

**YONGE
CHARLOTTE
MARY**

THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE

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Содержание

CHAPTER 1	5
CHAPTER 2	12
CHAPTER 3	17
CHAPTER 4	25
CHAPTER 5	37
CHAPTER 6	50
CHAPTER 7	58
CHAPTER 8	68
CHAPTER 9	74
CHAPTER 10	82
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	91

Charlotte M. Yonge

The Heir of Redclyffe

CHAPTER 1

In such pursuits if wisdom lies,
Who, Laura, can thy taste despise?

—GAY

The drawing-room of Hollywell House was one of the favoured apartments, where a peculiar air of home seems to reside, whether seen in the middle of summer, all its large windows open to the garden, or, as when our story commences, its bright fire and stands of fragrant green-house plants contrasted with the wintry fog and leafless trees of November. There were two persons in the room—a young lady, who sat drawing at the round table, and a youth, lying on a couch near the fire, surrounded with books and newspapers, and a pair of crutches near him. Both looked up with a smile of welcome at the entrance of a tall, fine-looking young man, whom each greeted with ‘Good morning, Philip.’

‘Good morning, Laura. Good morning, Charles; I am glad you are downstairs again! How are you to-day?’

‘No way remarkable, thank you,’ was the answer, somewhat wearily given by Charles.

‘You walked?’ said Laura.

‘Yes. Where’s my uncle? I called at the post-office, and brought a letter for him. It has the Moorworth post-mark,’ he added, producing it.

‘Where’s that?’ said Charles.

‘The post-town to Redclyffe; Sir Guy Morville’s place.’

‘That old Sir Guy! What can he have to do with my father?’

‘Did you not know,’ said Philip, ‘that my uncle is to be guardian to the boy—his grandson?’

‘Eh? No, I did not.’

‘Yes,’ said Philip; ‘when old Sir Guy made it an especial point that my father should take the guardianship, he only consented on condition that my uncle should be joined with him; so now my uncle is alone in the trust, and I cannot help thinking something must have happened at Redclyffe. It is certainly not Sir Guy’s writing.’

‘It must wait, unless your curiosity will carry you out in search of papa,’ said Charles; ‘he is somewhere about, zealously supplying the place of Jenkins.’

‘Really, Philip,’ said Laura, ‘there is no telling how much good you have done him by convincing him of Jenkins’ dishonesty. To say nothing of the benefit of being no longer cheated, the pleasure of having to overlook the farming is untold.’

Philip smiled, and came to the table where she was drawing. ‘Do you know this place?’ said she, looking up in his face.

‘Stylehurst itself! What is it taken from?’

‘From this pencil sketch of your sister’s, which I found in mamma’s scrap book.’

‘You are making it very like, only the spire is too slender, and that tree—can’t you alter the foliage?—it is an ash.’

‘Is it? I took it for an elm.’

‘And surely those trees in the foreground should be greener, to throw back the middle distance. That is the peak of South Moor exactly, if it looked further off.’

She began the alterations, while Philip stood watching her progress, a shade of melancholy gathering on his face. Suddenly, a voice called ‘Laura! Are you there? Open the door, and you will see.’

On Philip’s opening it, in came a tall camellia; the laughing face, and light, shining curls of the bearer peeping through the dark green leaves.

‘Thank you! Oh, is it you, Philip? Oh, don’t take it. I must bring my own camellia to show Charlie.’

‘You make the most of that one flower,’ said Charles.

‘Only see how many buds!’ and she placed it by his sofa. Is it not a perfect blossom, so pure a white, and so regular! And I am so proud of having beaten mamma and all the gardeners, for not another will be out this fortnight; and this is to go to the horticultural show. Sam would hardly trust me to bring it in, though it was my nursing, not his.’

‘Now, Amy,’ said Philip, when the flower had been duly admired, ‘you must let me put it into the window, for you. It is too heavy for you.’

‘Oh, take care,’ cried Amabel, but too late; for, as he took it from her, the solitary flower struck against Charles’s little table, and was broken off.

‘O Amy, I am very sorry. What a pity! How did it happen?’

‘Never mind,’ she answered; ‘it will last a long time in water.’

‘It was very unlucky—I am very sorry—especially because of the horticultural show.’

‘Make all your apologies to Sam,’ said Amy, ‘his feelings will be more hurt than mine. I dare say my poor flower would have caught cold at the show, and never held up its head again.’

Her tone was gay; but Charles, who saw her face in the glass, betrayed her by saying, ‘Winking away a tear, O Amy!’

‘I never nursed a dear gazelle!’ quoted Amy, with a merry laugh; and before any more could be said, there entered a middle-aged gentleman, short and slight, with a fresh, weather-beaten, good-natured face, gray whiskers, quick eyes, and a hasty, undecided air in look and movement. He greeted Philip heartily, and the letter was given to him.

‘Ha! Eh? Let us look. Not old Sir Guy’s hand. Eh? What can be the matter? What? Dead! This is a sudden thing.’

‘Dead! Who? Sir Guy Morville?’

‘Yes, quite suddenly—poor old man.’ Then stepping to the door, he opened it, and called, ‘Mamma; just step here a minute, will you, mamma?’

The summons was obeyed by a tall, handsome lady, and behind her crept, with doubtful steps, as if she knew not how far to venture, a little girl of eleven, her turned-up nose and shrewd face full of curiosity. She darted up to Amabel; who, though she shook her head, and held up her finger, smiled, and took the little girl’s hand, listening meanwhile to the announcement, ‘Do you hear this, mamma? Here’s a shocking thing! Sir Guy Morville dead, quite suddenly.’

‘Indeed! Well, poor man, I suppose no one ever repented or suffered more than he. Who writes?’

‘His grandson—poor boy! I can hardly make out his letter.’ Holding it half a yard from his eyes, so that all could see a few lines of hasty, irregular writing, in a forcible hand, bearing marks of having been penned under great distress and agitation, he read aloud:—

“DEAR MR. EDMONSTONE,—

My dear grandfather died at six this morning. He had an attack of apoplexy yesterday evening, and never spoke again, though for a short time he knew me. We hope he suffered little. Markham will make all arrangements. We propose that the funeral should take place on Tuesday; I hope you will be able to come. I would write

to my cousin, Philip Morville, if I knew his address; but I depend on you for saying all that ought to be said. Excuse this illegible letter,—I hardly know what I write.

“Yours, very sincerely,

“Guy Morville.”

‘Poor fellow!’ said Philip, ‘he writes with a great deal of proper feeling.’

‘How very sad for him to be left alone there!’ said Mrs. Edmonstone.

‘Very sad—very,’ said her husband. ‘I must start off to him at once—yes, at once. Should you not say so—eh, Philip?’

‘Certainly. I think I had better go with you. It would be the correct thing, and I should not like to fail in any token of respect for poor old Sir Guy.’

‘Of course—of course,’ said Mr. Edmonstone; ‘it would be the correct thing. I am sure he was always very civil to us, and you are next heir after this boy.’

Little Charlotte made a sort of jump, lifted her eyebrows, and stared at Amabel.

Philip answered. ‘That is not worth a thought; but since he and I are now the only representatives of the two branches of the house of Morville, it shall not be my fault if the enmity is not forgotten.’

‘Buried in oblivion would sound more magnanimous,’ said Charles; at which Amabel laughed so uncontrollably, that she was forced to hide her head on her little sister’s shoulder. Charlotte laughed too, an imprudent proceeding, as it attracted attention. Her father smiled, saying, half-reprovingly—‘So you are there, inquisitive pussy-cat?’ And at her mother’s question,—‘Charlotte, what business have you here?’ She stole back to her lessons, looking very small, without the satisfaction of hearing her mother’s compassionate words—‘Poor child!’

‘How old is he?’ asked Mr. Edmonstone, returning to the former subject.

‘He is of the same age as Laura—seventeen and a half,’ answered Mrs. Edmonstone. ‘Don’t you remember my brother saying what a satisfaction it was to see such a noble baby as she was, after such a poor little miserable thing as the one at Redclyffe?’

‘He is grown into a fine spirited fellow,’ said Philip.

‘I suppose we must have him here,’ said Mr. Edmonstone. ‘Should you not say so—eh, Philip?’

‘Certainly; I should think it very good for him. Indeed, his grandfather’s death has happened at a most favourable time for him. The poor old man had such a dread of his going wrong that he kept him—’

‘I know—as tight as a drum.’

‘With strictness that I should think very bad for a boy of his impatient temper. It would have been a very dangerous experiment to send him at once among the temptations of Oxford, after such discipline and solitude as he has been used to.’

‘Don’t talk of it,’ interrupted Mr. Edmonstone, spreading out his hands in a deprecating manner. ‘We must do the best we can with him, for I have got him on my hands till he is five-and-twenty—his grandfather has tied him up till then. If we can keep him out of mischief, well and good; if not, it can’t be helped.’

‘You have him all to yourself,’ said Charles.

‘Ay, to my sorrow. If your poor father was alive, Philip, I should be free of all care. I’ve a pretty deal on my hands,’ he proceeded, looking more important than troubled. ‘All that great Redclyffe estate is no sinecure, to say nothing of the youth himself. If all the world will come to me, I can’t help it. I must go and speak to the men, if I am to be off to Redclyffe tomorrow. Will you come, Philip?’

‘I must go back soon, thank you,’ replied Philip. ‘I must see about my leave; only we should first settle when to set off.’

This arranged, Mr. Edmonstone hurried away, and Charles began by saying, ‘Isn’t there a ghost at Redclyffe?’

‘So it is said,’ answered his cousin; ‘though I don’t think it is certain whose it is. There is a room called Sir Hugh’s Chamber, over the gateway, but the honour of naming it is undecided between

Hugo de Morville, who murdered Thomas a Becket, and his namesake, the first Baronet, who lived in the time of William of Orange, when the quarrel began with our branch of the family. Do you know the history of it, aunt?

‘It was about some property,’ said Mrs Edmonstone, ‘though I don’t know the rights of it. But the Morvilles were always a fiery, violent race, and the enmity once begun between Sir Hugh and his brother, was kept up, generation after generation, in a most unjustifiable way. Even I can remember when the Morvilles of Redclyffe used to be spoken of in our family like a sort of ogres.’

‘Not undeservedly, I should think,’ said Philip. ‘This poor old man, who is just dead, ran a strange career. Stories of his duels and mad freaks are still extant.’

‘Poor man! I believe he went all lengths,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone.

‘What was the true version of that horrible story about his son?’ said Philip. ‘Did he strike him?’

‘Oh, no! it was bad enough without that.’

‘How?’ asked Laura.

‘He was an only child, and lost his mother early. He was very ill brought up, and was as impetuous and violent as Sir Guy himself, though with much kindness and generosity. He was only nineteen when he made a runaway marriage with a girl of sixteen, the sister of a violin player, who was at that time in fashion. His father was very much offended, and there was much dreadfully violent conduct on each side. At last, the young man was driven to seek a reconciliation. He brought his wife to Moorworth, and rode to Redclyffe, to have an interview with his father. Unhappily, Sir Guy was giving a dinner to the hunt, and had been drinking. He not only refused to see him, but I am afraid he used shocking language, and said something about bidding him go back to his fiddling brother-in-law. The son was waiting in the hall, heard everything, threw himself on his horse, and rushed away in the dark. His forehead struck against the branch of a tree, and he was killed on the spot.’

‘The poor wife?’ asked Amabel, shuddering.

‘She died the next day, when this boy was born.’

‘Frightful!’ said Philip. ‘It might well make a reformation in old Sir Guy.’

‘I have heard that nothing could be more awful than the stillness that fell on that wretched party, even before they knew what had happened—before Colonel Harewood, who had been called aside by the servants, could resolve to come and fetch away the father. No wonder Sir Guy was a changed man from that hour.’

‘It was then that he sent for my father,’ said Philip.

‘But what made him think of doing so?’

‘You know Colonel Harewood’s house at Stylehurst? Many years ago, when the St. Mildred’s races used to be so much more in fashion, Sir Guy and Colonel Harewood, and some men of that stamp, took that house amongst them, and used to spend some time there every year, to attend to something about the training of the horses. There were some malpractices of their servants, that did so much harm in the parish, that my brother was obliged to remonstrate. Sir Guy was very angry at first, but behaved better at last than any of the others. I suspect he was struck by my dear brother’s bold, uncompromising ways, for he took to him to a certain degree—and my brother could not help being interested in him, there seemed to be so much goodness in his nature. I saw him once, and never did I meet any one who gave me so much the idea of a finished gentleman. When the poor son was about fourteen, he was with a tutor in the neighbourhood, and used to be a good deal at Stylehurst, and, after the unhappy marriage, my brother happened to meet him in London, heard his story, and tried to bring about a reconciliation.’

‘Ha!’ said Philip; ‘did not they come to Stylehurst? I have a dim recollection of somebody very tall, and a lady who sung.’

‘Yes; your father asked them to stay there, that he might judge of her, and wrote to Sir Guy that she was a little, gentle, childish thing, capable of being moulded to anything, and representing the mischief of leaving them to such society as that of her brother, who was actually maintaining

them. That letter was never answered, but about ten days or a fortnight after this terrible accident, Colonel Harewood wrote to entreat my brother to come to Redclyffe, saying poor Sir Guy had eagerly caught at the mention of his name. Of course he went at once, and he told me that he never, in all his experience as a clergyman, saw any one so completely broken down with grief.'

I found a great many of his letters among my father's papers,' said Philip; 'and it was a very touching one that he wrote to me on my father's death. Those Redclyffe people certainly have great force of character.'

'And was it then he settled his property on my uncle?' said Charles.

'Yes,' said Mrs. Edmonstone. 'My brother did not like his doing so, but he would not be at rest till it was settled. It was in vain to put him in mind of his grandchild, for he would not believe it could live; and, indeed, its life hung on a thread. I remember my brother telling me how he went to Moorworth to see it—for it could not be brought home—in hopes of bringing, back a report that might cheer its grandfather, but how he found it so weak and delicate, that he did not dare to try to make him take interest in it. It was not till the child was two or three years old, that Sir Guy ventured to let himself grow fond of it.'

'Sir Guy was a very striking person,' said Philip; 'I shall not easily forget my visit to Redclyffe four years ago. It was more like a scene in a romance than anything real—the fine old red sandstone house crumbling away in the exposed parts, the arched gateway covered with ivy; the great quadrangle where the sun never shone, and full of echoes; the large hall and black wainscoted rooms, which the candles never would light up. It is a fit place to be haunted.'

'That poor boy alone there!' said Mrs. Edmonstone; 'I am glad you and your uncle are going to him.'

'Tell us about him,' said Laura.

'He was the most incongruous thing there,' said Philip. 'There was a calm, deep melancholy about the old man added to the grand courtesy which showed he had been what old books call a fine gentleman, that made him suit his house as a hermit does his cell, or a knight his castle; but breaking in on this "penseroso" scene, there was Guy—'

'In what way?' asked Laura.

'Always in wild spirits, rushing about, playing antics, provoking the solemn echoes with shouting, whooping, singing, whistling. There was something in that whistle of his that always made me angry.'

'How did this suit old Sir Guy?'

'It was curious to see how Guy could rattle on to him, pour out the whole history of his doings, laughing, rubbing his hands, springing about with animation—all with as little answer as if he had been talking to a statue.'

'Do you mean that Sir Guy did not like it?'

'He did in his own way. There was now and then a glance or a nod, to show that he was attending; but it was such slight encouragement, that any less buoyant spirits must have been checked.'

'Did you like him, on the whole?' asked Laura. 'I hope he has not this tremendous Morville temper? Oh, you don't say so. What a grievous thing.'

'He is a fine fellow,' said Philip; 'but I did not think Sir Guy managed him well. Poor old man, he was quite wrapped up in him, and only thought how to keep him out of harm's way. He would never let him be with other boys, and kept him so fettered by rules, so strictly watched, and so sternly called to account, that I cannot think how any boy could stand it.'

'Yet, you say, he told everything freely to his grandfather,' said Amy.

'Yes,' added her mother, 'I was going to say that, as long as that went on, I should think all safe.'

'As I said before,' resumed Philip, 'he has a great deal of frankness, much of the making of a fine character; but he is a thorough Morville. I remember something that will show you his best and worst sides. You know Redclyffe is a beautiful place, with magnificent cliffs overhanging the sea, and

fine woods crowning them. On one of the most inaccessible of these crags there was a hawk's nest, about half-way down, so that looking from the top of the precipice, we could see the old birds fly in and out. Well, what does Master Guy do, but go down this headlong descent after the nest. How he escaped alive no one could guess; and his grandfather could not bear to look at the place afterwards—but climb it he did, and came back with two young hawks, buttoned up inside his jacket.'

'There's a regular brick for you!' cried Charles, delighted.

'His heart was set on training these birds. He turned the library upside down in search of books on falconry, and spent every spare moment on them. At last, a servant left some door open, and they escaped. I shall never forget Guy's passion; I am sure I don't exaggerate when I say he was perfectly beside himself with anger.'

'Poor boy!' said Mrs. Edmonstone.

'Served the rascal right,' said Charles.

'Nothing had any effect on him till his grandfather came out, and, at the sight of him, he was tamed in an instant, hung his head, came up to his grandfather, and said—"I am very sorry," Sir Guy answered, "My poor boy!" and there was not another word. I saw Guy no more that day, and all the next he was quiet and subdued. But the most remarkable part of the story is to come. A couple of days afterwards we were walking in the woods, when, at the sound of Guy's whistle, we heard a flapping and rustling, and beheld, tumbling along, with their clipped wings, these two identical hawks, very glad to be caught. They drew themselves up proudly for him to stroke them, and their yellow eyes looked at him with positive affection.'

'Pretty creatures!' said Amabel. 'That is a very nice end to the story.'

'It is not the end,' said Philip. 'I was surprised to see Guy so sober, instead of going into one of his usual raptures. He took them home; but the first thing I heard in the morning was, that he was gone to offer them to a farmer, to keep the birds from his fruit.'

'Did he do it of his own accord?' asked Laura.

'That was just what I wanted to know; but any hint about them brought such a cloud over his face that I thought it would be wanton to irritate him by questions. However, I must be going. Good-bye, Amy, I hope your Camellia will have another blossom before I come back. At least, I shall escape the horticultural meeting.'

'Good-bye,' said Charles. 'Put the feud in your pocket till you can bury it in old Sir Guy's grave, unless you mean to fight it out with his grandson, which would be more romantic and exciting.'

Philip was gone before he could finish. Mrs. Edmonstone looked annoyed, and Laura said, 'Charlie, I wish you would not let your spirits carry you away.'

'I wish I had anything else to carry me away!' was the reply.

'Yes,' said his mother, looking sadly at him. 'Your high spirits are a blessing; but why misuse them? If they are given to support you through pain and confinement, why make mischief with them?'

Charles looked more impatient than abashed, and the compunction seemed chiefly to rest with Amabel.

'Now,' said Mrs. Edmonstone, 'I must go and see after my poor little prisoner.'

'Ah!' said Laura, as she went; 'it was no kindness in you to encourage Charlotte to stay, Amy, when you know how often that inquisitive temper has got her into scrapes.'

'I suppose so,' said Amy, regretfully; 'but I had not the heart to send her away.'

'That is just what Philip says, that you only want bones and sinews in your character to—'

'Come, Laura,' interrupted Charles, 'I won't hear Philip's criticisms of my sister, I had rather she had no bones at all, than that they stuck out and ran into me. There are plenty of angles already in the world, without sharpening hers.'

He possessed himself of Amy's round, plump, childish hand, and spread out over it his still whiter, and very bony fingers, pinching her 'soft pinky cushions,' as he called them, 'not meant for studying anatomy upon.'

‘Ah! you two spoil each other sadly,’ said Laura, smiling, as she left the room.

‘And what do Philip and Laura do to each other?’ said Charles.

‘Improve each other, I suppose,’ said Amabel, in a shy, simple tone, at which Charles laughed heartily.

‘I wish I was as sensible as Laura!’ said she, presently, with a sigh.

‘Never was a more absurd wish,’ said Charles, tormenting her hand still more, and pulling her curls; ‘unwish it forthwith. Where should I be without silly little Amy? If every one weighed my wit before laughing, I should not often be in disgrace for my high spirits, as they call them.’

‘I am so little younger than Laura,’ said Amy, still sadly, though smiling.

‘Folly,’ said Charles; ‘you are quite wise enough for your age, while Laura is so prematurely wise, that I am in constant dread that nature will take her revenge by causing her to do something strikingly foolish!’

‘Nonsense!’ cried Amy, indignantly. ‘Laura do anything foolish!’

‘What I should enjoy,’ proceeded Charles, ‘would be to see her over head and ears in love with this hero, and Philip properly jealous.’

‘How can you say such things, Charlie?’

‘Why? was there ever a beauty who did not fall in love with her father’s ward?’

‘No; but she ought to live alone with her very old father and horribly grim maiden aunt.’

‘Very well, Amy, you shall be the maiden, aunt.’ And as Laura returned at that moment, he announced to her that they had been agreeing that no hero ever failed to fall in love with his guardian’s beautiful daughter.

‘If his guardian had a beautiful daughter,’ said Laura, resolved not to be disconcerted.

‘Did you ever hear such barefaced fishing for compliments?’ said Charles; but Amabel, who did not like her sister to be teased, and was also conscious of having wasted a good deal of time, sat down to practise. Laura returned to her drawing, and Charles, with a yawn, listlessly turned over a newspaper, while his fair delicate features, which would have been handsome but that they were blanched, sharpened, and worn with pain, gradually lost their animated and rather satirical expression, and assumed an air of weariness and discontent.

Charles was at this time nineteen, and for the last ten years had been afflicted with a disease in the hip-joint, which, in spite of the most anxious care, caused him frequent and severe suffering, and had occasioned such a contraction of the limb as to cripple him completely, while his general health was so much affected as to render him an object of constant anxiety. His mother had always been his most devoted and indefatigable nurse, giving up everything for his sake, and watching him night and day. His father attended to his least caprice, and his sisters were, of course, his slaves; so that he was the undisputed sovereign of the whole family.

The two elder girls had been entirely under a governess till a month or two before the opening of our story, when Laura was old enough to be introduced; and the governess departing, the two sisters became Charles’s companions in the drawing-room, while Mrs. Edmonstone, who had a peculiar taste and talent for teaching, undertook little Charlotte’s lessons herself.

CHAPTER 2

If the ill spirit have so fair a house,
Good things will strive to dwell with't.

—*THE TEMPEST*

One of the pleasantest rooms at Hollywell was Mrs. Edmonstone's dressing-room—large and bay-windowed, over the drawing-room, having little of the dressing-room but the name, and a toilet-table with a black and gold japanned glass, and curiously shaped boxes to match; her room opened into it on one side, and Charles's on the other; it was a sort of up-stairs parlour, where she taught Charlotte, cast up accounts, spoke to servants, and wrote notes, and where Charles was usually to be found, when unequal to coming down-stairs. It had an air of great snugness, with its large folding-screen, covered with prints and caricatures of ancient date, its book-shelves, its tables, its peculiarly easy arm-chairs, the great invalid sofa, and the grate, which always lighted up better than any other in the house.

In the bright glow of the fire, with the shutters closed and curtains drawn, lay Charles on his couch, one Monday evening, in a gorgeous dressing-gown of a Chinese pattern, all over pagodas, while little Charlotte sat opposite to him, curled up on a footstool. He was not always very civil to Charlotte; she sometimes came into collision with him, for she, too, was a pet, and had a will of her own, and at other times she could bore him; but just now they had a common interest, and he was gracious.

'It is striking six, so they must soon be here. I wish mamma would let me go down; but I must wait till after dinner.'

'Then, Charlotte, as soon as you come in, hold up your hands, and exclaim, "What a guy!" There will be a compliment!'

'No, Charlie; I promised mamma and Laura that you should get me into no more scrapes.'

'Did you? The next promise you make had better depend upon yourself alone.'

'But Amy said I must be quiet, because poor Sir Guy will be too sorrowful to like a racket; and when Amy tells me to be quiet, I know that I must, indeed.'

'Most true,' said Charles, laughing.

'Do you think you shall like Sir Guy?'

'I shall be able to determine,' said Charles, sententiously, 'when I have seen whether he brushes his hair to the right or left.'

'Philip brushes his to the left.'

'Then undoubtedly Sir Guy will brush his to the right.'

'Is there not some horrid story about those Morvilles of Redclyffe?' asked Charlotte. 'I asked Laura, and she told me not to be curious, so I knew there was something in it; and then I asked Amy, and she said it would be no pleasure to me to know.'

'Ah! I would have you prepared.'

'Why, what is it? Oh! dear Charlie! are you really going to tell me?'

'Did you ever hear of a deadly feud?'

'I have read of them in the history of Scotland. They went on hating and killing each other for ever. There was one man who made his enemy's children eat out of a pig-trough, and another who cut off his head.'

'His own?'

'No, his enemy's, and put it on the table, at breakfast, with a piece of bread in its mouth.'

‘Very well; whenever Sir Guy serves up Philip’s head at breakfast, with a piece of bread in his mouth, let me know.’

Charlotte started up. ‘Charles, what do you mean? Such things don’t happen now.’

‘Nevertheless, there is a deadly feud between the two branches of the house of Morville.’

‘But it is very wrong,’ said Charlotte, looking frightened.

‘Wrong? Of course it is.’

‘Philip won’t do anything wrong. But how will they ever get on?’

‘Don’t you see? It must be our serious endeavour to keep the peace, and prevent occasions of discord.’

‘Do you think anything will happen?’

‘It is much to be apprehended,’ said Charles, solemnly.

At that moment the sound of wheels was heard, and Charlotte flew off to her private post of observation, leaving her brother delighted at having mystified her. She returned on tip-toe. ‘Papa and Sir Guy are come, but not Philip; I can’t see him anywhere.’

‘Ah you have not looked in Sir Guy’s great-coat pocket.’

‘I wish you would not plague me so! You are not in earnest?’

The pettish inquiring tone was exactly what delighted him. And he continued to tease her in the same style till Laura and Amabel came running in with their report of the stranger.

‘He is come!’ they cried, with one voice.

‘Very gentlemanlike!’ said Laura.

‘Very pleasant looking,’ said Amy. ‘Such fine eyes!’

‘And so much expression,’ said Laura. ‘Oh!’

The exclamation, and the start which accompanied it, were caused by hearing her father’s voice close to the door, which had been left partly open. ‘Here is poor Charles,’ it said, ‘come in, and see him; get over the first introduction—eh, Guy?’ And before he had finished, both he and the guest were in the room, and Charlotte full of mischievous glee at her sister’s confusion.

‘Well, Charlie, boy, how goes it?’ was his father’s greeting. ‘Better, eh? Sorry not to find you down-stairs; but I have brought Guy to see you.’ Then, as Charles sat up and shook hands with Sir Guy, he continued—‘A fine chance for you, as I was telling him, to have a companion always at hand: a fine chance? eh, Charlie?’

‘I am not so unreasonable as to expect any one to be always at hand,’ said Charles, smiling, as he looked up at the frank, open face, and lustrous hazel eyes turned on him with compassion at the sight of his crippled, helpless figure, and with a bright, cordial promise of kindness.

As he spoke, a pattering sound approached, the door was pushed open, and while Sir Guy exclaimed, ‘O, Bustle! Bustle! I am very sorry,’ there suddenly appeared a large beautiful spaniel, with a long silky black and white coat, jetty curled ears, tan spots above his intelligent eyes, and tan legs, fringed with silken waves of hair, but crouching and looking beseeching at meeting no welcome, while Sir Guy seemed much distressed at his intrusion.

‘O you beauty!’ cried Charles. ‘Come here, you fine fellow.’

Bustle only looked wistfully at his master, and moved nothing but his feather of a tail.

‘Ah! I was afraid you would repent of your kindness,’ said Sir Guy to Mr. Edmonstone.

‘Not at all, not at all!’ was the answer; ‘mamma never objects to in-door pets, eh, Amy?’

‘A tender subject, papa,’ said Laura; ‘poor Pepper!’

Amy, ashamed of her disposition to cry at the remembrance of the dear departed rough terrier, bent down to hide her glowing face, and held out her hand to the dog, which at last ventured to advance, still creeping with his body curved till his tail was foremost, looking imploringly at his master, as if to entreat his pardon.

‘Are you sure you don’t dislike it?’ inquired Sir Guy, of Charles.

‘I? O no. Here, you fine creature.’

‘Come, then, behave like a rational dog, since you are come,’ said Sir Guy; and Bustle, resuming the deportment of a spirited and well-bred spaniel, no longer crouched and curled himself into the shape of a comma, but bounded, wagged his tail, thrust his nose into his master’s hand and then proceeded to reconnoitre the rest of the company, paying especial attention to Charles, putting his fore-paws on the sofa, and rearing himself up to contemplate him with a grave, polite curiosity, that was very diverting.

‘Well, old fellow,’ said Charles, ‘did you ever see the like of such a dressing-gown? Are you satisfied? Give me your paw, and let us swear an eternal friendship.’

‘I am quite glad to see a dog in the house again,’ said Laura, and, after a few more compliments, Bustle and his master followed Mr. Edmonstone out of the room.

‘One of my father’s well-judged proceedings,’ murmured Charles. ‘That poor fellow had rather have gone a dozen, miles further than have been lugged in here. Really, if papa chooses to inflict such dressing-gowns on me, he should give me notice before he brings men and dogs to make me their laughing-stock!’

‘An unlucky moment,’ said Laura. ‘Will my cheeks ever cool?’

‘Perhaps he did not hear,’ said Amabel, consolingly.

‘You did not ask about Philip?’ said Charlotte, with great earnestness.

‘He is staying at Thorndale, and then going to St. Mildred’s,’ said Laura.

‘I hope you are relieved,’ said her brother; and she looked in doubt whether she ought to laugh.

‘And what do you think of Sir Guy?’

‘May he only be worthy of his dog!’ replied Charles.

‘Ah!’ said Laura, ‘many men are neither worthy of their wives, nor of their dogs.’

‘Dr. Henley, I suppose, is the foundation of that aphorism,’ said Charles.

‘If Margaret Morville could marry him, she could hardly be too worthy,’ said Laura. ‘Think of throwing away Philip’s whole soul!’

‘O Laura, she could not lose that,’ said Amabel.

Laura looked as if she knew more; but at that moment, both her father and mother entered, the former rubbing his hands, as he always did when much pleased, and sending his voice before him, as he exclaimed, ‘Well, Charlie, well, young ladies, is not he a fine fellow—eh?’

‘Rather under-sized,’ said Charles.

‘Eh? He’ll grow. He is not eighteen, you know; plenty of time; a very good height; you can’t expect every one to be as tall as Philip; but he’s a capital fellow. And how have you been?—any pain?’

‘Hem—rather,’ said Charles, shortly, for he hated answering kind inquiries, when out of humour.

‘Ah, that’s a pity; I was sorry not to find you in the drawing-room, but I thought you would have liked just to see him,’ said Mr. Edmonstone, disappointed, and apologizing.

‘I had rather have had some notice of your intention,’ said Charles, ‘I would have made myself fit to be seen.’

‘I am sorry. I thought you would have liked his coming,’ said poor Mr. Edmonstone, only half conscious of his offence; ‘but I see you are not well this evening.’

Worse and worse, for it was equivalent to openly telling Charles he was out of humour; and seeing, as he did, his mother’s motive, he was still further annoyed when she hastily interposed a question about Sir Guy.

‘You should only hear them talk about him at Redclyffe,’ said Mr Edmonstone. ‘No one was ever equal to him, according to them. Every one said the same—clergyman, old Markham, all of them. Such attention to his grandfather, such proper feeling, so good-natured, not a bit of pride—it is my firm belief that he will make up for all his family before him.’

Charles set up his eyebrows sarcastically.

‘How does he get on with Philip?’ inquired Laura.

‘Excellently. Just what could be wished. Philip is delighted with him; and I have been telling Guy all the way home what a capital friend he will be, and he is quite inclined to look up to him.’ Charles made an exaggerated gesture of astonishment, unseen by his father. ‘I told him to bring his dog. He would have left it, but they seemed so fond of each other, I thought it was a pity to part them, and that I could promise it should be welcome here; eh, mamma?’

‘Certainly. I am very glad you brought it.’

‘We are to have his horse and man in a little while. A beautiful chestnut—anything to raise his spirits. He is terribly cut up about his grandfather.’

It was now time to go down to dinner; and after Charles had made faces of weariness and disgust at all the viands proposed to him by his mother, almost imploring him to like them, and had at last ungraciously given her leave to send what he could not quite say he disliked, he was left to carry on his teasing of Charlotte, and his grumbling over the dinner, for about the space of an hour, when Amabel came back to him, and Charlotte went down.

‘Hum!’ he exclaimed. ‘Another swan of my father’s.’

‘Did not you like his looks?’

‘I saw only an angular hobbetyhoy.’

‘But every one at Redclyffe speaks so well of him.’

‘As if the same things were not said of every heir to more acres than brains! However, I could have swallowed everything but the disposition to adore Philip. Either it was gammon on his part, or else the work of my father’s imagination.’

‘For shame, Charlie.’

‘Is it within the bounds of probability that he should be willing, at the bidding of his guardian, to adopt as Mentor his very correct and sententious cousin, a poor subaltern, and the next in the entail? Depend upon it, it is a fiction created either by papa’s hopes or Philip’s self-complacency, or else the unfortunate youth must have been brought very low by strait-lacing and milk-and-water.’

‘Mr. Thorndale is willing to look up to Philip,’

‘I don’t think the Thorndale swan very—very much better than a tame goose,’ said Charles, ‘but the coalition is not so monstrous in his case, since Philip was a friend of his own picking and choosing, and so his father’s adoption did not succeed in repelling him. But that Morville should receive this “young man’s companion,” on the word of a guardian whom he never set eyes on before, is too incredible—utterly mythical I assure you, Amy. And how did you get on at dinner?’

‘Oh, the dog is the most delightful creature I ever saw, so sensible and well-mannered.’

‘It was of the man that I asked.’

‘He said hardly anything, and sometimes started if papa spoke to him suddenly. He winced as if he could not bear to be called Sir Guy, so papa said we should call him only by his name, if he would do the same by us. I am glad of it, for it seems more friendly, and I am sure he wants to be comforted.’

‘Don’t waste your compassion, my dear; few men need it less. With his property, those moors to shoot over, his own master, and with health to enjoy it, there are plenty who would change with him for all your pity, my silly little Amy.’

‘Surely not, with that horrible ancestry.’

‘All very well to plume oneself upon. I rather covet that ghost myself.’

‘Well, if you watched his face, I think you would be sorry for him.’

‘I am tired of the sound of his name. One fifth of November is enough in the year. Here, find something to read to me among that trumpery.’

Amy read till she was summoned to tea, when she found a conversation going on about Philip, on whose history Sir Guy did not seem fully informed. Philip was the son of Archdeacon Morville, Mrs. Edmonstone’s brother, an admirable and superior man, who had been dead about five years. He left three children, Margaret and Fanny, twenty-five and twenty-three years of age, and Philip, just seventeen. The boy was at the head of his school, highly distinguished for application and good

conduct; he had attained every honour there open to him, won golden opinions from all concerned with him, and made proof of talents which could not have failed to raise him to the highest university distinctions. He was absent from home at the time of his father's death, which took place after so short an illness, that there had been no time to summon him back to Stylehurst. Very little property was left to be divided among the three; and as soon as Philip perceived how small was the provision for his sisters, he gave up his hopes of university honours, and obtained a commission in the army.

On hearing this, Sir Guy started forward: 'Noble!' he cried, 'and yet what a pity! If my grandfather had but known it—'

'Ah! I was convinced of *that*,' broke in Mr. Edmonstone, 'and so, I am sure, was Philip himself; but in fact he knew we should never have given our consent, so he acted quite by himself, wrote to Lord Thorndale, and never said a word, even to his sisters, till the thing was done. I never was more surprised in my life.'

'One would almost envy him the opportunity of making such a sacrifice,' said Sir Guy, yet one must lament it.

'It was done in a hasty spirit of independence,' said Mrs. Edmonstone; 'I believe if he had got a fellowship at Oxford, it would have answered much better.'

'And now that poor Fanny is dead, and Margaret married, there is all his expensive education thrown away, and all for nothing,' said Mr. Edmonstone.

'Ah,' said Mrs. Edmonstone, 'he planned for them to go on living at Stylehurst, so that it would still have been his home. It is a great pity, for his talent is thrown away, and he is not fond of his profession.'

'You must not suppose, though, that he is not a practical man,' said Mr. Edmonstone; 'I had rather take his opinion than any one's, especially about a horse, and there is no end to what I hear about his good sense, and the use he is of to the other young men.'

'You should tell about Mr. Thorndale, papa,' said Laura.

'Ah that is a feather in master Philip's cap; besides, he is your neighbour—at least, his father is.'

'I suppose you know Lord Thorndale?' said Mrs. Edmonstone, in explanation.

'I have seen him once at the Quarter Sessions,' said Sir Guy; 'but he lives on the other side of Moorworth, and there was no visiting.'

'Well, this youth, James Thorndale, the second son, was Philip's fag.'

'Philip says he was always licking him!' interposed Charlotte.'

'He kept him out of some scrape or other, continued Mr. Edmonstone. 'Lord Thorndale was very much obliged to him, had him to stay at his house, took pretty much to him altogether. It was through him that Philip applied for his commission, and he has put his son into the same regiment, on purpose to have him under Philip's eye. There he is at Broadstone, as gentlemanlike a youth as I would wish to see. We will have him to dinner some day, and Maurice too—eh, mamma? Maurice—he is a young Irish cousin of my own, a capital fellow at the bottom, but a regular thoroughgoing rattle. That was my doing. I told his father that he could not do better than put him into the —th. Nothing like a steady friend and a good example, I said, and Kilcoran always takes my advice, and I don't think he has been sorry. Maurice has kept much more out of scrapes of late.'

'O papa,' exclaimed Charlotte, 'Maurice has been out riding on a hired horse, racing with Mr. Gordon, and the horse tumbled down at the bottom of East-hill, and broke its knees.'

'That's the way,' said Mr. Edmonstone, 'the instant my back is turned.'

Thereupon the family fell into a discussion of home affairs, and thought little more of their silent guest.

CHAPTER 3

The hues of bliss more brightly glow
Chastised by sober tints of woe.

—GRAY

‘What use shall I make of him?’ said Charles to himself, as he studied Sir Guy Morville, who sat by the table, with a book in his hand.

He had the unformed look of a growing boy, and was so slender as to appear taller than he really was. He had an air of great activity; and though he sat leaning back, there was no lounging in his attitude, and at the first summons he roused up with an air of alert attention that recalled to mind the eager head of a listening greyhound. He had no pretension to be called handsome; his eyes were his best feature; they were very peculiar, of a light hazel, darker towards the outside of the iris, very brilliant, the whites tinted with blue, and the lashes uncommonly thick and black; the eyebrows were also very dark, and of a sharply-defined angular shape, but the hair was much lighter, loose, soft, and wavy; the natural fairness of the complexion was shown by the whiteness of the upper part of the forehead, though the rest of the face, as well as the small taper hands, were tanned by sunshine and sea-breezes, into a fresh, hardy brown, glowing with red on the cheeks.

‘What use shall I make of him?’ proceeded Charles’s thoughts. ‘He won’t be worth his salt if he goes on in this way; he has got a graver specimen of literature there than I ever saw Philip himself read on a week-day; he has been puritanized till he is good for nothing; I’ll trouble myself no more about him!’ He tried to read, but presently looked up again. ‘Plague! I can’t keep my thoughts off him. That sober look does not sit on that sun-burnt face as if it were native to it; those eyes don’t look as if the Redclyffe spirit was extinguished.’

Mrs. Edmonstone came in, and looking round, as if to find some occupation for her guest, at length devised setting him to play at chess with Charles. Charles gave her an amiable look, expressing that neither liked it; but she was pretty well used to doing him good against his will, and trusted to its coming right in time. Charles was a capital chess-player, and seldom found any one who could play well enough to afford him much real sport, but he found Sir Guy more nearly a match than often fell to his lot; it was a bold dashing game, that obliged him to be on his guard, and he was once so taken by surprise as to be absolutely check-mated. His ill-humour evaporated, he was delighted to find an opponent worth playing with, and henceforth there were games almost every morning or evening, though Sir Guy seemed not to care much about them, except for the sake of pleasing him.

When left to himself, Guy spent his time in reading or in walking about the lanes alone. He used to sit in the bay-window of the drawing-room with his book; but sometimes, when they least expected it, the girls would find his quick eyes following them with an air of amused curiosity, as Amabel waited on Charles and her flowers, or Laura drew, wrote letters, and strove to keep down the piles of books and periodicals under which it seemed as if her brother might some day be stifled—a vain task, for he was sure to want immediately whatever she put out of his reach.

Laura and Amabel both played and sung, the former remarkably well, and the first time they had any music after the arrival of Sir Guy, his look of delighted attention struck everyone. He ventured nearer, stood by the piano when they practised, and at last joined in with a few notes of so full and melodious a voice, that Laura turned round in surprise, exclaiming, ‘You sing better I than any of us!’

He coloured. ‘I beg your pardon,’ he said, ‘I could not help it; I know nothing of music.’

‘Really!’ said Laura, smiling incredulously.

‘I don’t even know the notes.’

‘Then you must have a very good ear. Let us try again.’

The sisters were again charmed and surprised, and Guy looked gratified, as people do at the discovery of a faculty which they are particularly glad to possess. It was the first time he appeared to brighten, and Laura and her mother agreed that it would do him good to have plenty of music, and to try to train that fine voice. He was beginning to interest them all greatly by his great helpfulness and kindness to Charles, as he learnt the sort of assistance he required, as well as by the silent grief that showed how much attached he must have been to his grandfather.

On the first Sunday, Mrs. Edmonstone coming into the drawing-room at about half-past five, found him sitting alone by the fire, his dog lying at his feet. As he started up, she asked if he had been here in the dark ever since church-time?

'I have not wanted light,' he answered with a sigh, long, deep, and irrepressible, and as she stirred the fire, the flame revealed to her the traces of tears. She longed to comfort him, and said—
'This Sunday twilight is a quiet time for thinking.'

'Yes,' he said; 'how few Sundays ago—' and there he paused.

'Ah! you had so little preparation.'

'None. That very morning he had done business with Markham, and had never been more clear and collected.'

'Were you with him when he was taken ill?' asked Mrs. Edmonstone, perceiving that it would be a relief to him to talk.

'No; it was just before dinner. I had been shooting, and went into the library to tell him where I had been. He was well then, for he spoke, but it was getting dark, and I did not see his face. I don't think I was ten minutes dressing, but when I came down, he had sunk back in his chair. I saw it was not sleep—I rang—and when Arnaud came, we knew how it was.' His voice became low with strong emotion.'

'Did he recover his consciousness?'

'Yes, that was *the* comfort,' said Guy, eagerly. 'It was after he had been bled that he seemed to wake up. He could not speak or move, but he looked at me—or—I don't know what I should have done.' The last words were almost inaudible from the gush of tears that he vainly struggled to repress, and he was turning away to hide them, when he saw that Mrs. Edmonstone's were flowing fast.

'You had great reason to be attached to him!' said she, as soon as she could speak.

'Indeed, indeed I had.' And after a long silence—'He was everything to me, everything from the first hour I can recollect. He never let me miss my parents. How he attended to all my pleasures and wishes, how he watched and cared for me, and bore with me, even I can never know.'

He spoke in short half sentences of intense feeling, and Mrs. Edmonstone was much moved by such affection in one said to have been treated with an excess of strictness, much compassionating the lonely boy, who had lost every family tie in one.

'When the first pain of the sudden parting has passed,' said she, 'you will like to remember the affection which you knew how to value.'

'If I had but known!' said Guy; 'but there was I, hasty, reckless, disregarding his comfort, rebelling against—O, what would I not give to have those restraints restored!'

'It is what we all feel in such losses,' said Mrs. Edmonstone. 'There is always much to wish otherwise; but I am sure you can have the happiness of knowing you were his great comfort.'

'It was what I ought to have been.'

She knew that nothing could have been more filial and affectionate than his conduct, and tried to say something of the kind, but he would not listen.

'That is worst of all,' he said; 'and you must not trust what they say of me. They would be sure to praise me, if I was anything short of a brute.'

A silence ensued, while Mrs. Edmonstone was trying to think of some consolation. Suddenly Guy looked up, and spoke eagerly:—

‘I want to ask something—a great favour—but you make me venture. You see how I am left alone—you know how little I can trust myself. Will you take me in hand—let me talk to you—and tell me if I am wrong, as freely as if I were Charles? I know it is asking a great deal, but you knew my grandfather, and it is in his name.’

She held out her hand; and with tears answered—

‘Indeed I will, if I see any occasion.’

‘You will let me trust to you to tell me when I get too vehement? above all, when you see my temper failing? Thank you; you don’t know what a relief it is!’

‘But you must not call yourself alone. You are one of us now.’

‘Yes; since you have made that promise,’ said Guy; and for the first time she saw the full beauty of his smile—a sort of sweetness and radiance of which eye and brow partook almost as much as the lips. It alone would have gained her heart.

‘I must look on you as a kind of nephew,’ she added, kindly. ‘I used to hear so much of you from my brother.’

‘Oh!’ cried Guy, lighting up, ‘Archdeacon Morville was always so kind to me. I remember him very well!’

‘Ah! I wish—’ there she paused, and added,—tête-à-tête ‘it is not right to wish such things—and Philip is very like his father.’

‘I am very glad his regiment is so near. I want to know him better.’

‘You knew him at Redclyffe, when he was staying there?’

‘Yes,’ said Guy, his colour rising; ‘but I was a boy then, and a very foolish, headstrong one. I am glad to meet him again. What a grand-looking person he is!’

‘We are very proud of him,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone, smiling. ‘I don’t think there has been an hour’s anxiety about him since he was born.’

The conversation was interrupted by the sound of Charles’s crutches slowly crossing the hall. Guy sprang to help him to his sofa, and then, without speaking, hurried up-stairs.

‘Mamma, tete-a-tete with the silent one!’ exclaimed Charles.

‘I will not tell you all I think of him,’ said she, leaving the room.

‘Hum!’ soliloquised Charles. ‘That means that my lady mother has adopted him, and thinks I should laugh at her, or straightway set up a dislike to him, knowing my contempt for heroes and hero-worship. It’s a treat to have Philip out of the way, and if it was but possible to get out of hearing of his perfection, I should have some peace. If I thought this fellow had one spice of the kind, I’d never trouble my head about him more; and yet I don’t believe he has such a pair of hawk’s eyes for nothing!’

The hawk’s eyes, as Charles called them, shone brighter from that day forth, and their owner began to show more interest in what passed around. Laura was much amused by a little conversation she held with him one day when a party of their younger neighbours were laughing and talking nonsense round Charles’s sofa. He was sitting a little way off in silence, and she took advantage of the loud laughing to say:

‘You think this is not very satisfactory?’ And as he gave a quick glance of inquiry—‘Don’t mind saying so. Philip and I often agree that it is a pity spend so much time in laughing at nothing—at such nonsense.’

‘It is nonsense?’

‘Listen—no don’t, it is too silly.’

‘Nonsense must be an excellent thing if it makes people so happy,’ said Guy thoughtfully. ‘Look at them; they are like—not a picture—that has no life—but a dream—or, perhaps a scene in a play.’

‘Did you never see anything like it?’

‘Oh, no! All the morning calls I ever saw were formal, every one stiff, and speaking by rote, or talking politics. How glad I used to be to get on horseback again! But to see these—why, it is

like the shepherd's glimpse at the pixies!—as one reads a new book, or watches what one only half understands—a rook's parliament, or a gathering of sea-fowl on the Shag Rock.'

'A rook's parliament?'

'The people at home call it a rook's parliament when a whole cloud of rooks settle on some bare, wide common, and sit there as if they were consulting, not feeding, only stalking about, with drooping wings, and solemn, black cloaks.'

'You have found a flattering simile,' said Laura, 'as you know that rooks never open their mouths without cause.'

Guy had never heard the riddle, but he caught the pun instantly, and the clear merry sound of his hearty laugh surprised Charles, who instantly noted it as another proof that was some life in him.

Indeed, each day began to make it evident that he had, on the whole, rather a superabundance of animation than otherwise. He was quite confidential with Mrs. Edmonstone, on whom he used to lavish, with boyish eagerness, all that interested him, carrying her the passages in books that pleased him, telling her about Redclyffe's affairs, and giving her his letters from Markham, the steward. His head was full of his horse, Deloraine, which was coming to him under the charge of a groom, and the consultations were endless about the means of transport, Mr. Edmonstone almost as eager about it as he was himself.

He did not so quickly become at home with the younger portion of the family, but his spirits rose every day. He whistled as he walked in the garden, and Bustle, instead of pacing soberly behind him, now capered, nibbled his pockets, and drew him into games of play which Charles and Amabel were charmed to overlook from the dressing-room window. There was Guy leaping, bounding, racing, rolling the dog over, tripping him up, twitching his ears, tickling his feet, catching at his tail, laughing at Bustle's springs, contortions, and harmless open-mouthed attacks, while the dog did little less than laugh too, with his intelligent amber eyes, and black and red mouth. Charles began to find a new interest in his listless life in the attempt to draw Guy out, and make him give one of his merry laughs. In this, however, he failed when his wit consisted in allusions to the novels of the day, of which Guy knew nothing. One morning he underwent a regular examination, ending in—

'Have you read anything?'

'I am afraid I am very ignorant of modern books.'

'Have you read the ancient ones?' asked Laura.

'I've had nothing else to read.'

'Nothing to read but ancient books!' exclaimed Amabel, with a mixture of pity and astonishment.

'Sanchoniathon, Manetho, Berosus, and Ocellus Lucanus!' said Guy, smiling.

'There, Amy,' said Charles, 'if he has the Vicar of Wakefield among his ancient books, you need not pity him.'

'It is like Philip,' said Laura; 'he was brought up on the old standard books, instead of his time being frittered away on the host of idle modern ones.'

'He was free to concentrate his attention on Sir Charles Grandison,' said Charles.

'How could any one do so?' said Guy. 'How could any one have any sympathy with such a piece of self-satisfaction?'

'Who could? Eh, Laura?' said Charles.

'I never read it,' said Laura, suspecting malice.

'What is your opinion of perfect heroes?' continued Charles.

'Here comes one,' whispered Amy to her brother, blushing at her piece of naughtiness, as Philip Morville entered the room.

After the first greetings and inquiries after his sister, whom he had been visiting, Laura told him what they had been saying of the advantage of a scanty range of reading.

‘True,’ said Philip; ‘I have often been struck by finding how ignorant people are, even of Shakspeare; and I believe the blame chiefly rests on the cheap rubbish in which Charlie is nearly walled up there.’

‘Ay,’ said Charles, ‘and who haunts that rubbish at the beginning of every month? I suppose to act as pioneer, though whether any one but Laura heeds his warnings, remains to be proved.’

‘Laura does heed?’ asked Philip, well pleased.

‘I made her read me the part of Dombey that hurts women’s feelings most, just to see if she would go on—the part about little Paul—and I declare, I shall think the worse of her ever after—she was so stony hearted, that to this day she does not know whether he is dead or alive.’

‘I can’t quite say I don’t know whether he lived or died,’ said Laura, ‘for I found Amy in a state that alarmed me, crying in the green-house, and I was very glad to find it was nothing worse than little Paul.’

‘I wish you would have read it,’ said Amy; and looking shyly at Guy, she added—‘Won’t you?’

‘Well done, Amy!’ said Charles. ‘In the very face of the young man’s companion!’

‘Philip does not really think it wrong,’ said Amy.

‘No,’ said Philip; ‘those books open fields of thought, and as their principles are negative, they are not likely to hurt a person well armed with the truth.’

‘Meaning,’ said Charles, ‘that Guy and Laura have your gracious permission to read Dombey.’

‘When Laura has a cold or toothache.’

‘And I,’ said Guy.

‘I am not sure about, the expediency for you,’ said Philip ‘it would be a pity to begin with Dickens, when there is so much of a higher grade equally new to you. I suppose you do not understand Italian?’

‘No,’ said Guy, abruptly, and his dark eyebrows contracted.

Philip went on. ‘If you did, I should not recommend you the translation of “I promessi Sponsi,” one of the most beautiful books in any language. You have it in English, I think, Laura.’

Laura fetched it; Guy, with a constrained ‘thank you,’ was going to take it up rather as if he was putting a force upon himself, when Philip more quickly took the first volume, and eagerly turned over the pages—I can’t stand this,’ he said, ‘where is the original?’

It was soon produced; and Philip, finding the beautiful history of Fra Cristoforo, began to translate it fluently and with an admirable choice of language that silenced Charles’s attempts to interrupt and criticise. Soon Guy, who had at first lent only reluctant attention, was entirely absorbed, his eyebrows relaxed, a look of earnest interest succeeded, his countenance softened, and when Fra Cristoforo humbled himself, exchanged forgiveness, and received “il pane del perdono,” tears hung on his eyelashes.

The chapter was finished, and with a smothered exclamation of admiration, he joined the others in begging Philip to proceed. The story thus read was very unlike what it had been to Laura and Amy, when they puzzled it out as an Italian lesson, or to Charles, when he carelessly tossed over the translation in search of Don Abbondio’s humours; and thus between reading and conversation, the morning passed very agreeably.

At luncheon, Mr. Edmonstone asked Philip to come and spend a day or two at Hollywell, and he accepted the invitation for the next week. ‘I will make Thorndale drive me out if you will give him a dinner.’

‘Of course, of course,’ said Mr. Edmonstone, ‘we shall be delighted. We were talking of asking him, a day or two ago; eh, mamma?’

‘Thank you,’ said Philip; ‘a family party is an especial treat to him,’ laying a particular stress on the word ‘family party,’ and looking at his aunt.

At that moment the butler came in, saying, ‘Sir Guy’s servant is come, and has brought the horse, sir.’

‘Deloraine come!’ cried Guy, springing up. ‘Where?’

‘At the door, sir.’

Guy darted out, Mr. Edmonstone following. In another instant, however, Guy put his head into the room again. ‘Mrs. Edmonstone, won’t you come and see him? Philip, you have not seen Deloraine.’

Off he rushed, and the others were just in time to see the cordial look of honest gladness with which William, the groom, received his young master’s greeting, and the delighted recognition between Guy, Bustle, and Deloraine. Guy had no attention for anything else till he had heard how they had prospered on the journey; and then he turned to claim his friend’s admiration for the beautiful chestnut, his grandfather’s birthday present. The ladies admired with earnestness that compensated for want of knowledge, the gentlemen with greater science and discrimination; indeed, Philip, as a connoisseur, could not but, for the sake of his own reputation, discover something to criticise. Guy’s brows drew together again, and his eyes glanced as if he was much inclined to resent the remarks, as attacks at once on Deloraine and on his grandfather; but he said nothing, and presently went to the stable with Mr. Edmonstone, to see about the horse’s accommodations. Philip stood in the hall with the ladies.

‘So I perceive you have dropped the title already,’ observed he to Laura.

‘Yes,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone, replying for her daughter, ‘it seemed to give him pain by reminding him of his loss, and he was so strange and forlorn just at first, that we were glad to do what we could to make him feel himself more at home.’

‘Then you get on pretty well now?’

The reply was in chorus with variations—‘Oh, excellently!’

‘He is so entertaining,’ said Charlotte.

‘He sings so beautifully,’ said Amabel.

‘He is so right-minded,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone.

‘So very well informed,’ said Laura.

Then it all began again.

‘He plays chess so well,’ said Amy.

‘Bustle is such a dear dog,’ said Charlotte.

‘He is so attentive to Charlie,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone, going into the drawing-room to her son.

‘Papa says he will make up for the faults of all his ancestors,’ said Amabel.

‘His music! oh, his music!’ said Laura.

‘Philip,’ said Charlotte, earnestly, ‘you really should learn to like him.’

‘Learn, impertinent little puss?’ said Philip, smiling, ‘why should I not like him?’

‘I was sure you would try,’ said Charlotte, impressively.

‘Is it hard?’ said Amy. ‘But, oh, Philip! you could not help liking his singing.’

‘I never heard such a splendid voice,’ said Laura; ‘so clear and powerful, and yet so wonderfully sweet in the low soft notes. And a very fine ear: he has a real talent for music.’

‘Ah! inherited, poor fellow,’ said Philip, compassionately.

‘Do you pity him for it?’ said Amy, smiling.

‘Do you forget?’ said Philip. ‘I would not advise you to make much of this talent in public; it is too much a badge of his descent.’

‘Mamma did not think so,’ said Amy. ‘She thought it a pity he should not learn regularly, with such a talent; so the other day, when Mr. Radford was giving us a lesson, she asked Guy just to sing up and down the scale. I never saw anything so funny as old Mr Radford’s surprise, it was almost like the music lesson in “La Figlia del Reggimento”; he started, and looked at Guy, and seemed in a perfect transport, and now Guy is to take regular lessons.’

‘Indeed.’

‘But do you really mean,’ said Laura, ‘that if your mother had been a musician’s daughter, and you had inherited her talent, that you would be ashamed of it.’

‘Indeed, Laura,’ said Philip, with a smile, ‘I am equally far from guessing what I should do if my mother had been anything but what she was, as from guessing what I should do if I had a talent for music.’

Mrs. Edmonstone here called her daughters to get ready for their walk, as she intended to go to East-hill, and they might as well walk with Philip as far as their roads lay together.

Philip and Laura walked on by themselves, a little in advance of the others. Laura was very anxious to arrive at a right understanding of her cousin’s opinion of Guy.

‘I am sure there is much to like in him,’ she said.

‘There is; but is it the highest praise to say there is much to like? People are not so cautious when they accept a man in toto.’

‘Then, do you not?’

Philip’s answer was—

‘He who the lion’s whelp has nurst,
At home with fostering hand,
Finds it a gentle thing at first,
Obedient to command,’

‘Do you think him a lion’s whelp?’

‘I am afraid I saw the lion just now in his flashing eyes and contracted brow. There is an impatience of advice, a vehemence of manner that I can hardly deem satisfactory. I do not speak from prejudice, for I think highly of his candour, warmth of heart, and desire to do right; but from all I have seen, I should not venture as yet to place much dependence on his steadiness of character or command of temper.’

‘He seems to have been very fond of his grandfather, in spite of his severity. He is but just beginning to brighten up a little.’

‘Yes; his disposition is very affectionate,—almost a misfortune to one so isolated from family ties. He showed remarkably well at Redclyffe, the other day; boyish of course, and without much self-command, but very amiably. It is very well for him that he is removed from thence, for all the people idolize him to such a degree that they could not fail to spoil him.’

‘It would be a great pity if he went wrong.’

‘Great, for he has many admirable qualities, but still they are just what persons are too apt to fancy compensation for faults. I never heard that any of his family, except perhaps that unhappy old Hugh, were deficient in frankness and generosity, and therefore these do not satisfy me. Observe, I am not condemning him; I wish to be perfectly just; all I say is, that I do not trust him till I have seen him tried.’

Laura did not answer, she was disappointed; yet there was a justice and guardedness in what Philip said, that made it impossible to gainsay it, and she was pleased with his confidence. She thought how cool and prudent he was, and how grieved she should be if Guy justified his doubts; and so they walked on in such silence as is perhaps the strongest proof of intimacy. She was the first to speak, led to do so by an expression of sadness about her cousin’s mouth. ‘What are you thinking of, Philip?’

‘Of Locksley Hall. There is nonsense, there is affectation in that, Laura, there is scarcely poetry, but there is power, for there is truth.’

‘Of Locksley Hall! I thought you were at Stylehurst.’

‘So I was, but the one brings the other.’

‘I suppose you went to Stylehurst while you were at St. Mildred’s? Did Margaret take you there?’

‘Margaret? Not she; she is too much engaged with her book-club, and her soirées, and her societies of every sort and kind.’

‘How did you get on with the Doctor?’

‘I saw as little of him as I could, and was still more convinced that he does not know what conversation is. Hem!’ Philip gave a deep sigh. ‘No; the only thing to be done at St. Mildred’s is to walk across the moors to Stylehurst. It is a strange thing to leave that tumult of gossip, and novelty, and hardness, and to enter on that quiet autumnal old world, with the yellow leaves floating silently down, just as they used to do, and the atmosphere of stillness round the green churchyard.’

‘Gossip!’ repeated Laura. ‘Surely not with Margaret?’

‘Literary, scientific gossip is worse than gossip in a primary sense, without pretension.’

‘I am glad you had Stylehurst to go to. How was the old sexton’s wife?’

‘Very well; trotting about on her pattens as merrily as ever.’

‘Did you go into the garden?’

‘Yes; Fanny’s ivy has entirely covered the south wall, and the acacia is so tall and spreading, that I longed to have the pruning of it. Old Will keeps everything in its former state.’

They talked on of the old home, till the stern bitter look of regret and censure had faded from his brow, and given way to a softened melancholy expression.

CHAPTER 4

A fig for all dactyls, a fig for all spondees,
A fig for all dunces and dominie grandees.

—SCOTT

‘How glad I am!’ exclaimed Guy, entering the drawing-room.

‘Wherefore?’ inquired Charles.

‘I thought I was too late, and I am very glad to find no one arrived, and Mr. and Mrs. Edmonstone not come down.’

‘But where have you been?’

‘I lost my way on the top of the down; I fancied some one told me there was a view of the sea to be had there.’

‘And can’t you exist without a view of the sea?’

Guy laughed. ‘Everything looks so dull—it is as if the view was dead or imprisoned—walled up by wood and hill, and wanting that living ripple, heaving and struggling.’

‘And your fine rocks?’ said Laura.

‘I wish you could see the Shag stone,—a great island mass, sloping on one side, precipitous on the other, with the spray dashing on it. If you see it from ever so far off, there is still that white foam coming and going—a glancing speck, like the light in an eye.’

‘Hark! a carriage.’

‘The young man and the young man’s companion,’ said Charles.

‘How can you?’ said Laura. ‘What would any one suppose Mr. Thorndale to be?’

‘Not Philip’s valet,’ said Charles, ‘if it is true that no man is a hero to his “valley-de-sham”; whereas, what is not Philip to the Honourable James Thorndale?’

‘Philip, Alexander, and Bucephalus into the bargain,’ suggested Amy, in her demure, frightened whisper, sending all but Laura into a fit of laughter, the harder to check because the steps of the parties concerned were heard approaching.

Mr. Thorndale was a quiet individual, one of those of whom there is least to be said, so complete a gentleman that it would have been an insult, to call him gentleman-like; agreeable and clever rather than otherwise, good-looking, with a high-bred air about him, so that it always seemed strange that he did not make more impression.

A ring at the front-door almost immediately followed their arrival.

‘Encore?’ asked Philip, looking at Laura with a sort of displeased surprise.

‘Unfortunately, yes,’ said Laura, drawing aside.

‘One of my uncle’s family parties,’ said Philip. ‘I wish I had not brought Thorndale. Laura, what is to be done to prevent the tittering that always takes place when Amy and those Harpers are together?’

‘Some game?’ said Laura. He signed approval; but she had time to say no more, for her father and mother came down, and some more guests entered.

It was just such a party that continually grew up at Hollywell, for Mr. Edmonstone was so fond of inviting, that his wife never knew in the morning how many would assemble at her table in the evening. But she was used to it, and too good a manager even to be called so. She liked to see her husband enjoy himself in his good-natured, open-hearted way. The change was good for Charles, and thus it did very well, and there were few houses in the neighbourhood more popular than Hollywell.

The guests this evening were Maurice de Courcy, a wild young Irishman, all noise and nonsense, a great favourite with his cousin, Mr. Edmonstone; two Miss Harpers, daughters of the late clergyman,

good-natured, second-rate girls; Dr. Mayerne, Charles's kind old physician, the friend and much-loved counsellor at Hollywell, and the present vicar, Mr. Ross with his daughter Mary.

Mary Ross was the greatest friend that the Miss Edmonstones possessed, though, she being five-and-twenty, they had not arrived at perceiving that they were on the equal terms of youngladyhood.

She had lost her mother early, and had owed a great deal to the kindness of Mrs. Edmonstone, as she grew up among her numerous elder brothers. She had no girlhood; she was a boy till fourteen, and then a woman, and she was scarcely altered since the epoch of that transition, the same in likings, tastes, and duties. 'Papa' was all the world to her, and pleasing him had much the same meaning now as then; her brothers were like playfellows; her delights were still a lesson in Greek from papa, a school-children's feast, a game at play, a new book. It was only a pity other people did not stand still too. 'Papa,' indeed, had never grown sensibly older since the year of her mother's death: but her brothers were whiskered men, with all the cares of the world, and no holidays; the school-girls went out to service, and were as a last year's brood to an old hen; the very children she had fondled were young ladies, as old, to all intents and purposes, as herself, and here were even Laura and Amy Edmonstone fallen into that bad habit of growing up! though little Amy had still much of the kitten in her composition, and could play as well as Charlotte or Mary herself, when they had the garden to themselves.

Mary took great pains to amuse Charles, always walking to see him in the worst weather, when she thought other visitors likely to fall, and chatting with him as if she was the idlest person in the world, though the quantity she did at home and in the parish would be too amazing to be recorded. Spirited and decided, without superfluous fears and fineries, she had a firm, robust figure, and a rosy, good-natured face, with a manner that, though perfectly feminine, had in it an air of strength and determination.

Hollywell was a hamlet, two miles from the parish church of East-hill, and Mary had thus seen very little of the Edmonstone's guest, having only been introduced to him after church on Sunday. The pleasure on which Charles chiefly reckoned for that evening was the talking him over with her when the ladies came in from the dining-room. The Miss Harpers, with his sisters, gathered round the piano, and Mrs. Edmonstone sat at Charles's feet, while Mary knitted and talked.

'So you get on well with him?'

'He is one of those people who are never in the way, and yet you never can forget their presence,' said Mrs. Edmonstone.

'His manners are quite the pink of courtesy,' said Mary.

'Like his grandfather's,' said Mrs. Edmonstone; 'that old-school deference and attention is very chivalrous, and sits prettily and quaintly on his high spirits and animation; I hope it will not wear off.'

'A vain hope,' said Charles. 'At present he is like that German myth, Kaspar Hauser, who lived till twenty in a cellar. It is lucky for mamma that, in his green state, he is courtly instead of bearish.'

'Lucky for you, too, Charlie; he spoils you finely.'

'He has the rare perfection of letting me know my own mind. I never knew what it was to have my own way before.'

'Is that your complaint, Charlie? What next?' said Mary.

'So you think I have my way, do you, Mary? That is all envy, you see, and very much misplaced. Could you guess what a conflict it is every time I am helped up that mountain of a staircase, or the slope of my sofa is altered? Last time Philip stayed here, every step cost an argument, till at last, through sheer exhaustion, I left myself a dead weight on his hands, to be carried up by main strength. And after all, he is such a great, strong fellow, that I am afraid he did not mind it; so next time I *crutched* myself down alone, and I hope that did provoke him.'

'Sir Guy is so kind that I am ashamed,' said Mrs. Edmonstone. 'It seems as if we had brought him for the sole purpose of waiting on Charles.'

'Half his heart is in his horse,' said Charles. 'Never had man such delight in the "brute creation."''

‘They have been his chief playfellows,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone. ‘The chief of his time was spent in wandering in the woods or on the beach, watching them and their ways.’

‘I fairly dreamt of that Elysium of his last night,’ said Charles: ‘a swamp half frozen on a winter’s night, full of wild ducks. Here, Charlotte, come and tell Mary the roll of Guy’s pets.’

Charlotte began. ‘There was the sea-gull, and the hedgehog, and the fox, and the badger, and the jay, and the monkey, that he bought because it was dying, and cured it, only it died the next winter, and a toad, and a raven, and a squirrel, and—’

‘That will do, Charlotte.’

‘Oh! but Mary has not heard the names of all his dogs. And Mary, he has cured Bustle of hunting my Puss. We held them up to each other, and Puss hissed horribly, but Bustle did not mind it a bit; and the other day, when Charles tried to set him at her, he would not take the least notice.’

‘Now, Charlotte,’ said Charles, waving his hand, with a provoking mock politeness, ‘have the goodness to return to your friends.’

Tea over, Laura proposed the game of definitions. ‘You know it, Philip,’ said she, ‘you taught us.’

‘Yes I learnt it of your sisters, Thorndale,’ said Philip.

‘O pray let us have it. It must be charming!’ exclaimed Miss Harper, on this recommendation.

‘Definitions!’ said Charles, contemptuously. ‘Dr. Johnson must be the hand for them.’

‘They are just the definitions not to be found in Johnson,’ said Mr. Thorndale. ‘Our standing specimen is adversity, which may be differently explained according to your taste, as “a toad with a precious jewel in its head,” or “the test of friendship.”’

‘The spirit of words,’ said Guy, looking eager and interested.

‘Well, we’ll try,’ said Charles, ‘though I can’t say it sounds to me promising. Come, Maurice, define an Irishman.’

‘No, no, don’t let us be personal,’ said Laura; ‘I had thought of the word “happiness”. We are each to write a definition on a slip of paper, then compare them.’

The game was carried on with great spirit for more than an hour. It was hard to say, which made most fun, Maurice, Charles, or Guy; the last no longer a spectator, but an active contributor to the sport. When the break-up came, Mary and Amabel were standing over the table together, collecting the scattered papers, and observing that it had been very good fun. ‘Some so characteristic,’ said Amy, ‘such as Maurice’s definition of happiness,—a row at Dublin.’

‘Some were very deep, though,’ said Mary; ‘if it is not treason, I should like to make out whose that other was of happiness.’

‘You mean this,’ said Amy: “‘Gleams from a brighter world, too soon eclipsed or forfeited.” I thought it was Philip’s, but it is Sir Guy’s writing. How very sad! I should not like to think so. And he was so merry all the time! This is his, too, I see; this one about riches being the freight for which the traveller is responsible.’

‘There is a great deal of character in them,’ said Mary. ‘I should not have wondered at any of us, penniless people, philosophizing in the fox and grapes style, but, for him, and at his age—’

‘He has been brought up so as to make the theory of wisdom come early,’ said Philip, who was nearer than she thought.

‘Is that intended for disparagement?’ she asked quickly.

I think very highly of him; he has a great deal of sense and right feeling,’ was Philip’s sedate answer; and he turned away to say some last words to Mr. Thorndale.

The Rosses were the last to depart, Mary in cloak and clogs, while Mr. Edmonstone lamented that it was in vain to offer the carriage; and Mary laughed, and thanked, and said the walk home with Papa was the greatest of treats in the frost and star-light.

‘Don’t I pity you, who always go out to dinner in a carriage!’ were her last words to Laura.

‘Well, Guy,’ said Charlotte, ‘how do you like it?’

‘Very much, indeed. It was very pleasant.’

‘You are getting into the fairy ring,’ said Laura, smiling.

‘Ay’ he said, smiling too; ‘but it does not turn to tinsel. Would it if I saw more of it?’ and he looked at Mrs. Edmonstone.

‘It would be no compliment to ourselves to say so,’ she answered.

‘I suppose tinsel or gold depends on the using,’ said he, thoughtfully; ‘there are some lumps of solid gold among those papers, I am sure, one, in particular, about a trifle. May I see that again? I mean—

‘Little things
On little wings
Bear little souls to heaven.’

‘Oh! that was only a quotation,’ said Amy, turning over the definitions again with him, and laughing at some of the most amusing; while, in the mean time, Philip went to help Laura, who was putting some books away in the ante-room.

‘Yes, Laura,’ he said, ‘he has thought, mind, and soul; he is no mere rattle.’

‘No indeed. Who could help seeing his superiority over Maurice?’

‘If only he does not pervert his gifts, and if it is not all talk. I don’t like such excess of openness about his feelings; it is too like talking for talking’s sake.’

‘Mamma says it in the transparency of youthfulness. You know he has never been at school; so his thoughts come out in security of sympathy, without fear of being laughed at. But it is very late. Good night.’

The frost turned to rain the next morning, and the torrents streamed against the window, seeming to have a kind of attraction for Philip and Guy, who stood watching them.

Guy wondered if the floods would be out at Redclyffe and his cousins were interested by his description of the sudden, angry rush of the mountain streams, eddying fiercely along, bearing with them tree and rock, while the valleys became lakes, and the little mounds islets; and the trees looked strangely out of proportion when only their branches were visible. ‘Oh! a great flood is famous fun,’ said he.

‘Surely,’ said Philip, ‘I have heard a legend of your being nearly drowned in some flood.’

‘Yes,’ said Guy, ‘I had a tolerable ducking.’

‘Oh, tell us about it!’ said Amy.

‘Ay! I have a curiosity to hear a personal experience of drowning,’ said Charles. ‘Come, begin at the beginning.’

‘I was standing watching the tremendous force of the stream, when I saw an unhappy old ram floating along, bleating so piteously, and making such absurd, helpless struggles, that I could not help pulling off my coat and jumping in after him. It was very foolish, for the stream was too strong—I was two years younger then. Moreover, the beast was very heavy, and not at all grateful for any kind intentions, and I found myself sailing off to the sea, with the prospect of a good many rocks before long; but just then an old tree stretched out its friendly arms through the water; it stopped the sheep, and I caught hold of the branches, and managed to scramble up, while my friend got entangled in them with his wool’—

‘Omne quum Proteus pecus egit altos
Visere montes,’

quoted Philip.

‘Ovium et summa, genus haesit ulmo,’

added Guy.

‘*Ovium*,’ exclaimed Philip, with a face of horror. ‘Don’t you know that *O* in *Ovis* is short? Do anything but take liberties with Horace!’

‘Get out of the tree first, Guy,’ said Charles, ‘for at present your history seems likely to end with a long ohone!’

‘Well, Triton—not Proteus—came to the rescue at last,’ said Guy, laughing; ‘I could not stir, and the tree bent so frightfully with the current that I expected every minute we should all go together; so I had nothing for it but to halloo as loud as I could. No one heard but Triton, the old Newfoundland dog, who presently came swimming up, so eager to help, poor fellow, that I thought he would have throttled me, or hurt himself in the branches. I took off my handkerchief and threw it to him, telling him to take it to Arnaud, who I knew would understand it as a signal of distress.’

‘Did he? How long had you to wait?’

‘I don’t know—it seemed long enough before a most welcome boat appeared, with some men in it, and Triton in an agony. They would never have found me but for him, for my voice was gone; indeed the next thing I remember was lying on the grass in the park, and Markham saying, ‘Well, sir, if you do wish to throw away your life, let it be for something better worth saving than Farmer Holt’s vicious old ram!’

‘In the language of the great Mr. Toots,’ said Charles ‘I am afraid you got very wet.’

‘Were you the worse for it?’ said Amy.

‘Not in the least. I was so glad to hear it was Holt’s! for you must know that I had behaved very ill to Farmer Holt. I had been very angry at his beating our old hound, for, as he thought, worrying his sheep; not that Dart ever did, though.

‘And was the ram saved?’

‘Yes, and next time I saw it, it nearly knocked me down.’

‘Would you do it again?’ said Philip.

‘I don’t know.’

‘I hope you had a medal from the Humane Society,’ said Charles.

‘That would have been more proper for Triton.’

‘Yours should have been an ovation,’ said Charles, cutting the *o* absurdly short, and looking at Philip.

Laura saw that the spirit of teasing was strong in Charles this morning and suspected that he wanted to stir up what he called the deadly feud, and she hastened to change the conversation by saying, ‘You quite impressed Guy with your translation of *Fra Cristoforo*.’

‘Indeed I must thank you for recommending the book,’ said Guy; ‘how beautiful it is!’

‘I am glad you entered into it,’ said Philip; ‘it has every quality that a fiction ought to have.’

‘I never read anything equal to the repentance of the nameless man.’

‘Is he your favourite character?’ said Philip, looking at him attentively.

‘Oh no—of course not—though he is so grand that one thinks most about him, but no one can be cared about as much as Lucia.’

‘Lucia! She never struck me as more than a well-painted peasant girl,’ said Philip.

‘Oh!’ cried Guy, indignantly; then, controlling himself, he continued: ‘She pretends to no more than she is, but she shows the beauty of goodness in itself in a—a—wonderful way. And think of the power of those words of hers over that gloomy, desperate man.’

‘Your sympathy with the *Innominato* again,’ said Philip. Every subject seemed to excite Guy to a dangerous extent, as Laura thought, and she turned to Philip to ask if he would not read to them again.

‘I brought this book on purpose,’ said Philip. ‘I wished to read you a description of that print from *Raffaelle*—you know it—the *Madonna di San Sisto*?’

‘The one you brought to show us?’ said Amy, ‘with the two little angels?’

‘Yes, here is the description,’ and he began to read—

‘Dwell on the form of the Child, more than human in grandeur, seated on the arms of the Blessed Virgin as on an august throne. Note the tokens of divine grace, His ardent eyes, what a spirit, what a countenance is His; yet His very resemblance to His mother denotes sufficiently that He is of us and takes care for us. Beneath are two figures adoring, each in their own manner. On one side is a pontiff, on the other a virgin each a most sweet and solemn example, the one of aged, the other of maidenly piety and reverence. Between, are two winged boys, evidently presenting a wonderful pattern of childlike piety. Their eyes, indeed, are not turned towards the Virgin, but both in face and gesture, they show how careless of themselves they are in the presence of God.’

All were struck by the description. Guy did not speak at first, but the solemn expression of his face showed how he felt its power and reverence. Philip asked if they would like to hear more, and Charles assented: Amy worked, Laura went on with her perspective, and Guy sat by her side, making concentric circles with her compasses, or when she wanted them he tormented her parallel ruler, or cut the pencils, never letting his fingers rest except at some high or deep passage, or when some interesting discussion arose. All were surprised when luncheon time arrived; Charles held out his hand for the book; it was given with a slight smile, and he exclaimed ‘Latin! I thought you were translating. Is it your own property?’

‘Yes.’

‘Is it very tough? I would read it, if any one would read it with me.’

‘Do you mean me?’ said Guy; ‘I should like it very much, but you have seen how little Latin I know.’

‘That is the very thing,’ said Charles; ‘that Ovis of yours was music; I would have made you a Knight of the Golden Fleece on the spot. Tutors I could get by shoals, but a fellow-dunce is inestimable.’

‘It is a bargain, then,’ said Guy; ‘if Philip has done with the book and will lend it to us.’

The luncheon bell rang, and they all adjourned to the dining-room. Mr. Edmonstone came in when luncheon was nearly over, rejoicing that his letters were done, but then he looked disconsolately from the window, and pitied the weather. ‘Nothing for it but billiards. People might say it was nonsense to have a billiard-table in such a house, but for his part he found there was no getting through a wet day without them. Philip must beat him as usual, and Guy might have one of the young ladies to make a fourth.’

‘Thank you,’ said Guy, ‘but I don’t play.’

‘Not play—eh?’ Well, we will teach you in the spinning of a ball, and I’ll have my little Amy to help me against you and Philip.’

‘No, thank you,’ repeated Guy, colouring, ‘I am under a promise.’

‘Ha! Eh? What? Your grandfather? He could see no harm in such play as this. For nothing, you understand. You did not suppose I meant anything else?’

‘O no, of course not,’ eagerly replied Guy; ‘but it is impossible for me to play, thank you. I have promised never even to look on at a game at billiards.’

‘Ah, poor man, he had too much reason.’ uttered Mr. Edmonstone to himself, but catching a warning look from his wife, he became suddenly silent. Guy, meanwhile, sat looking lost in sad thoughts, till, rousing himself, he exclaimed, ‘Don’t let me prevent you.’

Mr. Edmonstone needed but little persuasion, and carried Philip off to the billiard-table in the front hall.

‘O, I am so glad!’ cried Charlotte, who had, within the last week, learnt Guy’s value as a playfellow. ‘Now you will never go to those stupid billiards, but I shall have you always, every rainy day. Come and have a real good game at ball on the stairs.’

She already had hold of his hand, and would have dragged him off at once, had he not waited to help Charles back to his sofa; and in the mean time she tried in vain to persuade her more constant

playmate, Amabel, to join the game. Poor little Amy regretted the being obliged to refuse, as she listened to the merry sounds and bouncing balls, sighing more than once at having turned into a grown-up young lady; while Philip observed to Laura, who was officiating as billiard-marker, that Guy was still a mere boy.

The fates favoured Amy at last for about half after three, the billiards were interrupted, and Philip, pronouncing the rain to be almost over, invited Guy to take a walk, and they set out in a very gray wet mist, while Charlotte and Amy commenced a vigorous game at battledore and shuttle-cock.

The gray mist had faded into twilight, and twilight into something like night, when Charles was crossing the hall, with the aid of Amy's arm, Charlotte carrying the crutch behind him, and Mrs. Edmonstone helping Laura with her perspective apparatus, all on their way to dress for dinner; the door opened and in came the two Morvilles. Guy, without, even stopping to take off his great coat, ran at once up-stairs, and the next moment the door of his room was shut with a bang that shook the house, and made them all start and look at Philip for explanation.

'Redclyffe temper,' said he, coolly, with a half-smile curling his short upper lip.

'What have you been doing to him?' said Charles.'

'Nothing. At least nothing worthy of such ire. I only entered on the subject of his Oxford life, and advised him to prepare for it, for his education has as yet been a mere farce. He used to go two or three days in the week to one Potts, a self-educated genius—a sort of superior writing-master at the Moorworth commercial school. Of course, though it is no fault of his, poor fellow, he is hardly up to the fifth form, and he must make the most of his time, if he is not to be plucked. I set all this before him as gently as I could, for I knew with whom I had to deal, yet you see how it is.'

'What did he say?' asked Charles.

'He said nothing; so far I give him credit; but he strode on furiously for the last half mile, and this explosion is the finale. I am very sorry for him, poor boy; I beg no further notice may be taken of it. Don't you want an arm, Charlie?'

'No thank you,' answered Charles, with a little surliness.

'You had better. It really is too much for Amy,' said Philip, making a move as if to take possession of him, as he arrived at the foot of the stairs.

'Like the camellia, I suppose,' he replied; and taking his other crutch from Charlotte, he began determinedly to ascend without assistance, resolved to keep Philip a prisoner below him as long as he could, and enjoying the notion of chafing him by the delay. Certainly teasing Philip was a dear delight to Charles, though it was all on trust, as, if he succeeded, his cousin never betrayed his annoyance by look or sign.

About a quarter of an hour after, there was a knock at the dressing-room door. 'Come in,' said Mrs. Edmonstone, looking up from her letter-writing, and Guy made his appearance, looking very downcast.

'I am come,' he said, 'to ask pardon for the disturbance I made just now. I was so foolish as to be irritated at Philip's manner, when he was giving me some good advice, and I am very sorry.'

'What has happened to your lip?' she exclaimed.

He put his handkerchief to it. 'Is it bleeding still? It is a trick of mine to bite my lip when I am vexed. It seems to help to keep down words. There! I have given myself a mark of this hateful outbreak.'

He looked very unhappy, more so, Mrs. Edmonstone thought, than the actual offence required. 'You have only failed in part,' she said. 'It was a victory to keep down words.'

'The feeling is the *thing*,' said Guy; 'besides, I showed it plainly enough, without speaking.'

'It is not easy to take advice from one so little your elder,' began Mrs. Edmonstone, but he interrupted her. 'It was not the advice. That was very good; I—' but he spoke with an effort,—'I am obliged to him. It was—no, I won't say what,' he added, his eyes kindling, then changing in a moment to a sorrowful, resolute tone, 'Yes, but I *will*, and then I shall make myself thoroughly ashamed. It

was his veiled assumption of superiority, his contempt for all I have been taught. Just as if he had not every right to despise me, with his talent and scholarship, after such egregious mistakes as I had made in the morning. I gave him little reason to think highly of my attainments; but let him slight me as much as he pleases, he must not slight those who taught me. It was not Mr. Potts' fault.'

Even the name could not spoil the spirited sound of the speech, and Mrs. Edmonstone was full of sympathy. 'You must remember,' she said, 'that in the eyes of a man brought up at public school, nothing compensates for the want of the regular classical education. I have no doubt it was very provoking.'

'I don't want to be excused, thank you,' said Guy. 'Oh I am grieved; for I thought the worst of my temper had been subdued. After all that has passed—all I felt—I thought it impossible. Is there no hope for—' He covered his face with his hands, then recovering and turning to Mrs. Edmonstone, he said, 'It is encroaching too much on your kindness to come here and trouble you with my confessions.'

'No, no, indeed,' said she, earnestly. 'Remember how we agreed that you should come to me like one of my own children. And, indeed, I do not see why you need grieve in this despairing way, for you almost overcame the fit of anger; and perhaps you were off your guard because the trial came in an unexpected way?'

'It did, it did,' he said, eagerly; 'I don't, mind being told point blank that I am a dunce, but that Mr. Potts—nay, by implication—my grandfather should be set at nought in that cool—But here I am again!' said he, checking himself in the midst of his vehemence; 'he did not mean that, of course. I have no one to blame but myself.'

'I am sure,' said Mrs. Edmonstone, 'that if you always treat your failings in this way, you must subdue them at last.'

'It is all failing, and resolving, and failing again!' said Guy.

'Yes, but the failures become slighter and less frequent, and the end is victory.'

'The end victory!' repeated Guy, in a musing tone, as he stood leaning against the mantelshelf.

'Yes, to all who persevere and seek for help,' said Mrs Edmonstone; and he raised his eyes and fixed them on her with an earnest look that surprised her, for it was almost as if the hope came home to him as something new. At that moment, however, she was called away, and directly after a voice in the next room exclaimed, 'Are you there, Guy? I want an arm!' while he for the first time perceived that Charles's door was ajar.

Charles thought all this a great fuss about nothing, indeed he was glad to find there was anyone who had no patience with Philip; and in his usual mischievous manner, totally reckless of the fearful evil of interfering with the influence for good which it was to be hoped that Philip might exert over Guy, he spoke thus: 'I begin to think the world must be more docile than I have been disposed to give it credit for. How a certain cousin of ours has escaped numerous delicate hints to mind his own business is to me one of the wonders of the world.'

'No one better deserves that his advice should be followed,' said Guy, with some constraint.

'An additional reason against it,' said Charles. 'Plague on that bell! I meant to have broken through your formalities and had a candid opinion of Don Philip before it rang.'

'Then I am glad of it; I could hardly have given you a candid opinion just at present.'

Charles was vexed; but he consoled himself by thinking that Guy did not yet feel himself out of his leading-strings, and was still on his good behaviour. After such a flash as this there was no fear, but there was that in him which would create mischief and disturbance enough. Charles was well principled at the bottom, and would have shrunk with horror had it been set before him how dangerous might be the effect of destroying the chance of a friendship between Guy and the only person whose guidance was likely to be beneficial to him; but his idle, unoccupied life, and habit of only thinking of things as they concerned his immediate amusement, made him ready to do anything for the sake of opposition to Philip, and enjoy the vague idea of excitement to be derived from anxiety about his

father's ward, whom at the same time he regarded with increased liking as he became certain that what he called the Puritan spirit was not native to him.

At dinner-time, Guy was as silent as on his first arrival, and there would have been very little conversation had not the other gentleman talked politics, Philip leading the discussion to bear upon the duties and prospects of landed proprietors, and dwelling on the extent of their opportunities for doing good. He tried to get Guy's attention, by speaking of Redclyffe, of the large circle influenced by the head of the Morville family, and of the hopes entertained by Lord Thorndale that this power would prove a valuable support to the rightful cause. He spoke in vain; the young heir of Redclyffe made answers as brief, absent, and indifferent, as if all this concerned him no more than the Emperor of Morocco, and Philip, mentally pronouncing him sullen, turned to address himself to Laura.

As soon as the ladies had left the dining-room, Guy roused himself, and began by saying to his guardian that he was afraid he was very deficient in classical knowledge; that he found he must work hard before going to Oxford; and asked whether there was any tutor in the neighbourhood to whom he could apply.

Mr. Edmonstone opened his eyes, as much amazed as if Guy had asked if there was any executioner in the neighbourhood who could cut off his head. Philip was no less surprised, but he held his peace, thinking it was well Guy had sense enough to propose it voluntarily, as he would have suggested it to his uncle as soon as there was an opportunity of doing so in private. As soon as Mr. Edmonstone had recollected himself, and pronounced it to be exceedingly proper, &c., they entered into a discussion on the neighbouring curates, and came at last to a resolution that Philip should see whether Mr. Lascelles, a curate of Broadstone, and an old schoolfellow of his own, would read with Guy a few hours in every week.

After this was settled, Guy looked relieved, though he was not himself all the evening, and sat in his old corner between the plants and the window, where he read a grave book, instead of talking, singing, or finishing his volume of 'Ten Thousand a Year.' Charlotte was all this time ill at ease. She looked from Guy to Philip, from Philip to Guy; she shut her mouth as if she was forming some great resolve, then coloured, and looked confused, rushing into the conversation with something more mal-apropos than usual, as if on purpose to appear at her ease. At last, just before her bed-time, when the tea was coming in, Mrs. Edmonstone engaged with that, Laura reading, Amy clearing Charles's little table, and Philip helping Mr. Edmonstone to unravel the confused accounts of the late cheating bailiff, Guy suddenly found her standing by him, perusing his face with all the power of her great blue eyes. She started as he looked up, and put her face into Amabel's great myrtle as if she would make it appear that she was smelling to it.

'Well, Charlotte?' said he, and the sound of his voice made her speak, but in a frightened, embarrassed whisper.

'Guy—Guy—Oh! I beg your pardon, but I wanted to—'

'Well, what?' said he, kindly.

'I wanted to make sure that you are not angry with Philip. You don't mean to keep up the feud, do you?'

'Feud?—I hope not,' said Guy, too much in earnest to be diverted with her lecture. 'I am very much obliged to him.'

'Are you really?' said Charlotte, her head a little on one side. 'I thought he had been scolding you.'

Scolding was so very inappropriate to Philip's calm, argumentative way of advising, that it became impossible not to laugh.

'Not scolding, then?' said Charlotte. 'You are too nearly grown up for that, but telling you to learn, and being tiresome.'

'I was so foolish as to be provoked at first,' answered Guy; 'but I hope I have thought better of it, and am going to act upon it.'

Charlotte opened her eyes wider than ever, but in the midst of her amazement Mrs. Edmonstone called to Guy to quit his leafy screen and come to tea.

Philip was to return to Broadstone the next day, and as Mrs. Edmonstone had some errands there that would occupy her longer than Charles liked to wait in the carriage, it was settled that Philip should drive her there in the pony phaeton, and Guy accompany them and drive back, thus having an opportunity of seeing Philip's print of the 'Madonna di San Sisto,' returning some calls, and being introduced to Mr. Lascelles, whilst she was shopping. They appointed an hour and place of meeting, and kept to it, after which Mrs. Edmonstone took Guy with her to call on Mrs. Deane, the wife of the colonel.

It was currently believed among the young Edmonstones that Mamma and Mrs. Deane never met without talking over Mr. Morville's good qualities, and the present visit proved no exception. Mrs. Deane, a kind, open-hearted, elderly lady was very fond of Mr. Morville, and proud of him as a credit to the regiment; and she told several traits of his excellent judgment, kindness of heart, and power of leading to the right course. Mrs. Edmonstone listened, and replied with delight; and no less pleasure and admiration were seen reflected in her young friend's radiant face.

Mrs. Edmonstone's first question, as they set out on their homeward drive, was, whether they had seen Mr. Lascelles?

'Yes,' said Guy, 'I am to begin to-morrow, and go to him every Monday and Thursday.'

'That is prompt.'

'Ah! I have no time to lose; besides I have been leading too smooth a life with you. I want something unpleasant to keep me in order. Something famously horrid,' repeated he, smacking the whip with a relish, as if he would have applied that if he could have found nothing else.

'You think you live too smoothly at Hollywell,' said Mrs. Edmonstone, hardly able, with all her respect for his good impulses, to help laughing at this strange boy.

'Yes. Happy, thoughtless, vehement; that is what your kindness makes me. Was it not a proof, that I must needs fly out at such a petty provocation?'

'I should not have thought it such a very exciting life; certainly not such as is usually said to lead to thoughtlessness; and we have been even quieter than usual since you came.'

'Ah, you don't know what stuff I am made of,' said Guy, gravely, though smiling; 'your own home party is enough to do me harm; it is so exceedingly pleasant.'

'Pleasant things do not necessarily do harm.'

'Not to you; not to people who are not easily unsettled; but when I go up-stairs, after a talking, merry evening, such as the night before last, I find that I have enjoyed it too much; I am all abroad! I can hardly fix my thoughts, and I don't know what to do, since here I must be, and I can't either be silent, or sit up in my own room.'

'Certainly not,' said she, smiling; 'there are duties of society which you owe even to us dangerous people.'

'No, no: don't misunderstand me. The fault is in myself. If it was not for that, I could learn nothing but good,' said Guy, speaking very eagerly, distressed at her answer.

'I believe I understand you,' said she, marvelling at the serious, ascetic temper, coupled with the very high animal spirits. 'For your comfort, I believe the unsettled feeling you complain of is chiefly the effect of novelty. You have led so very retired a life, that a lively family party is to you what dissipation would be to other people: and, as you must meet with the world some time or other, it is better the first encounter with should be in this comparatively innocent form. Go on watching yourself, and it will do you no harm.'

Yes, but if I find it does me harm? It would be cowardly to run away, and resistance should be from within. Yet, on the other hand, there is the duty of giving up, wrenching oneself from all that has temptation in it.'

‘There is nothing,’ said Mrs Edmonstone, ‘that has no temptation in it; but I should think the rule was plain. If a duty such as that of living among us for the present, and making yourself moderately agreeable, involves temptations, they must be met and battled from within. In the same way, your position in society, with all its duties, could not be laid aside because it is full of trial. Those who do such things are fainthearted, and fail in trust in Him who fixed their station, and finds room for them to deny themselves in the trivial round and common task. It is pleasure involving no duty that should be given up, if we find it liable to lead us astray.’

‘I see,’ answered Guy, musingly; ‘and this reading comes naturally, and is just what I wanted to keep the pleasant things from getting a full hold of me. I ought to have thought of it sooner, instead of dawdling a whole month in idleness. Then all this would not have happened. I hope it will be very tough.’

‘You have no great love for Latin and Greek?’

‘Oh!’ cried Guy, eagerly, ‘to be sure I delight in Homer and the Georgics, and plenty more. What splendid things there are in these old fellows! But, I never liked the drudgery part of the affair; and now if I am to be set to work to be accurate, and to get up all the grammar and the Greek roots, it will be horrid enough in all conscience.’

He groaned as deeply as if he had not been congratulating himself just before on the difficulty.

‘Who was your tutor?’ asked Mrs. Edmonstone.

‘Mr. Potts,’ said Guy. ‘He is a very clever man; he had a common grammar-school education, but he struggled on—taught himself a great deal—and at last thought it great promotion to be a teacher at the Commercial Academy, as they call it, at Moorworth, where Markham’s nephews went to school. He is very clever, I assure you, and very patient of the hard, wearing life he must have of it there; and oh! so enjoying a new book, or an afternoon to himself. When I was about eight or nine, I began with him, riding into Moorworth three times in a week; and I have gone on ever since. I am sure he has done the best he could for me; and he made the readings very pleasant by his own enjoyment. If Philip had known the difficulties that man has struggled through, and his beautiful temper, persevering in doing his best and being contented, I am sure he could never have spoken contemptuously of him.’

‘I am sure he would not,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone; ‘all he meant was, that a person without a university education cannot tell what the requirements are to which a man must come up in these days.’

‘Ah!’ said Guy, laughing, ‘how I wished Mr. Potts had been there to have enjoyed listening to Philip and Mr. Lascelles discussing some new Lexicon, digging down for roots of words, and quoting passages of obscure Greek poets at such a rate, that if my eyes had been shut I could have thought them two withered old students in spectacles and snuff-coloured coats.’

‘Philip was in his element.’ said Mrs. Edmonstone, smiling.

‘Really,’ proceeded Guy, with animation, ‘the more I hear and see of Philip, the more I wonder. What a choice collection of books he has—so many of them school prizes, and how beautifully bound!’

‘Ah! that is one of Philip’s peculiar ways. With all his prudence and his love of books, I believe he would not buy one unless he had a reasonable prospect of being able to dress it handsomely. Did you see the print?’

‘Yes that I did. What glorious loveliness! There is nothing that does it justice but the description in the lecture. Oh I forgot, you have not heard it. You must let me read it to you by and by. Those two little angels, what faces they have. Perfect innocence—one full of reasoning, the other of unreasoning adoration!’

‘I see it!’ suddenly exclaimed Mrs. Edmonstone; ‘I see what you are like in one of your looks, not by any means, in all—it is to the larger of those two angels.’

‘Very seldom, I should guess,’ said Guy; and sinking his voice, as if he was communicating a most painful fact, he added, ‘My real likeness is old Sir Hugh’s portrait at home. But what were we saying? Oh! about Philip. How nice those stories were of Mrs. Deane’s.’

‘She is very fond of him.’

‘To have won so much esteem and admiration, already from strangers, with no prejudice in his favour.—It must be entirely his own doing; and well it may! Every time one hears of him, something comes out to make him seem more admirable. You are laughing at me, and I own it is presumptuous to praise; but I did not mean to praise, only to admire.’

‘I like very much to hear my nephew praised; I was only smiling at your enthusiastic way.’

‘I only wonder I am not more enthusiastic,’ said Guy. ‘I suppose it is his plain good sense that drives away that sort of feeling, for he is as near heroism in the way of self-sacrifice as a man can be in these days.’

‘Poor Philip! if disappointment can make a hero, it has fallen to his share. Ah! Guy, you are brightening and looking like one of my young ladies in hopes of a tale of true love crossed, but it was only love of a sister.’

‘The sister for whom he gave up so much?’

‘Yes, his sister Margaret. She was eight or nine years older, very handsome, very clever, a good deal like him—a pattern elder sister; indeed, she brought him up in great part after his mother died, and he was devoted to her. I do believe it made the sacrifice of his prospects quite easy to him, to know it was for her sake, that she would live on at Stylehurst, and the change be softened to her. Then came Fanny’s illness, and that led to the marriage with Dr. Henley. It was just what no one could object to; he is a respectable man in full practice, with a large income; but he is much older than she is, not her equal in mind or cultivation, and though I hardly like to say so, not at all a religious man. At any rate, Margaret Morville was one of the last people one could bear to see marry for the sake of an establishment.’

‘Could her brother do nothing?’

‘He expostulated with all his might; but at nineteen he could do little with a determined sister of twenty-seven; and the very truth and power of his remonstrance must have made it leave a sting. Poor fellow, I believe he suffered terribly—just as he had lost Fanny, too, which he felt very deeply, for she was a very sweet creature, and he was very fond of her. It was like losing both sisters and home at once.’

‘Has he not just been staying with Mrs. Henley?’

‘Yes. There was never any coolness, as people call it. He is the one thing she loves and is proud of. They always correspond, and he often stays with her; but he owns to disliking the Doctor, and I don’t think he has much comfort in Margaret herself, for he always comes back more grave and stern than he went. Her house, with all her good wishes, can be no home to him; and so we try to make Hollywell supply the place of Stylehurst as well as we can.’

‘How glad he must be to have you to comfort him!’

‘Philip? Oh no. He was always reserved; open to no one but Margaret, not even to his father, and since her marriage he has shut himself up within himself more than ever. It has, at least I think it is this that has given him a severity, an unwillingness to trust, which I believe is often the consequence of a great disappointment either in love or in friendship.’

‘Thank you for telling me,’ said Guy: ‘I shall understand him better, and look up to him more. Oh! it is a cruel thing to find that what one loves is, or has not been, all one thought. What must he not have gone through!’

Mrs. Edmonstone was well pleased to have given so much assistance to Guy’s sincere desire to become attached to his cousin, one of the most favourable signs in the character that was winning so much upon her.

CHAPTER 5

A cloud was o'er my childhood's dream,
I sat in solitude;
I know not how—I know not why,
But round my soul all drearily
There was a silent shroud.

—*THOUGHTS IN PAST YEARS*

Mrs. Edmonstone was anxious to hear Mr. Lascelle's opinion of his pupil, and in time she learnt that he thought Sir Guy had very good abilities, and a fair amount of general information; but that his classical knowledge was far from accurate, and mathematics had been greatly neglected. He had been encouraged to think his work done when he had gathered the general meaning of a passage, or translated it into English verse, spirited and flowing, but often further from the original than he or his tutor could perceive. He had never been taught to work, at least as other boys study, and great application would be requisite to bring his attainments to a level with those of far less clever boys educated at a public school.

Mr. Lascelles told him so at first; but as there were no reflections on his grandfather, or on Mr. Potts, Guy's lip did not suffer, and he only asked how many hours a day he ought to read. 'Three,' said Mr. Lascelles, with a due regard to a probable want of habits of application; but then, remembering how much was undone, he added, that 'it ought to be four or more, if possible.'

'Four it *shall* be,' said Guy; 'five if I can.'

His whole strength of will was set to accomplish these four hours, taking them before and after breakfast, working hard all the morning till the last hour before luncheon, when he came to read the lectures on poetry with Charles. Here, for the first time, it appeared that Charles had so entirely ceased to consider him as company, as to domineer over him like his own family.

Used as Guy had been to an active out-of-doors life, and now turned back to authors he had read long ago, to fight his way through the construction of their language, not excusing himself one jot of the difficulty, nor turning aside from one mountain over which his own efforts could carry him, he found his work as tough and tedious as he could wish or fear, and by the end of the morning was thoroughly fagged. Then would have been the refreshing time for recreation in that pleasant idling-place, the Hollywell drawing-room. Any other time of day would have suited Charles as well for the reading, but he liked to take the hour at noon, and never perceived that this made all the difference to his friend of a toil or a pleasure. Now and then Guy gave tremendous yawns; and once when Charles told him he was very stupid, proposed a different time; but as Charles objected, he yielded as submissively as the rest of the household were accustomed to do.

To watch Guy was one of Charles's chief amusements, and he rejoiced greatly in the prospect of hearing his history of his first dinner-party. Mr., Mrs. and Miss Edmonstone, and Sir Guy Morville, were invited to dine with Mr. and Mrs. Brownlow. Mr. Edmonstone was delighted as usual with any opportunity of seeing his neighbours; Guy looked as if he did not know whether he liked the notion or not; Laura told him it would be very absurd and stupid, but there would be some good music, and Charles ordered her to say no more, that he might have the account, the next morning, from a fresh and unprejudiced mind.

The next morning's question was, of course, 'How did you like your party?'

'O, it was great fun.' Guy's favourite answer was caught up in the midst, as Laura replied, 'It was just what parties always are.'

'Come, let us have the history. Who handed who in to dinner? I hope Guy had Mrs. Brownlow.'

‘Oh no,’ said Laura; we had both the honourables.’

‘Not Philip!’

‘No,’ said Guy; ‘the fidus Achetes was without his pious Aeneas.’

‘Very good, Guy,’ said Charles, enjoying the laugh.

‘I could not help thinking of it,’ said Guy, rather apologising, ‘when I was watching Thorndale’s manner; it is such an imitation of Philip; looking droller, I think, in his absence, than in his presence. I wonder if he is conscious of it.’

‘It does not suit him at all,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone; because he has no natural dignity.’

‘A man ought to be six foot one, person and mind, to suit with that grand, sedate, gracious way of Philip’s,’ said Guy.

‘There’s Guy’s measure of Philip’s intellect,’ said Charles, ‘just six foot one inch.’

‘As much more than other people’s twice his height,’ said Guy.

‘Who was your neighbour, Laura?’ asked Amy.

‘Dr. Mayerne; I was very glad of him, to keep off those hunting friends of Mr. Brownlow, who never ask anything but if one has been to the races, and if one likes balls.’

‘And how did Mrs. Brownlow behave?’ said Charles.

‘She is a wonderful woman,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone, in her quiet way; and Guy with an expression between drollery and simplicity, said, ‘Then there aren’t many like her.’

‘I hope not,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone.

‘Is she really a lady?’

‘Philip commonly calls her “that woman,”’ said Charles. ‘He has never got over her one night classing him with his “young man” and myself, as three of the shyest monkeys she ever came across.’

‘She won’t say so of Maurice,’ said Laura, as they recovered the laugh.

‘I heard her deluding some young lady by saying he was the eldest son,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone.

‘Mamma!’ cried Amy, ‘could she have thought so?’

‘I put in a gentle hint on Lord de Courcy’s existence, to which she answered, in her quick way, ‘O ay, I forgot; but then he is the second, and that’s the next thing.’

‘If you could but have heard the stories she and Maurice were telling each other!’ said Guy. ‘He was playing her off, I believe; for whatever she told, he capped it with something more wonderful. Is she really a lady?’

‘By birth,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone. It is only her high spirits and small judgment that make her so absurd.’

‘How loud she is, too!’ said Laura. ‘What was all that about horses, Guy?’

‘She was saying she drove two such spirited horses, that all the grooms were afraid of them; and when she wanted to take out her little boy, Mr. Brownlow said “You may do as you like my dear, but I won’t have my son’s neck broken, whatever you do with your own.” So Maurice answered by declaring he knew a lady who drove not two, but four-in-hand, and when the leaders turned round and looked her in the face, gave a little nod, and said, ‘I’m obliged for your civility.’

‘Oh! I wish I had heard that,’ cried Laura.

‘Did you hear her saying she smoked cigars?’

Everyone cried out with horror or laughter.

‘Of course, Maurice told a story of a lady who had a cigar case hanging at her chatelaine, and always took one to refresh her after a ball.’

Guy was interrupted by the announcement of his horse, and rode off at once to Mr. Lascelles.

On his return he went straight to the drawing-room, where Mrs. Edmonstone was reading to Charles, and abruptly exclaimed,—

‘I told you wrong. She only said she had smoked one cigar.’ Then perceiving that he was interrupting, he added, ‘I beg your pardon,’ and went away.

The next evening, on coming in from a solitary skating, he found the younger party in the drawing-room, Charles entertaining the Miss Harpers with the story of the cigars. He hastily interposed—

‘I told you it was but one.’

‘Ay, tried one, and went on. She was preparing an order for Havannah.’

‘I thought I told you I repeated the conversation incorrectly.’

‘If it is not the letter, it is the spirit,’ said Charles, vexed at the interference with his sport of amazing the Miss Harpers with outrageous stories of Mrs. Brownlow.

‘It is just like her,’ said one of them. ‘I could believe anything of Mrs. Brownlow.’

‘You must not believe this,’ said Guy, gently. ‘I repeated incorrectly what had better have been forgotten, and I must beg my foolish exaggeration to go no further.’

Charles became sullenly silent; Guy stood thoughtful; and Laura and Amabel could not easily sustain the conversation till the visitors took their leave.

‘Here’s a pothor!’ grumbled Charles, as soon as they were gone.

‘I beg your pardon for spoiling your story,’ said Guy; but it was my fault, so I was obliged to interfere.’

‘Bosh!’ said Charles. ‘Who cares whether she smoked one or twenty? She is Mrs. Brownlow still.’

The point is, what was truth?’ said Laura.

‘Straining at gnats,’ said Charles.

‘Little wings?’ said Guy, glancing at Amabel.

‘Have it your won way,’ said Charles, throwing his head back; ‘they must be little souls, indeed that stick at such trash.’

Guy’s brows were contracted with vexation, but Laura looked up very prettily, saying—

‘Never mind him. We must all honour you for doing such an unpleasant thing.’

‘You will recommend him favourably to Philip,’ growled Charles.

There was no reply, and presently Guy asked whether he would go up to dress? Having no other way of showing his displeasure, he refused, and remained nursing his ill-humour, till he forgot how slight the offence had been, and worked himself into a sort of insane desire—half mischievous, half revengeful—to be as provoking as he could in his turn.

Seldom had he been more contrary, as his old nurse was wont to call it. No one could please him, and Guy was not allowed to do anything for him. Whatever he said was intended to rub on some sore place in Guy’s mind. His mother and Laura’s signs made him worse, for he had the pleasure of teasing them, also; but Guy endured it all with perfect temper, and he grew more cross at his failure; yet, from force of habit, at bed-time, he found himself on the stairs with Guy’s arm supporting him.

‘Good night,’ said Charles; ‘I tried hard to poke up the lion to-night, but I see it won’t do.’

This plea of trying experiments was neither absolutely true nor false; but it restored Charles to himself, by saving a confession that he had been out of temper, and enabling him to treat with him wonted indifference the expostulations of father, mother, and Laura.

Now that the idea of ‘poking up the lion’ had once occurred, it became his great occupation to attempt it. He wanted to see some evidence of the fiery temper, and it was a new sport to try to rouse it; one, too, which had the greater relish, as it kept the rest of the family on thorns.

He would argue against his real opinion, talk against his better sense, take the wrong side, and say much that was very far from his true sentiments. Guy could not understand at first, and was quite confounded at some of the views he espoused, till Laura came to his help, greatly irritating her brother by hints that he was not in earnest. Next time she could speak to Guy alone, she told him he must not take all Charles said literally.

‘I thought he could hardly mean it: but why should he talk so?’

‘I can’t excuse him; I know it is very wrong, and at the expense of truth, and it is very disagreeable of him—I wish he would not; but he always does what he likes, and it is one of his amusements, so we must bear with him, poor fellow.’

From that time Guy seemed to have no trouble in reining in his temper in arguing with Charles, except once, when the lion was fairly roused by something that sounded like a sneer about King Charles I.

His whole face changed, his hazel eye gleamed with light like an eagle’s, and he started up, exclaiming—

‘You did not mean that?’

‘Ask Strafford,’ answered Charles, coolly, startled, but satisfied to have found the vulnerable point.

‘Ungenerous, unmanly,’ said Guy, his voice low, but quivering with indignation; ‘ungenerous to reproach him with what he so bitterly repented. Could not his penitence, could not his own blood’—but as he spoke, the gleam of wrath faded, the flush deepened on the cheek, and he left the room.

‘Ha!’ soliloquized Charles, ‘I’ve done it! I could fancy his wrath something terrific when it was once well up. I didn’t know what was coming next; but I believe he has got himself pretty well in hand. It is playing with edge tools; and now I have been favoured with one flash of the Morville eye, I’ll let him alone; but it *ryled* me to be treated as something beneath his anger, like a woman or a child.’

In about ten minutes, Guy came back: ‘I am sorry that I was hasty just now,’ said he.

‘I did not know you had such personal feelings about King Charles.’

‘If you would do me a kindness,’ proceeded Guy, ‘you would just say you did not mean it. I know you do not, but if you would only say so.’

‘I am glad you have the wit to see I have too much taste to be a roundhead.’

‘Thank you,’ said Guy; ‘I hope I shall know your jest from your earnest another time. Only if you would oblige me, you would never jest again about King Charles.’

His brow darkened into a stern, grave expression, so entirely in earnest, that Charles, though making no answer, could not do otherwise than feel compliance unavoidable. Charles had never been so entirely conquered, yet, strange to say, he was not, as usual, rendered sullen.

At night, when Guy had taken him to his room, he paused and said—‘You are sure that you have forgiven me?’

‘What! You have not forgotten that yet?’ said Charles.

‘Of course not.’

‘I am sorry you bear so much malice,’ said Charles, smiling.

‘What are you imagining?’ cried Guy. ‘It was my own part I was remembering, as I must, you know.’

Charles did not choose to betray that he did not see the necessity.

‘I thought King Charles’s wrongs were rankling. I only spoke as taking liberties with a friend.’

‘Yes,’ said Guy, thoughtfully, ‘it may be foolish, but I do not feel as if one could do so with King Charles. He is too near home; he suffered too much from scoffs and railings; his heart was too tender, his repentance too deep for his friends to add one word even in jest to the heap of reproach. How one would have loved him!’ proceeded Guy, wrapped up in his own thoughts,—‘loved him for the gentleness so little accordant with the rude times and the part he had to act—served him with half like a knight’s devotion to his lady-love, half like devotion to a saint, as Montrose did—

‘Great, good, and just, could I but rate
My grief, and thy too rigid fate,
I’d weep the world in such a strain,
As it should deluge once again.’

‘And, oh!’ cried he, with sudden vehemence, ‘how one would have fought for him!’

‘You would!’ said Charles. ‘I should like to see you and Deloraine charging at the head of Prince Rupert’s troopers.’

‘I beg your pardon,’ said Guy, suddenly recalled, and colouring deeply; ‘I believe I forgot where I was, and have treated you to one of my old dreams in my boatings at home. You may quiz me as much as you please tomorrow. Good night.’

‘It was a rhapsody!’ thought Charles; ‘yes it was. I wonder I don’t laugh at it; but I was naturally carried along. Fancy that! He did it so naturally; in fact, it was all from the bottom of his heart, and I could not quiz him—no, no more than Montrose himself. He is a strange article! But he keeps one awake, which is more than most people do!’

Guy was indeed likely to keep every one awake just then; for Mr. Edmonstone was going to take him out hunting for the first time, and he was half wild about it. The day came, and half an hour before Mr. Edmonstone was ready, Guy was walking about the hall, checking many an incipient whistle, and telling every one that he was beforehand with the world, for he had read one extra hour yesterday, and had got through the others before breakfast. Laura thought it very true that, as Philip said, he was only a boy, and moralized to Charlotte on his being the same age as herself—very nearly eighteen. Mrs. Edmonstone told Charles it was a treat to see any one so happy, and when he began to chafe at the delay, did her best to beguile the time, but without much success. Guy had ever learned to wait patiently, and had a custom of marching up and down, and listening with his head thrown back, or, as Charles used to call it, ‘prancing in the hall.’

If Mrs. Edmonstone’s patience was tried by the preparation for the hunt in the morning, it was no less her lot to hear of it in the evening. Guy came home in the highest spirits, pouring out his delight to every one, with animation and power of description giving all he said a charm. The pleasure did not lose by repetition; he was more engrossed by it every time; and no one could be more pleased with his ardour than Mr. Edmonstone, who, proud of him and his riding, gave a sigh to past hopes of poor Charles, and promoted the hunting with far more glee than he had promoted the reading.

The Redclyffe groom, William, whose surname of Robinson was entirely forgotten in the appellation of William of Deloraine, was as proud of Sir Guy as Mr. Edmonstone could be; but made representations to his master that he must not hunt Deloraine two days in the week, and ride him to Broadstone two more. Guy then walked to Broadstone; but William was no better pleased, for he thought the credit of Redclyffe compromised, and punished him by reporting Deloraine not fit to be used next hunting day. Mr. Edmonstone perceived that Guy ought to have another hunter; Philip heard of one for sale, and after due inspection all admired—even William, who had begun by remarking that there might be so many screw-looses about a horse, that a man did not know what to be at with them.

Philip, who was conducting the negotiation, came to dine at Hollywell to settle the particulars. Guy was in a most eager state; and they and Mr. Edmonstone talked so long about horses, that they sent Charles to sleep; his mother began to read, and the two elder girls fell into a low, mysterious confabulation of their own till they were startled by a question from Philip as to what could engross them so deeply.

‘It was,’ said Laura, ‘a banshee story in Eveleen de Courcy’s last letter.’

‘I never like telling ghost stories to people who don’t believe in them,’ half whispered Amabel to her sister.

‘Do you believe them?’ asked Philip, looking full at her.

‘Now I won’t have little Amy asked the sort of question she most dislikes,’ interposed Laura; ‘I had rather ask if you laugh at us for thinking many ghost stories inexplicable?’

‘Certainly not.’

‘The universal belief could hardly be kept up without some grounds,’ said Guy.

‘That would apply as well to fairies,’ said Philip.

‘Every one has an unexplained ghost story,’ said Amy.

‘Yes,’ said Philip; ‘but I would give something to meet any one whose ghost story did not rest on the testimony of a friend’s cousin’s cousin, a very strong-minded person.’

‘I can’t imagine how a person who has seen a ghost could ever speak of it,’ said Amy.

‘Did you not tell us a story of pixies at Redclyffe?’ said Laura.

‘O yes; the people there believe in them firmly. Jonas Ledbury heard them laughing one night when he could not get the gate open,’ said Guy.

‘Ah! You are the authority for ghosts,’ said Philip.

‘I forgot that,’ said Laura: ‘I wonder we never asked you about your Redclyffe ghost.’

‘You look as if you had seen it yourself,’ said Philip.

‘You have not?’ exclaimed Amy, almost frightened.

‘Come, let us have the whole story,’ said Philip. ‘Was it your own reflection in the glass? was it old sir Hugh? or was it the murderer of Becket? Come, the ladies are both ready to scream at the right moment. Never mind about giving him a cocked-hat, for with whom may you take a liberty, if not with an ancestral ghost of your own?’

Amy could not think how Philip could have gone on all this time; perhaps it was because he was not watching how Guy’s colour varied, how he bit his lip; and at last his eyes seemed to grow dark in the middle, and to sparkle with fire, as with a low, deep tone, like distant thunder, conveying a tremendous force of suppressed passion, he exclaimed, ‘Beware of trifling—’ then breaking off hastened out of the room.

‘What’s the matter?’ asked Mr. Edmonstone, startled from his nap; and his wife looked up anxiously, but returned to her book, as her nephew replied, ‘Nothing.’

‘How could you Philip?’ said Laura.

‘I really believe he has seen it!’ said Amy, in a startled whisper.

‘He has felt it, Amy—the Morville spirit,’ said Philip.

‘It is a great pity you spoke of putting a cocked hat to it,’ said Laura; ‘he must have suspected us of telling you what happened about Mrs. Brownlow.’

‘And are you going to do it now?’ said her sister in a tone of remonstrance.

‘I think Philip should hear it!’ said Laura; and she proceeded to relate the story. She was glad to see that her cousin was struck with it; he admired this care to maintain strict truth, and even opened a memorandum-book—the sight of which Charles dreaded—and read the following extract: ‘Do not think of one falsity as harmless, and another as slight, and another as unintended. Cast them all aside. They may be light and accidental, but they are an ugly soot from the smoke of the pit, for all that; and it is better that our hearts should be swept clean of them, without over care as to which is the largest or blackest.’

Laura and Amy were much pleased; but he went on to regret that such excellent dispositions should be coupled with such vehemence of character and that unhappy temper. Amy was glad that her sister ventured to hint that he might be more cautious in avoiding collisions.

‘I am cautious’, replied he, quickly and sternly; ‘I am not to be told of the necessity of exercising forbearance with this poor boy; but it is impossible to reckon on all the points on which he is sensitive.’

‘He is sensitive,’ said Laura. ‘I don’t mean only in temper, but in everything. I wonder if it is part of his musical temperament to be as keenly alive to all around, as his ear is to every note. A bright day, a fine view, is such real happiness to him; he dwells on every beauty of Redclyffe with such affection; and then, when he reads, Charles says it is like going over the story again himself to watch his face act it in that unconscious manner.’

‘He makes all the characters so real in talking them over,’ said Amy, ‘and he does not always know how they will end before they begin.’

‘I should think it hardly safe for so excitable a mind to dwell much on the world of fiction,’ said Philip.

‘Nothing has affected him so much as Sintram,’ said Laura. ‘I never saw anything like it. He took it up by chance, and stood reading it while all those strange expressions began to flit over his face, and at last he fairly cried over it so much, that he was obliged to fly out of the room. How often he has read it I cannot tell; I believe he has bought one for himself, and it is as if the engraving had a fascination for him; he stands looking at it as if he was in a dream.’

‘He is a great mystery,’ said Amy.

‘All men are mysterious,’ said Philip ‘but he not more than others, though he may appear so to you, because you have not had much experience, and also because most of the men you have seen have been rounded into uniformity like marbles, their sharp angles rubbed off against each other at school.’

‘Would it be better if there were more sharp angles?’ said Laura, thus setting on foot a discussion on public schools, on which Philip had, of course, a great deal to say.

Amy’s kind little heart was meanwhile grieving for Guy, and longing to see him return, but he did not come till after Philip’s departure. He looked pale and mournful, his hair hanging loose and disordered, and her terror was excited lest he might actually have seen his ancestor’s ghost, which, in spite of her desire to believe in ghosts, in general, she did not by any means wish to have authenticated. He was surprised and a good deal vexed to find Philip gone, but he said hardly anything, and it was soon bedtime. When Charles took his arm, he exclaimed, on finding his sleeve wet—‘What can you have been doing?’

‘Walking up and down under the wall,’ replied Guy, with some reluctance.

‘What, in the rain?’

‘I don’t know, perhaps it was.’

Amy, who was just behind, carrying the crutch, dreaded Charles’s making any allusion to Sintram’s wild locks and evening wanderings, but ever since the outburst about King Charles, the desire to tease and irritate Guy had ceased.

They parted at the dressing-room door, and as Guy bade her good night, he pushed back the damp hair that had fallen across his forehead, saying, ‘I am sorry I disturbed your evening. I will tell you the meaning of it another time.’

‘He has certainly seen the ghost!’ said silly little Amy, as she shut herself into her own room in such a fit of vague ‘eerie’ fright, that it was not till she had knelt down, and with her face hidden in her hands, said her evening prayer, that she could venture to lift up her head and look into the dark corners of the room.

‘Another time!’ Her heart throbbed at the promise.

The next afternoon, as she and Laura were fighting with a refractory branch of wisteria which had been torn down by the wind, and refused to return to its place, Guy, who had been with his tutor, came in from the stable-yard, reduced the trailing bough to obedience, and then joined them in their walk. He looked grave, was silent at first, and then spoke abruptly—‘It is due to you to explain my behaviour last night.’

‘Amy thinks you must have seen the ghost,’ said Laura, trying to be gay.

‘Did I frighten you?’ said Guy, turning round, full of compunction. ‘No, no. I never saw it. I never even heard of its being seen. I am very sorry.’

‘I was very silly,’ said Amy smiling.

‘But,’ proceeded Guy, ‘when I think of the origin of the ghost story, I cannot laugh, and if Philip knew all—’

‘Oh! He does not,’ cried Laura; ‘he only looks on it as we have always done, as a sort of romantic appendage to Redclyffe. I should think better of a place for being haunted.’

‘I used to be proud of it,’ said Guy. ‘I wanted to make out whether it was old Sir Hugh or the murderer of Becket, who was said to groan and turn the lock of Dark Hugh’s chamber. I hunted among old papers, and a horrible story I found. That wretched Sir Hugh,—the same who began the quarrel with your mother’s family—he was a courtier of Charles II, as bad or worse than any of that crew—’

‘What was the quarrel about?’ said Laura.

‘He was believed to have either falsified or destroyed his father’s will, so as to leave his brother, your ancestor, landless; his brother remonstrated, and he turned him out of doors. The forgery never was proved, but there was little doubt of it. There are traditions of his crimes without number, especially his furious anger and malice. He compelled a poor lady to marry him, though she was in love with another man; then he was jealous; he waylaid his rival, shut him up in the turret chamber, committed him to prison, and bribed Judge Jeffries to sentence him—nay it is even said he carried his wife to see the execution! He was so execrated that he fled the country; he went to Holland, curried favour with William of Orange, brought his wealth to help him, and that is the deserving action which got him the baronetcy! He served in the army a good many years, and came home when he thought his sins would be forgotten. But do you remember those lines?’ and Guy repeated them in the low rigid tone, almost of horror, in which he had been telling the story:—

‘On some his vigorous judgments light,
In that dread pause ‘twixt day and night,
Life’s closing twilight hour;
Round some, ere yet they meet their doom,
Is shed the silence of the tomb,
The eternal shadows lower.’

‘It was so with him; he lost his senses, and after many actions of mad violence, he ended by hanging himself in the very room where he had imprisoned his victim.’

‘Horrible!’ said Laura. ‘Yet I do not see why, when it is all past, you should feel it so deeply.’

‘How should I not feel it?’ answered Guy. ‘Is it not written that the sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children? You wonder to see me so foolish about Sintram. Well, it is my firm belief that such a curse of sin and death as was on Sintram rests on the descendants of that miserable man.’

The girls were silent, struck with awe and dismay at the fearful reality with which he pronounced the words. At last, Amy whispered, ‘But Sintram conquered his doom.’

At the same time Laura gathered her thoughts together, and said, ‘This must be an imagination. You have dwelt on it and fostered it till you believe it, but such notions should be driven away or they will work their own fulfilment.’

‘Look at the history of the Morvilles, and see if it be an imagination,’ said Guy. ‘Crime and bloodshed have been the portion of each—each has added weight and darkness to the doom which he had handed on. My own poor father, with his early death, was, perhaps, the happiest!’

Laura saw the idea was too deeply rooted to be treated as a fancy, and she found a better argument. ‘The doom of sin and death is on us all, but you should remember that if you are a Morville, you are also a Christian.’

‘He does remember it!’ said Amy, raising her eyes to his face, and then casting them down, blushing at having understood his countenance, where, in the midst of the gloomy shades, there rested for an instant the gleam which her mother had likened to the expression of Raffaele’s cherub.’

They walked on for some time in silence. At last Laura exclaimed, ‘Are you really like the portrait of this unfortunate Sir Hugh?’

Guy made a sign of assent.

‘Oh! It must have been taken before he grew wicked,’ said Amy; and Laura felt the same conviction, that treacherous revenge could never have existed beneath so open a countenance, with so much of highmindedness, pure faith and contempt of wrong in every glance of the eagle eye, in the frank expansion of the smooth forehead.

They were interrupted by Mr. Edmonstone's hearty voice, bawling across the garden for one of the men. 'O Guy! are you there?' cried he, as soon as he saw him. 'Just what I wanted! Your gun, man! We are going to ferret a rabbit.'

Guy ran off at full speed in search of his gun, whistling to Bustle. Mr. Edmonstone found his man, and the sisters were again alone.

'Poor fellow!' said Laura.

'You will not tell all this to Philip?' said Amy.

'It would show why he was hurt, and it can be no secret.'

'I dare say you are right, but I have a feeling against it. Well, I am glad he had not seen the ghost!'

The two girls had taken their walk, and were just going in, when, looking round, they saw Philip walking fast and determinedly up the approach, and as they turned back to meet him, the first thing he said was, 'Where is Guy?'

'Ferretting rabbits with papa. What is the matter?'

'And where is my aunt?'

Driving out with Charles and Charlotte. What is the matter?'

'Look here. Can you tell me the meaning of this which I found on my table when I came in this morning?'

It was a card of Sir Guy Morville, on the back of which was written in pencil, 'Dear P., I find hunting and reading don't agree, so take no further steps about the horse. Many thanks for your trouble.—G.M.'

'There,' said Philip, 'is the result of brooding all night on his resentment.' 'Oh no!' cried Laura, colouring with eagerness, 'you do not understand him. He could not bear it last night, because, as he has been explaining to us, that old Sir Hugh's story was more shocking than we ever guessed, and he has a fancy that their misfortunes are a family fate, and he could not bear to hear it spoken of lightly.'

'Oh! He has been telling you his own story, has he?'

Laura's colour grew still deeper, 'If you had been there,' she said, 'you would have been convinced. Why will you not believe that he finds hunting interfere with reading?'

'He should have thought of that before,' said Philip.

'Here have I half bought the horse! I have wasted the whole morning on it, and now I have to leave it on the man's hands. I had a dozen times rather take it myself, if I could afford it. Such a bargain as I had made, and such an animal as you will not see twice in your life.'

'It is a great pity,' said Laura. 'He should have known his own mind. I don't like people to give trouble for nothing.'

'Crazy about it last night, and giving it up this morning! A most extraordinary proceeding. No, no, Laura, this is not simple fickleness, it would be too absurd. It is temper, temper, which makes a man punish himself, in hopes of punishing others.'

Laura still spoke for Guy, and Amy rejoiced; for if her sister had not taken up the defence of the absent, she must, and she felt too strongly to be willing to speak. It seemed too absurd for one feeling himself under such a doom to wrangle about a horse, yet she was somewhat amused by the conviction that if Guy had really wished to annoy Philip he had certainly succeeded.

There was no coming to an agreement. Laura's sense of justice revolted at the notion of Guy's being guilty of petty spite; while Philip, firm in his preconceived idea of his character, and his own knowledge of mankind, was persuaded that he had imputed the true motive, and was displeased at Laura's attempting to argue the point. He could not wait to see any one else, as he was engaged to dine out, and he set off again at his quick, resolute pace.

'He is very unfair!' exclaimed Amy.

'He did not mean to be so,' said Laura; 'and though he is mistaken in imputing such motives, Guy's conduct has certainly been vexatious.'

They were just turning to go in, when they were interrupted by the return of the carriage; and before Charles had been helped up the steps, their father and Guy came in sight. While Guy went to shut up Bustle, who was too wet for the drawing-room, Mr. Edmonstone came up to the others, kicking away the pebbles before him, and fidgeting with his gloves, as he always did when vexed.

‘Here’s a pretty go!’ said he. ‘Here is Guy telling me he won’t hunt any more!’

‘Not hunt!’ cried Mrs. Edmonstone and Charles at once; ‘and why?’

‘Oh! something about its taking his mind from his reading; but that can’t be it—impossible, you know; I’d give ten pounds to know what has vexed him. So keen as he was about it last night, and I vow, one of the best riders in the whole field. Giving up that horse, too—I declare it is a perfect sin! I told him he had gone too far, and he said he had left a note with Philip this morning.’

‘Yes,’ said Laura; Philip has just been here about it. Guy left a card, saying, hunting and reading would not agree.’

‘That is an excuse, depend upon it,’ said Mr. Edmonstone. ‘Something has nettled him, I am sure. It could not be that Gordon, could it, with his hail-fellow-well-met manner? I thought Guy did not half like it the other day, when he rode up with his “Hollo, Morville!” The Morvilles have a touch of pride of their own; eh, mamma?’

‘I should be inclined to believe his own account of himself,’ said she.

‘I tell you, ‘tis utterly against reason,’ said Mr. Edmonstone, angrily. ‘If he was a fellow like Philip, or James Ross, I could believe it; but he—he make a book-worm! He hates it, like poison, at the bottom of his heart, I’ll answer for it; and the worst of it is, the fellow putting forward such a fair reason one can’t—being his guardian, and all—say what one thinks of it oneself. Eh, mamma?’

‘Not exactly,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone, smiling.

‘Well, you take him in hand, mamma. I dare say he will tell you the rights of it, and if it is only that Gordon, explain it rightly to him, show him ‘tis only the man’s way; tell him he treats me so for ever, and would the Lord-Lieutenant if he was in it.’

‘For a’ that and a’ that,’ said Charles, as Amy led him into the drawing-room.

‘You are sure the reading is the only reason?’ said Amy.’

‘He’s quite absurd enough for it,’ said Charles; but ‘absurd’ was pronounced in a way that made its meaning far from annoying even to Guy’s little champion.

Guy came in the next moment, and running lightly up-stairs after Mrs. Edmonstone, found her opening the dressing-room door, and asked if he might come in.

‘By all means,’ she said; ‘I am quite ready for one of our twilight talks.’

‘I am afraid I have vexed Mr. Edmonstone,’ began Guy; ‘and I am very sorry.’

‘He was only afraid that something might have occurred to vex you, which you might not like to mention to him,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone, hesitating a little.

‘Me! What could I have done to make him think so? I am angry with no one but myself. The fact is only this, the hunting is too pleasant; it fills up my head all day and all night; and I don’t attend rightly to anything else. If I am out in the morning and try to pay for it at night, it will not do; I can but just keep awake and that’s all; the Greek letters all seem to be hunting each other, the simplest things grow difficult, and at last all I can think of, is how near the minute hand of my watch is near to the hour I have set myself. So, for the last fortnight, every construing with Mr. Lascelles has been worse than the last; and as to my Latin verses, they were beyond everything shocking, so you see there is no making the two things agree, and the hunting must wait till I grow steadier, if I ever do. Heigho! It is a great bore to be so stupid, for I thought—But it is of no use to talk of it!’

‘Mr. Edmonstone would be a very unreasonable guardian, indeed, to be displeased,’ said his friend, smiling. You say you stopped the purchase of the horse. Why so? Could you not keep him till you are more sure of yourself?’

‘Do you think I might?’ joyously exclaimed Guy. ‘I’ll write to Philip this minute by the post. Such a splendid creature: it would do you good to see it—such action—such a neck—such spirit. It

would be a shame not to secure it. But no—no—’ and he checked himself sorrowfully. ‘I have made my mind before that I don’t deserve it. If it was here, it would always have to be tried: if I heard the hounds I don’t know I should keep from riding after them; whereas, now I can’t, for William won’t let me take Deloraine. No, I can’t trust myself to keep such a horse, and not hunt. It will serve me right to see Mr. Brownlow on it, and he will never miss such a chance!’ and the depth of his sigh bore witness to the struggle it cost him.

‘I should not like to use anyone as you use yourself,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone, looking at him with affectionate anxiety, which seemed suddenly to change the current of his thought, for he exclaimed abruptly—‘Mrs. Edmonstone, can you tell me anything about my mother?’

‘I am afraid not,’ said she, kindly; ‘you know we had so little intercourse with your family, that I heard little but the bare facts.’

‘I don’t think,’ said Guy, leaning on the chimneypiece, ‘that I ever thought much about her till I knew you, but lately I have fancied a great deal about what might have been if she had but lived.’

It was not Mrs. Edmonstone’s way to say half what she felt, and she went on—‘Poor thing! I believe she was quite a child.’

‘Only seventeen when she died,’ said Guy.

Mrs. Edmonstone went to a drawer, took out two or three bundles of old letters, and after searching in them by the fire-light, said—‘Ah! here’s a little about her; it is in a letter from my sister-in-law, Philip’s mother, when they were staying at Stylehurst.’

‘Who? My father and mother?’ cried Guy eagerly.

‘Did you not know they had been there three or four days?’

‘No—I know less about them than anybody,’ said he, sadly: but as Mrs. Edmonstone waited, doubtful as to whether she might be about to make disclosures for which he was unprepared, he added, hastily—‘I do know the main facts of the story; I was told them last autumn;’ and an expression denoting the remembrance of great suffering came over his face; then, pausing a moment, he said—‘I knew Archdeacon Morville had been very kind.’

‘He was always interested about your father,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone; ‘and happening to meet him in London some little time after his marriage, he—he was pleased with the manner in which he was behaving then, thought—thought—’ And here, recollecting that she must not speak ill of old Sir Guy, nor palliate his son’s conduct, poor Mrs. Edmonstone got into an inextricable confusion—all the worse because the fierce twisting of a penwiper in Guy’s fingers denoted that he was suffering a great trial of patience. She avoided the difficulty thus: ‘It is hard to speak of such things when there is so much to be regretted on both sides; but the fact was, my brother thought your father was harshly dealt with at that time. Of course he had done very wrong; but he had been so much neglected and left to himself, that it seemed hardly fair to visit his offence on him as severely as if he had had more advantages. So it ended in their coming to spend a day or two at Stylehurst; and this is the letter my sister-in-law wrote at the time:

“Our visitors have just left us, and on the whole I am much better pleased than I expected. The little Mrs. Morville is a very pretty creature, and as engaging as long flaxen curls, apple-blossom complexion, blue eyes, and the sweetest of voices can make her; so full of childish glee and playfulness, that no one would stop to think whether she was lady-like any more than you would with a child. She used to go singing like a bird about the house as soon as the first strangeness wore off, which was after her first game of play with Fanny and Little Philip. She made them very fond of her, as indeed she would make every one who spent a day or two in the same house with her. I could almost defy Sir Guy not to be reconciled after one sight of her sweet sunny face. She is all affection and gentleness, and with tolerable training anything might be made of her; but she is so young in mind and manners, that one cannot even think of blaming her for her elopement, for she had no mother, no education but in music; and her brother seems to have forced it on, thrown her in Mr. Morville’s way, and worked on his excitable temperament, until he hurried them into marriage. Poor little girl,

I suppose she little guesses what she has done; but it was very pleasant to see how devotedly attached he seemed to her; and there was something beautiful in the softening of his impetuous tones when he said, 'Marianne;' and her pride in him was very pretty, like a child playing at matronly airs.'"

Guy gave a long, heavy sigh, brushed away a tear, and after a long silence, said, 'Is that all?'

'All that I like to read to you. Indeed, there is no more about her; and it would be of no use to read all the reports that were going about.—Ah! here,' said Mrs. Edmonstone, looking into another letter, 'she speaks of your father as a very fine young man, with most generous impulses,'—but here again she was obliged to stop, for the next sentence spoke of 'a noble character ruined by mismanagement.' 'She never saw them again,' continued Mrs. Edmonstone; 'Mr. Dixon, your mother's brother, had great influence with your father, and made matters worse—so much worse, that my brother did not feel himself justified in having any more to do with them.'

'Ah! he went to America,' said Guy; 'I don't know any more about him except that he came to the funeral and stood with his arms folded, not choosing to shake hands with my poor grandfather.' After another silence he said, 'Will you read that again?' and when he had heard it, he sat shading his brow with his hand, as if to bring the fair, girlish picture fully before his mind, while Mrs. Edmonstone sought in vain among her letters for one which did not speak of the fiery passions ignited on either side, in terms too strong to be fit for his ears.

When next he spoke it was to repeat that he had not been informed of the history of his parents till within the last few months. He had, of course, known the manner of their death, but had only lately become aware of the circumstances attending it.

The truth was that Guy had grown up peculiarly shielded from evil, but ignorant of the cause of the almost morbid solicitude with which he was regarded by his grandfather. He was a very happy, joyous boy, leading an active, enterprising life, though so lonely as to occasion greater dreaminess and thoughtfulness than usual at such an early age. He was devotedly attached to his grandfather, looking on him as the first and best of human beings, and silencing the belief that Sir Hugh Morville had entailed a doom of crime and sorrow on the family, by a reference to him, as one who had been always good and prosperous.

When, however, Guy had reached an age at which he must encounter the influences which had proved so baneful to others of his family, his grandfather thought it time to give him the warning of his own history.

The sins, which the repentance of years had made more odious in the eyes of the old man, were narrated; the idleness and insubordination at first, then the reckless pursuit of pleasure, the craving for excitement, the defiance of rule and authority, till folly had become vice, and vice had led to crime.

He had fought no fewer than three duels, and only one had been bloodless. His misery after the first had well-nigh led to a reform; but time had dulled its acuteness—it had been lost in fresh scenes of excitement—and at the next offence rage had swept away such recollections. Indeed, so far had he lost the natural generosity of his character, that his remorse had been comparatively slight for the last, which was the worst of all, since he had forced the quarrel on his victim, Captain Wellwood, whose death had left a wife and children almost destitute. His first awakening to a sense of what his course had been, was when he beheld his only child, in the prime of youth, carried lifeless across his threshold, and attributed his death to his own intemperance and violence. That hour made Sir Guy Morville an old and a broken-hearted man; and he repented as vigorously as he had sinned.

From the moment he dared to hope that his son's orphan would be spared, he had been devoted to him, but still mournfully, envying and pitying his innocence as something that could not last.

He saw bright blossoms put forth, as the boy grew older; but they were not yet fruits, and he did not dare to believe they ever would be. The strength of will which had, in his own case, been the slave of his passions, had been turned inward to subdue the passions themselves, but this was only the beginning—the trial was not yet come. He could hope his grandson might repent, but this was the best that he dared to think possible. He could not believe that a Morville could pass unscathed

through the world, or that his sins would not be visited on the head of his only descendant; and the tone of his narration was throughout such as might almost have made the foreboding cause its own accomplishment.

The effect was beyond what he had expected; for a soul deeply dyed in guilt, even though loathing its own stains, had not the power of conceiving how foul was the aspect of vice, to one hitherto guarded from its contemplation, and living in a world of pure, lofty day-dreams. The boy sat the whole time without a word, his face bent down and hidden by his clasped hands, only now and then unable to repress a start or shudder at some fresh disclosure; and when it was ended, he stood up, gazed round, and walked uncertainly, as if he did not know where he was. His next impulse was to throw himself on his knee beside his grandfather, and caress him as he used to when a child. The 'good-night' was spoken, and Guy was shut into his room, with his overwhelming emotions.

His grandfather a blood-stained, remorseful man! The doom was complete, himself heir to the curse of Sir Hugh, and fated to run the same career; and as he knew full well, with the tendency to the family character strong within him, the germs of these hateful passions ready to take root downwards and bear fruit upwards, with the very countenance of Sir Hugh, and the same darkening, kindling eyes, of which traditions had preserved the remembrance.

He was crushed for awhile. The consciousness of strength not his own, of the still small voice that could subdue the fire, the earthquake, and the whirlwind, was slow in coming to him; and when it came, he, like his grandfather, had hope rather of final repentance than of keeping himself unstained.

His mind had not recovered the shock when his grandfather died,—died in faith and fear, with good hope of accepted repentance, but unable to convey the assurance of such hope to his grandson. Grief for the only parent he had ever known, and the sensation of being completely alone in the world, were joined to a vague impression of horror at the suddenness of the stroke, and it was long before the influence of Hollywell, or the elasticity of his own youthfulness, could rouse him from his depression.

Even then it was almost against his will that he returned to enjoyment, unable to avoid being amused, but feeling as if joy was not meant for him, and as if those around were walking 'in a world of light,' where he could scarcely hope to tread a few uncertain steps. In this despondency was Guy's chief danger, as it was likely to make him deem a struggle with temptation fruitless, while his high spirits and powers of keen enjoyment increased the peril of recklessness in the reaction.

It was Mrs. Edmonstone who first spoke with him cheerfully of a successful conflict with evil, and made him perceive that his temptations were but such as is common to man. She had given him a clue to discover when and how to trust himself to enjoy; the story of Sintram had stirred him deeply, and this very day, Amy's words, seemingly unheeded and unheard, had brought home to him the hope and encouragement of that marvellous tale.

They had helped him in standing, looking steadfastly upwards, and treading down not merely evil, but the first token of coming evil, regardless of the bruises he might inflict on himself. Well for him if he was constant.

Such was Guy's inner life; his outward life, frank and joyous, has been shown, and the two flowed on like a stream, pure as crystal, but into which the eye cannot penetrate from its depth. The surface would be sometimes obscured by cloud or shade, and reveal the sombre wells beneath; but more often the sunshine would penetrate the inmost recesses, and make them glance and sparkle, showing themselves as clear and limpid as the surface itself.

CHAPTER 6

Can piety the discord heal,
Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?

—*Scott*

It must not be supposed that such a history of Guy's mind was expressed by himself, or understood by Mrs. Edmonstone; but she saw enough to guess at his character, perceive the sort of guidance he needed, and be doubly interested in him. Much did she wish he could have such a friend as her brother would have been, and hope that nothing would prevent a friendship with her nephew.

The present question about the horse was, she thought, unfortunate, since, though Guy had exercised great self-denial, it was no wonder Philip was annoyed. Mr. Edmonstone's vexation was soon over. As soon as she had persuaded him that there had been no offence, he strove to say with a good grace, that it was very proper, and told Guy he would be a thorough book-worm and tremendous scholar, which Guy took as an excellent joke.

Philip had made up his mind to be forbearing, and to say no more about it. Laura thought this a pity, as they could thus never come to an understanding; but when she hinted it, he wore such a dignified air of not being offended, that she was much ashamed of having tried to direct one so much better able to judge. On his side Guy had no idea the trouble he had caused; so, after bestowing his thanks in a gay, off-hand way, which Philip thought the worst feature of the case, he did his best to bring Hecuba back into his mind, drive the hunters out of it, and appease the much-aggrieved William of Deloraine.

When all William's manoeuvres resulted in his master's not hunting at all, he was persuaded it was Mr. Edmonstone's fault, compassionated Sir Guy with all his heart, and could only solace himself by taking Deloraine to exercise where he was most likely to meet the hounds. He further chose to demonstrate that he was not Mr. Edmonstone's servant, by disregarding some of his stable regulations; but as soon as this came to his master's knowledge, a few words were spoken so sharp and stern, that William never attempted to disobey again.

It seemed as if it was the perception that so much was kept back by a strong force, that made Guy's least token of displeasure so formidable. A village boy, whom he caught misusing a poor dog, was found a few minutes after, by Mr. Ross, in a state of terror that was positively ludicrous, though it did not appear that Sir Guy had said or done much to alarm him; it was only the light in his eyes, and the strength of repressed indignation in his short broken words that had made the impression.

It appeared as if the force of his anger might be fearful, if once it broke forth without control; yet at the same time he had a gentleness and attention, alike to small and great, which, with his high spirit and good nature, his very sweet voice and pleasant smile, made him a peculiarly winning and engaging person; and few who saw him could help being interested in him.

No wonder he had become in the eyes of the Edmonstones almost a part of their family. Mrs. Edmonstone had assumed a motherly control over him, to which he submitted with a sort of affectionate gratitude.

One day Philip remarked, that he never saw any one so restless as Guy, who could neither talk nor listen without playing with something. Scissors, pencil, paper-knife, or anything that came in his way, was sure to be twisted or tormented; or if nothing else was at hand, he opened and shut his own knife so as to put all the spectators in fear for his fingers.

'Yes,' said Laura, 'I saw how it tortured your eyebrows all the time you were translating Schiller to us. I wondered you were not put out.'

‘I consider that to be put out—by which you mean to have the intellect at the mercy of another’s folly—is beneath a reasonable creature,’ said Philip; ‘but that I was annoyed, I do not deny. It is a token of a restless, ill-regulated mind.’

‘Restless, perhaps,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone ‘but not necessarily ill-regulated. I should think it rather a sign that he had no one to tell him of the tricks which mothers generally nip in the bud.’

‘I was going to say that I think he fidgets less,’ said Laura; ‘but I think his chief contortions of the scissors have been when Philip has been here.’

‘They have, I believe,’ said her mother, ‘I was thinking of giving him a hint.’

‘Well, aunt, you are a tamer of savage beasts if you venture on such a subject,’ said Philip.

‘Do you dare me?’ she asked, smiling.

‘Why, I don’t suppose he would do more than give you one of his lightning glances: but that, I think, is more than you desire.’

‘Considerably,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone; ‘for his sake as much as my own.’

‘But,’ said Laura, ‘mamma has nearly cured him of pawing like a horse in the hall when he is kept waiting. He said he knew it was impatience, and begged her to tell him how to cure it. So she treated him as an old fairy might, and advised him in a grave, mysterious way, always to go and play the “Harmonious Blacksmith,” when he found himself getting into “a taking”, just as if it was a charm. And he always does it most dutifully.’

‘It has a very good effect,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone; ‘for it is apt to act as a summons to the other party, as well as a sedative to him.’

‘I must say I am curious to see what you will devise this time,’ said Philip; ‘since you can’t set him to play on the piano; and very few can bear to be told of a trick of the kind.’

In the course of that evening, Philip caused the great atlas to be brought out in order to make investigations on the local habitation of a certain Khan of Kipchack, who existed somewhere in the dark ages. Then he came to Marco Polo, and Sir John Mandeville; and Guy, who knew both the books in the library at Redclyffe, grew very eager in talking them over, and tracing their adventures—then to the Genoese merchants, where Guy confessed himself perfectly ignorant. Andrea Doria was the only Genoese he ever heard of; but he hunted out with great interest all the localities of their numerous settlements. Then came modern Italy, and its fallen palaces; then the contrast between the republican merchant and aristocratic lord of the soil; then the corn laws; and then, and not till then, did Philip glance at his aunt, to show her Guy balancing a Venetian weight on as few of his fingers as could support it.

‘Guy,’ said she, smiling, ‘does that unfortunate glass inspire you with any arguments in favour of the Venetians?’

Guy put it down at once, and Philip proceeded to improved methods of farming, to enable landlords to meet the exigencies of the times. Guy had got hold of Mr. Edmonstone’s spectacle-case, and was putting its spring to a hard trial. Mrs. Edmonstone doubted whether to interfere again; she knew this was not the sort of thing that tried his temper, yet she particularly disliked playing him off, as it were for Philip’s amusement, and quite as much letting him go on, and lower himself in her nephew’s estimation. The spectacle-case settled the matter—a crack was heard, it refused to snap at all; and Guy, much discomfited, made many apologies.

Amy laughed; Philip was much too well-bred to do anything but curl his lip unconsciously. Mrs. Edmonstone waited till he was gone, then, when she was wishing Guy ‘good-night’ at Charles’s door, she said,—

‘The spectacle-case forestalled me in giving you a lecture on sparing our nerves. Don’t look so very full of compunction—it is only a trick which your mother would have stopped at five years old, and which you can soon stop for yourself.’

‘Thank you, I will!’ said Guy; ‘I hardly knew I did it, but I am very sorry it has teased you.’

Thenceforward it was curious to see how he put down and pushed away all he had once begun to touch and torture. Mrs. Edmonstone said it was self command in no common degree; and Philip allowed that to cure so inveterate a habit required considerable strength of will.

‘However,’ he said, ‘I always gave the Morvilles credit for an iron resolution. Yes, Amy, you may laugh; but if a man is not resolute in a little, he will never be resolute in great matters.’

‘And Guy has been resolute the right way this time,’ said Laura.

‘May he always be the same,’ said Philip.

Philip had undertaken, on his way back to Broadstone, to conduct Charlotte to East-hill, where she was to spend the day with a little niece of Mary Ross. She presently came down, her bonnet-strings tied in a most resolute-looking bow, and her little figure drawn up so as to look as womanly is possible for her first walk alone with Philip. She wished the party at home ‘goodbye;’ and as Amy and Laura stood watching her, they could not help laughing to see her tripping feet striving to keep step, her blue veil discreetly composed and her little head turned up, as if she was trying hard to be on equal terms with the tall cousin, who meanwhile looked graciously down from his height, patronising her like a very small child. After some space, Amy began to wonder what they could talk about, or whether they would talk at all; but Laura said there was no fear of Charlotte’s tongue ever being still, and Charles rejoined,—

‘Don’t you know that Philip considers it due to himself that his audience should never be without conversation suited to their capacity?’

‘Nonsense, Charlie!’

‘Nay, I give him credit for doing it as well as it is in nature of things for it to be done. The strongest proof I know of his being a superior man, is the way he adapts himself to his company. He lays down the law to us, because he knows we are all born to be his admirers; he calls Thorndale his dear fellow and conducts him like a Mentor; but you may observe how different he is with other people—Mr. Ross, for instance. It is not showing off; it is just what the pattern hero should be with the pattern clergyman. At a dinner party he is quite in his place; contents himself with leaving an impression on his neighbour that Mr. Morville is at home on every subject; and that he is the right thing with his brother officers is sufficiently proved, since not even Maurice either hates or quizzes him.’

‘Well, Charlie,’ said Laura, well pleased, I am glad you are convinced at last.’

‘Do you think I ever wanted to be convinced that we were created for no other end than to applaud Philip? I was fulfilling the object of our existence by enlarging on a remark of Guy’s, that nothing struck him more than the way in which Philip could adapt his conversation to the hearers. So the hint was not lost on me; and I came to the conclusion that it was a far greater proof of his sense than all the maxims he lavishes on us.’

‘I wonder Guy was the person to make the remark,’ said Laura; ‘for it is strange that those two never appear to the best advantage together.’

‘Oh, Laura, that would be the very reason,’ said Amy.

‘The very reason?’ said Charles. Draw out your meaning, Miss.’

‘Yes,’ said Amy, colouring, ‘If Guy—if a generous person, I mean—were vexed with another sometimes, it would be the very reason he would make the most of all his goodness.’

‘Heigh-ho!’ yawned Charles. What o’clock is it? I wonder when Guy is ever coming back from that Lascelles.’

‘Your wonder need not last long,’ said Laura; ‘for I see him riding into the stable yard.’

In a few minutes he had entered; and, on being asked if he had met Philip and Charlotte, and how they were getting on, he replied,—‘A good deal like the print of Dignity and Impudence,’ at the same time throwing back his shoulders, and composing his countenance to imitate Philip’s lofty deportment and sedate expression, and the next moment putting his head on one side with a sharp little nod, and giving a certain espiegle glance of the eye, and knowing twist of one corner of the mouth, just like Charlotte.

‘By the by,’ added he, ‘would Philip have been a clergyman if he had gone to Oxford?’

‘I don’t know; I don’t think it was settled,’ said Laura, ‘Why?’

‘I could never fancy him one’ said Guy. ‘He would not have been what he is now if he had gone to Oxford,’ said Charles. ‘He would have lived with men of the same powers and pursuits with himself, and have found his level.’

‘And that would have been a very high one,’ said Guy.

‘It would; but there would be all the difference there is between a feudal prince and an Eastern despot. He would know what it is to live with his match.’

‘But you don’t attempt to call him conceited!’ cried Guy, with a sort of consternation.

‘He is far above that; far too grand,’ said Amy.

‘I should as soon think of calling Jupiter conceited,’ said Charles; and Laura did not know how far to be gratified, or otherwise.

Charles had not over-estimated Philip’s readiness of self adaptation. Charlotte had been very happy with him, talking over the “Lady of the Lake”, which she had just read, and being enlightened, partly to her satisfaction, partly to her disappointment, as to how much was historical. He listened good-naturedly to a fit of rapture, and threw in a few, not too many, discreet words of guidance to the true principles of taste; and next told her about an island, in a pond at Stylehurst, which had been by turns Ellen’s isle and Robinson Crusoe’s. It was at this point in the conversation that Guy came in sight, riding slowly, his reins on his horse’s neck, whistling a slow, melancholy tune, his eyes fixed on the sky, and so lost in musings, that he did not perceive them till Philip arrested him by calling out, ‘That is a very bad plan. No horse is to be trusted in that way, especially such a spirited one.’

Guy started, and gathered up his reins, owning it was foolish.

‘You look only half disenchanted yet,’ said Philip. ‘Has Lascelles put you into what my father’s old gardener used to call a stud?’

‘Nothing so worthy of a stud,’ said Guy, smiling and colouring a little. ‘I was only dreaming over a picture of ruin—

‘The steed is vanish’d from the stall,
No serf is seen in Hassan’s hall,
The lonely spider’s thin grey pall
Waves, slowly widening o’er the wall.’

‘Byron!’ exclaimed Philip. ‘I hope you are not dwelling on him?’

‘Only a volume I found in my room.’

‘Oh, the “Giaour”!’ said Philip. ‘Well, there is no great damage done; but it is bad food for excitable minds. Don’t let it get hold of you.’

‘Very well;’ and there was a cloud, but it cleared in a moment, and, with a few gay words to both, he rode off at a quick pace.

‘Foolish fellow!’ muttered Philip, looking after him.

After some space of silence, Charlotte began in a very grave tone—

‘Philip.’

‘Well?’

‘Philip.’

Another ‘Well!’ and another long pause.

‘Philip, I don’t know whether you’ll be angry with me.’

‘Certainly not,’ said Philip, marvelling at what was coming.

‘Guy says he does not want to keep up the feud, and I wish you would not.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘The deadly feud!’ said Charlotte.

‘What nonsense is this?’ said Philip.

‘Surely—Oh Philip, there always was a deadly feud between our ancestors, and the Redclyffe Morvilles, and it was very wrong, and ought not to be kept up now.’

‘It is not I that keep it up.’

‘Is it not?’ said Charlotte. ‘But I am sure you don’t like Guy. And I can’t think why not, unless it is the deadly feud, for we are all so fond of him. Laura says it is a different house since he came.’

‘Hum!’ said Philip. ‘Charlotte, you did well to make me promise not to be angry with you, by which, I presume, you mean displeased. I should like to know what put this notion into your head.’

‘Charlie told me,’ almost whispered Charlotte, hanging down her head. ‘And—and—’

‘And what? I can’t hear.’

Charlotte was a good deal frightened; but either from firmness, or from the female propensity to have the last word, or it might be the spirit of mischief, she got out—‘You have made me quite sure of it yourself.’

She was so alarmed at having said this, that had it not been undignified, she would have run quite away, and never stopped till she came to East-hill. Matters were not mended when Philip said authoritatively, and as if he was not in the least bit annoyed (which was the more vexatious), ‘What do you mean, Charlotte?’

She had a great mind to cry, by way of getting out of the scrape; but having begun as a counsellor and peacemaker, it would never do to be babyish; and on his repeating the question, she said, in a tone which she could not prevent from being lachrymose, ‘You make Guy almost angry, you tease him, and when people praise him, you answer as if it would not last! And it is very unfair of you,’ concluded she, with almost a sob.

‘Charlotte,’ replied Philip, much more kindly than she thought she deserved, after the reproach that seemed to her so dreadfully naughty, ‘you may dismiss all fear of deadly feud, whatever you may mean by it. Charles has been playing tricks on you. You know, my little cousin, that I am a Christian, and we live in the nineteenth century.’

Charlotte felt as if annihilated at the aspect of her own folly. He resumed—‘You misunderstood me. I do think Guy very agreeable. He is very attentive to Charles, very kind to you, and so attractive, that I don’t wonder you like him. But those who are older than you see that he has faults, and we wish to set him on his guard against them. It may be painful to ourselves, and irritating to him, but depend upon it, it is the proof of friendship. Are you satisfied, my little cousin?’

She could only say humbly, ‘I beg your pardon.’

‘You need not ask pardon. Since you had the notion, it was right to speak, as it was to me, one of your own family. When you are older, you need never fear to speak out in the right place. I am glad you have so much of the right sort of feminine courage, though in this case you might have ventured to trust to me.’

So ended Charlotte’s anxieties respecting the deadly feud, and she had now to make up her mind to the loss of her playfellow, who was to go to Oxford at Easter, when he would be just eighteen, his birthday being the 28th of March. Both her playmates were going, Bustle as well as Guy, and it was at first proposed that Deloraine should go too, but Guy bethought himself that Oxford would be a place of temptation for William; and not choosing to trust the horse to any one else, resolved to leave both at Hollywell.

His grandfather had left an allowance for Guy, until his coming of age, such as might leave no room for extravagance, and which even Philip pronounced to be hardly sufficient for a young man in his position. ‘You know,’ said Mr. Edmonstone, in his hesitating, good-natured way, ‘if ever you have occasion sometimes for a little—a little more—you need only apply to me. Don’t be afraid, anything rather than run into debt. You know me, and ‘tis your own.’

‘This shall do,’ said Guy, in the same tone as he had fixed his hours of study.

Each of the family made Guy a birthday present, as an outfit for Oxford; Mr. Edmonstone gave him a set of studs, Mrs. Edmonstone a Christian Year, Amabel copied some of his favourite songs, Laura made a drawing of Sintram, Charlotte worked a kettle-holder, with what was called by courtesy a likeness of Bustle. Charles gave nothing, professing that he would do nothing to encourage his departure.

‘You don’t know what a bore it is to lose the one bit of quicksilver in the house!’ said he, yawning. ‘I shall only drag on my existence till you come back.’

‘You, Charles, the maker of fun!’ said Guy, amazed.

‘It is a case of flint and steel,’ said Charles; ‘but be it owing to who it will, we have been alive since you came here. You have taken care to be remembered. We have been studying you, or laughing at you, or wondering what absurdity was to come next.’

‘I am very sorry—that is, if you are serious. I hoped at least I appeared like other people.’

‘I’ll tell you what you appear like. Just what I would be if I was a free man.’

‘Never say that, Charlie!’

‘Nay, wait a bit. I would never be so foolish. I would never give my sunny mornings to Euripides; I would not let the best hunter in the county go when I had wherewithal to pay for him.’

‘You would not have such an ill-conditioned self to keep in rule.’

‘After all,’ continued Charles, yawning, ‘it is no great compliment to say I am sorry you are going. If you were an Ethiopian serenader, you would be a loss to me. It is something to see anything beyond this old drawing-room, and the same faces doing the same things every day. Laura poking over her drawing, and meditating upon the last entry in Philip’s memorandum-book, and Amy at her flowers or some nonsense or other, and Charlotte and the elders all the same, and a lot of stupid people dropping in and a lot of stupid books to read, all just alike. I can tell what they are like without looking in!’ Charles yawned again, sighed, and moved wearily. ‘Now, there came some life and freshness with you. You talk of Redclyffe, and your brute creation there, not like a book, and still less like a commonplace man; you are innocent and unsophisticated, and take new points of view; you are something to interest oneself about; your coming in is something to look forward to; you make the singing not such mere milk-and-water, your reading the *Praelectiones* is an additional landmark to time; besides the mutton of to-day succeeding the beef of yesterday. Heigh-ho! I’ll tell you what, Guy. Though I may carry it off with a high hand, ‘tis no joke to be a helpless log all the best years of a man’s life,—nay, for my whole life,—for at the very best of the contingencies the doctors are always flattering me with, I should make but a wretched crippling affair of it. And if that is the best hope they give me, you may guess it is likely to be a pretty deal worse. Hope? I’ve been hoping these ten years, and much good has it done me. I say, Guy,’ he proceeded, in a tone of extreme bitterness, though with a sort of smile, ‘the only wonder is that I don’t hate the very sight of you! There are times when I feel as if I could bite some men,—that Tomfool Maurice de Courcy, for instance, when I hear him rattling on, and think—’

‘I know I have often talked thoughtlessly, I have feared afterwards I might have given you pain.’

‘No, no, you never have; you have carried me along with you. I like nothing better than to hear of your ridings, and shootings, and boatings. It is a sort of life.’

Charles had never till now alluded seriously to his infirmity before Guy, and the changing countenance of his auditor showed him to be much affected, as he stood leaning over the end of the sofa, with his speaking eyes earnestly fixed on Charles, who went on:

‘And now you are going to Oxford. You will take your place among the men of your day. You will hear and be heard of. You will be somebody. And I!—I know I have what they call talent—I could be something. They think me an idle dog; but where’s the good of doing anything? I only know if I was not—not condemned to—to this—this life,’ (had it not been for a sort of involuntary respect to the gentle compassion of the softened hazel eyes regarding him so kindly, he would have used the

violent expletive that trembled on his lip;) ‘if I was not chained down here, Master Philip should not stand alone as the paragon of the family. I’ve as much mother wit as he.’

‘That you have,’ said Guy. ‘How fast you see the sense of a passage. You could excel very much if you only tried.’

‘Tried?’ And what am I to gain by it?’

‘I don’t know that one ought to let talents rust,’ said Guy, thoughtfully; ‘I suppose it is one’s duty not; and surely it is a pity to give up those readings.’

‘I shall not get such another fellow dunce as you,’ said Charles, ‘as I told you when we began, and it would be a mere farce to do it alone. I could not make myself, if I would.’

‘Can’t you make yourself do what you please?’ said Guy, as if it was the simplest thing in the world.

‘Not a bit, if the other half of me does not like it. I forget it, or put it off, and it comes to nothing. I do declare, though, I would get something to break my mind on, merely as a medical precaution, just to freshen myself up, if I could find any one to do it with. No, nothing in the shape of a tutor, against that I protest.’

‘Your sisters,’ suggested Guy.

‘Hum’! Laura is too intellectual already, and I don’t mean to poach on Philip’s manor; and if I made little Amy cease to be silly, I should do away with all the comfort I have left me in life. I don’t know, though, if she swallowed learning after Mary Ross’s pattern, that it need do her much harm.’

Amy came into the room at the moment. ‘Amy, here is Guy advising me to take you to read something awfully wise every day, something that will make you as dry as a stick, and as blue—’

‘As a gentianella,’ said Guy.

‘I should not mind being like a gentianella,’ said Amy. ‘But what dreadful thing were you setting him to do?’

‘To make you read all the folios in my uncle’s old library,’ said Charles. ‘All that Margaret has in keeping against Philip has a house of his own.’

‘Sancho somebody, and all you talked of when first you came?’ said Amy.

‘We were talking of the hour’s reading that Charlie and I have had together lately,’ said Guy.

‘I was thinking how Charlie would miss that hour,’ said Amy; ‘and we shall be very sorry not to have you to listen to.’

‘Well, then, Amy, suppose you read with me?’

‘Oh, Charlie, thank you! Should you really like it?’ cried Amy, colouring with delight. ‘I have always thought it would be so very delightful if you would read with me, as James Ross used with Mary, only I was afraid of tiring you with my stupidity. Oh, thank you!’

So it was settled, and Charles declared that he put himself on honour to give a good account of their doings to Guy, that being the only way of making himself steady to his resolution; but he was perfectly determined not to let Philip know anything about the practice he had adopted, since he would by no means allow him to guess that he was following his advice.

Charles had certainly grown very fond of Guy, in spite of his propensity to admire Philip, satisfying himself by maintaining that, after all, Guy only tried to esteem his cousin because he thought it a point of duty, just as children think it right to admire the good boy in a story book; but that he was secretly fretted and chafed by his perfection. No one could deny that there were often occasions when little misunderstandings would arise, and that, but for Philip’s coolness and Guy’s readiness to apologise they might often have gone further; but at the same time no one could regret these things more than Guy himself, and he was willing and desirous to seek Philip’s advice and assistance when needed. In especial, he listened earnestly to the counsel which was bestowed on him about Oxford: and Mrs. Edmonstone was convinced that no one could have more anxiety to do right and avoid temptation. She had many talks with him in her dressing-room, promising to write to him, as did also Charles; and he left Hollywell with universal regrets, most loudly expressed by Charlotte,

who would not be comforted without a lock of Bustle's hair, which she would have worn round her neck if she had not been afraid that Laura would tell Philip.

'He goes with excellent intentions,' said Philip, as they watched him from the door.

'I do hope he will do well,' said Mrs. Edmonstone.

'I wish he may,' said Philip; 'the agreeableness of his whole character makes one more anxious. It is very dangerous. His name, his wealth, his sociable, gay disposition, that very attractive manner, all are so many perils, and he has not that natural pleasure in study that would be of itself a preservative from temptation. However, he is honestly anxious to do right, and has excellent principles. I only fear his temper and his want of steadiness. Poor boy, I hope he may do well!'

CHAPTER 7

—Pray, good shepherd, what
Fair swain is this that dances with your daughter?
He sings several times faster than you'll tell money;
he utters them as he had eaten ballads, and all men's
ears grow to his tunes.

—*WINTER'S TALE*

It was a glorious day in June, the sky of pure deep dazzling blue, the sunshine glowing with brightness, but with cheerful freshness in the air that took away all sultriness, the sun tending westward in his long day's career, and casting welcome shadows from the tall firs and horse-chestnuts that shaded the lawn. A long rank of haymakers—men and women—proceeded with their rakes, the white shirt-sleeves, straw bonnets, and ruddy faces, radiant in the bath of sunshine, while in the shady end of the field were idler haymakers among the fragrant piles, Charles half lying on the grass, with his back against a tall haycock; Mrs. Edmonstone sitting on another, book in hand; Laura sketching the busy scene, the sun glancing through the chequered shade on her glossy curls; Philip stretched out at full length, hat and neck-tie off, luxuriating in the cool repose after a dusty walk from Broadstone; and a little way off, Amabel and Charlotte pretending to make hay, but really building nests with it, throwing it at each other, and playing as heartily as the heat would allow.

They talked and laughed, the rest were too hot, too busy, or too sleepy for conversation, even Philip being tired into enjoying the “dolce far niente”; and they basked in the fresh breezy heat and perfumy hay with only now and then a word, till a cold, black, damp nose was suddenly thrust into Charles's face, a red tongue began licking him; and at the same moment Charlotte, screaming “There he is!” raced headlong across the swarths of hay, to meet Guy, who had just ridden into the field. He threw Deloraine's rein to one of the haymakers, and came bounding to meet her, just in time to pick her up as she put her foot into a hidden hole, and fell prostrate.

In another moment he was in the midst of the whole party, who crowded round and welcomed him as if he had been a boy returning from his first half-year's schooling; and never did little school-boy look more holiday-like than he, with all the sunshine of that June day reflected, as it were, in his glittering eyes and glowing face, while Bustle escaping from Charles's caressing arm, danced round, wagging his tail in ecstasy, and claiming his share of the welcome. Then Guy was on the ground by Charles, rejoicing to find him out there, and then, some dropping into their former nests on the hay, some standing round, they talked fast and eagerly in a confusion of sound that did not subside for the first ten minutes so as to allow anything to be clearly heard. The first distinct sentence was Charlotte's “Bustle, darling old fellow, you are handsomer than ever!”

“What a delicious day!” next exclaimed Guy, following Philip's example, by throwing off hat and neck-tie.

“A spontaneous tribute to the beauty of the day,” said Charles.

“Really it is so ultra-splendid as to deserve notice!” said Philip, throwing himself completely back, and looking up.

“One cannot help revelling in that deep blue!” said Laura.

“Tomorrow'll be the happiest time of all the glad new year,” hummed Guy.

“Ah you will teach us all now,” said Laura, “after your grand singing lessons.”

“Do you know what is in store for you, Guy?” said Amy. “Oh! haven't you heard about Lady Kilcoran's ball?”

“You are to go, Guy,” said Charlotte. “I am glad I am not. I hate dancing.”

‘And I know as much about it as Bustle,’ said Guy, catching the dog by his forepaws, and causing him to perform an uncouth dance.

‘Never mind, they will soon teach you,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone.

‘Must I really go?’

‘He begins to think it serious,’ said Charles.

‘Is Philip going?’ exclaimed Guy, looking as if he was taken by surprise.

‘He is going to say something about dancing being a healthful recreation for young people,’ said Charles.

‘You’ll be disappointed,’ said Philip. ‘It is much too hot to moralize.’

‘Apollo unbends his bow,’ exclaimed Charles. ‘The captain yields the field.’

‘Ah! Captain Morville, I ought to have congratulated you,’ said Guy. ‘I must come to Broadstone early enough to see you on parade.’

‘Come to Broadstone! You aren’t still bound to Mr. Lascelles,’ said Charles.

‘If he has time for me,’ said Guy. ‘I am too far behind the rest of the world to afford to be idle this vacation.’

‘That’s right, Guy,’ exclaimed Philip, sitting up, and looking full of approval. ‘With so much perseverance, you must get on at last. How did you do in collections?’

‘Tolerably, thank you.’

‘You must be able to enter into the thing now,’ proceeded Philip. ‘What are you reading?’

‘Thucydides.’

‘Have you come to Pericles’ oration? I must show you some notes that I have on that. Don’t you get into the spirit of it now?’

‘Up-hill work still,’ answered Guy, disentangling some cinders from the silky curls of Bustle’s ear.

‘Which do you like best—that or the ball?’ asked Charles.

‘The hay-field best of all,’ said Guy, releasing Bustle, and blinding him with a heap of hay.

‘Of course!’ said Charlotte, ‘who would not like hay-making better than that stupid ball?’

‘Poor Charlotte!’ said Mrs. Edmonstone; commiseration which irritated Charlotte into standing up and protesting,

‘Mamma, you know I don’t want to go.’

‘No more do I, Charlotte,’ said her brother, in a mock consoling tone. ‘You and I know what is good for us, and despise sublunary vanities.’

‘But you will go, Guy,’ said Laura; ‘Philip is really going.’

‘In spite of Lord Kilcoran’s folly in going to such an expense as either taking Allonby or giving the ball,’ said Charles.

‘I don’t think it is my business to bring Lord Kilcoran to a sense of his folly,’ said Philip. ‘I made all my protests to Maurice when first he started the notion, but if his father chose to take the matter up, it is no concern of mine.’

‘You will understand, Guy,’ said Charles, ‘that this ball is specially got up by Maurice for Laura’s benefit.’

‘Believe as little as you please of that speech, Guy,’ said Laura; ‘the truth is that Lord Kilcoran is very good-natured, and Eveleen was very much shocked to hear that Amy had never been to any ball, and I to only one, and so it ended in their giving one.’

‘When is it to be?’

‘On Thursday week,’ said Amy. ‘I wonder if you will think Eveleen as pretty as we do!’

‘She is Laura’s great friend, is not she?’

‘I like her very much; I have known her all my life, and she has much more depth than those would think who only know her manner.’ And Laura looked pleadingly at Philip as she spoke.

‘Are there any others of the family at home?’ said Guy.

‘The two younger girls, Mabel and Helen, and the little boys,’ said Amy. ‘Lord de Courcy is in Ireland, and all the others are away.’

‘Lord de Courcy is the wisest man of the family, and sets his face against absenteeism,’ said Philip, ‘so he is never visible here.’

‘But you aren’t going to despise it, I hope, Guy,’ said Amy, earnestly; ‘it will be so delightful! And what fun we shall have in teaching you to dance!’

Guy stretched himself, and gave a quaint grunt.

‘Never mind, Guy,’ said Philip, ‘very little is required. You may easily pass in the crowd. I never learnt.’

‘Your ear will guide you,’ said Laura.

‘And no one can stay at home, since Mary Ross is going,’ said Amy. ‘Eveleen was always so fond of her, that she came and forced a promise from her by telling her she should come with mamma, and have no trouble.’

‘You have not seen Allonby,’ said Laura. ‘There are such Vandykes, and among them, such a King Charles!’

‘Is not that the picture,’ said Charles, ‘before which Amy—’

‘O don’t, Charlie!’

‘Was found dissolved in tears?’

‘I could not help it,’ murmured Amy, blushing crimson.

‘There is all Charles’s fate in his face,’ said Philip,—‘earnest, melancholy, beautiful! It would stir the feelings—were it an unknown portrait. No, Amy, you need not be ashamed of your tears.’

But Amy turned away, doubly ashamed.

‘I hope it is not in the ball-room,’ said Guy.

‘No said Laura, ‘it is in the library.’

Charlotte, whose absence had become perceptible from the general quietness, here ran up with two envelopes, which she put into Guy’s hands. One contained Lady Kilcoran’s genuine card of invitation for Sir Guy Morville, the other Charlotte had scribbled in haste for Mr. Bustle.

This put an end to all rationality. Guy rose with a growl and a roar, and hunted her over half the field, till she was caught, and came back out of breath and screaming, ‘We never had such a haymaking!’

‘So I think the haymakers will say!’ answered her mother, rising to go indoors. ‘What ruin of haycocks!’

‘Oh, I’ll set all that to rights,’ said Guy, seizing a hay-fork.

‘Stop, stop, take care!’ cried Charles. ‘I don’t want to be built up in the rick, and by and by, when my disconsolate family have had all the ponds dragged for me, Deloraine will be heard to complain that they give him very odd animal food.’

‘Who could resist such a piteous appeal!’ said Guy, helping him to rise, and conducting him to his wheeled chair. The others followed, and when, shortly after, Laura looked out at her window, she saw Guy, with his coat off, toiling like a real haymaker, to build up the cocks in all their neat fairness and height, whistling meantime the ‘Queen of the May,’ and now and then singing a line. She watched the old cowman come up, touching his hat, and looking less cross than usual; she saw Guy’s ready greeting, and perceived they were comparing the forks and rakes, the pooks and cocks of their counties; and, finally, she beheld her father ride into the field, and Guy spring to meet him.

No one could have so returned to what was in effect a home, unless his time had been properly spent; and, in fact, all that Mr. Edmonstone or Philip could hear of him, was so satisfactory, that Philip pronounced that the first stage of the trial had been passed irreproachably, and Laura felt and looked delighted at this sanction to the high estimation in which she held him.

His own account of himself to Mrs. Edmonstone would not have been equally satisfactory if she had not had something else to check it with. It was given by degrees, and at many different times,

chiefly as they walked round the garden in the twilight of the summer evenings, talking over the many subjects mentioned in the letters which had passed constantly. It seemed as if there were very few to whom Guy would ever give his confidence; but that once bestowed, it was with hardly any reserve, and that was his great relief and satisfaction to pour out his whole mind, where he was sure of sympathy.

To her, then, he confided how much provoked he was with himself, his 'first term,' he said, 'having only shown him what an intolerable fool he had to keep in order.' By his account, he could do nothing 'without turning his own head, except study, and that stupefied it.' 'Never was there a more idle fellow; he could work himself for a given time, but his sense would not second him; and was it not most absurd in him to take so little pleasure in what was his duty, and enjoy only what was bad for him?'

He had tried boating, but it had distracted him from his work; so he had been obliged to give it up, and had done so in a hasty vehement manner, which had caused offence, and for which he blamed himself. It had been the same with other things, till he had left himself no regular recreation but walking and music. 'The last,' he said, 'might engross him in the same way; but he thought (here he hesitated a little) there were higher ends for music, which made it come under Mrs. Edmonstone's rule, of a thing to be used guardedly, not disused.' He had resumed light reading, too, which he had nearly discontinued before he went to Oxford. 'One wants something,' he said, 'by way of refreshment, where there is no sea nor rock to look at, and no Laura and Amy to talk to.'

He had made one friend, a scholar of his own college, of the name of Wellwood. This name had been his attraction; Guy was bent on friendship with him; if, as he tried to make him out to be, he was the son of that Captain Wellwood whose death had weighed so heavily on his grandfather's conscience, feeling almost as if it were his duty to ask forgiveness in his grandfather's name, yet scarcely knowing how to venture on advances to one to whom his name had such associations. However, they had gradually drawn together, and at length entered on the subject, and Guy then found he was the nephew, not the son of Captain Wellwood; indeed, his former belief was founded on a miscalculation, as the duel had taken place twenty-eight years ago. He now heard all his grandfather had wished to know of the family. There were two unmarried daughters, and their cousin spoke in the highest terms of their self-devoted life, promising what Guy much wished, that they should hear what deep repentance had followed the crime which had made them fatherless. He was to be a clergyman, and Guy admired him extremely, saying, however, that he was so shy and retiring, it was hard to know him well.

From not having been at school, and from other causes, Guy had made few acquaintance; indeed, he amused Mrs. Edmonstone by fearing he had been morose. She was ready to tell him he was an ingenious self-tormentor; but she saw that the struggle to do right was the main spring of the happiness that beamed round him, in spite of his self-reproach, heart-felt as it was. She doubted whether persons more contented with themselves were as truly joyous, and was convinced that, while thus combating lesser temptations, the very shadow of what are generally alone considered as real temptations would hardly come near him.

If it had not been for these talks, and now and then a thoughtful look, she would have believed him one of the most light-hearted and merriest of beings. He was more full of glee and high spirits than she had ever seen him; he seemed to fill the whole house with mirth, and keep every one alive by his fun and frolic, as blithe and untiring as Maurice de Courcy himself, though not so wild.

Very pleasant were those summer days—reading, walking, music, gardening. Did not they all work like very labourers at the new arbour in the midst of the laurels, where Charles might sit and see the spires of Broadstone? Work they did, indeed! Charles looking on from his wheeled chair, laughing to see Guy sawing as if for his living and Amy hammering gallantly, and Laura weaving osiers, and Charlotte flying about with messages.

One day, they were startled by an exclamation from Charles. 'Ah, ha! Paddy, is that you?' and beheld the tall figure of a girl, advancing with a rapid, springing step, holding up her riding habit with one hand, with the other whisking her coral-handled whip. There was something distinguished in her

air, and her features, though less fine than Laura's, were very pretty, by the help of laughing dark blue eyes, and very black hair, under her broad hat and little waving feather. She threatened Charles with her whip, calling out—'Aunt Edmonstone said I should find you here. What is the fun now?'

'Arbour building,' said Charles; 'don't you see the head carpenter!'

'Sir Guy?' whispered she to Laura, looking up at him, where he was mounted on the roof, thatching it with reed, the sunshine full on his glowing face and white shirt sleeves.

'Here!' said Charles, as Guy swung himself down with a bound, his face much redder than sun and work had already made it, 'here's another wild Irisher for you.'

'Sir Guy Morville—Lady Eveleen de Courcy,' began Laura; but Lady Eveleen cut her short, frankly holding out her hand, and saying, 'You are almost a cousin, you know. Oh, don't leave off. Do give me something to do. That hammer, Amy, pray—Laura, don't you remember how dearly I always loved hammering?'

'How did you come?' said Laura.

'With papa—'tis his visit to Sir Guy. 'No, don't go,' as Guy began to look for his coat; 'he is only impending. He is gone on to Broadstone, but he dropped me here, and will pick me up on his way back. Can't you give me something to do on the top of that ladder? I should like it mightily; it looks so cool and airy.'

'How can you, Eva?' whispered Laura, reprovingly; but Lady Eveleen only shook her head at her, and declaring she saw a dangerous nail sticking out, began to hammer it in with such good will, that Charles stopped his ears, and told her it was worse than her tongue. 'Go on about the ball, do.'

'Oh,' said she earnestly, 'do you think there is any hope of Captain Morville's coming?'

'Oh yes,' said Laura.

'I am so glad! That is what papa is gone to Broadstone about. Maurice said he had given him such a lecture, that he would not be the one to think of asking him, and papa must do it himself; for if he sets his face against it, it will spoil it all.'

'You may make your mind easy,' said Charles, 'the captain is lenient, and looks on the ball as a mere development of Irish nature. He has been consoling Guy on the difficulties of dancing.'

'Can't you dance?' said Lady Eveleen, looking at him with compassion.

'Such is my melancholy ignorance,' said Guy.

'We have been talking of teaching him,' said Laura.

'Talk! will that do it?' cried Lady Eveleen, springing up. 'We will begin this moment. Come out on the lawn. Here, Charles,' wheeling him along, 'No, thank you, I like it,' as Guy was going to help her. 'There, Charles, be fiddler go on, tum-tum, tee! that'll do. Amy, Laura, be ladies. I'm the other gentleman,' and she stuck on her hat in military style, giving it a cock. She actually set them quadrilling in spite of adverse circumstances, dancing better, in her habit, than most people without one, till Lord Kilcoran arrived.

While he was making his visit, she walked a little apart, arm-in-arm with Laura. 'I like him very much,' she said; 'he looks up to anything. I had heard so much of his steadiness, that it is a great relief to my mind to see him so unlike his cousin.'

'Eveleen!'

'No disparagement to the captain, only I am so dreadfully afraid of him. I am sure he thinks me such an unmitigated goose. Now, doesn't he?'

'If you would but take the right way to make him think otherwise, dear Eva, and show the sense you really have.'

'That is just what my fear of him won't let me do. I would not for the world let him guess it, so there is nothing for it but sauciness to cover one's weakness. I can't be sensible with those that won't give me credit for it. But you'll mind and teach Sir Guy to dance; he has so much spring in him, he deserves to be an Irishman.'

In compliance with this injunction, there used to be a clearance every evening; Charles turned into the bay window out of the way, Mrs. Edmonstone at the piano, and the rest figuring away, the partnerless one, called 'puss in the corner', being generally Amabel, while Charlotte, disdainful of them all the time, used to try to make them imitate her dancing-master's graces, causing her father to perform such caricatures of them, as to overpower all with laughing.

Mr. Edmonstone was half Irish. His mother, Lady Mabel Edmonstone, had never thoroughly taken root in England, and on his marriage, had gone with her daughter to live near her old home in Ireland. The present Earl of Kilcoran was her nephew, and a very close intercourse had always been kept up between the families, Mr. and Mrs. Edmonstone being adopted by their younger cousins as uncle and aunt, and always so called.

The house at Allonby was in such confusion, that the family there expected to dine nowhere on the day of the ball, and the Hollywell party thought it prudent to secure their dinner at home, with Philip and Mary Ross, who were to go with them.

By special desire, Philip wore his uniform; and while the sisters were dressing Charlotte gave him a thorough examination, which led to a talk between him and Mary on accoutrements and weapons in general; but while deep in some points of chivalrous armour, Mary's waist was pinched by two mischievous hands, and a little fluttering white figure danced around her.

'O Amy! what do you want with me?'

'Come and be trimmed up,' said Amy.

'I thought you told me I was to have no trouble. I am dressed,' said Mary, looking complacently at her full folds of white muslin.

'No more you shall; but you promised to do as you were told.' And Amy fluttered away with her.

'Do you remember,' said Philip, 'the comparison of Rose Flammock dragging off her father, to a little carved cherub trying to uplift a solid monumental hero?'

'O, I must tell Mary!' cried Charlotte; but Philip stopped her, with orders not to be a silly child.

'It is a pity Amy should not have her share,' said Charles.

'The comparison to a Dutch cherub?' asked Guy.

'She is more after the pattern of the little things on little wings, in your blotting-book,' said Charles; 'certain lines in the predicament of the cherubs of painters—heads "et proeterea nihil".'

'O Guy, do you write verses?' cried Charlotte.

'Some nonsense,' muttered Guy, out of countenance; 'I thought I had made away with that rubbish; where is it?'

'In the blotting-book in my room,' said Charles. 'I must explain that the book is my property, and was put into your room when mamma was beautifying it for you, as new and strange company. On its return to me, at your departure, I discovered a great accession of blots and sailing vessels, beside the aforesaid little things.'

'I shall resume my own property,' said Guy, departing in haste.

Charlotte ran after him, to beg for a sight of it; and Philip asked Charles what it was like.

'A romantic incident,' said Charles, 'just fit for a novel. A Petrarch leaving his poems about in blotting-books.'

Charles used the word Petrarch to stand for a poet, not thinking what lady's name he suggested; and he was surprised at the severity of Philip's tone as he inquired, 'Do you mean anything, or do you not?'

Perceiving with delight that he had perplexed and teased, he rejoiced in keeping up the mystery: 'Eh? is it a tender subject with you, too?'

Philip rose, and standing over him, said, in a low but impressive tone:

'I cannot tell whether you are trifling or not; but you are no boy now, and can surely see that this is no subject to be played with. If you are concealing anything you have discovered, you have a

great deal to answer for. I can hardly imagine anything more unfortunate than that he should become attached to either of your sisters.'

'Et pourquoi?' asked Charles, coolly.

'I see,' said Philip, retreating to his chair, and speaking with great composure, 'I did you injustice by speaking seriously.' Then, as his uncle came into the room, he asked some indifferent question, without betraying a shade of annoyance.

Charles meanwhile congratulated himself on his valour in keeping his counsel, in spite of so tall a man in scarlet; but he was much nettled at the last speech, for if a real attachment to his sister had been in question, he would never have trifled about it. Keenly alive to his cousin's injustice, he rejoiced in having provoked and mystified the impassable, though he little knew the storm he had raised beneath that serene exterior of perfect self-command.

The carriages were announced, and Mr. Edmonstone began to call the ladies, adding tenfold to the confusion in the dressing-room. There was Laura being completed by the lady's maid, Amabel embellishing Mary, Mrs. Edmonstone with her arm loaded with shawls, Charlotte flourishing about. Poor Mary—it was much against her will—but she had no heart to refuse the wreath of geraniums that Amy's own hands had woven for her; and there she sat, passive as a doll, though in despair at their all waiting for her. For Laura's toilette was finished, and every one began dressing her at once; while Charlotte, to make it better, screamed over the balusters that all were ready but Mary. Sir Guy was heard playing the 'Harmonious Blacksmith,' and Captain Morville's step was heard, fast and firm. At last, when a long chain was put round her neck, she cried out, 'I have submitted to everything so far; I can bear no more!' jumped up, caught hold of her shawl, and was putting it on, when there was a general outcry that they must exhibit themselves to Charles.

They all ran down, and Amy, flying up to her brother, made a splendid sweeping curtsy, and twirled round in a pirouette.

'Got up, regardless of expense!' cried Charles; 'display yourselves.'

The young ladies ranged themselves in imitation of the book of fashions. The sisters were in white, with wreaths of starry jessamine. It was particularly becoming to Laura's bella-donna lily complexion, rich brown curls, and classical features, and her brother exclaimed:

'Laura is exactly like Apollo playing the lyre, outside mamma's old manuscript book of music.'

'Has not Amy made beautiful wreaths?' said Laura. 'She stripped the tree, and Guy had to fetch the ladder, to gather the sprays on the top of the wall.'

'Do you see your bit of myrtle, Guy,' said Amy, pointing to it, on Laura's head, 'that you tried to persuade me would pass for jessamine?'

'Ah! it should have been all myrtle,' said Guy.

Philip leant meantime against the door. Laura only once glanced towards him, thinking all this too trifling for him, and never imagining the intense interest with which he gave a meaning to each word and look.

'Well done, Mary!' cried Charles, 'they have furbished you up handsomely.'

Mary made a face, and said she should wonder who was the fashionable young lady she should meet in the pier-glasses at Allonby. Then Mr. Edmonstone hurried them away, and they arrived in due time.

The saloon at Allonby was a beautiful room, one end opening into a conservatory, full of coloured lamps, fresh green leaves, and hot-house plants. There they found as yet only the home party, the good-natured, merry Lord Kilcoran, his quiet English wife, who had bad health, and looked hardly equal to the confusion of the evening; Maurice, and two younger boys; Eveleen, and her two little sisters, Mabel and Helen.

'This makes it hard on Charlotte,' thought Amy, while the two girls dragged her off to show her the lamps in the conservatory; and the rest attacked Mrs. Edmonstone for not having brought Charlotte, reproaching her with hardness of heart of which they had never believed her capable—

Lady Eveleen, in especial, talking with that exaggeration of her ordinary manner which her dread of Captain Morville made her assume. Little he recked of her; he was absorbed in observing how far Laura's conduct coincided with Charles's hints. On the first opportunity, he asked her to dance, and was satisfied with her pleased acquiescence; but the next moment Guy came up, and in an eager manner made the same request.

'I am engaged,' said she, with a bright, proud glance at Philip; and Guy pursued Amabel into the conservatory, where he met with better success. Mr. Edmonstone gallantly asked Mary if he was too old a partner, and was soon dancing with the step and spring that had once made him the best dancer in the county.

Mrs. Edmonstone watched her flock, proud and pleased, thinking how well they looked and that, in especial, she had never been sensible how much Laura's and Philip's good looks excelled the rest of the world. They were much alike in the remarkable symmetry both of figure and feature, the colour of the deep blue eye, and fairness of complexion.

'It is curious,' thought Mrs. Edmonstone, 'that, so very handsome as Philip is, it is never the first thing remarked about him, just as his height never is observed till he is compared with other people. The fact is, that his superior sense carries off a degree of beauty which would be a misfortune to most men. It is that sedate expression and distinguished air that make the impression. How happy Laura looks, how gracefully she moves. No, it is not being foolish to think no one equal to Laura. My other pair!' and she smiled much more; 'you happy young things, I would not wish to see anything pleasanter than your merry faces. Little Amy looks almost as pretty as Laura, now she is lighted up by blush and smile, and her dancing is very nice, it is just like her laughing, so quiet, and yet so full of glee. I don't think she is less graceful than her sister, but the complete enjoyment strikes one more. And as to enjoyment—there are those bright eyes of her partner's perfectly sparkling with delight; he looks as if it was a world of enchantment to him. Never had any one a greater capacity for happiness than Guy.'

Mrs. Edmonstone might well retain her opinion when, after the quadrille, Guy came to tell her that he had never seen anything so delightful; and he entertained Mary Ross with his fresh, joyous pleasure, through the next dance.

'Laura,' whispered Eveleen, 'I've one ambition. Do you guess it? Don't tell him; but if he would, I should have a better opinion of myself ever after. I'm afraid he'll depreciate me to his friend; and really with Mr. Thorndale, I was no more foolish than a ball requires.'

Lady Eveleen hoped in vain. Captain Morville danced with little Lady Helen, a child of eleven, who was enchanted at having so tall a partner; then, after standing still for some time, chose his cousin Amabel.

'You are a good partner and neighbour,' said he, giving her his arm, 'you don't want young lady talk.'

'Should you not have asked Mary? She has been sitting down this long time.'

'Do you think she cares for such a sport as dancing?'

Amy made no answer.

'You have been well off. You were dancing with Thorndale just now.'

'Yes. It was refreshing to have an old acquaintance among so many strangers. And he is so delighted with Eveleen; but what is more, Philip, that Mr. Vernon, who is dancing with Laura, told Maurice he thought her the prettiest and most elegant person here.'

'Laura might have higher praise,' said Philip, 'for hers is beauty of countenance even more than of feature. If only—'

'If?' said Amy.

'Look round, Amy, and you will see many a face which speaks of intellect wasted, or, if cultivated, turned aside from its true purpose, like the double blossom, which bears leaves alone.'

'Ah! you forget you are talking to silly little Amy. I can't see all that. I had rather think people as happy and good as they look.'

‘Keep your child-like temper as long as you can—all your life,’ perhaps, for this is one of the points where it is folly to be wise.’

‘Then you only meant things in general? Nothing about Laura?’

‘Things in general,’ repeated Philip; ‘bright promises blighted or thrown away—’

But he spoke absently, and his eye was following Laura. Amy thought he was thinking of his sister, and was sorry for him. He spoke no more, but she did not regret it, for she could not moralize in such a scene, and the sight and the dancing were pleasure enough.

Guy, in the meantime, had met an Oxford acquaintance, who introduced him to his sisters—pretty girls—whose father Mr. Edmonstone knew, but who was rather out of the Hollywell visiting distance. They fell into conversation quickly, and the Miss Alstons asked him with some interest, ‘Which was the pretty Miss Edmonstone?’ Guy looked for the sisters, as if to make up his mind, for the fact was, that when he first knew Laura and Amy, the idea of criticising beauty had not entered his mind, and to compare them was quite a new notion. ‘Nay,’ said he at last, ‘if you cannot discover for yourselves when they are both before your eyes, I will do nothing so invidious as to say which is *the* pretty one. I’ll tell which is the eldest and which the youngest, but the rest you must decide for yourself.’

‘I should like to know them,’ said Miss Alston. ‘Oh! they are both very nice-looking girls.’

‘There, that is Laura—Miss Edmonstone,’ said Guy, ‘that tall young lady, with the beautiful hair and jessamine wreath.’

He spoke as if he was proud of her, and had a property in her. The tone did not escape Philip, who at that moment was close to them, with Amy on his arm; and, knowing the Alstons slightly, stopped and spoke, and introduced his cousin, Miss Amabel Edmonstone. At the same time Guy took one of the Miss Alstons away to get some tea.

‘So you knew my cousin at Oxford?’ said Philip, to the brother.

‘Yes, slightly. What an amusing fellow he is!’

‘There is something very bright, very unlike other people about him,’ said Miss Alston.

‘How does he get on? Is he liked?’

‘Why, yes, I should say so, on the whole; but it is rather as my sister says, he is not like other people.’

‘In what respect?’

‘Oh I can hardly tell. He is a very pleasant person, but he ought to have been at school. He is a man of crotchets.’

‘Hard-working?’

‘Very; he makes everything give way to that. He is a capital companion when he is to be had, but he lives very much to himself. He is a man of one friend, and I don’t see much of him.’

Another dance began, Mr. Alston went to look for his partner, Philip and Amy moved on in search of ice. ‘Hum!’ said Philip to himself, causing Amy to gaze up at him, but he was musing too intently for her to venture on a remark. She was thinking that she did not wonder that strangers deemed Guy crotchety, since he was so difficult to understand; and then she considered whether to take him to see King Charles, in the library, and concluded that she would wait, for she felt as if the martyr king’s face would look on her too gravely to suit her present tone.

Philip helped her to ice, and brought her back to her mother’s neighbourhood without many more words. He then stood thoughtful for some time, entered into conversation with one of the elder gentlemen, and, when that was interrupted, turned to talk to his aunt.

Lady Eveleen and her two cousins were for a moment together. ‘What is the matter, Eva?’ said Amy, seeing a sort of dissatisfaction on her bright face.

‘The roc’s egg?’ said Laura, smiling. ‘The queen of the evening can’t be content—’

‘No; you are the queen, if the one thing can make you so—the one thing wanting to me.’

‘How absurd you are, Eva—when you say you are so afraid of him, too.’

‘That is the very reason. I should get a better opinion of myself! Besides, there is nobody else so handsome. I declare I’ll make a bold attempt.’

‘Oh! you don’t think of such a thing,’ cried Laura, very much shocked.

‘Never fear,’ said Eveleen, ‘faint heart, you know.’ And with a nod, a flourish, of her bouquet, and an arch smile at her cousin’s horror, she moved on, and presently they heard her exclaiming, gaily, ‘Captain Morville, I really must scold you. You are setting a shocking example of laziness! Aunt Edmonstone, how can you encourage such proceedings! Indolence is the parent of vice, you know.’

Philip smiled just as much as the occasion required, and answered, ‘I beg your pardon, I had forgotten my duty. I’ll attend to my business better in future.’ And turning to a small, shy damsel, who seldom met with a partner, he asked her to dance. Eveleen came back to Laura with a droll disappointed gesture. ‘Insult to injury,’ said she, disconsolately.

‘Of course,’ said Amy, ‘he could not have thought you wanted to dance with him, or you would not have gone to stir him up.’

‘Well, then, he was very obtuse.’

‘Besides, you are engaged.’

‘O yes, to Mr. Thorndale! But who would be content with the squire when the knight disdains her?’

Mr. Thorndale came to claim Eveleen at that moment. It was the second time she had danced with him, and it did not pass unobserved by Philip, nor the long walk up and down after the dance was over. At length his friend came up to him and said something warm in admiration of her. ‘She is very Irish,’ was Philip’s answer, with a cold smile, and Mr. Thorndale stood uncomfortable under the disapprobation, attracted by Eveleen’s beauty and grace, yet so unused to trust his own judgment apart from ‘Morville’s,’ as to be in an instant doubtful whether he really admired or not.

‘You have not been dancing with her?’ he said, presently.

‘No: she attracts too many to need the attention of a nobody like myself.’

That ‘too many,’ seeming to confound him with the vulgar herd, made Mr. Thorndale heartily ashamed of having been pleased with her.

Philip was easy about him for the present, satisfied that admiration had been checked, which, if it had been allowed to grow into an attachment, would have been very undesirable.

The suspicions Charles had excited were so full in Philip’s mind, however, that he could not as easily set it at rest respecting his cousin. Guy had three times asked her to dance, but each time she had been engaged. At last, just as the clock struck the hour at which the carriage had been ordered, he came up, and impetuously claimed her. ‘One quadrille we must have, Laura, if you are not tired?’

‘No! Oh, no! I could dance till this time to-morrow.’

‘We ought to be going,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone.

‘O pray, Mrs. Edmonstone, this one more,’ cried Guy, eagerly. ‘Laura owes me this one.’

‘Yes, this one more, mamma,’ said Laura, and they went off together, while Philip remained, in a reverie, till requested by his aunt to see if the carriage was ready.

The dance was over, the carriage was waiting, but Guy and Laura did not appear till, after two or three minutes spent in wonder and inquiries, they came quietly walking back from the library, where they had been looking at King Charles.

All the way home the four ladies in the carriage never ceased laughing and talking. The three gentlemen in theirs acted diversely. Mr. Edmonstone went to sleep, Philip sat in silent thought, Guy whistled and hummed the tunes, and moved his foot very much as if he was still dancing.

They met for a moment, and parted again in the hall at Hollywell, where the daylight was striving to get in through the closed shutters. Philip went on to Broadstone, Guy said he could not go to bed by daylight, called Bustle, and went to the river to bathe, and the rest crept upstairs to their rooms. And so ended Lord Kilcoran’s ball.

CHAPTER 8

Like Alexander, I will reign,
And I will reign alone,
My thoughts shall ever more disdain
A rival near my throne.
But I must rule and govern still,
And always give the law,
And have each subject at my will,
And all to stand in awe.

—*MONTROSE.*

One very hot afternoon, shortly after the ball, Captain Morville walked to Hollywell, accelerating his pace under the influence of anxious reflections.

He could not determine whether Charles had spoken in jest; but in spite of Guy's extreme youth, he feared there was ground for the suspicion excited by the hint, and was persuaded that such an attachment could produce nothing but unhappiness to his cousin, considering how little confidence could be placed in Guy. He perceived that there was much to inspire affection—attractive qualities, amiable disposition, the talent for music, and now this recently discovered power of versifying, all were in Guy's favour, besides the ancient name and long ancestry, which conferred a romantic interest, and caused even Philip to look up to him with a feudal feeling as head of the family. There was also the familiar intercourse to increase the danger; and Philip, as he reflected on these things, trembled for Laura, and felt himself her only protector; for his uncle was nobody, Mrs. Edmonstone was infatuated, and Charles would not listen to reason. To make everything worse, he had that morning heard that there was to be a grand inspection of the regiment, and a presentation of colours; Colonel Deane was very anxious; and it was plain that in the interval the officers would be allowed little leisure. The whole affair was to end with a ball, which would lead to a repetition of what had already disturbed him.

Thus meditating, Philip, heated and dusty, walked into the smooth green enclosure of Hollywell. Everything, save the dancing clouds of insect youth which whirled in his face, was drooping in the heat. The house—every door and window opened—seemed gasping for breath; the cows sought refuge in the shade; the pony drooped its head drowsily; the leaves hung wearily; the flowers were faint and thirsty; and Bustle was stretched on the stone steps, mouth open, tongue out, only his tail now and then moving, till he put back his ears and crested his head to greet the arrival. Philip heard the sounds that had caused the motion of the sympathizing tail—the rich tones of Guy's voice. Stepping over the dog, he entered, and heard more clearly—

'Two loving hearts may sever,
For sorrow fails them never.'

And then another voice—

'Who knows not love in sorrow's night,
He knows not love in light.'

In the drawing-room, cool and comfortable in the green shade of the Venetian blinds of the bay window, stood Laura, leaning on the piano, close to Guy, who sat on the music-stool, looking thoroughly at home in his brown shooting-coat, and loosely-tied handkerchief.

Any one but Philip would have been out of temper, but he shook hands as cordially as usual, and would not even be the first to remark on the heat.

Laura told him he looked hot and tired, and invited him to come out to the others, and cool himself on the lawn. She went for her parasol, Guy ran for her camp stool, and Philip, going to the piano, read what they had been singing. The lines were in Laura's writing, corrected, here and there, in Guy's hand.

BE STEADFAST

Two loving hearts may sever,
Yet love shall fail them never.
Love brightest beams in sorrow's night,
Love is of life the light.

Two loving hearts may sever,
Yet hope shall fail them never.
Hope is a star in sorrow's night,
Forget-me-not of light.

Two loving hearts may sever,
Yet faith may fail them never.
Trust on through sorrow's night,
Faith is of love and hope the light.

Two loving hearts may sever,
For sorrow fails them never.
Who knows not love in sorrow's night,
He knows not love in light.

Philip was by no means pleased. However, it was in anything but a sentimental manner that Guy, looking over him, said, 'For sever, read, be separated, but "a" wouldn't rhyme.'

'I translated it into prose, and Guy made it verse,' said Laura; 'I hope you approve of our performance.'

'It is that thing of Helmine von Chezy, "Beharre", is it not?' said Philip, particularly civil, because he was so much annoyed. 'You have rendered the spirit very well', but you have sacrificed a good deal to your double rhymes.'

'Yes; those last lines are not troubled with any equality of feet,' said Guy; 'but the repetition is half the beauty. It put me in mind of those lines of Burns—

"Had we never loved so kindly,
Had we never loved so blindly,
Never met and never parted,
We had ne'er been broken hearted;"

but there is a trust in these that is more touching than that despair.'

'Yes; the despair is ready, to wish the love had never been,' said Laura. 'It does not see the star of trust. Why did you use that word "trust" only once, Guy?'

'I did not want to lose the three—faith, hope, love,—faith keeping the other two alive.'

‘My doubt was whether it was right to have that analogy.’

‘Surely,’ said Guy, eagerly, ‘that analogy must be the best part of earthly love.’

Here Charlotte came to see if Guy and Laura meant to sing all the afternoon; and they went out. They found the others in the arbour, and Charlotte’s histories of its construction, gave Philip little satisfaction. They next proceeded to talk over the ball.

‘Ah!’ said Philip, ‘balls are the fashion just now. What do you say, Amy, [he was more inclined to patronize her than any one else] to the gaieties we are going to provide for you?’

‘You! Are you going to have your new colours? Oh! you are not going to give us a ball?’

‘Well! that is fun!’ cried Guy. ‘What glory Maurice de Courcy must be in!’

‘He is gone to Allonby,’ said Philip, ‘to announce it; saying, he must persuade his father to put off their going to Brighton. Do you think he will succeed?’

‘Hardly,’ said Laura; ‘poor Lady Kilcoran was so knocked up by their ball, that she is the more in want of sea air. Oh, mamma, Eva must come and stay here.’

‘That she must,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone; ‘that will make it easy. She is the only one who will care about the ball.’

Philip was obliged to conceal his vexation, and to answer the many eager questions about the arrangements. He stayed to dinner, and as the others went in-doors to dress, he lingered near Charlotte, assuming, with some difficulty, an air of indifference, and said—‘Well, Charlotte, did you tease Guy into showing you those verses?’

‘Oh yes,’ said Charlotte, with what the French call “un air capable”.’

‘Well, what were they?’

‘That I mustn’t tell. They were very pretty; but I’ve promised.’

‘Promised what?’

‘Never to say anything about them. He made it a condition with me, and I assure you, I am to be trusted.’

‘Right,’ said Philip; ‘I’ll ask no more.’

‘It would be of no use,’ said Charlotte, shaking her head, as if she wished he would prove her further.

Philip was in hopes of being able to speak to Laura after dinner, but his uncle wanted him to come and look over the plans of an estate adjoining Redclyffe, which there was some idea of purchasing. Such an employment would in general have been congenial; but on this occasion, it was only by a strong force that he could chain his attention, for Guy was pacing the terrace with Laura and Amabel, and as they passed and repassed the window, he now and then caught sounds of repeating poetry.

In this Guy excelled. He did not read aloud well; he was too rapid, and eyes and thoughts were apt to travel still faster than the lips, thus producing a confusion; but no one could recite better when a passage had taken strong hold of his imagination, and he gave it the full effect of the modulations of his fine voice, conveying in its inflections the impressions which stirred him profoundly. He was just now enchanted with his first reading of ‘Thalaba,’ where he found all manner of deep meanings, to which the sisters listened with wonder and delight. He repeated, in a low, awful, thrilling tone, that made Amy shudder, the lines in the seventh book, ending with—

“Who comes from the bridal chamber!

It is Azrael, angel of death.”

‘You have not been so taken up with any book since Sintram,’ said Laura.

‘It is like Sintram,’ he replied.

‘Like it?’

‘So it seems to me. A strife with the powers of darkness; the victory, forgiveness, resignation, death.

“Thou know’st the secret wishes of my heart,
Do with me as thou wilt, thy will is best.”

‘I wish you would not speak as if you were Thalaba yourself,’ said Amy, ‘you bring the whole Domdaniel round us.’

‘I am afraid he is going to believe himself Thalaba as well as Sintram,’ said Laura. ‘But you know Southey did not see all this himself, and did not understand it when it was pointed out.’

‘Don’t tell us that,’ said Amy.

‘Nay; I think there is something striking in it,’ said Guy then, with a sudden transition, ‘but is not this ball famous?’

And their talk was of balls and reviews till nine o’clock, when they were summoned to tea.

On the whole, Philip returned to Broadstone by no means comforted.

Never had he known so much difficulty in attending with patience to his duties as in the course of the next fortnight. They became a greater durance, as he at length looked his feelings full in the face, and became aware of their true nature.

He perceived that the loss of Laura would darken his whole existence; yet he thought that, were he only secure of her happiness, he could have resigned her in silence. Guy was, however, one of the last men in the world whom he could bear to see in possession of her; and probably she was allowing herself to be entangled, if not in heart, at least in manner. If so, she should not be unwarned. He had been her guide from childhood, and he would not fail her now.

Three days before the review, he succeeded in finding time for a walk to Hollywell, not fully decided on the part he should act, though resolved on making some remonstrance. He was crossing a stile, about a mile and a half from Hollywell, when he saw a lady sitting on the stump of a tree, sketching, and found that fate had been so propitious as to send Laura thither alone. The rest had gone to gather mushrooms on a down, and had left her sketching the view of the spires of Broadstone, in the cleft between the high green hills. She was very glad to see him, and held up her purple and olive washes to be criticised; but he did not pay much attention to them. He was almost confused at the sudden manner in which the opportunity for speaking had presented itself.

‘It is a long time since I have seen you,’ said he, at last.

‘An unheard-of time.’

‘Still longer since we have had any conversation.’

‘I was just thinking so. Not since that hot hay-making, when Guy came home. Indeed, we have had so much amusement lately that I have hardly had time for thought. Guy says we are all growing dissipated.’

‘Ah! your German, and dancing, and music, do not agree with thought.’

‘Poor music!’ said Laura, smiling. ‘But I am ready for a lecture; I have been feeling more like a butterfly than I like.’

‘I know you think me unjust about music, and I freely confess that I cannot estimate the pleasure it affords, but I doubt whether it is a safe pleasure. It forms common ground for persons who would otherwise have little in common, and leads to intimacies which occasion results never looked for.’

‘Yes,’ said Laura, receiving it as a general maxim.

‘Laura, you complain of feeling like a butterfly. Is not that a sign that you were made for better things?’

‘But what can I do? I try to read early and at night, but I can’t prevent the fun and gaiety; and, indeed, I don’t think I would. It is innocent, and we never had such a pleasant summer. Charlie is

so—so much more equable, and mamma is more easy about him, and I can't help thinking it does them all good, though I do feel idle.'

'It is innocent, it is right for a little while,' said Philip; 'but your dissatisfaction proves that you are superior to such things. Laura, what I fear is, that this summer holiday may entangle you, and so fix your fate as to render your life no holiday. O Laura take care; know what you are doing!'

'What am I doing?' asked Laura, with an alarmed look of ingenuous surprise.

Never had it been so hard to maintain his composure as now, when her simplicity forced him to come to plainer terms. 'I must speak,' he continued, 'because no one else will. Have you reflected whither this may tend? This music, this versifying, this admitting a stranger so unreservedly into your pursuits?'

She understood now, and hung her head. He would have given worlds to judge of the face hidden by her bonnet; but as she did not reply, he spoke on, his agitation becoming so strong, that the struggle was perceptible in the forced calmness of his tone. 'I would not say a word if he were worthy, but Laura—Laura, I have seen Locksley Hall acted once; do not let me see it again in a way which—which would give me infinitely more pain.'

The faltering of his voice, so resolutely subdued, touched, her extremely, and a thrill of exquisite pleasure glanced through her, on hearing confirmed what she had long felt, that she had taken Margaret's place—nay, as she now learnt, that she was even more precious to him. She only thought of reassuring him.

'No, you need never fear *that*. He has no such thought, I am sure.' She blushed deeply, but looked in his face. 'He treats us both alike, besides, he is so young.'

'The mischief is not done,' said Philip, trying to resume his usual tone; 'I only meant to speak in time. You might let your manner go too far; you might even allow your affections to be involved without knowing it, if you were not on your guard.'

'Never!' said Laura. 'Oh, no; I could never dream of that with Guy. I like Guy very much; I think better of him than you do; but oh no; he could never be my first and best; I could never care for him in *that* way. How could you think so, Philip?'

'Laura, I cannot but look on you with what may seem over-solicitude. Since I lost Fanny, and worse than lost Margaret, you have been my home; my first, my most precious interest. O Laura!' and he did not even attempt to conceal the trembling and tenderness of his voice, 'could I bear to lose you, to see you thrown away or changed—you, dearest, best of all?'

Laura did not turn away her head this time, but raising her beautiful face, glowing with such a look as had never beamed there before, while tears rose to her eyes, she said, 'Don't speak of my changing towards you. I never could; for if there is anything to care for in me, it is you that have taught it to me.'

If ever face plainly told another that he was her first and best, Laura's did so now. Away went misgivings, and he looked at her in happiness too great for speech, at least, he could not speak till he had mastered his emotion, but his countenance was sufficient reply. Even then, in the midst of this flood of ecstasy, came the thought, 'What have I done?'

He had gone further than he had ever intended. It was a positive avowal of love; and what would ensue? Cessation of intercourse with her, endless vexations, the displeasure of her family, loss of influence, contempt, and from Mr. Edmonstone, for the pretensions of a penniless soldier. His joy was too great to be damped, but it was rendered cautious. 'Laura, my own!' (what delight the words gave her,) 'you have made me very happy. We know each other now, and trust each other for ever.'

'O yes, yes; nothing can alter what has grown up with us.'

'It is for ever!' repeated Philip. 'But, Laura, let us be content with our own knowledge of what we are to each other. Do not let us call in others to see our happiness.'

Laura looked surprised, for she always considered any communication about his private feelings too sacred to be repeated, and wondered he should think the injunction necessary. 'I never can bear to talk about the best kinds of happiness,' said she; 'but oh!' and she sprang up, 'here they come.'

Poor Mrs. Edmonstone, as she walked back from her mushroom-field, she little guessed that words had been spoken which would give the colouring to her daughter's whole life—she little guessed that her much-loved and esteemed nephew had betrayed her confidence! As she and the girls came up, Philip advanced to meet them, that Laura might have a few moments to recover, while with an effort he kept himself from appearing absent in the conversation that ensued. It was brief, for having answered some questions with regard to the doings on the important day, he said, that since he had met them he would not come on to Hollywell, and bade them farewell, giving Laura a pressure of the hand which renewed the glow on her face.

He walked back, trying to look through the dazzling haze of joy so as to see his situation clearly. It was impossible for him not to perceive that there had been an absolute declaration of affection, and that he had established a private understanding with his cousin. It was not, however, an engagement, nor did he at present desire to make it so. It was impossible for him as yet to marry, and he was content to wait without a promise, since that could not add to his entire reliance on Laura. He could not bear to be rejected by her parents: he knew his poverty would be the sole ground of objection, and he was not asking her to share it. He believed sincerely that a long, lingering attachment to himself would be more for her good than a marriage with one who would have been a high prize for worldly aims, and was satisfied that by winning her heart he had taken the only sure means of securing her from becoming attached to Guy, while secrecy was the only way of preserving his intercourse with her on the same footing, and exerting his influence over the family.

It was calmly reflected, for Philip's love was tranquil, though deep and steady, and the rather sought to preserve Laura as she was than to make her anything more; and this very calmness contributed to his self-deception on this first occasion that he had ever actually swerved from the path of right.

With an uncomfortable sensation, he met Guy riding home from his tutor, entirely unsuspecting. He stopped and talked of the preparations at Broadstone, where he had been over the ground with Maurice de Courcy, and had heard the band.

'What did you think of it?' said Philip, absently.

'They *should* keep better time! Really, Philip, there is one fellow with a bugle that ought to be flogged every day of his life!' said Guy, making a droll, excruciated face.

How a few words can change the whole current of ideas. The band was connected with Philip, therefore he could not bear to hear it found fault with, and adduced some one's opinion that the man in question was one of the best of their musicians.

Guy could not help shrugging his shoulders, as he laughed, and said,—'Then I shall be obliged to take to my heels if I meet the rest. Good-bye.'

'How conceited they have made that boy about his fine ear,' thought Philip. 'I wonder he is not ashamed to parade his music, considering whence it is derived.'

CHAPTER 9

Ah! county Guy, the hour is nigh,
The sun has left the lea,
The orange flower perfumes the bower,
The breeze is on the sea.
The lark, his lay, who thrilled all day,
Sits hushed, his partner nigh,
Breeze, bird, and flower, confess the hour,
But where is county Guy?

—SCOTT

How was it meantime with Laura? The others were laughing and talking round her, but all seemed lost in the transcendent beam that had shone out on her. To be told by Philip that she was all to him that he had always been to her! This one idea pervaded her—too glorious, too happy for utterance, almost for distinct thought. The softening of his voice, and the look with which he had regarded her, recurred again and again, startling her with a sudden surprise of joy almost as at the first moment. Of the future Laura thought not. Never had a promise of love been made with less knowledge of what it amounted to: it seemed merely an expression of sentiments that she had never been without; for had she not always looked up to Philip more than any other living creature, and gloried in being his favourite cousin? Ever since the time when he explained to her the plates in the Encyclopaedia, and made her read ‘Joyce’s Scientific Dialogues,’ when Amy took fright at the first page. That this might lead further did not occur to her; she was eighteen, she had no experience, not even in novels, she did not know what she had done; and above all, she had so leant to surrender her opinions to Philip, and to believe him always right, that she would never have dreamt of questioning wherever he might choose to lead her. Even the caution of secrecy did not alarm her, though she wondered that he thought it required, safe as his confidence always was with her. Mrs. Edmonstone had been so much occupied by Charles’s illness, as to have been unable to attend to her daughters in their girlish days; and in the governess’s time the habit had been disused of flying at once to her with every joy or grief. Laura’s thoughts were not easy of access, and Philip had long been all in all to her. She was too ignorant of life to perceive that it was her duty to make this conversation known; or, more truly, she did not awaken her mind to consider that anything could be wrong that Philip desired.

On coming home, she ran up to her own room, and sitting by the open window, gave herself up to that delicious dream of new-found joy.

There she still sat when Amy came in, opening the door softly, and treading lightly and airily as she entered, bringing two or three roses of different tints.

‘Laura! not begun to dress?’

‘Is it time?’

‘Shall I answer you according to what Philip calls my note of time, and tell you the pimpernels are closed, and the tigridias dropping their leaves? It would be a proper answer for you; you look as if you were in Fairy Land.’

‘Is papa come home?’

‘Long ago! and Guy too. Why, where could you have been, not to have heard Guy and Eveleen singing the Irish melodies?’

‘In a trance,’ said Laura, starting up, and laughing, with a slight degree of constraint, which caused Amy, who was helping her to dress, to exclaim, ‘Has anything happened, Laura?’

‘What should have happened?’

‘I can’t guess, unless the fairies in the great ring on Ashendown came to visit you when we were gone. But seriously, dear Laura, are you sure you are not tired? Is nothing the matter?’

‘Nothing at all, thank you. I was only thinking over the talk I had with Philip.’

‘Oh!’

Amy never thought of entering into Philip’s talks with Laura, and was perfectly satisfied.

By this time Laura was herself again, come back to common life, and resolved to watch over her intercourse with Guy; since, though she was convinced that all was safe at present, she had Philip’s word for it that there might be danger in continuing the pleasant freedom of their behaviour.

Nothing could be more reassuring than Guy’s demeanour. His head seemed entirely full of the Thursday, and of a plan of his own for enabling Charles to go to the review. It had darted into his head while he was going over the ground with Maurice. It was so long since Charles had thought it possible to attempt any amusement away from home, and former experiments had been so unsuccessful, that it had never even occurred to him to think of it; but he caught at the idea with great delight and eagerness. Mrs. Edmonstone seemed not to know what to say; she had much rather that it had not been proposed; yet it was very kind of Guy, and Charles was so anxious about it that she knew not how to oppose him.

She could not bear to have Charles in a crowd, helpless as he was; and she had an unpleasing remembrance of the last occasion when they had taken him to a flower-show, where they had lost, first Mr. Edmonstone, next the carriage, and lastly, Amy and Charlotte—all had been frightened, and Charles laid up for three days from the fatigue.

Answers, however, met each objection. Charles was much stronger; Guy’s arm would be ready for him; Guy would find the carriage. Philip would be there to help, besides Maurice; and whenever Charles was tired, Guy would take him home at once, without spoiling any one’s pleasure.

‘Except your own,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone.

‘Thank you; but this would be so delightful.’

‘Ah!’ said Charles, ‘it would be as great a triumph as the dog’s that caught the hare with the clog round his neck—the dog’s, I mean.’

‘If you will but trust me with him,’ said Guy, turning on her all the pleading eloquence of his eyes, ‘you know he can get in and out of the pony-carriage quite easily.’

‘As well as walk across the room,’ said Charles.

‘I would drive him in it, and tell William to ride in and be at hand to hold the pony or take it out; and the tent is so near, that you could get to the breakfast, unless the review had been enough for you. I paced the distance to make sure, and it is no further than from the garden-door to the cherry-tree.’

‘That is nothing,’ said Charles.

‘And William shall be in waiting to bring the pony the instant you are ready, and we can go home independently of every one else.’

‘I thought,’ interposed Mrs. Edmonstone, ‘that you were to go to the mess-dinner—what is to become of that?’

‘O,’ said Charles, ‘that will be simply a bore, and he may rejoice to be excused from going the whole hog.’

‘To be sure, I had rather dine in peace at home.’

Mrs. Edmonstone was not happy, but she had great confidence in Guy; and her only real scruple was, that she did not think it fair to occupy him entirely with attendance on her son. She referred it to papa, which, as every one knew, was the same as yielding the point, and consoled herself by the certainty that to prevent it would be a great disappointment to both the youths. Laura was convinced that to achieve the adventure of Charles at the review, was at present at least a matter of far more prominence with Guy than anything relating to herself.

All but Laura and her mother were wild about the weather, especially on Wednesday, when there was an attempt at a thunder storm. Nothing was studied but the sky; and the conversation

consisted of prognostications, reports of rises and falls of the glass, of the way weather-cocks were turning, or about to turn, of swallows flying high or low, red sunsets, and halos round the moon, until at last Guy, bursting into a merry laugh, begged Mrs. Edmonstone's pardon for being such a nuisance, and made a vow, and kept it, that be the weather what it might, he would say not another word about it that evening; it deserved to be neglected, for he had not been able to settle to anything all day.

He might have said for many days before; for since the last ball, and still more since Lady Eveleen had been at Hollywell, it had been one round of merriment and amusement. Scrambling walks, tea-drinkings out of doors, dances among themselves, or with the addition of the Harpers, were the order of the day. Amy, Eveleen, and Guy, could hardly come into the room without dancing, and the piano was said to acknowledge nothing but waltzes, polkas, and now and then an Irish jig, for the special benefit of Mr. Edmonstone's ears. The morning was almost as much spent in mirth as the afternoon, for the dawdlings after breakfast, and before luncheon, had a great tendency to spread out and meet, there was new music and singing to be practised, or preparations made for evening's diversion, or councils to be held, which Laura's absence could not break up, though it often made Amy feel how much less idle and frivolous Laura was than herself. Eveleen said the same, but she was visiting, and it was a time to be idle; and Mr. Lascelles seemed to be of the same opinion with regard to his pupil; for, when Guy was vexed at not having done as much work as usual, he only laughed at him for expecting to be able to go to balls, and spend a summer of gaiety, while he studied as much as at Oxford.

Thursday morning was all that heart could wish, the air cooled by the thunder, and the clouds looking as if raining was foreign to their nature. Mr. and Mrs. Edmonstone, their daughters, and Lady Eveleen, were packed inside and outside the great carriage, while Guy, carefully settling Charles in the low phaeton, putting in all that any one recommended, from an air-cushion to an umbrella, flourished his whip, and drove off with an air of exultation and delight.

Everything went off to admiration. No one was more amused than Charles. The scene was so perfectly new and delightful to one accustomed to such a monotonous life, that the very sight of people was a novelty. Nowhere was there so much laughing and talking as in that little carriage, and whenever Mrs. Edmonstone's anxious eye fell upon it, she always saw Charles sitting upright, with a face so full of eager interest as to banish all thought of fatigue. Happy, indeed, he was. He enjoyed the surprise of his acquaintance at meeting him; he enjoyed Dr. Mayerne's laugh and congratulation; he enjoyed seeing how foolish Philip thought him, nodding to his mother and sisters, laughing at the dreadful faces Guy could not help making at any particularly discordant note of the offensive bugle; and his capabilities rising with his spirits, he did all that the others did, walked further than he had done for years, was lifted up steps without knowing how, sat out the whole breakfast, talked to all the world, and well earned the being thoroughly tired, as he certainly was when Guy put him into the carriage and drove him home, and still more so when Guy all but carried him up stairs, and laid him on the sofa in the dressing-room.

However, his mother announced that it would have been so unnatural if he had not been fatigued, that she should have been more anxious, and leaving him to repose, they all, except Mr. Edmonstone, who had stayed to dine at the mess, sat down to dinner.

Amy came down dressed just as the carriage had been announced, and found Laura and Eveleen standing by the table, arranging their bouquets, while Guy, in the dark, behind the piano, was playing—not, as usual, in such cases, the Harmonious Blacksmith, but a chant.

'Is mamma ready?' asked Laura.

'Nearly,' said Amy, 'but I wish she was not obliged to go! I am sure she cannot bear to leave Charlie.'

'I hope she is not going on my account,' said Eveleen.

'No, said Laura, 'we must go; it would so frighten papa if we did not come. Besides, there is nothing to be uneasy about with Charles.'

‘O no,’ said Amy; ‘she says so, only she is always anxious, and she is afraid he is too restless to go to sleep.’

‘We must get home as fast as we can; if you don’t mind, Eva,’ said Laura, remembering how her last dance with Guy had delayed them.

‘Can I do any good to Charlie?’ said Guy, ceasing his music. I don’t mean to go.’

‘Not go!’ cried the girls in consternation.

‘He is joking!’ said Eveleen. ‘But, I declare!’ added she, advancing towards him, ‘he is not dressed! Come, nonsense, this is carrying it too far; you’ll make us all too late, and then I’ll set Maurice at you.’

‘I am afraid it is no joke,’ said Guy, smiling.

‘You must go. It will never do for you to stay away,’ said Laura, decidedly.

‘Are you tired? Aren’t you well?’ asked Amy.

‘Quite well, thank you, but I am sure I had better not.’

Laura thought she had better not seem anxious to take him, so she left the task of persuasion, to the others, and Amy went on.

‘Neither Mamma nor Charlie could bear to think you stayed because of him.’

‘I don’t, I assure you, Amy. I meant it before. I have been gradually finding out that it must come to this.’

‘Oh, you think it a matter of right and wrong! But you don’t think balls wrong?’

‘Oh no; only they won’t do for such an absurd person as I am. The last turned my head for a week, and I am much too unsteady for this.’

‘Well, if you think it a matter of duty, it can’t be helped,’ said Amy sorrowfully; ‘but I am very sorry.’

‘Thank you,’ said Guy, thinking it compassion, not regret; ‘but I shall do very well. I shall be all the happier to-morrow for a quiet hour at my Greek, and you’ll tell me all the fun.’

‘You liked it so much!’ said Amy; ‘but you have made up your mind and I ought not to tease you.’

‘That’s right Amy; he does it on purpose to be teased,’ said Eveleen, ‘and I never knew anybody so provoking. Mind, Sir Guy, if you make us all too late, you shan’t have the ghost of a quadrille with me.’

‘I shall console myself by quadrilling with Andromache,’ said Guy.

‘Come, no nonsense—off to dress directly! How can you have the conscience to stand there when the carriage is at the door?’

‘I shall have great pleasure in handing you in when you are ready.’

‘Laura—Amy! Does he really mean it?’

‘I am afraid he does,’ said Amy.

Eveleen let herself fall on the sofa as if fainting. ‘Oh,’ she said, ‘take him away! Let me never see the face of him again! I’m perfectly overcome! All my teaching thrown away!’

‘I am sorry for you,’ said Guy, laughing.

‘And how do you mean to face Maurice?’

‘Tell him his first bugle has so distracted me that I can’t answer for the consequences if I come to-night.’

‘Mrs. Edmonstone came in, saying,—

‘Come, I have kept you waiting shamefully, but I have been consoling myself by thinking you must be well entertained, as I heard no Harmonious Blacksmith. Papa will be wondering where we are.’

‘Oh, mamma! Guy won’t go.’

‘Guy! is anything the matter?’

‘Nothing, thank you, only idleness.’

‘This will never do. You really must go, Guy.’

‘Indeed! I think not. Pray don’t order me, Mrs. Edmonstone.’

‘What o’clock is it, Amy? Past ten! Papa will be in despair! What is to be done? How long do you take to dress, Guy?’

‘Not under an hour,’ said Guy, smiling.

‘Nonsense! But if there was time I should certainly send you. Self-discipline may be carried too far, Guy. But now it can’t be helped—I don’t know how to keep papa waiting any longer. Laura, what shall I do?’

‘Let me go to Charles,’ answered Guy. ‘Perhaps I can read him to sleep.’

‘Thank you; but don’t talk, or he will be too excited. Reading would be the very thing! It will be a pretty story to tell every one who asks for you that I have left you to nurse my son!’

‘No, for no such good reason,’ said Guy; ‘only because I am a great fool.’

‘Well, Sir Guy, I am glad you can say one sensible word,’ said Lady Eveleen.

‘Too true, I assure you,’ he answered, as he handed her in. ‘Good night! You will keep the quadrille for me till I am rational.’

He handed the others in, and shut the door. Mrs. Edmonstone, ruffled out of her composure, exclaimed,—

‘Well, this is provoking!’

‘Every one will be vexed,’ said Laura.

‘It will be so stupid,’ said Amy.

‘I give him up,’ said Eveleen. ‘I once had hopes of him.’

‘If it was not for papa, I really would turn back this moment and fetch him,’ cried Mrs. Edmonstone, starting forward. ‘I’m sure it will give offence. I wish I had not consented.’

‘He can’t be made to see that his presence is of importance to any living creature,’ said Laura.

‘What is the reason of this whim?’ said Eveleen.

‘No, Eveleen, it is not whim,’ said Laura; ‘it is because he thinks dissipation makes him idle.’

‘Then if he is idle I wonder what the rest of the world is!’ said Eveleen. ‘I am sure we all ought to stay at home too.’

‘I think so,’ said Amy. ‘I know I shall feel all night as if I was wrong to be there.’

‘I am angry,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone; ‘and yet I believe it is a great sacrifice.’

‘Yes, mamma; after all our looking forward to it,’ said Amy. ‘Oh! yes,’ and her voice lost its piteous tone, ‘it is a real sacrifice.’

‘If he was not a mere boy, I should say a lover’s quarrel was at the bottom of it,’ said Eveleen. ‘Depend upon it, Laura, it is all your fault. You only danced once with him at our ball, and all this week you have played for us, as if it was on purpose to cut him.’

Laura was glad of the darkness, and her mother, who had a particular dislike to jokes of this sort, went on,—‘If it were only ourselves I should not care, but there are so many who will fancy it caprice, or worse.’

‘The only comfort is,’ said Amy, ‘that it is Charlie’s gain.’

‘I hope they will not talk,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone. ‘But Charlie will never hold his tongue. He will grow excited, and not sleep all night.’

Poor Mrs. Edmonstone! her trials did not end here, for when she replied to her husband’s inquiry for Guy, Mr. Edmonstone said offence had already been taken at his absence from the dinner; he would not have had this happen for fifty pounds; she ought not to have suffered it; but it was all her nonsense about Charles, and as to not being late, she should have waited till midnight rather than not have brought him. In short, he said as much more than he meant, as a man in a pet is apt to say, and nevertheless Mrs. Edmonstone had to look as amiable and smiling as if nothing was the matter.

The least untruthful answer she could frame to the inquiries for Sir Guy Morville was, that young men were apt to be lazy about balls, and this sufficed for good-natured Mrs. Deane, but Maurice

poured out many exclamations about his ill-behaviour, and Philip contented himself with the mere fact of his not being there, and made no remark.

Laura turned her eyes anxiously on Philip. They had not met since the important conversation on Ashen-down, and she found herself looking with more pride than ever at his tall, noble figure, as if he was more her own; but the calmness of feeling was gone. She could not meet his eye, nor see him turn towards her without a start and tremor for which she could not render herself a reason, and her heart beat so much that it was at once a relief and a disappointment that she was obliged to accept her other cousin as her first partner. Philip had already asked Lady Eveleen, for he neither wished to appear too eager in claiming Laura, nor to let his friend think he had any dislike to the Irish girl.

Eveleen was much pleased to have him for her partner, and told herself she would be on her good behaviour. It was a polka, and there was not much talk, which, perhaps, was all the better for her. She admired the review, and the luncheon, and spoke of Charles without any sauciness, and Philip was condescending and agreeable.

‘I must indulge myself in abusing that stupid cousin of yours!’ said she. Did you ever know a man of such wonderful crotchets?’

‘This is a very unexpected one,’ said Philip.

‘It came like a thunder clap. I thought till the last moment he was joking, for he likes dancing so much; he was the life of our ball, and how could any one suppose he would fly off at the last moment?’

‘He seems rather to enjoy doing things suddenly.’

‘I tell Laura she has affronted him,’ said Eveleen, laughing. ‘She has been always busy of late when we have wanted her; and I assure her his pride has been piqued. Don’t you think that is an explanation, Captain Morville?’

It was Captain Morville’s belief, but he would not say so.

‘Isn’t Laura looking lovely?’ Eveleen went on. ‘I am sure she is the beauty of the night!’ She was pleased to see Captain Morville’s attention gained. ‘She is even better dressed than at our ball—those Venetian pins suit the form of her head so well. Her beauty is better than almost any one’s, because she has so much countenance.’

‘True,’ said Philip.

‘How proud Maurice looks of having her on his arm. Does not he? Poor Maurice! he is desperately in love with her!’

‘As is shown by his pining melancholy.’

Eveleen laughed with her clear hearty laugh. ‘I see you know what we mean by being desperately in love! No,’ she added more gravely, ‘I am very glad it is only *that* kind of desperation. One could not think of Maurice and Laura together. He does not know the best part of Laura.’

Eveleen was highly flattered by Captain Morville conducting her a second time round the room, instead of at once restoring her to her aunt.

He secured Laura next, and leading her away from her own party, said, ‘Laura, have you been overdoing it?’

‘It is not that,’ said Laura, wishing she could keep from blushing.

‘It is the only motive that could excuse his extraordinary behaviour.’

‘Surely you know he says that he is growing unsettled. It is part of his rule of self discipline.’

‘Absurd!—exaggerated!—incredible! This is the same story as there was about the horse. It is either caprice or temper, and I am convinced that some change in your manner—nay, I say unconscious, and am far from blaming you—is the cause. Why else did he devote himself to Charles, and leave you all on my uncle’s hands in the crowd?’

‘We could shift for ourselves much better than Charlie.’

‘This confirms my belief that my warning was not mistimed. I wish it could have been done without decidedly mortifying him and rousing his temper, because I am sorry others should be slighted; but if he takes your drawing back so much to heart, it shows that it was time you should do so.’

‘If I thought I had!’

‘It was visible to others—to another, I should say.’

‘O, that is only Eveleen’s nonsense! The only difference I am conscious of having made, was keeping more up-stairs, and not trying to persuade him to come here to-night.’

‘I have no doubt it was this that turned the scale, He only waited for persuasion, and you acted very wisely in not flattering his self-love.’

‘Did I?—I did not know it.’

‘A woman’s instinct is often better than reasoning, Laura; to do the right thing without knowing why. But come, I suppose we must play our part in the pageant of the night.’

For that evening Laura, contrary to the evidence of her senses, was persuaded by her own lover that Guy was falling in love with her; and after musing all through the dance, she said, ‘What do you think of the scheme that has been started for my going to Ireland with papa?’

‘Your going to Ireland?’

‘Yes; you know none of us, except papa, have seen grandmamma since Charles began to be ill, and there is some talk of his taking me with him when he goes this summer.’

‘I knew he was going, but I thought it was not to be till later in the year—not till after the long vacation.’

‘So he intended, but he finds he must be at home before the end of October, and it would suit him best to go in August.’

‘Then what becomes of Guy?’

‘He stays at Hollywell. It will be much better for Charles to have him there while papa is away. I thought when the plan was first mentioned I should be sorry, except that it is quite right to go to grandmamma; but if it is so, about Guy, this absence would be a good thing—it would make a break, and I could begin again on different terms.’

‘Wisely judged, Laura. Yes, on that account it would be very desirable, though it will be a great loss to me, and I can hardly hope to be so near you on your return.’

‘Ah! yes, so I feared!’ sighed Laura.

‘But we must give up something; and for Guy’s own sake, poor fellow, it will be better to make a break, as you say. It will save him pain by and by.’

‘I dare say papa will consult you about when his journey is to be. His only doubt was whether it would do to leave Guy so long alone, and if you say it would be safe, it would decide him at once.’

‘I see little chance of mischief. Guy has few temptations here, and a strong sense of honour; besides, I shall be at hand. Taking all things into consideration, Laura, I think that, whatever the sacrifice to ourselves, it is expedient to recommend his going at once, and your accompanying him.’

All the remainder of the evening Philip was occupied with attentions to the rest of the world, but Laura’s eyes followed him everywhere, and though she neither expected nor desired him to bestow more time on her, she underwent a strange restlessness and impatience of feeling. Her numerous partners teased her by hindering her from watching him moving about the room, catching his tones, and guessing what he was talking of;—not that she wanted to meet his eye, for she did not like to blush, nor did she think it pleased him to see her do so, for he either looked away immediately or conveyed a glance which she understood as monitory. She kept better note of his countenance than of her own partner’s.

Mr. Thorndale, meanwhile, kept aloof from Lady Eveleen de Courcy, but Captain Morville perceived that his eyes were often turned towards her, and well knew it was principle, and not inclination, that held him at a distance. He did indeed once ask her to dance, but she was engaged, and he did not ask her to reserve a future dance for him, but contented himself with little Amy.

Amy was doing her best to enjoy herself, because she thought it ungrateful not to receive pleasure from those who wished to give it, but to her it wanted the zest and animation of Lady Kilcoran’s ball. Besides, she knew she had been as idle as Guy, or still more so, and she thought it

wrong she should have pleasure while he was doing penance. It was on her mind, and damped her spirits, and though she smiled, and talked, and admired, and danced lightly and gaily, there was a sensation of weariness throughout, and no one but Eveleen was sorry when Mrs. Edmonstone sent Maurice to see for the carriage.

Philip was one of the gentlemen who came to shawl them. As he put Laura's cloak round her shoulders he was able to whisper, 'Take care; you must be cautious—self-command.'

Laura, though blushing and shrinking the moment before was braced by his words and tone to attempt all he wished. She looked up in what she meant to be an indifferent manner, and made some observation in a careless tone—anything rather than let Philip think her silly. After what he had said, was she not bound more than ever to exert herself to the utmost, that he might not be disappointed in her? She loved him only the better for what others might have deemed a stern coldness of manner, for it made the contrast of his real warmth of affection more precious. She mused over it, as much as her companions' conversation would allow, on the road home. They arrived, Mrs. Edmonstone peeped into Charles's room, announced that he was quietly asleep, and they all bade each other good night, or good morning, and parted.

CHAPTER 10

Leonora. Yet often with respect he speaks of thee.
Tasso. Thou meanest with forbearance, prudent, subtle,
‘Tis that annoys me, for he knows to use
Language so smooth and so conditional,
That seeming praise from him is actual blame.

—*GOETHE'S Tasso*

When the Hollywell party met at breakfast, Charles showed himself by no means the worse for his yesterday's experiment. He said he had gone to sleep in reasonable time, lulled by some poetry, he knew not what, of which Guy's voice had made very pretty music, and he was now full of talk about the amusement he had enjoyed yesterday, which seemed likely to afford food for conversation for many a week to come. After all the care Guy had taken of him, Mrs. Edmonstone could not find it in her heart to scold, and her husband, having spent his vexation upon her, had none left to bestow on the real culprit. So when Guy, with his bright morning face, and his hair hanging shining and wet round it, opened the dining-room door, on his return from bathing in the river, Mr. Edmonstone's salutation only conveyed that humorous anger that no one cares for.

‘Good morning to you, Sir Guy Morville! I wonder what you have to say for yourself.’

‘Nothing,’ said Guy, smiling; then, as he took his place by Mrs. Edmonstone, ‘I hope you are not tired after your hard day's work?’

‘Not at all, thank you.’

‘Amy, can you tell me the name of this flower?’

‘Oh! have you really found the arrow-head? How beautiful! Where did you get it? I didn't know it grew in our river.’

‘There is plenty of it in that reedy place beyond the turn. I thought it looked like something out of the common way.’

‘Yes! What a purple eye it has! I must draw it. O, thank you.’

‘And, Charlotte, Bustle has found you a moorhen's nest.’

‘How delightful! Is it where I can go and see the dear little things?’

‘It is rather a swamp; but I have been putting down stepping-stones for you, and I dare say I can jump you across. It was that which made me so late, for which I ought to have asked pardon,’ said he to Mrs. Edmonstone, with his look of courtesy.

Never did man look less like an offended lover, or like a morose self-tormentor.

‘There are others later,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone, looking at Lady Eveleen's empty chair.

‘So you think that is all you have to ask pardon for,’ said Mr. Edmonstone. ‘I advise you to study your apologies, for you are in pretty tolerable disgrace.’

‘Indeed, I am very sorry,’ said Guy, with such a change of countenance that Mr. Edmonstone's good nature could not bear to see it.

‘Oh, ‘tis no concern of mine! It would be going rather the wrong way, indeed, for you to be begging my pardon for all the care you've been taking of Charlie; but you had better consider what you have to say for yourself before you show your face at Broadstone.’

‘No?’ said Guy, puzzled for a moment, but quickly looking relieved, and laughing, ‘What! Broadstone in despair for want of me?’

‘And we perfectly exhausted with answering questions as to what was become of Sir Guy.’

‘Dreadful,’ said Guy, now laughing heartily, in the persuasion that it was all a joke.

‘O, Lady Eveleen, good morning; you are come in good time to give me the story of the ball, for no one else tells me one word about it.’

‘Because you don’t deserve it,’ said she. ‘I hope you have repented by this time.’

‘If you want to make me repent, you should give me a very alluring description.’

‘I shan’t say one word about it; I shall send you to Coventry, as Maurice and all the regiment mean to do,’ said Eveleen, turning away from him with a very droll arch manner of offended dignity.

‘Hear, hear! Eveleen send any one to Coventry!’ cried Charles. ‘See what the regiment say to you.’

‘Ay, when I am sent to Coventry?’

‘O, Paddy, Paddy!’ cried Charles, and there was a general laugh.

‘Laura seems to be doing it in good earnest without announcing it,’ added Charles, when the laugh was over, ‘which is the worst sign of all.’

‘Nonsense, Charles,’ said Laura, hastily; then afraid she had owned to annoyance, she blushed and was angry with herself for blushing.

‘Well, Laura, *do* tell me who your partners were?’

Very provoking, thought Laura, that I cannot say what is so perfectly natural and ordinary, without my foolish cheeks tingling. He may think it is because he is speaking to me. So she hurried on: ‘Maurice first, then Philip,’ and then showed, what Amy and Eveleen thought, strange oblivion of the rest of her partners.

They proceeded into the history of the ball; and Guy thought no more of his offences till the following day, when he went to Broadstone. Coming back, he found the drawing-room full of visitors, and was obliged to sit down and join in the conversation; but Mrs. Edmonstone saw he was inwardly chafing, as he betrayed by his inability to remain still, the twitchings of his forehead and lip, and a tripping and stumbling of the words on his tongue. She was sure he wanted to talk to her, and longed to get rid of Mrs. Brownlow; but the door was no sooner shut on the visitors, than Mr. Edmonstone came in, with a long letter for her to read and comment upon. Guy took himself out of the way of the consultation, and began to hurry up and down the terrace, until, seeing Amabel crossing the field towards the little gate into the garden, he went to open it for her.

She looked up at him, and exclaimed—‘Is anything the matter?’

‘Nothing to signify,’ he said; ‘I was only waiting for your mother. I have got into a mess, that is all.’

‘I am sorry,’ began Amy, there resting in the doubt whether she might inquire further, and intending not to burthen him with her company, any longer than till she reached the house door; but Guy went on,—

‘No, you have no occasion to be sorry; it is all my own fault; at least, if I was clear how it is my fault, I should not mind it so much. It is that ball. I am sure I had not the least notion any one would care whether I was there or not.’

‘I am sure we missed you very much.’

‘You are all so kind; beside, I belong in a manner you; but what could it signify to any one else? And here I find that I have vexed every one.’

‘Ah!’ said Amy, ‘mamma said she was afraid it would give offence.’

‘I ought to have attended to her. It was a fit of self-will in managing myself,’ said Guy, murmuring low, as if trying to find the real indictment; ‘yet I thought it a positive duty; wrong every way.’

‘What has happened?’ said Amy, turning back with him, though she had reached the door.

‘Why, the first person I met was Mr. Gordon; and he spoke like your father, half in joke, and I thought entirely so; he said something about all the world being in such a rage, that I was a bold man to venture into Broadstone. Then, while I was at Mr. Lascelles’, in came Dr. Mayerne. ‘We missed you at the dinner,’ he said; ‘and I hear you shirked the ball, too.’ I told him how it was, and he said

he was glad that was all, and advised me to go and call on Colonel Deane and explain. I thought that the best way—indeed, I meant it before, and was walking to his lodgings when Maurice de Courcy met me. ‘Ha!’ he cries out, ‘Morville! I thought at least you would have been laid up for a month with the typhus fever! As a friend, I advise you to go home and catch something, for it is the only excuse that will serve you. I am not quite sure that it will not be high treason for me to be seen speaking to you.’ I tried to get at the rights of it, but he is such a harum-scarum fellow there was no succeeding. Next I met Thorndale, who only bowed and passed on the other side of the street—sign enough how it was with Philip; so I thought it best to go at once to the Captain, and get a rational account of what was the matter.’

‘Did you?’ said Amy, who, though concerned and rather alarmed, had been smiling at the humorous and expressive tones with which he could not help giving effect to his narration.

‘Yes. Philip was at home, and very—very—’

‘Gracious?’ suggested Amy, as he hesitated for a word.

‘Just so. Only the vexatious thing was, that we never could succeed in coming to an understanding. He was ready to forgive; but I could not disabuse him of an idea—where he picked it up I cannot guess—that I had stayed away out of pique. He would not even tell me what he thought had affronted me, though I asked him over and over again to be only straightforward; he declared I knew.’

‘How excessively provoking!’ cried Amy. ‘You cannot guess what he meant?’

‘Not the least in the world. I have not the most distant suspicion. It was of no use to declare I was not offended with any one; he only looked in that way of his, as if he knew much better than I did myself, and told me he could make allowances.’

‘Worse than all! How horrid of him.’

‘No, don’t spoil me. No doubt he thinks he has grounds, and my irritation was unjustifiable. Yes, I got into my old way. He cautioned me, and nearly made me mad! I never was nearer coming to a regular outbreak. Always the same! Fool that I am.’

‘Now, Guy, that is always your way; when other people are provoking, you abuse yourself. I am sure Philip was so, with his calm assertion of being right.’

‘The more provoking, the more trial for me.’

‘But you endured it. You say it was only *nearly* an outbreak. You parted friends? I am sure of that.’

‘Yes, it would have been rather too bad not to do that.’

‘Then why do you scold yourself, when you really had the victory?’

‘The victory will be if the inward feeling as well as the outward token is ever subdued.’

‘O, that must be in time, of course. Only let me hear how you got on with Colonel Deane.’

‘He was very good-natured, and would have laughed it off, but Philip went with me, and looked grand, and begged in a solemn way that no more might be said. I could have got on better alone; but Philip was very kind, or, as you say, gracious.’

‘And provoking,’ added Amy, ‘only I believe you do not like me to say so.’

‘It is more agreeable to hear you call him so at this moment than is good for me. I have no right to complain, since I gave the offence.’

‘The offence?’

‘The absenting myself.’

‘Oh! that you did because you thought it right.’

‘I want to be clear that it was right.’

‘What do you mean?’ cried she, astonished. ‘It was a great piece of self-denial, and I only felt it wrong not to be doing the same.’

‘Nay, how should such creatures as you need the same discipline as I?’

She exclaimed to herself how far from his equal she was—how weak, idle, and self-pleasing she felt herself to be; but she could not say so—the words would not come; and she only drooped her little head, humbled by his treating her as better than himself.

He proceeded:—

‘Something wrong I have done, and I want the clue. Was it self-will in choosing discipline contrary to your mother’s judgment? Yet she could not know all. I thought it her kindness in not liking me to lose the pleasure. Besides, one must act for oneself, and this was only my own personal amusement.’

‘Yes,’ said Amy, timidly hesitating.

‘Well?’ said he, with the gentle, deferential tone that contrasted with his hasty, vehement self-accusations. ‘Well?’ and he waited, though not so as to hurry or frighten her, but to encourage, by showing her words had weight.

‘I was thinking of one thing,’ said Amy; ‘is it not sometimes right to consider whether we ought to disappoint people who want us to be pleased?’

‘There it is, I believe,’ said Guy, stopping and considering, then going on with a better satisfied air, ‘that is a real rule. Not to be so bent on myself as to sacrifice other people’s feelings to what seems best for me. But I don’t see whose pleasure I interfered with.’

Amy could have answered, ‘Mine;’ but the maidenly feeling checked her again, and she said, ‘We all thought you would like it.’

‘And I had no right to sacrifice your pleasure! I see, I see. The pleasure of giving pleasure to others is so much the best there is on earth, that one ought to be passive rather than interfere with it.’

‘Yes,’ said Amy, ‘just as I have seen Mary Ross let herself be swung till she was giddy, rather than disappoint Charlotte and Helen, who thought she liked it.’

‘If one could get to look at everything with as much indifference as the swinging! But it is all selfishness. It is as easy to be selfish for one’s own good as for one’s own pleasure; and I dare say, the first is as bad as the other.’

‘I was thinking of something else,’ said Amy. ‘I should think it more like the holly tree in Southey. Don’t you know it? The young leaves are sharp and prickly, because they have so much to defend themselves from, but as the tree grows older, it leaves off the spears, after it has won the victory.’

‘Very kind of you, and very pretty, Amy,’ said he, smiling; ‘but, in the meantime, it is surely wrong to be more prickly than is unavoidable, and there is the perplexity. Selfish! selfish! selfish! Oneself the first object. That is the root.’

‘Guy, if it is not impertinent to ask, I do wish you would tell me one thing. Why did you think it wrong to go to that ball?’ said Amy, timidly.

‘I don’t know that I thought it wrong to go to that individual ball,’ said Guy; ‘but my notion was, that altogether I was getting into a rattling idle way, never doing my proper quantity of work, or doing it properly, and talking a lot of nonsense sometimes. I thought, last Sunday, it was time to make a short turn somewhere and bring myself up. I could not, or did not get out of the pleasant talks as Laura does, so I thought giving up this ball would punish me at once, and set me on a new tack of behaving like a reasonable creature.’

‘Don’t call yourself too many names, or you won’t be civil to us. We all, except Laura, have been quite as bad.’

‘Yes; but you had not so much to do.’

‘We ought,’ said Amy; ‘but I meant to be reasonable when Eveleen is gone.’

Perhaps I ought to have waited till then, but I don’t know. Lady Eveleen is so amusing that it leads to farther dawdling, and it would not do to wait to resist the temptation till it is out of the way.’

As he spoke, they saw Mrs. Edmonstone coming out, and went to meet her. Guy told her his trouble, detailing it more calmly than before he had found out his mistake. She agreed with him

that this had been in forgetting that his attending the ball did not concern only himself, but he then returned to say that he could not see what difference it made, except to their own immediate circle.

‘If it was not you, Guy, who made that speech, I should call it fishing for a compliment. You forget that rank and station make people sought after.’

‘I suppose there is something in that,’ said Guy, thoughtfully; ‘at any rate, it is no bad thing to think so, it is so humiliating.’

‘That is not the way most people would take it.’

‘No? Does not it prevent one from taking any attention as paid to one’s real self? The real flattering thing would be to be made as much of as Philip is, for one’s own merits, and not for the handle to one’s name.’

‘Yes, I think so,’ said Amy.

‘Well, then,’ as if he wished to gather the whole conversation into one resolve, the point is to consider whether abstaining from innocent things that may be dangerous to oneself mortifies other people. If so, the vexing them is a certain wrong, whereas the mischief of taking the pleasure is only a possible contingency. But then one must take it out of oneself some other way, or it becomes an excuse for self-indulgence.’

‘Hardly with you,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone, smiling.

‘Because I had rather go at it at once, and forget all about other people. You must teach me consideration, Mrs. Edmonstone, and in the meantime will you tell me what you think I had better do about this scrape?’

‘Let it alone,’ said Mrs. Edmonstone. ‘You have begged every one’s pardon, and it had better be forgotten as fast as possible. They have made more fuss already than it is worth. Don’t torment yourself about it any more; for, if you have made a mistake, it is on the right side; and on the first opportunity, I’ll go and call on Mrs. Deane, and see if she is very implacable.’

The dressing-bell rang, and Amy ran up-stairs, stopping at Laura’s door, to ask how she prospered in the drive she had been taking with Charles and Eveleen.

Amy told her of Guy’s trouble, and oh! awkward question, inquired if she could guess what it could be that Philip imagined that Guy had been offended at.

‘Can’t he guess?’ said poor Laura, to gain time, and brushing her hair over her face.

‘No, he has no idea, though Philip protested that he knew, and would not tell him. Philip must have been most tiresome.’

‘What? Has Guy been complaining?’

‘No, only angry with himself for being vexed. I can’t think how Philip can go on so!’

‘Hush! hush, Amy, you know nothing about it. He has reasons—’

‘I know,’ said Amy, indignantly; ‘but what right has he to go on mistrusting? If people are to be judged by their deeds, no one is so good as Guy, and it is too bad to reckon up against him all his ancestors have done. It is wolf and lamb, indeed.’

‘He does not!’ cried Laura. ‘He never is unjust! How can you say so, Amy?’

‘Then why does he impute motives, and not straightforwardly tell what he means?’

‘It is impossible in this case,’ said Laura.

‘Do you know what it is?’

‘Yes,’ said Laura, perfectly truthful, and feeling herself in a dreadful predicament.

‘And you can’t tell me?’

‘I don’t think I can.’

‘Nor Guy?’

‘Not for worlds,’ cried Laura, in horror.

‘Can’t you get Philip to tell him?’

‘Oh no, no! I can’t explain it, Amy; and all that can be done is to let it die away as fast as possible. It is only the rout about it that is of consequence.’

‘It is very odd,’ said Amy, ‘but I must dress,’ and away she ran, much puzzled, but with no desire to look into Philip’s secrets.

Laura rested her head on her hand, sighed, and wondered why it was so hard to answer. She almost wished she had said Philip had been advising her to discourage any attachment on Guy’s part; but then Amy might have laughed, and asked why. No! no! Philip’s confidence was in her keeping, and cost her what it might, she would be faithful to the trust.

There was now a change. The evenings were merry, but the mornings were occupied. Guy went off to his room, as he used to do last winter; Laura commenced some complicated perspective, or read a German book with a great deal of dictionary; Amy had a book of history, and practised her music diligently; even Charles read more to himself, and resumed the study with Guy and Amy; Lady Eveleen joined in every one’s pursuits, enjoyed them, and lamented to Laura that it was impossible to be rational at her own home.

Laura tried to persuade her that there was no need that she should be on the level of the society round her, and it ended in her spending an hour in diligent study every morning, promising to continue it when she went home, while Laura made such sensible comments that Eveleen admired her more than ever; and she, knowing that some were second-hand from Philip, others arising from his suggestions, gave him all the homage paid to herself, as a tribute to him who reigned over her whole being.

Yet she was far from happy. Her reserve towards Guy made her feel stiff and guarded; she had a craving for Philip’s presence, with a dread of showing it, which made her uncomfortable. She wondered he had not been at Hollywell since the bail, for he must know that she was going to Ireland in a fortnight, and was not likely to return till his regiment had left Broadstone.

An interval passed long enough for her not to be alone in her surprise at his absenting himself before he at length made his appearance, just before luncheon, so as to miss the unconstrained morning hours he used so much to enjoy. He found Guy, Charles, and Amy, deep in Butler’s Analogy.

‘Are you making poor little Amy read that?’ said he.

‘Bravo!’ cried Charles; ‘he is so disappointed that it is not Pickwick that he does not know what else to say.’

‘I don’t suppose I take much in,’ said Amy; ‘but I like to be told what it means.’

‘Don’t imagine I can do that,’ said Guy.

‘I never spent much time over it,’ said Philip; ‘but I should think you were out of your depth.’

‘Very well,’ said Charles; ‘we will return to Dickens to oblige you.’

‘It is your pleasure to wrest my words,’ replied Philip, in his own calm manner, though he actually felt hurt, which he had never done before. His complacency was less secure, so that there was more need for self-assertion.

‘Where are the rest?’ he asked.

‘Laura and Eveleen are making a dictation lesson agreeable to Charlotte,’ said Amy; ‘I found Eva making mistakes on purpose.’

‘How much longer does she stay?’

‘Till Tuesday. Lord Kilcoran is coming to fetch her.’

Charlotte entered, and immediately ran up-stairs to announce her cousin’s arrival. Laura was glad of this previous notice, and hoped her blush and tremor were not observed. It was a struggle, through luncheon time, to keep her colour and confusion within bounds; but she succeeded better than she fancied she did, and Philip gave her as much help as he could, by not looking at her. Seeing that he dreaded nothing so much as her exciting suspicion, she was at once braced and alarmed.

Her father was very glad to see him, and reproached him for making himself a stranger, while her sisters counted up the days of his absence.

‘There was the time, to be sure, when we met you on Ashen-down, but that was a regular cheat. Laura had you all to herself.’

Laura bent down to feed Bustle, and Philip felt *his* colour deepening.

Mr. Edmonstone went on to ask him to come and stay at Hollywell for a week, vowing he would take no refusal. 'A week was out of the question, said Philip; 'but he could come for two nights.' Amabel hinted that there was to be a dinner-party on Thursday, thinking it fair to give him warning of what he disliked, but he immediately chose that very day. Again he disconcerted all expectations, when it was time to go out. Mrs. Edmonstone and Charles were going to drive, the young ladies and Guy to walk, but Philip disposed himself to accompany his uncle in a survey of the wheat.

Laura perceived that he would not risk taking another walk with her when they might be observed. It showed implicit trust to leave her to his rival; but she was sorry to find that caution must put an end to the freedom of their intercourse, and would have stayed at home, but that Eveleen was so wild and unguarded that Mrs. Edmonstone did not like her to be without Laura as a check on her, especially when Guy was of the party. There was some comfort in that warm pressure of her hand when she bade Philip good-bye, and on that she lived for a long time. He stood at the window watching them till they were out of sight, then moved towards his aunt, who with her bonnet on, was writing an invitation for Thursday, to Mr. Thorndale.

'I was thinking,' said he, in a low voice, 'if it would not be as well, if you liked, to ask Thorndale here for those two days.'

'If *you* think so,' returned Mrs. Edmonstone, looking at him more inquiringly than he could well bear.

'You know how he enjoys being here, and I owe them all so much kindness.'

'Certainly; I will speak to your uncle,' said she, going in search of him. She presently returned, saying they should be very glad to see Mr. Thorndale, asking him at the same time, in her kind tones of interest, after an old servant for whom he had been spending much thought and pains. The kindness cut him to the heart, for it evidently arose from a perception that he was ill at ease, and his conscience smote him. He answered shortly, and was glad when the carriage came; he lifted Charles into it, and stood with folded arms as they drove away.

'The air is stormy,' said Charles, looking back at him.'

'You thought so, too?' said Mrs. Edmonstone, eagerly.

'You did!'

'I have wondered for some time past.'

'It was very decided to-day—that long absence—and there was no provoking him to be sententious. His bringing his young man might be only to keep him in due subjection; but his choosing the day of the party, and above all, not walking with the young ladies.'

'It not like himself,' said Mrs. Edmonstone, in a leading tone.

'Either the sweet youth is in love, or in the course of some strange transformation.'

'In love!' she exclaimed. 'Have you any reason for thinking so?'

'Only as a solution of phenomena; but you look as if I had hit on the truth.'

'I hope it is no such thing; yet—'

'Yet?' repeated Charles, seriously. 'I think he has discovered the danger.'

'The danger of falling in love with Laura? Well, it would be odd if he was not satisfied with his own work. But he must know how preposterous that would be.'

'And you think that would prevent it?' said his mother, smiling. 'He is just the man to plume himself on making his judgment conquer his inclination, setting novels at defiance. How magnanimously he would resolve to stifle a hopeless attachment!'

'That is exactly what I think he is doing. I think he has found out the state of his feelings, and is doing all in his power to check them by avoiding her, especially in *tete-a-tetes*, and an unconstrained family party. I am nearly convinced that is his reason for bringing Mr. Thorndale, and fixing on the day of the dinner. Poor fellow, it must cost him a great deal, and I long to tell him how I thank him.'

‘Hm! I don’t think it unlikely,’ said Charles. ‘It agrees with what happened the evening of the Kilcoran ball, when he was ready to eat me up for saying something he fancied was a hint of a liking of Guy’s for Laura. It was a wild mistake, for something I said about Petrarch, forgetting that Petrarch suggested Laura; but it put him out to a degree, and he made all manner of denunciations on the horror of Guy’s falling in love with her. Now, as far as I see, Guy is much more in love with you, or with Deloraine, and the idea argues far more that the Captain himself is touched.’

‘Depend upon it, Charlie, it was this that led to his detecting the true state of the case. Ever since that he has kept away. It is noble!’

‘And what do you think about Laura?’

‘Poor child! I doubt if it was well to allow so much intimacy; yet I don’t see how it could have been helped.’

‘So you think she is in for it? I hope not; but she has not been herself of late.’

‘I think she misses what she has been used to from him, and thinks him estranged, but I trust it goes no further. I see she is out of spirits; I wish I could help her, dear girl, but the worst of all would be to let her guess the real name and meaning of all this, so I can’t venture to say a word.’

‘She is very innocent of novels,’ said Charles, ‘and that is well. It would be an unlucky business to have our poor beauty either sitting ‘like Patience on a monument’, or ‘cockit up on a baggage-waggon.’ But that will never be. Philip is not the man to have a wife in barracks. He would have her like his books, in morocco, or not at all.’

‘He would never involve her in discomforts. He may be entirely trusted, and as long as he goes on as he has begun, there is no harm done; Laura will cheer up, will only consider him as her cousin and friend, and never know he has felt more for her.’

‘Her going to Ireland is very fortunate.’

‘It has made me still more glad that the plan should take place at once.’

‘And you say “nothing to nobody”?’

‘Of course not. We must not let him guess we have observed anything; there is no need to make your father uncomfortable, and such things need not dawn on Amy’s imagination.’

It may be wondered at that Mrs. Edmonstone should confide such a subject to her son, but she knew that in a case really affecting his sister, and thus introduced, his silence was secure. In fact, confidence was the only way to prevent the shrewd, unscrupulous raillery which would have caused great distress, and perhaps led to the very disclosure to be deprecated. Of late, too, there had been such a decrease of petulance in Charles, as justified her in trusting him, and lastly, it must be observed that she was one of those open-hearted people who cannot make a discovery nor endure an anxiety without imparting it. Her tact, indeed, led her to make a prudent choice of confidants, and in this case her son was by far the best, though she had spoken without premeditation. Her nature would never have allowed her to act as her daughter was doing; she would have been without the strength to conceal her feelings, especially when deprived of the safety-valve of free intercourse with their object.

The visit took place as arranged, and very uncomfortable it was to all who looked deeper than the surface. In the first place, Philip found there the last person he wished his friend to meet—Lady Eveleen, who had been persuaded to stay for the dinner-party; but Mr. Thorndale was, as Charles would have said, on his good behaviour, and, ashamed of the fascination her manners exercised over him, was resolved to resist it, answered her gay remarks with brief sentences and stiff smiles, and consorted chiefly with the gentlemen.

Laura was grave and silent, trying to appear unconscious, and only succeeding in being visibly constrained. Philip was anxious and stern in his attempts to appear unconcerned, and even Guy was not quite as bright and free as usual, being puzzled as to how far he was forgiven about the ball.

Amabel could not think what had come to every one, and tried in vain to make them sociable. In the evening they had recourse to a game, said to be for Charlotte’s amusement, but in reality to obviate some of the stiffness and constraint; yet even this led to awkward situations. Each person was

to set down his or her favourite character in history and fiction, flower, virtue, and time at which to have lived, and these were all to be appropriated to the writers. The first read was—

‘Lily of the valley—truth—Joan of Arc—Padre Cristoforo—the present time.’

‘Amy!’ exclaimed Guy.

‘I see you are right,’ said Charles; ‘but tell me your grounds!’

‘Padre Cristoforo,’ was the answer.

‘Fancy little Amy choosing Joan of Arc,’ said Eveleen, ‘she who is afraid of a tolerable sized grasshopper.’

‘I should like to have been Joan’s sister, and heard her tell about her visions,’ said Amy.

‘You would have taught her to believe them,’ said Philip.

‘Taught her!’ cried Guy. ‘Surely you take the high view of her.’

‘I think,’ said Philip, ‘that she is a much injured person, as much by her friends as her enemies; but I don’t pretend to enter either enthusiastically or philosophically into her character.’

What was it that made Guy’s brow contract, as he began to strip the feather of a pen, till, recollecting himself, he threw it from him with a dash, betraying some irritation, and folded his hands.

‘Lavender,’ read Charlotte.

‘What should make any one choose that?’ cried Eveleen.

‘I know!’ said Mrs. Edmonstone, looking up. ‘I shall never forget the tufts of lavender round the kitchen garden at Stylehurst.’

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