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A Novel.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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1852.
PROFESSIONS.

CHAPTER I.

In these days a fancy ball in the country is of rare occurrence, and when one does take place, the various personages there assembled in all their variety of costume do not, generally speaking, at all keep up the character they appear in; and a Lady Jane Grey may be seen dancing away in the dress of execution, and a Mary Queen of Scots arm in arm with her implacable foe and rival, good Queen Bess.
Such incongruous scenes must always take place on such occasions, unless the party invited consult together, and choose costumes adapted to their peculiar feelings of intimacy, or slight acquaintance, of love, or hatred, rather than to the suitableness or becomingness of the dress.

The evening of the Deerfold fancy ball had at length arrived, and the old walls and spacious apartments of the mansion, could they have spoken, would have said such revelry had not been seen there for centuries. The arrangements were perfect, the decorations exquisite, and the testy Baronet could not find an excuse on this evening for moroseness or rudeness. Indeed, Sir Trevor Dolman was so unlike himself that he might almost have chosen from the groups of lovely women around him, in their elegant costumes, the future mistress of Deerfold, without danger of a refusal.

Mrs. Brown, as Mary Queen of Scots,
was one of the most conspicuous characters, and one of the best dressed; but there the personal likeness ended. Her rotund figure, her dark muddy complexion, her want of dignity, and her too apparent vulgarity, destroyed the illusion at a glance. But certainly the unhappy Queen herself never gave greater scope to her levity, nor allowed her vivacity to conquer her prudence more than Mrs. Brown did during the whole of this evening. Whenever she thought of it, she devoted herself to Sir Trevor, but his manner was almost indifferent to his dear Mrs. Brown, for his pleasure consisted in gazing on his own magnificence, and in catching words of praise of his entertainment from the various groups dispersed over his handsome suite of rooms. He opened the ball with a lovely Greek lady, and as he handed her to her seat, he thought Lady Agnes Scott might do honour to his choice, and he tried to smile upon her.
in admiration, but the fair Greek was not looking at him. Her gaze was fixed on a Norman peasant, the very best dressed girl in the room, and who looked the character she had assumed, exactly. She was very handsome, too, and Lady Agnes gave her last sigh to Clive as she withdrew her eyes from Helen Murray, and wondered not that he loved her.

Helen had been dancing with her faithful shepherd, Lewis Pemberton, and they were now talking away in their native tongue, even assuming the Norman French, which they managed capitally, to the amusement of Lord Davenant, who stood near to them, and who was wondering who this merry happy couple could be. Lord Leslie, in his full uniform, now approached. He shook hands with the amorous shepherd boy, and bowed gracefully to his companion. Helen blushed, though she knew not why.

"Where's Clive to-night, Miss Mur-
ray?" asked Lord Leslie, as he still stood by Helen's chair. "I do not see him here."

"Mr. Clive is not well, Lord Leslie," said Helen, gravely; "but, in any case, he would not have been here to-night."

"May I ask why not?" said his lordship.

"Certainly," replied Helen; "but from your knowledge of your cousin I should think it rather a useless question. Mr. Clive would not deem the scene very fitting his profession."

"Oh, indeed," replied his lordship. "I was not aware Clive was so particular; but I believe he is right." And Lord Leslie gave himself immense credit for this acknowledgment, as he thought Miss Murray looked handsomer than ever, and he remained by her side.

Lord Davenant approached. "Well, Leslie," said his lordship, "you are a lucky fellow to be able to appear in your own character this evening. I had
serious thoughts of enlisting last week, to enable me to do the same."

"Constance tells me," said Lord Leslie, "that you dislike a thing of this sort. I am sure your costume does her immense credit."

Lord Davenant was dressed as a courtier in the time of Charles the First. Miss Davenant, who had been dancing with a pilgrim, in the person of Frank Pemberton, now sat down by Lewis, and Lord Leslie immediately placed himself beside her. "I could not find you, Constance," said he, "in your new character."

"How do you like it, Clarence?" she asked.

"It becomes you exceedingly," replied Leslie; "but the high heeled shoes must be difficult to manage."

"Rather," but as I shall not dance again, Leslie, that difficulty is over," said Constance.

"You are too kind to me, Constance,"
sighed Leslie; and he looked at Helen. "Pray dance again if you like it; and you always seem to enjoy it."

"I enjoy this much more," she replied. "Davenant, do give me the pleasure of seeing that old English dress in motion. I must insist upon its moving in a dance of some sort."

"A minuet is the only one in character, surely," said Lewis Pemberton. "Don't you think so, Miss Murray?"

At the name of Murray Miss Davenant turned quickly round. Helen was answering Lewis, and at that moment Lord Heathdown went up to her and introduced a Dalmatian youth, splendidly attired and very handsome; and Helen left the group to waltz with Mr. Edward Fairfax.

"Is that Helen Murray?" whispered Constance to Lord Leslie.

"Yes," he replied. "Is she not handsome?"

"Very—oh, very. I could forgive
any one, even you, Clarence, falling in love there;” said Miss Davenant, as she watched Helen’s receding form.

Lord Leslie did not speak. His eyes were following the peasant girl.

Lewis Pemberton now asked Miss Davenant for the next waltz.

“Thank you, gentle shepherd,” she replied, “but I do not even know what you mean. Some outlandish fandango, I suppose, introduced by your dance-loving nation into our once sombre England. You must excuse me.” Lewis, amused by her vivacity, now threaded his way through the groups of figures who were watching the dancers, and at last seemed satisfied with his locality. He continued to gaze on the Norman peasant, and he almost envied the good looks of the Dalmation. He heard many say “what a handsome couple, and something alike, too. How well Mr. Edward Fairfax dances.”

“Yes, he deserves to have Helen Mur-
ray for a partner," exclaimed Jack Brown, whom his mother had persuaded to be Darnley, for want of a better. Jack's dress was the admiration of many, but the uncooth way in which he carried it about, quite destroyed its effect. He was watching his opportunity to ask Helen to dance, and he was determined that evening, to make her promise to be his, for he thought himself irresistible in his present costume, if not in his own plain dress.

Lord Davenant had not yet approached Lady Agnes. She had only danced once, and she seemed as if she preferred being a spectator, as she had refused to dance with men of every nation, who all seemed anxious to engage the beautiful Greek. Ernest Pemberton, in a handsome Turkish dress, was by her side, and he was unusually loquacious, for generally he spoke little. He was asking her about the Davenants, and whether it was true that her brother was engaged to Miss
Davenant. "Indeed," said Ernest, "I have been told, Lady Agnes, that there is likely to be a double marriage in your families."

"Never, Ernest," said Agnes, in a low tone, but not so low as to escape Lord Davenant. A deep sigh startled Agnes, and she looked round. Davenant was gone, and Agnes had not seen him.

"Well," said Mr. Pemberton, "I never believe reports of that kind, but I suppose Lord Leslie's engagement is announced."

"My brother's profession calls him abroad again very soon, and I think a soldier has no time to be married," was Agnes' evasive answer.

Ernest saw she was not inclined to be communicative. He now said, "Mr. Clive is not here to night. You know, of course, that he is very unwell."

Lady Agnes turned pale, but she commanded herself. "No, indeed, I do not. I hope not seriously so?" she asked.

"I should imagine not," said Ernest,
"or you, his near relation, would have known it. Miss Murray, who is our guest, heard of it this morning."

"I wonder she is here to night," observed Lady Agnes. "It is no great proof of feeling."

"Poor Miss Murray," said Ernest, "it would be rather too bad if she must stay at home because her vicar is not well."

"Not at all," said Agnes, quickly, "when that vicar is her affianced husband."

"Indeed, Lady Agnes, I think you are mistaken," observed Ernest.

"I know it to be true," said her ladyship.

"May I ask your authority?" demanded Ernest.

"Oh, yes," said Lady Agnes. "My cousin himself.

"Then," said Ernest, with unusual acrimony, "Helen Murray is a flirt. Alas! poor Lewis. I am sure my mother
knows nothing of this, and yet she has questioned Helen, having heard the report. You must be mistaken Lady Agnes."

"Impossible," said her ladyship. "But do tell me who that excessively vulgar woman is? Mr. Pemberton, whom your brother Frank has been dancing with, and is now talking to."


"Brown," echoed Lady Agnes. "Has she a pretty daughter?"

"She has two daughters, but I don't admire them," said Mr. Pemberton. "There is one, the girl dressed to represent a Priestess of the Sun.

"She is not very prepossessing certainly," observed Lady Agnes. "But who is this girl in a Spanish dress? She is handsome and of a better stamp."

"That is Miss Henrietta Brown, whom I cannot admire either," said Ernest.
"You are very fastidious, indeed, then," said Agnes.

"Perhaps I am prejudiced," said Ernest. "Their mother is so disgusting to me that I cannot allow any thing belonging to her to be tolerable, and I have professed a determination never to notice them."

At this moment the Priestess of the Sun approached, and waving away the attentions of her red hot worshipper, she addressed Mr. Pemberton. "Noble follower of Mahomet, whose badge shines upon your breast, dare you trust your faith to the bright beams of my god, the glorious Sun. If so come with me, and perhaps I may gain a worshipper."

Mr. Pemberton quite taken by surprise at this half-serious half-comic invitation, rose from his seat, and Matilda Brown seized his arm, and the next moment they were threading the mazy waltz. So much for professions.

Lord Leslie now seated himself by
Agnes. "Where is Constance?" said she.

"Gone away," was the reply.

"And why has she left so early?" asked Agnes. "Her party is still here. I saw Edward Fairfax this moment."

"Yes, with Miss Murray on his arm," said Leslie.

But Constance? do tell me Clarence," asked Agnes.

"She desired I would not," answered Leslie, "but I think it is better. Davenant is not well; he fainted, or something of the sort. The heat of the room—his dress oppressed him. For a few minutes even I was alarmed."

"Poor Constance," said Agnes. "Poor Lord Davenant. I wish you had sent for me, Clarence."

"He did ask for you when he was recovering," said Leslie. "He wished to go home alone, but his sister would not hear of it."

"I am sure she would not," said
Agnes; "the excellent, the unselfish girl. And how much pleasure she has given up, Leslie, for her brother."

"Yes, certainly," said his lordship, following with his eye Helen Murray who now passed before them, still on Edward's arm. "Very handsome, indeed," sighed Clarence.

Lady Agnes who was only thinking of Constance, and did not notice Helen, now wondered and said, "Surely Leslie your love for Constance has not reached that degree of romance as to produce blindness. I never thought her handsome."

"Handsome," said Leslie. "Who handsome? I beg your pardon—were you talking of Davenant?"

"No, Clarence," said Lady Agnes, "not of Davenant, but of his excellent sister, of your Constance."

Lord Leslie's attention was still given to Helen. "Mine, oh, no, she never can be mine," sighed his lordship.
"Are Constance's words so soon verified? Leslie," asked Agnes, in a trembling voice. "Has Miss Colville regained her influence? Has Henrietta Brown again fascinated you; or are you fancying some new beauty? wise, wise Constance not to accept you." 'Beware of professions,' is her motto, especially professions of love, especially from men who admire beauty and who profess not to care for it."

Lord Leslie started. He rose from his seat. "Agnes," he exclaimed, "Clive is ill."

"So I hear," observed Agnes, "and still Miss Murray is here, and seems to enjoy herself, and is not a little pleased with the attentions of Edward Fairfax."


Lady Agnes sighed for the happiness of her friend, and she made up her mind
that inconstancy was an innate quality in man. She watched her brother, for she was curious to see who was the charmer that evidently was drawing from his mind the plain, the sweet-tempered, the clever, the good Constance. The next moment Lord Leslie passed her with Helen Murray on his arm. How strange, how unaccountable is man. In a few minutes afterwards she saw Clarence in the waltz, and Helen his partner. She was glad, for Helen was engaged, and she could not interfere with the claims of Constance.

At this moment Henrietta Brown sat down by Lady Agnes, and assumed so gentle, so amiable a bearing, that her ladyship admired her still more than before. She feared such a girl might be a dangerous rival to her friend. Henrietta's object was, first, to make herself agreeable to Lady Agnes Scott; and, secondly, to find out when Lord Leslie went into Wales. He had not
noticed her that evening, excepting by a bow and a smile. At the time he was \textit{tete a tete} with Constance, and they were discussing Helen Murray. Constance was admiring her, and congratulating herself that she could not win her lover’s heart from her, for Lord Leslie had only known her as the affianced of his cousin, and he now spoke of her as very soon to be a near relation. “I knew her father,” said his lordship, “and it is this which especially attracts me to her. If I dance to night, Constance, it will be with Miss Murray.”

“You will not dance to-night, Clarence, if you are wise,” said Constance. “I refused, out of consideration to you, to stand up with you. But, if you do so foolish a thing, I cannot object to your choosing Miss Murray for a partner. She has won my heart by the mere fact of her beauty. But she has not your one great requisite, Clarence; good temper. So she will not be my rival.”
"You will never have a rival in my good opinion, dear Constance. I only wish you could be persuaded to accede to my request. In six months I return to India. Will you not, Constance, be my bride?"

"No, Leslie, said Miss Davenant. "I have told you I cannot leave my brother, unhappy as he is."

"But you can plight your faith to me, at least, Constance," said Leslie; "and on my return you can be mine."

"My faith I will not plight," said Constance. "Not that I doubt myself, not that I doubt you, in particular; but I doubt constancy in every one, especially in man; and I receive your addresses only on the condition I at first named, which is, that we are both free from an engagement."

"It is a cruel thing, Constance," said Leslie. "It is only a half acceptance of me. It is such a mortifying admission that my professions are not believed."
"They are believed, Clarence," replied Miss Davenant. "At this moment I know you to be sincere. You feel an affection for me sufficient to make me your wife. You think you are indifferent to beauty. You care not for my terribly unmusical voice. I am by your side. I am flattered. I am happy. But, when circumstances divide us, how will it be? Nay, if I were not here this very moment, how many sweet things would you not have uttered to Miss Colville, or Miss Brown, or a hundred other Misses? If I could now become your wife, Leslie, I should not have a fear. Then I should never leave you. We should be one. Your honour, as well as your love, would be plighted. But separated, and for years—oh, no. Go free, and if you return free, I will be the first to promise you constancy; and if you marry, or love another, I shall have saved myself and you from a world of misery."

"But if I were actually betrothed to
you," urged Leslie, "it would act as a charm, and no woman would have the power to influence me."

"Believe it not, Leslie," said Constance. "At least, you cannot make me believe it. No engagement will secure constancy, no professions of that sort can be relied on." And here the interesting tete a tete of the lovers was interrupted by the illness of Lord Davenant, when Constance was summoned to him.

But to return to Lady Agnes and Henrietta Brown. "How much better Lord Leslie looks," observed Henrietta, "than when last I had the pleasure of meeting him. Has he had sea-bathing yet, Lady Agnes?"

"Leslie is quite well now," replied his sister; "and if he be tolerably careful, and run down to Swansea for a few weeks, he will keep so, I hope."

"I fancied," said Henrietta, "that Mrs. Williams mentioned in her last
letter that Lord Leslie had decided to go to them next week."

"Yes, I believe he had; but he is obliged to delay his visit a few days," said her ladyship.

"Perhaps he won't go at all now then;" said Henrietta, carelessly.

"Oh, yes, he will;" said Lady Agnes. "Indeed, I think he told me that he goes on the 10th."

"I suppose you know his lordship's partner?" asked Henrietta.

"A little," replied Lady Agnes; adding, "she is very handsome, and her dress becomes her exceedingly. Do you know her?"

"Oh, yes, intimately;" said Henrietta. "I believe she is to be my sister; at least, if she is not, she uses my brother very ill. But she is rather a flirt."

"I am sorry for that," observed her ladyship, "as she is engaged to my cousin, Mr. Clive."

"You don't say so, Lady Agnes;"
exclaimed Henrietta, rather thrown off her guard by this announcement, and inclined to resume her more natural manner.

"What will sister say, after all her denials of it, though we have joked her so much about her attendance at the school, and her attentions to Mr. Clive? It is a great match for her, and how Jack will take it I can't think. Your ladyship is quite sure it's true?"

"Quite sure," said Lady Agnes, as she rose from her seat; and quite sure was she also that Henrietta Brown, handsome as she decidedly was, would never be a rival that Constance need fear. Her low birth shone conspicuous through the gloss that the quick-sighted clever Henrietta had tried to throw over it.

Leslie and Helen Murray had ended their waltz, and were enjoying the cool of a room now almost deserted, as it was quite out of the reach of the music. It had been the reception room of the
evening. Helen was resting in an arm chair, and Leslie was seated on a low couch by her side.

"How I have longed for this moment, Lord Leslie," said Helen, as she quietly sat beside him.

"Are you so very tired, Miss Murray?" asked his lordship, in the same musical voice that was so great a charm in his sister. "Why did not you bid me release you sooner? It was so charming a waltz that I could have danced for ever."

"Oh," said Helen, her dark eyes glistening with pleasure, "I do not mean that I am tired. I mean I have so much wished to hear you speak again of my father. Will you tell me of his last battle? I want to remember every word you say, that I may repeat it to my Aunt Melbourne—the sister of poor papa."

Lord Leslie, with great feeling recounted every particular of that day's
fight, and Helen Murray's faithful memory treasured up every word, never to be forgotten.

"Oh, Lord Leslie," she exclaimed, "how much I wish you could see my aunt."

"Would it gratify her that I should?" asked his lordship.

"Indeed it would," said Helen.

"May I then call upon you?" asked Clarence.

"Are you really in earnest?" demanded Helen.

"And why do you doubt me, Miss Murray?" said his lordship. "Am I never to be believed?"

"I only feared that Mayfield might be too far from Moreton Court; but perhaps you will be staying with Mr. Clive, and then my aunt will see you."

"Shall you be at home to morrow, Miss Murray?" asked Lord Leslie.

"Yes," said Helen, "but not till
the afternoon. I am with the Heathdowns at present."

"We are at the Deanery," said Leslie, "and you will allow me to call upon you, Miss Murray?"

"I shall be delighted," said Helen, "that my aunt should have the pleasure of seeing you. I hope you will not go very early, Lord Leslie."

"What hour shall you be at home?" asked Clarence.

"About three o'clock," said Helen.

"Then expect me, Miss Murray, and pray secure a welcome for me from your aunt. Agnes," continued Leslie, his sister passing at that moment with Lewis Pemberton, "I have made an appointment with Miss Murray."

"Indeed," said Lady Agnes, and she bowed, for the first time that evening to Helen, who rose to shake hands with her. Her ladyship just touched the extended fingers of Helen, and asking Leslie to escort her to the
refreshment room, they left Helen, wondering why she had met with so cool a reception from one who had at Pemberton Castle, been so friendly with her. Lewis now claimed her hand for the next polka, and she danced joyously away, not much troubling herself about the pride, for such she considered it, of Lady Agnes, and full of pleasant anticipations from Lord Leslie's promised visit.

Lewis Pemberton was fast bound in love's chains by his sweet partner, and he only waited the permission of his mother and Lord Heathdown to declare his attachment. He was too dutiful to think of doing so without their knowledge, otherwise, this evening would have assured Helen of what she began to fear, that her friend and favorite Lewis was fast becoming a much less agreeable thing, her lover. He danced with her more than any one. Indeed, he and Mr. Edward Fairfax seemed to contend
the point; and between them poor Jack Brown could never find his opportunity of pressing his suit. Helen cared for none of them, that is to say she liked Lewis exceedingly, but only in a most friendly way. She thought Mr. Edward Fairfax very handsome, much handsomer than Lord Leslie; but she did not admire him on that account. His devotion to her had somewhat flattered and pleased her, but not half so much as the one waltz Lord Leslie had danced with her; and as to Mr. John Brown, she had come to the determination of putting a stop to his impertinence, as she considered it, and she did not scruple to show her pride to him. Even Jack's impudence could not stand out against the quiet and perfectly ladylike contempt with which Helen treated him; and from that evening Mr. John Brown gave up all hope of success with Helen Murray; and from that evening he ceased to annoy her, as his expressions
of "disagreeable girl," "quite plain," "cross," "ill dressed," "quite gone by," did not at all affect her, and she was more inclined to tolerate Jack then, than she had ever before been.

Lewis Pemberton had never been so happy as in his shepherd's dress, and he vowed eternal friendship for Sir Trevor, and that no ball was like a fancy ball.
Mrs. Brown was not quite satisfied with the evening. Though Sir Trevor paid her more attention than any one else, he still was not her devoted slave. He did not blazon forth, as she had hoped and expected, that it was to her taste he owed the fitness and elegance of his entertainment. He did not satisfy her vanity by frequent and loudly uttered expressions of admiration. He did not gratify her pride by pushing her, as it
were, into the notice of the great people who honored his ball by their presence. She would, when she saw Sir Trevor in conversation with an Earl, a Countess, or a Right Honourable, familiarly pass her arm through his, and put in an apt word as occasion offered. But this emanated from herself. Sir Trevor merely tolerated her. He did not appeal to her. He showed her no difference. He forgot she was there, and he would unconsciously drop her arm, and leave Mrs. Brown standing alone. In short, he was wrapped up in self. This was his character. Self was the mainspring of all his actions. When he flirted with Mrs. Brown, it was to gratify his own vile taste. When he promised a fancy ball, it was to gratify himself by witnessing its splendour, and not to give pleasure to others. When he allowed it to be a fancy ball, it was because he expected to be amused, and not because his guests would enjoy it. The evening
had fully answered its end, and never was the self-sufficient Baronet so completely *himself*. He now looked round and about him for a wife, and then his menage would be complete. His pride fixed upon Lady Agnes Scott. His admiration of beauty led him to choose Helen Murray. His coarseness of feeling selected one of the Miss Browns. He determined to be married—he would set about it immediately—and he began his wooing on the spot.

He interrupted a *tete a tete* between Lewis Pemberton and Helen, and begged Miss Murray would dance the next polka with him. Helen could not refuse, for she was disengaged, but she knew too well the penalty of that honour, and honour it certainly was, as Sir Trevor had only danced once before that evening. However, it was an honour Helen would gladly have renounced for a quiet chat with Lewis, or any one she even liked less. The Baronet did his best on the
present occasion to avoid treading on Helen's little satin shoes, or tearing her pretty becoming peasant's costume; and when the polka was over, Sir Trevor offering his arm with a sharp angular pressure, led her to a couch in one of the drawing rooms, and threw himself carelessly beside her.

"How well you look to-night, Miss Murray," said the determined benedict.

Helen blushed. "You are very complimentary this evening, Sir Trevor," she quietly observed.

"Upon my life it is the first pretty thing I have said to-night, Miss Murray," replied the Baronet, staring with his usual boldness on the beautiful girl by his side. She felt annoyed, and yet she knew it was Sir Trevor's way.

"Is it true, Miss Murray, that you are engaged to be married?" asked the baronet, in his abrupt and impertinent manner.

"What an odd question," replied
Helen, "and one I think I need not answer, Sir Trevor. I never like to gratify idle curiosity."

"By Jove, you are right there," said the Baronet; "and I like you all the better for it; but I have a reason for my question, so you must answer me, and be as candid as you are pretty."

And Sir Trevor, looking around the spacious apartment, and finding it deserted, took Helen's hand, and pressed it to his lips before she was in the least aware of his intention. She immediately arose from the sofa.

"Sir Trevor Dolman, you cannot mean to insult me," said the indignant girl.

"No, by Jupiter I don't, Helen," said the baronet. "Sit down again, and listen to me."

Helen moved from the couch. She, too, looked round that spacious room, but not a soul was there. "I wish to go to Lady Heathdown," said Helen, and she continued to move onwards.
Sir Trevor now rose, and following her, took her hand, and exclaimed in a subdued tone of anger, "what the d—l do you fear, Miss Murray? Just listen to me five minutes, and then you shall go to Lady Heathdown, if you please," and the impetuous baronet obliged her again to sit down. He took another survey of the apartment. At that moment Mrs. Brown appeared at one of the doors, but unobserved by Sir Trevor. Her quick eye saw what was going on, and her first impulse was to interrupt the tete a tete, but Mary of Scotland had a deeper game, and she immediately disappeared. Sir Trevor, intent on his purpose, continued, "The busy world, Miss Murray, has said you are to marry Mr. Clive. Is it so?"

"Certainly not," said Helen, who now thought it the wisest plan to hear the baronet out, and she had, too, some curiosity to know what he meant. The truth she never guessed.
"So far, so good," said Sir Trevor. "Be as candid to the end, and, by Jove, you are one in a thousand. Has Lewis Pemberton proposed to you, or any of the Pembertons?"

"A very strange question, Sir Trevor, but to that I also say no," replied Helen, and she felt very much inclined to run away from the inquisitive baronet. "One moment's patience," said Sir Trevor, "and I release you from this inquisitorial part of our tete a tete. Are you engaged to that booby, Jack Brown? for women will do anything for money."

Helen grew impatient, and rather angrily said "Neither to Mr. John Brown, nor to any other rich—booby, who may think his gold acceptable to a girl with little fortune. And now, Sir Trevor, you will allow me to go to Lady Heathdown."

"And have you no curiosity, Miss Murray, to hear why I have put to you
such home questions?" asked Sir Trevor, in his blandest manner, which, however, admits not of description, for when he thought he was tender, he was merely civil, and when he meant to woo, he much more nearly commanded.

"I would rather join my party, Sir Trevor," said the impatient girl. "Will you take me to Lady Heathdown?" and she was about to rise.

Sir Trevor forcibly detained her by seizing her hand. "Then, dear girl," said the determined baronet, "you are very silly; but listen to me—you shall, yes, now and ever; for Helen Murray cannot too soon learn that Lady Dolman is expected to be obedient."

Helen now understood Sir Trevor, and she trembled, for she had heard of his violence, and his impertinence, too, and she looked around for help. She sat quite still, because she had no power to move, the baronet holding her hand as in a vice. She indignantly said "be
quick, Sir Trevor, in saying all you wish, and release me, if you please."

Sir Trevor gazed on her distress with delight. He set it all down to her joyful agitation, for he had said, and done, and looked enough, he thought, to tell Helen her great good fortune. But poor Helen was too frightened to know exactly what he had said, and she set down his rude detention of her to impertinence. And, as to his looks, she had avoided them.

"Your impatience is excusable, my charming Helen," exclaimed Sir Trevor. "In a word then, I mean you to be Lady Dolman." The Baronet threw his arm around her waist.

Helen screamed, and tried to escape, and, at that moment, a powerful hand rested on Sir Trevor's shoulder and held him in his place. Helen Murray felt she was released. She quickly left the couch, and almost flew out of the room. She encountered Mrs. Brown at the door.
"Well, Mademoiselle Helen," said she, "why in such a hurry? You run away from conquest. So did not your country woman of Falaise, the mother of our first Norman king."

Helen, not at all in a humour to play at characters with Mrs. Brown, merely said that she was very weary, and was in search of Lady Heathdown in hopes of going home, and immediately passed on.

Mrs. Brown had placed herself at that door to watch the result of her jealousy, for she had, as has been observed, seen Sir Trevor in close conversation with Miss Murray, and she, who knew his ways so well, had guessed the truth. She hastened to seek an interrupter to this love scene, and her object was to choose the person whom Helen Murray would least like to see her, thus listening to a declaration of love from Sir Trevor Dolman. Mrs. Brown could not find Lewis Pemberton
nor Mr. Edward Fairfax, so she seized upon Lord Leslie, as he, too, that evening, had paid Helen some attention.

"If your lordship," said Mrs. Brown, "has any curiosity, there is a very amusing scene going on in the reception room."

"Of what description?" asked Lord Leslie, who was sitting quietly by Mrs. Colville, and hoping the evening was nearly over, and not at all feeling disposed to move in honor of Mrs. Brown, for he concluded she merely wanted his arm to take her to the reception room in question. Besides, he had not spoken three words to her in his life.

Mrs. Brown saw his disinclination to move, and added, "Sir Trevor has assumed, though late in the evening, a very conspicuous character."

"What is that?" asked Mrs. Colville, who had been roused from her habitual silence by the loud voice of Mrs. Brown.
"What do you think of Paris, the Trojan Prince?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"How absurd," remarked Mrs. Colville, who was a very matter of fact person, imagined that Sir Trevor had really "dressed up," as she called it, in the character Mrs. Brown had mentioned.

"Not the less true on that account, Mrs. Colville," said Mrs. Brown; "and Helen, the beauteous Helen, will not escape the perils that beset her, unless some noble Grecian is chivalrous enough to rescue her;" and Mrs. Brown walked off to her former post at the folding doors, where she could see, but not be seen, by the Baronet.

Lord Leslie grew restless, and after a few common place remarks to Mrs. Colville on the lateness of the hour and the heat of the room, he found himself on his way to the scene Mrs. Brown had described, for he thought but of one Helen, whom he fancied the Grecian heroine could not exceed in beauty.
He walked quickly through the rooms and reached a closed door—he knew not where it led to, but he opened it, and he found himself close to the couch on which sat Helen Murray and Sir Trevor. He heard the scream, he saw the insult, and his strong arm forcibly held down the Baronet—so forcibly that Sir Trevor almost unconsciously released Helen, who flew from the room before she was aware to whom she owed her rescue, and, in another ten minutes she had driven off with the Heathdowns.

When Helen was safe Lord Leslie released the struggling Baronet, who, in his fury, might be compared to some wild animal. He could not speak, his passion was too great for that. He uttered some kind of noise, meant for words, but not one was distinguishable. He arose from the sofa the moment he found himself at liberty, and stamping his foot as if he would
have cracked the oaken boards under it, he foamed at the mouth like a furious animal.

Lord Leslie had retired a few paces and stood perfectly still, his fine figure drawn up to its full height, awaiting the result of his having baffled this impudent attack of Sir Trevor, who was now the victim of passion, and threatened destruction and death to all within his reach. At last his voice became more human, and Lord Leslie could discover that he was using towards him very opprobrious terms. He advanced when the Baronet exclaimed, "Well, sir, of course you are prepared to account to me for your impertinent interference with my pleasures in my house?"

"Quite so, Sir Trevor," replied his lordship.

"Then let me ask you," said the Baronet, still trembling with rage, "what right had you to hold me from my purpose, and to insult me by your touch?"
"The right, Sir Trevor," answered Leslie, "which honour and good feeling must ever assume over the man who insults a woman."

"By God, my lord," exclaimed Sir Trevor, "I don't understand such honour; and in the present case there was no insult, excepting to myself from you, Lord Leslie, and I demand an immediate apology."

"You will not have one from me, Sir Trevor, most assuredly," said Lord Leslie; and he turned to leave the room.

Sir Trevor seized him by the arm and said, "An apology, sir, on the instant, or——"

"Unhand me, madman!" exclaimed Leslie; and he flung off the slight form of the wiry baronet with the greatest ease.

Sir Trevor almost fell, but in a moment was again by Leslie's side; and in his uncontrolled fury struck him.

His lordship now stood motionless,
and in his turn was for a few minutes overcome by passion. He branded Sir Trevor as a coward and a villain; and so high were his words, that they were soon surrounded by the few guests who still remained.

Lady Agnes Scott had left early with some of the younger Colvilles, as she was tormented with headache, and was quite unable to enjoy herself since Constance had gone on account of the illness of Lord Davenant.

Mrs. Brown had witnessed the whole scene, and at first was enjoying the mischief she had made; but she had not the most distant idea that it would become so serious, and now she repented of the indulgence of her passion, for, as we have said, it was jealousy of Sir Trevor's *tete a tete* with Miss Murray that had been the cause of all that followed. She ran to Mr. Brown, and intreated him to interfere between the gentlemen. The good husband was
surprised to be applied to by his wife on any occasion, excepting when money was her object. However, he obliged her as was his habit; but when he reached the reception room, Lord Leslie was not there, and going on to the grand entrance hall, a servant told him, in answer to his inquiries, that Lord Leslie had just driven off. Mr. Brown now sought Sir Trevor. He had cooled down, and lay on a sofa in one of the now empty drawing rooms, pale and trembling, but not with rage, it seemed more like fear.

Mr. Brown cautiously approached the subject. "What is this little misunderstanding, Sir Trevor, between you and Lord Leslie?" he inquired. "Nothing serious I hope?"

Sir Trevor smiled, but it was a ghastly smile. "Only a life and death concern," said he.

"You are joking, Sir Trevor, I hope," observed Mr. Brown.
"No, by heaven, it is far removed from a joke," exclaimed the baronet. 
"By the way, where's Archer, now?"
"How d—d unlucky," said Sir Trevor. "But it is late, Brown, are you not going?"
"The carriage has been at the door the last hour," replied Brown. "I should have been home by this time, but Jane told me she feared you and Lord Leslie were quarrelling."
"And suppose we were," said the baronet, turning his sharp features on the lawyer, "what is that to anybody but ourselves? Good night, Brown. I am tired of this d—d pageant, and shall be glad to forget it in an hour or two of sleep," and the baronet nodding to Brown, left him, and shut himself in his own room, where he paced up and down for a couple of hours, and then threw himself on a sofa. He slept for another hour, and at seven o'clock,
ringing his bell, he inquired "Is there an answer to my note."

"Yes, Sir Trevor," and the footman handed it to his master on a massive silver waiter.

The baronet hastily seized it, tore it open, glanced his eye over it and said "That's all right. Prepare breakfast immediately. I expect Major Harwood."
Mr. Clive had received Lady Agnes' answer to his letter, and now, as Miss Davenant had told her friend, he could not fail to understand her. Poor Clive! His happiness blighted, his hopes, which he had fondly imagined so near their accomplishment, destroyed for ever, leaving him more miserable than he was before the meeting with his cousin, which had so strongly revived them.
Helen Murray was at Pemberton Castle, and Mrs. Melbourne had not seen Clive the whole day. That evening, about six o'clock, Clive's housekeeper asked to speak to Mrs. Melbourne, and on her entrance into the drawing room burst into tears.

"What is the matter, good Mrs. Cook?" said Mrs. Melbourne, "pray sit down, and compose yourself."

"My master, madam, is I fear very ill," answered the housekeeper; "will you come to the vicarage?"

"You quite alarm me, Mrs. Cook," replied Mrs. Melbourne, "what are the symptoms? the attack must have been very sudden."

"Why, madam, Mr. White, master's gentleman, tells me master has been gradually getting worse since morning," said Mrs. Cook.

"I will just finish my note, and give it to Letty, and then accompany you to the vicarage," said Mrs. Melbourne,
"and on the way you can tell me the particulars."

The note to Helen was hastily concluded, and a postscript added, saying Mr. Clive was not well, and Mrs. Melbourne was going to the vicarage, and, in another minute, she, and the good old Mrs. Cook were on their way thither. Mrs. Melbourne now learned that Mr. Clive had sent his breakfast away untouched. He had then retired to his study, which was his custom, for a couple of hours in a morning, but, as he remained there much longer, and as he had not tasted food that day, Mrs. Cook had asked Mr. White to go to their master to know if she should send him a cup of chocolate, or a mulled egg, or any other little thing he could fancy. Clive refused every thing, and seemed busy with his papers, desiring not to be interrupted. He looked very pale. He still remained in his study. "Mr. Stevens, master's
curate, madam, came about one o'clock," said Mrs. Cook. "He, as usual, went to the study, but he returned in five minutes, and Mr. White took the liberty of asking him if he did not think master looked ill? 'Yes,' said Mr. Stevens, 'and he complains of head-ache;' and then he left the vicarage. I determined now to try to tempt master's appetite, and sent him a basin of the most beautiful soup in the world. Mr. White carried it in. Master was lying on the sofa, and seemed in a sad way. He would not let the soup be left, and Mr. White brought it to me again, and I could have cried, madam," continued Mrs. White, "to see that beautiful soup come back untouched. We wondered what could be the matter. At three o'clock, as Mr. White was gone into the dining room, just to look at the fire, he heard master pacing along the floor, for master's study is over the dining room, and Mr. White stayed there to listen. Master never stopped. Up
and down, backwards and forwards, he kept walking on. When Mr. White came to me, we did not know what to do; so we did nothing but wonder and think what it was all about. Half an hour ago, as luck would have it, poor little Ann Morris' father came up to say she was worse, and kept asking for Mr. Clive. This was a reason, madam, for Mr. White going to master uncalled for, and so he went to the study door. He knocked. No one answered. He knocked again, but hearing nothing, he took the liberty of entering. Master lay on the floor in a fainting fit, or some fit. Mr. White rang the bell with such a pull, that I trembled again, and could hardly get to the door. It was open, and I never shall forget the sight. I thought at first master was dead. He did, however, open his eyes, and I then ran down to you, madam, first bidding the groom set off for the doctor, and I hope he is there by this time."
Mrs. Melbourne hurried on at her quickest pace. She met a female servant who was going to the cottage to hasten them, as Mr. Clive was worse. They soon reached the study. Mrs. Melbourne entered; but, oh! what a fearful scene presented itself. Poor Henry Clive pale as death, and covered with blood; his faithful servant supporting him, and he, too, seemed deluged, and looked little less ghastly than his master.

At the same moment the surgeon arrived. He saw at once what had happened, and he feared if life was not extinct, that it was fast ebbing to a close. The patient was carried to his bed, and perfect quietness was pronounced to be his only chance of recovery.

The surgeon finding he bore this movement without any additional bad symptoms, hoped he might yet be saved. He told Mrs. Melbourne that Mr. Clive had broken a blood vessel; and that, if on the lungs, his life was in imminent
peril, but that could not, in his present state, be ascertained.

Poor Mrs. Melbourne was greatly agitated, and scarcely knew how to act. After a little consideration, however, she determined, with her usual judgment, to send off a messenger immediately to Lord Moreton (who, she had understood, was not to be at Sir Trevor's ball), as Mr. Clive's nearest relation, with the exception of his brother, Lord Clive, who was abroad. Mrs. Melbourne deemed it proper that Lord Moreton should know his nephew's precarious state, especially as Clive was engaged to his daughter.

This done, she took her station by the bed of her dying friend, for when she knew the nature of his illness, she had little doubt what would be the result. There she sat hour after hour, patiently watching, without much hope as regarded poor Henry. The doctor remained in the house, administering such remedies
as he thought right, and carefully noticing the result.

About ten o'clock the servant returned from Moreton Court, and to the disappointment of Mrs. Melbourne, he had not found Lord Moreton there. He was gone to town, and was not expected home for some days. His address was not known to the servants, as his lordship had ordered his letters to be forwarded to Pemberton Castle, where Lady Moreton was, and where the Earl was to join her. Again Mrs. Melbourne had to decide what ought to be done; and she now consulted with the surgeon, begging to know his present opinion of Mr. Clive. All the comfort he could give her was, that as the blood had now almost ceased to flow, there was a chance of life, at least that there was no immediate danger. For this faint hope Mrs. Melbourne was thankful. She thought it well to take Mr. Stevens into her counsel (knowing that he was a person whose feelings
PROFESSIONS.

would never run away with his judgment), as to the propriety of sending to Lady Moreton immediately, or awaiting the result of the morrow. Together they decided it was better not to send, and together they devoted themselves to the sufferer, if such Henry Clive could be called; for he lay motionless, his eyes closed, his breathing only just perceptible.

So the night passed. Mrs. Melbourne lay down for an hour or two in an adjoining room, leaving Mr. Stevens and the surgeon with Clive. At morning's dawn she had the satisfaction of learning that Mr. Clive had had some sleep, and as she entered his room he opened his eyes for the first time, and seeing Mrs. Melbourne, he tried to raise his hand, but the effort was vain.

She gently approached the bed, and laying her hand on his, whispered, "Thank God, Henry, you are better." He looked at her earnestly, and tried
to speak, but he could not. She raised her finger in token of silence, and seating herself by his pillow, she said, in her own peculiarly soft musical voice, "Be calm, and all will yet be well. I will not leave you."

Clive still gazed upon her with an anxious and almost unearthly look, which made her shudder, as the remembrance of the death-bed of her beloved husband, in that very room, came across her mind. But, fully aware how absolutely necessary to Henry was the absence of all excitement, she now busied herself with the arrangement of his pillows, which seemed to have become uneasy to him. While she was leaning over him, wetting his lips with a little water, all he was allowed to have, Henry murmured something which sounded like "letter—Agnes—study."

Mrs. Melbourne in a moment understood him, so well knowing all that had gone before. She lost no time in seek-
ing that which she felt sure he anxiously wished her to see. She moved her hand in token of compliance, and without reply she left the room, desiring White to come for her if the least alteration occurred in his master. Mrs. Melbourne found her way into the well-known study. That study where Mr. Melbourne for years had devoted hours to the good of others, and where his attached wife had often sat by his side with her work or her book, and ever and anon laid it down in order to give her attention to some passage in his composition on which he asked her opinion.

In violent trepidation she now entered that room which she had not seen for more than a twelvemonth. She called all her courage and all her piety to her aid, and, assisted by her kindly feeling for Clive, she succeeded in acquiring calmness. She looked over the numerous papers which lay scattered on the table, and was not long in discovering
the letter of Lady Agnes Scott. It lay open, and Mrs. Melbourne, interpreting Clive's wishes, so unintelligibly expressed to one who had not known all the circumstances as well as she did, sat down and perused it.

She no longer wondered at the state poor Henry was reduced to. She felt that if she had sooner read this unfeeling, this very heartless epistle of Lady Agnes, she should not have announced Clive's danger to the Earl, her father, as he could not take much interest in a person whom his daughter had treated in the way she had done, as, doubtless, he knew of the letter, and, most likely, had encouraged the writing of it. Mrs. Melbourne took possession of it, and returned to the sick chamber. Clive was evidently watching her coming. His dark eye fell upon her as she opened the door; its brilliancy was gone, but it spoke as distinctly as in its brightest day, and Mrs. Melbourne understood the
question it asked. She went to Henry’s side, and, in a low tone, assured him the letter was safe. "And now, dear friend, think no more about it. Think only of getting well, and live for those who do value you as you deserve."

Henry closed his eyes, and, as Mrs. Melbourne looked on him, the hot burning tears forced their way through the lids. She gently wiped them away, and once again poor Henry was at peace, for sleep had shed its blessing over him.

The surgeon in attendance had proposed further advice, and an eminent physician had been called in. He gave it as his opinion that Mr. Clive would recover from this attack, but that he would be subject to a return of it, and for years he must not use any immoderate exertion. His church duties he must entirely renounce, and as soon as he was sufficiently recovered he must, for the next winter, go to a warmer climate.
Mrs. Melbourne was greatly relieved by this opinion, though there was still enough to make her anxious for her friend, who really seemed thrown on her kindness for those soothing attentions, and that care which gentle-hearted woman so well knows how to bestow.

As the day advanced, it became known in the village and neighbourhood how dangerously ill Mr. Clive was, and the vicarage was beset with inquiries from all grades of society, for Mr. Clive was beloved by the rich and the poor. Mrs. Melbourne dispatched a note to Helen, as she thought she might hear of Mr. Clive's danger from common report, and she knew it would be a great shock to her, from the intimacy that had existed between the families during the last year.

Helen Murray received her aunt's note at the breakfast table at Pemberton Castle. On reading it she was greatly agitated, and as soon as she could speak,
she asked Lady Heathdown if she could send her home immediately after breakfast.

"Certainly, my love; but what has occurred to distress you?" asked her ladyship. "I hope Mrs. Melbourne is not ill."

"My aunt is well," replied Helen; "but Mr. Clive"—and again Helen's voice failed her, and she gave the note to Lewis Pemberton, who took it with a trembling hand to his mother. Helen regained her composure, and Lady Heathdown, having read Mrs. Melbourne's note, said, "It is very sad news, indeed, Helen, but I hope Mr. Clive will recover."

"Is Clive ill?" asked Lord Heathdown.

"Very dangerously ill," replied Helen. "Should you like to read my aunt's note?" and she gave it to Lord Heathdown as she left the table, for she found it quite impossible to eat any thing.
She went into the library, where she encountered Ernest Pemberton.

"Have you finished breakfast already, Miss Murray?" said he.

"The party has only just sat down," replied Helen.

"Are you then deserting it?" asked Ernest.

"Yes," said Helen. "I have had sad news from home, and I am too anxious and unhappy to eat any thing."

"Indeed, I am very sorry. Is Mrs. Melbourne not so well?" asked Mr. Pemberton.

"The news is not of my aunt, Mr. Pemberton. Poor Mr. Clive has broken a blood vessel, and lies in a very precarious state;" and Helen looked very pale as she sat down on a chair near to her.

"Poor Clive," exclaimed Ernest, "yet in some respects to be envied. For who would not wish to excite pity and tenderness in Miss Murray, even at some risk
of life itself?" This was said rather sarcastically, and Helen was surprised both by the gross flattery of the words and the bitterness of the manner.

"I don't understand you, Mr. Pemberton," she replied.

"Nor I you, Miss Murray," was his answer.

"Is it," continued Ernest, "that you assume feeling? or is it that your heart is so capacious that you can stretch its sympathy to any amount?"

"What do you mean?" asked Helen, in a tone of mingled curiosity and anger. "Your language and manner are perfectly inexplicable."

"May I venture, without offending," asked Ernest, "to put a plain question to you, Miss Murray?"

"Any thing would be less insulting, Mr. Pemberton, than your inuendos and your evident suspicions, which I suppose are not at all creditable to me;" said Helen Murray, proudly. "But that is
the carriage," she exclaimed, rising hastily. "How kind of dear Lady Heathdown. Excuse me, Mr. Pemberton, I have not a minute now to listen to you. I hope, in a happier moment, to hear your explanation of an attack upon me, which I think I little deserve. Good morning;" and away flew Helen.

She was not long in preparing for her departure, and she found Lord and Lady Heathdown in the vestibule awaiting her. Her ladyship with a cup of cool tea in her hand for her dear child, which she insisted upon her drinking, as it would not do, she said, to go away without something. Lord Heathdown looked at Helen in a very peculiar way as he shook hands with her, and said, "I hope, Helen, you will find Mr. Clive not so ill as you fear, and that his precious life will be spared; for surely it has the promise of a very happy one."

"Indeed, I hope so," said Helen. "I see you have heard what is in store for him."
"Yes," said Lady Heathdown, "and I am much inclined to be angry with you, Helen, for not being candid with me on the subject."

"Indeed, dear Lady Heathdown, I could not," exclaimed Helen. "I was under a promise, and it is only since I was staying here with the Moretons, that all has been settled."

"Well, well, I forgive you, dear Helen," said her ladyship; "but my poor boy, I fear, will have more difficulty."

"And why, dear Lady Heathdown?" asked Helen.

"Come, come, Helen, time flies," said Lord Heathdown. "You and Louisa must have your talk out another day. Lady Moreton, who has told us the secret, is desirous to hear news of her nephew. Will you send us word how Mr. Clive is now?" And Lord Heathdown handed Helen into the carriage.
CHAPTER IV.

When Lord and Lady Heathdown returned to the breakfast room, Lewis Pemberton was not there. His heart's first misery had began.

Lady Moreton had entered the room at the same time as Ernest Pemberton, and Lord Heathdown carefully announced to her the illness of her nephew, Mr. Clive. She received the intelligence with great composure, and asked "where is Miss Murray? I suppose sent for to
Ernest Pemberton looked at his brother Lewis, who turned very pale.

Lady Heathdown observing her youngest son's agitation, said, "not sent for to Mr. Clive, but Mrs. Melbourne, Miss Murray's aunt, is a friend and neighbour of his, and she has been with your nephew, Lady Moreton, since his attack; and Helen is so anxious about her, that she wished to go immediately home."

Lewis' countenance brightened at this explanation, but Lady Moreton smiled and said "is it possible, Lady Heathdown, that with all your kindness to Miss Murray, and the intimacy which exists between you, that you should not know of her engagement?" Lewis Pemberton again turned deadly pale, and Lady Heathdown, intent on her son, did not even make a remark.

Lord Heathdown now quite on the *qui vive* to know what all this would lead to as regarded his favorite Helen, and not at all in his youngest son's
secret, (that was between Lewis and his mother) asked Lady Moreton to whom Miss Murray was engaged, for they were quite ignorant of the fact.

"How very odd," exclaimed her ladyship. "I thought all the world knew it by this time. Of course it was early announced to us as relations of the gentleman."

"Then Miss Murray is engaged to marry Clive?" observed Ernest Pemberton.

"Of course she is," replied Lady Moreton.

"Are you quite sure?" asked Lady Heathdown, who looked at her poor Lewis, and would fain have comforted him. He could bear it no longer, and rising hurriedly from the table left the room. His absence was a relief to his mother, who now asked Lady Moreton to tell them all the particulars of the engagement.

"Really," said her ladyship, "all I
know is, that Clive wrote to his uncle the very morning we left you, and announced the engagement; I have not heard when the marriage is to take place. Lord Moreton did not object to receive Miss Murray into the family. Indeed, Mr. Clive has no one to consult, he is his own master, and if he don't care for rank, I see no reason he should not marry Miss Murray. She is pretty and lady-like, and I believe not badly connected."

Lord Heathdown said that he had heard Mr. Clive admired Miss Murray, but he certainly was surprised that they had not been told by herself of the actual engagement.

"It was announced to me last night," said Ernest, "by Lady Agnes Scott, but I rather rudely doubted the fact."

"Well, we can none of us doubt it any longer," said Lady Heathdown. "No wonder the little child is so unhappy;" and she trotted off with her
cup of tea to persuade Helen to drink it before she went, as she had not touched her breakfast.

Lady Moreton begged Lord Heathdown would desire his servants to inquire after Mr. Clive in her name, and his lordship and Lady Heathdown left the room together.

"I am really angry with Helen," said her ladyship.

"Oh, nonsense, Louisa," exclaimed Lord Heathdown, "in love cases you know a little prevarication is allowable. We must excuse her, and now, too, she is unhappy."

"Oh, yes, now I will not scold her, poor girl!" said the kind-hearted Lady Heathdown; and they sought Helen in the vestibule.

Immediately breakfast was ended, Lady Heathdown walked off to her conservatory with Ernest. "Where is Lewis?" asked her ladyship.

"I don't know, mother," said Mr.
Pemberton, "but, wherever he is, I am sure of one thing, that he is very miserable;" for Ernest had discovered his brother's secret.

"My poor boy, my unfortunate Lewis," said Lady Heathdown; "and I have partly been the cause of his unhappiness."

"And I have had my share in it too, mother," said Ernest; "for I certainly thought Helen Murray liked him, but she is decidedly a flirt."

"I do not agree with you there, Ernest," said his mother, evidently not pleased. "Helen is too simple a character, too amiable, too guileless to be a flirt."

"I am surprised, mother," said Ernest, "to hear you defending a girl who has been the cause of unhappiness to your child."

"I must always do every one justice, Ernest," said Lady Heathdown, "especially my pretty Helen."

"Be as just as you please, mother,"
replied Mr. Pemberton, "but do not mistake partiality for justice. Can you deny that Miss Murray has encouraged the attentions of Lewis?"

"I think Helen has received his attentions," said Lady Heathdown, "and with pleasure; and it is that which has deceived me, and you, and dear Lewis. But I am sure now that she has not permitted them with the least idea that they meant more than friendship. Her attachment to Mr. Clive, and her subsequent engagement convinces me of this."

"You are an easy good soul, my dear mother," said Ernest, "but I consider Miss Murray a professed flirt."

"I cannot agree with you, Ernest," said his mother. "We have all been deceived by appearances, but not by Helen."

"Well, Madam," exclaimed Ernest, quite pettishly, "I can prove to you that Lewis is not the only sufferer by Miss Murray's flirtations."
'What do you mean, Pemberton?' asked Lady Heathdown. 'Speak openly, I hate riddles, you know.'

'Well then, let me count,' said Ernest, 'how many men she has deceived by her simplicity, her amiability, her guileless nature. I think these are the epithets you applied to your favorite.'

'My dear Ernest, what is it that makes you so bitter against Helen?' asked his mother.

'Two things, Lady Heathdown,' said her son. 'First, I think she has cruelly destroyed my brother's happiness, and in the second place, she has tried, and has succeeded, too, to humbug you with professions of qualifications which don't appertain to her character, and which you have invested her with, merely from her own showing.'

'Why, Ernest, at this rate,' said Lady Heathdown, 'you make Helen almost a demon. Who can have poisoned your mind, and induced you thus to think of
one whom we love almost as a daughter?"

"And your daughter she would have been if she had not thought Clive a better match than Lewis, mother," said Ernest.

"Taking you on your own grounds, Ernest," replied Lady Heathdown, "I think Lewis, in a worldly point of view, and, of course, Helen is very worldly in your eyes, is a better match than Mr. Clive. He is of as noble a family, and he will have a much better fortune."

"Oh, mother," replied Mr. Pemberton, "you don't see so far as Miss Murray. Clive is of age, his own master, has a good present income, a better still just at hand in Moreton Rectory; and he is heir presumptive to the title, as his brother, Lord Clive, is unmarried."

"Come, come, Ernest, you are too bad, too hard upon my favorite," said Lady Heathdown. "I begin to think you are
disappointed yourself, my dear boy, and that it has made you bitter. Is it so, Ernest?"

"Not at all, mother," replied he, "I assure you, as regards myself; but I allow I am dreadfully so as relates to Lewis. He has through life been so unfortunate, what with ill health and accidents, and that he should now have to bear a disappointment of this sort, seems hard upon him."

"So it does, Ernest," said Lady Heathdown, with a sigh, "and it is very amiable in you to feel thus for your brother, even at Helen's expense. I regret what has occurred as much as you possibly can, and I blame myself for having Helen here so much when I saw Lewis loved her, without making myself acquainted with her sentiments."

"But you did question Miss Murray about Mr. Clive," said Ernest, angrily, "and it is her duplicity on that occasion that I condemn."
"I cannot say that Helen confessed her love for Mr. Clive," said Lady Heathdown; "but that she was not called upon to do, as I never put such a question to her. I merely said report had coupled her name with his; and I asked her how far I was to believe it."

"And was not her answer positive, mother?" demanded Ernest.

"Certainly, my dear boy, it was, as far as it went," said his mother, "and, at the time, I thought it very satisfactory, too. She assured me there was no truth whatsoever in Mr. Clive's being in love with her; that they were excellent friends, and saw a great deal of each other; and when I ventured a still more home question, whether such an intercourse was not likely to awaken a warmer feeling, she said "certainly not, either on her part, or on Mr. Clive's." But I was foolish, Ernest, and I ought to have known that no girl, a delicate-minded, modest girl, especially, like
Helen, ever finds out that she loves a man till he has declared his love for her. So I quite excuse Helen, and it must be my business now to divert Lewis' mind from this, his unfortunate attachment; and will you not assist me, Ernest?"

"That I will, mother," said Mr. Pemberton.

"Let me know, Ernest, when the carriage returns from Mayfield," said Lady Heathdown. "I am anxious for accounts of poor Mr. Clive. I fear he is dangerously ill. Helen certainly commanded her feelings beautifully. I know many girls who would have gone into hysterics and been as troublesome as possible. I sincerely hope Mr. Clive will recover.

At that moment carriage wheels were heard. Lady Heathdown, followed by Ernest, left the conservatory and walked towards the stable yard, but no carriage was there. "How stupid of the coachman to drive to the Castle," said her ladyship.
"Perhaps he thought it the quickest way of giving you intelligence of Mr. Clive," observed Ernest.

"Still it was a stupid thing to do," said Lady Heathdown. "We will now wait here till he comes."

In about five minutes carriage wheels were again heard, and every moment Lady Heathdown and her son expected to see the carriage appear; but to their surprise the sound gradually died away, and they now hastened towards the Castle. On their way thither they met Frank in evident agitation. His mother instantly perceived it, and exclaimed, "What is amiss, Frank? any news of Mr. Clive?"

"None, my dear mother," answered Frank; "but misfortunes never come singly."

"What do you mean, Frank?" quickly demanded his mother.

"Poor Lord Leslie has met with an accident," he replied.
"Good gracious," said Lady Heathdown, "how and where?"

"Come in, my dear mother, and I will tell you all about it," said Frank, tenderly, as he took his mother's hand and drew it through his arm.

When they reached the anti-room she sat down. "Where is poor Lady Moreton?" asked Lady Heathdown.

"On her way to the deanery," replied Frank, "and my father has accompanied her. He asked for you, but no where could you be found, so as time was precious he set off immediately with Lady Moreton."

"Pray, pray," said Lady Heathdown, "tell me, Frank, all you know. Have you been with Lord Leslie, for I missed you at the breakfast table?"

"Yes, mother," said Frank, "I received a note from him this morning at six o'clock, begging I would immediately go to him, as he had a matter of importance on hand in which I could be
of service to him. I obeyed unscrupulously, and his lordship's servant directed me to an hotel in Hereford, where Leslie, it seems, had passed the night, or rather the early morning, for it was three o'clock when he left Deerfold. On my arrival I found him up and dressed. Indeed he had never been to bed. He told me he had been writing for the last three hours. He had dressed in his plain clothes——

"Oh, Frank, be quick," said Lady Heathdown. "What is coming?"

"Well, dear mother," said her son, "to put you out of suspense, I will go to the point at once. Lord Leslie wanted me to be his second."

"Surely, surely, Frank," almost screamed his mother, "you did not consent?"

"I could not help it, mother," exclaimed Frank Pemberton. "At least, my refusal would not have prevented the duel." Ernest observing the exces-
sive paleness of his mother, brought her a glass of water, and Frank proceeded.

"It seems that Sir Trevor Dolman insulted Lord Leslie last night, nay, actually struck him; and his lordship had nothing for it but to challenge him, which he did there and then."

"I always disliked a fancy ball," interrupted Lady Heathdown. "Some mistake or other is sure to occur."

"Do you know the nature of the quarrel, Frank?" asked Ernest.

"Not exactly," replied his brother. "Lord Leslie told me he had been struck by Sir Trevor Dolman in his anger and mortification, as he had prevented him insulting a lady."

"How very strange, and what nonsense to make such wicked business of," said Lady Heathdown. "I wish, Frank, you had had nothing to do with this affair of Leslie."

"I thought he was so perfectly in the
right, my dear mother," said her son, "that I could not refuse him my countenance; but I did my very best on the field, Lady Heathdown, to make matters up. However, it could not be done. Both gentlemen insisted on an apology, Lord Leslie for the blow received, and the Baronet for what he considered an impertinent interference with his pleasures in his own house, as he emphatically expressed himself."

"I wonder who the unfortunate lady is," said Lady Heathdown.

"I don't at all know," answered Frank, "for when I pressed Leslie to tell me, he said, 'No, I will not mention her name, as she is the last person in the world to wish to have it blazoned forth on such an occasion as the present.'"

"It must be Lady Agnes," said his mother.

"I am sure not," remarked Frank, "for when Leslie was carried back to the inn, he desired me to go to the deanery
and bid Mrs. Colville break the news gently to his sister, as she was totally ignorant even of the circumstances that had led to the duel, having gone from the ball early."

"Well, there is no use in our racking our brains," said Lady Heathdown, "to discover the name of the unhappy girl who has been the cause of so much mischief. I hope, Frank, Lord Leslie is not dangerously wounded."

"I believe not," he replied. "I left him under the hands of two of our best surgeons. His right arm is fractured."

"Poor fellow," exclaimed her ladyship.

"And how did Sir Trevor come off?" demanded Ernest.

"He is untouched as regards his person, but his state of mental derangement is something deplorable, I believe," replied Frank. He fears, and justly too, condign punishment, in case Leslie's wound prove fatal, and he is almost
paralyzed with apprehension. His friend, Major Harwood, the second, whom he sent for on this occasion, wants him to fly, but he cannot make up his mind.

"How was it that Sir Trevor escaped?" asked Ernest.

"He took a sure aim and the ball struck the extended arm of Leslie just after he had discharged his pistol in the air, for it seems he never intended to endanger his antagonist's life. His lordship fell, and the baronet was not even fired at."

"A very melancholy tale, indeed, Frank," said Lady Heathdown. "I hope your father will soon return and bring better accounts."

At this moment a servant entered with a note, and Lady Heathdown opened it. "From Helen," said she. "Mr. Clive is somewhat better, and the physician, who has just again seen him, gives hopes of his recovery."

Helen's letter went on to say that
she had only seen her aunt for a few minutes, and so pale and languid did she appear that now she feared for her, and there seemed no one to take her place in the sick room. "I hope, however," she added, "that Lord Moreton will come, and that then he will sanction the presence of one whose duty and affection call to poor Clive, but whose delicacy, perhaps, deters her from seeing him. Do you not think, dear Lady Heathdown that his betrothed might be allowed to be his nurse, his tender loving nurse, on the present occasion, when, perhaps, there are not many days, or hours, between him and death; for Henry Clive is still in a most precarious state. Do urge the propriety of this on one who would not perhaps resist your opinion on this occasion."

"My poor dear little girl," said Lady Heathdown. "I will go and write to Mrs. Melbourne and tell her she carries decorum to the point of prudery, and
that she must allow Helen, the tender anxious Helen, to take her rightful place in the sick room of her affianced husband;" and the warm-hearted excellent Lady Heathdown hastened to her boudoir, and Ernest and Frank sought their disconsolate brother, and, without noticing his wretched spirits began to tell him of the events of the morning, and the unselfish Lewis forgot, for a time, his own griefs in his sympathy for the sufferings of Lord Leslie.
"A pretty business this," said Downes to his wife, as they sat over their spare morning's meal; for though Downes had a good yearly income from his profession, and lived in a certain style, keeping his carriage and his livery servants, he was a regular screw, and his wife suited his taste, and did honour to his choice, as he thought, by carrying out his economical views in housekeeping.

"What do you mean, Frederick?"
demanded Mrs. Downes, after the pause of five minutes, for she had been occupied with her three children, who were all in the room, and who were all wanting something from the breakfast table, on which there was evidently not enough for their papa and mamma—at least, not enough of what children crave after—delicacies. The loaf was there for the seventh time that week, and looked as if it had been planed, so level was its hard surface. A handsome toast rack might be seen, with two diminutive pieces of this same stale bread. A singularly elegant egg stand was in the centre of the table, but as eggs were now rather dear, they were missing. A handsome cut glass butter dish attracted the eye, filled with clear water, but only one tiny pat was swimming about in it, in search of a companion. The china, too, was rich, and the small tea kettle, the tea pot, cream jug and sugar basin, were all of embossed silver, so
that if any one should chance to come in to Mr. Downes' breakfast room, the eye of the visitor would be pleased with the arrangements of the table, and perhaps not detect the scantiness of the repast.

Downes sat munching his dry bread and sipping his weak tea. One eye was on the toast rack, and the other watching the swimming pat in its handsome cut glass bath—determining, in his own mind, to have the whole of it when he felt sure they should not have a visitor, as Caroline was better without butter, and she always preferred bread to toast.

The children were now satisfied by the promise of an atom of sugar if they would sit quiet for ten minutes. Poor little mortals. Thus early bribery and corruption commence; and, people who would disdain ever having countenanced it at an election, have, perhaps, practised it for years in their own family: and,
thus, the minds of men and women, from earliest childhood, are influenced to do right not from principle, but because by so doing, they meet with a reward.

Mr. Downes finding his excellent domestic Caroline completely engrossed with her children and her tea pot, ate his breakfast, not again attempting a conversation with his absorbed wife. He was just venturing to take one of the two pieces of dry toast, and thinking of diving for the swimming pat of butter when the dining room door opened, and Mr. Knightley appeared.

"I hope," said Mr. Downes, casting a despairing look on the toast rack, and the cut glass butter dish. "I hope, Knightley, you have breakfasted, or you don't care for eggs or muffins, or broiled ham—there is capital home made bread, fresh butter, and a little brown toast left."

"Thank you, Downes," said Knightley,
with a meaning smile, for he was fully aware of the character of the humbug before him, "I devoured a partridge, and half-a-dozen eggs an hour ago, and I can very well wait till luncheon."

"Have a cup of tea, at all events," said Downes; and he helped himself to a piece of toast, and secured the sailing pat of butter. "Caroline give Knightley some tea."

Mrs. Downes looked any thing but amiable at this order, and said snapishly, "I think you don't drink cream in your tea, Mr. Knightley."

"I never drink tea at all," replied he. "I have had a famous jorum of strong coffee this morning, mollified by cream, which you might have eaten, it was so thick. I never allow any to appear at my table that can be poured out. But have you heard the news, Downes?"

"Yes," said Frederick. "I, as usual, took my morning's ride in order to look after my farm," (a plot of land consisting
of ten acres) "and, as I returned I met Frank Pemberton, the Captain, full gallop—I tried to stop him, but he shouted 'I am in haste, excuse me.' I thought some mad freak or other made him in that violent hurry, for he is rather wild, and I fancy Lord Heathdown is not quite aware of all he does; I mean to have some talk with his lordship the first time I meet him on business."

"Why should you interfere, Frederick," said Caroline, "don't be so busy—Lucy sit still—Fanny don't fidget—But what is the news, Mr. Knightley?"

"Bad enough," said he. "Lord Leslie is dangerously wounded in a duel."

"Good gracious," exclaimed Mrs. Downes, "why did you not tell me, Frederick?"

"My dear, you seemed so occupied with your nursery," said Downes, "which you persist in having at the breakfast table, which Louisa Maxwell and I agree
is a very injudicious thing, that I thought I should only interrupt you."

"What nonsense you talk, Frederick," said his wife. "Don't humbug me, however much you may choose to profess to other people. Do tell me, Mr. Knightley, about this horrid affair. Who was Lord Leslie's antagonist?"

"Sir Trevor Dolman," said Knightley.

"I am not surprised at any thing he does," observed Downes. "So rash, so ill-tempered, under no control, almost without religion."

"He is likely to suffer for his folly in this instance," said Knightley; "for if Leslie die, he must fly for his life."

"Is it so?" asked Downes, "for, lawyer as I am, I did not know that."

"Well, it depends, I suppose, on the feelings of the family," answered Knightley.

"I cannot make out what the quarrel is about," said Downes, "but I have seen
no one who was at the ball. Do you know, Knightley?"

"Not I," replied Mr. Knightley. "You know, Downes, that the baronet and I are never very good friends, so I had not an invitation to Deerfold. Our politics don't agree, for one thing, and, independent of that, we are ill suited. He looks with contempt upon my ancestors, good English yeomen; and 'I treat the old blood that runs in his veins with perfect indifference, as I think there is no pride so abominable, or so little to be excused, as that of setting a high value on oneself because our forefathers were noble. Give me the pride of making myself a name, independent of birth, be it noble or plebeian.'"

"True," said Downes. "Neither you nor I, Knightley, can boast of family. My wife, to be sure, has some good blood in her veins, but I don't know that I like her any the better for that. No, no, Caroline, I married you neither
for birth, beauty, nor fortune, my dear girl, but because you liked me."

Knightley burst into a loud laugh.

Mrs. Downes accustomed to her husband's foolish speeches, and believing he did not love her the less for them, made no reply, but asked Mr. Knightley to tell her all he knew of this dreadful duel, adding, "I am not much surprised at any mischief that arises from a fancy ball. It is of all things the most immoral, in my opinion."

"Not a private one, Caroline," said Downes. "I felt much inclined to go, I assure you; and I half promised the Maxwells I would. Indeed, the Arch deacon asked me to do so, in order to keep an eye on the girls."

"Well, Frederick, that is even beyond yourself," said his wife. "I would not have Louisa hear that, or she would at once declare you might look elsewhere for your second wife."

"Well, don't you tell tales, Caroline,"
said Downes. "But the Archdeacon did say something to that effect, or what might be construed to have that meaning. But now, Knightley, for the history of the duel."

"As far as I can understand," said Knightley, "Lord Leslie and Sir Trevor arranged last night to meet at seven o'clock this morning, or as soon as it was sufficiently light, with their seconds, a mile from the city, and settle their dispute, not at the point of the sword, as in former days, but with pistols. Accordingly so it was. Lord Leslie fell, and Sir Trevor escaped. He and Major Harwood, a desperate fellow for fighting, immediately left the field for Deerfold. Lord Leslie was placed in his carriage and taken to his hotel, where he had slept. His lady mother was sent for, also his sister, Lady Agnes Scott. Fainting fits and hysterics ensued. The broken arm was set, and if fever can be kept off, Bromley says all will go on
well. His lordship must not be removed at present."

"A good thing for old Nash, and his wife is a capital nurse," observed Downes.

"True," said Knightley; "but the Eagle is not so good as the Star."

"Prejudice, my dear fellow," said Downes. "Party feeling, nothing else. But I must go to my office. I expect Brown. Where are you bound for?"

"I have no particular object this morning, so I shall ride to the Knoll," said Knightley. "I want to hear Mrs. Brown's version of the ball. I expect her description of it will be quite equal to having been there."

"She will be gone to Deerfold to console the baronet, I should think;" said Downes with a cunning expression and extended chin.

"I understand you," replied Knightley; "but I will take my chance. Good morning, Mrs. Downes." But that lady
was gone, and was busy in her store room for the next hour, quite happy amongst the sugar and the tea, the coffee and the plums; for Mrs. Downes did not think it beneath her, though she was a baronet's daughter, to be her own store keeper. Nor was it so, fair readers. But though the excellent habit of ladies being their own housekeepers must be approved of, it is not desirable to see the generality of them so absorbed in it as was Mrs. Downes. She entered into the minutiae of it, not so much from duty as inclination; and that she might have daily occupation in that way, she doled out her sugar and tea, and all the etceteras appertaining to her office, with a sparing hand.

Downes encouraged all this in his wife, as he believed it kept his money together, and it pleased and occupied her, and thus left him at liberty to amuse himself, when not engaged in his office, in any way he pleased; and he might
be seen riding with the Miss Browns, the Miss Colvilles, but much oftener with the Miss Maxwells, whilst his wife would be driving in her little phaeton with all her children and a nurse; and if she chanced to meet Downes with his young companions, she would stop and chat a few minutes, and think it much better for them both to be thus engaged; and yet Mr. and Mrs. Downes were what is called a happy couple. They never quarrelled. They seemed to like each other; they had the same views on most subjects. They were both domestic, both religious; their aim in life seemed to be the same—to save money, and yet to live in a certain style which gave them consequence. Theirs had been a love match. Mrs. Downes' family had objected to it, but as Downes truly said, Caroline Ford was so much in love with him, and so determined to die if her father persisted in his refusal, that at last he was persuaded to give his consent;
and no one had any reason to say that Caroline ever repented her choice, or that Downes did either.

Louisa Maxwell was the only person who was suspicious on that point, but she hoped she was wrong, for Caroline was a friend of hers.

But we will now accompany Mr. Knightley in his visit to the Knoll.
CHAPTER VI.

The Browns, too, were at breakfast; for, always late, that morning they were an hour after their usual time. A greater contrast to the breakfast table Mr. Knightley had just left cannot well be imagined. It groaned under a load of every thing which appertains to that meal. Fancy bread, several hot dishes, sweetmeats of every variety, eggs in every form, and fruit of all kinds. Cold
meats and game covered a side table. The large silver hissing urn towered above all, and the massive tea-pot with its miniature for the lovers of green tea, accorded well with the whole, as did the rest of the plate and the Dresden china, which Mrs. Brown declared had been in her family for centuries, though no one at all knew where that family had hid itself, as it was never heard of until Mr. Brown brought his pretty smart wife to his house joining his office in Hereford some eight-and-twenty years before this period.

However, Mrs. Brown very early determined to be somebody, if she had never been anybody before; and by her cleverness and her tact, she certainly had contrived to know everybody, and to be visited by almost everybody. Nor did she let her good husband rest until he left that odious office house, and took a good one in the most aristocratic part of the city; and when the Knoll was
to be sold, Mrs. Brown persuaded Mr. Brown to be the purchaser.

Mr. Knightley found the party in high glee, and he complimented the ladies on their fresh looks, observing that no one could suppose they had been up all night. He carefully avoided the subject of the duel, as he came there to hear all they had to say of the ball before he damped their spirits by his relation of what, at present, they were evidently ignorant.

"Come Knightley," said Brown, "sit down, and let me give you some of this pheasant. It is the best ragout I ever tasted."

"I don't care if I have a second breakfast," said Knightley, "though I have just professed to the Downes that I had no appetite to join theirs."

"Good heavens," exclaimed Mrs. Brown, who looked her desire that Mr. Knightley should sit beside her. "You would eat those poor mean Downes up
at a mouthful, you great gormandising farmer, as I call you.”

“Call me what you like, my dear madam. Just now I am perfectly happy, and can bear your sharpest satire,” said Mr. Knightley, drawing his chair close to Mrs. Brown, so that his capacious person came in contact with her well standing out robe. She did not dislike the implied flattery, for Mr. Knightley was not disagreeable to her, especially when he was the only beau, and more particularly when Sir Trevor Dolman was not there to be jealous.

Mr. Knightley impatient to set his hostess “going,” as he called it, asked her how the ball went off last night?

“As such things always do in the country,” replied Mrs. Brown, “dull, dull—awfully dull.”

“Oh, mamma,” said Matilda, who hoped she had made some way with Mr. Pemberton, “I don’t think it was
dull; and I am sure you laughed and talked a great deal."

"Why, yes, there was plenty to laugh at," said Mrs. Brown. "I should have died of ennui, but for the amusement of watching the old dowagers and some of the aristocratic Misses in their egregiously ugly costumes. Did you ever see such a fright as Lady Heathdown, in that fly away cap?"

"What was her character?" asked Mr. Knightley.

"A Norman lady, I believe," said Mrs. Brown, "but she looked like a scarecrow. Actually, the height from her chin to her crown exceeded the rest of her body. Then her starch husband. I am sure I don't know what he meant to be—a mute, I should think, for Lord Heathdown did not speak two words to me."

"Mr. Pemberton looked very handsome as a Turk," said Matilda. "His crescent was composed of real brilliants."
"You hope to know it better some of these days, don't you, Matilda?" said Jack Brown, who seemed less lively than any of the party.

"None of your quizzing, Jack, if you please," said Matilda, "or I will tell Mr. Knightley how a certain Norman peasant girl cut you into thread papers."

"And a vast number Jack would make on my conscience," said Knightley, laughing. "What was your costume, hey, Jack?"

Mr. John Brown's spirits were not raised by this sally of his sister, and he wished he knew how to be witty, in order to retaliate, but Jack was hopelessly stupid; and now, quite convinced that he had no chance with Helen Murray, he found he was really fonder of her than he had imagined, and he had serious intentions of becoming disconsolate, and thus trying to work upon her feelings by growing thin. So this morning he had only ate twice of game, and
was determining to resist the various other dishes before him, professing himself to be fast losing his appetite. In answer to Mr. Knightley's question as to his costume the evening before, his mother answered for him. "Jack was Darnley to my Mary Queen of Scots, and very handsome he looked. I am sure, had the real lord been half as comely he would have escaped the blowing up his wife gave him."

"Capital, capital," exclaimed Knightley, laughing heartily. "If I lived with you, Mrs. Brown, I should soon be dead. I could not stand such a continuous fire of wit. Was Sir Trevor Bothwell, or did he assume the character of the tender timid Rizzio?"

"Sir Trevor was himself, Knightley," said Mrs. Brown. "No character in history, be it ancient or modern, sacred or profane, can come up in peculiarity to his natural one."

"And did the lovely Scottish Queen
smile upon him last evening?” asked Knightley. Mrs. Brown looked at her fat complimentary neighbour to discover how much was meant by his words. She understood him, and quite satisfied that he envied Sir Trevor Dolman the preference she always showed him; she forgave Knightley the inuendo that no truly modest woman could have done. However, Mrs. Brown was one by herself, and, as flirting was a part of her nature, and, as she could no more get through a day without it, than she could dispense with her dinner, or her rouge, she was callous to any allusion that might be made, let it emanate from whom it would. Her husband did not disapprove, at least, if he did, he was a wise man, for no one ever heard him say so; and least of all his wife.

Mrs. Brown did not answer Knightley’s last query, but now went on to tell him how this person had appeared in an inappropriate costume, and how that
person had disfigured herself. How old Sir Ogilvie Lovelace had flirted with young Miss Smith, and how enraged Mr. Jones was in consequence. Then she told Mr. Knightley how divinely Lady Agnes Scott was dressed as a Greek lady, though her beauty was not of a style to suit her costume, observing that Henrietta would have looked better in it.

“May I inquire,” said Mr. Knightley, “your character last evening?” and he looked at Henrietta Brown.

“A Spanish lady, in black velvet,” said Hetty. “I think it was a mistake, and I was excessively hot.”

“No mistake at all, Hetty,” said her mother. “I heard several men ask who you were, and you know Lord Leslie particularly admired you.”

“Did he really, Mamma?” said the now pleased young lady. “Did he tell you so?”

“Never mind, never mind, Miss Hetty,” answered her mother. “Be
quiet, leave things to me, and you will yet be a Countess."

Hetty blushed. Mr. Knightley, who was rather inclined to pay his devoirs to Miss Henrietta Brown, now thought he would cut short that hope, and he rather maliciously said "no one is likely to be a Countess who depends on Lord Leslie to make her one."

"What do you mean, Mr. Knightley?" asked Matilda.

"Why, his lordship now lies at the Golden Eagle, between life and death, with very little hope of the former."

"Good God, Knightley," said Brown, "why did you not tell us before?"

"I was not aware that you were all," and he looked at Henrietta, "so excessively interested in his lordship." Knightley said this with a sneer.

"Perhaps you did not know that Lord Leslie is a particular friend of ours?" observed Mrs. Brown.

"But tell me, Knightley," said Brown,
impatiently, "what has happened to Lord Leslie?" now fearing his wife had been right the evening before as to a quarrel between that nobleman and Sir Trevor Dolman.

"Only been shot in a duel," said Mr. Knightley, coolly.

"Good heavens!" screamed Mrs. Brown, and off she went into a violent fit of hysterics. Her maid was summoned, and Mr. Brown taking Knightley into his own room soon learned from him all the particulars of the duel; and he then went with him to Hereford, merely shouting at the foot of the staircase, "Matilda, how's your mother? Tell her I am off to the office," and, without waiting for an answer to his inquiries, for Brown very well knew that his wife was herself again by this time, though he would not have omitted the little attention of an enquiry for the world, set off with Knightley, as desirous as the veriest gossip in the city to hear
all about this "affair of honor," as the world misnames a duel; for, in the quiet old city of Hereford, such a thing had not been heard of in the memory of its very oldest inhabitant.

Mrs. Brown, after a good scream or two, and a little laughing and crying, ordered her carriage immediately. She told Matilda to accompany her, desiring Hetty not to show herself to any one, for, as she had been the cause of the duel, it would not be delicate; "besides," added Mrs. Brown, "I am sure child you feel too anxious about Lord Leslie to be able to command your feelings in the presence of indifferent people. I shall drive to the "Eagle," and Mrs. Nash will tell me all particulars. Poor Lord Leslie!"

Hetty and her sister had exchanged looks of astonishment, and wondered whether this was a got up story of their clever manœuvreing mamma, in order to give them all consequence, her favorite
daughter especially, or whether Lord Leslie did indeed sufficiently admire Hetty to risk his life in her cause.

"Mamma," said Matilda, "pray what has Hetty to do with the duel?"

"Mamma," asked Henrietta, in an anxious voice, "do tell me, and tell me truly, has Lord Leslie fought on my account?"

"Be quiet girls, you overpower me with your questions. Palmer, my last French bonnet, my new cashmere shawl. One more sip at that odious brandy. Should I find Lord Leslie dead, Hetty; don't faint love, perhaps he'll recover, I shall wish you to indulge your grief so far as to put on black for awhile."

Henrietta Brown stared in astonishment, but her mamma gave her no time to answer. She went on, "perhaps, when time has softened your regrets, and you consider the impossibility of recalling your lover to life, poor Sir Trevor may be forgiven for having
destroyed your hopes of a coronet, and you may be able to forget the admirer who died for you, in the arms of the brave baronet who fought for you."

"Mamma," exclaimed her youngest daughter, "I really think the brandy must be in your head. What nonsense you do talk."

Mrs. Brown's spirits had certainly risen somewhat beyond her control, and Matilda now appearing ready for their expedition, but not in the most amiable of humours, for she had intended doing something very opposite to driving with her mamma; the mother bidding her hasten to the carriage, turned to Henrietta and in a whisper said, "I heard the quarrel last night between Leslie and Trevor. They both profess to admire you, and yet your Spanish dress was 'a mistake.' Ungrateful girl! But now obey, and keep your room till my return;" and away went Mrs. Brown, and away went Henrietta to her boudoir, her
vanity pleased that a lord and a baronet should fight, nay, perhaps die, for love of her.

She first glanced at herself in her mirror, and she thought a handsomer person could not well be reflected. "If Lord Leslie die, it will certainly be quite proper for me to wear black lace for a few evenings," said Hetty aloud; "and then I may appear in my beautiful Honiton one afterwards. I must have a new morning dress, but I daresay mamma will give me that, as it is to mourn for a lord. Certainly I did not even dream that the interesting Leslie cared so much for me. The eclat of the thing is delightful. What will Lucy Colville say, and the Maxwells, and Helen Murray? Won't she be envious?" and Henrietta sat down at her writing table and took up a sprig of myrtle, somewhat drooping. She sighed, and continued her soliloquy:—"But should Lord Leslie recover. What then. Can
I give up the Dalmatian youth, with his soft beaming eye of love—his graceful figure, quite as tall as Leslie, and more graceful in my opinion, for poor Leslie rather limps yet." She kissed the fading myrtle. "How I dreamed of my last waltz, Edward. How little did I imagine I must perhaps renounce you for rank and fortune—you, dear Edward, who can bestow no title upon me; yet I should be content at Avondale with you. I hope you won't be very wretched when you hear I am Lady Leslie. But, perhaps, this enemy to our union may die. At all events I will treasure this sprig of your devotion; and now I will just look at my black lace, and be prepared for all things." And Henrietta Brown busied herself in enclosing the dying myrtle in a scented sheet of paper, which she locked up in her box of treasured love tokens, and ringing for her maid, desired her to reach out her lace dress.
"The Honiton one, ma'am?" asked the abigail.

"No, no, my black one. I shall have to put on mourning for Lord Leslie, perhaps."
Lord Leslie lay on his bed of sickness and suffering. His mind ill at ease, for he knew he had brought it all upon himself by his impetuous temper, and he thought how little better he was than the violent Baronet. Both had given way to passion, and what was the consequence? Bodily suffering, and perhaps death to himself and mental uneasiness; and may be, perpetual banishment to Sir Trevor. As Clarence thus lay rumi-
nating on the consequences of his rashness, the surgeons having left his room, and having ordered perfect quietness for their patient, for the next hour at least, he thought of Helen Murray. Yes, Helen Murray's form was ever present to him as he last saw her struggling to escape from the arms of the impertinent baronet; and Lord Leslie repented not that he had rescued her from insult, even at the risk of life. But then, the image of Constance Davenant rose up in all its purity and goodness, and affection towards himself; and he felt he had no right, after his professions of love to her, to sacrifice her happiness for the sake of another. And as Constance faded from his mind's eye, he saw his loving sweet sister in her agony of grief, and with her high sense of religion, mourning equally over his suffering and his sin. Then the sorrowing form of his ever kind and indulgent father haunted him, weeping over the danger of his loved,
his only son; and, to finish the family group which his feverish imagination placed before him, he fancied that the dreadful excitement caused to his invalid mother by the present doubtful recovery of the son and heir of their noble house, would at once deprive her of life, which had long entirely depended upon perfect freedom from all anxiety. Thus, when the medical men paid their noble patient a second visit, they found him restless and feverish, and they were not at all so sanguine of his recovery as they had been an hour before.

Lord Leslie asked for Lady Agnes. She was waiting, almost breathlessly, for admission. And now, Mr. Bromley thought that perhaps her presence might soothe her brother, and she was admitted, with strict entreaties not to show the slightest agitation.

The pale girl obeyed, and quietly approaching the bed, knelt down by her brother, and she seemed, in his eyes, as
a ministering angel; and not in his only, for all present thought they had never beheld a face and form of such exquisite loveliness. Her self-possession was admirable, for every nerve was unstrung, and her heart was weeping, though her frame was unmoved, and her eye dry. Her excessive paleness was the only visible sign of emotion, and that made her look scarcely earthly; for generally she had a tinge of colouring which gave to her fair cheek the hue of health.

Leslie put his arm around her as she knelt, and whispered "forgive me, Agnes, for making you unhappy."

"Hush, hush, Clarence, ask not forgiveness of me," said his gentle sister, in her soft musical tones.

"I understand you, Agnes," said Leslie. "Pray for me, dear sister, and do not leave me," and he pressed her forehead with his burning lips.

"God is merciful, Clarence," said Agnes, solemnly. "Be calm and patient,
and all may yet be well. From this moment I am your nurse. So now, dearest brother, compose yourself, and I must commence my duties."

Lady Agnes arose from her knees, and having received instructions from Mr. Bromley, she established herself in Leslie's chamber, desiring that her maid might be in readiness in the adjoining room to attend to her wants. Leslie seemed to be comforted and inclined to sleep, and the medical men took their departure for a few hours.

In the meanwhile Lady Moreton arrived at the Deanery, and when she found her son could not be seen, for no one had dared to tell her the nature of the accident, or that he was lying at an inn, she became violent in her grief. Lord Heathdown remained to assist Mrs. Colville in endeavouring to compose the agonized mother, and he it was who deemed it much better to tell her of the fractured arm, and that the surgeons
were then setting it, but they did not apprehend any difficulty. This intelligence had the desired effect, for Lady Moreton had a great horror of surgical operations, and she remained quite satisfied so long as she imagined that was going on. But then she insisted on admittance to her son, and Lord Heathdown cautiously told her the truth. She bore it better than was expected, and seemed to comfort herself in the certainty that her son's antagonist was a man of family, and she doubted not that the quarrel had been of a nature honourable to both; some slight difference in politics, or, perhaps, a contention for precedence, "and Leslie," observed her ladyship, "was quite right to maintain that. But, if I may not see my noble and gallant boy, Agnes might come and speak to me," continued Lady Moreton.

"Lady Agnes is with her brother," said Mrs. Colville.
"My poor child," exclaimed her ladyship. "It is quite improper, she will knock herself up, she will be unfit for everything, she will not have strength and spirit left to attend to and comfort me, and without her I cannot exist. Pray, Lord Heathdown, go to the hotel, announce to my son that I am here, and tell him that when those horrid surgeons are gone, I wish to see him; and tell Agnes she must come to me immediately."

Lord Heathdown, glad to make his escape from this odd compound of pride and selfishness, hastened to the "Eagle," and arrived there just as Bromley had quitted Lord Leslie's chamber, leaving Lady Agnes installed there as chief nurse. He reported favorably of his patient, but insisted on no person going near him at present, especially his own family; and when Lord Heathdown proposed to Bromley the return of Lady Agnes, he told his lordship that she neither would
nor ought to leave her brother, for it was her presence that had acted almost like a charm upon him, and he had been quiet and composed ever since her ladyship went to him.

Lord Heathdown, seeing the necessity of complying with the wishes of Bromley, hastened back to the Deanery, and with a tact no other man so well knew how to use, he managed to divert Lady Moreton from her determination of having her daughter at the Deanery, and then returning with her to her son's sick room at the hotel. After telling her that he had obeyed her orders, he said "don't you think, Lady Moreton, that you should send an express to London for Moreton?"

"Certainly, Lord Heathdown," said Lady Moreton, "and not only for him, but for Adams. He is now the first surgeon, and attends everybody of family. He saw my poor mother, and, though the duchess did not live many weeks
after Adams came abroad on purpose to visit her; an immense fee, my brother, the present duke, paid him; he is still the man to send for to our noble boy and only son. I'll write to Adams. He won't hesitate a moment when he knows poor Leslie is a grandson of the late duchess of Axminster."

"And you will also write to Moreton?" said Lord Heathdown.

"Yes, that will be a long business," replied her ladyship, "as I must tell him every particular. So Mrs. Colville, do give me, if you please, writing materials." And her ladyship, now busy with her pen, forgot for the next two hours that there was any one in the world but the ancient family of Moreton, and Mr. Adams who was called upon to sustain the life of the noble heir of that noble house.

Mrs. Colville consulted with Lord Heathdown what was best to be done as regarded Lady Moreton's remaining
at the deanery. They decided for her to return to Pemberton Castle, as she would then have the daily drive to occupy her, and also have fewer opportunities of interfering with the arrangements of the sick room, or depriving Leslie of his sister's society. Besides, the Colvilles were leaving Hereford the next day for a living of the Dean's, some miles from the city.

When her ladyship was settled down to her writing, Lord Heathdown returned to the inn; and he found Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Nash, the bonny landlady, in close confabulation in the bar. His lordship had entered the room before he was aware of its inmates. He shook hands with Mrs. Brown, who in a dolorous voice said, "A sad business this, my lord."

"It is, indeed," replied Lord Heathdown; "but I trust there is no fear for Lord Leslie's life."

"That must be doubtful at present,
my lord,” said Mrs. Brown. “We are too anxious to believe it.”

“No wonder, ma’am,” said Mrs. Nash, “considering its all along of you that the mischief is done.”

Now then the mystery of the duel is out, thought Lord Heathdown; for no one seemed even to guess the subject of quarrel, for Sir Trevor had professed his determination, with an oath, not to divulge the cause of the duel. He really felt ashamed of it, and Leslie was too anxious to guard the name of Helen Murray from appearing in such a business, ever to mention it. “How’s that, Mrs. Nash?” said Lord Heathdown to the jolly talkative landlady.

Mrs. Nash looked at Mrs. Brown.

“Oh!” exclaimed that lady, “it’s no secret—alas! it can’t be one, or delicacy would induce us to be silent. But, as scores of people heard my Lord Leslie and Sir Trevor Dolman at high words, and my dear Henrietta’s name banded
between them in loud tones, every one is acquainted with the subject which excited these two ill-tempered men. I am sure Hetty don't care much for either of them, but I believe she has rather encouraged Lord Leslie; and this duel, on her account, seems to have won upon her affections exceedingly. Poor girl, I left her in a sad way. She says if Lord Leslie don't recover she shall never marry, for she cannot forget a love which induced a man to die for her."

"At present, however," observed Lord Heathdown, who was exceedingly surprised by this account of Mrs. Brown, and rather inclined to think it a fabrication, or at all events an exaggerated account. "At present Lord Leslie is worth two dead men, Mrs. Brown, and I hope will recover, when doubtless he will be inclined to reward the fair subject of the duel for her overpowering anxiety on his account."
"Why, if Leslie recover," observed Mrs. Brown, in her usual familiar way of speaking of men, whether they were lords or shopkeepers, "perhaps Henrietta may become fonder of him when she has seen more of him; but I am not at all sure that she would accept him. But this you won't mention, my lord, or indeed any part of our conversation. I was shocked to find from Mrs. Nash how well the circumstances are known."

Mrs. Nash stared, for until Mrs. Brown had related them half an hour before, Mrs. Nash had never imagined the Browns were at all concerned in the duel; but she did not contradict the lady. Mrs. Nash knew her interest better than that. She was quick enough to discover that Mrs. Brown wished the affair to be published without appearing in it, and Mrs. Nash was just the person to do it for her; so she had confided the story to her in a kind of confidence, neither asking her to repeat it, nor yet
to be silent about it, but leaving it to Mrs. Nash's discretion to do what she saw would be agreeable to Mrs. Brown in a way that would best answer the purposes of that lady.

And now Mrs. Brown having done her work, and done it well too, she drove to the Deanery to take up Matilda, whom she had sent there to get all she could out of Lucy Colville.

Lord Heathdown smiled as Mrs. Brown left the bar of the hotel.


"A mere fable of Madam Brown's, I imagine," said Lord Heathdown. "Who told you about it, Mrs. Nash?" Lord Heathdown's clear full eye was fixed upon the stout landlady, and her own bold dark one sunk beneath it.

"I see, I see, Mrs. Nash," exclaimed his lordship. "You and Mrs. Brown understand each other. However, I advise you to be cautious in this affair,
and do not entirely trust to the lady’s version of it. It is a very pretty bit of gossip, but not one that is likely to please the family of your present guest, Mrs. Nash. I just caution you; and now tell me what is the news from the sick room.”

“Mr. Bromley is just gone up stairs, my lord,” replied Mrs. Nash, quite relieved to get rid of the subject till she could get rid of Lord Heathdown; for Mrs. Nash had determined, in her own mind, to have the pleasure of relating the story as told to her, in spite of his lordship’s caution.

Lord Heathdown waited until Bromley returned from Lord Leslie’s room, which he did immediately, as he found him sleeping, the very best possible symptom. Mr. Bromley gave Lord Heathdown a note from Lady Agnes Scott. It was merely to request that his lordship would write to her father, and send the letter by an express, and that Lady Heathdown
would do all she could to comfort her poor mamma.

"In a day or two," added Lady Agnes, "Bromley says mamma may see Clarence. I long to be with her, but my duty keeps me here at present. I have written two lines to mamma just now, and sent them by my maid."

Lord Heathdown desired Bromley would tell Lady Agnes that Lady Moreton was returning to the Castle, and she need not have any fears for her, as she had borne the announcement of Lord Leslie's accident with great composure after the first ten minutes.

Lord Heathdown then inquired after Mr. Clive.

"That is a much worse case, my lord, than this," said Bromley.

"I am very sorry indeed to hear that," said Lord Heathdown. "Surely he will not die?" and he thought of Helen Murray.

"I think there is a chance that he
may get over this attack, my lord,” said Bromley, “but it will leave him delicate for months, nay years, and perhaps for life; or he may speedily go into a consumption. But it is impossible to calculate the result. I am going to Mayfield Vicarage now, my lord.”

“Poor Clive!” exclaimed Lord Heathdown, as Mr. Bromley bowed his fat person out of his presence. “And poor, poor Helen,” sighed his lordship. “I will call at the Vicarage as we go home;” and accordingly, when he arrived at the Deanery and found Lady Moreton ready and willing to return to Pemberton Castle, for Agnes’ little note had satisfied her, he ordered his carriage, and as he stepped into it after Lady Moreton, said, “to Mayfield Vicarage.”
Matilda Brown had been admitted at the Deanery, but she did not see Lucy Colville. The two younger girls took her to their school-room, and began eagerly to discuss the ball of the previous evening, joking Matilda on the attentions of Mr. Beard, and asking if Hetty was not jealous.

"Oh, no, she is playing for a higher stake now," said Miss Brown; "but this
fatal duel is likely to cut her hopes short."

"Indeed," exclaimed Emily Colville. "Is it to see Hetty, then, that Sir Trevor goes so often to the Knoll?"

"Bless you, Emily, no;" said Matilda. "That's mamma. Sir Trevor is her professed admirer. We don't like him at all."

"Perhaps not," exclaimed the pretty Caroline, "but what a beautiful dear old place he has. How I should like to live there."

Matilda laughed aloud.

"Hush," said Emily, "Lady Moreton is in the next room."

"Well, and if she is," said Matilda, "may'n't I laugh? I suppose Lucy is in a pretty way about Lord Leslie? But do tell me, girls, is he likely to die, and where is he shot?"

"Oh, we don't quite know," said Emily. "We have not seen mamma, she has been closeted with old tiresome Lady Moreton for the last two hours."
"But Lady Agnes Scott, where is she?" asked Miss Brown.

"With her brother, of course," said Caroline. "She went immediately to the inn. Poor, dear, beautiful Lady Agnes. I wish I might go to her and help her to nurse her brother."

Matilda laughed again, and said, "Well, Caroline, you are the coolest person I ever knew. One moment you wish to be my Lady Dolman, because you would live in a musty old house, and the next, you wish to pay attention to a young lord because he has a sister you think pretty; but, for my part, I never look at Lady Agnes without thinking of a winding sheet, she is so thin and pale."

"How can you say so, Matilda Brown?" exclaimed Caroline Colville, who forgot the attack upon herself, in her defence of her friend and favorite. "Lady Agnes' colour comes and goes, to be sure, but always leaves a tinge of the loveliest pink."
"A faded pink, most assuredly," said Matilda, who admired her own rich colouring far more, and so, indeed, might some others.

"And, as to Agnes being thin," continued Caroline, now warm in the defence of her beauty, "she is just right in that respect, Matilda; at least, so my brother Robert says, and so Mr. Pemberton says."

"Mr. Robert Colville's taste may be your criterion, Caroline," said Matilda, "but I don't know that it is anybody else's, and, as to Ernest Pemberton admiring a tall lank figure, I know better than that. Did you notice the very long polka I had with him last night?"

"No indeed," said Caroline, who could not recover her temper easily, and who had quite lost it on the present occasion.

"You have no chance of winning Lord Leslie, Caroline," said the provoking Matilda.
“I don’t want to win him,” said Caroline, and she almost cried.

Emily thought her sister very foolish, and she told her so; at the same time she said, “Matilda, you are too bad. What do you mean by your last remark, for I am sure poor dear little Carry will never try to make a conquest if she lives to be a hundred; though I think it very possible she may make one sooner, perhaps, than either you or I?”

“That remains to be proved, Emily,” said Matilda.

“Certainly; but tell me what you meant, about Lord Leslie,” asked Emily, “for we all like him exceedingly.”

“I meant,” said Matilda, that his lordship has professed his determination not to marry a girl who has not a sweet temper. That, indeed, is Hetty’s charm with him. But, if my Lord Leslie take her to wife, he will find that a woman may possess a worse thing than a hasty temper.”
“Does Lord Leslie admire Henrietta?” asked Emily. “I never suspected that.”

“Not the less true though, on that account, Miss Emily,” retorted Matilda. “At least, I suppose he does, for Hetty is going into mourning if he dies, and mamma says the duel is all about her.”

“You don’t say so, Matilda?” exclaimed Emily.

“I don’t believe it,” said Caroline, who had retired to one end of the room, and appeared to be reading.

Matilda took no notice of Caroline’s observation. “Have you not heard all about it then?” asked Miss Brown of Emily.

“Not a syllable, Matilda,” said Emily. “Do tell me.”

“Why I promised mamma not to mention it, but I suppose I may to you, dear Emily,” said Miss Brown, in a subdued tone, so that Caroline might imagine she was not meant to hear it, though every word met her ear as
distinctly as if she had been seated near to Matilda. This was just what Miss Brown intended, and truly she was a faithful disciple of her managing mamma. "I believe," she went on to say, "that both Leslie and Sir Trevor asked Hetty for the same waltz, the last of the evening, for nearly every one was gone when the row began; at least, they did not exactly ask Hetty, but both went up to mamma and inquired "what Mary of Scotland had done with her lovely Spanish Maid of Honor." Mamma said she had just left her for Dalmatia, at least, a youth in the dress of the Country had invited her to accompany him. Upon which both gentlemen left her, and, in five minutes afterwards, high words ensued between them, and mamma says that Henrietta's name was heard from the lips of both. Mamma tried to make peace, and she thought she had accomplished it. Papa was with Sir Trevor sometime before we left Deerfold,
and we were the very last. Mamma sought Lord Leslie, but he was gone home, so she hoped the affair would blow over. Mamma never told any of us, not even papa, a word about Hetty being at the bottom of it all, till just now, when the truth cannot any longer be hid."

Emily Colville listened, and tried to comprehend, but she could not clearly see that Matilda had quite given a satisfactory account of the cause of the duel. However, Miss Brown was not inclined to be more communicative, indeed, she could not have been, as she had told all she knew, Mrs. Brown deeming it quite sufficient for Matilda to say in order to set the world agog; and she knew, before the tale had gone through many mouths, that it would be as pretty a piece of romance as any in print. Such was the love of news and scandal in the cathedral town of Hereford, and it was rumoured that the black coats were as fond of it
as less wise and less good men. The Dean, however, was an exception. He was a pattern of everything that was excellent in one of his high dignity. He was not much seen, as he had delicate health, which obliged him to keep the house during the winter months, but he did more in his province than any one could conceive possible for a man in his suffering state. He wished his children to enjoy themselves, so it was by his express desire that Mrs. Colville took her daughters out. One always stayed with him, and, on the occasion of the fancy ball at Deerfold, Lucy had been that one. She wished her younger sisters to have the pleasure of it, besides she had no spirits for it. She clearly saw her hopes of Leslie's being attached to her were at an end—and, like a wise girl, she determined to conquer her feelings, and, as she could not have him as a husband, not to lose him as a friend. When she became acquainted with the
duel and its consequences, she was deeply touched, and, though the brother was most likely lost to her for ever, the sister professed eternal friendship for her from that hour; so much real feeling did Lucy Colville display, with truly feminine delicacy, and, had Constance Davenant been out of the question, Lady Agnes would have gladly secured, if possible, the heart of her dear Clarence for her friend Lucy. She saw Lucy loved Leslie, though she used her best endeavours to conceal it; and none, perhaps, but a partial fond sister, would have discovered that it was so. She determined, the very first opportunity, to let Lucy know that Clarence's heart was won, but that was not the moment.

Mrs. Brown called for Matilda very soon after she had given her confidence to Emily Colville, and she left the Deanery with the amiable feeling that she had excited envy to the full extent she had intended. The mother and
daughter now agreed, as they were out, to drive to Mayfield to call on Mrs. Melbourne, and astonish her with their news. When they reached the cottage, Letty informed them that her mistress was at the Vicarage, as Mr. Clive was dangerously ill.

"Indeed," said Mrs. Brown, "and is Mrs. Melbourne head nurse?"

"She is the only one, excepting servants, madam," replied Letty. "But will you walk in ladies? Miss Murray is at home. She returned from Pemberton Castle early this morning."

"Perhaps we had better not, mamma," said Matilda, for she wanted to get home, as she thought she had passed Mr. Pemberton on the road, and he might possibly call at the Knoll.

"Oh, yes, we will just get out for five minutes," said Mrs. Brown, who was anxious to know whether Helen was aware that she was the heroine of the duel. At present it was her opinion
that she did not even know it was Lord Leslie who so aptly came to her assistance the evening before. She had watched the scene closely, and she thought that Helen had flown from her admirer without knowing how she was released. Mrs. Brown was perfectly right, and Helen Murray was not likely to gainsay her well got up story, which was invented to give her daughter consequence in the eyes of the world, and to create envy in the bosoms of one or two girls, who, from their birth and station, somewhat looked down on the family of the country lawyer. Should Lord Leslie die, which Mrs. Brown thought would be the safest thing that could happen to ensure the success of her plot, the falsity of her tale could never be known. Should he live, there might be a little difficulty, but Mrs. Brown trusted to her wits to surmount it, and they seldom failed to get her out of scrapes she had fallen into by the
indulgence of her vanity. She now entered the cottage, followed by her pouting daughter, who felt sure she was losing perhaps her only chance of securing a conquest she had taken such pains the evening before to gain, namely, the conquest of Mr. Pember ton.

Helen was not in the drawing room, so Mrs. Brown amused herself with reading over the names on the cards that lay in a pretty ivory basket on the table, making her remarks upon the individuals in her usual sarcastic style. When Helen appeared, Mrs. Brown met her with a very hearty shake of the hand. Her object now was to be very civil indeed to Miss Murray, and she really had felt more kindly towards her since she was certain that she would not have Jack, though she could not quite forgive her the mortification of a refusal.

"We are so exceedingly sorry," began Mrs. Brown, "to hear of Mr. Clive's
illness. I hope your maid has exaggerated the danger, Helen."

"Poor Letty, I believe, does not know the meaning of the word," replied Helen, who was looking very handsome, though somewhat pale for her. "She is quite a matter of fact person, Mrs. Brown. Mr. Clive is very very ill."

"And you not with him, Helen?" cried Matilda. "Why Hetty says you are engaged to him, though you do deny it."

Helen had more than her usual colour then. She did not think it necessary, however, to make any remark on Matilda's speech, as she knew it was the custom of the Miss Browns to talk in this strain, she quietly said "My Aunt Melbourne is at the Vicarage, and never leaves poor Mr. Clive. I only hope she will not overfatigue herself. I found her wonderfully well when I saw her half an hour ago on my return from Pemberton Castle, and I hope very soon
that Mr. Clive's relations, the Moreton family, will arrive, when my dear aunt will be able to resign her post to them."

"I fear Mrs. Melbourne will have to nurse Mr. Clive much longer than you imagine, Helen," said Mrs. Brown. "The Moretons have enough to do in their immediate family."

"What do you mean?" asked Helen.

"Oh, I suppose you have not heard of the duel?" said Mrs. Brown.

"Duel," exclaimed Helen in alarm. "Pray tell me, Mrs. Brown, I have heard nothing."

"Why," said she, "Sir Trevor and Lord Leslie, it seems, are after the same young lady, and, so, to settle the point, they meet and fight it out." Helen Murray became pale as death. She thought of the evening before. She knew some one had seized, with a strong arm, the impertinent Sir Trevor. Could it have been Lord Leslie. Quick as
lightning this thought passed through her mind, and two distinct feelings with it; pleasure that Lord Leslie should have interfered in her behalf, and horror that he should have suffered in her cause. Before she could speak, Mrs. Brown went on. "Sir Trevor is safe, Miss Murray, so do not be alarmed. He will, some of these days, no doubt, renew his professions of love to you."

Helen's cheek flushed with indignation, and she was about to reply, but Mrs. Brown went on with her narrative. "Poor Lord Leslie is the martyr to his love for—dear Hetty,—and lies at the "Eagle," severely wounded."

Helen was greatly shocked, and it required all her presence of mind not to show to Mrs. Brown how deeply she felt interested, for, some how or other, Lord Leslie had won her admiration from the first moment she saw him, and the previous evening had confirmed her in it. His lordship had danced with her,
and she thought that waltz and the half hour which followed it the pleasantest part of the evening. Surely it was that he danced so well, that he talked so kindly, so feelingly of her dear father. Thus she accounted to herself for the pleasure she derived from Lord Leslie's attentions. Then he had proposed calling at the cottage to gratify her aunt, a perfect stranger to him. This showed such goodness of heart. It was impossible not to be pleased with Lord Leslie.

She had been wondering as she sat in her own little room if his lordship would indeed come, or if Clive's illness would so occupy his thoughts as to make him forget his proposed visit. She thought it possible, too, that Lord Leslie would now go at once to the Vicarage, and there see her aunt, so that he would not, of course, come to the cottage; and thus she should miss seeing him altogether. She had just determined to go to her aunt, as she thought it right she
should know that Lord Leslie had intended her the honor of a call; otherwise, her aunt might not perhaps see his lordship, excepting in the sick chamber, and thus be deprived of the gratification of hearing his account of the last illness of her much lamented brother.

The arrival of the Browns had prevented Helen putting her plan into execution, and the melancholy news which Mrs. Brown had told her, made her feel more unhappy than the occasion seemed to require, or than she was willing to allow even to herself. Command herself, however, she did, and Mrs. Brown's allusion to Hetty dispelled her fears that she had been the cause of the mischief, which, in the first moment, she had deemed possible. She now asked Mrs. Brown to tell her all the sad particulars, and, with Hetty for the heroine, the lawyer's wife made a very interesting story of it, very little different from the one Matilda told to
the Colvilles; of course, not exactly the same, as it is difficult to tell a fictitious history twice alike. At the conclusion of it, Helen almost envied Henrietta the privilege of mourning for poor Lord Leslie. She could not doubt that he was really attached to her after Mrs. Brown's statement, and though she, perhaps, wondered that one so elegant, so refined, of so noble a family, and, as she had understood, of so proud a one, should fix his affections on one his inferior in every sense of the word, her personal beauty only excepted. But she had deemed Lord Leslie superior to those men who are won by a handsome person, and who allow themselves to be influenced by beauty, without at all caring for the amiable qualities of the mind, or for what is of still more importance, for good principles. She sighed as she came to the conclusion that Lord Leslie had disappointed her, not in admiring Henrietta Brown more than herself, but
that he should have allowed his admiration to supersede every other consideration; for Helen knew that Lord Leslie's acquaintance with the Browns was slight, and of very recent date. He was the only person she had ever felt the slightest interest in on a first acquaintance, and he was gradually gaining upon her good opinion, and fast becoming her criterion of excellence. In short, she had just placed her hero on a pinnacle more dangerous to herself than to him, and now she found she must remove him from this pedestal, and class him with the rest of his kind. And again it must be acknowledged that our heroine sighed and was disappointed.

When Mrs. Brown had finished her wonderful narrative, over which she tried to be pathetic, but scarcely succeeded, for so much of exaltation of manner was mixed up with her expressed feelings of sorrow and anxiety, that a nice observer would easily have detected that
Mrs. Brown was not telling a simple unvarnished tale. Helen Murray, however, was too much excited to criticise, and with her the whole was received as truth, and very glad she was when Mrs. Brown went; and that lady was made happy by the evident chagrin, to speak of it in the mildest terms, that Helen displayed when made acquainted with the share her daughter Henrietta had in the affair. She even kissed Helen in bidding her adieu, so greatly was she in charity with her just now for being envious of some one of the name of Brown.

Matilda during her drive home sat with her head almost out of the carriage window that she might not pass Mr. Pemberton, and she never opened her lips; Mrs. Brown had succeeded so well in carrying out her plan thus far, that she needed not conversation, her own thoughts amused her.

Helen, after the departure of the
Browns, sat some time in a deep reverie. She felt out of humour, she felt unhappy; and why was it so? She was vexed with herself for a decided feeling of jealousy towards Henrietta Brown; and Lord Leslie's present dangerous state, she could not conceal from herself, affected her greatly—much more than it ought to do, far more than Mr. Clive's illness, though he was an intimate friend, and Lord Leslie was merely the acquaintance of a few hours. Helen Murray could not comprehend her feelings. They did not raise her in her own estimation, consequently she was pretty certain they ought not to be indulged in; and our heroine, though very far removed from perfection, was not a girl to encourage even a thought which her conscience could not decidedly tell her was right. So now she determinately tried to think as little as possible of Lord Leslie, and to busy herself in any way that could assist her aunt in the arduous duties she had
taken upon herself at the vicarage, which there appeared little chance of her being relieved from, as the Moretons and Lady Agnes would be fully occupied with poor Lord Leslie.

And now Helen tied on her bonnet, and set off to see her aunt Melbourne, loaded with innumerable respectful injunctions from the good Letty to her mistress not to make herself ill with her too close attendance on Mr. Clive.
Days, weeks, months passed by. The autumn had closed, the winter was gone, the spring was far advanced, and summer was at hand. The neighbourhood of Hereford had undergone great changes. Sir Trevor Dolman had not been at Deerfold since the day of his duel with Lord Leslie—out of humour with himself and with the little world in which he moved, and not feeling at all certain of the recovery of his noble antagonist, he set off
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for Paris, hearing that Archer was there, and he thought he might in his society pass his time well enough, as they managed to agree tolerably well. At least, all the management was on the part of Archer, who was one of those hearty, good tempered, well intentioned people, who would rather submit to a certain quantum of ill humour from a friend than quarrel with him.

The Heathdowns were at the Hague, his lordship having been offered the appointment of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, and he had accepted it at the earnest entreaty of his wife, as she thought the change of scene and country would be the very best thing for Lewis, who could not at all get over his love for Helen Murray, and who gladly consented to go abroad with his family as attache to his father, and thus leave a neighbourhood where he was constantly meeting Helen; and as long as that was the case, he every day be-
came more miserable and less reconciled to his disappointment. Frank Pemberton was with his regiment, and Ernest was married to a young lady he had met with in Warwickshire, when visiting at the Davenants; and he had settled down with his bride in North Wales at a small place of his own, which he inherited from an uncle.

Every one had been surprised at Lord Heathdown becoming a diplomatist, as he had often professed an abhorrence of the sort of thing; but no one knew his secret motive, and so pronounced him inconsistent in accepting the very office he had always abused.

Lord and Lady Moreton had been very little at Moreton Court. Her ladyship fancied the place did not suit her, and she was now generally either in Bath or London. Every week she appeared to be less well, and the earl began to fear that her constitution was breaking up, and that he should lose her. Lady
Agnes devoted herself to her mother, and in the performance of this duty, which was exacted from her without any consideration, she had little time to dwell on the past, and the future she dared not look to.

Lord Leslie had recovered the use of his arm, and was on the point of going abroad to his regiment, which had another year's service in India. He was in wretched spirits. He had spent his time between his own family and the Davennants. His mother's declining health was a source of anxiety to him; but much more so was his position as regarded Constance. He was not engaged to her, it was true, because she would not hear of it when he first pressed his suit; but he felt his honor was pledged, and that he was thus bound to her for life. He wished a thousand and a thousand times that he had not been so carried away by his high estimation of her character, and his great admiration
of her talents. It would have been better if he had not offered to her so early in the acquaintance. It seemed a fatality; and yet she would not consent to be his wife now, nor yet to exchange vows with him to become so on his return. If she would now be his, the thing would be settled. There would be no uncertainty. As his wife he should love her, he should not allow his thoughts to wander to another. Hope would be at an end, and certainty would bring with it peace. Besides, Constance was the only woman that he knew whom he could make his wife, excepting—oh, unfortunate exception—excepting one betrothed to another, even before he had known her.

Helen Murray was seldom out of Leslie's thoughts. From the first moment he had seen her, when seated opposite to her at Lord Heathdown's table, he had been struck with her beauty; for seldom, if ever, had he seen such a happy
combination of features and expression. He had not been able to withdraw his gaze from her, nor to listen to any one else when she spoke. He had early determined that she was good tempered, not because her countenance betokened it, for her dark eye was expressive of impatience, but because he wished to think so. He did not even know her name till he had left the dinner table. Then his interest in her was increased, for he doubted not she was the daughter of the brave Colonel Murray, who had died ten years before in his arms.

That evening Lord Leslie's heart was won, but he did not know it, he did not understand his feelings. Before an hour had elapsed after his sister, Lady Agnes, had told him all she knew of Helen, he had positive proof, as he thought, of Helen's engagement to his cousin, Henry Clive. From that moment Clive was hated by him, and this feeling, neither, did Leslie comprehend. He
saw no more of Miss Murray, but he dreamed of her, he thought of her as something very beautiful, very lovely; but, as belonging to another; and therefore the dwelling upon her memory could not endanger his peace.

Constance Davenant was then domesticated at Moreton Court, and, possessing every requisite for happiness, every qualification calculated to please a man, especially such a man as Leslie, save and excepting beauty, and also that charm, of all others the most seducing, a musical voice, she attracted his attention, and commanded his admiration by the powers of her mind, and the sweetness of her disposition; and Clarence, ever acting from the impulse of the moment, gave himself up to her fascinations; and fair readers, be assured that the fascinations of the mind are quite as seductive as a pretty face, and their effect much more lasting; though, in this instance it may not
appear to have been the case. But it must be remembered that Leslie had been conquered by beauty before he knew Constance Davenant.

Clarence, in a very short time after his introduction to Constance professed love to her, and he asked her to become his wife ere he again left England. It has been related in what way she answered him; it remains to be seen whether or no she acted wisely.

Again Leslie met Helen Murray, and his every look, his every thought, was given to her. Still, he did not think it love. She was plighted to another, and so was he too, now. He tried not to resist the powerful feeling that impelled him to be near her. He waltzed with her; and could he not have waltzed till doom's day? but surely it was because she danced so exquisitely. He remained by her side afterwards; and no half-hour had ever flown so fast; but then, he was interesting her in one dear to
her memory. He seized with eagerness, an opportunity of seeing Helen again, and at her own home; but why? surely not to gratify himself, but to give pleasure to another, and that other the sister of his lamented and brave friend, and the aunt of Helen. He lingered by the side of Miss Murray, but Constance was gone, and Helen was soon to be a near connection.

So far Lord Leslie's attentions seemed the most natural and the most harmless in the world, and what is there more to say. That he defended her from an insult when none other was there to help her. And would he not have done so had Helen been quite uninteresting to him? undoubtedly he would. But it was the spell of her name, coupled with danger, that had hurried him to a scene which had led to so much that was deplorable. And did Lord Leslie regret that he had suffered in Helen's service? Oh, no; the certainty that he
had rescued her from the profane lips of the impudent Sir Trevor, was his sweetest thought on his bed of pain, and then it was that Leslie found out his very soul was Helen's though she was another's, and he had professed love to Constance Davenant.

Clarence was not sure whether Helen knew him to have been her defender. He secretly hoped she did. He had carefully avoided mentioning her name, and had refused even to tell Agnes what it was that had been the cause of anger between him and the Baronet. The Moretons were not long in hearing the gossip of the day, and Mrs. Brown's version of the duel reached them, as a matter of course. Lord Moreton thought it very possible that any pretty girl, were she a duke's daughter, or a lawyer's, (for, in his younger days, he had never danced with any one merely for her rank) might have been as natural a subject for a quarrel between

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two hasty men as any other; and, therefore, he doubted not what Mrs. Brown had taken so much pains, first to invent, and then to circulate. Nor, did Lord Moreton disturb himself about it. His only anxiety was for the recovery of his son. As to what might ensue as regarded Miss Henrietta Brown, Lord Moreton felt quite comfortable. He knew that Leslie inherited his mother's pride, and he felt certain that his son's choice in a wife would not be disgraced by any thing approaching to vulgarity in herself or her family, and that Clarence's bride must be the daughter of a gentleman; and all the Browns, even the clever and talented and excellent lawyer, were proverbially vulgar in their appearance and habits. So when Lord Moreton was asked by Lord Heathdown, half in joke, half in earnest, how he should like the connection his son was likely to make, according to common report, the Earl laughed, and
said he supposed the Browns were very good sort of people, and it was a pity if they, especially the pretty girl in question, buoyed themselves up with a hope that he felt sure Leslie would never realize.

"In short, Heathdown," said Lord Moreton, "Clarence has no heart to bestow. This I have just learned from Agnes. At present the thing is not to be announced, as Leslie is obliged to go abroad, and will be away a year, so the lady does not wish to be known to the world as an affiance, and, until Clarence's return, the attachment is not to be mentioned. You will consider this to be said in confidence, Heathdown."

"Certainly," replied his lordship, who was really quite glad to hear it, for the continued gossip of Mrs. Brown had rather staggered his belief in her story being an entire invention, and he began to fear that Leslie had indeed got entangled with Henrietta. Lord Moreton's
intelligence quite settled this point. Lady Moreton had really fretted more over this "abominable scandal," as she termed it, than over the sufferings of her son. When Lord Leslie was pronounced out of danger, her ladyship was quite happy in the thought that the house of Moreton would not lose its descent in the right line, and, as to all the minutiae of the sick room, she troubled herself very little about it, only as it made her nervous and ill to be much there. But when she was told one day by Mrs. Colville, for whom her son had risked his life, her ladyship was furious, and her declining health may be dated from that hour of ungoverned passion produced by her wounded pride. She did not believe the whole of the story, for she loved her son for his decided inheritance of that highest virtue, according to her estimation of things, pride. But it annoyed her to have Leslie's name coupled with that of the
daughter of a petty-fogging lawyer, and Lady Moreton never recovered the effect it had on her; and though she was assured afterwards that there was not the slightest truth in any part of the story, the fact of its having been talked of, was, in her eyes, equally disgraceful.

Lady Agnes had been her brother's tender and constant nurse. She heard nothing of the reports of the day during the first two or three weeks of his illness; but when Lucy Colville was admitted to see her for a short time, she was so intent on her purpose of knowing the truth as regarded Leslie and Henrietta Brown, for, of course, her sisters had immediately told her all that Matilda had said, that she asked Lady Agnes at once if the report was true. Her ladyship expressed her surprise at it, when now mentioned to her for the first time by Lucy, but she could not satisfy her, as she had never yet alluded to the subject with her brother. So Lucy
had gained no comfort from Lady Agnes, for it would have been a comfort to know that though she had no chance with Leslie, neither had a girl so inferior to her in all things as Henrietta Brown.

Lady Agnes was not quite pleased with the news brought to her by Miss Colville, for she had discovered at the Deerfold ball that her brother's thoughts were not entirely given to Constance, whatever his heart might be; and that he was a great admirer of beauty, though his chosen one was very plain. She had also seen that Miss Henrietta Brown was a young lady to force herself into notice, and, as she was decidedly handsome, it was very probable that Clarence had paid her attention, and that his impetuous temper had led him into a quarrel on her account. She determined to set her mind at ease on these points as soon as possible, and the very first moment she thought she could do so without injury
to her brother, she spoke to him on the subject.

"Will you not, Clarence, tell me," said Lady Agnes, "why it was that you lost your temper, and challenged that bad man, Sir Trevor?"

"I have told you, love," replied Leslie, "that he was on the point of insulting a woman, and I prevented it."

"Yes, yes, dear brother," said Agnes, kissing his quivering lip, for the recollection of the scene even then made him indignant. "I know that; but the name of the lady is what I ask."

"That, dearest Agnes, I would rather not tell you," said Leslie. "Do not press me. You have no occasion to be jealous for your friend Constance. I defended one who never can interfere with her claims."

"Poor Constance makes no claims," sighed Agnes. "I only hope the time may not arrive when she will rejoice in what she considers her wise resolve not
to be engaged to you." Clarence sighed heavily. Agnes looked anxious. She feared to agitate her brother, and yet, worlds would she have given to know why he sighed so deeply. He seemed not inclined to pursue the subject, but Agnes had not come to the point she aimed at, namely, to know if indeed Henrietta Brown occupied his thoughts. She said, in as lively a tone as she could assume, "well, Leslie, though you won't tell me the name of the fair damsel for whom you fought and bled, I do know it."

"Indeed," exclaimed her brother, the colour mounting to his temples, "I am sorry, for I am sure her delicacy will be wounded, and I would have suffered twice as much to have saved her that annoyance."

"I do not think," said Lady Agnes, smiling, "that Miss Henrietta Brown's delicacy of feeling will be called into play on this occasion."
"Henrietta Brown," exclaimed Clarence. "What do you mean, Agnes?"

"I mean," replied her ladyship, "that the world says she is the young lady you have risked your life for."

"How absurd," said Lord Leslie; and he seemed quite relieved that the real cause of his sufferings should be still unknown. "Who told you so, Agnes?" demanded her brother.

"Lucy Colville," replied his sister. "She has just been here."

"And does Lucy believe it?" asked Leslie. "Indeed, can any one believe it?"

"Oh, yes," said Agnes. "Every one, doubtless, believes it; and why not? Why should it not be Henrietta Brown as well as any one else—as it was not admiration of the insulted one, surely, Clarence, that influenced you," and Agnes sighed again for Constance; "but indignation towards Sir Trevor."

"True, true, Agnes," said Leslie; "and no doubt had Miss Henrietta
Brown been the lady so situated, I should still have been here, suffering from the consequence of my gallantry, as I suppose I must call it;" and again he sighed.

"And if you sigh in that melancholy way, Leslie, I too shall believe that you are more interested in the lady, whoever she may be, than is quite consistent with your feelings towards Constance;" said Agnes, gravely, adding cheerfully, however, she perceived that her brother was annoyed, "but I will not press myself into your confidence, dearest Clarence. Let the world talk and say what it pleases, I am sure I have really nothing to fear for my friend." And Lady Agnes rose from her seat, adding, "I will now leave you to repose; you look feverish. Remember in another week we are promised a release from the Golden Eagle, and I hope nothing will retard your recovery, as poor mamma grows sadly impatient to set off for Bath."
"In another week I am sure I shall be well enough to go any where, Agnes," said Leslie; "though I do wish we could spend the winter at Moreton Court."

"And so do I, Clarence," said his sister. "But you will have a change, a charming change from Bath, as soon as you are quite well."

"What do you mean, Agnes?" asked her brother, in a languid voice.

"To dear Castle Davenant, to be sure, Clarence," exclaimed his sister, with animation.

"Oh, yes," quietly assented Leslie. "I wish you would accompany me there, dear sister, I should then greatly enjoy it."

"Thank you, Clarence," said Agnes; "but you will have no time to wish for me, so happily, so quickly will the hours pass with Constance and Lord Davenant. Time always flies there."

"And yet, Agnes, you will not give poor Reginald a hope that you may be
won;" said Leslie. "It appears strange to me that you cannot like him."

"Oh, I do like Lord Davenant, Clarence, more than I can tell you," said Agnes; "and therefore it is that I persist in assuring his sister that I never can be his. If I did not estimate him highly, if I did not like him so much as a friend, I might allow him to hope that time would, perhaps, alter my feelings towards him, as perhaps it may; but as I firmly believe it will not, at all events it is most uncertain, I would not encourage a hope in Davenant that might, perhaps, make him less unhappy now, but if never realized, would add tenfold to his misery. Oh, no, Clarence, believe me I am acting right; at all events, I am acting conscientiously. It is great cause of regret to me to deprive myself of the friendship and society of the man I have known from childhood, and who is endeared to me by numerous acts of kindness, and by a never wearying atten-
tion to my wishes. But I know Lord Davenant well enough to be quite sure that, with his present feelings towards me, he cannot meet me with composure, he cannot be satisfied that we should merely be friends; and, therefore, till that time comes, I must not visit at Castle Davenant."

"You are an extraordinary girl, Agnes," said her brother, who had made her sit down again by him, assuring her he was quite free from fever, and that he enjoyed her company. "In order," continued Leslie, "to save Davenant the chance of suffering, you deny yourself a great pleasure, and relinquish a friendship that began almost with your life. I only wonder that love did not grow out of it years ago."

Agnes blushed. "Recollect Clarence," said she, "that my heart was pre-occupied; otherwise I might not have been insensible to Lord Davenant."

"Would to God," said Leslie, "my
mother had not such strong prejudices."

"Perhaps it is better that she has," tremulously observed Agnes.

"Why, certainly," observed Leslie. "I do not think Clive quite worthy of you, my dear sister." At the same time he felt much more disposed to allow his cousin some merit, considered as the lover of his sister, than he did, as the lover of Helen Murray. "Yet, influenced by you, he would have improved, and as you were attached to him, much unhappiness would have been spared you, my dear sister." And Clarence took the hand of Agnes, who said,

"You must not talk to me thus, Leslie. I wish to forget that I have ever loved Henry."

"The best way of doing so," answered Clarence, "is to marry Davenant. I am certain of it, Agnes. Then Constance will at once consent to be my wife, and that business will be settled, and we shall
all be a set of contented folk, without one grain of romantic nonsense to trouble the even tenor of our lives."

"You talk very wisely," said Agnes, smiling. "Much more like a philosopher than a lover. But, really, if any thing could induce me to accept Davenant with my present feelings it would be to ensure Constance to you, Clarence. Perhaps I ought to make the sacrifice."

"Not for me, dear girl, I intreat," said her brother, in a most decided manner. "It is, perhaps, quite as well, since Miss Davenant doubts my constancy, and laughs at my professions, that time should be allowed to prove their truth. I shall join my regiment in the spring, and I hope when I return that I shall find you, Agnes, the same warm hearted sister as now; and as for the rest, let fate do her worst."

"I shall never change to you, Clarence," said Lady Agnes, rising and embracing him, "neither will Constance."
She never makes professions, but she is the more to be trusted for that. Should you return wishing her to be your wife, who so happy as Constance? Should you be changed, she will never marry at all. Remember this, my prophecy, when the time comes to prove its truth. And now I am going to write to my friend, so what is your message?"

"Oh, every thing that it ought to be, dearest," said Leslie. "I am helpless;" and he looked at his arm now in a sling.

Agnes was gone, and Clarence taking up a book tried to lose himself in its pages. In a week after this conversation Lord and Lady Moreton, with their invalid son and Lady Agnes, were established in a commodious house in Bath, where they passed the winter. In the early spring the family went to London, Leslie paying his promised visit to Castle Davenant. He found Lord Davenant in the same wretchedly low spirits, but apparently struggling against them, at
least when in the presence of others; but his smile was so melancholy, and his laugh so forced, that his mirth was more distressing than his silence. He looked ill, too, and Constance was very unhappy about him. Many and many were the conversations she and Leslie had on the subject of her brother’s feelings, but Clarence could give her no hope that his sister would ever change towards him; and Constance, therefore, never for a moment repented of her determination of not leaving him to become the wife of Leslie and accompanying him to India. Not that she did not love Leslie. No woman could love more fondly, or with an affection so little selfish. She dared not let him see, she scarcely dared to confess, even to herself, the depth of her affection, for she had a strange pre-sentiment that she should never be Leslie’s wife. It seemed so impossible to her, even in the moment of his first profession of love, that it could be sin-
cere. She so very plain, so very unlikely to attract any man, and a young man, and a soldier especially.

These feelings gave, even to her acceptance of him, a doubt of his truth, which did not at all please Leslie, but which had the effect of confirming him in his determination. He would prove to Constance that his was a character not to be influenced by beauty. The nobler gifts of the mind, amiability of disposition and sweetness of temper, were the qualifications which attracted men of sense and discernment; and he pressed his suit the warmer for her doubts and fears. At last, he drew from her the avowal that she loved him, that she hoped some day to be his; but when he mentioned an immediate marriage, and going with him to India, Constance hesitated on her own account and on his, for she wished Leslie to have time to consider ere he bound himself to her for life; and another feeling powerfully influenced her, the
present unhappy state of mind of her brother. To leave him alone was impossible, at least impossible for Constance. She could not make up her mind to desert the brother of her earliest, fondest love, even for the man she was willing to devote her life to, had this brother been out of the question. She candidly, therefore, told Leslie that she thought the hope of being his was her great happiness now, and would be her solace during the many months they should be separated; but that no persuasion could induce her to marry him then, nor to tie him to an engagement that he had somewhat rashly and hastily entered into. Therefore, she made Leslie promise not to ask Lord Davenant to use his influence to induce her to alter her mind, nor to think she loved him the less for acting in the way she deemed the wisest for both. And Leslie did promise; and the weeks he spent at Castle Davenant more and more con-
vinced him that Constance was superior to her sex, and without exception the least selfish, the best tempered girl in the world; and he could not but deem himself fortunate to have secured her affection, and had there not been a Helen Murray in existence, Clarence would have considered himself a very happy fellow. He tried to think of Helen as Clive's wife, as his near relation, for he found it quite impossible not to think of her; and at last he really hoped that if chance threw him in her way, he could meet her with pleasure as an acquaintance and a connection. But most likely he should not see her at all; and that, perhaps, he thought was the thing most to be desired. At all events he would not seek her.

The Browns, so long as Lord Leslie remained ill enough to make his recovery doubtful, talked largely of their interest in him, and expected connection with him; but as soon as he was pronounced
out of danger, Mrs. Brown giving it out that Hetty was quite ill with the excitement of alternate hope and fear for his lordship, declared it necessary that she should have a complete change; and in a few days the Browns were off to Dover, and thence across the Channel. Downes declared they were gone to look up Sir Trevor Dolman, for as Lord Leslie fought shy of the young lady, after fighting for her, Mrs. Brown meant his antagonist to have the next chance; and as the sarcastic lawyer stretched his chin to the extreme point permitted by nature, nay, rather beyond it, he said to Beard, "He is a bold man who marries a Brown, and you are well out of it."

Beard looked very queer, and very vexed. However, he was a match for Downes, and after a minute's confusion, during which he racked his brain for something that might annoy his companion, he said, "There is a fate in these things, Downes; and some
men are fated to have no wife at all—unhappy me!” and Beard tried to look miserable. “Others,” he continued, “more fortunate, are fated to have two wives,” and he looked full on Downes; “but I think I never saw any one so improved in health as Mrs. Downes.”

The lawyer’s chin receded a couple of inches—he laughed, however, and said, “Yes, Beard, Caroline is charmingly well just now; but she is a sad sufferer often, poor girl.”

“I am sorry for it,” replied Beard. “Good morning, Downes, I have promised to set Creswell down at Archdeacon Maxwell’s, and he is expected there at one, to luncheon. He’s a lucky fellow, at all events.” And away went Beard, quite satisfied that he had left Downes to no pleasant cogitations for the remainder of that day.
But where is Clive? Breathing the balmy air of Italy, and gradually recovering his health. And is he alone? No. Who then are by his side? Mrs. Melbourne and Helen. But how is this? Had then the world been right? and was our heroine really betrothed to Clive? and is she already his wife? It seemed like it as these three sat together in a room overlooking the Bay of Naples. Henry reclining on a sofa, still pale,
but not otherwise looking ill, Mrs. Melbourne with her work, Helen reading aloud from Dante.

The door opened, and Edward Fairfax entered. Helen blushed, and put down her book.

"Pray do not let me interrupt this happy party," said Edward. "My mother thinks she left a letter here which she received this morning."

Helen rose to look for it.

"Oh, Helen," said Mr. Edward Fairfax, in a low tone, "The world will be right after all, and it generally is."

"What do you mean?" asked Helen.

"Walk with me, and I will tell you," said he.

"I cannot now," replied Helen. "When Mr. Clive is gone I will."

"Happy Clive, false Helen," whispered the youth; and taking the letter he sought hastily from her hand, he left the room, banging the door after him.

"How very odd Edward Fairfax is,"
observed Mrs. Melbourne. "He seems never to rest. Why cannot he come and read to us, and relieve you Helen? He has nothing to do, and he reads Italian very pleasantly."

"Yes," said Clive, "but I greatly prefer Helen's accent; will you go on?"

However, Helen could not then, Edward's few whispered words had annoyed her; and pleading weariness, she took up her work, and the whole party became silent.

But, in order to make our readers acquainted with the circumstances which have occurred, we must return to Mayfield, and go back in our story to the time of Clive's illness.

Mrs. Melbourne had been true to her word spoken to Clive on his sick bed. She left him not until he was quite able to do without her watchful care.

Lord Leslie had brought Lord Moreton to Hereford, and, after seeing his son,
he went on to Mayfield to see his nephew. But Henry was not in a state to bear excitement, and the mere mention of his uncle's name as being in the house brought on alarming symptoms, so that seeing him was out of the question. Mrs. Melbourne felt so angry with all the family, that she avoided the Earl, and did not leave the sick chamber whilst he remained at the Vicarage. Helen Murray was there when Lord Moreton arrived, as she went frequently during the day to see her aunt, and to be assured that she was not killing herself.

Lord Moreton appeared greatly shocked to learn the precarious state of Henry. He showed more feeling on the occasion than Helen had expected, and she felt strongly prepossessed in his favour, in spite of her aunt's angry feelings towards him. Of course Mrs. Melbourne had told Helen of Lady Agnes Scott's letter.

Before Lord Moreton left the Vicarage, he said he should be much obliged to
Miss Murray if she would favour him with a line as soon as Henry Clive was able to see him, and adding that he should hear constantly of him from Bromley who was attending his son, the Earl took his leave, giving Helen great credit for firmness of character and self-control in being able to command such complete composure, when her affianced husband lay at death's door; though he had observed Miss Murray turn very pale occasionally, and, with some difficulty she restrained her tears when he had said his boy too, was in a precarious state, and but for that, he should not think of leaving Clive. Miss Murray was evidently greatly distressed. Of this the Earl had not a doubt.

Lord Moreton, in the mean time, called occasionally at the Vicarage, but only saw servants. When Henry was better, he would not hear of his uncle being written to, and said he did not
wish to have any farther intercourse with the family.

The time now came for Mrs. Melbourne and Helen to pay their visit at Avondale. An excuse was sent, and the Fairfaxes thought it all very right and natural, as Helen was engaged to Clive. Mr. Fairfax hoped to see them some other time, and he consoled with them on the illness of their Vicar, which Mrs. Melbourne and Helen thought also very natural.

The Heathdowns had set off in a few days after Helen had left them, to Scotland, on a visit to their daughter, Lady Ashton. Lady Heathdown had written a little affectionate note to Helen, biding her keep up her spirits; and that she hoped on her return to see her well and happy, with no cause for anxiety. Lady Heathdown expected to be from home about a month or six weeks, and she begged to hear from Helen, who must not fail to tell her
all about Mr. Clive, as she felt much interested for him now. Doubtless, thought Helen, after reading Lady Heathdown's note, Lady Moreton has told her that her daughter has discarded Mr. Clive, and I am sure dear, kind, good Lady Heathdown will feel for him.

Helen did write to her ladyship, and her letters were not calculated to undeceive her as regarded Clive; for they contained little else than accounts of him; for Helen went no where but to the Vicarage, and saw no one but her aunt and Mr. Clive's curate.

The note Lady Heathdown had written to Mrs. Melbourne, begging her to admit Helen into the sick room, Mrs. Melbourne had never seen. It was put on the study table for Mrs. Melbourne to read at her leisure, and it was mixed up with Clive's papers, and had never been noticed.

One day, when Clive was so much better that he was able to leave his
room for an adjoining one, and lie on a couch, he asked if he might not see Miss Murray, who had just walked up from the cottage. Her aunt went for her, and greatly was Helen shocked to see how sorrow and illness had altered Clive; and she felt very angry with Lady Agnes Scott.

As Helen was returning home, she, much to her surprise, met Mr. Fairfax. She had been especially introduced to him at Sir Trevor Dolman's ball, as the niece of his old friend, Mr. Melbourne, and he had professed great delight in making her acquaintance. He now asked after Clive. Helen said she had just left him, and he was, she hoped, recovering.

"Then now, perhaps, you and Mrs. Melbourne will come to us, and Clive, too, if he thinks the change will benefit him," said Mr. Fairfax.

"I will return to the Vicarage," replied Helen; "will you walk there
with me, or go to the Cottage, where I am sure my aunt will come to you directly?"

Mr. Fairfax would go to the Vicarage. He saw Mrs. Melbourne; he pressed the visit upon her, and she consented to go to Avondale at the time Mr. Fairfax mentioned, namely, the following week. Accordingly, she and Helen went. Then it was Mr. Fairfax asked Mrs. Melbourne when she thought Clive would be sufficiently recovered to be married. "You need not hesitate to avow his engagement, my dear madam," said Mr. Fairfax, "for his uncle, Lord Moreton, announced it to me."

"Alas," said Mrs. Melbourne, "poor Clive is doomed to disappointment, and I believe his illness has been occasioned by it."

"What do you mean, my dear Mrs. Melbourne?" asked Mr. Fairfax. "Pray explain yourself, for I am interested, I assure you."
"I do not feel I am at liberty to divulge much," said Mrs. Melbourne. "Suffice it to say that the engagement no longer exists."

"I am very sorry to hear it," observed Mr. Fairfax. "Perhaps only some little misunderstanding between the lovers, which may be put straight; we must try. By the way, I do not think Miss Murray is looking well, and she is evidently out of spirits."

"She has been anxious, lately," replied Mrs. Melbourne. "But now, Mr. Clive is so much better, that I have taken my leave of him as head nurse, and I shall, if possible, get away from Mayfield for a few months, both on Helen's account and my own."

"Where do you think of going to?" asked Mr. Fairfax.

"To the cheapest place I can hear of that is likely to suit us," said Mrs. Melbourne. "You know, Mr. Fairfax, that my income is now very small."
"I am sorry to find it is so, my dear Mrs. Melbourne," said Mr. Fairfax. "I shall be happy to do all I can to increase it. Perhaps I can place out your money to greater advantage."

"Not mine I am sorry to say," replied Mrs. Melbourne, "for it is an annuity. But Helen's little fortune, I think, might be made more of."

"We will talk of this another time," said Mr. Fairfax. "I have now a proposal to make to you, my dear madam, which I trust will meet with your approbation; and be assured that it will give pleasure to us if you accede to it."

Mr. Fairfax then told Mrs. Melbourne that he, with his wife and son, were going to winter at Naples, and if she and Miss Murray would accompany them as their guests, and allow him to be their banker for all expenses attendant on the journey, it would just be what Mrs. Fairfax would like, and he thought Miss Murray would particularly enjoy it.
"And, as to you, my dear Mrs. Melbourne," said he, "I am certain it is just what you require to set you up."

Mrs. Melbourne was all gratitude, and on consulting Helen, they thought they need not be scrupulous about accepting the kind offer of this old friend, and so it was settled for them to go.

A clever little abigail was engaged, and Letty was left in charge of the cottage. The last week in November they were on their way to Avondale, where they were to pass one night, and then proceed with the Fairfaxes.

Mr. Clive had left home for the South of France, as they believed, a few days before themselves, accompanied by his faithful servant, White. In due course of time the party reached Naples, and great was the surprise of Mrs. Melbourne and Helen to see White at the door of the hotel they stopped at; and very soon after they had alighted from their carriages, Clive was at their side.
This was all accomplished by the managing Mr. Fairfax, who was never better pleased than when forming schemes, or carrying them into execution. But to explain—having been told by the Earl of Moreton that his nephew, Henry Clive was engaged to Miss Murray, he, of course believed it, and thought her a most fortunate girl to have secured so good a parti; as she had very little fortune, and, if her aunt died, no natural protector. Mrs. Melbourne, as he supposed and understood, announced to him the breaking off of this engagement, and, from that moment it was Mr. Fairfax's object to reconcile the lovers. Accordingly, he determined to bring them together under his own eye, and he doubted not the happy result. He had succeeded thus far. They were in Naples. He had written to Clive recommending him not to go to the South of France, for various reasons which he set forth, and he contrived
that this letter should reach him at his hotel in London. It had the effect expected. It made Clive hesitate; and Mr. Fairfax following up his letter by a call upon Clive the next morning, he easily persuaded him to make one of his party to Naples, begging him not delay proceeding thither, as he might be detained in Town longer than he expected.

Clive's evident pleasure in this change of his plan convinced Mr. Fairfax that he was still as much attached to Helen as ever, for he had long known that she and her aunt were to be of the party abroad; and, when they all found themselves in Naples, on the first evening of their arrival, a less sanguine person than Mr. Fairfax would have pronounced both Clive and Helen happy to find themselves together.

Edward Fairfax, after flirting with every girl he met with, from the high-bor Lady Agnes Scott to the plebeian
Henrietta Brown, found himself domesticated with Helen Murray. He had danced with her at Deerfold, when he had thought her very pretty, very ladylike, very engaging; but she did not seem to value his attentions, and consequently he had not devoted himself to her. That evening he flirted with Henrietta Brown, and he tried to mortify Helen by giving the lawyer's handsome daughter the preference. Helen had been quite unconscious of the attempt. She thought Edward Fairfax the very handsomest young man she had ever seen. But it was not mere beauty that could win Helen's admiration, much less her heart. Had she never seen him again, she would entirely have forgotten him.

When they met at Avondale, Edward intended to treat her with indifference, as he knew from his father that she was engaged. But he found this somewhat difficult, for Helen irresistibly attracted
every one by her loveliness, her gentleness, her cleverness. So unpretending, yet so decidedly superior. So beautiful, yet so totally unconscious of it. So feminine, yet so independent. Her very faults became her. Her pride was never offensive. Her impetuous temper under control.

Edward Fairfax was her devoted slave ere he had known her four and twenty hours. Helen received his attentions as nothing out of the common way, and not feeling towards him otherwise than as an every day acquaintance, she never dreamed of the impression she had made.

Weeks and weeks passed away in charming Italy. Clive recovered his health, and in some degree his spirits. He had his own apartments, but he was constantly at Mr. Fairfax', and it was evident to every one who was the attraction. Mr. Fairfax believed all was now as it should be, but he thought it wise
to say nothing; so, not even to Mrs. Melbourne, did he make a remark.

Edward was restless and melancholy. Helen alone knew why. He had all but professed his love for her. She always treated him as a friend. He rallied her upon her engagement to Clive, which Helen utterly denied. Edward's vanity was wounded that his attentions were not appreciated, and he again determined to neglect her, and to try what total indifference would do; and this had been his line of conduct for some days when he entered the room as has been described.

The evening of that same day Edward found himself alone with Helen. Her aunt had retired early to bed, and Mr. and Mrs. Fairfax and Edward were gone to a fete given by Princess L———. Helen had begged to be excused, as she was wearying of the continuous gaieties of Naples; and the Fairfaxes concluding it was an arrangement with Mr. Clive to
spend the evening together, did not attempt to persuade her.

Edward, after amusing himself with flattering the prettiest girl in the room by his devotion, wearied of the scene, and left it early.

Helen was still in the drawing room, and she was amusing herself by looking over Clive's sketch book, and comparing it with her own, when Edward entered.

"Up and alone, Miss Murray," said he. "Is Mr. Clive so insensible of his happiness?"

"Mr. Clive has not been here this evening at all, Mr. Edward Fairfax," was Helen's remark, as she closed the books and arose to go.

"Are you leaving me, Helen?" said Edward, "when I hoped to have had a delicious hour with you."

"It is late, Mr. Fairfax," said Helen; "and I have promised to be up early to-morrow."

"To walk with Clive, as is your cus-
tom, I presume, Miss Murray;" exclaimed Edward.

"You are quite right in your supposition," replied Helen, with great composure.

"Happy Clive," sighed Edward, throwing himself into a chair, and looking, as he thought, irresistibly disconsolate.

"Mr. Clive," said Helen, "deserves to be happy; for he is always trying to make others so."

"I am quite aware, Miss Murray, of your opinion of Clive," said Edward; "and I did not return early from the ball to hear the praises of my rival."

"He is no rival," said Helen, gravely.

"Then why walk with him to-morrow morning rather than spend this hour with me?" asked Edward, impatiently.

"Because this hour would be merely idled away," said Helen. "The walk of to-morrow is one of charity."

"Very flattering to Clive, upon my word, Miss Murray," said Edward, rising
and looking at his fine figure in the nearest mirror. "I certainly need not envy him if that is the feeling that draws you to him."

"You wilfully misunderstand me, Mr. Edward Fairfax," said Helen. "Mr. Clive has discovered a poor family here who are connected in some way with one of his parishioners, and we are going to see them, as they are in a state of destitution."

"Very amiable in both of you, doubtless," replied Edward, bitterly. "But why not be sincere with me, Miss Murray, and acknowledge your engagement?"

"I am sincere," replied Helen. "I am under no engagement to any one."

"But you have been, Helen?" asked Edward.

"I do not see that I am called upon to answer your question," replied Helen, as it is decidedly curious, and borders on impertinence. Good night, Mr. Edward Fairfax;" and Helen proudly withdrew,
leaving young Fairfax as much mortified as he knew how to be, and yet believing it quite impossible for Helen to be insensible towards his handsome self, especially as he had tried to make himself agreeable to her in his own peculiar way, by exclusive attention and overstrained flattery. He could not believe it possible for any girl to resist his attentions if she followed her own inclinations, and therefore he came to the conclusion that Helen had promised herself to Clive, but felt ashamed to acknowledge her choice. He began to pity her, and he determined if possible to get her out of the entanglement she had fallen into, recollecting that he was unknown to her when she must first have been engaged to Clive. And so his manner to Helen became tender and patronizing, which she met with perfect indifference, softened by her customary gentle and ladylike demeanour.

And how did Clive really feel towards
our heroine, now this hope of his cousin was so cruelly blasted. Had he ceased to love Agnes, and was Helen fast succeeding her in his heart? Mrs. Melbourne began to think so—to hope so. For, as Helen had no attachment, and never had had one, she could not conceive it possible for her to be insensible to Clive if he loved her; but aunts and nieces do not always agree on these matters of the heart any more than mothers and daughters, or fathers and sons.

Helen never dreamed of such a thing as succeeding Lady Agnes in Clive's affections, therefore her manner to him was what it had always been, familiar and confidential; and really liking him exceedingly as a friend, she had never in the least disguised the feeling, and her manner to him was that of a sister, which people determined to interpret in their own way, might have thought betrayed a warmer feeling.
Clive was deeply interested in Helen, but he was not in love with her; though he daily felt that as Agnes was lost to him for ever, Miss Murray might well supply her place as far as domestic happiness was concerned, and to secure such a wife Clive thought he should be fortunate. Passion was over; he could only look forward to contentment. And where could he find it, if not with Helen and her aunt? He sometimes sat musing on the future, and his thoughts would frequently rest on a family picture which he deemed not undesirable. Helen, his wife; and Mrs. Melbourne, the tried friend and mother of both, never intruding herself, but always there when wanted. Having made up his mind that this would be the nearest point to any happiness he could ever expect to enjoy, he next wondered how far Helen was inclined to meet his wishes. This was very doubtful, and this very doubt, perhaps, added to his determination
and his desire to make it out. He would try to discover, in the first place, if Helen’s affections were free. For be it known to our readers, that Clive was not at all different to other men, and, that though he had only a divided heart to give Helen, he expected the whole of her’s in return; and that if he could not love passionately again, he should not be satisfied to make Helen his wife unless she did.

Clive had noticed Mr. Edward Fairfax’ manner to Helen, but it was not different to his usual bearing towards handsome girls; and Helen always gave the preference to Clive over Edward. So far he was satisfied. From many little circumstances he was also sure that Mr. Fairfax would be glad that Miss Murray should be favourable to his suit. Indeed, it had often struck Clive that he seemed desirous to promote it. Of Mrs. Melbourne’s approbation he had not a doubt. Her regard for
him had been so strongly manifested, and he thought he could not better show his gratitude to her than by trying to make her beloved Helen happy. The result of his self communions was a determination to confide his wishes to Mrs. Melbourne, and when he did, she candidly told him that nothing could so much contribute to her future happiness as his success; but, at the same time, she intreated him, if, in the pursuit of Helen he was likely to lose his own peace of mind, supposing her insensible to him, to pause, ere he risked again his only just recovered composure; for she could not, honestly, encourage him, as she had not the slightest reason to imagine that Helen was at all disposed to regard him in any light but that of a friend.

"Understanding this from me, Henry," said Mrs. Melbourne, "you must now judge for yourself."

"May I ask you one question, dear
Mrs. Melbourne?" said Clive. "Has Helen ever loved?"

"Most certainly not," replied Mrs. Melbourne. "She has always professed her determination to tell me the moment that was the case; and that she has never done. So far, therefore, you are safe."

After this conversation, Clive's manner to Helen assumed a more tender tone, but so imperceptibly, that, to the unconscious girl, it was not apparent.

Time went on, and with it Clive's suit seemed to prosper. He became more and more interested in Helen, and, if he could quite have forgotten Lady Agnes, Clive's second love would not have been wanting in passion. As it was, it was very evident to all that his heart went with his judgement, and that Helen was beloved.

The week now arrived for their departure, and this pleasant party was to be broken up. The evening before they
left Naples, Mr. Fairfax congratulated Mrs. Melbourne on the happy prospects of her niece. Mrs. Melbourne remained silent. "I see," said Mr. Fairfax, "that you do not yet feel sure of the result. I do, and depend upon it, my dear madam, that it only required a little management, which has been skilfully executed;" and Mr. Fairfax smiled at his own success, and added, "I hope I shall shortly hear that the wedding day is fixed. Delays are ever dangerous; remember this, Mrs. Melbourne. At all events, the winter in Naples has been productive of some happiness."

"Of a great deal, Mr. Fairfax, I am sure," said Mrs. Melbourne. "However it may be as to Henry and Helen, I candidly tell you that my wishes are all for their union, as nothing could make me so happy. To you we are eternally obliged, I am sure."

"Not at all, not at all, my dear madam," exclaimed the delighted Mr.
Fairfax; for to have succeeded, and to hear his success admitted, was to him complete happiness. "I am amply rewarded in the agreeable connexion that my scheme has promoted. There is nothing like bringing people together, especially at Naples. Happiness is sure to be the result."

Soon after this the party left Italy, travelling together as far as London, and then each proceeded to their own home. The Fairfaxes to Avondale, Clive to his Vicarage, and Helen Murray and her aunt to their little cottage.
CHAPTER XI.

The Browns had spent the winter in Paris, where Mr. Hertford had joined them, both to the discomfort of himself and the annoyance of every one else; and yet no one admitted it. He fretted and grumbled, and almost quarrelled with the whole party, but still liked them too well to leave them.

Mrs. Brown's vanity was gratified by seeing she could still excite Hertford's ill-temper, though she suffered from it,
for he was not at all scrupulous in vent-
ing his humour when he found himself alone with her. In days gone by she liked him well enough to be annoyed by it, for she was pleased to know that she had captivated a man of learning, and kept him in her chains against his better taste and judgment; for Hertford was essentially a gentleman in feeling and manner; but his plebeian extraction, for his mother was the daughter of a trades-
man, burst forth in this partiality for a vulgar woman.

Now, however, Mrs. Brown had risen many degrees in her own estimation, and many degrees, too, in society. So Hertford, instead of being her sole admirer, which was the case soon after her marriage, was now only one in a hundred; therefore if it suited his humour, he might go, and she would scarcely miss him; so, whenever he began to lecture her on her conduct as regarded herself or her daughters,
she would become angry; and if he showed any jealousy of her, she only laughed at him, and told him he was too old to flirt with now, and he had better take a wife, who would be obliged to submit to his attentions; and Mrs. Brown strongly recommended to his notice one or two women she knew he disliked; or, what was still more offensive, some one whom he might have fancied, could she have liked him.

Such scenes were not of unfrequent occurrence. At last Hertford became quite ill, bodily ill; entirely owing to his unfortunate temperament. He was cursed with a degree of morbid sensibility, which, once or twice in the year, induced a serious illness, or, at least, Hertford thought it did. And now, he was even worse than usual, for he had come all this way from home for enjoyment, for pleasure, and he had met with insult from Mrs. Brown, for her ridicule he considered as such; neglect from her
daughters, as they preferred Archer, and even Sir Trevor Dolman to him; and such great mortification was his at having been thus duped; it well nigh promised to be the death of him.

Mrs. Brown, beginning to fear that Mr. Hertford would really become seriously ill, and that he would be thrown upon them as an old friend, and in a foreign land, tried to soothe the misanthrope, and just kept up the fiction till he was well enough to travel, and then persuaded him to return to England, assuring him she should be wretched till she knew he was out of a country which evidently disagreed with him. Whether Hertford saw through this thin veil of hypocrisy is uncertain; probably not, however, for the very wisest, the very cleverest, the very oldest, and the very youngest men are deceived by woman when she is intent upon her purpose, and carries it on by the aid of feeding the vanity of her victim.
Hertford returned to England, leaving the Browns to "the mercy," as he expressed himself, "of their own follies, backed by those of Archer and the proud stupid Baronet."

Mrs. Brown was quite determined to secure Sir Trevor for Henrietta, for this was the only way she could redeem her own character from the odium she expected would be cast upon it on Lord Leslie's "unfortunate" recovery.

She got Henrietta's promise to accept the Baronet, though the young lady fancied she was in love with Mr. Edward Fairfax, and the sprig of myrtle had accompanied her abroad. Just now, however, fortunately for her mamma's scheme, a report reached them that Helen Murray was engaged to Edward. Henrietta felt piqued, and she was more than willing, she was *determined* to return to England a bride.

Mrs. Brown managed the obstinate Baronet as no one else could do; or, at
least, as no one else would have taken the trouble to do, and she brought him to the point, Henrietta Brown was to be my Lady Dolman. Major Archer assisted Mrs. Brown in her manoeuvres, glad to please her in any way which did not commit himself; for Archer swore to himself every night on his way from the Brown's to his hotel, that he would not marry beneath his birth. He would flirt with his scullion maid, but his wife must have good blood in her veins; and he felt he must be off from Paris immediately, for the success of Henrietta with Sir Trevor, had given Matilda hope and she beset him in a most determined tone of conquest. So when Major Archer knew that the Baronet had offered, and that the marriage was to take place immediately, he took French leave, and wrote his congratulations from home to Mrs. Brown. Matilda was outrageous. She declared she would not dance bare footed, as the
adage has it, at her sister's wedding, so, she set her wits to work, and she was not surprised, in a week after, to hear Mr. Powis announced. Mrs. Brown received him coldly, Henrietta scornfully; but he cared not. In three days afterwards he was travelling post haste to Scotland, and as no one attempted to stop him, he reached the desired goal, and Matilda was a bride before her sister, which had been her sole aim, her only inducement for marrying Powis.

Mrs. Brown stormed. Hetty declared her sister must be mad, but Mr. Brown thought in his own mind that his eldest daughter had a greater chance of happiness with the good-tempered banker than his youngest girl with the surly baronet. At all events, Powis had given great proof of love for Matilda (fond as the world said he was of lucre), for he had married her without fortune, as it remained to be seen whether her father would give her one. Certainly at one time, he,
as well as Mrs. Brown, looked high for their eldest daughter. Mr. Brown had early cast his keen eye on a Pemberton, and Mrs. Brown had hoped for a title of some sort. But now her business was over as regarded the marrying of her daughters.

In the spring they all returned to England. Mrs. Brown and Jack to the Knoll, to join the lawyer and the youngest hope of the family. Matilda to a good house in a dirty street in Hereford, near to the bank; and Henrietta, as Lady Dolman, took possession of Deerfold. What a victorious return for Mrs. Brown. She was more important than ever, and, consequently, more disagreeable. Many mothers envied Mrs. Brown the match she had made for Henrietta, but their daughters consoled themselves by thinking of the notoriously ill-temper of the baronet; and when they saw Lady Dolman driving about in her handsome equipage, they tried not to think of that,
but to recollect the black sour looks of Sir Trevor.

Clive found all the duties of his parish had been carried on by his curate quite to his satisfaction; and his good old housekeeper, Mrs. Cook, had taken especial care of the sick and the poor. Clive was not yet allowed to take any church duty, but he found plenty to do in other ways amongst his parishoners. He was, as usual, often at the cottage, but he now seemed as if it were difficult ever to be away from it.

Mrs. Melbourne carefully avoided alluding to his more frequent and lengthened visits. Helen seemed very happy, and her aunt fondly thought everything was working well, both for Clive and her dear niece.

One morning he called before Mrs. Melbourne was down stairs, which he had seldom done before. Helen was in her garden, and she opened the gate herself.
"How delicious the perfume is from your flowers, Miss Murray," said Clive. "You certainly excel in the arrangement of your parterres. My garden looks miserable in comparison to this."

"How is that, Mr. Clive?" asked Helen, "for you have a regular gardener, and we only have one occasionally."

"Who has nothing to do with the arrangement of your flower borders," observed Clive. "How I wish you would do me the favor to direct Johnson."

"Oh, he would be in great dudgeon to be dictated to by a young lady," answered Helen, "or I would with pleasure;" and she sat down on a garden bench, inviting Clive to do so likewise.

"He must learn to like it, Helen," said Clive, as he seated himself beside her, "or he will very likely lose his place ere long."

"Why so?" asked Helen. "It would
be a great mistake for the sake of a trifling alteration in the laying out of your flower garden to lose a good servant."

"I don't think Johnson will go," said Clive. "He would not dislike having a mistress, I fancy; at least, such a one as I should give him, Helen;" and he ventured to take her hand.

"She started. "Mr. Clive, what do you mean?" she exclaimed, and turned very pale.

"I mean, my dear Miss Murray, what you can scarcely be ignorant of, that I love you; yes, Helen, it is even so."

Poor Helen. She felt over-powered. She thought she should faint. She attempted not to withdraw her hand; indeed, she could not. Too surely she knew she could not return Clive's love, but she knew not how to tell him so. She sat motionless. He very naturally interpreted her emotion in his favor, and he thought he was acting a most
generous and unselfish part when he said, "I will not further distress you, Helen. I see you are greatly agitated. I will go, dearest," and he kissed the hand he still held in his, which was cold as death. "Go to your kind aunt, Helen," continued Clive. "She will tell you how I have delayed this avowal, how I have feared to speak lest I should be met by a disappointment worse than any that has gone before. Mrs. Melbourne has long been in my secret, but so little encouragement have I had from her, that I dared not act upon it. It was only lately that I hoped you returned my love; it is only now that I dare feel almost sure you do. Speak Helen, one word will make me the happiest man in existence."

"Oh, Mr. Clive," sighed Helen, and she sank back in the seat quite senseless. Henry was greatly alarmed. He raised her in his arms, he called her by every endearing name; he ventured, in that
moment of agitation, to press his lips on her pale cheek. Helen was quite unconscious. Just then Letty appeared in the distance, for the cottage garden was extensive, and one of the very prettiest in the world. Clive called to her, and asked for a glass of water. Letty instantly obeyed, and shocked indeed was she to find her young mistress in such a state. Her first impulse was to go for Mrs. Melbourne, but she was still in bed, having passed a sleepless night.

By the aid of restoratives, which Letty understood so well how to apply, at length Helen seemed to revive, and opening her eyes, saw Clive bending over her with intense interest. She burst into tears, and throwing herself into the arms of her faithful Letty, she sobbed aloud.

Henry now thought all danger of a relapse was over, and feeling sure that his presence agitated her powerfully, he gently said to the still weeping girl, as
he took her unresisting hand, "I will leave you now, Helen, for awhile but expect me ere long; and pray, pray forgive me for being the cause of so much suffering to you," and again pressing her little white hand to his lips, he almost flew from the garden, quite happy in the conviction that his love was returned, even as tenderly as he could desire.

When Helen was sure that Clive was gone, she raised her head, and, disengaging herself from the supporting arms of Letty, she said. "What has happened, dear Letty? I feel quite bewildered."

"My dear young lady," replied Letty, respectfully, "let me lead you into the house, and I will bring you a little something to your own room. Do not go to my mistress until you are better, for she seems very poorly, and is in low spirits this morning."

"Indeed, Letty, I am very sorry,"
exclaimed Helen, now trying to rouse herself, and rising from the garden bench. "I will go to my aunt immediately."

"Not this moment, please Miss Helen," said Letty, "or you would distress her, I am sure."

"Why, Letty?" asked Helen. "I must go," she continued impatiently. "I have much to say to her."

"I hope it is something that will cheer her then, Miss Helen," observed this faithful domestic, "for she needs comfort.

"You alarm me, Letty," said Helen. "Why did you not come for me?"

"I was looking for you, ma'am, when Mr. Clive called me. Poor young gentleman; how pale he went, almost as pale as yourself, Miss Helen. I feared, I am sure I don't know what, for him, seeing he has only just recovered, you know. But his colour came again before he left you. And
now, Miss Helen, you, too, look better. Helen felt she blushed deeply.

"So," continued Letty, "if you will just smooth your hair, for your hat fell off, and this comb too I picked up—so that it is rather untidy."

Helen now slowly made her way into the cottage. She first went to her own room, according to Letty's advice, and after arranging her hair quickly, not allowing herself to think of the events of the last half-hour, she passed on to her aunt's bed room, and gently tapped at the door.

A faint "come in," admitted her. She found Mrs. Melbourne in tears.

Helen kneeled by the bed. She affectionately kissed her poor aunt, and, in a whisper asked what had occurred to distress her?

Mrs. Melbourne tried to command herself, and said, "It is for you, I weep, my beloved child. For myself I could bear any thing."
"Speak, Aunt Melbourne," said Helen, "you alarm me."

"Have you the courage to know the worst, my love?" asked her Aunt.

"Yes," replied Helen impetuously, "anything is better than suspense."

"Then read this letter I have just received," said her Aunt. "Oh, Helen, if I could hope you were not insensible to Clive, all might yet be well. Surely surely, my child, his love should not lightly be rejected."

Helen turned very pale—she opened the letter her Aunt gave to her, and greatly was she distressed to find the whole of her little fortune was lost to her by the stoppage of Powis' Bank; unfortunately all the money was lying there ready for an investment which Mr. Fairfax was contemplating in order to bring in a larger income than it had hitherto done. He had desired Mrs. Melbourne to get the money ready for him, and place it in Powis' hands
for a week or two. Unfortunately Mrs. Melbourne had done so, and thus it was lost. There was no one to blame in the business excepting Powis, who well knew his insolvency when the money was lodged in his hands; but he had hoped his marriage with Miss Brown would have secured him money to enable him to keep his head above water for some time, and, perhaps, bring him quite round. But tho' he quickly enough got Miss Brown, her fortune was not forthcoming so soon, and thankful was Matilda that she had this to depend upon when her husband became a bankrupt.

But to return to Helen Murray. She, poor girl, tried to appear less miserable than she really was, on her Aunt's account, and she bid her not dwell upon this unavoidable misfortune. "I will not be a burden to you, dear Aunt," said she, "I will work for my livelihood. You have given me an edu-
cation that will enable me to do so."

"Never my child, as long as I am spared to you," said Mrs. Melbourne. "We can still economize,—we can have a less expensive servant than Letty, for you know I give her high wages."

"Oh, dear Aunt, you must not part with your good, your invaluable Letty. How could you do without her?" asked Helen.

"Much better than I could do without you, my child," exclaimed her Aunt, and she threw her arms round Helen, and they wept together. To part with you would kill me, unless it were as I could wish. Helen, tell me, if Clive should ask you to be his, could you not love him? could you not be happy with him, and make his happiness?"

Helen spoke not, she dared not destroy her poor Aunt's hopes, she dared not confirm them.

"May I interpret your silence as I
wish, my child?"—and Mrs. Melbourne's countenance brightened, and she looked almost herself again,—"one word, Helen, and I am the happiest of human beings."

Helen still hesitated, she rose from her knees, she kissed her Aunt's now flushed cheek, she moved a few steps from the bed, she drew her finely modelled figure to its full height,—she looked angelic.

Mrs. Melbourne, even gazed with admiration on a beauty which habit had so familiarized her with, that she seldom or ever thought of it.

Helen spoke. "Aunt Melbourne, Clive has this morning, not ten minutes since, professed his love to me. I will answer him as you desire."

"My God, I thank Thee!" exclaimed Mrs. Melbourne. And Helen was wholly recompensed for the sacrifice she was prepared to make by that fervent, truthful exclamation of her beloved Aunt.

But when Mrs. Melbourne was about to discuss the subject, Helen felt she could
not yet bear it; she must school herself and seek for that calmness she could not much longer command. She made some excuse to her aunt to leave her, and summoning Letty to assist her mistress to dress, she shut herself in her own room, and throwing herself on the couch, gave way to a burst of tears. Shortly, however, Helen controlled them, and she now determined not to shrink from what she thought her duty.

Her aunt out of the question, Helen would have refused Clive. As to his unhappiness if she did, she thought it could not be great, for she had not much opinion of a man's love who could so easily change its object. But Helen was young, and very ignorant of human nature, particularly in affairs of the heart, especially of man's heart. Those who have lived longer, may know, from their own experience, or from that of others, that when once a man deems his love hopeless, or, when he believes it to
have been betrayed, he soon ceases to think of the object of his attachment, and is just in a state to be attracted and vanquished by the first interesting girl who is thrown much with him.

So it was with Clive. As long as he hoped, even against hope, that his cousin, Lady Agnes, might be his, and felt, besides, assured of her affections, Helen Murray was a person as little dangerous to him as her Aunt Melbourne. But, when he had no longer even a glimmering of hope as regarded his first love; and, also, when he deemed that Agnes had treated him ill, he found Helen exactly the girl to win his regard; and, though he was quite sure he could never love her as he had loved his cousin, yet, with such a wife, he felt life might be worth the having.

It has been said before that Helen was entirely influenced by her feelings towards her aunt in her determination to accept Clive; and, in order to make
that dear relative quite happy, it was necessary that she should not have a suspicion of the truth. Oh, how fervently poor Helen wished she were at liberty to follow her own inclination. How happy would she have felt, by comparison, to have been allowed to earn her bread as a Governess, or, as anything else, rather than be obliged to marry a man she did not love. She only could hope that time would reconcile her to her lot. She dreaded Clive's next visit,—then, indeed, her fate would be sealed. She would try not to think it so deplorable. Indeed, why should she? she liked Mr. Clive exceedingly, they were, and always had been, excellent friends,—she had no attachment for another—certainly not. Her admiration of Lord Leslie could not be called one; she hoped not, at least. She had tried, and she thought she had succeeded in never thinking of him but as an acquaintance of a day, whom she
might never see again, or if she did, he
would meet her with indifference, or
perhaps, as a perfect stranger.

Thus reasoned poor Helen, as she sat
in her own little room, and she was on
the point of going down to her Aunt
Melbourne, who had been in the draw-
ing room ten minutes at least, when a
ring at the gate announced a visitor;
and soon after Helen heard Henry Clive
inquiring if Mrs. Melbourne was yet
down stairs.
CHAPTER XII.

Mrs. Melbourne received Mr. Clive most affectionately. He looked so happy, so unlike the Henry Clive of former days that she thought him even more charming than ever, and she deemed her darling niece one of the most fortunate girls in the world.

As soon as Letty had closed the door Clive exclaimed, as he seated himself by Mrs. Melbourne's side, "Congratulate me, my dearest Mrs. Melbourne. But
where is Helen? I hope quite recovered. Have you forgiven me the agitation I caused her? Has she told you?"

"Yes" said Mrs. Melbourne, "she tells me you have declared your love to her, and the result to both, I hope will be happy."

"It cannot fail to be so, dearest friend," said Clive. "Helen mine, I shall have nothing to wish for, and I trust the feeling on her part, will be reciprocal. But where is she, Mrs. Melbourne? I want my happiness confirmed by her presence; she has, as yet, only tacitly consented to be mine. But I cannot doubt her love after the scene of this morning."

"Nor need you, Henry, I am sure," said Mrs. Melbourne. "But, perhaps, when I tell you that Helen is now penniless, her little fortune lost, you may deem it prudent to wait till you get possession of your Rectory. To this there can be no objection."
"I did not know," answered Clive, "that Miss Murray had any fortune. I am quite indifferent about it, be assured, for I believe I have enough for Helen's inexpensive tastes, and I am ready to make the best settlement I can upon her."

"Oh, I am quite sure you will be generosity itself, Henry," said Mrs. Melbourne, "and I feel more happy than I can tell you, in entrusting my child to your tender guardianship. But here is the dear girl herself," and Helen entered the room with a firm step, and a flushed cheek.

Henry advanced to meet her, and taking her extended hand, he led her to a seat near her Aunt, and placed himself by her side. "This is what I have dreamed of, this is my summit of happiness," exclaimed Clive. "My Helen, may I not say so?" and he gazed fondly on his beloved, "and our dear Aunt Melbourne. Am I presumptuous, Helen?"
May I speak to you two words alone, Mr. Clive?" asked Helen, rising from her chair, and walking to the door. "Excuse us five minutes, dearest Aunt," continued Helen, "and we will be with you again."

Clive followed Helen into the dining room. She stood by the open window. He closed the door. "Helen," he said, regarding her with anxiety, "you look grave, you look out of spirits, what have you to say?"

"A very few words, and very honest I assure you," she replied. "Do you promise me to hear them with patience and kindness?"

"Oh, yes, dear girl, speak, and speak quickly," said Clive, who began to wonder what was coming.

"If I understand you aright, Mr. Clive," said Helen, her dark eye fixed intently upon him, you wish me to be your wife?

"My dear Helen," exclaimed Henry,
you cannot doubt my meaning, what does all this lead to, you alarm me."

"I think it right," said she, "to be perfectly candid with you. It is evident that my agitation of this morning has misled you."

Henry was on the point of interrupting her.

Helen went on. "But I cannot allow you to be deceived. I do not love you, Mr. Clive."

"Good God, Helen, is this possible?" exclaimed Henry. "Why not have told me so at once? I am doubly wretched by this late avowal. Who is my rival, Miss Murray? for rival there must be in the case; or, I think my devotion could not have failed to make an impression on you."

"You have no rival, Mr. Clive," answered Helen, "and I am ready to be your wife, if you wish it, after you have heard me. My heart is given to no one, my hand is yours if you please."
"Helen," said Clive, "I do not understand you. This morning my declaration threw you into an agitation which left me no doubt of your love; and now, you tell me, you coldly proudly tell me, you will be my wife, but you have no regard for me."

"Oh, I did not say that, Mr. Clive," answered Helen with eagerness, "I could not say that with truth; I have the kindliest feeling towards you, for have we not been tried friends a long, long time, and constant companions for the last six months?"

"Then you do not unwillingly accept me?" asked Henry, a little softened by this avowal.

Helen blushed and hesitated. To say so, would betray her motive, and compromise her Aunt. She dared not do this; at last she gently said, "I think Mr. Clive, we need not discuss the subject farther. If you are satisfied with my friendly feelings towards you, and my
high sense of your goodness, and regard for your character, I am happy," and she looked composed.

"Helen," said Clive, taking her hand. "This acceptance of my love is very, very different to what I had hoped. Perhaps, however, I ought to be satisfied. Perhaps, when you see how sincere I am, how devoted, how determined to make you happy, you will find that you have mistaken your feelings towards me, and that what you so coldly, so provokingly, but I must say, so candidly call friendship is, in reality, a warmer sentiment. At all events," continued Clive, "you have never loved any one else, your Aunt assures me of this, dearest, and I am willing to pledge my faith to you, Helen, on your own terms. I give you devoted ardent love, and you bestow upon me as much of it as you can, calling it friendship, regard, esteem," and Clive smiled with satisfaction as he felt sure, within himself,
that Helen was deceiving herself, and that she really loved him. He had heard of the waywardness of woman, he had read of it, he had experienced it, so he set down Helen's cool way of accepting him as a species of coquetry, which he had not till then met with, and the vanity of man, and of this man especially, came to his aid, and satisfied him that he was beloved.

Helen listened to Clive, and she found she had now only to plight her troth. She no longer hesitated to do so, she had plainly told Clive her feelings, and she certainly could not but have a high sense of his affection for her, as he still wished to make her his wife. She was surprised, but the natural vanity of woman, and our heroine did not pretend to soar above her sex, was, in a degree, called forth; and that, aided by her real regard for Clive, and her sense of strictly performing her duty to her aunt, and performing it cheerfully, gave to her coun-
tenance an expression of entire satisfaction, that might well, with one so animated, be mistaken for happiness, and when she and Clive returned to the drawing room, Mrs. Melbourne had no reason to think her dear Helen was making a sacrifice.

So the marriage was decided upon. Clive wished there should be as little delay as possible. He would set his lawyer to work immediately, and spur him on to the conclusion of the generally lengthy business of settlements.

Helen cared not how soon her fate was sealed. She hoped as Clive's wife to be more happy than now. Then she should be imperatively called upon to love him; and she vainly imagined, poor girl, that duty and inclination were synonymous. So she made no objection to an early marriage. Her preparations would take no time in completing; she would add little to her wardrobe, as her usual simplicity of dress would well be-
come a clergyman's wife; who, in Helen's opinion, ought always to be remarkable for plainness of attire, whatever his rank, whatever his fortune.

Clive was now constantly at the cottage, and there could be no doubt that his heart was in the business, and Helen regained cheerfulness, and really was not unhappy, for she could not but see how happy she made others; one, her nearest and dearest relative; the other, her friend, and now, her affianced husband.

Mrs. Melbourne announced to Mr. Fairfax her niece's engagement to Clive, in the same letter that she informed him of the loss of her fortune.

Mr. Fairfax answered her by return of post, assuring her that if her letter had not contained the good news he had so long been expecting, the bad tidings of the loss of Helen's little fortune, would have overpowered him. He added, that he considered himself, in a
great measure, responsible for that loss, and he hoped Miss Murray would draw upon his banker for any amount she might want, previous to her marriage. "Clive is so well off," continued Mr. Fairfax, "that I do not conceive it can be of the slightest importance to him to lose a few thousands, so, my dear Madam, I hope neither you nor Miss Murray will dwell on a subject which, happily, is now of little moment. On your niece's wedding, if you find your income too small, be assured that I shall be ready to assist you, only let me know. My profession of friendship shall not merely be shown in words. I shall be most happy to be of the slightest service to you; and will you allow me the favour of giving Miss Murray away on the occasion of her wedding? With warmest congratulations on the happy termination of this, at one time, rather doubtful business,—Believe me, yours faithfully,

Herbert Fairfax."
Postscript. By the way, do not unnecessarily delay the wedding, or it may have to be put off for a while. I hear Lady Moreton becomes daily weaker. Lord Leslie’s marriage is to be hastened on that account.”

Mrs. Melbourne, after reading Mr. Fairfax’s letter, gave it to her niece, saying, “How very kind a friend he is. But I hope, as to money, that we shall have no occasion to trouble him. I can spare you a trifle, my child, towards your trousseau.”

“Oh, dear aunt, name it not,” said Helen. “I have nearly all my last half year’s allowance, and I shall require very few additions to my wardrobe.”

“I think, Helen, Mr. Fairfax is quite the proper person to take the place of your dear uncle Melbourne on this occasion, and I am much pleased that he has offered to do so,”

“Certainly,” said Helen, as she continued to read the letter. When she
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came to the postscript she coloured. "Dear Aunt," she exclaimed, "you did not tell me Lord Leslie is going to be married. I wonder who is the very fortunate girl. At all events, I am glad it is not Henrietta Brown."

"Henrietta Brown," echoed Mrs. Melbourne, "very improbable, ever, I should think. What could make you say that, my love?"

"Why," replied Helen, "Mrs. Brown quite implied that Lord Leslie was in love with her daughter, at the time the duel took place."

"Indeed," said her aunt, "you did not tell me that."

"You were so occupied at the time with poor Henry," observed Helen, "that I never mentioned it."

"And if you had, love," said Mrs. Melbourne, "I should have regarded it as a mere invention of Mrs. Brown, so well knowing her love of varnishing over the truth, especially when she can..."
add to her consequence, as she thinks, by a little fiction. But really, Helen, as you have described Lord Leslie, I should have been surprised if he had chosen Lady Dolman. By the way, I wish we could call at Deerfold. I must ask Mrs. Egerton to take us. Poor Lady Moreton," continued Mrs. Melbourne, "it would be exceedingly provoking were she to die before your marriage. I must talk to Clive."

"Perhaps, my dear aunt," said Helen, with considerable agitation, "Lady Moreton's death may make some difference as regards the future."

"What do you mean, Helen?" asked her aunt.

"Perhaps, now," said Helen, "Clive may marry his cousin."

"My dear girl," exclaimed Mrs. Melbourne, "what nonsense you talk. Don't frighten yourself in that way, Helen, I beg. You look quite pale. Be assured after all that has occurred, neither Clive
nor Lady Agnes have a feeling of tenderness as regards each other. Lady Agnes Scott's professed indifference, nay, dislike, I may say, of Henry, was too contemptuously expressed not to have come from her heart; and Clive is bound to you now, Helen, in honor, as well as affection."

"As to the honor," said Helen, "I should in a moment release Henry if I were sure he desired it. Will you speak to him, Aunt Melbourne?"

"Decidedly not, Helen," she replied, somewhat sternly. "And I must insist upon it that you do not either. It would be very indelicate in me, and doubly so in you, my child. Depend upon it Lady Agnes is nothing, and never again can be any thing to Clive. Pray let things remain as they are, and do not run heedlessly into trouble. You need not have a jealous feeling of Lady Agnes. Henry loves you truly, faithfully, warmly, Helen. Doubt not his profes-
sions, which the mention of his former love for his cousin would imply you did. Poor Lady Moreton must die, I suppose, but surely not until you are safely Clive's.”

Helen sighed deeply, which her aunt naturally attributed to the fear that the marriage might be delayed; or, to a feeling of jealousy as concerned Lady Agnes. Helen, herself, was not quite sure whether she sighed most at this dispelling of a hope that she might have escaped the marriage, or from an envious feeling towards the unknown future Lady Leslie.

Be this as it may, all progressed towards the completion of Mrs. Melbourne's wishes. Clive pushed on his lawyer, and got his promise that, as far as he was concerned, the marriage might take place at the end of another fortnight; and, seconded by the wishes of her aunt, Clive found no difficulty in fixing with Helen that their wedding
should take place the last day in June.

Clive did not pretend to be affected by his aunt's serious illness. He knew her to have been the unreasonable and bigoted obstacle to his happiness with her daughter; and he felt, even on the present occasion, that she might, perhaps, be the cause of delaying his marriage, though he declared that even her death should not prevent its taking place, unless it occurred on the very morning.

Mrs. Melbourne did not oppose him in his vehement philippic against Lady Moreton. She knew he had good reason to be angry with her; but she was convinced that his amiable disposition would not allow him to commit an impropriety, and should poor Lady Moreton be taken off before the 30th, he would be the first to desire that his marriage should be delayed for a reasonable time.
Helen ventured to ask Clive one day who Lord Leslie was going to marry?

"Miss Davenant," said Clive, "the sister of the present Baron. I only knew it an hour ago. I have had a letter from my brother William this morning. He means to try to be here for the 30th. He sends all sorts of messages to you, dear Helen."

"Where is Lord Clive now?" asked Helen.

"In Paris at this moment, but he says the cholera rages there to such a degree, that he shall leave for London in a few days. He very kindly desires we will take possession of his place for as long a time as we like; for he has no intention of going to Scotland at present, not till the grouse shooting."

"I shall very much like to see Scotland," said Helen. "Strathallan is in Perthshire, I think?"

"Yes," replied Clive, "and it is one of the finest houses in the country; but my
brother has not a fortune to keep it up. There has been great extravagance in the family, Helen, for the last two or three generations, and I fear William is not much inclined to economize. I tell him he must marry a woman with fortune; that would do much to put him straight."

"He is not then married?" asked Helen.

"Did you not know, my love," said Henry, with heightened colour and evident delight, "that you, perhaps, may be a Baroness? I am at present heir presumptive to the title."

Helen assured Clive it was the first moment she knew it.

"My rank and expectations have not then influenced you, dear girl?"

"Oh, no, most assuredly not," said Helen, blushing. "I have but one motive in becoming your wife, Henry."

"Dearest Helen, how happy you make me," said Clive. "Disinterested love is
a scarce article in these days. I feel as if I could never repay you for your affection."

"Say not so, Henry," sighed Helen. "May you never repent the engagement you have entered into."

"Repent, sweet one," exclaimed Henry, drawing the hand he held in his through his arm, and rising from their rustic seat, for they had strolled far beyond the village. "I never can repent of my professions to you. It is utterly impossible."

Lady Agnes' name rose to Helen's lips, for she had a kind of presentiment that Lady Moreton's death would open a way for the reconciliation of the cousins; and how terrible, then, for both, for all, if their marriage should be cause of regret. But so fearful was she that Clive should think her jealous of his former love, as her Aunt Melbourne had assured her would be the case, that she remained silent on the subject.
Helen then asked Clive innumerable questions about the Davenants. Everything he said was in their praise.

"Miss Davenant is very plain, but one of the nicest girls in the world," said he. "A great friend of Lady Agnes Scott, but she has twice her sense and feeling; and if Constance had been at my cousin's side, I feel sure Agnes would not have written as she did to me; for a more heartless dismissal of a man could not well have been penned. But it makes me angry to talk of one that I wish to forget; so I will not mar my present happiness with a thought of her. Leslie is a good fellow, and I think he and Constance are well suited, if he can get over her excessive plainness and her horrible voice. But have you not met the Davenants, Helen?

"Once," she replied, "at Sir Trevor Dolman's fancy ball; but I should not know Miss Davenant again. Lord Davenant's dress was one of the handsomest
and most remarkable in the room, so that it attracted my attention, and I thought I had never seen a countenance I so much liked as Lord Davenant's. At once so amiable, and so full of intelligence; and then so melancholy, which expression had its charm too. If I could take likenesses, I should paint Lord Davenant for my beau ideal of manly beauty."

Henry did not quite like this high encomium from the lips of Helen, especially as he knew himself, he could not fail to know it, to be particularly handsome; and he somewhat pettishly said, "Upon my word, Helen, Lord Davenant seems to have made a deep impression on you. I never heard him admired for his looks before. His figure is not good, and he is becoming rather bald."

"I was merely speaking of countenance," replied Helen, "which with me constitutes beauty. The most regular features in the world, unaccompanied by
a good expression, have no charm for me. But Lord Davenant's features are regular: his mouth is particularly handsome, and his teeth are good, and he has a very fine shaped head."

"Well, Helen, enough of Davenant and his perfections," said Clive, impatiently. "If you had fallen in love with Leslie, I should not have been surprised. He is a fine fellow." Helen blushed.

"Do you see the likeness between us?" asked Clive.

"Not at all," replied Helen, in some confusion.

"Perhaps, Helen, you never particularly noticed Clarence?" said Clive, "but I assure you as boys we were scarcely known apart. Leslie has lost some of his good looks abroad, but there are quite enough remaining to be admired."

So thought poor Helen; and she discovered now, if she had not done so before, that Henry Clive was vain of
his appearance; and was, also, inclined to be jealous: two qualifications that were not at all likely to add to the satisfaction of Helen in becoming his wife. She determined never again to praise the appearance of any one, thus she should avoid annoying in that way; but as to flattering him on his own good looks, that she should never do, especially as his was a kind of beauty that she had never admired, and that could never interest her.

Every thing was now arranged for the wedding. Mr. Fairfax was to arrive the evening before. Helen's bridesmaids were to be two of the Colvilles and two of the Maxwells. Lord Clive and a college friend of Henry's were coming to do honour to the ceremony. The Dean of Hereford was to officiate. The whole body of villagers meant to make it a holiday, and intended to hang up garlands and strew flowers. Clive liked this sort of thing, and encouraged them. He
ordered a dinner for the men and boys, and a tea drinking for the mothers and school girls.

And now it was only two days before the wedding. Clive was in a happy state of excitement. Helen kept herself as composed as possible. Mrs. Melbourne was agitated and restless. Letty all activity, in busy preparation to set off their cottage breakfast on the wedding morning to the very best advantage; and ever and anon giving instructions to the pretty little maid Mrs. Melbourne had engaged for Helen's abigail, as to the especial care she must take of Miss Helen, singing her praises all the while, and concluding by declaring that she and Mr. Clive would be the happiest and handsomest couple that ever went to church together.

And now our readers must bid adieu to the Cottage and Vicarage of Mayfield, and pay a visit to the stately old mansion of Deerfold.
CHAPTER XIII.

"A pretty business this of Powis' to be sure," said Sir Trevor Dolman to his wife; "and a pretty match your sister made of it. I insist upon it, Henrietta, that you don't notice her, at least, that you don't invite her to Deerfold. I certainly should have hesitated fulfilling my engagement to you, had I had a notion of such a disgraceful affair as this;" and Sir Trevor rose from his breakfast table the morning it had
become known that the Hereford bank had stopped, and that Powis was off.

"I hope you don't lose much by this horrid man's failure?" said Henrietta.

"More than I should have done had I never been connected with a Brown," said the Baronet, walking to the window.

Lady Dolman rose from the table, and looking very handsome, and very contemptuous, said, "Sir Trevor, you had better recollect that you cannot now decry my family without demeaning yourself. I am no longer Henrietta Brown, but Lady Dolman; and pray understand me once for all, that though I may not have quite such old blood in my veins as yours, it is just as warm in its way, and will not for a moment quail before you."

Sir Trevor turned from the window, and stared, actually stared, (no other word will express the look) at his wife. He was not accustomed to be so spoken to. He had had his will contested by
his sister, who used to live with him before her marriage; but then it was in a different way. He went in a violent rage, and so did she, and they stormed at each other; neither could ever claim a victory. At last Miss Dolman took refuge in the arms of a poor clergymen, who, from sheer lack of money, sold himself to the rich heiress, and never knew contentment afterwards.

On his sister's marriage Sir Trevor proclaimed himself victor, for his ungovernable temper had ousted her from Deerfold; and though in his heart he felt it a sort of degradation to have his sister spoken of as Mrs. Cartwright, and to meet her trudging to church in the wet and the dirt, because her husband deemed it wicked to allow her to have the carriage on a Sunday, yet he had never repented asserting and maintaining the mastership in his own house; and he boldly professed his determination that no woman should again enter it as mis
tress; at least, she might be nominally so, but in reality he would lord it over her, and leave her nothing but the name. Sir Trevor had gone on for two or three years after Miss Dolman's marriage, flirting with the Browns, sometimes the daughters, but oftener, and more to his gross taste, with the mother. It was only so late as his fancy ball that he thought he should like a wife. Lady Agnes Scott he felt would perhaps refuse him, as she had not only youth and beauty, but rank and fortune; so he would not risk an offer to her.

Miss Murray had equal beauty with Lady Agnes, and that evening, in her very becoming costume, almost surpassed her, though their style was so completely different, that a comparison could hardly be made.

Miss Murray was of a good family yet not high enough to venture to compare it with that of the Dolmans; and she had no fortune, so, doubtless, she
would gratefully accept Sir Trevor. We know the result of those cogitations.

In Paris Sir Trevor was so beset, and so successfully humbugged by Mrs. Brown and her handsome daughter, that, in a moment of overpowering vanity, the Baronet committed himself. The ladies followed up their conquest with able manœuvres and astounding flattery; Sir Trevor had no chance of an escape from their attack, and he surrendered at discretion. The beauty of Henrietta was certainly very inviting, and, when she chose, her manners were gentle and pleasing; and, very nearly lady-like. Sir Trevor felt sure of one thing—that he could govern her, rule her, manage her, she would be proud of her alliance with him, she would be grateful for his having raised her to rank and importance, and she appeared to be good tempered and docile. And last, though not least in the advantages he was thus calculating, Brown was
esteemed wealthy, and would be prepared to pay down a good round sum to secure such a match for his daughter. At least so promised Mrs. Brown.

Sir Trevor married; and for one month he believed he had chosen a wife well; and Henrietta, too, thought she had done wisely. The Baronet did not lose his temper more than once a day, and his bride had never yet been the exciting cause. She had been all flattering attention to him, and had taken every opportunity of blazoning his family, and of expressing deference to him, and something like gratitude for his having made her Lady Dolman.

This, however, could not last, as, on the part of Henrietta, it was all acting; and Sir Trevor was only to be kept in tolerable humour by the continuation of such acting. His young bride wearied of it, and, when she found herself established at Deerfold, she determined to be happy in the station she had
chosen for herself, and which she had arrived at by rather a troublesome and dangerous path. She did not venture, all at once, to assert her rights and her dignity. She "let him down easy," as she vulgarly termed it when talking to her brother Jack one day.

The Baronet winced at the first lash, he kicked at the second, and he plunged and resisted fearfully when he saw that such would be her every day habit. He had been in three or four towering passions since they had taken up their residence at Deerfold. All about trifles in reality, but made of importance by opposition. Henrietta had, hitherto, not gone the whole length she intended to do. She wisely used to leave the room, and when she met Sir Trevor again, she would avoid the subject matter of dispute. Sir Trevor still thought he was sole master at home, and that Henrietta would always humble herself in the end, in consideration of
her inferior birth, however much she might try to have her own way. One great virtue she possessed certainly, good temper. She never went into a passion, and, however Sir Trevor stormed, he found his wife as cool as possible; not at all seeing that her coolness was owing, in great measure, to her perfect indifference. He was certain too, that she possessed humility; not indeed christian humility, of that Sir Trevor never thought, but a humility that would bend her to his will, as an inferior being naturally succumbs to one of greater power and influence.

For some time then, Sir Trevor Dolman did not repent him of his choice. But now let us return to him in his own ancient mansion, staring at his humble, docile, good tempered wife, and thinking her at that moment rather mad, though, certainly very handsome.

The Baronet laughed outright, and advancing to her, he said, "Why,
Henrietta, my dear girl, are you losing your senses? Has your sudden rise from nothing, to a rank so very distinguished, upset your brain, and made you talk and look so like a pretty little maniac? Come, come, my Lady Dolman, to all the world beside, be as proud, as dictatorial as you please, it will say you have been a ready pupil of an able master; but to me, never, never venture to shew it," and he somewhat roughly saluted her. Henrietta was half inclined to box his ears, as she had sometimes done in days gone by, when he would flirt with her as a school girl, in his own familiar way, but she hesitated, and thought better of it. She deemed it, in this instance, beneath her dignity, as she felt very angry with him for the way in which he had alluded to her family, and she determined now to shew him that she would not submit to it. She disengaged herself from his rough embrace, and sat down near to him.
"Sir Trevor," she began, with the greatest calmness and temper, "I wish you to listen to me, and then you will understand that I did not become your wife to be insulted, especially through my own family."

"What the devil do you mean, madam." exclaimed the Baronet, fast getting into a rage.

"I mean, Trevor," said his wife, with provoking good humour, "that you must not offend me by abusing any part of my family."

"S'death, madam," said the Baronet, "offend you,—and pray who are you; or rather, who were you, till I made you Lady Dolman?"

"Exactly, Sir Trevor," said Henrietta, with a bland smile, and an extended hand, "but having made me Lady Dolman, remember that now I am somebody; and that every thing, and every individual appertaining to me, as Lady Dolman, is also something, and somebody."
Sir Trevor grinned again with passion. He could not articulate, and his wife continued.

"Therefore Mr. Brown is Lady Dolman's father, and Mrs. Brown is her mother, Jack Brown is her brother, as well as Augustus, and Matilda is Lady Dolman's sister. Even the bankrupt Powis is her connection; but, as regards him, I will agree with you, to forget him as belonging to us."

"D—n him, and the whole lot of you," shouted Sir Trevor, as he dashed his hand through a pane of plate glass in opening the window, and, in spite of the fast flowing blood; he leaped out into the garden.

Henrietta was rather alarmed, but not the least uneasy. She rang the bell, and desired the butler to see to his master, as he had just cut his hand, and, perhaps, he might faint from loss of blood, adding, Sir Trevor had gone into the open air.
Lady Dolman then retired to her own morning room, and thought no more of the wound, concluding it would be attended to, and hoping the letting of this noble fiery blood, would somewhat tame and cool her husband. She heard no more of it, so she thought no more, and she was preparing to drive to Hereford, in order to enquire after her unlucky sister, Matilda, when Mrs. Brown was announced.

"Well, mamma," said Henrietta, "how is poor Matilda?"

"Don't mention her name," said Mrs. Brown. "I've no patience to hear it. Good God, that my daughter should have done such a thing," and Mrs. Brown almost cried, but the tears did not show themselves.

"Surely mamma," observed Lady Dolman, "my sister is not to be blamed for the odious Bank stopping."

"Bank stopping," exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "Do you suppose, Hetty, that
is what I care for, or what I allude to? Oh, no; it is that my daughter should have married such a wretch as Powis. Old enough to be her father. Ugly enough to frighten naughty children. Mean enough to do any shabby trick. Dirty enough to disgust a scullion maid. and, now, poor enough to go to the workhouse, but not honest enough to gain admittance. Oh, Matilda, that I might never see you again."

"Mamma," said Lady Dolman, "don't give way to your feelings in this manner. It only makes things worse. I cannot help pitying Matilda, and I really think she liked Powis; indeed, I know she did three or four years back, when you were afraid she would marry him. But afterwards, she appeared to take a dislike to him, at least, she used to abuse him—till she married him. I don't know, even now, how their runaway wedding was brought about."

"I never thought it worth while to
enquire,” said Mrs. Brown. “The thing was done, and, as I supposed Powis was rich, I tried to think of his gold, and to forget his age, his ugliness, his meanness, and his dirtiness. But now, when the only good thing he possessed is gone, and, to his numerous disgusting qualifications, rascality is added, I never can again acknowledge him as a connexion; and I insist upon it that Matilda ought to sue for a divorce; but your father, lawyer as he is, says he’s not clever enough to get one. I mean to see Downes about it.”

“But where is Matilda?” asked Lady Dolman, with some interest.

“Oh, she’s at the Knoll, shut up with old Bennet, and they are crying together. Your father said she must come to us, for there would be an execution in the house in another hour. She did get her jewels away; and some of the plate was smuggled by Bennett, unknown to Matilda, of course, and we have not told
your Papa, so don't name it, my dear. But where is Trevor? and how does he like this Bank affair? But for your brilliant happy marriage, my dear Hetty, I could not have lived over this disgrace. I wish we could hear of Powis' death. He is too cowardly a fellow to commit suicide, or there might be a chance."

"Good gracious, mamma, how shocking," almost screamed Lady Dolman. "Surely that would be more disgraceful than anything."

"Yes, perhaps so," observed Mrs. Brown, "if it were known; but that would not be necessary, an apoplectic fit, occasioned by excessive feeling, would easily and honourably account for the sudden death, and a very respectable paragraph appear in the papers. Then, Matilda should go abroad for twelve-months, and marry almost anybody to get rid of the name of Powis. I see no other way of redeeming her character. But pray let us choose some more agree-
able subject. What a lovely collar you have on, Hetty. Tell me, when do you give your dinner parties. I should imagine you have dined everywhere now."

"Yes, we have, I believe," said her ladyship. "We are going in a few days to Castle Davenant for a week. I don't much care to go, but Sir Trevor makes a point of it, so I think it's as well to please him sometimes."

"How do you manage on the whole, Hetty?" asked her mother. "Is all pretty smooth?"

"Rough and smooth by turns," said Hetty. "But, as you very well know, mamma, I did not marry Sir Trevor for domestic happiness, I care not about it. I am Lady Dolman; I have my carriage, my own apartments, my lap-dog, my parrot,—and, my own way as often as I can get it."

"Indeed you must be a happy girl, dear Hetty," said her mother," and I
hope you are a grateful one, also. What a sacrifice I made to ensure your success."

"True, mamma, you gave up an admirer," said Lady Dolman, "but then, you have so many."

Mrs. Brown shrugged her broad fat shoulders, and said, "but where is Trevor? I want to know his opinion as to this divorce; for I suppose there is little chance of suicide."

"I really don't know, mamma, where Sir Trevor is, said her daughter, "we seldom meet till luncheon. Do you go and look for him, and I will finish my letter to Augustus. Poor boy, I want to have him here for a week or two, but Sir Trevor says the house will be full when he comes from Rugby; but I mean him to have a bed in my dressing room if no other can be found, so I have asked him to come."

"Well," said her mother, "you ought to know how to manage your husband,
for I have given you plenty of hints. I shall, perhaps, stay luncheon, Hetty."

And away went Mrs. Brown in search of her son-in-law. He was neither in the library, nor in his private room. Mrs. Brown went to the stable yard, and thence to the farm buildings; here she found the Baronet with his bailiff, picking out a fat cow for the slaughter-house. Sir Trevor nodded to her, and went on with his business, and having said his say, particularly desiring his man to drive a hard bargain, he walked up to Mrs. Brown, and putting out his left hand, said,

"Good morning, madam Brown. I am disabled, you see."

"Good heavens, Trevor," exclaimed the lady, "what have you been doing? Have these horrid animals been biting you?"

"No, madam, it is the bite of another sort of cattle than this," replied the wounded Baronet.
Whatever it is," said Mrs. Brown, not suspecting the truth, "pray, for Hetty's sake, avoid the beast in future. Surely it isn't the bite of a mad dog?" And Mrs. Brown moved a few steps from her companion.

"Don't be alarmed, I am not going to give you a hydrophobia hug, my good lady," said Sir Trevor, in his most sarcastic tone. "One of the family is enough for me. I only wish, however, that I had stuck to the mother, or that the daughter was more like her."

Mrs. Brown's vanity was more pleased than her maternal feelings were alarmed at this avowal. She at once concluded there had been "a row;" yet how beautifully calm she had found Hetty. She said, after a minute's pause, and an endeavour at a blush (which the rouge would have rendered quite invisible, even could it have come at the bidding), "a breeze, I suppose, Trevor. The first love quarrel you and your bride have
had; be not discouraged. Such things must happen. They are not at all out of nature—the best tempered people have to undergo them. Indeed they are, without doubt, greatly to be desired: they excite one, they prevent married life being too monotonous. I am sure Hetty has forgiven you. I found her so cheerful, so handsome, and so well dressed."

"D—n her cheerfulness, madam," said Sir Trevor. "Tears would better become her, considering she is the cause of this;" and he held out his right hand.

"My heavens, Trevor, Hetty surely did not bite you?" demanded Mrs. Brown, who really had some curiosity to know what the Baronet meant.

"I am in no joking mood, Mrs. Brown," gruffly replied Sir Trevor. "You might see that. You used to know me better. I wish you would read a lecture to your daughter on obedience. But,
by God, Lady Dolman shall be taught that I won't stand her cool impertinence."

"But your poor hand, Sir Trevor? Do tell me." And Mrs. Brown assumed a tone of sympathy.

"Oh, it's not much hurt. Cut, by that d—d plate glass which Lady Dolman asked me to have in the small dining room, and which I was fool enough to comply with. It cost me the devil and all. But what brings you so early to Deerfold?" continued the Baronet, as he threw himself into a chair, for they had now reached the house, and Sir Trevor had led the way into the library.

"A very unpleasant business," said Mrs. Brown, "and I want your advice, my dear Trevor." She then, in her most coaxing way, seated herself by the side of her son-in-law, and began by saying, "If Hetty had not made the brilliant match she has done, thanks to you, Sir Trevor Dolman."
The Baronet smiled.

"I could not have lived over the disgrace that has fallen upon Matilda."

"True, true, my dear Mrs. Brown. It is a devilishly unlucky affair indeed," said Sir Trevor, who was recovering his temper under the influence of his old charmer.

"Oh, my dear Trevor, but for you, as I observed, I must have sunk under it," said Mrs. Brown in a most piteous strain. "And yet, I ought rather to wish, for your sake, that you had been spared the annoyance of a connexion with us."

"True, true," said the Baronet; who, from his heart, wished he had been spared that infliction.

Mrs Brown went on. "But, your noble birth and high standing in the country, and your family and fortune, are more than sufficient to sustain me in this day of mortification; and I shall try to forget I have any daughter but..."
Lady Dolman, who, I am sure, feels grateful to you for the rank you have raised her to."

"I'm not so sure of that," said Sir Trevor. "That's just what we have quarrelled about, my dear mamma," an epithet the Baronet gave to Mrs. Brown when in good humour with her.

Mrs. Brown saw she had brought him round, and now she had only to keep him square. She said "Oh, Hetty is a foolish child, you must not mind what she says. Humour her a little, Trevor; and, by degrees she will be all you can wish. She is so overjoyed with her present position, that she is almost beside herself. Depend upon it she don't know what she says. And then, too, she doats on you, Trevor. And the love of a young handsome girl is worth the having, believe me. Take my advice if you can, and do not think me presumptuous in offering it, my dear Trevor. Hetty may
be governed by kindness, but not by violence."

"Well, well, that's enough, that will do. Lady Dolman may be happy if she chooses. I am quite independent of that," said Sir Trevor Dolman, rising from his chair as he spoke.

Mrs. Brown saw she had better change the subject; nay, she began to think she had better not stay luncheon, and she had quite determined not to mention Matilda's name again. So, asking if she might order her carriage, she rang the bell, and saying she would just wish Hetty good morning, she disappeared.

Lady Dolman was sealing letters.

"Well, mamma, you are staying luncheon, I see."

"No, love, not to day," said her mother. "I recollect I have a thousand things to do. Adieu, dear, you look divinely. Sir Trevor says you grow handsomer every day. He is in high good humour. And how he doats upon
you Hetty. Pray, pray, try to convince him that he is not disagreeable to you. Indeed, I think you do not dislike him now. Depend upon it, my dear Hetty, a little forced gratitude, a few professions of that sort, with a little delicate flattery, will be very palatable to the proud Baronet, cost you little at the time, and will gain you everything,—power, and that's what you married him for I believe.” And Mrs. Brown kissed her daughter, not allowing her to get in a word, for she saw Lady Dolman did not half relish what she was saying.

On Mrs. Brown's return to the library, Sir Trevor handed her to her carriage in silence. Mrs. Brown kissed her hand to him, observing Deerfold looked more beautiful every time she saw it. And on she rolled to Hereford.

She stopped at Downes' office, and was soon closeted with him. “Is it then impossible to get a divorce, think you, Downes?” said Mrs Brown, after listen-
ing impatiently to his lengthy arguments against it.

"Quite so, under present circumstances, I am sure," said Downes. "Powis has always treated your daughter well."

"Well, Downes!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "Ill, you mean. What can be worse conduct than his? He has not a penny for himself, much less for his wife. His conduct is certainly abominable."

"I quite agree with you, so far," said Downes, with extended chin; "but Powis has not personally ill used her."

"Decidedly," said Mrs. Brown, "He can't give her a guinea to buy a gown, he can't even secure her ornaments; can any conduct be worse? can anything be more personally annoying? A girl who has always dressed expensively; who never knew what it was to want money for her personal gratification. Is not Powis then a brute; and cannot his wife take the law of him?"
"No, my dear Mrs. Brown, this won't be considered sufficient," and Downes tried to look sorry, but the pleasurable smile predominated, for he rejoiced always in the downfall of others, and especially, of the Browns.

The lady saw through his thin hypocrisy. "Well, Downes, I called to ask your advice legally, not desiring sympathy," said Mrs. Brown. "I leave you, satisfied that your opinion is right, as far as your knowledge goes; and more convinced than ever that your heart is as hollow, as your head is empty."

Downes' laugh rang through the office, and almost reached his wife's drawing room, so determined was he that Mrs. Brown should not think he was offended by her severity; and, as he took her to her carriage, he said. "What a pity Mrs. Powis is not more like her mother. It would perhaps, have been less difficult to find a Bill of Divorcement;" adding, fearing he had gone too far, "But then,
Mrs. Powis has not her mother's beauty, her mother's wit."

"Come, come, Downes, none of your saucy humbug," said Mrs. Brown, who never resented an impertinent allusion, if qualified by flattery.

And so parted the lawyer, and the lawyer's wife; each satisfied that they had "given it" the other, as they expressed themselves; and each making a good story of the consultation, at the expense of the other.

And yet, Mr. Downes and Mrs. Brown met the next day as usual in a very friendly manner.
A family party was assembled at Castle Davenant; but we cannot say that it was either a very happy, or a very cheerful one; for, though a joyous event was to be celebrated on the morrow, so much of uneasiness and anxiety existed in the breasts of many of those concerned, that no stranger, suddenly thrown amongst them, would have anticipated a wedding. Yet so it was. Clarence Lord Leslie was
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to lead to the altar, the Honourable Constance Davenant. Her brother Lord Davenant, was to give her away. Lady Agnes Scott was to act as bridesmaid, and Lord Clive was to be Leslie’s groomsman, and to take Castle Davenant on his way to Mayfield Vicarage, as he had promised to attend his brother’s marriage on the morning after Leslie’s wedding.

How then is the gloom, so apparent at Castle Davenant, to be accounted for? Is not this approaching marriage one of affection? Is it not, in every respect, a most happy event?

The world so deems it. Lord and Lady Moreton give it their decided approbation. Lord Davenant is more than satisfied that his beloved sister should have such a protector. Lady Agnes Scott rejoices in the approaching union of her darling brother, and her bosom friend.

But what says the bride? Is she acting
from inclination or compulsion? Is Leslie the chosen of her heart; and does her judgment go with her affection? Yes, most assuredly. Why then is Constance so grave, so little like a joyous bride?

Is Leslie about to marry the woman of his warmest, his purest love? Is she dearer to him than all the world beside? Does he see beauties and perfections in her, where no other eye could discern them? He would answer "Yes." Then why is it that he is restless and melancholy?

It is not allowed to search into the secret thoughts of others; all that can be said, is this, that poor Lady Moreton lay on a bed of sickness, which all apprehended would be her bed of death: consequently, this must account for the bad spirits of the party. Feeling herself fast declining, she had expressed an earnest desire that Leslie and Constance should be married immediately.

Her son had received counter orders
from his Colonel, and he had leave to remain in England, as his regiment was returning from India forthwith.

This arrangement altered Leslie's position with Constance. She would not now have to go abroad as his wife, and she found it impossible longer to resist the pleadings of the whole family, her brother at the head of it, to become at once Clarence's bride.

She still in her heart of hearts doubted the constancy of her lover, and she fixed as late a day as possible for the wedding, giving him, as she imagined, more time to repent of his engagement.

But Leslie did not repent. He had the highest regard for Constance. He had thought it love for one short week, but the fancy ball at Deerfold had opened his eyes to that fallacy. However, knowing all the excellencies of Constance Davenant, and also knowing that Helen Murray could never be his, he still wished to fulfil his engagement; and
when his poor mother seemed almost to revive in the certainty of the event, he was satisfied that the sooner it took place, the happier it would be for all parties. So, that, on Lady Moreton becoming rapidly worse, and expressing her desire to have the ceremony over, Lord Leslie urged Constance to consent, with all the warmth of the most devoted lover, and, at last, she could not doubt the professions of her betrothed.

Poor Lady Moreton could not be dissuaded from going to Castle Davenant, to be present at the wedding. Throughout her illness she had scarcely ever kept her bed, and she was drawn out every day in a Bath chair; so that her family were not quite aware of her precarious state.

She had been at Castle Davenant just a week, and she appeared not at all worse than usual on the day we mention. She fully intended to witness the ceremony, as it was to be performed by special
license, in the magnificent saloon of the Castle.

Constance had wished to be married in the church, but Lady Moreton could not be persuaded to hear of it, and both Leslie and Lady Agnes urged her to comply with the wishes of their dying mother. And so she did.

Lord Davenant was wonderfully calm through all these passing events. He had had his days of agitation, and he had now settled down into a fixed melancholy, which nothing appeared to shake; not even the prospect of his dear Constance's happiness could extract a smile, though he was not wanting in words of affection, and in sincere congratulations.

Those who had not before known Lord Davenant would not, perhaps, have remarked his unhappiness, for he conversed sensibly and agreeably, and always seemed to be trying to give pleasure to others; and a stranger's observation would, probably, have been, "Lord Dave-
nant is a very kind person, and he is very clever; but how reserved."

To Lady Agnes his manner was friendly, though constrained. Sometimes, for a second, he would forget himself, and be as intimate as formerly; but, in another moment, a reserve, almost forbidding, would come over him, and Agnes was grieved and mortified. She too clearly saw she had lost her friend; and that it could be no pleasure to either of them to meet. She longed for the moment when she might leave Castle Davenant, and she felt certain that she should never be asked to become its mistress under any circumstances. The time was gone by for that. And did she regret it? She regretted the loss of Lord Davenant's friendship, and so sincerely, that she regretted she had not been able to return his love, which she now believed he had conquered. He could not be so generally reserved to her, though, he would relax for a
moment, sometimes, if he still loved her. There was, however, comfort in the thought that his love had passed away. For still Agnes felt that she should never love again. But Davenant's friendship, such as it had been, was invaluable to her. That was now denied her, and the future seemed a blank she dared not look upon. She could only pray for contentment, and hope that her life would yet pass cheerfully and usefully; and if in her own person she was not to know happiness, she must try to find it in that of others; and she thought of Leslie and Constance. She felt quite sure that her poor mother would not require her attentions long. She had the satisfaction of having contributed to her comfort. And what satisfaction can be greater to an affectionate and dutiful child?

Lord Moreton often found himself gazing on his dear Agnes, and sighing over her wrecked happiness. At one
time he hoped she had quite forgotten her cousin, and that there might in time be a double marriage in the Moreton and Davenant families. But now he was convinced that neither Agnes nor Lord Davenant thought of such a thing. He earnestly wished Clive had remained constant to his daughter, for certainly he should not have withheld his consent if it had been sought for when he alone was the one to be asked. But that was at an end, for he knew Clive was to be married to Helen Murray on the day after his son’s wedding.

The good Earl could only hope that there was still happiness in store for Agnes, though, whence it would spring, seemed doubtful. To have her with him, to cheer him in his lone home, was everything, as far as he was concerned; but Lord Moreton was not a selfish man, and he would have relinquished the society of his child for her increased happiness at any moment.
Lady Moreton had retired earlier, even than was her custom, as she wished to be up and dressed on the bridal morning before her usual time of rising.

The family dinner was over, and the party was assembled in the small drawing room, when a loud ring at the front gates announced an arrival.

Lord Davenant rose. "No doubt it is Lord Clive," said he. "I never knew him punctual."

"He cannot expect dinner at this late hour," said Leslie.

"I hope, Davenant, you won't give him any," observed Lord Moreton. "Want of punctuality annoys me."

"Oh, my Lord, that would be very inhospitable," said Davenant. "Clive and I have not met for the last few years, and I should be sorry not to give him a hearty welcome."

Lord Leslie was reading. Agnes and Constance were working at the same table. The door opened, and Lord Clive
was announced. The very name electrified Agnes. She had not seen her elder cousin for the last ten years, and then she did not think him at all like Henry, excepting in voice. She did not look up on his lordship's entrance.

"How is this?" exclaimed Lord Davenant, who approached to meet his guest: "An unexpected pleasure," and he scarcely touched his hand.

"Why, Clive," said Lord Moreton, "what has brought you here?"

Leslie now rose, and Constance and Agnes looked up from their work, both thinking that Lord Clive had met with a cold reception. Agnes turned pale as monumental marble. Constance saw her agitation and advanced to Clive. He put out his hand to her, and then bowed to his cousin. He looked ill, and appeared greatly agitated.

Lord Davenant inquired if he had dined.

"Oh, yes," said Clive, "I thank you."
And then addressing Lord Moreton, he said, "will you allow me to speak with you alone, uncle?"

The Earl rose, evidently surprised, and wondering what could have occurred to bring Clive there.

When the uncle and nephew had left the room, Leslie said. "How very stupid of your butler, Davenant, making such a mistake; but he does grow rather old."

"He must be very blind, I think, at all events, not to know the brothers apart," said Lord Davenant. "I cannot imagine to what we owe this visit of Clive."

Lady Agnes' agitation increased. She wished to leave the room, but she felt she could not stand. Presently, Lord Leslie was sent for, and then Lord Davenant.

Constance and Agnes were now alone together.

"What can all this mean?" asked Constance. "I have a foreboding of evil, Agnes."
"I do not know what to think," replied her friend. "I only wish I were in my own room."

"Will you go, love," asked Constance. "Take my arm—there, lean well upon me."

Agnes found that she scarcely could walk, but she had just reached the door with the assistance of Constance, when Clive entered, followed by Lord Moreton. "Agnes, you are ill," exclaimed her cousin, and he just saved her sinking form from falling, and carried her to a sofa.

At that moment a servant appeared, and said, "My Lord wishes to speak with you, Miss Davenant, in the library."

Constance wished to remain by her friend, but Lord Moreton told her she had better go to Davenant, as Agnes had not fainted, and would do very well now, till her return.

Constance went.

Lord Moreton leaned over his child,
and he saw the big tears rolling down her cheeks. He kissed her, and she whispered:

"Take Henry away, papa, I cannot bear it."

Lord Moreton was greatly distressed. "Clive," said he, let us have a stroll, it is a fine night. Agnes will be better without us, and I will ring for her maid," and Lord Moreton pulled the bell.

Clive had lingered near the sofa for a few minutes after he had laid his cousin on it, and then he had gone to a table and, apparently, was occupied with the newspaper of the day. But he was not reading. He was thinking of Helen Murray, and he was determined to leave Castle Davenant that very night.

He started at Lord Moreton's proposition; threw down the paper, and they walked out upon the terrace together.

"My poor Agnes," said the unhappy father, for he too clearly saw her affections were still Henry's.
"I am very sorry to find Lady Agnes Scott in such delicate health," replied Henry, with assumed composure. "I had not heard of it."

"Agnes is quite well," said Lord Moreton, "but she has never been the same creature since your cruel treatment of her, Clive, and now, that we have met, I should much like to hear from yourself, why you professed love to Agnes at the very time you were engaged to Miss Murray?"

Henry shuddered, for the whole truth burst upon him. He was obliged to take his uncle's arm, to prevent his falling.

"Come, boy," said Lord Moreton, impatiently, "don't shrink from the acknowledgement of what, I hope, is for your happiness, though you have certainly used my child very ill, and I find some difficulty in forgiving you."

"Uncle," said Henry, with vehemence, for the faint sickly feeling that had oppressed him for a few moments, was
gone, and he now was able to speak.

"Uncle, tell me, and tell me truly, how long do you suppose I have been engaged to Helen Murray?"

"Ever since you told me so, of course," replied Lord Moreton, in a tone of pique.

"I told you so!" exclaimed Henry.

"I have never told you so."

"What worse than nonsense is this, Henry," said his uncle. "Did you not announce it to me, or much the same thing, in a note you wrote to me, when I was at Pemberton Castle."

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed Clive, "what misery is yet in store for me? Tell me, my Lord, and tell me quickly, all that you have imagined, all that you have misunderstood, which has made three beings wretched for life."

"Calm yourself, Henry," said his uncle, "and listen to me."

The Earl then told Clive how they had all understood that he was engaged to
Miss Murray, from what source he did not know, or did not remember. How his note confirmed it; how much Agnes felt on the occasion; how angry he himself was; in consequence of which, he had written to put off his visit to Moreton Court. "And that," said Lord Moreton, "is all I know of this unhappy business."

"Are you not aware, sir," demanded Henry, "that I wrote to Agnes after your cool note, and entreated to be admitted to see her, believing I had your permission to do so; indeed, your letter from Pemberton Castle first made me hope that at last I might consider Agnes my own. In order to be quite sure of your meaning, I showed your letter to Leslie, and he confirmed my hopes. It was then I offered myself a visitor to Moreton Court; you coolly put me off, but still I did not suspect the truth. Then I wrote to Agnes, and oh! what a reply she sent me. So heartless, so cold,
that my very soul was riven, and I was
well nigh brought to death's door."

"I know not anything of the letter
you mention," said Lord Moreton, "and
yet my child is not wont to keep anything
from me. There must be some mistake,
Henry."

"Doubtless, there is a terrible mistake
somewhere," said Clive, "and I yet think,
my Lord, that it rests with you, and
that Lady Agnes dismissed me most
heartlessly."

"Impossible, impossible, Henry," ex-
claimed the Earl. "Agnes had never
ceased to love you, till she thought you
belonged to another, and, even now she
cannot meet you with composure. You
have misunderstood each other, it is clear.
It can't now be remedied. You are
engaged—attached I hope, to another.
Agnes will, perhaps, never love again;
but she will not be unhappy always.
Her kind heart will rejoice in the
happiness of others, and I am sure she
will be greatly comforted by knowing you have not acted like a hypocrite, in professing love and constancy to her, when engaged to another."

"Oh, no, my dear uncle," said Clive, now somewhat softened. "It was peculiar circumstances that first attracted me to Miss Murray; and, believe me, I never thought of her but as a friend, until my hope of Agnes was destroyed by her own letter. Then, severe illness threw me on the kindness of almost strangers. Helen was domesticated with me for months; so to see her, and to know her, and not to admire her, would have been impossible. I ventured to hope she might be able to fill the vacuum in my heart, caused by my first blighted love. I vainly thought she had done so, and I asked her to be my wife. To-morrow we were to have been married, but poor William's sudden death will delay it. And now, I cannot regret it."
"Say not so, Clive," replied the Earl. "Remember, the same obstacle exists to your union with Agnes. Lady Moreton would never consent to it."

"But my poor aunt out of the question?" sighed Henry.

"Oh, it is too late now," replied his uncle, "to talk of that. Neither Miss Murray's happiness nor your honor must be sacrificed. Get married as quickly as propriety will allow. I will tell Agnes the mistake we have made; and, now that she can resume her good opinion of you, she will be happy; and very soon you will meet as dear friends, and affectionate relations. You must bring your bride amongst us, and I shall be happy to acknowledge her as my niece, for I admire her excessively, and I am not surprised that you were unable to resist her charms."

Henry tried to regain his composure. "May I speak to Agnes to night, uncle?" he asked.
"Not to night, Henry," was the reply. "I will go to my child and tell her all that you have said, and perhaps she will see you to-morrow."

"To-morrow I must be off long before Lady Agnes rises," said Clive. "My duty will call me to Mayfield."

"But your curate will take that, surely," demanded the Earl.

"I am not speaking of the duties of my parish. I was thinking of Helen Murray," said Henry.

"True, true," replied his uncle. "The day after to-morrow she was to have been your bride. That, I suppose, is correct?"

"Quite," said Clive. "But now I don't know when our marriage will take place—perhaps never."

"Nonsense, Clive," exclaimed the Earl. "You are a lucky man to have gained the affections of such a girl as Helen Murray, or I am mistaken in the judgment I have formed of her. Make
the most of your good fortune, and may you be as happy as I wish you. But tell me, what do you intend to do with your vicarage now? and what am I to do with Moreton rectory? I suppose, as Baron Clive, you will reside at Strathallen.

"Oh, no, my Lord, I am too poor for that," observed Henry. "William has died deeply in debt, poor fellow. It was his anxiety for me to see Davenant, to whom he owed a large sum, kindly lent to him ten years ago, without security or interest, or even acknowledgement, that brought me here to night. The obligation pressed heavily on my brother's mind, and he told me he could not die in peace, unless I promised to see Davenant as soon as he had breathed his last. I did promise," continued Clive, "and therefore I am here."

"Then you would not have sought me to tell me of your brother's sudden and unhappy death?" asked Lord Moreton.
"Decidedly not, my Lord," replied Henry. "I have felt too angry with you for that, as, of course, I thought you knew how ill Agnes had treated me; nay, that probably you had encouraged it. I shall not be quite satisfied till I have seen Lady Agnes. Oh that I might have ten minutes, conversation with her to-night."

"Well, well, I will seek my child," said the Earl, "and it shall be as she pleases," and the uncle and nephew returned to the house.

The late Lord Clive had been attacked with cholera in London. Henry had been sent for immediately, and had only arrived a few hours before his brother's death; thus he was most unexpectedly a Peer. His poor brother had expressed a wish to be buried at Strathallan, and Henry had given orders accordingly. His intention was to go direct from Castle Davenport to Mayfield, to break the news to Helen, and then immediately
to Scotland, to perform the last melancholy duty to his brother. He had arranged all pecuniary matters with Lord Davenant, and he now only waited to hear Lady Agnes' determination as to whether or no she would see him.

Lord Davenant had sent for his sister to the Library to tell her of Lord Clive's death. She found Leslie with her brother, and both he and Davenant agreed that the marriage of Leslie and Constance need not be delayed on that account, especially as doing so would greatly distress Lady Moreton. Lord Clive, though a near relative, had been quite an absentee for some years; so that feeling, on the occasion of his death, excepting from the suddenness of it, was out of the question. Constance certainly was glad that there was no intention of putting off her wedding. She tried to dismiss the gloomy forebodings of the last half hour, and she returned to the drawing room to Agnes.
She found only Lord Clive. She expressed her condolence on the late melancholy event in his family, and she then asked for Lady Agnes.

"I have not seen her, Miss Davenant," said Clive, "since you left the room, as Lord Moreton and I have been strolling on the terrace."

"And neglecting my poor Agnes?" said Constance. "Oh, Lord Clive certainly you men are very heartless beings, or you could not have sought the Moretons here.

"I understand you, Miss Davenant," said Henry, "for my uncle has been informing me of the miserable mistakes that have arisen, God knows how, that threaten to destroy the happiness of us all."

"What mistakes?" asked Constance.

"Knowing you are in Agnes' confidence, I scruple not to speak plainly," said Henry; and he told all to Miss Davenant that had occurred since he
and Lady Agnes met at Pemberton Castle.

Constance was much surprised, and quite bewildered. But the feeling uppermost in her heart was that Clive might yet marry Agnes, as Lady Moreton could not live long, and she believed the Earl would gladly promote a marriage which would ensure the happiness of his child. Helen Murray was not once thought of. Perhaps this was excusable in Constance; but Henry could not so dismiss her, and when Miss Davenant ventured to express her thoughts, he quickly said,

"Tempt me not, I implore you, Constance, to be so dishonourable. No, I am bound to Helen now as much as if she were my wife. Agnes and I are forever separated. All I desire now is, that she should be able to give me her friendship, her esteem. That ensured, that restored to me, I will try not to be miserable for the sake of my poor Helen,
who deserves a better fate than is likely to be hers. She ought not to exchange her warm and devoted love for a divided heart."

"She is then decidedly in love with you?" asked Constance, in a despairing tone.

Lord Clive looked surprised and suspicious.

"Why do you ask such a question, Miss Davenant?" he demanded. "Is it in your own imagination, or have you heard it doubted?"

"Oh, I never heard it doubted, believe me, Lord Clive," said Constance. "I just thought it possible it might be a marriage of convenience; especially as I have understood that Miss Murray has lost all her fortune, and only heard of it the morning she accepted you."

Clive felt uncomfortable. He was naturally suspicious, and he now wondered if this was the case, or if it had influenced Helen in the slightest degree.
If so, he could break with her at once. She perhaps might desire that he should. Certainly she did not appear deeply in love with him at the time she accepted him; and, on consideration, she had been rather cool on several occasions, even when great feeling might have been expected, and would have been very proper.

All these thoughts passed quick as lightening through Henry's mind. He did not immediately answer Constance.

"Do you wish, Miss Davenant," at last he said, "to stagger me in the good opinion you think I have of myself, or in that I entertain for Helen? and thus, perhaps, add to my unhappiness."

"That is very far from my motive," said Constance, gravely; "I only know that if I had been in Miss Murray's place, I should have received with reluctance the professions of a man who had so lately made them to another; and, therefore, it seemed not impossible that the
marriage might be one of convenience rather than of affection; for, by your own shewing, Lord Clive, you first paid attention to Miss Murray because you thought she would suit you, and make you a good, kind little wife, and that she would be rather better than no wife at all."

Henry felt conscious, and his colour heightened, for truly he had determined to make Helen his wife long before he had loved her; and, with a slight exaggeration, Miss Davenant was right. He thought he would rather not discuss the subject further, and he was manœuvring to change it, when Lord Leslie came in, and the next moment Lord Moreton called Clive out of the room.

"Well, Constance," said Leslie, "what have you and your old friend Clive been discussing?"

"Helen Murray," said Constance. Lord Leslie coloured.

"Dangerous ground for you, I should
think," said he, "as I know you are prejudiced against her as the successor of Agnes in Clive's affections."

"There you are mistaken," said Constance, "Clive loves Lady Agnes Scott."

Lord Leslie started.

"Do not be alarmed, Clarence," continued Constance, "he will marry Helen Murray."

"You speak to me in enigmas, Constance," said his Lordship, "which I am not clever at expounding. Pray tell me what you mean." And Clarence tried not to seem greatly interested.

Miss Davenant then succinctly made Leslie acquainted with the wonders just related to her by Clive. He was more distressed than the occasion seemed to require.

"Why, Clarence," said Constance, "I did not think you would have taken this affair so much to heart. Is it for Agnes or Clive you feel thus acutely?"
"For both, for all," said Leslie, covering his face with his hand and laying his head upon the table.

Constance was anxious to console her lover, and said,

"I am sure, Clarence, that Agnes will be much happier than she has lately been, when she knows Clive is not the base hypocrite she imagined him to be. If she can recover her good opinion of him, she will recover her spirits. It was her belief in his want of principle, that has so distressed her."

"I did not know that Agnes had any reason to think so ill of Clive," said Leslie. "I supposed his only fault was, his being in love with Miss Murray; and how natural."

And his Lordship's animated tone assured Constance that she had succeeded in satisfying Clarence that things were not so bad as he had imagined. She now said, "I cannot think, Leslie, how you came to fancy Lord Clive was in
love with Helen Murray, for *fancy* it must have been, as he totally denies it. And, that very day at the dinner table at Pemberton Castle, Clive had professed to Agnes that his very soul was devoted to her.”

“I don’t know, indeed,” replied Leslie. “My ears, my eyes, confirmed me in the opinion. I only wish I had kept it to myself.”

“Helen would have lost a husband then,” said Constance.

“Perhaps not,” observed Clarence, but he immediately remembered he could not explain himself honestly, so he added. “Clive would certainly, sooner or later, have married Miss Murray, depend upon it, Constance. Agnes he cannot have, for, first cousins they must always be, and Miss Murray's beauty would have secured her Clive in the end. So really I hope I have not done much mischief. But why did
Agnes believe me, when Clive's professions so boldly contradicted me?"

"Because she agrees with me in thinking that professions are not realities, and are always to be doubted," said Constance.

"Do you still doubt me then, Constance?" asked Clarence.

"I ought not, certainly," she replied. "And yet I shall be glad when to-morrow is over."

"On my poor mother's account, so shall I," said Leslie. "It will be very exciting for her. But where are all the party, Constance? I want to talk to Agnes, and to ask her forgiveness; for, assuredly, I am the cause of much unhappiness to her. You say Clive still loves her. If so, I pity Helen from my heart. She is the great sacrifice after all."

"If Miss Murray were in different circumstances," observed Constance, "I should say that Clive had better
be candid with her, and tell her everything."

"What are the circumstances then," asked Clarence, "that make it desirable for her to marry a man who loves another?"

"Oh, she has lost the whole of her little fortune, and she is now dependant on her aunt, who has next to nothing," said Constance.

"Poor, poor Helen," exclaimed Clarence. "How deserving of a better fate. But tell me, Constance, where and when did you hear all this? Why have you not mentioned it to me?"

"I did not name it," said Miss Davenant, "because I had no idea you were interested in it. I did not even know that you were acquainted with Mrs. Melbourne, and Miss Murray I was sure you had scarcely seen."

Lord Leslie appeared somewhat confused. Constance went on, seemingly not noticing it. "Lady Dolman mentioned the affair to me when she was
staying here some time ago; and she also told me that she did not believe Miss Murray cared for Mr. Clive, for she had always said she did not to her; and they were very intimate.”

“Is then Helen Murray sacrificing herself for an establishment? I cannot believe it,” said Leslie.

“Nay, my Lord,” said Constance, with evident pique, “that is not the fair way of putting it. If Miss Murray is making a sacrifice at all, it is rather for a living than an establishment; and, as men generally marry for convenience, why may not poor women be allowed the same privilege? But I have only Lady Dolman’s word for it; and perhaps Miss Murray is as disinterested in the business as even you can desire, Lord Leslie. At all events, your cousin is satisfied that she loves him, and he intends to keep to his engagement.”

“It is a strange business, at all events,” said Leslie.
"And seems to affect you strangely, I think," observed Miss Davenant.

"It does interest me, certainly," said Leslie. "I would give much to know if Miss Murray really loves Clive. I always wondered how he gained his influence."

"Upon my word, Clarence," said Constance, "I see nothing very astonishing in a handsome highly connected young man, with fortune and wits too, making an impression on a young girl who has seen little of the world, and who has neither birth nor fortune."

"You are mistaken, Constance," hastily interrupted Leslie. Miss Murray is very well connected; and, as to fortune, few women have that."

Constance spoke not. She now almost felt sure that Lord Leslie had some peculiar interest in Helen, beyond her connection with Clive, and she felt a pang of jealousy. She thought of Helen's excessive beauty, which had so struck her, the only time she had
seen her, in the Norman costume, at the Deerfold fancy ball. She remembered her own words to Leslie on that occasion, "I could almost excuse your falling in love there," alluding to Helen as she passed before them. Had Lord Leslie, then, been taken with her beauty? Had he sought her after she had left Deerfold? Worlds would she have given to know. She determined to ask Agnes. Then, the thought struck her, was it for Helen Murray he had risked his life in a duel? The suspense was madness. The reality could not be more terrible. She abruptly said—"I know all, now, Clarence; Helen Murray is the secret fair one for whom you challenged Sir Trevor Dolman."

Leslie turned very pale.

"You need not deny it, Lord Leslie, your countenance betrays you," continued Constance. "I release you, Clarence, from your vows, though on the eve of their accomplishment; only have the courage to
be honest, and let there be no more unhappy mistakes. You had better not marry me, Leslie, than make me miserable afterwards," and poor Constance wept.

"What strange fancies are you conjuring up to distress yourself and me?" said Leslie.

"Tell me then," demanded Constance, "that Helen had no part in the duel."

Clarence hesitated. He could not pronounce a lie,—that was impossible; and he saw that nothing short of that, would answer his purpose: so he determined to speak the truth, and he could not for a moment suppose that Miss Davenant would not be convinced that he had acted as any other man would have done in similar circumstances.

He told her all. "And now Constance," he said, "are you satisfied that I could not have done less?"

To rescue a woman from insult, is always right. "Lord Leslie," said she, "and I should have been ashamed of you, had
you hesitated. But why you should have gone in search of an adventure at the instigation of that vulgar woman, Mrs. Brown, unless the very name of Helen was all powerful; or why you have so scrupulously refused to mention Miss Murray's name, unless you feel conscious it is interesting to you, I cannot understand; nor do I wish for an explanation, Leslie. Here let us drop the subject, now and for ever; perhaps I am foolish, and expect a devotion from you Clarence, which only beauty could ensure. I will try to be satisfied." and she held out her hand to him, "and not be too exacting; and, as Miss Murray will now certainly be thrown much with us, I hope to like her, and I also hope not to be jealous of your admiration of her beauty. Do you forgive me my pettishness, Leslie?"

"Forgive you, Constance," echoed Leslie. "Can I be anything but flattered by such evidence of your regard for me?" and he kissed the fair hand he held in his.
Lord Davenant now joined them, and presently Lord Moreton and Clive. Agnes did not make her appearance again; she had had an interview with her cousin, and, though it had been a very trying one, she felt much happier than she had done for months before, and she assured Clive, that now he was restored to her good opinion and friendship, and she should, ere long, be able to rejoice in his happiness, though she had not been allowed to form it.

Clive assured her of his unalterable affection, and he only hoped that time would allow him to meet her as a friend and cousin; and that in marrying Helen he should find his own happiness, and secure that of his bride. And so they parted.

The evening had drawn to a close, and the clock announced the hour of midnight. Lord Clive bade adieu to his relations, and the Davenants, as he meant to leave the Castle at five in the morning; and, as he shook hands with
Leslie at the door of his room, he said
"I wish you every happiness, Clarence. You are a lucky fellow to have secured your first and only love."

"And you, Henry, are not less lucky," said Leslie, to have won the affections of Miss Murray, for your second love. Fail not to remember me kindly to her; and pray, Clive, do not undervalue the treasure you have secured. Good night.

And the cousins parted. Lord Clive to dream of Agnes, and to awake with the thought of Helen, whom he was hastening to see. And Lord Leslie, to dream of no one, for he could not sleep.

His heart was Helen Murray's, though he arose the next morning, unrefreshed, to give his hand to Constance Davenant. And now to return to our heroine at Mayfield Cottage.

END OF VOL. II.