have always got a basket with you; you know you have, Mrs. Prior. You had it the day you took the cold fowl.
Mrs. Prior. For the poor blind black man! Oh, how thankful he was to his dear young benefactors! He is a man and a brother, and to help him was most kind of you, dear Master Popham!
Pop. That black beggar my brother? He ain't my brother.
Mrs. Prior. No, dears, you have both the most lovely complexions in the world.
Pop. Bother complexions! I say, Mary, another pot of marmalade.
Mary. I don't know, Master Pop—
Pop. I will have it, I say. If you don't I'll smash everything, I will.
Cis. Oh, you naughty rude boy!
Pop. Hold your tongue, stupid! I will have it, I say.
Mrs. Prior. Do humour him, Mary, please. And I'm sure my dear children at home will be better for it.
Pop. There's your basket. Now put this cake in, and this bit of butter, and this sugar on the top of the butter. Hurray! hurray! Oh, what jolly fun! Here's some cake—no, I think I'll keep that: and, Mrs. Prior, tell Gus, and Fanny, and Fred I sent it to 'em, and they shall never want for anything as long as Frederick Popham Baker Lovel, Esquire, can give it them. Did Gus like my grey greatcoat that I didn't want?
Miss Prior. You did not give him your new greatcoat?
Pop. It was beastly ugly, and I did give it him: and I'll give him this if I choose. And don't you speak to me: I'm going to school, and I ain't going to have no governesses soon.
Mrs. Prior. Ah, dear child! what a nice coat it is: and how well my boy looks in it!
Miss Prior. Mother, mother! I implore you—mother—
Mr. Lovel enters. So the children at high tea! How d'ye do,
Mrs. Prior? I think we shall be able to manage that little one for your second boy, Mrs. Prior.

*Mrs. Prior.* Heaven bless you,—bless you, my dear benefactor! Don’t prevent me, Elizabeth : I must kiss his hand.

There’s the second bell rings, and I enter the morning-room and can see Mrs. Prior’s great basket popped cunningly under the table-cloth. Her basket?—her *porte-manteau,* her *porte-bouteille* her *porte-gâteau,* her *porte-pantalon,* her *porte-buée* in general. Thus I could see that every day Mrs. Prior visited Shrublands gleaned greedily of the harvest. Well, Boaz was rich, and the ruthless Ruth was hungry and poor.

At the welcome summons of the second bell, Mr. and Mrs. Bonnington also made their appearance; the latter in the new gown which Mrs. Prior had admired, and which she saluted with a nod and smiling recognition: “Dear madam, it is lovely—I told you it was lovely!” whispers Mrs. P., and the wearer of the blue ribbons turned a bonny good-natured face towards the looking-glass, and I hope saw no reason to doubt Mrs. Prior’s sincerity. As for Bonnington, I could perceive that he had been taking a little nap before dinner,—a practice by which the appetite is improved, I think, and the intellect prepared for the bland prandial conversation.

“Have the children been quite good?” asks papa of the governess.

“There are worse children, sir,” says Miss Prior meekly.

“Make haste and have your dinner; we are coming in to dessert!” cries Pop.

“You would not have us go to dine without your grandmother?” papa asks. Dine without Lady Baker, indeed! I should have liked to see him go to dinner without Lady Baker.

Pending her Ladyship’s arrival, papa and Mr. Bonnington walk to the open window, and gaze on the lawn and the towers of Putney rising over the wall.

“Ah, my dear Mrs. Prior,” cries Mrs. Bonnington, “those grand children of mine are sadly spoiled.”

“Not by you, dear madam,” says Mrs. Prior, with a look of commiseration. “Your dear children at home are, I am sure, perfect models of goodness. Is Master Edward well, ma’am? and Master Robert, and Master Richard, and dear funny little Master William? Ah, what blessings those children are to you! If a certain wilful little nephew of theirs took after them!”

“The little naughty wretch!” cried Mrs. Bonnington; “do you know, Prior, my grandson Frederick? (I don’t know why they call him Popham in this house, or why he should be ashamed of his
I PLAY THE SPY

her's name)—do you know that Popham spilt the ink over my husband's bands, which he keeps in his great dictionary, and ght with my Richard, who is three years older than Popham, actually beat his own uncle!"

"Gracious goodness!" I cried; "you don't mean to say, am, that Pop has been laying violent hands upon his venerable tive?" I feel ever so gentle a pull at my coat. Was it Miss or who warned me not to indulge in the sarcastic method with d Mrs. Bonnington?

"I don't know why you call my poor child a venerable relative," s. B. remarks. "I know that Popham was very rude to him: then Robert came to his brother, and that graceless little pham took a stick, and my husband came out, and do you know pham Lovel actually kicked Mr. Bonnington on the shins, and eted him like a little naughty ram; and if you think such conecet is a subject for ridicule—I don't, Mr. Batchelor."

"My dear—dear lady!" I cried, seizing her hand; for she was ing to cry, and in woman's eye the unanswerable tear always raises deuce of a commotion in my mind. "I would not for the worl y a word that should willingly vex you; and as for Popham, I ve your honour, I think nothing would do that child so much od as a good whipping."

"He is spoiled, madam; we know by whom," says Mrs. Prior. Dear Lady Baker! how that red does become your Ladyship!"

fact, Lady B. sailed in at this juncture, arrayed in ribbons of carlet; with many brooches, bangles, and other gimmers ornaments her plenteous person. And now her Ladyship having arrived, Bedford announced that dinner was served, and Lovel gave his mother-in-law an arm, whilst I offered mine to Mrs. Bonnington to lead her to the adjoining dining-room. And the placable kind soul speedily made peace with me. And we ate and drank of Lovel's best. And Lady Baker told us her celebrated anecdote of George the Fourth's compliment to her late dear husband, Sir Popham, when his Majesty visited Ireland. Mrs. Prior and her basket were gone when we repaired to the drawing-room: having been hunting all day, the hungry mother had returned with her prey to her wide-mouthed birkikins. Elizabeth looked very pale and handsome, reading at her lamp. And whist and the little tray finished the second day at Shrublands.

I paced the moonlit walk alone when the family had gone to rest; and smoked my cigar under the tranquil stars. I had been some thirty hours in the house, and what a queer little drama was unfolding itself before me! What struggles and passions were going on here—what certamina and motus animorum! Here was
Lovel, this willing horse; and what a crowd of relations, what a heap of luggage had the honest fellow to carry! How that little Mrs. Prior was working, and scheming, and tacking, and flattering, and fawning, and plundering, to be sure! And that serene Elizabeth, with what consummate skill, art, and prudence had she to act, to keep her place with two such rivals reigning over her! And Elizabeth not only kept her place, but she actually was liked by those two women! Why, Elizabeth Prior, my wonder and respect for thee increase with every hour during which I contemplate thy character! How is it that you live with those lionesses, and are not torn to pieces? What sops of flattery do you cast to them to appease them? Perhaps I do not think my Elizabeth brings up her two children very well, and, indeed, have seldom become acquainted with young people more odious. But is the fault hers, or is it Fortune's spite? How, with these two grandmothers spoiling the children alternately, can the governess do better than she does? How has she managed to hush their natural jealousy? I will work out that intricate problem, that I will, ere many days are over. And there are other mysteries which I perceive. There is poor Mary breaking her heart for the butler. That butler, why does he connive at the rogueries of Mrs. Prior? Ha! herein lies a mystery too; and I vow I will penetrate it ere long. So saying, I fling away the butt-end of the fragrant companion of my solitude, and enter into my room by the open French window just as Bedford walks in at the door. I had heard the voice of that worthy domestic warbling a grave melody from his pantry window as I paced the lawn. When the family goes to rest, Bedford passes a couple of hours in study in his pantry, perusing the newspapers and the new works, and forming his opinion on books and politics. Indeed, I have reason to believe that the letters in the Putney Herald and Mortlake Monitor, signed "A Voice from the Basement," were Mr. Bedford's composition.

"Come to see all safe for the night, sir, and the windows closed before you turn in," Mr. Dick remarks. "Best not leave 'em open even if you are asleep inside—catch cold—many bad people about. Remember Bromley murder!—Enter at French windows—you cry out—cut your throat—and there's a fine paragraph for papers next morning!"

"What a good voice you have, Bedford!" I say; "I heard you warbling just now—a famous bass, on my word!"

"Always fond of music—sing when I'm cleaning my plate—learned in old Beak Street. She used to teach me," and he points towards the upper floors.
"What a little chap you were then!—when you came for my proofs for the Museum," I remark.

"I ain’t a very big one now, sir; but it ain’t the big ones that do the best work," remarks the butler.

"I remember Miss Prior saying that you were as old as she was."

"Hum! and I scarce came up to her—eh—elbow." (Bedford was constantly to do battle with the aspirates. He conquered them, but you could see there was a struggle.)

"And it was Miss Prior taught you to sing?" I say, looking him full in the face.

He dropped his eyes—he could not bear my scrutiny. I knew the whole story now.

"When Mrs. Lovel died at Naples, Miss Prior brought home the children, and you acted as courier to the whole party?"

"Yes, sir," says Bedford. "We had the carriage, and of course poor Mrs. L. was sent home by sea, and I brought home the young ones, and—and the rest of the family. I could say, Avanti! avanti! to the Italian postillions, and ask for des chevaux when we crossed the Alps—the Alps,—I beg your pardon, sir."

"And you used to see the party to their rooms at the inns, and call them up in the morning, and you had a blunderbuss in the rumble to shoot the robbers?"

"Yes," says Bedford.

"And it was a pleasant time?"

"Yes," says Bedford, groaning and hanging down his miserable head. "Oh yes, it was a pleasant time."

He turned away; he stamped his foot; he gave a sort of imprecation; he pretended to look at some books, and dust them with a napkin which he carried. I saw the matter at once. "Poor Dick!" says I.

"It’s the old old story," says Dick. "It’s you and the Hirish girl over again, sir. I’m only a servant, I know; but I’m a——. Confound it!" And here he stuck his fists into his eyes.

"And this is the reason you allow old Mrs. Prior to steal the sherry and the sugar?" I ask.

"How do you know that?—you remember how she prigged in Beak Street?" asks Bedford fiercely.

"I overheard you and her just before dinner," I said.

"You had better go and tell Lovel—have me turned out of the house. That’s the best thing that can be done," cries Bedford again fiercely, stamping his feet.

"It is always my custom to do as much mischief as I possibly can, Dick Bedford," I say, with fine irony.
LOVEL THE WIDOWER

He seizes my hand. "No, you're a trump—everybody knows that; beg pardon, sir; but you see I'm so—so—dash!—miserable that I hardly know whether I'm walking on my head or my heels."

"You haven't succeeded in touching her heart, then, my poor Dick?" I said.

Dick shook his head. "She has no heart," he said. "If she ever had any, that fellar in India took it away with him. She don't care for anybody alive. She likes me as well as any one. I think she appreciates me, you see, sir; she can't 'elp it—I'm blest if she can. She knows I am a better man than most of the chaps that come down here,—I am, if I wasn't a servant. If I were only an apothecary,—like that grinning jackass who comes here from Barnes in his gig, and wants to marry her,—she'd have me. She keeps him on, and encourages him,—she can do that cleverly enough. And the old dragon fancies she is fond of him. Psha! Why am I making a fool of myself?—I am only a servant. Mary's good enough for me; she'll have me fast enough. I beg your pardon, sir; I am making a fool of myself; I ain't the first, sir. Good night, sir; hope you'll sleep well." And Dick departs to his pantry and his private cares, and I think, "Here is another victim who is writhing under the merciless arrows of the universal torturer."

"He is a very singular person," Miss Prior remarked to me, as, next day, I happened to be walking on Putney Heath by her side, while her young charges trotted on and quarrelled in the distance. "I wonder where the world will stop next, dear Mr. Batchelor, and how far the march of intellect will proceed! Any one so free, and easy, and cool, as this Mr. Bedford, I never saw. When we were abroad with poor Mrs. Lovel, he picked up French and Italian in quite a surprising way. He takes books down from the library now: the most abstruse works—works that I couldn't pretend to read, I'm sure. Mr. Bonnington says he has taught himself history, and Horace in Latin, and algebra, and I don't know what besides. He talked to the servants and tradespeople at Naples much better than I could, I assure you." And Elizabeth tosses up her head heavenwards, as if she would ask of yonder skies how such a man could possibly be as good as herself.

She stepped along the Heath—slim, stately, healthy, tall,—her firm neat foot treading swiftly over the grass. She wore her blue spectacles, but I think she could have looked at the sun without the glasses and without wincing. That sun was playing with her tawny wavy ringlets, and scattering gold-dust over them.

"It is wonderful," said I, admiring her, "how these people give themselves airs, and try to imitate their betters!"

"Most extraordinary!" says Bessy. She had not one particle
of humour in all her composition. I think Dick Bedford was right; and she had no heart. Well, she had famous lungs, health, appetite, and with these one may get through life not uncomfortably.

"You and Saint Cecilia got on pretty well, Bessy?" I ask.

"Saint who?"

"The late Mrs. L."

"Oh, Mrs. Lovel:—yes. What an odd person you are! I did not understand whom you meant," says Elizabeth the downright.

"Not a good temper, I should think! She and Fred fought?"

"He never fought."

"I think a little bird has told me that she was not averse to the admiration of our sex?"

"I don't speak ill of my friends, Mr. Batchelor," replies Elizabeth the prudent.

"You must have difficult work with the two old ladies at Shrublands?"

Bessy shrugs her shoulders. "A little management is necessary in all families," she says. "The ladies are naturally a little jealous one of the other; but they are both of them not unkind to me in the main; and I have to bear no more than other women in my situation. It was not all pleasure at St. Boniface, Mr. Batchelor, with my uncle and aunt. I suppose all governesses have their difficulties! and I must get over mine as best I can, and be thankful for the liberal salary which your kindness procured for me, and which enables me to help my poor mother and my brothers and sisters."

"I suppose you give all your money to her?"

"Nearly all. They must have it; poor mamma has so many months to feed."

"And notre petit cœur, Bessy?" I ask, looking in her fresh face. "Have we replaced the Indian officer?"

Another shrug of the shoulders. "I suppose we all get over those follies, Mr. Batchelor. I remember somebody else was in a sad way too,"—and she looks askance at the victim of Glorvina. "My folly is dead and buried long ago. I have to work so hard for mamma, and my brothers and sisters, that I have no time for such nonsense."

Here a gentleman in a natty gig, with a high-trotting horse, came spanking towards us over the common, and with my profound knowledge of human nature, I saw at once that the servant by the driver's side was a little doctor's boy, and the gentleman himself was a neat and trim general practitioner.

He stared at me grimly, as he made a bow to Miss Bessy. I saw jealousy and suspicion in his aspect.
"Thank you, dear Mr. Drencher," says Bessy, "for your kind-ness to mamma and our children. You are going to call at Shrublands? Lady Baker was indisposed this morning. She says while she can't have Doctor Piper, there's nobody like you." And this artful one smiles blandly on Mr. Drencher.

"I have got the workhouse, and a case at Roehampton, and I shall be at Shrublands about two," Miss Prior," says that young Doctor, whom Bedford had called a grinning jackass. He laid an eager emphasis on the two. Go to! I know what two and two mean as well as most people, Mr. Drencher! Glances of rage he shot at me from out his gig. The serpents of that miserable Æsculapius unwound themselves from his rod, and were gnawing at his swollen heart!

"He has a good practice, Mr. Drencher?" I ask, sly rogue as I am.

"He is very good to mamma and our children. His practice with them does not profit him much," says Bessy.

"And I suppose our walk will be over before two o'clock?" remarks that slyboots who is walking with Miss Prior.

"I hope so. Why, it is our dinner-time; and this walk on the Heath does make one so hungry!" cries the governess.

"Bessy Prior," I said, "it is my belief that you no more want spectacles than a cat in the twilight." To which she replied, that I was such a strange odd man, she really could not understand me.

We were back at Shrublands at two. Of course we must not keep the children's dinner waiting; and of course Mr. Drencher drove up at five minutes past two, with his gig-horse all in a lather. I, who knew the secrets of the house, was amused to see the furious glances which Bedford darted from the sideboard, or as he served the Doctor with cutlets. Drencher, for his part, scowled at me. I, for my part, was easy, witty, pleasant, and I trust profoundly wicked and malicious. I bragged about my aristocratic friends to Lady Baker. I trumped her old-world stories about George the Fourth at Dublin with the latest dandified intelligence I had learned at the Club. That the young Doctor should be dazzled and disgusted was, I own, my wish; and I enjoyed his rage as I saw him choking with jealousy over his victuals.

But why was Lady Baker sulky with me? How came it, my fashionable stories had no effect upon that polite matron? Yesterday at dinner she had been gracious enough: and turning her back upon those poor simple Bonningtons, who knew nothing of the beau monde at all, had condescended to address herself specially to me several times with an "I need not tell you, Mr. Batchelor, that the Duchess of Dorsetshire's maiden name was De Bobus;" or, "You
I PLAY THE SPY

Now very well that the etiquette at the Lord Lieutenant's balls, at
Dublin Castle, is for the wives of baronets to"—&c. &c.

Now whence, I say, did it arise that Lady Baker, who had been
and familiar with me on Sunday, should on Monday turn me
shoulder as cold as that lamb which I offered to carve for the
family, and which remained from yesterday's quarter? I had
thought of staying but two days at Shrublands. I generally am
ored at country-houses. I was going away on the Monday mor-
ing, but Lovel, when he and I and the children and Miss Prior
breakfasted together before he went to business, pressed me to stay
so heartily and sincerely that I agreed, gladly enough, to remain.
I could finish a scene or two of my tragedy at my leisure; besides,
there were one or two little comedies going on in the house which
inspired me with no little curiosity.

Lady Baker growled at me, then, during lunch-time. She
addressed herself in whispers and hints to Mr. Drencher. She had
in her own man, Bulkeley, and bullied him. She desired to know
whether she was to have the barouche or not; and when informed
that it was at her Ladyship's service, said it was a great deal too
cold for the open carriage, and that she would have the brougham.
When she was told that Mr. and Mrs. Bonnington had impounded
the brougham, she said she had no idea of people taking other
people's carriages: and when Mr. Bedford remarked that her Lady-
ship had her choice that morning, and had chosen the barouche, she
said, "I didn't speak to you, sir; and I will thank you not to
address me until you are spoken to!" She made the place so hot
that I began to wish I had quitted it.

"And pray, Miss Prior, where is Captain Baker to sleep," she
asked, "now that the ground-floor room is engaged?"

Miss Prior meekly said, "Captain Baker would have the pink
room."

"The room on my landing-place, without double doors? Im-
possible! Clarence is always smoking. Clarence will fill the whole
house with his smoke. He shall not sleep in the pink room. I expected
the ground-floor room for him, which—a—this gentleman persists in
not vacating. And the dear creature looked me full in the face.

"This gentleman smokes, too, and is so comfortable where he is,
that he proposes to remain there," I say with a bland smile.

"Haspic of plovers' eggs, sir," says Bedford, handing a dish
over my back. And he actually gave me a little dig, and growled,
"Go it—give it her!"

"There is a capital inn on the Heath," I continue, peeling one
of my opal favourites. "If Captain Baker must smoke, he may
have a room there."
“Sir! my son does not live at inns,” cries Lady Baker.

“Oh, grandma! don’t he, though? And wasn’t there a inn at the ‘Star and Garter’; and didn’t pa pay Uncle Clarence’s bill there, though?”

“Silence, Popham! Little boys should be seen and not heard,” says Cissy. “Shouldn’t little boys be seen and not heard, Miss Prior?”

“They shouldn’t insult their grandmothers. O my Cecilia—my Cecilia!” cries Lady Baker, lifting her hand.

“You shan’t hit me! I say you shan’t hit me!” roars Pop, starting back, and beginning to square at his enraged ancestress. The scene was growing painful. And there was that rascal of a Bedford choking with suppressed laughter at the sideboard. Bickerley, her Ladyship’s man, stood calm as fate; but young Button burst out in a guffaw; on which, I assure you, Lady Baker looked as savage as Lady Macbeth.

“Am I to be insulted by my daughter’s servants?” cries Lady Baker. “I will leave the house this instant.”

“At what hour will your Ladyship have the barouche?” says Bedford, with perfect gravity.

If Mr. Drencher had whipped out a lancet and bled Lady B—— on the spot, he would have done her good. I shall draw the curtain over this sad—this humiliating scene. Drop, little curtain! on this absurd little act.
CHAPTER IV

A BLACK SHEEP

The being for whom my friend Dick Bedford seemed to have a special contempt and aversion, was Mr. Bulkeley, the tall footman in attendance upon Lovel's dear mother-in-law, one of the causes of Bedford's wrath, the worthy fellow explained to me. In the servants' hall, Bulkeley was in the habit of speaking disrespectfully and satirically of his mistress, enlarging upon her many foibles, and describing her pecuniary difficulties to the many habitués of that second social circle at Shrublands. The old which Mr. Bulkeley had over his lady lay in a long unsettled account of wages, which her Ladyship was quite inclined to discharge. And, in spite of this insolvency, the footman must have found his profit in the place, for he continued to hold it from year to year, and to fatten on his earnings, such as they were. My lady's dignity did not allow her to travel without this huge vouchsafé in her train; and a great comfort it must have been to her, to reflect that in all the country-houses which she visited (and he would go wherever she could force an invitation), her attendant reely explained himself regarding her peculiarities, and made his other servants aware of his mistress's embarrassed condition. And the woman, whom I suppose no soul alive respected (unless, aply, she herself had a hankering delusion that she was a respectable woman), thought that her position in life forbade her to move abroad without a maid, and this hulking encumbrance in plush; and never was seen anywhere, in watering-place, country-house, or hotel, unless she was so attended.

Between Bedford and Bulkeley, then, there was feud and mutual hatred. Bedford chafed the big man by constant sneers and sarcasms, which penetrated the other's dull hide, and caused him frequently to assert that he would punch Dick's ugly head off. The housekeeper had frequently to interpose, and fling her matronly arms between these men of war; and perhaps Bedford was forced to be still at times, for Bulkeley was nine inches taller than himself, and was perpetually bragging of his skill and feats as a bruise. His sultan may also have wished to fling his pocket-handkerchief
to Miss Mary Pinhorn, who, though she loved Bedford's wit

cleverness, might also be not insensible to the magnificent c

calves, whiskers, of Mr. Bulkeley. On this delicate subject, I

ever, I can't speak. The men hated each other. You have, 

doubt, remarked in your experience of life, that when men do

each other, about a woman, or some other cause, the real reas

never assigned. You say, "The conduct of such and such a ma

his grandmother—his behaviour in selling that horse to Benso

his manner of brushing his hair down the middle"—or what

will, "makes him so offensive to me that I can't endure him."

verses, therefore, are mediocre; his speeches in Parliament are 

failures; his practice at the bar is dwindling every year; his por

(always small) are utterly leaving him, and he is repeating his

founded jokes until they quite nauseate. Why, only about my

and within these three days, I read a nice little article—written

sorrow, you know, not in anger—by our eminent confrère Wigg

deploring the decay of, &c, &c. And Wiggins's little article wh

was not found suitable for a certain Magazine!—Alloons done! I

drankard says the pickled salmon gave him the headache; then

who hates us gives a reason, but not the reason. Bedford is

angry with Bulkeley for abusing his mistress at the servants' tab

Yes. But for what else besides? I don't care—nor possibly do

your worship, the exalted reader, for these low vulgar kitch

quarrels.

Out of that ground-floor room, then, I would not move in s

of the utmost efforts of my Lady Baker's broad shoulder to push

out; and with many grins that evening, Bedford complimented

on my gallantry in routing the enemy at luncheon. I think he

impossibly have told his master, for Lovel looked very much alar

and uneasy when we greeted each other on his return from the C

but became more composed when Lady Baker appeared at the

second dinner-bell, without a trace on her fine countenance of th

storm which had caused all her waves to heave with such connec

tion at noon. How finely some people, by the way, can hang qu

quarrels—or put them into a drawer—as they do their work, whe

dinner is announced, and take them out again at a convenient

season! Baker was mild, gentle, a thought sad and sentimenta
				
tenderly interested about her dear son and daughter in Ireland

whom she must go and see—quite easy in hand, in a word, and t

the immense relief of all of us. She kissed Lovel on retiring, an

prayed blessings on her Frederick. She pointed to the picture

nothing could be more melancholy or more gracious.

"She go!" says Mr. Bedford to me at night—"not she. She

knows when she's well off; was obliged to turn out of Bakerstown
ere she came here: that brute Bulkeley told me so. She's pps quarrelling with her son and his wife. Angels don't grow everytime as they do at Putney, Mr. B.! You gave it her well always at lunch, you did though!" During my stay at Shrublands, Bedford paid me a regular evening visit in my room, set the "du pays" before me, and in his curt way acquainted me with the nacters of the inmates of the house, and the incidents occurring rein.

Captain Clarence Baker did not come to Shrublands on the day en his anxious mother wished to clear out my nest (and expel the ake bird in it) for her son's benefit. I believe an important h, which was to come off in the Essex Marshes, and which was eponed in consequence of the interposition of the county gistrates, was the occasion, or at any rate the pretext, of the ptain's delay. "He likes seeing fights better than going to 'em, aptain does," my major-domo remarked. "His regiment was ered to India, and he sold out: climate don't agree with his eous health. The Captain ain't been here ever so long, not ke poor Mrs. L.'s time, before Miss P. came here: Captain rence and his sister had a tremendous quarrel together. He was to all sorts of pranks, the Captain was. Not a good lot, by any ans, I should say, Mr. Batchelor." And here Bedford begins to gh. "Did you ever read, sir, a farce called 'Raising the Wind? ere's plenty of Jeremy Diddlers now, Captain Jeremy Diddlers d Lady Jeremy Diddlers too. Have you such a thing as half-aown about you? If you have, don't invest it in some folks' cket—th's all. Beg your pardon, sir, if I am bothering you th talking."

As long as I was at Shrublands, and ready to partake of breakst with my kind host and his children and their governess, Lady sker had her own breakfast taken to her room. But when there ere no visitors in the house, she would come groaning out of her room to be present at the morning meal; and not uncommonly ould give the little company anecdotes of the departed saint, under nose invocation, as it were, we were assembled, and whose simperg effigy looked down upon us, over her harp, and from the wall. e eyes of the portrait followed you about, as portraits' eyes so inted will; and those glances, as it seemed to me, still domineered er Lovel, and made him quail as they had done in life. Yonder, the corner, was Cecilia's harp, with its leathern cover. I likened e skin to that drum which the dying Zisca ordered should be ade out of his hide, to be beaten before the hosts of his people and spire terror. "Vous concevez, I did not say to Lovel at breakfast, I sat before the ghostly musical instrument, "My dear fellow,
that skin of Cardovan leather belonging to your defunct Cecilia harp is like the hide which," &c.; but I confess, at first, I used to have a sort of _creaky_ sensation, as of a sickly genteel ghost flitting about the place, in an exceedingly peevish humour, trying to say and command, and finding her defunct voice couldn't be heard, trying to re-illumine her extinguished leers and faded smiles at ogles, and finding no one admired or took note. In the grey of a gloaming, in the twilight corner where stands the shrouded companion of song—what is that white figure flickering round the skin harp? Once, as we were assembled in the room at afternoon tea, a bird, entering at the open window, perched on the instrument Popham dashed at it. Lovel was deep in conversation upon the wine duties with a Member of Parliament he had brought down to dinner. Lady Baker, who was, if I may use the expression "jawing," as usual, and telling one of her tremendous stories about the Lord Lieutenant to Mr. Bonnington, took no note of the incident. Elizabeth did not seem to remark it: what was a bird on a harp to her, but a sparrow perched on a bit of leather-casing! All the ghosts in Putney churchyard might rattle all their bones, and would not frighten that stout spirit!

I was amused at a precaution which Bedford took, and somewhat alarmed at the distrust towards Lady Baker which he exhibited when, one day on my return from town—whither I had made an excursion of four or five hours—I found my bedroom door locked and Dick arrived with the key. "He's wrote to say he's coming this evening, and if he had come when you was away, Lady B. was capable of turning your things out, and putting his in, and taking her oath she believed you was going to leave. The long-bow Lady B. do pull are perfectly awful, Mr. B. ! So it was long-bow to long-bow, Mr. Batchelor; and I said you had took the key in your pocket, not wishing to have your papers disturbed. She tried the lawn window, but I had bolted that, and the Captain will have the pink room, after all, and must smoke up the chimney. I should have liked to see him, or you, or any one do it in poor Mrs. L.'s time—I just should."

During my visit to London, I had chanced to meet my friend Captain Fitzb—dale, who belongs to a dozen Clubs, and knows something of every man in London. "Know anything of Clarence Baker? Of course I do," says Fitz; "and if you want any renseignement, my dear fellow, I have the honour to inform you that a blacker little sheep does not trot the London pave. Wherever that ingenious officer's name is spoken—at Tattersall's, at his Club, in his late regiments, in men's society, in ladies' society, in that expanding and most agreeable circle which you may call no society.
all—a chorus of maledictions rises up at the mention of Baker. How anything of Clarence Baker? My dear fellow, enough to make your hair turn white, unless (as I sometimes fondly imagine) fate has already performed that process, when of course I can't pretend to act upon mere hair-dye.” (The whiskers of the individual who addressed me, innocent, stared me in the face as he spoke, and were dyed of the most unblushing purple.) “Clarence Baker, sir, a young man who would have been invaluable in Sparta as a weapon against drunkenness and an exemplar of it. He has helped be regimental surgeon to some most interesting experiments in divium tremens. He is known, and not in the least trusted, in very billiard-room in Brighton, Canterbury, York, Sheffield—on very pavement which has rung with the clink of dragoon boot-heels. By a wise system of revoking at whist he has lost games which have caused not only his partners, but his opponents and the whole Club, to admire him and to distrust him: long before and since he was of age, he has written his eminent name to bills which have been dishonoured, and has nobly pleaded his minority as a reason for declining to pay. From the garrison towns where he has been quartered, he has carried away not only the hearts of the milliners, but their gloves, haberdashery, and perfumery. He has had controversies with Cornet Green regarding horse transactions; disputed turf accounts with Lieutenant Brown; and betting and backgammon differences with Captain Black. From all I have heard he is the worthy son of his admirable mother. And I bet you even on the sure events, if you stay three days in a country-house with him—which appears to be your present happy idea—that he will quarrel with you, insult you and apologise; that he will intoxicate himself more than once; that he will offer to play cards with you, and not pay on losing (if he wins, I perhaps need not state what his conduct will be); and that he will try to borrow money from you, and most likely from your servant, before he goes away.” So saying, the intenuous Fitz strutted up the steps of one of his many club-rooms in Pall Mall, and left me forewarned, and I trust forearmed, against Captain Clarence and all his works.

The adversary, when at length I came in sight of him, did not seem very formidable. I beheld a weakly little man with Chinese eye, and pretty little feet and hands, whose pallid countenance told of Finishes and Casinos. His little chest and fingers were adorned with many jewels. A perfume of tobacco hung round him. His little moustache was twisted with an elaborate gummy curl. I perceived that the little hand which twirled the moustache hook woefully; and from the little chest there came a cough surprisingly loud and dismal.
He was lying on a sofa as I entered, and the children of the house were playing round him. "If you are our uncle, why didn't you come to see us oftener?" asks Popham.

"How should I know that you were such uncommonly nice children?" asked the Captain.

"We're not nice to you," says Popham. "Why do you cough so? Mamma used to cough. And why does your hand shake so?"

"My hand shakes because I am ill: and I cough because I'm ill. Your mother died of it, and I daresay I shall too."

"I hope you'll be good, and repent before you die, uncle, and will lend you some nice books," says Cecilia.

"Oh, bother books!" cries Pop.

"And I hope you'll be good, Popham," and "You hold your tongue, miss," and "I shall," and "I shan't," and "You're another," and "I'll tell Miss Prior,"—"Go and tell, telltale,"—"Boo"—"Boo"—Boo"—and I don't know what more expletives came tumultuously and rapidly from these dear children, as their uncle lay before them, a handkerchief to his mouth, his little feet high raised on the sofa cushions.

Captain Baker turned a little eye towards me, as I entered the room, but did not change his easy and elegant posture. When I came near to the sofa where he reposed, he was good enough to call out—

"Glass of sherry!"

"It's Mr. Batchelor; it isn't Bedford, uncle," says Cissy.

"Mr. Batchelor ain't got any sherry in his pocket: have you, Mr. Batchelor? You ain't like old Mrs. Prior, always pocketing things, are you?" cries Pop, and falls a-laughing at the ludicrous idea of my being mistaken for Bedford.

"Beg your pardon. How should I know, you know?" drawl the invalid on the sofa. "Everybody's the same now, you see."

"Sir!" say I, and "sir" was all I could say. The fact is, I could have replied with something remarkably neat and cutting which would have transfixed the languid little jackanapes who dared to mistake me for a footman; but, you see, I only thought of my repartee some eight hours afterwards when I was lying in bed, and I am sorry to own that a great number of my best bon mots have been made in that way. So, as I had not the pungent remark ready when wanted, I can't say I said it to Captain Baker, but I daresay I turned very red, and said "Sir!" and—and in fact that was all.

"You were goin' to say somethin'?" asked the Captain affably.

"You know my friend Mr. Fitzboodle, I believe?" said I; the fact is, I really did not know what to say.
"Some mistake—think not."

"He is a member of the 'Flag Club,'" I remarked, looking my young fellow hard in the face.

"I ain't. There's a set of cads in that Club that will say anything."

"You may not know him, sir, but he seemed to know you very well. Are we to have any tea, children?" I say, flinging myself down on an easy-chair, taking up a magazine, and adopting an easy attitude, though I daresay my face was as red as a turkey-cock's, and I was boiling over with rage.

As we had a very good breakfast and a profuse luncheon at Hrublands, of course we could not support nature till dinner-time without a five-o'clock tea; and this was the meal for which I intended to ask. Bedford, with his silver kettle, and his buttony satellite, presently brought in this refreshment, and of course the children bawled out to him—

"Bedford—Bedford! Uncle mistook Mr. Batchelor for you."

"I could not be mistaken for a more honest man, Pop," said I, and the bearer of the tea-urn gave me a look of gratitude and kindness which, I own, went far to restore my ruffled equanimity.

"Since you are the butler, will you get me a glass of sherry and a biscuit?" says the Captain. And Bedford retiring, returned presently with the wine.

The young gentleman's hand shook so, that in order to drink is wine, he had to surprise it, as it were, and seize it with his mouth, when a shake brought the glass near his lips. He drained his wine and held out his hand for another glass. The hand was teadier now.

"You the man who was here before?" asks the Captain.

"Six years ago, when you were here, sir," says the butler.

"What! I ain't changed, I suppose?"

"Yes, you are, sir."

"Then, how the dooce do you remember me?"

"You forgot to pay me some money you borrowed of me, one sound five, sir," says Bedford, whose eyes slyly turned in my direction.

And here, according to her wont at this meal, the dark-robed Miss Prior entered the room. She was coming forward with her ordinarily erect attitude and firm step, but paused in her walk an instant, and when she came to us, I thought, looked remarkably pale. She made a slight curtsy, and it must be confessed that Captain Baker rose up from his sofa for a moment when she appeared. She then sat down, with her back towards him, turning towards herself the table and its tea apparatus.
At this board my Lady Baker found us assembled when she returned from her afternoon drive. She flew to her darling repubate of a son. She took his hand, she smoothed back his hair from his damp forehead. "My, darling child," cries this fond mother, "what a pulse you have got!"

"I suppose, because I've been drinking," says the prodigal.

"Why didn't you come out driving with me? The afternoon was lovely!"

"To pay visits at Richmond? Not as I knows on, ma'am," says the invalid. "Conversation with elderly ladies about poodles, Bible societies, that kind of thing? It must be a doosid lovely afternoon that would make me like that sort of game." And here comes a fit of coughing, over which mamma ejaculates her sympathy.

"Kick—kick—killin' myself!" gasps out the Captain; "knock me down. No man can lead my life, and stand it. Dyin' by inches. Dyin' by whole yards, by Jo—o—hove, I am!" Indeed, he was as bad in health as in morals, this graceless Captain.

"That man of Lovel's seems a d—— insolent beggar," he presently and ingenuously remarks.

"Oh, Uncle, you mustn't say those words!" cries niece Cissy.

"He's a man, and may say what he likes, and so will I, when I'm a man. Yes, and I'll say it now, too, if I like," cries Master Popham.

"Not to give me pain, Popham? Will you?" asks the governess.

On which the boy says—"Well, who wants to hurt you, Miss Prior?"

And our colloquy ends by the arrival of the man of the house from the City.

What I have admired in some dear women is their capacity for quarrelling and for reconciliation. As I saw Lady Baker hang round her son's neck, and fondling his scanty ringlets, I remember the awful stories with which in former days she used to entertain us regarding this reprobate. Her heart was pincushioned with his filial crimes. Under her chestnut front her Ladyship's real hair of hair was grey, in consequence of his iniquities. His precocious appetite had devoured the greater part of her jointure. He had treated her many dangerous illnesses with indifference; had her the worst son, the worst brother, the most ill-conducted schoolboy, the most immoral young man—the terror of households, the Lovel of garrison towns, the perverter of young officers; in fact, Lady Baker did not know how she supported existence at all under the agony occasioned by his crimes, and it was only from the possession
of a more than ordinarily strong sense of religion that she was enabled to bear her burden.

The Captain himself explained these alternating maternal caresses and quarrels in his easy way.

"Saw how the old lady kissed and fondled me?" says he to his brother-in-law. "Quite refreshin', ain't it? Hang me, I thought she was goin' to send me a bit of sweetbread off her own plate. Came up to my room last night, wanted to tuck me up in bed, and abused my brother to me for an hour. You see, when I'm in favour, she always abuses Baker; when he's in favour she abuses me to him. And my sister-in-law, didn't she give it my sister-in-law! Oh! I'll trouble you. And poor Cecilia—why, hang me, Mr. Batchelor, she used to go on—this bottle's corked, I'm hanged if it isn't—to go on about Cecilia, and call her——Hullo!"

Here he was interrupted by our host, who said sternly—

"Will you please to forget those quarrels, or not mention them here? Will you have more wine, Batchelor?"

And Lovel rises, and haughtily stalks out of the room. To do Lovel justice, he had a great contempt and dislike for his young brother-in-law, which, with his best magnanimity, he could not at all times conceal.

So our host stalks towards the drawing-room, leaving Captain Clarence sipping wine.

"Don't go too," says the Captain. "He's a confounded rum fellow, my brother-in-law is. He's a confounded ill-conditioned fellow too. They always are, you know, these tradesmen fellows, these half-bred 'uns. I used to tell my sister so; but she wouldn't have him, because he had such lots of money, you know. And she threw over a fellar she was very fond of; and I told her she'd regret it. I told Lady B. she'd regret it. It was all Lady B.'s doing. She made Cissy throw the fellar over. He was a bad match, certainly, Tom Mountain was; and not a clever fellow, you know, or that sort of thing; but, at any rate, he was a gentleman, and better than a confounded sugar-baking beggar out of Ratcliff Highway."

"You seem to find that claret very good," I remark, speaking, I may say, Socratically, to my young friend, who had been swallowing bumper after bumper.

"Claret good? Yes, doosid good!"

"Well, you see our confounded sugar-baker gives you his best."

"And why shouldn't he, hang him? Why, the fellow chokes with money. What does it matter to him how much he spends? You're a poor man, I daresay. You don't look as if you were overflush of money. Well, if you stood a good dinner, it would be
all right—I mean it would show—you understand me, you know. But a sugar-baker with ten thousand a year, what does it matter to him, bottle of claret more—less?"

"Let us go in to the ladies," I say.

"Go in to mother! I don't want to go in to my mother; cries out the artless youth. "And I don't want to go in to the sugar-baker, hang him! and I don't want to go in to the children and I'd rather have a glass of brandy-and-water with you, old boy. Here you! What's your name? Bedford! I owe you five and twenty shillings, do I, old Bedford? Give us a glass of Schnapps and I'll pay you! Look here, Batchelor. I hate that sugar-baker. Two years ago, I drew a bill on him, and he wouldn't pay it; perhaps he would have paid it, but my sister wouldn't let him. And, I say, shall we go and have a cigar in your room? My mother's been abusing you to me like fun this morning. She abuses everybody. She used to abuse Cissie. Cissie used to abuse her—used to fight like two cats—"

And if I narrate this conversation, dear Spartan youth! if show thee this Helot maundering in his cups, it is that from his odious example thou may'st learn to be moderate in the use of thine own. Has the enemy who has entered thy mouth ever stolen away thy brains? Has wine ever caused thee to blab secrets; utter egotisms and follies? Beware of it. Has it ever been the friend at the end of the hard day's work, the cheery companion, thy companions, the promoter of harmony, kindness, harmless sooth pleasure? Be thankful for it. Three years since, when the com was blazing in the autumnal sky, I stood on the château-steps a great claret proprietor. "Boirai-je de ton vin, O comète?" said, addressing the luminary with the flaming tail. "Shall the generous bunched which you ripen yield their juices for me mos turo?" It was a solemn thought. Ah! my dear brethren! we knows the Order of the Fates? When shall we pass the Gloo Gates? Which of us goes, which of us waits to drink those fame Fifty-eights? A sermon, upon my word! And pray why not little homily on an autumn eve over a purple cluster? . . . If th rickety boy had only drunk claret, I warrant you his tongue wou not have babbled, his hand would not have shaken, his wretch little brain and body would not have reeled with fever.

"'Gad," said he next day to me, "cut again last night. Had an idea that I abused Lovel. When I have a little wine on board always speak my mind, don't you know? Last time I was here my poor sister's time, said somethin' to her, don't quite know what it was, somethin' confoundedly true and unpleasant I daresay. think it was about a fellow she used to go on with before ;
A BLACK SHEEP

prank the sugar-baker. And I got orders to quit, by Jove, sir—heck and crop, sir, and no mistake! And we gave it one another over the stairs. Oh, my! we did pitch in!—and that was the last time I ever saw Cecilia—give you my word. A doosid unforgiving woman my poor sister was, and between you and me, Batchelor, as great a flirt as ever threw a fellar over. You should have heard her and my Lady B. go on, that’s all!—Well, mamma, are you going out for a drive in the coachy-poachy?—Not as I knows on, thank you, as I before had the honour to observe. Mr. Batchelor and me are going to play a little game at billiards.” We did, and I won; and, from that day to this, have never been paid my little winnings.

On the day after the doughty Captain’s arrival, Miss Prior, in whose face I had remarked a great expression of gloom and care, neither made her appearance at breakfast nor at the children’s dinner. “Miss Prior was a little unwell,” Lady Baker said, with an air of most perfect satisfaction. “Mr. Drencher will come to see her this afternoon, and prescribe for her, I daresay,” adds her Ladyship, nodding and winking a roguish eye at me. I was at a loss to understand what was the point of humour which amused Lady B., until she herself explained it.

“My good sir,” she said, “I think Miss Prior is not at all adverse to being ill.” And the nods recommenced.

“How?” I ask.

“To being ill, or at least to calling in the medical man.”

“Attachment between governess and Sawbones I make bold for to presume?” says the Captain.

“Precisely, Clarence—a very fitting match. I saw the affair, even before Miss Prior owned it—that is to say, she has not denied it. She says she can’t afford to marry, that she has children enough at home in her brothers and sisters. She is a well-principled young woman, and does credit, Mr. Batchelor, to your recommendation, and the education she has received from her uncle, the Master of St. Boniface.”

“Cissy to school; Pop to Eton; and Miss What-d’you-call to grind the pestle in Sawbones’s back-shop: I see!” says Captain Clarence. “He seems a low vulgar blackguard, that Sawbones.”

“Of course, my love, what can you expect from that sort of person?” asks mamma, whose own father was a small attorney in a small Irish town.

“I wish I had his confounded good health,” cries Clarence, coughing.

“My poor darling!” says mamma.

I said nothing. And so Elizabeth was engaged to that great
broad-shouldered, red-whiskered young surgeon with the huge appetite and the dubious h's! Well, why not? What was it to me? Why shouldn't she marry him? Was he not an honest man, and a fitting match for her? - Yes. Very good. Only if I do love a bird or flower to glad me with its dark blue eye, it is the first to fade away. If I have a partiality for a young gazelle, it is the first to—psha! What have I to do with this namby-pamby? Can the heart that has truly loved ever forget, and doesn't it as truly love on to the—stuff! I am past the age of such follies. I might have made a woman happy: I think I should. But the fugacious years have lapsed, my Posthumus! My waist is now a good bit wider than my chest, and it is decreed that I shall be alone!

My tone, then, when next I saw Elizabeth, was sorrowful—not angry. Drencher, the young doctor, came punctually enough, you may be sure, to look after his patient. Little Pinhorn, the children's maid, led the young practitioner smiling towards the schoolroom regions. His creaking highlows sprang swiftly up the stairs. I happened to be in the hall, and surveyed him with a grim pleasure. "Now he is in the schoolroom," I thought. "Now he is taking her hand—it is very white—and feeling her pulse. And so on, and so on. Surely, surely, Pinhorn remains in the room?"

I am sitting on a hall-table as I muse plaintively on these things, and gaze up the stairs by which the Hakeem (great caroty-whiskered cad!) has passed into the sacred precincts of the harem. As I gaze up the stair, another door opens into the hall; a scowling face peeps through that door, and looks up the stair, too. 'Tis Bedford, who has slid out of his pantry, and watches the doctor. And thou, too, my poor Bedford! Oh! the whole world throbs with vain heart-pangs, and tosses and heaves with longing unfulfilled desires! All night, and all over the world, bitter tears are dropping as regular as the dew, and cruel memories are haunting the pillow. Close my hot eyes, kind Sleep! Do not visit it, dear delusive images out of the Past! Often your figure shimmers through my dreams, Glorvina. Not as you are now, the stout mother of many children—you always had an alarming likeness to your own mother, Glorvina—but as you were—slim, black-haired, blue-eyed—when your carnation lips warbled the "Vale of Avoca" or the "Angel's Whisper." "What!" I say then, looking up the stair, "am I absolutely growing jealous of you apotheecary?—O fool!" And at this juncture, out peers Bedford's face from the pantry, and I see he is jealous too. I tie my shoe as I sit on the table; I don't affect to notice Bedford in the least (who, in fact, pops his own head back again as soon as he sees mine). I take my wideawake from the peg, set it on one side of my head, and strut whistling
A BLACK SHEEP

at of the hall-door. I stretch over Putney Heath, and my spirit
assumes its tranquillity.

I sometimes keep a little journal of my proceedings, and on
perusing to its pages, the scene rises before me pretty clearly to
which the brief notes allude. On this day I find noted:

"Friday, July 14.

"B. came down to-day. Seems to require a great deal of
tendance from Dr. ———. Row between dowagers after dinner."

B," I need not remark, is Bessy. "Dr.," of course, you know.
"Row between dowagers" means a battle royal between Mrs.
Bonnington and Lady Baker, such as not unfrequently raged under
he kindly Lovel's roof.

Lady Baker's gigantic menial Bulkeley condescended to wait at
the family dinner at Shrublands, when perforce he had to put him-
self under Mr. Bedford's orders. Bedford would gladly have dis-
censed with the London footman, over whose calves, he said, he
ad his boy were always tumbling; but Lady Baker's dignity would
not allow her to part from her own man; and her good-natured son-
in-law allowed her, and indeed almost all other persons, to have
their own way. I have reason to fear Mr. Bulkeley's morals were
loose. Mrs. Bonnington had a special horror of him; his behaviour
in the village public-houses, where his powder and plume were for
ever visible—his freedom of conduct and conversation before the
good lady's nurse and parlour-maids—provoked her anger and sus-
picion. More than once, she whispered to me her loathing of this
bour-sprinkled monster; and, as much as such a gentle creature
would, she showed her dislike to him by her behaviour. The
flunky's solemn equanimity was not to be disturbed by any such
fickle indications of displeasure. From his powdered height, he
ooked down upon Mrs. Bonnington, and her esteem or her dislike
was beneath him.

Now on this Friday night the 14th, Captain Clarence had gone
to pass the day in town, and our Bessy made her appearance again,
the Doctor's prescriptions having, I suppose, agreed with her. Mr.
Bulkeley, who was handing coffee to the ladies, chose to offer none
to Miss Prior, and I was amused when I saw Bedford's heel scrunch
down on the flunky's right foot, as he pointed towards the governess.
The oaths which Bulkeley had to devour in silence must have been
frightful. To do the gallant fellow justice, I think he would have
died rather than speak before company in a drawing-room. He
limped up and offered the refreshment to the young lady, who bowed
and declined it.
“Frederick,” Mrs. Bonnington begins, when the coffee ceremony is over, “now the servants are gone, I must scold you about waste at your table, my dear. What was the need of opening that great bottle of champagne? Lady Baker only takes two glasses. Mr. Batchelor doesn’t touch it.” (No, thank you, my dear Mrs. Bonnington: too old a stager.) “Why not have a little beer instead of that great, large, immense one? Bedford is a teetotaler. I suppose it is that London footman who likes it.”

“My dear mother, I haven’t really ascertained his tastes,” saith Lovel.

“Then why not tell Bedford to open a pint, dear?” pursues mamma.

“Oh, Bedford — Bedford, we must not mention him, Mr. Bonnington!” cries Lady Baker. “Bedford is faultless. Bedford has the keys of everything. Bedford is not to be controlled in anything. Bedford is to be at liberty to be rude to my servant.”

“Bedford was admirably kind in his attendance on your daughter, Lady Baker,” says Lovel, his brow darkening; “and for your man, I should think he was big enough to protect himself from any rudeness of poor Dick!” The good fellow has been angry for one moment, at the next he was all for peace and conciliation.

Lady Baker puts on her superfine air. With that air she had often awe-stricken good simple Mrs. Bonnington; and she loved to use it whenever City folk or humble people were present. You see she thought herself your superior and mine, as de par le monde there are many artless Lady Bakers who do. “My dear Frederick,” says Lady B. then, putting on her best Mayfair manner, “except me for saying, but you don’t know the—the class of servant to which Bulkeley belongs. I had him as a great favour from Lord Toddleby’s. That—that class of servant is not generally accustomed to go out single.”

“Unless they are two behind a carriage-perch they pine away. I suppose,” remarks Mr. Lovel, “as one love-bird does without his mate.”

“No doubt — no doubt,” says Lady B., who does not in the least understand him; “I only say you are not accustomed here — in this kind of establishment, you understand — to that class of——”

But here Mrs. Bonnington could contain her wrath no more. “Lady Baker!” cries that injured mother, “is my son’s establishment not good enough for any powdered wretch in England? Is the house of a British merchant——”

“My dear creature—my dear creature!” interposes her Lady.
p, "it is the house of a British merchant, and a most comfortable
ise too."

"Yes, as you find it," remarks mamma.

"Yes, as I find it, when I come to take care of that departed
get's children, Mrs. Bonnington!"—(Lady B. here indicates the
celian effigy)—"of that dear seraph's orphans, Mrs. Bonnington!
ou cannot. You have other duties—other children—a husband,
on you have left at home in delicate health, and who—"

"Lady Baker!" exclaims Mrs. Bonnington, "no one shall say
don't take care of my dear husband!"

"My dear Lady Baker!—my dear—dear mother!" cries Lovel,
doré, and whimpers aside to me, "They spar in this way every
ght, when we're alone. It's too bad, ain't it, Batch?"

"I say you do take care of Mr. Bonnington," Baker blandly
smiles (she has hit Mrs. Bonnington on the raw place, and
ilingly proceeds to thong again): "I say you do take care of
our husband, my dear creature, and that is why you can't attend
Frederick! And as he is of a very easy temper,—except some-
mes with his poor Cecilia's mother,—he allows all his tradesmen
t cheat him; all his servants to cheat him; Bedford to be rude to
verybody; and if to me, why not to my servant Bulkeley, with
om Lord Toddleby's groom of the chambers gave me the very
ighest character?"

Mrs. Bonnington in a great flurry broke in by saying she was
uprised to hear that noblemen had grooms in their chambers:
nd she thought they were much better in the stables: and when
hey dined with Captain Huff, you know, Frederick, his man
ways brought such a dreadful smell of the stable in with him,
at— Here she paused. Baker's eye was on her; and that
ower was grinning a cruel triumph.

"He!—he! You mistake, my good Mrs. Bonnington!" says
Ladyship. "Your poor mother mistakes, my dear Frederick.
on have lived in a quiet and most respectable sphere, but not,
on understand, not—"

"Not what, pray, Lady Baker? We have lived in this neigh-
ourhood twenty years: in my late husband's time, when we saw
a great deal of company, and this dear Frederick was a boy at
estminster School. And we have paid for everything we have
ad for twenty years; and we have not owed a penny to any
adesman. And we may not have had powdered footmen, six feet
igh, impertinent beasts, who were rude to all the maids in the
lace. Don't—I will speak, Frederick! But servants who loved
is, and who were paid their wages, and who—o—ho—ho—ho!"

Wipe your eyes, dear friends! out with all your pocket-
handkerchiefs. I protest I cannot bear to see a woman in dis
Of course Fred Lovel runs to console his dear old mother, and
Lady Baker meant no harm.

"Meant harm! My de-ar Frederick, what harm can I n
I only said your poor mother did not seem to know what a g
of the chambers was! How should she?"

"Come—come," says Frederick, "enough of this! Miss I
will you be so kind as to give us a little music?"

Miss Prior was playing Beethoven at the piano, very sole;
and finely, when our Black Sheep returned to this quiet fold,
I am sorry to say, in a very riotous condition. The brilliant
his eye, the purple flush on his nose, the unsteady gait, and
certain tone of voice, told tales of Captain Clarence, who stum
over more than one chair before he found a seat near me.

"Quite right, old boy," says he, winking at me. "Cut aga
dooshid good fellosh. Better than being along with you sh:
old-fogish." And he began to warble wild "Fol-de-rol-loi-s" in
insane accompaniment to the music.

"By heavens, this is too bad!" growls Lovel. "Lady Ba
let your big man carry your son to bed. Thank you, Miss Pri
At a final yell, which the unlucky young scapegrace g
Elizabeth stopped, and rose from the piano, looking very p
She made her curtsey, and was departing, when the wre
young Captain sprang up, looked at her, and sank back on
sofa with another wild laugh. Bessy fled away scared, and w
as a sheet.

"TAKE THE BRUTE TO BED!" roars the master of the ho
in great wrath. And scapegrace was conducted to his apartm
whither he went laughing wildly, and calling out, "Come on,
sh-sh-shugar-baker!"

The morning after this fine exhibition, Captain Clarence Baki
mamma announced to us that her poor dear suffering boy was i
ill to come to breakfast, and I believe he prescribed for him\ndevilled drumstick and soda-water, of which he partook in
bedroom. Lovel, seldom angry, was violently wroth with h
brother-in-law; and, almost always polite, was at breakfast scara
civil to Lady Baker. I am bound to say that female abused p
position. She appealed to Cecilia's picture a great deal too mu
during the course of breakfast. She hinted, she sighed, she wag
er her head at me, and spoke about "that angel" in the most tr
manner. Angel is all very well; but your angel brought in à to
propos; your departed blessing called out of her grave ever
many times a day; when grandmamma wants to carry a poi
of her own; when the children are naughty, or noisy; when pa
is a flickering inclination to dine at his Club, or to bring a bachelor friend or two to Shrublands;—I say your angel dragged in by the wings into the conversation loses her. No man's heart put on wider drape than Lovel's at Cecilia's. Considering the circumstances, his grief was most creditable, but at breakfast, at lunch, about Bulkeley the footman, the barouche or the phaeton, or any trumpery domesticerry, to have a *Deus inter sit* was too much. And I observed, some inward satisfaction, that when Baker uttered her pompous al phrases, rolled her eyes up to the ceiling, and appealed to quarter, the children ate their jam and quarrelled and kicked little shins under the table, Lovel read his paper and looked a watch to see if it was omnibus time; and Bessy made the site undisturbed by the old lady's tragical prattle.

Then Baker described her son's fearful cough and dreadfully sh state, I said, "Surely, Lady Baker, *Mr. Drencher* had be sent for;" and I suppose I uttered the disgusting dispe Drencher with a fine sarcastic accent; for once, just once, s grey eyes rose through the spectacles and met mine with ice of utterable sadness, then calmly settled down on to the busin again, or the urn, in which her pale features, of course, odiously distorted.

You will not bring anybody home to dinner, Frederick, in my boy's state?" asks Lady B.

"He may stay in his bedroom I suppose," replies Lovel.

He is Cecilia's brother, Frederick!" cries the Lady.

"Conf—" Lovel was beginning. What was he about to say?

If you are going to confound your angel in heaven, I have ng to say, sir!" cries the mother of Clarence.

"Parbleu, madame!" cried Lovel, in French: "if he were not ife's brother, do you think I would let him stay here?"

"Parly Français? Oui, oui, oui!" cries Pop. "I know what ans!"

And so do I know. And I shall lend Uncle Clarence some which Mr. Bonnington gave me, and—"

"Hold your tongue all!" shouts Lovel, with a stamp of his foot. You will, perhaps, have the great kindness to allow me the of your carriage,—or, at least, to wait here until my poor ing boy can be moved, Mr. Lovel?" says Lady B., with the a martyr.

Lovel rang the bell. "The carriage for Lady Baker—at her ship's hour, Bedford: and the cart for her luggage. Her ship and Captain Baker are going away."

I have lost one child, Mr. Lovel, whom some people seem
to forget. I am not going to murder another! I will not let this house, sir, unless you drive me from it by force, until a medical man has seen my boy!" And here she and sorrowed down again. She was always giving warning. She was always fitting the halter and traversing the cart, was Lady B., but for ever declined to drop the handkerchief and have the buskins over. I saw by a little shrug in Bessy's shoulders what the goodness's views were of the matter: and, in a word, Lady B. no more went away on this day, than she had done on forty previous days, when she announced her intention of going. She would accept benefits, you see, but then she insulted her benefactors, and squared accounts.

That great healthy, florid, scarlet-whiskered medical man came at about twelve, saw Mr. Baker and prescribed for him: of course he must have a few words with Miss Prior, and inquire into the state of her health. Just as on the previous occasion, happened to be in the hall when Drencher went upstairs; Bessy happened to be looking out of his pantry-door: I burst into a fit of laughter when I saw Dick's livid face—the sight somehow suited my savage soul.

No sooner was Medicus gone than Bessy, grave and pale, bonnet and spectacles, came sliding downstairs. I do not know how down the bannister, which was Pop's favourite method of descent but slim, tall, noiseless, in a numinous calm, she swept down the steps. Of course I followed her. And there was Master Bede, nose peeping through the pantry-door at us, as we went out with the children. Pray, what business of his was it to be always watching anybody who walked with Miss Prior?

"So, Bessy," I said, "what report does Mr.—hem!—Drencher—give of the interesting invalid?"

"Oh, the most horrid! He says that Captain Baker has several times had a dreadful disease brought on by drinking, that he is mad when he has it. He has delusions, sees demons when he is in this state—wants to be watched."

"Drencher tells you everything?"

She says meekly: "He attends us when we are ill."

I remark, with fine irony: "He attends the whole family: is always coming to Shrublands!"

"He comes very often," Miss Prior says gravely.

"And do you mean to say, Bessy," I cry, madly cutting two or three heads of yellow broom with my stick—"do you mean to say a fellow like that, who drops his hat's about the room, is a welcome visitor?"

"I should be very ungrateful if he were not welcome, I
A BLACK SHEEP

"Achelor," says Miss Prior. "And call me by my surname, please
and he has taken care of all my family—and——"

"And, of course, of course, of course, Miss Prior!" say I
 tally; "and this is the way the world wags; and this is the
 we are ill, and are cured; and we are grateful to the doctor
t cures us!"

She nods her grave head. "You used to be kinder to me once,
 Batchelor, in old days—in your—in my time of trouble!
s, my dear, that is a beautiful bit of broom! Oh, what a fine
 butterfly!" (Cecilia scours the plain after the butterfly.) "You
d to be kinder to me once—when we were both unhappy."

"I was unhappy," I say, "but I survived. I was ill, but I
 now pretty well, thank you. I was jilted by a false heartless
 man. Do you suppose there are no other heartless women in
 world?" And I am confident, if Bessy's breast had not been
 el, the daggers which darted out from my eyes would have bored
 ghtful stabs in it.

But she shook her head, and looked at me so sadly that my
 daggers tumbled down to the ground at once; for you see,
ugh I am a jealous Turk, I am a very easily appeased jealous
rk; and if I had been Bluebeard, and my wife, just as I was
g to decapitate her, had lifted up her head from the block, and
 ed a little, I should have dropped my scimitar, and said, "Come,
ice, Fatima, never mind for the present about that key and closet
ness, and I'll chop your head off some other morning." I say,
sy disarmed me. Pooh! I say, women will make a fool of me
 the end. Ah! ye gracious Fates! Cut my thread of life ere it
ow too long. Suppose I were to live till seventy, and some little
itch of a woman were to set her cap at me? She would catch
— I know she would. All the males of our family have been
ony and soft, to a degree perfectly ludicrous and despicable to
emplate—— Well, Bessy Prior, putting a hand out, looked
me, and said—

"You are the oldest and best friend I have ever had, Mr.
tchelor—the only friend."

"Am I, Elizabeth?" I gasp, with a beating heart.

"Cissy is running back with a butterfly." (Our hands unlock.)
Don't you see the difficulties of my position? Don't you know
it ladies are often jealous of governesses; and that unless—unless
y imagined I was—I was favourable to Mr. Drencher, who is
y good and kind—the ladies of Shrublands might not like my
aining alone in the house with—with—you understand?" A
ent the eyes look over the spectacles; at the next, the meek
met bows down towards the ground.
I wonder did she hear the bump—bumping of my heart!—O wounded heart! did I ever think thou wouldst bump again? "Egl—Egl—izabeth," I say, choking with emotion. "do, do, do you—te—tell me—you don’t—don’t—don’t—I love that apothecary?"

She shrugs her shoulder—her charming shoulder.

"And if," I hotly continue, "if a gentleman—if a mature age certainly, but who has a kind heart and four lungs a year of his own—were to say to you, ‘Elizabeth! will you, the flowers of a blighted life to bloom again?—Elizabeth! will you soothe a wounded heart?’——"

"Oh, Mr. Batchelor!" she sighed, and then added quietly. "Please, don’t take my hand. Here’s Pop."

And that dear child (bless him!) came up at the moment, saying, "Oh, Miss Prior, look here! I’ve got such a jolly big stool!" And next came Cissy, with a confounded butterfly. Richard the Third! Haven’t you been maligned because you smothered two little nuisances in a Tower? What is to prove me that you did not serve the little brutes right, and that you weren’t a most humane man? Darling Cissy coming up, then her dear charming way, says, "You shan’t take Mr. Batchelor’s hand, you shall take my hand!" And she tosses up her little head, and walks with the instructor of her youth.

"Ces enfants ne comprennent guère le Français," says Mr. Prior, speaking very rapidly.

"Après l’heure?" I whisper. The fact is, I was so agitated I hardly knew what the French for lunch was. And then our conversation dropped: and the beating of my own heart was all I heard.

Lunch came. I couldn’t eat a bit: I should have choked. Bessy ate plenty, and drank a glass of beer. It was her dinner, be sure. Young Blacksheep did not appear. We did not need him. When Lady Baker began to tell her story of George Fourth at Slane Castle, I went into my own room. I took a book. Books? Psha! I went into the garden. I took out a cigar. But no, I would not smoke it. Perhaps she—many people do like smoking.

I went into the garden. "Come into the garden, Maud." sat by a large lilac-bush. I waited. Perhaps she would come. The morning-room windows were wide open on the lawn. If she never come? Ah! what is that tall form advancing? gliding into the chamber like a beauteous ghost? "Who does like an angel show, you may be sure ‘tis she." She came up to the glass. She lays her spectacles down on the mantelpiece.
he puts a slim white hand over her auburn hair and looks into
the mirror. Elizabeth, Elizabeth! I come!

As I came up, I saw a horrid little grinning, debauched face
rise over the back of a great armchair and look towards Elizabeth.
was Captain Blacksheep, of course. He laid his elbows over the
air. He looked keenly and with a diabolical smile at the un-
nscious girl; and just as I reached the window, he cried out,

Bessy Bellenden, by Jove!"

Elizabeth turned round, gave a little cry, and—— but what
happened I shall tell in the ensuing chapter.
CHAPTER V

IN WHICH I AM STUNG BY A SERPENT

If when I heard Baker call out Bessy Bellenden, and adjure him to have run forward and seized Elizabeth by the waist, I offered her my personal indignity, I too should have run forward on my side and engaged him. Though I am a slender, elderly man, short in stature and in wind, I know I am a match for that rickety little Captain on his high-heeled boots. A man for him? I believe Miss Bessy would have been a match for both of us. Her white arm was as hard and polished as ivory. Had she held it straight pointed against the rush of the dragoon, he would have fallen backwards before his intended prey: I have no doubt he would. It was the hen, in this case, was stronger than the libertine fox, and an besoin would have pecked the little manuscripting vermin’s eyes out. Had I, say, Partlet been weak, and Reynolds strong, I would have come forward: I certainly would. Had I been a wolf now, instead of a fox, I am certain I should have run in upon him, grappled with him, torn his heart and tongue out of his black throat, and trampled the lawless brute to death.

Well, I didn’t do any such thing. I was just going to run in —and I didn’t. I was just going to rush to Bessy’s side to clasped her (I have no doubt) to my heart: to hear the whiskered champion who was before her, and perhaps say, “Cheer thee—cheer thee, my persecuted maiden, my beauteous love—my Rebecca. Come on, Sir Brian de Bois Guilbert, thou dastard Templar! It is I, Sir Wilfrid of Ivanhoe.” (By the way, though the fellow was not a Templar, he was a Lincoln’s-Inn-man, having passed twice through the Insolvent Court there with infinite discredit.) But I made no heroic speeches. There was no need for Rebecca to jump out of window and risk her lovely neck. How could she, in fact, the French window being flush with the ground-floor? And I give you my honour, just as I was crying my war-cry, coughing my lance, and rushing à la rescousse upon Sir Baker, a sudden thought made me drop my (figurative) point: a sudden idea made me rein in my galloping (metaphorical) steed and spare Baker for that time.

Suppose I had gone in? But for that sudden precaution, there
I AM STUNG BY A SERPENT

have been a Mrs. Batchelor. I might have been a bullied her of ten children. (Elizabeth has a fine high temper of her n.) What is four hundred and twenty a year, with a wife and rhaps half-a-dozen children? Should I have been a whit the ppier? Would Elizabeth? Ah! no. And yet I feel a certain it of shame, even now, when I think that I didn’t go in. Not t at I was in a fright, as some people choose to hint. I swear I as not. But the reason why I did not charge was this—— Nay, I did charge part of the way, and then, I own, stopped. was an error in judgment. It wasn’t a want of courage. Lord eorge Sackville was a brave man, and as cool as a cucumber under e. Well, he didn’t charge at the battle of Minden, and Prince erdinand made the deuce and all of a disturbance, as we know. yng was a brave man,—and I ask, wasn’t it a confounded shame ecuting him? So with respect to myself. Here is my statement. make it openly. I don’t care. I am accused of seeing a woman suited, and not going to her rescue. I am not guilty, I say. hat is, there were reasons which caused me not to attack. Even itting aside the superior strength of Elizabeth herself to the enemy, —I vow there were cogent and honourable reasons why I did notarge home.

You see I happened to be behind a blue lilac-bush (and was urning a rhyme—Heaven help us!—in which death was only to art me and Elizabeth) when I saw Baker’s face surge over the hair-back. I rush forward as he cries ’By Jove!’ Had Miss rior cried out on her part, the strength of twenty Heenans, I now, would have nerved this arm; but all she did was to turn ale, and say, ’Oh, mercy! Captain Baker! Do pity me!’ ”

“What! you remember me, Bessy Bellenden, do you?” asks he Captain, advancing.

“Oh, not that name! please, not that name!” cries Bessy.

“I thought I knew you yesterday,” says Baker. “Only, gad, ou see, I had so much claret on board, I did not much know what as what. And oh! Bessy, I have got such a splinter of a head- che.”

“Oh! please—please, my name is Miss Prior. Pray! pray, in, don’t——”

“You’ve got handsomer—doosid deal handsomer. Know you ow well, your spectacles off. You come in here—teach my nephew nd niece, humbug my sister, make love to the sh—— Oh! you uncommon sly little toad!”

“Captain Baker, I beg—I implore you,” says Bessy, or someth-thing of the sort: for the white hands assumed an attitude of upplication.
"Pooh! don’t gammon me!" says the rickety Captain (words to that effect), and seizes those two firm white hands in moist trembling palms.

Now do you understand why I paused? When the dandy grinned forward, with looks and gestures of familiar recognition when the pale Elizabeth implored him to spare her:—a keen shot whizzing through my heart, and caused me to stagger backwards as I ran forwards. I bumped up against a bronze group in the garden. The group represented a lion stung by a serpent. I was a lion stung by a serpent too. Even Bessy could have knocked me down. Fiends and anguish! he had known her before. The Academy, the life she had led, the wretched tipsy ineffective guardian of a father—all these antecedents in Bessy’s history passed through my mind. And I had offered my heart and troth to this woman! Now, my dear sir, I appeal to you. What would you have done? Would you have liked to have such a sudden suspicion thrown over the being of your affection? "Oh! spare me—spare me!" I heard her say, in clear, too clear—pathetic tones. And then there came rather a shudder: "Ah!" and then the lion was up in my breast again; and I hurled my honour, just as I was going to step forward—to step—rushed forward from behind the urn where I had stood for a moment with thumping heart, Bessy’s "Ah!" or little cry was followed by a whack, which I heard as clear as anything I ever heard in life;—and I saw the little Captain spin back, topple over on his heels up, and in this posture heard him begin to scream and cry in shrill tones.

Not for long, for as the Captain and the chair tumbled down, the door springs open;—a man rushes in, who pounces like a panther upon the prostrate Captain, pitches into his nose and eyes, choking his bad language by sending a fist down his naughty throat.

"Oh! thank you, Bedford!—please, leave him, Bedford! this is enough. There, don’t hurt him any more!" says Bessy, laughing, upon my word.

"Ah! will you?" says Bedford. "Lie still, you little beggar or I’ll knock your head off. Look here, Miss Prior?—Elizabeth dear—dear Elizabeth! I love you with all my heart, and soul, strength—I do."

"O Bedford! Bedford!" warbles Elizabeth.

"I do! I can’t help it. I must say it! Ever since Rome, I Lie still, you drunken little beast! It’s no use. But I adore; O Elizabeth! Elizabeth!" And there was Dick, who was always following Miss P. about, and poking his head into keyholes to spy, actually making love to her over the prostrate body of the Capt.
BEDFORD TO THE RESCUE
Now, what was I to do? Wasn’t I in a most confoundedly awkward situation? A lady had been attacked—a lady?—the lady, and I hadn’t rescued her. Her insolent enemy was overthrown, and I hadn’t done it. A champion, three inches shorter than myself, had come in, and dealt the blow. I was in such a rage of mortification, that I should have liked to thrash the Captain and Bedford too. The first I know I could have matched: the second was a tough little hero. And it was he who rescued the damsel, whilst I stood by! In a strait so odious, sudden, and humiliating, what should I, what could I, what did I do?

Behind the lion and snake there is a brick wall and marble balustrade, built for no particular reason, but flanking three steps and a grassy terrace, which then rises up on a level to the house-windows. Beyond the balustrade is a shrubbery of more lilacs and so forth, by which you can walk round into another path, which also leads up to the house. So as I had not charged—ah! woe is me!—as the battle was over, I—I just went round that shrubbery into the other path, and so entered the house, arriving like Fortinbras in “Hamlet,” when everybody is dead and sprawling, you know, and the whole business is done.

And was there to be no end to my shame, or to Bedford’s laurels? In that brief interval, whilst I was walking round the bypath (just to give myself a pretext for entering coolly into the premises), this fortunate fellow had absolutely engaged another and larger champion. This was no other than Bulkeley, my Lady B.’s first-class attendant. When the Captain fell, amidst his screams and curses, he called for Bulkeley: and that individual made his appearance, with a little Scotch cap perched on his powdered head.

“Hullo! what’s the row year?” says Goliath, entering.

“Kill that blackguard! Hang him, kill him!” screams Captain Blacksheep, rising with bleeding nose.

“My say, what’s the row year?” asks the grenadier.

“Off with your cap, sir, before a lady!” calls out Bedford.

“Hoff with my cap! you be blo—”

But he said no more, for little Bedford jumped some two feet from the ground, and knocked the cap off, so that a cloud of ambrosial powder filled the room with violet odours. The immense frame of the giant shook at this insult: “I will be the death on you, you little beggar!” he grunted out; and was advancing to destroy Dick, just as I entered in the cloud which his head had raised.

“I’ll knock the brains as well as the powder out of your ugly head!” says Bedford, springing at the poker. At which juncture I entered.
“What—what is this disturbance?” I say, advancing with an air of mingled surprise and resolution.

“You git out of the way till I knock his ’ead off!” Bulkeley.

“Take up your cap, sir, and leave the room,” I say, still with the same elegant firmness.

“Put down that there poker, you coward!” bellows the man on board-wages.

“Miss Prior!” I say (like a dignified hypocrite, as I was), “I hope no one has offered you a rudeness?” And I round, first at the knight of the bleeding nose, and then at the squire.

Miss Prior’s face, as she replied to me, wore a look of scorn.

“Thank you, sir,” she said, turning her head over her shoulder and looking at me with her grey eyes. “Thank you, Richard Bedford! God bless you! I shall ever be thankful to you, when I am.” And the stately figure swept out of the room.

She had seen me behind that confounded statue, then, and had not come to her! O torments and racks! O scorpions, fiends, and pitchforks! The face of Bedford, too (flashing with knig
gatitude anon as she spoke kind words to him and passed) wore a look of scorn as he turned towards me, and then stood nostrils distended and breathing somewhat hard, glaring at enemies, and still grasping his mace of battle.

When Elizabeth was gone, there was a pause of a moment and then Blacksheep, taking his bleeding cambic from his shrivels out, “Kill him, I say! A fellow that dares to hit on my condition, and when I’m down! Bulkeley, you great haljackass! kill him, I say!”

“Jest let him put that there poker down, that’s all,” grunted Bulkeley.

“You’re afraid, you great cowardly beast! You shall go, What-d’ye-call-’im—Mr. Bedford—you shall have the sack, sure as your name is what it is! I’ll tell my brother-in-law everything; and as for that woman——”

“If you say a word against her, I’ll cane you wherever I find you, Captain Baker!” I cry out.

“Who spoke to you?” says the Captain, falling back scowling at me.

“Who ever told you to put your foot in?” says the squire.

I was in such a rage, and so eager to find an object on which to wreak my fury, that I confess I plunged at this Bulkeley. I gave him two most violent blows on the waistcoat, which cau
I am Stung by a Serpent

...to double up with such frightful contortions, that Bedford burst laughing; and even the Captain with the damaged eye and nose to laugh too. Then, taking a lesson from Dick, as there was a shining dagger on the table, used for the cutting open of ws and magazines, I seized and brandished this weapon, and essay would have sheathed it in the giant's bloated corpus, had made any movement towards me. But he only called out, "I'll be the death on you, you cowards! I'll be the death of you!" and snatching up his cap from the carpet, walked of the room.

"Glad you did that, though," says Baker, nodding his head. "I'd best pack up."

And now the Devil of Rage which had been swelling within gave place to a worse devil—the Devil of Jealousy—and I ed on the Captain, who was also just about to slink away:—

"Stop!" I cried out—I screamed out, I may say.

"Who spoke to you, I should like to know? and who the dare speak to me in that sort of way?" says Clarence er, with a plentiful garnish of expletives, which need not be inserted. But he stopped, nevertheless, and turned slouching.

"You spoke just now of Miss Prior?" I said. "Have you thing against her?"

"What's that to you?" he asked.

"I am her oldest friend. I introduced her into this family. e you say a word against her?"

"Well, who the dooce has?"

"You knew her before?"

"Yes, I did, then."

"When she went by the name of Bellenden?"

"Of course I did. And what's that to you?" he screams out.

"I this day asked her to be my wife, sir! That's what it is!" I replied with severe dignity.

Mr. Clarence began to whistle. "Oh! if that's it—of course !" he says.

The jealous demon writhed within me and rent me.

"You mean that there is something, then?" I asked, glaring he young reprobate.

"No, I don't," says he, looking very much frightened. "No, is nothin'. Upon my sacred honour, there isn't, that I w." (I was looking uncommonly fierce at this time, and, I st own, would rather have quarrelled with somebody than not.) o, there is nothin' that I know. Ever so many years ago, you I used to go with Tom Papillon, Turkington, and two or three
fellows, to that theatre. Dolphin had it. And we used to
be behind the scenes—and—and I own I had a row with her.
I was in the wrong. There now, I own I was. And she left
theatre. And she behaved quite right. And I was very
And I believe she is as good a woman as ever stopt now. And
father was a disreputable old man, but most honourable—I
he was. And there was a fellow in the Bombay service—a
by the name of Walker or Walkingham—yes, Walkingham;
I used to meet him at the ‘Cave of Harmony,’ you know; and
he told me that she was as right as right could be. And he
doisidly cut up about leaving her. And he would have mar-
er, I dessay, only for his father the General, who wouldn’t
it. And he was ready to hang himself when he went away.
used to drink awfully, and then he used to swear about her;
we used to chaff him, you know. Low vulgarish sort of man
was; and a very passionate fellow. And if you’re goin’ to
her, you know—of course, I ask your pardon, and that; and
the honour of a gentleman I know nothin’ against her. And if
you joy and all that sort of thing. I do now, really now!”
so saying, the mean mischievous little monkey sneaked away,
clambered up to his own perch in his own bedroom.

Worthy Mrs. Bonnington, with a couple of her young ones
made her appearance at this juncture. She had a key, which
her a free pass through the garden door, and brought her child
for an afternoon’s play and fighting with their little nephew
niece. Decidedly, Bessy did not bring up her young folks
Was it that their grandmothers spoiled them, and undid
 governess’s work? Were those young people odious (as they were) by nature, or rendered so by the neglect of their guardians?
If Bessy had loved her charges more, would they not have been
better? Had she a kind, loving, maternal heart? Ha! thought,—this jealous doubt,—smote my bosom: and was mine, and the mother of many possible little Batchelors, would
be kind to them? Would they be wilful, and selfish, and unac-
able little wretches, in a word, like these children? Nay—
Say that Elizabeth has but a cold heart; we cannot be all per-
tion. But, per contra, you must admit that, cold as she is, she does her duty. How good she has been to her own brothers
sisters: how cheerfully she has given away her savings to the
how admirably she has behaved to her mother, hiding the iniqu-
of that disreputable old schemer, and covering her impropri-
with decent filial screens and pretexts. Her mother? Ah! gra-
dieux! You want to marry, Charles Batchelor, and you will have
that greedy pauper for a mother-in-law; that fluffy Bluecoat
I AM STUNG BY A SERPENT

I hate the sight of hob-nailed taw-players, top-spinners, toffee-eaters, those under-girls, for your brothers and sisters-in-law! They will be tered upon you. You are so absurdly weak and good-natured you know you are—that you will never be able to resist. Those will grow up; they will go out as clerks or shop-boys; get debt and expect you to pay their bills: want to be articled to neys and so forth, and call upon you for the premium. Their mor will never be out of your house. She will ferret about in drawers and wardrobes, filch your haberdashery, and castly eyes on the very shirts and coats on your back, and calculate she can get them for her boys. Those vulgar young miscreants never fail to come and dine with you on a Sunday. They will have their young linendraper or articled friends. They will draw on you, or give their own to money-lenders, and unless you keep up those bills they will consider you a callous avaricious brute, the heartless author of their ruin. The girls will come and dine on your wife's piano. They won't come to you on Sundays; they will always be staying in the house. They will not be preventing a tête-à-tête between your wife and you. As they grow old, they will want her to take them out to tea-parties, to give such entertainments, where they will introduce their young men. They will expect you to commit meanesses, in order to get theatre tickets for them from the newspaper editors of acquaintance. You will have to sit in the back seat; to pay cab to and from the play; to see glances and bows of recognition passing between them and dubious bucks in the lobbies; and lend the girls your wife's gloves, scarfs, ornaments, smellings, and handkerchiefs, which of course they will never return. Elizabeth is ailing from any circumstance, they will get a footing in your house, and she will be jealous of them. The ladies of your family will quarrel with them of course; and very likely your sister-in-law will tell them a piece of her mind. And you bring a dreary certainty upon you, because, forsooth, you fall in love with a fine figure, a pair of grey eyes, and a head of auburn (not to red) hair! O Charles Batchelor! in what a galley hast thou ted thyself, and what a family is crowded in thy boat!

All these thoughts are passing in my mind, as good Mrs. Bonnington is prattling to me—I protest I don't know about what think I caught some faint sentences about the Patagonian mission, National schools, and Mr. Bonnington's lumber trade; but I can't be for certain. I was busy with my own thoughts. I had asked awful question—I was not answered. Bessy had even gone away a huff about my want of gallantry, but I was easy on that score, for Mr. Drencher, she had told me her sentiments regarding
him; "and though I am considerably older, yet," thought I, "I need not be afraid of that rival. But when she says yes? Oh, dear! oh dear! Yes means Elizabeth—certainly, a brave young woman—but it means Mrs. Prior, and Gus, and Amelia Jane, and the whole of that dismal family." No wonder, with these dark thoughts crowding my mind, Mrs. Bonnington found me absent; and, as a comment upon some absurd reply of mine, said, "La! Mr. Batchelor, you must be crossed in love!" Crossed in love! It might be as well for some folks if they were crossed in love! At my age, and having loved madly, as I did, that party in Dublin, a man doesn't take the second fit by any means so strongly. Well well! the die was cast, and I was there to bide the hazard. What can be the matter? I look pale and unwell, and had better see Mr. D. Thank you, my dear Mrs. Bonnington. I had a violent—a violent toothache last night—yes, toothache; and was kept awake, thank you. And there's nothing like having it out? and Mr. D. draws them beautifully, and has taken out six of your children's? It's better now; I daresay it will be better still, soon I retire to my chamber: I take a book—can't read one word of it I resume my tragedy. Tragedy? Bosh!

I suppose Mr. Drencher thought his yesterday's patient would be better for a little more advice and medicine, for he must pay a second visit to Shrublands on this day, just after the row with the Captain had taken place, and walked up to the upper region as his custom was. Very likely he found Mr. Clarence bathing his nose there, and prescribed for the injured organ. Certainly he knocked at the door of Miss Prior's schoolroom (the fellow was always finding a pretext for entering that apartment), and Maste Bedford comes to me with a woebegone livid countenance, and "Ha! ha! young Sawbones is up with her!"

"So, my poor Dick," I say, "I heard your confession as I was myself running in to rescue Miss P. from that villain."

"My blood was up," groans Dick, "up, I beg your pardon. When I saw that young rascal lay a hand on her, I could not help flying at him. I would have hit him if he had been my own father. And I could not help saying what was on my mind. It won't come out; I knew it would some day. I might as well wish the moon as hope to get her. She thinks herself superior to me; she don't care for anybody. Now the words are out, in court I mustn't stay here."

"You may get another place easily enough with your character, Bedford!"

But he shook his head. "I'm not disposed to black nobs..."
I AM STUNG BY A SERPENT

I have another place. I have saved a bit of money. My poor old mother is gone, whom you used to be so kind to, Mr. B. I'm alone now. Confound that Sawbones, will he never come away? I'll tell you about my plans some day, sir, and I know you'll be so good as to help me." And away goes Dick, looking the picture of woeful and despair.

Presently, from the upper rooms, Sawbones descends. I happened to be standing in the hall, you see, talking to Dick. Mr. Drencher scowls at me fiercely, and I suppose I return him haughty glance for glance. He hated me: I him: I liked him to hate me.

"How is your patient, Mr.—a—Drencher?" I ask.

"Trifling contusion of the nose—brown paper and vinegar," says the Doctor.

"Great powers! did the villain strike her on the nose?" I cry a terror.

"Her—whom?" says he.

"Oh—ah—yes—indeed; it's nothing," I say, smiling. The fact is I had forgotten about Baker in my natural anxiety for Elizabeth.

"I don't know what you mean by laughing, sir," says the red-haired practitioner. "But if you mean chaff, Mr. Batchelor, let me tell you I don't want chaff, and I won't have chaff!" and herewith exit Sawbones, looking black doses at me.

Jealous of me, think I, as I sink down in a chair in the morning-room, where the combat had just taken place. And so thou, too, art fever-caught, my poor physician! What a fascination this girl has! Here's the butler: here's the medical man: here am I: here is the Captain has been smitten—smitten on the nose. Has the gardener been smitten too, and is the page gnawing his buttons off for jealousy, and is Monsieur Bulkeley equally in love with her? I take up a review, and think over this, as I glance through its pages.

As I am lounging and reading, Monsieur Bulkeley himself makes his appearance, bearing in cloaks and packages belonging to his lady. "Have the goodness to take that cap off," I say coolly.

"You 'ave the goodness to remember that if ever I see you hout o' this 'ouse I'll punch your hlugy 'ead off," says the monstrous menial. But I poise my paper-cutter, and he retires growling.

From despondency I pass to hope; and the prospect of marriage, which before appeared so dark to me, assumes a gayer hue. I have four hundred a year, and that house in Devonshire Street, Bloomsbury Square, of which the upper part will be quite big enough for us. If we have children, there is Queen Square for them to walk and play in. Several genteel families I know, who still
live in the neighbourhood, will come and see my wife, and we shall have a comfortable cosy little society, suited to our small means. The tradesmen in Lamb’s Conduit Street are excellent, and the music at the Foundling always charming. I shall give up one of my clubs. The other is within an easy walk.

No: my wife’s relations will not plague me. Bessy is a most sensible determined woman, and as cool a hand as I know. She will only see Mrs. Prior at proper (and, I trust, distant) intervals. Her brothers and sisters will learn to know their places, and we will not obtrude upon me or the company which I keep. My friends, who are educated people and gentlemen, will not object to visit me because I live over a shop (my ground-floor and spacious back premises in Devonshire Street are let to a German toy-warehouse). I shall add a hundred or two at least to my income by my literary labour; and Bessy, who has practised frugality all her life, and been a good daughter and a good sister, I know will prove a good wife, and, please Heaven! a good mother. Why, four hundred a year plus two hundred, is a nice little income. And my old College friend, Wigmore, who is just on the Bench? He will, I think, must get me a place—say three hundred a year. With nine hundred a year we can do quite well.

Love is full of elations and despondencies. The future, over which such a black cloud of doubt lowered a few minutes since, blushed a sweet rose-colour now. I saw myself happy, beloved, with a competence, and imagined myself reposing in the delightful garden of Red Lion Square on some summer evening, and half-a-dozen little Batchelors frisking over the flower-bespangled grass there.

After our little colloquy, Mrs. Bonnington not finding much pleasure in my sulky society, had gone to Miss Prior’s room with her young folks, and as the door of the morning-room opened wide, and again, I could hear the dear young ones scuttling about the passages, where they were playing at horses and fighting and so forth. After a while good Mrs. B. came down from the schoolroom. “Whatever has happened, Mr. Batchelor?” she said to me, in her passage through the morning-room. “Miss Prior is very pale and absent. You are very pale and absent. Have you been courting her, you naughty man, and trying to supplant Mr. Drenchet? There now, you turn as red as my ribbon! Ah! Bessy is a good girl, and so fond of my dear children. ‘Ah, dear Mrs. Bonnington,’ she says to me—but of course you won’t tell Lady B.: it would make Lady B. perfectly furious. ‘Ah!’ says Miss P. to me, ’I wish, ma’am, that my little charges were like their dear little uncles and aunts—so exquisitely brought up!’ Pop again wished to beat
I AM STUNG BY A SERPENT

I wish—I wish Frederick would send that child to school! Miss P. owns that he is too much for her. Come, children, it is time to go to dinner.” And, with more of thisattle, the good lady summons her young ones, who descend from the schoolroom with their nephew and niece.

Following nephew and niece, comes demure Miss Prior, to whom I fling a knowing glance, which says, plain as eyes can speak—Do, Elizabeth, come and talk for a little to your faithful bachelor! She gives a sidelong look of intelligence, leaves a parasol and a pair of gloves on a table, accompanies Mrs. Bonnington and the young ones into the garden, sees the clergyman’s wife and children disappear through the garden gate, and her own motherly charges engaged in the strawberry-beds; and, of course, returns to the morning-room for her parasol and gloves, which she had forgotten. There is a calmness about that woman—an easy, amiable, dexterity, which frightens me—ma parole d’honneur. in that white breast is there a white marble stone in place of the ordinary cordial apparatus? Under the white velvet glove of that cold hand are there bones of cold steel?

“So, Drencher has again been here, Elizabeth?” I say.

She shrugs her shoulders. “To see that wretched Captain Baker. The horrid little man will die! He was not actually sober just now when he—when you saw him. How I wish you had come sooner—to prevent that horrible, tipsy, disreputable quarrel! It makes me very very thoughtful, Mr. Batchelor. He will speak to his mother—to Mr. Lovel. I shall have to go away. I know I must.”

“And don’t you know where you can find a home, Elizabeth? Have the words I spoke this morning been so soon forgotten?”

“Oh! Mr. Batchelor! you spoke in a heat. You could not think seriously of a poor girl like me, so friendless and poor, with so many family ties. Pop is looking this way, please. To a man like you, what can I be?”

“You may make the rest of my life happy, Elizabeth!” I cry. “We are friends of such old—old date, that you know what my disposition is.”

“Oh! indeed,” says she, “it is certain that there never was a sweeter disposition or a more gentle creature.” (Somehow I thought she said the words “gentle creature” with rather a sarcastic tone of voice.) “But consider your habits, dear sir. I remember how in Brook Street you used to be always giving, and, in spite of your income, always poor. You love ease and elegance; and having, I flatter, not too much for yourself now, would you encumber yourself with—with me and the expenses of a household? I shall always
regard you, esteem you, love you as the best friend I ever had, and—voici venir la mère du vaurien.”

Enter Lady Baker. “Do I interrupt a tête-à-tête, pray?” she asks.

“My benefactor has known me since I was a child, and befriended me since then,” says Elizabeth, with simple kindness beaming in her look. “We were just speaking—I was just—oh—telling him that my uncle has invited me most kindly to Saint Boniface, whenever I can be spared; and if you and the family, to the Isle of Wight this autumn, perhaps you will intercede with Mr. Lovel, and let me have a little holiday. Mary will take over charge of the children, and I do so long to see my dear aunt and cousins! And I was begging Mr. Batchelor to use his interest with you, and to entreat you to use your interest to get me leave. This was what our talk was about.”

The deuce it was! I couldn’t say No, of course; but I protest I had no idea until that moment that our conversation had been about Aunt and Uncle at Saint Boniface. Again came the horrid suspicion, the dreadful doubt—the chill as of a cold serpent crawling down my back—which had made me pause, and gasp, and turn pale, anon when Bessy and Captain Clarence were holding colloquy together. What has happened in this woman’s life? Do I know about her, or anything; or only just as much as she chooses? Oh, Batch—Batch! I suspect you are no better than an old goby!

“And Mr. Drencher has just been here and seen your son Bessy continues softly; “and he begs and entreats your Ladyship to order Captain Baker to be more prudent. Mr. D. says Captain Baker is shortening his life, indeed he is, by his carelessness.”

There is Mr. Lovel coming from the City, and the children running to their papa! And Miss Prior makes her patroness meek curtsy, and demurely slides away from the room. With sick heart I say to myself, “She has been—yes—humbugging the word—humbugging Lady B. Elizabeth! Elizabeth! can it possible thou art humbugging me too?”

Before Lovel enters, Bedford rapidly flits through the room. He looks as pale as a ghost. His face is awfully gloomy.

“Here’s the governor come,” Dick whispers to me. “It may all come hout now—out, I beg your pardon. So she’s caught ye, has she? I thought she would.” And he grins a ghastly grin.

“What do you mean?” I ask, and I daresay turn rather red.

“I know all about it. I’ll speak to you to-night, sir. Can’t find her! confound her!” and he doubles his knuckles into my eyes, and rushes out of the room over Buttons entering with the afternoon tea.
I AM STUNG BY A SERPENT

"What on earth's the matter, and why are you knocking the things about?" Lovel asks at dinner of his butler, who, indeed, acted as one distraught. A savage gloom was depicted on Bedford's usually melancholy countenance, and the blunders in his service were many. With his brother-in-law Lovel did not exchange many words. Clarence was not yet forgiven for his escapade two days previous. And when Lady Baker cried, "Mercy, child! what have you done to yourself?" and the Captain replied, "Knocked my face against a dark door—made my nose bleed," Lovel did not look up to express a word of sympathy. "If the fellow knocked his worthless head off, I should not be sorry," the widower murmured to me. Indeed, the tone of the Captain's voice, his tone, and his manners in general, were especially odious to Mr. Lovel, who could put up with the tyranny of women, but revolted against the vulgarity and assumption of certain men.

As yet nothing had been said about the morning's quarrel. Here we were all sitting with a sword hanging over our heads, talking and chatting, and talking cookery, politics, the weather, and what not. Bessy was perfectly cool and dignified at tea. Danger or doubt did not seem to affect her. If she had been ordered for execution at the end of the evening she would have made the tea, played her Beethoven, answered questions in her usual voice, and glided about from one to another with her usual dignified calm, until the hour of decapitation came, when she would have made her curtsey, and gone out and had the amputation performed quite quietly and neatly. I admired her, I was frightened before her. The cold snake crept more than ever down my back as I meditated on her. I made such awful blunders at whist that good Mrs. Bonnington lost her temper with her fourteen shillings. Miss Prior would have played her hand out, and never made fault, you may be sure. She retired at her accustomed hour. Mrs. Bonnington had her glass of negus, and withdrew too. Lovel keeping his eyes sternly on the Captain, that officer could only get little sherry and seltzer, and went to bed sober. Lady Baker folded Lovel in her arms, a process to which my poor friend very humbly submitted. Everybody went to bed, and no tales were told of the morning's doings. There was a respite, and no execution could take place till to-morrow at any rate. Put on thy night-cap, Damocles, and slumber for to-night at least. Thy slumbers will not be cut short by the awful Chopper of Fate.

Perhaps you may ask what need had I to be alarmed? Nothing could happen to me. I was not going to lose a governess's place. Well, if I must tell the truth, I had not acted with entire candour in the matter of Bessy's appointment. In recommending her to
Lovel and the late Mrs. L., I had answered for her probity, so forth, with all my might. I had described the respectability of her family, her father's campaigns, her grandfather's (old Dr. Sargent's) celebrated sermons; and had enlarged with the utmost eloquence upon the learning and high character of her uncle, Master of Boniface, and the deserved regard he bore his niece. I had touched upon. A quoi bon? Would every gentle or lady like to have everything told about him or her? I had left the Academy dark then; and so had brave Dick Bedford the bull and should that miscreant Captain reveal the secret, I knew he would be an awful commotion in the building. I should incur Lovel's not unjust reproaches for suppressio veri, and the anger of those two viragines, the grandmothers of Lovel's children. I was more afraid of the women than of him, though I knew he whispered me that I had not acted quite rightly by my friend.

When, then, the bed-candles were lighted, and every one said good-night, "Oh! Captain Baker," say I gaily, and putting on a confoundedly hypocritical grin, "if you will come into my room, I will give you that book."


"The book we were talking of this morning."

"Hang me, if I know what you mean," says he. And luck for me, Lovel, giving a shrug of disgust, and a good-night to me stalked out of the room, bed-candle in hand. No doubt, he thought his wretch of a brother-in-law did not well remember after dim what he had done or said in the morning.

As I now had the Blacksheep to myself, I said calmly, "You are quite right. There was no talk about a book at all, Captain Baker. But I wished to see you alone, and impress upon you earnest wish that everything which occurred this morning—mi everything—should be considered as strictly private, and should be confided to no person whatever—you understand?—to no person.

"Confound me," Baker breaks out, "if I understand what you mean by your books and your 'strictly private.' I shall see what I choose—hang me!"

"In that case, sir," I said, "will you have the goodness to send a friend of yours to my friend Captain Fitzboodle? I must consider the matter as personal between ourselves. You insulted and, as I find now, for the second time—a lady whose relations I do not know. You have given neither to her, nor to me, an apology to which we are both entitled. You refuse even to promise to be silent regarding a painful scene which was occasion
our own brutal and cowardly behaviour; and you must abide by the consequences, sir! you must abide by the consequences!” And glared at him over my flat candlestick.

“Curse me!—and hang me!—and,” &c. &c. &c. he says, “if you know what all this is about. What the dooce do you talk to me about books, and about silence, and apologies, and sending Captain Fitzboodle to me? I don’t want to see Captain Fitzboodle—great brute! I know him perfectly well.”

“Hush!” say I, “here’s Bedford.” In fact, Dick appeared at this juncture, to close the house and put the lamps out.

But Captain Clarence only spoke or screamed louder. “What do I care about who hears me? That fellow insulted me already to-day, and I’d have pitched his life out of him, only I was down, and I’m so confounded weak and nervous, and just out of my fever—and—and hang it all! what are you driving at, Mr. What’s-your-name?” And the wretched little creature cries almost as he speaks.

“Once for all, will you agree that the affair about which we spoke shall go no further?” I say, as stern as Draco.

“I shan’t say anythin’ about it. I wish you’d leave me alone, you fellows, and not come botherin’. I wish I could get a glass of brandy-and-water up in my bedroom. I tell you I can’t sleep without it,” whimpers the wretch.

“Sorry I laid hands on you, sir,” says Bedford sadly. “It wasn’t worth the while. Go to bed, and I’ll get you something warm.”

“Will you, though? I couldn’t sleep without it. Do now— o now! and I won’t say anythin’—I won’t now—on the honour of a gentleman, I won’t. Good-night, Mr. What-d’ye-call.” And Bedford leads the helot to his chamber.

“I’ve got him in bed; and I’ve given him a dose; and I put one laudanum in it. He ain’t been out. He has not had much to-day,” says Bedford, coming back to my room, with his face miserably pale.

“You have given him laudanum?” I ask.

“Sawbones gave him some yesterday,—told me to give him a little—forty drops,” growls Bedford.

Then the gloomy major-domo puts a hand into each waistcoat pocket, and looks at me. “You want to fight for her, do you, sir? Calling out, and that sort of game? Phoo!”—and he laughs cordially.

“The little miscreant is too despicable, I own,” say I, “and it’s hard for a peaceable fellow like me to talk about powder and shot at this time of day. But what could I do?”
could not have been more disgusting. It appeared (from Becca's statement) that Æsculapius, on getting into his gig, had allowed this scrap of paper to whisk out of his pocket—the rest he no doubt, under the eyes of the writer. Very likely, during perusal, he had taken and squeezed the false hand which wrote lines. Very likely the first part of the precious document contained compliments to him—from the horrible context I judged so compliments to that vendor of leeches and bandages, into whose he I daresay I wished ten thousand lancets might be stuck, as I used the False One's wheedling address to him! So ran the document. How well every word of it was engraved on my anguish heart! If page three, which I suppose was about the bit of letter which I got, was as it was—what must pages one and have been? The dreadful document began, then, thus:—

"—dear hair in the locket, which I shall ever wear for sake of him who gave it"—(dear hair! indeed—disgusting ear She should have been ashamed to call it "dear hair")."—"for sake of him who gave it and whose bad temper I shall pay because I think in spite of his faults he is a little fond of his Lizzie! Ah, Edward! how could you go on so the last time at poor Mr. B! Can you imagine that I can ever have more the filial regard for the kind old gentleman!" (Il était question de ma parole d'honneur. I was the kind old gentleman!) "I known him since my childhood. He was intimate in our family earlier and happier days; made our house his home; and, I say, was most kind to all of us children. If he has vanities, naughty boy, is he the only one of his sex who is vain? Can fancy that such an old creature (an old muff, as you call you wicked satirical man) could ever make an impression on heart? No, sir!" (Aha! So I was an old muff, was I?) "The I don't wish to make you vain too, or that other people should at you, as you do at poor dear Mr. B., I think, sir, you need look in your glass to see that you need not be afraid of such as that. You fancy he is attentive to me? If you looked little angrily at him, he would fly back to London. To-day, your horrid little patient did presume to offer to take my when I boxed his little wicked ears and sent him spinning end of the room—poor Mr. Batch was so frightened that he dared to come into the room, and I saw him peeping behind as on the lawn, and he would not come in until the servants are Poor man! We cannot all of us have courage like a Edward, who I know is as bold as a lion. Now, sir, you must be quarrelling with that wretched little Captain for being rue
ve shown him that I can very well take care of myself. I knew
an odious thing the first moment I set eyes on him, though he
had forgotten me. Years ago I met him, and I remember he was
usually rude and tips—"

Here the letter was torn. Beyond "tips" it did not go. But
at was enough, wasn't it? To this woman I had offered a gentle
manly, I may say a kind and tender heart—I had offered four
hundred a year in funded property, besides my house in Devonshire
street, Bloomsbury—and she preferred Edward, forsooth, at the sign
the Gallipot: and may ten thousand pestles smash his brains!
You may fancy what a night I had after reading that scrap. I
promise you I did not sleep much. I heard the hours toll as I kept
gil. I lay amidst shattered capitals, broken shafts of the tumbled
place which I had built in imagination—oh! how bright and
ately! I sat amongst the ruins of my own happiness, surrounded
the murdered corpses of innocent-visioned domestic joys. Tick-
ck! Moment after moment I heard on the clock the clinking foot-
eps of wakeful grief. I fell into a doze towards morning, and
reamed that I was dancing with Glorvina, when I woke with a
art, finding Bedford arrived with my shaving-water and opening
shutters. When he saw my haggard face he wagged his head.

"You have read it, I see, sir," says he.

"Yes, Dick," groaned I out of bed, "I have swallowed it." I
nd I laughed I may say a fiendish laugh. "And now I have
ten it, not poppy nor mandragora, nor all the drowsy syrups in
shop (hang him!) will be able to medicine me to sleep for some
me to come!"

"She has no heart, sir. I don't think she cares for t'other
nap much," groans the gloomy butler. "She can't, after having
own us"—and my companion in grief, laying down my hot-water
ng, retreats.

I did not cut any part of myself with my razor. I shaved
ite calmly. I went to the family at breakfast. My impression
was sarcastic and witty. I smiled most kindly at Miss Prior
hen she came in. Nobody could have seen from my outward
aviour that anything was wrong within. I was an apple.
ould you inspect the worm at my core? No, no. Somebody,
think old Baker, complimented me on my good looks. I was
iling lake. Could you see on my placid surface, amongst my
eny water-lilies, that a corpse was lying under my cool depths?
bit of devilled chicken?" "No, thank you. By the way,
sel, I think I must go to town to-day." "You'll come back to
inner, of course?" "Well—no." "Oh, stuff! You promised
me to-day and to-morrow. Robinson, Brown, and Jones, coming to-morrow, and you must be here to meet them.” We prattle on. I answer, I smile, I say, “Yes, if you please, another cup,” or, “Be so good as to hand the muffin,” or whatever. But I am dead. I feel as if I am under ground, and buried. And tea, and clatter, and muffins are going on, of course; and daisies spring and the sun shines on the grass whilst I am unawares. Ah, dear me! it’s very cruel; it’s very very lonely; it’s very odd! I don’t belong to the world any more. I have done with it. I am shelved away. But my spirit returns and flitters through the world, which it has no longer anything to do with; and a ghost, as it were, comes and smiles at my own tombstone. He is Charles Batchelor, the Unloved One. Oh! alone, alone, alone. Why, Fate! didst thou ordain that I should be companions of the Wandering Jew, that I may go and be with him. Is there any place at a lighthouse vacant? Will you know where is the Island of Juan Fernandez? Engage me a ship and take me there at once. Mr. R. Crusoe, I think? My dear Robinson, have the kindness to hand me over your goatskin breeches, and umbrella. Go home, and leave me here. Well, you know who is the solitary man on earth? That man am I. Was that cutlet which I ate at breakfast, anon, was that lamb which frisked on the mead last week (beyond you wall where the unconscious cucumber lay basking which was to form his sauce)? I say was that lamb made so tender that I might eat him? Aye, my heart, then? Poor heart! wert thou so softly constituted that women might stab thee? So I am a Muff, am I? And always wear a lock of his “dear hair,” will she? Ha! ha! The men on the omnibus looked askance as they saw me laugh. They thought it was from Hanwell, not Putney, I was escaping. Escape? Who can escape? I went into London. I went to the Clubs. Jwkins, of course, was there; and my impression that he talked as usual. I took another omnibus, and went back to Putney. “I will go back and revisit my grave,” I thought. It is said that ghosts loiter about their former haunts after they are first dead; flit wistfully among their old companions, and, I daresay, expect to hear a plenty of conversation and friendly tearful remark about themselves. But suppose the return, and find nobody talking of them at all? Or suppose Hamlet (Père, and Royal Dane) comes back and finds Claudius and Gertrude very comfortable over a piece of cold meat, or what not. Is the late gentleman’s present position as a ghost a very pleasing one? Crow, Cocks! Quick, Sundawn! Open, Trap-door! Allons! it’s best to pop underground again. So I am a Muff, am I? What
Cecilia's Successor

...rious thing that walk up the hill to the house was! What a
different place Shrublands was yesterday to what it is to-day!
the sun lost its light, and the flowers their bloom, and the joke
sparkle, and the dish its savour? Why, bless my soul! what
Lizzie herself—only an ordinary woman—freckled certainly—
irrigibly dull, and without a scintillation of humour; and you
an to say, Charles Batchelor, that your heart once beat about
woman? Under the intercepted letter of that cold assassin,
heart had fallen down dead, irretrievably dead. I remember,
propos of the occasion of my first death, that perpetrated by
orvina—on my second visit to Dublin—with what a strange
sation I walked under some trees in the Phoenix Park beneath
ich it had been my custom to meet my False One Number 1.
ere were the trees—there were the birds singing—there was the
ch on which we used to sit—the same, but how different! The
es had a different foliage, exquisite amaranthine; the birds sang
song paradisiacal; the bench was a bank of roses and fresh
wers, which young Love twined in fragrant chaplets around the
tue of Glorvina. Roses and fresh flowers? Rheumatisms and
mel-waistcoats, you silly old man! Foliage and Song? O namby-
mby driveller! A statue?—a doll, thou twaddling old dullard!—
doll with carmine checks, and a heart stuffed with bran—I say,
the night preceding that ride to and from Putney, I had under-
me death—in that omnibus I had been carried over to t'other
de of the Stygian shore. I returned but as a passionless ghost,
membering my life-days, but not feeling any more. Love was
ad, Elizabeth! Why, the Doctor came, and partook freely of
ch, and I was not angry. Yesterday I called him names, and
ed him, and was jealous of him. To-day I felt no rivalship;
no envy at his success; and no desire to supplant him. No—
swear—not the slightest wish to make Elizabeth mine if she
ould. I might have cared for her yesterday—yesterday I had
rt. Psha! my good sir or madam. You sit by me at dinner,
haps you are handsome, and use your eyes. Ogle away. Don't
ulk yourself, pray. But if you fancy I care a threepenny-piece
out you—or for your eyes—or for your bonny brown hair—or
or your sentimental remarks, sidelong warbled—or for your praise
not of) my face—or for your satire behind my back—ah me!—
w mistaken you are! Peine perdue, ma chère dame! The diges-
ive organs are still in good working order—but the heart! Caret.

I was perfectly civil to Mr. Drencher, and, indeed, wonder
think how in my irritation I had allowed myself to apply
mentally) any sort of disagreeable phrases to a most excellent
and deserving and good-looking young man, who is beloved by
the poor, and has won the just confidence of an extensive car-
patients. I made no sort of remark to Miss Prior, except —
the weather and the flowers in the garden. I was bland,
rather pleasant, not too high-spirited, you understand.—No
vow you could not have seen a nerve wince, or the slight
alteration in my demeanour. I helped the two old dowagers
listened to their twaddle; I gaily wiped up with my napkin
quarters of a glass of sherry which Popham flung over my trog.
I would defy you to know that I had gone through the tide
operation of an excision of the heart a few hours previous.
Heart—pooh! I saw Miss Prior's lip quiver. Without any
between us, she knew perfectly well that all was over as regrs
her late humble servant. She winced once or twice. Mr.
Drencher was busy with his plate, the grey eyes cast towards
interjectional looks of puzzled entreaty. She, I say, winced;
I give you my word I did not care a fig whether she was
or pleased, or happy, or going to be hanged. And I can't give
better proof of my utter indifference about the matter, than
fact that I wrote two or three copies of verses descriptive of
despair. They appeared, you may perhaps remember, in one of
annuals of those days, and were generally attributed to one of
most sentimental of our young poets. I remember the reviews
they were "replete with emotion," "full of passionate and equal
feeling," and so forth. Feeling, indeed! — ha! ha! "Passionate
bursts of a grief-stricken heart!" — Passionate scrapings of a folk
stick, my good friend. "Lonely" of course rhymes with "cry"
and "gushes" with "blushes," and "despair" with "hair," and
on. Despair is perfectly compatible with a good dinner, I promis
you. Hair is false: hearts are false. Grapes may be sour, ol
claret is good, my masters. Do you suppose I am going to cry
eyes out, because Chloe's are turned upon Strephon? If you fear
any whimpering in mine, may they never wink at a bee's-wing aga

When the Doctor rose presently, saying he would go and see the
gardener's child, who was ill, and casting longing looks at Miss Prior, I
assure you I did not feel a tittle of jealousy, though Miss Best
actually followed Mr. Drencher on to the lawn, under the pretext
of calling back Miss Cissy, who had run thither without her bonnet.

"Now, Lady Baker, which was right? you or I?" asks Berr
Mrs. Bonnington, wagging her head towards the lawn where the
couple of innocents were disporting.

"You thought there was an affair between Miss Prior and the
medical gentleman," I say, smiling. "It was no secret, Ma
Bonnington."

"Yes, but there were others who were a little smitten in the
"Her too," says Lady Baker; and she in turn wags her old head toward me.

"You mean me?" I answer, as innocent as a new-born babe. Am I a burnt child, Lady Baker; I have been at the fire, and am thoroughly done, thank you. One of your charming sex did me some years ago; and once is quite enough, I am much obliged to you."

This I said, not because it was true; in fact, it was the reverse of the truth; but if I chose to lie about my own affairs, pray, why not? I thought a strictly truth-telling man generally, when I do lie, I might be excused. You I do it boldly and well.

"If, as I gather from Mrs. Bonnington, Mr. Drencher and Mr. Prior like each other, I wish my old friend joy. I wish Drencher joy with all my heart. The match seems to me all right. He is a deserving, a clever, and a handsome young man; and I am sure, ladies, you can bear witness to her goodness, if all you have known of her."

"My dear Bachelor," says Mrs. Bonnington, still smiling and looking, "I don't believe one single word you say—not one single word!" And she looks infinitely pleased as she speaks.

"Oh!" cries Lady Baker, "my good Mrs. Bonnington, you always match-making—don't contradict me. You know you ought—"

"Oh, please don't," cries Mrs. B.

"I will. She thought, Mr. Bachelor, she actually thought our son, that my Cecilia's husband, was smitten by the sorceress. I should like to have seen him dare!" and her flash-eyes turn towards the late Mrs. Lovel's portrait, with its faded per leering over the harp. "The idea that any woman could need that angel, indeed!"

"Indeed, I don't envy her," I said.

"You don't mean, Bachelor, that my Frederick would not keep any woman happy!" cries the Bonnington. "He's only en-and-thirty, very young for his age, and the most affectionate creature. I am surprised, and it's most cruel, and most unkind you, to say that you don't envy any woman that marries boy!"

"My dear good Mrs. Bonnington, you quite misapprehend me," I remark.

"Why, when his late wife was alive," goes on Mrs. B., sobbing, "I knew with what admirable sweetness and gentleness he bore—her—bad temper—excuse me, Lady Baker!"

"Oh, pray, abuse my departed angel!" cries the Baker; "say your son should marry and forget her—say that those darlings
should be made to forget their mother. She was a woman of
and a woman of breeding, and a woman of family, and the Bake
came in with the Conqueror, Mrs. Bonnington——"

"I think I heard of one in the Court of Pharaoh," I interpos.
"And to say that a Baker is not worthy of a Lovel is pre-
news indeed! Do you hear that, Clarence?"

"Hear what, ma'am?" says Clarence, who enters at
juncture. "You're speakin' loud enough—though blesht if I've
two sh-shyllables."

"You wretched boy, you have been smoking!"

"Shmoking—haven't I?" says Clarence with a laugh; "I've
been at the 'Five Bells,' and I've been having a game
billiards with an old friend of mine," and he hunches towards
decanter.

"Ah! don't drink any more, my child!" cries the mother.
"I'm as sober as a judge, I tell you. You leave so pre
little in the bottle at dinner, that I must get it when I can, miss,
I, Batchelor, old boy? We had a row yesterday, hadn't we? It
was sugar-baker. I'm not angry—you're not angry. Bear
malish. Here's your health, old boy!"

The unhappy gentleman drank his bumper of sherry, tossing his hair off his head, said—"Where's the governess—who
Bessy Bellenden? Who's that kickin' me under the table, I say?
"Where is who?" asks his mother.

"Bessy Bellenden—the governess—that's her real name. Kno
her these ten years. Used to dansh at Prinsh's Theatre. I mem
her in the corps-de-ballet. Usched to go behind the she
Dooshid pretty girl!" maunders out the tipsy youth; and an
unconscious subject of his mischievous talk enters the room, as
he cries out, "Come and sit by me, Bessy Bellenden, I say!"

The matrons rose with looks of horror in their faces. "A ball
dancer!" cries Mrs. Bonnington. "A ballet-dancer!" echoes la
Baker. "Young woman, is this true?"

"The Bulbul and the Roshe—hay?" laughs the Capt.
"Don't you remember you and Fosbery in blue and shpan
Always all right, though, Bellenden was. Fosbery wasn't:
Bellenden was. Give you every credit for that, Bellenden. Bo
my ears. Bear no malish—no—no—malish! Get some m
sherry, you—whatsyth your name—Bedford, butler—and I'll l
you the money I owe you." And he laughs his wild laugh, utc
unconscious of the effect he is producing. Bedford stands sta
at him as pale as death. Poor Miss Prior is as white as marl
Wrath, terror, and wonder are in the countenances of the dowag
It is an awful scene!
CECILIA’S SUCCESSOR

“Mr. Batchelor knows that it was to help my family I did it,” says the poor governess.

“Yes, by George! and nobody can say a word against her,” exclaims Dick Bedford, with a sob; “and she is as honest as any man here.”

“Pray, who told you to put your oar in?” cries the tipsy captain.

“And you knew that this person was on the stage, and you introduced her into my son’s family? Oh, Mr. Batchelor, Mr. Batchelor, I didn’t think it of you! Don’t speak to me, miss!” says the furious Bonnigton.

“You brought this woman to the children of my adored Cecilia?” exclaims the other dowager. “Serpent, leave the room! Pack your trunks, viper! and quit the house this instant. Don’t touch my Cissy. Come to me, my blessing. Go away, you horrid rascal!”

“She ain’t a horrid wretch; and when I was ill she was very good to us,” breaks in Pop, with a roar of tears: “and you shan’t call Miss Prior—my dear pretty Miss Prior. You shan’t go!” and the child rushes up to the governess, and covers her neck with tears and kisses.

“Leave her, Popham, my darling blessing!—leave that woman!” cries Lady Baker.

“I won’t, you old beast!—and she sha-a-an’t go. And I wish you was dead—and, my dear, you shan’t go, and pa shan’t let you!” shouts the boy.

“Oh, Popham, if Miss Prior has been naughty, Miss Prior must go!” says Cecilia, tossing up her head.

“Spoken like my daughter’s child!” cries Lady Baker: and little Cissy, having flung her little stone, looks as if she had performed a very virtuous action.

“God bless you, Master Pop—you are a trump, you are!” says Mr. Bedford.

“Yes, that I am, Bedford; and she shan’t go, shall she?” cries the boy.

But Bessy stooped down sadly and kissed him. “Yes, I must, dear,” she said.

“Don’t touch him! Come away, sir! Come away from her this moment!” shrieked the two mothers.

“I nursed him through the scarlet fever, when his own mother would not come near him,” says Elizabeth gently.

“I’m blest if she didn’t,” sobs Bedford—“and—bub—bub—bless you, Master Pop!”

“That child is wicked enough, and headstrong enough, and rude
enough already!” exclaims Lady Baker. “I desire, young woman, you will not pollute him further!”

“That’s a hard word to say to an honest woman, ma’am,” says Bedford.

“Pray, miss, are you engaged to the butler, too?” hisses at the dowager.

“There’s very little the matter with Barnet’s child — or teeth — What on earth has happened? My dear Lizzie — my dear Miss Prior — what is it?” cries the Doctor, who enters from the garden at this juncture.

“Nothing has happened, only this young woman has appeared in a new character,” says Lady Baker. “My son has just informed us that Miss Prior danced upon the stage, Mr. Drencher; and I think such a person is a fit companion for your mother and sisters, who attend a place of Christian worship, I believe — I wish you joy.”

“Is this — is this — true?” asks the Doctor, with a look of bewilderment.

“Yes, it is true,” sighs the girl.

“And you never told me, Elizabeth?” groans the Doctor.

“She’s as honest as any woman here,” calls out Bedford. “She gave all the money to her family.”

“It wasn’t fair not to tell me. It wasn’t fair,” sobs the Doctor. And he gives her a ghastly parting look, and turns his back.

“I say, you — Hi! What-d’you-call-im? Sawbones!” shrills out Captain Clarence. “Come back, I say. She’s all right, I say. Upon my honour, now, she’s all right.”

“Miss P. shouldn’t have kept this from me. My mother and sisters are Dissenters, and very strict. I couldn’t ask a party into my family who has been — who has been — I wish you good morning,” says the Doctor, and stalks away.

“And now, will you please to get your things ready, and go too?” continues Lady Baker. “My dear Mrs. Bonnington, you think — — ”

“Certainly, certainly, she must go!” cries Mrs. Bonnington.

“Don’t go till Lovel comes home, miss. These ain’t your mistresses. Lady Baker don’t pay your salary. If you go, I go too. There!” calls out Bedford, and mumbles something in her ear about “the end of the world.”

“You go, too; and a good riddance, you insolent brute!” exclaims the dowager.

“Oh, Captain Clarence! you have made a pretty morning’s work,” I say.

“I don’t know what the dooce all the sherry — all the shifty’s
out,” says the Captain, playing with the empty decanter. “Gal’s very good gal—pretty gal. If she chooseah dansh shport her family, why the doosh shouldn’t she dansh shport a family?”

“That is exactly what I recommend this person to do,” says Andy Baker, tossing up her head. “And now I will thank you to save the room. Do you hear?”

As poor Elizabeth obeyed this order, Bedford darted after her; and I know ere she had gone five steps he had offered her his savings and everything he had. She might have had mine yesterday. But she had deceived me. She had played fast and loose with me. She had misled me about this Doctor. I could trust her no more. My love of yesterday was dead, I say. That vase was broken which never could be mended. She knew all was over between us. She did not once look at me as she left the room.

The two dowagers—one of them, I think, a little alarmed at her victory—left the house, and for once went away in the same carouche. The young maniac who had been the cause of the mischief staggered away, I know not whither.

About four o’clock, poor little Pinhorn, the children’s maid, came to me, well-nigh choking with tears, as she handed me a letter. ‘She’s goin’ away—and she saved both them children’s lives, she did. And she’ve wrote to you, sir. And Bedford’s a-goin’. And I’ll give warnin’, I will, too!’ And the weeping handmaiden retired, leaving me, perhaps somewhat frightened, with the letter in my hand.

“Dear sir,” she said—“I may write you a line of thanks and farewell. I shall go to my mother. I shall soon find another place. Poor Bedford, who has a generous heart, told me that he had given you a letter of mine to Mr. D——. I saw this morning that you knew everything. I can only say now that for all your kindesses and friendship to my family I am always your sincere and grateful—E. P.”

Yes: that was all. I think she was grateful. But she had not been candid with me, nor with the poor surgeon. I had no anger; far from it: a great deal of regard and goodwill, nay admiration, for the intrepid girl who had played a long hard part very cheerfully and bravely. But my foolish little flicker of love had blazed up and gone out in a day; I knew that she never could care for me. In that dismal wakeful night, after reading the letter, I had thought her character and story over, and seen to what a life of artifice and dissimulation necessity had compelled her. I did not blame her. In such circumstances, with such a family, how could she be frank and open? Poor thing! poor thing! Do we know anybody? Ah! dear me, we are most of us
very lonely in the world. You who have any who love you at
to them, and thank God. I went into the hall towards evening
her poor trunks and packages were there, and the little nurse
maid weeping over them. The sight unmanned me; and I
cried myself. Poor Elizabeth! And with these small chests
recommence your life's lonely voyage! I gave the girl a couple
sovereigns. She sobbed a God bless me! and burst out crying
desperately than ever. Thou hast a kind heart, little Pinhorn!

“'Miss Prior—to be called for.' Whose trunks are these
says Lovel, coming from the City. The dowagers drove up at
the same moment.

“Didn't you see us from the omnibus, Frederick?” cries
dame coaxingly. “We followed behind you all the way!”

“We were in the barouche, my dear,” remarks Mrs. Bonning,
rather nervously.

“Whose trunks are these?—what's the matter?—and what
the girl crying for?” asks Lovel.

“Miss Prior is a-going away,” sobs Pinhorn.

“Miss Prior going? Is this your doing, my Lady Baker?
or yours, mother?” the master of the house says sternly.

“She is going, my love, because she cannot stay in this family,
says mamma.

“That woman is no fit companion for my angel's child,
Frederick!” cries Lady B.

“That person has deceived us all, my love!” says mamma.

“Deceived?—how? Deceived whom?” continues Mr. Lovel
more and more hotly.

“Clarence, love! come down, dear! Tell Mr. Lovel every-
thing. Come down and tell him this moment,” cries Lady Baker
to her son, who at this moment appears on the corridor which
round the hall.

“What's the row now, pray?” And Captain Clarence descends
breaking his shins over poor Elizabeth's trunks, and calling dow
on them his usual maledictions.

“Tell Mr. Lovel where you saw that—that person, Clarence.
Now, sir, listen to my Cecilia's brother!”

“Saw her—saw her in blue and spangles, in the 'Rose and
Bulbul,' at the Prince's Theatre—and a doosid nice-looking girl sh
was too!” says the Captain.

“There, sir!”

“There, Frederick!” cry the matrons in a breath.

“And what then?” asks Lovel.

“Mercy! you ask, What then, Frederick? Do you kno
at a theatre is? Tell Frederick what a theatre is, Mr. Batchelor, that my grandchildren must not be educated by——"

"My grandchildren—my Cecilia's children," shrieks the other, just not be pol-luted by——"

"Silence!" I say. "Have you a word against her—have you, y, Baker?"

"No. 'Gad! I never said a word against her," says the plain. "No, hang me, you know—but——"

"But suppose I knew the fact the whole time?" asks Lovel, rather a blush on his cheek. "Suppose I knew that she need to give her family bread? Suppose I knew that she toiled to labour to support her parents, and brothers and sisters? Suppose I know that out of her pittance she has continued to sup-port them? Suppose I know that she watched my own children through fever and danger? For these reasons I must turn her out of doors, must I? No, by Heaven! No!—Elizabeth!—Miss for!—Come down!—Come here, I beg you!"

The governess, arrayed as for departure, at this moment appeared the corridor running round the hall. As Lovel continued to speak loud and resolute, she came down looking deadly pale.

Still much excited, the widower went up to her and took her by the arm. "Dear Miss Prior!" he said—"dear Elizabeth! you have the best friend of me and mine. You tended my wife in illness, took care of my children in fever and danger. You have been admirable sister, daughter in your own family—and for this, and these benefits conferred upon us, my relatives—my mother-in-law would drive you out of my doors! It shall not be!—by heavens, shall not be!"

You should have seen little Bedford sitting on the governess's knee, shaking his fist, and crying "Hurrah!" as his master spoke. this time the loud voices and the altercation in the hall had aught a half-dozen of servants from their quarters into the hall.

"So away, all of you!" shouts Lovel; and the domestic posse, Bedford being the last to retreat, and nodding approval at master as he backs out of the room.

"You are very good, and kind, and generous, sir," says the pale Elizabeth, putting a handkerchief to her eyes. "But without the confidence of these ladies, I must not stay, Mr. Lovel. God bless you for your goodness to me. I must, if you please, return to my ther."

The worthy gentleman looked fiercely round at the two elder men, and again seizing the governess's hand, said—"Elizabeth! or Elizabeth! I implore you not to go! If you love the children——"
"Oh, sir!" (A cambric veil covers Miss Prior's emotion, and the expression of her face, on this ejaculation.)

"If you love the children," gasps out the widower, "stay with them. If you have a regard for—their father"—(Timantho, where is thy pocket-handkerchief?)—"remain in this house, with such a title as none can question. Be the mistress of it."

"His mistress—and before me!" screams Lady Baker. "Mr. Bonnington, this depravity is monstrous!"

"Be my wife, dear Elizabeth!" the widower continues.

"Continue to watch over the children, who shall be motherless no more."

"Frederick! Frederick! haven't they got us?" shrieks one of the old ladies.

"Oh, my poor dear Lady Baker!" says Mrs. Bonnington.

"Oh, my poor dear Mrs. Bonnington!" says Lady Baker.

"Frederick, listen to your mother," implores Mrs. Bonnington.

"To your mothers," sobs Lady Baker.

And they both go down on their knees, and I heard a boohoo of a guffaw behind the green-baized servants' door, where I have no doubt Monsieur Bedford was posted.

"Ah, Batchelor! dear Batchelor, speak to him!" cries good Mrs. Bonny. "We are praying this child, Batchelor—this child whom you used to know at College, and when he was a good gentle obedient boy. You have influence with my poor Frederick. Exert it for his heartbroken mother's sake; and you shall have my bubble-ebble-essings, you shall."

"My dear good lady," I exclaim—not liking to see the kind soul in grief.

"Send for Doctor Straightwaist! Order him to pause in his madness," cries Baker; "or it is I, Cecilia's mother, the mother of that murdered angel, that shall go mad."

"Angel? Allons!" I say. "Since his widowhood, you have never given the poor fellow any peace. You have been for ever quarrelling with him. You took possession of his house; bullied his servants; spoiled his children—you did, Lady Baker."

"Sir," cries her Ladyship, "you are a low, presuming, vulgar man! Clarence, beat this rude man!"

"Nay," I say, "there must be no more quarrelling to-day. And I am sure Captain Baker will not molest me. Miss Prior, I am delighted that my old friend should have found a woman of good sense, good conduct, good temper—a woman who has had many trials and borne them with very great patience—to take charge of him, and make him happy. I congratulate you both. Miss Prior has borne poverty so well that I am certain she will bear good fortune, for it
good fortune to become the wife of such a loyal, honest, kindly gentleman as Frederick Lovel."

After such a speech as that, I think I may say, liberavi minum. Not one word of complaint, you see, not a hint about Edward," not a single sarcasm, though I might have launched some terrific shots out of my quiver, and have made Lovel and his pride-eject writhe before me. But what is the need of spoiling sport? Shall I growl out of my sulky manger because my comrade gobbets the meat? Eat it, happy dog! and be thankful. Would not that bone have choked me if I had tried it? Besides, I am accustomed to disappointment. Other fellows get the prizes which I try for. I am used to run second in the dreary race of love. Second? Psha! Third, Fourth. Que sais-je? There was the Bombay captain in Bess's early days. There was Edward. Here is Frederick. Go to, Charles Batchelor; repine not at fortune: but do content to be Batchelor still. My sister has children. I will be an uncle, a parent to them. Isn't Edward of the scarlet whiskers listaned? Has not poor Dick Bedford lost the race—poor Dick, who never had a chance, and is the best of us all? Besides, what am it is to see Lady Baker deposed: think of Mrs. Prior coming in and reigning over her! The purple-faced old fury of a Baker, never will she bully, and rage, and trample more. She must pack up her traps and be off. I know she must. I can congratulate Lovel sincerely, and that's the fact.

And here at this very moment, and as if to add to the comicality of the scene, who should appear but mother-in-law No. 2, Mrs. Prior, with her Bluecoat boy, and two or three of her children, who had been invited, or had invited themselves, to drink tea with Lovel's young ones, as their custom was whenever they could procure an invitation. Master Prior had a fine "copy" under his arm, which he came to show to his patron Lovel. His mamma, entirely ignorant of what had happened, came fawning in with her old poke-honnet, her old pocket, that vast depository of all sorts of stores, her old umbrella, and her usual dreary smirk. She made her obeisance to the matrons,—she led up her Bluecoat boy to Mr. Lovel, in whose office she hoped to find a clerk's place for her lad, on whose very coat and waistcoat she had designs whilst they were yet on his back: and she straightway began business with the dowagers—

"My Lady, I hope your Ladyship is quite well?" (a curtsey)."
speak to dear kind Mr. Lovel, Gus, our dear good friend and protector,—the son and son-in-law of these dear ladies. Look, sir, he has brought his copy to show you; and it’s creditable to a boy of his age, isn’t it, Mr. Batchelor? You can say, who know so well what writing is, and my kind services to you, sir—and—Elizabeth, Lizzie, my dear! where’s your spectacles, you—you—"

Here she stopped, and looking alarmed at the group, at the boxes, at the blushing Lovel, at the pale countenance of the governess, "Gracious goodness!" she said, "what has happened? Tell me, Lizzie, what is it?"

"Is this collusion, pray?" says ruffled Mrs. Bonnington.

"Collusion, dear Mrs. Bonnington?"

"Or insolvency?" bawls out my Lady Baker.

"Insolvency, your Ladyship? What—what is it? What are these boxes—Lizzie’s boxes? Ah!" the mother broke out with a scream, "you’ve not sent the poor girl away? Oh! my poor children—my poor children!"

"The Prince’s Theatre has come out, Mrs. Prior," here said I.

The mother clasps her meagre hands. "It wasn’t the darling’s fault. It was to help her poor father in poverty. It was I who forced her to it. Oh, ladies! ladies!—don’t take the bread out of the mouth of these poor orphans!"—and genuine tears rained down her yellow cheeks.

"Enough of this," says Mr. Lovel haughtily. "Mrs. Prior, your daughter is not going away. Elizabeth has promised to stay with me, and never to leave me—as governess no longer, but as——" and here he takes Miss Prior’s hand.

"His wife! Is this—is this true, Lizzie?" gasped the mother.

"Yes, mamma," meekly said Miss Elizabeth Prior.

At this the old woman flung down her umbrella, and uttering a fine scream, folds Elizabeth in her arms, and then runs up to Lovel. "My son! my son!" says she (Lovel’s face was not bad, I promise you, at this salutation and salute). "Come here, children!—come, Augustus, Fanny, Louisa, kiss your dear brother, children. And where are yours, Lizzie? Where are Pop and Cissy? Go and look for your little nephew and niece, dears: Pop and Cissy in the schoolroom, or in the garden, dears. They will be your nephew and niece now. Go and fetch them, I say."

As the young Priors filed off, Mrs. Prior turned to the two other matrons, and spoke to them with much dignity: "Most hot weather, your Ladyship, I’m sure! Mr. Bonnington must find it very hot for preaching, Mrs. Bonnington? Lor’! there’s that little wretch beating my Johnny on the stairs. Have done, Pop, sir! How ever shall we make those children agree, Elizabeth?"
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Quick, come to me, some skilful delineator of the British dowager, and draw me the countenances of Lady Baker and Mrs. Bonnington.

"I call this a jolly game, don't you, Batchelor, old boy?" remarks the Captain to me. "Lady Baker, my dear, I guess your Ladyship's nose is out of joint."

"O Cecilia—Cecilia! don't you shudder in your grave?" cries Lady B. "Call my people, Clarence—call Bulkeley—call my maid! Let me go, I say, from this house of horror!" and the old lady dashed into the drawing-room, where she uttered I know not what incoherent shrieks and appeals before that calm, glazed, simpering portrait of the departed Cecilia.

Now this is a truth, for which I call Lovel, his lady, Mrs. Bonnington, and Captain Clarence Baker as witnesses. Well, then, whilst Lady B. was adjuring the portrait, it is a fact that a string of Cecilia's harp—which has always been standing in the corner of the room under its shroud of Cordovan leather—a string, I say, of Cecilia's harp cracked, and went off with a loud bong, which struck terror into all beholders. Lady Baker's agitation at the incident was awful; I do not like to describe it—not having any wish to say anything tragic in this narrative—though that I can write tragedy, plays of mine (of which envious managers never could be got to see the merit) I think will prove, when they appear in my posthumous works.

Baker has always averred that at the moment when the harp-string broke, her heart broke too. But as she lived for many years, and may be alive now for what I know; and as she borrowed money repeatedly from Lovel—he must be acquitted of the charge which she constantly brings against him of hastening her own death, and murdering his first wife Cecilia. "The harp that once in Tara's halls" used to make such a piteous feeble thrumming, has been cut off I know not whither; and Cecilia's portrait, though it has been removed from the post of honour (where, you conceive, under present circumstances it would hardly be à propos), occupies a very reputable position in the pink room upstairs which that poor young Clarence inhabited during my visit to Shrublands.

All the house has been altered. There's a fine organ in the hall, on which Elizabeth performs sacred music very finely. As for my old room, I will trouble you to smoke there under the present government. It is a library now, with many fine and authentic pictures of the Lovel family hanging up in it, the English branch of the house with the wolf crest, and Gare à la louve for the motto, and a grand posthumous portrait of a Portuguese officer (Gandish), Elizabeth's late father.
As for dear old Mrs. Bonnington, she, you may be sure, would be easily reconciled to any live mortal who was kind to her, and any plan which should make her son happy; and Elizabeth has quite won her over. Mrs. Prior, on the deposition of the other dowagers, no doubt expected to reign at Shrublands, but in this object I am not very sorry to say was disappointed. Indeed, I was not a little amused, upon the very first day of her intended reign—that eventful one of which we have been describing the incidents—to see how calmly and gracefully Bessy pulled the throne from under her, on which the old lady was clambering.

Mrs. P. knew the house very well, and everything which it contained; and when Lady Baker drove off with her son and her suite of domestics, Prior dashed through the vacant apartments gleaning what had been left in the flurry of departure—a scarlet feather out of the dowager's room, a shirt-stud and a bottle of hair-oil, the Captain's property. "And now they are gone, and as you can't be alone with him, my dear, I must be with you," says she, coming down to her daughter.

"Of course, mamma, I must be with you," says obedient Elizabeth.

"And there is the pink room, and the blue room, and the yellow room for the boys—and the chintz boudoir for me—I can put them all away, oh, so comfortably!"

"I can come and share Louisa's room, mamma," says Bessy. "It will not be proper for me to stay here at all—until afterwards, you know. Or I can go to my uncle at Saint Boniface. Don't you think that will be best, eh, Frederick?"

"Whatever you wish, my dear Lizzie!" says Lovel.

"And I daresay there will be some little alterations made in the house. You talked, you know, of painting, Mr. Lovel: and the children can go to their grandmamma Bonnington. And on our return when the alterations are made we shall always be delighted to see you, Mr. Batchelor—our kindest old friend. Shall we not, Frederick?"

"Always, always," said Frederick.

"Come, children, come to your teas," calls out Mrs. P. in a resolute voice.

"Dear Pop, I'm not going away—that is, only for a few days dear," says Bessy, kissing the boy; "and you will love me, won't you?"

"All right," says the boy. But Cissy said, when the same appeal was made to her: "I shall love my dear mamma!" and makes her new mother-in-law a very polite curtsey.

"I think you had better put off those men you expect to dinner to-morrow, Fred," I say to Lovel.
"I think I had, Batch," says the gentleman.
"Or you can dine with them at the Club, you know," remarks Elizabeth.
"Yes, Bessy."
"And when the children have had their tea I will go with bamma. My boxes are ready, you know," says arch Bessy.
"And you will stay and dine with Mr. Lovel, won't you, Mr. Batchelor?" asks the lady.

It was the dreariest dinner I ever had in my life. No undertaker could be more gloomy than Bedford, as he served us. We tried to talk politics and literature. We drank too much, purposely. Nothing would do. "Hang me, if I can stand this, Lovel," I said, as we sat mum over our third bottle. "I will go back and sleep in my chambers. I was not a little soft upon her myself, that's the truth. Here's her health, and happiness to both of you, with all my heart." And we drained a great bumper apiece, and I left him. He was very happy I should go.

Bedford stood at the gate, as the little pony carriage came for me in the dusk. "God bless you, sir!" says he. "I can't stand it: I shall go too." And he rubbed his hands over his eyes.

He married Mary Pinhorn, and they have emigrated to Melbourne; whence he sent me, three years ago, an affectionate letter, and a smart gold pin from the diggings.

A month afterwards, a cab might have been seen driving from the Temple, to Hanover Square: and a month and a day after that drive, an advertisement might have been read in the Post and Times:

"Married, on Thursday, 10th, at St. George's, Hanover Square, by the Reverend the Master of Saint Boniface College, Oxbridge, uncle of the bride, Frederick Lovel, Esquire, of Shrublands, Roeampton, to Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the late Captain Montagu Prior, K.S.P."

We may hear of Lovel Married some other day, but here is an end of Lovel the Widower. Valete et plaudite, you good people, who have witnessed the little comedy. Down with the curtain: cover up the boxes: pop out the gas-lights. Ho! cab! take us home, and let us have some tea, and go to bed. Good-night, my little players. We have been merry together, and we part with soft hearts and somewhat rueful countenances, don't we?