

she shortly afterward published "The Italian, or the Confessional of the Black Penitents."

We can, in our day, realize to ourselves very little of the effect produced by Anne Radcliffe's romances at the time of their appearance. All the contemporary critics agree in testifying to their immense success, only inferior to that of the *Waverley* novels in more recent times. Now they appear nothing more than the efflux of a morbid imagination, full of hallucinations and absurdities, and insufferably tedious to our modern tastes, accustomed to the condensed writing of the present day. Their unconnected plots are nevertheless not altogether devoid of a certain sort of interest, and are fraught with picturesque situations and melodramatic surprises. The living characters therein introduced present few natural features. We recognize every where the caprices of an unbridled fancy, and a prevailing vitiation of sense and taste.

Anne Radcliffe died near London, on the 7th February, 1823, at the age of 63. The "*New Monthly Magazine*," for May of that year, announces her decease, and affirms that her death was accompanied by singular visions, which had pursued her ever since a romantic event of her youth.

MY NOVEL; OR, VARIETIES IN ENGLISH LIFE.*

CHAPTER XVII.—CONTINUED.

"YOUR flatterers will tell you, Signorina, that you are much improved since then, but I liked you better as you were; not but what I hope to return some day what you then so generously pressed upon me."

"Pressed upon you!—I? Signor, you are under some strange mistake."

"Alas! no; but the female heart is so capricious and fickle! You pressed it upon me, I assure you. I own that I was not loth to accept it."

"Pressed it? Pressed what?"

"Your kiss, my child," said Harley; and then added with a serious tenderness, "And I again say that I hope to return it some day—when I see you, by the side of father and of husband, in your native land—the fairest bride on whom the skies of Italy ever smiled! And now, pardon a hermit and a soldier for his rude jests, and give your hand in token of that pardon, to—Harley L'Estrange."

Violante, who at the first words of this address had recoiled, with a vague belief that the stranger was out of his mind, sprang forward as it closed, and in all the vivid enthusiasm of her nature, pressed the hand held out to her, with both her own. "Harley L'Estrange—the preserver of my father's life!" she cried, and her eyes were fixed on his with such evident gratitude and reverence, that Harley felt at once confused and delighted. She did not think at that instant of the hero of her dreams—she thought but of him who had saved her father. But, as his eyes

sank before her own, and his head, uncovered, bowed over the hand he held, she recognized the likeness to the features on which she had so often gazed. The first bloom of youth was gone, but enough of youth still remained to soften the lapse of years, and to leave to manhood the attractions which charm the eye. Instinctively she withdrew her hands from his clasp, and, in her turn, looked down.

In this pause of embarrassment to both, Riccabocca let himself into the garden by his own latch-key, and, startled to see a man by the side of Violante, sprang forward with an abrupt and angry cry. Harley heard, and turned.

As if restored to courage and self-possession by the sense of her father's presence, Violante again took the hand of the visitor. "Father," she said, simply, "it is he—he is come at last." And then, retiring a few steps, she contemplated them both; and her face was radiant with happiness—as if something, long silently missed and looked for, was as silently found, and life had no more a want, nor the heart a void.

BOOK X.—INITIAL CHAPTER.

It is observed by a very pleasant writer—read nowadays only by the brave, pertinacious few who still struggle hard to rescue from the House of Pluto the souls of departed authors, jostled and chased as those souls are by the noisy footsteps of the living—it is observed by the admirable Charron, that "judgment and wisdom is not only the best, but the happiest portion God Almighty hath distributed among men; for though this distribution be made with a very uneven hand, yet nobody thinks himself stinted or ill-dealt with, but he that hath never so little is contented in *this respect*."*

And, certainly, the present narrative may serve in notable illustration of the remark so drily made by the witty and wise preacher. For whether our friend Riccabocca deduce theories for daily life from the great folio of Machiavel; or that promising young gentleman, Mr. Randal Leslie, interpret the power of knowledge into the art of being too knowing for dull honest folks to cope with him; or acute Dick Avenel push his way up the social ascent with a blow for those before, and a kick for those behind him, after the approved fashion of your strong New Man; or Baron Levy—that cynical impersonation of Gold—compare himself to the Magnetic Rock in the Arabian tale, to which the nails in every ship that approaches the influence of the loadstone fly from the planks, and a shipwreck per day adds its waifs to the Rock: questionless, at least, it is, that each of these personages believed that Providence had bestowed on him an elder son's inheritance of wisdom. Nor, were we to glance toward the obscurer paths of life, should we find

* Translation of *Charron on Wisdom*. By G. STANHOPE, D.D., late Dean of Canterbury (1729). A translation remarkable for ease, vigor, and (despite that contempt for the strict rules of grammar, which was common enough among writers at the commencement of the last century) for the idiomatic raciness of its English.

* Continued from the March Number.

good Parson Dale deem himself worse off than the rest of the world in this precious commodity—as, indeed, he had signally evinced of late in that shrewd guess of his touching Professor Moss; even plain Squire Hazelden took it for granted that he could teach Audley Egerton a thing or two worth knowing in politics; Mr. Stim thought that there was no branch of useful lore on which he could not instruct the squire; and Sprott, the tinker, with his bag full of tracts and lucifer matches, regarded the whole framework of modern society, from a rick to a constitution, with the profound disdain of a revolutionary philosopher. Considering that every individual thus brings into the stock of the world so vast a share of intelligence, it can not but excite our wonder to find that Oxenstiern is popularly held to be right when he said, “See, my son, how little wisdom it requires to govern states;”—that is, Men! That so many millions of persons each with a profound assurance that he is possessed of an exalted sagacity, should concur in the ascendancy of a few inferior intellects, according to a few stupid, prosy, matter-of-fact rules as old as the hills, is a phenomenon very discreditable to the spirit and energy of the aggregate human species! It creates no surprise that one sensible watch-dog should control the movements of a flock of silly, grass-eating sheep; but that two or three silly, grass-eating sheep should give the law to whole flocks of such mighty sensible watch-dog—*Diavolo!* Dr. Riccabocca, explain that if you can! And wonderfully strange it is, that notwithstanding all the march of enlightenment, notwithstanding our progressive discoveries in the laws of nature—our railways, steam engines, animal magnetism, and electro-biology—we have never made any improvement that is generally acknowledged, since Men ceased to be troglodytes and nomads, in the old-fashioned gamut of flats and sharps, which attunes into irregular social jog-trot all the generations that pass from the cradle to the grave; still, “*the desire for something we have not*” impels all the energies that keep us in movement, for good for ill, according to the checks or the directions of each favorite desire.

A friend of mine once said to a *millionaire*, whom he saw forever engaged in making money which he never seemed to have any pleasure in spending, “Pray, Mr. —, will you answer me one question: You are said to have two millions, and you spend £600 a year. In order to rest and enjoy, what will content you?”

“A little more,” answered the *millionaire*. That “little more” is the mainspring of civilization. Nobody ever gets it!

“Philus,” saith a Latin writer, “was not so rich as Lælius; Lælius was not so rich as Scipio; Scipio was not so rich as Crassus; and Crassus was not so rich—as he wished to be!” If John Bull were once contented, Manchester might shut up its mills. It is the “little more” that makes a mere trifle of the National Debt!—Long life to it!”

“Still, mend our law-books as we will, one is forced to confess that knaves are often seen in fine linen, and honest men in the most shabby old rags; and still, notwithstanding the exceptions, knavery is a very hazardous game; and honesty, on the whole, by far the best policy. Still, most of the Ten Commandments remain at the core of all the Pandects and Institutes that keep our hands off our neighbors’ throats, wives, and pockets; still, every year shows that the Parson’s maxim—*quieta non movere*—is as prudent for the health of communities as when Apollo recommended his votaries not to rake up a fever by stirring the Lake Camarina; still people, thank Heaven, decline to reside in parallelograms; and the surest token that we live under a free government is, when we are governed by persons whom we have a full right to imply, by our censure and ridicule, are blockheads compared to ourselves! Stop that delightful privilege, and, by Jove! sir, there is neither pleasure nor honor, in being governed at all! You might as well be—a Frenchman.

CHAPTER II.

THE Italian and his friend are closeted together.

“And why have you left your home in — shire? and why this new change of name?”

“Peschiera is in England.”

“I know it.”

“And bent on discovering me; and, it is said, of stealing from me my child.”

“He has had the assurance to lay wagers that he will win the hand of your heiress. I know that too; and therefore I have come to England—first to baffle his design—for I do not think your fears are exaggerated—and next to learn from you how to follow up a clew which, unless I am too sanguine, may lead to his ruin, and your unconditional restoration. Listen to me. You are aware that, after the skirmish with Peschiera’s armed hirelings, sent in search of you, I received a polite message from the Austrian government, requesting me to leave its Italian domains. Now, as I hold it the obvious duty of any foreigner, admitted to the hospitality of a state, to refrain from all participation in its civil disturbances, so I thought my honor assailed at this intimation, and went at once to Vienna to explain to the Minister there (to whom I was personally known), that though I had, as became man to man, aided to protect a refugee, who had taken shelter under my roof, from the infuriated soldiers at the command of his private foe, I had not only not shared in any attempt at revolt, but dissuaded, as far as I could, my Italian friends from their enterprise; and that because, without discussing its merits, I believed, as a military man and a cool spectator, the enterprise could only terminate in fruitless bloodshed. I was enabled to establish my explanation by satisfactory proof; and my acquaintance with the Minister assumed something of the character of friendship. I was then in a position to advocate your cause, and to state your original reluctance to enter into the

plots of the insurgents. I admitted freely that you had such natural desire for the independence of your native land, that, had the standard of Italy been boldly hoisted by its legitimate chiefs, or at the common uprising of its whole people, you would have been found in the van, amidst the ranks of your countrymen; but I maintained that you would never have shared in a conspiracy frantic in itself, and defiled by the lawless schemes and sordid ambition of its main projectors, had you not been betrayed and decoyed into it by the misrepresentations and domestic treachery of your kinsman—the very man who denounced you. Unfortunately, of this statement I had no proof but your own word. I made, however, so far an impression in your favor, and, it may be, against the traitor, that your property was not confiscated to the State, nor handed over, upon the plea of your civil death, to your kinsman."

"How!—I do not understand. Peschiera has the property?"

"He holds the revenues but of one-half upon pleasure, and they would be withdrawn, could I succeed in establishing the case that exists against him. I was forbidden before to mention this to you; the Minister, not inexcusably, submitted you to the probation of unconditional exile. Your grace might depend upon your own forbearance from farther conspiracies—forgive the word. I need not say I was permitted to return to Lombardy. I found, on my arrival, that—that your unhappy wife had been to my house, and exhibited great despair at hearing of my departure."

Riccabocca knit his dark brows, and breathed hard.

"I did not judge it necessary to acquaint you with this circumstance, nor did it much affect me. I believed in her guilt—and what could now avail her remorse, if remorse she felt? Shortly afterward, I heard that she was no more."

"Yes," muttered Riccabocca, "she died in the same year that I left Italy. It must be a strong reason that can excuse a friend for reminding me even that she once lived!"

"I come at once to that reason," said L'Es-trange, gently. "This autumn I was roaming through Switzerland, and, in one of my pedestrian excursions amidst the mountains, I met with an accident, which confined me for some days to a sofa at a little inn in an obscure village. My hostess was an Italian; and, as I had left my servant at a town at some distance, I required her attention till I could write to him to come to me. I was thankful for her cares, and amused by her Italian babble. We became very good friends. She told me she had been servant to a lady of great rank, who had died in Switzerland; and that, being enriched by the generosity of her mistress, she had married a Swiss innkeeper, and his people had become hers. My servant arrived, and my hostess learned my name, which she did not know before. She came into my room greatly agitated. In brief, this woman had been servant to your wife. She had accompanied her

to my villa, and known of her anxiety to see me, as your friend. The government had assigned to your wife your palace at Milan, with a competent income. She had refused to accept of either. Failing to see me, she had set off toward England, resolved upon seeing yourself; for the journals had stated that to England you had escaped."

"She dared!—shameless! And see, but a moment before, I had forgotten all but her grave in a foreign soil—and these tears had forgiven her," murmured the Italian.

"Let them forgive her still," said Harley, with all his exquisite sweetness of look and tone. "I resume. On entering Switzerland, your wife's health, which you know was always delicate, gave way. To fatigue and anxiety succeeded fever, and delirium ensued. She had taken with her but this one female attendant—the sole one she could trust—on leaving home. She suspected Peschiera to have bribed her household. In the presence of this woman she raved of her innocence—in accents of terror and aversion, denounced your kinsman—and called on you to vindicate her name and your own."

"Ravings indeed! Poor Paulina!" groaned Riccabocca, covering his face with both hands.

"But in her delirium there were lucid intervals. In one of these she rose, in spite of all her servant could do to restrain her, took from her desk several letters, and reading them over, exclaimed piteously, 'But how to get them to him?—whom to trust? And his friend is gone!' Then an idea seemed suddenly to flash upon her, for she uttered a joyous exclamation, sat down, and wrote long and rapidly; inclosed what she wrote with all the letters, in one packet, which she sealed carefully, and bade her servant carry to the post, with many injunctions to take it with her own hand, and pay the charge on it. 'For, oh!' said she (I repeat the words as my informant told them to me)—'for, oh, this is my sole chance to prove to my husband that, though I have erred, I am not the guilty thing he believes me; the sole chance, too, to redeem my error, and restore, perhaps, to my husband my country, to my child her heritage.' The servant took the letter to the post; and when she returned, her lady was asleep, with a smile upon her face. But from that sleep she woke again delirious, and before the next morning her soul had fled." Here Riccabocca lifted one hand from his face, and grasped Harley's arm, as if mutely beseeching him to pause. The heart of the man struggled hard with his pride and his philosophy; and it was long before Harley could lead him to regard the worldly prospects which this last communication from his wife might open to his ruined fortunes. Not, indeed, till Riccabocca had persuaded himself, and half persuaded Harley (for strong, indeed, was all presumption of guilt against the dead), that his wife's protestations of innocence from all but error had been but ravings.

"Be this as it may," said Harley, "there seems every reason to suppose that the letters inclosed were Peschiera's correspondence, and that,

if so, these would establish the proof of his influence over your wife, and of his perfidious machinations against yourself. I resolved, before coming hither, to go round by Vienna. There I heard with dismay that Peschiera had not only obtained the imperial sanction to demand your daughter's hand, but had boasted to his profligate circle that he should succeed; and he was actually on his road to England. I saw at once that could this design, by any fraud or artifice, be successful with Violante (for of your consent, I need not say, I did not dream), the discovery of this packet, whatever its contents, would be useless: his end would be secured. I saw also that his success would suffice forever to clear his name; for his success must imply your consent (it would be to disgrace your daughter, to assert that she had married without it), and your consent would be his acquittal. I saw, too, with alarm, that to all means for the accomplishment of his project he would be urged by despair; for his debts are great, and his character nothing but new wealth can support. I knew that he was able, bold, determined, and that he had taken with him a large supply of money, borrowed upon usury;—in a word, I trembled for you both. I have now seen your daughter, and I tremble no more. Accomplished seducer as Peschiera boasts himself, the first look upon her face, so sweet, yet so noble, convinced me that she is proof against a legion of Peschieras. Now, then, return we to this all-important subject—to this packet. It never reached you. Long years have passed since then. Does it exist still? Into whose hands would it have fallen? Try to summon up all your recollections. The servant could not remember the name of the person to whom it was addressed; she only insisted that the name began with a B, that it was directed to England, and that to England she accordingly paid the postage. Whom, then, with a name that begins with B, or (in case the servant's memory here mislead her) whom did you or your wife know, during your visit to England, with sufficient intimacy to make it probable that she would select such a person for her confidante?"

"I can not conceive," said Riccabocca, shaking his head. We came to England shortly after our marriage. Paulina was affected by the climate. She spoke not a word of English, and indeed not even French as might have been expected from her birth, for her father was poor, and thoroughly Italian. She refused all society. I went, it is true, somewhat into the London world—enough to induce me to shrink from the contrast that my second visit as a beggared refugee would have made to the reception I met with on my first—but I formed no intimate friendships. I recall no one whom she could have written to as intimate with me."

"But," persisted Harley, "think again. Was there no lady well acquainted with Italian, and with whom, perhaps, for that very reason, your wife become familiar?"

"Ah, it is true. There was one old lady of

retired habits, but who had been much in Italy. Lady—Lady—I remember—Lady Jane Horton."

"Horton—Lady Jane!" exclaimed Harley; "again! thrice in one day—is this wound never to scar over?" Then, noting Riccabocca's look of surprise, he said, "Excuse me, my friend; I listen to you with renewed interest. Lady Jane was a distant relation of my own; she judged me, perhaps, harshly—and I have some painful associations with her name; but she was a woman of many virtues. Your wife knew her?"

"Not, however, intimately—still, better than any one else in London. But Paulina would not have written to her; she knew that Lady Jane had died shortly after her own departure from England. I myself was summoned back to Italy on pressing business; she was too unwell to journey with me as rapidly as I was obliged to travel; indeed, illness detained her several weeks in England. In this interval she might have made acquaintances. Ah, now I see; I guess. You say the name began with B. Paulina, in my absence, engaged a companion; it was at my suggestion—a Mrs. Bertram. This lady accompanied her abroad. Paulina became excessively attached to her, she knew Italian so well. Mrs. Bertram left her on the road, and returned to England, for some private affairs of her own. I forget why or wherefore; if, indeed, I ever asked or learned. Paulina missed her sadly, often talked of her, wondered why she never heard from her. No doubt it was to this Mrs. Bertram that she wrote!"

"And you don't know the lady's friends or address?"

"No."

"Nor who recommended her to your wife?"

"No."

"Probably Lady Jane Horton?"

"It may be so. Very likely."

"I will follow up this track, slight as it is."

"But if Mrs. Bertram received the communication, how comes it that it never reached—O, fool that I am, how should it! I, who guarded so carefully my incognito!"

"True. This your wife could not foresee; she would naturally imagine that your residence in England would be easily discovered. But many years must have passed since your wife lost sight of this Mrs. Bertram, if their acquaintance was made so soon after your marriage; and now it is a long time to retrace—long before even your Violante was born."

"Alas! yes. I lost two fair sons in the interval. Violante was born to me as the child of sorrow."

"And to make sorrow lovely! how beautiful she is!"

The father smiled proudly.

"Where, in the loftiest houses of Europe, find a husband worthy of such a prize?"

"You forget that I am still an exile—she still dowerless. You forget that I am pursued by Peschiera; that I would rather see her a beggar's wife—than—Pah, the very thought maddens me,

it is so foul, *Corpo di Bacco!* I have been glad to find her a husband already."

"Already! Then that young man spoke truly?"

"What young man?"

"Randal Leslie. How! You know him?"

Here a brief explanation followed. Harley heard with attentive ear, and marked vexation, the particulars of Riccabocca's connection and implied engagement with Leslie.

"There is something very suspicious to me in all this," said he. "Why should this young man have so sounded me as to Violante's chance of losing a fortune if she married an Englishman?"

"Did he? Oh, pooh! excuse him. It was but his natural wish to seem ignorant of all about me. He did not know enough of my intimacy with you to betray my secret."

"But he knew enough of it—must have known enough to have made it right that he should tell you I was in England. He does not seem to have done so."

"No—that is strange—yet scarcely strange; for, when we last met, his head was full of other things—love and marriage. *Basta!* youth will be youth."

"He has no youth left in him!" exclaimed Harley, passionately. "I doubt if he ever had any. He is one of those men who come into the world with the pulse of a centenarian. You and I never shall be as old—as he was in long-clothes. Ah, you may laugh; but I am never wrong in my instincts. I disliked him at the first—his eye, his smile, his voice, his very footstep. It is madness in you to countenance such a marriage: it may destroy all chance of your restoration."

"Better that than infringe my word once passed."

"No, no," exclaimed Harley; "your word is not passed—it shall not be passed. Nay, never look so piteously at me. At all events, pause till we know more of this young man. If he be worthy of her without a dower, why, then, let him lose you your heritage. I should have no more to say."

"But why lose me my heritage?"

"Do you think the Austrian government would suffer your estates to pass to this English jackanapes, a clerk in a public office? Oh, sage in theory, why are you such a simpleton in action!"

Nothing moved by this taunt, Riccabocca rubbed his hands, and then stretched them comfortably over the fire.

"My friend," said he, "the heritage would pass to my son—a dowry only goes to the daughter."

"But you have no son."

"Hush! I am going to have one; my Jemima informed me of it yesterday morning; and it was upon that information that I resolved to speak to Leslie. Am I a simpleton now?"

"Going to have a son," repeated Harley, looking very bewildered; "how do you know it is to be a son?"

"Physiologists are agreed," said the sage, positively, "that where the husband is much older than the wife, and there has been a long interval without children before she condescends to increase the population of the world—she (that is, it is at least as nine to four)—she brings into the world a male. I consider that point, therefore, as settled, according to the calculations of statistics and the researches of naturalists."

Harley could not help laughing, though he was still angry and disturbed.

"The same man as ever; always the fool of philosophy."

"*Cospetto!*" said Riccabocca, "I am rather the philosopher of fools. And talking of that, shall I present you to my Jemima?"

"Yes; but in turn I must present you to one who remembers with gratitude your kindness, and whom your philosophy, for a wonder, has not ruined. Some time or other you must explain that to me. Excuse me for a moment; I will go for him."

"For him—for whom? In my position I must be cautious; and—"

"I will answer for his faith and discretion. Meanwhile, order dinner, and let me and my friend stay to share it."

"Dinner? *Corpo di Bacco!*—not that Bacchus can help us here. What will Jemima say?"

"Henpecked man, settle that with your connubial tyrant. But dinner it must be."

I leave the reader to imagine the delight of Leonard at seeing once more Riccabocca unchanged, and Violante so improved; and the kind Jemima, too. And their wonder at him and his history, his books and his fame. He narrated his struggles and adventures with a simplicity that removed from a story so personal the character of egotism. But when he came to speak of Helen, he was brief and reserved.

Violante would have questioned more closely; but, to Leonard's relief, Harley interposed.

"You shall see her whom he speaks of, before long, and question her yourself."

With these words, Harley turned the young man's narrative into new directions; and Leonard's words again flowed freely. Thus the evening passed away happily to all save Riccabocca. But the thought of his dead wife rose ever and anon before him; and yet when it did, and became too painful, he crept nearer to Jemima, and looked in her simple face, and pressed her cordial hand. And yet the monster had implied to Harley that his comforter was a fool—so she was, to love so contemptible a slanderer of herself, and her sex.

Violante was in a state of blissful excitement; she could not analyze her own joy. But her conversation was chiefly with Leonard; and the most silent of all was Harley. He sat listening to Leonard's warm, yet unpretending eloquence—that eloquence which flows so naturally from genius, when thoroughly at its ease, and not chilled back on itself by hard unsympathizing hearers—listened, yet more charmed, to the sen-

timents less profound, yet no less earnest—sentiments so feminine, yet so noble, with which Violante's fresh virgin heart responded to the poet's kindling soul. Those sentiments of hers were so unlike all he heard in the common world—so akin to himself in his gone youth! Occasionally—at some high thought of her own, or some lofty line from Italian song, that she cited with lighted eyes, and in melodious accents—occasionally he reared his knightly head, and his lips quivered, as if he had heard the sound of a trumpet. The inertness of long years was shaken. The Heroic, that lay deep beneath all the humors of his temperament, was reached, appealed to; and stirred within him, rousing up all the bright associations connected with it, and long dormant. When he rose to take leave, surprised at the lateness of the hour, Harley said, in a tone that bespoke the sincerity of the compliment, "I thank you for the happiest hours I have known for years." His eye dwelt on Violante as he spoke. But timidity returned to her with his words—at his look; and it was no longer the inspired muse, but the bashful girl that stood before him.

"And when shall I see you again?" asked Riccabocca disconsolately, following his guest to the door.

"When? Why, of course, to-morrow. Adieu! my friend. No wonder you have borne your exile so patiently—with such a child!"

He took Leonard's arm, and walked with him to the inn where he had left his horse. Leonard spoke of Violante with enthusiasm. Harley was silent.

CHAPTER III.

THE next day a somewhat old-fashioned, but exceedingly patrician equipage stopped at Riccabocca's garden-gate. Giacomo, who, from a bedroom window, had caught sight of it winding toward the house, was seized with undefinable terror when he beheld it pause before their walls and heard the shrill summons at the portal. He rushed into his master's presence, and implored him not to stir—not to allow any one to give ingress to the enemies the machine might disgorge. "I have heard," said he, "how a town in Italy—I think it was Bologna—was once taken and given to the sword, by incautiously admitting a wooden horse, full of the troops of Barbarossa, and all manner of bombs and Congreve rockets."

"The story is differently told in Virgil," quoth Riccabocca, peeping out of the window. "Nevertheless, the machine looks very large and suspicious; unloose Pompey!"

"Father," said Violante, coloring, "it is your friend Lord L'Estrange; I hear his voice."

"Are you sure?"

"Quite. How can I be mistaken?"

"Go, then, Giacomo; but take Pompey with thee—and give the alarm, if we are deceived."

But Violante was right; and in a few moments Lord L'Estrange was seen walking up the garden, and giving the arm to two ladies.

"Ah," said Riccabocca, composing his dress-

ing-robe round him, "go, my child, and summon Jemima. Man to man; but, for Heaven's sake woman to woman."

Harley had brought his mother and Helen, in compliment to the ladies of his friend's household.

The proud countess knew that she was in the presence of Adversity, and her salute to Riccabocca was only less respectful than that with which she would have rendered homage to her sovereign. But Riccabocca, always gallant to the sex that he pretended to despise, was not to be outdone in ceremony; and the bow which replied to the courtesy would have edified the rising generation, and delighted such surviving relicts of the old Court breeding as may linger yet amidst the gloomy pomp of the Faubourg St. Germain. These dues paid to etiquette, the countess briefly introduced Helen, as Miss Digby, and seated herself near the exile. In a few moments the two elder personages became quite at home with each other; and really, perhaps, Riccabocca had never, since we have known him, showed to such advantage as by the side of his polished, but somewhat formal visitor. Both had lived so little with our modern, ill-bred age! They took out their manners of a former race, with a sort of pride in airing once more such fine lace and superb brocade. Riccabocca gave truce to the shrewd but homely wisdom of his proverbs—perhaps he remembered that Lord Chesterfield denounces proverbs as vulgar; and gaunt though his figure, and far from elegant though his dressing-robe, there was that about him which spoke undeniably of the *grand seigneur*—of one to whom a Marquis de Dangeau would have offered a *fauteuil* by the side of the Rohans and Montmorencies.

Meanwhile Helen and Harley seated themselves a little apart, and were both silent—the first, from timidity; the second, from abstraction. At length the door opened, and Harley suddenly sprang to his feet—Violante and Jemima entered. Lady Lansmere's eyes first rested on the daughter, and she could scarcely refrain from an exclamation of admiring surprise; but then, when she caught sight of Mrs. Riccabocca's somewhat humble, yet not obsequious mien—looking a little shy, a little homely, yet still thoroughly a gentlewoman (though of your plain rural kind of that genus)—she turned from the daughter, and with the *savoir vivre* of the fine old school, paid her first respects to the wife; respects literally, for her manner implied respect—but it was more kind, simple and cordial than the respect she had shown to Riccabocca; as the sage himself had said, here, "it it was Woman to Woman." And then she took Violante's hand in both hers, and gazed on her as if she could not resist the pleasure of contemplating so much beauty. "My son," she said, softly, and with a half sigh—"my son in vain told me not to be surprised. This is the first time I have ever known reality exceed description!"

Violante's blush here made her still more beautiful; and as the countess returned to Riccabocca, she stole gently to Helen's side.

"Miss Digby, my ward," said Harley, pointedly, observing that his mother had neglected her duty of presenting Helen to the ladies. He then reseated himself, and conversed with Mrs. Riccabocca; but his bright quick eye glanced ever at the two girls. They were about the same age—and youth was all that, to the superficial eye, they seemed to have in common. A greater contrast could not well be conceived; and, what is strange, both gained by it. Violante's brilliant loveliness seemed yet more dazzling, and Helen's fair, gentle face yet more winning. Neither had mixed much with girls of their own age; each took to the other at first sight. Violante, as the less shy, began the conversation.

"You are his ward—Lord L'Estrange's?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps you came with him from Italy?"

"No, not exactly. But I have been in Italy for some years."

"Ah! you regret—nay, I am foolish—you return to your native land. But the skies in Italy are so blue—here it seems as if nature wanted colors."

"Lord L'Estrange says that you were very young when you left Italy; you remember it well. He, too, prefers Italy to England."

"He! Impossible!"

"Why impossible, fair skeptic?" cried Harley, interrupting himself in the midst of a speech to Jemima.

Violante had not dreamed that she could be overheard—she was speaking low; but, though visibly embarrassed, she answered distinctly—

"Because in England there is the noblest career for noble minds."

Harley was startled, and replied, with a slight sigh, "At your age I should have said as you do. But this England of ours is so crowded with noble minds, that they only jostle each other, and the career is one cloud of dust."

"So, I have read, seems a battle to the common soldier, but not to the chief."

"You have read good descriptions of battles, I see."

Mrs. Riccabocca, who thought this remark a taunt upon her daughter-in-law's studies, hastened to Violante's relief.

"Her papa made her read the history of Italy, and I believe that is full of battles."

HARLEY.—"All history is, and all women are fond of war and of warriors. I wonder why."

VIOLANTE (turning to Helen, and in a very low voice, resolved that Harley should not hear this time).—"We can guess why—can we not?"

HARLEY (hearing every word, as if it had been spoken in St. Paul's Whispering Gallery).—"If you can guess, Helen, pray tell me."

HELEN (shaking her pretty head, and answering with a livelier smile than usual).—"But I am not fond of war and warriors."

HARLEY (to Violante).—"Then I must appeal at once to you, self-convicted Bellona that you are. Is it from the cruelty natural to the female disposition?"

VIOLANTE (with a sweet musical laugh).—"From two propensities still more natural to it."

HARLEY.—"You puzzle me: what can they be?"

VIOLANTE.—"Pity and admiration; we pity the weak, and admire the brave."

Harley inclined his head and was silent.

Lady Lansmere had suspended her conversation with Riccabocca to listen to this dialogue. "Charming!" she cried. "You have explained what has often perplexed me. Ah, Harley, I am glad to see that your satire is foiled; you have no reply to that."

"No; I willingly own myself defeated—too glad to claim the Signorina's pity, since my cavalry sword hangs on the wall, and I can have no longer a professional pretense to her admiration."

He then rose, and glanced toward the window.

"But I see a more formidable disputant for my conqueror to encounter is coming into the field—one whose profession it is to substitute some other romance for that of camp and siege."

"Our friend Leonard," said Riccabocca, turning his eye also toward the window. "True; as Quevedo says wittily, 'Ever since there has been so great a demand for type, there has been much less lead to spare for cannon-balls.'"

Here Leonard entered. Harley had sent Lady Lansmere's footman to him with a note, that prepared him to meet Helen. As he came into the room, Harley took him by the hand, and led him to Lady Lansmere.

"The friend of whom I spoke. Welcome him now for my sake, ever after for his own;" and then, scarcely allowing time for the Countess's elegant and gracious response, he drew Leonard toward Helen. "Children," said he, with a touching voice, that thrilled through the hearts of both, "go and seat yourselves yonder, and talk together of the past. Signorina, I invite you to renewed discussion upon the abstruse metaphysical subject you have started; let us see if we can not find gentler sources for pity and admiration than war and warriors." He took Violante aside to the window. "You remember that Leonard, in telling you his history last night, spoke, you thought, rather too briefly of the little girl who had been his companion in the rudest time of his trials. When you would have questioned more, I interrupted you, and said 'You should see her shortly, and question her yourself.' And now what think you of Helen Digby? Hush, speak low. But her ears are not so sharp as mine."

VIOLANTE.—"Ah! that is the fair creature whom Leonard called his child-angel? What a lovely innocent face!—the angel is there still."

HARLEY (pleased both at the praise and with her who gave it).—"You think so, and you are right. Helen is not communicative. But fine natures are like fine poems—a glance at the first two lines suffices for a guess into the beauty that waits you, if you read on."

Violante gazed on Leonard and Helen as they sat apart. Leonard was the speaker, Helen the

listener; and though the former had, in his narrative the night before, been indeed brief as to the episode in his life connected with the orphan, enough had been said to interest Violante in the pathos of their former position toward each other, and in the happiness they must feel in their meeting again—separated for years on the wide sea of life, now both saved from the storm and shipwreck. The tears came into her eyes. "True," she said very softly, "there is more here to move pity and admiration than in—" She paused.

HARLEY—"Complete the sentence. Are you ashamed to retract? Fie on your pride and obstinacy."

VIOLANTE—"No; but even here there have been war and heroism—the war of genius with adversity, and heroism in the comforter who shared it and consoled. Ah! wherever pity and admiration are both felt, something nobler than mere sorrow must have gone before: the heroic must exist."

"Helen does not know what the word heroic means," said Harley, rather sadly; "you must teach her."

Is it possible, thought he as he spoke, that a Randal Leslie could have charmed this grand creature? No heroic, surely, in that sleek young place-man. "Your father," he said aloud, and fixing his eyes on her face, "sees much, he tells me, of a young man, about Leonard's age, as to date; but I never estimate the age of men by the parish register; and I should speak of that so-called young man as a contemporary of my great-grandfather;—I mean Mr. Randal Leslie. Do you like him?"

"Like him?" said Violante slowly, and as if sounding her own mind. "Like him—yes."

"Why?" asked Harley, with dry and curt indignation.

"His visits seem to please my dear father. Certainly, I like him."

"Hum. He professes to like you, I suppose?"

Violante laughed, unsuspiciously. She had half a mind to reply, "Is that so strange?" But her respect for Harley stopped her. The words would have seemed to her pert.

"I am told he is clever," resumed Harley.

"O, certainly."

"And he is rather handsome. But I like Leonard's face better."

"Better—that is not the word. Leonard's face is as that of one who has gazed so often upon heaven; and Mr. Leslie's—there is neither sunlight nor starlight reflected there."

"My dear Violante!" exclaimed Harley, overjoyed; and he pressed her hand.

The blood rushed over the girl's cheek and brow; her hand trembled in his. But Harley's familiar exclamation might have come from a father's lips.

At this moment, Helen softly approached them, and looking timidly into her guardian's face, said, "Leonard's mother is with him: he asks me to call and see her. May I?"

"May you! A pretty notion the Signorina

must form of your enslaved state of pupillage, when she hears you ask that question. Of course you may."

"Will you take me there?"

Harley looked embarrassed. He thought of the widow's agitation at his name; of that desire to shun him, which Leonard had confessed, and of which he thought he divined the cause. And so divining, he too shrank from such a meeting.

"Another time, then," said he, after a pause.

Helen looked disappointed, but said no more.

Violante was surprised at this ungracious answer. She would have blamed it as unfeeling in another. But all that Harley did, was right in her eyes.

"Can not I go with Miss Digby?" said she, "and my mother will go too. We both know Mrs. Fairfield. We shall be so pleased to see her again."

"So be it," said Harley; "I will wait here with your father till you come back. O, as to my mother, she will excuse the—excuse Madame Riccabocca, and you too. See how charmed she is with *your* father. I must stay to watch over the conjugal interests of *mine*."

But Mrs. Riccabocca had too much good old country breeding to leave the Countess; and Harley was forced himself to appeal to Lady Lansmere. When he had explained the case in point, the Countess rose and said—

"But I will call myself, with Miss Digby."

"No," said Harley, gravely, but in a whisper.

"No—I would rather not. I will explain later."

"Then," said the Countess aloud, after a glance of surprise at her son, "I must insist on your performing this visit, my dear Madam, and you, Signorina. In truth, I have something to say confidentially to—"

"To me," interrupted Riccabocca. "Ah, Madame la Comtesse, you restore me to five-and-twenty. Go, quick—O jealous and injured wife; go, both of you, quick; and you, too, Harley."

"Nay," said Lady Lansmere, in the same tone, "Harley must stay, for my design is not at present upon destroying your matrimonial happiness, whatever it may be later. It is a design so innocent that my son will be a partner in it."

Here the Countess put her lips to Harley's ear, and whispered. He received her communication in attentive silence: but when she had done, pressed her hand, and bowed his head, as if in assent to a proposal.

In a few minutes, the three ladies and Leonard were on their road to the neighboring cottage.

Violante, with her usual delicate intuition, thought that Leonard and Helen must have much to say to each other; and ignorant as Leonard himself was, of Helen's engagement to Harley, began already, in the romance natural to her age, to predict for them happy and united days in the future. So she took her step-mother's arm, and left Helen and Leonard to follow.

"I wonder," she said musingly, "how Miss Digby became Lord L'Estrange's ward. I hope she is not very rich, nor very high-born."

"La, my love," said the good *Jemima*, "that is not like you; you are not envious of her, poor girl?"

"Envious! Dear *mamma*, what a word! But don't you think *Leonard* and *Miss Digby* seem born for each other? And then the recollections of their childhood—the thoughts of childhood are so deep, and its memories so strangely soft!" The long lashes drooped over *Violante's* musing eyes as she spoke. "And therefore," she said, after a pause, "therefore, I hoped that *Miss Digby* might not be very rich, nor very high-born."

"I understand you now, *Violante*," exclaimed *Jemima*, her own early passion for match-making instantly returning to her; "for as *Leonard*, however clever and distinguished, is still the son of *Mark Fairfield* the carpenter, it would spoil all if *Miss Digby* was, as you say, rich and high-born. I agree with you—a very pretty match, a very pretty match, indeed. I wish dear *Mrs. Dale* were here now—she is so clever in settling such matters."

Meanwhile *Leonard* and *Helen* walked side by side a few paces in the rear. He had not offered her his arm. They had been silent hitherto since they left *Riccabocca's* house.

Helen now spoke first. In similar cases it is generally the woman, be she ever so timid, who does speak first. And here *Helen* was the bolder; for *Leonard* did not disguise from himself the nature of his feelings, and *Helen* was engaged to another; and her pure heart was fortified by the trust reposed in it.

"And have you ever heard more of the good *Dr. Morgan*, who had powders against sorrow, and who meant to be so kind to us—though," she added, coloring, "we did not think so then?"

"He took my child—angel from me," said *Leonard*, with visible emotion; "and if she had not returned, where and what should I be now? But I have forgiven him. No, I have never met him since."

"And that terrible *Mr. Burley*?"

"Poor, poor *Burley*! He, too, is vanished out of my present life. I have made many inquiries after him; all I can hear is that he went abroad, supposed as a correspondent to some journal. I should like so much to see him again, now that perhaps I could help him as he helped me."

"Helped you—ah!"

Leonard smiled with a beating heart, as he saw again the dear, prudent, warning look, and involuntary drew closer to *Helen*. She seemed more restored to him and to her former self.

"Helped me much by his instructions; more, perhaps, by his very faults. You can not guess, *Helen*—I beg pardon, *Miss Digby*—but I forgot that we are no longer children; you can not guess how much we men, and, more than all perhaps, we writers, whose task it is to unravel the web of human actions, owe even to our own past errors; and if we learn nothing by the errors of others, we should be dull indeed. We must know where the roads divide, and have

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marked where they lead to, before we can erect our sign-posts; and books are the sign-posts in human life."

"Books!—And I have not yet read yours. And *Lord L'Estrange* tells me you are famous now. Yet you remember me still—the poor orphan child, whom you first saw weeping at her father's grave, and with whom you burdened your own young life, over-burdened already. No, still call me *Helen*—you must always be to me—a brother! *Lord L'Estrange* feels that; he said so to me when he told me that we were to meet again. He is so generous, so noble. Brother!" cried *Helen*, suddenly, and extending her hand, with a sweet but sublime look in her gentle face—"brother, we will never forfeit his esteem; we will both do our best to repay him! Will we not—say so?"

Leonard felt overpowered by contending and unanalyzed emotions. Touched almost to tears by the affectionate address—thrilled by the hand that pressed his own—and yet with a vague fear a consciousness that something more than the words themselves was implied—something that checked all hope. And this word "brother," once so precious and so dear, why did he shrink from it now?—why could he not too say the sweet word "sister?"

"She is above me now and evermore?" he thought, mournfully; and the tones of his voice, when he spoke again, were changed. The appeal to renewed intimacy but made him more distant; and to that appeal itself he made no direct answer; for *Mrs. Riccabocca*, now turning round, and pointing to the cottage which came in view, with its picturesque gable-ends, cried out,

"But is that your house, *Leonard*? I never saw any thing so pretty."

"You do not remember it, then," said *Leonard* to *Helen*, in accents of melancholy reproach—"there where I saw you last! I doubted whether to keep it exactly as it was, and I said, 'No! the association is not changed because we try to surround it with whatever beauty we can create; the dearer the association, the more the Beautiful becomes to it natural.' Perhaps you don't understand this—perhaps it is only we poor poets who do."

"I understand it," said *Helen*, gently. She looked wistfully at the cottage.

"So changed—I have so often pictured it to myself—never, never like this; yet I loved it, commonplace as it was to my recollection; and the garret, and the tree in the carpenter's yard."

She did not give these thoughts utterance. And they now entered the garden.

CHAPTER IV.

Mrs. Fairfield was a proud woman when she received *Mrs. Riccabocca* and *Violante* in her grand house; for a grand house to her was that cottage to which her boy *Lenny* had brought her home. Proud, indeed, ever was *Widow Fairfield*; but she thought then in her secret heart, that if ever she could receive in the drawing-room of that

grand house the great Mrs. Hazeldean, who had so lectured her for refusing to live any longer in the humble tenement rented of the Squire, the cup of human bliss would be filled, and she could contentedly die of the pride of it. She did not much notice Helen—her attention was too absorbed by the ladies who renewed their old acquaintance with her, and she carried them all over the house, yea, into the very kitchen; and so, somehow or other, there was a short time when Helen and Leonard found themselves alone. It was in the study. Helen had unconsciously seated herself in Leonard's own chair, and she was gazing with anxious and wistful interest on the scattered papers, looking so disorderly (though, in truth, in that disorder there was method, but method only known to the owner), and at the venerable, well-worn books, in all languages, lying on the floor, on the chairs—any where. I must confess that Helen's first tidy womanlike idea was a great desire to arrange the latter. "Poor Leonard," she thought to herself—"the rest of the house so neat, but no one to take care of his own room and of him!"

As if he divined her thought, Leonard smiled, and said, "It would be a cruel kindness to the spider, if the gentlest hand in the world tried to set its cobweb to rights."

HELEN.—"You were not quite so bad in the old days."

LEONARD.—"Yet even then, you were obliged to take care of the money. I have more books now, and more money. My present housekeeper lets me take care of the books, but she is less indulgent as to the money."

HELEN (archly).—"Are you as absent as ever?"

LEONARD.—"Much more so, I fear. The habit is incorrigible, Miss Digby—"

HELEN.—"Not Miss Digby—sister, if you like."

LEONARD (evading the word that implied so forbidden an affinity).—"Helen, will you grant me a favor? Your eyes and your smile say 'yes.' Will you lay aside, for one minute, your shawl and bonnet? What! can you be surprised that I ask it? Can you not understand that I wish for one minute to think you are at home again under this roof?"

Helen cast down her eyes, and seemed troubled; then she raised them, with a soft angelic candor in their dovelike blue, and as if in shelter from all thoughts of more warm affection, again murmured "*brother*," and did as he asked her.

So there she sate, among the dull books, by his table, near the open window—her fair hair parted on her forehead—looking so good, so calm, so happy! Leonard wondered at his own self-command. His heart yearned to her with such inexpressible love—his lips so longed to murmur, "Ah, as now so could it be forever! Is the home too mean?" But that word "*brother*" was as a talisman between her and him.

Yet she looked so at home—perhaps so at home she felt!—more certainly than she had yet learned to do in that stiff stately house in which she

was soon to have a daughter's rights. Was she suddenly made aware of this—that she so suddenly arose—and with a look of alarm and distress on her face—

"But—we are keeping Lady Lansmere too long," she said, falteringly. "We must go now," and she hastily took up her shawl and bonnet.

Just then Mrs. Fairfield entered with the visitors, and began making excuses for inattention to Miss Digby, whose identity with Leonard's child-angel she had not yet learned.

Helen received these apologies with her usual sweetness. "Nay," she said, "your son and I are such old friends, how could you stand on ceremony with me?"

"Old friends!" Mrs. Fairfield stared amazed, and then surveyed the fair speaker more curiously than she had yet done. "Pretty, nice spoken thing," thought the widow; "as nice spoken as Miss Violante, and humbler-looking-like—though as to dress, I never see any thing so elegant out of a picture."

Helen now appropriated Mrs. Riccabocca's arm; and after a kind leave-taking with the widow, the ladies returned toward Riccabocca's house.

Mrs. Fairfield, however, ran after them with Leonard's hat and gloves, which he had forgotten.

"'Deed, boy," said she, kindly, yet scoldingly, "but there'd be no more fine books, if the Lord had not fixed your head on your shoulders. You would not think it, marm," she added to Mrs. Riccabocca, "but sin' he has left you, he's not the 'cute lad he was; very helpless at times, marm!"

Helen could not resist turning round, and looking at Leonard, with a sly smile.

The widow saw the smile, and catching Leonard by the arm, whispered, "But, where before have you seen that pretty young lady? Old friends!"

"Ah, mother," said Leonard, sadly, "it is a long tale; you have heard the beginning, who can guess the end?"—and he escaped. But Helen still leant on the arm of Mrs. Riccabocca, and, in the walk back, it seemed to Leonard as if the winter had resettled in the sky.

Yet he was by the side of Violante, and she spoke to him with such praise of Helen! Alas! it is not always so sweet as folks say, to hear the praises of one we love. Sometimes those praises seem to ask ironically, "And what right hast thou to hope because thou lovest? *All love her.*"

CHAPTER V.

No sooner had Lady Lansmere found herself alone with Riccabocca and Harley than she laid her hand on the exile's arm, and, addressing him by a title she had not before given him, and from which he appeared to shrink nervously, said: "Harley, in bringing me to visit you, was forced to reveal to me your incognito, for I should have discovered it. You may not remember me, in spite of your gallantry. But I mixed more in the world than I do now, during your first visit to England, and once sate next to you at dinner

at Carlton House. Nay, no compliments, but listen to me. Harley tells me you have cause for some alarm respecting the designs of an audacious and unprincipled—adventurer, I may call him; for adventurers are of all ranks. Suffer your daughter to come to me, on a visit, as long as you please. With me, at least, she will be safe; and if you, too, and the—”

“Stop, my dear madam,” interrupted Riccabocca, with great vivacity; “your kindness overpowers me. I thank you most gratefully for your invitation to my child; but—”

“Nay,” in his turn interrupted Harley, “no buts. I was not aware of my mother’s intention when she entered this room. But since she whispered it to me, I have reflected on it, and am convinced that it is but a prudent precaution. Your retreat is known to Mr. Leslie—he is known to Peschiera. Grant that no indiscretion of Mr. Leslie’s betray the secret; still I have reason to believe that the Count guesses Randal’s acquaintance with you. Audley Egerton this morning told me he had gathered that, not from the young man himself, but from questions put to himself by Madame di Negra; and Peschiera might, and would, set spies to track Leslie to every house that he visits—might and would, still more naturally, set spies to track myself. Were this man an Englishman, I should laugh at his machinations; but he is an Italian, and has been a conspirator. What he could do, I know not; but an assassin can penetrate into a camp, and a traitor can creep through closed walls to one’s hearth. With my mother, Violante must be safe; that you can not oppose. And why not come yourself?”

Riccabocca had no reply to these arguments, so far as they affected Violante; indeed, they awakened the almost superstitious terror with which he regarded his enemy, and he consented at once that Violante should accept the invitation proffered. But he refused it for himself and Jemima.

“To say truth,” said he, simply, “I made a secret vow, on re-entering England, that I would associate with none who knew the rank I had formerly held in my own land. I felt that all my philosophy was needed, to reconcile and habituate myself to my altered circumstances. In order to find in my present existence, however humble, those blessings which make all life noble—dignity and peace—it was necessary for poor, weak human nature, wholly to dismiss the past. It would unsettle me sadly, could I come to your house, renew awhile, in your kindness and respect—nay, in the very atmosphere of your society—the sense of what I have been; and then (should the more than doubtful chance of recall from my exile fail me) to awake, and find myself for the rest of life—what I am. And though, were I alone, I might trust myself perhaps to the danger—yet my wife: she is happy and contented now; would she be so, if you had once spoiled her for the simple position of Dr. Riccabocca’s wife? Should I not have to listen to regrets, and hopes, and fears that would prick sharp through my thin cloak of

philosophy? Even as it is, since in a moment of weakness I confided my secret to her, I have had ‘my rank’ thrown at me—with a careless hand, it is true—but it hits hard, nevertheless. No stone hurts like one taken from the ruins of one’s own home; and the grander the home, why, the heavier the stone! Protect, dear madam—protect my daughter, since her father doubts his own power to do so. But—ask no more.”

Riccabocca was immovable here. And the matter was settled as he decided, it being agreed that Violante should be still styled but the daughter of Dr. Riccabocca.

“And now, one word more,” said Harley. “Do not confide to Mr. Leslie these arrangements; do not let him know where Violante is placed—at least, until I authorize such confidence in him. It is sufficient excuse, that it is no use to know unless he called to see her, and his movements, as I said before, may be watched. You can give the same reason to suspend his visits to yourself. Suffer me, meanwhile, to mature my judgment on this young man. In the mean while, also, I think that I shall have means of ascertaining the real nature of Peschiera’s schemes. His sister has sought to know me; I will give her the occasion. I have heard some things of her in my last residence abroad, which make me believe that she can not be wholly the Count’s tool in any schemes nakedly villainous; that she has some finer qualities in her than I once supposed; and that she can be won from his influence. It is a state of war: we will carry it into the enemy’s camp. You will promise me, then, to refrain from all further confidence to Mr. Leslie.”

“For the present, yes,” said Riccabocca, reluctantly.

“Do not even say that you have seen me, unless he first tell you that I am in England, and wish to learn your residence. I will give him full occasion to do so. Pish! don’t hesitate; you know your own proverb—

‘Boccha chiusa, ed occhio aperto
Non fece mai nissun deserto.’

‘The closed mouth and the open eye,’ &c.”

“That’s very true,” said the Doctor, much struck. “Very true. ‘In boccha chiusa non c’entrano mosche.’ One can’t swallow flies if one keeps one’s mouth shut. *Corpo di Bacco!* that’s very true, indeed!”

Harley took aside the Italian.

“You see if our hope of discovering the lost packet, or if our belief in the nature of its contents, be too sanguine, still, in a few months it is possible that Peschiera can have no further designs on your daughter—possible that a son may be born to you, and Violante would cease to be in danger, because she would cease to be an heirless. Indeed, it may be well to let Peschiera know this chance; it would, at least, make him delay all his plans while we are tracking the document that may defeat them forever.”

“No, no! for heaven’s sake, no!” exclaimed Riccabocca, pale as ashes. “Not a word to him I don’t mean to impute to him crimes of which

he may be innocent. But he meant to take my life when I escaped the pursuit of his hirelings in Italy. He did not hesitate, in his avarice, to denounce a kinsman; expose hundreds to the sword, if resisting—to the dungeon, if passive. Did he know that my wife might bear me a son, how can I tell that his designs might not change into others still darker, and more monstrous, than those he now openly parades, though, after all, not more infamous and vile. Would my wife's life be safe? Not more difficult to convey poison into my house, than to steal my child from my hearth. Don't despise me; but when I think of my wife, my daughter, and that man, my mind forsakes me: I am one fear."

"Nay, this apprehension is too exaggerated. We do not live in the age of the Borgias. Could Peschiera resort to the risks of a murder, it is for yourself that you should fear."

"For myself!—I! I!" cried the exile, raising his tall stature to its full height. "Is it not enough degradation to a man who has borne the name of such ancestors, to fear for those he loves! Fear for myself! Is it you who ask if I am a coward?"

He recovered himself, as he felt Harley's penitential and admiring grasp of the hand.

"See," said he, turning to the Countess, with a melancholy smile, "how even one hour of your society destroys the habits of years. Dr. Riccabocca is talking of his ancestors!"

CHAPTER VI.

VIOLANTE and Jemima were both greatly surprised, as the reader may suppose, when they heard, on their return, the arrangements already made for the former. The Countess insisted on taking her at once, and Riccabocca briefly said, "Certainly, the sooner the better." Violante was stunned and bewildered. Jemima hastened to make up a little bundle of things necessary, with many a woman's sigh that the poor wardrobe contained so few things befitting. But among the clothes she slipped a purse, containing the savings of months, perhaps of years, and with it a few affectionate lines, begging Violante to ask the Countess to buy her all that was proper for her father's child. There is always something hurried and uncomfortable in the abrupt and unexpected withdrawal of any member from a quiet household. The small party broke into still smaller knots. Violante hung on her father, and listened vaguely to his not very lucid explanations. The Countess approached Leonard, and, according to the usual mode with persons of quality addressing young authors, complimented him highly on the books she had not read, but which her son assured her were so remarkable. She was a little anxious to know how Harley had met with Mr. Oran, whom he called his friend; but she was too high-bred to inquire, or to express any wonder that rank should be friends with genius.

She took it for granted that they had formed their acquaintance abroad.

Harley conversed with Helen.—"You are not sorry that Violante is coming to us? She will be just such a companion for you as I could desire; of your own years too."

HELEN (ingenuously).—"It is hard to think I am not younger than she is."

HARLEY.—"Why, my dear Helen?"

HELEN.—"She is so brilliant. She talks so beautifully. And I—"

HARLEY.—"And you want but the habit of talking, to do justice to your own beautiful thoughts."

Helen looked at him gratefully, but shook her head. It was a common trick of hers, and always when she was praised.

At last the preparations were made—the farewell was said. Violante was in the carriage by Lady Lansmere's side. Slowly moved on the stately equipage with its four horses and trim postillions, heraldic badges on their shoulders, in the style rarely seen in the neighborhood of the metropolis, and now fast vanishing even amidst distant counties.

Riccabocca, Jemima, and Jackeymo continued to gaze after it from the gate.

"She is gone," said Jackeymo, brushing his eyes with his coat sleeve. "But it is a load off one's mind."

"And another load on one's heart," murmured Riccabocca. "Don't cry, Jemima; it may be bad for you, and bad for *him* that is to come. It is astonishing how the humors of the mother may affect the unborn. I should not like to have a son who has a more than usual propensity to tears."

The poor philosopher tried to smile, but it was a bad attempt. He went slowly in and shut himself up with his books. But he could not read. His whole mind was unsettled. And though, like all parents, he had been anxious to rid himself of a beloved daughter for life, now that she was gone, but for a while, a string seemed broken in the Music of Home.

CHAPTER VII.

THE evening of the same day, as Egerton, who was to entertain a large party at dinner, was changing his dress, Harley walked into his room.

Egerton dismissed his valet by a sign, and continued his toilet.

"Excuse me, my dear Harley, I have only ten minutes to give you. I expect one of the royal dukes, and punctuality is the stern virtue of men of business, and the graceful courtesy of princes."

Harley had usually a jest for his friend's aphorisms; but he had none now. He laid his hand kindly on Egerton's shoulder—"Before I speak of my business, tell me how you are—better?"

"Better—nay, I am always well. Pooh! I may look a little tired—years of toil will tell on the countenance. But that matters little—the period of life has passed with me when one cares how one looks in the glass."

As he spoke, Egerton completed his dress, and came to the hearth, standing there, erect and dignified as usual, still far handsomer than many a

younger man, and with a form that seemed to have ample vigor to support for many a year the sad and glorious burthen of power.

"So now to your business, Harley."

"In the first place, I want you to present me, at the first opportunity, to Madame di Negra. You say she wished to know me."

"Are you serious?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, she receives this evening. I did not mean to go; but when my party breaks up—"

"You can call for me at 'The Travelers.' Do!"

"Next—you knew Lady Jane Horton better even than I did, at least in the last year of her life." Harley sighed, and Egerton turned and stirred the fire.

"Pray, did you ever see at her house, or hear her speak of, a Mrs. Bertram?"

"Of whom?" said Egerton, in a hollow voice, his face still turned toward the fire.

"A Mrs. Bertram; but Heavens! my dear fellow, what is the matter? Are you ill?"

"A spasm at the heart—that is all—don't ring—I shall be better presently—go on talking. Mrs. —; why do you ask?"

"Why? I have hardly time to explain; but I am, as I told you, resolved on righting my old Italian friend, if Heaven will help me, as it ever does help the just when they bestir themselves; and this Mrs. Bertram is mixed up in my friend's affairs."

"His! How is that possible?"

Harley rapidly and succinctly explained. Audley listened attentively, with his eyes fixed on the floor, and still seeming to labor under great difficulty of breathing.

At last he answered, "I remember something of this Mrs.—Mrs.—Bertram. But your inquiries after her would be useless. I think I have heard that she is long since dead; nay, I am sure of it."

"Dead!—that is most unfortunate. But do you know any of her relations or friends? Can you suggest any mode of tracing this packet, if it came to her hands?"

"No."

"And Lady Jane had scarcely any friend that I remember, except my mother, and she knows nothing of this Mrs. Bertram. How unlucky! I think I shall advertise. Yet, no. I could only distinguish this Mrs. Bertram from any other of the same name, by stating with whom she had gone abroad, and that would catch the attention of Peschiera, and set him to counterwork us."

"And what avails it?" said Egerton. "She whom you seek is no more—no more!" He paused, and went on rapidly—"The packet did not arrive in England till years after her death—was no doubt returned to the post-office—is destroyed long ago."

Harley looked very much disappointed. Egerton went on in a sort of set mechanical voice, as if not thinking of what he said, but speaking from the dry practical mode of reasoning which was habitual to him, and by which the man of the world destroys the hopes of an enthusiast. Then

starting up at the sound of the first thundering knock at the street door, he said, "Hark! you must excuse me."

"I leave you, my dear Audley. Are you better now?"

"Much, much—quite well. I will call for you—probably between eleven and twelve."

CHAPTER VIII.

If any one could be more surprised at seeing Lord L'Estrange at the house of Madame di Negra that evening than the fair hostess herself, it was Randal Leslie. Something instinctively told him that this visit threatened interference with whatever might be his ultimate projects in regard to Riccabocca and Violante. But Randal Leslie was not one of those who shrink from an intellectual combat. On the contrary, he was too confident of his powers of intrigue, not to take a delight in their exercise. He could not conceive that the indolent Harley could be a match for his own restless activity and dogged perseverance. But in a very few moments fear crept on him. No man of his day could produce a more brilliant effect than Lord L'Estrange, when he deigned to desire it. Without much pretense to that personal beauty which strikes at first sight, he still retained all the charm of countenance, and all the grace of manner which had made him in boyhood the spoiled darling of society. Madame di Negra had collected but a small circle round her, still it was of the *élite* of the great world; not, indeed, those more precise and reserved *dames du château*, whom the lighter and easier of the fair dispensers of fashion ridicule as pruders; but, nevertheless, ladies were there, as unblemished in reputation as high in rank; flirts and coquettes, perhaps—nothing more; in short, "charming women"—the gay butterflies that hover over the stiff parterre. And there were ambassadors and ministers, and wits and brilliant debaters, and first-rate dandies (dandies when first-rate, are generally very agreeable men). Among all these various persons, Harley, so long a stranger to the London world, seemed to make himself at home with the ease of an Alcibiades. Many of the less juvenile ladies remembered him, and rushed to claim his acquaintance, with nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles. He had ready compliment for each. And few indeed, were there, men or women, for whom Harley L'Estrange had not appropriate attraction. Distinguished reputation as soldier and scholar, for the grave; whim and pleasantry for the gay; novelty for the sated; and for the more vulgar natures, was he not Lord L'Estrange, unmarried, heir to an ancient earldom, and some fifty thousand a year?

Not till he had succeeded in the general effect—which, it must be owned, he did his best to create—did Harley seriously and especially devote himself to his hostess. And then he seated himself by her side; and as if in compliment to both, less pressing admirers insensibly slipped away and edged off.

Frank Hazledean was the last to quit his

ground behind Madame di Negra's chair; but when he found that the two began to talk in Italian, and he could not understand a word they said, he too—fancying, poor fellow, that he looked foolish, and cursing his Eton education that had neglected, for languages spoken by the dead, of which he had learned little, those still in use among the living, of which he had learned naught—retreated toward Randal, and asked wistfully, "Pray, what age should you say L'Estrange was? He must be devilish old, in spite of his looks. Why, he was at Waterloo!"

"He is young enough to be a terrible rival," answered Randal, with artful truth.

Frank turned pale, and began to meditate dreadful bloodthirsty thoughts, of which hair-triggers and Lord's Cricket-ground formed the staple.

Certainly there was apparent ground for a lover's jealousy. For Harley and Beatrice now conversed in a low tone, and Beatrice seemed agitated, and Harley earnest. Randal himself grew more and more perplexed. Was Lord L'Estrange really enamored of the Marchesa? If so, farewell to all hopes of Frank's marriage with her! Or was he merely playing a part in Riccabocca's interest; pretending to be the lover, in order to obtain an influence over her mind, rule her through her ambition, and secure an ally against her brother? Was this *finesse* compatible with Randal's notions of Harley's character? Was it consistent with that chivalric and soldierly spirit of honor which the frank nobleman affected, to make love to a woman in mere *ruse de guerre*? Could mere friendship for Riccabocca be a sufficient inducement to a man, who, whatever his weaknesses or his errors, seemed to wear on his very forehead a soul above deceit, to stoop to paltry means, even for a worthy end? At this question, a new thought flashed upon Randal—might not Lord L'Estrange have speculated himself upon winning Violante?—would not that account for all the exertions he had made on behalf of her inheritance at the court of Vienna—exertions of which Peschiera and Beatrice had both complained? Those objections which the Austrian government might take to Violante's marriage with some obscure Englishman would probably not exist against a man like Harley L'Estrange, whose family not only belonged to the highest aristocracy of England, but had always supported opinions in vogue among the leading governments of Europe. Harley himself, it is true, had never taken part in politics, but his notions were, no doubt, those of a high-born soldier, who had fought, in alliance with Austria, for the restoration of the Bourbons. And this immense wealth—which Violante might lose if she married one like Randal himself—her marriage with the heir of the Lansmeres might actually tend only to secure. Could Harley, with all his own expectations, be indifferent to such a prize?—and no doubt he had learned Violante's rare beauty in his correspondence with Riccabocca.

Thus considered, it seemed natural to Randal's

estimate of human nature, that Harley's more prudish scruples of honor, as regards what is due to women, could not resist a temptation so strong. Mere friendship was not a motive powerful enough to shake them, but ambition was.

While Randal was thus cogitating, Frank thus suffering, and many a whisper, in comment on the evident flirtation between the beautiful hostess and the accomplished guest, reached the ears both of the brooding schemer and the jealous lover, the conversation between the two objects of remark and gossip had taken a new turn. Indeed, Beatrice had made an effort to change it.

"It is long, my lord," said she, still speaking Italian, "since I have heard sentiments like those you address to me; and if I do not feel myself wholly unworthy of them, it is from the pleasure I have felt in reading sentiments equally foreign to the language of the world in which I live." She took a book from the table as she spoke: "Have you seen this work?"

Harley glanced at the title-page. "To be sure I have, and I know the author."

"I envy you that honor. I should so like also to know one who has discovered to me deeps in my own heart which I had never explored."

"Charming Marchesa, if the book has done this, believe me that I have paid you no false compliment—formed no overflattering estimate of your nature; for the charm of the work is but in its simple appeal to good and generous emotions, and it can charm none in whom those emotions exist not!"

"Nay, that can not be true, or why is it so popular?"

"Because good and generous emotions are more common to the human heart than we are aware of till the appeal comes."

"Don't ask me to think that! I have found the world so base."

"Pardon me a rude question; but what do you know of the world?"

Beatrice looked first in surprise at Harley, then glanced round the room with significant irony.

"As I thought; you call this little room 'the world.' Be it so. I will venture to say, that if the people in this room were suddenly converted into an audience before a stage, and you were as consummate in the actor's art as you are in all others that please and command—"

"Well?"

"And were to deliver a speech full of sordid and base sentiments, you would be hissed. But let any other woman, with half your powers, arise and utter sentiments sweet and womanly, or honest and lofty—and applause would flow from every lip, and tears rush to many a worldly eye. The true proof of the inherent nobleness of our common nature is in the sympathy it betrays with what is noble wherever crowds are collected. Never believe the world is base;—if it were so, no society could hold together for a day. But you would know the author of this book? I will bring him to you."

"Do."

"And now," said Harley, rising, and with his candid winning smile, "do you think we shall ever be friends?"

"You have startled me so, that I can scarcely answer. But why would you be friends with me?"

"Because you need a friend. You have none."

"Strange flatterer!" said Beatrice, smiling, yet very sadly; and, looking up, her eye caught Randal's.

"Pooh!" said Harley, "you are too penetrating to believe that you inspire friendship *there*. Ah, do you suppose that, all the while I have been conversing with you, I have not noticed the watchful gaze of Mr. Randal Leslie? What tie can possibly connect you together I know not yet; but I soon shall."

"Indeed! you talk like one of the old Council of Venice. You try hard to make me fear you," said Beatrice, seeking to escape from the graver kind of impression Harley had made on her, by the affectation, partly of coquetry, partly of levity.

"And I," said L'Estrange, calmly, "tell you already, that I fear you no more." He bowed, and passed through the crowd to rejoin Audley, who was seated in a corner, whispering with some of his political colleagues. Before Harley reached the minister, he found himself close to Randal and young Hazeldean.

He bowed to the first, and extended his hand to the last. Randal felt the distinction, and his sullen, bitter pride was deeply galled—a feeling of hate toward Harley passed into his mind. He was pleased to see the cold hesitation with which Frank just touched the hand offered to him. But Randal had not been the only person whose watch upon Beatrice the keen-eyed Harley had noticed. Harley had seen the angry looks of Frank Hazeldean, and divined the cause. So he smiled forgivingly at the slight he had received.

"You are like me, Mr. Hazeldean," said he. "You think something of the heart should go with all courtesy that bespeaks friendship—

"The hand of Douglas is his own."

Here Harley drew aside Randal. "Mr. Leslie, a word with you. If I wished to know the retreat of Dr. Riccabocca, in order to render him a great service, would you confide to me that secret?"

"That woman has let out her suspicions that I know the exile's retreat," thought Randal; and with rare presence of mind, he replied at once:

"My Lord, yonder stands a connection of Dr. Riccabocca's. Mr. Hazeldean is surely the person to whom you should address this inquiry."

"Not so, Mr. Leslie; for I suspect that he can not answer it, and that you can. Well, I will ask something that it seems to me you may grant without hesitation. Should you see Dr. Riccabocca, tell him that I am in England, and so leave it to him to communicate with me or not; but perhaps you have already done so?"

"Lord L'Estrange," said Randal, bowing low, with pointed formality, "excuse me if I decline either to disclaim or acquiesce in the knowledge

you impute to me. If I am acquainted with any secret intrusted to me by Dr. Riccabocca, it is for me to use my own discretion how best to guard it. And for the rest, after the Scotch earl, whose words your lordship has quoted, refused to touch the hand of Marmion, Douglas could scarcely have called him back in order to give him—a message!"

Harley was not prepared for this tone in Mr. Egerton's *protégé*, and his own gallant nature was rather pleased than irritated by a haughtiness that at least seemed to bespeak independence of spirit. Nevertheless, L'Estrange's suspicions of Randal were too strong to be easily set aside, and therefore he replied, civilly, but with covert taunt:

"I submit to your rebuke, Mr. Leslie, though I meant not the offense you would ascribe to me. I regret my unlucky quotation yet the more, since the wit of your retort has obliged you to identify yourself with Marmion, who, though a clever and brave fellow, was an uncommonly—tricky one." And so Harley, certainly having the best of it, moved on, and joining Egerton, in a few minutes more both left the room.

"What was L'Estrange saying to you?" asked Frank. "Something about Beatrice, I am sure."

"No; only quoting poetry."

"Then what made you look so angry, my dear fellow? I know it was your kind feeling for me. As you say, he is a formidable rival. But that can't be his own hair. Do you think he wears a *toupet*? I am sure he was praising Beatrice. He is evidently very much smitten with her. But I don't think she is a woman to be caught by mere rank and fortune! Do you? Why can't you speak?"

"If you do not get her consent soon, I think she is lost to you," said Randal, slowly; and, before Frank could recover his dismay, glided from the house.

CHAPTER IX.

VIOLANTE's first evening at the Lansmeres, had seemed happier to her than the first evening, under the same roof, had done to Helen. True that she missed her father much—Jemima somewhat; but she so identified her father's cause with Harley, that she had a sort of vague feeling that it was to promote that cause that she was on this visit to Harley's parents. And the Countess, it must be owned, was more emphatically cordial to her than she had ever yet been to Captain Digby's orphan. But perhaps the real difference in the heart of either girl was this, that Helen felt awe of Lady Lansmere, and Violante felt only love for Lord L'Estrange's mother. Violante, too, was one of those persons whom a reserved and formal person, like the Countess, "can get on with," as the phrase goes. Not so poor little Helen—so shy herself, and so hard to coax into more than gentle monosyllables. And Lady Lansmere's favorite talk was always of Harley. Helen had listened to such talk with respect and interest. Violante listened to it with inquisitive

eagerness—with blushing delight. The mother's heart noticed the distinction between the two, and no wonder that that heart moved more to Violante than to Helen. Lord Lansmere, too, like most gentlemen of his age, clumped all young ladies together, as a harmless, amiable, but singularly stupid class of the genus Petticoat, meant to look pretty, play the piano, and talk to each other about frocks and sweethearts. Therefore this animated, dazzling creature, with her infinite variety of look and play of mind, took him by surprise, charmed him into attention, and warmed him into gallantry. Helen sat in her quiet corner, at her work, sometimes listening with almost mournful, though certainly unenvious admiration at Violante's vivid, yet ever unconscious eloquence of word and thought—sometimes plunged deep into her own secret meditations. And all the while the work went on the same, under the same noiseless fingers. This was one of Helen's habits that irritated the nerves of Lady Lansmere. She despised young ladies who were fond of work. She did not comprehend how often it is the source of the sweet, womanly mind, not from want of thought, but from the silence and the depth of it. Violante was surprised, and perhaps disappointed, that Harley had left the house before dinner, and did not return all the evening. But Lady Lansmere, in making excuse for his absence, on the plea of engagements, found so good an opportunity to talk of his ways in general—of his rare promise in boyhood—of her regret at the inaction of his maturity—of her hope to see him yet do justice to his natural powers, that Violante almost ceased to miss him.

And when Lady Lansmere conducted her to her room, and, kissing her cheek tenderly, said, "But you are just the person Harley admires—just the person to rouse him from melancholy dreams, of which his wild humors are now but the vain disguise"—Violante crossed her arms on her bosom, and her bright eyes, deepened into tenderness, seemed to ask, "He melancholy—and why?"

On leaving Violante's room, Lady Lansmere paused before the door of Helen's; and, after musing a little while, entered softly.

Helen had dismissed her maid; and, at the moment Lady Lansmere entered, she was kneeling at the foot of the bed, her hands clasped before her face.

Her form, thus seen, looked so youthful and child-like—the attitude itself was so holy and so touching, that the proud and cold expression on Lady Lansmere's face changed. She shaded the light involuntarily, and seated herself in silence, that she might not disturb the act of prayer.

When Helen rose, she was startled to see the Countess seated by the fire; and hastily drew her hand across her eyes. She had been weeping.

Lady Lansmere did not, however, turn to observe those traces of tears, which Helen feared were too visible. The Countess was too absorbed in her own thoughts; and as Helen timidly approached, she said—still with her eyes on the

clear low fire—"I beg your pardon, Miss Digby, for my intrusion; but my son has left it to me to prepare Lord Lansmere to learn the offer you have done Harley the honor to accept. I have not yet spoken to my lord; it may be days before I find a fitting occasion to do so; meanwhile, I feel assured that your sense of propriety will make you agree with me that it is due to Lord L'Estrange's father, that strangers should not learn arrangements of such moment in his family, before his own consent be obtained."

Here the Countess came to a full pause; and poor Helen, finding herself called upon for some reply to this chilling speech, stammered out, scarce audibly—

"Certainly, madam, I never dreamed of—"

"That is right, my dear," interrupted Lady Lansmere, rising suddenly, and as if greatly relieved. "I could not doubt your superiority to ordinary girls of your age, with whom these matters are never secret for a moment. Therefore, of course, you will not mention, at present, what has passed between you and Harley, to any of the friends with whom you may correspond."

"I have no correspondents—no friends, Lady Lansmere," said Helen deprecatingly, and trying hard not to cry.

"I am very glad to hear it, my dear; young ladies never should have. Friends, especially friends who correspond, are the worst enemies they can have. Good-night, Miss Digby, I need not add, by the way, that, though we are bound to show all kindness to this young Italian lady, still she is wholly unconnected with our family; and you will be as prudent with her as you would have been with your correspondents—had you had the misfortune to have any."

Lady Lansmere said the last words with a smile, and pressed a reluctant kiss (the step-mother's kiss) on Helen's bended brow. She then left the room, and Helen sate on the seat vacated by the stately, unloving form, and again covered her face with her hands, and again wept. But when she rose at last, and the light fell upon her face, that soft face was sad indeed, but serene—serene, as if with some inward sense of duty—sad, as with the resignation which accepts patience instead of hope.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

PIPE-CLAY AND CLAY PIPES.

I HAVE an eccentric friend, whom I meet occasionally. He can not be said to have an inquiring turn of mind, or usually to busy himself with the science of industrial economy. Babbage is an unknown writer to him; and he has not yet contrived to "get up" any interest in the recent Reports on Her Majesty's Customs. In fact, I should not be surprised if he never opened the interesting volumes in question. He is a man with an active mind, nevertheless; but this activity is expended, as a rule, in eccentric pursuits. He has one confirmed antipathy—he hates a purpose. Since he heard that I had written a paper on the wrongs of factory children, he has treated me with marked coolness.