

hearing of the words, and, I hoped, like conviction of their truth.

Well, why lengthen the story of those six quiet weeks? I will come to the seventh, and last, and have done.

It would surprise one who has no experience of the change two months can make in an invalid's physique, to see their effect on Mr. Larue.

Hepzibah was quite correct in her complacent affirmation, that he "looked twice as rugged and as fair-complexioned again as he did when he came—why, his very whiskers seemed to curl tighter, and when he was the least bit tickled his eyes would shine as merry and hansom as a new button!"

Yes, it was but plain my guest was rising to a new physical life—would he continue? Would the old Gilbert Larue, sad of face and slow of step, come back with town life, or would he emerge into the life alert, firm-handed, and pleasant-faced of the new Gilbert Larue?

What made the eyes into whose sadness I had looked so coolly thrill me thus with their gay brightness now?

Why had common speech and casual contact the same effect? Could I be falling in love with my patient? Oh, wise Plato!

Father and mother wrote the day they were

coming home. Larue went that day also. And I wonder if the parting guest I sped was any the less dear than those whose coming I welcomed?

What earthly reason had my heart to pulse so highly for a whole week every day at that hour which brought Jabez with the daily mail? Could it be in hope rather than expectancy of the white packet the end of that period brought? The sample I must give you ran:

"Dear, the long and short of it is I love you—how much, I wish I could tell you. I must have been rather an old young man, I believe: for I really thought all capacity for such feeling had gone out of my heart. I must confess to you a fact of which you have no idea [had I not?], I suppose—viz., that I came to your house a grim, self-indulgent dyspeptic, though I hardly saw it so at the time. Those two, all too speedy, months [the first tobaccoless week included. I presume!] opened to me no less a new love than a new life. Dear, neither can be perfect, nay, nor live at all without you. You will not deny alike my necessity and joy, nor forbid me hope permission to claim them both in you?"

What would you have done, dear friend, had it been you? Would you have refused the life-shelter of a strong arm, or the steady sunshine of a great love, albeit you had cured their possessor of dyspepsia?

ORLEY FARM.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.—ILLUSTRATED BY J. E. MILLAIS.

CHAPTER XLI.

HOW CAN I SAVE HIM?

"I WILL not consent to live with you while such deeds as these are being done." Such were the last words which Mrs. Farnival spoke as she walked out of her own drawing-room, leaving her husband still seated in his arm-chair.

What was he to do? Those who would hang by the letter of the law in such matters may say that he should have rung the bell, sent for his wife, explained to her that obedience was a necessary duty on her part, and have finished by making her understand that she must and would continue to live wherever he chose that she should live. There be those who say that if a man be any thing of a man he can always insure obedience in his own household. He has the power of the purse and the power of the law; and if, having these, he goes to the wall, it must be because he is a poor creature. Those who so say have probably never tried the position.

Mr. Farnival did not wish to send for his wife, because by doing so he would have laid bare his sore before his servants. He could not follow her, because he knew that he should not find her alone in her room. Nor did he wish for any further parley, because he knew that she would speak loud, and probably sob—nay, very possibly proceed to a fainting fit. And, moreover, he much doubted whether he would

have the power to keep her in the house if it should be her pleasure to leave it. And then what should he do? The doing of something in such a catastrophe, was, he thought, indispensable.

Was ever a man so ill-treated? Was ever jealousy so groundless? Here was a woman, with whom he was on the point of quarreling, who was engaged to be married to another man, whom for months past he had only seen as a client; and on her account he was to be told by his wife that she would not consent to live with him! Yes; it was quite indispensable that he should do something.

At last he went to bed, and slept upon it; not sharing the marital couch, but occupying his own dressing-room. In the morning, however, as he sat down to his solitary breakfast, he was as far as ever from having made up his mind what that something should be. A message was brought to him by an elderly female servant with a grave face—the elderly servant who had lived with them since their poorer days—saying that "Missus would not come down to breakfast this morning." There was no love sent, no excuse as to illness, no semblance of a peaceable reason, assumed even to deceive the servant. It was clear to Mr. Farnival that the servant was intended to know all about it. "And Miss Biggs says, Sir, that if you please you're not to wait for her."

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"Very well, that'll do," said Mr. Furnival, who had not the slightest intention of waiting for Miss Biggs; and then he sat himself down to eat his bacon, and bethink himself what step he would take with this recreant and troublesome spouse.

While he was thus employed the post came. The bulk of his letters as a matter of course went to his chambers; but there were those among his correspondents who wrote to him at Harley Street. To-day he received three or four letters, but our concern will be with one only. This one bore the Hamworth post-mark, and he opened it the first, knowing that it came from Lady Mason. It was as follows:

"Private.

"THE CREEVE, 23d January, 18—.

"MY DEAR MR. FURNIVAL,—I am so very sorry that I did not see you to-day! Indeed, your leaving without seeing me has made me unhappy, for I can not but think that it shows that you are displeased. Under these circumstances I must write to you and explain to you how that came to pass which Sir Peregrine told you. I have not let him know that I am writing to you, and I think for his sake that I had better not. But he is so good, and has shown to me such nobleness and affection, that I can hardly bring myself to have any secret from him.

"You may conceive what was my surprise when I first understood that he wished to make me his wife. It is hardly six months since I thought that I was almost exceeding my station in visiting at his house. Then by degrees I began to be received as a friend, and at last I found myself treated with the warmest love. But still I had no thought of this, and I knew that it was because of my great trouble that Sir Peregrine and Mrs. Orme were so good to me.

"When he sent for me into his library and told me what he wished, I could not refuse him any thing. I promised obedience to him as though I were a child; and in this way I found myself engaged to be his wife. When he told me that he would have it so, how could I refuse him, knowing as I do all that he has done for me, and thinking of it as I do every minute? As for loving him, of course I love him. Who that knows him does not love him? He is made to be loved. No one is so good and so noble as he. But of love of that sort I had never dreamed. Ah me, no!—a woman burdened as I am does not think of love.

"He told me that he would have it so, and I said that I would obey him; and he tried to prove to me that in this dreadful trial it would be better for me. But I would not wish it on that account. He has done enough for me without my causing him such injury. When I argued it with him, trying to say that others would not like it, he declared that Mrs. Orme would be well pleased, and, indeed, so she told me afterward herself. And thus I yielded to him, and agreed that I would be his wife. But I was not happy, thinking that I should injure him; and I promised only because I could not deny him.

"But the day before yesterday young Mr. Orme, his grandson, came to me and told me that such a marriage would be very wrong. And I do believe him. He said that old family friends would look down upon his grandfather and ridicule him if he were to make this marriage. And I can see that it would be so. I would not have such injury come upon him for the gain of all the world to myself. So I have made up my mind to tell him that it can not be, even though I should anger him. And I fear that it will anger him, for he loves to have his own way—especially in doing good; and he thinks that our marriage would rescue me altogether from the danger of this trial.

"So I have made up my mind to tell him, but I have not found courage to do it yet; and I do wish, dear Mr. Furnival, that I might see you first. I fear that I may have lost your friendship by what has already been done.

If so, what will become of me? When I heard that you had gone without asking for me, my heart sank within me. I have two friends whom I so dearly love, and I would fain do as both direct me, if that may be possible. And now I propose to go up to London to-morrow, and to be at your chambers about one o'clock. I have told Sir Peregrine and Mrs. Orme that I am going; but he is too noble-minded to ask questions now that he thinks I may feel myself constrained to tell him. So I will call in Lincoln's Inn at one o'clock, and I trust that if possible you will see me. I am greatly in want of your advice, for in truth I hardly know what to do.

"Pray believe me to be always your attached friend,

"MARY MASON."

There was hardly a word—I believe not a word in that letter that was not true. Her acceptance of Sir Peregrine had been given exactly in the manner and for the reasons there explained; and since she had accepted him she had been sorry for having done so, exactly in the way now described. She was quite willing to give up her husband if it was thought best—but she was not willing to give up her friend. She was not willing to give up either friend, and her great anxiety was so to turn her conduct that she might keep them both.

Mr. Furnival was gratified as he read the letter—gratified in spite of his present frame of mind. Of course he would see her—and of course, as he himself well knew, would take her again into favor. But he must insist on her carrying out her purpose of abandoning the marriage project. If, arising from this abandonment, there should be any coolness on the part of Sir Peregrine, Mr. Furnival would not regret it. Mr. Furnival did not feel quite sure whether in the conduct of this case he was not somewhat hampered by the—energetic zeal of Sir Peregrine's line of defense.

When he had finished the perusal of his letter and the consideration which it required, he put it carefully into his breast coat pocket, envelope and all. What might not happen if he left that envelope about in that house? And then he took it out again, and observed upon the cover the Hamworth post-mark, very clear. Post-marks nowadays are very clear, and every body may know whence a letter comes. His letters had been brought to him by the butler; but was it not probable that that ancient female servant might have seen them first, and have conveyed to her mistress intelligence as to this post-mark? If so—; and Mr. Furnival almost felt himself to be guilty as he thought of it.

While he was putting on his great-coat in the hall, the butler assisting him, the ancient female servant came to him again. There was a look about her face which told of war, and declared her to be, if not the chief lieutenant of his wife, at any rate her color-sergeant. Martha Biggs no doubt was chief lieutenant. "Missus desires me to ask," said she, with her grim face and austere voice, "whether you will be pleased to dine at home to-day?" And yet the grim, austere woman could be affectionate and almost motherly in her ministrations to him when things were going well, and had eaten his salt and bro-

ken his bread for more than twenty years. All this was very hard! "Because," continued the woman, "missus says she thinks she shall be out this evening herself."

"Where is she going?"

"Missus didn't tell me, Sir."

He almost determined to go up stairs and call upon her to tell him what she was going to do, but he remembered that if he did it would surely make a row in the house. Miss Biggs would put her head out of some adjacent door and scream, "Oh laws!" and he would have to descend his own stairs with the consciousness that all his household were regarding him as a brute. So he gave up that project. "No," he said, "I shall not dine at home;" and then he went his way.

"Missus is very aggravating," said the butler, as soon as the door was closed.

"You don't know what cause she has, Spooner," said the housekeeper, very solemnly.

"Is it at his age? I believe it's all nonsense, I do—feminine fancies, and vagaries of the weaker sex."

"Yes, I dare say; that's what you men always say. But if he don't look out he'll find missus 'll be too much for him. What'd he do if she were to go away from him?"

"Do?—why live twice as jolly. It would only be the first rumpus of the thing."

I am afraid that there was some truth in what Spooner said. It is the first rumpus of the thing, or rather the fear of that, which keeps together many a couple.

At one o'clock there came a timid female rap at Mr. Furnival's chamber door, and the juvenile clerk gave admittance to Lady Mason. Crabwitz, since the affair of that mission down at Hamworth, had so far carried a point of his, that a junior satellite was now permanently installed; and for the future the indignity of opening doors, and "just stepping out" into Chancery Lane, would not await him. Lady Mason was dressed all in black—but this was usual with her when she left home. To-day, however, there was about her something blacker and more sombre than usual. The veil which she wore was thick, and completely hid her face; and her voice, as she asked for Mr. Furnival, was low and plaintive. But, nevertheless, she had by no means laid aside the charm of womanhood; or it might be more just to say that the charm of womanhood had not laid aside her. There was that in her figure, step, and gait of going which compelled men to turn round and look at her. We all know that she had a son some two or three and twenty years of age, and that she had not been quite a girl when she married. But notwithstanding this, she was yet young; and though she made no effort—no apparent effort—to maintain the power and influence which beauty gives, yet she did maintain it.

He came forward and took her by the hand with all his old affectionate regard, and, muttering some words of ordinary salutation, led her to a chair. It may be that she muttered some-

thing also, but if so the sound was too low to reach his ears. She sat down where he placed her, and as she put her hand on the table near her arm, he saw that she was trembling.

"I got your letter this morning," he said, by way of beginning the conversation.

"Yes," she said; and then, finding that it was not possible that he should hear her through her veil, she raised it. She was very pale, and there was a look of painful care, almost of agony, round her mouth. He had never seen her look so pale—but he said to himself at the same time that he had never seen her look so beautiful.

"And to tell you the truth, Lady Mason, I was very glad to get it. You and I had better speak openly to each other about this—had we not?"

"Oh yes," she said. And then there was a struggle within her not to tremble—a struggle that was only too evident. She was aware of this, and took her hand off the table.

"I vexed you because I did not see you at The Cleeve the other day."

"Because I thought that you were angry with me."

"And I was so."

"Oh, Mr. Furnival!"

"Wait a moment, Lady Mason. I was angry—or rather sorry and vexed to hear of that which I did not approve. But your letter has removed that feeling. I can now understand the manner in which this engagement was forced upon you; and I understand also—do I not?—that the engagement will not be carried out?"

She did not answer him immediately, and he began to fear that she repented of her purpose. "Because," said he, "under no other circumstances could I—"

"Stop, Mr. Furnival. Pray do not be severe with me." And she looked at him with eyes which would almost have melted his wife—and which he was quite unable to withstand. Had it been her wish, she might have made him promise to stand by her, even though she had persisted in her engagement.

"No, no; I will not be severe."

"I do not wish to marry him," she went on to say. "I have resolved to tell him so. That was what I said in my letter."

"Yes, yes."

"I do not wish to marry him. I would not bring his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave—no, not to save myself from—" And then, as she thought of that from which she desired to save herself, she trembled again, and was silent.

"It would create in men's minds such a strong impression against you, were you to marry him at this moment!"

"It is of him I am thinking—of him and Lucius. Mr. Furnival, they might do their worst with me, if it were not for that thought. My boy!" And then she rose from her chair, and stood upright before him, as though she were going to do or say some terrible thing. He still kept his chair, for he was startled, and hardly

knew what he would be about. That last exclamation had come from her almost with a shriek, and now her bosom was heaving as though her heart would burst with the violence of her sobbing. "I will go," she said. "I had better go." And she hurried away toward the door.

"No, no; do not go yet." And he rose to stop her, but she was quite passive. "I do not know why you should be so much moved now." But he did know. He did understand the very essence and core of her feelings—as probably may the reader also. But it was impossible that he should allow her to leave him in her present state.

She sat down again, and leaning both her arms upon the table, hid her face within her hands. He was now standing, and for the moment did not speak to her. Indeed he could not bring himself to break the silence, for he saw her tears, and could still hear the violence of her sobs. And then she was the first to speak. "If it were not for him," she said, raising her head, "I could bear it all. What will he do? what will he do?"

"You mean," said Mr. Furnival, speaking very slowly, "if the—verdict—should go against us."

"It will go against us," she said. "Will it not?—tell me the truth. You are so clever, you must know. Tell me how it will go. Is there any thing I can do to save him?" And she took hold of his arm with both her hands, and looked up eagerly—oh, with such terrible eagerness!—into his face.

Would it not have been natural now that he should have asked her to tell him the truth? And yet he did not dare to ask her. He thought that he knew it. He felt sure—almost sure, that he could look into her very heart, and read there the whole of her secret. But still there was a doubt—enough of doubt to make him wish to ask the question. Nevertheless he did not ask it.

"Mr. Furnival," she said; and as she spoke there was a hardness came over the soft lines of her feminine face; a look of courage which amounted almost to ferocity, a look which at the moment recalled to his mind, as though it were but yesterday, the attitude and countenance she had borne as she stood in the witness-box at that other trial, now so many years since—that attitude and countenance which had impressed the whole court with so high an idea of her courage. "Mr. Furnival, weak as I am, I could bear to die here on the spot—now—if I could only save him from this agony. It is not for myself I suffer." And then the terrible idea occurred to him that she might attempt to compass her escape by death. But he did not know her. That would have been no escape for her son.

"And you too think that I must not marry him?" she said, putting up her hands to her brows as though to collect her thoughts.

"No; certainly not, Lady Mason."

"No, no. It would be wrong. But, Mr.

Furnival, I am so driven that I know not how I should act. What if I should lose my mind?" And as she looked at him there was that about her eyes which did tell him that such an ending might be possible.

"Do not speak in such a way," he said.

"No, I will not. I know that it is wrong. I will go down there, and tell him that it must not—must not be so. But I may stay at The Cleeve—may I not?"

"Oh, certainly—if he wishes it—after your understanding with him."

"Ah; he may turn me out, may he not? And they are so kind to me, so gentle and so good. And Lucius is so stern. But I will go back. Sternness will perhaps be better for me now than love and kindness."

In spite of every thing, in the teeth of his almost certain conviction of her guilt, he would now, even now, have asked her to come to his own house, and have begged her to remain there till the trial was over—if only he had had the power to do so. What would it be to him what the world might say, if she should be proved guilty? Why should not he have been mistaken as well as others? And he had an idea that if he could get her into his own hands he might still bring her through triumphantly—with assistance from Solomon Aram and Chaffanbrass. He was strongly convinced of her guilt, but by no means strongly convinced that her guilt could be proved. But then he had no house at the present moment that he could call his own. His Kitty, the Kitty of whom he still sometimes thought with affection—that Kitty whose soft motherly heart would have melted at such a story of a woman's sorrows, if only it had been rightly approached—that Kitty was now vehemently hostile, hostile both to him and to this very woman for whom he would have asked her care.

"May God help me!" said the poor woman. "I do not know where else to turn for aid. Well; I may go now, then. And, indeed, why should I take up your time further?"

But before she did go Mr. Furnival gave her much counsel. He did not ask as to her guilt, but he did give her that advice which he would have thought most expedient had her guilt been declared and owned. He told her that very much would depend on her maintaining her present position and standing; that she was so to carry herself as not to let people think that she was doubtful about the trial; and that above all things she was to maintain a composed and steadfast manner before her son. As to the Ormes, he bade her not to think of leaving The Cleeve, unless she found that her remaining there would be disagreeable to Sir Peregrine after her explanation with him. That she was to decline the marriage engagement he was very positive; on that subject there was to be no doubt.

And then she went; and as she passed down the dark passage into the new square by the old gate of the Chancellor's court, she met a stout

lady. The stout lady eyed her savagely, but was not quite sure as to her identity. Lady Mason in her trouble passed the stout lady without taking any notice of her.

CHAPTER XLII.

JOHN KENNEBY GOES TO HAMWORTH.

WHEN John Kenneby dined with his sister and brother-in-law on Christmas-day he agreed, at the joint advice of the whole party there assembled, that he would go down and see Mr. Dockwrath at Hamworth, in accordance with the invitation received from that gentleman—his enemy, Dockwrath, who had carried off Miriam Usbeck, for whom John Kenneby still sighed—in a gentle easy manner indeed—but still sighed as though it were an affair but of yesterday. But though he had so agreed, and though he had never stirred from that resolve, he by no means did it immediately. He was a slow man, whose life had offered him but little excitement; and the little which came to him was husbanded well and made to go a long way. He thought about this journey for nearly a month before he took it, often going to his sister and discussing it with her, and once or twice seeing the great Moulder himself. At last he fixed a day and did go down to Hamworth.

He had, moreover, been invited to the offices of Messrs. Round and Crook, and that visit also was as yet unpaid. A clerk from the house in Bedford Row had found him out at Hubbles and Grease's, and had discovered that he would be forthcoming as a witness. On the special subject of his evidence not much had then passed, the clerk having had no discretion given him to sift the matter. But Kenneby had promised to go to Bedford Row, merely stipulating for a day at some little distance of time. That day was now near at hand; but he was to see Dockwrath first, and hence it occurred that he now made his journey to Hamworth.

But another member of that Christmas party at Great St. Helen's had not been so slow in carrying out his little project. Mr. Kantwise had at once made up his mind that it would be as well that he should see Dockwrath. It would not suit him to incur the expense of a journey to Hamworth, even with the additional view of extracting payment for that set of metallic furniture; but he wrote to the attorney telling him that he should be in London in the way of trade on such and such a day, and that he had tidings of importance to give with reference to the great Orley Farm case. Dockwrath did see him, and the result was that Mr. Kantwise got his money, fourteen eleven—at least he got fourteen seven six, and had a very hard fight for the three odd half-crowns—and Dockwrath learned that John Kenneby, if duly used, would give evidence on his side of the question.

And then Kenneby did go down to Hamworth. He had not seen Miriam Usbeck since

the days of her marriage. He had remained hanging about the neighborhood long enough to feast his eyes with the agony of looking at the bride, and then he had torn himself away. Circumstances since that had carried him one way and Miriam another, and they had never met. Time had changed him very little, and what change time had made was perhaps for the better. He hesitated less when he spoke, he was less straggling and undecided in his appearance, and had about him more of manhood than in former days. But poor Miriam had certainly not been altered for the better by years and circumstances as far as outward appearance went.

Kenneby as he walked up from the station to the house—and from old remembrances he knew well where the house stood—gave up his mind entirely to the thought of seeing Miriam, and in his memories of old love passages almost forgot the actual business which now brought him to the place. To him it seemed as though he was going to meet the same Miriam he had left—the Miriam to whom in former days he had hardly ventured to speak of love, and to whom he must not now venture so to speak at all. He almost blushed as he remembered that he would have to take her hand.

There are men of this sort, men slow in their thoughts but very keen in their memories; men who will look for the glance of a certain bright eye from a window-pane, though years have rolled on since last they saw it—since last they passed that window. Such men will bethink themselves, after an interval of weeks, how they might have brought up wit to their use and improved an occasion which chance had given them. But when the bright eyes do glance, such men pass by abashed; and when the occasion offers, their wit is never at hand. Nevertheless they are not the least happy of mankind, these never-readies; they do not pick up sudden prizes, but they hold fast by such good things as the ordinary run of life bestows upon them. There was a lady even now, a friend of Mrs. Moulder, ready to bestow herself and her fortune on John Kenneby—a larger fortune than Miriam had possessed, and one which would not now probably be neutralized by so large a family as poor Miriam had bestowed upon her husband.

How would Miriam meet him? It was of this he thought as he approached the door. Of course he must call her Mrs. Dockwrath, though the other name was so often on his tongue. He had made up his mind, for the last week past, that he would call at the private door of the house, passing by the door of the office. Otherwise the chances were that he would not see Miriam at all. His enemy, Dockwrath, would be sure to keep him from her presence. Dockwrath had ever been inordinately jealous. But when he came to the office-door he hardly had the courage to pass on to that of the private dwelling. His heart beat too quickly, and the idea of seeing Miriam was almost too much for him. But, nevertheless, he did carry out his plan, and did knock at the door of the house.



JOHN KENNEBY AND MRS. DOCKWRAITH.

And it was opened by Miriam herself. He knew her instantly in spite of all the change. He knew her, but the whole course of his feelings were altered at the moment, and his blood was made to run the other way. And she knew him too. "La, John," she said, "who'd have thought of seeing you?" And she shifted the baby, whom she carried, from one arm to the other as she gave him her hand in token of welcome.

"It is a long time since we met," he said. He felt hardly any temptation now to call her Miriam. Indeed it would have seemed altogether in opposition to the common order of

things to do so. She was no longer Miriam, but the maternal Dockwrath; the mother of that long string of dirty children whom he saw gathered in the passage behind her. He had known as a fact that she had all the children, but the fact had not made the proper impression on his mind till he had seen them.

"A long time! 'Deed then it is. Why we've hardly seen each other since you used to be a courting of me; have we? But, my! John; why haven't you got a wife for yourself these many years? But come in. I'm glad to see every bit of you, so I am; though I've hardly a place to put you to sit down in." And then she opened a door and took him into a little sitting-room on the left hand side of the passage.

His feeling of intense enmity to Dockwrath was beginning to wear away, and one of modified friendship for the whole family was supervening. It was much better that it should be so. He could not understand before how Dockwrath had had the heart to write to him and call him John, but now he did understand it. He felt that he could himself be friendly with Dockwrath now, and forgive him all the injury; he felt also that it would not go so much against the grain with him to marry that friend as to whom his sister would so often solicit him.

"I think you may venture to sit down upon them," said Miriam, "though I can't say that I have ever tried myself." This speech referred to the chairs with which her room was supplied, and which Kenneby seemed to regard with suspicion.

"They are very nice I'm sure," said he, "but I don't think I ever saw any like them."

"Nor nobody else either. But don't you tell him so;" and she nodded with her head to the side of the house on which the office stood. "I had as nice a set of mahoganys as ever a woman could want, and bought with my own money too, John; but he's took them away to furnish some of his lodgings opposite, and put them things here in their place. Don't, Sam; you'll have 'em all twisted about nohows in no time if you go to use 'em in that way."

"I wants to see the pictur' on the table," said Sam.

"Drat the picture," said Mrs. Dockwrath. "It was hard, wasn't it, John, to see my own mahoganys, as I had rubbed with my own hands till they was ever so bright, and as was bought with my own money too, took away and them things brought here? Sam, if you twist that round any more I'll box your ears. One can't hear one's self speak with the noise."

"They don't seem to be very useful," said Kenneby.

"Useful! They're got up for cheater; that's what they're got up for. And that Dockwrath should be took in with 'em—he that's so sharp at every thing—that's what surprises me. But laws, John, it isn't the sharp ones that gets the best off. You was never sharp, but you're as smirk and smooth as though you came out of a

bandbox. I am glad to see you, John, so I am." And she put her apron up to her eyes and wiped away a tear.

"Is Mr. Dockwrath at home?" said John.

"Sam, run round and see if your father's in the office. He'll be home to dinner, I know. Molly, do be quiet with your sister. I never see such a girl as you are for bothering. You didn't come down about business, did you, John?" And then Kenneby explained to her that he had been summoned by Dockwrath as to the matter of this Orley Farm trial. While he was doing so, Sam returned to say that his father had stepped out, but would be back in half an hour, and Mrs. Dockwrath, finding it impossible to make use of her company sitting-room, took her old lover into the family apartment which they all ordinarily occupied.

"You can sit down there at any rate without it all crunching under you, up to nothing." And she emptied for him as she spoke the seat of an old well-worn horse-hair bottomed arm-chair. "As to them tin things I wouldn't trust myself on one of them; and so I told him, angry as it made him. But now about poor Lady Mason—. Sam and Molly, you go into the garden, there's good children. They is so ready with their ears, John; and he contrives to get every thing out of 'em. Now do tell me about this."

Kenneby could not help thinking that the love match between Miriam and her husband had not turned out in all respects well, and I fear that he derived from the thought a certain feeling of consolation. "He" was spoken about in a manner that did not betoken unflinching love and perfect confidence. Perhaps Miriam was at this moment thinking that she might have done better with her youth and her money! She was thinking of nothing of the kind. Her mind was one that dwelt on the present, not on the past. She was unhappy about her furniture, unhappy about the frocks of those four younger children, unhappy that the loaves of bread went faster and faster every day, very unhappy now at the savageness with which her husband prosecuted his anger against Lady Mason. But it did not occur to her to be unhappy because she had not become Mrs. Kenneby.

Mrs. Dockwrath had more to tell in the matter than had Kenneby, and when the elder of the children who were at home had been disposed of she was not slow to tell it. "Isn't it dreadful, John, to think that they should come agains: her now, and the will all settled as it was twenty year ago? But you won't say any thing against her; will you now, John? She was always a good friend to you; wasn't she? Though it wasn't much use; was it?" It was thus that she referred to the business before them, and to the love passages of her early youth at the same time.

"It's a very dreadful affair," said Kenneby, very solemnly; "and the more I think of it the more dreadful it becomes."

"But you won't say any thing against her:

will you? You won't go over to his side; eh, John?"

"I don't know much about sides," said he.

"He'll get himself into trouble with it; I know he will. I do so wish you'd tell him, for he can't hurt you if you stand up to him. If I speak—Lord bless you, I don't dare to call my soul my own for a week afterward."

"Is he so very—"

"Oh, dreadful, John! He's bid me never speak a word to her. But for all that I used till she went away down to The Cleeve yonder. And what do you think they say now? And I do believe it too. They say that Sir Peregrine is going to make her his lady. If he does that it stands to reason that Dockwrath and Joseph Mason will get the worst of it. I'm sure I hope they will; only he'll be twice as hard if he don't make money by it in some way."

"Will he, now?"

"Indeed he will. You never knew any thing like him for hardness if things go wrong a while. I know he's got lots of money, because he's always buying up bits of houses; besides, what has he done with mine? but yet sometimes you'd hardly think he'd let me have bread enough for the children—and as for clothes—!" Poor Miriam! It seemed that her husband shared with her but few of the spoils or triumphs of his profession.

Tidings now came in from the office that Dockwrath was there. "You'll come round and eat a bit of dinner with us?" said she, hesitatingly. He felt that she hesitated, and hesitated himself in his reply. "He must say something in the way of asking you, you know, and then say you'll come. His manner's nothing to you, you know. Do, now. It does me good to look at you, John; it does indeed." And then, without making any promise, he left her and went round to the office.

Kenneby had made up his mind, talking over the matter with Moulder and his sister, that he would be very reserved in any communication which he might make to Dockwrath as to his possible evidence at the coming trial; but nevertheless when Dockwrath had got him into his office, the attorney made him give a succinct account of every thing he knew, taking down his deposition in a regular manner. "And now if you'll just sign that," Dockwrath said to him when he had done.

"I don't know about signing," said Kenneby. "A man should never write his own name unless he knows why."

"You must sign your own deposition;" and the attorney frowned at him and looked savage.

"What would a judge say to you in court if you had made such a statement as this, affecting the character of a woman like Lady Mason, and then had refused to sign it? You'd never be able to hold up your head again."

"Wouldn't I?" said Kenneby, gloomily; and he did sign it. This was a great triumph to Dockwrath. Mat Round had succeeded in get-

ting the deposition of Bridget Bolster, but he had got that of John Kenneby.

"And now," said Dockwrath, "I'll tell you what we'll do; we'll go to the Blue Posts—you remember the Blue Posts?—and I'll stand a beef-steak and a glass of brandy-and-water. I suppose you'll go back to London by the 3 P.M. train. We shall have lots of time."

Kenneby said that he should go back by the 3 P.M. train, but he declined, with considerable hesitation, the beef-steak and brandy-and-water. After what had passed between him and Miriam he could not go to the Blue Posts with her husband.

"Nonsense, man," said Dockwrath. "You must dine somewhere."

But Kenneby said that he should dine in London. He always preferred dining late. Besides, it was a long time since he had been at Hamworth, and he was desirous of taking a walk that he might renew his associations.

"Associations!" said Dockwrath, with a sneer. According to his ideas a man could have no pleasant associations with a place unless he had made money there or been in some way successful. Now John Kenneby had enjoyed no success at Hamworth. "Well, then, if you prefer associations to the Blue Posts I'll say good-bye to you. I don't understand it myself. We shall see each other at the trial, you know." Kenneby, with a sigh, said that he supposed they should.

"Are you going into the house," said Dockwrath, "to see her again?" and he indicated with his head the side on which his wife was, as she before had indicated his side.

"Well, yes; I think I'll say good-bye."

"Don't be talking to her about this affair. She understands nothing about it, and every thing goes up to that woman at Orley Farm." And so they parted.

"And he wanted you to go to the Blue Posts, did he?" said Miriam, when she heard of the proposition. "It's like him. If there is to be any money spent it's any where but at home."

"But I ain't going," said John.

"He'll go before the day's out, though he mayn't get his dinner there. And he'll be ever so free when he's there. He'll stand brandy-and-water to half Hamworth when he thinks he can get any thing by it; but if you'll believe me, John, though I've all the fag of the house on me, and all them children, I can't get a pint of beer—not regular—betwixt breakfast and bedtime." Poor Miriam! Why had she not taken advice when she was younger? John Kenneby would have given her what beer was good for her quite regularly.

Then he went out and took his walk, sauntering away to the gate of Orley Farm, and looking up the avenue. He ventured up some way, and there at a distance before him he saw Lucius Mason walking up and down, from the house toward the road and back again, swinging a heavy stick in his hand, with his hat pressed down over his brows. Kenneby had no desire

to speak to him; so he returned to the gate, and thence went back to the station, escaping the town by a side lane; and in this way he got back to London without holding further communication with the people of Hamworth.

CHAPTER XLIII.

JOHN KENNEBY'S COURTSHIP.

"She's as sweet a temper, John, as ever stirred a lump of sugar in her tea," said Mrs. Moulder to her brother, as they sat together over the fire in Great St. Helen's on that same evening—after his return from Hamworth. "That she is—and so Smiley always found her. 'She's always the same,' Smiley said to me many a day. And what can a man want more than that?"

"That's quite true," said John.

"And then as to her habits—I never knew her take a drop too much since first I set eyes on her, and that's nigh twenty years ago. She likes things comfortable; and why shouldn't she, with two hundred a year of her own coming out of the Kingsland Road brick-fields? As for dress, her things is beautiful, and she is the woman that takes care of 'em! Why, I remember an Irish tabinet as Smiley gave her when first that venture in the brick-fields came up money; if that tabinet is as much as turned yet, why I'll eat it. And then, the best of it is, she'll have you to-morrow. Indeed she will; or to-night, if you'll ask her. Goodness gracious! if there ain't Moulder!" And the excellent wife jumped up from her seat, poked the fire, emptied the most comfortable arm-chair, and hurried out to the landing at the top of the stairs. Presently the noise of a loudly-wheeling pair of lugs was heard, and the commercial traveler, enveloped from head to foot in coats and comforters, made his appearance. He had just returned from a journey, and having deposited his parcels and packages at the house of business of Hubbles and Grease, in Houndsditch, had now returned to the bosom of his family. It was a way he had, not to let his wife know exactly the period of his return. Whether he thought that by so doing he might keep her always on the alert and ready for marital inspection, or whether he disliked to tie himself down by the obligation of a fixed time for his return, Mrs. Moulder had never made herself quite sure. But on neither view of the subject did she admire this practice of her lord. She had on many occasions pointed out to him how much more snug she could make him if he would only let her know when he was coming. But he had never taken the hint, and in these latter days she had ceased to give it.

"Why, I'm uncommon cold," he said, in answer to his wife's inquiries after his welfare. "And so would you be too, if you'd come up from Leeds since you'd had your dinner. What, John, are you there? The two of you are mak-

ing yourself snug enough, I suppose, with something hot?"

"Not a drop he's had yet since he's been in the house," said Mrs. Moulder. "And he's hardly as much as darkened the door since you left it." And Mrs. Moulder added, with some little hesitation in her voice, "Mrs. Smiley is coming in to-night, Moulder."

"The d—l she is! There's always something of that kind when I gets home tired out, and wants to be comfortable. I mean to have my supper to myself, as I likes it, if all the Mother Smileys in London choose to come the way. What on earth is she coming here for this time of night?"

"Why, Moulder, you know."

"No; I don't know. I only know this, that when a man's used up with business he don't want to have any of that nonsense under his nose."

"If you mean me—" began John Kenneby.

"I don't mean you; of course not; and I don't mean any body. Here, take my coats, will you? and let me have a pair of slippers. If Mrs. Smiley thinks that I'm going to change my pants, or put myself about for her—"

"Laws, Moulder, she don't expect that!"

"She won't get it, any way. Here's John dressed up as if he was going to a box in the theatre. And you—why should you be going to expense, and knocking out things that costs money, because Mother Smiley's coming? I'll Smiley her!"

"Now, Moulder—" But Mrs. Moulder knew that it was of no use speaking to him at the present moment. Her task should be this—to feed and cosset him if possible into good-humor before her guest should arrive. Her praises of Mrs. Smiley had been very fairly true. But nevertheless she was a lady who had a mind and voice of her own, as any lady has a right to possess who draws in her own right two hundred a year out of a brick-field in the Kingsland Road. Such a one knows that she is above being snubbed, and Mrs. Smiley knew this of herself as well as any lady; and if Moulder, in his wrath, should call her Mother Smiley, or give her to understand that he regarded her as an old woman, that lady would probably walk herself off in great dudgeon—herself and her share in the brick-field. To tell the truth, Mrs. Smiley required that considerable deference should be paid to her.

Mrs. Moulder knew well what was her husband's present ailment. He had dined as early as one, and on his journey up from Leeds to London had refreshed himself with drink only. That last glass of brandy which he had taken at the Peterborough station had made him cross. If she could get him to swallow some hot food before Mrs. Smiley came, all might yet be well.

"And what's it to be, M.?" she said in her most insinuating voice; "there's a lovely chop down stairs, and there's nothing so quick as that."

"Chop!" he said, and it was all he did say at the moment.

"There's a 'am in beautiful cut," she went on, showing by the urgency of her voice how anxious she was on the subject.

For the moment he did not answer her at all, but sat facing the fire, and running his fat fingers through his uncombed hair. "Mrs. Smiley!" he said; "I remember when she was kitchen-maid at old Pott's."

"She ain't nobody's kitchen-maid now," said Mrs. Moulder, almost prepared to be angry in the defense of her friend.

"And I never could make out when it was that Smiley married her—that is, if he ever did."

"Now, Moulder, that's shocking of you. Of course he married her. She and I is nearly an age as possible, though I think she is a year over me. She says not, and it ain't nothing to me. But I remember the wedding as if it was yesterday. You and I had never set eyes on each other then, M." This last she added in a plaintive tone, hoping to soften him.

"Are you going to keep me here all night without any thing?" he then said. "Let me have some whisky—hot, with—and don't stand there looking at nothing."

"But you'll take some solids with it, Moulder? Why, it stands to reason you'll be famished."

"Do as you're bid, will you, and give me the whisky. Are you going to tell me when I'm to eat and when I'm to drink, like a child?" This he said in that tone of voice which made Mrs. Moulder know that he meant to be obeyed; and though she was sure that he would make himself drunk, she was compelled to minister to his desires. She got the whisky and hot water, the lemon and sugar, and set the things beside him; and then she retired to the sofa. John Kenneby the while sat perfectly silent looking on. Perhaps he was considering whether he would be able to emulate the domestic management of Dockwrath or of Moulder when he should have taken to himself Mrs. Smiley and the Kingsland brick-field.

"If you've a mind to help yourself, John, I suppose you'll do it," said Moulder.

"None for me just at present, thank'ee," said Kenneby.

"I suppose you wouldn't swallow nothing less than wine in them togs?" said the other, raising his glass to his lips. "Well, here's better luck, and I'm blessed if it's not wanting. I'm pretty well tired of this go, and so I mean to let 'em know pretty plainly."

All this was understood by Mrs. Moulder, who knew that it only signified that her husband was half tipsy, and that in all probability he would be whole tipsy before long. There was no help for it. Were she to remonstrate with him in his present mood he would very probably fling the bottle at her head. Indeed, remonstrances were never of avail with him. So she sat herself down, thinking how she would

run down when she heard Mrs. Smiley's step, and beg that lady to postpone her visit. Indeed it would be well to send John to convey her home again.

Moulder swallowed his glass of hot toddy fast, and then mixed another. His eyes were very bloodshot, and he sat staring at the fire. His hands were thrust into his pockets between the periods of his drinking, and he no longer spoke to any one. "I'm — if I stand it," he growled forth, addressing himself. "I've stood it a — deal too long." And then he finished the second glass. There was a sort of understanding on the part of his wife that such interjections as these referred to Hubbles and Grease, and indicated a painfully advanced state of drink. There was one hope; the double heat, that of the fire and of the whisky, might make him sleep; and if so, he would be safe for two or three hours.

"I'm blessed if I do, and that's all," said Moulder, grasping the whisky-bottle for the third time. His wife sat behind him, very anxious, but not daring to interfere. "It's going over the table, M.," she then said.

"D—— the table!" he answered; and then his head fell forward on his breast, and he was fast asleep with the bottle in his hand.

"Put your hand to it, John," said Mrs. Moulder in a whisper. But John hesitated. The lion might rouse himself if his prey were touched.

"He'll let it go easy if you put your hand to it. He's safe enough now. There. If we could only get him back from the fire a little, or his face 'll be burned off of him."

"But you wouldn't move him?"

"Well, yes; we'll try. I've done it before, and he's never stirred. Come here, just behind. The casters is good, I know. Laws! ain't he heavy?" And then they slowly dragged him back. He grunted out some half-pronounced threat as they moved him; but he did not stir, and his wife knew that she was again mistress of the room for the next two hours. It was true that he snored horribly, but then she was used to that.

"You won't let her come up, will you?" said John.

"Why not? She knows what men is as well I do. Smiley wasn't that way often, I believe; but he was awful when he was. He wouldn't sleep it off, quite innocent, like that; but would break every thing about the place, and then cry like a child after it. Now Moulder's got none of that about him. The worst of it is, how am I ever to get him into bed when he wakes?"

While the anticipation of this great trouble was still on her mind, the ring at the bell was heard, and John Kenneby went down to the outer door that he might pay to Mrs. Smiley the attention of waiting upon her up stairs. And up stairs she came, bristling with silk—the identical Irish tabinet, perhaps, which had never been turned—and conscious of the business which had brought her.

"What—Moulder's asleep is he?" she said.

as she entered the room. "I suppose that's as good as a pair of gloves, any way."

"He ain't just very well," said Mrs. Moulder, winking at her friend; "he's tired after a long journey."

"Oh—h! ah—h!" said Mrs. Smiley, looking down upon the sleeping beauty, and understanding every thing at a glance. "It's uncommon bad for him, you know, because he's so given to flesh."

"It's as much fatigue as any thing," said the wife.

"Yes, I dare say;" and Mrs. Smiley shook her head. "If he fatigues himself so much as that often he'll soon be off the hooks."

Much was undoubtedly to be borne from two hundred a year in a brick-field, especially when that two hundred a year was coming so very near home; but there is an amount of impertinent familiarity which must be put down even in two hundred a year. "I've known worse cases than him, my dear; and that ended worse."

"Oh, I dare say. But you're mistook if you mean Smiley. It was 'sepilus' as took him off, as every body knows."

"Well, my dear, I'm sure I'm not going to say any thing against that. And now, John, do help her off with her bonnet and shawl, while I get the tea-things."

Mrs. Smiley was a firm set, healthy-looking woman of—about forty. She had large, dark, glassy eyes, which were bright without sparkling. Her cheeks were very red, having a fixed settled color that never altered with circumstances. Her black wiry hair was ended in short crisp curls, which sat close to her head. It almost collected like a wig, but the hair was in truth her own. Her mouth was small, and her lips thin, and they gave to her face a look of sharpness that was not quite agreeable. Nevertheless she was not a bad-looking woman, and with such advantages as two hundred a year and the wardrobe which Mrs. Moulder had described, was no doubt entitled to look for a second husband.

"Well, Mr. Kenneby, and how do you find yourself this cold weather? Dear, how he do snore; don't he?"

"Yes," said Kenneby, very thoughtfully, "he does rather." He was thinking of Miriam Usbech as she was twenty years ago, and of Mrs. Smiley as she appeared at present. Not that he felt inclined to grumble at the lot prepared for him, but that he would like to take a few more years to think about it.

And then they sat down to tea. The lovely chops which Moulder had despised, and the ham in beautiful cut which had failed to tempt him, now met with due appreciation. Mrs. Smiley, though she had never been known to take a drop too much, did like to have things comfortable; and on this occasion she made an excellent meal, with a large pocket-handkerchief of Moulder's—brought in for the occasion—stretched across the broad expanse of the Irish tabinet. "We sha'n't

wake him, shall we?" said she, as she took her last bit of muffin.

"Not till he wakes natural, of hisself," said Mrs. Moulder. "When he's worked it off he'll rouse himself, and I shall have to get him to bed."

"He'll be a bit patchy then, won't he?"

"Well, just for a while of course he will," said Mrs. Moulder. "But there's worse than him. To-morrow morning, maybe, he'll be just as sweet as sweet. It don't hang about him, sullen like. That's what I hate, when it hangs about 'em." Then the tea-things were taken away, Mrs. Smiley in her familiarity assisting in the removal, and—in spite of the example now before them—some more sugar, and some more spirits, and some more hot water were put upon the table. "Well, I don't mind just the least taste in life, Mrs. Moulder, as we're quite between friends; and I'm sure you'll want it to-night to keep yourself up." Mrs. Moulder would have answered these last words with some severity had she not felt that good-humor now might be of great value to her brother.

"Well, John, and what is it you've got to say to her!" said Mrs. Moulder, as she put down her empty glass. Between friends who understood each other so well, and at their time of life, what was the use of ceremony?

"La, Mrs. Moulder, what should he have got to say? Nothing I'm sure as I'd think of listening to."

"You try her, John."

"Not but what I've the greatest respect in life for Mr. Kenneby, and always did have. If you must have any thing to do with men, I've always said, recommend me to them as is quiet and steady, and hasn't got too much of the gab: a quiet man is the man for me any day."

"Well, John?" said Mrs. Moulder.

"Now, Mrs. Moulder, can't you keep yourself to yourself, and we shall do very well. Laws, how he do snore! When his head goes bobbling that way I do so fear he'll have a fit."

"No he won't; he's coming to, all right. Well, John?"

"I'm sure I shall be very happy," said John. "if she likes it. She says that she respects me, and I'm sure I've a great respect for her. I always had—even when Mr. Smiley was alive."

"It's very good of you to say so," said she; not speaking, however, as though she were quite satisfied. What was the use of his remembering Smiley just at present!

"Enough's enough between friends any day," said Mrs. Moulder. "So give her your hand, John."

"I think it'll be right to say one thing first," said Kenneby, with a solemn and deliberate tone.

"And what's that?" said Mrs. Smiley eagerly.

"In such a matter as this," continued Kenneby, "where the hearts are concerned—"

"You didn't say any thing about hearts yet," said Mrs. Smiley, with some measure of approbation in her voice.

"Didn't I?" said Kenneby. "Then it was an omission on my part, and I beg leave to apologize. But what I was going to say is this: when the hearts are concerned, every thing should be honest and above-board."

"Oh, of course," said Mrs. Moulder; "and I'm sure she don't suspect nothing else."

"You'd better let him go on," said Mrs. Smiley.

"My heart has not been free from woman's lovely image."

"And isn't free now, is it, John?" said Mrs. Moulder.

"I've had my object, and though she's been another's, still I've kept her image on my heart."

"But it ain't there any longer, John? He's speaking of twenty years ago, Mrs. Smiley."

"It's quite beautiful to hear him," said Mrs. Smiley. "Go on, Mr. Kenneby."

"The years are gone by as though they was nothing, and still I've had her image on my heart. I've seen her to-day."

"Her gentleman's still alive, ain't he?" asked Mrs. Smiley.

"And likely to live," said Mrs. Moulder.

"I've seen her to-day," Kenneby continued; "and now the Adriatic's free to wed another."

Neither of the ladies present exactly understood the force of the quotation; but as it contained an appropriate reference to marriage, and apparently to a second marriage, it was taken by both of them in good part. He was considered to have made his offer, and Mrs. Smiley thereupon formally accepted him. "He's spoke quite handsome, I'm sure," said Mrs. Smiley to his sister; "and I don't know that any woman has a right to expect more. As to the brick-fields—" And then there was a slight reference to business, with which it will not be necessary that the readers of this story should embarrass themselves.

Soon after that Mr. Kenneby saw Mrs. Smiley home in a cab, and poor Mrs. Moulder sat by her lord till he roused himself from his sleep. Let us hope that her troubles with him were as little vexatious as possible; and console ourselves with the reflection that at twelve o'clock the next morning, after the second bottle of soda and brandy, he was "as sweet as sweet."

CHAPTER XLIV.

SHOWING HOW LADY MASON COULD BE VERY NOBLE.

LADY MASON returned to The Cleeve after her visit to Mr. Furnival's chambers, and nobody asked her why she had been to London or whom she had seen. Nothing could be more gracious than the deference which was shown to her, and the perfect freedom of action which was accorded to her. On that very day Lady Staveley had called at The Cleeve, explaining to Sir Peregrine and Mrs. Orme that her visit was made expressly to Lady Mason. "I should

have called at Orley Farm, of course," said Lady Staveley, "only that I hear that Lady Mason is likely to prolong her visit with you. I must trust to you Mrs. Orme to make all that understood." Sir Peregrine took upon himself to say that it all should be understood, and then drawing Lady Staveley aside, told her of his own intended marriage. "I can not but be aware," he said, "that I have no business to trouble you with an affair that is so exclusively our own; but I have a wish, which perhaps you may understand, that there should be no secret about it. I think it better, for her sake, that it should be known. If the connection can be of any service to her, she should reap that benefit now, when some people are treating her name with a barbarity which I believe to be almost unparalleled in this country." In answer to this Lady Staveley was of course obliged to congratulate him, and she did so with the best grace in her power; but it was not easy to say much that was cordial, and as she drove back with Mrs. Arbuthnot to Noningsby the words which were said between them as to Lady Mason were not so kindly meant toward that lady as their remarks on their journey to The Cleeve.

Lady Staveley had hoped—though she had hardly expressed her hope even to herself, and certainly had not spoken of it to any one else—that she might have been able to say a word or two to Mrs. Orme about young Peregrine, a word or two that would have shown her own good feeling toward the young man—her own regard, and almost affection for him, even though this might have been done without any mention of Madeline's name. She might have learned in this way whether young Orme had made known at home what had been his hopes and what his disappointments, and might have formed some opinion whether or no he would renew his suit. She would not have been the first to mention her daughter's name; but if Mrs. Orme should speak of it, then the subject would be free for her, and she could let it be known that the heir of the Cleeve should at any rate have her sanction and good-will. What happiness could be so great for her as that of having a daughter so settled, within eight miles of her? And then it was not only that a marriage between her daughter and Peregrine Orme would be an event so fortunate, but also that those feelings with reference to Felix Graham were so unfortunate! That young heart, she thought, could not as yet be heavy laden, and it might be possible that the whole affair should be made to run in the proper course—if only it could be done at once. But now, that tale which Sir Peregrine had told her respecting himself and Lady Mason had made it quite impossible that any thing should be said on the other subject. And then again, if it was decreed that the Noningsby family and the family of The Cleeve should be connected, would not such a marriage as this between the baronet and Lady Mason be very injurious? So that Lady Staveley was not quite happy as she returned to her own house.

Lady Staveley's message, however, for Lady Mason was given with all its full force. Sir Peregrine had felt grateful for what had been done, and Mrs. Orme, in talking of it, made quite the most of it. Civility from the Staveleys to the Ormes would not, in the ordinary course of things, be accounted of any special value. The two families might, and naturally would, know each other on intimate terms. But the Ormes would as a matter of course stand the highest in general estimation. Now, however, the Ormes had to bear up Lady Mason with them. Sir Peregrine had so willed it, and Mrs. Orme had not for a moment thought of contesting the wish of one whose wishes she had never contested. No words were spoken on the subject; but still with both of them there was a feeling that Lady Staveley's countenance and open friendship would be of value. When it had come to this with Sir Peregrine Orme, he was already disgraced in his own estimation—already disgraced, although he declared to himself a thousand times that he was only doing his duty as a gentleman.

On that evening Lady Mason said no word of her new purpose. She had pledged herself both to Peregrine Orme and to Mr. Furnival. To both she had made a distinct promise that she would break off her engagement, and she knew well that the deed should be done at once. But how was she to do it? With what words was she to tell him that she had changed her mind and would not take the hand that he had offered to her? She feared to be a moment alone with Peregrine lest he should tax her with the non-fulfillment of her promise. But in truth Peregrine at the present moment was thinking more of another matter. It had almost come home to him that his grandfather's marriage might facilitate his own; and though he still was far from reconciling himself to the connection with Lady Mason, he was almost disposed to put up with it.

On the following day, at about noon, a chariot with a pair of post-horses was brought up to the door of The Cleve at a very fast pace, and the two ladies soon afterward learned that Lord Alston was closeted with Sir Peregrine. Lord Alston was one of Sir Peregrine's oldest friends. He was a man senior both in age and standing to the baronet; and, moreover, he was a friend who came but seldom to The Cleve, although his friendship was close and intimate. Nothing was said between Mrs. Orme and Lady Mason, but each dreaded that Lord Alston had come to remonstrate about the marriage. And so in truth he had. The two old men were together for about an hour, and then Lord Alston took his departure without asking for or seeing any other one of the family. Lord Alston had remonstrated about the marriage, using at last very strong language to dissuade the baronet from a step which he thought so unfortunate; but he had remonstrated altogether in vain. Every word he had used was not only fruitless but injurious; for Sir Peregrine was a man

whom it was very difficult to rescue by opposition, though no man might be more easily led by assumed acquiescence.

"Orme, my dear fellow," said his lordship, toward the end of the interview, "it is my duty, as an old friend, to tell you this."

"Then, Lord Alston, you have done your duty."

"Not while a hope remains that I may prevent this marriage."

"There is ground for no such hope on your part; and permit me to say that the expression of such a hope to me is greatly wanting in courtesy."

"You and I," continued Lord Alston, without apparent attention to the last words which Sir Peregrine had spoken, "have nearly come to the end of our tether here. Our careers have been run; and I think I may say as regards both, but I may certainly say as regards you, that they have been so run that we have not disgraced those who preceded us. Our dearest hopes should be that our names may never be held as a reproach by those who come after us."

"With God's blessing I will do nothing to disgrace my family."

"But, Orme, you and I can not act as may those whose names in the world are altogether unnoticed. I know that you are doing this from a feeling of charity to that lady."

"I am doing it, Lord Alston, because it so pleases me."

"But your first charity is due to your grandson. Suppose that he was making an offer of his hand to the daughter of some nobleman—as he is so well entitled to do—how would it affect his hopes if it were known that you at the time had married a lady whose misfortune made it necessary that she should stand at the bar in a criminal court?"

"Lord Alston," said Sir Peregrine, rising from his chair, "I trust that my grandson may never rest his hopes on any woman whose heart could be hardened against him by such a thought as that."

"But what if she should be guilty?" said Lord Alston.

"Permit me to say," said Sir Peregrine, still standing, and standing now bolt upright, as though his years did not weigh on him a feather, "that this conversation has gone far enough. There are some surmises to which I can not listen, even from Lord Alston."

Then his lordship shrugged his shoulders, declared that in speaking as he had spoken he had endeavored to do a friendly duty by an old friend—certainly the oldest, and almost the dearest friend he had—and so he took his leave. The wheels of the chariot were heard grating over the gravel, as he was carried away from the door at a gallop, and the two ladies looked into each other's faces, saying nothing. Sir Peregrine was not seen from that time till dinner; but when he did come into the drawing-room his manner to Lady Mason was, if possible, more gracious and more affectionate than ever.

"So Lord Alston was here to-day," Peregrine said to his mother that night before he went to bed.

"Yes, he was here."

"It was about this marriage, mother, as sure as I am standing here."

"I don't think Lord Alston would interfere about that, Perry."

"Wouldn't he? He would interfere about any thing he did not like; that is, as far as the pluck of it goes. Of course he can't like it. Who can?"

"Perry, your grandfather likes it; and surely he has a right to please himself."

"I don't know about that. You might say the same thing if he wanted to kill all the foxes about the place, or do any other outlandish thing. Of course he might kill them, as far as the law goes, but where would he be afterward? She hasn't said any thing to him, has she?"

"I think not."

"Nor to you?"

"No; she has not spoken to me—not about that."

"She promised me positively that she would break it off."

"You must not be hard on her, Perry."

Just as these words were spoken there came a low knock at Mrs. Orme's dressing-room door. This room, in which Mrs. Orme was wont to sit for an hour or so every night before she went to bed, was the scene of all the meetings of affection which took place between the mother and the son. It was a pretty little apartment, opening from Mrs. Orme's bedroom, which had at one time been the exclusive property of Peregrine's father. But by degrees it had altogether assumed feminine attributes; had been furnished with soft chairs, a sofa, and a lady's table; and though called by the name of Mrs. Orme's dressing-room, was in fact a separate sitting-room devoted to her exclusive use. Sir Peregrine would not for worlds have entered it without sending up his name beforehand, and this he did on only very rare occasions. But Lady Mason had of late been admitted here, and Mrs. Orme now knew that it was her knock.

"Open the door, Perry," she said; "it is Lady Mason." He did open the door, and Lady Mason entered.

"Oh, Mr. Orme, I did not know that you were here."

"I am just off. Good-night, mother!"

"But I am disturbing you."

"No, we had done;" and he stooped down and kissed his mother. "Good-night, Lady Mason. Hadn't I better put some coals on for you, or the fire will be out?" He did put on the coals, and then he went his way.

Lady Mason while he was doing this had sat down on the sofa, close to Mrs. Orme; but when the door was closed Mrs. Orme was the first to speak. "Well, dear," she said, putting her hand caressingly on the other's arm. I am inclined to think that had there been no one whom Mrs. Orme was bound to consult but herself, she would have wished that this marriage should

have gone on. To her it would have been altogether pleasant to have had Lady Mason ever with her in the house; and she had none of those fears as to future family retrospections respecting which Lord Alston had spoken with so much knowledge of the world. As it was, her manner was so caressing and affectionate to her guest that she did much more to promote Sir Peregrine's wishes than to oppose them. "Well, dear," she said, with her sweetest smile.

"I am so sorry that I have driven your son away."

"He was going. Besides, it would make no matter; he would stay here all night sometimes if I didn't drive him away myself. He comes here and writes his letters at the most unconscionable hours, and uses up all my note-paper in telling some horse-keeper what is to be done with his mare."

"Ah, how happy you must be to have him!"

"Well, I suppose I am," she said, as a tear came into her eyes. "We are so hard to please. I am all anxiety now that he should be married; and if he were married, then I suppose I should grumble because I did not see so much of him. He would be more settled if he would marry, I think. For myself I approve of early marriages for young men." And then she thought of her own husband whom she had loved so well and lost so soon. And so they sat silent for a while, each thinking of her own lot in life.

"But I must not keep you up all night," said Lady Mason.

"Oh, I do so like you to be here," said the other. Then again she took hold of her arm, and the two women kissed each other.

"But, Edith," said the other, "I came in here to-night with a purpose. I have something that I wish to say to you. Can you listen to me?"

"Oh yes," said Mrs. Orme; "surely."

"Has your son been talking to you about—about what was said between him and me the other day? I am sure he has, for I know he tells you every thing—as he ought to do."

"Yes, he did speak to me," said Mrs. Orme, almost trembling with anxiety.

"I am so glad, for now it will be easier for me to tell you. And since that I have seen Mr. Furnival, and he says the same. I tell you because you are so good and so loving to me. I will keep nothing from you; but you must not tell Sir Peregrine that I talked to Mr. Furnival about this."

Mrs. Orme gave the required promise, hardly thinking at the moment whether or no she would be guilty of any treason against Sir Peregrine in doing so.

"I think I should have said nothing to him, though he is so very old a friend, had not Mr. Orme—"

"You mean Peregrine?"

"Yes; had not he been so—so earnest about it. He told me that if I married Sir Peregrine I should be doing a cruel injury to him—to his grandfather."

"He should not have said that."

"Yes, Edith—if he thinks it. He told me that I should be turning all his friends against him. So I promised him that I would speak to Sir Peregrine, and break it off if it be possible."

"He told me that."

"And then I spoke to Mr. Furnival, and he told me that I should be blamed by all the world if I were to marry him. I can not tell you all he said, but he said this: that if—if—"

"If what, dear?"

"If in the court they should say—"

"Say what?"

"Say that I did this thing—then Sir Peregrine would be crushed, and would die with a broken heart."

"But they can not say that; it is impossible. You do not think it possible that they can do so?" And then again she took hold of Lady Mason's arm, and looked up anxiously into her face. She looked up anxiously, not suspecting any thing, not for a moment presuming it possible that such a verdict could be justly given, but in order that she might see how far the fear of a fate so horrible was operating on her friend. Lady Mason's face was pale and woe-worn, but not more so than was now customary with her.

"One can not say what may be possible," she answered, slowly. "I suppose they would not go on with it if they did not think they had some chance of success."

"You mean as to the property?"

"Yes; as to the property."

"But why should they not try that, if they must try it, without dragging you there?"

"Ah, I do not understand; or, at least, I can not explain it. Mr. Furnival says that it must be so; and therefore I shall tell Sir Peregrine to-morrow that all this must be given up." And then they sat together silently, holding each other by the hand.

"Good-night, Edith," Lady Mason said at last, getting up from her seat.

"Good-night, dearest."

"You will let me be your friend still, will you not?" said Lady Mason.

"My friend! Oh yes; always my friend. Why should this interfere between you and me?"

"But he will be very angry—at least I fear that he will. Not that—not that he will have any thing to regret. But the very strength of his generosity and nobleness will make him angry. He will be indignant because I do not let him make this sacrifice for me. And then—and then—I fear I must leave this house."

"Oh no, not that; I will speak to him. He will do any thing for me."

"It will be better perhaps that I should go. People will think that I am estranged from Lucius. But if I go, you will come to me? He will let you do that—will he not?"

And then there were warm, close promises given, and embraces interchanged. The women did love each other with a hearty, true love, and each longed that they might be left together.

And yet how different they were, and how different had been their lives!

The prominent thought in Lady Mason's mind as she returned to her own room was this—that Mrs. Orme had said no word to dissuade her from the line of conduct which she had proposed to herself. Mrs. Orme had never spoken against the marriage as Peregrine had spoken, and Mr. Furnival. Her heart had not been stern enough to allow her to do that. But was it not clear that her opinion was the same as theirs? Lady Mason acknowledged to herself that it was clear, and acknowledged to herself also that no one was in favor of the marriage. "I will do it immediately after breakfast," she said to herself. And then she sat down—and sat through the half the night thinking of it.

Mrs. Orme, when she was left alone, almost rebuked herself in that she had said no word of counsel against the undertaking which Lady Mason proposed for herself. For Mr. Furnival and his opinion she did not care much. Indeed, she would have been angry with Lady Mason for speaking to Mr. Furnival on the subject, were it not that her pity was too deep to admit of any anger. That the truth must be established at the trial Mrs. Orme felt all but confident. When alone she would feel quite sure on this point, though a doubt would always creep in on her when Lady Mason was with her. But now, as she sat alone, she could not realize the idea that the fear of a verdict against her friend should offer any valid reason against the marriage. The valid reasons, if there were such, must be looked for elsewhere. And were these other reasons so strong in their validity? Sir Peregrine desired the marriage; and so did Lady Mason herself, as regarded her own individual wishes. Mrs. Orme was sure that this was so. And then for her own self, she—Sir Peregrine's daughter-in-law, the only lady concerned in the matter—she also would have liked it. But her son disliked it, and she had yielded so far to the wishes of her son. Well—was it not right that with her those wishes should be all but paramount? And thus she endeavored to satisfy her conscience as she retired to rest.

On the following morning the four assembled at breakfast. Lady Mason hardly spoke at all to any one. Mrs. Orme, who knew what was about to take place, was almost as silent; but Sir Peregrine had almost more to say than usual to his grandson. He was in good spirits, having firmly made up his mind on a certain point; and he showed this by telling Peregrine that he would ride with him immediately after breakfast. "What has made you so slack about your hunting during the last two or three days?" he asked.

"I shall hunt to-morrow?" said Peregrine.

"Then you can afford time to ride with me through the woods after breakfast." And so it would have been arranged had not Lady Mason immediately said that she hoped to be able to say a few words to Sir Peregrine in the library after breakfast. "*Place aux dames*," said he.



THE CONFESSION.

"Peregrine, the horses can wait." And so the matter was arranged while they were still sitting over their toast.

Peregrine, as this was said, had looked at his mother, but she had not ventured to take her eyes for a moment from the tea-pot. Then he had looked at Lady Mason, and saw that she

was, as it were, going through a fashion of eating her breakfast. In order to break the absolute silence of the room he muttered something about the weather, and then his grandfather, with the same object, answered him. After that no words were spoken till Sir Peregrine, rising from his chair, declared that he was ready.

He got up and opened the door for his guest, and then hurrying across the hall, opened the library door for her also, holding it till she had passed in. Then he took her left hand in his, and passing his right arm round her waist, asked her if any thing disturbed her.

"Oh yes," she said, "yes; there is much that disturbs me. I have done very wrong."

"How done wrong, Mary?" She could not recollect that he had called her Mary before, and the sound she thought was very sweet—was very sweet, although she was over forty, and he over seventy years of age.

"I have done very wrong, and I have now come here that I may undo it. Dear Sir Peregrine, you must not be angry with me."

"I do not think that I shall be angry with you; but what is it, dearest?"

But she did not know how to find words to declare her purpose. It was comparatively an easy task to tell Mrs. Orme that she had made up her mind not to marry Sir Peregrine, but it was by no means easy to tell the baronet himself. And now she stood there leaning over the fire-place, with his arm round her waist—as it behooved her to stand no longer, seeing the resolution to which she had come. But still she did not speak.

"Well, Mary, what is it? I know there is something on your mind or you would not have summoned me in here. Is it about the trial? Have you seen Mr. Farnival again?"

"No, it is not about the trial," she said, avoiding the other question.

"What is it then?"

"Sir Peregrine, it is impossible that we should be married." And thus she brought forth her tidings, as it were at a gasp, speaking at the moment with a voice that was almost indicative of anger.

"And why not?" said he, releasing her from his arm and looking at her.

"It can not be," she said.

"And why not, Lady Mason?"

"It can not be," she said again, speaking with more emphasis, and with a stronger tone.

"And is that all that you intend to tell me? Have I done any thing that has offended you?"

"Offended me! No. I do not think that would be possible. The offense is on the other side—"

"Then, my dear—"

"But listen to me now. It can not be. I know that it is wrong. Every thing tells me that such a marriage on your part would be a sacrifice—a terrible sacrifice. You would be throwing away your great rank—"

"No," shouted Sir Peregrine; "not though I married a kitchen-maid, instead of a lady who in social life is my equal."

"Ah no; I should not have said rank. You can not lose that; but your station in the world, the respect of all around you, the—the—the—"

"Who has been telling you all this?"

"I have wanted no one to tell me. Thinking of it has told it me all. My own heart,

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which is full of gratitude and love for you, has told me."

"You have not seen Lord Alston?"

"Lord Alston! oh no."

"Has Peregrine been speaking to you?"

"Peregrine!"

"Yes; Peregrine, my grandson."

"He has spoken to me."

"Telling you to say this to me. Then he is an ungrateful boy—a very ungrateful boy. I would have done any thing to guard him from wrong in this matter."

"Ah; now I see the evil that I have done. Why did I ever come into the house to make quarrels between you?"

"There shall be no quarrel. I will forgive him even that if you will be guided by me. And, dearest Mary, you must be guided by me now. This matter has gone too far for you to go back—unless, indeed, you will say that personally you have an aversion to the marriage."

"Oh no, no; it is not that," she said, eagerly. She could not help saying it with eagerness. She could not inflict the wound on his feelings which her silence would then have given.

"Under those circumstances I have a right to say that the marriage must go on."

"No; no."

"But I say it must. Sit down, Mary." And she did sit down, while he stood leaning over her and thus spoke. "You speak of sacrificing me. I am an old man with not many more years before me. If I did sacrifice what little is left to me of life with the object of befriending one whom I really love, there would be no more in it than what a man might do, and still feel that the balance was on the right side. But here there will be no sacrifice. My life will be happier, and so will Edith's. And so indeed will that boy's, if he did but know it. For the world's talk, which will last some month or two. I care nothing. This I will confess, that if I were prompted to this only by my own inclination, only by love for you"—and as he spoke he held out his hand to her, and she could not refuse him hers—"in such a case I should doubt and hesitate and probably keep aloof from such a step. But it is not so. In doing this I shall gratify my own heart, and also serve you in your great troubles. Believe me, I have thought of that."

"I know you have, Sir Peregrine, and therefore it can not be."

"But therefore it shall be. The world knows it now, and were we to be separated after what has passed, the world would say that I—I had thought you guilty of this crime."

"I must bear all that." And now she stood before him, not looking him in the face, but with her face turned down toward the ground, and speaking hardly above her breath.

"By Heavens, no! not while I can stand by your side. Not while I have strength left to support you and thrust the lie down the throat of such a wretch as Joseph Mason. No, Mary, go back to Edith and tell her that you have tried

it, but that there is no escape for you." And then he smiled at her. His smile at times could be very pleasant!

But she did not smile as she answered him. "Sir Peregrine," she said; and she endeavored to raise her face to his but failed.

"Well, my love."

"Sir Peregrine, I am guilty."

"Guilty! Guilty of what?" he said, startled rather than instructed by her words.

"Guilty of all this with which they charge me." And then she threw herself at his feet, and wound her arms round his knees.

AN ORTHOPTERIAN DEFENSE.

"I will tell it softly;
You crickets shall not hear it."

NEITHER Juvenal nor Sir Walter Scott were Naturalists, or had the slightest peep into the hidden arcana of Nature. Neither of them saw any thing with eyes, either approximately or afar off; but both with a dim light beheld an Intelligence which, looking at it *inwardly*, and not *outwardly*, they considered, though an inexorable law of Providence, somewhat remarkable. Juvenal has nine lines* which Sir Walter Scott, as his friends term it, has "paraphrased:"

"Even the tiger fell and sullen bear
Their likeness and their lineage spare;
Man only mars kind Nature's plan,
And turns the fierce pursuit on man."

If you will take the trouble to compare these two, you will wish many *translators* of the present day conveyed the meaning of an author's thoughts so emphatically. Many a bright and beautiful message, with wings multiplied by languages, would be borne to souls, leaving their wealth to germinate, which now come to us garbled and betinseled with the translator's constructions, rendering them unintelligible, if not positively injurious.

We will not discuss the facts that prove how fallacious both poets are which can be taken from every department of Natural History, but confine ourselves to the one through which we have been so long—and, I trust, pleasantly to you, as it has been to me—journeying together.

I think it is a conclusion little disputed among those possessing the faith of the Christian, that in all the evil permitted to reach His creatures by an All-seeing Father—be it spiritually, morally, or through the instrumentality of na-

ture—*good* is the meaning, and good is eventually the result, which we who only see, feel, and understand the present, view neither for our improvement nor benefit; but which, if analyzed in all its bearings, would be found working together for the good of the whole. Self is a shadow, comprehended alone by man, unknown in heaven or in the earth beneath. Man, to himself, is not only a microcosm but a macrocosm; and, unfortunately for himself, he is willing to look on every thing around with a light springing from within, and not from without; which light alone dispels the darkness on truth's troublous path.

If this result is reached in great evils, which eventually expand into benefits, how much more so is it discoverable in the agency of those thousand minute beings placed around us to watch and invigorate the earth by constant destruction and renovation; and which, in their turn, would become an evil if they were not sacrificed as food for another race, which in its turn becomes the basis of life in higher orders, until man is reached, the recipient of the result—the *good*!

Suppose, for instance, a plant—an exotic—transplanted from a strange region: climate and soil being agreeable it thrives, and multiplied, and spread in luxuriance around and about us; suppose now that its natural insects, consumers and destroyers, should not seek it or find it, nor follow man in this new cultivation. How soon this once beautiful or useful exotic would become distasteful to us—utterly abhorrent! With nothing but this one thing obtruding upon us, the fig-tree would become a upas for poison, and wheat give us flour bitter, un nourishing, hateful. Therefore, is this not a wise provision that a race should exist which has the power to keep superfluous productions from becoming positive injuries?

A great outcry is made at the destruction caused by locusts, by ants, by cut-worms, by wire-worms, and a dozen other supposed enemies. But what fields of withered, unpalatable grasses the country would become if not eaten clear of this exuberance, and allowed to be re-invigorated by a new growth! The earth would be uninhabitable for man in tropical climates if ants and termites did not take old timber and fallen trees under their especial protection. The ground would become so baked by the sun, so hardened by evaporation, that all vegetation would soon disappear if those restless, twisting, eating little denizens, cut-worms, wire-worms, and a vast variety of others, did not keep constantly at work tossing, rooting, burrowing amidst, opening Mother Nature's bosom to the genial influences of rain, vapor, and dew.

How idle, then—nay, how ungrateful—it is in us to complain that such a thing is "a nuisance," and another "a plague!" Let us look over, beyond the trouble, and we shall see a benefit coming—slowly, perhaps, but still progressing—toward us. Then, again, the good effects which these insects are performing for us may in time become, from over-increase or preponderance, a

* Satire xv. 163-171.—*Indica tigris agit rabida cum tigride pacem*, etc. Literally rendered: "The tigress of India maintains unbroken harmony with each tigress that ravens. Bears, savage to others, are yet at peace among themselves. But for man! he is not content with forging on the ruthless anvil the death-dealing steel! While his progenitors, those primeval smiths, that wont to hammer out naught save rakes and hoes, and wearied out with mattocks and plow-shares, knew not the art of manufacturing swords. Here we behold a people whose brutal passion is not glutted with simple murder, but deem their fellows' breasts and arms and faces a kind of natural f.o.l."