EVAN HARRINGTON

By

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Freeditorial

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XIV. THE COUNTESS DESCRIBES THE FIELD OF ACTION

Now, to clear up a point or two: You may think the Comic Muse is straining human nature rather toughly in making the Countess de Saldar rush open-eyed into the jaws of Demogorgon, dreadful to her. She has seen her brother pointed out unmistakeably as the tailor-fellow. There is yet time to cast him off or fly with him. Is it her extraordinary heroism impelling her onward, or infatuated rashness? or is it her mere animal love of conflict?

The Countess de Saldar, like other adventurers, has her star. They who possess nothing on earth, have a right to claim a portion of the heavens. In resolute hands, much may be done with a star. As it has empires in its gift, so may it have heiresses. The Countess's star had not blinked balefully at her. That was one reason why she went straight on to Beckley.

Again: the Countess was a born general. With her star above, with certain advantages secured, with battalions of lies disciplined and zealous, and with one clear prize in view, besides other undeveloped benefits dimly shadowing forth, the Countess threw herself headlong into the enemy's country.

But, that you may not think too highly of this lady, I must add that the trivial reason was the exciting cause—as in many great enterprises. This was nothing more than the simple desire to be located, if but for a day or two, on the footing of her present rank, in the English country-house of an offshoot of our aristocracy. She who had moved in the first society of a foreign capital—who had married a Count, a minister of his sovereign, had enjoyed delicious high-bred badinage with refulgent ambassadors, could boast the friendship of duchesses, and had been the amiable receptacle of their pardonable follies; she who, moreover, heartily despised things English:—this lady experienced thrills of proud pleasure at the prospect of being welcomed at a third-rate English mansion. But then, that mansion was Beckley Court. We return to our first ambitions, as to our first loves not that they are dearer to us,—quit that delusion: our ripened loves and mature ambitions are probably closest to our hearts, as they deserve to be—but we return to them because our youth has a hold on us which it asserts whenever a disappointment knocks us down. Our old loves (with the bad natures I know in them) are always lurking to avenge themselves on the new by tempting us to a little retrograde infidelity. A schoolgirl in Fallow field, the tailor's daughter, had sighed for the bliss of Beckley Court. Beckley Court was her Elysium ere the ardent feminine brain conceived a loftier summit. Fallen from that attained eminence, she sighed anew for Beckley Court. Nor was this mere spiritual longing; it had its material side. At Beckley Court she could feel her foreign rank. Moving with our nobility as an equal, she could feel that the short dazzling glitter of her career was not illusory, and had left her something solid; not coin of the realm exactly, but yet gold. She could not feel this in the Cogglesby saloons, among pitiable bourgeoises—middle-class people daily soiled by the touch of tradesmen. They dragged her down. Their very homage was a mockery.

Let the Countess have due credit for still allowing Evan to visit Beckley Court to follow up his chance. If Demogorgon betrayed her there, the Count was her protector: a woman rises to her husband. But a man is what he is, and must stand upon that. She was positive Evan had

committed himself in some manner. As it did not suit her to think so, she at once encouraged an imaginary conversation, in which she took the argument that it was quite impossible Evan could have been so mad, and others instanced his youth, his wrongheaded perversity, his ungenerous disregard for his devoted sister, and his known weakness: she replying, that undoubtedly they were right so far: but that he could not have said he himself was that horrible thing, because he was nothing of the sort: which faith in Evan's stedfast adherence to facts, ultimately silenced the phantom opposition, and gained the day.

With admiration let us behold the Countess de Saldar alighting on the gravel sweep of Beckley Court, the footman and butler of the enemy bowing obsequious welcome to the most potent visitor Beckley Court has ever yet embraced.

The despatches of a general being usually acknowledged to be the safest sources from which the historian of a campaign can draw, I proceed to set forth a letter of the Countess de Saldar, forwarded to her sister, Harriet Cogglesby, three mornings after her arrival at Beckley Court; and which, if it should prove false in a few particulars, does nevertheless let us into the state of the Countess's mind, and gives the result of that general's first inspection of the field of action. The Countess's epistolary English does small credit to her Fallow field education; but it is feminine, and flows more than her ordinary speech. Besides, leaders of men have always notoriously been above the honours of grammar. 'MY DEAREST HARRIET,

'Your note awaited me. No sooner my name announced, than servitors in yellow livery, with powder and buckles started before me, and bowing one presented it on a salver. A venerable butler—most impressive! led the way. In future, my dear, let it be de Saldar de Sancorvo. That is our title by rights, and it may as well be so in England. English Countess is certainly best. Always put the de. But let us be systematic, as my poor Silva says. He would be in the way here, and had better not come till I see something he can do. Silva has great reliance upon me. The farther he is from Lymport, my dear!—and imagine me, Harriet, driving through Fallow field to Beckley Court! I gave one peep at Dubbins's, as I passed. The school still goes on. I saw three little girls skipping, and the old swing-pole. SEMINARY FOR YOUNG LADIES as bright as ever! I should have liked to have kissed the children and given them bonbons and a holiday.

'How sparing you English are of your crests and arms! I fully expected to see the Jocelyns' over my bed; but no—four posts totally without ornament! Sleep, indeed, must be the result of dire fatigue in such a bed. The Jocelyn crest is a hawk in jesses. The Elburne arms are, Or, three falcons on a field, vert. How heraldry reminds me of poor Papa! the evenings we used to spend with him, when he stayed at home, studying it so diligently under his directions! We never shall again! Sir Franks Jocelyn is the third son of Lord Elburne, made a Baronet for his patriotic support of the Ministry in a time of great trouble. The people are sometimes grateful, my dear. Lord Elburne is the fourteenth of his line—originally simple country squires. They talk of the Roses, but we need not go so very far back as that. I do not quite understand why a Lord's son should condescend to a Baronetcy. Precedence of some sort for his lady, I suppose. I have yet to learn whether she ranks by his birth, or his present title. If so, a young Baronetcy cannot possibly be a gain. One thing is certain. She cares very little about it. She is most eccentric. But remember what I have told you. It will be serviceable when you are speaking of the family.

'The dinner-hour, six. It would no doubt be full seven in Town. I am convinced you are half-an-hour too early. I had the post of honour to the right of Sir Franks. Evan to the right of Lady Jocelyn. Most fortunately he was in the best of spirits—quite brilliant. I saw the eyes of that sweet Rose glisten. On the other side of me sat my pet diplomatist, and I gave him one or two political secrets which astonished him. Of course, my dear, I was wheedled out of them. His contempt for our weak intellects is ineffable. But a woman must now and then ingratiate herself at the expense of her sex. This is perfectly legitimate. Tory policy at the table. The Opposition, as Andrew says, not represented. So to show that we were human beings, we differed among ourselves, and it soon became clear to me that Lady Jocelyn is the rankest of Radicals. My secret suspicion is, that she is a person of no birth whatever, wherever her money came from. A fine woman—yes; still to be admired, I suppose, by some kind of men; but totally wanting in the essentially feminine attractions.

'There was no party, so to say. I will describe the people present, beginning with the insignifacants.

'First, Mr. Parsley, the curate of Beckley. He eats everything at table, and agrees with everything. A most excellent orthodox young clergyman. Except that he was nearly choked by a fish-bone, and could not quite conceal his distress—and really Rose should have repressed her desire to laugh till the time for our retirement—he made no sensation. I saw her eyes watering, and she is not clever in turning it off. In that nobody ever equalled dear Papa. I attribute the attack almost entirely to the tightness of the white neck-cloths the young clergymen of the Established Church wear. But, my dear, I have lived too long away from them to wish for an instant the slightest change in anything they think, say, or do. The mere sight of this young man was most refreshing to my spirit. He may be the shepherd of a flock, this poor Mr. Parsley, but he is a sheep to one young person.

'Mr. Drummond Forth. A great favourite of Lady Jocelyn's; an old friend. He went with them to the East. Nothing improper. She is too cold for that. He is fair, with regular features, very self-possessed, and ready—your English notions of gentlemanly. But none of your men treat a woman as a woman. We are either angels, or good fellows, or heaven knows what that is bad. No exquisite delicacy, no insinuating softness, mixed with respect, none of that hovering over the border, as Papa used to say, none of that happy indefiniteness of manner which seems to declare "I would love you if I might," or "I do, but I dare not tell," even when engaged in the most trivial attentions—handing a footstool, remarking on the soup, etc. You none of you know how to meet a woman's smile, or to engage her eyes without boldness—to slide off them, as it were, gracefully. Evan alone can look between the eyelids of a woman. I have had to correct him, for to me he quite exposes the state of his heart towards dearest Rose. She listens to Mr. Forth with evident esteem. In Portugal we do not understand young ladies having male friends.

'Hamilton Jocelyn—all politics. The stiff Englishman. Not a shade of manners. He invited me to drink wine. Before I had finished my bow his glass was empty—the man was telling an anecdote of Lord Livelyston! You may be sure, my dear, I did not say I had seen his lordship.

'Seymour Jocelyn, Colonel of Hussars. He did nothing but sigh for the cold weather, and hunting. All I envied him was his moustache for Evan. Will you believe that the ridiculous boy has shaved!

'Then there is Melville, my dear diplomatist; and here is another instance of our Harrington luck. He has the gout in his right hand; he can only just hold knife and fork, and is interdicted Port-wine and penmanship. The dinner was not concluded before I had arranged that Evan should resume (gratuitously, you know) his post of secretary to him. So here is Evan fixed at Beckley Court as long as Melville stays. Talking of him, I am horrified suddenly. They call him the great Mel! 'Sir Franks is most estimable, I am sure, as a man, and redolent of excellent qualities—a beautiful disposition, very handsome. He has just as much and no more of the English polish one ordinarily meets. When he has given me soup or fish, bowed to me over wine, and asked a conventional question, he has done with me. I should imagine his opinions to be extremely good, for they are not a multitude.

'Then his lady-but I have not grappled with her yet. Now for the women, for I quite class her with the opposite sex.

'You must know that before I retired for the night, I induced Conning to think she had a bad head-ache, and Rose lent me her lady's-maid—they call the creature Polly. A terrible talker. She would tell all about the family. Rose has been speaking of Evan. It would have looked better had she been quiet—but then she is so English!'

Here the Countess breaks off to say, that from where she is writing, she can see Rose and Evan walking out to the cypress avenue, and that no eyes are on them; great praise being given to the absence of suspicion in the Jocelyn nature.

The communication is resumed the night of the same day.

'Two days at Beckley Court are over, and that strange sensation I had of being an intruder escaped from Dubbins's, and expecting every instant the old schoolmistress to call for me, and expose me, and take me to the dark room, is quite vanished, and I feel quite at home, quite happy. Evan is behaving well. Quite the young nobleman. With the women I had no fear of him; he is really admirable with the men—easy, and talks of sport and politics, and makes the proper use of Portugal. He has quite won the heart of his sister. Heaven smiles on us, dearest Harriet!

'We must be favoured, my dear, for Evan is very troublesome—distressingly inconsiderate! I left him for a day-remaining to comfort poor Mama—and on the road he picked up an object he had known at school, and this creature, in shameful garments, is seen in the field where Rose and Evan are riding—in a dreadful hat—Rose might well laugh at it!—he is seen running away from an old apple woman, whose fruit he had consumed without means to liquidate; but, of course, he rushes bolt up to Evan before all his grand company, and claims acquaintance, and Evan was base enough to acknowledge him! He disengaged himself so far well by tossing his purse to the wretch, but if he knows not how to—cut, I assure him it will be his ruin. Resolutely he must cast the dust off his shoes, or he will be dragged down to their level. By the way, as to hands and feet,

comparing him with the Jocelyn men, he has every mark of better blood. Not a question about it. As Papa would say—We have Nature's proof.

'Looking out on a beautiful lawn, and the moon, and all sorts of trees, I must now tell you about the ladies here.

'Conning undid me to-night. While Conning remains unattached, Conning is likely to be serviceable. If Evan, would only give her a crumb, she would be his most faithful dog. I fear he cannot be induced, and Conning will be snapped up by somebody else. You know how susceptible she is behind her primness—she will be of no use on earth, and I shall find excuse to send her back immediately. After all, her appearance here was all that was wanted.

'Mrs. Melville and her dreadful juvenile are here, as you may imagine—the complete Englishwoman. I smile on her, but I could laugh. To see the crow's-feet under her eyes on her white skin, and those ringlets, is really too ridiculous. Then there is a Miss Carrington, Lady Jocelyn's cousin, aged thirty-two—if she has not tampered with the register of her birth. I should think her equal to it. Between dark and fair. Always in love with some man, Conning tells me she hears. Rose's maid, Polly, hinted the same. She has a little money.

'But my sympathies have been excited by a little cripple—a niece of Lady Jocelyn's and the favourite grand-daughter of the rich old Mrs. Bonner—also here—Juliana Bonner. Her age must be twenty. You would take her for ten. In spite of her immense expectations, the Jocelyns hate her. They can hardly be civil to her. It is the poor child's temper. She has already begun to watch dear Evan—certainly the handsomest of the men here as yet, though I grant you, they are well-grown men, these Jocelyns, for an untravelled Englishwoman. I fear, dear Harriet, we have been dreadfully deceived about Rose. The poor child has not, in her own right, much more than a tenth part of what we supposed, I fear. It was that Mrs. Melville. I have had occasion to notice her quiet boasts here. She said this morning, "when Mel is in the Ministry"—he is not yet in Parliament! I feel quite angry with the woman, and she is not so cordial as she might be. I have her profile very frequently while I am conversing with her.

'With Grandmama Bonner I am excellent good friends,—venerable silver hair, high caps, etc. More of this most interesting Juliana Bonner by-and-by. It is clear to me that Rose's fortune is calculated upon the dear invalid's death! Is not that harrowing? It shocks me to think of it.

'Then there is Mrs. Shorne. She is a Jocelyn—and such a history! She married a wealthy manufacturer—bartered her blood for his money, and he failed, and here she resides, a bankrupt widow, petitioning any man that may be willing for his love AND a decent home. AND—I say in charity.

'Mrs. Shorne comes here to-morrow. She is at present with—guess, my dear!—with Lady Racial. Do not be alarmed. I have met Lady Racial. She heard Evan's name, and by that and the likeness I saw she knew at once, and I saw a truce in her eyes. She gave me a tacit assurance of it—she was engaged to dine here yesterday, and put it off—probably to grant us time for composure. If she comes I do not fear her. Besides, has she not reasons? Providence may have designed her for a staunch ally—I will not say, confederate.

'Would that Providence had fixed this beautiful mansion five hundred miles from L——-, though it were in a desolate region! And that reminds me of the Madre. She is in health. She always will be overbearingly robust till the day we are bereft of her. There was some secret in the house when I was there, which I did not trouble to penetrate. That little Jane F——was there—not improved.

'Pray, be firm about Torquay. Estates mortgaged, but hopes of saving a remnant of the property. Third son! Don't commit yourself there. We dare not baronetize him. You need not speak it—imply. More can be done that way.

'And remember, dear Harriet, that you must manage Andrew so that we may positively promise his vote to the Ministry on all questions when Parliament next assembles. I understood from Lord Livelyston, that Andrew's vote would be thought much of. A most amusing nobleman! He pledged himself to nothing! But we are above such a thing as a commercial transaction. He must countenance Silva. Women, my dear, have sent out armies—why not fleets? Do not spare me your utmost aid in my extremity, my dearest sister.

'As for Strike, I refuse to speak of him. He is insufferable and next to useless. How can one talk with any confidence of relationship with a Major of Marines? When I reflect on what he is, and his conduct to Caroline, I have inscrutable longings to slap his face. Tell dear Carry her husband's friend—the chairman or something of that wonderful company of Strike's—you know—the Duke of Belfield is coming here. He is a blood-relation of the Elburnes, therefore of the Jocelyns. It will not matter at all. Breweries, I find, are quite in esteem in your England. It was highly commendable in his Grace to visit you. Did he come to see the Major of Marines? Caroline is certainly the loveliest woman I ever beheld, and I forgive her now the pangs of jealousy she used to make me feel.

'Andrew, I hope, has received the most kind invitations of the Jocelyns. He must come. Melville must talk with him about the votes of his abominable brother in Fallow field. We must elect Melville and have the family indebted to us. But pray be careful that Andrew speaks not a word to his odious brother about our location here. It would set him dead against these hospitable Jocelyns. It will perhaps be as well, dear Harriet, if you do not accompany Andrew. You would not be able to account for him quite thoroughly. Do as you like—I do but advise, and you know I may be trusted—for our sakes, dear one! I am working for Carry to come with Andrew. Beautiful women always welcome. A prodigy!—if they wish to astonish the Duke. Adieu! Heaven bless your babes!'

The night passes, and the Countess pursues:

'Awakened by your fresh note from a dream of Evan on horseback, and a multitude hailing him Count Jocelyn for Fallow field! A morning dream. They might desire that he should change his name; but "Count" is preposterous, though it may conceal something.

'You say Andrew will come, and talk of his bringing Caroline. Anything to give our poor darling a respite from her brute. You deserve great credit for your managing of that dear little good-natured piece of obstinate man. I will at once see to prepare dear Caroline's welcome, and trust

her stay may be prolonged in the interest of common humanity. They have her story here already.

'Conning has come in, and says that young Mr. Harry Jocelyn will be here this morning from Fallow field, where he has been cricketing. The family have not spoken of him in my hearing. He is not, I think, in good odour at home—a scapegrace. Rose's maid, Polly, quite flew out when I happened to mention him, and broke one of my laces. These English maids are domesticated savage animals.

'My chocolate is sent up, exquisitely concocted, in plate of the purest quality—lovely little silver cups! I have already quite set the fashion for the ladies to have chocolate in bed. The men, I hear, complain that there is no lady at the breakfast-table. They have Miss Carrington to superintend. I read, in the subdued satisfaction of her eyes (completely without colour), how much she thanks me and the institution of chocolate in bed. Poor Miss Carrington is no match for her opportunities. One may give them to her without dread.

'It is ten on the Sabbath morn. The sweet churchbells are ringing. It seems like a dream. There is nothing but the religion attaches me to England; but that—is not that everything? How I used to sigh on Sundays to hear them in Portugal!

'I have an idea of instituting toilette-receptions. They will not please Miss Carrington so well.

'Now to the peaceful village church, and divine worship. Adieu, my dear. I kiss my fingers to Silva. Make no effort to amuse him. He is always occupied. Bread!—he asks no more. Adieu! Carry will be invited with your little man.... You unhappily unable.... She, the sister I pine to see, to show her worthy of my praises. Expectation and excitement! Adieu!'

Filled with pleasing emotions at the thought of the service in the quiet village church, and worshipping in the principal pew, under the blazonry of the Jocelyn arms, the Countess sealed her letter and addressed it, and then examined the name of Cogglesby; which plebeian name, it struck her, would not sound well to the menials of Beckley Court. While she was deliberating what to do to conceal it, she heard, through her open window, the voices of some young men laughing. She beheld her brother pass these young men, and bow to them. She beheld them stare at him without at all returning his salute, and then one of them—the same who had filled her ears with venom at Fallow field—turned to the others and laughed outrageously, crying—

'By Jove! this comes it strong. Fancy the snipocracy here—eh?'

What the others said the Countess did not wait to hear. She put on her bonnet hastily, tried the effect of a peculiar smile in the mirror, and lightly ran down-stairs.

CHAPTER XV. A CAPTURE

The three youths were standing in the portico when the Countess appeared among them. She singled out him who was specially obnoxious to her, and sweetly inquired the direction to the village post. With the renowned gallantry of his nation, he offered to accompany her, but presently, with a different exhibition of the same, proposed that they should spare themselves the trouble by dropping the letter she held prominently, in the bag.

'Thanks,' murmured the Countess, 'I will go.' Upon which his eager air subsided, and he fell into an awkward silent march at her side, looking so like the victim he was to be, that the Countess could have emulated his power of laughter.

'And you are Mr. Harry Jocelyn, the very famous cricketer?'

He answered, glancing back at his friends, that he was, but did not know about the 'famous.'

'Oh! but I saw you—I saw you hit the ball most beautifully, and dearly wished my brother had an equal ability. Brought up in the Court of Portugal, he is barely English. There they have no manly sports. You saw him pass you?'

'Him! Who?' asked Harry.

'My brother, on the lawn, this moment. Your sweet sister's friend. Your uncle Melville's secretary.'

'What's his name?' said Harry, in blunt perplexity.

The Countess repeated his name, which in her pronunciation was 'Hawington,' adding, 'That was my brother. I am his sister. Have you heard of the Countess de Saldar?'

'Countess!' muttered Harry. 'Dash it! here's a mistake.'

She continued, with elegant fan-like motion of her gloved fingers: 'They say there is a likeness between us. The dear Queen of Portugal often remarked it, and in her it was a compliment to me, for she thought my brother a model! You I should have known from your extreme resemblance to your lovely young sister.'

Coarse food, but then Harry was a youthful Englishman; and the Countess dieted the vanity according to the nationality. With good wine to wash it down, one can swallow anything. The Countess lent him her eyes for that purpose; eyes that had a liquid glow under the dove—like drooping lids. It was a principle of hers, pampering our poor sex with swinish solids or the lightest ambrosia, never to let the accompanying cordial be other than of the finest quality. She knew that clowns, even more than aristocrats, are flattered by the inebriation of delicate celestial liquors.

'Now,' she said, after Harry had gulped as much of the dose as she chose to administer direct from the founts, 'you must accord me the favour to tell me all about yourself, for I have heard much of you, Mr. Harry Jocelyn, and you have excited my woman's interest. Of me you know nothing.'

'Haven't I?' cried Harry, speaking to the pitch of his new warmth. 'My uncle Melville goes on about you tremendously—makes his wife as jealous as fire. How could I tell that was your brother?'

'Your uncle has deigned to allude to me?' said the Countess, meditatively. 'But not of him—of you, Mr. Harry! What does he say?'

'Says you're so clever you ought to be a man.'

'Ah! generous!' exclaimed the Countess. 'The idea, I think, is novel to him. Is it not?'

'Well, I believe, from what I hear, he didn't back you for much over in Lisbon,' said veracious Harry.

'I fear he is deceived in me now. I fear I am but a woman—I am not to be "backed." But you are not talking of yourself.'

'Oh! never mind me,' was Harry's modest answer.

'But I do. Try to imagine me as clever as a man, and talk to me of your doings. Indeed I will endeavour to comprehend you.'

Thus humble, the Countess bade him give her his arm. He stuck it out with abrupt eagerness.

'Not against my cheek.' She laughed forgivingly. 'And you need not start back half-a-mile,' she pursued with plain humour: 'and please do not look irresolute and awkward—It is not necessary,' she added. 'There!'; and she settled her fingers on him, 'I am glad I can find one or two things to instruct you in. Begin. You are a great cricketer. What else?'

Ay! what else? Harry might well say he had no wish to talk of himself. He did not know even how to give his arm to a lady! The first flattery and the subsequent chiding clashed in his elated soul, and caused him to deem himself one of the blest suddenly overhauled by an inspecting angel and found wanting: or, in his own more accurate style of reflection, 'What a rattling fine woman this is, and what a deuce of a fool she must think me!'

The Countess leaned on his arm with dainty languor.

'You walk well,' she said.

Harry's backbone straightened immediately.

'No, no; I do not want you to be a drill-sergeant. Can you not be told you are perfect without seeking to improve, vain boy? You can cricket, and you can walk, and will very soon learn how to give your arm to a lady. I have hopes of you. Of your friends, from whom I have ruthlessly dragged you, I have not much. Am I personally offensive to them, Mr. Harry? I saw them let my brother pass without returning his bow, and they in no way acknowledged my presence as I passed. Are they gentlemen?'

'Yes,' said Harry, stupefied by the question. 'One 's Ferdinand Laxley, Lord Laxley's son, heir to the title; the other's William Harvey, son of the Chief Justice—both friends of mine.'

'But not of your manners,' interposed the Countess. 'I have not so much compunction as I ought to have in divorcing you from your associates for a few minutes. I think I shall make a scholar of you in one or two essentials. You do want polish. Have I not a right to take you in hand? I have defended you already.'

'Me?' cried Harry.

'None other than Mr. Harry Jocelyn. Will he vouchsafe to me his pardon? It has been whispered in my ears that his ambition is to be the Don Juan of a country district, and I have said for him, that however grovelling his undirected tastes, he is too truly noble to plume himself upon the reputation they have procured him. Why did I defend you? Women, you know, do not shrink from Don Juans—even provincial Don Juans—as they should, perhaps, for their own sakes! You are all of you dangerous, if a woman is not strictly on her guard. But you will respect your champion, will you not?'

Harry was about to reply with wonderful briskness. He stopped, and murmured boorishly that he was sure he was very much obliged.

Command of countenance the Countess possessed in common with her sex. Those faces on which we make them depend entirely, women can entirely control. Keenly sensible to humour as the Countess was, her face sidled up to his immovably sweet. Harry looked, and looked away, and looked again. The poor fellow was so profoundly aware of his foolishness that he even doubted whether he was admired.

The Countess trifled with his English nature; quietly watched him bob between tugging humility and airy conceit, and went on:

'Yes! I will trust you, and that is saying very much, for what protection is a brother? I am alone here—defenceless!'

Men, of course, grow virtuously zealous in an instant on behalf of the lovely dame who tells them bewitchingly, she is alone and defenceless, with pitiful dimples round the dewy mouth that entreats their guardianship and mercy!

The provincial Don Juan found words—a sign of clearer sensations within. He said:

'Upon my honour, I'd look after you better than fifty brothers!'

The Countess eyed him softly, and then allowed herself the luxury of a laugh.

'No, no! it is not the sheep, it is the wolf I fear.'

And she went through a bit of the concluding portion of the drama of Little Red Riding Hood very prettily, and tickled him so that he became somewhat less afraid of her.

'Are you truly so bad as report would have you to be, Mr. Harry?' she asked, not at all in the voice of a censor.

'Pray don't think me—a—anything you wouldn't have me,' the youth stumbled into an apt response.

'We shall see,' said the Countess, and varied her admiration for the noble creature beside her with gentle ejaculations on the beauty of the deer that ranged the park of Beckley Court, the grand old oaks and beeches, the clumps of flowering laurel, and the rich air swarming Summer.

She swept out her arm. 'And this most magnificent estate will be yours? How happy will she be who is led hither to reside by you, Mr. Harry!'

'Mine? No; there's the bother,' he answered, with unfeigned chagrin. 'Beckley isn't Elburne property, you know. It belongs to old Mrs. Bonner, Rose's grandmama.'

'Oh!' interjected the Countess, indifferently.

'I shall never get it—no chance,' Harry pursued. 'Lost my luck with the old lady long ago.' He waxed excited on a subject that drew him from his shamefacedness. 'It goes to Juley Bonner, or to Rosey; it's a toss-up which. If I'd stuck up to Juley, I might have had a pretty fair chance. They wanted me to, that's why I scout the premises. But fancy Juley Bonner!'

'You couldn't, upon your honour!' rhymed the Countess. (And Harry let loose a delighted 'Ha! ha!' as at a fine stroke of wit.) 'Are we enamoured of a beautiful maiden, Senor Harry?'

'Not a bit,' he assured her eagerly. 'I don't know any girl. I don't care for 'em. I don't, really.'

The Countess impressively declared to him that he must be guided by her; and that she might the better act his monitress, she desired to hear the pedigree of the estate, and the exact relations in which it at present stood toward the Elburne family.

Glad of any theme he could speak on, Harry informed her that Beckley Court was bought by his grandfather Bonner from the proceeds of a successful oil speculation.

'So we ain't much on that side,' he said.

'Oil!' was the Countess's weary exclamation. 'I imagined Beckley Court to be your ancestral mansion. Oil!'

Harry deprecatingly remarked that oil was money.

'Yes,' she replied; 'but you are not one to mix oil with your Elburne blood. Let me see—oil! That, I conceive, is grocery. So, you are grocers on one side!'

'Oh, come! hang it!' cried Harry, turning red.

'Am I leaning on the grocer's side, or on the lord's?'

Harry felt dreadfully taken down. 'One ranks with one's father,' he said.

'Yes,' observed the Countess; 'but you should ever be careful not to expose the grocer. When I beheld my brother bow to you, and that your only return was to stare at him in that singular way, I was not aware of this, and could not account for it.'

I declare I'm very sorry,' said Harry, with a nettled air. 'Do just let me tell you how it happened. We were at an inn, where there was an odd old fellow gave a supper; and there was your brother, and another fellow—as thorough an upstart as I ever met, and infernally impudent. He got drinking, and wanted to fight us. Now I see it! Your brother, to save his friend's bones, said he was a tailor! Of course no gentleman could fight a tailor; and it blew over with my saying we'd order our clothes of him.'

'Said he was a—!' exclaimed the Countess, gazing blankly.

'I don't wonder at your feeling annoyed,' returned Harry. 'I saw him with Rosey next day, and began to smell a rat then, but Laxley won't give up the tailor. He's as proud as Lucifer. He wanted to order a suit of your brother to-day; but I said—not while he's in the house, however he came here.'

The Countess had partially recovered. They were now in the village street, and Harry pointed out the post-office.

'Your divination with regard to my brother's most eccentric behaviour was doubtless correct,' she said. 'He wished to succour his wretched companion. Anywhere—it matters not to him what!—he allies himself with miserable mortals. He is the modern Samaritan. You should thank him for saving you an encounter with some low creature.'

Swaying the letter to and fro, she pursued archly: 'I can read your thoughts. You are dying to know to whom this dear letter is addressed!'

Instantly Harry, whose eyes had previously been quite empty of expression, glanced at the letter wistfully.

Shall I tell you?'

'Yes, do.'

'It's to somebody I love.'

'Are you in love then?' was his disconcerted rejoinder.

'Am I not married?'

'Yes; but every woman that's married isn't in love with her husband, you know.'

'Oh! Don Juan of the provinces!' she cried, holding the seal of the letter before him in playful reproof. 'Fie!'

'Come! who is it?' Harry burst out.

'I am not, surely, obliged to confess my correspondence to you? Remember!' she laughed lightly. 'He already assumes the airs of a lord and master! You are rapid, Mr. Harry.'

'Won't you really tell me?' he pleaded.

She put a corner of the letter in the box. 'Must I?'

All was done with the archest elegance: the bewildering condescension of a Goddess to a boor.

'I don't say you must, you know: but I should like to see it,' returned Harry.

'There!' She showed him a glimpse of 'Mrs.,' cleverly concealing plebeian 'Cogglesby,' and the letter slid into darkness. 'Are you satisfied?'

'Yes,' said Harry, wondering why he felt a relief at the sight of 'Mrs.' written on a letter by a lady he had only known half an hour.

'And now,' said she, 'I shall demand a boon of you, Mr. Harry. Will it be accorded?'

She was hurriedly told that she might count upon him for whatever she chose to ask; and after much trifling and many exaggerations of the boon in question, he heard that she had selected him as her cavalier for the day, and that he was to consent to accompany her to the village church.

'Is it so great a request, the desire that you should sit beside a solitary lady for so short a space?' she asked, noting his rueful visage.

Harry assured her he would be very happy, but hinted at the bother of having to sit and listen to that fool of a Parsley: again assuring her, and with real earnestness, which the lady now affected to doubt, that he would be extremely happy.

'You know, I haven't been there for ages,' he explained.

'I hear it!' she sighed, aware of the credit his escort would bring her in Beckley, and especially with Harry's grandmama Bonner.

They went together to the village church. The Countess took care to be late, so that all eyes beheld her stately march up the aisle, with her captive beside her.

Nor was her captive less happy than he professed he would be. Charming comic side-play, at the expense of Mr. Parsley, she mingled with exceeding devoutness, and a serious attention to Mr. Parsley's discourse. In her heart this lady really thought her confessed daily sins forgiven her by the recovery of the lost sheep to Mr. Parsley's fold. The results of this small passage of arms were, that Evan's disclosure at Fallow field was annulled in the mind of Harry Jocelyn, and the latter gentleman became the happy slave of the Countess de Saldar.

CHAPTER XVI. LEADS TO A SMALL SKIRMISH BETWEEN ROSE AND EVAN

Lady Jocelyn belonged properly to that order which the Sultans and the Roxalanas of earth combine to exclude from their little games, under the designation of blues, or strong-minded women: a kind, if genuine, the least dangerous and staunchest of the sex, as poor fellows learn when the flippant and the frail fair have made mummies of them. She had the frankness of her daughter, the same direct eyes and firm step: a face without shadows, though no longer bright with youth. It may be charged to her as one of the errors of her strong mind, that she believed friendship practicable between men and women, young or old. She knew the world pretty well, and was not amazed by extraordinary accidents; but as she herself continued to be an example of her faith: we must presume it natural that her delusion should cling to her. She welcomed Evan as her daughter's friend, walked half-way across the room to meet him on his introduction to her, and with the simple words, 'I have heard of you,' let him see that he stood upon his merits in her house. The young man's spirit caught something of hers even in their first interview, and at once mounted to that level. Unconsciously he felt that she took, and would take him, for what he was, and he rose to his worth in the society she presided over. A youth like Evan could not perceive, that in loving this lady's daughter, and accepting the place she offered him, he was guilty of a breach of confidence; or reflect, that her entire absence of suspicion imposed upon him a corresponding honesty toward her. He fell into a blindness. Without dreaming for a moment that she designed to encourage his passion for Rose, he yet beheld himself in the light she had cast on him; and, received as her daughter's friend, it seemed to him not so utterly monstrous that he might be her daughter's lover. A haughty, a grand, or a too familiar manner, would have kept his eyes clearer on his true condition. Lady Jocelyn spoke to his secret nature, and eclipsed in his mind the outward aspects with which it was warring. To her he was a gallant young man, a fit

companion for Rose, and when she and Sir Franks said, and showed him, that they were glad to know him, his heart swam in a flood of happiness they little suspected.

This was another of the many forms of intoxication to which circumstances subjected the poor lover. In Fallow field, among impertinent young men, Evan's pride proclaimed him a tailor. At Beckley Court, acted on by one genuine soul, he forgot it, and felt elate in his manhood. The shades of Tailordom dispersed like fog before the full South-west breeze. When I say he forgot it, the fact was present enough to him, but it became an outward fact: he had ceased to feel it within him. It was not a portion of his being, hard as Mrs. Mel had struck to fix it. Consequently, though he was in a far worse plight than when he parted with Rose on board the Jocasta, he felt much less of an impostor now. This may have been partly because he had endured his struggle with the Demogorgon the Countess painted to him in such frightful colours, and found him human after all; but it was mainly owing to the hearty welcome Lady Jocelyn had extended to him as the friend of Rose.

Loving Rose, he nevertheless allowed his love no tender liberties. The eyes of a lover are not his own; but his hands and lips are, till such time as they are claimed. The sun must smile on us with peculiar warmth to woo us forth utterly-pluck our hearts out. Rose smiled on many. She smiled on Drummond Forth, Ferdinand Laxley, William Harvey, and her brother Harry; and she had the same eyes for all ages. Once, previous to the arrival of the latter three, there was a change in her look, or Evan fancied it. They were going to ride out together, and Evan, coming to his horse on the gravel walk, saw her talking with Drummond Forth. He mounted, awaiting her, and either from a slight twinge of jealousy, or to mark her dainty tread with her riding-habit drawn above her heels, he could not help turning his head occasionally. She listened to Drummond with attention, but presently broke from him, crying: 'It's an absurdity. Speak to them yourself—I shall not.'

On the ride that day, she began prattling of this and that with the careless glee that became her well, and then sank into a reverie. Between-whiles her eyes had raised tumults in Evan's breast by dropping on him in a sort of questioning way, as if she wished him to speak, or wished to fathom something she would rather have unspoken. Ere they had finished their ride, she tossed off what burden may have been on her mind as lightly as a stray lock from her shoulders. He thought that the singular look recurred. It charmed him too much for him to speculate on it.

The Countess's opportune ally, the gout, which had reduced the Hon. Melville Jocelyn's right hand to a state of uselessness, served her with her brother equally: for, having volunteered his services to the invalided diplomatist, it excused his stay at Beckley Court to himself, and was a mask to his intimacy with Rose, besides earning him the thanks of the family. Harry Jocelyn, released from the wing of the Countess, came straight to him, and in a rough kind of way begged Evan to overlook his rudeness.

'You took us all in at Fallow field, except Drummond,' he said. 'Drummond would have it you were joking. I see it now. And you're a confoundedly clever fellow into the bargain, or you wouldn't be quill-driving for Uncle Mel. Don't be uppish about it—will you?'

'You have nothing to fear on that point,' said Evan. With which promise the peace was signed between them. Drummond and William Harvey were cordial, and just laughed over the incident. Laxley, however, held aloof. His retention of ideas once formed befitted his rank and station. Some trifling qualms attended Evan's labours with the diplomatist; but these were merely occasioned by the iteration of a particular phrase. Mr. Goren, an enthusiastic tailor, had now and then thrown out to Evan stirring hints of an invention he claimed: the discovery of a Balance in Breeches: apparently the philosopher's stone of the tailor craft, a secret that should ensure harmony of outline to the person and an indubitable accommodation to the most difficult legs.

Since Adam's expulsion, it seemed, the tailors of this wilderness had been in search of it. But like the doctors of this wilderness, their science knew no specific: like the Babylonian workmen smitten with confusion of tongues, they had but one word in common, and that word was 'cut.' Mr. Goren contended that to cut was not the key of the science: but to find a Balance was. An artistic admirer of the frame of man, Mr. Goren was not wanting in veneration for the individual who had arisen to do it justice. He spoke of his Balance with supreme self-appreciation. Nor less so the Honourable Melville, who professed to have discovered the Balance of Power, at home and abroad. It was a capital Balance, but inferior to Mr. Goren's. The latter gentleman guaranteed a Balance with motion: whereas one step not only upset the Honourable Melville's, but shattered the limbs of Europe. Let us admit, that it is easier to fit a man's legs than to compress expansive empires.

Evan enjoyed the doctoring of kingdoms quite as well as the diplomatist. It suited the latent grandeur of soul inherited by him from the great Mel. He liked to prop Austria and arrest the Czar, and keep a watchful eye on France; but the Honourable Melville's deep-mouthed phrase conjured up to him a pair of colossal legs imperiously demanding their Balance likewise. At first the image scared him. In time he was enabled to smile it into phantom vagueness. The diplomatist diplomatically informed him, it might happen that the labours he had undertaken might be neither more nor less than education for a profession he might have to follow. Out of this, an ardent imagination, with the Countess de Saldar for an interpreter, might construe a promise of some sort. Evan soon had high hopes. What though his name blazed on a shop-front? The sun might yet illumine him to honour!

Where a young man is getting into delicate relations with a young woman, the more of his sex the better—they serve as a blind; and the Countess hailed fresh arrivals warmly. There was Sir John Loring, Dorothy's father, who had married the eldest of the daughters of Lord Elburne. A widower, handsome, and a flirt, he capitulated to the Countess instantly, and was played off against the provincial Don Juan, who had reached that point with her when youths of his description make bashful confidences of their successes, and receive delicious chidings for their naughtiness—rebukes which give immeasurable rebounds. Then came Mr. Gordon Graine, with his daughter, Miss Jenny Graine, an early friend of Rose's, and numerous others. For the present, Miss Isabella Current need only be chronicled among the visitors—a sprightly maid fifty years old, without a wrinkle to show for it—the Aunt Bel of fifty houses where there were young women and little boys. Aunt Bel had quick wit and capital anecdotes, and tripped them out aptly on a sparkling tongue with exquisite instinct for climax and when to strike for a laugh. No sooner had she entered the hall than she announced the proximate arrival of the Duke of Belfield at her

heels, and it was known that his Grace was as sure to follow as her little dog, who was far better paid for his devotion.

The dinners at Beckley Court had hitherto been rather languid to those who were not intriguing or mixing young love with the repast. Miss Current was an admirable neutral, sent, as the Countess fervently believed, by Providence. Till now the Countess had drawn upon her own resources to amuse the company, and she had been obliged to restrain herself from doing it with that unctuous feeling for rank which warmed her Portuguese sketches in low society and among her sisters. She retired before Miss Current and formed audience, glad of a relief to her inventive labour. While Miss Current and her ephemerals lightly skimmed the surface of human life, the Countess worked in the depths. Vanities, passions, prejudices beneath the surface, gave her full employment. How naturally poor Juliana Bonner was moved to mistake Evan's compassion for a stronger sentiment! The Countess eagerly assisted Providence to shuffle the company into their proper places. Harry Jocelyn was moodily happy, but good; greatly improved in the eyes of his grandmama Bonner, who attributed the change to the Countess, and partly forgave her the sinful consent to the conditions of her love-match with the foreign Count, which his penitent wife had privately confessed to that strict Churchwoman.

'Thank Heaven that you have no children,' Mrs. Bonner had said; and the Countess humbly replied:

'It is indeed my remorseful consolation!'

'Who knows that it is not your punishment?' added Mrs. Bonner; the Countess weeping.

She went and attended morning prayers in Mrs. Bonner's apartments, alone with the old lady. 'To make up for lost time in Catholic Portugal!' she explained it to the household.

On the morning after Miss Current had come to shape the party, most of the inmates of Beckley Court being at breakfast, Rose gave a lead to the conversation.

'Aunt Bel! I want to ask you something. We've been making bets about you. Now, answer honestly, we're all friends. Why did you refuse all your offers?'

'Quite simple, child,' replied the unabashed ex-beauty.

'A matter of taste. I liked twenty shillings better than a sovereign.'

Rose looked puzzled, but the men laughed, and Rose exclaimed:

'Now I see! How stupid I am! You mean, you may have friends when you are not married. Well, I think that's the wisest, after all. You don't lose them, do you? Pray, Mr. Evan, are you thinking Aunt Bel might still alter her mind for somebody, if she knew his value?'

'I was presuming to hope there might be a place vacant among the twenty,' said Evan, slightly bowing to both. 'Am I pardoned?'

'I like you!' returned Aunt Bel, nodding at him. 'Where do you come from? A young man who'll let himself go for small coin's a jewel worth knowing.'

'Where do I come from?' drawled Laxley, who had been tapping an egg with a dreary expression.

'Aunt Bel spoke to Mr. Harrington,' said Rose, pettishly.

'Asked him where he came from,' Laxley continued his drawl. 'He didn't answer, so I thought it polite for another of the twenty to strike in.'

'I must thank you expressly,' said Evan, and achieved a cordial bow.

Rose gave Evan one of her bright looks, and then called the attention of Ferdinand Laxley to the fact that he had lost a particular bet made among them.

'What bet?' asked Laxley. 'About the profession?'

A stream of colour shot over Rose's face. Her eyes flew nervously from Laxley to Evan, and then to Drummond. Laxley appeared pleased as a man who has made a witty sally: Evan was outwardly calm, while Drummond replied to the mute appeal of Rose, by saying:

'Yes; we've all lost. But who could hit it? The lady admits no sovereign in our sex.'

'So you've been betting about me?' said Aunt Bel. 'I 'll settle the dispute. Let him who guessed "Latin" pocket the stakes, and, if I guess him, let him hand them over to me.'

'Excellent!' cried Rose. 'One did guess "Latin," Aunt Bel! Now, tell us which one it was.'

'Not you, my dear. You guessed "temper."'

'No! you dreadful Aunt Bel!'

'Let me see,' said Aunt Bel, seriously. 'A young man would not marry a woman with Latin, but would not guess it the impediment. Gentlemen moderately aged are mad enough to slip their heads under any yoke, but see the obstruction. It was a man of forty guessed "Latin." I request the Hon. Hamilton Everard Jocelyn to confirm it.'

Amid laughter and exclamations Hamilton confessed himself the man who had guessed Latin to be the cause of Miss Current's remaining an old maid; Rose, crying:

'You really are too clever, Aunt Bel!'

A divergence to other themes ensued, and then Miss Jenny Graine said: 'Isn't Juley learning Latin? I should like to join her while I'm here.'

'And so should I,' responded Rose. 'My friend Evan is teaching her during the intervals of his arduous diplomatic labours. Will you take us into your class, Evan?'

'Don't be silly, girls,' interposed Aunt Bel. 'Do you want to graduate for my state with your eyes open?'

Evan objected his poor qualifications as a tutor, and Aunt Bel remarked, that if Juley learnt Latin at all, she should have regular instruction.

'I am quite satisfied,' said Juley, quietly.

'Of course you are,' Rose snubbed her cousin. 'So would anybody be. But Mama really was talking of a tutor for Juley, if she could find one. There's a school at Bodley; but that's too far for one of the men to come over.'

A school at Bodley! thought Evan, and his probationary years at the Cudford Establishment rose before him; and therewith, for the first time since his residence at Beckley, the figure of John Raikes.

'There's a friend of mine,' he said, aloud, 'I think if Lady Jocelyn does wish Miss Bonner to learn Latin thoroughly, he would do very well for the groundwork and would be glad of the employment. He is very poor.'

'If he's poor, and a friend of yours, Evan, we'll have him,' said Rose: 'we'll ride and fetch him.'

'Yes,' added Miss Carrington, 'that must be quite sufficient qualification.'

Juliana was not gazing gratefully at Evan for his proposal.

Rose asked the name of Evan's friend. 'His name is Raikes,' answered Evan. 'I don't know where he is now. He may be at Fallow field. If Lady Jocelyn pleases, I will ride over to-day and see.'

'My dear Evan!' cried Rose, 'you don't mean that absurd figure we saw on the cricket-field?' She burst out laughing. 'Oh! what fun it will be! Let us have him here by all means.'

'I shall not bring him to be laughed at,' said Evan.

'I will remember he is your friend,' Rose returned demurely; and again laughed, as she related to Jenny Graine the comic appearance Mr. Raikes had presented.

Laxley waited for a pause, and then said: 'I have met this Mr. Raikes. As a friend of the family, I should protest against his admission here in any office whatever into the upper part of the house, at least. He is not a gentleman.'

We don't want teachers to be gentlemen,' observed Rose.

'This fellow is the reverse,' Laxley pronounced, and desired Harry to confirm it; but Harry took a gulp of coffee.

'Oblige me by recollecting that I have called him a friend of mine,' said Evan.

Rose murmured to him: 'Pray forgive me! I forgot.' Laxley hummed something about 'taste.' Aunt Bel led from the theme by a lively anecdote.

After breakfast the party broke into knots, and canvassed Laxley's behaviour to Evan, which was generally condemned. Rose met the young men strolling on the lawn; and, with her usual bluntness, accused Laxley of wishing to insult her friend.

'I speak to him—do I not?' said Laxley. 'What would you have more? I admit the obligation of speaking to him when I meet him in your house. Out of it—that 's another matter.'

'But what is the cause for your conduct to him, Ferdinand?'

'By Jove!' cried Harry, 'I wonder he puts up with it I wouldn't. I'd have a shot with you, my boy.'

'Extremely honoured,' said Laxley. 'But neither you nor I care to fight tailors.'

'Tailors!' exclaimed Rose. There was a sharp twitch in her body, as if she had been stung or struck.

'Look here, Rose,' said Laxley; 'I meet him, he insults me, and to get out of the consequences tells me he's the son of a tailor, and a tailor himself; knowing that it ties my hands. Very well, he puts himself hors de combat to save his bones. Let him unsay it, and choose whether he 'll apologize or not, and I'll treat him accordingly. At present I'm not bound to do more than respect the house I find he has somehow got admission to.'

'It's clear it was that other fellow,' said Harry, casting a side-glance up at the Countess's window.

Rose looked straight at Laxley, and abruptly turned on her heel.

In the afternoon, Lady Jocelyn sent a message to Evan that she wished to see him. Rose was with her mother. Lady Jocelyn had only to say, that if he thought his friend a suitable tutor for Miss Bonner, they would be happy to give him the office at Beckley Court. Glad to befriend poor Jack, Evan gave the needful assurances, and was requested to go and fetch him forthwith. When he left the room, Rose marched out silently beside him.

'Will you ride over with me, Rose?' he said, though scarcely anxious that she should see Mr. Raikes immediately.

The singular sharpness of her refusal astonished him none the less.

'Thank you, no; I would rather not.'

A lover is ever ready to suspect that water has been thrown on the fire that burns for him in the bosom of his darling. Sudden as the change was, it was very decided. His sensitive ears were pained by the absence of his Christian name, which her lips had lavishly made sweet to him. He stopped in his walk.

'You spoke of riding to Fallow field. Is it possible you don't want me to bring my friend here? There's time to prevent it.'

Judged by the Countess de Saldar, the behaviour of this well-born English maid was anything but well-bred. She absolutely shrugged her shoulders and marched a-head of him into the conservatory, where she began smelling at flowers and plucking off sere leaves.

In such cases a young man always follows; as her womanly instinct must have told her, for she expressed no surprise when she heard his voice two minutes after.

'Rose! what have I done?'

'Nothing at all,' she said, sweeping her eyes over his a moment, and resting them on the plants.

'I must have uttered something that has displeased you.'

'No.'

Brief negatives are not re-assuring to a lover's uneasy mind.

'I beg you—Be frank with me, Rose!'

A flame of the vanished fire shone in her face, but subsided, and she shook her head darkly.

'Have you any objection to my friend?'

Her fingers grew petulant with an orange leaf. Eyeing a spot on it, she said, hesitatingly:

'Any friend of yours I am sure I should like to help. But—but I wish you wouldn't associate with that—that kind of friend. It gives people all sorts of suspicions.'

Evan drew a sharp breath.

The voices of Master Alec and Miss Dorothy were heard shouting on the lawn. Alec gave Dorothy the slip and approached the conservatory on tip-toe, holding his hand out behind him to enjoin silence and secrecy. The pair could witness the scene through the glass before Evan spoke.

'What suspicions?' he asked.

Rose looked up, as if the harshness of his tone pleased her.

'Do you like red roses best, or white?' was her answer, moving to a couple of trees in pots.

'Can't make up your mind?' she continued, and plucked both a white and red rose, saying: 'There! choose your colour by-and-by,' and ask Juley to sew the one you choose in your button-hole.'

She laid the roses in his hand, and walked away. She must have known that there was a burden of speech on his tongue. She saw him move to follow her, but this time she did not linger, and it may be inferred that she wished to hear no more.

CHAPTER XVII. IN WHICH EVAN WRITES HIMSELF TAILOR

The only philosophic method of discovering what a young woman means, and what is in her mind, is that zigzag process of inquiry conducted by following her actions, for she can tell you nothing, and if she does not want to know a particular matter, it must be a strong beam from the central system of facts that shall penetrate her. Clearly there was a disturbance in the bosom of Rose Jocelyn, and one might fancy that amiable mirror as being wilfully ruffled to confuse a thing it was asked by the heavens to reflect: a good fight fought by all young people at a certain period, and now and then by an old fool or two. The young it seasons and strengthens; the old it happily kills off; and thus, what is, is made to work harmoniously with what we would have be.

After quitting Evan, Rose hied to her friend Jenny Graine, and in the midst of sweet millinery talk, darted the odd question, whether baronets or knights ever were tradesmen: to which Scottish Jenny, entirely putting aside the shades of beatified aldermen and the illustrious list of mayors that have welcomed royalty, replied that it was a thing quite impossible. Rose then wished to know if tailors were thought worse of than other tradesmen. Jenny, premising that she was no authority, stated she imagined she had heard that they were.

'Why?' said Rose, no doubt because she was desirous of seeing justice dealt to that class. But Jenny's bosom was a smooth reflector of facts alone.

Rose pondered, and said with compressed eagerness, 'Jenny, do you think you could ever bring yourself to consent to care at all for anybody ever talked of as belonging to them? Tell me.'

Now Jenny had come to Beckley Court to meet William Harvey: she was therefore sufficiently soft to think she could care for him whatever his origin were, and composed in the knowledge that no natal stigma was upon him to try the strength of her affection. Designing to generalize, as women do (and seem tempted to do most when they are secretly speaking from their own emotions), she said, shyly moving her shoulders, with a forefinger laying down the principle:

'You know, my dear, if one esteemed such a person very very much, and were quite sure, without any doubt, that he liked you in return—that is, completely liked you, and was quite devoted, and made no concealment—I mean, if he was very superior, and like other men—you know what I mean—and had none of the cringing ways some of them have—I mean; supposing him gay and handsome, taking—'

'Just like William,' Rose cut her short; and we may guess her to have had some one in her head for her to conceive that Jenny must be speaking of any one in particular.

A young lady who can have male friends, as well as friends of her own sex, is not usually pressing and secret in her confidences, possibly because such a young lady is not always nursing baby-passions, and does not require her sex's coddling and posseting to keep them alive. With Rose love will be full grown when it is once avowed, and will know where to go to be nourished.

'Merely an idea I had,' she said to Jenny, who betrayed her mental pre-occupation by putting the question for the questions last.

Her Uncle Melville next received a visit from the restless young woman. To him she spoke not a word of the inferior classes, but as a special favourite of the diplomatist's, begged a gift of him for her proximate birthday. Pushed to explain what it was, she said, 'It's something I want you to do for a friend of mine, Uncle Mel.'

The diplomatist instanced a few of the modest requests little maids prefer to people they presume to have power to grant.

'No, it's nothing nonsensical,' said Rose; 'I want you to get my friend Evan an appointment. You can if you like, you know, Uncle Mel, and it's a shame to make him lose his time when he's young and does his work so well—that you can't deny! Now, please, be positive, Uncle Mel. You know I hate—I have no faith in your 'nous verrons'. Say you will, and at once.'

The diplomatist pretended to have his weather-eye awakened.

'You seem very anxious about feathering the young fellow's nest, Rosey?'

'There,' cried Rose, with the maiden's mature experience of us, 'isn't that just like men? They never can believe you can be entirely disinterested!'

'Hulloa!' the diplomatist sung out, 'I didn't say anything, Rosey.'

She reddened at her hastiness, but retrieved it by saying:

'No, but you listen to your wife; you know you do, Uncle Mel; and now there's Aunt Shorne and the other women, who make you think just what they like about me, because they hate Mama.'

'Don't use strong words, my dear.'

'But it's abominable!' cried Rose. 'They asked Mama yesterday what Evan's being here meant? Why, of course, he's your secretary, and my friend, and Mama very properly stopped them, and so will I! As for me, I intend to stay at Beckley, I can tell you, dear old boy.' Uncle Mel had a soft arm round his neck, and was being fondled. 'And I 'm not going to be bred up to go into a harem, you may be sure.'

The diplomatist whistled, 'You talk your mother with a vengeance, Rosey.'

'And she's the only sensible woman I know,' said Rose. 'Now promise me—in earnest. Don't let them mislead you, for you know you're quite a child, out of your politics, and I shall take you in hand myself. Why, now, think, Uncle Mel! wouldn't any girl, as silly as they make me out, hold her tongue—not talk of him, as I do; and because I really do feel for him as a friend. See the difference between me and Juley!'

It was a sad sign if Rose was growing a bit of a hypocrite, but this instance of Juliana's different manner of showing her feelings toward Evan would have quieted suspicion in shrewder men, for Juliana watched Evan's shadow, and it was thought by two or three at Beckley Court, that Evan would be conferring a benefit on all by carrying off the romantically-inclined but little presentable young lady.

The diplomatist, with a placid 'Well, well!' ultimately promised to do his best for Rose's friend, and then Rose said, 'Now I leave you to the Countess,' and went and sat with her mother and Drummond Forth. The latter was strange in his conduct to Evan. While blaming Laxley's unmannered behaviour, he seemed to think Laxley had grounds for it, and treated Evan with a sort of cynical deference that had, for the last couple of days, exasperated Rose.

'Mama, you must speak to Ferdinand,' she burst upon the conversation, 'Drummond is afraid to—he can stand by and see my friend insulted. Ferdinand is insufferable with his pride—he's jealous of everybody who has manners, and Drummond approves him, and I will not bear it.'

Lady Jocelyn hated household worries, and quietly remarked that the young men must fight it out together.

'No, but it's your duty to interfere, Mama,' said Rose; 'and I know you will when I tell you that Ferdinand declares my friend Evan is a tradesman—beneath his notice. Why, it insults me!'

Lady Jocelyn looked out from a lofty window on such veritable squabbles of boys and girls as Rose revealed.

'Can't you help them to run on smoothly while they're here?' she said to Drummond, and he related the scene at the Green Dragon.

'I think I heard he was the son of Sir Something Harrington, Devonshire people,' said Lady Jocelyn.

'Yes, he is,' cried Rose, 'or closely related. I'm sure I understood the Countess that it was so. She brought the paper with the death in it to us in London, and shed tears over it.'

'She showed it in the paper, and shed tears over it?' said Drummond, repressing an inclination to laugh. 'Was her father's title given in full?'

'Sir Abraham Harrington, replied Rose. 'I think she said father, if the word wasn't too common-place for her.'

'You can ask old Tom when he comes, if you are anxious to know,' said Drummond to her ladyship. 'His brother married one of the sisters. By the way, he's coming, too. He ought to clear up the mystery.'

'Now you're sneering, Drummond,' said Rose: 'for you know there 's no mystery to clear up.'

Drummond and Lady Jocelyn began talking of old Tom Cogglesby, whom, it appeared, the former knew intimately, and the latter had known.

'The Cogglesbys are sons of a cobbler, Rose,' said Lady Jocelyn. 'You must try and be civil to them.'

'Of course I shall, Mama,' Rose answered seriously.

'And help the poor Countess to bear their presence as well as possible,' said Drummond. 'The Harringtons have had to mourn a dreadful mesalliance. Pity the Countess!'

'Oh! the Countess! the Countess!' exclaimed Rose to Drummond's pathetic shake of the head. She and Drummond were fully agreed about the Countess; Drummond mimicking the lady: 'In verity, she is most mellifluous!' while Rose sugared her lips and leaned gracefully forward with 'De Saldar, let me petition you—since we must endure our title—since it is not to be your Louisa?' and her eyes sought the ceiling, and her hand slowly melted into her drapery, as the Countess was wont to effect it.

Lady Jocelyn laughed, but said: 'You're too hard upon the Countess. The female euphuist is not to be met with every day. It's a different kind from the Precieuse. She is not a Precieuse. She has made a capital selection of her vocabulary from Johnson, and does not work it badly, if we may judge by Harry and Melville. Euphuism—[affectation D.W.]—in "woman" is the popular ideal of a Duchess. She has it by nature, or she has studied it: and if so, you must respect her abilities.'

'Yes—Harry!' said Rose, who was angry at a loss of influence over her rough brother, 'any one could manage Harry! and Uncle Mel 's a goose. You should see what a "female euphuist" Dorry is getting. She says in the Countess's hearing: "Rose! I should in verity wish to play, if it were pleasing to my sweet cousin?" I'm ready to die with laughing. I don't do it, Mama.'

The Countess, thus being discussed, was closeted with old Mrs. Bonner: not idle. Like Hannibal in Italy, she had crossed her Alps in attaining Beckley Court, and here in the enemy's country the

wary general found herself under the necessity of throwing up entrenchments to fly to in case of defeat. Sir Abraham Harrington of Torquay, who had helped her to cross the Alps, became a formidable barrier against her return.

Meantime Evan was riding over to Fallow field, and as he rode under black visions between the hedgeways crowned with their hop-garlands, a fragrance of roses saluted his nostril, and he called to mind the red and the white the peerless representative of the two had given him, and which he had thrust sullenly in his breast-pocket and he drew them out to look at them reproachfully and sigh farewell to all the roses of life, when in company with them he found in his hand the forgotten letter delivered to him on the cricket-field the day of the memorable match. He smelt at the roses, and turned the letter this way and that. His name was correctly worded on the outside. With an odd reluctance to open it, he kept trifling over the flowers, and then broke the broad seal, and these are the words that met his eyes:

'Mr. EVAN HARRINGTON.

'You have made up your mind to be a tailor, instead of a Tomnoddy. You're right. Not too many men in the world—plenty of nincompoops.

'Don't be made a weathercock of by a parcel of women. I want to find a man worth something. If you go on with it, you shall end by riding in your carriage, and cutting it as fine as any of them. I 'll take care your belly is not punished while you're about it.

'From the time your name is over your shop, I give you L300 per annum.

'Or stop. There's nine of you. They shall have L40. per annum apiece, 9 times 40, eh? That's better than L300., if you know how to reckon. Don't you wish it was ninety-nine tailors to a man! I could do that too, and it would not break me; so don't be a proud young ass, or I 'll throw my money to the geese. Lots of them in the world. How many geese to a tailor?

'Go on for five years, and I double it.

'Give it up, and I give you up.

'No question about me. The first tailor can be paid his L40 in advance, by applying at the offices of Messrs. Grist, Gray's Inn Square, Gray's Inn. Let him say he is tailor No. 1, and show this letter, signed Agreed, with your name in full at bottom. This will do—money will be paid—no questions one side or other. So on—the whole nine. The end of the year they can give a dinner to their acquaintance. Send in bill to Messrs. Grist.

'The advice to you to take the cash according to terms mentioned is advice of

'A FRIEND.

'P.S. You shall have your wine. Consult among yourselves, and carry it by majority what wine it's to be. Five carries it. Dozen and half per tailor, per annum—that's the limit.'

It was certainly a very hot day. The pores of his skin were prickling, and his face was fiery; and yet he increased his pace, and broke into a wild gallop for a mile or so; then suddenly turned his horse's head back for Beckley. The secret of which evolution was, that he had caught the idea of a plotted insult of Laxley's in the letter, for when the blood is up we are drawn the way the tide sets strongest, and Evan was prepared to swear that Laxley had written the letter, because he was burning to chastise the man who had injured him with Rose.

Sure that he was about to confirm his suspicion, he read it again, gazed upon Beckley Court in the sultry light, and turned for Fallow field once more, devising to consult Mr. John Raikes on the subject.

The letter had a smack of crabbed age hardly counterfeit. The savour of an old eccentric's sour generosity was there. Evan fell into bitter laughter at the idea of Rose glancing over his shoulder and asking him what nine of him to a man meant. He heard her clear voice pursuing him. He could not get away from the mocking sound of Rose beseeching him to instruct her on that point. How if the letter were genuine? He began to abhor the sight and touch of the paper, for it struck division cold as death between him and his darling. He saw now the immeasurable hopes his residence at Beckley had lured him to. Rose had slightly awakened him: this letter was blank day to his soul. He saw the squalid shop, the good, stern, barren-spirited mother, the changeless drudgery, the existence which seemed indeed no better than what the ninth of a man was fit for. The influence of his mother came on him once more. Dared he reject the gift if true? No spark of gratitude could he feel, but chained, dragged at the heels of his fate, he submitted to think it true; resolving the next moment that it was a fabrication and a trap: but he flung away the roses.

As idle as a painted cavalier upon a painted drop-scene, the figure of Mr. John Raikes was to be observed leaning with crossed legs against a shady pillar of the Green Dragon; eyeing alternately, with an indifference he did not care to conceal, the assiduous pecking in the dust of some cocks and hens that had strayed from the yard of the inn, and the sleepy blinking in the sun of an old dog at his feet: nor did Evan's appearance discompose the sad sedateness of his demeanour.

'Yes; I am here still,' he answered Evan's greeting, with a flaccid gesture. 'Don't excite me too much. A little at a time. I can't bear it!'

'How now? What is it now, Jack?' said Evan.

Mr. Raikes pointed at the dog. 'I've made a bet with myself he won't wag his tail within the next ten minutes. I beg of you, Harrington, to remain silent for both our sakes.'

Evan was induced to look at the dog, and the dog looked at him, and gently moved his tail.

'I 've lost!' cried Raikes, in languid anguish. 'He 's getting excited. He'll go mad. We're not accustomed to this in Fallow field.'

Evan dismounted, and was going to tell him the news he had for him, when his attention was distracted by the sight of Rose's maid, Polly Wheedle, splendidly bonneted, who slipped past

them into the inn, after repulsing Jack's careless attempt to caress her chin; which caused him to tell Evan that he could not get on without the society of intellectual women.

Evan called a boy to hold the horse.

'Have you seen her before, Jack?'

Jack replied: 'Once. Your pensioner up-stairs she comes to visit. I do suspect there kinship is betwixt them. Ay! one might swear them sisters. She's a relief to the monotony of the petrified street—the old man with the brown-gaitered legs and the doubled-up old woman with the crutch. I heard the London horn this morning.'

Evan thrust the letter in his hands, telling him to read and form an opinion on it, and went in the track of Miss Wheedle.

Mr. Raikes resumed his station against the pillar, and held the letter out on a level with his thigh. Acting (as it was his nature to do off the stage), he had not exaggerated his profound melancholy. Of a light soil and with a tropical temperament, he had exhausted all lively recollection of his brilliant career, and, in the short time since Evan had parted with him, sunk abjectly down into the belief that he was fixed in Fallow field for life. His spirit pitied for agitation and events. The horn of the London coach had sounded distant metropolitan glories in the ears of the exile in rustic parts.

Sighing heavily, Raikes opened the letter, in simple obedience to the wishes of his friend; for he would have preferred to stand contemplating his own state of hopeless stagnation. The sceptical expression he put on when he had read the letter through must not deceive us. John Raikes had dreamed of a beneficent eccentric old gentleman for many years: one against whom, haply, he had bumped in a crowded thoroughfare, and had with cordial politeness begged pardon of; had then picked up his walking-stick; restored it, venturing a witty remark; retired, accidentally dropping his card-case; subsequently, to his astonishment and gratification, receiving a pregnant missive from that old gentleman's lawyer. Or it so happened that Mr. Raikes met the old gentleman at a tavern, and, by the exercise of a signal dexterity, relieved him from a bone in his throat, and reluctantly imparted his address on issuing from the said tavern. Or perhaps it was a lonely highway where the old gentleman walked, and John Raikes had his name in the papers for a deed of heroism, nor was man ungrateful. Since he had eaten up his uncle, this old gentleman of his dreams walked in town and country-only, and alas! Mr. Raikes could never encounter him in the flesh. The muscles of his face, therefore, are no index to the real feelings of the youth when he had thoroughly mastered the contents of the letter, and reflected that the dream of his luck—his angelic old gentleman—had gone and wantonly bestowed himself upon Evan Harrington, instead of the expectant and far worthier John Raikes. Worthier inasmuch as he gave him credence for existing long ere he knew of him and beheld him manifest.

Raikes retreated to the vacant parlour of the Green Dragon, and there Evan found him staring at the unfolded letter, his head between his cramped fists, with a contraction of his mouth. Evan was troubled by what he had seen up-stairs, and did not speak till Jack looked up and said, 'Oh, there you are.'

'Well, what do you think, Jack?'

'Yes—it's all right,' Raikes rejoined in most matter-of-course tone, and then he stepped to the window, and puffed a very deep breath indeed, and glanced from the straight line of the street to the heavens, with whom, injured as he was, he felt more at home now that he knew them capable of miracles.

'Is it a bad joke played upon me?' said Evan.

Raikes upset a chair. 'It's quite childish. You're made a gentleman for life, and you ask if it's a joke played upon you! It's maddening! There—there goes my hat!'

With a vehement kick, Mr. Raikes despatched his ancient head-gear to the other end of the room, saying that he must have some wine, and would; and disdainful was his look at Evan, when the latter attempted to reason him into economy. He ordered the wine; drank a glass, which coloured a new mood in him; and affecting a practical manner, said:

'I confess I have been a little hurt with you, Harrington. You left me stranded on the desert isle. I thought myself abandoned. I thought I should never see anything but the lengthening of an endless bill on my landlady's face—my sole planet. I was resigned till I heard my friend "to-lool!" this morning. He kindled recollection. But, this is a tidy Port, and that was a delectable sort of young lady that you were riding with when we parted last! She laughs like the true metal. I suppose you know it 's the identical damsel I met the day before, and owe it to for my run on the downs—I 've a compliment ready made for her.'

'You think that letter written in good faith?' said Evan.

'Look here.' Mr. Raikes put on a calmness. 'You got up the other night, and said you were a tailor—a devotee of the cabbage and the goose. Why the notion didn't strike me is extraordinary—I ought to have known my man. However, the old gentleman who gave the supper—he's evidently one of your beastly rich old ruffianly republicans—spent part of his time in America, I dare say. Put two and two together.'

But as Harrington desired plain, prose, Mr. Raikes tamed his imagination to deliver it. He pointed distinctly at the old gentleman who gave the supper as the writer of the letter. Evan, in return, confided to him his history and present position, and Mr. Raikes, without cooling to his fortunate friend, became a trifle patronizing.

'You said your father—I think I remember at old Cudford's—was a cavalry officer, a bold dragoon?'

'I did,' replied Evan. 'I told a lie.'

'We knew it; but we feared your prowess, Harrington.'

Then they talked over the singular letter uninterruptedly, and Evan, weak among his perplexities of position and sentiment: wanting money for the girl up-stairs, for this distasteful comrade's bill at the Green Dragon, and for his own immediate requirements, and with the bee buzzing of Rose in his ears: 'She despises you,' consented in a desperation ultimately to sign his name to it, and despatch Jack forthwith to Messrs. Grist.

'You'll find it's an imposition,' he said, beginning less to think it so, now that his name was put to the hated monstrous thing; which also now fell to pricking at curiosity. For he was in the early steps of his career, and if his lady, holding to pride, despised him—as, he was tortured into the hypocrisy of confessing, she justly might, why, then, unless he was the sport of a farceur, here seemed a gilding of the path of duty: he could be serviceable to friends. His claim on fair young Rose's love had grown in the short while so prodigiously asinine that it was a minor matter to constitute himself an old eccentric's puppet.

'No more an imposition than it's 50 of Virgil,' quoth the rejected usher.

'It smells of a plot,' said Evan.

'It 's the best joke that will be made in my time,' said Mr. Raikes, rubbing his hands.

'And now listen to your luck,' said Evan; 'I wish mine were like it!' and Jack heard of Lady Jocelyn's offer. He heard also that the young lady he was to instruct was an heiress, and immediately inspected his garments, and showed the sacred necessity there was for him to refit in London, under the hands of scientific tailors. Evan wrote him an introduction to Mr. Goren, counted out the contents of his purse (which Jack had reduced in his study of the pastoral game of skittles, he confessed), and calculated in a niggardly way, how far it would go to supply the fellow's wants; sighing, as he did it, to think of Jack installed at Beckley Court, while Jack, comparing his luck with Evan's, had discovered it to be dismally inferior.

'Oh, confound those bellows you keep blowing!' he exclaimed. 'I wish to be decently polite, Harrington, but you annoy me. Excuse me, pray, but the most unexampled case of a lucky beggar that ever was known—and to hear him panting and ready to whimper!—it's outrageous. You've only to put up your name, and there you are—an independent gentleman! By Jove! this isn't such a dull world. John Raikes! thou livest in times. I feel warm in the sun of your prosperity, Harrington. Now listen to me. Propound thou no inquiries anywhere about the old fellow who gave the supper. Humour his whim—he won't have it. All Fallow field is paid to keep him secret; I know it for a fact. I plied my rustic friends every night. "Eat you yer victuals, and drink yer beer, and none o' yer pryin's and peerin's among we!" That's my rebuff from Farmer Broadmead. And that old boy knows more than he will tell. I saw his cunning old eye on-cock. Be silent, Harrington. Let discretion be the seal of thy luck.'

'You can reckon on my silence,' said Evan. 'I believe in no such folly. Men don't do these things.'

'Ha!' went Mr. Raikes contemptuously.

Of the two he was the foolisher fellow; but quacks have cured incomprehensible maladies, and foolish fellows have an instinct for eccentric actions.

Telling Jack to finish the wine, Evan rose to go.

'Did you order the horse to be fed?'

'Did I order the feeding of the horse?' said Jack, rising and yawning. 'No, I forgot him. Who can think of horses now?'

'Poor brute!' muttered Evan, and went out to see to him.

The ostler had required no instructions to give the horse a feed of corn. Evan mounted, and rode out of the yard to where Jack was standing, bare-headed, in his old posture against the pillar, of which the shade had rounded, and the evening sun shone full on him over a black cloud. He now looked calmly gay.

'I 'm laughing at the agricultural Broadmead!' he said: "'None o' yer pryin's and peerin's!" He thought my powers of amusing prodigious. "Dang 'un, he do maak a chap laugh!" Well, Harrington, that sort of homage isn't much, I admit.'

Raikes pursued: 'There's something in a pastoral life, after all.'

'Pastoral!' muttered Evan. 'I was speaking of you at Beckley, and hope when you're there you won't make me regret my introduction of you. Keep your mind on old Cudford's mutton-bone.'

'I perfectly understood you,' said Jack. 'I 'm Presumed to be in luck. Ingratitude is not my fault—I'm afraid ambition is!'

'Console yourself with it or what you can get till we meet—here or in London. But the Dragon shall be the address for both of us,' Evan said, and nodded, trotting off.

CHAPTER XVIII. IN WHICH EVAN CALLS HIMSELF GENTLEMAN

The young cavalier perused that letter again in memory. Genuine, or a joke of the enemy, it spoke wakening facts to him. He leapt from the spell Rose had encircled him with. Strange that he should have rushed into his dream with eyes open! But he was fully awake now. He would speak his last farewell to her, and so end the earthly happiness he paid for in deep humiliation,

and depart into that gray cold mist where his duty lay. It is thus that young men occasionally design to burst from the circle of the passions, and think that they have done it, when indeed they are but making the circle more swiftly. Here was Evan mouthing his farewell to Rose, using phrases so profoundly humble, that a listener would have taken them for bitter irony. He said adieu to her,—pronouncing it with a pathos to melt scornful princesses. He tried to be honest, and was as much so as his disease permitted.

The black cloud had swallowed the sun; and turning off to the short cut across the downs, Evan soon rode between the wind and the storm. He could see the heavy burden breasting the beacon-point, round which curled leaden arms, and a low internal growl saluted him advancing. The horse laid back his ears. A last gust from the opposing quarter shook the furzes and the clumps of long pale grass, and straight fell columns of rattling white rain, and in a minute he was closed in by a hissing ring. Men thus pelted abandon without protest the hope of retaining a dry particle of clothing on their persons. Completely drenched, the track lost, everything in dense gloom beyond the white enclosure that moved with him, Evan flung the reins to the horse, and curiously watched him footing on; for physical discomfort balanced his mental perturbation, and he who had just been chafing was now quite calm.

Was that a shepherd crouched under the thorn? The place betokened a shepherd, but it really looked like a bundle of the opposite sex; and it proved to be a woman gathered up with her gown over her head. Apparently, Mr. Evan Harrington was destined for these encounters. The thunder rolled as he stopped by her side and called out to her. She heard him, for she made a movement, but without sufficiently disengaging her head of its covering to show him a part of her face.

Bellowing against the thunder, Evan bade her throw back her garment, and stand and give him up her arms, that he might lift her on the horse behind him.

There came a muffled answer, on a big sob, as it seemed. And as if heaven paused to hear, the storm was mute.

Could he have heard correctly? The words he fancied he had heard sobbed were:

'Best bonnet.'

The elements hereupon crashed deep and long from end to end, like a table of Titans passing a jest.

Rain-drops, hard as hail, were spattering a pool on her head. Evan stooped his shoulder, seized the soaked garment, and pulled it back, revealing the features of Polly Wheedle, and the splendid bonnet in ruins—all limp and stained.

Polly blinked at him penitentially.

'Oh, Mr. Harrington; oh, ain't I punished!' she whimpered.

In truth, the maid resembled a well-watered poppy.

Evan told her to stand up close to the horse, and Polly stood up close, looking like a creature that expected a whipping. She was suffering, poor thing, from that abject sense of the lack of a circumference, which takes the pride out of women more than anything. Note, that in all material fashions, as in all moral observances, women demand a circumference, and enlarge it more and more as civilization advances. Respect the mighty instinct, however mysterious it seem.

'Oh, Mr. Harrington, don't laugh at me,' said Polly.

Evan assured her that he was seriously examining her bonnet.

'It 's the bonnet of a draggletail,' said Polly, giving up her arms, and biting her under-lip for the lift.

With some display of strength, Evan got the lean creature up behind him, and Polly settled there, and squeezed him tightly with her arms, excusing the liberty she took.

They mounted the beacon, and rode along the ridge whence the West became visible, and a washed edge of red over Beckley Church spire and the woods of Beckley Court.

'And what have you been doing to be punished? What brought you here?' said Evan.

'Somebody drove me to Fallow field to see my poor sister Susan,' returned Polly, half crying.

'Well, did he bring you here and leave you?

'No: he wasn't true to his appointment the moment I wanted to go back; and I, to pay him out, I determined I'd walk it where he shouldn't overtake me, and on came the storm... And my gown spoilt, and such a bonnet!'

'Who was the somebody?'

'He's a Mr. Nicholas Frim, sir.'

'Mr. Nicholas Frim will be very unhappy, I should think.'

'Yes, that's one comfort,' said Polly ruefully, drying her eyes.

Closely surrounding a young man as a young woman must be when both are on the same horse, they, as a rule, talk confidentially together in a very short time. His 'Are you cold?' when Polly shivered, and her 'Oh, no; not very,' and a slight screwing of her body up to him, as she spoke, to assure him and herself of it, soon made them intimate.

'I think Mr. Nicholas Frim mustn't see us riding into Beckley,' said Evan.

'Oh, my gracious! Ought I to get down, sir?' Polly made no move, however.

'Is he jealous?'

'Only when I make him, he is.'

'That's very naughty of you.'

'Yes, I know it is—all the Wheedles are. Mother says, we never go right till we 've once got in a pickle.'

'You ought to go right from this hour,' said Evan.

'It's 'dizenzy—[?? D.W.]—does it,' said Polly. 'And then we're ashamed to show it. My poor Susan went to stay with her aunt at Bodley, and then at our cousin's at Hillford, and then she was off to Lymport to drown her poor self, I do believe, when you met her. And all because we can't bear to be seen when we 're in any of our pickles. I wish you wouldn't look at me, Mr. Harrington.'

'You look very pretty.'

'It 's quite impossible I can now,' said Polly, with a wretched effort to spread open her collar. 'I can see myself a fright, like my Miss Rose did, making a face in the looking-glass when I was undressing her last night. But, do you know, I would much rather Nicholas saw us than somebody!

'Who's that?'

'Miss Bonner. She'd never forgive me.'

'Is she so strict?'

'She only uses servants for spies,' said Polly. 'And since my Miss Rose come—though I'm up a step—I'm still a servant, and Miss Bonner 'd be in a fury to see my—though I'm sure we're quite respectable, Mr. Harrington—my having hold of you as I'm obliged to, and can't help myself. But she'd say I ought to tumble off rather than touch her engaged with a little finger.'

'Her engaged?' cried Evan.

'Ain't you, sir?' quoth Polly. 'I understand you were going to be, from my lady, the Countess. We all think so at Beckley. Why, look how Miss Bonner looks at you, and she's sure to have plenty of money.'

This was Polly's innocent way of bringing out a word about her own young mistress.

Evan controlled any denial of his pretensions to the hand of Miss Bonner. He said: 'Is it your mistress's habit to make faces in the looking-glass?'

'I'll tell you how it happened,' said Polly. 'But I'm afraid I'm in your way, sir. Shall I get off now?'

'Not by any means,' said Evan. 'Make your arm tighter.'

'Will that do?' asked Polly.

Evan looked round and met her appealing face, over which the damp locks of hair straggled. The maid was fair: it was fortunate that he was thinking of the mistress.

'Speak on,' said Evan, but Polly put the question whether her face did not want washing, and so earnestly that he had to regard it again, and compromised the case by saying that it wanted kissing by Nicholas Frim, which set Polly's lips in a pout.

'I 'm sure it wants kissing by nobody,' she said, adding with a spasm of passion: 'Oh! I know the colours of my bonnet are all smeared over it, and I'm a dreadful fright.'

Evan failed to adopt the proper measures to make Miss Wheedle's mind easy with regard to her appearance, and she commenced her story rather languidly.

'My Miss Rose—what was it I was going to tell? Oh!—my Miss Rose. You must know, Mr. Harrington, she's very fond of managing; I can see that, though I haven't known her long before she gave up short frocks; and she said to Mr. Laxley, who's going to marry her some day, "She didn't like my lady, the Countess, taking Mr. Harry to herself like that." I can't a-bear to speak his name, but I suppose he's not a bit more selfish than the rest of men. So Mr. Laxley said—just like the jealousy of men—they needn't talk of women! I'm sure nobody can tell what we have to put up with. We mustn't look out of this eye, or out of the other, but they're up and—oh, dear me! there's such a to-do as never was known—all for nothing!'

'My good girl!' said Evan, recalling her to the subject-matter with all the patience he could command.

'Where was I?' Polly travelled meditatively back. 'I do feel a little cold.'

'Come closer,' said Evan. 'Take this handkerchief—it 's the only dry thing I have—cover your chest with it.'

'The shoulders feel wettest,' Polly replied, 'and they can't be helped. I'll tie it round my neck, if you'll stop, sir. There, now I'm warmer.'

To show how concisely women can narrate when they feel warmer, Polly started off:

'So, you know, Mr. Harrington, Mr. Laxley said—he said to Miss Rose, "You have taken her brother, and she has taken yours." And Miss Rose said, "That was her own business, and nobody else's." And Mr. Laxley said, "He was glad she thought it a fair exchange." I heard it all! And then Miss Rose said—for she can be in a passion about some things"—What do you mean, Ferdinand," was her words, "I insist upon your speaking out." Miss Rose always will call

gentlemen by their Christian names when she likes them; that's always a sign with her. And he wouldn't tell her. And Miss Rose got awful angry, and she's clever, is my Miss Rose, for what does she do, Mr. Harrington, but begins praising you up so that she knew it must make him mad, only because men can't abide praise of another man when it's a woman that says it—meaning, young lady; for my Miss Rose has my respect, however familiar she lets herself be to us that she likes. The others may go and drown themselves. Are you took ill, sir?'

'No,' said Evan, 'I was only breathing.'

'The doctors say it's bad to take such long breaths,' remarked artless Polly. 'Perhaps my arms are pressing you?'

It 's the best thing they can do,' murmured Evan, dejectedly.

'What, sir?'

'Go and drown themselves.'

Polly screwed her lips, as if she had a pin between them, and continued: 'Miss Rose was quite sensible when she praised you as her friend; she meant it—every word; and then sudden what does Mr. Laxley do, but say you was something else besides friend—worse or better; and she was silent, which made him savage, I could hear by his voice. And he said, Mr. Harrington, "You meant it if she did not." "No," says she, "I know better; he's as honest as the day." Out he flew and said such things: he said, Mr. Harrington, you wasn't fit to be Miss Rose's friend, even. Then she said, she heard he had told lies about you to her Mama, and her aunts; but her Mama, my lady, laughed at him, and she at her aunts. Then he said you—oh, abominable of him!'

'What did he say?' asked Evan, waking up.

'Why, if I were to tell my Miss Rose some things of him,' Polly went on, 'she'd never so much as speak to him another instant.'

'What did he say?' Evan repeated.

'I hate him!' cried Polly. 'It's Mr. Laxley that misleads Mr. Harry, who has got his good nature, and means no more harm than he can help. Oh, I didn't hear what he said of you, sir. Only I know it was abominable, because Miss Rose was so vexed, and you were her dearest friend.'

'Well, and about the looking-glass?'

'That was at night, Mr. Harrington, when I was undressing of her. Miss Rose has a beautiful figure, and no need of lacing. But I'd better get down now.'

'For heaven's sake, stay where you are.'

'I tell her she stands as if she'd been drilled for a soldier,' Polly quietly continued. 'You're squeezing my arm with your elbow, Mr. Harrington. It didn't hurt me. So when I had her nearly undressed, we were talking about this and that, and you amongst 'em—and I, you know, rather like you, sir, if you'll not think me too bold—she started off by asking me what was the nickname people gave to tailors. It was one of her whims. I told her they were called snips—I'm off!'

Polly gave a shriek. The horse had reared as if violently stung.

'Go on,' said Evan. 'Hold hard, and go on.'

'Snips—Oh! and I told her they were called snips. It is a word that seems to make you hate the idea. I shouldn't like to hear my intended called snip. Oh, he's going to gallop!'

And off in a gallop Polly was borne.

'Well,' said Evan, 'well?'

'I can't, Mr. Harrington; I have to press you so,' cried Polly; 'and I'm bounced so—I shall bite my tongue.'

After a sharp stretch, the horse fell to a canter, and then trotted slowly, and allowed Polly to finish.

'So Miss Rose was standing sideways to the glass, and she turned her neck, and just as I'd said "snip," I saw her saying it in the glass; and you never saw anything so funny. It was enough to make anybody laugh; but Miss Rose, she seemed as if she couldn't forget how ugly it had made her look. She covered her face with her hands, and she shuddered! It is a word-snip! that makes you seem to despise yourself.'

Beckley was now in sight from the edge of the downs, lying in its foliage dark under the grey sky backed by motionless mounds of vapour. Miss Wheedle to her great surprise was suddenly though safely dropped; and on her return to the ground the damsel instantly 'knew her place,' and curtseyed becoming gratitude for his kindness; but he was off in a fiery gallop, the gall of Demogorgon in his soul.

What 's that the leaves of the proud old trees of Beckley Court hiss as he sweeps beneath them? What has suddenly cut him short? Is he diminished in stature? Are the lackeys sneering? The storm that has passed has marvellously chilled the air.

His sister, the Countess, once explained to him what Demogorgon was, in the sensation it entailed. 'You are skinned alive!' said the Countess. Evan was skinned alive. Fly, wretched young man! Summon your pride, and fly! Fly, noble youth, for whom storms specially travel to tell you that your mistress makes faces in the looking-glass! Fly where human lips and noses are not scornfully distorted, and get thee a new skin, and grow and attain to thy natural height in a more genial sphere! You, ladies and gentlemen, who may have had a matter to conceal, and find

that it is oozing out: you, whose skeleton is seen stalking beside you, you know what it is to be breathed upon: you, too, are skinned alive: but this miserable youth is not only flayed, he is doomed calmly to contemplate the hideous image of himself burning on the face of her he loves; making beauty ghastly. In vain—for he is two hours behind the dinner-bell—Mr. Burley, the butler, bows and offers him viands and wine. How can he eat, with the phantom of Rose there, covering her head, shuddering, loathing him? But he must appear in company: he has a coat, if he has not a skin. Let him button it, and march boldly. Our comedies are frequently youth's tragedies. We will smile reservedly as we mark Mr. Evan Harrington step into the midst of the fair society of the drawing-room. Rose is at the piano. Near her reclines the Countess de Saldar, fanning the languors from her cheeks, with a word for the diplomatist on one side, a whisper for Sir John Loring on the other, and a very quiet pair of eyes for everybody. Providence, she is sure, is keeping watch to shield her sensitive cuticle; and she is besides exquisitely happy, albeit outwardly composed: for, in the room sits his Grace the Duke of Belfield, newly arrived. He is talking to her sister, Mrs. Strike, masked by Miss Current. The wife of the Major has come this afternoon, and Andrew Cogglesby, who brought her, chats with Lady Jocelyn like an old acquaintance.

Evan shakes the hands of his relatives. Who shall turn over the leaves of the fair singer's music-book? The young men are in the billiard-room: Drummond is engaged in converse with a lovely person with Giorgione hair, which the Countess intensely admires, and asks the diplomatist whether he can see a soupcon of red in it. The diplomatist's taste is for dark beauties: the Countess is dark.

Evan must do duty by Rose. And now occurred a phenomenon in him. Instead of shunning her, as he had rejoiced in doing after the Jocasta scene, ere she had wounded him, he had a curious desire to compare her with the phantom that had dispossessed her in his fancy. Unconsciously when he saw her, he transferred the shame that devoured him, from him to her, and gazed coldly at the face that could twist to that despicable contortion.

He was in love, and subtle love will not be shamed and smothered. Love sits, we must remember, mostly in two hearts at the same time, and the one that is first stirred by any of the passions to wakefulness, may know more of the other than its owner. Why had Rose covered her head and shuddered? Would the girl feel that for a friend? If his pride suffered, love was not so downcast; but to avenge him for the cold she had cast on him, it could be critical, and Evan made his bearing to her a blank.

This somehow favoured him with Rose. Sheep's eyes are a dainty dish for little maids, and we know how largely they indulge in it; but when they are just a bit doubtful of the quality of the sheep, let the good animal shut his lids forthwith, for a time. Had she not been a little unkind to him in the morning? She had since tried to help him, and that had appeased her conscience, for in truth he was a good young man. Those very words she mentally pronounced, while he was thinking, 'Would she feel it for a friend?' We dare but guess at the puzzle young women present now and then, but I should say that Evan was nearer the mark, and that the 'good young man' was a sop she threw to that within her which wanted quieting, and was thereby passably quieted. Perhaps the good young man is offended? Let us assure him of our disinterested graciousness.

'Is your friend coming?' she asked, and to his reply said, 'I'm glad'; and pitched upon a new song-one that, by hazard, did not demand his attentions, and he surveyed the company to find a vacant seat with a neighbour. Juley Bonner was curled up on the sofa, looking like a damsel who has lost the third volume of an exciting novel, and is divining the climax. He chose to avoid Miss Bonner. Drummond was leaving the side of the Giorgione lady. Evan passed leisurely, and Drummond said 'You know Mrs. Evremonde? Let me introduce you.'

He was soon in conversation with the glorious-haired dame.

'Excellently done, my brother!' thinks the Countess de Saldar.

Rose sees the matter coolly. What is it to her? But she had finished with song. Jenny takes her place at the piano; and, as Rose does not care for instrumental music, she naturally talks and laughs with Drummond, and Jenny does not altogether like it, even though she is not playing to the ear of William Harvey, for whom billiards have such attractions; but, at the close of the performance, Rose is quiet enough, and the Countess observes her sitting, alone, pulling the petals of a flower in her lap, on which her eyes are fixed. Is the doe wounded? The damsel of the disinterested graciousness is assuredly restless. She starts up and goes out upon the balcony to breathe the night-air, mayhap regard the moon, and no one follows her.

Had Rose been guiltless of offence, Evan might have left Beckley Court the next day, to cherish his outraged self-love. Love of woman is strongly distinguished from pure egoism when it has got a wound: for it will not go into a corner complaining, it will fight its duel on the field or die. Did the young lady know his origin, and scorn him? He resolved to stay and teach her that the presumption she had imputed to him was her own mistake. And from this Evan graduated naturally enough the finer stages of self-deception downward.

A lover must have his delusions, just as a man must have a skin. But here was another singular change in Evan. After his ale-prompted speech in Fallow field, he was nerved to face the truth in the eyes of all save Rose. Now that the truth had enmeshed his beloved, he turned to battle with it; he was prepared to deny it at any moment; his burnt flesh was as sensitive as the Countess's.

Let Rose accuse him, and he would say, 'This is true, Miss Jocelyn—what then?' and behold Rose confused and dumb! Let not another dare suspect it. For the fire that had scorched him was in some sort healing, though horribly painful; but contact with the general air was not to be endured—was death! This, I believe, is common in cases of injury by fire. So it befell that Evan, meeting Rose the next morning was playfully asked by her what choice he had made between the white and the red; and he, dropping on her the shallow eyes of a conventional smile, replied, that unable to decide and form a choice, he had thrown both away; at which Miss Jocelyn gave him a look in the centre of his brows, let her head slightly droop, and walked off.

'She can look serious as well as grimace,' was all that Evan allowed himself to think, and he strolled out on the lawn with the careless serenity of lovers when they fancy themselves heart-free.

Rose, whipping the piano in the drawing-room, could see him go to sit by Mrs. Evremonde, till they were joined by Drummond, when he left her and walked with Harry, and apparently shadowed the young gentleman's unreflective face; after which Harry was drawn away by the appearance of that dark star, the Countess de Saldar, whom Rose was beginning to detest. Jenny glided by William Harvey's side, far off. Rose, the young Queen of Friendship, was left deserted on her music-stool for a throne, and when she ceased to hammer the notes she was insulted by a voice that cried from below:

'Go on, Rose, it's nice in the sun to hear you,' causing her to close her performances and the instrument vigorously.

Rose was much behind her age: she could not tell what was the matter with her. In these little torments young people have to pass through they gain a rapid maturity. Let a girl talk with her own heart an hour, and she is almost a woman. Rose came down-stairs dressed for riding. Laxley was doing her the service of smoking one of her rose-trees. Evan stood disengaged, prepared for her summons. She did not notice him, but beckoned to Laxley drooping over a bud, while the curled smoke floated from his lips.

'The very gracefullest of chimney-pots-is he not?' says the Countess to Harry, whose immense guffaw fails not to apprise Laxley that something has been said of him, for in his dim state of consciousness absence of the power of retort is the prominent feature, and when he has the suspicion of malicious tongues at their work, all he can do is silently to resent it. Probably this explains his conduct to Evan. Some youths have an acute memory for things that have shut their mouths.

The Countess observed to Harry that his dear friend Mr. Laxley appeared, by the cast of his face, to be biting a sour apple.

'Grapes, you mean?' laughed Harry. 'Never mind! she'll bite at him when he comes in for the title.'

'Anything crude will do,' rejoined the Countess. 'Why are you not courting Mrs. Evremonde, naughty Don?'

'Oh! she's occupied—castle's in possession. Besides—!' and Harry tried hard to look sly.

'Come and tell me about her,' said the Countess.

Rose, Laxley, and Evan were standing close together.

'You really are going alone, Rose?' said Laxley.

'Didn't I say so?—unless you wish to join us?' She turned upon Evan.

'I am at your disposal,' said Evan.

Rose nodded briefly.

'I think I'll smoke the trees,' said Laxley, perceptibly huffing.

'You won't come, Ferdinand?'

'I only offered to fill up the gap. One does as well as another.'

Rose flicked her whip, and then declared she would not ride at all, and, gathering up her skirts, hurried back to the house.

As Laxley turned away, Evan stood before him.

The unhappy fellow was precipitated by the devil of his false position.

'I think one of us two must quit the field; if I go I will wait for you,' he said.

'Oh; I understand,' said Laxley. 'But if it 's what I suppose you to mean, I must decline.'

'I beg to know your grounds.'

'You have tied my hands.'

'You would escape under cover of superior station?'

'Escape! You have only to unsay—tell me you have a right to demand it.'

The battle of the sophist victorious within him was done in a flash, as Evan measured his qualities beside this young man's, and without a sense of lying, said: 'I have.'

He spoke firmly. He looked the thing he called himself now. The Countess, too, was a dazzling shield to her brother. The beautiful Mrs. Strike was a completer vindicator of him; though he had queer associates, and talked oddly of his family that night in Fallow field.

'Very well, sir: I admit you manage to annoy me,' said Laxley. 'I can give you a lesson as well as another, if you want it.'

Presently the two youths were seen bowing in the stiff curt style of those cavaliers who defer a passage of temper for an appointed settlement. Harry rushed off to them with a shout, and they separated; Laxley speaking a word to Drummond, Evan—most judiciously, the Countess thought—joining his fair sister Caroline, whom the Duke held in converse.

Drummond returned laughing to the side of Mrs. Evremonde, nearing whom, the Countess, while one ear was being filled by Harry's eulogy of her brother's recent handling of Laxley, and while her intense gratification at the success of her patient management of her most difficult subject

made her smiles no mask, heard, 'Is it not impossible to suppose such a thing?' A hush ensued—the Countess passed.

In the afternoon, the Jocelyns, William Harvey, and Drummond met together to consult about arranging the dispute; and deputations went to Laxley and to Evan. The former demanded an apology for certain expressions that day; and an equivalent to an admission that Mr. Harrington had said, in Fallow field, that he was not a gentleman, in order to escape the consequences. All the Jocelyns laughed at his tenacity, and 'gentleman' began to be bandied about in ridicule of the arrogant lean-headed adolescent. Evan was placable enough, but dogged; he declined to make any admission, though within himself he admitted that his antagonist was not in the position of an impostor; which he for one honest word among them would be exposed as being, and which a simple exercise of resolution to fly the place would save him from being further.

Lady Jocelyn enjoyed the fun, and still more the serious way in which her relatives regarded it.

'This comes of Rose having friends, Emily,' said Mrs. Shorne.

There would have been a dispute to arrange between Lady Jocelyn and Mrs. Shorne, had not her ladyship been so firmly established in her phlegmatic philosophy. She said: 'Quelle enfantillage! I dare say Rose was at the bottom of it: she can settle it best. Defer the encounter between the boys until they see they are in the form of donkeys. They will; and then they'll run on together, as long as their goddess permits.'

'Indeed, Emily,' said Mrs. Shorne, 'I desire you, by all possible means, to keep the occurrence secret from Rose. She ought not to hear of it.'

'No; I dare say she ought not,' returned Lady Jocelyn; 'but I wager you she does. You can teach her to pretend not to, if you like. Ecce signum.'

Her ladyship pointed through the library window at Rose, who was walking with Laxley, and showing him her pearly teeth in return for one of his jokes: an exchange so manifestly unfair, that Lady Jocelyn's womanhood, indifferent as she was, could not but feel that Rose had an object in view; which was true, for she was flattering Laxley into a consent to meet Evan half way.

The ladies murmured and hummed of these proceedings, and of Rose's familiarity with Mr. Harrington; and the Countess in trepidation took Evan to herself, and spoke to him seriously; a thing she had not done since her residence in Beckley. She let him see that he must be on a friendly footing with everybody in the house, or go which latter alternative Evan told her he had decided on. 'Yes,' said the Countess, 'and then you give people full warrant to say it was jealousy drove you hence; and you do but extinguish yourself to implicate dear Rose. In love, Evan, when you run away, you don't live to fight another day.'

She was commanded not to speak of love.

'Whatever it may be, my dear,' said the Countess, 'Mr. Laxley has used you ill. It may be that you put yourself at his feet'; and his sister looked at him, sighing a great sigh. She had, with violence, stayed her mouth concerning what she knew of the Fallow field business, dreading to alarm his sensitiveness; but she could not avoid giving him a little slap. It was only to make him remember by the smart that he must always suffer when he would not be guided by her.

Evan professed to the Jocelyns that he was willing to apologize to Laxley for certain expressions; determining to leave the house when he had done it. The Countess heard and nodded. The young men, sounded on both sides, were accordingly lured to the billiard-room, and pushed together: and when he had succeeded in thrusting the idea of Rose from the dispute, it did seem such folly to Evan's common sense, that he spoke with pleasant bonhommie about it. That done, he entered into his acted part, and towered in his conceit considerably above these aristocratic boors, who were speechless and graceless, but tigers for their privileges and advantages.

It will not be thought that the Countess intended to permit her brother's departure. To have toiled, and yet more, to have lied and fretted her conscience, for nothing, was as little her principle, as to quit the field of action till she is forcibly driven from it is that of any woman.

'Going, my dear,' she said coolly. 'To-morrow? Oh! very well. You are the judge. And this creature—the insolvent to the apple-woman, who is coming, whom you would push here—will expose us, without a soul to guide his conduct, for I shall not remain. And Carry will not remain. Carry—-!' The Countess gave a semisob. 'Carry must return to her brute—' meaning the gallant Marine, her possessor.

And the Countess, knowing that Evan loved his sister Caroline, incidentally related to him an episode in the domestic life of Major and Mrs. Strike.

'Greatly redounding to the credit of the noble martinet for the discipline he upholds,' the Countess said, smiling at the stunned youth.

'I would advise you to give her time to recover from one bruise,' she added. 'You will do as it pleases you.'

Evan was sent rushing from the Countess to Caroline, with whom the Countess was content to leave him.

The young man was daintily managed. Caroline asked him to stay, as she did not see him often, and (she brought it in at the close) her home was not very happy. She did not entreat him, but looking resigned, her lovely face conjured up the Major to Evan, and he thought, 'Can I drive her back to her tyrant?' For so he juggled with himself to have but another day in the sunshine of Rose.

Andrew, too, threw out genial hints about the Brewery. Old Tom intended to retire, he said, and then they would see what they would see! He silenced every word about Lymport; called him a brewer already, and made absurd jokes, that were serviceable stuff nevertheless to the Countess,

who deplored to this one and to that the chance existing that Evan might, by the urgent solicitations of his brother-in-law, give up diplomacy and its honours for a brewery and lucre!

Of course Evan knew that he was managed. The memoirs of a managed man have yet to be written; but if he be sincere he will tell you that he knew it all the time. He longed for the sugar-plum; he knew it was naughty to take it: he dared not for fear of the devil, and he shut his eyes while somebody else popped it into his mouth, and assumed his responsibility. Being man-driven or chicaned, is different from being managed. Being managed implies being led the way this other person thinks you should go: altogether for your own benefit, mind: you are to see with her eyes, that you may not disappoint your own appetites: which does not hurt the flesh, certainly; but does damage the conscience; and from the moment you have once succumbed, that function ceases to perform its office of moral strainer so well.

After all, was he not happier when he wrote himself tailor, than when he declared himself gentleman?

So he now imagined, till Rose, wishing him 'Good night' on the balcony, and abandoning her hand with a steady sweet voice and gaze, said: 'How generous of you to forgive my friend, dear Evan!' And the ravishing little glimpse of womanly softness in her, set his heart beating. If he thought at all, it was that he would have sacrificed body and soul for her.

END OF VOLUME-3

Freeditorial