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THE EUSTACE DIAMONDS.

VOL. II.

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THE

EUSTACE DIAMONDS.

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

LUCY MORRIS MISBEHAVES.

Lucy Morris got her letter and was contented. She wanted some demonstration of love from her lover, but very little sufficed for her comfort. With her it was almost impossible that a man should be loved and suspected at the same time. She could not have loved the man, or at any rate confessed her love, without thinking well of him; and she could not think good and evil at the same time. She had longed for some word from him since she last saw him; and now she had got a word. She had known that he was close to his fair cousin—the cousin whom she despised, and whom, with womanly instinct, she had almost regarded as a rival. But to her the man had spoken out; and though he was far away from her, living close to the fair cousin, she would not allow a thought of trouble on that score to annoy her. He was her own, and
let Lizzie Eustace do her worst, he would remain her own. But she had longed to be told that he was thinking of her, and at last the letter had come. She answered it that same night with the sweetest, prettiest little letter, very short, full of love and full of confidence. Lady Fawn, she said, was the dearest of women;—but what was Lady Fawn to her, or all the Fawns, compared with her lover? If he could come to Richmond without disturbance to himself, let him come; but if he felt that, in the present unhappy condition of affairs between him and Lord Fawn, it was better that he should stay away, she had not a word to say in the way of urging him. To see him would be a great delight. But had she not the greater delight of knowing that he loved her? That was quite enough to make her happy. Then there was a little prayer that God might bless him, and an assurance that she was in all things his own, own Lucy. When she was writing her letter she was in all respects a happy girl.

But on the very next day there came a cloud upon her happiness,—not in the least, however, affecting her full confidence in her lover. It was a Saturday, and Lord Fawn came down to Richmond. Lord Fawn had seen Mr. Greystock in London on that day, and the interview had been by no means pleasant to him. The Under-Secretary of State for India was as dark as a November day when he reached his mother's house, and there fell upon every one the intermittent cold drizzling shower of his displeasure from
Lucy Morris misbehaves.

the moment in which he entered the house. There was never much reticence among the ladies at Richmond in Lucy's presence, and since the completion of Lizzie's unfortunate visit to Fawn Court, they had not hesitated to express open opinions adverse to the prospects of the proposed bride. Lucy herself could say but little in defence of her old friend, who had lost all claim upon that friendship since the offer of the bribe had been made,—so that it was understood among them all that Lizzie was to be regarded as a black sheep;—but hitherto Lord Fawn himself had concealed his feelings before Lucy. Now unfortunately he spoke out, and in speaking was especially bitter against Frank. "Mr. Greystock has been most insolent," he said, as they were all sitting together in the library after dinner. Lady Fawn made a sign to him and shook her head. Lucy felt the hot blood fly into both her cheeks, but at the moment she did not speak. Lydia Fawn put out her hand beneath the table and took hold of Lucy's. "We must all remember that he is her cousin," said Augusta.

"His relationship to Lady Eustace cannot justify ungentleman-like impertinence to me," said Lord Fawn. "He has dared to use words to me which would make it necessary that I should call him out, only——"

"Frederic, you shall do nothing of the kind!" said Lady Fawn, jumping up from her chair.

"Oh, Frederic, pray, pray don't!" said Augusta, springing on to her brother's shoulder.
"I am sure Frederic does not mean that," said Amelia.
"Only that nobody does call anybody out now," added the pacific lord. "But nothing on earth shall ever induce me to speak again to a man who is so little like a gentleman." Lydia now held Lucy's hand still tighter, as though to prevent her rising. "He has never forgiven me," continued Lord Fawn, "because he was so ridiculously wrong about the Sawab."
"I am sure that had nothing to do with it," said Lucy.
"Miss Morris, I shall venture to hold my own opinion," said Lord Fawn.
"And I shall hold mine," said Lucy bravely. "The Sawab of Mygawb had nothing to do with what Mr. Greystock may have said or done about his cousin. I am quite sure of it."
"Lucy, you are forgetting yourself," said Lady Fawn.
"Lucy, dear, you shouldn't contradict my brother," said Augusta.
"Take my advice, Lucy, and let it pass by," said Amelia.
"How can I hear such things said and not notice them?" demanded Lucy. "Why does Lord Fawn say them when I am by?"
Lord Fawn had now condescended to be full of wrath against his mother's governess. "I suppose I may express my own opinion, Miss Morris, in my mother's house."
"And I shall express mine," said Lucy. "Mr. Greystock is a gentleman. If you say that he is not a gentleman, it is not true." Upon hearing these terrible words spoken, Lord Fawn rose from his seat and slowly left the room. Augusta followed him with both her arms stretched out. Lady Fawn covered her face with her hands, and even Amelia was dismayed.

"O Lucy! why could you not hold your tongue?" said Lydia.

"I won't hold my tongue!" said Lucy, bursting out into tears. "He is a gentleman."

Then there was great commotion at Fawn Court. After a few moments Lady Fawn followed her son without having said a word to Lucy, and Amelia went with her. Poor Lucy was left with the younger girls, and was no doubt very unhappy. But she was still indignant, and would yield nothing. When Georgina, the fourth daughter, pointed out to her that, in accordance with all rules of good breeding, she should have abstained from asserting that her brother had spoken an untruth, she blazed up again. "It was untrue," she said.

"But, Lucy, people never accuse each other of untruth. No lady should use such a word to a gentleman."

"He should not have said so. He knows that Mr. Greystock is more to me than all the world."

"If I had a lover," said Nina, "and anybody were to say a word against him, I know I'd fly at them."
The Eustace Diamonds.

I don't know why Frederic is to have it all his own way."

"Nina, you're a fool," said Diana.

"I do think it was very hard for Lucy to bear," said Lydia.

"And I won't bear it!" exclaimed Lucy. "To think that Mr. Greystock should be so mean as to bear malice about a thing like that wild Indian because he takes his own cousin's part! Of course I'd better go away. You all think that Mr. Greystock is an enemy now; but he never can be an enemy to me."

"We think that Lady Eustace is an enemy," said Cecilia, "and a very nasty enemy, too."

"I did not say a word about Lady Eustace," said Lucy. "But Mr. Greystock is a gentleman."

About an hour after this Lady Fawn sent for Lucy, and the two were closeted together for a long time. Lord Fawn was very angry, and had hitherto altogether declined to overlook the insult offered. "I am bound to tell you," declared Lady Fawn, with much emphasis, "that nothing can justify you in having accused Lord Fawn of telling an untruth. Of course, I was sorry that Mr. Greystock's name should have been mentioned in your presence; but as it was mentioned, you should have borne what was said with patience."

"I couldn't be patient, Lady Fawn."

"That is what wicked people say when they commit murder, and then they are hung for it."

"I'll go away, Lady Fawn——"

"That is ungrateful, my dear. You know that I
Lucy Morris misbehaves.

don't wish you to go away. But if you behave badly, of course I must tell you of it."

"I'd sooner go away. Everybody here thinks ill of Mr. Greystock. But I don't think ill of Mr. Greystock, and I never shall. Why did Lord Fawn say such very hard things about him?"

It was suggested to her that she should be down-stairs early the next morning, and apologise to Lord Fawn for her rudeness; but she would not, on that night, undertake to do any such thing. Let Lady Fawn say what she might, Lucy thought that the injury had been done to her, and not to his lordship. And so they parted hardly friends. Lady Fawn gave her no kiss as she went, and Lucy, with obstinate pride, altogether refused to own her fault. She would only say that she had better go, and when Lady Fawn over and over again pointed out to her that the last thing that such a one as Lord Fawn could bear was to be accused of an untruth, she would continue to say that in that case he should be careful to say nothing that was untrue. All this was very dreadful, and created great confusion and unhappiness at Fawn Court. Lydia came into her room that night, and the two girls talked the matter over for hours. In the morning Lucy was up early, and found Lord Fawn walking in the grounds. She had been told that he would probably be found walking in the grounds, if she were willing to tender to him any apology.

Her mind had been very full of the subject,—not only in reference to her lover, but as it regarded her
own conduct. One of the elder Fawn girls had assured her that under no circumstances could a lady be justified in telling a gentleman that he had spoken an untruth, and she was not quite sure but that the law so laid down was right. And then she could not but remember that the gentleman in question was Lord Fawn, and that she was Lady Fawn's governess. But Mr. Greystock was her affianced lover, and her first duty was to him. And then, granting that she herself had been wrong in accusing Lord Fawn of untruth, she could not refrain from asking herself whether he had not been much more wrong in saying in her hearing that Mr. Greystock was not a gentleman? And his offence had preceded her offence, and had caused it! She hardly knew whether she did or did not owe an apology to Lord Fawn, but she was quite sure that Lord Fawn owed an apology to her.

She walked straight up to Lord Fawn, and met him beneath the trees. He was still black and solemn, and was evidently brooding over his grievance; but he bowed to her, and stood still as she approached him. "My lord," said she, "I am very sorry for what happened last night."

"And so was I,—very sorry, Miss Morris."

"I think you know that I am engaged to marry Mr. Greystock?"

"I cannot allow that that has anything to do with it."

"When you think that he must be dearer to me than all the world, you will acknowledge that I couldn't
Lucy Morris misbehaves.

hear hard things said of him without speaking.” His face became blacker than ever, but he made no reply. He wanted an abject begging of unconditional pardon from the little girl who loved his enemy. If that were done, he would vouchsafe his forgiveness; but he was too small by nature to grant it on other terms. “Of course,” continued Lucy, “I am bound to treat you with special respect in Lady Fawn’s house.” She looked almost beseechingly into his face as she paused for a moment.

“But you treated me with especial disrespect,” said Lord Fawn.

“And how did you treat me, Lord Fawn?”

“Miss Morris, I must be allowed, in discussing matters with my mother, to express my own opinions in such language as I may think fit to use. Mr. Greystock’s conduct to me was,—was,—was altogether most un-gentlemanlike.”

“Mr. Greystock is a gentleman.”

“His conduct was most offensive, and most,—most ungentlemanlike. Mr. Greystock disgraced himself.”

“It isn’t true!” said Lucy. Lord Fawn gave one start, and then walked off to the house as quick as his legs could carry him.
CHAPTER XXVIII.

MR. DOVE IN HIS CHAMBERS.

The scene between Lord Fawn and Greystock had taken place in Mr. Camperdown's chambers, and John Eustace had also been present. The lawyer had suffered considerable annoyance, before the arrival of the two first-named gentlemen, from reiterated assertions made by Eustace that he would take no further trouble whatsoever about the jewels. Mr. Camperdown had in vain pointed out to him that a plain duty lay upon him as executor and guardian to protect the property on behalf of his nephew, but Eustace had asserted that, though he himself was comparatively a poor man, he would sooner replace the necklace out of his own property, than be subject to the nuisance of such a continued quarrel. "My dear John; ten thousand pounds!" Mr. Camperdown had said. "It is a fortune for a younger son."

"The boy is only two years old, and will have time enough to make fortunes for his own younger sons, if he does not squander everything. If he does, the ten thousand pounds will make no difference."
"But the justice of the thing, John!"

"Justice may be purchased too dearly."

"Such a harpy as she is, too!" pleaded the lawyer. Then Lord Fawn had come in, and Greystock had followed immediately afterwards.

"I may as well say at once," said Greystock, "that Lady Eustace is determined to maintain her right to the property; and that she will not give up the diamonds till some adequate court of law shall have decided that she is mistaken in her views. Stop one moment, Mr. Camperdown. I feel myself bound to go further than that, and express my own opinion that she is right."

"I can hardly understand such an opinion as coming from you," said Mr. Camperdown.

"You have changed your mind, at any rate," said John Eustace.

"Not so, Eustace. Mr. Camperdown, you'll be good enough to understand that my opinion expressed here is that of a friend, and not that of a lawyer. And you must understand, Eustace," continued Greystock, "that I am speaking now of my cousin's right to the property. Though the value be great, I have advised her to give up the custody of it for a while, till the matter shall be clearly decided. That has still been my advice to her, and I have in no respect changed my mind. But she feels that she is being cruelly used, and with a woman's spirit will not, in such circumstances, yield anything. Mr. Camperdown actually stopped her carriage in the street."
"She would not answer a line that anybody wrote to her," said the lawyer.

"And I may say plainly,—for all here know the circumstances,—that Lady Eustace feels the strongest possible indignation at the manner in which she is being treated by Lord Fawn."

"I have only asked her to give up the diamonds till the question should be settled," said Lord Fawn.

"And you backed your request, my lord, by a threat! My cousin is naturally most indignant; and, my lord, you must allow me to tell you that I fully share the feeling."

"There is no use in making a quarrel about it," said Eustace.

"The quarrel is ready made," replied Greystock. "I am here to tell Lord Fawn in your presence, and in the presence of Mr. Camperdown, that he is behaving to a lady with ill-usage, which he would not dare to exercise, did he not know that her position saves him from legal punishment, as do the present usages of society from other consequences."

"I have behaved to her with every possible consideration," said Lord Fawn.

"That is a simple assertion," said the other. "I have made one assertion, and you have made another. The world will have to judge between us. What right have you to take upon yourself to decide whether this thing or that belongs to Lady Eustace, or to any one else?"

"When the thing was talked about I was obliged to
have an opinion," said Lord Fawn, who was still thinking of words in which to reply to the insult offered him by Greystock, without injury to his dignity as an Under-Secretary of State.

"Your conduct, sir, has been altogether inexcusable." Then Frank turned to the attorney. "I have been given to understand that you are desirous of knowing where this diamond necklace is at present. It is at Lady Eustace's house in Scotland;—at Portray Castle." Then he shook hands with John Eustace, bowed to Mr. Camperdown, and succeeded in leaving the room before Lord Fawn had so far collected his senses as to be able to frame his anger into definite words.

"I will never willingly speak to that man again," said Lord Fawn. But as it was not probable that Greystock would greatly desire any further conversation with Lord Fawn, this threat did not carry with it any powerful feeling of severity.

Mr. Camperdown groaned over the matter with thorough vexation of spirit. It seemed to him as though the harpy, as he called her, would really make good her case against him,—at any rate, would make it seem to be good for so long a time, that all the triumph of success would be hers. He knew that she was already in debt, and gave her credit for a propensity to fast living which almost did her an injustice. Of course, the jewels would be sold for half their value, and the harpy would triumph. Of what use to him or to the estate would be a decision of the courts in his favour, when the diamonds should have been broken
up and scattered to the winds of heaven? Ten thousand pounds! It was, to Mr. Camperdown's mind, a thing quite terrible that, in a country which boasts of its laws, and of the execution of its laws, such an impostor as was this widow should be able to lay her dirty, grasping fingers on so great an amount of property, and that there should be no means of punishing her. That Lizzie Eustace had stolen the diamonds, as a pickpocket steals a watch, was a fact as to which Mr. Camperdown had in his mind no shadow of a doubt. And, as the reader knows, he was right. She had stolen them. Mr. Camperdown knew that she had stolen them, and was a wretched man. From the first moment of the late Sir Florian's infatuation about this woman, she had worked woe for Mr. Camperdown. Mr. Camperdown had striven hard,—to the great and almost permanent offence of Sir Florian,—to save Portray from its present condition of degradation; but he had striven in vain. Portray belonged to the harpy for her life; and moreover he himself had been forced to be instrumental in paying over to the harpy a largo sum of Eustace money almost immediately on her becoming a widow. Then had come the affair of the diamonds;—an affair of ten thousand pounds!—as Mr. Camperdown would exclaim to himself, throwing his eyes up to the ceiling. And now it seemed that she was to get the better of him, even in that, although there could not be a shadow of doubt as to her falsehood and fraudulent dishonesty! His luck in the matter was so bad! John Eustace had no backbone,
Mr. Dove in his Chambers.

no spirit, no proper feeling as to his own family. Lord Fawn was as weak as water, and almost disgraced the cause by the accident of his adherence to it. Grey-stock, who would have been a tower of strength, had turned against him, and was now prepared to maintain that the harpy was right. Mr. Camperdown knew that the harpy was wrong,—that she was a harpy, and he would not abandon the cause; but the difficulties in his way were great, and the annoyance to which he was subjected was excessive. His wife and daughters were still at Dawlish, and he was up in town in September, simply because the harpy had the present possession of these diamonds.

Mr. Camperdown was a man turned sixty, handsome, grey-haired, healthy, somewhat florid, and carrying in his face and person external signs of prosperity and that kind of self-assertion which prosperity always produces. But they who knew him best were aware that he did not bear trouble well. In any trouble, such as was this about the necklace, there would come over his face a look of weakness which betrayed the want of real inner strength. How many faces one sees which, in ordinary circumstances, are comfortable, self-asserting, sufficient, and even bold; the lines of which, under difficulties, collapse and become mean, spiritless, and insignificant. There are faces which, in their usual form, seem to bluster with prosperity, but which the loss of a dozen points at whist will reduce to that currish aspect which reminds one of a dog-whip. Mr. Camperdown’s countenance, when Lord Fawn and
Mr. Eustace left him, had fallen away into this mean-
ness of appearance. He no longer carried himself as a
man owning a dog-whip, but rather as the hound that
feared it.

A better attorney, for the purposes to which his life
was devoted, did not exist in London than Mr. Camper-
down. To say that he was honest, is nothing. To
describe him simply as zealous, would be to fall very
short of his merits. The interests of his clients were
his own interests, and the legal rights of the properties
of which he had the legal charge, were as dear to him
as his own blood. But it could not be said of him that
he was a learned lawyer. Perhaps in that branch of
a solicitor's profession in which he had been called
upon to work, experience goes further than learning.
It may be doubted, indeed, whether it is not so in
every branch of every profession. But it might, per-
haps, have been better for Mr. Camperdown had he
devoted more hours of his youth to reading books on
conveyancing. He was now too old for such studies,
and could trust only to the reading of other people.
The reading, however, of other people was always at
his command, and his clients were rich men who did
not mind paying for an opinion. To have an opinion
from Mr. Dove, or some other learned gentleman, was
the everyday practice of his life; and when he obtained,
as he often did, little coigns of legal vantage and subtle
definitions as to property which were comfortable to
him, he would rejoice to think that he could always
have a Dove at his hand to tell him exactly how far he
was justified in going in defence of his clients' interests. But now there had come to him no comfort from his corner of legal knowledge. Mr. Dove had taken extraordinary pains in the matter, and had simply succeeded in throwing over his employer. "A necklace can't be an heirloom!" said Mr. Camperdown to himself, telling off on his fingers half-a-dozen instances in which he had either known or had heard that the head of a family had so arranged the future possession of the family jewels. Then he again read Mr. Dove's opinion; and actually took a law-book off his shelves with the view of testing the correctness of the barrister in reference to some special assertion. A pot or a pan might be an heirloom, but not a necklace! Mr. Camperdown could hardly bring himself to believe that this was law. And then as to paraphernalia! Up to this moment, though he had been called upon to arrange great dealings in reference to widows, he had never as yet heard of a claim made by a widow for paraphernalia. But then the widows with whom he had been called upon to deal, had been ladies quite content to accept the good things settled upon them by the liberal prudence of their friends and husbands,—not greedy, blood-sucking harpies, such as this Lady Eustace. It was quite terrible to Mr. Camperdown that one of his clients should have fallen into such a pit. Mors omnibus est communis. But to have left such a widow behind one!

"John," he said, opening his door. John was his son and partner, and John came to him, having been
The Eustace Diamonds.

summoned by a clerk from another room. "Just shut the door. I've had such a scene here;—Lord Fawn and Mr. Greystock almost coming to blows about that horrid woman."

"The Upper House would have got the worst of it, as it usually does," said the younger attorney.

"And there is John Eustace cares no more what becomes of the property than if he had nothing to do with it;—absolutely talks of replacing the diamonds out of his own pocket; a man whose personal interest in the estate is by no means equal to her own."

"He wouldn't do it, you know," said Camperdown Junior, who did not know the family.

"It's just what he would do," said the father, who did. "There's nothing they wouldn't give away, when once the idea takes them. Think of that woman having the whole Portray estate, perhaps for the next sixty years,—nearly the fee-simple of the property,—just because she made eyes to Sir Florian!"

"That's done and gone father."

"And here's Dove tells us that a necklace can't be an heirloom, unless it belongs to the Crown."

"Whatever he says, you'd better take his word for it."

"I'm not so sure of that. It can't be. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll go over and see him. We can file a bill in Chancery, I don't doubt, and prove that the property belongs to the family, and must go by the will. But she'll sell them before we can get the custody of them."
"Perhaps she has done that already."

"Greystock says they are at Portray, and I believe they are. She was wearing them in London only in July,—a day or two before I saw her as she was leaving town. If anybody like a jeweller had been down at the castle, I should have heard of it. She hasn't sold them yet, but she will."

"She could do that just the same if they were an heirloom."

"No, John. I think not. We could have acted much more quickly, and have frightened her."

"If I were you, father, I'd drop the matter altogether, and let John Eustace replace them if he pleases. We all know that he would never be called on to do anything of the kind. It isn't our sort of business."

"Not ten thousand pounds!" said Camperdown Senior, to whom the magnitude of the larceny almost ennobled the otherwise mean duty of catching the thief. Then Mr. Camperdown rose, and slowly walked across the New Square, Lincoln's Inn, under the low archway, by the entrance to the old court in which Lord Eldon used to sit, to the Old Square, in which the Turtle Dove had built his legal nest on a first floor, close to the old gateway.

Mr. Dove was a gentleman who spent a very great portion of his life in this somewhat gloomy abode of learning. It was not now term time, and most of his brethren were absent from London, recruiting their strength among the Alps, or drinking in vigour for fresh campaigns with the salt sea breezes of Kent and
Sussex, or perhaps shooting deer in Scotland, or catching fish in Connemara. But Mr. Dove was a man of iron, who wanted no such recreation. To be absent from his law-books and the black, littered, ink-stained old table on which he was wont to write his opinions, was, to him, to be wretched. The only exercise necessary to him was that of putting on his wig and going into one of the courts that were close to his chambers; —but even that was almost distasteful to him. He preferred sitting in his old arm-chair, turning over his old books in search of old cases, and producing opinions which he would be prepared to back against all the world of Lincoln’s Inn. He and Mr. Camperdown had known each other intimately for many years, and though the rank of the two men in their profession differed much, they were able to discuss questions of law without any appreciation of that difference among themselves. The one man knew much, and the other little; the one was not only learned, but possessed also of great gifts, while the other was simply an ordinary clear-headed man of business; but they had sympathies in common which made them friends; they were both honest and unwilling to sell their services to dishonest customers; and they equally entertained a deep-rooted contempt for that portion of mankind who thought that property could be managed and protected without the intervention of lawyers. The outside world to them was a world of pretty, laughing, ignorant children; and lawyers were the parents, guardians, pastors and masters by
whom the children should be protected from the evils incident to their childishness.

"Yes, sir; he's here," said the Turtle Dove's clerk. "He is talking of going away, but he won't go. He's told me I can have a week, but I don't know that I like to leave him. Mrs. Dove and the children are down at Ramsgate, and he's here all night. He hadn't been out so long that when he wanted to go as far as the Temple yesterday, we couldn't find his hat." Then the clerk opened the door, and ushered Mr. Camperdown into the room. Mr. Dove was the younger man by five or six years, and his hair was still black. Mr. Camperdown's was nearer white than grey; but, nevertheless, Mr. Camperdown looked as though he were the younger man. Mr. Dove was a long, thin man, with a stoop in his shoulders, with deep-set, hollow eyes, and lanthorn cheeks, and sallow complexion, with long, thin hands, who seemed to acknowledge by every movement of his body and every tone of his voice that old age was creeping on him—whereas the attorney's step was still elastic, and his speech brisk. Mr. Camperdown wore a blue frockcoat, and a coloured cravat, and a light waistcoat. With Mr. Dove every visible article of his raiment was black, except his shirt, and he had that peculiar blackness which a man achieves when he wears a dress-coat over a high black waistcoat in the morning.

"You didn't make much, I fear, of what I sent you about heirlooms," said Mr. Dove, divining the purport of Mr. Camperdown's visit.
A great deal more than I wanted, I can assure you, Mr. Dove."

"There is a common error about heirlooms."

"Very common, indeed, I should say. God bless my soul! when one knows how often the word occurs in family deeds, it does startle one to be told that there isn't any such thing."

"I don't think I said quite so much as that. Indeed, I was careful to point out that the law does acknowledge heirlooms."

"But not diamonds," said the attorney.

"I doubt whether I went quite so far as that."

"Only the Crown diamonds."

"I don't think I ever debarred all other diamonds. A diamond in a star of honour might form a part of an heirloom; but I do not think that a diamond itself could be an heirloom."

"If in a star of honour, why not in a necklace?" argued Mr. Camperdown almost triumphantly.

"Because a star of honour, unless tampered with by fraud, would naturally be maintained in its original form. The setting of a necklace will probably be altered from generation to generation. The one, like a picture or a precious piece of furniture ——"

"Or a pot or a pan," said Mr. Camperdown, with sarcasm.

"Pots and pans may be precious, too," replied the Dove. "Such things can be traced, and can be held as heirlooms without imposing too great difficulties on their guardians. The Law is generally very wise and
prudent, Mr. Camperdown;—much more so often than are they who attempt to improve it."

"I quite agree with you there, Mr. Dove."

"Would the Law do a service, do you think, if it lent its authority to the special preservation in special hands of trinkets only to be used for vanity and ornament? Is that a kind of property over which an owner should have a power of disposition more lasting, more autocratic, than is given him even in regard to land? The land, at any rate, can be traced. It is a thing fixed and known. A string of pearls is not only alterable, but constantly altered, and cannot easily be traced."

"Property of such enormous value should, at any rate, be protected," said Mr. Camperdown indignantly.

"All property is protected, Mr. Camperdown;—although, as we know too well, such protection can never be perfect. But the system of heirlooms, if there can be said to be such a system, was not devised for what you and I mean when we talk of protection of property."

"I should have said that that was just what it was devised for."

"I think not. It was devised with the more picturesque idea of maintaining chivalric associations. Heirlooms have become so, not that the future owners of them may be assured of so much wealth,—whatever the value of the thing so settled may be,—but that the son or grandson or descendant may enjoy the satisfaction which is derived from saying, My father or
my grandfather or my ancestor sat in that chair, or looked as he now looks in that picture, or was graced by wearing on his breast that very ornament which you now see lying beneath the glass. Crown jewels are heirlooms in the same way, as representing not the possession of the sovereign, but the time-honoured dignity of the Crown. The Law, which, in general, concerns itself with our property or lives and our liberties, has in this matter bowed gracefully to the spirit of chivalry and has lent its aid to romance;—but it certainly did not do so to enable the discordant heirs of a rich man to settle a simple dirty question of money, which, with ordinary prudence, the rich man should himself have settled before he died."

The Turtlo Dove had spoken with emphasis and had spoken well, and Mr. Camperdown had not ventured to interrupt him while he was speaking. He was sitting far back on his chair, but with his neck bent and his head forward, rubbing his long thin hands slowly over each other, and with his deep bright eyes firmly fixed on his companion’s face. Mr. Camperdown had not unfrequently heard him speak in the same fashion before, and was accustomed to his manner of unravelling the mysteries and searching into the causes of Law with a spirit which almost lent a poetry to the subject. When Mr. Dove would do so, Mr. Camperdown would not quite understand the words spoken, but he would listen to them with an undoubting reverence. And he did understand them in part, and was conscious of an infusion of a certain
amount of poetic spirit into his own bosom. He would think of these speeches afterwards, and would entertain high but somewhat cloudy ideas of the beauty and the majesty of law. Mr. Dove's speeches did Mr. Camperdown good, and helped to preserve him from that worst of all diseases,—a low idea of humanity.

"You think, then, we had better not claim them as heirlooms?" he asked.

"I think you had better not."

"And you think that she could claim them—as paraphernalia."

"That question has hardly been put to me,—though I allowed myself to wander into it. But for my intimacy with you, I should hardly have ventured to stray so far."

"I need hardly say how much obliged we are. But we will submit one or two other cases to you."

"I am inclined to think the court would not allow them to her as paraphernalia, seeing that their value is excessive as compared with her income and degree; but if it did, it would do so in a fashion that would guard them from alienation."

"She would sell them—under the rose."

"Then she would be guilty of stealing them,—which she would hardly attempt, even if not restrained by honesty, knowing, as she would know, that the greatness of the value would almost assuredly lead to detection. The same feeling would prevent buyers from purchasing."
"She says, you know, that they were given to her, absolutely."

"I should like to know the circumstances."

"Yes;—of course."

"But I should be disposed to think that in equity no allegation by the receiver of such a gift, unsubstantiated either by evidence or by deed, would be allowed to stand. The gentleman left behind him a will, and regular settlements. I should think that the possession of these diamonds,—not, I presume, touched on in the settlements—"

"Oh dear no;—not a word about them."

"I should think, then, that, subject to any claim for paraphernalia, the possession of the diamonds would be ruled by the will." Mr. Camperdown was rushing into the further difficulty of the chattels in Scotland and those in England, when the Turtle Dove stopped him, declaring that he could not venture to discuss matters as to which he knew none of the facts.

"Of course not;—of course not," said Mr. Camperdown. "We'll have cases prepared. I'd apologise for coming at all, only that I get so much from a few words."

"I'm always delighted to see you, Mr. Camperdown," said the Turtle Dove, bowing.
CHAPTER XXIX.

I HAD BETTER GO AWAY.

When Lord Fawn gave a sudden jump and stalked away towards the house on that Sunday morning before breakfast, Lucy Morris was a very unhappy girl. She had a second time accused Lord Fawn of speaking an untruth. She did not quite understand the usages of the world in the matter; but she did know that the one offence which a gentleman is supposed never to commit is that of speaking an untruth. The offence may be one committed oftener than any other by gentlemen,—as also by all other people; but, nevertheless, it is regarded by the usages of society as being the one thing which a gentleman never does. Of all this Lucy understood something. The word "lie" she knew to be utterly abominable. That Lizzie Eustace was a little liar had been acknowledged between herself and the Fawn girls very often,—but to have told Lady Eustace that any word spoken by her was a lie, would have been a worse crime than the lie itself. To have brought such an accusation, in that term, against Lord Fawn, would have been
to degrade herself for ever. Was there any difference between a lie and an untruth? That one must be, and that the other need not be, intentional, she did feel; but she felt also that the less offensive word had come to mean a lie,—the world having been driven so to use it because the world did not dare to talk about lies; and this word, bearing such a meaning in common parlance, she had twice applied to Lord Fawn. And yet, as she was well aware, Lord Fawn had told no lie. He had himself believed every word that he had spoken against Frank Greystock. That he had been guilty of unmanly cruelty in so speaking of her lover in her presence, Lucy still thought, but she should not therefore have accused him of falsehood. "It was untrue all the same," she said to herself, as she stood still on the gravel walk, watching the rapid disappearance of Lord Fawn, and endeavouring to think what she had better now do with herself. Of course, Lord Fawn, like a great child, would at once go and tell his mother what that wicked governess had said to him.

In the hall she met her friend Lydia. "Oh, Lucy, what is the matter with Frederic?" she asked.
"Lord Fawn is very angry indeed."
"With you?"
"Yes;—with me. He is so angry that I am sure he would not sit down to breakfast with me. So I won't come down. Will you tell your mamma? If she likes to send to me, of course I'll go to her at once."
"What have you done, Lucy?"
"I've told him again that what he said wasn't true."
"But why?"
"Because—Oh, how can I say why? Why does any person do everything that she ought not to do? It's the fall of Adam, I suppose."
"You shouldn't make a joke of it, Lucy."
"You can have no conception how unhappy I am about it. Of course, Lady Fawn will tell me to go away. I went out on purpose to beg his pardon for what I said last night, and I just said the very same thing again."
"But why did you say it?"
"And I should say it again and again and again, if he were to go on telling me that Mr. Greystock isn't a gentleman. I don't think he ought to have done it. Of course, I have been very wrong; I know that. But I think he has been wrong too. But I must own it, and he needn't. I'll go up now and stay in my own room till your mamma sends for me."
"And I'll get Jane to bring you some breakfast."
"I don't care a bit about breakfast," said Lucy.

Lord Fawn did tell his mother, and Lady Fawn was perplexed in the extreme. She was divided in her judgment and feelings between the privilege due to Lucy as a girl possessed of an authorised lover,—a privilege which no doubt existed, but which was not extensive,—and the very much greater privilege which attached to Lord Fawn as a man, as a peer, as an Under-Secretary of State,—but which attached to him especially as the head and only man belonging to the
Fawn family. Such a one, when, moved by filial duty, he condescends to come once a week to his mother's house, is entitled to say whatever he pleases, and should on no account be contradicted by any one. Lucy no doubt had a lover,—an authorised lover; but perhaps that fact could not be taken as more than a balancing weight against the inferiority of her position as a governess. Lady Fawn was of course obliged to take her son's part, and would scold Lucy. Lucy must be scolded very seriously. But it would be a thing so desirable if Lucy could be induced to accept her scolding and have done with it, and not to make matters worse by talking of going away! "You don't mean that she came out into the shrubbery, having made up her mind to be rude to you?" said Lady Fawn to her son.

"No;—I do not think that. But her temper is so ungovernable, and she has, if I may say so, been so spoilt among you here,—I mean by the girls, of course,—that she does not know how to restrain herself."

"She is as good as gold, you know, Frederic." He shrugged his shoulders, and declared that he had not a word more to say about it. He could, of course, remain in London till it should suit Mr. Greystock to take his bride. "You'll break my heart if you say that!" exclaimed the unhappy mother. "Of course, she shall leave the house if you wish it."

"I wish nothing," said Lord Fawn. "But I peculiarly object to be told that I am a—liar." Then
he stalked away along the corridor and went down to breakfast, as black as a thunder-cloud.

Lady Fawn and Lucy sat opposite to each other in church, but they did not speak till the afternoon. Lady Fawn went to church in the carriage and Lucy walked, and as Lucy retired to her room immediately on her return to the house, there had not been an opportunity even for a word. After lunch Amelia came up to her and sat down for a long discussion.

"Now, Lucy, something must be done, you know," said Amelia.

"I suppose so."

"Of course, mamma must see you. She can't allow things to go on in this way. Mamma is very unhappy, and didn't eat a morsel of breakfast." By this latter assertion Amelia simply intended to imply that her mother had refused to be helped a second time to fried bacon, as was customary.

"Of course, I shall go to her the moment she sends for me. Oh,—I am so unhappy!"

"I don't wonder at that, Lucy. So is my brother unhappy. These things make people unhappy. It is what the world calls—temper, you know, Lucy."

"Why did he tell me that Mr. Greystock isn't a gentleman? Mr. Greystock is a gentleman. I meant to say nothing more than that."

"But you did say more, Lucy."

"When he said that Mr. Greystock wasn't a gentleman, I told him it wasn't true. Why did he say it? He knows all about it. Everybody knows. Would
you think it wise to come and abuse him to me, when you know what he is to me? I can't bear it, and I won't. I'll go away to-morrow, if your mamma wishes it." But that going away was just what Lady Fawn did not wish.

"I think you know, Lucy, you should express your deep sorrow at what has passed."

"To your brother?"

"Yes."

"Then he would abuse Mr. Greystock again, and it would all be as bad as ever. I'll beg Lord Fawn's pardon if he'll promise beforehand not to say a word about Mr. Greystock."

"You can't expect him to make a bargain like that, Lucy."

"I suppose not. I daresay I'm very wicked, and I must be left wicked. I'm too wicked to stay here. That's the long and the short of it."

"I'm afraid you're proud, Lucy."

"I suppose I am. If it wasn't for all that I owe to everybody here, and that I love you all so much, I should be proud of being proud;—because of Mr. Greystock. Only it kills me to make Lady Fawn unhappy."

Amelia left the culprit, feeling that no good had been done, and Lady Fawn did not see the delinquent till late in the afternoon. Lord Fawn had, in the meantime, wandered out along the river all alone to brood over the condition of his affairs. It had been an evil day for him in which he had first seen Lady
I had better go away.

Eustace. From the first moment of his engagement to her he had been an unhappy man. Her treatment of him, the stories which reached his ears from Mrs. Hittaway and others, Mr. Camperdown's threats of law in regard to the diamonds, and Frank Greystock's insults, altogether made him aware that he could not possibly marry Lady Eustace. But yet he had no proper and becoming way of escaping from the bonds of his engagement. He was a man with a conscience, and was made miserable by the idea of behaving badly to a woman. Perhaps it might have been difficult to analyse his misery, and to decide how much arose from the feeling that he was behaving badly, and how much from the conviction that the world would accuse him of doing so; but, between the two, he was wretched enough. The punishment of the offence had been commenced by Greystock's unavenged insults;—and it now seemed to him that this girl's conduct was a continuation of it. The world was already beginning to treat him with that want of respect which he so greatly dreaded. He knew that he was too weak to stand up against a widely-spread expression of opinion that he had behaved badly. There are men who can walk about the streets with composed countenances, take their seats in Parliament if they happen to have seats, work in their offices, or their chambers, or their counting-houses with diligence, and go about the world serenely, even though everybody be saying evil of them behind their backs. Such men can live down temporary calumny, and almost take a delight in the
isolation which it will produce. Lord Fawn knew well that he was not such a man. He would have described his own weakness as caused, perhaps, by a too thin-skinned sensitiveness. Those who knew him were inclined to say that he lacked strength of character, and, perhaps, courage.

He had certainly engaged himself to marry this widow, and he was most desirous to do what was right. He had said that he would not marry her unless she would give up the necklace, and he was most desirous to be true to his word. He had been twice insulted, and he was anxious to support these injuries with dignity. Poor Lucy's little offence against him rankled in his mind with the other great offences. That this humble friend of his mother's should have been insolent, was a terrible thing to him. He was not sure even whether his own sisters did not treat him with scantier reverence than of yore. And yet he was so anxious to do right, and do his duty in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call him! As to much he was in doubt; but of two things he was quite sure,—that Frank Greystock was a scoundrel, and that Lucy Morris was the most impertinent young woman in England.

"What would you wish to have done, Frederic?" his mother said to him on his return.

"In what respect, mother?"

"About Lucy Morris? I have not seen her yet. I have thought it better that she should be left to herself"
I had better go away.

for a while before I did so. I suppose she must come down to dinner. She always does."

"I do not wish to interfere with the young lady's meals."

"No;—but about meeting her? If there is to be no talking it will be so very unpleasant. It will be unpleasant to us all, but I am thinking chiefly of you."

"I do not wish anybody to be disturbed for my comfort." A young woman coming down to dinner as though in disgrace, and not being spoken to by any one, would, in truth, have had rather a soothing effect upon Lord Fawn, who would have felt that the general silence and dulness had been produced as a sacrifice in his honour. "I can, of course, insist that she should apologise; but if she refuses, what shall I do then?"

"Let there be no more apologies, if you please, mother."

"What shall I do then, Frederic?"

"Miss Morris's idea of an apology is a repetition of her offence with increased rudeness. It is not for me to say what you should do. If it be true that she is engaged to that man——"

"It is true, certainly."

"No doubt that will make her quite independent of you, and I can understand that her presence here in such circumstances must be very uncomfortable to you all. No doubt she feels her power."

"Indeed, Frederic, you do not know her."
"I can hardly say that I desire to know her better. You cannot suppose that I can be anxious for further intimacy with a young lady who has twice given me the lie in your house. Such conduct is, at least, very unusual; and as no absolute punishment can be inflicted, the offender can only be avoided. It is thus and thus only that such offences can be punished. I shall be satisfied if you will give her to understand that I should prefer that she should not address me again."

Poor Lady Fawn was beginning to think that Lucy was right in saying that there was no remedy for all these evils but that she should go away. But whither was she to go? She had no home but such home as she could earn for herself by her services as a governess, and in her present position it was almost out of the question that she should seek another place. Lady Fawn, too, felt that she had pledged herself to Mr. Greystock that till next year Lucy should have a home at Fawn Court. Mr. Greystock, indeed, was now an enemy to the family; but Lucy was not an enemy, and it was out of the question that she should be treated with real enmity. She might be scolded, and scowled at, and put into a kind of drawing-room Coventry for a time,—so that all kindly intercourse with her should be confined to school-room work and bed-room conferences. She could be generally "sat upon," as Nina would call it. But as for quarrelling with her,—making a real enemy of one whom they all loved, one whom Lady Fawn knew to
be "as good as gold," one who had become so dear to the old lady that actual extrusion from their family affections would be like the cutting off of a limb,—that was simply impossible. "I suppose I had better go and see her," said Lady Fawn,—"and I have got such a headache."

"Do not see her on my account," said Lord Fawn. The duty, however, was obligatory, and Lady Fawn with slow steps sought Lucy in the school-room.

"Lucy," she said, seating herself, "what is to be the end of all this?"

Lucy came up to her and knelt at her feet. "If you knew how unhappy I am, because I have vexed you!"

"I am unhappy, my dear, because I think you have been betrayed by warm temper into misbehaviour."

"I know I have."

"Then why do you not control your temper?"

"If anybody were to come to you, Lady Fawn, and make horrible accusations against Lord Fawn, or against Augusta, would not you be angry? Would you be able to stand it?"

Lady Fawn was not clear-headed; she was not clever; nor was she even always rational. But she was essentially honest. She knew that she would fly at anybody who should in her presence say such bitter things of any of her children as Lord Fawn had said of Mr. Greystock in Lucy's hearing;—and she knew also that Lucy was entitled to hold Mr. Greystock as dearly as she held her own sons and
daughters. Lord Fawn, at Fawn Court, could not do wrong. That was a tenet by which she was obliged to hold fast. And yet Lucy had been subjected to great cruelty. She thought awhile for a valid argument. "My dear," she said, "your youth should make a difference."

"Of course it should."

"And though to me and to the girls you are as dear as any friend can be, and may say just what you please—— Indeed, we all live here in such a way that we all do say just what we please,—young and old together. But you ought to know that Lord Fawn is different."

"Ought he to say that Mr. Greystock is not a gentleman to me?"

"We are, of course, very sorry that there should be any quarrel. It is all the fault of that—nasty, false young woman."

"So it is, Lady Fawn. Lady Fawn, I have been thinking about it all the day, and I am quite sure that I had better not stay here while you and the girls think badly of Mr. Greystock. It is not only about Lord Fawn but because of the whole thing. I am always wanting to say something good about Mr. Greystock, and you are always thinking something bad about him. You have been to me,—oh, the very best friend that a girl ever had. Why you should have treated me so generously I never could know."

"Because we have loved you."

"But when a girl has got a man whom she loves,
and has promised to marry, he must be her best friend of all. Is it not so, Lady Fawn?" The old woman stooped down and kissed the girl who had got the man. "It is not ingratitude to you that makes me think most of him; is it?"

"Certainly not, dear."

"Then I had better go away."

"But where will you go, Lucy?"

"I will consult Mr. Greystock."

"But what can he do, Lucy? It will only be a trouble to him. He can't find a home for you."

"Perhaps they would have me at the deanery," said Lucy slowly. She had evidently been thinking much of it all. "And, Lady Fawn, I will not go down-stairs while Lord Fawn is here; and when he comes,—if he does come again while I am here,—he shall not be troubled by seeing me. He may be sure of that. And you may tell him that I don't defend myself, only I shall always think that he ought not to have said that Mr. Greystock wasn't a gentleman before me." When Lady Fawn left Lucy the matter was so far settled that Lucy had neither been asked to come down to dinner, nor had she been forbidden to seek another home.
CHAPTER XXX.

MR. GREYSTOCK'S TROUBLES.

Frank Greystock stayed the Sunday in London and went down to Bobsborough on the Monday. His father and mother and sister all knew of his engagement to Lucy, and they had heard also that Lady Eustace was to become Lady Fawn. Of the necklace they had hitherto heard very little, and of the quarrel between the two lovers they had heard nothing. There had been many misgivings at the deanery, and some regrets about these marriages. Mrs. Greystock, Frank's mother, was, as we are so wont to say of many women, the best woman in the world. She was unselfish, affectionate, charitable, and thoroughly feminine. But she did think that her son Frank, with all his advantages,—good looks, cleverness, general popularity, and seat in Parliament,—might just as well marry an heiress as a little girl without twopence in the world. As for herself, who had been born a Jackson, she could do with very little; but the Greystocks were all people who wanted money. For them there was never more than ninepence in a shilling,
if so much. They were a race who could not pay their way with moderate incomes. Even the dear dean, who really had a conscience about money, and who hardly ever left Bobsborough, could not be kept quite clear of debt, let her do what she would. As for the admiral, the dean's elder brother, he had been notorious for insolvency; and Frank was a Greystock all over. He was the very man to whom money with a wife was almost a necessity of existence.

And his pretty cousin, the widow, who was devoted to him, and would have married him at a word, had ever so many thousands a year! Of course, Lizzie Eustace was not just all that she should be;—but then who is? In one respect, at any rate, her conduct had always been proper. There was no rumour against her as to lovers or flirtations. She was very young, and Frank might have moulded her as he pleased. Of course there were regrets. Poor dear little Lucy Morris was as good as gold. Mrs. Greystock was quite willing to admit that. She was not good-looking;—so at least Mrs. Greystock said. She never would allow that Lucy was good-looking. And she didn't see much in Lucy, who, according to her idea, was a little chit of a thing. Her position was simply that of a governess. Mrs. Greystock declared to her daughter that no one in the whole world had a higher respect for governesses than had she. But a governess is a governess;—and for a man in Frank's position such a marriage would be simply suicide.
"You shouldn't say that, mamma, now; for it's fixed," said Ellinor Greystock.

"But I do not say it, my dear. Things sometimes are fixed which must be unfixed. You know your brother."

"Frank is earning a large income, mamma."

"Did you ever know a Greystock who didn't want more than his income?"

"I hope I don't, mamma, and mine is very small."

"You're a Jackson. Frank is Greystock to the very backbone. If he marries Lucy Morris he must give up Parliament. That's all."

The dean himself was more reticent, and less given to interference than his wife, but he felt it also. He would not for the world have hinted to his son that it might be well to marry money; but he thought that it was a good thing that his son should go where money was. He knew that Frank was apt to spend his guineas faster than he got them. All his life long the dean had seen what came of such spending. Frank had gone out into the world and had prospered,—but he could hardly continue to prosper unless he married money. Of course, there had been regrets when the news came of that fatal engagement with Lucy Morris. "It can't be for the next ten years, at any rate," said Mrs. Greystock.

"I thought at one time that he would have made a match with his cousin," said the dean.

"Of course;—so did everybody," replied Mrs. Dean. Then Frank came among them. He had intended
staying some weeks,—perhaps for a month, and great preparations were made for him; but immediately on his arrival he announced the necessity that was incumbent on him of going down again to Scotland in ten days. "You've heard about Lizzie, of course?" he said. They had heard that Lizzie was to become Lady Fawn, but beyond that they had heard nothing. "You know about the necklace?" asked Frank. Something of a tale of a necklace had made its way even down to quiet Bobsborough. They had been informed that there was a dispute between the widow and the executors of the late Sir Florian about some diamonds. "Lord Fawn is behaving about it in the most atrocious manner," continued Frank, "and the long and the short of it is that there will be no marriage."

"No marriage!" exclaimed Mrs. Greystock.

"And what is the truth about the diamonds?" asked the dean.

"Ah;—it will give the lawyers a job before they decide that. They're very valuable;—worth about ten thousand pounds, I'm told; but the most of it will go to some of my friends at the Chancery bar. It's a pity that I should be out of the scramble myself."

"But why should you be out?" asked his mother, with tender regrets,—not thinking of the matter as her son was thinking of it, but feeling that when there was so much wealth so very near him, he ought not to let it all go past him.

"As far as I can see," continued Frank, "she has a fair claim to them. I suppose they'll file a bill in
Chancery, and then it will be out of my line altogether. She says her husband gave them to her,—absolutely put them on her neck himself, and told her that they were hers. As to their being an heirloom, that turns out to be impossible. I didn't know it, but it seems you can't make diamonds an heirloom. What astonishes me is, that Fawn should object to the necklace. However, he has objected, and has simply told her that he won't marry her unless she gives them up."

"And what does she say?"

"Storms and raves,—as of course any woman would. I don't think she is behaving badly. What she wants is to reduce him to obedience, and then to dismiss him. I think that is no more than fair. Nothing on earth would make her marry him now."

"Did she ever care for him?"

"I don't think she ever did. She found her position to be troublesome, and she thought she had better marry. And then he's a lord, which always goes for something."

"I am sorry you should have so much trouble," said Mrs. Greystock. But in truth the mother was not sorry. She did not declare to herself that it would be a good thing that her son should be false to Lucy Morris, in order that he might marry his rich cousin; but she did feel it to be an advantage that he should be on terms of intimacy with so large an income as that belonging to Lady Eustace. "Don't thou marry for munny, but goa where munny is." Mrs. Greystock would have repudiated the idea of mercenary
Mr. Greystock's Troubles.

marriages in any ordinary conversation, and would have been severe on any gentleman who was false to a young lady. But it is so hard to bring one's general principles to bear on one's own conduct or in one's own family;—and then the Greystocks were so peculiar a people! When her son told her that he must go down to Scotland again very shortly, she reconciled herself to his loss. Had he left Bobsborough for the sake of being near Lucy at Richmond, she would have felt it very keenly.

Days passed by, and nothing was said about poor Lucy. Mrs. Greystock had made up her mind that she would say nothing on the subject. Lucy had behaved badly in allowing herself to be loved by a man who ought to have loved money, and Mrs. Greystock had resolved that she would show her feelings by silence. The dean had formed no fixed determination, but he had thought that it might be, perhaps, as well to drop the subject. Frank himself was unhappy about it; but from morning to evening, and from day to day, he allowed it to pass by without a word. He knew that it should not be so, that such silence was in truth treachery to Lucy;—but he did. What had he meant when, as he left Lizzie Eustace among the rocks at Portray,—in that last moment,—he had assured her that he would be true to her? And what had been Lizzie's meaning? He was more sure of Lizzie's meaning than he was of his own. "It's a very rough world to live in," he said to himself in these days, as he thought of his difficulties.
But when he had been nearly a week at the deanery, and when the day of his going was so near as to be a matter of concern, his sister did at last venture to say a word about Lucy. "I suppose there is nothing settled about your own marriage, Frank?"

"Nothing at all."

"Nor will be for some while?"

"Nor will be,—for some while." This he said in a tone which he himself felt to be ill-humoured and almost petulant. And he felt also that such ill-humour on such a subject was unkind, not to his sister, but to Lucy. It seemed to imply that the matter of his marriage was distasteful to him. "The truth is," he said, "that nothing can be fixed. Lucy understands that as well as I do. I am not in a position at once to marry a girl who has nothing. It's a pity, perhaps, that one can't train oneself to like some girl best that has got money; but as I haven't, there must be some delay. She is to stay where she is,—at any rate, for a twelvemonth."

"But you mean to see her?"

"Well; yes; I hardly know how I can see her, as I have quarrelled to the knife with Lord Fawn; and Lord Fawn is recognised by his mother and sisters as the one living Jupiter upon earth."

"I like them for that," said Ellinor.

"Only it prevents my going to Richmond;—and poor Fawn himself is such an indifferent Jupiter."

That was all that was said about Lucy at Bobsborough, till there came a letter from Lucy to her
lover acquainting him with the circumstances of her unfortunate position at Richmond. She did not tell him quite all the circumstances. She did not repeat the strong expressions which Lord Fawn had used, nor did she clearly explain how wretched she had been herself. "Lord Fawn has been here," she said, "and there has been ever so much unpleasantness. He is very angry with you about Lady Eustace, and, of course, Lady Fawn takes his part. I need not tell you whose part I take. And so there have been what the servants call,—just a few words. It is very dreadful, isn't it? And, after all, Lady Fawn has been as kind as possible. But the upshot of it is, that I am not to stay here. You mustn't suppose that I'm to be turned out at twelve hours' notice. I am to stay till arrangements have been made, and everybody will be kind to me. But what had I better do? I'll try and get another situation at once if you think it best, only I suppose I should have to explain how long I could stay. Lady Fawn knows that I am writing to you to ask you what you think best."

On receipt of this, Greystock was very much puzzled. What a little fool Lucy had been, and yet what a dear little fool! Who cared for Lord Fawn and his hard words? Of course, Lord Fawn would say all manner of evil things of him, and would crow valiantly in his own farm-yard; but it would have been so much wiser on Lucy's part to have put up with the crowing, and to have disregarded altogether the words of a man so weak and insignificant! But the evil was done,
and he must make some arrangement for poor Lucy's comfort. Had he known exactly how matters stood, that the proposition as to Lucy's departure had come wholly from herself, and that at the present time all the ladies at Fawn Court,—of course, in the absence of Lord Fawn,—were quite disposed to forgive Lucy if Lucy would only be forgiven, and hide herself when Lord Fawn should come;—had Frank known all this, he might, perhaps, have counselled her to remain at Richmond. But he believed that Lady Fawn had insisted on Lucy's departure; and of course, in such a case, Lucy must depart. He showed the letter to his sister, and asked for advice. "How very unfortunate!" said Ellinor.

"Yes; is it not?"

"I wonder what she said to Lord Fawn."

"She would speak out very plainly."

"I suppose she has spoken out plainly, or otherwise they would never have told her to go away. It seems so unlike what I have always heard of Lady Fawn."

"Lucy can be very headstrong if she pleases," said Lucy's lover. "What on earth had I better do for her? I don't suppose she can get another place that would suit."

"If she is to be your wife, I don't think she should go into another place. If it is quite fixed,—" she said, and then she looked into her brother's face.

"Well; what then?"

"If you are sure you mean it——"

"Of course I mean it."
"Then she had better come here. As for her going out as a governess, and telling the people that she is to be your wife in a few months, that is out of the question. And it would, I think, be equally so that she should go into any house and not tell the truth. Of course this would be the place for her." It was at last decided that Ellinor should discuss the matter with her mother.

When the whole matter was unfolded to Mrs. Greystock, that lady was more troubled than ever. If Lucy were to come to the deanery, she must come as Frank’s affianced bride, and must be treated as such by all Bobsborough. The dean would be giving his express sanction to the marriage, and so would Mrs. Greystock herself. She knew well that she had no power of refusing her sanction. Frank must do as he pleased about marrying. Were Lucy once his wife, of course she would be made welcome to the best the deanery could give her. There was no doubt about Lucy being as good as gold;—only that real gold, vile as it is, was the one thing that Frank so much needed. The mother thought that she had discovered in her son something which seemed to indicate a possibility that this very imprudent match might at last be abandoned; and if there were such possibility, sure Lucy ought not now to be brought to the deanery. Nevertheless, if Frank were to insist upon her coming,—she must come.

But Mrs. Greystock had a plan. "Oh, mamma,"
said Ellinor, when the plan was proposed to her, "do not you think that would be cruel?"

"Cruel, my dear! No; certainly not cruel."

"She is such a virago."

"You think that because Lizzie Eustace has said so. I don't know that she's a virago at all. I believe her to be a very good sort of woman."

"Do you remember, mamma, what the admiral used to say of her?"

"The admiral, my dear, tried to borrow her money, as he did everybody's, and when she wouldn't give him any, then he said severe things. The poor admiral was never to be trusted in such matters."

"I don't think Frank would like it," said Ellinor. The plan was this. Lady Linlithgow, who, through her brother-in-law, the late Admiral Greystock, was connected with the dean's family, had made known her desire to have a new companion for six months. The lady was to be treated like a lady, but was to have no salary. Her travelling expenses were to be paid for her, and no duties were to be expected from her, except that of talking and listening to the countess.

"I really think it's the very thing for her," said Mrs. Greystock. "It's not like being a governess. She's not to have any salary."

"I don't know whether that makes it better, mamma."

"It would just be a visit to Lady Linlithgow. It is that which makes the difference, my dear."

Ellinor felt sure that her brother would not hear
of such an engagement,—but he did hear of it, and, after various objections, gave a sort of sanction to it. It was not to be pressed upon Lucy if Lucy disliked it. Lady Linlithgow was to be made to understand that Lucy might leave whenever she pleased. It was to be an invitation, which Lucy might accept if she were so minded. Lucy's position as an honourable guest was to be assured to her. It was thought better that Lady Linlithgow should not be told of Lucy's engagement unless she asked questions;—or unless Lucy should choose to tell her. Every precaution was to be taken, and then Frank gave his sanction. He could understand, he said, that it might be inexpedient that Lucy should come at once to the deanery, as,—were she to do so,—she must remain there till her marriage, let the time be ever so long. "It might be two years," said the mother. "Hardly so long as that," said the son. "I don't think it would be—quite fair—to papa," said the mother. It was well that the argument was used behind the dean's back, as, had it been made in his hearing, the dean would have upset it at once. The dean was so short-sighted and imprudent, that he would have professed delight at the idea of having Lucy Morris as a resident at the deanery. Frank acceded to the argument,—and was ashamed of himself for acceding. Ellinor did not accede, nor did her sisters, but it was necessary that they should yield. Mrs. Greystock at once wrote to Lady Linlithgow, and Frank wrote by the same post to Lucy Morris. "As there must be
a year’s delay,” he wrote, “we all here think it best that your visit to us should be postponed for a while. But if you object to the Linlithgow plan, say so at once. You shall be asked to do nothing disagreeable.” He found the letter very difficult to write. He knew that she ought to have been welcomed at once to Bobsborough. And he knew, too, the reason on which his mother’s objection was founded. But it might be two years before he could possibly marry Lucy Morris;—or it might be three. Would it be proper that she should be desired to make the deanery her home for so long and so indefinite a time? And when an engagement was for so long, could it be well that everybody should know it,—as everybody would, if Lucy were to take up her residence permanently at the deanery? Some consideration, certainly, was due to his father.

And, moreover, it was absolutely necessary that he and Lizzie Eustace should understand each other as to that mutual pledge of troth which had passed between them.

In the meantime he received the following letter from Messrs. Camperdown:—

“62, New Square, Lincoln’s Inn,
16 September, 18—

“Dear Sir,

“After what passed in our chambers the other day, we think it best to let you know that we have been instructed by the executor of the late Sir Florian
Mr. Greystock's Troubles.

Eustace to file a bill in Chancery against the widow, Lady Eustace, for the recovery of valuable diamonds. You will oblige us by making the necessary communication to her ladyship, and will perhaps tell us the names of her ladyship's solicitors.

"We are, dear sir,
"Your very obedient servants,
"Camperdown & Son.

"F. Greystock, Esq., M.P."

A few days after the receipt of this letter Frank started for Scotland.
CHAPTER XXXI.

FRANK GREYSTOCK'S SECOND VISIT TO PORTRAY.

On this occasion Frank Greystock went down to Portray Castle with the intention of staying at the house during the very short time that he would remain in Scotland. He was going there solely on his cousin's business,—with no view to grouse-shooting or other pleasure, and he purposed remaining but a very short time,—perhaps only one night. His cousin, moreover, had spoken of having guests with her, in which case there could be no impropriety in his doing so. And whether she had guests, or whether she had not, what difference could it really make? Mr. Andrew Gowran had already seen what there was to see, and could do all the evil that could be done. He could, if he were so minded, spread reports in the neighbourhood, and might, perhaps, have the power of communicating what he had discovered to the Eustace faction,—John Eustace, Mr. Camperdown, and Lord Fawn. That evil, if it were an evil, must be encountered with absolute indifference. So he went direct to the castle, and was received quietly, but very graciously, by his cousin Lizzie.
Frank Greystock's Second Visit to Portray.

There were no guests then staying at Portray; but that very distinguished lady, Mrs. Carbuncle, with her niece, Miss Roanoke, had been there; as had also that very well-known nobleman, Lord George de Bruce Carruthers. Lord George and Mrs. Carbuncle were in the habit of seeing a good deal of each other, though, as all the world knew, there was nothing between them but the simplest friendship. And Sir Griffin Tewett had also been there, a young baronet who was supposed to be enamoured of that most gorgeous of beauties, Lucinda Roanoke. Of all these grand friends,—friends with whom Lizzie had become acquainted in London,—nothing further need be said here, as they were not at the castle when Frank arrived. When he came, whether by premeditated plan or by the chance of circumstances, Lizzie had no one with her at Portray,—except the faithful Macnulty.

"I thought to have found you with all the world here," said Frank,—the faithful Macnulty being then present.

"Well,—we have had people, but only for a couple of days. They are all coming again, but not till November. You hunt;—don't you, Frank?"

"I have no time for hunting. Why do you ask?"

"I'm going to hunt. It's a long way to go,—ten or twelve miles generally; but almost everybody hunts here. Mrs. Carbuncle is coming again, and she is about the best lady in England after hounds;—so they tell me. And Lord George is coming again."
"Who is Lord George?"
"You remember Lord George Carruthers, whom we all knew in London?"
"What,—the tall man with the hollow eyes and the big whiskers, whose life is a mystery to every one. Is he coming?"
"I like him, just because he isn’t a ditto to every man one meets. And Sir Griffin Tewett is coming."
"Who is ditto to everybody."
"Well;—yes; poor Sir Griffin! The truth is, he is awfully smitten with Mrs. Carbuncle’s niece."
"Don’t you go match-making, Lizzie," said Frank. "That Sir Griffin is a fool, we will all allow; but it’s my belief he has wit enough to make himself pass off as a man of fortune, with very little to back it. He’s at law with his mother, at law with his sisters, and at law with his younger brother."
"If he were at law with his great-grandmother, it would be nothing to me, Frank. She has her aunt to take care of her, and Sir Griffin is coming with Lord George."
"You don’t mean to put up all their horses, Lizzie?"
"Well, not all. Lord George and Sir Griffin are to keep theirs at Troon, or Kilmarnock, or somewhere. The ladies will bring two apiece, and I shall have two of my own."
"And carriage-horses and hacks?"
"The carriage-horses are here,—of course."
"It will cost you a great deal of money, Lizzie."
"That’s just what I tell her," said Miss Macnulty.
"I've been living here; not spending one shilling for the last two months," said Lizzie, "and all for the sake of economy; yet people think that no woman was ever left so rich. Surely I can afford to see a few friends for one month in the year. If I find I can't afford so much as that, I shall let the place, and go and live abroad somewhere. It's too much to suppose that a woman should shut herself up here for six or eight months and see nobody all the time."

On that, the day of Frank's arrival, not a word was said about the necklace, nor of Lord Fawn, nor of the mutual pledge which had been taken and given down among the rocks. Frank, before dinner, went out about the place, that he might see how things were going on, and observe whether the widow was being ill-treated and unfairly eaten up by her dependents. He was, too, a little curious as to a matter as to which his curiosity was soon relieved. He had hardly reached the out-buildings which lay behind the kitchen-gardens on his way to the Portray woods, before he encountered Andy Gowran. That faithful adherent of the family raised his hand to his cap and bobbed his head, and then silently, and with renewed diligence, applied himself to the job which he had in hand. The gate of the little yard in which the cowshed stood was off its hinges, and Andy was resetting the post and making the fence tight and tidy. Frank stood a moment watching him, and then asked after his health. "'Deed am I nae that to boost about in the way of bodily heath, Muster Greystock. I've just o'er mony things to tent to, to
tent to my ain sell as a prudent mon ought. It's airly an' late wi' me, Muster Greystock; and the lumbagy just a' o'er a mon, isn't the pleasantest freend in the world.” Frank said that he was sorry to hear so bad an account of Mr. Gowran’s health, and passed on. It was not for him to refer to the little scene in which Mr. Gowran had behaved so badly and had shaken his head. If the misbehaviour had been condoned by Lady Eustace, the less that he said about it the better. Then he went on through the woods, and was well aware that Mr. Gowran’s fostering care had not been abated by his disapproval of his mistress. The fences had been repaired since Frank was there, and stones had been laid on the road or track over which was to be carried away the underwood which it would be Lady Eustace’s privilege to cut during the coming winter.

Frank was not alone for one moment with his cousin during that evening, but in the presence of Miss Macnulty all the circumstances of the necklace were discussed. “Of course it is my own,” said Lady Eustace, standing up,—“my own to do just what I please with. If they go on like this with me, they will almost tempt me to sell it for what it will fetch,—just to prove to them that I can do so. I have half a mind to sell it, and then send them the money, and tell them to put it by for my little Flory. Would not that serve them right, Frank?”

“I don’t think I’d do that, Lizzie.”

“Why not? You always tell me what not to do, but you never say what I ought.”
Frank Greystock's Second Visit to Portray. 59

"That is because I am so wise and prudent. If you were to attempt to sell the diamonds they would stop you, and would not give you credit for the generous purpose afterwards."

"They wouldn't stop you if you sold the ring you wear." The ring had been given to him by Lucy, after their engagement, and was the only present she had ever made him. It had been purchased out of her own earnings, and had been put on his finger by her own hand. Either from accident or craft he had not worn it when he had been before at Portray, and Lizzie had at once observed it as a thing she had never seen before. She knew well that he would not buy such a ring. Who had given him the ring? Frank almost blushed as he looked down at the trinket, and Lizzie was sure that it had been given by that sly little creeping thing, Lucy. "Let me look at the ring," she said. "Nobody could stop you if you chose to sell this to me."

"Little things are always less troublesome than big things," he said.

"What is the price?" she asked.

"It is not in the market, Lizzie. Nor should your diamonds be there. You must be content to let them take what legal steps they may think fit, and defend your property. After that you can do as you please; but keep them safe till the thing is settled. If I were you I would have them at the bankers."

"Yes;—and then when I ask for them to be told that they couldn't be given up to me, because of Mr.
Camperdown or the Lord Chancellor. And what's the good of a thing locked up? You wear your ring;—why shouldn't I wear my necklace?"

"I have nothing to say against it."

"It isn't that I care for such things. Do I, Julia?"

"All ladies like them, I suppose," said that stupidest and most stubborn of all humble friends, Miss Macnulty.

"I don't like them at all, and you know I don't. I hate them. They have been the misery of my life. Oh, how they have tormented me! Even when I am asleep I dream about them, and think that people steal them. They have never given me one moment's happiness. When I have them on I am always fearing that Camperdown and Son are behind me, and are going to clutch them. And I think too well of myself to believe that anybody will care more for me because of a necklace. The only good they have ever done me has been to save me from a man who I now know never cared for me. But they are mine;—and therefore I choose to keep them. Though I am only a woman I have an idea of my own rights, and will defend them as far as they go. If you say I ought not to sell them, Frank, I'll keep them; but I'll wear them as commonly as you do that gage d'amour which you carry on your finger. Nobody shall ever see me without them. I won't go to any old dowager's tea-party without them. Mr. John Eustace has chosen to accuse me of stealing them."

"I don't think John Eustace has ever said a word about them," said Frank.
Frank Greystock's Second Visit to Portray. 61

"Mr. Camperdown then;—people who choose to call themselves the guardians and protectors of my boy, as if I were not his best guardian and protector! I'll show them at any rate that I'm not ashamed of my booty. I don't see why I should lock them up in a musty old bank. Why don't you send your ring to the bank?" Frank could not but feel that she did it all very well. In the first place she was very pretty in the display of her half-mock indignation. Though she used some strong words, she used them with an air that carried them off and left no impression that she had ever been either vulgar or violent. And then, though the indignation was half-mock, it was also half-real, and her courage and spirit were attractive. Greystock had at last taught himself to think that Mr. Camperdown was not justified in the claim which he made, and that in consequence of that unjust claim Lizzie Eustace had been subjected to ill-usage. "Did you ever see this bone of contention," she asked;—"this fair Helen for which Greeks and Romans are to fight?"

"I never saw the necklace, if you mean that."

"I'll fetch it. You ought to see it as you have to talk about it so often."

"Can I get it?" asked Miss Macnulty.

"Heaven and earth! To suppose that I should ever keep them under less than seven keys, and that there should be any of the locks that anybody should be able to open except myself!"

"And where are the seven keys?" asked Frank.
"Next to my heart," said Lizzie, putting her hand on her left side. "And when I sleep they are always tied round my neck in a bag, and the bag never escapes from my grasp. And I have such a knife under my pillow, ready for Mr. Camperdown, should he come to seize them!" Then she ran out of the room, and in a couple of minutes returned with the necklace, hanging loose in her hand. It was part of her little play to show by her speed that the close locking of the jewels was a joke, and that the ornament, precious as it was, received at her hands no other treatment than might any indifferent feminine bauble. Nevertheless within those two minutes she had contrived to unlock the heavy iron case which always stood beneath the foot of her bed. "There," she said, chucking the necklace across the table to Frank, so that he was barely able to catch it. "There is ten thousand pounds' worth, as they tell me. Perhaps you will not believe me when I say that I should have the greatest satisfaction in the world in throwing them out among those blue waves yonder, did I not think that Camperdown and Son would fish them up again."

Frank spread the necklace on the table, and stood up to look at it, while Miss Macnulty came and gazed at the jewels over his shoulder. "And that is worth ten thousand pounds," said he.

"So people say."

"And your husband gave it you just as another man gives a trinket that costs ten shillings!"

"Just as Lucy Morris gave you that ring."
Frank Greystock's Second Visit to Portray.

He smiled, but took no other notice of the accusation. "I am so poor a man," said he, "that this string of stones, which you throw about the room like a child's toy, would be the making of me."

"Take it and be made," said Lizzie.

"It seems an awful thing to me to have so much value in my hands," said Miss Macnulty, who had lifted the necklace off the table. "It would buy an estate; wouldn't it?"

"It would buy the honourable estate of matrimony if it belonged to many women," said Lizzie,—"but it hasn't had just that effect with me;—has it, Frank?"

"You haven't used it with that view yet."

"Will you have it, Frank?" she said. "Take it with all its encumbrances, and weight of cares. Take it with all the burthen of Messrs. Camperdown's lawsuits upon it. You shall be as welcome to it as flowers were ever welcomed in May."

"The encumbrances are too heavy," said Frank.

"You prefer a little ring."

"Very much."

"I don't doubt but you're right," said Lizzie. "Who fears to rise will hardly get a fall. But there they are for you to look at, and there they shall remain for the rest of the evening." So saying, she clasped the string round Miss Macnulty's throat. "How do you feel, Julia, with an estate upon your neck? Five hundred acres at twenty pounds an acre. Let us call it £500 a year. That's about it." Miss Macnulty
looked as though she did not like it, but she stood for a time bearing the precious burthen, while Frank explained to his cousin that she could hardly buy land to pay her five per cent. They were then taken off and left lying on the table till Lady Eustace took them with her as she went to bed. "I do feel so like some naughty person in the Arabian Nights," she said, "who has got some great treasure that always brings him into trouble; but he can't get rid of it, because some spirit has given it to him. At last, some morning it turns to slate stones, and then he has to be a water-carrier, and is happy ever afterwards, and marries the king's daughter. What sort of a king's son will there be for me when this turns into slate stones? Good night, Frank." Then she went off with her diamonds and her bed-candle.

On the following day Frank suggested that there should be a business conversation. "That means that I am to sit silent and obedient while you lecture me," she said. But she submitted, and they went together into the little sitting-room which looked out over the sea,—the room where she kept her Shelley and her Byron, and practised her music and did water-colours, and sat, sometimes dreaming of a Corsair. "And now, my gravest of Mentors, what must a poor ignorant female Telemachus do, so that the world may not trample on her too heavily?" He began by telling her what had happened between himself and Lord Fawn, and recommended her to write to that unhappy nobleman, returning any present that she might have
received from him, and expressing, with some mild but intelligible sarcasm, her regret that their paths should have crossed each other. "I've worse in store for his lordship than that," said Lizzie.

"Do you mean by any personal interview?"

"Certainly."

"I think you are wrong, Lizzie."

"Of course you do. Men have become so soft themselves, that they no longer dare to think even of punishing those who behave badly, and they expect women to be softer and more fainéant than themselves. I have been ill-used."

"Certainly you have."

"And I will be revenged. Look here, Frank; if your view of these things is altogether different from mine, let us drop the subject. Of all living human beings you are the one that is most to me now. Perhaps you are more than any other ever was. But, even for you, I cannot alter my nature. Even for you I would not alter it if I could. That man has injured me, and all the world knows it. I will have my revenge, and all the world shall know that. I did wrong;—I am sensible enough of that."

"What wrong do you mean?"

"I told a man whom I never loved that I would marry him. God knows that I have been punished."

"Perhaps, Lizzie, it is better as it is."

"A great deal better. I will tell you now that I could never induce myself to go into church with that man as his bride. With a man I didn't love
The Eustace Diamonds.

I might have done so, but not with a man I despised."

"You have been saved, then, from a greater evil."

"Yes;—but not the less is his injury to me. It is not because he despises me that he rejects me;—nor is it because he thought that I had taken property that was not my own."

"Why then?"

"Because he was afraid the world would say that I had done so. Poor shallow creature! But he shall be punished."

"I do not know how you can punish him."

"Leave that to me. I have another thing to do much more difficult." She paused, looking for a moment up into his face, and then turning her eyes upon the ground. As he said nothing, she went on. "I have to excuse myself to you for having accepted him."

"I have never blamed you."

"Not in words. How should you? But if you have not blamed me in your heart, I despise you. I know you have. I have seen it in your eyes when you have counselled me, either to take the poor creature or to leave him. Speak out, now, like a man. Is it not so?"

"I never thought you loved him."

"Loved him! Is there anything in him or about him that a woman could love? Is he not a poor social stick;—a bit of half-dead wood, good to make a post
of, if one wants a post? I did want a post so sorely then!"

"I don't see why."

"You don't?"

"No, indeed. It was natural that you should be inclined to marry again."

"Natural that I should be inclined to marry again! And is that all? It is hard sometimes to see whether men are thick-witted, or hypocrites so perfect that they seem to be so. I cannot bring myself to think you thick-witted, Frank."

"Then I must be the perfect hypocrite,—of course."

"You believed I accepted Lord Fawn because it was natural that I should wish to marry again! Frank, you believed nothing of the kind. I accepted him in my anger, in my misery, in my despair, because I had expected you to come to me,—and you had not come!"—She had thrown herself now into a chair, and sat looking at him. "You had told me that you would come, and you had stayed away. It was you, Frank, that I wanted to punish then;—but there was no punishment in it for you. When is it to be, Frank?"

"When is what to be?" he asked, in a low voice, all but dumbfounded. How was he to put an end to this conversation, and what was he to say to her?

"Your marriage with that little wizened thing who gave you the ring,—that prim morsel of feminine propriety who has been clever enough to make you believe that her morality would suffice to make you happy."
"I will not hear Lucy Morris abused, Lizzie."

"Is that abuse? Is it abuse to say that she is moral and proper? But, sir, I shall abuse her. I know her for what she is, while your eyes are sealed. She is wise and moral, and decorous and prim; but she is a hypocrite, and has no touch of real heart in her composition. Not abuse her when she has robbed me of all,—all,—all that I have in the world! Go to her. You had better go at once. I did not mean to say all this, but it has been said, and you must leave me. I, at any rate, cannot play the hypocrite;—I wish I could." He rose and came to her, and attempted to take her hand, but she flung away from him. "No!" she said,—"never again; never, unless you will tell me that the promise you made me when we were down on the sea-shore was a true promise. Was that truth, sir, or was it a—lie?"

"Lizzie, do not use such a word as that to me."

"I cannot stand picking my words when the whole world is going round with me, and my very brain is on fire. What is it to me what my words are? Say one syllable to me, and every word I utter again while breath is mine shall be spoken to do your pleasure. If you cannot say it, it is nothing to me what you or any one may think of my words. You know my secret, and I care not who else knows it. At any rate, I can die!" Then she paused a moment, and after that stalked steadily out of the room.

That afternoon Frank took a long walk by himself over the mountains, nearly to the Cottage and
back again; and on his return was informed that Lady Eustace was ill, and had gone to bed. At any rate, she was too unwell to come down to dinner. He, therefore, and Miss Macnulty sat down to dine, and passed the evening together without other companionship. Frank had resolved during his walk that he would leave Portray the next day; but had hardly resolved upon anything else. One thing, however, seemed certain to him. He was engaged to marry Lucy Morris, and to that engagement he must be true. His cousin was very charming,—and had never looked so lovely in his eyes as when she had been confessing her love for him. And he had wondered at and admired her courage, her power of language, and her force. He could not quite forget how useful would be her income to him. And, added to this, there was present to him an unwholesome feeling,—ideas absolutely at variance with those better ideas which had prompted him when he was writing his offer to Lucy Morris in his chambers,—that a woman such as was his cousin Lizzie was fitter to be the wife of a man thrown, as he must be, into the world, than a dear, quiet, domestic little girl such as Lucy Morris. But to Lucy Morris he was engaged, and therefore there was an end of it.

The next morning he sent his love to his cousin, asking whether he should see her before he went. It was still necessary that he should know what attorneys to employ on her behalf if the threatened bill were filed by Messrs. Camperdown. Then he suggested a firm
in his note. Might he put the case into the hands of Mr. Townsend, who was a friend of his own? There came back to him a scrap of paper, an old envelope, on which were written the names of Mowbray and Mopus; —Mowbray and Mopus in a large scrawling hand, and with pencil. He put the scrap of paper into his pocket, feeling that he could not remonstrate with her at this moment, and was prepared to depart; when there came a message to him. Lady Eustace was still unwell, but had risen; and if it were not giving him too much trouble, would see him before he went. He followed the messenger to the same little room, looking out upon the sea, and then found her, dressed indeed, but with a white morning wrapper on, and with hair loose over her shoulders. Her eyes were red with weeping, and her face was pale, and thin, and woe-begone. "I am so sorry that you are ill, Lizzie," he said.

"Yes; I am ill;—sometimes very ill; but what does it matter? I did not send for you, Frank, to speak of aught so trivial as that. I have a favour to ask."

"Of course I will grant it."

"It is your forgiveness for my conduct yesterday."

"Oh, Lizzie!"

"Say that you forgive me. Say it!"

"How can I forgive where there has been no fault?"

"There has been fault. Say that you forgive me."

And she stamped her foot as she demanded his pardon.

"I do forgive you," he said.
"And now, one farewell." She then threw herself upon his breast and kissed him. "Now, go," she said; "go, and come no more to me, unless you would see me mad. May God Almighty bless you, and make you happy!" As she uttered this prayer she held the door in her hand, and there was nothing for him but to leave her.
CHAPTER XXXII.

MR. AND MRS. HITTAWAY IN SCOTLAND.

A great many people go to Scotland in the autumn. When you have your autumn holiday in hand to dispose of it, there is nothing more aristocratic that you can do than to go to Scotland. Dukes are more plentiful there than in Pall Mall, and you will meet an earl or at least a lord on every mountain. Of course, if you merely travel about from inn to inn, and neither have a moor of your own nor stay with any great friend, you don't quite enjoy the cream of it; but to go to Scotland in August, and stay there, perhaps, till the end of September, is about the most certain step you can take towards autumnal fashion. Switzerland and the Tyrol, and even Italy, are all redolent of Mr. Cook, and in those beautiful lands you become subject at least to suspicion.

By no persons was the duty of adhering to the best side of society more clearly appreciated than by Mr. and Mrs. Hittaway of Warwick Square. Mr. Hittaway was Chairman of the Board of Civil Appeals, and was a man who quite understood that there are chairmen—
and chairmen. He could name to you three or four men holding responsible permanent official positions quite as good as that he filled in regard to salary,—which, as he often said of his own, was a mere nothing, just a poor two thousand pounds a year, not as much as a grocer would make in a decent business,—but they were simply head clerks and nothing more. Nobody knew anything of them. They had no names. You did not meet them anywhere. Cabinet ministers never heard of them; and nobody out of their own offices ever consulted them. But there are others, and Mr. Hittaway felt greatly conscious that he was one of them, who moved altogether in a different sphere. One minister of State would ask another whether Hittaway had been consulted on this or on that measure;—so at least the Hittawayites were in the habit of reporting. The names of Mr. and Mrs. Hittaway were constantly in the papers. They were invited to evening gatherings at the houses of both the alternate Prime Ministers. They were to be seen at fashionable gatherings up the river. They attended concerts at Buckingham Palace. Once a year they gave a dinner-party which was inserted in the Morning Post. On such occasions at least one Cabinet Minister always graced the board. In fact, Mr. Hittaway, as Chairman of the Board of Civil Appeals, was somebody; and Mrs. Hittaway, as his wife and as sister to a peer, was somebody also. The reader will remember that Mrs. Hittaway had been a Fawn before she married.

There is this drawback upon the happy condition
which Mr. Hittaway had achieved,—that it demands a certain expenditure. Let nobody dream that he can be somebody without having to pay for that honour;—unless, indeed, he be a clergyman. When you go to a concert at Buckingham Palace you pay nothing, it is true, for your ticket; and a Cabinet Minister dining with you does not eat or drink more than your old friend Jones the attorney. But in some insidious unforeseen manner,—in a way that can only be understood after much experience,—these luxuries of fashion do make a heavy pull on a modest income. Mrs. Hittaway knew this thoroughly, having much experience, and did make her fight bravely. For Mr. Hittaway's income was no more than modest. A few thousand pounds he had of his own when he married, and his Clara had brought to him the unpretending sum of fifteen hundred. But, beyond that, the poor official salary,—which was less than what a decent grocer would make,—was their all. The house in Warwick Square they had prudently purchased on their marriage,—when houses in Warwick Square were cheaper than they are now,—and there they carried on their battle, certainly with success. But two thousand a year does not go very far in Warwick Square, even though you sit rent free, if you have a family and absolutely must keep a carriage. It therefore resulted that when Mr. and Mrs. Hittaway went to Scotland, which they would endeavour to do every year, it was very important that they should accomplish their aristocratic holiday as visitors at the house of some aristo-
Mr. and Mrs. Hittaway in Scotland.

critic friend. So well had they played their cards in this respect, that they seldom failed altogether. In one year they had been the guests of a great marquis quite in the north, and that had been a very glorious year. To talk of Stackallan was, indeed, a thing of beauty. But in that year Mr. Hittaway had made himself very useful in London. Since that they had been at delicious shooting lodges in Ross and Inverness-shire, had visited a millionaire at his palace amidst the Argyle mountains, had been fêted in a western island, had been bored by a Dundee dowager, and put up with a Lothian laird. But the thing had been almost always done, and the Hittaways were known as people that went to Scotland. He could handle a gun, and was clever enough never to shoot a keeper. She could read aloud, could act a little, could talk or hold her tongue; and let her hosts be who they would and as mighty as you please, never caused them trouble by seeming to be out of their circle, and on that account requiring peculiar attention.

On this occasion Mr. and Mrs. Hittaway were the guests of old Lady Pierrepont, in Dumfries. There was nothing special to recommend Lady Pierrepont except that she had a large house and a good income, and that she liked to have people with her of whom everybody knew something. So far was Lady Pierrepont from being high in the Hittaway world, that Mrs. Hittaway felt called upon to explain to her friends that she was forced to go to Dumdum House by the
duties of old friendship. Dear old Lady Pierrepont had been insisting on it for the last ten years. And there was this advantage, that Dumfriesshire is next to Ayrshire, that Dumdum was not very far,—some twenty or thirty miles,—from Portray, and that she might learn something about Lizzie Eustace in her country house.

It was nearly the end of August when the Hittaways left London to stay an entire month with Lady Pierrepont. Mr. Hittaway had very frequently explained his defalcation as to fashion,—in that he was remaining in London for three weeks after Parliament had broken up,—by the peculiar exigencies of the Board of Appeals in that year. To one or two very intimate friends Mrs. Hittaway had hinted that everything must be made to give way to this horrid business of Fawn's marriage. "Whatever happens, and at whatever cost, that must be stopped," she had ventured to say to Lady Glencora Palliser,—who, however, could hardly be called one of her very intimate friends. "I don't see it at all," said Lady Glencora. "I think Lady Eustace is very nice. And why shouldn't she marry Lord Fawn if she's engaged to him?" "But you have heard of the necklace, Lady Glencora?" "Yes, I've heard of it. I wish anybody would come to me and try and get my diamonds! They should hear what I would say." Mrs. Hittaway greatly admired Lady Glencora, but not the less was she determined to persevere.

Had Lord Fawn been altogether candid and open
with his family at this time, some trouble might have been saved; for he had almost altogether resolved that, let the consequences be what they might, he would not marry Lizzie Eustace. But he was afraid to say this even to his own sister. He had promised to marry the woman, and he must walk very warily, or the objurgations of the world would be too many for him. "It must depend altogether on her conduct, Clara," he had said when last his sister had persecuted him on the subject. She was not, however, sorry to have an opportunity of learning something of the lady's doings. Mr. Hittaway had more than once called on Mr. Camperdown. "Yes," Mr. Camperdown had said in answer to a question from Lord Fawn's brother-in-law; "she would play old gooseberry with the property, if we hadn't some one to look after it. There's a fellow named Gowran who has lived there all his life, and we depend very much upon him."

It is certainly true, that as to many points of conduct, women are less nice than men. Mr. Hittaway would not probably have condescended himself to employ espionage, but Mrs. Hittaway was less scrupulous. She actually went down to Troon and had an interview with Mr. Gowran, using freely the names of Mr. Camperdown and of Lord Fawn; and some ten days afterwards Mr. Gowran travelled as far as Dumfries, and Dumdum, and had an interview with Mrs. Hittaway. The result of all this, and of further inquiries, will be shown by the following letter from Mrs. Hittaway to her sister Amelia:
"My dear Amelia,

"Here we are, and here we have to remain to the end of the month. Of course it suits, and all that; but it is awfully dull. Richmond for this time of the year is a paradise to it; and as for coming to Scotland every autumn, I am sick of it. Only what is one to do if one lives in London? If it wasn't for Orlando and the children, I'd brazen it out, and let people say what they pleased. As for health, I'm never so well as at home, and I do like having my own things about me. Orlando has literally nothing to do here. There is no shooting, except pheasants, and that doesn't begin till October.

"But I'm very glad I've come as to Frederic, and the more so, as I have learned the truth as to that Mr. Greystock. She, Lady Eustace, is a bad creature in every way. She still pretends that she is engaged to Frederic, and tells everybody that the marriage is not broken off, and yet she has her cousin with her, making love to him in the most indecent way. People used to say in her favour that at any rate she never flirted. I never quite know what people mean when they talk of flirting. But you may take my word for it that she allows her cousin to embrace her, and embraces him. I would not say it if I could not prove it. It is horrible to think of it, when one remembers that she is almost justified in saying that Frederic is engaged to her.

"No doubt he was engaged to her. It was a great
misfortune, but, thank God, is not yet past remedy. He has some foolish feeling of what he calls honour; as if a man can be bound in honour to marry a woman who has deceived him in every point! She still sticks to the diamonds,—if she has not sold them, as I believe she has; and Mr. Camperdown is going to bring an action against her in the High Court of Chancery. But still Frederic will not absolutely declare the thing off. I feel, therefore, that it is my duty to let him know what I have learned. I should be the last to stir in such a matter unless I was sure I could prove it. But I don't quite like to write to Frederic. Will mamma see him, and tell him what I say? Of course you will show this letter to mamma. If not, I must postpone it till I am in town;—but I think it would come better from mamma. Mamma may be sure that she is a bad woman.

"And now what do you think of your Mr. Greystock? As sure as I am here he was seen with his arm round his cousin's waist sitting out of doors,—kissing her! I was never taken in by that story of his marrying Lucy Morris. He is the last man in the world to marry a governess. He is over head and ears in debt, and if he marries at all, he must marry some one with money. I really think that mamma, and you, and all of you have been soft about that girl. I believe she has been a good governess,—that is, good after mamma's easy fashion; and I don't for a moment suppose that she is doing anything underhand. But a governess with a lover never does suit, and I'm
sure it won’t suit in this case. If I were you I would tell her. I think it would be the best charity. Whether they mean to marry I can’t tell,—Mr. Grey-stock, that is, and this woman; but they ought to mean it;—that’s all.

"Let me know at once whether mamma will see Frederic, and speak to him openly. She is quite at liberty to use my name; only nobody but mamma should see this letter.

"Love to them all,
"Your most affectionate sister,
"Clara Hittaway."

In writing to Amelia instead of to her mother, Mrs. Hittaway was sure that she was communicating her ideas to at least two persons at Fawn Court, and that therefore there would be discussion. Had she written to her mother, her mother might probably have held her peace, and done nothing.
CHAPTER XXXIII.

IT WON'T BE TRUE.

Mrs. Greystock, in making her proposition respecting Lady Linlithgow, wrote to Lady Fawn, and by the same post Frank wrote to Lucy. But before those letters reached Fawn Court there had come that other dreadful letter from Mrs. Hittaway. The consternation caused at Fawn Court in respect to Mr. Greystock's treachery almost robbed of its importance the suggestion made as to Lord Fawn. Could it be possible that this man, who had so openly and in so manly a manner engaged himself to Lucy Morris, should now be proposing to himself a marriage with his rich cousin? Lady Fawn did not believe that it was possible. Clara had not seen those horrid things with her own eyes, and other people might be liars. But Amelia shook her head. Amelia evidently believed that all manner of iniquities were possible to man. "You see, mamma, the sacrifice he was making was so very great!" "But he made it!" pleaded Lady Fawn. "No, mamma, he said he would make it. Men do these things. It is very horrid, but I think they
do them more now than they used to. It seems to me that nobody cares now what he does, if he's not to be put into prison.” It was resolved between these two wise ones that nothing at the present should be said to Lucy or to any one of the family. They would wait awhile, and in the meantime they attempted,—as far as it was possible to make the attempt without express words,—to let Lucy understand that she might remain at Fawn Court if she pleased. While this was going on, Lord Fawn did come down once again, and on that occasion Lucy simply absented herself from the dinner-table and from the family circle for that evening. “He's coming in, and you've got to go to prison again,” Nina said to her, with a kiss.

The matter to which Mrs. Hittaway's letter more specially alluded was debated between the mother and daughter at great length. They, indeed, were less brave and less energetic than was the married daughter of the family; but as they saw Lord Fawn more frequently, they knew better than Mrs. Hittaway the real state of the case. They felt sure that he was already sufficiently embittered against Lady Eustace, and thought that therefore the peculiarly unpleasant task assigned to Lady Fawn need not be performed. Lady Fawn had not the advantage of living so much in the world as her daughter, and was oppressed by, perhaps, a squeamish delicacy. “I really could not tell him about her sitting and—and kissing the man. Could I, my dear?” “I couldn't,” said Amelia;—“but Clara would.”
"And to tell the truth," continued Lady Fawn, "I shouldn't care a bit about it if it was not for poor Lucy. What will become of her if that man is untrue to her?"

"Nothing on earth would make her believe it, unless it came from himself,” said Amelia,—who really did know something of Lucy's character. "Till he tells her, or till she knows that he's married, she'll never believe it."

Then, after a few days, there came those other letters from Bobsborough,—one from the dean's wife and the other from Frank. The matter there proposed it was necessary that they should discuss with Lucy, as the suggestion had reached Lucy as well as themselves. She at once came to Lady Fawn with her lover's letter, and with a gentle merry laughing face declared that the thing would do very well. "I am sure I should get on with her, and I should know that it wouldn't be for long," said Lucy.

"The truth is, we don't want you to go at all," said Lady Fawn.

"Oh, but I must," said Lucy in her sharp, decided tone. "I must go. I was bound to wait till I heard from Mr. Greystock, because it is my first duty to obey him. But of course I cannot stay here after what has passed. As Nina says, it is simply going to prison when Lord Fawn comes here."

"Nina is an impertinent little chit," said Amelia.

"She is the dearest little friend in all the world,"
said Lucy, "and always tells the exact truth. I do go to prison, and when he comes I feel that I ought to go to prison. Of course, I must go away. What does it matter? Lady Linlithgow won't be exactly like you,"—and she put her little hand in upon Lady Fawn's fat arm caressingly, "and I shan't have you all to spoil me; but I shall be simply waiting till he comes. Everything now must be no more than waiting till he comes."

If it was to be that the "he" would never come, this was very dreadful. Amelia clearly thought that "he" would never come, and Lady Fawn was apt to think her daughter wiser than herself. And if Mr. Greystock were such as Mrs. Hittaway had described him to be,—if there were to be no such coming as that for which Lucy fondly waited,—then there would be reason ten-fold strong why she should not leave Fawn Court and go to Lady Linlithgow. In such case,—when that blow should fall,—Lucy would require very different treatment than might be expected for her from the hands of Lady Linlithgow. She would fade and fall to the earth like a flower with an insect at its root. She would be like a wounded branch, into which no sap would run. With such misfortune and wretchedness possibly before her, Lady Fawn could not endure the idea that Lucy should be turned out to encounter it all beneath the cold shade of Lady Linlithgow’s indifference. "My dear," she said, "let bygones be bygones. Come down and meet Lord Fawn. Nobody will say anything. After
It won't be True.

all, you were provoked very much, and there has been quite enough about it."

This, from Lady Fawn, was almost miraculous,—from Lady Fawn, to whom her son had ever been the highest of human beings! But Lucy had told the tale to her lover, and her lover approved of her going. Perhaps there was acting upon her mind some feeling, of which she was hardly conscious, that as long as she remained at Fawn Court she would not see her lover. She had told him that she could make herself supremely happy in the simple knowledge that he loved her. But we all know how few such declarations should be taken as true. Of course, she was longing to see him. "If he would only pass by the road," she would say to herself, "so that I might peep at him through the gate!" She had no formed idea in her own mind that she would be able to see him should she go to Lady Linlithgow, but still there would be the chances of her altered life. She would tell Lady Linlithgow the truth, and why should Lady Linlithgow refuse her so rational a pleasure? There was, of course, a reason why Frank should not come to Fawn Court; but the house in Bruton Street need not be closed to him. "I hardly know how to love you enough," she said to Lady Fawn, "but indeed I must go. I do so hope the time may come when you and Mr. Greystock may be friends. Of course, it will come. Shall it not?"

"Who can look into the future?" said the wise Amelia.
The Eustace Diamonds.

"Of course, if he is your husband, we shall love him," said the less wise Lady Fawn.

"He is to be my husband," said Lucy, springing up. "What do you mean? Do you mean anything?" Lady Fawn, who was not at all wise, protested that she meant nothing.

What were they to do? On that special day they merely stipulated that there should be a day's delay before Lady Fawn answered Mrs. Greystock's letter,—so that she might sleep upon it. The sleeping on it meant that further discussion which was to take place between Lady Fawn and her second daughter in her ladyship's bed-room that night. During all this period the general discomfort of Fawn Court was increased by a certain sullenness on the part of Augusta, the elder daughter, who knew that letters had come and that consultations were being held,—but who was not admitted to those consultations. Since the day on which poor Augusta had been handed over to Lizzie Eustace as her peculiar friend in the family, there had always existed a feeling that she, by her position, was debarred from sympathising in the general desire to be quit of Lizzie; and then, too, poor Augusta was never thoroughly trusted by that great guide of the family, Mrs. Hittaway. "She couldn't keep it to herself if you'd give her gold to do it," Mrs. Hittaway would say. Consequently Augusta was sullen and conscious of ill-usage. "Have you fixed upon anything?" she said to Lucy that evening.
"Not quite;—only I am to go away."
"I don't see why you should go away at all. Frederic doesn't come here so very often, and when he does come he doesn't say much to any one. I suppose it's all Amelia's doings."
"Nobody wants me to go, only I feel that I ought. Mr. Greystock thinks it best."
"I suppose he's going to quarrel with us all."
"No, dear. I don't think he wants to quarrel with any one;—but above all he must not quarrel with me. Lord Fawn has quarrelled with him, and that's a misfortune,—just for the present."
"And where are you going?"
"Nothing has been settled yet; but we are talking of Lady Linlithgow,—if she will take me."
"Lady Linlithgow! Oh dear!"
"Won't it do?"
"They say she is the most dreadful old woman in London. Lady Eustace told such stories about her."
"Do you know, I think I shall rather like it."
But things were very different with Lucy the next morning. That discussion in Lady Fawn's room was protracted till midnight, and then it was decided that just a word should be said to Lucy, so that, if possible, she might be induced to remain at Fawn Court. Lady Fawn was to say the word, and on the following morning she was closeted with Lucy. "My dear," she began, "we all want you to do us a particular favour." As she said this, she held Lucy by the hand, and no one looking at them would have thought that Lucy
was a governess and that Lady Fawn was her employer.

"Dear Lady Fawn, indeed it is better that I should go."

"Stay just one month."

"I couldn't do that, because then this chance of a home would be gone. Of course, we can't wait a month before we let Mrs. Greystock know."

"We must write to her, of course."

"And then, you see, Mr. Greystock wishes it." Lady Fawn knew that Lucy could be very firm, and had hardly hoped that anything could be done by simple persuasion. They had long been accustomed among themselves to call her obstinate, and knew that even in her acts of obedience she had a way of obeying after her own fashion. It was as well, therefore, that the thing to be said should be said at once.

"My dear Lucy, has it ever occurred to you that there may be a slip between the cup and the lip?"

"What do you mean, Lady Fawn?"

"That sometimes engagements take place which never become more than engagements. Look at Lord Fawn and Lady Eustace."

"Mr. Greystock and I are not like that," said Lucy proudly.

"Such things are very dreadful, Lucy, but they do happen."

"Do you mean anything;—anything real, Lady Fawn?"

"I have so strong a reliance on your good sense,
that I will tell you just what I do mean. A rumour has reached me that Mr. Greystock is—paying more attention than he ought to do to Lady Eustace."

"His own cousin!"

"But people marry their cousins, Lucy."

"To whom he has always been just like a brother! I do think that is the cruelllest thing. Because he sacrifices his time and his money and all his holidays to go and look after her affairs, this is to be said of him! She hasn't another human being to look after her, and, therefore, he is obliged to do it. Of course he has told me all about it. I do think, Lady Fawn,—I do think that this is the greatest shame I ever heard!"

"But if it should be true —— ?"

"It isn't true."

"But just for the sake of showing you, Lucy ——; if it was to be true—— ?"

"It won't be true."

"Surely I may speak to you as your friend, Lucy. You needn't be so abrupt with me. Will you listen to me, Lucy?"

"Of course I will listen;—only nothing that anybody on earth could say about that would make me believe a word of it."

"Very well! Now just let me go on. If it were to be so ——"

"Oh-h, Lady Fawn!"

"Don't be foolish, Lucy. I will say what I've got to say. If—if—— Let me see. Where was I? I
mean just this. You had better remain here till things are a little more settled. Even if it be only a rumour,—and I'm sure I don't believe it's anything more,—you had better hear about it with us,—with friends round you, than with a perfect stranger like Lady Linlithgow. If anything were to go wrong there, you wouldn't know where to go for comfort. If anything were wrong with you here, you could come to me as though I were your mother.—Couldn't you, now?"

"Indeed, indeed I could! And I will; I always will. Lady Fawn, I love you and the dear darling girls better than all the world—except Mr. Greystock. If anything like that were to happen, I think I should creep here and ask to die in your house. But it won't. And just now it will be better that I should go away."

It was found at last that Lucy must have her way, and letters were written both to Mrs. Greystock and to Frank, requesting that the suggested overtures might at once be made to Lady Linlithgow.

Lucy, in her letter to her lover, was more than ordinarily cheerful and jocose. She had a good deal to say about Lady Linlithgow that was really droll, and not a word to say indicative of the slightest fear in the direction of Lady Eustace. She spoke of poor Lizzie, and declared her conviction that that marriage never could come off now. "You mustn't be angry when I say that I can't break my heart for them, for I never did think that they were very much in love. As for Lord Fawn, of course he is my—ENEMY!"
And she wrote the word in big letters. "And as for Lizzie,—she's your cousin, and all that. And she's ever so pretty, and all that. And she's as rich as Croesus, and all that. But I don't think she'll break her own heart. I would break mine; only,—only—only—— You will understand the rest. If it should come to pass, I wonder whether 'the duchess' would ever let a poor creature see a friend of hers in Bruton Street?" Frank had once called Lady Linlithgow the duchess, after a certain popular picture in a certain popular book, and Lucy never forgot anything that Frank had said.

It did come to pass. Mrs. Greystock at once corresponded with Lady Linlithgow, and Lady Linlithgow, who was at Ramsgate for her autumn vacation, requested that Lucy Morris might be brought to see her at her house in London on the 2nd of October. Lady Linlithgow's autumn holiday always ended on the last day of September. On the 2nd of October Lady Fawn herself took Lucy up to Bruton Street, and Lady Linlithgow appeared. "Miss Morris," said Lady Fawn, "thinks it right that you should be told that she's engaged to be married." "Who to?" demanded the countess. Lucy was as red as fire, although she had especially made up her mind that she would not blush when the communication was made. "I don't know that she wishes me to mention the gentleman's name, just at present; but I can assure you that he is all that he ought to be." "I hate mysteries," said the countess. "If Lady Linlithgow——" began Lucy.
"Oh, it's nothing to me," continued the old woman.
"It won't come off for six months I suppose?" Lucy gave a mute assurance that there would be no such difficulty as that. "And he can't come here, Miss Morris." To this Lucy said nothing. Perhaps she might win over even the countess, and if not, she must bear her six months of prolonged exclusion from the light of day. And so the matter was settled. Lucy was to be taken back to Richmond, and to come again on the following Monday. "I don't like this parting at all, Lucy," Lady Fawn said on her way home.

"It is better so, Lady Fawn."

"I hate people going away; but, somehow, you don't feel it as we do."

"You wouldn't say that if you really knew what I do feel."

"There was no reason why you should go. Frederic was getting not to care for it at all. What's Nina to do now? I can't get another governess after you. I hate all these sudden breaks up. And all for such a trumpery thing. If Frederic hasn't forgotten all about it, he ought."

"It hasn't come altogether from him, Lady Fawn."

"How has it come, then?"

"I suppose it is because of Mr. Greystock. I suppose when a girl has engaged herself to marry a man she must think more of him than of anything else."

"Why couldn't you think of him at Fawn Court?"

"Because—because things have been unfortunate."
He isn’t your friend,—not as yet. Can’t you understand, Lady Fawn, that, dear as you all must be to me, I must live in his friendships, and take his part when there is a part?"

"Then I suppose that you mean to hate all of us!" Lucy could only cry at hearing this;—whereupon Lady Fawn also burst into tears.

On the Sunday before Lucy took her departure, Lord Fawn was again at Richmond. "Of course, you’ll come down,—just as if nothing had happened," said Lydia. "We’ll see," said Lucy. "Mamma will be very angry if you don’t," said Lydia.

But Lucy had a little plot in her head, and her appearance at the dinner-table on the Sunday must depend on the manner in which her plot was executed. After church, Lord Fawn would always hang about the grounds for awhile before going into the house; and on this morning Lucy also remained outside. She soon found her opportunity, and walked straight up to him, following him on the path. "Lord Fawn," she said, "I have come to beg your pardon."

He had turned round hearing footsteps behind him, but still was startled and unready. "It does not matter at all," he said.

"It matters to me, because I behaved badly."

"What I said about Mr. Greystock wasn’t intended to be said to you, you know."

"Even if it was it would make no matter. I don’t mean to think of that now. I beg your pardon because I said what I ought not to have said."
"You see, Miss Morris, that as the head of this family—"

"If I had said it to Juniper, I would have begged his pardon." Now Juniper was the gardener, and Lord Fawn did not quite like the way in which the thing was put to him. The cloud came across his brow, and he began to fear that she would again insult him. "I oughtn't to accuse anybody of an untruth,—not in that way; and I am very sorry for what I did, and I beg your pardon." Then she turned as though she were going back to the house.

But he stopped her. "Miss Morris, if it will suit you to stay with my mother, I will never say a word against it."

"It is quite settled that I am to go to-morrow, Lord Fawn. Only for that I would not have troubled you again."

Then she did turn towards the house, but he recalled her. "We will shake hands, at any rate," he said, "and not part as enemies." So they shook hands, and Lucy came down and sat in his company at the dinner-table.
CHAPTER XXXIV.

LADY LINLITHGOW AT HOME.

Lucy, in her letter to her lover, had distinctly asked whether she might tell Lady Linlithgow the name of her future husband, but had received no reply when she was taken to Bruton Street. The parting at Richmond was very painful, and Lady Fawn had declared herself quite unable to make another journey up to London with the ungrateful runagate. Though there was no diminution of affection among the Fawns, there was a general feeling that Lucy was behaving badly. That obstinacy of hers was getting the better of her. Why should she have gone? Even Lord Fawn had expressed his desire that she should remain. And then, in the breasts of the wise ones, all faith in the Greystock engagement had nearly vanished. Another letter had come from Mrs. Hittaway, who now declared that it was already understood about Portray that Lady Eustace intended to marry her cousin. This was described as a terrible crime on the part of Lizzie, though the antagonistic crime of a remaining desire to marry Lord Fawn was still imputed
to her. And, of course, the one crime heightened the other. So that words from the eloquent pen of Mrs. Hittaway failed to make dark enough the blackness of poor Lizzie's character. As for Mr. Greystock, he was simply a heartless man of the world, wishing to feather his nest. Mrs. Hittaway did not, for a moment, believe that he had ever dreamed of marrying Lucy Morris. Men always have three or four little excitements of that kind going on for the amusement of their leisure hours,—so, at least, said Mrs. Hittaway. "The girl had better be told at once." Such was her decision about poor Lucy. "I can't do more than I have done," said Lady Fawn to Augusta. "She'll never get over it, mamma; never," said Augusta.

Nothing more was said, and Lucy was sent off in the family carriage. Lydia and Nina were sent with her, and though there was some weeping on the journey, there was also much laughing. The character of the "duchess" was discussed very much at large, and many promises were made as to long letters. Lucy, in truth, was not unhappy. She would be nearer to Frank; and then it had been almost promised her that she should go to the deanery, after a residence of six months with Lady Linlithgow. At the deanery—of course she would see Frank; and she also understood that a long visit to the deanery would be the surest prelude to that home of her own of which she was always dreaming.

"Dear me;—sent you up in the carriage, has she? Why shouldn't you have come by the railway?"
"Lady Fawn thought the carriage best. She is so very kind."
"It's what I call twaddle, you know. I hope you ain't afraid of going in a cab."
"Not in the least, Lady Linlithgow."
"You can't have the carriage to go about here. Indeed, I never have a pair of horses till after Christmas. I hope you know that I'm as poor as Job."
"I didn't know."
"I am, then. You'll get nothing beyond wholesome food with me. And I'm not sure it is wholesome always. The butchers are scoundrels, and the bakers are worse. What used you to do at Lady Fawn's?"
"I still did lessons with the two youngest girls."
"You won't have any lessons to do here, unless you do 'em with me. You had a salary there?"
"Oh yes."
"Fifty pounds a year, I suppose."
"I had eighty."
"Had you, indeed; eighty pounds;—and a coach to ride in!"
"I had a great deal more than that, Lady Linlithgow."
"How do you mean?"
"I had downright love and affection. They were just so many dear friends. I don't suppose any governess was ever so treated before. It was just like being at home. The more I laughed, the better every one liked it."
"You won't find anything to laugh at here; at least, I don't. If you want to laugh, you can laugh up-stairs, or down in the parlour."

"I can do without laughing for a while."

"That's lucky, Miss Morris. If they were all so good to you, what made you come away? They sent you away, didn't they?"

"Well;—I don't know that I can explain it just all. There were a great many things together. No;—they didn't send me away. I came away because it suited."

"It was something to do with your having a lover, I suppose." To this Lucy thought it best to make no answer, and the conversation for a while was dropped.

Lucy had arrived at about half-past three, and Lady Linlithgow was then sitting in the drawing-room. After the first series of questions and answers, Lucy was allowed to go up to her room, and on her return to the drawing-room, found the countess still sitting upright in her chair. She was now busy with accounts, and at first took no notice of Lucy's return. What were to be the companion's duties? What tasks in the house were to be assigned to her? What hours were to be her own; and what was to be done in those of which the countess would demand the use? Up to the present moment nothing had been said of all this. She had simply been told that she was to be Lady Linlithgow's companion,—without salary, indeed,—but receiving shelter, guardianship, and bread and meat in return for her services. She
Lady Linlithgow at Home.

took up a book from the table and sat with it for ten minutes. It was Tupper’s great poem, and she attempted to read it. Lady Linlithgow sat, totting up her figures, but said nothing. She had not spoken a word since Lucy’s return to the room; and as the great poem did not at first fascinate the new companion,—whose mind not unnaturally was somewhat disturbed,—Lucy ventured upon a question. “Is there anything I can do for you, Lady Linlithgow?”

“Do you know about figures?”

“Oh yes. I consider myself quite a ready-reckoner.”

“Can you make two and two come to five on one side of the sheet, and only come to three on the other?”

“I’m afraid I can’t do that, and prove it afterwards.”

“Then you ain’t worth anything to me.” Having so declared, Lady Linlithgow went on with her accounts, and Lucy relapsed into her great poem.

“No, my dear,” said the countess, when she had completed her work, “there isn’t anything for you to do. I hope you haven’t come here with that mistaken idea. There won’t be any sort of work of any kind expected from you. I poke my own fires, and I carve my own bit of mutton. And I haven’t got a nasty little dog to be washed. And I don’t care twopence about worsted work. I have a maid to darn my stockings, and because she has to work, I pay her wages. I don’t like being alone, so I get you
to come and live with me. I breakfast at nine, and
if you don’t manage to be down by that time, I shall
be cross.”

“I’m always up long before that.”

“There’s lunch at two,—just bread and butter and
cheese, and perhaps a bit of cold meat. There’s
dinner at seven;—and very bad it is, because they
don’t have any good meat in London. Down in
Fifeshire the meat’s a deal better than it is here, only
I never go there now. At half-past ten I go to bed.
It’s a pity you’re so young, because I don’t know
what you’ll do about going out. Perhaps, as you
ain’t pretty, it won’t signify.”

“Not at all, I should think,” said Lucy.

“Perhaps you consider yourself pretty. It’s all al-
tered now since I was young. Girls make monsters
of themselves, and I’m told the men like it;—going
about with unclean, frowzy structures on their head,
*enough to make a dog sick.* They used to be clean
and sweet and nice,—what one would like to kiss.
How a man can like to kiss a face with a dirty horse’s
tail all whizzling about it, is what I can’t at all
understand. I don’t think they do like it, but they
have to do it.”

“I haven’t even a pony’s tail,” said Lucy.

“They do like to kiss you, I daresay.”

“No, they don’t,” ejaculated Lucy, not knowing
what answer to make.

“I haven’t hardly looked at you, but you didn’t
seem to me to be a beauty.”
Lady Linlithgow at Home.

"You're quite right about that, Lady Linlithgow."
"I hate beauties. My niece, Lizzie Eustace, is a beauty; and I think that, of all the heartless creatures in the world, she is the most heartless."
"I know Lady Eustace very well."
"Of course you do. She was a Greystock, and you know the Greystocks. And she was down staying with old Lady Fawn at Richmond. I should think old Lady Fawn had a time with her;—hadn't she?"
"It didn't go off very well."
"Lizzie would be too much for the Fawns, I should think. She was too much for me, I know. She's about as bad as anybody ever was. She's false, dishonest, heartless, cruel, irreligious, ungrateful, mean, ignorant, greedy, and vile!"
"Good gracious, Lady Linlithgow!"
"She's all that, and a great deal worse. But she is handsome. I don't know that I ever saw a prettier woman. I generally go out in a cab at three o'clock, but I shan't want you to go with me. I don't know what you can do. Macnulty used to walk round Grosvenor Square and think that people mistook her for a lady of quality. You mustn't go and walk round Grosvenor Square by yourself, you know. Not that I care."
"I'm not a bit afraid of anybody," said Lucy.
"Now you know all about it. There isn't anything for you to do. There are Miss Edgeworth's novels down-stairs, and 'Pride and Prejudice' in my bed-
room. I don’t subscribe to Mudie’s, because when I asked for ‘Adam Bede,’ they always sent me the ‘Bandit Chief.’ Perhaps you can borrow books from your friends at Richmond. I daresay Mrs. Greystock has told you that I’m very cross.”

“I haven’t seen Mrs. Greystock for ever so long.”

“Then Lady Fawn has told you,—or somebody. When the wind is east, or north-east, or even north, I am cross, for I have the lumbago. It’s all very well talking about being good-humoured. You can’t be good-humoured with the lumbago. And I have the gout sometimes in my knee. I’m cross enough then, and so you’d be. And, among ’em all, I don’t get much above half what I ought to have out of my jointure. That makes me very cross. My teeth are bad, and I like to have the meat tender. But it’s always tough, and that makes me cross. And when people go against the grain with me, as Lizzie Eustace always did, then I’m very cross.”

“I hope you won’t be very bad with me,” said Lucy.

“I don’t bite, if you mean that,” said her ladyship.

“I’d sooner be bitten than barked at,—sometimes,” said Lucy.

“Humph!” said the old woman, and then she went back to her accounts.

Lucy had a few books of her own, and she determined to ask Frank to send her some. Books are cheap things, and she would not mind asking him for magazines, and numbers, and perhaps for the loan of
a few volumes. In the meantime she did read Tupper's poem, and "Pride and Prejudice," and one of Miss Edgeworth's novels,—probably for the third time. During the first week in Bruton Street she would have been comfortable enough, only that she had not received a line from Frank. That Frank was not specially good at writing letters she had already taught herself to understand. She was inclined to believe that but few men of business do write letters willingly, and that, of all men, lawyers are the least willing to do so. How reasonable it was that a man who had to perform a great part of his daily work with a pen in his hand, should loathe a pen when not at work. To her the writing of letters was perhaps the most delightful occupation of her life, and the writing of letters to her lover was a foretaste of heaven; but then men, as she knew, are very different from women. And she knew this also,—that of all her immediate duties, no duty could be clearer than that of abstaining from all jealousy, petulance, and impatient expectation of little attentions. He loved her, and had told her so, and had promised her that she should be his wife, and that ought to be enough for her. She was longing for a letter, because she was very anxious to know whether she might mention his name to Lady Linlithgow;—but she would abstain from any idea of blaming him because the letter did not come.

On various occasions the countess showed some little curiosity about the lover; and at last, after about ten days, when she found herself beginning to be intimate
with her new companion, she put the question point-blank. "I hate mysteries," she said. "Who is the young man you are to marry?"

"He is a gentleman I've known a long time."

"That's no answer."

"I don't want to tell his name quite yet, Lady Linlithgow."

"Why shouldn't you tell his name, unless it's something improper? Is he a gentleman?"

"Yes;—he is a gentleman."

"And how old?"

"Oh, I don't know;—perhaps thirty-two."

"And has he any money?"

"He has his profession."

"I don't like these kind of secrets, Miss Morris. If you won't say who he is, what was the good of telling me that you were engaged at all? How is a person to believe it?"

"I don't want you to believe it."

"Highty, tighty!"

"I told you my own part of the affair, because I thought you ought to know it as I was coming into your house. But I don't see that you ought to know his part of it. As for not believing, I suppose you believed Lady Fawn."

"Not a bit better than I believe you. People don't always tell truth because they have titles, nor yet because they've grown old. He don't live in London;—does he?"

"He generally lives in London. He is a barrister."
“Oh,—oh; a barrister is he? They’re always making a heap of money, or else none at all. Which is it with him?”

“He makes something.”

“As much as you could put in your eye and see none the worse.”

To see the old lady, as she made this suggestion, turn sharp round upon Lucy, was as good as a play. “My sister’s nephew, the dean’s son, is one of the best of the rising ones, I’m told.” Lucy blushed up to her hair, but the dowager’s back was turned, and she did not see the blushes. “But he’s in Parliament, and they tell me he spends his money faster than he makes it. I suppose you know him?”

“Yes;—I knew him at Bobsborough.”

“It’s my belief that after all this fuss about Lord Fawn, he’ll marry his cousin, Lizzie Eustace. If he’s a lawyer, and as sharp as they say, I suppose he could manage her. I wish he would.”

“And she so bad as you say she is!”

“She’ll be sure to get somebody, and why shouldn’t he have her money as well as another? There never was a Greystock who didn’t want money. That’s what it will come to;—you’ll see.”

“Never,” said Lucy decidedly.

“And why not?”

“What I mean is that Mr. Greystock is,—at least, I should think so from what I hear,—the very last man in the world to marry for money.”

“What do you know of what a man would do?”
"It would be a very mean thing;—particularly if he does not love her."

"Bother!" said the countess. "They were very near it in town last year before Lord Fawn came up at all. I knew as much as that. And it's what they'll come to before they've done."

"They'll never come to it," said Lucy.

Then a sudden light flashed across the astute mind of the countess. She turned round in her chair, and sat for a while silent, looking at Lucy. Then she slowly asked another question. "He isn't your young man;—is he?" To this Lucy made no reply. "So that's it; is it?" said the dowager. "You've done me the honour of making my house your home till my own sister's nephew shall be ready to marry you?"

"And why not?" asked Lucy, rather roughly.

"And Dame Greystock, from Bobsborough, has sent you here to keep you out of her son's way. I see it all. And that old frump at Richmond has passed you over to me because she did not choose to have such goings on under her own eye."

"There have been no goings on," said Lucy.

"And he's to come here, I suppose, when my back's turned?"

"He is not thinking of coming here. I don't know what you mean. Nobody has done anything wrong to you. I don't know why you say such cruel things."

"He can't afford to marry you, you know."

"I don't know anything about it. Perhaps we must
wait ever so long; five years. That's nobody's business but my own."

"I found it all out,—didn't I?"

"Yes;—you found it out."

"I'm thinking of that sly old Dame Greystock at Bobsborough,—sending you here!" Neither on that nor on the two following days did Lady Linlithgow say a word further to Lucy about her engagement.
CHAPTER XXXV.

TOO BAD FOR SYMPATHY.

When Frank Greystock left Bobsborough to go to Scotland, he had not said that he would return, nor had he at that time made up his mind whether he would do so or no. He had promised to go and shoot in Norfolk, and had half undertaken to be up in London with Herriot working. Though it was holiday time, still there was plenty of work for him to do,—various heavy cases to get up, and papers to be read, if only he could settle himself down to the doing of it. But the scenes down in Scotland had been of a nature to make him unfit for steady labour. How was he to sail his bark through the rocks by which his present voyage was rendered so dangerous? Of course, to the reader, the way to do so seems to be clear enough. To work hard at his profession; to explain to his cousin that she had altogether mistaken his feelings; and to be true to Lucy Morris was so manifestly his duty, that to no reader will it appear possible that to any gentleman there could be a doubt. Instead of the existence of a difficulty, there was a flood of light
upon his path,—so the reader will think;—a flood so clear that not to see his way was impossible. A man carried away by abnormal appetites, and wickedness, and the devil, may of course commit murder, or forge bills, or become a fraudulent director of a bankrupt company. And so may a man be untrue to his troth,—and leave true love in pursuit of tinsel, and beauty, and false words, and a large income. But why should one tell the story of creatures so base? One does not willingly grovel in gutters, or breathe fetid atmospheres, or live upon garbage. If we are to deal with heroes and heroines, let us, at any rate, have heroes and heroines who are above such meanness as falsehood in love. This Frank Greystock must be little better than a mean villain, if he allows himself to be turned from his allegiance to Lucy Morris for an hour by the seductions and money of such a one as Lizzie Eustace.

We know the dear old rhyme;—

"It is good to be merry and wise,  
It is good to be honest and true,  
It is good to be off with the old love  
Before you are on with the new."

There was never better truth spoken than this, and if all men and women could follow the advice here given there would be very little sorrow in the world. But men and women do not follow it. They are no more able to do so than they are to use a spear, the staff of which is like a weaver's beam, or to fight with
the sword Excalibur. The more they exercise their arms the nearer will they get to using the giant's weapon,—or even the weapon that is divine. But as things are at present their limbs are limp and their muscles soft, and over-feeding impedes their breath. They attempt to be merry without being wise, and have theories about truth and honesty with which they desire to shackle others, thinking that freedom from such trammels may be good for themselves. And in that matter of love,—though love is very potent,—treachery will sometimes seem to be prudence, and a hankering after new delights will often interfere with real devotion.

It is very easy to depict a hero,—a man absolutely stainless, perfect as an Arthur,—a man honest in all his dealings, equal to all trials, true in all his speech, indifferent to his own prosperity, struggling for the general good, and, above all, faithful in love. At any rate, it is as easy to do that as to tell of the man who is one hour good and the next bad, who aspires greatly, but fails in practice, who sees the higher, but too often follows the lower course. There arose at one time a school of art, which delighted to paint the human face as perfect in beauty; and from that time to this we are discontented unless every woman is drawn for us as a Venus, or at least a Madonna. I do not know that we have gained much by this untrue portraiture, either in beauty or in art. There may be made for us a pretty thing to look at, no doubt;—but we know that that pretty thing is not
really visaged as the mistress whom we serve, and whose lineaments we desire to perpetuate on the canvas. The winds of heaven, or the flesh-pots of Egypt, or the midnight gas,—passions, pains, and, perhaps, rouge and powder, have made her something different. But still there is the fire of her eye, and the eager eloquence of her mouth, and something, too, perhaps, left of the departing innocence of youth, which the painter might give us without the Venus or the Madonna touches. But the painter does not dare to do it. Indeed, he has painted so long after the other fashion that he would hate the canvas before him, were he to give way to the rouge-begotten roughness or to the flesh-pots,—or even to the winds. And how, my lord, would you, who are giving hundreds, more than hundreds, for this portrait of your dear one, like to see it in print from the art critic of the day, that she is a brazen-faced hoyden who seems to have had a glass of wine too much, or to have been making hay?

And so also has the reading world taught itself to like best the characters of all but divine men and women. Let the man who paints with pen and ink give the gaslight, and the flesh-pots, the passions and pains, the prurient prudence and the rouge-pots and pounce-boxes of the world as it is, and he will be told that no one can care a straw for his creations. With whom are we to sympathise? says the reader, who not unnaturally imagines that a hero should be heroic. Oh, thou, my reader, whose sympathies are in truth
the great and only aim of my work, when you have called the dearest of your friends round you to your hospitable table, how many heroes are there sitting at the board? Your bosom friend, even if he be a knight without fear, is he a knight without reproach? The Ivanhoe that you know, did he not press Rebecca's hand? Your Lord Evandale,—did he not bring his coronet into play when he strove to win his Edith Bellenden? Was your Tresilian still true and still forbearing when truth and forbearance could avail him nothing? And those sweet girls whom you know, do they never doubt between the poor man they think they love, and the rich man whose riches they know they covet?

Go into the market, either to buy or sell, and name the thing you desire to part with or to get, as it is, and the market is closed against you. Middling oats are the sweepings of the granaries. A useful horse is a jade gone at every point. Good sound port is sloe juice. No assurance short of A 1 betokens even a pretence to merit. And yet in real life we are content with oats that are really middling, are very glad to have a useful horse, and know that if we drink port at all we must drink some that is neither good nor sound. In those delineations of life and character which we call novels a similarly superlative vein is desired. Our own friends around us are not always merry and wise, nor, alas! always honest and true. They are often cross and foolish, and sometimes treacherous and false. They are so, and we are angry.
Too Bad for Sympathy.

Then we forgive them, not without a consciousness of imperfection on our own part. And we know,—or at least believe,—that though they be sometimes treacherous and false, there is a balance of good. We cannot have heroes to dine with us. There are none. And were these heroes to be had, we should not like them. But neither are our friends villains,—whose every aspiration is for evil, and whose every moment is a struggle for some achievement worthy of the devil.

The persons whom you cannot care for in a novel, because they are so bad, are the very same that you so dearly love in your life, because they are so good. To make them and ourselves somewhat better,—not by one spring heavenwards to perfection, because we cannot so use our legs,—but by slow climbing, is, we may presume, the object of all teachers, leaders, legislators, spiritual pastors, and masters. He who writes tales such as this, probably also has, very humbly, some such object distantly before him. A picture of surpassing godlike nobleness,—a picture of a King Arthur among men, may perhaps do much. But such pictures cannot do all. When such a picture is painted, as intending to show what a man should be, it is true. If painted to show what men are, it is false. The true picture of life as it is, if it could be adequately painted, would show men what they are, and how they might rise, not, indeed, to perfection, but one step first, and then another on the ladder.

Our hero, Frank Greystock, falling lamentably short
in his heroism, was not in a happy state of mind when he reached Bobsborough. It may be that he returned to his own borough and to his mother's arms because he felt, that were he to determine to be false to Lucy, he would there receive sympathy in his treachery. His mother would, at any rate, think that it was well, and his father would acknowledge that the fault committed was in the original engagement with poor Lucy, and not in the treachery. He had written that letter to her in his chambers one night in a fit of ecstasy; and could it be right that the ruin of a whole life should be the consequence?

It can hardly be too strongly asserted that Lizzie Eustace did not appear to Frank as she had been made to appear to the reader. In all this affair of the necklace he was beginning to believe that she was really an ill-used woman; and as to other traits in Lizzie's character,—traits which he had seen, and which were not of a nature to attract,—it must be remembered that beauty reclining in a man's arms does go far towards washing white the lovely blackamoor. Lady Linlithgow, upon whom Lizzie's beauty could have no effect of that kind, had nevertheless declared her to be very beautiful. And this loveliness was of a nature that was altogether pleasing, if once the beholder of it could get over the idea of falseness which certainly Lizzie's eye was apt to convey to the beholder. There was no unclean horse's tail. There was no get up of flounces, and padding, and paint, and hair, with a dorsal excrescence appended with the object surely of
showing in triumph how much absurd ugliness women can force men to endure. She was lithe, and active, and bright,—and was at this moment of her life at her best. Her growing charms had as yet hardly reached the limits of full feminine loveliness,—which, when reached, have been surpassed. Luxuriant beauty had with her not as yet become comeliness; nor had age or the good things of the world added a pound to the fairy lightness of her footstep. All this had been tendered to Frank,—and with it that worldly wealth which was so absolutely necessary to his career. For though Greystock would not have said to any man or woman that nature had intended him to be a spender of much money and a consumer of many good things, he did undoubtedly so think of himself. He was a Greystock, and to what miseries would he not reduce his Lucy if, burthened by such propensities, he were to marry her and then become an aristocratic pauper!

The offer of herself by a woman to a man is, to us all, a thing so distasteful that we at once declare that the woman must be abominable. There shall be no whitewashing of Lizzie Eustace. She was abominable. But the man to whom the offer is made hardly sees the thing in the same light. He is disposed to believe that, in his peculiar case, there are circumstances by which the woman is, if not justified, at least excused. Frank did put faith in his cousin’s love for himself. He did credit her when she told him that she had accepted Lord Fawn’s offer in pique, because he had
not come to her when he had promised that he would come. It did seem natural to him that she should have desired to adhere to her engagement when he would not advise her to depart from it. And then her jealousy about Lucy’s ring, and her abuse of Lucy, were proofs to him of her love. Unless she loved him, why should she care to marry him? What was his position that she should desire to share it;—unless she so desired because he was dearer to her than aught beside? He had not eyes clear enough to perceive that his cousin was a witch whistling for a wind, and ready to take the first blast that would carry her and her broomstick somewhere into the sky. And then, in that matter of the offer, which in ordinary circumstances certainly should not have come from her to him, did not the fact of her wealth and of his comparative poverty cleanse her from such stain as would, in usual circumstances, attach to a woman who is so forward? He had not acceded to her proposition. He had not denied his engagement to Lucy. He had left her presence without a word of encouragement, because of that engagement. But he believed that Lizzie was sincere. He believed, now, that she was genuine; though he had previously been all but sure that falsehood and artifice were second nature to her.

At Bobsborough he met his constituents, and made them the normal autumn speech. The men of Bobsborough were well pleased and gave him a vote of confidence. As none but those of his own party attended the meeting, it was not wonderful that the
vote was unanimous. His father, mother, and sister all heard his speech, and there was a strong family feeling that Frank was born to set the Greystocks once more upon their legs. When a man can say what he likes with the certainty that every word will be reported, and can speak to those around him as one manifestly their superior, he always looms large. When the Conservatives should return to their proper place at the head of affairs, there could be no doubt that Frank Greystock would be made Solicitor-General. There were not wanting even ardent admirers who conceived that, with such claims and such talents as his, the ordinary steps in political promotion would not be needed, and that he would become Attorney-General at once. All men began to say all good things to the dean, and to Mrs. Greystock it seemed that the woolsack, or at least the Queen’s Bench with a peerage, was hardly an uncertainty. But then,—there must be no marriage with a penniless governess. If he would only marry his cousin one might say that the woolsack was won.

Then came Lucy’s letter; the pretty, dear, joking letter about the “duchess,” and broken hearts. “I would break my heart, only—only—only——” Yes, he knew very well what she meant. I shall never be called upon to break my heart, because you are not a false scoundrel. If you were a false scoundrel, instead of being, as you are, a pearl among men,—then I should break my heart. That was what Lucy meant. She could not have been much clearer, and
he understood it perfectly. It is very nice to walk about one's own borough and be voted unanimously worthy of confidence, and be a great man; but if you are a scoundrel, and not used to being a scoundrel, black care is apt to sit very close behind you as you go caracolling along the streets.

Lucy's letter required an answer, and how should he answer it? He certainly did not wish her to tell Lady Linlithgow of her engagement, but Lucy clearly wished to be allowed to tell, and on what ground could he enjoin her to be silent? He knew, or he thought he knew, that till he answered the letter, she would not tell his secret,—and therefore from day to day he put off the answer. A man does not write a love-letter usually when he is in doubt himself whether he does or does not mean to be a scoundrel.

Then there came a letter to "Dame" Greystock from Lady Linlithgow, which filled them all with amaze-
ment.

"My dear Madam,"—began the letter,—

"Seeing that your son is engaged to marry Miss Morris,—at least she says so,—you ought not to have sent her here without telling me all about it. She says you know of the match, and she says that I can write to you if I please. Of course, I can do that without her leave. But it seems to me that if you know all about it, and approve the marriage, your house and not mine would be the proper place for her."
"I'm told that Mr. Greystock is a great man. Any lady being with me as my companion can't be a great woman. But perhaps you wanted to break it off;—else you would have told me. She shall stay here six months, but then she must go.

"Yours truly,

"Susanna Linlithgow."

It was considered absolutely necessary that this letter should be shown to Frank. "You see," said his mother, "she told the old lady at once."

"I don't see why she shouldn't." Nevertheless Frank was annoyed. Having asked for permission, Lucy should at least have waited for a reply.

"Well; I don't know," said Mrs. Greystock. "It is generally considered that young ladies are more reticent about such things. She has blurted it out and boasted about it at once."

"I thought girls always told of their engagements," said Frank, "and I can't for the life of me see that there was any boasting in it." Then he was silent for a moment. "The truth is, we are, all of us, treating Lucy very badly."

"I cannot say that I see it," said his mother.

"We ought to have had her here."

"For how long, Frank?"

"For as long as a home was needed by her."

"Had you demanded it, Frank, she should have come, of course. But neither I nor your father could have had pleasure in receiving her as your future wife."
You, yourself, say that it cannot be for two years at least."

"I said one year."

"I think, Frank, you said two. And we all know that such a marriage would be ruinous to you. How could we make her welcome? Can you see your way to having a house for her to live in within twelve months?"

"Why not a house? I could have a house tomorrow."

"Such a house as would suit you in your position? And, Frank, would it be a kindness to marry her and then let her find that you were in debt?"

"I don't believe she'd care, if she had nothing but a crust to eat."

"She ought to care, Frank."

"I think," said the dean to his son, on the next day, "that in our class of life an imprudent marriage is the one thing that should be avoided. My marriage has been very happy, God knows; but I have always been a poor man, and feel it now when I am quite unable to help you. And yet your mother had some fortune. Nobody, I think, cares less for wealth than I do. I am content almost with nothing."—The nothing with which the dean had hitherto been contented had always included every comfort of life, a well-kept table, good wine, new books, and canonical habiliments with the gloss still on; but as the Bobsborough tradesmen had, through the agency of Mrs. Greystock, always supplied him with these things as though they came
from the clouds, he really did believe that he had never asked for anything. — "I am content almost with nothing. But I do feel that marriage cannot be adopted as the ordinary form of life by men in our class as it can be by the rich or by the poor. You, for instance, are called upon to live with the rich, but are not rich. That can only be done by wary walking, and is hardly consistent with a wife and children."

"But men in my position do marry, sir."

"After a certain age,—or else they marry ladies with money. You see, Frank, there are not many men who go into Parliament with means so moderate as yours; and they who do perhaps have stricter ideas of economy." The dean did not say a word about Lucy Morris, and dealt entirely with generalities.

In compliance with her son's advice,—or almost command,—Mrs. Greystock did not answer Lady Lin-lithgow's letter. He was going back to London, and would give personally, or by letter written there, what answer might be necessary. "You will then see Miss Morris?" asked his mother.

"I shall certainly see Lucy. Something must be settled." There was a tone in his voice as he said this which gave some comfort to his mother.
CHAPTER XXXVI.

LIZZIE'S GUESTS.

True to their words, at the end of October, Mrs. Carbuncle and Miss Roanoke, and Lord George de Bruce Carruthers, and Sir Griffin Tewett, arrived at Portray Castle. And for a couple of days there was a visitor whom Lizzie was very glad to welcome, but of whose good-nature on the occasion Mr. Camperdown thought very ill indeed. This was John Eustace. His sister-in-law wrote to him in very pressing language; and as,—so he said to Mr. Camperdown,—he did not wish to seem to quarrel with his brother's widow as long as such seeming might be avoided, he accepted the invitation. If there was to be a lawsuit about the diamonds, that must be Mr. Camperdown's affair. Lizzie had never entertained her friends in style before. She had had a few people to dine with her in London, and once or twice had received company on an evening. But in all her London doings there had been the trepidation of fear,—to be accounted for by her youth and widowhood; and it was at Portray,—her own house at Portray,—that it would best
become her to exercise her hospitality. She had
bided her time even there, but now she meant to
show her friends that she had got a house of her
own.

She wrote even to her husband’s uncle, the bishop,
asking him down to Portray. He could not come, but
sent an affectionate answer, and thanked her for think-
ing of him. Many people she asked who, she felt sure,
would not come,—and one or two of them accepted
her invitation. John Eustace promised to be with
her for two days. When Frank had left her, going
out of her presence in the manner that has been
described, she actually wrote to him, begging him to
join her party. This was her note.

“Come to me, just for a week,” she said, “when
my people are here, so that I may not seem to be
deserted. Sit at the bottom of my table, and be to me
as a brother might. I shall expect you to do so
much for me.” To this he had replied that he would
come during the first week in November.

And she got a clergyman down from London, the
Rev. Joseph Emilius, of whom it was said that he was
born a Jew in Hungary, and that his name in his
own country had been Mealyus. At the present time
he was among the most eloquent of London preachers,
and was reputed by some to have reached such a
standard of pulpit-oratory, as to have had no equal
within the memory of living hearers. In regard to
his reading it was acknowledged that no one since
Mrs. Siddons had touched him. But he did not get
The Eustace Diamonds.

on very well with any particular bishop, and there was doubt in the minds of some people whether there was or was not any—Mrs. Emilius. He had come up quite suddenly within the last season, and had made church-going quite a pleasant occupation to Lizzie Eustace.

On the last day of October, Mr. Emilius and Mr. John Eustace came each alone. Mrs. Carbuncle and Miss Roanoke came over with post-horses from Ayr,—as also did Lord George and Sir Griffin about an hour after them. Frank was not yet expected. He had promised to name a day and had not yet named it.

"Varra weel; varra weel," Gowran had said when he was told of what was about to occur, and was desired to make preparations necessary in regard to the outside plenishing of the house; "nae doobt she'll do with her ain what pleases her ainsel. The mair ye poor out, the less there'll be left in. Mr. Jo-ohn coming? I'll be glad then to see Mr. Jo-ohn. Oo, ay; aits,—there'll be aits eneuch. And anither coo? You'll want twa ither coos. I'll see to the coos." And Andy Gowran, in spite of the internecine warfare which existed between him and his mistress, did see to the hay, and the cows and the oats, and the extra servants that were wanted both inside and outside the house. There was enmity between him and Lady Eustace, and he didn't care who knew it;—but he took her wages and he did her work.
Mrs. Carbuncle was a wonderful woman. She was the wife of a man with whom she was very rarely seen, whom nobody knew, who was something in the City, but somebody who never succeeded in making money; and yet she went everywhere. She had at least the reputation of going everywhere, and did go to a great many places. Carbuncle had no money,—so it was said; and she had none. She was the daughter of a man who had gone to New York and had failed there. Of her own parentage no more was known. She had a small house in one of the very small Mayfair streets, to which she was wont to invite her friends for five-o'clock tea. Other receptions she never attempted. During the London seasons she always kept a carriage, and during the winters she always had hunters. Who paid for them no one knew or cared. Her dress was always perfect,—as far as fit and performance went. As to approving Mrs. Carbuncle's manner of dress,—that was a question of taste. Audacity may, perhaps, be said to have been the ruling principle of her toilet;—not the audacity of indecency, which, let the satirists say what they may, is not efficacious in England, but audacity in colour, audacity in design, and audacity in construction. She would ride in the park in a black and yellow habit, and appear at the opera in white velvet without a speck of colour. Though certainly turned thirty, and probably nearer to forty, she would wear her jet-black hair streaming down her back, and when June came would drive about London in a straw hat.
But yet it was always admitted that she was well dressed. And then would arise the question, Who paid the bills?

Mrs. Carbuncle was certainly a handsome woman. She was full-faced,—with bold eyes, rather far apart, perfect black eyebrows, a well-formed broad nose, thick lips, and regular teeth. Her chin was round and short, with, perhaps, a little bearing towards a double chin. But though her face was plump and round, there was a power in it, and a look of command of which it was, perhaps, difficult to say in what features was the seat. But in truth the mind will lend a tone to every feature, and it was the desire of Mrs. Carbuncle's heart to command. But perhaps the wonder of her face was its complexion. People said,—before they knew her,—that, as a matter of course, she had been made beautiful for ever. But, though that too brilliant colour was almost always there, covering the cheeks but never touching the forehead or the neck, it would at certain moments shift, change, and even depart. When she was angry, it would vanish for a moment and then return intensified. There was no chemistry on Mrs. Carbuncle's cheek; and yet it was a tint so brilliant and so transparent, as almost to justify a conviction that it could not be genuine. There were those who declared that nothing in the way of complexion so beautiful as that of Mrs. Carbuncle's had been seen on the face of any other woman in this age, and there were others who called her an exaggerated milkmaid. She was tall, too, and
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had learned so to walk as though half the world belonged to her.

Her niece, Miss Roanoke, was a lady of the same stamp, and of similar beauty, with those additions and also with those drawbacks which belong to youth. She looked as though she were four-and-twenty, but in truth she was no more than eighteen. When seen beside her aunt, she seemed to be no more than half the elder lady’s size; and yet her proportions were not insignificant. She, too, was tall, and was as one used to command, and walked as though she were a young Juno. Her hair was very dark,—almost black,—and very plentiful. Her eyes were large and bright, though too bold for a girl so young. Her nose and mouth were exactly as her aunt’s, but her chin was somewhat longer, so as to divest her face of that plump roundness which, perhaps, took something from the majesty of Mrs. Carbuncle’s appearance. Miss Roanoke’s complexion was certainly marvellous. No one thought that she had been made beautiful for ever, for the colour would go and come and shift and change with every word and every thought; but still it was there, as deep on her cheeks as on her aunt’s, though somewhat more transparent, and with more delicacy of tint as the bright hues faded away and became merged in the almost marble whiteness of her skin. With Mrs. Carbuncle there was no merging and fading. The red and white bordered one another on her cheek, without any merging, as they do on a flag.
Lucinda Roanoke was undoubtedly a very handsome woman. It probably never occurred to man or woman to say that she was lovely. She had sat for her portrait during the last winter, and her picture had caused much remark in the Exhibition. Some said that she might be a Brinvilliers, others a Cleopatra, and others again a Queen of Sheba. In her eyes as they were limned there had been nothing certainly of love, but they who likened her to the Egyptian queen believed that Cleopatra's love had always been used simply to assist her ambition. They who took the Brinvilliers side of the controversy were men so used to softness and flattery from woman as to have learned to think that a woman silent, arrogant, and hard of approach, must be always meditating murder. The disciples of the Queen of Sheba school, who formed perhaps the more numerous party, were led to their opinion by the majesty of Lucinda's demeanour rather than by any clear idea in their own minds of the lady who visited Solomon. All men, however, agreed in this, that Lucinda Roanoke was very handsome, but that she was not the sort of girl with whom a man would wish to stray away through the distant beech-trees at a picnic.

In truth she was silent, grave, and, if not really haughty, subject to all the signs of haughtiness. She went everywhere with her aunt, and allowed herself to be walked out at dances, and to be accosted when on horseback, and to be spoken to at parties; but she seemed hardly to trouble herself to talk,—and as for
laughing, flirting, or giggling, one might as well expect such levity from a marble Minerva. During the last winter she had taken to hunting with her aunt, and already could ride well to hounds. If assistance were wanted at a gate, or in the management of a fence, and the servant who attended the two ladies were not near enough to give it, she would accept it as her due from the man nearest to her; but she rarely did more than bow her thanks, and, even by young lords, or hard-riding handsome colonels, or squires of undoubted thousands, she could hardly ever be brought to what might be called a proper hunting-field conversation. All of which things were noted, and spoken of, and admired. It must be presumed that Lucinda Roanoke was in want of a husband, and yet no girl seemed to take less pains to get one. A girl ought not to be always busying herself to bring down a man, but a girl ought to give herself some

- charms. A girl so handsome as Lucinda Roanoke, with pluck enough to ride like a bird, dignity enough for a duchess, and who was undoubtedy clever, ought to put herself in the way of taking such good things as her charms and merits would bring her;—but Lucinda Roanoke stood aloof and despised everybody. So it was that Lucinda was spoken of when her name was mentioned; and her name was mentioned a good deal after the opening of the exhibition of pictures.

There was some difficulty about her,—as to whose she was. That she was an American was the received opinion. Her mother, as well as Mrs. Carbuncle, had
certainly been in New York. Carbuncle was a London man; but it was supposed that Mr. Roanoke was, or had been, an American. The received opinion was correct. Lucinda had been born in New York, had been educated there till she was sixteen, had then been taken to Paris for nine months, and from Paris had been brought to London by her aunt. Mrs. Carbuncle always spoke of Lucinda's education as having been thoroughly Parisian. Of her now education and antecedents, Lucinda never spoke at all. "I'll tell you what it is," said a young scamp from Eton to his elder sister, when her character and position were once being discussed. "She's a heroine, and would shoot a fellow as soon as look at him." In that scamp's family, Lucinda was ever afterwards called the heroine.

The manner in which Lord George de Bruce Carruthers had attached himself to these ladies was a mystery; but then Lord George was always mysterious. He was a young man,—so considered,—about forty-five years of age, who had never done anything in the manner of other people. He hunted a great deal, but he did not fraternise with hunting men, and would appear now in this county and now in that, with an utmost disregard of grass, fences, friendships, or foxes. Leicester, Essex, Ayrshire, or the Baron had equal delights for him; and in all counties he was quite at home. He had never owned a fortune, and had never been known to earn a shilling. It was said that early in life he had been apprenticed to an attorney at Aberdeen as George
Carruthers. His third cousin, the Marquis of Killiecrankie, had been killed out hunting; the second scion of the noble family had fallen at Balaclava; a third had perished in the Indian Mutiny; and a fourth, who did reign for a few months, died suddenly, leaving a large family of daughters. Within three years the four brothers vanished, leaving among them no male heir, and George's elder brother, who was then in a West India regiment, was called home from Demerara to be Marquis of Killiecrankie. By a usual exercise of the courtesy of the Crown, all the brothers were made lords, and some twelve years before the date of our story George Carruthers, who had long since left the attorney's office at Aberdeen, became Lord George de Bruce Carruthers. How he lived no one knew. That his brother did much for him was presumed to be impossible, as the property entailed on the Killiecrankie title certainly was not large. He sometimes went into the City, and was supposed to know something about shares. Perhaps he played a little and made a few bets. He generally lived with men of means;—or perhaps with one man of means at a time; but they, who knew him well, declared that he never borrowed a shilling from a friend, and never owed a guinea to a tradesman. He always had horses, but never had a home. When in London he lodged in a single room, and dined at his club. He was a Colonel of Volunteers, having got up the regiment known as the Long Shore Riflemen,—the roughest regiment of Volunteers in all England,—and
reputed to be a bitter Radical. He was suspected even of republican sentiments, and ignorant young men about London hinted that he was the grand centre of the British Fenians. He had been invited to stand for the Tower Hamlets, but had told the deputation which waited upon him that he knew a thing worth two of that. Would they guarantee his expenses, and then give him a salary? The deputation doubted its ability to promise so much. "I more than doubt it," said Lord George; and then the deputation went away.

In person he was a long-legged, long-bodied, long-faced man, with rough whiskers and a rough beard on his upper lip, but with a shorn chin. His eyes were very deep set in his head, and his cheeks were hollow and sallow, and yet he looked to be and was a powerful, healthy man. He had large hands, which seemed to be all bone, and long arms, and a neck which looked to be long; because he so wore his shirt that much of his throat was always bare. It was manifest enough that he liked to have good-looking women about him, and yet nobody presumed it probable that he would marry. For the last two or three years there had been friendship between him and Mrs. Carbuncle; and during the last season he had become almost intimate with our Lizzie. Lizzie thought that perhaps he might be the Corsair whom, sooner or later in her life, she must certainly encounter.

Sir Griffin Tewett, who at the present period of his existence was being led about by Lord George, was
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not exactly an amiable young baronet. Nor were his circumstances such as make a man amiable. He was nominally, not only the heir to, but actually the possessor of, a large property;—but he could not touch the principal, and of the income only so much as certain legal curmudgeons would allow him. As Greystock had said, everybody was at law with him,—so successful had been his father in mismanaging, and miscontrolling, and misappropriating the property. Tewett Hall had gone to rack and ruin for four years, and was now let almost for nothing. He was a fair, frail young man, with a bad eye, and a weak mouth, and a thin hand, who was fond of liqueurs, and hated to the death any acquaintance who won a five-pound note of him, or any tradesman who wished to have his bill paid. But he had this redeeming quality,—that having found Lucinda Roanoke to be the handsomest woman he had ever seen, he did desire to make her his wife.

Such were the friends whom Lizzie Eustace received at Portray Castle on the first day of her grand hospitality,—together with John Eustace and Mr. Joseph Emilius, the fashionable preacher from Mayfair.
CHAPTER XXXVII.

LIZZIE'S FIRST DAY.

The coming of John Eustace was certainly a great thing for Lizzie, though it was only for two days. It saved her from that feeling of desertion before her friends,—desertion by those who might naturally belong to her, which would otherwise have afflicted her. His presence there for two days gave her a start. She could call him John, and bring down her boy to him, and remind him, with the sweetest smile,—with almost a tear in her eye,—that he was the boy's guardian. "Little fellow! So much depends on that little life,—does it not, John?" she said, whispering the words into his ear.

"Lucky little dog!" said John, patting the boy's head. "Let me see; of course he'll go to Eton."

"Not yet," said Lizzie with a shudder.

"Well; no; hardly;—when he's twelve." And then the boy was done with and was carried away. She had played that card, and had turned her trick. John Eustace was a thoroughly good-natured man of the world, who could forgive many faults, not ex-
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pecting people to be perfect. He did not like Mrs. Carbuncle;—was indifferent to Lucinda's beauty;—was afraid of that Tartar, Lord George; and thoroughly despised Sir Griffin. In his heart he believed Mr. Emilius to be an impostor, who might, for all he knew, pick his pocket; and Miss Macnulty had no attraction for him. But he smiled and was gay, and called Lady Eustace by her Christian name, and was content to be of use to her in showing her friends that she had not been altogether dropped by the Eustace people. "I got such a nice affectionate letter from the dear bishop," said Lizzie, "but he couldn't come. He could not escape a previous engagement."

"It's a long way," said John, "and he's not so young as he was once;—and then there are the Bobsonborough parsons to look after."

"I don't suppose anything of that kind stops him," said Lizzie, who did not think it possible that a bishop's bliss should be alloyed by work. John was so very nice that she almost made up her mind to talk to him about the necklace; but she was cautious, and thought of it, and found that it would be better that she should abstain. John Eustace was certainly very good-natured, but perhaps he might say an ugly word to her if she were rash. She refrained, therefore, and after breakfast on the second day he took his departure without an allusion to things that were unpleasant.

"I call my brother-in-law a perfect gentleman," said Lizzie with enthusiasm, when his back was called.
"Certainly," said Mrs. Carbuncle. "He seems to me to be very quiet."

"He didn't quite like his party," said Lord George. "I am sure he did," said Lizzie.

"I mean as to politics. To him we are all turbulent demagogues and Bohemians. Eustace is an old-world Tory, if there's one left anywhere. But you're right, Lady Eustace. He is a gentleman."

"He knows on which side his bread is buttered as well as any man," said Sir Griffin.

"Am I a demagogue," said Lizzie, appealing to the Corsair, "or a Bohemian? I didn't know it."

"A little in that way, I think, Lady Eustace;—not a demagogue, but demagoguical;—not a Bohemian, but that way given."

"And is Miss Roanoke demagoguical?"

"Certainly," said Lord George. "I hardly wrong you there, Miss Roanoke?"

"Lucinda is a democrat, but hardly a demagogue, Lord George," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"Those are distinctions which we hardly understand on this thick-headed side of the water. But demagogues, democrats, demonstrations, and Demosthenic oratory are all equally odious to John Eustace. For a young man he's about the best Tory I know."

"He is true to his colours," said Mr. Emilius, who had been endeavouring to awake the attention of Miss Roanoke on the subject of Shakespeare's dramatic action, "and I like men who are true to their colours." Mr.
Emilius spoke with the slightest possible tone of a foreign accent,—a tone so slight that it simply served to attract attention to him.

While Eustace was still in the house, there had come a letter from Frank Greystock, saying that he would reach Portray, by way of Glasgow, on Wednesday, the 5th of November. He must sleep in Glasgow on that night, having business, or friends, or pleasure demanding his attention in that prosperous mart of commerce. It had been impressed upon him that he should hunt, and he had consented. There was to be a meet out on the Kilmarnock side of the county on that Wednesday, and he would bring a horse with him from Glasgow. Even in Glasgow a hunter was to be hired, and could be sent forty or fifty miles out of the town in the morning and brought back in the evening. Lizzie had learned all about that, and had told him. If he would call at MacFarlane's stables in Buchanan Street, or even write to Mr. MacFarlane, he would be sure to get a horse that would carry him. MacFarlane was sending horses down into the Ayrshire country every day of his life. It was simply an affair of money. Three guineas for the horse, and then just the expense of the railway. Frank, who knew quite as much about it as did his cousin, and who never thought much of guineas or of railway tickets, promised to meet the party at the meet ready equipped. His things would go on by train, and Lizzie must send for them to Troon. He presumed a beneficent Providence would take the horse back to the bosom of Mr. MacFarlane. Such
was the tenor of his letter. "If he don't mind, he'll find himself astray," said Sir Griffin. "He'll have to go one way by rail and his horse another." "We can manage better for our cousin than that," said Lizzie, with a rebuking nod.

But there was hunting from Portray before Frank Greystock came. It was specially a hunting party, and Lizzie was to be introduced to the glories of the field. In giving her her due, it must be acknowledged that she was fit for the work. She rode well, though she had not ridden to hounds, and her courage was cool. She looked well on horseback, and had that presence of mind which should never desert a lady when she is hunting. A couple of horses had been purchased for her, under Lord George's superintendence,—his conjointly with Mrs. Carbuncle's,—and had been at the castle for the last ten days—"eating their varra heeds off," as Andy Gowran had said in sorrow. There had been practising even while John Eustace was there, and before her preceptors had slept three nights at the castle, she had ridden backwards and forwards, half-a-dozen times, over a stone wall. "Oh yes," Lucinda had said, in answer to a remark from Sir Griffin, "it's easy enough,—till you come across something difficult."

"Nothing difficult stops you," said Sir Griffin;—to which compliment Lucinda vouchsafed no reply.

On Monday Lizzie went out hunting for the first time in her life. It must be owned that, as she put her habit on, and afterwards breakfasted with all her
guests in hunting gear around her, and then was driven
with them in her own carriage to the meet, there was
something of trepidation at her heart. And her feeling
of cautious fear in regard to money had received a
shock. Mrs. Carbuncle had told her that a couple of
horses fit to carry her might perhaps cost her about
£180. Lord George had received the commission, and
the cheque required from her had been for £320. Of
course she had written the cheque without a word, but
it did begin to occur to her that hunting was an ex-
pensive amusement. Gowran had informed her that
he had bought a rick of hay from a neighbour for
£75 15s. 9d. “God forgive me,” said Andy, “but I
b’lieve I’ve been o’er hard on the puir man in your
leddyship’s service.” £75 15s. 9d. did seem a great
deal of money to pay; and could it be necessary that
she should buy a whole rick? There were to be eight
horses in the stable. To what friend could she apply
to learn how much of a rick of hay one horse ought to
eat in a month of hunting? In such a matter she
might have trusted Andy Gowran implicitly; but how
was she to know that? And then, what if at some
desperate fence she were to be thrown off and break
her nose and knock out her front teeth! Was the
game worth the candle? She was by no means sure
that she liked Mrs. Carbuncle very much. And though
she liked Lord George very well, could it be possible
that he bought the horses for £90 each and charged
her £160? Corsairs do do this sort of things. The
horses themselves were two sweet dears, with stars on
The Eustace Diamonds.

their foreheads, and shining coats, and a delicious aptitude for jumping over everything at a moment's notice. Lord George had not, in truth, made a penny by them, and they were good hunters, worth the money;—but how was Lizzie to know that? But though she doubted, and was full of fears, she could smile and look as though she liked it. If the worst should come she could certainly get money for the diamonds.

On that Monday, the meet was comparatively near to them,—distant only twelve miles. On the following Wednesday it would be sixteen, and they would use the railway,—having the carriage sent to meet them in the evening. The three ladies and Lord George filled the carriage, and Sir Griffin was perched upon the box. The ladies' horses had gone on with two grooms, and those for Lord George and Sir Griffin were to come to the meet. Lizzie felt somewhat proud of her establishment and her equipage;—but at the same time somewhat fearful. Hitherto she knew but very little of the county people, and was not sure how she might be received;—and then how would it be with her, if the fox should at once start away across country, and she should lack either the pluck or the power to follow? There was Sir Griffin to look after Miss Roanoke, and Lord George to attend to Mrs. Carbuncle. At last an idea so horrible struck her that she could not keep it down. "What am I to do," she said, "if I find myself all alone in a field, and everybody else gone away?"
"We won't treat you quite in that fashion," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"The only possible way in which you can be alone in a field is that you will have cut everybody else down," said Lord George.

"I suppose it will all come right," said Lizzie, plucking up her courage, and telling herself that a woman can die but once.

Everything was right,—as it usually is. The horses were there,—quite a throng of horses, as the two gentlemen had two each; and there was, moreover, a mounted groom to look after the three ladies. Lizzie had desired to have a groom to herself, but had been told that the expenditure in horseflesh was more than the stable could stand. "All I ever want of a man is to carry for me my flask, and waterproof, and luncheon," said Mrs. Carbuncle. "I don't care if I never see a groom, except for that."

"It's convenient to have a gate opened sometimes," said Lucinda slowly.

"Will no one but a groom do that for you?" asked Sir Griffin.

"Gentlemen can't open gates," said Lucinda. Now, as Sir Griffin thought that he had opened many gates during the last season for Miss Roanoke, he felt this to be hard.

But there were eight horses, and eight horses with three servants and a carriage made quite a throng. Among the crowd of Ayrshire hunting men,—a lord or two, a dozen lairds, two dozen farmers, and as many
men of business out of Ayr, Kilmarnock, and away from Glasgow,—it was soon told that Lady Eustace and her party were among them. A good deal had been already heard of Lizzie, and it was at least known of her that she had, for her life, the Portray estate in her hands. So there was an undercurrent of whispering, and that sort of commotion which the appearance of new-comers does produce at a hunt-meet. Lord George knew one or two men, who were surprised to find him in Ayrshire, and Mrs. Carbuncle was soon quite at home with a young nobleman whom she had met in the vale with the Baron. Sir Griffin did not leave Lucinda's side, and for a while poor Lizzie felt herself alone in a crowd.

Who does not know that terrible feeling, and the all but necessity that exists for the sufferer to pretend that he is not suffering,—which again is aggravated by the conviction that the pretence is utterly vain? This may be bad with a man, but with a woman, who never looks to be alone in a crowd, it is terrible. For five minutes, during which everybody else was speaking to everybody,—for five minutes, which seemed to her to be an hour, Lizzie spoke to no one, and no one spoke to her. Was it for such misery as this, that she was spending hundreds upon hundreds, and running herself into debt? For she was sure that there would be debt before she had parted with Mrs. Carbuncle. There are people, very many people, to whom an act of hospitality is in itself a good thing; but there are others who are always making calculations, and endeavouring to count
up the thing purchased against the cost. Lizzie had been told that she was a rich woman,—as women go, very rich. Surely she was entitled to entertain a few friends; and if Mrs. Carbuncle and Miss Roanoke could hunt, it could not be that hunting was beyond her own means. And yet she was spending a great deal of money. She had seen a large waggon loaded with sacks of corn coming up the hill to the Portray stables, and she knew that there would be a long bill at the corn-chandler’s. There had been found a supply of wine in the cellars at Portray,—which at her request had been inspected by her cousin Frank;—but it had been necessary, so he had told her, to have much more sent down from London,—champagne, and liqueurs, and other nice things that cost money. “You won’t like not to have them if these people are coming?” “Oh, no; certainly not,” said Lizzie with enthusiasm. What other rich people did, she would do. But now, in her five minutes of misery, she counted it all up, and was at a loss to find what was to be her return for her expenditure. And then, if on this her first day she should have a fall, with no tender hand to help her, and then find that she had knocked out her front teeth!

But the cavalcade began to move, and then Lord George was by her side. “You mustn’t be angry if I seem to stick too close to you,” he said. She gave him her sweetest smile as she told him that that would be impossible. “Because, you know, though it’s the easiest thing in the world to get along out hunting,
and women never come to grief, a person is a little astray at first."

"I shall be so much astray," said Lizzie. "I don't at all know how we are going to begin. Are we hunting a fox now?" At this moment they were trotting across a field or two, through a run of gates up to the first covert.

"Not quite yet. The hounds haven't been put in yet. You see that wood there? I suppose they'll draw that."

"What is drawing, Lord George? I want to know all about it, and I am so ignorant. Nobody else will tell me." Then Lord George gave his lesson, and explained the theory and system of fox-hunting. "We're to wait here, then, till the fox runs away? But it's ever so large, and if he runs away, and nobody sees him? I hope he will, because it will be nice to go on easily."

"A great many people hope that, and a great many think it nice to go on easily. Only you must not confess to it." Then he went on with his lecture, and explained the meaning of scent, was great on the difficulty of getting away, described the iniquity of heading the fox, spoke of up wind and down wind, got as far as the trouble of "carrying," and told her that a good ear was everything in a big wood,—when there came upon them the thrice-repeated note of an old hound's voice, and the quick scampering, and low, timid, anxious, trustful whinnying of a dozen comrade younger hounds, who recognised the sagacity of their well-
known and highly-appreciated elder.—"That's a fox," said Lord George.

"What shall I do now?" said Lizzie, all in a twitter.

"Sit just where you are and light a cigar, if you're given to smoking."

"Pray don't joke with me. You know I want to do it properly."

"And therefore you must sit just where you are, and not gallop about. There's a matter of a hundred and twenty acres here I should say, and a fox doesn't always choose to be evicted at the first notice. It's a chance whether he goes at all from a wood like this. I like woods myself, because, as you say, we can take it easy; but if you want to ride, you should—— By George, they've killed him!"

"Killed the fox?"

"Yes; he's dead. Didn't you hear?"

"And is that a hunt?"

"Well;——as far as it goes, it is."

"Why didn't he run away? What a stupid beast! I don't see so very much in that. Who killed him? That man that was blowing the horn?"

"The hounds chopped him."

"Chopped him!" Lord George was very patient, and explained to Lizzie, who was now indignant and disappointed, the misfortune of chopping. "And are we to go home now? Is it all over?"

"They say the country is full of foxes," said Lord George. "Perhaps we shall chop half-a-dozen."
"Dear me! Chop half-a-dozen foxes! Do they like to be chopped? I thought they always ran away."

Lord George was constant and patient, and rode at Lizzie's side from covert to covert. A second fox they did kill in the same fashion as the first; a third they couldn't hunt a yard; a fourth got to ground after five minutes, and was dug out ingloriously;—during which process a drizzling rain commenced.

"Where is the man with my waterproof?" demanded Mrs. Carbuncle. Lord George had sent the man to see whether there was shelter to be had in a neighbouring yard. And Mrs. Carbuncle was angry. "It's my own fault," she said, "for not having my own man. Lucinda, you'll be wet."

"I don't mind the wet," said Lucinda. Lucinda never did mind anything.

"If you'll come with me, we'll get into a barn," said Sir Griffin.

"I like the wet," said Lucinda. All the while seven men were at work with picks and shovels, and the master and four or five of the more ardent sportsmen were deeply engaged in what seemed to be a mining operation on a small scale. The huntsman stood over giving his orders. One enthusiastic man, who had been lying on his belly, grovelling in the mud for five minutes, with a long stick in his hand, was now applying the point of it scientifically to his nose. An ordinary observer with a magnifying glass might have seen a hair at the end of the stick. "He's there," said the enthusiastic man, covered with mud, after a long-
drawn, eager sniff at the stick. The huntsman deigned to give one glance. "That's rabbit," said the huntsman. A conclave was immediately formed over the one visible hair that stuck to the stick, and three experienced farmers decided that it was rabbit. The muddy enthusiastic man, silenced but not convinced, retired from the crowd, leaving his stick behind him, and comforted himself with his brandy-flask.

"He's here, my lord," said the huntsman to his noble master, "only we ain't got nigh him yet." He spoke almost in a whisper, so that the ignorant crowd should not hear the words of wisdom, which they wouldn't understand or perhaps believe. "It's that full of rabbits that the holes is all hairs. They ain't got no terrier here, I suppose. They never has aught that is wanted in these parts. Work round to the right, there; — that's his line." The men did work round to the right, and in something under an hour the fox was dragged out by his brush and hind legs, while the experienced whip who dragged him held the poor brute tight by the back of his neck. "An old dog, my lord. There's such a many of 'em here, that they'll be a deal better for a little killing." Then the hounds ate their third fox for that day.

Lady Eustace, in the meantime, and Mrs. Carbuncle, with Lord George, had found their way to the shelter of a cattle-shed. Lucinda had slowly followed, and Sir Griffin had followed her. The gentlemen smoked cigars, and the ladies, when they had eaten their luncheons and drank their sherry, were cold and cross.
"If this is hunting," said Lizzie, "I really don't think so much about it."

"It's Scotch hunting," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"I have seen foxes dug out south of the Tweed," suggested Lord George.

"I suppose everything is slow after the Baron," said Mrs. Carbuncle, who had distinguished herself with the Baron's staghounds last March.

"Are we to go home now?" asked Lizzie, who would have been well pleased to have received an answer in the affirmative.

"I presume they'll draw again," exclaimed Mrs. Carbuncle, with an angry frown on her brow. "It's hardly two o'clock."

"They always draw till seven, in Scotland," said Lord George.

"That's nonsense," said Mrs. Carbuncle. "It's dark at four."

"They have torches in Scotland," said Lord George.

"They have a great many things in Scotland that are very far from agreeable," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"Lucinda, did you ever see three foxes killed without five minutes' running, before? I never did."

"I've been out all day without finding at all," said Lucinda, who loved the truth.

"And so have I," said Sir Griffin; "often. Don't you remember that day when we went down from London to Bringher Wood, and they pretended to find at half-past four?—That's what I call a sell."

"They're going on, Lady Eustace," said Lord
George. "If you're not tired, we might as well see it out." Lizzie was tired, but said she was not, and she did see it out. They found a fifth fox, but again there was no scent. "Who the —— is to hunt a fox with people scurrying about like that!" said the huntsman, very angrily, dashing forward at a couple of riders. "The hounds is behind you, only you ain't a-looking. Some people never do look!" The two peccant riders unfortunately were Sir Griffin and Lucinda.

The day was one of those from which all the men and women return home cross, and which induce some half-hearted folk to declare to themselves that they never will hunt again. When the master decided a little after three that he would draw no more, because there wasn't a yard of scent, our party had nine or ten miles to ride back to their carriages. Lizzie was very tired, and, when Lord George took her from her horse, could almost have cried from fatigue. Mrs. Carbuncle was never fatigued, but she had become damp,—soaking wet through, as she herself said,—during the four minutes that the man was absent with her waterproof jacket, and could not bring herself to forget the ill-usage she had suffered. Lucinda had become absolutely dumb, and any observer would have fancied that the two gentlemen had quarrelled with each other. "You ought to go on the box now," said Sir Griffin, grumbling. "When you're my age, and I'm yours, I will," said Lord George, taking his seat in the carriage. Then he appealed to Lizzie. "You'll let me smoke, won't
you?" She simply bowed her head. And so they went home,—Lord George smoking, and the ladies dumb. Lizzie, as she dressed for dinner, almost cried with vexation and disappointment.

There was a little conversation up-stairs between Mrs. Carbuncle and Lucinda, when they were free from the attendance of their joint maid. "It seems to me," said Mrs. Carbuncle, "that you won't make up your mind about anything."

"There is nothing to make up my mind about."

"I think there is;—a great deal. Do you mean to take this man who is dangling after you?"

"He isn't worth taking."

"Carruthers says that the property must come right, sooner or later. You might do better, perhaps, but you won't trouble yourself. We can't go on like this for ever, you know."

"If you hated it as much as I do, you wouldn't want to go on."

"Why don't you talk to him? I don't think he's at all a bad fellow."

"I've nothing to say."

"He'll offer to-morrow, if you'll accept him."

"Don't let him do that, Aunt Jane. I couldn't say Yes. As for loving him;—oh laws!"

"It won't do to go on like this, you know."

"I'm only eighteen;—and it's my money, aunt."

"And how long will it last? If you can't accept him, refuse him, and let somebody else come."
"It seems to me," said Lucinda, "that one is as bad as another. I'd a deal sooner marry a shoemaker and help him to make shoes."

"That's downright wickedness," said Mrs. Carbuncle. And then they went down to dinner.
CHAPTER XXXVIII.

NAPPIE'S GREY HORSE.

During the leisure of Tuesday, our friends regained their good-humour, and on the Wednesday morning they again started for the hunting-field. Mrs. Carbuncle, who probably felt that she had behaved ill about the groom and in regard to Scotland, almost made an apology, and explained that a cold shower always did make her cross. "My dear Lady Eustace, I hope I wasn't very savage." "My dear Mrs. Carbuncle, I hope I wasn't very stupid," said Lizzie with a smile. "My dear Lady Eustace, and my dear Mrs. Carbuncle, and my dear Miss Roanoke, I hope I wasn't very selfish," said Lord George.

"I thought you were," said Sir Griffin.

"Yes, Griff; and so were you;—but I succeeded."

"I am almost glad that I wasn't of the party," said Mr. Emilius, with that musical foreign tone of his. "Miss Macnulty and I did not quarrel; did we?"

"No, indeed," said Miss Macnulty, who had liked the society of Mr. Emilius.

But on this morning there was an attraction for
Lizzie which the Monday had wanted. She was to meet her cousin, Frank Greystock. The journey was long, and the horses had gone on overnight. They went by railway to Kilmarnock, and there a carriage from the inn had been ordered to meet them. Lizzie, as she heard the order given, wondered whether she would have to pay for that, or whether Lord George and Sir Griffin would take so much off her shoulders. Young women generally pay for nothing: and it was very hard that she, who was quite a young woman, should have to pay for all. But she smiled, and accepted the proposition. "Oh, yes; of course a carriage at the station. It is so nice to have some one to think of things, like Lord George." The carriage met them, and everything went prosperously. Almost the first person they saw was Frank Greystock, in a black coat, indeed, but riding a superb grey horse, and looking quite as though he knew what he was about. He was introduced to Mrs. Carbuncle and Miss Roanoke and Sir Griffin. With Lord George he had some slight previous acquaintance.

"You've had no difficulty about a horse?" said Lizzie.

"Not the slightest. But I was in an awful fright this morning. I wrote to MacFarlane from London, and absolutely hadn't a moment to go to his place yesterday or this morning. I was staying over at Glenshiels, and had not a moment to spare in catching the train. But I found a horse-box on, and a lad from MacFarlane's just leaving as I came up."
“Didn’t he send a boy down with the horse?” asked Lord George.

“I believe there is a boy, and the boy’ll be awfully bothered. I told them to book the horse for Kilmarnock.”

“They always do book for Kilmarnock for this meet,” said a gentleman who had made acquaintance with some of Lizzie’s party on the previous hunting-day;—“but Stewarton is ever so much nearer.”

“So somebody told me in the carriage,” continued Frank, “and I contrived to get my box off at Stewarton. The guard was uncommon civil, and so was the porter. But I hadn’t a moment to look for the boy.”

“I always make my fellow stick to his horses,” said Sir Griffin.

“But you see, Sir Griffin, I haven’t got a fellow, and I have only hired a horse. But I shall hire a good many horses from Mr. MacFarlane if he’ll always put me up like this.”

“I’m so glad you’re here,” said Lizzie.

“So am I. I hunt about twice in three years, and no man likes it so much. I’ve still got to find out whether the beast can jump.”

“Any mortal thing alive, sir,” said one of those horsey-looking men who are to be found in all hunting-fields, who wear old brown brooches, old black coats, old hunting caps, who ride screws, and never get thrown out.

“You know him, do you?” said Frank.
"I know him. I didn't know as Muster Mac-Farlane owned him. No more he don't," said the horsey man, turning aside to one of his friends. "That's Nappie's horse, from Jamaica Street."

"Not possible," said the friend.

"You'll tell me I don't know my own horse next."

"I don't believe you ever owned one," said the friend.

Lizzie was in truth delighted to have her cousin beside her. He had at any rate forgiven what she had said to him at his last visit, or he would not have been there. And then, too, there was a feeling of reality in her connection with him, which was sadly wanting to her,—unreal as she was herself,—in her acquaintance with the other people around her.

And on this occasion three or four people spoke or bowed to her, who had only stared at her before; and the huntsman took off his cap, and hoped that he would do something better for her than on the previous Monday. And the huntsman was very courteous also to Miss Roanoke, expressing the same hope, cap in hand, and smiling graciously. A huntsman at the beginning of any day or at the end of a good day is so different from a huntsman at the end of a bad day! A huntsman often has a very bad time out hunting, and it is sometimes a marvel that he does not take the advice which Job got from his wife. But now all things were smiling, and it was soon known that his lordship intended to draw Craigattan Gorse. Now
in those parts there is no surer find, and no better chance of a run, than Craigattan Gorse affords.

"There is one thing I want to ask, Mr. Greystock," said Lord George, in Lizzie's hearing.

"You shall ask two," said Frank.

"Who is to coach Lady Eustace to-day;—you or I?"

"Oh, do let me have somebody to coach me," said Lizzie.

"For devotion in coachmanship," said Frank,—"devotion, that is, to my cousin, I defy the world. In point of skill I yield to Lord George."

"My pretensions are precisely the same," said Lord George. "I glow with devotion; my skill is naught."

"I like you best, Lord George," said Lizzie, laughing.

"That settles the question," said Lord George.

"Altogether," said Frank, taking off his hat.

"I mean as a coach," said Lizzie.

"I quite understand the extent of the preference," said Lord George. Lizzie was delighted, and thought the game was worth the candle. The noble master had told her that they were sure of a run from Craigattan, and she wasn't in the least tired, and they were not called upon to stand still in a big wood, and it didn't rain, and, in every respect, the day was very different from Monday. Mounted on a bright-skinned, lively steed, with her cousin on one side and Lord George de Bruce Carruthers on the other, with all the hunting world of her own county civil around
her, and a fox just found in Craigattan Gorse, what could the heart of woman desire more? This was to live. There was, however, just enough of fear to make the blood run quickly to her heart. "We'll be away at once now," said Lord George with utmost earnestness; "follow me close, but not too close. When the men see that I am giving you a lead, they won't come between. If you hang back, I'll not go ahead. Just check your horse as he comes to his fences, and, if you can, see me over before you go at them. Now then, down the hill;—there's a gate at the corner, and a bridge over the water. We couldn't be better. By George! there they are,—altogether. If they don't pull him down in the first two minutes, we shall have a run."

Lizzie understood most of it,—more at least than would nine out of ten young women who had never ridden a hunt before. She was to go wherever Lord George led her, and she was not to ride upon his heels. So much at least she understood,—and so much she was resolved to do. That dread about her front teeth which had perplexed her on Monday was altogether gone now. She would ride as fast as Lucinda Roanoke. That was her prevailing idea. Lucinda, with Mrs. Carbuncle, Sir Griffin, and the ladies' groom, was at the other side of the covert. Frank had been with his cousin and Lord George, but had crept down the hill while the hounds were in the gorse. A man who likes hunting but hunts only once a year is desirous of doing the best he can with
his day. When the hounds came out and crossed the brook at the end of the gorse, perhaps he was a little too forward. But, indeed, the state of affairs did not leave much time for waiting, or for the etiquette of the hunting-field. Along the opposite margin of the brook there ran a low paling, which made the water a rather nasty thing to face. A circuit of thirty or forty yards gave the easy riding of a little bridge, and to that all the crowd hurried. But one or two men with good eyes, and hearts as good, had seen the leading hounds across the brook turning up the hill away from the bridge, and knew that two most necessary minutes might be lost in the crowd. Frank did as they did, having seen nothing of any hounds, but with instinctive knowledge that they were men likely to be right in a hunting-field. "If that ain't Nappie's horse, I'll eat him," said one of the leading men to the other, as all the three were breasting the hill together. Frank only knew that he had been carried over water and timber without a mistake, and felt a glow of gratitude towards Mr. MacFarlane. Up the hill they went, and not waiting to inquire into the circumstances of a little gate, jumped a four-foot wall and were away. "How the mischief did he get a-top of Nappie's horse?" said the horsey man to his friend.

"We're about right for it now," said the huntsman, as he came up alongside of Frank. He had crossed the bridge, but had been the first across it, and knew how to get over his ground quickly. On they went,
the horsey man leading on his thoroughbred screw, the huntsman second, and Frank third. The pace had already been too good for the other horsey man.

When Lord George and Lizzie had mounted the hill, there was a rush of horses at the little gate. As they topped the hill Lucinda and Mrs. Carbuncle were jumping the wall. Lord George looked back and asked a question without a word. Lizzie answered it as mutely, Jump it! She was already a little short of breath, but she was ready to jump anything that Lucinda Roanoke had jumped. Over went Lord George, and she followed him almost without losing the stride of her horse. Surely in all the world there was nothing equal to this! There was a large grass field before them, and for a moment she came up alongside of Lord George. "Just steady him before he leaps," said Lord George. She nodded her assent, and smiled her gratitude. She had plenty of breath for riding, but none for speaking. They were now very near to Lucinda, and Sir Griffin, and Mrs. Carbuncle. "The pace is too good for Mrs. Carbuncle's horse," said Lord George. Oh, if she could only pass them, and get up to those men whom she saw before her! She knew that one of them was her cousin Frank. She had no wish to pass them, but she did wish that he should see her. In the next fence Lord George spied a rail, which he thought safer than a blind hedge, and he made for it. His horse took it well, and so did Lizzie's; but Lizzie jumped it a little too near him, as he had paused an instant to
look at the ground. "Indeed, I won't do it again," she said, collecting all her breath for an apology. "You are going admirably," he said, "and your horse is worth double the money." She was so glad now that he had not spared for price in mounting her. Looking to the right she could see that Mrs. Carbuncle had only just floundered through the hedge. Lucinda was still ahead, but Sir Griffin was falling behind, as though divided in duty between the niece and the aunt. Then they passed through a gate, and Lord George stayed his horse to hold it for her. She tried to thank him but he stopped her. "Don't mind talking, but come along, and take it easy." She smiled again, and he told himself that she was wondrous pretty. And then her pluck was so good! And then she had four thousand a year! "Now for the gap!—don't be in a hurry. You first, and I'll follow you to keep off these two men. Keep to the left, where the other horses have been." On they went, and Lizzie was in heaven. She could not quite understand her feelings, because it had come to that with her that to save her life she could not have spoken a word. And yet she was not only happy but comfortable. The leaping was delightful, and her horse galloped with her as though his pleasure was as great as her own. She thought that she was getting nearer to Lucinda. For her, in her heart, Lucinda was the quarry. If she could only pass Lucinda! That there were any hounds she had altogether forgotten. She only knew that two or three men were leading the
way, of whom her cousin Frank was one, that Lucinda Roanoke was following them closely, and that she was gaining upon Lucinda Roanoke. She knew she was gaining a little, because she could see now how well and squarely Lucinda sat upon her horse. As for herself, she feared that she was rolling;—but she need not have feared. She was so small, and lithe, and light, that her body adapted itself naturally to the pace of her horse. Lucinda was of a different build, and it behoved her to make for herself a perfect seat. "We must have the wall," said Lord George, who was again at her side for a moment. She would have "had" a castle wall, moat included, turrets and all, if he would only have shown her the way. The huntsman and Frank had taken the wall. The horsey man's bit of blood, knowing his own powers to an inch, had declined,—not roughly, with a sudden stop and a jerk, but with a swerve to the left, which the horsey man at once understood. What the brute lacked in jumping he could make up in pace, and the horsey man was along the wall and over a broken bank at the head of it, with the loss of not more than a minute. Lucinda's horse, following the ill example, balked the jump. She turned him round with a savage gleam in her eye which Lizzie was just near enough to see, struck him rapidly over the shoulders with her whip, and the animal flew with her into the next field. "Oh, if I could do it like that!" thought Lizzie. But in that very minute she was doing it, not only as well but better.
Not following Lord George, but close at his side, the little animal changed his pace, trotted for a yard or two, hopped up as though the wall were nothing, knocked off a top stone with his hind feet, and dropped on to the ground so softly that Lizzie hardly believed that she had gone over the big obstruction that had cost Lucinda such an effort. Lucinda's horse came down on all four legs, with a grunt and a groan, and she knew that she had bustled him. At that moment Lucinda was very full of wrath against the horsey man with the screw who had been in her way. "He touched it," gasped Lizzie, thinking that her horse had disgraced himself. "He's worth his weight in gold," said Lord George. "Come along. There's a brook with a ford. Morgan is in it." Morgan was the huntsman. "Don't let them get before you." Oh, no. She would let no one get before her. She did her very best, and just got her horse's nose on the broken track leading down into the brook before Lucinda. "Pretty good, isn't it?" said Lucinda. Lizzie smiled sweetly. She could smile, though she could not speak. "Only they do balk one so at one's fences!" said Lucinda. The horsey man had all but regained his place, and was immediately behind Lucinda, within hearing—as Lucinda knew.

On the farther side of the field, beyond the brook, there was a little spinny, and for half a minute the hounds came to a check. "Give 'em time, sir, give 'em time," said Morgan to Frank, speaking in full good-humour, with no touch of Monday's savagery.
"Wind him, Bolton; Beaver's got it. Very good thing, my lady, isn't it? Now, Carstairs, if you're going to 'unt the fox, you'd better 'unt him." Carstairs was the horsey man,—and one with whom Morgan very often quarrelled. "That's it, my hearties," and Morgan was across a broken wall in a moment, after the leading hounds. "Are we to go on?" said Lizzie, who feared much that Lucinda would get ahead of her. There was a matter of three dozen horsemen up now, and, as far as Lizzie saw, the whole thing might have to be done again. In hunting, to have ridden is the pleasure;—and not simply to have ridden well, but to have ridden better than others. "I call it very awkward ground," said Mrs. Carbuncle, coming up. "It can't be compared to the Baron's country." "Stone walls four feet and a half high, and well built, are awkward," said the noble master.

But the hounds were away again, and Lizzie had got across the gap before Lucinda, who, indeed, made way for her hostess with a haughty politeness which was not lost upon Lizzie. Lizzie could not stop to beg pardon, but she would remember to do it in her prettiest way on their journey home. They were now on a track of open country, and the pace was quicker even than before. The same three men were still leading, Morgan, Greystock, and Carstairs. Carstairs had slightly the best of it; and of course Morgan swore afterwards that he was among the hounds the whole run. "The scent was that good, there wasn't no putting of 'em off;—no thanks to him," said
Morgan. "I 'ate to see 'em galloping, galloping, galloping, with no more eye to the 'ounds than a pig. Any idiot can gallop, if he's got it under him." All which only signified that Jack Morgan didn't like to see any of his field before him. There was need, indeed, now for galloping, and it may be doubted whether Morgan himself was not doing his best. There were about five or six in the second flight, and among these Lord George and Lizzie were well placed. But Lucinda had pressed again ahead. "Miss Roanoke had better have a care, or she'll blow her horse," Lord George said. Lizzie didn't mind what happened to Miss Roanoke's horse, so that it could be made to go a little slower and fall behind. But Lucinda still pressed on, and her animal went with a longer stride than Lizzie's horse.

They now crossed a road, descending a hill, and were again in a close country. A few low hedges seemed as nothing to Lizzie. She could see her cousin gallop over them ahead of her, as though they were nothing; and her own horse, as he came to them, seemed to do exactly the same. On a sudden they found themselves abreast with the huntsman. "There's a biggis brook below there, my lord," said he. Lizzie was charmed to hear it. Hitherto she had jumped all the big things so easily, that it was a pleasure to hear of them. "How are we to manage it?" asked Lord George. "It is rideable, my lord; but there's a place about half a mile down. Let's see how'll they head. Drat it, my lord, they've turned up, and
we must have it or go back to the road." Morgan hurried on, showing that he meant to "have" it, as did also Lucinda. "Shall we go to the road?" said Lord George. "No, no!" said Lizzie. Lord George looked at her and at her horse, and then galloped after the huntsman and Lucinda. The horsey man, with the well-bred screw, was first over the brook. The little animal could take almost any amount of water, and his rider knew the spot. "He'll do it like a bird," he had said to Greystock, and Greystock had followed him. Mr. MacFarlane's hired horse did do it like a bird. "I know him, sir," said Carstairs. "Mr. Nappie gave £250 for him down in Northamptonshire last February;—bought him of Mr. Percival. You know Mr. Percival, sir?" Frank knew neither Mr. Percival nor Mr. Nappie, and at this moment cared nothing for either of them. To him, at this moment, Mr. MacFarlane, of Buchanan Street, Glasgow, was the best friend he ever had.

Morgan, knowing well the horse he rode, dropped him into the brook, floundered and half swam through the mud and water, and scrambled out safely on the other side. "He wouldn't have jumped it with me, if I'd asked him ever so," he said afterwards. Lucinda rode at it, straight as an arrow, but her brute came to a dead balk, and, but that she sat well, would have thrown her into the stream. Lord George let Lizzie take the leap before he took it, knowing that, if there were misfortune, he might so best render help. To Lizzie it seemed as though the river were the blackest,
and the deepest, and the broadest that ever ran. For a moment her heart quailed;—but it was but for a moment. She shut her eyes, and gave the little horse his head. For a moment she thought that she was in the water. Her horse was almost upright on the bank, with his hind-feet down among the broken ground, and she was clinging to his neck. But she was light, and the beast made good his footing, and then she knew that she had done it. In that moment of the scramble her heart had been so near her mouth that she was almost choked. When she looked round, Lord George was already by her side. "You hardly gave him powder enough," he said, "but still he did it beautifully. Good heavens! Miss Roanoke is in the river." Lizzie looked back, and there, in truth, was Lucinda struggling with her horse in the water. They paused a moment, and then there were three or four men assisting her. "Come on," said Lord George;—"there are plenty to take her out, and we couldn't get to her if we stayed."

"I ought to stop," said Lizzie.

"You couldn't get back if you gave your eyes for it," said Lord George. "She's all right." So instigated, Lizzie followed her leader up the hill, and in a minute was close upon Morgan's heels.

The worst of doing a big thing out hunting is the fact that in nine cases out of ten they who don't do it are as well off as they who do. If there were any penalty for riding round, or any mark given to those who had ridden straight,—so that justice might in
some sort be done,—it would perhaps be better. When you have nearly broken your neck to get to hounds, or made your horse exert himself beyond his proper power, and then find yourself, within three minutes, overtaking the hindmost ruck of horsemen on a road because of some iniquitous turn that the fox has taken, the feeling is not pleasant. And some man who has not ridden at all, who never did ride at all, will ask you where you have been; and his smile will give you the lie in your teeth if you make any attempt to explain the facts. Let it be sufficient for you at such a moment to feel that you are not ashamed of yourself. Self-respect will support a man even in such misery as this.

The fox on this occasion, having crossed the river, had not left its bank, but had turned from his course up the stream, so that the leading spirits who had followed the hounds over the water came upon a crowd of riders on the road in a space something short of a mile. Mrs. Carbuncle, among others, was there, and had heard of Lucinda’s mishap. She said a word to Lord George in anger, and Lord George answered her. “We were over the river before it happened, and if we had given our eyes we couldn’t have got to her. Don’t you make a fool of yourself!” The last words were spoken in a whisper, but Lizzie’s sharp ears caught them.

“I was obliged to do what I was told,” said Lizzie apologetically.

“It will be all right, dear Lady Eustace. Sir
Griffin is with her. I am so glad you are going so well."

They were off again now, and the stupid fox absolutely went back across the river. But, whether on one side or on the other, his struggle for life was now in vain. Two years of happy, free existence amidst the wilds of Craigattan had been allowed him. Twice previously had he been "found," and the kindly storm or not less beneficent brightness of the sun had enabled him to baffle his pursuers. Now there had come one glorious day, and the common lot of mortals must be his. A little spurt there was, back towards his own home,—just enough to give something of selectness to the few who saw him fall,—and then he fell. Among the few were Frank, and Lord George, and our Lizzie. Morgan was there, of course, and one of his whips. Of Ayrshire folk, perhaps five or six, and among them our friend, Carstairs. They had run him down close to the outbuildings of a farmyard, and they broke him up in the home paddock.

"What do you think of hunting?" said Frank to his cousin.

"It's divine!"

"My cousin went pretty well, I think," he said to Lord George.

"Like a celestial bird of Paradise. No one ever went better;—or I believe so well. You've been carried rather nicely yourself."

"Indeed I have," said Frank, patting his still palpitating horse, "and he's not to say tired now."
"You've taken it pretty well out of him, sir," said Carstairs. "There was a little bit of a hill that told when we got over the brook. I know'd you'd find he'd jump a bit."

"I wonder whether he's to be bought?" asked Frank in his enthusiasm.

"I don't know the horse that isn't," said Mr. Carstairs,—"so long as you don't stand at the figure."

They were collected on the farm road, and now, as they were speaking, there was a commotion among the horses. A man, driving a little buggy, was forcing his way along the road, and there was a sound of voices, as though the man in the buggy were angry. And he was very angry. Frank, who was on foot by his horse's head, could see that the man was dressed for hunting, with a bright red coat and a flat hat, and that he was driving the pony with a hunting-whip. The man was talking as he approached, but what he said did not much matter to Frank. It did not much matter to Frank till his new friend, Mr. Carstairs, whispered a word in his ear. "It's Nappie, by gum!" Then there crept across Frank's mind an idea that there might be trouble coming.

"There he is," said Nappie, bringing his pony to a dead stop with a chuck, and jumping out of the buggy. "I say—you, sir; you've stole my 'orse!" Frank said not a word, but stood his ground with his hand on the nag's bridle. "You've stole my 'orse; you've stole him off the rail. And you've been a-riding him all day. Yes, you 'ave. Did ever anybody see
the like of this? Why, the poor beast can't a'most stand!"

"I got him from Mr. MacFarlane."

"MacFarlane be blowed! You didn't do nothing of the kind. You stole him off the rail at Stewarton. Yes, you did;—and him booked to Kilmarnock. Where's a police? Who's to stand the like o' this? I say, my lord,—just look at this." A crowd had now been formed round poor Frank, and the master had come up. Mr. Nappie was a Huddersfield man, who had come to Glasgow in the course of the last winter, and whose popularity in the hunting-field was not as yet quite so great as it perhaps might have been.

"There's been a mistake, I suppose," said the master.

"Mistake, my lord! Take a man's 'orse off the rail at Stewarton, and him booked to Kilmarnock, and ride him to a standstill! It's no mistake at all. It's 'orse-nobbling; that's what it is. Is there any police here, sir?" This he said, turning round to a farmer. The farmer didn't deign any reply. "Perhaps you'll tell me your name, sir? if you've got a name. No gen'leman ever took a gen'leman's 'orse off the rail like that."

"Oh, Frank, do come away," said Lizzie, who was standing by.

"We shall be all right in two minutes," said Frank.

"No, we shan't," said Mr. Nappie,—"nor yet in two hours. I've asked what's your name?"

"My name is—Greystock."

"Greystockings," said Mr. Nappie more angrily
than ever. "I don't believe in no such name. Where do you live?" Then somebody whispered a word to him. "Member of Parliament,—is he? I don't care a —— A member of Parliament isn't to steal my 'orse off the rail, and him booked to Kilmarnock. Now, my lord, what'd you do if you was served like that?" This was another appeal to the noble master.

"I should express a hope that my horse had carried the gentleman as he liked to be carried," said the master.

"And he has,—carried me remarkably well," said Frank:—whereupon there was a loud laugh among the crowd.

"I wish he'd broken the infernal neck of you, you scoundrel, you,—that's what I do!" said Mr. Nappie. "There was my man, and my 'orse, and myself all booked from Glasgow to Kilmarnock; and when I got there what did the guard say to me?—why, just that a man in a black coat had taken my horse off at Stewarton; and now I've been driving all about the country in that gig there for three hours!" When Mr. Nappie had got so far as this in his explanation he was almost in tears. "I'll make 'im pay, that I will. Take your hand off my horse's bridle, sir. Is there any gentleman here as would like to give two hundred and eighty guineas for a horse, and then have him rid to a standstill by a fellow like that down from London. If you're in Parliament, why don't you stick to Parliament? I don't suppose he's worth fifty pound this moment."
Frank had all the while been endeavouring to explain the accident; how he had ordered a horse from Mr. MacFarlane, and the rest of it,—as the reader will understand; but quite in vain. Mr. Nappie in his wrath would not hear a word. But now that he spoke about money, Frank thought that he saw an opening. “Mr. Nappie,” he said, “I’ll buy the horse for the price you gave for him.”

“I’ll see you—-; extremely well—first,” said Mr. Nappie.

The horse had now been surrendered to Mr. Nappie, and Frank suggested that he might as well return to Kilmarnock in the gig, and pay for the hire of it. But Mr. Nappie would not allow him to set a foot upon the gig. “It’s my gig for the day,” said he, “and you don’t touch it. You shall foot it all the way back to Kilmarnock, Mr. Greystockings.” But Mr. Nappie, in making this threat, forgot that there were gentlemen there with second horses. Frank was soon mounted on one belonging to Lord George, and Lord George’s servant, at the corner of the farmyard, got into the buggy, and was driven back to Kilmarnock by the man who had accompanied poor Mr. Nappie in their morning’s hunt on wheels after the hounds.

“Upon my word, I was very sorry,” said Frank as he rode back with his friends to Kilmarnock; “and when I first really understood what had happened, I would have done anything. But what could I say? It was impossible not to laugh, he was so unreasonable.”
Nappie's Grey Horse.

"I should have put my whip over his shoulder," said a stout farmer, meaning to be civil to Frank Greystock.
"Not after using it so often over his horse," said Lord George.
"I never had to touch him once," said Frank.
"And are you to have it all for nothing?" asked the thoughtful Lizzie.
"He'll send a bill in, you'll find," said a bystander.
"Not he," said Lord George. "His grievance is worth more to him than his money."

No bill did come to Frank, and he got his mount for nothing. When Mr. MacFarlane was applied to, he declared that no letter ordering a horse had been delivered in his establishment. From that day to this Mr. Nappie's grey horse has had a great character in Ayrshire; but all the world there says that its owner never rides him as Frank Greystock rode him that day.
CHAPTER XXXIX.

SIR GRIFFIN TAKES AN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE.

We must return to the unfortunate Lucinda, whom we last saw struggling with her steed in the black waters of the brook which she attempted to jump. A couple of men were soon in after her, and she was rescued and brought back to the side from which she had taken off without any great difficulty. She was neither hurt nor frightened, but she was wet through; and for a while she was very unhappy, because it was not found quite easy to extricate her horse. During the ten minutes of her agony, while the poor brute was floundering in the mud, she had been quite disregardful of herself, and had almost seemed to think that Sir Griffin, who was with her, should go into the water after her steed. But there were already two men in the water, and three on the bank, and Sir Griffin thought that duty required him to stay by the young lady's side. "I don't care a bit about myself," said Lucinda, "but if anything can be done for poor Warrior!" Sir Griffin assured her that "poor Warrior" was receiving the very best attention; and
then he pressed upon her the dangerous condition in which she herself was standing,—quite wet through, covered, as to her feet and legs, with mud, growing colder and colder every minute. She touched her lips with a little brandy that somebody gave her, and then declared again that she cared for nothing but poor Warrior. At last poor Warrior was on his legs, with the water dripping from his black flanks, with his nose stained with mud, with one of his legs a little cut,—and, alas! with the saddle wet through. Nevertheless, there was nothing to be done better than to ride into Kilmarnock. The whole party must return to Kilmarnock, and, perhaps, if they hurried, she might be able to get her clothes dry before they would start by the train. Sir Griffin, of course, accompanied her, and they two rode into the town alone. Mrs. Carbuncle did hear of the accident soon after the occurrence, but had not seen her niece; nor when she heard of it, could she have joined Lucinda.

If anything would make a girl talk to a man, such a ducking as Lucinda had had would do so. Such sudden events, when they come in the shape of misfortune, or the reverse, generally have the effect of abolishing shyness for the time. Let a girl be upset with you in a railway train, and she will talk like a Rosalind, though before the accident she was as mute as death. But with Lucinda Roanoke the accustomed change did not seem to take place. When Sir Griffin had placed her on her saddle, she would have trotted all the way into Kilmarnock without a
word if he would have allowed her. But he, at least, understood that such a joint misfortune should create confidence,—for he, too, had lost the run, and he did not intend to lose his opportunity also. "I am so glad that I was near you," he said.

"Oh, thank you, yes; it would have been bad to be alone."

"I mean that I am glad that it was I," said Sir Griffin. "It's very hard even to get a moment to speak to you." They were now trotting along on the road, and there were still three miles before them.

"I don't know," said she. "I'm always with the other people."

"Just so." And then he paused. "But I want to find you when you're not with the other people. Perhaps, however, you don't like me."

As he paused for a reply, she felt herself bound to say something. "Oh, yes, I do," she said,—"as well as anybody else."

"And is that all?"

"I suppose so."

After that he rode on for the best part of another mile before he spoke to her again. He had made up his mind that he would do it. He hardly knew why it was that he wanted her. He had not determined that he was desirous of the charms or comfort of domestic life. He had not even thought where he would live were he married. He had not suggested to himself that Lucinda was a desirable companion, that her temper would suit his, that her ways and his
were sympathetic, or that she would be a good mother to the future Sir Griffin Tewett. He had seen that she was a very handsome girl, and—therefore he had thought that he would like to possess her. Had she fallen like a ripe plum into his mouth, or shown herself ready so to fall, he would probably have closed his lips and backed out of the affair. But the difficulty no doubt added something to the desire. "I had hoped," he said, "that after knowing each other so long there might have been more than that."

She was again driven to speak because he paused. "I don't know that that makes much difference."

"Miss Roanoke, you can't but understand what I mean."

"I'm sure I don't," said she.

"Then I'll speak plainer."

"Not now, Sir Griffin, because I'm so wet."

"You can listen to me even if you will not answer me. I am sure that you know that I love you better than all the world. Will you be mine?" Then he moved on a little forward so that he might look back into her face. "Will you allow me to think of you as my future wife?"

Miss Roanoke was able to ride at a stone wall or at a river, and to ride at either the second time when her horse balked the first. Her heart was big enough for that. But her heart was not big enough to enable her to give Sir Griffin an answer. Perhaps it was that, in regard to the river and the stone wall, she knew what she wanted; but that, as to Sir Griffin, she did
not. "I don't think this is a proper time to ask," she said.

"Why not?"

"Because I am wet through and cold. It is taking an unfair advantage."

"I didn't mean to take any unfair advantage," said Sir Griffin scowling—"I thought we were alone——"

"Oh, Sir Griffin, I am so tired!" As they were now entering Kilmarnock, it was quite clear he could press her no further. They clattered up, therefore, to the hotel, and he busied himself in getting a bedroom fire lighted, and in obtaining the services of the landlady. A cup of tea was ordered and toast, and in two minutes Lucinda Roanoke was relieved from the presence of the baronet. "It's a kind of thing a fellow doesn't quite understand," said Griffin to himself. "Of course she means 'it,' and why the devil can't she say so?" He had no idea of giving up the chase, but he thought that perhaps he would take it out of her when she became Lady Tewett.

They were an hour at the inn before Mrs. Carbuncle and Lady Eustace arrived, and during that hour Sir Griffin did not see Miss Roanoke. For this there was, of course, ample reason. Under the custody of the landlady, Miss Roanoke was being made dry and clean, and was by no means in a condition to receive a lover's vows. The baronet sent up half-a-dozen messages as he sauntered about the yard of the inn, but he got no message in return. Lucinda, as she sat drinking her tea and drying her clothes, did no doubt think about
him,—but she thought about him as little as she could. Of course, he would come again, and she could make up her mind then. It was no doubt necessary that she should do something. Her fortune, such as it was, would soon be spent in the adventure of finding a husband. She also had her ideas about love, and had enough of sincerity about her to love a man thoroughly; but it had seemed to her that all the men who came near her were men whom she could not fail to dislike. She was hurried here and hurried there, and knew nothing of real social intimacies. As she told her aunt in her wickedness, she would almost have preferred a shoemaker,—if she could have become acquainted with a shoemaker in a manner that should be unforced and genuine. There was a savageness of antipathy in her to the mode of life which her circumstances had produced for her. It was that very savageness which made her ride so hard, and which forbade her to smile and be pleasant to people whom she could not like. And yet she knew that something must be done. She could not afford to wait as other girls might do. Why not Sir Griffin as well as any other fool? It may be doubted whether she knew how obstinate, how hard, how cruel to a woman a fool can be.

Her stockings had been washed and dried, and her boots and trousers were nearly dry, when Mrs. Carbuncle, followed by Lizzie, rushed into the room. "Oh, my darling, how are you?" said the aunt, seizing her niece in her arms.

"I'm only dirty now," said Lucinda.
"We've got off the biggest of the muck, my lady," said the landlady.

"Oh, Miss Roanoke," said Lizzie, "I hope you don't think I behaved badly in going on."

"Everybody always goes on, of course," said Lucinda.

"I did so pray Lord George to let me try and jump back to you. We were over, you know, before it happened. But he said it was quite impossible. We did wait till we saw you were out."

"It didn't signify at all, Lady Eustace."

"And I was so sorry when I went through the wall at the corner of the wood before you. But I was so excited I hardly knew what I was doing." Lucinda, who was quite used to these affairs in the hunting-field, simply nodded her acceptance of this apology.

"But it was a glorious run; wasn't it?"

"Pretty well," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"Oh, it was glorious,—but then I got over the river. And, oh, if you had been there afterwards. There was such an adventure between a man in a gig and my cousin Frank." Then they all went to the train, and were carried home to Portray.
CHAPTER XL.

YOU ARE NOT ANGRY?

On their journey back to Portray, the ladies were almost too tired for talking; and Sir Griffin was sulky. Sir Griffin had as yet heard nothing about Greystock's adventure, and did not care to be told. But when once they were at the castle, and had taken warm baths, and glasses of sherry, and got themselves dressed and had come down to dinner, they were all very happy. To Lizzie it had certainly been the most triumphant day of her life. Her marriage with Sir Florian had been triumphant, but that was only a step to something good that was to come after. She then had at her own disposal her little wits and her prettiness, and a world before her in which, as it seemed to her, there was a deal of pleasure if she could only reach it. Up to this period of her career she had hardly reached any pleasure; but this day had been very pleasant. Lord George de Bruce Carruthers had in truth been her Corsair, and she had found the thing which she liked to do, and would soon know how to do. How glorious it was to jump over that black,
yawning stream, and then to see Lucinda fall into it! And she could remember every jump, and her feeling of ecstasy as she landed on the right side. And she had by heart every kind word that Lord George had said to her,—and she loved the sweet, pleasant, Corsair-like intimacy that had sprung up between them. She wondered whether Frank was at all jealous. It wouldn’t be amiss that he should be a little jealous. And then somebody had brought home in his pocket the fox’s brush which the master of the hounds had told the huntsman to give her. It was all delightful; —and so much more delightful because Mrs. Carbuncle had not gone quite so well as she liked to go, and because Lucinda had fallen into the water.

They did not dine till past eight, and the ladies and gentlemen all left the room together. Coffee and liqueurs were to be brought into the drawing-room, and they were all to be intimate, comfortable, and at their ease;—all except Sir Griffin Tewett, who was still very sulky. “Did he say anything?” Mrs. Carbuncle had asked. “Yes.” “Well.” “He proposed; but of course I could not answer him when I was wet through.” There had been but a moment, and in that moment this was all that Lucinda would say.

“Now I don’t mean to stir again,” said Lizzie, throwing herself into a corner of a sofa, “till somebody carries me to bed. I never was so tired in all my life.” She was tired, but there is a fatigue which is delightful as long as all the surroundings are pleasant and comfortable.
"I didn't call it a very hard day," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"You only killed one fox," said Mr. Emilius, pretending a delightfully clerical ignorance, "and on Monday you killed four. Why should you be tired?"

"I suppose it was nearly twenty miles," said Frank, who was also ignorant.

"About ten, perhaps," said Lord George. "It was an hour and forty minutes, and there was a good bit of slow hunting after we had come back over the river."

"I'm sure it was thirty," said Lizzie, forgetting her fatigue in her energy.

"Ten is always better than twenty," said Lord George, "and five generally better than ten."

"It was just whatever is best," said Lizzie. "I know Frank's friend, Mr. Nappie, said it was twenty. By-the-bye, Frank, oughtn't we to have asked Mr. Nappie home to dinner?"

"I thought so," said Frank; "but I couldn't take the liberty myself."

"I really think poor Mr. Nappie was very badly used," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"Of course he was," said Lord George; "no man ever worse since hunting was invented. He was entitled to a dozen dinners, and no end of patronage; but you see he took it out in calling your cousin Mr. Greystockings."

"I felt that blow," said Frank.

"I shall always call you Cousin Greystockings," said Lizzie.
"It was hard," continued Lord George, "and I understood it all so well when he got into a mess in his wrath about booking the horse to Kilmarnock. If the horse had been on the roadside, he or his men could have protected him. He is put under the protection of a whole railway company, and the company gives him up to the first fellow that comes and asks for him."

"It was cruel," said Frank.

"If it had happened to me, I should have been very angry," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"But Frank wouldn't have had a horse at all," said Lizzie, "unless he had taken Mr. Nappie's."

Lord George still continued his plea for Mr. Nappie. "There's something in that, certainly; but, still, I agree with Mrs. Carbuncle. If it had happened to me, I should,—just have committed murder and suicide. I can't conceive anything so terrible. It's all very well for your noble master to talk of being civil, and hoping that the horse had carried him well, and all that. There are circumstances in which a man can't be civil. And then everybody laughed at him! It's the way of the world. The lower you fall, the more you're kicked."

"What can I do for him?" asked Frank.

"Put him down at your club, and order thirty dozen of grey shirtings from Nappie and Co., without naming the price."

"He'd send you grey stockings instead," said Lizzie.

But though Lizzie was in heaven, it behoved her to be careful. The Corsair was a very fine specimen of
the Corsair breed;—about the best Corsair she had ever seen, and had been devoted to her for the day. But these Corsairs are known to be dangerous, and it would not be wise that she should sacrifice any future prospects of importance on behalf of a feeling, which, no doubt, was founded on poetry, but which might too probably have no possible beneficial result. As far as she knew, the Corsair had not even an island of his own in the Ægean Sea. And, if he had, might not the island too probably have a Medora or two of its own? In a ride across the country the Corsair was all that a Corsair should be; but knowing, as she did, but very little of the Corsair, she could not afford to throw over her cousin for his sake. As she was leaving the drawing-room, she managed to say one word to her cousin. "You were not angry with me because I got Lord George to ride with me instead of you?"

"Angry with you?"

"I knew I should only be a hindrance to you."

"It was a matter of course. He knows all about it, and I know nothing. I am very glad that you liked it so much."

"I did like it;—and so did you. I was so glad you got that poor man's horse. You were not angry then?" They had now passed across the hall, and were on the bottom stair.

"Certainly not."

"And you are not angry for what happened before?" She did not look into his face as she asked this question, but stood with her eyes fixed on the stair-carpet.
"Indeed no."
"Good night, Frank."
"Good night, Lizzie." Then she went, and he returned to a room below which had been prepared for purposes of tobacco and soda-water and brandy.
"Why, Griff, you're rather out of sorts to-night," said Lord George to his friend, before Frank had joined them.
"So would you be out of sorts if you'd lost your run and had to pick a young woman out of the water. I don't like young women when they're damp and smell of mud."
"You mean to marry her, I suppose?"
"How would you like me to ask you questions? Do you mean to marry the widow? And, if you do, what will Mrs. Carbuncle say? And if you don't, what do you mean to do; and all the rest of it?"
"As for marrying the widow, I should like to know the facts first. As to Mrs. C., she wouldn't object in the least. I generally have my horses so bitted that they can't very well object. And as to the other question, I mean to stay here for the next fortnight, and I advise you to make it square with Miss Roanoke. Here's my lady's cousin; for a man who doesn't ride often, he went very well to-day."
"I wonder if he'd take a twenty-pound note if I sent it to him," said Frank, when they broke up for the night. "I don't like the idea of riding such a fellow's horse for nothing."
You are not angry?

"He'll bring an action against the railway, and then you can offer to pay if you like." Mr. Nappie did bring an action against the railway, claiming exorbitant damages;—but with what result, we need not trouble ourselves to inquire.
CHAPTER XLI.

"LIKEWISE THE BEARS IN COUPLES AGREE."

Frank Greystock stayed till the following Monday at Portray, but could not be induced to hunt on the Saturday,—on which day the other sporting men and women went to the meet. He could not, he said, trust to that traitor MacFarlane, and he feared that his friend Mr. Nappie would not give him another mount on the grey horse. Lizzie offered him one of her two darlings,—an offer which he, of course, refused; and Lord George also proposed to put him up. But Frank averred that he had ridden his hunt for that season, and would not jeopardise the laurels he had gained. "And, moreover," said he, "I should not dare to meet Mr. Nappie in the field." So he remained at the castle and took a walk with Mr. Emilius. Mr. Emilius asked a good many questions about Portray, and exhibited the warmest sympathy with Lizzie's widowed condition. He called her a "sweet, gay, unsophisticated, light-hearted young thing." "She is very young," replied her cousin. "Yes," he continued, in answer to further questions; "Portray is certainly very nice. I don't
know what the income is. Well; yes. I should think it is over a thousand. Eight! No, I never heard it said that it was as much as that.” When Mr. Emilius put it down in his mind as five, he was not void of acuteness, as very little information had been given to him.

There was a joke throughout the castle that Mr. Emilius had fallen in love with Miss Macnulty. They had been a great deal together on those hunting days; and Miss Macnulty was unusually enthusiastic in praise of his manner and conversation. To her, also, had been addressed questions as to Portray and its income, all of which she had answered to the best of her ability; —not intending to betray any secret, for she had no secret to betray; but giving ordinary information on that commonest of all subjects, our friends’ incomes. Then there had risen a question whether there was a vacancy for such promotion to Miss Macnulty. Mrs. Carbuncle had certainly heard that there was a Mrs. Emilius. Lucinda was sure that there was not,—an assurance which might have been derived from a certain eagerness in the reverend gentleman’s demeanour to herself on a former occasion. To Lizzie, who at present was very good-natured, the idea of Miss Macnulty having a lover, whether he were a married man or not, was very delightful. “I’m sure I don’t know what you mean,” said Miss Macnulty. “I don’t suppose Mr. Emilius had any idea of the kind.” Upon the whole, however, Miss Macnulty liked it.

On the Saturday nothing especial happened. Mr.
Nappie was out on his grey horse, and condescended to a little conversation with Lord George. He wouldn't have minded, he said, if Mr. Greystock had come forward; but he did think Mr. Greystock hadn't come forward as he ought to have done. Lord George professed that he had observed the same thing; but then, as he whispered into Mr. Nappie's ear, Mr. Greystock was particularly known as a bashful man. "He didn't ride my 'orse anyway bashful," said Mr. Nappie; all of which was told at dinner in the evening, amidst a great deal of laughter. There had been nothing special in the way of sport, and Lizzie's enthusiasm for hunting, though still high, had gone down a few degrees below fever heat. Lord George had again coached her; but there had been no great need for coaching, no losing of her breath, no cutting down of Lucinda, no river, no big wall,—nothing, in short, very fast. They had been much in a big wood; but Lizzie, in giving an account of the day to her cousin, had acknowledged that she had not quite understood what they were doing at any time. "It was a blowing of horns, and a galloping up and down all the day," she said; "and then Morgan got cross again and scolded all the people. But there was one nice paling, and Dandy flew over it beautifully. Two men tumbled down, and one of them was a good deal hurt. It was very jolly;—but not at all like Wednesday."

Nor had it been like Wednesday to Lucinda Roanoke, who did not fall into the water, and who did accept Sir Griffin when he again proposed to her in Sarkie wood.
A great deal had been said to Lucinda on the Thursday and the Friday by Mrs. Carbuncle,—which had not been taken at all in good part by Lucinda. On those days Lucinda kept as much as she could out of Sir Griffin's way, and almost snapped at the baronet when he spoke to her. Sir Griffin swore to himself that he wasn't going to be treated that way. He'd have her, by George! There are men in whose love a good deal of hatred is mixed;—who love as the huntsman loves the fox, towards the killing of which he intends to use all his energies and intellects. Mrs. Carbuncle, who did not quite understand the sort of persistency by which a Sir Griffin can be possessed, feared greatly that Lucinda was about to lose her prize, and spoke out accordingly. "Will you, then, just have the kindness to tell me what it is you propose to yourself?" asked Mrs. Carbuncle.

"I don't propose anything."

"And where will you go when your money's done?"

"Just where I am going now," said Lucinda. By which it may be feared that she indicated a place to which she should not on such an occasion have made an allusion.

"You don't like anybody else?" suggested Mrs. Carbuncle.

"I don't like anybody or anything," said Lucinda.

"Yes you do;—you like horses to ride, and dresses to wear."

"No I don't. I like hunting because, perhaps, some day I may break my neck. It's no use your
looking like that, Aunt Jane. I know what it all means. If I could break my neck it would be the best thing for me."

"You'll break my heart, Lucinda."

"Mine's broken long ago."

"If you'll accept Sir Griffin, and just get a home round yourself, you'll find that everything will be happy. It all comes from the dreadful uncertainty. Do you think I have suffered nothing? Carbuncle is always threatening that he'll go back to New York, and as for Lord George, he treats me that way I'm sometimes afraid to show my face."

"Why should you care for Lord George?"

"It's all very well to say, why should I care for him. I don't care for him, only one doesn't want to quarrel with one's friends. Carbuncle says he owes him money."

"I don't believe it," said Lucinda.

"And he says Carbuncle owes him money."

"I do believe that," said Lucinda.

"Between it all, I don't know which way to be turning. And now, when there's this great opening for you, you won't know your own mind."

"I know my mind well enough."

"I tell you you'll never have such another chance. Good looks isn't everything. You've never a word to say to anybody; and when a man does come near you, you're as savage and cross as a bear."

"Go on, Aunt Jane."

"What with your hatings and dislikings, one would
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suppose you didn't think God Almighty made men at all."

"He made some of 'em very bad," said Lucinda.
"As for some others, they're only half made. What can Sir Griffin do, do you suppose?"

"He's a gentleman."

"Then if I were a man, I should wish not to be a gentleman; that's all. I'd a deal sooner marry a man like that huntsman, who has something to do and knows how to do it." Again she said, "Don't worry any more, Aunt Jane. It doesn't do any good. It seems to me that to make my self Sir Griffin's wife would be impossible; but I'm sure your talking won't do it." Then her aunt left her, and, having met Lord George, at his bidding went and made civil speeches to Lizzie Eustace.

That was on the Friday afternoon. On the Saturday afternoon Sir Griffin, biding his time, found himself, in a ride with Lucinda, sufficiently far from other horsemen for his purpose. He wasn't going to stand any more nonsense. He was entitled to an answer, and he knew that he was entitled, by his rank and position, to a favourable answer. Here was a girl who, as far as he knew, was without a shilling, of whose birth and parentage nobody knew anything, who had nothing but her beauty to recommend her,—nothing but that and a certain capacity for carrying herself in the world as he thought ladies should carry themselves,—and she was to give herself airs with him, and expect him to propose to her half a dozen times! By

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George!—he had a very good mind to go away and let her find out her mistake. And he would have done so,—only that he was a man who always liked to have all that he wanted. It was intolerable to him that anybody should refuse him anything. "Miss Roanoke," he said; and then he paused.

"Sir Griffin," said Lucinda, bowing her head.

"Perhaps you will condescend to remember what I had the honour of saying to you as we rode into Kilmarnock last Wednesday."

"I had just been dragged out of a river, Sir Griffin, and I don't think any girl ought to be asked to remember what was said to her in that condition."

"If I say it again now, will you remember?"

"I cannot promise, Sir Griffin."

"Will you give me an answer?"

"That must depend."

"Come;—I will have an answer. When a man tells a lady that he admires her, and asks her to be his wife, he has a right to an answer. Don't you think that in such circumstances a man has a right to expect an answer?"

Lucinda hesitated for a moment, and he was beginning again to remonstrate impatiently, when she altered her tone, and replied to him seriously. "In such circumstances a gentleman has a right to expect an answer."

"Then give me one. I admire you above all the world, and I ask you to be my wife. I'm quite in earnest."
"Likewise the Bears in couples agree."

"I know that you are in earnest, Sir Griffin. I would do neither you nor myself the wrong of supposing that it could be otherwise."

"Very well then. Will you accept the offer that I make you?"

Again she paused. "You have a right to an answer,—of course; but it may be so difficult to give it. It seems to me that you have hardly realised how serious a question it is."

"Haven't I though. By George, it is serious!"

"Will it not be better for you to think it over again?"

He now hesitated for a moment. Perhaps it might be better. Should she take him at his word there would be no going back from it. But Lord George knew that he had proposed before. Lord George had learned this from Mrs. Carbuncle, and had shown that he knew it. And then, too,—he had made up his mind about it. He wanted her, and he meant to have her. "It requires no more thinking with me, Lucinda. I'm not a man who does things without thinking; and when I have thought I don't want to think again. There's my hand;—will you have it?"

"I will," said Lucinda, putting her hand into his. He no sooner felt her assurance than his mind misgave him that he had been precipitate, that he had been rash, and that she had taken advantage of him. After all, how many things are there in the world more precious than a handsome girl. And she had never told him that she loved him.
"I suppose you love me?" he asked.
"H'ah!—here they all are." The hand was withdrawn, but not before both Mrs. Carbuncle and Lady Eustace had seen it.

Mrs. Carbuncle, in her great anxiety, bided her time, keeping close to her niece. Perhaps she felt that if the two were engaged, it might be well to keep the lovers separated for awhile, lest they should quarrel before the engagement should have been so confirmed by the authority of friends as to be beyond the power of easy annihilation. Lucinda rode quite demurely with the crowd. Sir Griffin remained near her, but without speaking. Lizzie whispered to Lord George that there had been a proposal. Mrs. Carbuncle sat in stately dignity on her horse, as though there were nothing which at that moment especially engaged her attention. An hour almost had passed before she was able to ask the important question, "Well;—what have you said to him?"

"Oh;—just what you would have me."

"You have accepted him?"

"I suppose I was obliged. At any rate I did. You shall know one thing, Aunt Jane, at any rate, and I hope it will make you comfortable. I hate a good many people; but of all the people in the world I hate Sir Griffin Tewett the worst."

"Nonsense, Lucinda."

"It shall be nonsense, if you please; but it's true. I shall have to lie to him,—but there shall be no lying to you, however much you may wish it. I hate him!"
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This was very grim, but Mrs. Carbuncle quite understood that to persons situated in great difficulty things might be grim. A certain amount of grimness must be endured. And she knew, too, that Lucinda was not a girl to be driven without showing something of an intractable spirit in harness. Mrs. Carbuncle had undertaken the driving of Lucinda, and had been not altogether unsuccessful. The thing so necessary to be done was now effected. Her niece was engaged to a man with a title, to a man reported to have a fortune, to a man of family, and a man of the world. Now that the engagement was made the girl could not go back from it, and it was for Mrs. Carbuncle to see that neither should Sir Griffin go back. Her first steps must be taken at once. The engagement should be made known to all the party, and should be recognised by some word spoken between herself and the lover. The word between herself and the lover must be the first thing. She herself, personally, was not very fond of Sir Griffin; but on such an occasion as this she could smile and endure the bear. Sir Griffin was a bear,—and so also was Lucinda. “The rabbits and hares All go in pairs; And likewise the bears In couples agree.” Mrs. Carbuncle consoled herself with the song, and assured herself that it would all come right. No doubt the she-bears were not as civil to the he-bears as the turtle doves are to each other. It was, perhaps, her misfortune that her niece was not a turtle dove; but, such as she was, the best had been done for her. “Dear Sir Griffin,” she said on the first available
opportunity, not caring much for the crowd, and almost desirous that her very words should be overheard, "my darling girl has made me so happy by what she has told me."

"She hasn't lost any time," said Sir Griffin.

"Of course she would lose no time. She is the same to me as a daughter. I have no child of my own, and she is everything to me. May I tell you that you are the luckiest man in Europe?"

"It isn't every girl that would suit me, Mrs. Carbuncle."

"I am sure of that. I have noticed how particular you are. I won't say a word of Lucinda's beauty. Men are better judges of that than women; but for high, chivalrous spirit, for true principle and nobility, and what I call downright worth, I don't think you will easily find her superior. And she is as true as steel."

"And about as hard, I was beginning to think."

"A girl like that, Sir Griffin, does not give herself away easily. You will not like her the less for that now that you are the possessor. She is very young, and has known my wish that she should not engage herself to any one quite yet. But, as it is, I cannot regret anything."

"I dare say not," said Sir Griffin.

That the man was a bear was a matter of course, and bears probably do not themselves know how bearish they are. Sir Griffin, no doubt, was unaware of the extent of his own rudeness. And his rudeness mattered but little to Mrs. Carbuncle, so long as he acknowledged
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the engagement. She had not expected a lover's raptures from the one more than from the other. And was there not enough in the engagement to satisfy her? She allowed, therefore, no cloud to cross her brow as she rode up alongside of Lord George. "Sir Griffin proposed, and she has accepted him," she said in a whisper. She was not now desirous that any one should hear her but he to whom she spoke.

"Of course she has," said Lord George.

"I don't know about that, George. Sometimes I thought she would, and sometimes that she wouldn't. You have never understood Lucinda."

"I hope Griff will understand her,—that's all. And now that the thing is settled, you'll not trouble me about it any more. Their woes be on their own head. If they come to blows Lucinda will thrash him, I don't doubt. But while it's simply a matter of temper and words, she won't find Tewett so easy-going as he looks."

"I believe they'll do very well together."

"Perhaps they will. There's no saying who may do well together. You and Carbuncle get on à merveille. When is it to be?"

"Of course nothing is settled yet."

"Don't be too hard about settlements, or, maybe, he'll find a way of wriggling out. When a girl without a shilling asks very much, the world supports a man for breaking his engagement. Let her pretend to be indifferent about it;—that will be the way to keep him firm."
"What is his income, George?"
"I haven't an idea. There never was a closer man about money. I believe he must have the bulk of the Tewett property some day. He can't spend above a couple of thousand now."
"He's not in debt, is he?"
"He owes me a little money,—twelve hundred or so, and I mean to have it. I suppose he is in debt, but not much, I think. He makes stupid bets, and the devil won't break him of it."
"Lucinda has two or three thousand pounds, you know."
"That's a flea-bite. Let her keep it. You're in for it now, and you'd better say nothing about money. He has a decent solicitor, and let him arrange about the settlements. And look here, Jane;—get it done as soon as you can."
"You'll help me?"
"If you don't bother me, I will."
On their way home Mrs. Carbuncle was able to tell Lady Eustace. "You know what has occurred?"
"Oh dear, yes," said Lizzie, laughing.
"Has Lucinda told you?"
"Do you think I've got no eyes? Of course it was going to be. I knew that from the very moment Sir Griffin reached Portray. I am so glad that Portray has been useful."
"Oh, so useful, dear Lady Eustace! Not but what it must have come off anywhere, for there never was a man so much in love as Sir Griffin. The difficulty has been with Lucinda."
"Likewise the Bears in couples agree."

"She likes him, I suppose?"

"Oh yes, of course," said Mrs. Carbuncle with energy.

"Not that girls ever really care about men now. They've got to be married, and they make the best of it. She's very handsome, and I suppose he's pretty well off."

"He will be very rich indeed. And they say he's such an excellent young man when you know him."

"I dare say most young men are excellent,—when you come to know them. What does Lord George say?"

"He's in raptures. He is very much attached to Lucinda, you know." And so that affair was managed. They hadn't been home a quarter of an hour before Frank Greystock was told. He asked Mrs. Carbuncle about the sport, and then she whispered to him, "An engagement has been made."

"Sir Griffin?" suggested Frank. Mrs. Carbuncle smiled and nodded her head. It was well that everybody should know it.
CHAPTER XLII.

SUNDAY MORNING.

"So, miss, you've took him?" said the joint abigail of the Carbuncle establishment that evening to the younger of her two mistresses. Mrs. Carbuncle had resolved that the thing should be quite public. "Just remember this," replied Lucinda, "I don't want to have a word said to me on the subject." "Only just to wish you joy, miss." Lucinda turned round with a flash of anger at the girl. "I don't want your wishing. That'll do. I can manage by myself. I won't have you come near me if you can't hold your tongue when you're told." "I can hold my tongue as well as anybody," said the abigail with a toss of her head.

This happened after the party had separated for the evening. At dinner Sir Griffin had, of course, given Lucinda his arm; but so he had always done since they had been at Portray. Lucinda hardly opened her mouth at table, and had retreated to bed with a headache when the men, who on that day lingered a few minutes after the ladies, went into the drawing-room. This Sir Griffin felt to be almost an affront, as there
was a certain process of farewell for the night which he had anticipated. If she was going to treat him like that, he would cut up rough, and she should know it.

"Well, Griff, so it's all settled," said Lord George in the smoking-room. Frank Greystock was there, and Sir Griffin did not like it.

"What do you mean by settled? I don't know that anything is settled."

"I thought it was. Weren't you told so?"—and Lord George turned to Greystock.

"I thought I heard a hint," said Frank.

"I'm —— if I ever knew such people in my life!" said Sir Griffin. "They don't seem to have an idea that a man's own affairs may be private."

"Such an affair as that never is private," said Lord George. "The women take care of that. You don't suppose they're going to run down their game, and let nobody know it."

"If they take me for game——"

"Of course you're game. Every man's game. Only some men are such bad game that they ain't worth following. Take it easy, Griff; you're caught."

"No; I ain't."

"And enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that she's about the handsomest girl out. As for me, I'd sooner have the widow. I beg your pardon, Mr. Greystock." Frank merely bowed. "Simply, I mean, because she rides about two stone lighter. It'll cost you something to mount Lady Tewett."

"I don't mean that she shall hunt," said Sir Griffin.
It will be seen, therefore, that the baronet made no real attempt to deny his engagement.

On the following day, which was a Sunday, Sir Griffin having ascertained that Miss Roanoke did not intend to go to church, stayed at home also. Mr. Emilius had been engaged to preach at the nearest episcopal place of worship, and the remainder of the party all went to hear him. Lizzie was very particular about her Bible and Prayer-book, and Miss Macnulty wore a brighter ribbon on her bonnet than she had ever been known to carry before. Lucinda, when she had heard of the arrangement, had protested to her aunt that she would not go down-stairs till they had all returned; but Mrs. Carbuncle, fearing the anger of Sir Griffin, doubting whether, in his anger, he might not escape them altogether, said a word or two which even Lucinda found to be rational. "As you have accepted him, you shouldn't avoid him, my dear. That is only making things worse for the future. And then it's cowardly, is it not?" No word that could have been spoken was more likely to be efficacious. At any rate, she would not be cowardly.

As soon then as the wheels of the carriage were no longer heard grating upon the road, Lucinda, who had been very careful in her dress,—so careful as to avoid all appearance of care,—with slow majestic step descended to a drawing-room which they were accustomed to use on mornings. It was probable that Sir Griffin was smoking somewhere about the grounds, but it could not be her duty to go after him out of
doors. She would remain there, and, if he chose, he might come to her. There could be no ground of complaint on his side if she allowed herself to be found in one of the ordinary sitting-rooms of the house. In about half an hour he sauntered upon the terrace, and flattened his nose against the window. She bowed and smiled to him,—hating herself for smiling. It was perhaps the first time that she had endeavoured to put on a pleasant face wherewithal to greet him. He said nothing then, but passed round the house, threw away the end of his cigar, and entered the room. Whatever happened, she would not be a coward. The thing had to be done. Seeing that she had accepted him on the previous day, had not run away in the night or taken poison, and had come down to undergo the interview, she would undergo it at least with courage. What did it matter, even though he should embrace her? It was her lot to undergo misery, and as she had not chosen to take poison, the misery must be endured. She rose as he entered and gave him her hand. She had thought what she would do, and was collected and dignified. He had not, and was very awkward. "So you haven't gone to church, Sir Griffin,—as you ought," she said, with another smile.

"Come; I've gone as much as you."

"But I had a headache. You stayed away to smoke cigars."

"I stayed to see you, my girl." A lover may call his lady-love his girl, and do so very prettily. He
may so use the word that she will like it, and be grateful in her heart for the sweetness of the sound. But Sir Griffin did not do it nicely. "I've got ever so much to say to you."

"I won't flatter you by saying that I stayed to hear it."

"But you did;—didn't you now?" She shook her head; but there was something almost of playfulness in her manner of doing it. "Ah, but I know you did. And why shouldn't you speak out, now that we are to be man and wife? I like a girl to speak out. I suppose if I want to be with you, you want as much to be with me; eh?"

"I don't see that that follows."

"By ———, if it doesn't, I'll be off."

"You must please yourself about that, Sir Griffin."

"Come; do you love me? You have never said you loved me." Luckily perhaps for her he thought that the best assurance of love was a kiss. She did not revolt, or attempt to struggle with him; but the hot blood flew over her entire face, and her lips were very cold to his, and she almost trembled in his grasp. Sir Griffin was not a man who could ever have been the adored of many women, but the instincts of his kind were strong enough within him to make him feel that she did not return his embrace with passion. He had found her to be very beautiful;—but it seemed to him that she had never been so little beautiful as when thus pressed close to his bosom. "Come," he said, still holding her; "you'll give me a kiss?"

"I did do it," she said.
"No;—nothing like it. Oh, if you won't, you know—"

On a sudden she made up her mind, and absolutely did kiss him. She would sooner have leaped at the blackest, darkest, dirtiest river in the county. "There," she said, "that will do," gently extricating herself from his arms. "Some girls are different, I know; but you must take me as I am, Sir Griffin;—that is if you do take me."

"Why can't you drop the Sir?"

"Oh yes;—I can do that."

"And you do love me?" There was a pause, while she tried to swallow the lie. "Come;—I'm not going to marry any girl who is ashamed to say that she loves me. I like a little flesh and blood. You do love me?"

"Yes," she said. The lie was told; and for the moment he had to be satisfied. But in his heart he didn't believe her. It was all very well for her to say that she wasn't like other girls. Why shouldn't she be like other girls? It might, no doubt, suit her to be made Lady Tewett;—but he wouldn't make her Lady Tewett if she gave herself airs with him. She should lie on his breast and swear that she loved him beyond all the world;—or else she should never be Lady Tewett. Different from other girls indeed! She should know that he was different from other men. Then he asked her to come and take a walk about the grounds. To that she made no objection. She would get her hat and be with him in a minute.
But she was absent more than ten minutes. When she was alone she stood before her glass looking at herself, and then she burst into tears. Never before had she been thus polluted. The embrace had disgusted her. It made her odious to herself. And if this, the beginning of it, were so bad, how was she to drink the cup to the bitter dregs? Other girls, she knew, were fond of their lovers,—some so fond of them that all moments of absence were moments, if not of pain, at any rate of regret. To her, as she stood there ready to tear herself because of the vileness of her own condition, it now seemed as though no such love as that were possible to her. For the sake of this man who was to be her husband, she hated all men. Was not everything around her base, and mean, and sordid? She had understood thoroughly the quick divulgings of Mrs. Carbuncle's tidings, the workings of her aunt's anxious mind. The man, now that he had been caught, was not to be allowed to escape. But how great would be the boon if he would escape. How should she escape? And yet she knew that she meant to go on and bear it all. Perhaps by study and due practice she might become as were some others,—a beast of prey, and nothing more. The feeling that had made these few minutes so inexpressibly loathsome to her might, perhaps, be driven from her heart. She washed the tears from her eyes with savage energy, and descended to her lover with a veil fastened closely under her hat. "I hope I haven't kept you waiting," she said.
"Women always do," he replied, laughing. "It gives them importance."

"It is not so with me, I can assure you. I will tell you the truth. I was agitated,—and I cried."

"Oh, ay; I dare say." He rather liked the idea of having reduced the haughty Lucinda to tears. "But you needn't have been ashamed of my seeing it. As it is I can see nothing. You must take that off presently."

"Not now, Griffin." Oh, what a name it was. It seemed to blister her tongue as she used it without the usual prefix.

"I never saw you tied up in that way before. You don't do it out hunting. I've seen you when the snow has been driving in your face, and you didn't mind it,—not so much as I did."

"You can't be surprised that I should be agitated now."

"But you're happy;—ain't you?"

"Yes," she said. The lie once told must of course be continued.

"Upon my word I don't quite understand you," said Sir Griffin. "Look here, Lucinda, if you want to back out of it, you can, you know."

"If you ask me again I will." This was said with the old savage voice, and it at once reduced Sir Griffin to thraldom. To be rejected now would be the death of him. And should there come a quarrel he was sure that it would seem to be that he had been rejected.
The Eustace Diamonds.

"I suppose it's all right," he said, "only when a man is only thinking how he can make you happy, he doesn't like to find nothing but crying." After this there was but little more said between them, before they returned to the castle.
CHAPTER XLIII.

LIFE AT PORTRAY.

On the Monday Frank took his departure. Everybody at the castle had liked him except Sir Griffin, who, when he had gone, remarked to Lucinda that he was an insufferable legal prig, and one of those chaps who think themselves somebody because they are in Parliament. Lucinda had liked Frank, and said so very boldly. "I see what it is," replied Sir Griffin, "you always like the people I don't." When he was going, Lizzie left her hand in his for a moment, and gave one look up into his eyes. "When is Lucy to be made blessed?" she asked. "I don't know that Lucy will ever be made blessed," he replied, "but I am sure I hope she will." Not a word more was said, and he returned to London.

After that Mrs. Carbuncle and Lucinda remained at Portray Castle till after Christmas, greatly overstaying the original time fixed for their visit. Lord George and Sir Griffin went and returned, and went again and returned again. There was much hunting and a great many love passages, which need not be recorded.
here. More than once during these six or seven weeks there arose a quarrel, bitter, loud, and pronounced, between Sir Griffin and Lucinda; but Lord George and Mrs. Carbuncle between them managed to throw oil upon the waters, and when Christmas came the engagement was still an engagement. The absolute suggestion that it should be broken, and abandoned, and thrown to the winds, always came from Lucinda; and Sir Griffin, when he found that Lucinda was in earnest, would again be moved by his old desires, and would determine that he would have the thing he wanted. Once he behaved with such coarse brutality that nothing but an abject apology would serve the turn. He made the abject apology, and after that became conscious that his wings were clipped, and that he must do as he was bidden. Lord George took him away, and brought him back again, and blew him up;—and at last, under pressure from Mrs. Carbuncle, made him consent to the fixing of a day. The marriage was to take place during the first week in April. When the party moved from Portray, he was to go up to London and see his lawyer. Settlements were to be arranged, and something was to be fixed as to future residence.

In the midst of all this Lucinda was passive as regarded the making of the arrangements, but very troublesome to those around her as to her immediate mode of life. Even to Lady Eustace she was curt and uncivil. To her aunt she was at times ferocious. She told Lord George more than once to his face that he
was hurrying her to perdition. "What the d—— is it you want?" Lord George said to her. "Not to be married to this man." "But you have accepted him. I didn't ask you to take him. You don't want to go into a workhouse, I suppose?" Then she rode so hard that all the Ayrshire lairds were startled out of their propriety, and there was a general fear that she would meet with some terrible accident. And Lizzie, instigated by jealousy, learned to ride as hard, and as they rode against each other every day there was a turmoil in the hunt. Morgan, scratching his head, declared that he had known "drunken rampaging men, but had never seed ladies so wicked." Lizzie did come down rather badly at one wall, and Lucinda got herself jammed against a gate-post. But when Christmas was come and gone, and Portray Castle had been left empty, no very bad accident had occurred.

A great friendship had sprung up between Mrs. Carbuncle and Lizzie, so that both had become very communicative. Whether both or either had been candid may, perhaps, be doubted. Mrs. Carbuncle had been quite confidential in discussing with her friend the dangerous varieties of Lucinda's humours, and the dreadful aversion which she still seemed to entertain for Sir Griffin. But then these humours and this aversion were so visible, that they could not well be concealed;—and what can be the use of confidential communications if things are kept back which the confidante would see even if they were not told? "She
would be just like that whoever the man was," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"I suppose so," said Lizzie, wondering at such a phenomenon in female nature. But, with this fact understood between them to be a fact,—namely that Lucinda would be sure to hate any man whom she might accept,—they both agreed that the marriage had better go on.

"She must take a husband some day, you know," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"Of course," said Lizzie.

"With her good looks, it would be out of the question that she shouldn’t be married."

"Quite out of the question," repeated Lizzie.

"And I really don’t see how she’s to do better. It’s her nature, you know. I have had enough of it, I can tell you. And at the pension, near Paris, they couldn’t break her in at all. Nobody ever could break her in. You see it in the way she rides."

"I suppose Sir Griffin must do it," said Lizzie, laughing.

"Well;—that, or the other thing, you know." But there was no doubt about this;—whoever might break or be broken, the marriage must go on. "If you don’t persevere with one like her, Lady Eustace, nothing can be done." Lizzie quite concurred. What did it matter to her who should break, or who be broken, if she could only sail her own little bark without dashing it on the rocks? Rocks there were. She didn’t quite know what to make of Lord George,
who certainly was a Corsair,—who had said some very pretty things to her, quite à la Corsair. But in the meantime, from certain rumours that she heard, she believed that Frank had given up, or at least was intending to give up, the little chit who was living with Lady Linlithgow. There had been something of a quarrel,—so, at least, she had heard through Miss Macnulty, with whom Lady Linlithgow still occasionally corresponded in spite of their former breaches. From Frank Lizzie heard repeatedly, but Frank in his letters never mentioned the name of Lucy Morris. Now, if there should be a division between Frank and Lucy, then, she thought, Frank would return to her. And if so, for a permanent holding rock of protection in the world, her cousin Frank would be at any rate safer than the Corsair.

Lizzie and Mrs. Carbuncle had quite come to understand each other comfortably about money. It suited Mrs. Carbuncle very well to remain at Portray. It was no longer necessary that she should carry Lucinda about in search of game to be run down. The one head of game needed had been run down, such as it was,—not, indeed, a very noble stag; but the stag had been accepted; and a home for herself and her niece, which should have about it a sufficient air of fashion to satisfy public opinion,—out of London,—better still, in Scotland, belonging to a person with a title, enjoying the appurtenances of wealth, and one to which Lord George and Sir Griffin could have access,—was very desirable. But it was out of the
question that Lady Eustace should bear all the expense. Mrs. Carbuncle undertook to find the stables, and did pay for that rick of hay, and for the cart-load of forage which had made Lizzie's heart quake as she saw it dragged up the hill towards her own granaries. It is very comfortable when all these things are clearly understood. Early in January they were all to go back to London. Then for a while,—up to the period of Lucinda's marriage,—Lizzie was to be Mrs. Carbuncle's guest at the small house in Mayfair;—but Lizzie was to keep the carriage. There came at last to be some little attempt, perhaps, at a hard bargain at the hand of each lady, in which Mrs. Carbuncle, as the elder, probably got the advantage. There was a question about the liveries in London. The footman there must appertain to Mrs. Carbuncle, whereas the coachman would as necessarily be one of Lizzie's retainers. Mrs. Carbuncle assented at last to finding the double livery,—but, like a prudent woman, arranged to get her quid pro quo. "You can add something, you know, to the present you'll have to give Lucinda. Lucinda shall choose something up to forty pounds." "We'll say thirty," said Lizzie, who was beginning to know the value of money. "Split the difference," said Mrs. Carbuncle, with a pleasant little burst of laughter,—and the difference was split. That the very neat and even dandified appearance of the groom who rode out hunting with them should be provided at the expense of Mrs. Carbuncle was quite understood; but it was equally well understood that
Lizzie was to provide the horse on which he rode every third day. It adds greatly to the comfort of friends living together when these things are accurately settled.

Mr. Emilius remained longer than had been anticipated, and did not go till Lord George and Sir Griffin took their departure. It was observed that he never spoke of his wife; and yet Mrs. Carbuncle was almost sure that she had heard of such a lady. He had made himself very agreeable, and was, either by art or nature, a courteous man,—one who paid compliments to ladies. It was true, however, that he sometimes startled his hearers by things which might have been considered to border on coarseness if they had not been said by a clergyman. Lizzie had an idea that he intended to marry Miss Macnulty. And Miss Macnulty certainly received his attentions with pleasure. In these circumstances his prolonged stay at the castle was not questioned;—but when towards the end of November Lord George and Sir Griffin took their departure, he was obliged to return to his flock.

On the great subject of the diamonds Lizzie had spoken her mind freely to Mrs. Carbuncle early in the days of their friendship,—immediately, that is, after the bargainings had been completed. "Ten thousand pounds!" ejaculated Mrs. Carbuncle, opening wide her eyes. Lizzie nodded her head thrice in token of reiterated assurance. "Do you mean that you really know their value?" The ladies at this
time were closeted together, and were discussing many things in the closest confidence.

"They were valued for me by jewellers."

"Ten thousand pounds! And Sir Florian gave them to you?"

"Put them round my neck, and told me they were to be mine,—always."

"Generous man!"

"Ah, if you had but known him!" said Lizzie, just touching her eye with her handkerchief.

"I dare say. And now the people claim them. I'm not a bit surprised at that, my dear. I should have thought a man couldn't give away so much as that,—not just as one makes a present that costs forty or fifty pounds." Mrs. Carbuncle could not resist the opportunity of showing that she did not think so very much of that coming thirty-five pound "gift" for which the bargain had been made.

"That's what they say. And they say ever so many other things besides. They mean to prove that it's an—heirloom."

"Perhaps it is."

"But it isn't. My cousin Frank, who knows more about law than any other man in London, says that they can't make a necklace an heirloom. If it was a brooch or a ring it would be different. I don't quite understand it, but it is so."

"It's a pity Sir Florian didn't say something about it in his will," suggested Mrs. Carbuncle.

"But he did;—at least not just about the necklace."
Then Lady Eustace explained the nature of her late husband's will, as far as it regarded chattels to be found in the Castle of Portray at the time of his death; and added the fiction, which had now become common to her, as to the necklace having been given to her in Scotland.

"I shouldn't let them have it," said Mrs. Carbuncle.
"I don't mean," said Lizzie.
"I should—sell them," said Mrs. Carbuncle.
"But why?"
"Because there are so many accidents. A woman should be very rich indeed before she allows herself to walk about with ten thousand pounds upon her shoulders. Suppose somebody broke into the house, and stole them. And if they were sold, my dear, so that some got to Paris, and others to St. Petersburg, and others to New York, they'd have to give it up then." Before the discussion was over, Lizzie tripped up-stairs and brought the necklace down, and put it on Mrs. Carbuncle's neck. "I shouldn't like to have such property in my house, my dear," continued Mrs. Carbuncle. "Of course, diamonds are very nice. Nothing is so nice. And if a person had a proper place to keep them, and all that——" 
"I've a very strong iron case," said Lizzie.
"But they should be at the bank, or at the jewellers, or somewhere quite—quite safe. People might steal the case and all. If I were you, I should sell them." It was explained to Mrs. Carbuncle on that occasion that Lizzie had brought them down with her in the
train from London, and that she intended to take them back in the same way. "There's nothing the thieves would find easier than to steal them on the way," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

It was some days after this that there came down to her by post some terribly frightful documents, which were the first results, as far as she was concerned, of the filing of a bill in Chancery;—which hostile proceeding was, in truth, effected by the unaided energy of Mr. Camperdown, although Mr. Camperdown put himself forward simply as an instrument used by the trustees of the Eustace property. Within eight days she was to enter an appearance, or go through some preliminary ceremony, towards showing why she should not surrender her diamonds to the Lord Chancellor, or to one of those satraps of his, the Vice-Chancellors, or to some other terrible myrmidon. Mr. Camperdown in his letter explained that the service of this document upon her in Scotland would amount to nothing,—even were he to send it down by a messenger; but that, no doubt, she would send it to her attorney, who would see the expediency of avoiding exposure by accepting the service. Of all which explanation Lizzie did not understand one word. Messrs. Camperdown's letter and the document which it contained did frighten her considerably, although the matter had been discussed so often that she had accustomed herself to declare that no such bugbears as that should have any influence on her. She had asked Frank whether, in the event of such
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missiles reaching her, she might send them to him. He had told her that they should be at once placed in the hands of her attorney;—and consequently she now sent them to Messrs. Mowbray and Mopus, with a very short note from herself. "Lady Eustace presents her compliments to Messrs. Mowbray and Mopus, and encloses some papers she has received about her diamonds. They are her own diamonds, given to her by her late husband. Please do what is proper, but Mr. Camperdown ought to be made to pay all the expenses."

She had, no doubt, allowed herself to hope that no further steps would be taken in the matter; and the very name of the Vice-Chancellor did for a few hours chill the blood at her heart. In those few hours she almost longed to throw the necklace into the sea, feeling sure that, if the diamonds were absolutely lost, there must be altogether an end of the matter. But, by degrees, her courage returned to her, as she remembered that her cousin had told her that, as far as he could see, the necklace was legally her own. Her cousin had, of course, been deceived by the lies which she had repeated to him; but lies which had been efficacious with him might be efficacious with others. Who could prove that Sir Florian had not taken the diamonds to Scotland, and given them to her there, in that very house which was now her own?

She told Mrs. Carbuncle of the missiles which had been hurled at her from the London courts of law, and Mrs. Carbuncle evidently thought that the dia-
monds were as good as gone. "Then I suppose you can't sell them?" said she.

"Yes I could;—I could sell them to-morrow. What is to hinder me? Suppose I took them to jewellers in Paris."

"The jewellers would think you had stolen them."

"I didn't steal them," said Lizzie; "they're my very own. Frank says that nobody can take them away from me. Why shouldn't a man give his wife a diamond necklace as well as a diamond ring? That's what I can't understand. What may he give her so that men shan't come and worry her life out of her in this way? as for an heirloom, anybody who knows anything, knows that it can't be an heirloom. A pot or a pan may be an heirloom;—but a diamond necklace cannot be an heirloom. Everybody knows that, that knows anything."

"I dare say it will all come right," said Mrs. Carbuncle, who did not in the least believe Lizzie's law about the pot and pan.

In the first week in January Lord George and Sir Griffin returned to the castle with the view of travelling up to London with the three ladies. This arrangement was partly thrown over by circumstances, as Sir Griffin was pleased to leave Portray two days before the others and to travel by himself. There was a bitter quarrel between Lucinda and her lover, and it was understood afterwards by Lady Eustace that Sir Griffin had had a few words with Lord George;—but what those few words were, she never quite knew. There was no
open rupture between the two gentlemen, but Sir Griffin showed his displeasure to the ladies, who were more likely to bear patiently his ill-humour in the present circumstances than was Lord George. When a man has shown himself to be so far amenable to feminine authority as to have put himself in the way of matrimony, ladies will bear a great deal from him. There was nothing which Mrs. Carbuncle would not endure from Sir Griffin,—just at present; and, on behalf of Mrs. Carbuncle even Lizzie was long-suffering. It cannot, however, be said that this Petruchio had as yet tamed his own peculiar shrew. Lucinda was as savage as ever, and would snap and snarl, and almost bite. Sir Griffin would snarl too, and say very bearish things. But when it came to the point of actual quarrelling, he would become sullen, and in his sullenness would yield.

"I don't see why Carruthers should have it all his own way," he said, one hunting morning, to Lucinda.

"I don't care twopence who have their own way," said Lucinda. "I mean to have mine;—that's all."

"I'm not speaking about you. I call it downright interference on his part. And I do think you give way to him. You never do anything that I suggest."

"You never suggest anything that I like," said Lucinda.

"That's a pity," said Sir Griffin, "considering that I shall have to suggest so many things that you will have to do."

"I don't know that at all," said Lucinda.
Mrs. Carbuncle came up during the quarrel, meaning to throw oil upon the waters. "What children you are!" she said laughing. "As if each of you won't have to do what the other suggests."

"Mrs. Carbuncle," began Sir Griffin, "if you will have the great kindness not to endeavour to teach me what my conduct should be now or at any future time, I shall take it as a kindness."

"Sir Griffin, pray don't quarrel with Mrs. Carbuncle," said Lizzie.

"Lady Eustace, if Mrs. Carbuncle interferes with me, I shall quarrel with her. I have borne a great deal more of this kind of thing than I like. I'm not going to be told this and told that because Mrs. Carbuncle happens to be the aunt of the future Lady Tewett,—if it should come to that. I'm not going to marry a whole family; and the less I have of this kind of thing the more likely it is that I shall come up to scratch when the time is up."

Then Lucinda rose and spoke. "Sir Griffin Tewett, she said, "there is not the slightest necessity that you should come up,—'to scratch.' I wonder that I have not as yet been able to make you understand that if it will suit your convenience to break off our match, it will not in the least interfere with mine. And let me tell you this, Sir Griffin,—that any repetition of your unkindness to my aunt will make me utterly refuse to see you again."

"Of course, you like her better than you do me."

"A great deal better," said Lucinda.
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"If I stand that I'll be——," said Sir Griffin, leaving the room. And he left the castle, sleeping that night at the inn at Kilmarnock. The day, however, was passed in hunting; and though he said nothing to either of the three ladies, it was understood by them as they returned to Portray that there was to be no quarrel. Lord George and Sir Griffin had discussed the matter, and Lord George took upon himself to say that there was no quarrel. On the morning but one following, there came a note from Sir Griffin to Lucinda, —just as they were leaving home for their journey up to London,—in which Sir Griffin expressed his regret if he had said anything displeasing to Mrs. Carbuncle.
CHAPTER XLIV.

A MIDNIGHT ADVENTURE.

Something as to the jewels had been told to Lord George;—and this was quite necessary, as Lord George intended to travel with the ladies from Portray to London. Of course, he had heard of the diamonds,—as who had not? He had heard too of Lord Fawn, and knew why it was that Lord Fawn had peremptorily refused to carry out his engagement. But, till he was told by Mrs. Carbuncle, he did not know that the diamonds were then kept within the castle, nor did he understand that it would be part of his duty to guard them on their way back to London. "They are worth ever so much; ain't they?" he said to Mrs. Carbuncle, when she first gave him the information.

"Ten thousand pounds," said Mrs. Carbuncle, almost with awe.

"I don't believe a word of it," said Lord George.

"She says that they've been valued at that, since she's had them."

Lord George owned to himself that such a necklace
was worth having,—as also, no doubt, were Portray Castle and the income arising from the estate, even though they could be held in possession only for a single life. Hitherto in his very chequered career he had escaped the trammels of matrimony, and among his many modes of life had hardly even suggested to himself the expediency of taking a wife with a fortune, and then settling down for the future, if submissively, still comfortably. To say that he had never looked forward to such a marriage as a possible future arrangement, would probably be incorrect. To men such as Lord George it is too easy a result of a career to be altogether banished from the mind. But no attempt had ever yet been made, nor had any special lady ever been so far honoured in his thoughts as to be connected, in them with any vague ideas which he might have formed on the subject. But now it did occur to him that Portray Castle was a place in which he could pass two or three months annually without ennui. And that if he were to marry, little Lizzy Eustace would do as well as any other woman with money whom he might chance to meet. He did not say all this to anybody, and therefore cannot be accused of vanity. He was the last man in the world to speak on such a subject to any one. And as even Lizzie certainly bestowed upon him many of her smiles, much of her poetry, and some of her confidence, it cannot be said that he was not justified in his views. But then she was such an—"infernal little liar." Lord George was quite able to discover so much of her.
"She does lie, certainly," said Mrs. Carbuncle, "but then who doesn't?"

On the morning of their departure the box with the diamonds was brought down into the hall just as they were about to depart. The tall London footman again brought it down, and deposited it on one of the oak hall-chairs, as though it were a thing so heavy that he could hardly stagger along with it. How Lizzie did hate the man as she watched him, and regret that she had not attempted to carry it down herself. She had been with her diamonds that morning, and had seen them out of the box and into it. Few days passed on which she did not handle them and gaze at them. Mrs. Carbuncle had suggested that the box, with all her diamonds in it, might be stolen from her,—and as she thought of this her heart almost sank within her. When she had them once again in London she would take some steps to relieve herself from this embarrassment of carrying about with her so great a burden of care. The man, with a vehement show of exertion, deposited the box on a chair, and then groaned aloud. Lizzie knew very well that she could lift the box by her own unaided exertions, and that the groan was at any rate unnecessary.

"Supposing somebody were to steal that on the way," said Lord George to her, not in his pleasantest tone.

"Do not suggest anything so horrible," said Lizzie, trying to laugh.

"I shouldn't like it at all," said Lord George.
"I don’t think it would make me a bit unhappy. You’ve heard about it all. There never was such a persecution. I often say that I should be well pleased to take the bauble and fling it into the ocean waves."

"I should like to be a mermaid and catch it," said Lord George.

"And what better would you be? Such things are all vanity and vexation of spirit. I hate the shining thing." And she hit the box with the whip she held in her hand.

It had been arranged that the party should sleep at Carlisle. It consisted of Lord George, the three ladies, the tall man-servant, Lord George’s own man, and the two maids. Miss Macnulty, with the heir and the nurses, were to remain at Portray for yet a while longer. The iron box was again put into the carriage; and was used by Lizzie as a footstool. This might have been very well, had there been no necessity for changing their train. At Troon the porter behaved well, and did not struggle much as he carried it from the carriage on to the platform. But at Kilmarnock, where they met the train from Glasgow, the big footman interfered again, and the scene was performed under the eyes of a crowd of people. It seemed to Lizzie that Lord George almost encouraged the struggling, as though he were in league with the footman to annoy her. But there was no further change between Kilmarnock and Carlisle, and they managed to make themselves very comfortable. Lunch had been provided; — for Mrs. Carbuncle was a woman who cared for such things,
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and Lord George also liked a glass of champagne in the middle of the day. Lizzie professed to be perfectly indifferent on such matters; but nevertheless she enjoyed her lunch, and allowed Lord George to press upon her a second, and perhaps a portion of a third glass of wine. Even Lucinda was roused up from her general state of apathy, and permitted herself to forget Sir Griffin for a while.

During this journey to Carlisle Lizzie Eustace almost made up her mind that Lord George was the very Corsair she had been expecting ever since she had mastered Lord Byron's great poem. He had a way of doing things and of saying things, of proclaiming himself to be master, and at the same time of making himself thoroughly agreeable to his dependents,—and especially to the one dependent whom he most honoured at the time,—which exactly suited Lizzie's ideas of what a man should be. And then he possessed that utter indifference to all conventions and laws, which is the great prerogative of Corsairs. He had no reverence for aught divine or human,—which is a great thing. The Queen and Parliament, the bench of bishops, and even the police, were to him just so many fungi and parasites, and noxious vapours, and false hypocrites. Such were the names by which he ventured to call these bugbears of the world. It was so delightful to live with a man, who himself had a title of his own, but who could speak of dukes and marquises as being quite despicable by reason of their absurd position. And as they became gay and free after their luncheon
he expressed almost as much contempt for honesty as for dukes, and showed clearly that he regarded matrimony and marquises to be equally vain and useless. "How dare you say such things in our hearing!" exclaimed Mrs. Carbuncle.

"I assert that if men and women were really true, no vows would be needed;—and if no vows, then no marriage vows. Do you believe such vows are kept?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Carbuncle enthusiastically.

"I don't," said Lucinda.

"Nor I," said the Corsair. "Who can believe that a woman will always love her husband because she swears she will? The oath is false on the face of it."

"But women must marry," said Lizzie. The Corsair declared freely that he did not see any such necessity.

And then, though it could hardly be said that this Corsair was a handsome man, still he had fine Corsair's eyes, full of expression and determination, eyes that could look love and bloodshed almost at the same time; and then he had those manly properties,—power, bigness, and apparent boldness,—which belong to a Corsair. To be hurried about the world by such a man, treated sometimes with crushing severity, and at others with the tenderest love, not to be spoken to for one fortnight, and then to be embraced perpetually for another, to be cast every now and then into some abyss of despair by his rashness, and then raised to a pinnacle of human joy by his courage,—that, thought Lizzie, would be the kind of life which would suit her poetical temperament. But then, how would it be with her, if the Corsair
were to take to hurrying about the world without carrying her with him;—and were to do so always at her expense! Perhaps he might hurry about the world and take somebody else with him. Medora, if Lizzie remembered rightly, had had no jointure or private fortune. But yet a woman must risk something if the spirit of poetry is to be allowed any play at all! "And now these weary diamonds again," said Lord George, as the carriage was stopped against the Carlisle platform. "I suppose they must go into your bedroom, Lady Eustace?"

"I wish you'd let the man put the box in yours;—just for this night," said Lizzie.

"No;—not if I know it," said Lord George. And then he explained. Such property would be quite as liable to be stolen when in his custody as it would in hers;—but if stolen while in his would entail upon him a grievous vexation which would by no means lessen the effect of her loss. She did not understand him, but finding that he was quite in earnest she directed that the box should be again taken to her own chamber. Lord George suggested that it should be entrusted to the landlord; and for a moment or two Lizzie submitted to the idea. But she stood for that moment thinking of it, and then decided that the box should go to her own room. "There's no knowing what that Mr. Camperdown mightn't do," she whispered to Lord George. The porter and the tall footman, between them, staggered along under their load, and the iron box was again deposited in the bed-room of the Carlisle inn.
The evening at Carlisle was spent very pleasantly. The ladies agreed that they would not dress,—but of course they did so with more or less of care. Lizzie made herself to look very pretty, though the skirt of the gown in which she came down was that which she had worn during the journey. Pointing this out with much triumph, she accused Mrs. Carbuncle and Lucinda of great treachery in that they had not adhered to any vestige of their travelling raiment. But the rancour was not vehement, and the evening was passed pleasantly. Lord George was infinitely petted by the three Houris around him, and Lizzie called him a Corsair to his face. "And you are the Medora," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"Oh no. That is your place,—certainly," said Lizzie.

"What a pity Sir Griffin isn't here," said Mrs. Carbuncle, "that we might call him the Giaour." Lucinda shuddered, without any attempt at concealing her shudder. "That's all very well, Lucinda, but I think Sir Griffin would make a very good Giaour."

"Pray don't, aunt. Let one forget it all just for a moment."

"I wonder what Sir Griffin would say if he was to hear this!" said Lord George.

Late in the evening Lord George strolled out, and of course the ladies discussed his character in his absence. Mrs. Carbuncle declared that he was the soul of honour. In regard to her own feeling for him, she averred that no woman had ever had a truer friend. Any other
sentiment was of course out of the question,—for was she not a married woman? Had it not been for that accident, Mrs. Carbuncle really thought that she could have given her heart to Lord George. Lucinda declared that she always regarded him as a kind of supplementary father. "I suppose he is a year or two older than Sir Griffin," said Lizzie. "Lady Eustace, why should you make me unhappy?" said Lucinda. Then Mrs. Carbuncle explained, that whereas Sir Griffin was not yet thirty, Lord George was over forty. "All I can say is, he doesn't look it," urged Lady Eustace enthusiastically. "Those sort of men never do," said Mrs. Carbuncle. Lord George, when he returned was greeted with an allusion to angel's wings,—and would have been a good deal spoilt among them were it in the nature of such an article to receive injury. As soon as the clock had struck ten the ladies all went away to their beds.

Lizzie, when she was in her own room, of course found her maid waiting for her. It was necessarily part of the religion of such a woman as Lizzie Eustace that she could not go to bed, or change her clothes, or get up in the morning, without the assistance of her own young woman. She would not like to have it thought that she could stick a pin into her own belongings without such assistance. Nevertheless it was often the case with her, that she was anxious to get rid of her girl's attendance. It had been so on this morning, and before dinner, and was so now again. She was secret in her movements, and always had some recess in her boxes
and bags and dressing apparatuses to which she did not choose that Miss Patience Crabstick should have access. She was careful about her letters, and very careful about her money. And then as to that iron box in which the diamonds were kept! Patience Crabstick had never yet seen the inside of it. Moreover, it may be said,—either on Lizzie's behalf or to her discredit, as the reader may be pleased to take it,—that she was quite able to dress herself, to brush her own hair, to take off her own clothes; and that she was not, either by nature or education, an incapable young woman. But that honour and glory demanded it, she would almost as lief have had no Patience Crabstick to pry into her most private matters. All which Crabstick knew, and would often declare her missus to be "of all missusses the most slyest and least come-at-able." On this present night she was very soon despatched to her own chamber. Lizzie, however, took one careful look at the iron box before the girl was sent away.

Crabstick, on this occasion, had not far to go to seek her own couch. Along side of Lizzie's larger chamber there was a small room,—a dressing-room with a bed in it, which, for this night, was devoted to Crabstick's accommodation. Of course, she departed from attendance on her mistress by the door which opened from the one room to the other; but, this had no sooner been closed than Crabstick descended to complete the amusements of the evening. Lizzie, when she was alone, bolted both the doors on the inside, and then quickly retired to rest. Some short prayer she
said, with her knees close to the iron box. Then she put certain articles of property under her pillow,—her watch and chain, and the rings from her fingers, and a packet which she had drawn from her travelling-desk,—and was soon in bed, thinking that, as she fell away to sleep, she would revolve in her mind that question of the Corsair;—would it be good to trust herself and all her belongings to one who might perhaps take her belongings away, but leave herself behind? The subject was not unpleasant, and while she was considering it, she fell asleep.

It was, perhaps, about two in the morning when a man, very efficient at the trade which he was then following, knelt outside Lady Eustace's door, and, with a delicately-made saw, aided, probably, by some other equally well-finished tools, absolutely cut out that portion of the bed-room door on which the bolt was fastened. He must have known the spot exactly, for he did not doubt a moment as he commenced his work; and yet there was nothing on the exterior of the door to show where the bolt was placed. The bit was cut out without the slightest noise, and then, when the door was opened, was placed just inside, upon the floor. The man then with perfectly noiseless step entered the room, knelt again,—just where poor Lizzie had knelt as she said her prayers,—so that he might the more easily raise the iron box without a struggle, and left the room with it in his arms without disturbing the lovely sleeper. He then descended the stairs, passed into the coffee-room at the bottom of them, and handed the box
through an open window to a man who was crouching on the outside in the dark. He then followed the box, pulled down the window, put on a pair of boots which his friend had ready for him; and the two, after lingering a few moments in the shade of the dark wall, retreated with their prize round a corner. The night itself was almost pitch-dark, and very wet. It was as nearly black with darkness as a night can be. So far, the enterprising adventurers had been successful, and we will now leave them in their chosen retreat, engaged on the longer operation of forcing open the iron safe. For it had been arranged between them that the iron safe should be opened then and there. Though the weight to him who had taken it out of Lizzie's room had not been oppressive, as it had oppressed the tall serving-man, it might still have been an encumbrance to gentlemen intending to travel by railway with as little observation as possible. They were, however, well supplied with tools, and we will leave them at their work.

On the next morning Lizzie was awakened earlier than she had expected, and found, not only Patience Crabstick in her bedroom, but also a chambermaid and the wife of the manager of the hotel. The story was soon told to her. Her room had been broken open, and her treasure was gone. The party had intended to breakfast at their leisure, and proceed to London by a train leaving Carlisle in the middle of the day; but they were soon disturbed from their rest. Lady Eustace had hardly time to get her slippers on her feet,
and to wrap herself in her dressing-gown, to get rid of her dishevelled night-cap, and make herself just fit for public view, before the manager of the hotel, and Lord George, and the tall footman, and the boots were in her bedroom. It was too plainly manifest to them all that the diamonds were gone. The superintendent of the Carlisle police was there almost as soon as the others;—and following him very quickly came the important gentleman who was the head of the constabulary of the county.

Lizzie, when she first heard the news, was awe-struck, rather than outwardly demonstrative of grief. "There has been a regular plot," said Lord George. Captain Fitzmaurice, the gallant chief, nodded his head. "Plot enough," said the superintendent,—who did not mean to confide his thoughts to any man, or to exempt any human being from his suspicion. The manager of the hotel was very angry, and at first did not restrain his anger. Did not everybody know that if articles of value were brought into an hotel they should be handed over to the safe keeping of the manager? He almost seemed to think that Lizzie had stolen her own box of diamonds. "My dear fellow," said Lord George, "nobody is saying a word against you, or your house."

"No, my lord;—but——"

"Lady Eustace is not blaming you, and do not you blame anybody else," said Lord George. "Let the police do what is right."

At last the men retreated, and Lizzie was left with
A Midnight Adventure.

Patience and Mrs. Carbuncle. But even then she did not give way to her grief, but sat upon the bed awestruck, and mute. "Perhaps I had better get dressed," she said at last.

"I feared how it might be," said Mrs. Carbuncle, holding Lizzie's hand affectionately.

"Yes;—you said so."

"The prize was so great."

"I always was a-telling my lady——" began Crabstick.

"Hold your tongue!" said Lizzie angrily. "I suppose the police will do the best they can, Mrs. Carbuncle?"

"Oh yes;—and so will Lord George."

"I think I'll lie down again for a little while," said Lizzie. "I feel so sick I hardly know what to do. If I were to lie down for a little I should be better." With much difficulty she got them to leave her. Then, before she again undressed herself, she bolted the door that still had a bolt, and turned the lock in the other. Having done this, she took out from under her pillow the little parcel which had been in her desk,—and, untying it, perceived that her dear diamond necklace was perfect, and quite safe.

The enterprising adventurers had, indeed, stolen the iron case, but they had stolen nothing else. The reader must not suppose that because Lizzie had preserved her jewels, she was therefore a consenting party to the abstraction of the box. The theft had been a genuine theft, planned with great skill, carried out with much
ingenuity, one in the perpetration of which money had been spent,—a theft which for a while baffled the police of England, and which was supposed to be very creditable to those who had been engaged in it. But the box, and nothing but the box, had fallen into the hands of the thieves.

Lizzie's silence when the abstraction of the box was made known to her,—her silence as to the fact that the necklace was at that moment within the grasp of her own fingers,—was not at first the effect of deliberate fraud. She was ashamed to tell them that she brought the box empty from Portray, having the diamonds in her own keeping because she had feared that the box might be stolen. And then it occurred to her, quick as thought could flash, that it might be well that Mr. Camperdown should be made to believe that they had been stolen. And so she kept her secret. The reflections of the next half-hour told her how very great would now be her difficulties. But, as she had not disclosed the truth at first, she could hardly disclose it now.
CHAPTER XLV.

THE JOURNEY TO LONDON.

When we left Lady Eustace alone in her bedroom at the Carlisle hotel after the discovery of the robbery, she had very many cares upon her mind. The necklace was, indeed, safe under her pillow in the bed; but when all the people were around her,—her own friends, and the police, and they who were concerned with the inn,—she had not told them that it was so, but had allowed them to leave her with the belief that the diamonds had gone with the box. Even at this moment, as she knew well, steps were being taken to discover the thieves, and to make public the circumstances of the robbery. Already, no doubt, the fact that her chamber had been entered in the night, and her jewel-box withdrawn, was known to the London police officers. In such circumstances how could she now tell the truth? But it might be that already had the thieves been taken. In that case would not the truth be known, even though she should not tell it? Then she thought for a while that she would get rid of the diamonds altogether, so that no one should
The Eustace Diamonds.

know aught of them. If she could only think of a place fit for such purpose, she would so hide them that no human ingenuity could discover them. Let the thieves say what they might, her word would, in such case, be better than that of the thieves. She would declare that the jewels had been in the box when the box was taken. The thieves would swear that the box had been empty. She would appeal to the absence of the diamonds, and the thieves,—who would be known as thieves,—would be supposed, even by their own friends and associates, to have disposed of the diamonds before they had been taken. There would be a mystery in all this, and a cunning cleverness, the idea of which had in itself a certain charm for Lizzie Eustace. She would have all the world at a loss. Mr. Camperdown could do nothing further to harass her; and would have been, so far, overcome. She would be saved from the feeling of public defeat in the affair of the necklace, which would be very dreadful to her. Lord Fawn might probably be again at her feet. And in all the fuss and rumour which such an affair would make in London, there would be nothing of which she need be ashamed. She liked the idea, and she had grown to be very sick of the necklace.

But what should she do with it? It was, at this moment, between her fingers beneath the pillow. If she were minded,—and she thought she was so minded,—to get rid of it altogether, the sea would be the place. Could she make up her mind absolutely to destroy so large a property, it would be best for her to
The Journey to London.

have recourse to "her own broad waves," as she called them even to herself. It was within the "friendly depths of her own rock-girt ocean" that she should find a grave for her great trouble. But now her back was to the sea, and she could hardly insist on returning to Portray without exciting a suspicion that might be fatal to her.

And then might it not be possible to get altogether quit of the diamonds and yet to retain the power of future possession? She knew that she was running into debt, and that money would, some day, be much needed. Her acquaintance with Mr. Benjamin, the jeweller, was a fact often present to her mind. She might not be able to get ten thousand pounds from Mr. Benjamin;—but if she could get eight, or six, or even five, how pleasant would it be! If she could put away the diamonds for three or four years,—if she could so hide them that no human eyes could see them till she should again produce them to the light,—surely, after so long an interval, they might be made available! But where should be found such hiding-place? She understood well how great was the peril while the necklace was in her own immediate keeping. Any accident might discover it, and if the slightest suspicion were aroused, the police would come upon her with violence and discover it. But surely there must be some such hiding-place,—if only she could think of it! Then her mind reverted to all the stories she had ever heard of mysterious villanies. There must be some way of accomplishing this thing, if she
could only bring her mind to work upon it exclusively. A hole dug deep into the ground;—would not that be the place? But then, where should the hole be dug? In what spot should she trust the earth? If anywhere, it must be at Portray. But now she was going from Portray to London. It seemed to her to be certain that she could dig no hole in London that would be secret to herself. Nor could she trust herself, during the hour or two that remained to her, to find such a hole in Carlisle.

What she wanted was a friend;—some one that she could trust. But she had no such friend. She could not dare to give the jewels up to Lord George. So tempted, would not any Corsair appropriate the treasure? And if, as might be possible, she were mistaken about him and he was no Corsair, then would he betray her to the police? She thought of all her dearest friends,—Frank Greystock, Mrs. Carbuncle, Lucinda, Miss Macnulty,—even of Patience Crabstick,—but there was no friend whom she could trust. Whatever she did she must do alone! She began to fear that the load of thought required would be more than she could bear. One thing, however, was certain to her;—she could not now venture to tell them all that the necklace was in her possession, and that the stolen box had been empty.

Thinking of all this, she went to sleep,—still holding the packet tight between her fingers,—and in this position was awakened at about ten by a knock at the door from her friend, Mrs. Carbuncle. Lizzie jumped
out of bed, and admitted her friend, admitting also Patience Crabstick. "You had better get up now, dear," said Mrs. Carbuncle. "We are all going to breakfast." Lizzie declared herself to be so fluttered, that she must have her breakfast up-stairs. No one was to wait for her. Crabstick would go down and fetch for her a cup of tea,—and just a morsel of something to eat. "You can't be surprised that I shouldn't be quite myself," said Lizzie.

Mrs. Carbuncle's surprise did not run at all in that direction. Both Mrs. Carbuncle and Lord George had been astonished to find how well she bore her loss. Lord George gave her credit for real bravery. Mrs. Carbuncle suggested, in a whisper, that perhaps she regarded the theft as an easy way out of a lawsuit. "I suppose you know, George, they would have got it from her." Then Lord George whistled, and, in another whisper, declared that, if the little adventure had all been arranged by Lady Eustace herself with the view of getting the better of Mr. Camperdown, his respect for that lady would be very greatly raised. "If," said Lord George, "it turns out that she has had a couple of bravos in her pay, like an old Italian marquis, I shall think very highly of her indeed." This had occurred before Mrs. Carbuncle came up to Lizzie's room;—but neither of them for a moment suspected that the necklace was still within the hotel.

The box had been found, and a portion of the fragments were brought into the room while the party were still at breakfast. Lizzie was not in the room, but the
news was at once taken up to her by Crabstick, together with a pheasant's wing and some buttered toast. In a recess beneath an archway running under the railroad, not distant from the hotel above a hundred and fifty yards, the iron box had been found. It had been forced open, so said the sergeant of police, with tools of the finest steel, peculiarly made for such purpose. The sergeant of police was quite sure that the thing had been done by London men who were at the very top of their trade. It was manifest that nothing had been spared. Every motion of the party must have been known to them, and probably one of the adventurers had travelled in the same train with them. And the very doors of the bedroom in the hotel had been measured by the man who had cut out the bolt. The sergeant of police was almost lost in admiration; — but the superintendent of police, whom Lord George saw more than once, was discreet and silent. To the superintendent of police it was by no means sure that Lord George himself might not be fond of diamonds. Of a suspicion flying so delightfully high as this, he breathed no word to any one; but simply suggested that he should like to retain the companionship of one of the party. If Lady Eustace could dispense with the services of the tall footman, the tall footman might be found useful at Carlisle. It was arranged, therefore, that the tall footman should remain; — and the tall footman did remain, though not with his own consent.

The whole party, including Lady Eustace herself and Patience Crabstick, were called upon to give their evi-
The Journey to London.

dence to the Carlisle magistrates before they could proceed to London. This Lizzie did, having the necklace at that moment locked up in her desk at the inn. The diamonds were supposed to be worth ten thousand pounds. There was to be a lawsuit about them. She did not for a moment doubt that they were her property. She had been very careful about the diamonds because of the lawsuit. Fearing that Mr. Camperdown might wrest them from her possession, she had caused the iron box to be made. She had last seen the diamonds on the evening before her departure from Portray. She had then herself locked them up, and she now produced the key. The lock was still so far uninjured that the key would turn it. That was her evidence. Crabstick, with a good deal of reticence, supported her mistress. She had seen the diamonds, no doubt, but had not seen them often. She had seen them down at Portray; but not for ever so long. Crabstick had very little to say about them; but the clever superintendent was by no means sure that Crabstick did not know more than she said. Mrs. Carbuncle and Lord George had also seen the diamonds at Portray. There was no doubt whatever as to the diamonds having been in the iron box;—nor was there, said Lord George, any doubt but that this special necklace had acquired so much public notice from the fact of the threatened lawsuit, as might make its circumstances and value known to London thieves. The tall footman was not examined; but was detained by the police under a remand given by the magistrates.
Much information as to what had been done oozed out in spite of the precautions of the discreet superintendent. The wires had been put into operation in every direction, and it had been discovered that one man whom nobody knew had left the down mail train at Annan, and another at Dumfries. These men had taken tickets by the train leaving Carlisle between four and five A.M., and were supposed to have been the two thieves. It had been nearly seven before the theft had been discovered, and by that time not only had the men reached the towns named, but had had time to make their way back again or farther on into Scotland. At any rate, for the present, all trace of them was lost. The sergeant of police did not doubt but that one of these men was making his way up to London with the necklace in his pocket. This was told to Lizzie by Lord George; and though she was awe-struck by the danger of her situation, she nevertheless did feel some satisfaction in remembering that she and she only held the key of the mystery. And then as to those poor thieves! What must have been their consternation when they found, after all the labour and perils of the night, that the box contained no diamonds,—that the treasure was not there, and that they were nevertheless bound to save themselves by flight and stratagem from the hands of the police! Lizzie, as she thought of this, almost pitied the poor thieves. What a consternation there would be among the Camperdowns and Garnetts, among the Mopuses and Benjamins, when the news was heard in London! Lizzie almost enjoyed it.
The Journey to London.

As her mind went on making fresh schemes on the subject, a morbid desire of increasing the mystery took possession of her. She was quite sure that nobody knew her secret, and that nobody as yet could even guess it. There was great danger, but there might be delight and even profit if she could safely dispose of the jewels before suspicion against herself should be aroused. She could understand that a rumour should get to the police that the box had been empty, even if the thieves were not taken; but such rumour would avail nothing if she could only dispose of the diamonds. As she first thought of all this, the only plan hitherto suggested to herself would require her immediate return to Portray. If she were at Portray she could find a spot where she could bury the necklace. But she was obliged to allow herself now to be hurried up to London. When she got into the train the little parcel was in her desk, and the key of her desk was fastened round her neck.

They had secured a department for themselves from Carlisle to London, and of course filled four seats. "As I am alive," said Lord George, as soon as the train had left the station, "that head policeman thinks that I am the thief!" Mrs. Carbuncle laughed. Lizzie protested that this was absurd. Lucinda declared that such a suspicion would be vastly amusing. "'It's a fact," continued Lord George. "I can see it in the fellow's eye, and I feel it to be a compliment. They are so very 'cute that they delight in suspicions. I remember when the altar-plate was stolen from Bar-
chester Cathedral some years ago, a splendid idea occurred to one of the police, that the Bishop had taken it!"

"Really?" asked Lizzie.

"Oh, yes;—really. I don't doubt but that there is already a belief in some of their minds that you have stolen your own diamonds for the sake of getting the better of Mr. Camperdown."

"But what could I do with them if I had?" asked Lizzie.

"Sell them, of course. There is always a market for such goods."

"But who would buy them?"

"If you have been so clever, Lady Eustace, I'll find a purchaser for them. One would have to go a good distance to do it,—and there would be some expense. But the thing could be done. Vienna, I should think would be about the place."

"Very well, then," said Lizzie. "You won't be surprised if I ask you to take the journey for me." Then they all laughed, and were very much amused. It was quite agreed among them that Lizzie bore her loss very well.

"I shouldn't care the least for losing them," said Lizzie,—"only that Florian gave them to me. They have been such a vexation to me that to be without them will be a comfort." Her desk had been brought into the carriage and was now used as a footstool in the place of the box which was gone.

They arrived at Mrs. Carbuncle's house in Hertford
The Journey to London.

Street quite late, between ten and eleven;—but a note had been sent from Lizzie to her cousin Frank's address from the Euston Square station by a commissionaire. Indeed, two notes were sent,—one to the House of Commons, and the other to the Grosvenor Hotel. "My necklace has been stolen. Come to me early to-morrow at Mrs. Carbuncle's house, No. —, Hertford Street." And he did come,—before Lizzie was up. Crabstick brought her mistress word that Mr. Greystock was in the parlour soon after nine o'clock. Lizzie again hurried on her clothes so that she might see her cousin, taking care as she did so that though her toilet might betray haste, it should not be other than charming. And as she dressed she endeavoured to come to some conclusion. Would it not be best for her that she should tell everything to her cousin, and throw herself upon his mercy, trusting to his ingenuity to extricate her from her difficulties? She had been thinking of her position almost through the entire night, and had remembered that at Carlisle she had committed perjury. She had sworn that the diamonds had been left by her in the box. And should they be found with her it might be that they would put her in gaol for stealing them. Little mercy could she expect from Mr. Camperdown should she fall into that gentleman's hands! But Frank, if she would even yet tell him everything honestly, might probably save her.

"What is this about the diamonds?" he asked as soon as he saw her. She had flown almost into his arms, as though carried there by the excitement of the
moment. "You don't really mean that they have been stolen?"

"I do, Frank."

"On the journey?"

"Yes, Frank;—at the inn at Carlisle."

"Box and all?" Then she told him the whole story;—not the true story, but the story as it was believed by all the world. She found it to be impossible to tell him the true story. "And the box was broken open, and left in the street?"

"Under an archway," said Lizzie.

"And what do the police think?"

"I don't know what they think. Lord George says that they believe he is the thief."

"He knew of them," said Frank, as though he imagined that the suggestion was not altogether absurd.

"Oh, yes;—he knew of them."

"And what is to be done?"

"I don't know. I've sent for you to tell me." Then Frank averred that information should be immediately given to Mr. Camperdown. He would himself call on Mr. Camperdown, and would also see the head of the police. He did not doubt but that all the circumstances were already known in London at the police office;—but it might be well that he should see the officer. He was acquainted with the gentleman, and might perhaps learn something. Lizzie at once acceded, and Frank went direct to Mr. Camperdown's offices. "If I had
lost ten thousand pounds in that way," said Mrs. Carbuncle, "I think I should have broken my heart." Lizzie felt that her heart was bursting rather than being broken, because the ten thousand pounds' worth of diamonds was not really lost.
CHAPTER XLVI.

LUCY MORRIS IN BROOK STREET.

Lucy Morris went to Lady Linlithgow early in October, and was still with Lady Linlithgow when Lizzie Eustace returned to London in January. During these three months she certainly had not been happy. In the first place, she had not once seen her lover. This had aroused no anger or suspicion in her bosom against him, because the old countess had told her that she would have no lover come to the house, and that, above all, she would not allow a young man with whom she herself was connected to come in that guise to her companion. "From all I hear," said Lady Linlithgow, "it's not at all likely to be a match;—and at any rate it can't go on here." Lucy thought she would be doing no more than standing up properly for her lover by asserting her conviction that it would be a match;—and she did assert it bravely; but she made no petition for his presence, and bore that trouble bravely. In the next place Frank was not a satisfactory correspondent. He did write to her occasionally;—and he wrote also to the old countess immediately on his return to town.
from Bobshorough a letter which was intended as an answer to that which she had written to Mrs. Greystock. What was said in that letter Lucy never knew;—but she did know that Frank’s few letters to herself were not full and hearty,—were not such thorough-going love-letters as lovers write to each other when they feel unlimited satisfaction in the work. She excused him,—telling herself that he was overworked, that with his double trade of legislator and lawyer he could hardly be expected to write letters,—that men, in respect of letter-writing, are not as women are, and the like; but still there grew at her heart a little weed of care, which from week to week spread its noxious, heavy-scented leaves, and robbed her of her joyousness. To be loved by her lover, and to feel that she was his,—to have a lover of her own to whom she could thoroughly devote herself,—to be conscious that she was one of those happy women in the world who find a mate worthy of worship as well as love,—this to her was so great a joy that even the sadness of her present position could not utterly depress her. From day to day she assured herself that she did not doubt and would not doubt,—that there was no cause for doubt;—that she would herself be base were she to admit any shadow of suspicion. But yet his absence,—and the shortness of those little notes, which came perhaps once a fortnight, did tell upon her in opposition to her own convictions. Each note as it came was answered,—instantly; but she would not write except when the notes came. She would not seem to reprove him by writing oftener
than he wrote. When he had given her so much, and she had nothing but her confidence to give in return, would she stint him in that? There can be no love, she said, without confidence, and it was the pride of her heart to love him.

The circumstances of her present life were desperately weary to her. She could hardly understand why it was that Lady Linlithgow should desire her presence. She was required to do nothing. She had no duties to perform, and, as it seemed to her, was of no use to any one. The countess would not even allow her to be of ordinary service in the house. Lady Linlithgow, as she had said of herself, poked her own fires, carved her own meat, lit her own candles, opened and shut the doors for herself, wrote her own letters,—and did not even like to have books read to her. She simply chose to have some one sitting with her to whom she could speak and make little cross-grained, sarcastic, and ill-natured remarks. There was no company at the house in Brook Street, and when the countess herself went out, she went out alone. Even when she had a cab to go shopping, or to make calls, she rarely asked Lucy to go with her,—and was benevolent chiefly in this,—that if Lucy chose to walk round the square or as far as the park, her ladyship's maid was allowed to accompany her for protection. Poor Lucy often told herself that such a life would be unbearable,—were it not for the supreme satisfaction she had in remembering her lover. And then the arrangement had been made only for six months. She did not feel quite assured of her fate at
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the end of those six months, but she believed that there would come to her a residence in a sort of outer garden to that sweet Elysium in which she was to pass her life. The Elysium would be Frank's house; and the outer garden was the deanery at Bobsborough.

Twice during the three months Lady Fawn, with two of the girls, came to call upon her. On the first occasion she was unluckily out, taking advantage of the protection of her ladyship's maid in getting a little air. Lady Linlithgow had also been away, and Lady Fawn had seen no one. Afterwards, both Lucy and her ladyship were found at home, and Lady Fawn was full of graciousness and affection. "I dare say you've got something to say to each other," said Lady Linlithgow, "and I'll go away."

"Pray don't let us disturb you," said Lady Fawn.

"You'd only abuse me if I didn't," said Lady Linlithgow.

As soon as she was gone Lucy rushed into her friend's arms. "It is so nice to see you again."

"Yes, my dear, isn't it? I did come before, you know."

"You have been so good to me! To see you again is like the violets and primroses." She was crouching close to Lady Fawn, with her hand in that of her friend Lydia. "I haven't a word to say against Lady Linlithgow, but it is like winter here, after dear Richmond."

"Well;—we think we're prettier at Richmond," said Lady Fawn.

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"There were such hundreds of things to do there," said Lucy. "After all, what a comfort it is to have things to do!"

"Why did you come away?" said Lydia.

"Oh, I was obliged. You mustn't scold me now that you have come to see me."

There were a hundred things to be said about Fawn Court and the children, and a hundred more things about Lady Linlithgow and Brook Street. Then, at last, Lady Fawn asked the one important question.

"And now, my dear, what about Mr. Greystock?"

"Oh,—I don't know;—nothing particular, Lady Fawn. It's just as it was, and I am—quite satisfied."

"You see him sometimes?"

"No, never. I have not seen him since the last time he came down to Richmond. Lady Linlithgow doesn't allow—followers." There was a pleasant little sparkle of laughter in Lucy's eye as she said this, which would have told to any bystander the whole story of the affection which existed between her and Lady Fawn.

"That's very ill-natured," said Lydia.

"And he's a sort of cousin too," said Lady Fawn.

"That's just the reason why," said Lucy, explaining.

"Of course, Lady Linlithgow thinks that her sister's son can do better than marry her companion. It's a matter of course she should think so. What I am most afraid of is that the dean and Mrs. Greystock should think so too."

No doubt the dean and Mrs. Greystock would think so:—Lady Fawn was very sure of that. Lady Fawn
was one of the best women breathing,—unselfish, motherly, affectionate, appreciative, and never happy unless she was doing good to somebody. It was her nature to be soft, and kind, and beneficent. But she knew very well that if she had had a son,—a second son,—situated as was Frank Greystock, she would not wish him to marry a girl without a penny, who was forced to earn her bread by being a governess. The sacrifice on Mr. Greystock's part would, in her estimation, be so great, that she did not believe that it would be made. Woman-like, she regarded the man as being so much more important than the woman, that she could not think that Frank Greystock would devote himself simply to such a one as Lucy Morris. Had Lady Fawn been asked which was the better creature of the two, her late governess or the rising barrister who had declared himself to be that governess's lover, she would have said that no man could be better than Lucy. She knew Lucy's worth and goodness so well that she was ready herself to do any act of friendship on behalf of one so sweet and excellent. For herself and her girls Lucy was a companion and friend in every way satisfactory. But was it probable that a man of the world, such as was Frank Greystock, a rising man, a member of Parliament, one who, as everybody knew, was especially in want of money,—was it probable that such a man as this would make her his wife just because she was good, and worthy, and sweet-natured? No doubt the man had said that he would do so,—and Lady Fawn's fears betrayed on
her ladyship's part a very bad opinion of men in general. It may seem to be a paradox to assert that such bad opinion sprung from the high idea which she entertained of the importance of men in general;—but it was so. She had but one son, and of all her children he was the least worthy; but he was more important to her than all her daughters. Between her own girls and Lucy she hardly made any difference;—but when her son had chosen to quarrel with Lucy, it had been necessary to send Lucy to eat her meals up-stairs. She could not believe that Mr. Greystock should think so much of such a little girl as to marry her. Mr. Greystock would no doubt behave very badly in not doing so;—but then men do so often behave very badly! And at the bottom of her heart she almost thought that they might be excused for doing so. According to her view of things, a man out in the world had so many things to think of, and was so very important, that he could hardly be expected to act at all times with truth and sincerity.

Lucy had suggested that the dean and Mrs. Greystock would dislike the marriage, and upon that hint Lady Fawn spoke. "Nothing is settled, I suppose, as to where you are to go when the six months are over?"

"Nothing as yet, Lady Fawn."

"They haven't asked you to go to Bobsborough?"

Lucy would have given the world not to blush as she answered, but she did blush. "Nothing is fixed, Lady Fawn."

"Something should be fixed, Lucy. It should be
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settled by this time;—shouldn't it, dear? What will you do without a home, if at the end of the six months Lady Linlithgow should say that she doesn't want you any more?"

Lucy certainly did not look forward to a condition in which Lady Linlithgow should be the arbitress of her destiny. The idea of staying with the countess was almost as bad to her as that of finding herself altogether homeless. She was still blushing, feeling herself to be hot and embarrassed. But Lady Fawn sat, waiting for an answer. To Lucy there was only one answer possible. "I will ask Mr. Greystock what I am to do." Lady Fawn shook her head. "You don't believe in Mr. Greystock, Lady Fawn; but I do."

"My darling girl," said her ladyship, making the special speech for the sake of making which she had travelled up from Richmond,—"it is not exactly a question of belief, but one of common prudence. No girl should allow herself to depend on a man before she is married to him. By doing so she will be apt to lose even his respect."

"I didn't mean for money," said Lucy, hotter than ever, with her eyes full of tears.

"She should not be in any respect at his disposal till he has bound himself to her at the altar. You may believe me, Lucy, when I tell you so. It is only because I love you so that I say so."

"I know that, Lady Fawn."

"When your time here is over, just put up your
things and come back to Richmond. You need fear nothing with us. Frederic quite liked your way of parting with him at last, and all that little affair is forgotten. At Fawn Court you'll be safe; and you shall be happy too, if we can make you happy. It's the proper place for you."

"Of course you'll come," said Diana Fawn.

"You'll be the worst little thing in the world if you don't," said Lydia. "We don't know what to do without you. Do we, mamma?"

"Lucy will please us all by coming back to her old home," said Lady Fawn. The tears were now streaming down Lucy's face, so that she was hardly able to say a word in answer to all this kindness. And she did not know what word to say. Were she to accept the offer made to her, and acknowledge that she could do nothing better than creep back under her old friend's wing,—would she not thereby be showing that she doubted her lover? And yet she could not go to the dean's house unless the dean and his wife were pleased to take her; and, suspecting as she did, that they would not be pleased, would it become her to throw upon her lover the burthen of finding for her a home with people who did not want her? Had she been welcome at Bobsborough, Mrs. Greystock would surely have so told her before this. "You needn't say a word, my dear," said Lady Fawn. "You'll come, and there's an end of it."

"But you don't want me any more," said Lucy, from amidst her sobs.
"That's just all that you know about it," said Lydia. "We do want you,—more than anything."

"I wonder whether I may come in now," said Lady Linlithgow, entering the room. As it was the countess's own drawing-room, as it was now mid-winter, and as the fire in the dining-room had been allowed, as was usual, to sink almost to two hot coals, the request was not unreasonable. Lady Fawn was profuse in her thanks, and immediately began to account for Lucy's tears, pleading their dear friendship, and their long absence, and poor Lucy's emotional state of mind. Then she took her leave, and Lucy, as soon as she had been kissed by her friends outside the drawing-room door, took herself to her bedroom, and finished her tears in the cold.

"Have you heard the news?" said Lady Linlithgow to her companion about a month after this. Lady Linlithgow had been out, and asked the question immediately on her return. Lucy, of course, had heard no news. "Lizzie Eustace has just come back to London, and has had all her jewels stolen on the road."

"The diamonds?" asked Lucy, with amaze.

"Yes,—the Eustace diamonds! And they didn't belong to her any more than they did to you. They've been taken, anyway; and from what I hear I shouldn't be at all surprised if she had arranged the whole matter herself."

"Arranged that they should be stolen?"

"Just that, my dear. It would be the very thing
for Lizzie Eustace to do. She's clever enough for anything."

"But, Lady Linlithgow——"

"I know all about that. Of course, it would be very wicked, and if it were found out she'd be put in the dock and tried for her life. It is just what I expect she'll come to some of these days. She has gone and got up a friendship with some disreputable people, and was travelling with them. There was a man who calls himself Lord George de Bruce Carruthers. I know him, and can remember when he was errand-boy to a disreputable lawyer at Aberdeen." This assertion was a falsehood on the part of the countess; Lord George had never been an errand-boy, and the Aberdeen lawyer,—as provincial Scotch lawyers go,—had been by no means disreputable. "I'm told that the police think that he has got them."

"How very dreadful!"

"Yes; it's dreadful enough. At any rate, men got into Lizzie's room at night and took away the iron box and diamonds and all. It may be she was asleep at the time;—but she's one of those who pretty nearly always sleep with one eye open."

"She can't be so bad as that, Lady Linlithgow."

"Perhaps not. We shall see. They had just begun a lawsuit about the diamonds,—to get them back. And then all at once,—they're stolen. It looks what the men call—fishy. I'm told that all the police in London are up about it."

On the very next day who should come to Brook
Street, but Lizzie Eustace herself. She and her aunt had quarrelled, and they hated each other;—but the old woman had called upon Lizzie, advising her, as the reader will perhaps remember, to give up the diamonds, and now Lizzie returned the visit. "So you're here, installed in poor Macnulty's place," began Lizzie to her old friend, the countess at the moment being out of the room.

"I am staying with your aunt for a few months,—as her companion. Is it true, Lizzie, that all your diamonds have been stolen?" Lizzie gave an account of the robbery, true in every respect, except in regard to the contents of the box. Poor Lizzie had been wronged in that matter by the countess, for the robbery had been quite genuine. The man had opened her room and taken her box, and she had slept through it all. And then the broken box had been found, and was in the hands of the police, and was evidence of the fact.

"People seem to think it possible," said Lizzie, "that Mr. Camperdown the lawyer arranged it all." As this suggestion was being made Lady Linlithgow came in, and then Lizzie repeated the whole story of the robbery. Though the aunt and niece were open and declared enemies, the present circumstances were so peculiar and full of interest that conversation, for a time almost amicable, took place between them. "As the diamonds were so valuable, I thought it right, Aunt Susanna, to come and tell you myself."

"'Tis very good of you, but I'd heard it already."
I was telling Miss Morris yesterday what very odd things there are being said about it."

"Weren't you very much frightened?" asked Lucy.

"You see, my child, I knew nothing about it till it was all over. The man cut the bit out of the door in the most beautiful way, without my ever hearing the least sound of the saw."

"And you that sleep so light," said the countess.

"They say that perhaps something was put into the wine at dinner to make me sleep."

"Ah," ejaculated the countess, who did not for a moment give up her own erroneous suspicion;—"very likely."

"And they do say these people can do things without making the slightest tittle of noise. At any rate, the box was gone."

"And the diamonds?" asked Lucy.

"Oh yes;—of course. And now there is such a fuss about it! The police keep on coming to me almost every day."

"And what do the police think?" asked Lady Linlithgow. "I'm told that they have their suspicions."

"No doubt they have their suspicions," said Lizzie.

"You travelled up with friends, I suppose."

"Oh yes,—with Lord George de Bruce Carruthers; and with Mrs. Carbuncle,—who is my particular friend, and with Lucinda Roanoke, who is just going to be married to Sir Griffin Tewett. We were quite a large party."
“And Macnulty?”

“No. I left Miss Macnulty at Portray with my darling. They thought he had better remain a little longer in Scotland.”

“Ah yes;—perhaps Lord George de Bruce Carruthers does not care for babies. I can easily believe that. I wish Macnulty had been with you.”

“Why do you wish that?” said Lizzie, who already was beginning to feel that the countess intended, as usual, to make herself disagreeable.

“She’s a stupid, dull, pig-headed creature; but one can believe what she says.”

“And don’t you believe what I say?” demanded Lizzie.

“It’s all true, no doubt, that the diamonds are gone.”

“Indeed it is.”

“But I don’t know much about Lord George de Bruce Carruthers.”

“He’s the brother of a marquis, anyway,” said Lizzie, who thought that she might thus best answer the mother of a Scotch earl.

“I remember when he was plain George Carruthers, running about the streets of Aberdeen, and it was well with him when his shoes weren’t broken at the toes and down at heel. He earned his bread then, such as it was; nobody knows how he gets it now. Why does he call himself de Bruce, I wonder.”

“Because his godfathers and godmothers gave him that name when he was made a child of Christ, and an
inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,” said Lizzie, ever so pertly.

“I don’t believe a bit of it.”

“I wasn’t there to see, Aunt Susanna; and therefore I can’t swear to it. That’s his name in all the peerages, and I suppose they ought to know.”

“And what does Lord George de Bruce say about the diamonds?”

Now it had come to pass that Lady Eustace herself did not feel altogether sure that Lord George had not had a hand in this robbery. It would have been a trick worthy of a genuine Corsair to arrange and carry out such a scheme for the appropriation of so rich a spoil. A watch or a brooch would, of course, be beneath the notice of a good genuine Corsair,—of a Corsair who was written down in the peerage as a marquis’s brother;—but diamonds worth ten thousand pounds are not to be had every day. A Corsair must live, and if not by plunder rich as that,—how then? If Lord George had concocted this little scheme, he would naturally be ignorant of the true event of the robbery till he should meet the humble executors of his design, and would, as Lizzie thought, have remained unaware of the truth till his arrival in London. That he had been ignorant of the truth during the journey was evident to her. But they had now been three days in London, during which she had seen him once. At that interview he had been sullen, and almost cross,—and had said next to nothing about the robbery. He made but one remark about it. “I have told the
chief man here," he said, "that I shall be ready to
give any evidence in my power when called upon.
Till then I shall take no further steps in the matter.
I have been asked questions that should not have been
asked." In saying this he had used a tone which pre-
vented further conversation on the subject, but Lizzie,
as she thought of it all, remembered his jocular remark,
made in the railway carriage, as to the suspicion which
had already been expressed on the matter in regard to
himself. If he had been the perpetrator, and had then
found he had only stolen the box, how wonderful
would be the mystery! "He hasn't got anything
to say," replied Lizzie to the question of the
countess.

"And who is your Mrs. Carbuncle?" asked the old
woman.

"A particular friend of mine with whom I am stay-
ing at present. You don't go about a great deal, Aunt
Linlithgow, but surely you must have met Mrs. Car-
bungle."

"I'm an ignorant old woman, no doubt. My dear,
I'm not at all surprised at your losing your diamonds.
The pity is that they weren't your own."

"They were my own."

"The loss will fall on you, no doubt, because the
Eustace people will make you pay for them. You will
have to give up half your jointure for your life. That's
what it will come to. To think of your travelling
about with those things in a box!"

"They were my own, and I had a right to do what
I liked with them. Nobody accuses you of taking them."

"That's quite true. Nobody will accuse me. I suppose Lord George has left England for the benefit of his health. It would not at all surprise me if I were to hear that Mrs. Carbuncle had followed him;—not in the least."

"You're just like yourself, Aunt Susanna," said Lizzie, getting up and taking her leave. "Good-bye, Lucy,—I hope you're happy and comfortable here. Do you ever see a certain friend of ours now?"

"If you mean Mr. Greystock, I haven't seen him since I left Fawn Court," said Lucy with dignity.

When Lizzie was gone, Lady Linlithgow spoke her mind freely about her niece. "Lizzie Eustace won't come to any good. When I heard that she was engaged to that prig, Lord Fawn, I had some hopes that she might be kept out of harm. That's all over, of course. When he heard about the necklace he wasn't going to put his neck into that scrape. But now she's getting among such a set that nothing can save her. She has taken to hunting, and rides about the country like a mad woman."

"A great many ladies hunt," said Lucy.

"And she's got hold of this Lord George, and of that horrid American woman that nobody knows anything about. They've got the diamonds between them, I don't doubt. I'll bet you sixpence that the police find out all about it, and that there is some terrible
scandal. The diamonds were no more hers than they were mine, and she'll be made to pay for them."

The necklace, the meanwhile, was still locked up in Lizzie's desk,—with a patent Bramah key,—in Mrs. Carbuncle's house, and was a terrible trouble to our unhappy friend.
CHAPTER XLVII.

MATCHING PRIORY.

Before the end of January everybody in London had heard of the great robbery at Carlisle,—and most people had heard also that there was something very peculiar in the matter,—something more than a robbery. Various rumours were afloat. It had become widely known that the diamonds were to be the subject of litigation between the young widow and the trustees of the Eustace estate; and it was known also that Lord Fawn had engaged himself to marry the widow, and had then retreated from his engagement simply on account of this litigation. There were strong parties formed in the matter,—whom we may call Lizzieites and anti-Lizzieites. The Lizzieites were of opinion that poor Lady Eustace was being very ill-treated;—that the diamonds did probably belong to her, and that Lord Fawn, at any rate, clearly ought to be her own. It was worthy of remark that these Lizzieites were all of them Conservatives. Frank Grey-stock had probably set the party on foot;—and it was natural that political opponents should believe that a
noble young Under-Secretary of State on the liberal side,—such as Lord Fawn, had misbehaved himself. When the matter at last became of such importance as to demand leading articles in the newspapers, those journals which had devoted themselves to upholding the conservative politicians of the day were very heavy indeed upon Lord Fawn. The whole force of the Government, however, was anti-Lizzieite; and as the controversy advanced, every good Liberal became aware that there was nothing so wicked, so rapacious, so bold, or so cunning but that Lady Eustace might have done it, or caused it to be done, without delay, without difficulty, and without scruple. Lady Glencora Palliser for a while endeavoured to defend Lizzie in liberal circles,—from generosity rather than from any real belief, and instigated, perhaps, by a feeling that any woman in society who was capable of doing anything extraordinary ought to be defended. But even Lady Glencora was forced to abandon her generosity, and to confess, on behalf of her party, that Lizzie Eustace was a very wicked young woman, indeed. All this, no doubt, grew out of the diamonds, and chiefly arose from the robbery; but there had been enough of notoriety attached to Lizzie before the affair at Carlisle to make people fancy that they had understood her character long before that.

The party assembled at Matching Priory, a country house belonging to Mr. Palliser in which Lady Glencora took much delight, was not large, because Mr. Palliser's uncle, the Duke of Omnium, who was with
them, was now a very old man, and one who did not like very large gatherings of people. Lord and Lady Chiltern were there,—that Lord Chiltern who had been known so long and so well in the hunting-counties of England, and that Lady Chiltern who had been so popular in London as the beautiful Violet Effingham; and Mr. and Mrs. Grey were there, very particular friends of Mr. Palliser's. Mr. Grey was now sitting for the borough of Silverbridge, in which the Duke of Omnium was still presumed to have a controlling influence, in spite of all Reform bills, and Mrs. Grey was in some distant way connected with Lady Glencora. And Madame Max Goesler was there,—a lady whose society was still much affected by the old duke; and Mr. and Mrs. Bonteen,—who had been brought there, not, perhaps, altogether because they were greatly loved, but in order that the gentleman's services might be made available by Mr. Palliser in reference to some great reform about to be introduced in monetary matters. Mr. Palliser, who was now Chancellor of the Exchequer, was intending to alter the value of the penny. Unless the work should be too much for him, and he should die before he had accomplished the self-imposed task, the future penny was to be made, under his auspices, to contain five farthings, and the shilling ten pennies. It was thought that if this could be accomplished, the arithmetic of the whole world would be so simplified that henceforward the name of Palliser would be blessed by all school-boys, clerks, shopkeepers, and financiers. But the difficulties were
so great that Mr. Palliser's hair was already grey from toil, and his shoulders bent by the burden imposed upon them. Mr. Bonteen, with two private secretaries from the Treasury, was now at Matching to assist Mr. Palliser;—and it was thought that both Mr. and Mrs. Bonteen were near to madness under the pressure of the five-farthings penny. Mr. Bonteen had remarked to many of his political friends that those two extra farthings that could not be made to go into the shilling would put him into his cold grave before the world would know what he had done,—or had rewarded him for it with a handle to his name, and a pension. Lord Fawn was also at Matching,—a suggestion having been made to Lady Glencora by some leading Liberals that he should be supported in his difficulties by her hospitality.

The mind of Mr. Palliser himself was too deeply engaged to admit of its being interested in the great necklace affair; but, of all the others assembled, there was not one who did not listen anxiously for news on the subject. As regarded the old duke, it had been found to be quite a godsend; and from post to post as the facts reached Matching they were communicated to him. And, indeed, there were some there who would not wait for the post, but had the news about poor Lizzie's diamonds down by the wires. The matter was of the greatest moment to Lord Fawn, and Lady Glencora was, perhaps, justified, on his behalf, in demanding a preference for her affairs over the messages which were continually passing between Matching and
the Treasury respecting those two ill-conditioned farthings.

"Duke," she said, entering rather abruptly the small warm luxurious room in which her husband's uncle was passing his morning, "duke, they say now that after all the diamonds were not in the box when it was taken out of the room at Carlisle." The duke was reclining in an easy-chair, with his head leaning forward on his breast, and Madame Goessler was reading to him. It was now three o'clock, and the old man had been brought down to this room after his breakfast. Madame Goessler was reading the last famous new novel, and the duke was dozing. That, probably, was the fault neither of the reader nor of the novelist; as the duke was wont to doze in these days. But Lady Glencora's tidings awakened him completely. She had the telegram in her hand,—so that he could perceive that the very latest news was brought to him.

"The diamonds not in the box!" he said,—pushing his head a little more forward in his eagerness, and sitting with the extended fingers of his two hands touching each other.

"Barrington Erle says that Major Mackintosh is almost sure the diamonds were not there." Major Mackintosh was an officer very high in the police force, whom everybody trusted implicitly, and as to whom the outward world believed that he could discover the perpetrators of any iniquity, if he would only take the trouble to look into it. Such was the pressing nature of his duties that he found himself compelled in
one way or another to give up about sixteen hours a day to them;—but the outer world accused him of idleness. There was nothing he couldn’t find out;—only he would not give himself the trouble to find out all the things that happened. Two or three newspapers had already been very hard upon him in regard to the Eustace diamonds. Such a mystery as that, they said, he ought to have unravelled long ago. That he had not unravelled it yet was quite certain.

"The diamonds not in the box!" said the duke.

"Then she must have known it," said Madame Goesler.

"That doesn’t quite follow, Madame Max," said Lady Glencora.

"But why shouldn’t the diamonds have been in the box?" asked the duke. As this was the first intimation given to Lady Glencora of any suspicion that the diamonds had not been taken with the box, and as this had been received by telegraph, she could not answer the duke’s question with any clear exposition of her own. She put up her hands and shook her head.

"What does Plantagenet think about it?" asked the duke. Plantagenet Palliser was the full name of the duke’s nephew and heir. The duke’s mind was evidently much disturbed.

"He doesn’t think that either the box or the diamonds were ever worth five farthings," said Lady Glencora.

"The diamonds not in the box!" repeated the duke.

"Madame Max, do you believe that the diamonds were
not in the box?" Madame Goesler shrugged her shoulders and made no answer; but the shrugging of her shoulders was quite satisfactory to the duke, who always thought that Madame Goesler did everything better than anybody else. Lady Glencora stayed with her uncle for the best part of an hour, and every word spoken was devoted to Lizzie and her necklace; but as this new idea had been broached, and as they had no other information than that conveyed in the telegram, very little light could be thrown upon it. But on the next morning there came a letter from Barrington Erle to Lady Glencora, which told so much, and hinted so much more, that it will be well to give it to the reader.

"Travellers', 29th Jan., 186—  

"My dear Lady Glencora,

"I hope you got my telegram yesterday. I had just seen Mackintosh,—on whose behalf, however, I must say that he told me as little as he possibly could. It is leaking out, however, on every side, that the police believe that when the box was taken out of the room at Carlisle, the diamonds were not in it. As far as I can learn, they ground this suspicion on the fact that they cannot trace the stones. They say that, if such a lot of diamonds had been through the thieves' market in London, they would have left some track behind them. As far as I can judge, Mackintosh thinks that Lord George has them, but that her ladyship gave them to him; and that this little game of
the robbery at Carlisle was planned to put John Eustace and the lawyers off the scent. If it should turn out that the box was opened before it left Portray, that the door of her ladyship's room was cut by her ladyship's self, or by his lordship with her ladyship's aid, and that the fragments of the box were carried out of the hotel by his lordship in person, it will altogether have been so delightful a plot, that all concerned in it ought to be canonised,—or, at least, allowed to keep their plunder. One of the old detectives told me that the opening of the box under the arch of the railway, in an exposed place, could hardly have been executed so neatly as was done;—that no thief so situated would have given the time necessary to it; and that, if there had been thieves at all at work, they would have been traced. Against this, there is the certain fact,—as I have heard from various men engaged in the inquiry,—that certain persons among the community of thieves are very much at loggerheads with each other,—the higher, or creative department in thieftom, accusing the lower or mechanical department with gross treachery in having appropriated to its own sole profit plunder, for the taking of which it had undertaken to receive a certain stipulated price. But then it may be the case that his lordship and her ladyship have set such a rumour abroad for the sake of putting the police off the scent. Upon the whole, the little mystery is quite delightful; and has put the ballot, and poor Mr. Palliser's five-farthingsed penny, quite out of joint. Nobody now cares for anything except the Eustace
diamonds. Lord George, I am told, has offered to fight everybody or anybody, beginning with Lord Fawn, and ending with Major Mackintosh. Should he be innocent, which, of course, is possible, the thing must be annoying. I should not at all wonder myself, if it should turn out that her ladyship left them in Scotland. The place there, however, has been searched, in compliance with an order from the police and by her ladyship's consent.

"Don't let Mr. Palliser quite kill himself. I hope the Bonteen plan answers. I never knew a man who could find more farthings in a shilling than Mr. Bonteen. Remember me very kindly to the duke, and pray enable poor Fawn to keep up his spirits. If he likes to arrange a meeting with Lord George, I shall be only too happy to be his friend. You remember our last duel. Chiltern is with you, and can put Fawn up to the proper way of getting over to Flanders,—and of returning, should he chance to escape.

"Yours always most faithfully,

"BARRINGTON ERLE.

"Of course, I'll keep you posted in everything respecting the necklace until you come to town yourself."

The whole of this letter Glencora read to the duke, to Lady Chiltern, and to Madame Gocslcr;—and the principal contents of it she repeated to the entire company. It was certainly the general belief at Matching that Lord George had the diamonds in his possession,
—either with or without the assistance of their late fair possessor.

The duke was struck with awe when he thought of all the circumstances. "The brother of a marquis!" he said to his nephew's wife. "It's such a disgrace to the peerage!"

"As for that, duke," said Lady Glencora, "the peerage is used to it by this time."

"I never heard of such an affair as this before."

"I don't see why the brother of a marquis shouldn't turn thief as well as anybody else. They say he hasn't got anything of his own;—and I suppose that is what makes men steal other people's property. Peers go into trade, and peeresses gamble on the Stock Exchange. Peers become bankrupt and the sons of peers run away;—just like other men. I don't see why all enterprises should not be open to them. But to think of that little purring cat, Lady Eustace, having been so very—very clever! It makes me quite envious."

All this took place in the morning;—that is, about two o'clock; but after dinner the subject became general. There might be some little reticence in regard to Lord Fawn's feelings,—but it was not sufficient to banish a subject so interesting from the minds and lips of the company. "The Tewett marriage is to come off, after all," said Mrs. Bonteen. "I've a letter from dear Mrs. Rutter, telling me so as a fact."

"I wonder whether Miss Roanoke will be allowed to wear one or two of the diamonds at the wedding," suggested one of the private secretaries.
"Nobody will dare to wear a diamond at all next season," said Lady Glencora. "As for my own part I shan't think of having them out. I should always feel that I was being inspected."

"Unless they unravel the mystery," said Madame Goesler.

"I hope they won't do that," said Lady Glencora. "The play is too good to come to an end so soon. If we hear that Lord George is engaged to Lady Eustace, nothing, I suppose, can be done to stop the marriage."

"Why shouldn't she marry if she pleases?" asked Mr. Palliser.

"I've not the slightest objection to her being married. I hope she will, with all my heart. I certainly think she should have her husband after buying him at such a price. I suppose Lord Fawn won't forbid the banns." These last words were only whispered to her next neighbour, Lord Chiltern; but poor Lord Fawn saw the whisper, and was aware that it must have had reference to his condition.

On the next morning there came further news. The police had asked permission from their occupants to search the rooms in which lived Lady Eustace and Lord George, and in each case the permission had been refused. So said Barrington Erle in his letter to Lady Glencora. Lord George had told the applicant, very roughly, that nobody should touch an article belonging to him without a search-warrant. If any magistrate would dare to give such a warrant, let him do it. "I am told that Lord George acts the indignant madman
uncommonly well," said Barrington Erle in his letter. As for poor Lizzie, she had fainted when the proposition was made to her. The request was renewed as soon as she had been brought to herself; and then she refused,—on the advice, as she said, of her cousin, Mr. Greystock. Barrington Erle went on to say that the police were very much blamed. It was believed that no information could be laid before a magistrate sufficient to justify a search-warrant;—and, in such circumstances, no search should have been attempted. Such was the public verdict, as declared in Barrington Erle's last letter to Lady Glencora.

Mr. Palliser was of opinion that the attempt to search the lady's house was iniquitous. Mr. Bonteen shook his head, and rather thought that, if he were Home Secretary, he would have had the search made. Lady Chiltern said that, if policemen came to her, they might search everything she had in the world. Mrs. Grey reminded them that all they really knew of the unfortunate woman was, that her jewel-box had been stolen out of her bedroom at her hotel. Madame Goesler was of opinion that a lady who could carry such a box about the country with her, deserved to have it stolen. Lord Fawn felt himself obliged to confess that he agreed altogether with Madame Goesler. Unfortunately, he had been acquainted with the lady, and now was constrained to say that her conduct had been such as to justify the suspicions of the police. "Of course, we all suspect her," said Lady Glencora; "and, of course, we suspect Lord George too, and Mrs. Carbuncle and Miss
Roanoke. But then, you know, if I were to lose my diamonds, people would suspect me just the same,—or perhaps Plantagenet. It is so delightful to think that a woman has stolen her own property, and put all the police into a state of ferment.” Lord Chiltern declared himself to be heartily sick of the whole subject; and Mr. Grey, who was a very just man, suggested that the evidence, as yet, against anybody, was very slight. “Of course, it’s slight,” said Lady Glencora. “If it were more than slight, it would be just like any other robbery, and there would be nothing in it.” On the same morning Mrs. Bonteen received a second letter from her friend Mrs. Rutter. The Tewett marriage had been certainly broken off. Sir Griffin had been very violent, misbehaving himself grossly in Mrs. Carbuncle’s house, and Miss Roanoke had declared that, under no circumstances, would she ever speak to him again. It was Mrs. Rutter’s opinion, however, that this violence had been “put on” by Sir Griffin, who was desirous of escaping from the marriage because of the affair of the diamonds. “He’s very much bound up with Lord George,” said Mrs. Rutter, “and is afraid that he may be implicated.”

“In my opinion he’s quite right,” said Lord Fawn. All these matters were told to the duke by Lady Glencora and Madame Goesler in the recesses of his grace’s private room; for the duke was now infirm, and did not dine in company unless the day was very auspicious to him. But in the evening he would creep into the drawing-room, and on this occasion he had a
word to say about the Eustace diamonds to every one in the room. It was admitted by them all that the robbery had been a godsend in the way of amusing the duke. "Wouldn't have her boxes searched, you know," said the duke; "that looks uncommonly suspicious. Perhaps, Lady Chiltern, we shall hear to-morrow morning something more about it."

"Poor dear duke," said Lady Chiltern to her husband.

"Doting old idiot!" he replied.
CHAPTER XLVIII.

LIZZIE'S CONDITION.

When such a man as Barrington Erle undertakes to send information to such a correspondent as Lady Glen-cora in reference to such a matter as Lady Eustace's diamonds, he is bound to be full rather than accurate. We may say, indeed, that perfect accuracy would be detrimental rather than otherwise, and would tend to disperse that feeling of mystery which is so gratifying. No suggestion had in truth been made to Lord George de Bruce Carruthers as to the searching of his lordship's boxes and desks. That very eminent detective officer, Mr. Bunfit, had, however, called upon Lord George more than once, and Lord George had declared very plainly that he did not like it. "If you'll have the kindness to explain to me what it is you want, I'll be much obliged to you," Lord George had said to Mr. Bunfit.

"Well, my lord," said Bunfit, "what we want is these diamonds."

"Do you believe that I've got them?"

"A man in my situation, my lord, never believes
anything. We has to suspect, but we never believes."

"You suspect that I stole them?"

"No, my lord;—I didn't say that. But things are very queer; arn't they?" The immediate object of Mr. Bunfit's visit on this morning had been to ascertain from Lord George whether it was true that his lordship had been with Messrs. Harter and Benjamin, the jewellers, on the morning after his arrival in town. No one from the police had as yet seen either Harter or Benjamin in connection with this robbery; but it may not be too much to say that the argus eyes of Major Mackintosh were upon Messrs. Harter and Benjamin's whole establishment, and it was believed that, if the jewels were in London, they were locked up in some box within that house. It was thought more than probable by Major Mackintosh and his myrmidons that the jewels were already at Hamburg; and by this time, as the major had explained to Mr. Camperdown, every one of them might have been reset,—or even recut. But it was known that Lord George had been at the house of Messrs. Harter and Benjamin early on the morning after his return to town, and the ingenuous Mr. Bunfit, who, by reason of his situation, never believed anything and only suspected, had expressed a very strong opinion to Major Mackintosh that the necklace had in truth been transferred to the Jews on that morning. That there was nothing "too hot or too heavy," for Messrs. Harter and Benjamin was quite a creed with the police of the West-end of London.
Might it not be well to ask Lord George what he had to say about the visit? Should Lord George deny the visit, such denial would go far to confirm Mr. Bunfit. The question was asked, and Lord George did not deny the visit. "Unfortunately, they hold acceptances of mine," said Lord George, "and I am often there." "We know as they have your lordship's name to paper," said Mr. Bunfit,—thanking Lord George, however, for his courtesy. It may be understood that all this would be unpleasant to Lord George, and that he should be indignant almost to madness.

But Mr. Erle's information, though certainly defective in regard to Lord George de Bruce Carruthers, had been more correct when he spoke of the lady. An interview that was very terrible to poor Lizzie did take place between her and Mr. Bunfit in Mrs. Carbuncle's house on Tuesday, the 30th of January. There had been many interviews between Lizzie and various members of the police force in reference to the diamonds, but the questions put to her had always been asked on the supposition that she might have mislaid the necklace. Was it not possible that she might have thought that she locked it up, but have omitted to place it in the box? As long as these questions had reference to a possible oversight in Scotland,—to some carelessness which she might have committed on the night before she left her home,—Lizzie upon the whole seemed rather to like the idea. It certainly was possible. She believed thoroughly that the diamonds had been locked by her in the box,—but she acknowledged that
it might be the case that they had been left on one side. This had happened when the police first began to sus-
pect that the necklace had not been in the box when it was carried out of the Carlisle hotel, but before it had occurred to them that Lord George had been concerned in the robbery, and possibly Lady Eustace herself. Men had been sent down from London, of course at consid-
erable expense, and Portray Castle had been searched, with the consent of its owner, from the weathercock to the foundation-stone,—much to the consternation of Miss Macnulty, and to the delight of Andy Gowran. No trace of the diamonds was found, and Lizzie had so far fraternised with the police. But when Mr. Bunfit called upon her, perhaps for the fifth or sixth time, and suggested that he should be allowed, with the assist-
ance of the female whom he had left behind him in the hall, to search all her ladyship's boxes, drawers, presses, and receptacles in London, the thing took a very dif-
ferent aspect. "You see, my lady," said Mr. Bunfit, excusing the peculiar nature of his request, "it may have got anywhere among your ladyship's things, unbeknownst." Lady Eustace and Mrs. Carbuncle were at the time sitting together, and Mrs. Carbuncle was the first to protest. If Mr. Bunfit thought that he was going to search her things, Mr. Bunfit was very much mistaken. What she had suffered about this necklace no man or woman knew,—and she meant that there should be an end to it. It was her opinion that the police should have discovered every stone of it days and days ago. At any rate, her house was her own,
and she gave Mr. Bunfit to understand that his repeated visits were not agreeable to her. But when Mr. Bunfit, without showing the slightest displeasure at the evil things said of him, suggested that the search should be confined to the rooms used exclusively by Lady Eustace, Mrs. Carbuncle absolutely changed her views, and recommended that he should be allowed to have his way.

At that moment the condition of poor Lizzie Eustace was very sad. He who recounts these details has scorned to have a secret between himself and his readers. The diamonds were at this moment locked up within Lizzie’s desk. For the last three weeks they had been there,—if it may not be more truly said that they were lying heavily on her heart. For three weeks had her mind with constant stretch been working on that point,—whither should she take the diamonds, and what should she do with them? A certain very wonderful strength she did possess, or she could not have endured the weight of so terrible an anxiety; but from day to day the thing became worse and worse with her, as gradually she perceived that suspicion was attached to herself. Should she confide the secret to Lord George, or to Mrs. Carbuncle, or to Frank Greystock? She thought she could have borne it all, if only some one would have borne it with her. But when the moments came in which such confidence might be made, her courage failed her. Lord George she saw frequently, but he was unsympathetic and almost rough with her. She knew that he also was
suspected, and she was almost disposed to think that he had planned the robbery. If it were so, if the robbery had been his handiwork, it was not singular that he should be unsympathetic with the owner and probable holder of the prey which he had missed. Nevertheless Lizzie thought that if he would have been soft with her, like a dear, good, genuine Corsair, for half an hour, she would have told him all, and placed the necklace in his hands. And there were moments in which she almost resolved to tell her secret to Mrs. Carbuncle. She had stolen nothing;—so she averred to herself. She had intended only to defend and save her own property. Even the lie that she had told, and the telling of which was continued from day to day, had in a measure been forced upon her by circumstances. She thought that Mrs. Carbuncle would sympathize with her in that feeling which had prevented her from speaking the truth, when first the fact of the robbery was made known to herself in her own bedroom. Mrs. Carbuncle was a lady who told many lies, as Lizzie well knew,—and surely could not be horrified at a lie told in such circumstances. But it was not in Lizzie's nature to trust a woman. Mrs. Carbuncle would tell Lord George,—and that would destroy everything. When she thought of confiding everything to her cousin, it was always in his absence. The idea became dreadful to her as soon as he was present. She could not dare to own to him that she had sworn falsely to the magistrate at Carlisle. And so the burthen had to be borne, increasing every hour in weight, and the
poor creature's back was not broad enough to bear it. She thought of the necklace every waking minute, and dreamed of it when she slept. She could not keep herself from unlocking her desk and looking at it twenty times a day, although she knew the peril of such nervous solicitude. If she could only rid herself of it altogether, she was sure now that she would do so. She would throw it into the ocean fathoms deep, if only she could find herself alone upon the ocean. But she felt that, let her go where she might, she would be watched. She might declare to-morrow her intention of going to Ireland,—or, for that matter, to America. But, were she to do so, some horrid policeman would be on her track. The iron box had been a terrible nuisance to her;—but the iron box had been as nothing compared to the necklace locked up in her desk. From day to day she meditated a plan of taking the thing out into the streets, and dropping it in the dark; but she was sure that, were she to do so, some one would have watched her while she dropped it. She was unwilling to trust her old friend Mr. Benjamin; but in these days her favourite scheme was to offer the diamonds for sale to him at some very low price. If he would help her they might surely be got out of their present hiding-place into his hands. Any man would be powerful to help, if there were any man whom she could trust. In furtherance of this scheme she went so far as to break a brooch,—a favourite brooch of her own,—in order that she might have an excuse for calling at the jewellers'. But even this she postponed
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from day to day. Circumstances, as they had occurred, had taught her to believe that the police could not insist on breaking open her desk unless some evidence could be brought against her. There was no evidence, and her desk was so far safe. But the same circumstances had made her understand that she was already suspected of some intrigue with reference to the diamonds,—though of what she was suspected she did not clearly perceive. As far as she could divine the thoughts of her enemies, they did not seem to suppose that the diamonds were in her possession. It seemed to be believed by those enemies that they had passed into the hands of Lord George. As long as her enemies were on a scent so false, might it not be best that she should remain quiet?

But all the ingenuity, the concentrated force, and trained experience of the police of London would surely be too great and powerful for her in the long-run. She could not hope to keep her secret and the diamonds till they should acknowledge themselves to be baffled. And then she was aware of a morbid desire on her own part to tell the secret,—of a desire that amounted almost to a disease. It would soon burst her bosom open, unless she could share her knowledge with some one. And yet, as she thought of it all, she told herself that she had no friend so fast and true as to justify such confidence. She was ill with anxiety, and,—worse than that,—Mrs. Carbuncle knew that she was ill. It was acknowledged between them that this affair of the necklace was so terrible as to make a woman ill.
Mrs. Carbuncle at present had been gracious enough to admit so much as that. But might it not be probable that Mrs. Carbuncle would come to suspect that she did not know the whole secret? Mrs. Carbuncle had already, on more than one occasion, said a little word or two which had been unpleasant.

Such was Lizzie's condition when Mr. Bunfit came, with his authoritative request to be allowed to inspect Lizzie's boxes,—and when Mrs. Carbuncle, having secured her own privacy, expressed her opinion that Mr. Bunfit should be allowed to do as he desired.
CHAPTER XLIX.

BUNFIT AND GAGER.

As soon as the words were out of Mrs. Carbuncle's mouth,—those ill-natured words in which she expressed her assent to Mr. Bunfit's proposition that a search should be made after the diamonds among all the possessions of Lady Eustace which were now lodged in her own house,—poor Lizzie's courage deserted her entirely. She had been very courageous; for, though her powers of endurance had sometimes nearly deserted her, though her heart had often failed her, still she had gone on and had endured and been silent. To endure and to be silent in her position did require great courage. She was all alone in her misery, and could see no way out of it. The diamonds were heavy as a load of lead within her bosom. And yet she had persevered. Now, as she heard Mrs. Carbuncle's words, her courage failed her. There came some obstruction in her throat, so that she could not speak. She felt as though her heart were breaking. She put out both her hands and could not draw them back again. She knew that she was betraying herself
by her weakness. She could just hear the man explaining that the search was merely a thing of ceremony,—just to satisfy everybody that there was no mistake;—and then she fainted. So far, Barrington Erle was correct in the information given by him to Lady Glencora. She pressed one hand against her heart, gasped for breath, and then fell back upon the sofa. Perhaps she could have done nothing better. Had the fainting been counterfeit, the measure would have shown ability. But the fainting was altogether true. Mrs. Carbuncle first, and then Mr. Bunfit, hurried from their seats to help her. To neither of them did it occur for a moment that the fit was false.

"The whole thing has been too much for her," said Mrs. Carbuncle severely, ringing the bell at the same time for further aid.

"No doubt,—mum; no doubt. We has to see a deal of this sort of thing. Just a little air if you please, mum,—and as much water as 'd go to christen a babby. That's always best, mum."

"If you'll have the kindness to stand on one side," said Mrs. Carbuncle, as she stretched Lizzie on the sofa.

"Certainly, mum," said Bunfit, standing erect by the wall, but not showing the slightest disposition to leave the room.

"You had better go," said Mrs. Carbuncle,—loudly and very severely.

"I'll just stay and see her come to, mum. I won't do her a morsel of harm, mum. Sometimes they
faints at the very first sight of such as we; but we has to bear it. A little more air, if you could, mum;—and just dash the water on in drops like. They feels a drop more than they would a bucketful,—and then when they comes to they hasn’t to change theirselves.”

Bunfit’s advice, founded on much experience, was good, and Lizzie gradually came to herself and opened her eyes. She immediately clutched at her breast feeling for her key. She found it unmoved, but before her finger had recognised the touch, her quick mind had told her how wrong the movement had been. It had been lost upon Mrs. Carbuncle, but not on Mr. Bunfit. He did not at once think that she had the diamonds in her desk; but he felt almost sure that there was something in her possession,—probably some document,—which, if found, would place him on the track of the diamonds. But he could not compel a search. “Your ladyship ’ll soon be better,” said Bunfit graciously. Lizzie endeavoured to smile as she expressed her assent to this proposition. “As I was a saying to the elder lady——”

“Saying to who, sir?” exclaimed Mrs. Carbuncle, rising up in wrath. “Elder, indeed!”

“As I was a venturing to explain, these fits of fainting come often in our way. Thieves, mum,—that is, the regulars,—don’t mind us a bit, and the women is more hardeneder than the men; but when we has to speak to a lady, it is so often that she goes off like that! I’ve known ’em do it just at being looked at.”
"Don't you think, sir, that you'd better leave us now?" said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"Indeed you had," said Lizzie. "I am fit for nothing just at present."

"We won't disturb your ladyship the least in life," said Mr. Bunfit, "if you'll only just let us have your keys. Your servant can be with us, and we won't move one tittle of anything." But Lizzie, though she was still suffering that ineffable sickness which always accompanies and follows a real fainting-fit, would not surrender her keys. Already had an excuse for not doing so occurred to her. But for a while she seemed to hesitate. "I don't demand it, Lady Eustace," said Mr. Bunfit, "but if you'll allow me to say so, I do think it will look better for your ladyship."

"I can take no step without consulting my cousin, Mr. Greystock," said Lizzie; and having thought of this she adhered to it. The detective supplied her with many reasons for giving up her keys, alleging that it would do no harm, and that her refusal would create infinite suspicions. But Lizzie had formed her answer and stuck to it. She always consulted her cousin, and always acted upon his advice. He had already cautioned her not to take any steps without his sanction. She would do nothing till he consented. If Mr. Bunfit would see Mr. Greystock, and if Mr. Greystock would come to her and tell her to submit,— she would submit. Ill as she was, she could be obstinate, and Bunfit left the house without having
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been able to finger that key which he felt sure that Lady Eustace carried somewhere on her person.

As he walked back to his own quarters in Scotland Yard, Bunfit was by no means dissatisfied with his morning's work. He had not expected to find anything with Lady Eustace, and, when she fainted, had not hoped to be allowed to search. But he was now sure that her ladyship was possessed, at any rate, of some guilty knowledge. Bunfit was one of those who, almost from the first, had believed that the box was empty when taken out of the hotel. "Stones like them must turn up more or less," was Bunfit's great argument. That the police should already have found the stones themselves was not perhaps probable; but had any ordinary thieves had them in their hands, they could not have been passed on without leaving a trace behind them. It was his opinion that the box had been opened and the door cut by the instrumentality and concurrence of Lord George de Bruce Carruthers—with the assistance of some one well-skilled mechanical thief. Nothing could be made out of the tall footman;—indeed, the tall footman had already been set at liberty, although he was known to have evil associates, and the tall footman was now loud in demanding compensation for the injury done to him. Many believed that the tall footman had been concerned in the matter,—many, that is, among the experienced craftsmen of the police force. Bunfit thought otherwise. Bunfit believed that the diamonds were now either in the possession of Lord George or
of Harter and Benjamin, that they had been handed over to Lord George to save them from Messrs. Camperdown and the lawsuit, and that Lord George and the lady were lovers. The lady's conduct at their last interview, her fit of fainting, and her clutching for the key, all confirmed Bunfit in his opinion. But unfortunately for Bunfit he was almost alone in his opinion. There were men in the force,—high in their profession as detectives—who avowed that certainly two very experienced and well-known thieves had been concerned in the business. That a certain Mr. Smiler had been there,—a gentleman for whom the whole police of London entertained a feeling which approached to veneration, and that most diminutive of full-grown thieves, Billy Cann,—most diminutive but at the same time most expert,—was not doubted by some minds which were apt to doubt till conviction had become certainty. The traveller who had left the Scotch train at Dumfries had been a very small man, and it was a known fact that Mr. Smiler had left London by train, from the Euston Square station, on the day before that on which Lizzie and her party had reached Carlisle. If it were so, if Mr. Smiler and Billy Cann had both been at work at the hotel, then,—so argued they who opposed the Bunfit theory,—it was hardly conceivable that the robbery should have been arranged by Lord George. According to the Bunfit theory, the only thing needed by the conspirators had been that the diamonds should be handed over by Lady Eustace to Lord George in such a way
as to escape suspicion that such transfer had been made. This might have been done with very little trouble,—by simply leaving the box empty, with the key in it. The door of the bedroom had been opened by skilful professional men, and the box had been forced by the use of tools which none but professional gentlemen would possess. Was it probable that Lord George would have committed himself with such men, and incurred the very heavy expense of paying for their services, when he was,—according to the Bunfit theory,—able to get at the diamonds without any such trouble, danger, and expenditure? There was a young detective in the force, very clever,—almost too clever, and certainly a little too fast,—Gager by name, who declared that the Bunfit theory "warn't on the cards." According to Gager's information, Smiler was at this moment a broken-hearted man,—ranging between mad indignation and suicidal despondency, because he had been treated with treachery in some direction. Mr. Gager was as fully convinced as Bunfit that the diamonds had not been in the box. There was bitter, raging, heart-breaking disappointment about the diamonds in more quarters than one. That there had been a double robbery Gager was quite sure;—or rather a robbery in which two sets of thieves had been concerned, and in which one set had been duped by the other set. In this affair Mr. Smiler and poor little Billy Cann had been the dupes. So far Gager's mind had arrived at certainty. But then how had they been duped, and who had duped them? And
who had employed them? Such a robbery would hardly have been arranged or executed except on commission. Even Mr. Smiler would not have burthened himself with such diamonds without knowing what to do with them, and what he should get for them. That they were intended ultimately for the hands of Messrs. Harter and Benjamin, Gager almost believed. And Gager was inclined to think that Messrs. Harter and Benjamin,—or rather Mr. Benjamin, for Mr. Harter himself was almost too old for work requiring so very great mental activity, that Mr. Benjamin, fearing the honesty of his executive officer Mr. Smiler, had been splendidly treacherous to his subordinate. Gager had not quite completed his theory; but he was very firm on one great point,—that the thieves at Carlisle had been genuine thieves, thinking that they were stealing the diamonds, and finding their mistake out when the box had been opened by them under the bridge. "Who have 'em, then?" asked Bunfit of his younger brother, in a disparaging whisper.

"Well; yes; who 'ave 'em? It's easy to say, who 'ave 'em? Suppose 'e 'ave 'em." The "he" alluded to by Gager was Lord George de Bruce Carruthers. "But, laws, Bunfit, they're gone—weeks ago. You know that, Bunfit." This had occurred before the intended search among poor Lizzie's boxes, but Bunfit's theory had not been shaken. Bunfit could see all round his own theory. It was a whole, and the motives as well as the operations of the persons
concerned were explained by it. But the Gager theory only went to show what had not been done, and offered no explanation of the accomplished scheme. Then Bunfit went a little further in his theory, not disdaining to accept something from Gager. Perhaps Lord George had engaged these men, and had afterwards found it practicable to get the diamonds without their assistance. On one great point all concerned in the inquiry were in unison,—that the diamonds had not been in the box when it was carried out of the bedroom at Carlisle. The great point of difference consisted in this, that whereas Gager was sure that the robbery when committed had been genuine, Bunfit was of opinion that the box had been first opened, and then taken out of the hotel in order that the police might be put on a wrong track.

The matter was becoming very important. Two or three of the leading newspapers had first hinted at and then openly condemned the incompetence and slowness of the police. Such censure, as we all know, is very common, and in nine cases out of ten it is unjust. They who write it probably know but little of the circumstances;—and, in speaking of a failure here and a failure there, make no reference to the numerous successes, which are so customary as to partake of the nature of routine. It is the same in regard to all public matters;—army matters, navy matters, poor-law matters, and post-office matters. Day after day, and almost every day, one meets censure which is felt to be unjust;—but the general result of
all this injustice is increased efficiency. The coach does go the faster because of the whip in the coachman's hand, though the horses driven may never have deserved the thong. In this matter of the Eustace diamonds the police had been very active; but they had been unsuccessful, and had consequently been abused. The robbery was now more than three weeks old. Property to the amount of ten thousand pounds had been abstracted, and as yet the police had not even formed an assured opinion on the subject! Had the same thing occurred in New York or Paris every diamond would by this time have been traced. Such were the assertions made, and the police were instigated to new exertions. Bunfit would have jeopardised his right hand, and Gager his life, to get at the secret. Even Major Mackintosh was anxious.

The facts of the claim made by Mr. Camperdown, and of the bill which had been filed in Chancery for the recovery of the diamonds, were of course widely known, and added much to the general interest and complexity. It was averred that Mr. Camperdown's determination to get the diamonds had been very energetic, and Lady Eustace's determination to keep them equally so. Wonderful stories were told of Lizzie's courage, energy, and resolution. There was hardly a lawyer of repute but took up the question, and had an opinion as to Lizzie's right to the necklace. The Attorney and Solicitor-General were dead against her, asserting that the diamonds certainly did not pass to her under the will, and could not have.
become hers by gift. But they were members of a liberal government, and of course anti-Lizzieite. Gentlemen who were equal to them in learning, who had held offices equally high, were distinctly of a different opinion. Lady Eustace might probably claim the jewels as paraphernalia properly appertaining to her rank;—in which claim the bestowal of them by her husband would no doubt assist her. And to these gentlemen,—who were Lizzieites, and of course conservatives in politics,—it was by no means clear that the diamonds did not pass to her by will. If it could be shown that the diamonds had been lately kept in Scotland, the ex-Attorney General thought that they would so pass. All which questions, now that the jewels had been lost, were discussed openly, and added greatly to the anxiety of the police. Both Lizzieites and anti-Lizzieites were disposed to think that Lizzie was very clever.

Frank Greystock in these days took up his cousin's part altogether in good faith. He entertained not the slightest suspicion that she was deceiving him in regard to the diamonds. That the robbery had been a bona-fide robbery, and that Lizzie had lost her treasure, was to him beyond doubt. He had gradually convinced himself that Mr. Camperdown was wrong in his claim, and was strongly of opinion that Lord Fawn had disgraced himself by his conduct to the lady. When he now heard, as he did hear, that some undefined suspicion was attached to his cousin,—and when he heard also, as unfortunately he did hear,—that Lord
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Fawn had encouraged that suspicion, he was very irate, and said grievous things of Lord Fawn. It seemed to him to be the extremity of cruelty that suspicion should be attached to his cousin because she had been robbed of her jewels. He was among those who were most severe in their denunciation of the police, —and was the more so, because he had heard it asserted that the necklace had not in truth been stolen. He busied himself very much in the matter, and even interrogated John Eustace as to his intentions. "My dear fellow," said Eustace, "if you hated those diamonds as much as I do, you would never mention them again." Greystock declared that this expression of aversion to the subject might be all very well for Mr. Eustace, but that he found himself bound to defend his cousin. "You cannot defend her against me," said Eustace, "for I do not attack her. I have never said a word against her. I went down to Portray when she asked me. As far as I am concerned she is perfectly welcome to wear the necklace, if she can get it back again. I will not make or meddle in the matter one way or the other." Frank, after that, went to Mr. Camperdown, but he could get no satisfaction from the attorney. Mr. Camperdown would only say that he had a duty to do, and that he must do it. On the matter of the robbery he refused to give an opinion. That was in the hands of the police. Should the diamonds be recovered, he would, of course, claim them on behalf of the estate. In his opinion, whether the diamonds were recovered or not, Lady Eustace
was responsible to the estate for their value. In opposition, first to the entreaties, and then to the demands of her late husband’s family, she had insisted on absurdly carrying about with her an enormous amount of property which did not belong to her. Mr. Camperdown opined that she must pay for the lost diamonds out of her jointure. Frank, in a huff, declared that, as far as he could see, the diamonds belonged to his cousin;—in answer to which Mr. Camperdown suggested that the question was one for the decision of the Vice-Chancellor. Frank Greystock found that he could do nothing with Mr. Camperdown, and felt that he could wreak his vengeance only on Lord Fawn.

Bunfit, when he returned from Mrs. Carbuncle’s house to Scotland Yard, had an interview with Major Mackintosh. “Well, Bunfit, have you seen the lady?”

“Yes,—I did see her, sir.”

“And what came of it?”

“She fainted away, sir—just as they always do.”

“There was no search, I suppose?”

“No, sir;—no search. She wouldn’t have it, unless her cousin, Mr. Greystock, permitted”

“I didn’t think she would.”

“Nor yet didn’t I, sir. But I’ll tell you what it is, major. She knows all about it.”

“You think she does, Bunfit?”

“She does, sir; and she’s got something locked up somewhere in that house as’d elucidate the whole of this aggravating mystery, if only we could get at it. Major,——”
"Well, Bunfit?"

"I ain't noways sure as she ain't got them very diamonds themselves locked up, or, perhaps, tied round her person."

"Neither am I sure that she has not," said the major.

"The robbery at Carlisle was no robbery," continued Bunfit. "It was a got-up plant, and about the best as I ever knowed. It's my mind that it was a got-up plant between her ladyship and his lordship; and either the one or the other is just keeping the diamonds till it's safe to take 'em into the market."
CHAPTER L.

IN HERTFORD STREET.

During all this time Lucinda Roanoke was engaged to marry Sir Griffin Tewett, and the lover was an occasional visitor in Hertford Street. Mrs. Carbuncle was as anxious as ever that the marriage should be celebrated on the appointed day, and though there had been repeated quarrels, nothing had as yet taken place to make her despond. Sir Griffin would make some offensive speech; Lucinda would tell him that she had no desire ever to see him again; and then the baronet, usually under the instigation of Lord George, would make some awkward apology. Mrs. Carbuncle,—whose life at this period was not a pleasant one,—would behave on such occasions with great patience, and sometimes with great courage. Lizzie, who in her present emergency could not bear the idea of losing the assistance of any friend, was soft and graceful, and even gracious, to the bear. The bear himself certainly seemed to desire the marriage, though he would so often give offence which made any prospect of a marriage almost impossible. But with
Sir Griffin, when the prize seemed to be lost, it again became valuable. He would talk about his passionate love to Mrs. Carbuncle, and to Lizzie,—and then, when things had been made straight for him, he would insult them, and neglect Lucinda. To Lucinda herself, however, he would rarely dare to say such words as he used daily to the other two ladies in the house. What could have been the man's own idea of his future married life, how can any reader be made to understand, or any writer adequately describe! He must have known that the woman despised him, and hated him. In the very bottom of his heart he feared her. He had no idea of other pleasure from her society than what might arise to him from the pride of having married a beautiful woman. Had she shown the slightest fondness for him, the slightest fear that she might lose him, the slightest feeling that she had won a valuable prize in getting him, he would have scorned her, and jilted her without the slightest remorse. But the scorn came from her, and it beat him down. "Yes;—you hate me, and would fain be rid of me; but you have said that you will be my wife, and you cannot now escape me." Sir Griffin did not exactly speak such words as these, but he acted them. Lucinda would bear his presence,—sitting apart from him, silent, imperious, but very beautiful. People said that she became more handsome from day to day, and she did so, in spite of her agony. Hers was a face which could stand such condition of the heart without fading or sinking under it. She did not weep,
or lose her colour, or become thin. The pretty soft-ness of a girl,—delicate feminine weakness, or laugh-ing eyes and pouting lips, no one expected from her. Sir Griffin, in the early days of their acquaintance, had found her to be a woman with a character for beauty,—and she was now more beautiful than ever. He probably thought that he loved her; but, at any rate, he was determined that he would marry her.

He had expressed himself more than once as very angry about this affair of the jewels. He had told Mrs. Carbuncle that her inmate, Lady Eustace, was suspected by the police, and that it might be well that Lady Eustace should be,—be made to go, in fact. But it did not suit Mrs. Carbuncle that Lady Eustace should be made to go;—nor did it suit Lord George de Bruce Carruthers. Lord George, at Mrs. Carbuncle's instance, had snubbed Sir Griffin more than once, and then it came to pass that he was snubbed yet again more violently than before. He was at the house in Hertford Street on the day of Mr. Bunfit's visit, some hours after Mr. Bunfit was gone, when Lizzie was still lying on her bed up-stairs, nearly beaten by the great danger which had oppressed her. He was told of Mr. Bunfit's visit, and then again said that he thought that the continued residence of Lady Eustace beneath that roof was a misfortune. "Would you wish us to turn her out because her necklace has been stolen?" asked Mrs. Carbuncle.

"People say very queer things," said Sir Griffin.
"So they do, Sir Griffin," continued Mrs. Carbuncle. "They say such queer things that I can hardly understand that they should be allowed to say them. I am told that the police absolutely suggest that Lord George stole the diamonds."

"That's nonsense."

"No doubt, Sir Griffin. And so is the other nonsense. Do you mean to tell us that you believe that Lady Eustace stole her own diamonds?"

"I don't see the use of having her here. Situated as I am, I have a right to object to it."

"Situated as you are, Sir Griffin!" said Lucinda.

"Well;—yes, of course; if we are to be married, I cannot but think a good deal of the persons you stay with."

"You were very glad to stay yourself with Lady Eustace at Portray," said Lucinda.

"I went there to follow you," said Sir Griffin gallantly.

"I wish with all my heart you had stayed away," said Lucinda. At that moment Lord George was shown into the room, and Miss Roanoke continued speaking, determined that Lord George should know how the bear was conducting himself. "Sir Griffin is saying that my aunt ought to turn Lady Eustace out of the house."

"Not quite that," said Sir Griffin with an attempt at laughter.

"Quite that," said Lucinda. "I don't suppose that he suspects poor Lady Eustace, but he thinks that my
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aunt's friend should be like Cæsar's wife, above the suspicion of others."

"If you would mind your own business, Tewett," said Lord George, "it would be a deal better for us all. I wonder Mrs. Carbuncle does not turn you out of the room for making such a proposition here. If it were my room, I would."

"I suppose I can say what I please to Mrs. Carbuncle? Miss Roanoke is not going to be your wife."

"It is my belief that Miss Roanoke will be nobody's wife,—at any rate, for the present," said that young lady;—upon which Sir Griffin left the room, muttering some words which might have been, perhaps, intended for an adieu. Immediately after this, Lizzie came in, moving slowly, but without a sound, like a ghost, with pale cheeks, and dishevelled hair, and that weary, worn look of illness which was become customary with her. She greeted Lord George with a faint attempt at a smile, and seated herself in a corner of a sofa. She asked whether he had been told the story of the proposed search, and then bade her friend Mrs. Carbuncle describe the scene.

"If it goes on like this it will kill me," said Lizzie.

"They are treating me in precisely the same way," said Lord George.

"But think of your strength and of my weakness, Lord George."

"By heavens, I don't know!" said Lord George. "In this matter your weakness is stronger than any strength of mine. I never was so cut up in my life."
It was a good joke when we talked of the suspicions of that fellow at Carlisle as we came up by the railway,—but it is no joke now. I've had men with me, almost asking to search among my things."

"They have quite asked me!" said Lizzie piteously.

"You;—yes. But there's some reason in that. These infernal diamonds did belong to you, or, at any rate, you had them. You are the last person known to have seen them. Even if you had them still, you'd only have what you call your own." Lizzie looked at him with all her eyes and listened to him with all her ears. "But what the mischief can I have had to do with them?"

"It's very hard upon you," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"Unless I stole them," continued Lord George.

"Which is so absurd, you know," said Lizzie.

"That a pig-headed provincial fool should have taken me for a midnight thief, did not disturb me much. I don't think I am very easily annoyed by what other people think of me. But these fellows, I suppose, were sent here by the head of the metropolitan police; and everybody knows that they have been sent. Because I was civil enough to you women to look after you coming up to town, and because one of you was careless enough to lose her jewels, I—I am to be talked about all over London as the man who took them!" This was not spoken with much courtesy to the ladies present. Lord George had dropped that customary chivalry of manner which, in ordinary life, makes it to be quite out of the question that a man shall be uncivil
to a woman. He had escaped from conventional usage into rough, truthful speech, under stress from the extremity of the hardship to which he had been subjected. And the women understood it and appreciated it, and liked it rather than otherwise. To Lizzie it seemed fitting that a Corsair so circumstanced should be as uncivil as he pleased; and Mrs. Carbuncle had long been accustomed to her friend's moods.

"They can't really think it," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"Somebody thinks it. I am told that your particular friend, Lord Fawn,"—this he said, specially addressing Lizzie,—"has expressed a strong opinion that I carry about the necklace always in my pocket. I trust to have the opportunity of wringing his neck some day."

"I do wish you would," said Lizzie.

"I shall not lose a chance if I can get it. Before all this occurred, I should have said to myself that nothing of the kind could put me out. I don't think there is a man in the world cares less what people say of him than I do. I am as indifferent to ordinary tittle-tattle as a rhinoceros. But, by George, when it comes to stealing ten thousand pounds' worth of diamonds, and the delicate attentions of all the metropolitan police, one begins to feel that one is vulnerable. When I get up in the morning, I half feel that I shall be locked up before night, and I can see in the eyes of every man I meet that he takes me for the prince of burglars!"

"And it is all my fault," said Lizzie.

"I wish the diamonds had been thrown into the sea," said Mrs. Carbuncle.
"What do you think about them yourself?" asked Lucinda.

"I don't know what to think. I'm at a dead loss. You know that man, Mr. Benjamin, Lady Eustace?" Lizzie, with a little start, answered that she did,—that she had had dealings with him before her marriage, and had once owed him two or three hundred pounds. As the man's name had been mentioned, she thought it better to own as much. "So he tells me. Now, in all London, I don't suppose there is a greater rascal than Benjamin."

"I didn't know that," said Lizzie.

"But I did; and with that rascal I have had money dealings for the last six or seven years. He has cashed bills for me, and has my name to bills now,—and Sir Griffin's too. I'm half inclined to think that he has got the diamonds."

"Do you indeed?" said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"Mr. Benjamin!" said Lizzie.

"And he returns the compliment."

"How does he return it?" asked Mrs. Carbuncle.

"He either thinks that I've got 'em, or he wants to make me believe that he thinks so. He hasn't dared to say it;—but that's his intention. Such an opinion from such a man on such a subject would be quite a compliment. And I feel it. But yet it troubles me. You know that greasy, Israelitish smile of his, Lady Eustace?" Lizzie nodded her head and tried to smile. "When I asked him yesterday about the diamonds, he
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leered at me and rubbed his hands. 'It's a pretty little game;—ain't it, Lord George?' he said. I told him that I thought it a very bad game, and that I hoped the police would have the thief and the necklace soon. 'It's been managed a deal too well for that, Lord George;—don't you think so?'” Lord George mimicked the Jew as he repeated the words, and the ladies, of course, laughed. But poor Lizzie's attempt at laughter was very sorry. “I told him to his face that I thought he had them among his treasures. 'No, no, no; Lord George,' he said, and seemed quite to enjoy the joke. If he's got them himself, he can't think that I have them;—but if he has not, I don't doubt but he believes that I have. And I'll tell you another person who suspects me.”

"What fools they are," said Lizzie.

"I don't know how that may be. Sir Griffin, Lucinda, isn't at all sure but what I have them in my pocket.”

"I can believe anything of him," said Lucinda.

"And it seems he can believe anything of me. I shall begin to think soon that I did take them, myself, —or, at any rate, that I ought to have done so. I wonder what you three women think of it. If you do think I've got 'em, don't scruple to say so. I'm quite used to it, and it won't hurt me any further.” The ladies again laughed. "You must have your suspicions," continued he.

"I suppose some of the London thieves did get them," said Mrs. Carbuncle.
"The police say the box was empty," said Lord George.

"How can the police know?" asked Lucinda.

"They weren't there to see. Of course, the thieves would say that they didn't take them."

"What do you think, Lady Eustace?"

"I don't know what to think. Perhaps Mr. Camperdown did it."

"Or the Lord Chancellor," said Lord George. "One is just as likely as the other. I wish I could get at what you really think. The whole thing would be so complete if all you three suspected me. I can't get out of it all by going to Paris or Kamtschatka, as I should have half a dozen detectives on my heels wherever I went. I must brazen it out here; and the worst of it is, that I feel that a look of guilt is creeping over me. I have a sort of conviction growing upon me that I shall be taken up and tried, and that a jury will find me guilty. I dream about it; and if,—as is probable,—it drives me mad, I'm sure that I shall accuse myself in my madness. There's a fascination about it that I can't explain or escape. I go on thinking how I would have done it if I did do it. I spend hours in calculating how much I would have realised, and where I would have found my market. I couldn't keep myself from asking Benjamin the other day how much they would be worth to him."

"What did he say?" asked Lizzie, who sat gazing upon the Corsair, and who was now herself fascinated. Lord George was walking about the room, then sitting
for a moment in one chair and again in another, and after a while leaning on the mantelpiece. In his speaking he addressed himself almost exclusively to Lizzie, who could not keep her eyes from his.

"He grinned greasily," said the Corsair, "and told me they had already been offered to him once before by you."

"That's false," said Lizzie.

"Very likely. And then he said that no doubt they'd fall into his hands some day. 'Wouldn't it be a game, Lord George,' he said, 'if, after all, they should be no more than paste?' That made me think he had got them, and that he'd get paste diamonds put into the same setting,—and then give them up with some story of his own making. 'You'd know whether they were paste or not; wouldn't you, Lord George?' he asked." The Corsair, as he repeated Mr. Benjamin's words, imitated the Jew's manner so well, that he made Lizzie shudder. "While I was there, a detective named Gager came in."

"The same man who came here, perhaps," suggested Mrs. Carbuncle.

"I think not. He seemed to be quite intimate with Mr. Benjamin, and went on at once about the diamonds. Benjamin said that they'd made their way over to Paris, and that he'd heard of them. I found myself getting quite intimate with Mr. Gager, who seemed hardly to scruple at showing that he thought that Benjamin and I were confederates. Mr. Camperdown has offered four hundred pounds reward for the jewels,
—to be paid on their surrender to the hands of Mr. Garnett, the jeweller. Gager declared that, if any ordinary thief had them, they would be given up at once for that sum."

"That's true. I suppose," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"How would the ordinary thief get his money without being detected? Who would dare to walk into Garnett's shop with the diamonds in his hands and ask for the four hundred pounds? Besides, they have been sold to some one,—and, as I believe, to my dear friend, Mr. Benjamin. 'I suppose you ain't a going anywhere just at present, Lord George?' said that fellow Gager. 'What the devil's that to you?' I asked him. He just laughed and shook his head. I don't doubt but that there's a policeman about waiting till I leave this house,—or looking at me now with a magnifying glass from the windows at the other side. They've photographed me while I'm going about, and published a list of every hair on my face in the 'Hue and Cry.' I dined at the club yesterday, and found a strange waiter. I feel certain that he was a policeman done up in livery all for my sake. I turned sharp round in the street yesterday, and found a man at a corner. I am sure that man was watching me, and was looking at my pockets to see whether the jewel case was there. As for myself, I can think of nothing else. I wish I had got them. I should have something then to pay me for all this nuisance."

"I do wish you had," said Lizzie.

"What I should do with them I cannot even imagine."
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I am always thinking of that, too,—making plans for getting rid of them, supposing I had stolen them. My belief is, that I should be so sick of them that I should chuck them over the bridge into the river,—only that I should fear that some policeman's eye would be on me as I did it. My present position is not comfortable,—but if I had got them, I think that the weight of them would crush me altogether. Having a handle to my name, and being a lord, or, at least, called a lord, makes it all the worse. People are so pleased to think that a lord should have stolen a necklace."

Lizzie listened to it all with a strange fascination. If this strong man were so much upset by the bare suspicion, what must be her condition? The jewels were in her desk up-stairs, and the police had been with her also,—were even now probably looking after her and watching her. How much more difficult must it be for her to deal with the diamonds than it would have been for this man. Presently Mrs. Carbuncle left the room, and Lucinda followed her. Lizzie saw them go, and did not dare to go with them. She felt as though her limbs would not have carried her to the door. She was now alone with her Corsair; and she looked up timidly into his deep-set eyes, as he came and stood over her. "Tell me all that you know about it," he said, in that deep low voice which, from her first acquaintance with him, had filled her with interest, and almost with awe.
CHAPTER LI.

CONFIDENCE.

Lizzie Eustace was speechless as she continued to look up into the Corsair's face. She ought to have answered him briskly, either with indignation or with a touch of humour. But she could not answer him at all. She was desired to tell him all that she knew about the robbery, and she was unable to declare that she knew nothing. How much did he suspect? What did he believe? Had she been watched by Mrs. Carbuncle, and had something of the truth been told to him? And then would it not be better for her that he should know it all? Unsupported and alone she could not bear the trouble which was on her. If she were driven to tell her secret to any one, had she not better tell it to him? She knew that if she did so, she would be a creature in his hands to be dealt with as he pleased;—but would there not be a certain charm in being so mastered? He was but a pinchbeck lord. She had wit enough to know that; but then she had wit enough also to feel that she herself was but a pinchbeck lady. He would be fit for her, and she for him,—if only he would take her. Since her day-dreams first began, she
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had been longing for a Corsair: and here he was, not kneeling at her feet, but standing over her,—as became a Corsair. At any rate he had mastered her now, and she could not speak to him.

He waited perhaps a minute, looking at her, before he renewed his question; and the minute seemed to her to be an age. During every second her power beneath his gaze sank lower and lower. There gradually came a grim smile over his face, and she was sure that he could read her very heart. Then he called her by her Christian name,—as he had never called her before. "Come, Lizzie," he said, "you might as well tell me all about it. You know."

"Know what?" The words were audible to him, though they were uttered in the lowest whisper.

"About this d— necklace. What is it all? Where are they? And how did you manage it?"

"I didn't manage anything."

"But you know where they are?" He paused again, still gazing at her. Gradually there came across his face, or she fancied that it was so, a look of ferocity which thoroughly frightened her. If he should turn against her, and be leagued with the police against her, what chance would she have? "You know where they are," he said, repeating his words. Then at last she nodded her head, assenting to his assertion. "And where are they? Come;—out with it! If you won't tell me, you must tell some one else. There has been a deal too much of this already."
"You won't betray me?"
"Not if you deal openly with me."
"I will; indeed I will. And it was all an accident. When I took them out of the box, I only did it for safety."
"You did take them out of the box then?" Again she nodded her head. "And have got them now?"
There was another nod. "And where are they? Come; with such a spirit of enterprise as yours you ought to be able to speak. Has Benjamin got them?"
"Oh no."
"And he knows nothing about them?"
"Nothing."
"Then I have wronged in my thoughts that son of Abraham?"
"Nobody knows anything," said Lizzie.
"Not even Jane or Lucinda?"
"Nothing at all."
"Then you have kept your secret marvellously. And where are they?"
"Up-stairs."
"In your bedroom?"
"In my desk in the little sitting-room."
"The Lord be good to us!" ejaculated Lord George.
"All the police in London, from the chief downwards, are agog about this necklace. Every well-known thief in the town is envied by every other thief because he is thought to have had a finger in the pie. I am suspected, and Mr. Benjamin is suspected; Sir Griffin is suspected, and half the jewellers in London and
Confidence.

Paris are supposed to have the stones in their keeping. Every man and woman is talking about it, and people are quarrelling about it till they almost cut each other's throats; and all the while you have got them locked up in your desk! How on earth did you get the box broken open and then conveyed out of your room at Carlisle?"

Then Lizzie in a frightened whisper, with her eyes often turned on the floor, told the whole story. "If I'd had a minute to think of it," she said, "I would have confessed the truth at Carlisle. Why should I want to steal what was my own? But they came to me all so quickly, and I didn't like to say that I had them under my pillow."

"I daresay not."

"And then I couldn't tell anybody afterwards. I always meant to tell you,—from the very first; because I knew you would be good to me. They are my own. Surely I might do what I liked with my own?"

"Well;—yes; in one way. But you see there was a lawsuit in Chancery going on about them; and then you committed perjury at Carlisle. And altogether,—it's not quite straight sailing, you know."

"I suppose not."

"Hardly. Major Mackintosh, and the magistrates, and Messrs. Bunfit and Gager won't settle down, peaceable and satisfied, when they hear the end of the story. And I think Messrs. Camperdown will have a bill against you. It's been uncommonly clever, but I don't see the use of it."
"I've been very foolish," said Lizzie; "but you won't desert me!"
"Upon my word I don't know what I'm to do."
"Will you have them—as a present?"
"Certainly not."
"They're worth ever so much—ten thousand pounds! And they are my own, to do just what I please with them."
"You are very good; but what should I do with them?"
"Sell them."
"Who'd buy them? And before a week was over I should be in prison, and in a couple of months should be standing at the Old Bailey at my trial. I couldn't just do that, my dear."
"What will you do for me? You are my friend—ain't you?" The diamond necklace was not a desirable possession in the eyes of Lord George de Bruce Carruthers; but Portray Castle, with its income, and the fact that Lizzie Eustace was still a very young woman, was desirable. Her prettiness, too, was not altogether thrown away on Lord George, though, as he was wont to say himself, he was too old now to sacrifice much for such a toy as that. Something he must do, if only because of the knowledge which had come to him. He could not go away and leave her, and neither say nor do anything in the matter. And he could not betray her to the police. "You will not desert me," she said, taking hold of his hand, and kissing it as a suppliant.
Confidence.

He passed his arm round her waist, but more as though she were a child than a woman, as he stood thinking. Of all the affairs in which he had ever been engaged it was the most difficult. She submitted to his embrace, and leaned upon his shoulder, and looked up into his face. If he would only tell her that he loved her, then he would be bound to her—then must he share with her the burthen of the diamonds—then must he be true to her. "George!" she said, and burst into a low, suppressed wailing, with her face hidden upon his arm.

"That's all very well," said he, still holding her—for she was pleasant to hold—"but what the d—— is a fellow to do? I don't see my way out of it. I think you had better go to Camperdown, and give them up to him, and tell him the truth." Then she sobbed more violently than before, till her quick ear caught the sound of a footstep on the stairs, and in a moment she was out of his arms and seated on the sofa, with hardly a trace of tears in her eyes. It was the footman, who desired to know whether Lady Eustace would want the carriage that afternoon. Lady Eustace, with her cheeriest voice, sent her love to Mrs. Carbuncle, and her assurance that she would not want the carriage before the evening. "I don't know that you can do anything else," continued Lord George, "except just give them up and brazen it out. I don't suppose they'd prosecute you."

"Prosecute me!" ejaculated Lizzie.

"For perjury, I mean."
"And what could they do to me?"

"Oh, I don't know. Lock you up for five years, perhaps."

"Because I had my own necklace under the pillow in my own room?"

"Think of all the trouble you've given."

"I'll never give them up to Mr. Camperdown. They are mine—my very own. My cousin, Mr. Greystock, who is much more of a lawyer than Mr. Camperdown, says so. Oh, George, do think of something! Don't tell me that I must give them up! Wouldn't Mr. Benjamin buy them?"

"Yes—for half nothing; and then go and tell the whole story, and get money from the other side. You can't trust Benjamin."

"But I can trust you." She clung to him and implored him, and did get from him a renewed promise that he would not reveal her secret. She wanted him to take the terrible packet from her there and then, and use his own judgment in disposing of it. But this he positively refused to do. He protested that they were safer with her than they could be with him. He explained to her that if they were found in his hands, his offence in having them in his possession would be much greater than hers. They were her own, as she was ever so ready to assert; or, if not her own, the ownership was so doubtful, that she could not be accused of having stolen them. And then he needed to consider it all—to sleep upon it—before he could make up his mind what he would do.
But there was one other trouble on her mind as to which he was called upon to give her counsel before he was allowed to leave her. She had told the detective officer that she would submit her boxes and desks to be searched if her cousin Frank should advise it. If the policeman were to return with her cousin while the diamonds were still in her desk, what should she do? He might come at any time; and then she would be bound to obey him. "And he thinks that they were stolen at Carlisle?" asked Lord George. "Of course he thinks so," said Lizzie, almost indignantly. "They would never ask to search your person," suggested Lord George. Lizzie could not say. She had simply declared that she would be guided by her cousin. "Have them about you when he comes. Don't take them out with you; but keep them in your pocket while you are in the house during the day. They will hardly bring a woman with them to search you."

"But there was a woman with the man when he came before."

"Then you must refuse in spite of your cousin. Show yourself angry with him and with everybody. Swear that you did not intend to submit yourself to such indignity as that. They can't do it without a magistrate's order, unless you permit it. I don't suppose they will come at all; and if they do they will only look at your clothes and your boxes. If they ask to do more, be stout with them and refuse. Of course they'll suspect you, but they do that already. And your cousin will suspect you;—but you must put up
with that. It will be very bad;—but I see nothing better. But, of all things, say nothing of me."

"Oh, no," said Lizzie, promising to be obedient to him. And then he took his leave of her. "You will be true to me;—will you not?" she said, still clinging to his arm. He promised her that he would. "Oh, George," she said, "I have no friend now but you. You will care for me?" He took her in his arms and kissed her, and promised that he would care for her. How was he to save himself from doing so? When he was gone, Lizzie sat down to think of it all, and felt sure that at last she had found her Corsair.
CHAPTER LII.

MRS. CARBUNCLE GOES TO THE THEATRE.

MRS. CARBUNCLE and Lizzie Eustace did not, in these days, shut themselves up because there was trouble in the household. It would not have suited the creed of Mrs. Carbuncle on social matters to be shut up from the amusements of life. She had sacrificed too much in seeking them for that, and was too conscious of the price she paid for them. It was still mid-winter, but nevertheless there was generally some amusement arranged for every evening. Mrs. Carbuncle was very fond of the play, and made herself acquainted with every new piece as it came out. Every actor and actress of note on the stage was known to her, and she dealt freely in criticisms on their respective merits. The three ladies had a box at the Haymarket taken for this very evening, at which a new piece, "The Noble Jilt," from the hand of a very eminent author, was to be produced. Mrs. Carbuncle had talked a great deal about "The Noble Jilt," and could boast that she had discussed the merits of the two chief characters with the actor and actress who were to under-
take them. Miss Talbot had assured her that the Margaret was altogether impracticable, and Mrs. Carbuncle was quite of the same opinion. And as for the hero, Steinmark,—it was a part that no man could play so as to obtain the sympathy of an audience. There was a second hero,—a Flemish Count,—tame as rain-water, Mrs. Carbuncle said. She was very anxious for the success of the piece, which, as she said, had its merits; but she was sure that it wouldn't do. She had talked about it a great deal, and now, when the evening came, she was not going to be deterred from seeing it by any trouble in reference to the diamond necklace. Lizzie, when she was left by Lord George, had many doubts on the subject,—whether she would go or stay at home. If he would have come to her, or her cousin Frank, or if, had it been possible, Lord Fawn would have come, she would have given up the play very willingly. But to be alone,—with her necklace in the desk up-stairs, or in her pocket, was terrible to her. And then, they could not search her or her boxes while she was at the theatre. She must not take the necklace with her there. He had told her to leave it in her desk, when she went from home.

Lucinda, also, was quite determined that she would see the new piece. She declared to her aunt, in Lizzie's presence, without a vestige of a smile, that it might be well to see how a jilt could behave herself, so as to do her work of jilting in any noble fashion. "My dear," said her aunt, "you let things weigh upon
your heart a great deal too much." "Not upon my heart, Aunt Jane," the young lady had answered. She also intended to go, and when she had made up her mind to anything, nothing would deter her. She had no desire to stay at home in order that she might see Sir Griffin. "I daresay the play may be very bad," she said, "but it can hardly be so bad as real life."

Lizzie, when Lord George had left her, crept upstairs, and sat for awhile thinking of her condition, with the key of her desk in her hand. Should there come a knock at the door, the case of diamonds would be in her pocket in a moment. Her own room door was bolted on the inside, so that she might have an instant for her preparation. She was quite resolved that she would carry out Lord George's recommendation, and that no policeman or woman should examine her person, unless it were done by violence. There she sat, almost expecting that at every moment her cousin would be there with Bunfit and the woman. But nobody came, and at six she went down to dinner. After much consideration she then left the diamonds in the desk. Surely no one would come to search at such an hour as that. No one had come when the carriage was announced and the three ladies went off together.

During the whole way Mrs. Carbuncle talked of the terrible situation in which poor Lord George was placed by the robbery, and of all that Lizzie owed him on account of his trouble. "My dear," said, Mrs. Car-
buncle, "the least you can do for him is to give him all that you've got to give." "I don't know that he wants me to give him anything," said Lizzie. "I think that's quite plain," said Mrs. Carbuncle, "and I'm sure I wish it may be so. He and I have been dear friends,—very dear friends, and there is nothing I wish so much as to see him properly settled. Ill-natured people like to say all manner of things because everybody does not choose to live in their own heartless, conventional form. But I can assure you there is nothing between me and Lord George which need prevent him from giving his whole heart to you."

"I don't suppose there is," said Lizzie, who loved an opportunity of giving Mrs. Carbuncle a little rap.

The play, as a play, was a failure; at least so said Mrs. Carbuncle. The critics, on the next morning, were somewhat divided,—not only in judgment, but as to facts. To say how a play has been received is of more moment than to speak of its own merits or of the merits of the actors. Three or four of the papers declared that the audience was not only eulogistic, but enthusiastic. One or two others averred that the piece fell very flatly. As it was not acted above four or five dozen times consecutively, it must be regarded as a failure. On their way home Mrs. Carbuncle declared that Minnie Talbot had done her very best with such a part as Margaret, but that the character afforded no scope for sympathy. "A noble jilt, my dears," said Mrs. Carbuncle eloquently, "is a contradiction in terms. There can be no such thing. A woman, when she has
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once said the word, is bound to stick to it. The delicacy of the female character should not admit of hesitation between two men. The idea is quite revolting."

"But may not one have an idea of no man at all?" asked Lucinda. "Must that be revolting also?"

"Of course a young woman may entertain such an idea; though for my part I look upon it as unnatural. But when she has once given herself there can be no taking back without the loss of that aroma which should be the apple of a young woman's eye."

"If she finds that she has made a mistake—?" said Lucinda fiercely. "Why shouldn't a young woman make a mistake as well as an old woman? Her aroma won't prevent her from having been wrong and finding it out."

"My dear, such mistakes, as you call them, always arise from fantastic notions. Look at this piece. Why does the lady jilt her lover? Not because she doesn't like him. She's just as fond of him as ever."

"He's a stupid sort of fellow, and I think she was quite right," said Lizzie. "I'd never marry a man merely because I said I would. If I found I didn't like him, I'd leave him at the altar. If I found I didn't like him, I'd leave him even after the altar. I'd leave him any time I found I didn't like him. It's all very well to talk of aroma, but to live with a man you don't like—is the devil!"

"My dear, those whom God has joined together shouldn't be separated,—for any mere likings or dislikings." This Mrs. Carbuncle said in a high tone of
moral feeling, just as the carriage stopped at the door in Hartford Street. They at once perceived that the hall-door was open, and Mrs. Carbuncle, as she crossed the pavement, saw that there were two policemen in the hall. The footman had been with them to the theatre, but the cook and housemaid, and Mrs. Carbuncle's own maid, were with the policemen in the passage. She gave a little scream, and then Lizzie, who had followed her, seized her by the arm. She turned round and saw by the gas-light that Lizzie's face was white as a sheet, and that all the lines of her countenance were rigid and almost distorted. "Then she does know all about it!" said Mrs. Carbuncle to herself. Lizzie didn't speak, but still hung on to Mrs. Carbuncle's arm, and Lucinda, having seen how it was, was also supporting her. A policeman stepped forward and touched his hat. He was not Bunfit;—neither was he Gager. Indeed, though the ladies had not perceived the difference, he was not at all like Bunfit or Gager. This man was dressed in a policeman's uniform, whereas Bunfit and Gager always wore plain clothes. "My lady," said the policeman, addressing Mrs. Carbuncle, "there's been a robbery here."

"A robbery!" ejaculated Mrs. Carbuncle. "Yes, my lady. The servants all out,—all to one; and she's off. They've taken jewels, and, no doubt, money, if there was any. They don't mostly come unless they know what they comes for."

With a horrid spasm across her heart, which seemed ready to kill her, so sharp was the pain, Lizzie recovered
the use of her legs and followed Mrs. Carbuncle into
the dining-room. She had been hardly conscious of
hearing; but she had heard, and it had seemed to her
that the robbery spoken of was something distinct
from her own affair. The policemen did not speak of
having found the diamonds. It was of something lost
that they spoke. She seated herself in a chair against
the wall, but did not utter a word. "We've been up-
stairs, my lady, and they've been in most of the rooms.
There's a desk broke open,"—Lizzie gave an in-
voluntary little scream;—"Yes, mum, a desk," con-
tinued the policeman turning to Lizzie, "and a bureau,
and a dressing-case. What's gone your ladyship can
tell when you sees. And one of the young women is
off. It's she as done it." Then the cook explained.
She and the housemaid, and Mrs. Carbuncle's lady's
maid, had just stepped out, only round the corner, to
get a little air, leaving Patience Crabstick in charge
of the house, and when they came back, the area gate
was locked against them, the front door was locked,
and finding themselves unable to get in after many
knockings, they had at last obtained the assistance of
a policeman. He had got into the place over the area
gate, had opened the front door from within, and then
the robbery had been discovered. It was afterwards
found that the servants had all gone out to what they
called a tea-party, at a public-house in the neighbour-
hood, and that by previous agreement Patience Crab-
stick had remained in charge. When they came back
Patience Crabstick was gone, and the desk, and bureau,
and dressing-case, were found to have been opened. "She had a reg'lar thief along with her, my lady," said the policeman, still addressing himself to Mrs. Carbuncle, "'cause of the way the things was opened."

"I always knew that young woman was downright bad," said Mrs. Carbuncle in her first expression of wrath.

But Lizzie sat in her chair without saying a word, still pale, with that almost awful look of agony in her face. Within ten minutes of their entering the house, Mrs. Carbuncle was making her way up-stairs, with the two policemen following her. That her bureau and her dressing-case should have been opened was dreadful to her, though the value that she could thus lose was very small. She also possessed diamonds,—but her diamonds were paste; and whatever jewellery she had of any value,—a few rings, and a brooch, and such like,—had been on her person in the theatre. What little money she had by her was in the drawing-room, and the drawing-room, as it seemed, had not been entered. In truth, all Mrs. Carbuncle's possessions in the house were not sufficient to have tempted a well-bred, well-instructed thief. But it behoved her to be indignant; and she could be indignant with grace, as the thief was discovered to be, not her maid, but Patience Crabstick. The policemen followed Mrs. Carbuncle, and the maids followed the policemen; but Lizzie Eustace kept her seat in the chair by the wall. 'Do you think they have taken much of yours," said Lucinda, coming up to her and speaking very gently.
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Lizzie made a motion with her two hands upon her heart, and struggled, and gasped,—as though she wished to speak but could not. "I suppose it is that girl who has done it all," said Lucinda. Lizzie nodded her head, and tried to smile. The attempt was so ghastly that Lucinda, though not timid by nature, was frightened. She sat down and took Lizzie's hand, and tried to comfort her. "It is very hard upon you," she said, "to be twice robbed." Lizzie again nodded her head. "I hope it is not much now. Shall we go up and see?" The poor creature did get upon her legs, but she gasped so terribly that Lucinda feared that she was dying. "Shall I send for some one?" she said. Lizzie made an effort to speak, was shaken convulsively while the other supported her, and then burst into a flood of tears.

When that had come she was relieved, and could again act her part. "Yes," she said, "we will go with them. It is so dreadful;—is it not?"

"Very dreadful;—but how much better that we weren't at home! Shall we go now?" Then together they followed the others, and on the stairs Lizzie explained that in her desk, of which she always carried the key round her neck, there was what money she had by her;—two ten-pound notes, and four five-pound notes, and three sovereigns; in all, forty-three pounds. Her other jewels,—the jewels which she had possessed over and above the fatal diamond necklace, —were in her dressing-case. Patience, she did not doubt, had known that the money was there, and
certainly knew of her jewels. So they went up-stairs. The desk was open and the money gone. Five or six rings and a bracelet had been taken also from Lizzie's dressing-case, which she had left open. Of Mrs. Carbuncle's property sufficient had been stolen to make a long list in that lady's handwriting. Lucinda Roanoke's room had not been entered,—as far as they could judge. The girl had taken the best of her own clothes, and a pair of strong boots belonging to the cook. A superintendent of police was there before they went to bed, and a list was made out. The superintendent was of opinion that the thing had been done very cleverly, but was of opinion that the thieves had expected to find more plunder. "They don't care so much about bank-notes, my lady, because they fetches such a low price with them as they deal with. The three sovereigns is more to them than all the forty pounds in notes." The superintendent had heard of the diamond necklace, and expressed an opinion that poor Lady Eustace was especially marked out for misfortune. "It all comes of having such a girl as that about her," said Mrs. Carbuncle. The superintendent, who intended to be consolatory to Lizzie, expressed his opinion that it was very hard to know what a young woman was. "They looks as soft as butter, and they're as sly as foxes, and as quick, as quick,—as quick as greased lightning, my lady." Such a piece of business as this which had just occurred, will make people intimate at a very short notice.
Mrs. Carbuncle goes to the Theatre.

And so the diamond necklace, known to be worth ten thousand pounds, had at last been stolen in earnest! Lizzie, when the policemen were gone, and the noise was over, and the house was closed, slunk away to her bedroom, refusing any aid in lieu of that of the wicked Patience. She herself had examined the desk beneath the eyes of her two friends and of the policemen, and had seen at once that the case was gone. The money was gone too, as she was rejoiced to find. She perceived at once that had the money been left,—the very leaving of it would have gone to prove that other prize had been there. But the money was gone,—money of which she had given a correct account;—and she could now honestly allege that she had been robbed. But she had at last really lost her great treasure;—and if the treasure should be found, then would she infallibly be exposed. She had talked twice of giving away her necklace, and had seriously thought of getting rid of it by burying it deep in the sea. But now that it was in very truth gone from her, the loss of it was horrible to her. Ten thousand pounds, for which she had struggled so much and borne so many things, which had come to be the prevailing fact of her life, gone from her for ever! Nevertheless it was not that sorrow, that regret which had so nearly overpowered her in the dining-parlour. At that moment she hardly knew, had hardly thought, whether the diamonds had or had not been taken. But the feeling came upon her at once that her own disgrace was every hour being brought nearer to her.
Her secret was no longer quite her own. One man knew it, and he had talked to her of perjury and of five years’ imprisonment. Patience must have known it, too; and now some one else also knew it. The police, of course, would find it out, and then horrid words would be used against her. She hardly knew what perjury was. It sounded like forgery and burglary. To stand up before a judge and be tried,—and then to be locked up for five years in prison——! What an end would this be to all her glorious success? And what evil had she done to merit all this terrible punishment? When they came to her in her bedroom at Carlisle she had simply been too much frightened to tell them all that the necklace was at that moment under her pillow.

She tried to think of it all, and to form some idea in her mind of what might be the truth. Of course, Patience Crabstick had known her secret, but how long had the girl known it? And how had the girl discovered it? She was almost certain, from certain circumstances, from words which the girl had spoken, and from signs which she had observed, that Patience had not even suspected that the necklace had been brought with them from Carlisle to London. Of course, the coming of Bunfit and the woman would have set the girl’s mind to work in that direction; but then Bunfit and the woman had only been there on that morning. The Corsair knew the facts, and no one but the Corsair. That the Corsair was a Corsair, the suspicions of the police had proved to her. She
had offered the necklace to the Corsair; but when so offered, he had refused to take it. She could understand that he should see the danger of accepting the diamonds from her hand, and yet should be desirous of having them. And might not he have thought that he could best relieve her from the burden of their custody in this manner? She felt no anger against the Corsair as she weighed the probability of his having taken them in this fashion. A Corsair must be a Corsair. Were he to come to her and confess the deed, she would almost like him the better for it,—admiring his skill and enterprise. But how very clever he must have been, and how brave! He had known, no doubt, that the three ladies were all going to the theatre; but in how short a time had he got rid of the other women and availed himself of the services of Patience Crabstick!

But in what way would she conduct herself when the police should come to her on the following morning,—the police and all the other people who would crowd to the house? How should she receive her cousin Frank? How should she look when the coincidence of the double robbery should be spoken of in her hearing? How should she bear herself when, as of course would be the case, she should again be taken before the magistrates, and made to swear as to the loss of her property? Must she commit more perjury, with the certainty that various people must know that her oath was false? All the world might suspect her. All the world would soon know the truth. Might it
not be possible that the diamonds were at this moment in the hands of Messrs. Camperdown, and that they would be produced before her eyes, as soon as her second false oath had been registered against her? And yet how could she tell the truth? And what would the Corsair think of her,—the Corsair, who would know everything? She made one resolution during the night. She would not be taken into court. The magistrates and the people might come to her, but she would not go before them. When the morning came she said that she was ill, and refused to leave her bed. Policemen, she knew, were in the house early. At about nine Mrs. Carbuncle and Lucinda were up and in her room. The excitement of the affair had taken them from their beds,—but she would not stir. If it were absolutely necessary, she said, the men must come into her room. She had been so overset by what had occurred on the previous night, that she could not leave her room. She appealed to Lucinda as to the fact of her illness. The trouble of these robberies was so great upon her that her heart was almost broken. If her deposition must be taken, she would make it in bed. In the course of the day the magistrate did come into her room and the deposition was taken. Forty-three pounds had been taken from her desk, and certain jewels, which she described, from her dressing-case. As far as she was aware, no other property of hers was missing. This she said in answer to a direct question from the magistrate, which, as she thought, was asked with a stern voice and
searching eye. And so, a second time, she had sworn falsely. But this at least was gained,—that Lord George de Bruce Carruthers was not looking at her as she swore.

Lord George was in the house for a great part of the day, but he did not ask to be admitted to Lizzie's room;—nor did she ask to see him. Frank Greystock was there late in the afternoon, and went up at once to his cousin. The moment that she saw him she stretched out her arms to him, and burst into tears. "My poor girl," said he, "what is the meaning of it all?"

"I don't know. I think they will kill me. They want to kill me. How can I bear it all? The robbers were here last night, and magistrates and policemen and people have been here all day." Then she fell into a fit of sobbing and wailing, which was, in truth, hysterical. For,—if the readers think of it,—the poor woman had a great deal to bear.

Frank, into whose mind no glimmer of suspicion against his cousin had yet entered, and who firmly believed that she had been made a victim because of the value of her diamonds,—and who had a theory of his own about the robbery at Carlisle, to the circumstances of which he was now at some pains to make these latter circumstances adhere,—was very tender with his cousin, and remained in the house for more than an hour. "Oh, Frank, what had I better do?" she asked him.

"I would leave London, if I were you."

"Yes;—of course. I will. Oh yes, I will!"
"If you don't fear the cold of Scotland——"
"I fear nothing,—nothing but being where these policemen can come to me. Oh!"—and then she shuddered and was again hysterical. Nor was she acting the condition. As she remembered the magistrates, and the detectives, and the policemen in their uniforms,—and reflected that she might probably see much more of them before the game was played out, the thoughts that crowded on her were almost more than she could bear.

"Your child is there, and it is your own house. Go there till all this passes by." Whereupon she promised him that, as soon as she was well enough, she would at once go to Scotland.

In the meantime, the Eustace diamonds were locked up in a small safe fixed into the wall at the back of a small cellar beneath the establishment of Messrs. Harter and Benjamin, in Minto Lane, in the City. Messrs. Harter and Benjamin always kept a second place of business. Their great shop was at the West-end; but they had accommodation in the City.

The chronicler states this at once, as he scorns to keep from his reader any secret that is known to himself.
CHAPTER LIII.

LIZZIE’S SICK-ROOM.

When the Hertford Street robbery was three days old, and was still the talk of all the town, Lizzie Eustace was really ill. She had promised to go down to Scotland in compliance with the advice given to her by her cousin Frank, and at the moment of promising would have been willing enough to be transported at once to Portray, had that been possible, so as to be beyond the visits of policemen and the authority of lawyers and magistrates; but as the hours passed over her head, and as her presence of mind returned to her, she remembered that even at Portray she would not be out of danger, and that she could do nothing in furtherance of her plans if once immured there. Lord George was in London, Frank Greystock was in London, and Lord Fawn was in London. It was more than ever necessary to her that she should find a husband among them,—a husband who would not be less her husband when the truth of that business at Carlisle should be known to all the world. She had, in fact, stolen nothing. She endeavoured to comfort herself by repeating to
herself over and over again that assurance. She had stolen nothing; and she still thought that if she could obtain the support of some strong arm on which to lean, she might escape punishment for those false oaths which she had sworn. Her husband might take her abroad, and the whole thing would die away. If she should succeed with Lord George, of course he would take her abroad, and there would be no need for any speedy return. They might roam among islands in pleasant warm suns, and the dreams of her youth might be realised. Her income was still her own. They could not touch that. So she thought, at least,— oppressed by some slight want of assurance in that respect. Were she to go at once to Scotland, she must for the present give up that game altogether. If Frank would pledge himself to become her husband in three or four, or even in six months, she would go at once. She had more confidence in Frank than even in Lord George. As for love,—she would sometimes tell herself that she was violently in love; but she hardly knew with which. Lord George was certainly the best representative of that perfect Corsair which her dreams had represented to her; but, in regard to working life, she thought that she liked her cousin Frank better than she had ever yet liked any other human being. But, in truth, she was now in that condition, as she acknowledged to herself, that she was hardly entitled to choose. Lord Fawn had promised to marry her, and to him as a husband she conceived that she still had a right. Nothing had as yet been proved against her
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which could justify him in repudiating his engagement. She had, no doubt, asserted with all vehemence to her cousin that no consideration would now induce her to give her hand to Lord Fawn;—and when making that assurance she had been, after her nature, sincere. But circumstances were changed since that. She had not much hope that Lord Fawn might be made to succumb,—though evidence had reached her before the last robbery which induced her to believe that he did not consider himself to be quite secure. In these circumstances she was unwilling to leave London though she had promised, and was hardly sorry to find an excuse in her recognised illness.

And she was ill. Though her mind was again at work with schemes on which she would not have busied herself without hope, yet she had not recovered from the actual bodily prostration to which she had been compelled to give way when first told of the robbery on her return from the theatre. There had been moments, then, in which she thought her heart would have broken,—moments in which, but that the power of speech was wanting, she would have told everything to Lucinda Roanoke. When Mrs. Carbuncle was marching up-stairs with the policeman at her heels she would have willingly sold all her hopes, Portray Castle, her lovers, her necklace, her income, her beauty, for any assurance of the humblest security. With that quickness of intellect which was her peculiar gift, she had soon understood, in the midst of her sufferings, that her necklace had been taken by thieves whose
robery might assist her for awhile in keeping her secret, rather than lead to the immediate divulging of it. Neither Camperdown nor Bunfit had been at work among the boxes. Her secret had been discovered, no doubt, by Patience Crabstick, and the diamonds were gone. But money also was taken, and the world need not know that the diamonds had been there. But Lord George knew. And then there arose to her that question. Had the diamonds been taken in consequence of that revelation to Lord George? It was not surprising that in the midst of all this Lizzie should be really ill.

She was most anxious to see Lord George; but, if what Mrs. Carbuncle said to her was true, Lord George refused to see her. She did not believe Mrs. Carbuncle, and was, therefore, quite in the dark about her Corsair. As she could only communicate with him through Mrs. Carbuncle, it might well be the case that he should have been told that he could not have access to her. Of course there were difficulties. That her cousin Frank should see her in her bedroom,—her cousin Frank, with whom it was essentially necessary that she should hold counsel as to her present great difficulties, was a matter of course. There was no hesitation about that. A fresh nightcap and a clean pocket-handkerchief with a bit of lace round it, and perhaps some pretty covering to her shoulders if she were to be required to sit up in bed, and the thing was arranged. He might have spent the best part of his days in her bedroom if he could have spared the time. But the Corsair was
not a cousin,—nor as yet an acknowledged lover. There was difficulty, even, in framing a reason for her request, when she made it to Mrs. Carbuncle; and the very reason which she gave was handed back to her as the Corsair's reason for not coming to her. She desired to see him because he had been so much mixed up in the matter of these terrible robberies. But Mrs. Carbuncle declared to her that Lord George would not come to her because his name had been so frequently mentioned in connection with the diamonds. "You see, my dear," said Mrs. Carbuncle, "there can be no real reason for his seeing you up in your bedroom. If there had been anything between you, as I once thought there would——" There was something in the tone of Mrs. Carbuncle's voice which grated on Lizzie's ear,—something which seemed to imply that all that prospect was over.

"Of course," said Lizzie querulously, "I am very anxious to know what he thinks. I care more about his opinion than anybody else's. As to his name being mixed up in it,—that is all a joke."

"It has been no joke to him, I can assure you," said Mrs. Carbuncle. Lizzie could not press her request. Of course, she knew more about it than did Mrs. Carbuncle. The secret was in her own bosom,—the secret as to the midnight robbery at Carlisle, and that secret she had told to Lord George. As to the robbery in London she knew nothing,—except that it had been perpetrated through the treachery of Patience Crabstick. Did Lord George know more about it than she
knew?—and if so, was he now deterred by that knowledge from visiting her? "You see, my dear," said Mrs. Carbuncle, "that a gentleman visiting a lady with whom he has no connection in her bedroom, is in itself something very peculiar." Lizzie made a motion of impatience under the bedclothes. Any such argument was trash to her, and she knew that it was trash to Mrs. Carbuncle also. What was one man in her bedroom more than another? She could see a dozen doctors if she pleased, and if so, why not this man, whose real powers of doctoring her would be so much more efficacious? "You would want to see him alone, too," continued Mrs. Carbuncle, "and, of course, the police would hear of it. I am not at all surprised that he should stay away." Lizzie's condition did not admit of much argument on her side, and she only showed her opposition to Mrs. Carbuncle by being cross and querulous.

Frank Greystock came to her with great constancy almost every day, and from him she did hear about the robbery all that he knew or heard. When three days had passed,—when six days, and even when ten days were gone, nobody had been as yet arrested. The police, according to Frank, were much on the alert, but were very secret. They either would not, or could not, tell anything. To him the two robberies, that at Carlisle and the last affair in Hertford Street, were of course distinct. There were those who believed that the Hertford Street thieves and the Carlisle thieves were not only the same, but that they had been in
quest of the same plunder,—and had at last succeeded. But Frank was not one of these. He never for a moment doubted that the diamonds had been taken at Carlisle, and explained the second robbery by the supposition that Patience Crabstick had been emboldened by success. The iron box had no doubt been taken by her assistance, and her familiarity with the thieves, then established, had led to the second robbery. Lizzie's loss in that second robbery had amounted to some hundred pounds. This was Frank Greystock's theory, and of course it was one very comfortable to Lizzie.

"They all seem to think that the diamonds are at Paris," he said to her one day.

"If you only knew how little I care about them. It seems as though I had almost forgotten them in these after troubles."

"Mr. Camperdown cares about them. I'm told he says that he can make you pay for them out of your jointure."

"That would be very terrible, of course," said Lizzie, to whose mind there was something consolatory in the idea that the whole affair of the robbery might perhaps remain so mysterious as to remove her from the danger of other punishment than this.

"I feel sure that he couldn't do it," said Frank, "and I don't think he'll try it. John Eustace would not let him. It would be persecution."

"Mr. Camperdown has always chosen to persecute me," said Lizzie.
"I can understand that he shouldn't like the loss of the diamonds. I don't think, Lizzie, you ever realised their true value."

"I suppose not. After all, a necklace is only a necklace. I cared nothing for it,—except that I could not bear the idea that that man should dictate to me. I would have given it up at once, at the slightest word from you." He did not care to remind her then, as she lay in bed, that he had been very urgent in his advice to her to abandon the diamonds,—and not the less urgent because he had thought that the demand for them was unjust. "I told you often," she continued, "that I was tempted to throw them among the waves. It was true;—quite true. I offered to give them to you, and should have been delighted to have been relieved from them."

"That was, of course, simply impossible."

"I know it was;—impossible on your part; but I would have been delighted. Of what use were they to me? I wore them twice because that man,"—meaning Lord Fawn,—"disputed my right to them. Before that I never even looked at them. Do you think I had pleasure in wearing them, or pleasure in looking at them? Never. They were only a trouble to me. It was a point of honour with me to keep them, because I was attacked. But I am glad they are gone,—thoroughly glad." This was all very well, and was not without its effect on Frank Greystock. It is hardly expected of a woman in such a condition, with
so many troubles on her mind, who had been so persecuted, that every word uttered by her should be strictly true. Lizzie, with her fresh nightcap, and her laced handkerchief, pale, and with her eyes just glittering with tears, was very pretty. "Didn't somebody once give some one a garment which scorched him up when he wore it,—some woman who sent it because she loved the man so much?"

"The shirt, you mean, which Dejanira sent to Hercules. Yes;—Hercules was a good deal scorched."

"And that necklace, which my husband gave me because he loved me so well, has scorched me horribly. It has nearly killed me. It has been like the white elephant which the Eastern king gives to his subject when he means to ruin him. Only poor Florian didn't mean to hurt me. He gave it all in love. If these people bring a lawsuit against me, Frank, you must manage it for me."

"There will be no lawsuit. Your brother-in-law will stop it."

"I wonder who will really get the diamonds after all, Frank? They were very valuable. Only think that the ten thousand pounds should disappear in such a way!" The subject was a very dangerous one, but there was a fascination about it which made it impossible for her to refrain from it.

"A dishonest dealer in diamonds will probably realise the plunder,—after some years. There would be something very alluring in the theft of articles of
great value, were it not that when got, they at once become almost valueless by the difficulty of dealing with them. Supposing I had the necklace!"

"I wish you had, Frank."

"I could do nothing with it. Ten sovereigns would go further with me,—or ten shillings. The burthen of possessing it would in itself be almost more than I could bear. The knowledge that I had the thing, and might be discovered in having it, would drive me mad. By my own weakness I should be compelled to tell my secret to some one. And then I should never sleep for fear my partner in the matter should turn against me."

How well she understood it all! How probable it was that Lord George should turn against her! How exact was Frank's description of that burthen of a secret so heavy that it cannot be borne alone! "A little reflection," continued Frank, "soon convinces a man that rough downright stealing is an awkward, foolish trade; and it therefore falls into the hands of those who want education for the higher efforts of dishonesty. To get into a bank at midnight and steal what little there may be in the till, or even an armful of bank-notes, with the probability of a policeman catching you as you creep out of the chimney and through a hole, is clumsy work; but to walk in amidst the smiles and bows of admiring managers and draw out money over the counter by thousands and tens of thousands, which you have never put in and which you can never repay; and which, when all is done, you have only borrowed;—that is a great feat."
"Do you really think so?"

"The courage, the ingenuity, and the self-confidence needed are certainly admirable. And then there is a cringing and almost contemptible littleness about honesty, which hardly allows it to assert itself. The really honest man can never say a word to make those who don't know of his honesty believe that it is there. He has one foot in the grave before his neighbours have learned that he is possessed of an article for the use of which they would so willingly have paid, could they have been made to see that it was there. The dishonest man almost doubts whether in him dishonesty is dishonest, let it be practised ever so widely. The honest man almost doubts whether his honesty be honest, unless it be kept hidden. Let two unknown men be competitors for any place, with nothing to guide the judges but their own words and their own looks, and who can doubt but the dishonest man would be chosen rather than the honest? Honesty goes about with a hang-dog look about him, as though knowing that he cannot be trusted till he be proved. Dishonesty carries his eyes high, and assumes that any question respecting him must be considered to be unnecessary."

"Oh, Frank, what a philosopher you are!"

"Well, yes; meditating about your diamonds has brought my philosophy out. When do you think you will go to Scotland?"

"I am hardly strong enough for the journey yet. I fear the cold so much."
You would not find it cold there by the sea-side. To tell you the truth, Lizzie, I want to get you out of this house. I don't mean to say a word against Mrs. Carbuncle; but after all that has occurred, it would be better that you should be away. People talk about you and Lord George."

"How can I help it, Frank?"

"By going away;—that is, if I may presume one thing. I don't want to pry into your secrets."

"I have none from you."

"Unless there be truth in the assertion that you are engaged to marry Lord George Carruthers."

"There is no truth in it."

"And you do not wish to stay here in order that there may be an engagement? I am obliged to ask you home questions, Lizzie, as I could not otherwise advise you."

"You do, indeed, ask home questions."

"I will desist at once, if they be disagreeable."

"Frank, you are false to me!" As she said this she rose in her bed, and sat with her eyes fixed upon his, and her thin hands stretched out upon the bed-clothes. "You know that I cannot wish to be engaged to him or to any other man. You know better almost than I can know myself, how my heart stands. There has, at any rate, been no hypocrisy with me in regard to you. Everything has been told to you;—at what cost I will not now say. The honest woman, I fear, fares worse even than the honest man of whom you spoke. I think you admitted that he would be appre-
associated at last. She to her dying day must pay the penalty of her transgressions. Honesty in a woman the world never forgives.” When she had done speaking, he sat silent by her bedside, but, almost unconsciously, he stretched out his left hand and took her right hand in his. For a few seconds she admitted this, and she lay there with their hands clasped. Then with a start she drew back her arm, and retreated as it were from his touch. “How dare you,” said she, “press my hand, when you know that such pressure from you is treacherous and damnable!”

“Damnable, Lizzie!”

“Yes;—damnable. I will not pick my words for you. Coming from you, what does such pressure mean?”

“Affection.”

“Yes;—and of what sort? You are wicked enough to feed my love by such tokens, when you know that you do not mean to return it. O Frank, Frank, will you give me back my heart? What was it that you promised me when we sat together upon the rocks of Portray?”

It is inexpressibly difficult for a man to refuse the tender of a woman’s love. We may almost say that a man should do so as a matter of course,—that the thing so offered becomes absolutely valueless by the offer,—that the woman who can make it has put herself out of court by her own abandonment of the privileges due to her as a woman,—that stern rebuke and even expressed contempt are justified by such conduct,—and that the fairest beauty and most alluring
The Eustace Diamonds.

charms of feminine grace should lose their attraction when thus tendered openly in the market. No doubt such is our theory as to love and love-making. But the action to be taken by us in matters as to which the plainest theory prevails for the guidance of our practice, depends so frequently on accompanying circumstances and correlative issues, that the theory, as often as not, falls to the ground. Frank could not despise this woman, and could not be stern to her. He could not bring himself to tell her boldly that he would have nothing to say to her in the way of love. He made excuses for her, and persuaded himself that there were peculiar circumstances in her position justifying unwomanly conduct, although, had he examined himself on the subject, he would have found it difficult to say what those circumstances were. She was rich, beautiful, clever,—and he was flattered. Nevertheless he knew that he could not marry her;—and he knew also that much as he liked her he did not love her. "Lizzie," he said, "I think you hardly understand my position."

"Yes, I do. That little girl has cozened you out of a promise."

"If it be so, you would not have me break it."

"Yes, I would, if you think she is not fit to be your wife. Is a man, such as you are, to be tied by the leg for life, have all his ambition clipped, and his high hopes shipwrecked, because a girl has been clever enough to extract a word from him? Is it not true that you are in debt?"
"What of that? At any rate, Lizzie, I do not want help from you."

"That is so like a man's pride! Do we not all know that in such a career as you have marked out for yourself, wealth, or at any rate an easy income, is necessary? Do you think that I cannot put two and two together? Do you believe so meanly of me as to imagine that I should have said to you what I have said, if I did not know that I could help you? A man, I believe, cannot understand that love which induces a woman to sacrifice her pride simply for his advantage. I want to see you prosper. I want to see you a great man and a lord, and I know that you cannot become so without an income. Ah, I wish I could give you all that I have got, and save you from the encumbrance that is attached to it!"

It might be that he would then have told her of his engagement to Lucy, and of his resolution to adhere to that promise, had not Mrs. Carbuncle at the moment entered the room. Frank had been there for above an hour, and as Lizzie was still an invalid, and to some extent under the care of Mrs. Carbuncle, it was natural that that lady should interfere. "You know, my dear, you should not exhaust yourself altogether. Mr. Emilius is to come to you this afternoon."

"Mr. Emilius!" said Greystock.

"Yes;—the clergyman. Don't you remember him at Portray? A dark man with eyes close together! You used to be very wicked, and say that he was once a Jew-boy in the streets." Lizzie, as she spoke of her
spiritual guide, was evidently not desirous of doing him much honour.

"I remember him well enough. He made sheep's eyes at Miss Macnulty, and drank a great deal of wine at dinner."

"Poor Macnulty! I don't believe a word about the wine; and as for Macnulty, I don't see why she should not be converted as well as another. He is coming here to read to me. I hope you don't object."

"Not in the least;—if you like it."

"One does have solemn thoughts sometimes, Frank,—especially when one is ill."

"Oh, yes. Well or ill, one does have solemn thoughts;—ghosts, as it were, which will appear. But is Mr. Emilius good at laying such apparitions?"

"He is a clergyman, Mr. Greystock," said Mrs. Carbuncle, with something of rebuke in her voice.

"So they tell me. I was not present at his ordination, but I dare say it was done according to rule. When one reflects what a deal of harm a bishop may do, one wishes that there was some surer way of getting bishops."

"Do you know anything against Mr. Emilius?" asked Lizzie.

"Nothing at all but his looks, and manners, and voice,—unless it be that he preaches popular sermons, and drinks too much wine, and makes sheep's eyes at Miss Macnulty. Look after your silver spoons, Mrs. Carbuncle,—if the last thieves have left you any, You were asking after the fate of your diamonds."
Lizzie. Perhaps they will endow a Protestant church in Mr. Emilius's native land."

Mr. Emilius did come and read to Lady Eustace that afternoon. A clergyman is as privileged to enter the bedroom of a sick lady as is a doctor or a cousin. There was another clean cap, and another laced handkerchief, and on this occasion a little shawl over Lizzie's shoulders. Mr. Emilius first said a prayer, kneeling at Lizzie's bedside; then he read a chapter in the Bible;—and after that he read the first half of the fourth canto of Childe Harold so well, that Lizzie felt for the moment that after all, poetry was life and life was poetry.

END OF VOL. II.