

to both parties. Gay became an habitual guest of Lord Monmouth when his patron was in England; and in his absence received frequent and substantial marks of his kind recollection, for Lord Monmouth was generous to those who amused him.

In the meantime the hour of dinner is at hand. Coningsby, who had lost the key of his *carpet-bag*, which he finally cut open with a penknife that he found on his writing-table, and the blade of which he broke in the operation, only reached the drawing-room as the figure of his grandfather, leaning on his ivory cane, and following his guests, was just visible in the distance. He was soon overtaken. Perceiving Coningsby, Lord Monmouth made him a bow, not so formal a one as in the morning, but still a bow, and said, 'I hope you liked your drive.'

CHAPTER VI.

A *LITTLE dinner, not more than the Muses*, with all the guests clever, and some pretty, offers human life and human nature under very favourable circumstances. In the present instance, too, every one was anxious to please, for the host was entirely well-bred, never selfish in little things, and always contributed his quota to the general fund of polished sociability.

Although there was really only one thought in every male mind present, still, regard for the ladies, and some little apprehension of the servants, banished politics from discourse during the greater part of the dinner, with the occasional exception of some rapid and flying allusion which the initiated understood, but which remained a mystery to the rest. Nevertheless an old story now and then well told by Mr. Ormsby, a new joke now and then well introduced by Mr. Gay, some dashing assertion by Mr. Rigby, which, though wrong, was startling; this agreeable blending of anecdote, jest, and paradox, kept everything

fluent, and produced that degree of mild excitation which is desirable. Lord Monmouth sometimes summed up with an epigrammatic sentence, and turned the conversation by a question, in case it dwelt too much on the same topic. Lord Eskdale addressed himself principally to the ladies; inquired after their morning drive and doings, spoke of new fashions, and quoted a letter from Paris. Madame Colonna was not witty, but she had that sweet Roman frankness which is so charming. The presence of a beautiful woman, natural and good-tempered, even if she be not a L'Espinasse or a De Stael, is animating.

Nevertheless, owing probably to the absorbing powers of the forbidden subject, there were moments when it seemed that a pause was impending, and Mr. Ormsby, an old hand, seized one of these critical instants to address a good-natured question to Coningsby, whose acquaintance he had already cultivated by taking wine with him.

'And how do you like Eton?' asked Mr. Ormsby.

It was the identical question which had been presented to Coningsby in the memorable interview of the morning, and which had received no reply; or rather had produced on his part a sentimental ebullition that had absolute,}y destined or doomed him to the Church.

'I should like to see the fellow who did *not* like Eton,' said Coningsby, briskly, determined this time to be very brave.

'Gad I must go down and see the old place,' said Mr. Ormsby, touched by a pensive reminiscence. 'One can get a good bed and bottle of port at the Christopher, still?'

'You had better come and try, sir,' said Coningsby. 'If you will come some day and dine with me at the Christopher, I will give you such a bottle of champagne as you never tasted yet.'

The Marquess looked at him, but said nothing.

'Ah! I liked a dinner at the Christopher,' said Mr. Ormsby; 'after mutton, mutton, mutton, every day, it was not a bad thing.'

'We had venison for dinner every week last season,' said

Coningsby; 'Buckhurst had it sent up from his park. But I don't care for dinner. Breakfast is my lounge.'

'Ah! those little rolls and pats of butter!' said Mr. Ormsby. 'Short commons, though. What do you think we did in my time? We used to send over the way to get a mutton-chop.'

'I wish you could see Buckhurst and me at breakfast, said Coningsby, 'with a pound of Castle's sausages!'

'What Buckhurst is that, Harry?' inquired Lord Monmouth, in a tone of some interest, and for the first time calling him by his Christian name.

'Sir Charles Buckhurst, sir, a Berkshire man: Shirley Park is his place.'

'Why, that must be Charley's son, Eskdale,' said Lord Monmouth; 'I had no idea he could be so young.'

'He married late, you know, and had nothing but daughters for a long time.'

'Well, I hope there will be no Reform Bill for Eton,' said Lord Monmouth, musingly.

The servants had now retired.

'I think, Lord Monmouth,' said Mr. Rigby, 'we must ask permission to drink one toast to-day.'

'Nay, I will myself give it,' he replied. 'Madame Colonna, you will, I am sure, join us when we drink, THE DUKE!'

'Ah! what a man!' exclaimed the Princess. 'What a pity it is you have a House of Commons here! England would be the greatest country in the world if it were not for that House of Commons. It makes so much confusion!'

'Don't abuse our property,' said Lord Eskdale; 'Lord Monmouth and I have still twenty votes of that same body between us.'

'And there is a combination,' said Rigby, 'by which you may still keep them.'

'Ah! now for Rigby's combination,' said Lord Eskdale.

'The only thing that can save this country,' said Rigby, 'is a coalition on a sliding scale.'

'You had better buy up the Birmingham Union and the other bodies,' said Lord Monmouth; 'I believe it might all be done for two or three hundred thousand pounds; and the newspapers too. Pitt would have settled this business long ago.'

'Well, at any rate, we are in,' said Rigby, 'and we must do something.'

'I should like to see Grey's list of new peers,' said Lord Eskdale: 'They say there are several members of our club in it.'

'And the claims to the honour are so opposite,' said Lucian Gay; 'one, on account of his large estate; another, because he has none; one, because he has a well-grown family to perpetuate the title; another, because he has no heir, and no power of ever obtaining one.'

'I wonder how he will form his cabinet,' said Lord Monmouth; 'the old story won't do.'

'I hear that Baring is to be one of the new cards; they say it will please in the city,' said Lord Eskdale. 'I suppose they will pick out of hedge and ditch everything that has ever had the semblance of liberalism.'

'Affairs in my time were never so complicated,' said Mr. Ormsby.

'Nay, it appears to me to lie in a nutshell,' said Lucian Gay; 'one party wishes to keep their old boroughs, and the other to get their new peers.'

CHAPTER VII.

THE future historian of the country will be perplexed to ascertain what was the distinct object which the Duke of Wellington proposed to himself in the political manœuvres of May 1832. It was known that the passing of the Reform Bill was a condition absolute with the King; it was unquestionable, that the first general election under the new law must ignominiously expel the Anti-Reform Ministry

from power; who would then resume their seats on the Opposition benches in both Houses with the loss not only of their boroughs, but of that reputation for political consistency, which might have been some compensation for the parliamentary influence of which they had been deprived. It is difficult to recognise in this premature effort of the Anti-Reform leader to thrust himself again into the conduct of public affairs, any indications of the prescient judgment which might have been expected from such a quarter. It savoured rather of restlessness than of energy; and, while it proved in its progress not only an ignorance on his part of the public mind, but of the feelings of his own party, it terminated under circumstances which were humiliating to the Crown, and painfully significant of the future position of the House of Lords in the new constitutional scheme.

The Duke of Wellington has ever been the votary of circumstances. He cares little for causes. He watches events rather than seeks to produce them. It is a characteristic of the military mind. Rapid combinations, the result of a quick, vigilant, and comprehensive glance, are generally triumphant in the field: but in civil affairs, where results are not immediate; in diplomacy and in the management of deliberative assemblies, where there is much intervening time and many counteracting causes, this velocity of decision, this fitful and precipitate action, are often productive of considerable embarrassment, and sometimes of terrible discomfiture. It is remarkable that men celebrated for military prudence are often found to be headstrong statesmen. In civil life a great general is frequently and strangely the creature of impulse; influenced in his political movements by the last snatch of information; and often the creature of the last aide-de-camp who has his ear.

We shall endeavour to trace in another chapter the reasons which on this, as on previous and subsequent occasions, induced Sir Robert Peel to stand aloof, if possible, from official life, and made him reluctant to re-enter the service of his Sovereign. In the present instance, even

temporary success could only have been secured by the utmost decision, promptness, and energy. These were all wanting: some were afraid to follow the bold example of their leader; many were disinclined. In eight-and-forty hours it was known there was a 'hitch.'

The Reform party, who had been rather stupified than appalled by the *accepted mission of the Duke of Wellington*, collected their scattered senses, and rallied their forces. The agitators harangued, the mobs hooted. The City of London, as if the King had again tried to seize the five members, appointed a permanent committee of the Common Council to watch the fortunes of the 'great national measure,' and to report daily. Brookes', which was the only place that at first was really frightened and talked of compromise, grew valiant again; while young Whig heroes jumped upon club-room tables, and delivered fiery invectives. Emboldened by these demonstrations, the House of Commons met in great force, and passed a vote which struck, without disguise, at all rival powers in the State; virtually announced its supremacy; revealed the forlorn position of the House of Lords under the new arrangement; and seemed to lay for ever the fluttering phantom of regal prerogative.

It was on the 9th of May that Lord Lyndhurst was with the King, and on the 15th all was over. Nothing in parliamentary history so humiliating as the funeral oration delivered that day by the Duke of Wellington over the old constitution, that, modelled on the Venetian, had governed England since the accession of the House of Hanover. He described his Sovereign, when his Grace first repaired to his Majesty, as in a state of the greatest 'difficulty and distress,' appealing to his never-failing loyalty to extricate him from his trouble and vexation. The Duke of Wellington, representing the House of Lords, sympathises with the King, and pledges his utmost efforts for his Majesty's relief. But after five days' exertion, this man of indomitable will and invincible fortunes, resigns the task in *discomfiture and despair, and alleges as the only and*

sufficient reason of his utter and hopeless defeat, that the House of Commons had come to a vote which ran counter to the contemplated exercise of the prerogative.

From that moment power passed from the House of Lords to another assembly. But if the peers have ceased to be magnificoes, may it not also happen that the Sovereign may cease to be a Doge? It is not impossible that the political movements of our time, which seem on the surface to have a tendency to democracy, may have in reality a monarchical bias.

In less than a fortnight's time the House of Lords, like James II., having abdicated their functions by absence, the Reform Bill passed; the ardent monarch, who a few months before had expressed his readiness to go down to Parliament, in a hackney-coach if necessary, to assist its progress, now declining personally to give his assent to its provisions.

In the protracted discussions to which this celebrated measure gave rise, nothing is more remarkable than the perplexities into which the speakers of both sides are thrown, when they touch upon the nature of the representative principle. On one hand it was maintained, that, under the old system, the people were virtually represented; while, on the other, it was triumphantly urged, that if the principle be conceded, the people should not be virtually, but actually, represented. But who are the people? And where are you to draw a line? And why should there be any? It was urged that a contribution to the taxes was the constitutional qualification for the suffrage. But we have established a system of taxation in this country of so remarkable a nature, that the beggar who chews his quid as he sweeps a crossing, is contributing to the imposts! Is he to have a vote? He is one of the people, and he yields his quota to the public burthens.

Amid these conflicting statements, and these confounding conclusions, it is singular that no member of either House should have recurred to the original character of these popular assemblies, which have always prevailed among the

northern nations. We still retain in the antique phraseology of our statutes the term which might have beneficially guided a modern Reformer in his reconstructive labours.

When the crowned Northman consulted on the welfare of his kingdom, he assembled the *ESTATES* of his realm. Now an estate is a class of the nation invested with political rights. There appeared the estate of the clergy, of the barons, of other classes. In the Scandinavian kingdoms to this day, the estate of the peasants sends its representatives to the Diet. In England, under the Normans, the Church and the Baronage were convoked, together with the estate of the Community, a term which then probably described the inferior holders of land, whose tenure was not immediate of the Crown. This Third Estate was so numerous, that convenience suggested its appearance by representation; while the others, more limited, appeared, and still appear, personally. The Third Estate was reconstructed as circumstances developed themselves. It was a Reform of Parliament when the towns were summoned.

In treating the House of the Third Estate as the House of the People, and not as the House of a privileged class, the Ministry and Parliament of 1831 virtually conceded the principle of Universal Suffrage. In this point of view the ten-pound franchise was an arbitrary, irrational, and impolitic qualification. It had, indeed, the merit of simplicity, and so had the constitutions of Abbé Sicéyès. But its immediate and inevitable result was Chartism.

But if the Ministry and Parliament of 1831 had announced that the time had arrived when the Third Estate should be enlarged and reconstructed, they would have occupied an intelligible position; and if, instead of simplicity of elements in its reconstruction, they had sought, on the contrary, various and varying materials which would have neutralised the painful predominance of any particular interest in the new scheme, and prevented those banded jealousies which have been its consequences, the nation would have found itself in a secure condition. Another class not less numerous than the existing one, and invested

with privileges not less important, would have been added to the public estates of the realm; and the bewildering phrase 'the People' would have remained, what it really is, a term of natural philosophy, and not of political science.

During this eventful week of May 1832, when an important revolution was effected in the most considerable of modern kingdoms, in a manner so tranquil, that the victims themselves were scarcely conscious at the time of the catastrophe, Coningsby passed his hours in unaccustomed pleasures, and in novel excitement. Although he heard daily from the lips of Mr. Rigby and his friends that England was for ever lost, the assembled guests still contrived to do justice to his grandfather's excellent dinners; nor did the impending ruin that awaited them prevent the Princess Colonna from going to the Opera, whither she very good-naturedly took Coningsby. Madame Colonna, indeed, gave such gratifying accounts of her dear young friend, that Coningsby became daily a greater favourite with Lord Monmouth, who cherished the idea that his grandson had inherited not merely the colour of his eyes, but something of his shrewd and fearless spirit.

With Lucretia, Coningsby did not much advance. She remained silent and sullen. She was not beautiful; pallid, with a lowering brow, and an eye that avoided meeting another's. Madame Colonna, though good-natured, felt for her something of the affection for which step-mothers are celebrated. Lucretia, indeed, did not encourage her kindness, which irritated her step-mother, who seemed seldom to address her but to rate and chide; Lucretia never replied, but looked dogged. Her father, the Prince, did not compensate for this treatment. The memory of her mother, whom he had greatly disliked, did not soften his heart. He was a man still young; slender, not tall; very handsome, but worn; a haggard Antinous; his beautiful hair daily thinning; his dress rich and effeminate; many jewels, much lace. He seldom spoke, but was polished, though moody.

At the end of the week, Coningsby returned to Eton. On the eve of his departure, Lord Monmouth desired his grandson to meet him in his apartments on the morrow, before quitting his roof. This farewell visit was as kind and gracious as the first one had been repulsive. Lord Monmouth gave Coningsby his blessing and ten pounds; desired that he would order a dress, anything he liked, for the approaching Montem, which Lord Monmouth meant to attend; and informed his grandson that he should order that in future a proper supply of game and venison should be forwarded to Eton for the use of himself and his friends.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER eight o'clock school, the day following the return of Coningsby, according to custom, he repaired to Bucknurst's room, where Henry Sydney, Lord Vere, and our hero held with him their breakfast mess. They were all in the fifth form, and habitual companions, on the river or on the Fives' Wall, at cricket or at foot-ball. The return of Coningsby, their leader alike in sport and study, inspired them to-day with unusual spirits, which, to say the truth, were never particularly depressed. Where he had been, what he had seen, what he had done, what sort of fellow his grandfather was, whether the visit had been a success; here were materials for almost endless inquiry. And, indeed, to do them justice, the last question was not the least exciting to them; for the deep and cordial interest which all felt in Coningsby's welfare far outweighed the curiosity which, under ordinary circumstances, they would have experienced on the return of one of their companions from an unusual visit to London. The report of their friend imparted to them unbounded satisfaction, when they learned that his relative was a splendid fellow; that he had been loaded with kindness and favours; that Monmouth

Honse, the wonders of which he rapidly sketched, was hereafter to be his home; that Lord Monmouth was coming down to Montem; that Coningsby was to order any dress he liked, build a new boat if he chose; and, finally, had been pouched in a manner worthy of a Marquess and a grandfather.

'By the bye,' said Buckhurst, when the hubbub had a little subsided, 'I am afraid you will not half like it, Coningsby; but, old fellow, I had no idea you would be back this morning; I have asked Millbank to breakfast here.'

A cloud stole over the clear brow of Coningsby.

'It was my fault,' said the amiable Henry Sydney; 'but I really wanted to be civil to Millbank, and as you were not here, I put Buckhurst up to ask him.'

'Well,' said Coningsby, as if sullenly resigned, 'never mind; but why should you ask an infernal manufacturer?'

'Why the Duke always wished me to pay him some attention,' said Lord Henry, mildly. 'His family were so civil to us when we were at Manchester.'

'Manchester, indeed!' said Coningsby; 'if you knew what I do about Manchester! A pretty state we have been in in London this week past with your Manchesters and Birminghams!'

'Come, come, Coningsby,' said Lord Vere, the son of a Whig minister; 'I am all for Manchester and Birmingham.'

'It is all up with the country I can tell you,' said Coningsby, with the air of one who was in the secret.

'My father says it will all go right now,' rejoined Lord Vere. 'I had a letter from my sister yesterday.'

'They say we shall all lose our estates, though,' said Buckhurst; 'I know I shall not give up mine without a fight. Shirley was besieged, you know, in the civil wars; and the rebels got infernally licked.'

'I think that all the people about Beaumanoir would stand by the Duke,' said Lord Henry, pensively.

'Well, you may depend upon it you will have it very

soon, said Coningsby. 'I know it from the best authority.'

'It depends on whether my father remains in,' said Lord Vere. 'He is the only man who can govern the country now. All say that.'

At this moment Millbank entered. He was a good looking boy, somewhat shy, and yet with a sincere expression in his countenance. He was evidently not extremely intimate with those who were now his companions. Buckhurst, and Henry Sydney, and Vere, welcomed him cordially. He looked at Coningsby with some constraint, and then said

'You have been in London, Coningsby?'

'Yes, I have been there during all the row.'

'You must have had a rare lark.'

'Yes, if having your windows broken by a mob be a rare lark. They could not break my grandfather's, though. Monmouth House is in a court-yard. All noblemen's houses should be in court-yards.'

'I was glad to see it all ended very well,' said Millbank.

'It has not begun yet,' said Coningsby.

'What?' said Millbank.

'Why, the revolution.'

'The Reform Bill will prevent a revolution, my father says,' said Millbank.

'By Jove! here's the goose,' said Buckhurst.

At this moment there entered the room a little boy, the scion of a noble house, bearing a roasted goose, which he had carried from the kitchen of the opposite inn, the Christopher. The lower boy or fag, depositing his burthen, asked his master whether he had further need of him; and Buckhurst, after looking round the table, and ascertaining that he had not, gave him permission to retire; but he had scarcely disappeared, when his master singing out, 'Lower boy, St. John!' he immediately re-entered, and demanded his master's pleasure, which was, that he should pour some water in the teapot. This being accomplished, St. John really made his escape, and retired to a

pupil-room, where the bullying of a tutor, because he had no derivations, exceeded in all probability the bullying of his master, had he contrived in his passage from the Christopher to have upset the goose or dropped the sausages.

In their merry meal, the Reform Bill was forgotten. Their thoughts were soon concentrated in their little world, though it must be owned that visions of palaces and beautiful ladies did occasionally flit over the brain of one of the company. But for him especially there was much of interest and novelty. So much had happened in his absence! There was a week's arrears for him of Eton annals. They were recounted in so fresh a spirit, and in such vivid colours, that Coningsby lost nothing by his London visit. All the bold feats that had been done, and all the bright things that had been said; all the triumphs, and all the failures, and all the scrapes; how popular one master had made himself, and how ridiculous another; all was detailed with a liveliness, a candour, and a picturesque ingenuousness, which would have made the fortune of a Herodotus or a Froissart.

'I'll tell you what,' said Buckhurst, 'I move that after twelve we five go up to Maidenhead.'

'Agreed; agreed!'

CHAPTER IX.

MILLBANK was the son of one of the wealthiest manufacturers in Lancashire. His father, whose opinions were of a very democratic bent, sent his son to Eton, though he disapproved of the system of education pursued there, to show that he had as much right to do so as any duke in the land. He had, however, brought up his only boy with a due prejudice against every sentiment or institution of an aristocratic character, and had especially impressed upon him in his school career, to avoid the slightest semblance of

courting the affections or society of any member of the falsely-held superior class.

The character of the son, as much as the influence of the father, tended to the fulfilment of these injunctions. Oswald Millbank was of a proud and independent nature; reserved, a little stern. The early and constantly-reiterated dogma of his father, that he belonged to a class debarred from its just position in the social system, had aggravated the grave and somewhat discontented humour of his blood. His talents were considerable, though invested with no dazzling quality. He had not that quick and brilliant apprehension, which, combined with a memory of rare retentiveness, had already advanced Coningsby far beyond his age, and made him already looked to as the future hero of the school. But Millbank possessed one of those strong, industrious volitions whose perseverance amounts almost to genius, and nearly attains its results. Though Coningsby was by a year his junior, they were rivals. This circumstance had no tendency to remove the prejudice which Coningsby entertained against him, but its bias on the part of Millbank had a contrary effect.

The influence of the individual is nowhere so sensible as at school. There the personal qualities strike without any intervening and counteracting causes. A gracious presence, noble sentiments, or a happy talent, make their way there at once, without preliminary inquiries as to what set they are in, or what family they are of, how much they have a-year, or where they live. Now, on no spirit had the influence of Coningsby, already the favourite, and soon probably to become the idol, of the school, fallen more effectually than on that of Millbank, though it was an influence that no one could suspect except its votary or its victim.

At school, friendship is a passion. It entrances the being; it tears the soul. All loves of after-life can never bring its rapture, or its wretchedness; no bliss so absorbing, no pangs of jealousy or despair so crushing and so keen! What tenderness and what devotion; what illimitable confidence; infinite revelations of inmost thoughts;

what ecstatic present and romantic future; what bitter estrangements and what melting reconciliations; what scenes of wild recrimination, agitating explanations, passionate correspondence; what insane sensitiveness, and what frantic sensibility; what earthquakes of the heart and whirlwinds of the soul are confined in that simple phrase, a schoolboy's friendship! 'Tis some indefinite recollection of these mystic passages of their young emotion that makes grey-haired men mourn over the memory of their schoolboy days. It is a spell that can soften the acerbity of political warfare, and with its witchery can call forth a sigh even amid the callous bustle of fashionable saloons.

The secret of Millbank's life was a passionate admiration and affection for Coningsby. Pride, his natural reserve, and his father's injunctions, had, however, hitherto successfully combined to restrain the slightest demonstration of these sentiments. Indeed, Coningsby and himself were never companions, except in school, or in some public game. The demeanour of Coningsby gave no encouragement to intimacy to one, who, under any circumstances, would have required considerable invitation to open himself. So Millbank fed in silence on a cherished idea. It was his happiness to be in the same form, to join in the same sport, with Coningsby; occasionally to be thrown in unusual contact with him, to exchange slight and not unkind words. In their division they were rivals; Millbank sometimes triumphed, but to be vanquished by Coningsby was for him not without a degree of wild satisfaction. Not a gesture, not a phrase from Coningsby, that he did not watch and ponder over and treasure up. Coningsby was his model, alike in studies, in manners, or in pastimes; the aptest scholar, the gayest wit, the most graceful associate, the most accomplished playmate: his standard of the excellent. Yet Millbank was the very last boy in the school who would have had credit given him by his companions for profound and ardent feeling. He was not indeed unpopular. The favourite of the school like

Coningsby, he could, under no circumstances, ever have become; nor was he qualified to obtain that general graciousness among the multitude, which the sweet disposition of Henry Sydney, or the gay profusion of Buckhurst, acquired without an effort. Millbank was not blessed with the charm of manner. He seemed close and cold; but he was courageous, just, and inflexible; never bullied, and to his utmost would prevent tyranny. The little boys looked up to him as a stern protector; and his word, too, throughout the school was a proverb: and truth ranks a great quality among boys. In a word, Millbank was respected by those among whom he lived; and school-boys scan character more nicely than men suppose.

A brother of Henry Sydney, quartered in Lancashire, had been wounded recently in a riot, and had received great kindness from the Millbank family, in whose immediate neighbourhood the disturbance had occurred. The kind Duke had impressed on Henry Sydney to acknowledge with cordiality to the younger Millbank at Eton, the sense which his family entertained of these benefits; but though Henry lost neither time nor opportunity in obeying an injunction, which was grateful to his own heart, he failed in cherishing, or indeed creating, any intimacy with the object of his solicitude. A companionship with one who was Coningsby's relative and most familiar friend, would at the first glance have appeared, independently of all other considerations, a most desirable result for Millbank to accomplish. But, perhaps, this very circumstance afforded additional reasons for the absence of all encouragement with which he received the overtures of Lord Henry. Millbank suspected that Coningsby was not affected in his favour, and his pride recoiled from gaining, by any indirect means, an intimacy which to have obtained in a plain and express manner would have deeply gratified him. However, the urgent invitation of Buckhurst and Henry Sydney, and the fear that a persistence in refusal might be misinterpreted into churlishness, had at length brought Millbank to their breakfast-mess, though, when he accepted

their invitation, he did not apprehend that Coningsby would have been present.

It was about an hour before sunset, the day of this very breakfast, and a good number of boys, in lounging groups, were collected in the Long Walk. The sports and matches of the day were over. Criticism had succeeded to action in sculling and in cricket. They talked over the exploits of the morning; canvassed the merits of the competitors, marked the fellow whose play or whose stroke was improving; glanced at another, whose promise had not been fulfilled; discussed the pretensions, and adjudged the palm. Thus public opinion is formed. Some, too, might be seen with their books and exercises, intent on the inevitable and impending tasks. Among these, some unhappy wight in the remove, wandering about with his hat, after parochial fashion, seeking relief in the shape of a verse. A hard lot this, to know that you must be delivered of fourteen verses at least in the twenty-four hours, and to be conscious that you are pregnant of none. The lesser boys, urchins of tender years, clustered like flies round the baskets of certain vendors of sugary delicacies that rested on the Long Walk wall. The pallid countenance, the lack lustre eye, the hoarse voice clogged with accumulated phlegm, indicated too surely the irreclaimable and hopeless votary of lollypop, the opium-eater of school-boys.

'It is settled, the match to-morrow shall be between Aquatics and Drybobs,' said a senior boy; who was arranging a future match at cricket.

'But what is to be done about Fielding major?' inquired another. 'He has not paid his boating money, and I say he has no right to play among the Aquatics before he has paid his money.'

'Oh! but we must have Fielding major, he is such a devil of a swipe.'

'I declare he shall not play among the Aquatics if he does not pay his boating money. It is an infernal shame.'

'Let us ask Buckhurst. Where is Buckhurst?'

'Have you got any toffy?' inquired a dull-looking little

boy, in a hoarse voice, of one of the vendors of scholastic confectionary.

'Tom Trot, sir.'

'No; I want toffy.'

'Very nice Tom Trot, sir.'

'No, I want toffy; I have been eating Tom Trot all day.'

'Where is Buckhurst? We must settle about the Aquatics.'

'Well, I for one will not play if Fielding major plays amongst the Aquatics. That is settled.'

'Oh! nonsense; he will pay his money if you ask him.'

'I shall not ask him again. The captain duns us every day. It is an infernal shame.'

'I say, Burnham, where can one get some toffy? This fellow never has any.'

'I will tell you; at Barnes' on the bridge. The best toffy in the world.'

'I will go at once. I must have some toffy.'

'Just help me with this verse, Collins,' said one boy to another, in an imploring tone, 'that's a good fellow.'

'Well, give it us: first syllable in *fabri* is short; three false quantities in the two first lines! You're a pretty one. There, I have done it for you.'

'That's a good fellow.'

'Any fellow seen Buckhurst?'

'Gone up the river with Coningsby and Henry Sydney.'

'But he must be back by this time. I want him to make the list for the match to-morrow. Where the deuce can Buckhurst be?'

And now, as rumours rise in society we know not how, so there was suddenly a flying report in this multitude, the origin of which no one in his alarm stopped to ascertain, that a boy was drowned.

Every heart was agitated.

What boy? When, where, how? Who was absent? Who had been on the river to-day? Buckhurst. The report ran that Buckhurst was drowned. Great were the trouble and consternation. Buckhurst was ever much

liked; and now no one remembered anything but his good qualities.

'Who heard it was Buckhurst?' said Sedgwick, captain of the school, coming forward.

'I heard Bradford tell Palmer it was Buckhurst,' said a little boy.

'Where is Bradford?'

'Here.'

'What do you know about Buckhurst?'

'Wentworth told me that he was afraid Buckhurst was drowned. He heard it at the Brocas; a bargeman told him about a quarter of an hour ago.'

'Here is Wentworth! Here is Wentworth!' a hundred voices exclaimed, and they formed a circle round him.

'Well, what did you hear, Wentworth?' asked Sedgwick.

'I was at the Brocas, and a Bargee told me that an Eton fellow had been drowned above Surley, and the only Eton boat above Surley to-day, as I can learn, is Buckhurst's four-oar. That is all.'

There was a murmur of hope.

'Oh! come, come,' said Sedgwick, 'there is some chance. Who is with Buckhurst; who knows?'

'I saw him walk down to the Brocas with Vere,' said a boy.

'I hope it is not Vere,' said a little boy, with a tearful eye; 'he never lets any fellow bully me.'

'Here is Maltravers,' halloed out a boy; 'he knows something.'

'Well, what do you know, Maltravers?'

'I heard Boots at the Christopher say that an Eton fellow was drowned, and that he had seen a person who was there.'

'Bring Boots here,' said Sedgwick.

Instantly a band of boys rushed over the way, and in a moment the witness was produced.

'What have you heard, Sam, about this accident?' said Sedgwick.

'Well, sir, I heard a young gentleman was drowned above Monkey Island,' said Boots.

'And no name mentioned?'

'Well, sir, I believe it was Mr. Coningsby.'

A general groan of horror.

'Coningsby, Coningsby! By Heavens I hope not,' said Sedgwick.

'I very much fear so,' said Boots; 'as how the bargeman who told me saw Mr. Coningsby in the Lock House laid out in flannels.'

'I had sooner any fellow had been drowned than Coningsby,' whispered one boy to another.

'I liked him, the best fellow at Eton,' responded his companion, in a smothered tone.

'What a clever fellow he was!'

'And so deuced generous!'

'He would have got the medal if he had lived.'

'And how came he to be drowned? for he was such a fine swimmer!'

'I heard Mr. Coningsby was saving another's life,' continued Boots in his evidence, 'which makes it in a manner more sorrowful.'

'Poor Coningsby!' exclaimed a boy, bursting into tears: 'I move the whole school goes into mourning.'

'I wish we could get hold of this bargeman,' said Sedgwick. 'Now stop, stop, don't all run away in that mad manner; you frighten the people. Charles Herbert and Palmer, you two go down to the Brocas and inquire.'

But just at this moment, an increased stir and excitement were evident in the Long Walk; the circle round Sedgwick opened, and there appeared Henry Sydney and Buckhurst.

There was a dead silence. It was impossible that suspense could be strained to a higher pitch. The air and countenance of Sydney and Buckhurst were rather excited than mournful or alarmed. They needed no inquiries, for before they had penetrated the circle they had become aware of its cause.

Buckhurst, the most energetic of beings, was of course the first to speak. Henry Sydney indeed looked pale and nervous; but his companion, flushed and resolute, knew exactly how to hit a popular assembly, and at once came to the point.

'It is all a false report, an infernal lie; Coningsby is quite safe, and nobody is drowned.'

There was a cheer that might have been heard at Windsor Castle. Then, turning to Sedgwick, in an under tone Buckhurst added,

'It is all right, but, by Jove! we have had a shaver. I will tell you all in a moment, but we want to keep the thing quiet, and so let the fellows disperse, and we will talk afterwards.'

In a few moments the Long Walk had resumed its usual character; but Sedgwick, Herbert, and one or two others turned into the playing fields, where, undisturbed and unnoticed by the multitude, they listened to the promised communication of Buckhurst and Henry Sydney.

'You know we went up the river together,' said Buckhurst. 'Myself, Henry Sydney, Coningsby, Vere, and Millbank. We had breakfasted together, and after twelve agreed to go up to Maidenhead. Well, we went up much higher than we had intended. About a quarter of a mile before we had got to the Lock we pulled up; Coningsby was then steering. Well, we fastened the boat to, and were all of us stretched out on the meadow, when Millbank and Vere said they they should go and bathe in the Lock Pool. The rest of us were opposed; but after Millbank and Vere had gone about ten minutes, Coningsby, who was very fresh, said he had changed his mind and should go and bathe too. So he left us. He had scarcely got to the pool when he heard a cry. There was a fellow drowning. He threw off his clothes and was in in a moment. The fact is this, Millbank had plunged in the pool and found himself in some eddies, caused by the meeting of two currents. He called out to Vere not to come, and tried to swim off. But he was beat, and seeing he was in danger, Vere jumped in. But the stream was so

strong, from the great fall of water from the lasher above, that Vere was exhausted before he could reach Millbank, and nearly sank himself. Well, he just saved himself; but Millbank sank as Coningsby jumped in. What do you think of that ?

'By Jove!' exclaimed Sedgwick, Herbert, and all. The favourite oath of schoolboys perpetuates the divinity of Olympus.

'And now comes the worst. Coningsby caught Millbank when he rose, but he found himself in the midst of the same strong current that had before nearly swamped Vere. What a lucky thing that he had taken into his head not to pull to-day! Fresher than Vere, he just managed to land Millbank and himself. The shouts of Vere called us, and we arrived to find the bodies of Millbank and Coningsby apparently lifeless, for Millbank was quite gone, and Coningsby had swooned on landing.'

'If Coningsby had been lost,' said Henry Sydney, 'I never would have shown my face at Eton again.'

'Can you conceive a position more terrible?' said Buckhurst. 'I declare I shall never forget it as long as I live. However, there was the Lock House at hand; and we got blankets and brandy. Coningsby was soon all right; but Millbank, I can tell you, gave us some trouble. I thought it was all up. Didn't you, Henry Sydney?'

'The most fishy thing I ever saw,' said Henry Sydney.

'Well, we were fairly frightened here,' said Sedgwick. 'The first report was, that you had gone, but that seemed without foundation; but Coningsby was quite given up. Where are they now?'

'They are both at their tutors'. I thought they had better keep quiet. Vere is with Millbank, and we are going back to Coningsby directly; but we thought it best to show, finding on our arrival that there were all sorts of rumours about. I think it will be best to report at once to my tutor, for he will be sure to hear something.'

'I would if I were you.'

CHAPTER X.

WHAT wonderful things are events! The least are of greater importance than the most sublime and comprehensive speculations! In what fanciful schemes to obtain the friendship of Coningsby had Millbank in his reveries often indulged! What combinations that were to extend over years and influence their lives! But the moment that he entered the world of action, his pride recoiled from the plans and hopes which his sympathy had inspired. His sensibility and his inordinate self-respect were always at variance. And he seldom exchanged a word with the being whose idea engrossed his affection.

And now, suddenly, an event had occurred, like all events, unforeseen, which in a few, brief, agitating, tumultuous moments had singularly and utterly changed the relations that previously subsisted between him and the former object of his concealed tenderness. Millbank now stood with respect to Coningsby in the position of one who owes to another the greatest conceivable obligation; a favour which time could permit him neither to forget nor to repay. Pride was a sentiment that could no longer subsist before the preserver of his life. Devotion to that being, open, almost ostentatious, was now a duty, a paramount and absorbing tie. The sense of past peril, the rapture of escape, a renewed relish for the life so nearly forfeited, a deep sentiment of devout gratitude to the providence that had guarded over him, for Millbank was an eminently religious boy, a thought of home, and the anguish that might have overwhelmed his hearth; all these were powerful and exciting emotions for a young and fervent mind, in addition to the peculiar source of sensibility on which we have already touched. Lord Vere, who lodged in the same house as Millbank, and was sitting by his bedside, observed, as night fell, that his mind wandered.

The illness of Millbank, the character of which soon transpired, and was soon exaggerated, attracted the public attention with increased interest to the circumstances out of which it had arisen, and from which the parties principally concerned had wished to have diverted notice. The sufferer, indeed, had transgressed the rules of the school by bathing at an unlicensed spot, where there were no expert swimmers in attendance, as is customary, to instruct the practice and to guard over the lives of the young adventurers. But the circumstances with which this violation of rules had been accompanied, and the assurance of several of the party that they had not themselves infringed the regulations, combined with the high character of Millbank, made the authorities not over anxious to visit with penalties a breach of observance which, in the case of the only proved offender, had been attended with such impressive consequences. The feat of Coningsby was extolled by all as an act of high gallantry and skill. It confirmed and increased the great reputation which he already enjoyed.

'Millbank is getting quite well,' said Buckhurst to Coningsby a few days after the accident. 'Henry Sydney and I are going to see him. Will you come?'

'I think we shall be too many. I will go another day,' replied Coningsby.

So they went without him. They found Millbank up and reading.

'Well, old fellow,' said Buckhurst, 'how are you? We should have come up before, but they would not let us. And you are quite right now, eh?'

'Quite. Has there been any row about it?'

'All blown over,' said Henry Sydney; 'C*****y behaved like a trump.'

'I have seen nobody yet,' said Millbank; 'they would not let me till to-day. Vere looked in this morning and left me this book, but I was asleep. I hope they will let me out in a day or two. I want to thank Coningsby; I never shall rest till I have thanked Coningsby.'

'Oh, he will come to see you,' said Henry Sydney; 'I asked him just now to come with us.'

'Yes!' said Millbank, eagerly; 'and what did he say?'

'He thought we should be too many.'

'I hope I shall see him soon,' said Millbank, 'somehow or other.'

'I will tell him to come,' said Buckhurst.

'Oh! no, no, don't tell him to come,' said Millbank. 'Don't bore him.'

'I know he is going to play a match at fives this afternoon,' said Buckhurst, 'for I am one.'

'And who are the others?' inquired Millbank.

'Herbert and Campbell.'

'Herbert is no match for Coningsby,' said Millbank.

And then they talked over all that had happened since his absence; and Buckhurst gave him a graphic report of the excitement on the afternoon of the accident; at last they were obliged to leave him.

'Well, good-bye, old fellow; we will come and see you every day. What can we do for you? Any books, or anything?'

'If any fellow asks after me,' said Millbank, 'tell him I shall be glad to see him. It is very dull being alone. But do not tell any fellow to come if he does not ask after me.'

Notwithstanding the kind suggestions of Buckhurst and Henry Sydney, Coningsby could not easily bring himself to call on Millbank. He felt a constraint. It seemed as if he went to receive thanks. He would rather have met Millbank again in school, or in the playing fields. Without being able then to analyse his feelings, he shrank unconsciously from that ebullition of sentiment, which in more artificial circles is described as a scene. Not that any dislike of Millbank prompted him to this reserve. On the contrary, since he had conferred a great obligation on Millbank, his prejudice against him had sensibly decreased. How it would have been had Millbank saved Coningsby's life, is quite another affair. Probably, as Coningsby was by nature generous, his sense of justice might have strug-

gled successfully with his painful sense of the overwhelming obligation. But in the present case there was no element to disturb his fair self-satisfaction. He had greatly distinguished himself; he had conferred on his rival an essential service; and the whole world rang with his applause. He began rather to like Millbank; we will not say because Millbank was the unintentional cause of his pleasurable sensations. Really it was that the unusual circumstances had prompted him to a more impartial judgment of his rival's character. In this mood, the day after the visit of Buckhurst and Henry Sydney, Coningsby called on Millbank, but finding his medical attendant with him, Coningsby availed himself of that excuse for going away without seeing him.

The next day he left Millbank a newspaper on his way to school, time not permitting a visit. Two days after, going into his room, he found on his table a letter addressed to 'Harry Coningsby, Esq.

ETON, May —, 1832.

'DEAR CONINGSBY, I very much fear that you must think me a very ungrateful fellow, because you have not heard from me before; but I was in hopes that I might get out and say to you what I feel; but whether I speak or write, it is quite impossible for me to make you understand the feelings of my heart to you. Now, I will say at once, that I have always liked you better than any fellow in the school, and always thought you the cleverest; indeed, I always thought that there was no one like you; but I never would say this or show this, because you never seemed to care for me, and because I was afraid you would think I merely wanted to con with you, as they used to say of some other fellows, whose names I will not mention, because they always tried to do so with Henry Sydney and you. I do not want this at all; but I want, though we may not speak to each other more than before, that we may be friends; and that you will always know that there is nothing I will not do for you, and that I like you better than any fellow at Eton. And I do not mean that this shall be only at

Eton, but afterwards, wherever we may be, that you will always remember that there is nothing I will not do for you. Not because you saved my life, though that is a great thing, but because before that I would have done anything for you; only, for the cause above mentioned, I would not show it. I do not expect that we shall be more together than before; nor can I ever suppose that you could like me as you like Henry Sydney and Buckhurst, or even as you like Vere; but still I hope you will always think of me with kindness now, and let me sign myself, if ever I do write to you,

‘Your most attached, affectionate, and devoted friend,
OSWALD MILLBANK.’

CHAPTER XI.

ABOUT a fortnight after this nearly fatal adventure on the river, it was Montem. One need hardly remind the reader that this celebrated ceremony, of which the origin is lost in obscurity, and which now occurs triennially, is the tenure by which Eton College holds some of its domains. It consists in the waving of a flag by one of the scholars, on a mount near the village of Salt Hill, which, without doubt, derives its name from the circumstance that on this day every visitor to Eton, and every traveller in its vicinity, from the monarch to the peasant, are stopped on the road by youthful brigands in picturesque costume, and summoned to contribute ‘salt,’ in the shape of coin of the realm, to the purse collecting for the Captain of Eton, the senior scholar on the Foundation, who is about to repair to King’s College, Cambridge.

On this day the Captain of Eton appears in a dress as martial as his title: indeed, each sixth-form boy represents in his uniform, though not perhaps according to the exact rules of the Horse Guards, an officer of the army. One is a marshal, another an ensign. There is a lieutenant, too;

and the remainder are sergeants. Each of those who are intrusted with these ephemeral commissions has one or more attendants, the number of these varying according to his rank. These servitors are selected according to the wishes of the several members of the sixth form, out of the ranks of the lower boys, that is, those boys who are below the fifth form; and all these attendants are arrayed in a variety of fancy dresses. The Captain of the Oppidans and the senior Colleger next to the Captain of the school, figure also in fancy costume, and are called 'Saltbearers.' It is their business, together with the twelve senior Collegers of the fifth form, who are called 'Runners,' and whose costume is also determined by the taste of the wearers, to levy the contributions. And all the Oppidans of the fifth form, among whom ranked Coningsby, class as 'Corporals,' and are severally followed by one or more lower boys, who are denominated 'Polemen,' but who appear in their ordinary dress.

It was a fine, bright morning; the bells of Eton and Windsor rang merrily; everybody was astir, and every moment some gay equipage drove into the town. Gaily clustering in the thronged precincts of the College, might be observed many a glistening form: airy Greek or sumptuous Ottoman, heroes of the Holy Sepulchre, Spanish Hidalgos who had fought at Pavia, Highland Chiefs who had charged at Culloden, gay in the tartan of Prince Charlie. The Long Walk was full of busy groups in scarlet coats or fanciful uniforms; some in earnest conversation, some criticising the arriving guests; others encircling some magnificent hero, who astounded them with his slashed doublet or flowing plume.

A knot of boys, sitting on the Long Walk wall, with their feet swinging in the air, watched the arriving guests of the Provost.

'I say, Townshend,' said one, 'there's Grobbleton; he *was* a bully. I wonder if that's his wife? Who's this? The Duke of Agincourt. He wasn't an Eton fellow? Yes, he was. He was called Poitiers then. Oh! ah! his name

is in the upper school, very large, under Charles Fox. I say, Townshend, did you see Saville's turban? What was it made of? He says his mother brought it from Grand Cairo. Didn't he just look like the Saracen's Head? Here are some Dons. That's Hallam! We'll give him a cheer. I say, Townshend, look at this fellow. He doesn't think small beer of himself. I wonder who he is? The Duke of Wellington's valet come to say his master is engaged. Oh! by Jove, he heard you! I wonder if the Duke will come? Won't we give him a cheer!

'By Jove! who is this?' exclaimed Townshend, and he jumped from the wall, and, followed by his companions, rushed towards the road.

Two britskas, each drawn by four grey horses of mettle, and each accompanied by outriders as well mounted, were advancing at a rapid pace along the road that leads from Slough to the College. But they were destined to an irresistible check. About fifty yards before they had reached the gate that leads into Weston's Yard, a ruthless but splendid Albanian, in crimson and gold embroidered jacket, and snowy camise, started forward, and holding out his silver-sheathed yataghan commanded the postillions to stop. A Peruvian Inca on the other side of the road gave a simultaneous command, and would infallibly have transfixed the outriders with an arrow from his unerring bow, had they for an instant hesitated. The Albanian Chief then advanced to the door of the carriage, which he opened, and in a tone of great courtesy, announced that he was under the necessity of troubling its inmates for 'salt.' There was no delay. The Lord of the equipage, with the amiable condescension of a 'grand monarque,' expressed his hope that the collection would be an ample one, and as an old Etonian, placed in the hands of the Albanian his contribution, a magnificent purse, furnished for the occasion, and heavy with gold.

'Don't be alarmed, ladies,' said a very handsome young officer, laughing, and taking off his cocked hat.

'Ah!' exclaimed one of the ladies, turning at the voice, and starting a little. 'Ah! it is Mr. Coningsby.'

Lord Eskdale paid the salt for the next carriage. 'Do they come down pretty stiff?' he inquired, and then, pulling forth a roll of bank-notes from the pocket of his pea-jacket, he wished them good morning.

The courtly Provost, then the benignant Goodall, a man who, though his experience of life was confined to the colleges in which he had passed his days, was naturally gifted with the rarest of all endowments, the talent of reception; and whose happy bearing and gracious manner, a smile ever in his eye and a lively word ever on his lip, must be recalled by all with pleasant recollections, welcomed Lord Monmouth and his friends to an assemblage of the noble, the beautiful, and the celebrated, gathered together in rooms not unworthy of them, as you looked upon their interesting walls, breathing with the portraits of the heroes whom Eton boasts, from Wotton to Wellesley. Music sounded in the quadrangle of the College, in which the boys were already quickly assembling. The Duke of Wellington had arrived, and the boys were cheering a hero, who was also an Eton field-marshal. From an oriel window in one of the Provost's rooms, Lord Monmouth, surrounded by every circumstance that could make life delightful, watched with some intentness the scene in the quadrangle beneath.

'I would give his fame,' said Lord Monmouth, 'if I had it, and my wealth, to be sixteen.'

Five hundred of the youth of England, sparkling with health, high spirits, and fancy dresses, were now assembled in the quadrangle. They formed into rank, and headed by a band of the Guards, thrice they marched round the court. Then quitting the College, they commenced their progress 'ad Montem.' It was a brilliant spectacle to see them defiling through the playing fields, those bowery meads; the river sparkling in the sun, the castled heights of Windsor, their glorious landscape; behind them, the pinnacles of their College.

The road from Eton to Salt Hill was clogged with carriages; the broad fields as far as eye could range were covered with human beings. Amid the burst of martial

music and the shouts of the multitude, the band of heroes, as if they were marching from Athens, or Thebes, or Sparta, to some heroic deed, encircled the mount; the ensign reaches its summit, and then, amid a deafening cry of 'Floreat Etona!' he unfurls, and thrice waves the consecrated standard.

'Lord Monmouth,' said Mr. Rigby to Coningsby, 'wishes that you should beg your friends to dine with him. Of course you will ask Lord Henry and your friend Sir Charles Buckhurst; and is there any one else that you would like to invite?'

'Why there is Vere,' said Coningsby, hesitating, 'and —'

'Vere! What Lord Vere?' said Mr. Rigby. 'Hum! He is one of your friends, is he? His father has done a great deal of mischief, but still he is Lord Vere. Well, of course, you can invite Vere.'

'There is another fellow I should like to ask very much,' said Coningsby, 'if Lord Monmouth would not think I was asking too many.'

'Never fear that; he sent me particularly to tell you to invite as many as you liked.'

'Well, then, I should like to ask Millbank.'

'Millbank!' said Mr. Rigby, a little excited, and then he added, 'Is that a son of Lady Albinia Millbank.'

'No; his mother is not a Lady Albinia, but he is a great friend of mine. His father is a Lancashire manufacturer.'

'By no means,' exclaimed Mr. Rigby, quite agitated. 'There is nothing in the world that Lord Monmouth dislikes so much as Manchester manufacturers, and particularly if they bear the name of Millbank. It must not be thought of, my dear Harry. I hope you have not spoken to the young man on the subject. I assure you it is quite out of the question. It would make Lord Monmouth quite ill. It would spoil everything, quite upset him.'

It was, of course, impossible for Coningsby to urge his wishes against such representations. He was disappointed, rather amazed; but Madame Colonna having sent for him to introduce her to some of the scenes and details of

Eton life, his vexation was soon absorbed in the pride of acting in the face of his companions as the cavalier of a beautiful lady, and becoming the cicerone of the most brilliant party that had attended Montem. He presented his friends, too, to Lord Monmouth, who gave them a cordial invitation to dine with him at his hotel at Windsor, which they warmly accepted. Buckhurst delighted the Marquess by his reckless genius. Even Lucretia deigned to appear amused; especially when, on visiting the upper school, the name of *CARDIFF*, the title Lord Monmouth bore in his youthful days, was pointed out to her by Coningsby, cut with his grandfather's own knife on the classic panels of that memorable wall in which scarcely a name that has flourished in our history, since the commencement of the eighteenth century, may not be observed with curious admiration.

It was the humour of Lord Monmouth that the boys should be entertained with the most various and delicious banquet that luxury could devise or money could command. For some days beforehand orders had been given for the preparation of this festival. Our friends did full justice to their Lucullus; Buckhurst especially, who gave his opinion on the most refined dishes with all the intrepidity of saucy ignorance, and occasionally shook his head over a glass of *Hermitage* or *Côte Rôtie* with a dissatisfaction which a satiated Sybarite could not have exceeded. Considering all things, Coningsby and his friends exhibited a great deal of self-command; but they were gay, even to the verge of frolic. But then the occasion justified it, as much as their youth. All were in high spirits. Madame Colonna declared that she had met nothing in England equal to Montem; that it was a Protestant Carnival; and that its only fault was that it did not last forty days. The Prince himself was all animation, and took wine with every one of the Etonians several times. All went on flowingly until Mr. Rigby contradicted Buckhurst on some point of Eton discipline, which Buckhurst would not stand. He rallied Mr. Rigby roundly, and Coningsby, full of champagne, and

owing Rigby several years of contradiction, followed up the assault. Lord Monmouth, who liked a butt, and had a weakness for boisterous gaiety, sily encouraged the boys, till Rigby began to lose his temper and get noisy.

The lads had the best of it; they said a great many funny things, and delivered themselves of several sharp retorts; whereas there was something ridiculous in Rigby putting forth his 'slashing' talents against such younkers. However, he brought the infliction on himself by his strange habit of deciding on subjects of which he knew nothing, and of always contradicting persons on the very subjects of which they were necessarily masters.

To see Rigby baited was more amusement to Lord Monmouth even than Montem. Lucian Gay, however, when the affair was getting troublesome, came forward as a diversion. He sang an extemporaneous song on the ceremony of the day, and introduced the names of all the guests at the dinner, and of a great many other persons besides. This was capital! The boys were in raptures, but when the singer threw forth a verse about Dr. Keate, the applause became uproarious.

'Good-bye, my dear Harry,' said Lord Monmouth, when he bade his grandson farewell. 'I am going abroad again; I cannot remain in this Radical-ridden country. Remember, though I am away, Monmouth House is your home, at least so long as it belongs to me. I understand my tailor has turned Liberal, and is going to stand for one of the metropolitan districts, a friend of Lord Durham; perhaps I shall find him in it when I return. I fear there are evil days for the NEW GENERATION!'