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BEAUCHAMP'S CAREER

By George Meredith

1897

BOOK 6.

CHAPTER XLII

THE TWO PASSIONS

The foggy February night refreshed his head, and the business of fetching the luggage from the hotel--a commission that necessitated the delivery of his card and some very commanding language--kept his mind in order. Subsequently he drove to his cousin Baskelett's Club, where he left a short note to say the house was engaged for the night and perhaps a week further. Concise, but sufficient: and he stated a hope to his cousin that he would not be inconvenienced. This was courteous.

He had taken a bed at Renee's hotel, after wresting her boxes from the vanquished hotel proprietor, and lay there, hearing the clear sound of every little sentence of hers during the absence of Rosamund: her 'Adieu,' and the strange 'Do you think so?' and 'I know where I am; I scarcely know more.' Her eyes and their darker lashes, and the fitful little sensitive dimples of a smile without joy, came with her voice, but hardened to an aspect unlike her. Not a word could he recover of what she had spoken before Rosamund's intervention. He fancied she must have related details of her journey. Especially there must have been mention, he thought, of her drive to the station from Tourdestelle; and this flashed on him the scene of his ride to the chateau, and the meeting her on the road, and the white light on the branching river, and all that was Renee in the spirit of the place she had abandoned for him, believing in him. She had proved that she believed in him. What in the name of sanity had been the meaning of his language? and what was it between them that arrested him and caused him to mumble absurdly of 'doing best,' when in fact he was her bondman, rejoiced to be so, by his pledged word? and when she, for some reason that he was sure she had stated, though he could recollect no more than the formless hideousness of it, was debarred from returning to Tourdestelle?

He tossed in his bed as over a furnace, in the extremity of perplexity of one accustomed to think himself ever demonstrably in the right, and now with his whole nature in insurrection against that legitimate claim. It led him to accuse her of a want of passionate warmth, in her not having supplicated and upbraided him--not behaving theatrically, in fine, as the ranting pen has made us expect of emergent ladies that they will naturally do. Concerning himself, he thought commendingly, a tear would have overcome him. She had not wept. The kaleidoscope was shaken in his fragmentary mind, and she appeared thrice adorable for this noble composure, he brutish.

Conscience and reason had resolved to a dead weight in him, like an inanimate force, governing his acts despite the man, while he was with Renee. Now his wishes and waverings conjured up a semblance of a conscience and much reason to assure him that he had done foolishly as well as unkindly, most unkindly: that he was even the ghastly spectacle of a creature attempting to be more than he can be. Are we never to embrace our inclinations? Are the laws regulating an old dry man like his teacher and guide to be the same for the young and vigorous?

Is a good gift to be refused? And this was his first love! The brilliant Renee, many-hued as a tropic bird! his lady of shining grace, with her sole fault of want of courage devotedly amended! his pupil, he might say, of whom he had foretold that she must come to such a pass, at the same time prefixing his fidelity. And he was handing her over knowingly to one kind of wretchedness--'son amour, mon ami,' shot through him, lighting up the gulfs of a mind in wreck;--and one kind of happiness could certainly be promised her!

All these and innumerable other handsome pleadings of the simulacra of the powers he had set up to rule, were crushed at daybreak by the realities in a sense of weight that pushed him mechanically on. He telegraphed to Roland, and mentally gave chase to the message to recall it. The slumberer roused in darkness by the relentless insane-seeming bell which hales him to duty, melts at the charms of sleep, and feels that logic is with him in his preference of his pillow; but the tireless revolving world outside, nature's pitiless antagonist, has hung one of its balances about him, and his actions are directed by the state of the scales, wherein duty weighs deep and desireability swings like a pendant doll: so he throws on his harness, astounded, till his blood quickens with work, at the round of sacrifices demanded of nature: which is indeed curious considering what we are taught here and there as to the infallibility of our august mother. Well, the world of humanity had done this for Beauchamp. His afflicted historian is compelled to fling his net among prosaic similitudes for an illustration of one thus degradedly in its grip. If he had been off with his love like the rover! why, then the Muse would have loosened her lap like May showering flower-buds, and we might have knocked great nature up from her sleep to embellish his desperate proceedings with hurricanes to be danced over, to say nothing of imitative spheres dashing out into hurly-burly after his example.

Conscious rectitude, too, after the pattern of the well-behaved AEneas

quitting the fair bosom of Carthage in obedience to the Gods, for an example to his Roman progeny, might have stiffened his backbone and put a crown upon his brows. It happened with him that his original training rather imposed the idea that he was a figure to be derided. The approval of him by the prudent was a disgust, and by the pious tasteless. He had not any consolation in reverting to Dr. Shrapnel's heavy Puritanism. On the contrary, such a general proposition as that of the sage of Bevisham could not for a moment stand against the pathetic special case of Renee: and as far as Beauchamp's active mind went, he was for demanding that Society should take a new position in morality, considerably broader, and adapted to very special cases.

Nevertheless he was hardly grieved in missing Renee at Rosamund's breakfast-table. Rosamund informed him that Madame de Rouaillout's door was locked. Her particular news for him was of a disgraceful alarum raised by Captain Baskelett in the night, to obtain admission; and of an interview she had with him in the early morning, when he subjected her to great insolence. Beauchamp's attention was drawn to her repetition of the phrase 'mistress of the house.' However, she did him justice in regard to Renee, and thoroughly entered into the fiction of Renee's visit to her as her guest: he passed over everything else.

To stop the mouth of a scandal-monger, he drove full speed to Cecil's Club, where he heard that the captain had breakfasted and had just departed for Romfrey Castle. He followed to the station. The train had started. So mischief was rolling in that direction.

Late at night Rosamund was allowed to enter the chill unlighted chamber, where the unhappy lady had been lying for hours in the gloom of a London Winter's daylight and gaslight.

'Madame de Rouaillout is indisposed with headache,' was her report to Beauchamp.

The conventional phraseology appeased him, though he saw his grief behind it.

Presently he asked if Renee had taken food.

'No: you know what a headache is,' Rosamund replied.

It is true that we do not care to eat when we are in pain.

He asked if she looked ill.

'She will not have lights in the room,' said Rosamund.

Piecemeal he gained the picture of Renee in an image of the death within which welcomed a death without.

Rosamund was impatient with him for speaking of medical aid. These men! She remarked very honestly:

'Oh, no; doctors are not needed.'

'Has she mentioned me?'

'Not once.'

'Why do you swing your watch-chain, ma'am?' cried Beauchamp, bounding off his chair.

He reproached her with either pretending to indifference or feeling it; and then insisted on his privilege of going up-stairs-accompanied by her, of course; and then it was to be only to the door; then an answer to a message was to satisfy him.

'Any message would trouble her: what message would you send?' Rosamund asked him.

The weighty and the trivial contended; no fitting message could be thought of.

'You are unused to real suffering--that is for women!--and want to be doing instead of enduring,' said Rosamund.

She was beginning to put faith in the innocence of these two mortally sick lovers. Beauchamp's outcries against himself gave her the shadows of their story. He stood in tears--a thing to see to believe of Nevil Beauchamp; and plainly he did not know it, or else he would have taken her advice to him to leave the house at an hour that was long past midnight. Her method for inducing him to go was based on her intimate knowledge of him: she made as if to soothe and kiss him compassionately.

In the morning there was a flying word from Roland, on his way to England. Rosamund tempered her report of Renee by saying of her, that she was very quiet. He turned to the window.

'Look, what a climate ours is!' Beauchamp abused the persistent fog. 'Dull, cold, no sky, a horrible air to breathe! This is what she has come to! Has she spoken of me yet?'

'No.'

'Is she dead silent?'

'She answers, if I speak to her.'

'I believe, ma'am,' said Beauchamp, 'that we are the coldest-hearted people in Europe.'

Rosamund did not defend us, or the fog. Consequently nothing was left for him to abuse but himself. In that she tried to moderate him, and drew forth a torrent of self-vituperation, after which he sank into the speechless misery he had been evading; until sophistical fancy, another evolution of his nature, persuaded him that Roland, seeing Renee, would

for love's sake be friendly to them.

'I should have told you, Nevil, by the way, that the earl is dead,' said Rosamund.

'Her brother will be here to-day; he can't be later than the evening,' said Beauchamp. 'Get her to eat, ma'am; you must. Command her to eat. This terrible starvation!'

'You ate nothing yourself, Nevil, all day yesterday.'

He surveyed the table. 'You have your cook in town, I see. Here's a breakfast to feed twenty hungry families in Spitalfields. Where does the mass of meat go? One excess feeds another. You're overdone with servants. Gluttony, laziness, and pilfering come of your host of unmanageable footmen and maids; you stuff them, and wonder they're idle and immoral. If--I suppose I must call him the earl now, or Colonel Halkett, or any one of the army of rich men, hear of an increase of the income-tax, or some poor wretch hints at a sliding scale of taxation, they yell as if they were thumb-screwed: but five shillings in the pound goes to the kitchen as a matter of course--to puff those pompous idiots! and the parsons, who should be preaching against this sheer waste of food and perversion of the strength of the nation, as a public sin, are maundering about schism. There's another idle army! Then we have artists, authors, lawyers, doctors--the honourable professions! all hanging upon wealth, all ageing the rich, and all bearing upon labour! it's incubus on incubus. In point of fact, the rider's too heavy for the horse in England.'

He began to nibble at bread.

Rosamund pushed over to him a plate of the celebrated Steynham pie, of her own invention, such as no douse in the county of Sussex could produce or imitate.

'What would you have the parsons do?' she said.

'Take the rich by the throat and show them in the kitchen-mirror that they're swine running down to the sea with a devil in them.' She had set him off again, but she had enticed him to eating. 'Pooh! it has all been said before. Stones are easier to move than your English. May I be forgiven for saying it! an invasion is what they want to bring them to their senses. I'm sick of the work. Why should I be denied--am I to kill the woman I love that I may go on hammering at them? Their idea of liberty is, an evasion of public duty. Dr. Shrapnel's right--it's a money-logged Island! Men like the Earl of Romfrey, who have never done work in their days except to kill bears and birds, I say they're stifled by wealth: and he at least would have made an Admiral of mark, or a General: not of much value, but useful in case of need. But he, like a pretty woman, was under no obligation to contribute more than an ornamental person to the common good. As to that, we count him by tens of thousands now, and his footmen and maids by hundreds of thousands. The rich love the nation through their possessions; otherwise they have

no country. If they loved the country they would care for the people.
Their hearts are eaten up by property. I am bidden to hold my tongue
because I have no knowledge. When men who have this "knowledge" will go
down to the people, speak to them, consult and argue with them, and come
into suitable relations with them--I don't say of lords and retainers,
but of knowers and doers, leaders and followers--out of consideration for
public safety, if not for the common good, I shall hang back gladly;
though I won't hear misstatements. My fault is, that I am too moderate.
I should respect myself more if I deserved their hatred. This flood of
luxury, which is, as Dr. Shrapnel says, the body's drunkenness and the
soul's death, cries for execration. I'm too moderate. But I shall quit
the country: I've no place here.'

Rosamund ahemed. 'France, Nevil? I should hardly think that France
would please you, in the present state of things over there.'

Half cynically, with great satisfaction, she had watched him fretting at
the savoury morsels of her pie with a fork like a sparrow-beak during the
monologue that would have been so dreary to her but for her appreciation
of the wholesome effect of the letting off of steam, and her admiration
of the fire of his eyes. After finishing his plate he had less the look
of a ship driving on to reef--some of his images of the country. He
called for claret and water, sighing as he munched bread in vast
portions, evidently conceiving that to eat unbuttered bread was to
abstain from luxury. He praised passingly the quality of the bread. It
came from Steynham, and so did the, milk and cream, the butter, chicken
and eggs. He was good enough not to object to the expenditure upon the
transmission of the accustomed dainties. Altogether the gradual act of
nibbling had conduced to his eating remarkably well-royally. Rosamund's
more than half-cynical ideas of men, and her custom of wringing unanimous
verdicts from a jury of temporary impressions, inclined her to imagine
him a lover that had not to be so very much condoled with, and a
politician less alarming in practice than in theory:--somewhat a
gentleman of domestic tirades on politics: as it is observed of your
generous young Radical of birth and fortune, that he will become on the
old high road to a round Conservatism.

He pitched one of the morning papers to the floor in disorderly sheets,
muttering: 'So they're at me!'

'Is Dr. Shrapnel better?' she asked. 'I hold to a good appetite as a
sign of a man's recovery.'

Beauchamp was confronting the fog at the window. He swung round: 'Dr.
Shrapnel is better. He has a particularly clever young female cook.'

'Ah! then . . .'

'Yes, then, naturally! He would naturally hasten to recover to partake
of the viands, ma'am.'

Rosamund murmured of her gladness that he should be able to enjoy them.

'Oddly enough, he is not an eater of meat,' said Beauchamp.

'A vegetarian!'

'I beg you not to mention the fact to my lord. You see, you yourself can scarcely pardon it. He does not exclude flesh from his table. Blackburn Tuckham dined there once. "You are a thorough revolutionist, Dr. Shrapnel," he observed. The doctor does not exclude wine, but he does not drink it. Poor Tuckham went away entirely opposed to a Radical he could not even meet as a boon-fellow. I begged him not to mention the circumstances, as I have begged you. He pledged me his word to that effect solemnly; he correctly felt that if the truth were known, there would be further cause for the reprobation of the man who had been his host.'

'And that poor girl, Nevil?'

'Miss Denham? She contracted the habit of eating meat at school, and drinking wine in Paris, and continues it, occasionally. Now run upstairs. Insist on food. Inform Madame de Rouaillout that her brother M. le comte de Croisnel will soon be here, and should not find her ill. Talk to her as you women can talk. Keep the blinds down in her room; light a dozen wax-candles. Tell her I have no thought but of her. It's a lie: of no woman but of her: that you may say. But that you can't say. You can say I am devoted--ha, what stuff! I've only to open my mouth!--say nothing of me: let her think the worst--unless it comes to a question of her life: then be a merciful good woman . . .' He squeezed her fingers, communicating his muscular tremble to her sensitive woman's frame, and electrically convincing her that he was a lover.

She went up-stairs. In ten minutes she descended, and found him pacing up and down the hall. 'Madame de Rouaillout is much the same,' she said. He nodded, looked up the stairs, and about for his hat and gloves, drew on the gloves, fixed the buttons, blinked at his watch, and settled his hat as he was accustomed to wear it, all very methodically, and talking rapidly, but except for certain precise directions, which were not needed by so careful a housekeeper and nurse as Rosamund was known to be, she could not catch a word of meaning. He had some appointment, it seemed; perhaps he was off for a doctor--a fresh instance of his masculine incapacity to understand patient endurance. After opening the housedoor, and returning to the foot of the stairs, listening and sighing, he disappeared.

It struck her that he was trying to be two men at once.

The litter of newspaper sheets in the morning-room brought his exclamation to her mind: 'They're at me!' Her eyes ran down the columns, and were seized by the print of his name in large type. A leading article was devoted to Commander's Beauchamp's recent speech delivered in the great manufacturing town of Gunningham, at a meeting under the presidency of the mayor, and his replies to particular questions addressed to him; one being, what right did he conceive himself to have to wear the Sovereign's uniform in professing Republican opinions?

Rosamund winced for her darling during her first perusal of the article. It was of the sarcastically caressing kind, masterly in ease of style, as the flourish of the executioner well may be with poor Bare-back hung up to a leisurely administration of the scourge. An allusion to 'Jack on shore' almost persuaded her that his uncle Everard had inspired the writer of the article. Beauchamp's reply to the question of his loyalty was not quoted: he was, however, complimented on his frankness. At the same time he was assured that his error lay in a too great proneness to make distinctions, and that there was no distinction between sovereign and country in a loyal and contented land, which could thank him for gallant services in war, while taking him for the solitary example to be cited at the present period of the evils of a comparatively long peace.

'Doubtless the tedium of such a state to a man of the temperament of the gallant commander,' etc., the termination of the article was indulgent. Rosamund recurred to the final paragraph for comfort, and though she loved Beauchamp, the test of her representative feminine sentiment regarding his political career, when personal feeling on his behalf had subsided, was, that the writer of the article must have received an intimation to deal both smartly and forbearingly with the offender: and from whom but her lord? Her notions of the conduct of the Press were primitive. In a summary of the article Beauchamp was treated as naughty boy, formerly brave boy, and likely by-and-by to be good boy. Her secret heart would have spoken similarly, with more emphasis on the flattering terms.

A telegram arrived from her lord. She was bidden to have the house clear for him by noon of the next day.

How could that be done?

But to write blankly to inform the Earl of Romfrey that he was excluded from his own house was another impossibility.

'Hateful man!' she apostrophized Captain Baskelett, and sat down, supporting her chin in a prolonged meditation.

The card of a French lady, bearing the name of Madame d'Auffray, was handed to her.

Beauchamp had gone off to his friend Lydiard, to fortify himself in his resolve to reply to that newspaper article by eliciting counsel to the contrary. Phrase by phrase he fought through the first half of his composition of the reply against Lydiard, yielding to him on a point or two of literary judgement, only the more vehemently to maintain his ideas of discretion, which were, that he would not take shelter behind a single subterfuge; that he would try this question nakedly, though he should stand alone; that he would stake his position on it, and establish his right to speak his opinions: and as for unseasonable times, he protested it was the cry of a gorged middle-class, frightened of further action, and making snug with compromise. Would it be a seasonable time when there was uproar? Then it would be a time to be silent on such themes: they could be discussed calmly now, and without danger; and whether he

was hunted or not, he cared nothing. He declined to consider the peculiar nature of Englishmen: they must hear truth or perish.

Knowing the difficulty once afflicting Beauchamp in the art of speaking on politics tersely, Lydiard was rather astonished at his well-delivered cannonade; and he fancied that his modesty had been displaced by the new acquirement; not knowing the nervous fever of his friend's condition, for which the rattle of speech was balm, and contention a native element, and the assumption of truth a necessity. Beauchamp hugged his politics like some who show their love of the pleasures of life by taking to them angrily. It was all he had: he had given up all for it. He forced Lydiard to lay down his pen and walk back to the square with him, and went on arguing, interjecting, sneering, thumping the old country, raising and oversetting her, treating her alternately like a disrespected grandmother, and like a woman anciently beloved; as a dead lump, and as a garden of seeds; reviewing prominent political men, laughing at the dwarf-giants; finally casting anchor on a Mechanics' Institute that he had recently heard of, where working men met weekly for the purpose of reading the British poets.

'That's the best thing I've heard of late,' he said, shaking Lydiard's hand on the door-steps.

'Ah! You're Commander Beauchamp; I think I know you. I've seen you on a platform,' cried a fresh-faced man in decent clothes, halting on his way along the pavement; 'and if you were in your uniform, you damned Republican dog! I'd strip you with my own hands, for the disloyal scoundrel you are, with your pimping Republicanism and capsizing everything in a country like Old England. It's the cat-o'-nine-tails you want, and the bosen to lay on; and I'd do it myself. And mind me, when next I catch sight of you in blue and gold lace, I'll compel you to show cause why you wear it, and prove your case, or else I'll make a Cupid of you, and no joke about it. I don't pay money for a nincompoop to outrage my feelings of respect and loyalty, when he's in my pay, d' ye hear? You're in my pay: and you do your duty, or I 'll kick ye out of it. It's no empty threat. You look out for your next public speech, if it's anywhere within forty mile of London. Get along.'

With a scowl, and a very ugly 'yah!' worthy of cannibal jaws, the man passed off.

Beauchamp kept eye on him. 'What class does a fellow like that come of?'

'He's a harmless enthusiast,' said Lydiard. 'He has been reading the article, and has got excited over it.'

'I wish I had the fellow's address.' Beauchamp looked wistfully at Lydiard, but he did not stimulate the generous offer to obtain it for him. Perhaps it was as well to forget the fellow.

'You see the effect of those articles,' he said.

'You see what I mean by unseasonable times,' Lydiard retorted.

’He didn’t talk like a tradesman,’ Beauchamp mused.

’He may be one, for all that. It’s better to class him as an enthusiast.’

’An enthusiast!’ Beauchamp stamped: ’for what?’

’For the existing order of things; for his beef and ale; for the titles he is accustomed to read in the papers. You don’t study your countrymen.’

’I’d study that fellow, if I had the chance.’

’You would probably find him one of the emptiest, with a rather worse temper than most of them.’

Beauchamp shook Lydiard’s hand, saying, ’The widow?’

’There’s no woman like her!’

’Well, now you’re free--why not? I think I put one man out of the field.’

’Too early! Besides--’

’Repeat that, and you may have to say too late.’

’When shall you go down to Bevisham?’

’When? I can’t tell: when I’ve gone through fire. There never was a home for me like the cottage, and the old man, and the dear good girl--the best of girls! if you hadn’t a little spoilt her with your philosophy of the two sides of the case.’

’I’ve not given her the brains.’

’She’s always doubtful of doing, doubtful of action: she has no will. So she is fatalistic, and an argument between us ends in her submitting, as if she must submit to me, because I’m overbearing, instead of accepting the fact.’

’She feels your influence.’

’She’s against the publication of THE DAWN--for the present. It’s an "unseasonable time." I argue with her: I don’t get hold of her mind a bit; but at last she says, "very well." She has your head.’

And you have her heart, Lydiard could have rejoined.

They said good-bye, neither of them aware of the other’s task of endurance.

As they were parting, Beauchamp perceived his old comrade Jack Wilmore walking past.

'Jack!' he called.

Wilmore glanced round. 'How do you do, Beauchamp?'

'Where are you off to, Jack?'

'Down to the Admiralty. I'm rather in a hurry; I have an appointment.'

'Can't you stop just a minute?'

'I'm afraid I can't. Good morning.'

It was incredible; but this old friend, the simplest heart alive, retreated without a touch of his hand, and with a sorely wounded air.

'That newspaper article appears to have been generally read,' Beauchamp said to Lydiard, who answered:

'The article did not put the idea of you into men's minds, but gave tongue to it: you may take it for an instance of the sagacity of the Press.'

'You wouldn't take that man and me to have been messmates for years! Old Jack Wilmore! Don't go, Lydiard.'

Lydiard declared that he was bound to go: he was engaged to read Italian for an hour with Mrs. Wardour-Devereux.

'Then go, by all means,' Beauchamp dismissed him.

He felt as if he had held a review of his friends and enemies on the door-step, and found them of one colour. If it was an accident befalling him in a London square during a space of a quarter of an hour, what of the sentiments of universal England? Lady Barbara's elopement with Lord Alfred last year did not rouse much execration; hardly worse than gossip and compassion. Beauchamp drank a great deal of bitterness from his reflections.

They who provoke huge battles, and gain but lame victories over themselves, insensibly harden to the habit of distilling sour thoughts from their mischances and from most occurrences. So does the world they combat win on them.

'For,' says Dr. Shrapnel, 'the world and nature, which are opposed in relation to our vital interests, each agrees to demand of us a perfect victory, on pain otherwise of proving it a stage performance; and the victory over the world, as over nature, is over self: and this victory lies in yielding perpetual service to the world, and none to nature: for the world has to be wrought out, nature to be subdued.'

The interior of the house was like a change of elements to Beauchamp. He had never before said to himself, 'I have done my best, and I am beaten!' Outside of it, his native pugnacity had been stimulated; but here, within the walls where Renee lay silently breathing, barely breathing, it might be dying, he was overcome, and left it to circumstance to carry him to a conclusion. He went up-stairs to the drawing-room, where he beheld Madame d'Auffray in conversation with Rosamund.

'I was assured by Madame la Comtesse that I should see you to-day,' the French lady said as she swam to meet him; 'it is a real pleasure': and pressing his hand she continued, 'but I fear you will be disappointed of seeing my sister. She would rashly try your climate at its worst period. Believe me, I do not join in decrying it, except on her account: I could have forewarned her of an English Winter and early Spring. You know her impetuosity; suddenly she decided on accepting the invitation of Madame la Comtesse; and though I have no fears of her health, she is at present a victim of the inclement weather.'

'You have seen her, madame?' said Beauchamp. So well had the clever lady played the dupe that he forgot there was a part for him to play. Even the acquiescence of Rosamund in the title of countess bewildered him.

'Madame d'Auffray has been sitting for an hour with Madame de Rouaillout,' said Rosamund.

He spoke of Roland's coming.

'Ah?' said Madame d'Auffray, and turned to Rosamund: 'you have determined to surprise us: then you will have a gathering of the whole family in your hospitable house, Madame la Comtesse!

'If M. la Marquis will do it that honour, madame!

'My brother is in London,' Madame d'Auffray said to Beauchamp.

The shattering blow was merited by one who could not rejoice that he had acted rightly.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE EARL OF ROMFREY AND THE COUNTESS

An extraordinary telegraphic message, followed by a still more extraordinary letter the next morning, from Rosamund Culling, all but interdicted the immediate occupation of his house in town to Everard, now Earl of Romfrey. She begged him briefly not to come until after the funeral, and proposed to give him good reasons for her request at their meeting. 'I repeat, I pledge myself to satisfy you on this point,' she wrote. Her tone was that of one of your heroic women of history refusing

to surrender a fortress.

Everard's wrath was ever of a complexion that could suffer postponements without his having to fear an abatement of it. He had no business to transact in London, and he had much at the Castle, so he yielded himself up to his new sensations, which are not commonly the portion of gentlemen of his years. He anticipated that Nevil would at least come down to the funeral, but there was no appearance of him, nor a word to excuse his absence. Cecil was his only supporter. They walked together between the double ranks of bare polls of the tenantry and peasantry, resembling in a fashion old Froissart engravings the earl used to dote on in his boyhood, representing bodies of manacled citizens, whose humbled heads looked like nuts to be cracked, outside the gates of captured French towns, awaiting the disposition of their conqueror, with his banner above him and prancing knights around. That was a glory of the past. He had no successor. The thought was chilling; the solitariness of childlessness to an aged man, chief of a most ancient and martial House, and proud of his blood, gave him the statue's outlook on a desert, and made him feel that he was no more than a whirl of the dust, settling to the dust.

He listened to the parson curiously and consentingly. We are ashes. Ten centuries had come to an end in him to prove the formula correct. The chronicle of the House would state that the last Earl of Romfrey left no heir.

Cecil was a fine figure walking beside him. Measured by feet, he might be a worthy holder of great lands. But so heartily did the earl despise this nephew that he never thought of trying strength with the fellow, and hardly cared to know what his value was, beyond his immediate uses as an instrument to strike with. Beauchamp of Romfrey had been his dream, not Baskelett: and it increased his disgust of Beauchamp that Baskelett should step forward as the man. No doubt Cecil would hunt the county famously: he would preserve game with the sleepless eye of a General of the Jesuits. These things were to be considered.

Two days after the funeral Lord Romfrey proceeded to London. He was met at the station by Rosamund, and informed that his house was not yet vacated by the French family.

'And where have you arranged for me to go, ma'am?' he asked her complacently.

She named an hotel where she had taken rooms for him.

He nodded, and was driven to the hotel, saying little on the road.

As she expected, he was heavily armed against her and Nevil.

'You're the slave of the fellow, ma'am. You are so infatuated that you second his amours, in my house. I must wait for a clearance, it seems.'

He cast a comical glance of disapprobation on the fittings of the hotel apartment, abhorring gilt.

’They leave us the day after to-morrow,’ said Rosamund, out of breath with nervousness at the commencement of the fray, and skipping over the opening ground of a bold statement of facts. ’Madame de Rouaillout has been unwell. She is not yet recovered; she has just risen. Her sister-in-law has nursed her. Her husband seems much broken in health; he is perfect on the points of courtesy.’

’That is lucky, ma’am.’

’Her brother, Nevil’s comrade in the war, was there also.’

’Who came first?’

’My lord, you have only heard Captain Baskelett’s version of the story. She has been my guest since the first day of her landing in England. There cannot possibly be an imputation on her.’

’Ma’am, if her husband manages to be satisfied, what on earth have I to do with it?’

’I am thinking of Nevil, my lord.’

’You’re never thinking of any one else, ma’am.’

’He sleeps here, at this hotel. He left the house to Madame de Rouaillout. I bear witness to that.’

’You two seem to have made your preparations to stand a criminal trial.’

’It is pure truth, my lord.’

’Do you take me to be anxious about the fellow’s virtue?’

’She is a lady who would please you.’

’A scandal in my house does not please me.’

’The only approach to a scandal was made by Captain Baskelett.’

’A poor devil locked out of his bed on a Winter’s night hullabaloos with pretty good reason. I suppose he felt the contrast.’

’My lord, this lady did me the honour to come to me on a visit. I have not previously presumed to entertain a friend. She probably formed no estimate of my exact position.’

The earl with a gesture implied Rosamund’s privilege to act the hostess to friends.

’You invited her?’ he said.

’That is, I had told her I hoped she would come to England.’

’She expected you to be at the house in town on her arrival?’

’It was her impulse to come.’

’She came alone?’

’She may have desired to be away from her own people for a time: there may have been domestic differences. These cases are delicate.’

’This case appears to have been so delicate that you had to lock out a fourth party.’

’It is indelicate and base of Captain Baskelett to complain and to hint. Nevil had to submit to the same; and Captain Baskelett took his revenge on the housedoor and the bells. The house was visited by the police next morning.’

’Do you suspect him to have known you were inside the house that night?’

She could not say so: but hatred of Cecil urged her past the bounds of habitual reticence to put it to her lord whether he, imagining the worst, would have behaved like Cecil.

To this he did not reply, but remarked, ’I am sorry he annoyed you, ma’am.’

’It is not the annoyance to me; it is the shocking, the unmanly insolence to a lady, and a foreign lady.’

’That’s a matter between him and Nevil. I uphold him.’

’Then, my lord, I am silent.’

Silent she remained; but Lord Romfrey was also silent: and silence being a weapon of offence only when it is practised by one out of two, she had to reflect whether in speaking no further she had finished her business.

’Captain Baskelett stays at the Castle?’ she asked.

’He likes his quarters there.’

’Nevil could not go down to Romfrey, my lord. He was obliged to wait, and see, and help me to entertain, her brother and her husband.’

’Why, ma’am? But I have no objection to his making the marquis a happy husband.’

’He has done what few men would have done, that she may be a self-respecting wife.’

’The parson’s in that fellow!’ Lord Romfrey exclaimed. ’Now I have the story. She came to him, he declined the gift, and you were turned into

the curtain for them. If he had only been off with her, he would have done the country good service. Here he's a failure and a nuisance; he's a common cock-shy for the journals. I'm tired of hearing of him; he's a stench in our nostrils. He's tired of the woman.'

'He loves her.'

'Ma'am, you're hoodwinked. If he refused to have her, there 's a something he loves better. I don't believe we've bred a downright lackadaisical donkey in our family: I know him. He's not a fellow for abstract morality: I know him. It's bargain against bargain with him; I'll do him that justice. I hear he has ordered the removal of the Jersey bull from Holdesbury, and the beast is mine,' Lord Romfrey concluded in a lower key.

'Nevil has taken him.'

'Ha! pull and pull, then!'

'He contends that he is bound by a promise to give an American gentleman the refusal of the bull, and you must sign an engagement to keep the animal no longer than two years.'

'I sign no engagement. I stick to the bull.'

'Consent to see Nevil to-night, my lord.'

'When he has apologized to you, I may, ma'am.'

'Surely he did more, in requesting me to render him a service.'

'There's not a creature living that fellow wouldn't get to serve him, if he knew the trick. We should all of us be marching on London at Shrapnel's heels. The political mania is just as incurable as hydrophobia, and he's bitten. That's clear.'

'Bitten perhaps: but not mad. As you have always contended, the true case is incurable, but it is very rare: and is this one?'

'It's uncommonly like a true case, though I haven't seen him foam at the mouth, and shun water-as his mob does.'

Rosamund restrained some tears, betraying the effort to hide the moisture. 'I am no match for you, my lord. I try to plead on his behalf;--I do worse than if I were dumb. This I most earnestly say: he is the Nevil Beauchamp who fought for his country, and did not abandon her cause, though he stood there--we had it from Colonel Halkett--a skeleton: and he is the Nevil who--I am poorly paying my debt to him! --defended me from the aspersions of his cousin.'

'Boys!' Lord Romfrey ejaculated.

'It is the same dispute between them as men.'

’Have you forgotten my proposal to shield you from liars and scandalmongers?’

’Could I ever forget it?’ Rosamund appeared to come shining out of a cloud. ’Princeliest and truest gentleman, I thought you then, and I know you to be, my dear lord. I fancied I had lived the scandal down. I was under the delusion that I had grown to be past backbiting: and that no man could stand before me to insult and vilify me. But, for a woman in any so-called doubtful position, it seems that the coward will not be wanting to strike her. In quitting your service, I am able to affirm that only once during the whole term of it have I consciously overstepped the line of my duties: it was for Nevil: and Captain Baskelett undertook to defend your reputation, in consequence.’

’Has the rascal been questioning your conduct?’ The earl frowned.

’Oh, no! not questioning: he does not question, he accuses: he never doubted: and what he went shouting as a boy, is plain matter of fact to him now. He is devoted to you. It was for your sake that he desired me to keep my name from being mixed up in a scandal he foresaw the occurrence of in your house.’

’He permitted himself to sneer at you?’

’He has the art of sneering. On this occasion he wished to be direct and personal.’

’What sort of hints were they?’

Lord Romfrey strode away from her chair that the answer might be easy to her, for she was red, and evidently suffering from shame as well as indignation.

’The hints we call distinct.’ said Rosamund.

’In words?’

’In hard words.’

’Then you won’t meet Cecil?’

Such a question, and the tone of indifference in which it came, surprised and revolted her so that the unreflecting reply leapt out:

’I would rather meet a devil.’

Of how tremblingly, vehemently, and hastily she had said it, she was unaware. To her lord it was an outcry of nature, astutely touched by him to put her to proof.

He continued his long leisurely strides, nodding over his feet.

Rosamund stood up. She looked a very noble figure in her broad black-furred robe. 'I have one serious confession to make, sir.'

'What's that?' said he.

'I would avoid it, for it cannot lead to particular harm; but I have an enemy who may poison your ear in my absence. And first I resign my position. I have forfeited it.'

'Time goes forward, ma'am, and you go round. Speak to the point. Do you mean that you toss up the reins of my household?'

'I do. You trace it to Nevil immediately?'

'I do. The fellow wants to upset the country, and he begins with me.'

'You are wrong, my lord. What I have done places me at Captain Baskelett's mercy. It is too loathsome to think of: worse than the whip; worse than your displeasure. It might never be known; but the thought that it might gives me courage. You have said that to protect a woman everything is permissible. It is your creed, my lord, and because the world, I have heard you say, is unjust and implacable to women. In some cases, I think so too. In reality I followed your instructions; I mean, your example. Cheap chivalry on my part! But it pained me not a little. I beg to urge that in my defence.'

'Well, ma'am, you have tied the knot tight enough; perhaps now you'll cut it,' said the earl.

Rosamund gasped softly. 'M. le Marquis is a gentleman who, after a life of dissipation, has been reminded by bad health that he has a young and beautiful wife.'

'He dug his pit to fall into it:--he's jealous?'

She shook her head to indicate the immeasurable.

'Senile jealousy is anxious to be deceived. He could hardly be deceived so far as to imagine that Madame la Marquise would visit me, such as I am, as my guest. Knowingly or not, his very clever sister, a good woman, and a friend to husband and wife--a Frenchwoman of the purest type--gave me the title. She insisted on it, and I presumed to guess that she deemed it necessary for the sake of peace in that home.'

Lord Romfrey appeared merely inquisitive; his eyebrows were lifted in permanence; his eyes were mild.

She continued: 'They leave England in a few hours. They are not likely to return. I permitted him to address me with the title of countess.'

'Of Romfrey?' said the earl.

Rosamund bowed.

His mouth contracted. She did not expect thunder to issue from it, but she did fear to hear a sarcasm, or that she would have to endure a deadly silence: and she was gathering her own lips in imitation of his, to nerve herself for some stroke to come, when he laughed in his peculiar close-mouthed manner.

'I'm afraid you've dished yourself.'

'You cannot forgive me, my lord?'

He indulged in more of his laughter, and abruptly summoning gravity, bade her talk to him of affairs. He himself talked of the condition of the Castle, and with a certain off-hand contempt of the ladies of the family, and Cecil's father, Sir John. 'What are they to me?' said he, and he complained of having been called Last Earl of Romfrey.

'The line ends undegenerate,' said Rosamund fervidly, though she knew not where she stood.

'Ends!' quoth the earl.

'I must see Stukely,' he added briskly, and stooped to her: 'I beg you to drive me to my Club, countess.'

'Oh! sir.'

'Once a countess, always a countess!'

'But once an impostor, my lord?'

'Not always, we'll hope.'

He enjoyed this little variation in the language of comedy; letting it drop, to say: 'Be here to-morrow early. Don't chase that family away from the house. Do as you will, but not a word of Nevil to me: he's a bad mess in any man's porringer; it's time for me to claim exemption of him from mine.'

She dared not let her thoughts flow, for to think was to triumph, and possibly to be deluded. They came in copious volumes when Lord Romfrey, alighting at his Club, called to the coachman: 'Drive the countess home.'

They were not thoughts of triumph absolutely. In her cooler mind she felt that it was a bad finish of a gallant battle. Few women had risen against a tattling and pelting world so stedfastly; and would it not have been better to keep her own ground, which she had won with tears and some natural strength, and therewith her liberty, which she prized? The hateful Cecil, a reminder of whom set her cheeks burning and turned her heart to serpent, had forced her to it. So she honestly conceived, owing to the circumstance of her honestly disliking the pomps of life and not desiring to occupy any position of brilliancy. She thought assuredly of her hoard of animosity toward the scandalmongers, and of the quiet glance

she would cast behind on them, and below. That thought came as a fruit, not as a reflection.

But if ever two offending young gentlemen, nephews of a long-suffering uncle, were circumvented, undermined, and struck to earth, with one blow, here was the instance. This was accomplished by Lord Romfrey's resolution to make the lady he had learnt to esteem his countess: and more, it fixed to him for life one whom he could not bear to think of losing: and still more, it might be; but what more was unwritten on his tablets.

Rosamund failed to recollect that Everard Romfrey never took a step without seeing a combination of objects to be gained by it.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE NEPHEWS OF THE EARL, AND ANOTHER EXHIBITION OF THE TWO PASSIONS IN BEAUCHAMP

It was now the season when London is as a lighted tower to her provinces, and, among other gentlemen hurried thither by attraction, Captain Baskelett arrived. Although not a personage in the House of Commons, he was a vote; and if he never committed himself to the perils of a speech, he made himself heard. His was the part of chorus, which he performed with a fairly close imitation of the original cries of periods before parliaments were instituted, thus representing a stage in the human development besides the borough of Bevisham. He arrived in the best of moods for the emission of high-pitched vowel-sounds; otherwise in the worst of tempers. His uncle had notified an addition of his income to him at Romfrey, together with commands that he should quit the castle instantly: and there did that woman, Mistress Culling, do the honours to Nevil Beauchamp's French party. He assured Lord Palmet of his positive knowledge of the fact, incredible as the sanction of such immoral proceedings by the Earl of Romfrey must appear to that young nobleman. Additions to income are of course acceptable, but in the form of a palpable stipulation for silence, they neither awaken gratitude nor effect their purpose. Quite the contrary; they prick the moral mind to sit in judgement on the donor. It means, she fears me! Cecil confidently thought and said of the intriguing woman who managed his patron.

The town-house was open to him. Lord Romfrey was at Steynham. Cecil could not suppose that he was falling into a pit in entering it. He happened to be the favourite of the old housekeeper, who liked him for his haughtiness, which was to her thinking the sign of real English nobility, and perhaps it is the popular sign, and a tonic to the people. She raised lamentations over the shame of the locking of the door against him that awful night, declaring she had almost mustered courage to go down to him herself, in spite of Mrs. Calling's orders. The old woman lowered her voice to tell him that her official superior had permitted

the French gentleman and ladies to call her countess. This she knew for a certainty, though she knew nothing of French; but the French lady who came second brought a maid who knew English a little, and she said the very words--the countess, and said also that her party took Mrs. Culling for the Countess of Romfrey. What was more, my lord's coachman caught it up, and he called her countess, and he had a quarrel about it with the footman Kendall; and the day after a dreadful affair between them in the mews, home drives madam, and Kendall is to go up to her, and down the poor man comes, and not a word to be got out of him, but as if he had seen a ghost. 'She have such power,' Cecil's admirer concluded.

'I wager I match her,' Cecil said to himself, pulling at his wristbands and letting his lower teeth shine out. The means of matching her were not so palpable as the resolution. First he took men into his confidence. Then he touched lightly on the story to ladies, with the question, 'What ought I to do?' In consideration for the Earl of Romfrey he ought not to pass it over, he suggested. The ladies of the family urged him to go to Steynham and boldly confront the woman. He was not prepared for that. Better, it seemed to him, to blow the rumour, and make it the topic of the season, until Lord Romfrey should hear of it. Cecil had the ear of the town for a month. He was in the act of slicing the air with his right hand in his accustomed style, one evening at Lady Elsea's, to protest how vast was the dishonour done to the family by Mistress Culling, when Stukely Culbrett stopped him, saying, 'The lady you speak of is the Countess of Romfrey. I was present at the marriage.'

Cecil received the shock in the attitude of those martial figures we see wielding two wooden swords in provincial gardens to tell the disposition of the wind: abruptly abandoned by it, they stand transfixed, one sword aloft, the other at their heels. The resemblance extended to his astonished countenance. His big chest heaved. Like many another wounded giant before him, he experienced the insufficiency of interjections to solace pain. For them, however, the rocks were handy to fling, the trees to uproot; heaven's concave resounded companionably to their bellowings. Relief of so concrete a kind is not to be obtained in crowded London assemblies.

'You are jesting?--you are a jester,' he contrived to say.

'It was a private marriage, and I was a witness,' replied Stukely.

'Lord Romfrey has made an honest woman of her, has he?'

'A peeress, you mean.'

Cecil bowed. 'Exactly. I am corrected. I mean a peeress.'

He got out of the room with as high an air as he could command, feeling as if a bar of iron had flattened his head.

Next day it was intimated to him by one of the Steynham servants that apartments were ready for him at the residence of the late earl: Lord Romfrey's house was about to be occupied by the Countess of Romfrey.

Cecil had to quit, and he chose to be enamoured of that dignity of sulking so seductive to the wounded spirit of man.

Rosamund, Countess of Romfrey, had worse to endure from Beauchamp. He indeed came to the house, and he went through the formalities of congratulation, but his opinion of her step was unconcealed, that she had taken it for the title. He distressed her by reviving the case of Dr. Shrapnel, as though it were a matter of yesterday, telling her she had married a man with a stain on him; she should have exacted the Apology as a nuptial present; ay, and she would have done it if she had cared for the earl's honour or her own. So little did he understand men! so tenacious was he of his ideas! She had almost forgotten the case of Dr. Shrapnel, and to see it shooting up again in the new path of her life was really irritating.

Rosamund did not defend herself.

'I am very glad you have come, Nevil,' she said; 'your uncle holds to the ceremony. I may be of real use to you now; I wish to be.'

'You have only to prove it,' said he. 'If you can turn his mind to marriage, you can send him to Bevisham.'

'My chief thought is to serve you.'

'I know it is, I know it is,' he rejoined with some fervour. 'You have served me, and made me miserable for life, and rightly. Never mind, all's well while the hand's to the axe.' Beauchamp smoothed his forehead roughly, trying hard to inspire himself with the tonic draughts of sentiments cast in the form of proverbs. 'Lord Romfrey saw her, you say?'

'He did, Nevil, and admired her.'

'Well, if I suffer, let me think of her! For courage and nobleness I shall never find her equal. Have you changed your ideas of Frenchwomen now? Not a word, you say, not a look, to show her disdain of me whenever my name was mentioned!'

'She could scarcely feel disdain. She was guilty of a sad error.'

'Through trusting in me. Will nothing teach you where the fault lies? You women have no mercy for women. She went through the parade to Romfrey Castle and back, and she must have been perishing at heart. That, you English call acting. In history you have a respect for such acting up to the scaffold. Good-bye to her! There's a story ended. One thing you must promise: you're a peeress, ma'am: the story's out, everybody has heard of it; that babbler has done his worst: if you have a becoming appreciation of your title, you will promise me honestly--no, give me your word as a woman I can esteem--that you will not run about excusing me. Whatever you hear said or suggested, say nothing yourself. I insist on your keeping silence. Press my hand.'

'Nevil, how foolish!'

'It's my will.'

'It is unreasonable. You give your enemies licence.'

'I know what's in your head. Take my hand, and let me have your word for it.'

'But if persons you like very much, Nevil, should hear?'

'Promise. You are a woman not to break your word.'

'If I decline?'

'Your hand! I'll kiss it.'

'Oh! my darling.' Rosamund flung her arms round him and strained him an instant to her bosom. 'What have I but you in the world? My comfort was the hope that I might serve you.'

'Yes! by slaying one woman as an offering to another. It would be impossible for you to speak the truth. Don't you see, it would be a lie against her, and making a figure of me that a man would rather drop to the ground than have shown of him? I was to blame, and only I. Madame de Rouaillout was as utterly deceived by me as ever a trusting woman by a brute. I look at myself and hardly believe it 's the same man. I wrote to her that I was unchanged--and I was entirely changed, another creature, anything Lord Romfrey may please to call me.'

'But, Nevil, I repeat, if Miss Halkett should hear . . . ?'

'She knows by this time.'

'At present she is ignorant of it.'

'And what is Miss Halkett to me?'

'More than you imagined in that struggle you underwent, I think, Nevil. Oh! if only to save her from Captain Baskelett! He gained your uncle's consent when they were at the Castle, to support him in proposing for her. He is persistent. Women have been snared without loving. She is a great heiress. Reflect on his use of her wealth. You respect her, if you have no warmer feeling. Let me assure you that the husband of Cecilia, if he is of Romfrey blood, has the fairest chance of the estates. That man will employ every weapon. He will soon be here bowing to me to turn me to his purposes.'

'Cecilia can see through Baskelett,' said Beauchamp.

'Single-mindedly selfish men may be seen through and through, and still be dangerous, Nevil. The supposition is, that we know the worst of them. He carries a story to poison her mind. She could resist it, if you and

she were in full confidence together. If she did not love you, she could resist it. She does, and for some strange reason beyond my capacity to fathom, you have not come to an understanding. Sanction my speaking to her, just to put her on her guard, privately: not to injure that poor lady, but to explain. Shall she not know the truth? I need say but very little. Indeed, all I can say is, that finding the marquise in London one evening, you telegraphed for me to attend on her, and I joined you. You shake your head. But surely it is due to Miss Halkett. She should be protected from what will certainly wound her deeply. Her father is afraid of you, on the score of your theories. I foresee it: he will hear the scandal: he will imagine you as bad in morals as in politics. And you have lost your friend in Lord Romfrey--though he shall not be your enemy. Colonel Halkett and Cecilia called on us at Steynham. She was looking beautiful; a trifle melancholy. The talk was of your--that--I do not like it, but you hold those opinions--the Republicanism. She had read your published letters. She spoke to me of your sincerity. Colonel Halkett of course was vexed.

It is the same with all your friends. She, however, by her tone, led me to think that she sees you as you are, more than in what you do. They are now in Wales. They will be in town after Easter. Then you must expect that her feeling for you will be tried, unless but you will! You will let me speak to her, Nevil. My position allows me certain liberties I was previously debarred from. You have not been so very tender to your Cecilia that you can afford to give her fresh reasons for sorrowful perplexity. And why should you stand to be blackened by scandalmongers when a few words of mine will prove that instead of weak you have been strong, instead of libertine blameless? I am not using fine phrases: I would not. I would be as thoughtful of you as if you were present. And for her sake, I repeat, the truth should be told to her. I have a lock of her hair.'

'Cecilia's? Where?' said Beauchamp.

'It is at Steynham.' Rosamund primmed her lips at the success of her probing touch; but she was unaware of the chief reason for his doting on those fair locks, and how they coloured his imagination since the day of the drive into Bevisham.

'Now leave me, my dear Nevil,' she said. 'Lord Romfrey will soon be here, and it is as well for the moment that you should not meet him, if it can be avoided.'

Beauchamp left her, like a man out-argued and overcome. He had no wish to meet his uncle, whose behaviour in contracting a misalliance and casting a shadow on the family, in a manner so perfectly objectless and senseless, appeared to him to call for the reverse of compliments. Cecilia's lock of hair lying at Steynham hung in his mind. He saw the smooth flat curl lying secret like a smile.

The graceful head it had fallen from was dimmer in his mental eye. He went so far in this charmed meditation as to feel envy of the possessor of the severed lock: passingly he wondered, with the wonder of reproach,

that the possessor should deem it enough to possess the lock, and resign it to a drawer or a desk. And as when life rolls back on us after the long ebb of illness, little whispers and diminutive images of the old joys and prizes of life arrest and fill our hearts; or as, to men who have been beaten down by storms, the opening of a daisy is dearer than the blazing orient which bids it open; so the visionary lock of Cecilia's hair became Cecilia's self to Beauchamp, yielding him as much of her as he could bear to think of, for his heart was shattered.

Why had she given it to his warmest friend? For the asking, probably.

This question was the first ripple of the breeze from other emotions beginning to flow fast.

He walked out of London, to be alone, and to think and from the palings of a road on a South-western run of high land, he gazed, at the great city--a place conquerable yet, with the proper appliances for subjugating it: the starting of his daily newspaper, THE DAWN, say, as a commencement. It began to seem a possible enterprise. It soon seemed a proximate one. If Cecilia! He left the exclamation a blank, but not an empty dash in the brain; rather like the shroud of night on a vast and gloriously imagined land.

Nay, the prospect was partly visible, as the unknown country becomes by degrees to the traveller's optics on the dark hill-tops. It is much, of course, to be domestically well-mated: but to be fortified and armed by one's wife with a weapon to fight the world, is rare good fortune; a rapturous and an infinite satisfaction. He could now support of his own resources a weekly paper. A paper published weekly, however, is a poor thing, out of the tide, behind the date, mainly a literary periodical, no foremost combatant in politics, no champion in the arena; hardly better than a commentator on the events of the six past days; an echo, not a voice. It sits on a Saturday bench and pretends to sum up. Who listens? The verdict knocks dust out of a cushion. It has no steady continuous pressure of influence. It is the organ of sleepers. Of all the bigger instruments of money, it is the feeblest, Beauchamp thought. His constant faith in the good effects of utterance naturally inclined him to value six occasions per week above one; and in the fight he was for waging, it was necessary that he should enter the ring and hit blow for blow sans intermission. A statement that he could call false must be challenged hot the next morning. The covert Toryism, the fits of flunkeyism, the cowardice, of the relapsing middle-class, which is now England before mankind, because it fills the sails of the Press, must be exposed. It supports the Press in its own interests, affecting to speak for the people. It belies the people. And this Press, declaring itself independent, can hardly walk for fear of treading on an interest here, an interest there. It cannot have a conscience. It is a bad guide, a false guardian; its abject claim to be our national and popular interpreter-even that is hollow and a mockery! It is powerful only while subservient. An engine of money, appealing to the sensitiveness of money, it has no connection with the mind of the nation. And that it is not of, but apart from, the people, may be seen when great crises come. Can it stop a war? The people would, and with thunder, had they the

medium. But in strong gales the power of the Press collapses; it wheezes like a pricked pigskin of a piper. At its best Beauchamp regarded our lordly Press as a curiously diapered curtain and delusive mask, behind which the country struggles vainly to show an honest feature; and as a trumpet that deafened and terrorized the people; a mere engine of leaguers banded to keep a smooth face upon affairs, quite soullessly: he meanwhile having to be dumb.

But a Journal that should be actually independent of circulation and advertisements: a popular journal in the true sense, very lungs to the people, for them to breathe freely through at last, and be heard out of it, with well-paid men of mark to head and aid them;--the establishment of such a Journal seemed to him brave work of a life, though one should die early. The money launching it would be coin washed pure of its iniquity of selfish reproduction, by service to mankind. This DAWN of his conception stood over him like a rosier Aurora for the country. He beheld it in imagination as a new light rising above hugeous London. You turn the sheets of THE DAWN, and it is the manhood of the land addressing you, no longer that alternately puling and insolent cry of the coffers. The health, wealth, comfort, contentment of the greater number are there to be striven for, in contempt of compromise and 'unseasonable times.'

Beauchamp's illuminated dream of the power of his DAWN to vitalize old England, liberated him singularly from his wearing regrets and heart-sickness.

Surely Cecilia, who judged him sincere, might be bent to join hands with him for so good a work! She would bring riches to her husband: sufficient. He required the ablest men of the country to write for him, and it was just that they should be largely paid. They at least in their present public apathy would demand it. To fight the brewers, distillers, publicans, the shopkeepers, the parsons, the landlords, the law limpets, and also the indifferents, the logs, the cravens and the fools, high talent was needed, and an ardour stimulated by rates of pay outdoing the offers of the lucre-journals. A large annual outlay would therefore be needed; possibly for as long as a quarter of a century. Cecilia and her husband would have to live modestly. But her inheritance would be immense. Colonel Halkett had never spent a tenth of his income. In time he might be taught to perceive in THE DAWN the one greatly beneficent enterprise of his day. He might through his daughter's eyes, and the growing success of the Journal. Benevolent and gallant old man, patriotic as he was, and kind at heart, he might learn to see in THE DAWN a broader channel of philanthropy and chivalry than any we have yet had a notion of in England!--a school of popular education into the bargain.

Beauchamp reverted to the shining curl. It could not have been clearer to vision if it had lain under his eyes.

Ay, that first wild life of his was dead. He had slain it. Now for the second and sober life! Who can say? The Countess of Romfrey suggested it:--Cecilia may have prompted him in his unknown heart to the sacrifice of a lawless love, though he took it for simply barren iron duty. Brooding on her, he began to fancy the victory over himself less and less

a lame one: for it waxed less and less difficult in his contemplation of it. He was looking forward instead of back.

Who cut off the lock? Probably Cecilia herself; and thinking at the moment that he would see it, perhaps beg for it. The lustrous little ring of hair wound round his heart; smiled both on its emotions and its aims; bound them in one.

But proportionately as he grew tender to Cecilia, his consideration for Renee increased; that became a law to him: pity nourished it, and glimpses of self-contempt, and something like worship of her high-heartedness.

He wrote to the countess, forbidding her sharply and absolutely to attempt a vindication of him by explanations to any persons whomsoever; and stating that he would have no falsehoods told, he desired her to keep to the original tale of the visit of the French family to her as guests of the Countess of Romfrey. Contradictory indeed. Rosamund shook her head over him. For a wilful character that is guilty of issuing contradictory commands to friends who would be friends in spite of him, appears to be expressly angling for the cynical spirit, so surely does it rise and snap at such provocation. He was even more emphatic when they next met. He would not listen to a remonstrance; and though, of course, her love of him granted him the liberty to speak to her in what tone he pleased, there were sensations proper to her new rank which his intemperateness wounded and tempted to revolt when he vexed her with unreason. She had a glimpse of the face he might wear to his enemies.

He was quite as resolute, too, about that slight matter of the Jersey bull. He had the bull in Bevisham, and would not give him up without the sign manual of Lord Romfrey to an agreement to resign him over to the American Quaker gentleman, after a certain term. Moreover, not once had he, by exclamation or innuendo, during the period of his recent grief for the loss of his first love, complained of his uncle Everard's refusal in the old days to aid him in suing for Renee. Rosamund had expected that he would. She thought it unloverlike in him not to stir the past, and to bow to intolerable facts. This idea of him, coming in conjunction with his present behaviour, convinced her that there existed a contradiction in his nature: whence it ensued that she lost her warmth as an advocate designing to intercede for him with Cecilia; and warmth being gone, the power of the scandal seemed to her unassailable. How she could ever have presumed to combat it, was an astonishment to her. Cecilia might be indulgent, she might have faith in Nevil. Little else could be hoped for.

The occupations, duties, and ceremonies of her new position contributed to the lassitude into which Rosamund sank. And she soon had a communication to make to her lord, the nature of which was more startling to herself, even tragic. The bondwoman is a free woman compared with the wife.

Lord Romfrey's friends noticed a glow of hearty health in the splendid old man, and a prouder animation of eye and stature; and it was agreed

that matrimony suited him well. Luckily for Cecil he did not sulk very long. A spectator of the earl's first introduction to the House of Peers, he called on his uncle the following day, and Rosamund accepted his homage in her husband's presence. He vowed that my lord was the noblest figure in the whole assembly; that it had been to him the most moving sight he had ever witnessed; that Nevil should have been there to see it and experience what he had felt; it would have done old Nevil incalculable good! and as far as his grief at the idea and some reticence would let him venture, he sighed to think of the last Earl of Romfrey having been seen by him taking the seat of his fathers.

Lord Romfrey shouted 'Ha!' like a checked peal of laughter, and glanced at his wife.

CHAPTER XLV

A LITTLE PLOT AGAINST CECILIA

Some days before Easter week Seymour Austin went to Mount Laurels for rest, at an express invitation from Colonel Halkett. The working barrister, who is also a working member of Parliament, is occasionally reminded that this mortal machine cannot adapt itself in perpetuity to the long hours of labour by night in the House of Commons as well as by day in the Courts, which would seem to have been arranged by a compliant country for the purpose of aiding his particular, and most honourable, ambition to climb, while continuing to fill his purse. Mr. Austin broke down early in the year. He attributed it to a cold. Other representative gentlemen were on their backs, of whom he could admit that the protracted nightwork had done them harm, with the reservation that their constitutions were originally unsound. But the House cannot get on without lawyers, and lawyers must practise their profession, and if they manage both to practise all day and sit half the night, others should be able to do the simple late sitting; and we English are an energetic people, we must toil or be beaten: and besides, 'night brings counsel,' men are cooler and wiser by night. Any amount of work can be performed by careful feeders: it is the stomach that kills the Englishman. Brains are never the worse for activity; they subsist on it.

These arguments and citations, good and absurd, of a man more at home in his harness than out of it, were addressed to the colonel to stop his remonstrances and idle talk about burning the candle at both ends. To that illustration Mr. Austin replied that he did not burn it in the middle.

'But you don't want money, Austin.'

'No; but since I've had the habit of making it I have taken to like it.'

'But you're not ambitious.'

’Very little; but I should be sorry to be out of the tideway.’

’I call it a system of slaughter,’ said the colonel; and Mr. Austin said, ’The world goes in that way--love and slaughter.’

’Not suicide though,’ Colonel Halkett muttered.

’No, that’s only incidental.’

The casual word ’love’ led Colonel Halkett to speak to Cecilia of an old love-affair of Seymour Austin’s, in discussing the state of his health with her. The lady was the daughter of a famous admiral, handsome, and latterly of light fame. Mr. Austin had nothing to regret in her having married a man richer than himself.

’I wish he had married a good woman,’ said the colonel.

’He looks unwell, papa.’

’He thinks you’re looking unwell, my dear.’

’He thinks that of me?’

Cecilia prepared a radiant face for Mr. Austin.

She forgot to keep it kindled, and he suspected her to be a victim of one of the forms of youthful melancholy, and laid stress on the benefit to health of a change of scene.

’We have just returned from Wales,’ she said.

He remarked that it was hardly a change to be within shot of our newspapers.

The colour left her cheeks. She fancied her father had betrayed her to the last man who should know her secret. Beauchamp and the newspapers were rolled together in her mind by the fever of apprehension wasting her ever since his declaration of Republicanism, and defence of it, and an allusion to one must imply the other, she feared: feared, but far from quailingly. She had come to think that she could read the man she loved, and detect a reasonableness in his extravagance. Her father had discovered the impolicy of attacking Beauchamp in her hearing. The fever by which Cecilia was possessed on her lover’s behalf, often overcame discretion, set her judgement in a whirl, was like a delirium. How it had happened she knew not. She knew only her wretched state; a frenzy seized her whenever his name was uttered, to excuse, account for, all but glorify him publicly. And the immodesty of her conduct was perceptible to her while she thus made her heart bare. She exposed herself once of late at Itchincope, and had tried to school her tongue before she went there. She felt that she should inevitably be seen through by Seymour Austin if he took the world’s view of Beauchamp, and this to her was like a descent on the rapids to an end one shuts eyes from.

He noticed her perturbation, and spoke of it to her father.

'Yes, I'm very miserable about her,' the colonel confessed. 'Girls don't see . . . they can't guess . . . they have no idea of the right kind of man for them. A man like Blackburn Tuckham, now, a man a father could leave his girl to, with confidence! He works for me like a slave; I can't guess why. He doesn't look as if he were attracted. There's a man! but, no; harum-scarum fellows take their fancy.'

'Is she that kind of young lady?' said Mr. Austin.

'No one would have thought so. She pretends to have opinions upon politics now. It's of no use to talk of it!'

But Beauchamp was fully indicated.

Mr. Austin proposed to Cecilia that they should spend Easter week in Rome.

Her face lighted and clouded.

'I should like it,' she said, negatively.

'What's the objection?'

'None, except that Mount Laurels in Spring has grown dear to me; and we have engagements in London. I am not quick, I suppose, at new projects. I have ordered the yacht to be fitted out for a cruise in the Mediterranean early in the Summer. There is an objection, I am sure--yes; papa has invited Mr. Tuckham here for Easter.'

'We could carry him with us.'

'Yes, but I should wish to be entirely under your tutelage in Rome.'

'We would pair: your father and he; you and I.'

'We might do that. But Mr. Tuckham is like you, devoted to work; and, unlike you, careless of Antiquities and Art.'

'He is a hard and serious worker, and therefore the best of companions for a holiday. At present he is working for the colonel, who would easily persuade him to give over, and come with us.'

'He certainly does love papa,' said Cecilia.

Mr. Austin dwelt on that subject.

Cecilia perceived that she had praised Mr. Tuckham for his devotedness to her father without recognizing the beauty of nature in the young man who could voluntarily take service under the elder he esteemed, in simple admiration of him. Mr. Austin scarcely said so much, or expected her to see the half of it, but she wished to be extremely grateful, and could

only see at all by kindling altogether.

'He does himself injustice in his manner,' said Cecilia.

'That has become somewhat tempered,' Mr. Austin assured her, and he acknowledged what it had been with a smile that she reciprocated.

A rough man of rare quality civilizing under various influences, and half ludicrous, a little irritating, wholly estimable, has frequently won the benign approbation of the sex. In addition, this rough man over whom she smiled was one of the few that never worried her concerning her hand. There was not a whisper of it in him. He simply loved her father.

Cecilia welcomed him to Mount Laurels with grateful gladness. The colonel had hastened Mr. Tuckham's visit in view of the expedition to Rome, and they discoursed of it at the luncheon table. Mr. Tuckham let fall that he had just seen Beauchamp.

'Did he thank you for his inheritance?' Colonel Halkett inquired.

'Not he!' Tuckham replied jovially.

Cecilia's eyes, quick to flash, were dropped.

The colonel said: 'I suppose you told him nothing of what you had done for him?' and said Tuckham: 'Oh no: what anybody else would have done'; and proceeded to recount that he had called at Dr. Shrapnel's on the chance of an interview with his friend Lydiard, who used generally to be hanging about the cottage. 'But now he's free: his lunatic wife is dead, and I'm happy to think I was mistaken as to Miss Denham. Men practising literature should marry women with money. The poor girl changed colour when I informed her he had been released for upwards of three months. The old Radical's not the thing in health. He's anxious about leaving her alone in the world; he said so to me. Beauchamp's for rigging out a yacht to give him a sail. It seems that salt water did him some good last year. They're both of them rather the worse for a row at one of their meetings in the North in support of that public nuisance, the democrat and atheist Roughleigh. The Radical doctor lost a hat, and Beauchamp almost lost an eye. He would have been a Nelson of politics, if he had been a monops, with an excuse for not seeing. It's a trifle to them; part of their education. They call themselves students. Rome will be capital, Miss Halkett. You're an Italian scholar, and I beg to be accepted as a pupil.'

'I fear we have postponed the expedition too long,' said Cecilia. She could have sunk with languor.

'Too long?' cried Colonel Halkett, mystified.

'Until too late, I mean, papa. Do you not think, Mr. Austin, that a fortnight in Rome is too short a time?'

'Not if we make it a month, my dear Cecilia.'

’Is not our salt air better for you? The yacht shall be fitted out.’

’I’m a poor sailor!’

’Besides, a hasty excursion to Italy brings one’s anticipated regrets at the farewell too close to the pleasure of beholding it, for the enjoyment of that luxury of delight which I associate with the name of Italy.’

’Why, my dear child,’ said her father, ’you were all for going, the other day.’

’I do not remember it,’ said she. ’One plans agreeable schemes. At least we need not hurry from home so very soon after our return. We have been travelling incessantly. The cottage in Wales is not home. It is hardly fair to Mount Laurels to quit it without observing the changes of the season in our flowers and birds here. And we have visitors coming. Of course, papa, I would not chain you to England. If I am not well enough to accompany you, I can go to Louise for a few weeks.’

Was ever transparency so threadbare? Cecilia shrank from herself in contemplating it when she was alone; and Colonel Halkett put the question to Mr. Austin, saying to him privately, with no further reserve: ’It’s that fellow Beauchamp in the neighbourhood; I’m not so blind. He’ll be knocking at my door, and I can’t lock him out. Austin, would you guess it was my girl speaking? I never in my life had such an example of intoxication before me. I ’m perfectly miserable at the sight. You. know her; she was the proudest girl living. Her ideas were orderly and sound; she had a good intellect. Now she more than half defends him--a naval officer! good Lord!--for getting up in a public room to announce that he ’s a Republican, and writing heaps of mad letters to justify himself. He’s ruined in his profession: hopeless! He can never get a ship: his career’s cut short, he’s a rudderless boat. A gentleman drifting to Bedlam, his uncle calls him. I call his treatment of Grancey Lespel anything but gentlemanly. This is the sort of fellow my girl worships! What can I do? I can’t interdict the house to him: it would only make matters worse. Thank God, the fellow hangs fire somehow, and doesn’t come to me. I expect it every day, either in a letter or the man in person. And I declare to heaven I’d rather be threading a Khyber Pass with my poor old friend who fell to a shot there.’

’She certainly has another voice,’ Mr. Austin assented gravely.

He did not look on Beauchamp as the best of possible husbands for Cecilia.

’Let her see that you’re anxious, Austin,’ said the colonel. ’I’m her old opponent in this affair. She loves me, but she’s accustomed to think me prejudiced: you she won’t. You may have a good effect.’

’Not by speaking.’

’No, no; no assault: not a word, and not a word against him. Lay the

wind to catch a gossamer. I've had my experience of blowing cold, and trying to run her down. He's at Shrapnel's. He'll be up here to-day, and I have an engagement in the town. Don't quit her side. Let her fancy you are interested in some discussion--Radicalism, if you like.'

Mr. Austin readily undertook to mount guard over her while her father rode into Bevisham on business.

The enemy appeared.

Cecilia saw him, and could not step to meet him for trouble of heart. It was bliss to know that he lived and was near.

A transient coldness following the fit of ecstasy enabled her to swin through the terrible first minutes face to face with him.

He folded her round like a mist; but it grew a problem to understand why Mr. Austin should be perpetually at hand, in the garden, in the woods, in the drawing-room, wheresoever she wakened up from one of her trances to see things as they were.

Yet Beauchamp, with a daring and cunning at which her soul exulted, and her feminine nature trembled, as at the divinely terrible, had managed to convey to her no less than if they had been alone together.

His parting words were: 'I must have five minutes with your father to-morrow.'

How had she behaved? What could be Seymour Austin's idea of her?

She saw the blind thing that she was, the senseless thing, the shameless; and vulture-like in her scorn of herself, she alighted on that disgraced Cecilia and picked her to pieces hungrily. It was clear: Beauchamp had meant nothing beyond friendly civility: it was only her abject greediness pecking at crumbs. No! he loved her. Could a woman's heart be mistaken? She melted and wept, thanking him: she offered him her remnant of pride, pitiful to behold.

And still she asked herself between-whiles whether it could be true of an English lady of our day, that she, the fairest stature under sun, was ever knowingly twisted to this convulsion. She seemed to look forth from a barred window on flower, and field, and hill. Quietness existed as a vision. Was it impossible to embrace it? How pass into it? By surrendering herself to the flames, like a soul unto death! For why, if they were overpowering, attempt to resist them? It flattered her to imagine that she had been resisting them in their present burning might ever since her lover stepped on the Esperanza's deck at the mouth of Otley River. How foolish, seeing that they are fatal! A thrill of satisfaction swept her in reflecting that her ability to reason was thus active. And she was instantly rewarded for surrendering; pain fled, to prove her reasoning good; the flames devoured her gently they cared not to torture so long as they had her to themselves.

At night, candle in hand, on the corridor, her father told her he had come across Grancey Lespel in Bevisham, and heard what he had not quite relished of the Countess of Romfrey. The glittering of Cecilia's eyes frightened him. Taking her for the moment to know almost as much as he, the colonel doubted the weight his communication would have on her; he talked obscurely of a scandalous affair at Lord Romfrey's house in town, and Beauchamp and that Frenchwoman. 'But,' said he, 'Mrs. Grancey will be here to-morrow.'

'So will Nevil, papa,' said Cecilia.

'Ah! he's coming, yes; well!' the colonel puffed. 'Well, I shall see him, of course, but I . . . I can only say that if his oath 's worth having, I . . . and I think you too, my dear, if you . . . but it's no use anticipating. I shall stand out for your honour and happiness. There, your cheeks are flushed. Go and sleep.'

Some idle tale! Cecilia murmured to herself a dozen times, undisturbed by the recurrence of it. Nevil was coming to speak to her father tomorrow! Adieu to doubt and division! Happy to-morrow! and dear Mount Laurels! The primroses were still fair in the woods: and soon the cowslips would come, and the nightingale; she lay lapt in images of everything innocently pleasing to Nevil. Soon the Esperanza would be spreading wings. She revelled in a picture of the yacht on a tumbling Mediterranean Sea, meditating on the two specks near the tiller,--who were blissful human creatures, blest by heaven and in themselves--with luxurious Olympian benevolence.

For all that, she awoke, starting up in the first cold circle of twilight, her heart in violent action. She had dreamed that the vessel was wrecked. 'I did not think myself so cowardly,' she said aloud, pressing her side and then, with the dream in her eyes, she gasped: 'It would be together!'

Strangely chilled, she tried to recover some fallen load. The birds of the dawn twittered, chirped, dived aslant her window, fluttered back. Instead of a fallen load, she fancied presently that it was an expectation she was desiring to realize: but what? What could be expected at that hour? She quitted her bed, and paced up and down the room beneath a gold-starred ceiling. Her expectation, she resolved to think, was of a splendid day of the young Spring at Mount Laurels--a day to praise to Nevil.

She raised her window-blind at a window letting in sweet air, to gather indications of promising weather. Her lover stood on the grass-plot among the flower-beds below, looking up, as though it had been his expectation to see her which had drawn her to gaze out with an idea of some expectation of her own. So visionary was his figure in the grey solitariness of the moveless morning that she stared at the apparition, scarce putting faith in him as man, until he kissed his hand to her, and had softly called her name.

Impulsively she waved a hand from her lips.

Now there was no retreat for either of them!

She awoke to this conviction after a flight of blushes that burnt her thoughts to ashes as they sprang. Thoughts born blushing, all of the crimson colour, a rose-garden, succeeded, and corresponding with their speed her feet paced the room, both slender hands crossed at her throat under an uplifted chin, and the curves of her dark eyelashes dropped as in a swoon.

'He loves me!' The attestation of it had been visible. 'No one but me!' Was that so evident?

Her father picked up silly stories of him--a man who made enemies recklessly!

Cecilia was petrified by a gentle tapping at her door. Her father called to her, and she threw on her dressing-gown, and opened the door.

The colonel was in his riding-suit.

'I haven't slept a wink, and I find it's the same with you,' he said, paining her with his distressed kind eyes. 'I ought not to have hinted anything last night without proofs. Austin's as unhappy as I am.'

'At what, my dear papa, at what?' cried Cecilia.

'I ride over to Steynham this morning, and I shall bring you proofs, my poor child, proofs. That foreign tangle of his . . .'

'You speak of Nevil, papa?'

'It's a common scandal over London. That Frenchwoman was found at Lord Romfrey's house; Lady Romfrey cloaked it. I believe the woman would swear black's white to make Nevil Beauchamp appear an angel; and he's a desperately cunning hand with women. You doubt that.'

She had shuddered slightly.

'You won't doubt if I bring you proofs. Till I come back from Steynham, I ask you not to see him alone: not to go out to him.'

The colonel glanced at her windows.

Cecilia submitted to the request, out of breath, consenting to feel like a tutored girl, that she might conceal her guilty knowledge of what was to be seen through the windows.

'Now I'm off,' said he, and kissed her.

'If you would accept Nevil's word!' she murmured.

'Not where women are concerned!'

He left her with this remark, which found no jealous response in her heart, yet ranged over certain dispersed inflammable grains, like a match applied to damp powder; again and again running in little leaps of harmless firm keeping her alive to its existence, and surprising her that it should not have been extinguished.

Beauchamp presented himself rather late in the afternoon, when Mr. Austin and Blackburn Tuckham were sipping tea in Cecilia's boudoir with that lady, and a cousin of her sex, by whom she was led to notice a faint discoloration over one of his eyes, that was, considering whence it came, repulsive to compassion. A blow at a Radical meeting! He spoke of Dr. Shrapnel to Tuckham, and assuredly could not complain that the latter was unsympathetic in regard to the old man's health, though when he said, 'Poor old man! he fears he will die!' Tuckham rejoined: 'He had better make his peace.'

'He fears he will die, because of his leaving Miss Denham unprotected,' said Beauchamp.

'Well, she's a good-looking girl: he'll be able to leave her something, and he might easily get her married, I should think,' said Tuckham.

'He's not satisfied with handing her to any kind of man.'

'If the choice is to be among Radicals and infidels, I don't wonder. He has come to one of the tests.'

Cecilia heard Beauchamp speaking of a newspaper. A great Radical Journal, unmatched in sincerity, superior in ability, soon to be equal in power, to the leader and exemplar of the lucre-Press, would some day see the light.

'You'll want money for that,' said Tuckham.

'I know,' said Beauchamp.

'Are you prepared to stand forty or fifty thousand a year?'

'It need not be half so much.,

'Counting the libels, I rate the outlay rather low.'

'Yes, lawyers, judges, and juries of tradesmen, dealing justice to a Radical print!'

Tuckham brushed his hand over his mouth and ahemed. 'It's to be a penny journal?'

'Yes, a penny. I'd make it a farthing--'

'Pay to have it read?'

'Willingly.'

Tuckham did some mental arithmetic, quaintly, with rapidly blinking eyelids and open mouth. 'You may count it at the cost of two paying mines,' he said firmly. 'That is, if it's to be a consistently Radical Journal, at law with everybody all round the year. And by the time it has won a reputation, it will be undermined by a radicaller Radical Journal. That's how we've lowered the country to this level. That's an Inferno of Circles, down to the ultimate mire. And what on earth are you contending for?'

'Freedom of thought, for one thing.'

'We have quite enough free-thinking.'

'There's not enough if there's not perfect freedom.'

'Dangerous!' quoth Mr. Austin.

'But it's that danger which makes men, sir; and it's fear of the danger that makes our modern Englishman.'

'Oh! Oh!' cried Tuckham in the voice of a Parliamentary Opposition. 'Well, you start your paper, we'll assume it: what class of men will you get to write?'

'I shall get good men for the hire.'

'You won't get the best men; you may catch a clever youngster or two, and an old rogue of talent; you won't get men of weight. They're prejudiced, I dare say. The Journals which are commercial speculations give us a guarantee that they mean to be respectable; they must, if they wouldn't collapse. That's why the best men consent to write for them.'

'Money will do it,' said Beauchamp.

Mr. Austin disagreed with that observation.

'Some patriotic spirit, I may hope, sir.'

Mr. Austin shook his head. 'We put different constructions upon patriotism.'

'Besides--fiddle! nonsense!' exclaimed Tuckham in the mildest interjections he could summon for a vent in society to his offended common sense; 'the better your men the worse your mark. You're not dealing with an intelligent people.'

'There's the old charge against the people.'

'But they're not. You can madden, you can't elevate them by writing and writing. Defend us from the uneducated English! The common English are doltish; except in the North, where you won't do much with them. Compare

them with the Yankees for shrewdness, the Spaniards for sobriety, the French for ingenuity, the Germans for enlightenment, the Italians in the Arts; yes, the Russians for good-humour and obedience--where are they? They're only worth something when they're led. They fight well; there's good stuff in them.'

'I've heard all that before,' returned Beauchamp, unruffled. 'You don't know them. I mean to educate them by giving them an interest in their country. At present they have next to none. Our governing class is decidedly unintelligent, in my opinion brutish, for it's indifferent. My paper shall render your traders justice for what they do, and justice for what they don't do.'

'My traders, as you call them, are the soundest foundation for a civilized state that the world has yet seen.'

'What is your paper to be called?' said Cecilia.

'The DAWN,' Beauchamp answered.

She blushed fiery red, and turned the leaves of a portfolio of drawings.

'The DAWN!' ejaculated Tuckham. 'The grey-eyed, or the red? Extraordinary name for a paper, upon my word!'

'A paper that doesn't devote half its columns to the vices of the rich--to money-getting, spending and betting--will be an extraordinary paper.'

'I have it before me now!--two doses of flattery to one of the whip. No, no; you haven't hit the disease. We want union, not division. Turn your mind to being a moralist, instead of a politician.'

'The distinction shouldn't exist!'

'Only it does!'

Mrs. Grancey Lespel's entrance diverted their dialogue from a theme wearisome to Cecilia, for Beauchamp shone but darkly in it, and Mr. Austin did not join in it. Mrs. Grancey touched Beauchamp's fingers. 'Still political?' she said. 'You have been seen about London with a French officer in uniform.'

'It was M. le comte de Croisnel, a very old friend and comrade of mine,' Beauchamp replied.

'Why do those Frenchmen everlastingly wear their uniforms?--tell me! Don't you think it detestable style?'

'He came over in a hurry.'

'Now, don't be huffed. I know you, for defending your friends, Captain Beauchamp! Did he not come over with ladies?'

'With relatives, yes.'

'Relatives of course. But when British officers travel with ladies, relatives or other, they prefer the simplicity of mufti, and so do I, as a question of taste, I must say.'

'It was quite by misadventure that M. de Croisnel chanced to come in his uniform.'

'Ah! I know you, for defending your friends, Captain Beauchamp. He was in too great a hurry to change his uniform before he started, or en route?'

'So it happened.'

Mrs. Grancey let a lingering eye dwell maliciously on Beauchamp, who said, to shift the burden of it: 'The French are not so jealous of military uniforms as we are. M. de Croisnel lost his portmanteau.'

'Ah! lost it! Then of course he is excuseable, except to the naked eye. Dear me! you have had a bruise on yours. Was Monsieur votre ami in the Italian campaign?'

'No, poor fellow, he was not. He is not an Imperialist; he had to remain in garrison.'

'He wore a multitude of medals, I have been told. A cup of tea, Cecilia. And how long did he stay in England with his relatives?'

'Two days.'

'Only two days! A very short visit indeed--singularly short. Somebody informed me of their having been seen at Romfrey Castle, which cannot have been true.'

She turned her eyes from Beauchamp silent to Cecilia's hand on the teapot. 'Half a cup,' she said mildly, to spare the poor hand its betrayal of nervousness, and relapsed from her air of mistress of the situation to chatter to Mr. Austin.

Beauchamp continued silent. He took up a book, and presently a pencil from his pocket, then talked of the book to Cecilia's cousin; and leaving a paper-cutter between the leaves, he looked at Cecilia and laid the book down.

She proceeded to conduct Mrs. Grancey Lespel to her room.

'I do admire Captain Beauchamp's cleverness; he is as good as a French romance!' Mrs. Grancey exclaimed on the stairs. 'He fibs charmingly. I could not help drawing him out. Two days! Why, my dear, his French party were a fortnight in the country. It was the marquise, you know-- the old affair; and one may say he's a constant man.'

'I have not heard Captain Beauchamp's cleverness much praised,' said Cecilia. 'This is your room, Mrs. Grancey.'

'Stay with me a moment. It is the room I like. Are we to have him at dinner?'

Cecilia did not suppose that Captain Beauchamp would remain to dine. Feeling herself in the clutches of a gossip, she would fain have gone.

'I am just one bit glad of it, though I can't dislike him personally,' said Mrs. Grancey, detaining her and beginning to whisper. 'It was really too bad. There was a French party at the end, but there was only one at the commencement. The brother was got over for a curtain, before the husband arrived in pursuit. They say the trick Captain Beauchamp played his cousin Cecil, to get him out of the house when he had made a discovery, was monstrous--fiendishly cunning. However, Lady Romfrey, as that woman appears to be at last, covered it all. You know she has one of those passions for Captain Beauchamp which completely blind women to right and wrong. He is her saint, let him sin ever so! The story's in everybody's mouth. By the way, Palmet saw her. He describes her pale as marble, with dark long eyes, the most innocent look in the world, and a walk, the absurd fellow says, like a statue set gliding. No doubt Frenchwomen do walk well. He says her eyes are terrible traitors; I need not quote Palmet. The sort of eyes that would look fondly on a stone, you know. What her reputation is in France I have only indistinctly heard. She has one in England by this time, I can assure you. She found her match in Captain Beauchamp for boldness. Where any other couple would have seen danger, they saw safety; and they contrived to accomplish it, according to those horrid talebearers. You have plenty of time to dress, my dear; I have an immense deal to talk about. There are half-a-dozen scandals in London already, and you ought to know them, or you will be behind the tittle-tattle when you go to town; and I remember, as a girl, I knew nothing so excruciating as to hear blanks, dashes, initials, and half words, without the key. Nothing makes a girl look so silly and unpalatable. Naturally, the reason why Captain Beauchamp is more talked about than the rest is the politics. Your grand reformer should be careful. Doubly heterodox will not do! It makes him interesting to women, if you like, but he won't soon hear the last of it, if he is for a public career. Grancey literally crowed at the story. And the wonderful part of it is, that Captain Beauchamp refused to be present at the earl's first ceremonial dinner in honour of his countess. Now, that, we all think, was particularly ungrateful: now, was it not?'

'If the countess--if ingratitude had anything to do with it,' said Cecilia.

She escaped to her room and dressed impatiently.

Her boudoir was empty: Beauchamp had departed. She recollected his look at her, and turned over the leaves of the book he had been hastily scanning, and had condescended to approve of. On the two pages where the paper-cutter was fixed she perceived small pencil dots under certain words. Read consecutively, with a participle termination struck out to

convey his meaning, they formed the pathetically ungrammatical line:

'Hear: none: but: accused: false.'

Treble dots were under the word 'to-morrow.' He had scored the margin of the sentences containing his dotted words, as if in admiration of their peculiar wisdom.

She thought it piteous that he should be reduced to such means of communication. The next instant Cecilia was shrinking from the adept intriguer--French-taught!

In the course of the evening her cousin remarked:

'Captain Beauchamp must see merit in things undiscoverable by my poor faculties. I will show you a book he has marked.'

'Did you see it? I was curious to examine it,' interposed Cecilia; 'and I am as much at a loss as you to understand what could have attracted him. One sentence . . .'

'About the sheikh in the stables, where he accused the pretended physician? Yes, what was there in that?'

'Where is the book?' said Mrs. Grancey.

'Not here, I think.' Cecilia glanced at the drawing-room book-table, and then at Mr. Austin, the victim of an unhappy love in his youth, and unhappy about her, as her father had said. Seymour Austin was not one to spread the contagion of intrigue! She felt herself caught by it, even melting to feel enamoured of herself in consequence, though not loving Beauchamp the more.

'This newspaper, if it's not merely an airy project, will be ruination,' said Tuckham. 'The fact is, Beauchamp has no bend in him. He can't meet a man without trying a wrestle, and as long as he keeps his stiffness, he believes he has won. I've heard an oculist say that the eye that doesn't blink ends in blindness, and he who won't bend breaks. It's a pity, for he's a fine fellow. A Radical daily Journal of Shrapnel's colour, to educate the people by giving them an interest in the country! Goodness, what a delusion! and what a waste of money! He'll not be able to carry it on a couple of years. And there goes his eighty thousand!'

Cecilia's heart beat fast. She had no defined cause for its excitement.

Colonel Halkett returned to Mount Laurels close upon midnight, very tired, coughing and complaining of the bitter blowing East. His guests shook hands with him, and went to bed.

'I think I'll follow their example,' he said to Cecilia, after drinking a tumbler of mulled wine.

'Have you nothing to tell me, dear papa?' said she, caressing him

timidly.

'A confirmation of the whole story from Lord Romfrey in person--that's all. He says Beauchamp's mad. I begin to believe it. You must use your judgement. I suppose I must not expect you to consider me. You might open your heart to Austin. As to my consent, knowing what I do, you will have to tear it out of me. Here's a country perfectly contented, and that fellow at work digging up grievances to persuade the people they're oppressed by us. Why should I talk of it? He can't do much harm; unless he has money--money! Romfrey says he means to start a furious paper. He'll make a bonfire of himself. I can't stand by and see you in it too. I may die; I may be spared the sight.'

Cecilia flung her arms round his neck. 'Oh! papa.'

'I don't want to make him out worse than he is, my dear. I own to his gallantry--in the French sense as well as the English, it seems! It's natural that Romfrey should excuse his wife. She's another of the women who are crazy about Nevil Beauchamp. She spoke to me of the "pleasant visit of her French friends," and would have enlarged on it, but Romfrey stopped her. By the way, he proposes Captain Baskelett for you, and we're to look for Baskelett's coming here, backed by his uncle. There's no end to it; there never will be till you're married: and no peace for me! I hope I shan't find myself with a cold to-morrow.'

The colonel coughed, and perhaps exaggerated the premonitory symptoms of a cold.

'Italy, papa, would do you good,' said Cecilia.

'It might,' said he.

'If we go immediately, papa; to-morrow, early in the morning, before there is a chance of any visitors coming to the house.'

'From Bevisham?'

'From Steynham. I cannot endure a second persecution.'

'But you have a world of packing, my dear.'

'An hour before breakfast will be sufficient for me.'

'In that case, we might be off early, as you say, and have part of the Easter week in Rome.'

'Mr. Austin wishes it greatly, papa, though he has not mentioned it.'

'Austin, my darling girl, is not one of your impatient men who burst with everything they have in their heads or their hearts.'

'Oh! but I know him so well,' said Cecilia, conjuring up that innocent enthusiasm of hers for Mr. Austin as an antidote to her sharp suffering.

The next minute she looked on her father as the key of an enigma concerning Seymour Austin, whom, she imagined, possibly she had not hitherto known at all. Her curiosity to pierce it faded. She and her maid were packing through the night. At dawn she requested her maid to lift the window-blind and give her an opinion of the weather. 'Grey, Miss,' the maid reported. It signified to Cecilia: no one roaming outside.

The step she was taking was a desperate attempt at a cure; and she commenced it, though sorely wounded, with pity for Nevil's disappointment, and a singularly clear-eyed perception of his aims and motives.--'I am rich, and he wants riches; he likes me, and he reads my weakness.'--Jealousy shook her by fits, but she had no right to be jealous, nor any right to reproach him. Her task was to climb back to those heavenly heights she sat on before he distracted her and drew her down.

Beauchamp came to a vacated house that day.

CHAPTER XLVI

AS IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN FORESEEN

It was in Italy that Cecilia's maiden dreams of life had opened. She hoped to recover them in Italy, and the calm security of a mind untainted. Italy was to be her reviving air.

While this idea of a specific for her malady endured travelling at speed to the ridges of the Italian frontier, across France--she simply remembered Nevil: he was distant; he had no place in the storied landscape, among the images of Art and the names of patient great men who bear, as they bestow, an atmosphere other than earth's for those adoring them. If at night, in her sleep, he was a memory that conducted her through scenes which were lightnings, the cool swift morning of her flight released her. France, too, her rival!--the land of France, personified by her instinctively, though she had no vivid imaginative gift, did not wound her with a poisoned dart.--'She knew him first: she was his first love.' The Alps, and the sense of having Italy below them, renewed Cecilia's lofty-perching youth. Then--I am in Italy! she sighed with rapture. The wine of delight and oblivion was at her lips.

But thirst is not enjoyment, and a satiated thirst that we insist on over-satisfying to drown the recollection of past anguish, is baneful to the soul. In Rome Cecilia's vision of her track to Rome was of a run of fire over a heath. She could scarcely feel common pleasure in Rome. It seemed burnt out.

Flung back on herself, she was condemned to undergo the bitter torment she had flown from: jealous love, and reproachful; and a shame in it like nothing she had yet experienced. Previous pains were but Summer

lightnings, passing shadows. She could have believed in sorcery: the man had eaten her heart!

A disposition to mocking humour, foreign to her nature, gave her the notion of being off her feet, in the claws of a fabulous bird. It served to veil her dulness. An ultra-English family in Rome, composed, shocking to relate, of a baronet banker and his wife, two faint-faced girls, and a young gentleman of our country, once perhaps a light-limbed boy, chose to be followed by their footman in the melancholy pomp of state livery. Wherever she encountered them Cecilia talked Nevil Beauchamp. Even Mr. Tuckham perceived it. She was extremely uncharitable: she extended her ungenerous criticism to the institution of the footman: England, and the English, were lashed.

'These people are caricatures,' Tuckham said, in apology for poor England burlesqued abroad. 'You must not generalize on them. Footmen are footmen all the world over. The cardinals have a fine set of footmen.'

'They are at home. Those English sow contempt of us all over Europe. We cannot but be despised. One comes abroad foredoomed to share the sentiment. This is your middle-class! What society can they move in, that sanctions a vulgarity so perplexing? They have the air of ornaments on a cottager's parlour mantelpiece.'

Tuckham laughed. 'Something of that,' he said.

'Evidently they seek distinction, and they have it, of that kind,' she continued. 'It is not wonderful that we have so much satirical writing in England, with such objects of satire. It may be as little wonderful that the satire has no effect. Immense wealth and native obtuseness combine to disfigure us with this aspect of overripeness, not to say monstrosity. I fall in love with the poor, and think they have a cause to be pleaded, when I look at those people. We scoff at the vanity of the French, but it is a graceful vanity; pardonable compared with ours.'

'I've read all that a hundred times,' quoth Tuckham bluntly.

'So have I. I speak of it because I see it. We scoff at the simplicity of the Germans.'

'The Germans live in simple fashion, because they're poor. French vanity's pretty and amusing. I don't know whether it's deep in them, for I doubt their depth; but I know it's in their joints. The first spring of a Frenchman comes of vanity. That you can't say of the English. Peace to all! but I abhor cosmopolitanism. No man has a firm foothold who pretends to it. None despises the English in reality. Don't be misled, Miss Halkett. We're solid: that is the main point. The world feels our power, and has confidence in our good faith. I ask for no more.'

'With Germans we are supercilious Celts; with Frenchmen we are sneering Teutons:--Can we be loved, Mr. Tuckham?'

'That's a quotation from my friend Lydiard. Loved? No nation ever was loved while it lived. As Lydiard says, it may be a good beast or a bad, but a beast it is. A nation's much too big for refined feelings and affections. It must be powerful or out of the way, or down it goes. When a nation's dead you may love it; but I don't see the use of dying to be loved. My aim for my country is to have the land respected. For that purpose we must have power; for power wealth; for wealth industry; for industry internal peace: therefore no agitation, no artificial divisions. All's plain in history and fact, so long as we do not obtrude sentimentalism. Nothing mixes well with that stuff--except poetical ideas!'

Contrary to her anticipation, Cecilia was thrown more into companionship with Mr. Tuckham than with Mr. Austin; and though it often vexed her, she acknowledged that she derived a benefit from his robust antagonism of opinion. And Italy had grown tasteless to her. She could hardly simulate sufficient curiosity to serve for a vacant echo to Mr. Austin's historic ardour. Pliny the Younger might indeed be the model of a gentleman of old Rome; there might be a scholarly pleasure in calculating, as Mr. Austin did, the length of time it took Pliny to journey from the city to his paternal farm, or villa overlooking the lake, or villa overlooking the bay, and some abstruse fun in the tender ridicule of his readings of his poems to friends; for Mr. Austin smiled effusively in alluding to the illustrious Roman pleader's foible of verse: but Pliny bore no resemblance to that island barbarian Nevil Beauchamp: she could not realize the friend of Trajan, orator, lawyer, student, statesman, benefactor of his kind, and model of her own modern English gentleman, though he was. 'Yes!' she would reply encouragingly to Seymour Austin's fond brooding hum about his hero; and 'Yes!' conclusively: like an incarnation of stupidity dealing in monosyllables. She was unworthy of the society of a scholar. Nor could she kneel at the feet of her especial heroes: Dante, Raphael, Buonarotti: she was unworthy of them. She longed to be at Mount Laurels. Mr. Tuckham's conversation was the nearest approach to it--as it were round by Greenland; but it was homeward.

She was really grieved to lose him. Business called him to England.

'What business can it be, papa?' she inquired: and the colonel replied briefly: 'Ours.'

Mr. Austin now devoted much of his time to the instruction of her in the ancient life of the Eternal City. He had certain volumes of Livy, Niebuhr, and Gibbon, from which he read her extracts at night, shunning the scepticism and the irony of the moderns, so that there should be no jar on the awakening interest of his fair pupil and patient. A gentle cross-hauling ensued between them, that they grew conscious of and laughed over during their peregrinations in and out of Rome: she pulled for the Republic of the Scipios; his predilections were toward the Rome of the wise and clement emperors. To Cecilia's mind Rome rocked at a period so closely neighbouring her decay: to him, with an imagination brooding on the fuller knowledge of it, the city breathed securely, the sky was clear; jurisprudence, rhetoric, statesmanship, then flourished

supreme, and men eminent for culture: the finest flowers of our race, he thought them: and he thought their Age the manhood of Rome.

Struck suddenly by a feminine subtle comparison that she could not have framed in speech, Cecilia bowed to his views of the happiness and elevation proper to the sway of a sagacious and magnanimous Imperialism of the Roman pattern:--he rejected the French. She mused on dim old thoughts of the gracious dignity of a woman's life under high governorship. Turbulent young men imperilled it at every step. The trained, the grave, the partly grey, were fitting lords and mates for women aspiring to moral beauty and distinction. Beside such they should be planted, if they would climb! Her walks and conversations with Seymour Austin charmed her as the haze of a summer evening charms the sight.

Upon the conclusion of her term of exile Cecilia would gladly have remained in Italy another month. An appointment of her father's with Mr. Tuckham at Mount Laurels on a particular day she considered as of no consequence whatever, and she said so, in response to a meaningless nod. But Mr. Austin was obliged to return to work. She set her face homeward with his immediately, and he looked pleased: he did not try to dissuade her from accompanying him by affecting to think it a sacrifice: clearly he knew that to be near him was her greatest delight.

Thus do we round the perilous headland called love by wooing a good man for his friendship, and requiting him with faithful esteem for the grief of an ill-fortuned passion of his youth!

Cecilia would not suffer her fancy to go very far in pursuit of the secret of Mr. Austin's present feelings. Until she reached Mount Laurels she barely examined her own. The sight of the house warned her instantly that she must have a defence: and then, in desperation but with perfect distinctness, she entertained the hope of hearing him speak the protecting words which could not be broken through when wedded to her consent.

If Mr. Austin had no intentions, it was at least strange that he did not part from her in London.

He whose coming she dreaded had been made aware of the hour of her return, as his card, with the pencilled line, 'Will call on the 17th,' informed her. The 17th was the morrow.

After breakfast on the morning of the 17th Seymour Austin looked her in the eyes longer than it is customary for ladies to have to submit to keen inspection.

'Will you come into the library?' he said.

She went with him into the library.

Was it to speak of his anxiousness as to the state of her father's health that he had led her there, and that he held her hand? He alarmed her,

and he pacified her alarm, yet bade her reflect on the matter, saying that her father, like other fathers, would be more at peace upon the establishment of his daughter. Mr. Austin remarked that the colonel was troubled.

'Does he wish for my pledge never to marry without his approval? I will give it,' said Cecilia.

'He would like you to undertake to marry the man of his choice.' Cecilia's features hung on an expression equivalent to:--I could almost do that.'

At the same time she felt it was not Seymour Austin's manner of speaking. He seemed to be praising an unknown person--some gentleman who was rough, but of solid promise and singular strength of character.

The house-bell rang. Believing that Beauchamp had now come, she showed a painful ridging of the brows, and Mr. Austin considerately mentioned the name of the person he had in his mind.

She readily agreed with him regarding Mr. Tuckham's excellent qualities --if that was indeed the name; and she hastened to recollect how little she had forgotten Mr. Tuckham's generosity to Beauchamp, and confessed to herself it might as well have been forgotten utterly for the thanks he had received. While revolving these ideas she was listening to Mr. Austin; gradually she was beginning to understand that she was parting company with her original conjectures, but going at so swift a pace in so supple and sure a grasp, that, like the speeding train slipped on new lines of rails by the pointsman, her hurrying sensibility was not shocked, or the shock was imperceptible, when she heard him proposing Mr. Tuckham to her for a husband, by her father's authority, and with his own warm seconding. He had not dropped her hand: he was very eloquent, a masterly advocate: he pleaded her father's cause; it was not put to her as Mr. Tuckham's: her father had set his heart on this union he was awaiting her decision.

'Is it so urgent?' she asked.

'It is urgent. It saves him from an annoyance. He requires a son-in-law whom he can confidently rely on to manage the estates, which you are woman of the world enough to know should be in strong hands. He gives you to a man of settled principles. It is urgent, because he may wish to be armed with your answer at any instant.'

Her father entered the library. He embraced her, and 'Well?' he said.

'I must think, papa, I must think.'

She pressed her hand across her eyes. Disillusioned by Seymour Austin, she was utterly defenceless before Beauchamp: and possibly Beauchamp was in the house. She fancied he was, by the impatient brevity of her father's voice.

Seymour Austin and Colonel Halkett left the room, and Blackburn Tuckham walked in, not the most entirely self-possessed of suitors, puffing softly under his breath, and blinking eyes as rapidly as a skylark claps wings on the ascent.

Half an hour later Beauchamp appeared. He asked to see the colonel, delivered himself of his pretensions and wishes to the colonel, and was referred to Cecilia; but Colonel Halkett declined to send for her. Beauchamp declined to postpone his proposal until the following day. He went outside the house and walked up and down the grass-plot.

Cecilia came to him at last.

'I hear, Nevil, that you are waiting to speak to me.'

'I've been waiting some weeks. Shall I speak here?'

'Yes, here, quickly.'

'Before the house? I have come to ask you for your hand.'

'Mine? I cannot . . .'

'Step into the park with me. I ask you to marry me.'

'It is too late.'

CHAPTER XLVII

THE REFUSAL OF HIM

Passing from one scene of excitement to another, Cecilia was perfectly steeled for her bitter task; and having done that which separated her a sphere's distance from Beauchamp, she was cold, inaccessible to the face of him who had swayed her on flood and ebb so long, incapable of tender pity, even for herself. All she could feel was a harsh joy to have struck off her tyrant's fetters, with a determination to cherish it passionately lest she should presently be hating herself: for the shadow of such a possibility fell within the narrow circle of her strung sensations. But for the moment her delusion reached to the idea that she had escaped from him into freedom, when she said, 'It is too late.' Those words were the sum and voice of her long term of endurance. She said them hurriedly, almost in a whisper, in the manner of one changeing a theme of conversation for subjects happier and livelier, though none followed.

The silence bore back on her a suspicion of a faint reproachfulness in the words; and perhaps they carried a poetical tone, still more distasteful.

’You have been listening to tales of me,’ said Beauchamp.

’Nevil, we can always be friends, the best of friends.’

’Were you astonished at my asking you for your hand? You said "mine?" as if you wondered. You have known my feelings for you. Can you deny that? I have reckoned on yours--too long?--But not falsely? No, hear me out. The truth is, I cannot lose you. And don’t look so resolute. Overlook little wounds: I was never indifferent to you. How could I be--with eyes in my head? The colonel is opposed to me of course: he will learn to understand me better: but you and I! we cannot be mere friends. It’s like daylight blotted out--or the eyes gone blind:--Too late? Can you repeat it? I tried to warn you before you left England: I should have written a letter to put you on your guard against my enemies:--I find I have some: but a letter is sure to stumble; I should have been obliged to tell you that I do not stand on my defence; and I thought I should see you the next day. You went: and not a word for me! You gave me no chance. If you have no confidence in me I must bear it. I may say the story is false. With your hand in mine I would swear it.’

’Let it be forgotten,’ said Cecilia, surprised and shaken to think that her situation required further explanations; fascinated and unnerved by simply hearing him. ’We are now--we are walking away from the house.’

’Do you object to a walk with me?’

They had crossed the garden plot and were at the gate of the park leading to the Western wood. Beauchamp swung the gate open. He cast a look at the clouds coming up from the South-west in folds of grey and silver.

’Like the day of our drive into Bevisham!--without the storm behind,’ he said, and doated on her soft shut lips, and the mild sun-rays of her hair in sunless light. ’There are flowers that grow only in certain valleys, and your home is Mount Laurels, whatever your fancy may be for Italy. You colour the whole region for me. When you were absent, you were here. I called here six times, and walked and talked with you.’

Cecilia set her face to the garden. Her heart had entered on a course of heavy thumping, like a sapper in the mine.

Pain was not unwelcome to her, but this threatened weakness.

What plain words could she use? If Mr. Tuckham had been away from the house, she would have found it easier to speak of her engagement; she knew not why. Or if the imperative communication could have been delivered in Italian or French, she was as little able to say why it should have slipped from her tongue without a critic shudder to arrest it. She was cold enough to revolve the words: betrothed, affianced, plighted: and reject them, pretty words as they are. Between the vulgarity of romantic language, and the baldness of commonplace, it seemed to her that our English gives us no choice; that we cannot be dignified in simplicity. And for some reason, feminine and remote, she now detested her ’hand’ so much as to be unable to bring herself to the

metonymic mention of it. The lady's difficulty was peculiar to sweet natures that have no great warmth of passion; it can only be indicated. Like others of the kind, it is traceable to the most delicate of sentiments, and to the flattest:--for Mr. Blackburn's Tuckham's figure was (she thought of it with no personal objection) not of the graceful order, neither cavalierly nor kingly: and imagining himself to say, 'I am engaged,' and he suddenly appearing on the field, Cecilia's whole mind was shocked in so marked a way did he contrast with Beauchamp.

This was the effect of Beauchamp's latest words on her. He had disarmed her anger.

'We must have a walk to-day,' he said commandingly, but it had stolen into him that he and she were not walking on the same bank of the river, though they were side by side: a chill water ran between them. As in other days, there hung her hand: but not to be taken. Incredible as it was, the icy sense of his having lost her benumbed him. Her beautiful face and beautiful tall figure, so familiar to him that they were like a possession, protested in his favour while they snatched her from him all the distance of the words 'too late.'

'Will you not give me one half-hour?'

'I am engaged,' Cecilia plunged and extricated herself, 'I am engaged to walk with Mr. Austin and papa.'

Beauchamp tossed his head. Something induced him to speak of Mr. Tuckham. 'The colonel has discovered his Tory young man! It's an object as incomprehensible to me as a Tory working-man. I suppose I must take it that they exist. As for Blackburn Tuckham, I have nothing against him. He's an honourable fellow enough, and would govern Great Britain as men of that rich middle-class rule their wives--with a strict regard for ostensible humanity and what the law allows them. His manners have improved. Your cousin Mary seems to like him: it struck me when I saw them together. Cecilia! one half-hour! You refuse me: you have not heard me. You will not say too late.'

'Nevil, I have said it finally. I have no longer the right to conceive it unsaid.'

'So we speak! It's the language of indolence, temper, faint hearts. "Too late" has no meaning. Turn back with me to the park. I offer you my whole heart; I love you. There's no woman living who could be to me the wife you would be. I'm like your male nightingale that you told me of: I must have my mate to sing to--that is, work for and live for; and she must not delay too long. Did I? Pardon me if you think I did. You have known I love you. I have been distracted by things that kept me from thinking of myself and my wishes: and love's a selfish business while . . . while one has work in hand. It's clear I can't do two things at a time--make love and carry on my taskwork. I have been idle for weeks. I believed you were mine and wanted no lovemaking. There's no folly in that, if you understand me at all. As for vanity about women, I 've outlived it. In comparison with you I'm poor, I know:--you

look distressed, but one has to allude to it:--I admit that wealth would help me. To see wealth supporting the cause of the people for once would--but you say, too late! Well, I don't renounce you till I see you giving your hand to a man who's not myself. You have been offended: groundlessly, on my honour! You are the woman of all women in the world to hold me fast in faith and pride in you. It's useless to look icy: you feel what I say.'

'Nevil, I feel grief, and beg you to cease. I am----It is-----'

'"'Too late' has not a rag of meaning, Cecilia! I love your name. I love this too: this is mine, and no one can rob me of it.'

He drew forth a golden locket and showed her a curl of her hair.

Crimsoning, she said instantly: 'Language of the kind I used is open to misconstruction, I fear. I have not even the right to listen to you. I am . . . You ask me for what I have it no longer in my power to give. I am engaged.'

The shot rang through him and partly stunned him; but incredulity made a mocking effort to sustain him. The greater wounds do not immediately convince us of our fate, though we may be conscious that we have been hit.

'Engaged in earnest?' said he.

'Yes.'

'Of your free will?'

'Yes.'

Her father stepped out on the terrace, from one of the open windows, trailing a newspaper like a pocket-handkerchief. Cecilia threaded the flower-beds to meet him.

'Here's an accident to one of our ironclads,' he called to Beauchamp.

'Lives lost, sir?'

'No, thank heaven! but, upon my word, it's a warning. Read the telegram; it's the Hastings. If these are our defences, at a cost of half a million of money, each of them, the sooner we look to our land forces the better.'

'The Shop will not be considered safe!' said Beauchamp, taking in the telegram at a glance. 'Peppel's a first-rate officer too: she couldn't have had a better captain. Ship seriously damaged!'

He handed back the paper to the colonel.

Cecilia expected him to say that he had foreseen such an event.

He said nothing; and with a singular contraction of the heart she recollected how he had denounced our system of preparing mainly for the defensive in war, on a day when they stood together in the park, watching the slow passage of that very ship, the Hastings, along the broad water, distant below them. The 'swarms of swift vessels of attack,' she recollected particularly, and 'small wasps and rams under mighty steam-power,' that he used to harp on when declaring that England must be known for the assailant in war: she was to 'ray out' her worrying fleets. 'The defensive is perilous policy in war': he had said it. She recollected also her childish ridicule of his excess of emphasis: he certainly had foresight.'

Mr. Austin and Mr. Tuckham came strolling in conversation round the house to the terrace. Beauchamp bowed to the former, nodded to the latter, scrutinizing him after he had done so, as if the flash of a thought were in his mind. Tuckham's radiant aspect possibly excited it: 'Congratulate me!' was the honest outcry of his face and frame. He was as over-flowingly rosy as a victorious candidate at the hustings commencing a speech. Cecilia laid her hand on an urn, in dread of the next words from either of the persons present. Her father put an arm in hers, and leaned on her. She gazed at her chamber window above, wishing to be wafted thither to her seclusion within. The trembling limbs of physical irresoluteness was a new experience to her.

'Anything else in the paper, colonel? I've not seen it to-day,' said Beauchamp, for the sake of speaking.

'No, I don't think there's anything,' Colonel Halkett replied. 'Our diplomatists haven't been shining much: that 's not our forte.'

'No: it's our field for younger sons.'

'Is it? Ah! There's an expedition against the hilltribes in India, and we're such a peaceful nation, eh? We look as if we were in for a complication with China.'

'Well, sir, we must sell our opium.'

'Of course we must. There's a man writing about surrendering Gibraltar!'

'I'm afraid we can't do that.'

'But where do you draw the line?' quoth Tuckham, very susceptible to a sneer at the colonel, and entirely ignorant of the circumstances attending Beauchamp's position before him. 'You defend the Chinaman; and it's questionable if his case is as good as the Spaniard's.'

'The Chinaman has a case against our traders. Gibraltar concerns our imperial policy.'

'As to the case against the English merchants, the Chinaman is for shutting up his millions of acres of productive land, and the action of

commerce is merely a declaration of a universal public right, to which all States must submit.'

'Immorality brings its punishment, be sure of that. Some day we shall have enough of China. As to the Rock, I know the argument; I may be wrong. I've had the habit of regarding it as necessary to our naval supremacy.'

'Come! there we agree.'

'I'm not so certain.'

'The counter-argument, I call treason.'

'Well,' said Beauchamp, 'there's a broad policy, and a narrow. There's the Spanish view of the matter--if you are for peace and harmony and disarmament.'

'I'm not.'

'Then strengthen your forces.'

'Not a bit of it!'

'Then bully the feeble and truckle to the strong; consent to be hated till you have to stand your ground.'

'Talk!'

'It seems to me logical.'

'That's the French notion--c'est lodgique!'

Tuckham's pronunciation caused Cecilia to level her eyes at him passingly.

'By the way,' said Colonel Halkett, 'there are lots of horrors in the paper to-day; wife kickings, and starvations--oh, dear me! and the murder of a woman: two columns to that.'

'That, the Tory reaction is responsible for!' said Tuckham, rather by way of a joke than a challenge.

Beauchamp accepted it as a challenge. Much to the benevolent amusement of Mr. Austin and Colonel Halkett, he charged the responsibility of every crime committed in the country, and every condition of misery, upon the party which declined to move in advance, and which therefore apologized for the perpetuation of knavery, villany, brutality, injustice, and foul dealing.

'Stick to your laws and systems and institutions, and so long as you won't stir to amend them, I hold you accountable for that long newspaper list daily.'

He said this with a visible fire of conviction.

Tuckham stood bursting at the monstrousness of such a statement.

He condensed his indignant rejoinder to: 'Madness can't go farther!'

'There's an idea in it,' said Mr. Austin.

'It's an idea foaming at the mouth, then.'

'Perhaps it has no worse fault than that of not marching parallel with the truth,' said Mr. Austin, smiling. 'The party accusing in those terms . . . what do you say, Captain Beauchamp?--supposing us to be pleading before a tribunal?'

Beauchamp admitted as much as that he had made the case gigantic, though he stuck to his charge against the Tory party. And moreover: the Tories-and the old Whigs, now Liberals, ranked under the heading of Tories--those Tories possessing and representing the wealth of the country, yet had not started one respectable journal that a lady could read through without offence to her, or a gentleman without disgust! If there was not one English newspaper in existence independent of circulation and advertisements, and of the tricks to win them, the Tories were answerable for the vacancy. They, being the rich who, if they chose, could set an example to our Press by subscribing to maintain a Journal superior to the flattering of vile appetites--'all that nauseous matter,' Beauchamp stretched his fingers at the sheets Colonel Halkett was holding, and which he had not read--'those Tories,' he bowed to the colonel, 'I'm afraid I must say you, sir, are answerable for it.'

'I am very well satisfied with my paper,' said the colonel.

Beauchamp sighed to himself. 'We choose to be satisfied,' he said. His pure and mighty DAWN was in his thoughts: the unborn light of a day denied to earth!

One of the doctors of Bevisham, visiting a sick maid of the house, trotted up the terrace to make his report to her master of the state of her health. He hoped to pull her through with the aid of high feeding. He alluded cursorily to a young girl living on the outskirts of the town, whom he had been called in to see at the eleventh hour, and had lost, owing to the lowering of his patient from a prescription of a vegetable diet by a certain Dr. Shrapnel.

That ever-explosive name precipitated Beauchamp to the front rank of the defence.

'I happen to be staying with Dr. Shrapnel,' he observed. 'I don't eat meat there because he doesn't, and I am certain I take no harm by avoiding it. I think vegetarianism a humaner system, and hope it may be wise. I should like to set the poor practising it, for their own sakes; and I have half an opinion that it would be good for the rich--if we are

to condemn gluttony.'

'Ah? Captain Beauchamp!' the doctor bowed to him. 'But my case was one of poor blood requiring to be strengthened. The girl was allowed to sink so low that stimulants were ineffective when I stepped in. There's the point. It 's all very well while you are in health. You may do without meat till your system demands the stimulant, or else--as with this poor girl! And, indeed, Captain Beauchamp, if I may venture the remark--I had the pleasure of seeing you during the last Election in our town--and if I may be so bold, I should venture to hint that the avoidance of animal food--to judge by appearances--has not been quite wholesome for you.'

Eyes were turned on Beauchamp.

CHAPTER XLVIII

OF THE TRIAL AWAITING THE EARL OF ROMFREY

Cecilia softly dropped her father's arm, and went into the house. The exceeding pallor of Beauchamp's face haunted her in her room. She heard the controversy proceeding below, and an exclamation of Blackburn Tuckham's: 'Immorality of meat-eating? What nonsense are they up to now?'

Beauchamp was inaudible, save in a word or two. As usual, he was the solitary minority.

But how mournfully changed he was! She had not noticed it, agitated by her own emotions as she had been, and at one time three parts frozen. He was the ghost of the Nevil Beauchamp who had sprung on the deck of the Esperanza out of Lieutenant Wilmore's boat, that sunny breezy day which was the bright first chapter of her new life--of her late life, as it seemed to her now, for she was dead to it, and another creature, the coldest of the women of earth. She felt sensibly cold, coveted warmth, flung a shawl on her shoulders, and sat in a corner of her room, hidden and shivering beside the open window, till long after the gentlemen had ceased to speak.

How much he must have suffered of late! The room she had looked to as a refuge from Nevil was now her stronghold against the man whom she had incredibly accepted. She remained there, the victim of a heart malady, under the term of headache. Feeling entrapped, she considered that she must have been encircled and betrayed. She looked back on herself as a giddy figure falling into a pit: and in the pit she lay.

And how vile to have suspected of unfaithfulness and sordidness the generous and stedfast man of earth! He never abandoned a common friendship. His love of his country was love still, whatever the form it had taken. His childlike reliance on effort and outspeaking, for which men laughed at him, was beautiful.

Where am I? she cried amid her melting images of him, all dominated by his wan features. She was bound fast, imprisoned and a slave. Even Mr. Austin had conspired against him: for only she read Nevil justly. His defence of Dr. Shrapnel filled her with an envy that no longer maligned the object of it, but was humble, and like the desire of the sick to creep into sunshine.

The only worthy thing she could think of doing was (it must be mentioned for a revelation of her fallen state, and, moreover, she was not lusty of health at the moment) to abjure meat. The body loathed it, and consequently the mind of the invalided lady shrank away in horror of the bleeding joints, and the increasingly fierce scramble of Christian souls for the dismembered animals: she saw the innocent pasturing beasts, she saw the act of slaughter. She had actually sweeping before her sight a spectacle of the ludicrous-terrific, in the shape of an entire community pursuing countless herds of poor scampering animal life for blood: she, meanwhile, with Nevil and Dr. Shrapnel, stood apart contemning. For whoso would not partake of flesh in this kingdom of roast beef must be of the sparse number of Nevil's execrated minority in politics.

The example will show that she touched the borders of delirium. Physically, the doctor pronounces her bilious. She was in earnest so far as to send down to the library for medical books, and books upon diet. These, however, did not plead for the beasts. They treated the subject without question of man's taking that which he has conquered. Poets and philosophers did the same. Again she beheld Nevil Beauchamp solitary in the adverse rank to the world;--to his countrymen especially. But that it was no material cause which had wasted his cheeks and lined his forehead, she was sure: and to starve with him, to embark with him in his little boat on the seas he whipped to frenzy, would have been a dream of bliss, had she dared to contemplate herself in a dream as his companion.

It was not to be thought of.

No: but this was, and to be thought of seriously: Cecilia had said to herself for consolation that Beauchamp was no spiritual guide; he had her heart within her to plead for him, and the reflection came to her, like a bubble up from the heart, that most of our spiritual guides neglect the root to trim the flower: and thence, turning sharply on herself, she obtained a sudden view of her allurement and her sin in worshipping herself, and recognized that the aim at an ideal life closely approaches, or easily inclines, to self-worship; to which the lady was woman and artist enough to have had no objection, but that therein visibly she discerned the retributive vain longings, in the guise of high individual superiority and distinction, that had thwarted her with Nevil Beauchamp, never permitting her to love single-mindedly or whole-heartedly, but always in reclaiming her rights and sighing for the loss of her ideal; adoring her own image, in fact, when she pretended to cherish, and regret that she could not sufficiently cherish, the finer elements of nature. What was this ideal she had complained of losing? It was a broken mirror: she could think of it in no other form.

Dr. Shrapnel's 'Ego-Ego' yelped and gave chase to her through the pure beatitudes of her earlier days down to her present regrets. It hunted all the saints in the calendar till their haloes top-sided on their heads-her favourite St. Francis of Assisi excepted.

The doctor was called up from Bevisham next day, and pronounced her bilious. He was humorous over Captain Beauchamp, who had gone to the parents of the dead girl, and gathered the information that they were a consumptive family, to vindicate Dr. Shrapnel. 'The very family to require strong nourishment,' said the doctor.

Cecilia did not rest in her sick-room before, hunting through one book and another, she had found arguments on the contrary side; a waste of labour that heaped oppression on her chest, as with the world's weight. Apparently one had only to be in Beauchamp's track to experience that. She horrified her father by asking questions about consumption. Homoeopathy, hydropathy,--the revolutionaries of medicine attracted her. Blackburn Tuckham, a model for an elected lover who is not beloved, promised to procure all sorts of treatises for her: no man could have been so deferential to a diseased mind. Beyond calling her by her Christian name, he did nothing to distress her with the broad aspect of their new relations together. He and Mr. Austin departed from Mount Laurels, leaving her to sink into an agreeable stupor, like one deposited on a mudbank after buffeting the waves. She learnt that her father had seen Captain Baskelett, and remembered, marvelling, how her personal dread of an interview, that threatened to compromise her ideal of her feminine and peculiar dignity, had assisted to precipitate her where she now lay helpless, almost inanimate.

She was unaware of the passage of time save when her father spoke of a marriage-day. It told her that she lived and was moving. The fear of death is not stronger in us, nor the desire to put it off, than Cecilia's shunning of such a day. The naming of it numbed her blood like a snakebite. Yet she openly acknowledged her engagement; and, happily for Tuckham, his visits, both in London and at Mount Laurels, were few and short, and he inflicted no foretaste of her coming subjection to him to alarm her.

Under her air of calm abstraction she watched him rigorously for some sign of his ownership that should tempt her to revolt from her pledge, or at least dream of breaking loose: the dream would have sufficed. He was never intrusive, never pressing. He did not vex, because he absolutely trusted to the noble loyalty which made her admit to herself that she belonged irrevocably to him, while her thoughts were upon Beauchamp. With a respectful gravity he submitted to her perusal a collection of treatises on diet, classed pro and con., and paged and pencil-marked to simplify her study of the question. They sketched in company; she played music to him, he read poetry to her, and read it well. He seemed to feel the beauty of it sensitively, as she did critically. In other days the positions had been reversed. He invariably talked of Beauchamp with kindness, deploring only that he should be squandering his money on workmen's halls and other hazy projects down in Bevisham.

’Lydiard tells me he has a very sound idea of the value of money, and has actually made money by cattle breeding; but he has flung ten thousand pounds on a single building outside the town, and he’ll have to endow it to support it--a Club to educate Radicals. The fact is, he wants to jam the business of two or three centuries into a life-time. These men of their so-called progress are like the majority of religious minds: they can’t believe without seeing and touching. That is to say, they don’t believe in the abstract at all, but they go to work blindly by agitating, and proselytizing, and persecuting to get together a mass they can believe in. You see it in their way of arguing; it’s half done with the fist. Lydiard tells me he left him last in a horrible despondency about progress. Ha! ha! Beauchamp’s no Radical. He hasn’t forgiven the Countess of Romfrey for marrying above her rank. He may be a bit of a Republican: but really in this country Republicans are fighting with the shadow of an old hat and a cockhorse. I beg to state that I have a reverence for constituted authority: I speak of what those fellows are contending with.’

’Right,’ said Colonel Halkett. ’But "the shadow of an old hat and a cockhorse": what does that mean?’

’That’s what our Republicans are hitting at, sir.’

’Ah! so; yes,’ quoth the colonel. ’And I say this to Nevil Beauchamp, that what we’ve grown up well with, powerfully with, it’s base ingratitude and dangerous folly to throw over.’

He blamed Beauchamp for ingratitude to the countess, who had, he affirmed of his own knowledge, married Lord Romfrey to protect Beauchamp’s interests.

A curious comment on this allegation was furnished by the announcement of the earl’s expectations of a son and heir. The earl wrote to Colonel Halkett from Romfrey Castle inviting him to come and spend some time there.

’Now, that’s brave news!’ the colonel exclaimed.

He proposed a cruise round by the Cornish coast to the Severn, and so to Romfrey Castle, to squeeze the old lord’s hand and congratulate him with all his heart. Cecilia was glad to acquiesce, for an expedition of any description was a lull in the storm that hummed about her ears in the peace of home, where her father would perpetually speak of the day to be fixed. Sailing the sea on a cruise was like the gazing at wonderful colours of a Western sky: an oblivion of earthly dates and obligations. What mattered it that there were gales in August? She loved the sea, and the stinging salt spray, and circling gull and plunging gannet, the sun on the waves, and the torn cloud. The revelling libertine open sea wedded her to Beauchamp in that veiled cold spiritual manner she could muse on as a circumstance out of her life.

Fair companies of racing yachts were left behind. The gales of August

mattered frightfully to poor Blackburn Tuckham, who was to be dropped at a town in South Wales, and descended greenish to his cabin as soon as they had crashed on the first wall-waves of the chalk-race, a throw beyond the peaked cliffs edged with cormorants, and were really tasting sea. Cecilia reclined on deck, wrapped in shawl and waterproof. As the Alpine climber claims the upper air, she had the wild sea to herself through her love of it; quite to herself. It was delicious to look round and ahead, and the perturbation was just enough to preserve her from thoughts too deep inward in a scene where the ghost of Nevil was abroad.

The hard dry gale increased. Her father, stretched beside her, drew her attention to a small cutter under double-reefed main-sail and small jib on the Esperanza's weather bow--a gallant boat carefully handled. She watched it with some anxiety, but the Esperanza was bound for a Devon bay, and bore away from the black Dorsetshire headland, leaving the little cutter to run into haven if she pleased. The passing her was no event.--In a representation of the common events befalling us in these times, upon an appreciation of which this history depends, one turns at whiles a languishing glance toward the vast potential mood, pluperfect tense. For Nevil Beauchamp was on board the cutter, steering her, with Dr. Shrapnel and Lydiard in the well, and if an accident had happened to cutter or schooner, what else might not have happened? Cecilia gathered it from Mrs. Wardour-Devereux, whom, to her surprise and pleasure, she found at Romfrey Castle. Her friend Louise received a letter from Mr. Lydiard, containing a literary amateur seaman's log of a cruise of a fifteen-ton cutter in a gale, and a pure literary sketch of Beauchamp standing drenched at the helm from five in the morning up to nine at night, munching a biscuit for nourishment. The beautiful widow prepared the way for what was very soon to be publicly known concerning herself by reading out this passage of her correspondent's letter in the breakfast room.

'Yes, the fellow's a sailor!' said Lord Romfrey.

The countess rose from her chair and walked out.

'Now, was that abuse of the fellow?' the old lord asked Colonel Halkett. 'I said he was a sailor, I said nothing else. He is a sailor, and he's fit for nothing else, and no ship will he get unless he bends his neck never 's nearer it.'

He hesitated a moment, and went after his wife.

Cecilia sat with the countess, in the afternoon, at a window overlooking the swelling woods of Romfrey. She praised the loveliness of the view.

'It is fire to me,' said Rosamund.

Cecilia looked at her, startled. Rosamund said no more.

She was an excellent hostess, nevertheless, unpretending and simple in company; and only when it chanced that Beauchamp's name was mentioned did she cast that quick supplicating nervous glance at the earl, with a

shadow of an elevation of her shoulders, as if in apprehension of mordant pain.

We will make no mystery about it. I would I could. Those happy tales of mystery are as much my envy as the popular narratives of the deeds of bread and cheese people, for they both create a tide-way in the attentive mind; the mysterious pricking our credulous flesh to creep, the familiar urging our obese imagination to constitutional exercise. And oh, the refreshment there is in dealing with characters either contemptibly beneath us or supernaturally above! My way is like a Rhone island in the summer drought, stony, unattractive and difficult between the two forceful streams of the unreal and the over-real, which delight mankind--honour to the conjurors! My people conquer nothing, win none; they are actual, yet uncommon. It is the clock-work of the brain that they are directed to set in motion, and--poor troop of actors to vacant benches!--the conscience residing in thoughtfulness which they would appeal to; and if you are there impervious to them, we are lost: back I go to my wilderness, where, as you perceive, I have contracted the habit of listening to my own voice more than is good: The burden of a child in her bosom had come upon Rosamund with the visage of the Angel of Death fronting her in her path. She believed that she would die; but like much that we call belief, there was a kernel of doubt in it, which was lively when her frame was enlivened, and she then thought of the giving birth to this unloved child, which was to disinherit the man she loved, in whose interest solely (so she could presume to think, because it had been her motive reason) she had married the earl. She had no wish to be a mother; but that prospect, and the dread attaching to it at her time of life, she could have submitted to for Lord Romfrey's sake. It struck her like a scoffer's blow that she, the one woman on earth loving Nevil, should have become the instrument for dispossessing him. The revulsion of her feelings enlightened her so far as to suggest, without enabling her to fathom him, that instead of having cleverly swayed Lord Romfrey, she had been his dupe, or a blind accomplice; and though she was too humane a woman to think of punishing him, she had so much to forgive that the trifles daily and at any instant added to the load, flushed her resentment, like fresh lights showing new features and gigantic outlines. Nevil's loss of Cecilia she had anticipated; she had heard of it when she was lying in physical and mental apathy at Steynham. Lord Romfrey had repeated to her the nature of his replies to the searching parental questions of Colonel Halkett, and having foreseen it all, and what was more, foretold it, she was not aroused from her torpor. Latterly, with the return of her natural strength, she had shown herself incapable of hearing her husband speak of Nevil; nor was the earl tardy in taking the hint to spare the mother of his child allusions that vexed her. Now and then they occurred perforce. The presence of Cecilia exasperated Rosamund's peculiar sensitiveness. It required Louise Wardour-Devereux's apologies and interpretations to account for what appeared to Cecilia strangely ill-conditioned, if not insane, in Lady Romfrey's behaviour.
The most astonishing thing to hear was, that Lady Romfrey had paid Mrs. Devereux a visit at her Surrey house unexpectedly one Sunday in the London season, for the purpose, as it became evident, of meeting Mr. Blackburn Tuckham: and how she could have known that Mr. Tuckham would be there, Mrs. Devereux could not tell, for it was, Louise assured Cecilia,

purely by chance that he and Mr. Lydiard were present: but the countess obtained an interview with him alone, and Mr. Tuckham came from it declaring it to have been more terrible than any he had ever been called upon to endure. The object of the countess was to persuade him to renounce his bride.

Louise replied to the natural inquiry--'Upon what plea?' with a significant evasiveness. She put her arms round Cecilia's neck: 'I trust you are not unhappy. You will get no release from him.'

'I am not unhappy,' said Cecilia, musically clear to convince her friend.

She was indeed glad to feel the stout chains of her anchor restraining her when Lady Romfrey talked of Nevil; they were like the safety of marriage without the dreaded ceremony, and with solitude to let her weep. Bound thus to a weaker man than Blackburn Tuckham, though he had been more warmly esteemed, her fancy would have drifted away over the deeps, perhaps her cherished loyalty would have drowned in her tears--for Lady Romfrey tasked it very severely: but he from whom she could hope for no release, gave her some of the firmness which her nature craved in this trial.

From saying quietly to her: 'I thought once you loved him,' when alluding to Nevil, Lady Romfrey passed to mournful exclamations, and by degrees on to direct entreaties. She related the whole story of Renee in England, and appeared distressed with a desperate wonderment at Cecilia's mildness after hearing it. Her hearer would have imagined that she had no moral sense, if it had not been so perceptible that the poor lady's mind was distempered on the one subject of Nevil Beauchamp. Cecilia's high conception of duty, wherein she was a peerless flower of our English civilization, was incommunicable: she could practise, not explain it. She bowed to Lady Romfrey's praises of Nevil, suffered her hands to be wrung, her heart to be touched, all but an avowal of her love of him to be wrested from her, and not the less did she retain her cold resolution to marry to please her father and fulfil her pledge. In truth, it was too late to speak of Renee to her now. It did not beseem Cecilia to remember that she had ever been a victim of jealousy; and while confessing to many errors, because she felt them, and gained a necessary strength from them--in the comfort of the consciousness of pain, for example, which she sorely needed, that the pain in her own breast might deaden her to Nevil's jealousy, the meanest of the errors of a lofty soul, yielded no extract beyond the bare humiliation proper to an acknowledgement that it had existed: so she discarded the recollection of the passion which had wrought the mischief. Since we cannot have a peerless flower of civilization without artificial aid, it may be understood how it was that Cecilia could extinguish some lights in her mind and kindle others, and wherefore what it was not natural for her to do, she did. She had, briefly, a certain control of herself.

Our common readings in the fictitious romances which mark out a plot and measure their characters to fit into it, had made Rosamund hopeful of the effect of that story of Renee. A wooden young woman, or a galvanized (sweet to the writer, either of them, as to the reader--so moveable they

are!) would have seen her business at this point, and have glided melting to reconciliation and the chamber where romantic fiction ends joyously. Rosamund had counted on it.

She looked intently at Cecilia. 'He is ruined, wasted, ill, unloved; he has lost you--I am the cause!' she cried in a convulsion of grief.

'Dear Lady Romfrey!' Cecilia would have consoled her. 'There is nothing to lead us to suppose that Nevil is unwell, and you are not to blame for anything: how can you be?'

'I spoke falsely of Dr. Shrapnel; I am the cause. It lies on me! it pursues me. Let me give to the poor as I may, and feel for the poor, as I do, to get nearer to Nevil--I cannot have peace! His heart has turned from me. He despises me. If I had spoken to Lord Romfrey at Steynham, as he commanded me, you and he--Oh! cowardice: he is right, cowardice is the chief evil in the world. He is ill; he is desperately ill; he will die.'

'Have you heard he is very ill, Lady Romfrey?'

'No! no!' Rosamund exclaimed; 'it is by not hearing that I know it!'

With the assistance of Louise Devereux, Cecilia gradually awakened to what was going on in the house. There had been a correspondence between Miss Denham and the countess. Letters from Bevisham had suddenly ceased. Presumably the earl had stopped them: and if so it must have been for a tragic reason.

Cecilia hinted some blame of Lord Romfrey to her father.

He pressed her hand and said: 'You don't know what that man suffers. Romfrey is fond of Nevil too, but he must guard his wife; and the fact is Nevil is down with fever. It 's in the papers now; he may be able to conceal it, and I hope he will. There'll be a crisis, and then he can tell her good news--a little illness and all right now! Of course,' the colonel continued buoyantly, 'Nevil will recover; he's a tough wiry young fellow, but poor Romfrey's fears are natural enough about the countess. Her mind seems to be haunted by the doctor there--Shrapnel, I mean; and she's exciteable to a degree that threatens the worst--in case of any accident in Bevisham.'

'Is it not a kind of cowardice to conceal it?' Cecilia suggested.

'It saves her from fretting,' said the colonel.

'But she is fretting! If Lord Romfrey would confide in her and trust to her courage, papa, it would be best.'

Colonel Halkett thought that Lord Romfrey was the judge.

Cecilia wished to leave a place where this visible torture of a human soul was proceeding, and to no purpose. She pointed out to her father,

by a variety of signs, that Lady Romfrey either knew or suspected the state of affairs in Bevisham, and repeated her remarks upon Nevil's illness. But Colonel Halkett was restrained from departing by the earl's constant request to him to stay. Old friendship demanded it of him. He began to share his daughter's feelings at the sight of Lady Romfrey. She was outwardly patient and submissive; by nature she was a strong healthy woman; and she attended to all her husband's prescriptions for the regulating of her habits, walked with him, lay down for the afternoon's rest, appeared amused when he laboured to that effect, and did her utmost to subdue the worm devouring her heart but the hours of the delivery of the letter-post were fatal to her. Her woeful: 'No letter for me!' was piteous. When that was heard no longer, her silence and famished gaze chilled Cecilia. At night Rosamund eyed her husband expressionlessly, with her head leaning back in her chair, to the sorrow of the ladies beholding her. Ultimately the contagion of her settled misery took hold of Cecilia. Colonel Halkett was induced by his daughter and Mrs. Devereux to endeavour to combat a system that threatened consequences worse than those it was planned to avert. He by this time was aware of the serious character of the malady which had prostrated Nevil. Lord Romfrey had directed his own medical man to go down to Bevisham, and Dr. Gannet's report of Nevil was grave. The colonel made light of it to his daughter, after the fashion he condemned in Lord Romfrey, to whom however he spoke earnestly of the necessity for partially taking his wife into his confidence to the extent of letting her know that a slight fever was running its course with Nevil.

'There will be no slight fever in my wife's blood,' said the earl. 'I stand to weather the cape or run to wreck, and it won't do to be taking in reefs on a lee-shore. You don't see what frets her, colonel. For years she has been bent on Nevil's marriage. It's off: but if you catch Cecilia by the hand and bring her to us--I swear she loves the fellow!--that's the medicine for my wife. Say: will you do it? Tell Lady Romfrey it shall be done. We shall stand upright again!'

'I'm afraid that's impossible, Romfrey,' said the colonel.

'Play at it, then! Let her think it. You're helping me treat an invalid. Colonel! my old friend! You save my house and name if you do that. It's a hand round a candle in a burst of wind. There's Nevil dragged by a woman into one of their reeking hovels--so that Miss Denham at Shrapnel's writes to Lady Romfrey--because the woman's drunken husband voted for him at the Election, and was kicked out of employment, and fell upon the gin-bottle, and the brats of the den died starving, and the man sickened of a fever; and Nevil goes in and sits with him! Out of that tangle of folly is my house to be struck down? It looks as if the fellow with his infernal "humanity," were the bad genius of an old nurse's tale. He's a good fellow, colonel, he means well. This fever will cure him, they say it sobers like bloodletting. He's a gallant fellow; you know that. He fought to the skeleton in our last big war. On my soul, I believe he's good for a husband. Frenchwoman or not, that affair's over. He shall have Steynham and Holdesbury. Can I say more? Now, colonel, you go in to the countess. Grasp my hand. Give me that help, and God bless you! You light up my old days. She's a noble woman: I would not

change her against the best in the land. She has this craze about Nevil. I suppose she'll never get over it. But there it is: and we must feed her with the spoon.'

Colonel Halkett argued stutteringly with the powerful man: 'It's the truth she ought to hear, Romfrey; indeed it is, if you 'll believe me. It 's his life she is fearing for. She knows half.'

'She knows positively nothing, colonel. Miss Denham's first letter spoke of the fellow's having headaches, and staggering. He was out on a cruise, and saw your schooner pass, and put into some port, and began falling right and left, and they got him back to Shrapnel's: and here it is--that if you go to him you'll save him, and if you go to my wife you'll save her: and there you have it: and I ask my old friend, I beg him to go to them both.'

'But you can't surely expect me to force my daughter's inclinations, my dear Romfrey?'

'Cecilia loves the fellow!'

'She is engaged to Mr. Tuckham.'

'I'll see the man Tuckham.'

'Really, my dear lord!'

'Play at it, Halkett, play at it! Tide us over this! Talk to her: hint it and nod it. We have to round November. I could strangle the world till that month's past. You'll own,' he added mildly after his thunder, 'I'm not much of the despot Nevil calls me. She has not a wish I don't supply. I'm at her beck, and everything that's mine. She's a brave good woman. I don't complain. I run my chance. But if we lose the child--good night! Boy or girl!--boy!'

Lord Romfrey flung an arm up. The child of his old age lived for him already: he gave it all the life he had. This miracle, this young son springing up on an earth decaying and dark, absorbed him. This reviver of his ancient line must not be lost. Perish every consideration to avert it! He was ready to fear, love, or hate terribly, according to the prospects of his child.

Colonel Halkett was obliged to enter into a consultation, of a shadowy sort, with his daughter, whose only advice was that they should leave the castle. The penetrable gloom there, and the growing apprehension concerning the countess and Nevil, tore her to pieces. Even if she could have conspired with the earl to hoodwink his wife, her strong sense told her it would be fruitless, besides base. Father and daughter had to make the stand against Lord Romfrey. He saw their departure from the castle gates, and kissed his hand to Cecilia, courteously, without a smile.

'He may well praise the countess, papa,' said Cecilia, while they were looking back at the castle and the moveless flag that hung in folds by

the mast above it. 'She has given me her promise to avoid questioning him and to accept his view of her duty. She said to me that if Nevil should die she . . .'

Cecilia herself broke down, and gave way to sobs in her father's arms.

CHAPTER XLIX

A FABRIC OF BARONIAL DESPOTISM CRUMBLE

The earl's precautions did duty night and day in all the avenues leading to the castle and his wife's apartments; and he could believe that he had undertaken as good a defence as the mountain guarding the fertile vale from storms: but him the elements pelted heavily. Letters from acquaintances of Nevil, from old shipmates and from queer political admirers and opponents, hailed on him; things not to be frigidly read were related of the fellow.

Lord Romfrey's faith in the power of constitution to beat disease battled sturdily with the daily reports of his physician and friends, whom he had directed to visit the cottage on the common outside Bevisham, and with Miss Denham's intercepted letters to the countess. Still he had to calculate on the various injuries Nevil had done to his constitution, which had made of him another sort of man for a struggle of life and death than when he stood like a riddled flag through the war. That latest freak of the fellow's, the abandonment of our natural and wholesome sustenance in animal food, was to be taken in the reckoning. Dr. Gannet did not allude to it; the Bevisham doctor did; and the earl meditated with a fury of wrath on the dismal chance that such a folly as this of one old vegetable idiot influencing a younger noodle, might strike his House to the dust.

His watch over his wife had grown mechanical: he failed to observe that her voice was missing. She rarely spoke. He lost the art of observing himself: the wrinkling up and dropping of his brows became his habitual language. So long as he had not to meet inquiries or face tears, he enjoyed the sense of security. He never quitted his wife save to walk to the Southern park lodge, where letters and telegrams were piled awaiting him; and she was forbidden to take the air on the castle terrace without his being beside her, lest a whisper, some accident of the kind that donkeys who nod over their drowsy nose-length-ahead precautions call fatality, should rouse her to suspect, and in a turn of the hand undo his labour: for the race was getting terrible: Death had not yet stepped out of that evil chamber in Dr. Shrapnel's cottage to aim his javelin at the bosom containing the prized young life to come, but, like the smoke of waxing fire, he shadowed forth his presence in wreaths blacker and thicker day by day: and Everard Romfrey knew that the hideous beast of darkness had only to spring up and pass his guard to deal a blow to his House the direr from all he supposed himself to have gained by masking it hitherto. The young life he looked to for renewal swallowed him: he

partly lost human feeling for his wife in the tremendous watch and strain to hurry her as a vessel round the dangerous headland. He was oblivious that his eyebrows talked, that his head was bent low, that his mouth was shut, and that where a doubt had been sown, silence and such signs are like revelations in black night to the spirit of a woman who loves.

One morning after breakfast Rosamund hung on his arm, eyeing him neither questioningly nor invitingly, but long. He kissed her forehead. She clung to him and closed her eyes, showing him a face of slumber, like a mask of the dead.

Mrs. Devereux was present. Cecilia had entreated her to stay with Lady Romfrey. She stole away, for the time had come which any close observer of the countess must have expected.

The earl lifted his wife, and carried her to her sitting-room. A sunless weltering September day whipped the window-panes and brought the roar of the beaten woods to her ears. He was booted and gaitered for his customary walk to the park lodge, and as he bent a knee beside her, she murmured: 'Don't wait; return soon.'

He placed a cord attached to the bellrope within her reach. This utter love of Nevil Beauchamp was beyond his comprehension, but there it was, and he had to submit to it and manoeuvre. His letters and telegrams told the daily tale. 'He's better,' said the earl, preparing himself to answer what his wife's look had warned him would come.

She was an image of peace, in the same posture on the couch where he had left her, when he returned. She did not open her eyes, but felt about for his hand, and touching it, she seemed to weigh the fingers.

At last she said: 'The fever should be at its height.'

'Why, my dear brave girl, what ails you?' said he.

'Ignorance.'

She raised her eyelids. His head was bent down over her, like a raven's watching, a picture of gravest vigilance.

Her bosom rose and sank. 'What has Miss Denham written to-day?'

'To-day?' he asked her gently.

'I shall bear it,' she answered. 'You were my master before you were my husband. I bear anything you think is good for my government. Only, my ignorance is fever; I share Nevil's.'

'Have you been to my desk at all?'

'No. I read your eyes and your hands: I have been living on them. To-day I find that I have not gained by it, as I hoped I should. Ignorance kills me. I really have courage to bear to hear just at this moment I

have.'

'There's no bad news, my love,' said the earl.

'High fever, is it?'

'The usual fever. Gannet's with him. I sent for Gannet to go there, to satisfy you.'

'Nevil is not dead?'

'Lord! ma'am, my dear soul!'

'He is alive?'

'Quite: certainly alive; as much alive as I am; only going a little faster, as fellows do in the jumps of a fever. The best doctor in England is by his bed. He 's doing fairly. You should have let me know you were fretting, my Rosamund.'

'I did not wish to tempt you to lie, my dear lord.'

'Well, there are times when a woman . . . as you are: but you're a brave woman, a strong heart, and my wife. You want some one to sit with you, don't you? Louise Devereux is a pleasant person, but you want a man to amuse you. I'd have sent to Stukely, but you want a serious man, I fancy.'

So much had the earl been thrown out of his plan for protecting his wife, that he felt helpless, and hinted at the aids and comforts of religion. He had not rejected the official Church, and regarding it now as in alliance with great Houses, he considered that its ministers might also be useful to the troubled women of noble families. He offered, if she pleased, to call in the rector to sit with her--the bishop of the diocese, if she liked.

'But just as you like, my love,' he added. 'You know you have to avoid fretting. I've heard my sisters talk of the parson doing them good off and on about the time of their being brought to bed. He elevated their minds, they said. I'm sure I've no objection. If he can doctor the minds of women he's got a profession worth something.'

Rosamund smothered an outcry. 'You mean that Nevil is past hope!'

'Not if he's got a fair half of our blood in him. And Richard Beauchamp gave the fellow good stock. He has about the best blood in England. That's not saying much when they've taken to breed as they build--stuff to keep the plasterers at work; devil a thought of posterity!'

'There I see you and Nevil one, my dear lord,' said Rosamund. 'You think of those that are to follow us. Talk to me of him. Do not say, "the fellow." Say "Nevil." No, no; call him "the fellow." He was alive and well when you used to say it. But smile kindly, as if he made you love

him down in your heart, in spite of you. We have both known that love, and that opposition to him; not liking his ideas, yet liking him so: we were obliged to laugh--I have seen you! as love does laugh! If I am not crying over his grave, Everard? Oh!'

The earl smoothed her forehead. All her suspicions were rekindled. 'Truth! truth! give me truth. Let me know what world I am in.'

'My dear, a ship's not lost because she's caught in a squall; nor a man buffeting the waves for an hour. He's all right: he keeps up.'

'He is delirious? I ask you--I have fancied I heard him.'

Lord Romfrey puffed from his nostrils: but in affecting to blow to the winds her foolish woman's wildness of fancy, his mind rested on Nevil, and he said: 'Poor boy! It seems he's chattering hundreds to the minute.'

His wife's looks alarmed him after he had said it, and he was for toning it and modifying it, when she gasped to him to help her to her feet; and standing up, she exclaimed: 'O heaven! now I hear you; now I know he lives. See how much better it is for me to know the real truth. It takes me to his bedside. Ignorance and suspense have been poison. I have been washed about like a dead body. Let me read all my letters now. Nothing will harm me now. You will do your best for me, my husband, will you not?' She tore at her dress at her throat for coolness, panting and smiling. 'For me--us--yours--ours! Give me my letters, lunch with me, and start for Bevisham. Now you see how good it is for me to hear the very truth, you will give me your own report, and I shall absolutely trust in it, and go down with it if it's false! But you see I am perfectly strong for the truth. It must be you or I to go. I burn to go; but your going will satisfy me. If you look on him, I look. I feel as if I had been nailed down in a coffin, and have got fresh air. I pledge you my word, sir, my honour, my dear husband, that I will think first of my duty. I know it would be Nevil's wish. He has not quite forgiven me--he thought me ambitious--ah! stop: he said that the birth of our child would give him greater happiness than he had known for years: he begged me to persuade you to call a boy Nevil Beauchamp, and a girl Renee. He has never believed in his own long living.'

Rosamund refreshed her lord's heart by smiling archly as she said: 'The boy to be educated to take the side of the people, of course! The girl is to learn a profession.'

'Ha! bless the fellow!' Lord Romfrey interjected. 'Well, I might go there for an hour. Promise me, no fretting! You have hollows in your cheeks, and your underlip hangs: I don't like it. I haven't seen that before.'

'We do not see clearly when we are trying to deceive,' said Rosamund. 'My letters! my letters!'

Lord Romfrey went to fetch them. They were intact in his desk. His

wife, then, had actually been reading the facts through a wall! For he was convinced of Mrs. Devereux's fidelity, as well as of the colonel's and Cecilia's. He was not a man to be disobeyed: nor was his wife the woman to court or to acquiesce in trifling acts of disobedience to him. He received the impression, consequently, that this matter of the visit to Nevil was one in which the poor loving soul might be allowed to guide him, singular as the intensity of her love of Nevil Beauchamp was, considering that they were not of kindred blood.

He endeavoured to tone her mind for the sadder items in Miss Denham's letters.

'Oh!' said Rosamund, 'what if I shed the "screaming eyedrops," as you call them? They will not hurt me, but relieve. I was sure I should someday envy that girl! If he dies she will have nursed him and had the last of him.'

'He's not going to die!' said Everard powerfully.

'We must be prepared. These letters will do that for me. I have written out the hours of your trains. Stanton will attend on you. I have directed him to telegraph to the Dolphin in Bevisham for rooms for the night: that is to-morrow night. To-night you sleep at your hotel in London, which will be ready to receive you, and is more comfortable than the empty house. Stanton takes wine, madeira and claret, and other small necessaries. If Nevil should be very unwell, you will not leave him immediately. I shall look to the supplies. You will telegraph to me twice a day, and write once. We lunch at half-past twelve, so that you may hit the twenty-minutes-to-two o'clock train. And now I go to see that the packing is done.'

She carried off her letters to her bedroom, where she fell upon the bed, shutting her eyelids hard before she could suffer her eyes to be the intermediaries of that fever-chamber in Bevisham and her bursting heart. But she had not positively deceived her husband in the reassurance she had given him by her collectedness and by the precise directions she had issued for his comforts, indicating a mind so much more at ease. She was firmer to meet the peril of her beloved: and being indeed, when thrown on her internal resources, one among the brave women of earth, though also one who required a lift from circumstances to take her stand calmly fronting a menace to her heart, she saw the evidence of her influence with Lord Romfrey: the level she could feel that they were on together so long as she was courageous, inspirited her sovereignly.

He departed at the hour settled for him. Rosamund sat at her boudoir window, watching the carriage that was conducting him to the railway station. Neither of them had touched on the necessity of his presenting himself at the door of Dr. Shrapnel's house. That, and the disgust belonging to it, was a secondary consideration with Lord Romfrey, after he had once resolved on it as the right thing to do: and his wife admired and respected him for so supreme a loftiness. And fervently she prayed that it might not be her evil fate to disappoint his hopes. Never had she experienced so strong a sense of devotedness to him as when she saw

the carriage winding past the middle oak-wood of the park, under a wet sky brightened from the West, and on out of sight.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

A tear would have overcome him--She had not wept
Art of speaking on politics tersely
Death within which welcomed a death without
Dignity of sulking so seductive to the wounded spirit of man
Grief of an ill-fortuned passion of his youth
He lost the art of observing himself
Immense wealth and native obtuseness combine to disfigure us
Infallibility of our august mother
Inflicted no foretaste of her coming subjection to him
Love's a selfish business one has work in hand
No man has a firm foothold who pretends to it
Silence and such signs are like revelations in black night
The defensive is perilous policy in war
The greater wounds do not immediately convince us of our fate
The rider's too heavy for the horse in England
The weighty and the trivial contended
Their hearts are eaten up by property
Unanimous verdicts from a jury of temporary impressions
We do not see clearly when we are trying to deceive
Well, sir, we must sell our opium
Won't do to be taking in reefs on a lee-shore
Wooing a good man for his friendship

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s,

considering that they were not of kindred blood.

He endeavoured to tone her mind for the sadder items in Miss Denham's

letters.

’Oh!’ said Rosamund, ’what if I shed the "screaming eyedrops," as you

call them