

MATRIMONY.

THE DOCTRINE OF CHANCES.

Matrimony is like a game of whist, which men are generally playing at every day of their lives, some with variable luck; but in the main, of the many who consume their time in this way, the great proportion end where they commence; that is, they are neither better nor worse at the end of the year. Some skill is necessary in playing the game of matrimony, as it is of whist, to make bad cards turn to good account; but Chance is, after all, the great governor of our destinies, for no man knoweth the moment he may take up all trumps. Some, however, to whom Fortune owes a spite, only get a little one, and if they be of cold phlegmatic constitutions, they are content to take the matter philosophically. With others cards run highly and advantageously—then all is prosperity and good luck: whilst others have only an ace or a king of trumps—and this is like Love, that is all fervour and ecstasy at the first going off—but having no good cards to back it, the game ends in disappointment and loss. Now, by an odd vagary of Fortune, who is undoubtedly a lady from her fickleness, there being some hands in which not a single trump is taken up, and men who never get married, whose long suits remind one of old bachelorism, the skill of the player is shown by the way in which he keeps them up; as if trumps are played out, which is ordinary matrimony, then long suits come in and make tricks; but if, on the contrary, these are held back, and are only used to take his good cards, these may be compared to the fidgetty old man, who makes several nibbles at matrimony; but although he finesse deeply, it will not do, as all his endeavours end in trumps, the ladies cutting him out, and spoiling his deep-laid plans of success. Let no man say the best players are always the greatest winners; for a youth often sits down to play the game of whist or matrimony, having nothing to recommend him but his ingenuous inexperience, and little expects to come off a winner. Contrary to his expectations, the golden sun of fortune shines upon him with brilliancy when least he looked for it; and the morning of life, which set in obscurity,

brightens up towards the eve, to unlooked for success and prosperity.

Every writer deems it necessary to present himself to his reader by a prosy introduction of some sort; one class tell the motives which induced them to write, and delicacy of health has been so often quoted that it is worn completely threadbare — “To relieve the tedium of some solitary hours — the kindness of friends — the unexpected patronage of the public to the author’s last previous work” — have so often fretted their brief hour, that it would be but servile imitation in me to repeat them. Beside, I am even now in the enjoyment of rude, vulgar health, and unromantic plumpness of body. My time passes so trippingly, that I often wish my weeks were months, and no sympathising friends have ever been known to express themselves in flattering terms about me. Thus circumstanced, I could not come before my gentle reader with a fib. I can only say, I have selected the comparison of whist and matrimony, to prove by my own example the doctrine of chances, how mystically it worketh, yet how great is its influence, both proximate and remote, upon all our actions. It is like a watch, the secrets of which are unknown to the many: it serveth as a correct index of time, and pointeth out its flight with truth and accuracy. Yet all we can say is that we know the effect, but we are not entitled to sit in judgment upon the causes which produce that effect.

I had been rambling some few miles from town, and had returned towards the close of a summer’s evening, having enjoyed the exhilarating influence of a walk away from the smut which impertinently intrudes itself upon a man’s nose as he goes through the streets of London. I had quietly seated myself in one of the easy chairs of my club, giving way to those castles in the air, those visions which find an existence more or less in every man—thought of my family and my home, whence I had been absent nearly four years—and the current of my ideas having flown back to the recollections of the scenes of my childhood, I contrasted their peaceful tran-

quillity with the activity and bustle of professional pursuit, in which I had been engaged since I left the retirement of my early days. Anon, fresh forms were conjured up to my imagination. I contemplated my future success: the friends I had secured—the progress I had made towards fame and celebrity, which, however tardy at the outset, with each advancing step acquires new force and vigour, and if unchecked by misfortune or accident, promises to realise that independence, and earn the first, perhaps the fondest, wish which can inspire an Englishman,—to persevere steadily and unwearily in the line he has laid down for himself. I felt that I was happy and contented, and a man in this state is little likely to be out of temper with himself, or those around him, for I was one of those of whom people say whatever he touches is sure to turn to account. Such, Chance, call it which you will, or a *penchant* on the part of Dame Fortune towards an unworthy admirer, had made me so far a proselyte to the system of such as carry their doctrines almost to superstitious reverence, that I began to doubt if she had not more to do with our actions than we generally give her credit for. At all events, man is content with superficial reasoning in favour of any system, and readily brings his doctrines to coincide with the reality as he would wish it to exist; and thus may be understood the risks and hazards which the speculator will encounter, in placing his all on the chance of the elements, because in all former similar attempts of less importance, Fortune has given him the benefit of a good-natured grin; but he takes no heed of the fact, that she has looked with less favouring countenance upon others who had equal claims to her good will.

I might have indulged myself some half hour ruminating over the past, and trying to look into the future, and perhaps was gradually composing myself for a nap. The outlines of the castles in the air were no longer so broad and distinct; they had already begun to be obscure, if not to vanish; the soul, like Mahomet's coffin, was midway poised between the state of sleep and that of waking, and wanted but the preponderance of a swan's down to destroy the equilibrium: all nature seemed wrapped up in a cloak, when just in the momentary open-

ing of the eyes which takes place—when one wants not to go to sleep, yet is as somnolent as a man awake can be, my eyes rested upon the form of a young female, who leant upon the arm of an elderly gentleman. One glance of the moment was sufficient to tell me that figure was one such as I had never gazed upon before. My eyes, just before in uncertainty between wholly closed and winking, seemed to acquire new powers of vision, as they followed the unconscious pair who were receding from my view. The impulse of the moment urged me to almost bound from my easy chair, and as I seized my hat to rush out and obtain a nearer view of her whom one glance was sufficient to set me in a flame, brilliant as that produced by the combustion of the united oxygen and hydrogen gases, sundry of the old members looked at me in astonishment; and well they might, as I was seized with a fit of sudden enthusiasm, which contrasted forcibly with the stillness which reigned in the room. Had they observed me more closely, they might have seen my whole countenance present one mass of almost mad excitement, the concealment of which I was indebted to for the obscurity of the evening, which was now fast approaching. As it was, the sudden movement made some of them look up with wonder; and if their words did not express it, their hard features relaxed into a look which, had I stayed to examine it, could have only meant—"Surely the young man has lost his senses." As the porter opened the door, with one fling I dashed down the flight of steps which led to the street, and I had scarce discretion left me to check my steps, as I felt them in eager desire to set off in full speed after her. Tempering my impatience, I walked on,—looked around, but saw them not. They were gone! lost—irrevocably lost!—vanished I knew not how—but gone they were. I rubbed my eyes, to be sure no film was upon them; but the only effect that resulted was to strike fire from my eye-balls. I still followed in the direction in which I had seen them going, but it was useless. The disappearance was both singular and unaccountable.

To pursue was now hopeless; yet I wandered about with furious impetuosity, passed before the house where, a short time before, I had been so tranquilly

musings, at least a dozen times—met sundry of my acquaintances, whom I disdained to notice. I was positively spoken to by the footman of a lady, a neighbour of mine, who had had directions to call at my residence to request I would make a rubber for an old Indian friend, as they were one short. Not having found me at home he was returning, when he accidentally encountered me. Play whist—sit down to a sober game—endure to be scolded by a cross, sour-grained, liverless, parchment-visaged old bachelor, as peppery as his curry! The thought had almost driven me into a fresh fury. I know not how I escaped; but certain it is I played no whist that evening.

It was fortunate I had not done so, for chancing to saunter in the vicinity of St. James's Park, I espied, standing at the postern of one of the mansions overlooking it, the identical footman of the morning, plainly betokening, by the easy nonchalance of his lounging posture, that although not the proprietor, he was the next best thing to it—the proprietor's footman. "Upon that hint I spake," or rather inwardly meditated: the result of which was, a certain resolve to pass no fewer hours of the day in the vicinity in which I then found myself.

What a change had so brief an interval effected in my whole constitution; for what could be more strongly and strangely contrasted than the excitement with which I had gone to and fro, and the sober contemplative mood in which I had meditated but in a few previous moments. It was nothing short of a complete revulsion of my nature, in which my former comparatively inenergetic disposition was obliterated, and in its place arose one of stormy passion and fiery excitation.

Heretofore I was considered by my acquaintance as one of the most consummate of flirts. This was a truth which, like the metaphysical verities of the logicians, was incontrovertible. An abundant supply of that badinage which consists in saying pretty nothings, and no small affectation of sentimental sincerity, had, on more than one occasion, caused me to be an object of love by sundry young ladies, whose notions of the passion consist in their giving their hearts, for the time, to the best waltzer, and the most agreeable propounder of agreeable

nothings of their coterie. It was also notorious, that at Brighton I was enabled to obtain passing fair partners, when the rest of the blue coats (a phrase now to be abandoned by our modern Brummels) were enduring a species of Coventry, owing to the prevalence of scarlet fever among the fair sex, occasioned by the too close approximation of a gallant dragoon regiment to the scene of their retirement. This important fact had secured me many advantages, yet I managed to pass unscathed; and oft as I had thrown the gauntlet of flirtation, I had still remained free from victimisation of the saucy god.

But now was this a bright vision sent to mock me, and elude my grasp almost as I seized it—a dream, painted in the most vivid and radiant colours which fancy could select, or was it reality? The time—the place—the fatigue, both mental and bodily, consequent upon this sudden excitement, were too palpable, too much things of this mortal life, to admit of its being mistaken for "fancy's sketch." Yet the sudden disappearance, the vanishing of the whole party, was so improbable, so unaccountable, as if the earth had opened to swallow them, or rather that the ethereal and sylph-like form had fled to the heavens, there to dwell with the other constellations of brightness. In short, there was no rational way of explaining it, though my brain had almost burnt in its convulsive efforts to unfathom the mystery.

Here was I, in the shortest particle of time which imagination can conceive, driven almost to madness by this bright star of a moment, evanescent at its appearance, whose light could be scarce said to twinkle, much less to shine steadily beyond a mere second. A spirit of romance, the appearance of which had I revealed to my friends, I had been set down as a madman; and the hint once set agoing, would soon be told as a fact, which was beyond the power of disputation. The more I reflected, the more was I firmly convinced that I was regularly and irrevocably gone. It was lucky for me, that still no one was really conscious of my new state, else had I been subjected to that perpetual banter which young ladies and gentlemen conceive it to be a duty to inflict on any unfortunate wight upon whom they can pounce. What a contrast is there between the

demeanour of both sexes when they love. A man is about the most awkward animal in the creation; he is in a perpetual fidget, and a nuisance to all his acquaintance. "Oh that mine enemy would write a book!" was the exclamation of the olden time; I say, "Oh that my enemy might fall in love, and I know it!" He is such a fool under the influence of the tender passion, he displays all the grosser particles; whilst the ethereal sentiment—the refined romance—the inexplicable delicacy which a woman alone understands, are all so many gorgons, which he avoids as if this were the death, instead of the life—the quintessential essence of all that is pure and hallowed in love! The reason of this phenomenon can scarce be otherwise accounted for, than from the naturally uncouth dispositions which nature has engrafted upon the more stern and vigorous half of the human race.

Happy indeed was it for me that I had no prying friends to obtrude upon my solitude of thought, or to disturb those fairy fancies, Paphian bowers, and rosy little gods which were conjured up in hundreds to my perturbed imagination. It was bad enough to be in love; but to be pestered by every coquettish damsel, who having found that her charms could not accomplish the conquest, takes her measure of revenge in ridicule, was more than tender soul like mine could endure.

Of course I went to bed—a hero or a heroine in love are always sure to commune with their pillow, and if their career be rough and uncomfortable, as a matter of course they are, according to novel writers, sure to moisten them with their tears. Though I shed no tears, I lay tossing and tumbling about like a hero; for to sleep under such circumstances would be profanation. Morning came, twilight burst into a sunny morning; the little birds began, some to chirrup, and some to join in tuneful harmony, sounded upon my ear: all I further know was, that I believed I was wandering for hours in the same vicinity where I had gained a sight of the already beloved object, yet I saw her not. I was fatigued and almost worn out—hope was beginning to fade; memory, however, still continued as strong; but despair was fast gaining the mastery over me, when my heart began to throb with fresh impulse—my breast to heave

with renewed efforts—my breath was hurried from my chest in short convulsive sobs,—I looked around, I beheld her as she drew up the window blind of the identical house near St. James's Park, which I had already settled in my own mind was her residence. I tried to advance to be closer to her, but my legs failed me, and I trembled most violently with agitation. Unable to go nearer, I was worked up into an agony of excitement,—yet she seemed to see me, and to be conscious that I would address her. I struggled to give utterance, and my tongue cleaved to my palate; every fresh effort for a time seemed to end in disappointment: at last I conquered my agitation, and freed myself from the trammels which held me back; I bounded forward—the window opened—she came upon the balcony—I now struggled to suppress my emotion, and made almost convulsive efforts to be calm: she looked,—oh! such a look it was,—that which angel would give to suppliant mortal, so full was it of beneficence. I saw that she was about to speak—I almost hung upon her expected words, my whole soul was wrapped up in the ecstasy of the moment,—I was all-absorbed attention as she stood full before me and said,—O Heaven, what a terrible contrast!—"Here, sir, is your warm water, it is just two o'clock!"

There was an ending to all my bright vision, there a climax for the fancied happiness with which I was surrounded.

The fact was simply that I had not fallen asleep until morning, and my servant, surprised at my unusual lateness, had entered my room to awake me; and had, I suppose, drawn the curtain of the bed at the moment I fancied my incognita had appeared at her window. As I awoke, the perspiration stood upon my brow, and my whole frame was in excitement and fever. Here was I, a second time within a day, mocked by Fortune, and made the victim of her caprice. But then it might have been a bright beacon, lighted up to imprint her likeness more lastingly upon the tablets of my memory, and to urge me on, as dreams they say are phantascopiæ; the pictures of which, though they are impalpable, and can be passed through by the finger, are nevertheless reflections of real ones concealed from general view.

A single glance at a person is often

sufficient to judge by their demeanour of the dignity, ease, and elegance which entitle him or her to consideration. My incognita was evidently mild and contemplative, intelligence beamed in her dark blue eye, clear as the atmosphere which perpetually reigns triumphant in Italia's clime. Her eyelash was pencilled, as the glowing fervour of a young and enthusiastic artist would paint the object of his highly-wrought fancy. Her carriage was noble and commanding. It had something of the exalted feature of aristocracy, blended with the mild and placid virtue of humility; and as she leant upon the arm of her elderly friend, (as it was not until afterwards I knew that it was her father, one who had bravely and manfully fought for his country, and made one of the many, alike distinguished for their daring courage and the soundness of their judgment in the moment of need,) there was something of confiding sweetness—something of maiden loveliness, infinitely more captivating than the bold and determined mien and aspect which too often gives a masculineness of tone that ill harmonizes with the natural retiring nature of the sex. A single look of the moment was sufficient to point all these circumstances with all the vigour of impressions perpetually repeated, and I asked but that one look to feel myself perpetually, irrevocably in love. I was, of course, determined to learn her name and rank; and with this resolution, no sooner was I dressed in reality, than as if like the pulsations of the heart, which are involuntary, and we cannot control them, I was attracted to the square where I had both seen her and been disappointed the previous evening.

Howell and James' "ruination shop," as Lady Morgan calls it, was in my way. How or why I know not, the thought occurred to me, that by bare possibility there was a chance she might be there; at all events, it was worth while to try! Amongst the number of footmen collected at the door of the emporium of fashion, stood the identical one of the long cane, who had followed her: a carriage was drawn up, and the livery of the coachman blue, with scarlet and gold facings—it was identically the same. There was, of course, no doubt of my seeing her; and none but a lover, mad as I was, can tell how my heart throbbed with delight at the prospect. Necessity, they

say, sharpens wit, else confused, bewildered as I was, it had never occurred to me to look at the crest, arms, and motto, emblazoned upon the panel of the carriage. The last *audaciter et fortiter* I resolved to take as an omen; as to my mind, its obvious meaning was, faint heart never won fair lady. The hand in dagger rising from an earl's coronet were carefully noted in my pocket-book, to be referred to in that *very valuable work*, the "Heraldic Dictionary." It is hardly possible to say how long I may have remained in expectation; but at length my patience was rewarded, and I did see her. Oh, ye gods! as she stepped into her carriage. "Home," cried Joseph of the long cane. The aristocratic horses, proud of the lovely burden they carried, bounded forward; and as she passed, I thought—it was but a thought of the moment, dispelled like a dew-drop—that she looked upon me as I, fascinated, on the spot gazed as firmly as serpent ever gazed upon his intended victim. To follow was useless, as the wheels twirled with more velocity than did my brain, as I followed with my eye the carriage down Waterloo-place. "She is going a round home," thought I, as I saw them take a wrong turn, for they passed the nearest street that led to their house, and went towards Charing-cross, instead of St. James's-street.

The "Court Guide" was speedily referred to, to discover the name of the owner of the house in — square, when, horror inexpressible! that of John Gubbins, Esq., stared me full in the face—John Gubbins, and she, of course, a Miss Gubbins. Then all the little Gubbinses came to my mind to fill up the picture with their interminable faces, as it was one of those names the owners of which are sure to be anti-Malthusians, both in doctrine and practice. The thought was squeamish—it was positively sickening; and at the first blush of the thing, in a fit of desperation, I had fully made up my mind to get to the top of the headless monument in Carlton-place, and fling myself down, a devoted victim to the name of Gubbins. Why I did not put my theory in practice, I know not. Despair pulled one tail of my coat, and I suppose Hope tugged more lustily at the other, and drove in Reflection, which whispered, or rather buzzed, into my ear—"Was a Gubbins ever known to

have a crest rising from an earl's coronet? What Gubbins was ever so passing fair as *your inamorata*? This, at all events, was consoling, and I thanked Reflection for her kind consideration—it was a soother to the torture inflicted upon a too sensitive mind—a consolation in the hour of distress, which made me rejoice that I had not immolated myself, and gave time for Discretion to chime in with a piece of advice. No man should ever do more than go mad for a girl. Beside, it is more effective from its longer duration than killing yourself, when you may so soon be forgotten. The “Heraldic Dictionary” confirmed reflection's judgment: it showed no Gubbins with an earl's coronet; it traced with accuracy the Gubbinses, from Gubs—originally Cub—changed by time to Gub; and the bins added to distinguish them from another Gubbins, who showed their pedigree to be derived from Grub, since extinct. There was an ancestor who fought at Agincourt, and killed an opponent with his own hand, the present representative of the family—“John Gubbins, Esq., aged 52, unmarried.” This intelligence restored me: I was convinced all along that one so fair—so aristocratic—so loveable, could never have had so detested a patronymic; but then, lover-like at the moment, I gave way to all those fears as doubts, which constitute one of the soul-inflicting tortures with which love is ever entangled.

I must, however, check these details. Three months of a lover's life, before matters are arranged, is at best so much purgatory; with me it was a grade lower, for I almost daily said—“My Georgiana!” for such, at length, I ascertained her name to be, without the power of addressing her. She passed before me, and my heart longed to commune with her, to pour out the fervent expression of unalterable love—but I dared not. That

she saw me was undoubted—that she knew me was equally certain—that she checked me with a reproving glance, when my eyes were continually fixed upon her, was also a fact; yet was it done so gently, so timidly, that it left the meaning doubtful, whether she felt more anger or pity. I managed so that we met regularly at church. There I beheld her in the attitude of meek and humble piety, her soul absorbed with due reverence of the scene—her whole manner breathing the pure and hallowed charm of religion—a charm which knows no counterfeit; and able as is the most consummate hypocrite, it is in the expression of a benign and peaceful countenance that he is really wanting. Hypocrisy in the body without the soul of religion—the filthy worm which constitutes its nature is mean, grovelling, and loathing; and he does well to society who tramples upon and crushes the noxious and venomous reptile. To Georgiana's influence do I first attribute that sense of religion which, until induced by her example to lift up my voice in thanks, was comparatively unknown to me. I ever had a cold, haughty respect for the sacred things of another and a better world; but to her am I indebted for that feeling, than which I conceive nothing is more exalted and noble in man, or a more true or beautiful type of the heart of the softer sex. It is as the refreshing stream of pure and crystal water, which meanders through the valley, fertilising and enriching the soil, filling the pores of the earth with the sap which nourishes the vegetable and, indirectly, the animal kingdom, and causing all things to assume the joyous aspect of prospering nature. The waters of true religion are equally nourishing, and equally productive of abundant crops of good works, as the stream is beneficial to the circumjacent soil.

(*To be continued.*)

MATRIMONY.

THE DOCTRINE OF CHANCES.

(Continued from page 216.)

A new scene broke upon me, the divinity had been stirred within me; I was now fated to experience a scene of terrestrial enchantment: it was at the Opera. Pasta had sung with wondrous success, her deep and mellow tones had flown to the ear with honeyed sweetness and richness of expression; Taglioni had bounded into mid-air, and, like the gossamer, had almost floated along the ethereal fluid.

The Opera had been crowded by as brilliant and dazzling a galaxy of beauty, as had ever graced its walls. It was one of those exquisite nights, when neither singer was troubled with the rheum—the only malady to which they are subject, and the *artistes de la danse* had escaped sprains of the ankle—when every countenance was lit up with satisfaction; and even the fops of the pit, who constitute

themselves the judges, in accents audible in the third tier of boxes gave token of their assent. I, too, was happy—yet I listened not to Pasta; and the plaudits, as they swelled into one almost unanimous expression of delight at the heavenly grace of the Taglioni, had nearly been unheard by me: for *she*—the sole object of my adoration in this instance—was there!—it was the first time I had seen her by the lamps' reflective rays. I had loved—had seen her countenance rivaling the glorious beams of day; but, somehow or other, never felt that she was so beautiful—never felt that she was so truly the being upon whom my heart had fixed its first, its only affection. Perhaps it was that our eyes had met more than once, and methought there was an expression of more than usual indulgence. The ballet had now nearly concluded: the tale of the *Sylphide* had almost been told,—it had come to that scene where the lovely being of the air is bereft of her mortal love, which Taglioni describes with such touching pathos the anguish that consumes her, when Georgiana's eyes and mine again met. The glance was but momentary. The eyelash was lowered almost at the hair's-breadth of time that it was raised; yet short as it was, and imperceptible as it would have been to aught but lover, it told a tale of love, returned more glowing than imagination can conceive—more expressive than the faint pen of man can describe. Who that has once felt the influence of this one look—and it comes but once in the era of man's life—cannot understand it? Who that has not known it would comprehend it by description? It is the communion of souls that are formed for each other; the hallowed moment of bliss, when all things else sink into insignificance—when man partakes of joy almost beyond terrestrial—when distinction of rank, wealth, and station are dissipated, and fade from the memory during these seconds of enchantment. Too sweet is it—too pure for repetition, it fades at its birth; and like the aloe-tree, that in our clime is said to take a century to blossom but once in its existence, it no sooner appears than it vanishes.

I was now in a whirlpool of delight—she had seen me, had so far at least known me: then there was hope the lovely Georgiana might still be mine. I know not how the curtain dropped—I know not how

I got through the crowded entrance of the pit, as it was pouring out its shoals of well-dressed people, who had been regularly steamed for the last six hours: I must have pushed with lusty struggles, as sundry sounds reached me, which might have afforded at another time much of the new amusement and phraseology of the day. But I heeded them not. I rushed on, regardless of the insults that were offered me, and arrived towards the exterior just in time to hear the announcement of the carriage re-echoed from mouth to mouth, until, with radical nonchalance, he at the entrance roars out the patronymic, but sinks the title, mingling all ranks in chaotic confusion; and paying as much respect to the family of six, who get a bookseller's box on the fourth tier for the night, as to the lovely beings who look more like the angels sent to listen to the strains of harmony, than beings of this habitable earth.

She was the last of the party to enter the carriage: her delicate little foot encased in a white satin shoe, and her taper ankle just displayed beneath the hem of her garment, had but rested upon the first step, while the other was still in the mid air, when a sudden movement caused by the coachman of the carriage next in succession, having violently struck his horses, frightened the spirited and noble animals belonging to her. The sound of the whip made them bound forward as if in the act of moving on. Pardon these incidents; which of them are not dear to love? It was little beyond a mere startle, instantly checked by the firmness of the coachman; but the sudden jerk given to restrain their advance, caused them to back: she was still upon the step, when in the effort to steady herself she slipped. The footman was on the wrong side for supporting her, he being nearest to the horses. In the struggle to recover her balance, she must have fallen upon the curb-stone, and coming upon the back of her head, the consequences must have been fatal, had not I, who saw the danger, quick as lightning, made a rush to the spot; in doing which I knocked down an old dowager who stood in my way, and caught my propitiating angel in my arms at the very moment her fate seemed inevitable! A second later, and nothing could have saved her. The unexpected shock had almost unnerved her; in a moment the colour fled

her cheeks,—it was, however, only transient. I took her hand in mine, which trembled like an aspen leaf; and as she opened her eyes, and seemed restored to consciousness, I dared to press her closely to my bosom, for she then lay almost unconscious in my arms. The delicate hand that I had grasped, I was sure returned the pressure; it was almost imperceptible, so gentle was it, yet I could not be deceived. But this scene could not last much longer in the presence of the crowd, who had collected around. She still trembled as I placed her in her carriage—"Home," cried Joseph: a smile of grateful acknowledgment rewarded me as I took off my hat; and it is hardly possible to tell how long I might have remained transfixed to the spot, had I not been recalled to my senses by the blustering command of the attending constable, "to move on."

When a man has done what he conceives to be a goodly action, he arranges his hat with peculiar gusto—takes short and hurried steps—now goes quick—again he draws up: he smiles and takes credit to himself for his deed, on the ground of innate rectitude, while he is only indebted to chance. He mutters as he goes along, and thinks much more of himself than the action. Now all this I did, and more; and, as I went along as trippingly as summer butterfly, I gave way to a chain of cogitations, which as they are only cogitations, and upon the one subject, need not be repeated. How the matter stood with me, is easier conceived than described.

I now conceived myself in a somewhat different position, and felt myself entitled to hope. I had done what the world would have called saving her life—something like gratitude was due on her part; and if I could substantiate a claim for it, her every look and manner told me she would not long hesitate in repaying me with that which I most valued—her regard. I required not the confirmation which words could give to understand her. The momentary glance in the theatre—the pressure of the hand as she found that it was I who supported her—the lovely expression of kindness as the carriage was twirled away, were all so many circumstances of corroboration, that in my mind decided me to persevere. But then that odious drawback—the want of an introduction came to falsify

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all my flattering hopes, and to dispel the bright visions of happiness which floated across my imagination. When I pictured her as my wife—my beloved wife, and my happiness in so calling her—the fairy delusion was still damped by the recollection of how is the first step to that end to be taken. I had long since confirmed my opinion, that she was not a Miss Gubbins; that the proprietor of the house where I had seen her enter the first evening was a rich old bachelor, with whom her father had been on intimate terms since their school-boy days. I also soon found their real residence; but still with every advantage, which even now I might be said to possess towards winning her if I had the opportunity, I was just where I had started, as far as knowing her according to the established rules of society. There was this perpetual thorn to perplex me, and dash the cup of bliss from the lips of the weary traveller, through the meandrous ways of unextinguishable love. Plans were invented, which were only concocted to prove their inutility: every scheme that I thought of, when considered, I laid aside as impracticable. To dare to speak to her, even now, after so many expressions, beyond words, without this sanction, would seem impertinence; and even could I suppose she sanctioned my addresses, I myself would feel that the angel had fallen to the mere woman. Then again, to write—yes, that might do—to be energetic, yet respectful—to plead my cause with all the force which pure and unchangeable love would prompt, might be admirable. But how to convey it—there was the difficulty: through her maid—impossible to make a vulgar-minded chattering soubrette the administering Mercury between us—the thought had almost banished the idea of writing from my mind. To fling it into her carriage as she passed—and then perchance to see it thrown out with displeasure. On every side there were insurmountable impediments; and like the criminal who sees that there is not the slightest chance, by ordinary means, of escaping the doom that awaits him, I had strung up my mind to that degree of resolution, that unless some unaccountable piece of good fortune should turn up, I must after all content myself with continuing desperately in love, without the glimpse of a hope of success, beyond that

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of knowing that if ever opportunity did occur, I might reckon upon being rewarded for my patience and constancy. Lingered as time is when gloom oppresses one, it nevertheless passes on. The tortoise must eventually come to the end of his journey. A country summer, a London winter fled—the rural autumn was fast approaching—Newman's post-horses were daily, hourly, passing from town, drawing after them sundry chariots, family carriages, rumbles, and all the cases, band-boxes, trunks, which our modern Noah's arks contain. The fashionable departures took up a goodly column of the *Morning Post*, whilst the "arrivals" were buried in an obscure corner of the paper, as if the printers were ashamed of those whom they classed under the names of fashionables—plain misters staying at some doubtful West-end hotel—not a lord to be had for love or money. Just that season, when the Smiths, and Thompsons, and Johnsons, and all those people who remain in town all the year, begin to figure in the aristocratic columns—when window shutters are closed in all well-regulated establishments, and when every body professing to be somebody is anxious to rid himself of the fumes of a London season. Such was just the time when in a fit of ennui, having at least twice read over the police reports, and got all the scandal off by heart, my eyes involuntarily glanced among the departures upon the names of "The Hon. Mrs. and Miss Georgiana Eldermont for Dover." Upon the instant, accoutred as I was, I determined to follow; and, as little preparation was necessary, the next morning found me safely landed at Wright's-hotel, per mail. Of all places in the world, a watering-place is the dullest, where you are unwilling to enter into the spirit of all the little nonsensical amusements, which fill up the measure of time of those who go to forget care and the anxieties of life. Bathing becomes wearisome—the newspapers are insipid—there is nothing to do of an evening; and bad as town is, there are always so many resources there, that a lover, the current of whose affection runneth unsmoothly, had better eschew even romantic dells and mountain scenery for the retreat of London. To add to the number of my misfortunes, a gale of wind, such as Æolus must have taken at

least six weeks to concoct, continued for three days, with only occasional intermissions; and then torrents of rain descended, "unequalled in the recollection of the oldest inhabitant." In vain I went twice to church on Sunday—in vain I twice saw my Georgiana upon the Marine Parade; and had nearly been blown into the ocean for my temerity, as a blast of wind came right bolt against me. It would not do, the power of man could no longer endure this state of things. I hastened back to town with as much speed as I had evaporated, cursed the storm, and made a vow never to quit London again. In the first moment of passion, I firmly resolved to turn recluse, or monk of La Trappe, where I might never open my lips again; and was only saved by recollecting that if I had gone, she would never have known what had become of me.

Fate had now been plaguing me for fully a year, and as a person of a sulky temperament has an occasional day of sunshine, so it would seem that fate had got out of its dumps, and was determined to show me a little favour and kindness. I was pacing steadily along one of the fashionable streets, thinking as usual, but engaged in the duties of my profession, with the cold spirit of one who participates not in the excitement consequent upon interest. "How do you?—how do you?" exclaimed a female voice as I passed on to get before her: "do you thus cut all your old acquaintance?" I turned round and saw a lady, of whom I had neither heard nor seen during the last four years. I really felt happy, as if by instinct, little knowing the consequences that would ensue from this recognition. Indeed, I had always been a favourite with her. The first congratulations over, I was introduced to her husband, Captain Arneville.

"Now, it is so long since we have met, you must just come and spend the remainder of the day with us. Give me your arm. No refusal. I wish to hear all that you have been doing since we separated in Paris." I pleaded an excuse for the day, on the ground of professional occupation; "and as to dinner——" "True," said Mrs. Arneville; "but when I last saw you, that did not often interfere: however, as we get on in the world, I suppose," said she smiling, "we become more grave and steady: at

all events we shall meet at six." I had it on the tip of my tongue to plead a previous engagement, which I *feared* I could not avoid; but I forgot the deception in the anticipated pleasure of seeing an old friend.

I went,—we chatted and talked, as old friends always do who had been so long separated: she told me I was altered, that I had become less volatile in my spirits—less laughter-loving than when we used to meet; that, in short, I was an altered man. "As for me," said she, "I have been married these two years to Captain Arneville: we have been leading a wandering life ever since our marriage; for immediately after he quitted the *d Hussars, and——"

"The *d Hussars!" exclaimed I, "impossible! surely Captain Arneville was not in the *d Hussars? I must have seen his name in the army-list; and I have too often looked at the officers of this regiment, not to know who belonged to it." "Why," she added, "why this sudden agitation, there is something more here than meets the eye; however, I shall not press for secrets that you may be unwilling to disclose." The conversation turned to other topics, but my mind was solely engrossed upon the one.

"Have you had a second cup of tea," asked my kind friend, Mrs. Arneville.

"The *d!" exclaimed I, "unconscious of any thing but the one subject—I had just perception enough to observe a look and a suppressed smile exchanged between the couple.—At length I summoned courage to ask the captain, was he acquainted with Colonel Eldermont. There was, I suppose, an air of consciousness about me, which must have betrayed me. I thought I should not be agitated, and I almost wished I had not commenced to ask the question before it was half spoken. "I know him intimately," said he; "he was my first and earliest friend—we have fought beside one another many times."

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Mrs. Arneville, "he is married to my old school-fellow. They only came to town yesterday. Horatio, that reminds me that we must call there to-morrow."

I took care to be with Mrs. Arneville a good hour before she left home—I told

her every thing—made her my confidant, entreated her to manage matters, and to arrange for my introduction, if it were possible.

"Then you are altered," said she; "but the fault shall not be mine if I do not make you happy."

She was in part as good as her word.—It will be needless to dwell upon the ecstasy I felt at the moment of introduction—the encouraging smile I received from Georgiana on the occasion, when she felt for my embarrassment: all that have been in love understand this matter much better than I can explain it; and those who have never loved need not inquire, as they cannot appreciate the feeling. What followed would have the tedium of a thrice-told tale.

Three years and a half have elapsed since the period of my introduction. A child, which every one says is lovely, is now clambering upon my knee, and her mother, seated beside me, has more than once wondered what makes me defer so long our promised walk in the garden.—Cannot the gentle reader fill up the picture? *She* has been my wife these three years, and the girl is the image of her—she has been to me every thing that a fond and doating husband can desire; the single glance that kindled the spark of love, has sufficed to support the pure and lambent flame of affection—and long may it continue so. I am fast ascending, I may say, towards the summit of my profession, health and prosperity shine around us, and uninterrupted bliss is our portion. Mr. Gubbins has been an excellent friend, and I have long since forgotten the horror with which his name inspired me. Such is the extraordinary extent of his kindness, that he has even promised to make the young Georgiana the heiress of his fortune, whilst I must provide for one that is shortly expected to make its appearance in this world; and now farewell, gentle reader, and with my valedictory benediction, let me ask what but the propitious smile of Fortune (call it by a better name if you please) could have given me such stores of happiness, or rewarded me for the patient endurance with which I bore the rebuffs which the fickle goddess so long inflicted upon me?