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THE ARMY. [1]

When we glance back at the bright page of British military history, so thickly strewn with triumphs, so rarely checkered by a reverse, it seems paradoxical to assert that the English are not a military nation. Such, nevertheless, is the case. Our victories have been the result of no especial fitness for the profession of arms, but of dauntless spirit and cool stubborn courage, characterising the inhabitants of the narrow island that breeds very valiant children. Mere bravery, however heroic, does not of itself constitute an aptitude for the soldier's trade. Other qualities are needful – qualities conspicuous in many European nations, but less manifest in the Englishman. Naturally military nations are those of France, the Highlands of Scotland, Poland, and Switzerland – every one of them affording good specimens of the stuff peculiarly fitted for the manufacture of soldiers. They all possess a martial bent, a taste for the military career, submitting willingly to its hardships and privations, and are endowed with a faculty of acquiring the management of offensive weapons, with which for the most part they become acquainted early in life. A system of national conscription, like that established in many continental countries, is the readiest and surest means of giving a military tone to the character of a people, and of increasing the civil importance and respectability of an army. But without proceeding to so extreme a measure, other ways may be devised of producing, as far as is desirable, similar results.

We appeal to all intelligent observers, and especially to military men, whom travel or residence upon the Continent have qualified to judge, whether in any of the great European states the soldier has hitherto obtained so little of the public attention and solicitude as in England? Whether in any country he is so completely detached from the population, enjoying so little sympathy, in all respects so uncared for and unheeded by the masses, and, we are sorry to say it, often so despised and looked down upon, even by those classes whence he is taken? Let war call him to the field, and for a moment he forces attention: his valour is extolled, his fortitude admired, his sufferings are pitied. But when peace, bought by his bravery and blood, is concluded, what ensues? Houses of Parliament thank and commend him, towns illuminate in honour of his deeds, pensions and peerages are showered upon his chiefs, perhaps some brief indulgence is accorded to himself; but it is a nine days' wonder, and those elapsed, no living creature, save barrack masters, inspecting officers, and Horse-guards authorities, gives him another thought, or wastes a moment upon the consideration of what might render him a happier and a better man. Like a well-tried sabre that has done its work and for the present may lie idle, he is shelved in the barrack room, to be occasionally glanced at with pride and satisfaction. Hilt and scabbard are, it is true, kept carefully polished – drill and discipline are maintained; but insufficient pains are taken to ascertain whether rust corrodes the blade, whether the trusty servant, whose achievements have been so glorious and advantageous, does not wear out his life in discouragement and despondency. But this state of things, we hope and believe, is about to change. We rejoice to see a daily increasing disposition on the part of English legislators and of the English nation, to investigate and amend the condition of their gallant defenders. If war is justly considered

[1] *Notes and Recollections of a Professional Life.* By the late Wm. Fergusson, M.D., Inspector-General of Military Hospitals. Longmans: 1846.*The Military Miscellany.* By Henry Marshall, F.R.S.E., Deputy Inspector-General of Army Hospitals. Murray: 1846.

the natural state of an army,[2] peace, on the other hand, is the best time to moot and discuss measures likely to raise its character and increase its efficiency.

We do not fear to be accused of advocating change for its own sake, or what is vulgarly nicknamed Reform, in any of the institutions of this country, whether civil or military. But we rejoice at the appearance of books calculated to direct attention, we will not say to the abuses of the army, but to its possible improvement. And we know no class of men better qualified to write such books than army surgeons, whose occupations, when attached to regiments, bring them of necessity into more frequent contact with a greater variety of men, and to a more intimate acquaintance with the soldier's real character and feelings, than the duties of field or company officers in our service either exact or permit.

"To obviate the reproaches I may encounter for presuming to write upon subjects altogether military, I may be allowed to state, that during a quarter of a century that I served with the armies of the country, I officiated as surgeon of three different regiments in different parts of the world. I embarked nine times from the shores of Britain with armaments on foreign expeditions, and out of twenty-four years' actual service, (for the year of the peace of Amiens has to be deducted,) I spent seventeen years, or parts of them, in other climates, passing through every grade of medical rank, in every variety of service, even to the sister service of the navy." – Dr. Fergusson. *Preface.*

These are the men, or we greatly err, to write books about the army. They may not be conversant with tactics in the field, although even of those, unless they wilfully shut both eyes and ears, they can hardly avoid acquiring some knowledge. But on other matters connected with soldiers and armies, they must be competent to speak, and should be listened to as authorities. We look upon Dr Fergusson's testimony, and upon the information – the result of his vast experience – which he gives us in concise form and plain language, as most valuable; although some of the changes he suggests have been accomplished, wholly or partially, since his book was written. Mr Marshall's opportunities of personal observation have, we suspect, been less extensive; but to atone for such deficiency, he has been a diligent reader, and he places before us a host of military authorities, references and statistical tables. The value of his authorities may, perhaps, here and there be questioned; and he sometimes gives, in the form of extracts, statements unauthenticated by a name, but of which he does not himself seem to accept the responsibility. Nevertheless, his book has merit, and is not unlikely to accomplish both the objects proposed by its author, – namely, "to supply some information respecting the constitution, laws, and usages of the army, and to excite attention to the means which may meliorate the condition of soldiers, and exalt their moral and intellectual character."

These are three measures whose adoption would, we fully believe, elevate the character of the British soldier, increase his self-respect and willingness to serve, and, consequently, his efficiency in the field and good conduct in quarters. They will not be thought the worse of, we are sure, because they would assimilate the organization of our army to that of certain foreign services. The day is gone by when prejudice prevented Englishmen from adopting improvements, merely because they were based upon foreign example. The measures referred to, and whose adoption we would strenuously urge, are – first, the enlistment of soldiers for limited periods only; secondly, the total abolition of corporal punishment; thirdly, the increase of rewards, and especially a gradual and cautious augmentation of the number of commissions given to non-commissioned officers. Be it understood that we recommend these changes collectively, and not separately. They hinge upon each other, particularly the two last; and if one of them be refused, the others may require modification.

By the British constitution, no man may sell himself to unlimited servitude. On what grounds, then, is the practice of enlistment for life to be justified; and can it be justified upon any, even upon those of expediency? Ought not the thoughtless and the destitute – for under these heads the majority of recruits must at present be ranked – rather to be protected against themselves, and preserved, as

[2] Sir Charles Napier.

far as may be, from the consequences of non-reflection and of want? Such is assuredly the duty of a just and paternal government. Very different is the practice of this country under the present system! Influenced by a boyish caprice, or driven by necessity, an inexperienced lad takes the shilling and mounts the cockade. After a while he gets weary of the service; perhaps he sees opportunities, if once more a civilian, of making his way in the world. But weary though he be, or eagerly as he may desire to strip off the uniform assumed hastily, or by compulsion of circumstances, no perspective of release encourages him to patient endurance. No hope of emancipation, so long as his health holds good, or his services are found useful, smiles to him in the distance. After twenty-one years he *may* obtain his discharge, as a favour, but without pension. After twenty-five years, if discharged at his own request, he gets sixpence a-day! Truly a cheering prospect and great encouragement, to be liberated in the decline of life, any trade that he had learned as a boy forgotten, and with sixpence a-day as sole reward for having fought the battles and mounted the guards of his country during a quarter of a century! What are the frequent results of so gloomy a perspective? Despondency, desertion, drunkenness, and even suicide.

The British army, its strength considered, and in comparison with the armies of other countries, is, undeniably, a very expensive establishment, and the necessity of economy has been urged as an argument in favour of unlimited enlistment. The evidence both of Dr Fergusson and of Mr Marshall goes far to prove that one more fallacious was never advanced. Innumerable are the artifices resorted to by soldiers, under the present system, in the hope of obtaining their discharge – artifices sometimes successful, frequently entailing expense on the government, and at times almost impairing the efficiency of an army. Speaking of the last war, Dr Fergusson says, – "Artificial ulcers of the legs were all but universal amongst young recruits, and spurious ophthalmia was organised in conspiracy so complicated and extended, that at one time it threatened seriously to affect the general efficiency of the forces, and was in every respect so alarming that the then military authorities durst not expose its naked features to the world. These are the results, and ever will be the results, whilst human nature is constituted as it is, of service for life." That unlimited service is the chief cause of desertion may be proved beyond a doubt, if there be any value in the statistics of armies as given by Mr Marshall. In the year 1839, the mean strength of the French army was three hundred and seventeen thousand five hundred and seventy-eight men; the number condemned for desertion was six hundred and six. Eight hundred and eighty-one conscripts were punished for failing to join their corps. In the same year, in our army, of which the strength was less than one third of the French – under one hundred thousand men – the deserters punished amounted to two thousand one hundred and ten, or nearly one-fifth of the number of recruits annually raised. Where must we seek the cause of so monstrous a disparity? Chiefly in the difference of the term of service. The English soldier is by far the best paid and rationed; most of his comforts are more cared for than those of the Frenchman; but the latter takes his service kindly, because he knows that in six or seven years (the period varies a little according to the arm served in) he will be free to return to civil life, whilst still at an age to begin the world on his own account. The following extract from the *Military Miscellany* illustrates and confirms our present argument, that unlimited enlistment is no saving to the country.

"I have no adequate materials to enable me to state the mean duration of service of men who enlist for the army; but I am disposed to conjecture that it is not much, if at all, above ten years. It has, I believe, been ascertained, that the average length of service performed by men now on the permanent pension list, is about fifteen or sixteen years. Upon these grounds I conclude that enlistment for life, as a means of obtaining an average length of service of more than from ten to twelve years, is a fallacy; and consequently, I submit whether it would not be an advisable measure to abolish enlistment for an unlimited period, and to adopt a regulation whereby a soldier might have the option of being discharged after a certain length of service, say ten years."

In estimating the average duration of service at ten to twelve years, Mr Marshall has, we conjecture, taken into consideration the men discharged under fifteen years' service, before which

time they would not be entitled to a pension. To the ten years' enlistment proposed by him, we should prefer the term of seven years, fixed by Mr Wyndham's bill, passed in 1806, but rendered nugatory in 1808, by a clause in Lord Castlereagh's Military bill, which made it optional to enlist for life, adding the temptation of a higher bounty. The latter bait, aided by the thoughtlessness of recruits, and by the cajolery of recruiting sergeants, caused the engagement to be almost invariably for life. And since then, Horse-guards' orders have been issued, forbidding recruiting officers to accept men for limited service. According to Mr Wyndham's plan, the seven years' engagement was to be prolonged indefinitely in war time. We should not object to the latter arrangement, which is necessary for the safety of the country. Nor is it when actively engaged in the field that soldiers are likely to repine at length of service, but in the tedium of a garrison, when no change, or prospect of one, no opportunity of distinction, or chance of promotion, relieves the monotony of a military existence.

There is one advantage of short enlistments that has been overlooked both by Dr Fergusson and by Mr Marshall, but which nevertheless is, in our opinion, an important one. It is the increased military character that it would give to the nation, the greater number of men whom it would familiarize with the use of arms, and render competent to use them effectually at a moment's notice. We believe that short enlistments, and the other improvements already referred to, and which we shall presently speak of at greater length, would produce, in this thickly peopled kingdom, a regular annual supply of recruits, a large proportion of them of a very superior class to those who now offer. On the other hand, the army, instead of being thinned by desertions, transportations, and feigned diseases, would each year give up from its ranks a number of young and able-bodied men, who, whilst entering upon the occupations of civil life, would in a great measure retain their soldierly qualities, and be ready, in case of an emergency, to stand forward successfully in defence of their homes and families. We have long been accustomed to look upon this country as guaranteed from invasion by her wooden walls. Noble as the bulwark is, there is no dissembling the fact, that its efficiency has been greatly impaired by the progress of steam, rendering it extremely difficult, in case of a war, effectually to guard our long line of coast. And although Europe seems now as disinclined for war as a long experience of the blessings of peace can render her, this happy state cannot, in the nature of things, last for ever. Let us suppose a general war, and a large body of French troops thrown upon our shores in a night, whilst our armies were absent on the battle fields of the Continent, or of America. The supposition is startling, but cannot be viewed as absurd; many looked upon its realization as certain when circumstances were far less favourable to it than they would now be. How far would volunteers and militiamen, hastily raised, unaccustomed to services in the field, and many of whom had never fired a ball-cartridge in their lives,[3] be able to cope, with any chance of success, with fifty thousand French soldiers? And admitting that they did successfully contend, and that superior numbers and steadfast courage – although these, without good drill and discipline, are of little avail against a veteran army – eventually gained the day, how much more effective would they be, and how much loss of life and injury to the

[3] "The author, soon after his last return from the West Indies, at the close of the year 1817, was induced, from the then troubled state of the country, to join the ranks of a volunteer corps in Scotland, which was drilled and instructed by experienced men in all manner of ways, with the exception of the one thing needful – the firing ball – for during the whole time he remained with them, nearly two years, that was never thought of; and this was the case generally with the whole volunteer force of Great Britain, as well as the militia, at least in the early part of the war. Future wars must and will recur, and volunteer corps will again be formed; but if they be unused to the full-charged musket, however much their first appearance may impose, they will be found, when brought into action, of as much use as so many Chinese. Let them not suppose that until they have attained this skill, which it is in the power of every man to do, they are qualified to fight the battles of their country. * * * * In their present state, supposing two such bodies to get into collision, it would indeed be matter of wonder to think how they could contrive to kill one another without the aid of the cannon and other adjuncts. If they carried broomsticks on their shoulders, instead of muskets, they would no doubt make a sturdy fight of it; but with fire-arms which they had never been taught to use, the battle would resemble those of the Italian republics in the middle ages, when mailed knights fought the livelong day without mortal casualty." – Dr Fergusson, p. 42.Is ball practice sufficiently attended to in our army generally? We are inclined to doubt it. "We are economical people," says Dr Ferguson in another place, "famed for straining at gnats and swallowing camels, and the expense of ball cartridge is ever brought up in bar of the soldier being in the constant habit of firing it." We should also like to see some of our muskets replaced by rifles, an arm in which we have ever been deficient.

country might be avoided, did their ranks contain a fair proportion of men trained to arms, and able to instruct and encourage their comrades? But these are subjects so suggestive as to afford themes for volumes, where they might be better discussed than in the scanty pages of a review. We can only afford to glance at them, and to throw out hints for others to improve upon.

The liability to the lash, inflicted, until very recently, even for the least disgraceful offences, has long been thrown in the teeth of the British soldier by his foreign brethren in arms. That infamous punishment has been utterly disapproved and eloquently argued against by military men of high rank and great abilities, whose enlightened minds and long experience taught them to condemn it. The feeling of the nation is strongly against it, the armies of other countries are seen to flourish and improve without it, and yet it is still maintained, although gradually sinking into disuse, and, we hope and believe, drawing near to its abolition. Unnecessarily cruel as a punishment, ineffectual as an example to repress crime, and stamping the indelible brand of infamy on men the soul of whose profession should be a feeling of honour, why is it so lovingly and tenaciously clung to? "The service would go to the devil – could not be carried on without it – no soldiering without flogging," is the reply of a section of officers – the minority, we assuredly believe. "No one can doubt," says Dr Fergusson, "that for infamous crimes there ought to be infamous punishments, and to them let the lash be restricted." Be it so, but then devise some plan by which the soldier, whose offence is so disgraceful as to need the most humiliating of chastisements, shall be thenceforward excluded from the army. When he leaves the hospital, let his discharge be handed to him. "A fine plan, indeed!" it will be said. "Men will incur a flogging every day to get out of the service." Doubtless they will, so long as service is unlimited. And this is one reason why short enlistments and abolition of corporal punishment should go together. Against desertion, transportation has hitherto been found an ineffectual remedy. If men were enlisted for seven years only, it would cease to be so. Few would then be sufficiently perverse to risk five or seven years' transportation in order to get rid of what remained of their period of service. To flog for drunkenness, however frequent the relapse, is an absurdity, for it usually drives the culprit to habits of increased intemperance, that he may forget the disgraceful punishment he has suffered. In war time, when in the field before the enemy, discipline should assume its most Spartan and inflexible aspect. The deserter, the mutineer, the confirmed marauder, to the provost-marshal and cord. For minor offences, there would be no difficulty in finding appropriate punishments; such as fines, imprisonment in irons, extra guards and pickets, fatigue-duty, and the like. No military offenders should be punished by the cat. It is in direct opposition to the spirit by which armies should be governed: a spirit of honour and self-respect.

"The incorrigible deserter," says Dr Fergusson, "may be safely committed to penal service in the West Indies or the coast of Africa; and should the pseudo-philanthropists interfere with the cant of false humanity, let them be told that the best and bravest of our troops have too often been sent there, as to posts of honour and duty, from which they are hereafter to be saved by the substitution of the criminal and the worthless. The other nations of the Continent, who have not these outlets, conduct the discipline of their armies without flogging; and why should not we? They, it may be said, cultivate the point of honour. And does not the germ of pride and honour reside as well, and better, in the breast of the British soldier, distinguished, as he has ever been, for fidelity to his colours, obedience to his commanders, pride in his corps, and attachment to its very name?"

Mr Marshall's history of punishments in the army is rather to be termed curious than useful. Agreeable it certainly cannot be considered, except by those persons, if such there be, who luxuriate in Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, or gloat over the annals of the Spanish Inquisition. It shows human ingenuity taxed to the utmost to invent new tortures for the soldier. The last adhered to, and, it may safely be said, the worst devised, is the lash; and we need look back but a very little way to find its infliction carried to a frightful extent. A thousand lashes used to be no unusual award; and it sometimes happened (frequently, Mr Marshall asserts, but this other information induces us to doubt) that a man who had been unable, with safety to his life, to receive the whole of the punishment at one time, was brought

out again, as soon as his back was skinned over, to take the rest. At one time there was no limit to the number of lashes that a general court-martial might award. Mr Marshall says, that at Amboyna, in the year 1813 or 1814, he knew three men to be condemned to fifteen hundred lashes each. The whole punishment was inflicted. At Dinapore, on the 12th September 1825, a man was sentenced to nineteen hundred lashes, which sentence the commander-in-chief commuted to twelve hundred. Such sentences, however, were in direct contradiction to the general order of the 30th January 1807, by which "his Majesty was graciously pleased to express his opinion, that no sentence for corporal punishment should exceed one thousand lashes." In 1812, when the powers of a regimental court-martial had been limited to the infliction of three hundred lashes, "many old officers believed, and did not hesitate to say, that such limitation would destroy the discipline of the army." – (*Marshall*, p. 185.) We cannot put the same faith that Mr Marshall appears to do in the outrageous narratives of some of his authorities. It is impossible, for instance, to swallow such a tale as we find at page 267 of the *Military Miscellany*, of seventy men of one battalion being flogged on the line of march in one day. This, however, is only given as an *on dit*. Equally incredible is the story quoted from the book of a certain Sergeant Teesdale, of ten to twenty-five men being flogged daily for six weeks for coming dirty on parade; and another, which Mr Marshall tells, of *seventeen thousand* lashes being for some time the monthly allowance of a regiment in India – the said regiment being, we are informed, treated very little worse than its neighbours. The articles of war, as they stand at the present day, restrict the award of corporal punishment, by a general court-martial, to two hundred lashes; by a district court-martial, to one hundred and fifty; and by a regimental court, to one hundred.

We would put the question to any military man – even to the strongest advocate of flogging – what is the usual effect of corporal punishment on the soldier? Does it make or mar him, improve his character and correct his vices, or render him more reckless and abandoned than before? The conscientious answer would be, we are persuaded, that seldom is a good soldier made of a flogged man. "There is not an instance in a thousand," says Dr Jackson, "where severe punishment (flogging is here referred to) has made a soldier what he ought to be; there are thousands where it has rendered those who were forgetful and careless, rather than vicious, insensible to honour, and abandoned to crime." But then the example is supposed, erroneously, as we believe, to be of good operation. We cannot admit that, to justify the practice of marking a man's shoulders with the ineffaceable stripes of disgrace.

In speaking of corporal punishment, we have considered only its moral effect, and have not touched on the unnecessary and unequal amount of pain it occasions. Much might be said upon this head. "My first objection to flogging," says Sir Charles Napier, in his treatise "*On Military Law*," published in 1837, "is, that it is torture," – using the word, no doubt, in the sense of inhumanity, and meaning that more pain than is necessary is inflicted. Sir Charles's second objection is, that it is torture of a very unequal infliction – varying, of course, according to the strength of the drummers or others employed, to the rigour of the drum-major superintending their exertions, and to other circumstances. Mr Marshall tells us that different men suffer in very different degrees from punishment of like severity. Tall slender men, of a sanguine temperament, feel a flogging more severely than short, thickset ones; and instances have been known of soldiers succumbing under a sixth part of the punishment which others have borne and rapidly recovered from. The presence of a surgeon is in many cases no guarantee against a fatal result. "It is impossible to say what may be the effect of corporal infliction with more certainty than to predict the consequences of a surgical operation." – (*Military Miscellany*, p. 224.) "No medical officer can answer either for the immediate or ultimate consequences of this species of corporal punishment. Inflammation of the back, or general fever, may occur after a very moderate infliction, and may terminate fatally, notwithstanding the greatest diligence and attention on the part of a well-informed and conscientious surgeon." – (*Ibid.* p. 276.) Besides the reasons against corporal punishment above stated, Sir Charles Napier advances and supports by argument six others equally cogent. Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, although he

introduced into his army the species of flogging known as the gantlope or gauntlet, rarely had recourse to it, being persuaded that "such a disgrace cast a damp upon the soldier's vivacity, and did not well agree with the notions which a high spirit ought to entertain of honour." "Il ne faut point," says Kirckhoff, a medical officer in the army of the king of the Netherlands, quoted by Mr Marshall, "soumettre le soldat fautif à des punitions avilissantes. A quoi bon les coups de bâton qu'on donne trop légèrement au soldat, si ce n'est pour l'abrutir, et pour déshonorer le noble état du defenseur de la patrie? Ce genre de punition déshonorant ne devrait être réservé qu'aux lâches et aux traîtres; et dès qu'une fois un militaire l'aurait subi, il faudrait l'exclure à jamais d'un ordre auquel les destins d'une nation sont confiés; d'un ordre qui a pour base le courage, l'honneur, et toutes les vertus généreuses."

It is singular that whilst such remarkable ingenuity has been exhibited in devising punishments for the soldier, so very little should have been displayed in the invention of rewards. Of these latter, the most legitimate and desirable are pensions and promotion. We would add a third – a military order of merit to be bestowed upon men distinguishing themselves by acts of gallantry, or by steady good conduct. Decorations of this kind – we are convinced of it by our observations on various foreign services – act as a strong incentive to the soldier. There exists in this country a prejudice against their adoption, principally because we are accustomed to see such rewards heaped without discrimination, and with a profusion that renders them worthless, upon the soldiers of foreign nations. There seems a natural tendency to the abuse of such institutions, and Napoleon might well shudder were he to rise from his grave and see his "Star of the Brave" dangling from the buttonhole of half the pamphleteers and national guardsmen of the French capital. In other countries the lavish profusion with which stars, crosses, riband-ends, and rosettes are bestowed, is enough to raise a suspicion of collusion between the royal donors and the jewellers and haberdashers of their dominions. But even when largely distributed, we believe them to act as a spur to the soldier. If there is a fear of England's becoming what we find so ridiculous in others, a country where the non-decorated amongst military men are the exception, let great caution be used in the bestowal of such honours. We now refer to an order of merit for the soldiers only. With officers we have at present nothing to do; although we shall be found upon occasion equally ready and willing to support their just claims. But they can plead their own cause, if not effectually, at least perseveringly, as the recent numerous letters in newspapers, and articles in military periodicals, claiming a decoration for Peninsular services, sufficiently prove. Such a decoration was certainly nobly deserved, but, if conceded at all, it should be given quickly, or its existence, it is to be feared, will be very brief. Our present business, however, is with the soldier – the humble private, the deserving non-commissioned officer.

It is not unnatural that when tardy reflection comes to the thoughtless lad who has sold himself to unlimited military bondage, he should be anxious to know what provision is made for him when age or disease shall cause his services to be dispensed with. Inquiry or reference informs him, that should he be discharged after fourteen and under twenty-one years service, so far disabled as to be *unable to work*– this is a condition – he may be awarded the magnificent sum of from sixpence to eightpence a-day! Discharged under twenty-one years' service, as disabled for the army only, he may get a temporary pension of sixpence a-day for a period varying from one month to five years. Discharged by indulgence after twenty-five years, he may receive sixpence a-day. We have already remarked on the little heed taken by civilians in this country of the treatment and ordinances of the army. These statements will probably be new to most of our non-military readers, many of whom, we doubt not, entertain an absurd notion, that when a man has served his country well and faithfully during twenty-five years, or is dismissed, as unable to work, after fourteen years' servitude, he invariably finds a snug berth ready for him at Chelsea, or at least has a pension awarded to him tolerably adequate to supply him with the bare necessaries of life, and to keep him from begging or crossing-sweeping. As to the savings of soldiers out of their pay, facilitated though they now are by the establishment of savings' banks in the army, they can be but exceedingly small. A soldier's pay varies from thirteen to fifteen pence, according to the time he has served. Deduct from this the cost of his clothing, only

a portion of which is supplied to him free of charge, and sixpence a-day for his rations of bread and meat, and what remains will frequently not exceed threepence a-day for tobacco, vegetables, coffee, and other small necessaries. The great difference between the pay, rations, and pensions of soldiers and sailors, is not generally known. Besides receiving rations far more abundant and varied, an able seaman gets thirty-four shillings per month of twenty-eight days, more than double the pay of a soldier under seven years' service. Seamen have a claim of right to be discharged after twenty-one years' service with a pension of one shilling to fourteen pence a-day. And, besides this, it must be remembered that a sailor may enlist for a short time, and at its expiration, or at any time that he is discharged, employment is open to him in the merchant service. But what is the soldier to do when dismissed from the army at forty years of age or upwards? "A very small number of men," says Mr Marshall, "are fit after forty years of age for the arduous duties of the service." Surely it may be claimed for our brave fellows that a more liberal system of pensioning be adopted. We do not lose sight of the necessity of economy in these days of heavy taxation; and before deciding on a plan, the matter should be well sifted and considered. But we have already expressed our conviction that limited service would of itself in various ways produce a pecuniary saving to the government. Adequate pensions would have other beneficial results. Mr Marshall throws out suggestions for a new scale of pensions, and declares his opinion, that no man who has served twenty-one years should receive a smaller allowance than a shilling a-day.

"The more striking," he proceeds to say, "the honourable example of an old soldier enjoying his pension, the more likely is it to contribute to spread a military feeling in the neighbourhood. But to repay the retired soldier by a pension inadequate to his sustenance, must have the effect of consigning him to the workhouse, and of sinking him and the army in the estimation of the working class of the population; destroying all military feeling, and, whilst the soldier is serving, weakening those important aids to discipline – the cheerfulness and satisfaction which the prospect of a pension, after a definite period, inspires."

We now come to a branch of our subject encompassed with peculiar difficulties, and that will be met with many objections; the present system of disposing of commissions in the army is too convenient and agreeable to a large and influential class of the community for it to be otherwise. The most important part of the proposed scheme of rewards is the bestowing of commissions upon sergeants. We are aware that, in the present constitution of the army, much may be urged against such a plan being carried out beyond an exceedingly limited extent. But most of the objections would, we think, be removed by the adoption and consequences of limited service, and by the extinction of corporal punishment. Others would disappear before a greater attention to the education of the soldier, and before some slight reductions in what are now erroneously considered the necessary expenses of officers.

Constituted and regulated as the British army now is, the immediate consequences of enlistment to the young peasant or artisan of previous respectability is a total breach with his family. However good his previous character, the single fact of his entering what ought to be an honourable profession, excludes him from the society and good opinion of his nearest friends. Former associates shun and look coldly upon him, his female relatives are ashamed to be seen walking with him, often the door of his father's cottage or workshop is shut on his approach. The community in general, there is no dissembling the fact, look upon soldiers as a degraded class, and upon the recruit as a man consigned to evil company, to idleness and the alehouse, and perhaps to the ignominy of the lash. To brand an innocent man as criminal is the way to render him so. Avoided and despised, the young soldier, to whom bad example is not wanting, speedily comes to deserve the disreputable character which the mere assumption of a red coat has caused to be fixed upon him. So long as military service stands thus low in the opinion of the people, the army will have to recruit its ranks from the profligate and the utterly destitute, and the supply of respectable volunteers will be as limited as heretofore. At present, most young men of a better class whom a temporary impulse, or a predilection for the

service, has induced to enlist, strain every nerve, when they awake to their real position, to raise funds for their discharge. In this their friends often aid them; and we have known instances of incredible sacrifices being made by the poor to snatch a son or brother from what they looked upon as the jaws of destruction. And thus is it that a large proportion of the respectable recruits are bought out after a brief period of service.

Assuming limitation of service and the abolition of corporal punishment to have been conceded, the next thing demanding attention would be the education of the soldier. This has hitherto been sadly neglected, strangely so at a period and in a country where education of the people is so strongly and generally advocated. The schoolmaster is abroad, we are told – we should be glad to hear of his visiting the barrack-room. To no class of the population would a good plain education be more valuable than to the soldier, as a means of filling up his abundant leisure, of improving his moral condition, and preserving him from drunkenness and vice. How extraordinary that its advantages should so long have been overlooked, even by those to whom they ought to have been the most palpable. "Of two hundred and fourteen officers," Mr Marshall writes, "who returned answers to the following query, addressed to them by the General Commanding in Chief, in 1834, only two or three recommended intellectual, moral, or religious cultivation as a means of preventing crime: – 'Are you enabled to suggest any means of restraining, or eradicating the propensity to drunkenness, so prevalent among the soldiery, and confessedly the parent of the majority of military crimes?' A great variety of penal enactments were recommended, but no one suggested the school master's drill but Sir George Arthur and the late Colonel Oglander. The colonel's words are: – 'The only effectual corrective of this, as of every other vice, is a sound and rational sense of religion. This is the only true foundation of moral discipline. The establishment of libraries, and the system of *adult* schools, would be useful in this view.'" To prevent crime is surely better than to punish it. Vast pains are taken with the merely military education of the soldier. A recruit is carefully drilled into the perpendicular, taught to handle his musket, mount his guards, clean his accoutrements – converted, in short, into an excellent automaton – and then he is dismissed as perfect, and left to lounge away, as best he may, his numerous hours of daily leisure. He has perhaps never been taught to read and write, or may possess those accomplishments but imperfectly. What more natural than to encourage, and, if necessary, to compel him to acquire them, together with such other useful scholarship as it may be desirable for him to possess? Education would be especially valuable under a system of limited service. The soldier, leaving the army when still a young man, would be better fitted than before he entered it, for any trade or occupation he might adopt. And when the lower classes found that military service was made a medium for the communication of knowledge, and that their sons, after seven years passed under the colours, were better able to get through the world advantageously and creditably than when they enlisted, the present strong prejudice against a soldier's life would rapidly become weakened, and finally disappear. The army would then be looked upon by poor men with large families as no undesirable resource for temporarily providing for one or two of their sons.

It is certainly not creditable to this country, that in France, Prussia, Holland, and even in Russia – that land of the serf and the Cossack – greater pains are taken with the education of the soldier than in free and enlightened England. It has become customary to compare our navy with that of France, and when we are found to have a carronade or a cock-boat less than our friends across the water, a shout of indignation is forthwith set up by vigilant journalists and nervous naval officers. We heartily wish that it were equally usual to contrast our army with that of the French – not in respect of numbers, but of the attention paid to the education and moral discipline of the men. Every French regiment has two schools, a higher and a lower one. In the latter are taught reading, writing, and arithmetic; in the former, geography, book-keeping, the elements of geometry and fortification, and other things equally useful. The schools are managed by lieutenants, aided by non-commissioned officers; and sergeants recommended for commissions are required to pass an examination in the branches of knowledge there taught. It is well known that in the French service, as in most others, excepting the

English, a proportion of the commissions is set aside for the sergeants. In the Prussian service there is a school in each battalion, superintended by a captain and three lieutenants, who receive additional pay for alternately taking a share in the instruction of the soldiers. "Non-commissioned officers," Mr Marshall informs us, "who wish to become officers, first undergo an examination in geography, history, simple mathematics, and the French and German languages. At the end of another year they are again examined in the same branches of knowledge, and also in algebra, military drawing, and fortification. If they pass this second examination, they become officers."

How many of the young men, who, by virtue of interest or money, enter the British army as ensigns and cornets, would be found willing to devote even a small portion of their time to the instruction of the soldier? Very few, we fear. By the majority, the idea would be scouted as a bore, and as quite inconsistent with their dignity. Extra pay, however acceptable to the comparatively needy Prussian lieutenant, might be expected to prove an insufficient inducement in a service where it is frequently difficult to find a subaltern to accept the duties of adjutant. None can entertain a higher respect than we do for the gallant spirit and many excellent qualities of the present race of British officers; but we confess a wish that they would view their profession in a more serious light. Young men entering the army seemingly imagine, that the sole object of their so doing is to wear a well-made uniform, and dine at a pleasant mess; and that, once dismissed to their duty by the adjutant, they may fairly discard all idea of self-instruction and improvement. But war is an art, and therefore its principles can be acquired but by study. Our young officers too often neglect not only their military studies, but their mental improvement in other respects; forgetting that the most valuable part of a man's education is not that acquired at a public school before the age of eighteen, but that which he bestows upon himself after that age. The former is the foundation; the latter the fabric to be raised upon it. We have known instances of smart subs deft upon parade, brilliants in the ball-room, perfect models of a pretty soldier from plume to boot-heel, so supremely ignorant of the common business of life as to be unable to write a letter without a severe effort, or to draw a bill upon their agents when no one was at hand to instruct them in its form. It was but the other day that an officer related to us, that, being detached on an outpost in one of our colonies, he found himself in company with two brother subalterns, both most anxious to make a call upon their father's strong-box, but totally ignorant how to effect the same. Their spirit was very willing, but their pen lamentably weak; their exchequer was exhausted, and in their mind's-eye the paternal coffers stood invitingly open; but nevertheless they sat helpless, ruefully contemplating oblong slips of blank paper, until our friend, whose experience as a man of business was somewhat greater, extricated them from their painful dilemma, by drawing up the necessary document at *thirty days' sight*. In this particular view, want of skill as a "pen and ink man" would probably not be regretted by those most interested in their sons; and doubtless many *governors* would exclaim, as fervently as Lord Douglas in *Marmion*,

"Thanks to St Bothan, son of mine
Could never pen a written line!"

Seriously speaking, a graver and more studious tone is wanted in our service. It is found in the military services of other countries. German and French officers take their calling far more *au sérieux* than do ours. They find abundant time for pleasure, but also for solitude and reading, and for attention to the improvement of the soldier. Dressing, dining, and cigars, and beating the pavements of a garrison town with his boot-heels, ought not to fill up the whole time of a subaltern officer. That in this country they usually do so, will be admitted by all who have had opportunities of observing young English officers in peace time. We could bring hosts of witnesses in support of our assertion, but will content ourselves with one whose competency to judge in such matters will not be disputed. The following passages are from Major-General Sir George Arthur's "General Observations upon Military Discipline, and the Intellectual and Moral Improvement of both Officers and Soldiers."

"I have said that education is essential, as well as moral character, and so it is. Look into the habits of the officers of almost every regiment in His Majesty's service – how are they formed? Do men study at all after they get commissions? Very far from it; unless an officer is employed in the field, his days are passed in mental idleness – his ordinary duties are carried on instinctively – there is no intellectual exertion. To discuss fluently upon women, play, horses, and wine, is, with some excellent exceptions, the ordinary range of mess conversation. In these matters lie the education of young officers, generally speaking, after entering the service."

"If the officers were not seen so habitually walking in the streets in every garrison town, the soldiers would be less frequently found in public-houses."

The influence of example is great, especially when exercised by those whom we are taught to look up to and respect. A change in the habits of officers will go far to produce one in those of their men. French officers, of whom we are sure that no British officer who has met them, either in the field or in quarters, will speak without respect, feel a pride and a pleasure in the instruction of the soldier, and take pains to induce him to improve his mind, holding out as an incentive the prospect of promotion. And such interest and solicitude produce, amongst other good effects, an affectionate feeling on the part of the soldier towards his superiors, which, far from interfering with discipline, makes him perform his duties, often onerous and painful, with increased zeal and good-will. For the want of this kindly sympathy between different ranks, and of the moral instruction which, by elevating their character, would go far to produce it, our soldiers are converted into mere machines, unable even to think, often forbidden so to do. We are convinced that attention to the education of the soldier, introduced simultaneously with short enlistments and abolition of flogging, would speedily create in the army of this country a body of non-commissioned officers, who, when promoted, would disgrace no mess-table in the service. With the prospect of the epaulet before them, they would strive to improve themselves, and to become fit society for the men of higher breeding and education with whom they hoped one day to be called upon to associate. For, if it be painful and unpleasant to a body of gentlemen to have a coarse and ill-mannered man thrust upon them, it is certainly not less so to the intruder, if he possess one spark of feeling, to find himself shunned and looked coldly upon by his new associates. The total abolition of corporal punishment is, we consider, a necessary preliminary to promotion from the ranks on an extensive scale. We were told four years ago, in the House of Commons, during a debate on the Mutiny bill, that there were then in the British army four colonels who were flogged men. Many will remember the story related in a recent military publication, of the old field-officer who, one day at the mess-table, or amongst a party of his comrades, declared himself in favour of corporal punishment, on the ground that he himself had never been worth a rush till he had taken his cool three hundred. During a long war, abounding in opportunities of distinction, and at a time when the lash was the universal punishment for nearly every offence, it is not surprising that here and there a flogged man got his commission. But, in our opinion, not only the circumstance of having been flogged, but the mere liability to so degrading an infliction, might plausibly be urged as an argument against promotion from the ranks. Let the lash, then, at once and totally disappear; replace torture by instruction, hold out judicious rewards instead of disgraceful punishment, appeal to the sense of honour of the man, instead of to the sense of pain of the brute; and, repudiating the harsh traditions of less enlightened days, lay it down as an axiom, that the British soldier can and will fight at least as well under a mild and generous system, as when the bloody thongs of the cat are suspended *in terrorem* over him.

The physical as well as moral training of the soldier should receive attention, as a means both of filling up his time, thereby keeping him from the alehouse, and of increasing his efficiency in the field. At present the marching qualities of our armies are very far inferior to their fighting ones. In the latter, they are surpassed by none – in the former, equal to few. And yet how important is it that troops should be able to perform long and rapid marches! The fate of a campaign, the destruction of an enemy's army, may, and often does depend upon a forced march. At that work there is scarcely

an army in Europe worth the naming, but would beat us, at least at the commencement of a war, and until our soldiers had got their marching legs – a thing not done in a day, or without great loss and inconvenience by straggling. Foot-sore men are almost as great a nuisance and encumbrance to infantry, as sore-backed horses to dragoons. Our soldiers are better fed than those of most other countries, and to keep them in hard and serviceable condition they require more exercise than they get. French soldiers are encouraged to practice athletic exercises and games; running, quoit-playing, and fencing, the latter especially, are their constant pastimes. Most of them are expert swordsmen, no valueless accomplishment even to the man whose usual weapons are musket and bayonet, but one that in our infantry regiments is frequently neglected even by those whose only arm is the sword, namely, the officers. Surely the man who carries a sword should know how to use it in the most effectual manner. Let old officers say on whose side the advantage usually was in the sword duels that occurred when Paris was occupied by the Allies, and when the French officers, maddened by their reverses, sought opportunities of picking quarrels with their conquerors. The adjutant of a British foot regiment informed us, that on one occasion, not very long ago, at a review of his corps by an officer of high rank, the latter, after applauding the performances of the regiment, expressed a wish to see the officers do the sword exercise. In obedience to orders, the adjutant called the officers to the front. "I suppose, gentlemen," said he, "that few of you know much about the sword exercise." His assumption was not contradicted. "Probably, your best plan will be to watch the sergeant-major and myself." And accordingly adjutant and sergeant-major placed themselves in front of each flank, and the officers, looking to them as fuglemen, went through their exercise with great delicacy and tolerable correctness, to the perfect satisfaction of the inspecting general, who probably was not disposed to be very captious. But we are digressing from the subject of the soldier's occupations. In France, let a military work be required – a wall, road, or fortification – and the soldiers slip into their working dresses, and labour at it with a good will produced by additional pay. Thus were the forts and vast wall now surrounding Paris run up in wonderfully short time by the exertions of the soldiery. In all German garrison towns, we believe – certainly in all that we have visited – is found an Exercitiums Platz, a field or plot of ground with bars, poles, and other gymnastic contrivances, reserved for the troops, who are frequently to be seen there, amusing themselves, and improving their strength and activity of body. We are aware of nothing of this kind in our service, beyond a rare game at cricket, got up by the good-nature of officers. As Dr Fergusson truly says, "of all European troops, our own appear to be the most helpless and listless in their quarters. Whilst the soldiers of other nations employ their leisure hours in fencing, gymnastics, and other exercises of strength, ours are lounging idle, or muddled, awaiting the hour of their unvaried meal, or the drum being beat for the daily parades." This might easily be altered. It needs but to be thought of, which hitherto it appears not to have been. No men are naturally more adapted and prone to manly exercises than the English. Give the soldier the opportunity, and he will gladly avail himself of it.

Before closing this paper, a word or two on the equipment and dress of the army will not be out of place. We are glad to find the opinions we have long entertained on those subjects confirmed by a pithy and pointed chapter in Dr Fergusson's book. The externals of the army have of late been much discussed, and have undergone certain changes, scarcely deserving the name of improvements. In regulating such matters, three objects should be kept in view, and their pursuit never departed from; lightness on the march, protection from the weather, ease of movement. The attainment of these should be sought by every means; even by the sacrifice, if necessary, of what pleases the eye. The most heavily laden, the British soldier is in many respects the most inconveniently equipped, of all European men-at-arms. The covering of his head, the material and colour of his belts, the very form of the foot-soldier's overalls, cut large over the shoe, as if on purpose to become dirty and draggled on the march, seem selected with a view to occasion him as much uncomfort and trouble as possible. Time was, when the soldier was compelled to powder his hair and wear a queue and tight knee breeches, like a dancing master or a French marquis of the *ancien régime*. For the sweeping

away of such absurdities, which must have been especially convenient and agreeable in a bivouac; we may thank the Duke of York; but much as has been done, there is much more to do. And first as regards the unnecessarily heavy belts, the cumbersome and misplaced cartridge-box. Than the latter it would be difficult to devise any thing more inconvenient, as all who have seen British infantry in the field will admit. The soldier has to make a rapid advance, to pursue a flying enemy, to scud across fields, leap ditches or jump down banks when out skirmishing. At every spring or jump, bang goes the lumbering cartridge-box against his posteriors, until he is fain to use his hand to steady it, thereby of course greatly impeding his progress, the swiftness and ease of running depending in great measure on one arm, at least, being at liberty. And then the belts, what an unnecessary mass of leather is there, all bedaubed with the fictitious purity of chalk and water. When will the soldier cease to depend for cleanliness upon pipe-clay, justly styled by Dr Fergusson "as absurd and unwholesome a nuisance as ever was invented." Had the object been to give the utmost possible trouble to the infantry-man, no better means could have been devised than inflicting on him the belts at present used, of all others the most easily sullied and troublesome to clean. Let a black patent leather belt and rifleman's cartridge-box be adopted as the regulation for the whole of the British service. Light to carry, convenient in form, and easy to clean, it is the perfection of infantry equipment.

There has recently been a great talk about hats, and various shocking bad ones have been proposed as a substitute for the old top-heavy shako. Without entering upon a subject that has already caused so much controversy, we would point attention to the light shako worn by the French troops in Algeria. Low, and slightly tapering in form, with a broad peak projecting horizontally, so as to shade the eyes without embarrassing the vision, which peaks that droop overmuch are apt to do, its circumference is of cloth, its crown of thick leather painted white. The general effect is good, conveying an idea of lightness and convenience, both of which this head-dress certainly possesses; and it appears to us that a hint might be taken from it, at any rate, for our troops in India, and other hot climates. As to fur caps a yard high, and similar nonsensical exhibitions, we can only say that the sooner they are done away with, the better for the credit of those who have it in their power to abolish such gross absurdities. With regard to coats, "I advance no pretensions," says Dr Fergusson, "to fancy or taste in military dress, but I ought to know what constitutes cover and protection to the human frame, and amongst these the swallow-tailed coat of the infantry, pared away as it is to an absurdity, holds no place. If health and protection were the object, the coat should be of round cut, to cover the thighs as low as the knees, with body of sufficient depth to support the unprotected flanks and abdomen of the wearer." In the French service, frock-coats have of late been universally adopted. We should prefer a tailed coat of greater amplitude of skirt and depth of body than the one in present use; for it is certain, and will be acknowledged by all who have performed marches and pedestrian excursions, that the skirts of a frock-coat flapping against the front of the thighs, more or less impede motion and add to fatigue.

Although the form of a soldier's dress is important, for it may make a considerable difference in his health and comfort, its colour and ornamental details are a very secondary consideration. It were absurd to doubt that a British soldier would fight equally well, whatever the tint of the cloth that covered his stalwart arm and stout heart. Strip him to-morrow of his scarlet, and he will do his devoir as nobly in the white jacket of the Austrian grenadier or the brown one of the Portuguese *cazador*. Such matters, it will be said, may be left to army tailors and pet colonels of fancy regiments, in conclave assembled. Nevertheless it is a subject that should not entirely be passed over. Soldiers are apt to look with disgust and contempt upon equipments that are tawdry and unserviceable, or that give them unnecessary trouble. They should be gravely, soberly, and usefully clad, in the garb that may be found most comfortable and durable in the field, not in that which most flatters the eye on a Hounslow or Hyde Park parade. Dr Fergusson is amusing enough upon the subject of hussar pelisses and such-like foreign fooleries.

"The first time I ever saw a hussar, or hulan, was at Ghent, in Flanders, then an Austrian town; and when I beheld a richly decorated pelisse waving, empty sleeves and all, from his shoulder, I never doubted that the poor man must have been recently shot through the arm; a glance, however, upon a tightly braided sleeve underneath, made it still more unaccountable; and why he should not have had an additional pair of richly ornamental breeches dangling at his waist, as well as a jacket from his shoulders, has, I confess, puzzled me from that time to the present; it being the first rule of health to keep the upper portion of the body as cool, and the lower as warm as possible."

The doctor further disapproves of scarlet as a colour for uniform, because "a man clothed in scarlet exhibits the dress of a mountebank rather than of a British warrior going forth to fight the battles of his country," and also "because it is the worst adapted for any hard work of all the colours, as it immediately becomes shabby and tarnished on being exposed to the weather; and a single wet night in the bivouac spoils it completely." Here we must differ from the doctor. The chief advantage of scarlet, we have always considered, and we believe the same opinion to be generally held by military men, is that it looks well longer, gets white and shabby later, than a darker colour. The preparation of the cloth and mode of dyeing, may, however, have been improved since Dr Fergusson's period of service. With regard to the colour, there is a popular prejudice in its favour, associating it as most persons do, from childhood upwards, with ideas of glory and victory. Had our uniform been yellow for the same period that it has been red, we should have attached those ideas to the former colour; but that would be no reason for continuing to dress soldiers like canary birds. Apart from association, scarlet is unmilitary, first, because it is tawdry; and, secondly, as rendering the soldier, when isolated, an easier mark than a less glaring colour. We doubt also, if it would harmonize well with the black belts, which we desire to see adopted; and on these various accounts we must give our vote in favour of the sober blue of the Prussians, assuredly no un-British colour, and one already in use for many of our cavalry regiments. The Portuguese troops, as they are now uniformed, or were, when last we saw them, offer no bad model in this respect. Blue coats and dark grey trousers are the colours of their line regiments, and these we should like to see adopted in our service, preserving always the green for the rifles, who ought to be ten times as numerous as they are, as we shall discover whenever we come to a brush with the Yankees, or with our old and gallant opponent, Monsieur Nong-tong-paw. One would have thought that the picking off of our officers at New Orleans, and on other occasions, and the stinging practice of French tirailleurs during the last war, would have taught our military rulers a lesson in this respect; but the contrary seems the case, and on we go at the old jog-trot, heavy men, heavy equipments, and slow march, whilst seven-eighths of the French army are practically light infantry, and it is only the other day that they raised ten new regiments of sharpshooters, the Chasseurs de Vincennes, or some such name, little light active riflemen, trained to leap and to march for leagues at double quick, and who would scamper round a ten acre field whilst a heavy British grenadier went through his facings. The cool steadiness and indomitable pluck of our fellows has hitherto carried the day, and will doubtless do it again when the time comes, but it would be done with greater ease and less loss if we could condescend to fight our enemy rather more with his own weapons. *Fas est ab hoste doceri*, is a maxim oftener quoted than acted upon. But to return to uniforms. The scarlet might be reserved for the guards – it has always been a guardsman's colour – the blue given to the line, the green kept for the rifles; black belts on rifle plan for all. And above all, if it can be done without too great annoyance to tailors, amateur and professional, deliver us from braided pelisses, bearskin caps, crimson pantaloons, and all such costly and unserviceable fopperies. Spend money on the well-being of the soldier, rather than on the smartness of his uniform; cut down frippery, and increase comfort. Attend less to the glitter of externals, and more to that moral and intellectual cultivation, which will convert men now treated as machines, into reasoning and reasonable creatures, and valuable members of society.

MY COLLEGE FRIENDS. NO. IV

Charles Russell, the Gentleman-commoner

Chap. I

"Have you any idea who that fresh gentleman-commoner is?" said I to Savile, who was sitting next to me at dinner, one day soon after the beginning of term. We had not usually in the college above three or four of that privileged class, so that any addition to their table attracted more attention than the arrival of the vulgar herd of freshmen to fill up the vacancies at our own. Unless one of them had choked himself with his mutton, or taken some equally decided mode of making himself an object of public interest, scarcely any man of "old standing" would have even inquired his name.

"Is he one of our men?" said Savile, as he scrutinized the party in question. "I thought he had been a stranger dining with some of them. Murray, you know the history of every man who comes up, I believe – who is he?"

"His name is Russell," replied the authority referred to; "Charles Wynderbie Russell; his father's a banker in the city: Russell and Smith, you know, – Street."

"Ay, I dare say," said Savile; "one of your rich tradesmen; they always come up as gentlemen-commoners, to show that they have lots of money: it makes me wonder how any man of decent family ever condescends to put on a silk gown." Savile was the younger son of a poor baronet, thirteenth in descent, and affected considerable contempt for any other kind of distinction.

"Oh!" continued Murray, "this man is by no means of a bad family: his father comes of one of the oldest houses in Dorsetshire, and his mother, you know, is one of the Wynderbies of Wynderbie Court – a niece of Lord De Staveley's."

"*I* know!" said Savile; "nay, I never heard of Wynderbie Court in my life; but I dare say *you* know, which is quite sufficient. Really, Murray, you might make a good speculation by publishing a genealogical list of the undergraduate members of the university – birth, parentage, family connexions, governors' present incomes, probable expectations, &c., &c. It would sell capitally among the tradesmen – they'd know exactly when it was safe to give credit. You could call it *A Guide to Duns*."

"Or a *History of the* Un-*landed Gentry*," suggested I.

"Well, he is a very gentleman-like looking fellow, that Mr Russell, banker or not," said Savile, as the unconscious subject of our conversation left the hall; "I wonder who knows him?"

The same question might have been asked a week – a month after this conversation, without eliciting any very satisfactory answer. With the exception of Murray's genealogical information – the correctness of which was never doubted for a moment, though how or where he obtained this and similar pieces of history, was a point on which he kept up an amusing mystery – Russell was a man of whom no one appeared to know any thing at all. The other gentlemen-commoners had, I believe, all called upon him, as a matter of courtesy to one of their own limited mess; but in almost every case it had merely amounted to an exchange of cards. He was either out of his rooms, or "sporting oak;" and "Mr C. W. Russell," on a bit of pasteboard, had invariably appeared in the note-box of the party for whom the honour was intended, on their return from their afternoon's walk or ride. Invitations to two or three wine-parties had followed, and been civilly declined. It was at one of these meetings that he again became the subject of conversation. We were a large party, at a man of the name of Tichborne's rooms, when some one mentioned having met "the Hermit," as they called him, taking a solitary walk about three miles out of Oxford the day before.

"Oh, you mean Russell," said Tichborne: "well, I was going to tell you, I called on him again this morning, and found him in his rooms. In fact, I almost followed him in after lecture; for I confess I had some little curiosity to find out what he was made of."

"And did you find out?" – "What sort of a fellow is he?" asked half-a-dozen voices at once; for, to say the truth, the curiosity which Tichborne had just confessed had been pretty generally felt, even among those who usually affected a dignified disregard of all matters concerning the nature and habits of freshmen.

"I sat with him for about twenty minutes; indeed, I should have staid longer, for I rather liked the lad; but he seemed anxious to get rid of me. I can't make him out at all, though. I wanted him to come here to-night, but he positively would not, though he didn't pretend to have any other engagement: he said he never, or seldom, drank wine."

"Not drink wine!" interrupted Savile. "I always said he was some low fellow!"

"I have known some low fellows drink their skins full of wine, though; especially at other men's expense," said Tichborne, who was evidently not pleased with the remark; "and Russell is *not* a low fellow by any means."

"Well, well," replied Savile, whose good-humour was imperturbable – "if you say so, there's an end of it: all I mean to say is, I can't conceive any man not drinking wine, unless for the simple reason that he prefers brandy and water, and that I *do* call low. However, you'll excuse my helping myself to another glass of this particularly good claret, Tichborne, though it *is* at your expense: indeed, the only use of you gentlemen-commoners, that I am aware of, is to give us a taste of the senior common-room wine now and then. They do manage to get it good there, certainly. I wish they would give out a few dozens as prizes at collections; it would do us a great deal more good than a Russia-leather book with the college arms on it. I don't know that I shouldn't take to reading in that case."

"Drink a dozen of it, old fellow, if you can," said Tichborne. "But really I am sorry we couldn't get Russell here this evening; I think he would be rather an acquisition, if he could be drawn out. As to his not drinking wine, that's a matter of taste; and he is not very likely to corrupt the good old principles of the college on that point. But he must please himself."

"What does he do with himself?" said one of the party – "read?"

"Why, he didn't *talk* about reading, as most of our literary freshmen do, which might perhaps lead one to suppose he really was something of a scholar; still, I doubt if he is what you call a reading man; I know he belongs to the Thucydides lecture, and I have never seen him there but once."

"Ah!" said Savile, with a sigh, "that's another privilege of yours I had forgotten, which is rather enviable; you can cut lectures when you like, without getting a thundering imposition. Where does this man Russell live?"

"He has taken those large rooms that Sykes used to have, and fitted up so capitally; they were vacant, you remember, the last two terms; I had some thought of moving into them myself, but they were confoundedly expensive, and I didn't think it worth while. They cost Sykes I don't know how much, in painting and papering, and are full of all sorts of couches, and easy chairs, and so forth. And this man seems to have got two or three good paintings into them; and, altogether, they are now the best rooms in college, by far."

"Does he mean to hunt?" asked another.

"No, I fancy not," replied our host: "though he spoke as if he knew something about it; but he said he had no horses in Oxford."

"Nor any where else, I'll be bound; he's a precious slow coach, you may depend upon it." And with this decisive remark, Mr Russell and his affairs were dismissed for the time.

A year passed away, and still, at the end of that time – (a long time it seemed in those days) – Russell was as much a stranger in college as ever. He had begun to be regarded as a rather mysterious person. Hardly two men in the college agreed in their estimate of his character. Some said he was a natural son – the acknowledged heir to a large fortune, but too proud to mix in society, under the

consciousness of a dishonoured birth. But this suspicion was indignantly refuted by Murray, as much on behalf of his own genealogical accuracy, as for Russell's legitimacy, – he was undoubtedly the true and lawful son and heir of Mr Russell the banker, of – Street. Others said he was poor; but his father was reputed to be the most wealthy partner in a wealthy firm, and was known to have a considerable estate in the west of England. There were not wanting those who said he was "eccentric," – in the largest sense of the term. Yet his manners and conduct, as far as they came within notice, were correct, regular, and gentlemanly beyond criticism. There was nothing about him which could fairly incur the minor charge of being odd. He dressed well, though very plainly; would converse freely enough, upon any subject, with the few men who, from sitting at the same table, or attending the same lectures, had formed a doubtful sort of acquaintance with him; and always showed great good sense, a considerable knowledge of the world, and a courtesy, and at the same time perfect dignity of manner, which effectually prevented any attempt to penetrate, by jest or direct question, the reserve in which he had chosen to inclose himself. All invitations he steadily refused; even to the extent of sending an excuse to the dean's and tutors' breakfast parties, to their ineffable disgust. Whether he read hard, or not, was equally a secret. He was regular in his attendance at chapel, and particularly attentive to the service; a fact which by no means tended to lower him in men's estimation, though in those days more remarkable than, happily, it would be now. At lectures, indeed, he was not equally exemplary, either as to attendance or behaviour; he was often absent when asked a question, and not always accurate when he replied; and occasionally declined translating a passage which came to his turn, on the ground of not having read it. Yet his scholarship, if not always strictly accurate, had a degree of elegance which betokened both talent and reading; and his taste was evidently naturally good, and classical literature a subject of interest to him. Altogether, it rather piqued the vanity of those who saw most of him, that he would give them no opportunity of seeing more; and many affected to sneer at him, as a "*muff*," who would have been exceedingly flattered by his personal acquaintance. Only one associate did Charles Russell appear to have in the university; and this was a little greenish-haired man in a scholar's gown, a perfect contrast to himself in appearance, whose name or college no man knew, though some professed to recognise him as a Bible-clerk of one of the smallest and most obscure of the halls.

Attempts were made to pump out of his scout some information as to how Russell passed his time: for, with the exception of a daily walk, sometimes with the companion above mentioned, but much oftener alone, and his having been seen once or twice in a skiff on the river, he appeared rarely to quit his own rooms. Scouts are usually pretty communicative of all they know – and sometimes a great deal more – about the affairs of their many masters; and they are not inclined in general to hold a very high opinion of those among "their gentlemen" who, like Russell, are behind-hand in the matter of wine and supper parties – their own perquisites suffering thereby. But Job Allen was a scout of a thousand. His honesty and integrity made him quite the "*rara avis*" of his class —*i. e.*, a *white* swan amongst a flock of black ones. Though really, since I have left the university, and been condemned to house-keeping, and have seen the peculation and perquisite-hunting existing pretty nearly in the same proportion amongst ordinary servants – and the higher you go in society the worse it seems to be – without a tittle of the activity and cleverness displayed by a good college scout, who provides supper and etceteras for an extemporary party of twenty or so at an hour's notice, without starting a difficulty or giving vent to a grumble, or neglecting any one of his other multifarious duties, (further than perhaps borrowing for the service of the said supper, some hard-reading freshman's whole stock of knives, and leaving him to spread his nocturnal bread and butter with his fingers;) since I have been led to compare this with the fuss and fidget caused in a "well-regulated family" among one's own lazy vagabonds by having an extra horse to clean, or by a couple of friends arriving unexpectedly to dinner, when they all stare at you as if you were expecting impossibilities, I have nearly come to the conclusion that college servants, like hedgehogs, are a grossly calumniated race of animals – wrongfully accused of getting their living by picking and stealing, whereas they are in fact

rather more honest than the average of their neighbours. It is to be hoped that, like the hedgehogs, they enjoy a compensation in having too thick skins to be over-sensitive. At all events, Job Allen was an honest fellow. He had been known to expostulate with some of his more reckless masters upon the absurdities of their goings-on; and had more than once had a commons of bread flung at his head, when taking the opportunity of symptoms of repentance, in an evident disrelish for breakfast, to hint at the slow but inevitable approach of "degree-day." Cold chickens from the evening's supper-party had made a miraculous reappearance at next morning's lunch or breakfast; half-consumed bottles of port seemed, under his auspices, to lead charmed lives. No wonder, then, there was very little information about the private affairs of Russell to be got out of Job Allen. He had but a very poor talent for gossip, and none at all for invention. "Mr Russell's a very nice, quiet sort of gentleman, sir, and keeps his-self pretty much to his-self." This was Job's account of him; and, to curious enquirers, it was provoking both for its meagreness and its truth. "Who's his friend in the rusty gown, Job?" "I thinks, sir, his name's Smith." "Is Mr Russell going up for a class, Job?" "I can't say indeed, sir." "Does he read hard?" "Not over-hard I think, sir." "Does he sit up late, Job?" "Not over-late, sir." If there was any thing to tell, it was evident Job would neither commit himself nor his master.

Russell's conduct was certainly uncommon. If he had been the son of a poor man, dependent for his future livelihood on his own exertions, eking out the scanty allowance ill-spared by his friends by the help of a scholarship or exhibition, and avoiding society as leading to necessary expense, his position would have been understood, and even, in spite of the prejudices of youthful extravagance, commended. Or if he had been a hard-reading man from choice – or a stupid man – or a "saint" – no one would have troubled themselves about him or his proceedings. But Russell was a gentleman-commoner, and a man who had evidently seen something of the world; a rich man, and apparently by no means of the character fitted for a recluse. He had dined once with the principal, and the two or three men who had met him there were considerably surprised at the easy gracefulness of his manners, and his information upon many points usually beyond the range of undergraduates: at his own table, too, he never affected any reserve, although, perhaps from a consciousness of having virtually declined any intimacy with his companions, he seldom originated any conversation. It might have been assumed, indeed, that he despised the society into which he was thrown, but that his bearing, so far from being haughty or even cold, was occasionally marked by apparent dejection. There was also, at times, a breaking out as it were of the natural spirits of youth, checked almost abruptly; and once or twice he had betrayed an interest in, and a knowledge of, field-sports and ordinary amusements, which for the moment made his hearers fancy, as Tichborne said, that he was "coming out." But if, as at first often happened, such conversations led to a proposal for a gallop with the harriers, or a ride the next afternoon, or a match at billiards, or even an invitation to a quiet breakfast party – the refusal, though always courteous – and sometimes it was fancied unwilling – was always decided. And living day by day within reach of that close companionship which similarity of age, pursuits, and tastes, strengthened by daily intercourse, was cementing around him, Charles Russell, in his twentieth year, in a position to choose his own society, and qualified to shine in it, seemed to have deliberately adopted the life of a recluse.

There were some, indeed, who accounted for his behaviour on the ground of stinginess; and it was an opinion somewhat strengthened by one or two trifling facts. When the subscription-list for the College boat was handed to him, he put his name down for the minimum of one guinea, though Charley White, our secretary, with the happy union of impudence and "soft sawder" for which he was remarkable, delicately drew his attention to the fact, that no other gentleman-commoner had given less than five. Still it was not very intelligible that a man who wished to save his pocket, should choose to pay double fees for the privilege of wearing a velvet cap and silk gown, and rent the most expensive set of rooms in the college.

It happened that I returned one night somewhat late from a friend's rooms out of college, and had the satisfaction to find that my scout, in an unusually careful mood, had shut my outer "oak,"

which had a spring lock, of which I never by any chance carried the key. It was too late to send for the rascal to open it, and I was just planning the possibility of effecting an entrance at the window by means of the porter's ladder, when the light in Russell's room caught my eye, and I remembered that, in the days of their former occupant, our keys used to correspond, very much to our mutual convenience. It was no very great intrusion, even towards one in the morning, to ask a man to lend you his door-key, when the alternative seemed to be spending the night in the quadrangle: so I walked up his staircase, knocked, was admitted, and stated my business with all proper apologies. The key was produced most graciously, and down I went again – unluckily two steps at a time. My foot slipped, and one grand rattle brought me to the bottom: not head first, but feet first, which possibly is not quite so dangerous, but any gentleman who has tried it will agree with me that it is sufficiently unpleasant. I was dreadfully shaken; and when I tried to get up, found it no easy matter. Russell, I suppose, heard the fall, for he was by my side by the time I had collected my ideas. I felt as if I had skinned myself at slight intervals all down one side; but the worst of it was a sprained ankle. How we got up-stairs again I have no recollection; but when a glass of brandy had brought me to a little, I found myself in an easy-chair, with my foot on a stool, shivering and shaking like a wet puppy. I staid there a fortnight, (not in the chair, reader, but in the rooms;) and so it was I became intimately acquainted with Charles Russell. His kindness and attention to me were excessive; I wished of course to be moved to my own rooms at once, but he would not hear of it; and as I found every wriggle and twist which I gave quite sufficiently painful, I acceded to my surgeon's advice to remain where I was.

It was not a very pleasant mode of introduction for either party. Very few men's acquaintance is worth the pains of bumping all the way downstairs and spraining an ankle for: and for a gentleman who voluntarily confines himself to his own apartment and avoids society, to have another party chummed in upon him perforce, day and night, sitting in an armchair, with a suppressed groan occasionally, and an abominable smell of hartshorn – is, to say the least of it, not the happiest mode of hinting to him the evils of solitude. Whether it was that the one of us, compelled thus against his will to play the host, was anxious to show he was no churl by nature, and the other, feeling himself necessarily in a great degree an intruder and a bore, put forth more zealously any redeeming social qualities he might possess; be this as it might, within that fortnight Russell and I became sincere friends.

I found him, as I had expected, a most agreeable and gentlemanlike companion, clever and well informed, and with a higher and more settled tone of principles than is common to his age and position. But strongly contrasted with his usually cheerful manner, were sudden intervals of abstraction approaching to gloominess. In him, it was evidently not the result of caprice, far less of any thing approaching to affectation. I watched him closely, partly from interest, partly because I had little else to do, and became convinced that there was some latent cause of grief or anxiety at work. Once in particular, after the receipt of some letters, (they were always opened hurriedly, and apparently with a painful interest,) he was so visibly discomposed and depressed in spirits, that I ventured to express a hope that they had contained no distressing intelligence. Russell seemed embarrassed at having betrayed any unusual emotion, and answered in the negative; adding, that "he knew he was subject to the blues occasionally" – and I felt I could say no more. But I suppose I did not look convinced; for catching my eyes fixed on him soon afterwards, he shook my hand and said, "Something *has* vexed me – I cannot tell you what; but I won't think about it again now."

One evening, towards the close of my imprisonment, after a long and pleasant talk over our usual sober wind-up of a cup of coffee, some recent publication, tasteful, but rather expensive, was mentioned, which Russell expressed a wish to see. I put the natural question, to a man in his position who could appreciate the book, and to whom a few pounds were no consideration – why did he not order it? He coloured slightly, and after a moment's hesitation hurriedly replied, "Because I cannot afford it." I felt a little awkwardness as to what to say next; for the style of every thing round me betrayed a lavish disregard of expense, and yet the remark did not at all bear the tone of a jest. Probably Russell understood what was passing in my mind; for presently, without looking at me, he

went on: "Yes, you may well think it a pitiful economy to grudge five guineas for a book like that, and indulge one's-self in such pompous mummery as we have here;" and he pushed down with his foot a massive and beautiful silver coffee-pot, engraved with half-a-dozen quarterings of arms, which, in spite of a remonstrance from me, had been blackening before the fire to keep its contents warm. "Never mind it," he continued, as I in vain put out my hand to save it from falling – "it won't be damaged; it will fetch just as much per ounce; and I really cannot afford to buy an inferior article." Russell's behaviour up to this moment had been rational enough, but at the moment a suspicion crossed my mind that "eccentricity," as applied to his case, might possibly, as in some other cases, be merely an euphonism for something worse. However, I picked up the coffee-pot, and said nothing. "You must think me very strange, Hawthorne; I quite forgot myself at the moment; but if you choose to be trusted with a secret, which will be no secret long, I will tell you what will perhaps surprise you with regard to my own position, though I really have no right to trouble you with my confidences." I disclaimed any wish to assume the right of inquiring into private matters, but at the same time expressed, as I sincerely felt, an interest in what was evidently a weight on my companion's mind. "Well, to say the truth," continued Russell, "I think it will be a relief to me to tell you how I stand. I know that I have often felt of late that I am acting a daily lie here, to all the men about me; passing, doubtless, for a rich man, when in truth, for aught I know, I and all my family are beggars at this moment." He stopped, walked to the window, and returned. "I am surrounded here by luxuries which have little right within a college's walls; I occupy a distinctive position which you and others are supposed not to be able to afford. I never can mix with any of you, without, as it were, carrying with me every where the superscription written – 'This is a rich man.' And yet, with all this outward show, I may be a debtor to your charity for my bread to-morrow. You are astonished, Hawthorne; of course you are. I am not thus playing the hypocrite willingly, believe me. Had I only my own comfort, and my own feelings to consult, I would take my name off the college books to-morrow. How I bear the life I lead, I scarcely know."

"But tell me," said I, "as you have told me so much, what is the secret of all this?"

"I will; I was going to explain. My only motive for concealment, my only reason for even wishing you to keep my counsel, is, because the character and prospects of others are concerned. My father, as I dare say you know, is pretty well known as the head of the firm of Russell and Smith: he passes for a rich man, of course; he *was* a rich man, I believe, once; and I, his only son and heir – brought up as I was to look upon money as a plaything – I was sent to college of course as a gentleman-commoner. I knew nothing, as a lad, of my father's affairs: there were fools enough to tell me he was rich, and that I had nothing to do but to spend his money – and I did spend it – ay, too much of it – yet not so much, perhaps, as I might. Not since I came here, Hawthorne; oh no! – not since I found out that it was neither his nor mine to spend – I have not been so bad as that, thank God. And if ever man could atone, by suffering, for the thoughtlessness and extravagance of early days, I have wellnigh paid my penalty in full already. I told you, I entered here as a gentleman-commoner; my father came down to Oxford with me, chose my rooms, sent down this furniture and these paintings from town – thank Heaven, I knew not what they cost – ordered a couple of hunters and a groom for me – those I stopped from coming down – and, in fact, made every preparation for me to commence my career with credit as to heir-apparent to a large fortune. Some suspicions that all was not right had crossed my mind before: certain conversations between my father and cold-looking men of business, not meant for my ear, and very imperfectly understood – for it appeared to be my father's object to keep me totally ignorant of all the mysteries of banking – an increasing tendency on his part to grumble over petty expenses which implied ready payment, with an ostentatious profusion in show and entertainments – many slight circumstances put together had given me a sort of vague alarm at times, which I shook off, as often as it recurred, like a disagreeable dream. A week after I entered college, a letter from my only sister opened my eyes to the truth. What I had feared was a temporary embarrassment – a disagreeable necessity for retrenchment, or, at the worst, a stoppage of payment,

and a respectable bankruptcy, which would injure no one but the creditors. What she spoke of, was absolute ruin, poverty, and, what was worse, disgrace. It came upon me very suddenly – but I bore it. I am not going to enter into particulars about family matters to you, Hawthorne – you would not wish it, I know; let me only say, my sister Mary is an angel, and my father a weak-minded man – I will hope, not intentionally a dishonest one. But I have learnt enough to know that there are embarrassments from which he can never extricate himself with honour, and that every month, every week, that he persists in maintaining a useless struggle will only add misery to misery in the end. How long it may go on no one can say – but the end must come. My own first impulse was, of course, to leave this place at once, and so, at all events, to avoid additional expenses: but my father would not hear of it. I went to him, told him what I knew, though not how I had heard it, and drew from him a sort of confession that he had made some unfortunate speculations. But 'only let us keep up appearances' – those were his words – a little while, and all would be right again, he assured me. I made no pretence of believing him; but, Hawthorne, when he offered to go on his knees to me – and I his only son – and promised to retrench in every possible method that would not betray his motives, if I would but remain at college to take my degree – 'to keep up appearances' – what could I do?"

"Plainly," said I, "you did right: I do not see that you had any alternative. Nor have you any right to throw away your future prospects. Your father's unfortunate embarrassments are no disgrace to you."

"So said my sister. I knew her advice must be right, and I consented to remain here. *You* know I lead no life of self-indulgence; and the necessary expenses, even as a gentleman-commoner, are less than you would suppose, unless you had tried matters as closely as I have."

"And with our talents," said I.

"My talents! I am conscious of but one talent at present: the faculty of feeling acutely the miserable position into which I have been forced. No, if you mean that I am to gain any sort of distinction by hard reading, it is simply what I cannot do. Depend upon it, Hawthorne, a man must have a mind tolerably at ease to put forth any mental exertion to good purpose. If this crash were once over, and I were reduced to my proper level in society – which will, I suppose, be pretty nearly that of a pauper —*then* I think I could work for my bread either with head or hands: but in this wretchedly false position, here I sit bitterly, day after day, with books open before me perhaps, but with no heart to read, and no memory but for one thing. You know my secret now, Hawthorne, and it has been truly a relief to me to unburden my mind to some one here. I am very much alone, indeed; and it is not at all my nature to be solitary: if you will come and see me sometimes, now that you know all, it will be a real kindness. It is no great pleasure, I assure you," he continued, smiling, "to be called odd, and selfish, and stingy, by those of one's own age, as I feel I must be called; but it is much better than to lead the life I might lead – spending money which is not mine, and accustoming myself to luxuries, when I may soon have to depend on charity even for necessaries. For my own comfort, it might be better, as I said before, that the crisis came at once: still, if I remain here until I am qualified for some profession, by which I may one day be able to support my sister – that is the hope I feed on – why, then, this sort of existence may be endured."

Russell had at least no reason to complain of having disclosed his mind to a careless listener. I was moved almost to tears at his story: but, stronger than all other feelings, was admiration of his principles and character. I felt that some of us had almost done him irreverence in venturing to discuss him so lightly as we had often done. How little we know the heart of others, and how readily we prate about "seeing through" a man, when in truth what we see is but a surface, and the image conveyed to our mind from it but the reflection of ourselves!

My intimacy with Russell, so strangely commenced, had thus rapidly and unexpectedly taken the character of that close connexion which exists between those who have one secret and engrossing interest confined to themselves alone. We were now more constantly together, perhaps, than any two men in college: and many were the jokes I had to endure in consequence. Very few of my old

companions had ventured to carry their attentions to me, while laid up in Russell's rooms, beyond an occasional call at the door to know how I was going on; and when I got back to my old quarters, and had refused one or two invitations on the plea of having Russell coming to spend a quiet evening with me, their astonishment and disgust were expressed pretty unequivocally, and they affected to call us the exclusives. However, Russell was a man who, if he made few friends, gave no excuse for enemies: and, in time, my intimacy with him, and occasional withdrawals from general society in consequence, came to be regarded as a pardonable weakness – unaccountable, but past all help – a subject on which the would-be wisest of my friends shook their heads, and said nothing.

I think this new connexion was of advantage to both parties. To myself it certainly was. I date the small gleams of good sense and sobermindedness which broke in upon my character at that critical period of life, solely from my intercourse with Charles Russell. He, on the other hand, had suffered greatly from the want of that sympathy and support which the strongest mind at times stands as much in need of as the weakest, and which in his peculiar position could only be purchased by an unreserved confidence. From any premeditated explanation he would have shrunk; nor would he ever, as he himself confessed, have made the avowal he did to me, except it had escaped him by a momentary impulse. But, having made it, he seemed a happier man. His reading, which before had been desultory and interrupted, was now taken up in earnest: and idly inclined as I was myself, I became, with the pseudo sort of generosity not uncommon at that age, so much more anxious for his future success than my own, that, in order to encourage him, I used to go to his rooms to read with him, and we had many a hard morning's work together.

We were very seldom interrupted by visitors: almost the only one was that unknown and unprepossessing friend of Russell's who has been mentioned before – his own contradictory in almost every respect. Very uncouth and dirty-looking he was, and stuttered terribly – rather, it seemed, from diffidence than from any natural defect. He showed some surprise on the first two or three occasions in which he encountered me, and made an immediate attempt to back out of the room again: and though Russell invariably recalled him, and showed an evident anxiety to treat him with every consideration, he never appeared at his ease for a moment, and made his escape as soon as possible. Russell always fixed a time for seeing him again – usually the next day: and there was evidently some object in these interviews, into which, as it was no concern of mine, I never enquired particularly, as I had already been intrusted with a confidence rather unusual as the result of a few weeks' acquaintance; and on the subject of his friend – "poor Smith," as he called him – Russell did not seem disposed to be communicative.

Time wore on, and brought round the Christmas vacation. I thought it due to myself, as all young men do, to get up to town for a week or two if possible; and being lucky enough to have an old aunt occupying a very dark house much too large for her, and who, being rather a prosy personage, a little deaf, and very opinionated, and therefore not a special object of attraction to her relations, (her property was merely a life-interest,) was very glad to get any one to come and see her – I determined to pay a visit, in which the score of obligations would be pretty equally balanced on both sides. On the one hand, the tête-à-tête dinners with the old lady, and her constant catechising about Oxford, were a decided bore to me; while it required some forbearance on her part to endure an inmate who constantly rushed into the drawing-room without wiping his boots, who had no taste for old china, and against whom the dear dog Petto had an unaccountable but decided antipathy. (Poor dog! I fear he was ungrateful: I used to devil spunge biscuit, internally, for him after dinner, kept a snuff-box more for his use than my own, and prolonged his life, I feel confident, at least twelve months from apoplexy, by pulling hairs out of his tail with a tweezer whenever he went to sleep.) On the other hand, my aunt had good wine, and I used to praise it; which was agreeable to both parties. She got me pleasant invitations, and was enabled herself to make her appearance in society with a live nephew in her suite, who in her eyes (I confess, reader, old aunts are partial) was a very eligible young man. So my visit, on the whole, was mutually agreeable and advantageous. I had my mornings to myself, gratifying the

dowager occasionally by a drive with her in the afternoon; and we had sufficient engagements for our evenings to make each other's sole society rather an unusual infliction. It is astonishing how much such an arrangement tends to keep people the best friends in the world.

I had attended my respectable relation one evening (or rather she had attended me, for I believe she went more for my sake than her own) to a large evening party, which was a ball in every thing but the name. Nearly all in the rooms were strangers to me; but I had plenty of introductions, and the night wore on pleasantly enough. I saw a dozen pretty faces I had never seen before, and was scarcely likely to see again – the proportion of ugly ones I forbear to mention – and was prepared to bear the meeting and the parting with equal philosophy, when the sight of a very familiar face brought different scenes to my mind. Standing within half-a-dozen steps of me, and in close conversation with a lady, of whom I could see little besides a cluster of dark curls, was Ormiston, one of our college tutors, and one of the most universally popular men in Oxford. It would be wrong to say I was surprised to see him there or any where else, for his roll of acquaintance was most extensive, embracing all ranks and degrees; but I was very glad to see him, and made an almost involuntary dart forward in his direction. He saw me, smiled, and put out his hand, but did not seem inclined to enter into any conversation. I was turning away, when a sudden movement gave me a full view of the face of the lady to whom he had been talking. It was a countenance of that pale, clear, intellectual beauty, with a shade of sadness about the mouth, which one so seldom sees but in a picture, but which, when seen, haunts the imagination and the memory rather than excites passionate admiration. The eyes met mine, and, quite by accident, for the thoughts were evidently pre-occupied, retained for some moments the same fixed gaze with which I almost as unconsciously was regarding them. There was something in the features which seemed not altogether unknown to me; and I was beginning to speculate on the possibility of any small heroine of my boyish admiration having shot up into such sweet womanhood – such changes soon occur – when the eyes became conscious, and the head was rapidly turned away. I lost her a moment afterwards in the crowd, and although I watched the whole of the time we remained, with an interest that amused myself, I could not see her again. She must have left the party early.

So strong became the impression on my mind that it was a face I had known before, and so fruitless and tantalizing were my efforts to give it "a local habitation and a name" – that I determined at last to question my aunt upon the subject, though quite aware of the imputation that would follow. The worst of it was, I had so few tangible marks and tokens by which to identify my interesting unknown. However, at breakfast next morning, I opened ground at once, in answer to my hostess's remark that the rooms had been very full.

"Yes, they were: I wanted very much, my dear aunt, to have asked you the names of all the people; but you really were so much engaged, I had no opportunity."

"Ah! if you had come and sat by me, I could have told you all about them; but there were some very odd people there, too."

"There was one rather interesting-looking girl I did not see dancing much – tallish, with pearl earrings."

"Where was she sitting? how was she dressed?"

I had only seen her standing – I never noticed – I hardly think I could have seen – even the colour of her dress.

"Not know how she was dressed? My dear Frank, how strange!"

"All young ladies dress alike now, aunt; there's really not much distinction: they seemed all black and white to me."

"Certainly the balls don't look half so gay as they used to do: a little colour gives cheerfulness, I think." (The good old lady herself had worn crimson satin and a suite of chrysolites – if her theory were correct, she was enough to have spread a glow over the whole company.) "But let me see; – tall, with pearls, you say; dark hair and eyes?"

"Yes."

"You must mean Lucy Fielding."

"Nonsense, my dear Ma'am – I beg a thousand pardons; but I was introduced to Miss Fielding, and danced with her – she squints."

"My dear Frank, don't say such a thing! – she will have half the Strathinnis property when she comes of age. But let me see again. Had she a white rose in her hair?"

"She had, I think; or something like it."

"It might have been Lord Dunham's youngest daughter, who is just come out – she was there for an hour or so."

"No, no, aunt: I know her by sight too – a pale gawky thing, with an arm and hand like a prize-fighter's – oh no!"

"Upon my word, my dear nephew, you young men give yourselves abominable airs: call her a very fine young woman, and I've no doubt she will marry well, though she hasn't much fortune. Was it Miss Cassilis, then? – white tulle over satin, looped with roses, with gold sprigs" —

"And freckles to match: why, she's as old as" – ; I felt myself on dangerous ground, and filled up the hiatus, I fear not very happily, by looking full at my aunt.

"Not so very old, indeed, my dear: she refused a very good offer last season: she cannot possibly be above" —

"Oh! spare the particulars, pray, my dear Ma'am; but you could not have seen the girl I mean: I don't think she staid after supper: I looked every where for her to ask who she was, but she must have been gone."

"Really! I wish I could help you," said my aunt with a very insinuating smile.

"Oh," said I, "what made me anxious to know who she was at the time, was simply that I saw her talking to an old friend of mine, whom you know something of, I believe; did you not meet Mr Ormiston somewhere last winter?"

"Mr Ormiston! oh, I saw him there last night! and now I know who you mean; it must have been Mary Russell, of course; she did wear pearls, and plain white muslin."

"Russell! what Russells are they?"

"Russell the banker's daughter; I suppose nobody knows how many thousands she'll have; but she is a very odd girl. Mr Ormiston is rather committed in that quarter, I fancy. Ah, he's a very gentlemanly man, certainly, and an old friend of the family; but that match would never do. Why, he must be ten years older than she is, in the first place, and hasn't a penny that I know of except his fellowship. No, no; she refused Sir John Maynard last winter, with a clear twelve thousand a-year; and angry enough her papa was about that, every body says, though he never contradicts her; but she never will venture upon such a silly thing as a match with Mr Ormiston."

"Won't she?" said I mechanically, not having had time to collect my thoughts exactly.

"To be sure she won't," replied my aunt rather sharply. It certainly struck me that Mary Russell, from what her brother had told me, was a person very likely to show some little disregard of any conventional notions of what was, or what was not desirable in the matter of matrimony; but at the same time I inclined to agree with my aunt, that it was not very probable she would become Mrs Ormiston; indeed, I doubted any very serious intentions on his part. Fellows of colleges are usually somewhat lavish of admiration and attentions; but, as many young ladies know, very difficult to bring to book. Ormiston was certainly not a man to be influenced by the fortune which the banker's daughter might reasonably be credited with; if any thing made the matter seem serious, it was that his opinion of the sex in general – as thrown out in an occasional hint or sarcasm – seemed to border on a supercilious contempt.

I did not meet Miss Russell again during my short stay in town; but two or three days after this conversation, in turning the corner of the street, I came suddenly upon Ormiston. I used to flatter myself with being rather a favourite of his – not from any conscious merit on my part, unless that,

during the year of his deanship, when summoned before him for any small atrocities, and called to account for them, I never took up his time or my own by any of the usual somewhat questionable excuses, but awaited my fate, whether "imposition" or reprimand, in silence; a plan which, with him, answered very well, and saved occasionally some straining of conscience on one side, and credulity on the other. I tried it with his successor, who decided that I was contumacious, because, the first time I was absent from chapel, in reply to his interrogations I answered nothing, and upon his persevering, told him that I had been at a very late supper-party the night before. I think, then, I was rather a favourite of Ormiston's. To say that he was a favourite of mine would be saying very little; for there could have been scarcely a man in college, of any degree of respectability, who would not have been ready to say the same. No man had a higher regard for the due maintenance of discipline, or his own dignity, and the reputation of the college; yet nowhere among the seniors could the undergraduate find a more judicious or a kinder friend. He had the art of mixing with them occasionally with all the unreservedness of an equal, without for a moment endangering the respect due to his position. There was no man you could ask a favour of – even if it infringed a little upon the strictness of college regulations – so readily as Ormiston; and no one appeared to retain more thoroughly some of his boyish tastes and recollections. He subscribed his five guineas to the boat, even after a majority of the fellows had induced our good old Principal, whose annual appearance at the river-side to cheer her at the races had seemed almost a part of his office, to promulgate a decree to the purport that boat-racing was immoral, and that no man engaged therein should find favour in the sight of the authorities. Yet, at the same time, Ormiston could give grave advice when needed; and give it in such a manner, that the most thoughtless among us received it as from a friend. And whenever he did administer a few words of pointed rebuke – and he did not spare it when any really discreditable conduct came under his notice – they fell the more heavily upon the delinquent, because the public sympathy was sure to be on the side of the judge. The art of governing young men is a difficult one, no doubt; but it is surprising that so few take any pains to acquire it. There were very few Ormistons, in my time, in the high places in Oxford.

On that morning, however, Ormiston met me with evident embarrassment, if not with coolness. He started when he first saw me, and, had there been a chance of doing so with decency, looked as if he would have pretended not to recognise me. But we were too near for that, and our eyes met at once. I was really very glad to see him, and not at all inclined to be content with the short "How d'ye do?" so unlike his usual cordial greetings, with which he was endeavouring to hurry on; and there was a little curiosity afloat among my other feelings. So I fairly stopped him with a few of the usual inquiries, as to how long he had been in town, &c., and then plunged at once into the affair of the ball at which we had last met. He interrupted me at once.

"By the way," said he, "have you heard of poor Russell's business?"

I actually shuddered, for I scarcely knew what was to follow. As composedly as I could, I simply said, "No."

"His father is ruined, they say – absolutely ruined. I suppose *that* is no secret by this time, at all events. He cannot possibly pay even a shilling in the pound."

"I'm very sorry indeed to hear it," was all I could say.

"But do you know, Hawthorne," continued Ormiston, taking my arm with something like his old manner, and no longer showing any anxiety to cut short our interview, "I am afraid this is not the worst of it. There is a report in the city this morning, I was told, that Mr Russell's character is implicated by some rather unbusinesslike transactions. I believe you are a friend of poor Russell's, and for that reason I mention it to you in confidence. He may not be aware of it; but the rumour is, that his father *dare* not show himself again here: that he has left England I know to be a fact."

"And his daughter? Miss Russell?" I asked involuntarily – "his children, I mean – where are they?"

I thought Ormiston's colour heightened; but he was not a man to show much visible emotion. "Charles Russell and his sister are still in London," he replied; "I have just seen them. They know their father has left for the Continent; I hope they do *not* know all the reasons. I am very sincerely sorry for young Russell; it will be a heavy blow to him, and I fear he will find his circumstances bitterly changed. Of course he will have to leave Oxford."

"I suppose so," said I; "no one can feel more for him than I do. It was well, perhaps, that this did not happen in term time."

"It spared him some mortification, certainly. You will see him, perhaps, before you leave town; he will take it kind. And if you have any influence with him – (he will be inclined to listen, perhaps just now, to you more than to me – being more of his own age, he will give you credit for entering into his feelings) – do try and dissuade him from forming any wild schemes, to which he seems rather inclined. He has some kind friends, no doubt; and remember, if there is any thing in which I can be of use to him, he shall have my aid – even to the half of my kingdom – that is, my tutorship."

And with a smile and tone which seemed a mixture of jest and earnest, Mr Ormiston wished me good-morning. He was to leave for Oxford that night.

Of Russell's address in town I was up to this moment ignorant, but resolved to find it out, and see him before my return to the University. The next morning, however, a note arrived from him, containing a simple request that I would call. I found him at the place from which he wrote – one of those dull quiet streets that lead out of the Strand – in very humble lodgings; his father's private establishment having been given up, it appeared, immediately. The moment we met, I saw at once, as I expected, that the blow which, to Ormiston, had naturally seemed so terrible a one – no less than the loss, to a young man, of the wealth, rank, and prospects in life to which he had been taught to look forward – had been, in fact, to Russell a merciful relief. The failure of that long-celebrated and trusted house, which was causing in the public mind, according to the papers, so much "consternation" and "excitement," was to him a consummation long foreseen, and scarcely dreaded. It was only the shadow of wealth and happiness which he had lost now; its substance had vanished long since. And the conscious hollowness and hypocrisy, as he called it, of his late position, had been a far more bitter trial to a mind like his, than any which could result from its exposure. He was one to hail with joy any change which brought him back to truth and reality, no matter how rude and sudden the revulsion.

He met me with a smile; a really honest, almost a light-hearted smile. "It is come at last, Hawthorne; perhaps it would be wrong, or I feel as if I could say, thank God. There is but one point which touches me at all; what do they say about my father?" I told him – fortunately, my acquaintance lying but little among men of business, I could tell him so honestly – that I had not heard a syllable breathed to his discredit.

"Well, well; but they will, soon. Oh! Hawthorne; the utter misery, the curse that money-making brings with it! That joining house to house, and field to field, how it corrupts all the better part of a man's nature! I vow to you, I believe my father would have been an honest man if he had but been a poor one! If he had never had any thing to do with interest tables, and had but spent his capital, instead of trying to double and redouble it! One thing I have to thank him for; that he never would suffer me to imbibe any taste for business; he knew the evil and the pollution money-handling brings with it – I am sure he did; he encouraged me, I fear, in extravagance; but I bless him that he never encouraged me in covetousness."

He grew a little calmer by degrees, and we sat down and took counsel as to his future plans. He was not, of course, without friends, and had already had many offers of assistance for himself and his sister; but his heart appeared, for the present, firmly bent upon independence. Much to my surprise, he decided on returning at once to Oxford, and reading for his degree. His sister had some little property settled upon her – some hundred and fifty pounds a-year; and this she had insisted on devoting to this purpose.

"I love her too well," said Russell, "to refuse her: and trifling as this sum is, – I remember the time when I should have thought it little to keep me in gloves and handkerchiefs, – yet, with management, it will be more than I shall spend in Oxford. Of course, I play the gentleman-commoner no longer; I shall descend to the plain stuff gown."

"You'll go to a hall, of course?" said I; for I concluded he would at least avoid the mortification of so palpable a confession of reduced circumstances as this degradation of rank in his old College would be.

"I can see no occasion for it; that is, if they will allow me to change; I have done nothing to be ashamed of, and shall be much happier than I was before. I only strike my false colours; and you know they were never carried willingly."

I did not attempt to dissuade him, and soon after rose to take my leave.

"I cannot ask my sister to see you now," he said, as we shook hands: "she is not equal to it. But some other time, I hope" —

"At any other time, I shall be most proud of the introduction. By the way, have you seen Ormiston? He met me this morning, and sent some kind messages, to offer any service in his power."

"He did, did he?"

"Yes; and, depend upon it, he will do all he can for you in college; you don't know him very well, I think; but I am sure he takes an interest in you now, at all events," I continued, "and no man is a more sincere and zealous friend."

"I beg your pardon, Hawthorne, but I fancy I *do* know Mr Ormiston very well."

"Oh! I remember, there seemed some coolness between you, because you never would accept his invitations. Ormiston thought you were too proud to dine with him; and then *his* pride, which he has his share of, took fire. But that misunderstanding must be all over now."

"My dear Hawthorne, I believe Mr Ormiston and I understand each other perfectly. Good-morning; I am sorry to seem abrupt, but I have a host of things, not the most agreeable, to attend to."

It seemed quite evident that there was some little prejudice on Russell's part against Ormiston. Possibly he did not like his attentions to his sister. But that was no business of mine, and I knew the other too well to doubt his earnest wish to aid and encourage a man of Russell's high principles, and in his unfortunate position. None of us always know our best friends.

The step which Russell had resolved on taking was, of course, an unusual one. Even the college authorities strongly advised him to remove his name to the books of one of the halls, where he would enter comparatively as a stranger, and where his altered position would not entail so many painful feelings. Every facility was offered him of doing so at one of them where a relative of our Principal's was the head, and even a saving in expense might thus be effected. But this evident kindness and consideration on their part, only confirmed him in the resolution of remaining where he was. He met their representations with the graceful reply, that he had an attachment to the college which did not depend upon the rank he held in it, and that he trusted he should not be turned out of two homes at once. Even the heart of the splenetic little vice-principal was moved by this genuine tribute to the venerable walls, which to him, as his mistress's girdle to the poet, encircled all he loved, or hoped, or cared for; and had the date been some century earlier – in those remarkable times when a certain fellow was said to have owed his election into that body to a wondrous knack he had at compounding sherry-posset – it is probable Charles Russell would have stepped into a fellowship by special license at once.

He had harder work before him, however, and he set stoutly to it. He got permission to lodge out of college – a privilege quite unusual, and apparently without any sufficient object in his case. A day or two after his return, he begged me to go with him to see the rooms he had taken: and I was surprised to find that although small, and not in a good part of the town, they were furnished in a style by no means, I thought, in accordance with the strict economy I knew him to be practising in every other respect. They contained, on a small scale, all the appointments of a lady's drawing-

room. It was soon explained. His sister was coming to live with him. "We are but two, now," said Russell in explanation, "and though poor Mary has been offered what might have been a comfortable home elsewhere, which perhaps would have been more prudent, we both thought why should we be separated? As to these little things you see, they are nearly all hers: we offered them to the creditors, but even the lawyers would not touch them: and here Mary and I shall live. Very strange, you think, for her to be here in Oxford with no one to take care of her but me; but she does not mind that, and we shall be together. However, Hawthorne, we shall keep a dragon: there is an old housekeeper who would not be turned off, and she comes down with Mary, and may pass for her aunt, if that's all; so don't, pray, be shocked at us."

And so the old housekeeper did come down, and Mary with her; and under such guardianship, a brother and an old servant, was that fair girl installed within the perilous precincts of the University of Oxford; perilous in more senses than one, as many a speculative and disappointed mamma can testify, whose daughters, brought to market at the annual "show" at commemoration, have left uncaught those dons of dignity, and heirs-apparent of property, whom they ought to have caught, and caught those well-dressed and good-looking, but undesirable young men, whom they ought not to have caught. Mary Russell, however, was in little peril herself, and, as little as she could help it, an occasion of peril to others. Seldom did she move out from her humble abode, except for an early morning walk with her brother, or sometimes leaning on the arm of her old domestic, so plainly dressed that you might have mistaken her for her daughter, and wondered how those intensely expressive features, and queen-like graces, should have been bestowed by nature on one so humble. Many a thoughtful student, pacing slowly the parks or Christchurch meadow after early chapel, book in hand, cheating himself into the vain idea that he was taking a healthful walk, and roused by the flutter of approaching female dress, and unwillingly looking up to avoid the possible and unwelcome collision with a smirking nurse-maid and an unresisting baby – has met those eyes, and spoilt his reading for the morning; or has paused in the running tour of Headington hill, or Magdalen walk, by which he was endeavouring to cram his whole allotted animal exercise for the day into an hour, as that sweet vision crossed his path, and wondered in his heart by what happy tie of relationship, or still dearer claim, his fellow-undergraduate had secured to himself so lovely a companion; and has tried in vain, over his solitary breakfast, to rid himself of the heterodox notion which would still creep in upon his thoughts, that in the world there might be, after all, things better worth living and working for, prizes more valuable – and perhaps not harder to win – than a first class, and living personations of the beautiful which Aristotle had unaccountably left out. Forgive me, dear reader, if I seem to be somewhat sentimental: I am not, and I honestly believe I never was, in love with Mary Russell; I am not – I fear I never was or shall be – much of a reading man or an early riser; but I will confess, it would have been a great inducement to me to adopt such habits, if I could have ensured such pleasant company in my morning walks.

To the general world of Oxford, for a long time, I have no doubt the very existence of such a jewel within it was unknown; for at the hours when liberated tutors and idle undergraduates are wont to walk abroad, Mary was sitting, hid within a little ambush of geraniums, either busy at her work, or helping – as she loved to fancy she helped him – her brother at his studies. Few men, I believe, ever worked harder than Russell did in his last year. With the exception of the occasional early walk, and the necessary attendance at chapel and lecture, he read hard nearly the whole day; and I always attributed the fact of his being able to do so with comparatively little effort, and no injury to his health, to his having such a sweet face always present, to turn his eyes upon, when wearied with a page of Greek, and such a kind voice always ready to speak or to be silent.

It was not for want of access to any other society that Mary Russell spent her time so constantly with her brother. The Principal, with his usual kindheartedness, had insisted – a thing he seldom did – upon his lady making her acquaintance; and though Mrs Meredith, who plumed herself much upon her dignity, had made some show of resistance at first to calling upon a young lady who was living in lodgings by herself in one of the most out-of-the-way streets in Oxford, yet, after her first interview

with Miss Russell, so much did her sweetness of manner win upon Mrs Principal's fancy – or perhaps it will be doing that lady but justice to say, so much did her more than orphan unprotectedness and changed fortunes soften the woman's heart that beat beneath that formidable exterior of silk and ceremony, that before the first ten minutes of what had been intended as a very condescending and very formal call, were over, she had been offered a seat in Mrs Meredith's official pew in St Mary's; the pattern of a mysterious bag, which that good lady carried every where about with her, it was believed for no other purpose; and an airing the next day behind the fat old greys, which their affectionate coachman – in commemoration of his master's having purchased them at the time he held that dignity – always called by the name of the "Vice-Chancellors." Possibly an absurd incident, which Mary related with great glee to her brother and myself, had helped to thaw the ice in which "our governess" usually encased herself. When the little girl belonging to the lodgings opened the door to these dignified visitors, upon being informed that Miss Russell was at home, the Principal gave the name simply as "Dr and Mrs Meredith: " which, not appearing to his more pompous half at all calculated to convey a due impression of the honour conveyed by the visit, she corrected him, and in a tone quite audible – as indeed every word of the conversation had been – up the half-dozen steep stairs which led to the little drawing-room, gave out "the Master of – and lady, if you please." The word "master" was quite within the comprehension of the little domestic, and dropping an additional courtesy of respect to an office which reminded her of her catechism and the Sunday school, she selected the appropriate feminine from her own vocabulary, and threw open the door with "the master and mistress of – if you please, Miss." Dr Meredith laughed, as he entered, so heartily, that even Mary could not help smiling, and the "mistress," seeing the odds against her, smiled too. An acquaintance begun in such good humour, could hardly assume a very formal character; and, in fact, had Mary Russell not resolutely declined all society, Mrs Meredith would have felt rather a pleasure in patronising her. But both her straitened means and the painful circumstances of her position – her father already spoken of almost as a criminal – led her to court strict retirement; while she clung with redoubled affection to her brother. He, on his part, seemed to have improved in health and spirits since his change of fortunes; the apparent haughtiness and coldness with which many had charged him before, had quite vanished; he showed no embarrassment, far less any consciousness of degradation, in his conversation with any of his old messmates at the gentlemen-commoners' table; and though his communication with the college was but comparatively slight, nearly all his time being spent in his lodgings, he was becoming quite a popular character.

Meanwhile, a change of a different kind seemed to be coming over Ormiston. It was remarked, even by those not much given to observation, that his lectures, which were once considered endurable, even by idle men, from his happy talent of remark and illustration, were fast becoming as dull and uninteresting as the common run of all such business. Moreover, he had been in the habit of giving, occasionally, capital dinners, invitations to which were sent out frequently and widely among the young men of his own college: these ceased almost entirely; or, when they occurred, had but the shadow of their former joyousness. Even some of the fellows were known to have remarked that Ormiston was much altered lately; some said he was engaged to be married, a misfortune which would account for any imaginable eccentricities; but one of the best of the college livings falling vacant about the time, and, on its refusal by the two senior fellows, coming within Ormiston's acceptance, and being passed by him, tended very much to do away with any suspicion of that kind.

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