able home, full of stuffed birds, and dried plants, and marvellous fishes, and other innocent trophies and triumphs over nature.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

THE tenant of the Manor Farm was a good specimen of his class; a thorough Saxon, ruddy and bright visaged, with an athletic though rather bulky frame, hardened by exposure to the seasons and constant exercise. Although he was the tenant of several hundred acres, he had an eye to the main chance in little things, which is a characteristic of farmers, but he was good-natured and obliging, and while he foraged their pony, furnished their woodyard with logs and faggots, and supplied them from his dairy, he gratuitously performed for the family at the hall many other offices which tended to their comfort and convenience, but which cost him nothing.

Mr. Ferrars liked to have a chat every now and then with Farmer Thornberry, who had a shrewd and idiomatic style of expressing his limited, but in its way complete, experience of men and things, which was amusing and interesting to a man of the world whose knowledge of rural life was mainly derived from grand shooting parties at great houses.

The pride and torment of Farmer Thornberry's life was his only child, Job.

'I gave him the best of educations,' said the farmer; 'he had a much better chance than I had myself, for I do not pretend to be a scholar, and never was; and yet I cannot make head or tail of him. I wish you would speak to him some day, sir. He goes against the land, and yet we have been on it for three generations, and have nothing to complain of; and he is a good farmer, too, is Job, none better; a little too fond of experimenting, but then he is young. But I am very much afraid he will leave me. I think it is this new thing the big-wigs have set up

in London that has put him wrong, for he is always reading their papers'

'And what is that?' said Mr. Ferrars.

'Well, they call themselves the Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge, and Lord Brougham is at the head of it.'

'Ah! he is a dangerous man,' said Mr. Ferrars.

'Do you know, I think he is,' said Farmer Thornberry, very seriously, 'and by this token, he says a knowledge of chemistry is necessary for the cultivation of the soil.'

'Brougham is a man who would say anything,' said Mr. Ferrars, 'and of one thing you may be quite certain, that there is no subject which Lord Brougham knows thoroughly. I have proved that, and if you ever have time some winter evening to read something on the matter, I will lend you a number of the 'Quarterly Review,' which might interest you.'

'I wish you would lend it to Job,' said the farmer.

Mr. Ferrars found Job not so manageable in controversy as his father. His views were peculiar, and his conclusions certain. He had more than a smattering too of political economy, a kind of knowledge which Mr. Ferrars viewed with suspicion; for though he had himself been looked upon as enlightened in this respect in the last years of Lord Liverpool, when Lord Wallace and Mr. Huskisson were astonishing the world, he had relapsed, after the schism of the Tory party, into orthodoxy, and was satisfied that the tenets of the economists were mere theories, or could only be reduced into practice by revolution.

'But it is a pleasant life, that of a farmer,' said Mr. Ferrars to Job.

'Yes, but life should be something more than pleasant,' said Job, who always looked discontented; 'an ox in a pasture has a pleasant life.'

'Well, and why should it not be a profitable one, too?' said Mr. Ferrars.

'I do not see my way to that,' said Job moodily; 'there is not much to be got out of the land at any time, and still less on the terms we hold it.'

'But you are not high-rented!'

'Oh, rent is nothing, if everything else were right, but nothing is right,' said Job. 'In the first place, a farmer is the only trader who has no security for his capital.'

'Ah! you want a lease?'

'I should be very sorry to have a lease like any that I have seen,' replied Job. 'We had one once in our family, and we keep it as a curiosity. It is ten skins long, and more tyrannical nonsense was never engrossed by man.'

'But your family, I believe, has been on this estate for generations now,' said Mr. Ferrars, 'and they have done well.'

'They have done about as well as their stock. They have existed,' said Job; 'nothing more.'

'Your father always gives me quite the idea of a prosperous man,' said Mr. Ferrars.

'Whether he be or not I am sure I cannot say,' said Job; 'for as neither he nor any of his predecessors ever kept any accounts, it is rather difficult to ascertain their exact condition. So long as he has money enough in his pocket to pay his labourers and buy a little stock, my father, like every British farmer, is content. The fact is, he is a serf as much as his men, and until we get rid of feudalism he will remain so.'

'These are strong opinions,' said Mr. Ferrars, drawing himself up, and looking a little cold.

'Yes, but they will make their way,' said Job. 'So far as I myself am concerned, I do not much care what happens to the land, for I do not mean to remain on it; but I care for the country. For the sake of the country I should like to see the whole thing upset.'

'What thing?' asked Mr. Ferrars.

'Feudalism,' said Job. 'I should like to see this estate managed on the same principles as they do their great establishments in the north of England. Instead of feudalism, I would substitute the commercial principle. I would have long leases without covenants; no useless timber, and no game.'

'Why, you would destroy the country,' said Mr. Ferrars.

'We owe everything to the large towns,' said Job.

'The people in the large towns are miserable,' said Mr. Ferrars.

'They cannot be more miserable than the people in the country,' said Job.

'Their wretchedness is notorious,' said Mr. Ferrars. 'Look at their riots.'

'Well, we had Swing in the country only two or three years ago.'

Mr. Ferrars looked sad. The reminiscence was too near and too fatal. After a pause he said with an air of decision, and as if imparting a state secret, 'If it were not for the agricultural districts, the King's army could not be recruited.'

'Well, that would not break my heart,' said Job.

'Why, my good fellow, you are a Radical!'

'They may call me what they like,' said Job; 'but it will not alter matters. However, I am going among the Radicals soon, and then I shall know what they are.'

'And can you leave your truly respectable parent?' said Mr. Ferrars rather solemnly, for he remembered his promise to Farmer Thornberry to speak seriously to his son.

'Oh! my respectable parent will do very well without me, sir. Only let him be able to drive into Bamford on market day, and get two or three linendrapers to take their hats off to him, and he will be happy enough, and always ready to die for our glorious Constitution.'

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## CHAPTER XIV.

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-TWO, the darkest and most distressing year in the life of Mr. Ferrars, closed in comparative calm and apparent content. He was himself greatly altered, both in manner and appearance. He was kind and gentle, but

he was silent, and rarely smiled. His hair was grizzled, and he began to stoop. But he was always employed, and was interested in his labours.

His sanguine wife bore up against their misfortunes with far more animation. She was at first amused with her new life, and when she was accustomed to it, she found a never-failing resource in her conviction of a coming reaction. Mrs. Ferrars possessed most feminine qualities, and many of them in excess. She could not reason, but her intuition was remarkable. She was of opinion that 'these people never could go on,' and that they must necessarily be succeeded by William and his friends. In vain her husband, when she pressed her views and convictions on him, would shake his head over the unprecedented majority of the government, and sigh while he acknowledged that the Tories absolutely did not now command one-fifth of the House of Commons; his shakes and sighs were equally disregarded by her, and she persisted in her dreams of riding upon elephants.

After all Mrs. Ferrars was right. There is nothing more remarkable in political history than the sudden break-up of the Whig party after their successful revolution of 1832. It is one of the most striking instances on record of all the elements of political power being useless without a commanding individual will. During the second year of their exile in the Berkshire hills, affairs looked so black that it seemed no change could occur except further and more calamitous revolution. Zenobia went to Vienna that she might breathe the atmosphere of law and order, and hinted to Mrs. Ferrars that probably she should never return—at least not until Parliament met, when she trusted the House of Lords, if they were not abolished in the interval, would save the country. And yet at the commencement of the following year an old colleague of Mr. Ferrars apprised him, in the darkest and the deepest confidence, that 'there was a screw loose,' and he must 'look out for squalls.'

In the meantime Mr. Ferrars increased and established his

claims on his party, if they ever did rally, by his masterly articles in their great Review, which circumstances favoured, and which kept up that increasing feeling of terror and despair which then was deemed necessary to the advancement of Conservative opinions.

At home a year and more had elapsed without change. The occasional appearance of Nigel Penruddock was the only event. It was to all a pleasing, and to some of the family a deeply interesting, one. Nigel, though a student and devoted to the holy profession for which he was destined, was also a sportsman. His Christianity was muscular, and Endymion, to whom he had taken a fancy, became the companion of his pastimes. All the shooting of the estate was at Nigel's command, but as there were no keepers, it was of course very rough work. Still it was a novel and animating life for Endymion; and though the sport was slight, the pursuit was keen. Then Nigel was a great fisherman, and here their efforts had a surer return, for they dwelt in a land of trout streams, and in their vicinity was a not inconsiderable river. It was an adventure of delight to pursue some of these streams to their source, throwing, as they rambled on, the fly in the rippling waters. Myra, too, took some pleasure in these fishing expeditions, carrying their luncheon and a German book in her wallet, and sitting quietly on the bank for hours, when they had fixed upon some favoured pool for a prolonged campaign.

Every time that Nigel returned home, a difference, and a striking difference, was observed in him. His person, of course, became more manly, his manner more assured, his dress more modish. It was impossible to deny that he was extremely good-looking, interesting in his discourse, and distinguished in his appearance. Endymion idolised him. Nigel was his model. He imitated his manner, caught the tone of his voice, and began to give opinions on subjects, sacred and profane.

After a hard morning's march, one day, as they were lolling on the turf amid the old beeches and the juniper, Nigel said—

'What does Mr. Ferrars mean you to be, Endymion?'

'I do not know,' said Endymion, looking perplexed.

'But I suppose you are to be something?'

'Yes; I suppose I must be something; because papa has lost his fortune.'

'And what would you like to be?'

'I never thought about it,' said Endymion.

'In my opinion there is only one thing for a man to be in this age,' said Nigel peremptorily; 'he should go into the Church.'

'The Church!' said Endymion.

'There will soon be nothing else left,' said Nigel. 'The Church must last for ever. It is built upon a rock. It was founded by God; all other governments have been founded by men. When they are destroyed, and the process of destruction seems rapid, there will be nothing left to govern mankind except the Church.'

'Indeed!' said Endymion; 'papa is very much in favour of the Church, and, I know, is writing something about it.'

'Yes, but Mr. Ferrars is an Erastian,' said Nigel; 'you need not tell him I said so, but he is one. He wants the Church to be the servant of the State, and all that sort of thing, but that will not do any longer. This destruction of the Irish bishoprics has brought affairs to a crisis. No human power has the right to destroy a bishopric. It is a divinely-ordained office, and when a diocese is once established, it is eternal.'

'I see,' said Endymion, much interested.

'I wish,' continued Nigel, 'you were two or three years older, and Mr. Ferrars could send you to Oxford. That is the place to understand these things, and they will soon be the only things to understand. The rector knows nothing about them. My father is thoroughly high and dry, and has not the slightest idea of Church principles.'

'Indeed!' said Endymion.

'It is quite a new set even at Oxford,' continued Nigel; 'but their principles are as old as the Apostles, and come down from them, straight.'

'That is a long time ago,' said Endymion.

'I have a great fancy,' continued Nigel, without apparently attending to him, 'to give you a thorough Church education. It would be the making of you. You would then have a purpose in life, and never be in doubt or perplexity on any subject. We ought to move heaven and earth to induce Mr. Ferrars to send you to Oxford.'

'I will speak to Myra about it,' said Endymion.

'I said something of this to your sister the other day,' said Nigel, 'but I fear she is terribly Erastian. However, I will give you something to read. It is not very long, but you can read it at your leisure, and then we will talk over it afterwards, and perhaps I may give you something else.'

Endymion did not fail to give a report of this conversation and similar ones to his sister, for he was in the habit of telling her everything. She listened with attention, but not with interest, to his story. Her expression was kind, but hardly serious. Her wondrous eyes gave him a glance of blended mockery and affection. 'Dear darling,' she said, 'if you are to be a clergyman, I should like you to be a cardinal.'

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## CHAPTER XV.

THE dark deep hints that had reached Mr. Ferrars at the beginning of 1834 were the harbingers of startling events. In the spring it began to be rumoured among the initiated, that the mighty Reform Cabinet with its colossal majority, and its testimonial goblets of gold, raised by the penny subscriptions of a grateful people, was in convulsions, and before the month of July had elapsed Lord Grey had resigned, under circumstances which exhibited the entire demoralisation of his party. Except Zenobia, every one was of opinion that the King acted wisely in entrusting the reconstruction of the Whig ministry to his late Secretary of State, Lord Melbourne. Nevertheless, it could no longer be concealed, nay, it was invariably admitted, that the

political situation had been largely and most unexpectedly changed, and that there was a prospect, dim, perhaps, yet not undefinable, of the conduct of public affairs again falling to the alternate management of two rival constitutional parties.

Zenobia was so full of hope, and almost of triumph, that she induced her lord in the autumn to assemble their political friends at one of his great seats, and Mr. and Mrs. Ferrars were urgently invited to join the party. But, after some hesitation, they declined this proposal. Had Mr. Ferrars been as sanguine as his wife, he would perhaps have overcome his strong disinclination to re-enter the world, but though no longer despairing of a Tory revival, he was of opinion that a considerable period, even several years, must elapse before its occurrence. Strange to say, he found no difficulty in following his own humour through any contrary disposition on the part of Mrs. Ferrars. With all her ambition and passionate love of society, she was unwilling to return to that stage, where she once had blazed, in a subdued and almost subordinate position. In fact, it was an affair of the wardrobe. The queen of costumes, whose fanciful and gorgeous attire even Zenobia was wont to praise, could not endure a reappearance in old dresses. 'I do not so much care about my jewels, William,' she said to her husband, 'but one must have new dresses.'

It was a still mild day in November, a month which in the country, and especially on the light soils, has many charms, and the whole Ferrars family were returning home after an afternoon ramble on the chase. The leaf had changed but had not fallen, and the vast spiral masses of the dark green juniper effectively contrasted with the rich brown foliage of the beech, varied occasionally by the scarlet leaves of the wild cherry tree, that always mingles with these woods. Around the house were some lime trees of large size, and at this period of the year their foliage, still perfect, was literally quite golden. They seemed like trees in some fairy tale of imprisoned princesses or wandering cavaliers, and such they would remain, until the fatal night that brings the first frost.

'There is a parcel from London,' said the servant to Mr. Ferrars, as they entered the house. 'It is on your desk.'

A parcel from London was one of the great events of their life. What could it be? Perhaps some proofs, probably some books. Mr. Ferrars entered his room alone. It was a very small brown paper parcel, evidently not books. He opened it hastily, and disencumbered its contents of several coverings. The contents took the form of a letter—a single letter.

The handwriting was recognised, and he read the letter with an agitated countenance, and then he opened the door of his room, and called loudly for his wife, who was by his side in a few moments.

'A letter, my love, from Barron,' he cried. 'The King has dismissed Lord Melbourne and sent for the Duke of Wellington, who has accepted the conduct of affairs.'

'You must go to town directly,' said his wife 'He offered you the Cabinet in 1832. No person has such a strong claim on him as you have.'

'It does not appear that he is exactly prime minister,' said Mr. Ferrars, looking again at the letter. 'They have sent for Peel, who is at Rome, but the Duke is to conduct the government till he arrives.'

'You must go to town immediately,' repeated Mrs. Ferrars. 'There is not a moment to be lost. Send down to the Horse Shoe and secure an inside place in the Salisbury coach. It reaches this place at nine to-morrow morning. I will have everything ready. You must take a portmanteau and a carpet-bag. I wonder if you could get a bedroom at the Rodneys'. It would be so nice to be among old friends; they must feel for you. And then it will be near the Carlton, which is a great thing. I wonder how he will form his cabinet. What a pity he is not here!'

'It is a wonderful event, but the difficulties must be immense, observed Ferrars.

'Oh! you always see difficulties. I see none. The King is with us, the country is disgusted. It is what I always said would be; the reaction is complete.'

'Well, we had better now go and tell the children,' said Ferrars. 'I leave you all here for the first time,' and he seemed to sigh.

'Well, I hope we shall soon join you,' said Mrs. Ferrars. 'It is the very best time for hiring a house. What I have set my heart upon is the Green Park. It will be near your office and not too near. I am sure I could not live again in a street.'

The children were informed that public events of importance had occurred, that the King had changed his ministry, and that papa must go up to town immediately and see the Duke of Wellington. The eyes of Mrs. Ferrars danced with excitement as she communicated to them all this intelligence, and much more, with a volubility in which of late years she had rarely indulged. Mr. Ferrars looked grave and said little. Then he patted Endymion on the head, and kissed Myra, who returned his embrace with a warmth unusual with her.

The whole household soon became in a state of bustle with the preparations for the early departure of Mr. Ferrars. It seemed difficult to comprehend how filling a portmanteau and a carpet-bag could induce such excited and continuous exertions. But then there was so much to remember, and then there was always something forgotten. Mrs. Ferrars was in her bedroom surrounded by all her maids; Mr. Ferrars was in his study looking out some papers which it was necessary to take with him. The children were alone.

'I wonder if we shall be restored to our greatness,' said Myra to Endymion.

'Well, I shall be sorry to leave the old place; I have been happy here.'

'I have not,' said Myra; 'and I do not think I could have borne this life had it not been for you.'

'It will be a wonderful change,' said Endymion.

'If it come; I fear papa is not daring enough. However, if we get out of this hole, it will be something.'

Tea-time brought them all together again, but when the meal was over, none of the usual occupations of the evening were pursued; no work, no books, no reading aloud. Mr. Ferrars

was to get up very early, and that was a reason for all retiring soon. And yet neither the husband nor the wife really cared to sleep. Mrs. Ferrars sate by the fire in his dressing-room, speculating on all possible combinations, and infusing into him all her suggestions and all her schemes. She was still prudent, and still would have preferred a great government—India if possible; but had made up her mind that he must accept the cabinet. Considering what had occurred in 1832, she thought he was bound in honour to do so. Her husband listened rather than conversed, and seemed lost in thought. At last he rose, and, embracing her with much affection, said, 'You forget I am to rise with the lark. I shall write to you every day. Best and dearest of women, you have always been right, and all my good fortune has come from you.'

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## CHAPTER XVI.

It was a very tedious journey, and it took the whole day to accomplish a distance which a rapid express train now can achieve in an hour. The coach carried six inside passengers, and they had to dine on the road. All the passengers were strangers to Mr. Ferrars, and he was by them unknown; one of them purchased, though with difficulty, a second edition of the 'Times' as they approached London, and favoured his fellow-travellers with the news of the change of ministry. There was much excitement, and the purchaser of the paper gave it as his opinion, 'that it was an intrigue of the Court and the Tories, and would never do.' Another modestly intimated that he thought there was a decided reaction. A third announced that England would never submit to be governed by O'Connell.

As the gloom of evening descended, Mr. Ferrars felt depressed. Though his life at Hurstley had been pensive and melancholy, he felt now the charm and the want of that sweet domestic distraction which had often prevented his mind from over-brooding, and had softened life by sympathy in little things.

Nor was it without emotion that he found himself again in London, that proud city where once he had himself been so proud. The streets were lighted, and seemed swarming with an infinite population, and the coach finally stopped at a great inn in the Strand, where Mr. Ferrars thought it prudent to secure accommodation for the night. It was too late to look after the Rodneys, but in deference to the strict injunction of Mrs. Ferrars, he paid them a visit next morning on his way to his political chief.

In the days of the great modistes, when an English lady might absolutely be dressed in London, the most celebrated mantua-maker in that city was Madame Euphrosyne. She was as fascinating as she was fashionable. She was so graceful, her manners were so pretty, so natural, and so insinuating! She took so lively an interest in her clients—her very heart was in their good looks. She was a great favourite of Mrs. Ferrars, and that lady of Madame Euphrosyne. She assured Mrs. Ferrars that she was prouder of dressing Mrs. Ferrars than all the other fine ladies in London together, and Mrs. Ferrars believed her. Unfortunately, while in the way of making a large fortune, Madame Euphrosyne, who was romantic, fell in love with, and married, a very handsome and worthless husband, whose good looks had obtained for him a position in the company of Drury Lane Theatre, then a place of refined resort, which his abilities did not justify. After pillaging and plundering his wife for many years, he finally involved her in such engagements, that she had to take refuge in the Bankruptcy Court. Her business was ruined, and her spirit was broken, and she died shortly after of adversity and chagrin. Her daughter Sylvia was then eighteen, and had inherited with the grace of her mother the beauty of her less reputable parent. Her figure was slight and undulating, and she was always exquisitely dressed. A brilliant complexion set off to advantage her delicate features, which, though serene, were not devoid of a certain expression of archness. Her white hands were delicate, her light eyes inclined to merriment, and her nose quite a gem, though a little turned up.

After their ruin, her profligate father told her that her face was her fortune, and that she must provide for herself, in which she would find no difficulty. But Sylvia, though she had never enjoyed the advantage of any training, moral or religious, had no bad impulses even if she had no good ones, was of a rather cold character, and extremely prudent. She recoiled from the life of riot, and disorder, and irregularity, in which she had unwittingly passed her days, and which had terminated so tragically, and she resolved to make an effort to secure for herself a different career. She had heard that Mrs. Ferrars was in want of an attendant, and she determined to apply for the post. As one of the chief customers of her mother, Sylvia had been in the frequent habit of waiting on that lady, with whom she had become a favourite. She was so pretty, and the only person who could fit Mrs. Ferrars. Her appeal, therefore, was not in vain; it was more than successful. Mrs. Ferrars was attracted by Sylvia. Mrs. Ferrars was magnificent, generous, and she liked to be a patroness and to be surrounded by favourites. She determined that Sylvia should not sink into a menial position; she adopted her as a humble friend, and one who every day became more regarded by her. Sylvia arranged her invitations to her receptions, a task which required finish and precision; sometimes wrote her notes. She spoke and wrote French, too, and that was useful, was a musician, and had a pretty voice. Above all, she was a first-rate counsellor in costume; and so, looking also after Mrs. Ferrars' dogs and birds, she became almost one of the family; dined with them often when they were alone, and was frequently Mrs. Ferrars' companion in her carriage.

Sylvia, though not by nature impulsive, really adored her patroness. She governed her manners and she modelled her dress on that great original, and, next to Mrs. Ferrars, Sylvia in time became nearly the finest lady in London. There was, indeed, much in Mrs. Ferrars to captivate a person like Sylvia. Mrs. Ferrars was beautiful, fashionable, gorgeous, wonderfully expensive, and, where her taste was pleased, profusely generous. Her winning manner was not less irresistible because it was

sometimes uncertain, and she had the art of being intimate without being familiar.

When the crash came, Sylvia was really broken-hearted, or believed she was, and implored that she might attend the deposed sovereigns into exile; but that was impossible, however anxious they might be as to the future of their favourite. Her destiny was sooner decided than they could have anticipated. There was a member of the household, or rather family, in Hill Street, who bore almost the same relation to Mr. Ferrars as Sylvia to his wife. This was Mr. Rodney, a remarkably good-looking person, by nature really a little resembling his principal, and completing the resemblance by consummate art. The courtiers of Alexander of Macedon could not study their chief with more devotion, or more sedulously imitate his mien and carriage, than did Mr. Rodney that distinguished individual of whom he was the humble friend, and who he was convinced was destined to be Prime Minister of England. Mr. Rodney was the son of the office-keeper of old Mr. Ferrars, and it was the ambition of the father that his son, for whom he had secured a sound education, should become a member of the civil service. It had become an apothegm in the Ferrars family that something must be done for Rodney, and whenever the apparent occasion failed, which was not unfrequent, old Mr. Ferrars used always to add, 'Never mind; so long as I live, Rodney shall never want a home.' The object of all this kindness, however, was little distressed by their failures in his preferment. He had implicit faith in the career of his friend and master, and looked forward to the time when it might not be impossible that he himself might find a haven in a commissionership. Recently Mr. Ferrars had been able to confer on him a small post with duties not too engrossing, and which did not prevent his regular presence in Hill Street, where he made himself generally useful.

If there were anything confidential to be accomplished in their domestic life, everything might be trusted to his discretion and entire devotion. He supervised the establishment without

injudiciously interfering with the house-steward, copied secret papers for Mr. Ferrars, and when that gentleman was out of office acted as his private secretary. Mr. Rodney was the most official personage in the ministerial circle. He considered human nature only with reference to office. No one was so intimately acquainted with all the details of the lesser patronage as himself, and his hours of study were passed in the pages of the 'Peerage' and in penetrating the mysteries of the 'Royal Calendar.'

The events of 1832, therefore, to this gentleman were scarcely a less severe blow than to the Ferrars family itself. Indeed, like his chief, he looked upon himself as the victim of a revolution. Mr. Rodney had always been an admirer of Sylvia, but no more. He had accompanied her to the theatre, and had attended her to the park, but this was quite understood on both sides only to be gallantry; both, perhaps, in their prosperity, with respect to the serious step of life, had indulged in higher dreams. But the sympathy of sorrow is stronger than the sympathy of prosperity. In the darkness of their lives, each required comfort: he murmured some accents of tender solace, and Sylvia agreed to become Mrs. Rodney.

When they considered their position, the prospect was not free from anxiety. To marry and then separate is, where there is affection, trying. His income would secure them little more than a roof, but how to live under that roof was a mystery. For her to become a governess, and for him to become a secretary, and to meet only on an occasional Sunday, was a sorry lot. And yet both possessed accomplishments or acquirements which ought in some degree to be productive. Rodney had a friend, and he determined to consult him.

That friend was no common person; he was Mr. Vigo, by birth a Yorkshireman, and gifted with all the attributes, physical and intellectual, of that celebrated race. At present he was the most fashionable tailor in London, and one whom many persons consulted. Besides being consummate in his art, Mr. Vigo had the reputation of being a man of singularly good judg-

ment. He was one who obtained influence over all with whom he came in contact, and as his business placed him in contact with various classes, but especially with the class socially most distinguished, his influence was great. The golden youth who repaired to his counters came there not merely to obtain raiment of the best material and the most perfect cut, but to see and talk with Mr. Vigo, and to ask his opinion on various points. There was a spacious room where, if they liked, they might smoke a cigar, and 'Vigo's cigars' were something which no one could rival. If they liked to take a glass of hock with their tobacco, there was a bottle ready from the cellars of Johannisberg. Mr. Vigo's stable was almost as famous as its master; he drove the finest horses in London, and rode the best hunters in the Vale of Aylesbury. With all this, his manners were exactly what they should be. He was neither pretentious nor servile, but simple, and with becoming respect for others and for himself. He never took a liberty with any one, and such treatment, as is generally the case, was reciprocal.

Mr. Vigo was much attached to Mr. Rodney, and was proud of his intimate acquaintance with him. He wanted a friend not of his own order, for that would not increase or improve his ideas, but one conversant with the habits and feelings of a superior class, and yet he did not want a fine gentleman for an intimate, who would have been either an insolent patron or a designing parasite. Rodney had relations with the aristocracy, with the political world, and could feel the pulse of public life. His appearance was engaging, his manners gentle if not gentlemanlike, and he had a temper never disturbed. This is a quality highly appreciated by men of energy and fire, who may happen not to have a complete self-control.

When Rodney detailed to his friend the catastrophe that had occurred and all its sad consequences, Mr. Vigo heard him in silence, occasionally nodding his head in sympathy or approbation, or scrutinising a statement with his keen hazel eye. When his visitor had finished, he said—

'When there has been a crash, there is nothing like a change

of scene. I propose that you and Mrs. Rodney should come and stay with me a week at my house at Barnes, and there a good many things may occur to us.'

And so, towards the end of the week, when the Rodneys had exhausted their whole programme of projects, against every one of which there seemed some invincible objection, their host said, 'You know I rather speculate in houses. I bought one last year in Warwick Street. It is a large roomy house in a quiet situation, though in a bustling quarter, just where members of parliament would like to lodge. I have put it in thorough repair. What I propose is that you should live there, let the first and second floors—they are equally good—and live on the ground floor yourselves, which is amply convenient. We will not talk about rent till the year is over and we see how it answers. The house is unfurnished, but that is nothing. I will introduce you to a friend of mine who will furnish it for you solidly and handsomely, you paying a percentage on the amount expended. He will want a guarantee, but of course I will be that. It is an experiment, but try it. Try it for a year; at any rate you will be a householder, and you will have the opportunity of thinking of something else.'

Hitherto the Rodneys had been successful in their enterprise, and the soundness of Mr. Vigo's advice had been proved. Their house was full, and of the best tenants. Their first floor was taken by a distinguished M.P., a county member of repute whom Mr. Rodney had known before the 'revolution,' and who was so pleased with his quarters, and the comfort and refinement of all about him, that to ensure their constant enjoyment he became a yearly tenant. Their second floor, which was nearly as good as their first, was inhabited by a young gentleman of fashion, who took them originally only by the week, and who was always going to give them up, but never did. The weekly lodger went to Paris, and he went to German baths, and he went to country houses, and he was frequently a long time away, but he never gave up his lodgings. When therefore Mr. Ferrars called in Warwick Street, the truth is the house

was full and there was no vacant room for him. But this the Rodneys would not admit. Though they were worldly people, and it seemed impossible that anything more could be gained from the ruined house of Hurstley, they had, like many other people, a superstition, and their superstition was an adoration of the family of Ferrars. The sight of their former master, who, had it not been for the revolution, might have been Prime Minister of England, and the recollection of their former mistress and all her splendour, and all the rich dresses which she used to give so profusely to her dependent, quite overwhelmed them. Without consultation this sympathising couple leapt to the same conclusion. They assured Mr. Ferrars they could accommodate him, and that he should find everything prepared for him when he called again, and they resigned to him, without acknowledging it, their own commodious and well-furnished chamber, which Mrs. Rodney prepared for him with the utmost solicitude, arranging his writing-table and materials as he used to have them in Hill Street, and showing by a variety of modes she remembered all his ways.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

After securing his room in Warwick Street, Mr. Ferrars called on his political chiefs. Though engrossed with affairs, the moment his card was exhibited he was seen, cordially welcomed, and addressed in confidence. Not only were his claims acknowledged without being preferred, but an evidently earnest hope was expressed that they might be fully satisfied. No one had suffered more for the party and no one had worked harder or more effectively for it. But at present nothing could be done and nothing more could be said. All depended on Peel. Until he arrived nothing could be arranged. Their duties were limited to provisionally administering the affairs of the country until his appearance.

It was many days, even weeks, before that event could

happen. The messenger would travel to Rome night and day, but it was calculated that nearly three weeks must elapse before his return. Mr. Ferrars then went to the Carlton Club, which he had assisted in forming three or four years before, and had established in a house of modern dimensions in Charles Street, St. James. It was called then the Charles Street gang, and none but the thoroughgoing cared to belong to it. Now he found it flourishing in a magnificent mansion on Carlton Terrace, while in very sight of its windows, on a plot of ground in Pall Mall, a palace was rising to receive it. It counted already fifteen hundred members, who had been selected by an omniscient and scrutinising committee, solely with reference to their local influence throughout the country, and the books were overflowing with impatient candidates of rank, and wealth, and power.

Three years ago Ferrars had been one of the leading spirits of this great confederacy, and now he entered the superb chamber, and it seemed to him that he did not recognise a human being. Yet it was full to overflowing, and excitement and anxiety and bustle were impressed on every countenance. If he had heard some of the whispers and remarks, as he entered and moved about, his self-complacency would scarcely have been gratified.

'Who is that?' inquired a young M.P. of a brother senator not much more experienced.

'Have not the remotest idea; never saw him before. Barron is speaking to him; he will tell us. I say, Barron, who is your friend?'

'That is Ferrars!'

'Ferrars! who is he?'

'One of our best men. If all our fellows had fought like him against the Reform Bill, that infernal measure would never have been carried.'

'Oh! ah! I remember something now,' said the young M.P., 'but anything that happened before the election of '32 I look upon as an old almanack.'

However, notwithstanding the first and painful impression of strangers and strangeness, when a little time had elapsed Ferrars found many friends, and among the most distinguished present. Nothing could be more hearty than their greeting, and he had not been in the room half an hour before he had accepted an invitation to dine that very day with Lord Pomeroy.

It was a large and rather miscellaneous party, but all of the right kidney. Some men who had been cabinet ministers, and some who expected to be; several occupiers in old days of the secondary offices; both the whips, one noisy and the other mysterious; several lawyers of repute who must be brought into parliament, and some young men who had distinguished themselves in the reformed house and whom Ferrars had never seen before. 'It is like old days,' said the husband of Zenobia to Ferrars, who sate next to him; 'I hope it will float, but we shall know nothing till Peel comes.'

'He will have difficulty with his cabinet so far as the House of Commons is concerned,' said an old privy councillor. 'They must have seats, and his choice is very limited.'

'He will dissolve,' said the husband of Zenobia. 'He must.'

'Wheugh!' said the privy councillor, and he shrugged his shoulders.

'The old story will not do,' said the husband of Zenobia. 'We must have new blood. Peel must reconstruct on a broad basis.'

'Well, they say there is no lack of converts,' said the old privy councillor.

All this, and much more that he heard, made Ferrars ponder, and anxiously. No cabinet without parliament. It was but reasonable. A dissolution was therefore in his interest. And yet, what a prospect! A considerable expenditure, and yet with a considerable expenditure a doubtful result. Then reconstruction on a broad basis—what did that mean? Neither more nor less than rival candidates for office. There was no lack of converts. He dare say not. A great deal had developed since his exile at Hurstley—things which are not learned by newspapers, or even private correspondence. He spoke to Barron

after dinner. He had reason to believe Barron was his friend. Barron could give no opinion about dissolution; all depended on Peel. But they were acting, and had been acting for some time, as if a dissolution were on the cards. Ferrars had better call upon him to-morrow, and go over the list, and see what could be done for him. He had every claim.

The man with every claim called on Barron on the morrow, and saw his secret list, and listened to all his secret prospects and secret plans. There was more than one manufacturing town where there was an opening; decided reaction, and a genuine Conservative feeling. Barron had no doubt that, although a man might not get in the first time he stood, he would ultimately. Ultimately was not a word which suited Mr. Ferrars. There were several old boroughs where the freemen still outnumbered the ten-pounders, and where the prospects were more encouraging; but the expense was equal to the goodness of the chance, and although Ferrars had every claim, and would no doubt be assisted, still one could not shut one's eyes to the fact that the personal expenditure must be considerable. The agricultural boroughs must be fought, at least this time, by local men. Something might be done with an Irish borough; expense, comparatively speaking inconsiderable, but the politics deeply Orange.

Gloom settled on the countenance of this spoiled child of politics, who had always sate for a close borough, and who recoiled from a contest like a woman, when he pictured to himself the struggle and exertion and personal suffering he would have to encounter and endure, and then with no certainty of success. The trained statesman, who had anticipated the mass of his party on Catholic emancipation, to become an Orange candidate! It was worse than making speeches to ten-pounders and canvassing freemen!

'I knew things were difficult,' said Ferrars; 'but I was in hopes that there were yet some seats that we might command.'

'No doubt there are,' said Mr. Barron; 'but they are few, and they are occupied—at least at present. But, after all, a

thousand things may turn up, and you may consider nothing definitively arranged till Sir Robert arrives. The great thing is to be on the spot.'

Ferrars wrote to his wife daily, and kept her minutely acquainted with the course of affairs. She agreed with Barron that the great thing was to be on the spot. She felt sure that something would turn up. She was convinced that Sir Robert would send for him, offer him the cabinet, and at the same time provide him with a seat. Her own inclination was still in favour of a great colonial or foreign appointment. She still hankered after India; but if the cabinet were offered, as was certain, she did not consider that William, as a man of honour, could refuse to accept the trust and share the peril.

So Ferrars remained in London under the roof of the Rodneys. The feverish days passed in the excitement of political life in all its manifold forms, grave council and light gossip, dinners with only one subject of conversation, and that never palling, and at last, even evenings spent again under the roof of Zenobia, who, the instant her winter apartments were ready to receive the world, had hurried up to London and raised her standard in St. James' Square. 'It was like old days,' as her husband had said to Ferrars when they met after a long separation.

Was it like old days? he thought to himself when he was alone. Old days, when the present had no care, and the future was all hope; when he was proud, and justly proud, of the public position he had achieved, and of all the splendid and felicitous circumstances of life that had clustered round him. He thought of those away, and with whom during the last three years he had so continuously and intimately lived. And his hired home that once had been associated only in his mind with exile, imprisonment, misfortune, almost disgrace, became hallowed by affection, and in the agony of the suspense which now involved him, and to encounter which he began to think his diminished nerve unequal, he would have bargained for the rest of his life to pass undisturbed in that sweet solitude, in the delights of study and the tranquillity of domestic love.

A little not unamiable weakness this, but it passed off in the morning like a dream, when Mr. Ferrars heard that Sir Robert had arrived.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

It was a dark December night when Mr. Ferrars returned to Hurstley. His wife, accompanied by the gardener with a lantern, met him on the green. She embraced him, and whispered, 'Is it very bad, love? I fear you have softened it to me?'

'By no means bad, and I told you the truth: not all, for had I, my letter would have been too late. He said nothing about the cabinet, but offered me a high post in his government, provided I could secure my seat. That was impossible. During the month I was in town I had realised that. I thought it best, therefore, at once to try the other tack, and nothing could be more satisfactory.'

'Did you say anything about India?' she said in a very low voice.

'I did not. He is an honourable man, but he is cold, and my manner is not distinguished for *abandon*. I thought it best to speak generally, and leave it to him. He acknowledged my claim, and my fitness for such posts, and said if his government lasted it would gratify him to meet my wishes. Barron says the government will last. They will have a majority, and if Stanley and Graham had joined them, they would have had not an inconsiderable one. But in that case I should probably not have had the cabinet, if indeed he meant to offer it to me now.'

'Of course he did,' said his wife. 'Who has such claims as you have? Well, now we must hope and watch. Look cheerful to the children, for they have been very anxious.'

With this hint the meeting was not unhappy, and the evening passed with amusement and interest. Endymion embraced his father with warmth, and Myra kissed him on both cheeks. Mr. Ferrars had a great deal of gossip which

interested his wife, and to a certain degree his children. The latter of course remembered Zenobia, and her sayings and doings were always amusing. There were anecdotes, too, of illustrious persons which always interest, especially when in the personal experience of those with whom we are intimately connected. What the Duke, or Sir Robert, or Lord Lyndhurst said to papa seemed doubly wiser or brighter than if it had been said to a third person. Their relations with the world of power, and fashion, and fame, seemed not to be extinct, at least reviving from their torpid condition. Mr. Ferrars had also brought a German book for Myra; and 'as for you, Endymion,' he said, 'I have been much more successful for you than for your father, though I hope I shall not have myself in the long run to complain. Our friends are faithful to us, and I have got you put down on the private list for a clerkship both in the Foreign Office and the Treasury. They are the two best things, and you will have one of the first vacancies that will occur in either department. I know your mother wishes you to be in the Foreign Office. Let it be so if it come. I confess, myself, remembering your grandfather's career, I have always a weakness for the Treasury, but so long as I see you well planted in Whitehall, I shall be content. Let me see, you will be sixteen in March. I could have wished you to wait another year, but we must be ready when the opening occurs.'

The general election in 1834–5, though it restored the balance of parties, did not secure to Sir Robert Peel a majority, and the anxiety of the family at Hurstley was proportionate to the occasion. Barron was always sanguine, but the vote on the Speakership could not but alarm them. Barron said it did not signify, and that Sir Robert had resolved to go on and had confidence in his measures. His measures were excellent, and Sir Robert never displayed more resource, more energy, and more skill, than he did in the spring of 1835. But knowledge of human nature was not Sir Robert Peel's strong point, and it argued some deficiency in that respect, to suppose that the fitness of his measures could disarm a vindictive opposition. On the

contrary, they rather whetted their desire of revenge, and they were doubly loth that he should increase his reputation by availing himself of an opportunity which they deemed the Tory party had unfairly acquired.

After the vote on the Speakership, Mr. Ferrars was offered a second-class West Indian government. His wife would not listen to it. If it were Jamaica, the offer might be considered, though it could scarcely be accepted without great sacrifice. The children, for instance, must be left at home. Strange to say, Mr. Ferrars was not disinclined to accept the inferior post. Endymion he looked upon as virtually provided for, and Myra, he thought, might accompany them; if only for a year. But he ultimately yielded, though not without a struggle, to the strong feeling of his wife.

'I do not see why I also should not be left behind,' said Myra to her brother in one of their confidential walks. 'I should like to live in London in lodgings with you.'

The approaching appointment of her brother filled her from the first with the greatest interest. She was always talking of it when they were alone—fancying his future life, and planning how it might be happier and more easy. 'My only joy in life is seeing you,' she sometimes said, 'and yet this separation does not make me unhappy. It seems a chance from heaven for you. I pray every night it may be the Foreign Office.'

The ministry were still sanguine as to their prospects in the month of March, and they deemed that public opinion was rallying round Sir Robert. Perhaps Lord John Russell, who was the leader of the opposition, felt this, in some degree, himself, and he determined to bring affairs to a crisis by notice of a motion respecting the appropriation of the revenues of the Irish Church. Then Barron wrote to Mr. Ferrars that affairs did not look so well, and advised him to come up to town, and take anything that offered. 'It is something,' he remarked, 'to have something to give up. We shall not, I suppose, always be out of office, and they get preferred more easily whose promotion contributes to patronage, even while they claim its exercise.'

The ministry were in a minority on the Irish Church on April 2, the day on which Mr. Ferrars arrived in town. They did not resign, but the attack was to be repeated in another form on the 6th. During the terrible interval Mr. Ferrars made distracted visits to Downing Street, saw secretaries of state, who sympathised with him notwithstanding their own chagrin, and was closeted daily and hourly with under-secretaries, parliamentary and permanent, who really alike wished to serve him. But there was nothing to be had. He was almost meditating taking Sierra Leone, or the Gold Coast, when the resignation of Sir Robert Peel was announced. At the last moment, there being, of course, no vacancy in the Foreign Office, or the Treasury, he obtained from Barron an appointment for Endymion, and so, after having left Hurstley five months before to become Governor-General of India, this man, 'who had claims,' returned to his mortified home with a clerkship for his son in a second-rate government office.

## CHAPTER XIX.

DISAPPOINTMENT and distress, it might be said despair, seemed fast settling again over the devoted roof of Hurstley, after a three years' truce of tranquillity. Even the crushing termination of her worldly hopes was forgotten for the moment by Mrs. Ferrars in her anguish at the prospect of separation from Endymion. Such a catastrophe she had never for a moment contemplated. True it was she had been delighted with the scheme of his entering the Foreign Office, but that was on the assumption that she was to enter office herself, and that, whatever might be the scene of the daily labours of her darling child, her roof should be his home, and her indulgent care always at his command. But that she was absolutely to part with Endymion, and that, at his tender age, he was to be launched alone into the wide world, was an idea that she could not entertain, or even comprehend. Who was to clothe him, and feed him, and

tend him, and save him from being run over, and guide and guard him in all the difficulties and dangers of this mundane existence? It was madness, it was impossible. But Mr. Ferrars, though gentle, was firm. No doubt it was to be wished that the event could have been postponed for a year; but its occurrence, unless all prospect of establishment in life were surrendered, was inevitable, and a slight delay would hardly render the conditions under which it happened less trying. Though Endymion was only sixteen, he was tall and manly beyond his age, and during the latter years of his life, his naturally sweet temper and genial disposition had been schooled in self-discipline and self-sacrifice. He was not to be wholly left to strangers; Mr. Ferrars had spoken to Rodney about receiving him, at least for the present, and steps would be taken that those who presided over his office would be influenced in his favour. The appointment was certainly not equal to what had been originally anticipated; but still the department, though not distinguished, was highly respectable, and there was no reason on earth, if the opportunity offered, that Endymion should not be removed from his present post to one in the higher departments of the state. But if this opening were rejected, what was to be the future of their son? They could not afford to send him to the University, nor did Mr. Ferrars wish him to take refuge in the bosom of the Church. As for the army, they had now no interest to acquire commissions, and if they could succeed so far, they could not make him an allowance, which would permit him to maintain himself as became his rank. The civil service remained, in which his grandfather had been eminent, and in which his own parent, at any rate, though the victim of a revolution, had not disgraced himself. It seemed, under the circumstances, the natural avenue for their child. At least, he thought it ought to be tried. He wished nothing to be settled without the full concurrence of Endymion himself. The matter should be put fairly and clearly before him, 'and for this purpose,' concluded Mr. Ferrars, 'I have just sent for him to my room;' and he retired.

The interview between the father and son was long. When Endymion left the room his countenance was pale, but its expression was firm and determined. He went forth into the garden, and there he saw Myra. 'How long you have been!' she said; 'I have been watching for you. What is settled?'

He took her arm, and in silence led her away into one of the glades. Then he said: 'I have settled to go, and I am resolved, so long as I live, that I will never cost dear papa another shilling. Things here are very bad, quite as bad as you have sometimes fancied. But do not say anything to poor mamma about them.'

Mr. Ferrars resolved that Endymion should go to London immediately, and the preparations for his departure were urgent. Myra did everything. If she had been the head of a family she could not have been more thoughtful or apparently more experienced. If she had a doubt, she stepped over to Mrs. Penruddock and consulted her. As for Mrs. Ferrars, she had become very unwell, and unable to attend to anything. Her occasional interference, fitful and feverish, and without adequate regard to circumstances, only embarrassed them. But, generally speaking, she kept to her own room, and was always weeping.

The last day came. No one pretended not to be serious and grave. Mrs. Ferrars did not appear, but saw Endymion alone. She did not speak, but locked him in her arms for many minutes, and then kissing him on the forehead, and, by a gentle motion, intimating that he should retire, she fell back on her sofa with closed eyes. He was alone for a short time with his father after dinner. Mr. Ferrars said to him: 'I have treated you in this matter as a man, and I have entire confidence in you. Your business in life is to build up again a family which was once honoured.'

Myra was still copying inventories when he returned to the drawing-room. 'These are for myself,' she said, 'so I shall always know what you ought to have. Though you go so early, I shall make your breakfast to-morrow,' and, leaning back on the sofa, she took his hand. 'Things are dark, and I fancy they will be

darker; but brightness will come, somehow or other, to you, darling, for you are born for brightness. You will find friends in life, and they will be women.'

It was nearly three years since Endymion had travelled down to Hurstley by the same coach that was now carrying him to London. Though apparently so uneventful, the period had not been unimportant in the formation, doubtless yet partial, of his character. And all its influences had been beneficial to him. The crust of pride and selfishness with which large prosperity and illimitable indulgence had encased a kind, and far from presumptuous, disposition had been removed; the domestic sentiments in their sweetness and purity had been developed; he had acquired some skill in scholarship and no inconsiderable fund of sound information; and the routine of religious thought had been superseded in his instance by an amount of knowledge and feeling on matters theological, unusual at his time of life. Though apparently not gifted with any dangerous vivacity, or fatal facility of acquisition, his mind seemed clear and painstaking, and distinguished by common sense. He was brave and accurate.

Mr. Rodney was in waiting for him at the inn. He seemed a most distinguished gentleman. A hackney coach carried them to Warwick Street, where he was welcomed by Mrs. Rodney, who was exquisitely dressed. There was also her sister, a girl not older than Endymion, the very image of Mrs. Rodney, except that she was a brunette—a brilliant brunette. This sister bore the romantic name of Imogene, for which she was indebted to her father performing the part of the husband of the heroine in Maturin's tragedy of the 'Castle of St. Aldobrand,' and which, under the inspiration of Kean, had set the town in a blaze about the time of her birth. Tea was awaiting him, and there was a mixture in their several manners of not ungraceful hospitality and the remembrance of past dependence, which was genuine and not uninteresting, though Endymion was yet too inexperienced to observe all this.

Mrs. Rodney talked very much of Endymion's mother; her

wondrous beauty, her more wondrous dresses; the splendour of her fêtes and equipages. As she dilated on the past, she seemed to share its lustre and its triumphs. 'The first of the land were always in attendance on her,' and for Mrs. Rodney's part, she never saw a real horsewoman since her dear lady. Her sister did not speak, but listened with rapt attention to the gorgeous details, occasionally stealing a glance at Endymion—a glance of deep interest, of admiration mingled as it were both with reverence and pity.

Mr. Rodney took up the conversation if his wife paused. He spoke of all the leading statesmen who had been the habitual companions of Mr. Ferrars, and threw out several anecdotes respecting them from personal experience. 'I knew them all,' continued Mr. Rodney, 'I might say intimately;' and then he told his great anecdote, how he had been so fortunate as perhaps even to save the Duke's life during the Reform Bill riots. 'His Grace has never forgotten it, and only the day before yesterday I met him in St. James' Street walking with Mr. Arbuthnot, and he touched his hat to me.'

All this gossip and good nature, and the kind and lively scene, saved Endymion from the inevitable pang, or at least greatly softened it, which accompanies our first separation from home. In due season, Mrs. Rodney observed that she doubted not Mr. Endymion, for so they ever called him, must be wearied with his journey, and would like to retire to his room; and her husband, immediately lighting a candle, prepared to introduce their new lodger to his quarters.

It was a tall house, which had recently been renovated, with a story added to it, and on this story was Endymion's chamber; not absolutely a garret, but a modern substitute for that sort of apartment. 'It is rather high,' said Mr. Rodney, half apologising for the ascent, 'but Mr. Ferrars himself chose the room. We took the liberty of lighting a fire to-night.'

And the cheerful blaze was welcome. It lit up a room clean and not uncomfortable. Feminine solicitude had fashioned a toilette-table for him, and there was a bunch of geraniums in a

blue vase on its sparkling dimity garniture. 'I suppose you have in your bag all that you want at present?' said Mr. Rodney. 'To-morrow we will unpack your trunks and arrange your things in their drawers; and after breakfast, if you please, I will show you your way to Somerset House.'

Somerset House! thought Endymion, as he stood before the fire alone. Is it so near as that? To-morrow, and I am to be at Somerset House! And then he thought of what they were doing at Hurstley—of that terrible parting with his mother, which made him choke—and of his father's last words. And then he thought of Myra, and the tears stole down his cheek. And then he knelt down by his bedside and prayed.

## CHAPTER XX.

Mr. Rodney would have accompanied Endymion to Somerset House under any circumstances, but it so happened that he had reasons of his own for a visit to that celebrated building. He had occasion to see a gentleman who was stationed there. 'Not,' as he added to Endymion, 'that I know many here, but at the Treasury and in Downing Street I have several acquaintances.'

They separated at the door in the great quadrangle which led to the department to which Endymion was attached, and he contrived in due time to deliver to a messenger a letter addressed to his future chief. He was kept some time in a gloomy and almost unfurnished waiting-room, and his thoughts in a desponding mood were gathering round the dear ones who were distant, when he was summoned, and, following the messenger down a passage, was ushered into a lively apartment on which the sun was shining, and which, with its well-lined book-shelves, and tables covered with papers, and bright noisy clock, and general air of habitation and business, contrasted favourably with the room he had just quitted. A good-natured-looking man held out his hand and welcomed him cordially, and said at once, 'I served, Mr. Ferrars, under your grandfather at the Treasury, and

I am glad to see you here.' Then he spoke of the duties which Endymion would have at present to discharge. His labours at first would be somewhat mechanical; they would require only correctness and diligence; but the office was a large one, and promotion not only sure, but sometimes rapid, and as he was so young, he might with attention count on attaining, while yet in the prime of life, a future of very responsible duties and of no inconsiderable emolument. And while he was speaking he rang the bell and commanded the attendance of a clerk, under whose care Endymion was specially placed. This was a young man of pleasant address, who invited Endymion with kindness to accompany him, and leading him through several chambers, some capacious, and all full of clerks seated on high stools and writing at desks, finally ushered him into a smaller chamber where there were not above six or eight at work, and where there was a vacant seat. 'This is your place,' he said, 'and now I will introduce you to your future comrades. This is Mr. Jawett, the greatest Radical of the age, and who, when he is President of the Republic, will, I hope, do a job for his friends here. This is Mr. St. Barbe, who, when the public taste has improved, will be the most popular author of the day. In the meantime he will give you a copy of his novel, which has not sold as it ought to have done, and in which we say he has quizzed all his friends. This is Mr. Seymour Hicks, who, as you must perceive, is a man of fashion.' And so he went on, with what was evidently accustomed raillery. All laughed, and all said something courteous to Endymion, and then after a few minutes they resumed their tasks, Endymion's work being to copy long lists of figures, and routine documents of public accounts.

In the meantime, Mr. St. Barbe was busy in drawing up a public document of a different but important character, and which was conceived something in this fashion :—

'We, the undersigned, highly approving of the personal appearance and manners of our new colleague, are unanimously of opinion that he should be invited to join our symposium to-day at the immortal Joe's.'

This was quietly passed round and signed by all present, and then given to Mr. Trenchard, who, all unconsciously to the copying Endymion, wrote upon it, like a minister of state, 'Approved,' with his initial.

Joe's, more technically known as 'The Blue Posts,' was a celebrated chop-house in Naseby Street, a large, low-ceilinged, wainscoted room, with the floor strewn with sawdust, and a hissing kitchen in the centre, and fitted up with what were called boxes, these being of various sizes, and suitable to the number of the guests requiring them. About this time the fashionable coffee-houses, George's and the Piazza, and even the coffee-rooms of Stevens' or Long's, had begun to feel the injurious competition of the new clubs that of late years had been established; but these, after all, were limited, and, comparatively speaking, exclusive societies. Their influence had not touched the chop-houses, and it required another quarter of a century before their cheerful and hospitable roofs and the old taverns of London, so full, it ever seemed, of merriment and wisdom, yielded to the gradually increasing but irresistible influence of those innumerable associations, which, under classic names, or affecting to be the junior branches of celebrated confederacies, have since secured to the million, at cost price, all the delicacies of the season, and substituted for the zealous energy of immortal JOES the inexorable but frigid discipline of managing committees.

'You are our guest to-day,' said Mr. Trenchard to Endymion. 'Do not be embarrassed. It is a custom with us, but not a ruinous one. We dine off the joint, but the meat is first-rate, and you may have as much as you like, and our tipple is half-and-half. Perhaps you do not know it. Let me drink to your health.'

They ate most heartily; but when their well-earned meal was despatched, their conversation, assisted by a moderate portion of some celebrated toddy, became animated, various, and interesting. Endymion was highly amused; but being a stranger, and the youngest present, his silence was not unbecoming, and

his manner indicated that it was not occasioned by want of sympathy. The talk was very political. They were all what are called Liberals, having all of them received their appointments since the catastrophe of 1830; but the shades in the colour of their opinions were various and strong. Jawett was uncompromising; ruthlessly logical, his principles being clear, he was for what he called 'carrying them out' to their just conclusions. Trenchard, on the contrary, thought everything ought to be compromise, and that a public man ceased to be practical the moment he was logical. St. Barbe believed that literature and the arts, and intellect generally, had as little to hope for from one party as from the other; while Seymour Hicks was of opinion that the Tories never would rally, owing to their deficiency in social influences. Seymour Hicks sometimes got an invitation to a ministerial soirée.

The vote of the House of Commons in favour of an appropriation of the surplus revenues of the Irish Church to the purposes of secular education—a vote which had just changed the government and expelled the Tories—was much discussed.. Jawett denounced it as a miserable subterfuge, but with a mildness of manner and a mincing expression, which amusingly contrasted with the violence of his principles and the strength of his language.

'The whole of the revenues of the Protestant Church should be at once appropriated to secular education, or to some other purpose of general utility,' he said. 'And it must come to this.'

Trenchard thought the ministry had gone as far in this matter as they well could, and Seymour Hicks remarked that any government which systematically attacked the Church would have 'society' against it. Endymion, who felt very nervous, but who on Church questions had strong convictions, ventured to ask why the Church should be deprived of its property.

'In the case of Ireland,' replied Jawett, quite in a tone of conciliatory condescension, 'because it does not fulfil the purpose for which it was endowed. It has got the property of the

nation, and it is not the Church of the people. But I go further than that. I would disendow every Church. They are not productive institutions. There is no reason why they should exist. There is no use in them.'

'No use in the Church!' said Endymion, reddening; but Mr. Trenchard, who had tact, here interfered, and said, 'I told you our friend Jawett was a great Radical; but he is in a minority among us on these matters. Everybody, however, says what he likes at Joe's.'

Then they talked of theatres, and critically discussed the articles in the daily papers and the last new book, and there was much discussion respecting a contemplated subscription boat; but still, in general, it was remarkable how they relapsed into their favourite subject—speculation upon men in office, both permanent and parliamentary, upon their characters and capacity, their habits and tempers. One was a good administrator, another did nothing; one had no detail, another too much; one was a screw, another a spendthrift; this man could make a set speech, but could not reply; his rival, capital at a reply but clumsy in a formal oration.

At this time London was a very dull city, instead of being, as it is now, a very amusing one. Probably there never was a city in the world, with so vast a population, which was so melancholy. The aristocracy probably have always found amusements adapted to the manners of the time and the age in which they lived. The middle classes, half a century ago, had little distraction from their monotonous toil and melancholy anxieties, except, perhaps, what they found in religious and philanthropic societies. Their general life must have been very dull. Some traditionary merriment always lingered among the working classes of England. Both in town and country they had always their games and fairs and junketing parties, which have developed into excursion trains and colossal pic-nics. But of all classes of the community, in the days of our fathers, there was none so unfortunate in respect of public amusements as the bachelors about town. There were, one might almost say, only

two theatres, and they so huge, that it was difficult to see or hear in either. Their monopolies, no longer redeemed by the stately genius of the Kembles, the pathos of Miss O'Neill, or the fiery passion of Kean, were already menaced, and were soon about to fall; but the crowd of diminutive but sparkling substitutes, which have since taken their place, had not yet appeared, and half-price at Drury Lane or Covent Garden was a dreary distraction after a morning of desk work. There were no Alhambras then, and no Cremornes, no palaces of crystal in terraced gardens, no casinos, no music-halls, no aquaria, no promenade concerts. Evans' existed, but not in the fulness of its modern development; and the most popular place of resort was the barbarous conviviality of the Cider Cellar.

Mr. Trenchard had paid the bill, collected his quotas and rewarded the waiter, and then, as they all rose, said to Endymion, 'We are going to the divan. Do you smoke?'

Endymion shook his head; but Trenchard added, 'Well, you will some day; but you had better come with us. You need not smoke; you can order a cup of coffee, and then you may read all the newspapers and magazines. It is a nice lounge.'

So, emerging from Naseby Street into the Strand, they soon entered a tobacconist's shop, and passing through it were admitted into a capacious saloon, well lit and fitted up with low, broad sofas, fixed against the walls, and on which were seated, or reclining, many persons, chiefly smoking cigars, but some few practising with the hookah and other oriental modes. In the centre of the room was a table covered with newspapers and publications of that class. The companions from Joe's became separated after their entrance, and St. Barbe, addressing Endymion, said, 'I am not inclined to smoke to-day. We will order some coffee, and you will find some amusement in this;' and he placed in his hands a number of 'SCARAMOUCH.'

'I hope you will like your new life,' said St. Barbe, throwing down a review on the divan, and leaning back sipping his coffee. 'One thing may be said in favour of it: you will work with a body of as true-hearted comrades as ever existed. They are

always ready to assist one. Thorough good-natured fellows, that I will say for them. I suppose it is adversity,' he continued, 'that develops the kindly qualities of our nature. I believe the sense of common degradation has a tendency to make the degraded amiable—at least among themselves. I am told it is found so in the plantations in slave-gangs.'

'But I hope we are not a slave-gang,' said Endymion.

'It is horrible to think of gentlemen, and men of education, and perhaps first-rate talents—who knows?—reduced to our straits,' said St. Barbe. 'I do not follow Jawett in all his views, for I hate political economy, and never could understand it; and he gives it you pure and simple, eh? eh?—but, I say, it is something awful to think of the incomes that some men are making, who could no more write an article in "SCARAMOUCH," than fly.'

'But our incomes may improve,' said Endymion. 'I was told to-day that promotion was even rapid in our office.'

'Our incomes may improve when we are bent and grey,' said St. Barbe, 'and we may even retire on a pension about as good as a nobleman leaves to his valet. Oh, it is a horrid world! Your father is a privy councillor, is not he?'

'Yes, and so was my grandfather, but I do not think I shall ever be one.'

'It is a great thing to have a father a privy councillor,' said St. Barbe, with a glance of envy. 'If I were the son of a privy councillor, those demons, Shuffle and Screw, would give me £500 for my novel, which now they put in their beastly magazine and print in small type, and do not pay me so much as a powdered flunkey has in St. James' Square. I agree with Jawett: the whole thing is rotten.'

'Mr. Jawett seems to have very strange opinions,' said Endymion. 'I did not like to hear what he said at dinner about the Church, but Mr. Trenchard turned the conversation, and I thought it best to let it pass.'

'Trenchard is a sensible man, and a good fellow,' said St. Barbe; 'you like him?'

'I find him kind.'

'Do you know,' said St. Barbe, in a whisper, and with a distressed and almost vindictive expression of countenance, 'that man may come any day into four thousand a year. There is only one life between him and the present owner. I believe it is a good life,' he added, in a more cheerful voice, 'but still it might happen. Is it not horrible? Four thousand a year! Trenchard with four thousand a year, and we receiving little more than the pay of a butler!'

'Well, I wish, for his sake, he might have it,' said Endymion, 'though I might lose a kind friend.'

'Look at Seymour Hicks,' said St. Barbe; 'he has smoked his cigar, and he is going. He never remains. He is going to a party, I'll be bound. That fellow gets about in a most extraordinary manner. Is it not disgusting? I doubt whether he is asked much to dinner though, or I think we should have heard of it. Nevertheless, Trenchard said the other day that Hicks had dined with Lord Cinque-Ports. I can hardly believe it; it would be too disgusting. No lord ever asked me to dinner. But the aristocracy of this country are doomed!'

'Mr. Hicks,' said Endymion, 'probably lays himself out for society.'

'I suppose you will,' said St. Barbe, with a scrutinising air. 'I should if I were the son of a privy councillor. Hicks is nothing; his father kept a stable-yard and his mother was an actress. We have had several dignitaries of the Church in my family and one admiral. And yet Hicks dines with Lord Cinque-Ports! It is positively revolting! But the things he does to get asked!—sings, rants, conjures, ventriloquises, mimics, stands on his head. His great performance is a parliamentary debate. We will make him do it for you. And yet with all this a dull dog—a very dull dog, sir. He wrote for "Scaramouch" some little time, but they can stand it no more. Between you and me, he has had notice to quit. That I know; and he will probably get the letter when he goes home from his party to-night. So much for success in society! I shall now say good-night to you.'

## CHAPTER XXI.

It was only ten o'clock when Endymion returned to Warwick Street, and for the first time in his life used a pass-key, with which Mr. Rodney had furnished him in the morning, and re-entered his new home. He thought he had used it very quietly, and was lighting his candle and about to steal up to his lofty heights, when from the door of the parlour, which opened into the passage, emerged Miss Imogene, who took the candlestick from his hand and insisted on waiting upon him.

'I thought I heard something,' she said; 'you must let me light you up, for you can hardly yet know your way. I must see too if all is right; you may want something.'

So she tripped up lightly before him, showing, doubtless without premeditation, as well-turned an ankle and as pretty a foot as could fall to a damsel's fortunate lot. 'My sister and Mr. Rodney have gone to the play,' she said, 'but they left strict injunctions with me to see that you were comfortable, and that you wanted for nothing that we could supply.'

'You are too kind,' said Endymion, as she lighted the candles on his dressing-table, 'and, to tell you the truth, these are luxuries I am not accustomed to, and to which I am not entitled.'

'And yet,' she said, with a glance of blended admiration and pity, 'they tell me time was when gold was not good enough for you, and I do not think it could be.'

'Such kindness as this,' said Endymion, 'is more precious than gold.'

'I hope you will find your things well arranged. All your clothes are in these two drawers; the coats in the bottom one, and your linen in those above. You will not perhaps be able to find your pocket-handkerchiefs at first. They are in this sachet; my sister made it herself. Mr. Rodney says you are to be called at eight o'clock and breakfast at nine. I think everything is right. Good-night, Mr. Endymion.'

The Rodney household was rather a strange one. The first two floors, as we have mentioned, were let, and at expensive rates, for the apartments were capacious and capitally furnished, and the situation, if not distinguished, was extremely convenient —quiet from not being a thoroughfare, and in the heart of civilisation. They only kept a couple of servants, but their principal lodgers had their personal attendants. And yet after sunset the sisters appeared and presided at their tea-table, always exquisitely dressed; seldom alone, for Mr. Rodney had many friends, and lived in a capacious apartment, rather finely furnished, with a round table covered with gaudy print-books, a mantelpiece crowded with vases of mock Dresden, and a cottage piano, on which Imogene could accompany her more than pleasing voice.

Somehow or other, the process is difficult to trace, Endymion not unfrequently found himself at Mrs. Rodney's tea-table. On the first occasion or so, he felt himself a little shy and embarrassed, but it soon became natural to him, and he would often escape from the symposia at Joe's, and, instead of the Divan, find in Warwick Street a more congenial scene. There were generally some young men there, who seemed delighted with the ladies, listened with enthusiasm to Imogene's singing, and were allowed to smoke. They were evidently gentlemen, and indeed Mr. Rodney casually mentioned to Endymion that one of the most frequent guests might some day even be a peer of the realm. Sometimes there was a rubber of whist, and, if wanted, Mrs. Rodney took a hand in it; Endymion sitting apart and conversing with her sister, who amused him by her lively observations, indicating even flashes of culture; but always addressed him without the slightest pretence and with the utmost naturalness. This was not the case with Mr. Rodney; pretence with him was ingrained, and he was at first somewhat embarrassed by the presence of Endymion, as he could hardly maintain before his late patron's son his favourite character of the aristocratic victim of revolution. And yet this drawback was more than counterbalanced by the gratification of his vanity in finding

a Ferrars his habitual guest. Such a luxury seemed a dangerous indulgence, but he could not resist it, and the moth was always flying round the candle. There was no danger, however, and that Mr. Rodney soon found out. Endymion was born with tact, and it came to him as much from goodness of heart as fineness of taste. Mr. Rodney, therefore, soon resumed his anecdotes of great men and his personal experience of their sayings, manners, and customs, with which he was in the habit of enlivening or ornamenting the whist table; occasionally introducing Endymion to the notice of the table by mentioning in a low tone, 'That is Mr. Ferrars, in a certain sense under my care; his father is a privy councillor, and had it not been for the revolution—for I maintain, and always will, the Reform Bill was neither more nor less than a revolution—would probably have been Prime Minister. He was my earliest and my best friend.'

When there were cards, there was always a little supper: a lobster and a roasted potato and that sort of easy thing, and curious drinks, which the sisters mixed and made, and which no one else, at least all said so, could mix and make. On fitting occasions a bottle of champagne appeared, and then the person for whom the wine was produced was sure with wonderment to say, 'Where did you get this champagne, Rodney? Could you get me some?' Mr. Rodney shook his head and scarcely gave a hope, but subsequently, when the praise in consequence had continued and increased, would observe, 'Do you really want some? I cannot promise, but I will try. Of course they will ask a high figure.'

'Anything they like, my dear Rodney.'

And in about a week's time the gentleman was so fortunate as to get his champagne.

There was one subject in which Mr. Rodney appeared to be particularly interested, and that was racing. The turf at that time had not developed into that vast institution of national demoralisation which it now exhibits. That disastrous character may be mainly attributed to the determination of our legislators to put down gaming-houses, which, practically speaking, substi-

tuted for the pernicious folly of a comparatively limited class the ruinous madness of the community. There were many influences by which in the highest classes persons might be discouraged or deterred from play under a roof; and in the great majority of cases such a habit was difficult, not to say impossible, to indulge. But in shutting up gaming-houses, we brought the gaming-table into the street, and its practices became the pursuit of those who would otherwise have never witnessed or even thought of them. No doubt Crockford's had its tragedies, but all its disasters and calamities together would hardly equal a lustre of the ruthless havoc which has ensued from its suppression.

Nevertheless, in 1835 men made books, and Mr. Rodney was not inexpert in a composition which requires no ordinary qualities of character and intelligence; method, judgment, self-restraint, not too much imagination, perception of character, and powers of calculation. All these qualities were now in active demand and exercise; for the Derby was at hand, and the Rodney family, deeply interested in the result, were to attend the celebrated festival.

One of the young gentlemen, who sometimes smoked a cigar and sometimes tasted a lobster in their parlour, and who seemed alike and equally devoted to Mrs. Rodney and her sister, insisted upon taking them to Epsom in his drag, and they themselves were to select the party to accompany them. That was not difficult, for they were naturally all friends of their munificent host with one exception. Imogene stipulated that Endymion should be asked, and Mr. Rodney supported the suggestion. 'He is the son of the privy councillor the Right Hon. William Pitt Ferrars, my earliest and my best friend, and in a certain sense is under my care.'

The drive to the Derby was not then shorn of its humours and glories. It was the Carnival of England, with equipages as numerous and various, and with banter not less quick and witty. It was a bright day—a day, no doubt, of wild hopes and terrible fears, but yet, on the whole, of joy and exultation. And no one

was happier and prouder than pretty Mrs. Rodney, exquisitely dressed and sitting on the box of a patrician drag, beside its noble owner. On the seat behind them was Imogene, with Endymion on one side, and on the other the individual 'who might one day be a peer.' Mr. Rodney and some others, including Mr. Vigo, faced a couple of grooms, who sat with folded arms and unmoved countenances, fastidiously stolid amid all the fun, and grave even when they opened the champagne.

The right horse won. Mr. Rodney and his friends pocketed a good stake, and they demolished their luncheon of luxuries with frantic gaiety.

'It is almost as happy as our little suppers in Warwick Street,' whispered their noble driver to his companion.

'Oh! much more than anything you can find there,' simpered Mrs. Rodney.

'I declare to you, some of the happiest hours of my life have been passed in Warwick Street,' gravely murmured her friend.

'I wish I could believe that,' said Mrs. Rodney.

As for Endymion, he enjoyed himself amazingly. The whole scene was new to him—he had never been at a race before, and this was the most famous of races. He did not know he had betted, but he found he too had won a little money, Mr. Rodney having put him on something, though what that meant he had not the remotest idea. Imogene, however, assured him it was all right—Mr. Rodney constantly put her on something. He enjoyed the luncheon too; the cold chicken, and the French pies, the wondrous salads, and the iced champagne. It seemed that Imogene was always taking care that his plate or his glass should be filled. Everything was delightful, and his noble host, who, always courteous, had hitherto been reserved, called him 'Ferrars.'

What with the fineness of the weather, the inspiration of the excited and countless multitude, the divine stimulus of the luncheon, the kindness of his charming companions, and the general feeling of enjoyment and success that seemed to pervade his being, Endymion felt as if he were almost acting a distin-

guished part in some grand triumph of antiquity, as returning home, the four splendid dark chestnuts swept along. two of their gay company playing bugles, and the grooms sitting with folded arms of haughty indifference.

Just at this moment his eye fell upon an omnibus full, inside and out, of clerks in his office. There was a momentary stoppage, and while he returned the salute of several of them, his quick eye could not avoid recognising the slightly surprised glance of Trenchard, the curious amazement of Seymour Hicks, and the indignant astonishment of St. Barbe.

'Our friend Ferrars seems in tiptop company,' said Trenchard.

'That may have been a countess on the box,' said Seymour Hicks, 'for I observed an earl's coronet on the drag. I cannot make out who it is.'

'There is no more advantage in going with four horses than with two,' said St. Barbe; 'indeed, I believe you go slower. It is mere pride; puffed-up vanity. I should like to send those two grooms with their folded arms to the galleys—I hate those fellows. For my part, I never was behind four horses except in a stage-coach. No peer of the realm ever took me on his drag. However, a day of reckoning will come; the people won't stand this much longer.'

Jawett was not there, for he disapproved of races.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

ENDYMION had to encounter a rather sharp volley when he went to the office next morning. After some general remarks as to the distinguished party which he had accompanied to the races, Seymour Hicks could not resist inquiring, though with some circumlocution, whether the lady was a countess The lady was not a countess. Who was the lady? The lady was Mrs. Rodney. Who was Mrs. Rodney? She was the wife of Mr. Rodney, who accompanied her. Was Mr. Rodney a relation of Lord Rodney?

Endymion believed he was not a relation of Lord Rodney. Who was Mr. Rodney then?

'Mr. Rodney is an old friend of my father.'

This natural solution of doubts and difficulties arrested all further inquiry. Generally speaking, the position of Endymion in his new life was satisfactory. He was regular and assiduous in his attendance at his office, was popular with his comrades, and was cherished by his chief, who had even invited him to dinner. His duties were certainly at present mechanical, but they were associated with an interesting profession; and humble as was his lot, he began to feel the pride of public life. He continued to be a regular guest at Joe's, and was careful not to seem to avoid the society of his fellow-clerks in the evenings, for he had an instinctive feeling that it was as well they should not become acquainted with his circle in Warwick Street. And yet to him the attractions of that circle became daily more difficult to resist. And often when he was enduring the purgatory of the Divan, listening to the snarls of St. Barbe over the shameful prosperity of everybody in this world except the snarler, or perhaps went half-price to the pit of Drury Lane with the critical Trenchard, he was, in truth, restless and absent, and his mind was in another place, indulging in visions which he did not care to analyse, but which were very agreeable.

One evening, shortly after the expedition to Epsom, while the rest were playing a rubber, Imogene said to him, 'I wish you to be friends with Mr. Vigo; I think he might be of use to you.'

Mr. Vigo was playing whist at this moment; his partner was Sylvia, and they were playing against Mr. Rodney and Waldershare.

Waldershare was the tenant of the second floor. He was the young gentleman 'who might some day be a peer.' He was a young man of about three or four and twenty years; fair, with short curly brown hair and blue eyes; not exactly handsome, but with a countenance full of expression, and the index of quick emotions, whether of joy or of anger. Waldershare was the only child of a younger son of a patrician house, and had inherited from his father a moderate but easy fortune. He

had been the earliest lodger of the Rodneys, and, taking advantage of the Tory reaction, had just been returned to the House of Commons.

What he would do there was a subject of interesting speculation to his numerous friends, and it may be said admirers. Waldershare was one of those vivid and brilliant organisations which exercise a peculiarly attractive influence on youth. He had been the hero of the debating club at Cambridge, and many believed in consequence that he must become prime minister. He was witty and fanciful, and, though capricious and bad-tempered, could flatter and caress. At Cambridge he had introduced the new Oxford heresy, of which Nigel Penruddock was a votary. Waldershare prayed and fasted, and swore by Laud and Strafford. He took, however, a more eminent degree at Paris than at his original Alma Mater, and becoming passionately addicted to French literature, his views respecting both Church and State became modified—at least in private. His entrance into English society had been highly successful, and as he had a due share of vanity, and was by no means free from worldliness, he had enjoyed and pursued his triumphs. But his versatile nature, which required not only constant, but novel excitement, became palled, even with the society of duchesses. There was a monotony in the splendour of aristocratic life which wearied him, and for some time he had persuaded himself that the only people who understood the secret of existence were the family under whose roof he lodged.

Waldershare was profligate, but sentimental; unprincipled, but romantic; the child of whim, and the slave of an imagination so freakish and deceptive, that it was always impossible to foretell his course. He was alike capable of sacrificing all his feelings to worldly considerations or of forfeiting the world for a visionary caprice. At present his favourite scheme, and one to which he seemed really attached, was to educate Imogene. Under his tuition he had persuaded himself that she would turn out what he styled 'a great woman.' An age of vast change, according to Waldershare, was impending over us. There was no male career in which one could confide. Most men of mark would probably be victims, but 'a great woman'

must always make her way. Whatever the circumstances, she would adapt herself to them; if necessary, would mould and fashion them. His dream was that Imogene should go forth and conquer the world, and that in the sunset of life he should find a refuge in some corner of her palaces.

Imogene was only a child when Waldershare first became a lodger. She used to bring his breakfast to his drawing-room and arrange his table. He encountered her one day, and he requested her to remain, and always preside over his meal. He fell in love with her name, and wrote her a series of sonnets, idealising her past, panegyrising her present, and prophetic of her future life. Imogene, who was neither shy nor obtrusive, was calm amid all his vagaries, humoured his fancies, even when she did not understand them, and read his verses as she would a foreign language which she was determined to master.

Her culture, according to Waldershare, was to be carried on chiefly by conversation. She was not to read, or at least not to read much, until her taste was formed and she had acquired the due share of previous knowledge necessary to profitable study. As Waldershare was eloquent, brilliant, and witty, Imogene listened to him with wondering interest and amusement, even when she found some difficulty in following him; but her apprehension was so quick and her tact so fine, that her progress, though she was almost unconscious of it, was remarkable. Sometimes in the evening, while the others were smoking together or playing whist, Waldershare and Imogene, sitting apart, were engaged in apparently the most interesting converse. It was impossible not to observe the animation and earnestness of Waldershare, and the great attention with which his companion responded to his representations. Yet all this time he was only giving her a lecture on Madame de Sévigné.

Waldershare used to take Imogene to the National Gallery and Hampton Court, and other delightful scenes of popular education, but of late Mrs. Rodney had informed her sister that she was no longer young enough to permit these expeditions. Imogene accepted the announcement without a murmur. but it occasioned Waldershare several sonnets of heartrending remonstrance. Imogene continued, however, to make his breakfast,

and kept his Parliamentary papers in order, which he never could manage, but the mysteries of which Imogene mastered with feminine quickness and precision. Whenever Waldershare was away he always maintained a constant correspondence with Imogene. In this he communicated everything to her without the slightest reserve; describing everything he saw, almost everything he heard, pages teeming with anecdotes of a world of which she could know nothing—the secrets of courts and coteries, memoirs of princes and ministers, of dandies and dames of fashion. 'If anything happens to me,' Waldershare would say to Imogene, 'this correspondence may be worth thousands to you, and when it is published it will connect your name with mine, and assist my grand idea of your becoming "a great woman."'

'But I do not know Mr. Vigo,' whispered Endymion to Imogene.

'But you have met him here, and you went together to Epsom. It is enough. He is going to ask you to dine with him on Saturday. We shall be there, and Mr. Waldershare is going. He has a beautiful place, and it will be very pleasant.' And exactly as Imogene had anticipated, Mr. Vigo, in the course of the evening, did ask Endymion to do him the honour of becoming his guest.

The villa of Mr. Vigo was on the banks of the Thames, and had once belonged to a noble customer. The Palladian mansion contained a suite of chambers of majestic dimensions—lofty ceilings, rich cornices, and vast windows of plate glass; the gardens were rich with the products of conservatories which Mr. Vigo had raised with every modern improvement, and a group of stately cedars supported the dignity of the scene and gave to it a name. Beyond, a winding walk encircled a large field which Mr. Vigo called the park, and which sparkled with gold and silver pheasants, and the keeper lived in a newly-raised habitation at the extreme end, which took the form of a Swiss cottage.

The Rodney family, accompanied by Mr. Waldershare and Endymion, went to the Cedars by water. It was a delightful afternoon of June, the river warm and still, and the soft, fitful

western breeze occasionally rich with the perfume of the gardens of Putney and Chiswick. Waldershare talked the whole way. It was a rhapsody of fancy, fun, knowledge, anecdote, brilliant badinage—even passionate seriousness. Sometimes he recited poetry, and his voice was musical; and then, when he had attuned his companions to a sentimental pitch, he would break into mockery, and touch with delicate satire every mood of human feeling. Endymion listened to him in silence and admiration. He had never heard Waldershare talk before, and he had never heard anybody like him. All this time, what was now, and ever, remarkable in Waldershare were his manners. They were finished, even to courtliness. Affable and winning, he was never familiar. He always addressed Sylvia as if she were one of those duchesses round whom he used to linger. He would bow deferentially to her remarks, and elicit from some of her casual observations an acute or graceful meaning, of which she herself was by no means conscious. The bow of Waldershare was a study. Its grace and ceremony must have been organic; for there was no traditionary type in existence from which he could have derived or inherited it. He certainly addressed Imogene and spoke of her by her Christian name; but this was partly because he was in love with the name, and partly because he would persist in still treating her as a child. But his manner to her always was that of tender respect. She was almost as silent as Endymion during their voyage, but not less attentive to her friend. Mr. Rodney was generally silent, and never opened his mouth on this occasion except in answer to an inquiry from his wife as to whom a villa might belong, and it seemed always that he knew every villa, and every one to whom they belonged.

The sisters were in demi-toilette, which seemed artless, though in fact it was profoundly devised. Sylvia was the only person who really understood the meaning of 'simplex munditiis,' and this was one of the secrets of her success. There were some ladies, on the lawn of the Cedars when they arrived, not exactly of their school, and who were finely and fully dressed. Mrs. Gamme was the wife of a sporting attorney, a friend of Mr. Vigo, and who also, having a villa at hand, was looked upon as

a country neighbour. Mrs. Gamme was universally recognised to be a fine woman, and she dressed up to her reputation. She was a famous whist-player at high points, and dealt the cards with hands covered with diamond rings. Another country neighbour was the chief partner in the celebrated firm of Hooghley, Dacca, & Co., dealers in Indian and other shawls. Mr. Hooghley had married a celebrated actress, and was proud and a little jealous of his wife. Mrs. Hooghley had always an opportunity at the Cedars of meeting some friends in her former profession, for Mr. Vigo liked to be surrounded by genius and art. 'I must have talent,' he would exclaim, as he looked round at the amusing and motley multitude assembled at his splendid entertainments. And to-day upon his lawn might be observed the first tenor of the opera and a prima-donna who had just arrived, several celebrated members of the English stage of both sexes, artists of great reputation, whose principal works already adorned the well-selected walls of the Cedars, a danseuse or two of celebrity, some literary men, as Mr. Vigo styled them, who were chiefly brethren of the periodical press, and more than one member of either House of Parliament.

Just as the party were preparing to leave the lawn and enter the dining-room arrived, breathless and glowing, the young earl who had driven the Rodneys to the Derby.

'A shaver, my dear Vigo! Only returned to town this afternoon, and found your invitation. How fortunate!' And then he looked around, and recognising Mrs. Rodney, was immediately at her side. 'I must have the honour of taking you into dinner. I got your note, but only by this morning's post.'

The dinner was a banquet,—a choice bouquet before every guest, turtle and venison and piles of whitebait, and pine-apples of prodigious size, and bunches of grapes that had gained prizes. The champagne seemed to flow in fountains, and was only interrupted that the guest might quaff Burgundy or taste Tokay. But what was more delightful than all was the enjoyment of all present, and especially of their host. That is a rare sight. Banquets are not rare, nor choice guests, nor gracious hosts; but when do we ever see a person enjoy anything? But these gay children of art and whim, and successful labour and happy

speculation, some of them very rich and some of them without a sou, seemed only to think of the festive hour and all its joys. Neither wealth nor poverty brought them cares. Every face sparkled, every word seemed witty, and every sound seemed sweet. A band played upon the lawn during the dinner, and were succeeded, when the dessert commenced, by strange choruses from singers of some foreign land, who for the first time aired their picturesque costumes on the banks of the Thames.

When the ladies had withdrawn to the saloon, the first comic singer of the age excelled himself; and when they rejoined their fair friends, the primo-tenore and the prima-donna gave them a grand scena, succeeded by the English performers in a favourite scene from a famous farce. Then Mrs. Gamme had an opportunity of dealing with her diamond rings, and the rest danced—a waltz of whirling grace, or merry cotillon of jocund bouquets.

'Well, Clarence,' said Waldershare to the young earl, as they stood for a moment apart, 'was I right?'

'By Jove! yes. It is the only life. You were quite right. We should indeed be fools to sacrifice ourselves to the conventional.'

The Rodney party returned home in the drag of the last speaker. They were the last to retire, as Mr. Vigo wished for one cigar with his noble friend. As he bade farewell, and cordially, to Endymion, he said, 'Call on me to-morrow morning in Burlington Street in your way to your office. Do not mind the hour. I am an early bird.'

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

'It is no favour,' said Mr. Vigo; 'it is not even an act of friendliness; it is a freak, and it is my freak; the favour, if there be one, is conferred by you.'

'But I really do not know what to say,' said Endymion, hesitating and confused.

'I am not a classical scholar,' said Mr. Vigo, 'but there are two things which I think I understand—men and horses. I like to back them both when I think they ought to win.'