Title: Devereux, Book IV.

Author: Edward Bulwer-Lytton

Release Date: March 2005 [EBook #7627]
[Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule]
[This file was first posted on February 25, 2003]

Edition: 10

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DEVEREUX, BY LYTTON, BOOK IV. ***

This eBook was produced by Dagny, dagnypg@yahoo.com
and David Widger, widger@cecomet.net

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

A RE-ENTRANCE INTO LIFE THROUGH THE EBON GATE, AFFLICTION.

MONTHS passed away before my senses returned to me. I rose from the bed of suffering and of madness calm, collected, immovable,--altered, but tranquil. All the vigilance of justice had been employed to discover the murderers, but in vain. The packet was gone; and directly I, who alone was able to do so, recovered enough to state the loss of that document, suspicion naturally rested on Gerald, as on one whom that loss essentially benefited. He came publicly forward to anticipate inquiry. He proved that he had not stirred from home during the whole week in which the event had occurred. That seemed likely enough to others; it is the tools that work, not the instigator,--the bravo, not the employer; but I, who saw in him not only the robber, but that fearful rival who had long threatened Isora that my bridals should be stained with blood, was somewhat staggered by the undeniable proofs of his absence from the scene of that night; and I was still more bewildered in conjecture by remembering that, so far as their disguises and my own hurried and confused observation could allow me to judge, the person of neither villain, still less that of Isora's murderer, corresponded with the proportions and height of Gerald. Still, however, whether mediately or immediately--whether as the executor or the designer--not a doubt remained on my mind that against his head was justice due. I directed inquiry towards Montreuil: he was abroad at the time of my recovery; but, immediately on his return, he came forward boldly and at once to meet and even to court the inquiry I had instituted; he did more,--he demanded on what ground, besides my own word, it rested that this packet had ever been in my possession; and, to my surprise and perplexity, it was utterly impossible to produce the smallest trace of Mr. Marie Oswald. His half-brother, the attorney, had died, it is true, just before the event of that night; and it was also true that he had seen Marie on his death-bed; but no other corroboration of my story could be substantiated, and no other information of the man obtained; and the partisans of Gerald were not slow in hinting at the great interest I had in forging a tale respecting a will, about the authenticity of which I was at law.

The robbers had entered the house by a back-door, which was found open. No one had perceived their entrance or exit, except Desmarais, who stated that he heard a cry; that he, having spent the greater part of the night abroad, had not been in bed above an hour before he heard it; that he rose and hurried towards my room, whence the cry came; that he met two men masked on the stairs; that he seized one, who struck him in the breast with a poniard, dashed him to the ground, and escaped; that he then immediately alarmed the house, and, the servants accompanying him, he proceeded, despite his wound, to my apartment, where he found Isora and myself bleeding and lifeless, with the escritoire broken open.

The only contradiction to this tale was, that the officers of justice found the escritoire not broken open, but unlocked; and yet the key which belonged to it was found in a pocketbook in my clothes, where Desmarais said, rightly, I always kept it. How, then, had the escritoire been unlocked? it was supposed by the master-keys peculiar to experienced burglars; this diverted suspicion into a new channel, and it was suggested that the robbery and the murder had really been committed by common housebreakers. It was then discovered that a large purse of gold, and a diamond cross, which the escritoire contained, were gone. And a few articles of ornamental /bijouterie/ which I had retained from the wreck of my former profusion in such baubles, and which were kept in a room below stairs, were also missing. The circumstances immediately confirmed the opinion of those who threw the guilt upon vulgar and mercenary villains, and a very probable and plausible supposition was built on this hypothesis. Might not this Oswald, at best an adventurer with an indifferent reputation, have forged this story of the packet in order to obtain admission into the house, and reconnoitre, during the confusion of a wedding, in what places the most portable articles of value were stowed? A thousand opportunities, in the opening and shutting of the house-doors, would have allowed an ingenious villain to glide in; nay, he might have secreted himself in my own room, and seen the place where I had put the packet: certain would he then be that I had selected for the repository of a document I believed so important that place where all that I most valued was secured; and hence he would naturally resolve to break open the escritoire, above all other places, which, to an uninformed robber, might have seemed not only less exposed to danger, but equally likely to contain articles of value. The same confusion which enabled him to enter and conceal himself would have also enabled him to withdraw and introduce his accomplice. This notion was rendered probable by his insisting so strongly on my not opening the packet within a certain time; had I opened it immediately, I might have perceived that a deceit had been practised, and not have hoarded it in that place of security which it was the villain's object to discover. Hence, too, in opening the escritoire, he would naturally retake the packet (which other plunderers might not have cared to steal), as well as things of more real price,--naturally retake it, in order that his previous imposition might not be detected, and that suspicion might be cast upon those who would appear to have an interest in stealing a packet which I believed to be so inestimably important.

What gave a still greater colour to this supposition was the fact that none of the servants had seen Oswald leave the house, though many had seen him enter. And what put his guilt beyond a doubt in the opinion of many, was his sudden and mysterious disappearance. To my mind, all these circumstances were not conclusive. Both the men seemed taller than Oswald; and I knew that that confusion which was so much insisted upon, had not--thanks to my singular fastidiousness in those matters--existed. I was also perfectly convinced that Oswald could not have been hidden in my room while I locked up the packet; and there was something in the behaviour of the murderer utterly unlike that of a common robber actuated by common motives.

All these opposing arguments were, however, of a nature to be deemed nugatory by the world; and on the only one of any importance in their estimation, namely, the height of Oswald being different from that of the robbers, it was certainly very probable that, in a scene so dreadful, so brief, so confused, I should easily be mistaken. Having therefore once flowed in this direction, public opinion soon settled into the full conviction that Oswald was the real criminal, and against Oswald was the whole strength of inquiry ultimately, but still vainly, bent. Some few, it is true, of that kind class who love family mysteries, and will not easily forego the notion of a brother's guilt for that of a mere vulgar housebreaker, still shook their heads and talked of Gerald; but the suspicion was vague and partial, and it was only in the close gossip of private circles that it was audibly vented.

I had formed an opinion by no means favourable to the innocence of Mr. Jean Desmarais; and I took especial care that the Necessitarian, who would only have thought robbery and murder pieces of ill-luck, should undergo a most rigorous examination. I remembered that he had seen me put the packet into the escritoire; and this circumstance was alone sufficient to arouse my suspicion. Desmarais bared his breast gracefully to the magistrate. "Would a man, Sir," he said, "a man of my youth, suffer such a scar as that, if he could help it?" The magistrate laughed: frivolity is often a rogue's best policy, if he did but know it. One finds it very difficult to think a coxcomb can commit robbery and murder. Howbeit Desmarais came off triumphantly; and immediately after this examination, which had been his second one, and instigated solely at my desire, he came to me with a blush of virtuous indignation on his thin cheeks. "He did not presume," he said, with a bow profounder than ever, "to find fault with Monsieur le Comte; it was his fate to be the victim of ungrateful suspicion: but philosophical truths could not always conquer the feelings of the man, and he came to request his dismissal." I gave it him with pleasure.

I must now state my own feelings on the matter; but I shall do so briefly. In my own mind, I repeat, I was fully impressed with the conviction that Gerald was the real and the head criminal; and thrice did I resolve to repair to Devereux Court, where he still resided, to lie in wait for him, to reproach him with his guilt, and at the sword's point in deadly combat to seek its earthly expiation. I spare the reader a narration of the terrible struggles which nature, conscience, all scruples and prepossessions of education and of blood, held with this resolution, the unholiness of which I endeavoured to clothe with the name of justice to Isora. Suffice it to say that this resolution I forewent at last; and I did so more from a feeling that, despite my own conviction of Gerald's guilt, one rational doubt rested upon the circumstance that the murderer seemed to my eyes of an inferior height to Gerald, and that the person whom I had pursued on the night I had received that wound which brought Isora to my bedside, and who, it was natural to believe, was my rival, appeared to me not only also slighter and shorter than Gerald, but of a size that seemed to tally with the murderer's.

This solitary circumstance, which contradicted my other impressions,

was, I say, more effectual in making me dismiss the thought of personal revenge on Gerald than the motives which virtue and religion should have dictated. The deep desire of vengeance is the calmest of all the passions, and it is the one which most demands certainty to the reason, before it releases its emotions and obeys their dictates. The blow which was to do justice to Isora I had resolved should not be dealt till I had obtained the most utter certainty that it fell upon the true criminal. And thus, though I cherished through all time and through all change the burning wish for retribution, I was doomed to cherish it in secret, and not for years and years to behold a hope of attaining it. Once only I vented my feelings upon Gerald. I could not rest or sleep or execute the world's objects till I had done so; but when they were thus once vented, methought I could wait the will of time with a more settled patience, and I re-entered upon the common career of life more externally fitted to fulfil its duties and its aims.

That single indulgence of emotion followed immediately after my resolution of not forcing Gerald into bodily contest. I left my sword, lest I might be tempted to forget my determination. I rode to Devereux Court; I entered Gerald's chamber, while my horse stood unstalled at the gate. I said but few words, but each word was a volume. I told him to enjoy the fortune he had acquired by fraud, and the conscience he had stained with murder. "Enjoy them while you may," I said, "but know that sooner or later shall come a day when the blood that cries from earth shall be heard in Heaven,--and /your/ blood shall appease it. Know, if I seem to disobey the voice at my heart, I hear it night and day; and I only live to fulfil at one time its commands."

I left him stunned and horror-stricken. I flung myself on my horse, and cast not a look behind as I rode from the towers and domains of which I had been despoiled. Never from that time would I trust myself to meet or see the despoiler. Once, directly after I had thus braved him in his usurped hall, he wrote to me. I returned the letter unopened. Enough of this: the reader will now perceive what was the real nature of my feelings of revenge; and will appreciate the reasons which throughout this history will cause me never or rarely to recur to those feelings again, until at least he will perceive a just hope of their consummation.

I went with a quiet air and a set brow into the world. It was a time of great political excitement. Though my creed forbade me the open senate, it could not deprive me of the veiled intrigue. St. John found ample employment for my ambition; and I entered into the toils and objects of my race with a seeming avidity more eager and engrossing than their own. In what ensues, you will perceive a great change in the character of my memoirs. Hitherto, I chiefly portrayed to you /myself/. I bared open to you my heart and temper,--my passions, and the thoughts which belong to our passions. I shall now rather bring before you the natures and the minds of others. The lover and the dreamer are no more! The satirist and the observer; the derider of human follies, participating while he derides; the worldly and keen actor in the human drama,--these are what the district of my history on which you enter will portray me. From whatever pangs to me the change may have been wrought, you will be

the gainer by that change. The gaudy dissipation of courts; the vicissitudes and the vanities of those who haunt them; the glittering jest and the light strain; the passing irony or the close reflection; the characters of the great; the colloquies of wit,--these are what delight the temper, and amuse the leisure more than the solemn narrative of fated love. As the monster of the Nile is found beneath the sunniest banks and in the most freshening wave, the stream may seem to wander on in melody and mirth,--the ripple and the beam; but /who/ shall tell what lurks, dark, and fearful, and ever vigilant, below!

CHAPTER II.

AMBITIOUS PROJECTS.

IT is not my intention to write a political history, instead of a private biography. No doubt in the next century there will be volumes enough written in celebration of that era which my contemporaries are pleased to term the greatest that in modern times has ever existed. Besides, in the private and more concealed intrigues with which I was engaged with St. John, there was something which regard for others would compel me to preserve in silence. I shall therefore briefly state that in 1712 St. John dignified the peerage by that title which his exile and his genius have rendered so illustrious.

I was with him on the day this honour was publicly announced. I found him walking to and fro his room, with his arms folded, and with a very peculiar compression of his nether lip, which was a custom he had when anything greatly irritated or disturbed him.

"Well," said he, stopping abruptly as he saw me,--"well, considering the peacock Harley brought so bright a plume to his own nest, we must admire the generosity which spared this gay dunghill feather to mine!"

"How?" said I, though I knew the cause of his angry metaphor. St. John used metaphors in speech scarcely less than in writing.

"How?" cried the new peer, eagerly, and with one of those flashing looks which made his expression of indignation the most powerful I ever saw; "how! Was the sacred promise granted to me of my own collateral earldom to be violated; and while the weight, the toil, the difficulty, the odium of affairs, from which Harley, the despotic dullard, shrank alike in imbecility and fear, had been left exclusively to my share, an insult in the shape of an honour to be left exclusively to my reward? You know my disposition is not to overrate the mere baubles of ambition; you know I care little for titles and for orders in themselves: but the most worthless thing becomes of consequence if made a symbol of what is of value, or designed as the token of an affront. Listen: a collateral earldom falls vacant; it is partly promised me. Suddenly I am dragged from the House of Commons, where I am all powerful; I am given--not this earldom, which, as belonging to my house, would alone have induced me to consent to a removal from a sphere where my enemies allow I had greater

influence than any single commoner in the kingdom,--I am given, not this, but a miserable compromise of distinction, a new and an inferior rank; given it against my will; thrust into the Upper House to defend what this pompous driveller, Oxford, is forced to forsake; and not only exposed to all the obloquy of a most infuriate party opposed to me, but mortified by an intentional affront from the party which, heart and soul, I have supported. You know that my birth is to the full as noble as Harley's; you know that my influence in the Lower House is far greater; you know that my name in the country, nay, throughout Europe, is far more popular; you know that the labour allotted to me has been far more weighty; you know that the late Peace of Utrecht is entirely my framing, that the foes to the measure direct all their venom against me, that the friends of the measure heap upon me all the honour: when, therefore, this exact time is chosen for breaking a promise formerly made to me; when a pretended honour, known to be most unpalatable to me, is thrust upon me; when, at this very time, too, six vacant ribbons of the garter flaunt by me,--one resting on the knee of this Harley, who was able to obtain an earldom for himself,--the others given to men of far inferior pretensions, though not inferior rank to my own,--myself markedly, glaringly passed by: how can I avoid feeling that things despicable in themselves are become of a vital power, from the evident intention that they should be insults to me? The insects we despise as they buzz around us become dangerous when they settle on ourselves and we feel their sting! But," added Bolingbroke, suddenly relapsing into a smile, "I have long wanted a nickname: I have now found one for myself. You know Oxford is called 'The Dragon;' well, henceforth call me 'St. George;' for, as sure as I live, will I overthrow the Dragon. I say this in jest, but I mean it in earnest. And now that I have discharged my bile, let us talk of this wonderful poem, which, though I have read it a hundred times, I am never wearied of admiring."

"Ah--'The Rape of the Lock'. It is indeed beautiful, but I am not fond of poetry now. By the way, how is it that all our modern poets speak to the taste, the mind, the judgment, and never to the /feelings/? Are they right in doing so?"

"My friend, we are now in a polished age. What have feelings to do with civilization?"

"Why, more than you will allow. Perhaps the greater our civilization, the more numerous our feelings. Our animal passions lose in excess, but our mental gain; and it is to the mental that poetry should speak. Our English muse, even in this wonderful poem, seems to me to be growing, like our English beauties, too glitteringly artificial: it wears /rouge/ and a hoop!"

"Ha! ha!--yes, they ornament now, rather than create; cut drapery, rather than marble. Our poems remind me of the ancient statues. Phidias made them, and Bubo and Bombax dressed them in purple. But this does not apply to young Pope, who has shown in this very poem that he can work the quarry as well as choose the gems. But see, the carriage awaits us. I have worlds to do; first there is Swift to see; next, there is some exquisite Burgundy to taste; then, too, there is the new

actress: and, by the by, you must tell me what you think of Bentley's Horace; we will drive first to my bookseller's to see it; Swift shall wait; Heavens! how he would rage if he heard me. I was going to say what a pity it is that that man should have so much littleness of vanity; but I should have uttered a very foolish sentiment if I had!"

"And why?"

"Because, if he had not so much littleness perhaps he would not be so great: what but vanity makes a man write and speak, and slave, and become famous? Alas!" and here St. John's countenance changed from gayety to thought; "'tis a melancholy thing in human nature that so little is good and noble, both in itself and in its source! Our very worst passions will often produce sublimer effects than our best. Phidias (we will apply to him for another illustration) made the wonderful statue of Minerva for his country; but, in order to avenge himself on that country, he eclipsed it in the far more wonderful statue of the Jupiter Olympius. Thus, from a vicious feeling emanated a greater glory than from an exalted principle; and the artist was less celebrated for the monument of his patriotism than for that of his revenge! But, /allons, mon cher/, we grow wise and dull. Let us go to choose our Burgundy and our comrades to share it."

However with his characteristic affectation of bounding ambition, and consequently hope, to no one object in particular, and of mingling affairs of light importance with those of the most weighty, Lord Bolingbroke might pretend not to recur to, or to dwell upon, his causes of resentment, from that time they never ceased to influence him to a great, and for a statesman an unpardonable, degree. We cannot, however, blame politicians for their hatred, until, without hating anybody, we have for a long time been politicians ourselves; strong minds have strong passions, and men of strong passions must hate as well as love.

The next two years passed, on my part, in perpetual intrigues of diplomacy, combined with an unceasing though secret endeavour to penetrate the mystery which hung over the events of that dreadful night. All, however, was m vain. I know not what the English police may be hereafter, but, in my time, its officers seem to be chosen, like honest Dogberry's companions, among "the most senseless and fit men." They are, however, to the full, as much knaves as fools; and perhaps a wiser posterity will scarcely believe that, when things of the greatest value are stolen, the owners, on applying to the chief magistrate, will often be told that no redress can be given there, while one of the officers will engage to get back the goods, upon paying the thieves a certain sum in exchange: if this is refused, your effects are gone forever! A pretty state of internal government!

It was about a year after the murder that my mother informed me of an event which tore from my heart its last private tie; namely, the death of Aubrey. The last letter I had received from him has been placed before the reader; it was written at Devereux Court, just before he left it forever. Montreuil had been with him during the illness which proved fatal, and which occurred in Ireland. He died of consumption; and when

I heard from my mother that Montreuil dwelt most glowingly upon the devotion he had manifested during the last months of his life, I could not help fearing that the morbidity of his superstition had done the work of physical disease. On this fatal news, my mother retired from Devereux Court to a company of ladies of our faith, who resided together, and practised the most ascetic rules of a nunnery, though they gave not to their house that ecclesiastical name. My mother had long meditated this project, and it was now a melancholy pleasure to put it into execution. From that period I rarely heard from her, and by little and little she so shrank from all worldly objects that my visits, and I believe even those of Gerald, became unwelcome and distasteful.

As to my lawsuit, it went on gloriously, according to the assertions of my brisk little lawyer, who had declared so emphatically that he liked making quick work of a suit. And, at last, what with bribery and feeing and pushing, a day was fixed for the final adjustment of my claim. It came--the cause was heard and lost! I should have been ruined, but for one circumstance; the old lady, my father's godmother, who had witnessed my first and concealed marriage, left me a pretty estate near Epsom. I turned it into gold, and it was fortunate that I did so soon, as the reader is about to see.

The queen died; and a cloud already began to look menacing to the eyes of the Viscount Bolingbroke, and therefore to those of the Count Devereux. "We will weather out the shower," said Bolingbroke.

"Could not you," said I, "make our friend Oxford the Talapat?"* and Bolingbroke laughed. All men find wit in the jests broken on their enemies!

* A thing used by the Siamese for the same purpose as we now use the umbrella. A work descriptive of Siam, by M. de la Loubere, in which the Talapat is somewhat minutely described, having been translated into English, and having excited some curiosity, a few years before Count Devereux now uses the word, the allusion was probably familiar.--ED.

One morning, however, I received a laconic note from him, which, notwithstanding its shortness and seeming gayety, I knew well signified that something not calculated for laughter had occurred. I went, and found that his new Majesty had deprived him of the seals and secured his papers. We looked very blank at each other. At last, Bolingbroke smiled. I must say that, culpable as he was in some points as a politician,--culpable, not from being ambitious (for I would not give much for the statesman who is otherwise), but from not having inseparably linked his ambition to the welfare of his country, rather than to that of a party; for, despite of what has been said of him, his ambition was never selfish,--culpable as he was when glory allured him, he was most admirable when danger assailed him!* and, by the shade of that Tully whom he so idolized, his philosophy was the most conveniently worn of any person's I ever met. When it would have been in the way--at the supper of an actress, in the /levees/ of a court, in the boudoir of

a beauty, in the arena of the senate, in the intrigue of the cabinet--you would not have observed a seam of the good old garment. But directly it was wanted--in the hour of pain, in the day of peril, in the suspense of exile, in (worst of all) the torpor of tranquillity--my extraordinary friend unfolded it piece by piece, wrapped himself up in it, sat down, defied the world, and uttered the most beautiful sentiments upon the comfort and luxury of his raiment, that can possibly be imagined. It used to remind me, that same philosophy of his, of the enchanted tent in the Arabian Tale, which one moment lay wrapped in a nut-shell, and the next covered an army.

* I know well that it has been said otherwise, and that Bolingbroke has been accused of timidity for not staying in England, and making Mr. Robert Walpole a present of his head. The elegant author of "De Vere" has fallen into a very great though a very hackneyed error, in lauding Oxford's political character, and condemning Bolingbroke's, because the former awaited a trial and the latter shunned it. A very little reflection might perhaps have taught the accomplished novelist that there could be no comparison between the two cases, because there was no comparison between the relative danger of Oxford and Bolingbroke. Oxford, as their subsequent impeachment proved, was far more numerously and powerfully supported than his illustrious enemy: and there is really no earthly cause for doubting the truth of Bolingbroke's assertion; namely, that "He had received repeated and certain information that a resolution was taken, by those who had power to execute it, to pursue him to the scaffold." There are certain situations in which a brave and a good man should willingly surrender life--but I humbly opine that there may sometimes exist a situation in which he should preserve it; and if ever man was placed in that latter situation, it was Lord Bolingbroke. To choose unnecessarily to put one's head under the axe, without benefiting any but one's enemies by the act, is, in my eyes, the proof of a fool, not a hero; and to attack a man for not placing his head in that agreeable and most useful predicament--for preferring, in short, to live for a world, rather than to perish by a faction--appears to be a mode of arguing that has a wonderful resemblance to nonsense. When Lord Bolingbroke was impeached, two men only out of those numerous retainers in the Lower House who had been wont so loudly to applaud the secretary of state, in his prosecution of those very measures for which he was now to be condemned,--two men only, General Ross and Mr. Hungerford, uttered a single syllable in defence of the minister disgraced.--ED.

Bolingbroke smiled, and quoted Cicero, and after an hour's conversation, which on his part was by no means like that of a person whose very head was in no enviable state of safety, he slid at once from a sarcasm upon Steele into a discussion as to the best measures to be adopted. Let me be brief on this point. Throughout the whole of that short session, he behaved in a manner more delicately and profoundly wise than, I think, the whole of his previous administration can equal. He sustained with the most unflagging, the most unwearied, dexterity, the sinking spirits of his associates. Without an act, or the shadow of an act, that could

be called time-serving, he laid himself out to conciliate the king, and to propitiate Parliament; with a dignified prudence which, while it seemed above petty pique, was well calculated to remove the appearance of that disaffection with which he was charged, and discriminated justly between the king and the new administration, he lent his talents to the assistance of the monarch by whom his impeachment was already resolved on, and aided in the settlement of the civil list while he was in full expectation of a criminal accusation.

The new Parliament met, and all doubt was over. An impeachment of the late administration was decided upon. I was settling bills with my little lawyer one morning, when Bolingbroke entered my room. He took a chair, nodded to me not to dismiss my assistant, joined our conversation, and when conversation was merged in accounts, he took up a book of songs, and amused himself with it till my business was over and my disciple of Coke retired. He then said, very slowly, and with a slight yawn, "You have never been at Paris, I think?"

"Never: you are enchanted with that gay city."

"Yes, but when I was last there, the good people flattered my vanity enough to bribe my taste. I shall be able to form a more unbiased and impartial judgment in a few days."

"A few days!"

"Ay, my dear Count: does it startle you? I wonder whether the pretty De Tencin will be as kind to me as she was, and whether /tout le monde/ (that most exquisite phrase for five hundred people) will rise now at the Opera on my entrance. Do you think that a banished minister can have any, the smallest resemblance to what he was when in power? By Gumdragon, as our friend Swift so euphoniously and elegantly says, or swears, by Gumdragon, I think not! What altered Satan so after his fall? what gave him horns and a tail? Nothing but his disgrace. Oh! years, and disease, plague, pestilence, and famine never alter a man so much as the loss of power."

"You say wisely; but what am I to gather from your words? is it all over with us in real earnest?"

"Us! with /me/ it is indeed all over: /you/ may stay here forever. I must fly: a packet-boat to Calais, or a room in the Tower, I must choose between the two. I had some thoughts of remaining and confronting my trial: but it would be folly; there is a difference between Oxford and me. He has friends, though out of power: I have none. If they impeach him, he will escape; if they impeach me, they will either shut me up like a rat in a cage, for twenty years, till, old and forgotten, I tear my heart out with my confinement, or they will bring me at once to the block. No, no: I must keep myself for another day; and, while they banish me, I will leave the seeds of the true cause to grow up till my return. Wise and exquisite policy of my foes,--'/Frustra Cassium amovisti, si gliscere et vigere Brutorum emulos passurus es.'* But I have no time to lose: farewell, my friend; God bless you; you are saved

from these storms; and even intolerance, which prevented the exercise of your genius, preserves you now from the danger of having applied that genius to the welfare of your country. Heaven knows, whatever my faults, I have sacrificed what I loved better than all things--study and pleasure--to her cause. In her wars I served even my enemy Marlborough, in order to serve her; her peace I effected, and I suffer for it. Be it so, I am

"'Fidens animi atque in utrumque paratus.'**

"Once more I embrace you; farewell."

* "Vainly have you banished Cassius, if you shall suffer the rivals of the Brutuses to spread themselves and flourish."

** "Confident of soul and prepared for either fortune."

"Nay," said I, "listen to me; you shall not go alone. France is already, in reality, my native country: there did I receive my birth; it is no hardship to return to my /natale solum/; it is an honour to return in the company of Henry St. John. I will have no refusal: my law case is over; my papers are few; my money I will manage to transfer. Remember the anecdote you told me yesterday of Anaxagoras, who, when asked where his country was, pointed with his finger to heaven. It is applicable, I hope, as well to me as to yourself: to me, uncelebrated and obscure; to you, the senator and the statesman."

In vain Bolingbroke endeavoured to dissuade me from this resolution; he was the only friend fate had left me, and I was resolved that misfortune should not part us. At last he embraced me tenderly, and consented to what he could not resist. "But you cannot," he said, "quit England to-morrow night, as I must."

"Pardon me," I answered, "the briefer the preparation, the greater the excitement, and what in life is equal to /that/?"

"True," answered Bolingbroke; "to some natures, too restless to be happy, excitement can compensate for all,--compensate for years wasted, and hopes scattered,--compensate for bitter regret at talents perverted and passions unrestrained. But we will talk philosophically when we have more leisure. You will dine with me to-morrow: we will go to the play together; I promised poor Lucy that I would see her at the theatre, and I cannot break my word; and an hour afterwards we will commence our excursion to Paris. And now I will explain to you the plan I have arranged for our escape."

CHAPTER III.

THE REAL ACTORS SPECTATORS TO THE FALSE ONES.

IT was a brilliant night at the theatre. The boxes were crowded to excess. Every eye was directed towards Lord Bolingbroke, who, with his usual dignified and consummate grace of manner, conversed with the various loiterers with whom, from time to time, his box was filled.

"Look yonder," said a very young man, of singular personal beauty, "look yonder, my Lord, what a panoply of smiles the Duchess wears to-night, and how triumphantly she directs those eyes, which they say were once so beautiful, to your box."

"Ah," said Bolingbroke, "her Grace does me too much honour: I must not neglect to acknowledge her courtesy; "and, leaning over the box, Bolingbroke watched his opportunity till the Duchess of Marlborough, who sat opposite to him, and who was talking with great and evidently joyous vivacity to a tall, thin man, beside her, directed her attention, and that of her whole party, in a fixed and concentrated stare, to the imperilled minister. With a dignified smile Lord Bolingbroke then put his hand to his heart, and bowed profoundly; the Duchess looked a little abashed, but returned the courtesy quickly and slightly, and renewed her conversation.

"Faith, my Lord," cried the young gentleman who had before spoken, "you managed that well! No reproach is like that which we clothe in a smile, and present with a bow."

"I am happy," said Lord Bolingbroke, "that my conduct receives the grave support of a son of my political opponent."

"/Grave/ support, my Lord! you are mistaken: never apply the epithet grave to anything belonging to Philip Wharton. But, in sober earnest, I have sat long enough with you to terrify all my friends, and must now show my worshipful face in another part of the house. Count Devereux, will you come with me to the Duchess's?"

"What! the Duchess's immediately after Lord Bolingbroke's!--the Whig after the Tory: it would be as trying to one's assurance as a change from the cold bath to the hot to one's constitution."

"Well, and what so delightful as a trial in which one triumphs? and a change in which one does not lose even one's countenance?"

"Take care, my Lord," said Bolingbroke, laughing; "those are dangerous sentiments for a man like you, to whom the hopes of two great parties are directed, to express so openly, even on a trifle and in a jest."

"'Tis for that reason I utter them. I like being the object of hope and fear to men, since my miserable fortune made me marry at fourteen, and cease to be aught but a wedded thing to the women. But sup with me at the Bedford,--you, my Lord, and the Count."

"And you will ask Walpole, Addison, and Steele,* to join us, eh?" said Bolingbroke. "No, we have other engagements for to-night; but we shall meet again soon."

* All political opponents of Lord Bolingbroke.

And the eccentric youth nodded his adieu, disappeared, and a minute afterwards was seated by the side of the Duchess of Marlborough.

"There goes a boy," said Bolingbroke, "who, at the age of fifteen, has in him the power to be the greatest man of his day, and in all probability will only be the most singular. An obstinate man is sure of doing well; a wavering or a whimsical one (which is the same thing) is as uncertain, even in his elevation, as a shuttlecock. But look to the box at the right: do you see the beautiful Lady Mary?"

"Yes," said Mr. Trefusis, who was with us, "she has only just come to town. 'Tis said she and Ned Montagu live like doves."

"How!" said Lord Bolingbroke; "that quick, restless eye seems to have very little of the dove in it."

"But how beautiful she is!" said Trefusis, admiringly. "What a pity that those exquisite hands should be so dirty! It reminds me" (Trefusis loved a coarse anecdote) "of her answer to old Madame de Noailles, who made exactly the same remark to her. 'Do you call my hands dirty?' cried Lady Mary, holding them up with the most innocent /naivete/. 'Ah, Madame, /si vous pouviez voir mes pieds!'"

"/Fi donc/," said I, turning away; "but who is that very small, deformed man behind her,--he with the bright black eye?"

"Know you not?" said Bolingbroke; "tell it not in Gath!--'tis a rising sun, whom I have already learned to worship,--the young author of the 'Essay on Criticism,' and 'The Rape of the Lock.' Egad, the little poet seems to eclipse us with the women as much as with the men. Do you mark how eagerly Lady Mary listens to him, even though the tall gentleman in black, who in vain endeavours to win her attentions, is thought the handsomest gallant in London? Ah, Genius is paid by smiles from all females but Fortune; little, methinks, does that young poet, in his first intoxication of flattery and fame, guess what a lot of contest and strife is in store for him. The very breath which a literary man respires is hot with hatred, and the youthful proselyte enters that career which seems to him so glittering, even as Dame Pliant's brother in the 'Alchemist' entered town,--not to be fed with luxury, and diet on pleasure, but 'to learn to quarrel and live by his wits.'"

The play was now nearly over. With great gravity Lord Bolingbroke summoned one of the principal actors to his box, and bespoke a play for the next week; leaning then on my arm, he left the theatre. We hastened

to his home, put on our disguises, and, without any adventure worth recounting, effected our escape and landed safely at Calais.

CHAPTER IV.

PARIS.--A FEMALE POLITICIAN AND AN ECCLESIASTICAL ONE.--SUNDRY OTHER MATTERS.

THE ex-minister was received both at Calais and at Paris with the most gratifying honours: he was then entirely the man to captivate the French. The beauty of his person, the grace of his manner, his consummate taste in all things, the exceeding variety and sparkling vivacity of his conversation, enchanted them. In later life he has grown more reserved and profound, even in habitual intercourse; and attention is now fixed to the solidity of the diamond, as at that time one was too dazzled to think of anything but its brilliancy.

While Bolingbroke was receiving visits of state, I busied myself in inquiring after a certain Madame de Balzac. The reader will remember that the envelope of that letter which Oswald had brought to me at Devereux Court was signed by the letters C. de B. Now, when Oswald disappeared, after that dreadful night to which even now I can scarcely bring myself to allude, these initials occurred to my remembrance, and Oswald having said they belonged to a lady formerly intimate with my father, I inquired of my mother if she could guess to what French lady such initials would apply. She, with an evident pang of jealousy, mentioned a Madame de Balzac; and to this lady I now resolved to address myself, with the faint hope of learning from her some intelligence respecting Oswald. It was not difficult to find out the abode of one who in her day had played no inconsiderable role in that 'Comedy of Errors,'--the Great World. She was still living at Paris: what Frenchwoman would, if she could help it, live anywhere else? "There are a hundred gates," said the witty Madame de Choisi to me, "which lead into Paris, but only two roads out of it,--the convent, or (odious word!) the grave."

I hastened to Madame Balzac's hotel. I was ushered through three magnificent apartments into one which to my eyes seemed to contain a throne: upon a nearer inspection I discovered it was a bed. Upon a large chair, by a very bad fire--it was in the month of March--sat a tall, handsome woman, excessively painted, and dressed in a manner which to my taste, accustomed to English finery, seemed singularly plain. I had sent in the morning to request permission to wait on her, so that she was prepared for my visit. She rose, offered me her cheek, kissed mine, shed several tears, and in short testified a great deal of kindness towards me. Old ladies who have flirted with our fathers always seem to claim a sort of property in the sons!

Before she resumed her seat she held me out at arm's length.

"You have a family likeness to your brave father," said she, with a

little disappointment; "but--"

"Madame de Balzac would add," interrupted I, filling up the sentence which I saw her /bienveillance/ had made her break off, "Madame de Balzac would add that I am not so good-looking. It is true: the likeness is transmitted to me within rather than without; and if I have not my father's privilege to be admired, I have at least his capacities to admire," and I bowed.

Madame de Balzac took three large pinches of snuff. "That is very well said," said she, gravely: "very well indeed! not at all like your father, though, who never paid a compliment in his life. Your clothes, by the by, are in exquisite taste: I had no idea that English people had arrived at such perfection in the fine arts. Your face is a little too long! You admire Racine, of course? How do you like Paris?"

All this was not said gayly or quickly: Madame de Balzac was by no means a gay or a quick person. She belonged to a peculiar school of Frenchwomen, who affected a little languor, a great deal of stiffness, an indifference to forms when forms were to be used by themselves, and an unrelaxing demand of forms when forms were to be observed to them by others. Added to this, they talked plainly upon all matters, without ever entering upon sentiment. This was the school she belonged to; but she possessed the traits of the individual as well as of the species. She was keen, ambitious, worldly, not unaffectionate nor unkind; very proud, a little of the devotee,--because it was the fashion to be so,--an enthusiastic admirer of military glory, and a most prying, searching, intriguing schemer of politics without the slightest talent for the science.

"Like Paris!" said I, answering only the last question, and that not with the most scrupulous regard to truth. "Can Madame de Balzac think of Paris, and not conceive the transport which must inspire a person entering it for the first time? But I had something more endearing than a stranger's interest to attach me to it: I longed to express to my father's friend my gratitude for the interest which I venture to believe she on one occasion manifested towards me."

"Ah! you mean my caution to you against that terrible De Montreuil. Yes, I trust I was of service to you /there/."

And Madame de Balzac then proceeded to favour me with the whole history of the manner in which she had obtained the letter she had sent me, accompanied by a thousand anathemas against those /atroces Jesuites/ and a thousand eulogies on her own genius and virtues. I brought her from this subject so interesting to herself, as soon as decorum would allow me; and I then made inquiry if she knew aught of Oswald or could suggest any mode of obtaining intelligence respecting him. Madame de Balzac hated plain, blunt, blank questions, and she always travelled through a wilderness of parentheses before she answered them. But at last I did ascertain her answer, and found it utterly unsatisfactory. She had never seen nor heard anything of Oswald since he had left her charged with her commission to me. I then questioned her respecting the

character of the man, and found Mr. Marie Oswald had little to plume himself upon in that respect. He seemed, however, from her account of him, to be more a rogue than a villain; and from two or three stories of his cowardice, which Madame de Balzac related, he appeared to me utterly incapable of a design so daring and systematic as that of which it pleased all persons who troubled themselves about my affairs to suspect him.

Finding at last that no further information was to be gained on this point, I turned the conversation to Montreuil. I found, from Madame de Balzac's very abuse of him, that he enjoyed a great reputation in the country and a great favour at court. He had been early befriended by Father la Chaise, and he was now especially trusted and esteemed by the successor of that Jesuit Le Tellier,--Le Tellier, that rigid and bigoted servant of Loyola, the sovereign of the king himself, the destroyer of the Port Royal, and the mock and terror of the bedevilled and persecuted Jansenists. Besides this, I learned what has been before pretty clearly evident; namely, that Montreuil was greatly in the confidence of the Chevalier, and that he was supposed already to have rendered essential service to the Stuart cause. His reputation had increased with every year, and was as great for private sanctity as for political talent.

When this information, given in a very different spirit from that in which I retail it, was over, Madame de Balzac observed, "Doubtless you will obtain a private audience with the king?"

"Is it possible, in his present age and infirmities?"

"It ought to be, to the son of the brave Marshal Devereux."

"I shall be happy to receive Madame's instructions how to obtain the honour: her name would, I feel, be a greater passport to the royal presence than that of a deceased soldier; and Venus's cestus may obtain that grace which would never be accorded to the truncheon of Mars!"

Was there ever so natural and so easy a compliment? My Venus of fifty smiled.

"You are mistaken, Count," said she; "I have no interest at court: the Jesuits forbid that to a Jansenist, but I will speak this very day to the Bishop of Frejus; he is related to me, and will obtain so slight a boon for you with ease. He has just left his bishopric; you know how he hated it. Nothing could be pleasanter than his signing himself, in a letter to Cardinal Quirini, 'Fleuri, Eveque de Frejus par l'indignation divine.' The King does not like him much; but he is a good man on the whole, though jesuitical; he shall introduce you."

I expressed my gratitude for the favour, and hinted that possibly the relations of my father's first wife, the haughty and ancient house of La Tremouille, might save the Bishop of Frejus from the pain of exerting himself on my behalf.

"You are very much mistaken," answered Madame de Balzac: "priests point

the road to court as well as to Heaven; and warriors and nobles have as little to do with the former as they have with the latter, the unlucky Duc de Villars only excepted,--a man whose ill fortune is enough to destroy all the laurels of France. /Ma foi/! I believe the poor Duke might rival in luck that Italian poet who said, in a fit of despair, that if he had been bred a hatter, men would have been born without heads."

And Madame de Balzac chuckled over this joke, till, seeing that no further news was to be gleaned from her, I made my adieu and my departure.

Nothing could exceed the kindness manifested towards me by my father's early connections. The circumstance of my accompanying Bolingbroke, joined to my age, and an address which, if not animated nor gay, had not been acquired without some youthful cultivation of the graces, gave me a sort of /eclat/ as well as consideration. And Bolingbroke, who was only jealous of superiors in power, and who had no equals in anything else, added greatly to my reputation by his panegyrics.

Every one sought me; and the attention of society at Paris would, to most, be worth a little trouble to repay. Perhaps, if I had liked it, I might have been the rage; but that vanity was over. I contented myself with being admitted into society as an observer, without a single wish to become the observed. When one has once outlived the ambition of fashion I know not a greater affliction than an over-attention; and the Spectator did just what I should have done in a similar case, when he left his lodgings "because he was asked every morning how he had slept." In the immediate vicinity of the court, the King's devotion, age, and misfortunes threw a damp over society; but there were still some sparkling circles, who put the King out of the mode, and declared that the defeats of his generals made capital subjects for epigrams. What a delicate and subtle air did hang over those /soirees/, where all that were bright and lovely, and noble and gay, and witty and wise, were assembled in one brilliant cluster! Imperfect as my rehearsals must be, I think the few pages I shall devote to a description of these glittering conversations must still retain something of that original piquancy which the /soirees/ of no other capital could rival or appreciate.

One morning, about a week after my interview with Madame de Balzac, I received a note from her requesting me to visit her that day, and appointing the hour.

Accordingly I repaired to the house of the fair politician. I found her with a man in a clerical garb, and of a benevolent and prepossessing countenance. She introduced him to me as the Bishop of Frejus; and he received me with an air very uncommon to his countrymen, namely, with an ease that seemed to result from real good-nature, rather than artificial grace.

"I shall feel," said he, quietly, and without the least appearance of paying a compliment, "very glad to mention your wish to his Majesty; and

I have not the least doubt but that he will admit to his presence one who has such hereditary claims on his notice. Madame de Maintenon, by the way, has charged me to present you to her whenever you will give me the opportunity. She knew your admirable mother well, and for her sake wishes once to see you. You know perhaps, Monsieur, that the extreme retirement of her life renders this message from Madame de Maintenon an unusual and rare honour."

I expressed my thanks; the Bishop received them with a paternal rather than a courtier-like air, and appointed a day for me to attend him to the palace. We then conversed a short time upon indifferent matters, which I observed the good Bishop took especial pains to preserve clear from French politics. He asked me, however, two or three questions about the state of parties in England,--about finance and the national debt, about Ormond and Oxford; and appeared to give the most close attention to my replies. He smiled once or twice, when his relation, Madame de Balzac, broke out into sarcasms against the Jesuits, which had nothing to do with the subjects in question.

"Ah, /ma chere cousine/," said he: "you flatter me by showing that you like me not as the politician, but the private relation,--not as the Bishop of Frejus, but as Andre de Fleuri."

Madame de Balzac smiled, and answered by a compliment. She was a politician for the kingdom, it is true, but she was also a politician for herself. She was far from exclaiming, with Pindar, "Thy business, O my city, I prefer willingly to my own." Ah, there is a nice distinction between politics and policy, and Madame de Balzac knew it. The distinction is this. Politics is the art of being wise for others: policy is the art of being wise for one’s self.

From Madame de Balzac’s I went to Bolingbroke. "I have just been offered the place of Secretary of State by the English king on this side of the water," said he; "I do not, however, yet like to commit myself so fully. And, indeed, I am not unwilling to have a little relaxation of pleasure, after all these dull and dusty travails of state. What say you to Boulainvilliers to-night? you are asked?"

"Yes! all the wits are to be there,--Anthony Hamilton, and Fontenelle, young Arouet, Chaulieu, that charming old man. Let us go, and polish away the wrinkles of our hearts. What cosmetics are to the face wit is to the temper; and, after all, there is no wisdom like that which teaches us to forget."

"Come then," said Bolingbroke, rising, "we will lock up these papers, and take a melancholy drive, in order that we may enjoy mirth the better by and by."

CHAPTER V.

A MEETING OF WITS.--CONVERSATION GONE OUT TO SUPPER IN HER DRESS OF

VELVET AND JEWELS.

BOULAINVILLIERS! Comte de St. Saire! What will our great-grandchildren think of that name? Fame is indeed a riddle! At the time I refer to, wit, learning, grace--all things that charm and enlighten--were supposed to centre in one word,-/Boulainvilliers/! The good Count had many rivals, it is true, but he had that exquisite tact peculiar to his countrymen, of making the very reputations of those rivals contribute to his own. And while he assembled them around him, the lustre of their /bons mots/, though it emanated from themselves, was reflected upon him.

It was a pleasant though not a costly apartment in which we found our host. The room was sufficiently full of people to allow scope and variety to one group of talkers, without being full enough to permit those little knots and /coteries/ which are the destruction of literary society. An old man of about seventy, of a sharp, shrewd, yet polished and courtly expression of countenance, of a great gayety of manner, which was now and then rather displeasingly contrasted by an abrupt affectation of dignity, that, however, rarely lasted above a minute, and never withstood the shock of a /bon mot/, was the first person who accosted us. This old man was the wreck of the once celebrated Anthony Count Hamilton!

"Well, my Lord," said he to Bolingbroke, "how do you like the weather at Paris? It is a little better than the merciless air of London; is it not? 'Slife!--even in June one could not go open breasted in those regions of cold and catarrh,--a very great misfortune, let me tell you, my Lord, if one's cambric happened to be of a very delicate and brilliant texture, and one wished to penetrate the inward folds of a lady's heart, by developing to the best advantage the exterior folds that covered his own."

"It is the first time," answered Bolingbroke, "that I ever heard so accomplished a courtier as Count Hamilton repine, with sincerity, that he could not bare his bosom to inspection."

"Ah!" cried Boulainvilliers, "but vanity makes a man show much that discretion would conceal."

"/Au diable/ with your discretion!" said Hamilton, "'tis a vulgar virtue. Vanity is a truly aristocratic quality, and every way fitted to a gentleman. Should I ever have been renowned for my exquisite lace and web-like cambric, if I had not been vain? Never, /mon cher/! I should have gone into a convent and worn sackcloth, and from /Count Antoine/ I should have thickened into /Saint Anthony/."

"Nay," cried Lord Bolingbroke, "there is as much scope for vanity in sackcloth as there is in cambric; for vanity is like the Irish ogling master in the "Spectator," and if it teaches the play-house to ogle by candle-light, it also teaches the church to ogle by day! But, pardon me, Monsieur Chaulieu, how well you look! I see that the myrtle sheds its verdure, not only over your poetry, but the poet. And it is right that, to the modern Anacreon, who has bequeathed to Time a treasure it

will never forego, Time itself should be gentle in return."

"Milord," answered Chaulieu, an old man who, though considerably past seventy, was animated, in appearance and manner, with a vivacity and life that would have done honour to a youth,--"Milord, it was beautifully said by the Emperor Julian that Justice retained the Graces in her vestibule. I see, now, that he should have substituted the word /Wisdom/ for that of Justice."

"Come," cried Anthony Hamilton, "this will never do: compliments are the dullest things imaginable. For Heaven's sake, let us leave panegyric to blockheads, and say something bitter to one another, or we shall die of /ennui/."

"Right," said Boulainvilliers; "let us pick out some poor devil to begin with. Absent or present?--Decide which."

"Oh, absent," cried Chaulieu, "'tis a thousand times more piquant to slander than to rally! Let us commence with his Majesty: Count Devereux, have you seen Madame Maintenon and her devout infant since your arrival?"

"No! the priest must be petitioned before the miracle is made public."

"What!" cried Chaulieu, "would you insinuate that his Majesty's piety is really nothing less than a miracle?"

"Impossible!" said Boulainvilliers, gravely,--"piety is as natural to kings as flattery to their courtiers: are we not told that they are made in God's own image?"

"If that were true," said Count Hamilton, somewhat profanely,--"if that were true, I should no longer deny the impossibility of Atheism!"

"Fie, Count Hamilton," said an old gentleman, in whom I recognized the great Huet, "fie: wit should beware how it uses wings; its province is earth, not Heaven."

"Nobody can better tell what wit is /not/ than the learned Abbe Huet!" answered Hamilton, with a mock air of respect.

"Pshaw!" cried Chaulieu, "I thought when we once gave the rein to satire it would carry us /pele-mele/ against one another. But, in order to sweeten that drop of lemon-juice for you, my dear Huet, let me turn to Milord Bolingbroke, and ask him whether England can produce a scholar equal to Peter Huet, who in twenty years wrote notes to sixty-two volumes of Classics,* for the sake of a prince who never read a line in one of them?"

* The Delphin Classics.

"We have some scholars," answered Bolingbroke; "but we certainly have no Huet. It is strange enough, but learning seems to me like a circle: it grows weaker the more it spreads. We now see many people capable of reading commentaries, but very few indeed capable of writing them."

"True," answered Huet; and in his reply he introduced the celebrated illustration which is at this day mentioned among his most felicitous /bons mots/. "Scholarship, formerly the most difficult and unaided enterprise of Genius, has now been made, by the very toils of the first mariners, but an easy and commonplace voyage of leisure. But who would compare the great men, whose very difficulties not only proved their ardour, but brought them the patience and the courage which alone are the parents of a genuine triumph, to the indolent loiterers of the present day, who, having little of difficulty to conquer, have nothing of glory to attain? For my part, there seems to me the same difference between a scholar of our days and one of the past as there is between Christopher Columbus and the master of a packet-boat from Calais to Dover!"

"But," cried Anthony Hamilton, taking a pinch of snuff with the air of a man about to utter a witty thing, "but what have we--we spirits of the world, not imps of the closet," and he glanced at Huet--"to do with scholarship? All the waters of Castaly, which we want to pour into our brain, are such as will flow the readiest to our tongue."

"In short, then," said I, "you would assert that all a friend cares for in one’s head is the quantity of talk in it?"

"Precisely, my dear Count," said Hamilton, seriously; "and to that maxim I will add another applicable to the opposite sex. All that a mistress cares for in one’s heart is the quantity of love in it."

"What! are generosity, courage, honour, to go for nothing with our mistress, then?" cried Chaulieu.

"No: for she will believe, if you are a passionate lover, that you have all those virtues; and if not, she will never believe that you have one."

"Ah! it was a pretty court of love in which the friend and biographer of Count Grammont learned the art!" said Bolingbroke.

"We believed so at the time, my Lord; but there are as many changes in the fashion of making love as there are in that of making dresses. Honour me, Count Devereux, by using my snuff-box and then looking at the lid."

"It is the picture of Charles the Second which adorns it; is it not?"

"No, Count Devereux, it is the diamonds which adorn it. His Majesty’s face I thought very beautiful while he was living; but now, on my conscience, I consider it the ugliest phiz I ever beheld. But I directed your notice to the picture because we were talking of love; and

Old Rowley believed that he could make it better than any one else. All his courtiers had the same opinion of themselves; and I dare say the /beaux garcons/ of Queen Anne's reign would say that not one of King Charley's gang knew what love was. Oh! 'tis a strange circle of revolutions, that love! Like the earth, it always changes, and yet always has the same materials."

"/L'amour, l'amour, toujours l'amour/, with Count Anthony Hamilton!" said Boulainvilliers. "He is always on that subject; and, /sacre bleu/! when he was younger, I am told he was like Cacus, the son of Vulcan, and breathed nothing but flames."

"You flatter me," said Hamilton. "Solve me now a knotty riddle, my Lord Bolingbroke. Why does a young man think it the greatest compliment to be thought wise, while an old man thinks it the greatest compliment to be told he has been foolish?"

"Is love foolish then?" said Lord Bolingbroke.

"Can you doubt it?" answered Hamilton; "it makes a man think more of another than himself! I know not a greater proof of folly!"

"Ah! /mon aimable ami/," cried Chaulieu; "you are the wickedest witty person I know. I cannot help loving your language, while I hate your sentiments."

"My language is my own; my sentiments are those of all men," answered Hamilton: "but are we not, by the by, to have young Arouet here to-night? What a charming person he is!"

"Yes," said Boulainvilliers. "He said he should be late; and I expect Fontenelle, too, but /he/ will not come before supper. I found Fontenelle this morning conversing with my cook on the best manner of dressing asparagus. I asked him the other day what writer, ancient or modern, had ever given him the most sensible pleasure? After a little pause, the excelient old man said, 'Daphnus.' 'Daphnus!' repeated I, 'who the devil is he?' 'Why,' answered Fontenelle, with tears of gratitude in his benevolent eyes, 'I had some hypochondriacal ideas that suppers were unwholesome; and Daphnus is an ancient physician, who asserts the contrary; and declares,--think, my friend, what a charming theory!--that the moon is a great assistant of the digestion!'"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the Abbe de Chaulieu. "How like Fontenelle! what an anomalous creature 'tis! He has the most kindness and the least feeling of any man I ever knew. Let Hamilton find a pithier description for him if he can!"

Whatever reply the friend of the /preux Grammont/ might have made was prevented by the entrance of a young man of about twenty-one.

In person he was tall, slight, and very thin. There was a certain affectation of polite address in his manner and mien which did not quite become him; and though he was received by the old wits with great

cordiality, and on a footing of perfect equality, yet the inexpressible air which denotes birth was both pretended to and wanting. This, perhaps, was however owing to the ordinary inexperience of youth; which, if not awkwardly bashful, is generally awkward in its assurance. Whatever its cause, the impression vanished directly he entered into conversation. I do not think I ever encountered a man so brilliantly, yet so easily, witty. He had but little of the studied allusion, the antithetical point, the classic metaphor, which chiefly characterize the wits of my day. On the contrary, it was an exceeding and naive simplicity, which gave such unrivalled charm and piquancy to his conversation. And while I have not scrupled to stamp on my pages some faint imitation of the peculiar dialogue of other eminent characters, I must confess myself utterly unable to convey the smallest idea of his method of making words irresistible. Contenting my efforts, therefore, with describing his personal appearance,--interesting, because that of the most striking literary character it has been my lot to meet,--I shall omit his share in the remainder of the conversation I am rehearsing, and beg the reader to recall that passage in Tacitus in which the great historian says that, in the funeral of Junia, "the images of Brutus and Cassius outshone all the rest, from the very circumstance of their being the sole ones excluded from the rite."

The countenance, then, of Marie Francois Arouet (since so celebrated under the name of Voltaire) was plain in feature, but singularly striking in effect; its vivacity was the very perfection of what Steele once happily called "physiognomical eloquence." His eyes were blue, fiery rather than bright, and so restless that they never dwelt in the same place for a moment:* his mouth was at once the worst and the most peculiar feature of his face; it betokened humour, it is true; but it also betrayed malignancy, nor did it ever smile without sarcasm. Though flattering to those present, his words against the absent, uttered by that bitter and curling lip, mingled with your pleasure at their wit a little fear at their causticity. I believe no one, be he as bold, as callous, or as faultless as human nature can be, could be one hour with that man and not feel apprehension. Ridicule, so lavish, yet so true to the mark; so wanton, yet so seemingly just; so bright, that while it wandered round its target, in apparent though terrible playfulness, it burned into the spot, and engraved there a brand, and a token indelible and perpetual,--this no man could witness, when darted towards another, and feel safe for himself. The very caprice and levity of the jester seemed more perilous, because less to be calculated upon, than a systematic principle of bitterness or satire. Bolingbroke compared him, not unaptly, to a child who has possessed himself of Jupiter’s bolts, and who makes use of those bolts in sport which a god would only have used in wrath.

* The reader will remember that this is a description of Voltaire as a very young man. I do not know anywhere a more impressive, almost a more ghastly, contrast than that which the pictures of Voltaire, grown old, present to Largilliere’s picture of him at the age of twenty-four; and he was somewhat younger than twenty-four at the time of which the Count now speaks.--ED.

Arouet's forehead was not remarkable for height, but it was nobly and grandly formed, and, contradicting that of the mouth, wore a benevolent expression. Though so young, there was already a wrinkle on the surface of the front, and a prominence on the eyebrow, which showed that the wit and the fancy of his conversation were, if not regulated, at least contrasted, by more thoughtful and lofty characteristics of mind. At the time I write, this man has obtained a high throne among the powers of the lettered world. What he may yet be, it is in vain to guess: he may be all that is great and good, or--the reverse; but I cannot but believe that his career is only begun. Such men are born monarchs of the mind; they may be benefactors or tyrants: in either case, they are greater than the kings of the physical empire, because they defy armies and laugh at the intrigues of state. From themselves only come the balance of their power, the laws of their government, and the boundaries of their realm. We sat down to supper. "Count Hamilton," said Boulainvilliers, "are we not a merry set for such old fellows? Why, excepting Arouet, Milord Bolingbroke, and Count Devereux, there is scarcely one of us under seventy. Where but at Paris would you see /bons vivans/ of our age? /Vivent la joie, la bagatelle, l'amour/!"

"/Et le vin de Champagne/!" cried Chaulieu, filling his glass; "but what is there strange in our merriment? Philemon, the comic poet, laughed at ninety-seven. May we all do the same!"

"You forget," cried Bolingbroke, "that Philemon died of the laughing."

"Yes," said Hamilton; "but if I remember right, it was at seeing an ass eat figs. Let us vow, therefore, never to keep company with asses!"

"Bravo, Count," said Boulainvilliers, "you have put the true moral on the story. Let us swear by the ghost of Philemon that we will never laugh at an ass's jokes,--practical or verbal."

"Then we must always be serious, except when we are with each other," cried Chaulieu. "Oh, I would sooner take my chance of dying prematurely at ninety-seven than consent to such a vow!"

"Fontenelle," cried our host, "you are melancholy. What is the matter?"

"I mourn for the weakness of human nature," answered Fontenelle, with an air of patriarchal philanthropy. "I told your cook three times about the asparagus; and now--taste it. I told him not to put too much sugar, and he has put none. Thus it is with mankind,--ever in extremes, and consequently ever in error. Thus it was that Luther said, so felicitously and so truly, that the human mind was like a drunken peasant on horseback: prop it on one side, and it falls on the other."

"Ha! ha! ha!" cried Chaulieu. "Who would have thought one could have found so much morality in a plate of asparagus! Taste this /salsifis/."

"Pray, Hamilton," said Huet, "what /jeu de mot/ was that you made

yesterday at Madame d'Epernonville's which gained you such applause?"

"Ah, repeat it, Count," cried Boulainvilliers; "'t was the most classical thing I have heard for a long time."

"Why," said Hamilton, laying down his knife and fork, and preparing himself by a large draught of the champagne, "why, Madame d'Epernonville appeared without her /tour/; you know, Lord Bolingbroke, that /tour/ is the polite name for false hair. 'Ah, sacre!' cried her brother, courteously, 'ma soeur, que vous etes laide aujourd'hui: vous n'avez pas votre tour!' 'Voila pourquoi elle n'est pas si-belle (Cybele),' answered I."

"Excellent! famous!" cried we all, except Huet, who seemed to regard the punster with a very disrespectful eye. Hamilton saw it. "You do not think, Monsieur Huet, that there is wit in these /jeux de mots/: perhaps you do not admire wit at all?"

"Yes, I admire wit as I do the wind. When it shakes the trees it is fine; when it cools the wave it is refreshing; when it steals over flowers it is enchanting: but when, Monsieur Hamilton, it whistles through the key-hole it is unpleasant."

"The very worst illustration I ever heard," said Hamilton, coolly. "Keep to your classics, my dear Abbe. When Jupiter edited the work of Peter Huet, he did with wit as Peter Huet did with Lucan when he edited the classics: he was afraid it might do mischief, and so left it out altogether."

"Let us drink!" cried Chaulieu; "let us drink!" and the conversation was turned again.

"What is that you say of Tacitus, Huet?" said Boulainvilliers.

"That his wisdom arose from his malignancy," answered Huet. "He is a perfect penetrator* into human vices, but knows nothing of human virtues. Do you think that a good man would dwell so constantly on what is evil? Believe me--no. A man cannot write much and well upon virtue without being virtuous, nor enter minutely and profoundly into the causes of vice without being vicious himself."

* A remark similar to this the reader will probably remember in the "Huetiana," and will, I hope, agree with me in thinking it showy and untrue.--ED.

"It is true," said Hamilton; "and your remark, which affects to be so deep, is but a natural corollary from the hackneyed maxim that from experience comes wisdom."

"But, for my part," said Boulainvilliers, "I think Tacitus is not so invariably the analyzer of vice as you would make him. Look at the

’Agricola’ and the ’Germania.’"

"Ah! the ’Germany,’ above all things!" cried Hamilton, dropping a delicious morsel of /sanglier/ in its way from hand to mouth, in his hurry to speak. "Of course, the historian, Boulainvilliers, advocates the ’Germany,’ from its mention of the origin of the feudal system,--that incomparable bundle of excellences, which Le Comte de Boulainvilliers has declared to be /le chef d’oeuvre de l’esprit humain/; and which the same gentleman regrets, in the most pathetic terms, no longer exists in order that the seigneur may feed upon /des gros morceaux de boeuf demi-cru/, may hang up half his peasants /pour encourager les autres/, and ravish the daughters of the defunct /pour leur donner quelque consolation./"

"Seriously though," said the old Abbe de Chaulieu, with a twinkling eye, "the last mentioned evil, my dear Hamilton, was not without a little alloy of good."

"Yes," said Hamilton, "if it was only the daughters; but perhaps the seigneur was not too scrupulous with regard to the wives."

"Ah! shocking, shocking!" cried Chaulieu, solemnly. "Adultery is, indeed, an atrocious crime. I am sure I would most conscientiously cry out with the honest preacher, ’Adultery, my children, is the blackest of sins. I do declare that I would rather have /ten/ virgins in love with me than /one/ married woman!’"

We all laughed at this enthusiastic burst of virtue from the chaste Chaulieu. And Arouet turned our conversation towards the ecclesiastical dissensions between Jesuits and Jansenists that then agitated the kingdom. "Those priests," said Bolingbroke, "remind me of the nurses of Jupiter: they make a great clamour in order to drown the voice of their God."

"Bravissimo!" cried Hamilton. "Is it not a pity, Messieurs, that my Lord Bolingbroke was not a Frenchman? He is almost clever enough to be one."

"If he would drink a little more, he would be," cried Chaulieu, who was now setting us all a glorious example.

"What say you, Morton?" exclaimed Bolingbroke; "must we not drink these gentlemen under the table for the honour of our country?"

"A challenge! a challenge!" cried Chaulieu. "I march first to the field!"

"Conquest or death!" shouted Bolingbroke. And the rites of Minerva were forsaken for those of Bacchus.

CHAPTER VI.

A COURT, COURTIERS, AND A KING.

I THINK it was the second day after this "feast of reason" that Lord Bolingbroke deemed it advisable to retire to Lyons till his plans of conduct were ripened into decision. We took an affectionate leave of each other; but before we parted, and after he had discussed his own projects of ambition, we talked a little upon mine. Although I was a Catholic and a pupil of Montreuil, although I had fled from England and had nothing to expect from the House of Hanover, I was by no means favourably disposed towards the Chevalier and his cause. I wonder if this avowal will seem odd to Englishmen of the next century! To Englishmen of the present one, a Roman Catholic and a lover of priestcraft and tyranny are two words for the same thing; as if we could not murmur at tithes and taxes, insecurity of property or arbitrary legislation, just as sourly as any other Christian community. No! I never loved the cause of the Stuarts,--unfortunate, and therefore interesting, as the Stuarts were; by a very stupid and yet uneffaceable confusion of ideas, I confounded it with the cause of Montreuil, and I hated the latter enough to dislike the former: I fancy all party principles are formed much in the same manner. I frankly told Bolingbroke my disinclination to the Chevalier.

"Between ourselves be it spoken," said he, "there is but little to induce a wise man in /your/ circumstances to join James the Third. I would advise you rather to take advantage of your father's reputation at the French court, and enter into the same service he did. Things wear a dark face in England for you, and a bright one everywhere else."

"I have already," said I, "in my own mind, perceived and weighed the advantages of entering into the service of Louis. But he is old: he cannot live long. People now pay court to parties, not to the king. Which party, think you, is the best,--that of Madame de Maintenon?"

"Nay, I think not; she is a cold friend, and never asks favours of Louis for any of her family. A bold game might be played by attaching yourself to the Duchesse d'Orleans (the Duke's mother). She is at daggers-drawn with Maintenon, it is true, and she is a violent, haughty, and coarse woman; but she has wit, talent, strength of mind, and will zealously serve any person of high birth who pays her respect. But she can do nothing for you till the king's death, and then only on the chance of her son's power. But--let me see--you say Fleuri, the Bishop of Frejus, is to introduce you to Madame de Maintenon?"

"Yes; and has appointed the day after to-morrow for that purpose."

"Well, then, make close friends with him: you will not find it difficult; he has a delightful address, and if you get hold of his weak points you may win his confidence. Mark me: Fleuri has no /faux-brillant/, no genius, indeed, of very prominent order; but he is one of those soft and smooth minds which, in a crisis like the present, when parties are contending and princes wrangling, always slip silently and unobtrusively into one of the best places. Keep in with Frejus: you

cannot do wrong by it; although you must remember that at present he is in ill odour with the king, and you need not go with /him twice/ to Versailles. But, above all, when you are introduced to Louis, do not forget that you cannot please him better than by appearing awe-stricken."

Such was Bolingbroke's parting advice. The Bishop of Frejus carried me with him (on the morning we had appointed) to Versailles. What a magnificent work of royal imagination is that palace! I know not in any epic a grander idea than terming the avenues which lead to it the roads "to Spain, to Holland," etc. In London, they would have been the roads to Chelsea and Pentonville!

As we were driving slowly along in the Bishop's carriage, I had ample time for conversation with that personage, who has since, as the Cardinal de Fleuri, risen to so high a pitch of power. He certainly has in him very little of the great man; nor do I know anywhere so striking an instance of this truth,--that in that game of honours which is played at courts, we obtain success less by our talents than our tempers. He laughed, with a graceful turn of /badinage/, at the political peculiarities of Madame de Balzac; and said that it was not for the uppermost party to feel resentment at the chafings of the under one. Sliding from this topic, he then questioned me as to the gayeties I had witnessed. I gave him a description of the party at Boulainvilliers'. He seemed much interested in this, and showed more shrewdness than I should have given him credit for in discussing the various characters of the /literati/ of the day. After some general conversation on works of fiction, he artfully glided into treating on those of statistics and politics, and I then caught a sudden but thorough insight into the depths of his policy. I saw that, while he affected to be indifferent to the difficulties and puzzles of state, he lost no opportunity of gaining every particle of information respecting them; and that he made conversation, in which he was skilled, a vehicle for acquiring that knowledge which he had not the force of mind to create from his own intellect, or to work out from the written labours of others. If this made him a superficial statesman, it made him a prompt one; and there was never so lucky a minister with so little trouble to himself.*

* At his death appeared the following pnnning epigram:--

"/Floruit/ sine fructu;
/Defloruit/ sine luctu."

"He flowered without fruit, and faded without regret."--ED.

As we approached the end of our destination, we talked of the King. On this subject he was jealously cautious. But I gleaned from him, despite of his sagacity, that it was high time to make all use of one's acquaintance with Madame de Maintenon that one could be enabled to do; and that it was so difficult to guess the exact places in which power would rest after the death of the old King that supineness and silence

made at present the most profound policy.

As we alighted from the carriage and I first set my foot within the palace, I could not but feel involuntarily yet powerfully impressed with the sense of the spirit of the place. I was in the precincts of that mighty court which had gathered into one dazzling focus all the rays of genius which half a century had emitted,--the court at which time had passed at once from the morn of civilization into its full noon and glory,--the court of Conde and Turenne, of Villars and of Tourville,--the court where, over the wit of Grammont, the profusion of Fouquet, the fatal genius of Louvois (fatal to humanity and to France), Love, real Love, had not disdained to shed its pathos and its truth, and to consecrate the hollow pageantries of royal pomp, with the tenderness, the beauty, and the repentance of La Valliere. Still over that scene hung the spells of a genius which, if artificial and cold, was also vast, stately, and magnificent,--a genius which had swelled in the rich music of Racine, which had raised the nobler spirit and the freer thought of Pierre Corneille,* which had given edge to the polished weapon of Boileau, which had lavished over the bright page of Moliere,--Moliere, more wonderful than all--a knowledge of the humours and the hearts of men, which no dramatist, save Shakspeare, has surpassed. Within those walls still glowed, though now waxing faint and dim, the fame of that monarch who had enjoyed, at least till his later day, the fortune of Augustus unsullied by the crimes of Octavius. Nine times, since the sun of that monarch rose, had the Papal Chair received a new occupant! Six sovereigns had reigned over the Ottoman hordes! The fourth emperor since the birth of the same era bore sway over Germany! Five czars, from Michael Romanoff to the Great Peter, had held, over their enormous territory, the precarious tenure of their iron power! Six kings had borne the painful cincture of the English crown;** two of those kings had been fugitives to that court; to the son of the last it was an asylum at that moment.

* Rigidly speaking, Corneille belongs to a period later than that of Louis XIV., though he has been included in the era formed by that reign.--ED.

** Besides Cromwell; namely, Charles I., Charles II., James II., William and Mary, Anne, George I.

What wonderful changes had passed over the face of Europe during that single reign! In England only, what a vast leap in the waste of events, from the reign of the first Charles to that of George the First! I still lingered, I still gazed, as these thoughts, linked to one another in an electric chain, flashed over me! I still paused on the threshold of those stately halls which Nature herself had been conquered to rear! Where, through the whole earth, could I find so meet a symbol for the character and the name which that sovereign would leave to posterity as this palace itself afforded? A gorgeous monument of regal state raised from a desert; crowded alike with empty pageantries and illustrious

names; a prodigy of elaborate artifice, grand in its whole effect, petty in its small details; a solitary oblation to a splendid selfishness, and most remarkable for the revenues which it exhausted and the poverty by which it is surrounded!

Fleuri, with his usual urbanity--an urbanity that, on a great scale, would have been benevolence--had hitherto indulged me in my emotions: he now laid his hand upon my arm, and recalled me to myself. Before I could apologize for my abstraction, the Bishop was accosted by an old man of evident rank, but of a countenance more strikingly demonstrative of the little cares of a mere courtier than any I ever beheld. "What news, Monsieur le Marquis?" said Fleuri, smiling.

"Oh! the greatest imaginable! the King talks of receiving the Danish minister on /Thursday/, which, you know, is his day of /domestic business/! What /can/ this portend? Besides," and here the speaker's voice lowered into a whisper, "I am told by the Duc de la Rochefoucauld that the king intends, out of all ordinary rule and practice, to take physic to-morrow: I can't believe it; no, I positively can't; but don't let this go further!"

"Heaven forbid!" answered Fleuri, bowing, and the courtier passed on to whisper his intelligence to others. "Who's that gentleman?" I asked.

"The Marquis de Dangeau," answered Fleuri; "a nobleman of great quality, who keeps a diary of all the king says and does. It will perhaps be a posthumous publication, and will show the world of what importance nothings can be made. I dare say, Count, you have already, in England, seen enough of a court to know that there are some people who are as human echoes, and have no existence except in the noise occasioned by another."

I took care that my answer should not be a witticism, lest Fleuri should think I was attempting to rival him; and so we passed on in an excellent humour with each other.

We mounted the grand staircase, and came to an ante-chamber, which, though costly and rich, was not remarkably conspicuous for splendour. Here the Bishop requested me to wait for a moment. Accordingly, I amused myself with looking over some engravings of different saints. Meanwhile, my companion passed through another door, and I was alone.

After an absence of nearly ten minutes, he returned. "Madame de Maintenon," said he in a whisper, "is but poorly to-day. However, she has eagerly consented to see you; follow me!"

So saying, the ecclesiastical courtier passed on, with myself at his heels. We came to the door of a second chamber, at which Fleuri /scraped/ gently. We were admitted, and found therein three ladies, one of whom was reading, a second laughing, and a third yawning, and entered into another chamber, where, alone and seated by the window in a large chair, with one foot on a stool, in an attitude that rather reminded me of my mother, and which seems to me a favourite position with all

devotees, we found an old woman without /rouge/, plainly dressed, with spectacles on her nose and a large book on a little table before her. With a most profound salutation, Frejus approached, and taking me by the hand, said,--

"Will Madame suffer me to present to her the Count Devereux?"

Madame de Maintenon, with an air of great meekness and humility, bowed a return to the salutation. "The son of Madame la Marechale de Devereux will always be most welcome to me!" Then, turning towards us, she pointed to two stools, and, while we were seating ourselves, said,--

"And how did you leave my excellent friend?"

"When, Madame, I last saw my mother, which is now nearly a year ago, she was in health, and consoling herself for the advance of years by that tendency to wean the thoughts from this world which (in her own language) is the divinest comfort of old age!"

"Admirable woman!" said Madame de Maintenon, casting down her eyes; "such are indeed the sentiments in which I recognize the Marechale. And how does her beauty wear? Those golden locks, and blue eyes, and that snowy skin, are not yet, I suppose, wholly changed for an adequate compensation of the beauties within?"

"Time, Madame, has been gentle with her; and I have often thought, though never perhaps more strongly than at this moment, that there is in those divine studies, which bring calm and light to the mind, something which preserves and embalms, as it were, the beauty of the body."

A faint blush passed over the face of the devotee. No, no,--not even at eighty years of age is a compliment to a woman's beauty misplaced! There was a slight pause. I thought that respect forbade me to break it.

"His Majesty," said the Bishop, in the tone of one who is sensible that he encroaches a little, and does it with consequent reverence, "his Majesty, I hope, is well?"

"God be thanked, yes, as well as we can expect. It is now nearly the hour in which his Majesty awaits your personal inquiries."

Fleuri bowed as he answered,--

"The King, then, will receive us to-day? My young companion is very desirous to see the greatest monarch, and, consequently, the greatest man, of the age."

"The desire is natural," said Madame de Maintenon; and then, turning to me, she asked if I had yet seen King James the Third.

I took care, in my answer, to express that even if I had resolved to make that stay in Paris which allowed me to pay my respects to him at

all, I should have deemed that both duty and inclination led me, in the first instance, to offer my homage to one who was both the benefactor of my father and the monarch whose realms afforded me protection.

"You have not, then," said Madame de Maintenon, "decided on the length of your stay in France?"

"No," said I,--and my answer was regulated by my desire to see how far I might rely on the services of one who expressed herself so warm a friend of that excellent woman, Madame la Marechale,--"no, Madame. France is the country of my birth, if England is that of my parentage; and could I hope for some portion of that royal favour which my father enjoyed, I would rather claim it as the home of my hopes than the refuge of my exile. But"--and I stopped short purposely.

The old lady looked at me very earnestly through her spectacles for one moment, and then, hemming twice with a little embarrassment, again remarked to the Bishop that the time for seeing the King was nearly arrived. Fleuri, whose policy at that period was very like that of the concealed Queen, and who was, besides, far from desirous of introducing any new claimants on Madame de Maintenon's official favour, though he might not object to introduce them to a private friend, was not slow in taking the hint. He rose, and I was forced to follow his example.

Madame de Maintenon thought she might safely indulge in a little cordiality when I was just on the point of leaving her, and accordingly blessed me, and gave me her hand, which I kissed very devoutly. An extremely pretty hand it was, too, notwithstanding the good Queen's age. We then retired, and, repassing the three ladies, who were now all yawning, repaired to the King's apartments.

"What think you of Madame?" asked Fleuri.

"What can I think of her," said I, cautiously, "but that greatness seems in her to take its noblest form,--that of simplicity?"

"True," rejoined Fleuri; "never was there so meek a mind joined to so lowly a carriage! Do you remark any trace of former beauty?"

"Yes, indeed, there is much that is soft in her countenance, and much that is still regular in her features; but what struck me most was the pensive and even sad tranquillity that rests upon her face when she is silent."

"The expression betrays the mind," answered Fleuri; "and the curse of the great is /ennui/."

"Of the great in station," said I, "but not necessarily of the great in mind. I have heard that the Bishop of Frejus, notwithstanding his rank and celebrity, employs every hour to the advantage of others, and consequently without tedium to himself."

"Aha!" said Fleuri, smiling gently and patting my cheek: "see now if the

air of palaces is not absolutely prolific of pretty speeches." And, before I could answer, we were in the apartments of the King.

Leaving me a while to cool my heels in a gallery, filled with the butterflies who bask in the royal sunshine, Frejus then disappeared among the crowd; he was scarcely gone when I was agreeably surprised by seeing Count Hamilton approach towards me.

"/Mort diable/!" said he, shaking me by the hand /a l'Anglaise/; "I am really delighted to see any one here who does not insult my sins with his superior excellence. Eh, now, look round this apartment for a moment! Whether would you believe yourself at the court of a great king or the /levee/ of a Roman cardinal! Whom see you chiefly? Gallant soldiers, with worn brows and glittering weeds? wise statesmen with ruin to Austria and defiance to Rome in every wrinkle? gay nobles in costly robes, and with the bearing that so nicely teaches mirth to be dignified and dignity to be merry? No! cassock and hat, rosary and gown, decking sly, demure, hypocritical faces, flit, and stalk, and sadden round us. It seems to me," continued the witty Count, in a lower whisper, "as if the old king, having fairly buried his glory at Ramilies and Blenheim, had summoned all these good gentry to sing psalms over it! But are you waiting for a private audience?"

"Yes, under the auspices of the Bishop of Frejus."

"You might have chosen a better guide: the King has been too much teased about him," rejoined Hamilton; "and now that we are talking of him, I will show you a singular instance of what good manners can do at court in preference to good abilities. You observe yon quiet, modest-looking man, with a sensible countenance and a clerical garb; you observe how he edges away when any one approaches to accost him; and how, from his extreme disesteem of himself, he seems to inspire every one with the same sentiment. Well, that man is a namesake of Fleuri, the Prior of Argenteuil; he has come here, I suppose, for some particular and temporary purpose, since, in reality, he has left the court. Well, that worthy priest--do remark his bow; did you ever see anything so awkward?--is one of the most learned divines that the Church can boast of; he is as immeasurably superior to the smooth-faced Bishop of Frejus as Louis the Fourteenth is to my old friend Charles the Second. He has had equal opportunities with the said Bishop; been preceptor to the princes of Conti and the Count de Vermandois; and yet I will wager that he lives and dies a tutor, a bookworm--and a prior; while t' other Fleuri, without a particle of merit but of the most superficial order, governs already kings through their mistresses, kingdoms through the kings, and may, for aught I know, expand into a prime minister and ripen into a cardinal."

"Nay," said I, smiling, "there is little chance of so exalted a lot for the worthy Bishop."

"Pardon me," interrupted Hamilton, "I am an old courtier, and look steadily on the game I no longer play. Suppleness, united with art, may do anything in a court like this; and the smooth and unelevated craft of

a Fleuri may win even to the same height as the deep wiles of the glittering Mazarin, or the superb genius of the imperious Richelieu."

"Hist!" said I, "the Bishop has reappeared. Who is that old priest with a fine countenance and an address that will, at least, please you better than that of the Prior of Argenteuil, who has just stopped our episcopal courtier?"

"What! do you not know? It is the most celebrated preacher of the day,--the great Massillon. It is said that that handsome person goes a great way towards winning converts among the court ladies; it is certain, at least, that when Massillon first entered the profession he was to the soul something like the spear of Achilles to the body; and, though very efficacious in healing the wounds of conscience, was equally ready in the first instance to inflict them."

"Ah," said I, "see the malice of wit; and see, above all, how much more ready one is to mention a man's frailties than to enlarge upon his virtues."

"To be sure," answered Hamilton, coolly, and patting his snuff-box, "to be sure, we old people like history better than fiction; and frailty is certain, while virtue is always doubtful."

"Don't judge of all people," said I, "by your experience among the courtiers of Charles the Second."

"Right," said Hamilton. "Providence never assembled so many rascals together before without hanging them. And he would indeed be a bad judge of human nature who estimated the characters of men in general by the heroes of Newgate and the victims of Tyburn. But your Bishop approaches. Adieu!"

"What!" said Fleuri, joining me and saluting Hamilton, who had just turned to depart, "what, Count Antoine! Does anything but whim bring you here to-day?"

"No," answered Hamilton; "I am only here for the same purpose as the poor go to the temples of Caitan,--/to inhale the steam of those good things which I see the priests devour/."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the good-natured Bishop, not in the least disconcerted; and Count Hamilton, congratulating himself on his /bon mot/, turned away.

"I have spoken to his Most Christian Majesty," said the Bishop; "he is willing, as he before ordained, to admit you to his presence. The Duc de Maine is with the King, as also some other members of the royal family; but you will consider this a private audience."

I expressed my gratitude: we moved on; the doors of an apartment were thrown open; and I saw myself in the presence of Louis XIV.

The room was partially darkened. In the centre of it, on a large sofa, reclined the King; he was dressed (though this, if I may so speak, I rather remembered than noted) in a coat of black velvet, slightly embroidered; his vest was of white satin; he wore no jewels nor orders, for it was only on grand or gala days that he displayed personal pomp. At some little distance from him stood three members of the royal family; them I never regarded: all my attention was bent upon the King. My temperament is not that on which greatness, or indeed any external circumstances, make much impression; but as, following at a little distance the Bishop of Frejus, I approached the royal person, I must confess that Bolingbroke had scarcely need to have cautioned me not to appear too self-possessed. Perhaps, had I seen that great monarch in his /beaux jours/; in the plenitude of his power, his glory, the dazzling and meridian splendour of his person, his court, and his renown,--pride might have made me more on my guard against too deep, or at least too apparent, an impression; but the many reverses of that magnificent sovereign,--reverses in which he had shown himself more great than in all his previous triumphs and early successes; his age, his infirmities, the very clouds round the setting sun, the very howls of joy at the expiring lion,--all were calculated, in my mind, to deepen respect into reverence, and tincture reverence itself with awe. I saw before me not only the majesty of Louis le Grand, but that of misfortune, of weakness, of infirmity, and of age; and I forgot at once, in that reflection, what otherwise would have blunted my sentiments of deference, namely, the crimes of his ministers and the exactions of his reign. Endeavouring to collect my mind from an embarrassment which surprised myself, I lifted my eyes towards the King, and saw a countenance where the trace of the superb beauty for which his manhood had been celebrated still lingered, broken, not destroyed, and borrowing a dignity even more imposing from the marks of encroaching years and from the evident exhaustion of suffering and disease.

Fleuri said, in a low tone, something which my ear did not catch. There was a pause,--only a moment’s pause; and then, in a voice, the music of which I had hitherto deemed exaggerated, the King spoke; and in that voice there was something so kind and encouraging that I felt reassured at once. Perhaps its tone was not the less conciliating from the evident effect which the royal presence had produced upon me.

"You have given us, Count Devereux," said the King, "a pleasure which we are glad, in person, to acknowledge to you. And it has seemed to us fitting that the country in which your brave father acquired his fame should also be the asylum of his son."

"Sire," answered I, "Sire, it shall not be my fault if that country is not henceforth my own; and in inheriting my father’s name, I inherit also his gratitude and his ambition."

"It is well said, Sir," said the King; and I once more raised my eyes, and perceived that his were bent upon me. "It is well said," he repeated after a short pause; "and in granting to you this audience, we were not unwilling to hope that you were desirous to attach yourself to our court. The times do not require" (here I thought the old King’s

voice was not so firm as before) "the manifestation of your zeal in the same career as that in which your father gained laurels to France and to himself. But we will not neglect to find employment for your abilities, if not for your sword."

"That sword which was given to me, Sire," said I, "by your Majesty, shall be ever drawn (against all nations but one) at your command; and, in being your Majesty's petitioner for future favours, I only seek some channel through which to evince my gratitude for the past."

"We do not doubt," said Louis, "that whatever be the number of the ungrateful we may make by testifying our good pleasure on your behalf, /you/ will not be among the number." The King here made a slight but courteous inclination and turned round. The observant Bishop of Frejus, who had retired to a little distance and who knew that the King never liked talking more than he could help it, gave me a signal. I obeyed, and backed, with all due deference, out of the royal presence.

So closed my interview with Louis XIV. Although his Majesty did not indulge in prolixity, I spoke of him for a long time afterwards as the most eloquent of men. Believe me, there is no orator like a king; one word from a royal mouth stirs the heart more than Demosthenes could have done. There was a deep moral in that custom of the ancients, by which the Goddess of Persuasion was always represented /with a diadem on her head/.

CHAPTER VII.

REFLECTIONS.--A SOIREE.--THE APPEARANCE OF ONE IMPORTANT IN THE HISTORY.--A CONVERSATION WITH MADAME DE BALZAC HIGHLY SATISFACTORY AND CHEERING.--A RENCONTRE WITH A CURIOUS OLD SOLDIER.--THE EXTINCTION OF A ONCE GREAT LUMINARY.

I HAD now been several weeks at Paris; I had neither eagerly sought nor sedulously avoided its gayeties. It is not that one violent sorrow leaves us without power of enjoyment; it only lessens the power, and deadens the enjoyment: it does not take away from us the objects of life; it only forestalls the more indifferent calmness of age. The blood no longer flows in an irregular but delicious course of vivid and wild emotion; the step no longer spurns the earth; nor does the ambition wander, insatiable, yet undefined, over the million paths of existence: but we lose not our old capacities; they are quieted, not extinct. The heart can never utterly and long be dormant: trifles may not charm it any more, nor levities delight; but its pulse has not yet ceased to beat. We survey the scene that moves around, with a gaze no longer distracted by every hope that flutters by; and it is therefore that we find ourselves more calculated than before for the graver occupations of our race. The overflowing temperament is checked to its proper level, the ambition bounded to its prudent and lawful goal. The earth is no longer so green, nor the heaven so blue, nor the fancy that stirs within us so rich in its creations; but we look more narrowly on the living

crowd, and more rationally on the aims of men. The misfortune which has changed us has only adapted us the better to a climate in which misfortune is a portion of the air. The grief that has thralled our spirit to a more narrow and dark cell has also been a change that has linked us to mankind with a strength of which we dreamed not in the day of a wilder freedom and more luxuriant aspirings. In later life, a new spirit, partaking of that which was our earliest, returns to us. The solitude which delighted us in youth, but which, when the thoughts that make solitude a fairy land are darkened by affliction, becomes a fearful and sombre void, resumes its old spell, as the more morbid and urgent memory of that affliction crumbles away by time. Content is a hermit; but so also is Apathy. Youth loves the solitary couch, which it surrounds with dreams. Age, or Experience (which is the mind's age), loves the same couch for the rest which it affords; but the wide interval between is that of exertion, of labour, and of labour among men. The woe which makes our /hearts/ less social, often makes our /habits/ more so. The thoughts, which in calm would have shunned the world, are driven upon it by the tempest, even as the birds which forsake the habitable land can, so long as the wind sleeps and the thunder rests within its cloud, become the constant and solitary brooders over the waste sea: but the moment the storm awakes and the blast pursues them, they fly, by an overpowering instinct, to some wandering bark, some vestige of human and social life; and exchange, even for danger from the hands of men, the desert of an angry Heaven and the solitude of a storm.

I heard no more either of Madame de Maintenon or the King. Meanwhile, my flight and friendship with Lord Bolingbroke had given me a consequence in the eyes of the exiled Prince which I should not otherwise have enjoyed; and I was honoured by very flattering overtures to enter actively into his service. I have before said that I felt no enthusiasm in his cause, and I was far from feeling it for his person. My ambition rather directed its hope towards a career in the service of France. France was the country of my birth, and the country of my father's fame. There no withering remembrances awaited me; no private regrets were associated with its scenes, and no public penalties with its political institutions. And although I had not yet received any token of Louis's remembrance, in the ordinary routine of court favours expectation as yet would have been premature; besides, his royal fidelity to his word was proverbial; and, sooner or later, I indulged the hope to profit by the sort of promise he had insinuated to me. I declined, therefore, with all due respect, the offers of the Chevalier, and continued to live the life of idleness and expectation, until Lord Bolingbroke returned to Paris, and accepted the office of secretary of state in the service of the Chevalier. As he has publicly declared his reasons in this step, I do not mean to favour the world with his private conversations on the same subject.

A day or two after his return, I went with him to a party given by a member of the royal family. The first person by whom we were accosted--and I rejoiced at it, for we could not have been accosted by a more amusing one--was Count Anthony Hamilton.

"Ah! my Lord Bolingbroke," said he, sauntering up to us; "how are you?--delighted to see you again. Do look at Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans! Saw you ever such a creature? Whither are you moving, my Lord? Ah! see him, Count, see him, gliding off to that pretty duchess, of course; well, he has a beautiful bow, it must be owned; why, you are not going too?--what would the world say if Count Anthony Hamilton were seen left to himself? No, no, come and sit down by Madame de Cornuel: she longs to be introduced to you, and is one of the wittiest women in Europe."

"With all my heart! provided she employs her wit ill-naturedly, and uses it in ridiculing other people, not praising herself."

"Oh! nobody can be more satirical; indeed, what difference is there between wit and satire? Come, Count!"

And Hamilton introduced me forthwith to Madame de Cornuel. She received me very politely; and, turning to two or three people who formed the circle round her, said, with the greatest composure, "Messieurs, oblige me by seeking some other object of attraction; I wish to have a private conference with my new friend."

"I may stay?" said Hamilton.

"Ah! certainly; you are never in the way."

"In that respect, Madame," said Hamilton, taking snuff, and bowing very low, "in that respect, I must strongly remind you of your excellent husband."

"Fie!" cried Madame de Cornuel; then, turning to me, she said, "Ah! Monsieur, if you /could/ have come to Paris some years ago, you would have been enchanted with us: we are sadly changed. Imagine the fine old King thinkinj it wicked not to hear plays, but to hear /players/ act them, and so making the royal family a company of comedians. /Mon Dieu!/ how villanously they perform! but do you know why I wished to be introduced to you?"

"Yes! in order to have a new listener: old listeners must be almost as tedious as old news."

"Very shrewdly said, and not far from the truth. The fact is, that I wanted to talk about all these fine people present to some one for whose ear my anecdotes would have the charm of novelty. Let us begin with Louis Armand, Prince of Conti; you see him."

"What, that short-sighted, stout, and rather handsome man, with a cast of countenance somewhat like the pictures of Henri Quatre, who is laughing so merrily?"

"/O Ciel/! how droll! No! that handsome man is no less a person than the Duc d'Orleans. You see a little ugly thing like an anatomized ape,--there, see,--he has just thrown down a chair, and, in stooping to

pick it up, has almost fallen over the Dutch ambassadress,--that is Louis Armand, Prince of Conti. Do you know what the Duc d'Orleans said to him the other day? '/Mon bon ami/,' he said, pointing to the prince's limbs (did you ever see such limbs out of a menagerie, by the by?) '/mon bon ami/, it is a fine thing for you that the Psalmist has assured us "that the Lord delighteth not in any man's legs."' Nay, don't laugh, it is quite true!"

It was now for Count Hamilton to take up the ball of satire; he was not a whit more merciful than the kind Madame de Cornuel. "The Prince," said he, "has so exquisite an awkwardness that, whenever the King hears a noise, and inquires the cause, the invariable answer is that 'the Prince of Conti has just tumbled down'! But, tell me, what do you think of Madame d'Aumont? She is in the English headdress, and looks /triste a la mort/."

"She is rather pretty, to my taste."

"Yes," cried Madame de Cornuel, interrupting the gentle Antoine (it did one's heart good to see how strenuously each of them tried to talk more scandal than the other), "yes, she is thought very pretty; but I think her very like a /fricandeau/,--white, soft, and insipid. She is always in tears," added the good-natured Cornuel, "after her prayers, both at morning and evening. I asked why; and she answered, pretty simpleton, that she was always forced to pray to be made good, and she feared Heaven would take her at her word! However, she has many worshippers, and they call her the evening star."

"They should rather call her the Hyades!" said Hamilton, "if it be true that she sheds tears every morning and night, and her rising and setting are thus always attended by rain."

"Bravo, Count Antoine! she shall be so called in future," said Madame de Cornuel. "But now, Monsieur Devereux, turn your eyes to that hideous old woman."

"What! the Duchesse d'Orleans?"

"The same. She is in full dress to-night; but in the daytime you generally see her in a riding habit and a man's wig; she is--"

"Hist!" interrupted Hamilton; "do you not tremble to think what she would do if she overheard you? she is such a terrible creature at fighting! You have no conception, Count, what an arm she has. She knows her ugliness, and laughs at it, as all the rest of the world does. The King took her hand one day, and said smiling, 'What could Nature have meant when she gave this hand to a German princess instead of a Dutch peasant?' 'Sire,' said the Duchesse, very gravely, 'Nature gave this hand to a German princess for the purpose of boxing the ears of her ladies in waiting!'"

"Ha! ha! ha!" said Madame de Cornuel, laughing; "one is never at a loss for jokes upon a woman who eats /salade au lard/, and declares that,

whenever she is unhappy, her only consolation is ham and sausages! Her son treats her with the greatest respect, and consults her in all his amours, for which she professes the greatest horror, and which she retails to her correspondents all over the world, in letters as long as her pedigree. But you are looking at her son, is he not of a good mien?"

"Yes, pretty well; but does not exhibit to advantage by the side of Lord Bolingbroke, with whom he is now talking. Pray, who is the third personage that has just joined them?"

"Oh, the wretch! it is the Abbe Dubois; a living proof of the folly of the French proverb, which says that Mercuries should /not/ be made /du bois/. Never was there a Mercury equal to the Abbe,--but, do look at that old man to the left,--he is one of the most remarkable persons of the age."

"What! he with the small features, and comely countenance, considering his years?"

"The same," said Hamilton; "it is the notorious Choisi. You know that he is the modern Tiresias, and has been a woman as well as man."

"How do you mean?"

"Ah, you may well ask!" cried Madame de Cornuel. "Why, he lived for many years in the disguise of a woman, and had all sorts of curious adventures."

"/Mort Diable/!" cried Hamilton; "it was entering your ranks, Madame, as a spy. I hear he makes but a sorry report of what he saw there."

"Come, Count Antoine," cried the lively de Cornuel, "we must not turn our weapons against each other; and when you attack a woman's sex you attack her individually. But what makes you look so intently, Count Devereux, at that ugly priest?"

The person thus flatteringly designated was Montreuil; he had just caught my eye, among a group of men who were conversing eagerly.

"Hush! Madame," said I, "spare me for a moment;" and I rose, and mingled with the Abbe's companions.

"So, you have only arrived to-day," I heard one of them say to him.

"No, I could not despatch my business before."

"And how are matters in England?"

"Ripe! if the life of his Majesty (of France) be spared a year longer, we will send the Elector of Hanover back to his principality."

"Hist!" said the companion, and looked towards me. Montreuil ceased

abruptly: our eyes met; his fell. I affected to look among the group as if I had expected to find there some one I knew, and then, turning away, I seated myself alone and apart. There, unobserved, I kept my looks on Montreuil. I remarked that, from time to time, his keen dark eye glanced towards me, with a look rather expressive of vigilance than anything else. Soon afterwards his little knot dispersed; I saw him converse for a few moments with Dubois, who received him I thought distantly; and then he was engaged in a long conference with the Bishop of Frejus, whom, till then, I had not perceived among the crowd.

As I was loitering on the staircase, where I saw Montreuil depart with the Bishop, in the carriage of the latter, Hamilton, accosting me, insisted on my accompanying him to Chaulieu's, where a late supper awaited the sons of wine and wit. However, to the good Count's great astonishment, I preferred solitude and reflection, for that night, to anything else.

Montreuil's visit to the French capital boded me no good. He possessed great influence with Fleuri, and was in high esteem with Madame de Maintenon, and, in effect, very shortly after his return to Paris, the Bishop of Frejus looked upon me with a most cool sort of benignancy; and Madame de Maintenon told her friend, the Duchesse de St. Simon, that it was a great pity a young nobleman of my birth and prepossessing appearance (ay! my prepossessing appearance would never have occurred to the devotee, if I had not seemed so sensible of her own) should not only be addicted to the wildest dissipation, but, worse still, to Jansenistical tenets. After this there was no hope for me save in the King's word, which his increasing infirmities, naturally engrossing his attention, prevented my hoping too sanguinely would dwell very acutely on his remembrance. I believe, however, so religiously scrupulous was Louis upon a point of honour that, had he lived, I should have had nothing to complain of. As it was--but I anticipate! Montreuil disappeared from Paris, almost as suddenly as he had appeared there. And, as drowning men catch at a straw, so, finding my affairs at a very low ebb, I thought I would take advice, even from Madame de Balzac.

I accordingly repaired to her hotel. She was at home, and, fortunately, alone.

"You are welcome, /mon fils/," said she; "suffer me to give you that title: you are welcome; it is some days since I saw you."

"I have numbered them, I assure you, Madame," said I, "and they have crept with a dull pace; but you know that business has claims as well as pleasure!"

"True!" said Madame de Balzac, pompously: "I myself find the weight of politics a little insupportable, though so used to it; to your young brain I can readily imagine how irksome it must be!"

"Would, Madame, that I could obtain your experience by contagion; as it is, I fear that I have profited little by my visit to his Majesty. Madame de Maintenon will not see me, and the Bishop of Frejus (excellent

man!) has been seized with a sudden paralysis of memory whenever I present myself in his way."

"That party will never do,--I thought not," said Madame de Balzae, who was a wonderful imitator of the fly on the wheel; "/my/ celebrity, and the knowledge that /I/ loved you for your father's sake, were, I fear, sufficient to destroy your interest with the Jesuits and their tools. Well, well, we must repair the mischief we have occasioned you. What place would suit you best?"

"Why, anything diplomatic. I would rather travel, at my age, than remain in luxury and indolence even at Paris!"

"Ah, nothing like diplomacy!" said Madame de Balzac, with the air of a Richelieu, and emptying her snuff-box at a pinch; "but have you, my son, the requisite qualities for that science, as well as the tastes? Are you capable of intrigue? Can you say one thing and mean another? Are you aware of the immense consequence of a look or a bow? Can you live like a spider, in the centre of an inexplicable net--inexplicable as well as dangerous--to all but the weaver? That, my son, is the art of politics; that is to be a diplomatist!"

"Perhaps, to one less penetrating than Madame de Balzac," answered I, "I might, upon trial, not appear utterly ignorant of the noble art of state duplicity which she has so eloquently depicted."

"Possibly!" said the good lady; "it must indeed be a profound dissimulator to deceive /me/."

"But what would you advise me to do in the present crisis? What party to adopt, what individual to flatter?"

Nothing, I already discovered and have already observed, did the inestimable Madame de Balzac dislike more than a downright question: she never answered it.

"Why, really," said she, preparing herself for a long speech, "I am quite glad you consult me, and I will give you the best advice in my power. /Ecoutez donc/; you have seen the Duc de Maine?"

"Certainly!"

"Hum! ha! it would be wise to follow him; but--you take me--you understand. Then, you know, my son, there is the Duc d'Orleans, fond of pleasure, full of talent; but you know--there is a little--what do you call it? you understand. As for the Duc de Bourbon, 'tis quite a simpleton; nevertheless we must consider: nothing like consideration; believe me, no diplomatist ever hurries. As for Madame de Maintenon, you know, and I know too, that the Duchesse d'Orleans calls her an old hag; but then--a word to the wise--eh?--what shall we say to Madame the Duchess herself?--what a fat woman she is, but excessively clever,--such a letter writer!--Well--you see, my dear young friend, that it is a very difficult matter to decide upon,--but you must already be fully

aware what plan I should advise."

"Already, Madame?"

"To be sure! What have I been saying to you all this time?--did you not hear me? Shall I repeat my advice?"

"Oh, no! I perfectly comprehend you now; you would advise me--in short--to--to--do--as well as I can."

"You have said it, my son. I thought you would understand me on a little reflection."

"To be sure,--to be sure," said I.

And three ladies being announced, my conference with Madame de Balzac ended.

I now resolved to wait a little till the tides of power seemed somewhat more settled, and I could ascertain in what quarter to point my bark of enterprise. I gave myself rather more eagerly to society, in proportion as my political schemes were suffered to remain torpid. My mind could not remain quiet, without preying on itself; and no evil appeared to me so great as tranquillity. Thus the spring and earlier summer passed on, till, in August, the riots preceding the Rebellion broke out in Scotland. At this time I saw but little of Lord Bolingbroke in private; though, with his characteristic affectation, he took care that the load of business with which he was really oppressed should not prevent his enjoyment of all gayeties in public. And my indifference to the cause of the Chevalier, in which he was so warmly engaged, threw a natural restraint upon our conversation, and produced an involuntary coldness in our intercourse: so impossible is it for men to be private friends who differ on a public matter.

One evening I was engaged to meet a large party at a country-house about forty miles from Paris. I went, and stayed some days. My horses had accompanied me; and, when I left the chateau, I resolved to make the journey to Paris on horseback. Accordingly, I ordered my carriage to follow me, and attended by a single groom, commenced my expedition. It was a beautiful still morning,--the first day of the first month of autumn. I had proceeded about ten miles, when I fell in with an old French officer. I remember,--though I never saw him but that once,--I remember his face as if I had encountered it yesterday. It was thin and long, and yellow enough to have served as a caricature rather than a portrait of Don Quixote. He had a hook nose, and a long sharp chin; and all the lines, wrinkles, curves, and furrows of which the human visage is capable seemed to have met in his cheeks. Nevertheless, his eye was bright and keen, his look alert, and his whole bearing firm, gallant, and soldier-like. He was attired in a sort of military undress; wore a mustachio, which, though thin and gray, was carefully curled; and at the summit of a very respectable wig was perched a small cocked hat, adorned with a black feather. He rode very upright in his saddle; and his horse, a steady, stalwart quadruped of the Norman breed, with a terribly

long tail and a prodigious breadth of chest, put one stately leg before another in a kind of trot, which, though it seemed, from its height of action and the proud look of the steed, a pretension to motion more than ordinarily brisk, was in fact a little slower than a common walk.

This noble cavalier seemed sufficiently an object of curiosity to my horse to induce the animal to testify his surprise by shying, very jealously and very vehemently, in passing him. This ill breeding on his part was indignantly returned on the part of the Norman charger, who, uttering a sort of squeak and shaking his long mane and head, commenced a series of curvets and capers which cost the old Frenchman no little trouble to appease. In the midst of these equine freaks, the horse came so near me as to splash my nether garment with a liberality as little ornamental as it was pleasurable.

The old Frenchman seeing this, took off his cocked hat very politely and apologized for the accident. I replied with equal courtesy; and, as our horses slid into quiet, their riders slid into conversation. It was begun and chiefly sustained by my new comrade; for I am little addicted to commence unnecessary socialities myself, though I should think very meanly of my pretensions to the name of a gentleman and a courtier, if I did not return them when offered, even by a beggar.

"It is a fine horse of yours, Monsieur," said the old Frenchman; "but I cannot believe--pardon me for saying so--that your slight English steeds are so well adapted to the purposes of war as our strong chargers,--such as mine for example."

"It is very possible, Monsieur," said I. "Has the horse you now ride done service in the field as well as on the road?"

"Ah! /le pauvre petit mignon/,--no!" (/petit/, indeed! this little darling was seventeen hands high at the very least) "no, Monsieur: it is but a young creature this; his grandfather served me well!"

"I need not ask you, Monsieur, if you have borne arms: the soldier is stamped upon you!"

"Sir, you flatter me highly!" said the old gentleman, blushing to the very tip of his long lean ears, and bowing as low as if I had called him a Conde. "I have followed the profession of arms for more than fifty years."

"Fifty years! 'tis a long time."

"A long time," rejoined my companion, "a long time to look back upon with regret."

"Regret! by Heaven, I should think the remembrance of fifty years' excitement and glory would be a remembrance of triumph."

The old man turned round on his saddle, and looked at me for some moments very wistfully. "You are young, Sir," he said, "and at your

years I should have thought with you; but--" (then abruptly changing his voice, he continued)--"Triumph, did you say? Sir, I have had three sons: they are dead; they died in battle; I did not weep; I did not shed a tear, Sir,--not a tear! But I will tell you when I did weep. I came back, an old man, to the home I had left as a young one. I saw the country a desert. I saw that the /noblesse/ had become tyrants; the peasants had become slaves,--such slaves,--savage from despair,--even when they were most gay, most fearfully gay, from constitution. Sir, I saw the priest rack and grind, and the seigneur exact and pillage, and the tax-gatherer squeeze out the little the other oppressors had left; anger, discontent, wretchedness, famine, a terrible separation between one order of people and another; an incredible indifference to the miseries their despotism caused on the part of the aristocracy; a sullen and vindictive hatred for the perpetration of those miseries on the part of the people; all places sold--even all honours priced--at the court, which was become a public market, a province of peasants, of living men bartered for a few livres, and literally passed from one hand to another, to be squeezed and drained anew by each new possessor: in a word, Sir, an abandoned court; an unredeemed /noblesse/,--unredeemed, Sir, by a single benefit which, in other countries, even the most feudal, the vassal obtains from the master; a peasantry famished; a nation loaded with debt which it sought to pay by tears,--these are what I saw,--these are the consequences of that heartless and miserable vanity from which arose wars neither useful nor honourable,--these are the real components of that /triumph/, as you term it, which you wonder that I regret."

Now, although it was impossible to live at the court of Louis XIV. in his latter days, and not feel, from the general discontent that prevailed even there, what a dark truth the old soldier's speech contained, yet I was somewhat surprised by an enthusiasm so little military in a person whose bearing and air were so conspicuously martial.

"You draw a melancholy picture," said I; "and the wretched state of culture which the lands that we now pass through exhibit is a witness how little exaggeration there is in your colouring. However, these are but the ordinary evils of war; and, if your country endures them, do not forget that she has also inflicted them. Remember what France did to Holland, and own that it is but a retribution that France should now find that the injury we do to others is (among nations as well as individuals) injury to ourselves."

My old Frenchman curled his mustaches with the finger and thumb of his left hand: this was rather too subtile a distinction for him.

"That may be true enough, Monsieur," said he; "but, /morbleu/! those /maudits/ Dutchmen deserved what they sustained at our hands. No, Sir, no: I am not so base as to forget the glory my country acquired, though I weep for her wounds."

"I do not quite understand you, Sir," said I; "did you not just now confess that the wars you had witnessed were neither honourable nor

useful? What glory, then, was to be acquired in a war of that character, even though it was so delightfully animated by cutting the throats of those /maudits/ Dutchmen?"

"Sir," answered the Frenchman, drawing himself up, "you did /not/ understand me. When we punished Holland, we did rightly. We /conquered/."

"Whether you conquered or not (for the good folk of Holland are not so sure of the fact)," answered I, "that war was the most unjust in which your king was ever engaged; but pray, tell me, Sir, what war it is that you lament?"

The Frenchman frowned, whistled, put out his under lip, in a sort of angry embarrassment, and then, spurring his great horse into a curvet, said,--

"That last war with the English!"

"Faith," said I, "that was the justest of all."

"Just!" cried the Frenchman, halting abruptly and darting at me a glance of fire, "just! no more, Sir! no more! I was at Blenheim and at Ramilies!"

As the old warrior said the last words, his voice faltered; and though I could not help inly smiling at the confusion of ideas by which wars were just or unjust, according as they were fortunate or not, yet I respected his feelings enough to turn away my face and remain silent.

"Yes," renewed my comrade, colouring with evident shame and drawing his cocked hat over his brows, "yes, I received my last wound at Ramilies. /Then/ my eyes were opened to the horrors of war; /then/ I saw and cursed the evils of ambition; /then/ I resolved to retire from the armies of a king who had lost forever his name, his glory, and his country."

Was there ever a better type of the French nation than this old soldier? As long as fortune smiles on them, it is "Marchons au diable!" and "Vive la gloire!" Directly they get beaten, it is "Ma pauvre patrie!" and "Les calamites affreuses de la guerre!"

"However," said I, "the old King is drawing near the end of his days, and is said to express his repentance at the evils his ambition has occasioned."

The old soldier shoved back his hat, and offered me his snuff-box. I judged by this that he was a little mollified.

"Ah!" he renewed, after a pause, "ah! times are sadly changed since the year 1667; when the young King--he was young then--took the field in Flanders, under the great Turenne. /Sacristie/! What a hero he looked upon his white war-horse! I would have gone--ay, and the meanest and

backwardest soldier in the camp would have gone--into the very mouth of the cannon for a look from that magnificent countenance, or a word from that mouth which knew so well what words were! Sir, there was in the war of ’72, when we were at peace with Great Britain, an English gentleman, then in the army, afterwards a marshal of France: I remember, as if it were yesterday, how gallantly he behaved. The King sent to compliment him after some signal proof of courage and conduct, and asked what reward he would have. ’Sire,’ answered the Englishman, ’give me the white plume you wore this day.’ From that moment the Englishman’s fortune was made."

"The flattery went further than the valour!" said I, smiling, as I recognized in the anecdote the first great step which my father had made in the ascent of fortune.

"/Sacristie/!" cried the Frenchman, "it was no flattery then. We so idolized the King that mere truth would have seemed disloyalty; and we no more thought that praise, however extravagant, was adulation, when directed to him, than we should have thought there was adulation in the praise we would have given to our first mistress. But it is all changed now! Who now cares for the old priest-ridden monarch?"

And upon this the veteran, having conquered the momentary enthusiasm which the remembrance of the King’s earlier glories had excited, transferred all his genius of description to the opposite side of the question, and declaimed, with great energy, upon the royal vices and errors, which were so charming in prosperity, and were now so detestable in adversity.

While we were thus conversing we approached Versailles. We thought the vicinity of the town seemed unusually deserted. We entered the main street: crowds were assembled; a universal murmur was heard; excitement sat on every countenance. Here an old crone was endeavouring to explain something, evidently beyond his comprehension, to a child of three years old, who, with open mouth and fixed eyes, seemed to make up in wonder for the want of intelligence; there a group of old disbanded soldiers occupied the way, and seemed, from their muttered conversations, to vent a sneer and a jest at a priest who, with downward countenance and melancholy air, was hurrying along.

One young fellow was calling out, "At least, it is a holy-day, and I shall go to Paris!" and, as a contrast to him, an old withered artisan, leaning on a gold-headed cane, with sharp avarice eloquent in every line of his face, muttered out to a fellow-miser, "No business to-day, no money, John; no money!" One knot of women, of all ages, close by which my horse passed, was entirely occupied with a single topic, and that so vehemently that I heard the leading words of the discussion. "Mourning--becoming--what fashion?--how long?--/O Ciel/!" Thus do follies weave themselves round the bier of death!

"What is the news, gentlemen?" said I.

"News! what, you have not heard it?--the King is dead!"

"Louis dead! Louis the Great, dead!" cried my companion.

"Louis the Great?" said a sullen-looking man,--"Louis the persecutor!"

"Ah, he's a Huguenot!" cried another with haggard cheeks and hollow eyes, scowling at the last speaker. "Never mind what he says: the King was right when he refused protection to the heretics; but was he right when he levied such taxes on the Catholics?"

"Hush!" said a third--"hush: it may be unsafe to speak; there are spies about; for my part, I think it was all the fault of the /noblesse/."

"And the Favourites!" cried a soldier, fiercely.

"And the Harlots!" cried a hag of eighty.

"And the Priests!" muttered the Huguenot.

"And the Tax-gatherers!" added the lean Catholic.

We rode slowly on. My comrade was evidently and powerfully affected.

"So, he is dead!" said he. "Dead!--well, well, peace be with him! He conquered in Holland; he humbled Genoa; he dictated to Spain; he commanded Conde and Turenne; he--Bah! What is all this!--" then, turning abruptly to me, my companion cried, "I did not speak against the King, did I, Sir?"

"Not much."

"I am glad of that,--yes, very glad!" And the old man glared fiercely round on a troop of boys who were audibly abusing the dead lion.

"I would have bit out my tongue rather than it had joined in the base joy of these yelping curs. Heavens! when I think what shouts I have heard when the name of that man, then deemed little less than a god, was but breathed!--and now--why do you look at me, Sir? My eyes are moist; I know it, Sir,--I know it. The old battered broken soldier, who made his first campaigns when that which is now dust was the idol of France and the pupil of Turenne,--the old soldier's eyes shall not be dry, though there is not another tear shed in the whole of this great empire."

"Your three sons?" said I; "you did not weep for them?"

"No, Sir: I loved them when I was old; but I loved Louis /when I was young/!"

"Your oppressed and pillaged country?" said I, "think of that."

"No, Sir, I will not think of it!" cried the old warrior in a passion.
"I will not think of it--to-day, at least."

"You are right, my brave friend: in the grave let us bury even public wrongs; but let us not bury their remembrance. May the joy we read in every face that we pass--joy at the death of one whom idolatry once almost seemed to deem immortal--be a lesson to future kings!"

My comrade did not immediately answer; but, after a pause and we had turned our backs upon the town, he said, "Joy, Sir,--you spoke of joy! Yes, we are Frenchmen: we forgive our rulers easily for private vices and petty faults; but we never forgive them if they commit the greatest of faults, and suffer a stain to rest upon--"

"What?" I asked, as my comrade broke off.

"The national glory, Monsieur!" said he.

"You have hit it," said I, smiling at the turgid sentiment which was so really and deeply felt. "And had you written folios upon the character of your countrymen, you could not have expressed it better."

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH THERE IS REASON TO FEAR THAT PRINCES ARE NOT INVARIABLY FREE FROM HUMAN PECCADILLOES.

ON entering Paris, my veteran fellow-traveller took leave of me, and I proceeded to my hotel. When the first excitement of my thoughts was a little subsided, and after some feelings of a more public nature, I began to consider what influence the King’s death was likely to have on my own fortunes. I could not but see at a glance that for the cause of the Chevalier, and the destiny of his present exertions in Scotland, it was the most fatal event that could have occurred.

The balance of power in the contending factions of France would, I foresaw, lie entirely between the Duke of Orleans and the legitimatized children of the late king: the latter, closely leagued as they were with Madame de Maintenon, could not be much disposed to consider the welfare of Count Devereux; and my wishes, therefore, naturally settled on the former. I was not doomed to a long suspense. Every one knows that the very next day the Duke of Orleans appeared before Parliament, and was proclaimed Regent; that the will of the late King was set aside; and that the Duke of Maine suddenly became as low in power as he had always been despicable in intellect. A little hubbub ensued: people in general laughed at the Regent’s /finesse/; and the more sagacious admired the courage and address of which the /finesse/ was composed. The Regent’s mother wrote a letter of sixty-nine pages about it; and the Duchess of Maine boxed the Duke’s ears very heartily for not being as clever as herself. All Paris teemed with joyous forebodings; and the Regent, whom every one some time ago had suspected of poisoning his cousins, every one now declared to be the most perfect prince that could possibly be imagined, and the very picture of Henri Quatre in goodness as well as

physiognomy. Three days after this event, one happened to myself with which my public career may be said to commence.

I had spent the evening at a house in a distant part of Paris, and, invited by the beauty of the night, had dismissed my carriage, and was walking home alone and on foot. Occupied with my reflections, and not very well acquainted with the dangerous and dark streets of Paris, in which it was very rare for those who have carriages to wander on foot, I insensibly strayed from my proper direction. When I first discovered this disagreeable fact, I was in a filthy and obscure lane rather than street, which I did not remember having ever honoured with my presence before. While I was pausing in the vain hope and anxious endeavour to shape out some imaginary chart--some "map of the mind," by which to direct my bewildered course--I heard a confused noise proceed from another lane at right angles with the one in which I then was. I listened: the sound became more distinct; I recognized human voices in loud and angry altercation; a moment more and there was a scream. Though I did not attach much importance to the circumstance, I thought I might as well approach nearer to the quarter of noise. I walked to the door of the house from which the scream proceeded; it was very small and mean. Just as I neared it, a window was thrown open, and a voice cried, "Help! help! for God's sake, help!"

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Whoever you are, save us!" cried the voice, "and that instantly, or we shall be murdered;" and, the moment after, the voice ceased abruptly, and was succeeded by the clashing of swords.

I beat loudly at the door; I shouted out,--no answer; the scuffle within seemed to increase. I saw a small blind alley to the left; one of the unfortunate women to whom such places are homes was standing in it.

"What possibility is there of entering the house?" I asked.

"Oh!" said she, "it does not matter; it is not the first time gentlemen have cut each other's throats /there/."

"What! is it a house of bad repute?"

"Yes; and where there are bullies who wear knives, and take purses, as well as ladies who--"

"Good heavens!" cried I, interrupting her, "there is no time to be lost. Is there no way of entrance but at this door?"

"Yes, if you are bold enough to enter at another!"

"Where?"

"Down this alley."

Immediately I entered the alley; the woman pointed to a small, dark,

narrow flight of stairs; I ascended; the sounds increased in loudness. I mounted to the second flight; a light streamed from a door; the clashing of swords was distinctly audible within; I broke open the door, and found myself a witness and intruder on a scene at once ludicrous and fearful.

A table, covered with bottles and the remnants of a meal, was in the centre of the room; several articles of women's dress were scattered over the floor; two women of unequivocal description were clinging to a man richly dressed, and who having fortunately got behind an immense chair, that had been overthrown probably in the scuffle, managed to keep off with awkward address a fierce-looking fellow, who had less scope for the ability of his sword-arm, from the circumstance of his attempting to pull away the chair with his left hand. Whenever he stooped to effect this object his antagonist thrust at him very vigorously, and had it not been for the embarrassment his female enemies occasioned him, the latter would, in all probability, have despatched or disabled his besieger. This fortified gentleman, being backed by the window, I immediately concluded to be the person who had called to me for assistance.

At the other corner of the apartment was another cavalier, who used his sword with singular skill, but who, being hard pressed by two lusty fellows, was forced to employ that skill rather in defence than attack. Altogether, the disordered appearance of the room, the broken bottles, the fumes with which the hot atmosphere teemed, the evident profligacy of the two women, the half-undressed guise of the cavaliers, and the ruffian air and collected ferocity of the assailants, plainly denoted that it was one of those perilous festivals of pleasure in which imprudent gallants were often, in that day, betrayed by treacherous Delilahs into the hands of Philistines, who, not contented with stripping them for the sake of plunder, frequently murdered them for the sake of secrecy.

Having taken a rapid but satisfactory survey of the scene, I did not think it necessary to make any preparatory parley. I threw myself upon the nearest bravo with so hearty a good will that I ran him through the body before he had recovered his surprise at my appearance. This somewhat startled the other two; they drew back and demanded quarter.

"Quarter, indeed!" cried the farther cavalier, releasing himself from his astonished female assailants, and leaping nimbly over his bulwark into the centre of the room, "quarter, indeed, rascally /ivrognes/! No; it is our turn now! and, by Joseph of Arimathea! you shall sup with Pilate to-night." So saying, he pressed his old assailant so fiercely that, after a short contest, the latter retreated till he had backed himself to the door; he then suddenly turned round, and vanished in a twinkling. The third and remaining ruffian was far from thinking himself a match for three men; he fell on his knees, and implored mercy. However, the /ci-devant/ sustainer of the besieged chair was but little disposed to afford him the clemency he demanded, and approached the crestfallen bravo with so grim an air of truculent delight, brandishing his sword and uttering the most terrible threats, that there would have been small doubt of the final catastrophe of the trembling bully, had

not the other gallant thrown himself in the way of his friend.

"Put up thy sword," said he, laughing, and yet with an air of command; "we must not court crime, and then punish it." Then, turning to the bully, he said, "Rise, Sir Rascal! the devil spares thee a little longer, and this gentleman will not disobey /his/ as well as /thy/ master's wishes. Begone!"

The fellow wanted no second invitation: he sprang to his legs, and to the door. The disappointed cavalier assisted his descent down the stairs with a kick that would have done the work of the sword to any flesh not accustomed to similar applications. Putting up his rapier, the milder gentleman then turned to /the ladies/, who lay huddled together under shelter of the chair which their intended victim had deserted.

"Ah, Mesdames," said he, gravely, and with a low bow, "I am sorry for your disappointment. As long as you contented yourselves with robbery, it were a shame to have interfered with your innocent amusements; but cold steel becomes serious. Monsieur D'Argenson will favour you with some inquiries to-morrow; at present, I recommend you to empty what remains in the bottle. Adieu! Monsieur, to whom I am so greatly indebted, honour me with your arm down these stairs. You" (turning to his friend) "will follow us, and keep a sharp look behind. /Allons! Vive Henri Quatre/!"

As we descended the dark and rough stairs, my new companion said, "What an excellent antidote to the effects of the /vin de champagne/ is this same fighting! I feel as if I had not tasted a drop these six hours. What fortune brought you hither, Monsieur?" addressing me.

We were now at the foot of the first flight of stairs; a high and small window admitted the moonlight, and we saw each other's faces clearly.

"That fortune," answered I, looking at my acquaintance steadily, but with an expression of profound respect,--"that fortune which watches over kingdoms, and which, I trust, may in no place or circumstance be a deserter from your Highness."

"Highness!" said my companion, colouring, and darting a glance, first at his friend and then at me. "Hist, Sir, you know me, then,--speak low,--you know, then, for whom you have drawn your sword?"

"Yes, so please your Highness. I have drawn it this night for Philip of Orleans; I trust yet, in another scene and for another cause, to draw it for the Regent of France!"

CHAPTER IX.

A PRINCE, AN AUDIENCE, AND A SECRET EMBASSY.

THE Regent remained silent for a moment: he then said in an altered and grave voice, "/C'est bien, Monsieur/! I thank you for the distinction you have made. It were not amiss" (he added, turning to his comrade) "that /you/ would now and then deign, henceforward, to make the same distinction. But this is neither time, nor place for parlance. On, gentlemen!" We left the house, passed into the street, and moved on rapidly, and in silence, till the constitutional gayety of the Duke recovering its ordinary tone, he said with a laugh,--

"Well, now, it is a little hard that a man who has been toiling all day for the public good should feel ashamed of indulging for an hour or two at night in his private amusements; but so it is. 'Once grave, always grave!' is the maxim of the world; eh, Chatran?"

The companion bowed. "'Tis a very good saying, please your Royal Highness, and is intended to warn us from the sin of /ever/ being grave!"

"Ha! ha! you have a great turn for morality, my good Chatran!" cried the Duke, "and would draw a rule for conduct out of the wickedest /bon mot/ of Dubois. Monsieur, pardon me, but I have seen you before: you are the Count--"

"Devereux, Monseigneur."

"True, true! I have heard much of you: you are intimate with Milord Bolingbroke. Would that I had fifty friends like /him/."

"Monseigneur would have little trouble in his regency if his wish were realized," said Chatran.

"/Tant mieux/, so long as I had little odium, as well as little trouble,--a happiness which, thanks to you and Dubois, I am not likely to enjoy,--but there is the carriage!"

And the Duke pointed to a dark, plain carriage, which we had suddenly come upon.

"Count Devereux," said the merry Regent, "you will enter; my duty requires that, at this seductive hour, I should see a young gentleman of your dangerous age safely lodged at his hotel!"

We entered, Chatran gave the orders, and we drove off rapidly.

The Regent hummed a tune, and his two companions listened to it in respectful silence.

"Well, well, Messieurs," said he, bursting out at last into open voice, "I will ever believe, in future, that the gods /do/ look benignantly on us worshippers of the Alma Venus! Do you know much of Tibullus, Monsieur Devereux? And can you assist my memory with the continuation of the line--

"'Quisquis amore tenetur, eat--'"

"'tutusque sacerque
Qualibet, insidias non timuisse decet,'"*

answered I.

* "Whosoever is possessed by Love may go safe and holy withersoever he likes. It becomes not him to fear snares."

"/Bon/!" cried the Duke. "I love a gentleman, from my very soul, when he can both fight well and read Latin! I hate a man who is merely a winebibber and blade-drawer. By Saint Louis, though it is an excellent thing to fill the stomach, especially with Tokay, yet there is no reason in the world why we should not fill the head too. But here we are. Adieu, Monsieur Devereux: we shall see you at the Palace."

I expressed my thanks briefly at the Regent's condescension, descended from the carriage (which instantly drove off with renewed celerity), and once more entered my hotel.

Two or three days after my adventure with the Regent, I thought it expedient to favour that eccentric prince with a visit. During the early part of his regency, it is well known how successfully he combated with his natural indolence, and how devotedly his mornings were surrendered to the toils of his new office; but when pleasure has grown habit, it requires a stronger mind than that of Philippe le Debonnaire to give it a permanent successor in business. Pleasure is, indeed, like the genius of the fable, the most useful of slaves, while you subdue it; the most intolerable of tyrants the moment your negligence suffers it to subdue you.

The hours in which the Prince gave audience to the comrades of his lighter rather than graver occupations were those immediately before and after his /levee/. I thought that this would be the best season for me to present myself. Accordingly, one morning after the /levee/, I repaired to his palace.

The ante-chamber was already crowded. I sat myself quietly down in one corner of the room, and looked upon the motley groups around. I smiled inly as they reminded me of the scenes my own anteroom, in my younger days of folly and fortune, was wont to exhibit; the same heterogeneous assemblage (only upon a grander scale) of the ministers to the physical appetites and the mental tastes. There was the fretting and impudent mountebank, side by side with the gentle and patient scholar; the harlot's envoy and the priest's messenger; the agent of the police and the licensed breaker of its laws; there--but what boots a more prolix description? What is the anteroom of a great man, who has many wants

and many tastes, but a panorama of the blended disparities of this compounded world?

While I was moralizing, a gentleman suddenly thrust his head out of a door, and appeared to reconnoitre us. Instantly the crowd swept up to him. I thought I might as well follow the general example, and pushing aside some of my fellow-loiterers, I presented myself and my name to the gentleman, with the most ingratiating air I could command.

The gentleman, who was tolerably civil for a great man's great man, promised that my visit should be immediately announced to the Prince; and then, with the politest bow imaginable, slapped the door in my face. After I had waited about seven or eight minutes longer, the gentleman reappeared, singled me from the crowd, and desired me to follow him; I passed through another room, and was presently in the Regent's presence.

I was rather startled when I saw, by the morning light, and in deshabille, the person of that royal martyr to dissipation. His countenance was red, but bloated, and a weakness in his eyes added considerably to the jaded and haggard expression of his features. A proportion of stomach rather inclined to corpulency seemed to betray the taste for the pleasures of the table, which the most radically coarse, and yet (strange to say) the most generally accomplished and really good-natured of royal profligates, combined with his other qualifications. He was yawning very elaborately over a great heap of papers when I entered. He finished his yawn (as if it were too brief and too precious a recreation to lose), and then said, "Good morning, Monsieur Devereux; I am glad that you have found me out /at last/."

"I was afraid, Monseigneur, of appearing an intruder on your presence, by offering my homage to you before."

"So like my good fortune," said the Regent, turning to a man seated at another table at some distance, whose wily, astute countenance, piercing eye, and licentious expression of lip and brow, indicated at once the ability and vice which composed his character. "So like my good fortune, is it not, Dubois? If ever I meet with a tolerably pleasant fellow, who does not disgrace me by his birth or reputation, he is always so terribly afraid of intruding! and whenever I pick up a respectable personage without wit, or a wit without respectability, he attaches himself to me like a burr, and can't live a day without inquiring after my health."

Dubois smiled, bowed, but did not answer, and I saw that his look was bent darkly and keenly upon me.

"Well," said the Prince, "what think you of our opera, Count Devereux? It beats your English one--eh?"

"Ah, certainly, Monseigneur; ours is but a reflection of yours."

"So says your friend, Milord Bolingbroke, a person who knows about operas almost as much as I do, which, vanity apart, is saying a great

deal. I should like very well to visit England; what should I learn best there? In Spain (I shall always love Spain) I learned to cook."

"Monseigneur, I fear," answered I, smiling, "could obtain but little additional knowledge in that art in our barbarous country. A few rude and imperfect inventions have, indeed, of late years, astonished the cultivators of the science; but the night of ignorance rests still upon its main principles and leading truths. Perhaps, what Monseigneur would find best worth studying in England would be--the women."

"Ah, the women all over the world!" cried the Duke, laughing; "but I hear your /belles Anglaises/ are sentimental, and love /a l'Arcadienne/."

"It is true at present; but who shall say how far Monseigneur's example might enlighten them in a train of thought so erroneous?"

"True. Nothing like example, eh, Dubois? What would Philip of Orleans have been but for thee?"

"'L'exemple souvent n'est qu'un miroir trompeur;
Quelquefois l'un se brise ou l'autre s'est sauve,
Et par ou l'un perit, un autre est conserve,'"*

answered Dubois, out of "Cinna."

* "Example is often but a deceitful mirror, where sometimes one destroys himself, while another comes off safe; and where one perishes, another is preserved."

"Corneille is right," rejoined the Regent. "After all, to do thee justice, /mon petit Abbe/, example has little to do with corrupting us. Nature pleads the cause of pleasure as Hyperides pleaded that of Phryne. She has no need of eloquence: she unveils the bosom of her client, and the client is acquitted."

"Monseigneur shows at least that he has learned to profit by my humble instructions in the classics," said Dubois.

The Duke did not answer. I turned my eyes to some drawings on the table; I expressed my admiration of them. "They are mine," said the Regent. "Ah! I should have been much more accomplished as a private gentleman than I fear I ever shall be as a public man of toil and business. Business--bah! But Necessity is the only real sovereign in the world, the only despot for whom there is no law. What! are you going already, Count Devereux?"

"Monseigneur's anteroom is crowded with less fortunate persons than myself, whose sins of envy and covetousness I am now answerable for."

"Ah--well! I must hear the poor devils; the only pleasure I have is in seeing how easily I can make them happy. Would to Heaven, Dubois, that one could govern a great kingdom only by fair words! Count Devereux, you have seen me to-day as my acquaintance; see me again as my petitioner. /Bon jour, Monsieur/."

And I retired, very well pleased with my reception; from that time, indeed, during the rest of my short stay at Paris, the Prince honoured me with his especial favour. But I have dwelt too long on my sojourn at the French court. The persons whom I have described, and who alone made that sojourn memorable, must be my apology.

One day I was honoured by a visit from the Abbe Dubois. After a short conversation upon indifferent things, he accosted me thus:--

"You are aware, Count Devereux, of the partiality which the Regent has conceived towards you. Fortunate would it be for the Prince" (here Dubois elevated his brows with an ironical and arch expression), "so good by disposition, so injured by example, if his partiality had been more frequently testified towards gentlemen of your merit. A mission of considerable importance, and one demanding great personal address, gives his Royal Highness an opportunity of testifying his esteem for you. He honoured me with a conference on the subject yesterday, and has now commissioned me to explain to you the technical objects of this mission, and to offer to you the honour of undertaking it. Should you accept the proposals, you will wait upon his Highness before his /levee/ to-morrow."

Dubois then proceeded, in the clear, rapid manner peculiar to him, to comment on the state of Europe. "For France," said he, in concluding his sketch, "peace is absolutely necessary. A drained treasury, an exhausted country, require it. You see, from what I have said, that Spain and England are the principal quarters from which we are to dread hostilities. Spain we must guard against; England we must propitiate: the latter object is easy in England in any case, whether James or George be uppermost. For whoever is king in England will have quite enough to do at home to make him agree willingly enough to peace abroad. The former requires a less simple and a more enlarged policy. I fear the ambition of the Queen of Spain and the turbulent genius of her minion Alberoni. We must fortify ourselves by new forms of alliance, at various courts, which shall at once defend us and intimidate our enemies. We wish to employ some nobleman of ability and address, on a secret mission to Russia: will you be that person? Your absence from Paris will be but short; you will see a very droll country, and a very droll sovereign; you will return hither, doubly the rage, and with a just claim to more important employment hereafter. What say you to the proposal?"

"I must hear more," said I, "before I decide."

The Abbe renewed. It is needless to repeat all the particulars of the commission that he enumerated. Suffice it that, after a brief

consideration, I accepted the honour proposed to me. The Abbe wished me joy, relapsed into his ordinary strain of coarse levity for a few minutes, and then, reminding me that I was to attend the Regent on the morrow, departed. It was easy to see that in the mind of that subtle and crafty ecclesiastic, with whose manoeuvres private intrigues were always blended with public, this offer of employment veiled a desire to banish me from the immediate vicinity of the good-natured Regent, whose favour the aspiring Abbe wished at that exact moment exclusively to monopolize. Mere men of pleasure he knew would not interfere with his aims upon the Prince; mere men of business still less: but a man who was thought to combine the capacities of both, and who was moreover distinguished by the Regent, he deemed a more dangerous rival than the inestimable person thus suspected really was.

However, I cared little for the honest man's motives. Adventure to me had always greater charms than dissipation, and it was far more agreeable to the nature of my ambition, to win distinction by any honourable method, than by favouritism at a court so hollow, so unprincipled, and so grossly licentious as that of the Regent. There to be the most successful courtier was to be the most amusing profligate. Alas, when the heart is away from its objects, and the taste revolts at its excess, Pleasure is worse than palling: it is a torture! and the devil in Jonson's play did not perhaps greatly belie the truth when he averred "that the pains in his native country were pastimes to the life of a person of fashion."

The Duke of Orleans received me the next morning with more than his wonted /bonhomie/. What a pity that so good-natured a prince should have been so bad a man! He enlarged more easily and carelessly than his worthy preceptor had done upon the several points to be observed in my mission; then condescendingly told me he was very sorry to lose me from his court, and asked me, at all events, before I left Paris, to be a guest at one of his select suppers. I appreciated this honour at its just value. To these suppers none were asked but the Prince's chums, or /roues/,* as he was pleased to call them. As, /entre nous/, these chums were for the most part the most good-for-nothing people in the kingdom, I could not but feel highly flattered at being deemed, by so deep a judge of character as the Regent, worthy to join them. I need not say that the invitation was eagerly accepted, nor that I left Philippe le Debonnaire impressed with the idea of his being the most admirable person in Europe. What a fool a great man is if he does not study to be affable: weigh a prince's condescension in one scale, and all the cardinal virtues in the other, and the condescension will outweigh them all! The Regent of France ruined his country as much as he well could do, and there was not a dry eye when he died!

* The term /roue/, now so comprehensive, was first given by the Regent to a select number of his friends; according to them, because they would be broken on the wheel for his sake, according to himself, because they deserved to be so broken.--ED.

A day had now effected a change--a great change--in my fate. A new court, a new theatre of action, a new walk of ambition, were suddenly opened to me. Nothing could be more promising than my first employment; nothing could be more pleasing than the anticipation of the change. "I must force myself to be agreeable to-night," said I, as I dressed for the Regent's supper. "I must leave behind me the remembrance of a /bon mot/, or I shall be forgotten."

And I was right. In that whirlpool, the capital of France, everything sinks but wit: /that/ is always on the surface; and we must cling to it with a firm grasp, if we would not go down to--"the deep oblivion."

CHAPTER X.

ROYAL EXERTIONS FOR THE GOOD OF THE PEOPLE.

WHAT a singular scene was that private supper with the Regent of France and his /roues/! The party consisted of twenty: nine gentlemen of the court besides myself; four men of low rank and character, but admirable buffoons; and six ladies, such ladies as the Duke loved best,--witty, lively, sarcastic, and good for nothing.

De Chatran accosted me.

"Je suis ravi, mon cher Monsieur Devereux," said he, gravely, "to see you in such excellent company: you must be a little surprised to find yourself here!"

"Not at all! every scene is worth one visit. He, my good Monsieur Chatran, who goes to the House of Correction once is a philosopher: he who goes twice is a rogue!"

"Thank you, Count, what am I then? I have been /here/ twenty times."

"Why, I will answer you with a story. The soul of a Jesuit one night, when its body was asleep, wandered down to the lower regions; Satan caught it, and was about to consign it to some appropriate place; the soul tried hard to excuse itself: you know what a cunning thing a Jesuit's soul is! 'Monsieur Satan,' said the spirit; 'no king should punish a traveller as he would a native. Upon my honour, I am merely here /en voyageur/.' 'Go then,' said Satan, and the soul flew back to its body. But the Jesuit died, and came to the lower regions a second time. He was brought before his Satanic majesty, and made the same excuse. 'No, no,' cried Beelzebub; 'once here is to be only /le diable voyageur/; twice here, and you are /le diable tout de bon/.'"

"Ha! ha! ha!" said Chatran, laughing; "I then am the /diable tout de bon/! 'tis well I /am no worse/; for we reckon the /roues/ a devilish deal worse than the very worst of the devils,--but see, the Regent approaches us."

And, leaving a very pretty and gay-looking lady, the Regent sauntered towards us. It was in walking, by the by, that he lost all the grace of his mien. I don't know, however, that one wishes a great man to be graceful, so long as he's familiar.

"Aha, Monsieur Devereux!" said he, "we will give you some lessons in cooking to-night; we shall show you how to provide for yourself in that barbarous country which you are about to visit. /Tout voyageur doit tout savoir!"

"Avery admirable saying; which leads me to understand that Monseigneur has been a great traveller," said I.

"Ay, in all things and /all places/; eh, Count?" answered the Regent, smiling; "but," here he lowered his voice a little, "I have never yet learned how you came so opportunely to our assistance that night. /Dieu me damne/! but it reminds me of the old story of the two sisters meeting at a gallant's house. 'Oh, Sister, how came /you/ here?' said one, in virtuous amazement. '/Ciel! ma soeur/!' cries the other; 'what brought /you/?'"*

* The reader will remember a better version of this anecdote in one of the most popular of the English comedies.--ED.

"Monseigneur is pleasant," said I, laughing; "but a man does now and then (though I own it is very seldom) do a good action, without having previously resolved to commit a bad one!"

"I like your parenthesis," cried the Regent; "it reminds me of my friend St. Simon, who thinks so ill of mankind that I asked him one day whether it was possible for him to despise anything more than men? 'Yes,' said he, with a low bow, 'women!'"

"His experience," said I, glancing at the female part of the /coterie/, "was, I must own, likely to lead him to that opinion."

"None of your sarcasms, Monsieur," cried the Regent.

"'L'amusement est un des besoins de l'homme,' as I hear young Arouet very pithily said the other day; and we owe gratitude to whomsoever it may be that supplies that want. Now, you will agree with me that none supply it like women therefore we owe them gratitude; therefore we must not hear them abused. Logically proved, I think!"

"Yes, indeed," said I, "it is a pleasure to find they have so able an advocate; and that your Highness can so well apply to yourself /both/ the assertions in the motto of the great master of fortification, Vauban,--'I destroy, but I defend.'"

"Enough," said the Duke, gayly, "now to /our fortifzeations/;" and he moved away towards the women; I followed the royal example, and soon found myself seated next to a pretty and very small woman. We entered

into conversation; and, when once begun, my fair companion took care that it should not cease, without a miracle. By the goddess Facundia, what volumes of words issued from that little mouth! and on all subjects too! church, state, law, politics, play-houses, lampoons, lace, liveries, kings, queens, /roturiers/, beggars, you would have thought, had you heard her, so vast was her confusion of all things, that chaos had come again. Our royal host did not escape her. "You never before supped here /en famille/," said she,--"/mon Dieu/! it will do your heart good to see how much the Regent will eat. He has such an appetite; you know he never eats any dinner, in order to eat the more at supper. You see that little dark woman he is talking to?--well, she is Madame de Parabere: he calls her his little black crow; was there ever such a pet name? Can you guess why he likes her? Nay, never take the trouble of thinking: I will tell you at once; simply because she eats and drinks so much. /Parole d'honneur/, 'tis true. The Regent says he likes sympathy in all things! is it not droll? What a hideous old man is that Noce: his face looks as if it had caught the rainbow. That impudent fellow Dubois scolded him for squeezing so many louis out of the good Regent. The yellow creature attempted to deny the fact. 'Nay,' cried Dubois, 'you cannot contradict me: I see their very ghosts in your face.'"

While my companion was thus amusing herself, Noce, unconscious of her panegyric on his personal attractions, joined us.

"Ah! my dear Noce," said the lady, most affectionately, "how well you are looking! I am delighted to see you."

"I do not doubt it," said Noce "for I have to inform you that your petition is granted; your husband will have the place."

"Oh, how eternally grateful I am to you!" cried the lady, in an ecstasy; "my poor, dear husband will be so rejoiced. I wish I had wings to fly to him!"

The gallant Noce uttered a compliment; I thought myself /de trop/, and moved away. I again encountered Chatran.

"I overheard your conversation with Madame la Marquise," said he, smiling: "she has a bitter tongue; has she not?"

"Very! how she abused the poor rogue Noce!"

"Yes, and yet he is her lover!"

"Her lover!--you astonish me: why, she seemed almost fond of her husband; the tears came in her eyes when she spoke of him."

"She is fond of him!" said Chatran, dryly. "She loves the ground he treads on: it is precisely for that reason she favours Noce; she is never happy but when she is procuring something /pour son cher bon mari/. She goes to spend a week at Noce's country-house, and writes to her husband, with a pen dipped in her blood, saying, 'My /heart/ is with thee!'"

"Certainly," said I, "France is the land of enigmas; the sphynx must have been a /Parisienne/. And when Jupiter made man, he made two natures utterly distinct from one another. One was /Human nature/, and the other /French nature/!"

At this moment supper was announced. We all adjourned to another apartment, where to my great surprise I observed the cloth laid, the sideboard loaded, the wines ready, but nothing to eat on the table! A Madame de Savori, who was next me, noted my surprise.

"What astonishes you, Monsieur?"

"/Nothing/, Madame," said I; "that is, the absence of /all/ things."

"What! you expected to see supper?"

"I own my delusion: I did."

"It is not cooked yet!"

"Oh! well, I can wait!"

"And officiate too!" said the lady; "in a word, this is one of the Regent's cooking nights."

Scarcely had I received this explanation, before there was a general adjournment to an inner apartment, where all the necessary articles of cooking were ready to our hand.

> "The Regent led the way,
> To light us to our prey,"

and, with an irresistible gravity and importance of demeanour, entered upon the duties of /chef/. In a very short time we were all engaged. Nothing could exceed the zest with which every one seemed to enter into the rites of the kitchen. You would have imagined they had been born scullions, they handled the /batterie de cuisine/ so naturally. As for me, I sought protection with Madame de Savori; and as, fortunately, she was very deeply skilled in the science, she had occasion to employ me in many minor avocations which her experience taught her would not be above my comprehension.

After we had spent a certain time in this dignified occupation, we returned to the /salle a manger/. The attendants placed the dishes on the table, and we all fell to. Whether out of self-love to their own performances, or complaisance to the performances of others, I cannot exactly say, but certain it is that all the guests acquitted themselves /a merveille/: you would not have imagined the Regent the only one who had gone without dinner to eat the more at supper. Even that devoted wife to her /cher bon mari/, who had so severely dwelt upon the good

Regent's infirmity, occupied herself with an earnestness that would have seemed almost wolf-like in a famished grenadier.

Very slight indeed was the conversation till the supper was nearly over; then the effects of the wine became more perceptible. The Regent was the first person who evinced that he had eaten sufficiently to be able to talk. Utterly dispensing with the slightest veil of reserve or royalty, he leaned over the table, and poured forth a whole tide of jests. The guests then began to think it was indecorous to stuff themselves any more, and, as well as they were able, they followed their host's example. But the most amusing personages were the buffoons: they mimicked and joked, and lampooned and lied, as if by inspiration. As the bottle circulated, and talk grew louder, the lampooning and the lying were not, however, confined to the buffoons. On the contrary, the best born and best bred people seemed to excel the most in those polite arts. Every person who boasted a fair name or a decent reputation at court was seized, condemned, and mangled in an instant. And how elaborately the good folks slandered! It was no hasty word and flippant repartee which did the business of the absent: there was a precision, a polish, a labour of malice, which showed that each person had brought so many reputations already cut up. The good-natured convivialists differed from all other backbiters that I have ever met, in the same manner as the toads of Surinam differ from all other toads; namely, their venomous offspring were not half formed, misshapen tadpoles of slander, but sprang at once into life,--well shaped and fully developed.

"/Chantons/!" cried the Regent, whose eyes, winking and rolling, gave token of his approaching state which equals the beggar to the king; "let us have a song. Noce, lift up thy voice, and let us hear what the Tokay has put into thy head!"

Noce obeyed, and sang as men half drunk generally do sing.

"/O Ciel/!" whispered the malicious Savori, "what a hideous screech: one would think he had /turned his face into a voice!/"

"/Bravissimo/!" cried the Duke, when his guest had ceased,--"what happy people we are! Our doors are locked; not a soul can disturb us: we have plenty of wine; we are going to get drunk; and we have all Paris to abuse! what were you saying of Marshal Villars, my little Parabere?"

And pounce went the little Parabere upon the unfortunate marshal. At last slander had a respite: nonsense began its reign; the full inspiration descended upon the orgies; the good people lost the use of their faculties. Noise, clamour, uproar, broken bottles, falling chairs, and (I grieve to say) their occupants falling too,--conclude the scene of the royal supper. Let us drop the curtain.

CHAPTER XI.

AN INTERVIEW.

I WENT a little out of my way, on departing from Paris, to visit Lord Bolingbroke, who at that time was in the country. There are some men whom one never really sees in capitals; one sees their masks, not themselves: Bolingbroke was one. It was in retirement, however brief it might be, that his true nature expanded itself; and, weary of being admired, he allowed one to love, and, even in the wildest course of his earlier excesses, to respect him. My visit was limited to a few hours, but it made an indelible impression on me.

"Once more," I said, as we walked to and fro in the garden of his temporary retreat, "once more you are in your element; minister and statesman of a prince, and chief supporter of the great plans which are to restore him to his throne."

A slight shade passed over Bolingbroke's fine brow. "To you, my constant friend," said he, "to you,--who of all my friends alone remained true in exile, and unshaken by misfortune,--to you I will confide a secret that I would intrust to no other. I repent me already of having espoused this cause. I did so while yet the disgrace of an unmerited attainder tingled in my veins; while I was in the full tide of those violent and warm passions which have so often misled me. Myself attainted; the best beloved of my associates in danger; my party deserted, and seemingly lost but for some bold measure such as then offered,--these were all that I saw. I listened eagerly to representations I now find untrue; and I accepted that rank and power from one prince which were so rudely and gallingly torn from me by another. I perceive that I have acted imprudently; but what is done, is done: no private scruples, no private interest, shall make me waver in a cause that I have once pledged myself to serve; and if I /can/ do aught to make a weak cause powerful, and a divided party successful, I will; but, Devereux, you are wrong,--this is /not/ my element. Ever in the paths of strife, I have sighed for quiet; and, while most eager in pursuit of ambition, I have languished the most fondly for content. The littleness of intrigue disgusts me, and while /the branches/ of my power soared the highest, and spread with the most luxuriance, it galled me to think of the miry soil in which that power was condemned to strike /the roots/,* upon which it stood, and by which it must be nourished."

* "Occasional Writer," No. 1. The Editor has, throughout this work, usually, but not invariably, noted the passages in Bolingbroke's writings, in which there occur similes, illustrations, or striking thoughts, correspondent with those in the text.

I answered Bolingbroke as men are wont to answer statesmen who complain of their calling,--half in compliment, half in contradiction; but he replied with unusual seriousness,

"Do not think I affect to speak thus: you know how eagerly I snatch any respite from state, and how unmovedly I have borne the loss of prosperity and of power. You are now about to enter those perilous

paths which I have trod for years. Your passions, like mine, are strong! Beware, oh, beware, how you indulge them without restraint! They are the fires which should warm: let them not be the fires which destroy."

Bolingbroke paused in evident and great agitation; he resumed: "I speak strongly, for I speak in bitterness; I was thrown early into the world; my whole education had been framed to make me ambitious; it succeeded in its end. I was ambitious, and of all success,--success in pleasure, success in fame. To wean me from the former, my friends persuaded me to marry; they chose my wife for her connections and her fortune, and I gained those advantages at the expense of what was better than either,--happiness! You know how unfortunate has been that marriage, and how young I was when it was contracted. Can you wonder that it failed in the desired effect? Every one courted me; every temptation assailed me: pleasure even became more alluring abroad, when at home I had no longer the hope of peace; the indulgence of one passion begat the indulgence of another; and, though my better sense /prompted/ all my actions, it never /restrained/ them to a proper limit. Thus the commencement of my actions has been generally prudent, and their /continuation/ has deviated into rashness, or plunged into excess. Devereux, I have paid the forfeit of my errors with a terrible interest: when my motives have been pure, men have seen a fault in the conduct, and calumniated the motives; when my conduct has been blameless, men have remembered its former errors, and asserted that its present goodness only arose from some sinister intention: thus I have been termed crafty, when I was in reality rash, and that was called the inconsistency of interest which in reality was the inconsistency of passion.* I have reason, therefore, to warn you how you suffer your subjects to become your tyrants; and believe me no experience is so deep as that of one who has committed faults, and who has discovered their causes."

* This I do believe to be the real (though perhaps it is a new) light in which Lord Bolingbroke's life and character are to be viewed. The same writers who tell us of his ungovernable passions, always prefix to his name the epithets "designing, cunning, crafty," etc. Now I will venture to tell these historians that, if they had studied human nature instead of party pamphlets, they would have discovered that there are certain incompatible qualities which can never be united in one character,--that no man can have violent passions /to which he is in the habit of yielding/, and be systematically crafty and designing. No man can be all heat, and at the same time all coolness; but opposite causes not unoften produce like effects. Passion usually makes men changeable, so sometimes does craft: hence the mistake of the uninquiring or the shallow; and hence while ------ writes, and ------ compiles, will the characters of great men be transmitted to posterity misstated and belied.--ED.

"Apply, my dear Lord, that experience to your future career. You remember what the most sagacious of all pedants,* even though he was an

emperor, has so happily expressed,--'Repentance is a goddess, and the preserver of those who have erred.'"

* The Emperor Julian. The original expression is paraphrased in the text.

"May I /find/ her so!" answered Bolingbroke; "but as Montaigne or Charron would say,* 'Every man is at once his own sharper and his own bubble.' We make vast promises to ourselves; and a passion, an example, sweeps even the remembrance of those promises from our minds. One is too apt to believe men hypocrites, if their conduct squares not with their sentiments; but perhaps no vice is more rare, for no task is more difficult, than systematic hypocrisy; and the same susceptibility which exposes men to be easily impressed by the allurements of vice renders them at heart most struck by the loveliness of virtue. Thus, their language and their hearts worship the divinity of the latter, while their conduct strays the most erringly towards the false shrines over which the former presides. Yes! I have never been blind to the surpassing excellence of GOOD. The still, sweet whispers of virtue have been heard, even when the storm has been loudest, and the bark of Reason been driven the most impetuously over the waves: and, at this moment, I am impressed with a foreboding that, sooner or later, the whispers will not only be heard, but their suggestion be obeyed; and that, far from courts and intrigue, from dissipation and ambition, I shall learn, in retirement, the true principles of wisdom, and the real objects of life."

* "Spirit of Patriotism."

Thus did Bolingbroke converse, and thus did I listen, till it was time to depart. I left him impressed with a melancholy that was rather soothing than distasteful. Whatever were the faults of that most extraordinary and most dazzling genius, no one was ever more candid* in confessing his errors. A systematically bad man either ridicules what is good or disbelieves in its existence; but no man can be hardened in vice whose heart is still sensible of the excellence and the glory of virtue.

* It is impossible to read the letter to Sir W. Windham without being remarkably struck with the dignified and yet open candour which it displays. The same candour is equally visible in whatever relates /to himself/, in all Lord Bolingbroke's writings and correspondence; and yet candour is the last attribute usually conceded to him. But never was there a writer whom people have talked of more and read less; and I do not know a greater proof of this than the ever-repeated assertion (echoed from a most incompetent authority) of the said letter to Sir W. Windham being the finest of all Lord Bolingbroke's writings. It is an article of great value to the history of the times; but, as to all the

higher graces and qualities of composition, it is one of the least striking (and on the other hand it is one of the most verbally incorrect) which he has bequeathed to us (the posthumous works always excepted). I am not sure whether the most brilliant passages, the most noble illustrations, the most profound reflections, and most useful truths, to be found in all his writings, are not to be gathered from the least popular of them,--such as that volume entitled "Political Tracts."--ED.

announcement goes out in the Project Gutenberg Newsletter.

http://www.ibiblio.org/gutenberg/etext03 or
ftp://ftp.ibiblio.org/pub/docs/books/gutenberg/etext03

Or /etext02, 01, 00, 99, 98, 97, 96, 95, 94, 93, 92, 92, 91 or 90

Just search by the first five letters of the filename you want,
as it appears in our Newsletters.

Information about Project Gutenberg (one page)

We produce about two million dollars for each hour we work. The time it takes us, a rather conservative estimate, is fifty hours to get any eBook selected, entered, proofread, edited, copyright searched and analyzed, the copyright letters written, etc. Our projected audience is one hundred million readers. If the value per text is nominally estimated at one dollar then we produce $2 million dollars per hour in 2002 as we release over 100 new text files per month: 1240 more eBooks in 2001 for a total of 4000+ We are already on our way to trying for 2000 more eBooks in 2002 If they reach just 1-2% of the world's population then the total will reach over half a trillion eBooks given away by year's end.

The Goal of Project Gutenberg is to Give Away 1 Trillion eBooks! This is ten thousand titles each to one hundred million readers, which is only about 4% of the present number of computer users.

Here is the briefest record of our progress (* means estimated):

eBooks Year Month

1	1971	July
10	1991	January
100	1994	January
1000	1997	August
1500	1998	October
2000	1999	December
2500	2000	December
3000	2001	November
4000	2001	October/November
6000	2002	December*
9000	2003	November*
10000	2004	January*

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation has been created to secure a future for Project Gutenberg into the next millennium.

We need your donations more than ever!

As of February, 2002, contributions are being solicited from people

and organizations in: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

We have filed in all 50 states now, but these are the only ones that have responded.

As the requirements for other states are met, additions to this list will be made and fund raising will begin in the additional states. Please feel free to ask to check the status of your state.

In answer to various questions we have received on this:

We are constantly working on finishing the paperwork to legally request donations in all 50 states. If your state is not listed and you would like to know if we have added it since the list you have, just ask.

While we cannot solicit donations from people in states where we are not yet registered, we know of no prohibition against accepting donations from donors in these states who approach us with an offer to donate.

International donations are accepted, but we don't know ANYTHING about how to make them tax-deductible, or even if they CAN be made deductible, and don't have the staff to handle it even if there are ways.

Donations by check or money order may be sent to:

Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation
PMB 113
1739 University Ave.
Oxford, MS 38655-4109

Contact us if you want to arrange for a wire transfer or payment method other than by check or money order.

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation has been approved by the US Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) organization with EIN [Employee Identification Number] 64-622154. Donations are tax-deductible to the maximum extent permitted by law. As fund-raising requirements for other states are met, additions to this list will be made and fund-raising will begin in the additional states.

We need your donations more than ever!

You can get up to date donation information online at:

http://www.gutenberg.net/donation.html

***

If you can’t reach Project Gutenberg,
you can always email directly to:

Michael S. Hart <hart@pobox.com>

Prof. Hart will answer or forward your message.

We would prefer to send you information by email.

The Legal Small Print

(Three Pages)

START**THE SMALL PRINT!**FOR PUBLIC DOMAIN EBOOKS**START
Why is this "Small Print!" statement here? You know: lawyers.
They tell us you might sue us if there is something wrong with
your copy of this eBook, even if you got it for free from
someone other than us, and even if what’s wrong is not our
fault. So, among other things, this "Small Print!" statement
disclaims most of our liability to you. It also tells you how
you may distribute copies of this eBook if you want to.

BEFORE! YOU USE OR READ THIS EBOOK
By using or reading any part of this PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm
eBook, you indicate that you understand, agree to and accept
this "Small Print!" statement. If you do not, you can receive
a refund of the money (if any) you paid for this eBook by
sending a request within 30 days of receiving it to the person
you got it from. If you received this eBook on a physical
medium (such as a disk), you must return it with your request.

ABOUT PROJECT GUTENBERG-TM EBOOKS
This PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm eBook, like most PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm eBooks,
is a "public domain" work distributed by Professor Michael S. Hart
through the Project Gutenberg Association (the "Project").
Among other things, this means that no one owns a United States copyright
on or for this work, so the Project (and you!) can copy and
distribute it in the United States without permission and
without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth
below, apply if you wish to copy and distribute this eBook
under the "PROJECT GUTENBERG" trademark.

Please do not use the "PROJECT GUTENBERG" trademark to market
any commercial products without permission.

To create these eBooks, the Project expends considerable efforts to identify, transcribe and proofread public domain works. Despite these efforts, the Project's eBooks and any medium they may be on may contain "Defects". Among other things, Defects may take the form of incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other eBook medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

LIMITED WARRANTY; DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES
But for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described below, [1] Michael Hart and the Foundation (and any other party you may receive this eBook from as a PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm eBook) disclaims all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees, and [2] YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE OR UNDER STRICT LIABILITY, OR FOR BREACH OF WARRANTY OR CONTRACT, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES, EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGES.

If you discover a Defect in this eBook within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending an explanatory note within that time to the person you received it from. If you received it on a physical medium, you must return it with your note, and such person may choose to alternatively give you a replacement copy. If you received it electronically, such person may choose to alternatively give you a second opportunity to receive it electronically.

THIS EBOOK IS OTHERWISE PROVIDED TO YOU "AS-IS". NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, ARE MADE TO YOU AS TO THE EBOOK OR ANY MEDIUM IT MAY BE ON, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE.

Some states do not allow disclaimers of implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of consequential damages, so the above disclaimers and exclusions may not apply to you, and you may have other legal rights.

INDEMNITY
You will indemnify and hold Michael Hart, the Foundation, and its trustees and agents, and any volunteers associated with the production and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm texts harmless, from all liability, cost and expense, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following that you do or cause: [1] distribution of this eBook, [2] alteration, modification, or addition to the eBook, or [3] any Defect.

DISTRIBUTION UNDER "PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm"

Money should be paid to the:
"Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

If you are interested in contributing scanning equipment or
software or other items, please contact Michael Hart at:
hart@pobox.com

*END THE SMALL PRINT! FOR PUBLIC DOMAIN EBOOKS*Ver.02/11/02*END*
KS*Ver.02/11/02*END*

ed warranties or

the exclusion or limitation of consequential damages, so the

above disclaimers and exclusions may not apply to you, and you

may have other legal rights.

INDEMNITY

You will indemnify and hold Michael Hart, the Foundation,

and its trustees and agents, and any volunteers associated

with the production and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm

texts harmless, from all liability, cost and expense, including

legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the

following that you do or cause: [1] distribution of this eBook,

[2] alteration, modification, or addition to the eBook,

or [3] any Defect.

DISTRIBUTION UNDER "PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm"

You may distribute copies of this eBook electronically, or by

disk, book or any other medium if you either delete this

"Small Print!" and all other references to Project Gutenberg,

or:

[1] Only give exact copies of it. Among other things, this
requires that you do not remove, alter or modify the
eBook or this "small print!" statement. You may however,
if you wish, distribute this eBook in machine readable
binary, compressed, mark-up, or proprietary form,
including any form resulting from conversion by word
processing or hypertext software, but only so long as
EITHER:

[*] The eBook, when displayed, is clearly readable, and
does *not* contain characters other than those
intended by the author of the work, although tilde
(~), asterisk (*) and underline (_) characters may
be used to convey punctuation intended by the
author, and additional characters may be used to
indicate hypertext links; OR

[*] The eBook may be readily converted by the reader at
no expense into plain ASCII, EBCDIC or equivalent
form by the program that displays the eBook (as is
the case, for instance, with most word processors);
OR

[*] You provide, or agree to also provide on request at

no additional cost, fee or expense, a copy of the eBook in its original plain ASCII form (or in EBCDIC or other equivalent proprietary form).

[2] Honor the eBook refund and replacement provisions of this "Small Print!" statement.

[3] Pay a trademark license fee to the Foundation of 20% of the gross profits you derive calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. If you don't derive profits, no royalty is due. Royalties are payable to "Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation" the 60 days following each date you prepare (or were legally required to prepare) your annual (or equivalent periodic) tax return. Please contact us beforehand to let us know your plans and to work out the details.

WHAT IF YOU *WANT* TO SEND MONEY EVEN IF YOU DON'