PRINCES, PUBLIC MEN, 

AND

PRETTY WOMEN:

Episodes in Real Life.

BY FLORA DAWSON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

At the present day it is felt and acknowledged that a preface cannot be too short.

But it is my wish to make one or two observations on the contents of this work. I desire it to be distinctly understood, that every circumstance and every character has been drawn from memory, and not from imagination.

Amidst the ever-changing scenes of a varied life, the events here recorded have remained deeply and vividly impressed upon my mind. It has appeared then to me, that they could not be entirely devoid of interest. Let me add, that this is the age when everything genuine is undoubtedly appreciated. We may laugh over an exaggerated farce, or weep,
perhaps, over an impossible tragedy, but one touch of real and natural feeling moves us to the quick.

In the following pages I have adhered strictly and simply to the facts as I remember them; discarding all imaginary and worked-up adventures. It has been my chief ambition to be accurate and truthful.

In one respect only have I deviated from this course. While the names of persons well known in history are given without reserve, the appellations of private individuals, whose friends or families might shrink from publicity, have been generally changed.

If any, incredulous, should object that there is too clearly a tinge of romance about some of the narratives, let me ask if even one of my readers will own to having led so homespun an existence, that he has not discovered by experience the correctness of the old adage which says, "Truth is stranger than Fiction."
Having passed many years at foreign courts, and mingled much with men whose "names are famous in story"—and being connected by ties of friendship and consanguinity with several who were themselves leaders and actors in the stirring events which convulsed Europe for more than fifty years—I have been enabled to gather, from eye-witnesses, a number of curious and interesting incidents. From among these I have at present only taken a few slight sketches—such as might best suit the tone and character of this Work.

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THE PAGES AND THE SOAPED STAIRS.

HOW often have the memoirs of a woman, the correspondence of her leisure hours, the small records of her diary, rendered clear some of the more obscure portions of history. Her light and careless hand lifts the curtain, drawn by deep-scheming politicians, over the hidden springs and motives that influence alike events and individuals.

It is not for me to moralize, in these brief sketches, upon the great results that follow trifling causes, or to point out how even a few passing words from the lips of women, whose very existence is unacknowledged in history, have made and unmade heroes.
I have now before my mind's eye a charming Frenchwoman, of high birth and of wonderful talents, whose fate it was, while still in the bloom of her earliest youth, to be mixed up in events, which are now chronicled in history.

Those events which altered the face of Europe at the beginning of the present century, which changed dynasties, and raised new kings to old thrones, were witnessed by many who still live; but their number diminishes daily, and I would fain snatch from oblivion a few facts and anecdotes imparted to me by the young Frenchwoman I have mentioned, and relate them as she related them to me, fresh from the scenes she described.

Their historical importance may be but small, their accuracy, however, may be relied on; and the smallest fragment of a picture, if that picture be true to nature, may sometimes be studied with advantage.

It happened, in the changes and chances of party, that Aurore de Courval (for such was the name of my young friend), though
descended from a family devoted to the *fleur-de-lys*, had become a favourite with the Bees. Her father, the Marquis de Courval, an *émigré* at the time of the Revolution, had ever remained a faithful servant of the Bourbons; but after his death, the Buonapartes had taken by the hand all that remained of his family. The great Napoleon was then in the zenith of his power; by him the Marchioness de Courval, mother of Aurore, was placed as *dame d'honneur* to his sister Caroline, Queen of Naples, wife of Murat; while the young Aurore was educated at Paris, at an imperial establishment for the daughters of royal and noble houses.

She was rapidly acquiring honours and accomplishments under the care of the first artists in France, when her studies were suddenly interrupted.

A messenger arrived, dispatched by the emperor himself, declaring it as his command that Aurore de Courval should forthwith proceed to Naples, there to join her mother, and occupy also some post about the court.

She was informed that every preparation
must be made at once; no time was to be lost; a carriage would be provided for her; she must travel post, as fast as four horses could take her; an old and trusted servant of her father's would escort her on the way.

Here was a surprise! but a delightful one to Aurore. Her heart beat high with happy anticipations. The journey seemed to her excited imagination like a dream of fairy land.

Another and another messenger arrived to hurry on her departure; yet it excited some little surprise among those versed in court matters, that the emperor exhibited a solicitude that the young Aurore should be equipped with everything that was most magnificent and costly; indeed, there was a reason for this, little dreamt of at the time by Aurore herself or those around her. But I will not forestall.

Amongst all the rich jewellery that was brought for the hair, the arms, the neck, I can still well remember a locket, where on one side the chiffres of Napoleon and the empress blazed in a multitude of tiny diamonds, while on the other side was seen a portrait of
the empress, beautifully executed by Isabeau, which made this little locket the most treasured and valuable gift of all. It still remained in her possession when I knew her, the most prized but solitary relic of so much splendour.

After a few days spent in brief and hurried preparations, she was off. The luxurious and well-padded cushions of the large berline in which she travelled invited to repose; which was well, for orders were given that they should halt neither night nor day, if possible. A rapid journey brought them soon through France, through Switzerland. No accident befel them. They crossed the Alps, down into the rich plains of Lombardy; but, as soon as they arrived into the less secure roads of Italy, a strong escort of soldiers was always ordered to protect her from attack, as it was said her costly wardrobe and cases of valuables might tempt the robbers, who were supposed to be lying in wait for unwary travellers. This was repeated to Aurore at every stage, and repeated to the by-standers, and seemed natural enough.
Much did the young girl long to halt and loiter on her way, or rest for a brief interval at places of note. But the old servant respectfully, yet firmly, urged the emperor's orders. Rome itself, Rome, "the Eternal City," was traversed by night, nor could Aurore, though straining her eyes, and stretching her head out through the windows of the carriage, see more than the dark and shadowy outlines of those monuments of its greatness, of which she had heard so much.

She threw herself back on the well-stuffed cushions of the carriage in some disappointment, and there sleep closed her eyelids through several hours of darkness. On, still on, went the bright black horses—so famous for their speed and vigour in these countries at that period. But a languor and fatigue followed the long excitement for Aurore—she hardly looked around—and dreamed and dozed away the day. At last, after night had once again been passed, a cry of "Napoli, Napoli, la bella Napoli," aroused her—and there the blue waves of the Mediterranean glanced beneath the early
rays of the sun. A slight haze, floating away in wreaths of vapour, indicated the site of old Vesuvius, and Naples itself indeed lay before her. Its bay, its beauties, all revealed to the wondering eyes of our young traveller.

As her gemmed and enamelled watch pointed to five, they drove into the court of the palace—several guards were standing about—an officer or two reclined on a stone bench. But one there was, wrapped in a military cloak, who paced rapidly and impatiently up and down the flagstones.

When the carriage rolled in through the wide portals, a sign was made by this officer, whom all hastened to obey. The carriage was driven under cover into a low arched building, that communicated with the court. The doors were closed behind them; they were almost in darkness, but a few rays gleamed in from a chink high up in the old roof.

“What now!” thought Aurore, “this is a strange reception.” The officer politely handed her out. A peculiarity in his ap-
pearance arrested her attention. His head was near her, close to her as he leaned forward almost hurriedly, to lift her from the carriage. The ray of light fell across his face and figure, as he bent towards her.

The black ringlets fell on his shoulders long and glossy, but parting as he moved, showed the ear!—a part, the upper part, was missing. One man in that court was known by those peculiarities, Murat, the king of Naples. Could it be Murat, himself? She gazed with surprise, and watched his movements. One more gesture—of enquiry—was the door well shut? It was. And then Aurore de Courval beheld with astonishment the officer whose glossy black ringlets and incomplete ear had caught her attention, spring into the carriage. His companion, or attendant, handed him a knife with a strong blade, and in a few instants the carriage lining was ripped open, papers tumbled out, and our friend Aurore learnt for the first time that she had been the bearer of most important documents. More than half the care shown to hasten her on her journey, and
escort her with guards, for which her youth, her rich jewellery, and her tempting cases, formed a plausible excuse, had, in fact, been provided for these important documents, concealed in the carriage, and which had thus passed without suspicion.

Little did she dream that she had been reposing amidst such dangerous matter; and now she found herself standing almost unheeded, while Murat (for it was he indeed) was hastily casting his eye over the packets which had been dislodged.

After a brief interval, during which he had apparently forgotten her presence, he turned towards her with a bland smile,—

"Ah, mademoiselle," he said, "you do not know how impatiently you were expected." "C'est bien c'est très bien." "Will you descend to follow me—but stop—Mrv de B—— will conduct you to your friends. I have much here to look at."

"And much sleep to take, I hope," said the other officer, who was standing by. "His majesty expected you before midnight; he has been waiting ever since."
"Tush!" said the king. "Who would not wait for so fair a demoiselle!"

"And the papers?" said Aurore, smiling.

The king looked for a moment scrutinizingly at her, then said, "I was told you were not bête, and might be trusted."

"But was I?" said Aurore. "Grand Dieu! If I had known what I was bringing!"

"You would have been alarmed, and showed you were," said Murat. "We saved you the alarm, and ourselves the risk. But my impatience has made you now a witness to this scene; you can forget it—you know who asks you?"

"Sire," exclaimed Aurore, and would have continued, but he interrupted her. "I have not much patience; it was tried by your not coming. I am not good at waiting. You have a king's secret: keep it. Bon Dieu! there are many fair girls, not half so pretty as you, obliged to keep secrets for Murat's sake;" and a tender squeeze of the hand followed.

But the impatience of the young traveller
was also great, and mingled with it was some fear of the celebrated man before her.

Even in the far off chambers of the Royal "Pension," where she had been educated, some rumours had reached her of Murat's feats in love, as well as of his feats in war; and she was bewildered and alarmed at this singular reception.

However, Monsieur de B— stepped forward, and said, "As I have his majesty's permission, and you must greatly require repose, after your journey, allow me, mademoiselle, to conduct you at once to your mother."

"Oh, yes!" cried Aurore, and she walked hastily forward in the direction he had pointed out.

"But," said Monsieur de B——, "you did not take leave of the king."

"Was he the king?" said Aurore; then added, colouring, "He was so odd. I was glad to get away. Besides, he was only thinking of those papers."

"Well!" said Monsieur de B——, "he found
time to look at you. His majesty has a ready eye for beauty."

"Nothing but compliments!" said Aurore.

"Then," said Monsieur de B——, "instead of compliments, take a word of caution. The queen——"

"Eh bien, the queen?" said Aurore.

"You need not mention before her that you have seen his majesty; in fact, he asks as much. When you are presented, address him as a stranger. You comprehend me."

"Ah, monsieur!" said she, "I shall not address him. Why, what should a young girl like me have to say to the king?"

A peculiar smile was the only reply; and as they had reached that part of the palace inhabited by the queen, M. de B—— summoned another officer, into whose charge he gave the young Aurore, and, bowing low, wished her God speed.

In a few minutes more she was face to face with her mother, clasped in her arms—and there we will leave her—for a time at least.

It is not the history of Aurore de Courval I would write, though her adventures might
fill a volume. But I would pass on to some of the events or grave or gay which fell under her own notice not very long after her arrival.

The court of Naples was enjoying a brief season of gaiety and enjoyment. Murat, not wanted at the moment to fight the battles of his imperial and imperious brother-in-law, found himself at liberty to taste the pleasures of life in his beautiful capital.

But alas for Murat, pleasure created as much war around him as ambition.

The fair sex was his idol, and he was the idol of the fair sex. The gallantries, the loves of the king, the anger of the queen, her surveillance and his escapes, were the chief topics of the court.

A host of pages, whose good looks and espiègleries were as remarkable as if they had lived under the ancien régime, kept up a constant supervision on the amours of his majesty. By the pages of the king, the
names and adventures of many a frail beauty would be whispered to the pages of the queen; and it was not difficult for her majesty to learn the exact state of the different intrigues carried on by her husband: these did not much affect her heart, for she had no great affection for him, but they deeply wounded her vanity, and both as a queen and as a woman, she resented these affronts.

Many a lady had been obliged to leave the court by the open contempt of the queen, who never condescended to conceal her displeasure.

Let us do Murat the justice of saying, that, if he was soon in love, he was soon out of it; he was a hot wooer, but it did not last long; and he would witness the departure of the fair lady he had but now “been dying for” with a *sang-froid* and indifference, which did much to reconcile him to his wife after these “esclandres.”

Wooed and won in secret, then discovered, then dismissed,—this was the usual fate of the ladies of his love: and those who would win the favour of the queen, and some also who
were themselves desirous of reigning supreme over the affections of Murat, were always at work to aid in the discovery and hasten on the dénouement.

One mysterious visitor, however, baffled the curiosity of all. She had succeeded in completely escaping detection, though frequently admitted to the private apartments of the king. The emissaries of the queen were completely at fault. Even the pages were obliged to confess themselves as much in the dark as the rest of the world. Of course it was expected they would soon be able to unravel the mystery, for etiquette demanded that some of their number should be in waiting at every entrance to the king's apartments. The incognita had then passed them, and frequently. Who was she? Marvellous as it may seem, not one of them could tell.

The queen frowned, the courtiers laughed; the pages became furious; it was not to be borne; their reputation was at stake. She must be discovered, and by them. Something must be attempted. Force? that would not
do. What then? a whispered consultation followed.

She always came alone, up a long flight of steps, which led into the ante-room, where they were posted; here she did not pause, but entered at once into the king's apartment. Her dress was of the deepest black from head to foot. A large and wrapping mantle concealed the outlines of her person. She was neither short nor tall. A thick black veil covered her face,—it was impenetrably thick; her hands were gloved; and had it not been for the lightness of her tread, and the exquisite beauty of a small foot that had once escaped for a moment from the long folds of her mourning habit, the female might have been old and ugly and deformed.

When the audience was over, she returned, closely veiled and muffled as before, passed their room slowly, and descending the long flight of stairs, was driven away in one of the carriages belonging to the king.

Those stairs! A sudden ray of inspiration darted across the face of the youngest of the pages. "Victory! victory!" cried he.
"Those stairs—yes, that will do—we'll soap them!—she'll slip—we'll rush to the rescue—raise her up—lift her veil—learn who she is—c'est l'affaire d'un moment—what do you say?" "Capital! capital!" All applauded. It could be done, it should be done. Their eyes brightened, success already seemed within their grasp,—the lady too.

With what spirits and gaiety they hurried off to the evening réunion; how did they laugh and glitter in their dazzling dresses; with what flashes of wit and humour they brightened up the courtly scene. "Ah!" said an old countess, winking hard at her friend, General B,—, "those pages have some deviltries in hand, depend upon it; on entendra de leurs nouvelles demain."

And for the morrow did they wait. They could hardly contain their impatience to see her arrive. Once housed in the king's apartments, two of the most active of the pages promised to do the soaping to perfection; and outbursts of merriment accompanied the operation. The audience lasted longer than usual, the operation was renewed, at least a few
fresh touches on the very spot she was most likely to step were skilfully applied. At last footsteps were heard approaching the door; “She treads heavily to-day,” was hardly remarked, before the door opened, and the king himself was there; the lady had remained behind.

A look of comic disappointment was followed by a thrill of terror and dismay. His majesty, looking right and left with his usual jaunty air, approached the flight of steps; before aught could be done, thought of, or decided on, by the petrified group of pages, his foot was on the stair, one moment, then a slide—an oath—a fall—a roll—down, down the whole flight, the pages rushing, tumbling over one another, and even over Murat himself, in a vain endeavour to stop or even check his descent. All reached the bottom of the steps one way or other. Murat, active, strong, self-possessed in every emergency, was first on his feet; his splendid costume, always rather theatrically arranged, was torn and awry; his hair, worn in long wavy locks, was thrown across his brow; his hand searched
for the pommel of his sword,—rage, fury blazed in his eye—he looked round as a tiger that is about to make a spring.

The pages shrunk back self-convicted and terror-struck, except one wretch of a young fellow, who, grasping the soap and flannel employed in the nefarious operation, had been seized by one of those uncontrollable fits of laughter which the sight of a ridiculous fall will excite, even sometimes when the laugh costs a friend or makes an enemy for life.

Stung to the quick by this fresh incident, Murat turned the full lightning of his countenance on the offender. One glance at the stairs, a moment’s recollection, revealed the whole to Murat—acute enough in love and war; a terrible panic kept all silent. Oaths fast and furious from the "fallen monarch" would have been a relief to the conspirators; his gaze was rivetted now on the bold and merry page who could not quail beneath that look, though the very implements in his hands proclaimed him the chief offender. Another of those uncontrollable peals of merriment burst from him at the discomfited group, and
as the recollection of the promiscuous roll down those fated stairs came over him; a deep guttural sound chimed in; Murat, glaring there as a wild beast, is he roaring as one? will he strike the young fellow dead on the spot, in ungovernable fury? Another explosion, that sounded like a suppressed and stifled growl, broke from the heaving chest of the king, and then out it came—a sound—such a sound—a laugh—loud, ringing, irresistible, even as the page’s. The infection was caught, and Murat, throwing himself on a seat, gave way to as full, long, repeated a laugh as ever broke from the lips of man.

He saw the whole thing—the curiosity, the contrivance, the dénouement—so complete, and so unexpected. He was never a hard-hearted man. In battle he seldom drew a drop of blood; the victorious sword, with which he led his troops into the thickest of the fight, was a mere court bauble. The dolorous display of discomfited faces, the despair of his young attendants, amused him infinitely; his own fall he made light as air of.
He would have read them a lecture, but he had joined in the laugh, though against himself; he could not now play the mentor. Besides, a slight shudder came over him,—"the queen,"—the story would probably be much to her taste, in which she would imagine he received but just measure for his offences; so his majesty restored the young offenders to his favour, on the distinct understanding that the whole thing was to be kept perfectly secret.

In fact, Murat felt the story must tell against himself, should it get wind; and punish them as he would, he could not purchase silence.

But one only of the group did he single out to speak to. The young man whose gay and dauntless spirit had borne him up even at the moment of Murat's fiercest anger, whose courage was well known, and whose bold merriment had been shared in and forgiven.

The father of this young man was suspected of favouring the Bourbon race, and lived a voluntary exile for a long period of years.
The Royal Family of Murat.

His mother, whom he had not seen since he was some ten or twelve years old, was also absent. She had accompanied his father, though their political feelings were diametrically opposite, for she was a devoted admirer of glory and the empire.

Her husband, suffering in health, and growing feeble, wearied of the pale sunshine of the land that gave him shelter, gladly would have returned once more if possible to the warm and voluptuous climate of his native city.

Pressed by his wife, he accepted from the reigning family the offer of a nomination for his son, as page about the person of Murat, whom he esteemed for his bravery, though he still detested the master-hand which had placed him on the throne of Naples.

His son, the young man I have spoken of, and who was the leader of the giddy band, did however feel an awe he could not control, when something of a dark and solemn nature threw a pallor over the face of Murat, as, touching him on the shoulder, with a countenance from which every shade of merriment or
anger had vanished, he bade him follow him, and taking him back with him to his own apartment, himself cautiously closed the entrance door behind them.

"Young man," he said, turning with much emotion towards the page, who still wore the gay trappings of that office, though in height and figure he looked more like an officer who had seen some service, "Young man, you have this day joined in a frolic that has ended so far well, since I am perhaps the only sufferer," and a half smile lit up his face once more, as his disordered attire testified to the rapid and involuntary descent he had made; but his brow grew fixed again.

"But you have escaped a danger, so great, so immeasurably great, that it will haunt you to your dying day.

"The woman you would have helped expose to the mad pranks of your boyish confederates, to the ribald jests of the court, that woman is—your mother;" and so saying, Murat led forward a woman of great beauty, but of that beauty which lingers only around age, for the hair was blanched
as if of silver; the face calm, attenuated, shrunk; the foot, the small arched beautiful foot, still spoke of the time when the Countess de M—— had been the reigning toast; but all else indicated age,—age advanced by sorrows, anxieties, and ill-health. The young man, her youngest and now her only son, recognized the pale and emaciated countenance unveiled before him, but how changed from the brilliant woman who, ten years back, had parted from him with tears and smiles.

He knelt before her with sudden reverence; he took her hand, he placed it on his brow, his lips—she raised him with calmness and dignity. "I am here, my son, for thee—for thy father. His return has been planned, arranged by the brave man before you. You yourself have been this day nominated by him as an officer in the — regiment, which your father once commanded. Forbidden by my husband to take one public step for his return, or for your promotion, his majesty has honoured me with his friendship and assistance; my age and my position have
rendered the step which appeared suspicious, the only safe one open to me.

“You would have rent the veil that shrouded my projects; you would have exposed my silver hairs to insult and derision; go—you are fit for nothing but 'a page;' his majesty's commission shall not be entrusted to a—laced buffoon. His majesty shall have my eternal gratitude; but you have the commission!—never! Thus I tear —” She raised the paper from the table, and in one instant would have been too true to her words.

But Murat, with sudden energy, sprung forward and held her hand.

The young man had risen and stood speechless, paralysed at her rebuke.

Growing like a true woman in vehemence, as she gave expression to her feelings, a passion of tears closed her harangue, and drops fell thick and fast upon the paper she was about to destroy. Murat, with kindness and gallantry mixed, interposed. “Nay, madame,” he said, “if I have done you some little favour, forgive the boy; eh! mais c'est un peu fort, le pauvre garçon, vous l'accablez.”
If tears are wonderful pleaders, they are also wonderful allayers to the stormy passions. The countess had been calm, vehement, tearful; she was now calm again; and the king, good-humouredly and skilfully profiting by the lull, spoke well and warmly for the young man, whose follies as a page should be, he would himself vouch for it, cast off with the dress.

The scene terminated happily. The young man received the commission from the hands of Murat himself; he felt two inches taller at least as he stuck it in his bosom. The Countess de M—— embraced her son, and announced to him the happy tidings that she was to fetch his father, and that they would shortly return openly to Naples, to inhabit once more the beautiful villa of his forefathers; then, while the king gallantly raised her hand to his lips, and her son stepped back to let them pass, she once more resumed her disguise, and the king himself led her carefully down the scene of his late unexpected and headlong descent. The royal carriage received the countess, and she was driven away,
never to return in mysterious guise by those unlucky stairs.

A few months afterwards, with a suitable retinue, and with much pomp, she and her husband performed the journey from the land of their exile and arrived in Naples.

No one, till all concerned, save the young officer, were dead and gone—no one knew that the veiled and mysterious visitant was the identical and aged Countess de M——, whose magnificent mansion was at that period once more thrown open for courtly and noble guests.

The story of the stairs, however, got wind much sooner, though the name of the supposed inamorata was not to be discovered; and, perhaps, had not more serious disturbances claimed his thoughts and his time, the king would have had that particular and much talked of entry to his apartments blocked up.

It is certain that upon one occasion, when in her own peculiar manner the queen had made him aware of her knowledge that some such catastrophe had there occurred, he was
heard to wish those stairs at the bottom of the Red Sea; but too honourable to mix up the name of the exemplary countess in court gossip, or to reveal to the world and to her husband the active part the aged lady had taken in his restoration to his home, and, as a necessary sequel, his conversion to the Buonaparte interest, he endured with a shrug of the shoulders allusions and jests; shoulders on which enough was already laid of good and bad fortune, and which bore it bravely.
THE ROYAL FAMILY OF MURAT.

THE PINK ROBE AND THE LAST PARTING.

In the grand drama being worked out in Europe at that period, when the greatest man of his age struggled like a giant in his last throes against a host of enemies, and which left the hero of that wondrous story a caged lion on a lonely rock in the ocean—in that drama Murat had played his part, and not a mean one; and he had played it well—a crown of laurel to the brave chief!

Darkling discontent passing through the mind of Napoleon, shadowed the last intercourse between him and his brother-in-law—may we not say, his brother-in-arms? He could not forgive the victorious leader, whom
he had rewarded with a kingdom, some few sighs, when called upon to leave the land of the luscious grape, the orange and the myrtle, to lead the legions of France over the wide plains of Russia, under the icy bolts of heaven, and the sharp lance of the Cossack.

The grand emperor, though himself weary, baffled, and betrayed, could not endure that the chiefs under his command should move with less vigour, less zeal, less devotion, than in the days of their triumphant prosperity.

It is seldom that the hot Buonapartist betrays any deep-felt sorrow for the fate of Murat. And yet how gallantly did he play out his stake, how nobly did he bear the penalty of failure!

If the policy of the Allies kept him on the throne, when Napoleon first was banished from France; if he had wisdom to temporize; if, for a time, like Bernadotte, he turned his sword against his friend; still the most tempting offers did not detach him from Napoleon in the last great contest. When Napoleon again stepped forth, a mighty conqueror of his own kingdom, to throw the
The Pink Robe and the Last Parting.

gauntlet before Europe, Murat despaired not, —he despaired not for the eagles of France. He dashed forward to the rescue. His troops, his throne, his life were cast into the balance, not heedlessly, not without calculating the cost, not reckless of his people's welfare.

He dreamed of a united Italy: he did more than dream of it; he fought for it.

When Austria would have purchased him off with offers of security and immunity, he would not make common cause with the enemies of France; he would not join the hand of fellowship with the oppressors of Italy. His words at Parma were a prophecy,—

"L'Italie veut être libre—elle le sera."

The political horizon was dark indeed all around. The storm had burst; and even the great emperor succumbed a while before it. But the court of Naples was still immersed in gaiety. On her sunny throne the beautiful Queen Caroline, the wife of Murat, had remained unscathed; she ruled the court in the absence of her husband. What was the strife to her? Murat had gone forth at the head of
a brilliant army to chastise the Austrians, to drive them from the land, to lay new trophies at her feet. The emperor triumphant, and at Paris!

The queen, self-willed, beautiful, and capricious, cared not much for the dangers that surrounded her family. She listened peevishly and disdainfully to "prophets of evil;" she had a blind faith in her brother's star. She found the easiest manner of meeting all difficulties was to frown, and say, "The emperor will make all right; leave it to him!—let no one torment me—send out orders for another state ball."

The state balls had at last to boast but a thin attendance: the nobles hung back; they did not know which way the scale would turn. The queen found deserted saloons as she passed onwards through the illuminated rooms.

"The opera, at least, would be amusing." Her favourite opera was commanded. She dozed away the morning amidst flowers and soft cushions. Alas! where was Murat? the brave leader, the chivalrous prince, the
king of Naples. Naples! The king was not there; but a strange rumour was; first whispered by pale lips to listeners, who gasped and blanched as they listened.

Louder, wider, far and near, spread some horrible tidings, which all men told, but no man told aloud! The army of Italy which he had led to victory, had met, they said, defeat, destruction; their sons, their nobles, trusting to Murat, had marched forth a goodly host. Where were they? all slaughtered, fallen, trampled under the hoof of the Austrian cavalry—dead, destroyed, all but Murat! He had escaped; he alone was saved—and for what? ah! soon, too soon, he, too, the brave leader, the chivalrous prince, the king of Naples, shall fall; but not at the head of his troops, not leading them on to victory, not on the glorious battle-field, but shot down like a dog in his own land, among his own people, almost within sight of his own capital, soon to pass into other and hostile hands; so short a distance from where his queen still reigns, or fancies she reigns, in her gay court.
But see where she is now—in her own gorgeous apartments. The windows are open. Blue and glistening lies the calm sea in the wide bay. Bright beams glance with a fairy-like brilliancy through the window, and rest on all, above and below, like a golden film.

The maids of honour—Aurore was there—gather around her: they watch the tressing of the rich hair, and clasp the bracelet on her rounded and beautiful arm.

Aurore's mother was not there. An unusual attendant, with a strange mien and tottering step, had grasped her robe as she passed onward to the queen's chamber. A rapid entreaty induced her to pause, to step aside into a small ante-chamber. There the deadly tidings that had reached the city were communicated briefly, suddenly. Like a death-warrant on her own head did they fall—like a death-warrant did I say? Women in France had learned to smile at death-warrants, and tread the path to the scaffold with a joyful step; but here was ruin and desolation to a thousand homes—
ruin to the cause, ruin to Italy! The death of her sons brought the rule of the Austrian,—of the Bourbon. Was it not enough that France should see the overthrow of all the splendid fabric of French glory? Must the classic soil of Italy be stained by the blood of her children; and on whom did they cry out vengeance? On Murat, and the queen! She must be warned; she must be prepared.

The Marchioness de Courval flew to the chamber where the queen was occupied in the busy selection of a robe of the most becoming hue. The floor, the chairs, were strewed with different coloured materials. The maids of honour displayed each their favourite habiliment, while Aurore de Courval’s blooming countenance and glossy black hair were just distinguishable above the folds of a pink robe of the richest and softest satin.

Whether it was the insinuating smiles and persuasions of the young girl, or the beautiful effect of the tender colouring in the haze of the glowing sunset, as Aurore waved it temptingly hither and thither, the queen at once
exclaimed, with almost passionate admiration, "Oh, the pink robe—the pink robe!"

The words were ringing in the chamber as Madame de Courval opened the door, the ghastly tidings on her heart, her face shaded with her hand, to conceal the features, which might betray too suddenly some fearful intelligence. Her care was useless, for her entrance was quite unobserved in the eagerness of the moment.

"Ah!" said the queen as she rose, and they passed the pink robe over her white and swan-like shoulders, then let it fall in graceful outlines to her feet, "Ah! I never looked so well! What a beautiful colour! It is reflected on my cheek."

In fact it was so: or the transient excitement of the scene had called up a delicate carnation to her face; for, as Madame de Courval drew near, she thought she had never seen the queen look so dazzlingly lovely. A coronet of diamonds was in her hair. More diamonds, of immense value, sparkled on her throat. She stood before the tall mirror, which reflected her queen-like form, viewing
with pride this reflection of herself, and lifting, amidst murmurs of applause from the young girls, now this arm and now that; and, finally, seated herself, in a graceful and majestic attitude, to take, as she told them, the "pose," in which she would first show herself to the admiring gaze of the noble crowd, who would, no doubt, be assembled at the theatre.

Oh! terrible contrast: the vain, the beautiful woman in her gay trappings, her mind a chaos of gauds and floating ribbons; crowned, perfumed, jewelled; imaginary deity of surrounding admirers and worshippers. And her husband, a fugitive from the lost battle-field—

"Mid the cries of the dying,
Borne down by the flying!"

with breaking heart, seeking death—to end a despair he knows not how to endure—and finds it not—not then, not there!

"Ahime, my queen! Ahime!" burst from the lips of Madame de Courval. The queen looked round; what wail of sorrow dared
there to interrupt the reign of beauty, and that beauty a queen. The Marchioness de Courval quickly recovered herself. Her face, habitually pale, was now calm once more. All her nerves trembled, but her words came gentle and soft.

She advanced to the queen, and after a few expressions of admiration, which her majesty seemed to expect as a natural tribute to her charms, the marchioness leant over her caressingly.

"Alas!" said she, "that hot theatre will destroy the beautiful bloom on your majesty's cheek. The evening is most oppressive," and she laid her hand on the queen's rounded arm. The queen started, for the touch was of a hand cold as death. "Madame," said she, "cela me fait mal—if the evening is hot, what ails you that your hand is as cold as death?"

The marchioness would gladly have had the queen still question her, and draw from her the dreadful news she had to tell; but, quickly passing to other thoughts, the unfortunate queen, whose heart was elated with
the prospect of pleasure, and the contemplation of her own beauty, and its adornment, rose to leave the room, and ordered the doors to be thrown open, that she might proceed to the apartment where she supposed a gay throng of noble courtiers awaited her arrival, to attend upon her at her evening appearance in the royal box.

The lovely girls flew forward. One tendered the bouquet of the choicest flowers, another the embroidered gloves, a third the little flacon of scent most patronized by "la Reine Caroline," whose name it bore; a fourth the handkerchief of finest texture, bordered with drooping and delicate mechlin.

Madame de Courval had no time for deliberation. For the first time in her life, before any human being, she flung herself on her knees. Her arms were round the queen, impeding her progress, and with tears bursting from her eyes, she exclaimed, "Oh! chère reine—beautiful queen! go not forth. Something is wrong. The people murmur. The times are dangerous. Many perils encompass your house. Remain, remain, till we,
till your friends, can devise means for your safety!"

"What mean you, madame, vous rêvez—you dream. Will events go worse because we enjoy ourselves? You are strangely troublesome,"—and a deep shade of annoyance crossed her face; "but now, you warn us the evening is too hot for theatres. See here—the sweet breeze is dancing among those flowers." And truly, through the open casement, the early air of night came over vases of richly scented and living flowers, that swayed their heads backwards and forwards, as if wooing the zephyr to kiss their tender petals as it passed.

"There," said the queen less petulantly, "our pale, our calm marchioness is agitated; she is herself acting a tragedy part for our amusement. See, how she looks at us!"—and she laughed a gay ringing laugh.

But the tones of that laugh had hardly time to find an echo from the gay beings around her, when another sound, low, rushing, as of a mighty flood in the distance—awful, heart chilling—broke in upon the queen’s merriment.
The voice of a multitude. The deep, raging voice of a multitude in the distance, came in at the open window—the very window, with its flowers and its perfume, to which the queen had pointed.

First were heard indistinct murmurings, as distant thunders from the far-off storm. Then, while panic-struck the women stood, still, white, motionless, wrapped up in one terror of what they knew not what, there arose another nearer outburst. And, above the groans, the execrations that joined in one horrible chorus, some shrill fierce voice yelled loudly a few words—a brief sentence, how innocent, how unmeaning seemed the words thus shouted. But they were worse than all. It was the cry of blood, of discord, of rebellion, of expulsion, "Ev-viva il Naso," the soubriquet by which the Bourbon Ferdinand was known amongst his subjects.

Laugh not, reader. The queen laughed not now. To Caroline Murat, to the sister of Napoleon, it was as a death-blow, aimed at all she held most dear. We have said,
“she laughed not now,” but a rigid calmness, a grandeur almost, came over that young queen. The blood of the Buonapartes crowded on her heart; her face was pale, white as marble, but the heart was strong as well as full—at least, at that moment, when all sank trembling around her. She gathered together her every energy; for a moment the weak, the vain woman felt herself a queen, the sister of the great Napoleon. A vision of disasters she could not measure passed through her soul. She would not measure, but she could meet. She advanced with rapid step, threw open with her own hand the doors—wide, that led to her presence chamber. There, instead of the splendid and admiring circle that usually awaited her, were but a few faithful and devoted friends of her race, who, with signs of trouble and agony on their countenances, were rapidly congregating.

“Messieurs,” said Caroline of Naples, advancing towards them with a noble and becoming courage, “Messieurs, here is revolt. Here is danger. Let us meet it at once. Accompany me; we will show ourselves to
this unruly people. Italians, they will respect a woman. Neapolitans, they will obey their queen.”

“Alas, madame,” said an old general, “they will respect no one; they will obey no one. There is but one alternative: flight, the most rapid flight, or evils may overtake your majesty—evils too great for you to endure.”

“Never will I believe it!” said the queen. Still, a tremor over her heart, and over her features, which she could not control, revealed an awakening alarm. “You would have me fly, leave Naples, my palace, my kingdom?”

“Alas, madame, I fear it is yours no longer,” said a stern old veteran, almost angrily. “Haste, madame, haste, and do not peril your life, or the lives of these brave men, by delay. The advice they give you is good.”

The queen looked around her from one to the other of her advisers; she thought this was the counsel of the old, the timid. Her mind reverted to one brave, noble, gallant chief,—the star of victory had sparkled on
his brow. He fly?—never, without a resistance as glorious as victory. Estrangement, jealousy, rivalry, all vanished; and her heart cried aloud for him before whose sword, bloodless as it was, hosts had fled, by whose good arm the whole tide of war had been driven back.

And now was she—his wife, his queen, to fly before a base, low-born multitude? "Oh, were he here!" broke from her lips, while tears poured from her eyes; "Where is Murat—where is my husband?"

That voice, those words, that appeal, who would answer, where all could and none dare speak, no, not one of the veterans around her. Who could tell the wife, the queen, the ruin that had befallen on Italy, the army, and her husband, now when her high braced courage had filled them with fresh devotion? But the task must be accomplished. A brief colloquy was held by those devoted men, and at last the same aged and grey-haired general who had addressed the queen so roughly, when she appeared to him but as a gay and painted butterfly caught in a storm, now that he beheld her struggling with feelings
deep, true, overpowering, advanced with almost a woman's tenderness, and unfolded to her with a cautious and trembling voice the terrible result of the campaign—the destruction of the army, the rage of the populace, the flight of Murat.

Hurriedly as the tale of disaster was told, it was broken in upon once and again by the deep lowering tones of the raging multitude without, cursing the race they had but now adored, and shriller and more often came the well-known and detested cry, "Evviva il Naso!"

Struck to the heart in a paroxysm of grief and (though she would not own it) of terror, the queen wrung her hands in speechless agony. One moment she stood erect, but the next a gush of womanly and natural sorrow overwhelmed her, and sinking almost to the earth, she sought to bury her face in the folds of her robe, while she abandoned herself to tears and lamentations that would not be checked. She tried to stifle the sound of her own voice, to shut out the yelling curses of the crowd.
Her attendants surrounded her, raised her from the ground; she was exhausted, almost motionless; a torpor, as of despair, came over her. She no longer questioned, commanded; she obeyed, she moved where they wished, she went where they led her.

Hoping compliance from her mood of prostration and despair, offers were again made to convey her at once in safety from Naples. But the queen raised her head, the colour came into the beautiful face, the large dark eyes beamed with a bright lustre, and she exclaimed, with a vehemence that left no room for opposition, “No. Murat left me queen of this kingdom, regent in his stead; to none but him will I yield up my power; from his lips alone will I receive commands to leave this city. One thing I require of you, tell me you have not deceived me—is the king alive or dead? A dark and dreadful surmise—something awful as a presentiment has chilled my heart. Speak the truth, I charge you—is Murat still alive?”

Even while she spoke, a horseman, pale, disordered, accompanied but by a few mounted
dragoons, had rode into the court of the palace. Haggard and weary, his step was still rapid and commanding; the guards, clustering at the palace gates in fear of an attack from the mutinous crowds in the city, gave way readily before him, but they looked upon him as a ghost who returns unwelcome to the scene of his earthly career. He sprung forward, and yet no glad smile spoke of a happy return; the herald of death could not have looked more wan or horror-struck. His eye, familiar with the palace, missed the accustomed group of courtiers, the rooms were deserted; his step was not arrested, onwards to the queen's own presence-chamber came the horseman; his hand is on the door—a moment's pause—the accents of the queen, as she spoke the sentences I have recorded, impetuously, and above her natural key in her eager anxiety, had reached his ear, as he stood for one brief space with the unclosed door in his hand.

Something of sunshine revisited the splendid features of the horseman, as the voice of the queen, asking with heartfelt anxiety of her...
husband’s safety, thrilled upon his ear; he stepped forward,—need I say it, it was Murat himself! History has recorded his return, and the words which he uttered as he presented himself before the eyes of the queen:—

"Madame, je n’ai pu mourir!"

An expression new, unwonted, of inexpressible tenderness in those queenly eyes, as they rested on the hero she thought she should see no more, reached the very soul of the disconsolate soldier; and Murat found in the moment of his defeat a triumph he little expected.

In this hour of his humiliation, when he had looked for the anger, the contempt of the queen, to add bitterness to his fate, he found a tender wife, a noble counsellor.

She rallied her fainting spirits; hopeless as was the prospect, the queen still spoke of hope. Both Murat and Caroline of Naples came forth from that brief conference armed with fresh courage and high resolution. All should be tried; but if it must be in vain,
they mutually vowed to meet the worst with fortitude.

It was decided between them that Murat should instantly leave Naples, and endeavour to join the Emperor Napoleon.

The excited populace had obtained some indistinct knowledge of the king's return; rumours got afloat that the prisons were to be opened, and the worst criminals let loose to lead the people on to plunder and to massacre. Mothers cried aloud for their sons, left on the bloody battle-field of Tolentino, and invoked death on Murat.

Murat must not be recognized: if he was to leave the city, a disguise was indispensable.

With wonderful energy the queen herself directed everything, and provided for the safety of Murat. The disguise was procured for him, as well as for the two generals who were to accompany him.

Something was still considered necessary to complete the transformation in the personal appearance of the king. But Murat, whose glorious valour was dashed with but one little failing, an almost womanly vanity in his
fine person and magnificent hair, could not even at that moment be persuaded to have that hair shortened, or his moustache removed.

It remained for a later and more trying hour to bring him, with his own hands, to cut off one from among those dark curls, and then it was for the queen!

It was his death gift; it came in a letter, which history has preserved, beginning with these touching words to his "chère Caroline:"—

"Ma dernière heure est sonnée, encore quelques instans j’aurais cessé de vivre ; tu n’auras plus d’époux, mes enfants n’auront plus de père ; pensez à moi."

We are told that having finished the letter, of which the above is part, "il coupa une mèche de ses cheveux, la renferma dans la lettre, et chargea le capitaine rapporteur de la faire parvenir à sa femme."

History farther tells us, "Le portrait de la reine était empreint sur le cachet de sa montre, il le posa sur son cœur, et entendit, sans pâlir, l’ordre qui l’étendit sans vie aux
pieds des hommes, dont il avait été sept ans le général et le souverain."

I leave to history the regular relation of the events which followed the battle of Tolentino, and which brought the career of Murat to a sudden and hideous close. They are well known, and even the words he uttered while the last weakness again mingled with his heroism—

"Soldats, mes amis,—ménagez la figure et visez au cœur."

These events belong to history. I follow only the personal recollections of Aurore de Courval, and again return to the last parting of Murat and the queen, parting sorrowful, but still hopeful.

The words uttered in peevish impatience by the queen in the days of her indolent luxury, were whispered hopefully in the ear of Murat, as he bent to take a fond farewell, "Ah!" said she, "l'Empereur will still make all right."

She detained him, and opening a casket which stood on a table near, sought for a moment amongst many gems; a small and ex-
quisitely executed cameo of herself, set as a seal, was chosen, and herself fastening it to the chain of Murat's watch, she abandoned herself one moment to his embrace, then bade him leave her and "go."

The little portrait was pressed to his heart as he turned from her. An extraordinary expression animated his features; a few words escaped his lips, of which only these, "à la mort," were audible. His biographer remarks that, "toujours il élevait ses regards vers les étoiles;" at that moment he certainly did so; there was pain, grief, but above all, resolution on the fine features, and perhaps a bitter foretaste of the end that should be his. But a smile followed, a hurried gesture of command to the two companions of his flight, one more pressure of the fair hand of Caroline to his lips, and he was gone—her eyes beheld him no more.
During the middle, and towards the end of the last century, not much more than "sixty years ago," the neighbourhood of London was, as we all know, the scene of many a wild and daring act. The traveller was indeed fortunate who escaped all the risks and perils of the road, from highwaymen on foot and on horse, and from other lawless characters.

The admirable novel of Paul Clifford, and many similar works treating of this period, give us a lively picture of the adventures of these Turpins of the day, or rather of the night.

There is a dash and an excitement about them which has an indescribable charm; and, we fear, most readers tremble more for the
fate of these heroes of the road, than for the unfortunate persons whose lives they endangered, and whose property they very cavalierly appropriated.

Perhaps we have as many robberies now, but they are certainly effected in a very different manner. We have no longer the mounted highwayman riding up to the window of your chaise, presenting a splendid, silver-mounted pistol to your head, and bowing in most courtier-like fashion, while he solicits the favour of a thousand pounds.

We have no longer the moated and fortified houses, relics of the civil wars, where ill deeds could be perpetrated unheard and unknown. No carriages with dashing outriders, carrying off screaming heiresses. No smugglers besieging the residences of country gentlemen, and threatening death and destruction to the inmates.

But as each day carries us farther and farther from these times, such an accumulating number of new faces, new events, new interests, rise up around us, that they seem to hem us in and throw into shadow the “me-
mories of the past.” We feel they are vanishing, and we would fain grasp them before they disappear entirely.

Something of this desire, which makes us seek to retain even a painful tradition, because it is “of the past,” has induced me to record the history of Lucy.

My maternal grandfather was a barrister of great eminence. He married young—a step considered imprudent by his friends. Not that the wife he had selected was in any respect wanting in those qualifications that could justify his choice. She was rich, well born, and beautiful. But marriage, under even the most favourable circumstances, was supposed to militate against a young man in his profession.

A beautiful wife must, it was thought, occupy too much of his attention. Young and rich, it was imagined she would love pleasure and the world, tastes that her husband would
be inclined to share, and thus become unfitted for those graver studies, by which he could alone hope to rise to eminence, or advance the interests of his clients.

My grandfather's marriage was then kept a secret. A handsome villa near London was fitted up for his wife, where she resided in much privacy. Her sole companion, during the absence of her husband, was Lucy Fortescue, a most interesting girl—a cousin of her husband's, and his ward.

She was an orphan: her father had confided her person to the care of my grandfather, and she led a particularly happy life under the same roof as his wife. Between her and Lucy the most devoted friendship existed, though their dispositions were very dissimilar.

Lucy was of a tender and impassioned nature, while my grandmother was singularly cool and courageous for a woman.

Lucy, elegant and graceful, but not possessed of the classic regularity of feature which distinguished her friend, would hang about her, with almost childish fondness: and
she had a little peculiar and enchanting sort of air, with which she would ring out the words again and again: "My beautiful, beautiful, beautiful friend!"

Without Lucy, the hours would indeed have seemed long and dreary to my grandmother, which her husband was compelled to spend in his professional duties; or, entertaining his friends at his town apartments, which were kept up as a bachelor establishment. Then, when all was done, how would he hurry back to where his wife and her friend awaited him.

They, too, had their occupations. Music, Italian, drawing, studied together, had proved an agreeable pastime. A stroll under the shady alleys of the garden—a doze, perhaps, by the margin of the fountain, that threw up a tiny shower of pearly drops at the farther end of the green vista—a small bit of work done, at an enormous piece of tapestry, which was to be finished one day, and hung up in the large dining room, as a trophy of the combined skill and industry of the two friends;—these were the occupations that,
entered on together, had a charm about them which made the hours pass by pleasantly enough.

To my grandmother, all was bright and sunshiny as a May-day. The concealment, that made it necessary to shroud their marriage in mystery, would soon be over. Her husband's talents were already commanding a leading position; that once gained, their marriage would be declared. In the mean time, she had some of his society, and all his love; and the sweet Lucy by her side, a tender flower to care for, and watch over; and from whom she reaped a rich return of affection—almost of adoration.

Yes; poor Lucy's heart was susceptible to such an overflow of feeling, that her friendship was almost as warm as love. Still, love in its own sense, love, enthusiastic, passionate love, had become a tenant of her bosom. A young man, who had known her before her father's death, and whose addresses had been approved of by him, was affianced to her. She did not see much of him, for my grandmother's position at that time did not admit
of visitors of the male sex, especially if they were young and handsome. But Lucy had friends in London; to them she sometimes went for a few days, and there she and her affianced met.

He was in the army: a fine, good looking, high spirited, young fellow, who loved her, as Lucy deserved to be loved, with all his heart and soul. He was a little hasty, a little impetuous, but, with his sweet Lucy he was tender and gentle as a woman.

It was a picture to see him, with his fine face, and dark waving hair clustering thickly over his head, bowed down towards her, watching her—watching her expressive eyes, and reading his happiness there; watching her ruby lips, till they parted in a bewitching smile; gazing on her smooth brow, then, with light touch, parting the golden hair, or raising the glossy ringlets, to trace the blue veins on the white temples. Then he would take her fair hand and lay it on his own, and see how he could shut it up in his, and hide it quite, and not even one little rosy tipped finger peep out. He loved her for her pure, trustful
spirit. He could kneel and worship her almost, his darling! his fiancée! How they would talk and plan! Such happy plans for the future! They were joyous, earnest, playful, loving, by turns. What ecstatic hours they passed together. How they vowed their married life should be but one honeymoon—a succession of honeymoons. How full of hope were those young hearts! Almost too happy in the present to be impatient. However, a time was fixed for their marriage, and that not far distant. They had but to wait till Lucy was of age.

Lucy was nineteen. Few persons believed it. Many thought she was considerably younger. The soft contour of her face still reminded you of the child; the wonderful delicacy of her complexion for one in perfect health; the slight figure, which was tenderly rounded, as if fatigue or uneasiness had never wasted it; the freshness of her whole being; the cloudless light of her blue eye, as if pain or grief had never dimmed it—everything gave the impression of extreme youth-
fulness. The sunshine of happiness lighted up all, and made her a creature sweet and radiant to behold.

She was now nineteen, and on coming of age, she was to be complete mistress of herself and her fortune, which consisted of the old family estate, with an income of between two and three thousand a year. Had she been less fascinating, she would still have been a prize.

The management of this fortune was left to her uncle till the time she married, or became of age; and here was the only little speck upon the pure sky of their horizon. The consent of her uncle was necessary to her marriage, if it should take place before she was of age. This consent her uncle had refused, or delayed under various pretences. He could not object to her choice, since it had been sanctioned by her father. But his consent was not forthcoming, and on several occasions her uncle had summoned her to an interview, and endeavoured to wean her mind from an attachment he assured her was ill
founded. He urged that she was deceived, that she was sought for merely from mercenary motives, and at last he insisted that a period should elapse before the marriage: that time might test the stability of their mutual attachment.

Lucy and her lover waited patiently; they smiled at the doubts and censures of her uncle. That his advice was quite disinterested could not be supposed. In case Lucy died unmarried, the whole property would pass to him. This seemed little probable, however, under existing circumstances, and indeed it was a contingency never alluded to by any of them.

Her uncle was not very much her senior; her father had been the eldest of a large family. Many of them died before him, and the younger son was the only one left. He might be five and thirty, and would not own to so much. I am particular in mentioning these things, as it is necessary to bear them in mind.

He had more than once observed to Lucy, that it would be much better for
her to marry a man used to manage a large property; and added, it was much to be feared, that all she had would be squandered by the improvident young soldier, in whom she had placed her confidence. He represented to her, at some length, the last time they were alone together, what his own ideas of married life were. He took her hand in his, he drew her towards him, as the warmth of his manner increased; and the calm and kind tone of an uncle was lost in almost the ardour of a lover, as he painted all he could and would do to devote himself to a young and charming wife; he quite frightened Lucy;—his looks, she declared, had a mixture of love and hate as he addressed her, and as he grew more and more vehement—finally declaring, that he loved her; that he had always determined she should be his wife, that no one else should have her, no one else was worthy of her. He knew he was not himself worthy of her, but he had studied her character since she was a child—he alone knew her and understood her, and could make her happy.
Lucy made many attempts to break from him, but he held her tightly by both her hands—she was afraid to struggle or to call. She entreated him to cease—to mention no more a subject she could never listen to. He pulled her towards him forcibly, and said she was his dear little niece, and added, with an oath, she should be his dear little wife. Lucy was more and more terrified. She again entreated him to let her go. He stopped her mouth with kisses, and would have recommenced his loathsome protestations, when Lucy, suddenly wrenching herself from him, sprung forward with a cry of alarm. At that very moment my grandfather, who was quite unexpected, opened the door, and looked around, amazed and puzzled. Lucy burst into tears, but her uncle advanced with perfect composure, patted her gently on the head, and laughed a loud, prolonged laugh.

"Ah!" said he, "my playfellow is getting so fine a lady, she won't have a game of play, now, with an old bachelor like me! See, she is quite angry with me for not forgetting
she is still a child—a child I have dandled on my knee since—since when? Why what an old fellow you make of me, Lucy.—Come, help your hobbling old uncle with an arm."

My grandfather looked from one to the other. Lucy did not dare disobey her uncle, and the presence of my grandfather reassured her. But her soul revolted at the man who so rapidly took shelter behind the mask of relationship; she fixed a sort of appealing look upon my grandfather; a red spot came up on either cheek, but—she offered her arm to her "uncle," who, leaning heavily on it, said, "I have a twinge of this gout again—you must spare this child to nurse me, Mr. M——," he felt Lucy shudder, "by and bye, Mr. M——, by and bye, at my place in the country—at Lucy's place, I mean—I am but a poor locum tenens. You are making a lawyer of her, I suppose, Mr. M——," he added, a little embarrassment creeping over him, notwithstanding his consummate assurance, at my grandfather's steady silence.
"You are making a lawyer of her, I suppose, to look after her own property; in two years' time Lucy will be of age. She will be coming to turn me out, and make me deliver up my accounts."

"I shall never turn you out," said Lucy with an averted face, but a voice that had recovered something of its firmness; "you will live in my father's house as long as you please."

"Well, well, but your young scapegrace of a guardsman will, I warrant me. Your poor uncle will soon be sent to the right-about. Though I've kept the place in beautiful repair for you—a fine old place for a child like you, and your scapegrace of a guardsman! You'll thank your poor uncle, but you'll turn him out all the same—ha! ha! ha!"

His manner was excited and strange; but, on seeing my grandfather look up suddenly, and even Lucy turn her timid eyes upon him, he suddenly recovered his self-possession.

"I have been having a little fun with this
child—joking her a little; but she has not much fun in her."

"If that was fun," thought Lucy, "God help me from his earnest!"

"I shall wish you both farewell," said her uncle, resuming a calm and sedate manner. "I have a good deal to do this morning. Good bye, my little niece."

"That child has a peevish temper—can't take a joke," was his last remark, half addressed to my grandfather, who, hat in hand, watched his departure, and half said as if to himself; and he left the room, promising to see them again soon.

But he made no further efforts to see Lucy for some time. Months passed without his visiting her. At length he came. He met her in his usual manner. He never referred to their last conversation, or made any allusion to her contemplated marriage. Yet Lucy was considerably agitated; she felt a creeping chill as he approached her, and could not avoid treating him coldly and stiffly. He took no notice of this, however, though something dark and venom-
ous seemed to hang about his expression, particularly when the young guardsman, who knew not he was there, came in and took his usual seat near Lucy.

A few days after that visit of her uncle's, a letter was put into Lucy's hands. It came by the late evening's post; but it had no date, and no signature: the hand-writing was either strange to her, or it was feigned. This anonymous letter contained the gravest charges against her affianced. He was with her when she received it: they read it together. Sweet Lucy's face mantled with indignation against the writer, while her whole soul kindled with ardent affection for him so villainously attacked.

Her lover kissed her soft hands, as they lay clasped together on her knees, in utter astonishment that any one could be so full of evil thoughts against the man she loved.

"Then," said he, "Lucy, you will not give me up?"

She did not answer at once. She threw the hated letter they had been reading in the
wood fire, that was burning briskly on the hearth; for a fire had been deemed necessary, the chill of an early autumnal evening having made Lucy shiver.

But she still shivered, or trembled—was it with the cold? as she slowly repeated the words he had used.

"Give—you—up?" she added, in a low but distinct voice, "Is not my every hope in life bound up with you?"

There was a pause. Lucy's little heart was palpitating, even visibly, for the breath came quick and short; and the rounded bosom heaved and fell for a moment under the muslin robe of white, that shrouded her exquisite figure.

They rose from the low sofa on which they had been sitting near the fire, whose bright and ruddy blaze cast a glowing light around them. Lucy had passed her arm through his. She was clinging to it almost as if she felt it was thus—leaning on him for strength and for support—she hoped to pass through life; honoured and honouring, loved and loving.
The purest joy sparkled from her eyes, and unusual animation covered her cheeks with blushes.

My grandmother was in the room: seated at a table at some little distance, she had been looking over some books and papers spread out before her.

"My darling Lucy," she said, coming towards the two lovers, as they stood watching together the red embers, "how have you often told me, little flatterer that you are, that I look 'beautiful.' Look at yourself, there, in that large mirror, as you stand opposite to it. I never saw you look so fair, so sweet, so happy!" and she lifted off of the white shoulder a long waving ringlet of a golden hue, and passed it round and round her finger.

"What a lovely bride our little Lucy will make!" she exclaimed, turning to the young man, who now rivetted his eyes on Lucy. "Let me see, how you will do it. Do you know, to-morrow is your birthday; you will be twenty. One more little year, and you will be standing before the altar!"

"One little year!" said the lover. "It is
an age! Why won't your uncle consent? Do you not think you could persuade him?"

"No, no!" said Lucy, shrinking. The recollection of his words and manner, on that one occasion, had never been effaced. Her face showed such a change, such a pale terror shot across the angelic sweetness of her features, that my grandmother instantly changed the subject, and reverting to her former idea, went on to say,

"Now Lucy," I want to see how you will do it. When he takes the ring, he puts it on your finger——"

"He gives it to the clergyman first; he lays it on the book," interrupted Lucy, eagerly, betraying a knowledge of the marriage service that brought out a merry laugh against her.

"Well," said my grandmother, "suppose I am the clergyman; I give him back the ring." So saying, she passed from off her own hand a little ring; it was a golden circlet, with a ruby heart attached to it, one she always wore. "Now," she repeated, "I am the clergyman. I give your husband—that is to
be—this ring,” and she suited the action to the words, “and he puts it on your finger so;” and Lucy’s slender hand was raised by her lover, and with much solemnity the little ring was placed on the fourth finger of the left hand.

Lucy coloured and smiled, and said, “How nice it felt;” then coloured again at what she had said, and was going to take it off. But my grandmother prevented her.

“No, wear it, dear child,” she said; “wear it till—till your wedding-day. I cannot give it you, you know it was my husband’s first gift to me, at the time of our own engagement. I have never parted with it for an hour; but keep it now, and on that day, when we are all crowding round to look upon the bride, upon my Lucy, with her white and festal robe, and the orange flowers in her soft hair, let me, amongst all the gay jewellery your friends will bring you—let me see that one little ring upon your finger. Then, let me have it once more. It will be doubly dear: a memorial of the two beings I love best on earth—him and you.”
"It shall be returned to you," said Lucy, with pretty earnestness, "on that day, even if—"

"If what?" exclaimed her lover, with an outbreak of impatient ardour. "No ifs! That day will come when our long waiting will be over, when we shall all be gathered once more in the home of your childhood, your home for ever, Lucy. How the village church will ring out a merry peal, a merry marriage peal, and old and young come forth to welcome you, and strew your path with flowers; and no one then will boast a right to step forward and say, 'This marriage shall not be! and you will be mine, Lucy, on that day; you will be mine for life;' and the young soldier pressed the sweet girl to his heart in an uncontrollable movement of love and joy, and imprinted on the snowy forehead a kiss, which seemed almost a solemn seal of their unflinching constancy.

Lucy's eyes for once did not sink modestly to the ground at this caress, but, withdrawing herself gently, she lifted those blue orbs, so bright, so dazzlingly beautiful, and gazed upon
Lucy.

her lover, looking long, earnestly, into his eyes, at his noble animated features, looking as if she would fix in her mind and soul every lineament of one she so loved and trusted. What strange sensation, what shadowy doubt is in that gaze; doubt, not of him, but of the future—more than doubt, an intense despair seemed to paralyse her; was it a presentiment? So feel those who, loving, part to meet no more.

He held her hands; he spoke to her once or twice. "Lucy," he said, "Lucy, I have never seen you thus. It is that letter. Are you thinking of it?"

"No, no, no!" said Lucy, in her own sweet joyous voice. The rosy lips parted with a radiant smile, the little dimple came again in the rounded cheeks, and with more than her usual vivacity she entered into all the arrangements for the morrow. They were not soon made, but at last the hour came when they must part.

Lucy once more put her hand in his, and a gay good night was breathed out in her usual clear silvery tones.
The assurance had been given again and again, at sunset they should meet, to-morrow, there, just there. Lucy should be on the low sofa near the fire. Her lover would have finished his duties for the day; they would all be there, and have a "delicious evening."

And so the little trio broke up. Each sought their pillow. The young soldier to dream of the loveliest of brides; the two friends to spend a long hour in converse sweet, and then, enlaced in each other's arms, dreamed also till morning. But we dare not lift the curtain that shrouded the slumbers of the young wife that was, or the young wife that was to be.

"The morning broke." I was going to add, in the words of a well-known song, "it brought despair;" but I am premature.

It brought breakfast—breakfast as English comfort prescribes. The hissing urn, well burnished, was then still the presiding deity of the scene. The piles of muffins and of
household dainties which the family housekeeper insisted on sending up, though the fair friends made small progress in assaulting them, the juicy steak, the symmetrical toast, all spoke of the care and affection with which the domestics sought to provide for the comfort of their young mistress.

A bright autumnal sun shone pleasantly into the room, and threw a ray of light on Lucy's golden hair, as she approached to open the casement.

A long list of commissions, such as accumulate when ladies are not great fanciers of "shopping" (oh, word! as fatal almost to domestic peace as "gambling"), lay on the table.

"And must we do all that?" said Lucy.

"Yes, and more. You will remember today is the first Thursday in the month. Madame de B——"

"That must not be omitted, we never omit that," said Lucy, all objection instantly vanishing. For Madame de B—— was an old invalid, a French lady, whose family had perished in the great revolution; and the visit of her two young friends, on the first
Thursday of every month, was one of the chief pleasures of her sad existence.

"We must give her a shorter visit than usual, or we shall miss . . . ."

"Oh, he will wait for us," said Lucy; but her heart was not in the words, they came out faintly. She never could bear that he should wait. She loved to be the first at meetings, and see his glad look when he found her there before him.

The two friends drove into London. Lucy's patience was sorely tried at each fresh commission, but her impatience was the nicest impatience imaginable—a soft entreaty, a ringing musical laugh at her own disappointment, a richer tint upon the blooming cheek: these were her tokens of impatience. At last Madame de B—'s house was reached. It was in an old-fashioned part of the town. She had expected them some time, and had caused her chair to be wheeled to the window to see them arrive. They never had failed to come at the expected time, they were eagerly admitted, they sat with her a brief space, but Lucy was a little restless; it was unusual
with her. But her head was often turned towards a marble console, where a curious old clock of French manufacture ticked out the minutes. At last there came the sound of wheels; in that out-of-the-way street they were distinctly heard. She said, "It must be our carriage come for us, I know. I do so long to go," and, waving a kiss to Madame de B——, she ran hurriedly down to open the house door.

My grandmother rose to follow her, but a longer adieu, which her politeness thought necessary to the infirm old French lady, detained her. As she pressed her hand, and said farewell, a sound startled her, it was as of a faint scream.

She flew down the stairs. The door of the wide hall was open. A carriage was before it—not her own. Two men stood by, a third was springing into the carriage; a glimpse of Lucy's pale coloured silk dress—a struggling hand—another stifled scream—and the two men flung to the door upon them, leapt up behind, the coachman lashed right and left at the horses—there were four of them
—and off they dashed, at a speed that nothing could arrest. My grandmother's screams for help, and her calls upon Lucy, brought domestics, men, women, children, to the door. She herself flew wildly after them, calling on all that passed to "Stop! stop! that carriage!"

Many looked in stupid wonder; some endeavoured to pursue; but before three instants were over, the carriage, driven at a furious pace, had turned into another street. My grandmother, whose agile feet bore her along, quick, as the arrow from the bow, still reached the turn in time to catch one more glimpse of it; again it was lost to sight, at the angle of another street. Still calling Lucy, still supplicating aid to "stop that carriage!" a superhuman energy carried her forward.

But vain was the speed. Vain, vain, the cry. Help there was none that could avail. A mounted man could barely keep pace with horses chosen for their fleetness, driven with reckless determination to distance all pursuit at any price.

Vain the sympathy, the assistance of the
well meaning, and her own frantic chase. All traces were soon lost; and my grandmother was left standing, she knew not where; rage and anguish in her heart; helpless, but not hopeless.

"A hundred guineas!" she cried, "to any who will bring me but one true word of where that carriage has gone! If any bring the lady back, a reward that shall make a poor man rich for life. And now, a carriage quick, here;" and one being brought, she bade them "drive, as those busy on ill deeds had driven," to her husband's chambers.

The whole was briefly told. The police of the period were quickly set to work. My grandfather repaired instantly to the spot whence Lucy had been carried off. But nothing more could be ascertained of the route that had been taken, or of the persons who had borne away Lucy. Into whose grasp had she fallen? Where was she? Through that night, all that man could do, or woman either, was done, to follow and to rescue her. The rewards they offered served only to increase their difficulty.
Lucy.

False accounts and fabricated evidence would be brought by those who hoped to profit by their misery; and many a bootless ride was taken before morning, hither and thither, still all in vain.

The next day was spent in search—a maddening fruitless search—to those who loved her.

What must she be suffering? Could no clue guide them to her—to save her—from what, from whom? The only particle of information, on which dependence could be placed, added to what has already been stated, was gleaned from some little children, who had been playing in the street, and had been fiercely told to "Make way," by a coachman driving four horses. One of them said the carriage stopped opposite the house they knew to be that of the foreign lady. It had been there but a few minutes, and they had begun to play again, when they saw "a very pretty lady" come to the door, and look out. A man, "all in black," they said, had seized her at the instant, lifted her into the carriage.
with his hand on her mouth, and that she screamed.

The other child said two men had taken her; the first maintained only one, and the others had shut them in; that the young lady tried to turn round, but the man “in black” sprang into the carriage with her, and then they saw them drive away. They did not see the man’s face. He was tall, and had something wrapped round him, like a cloak or shawl—black, too. This he threw in, and seemed to cover the lady’s face with, but the door was shut in a moment, and the carriage drove off; while another “pretty lady” came to the door, and screamed, and ran after it; and then they saw the carriage and the people going very fast down the street, and soon they were all gone and out of sight.

This account, scanty as it was, and gleaned in fragments from the children, threw the only light they could obtain on the person or persons of the villains who had perpetrated this deed.

“A tall man.” More might be learnt, more must be learnt. Day and night, night and
day, did mounted horsemen, and police agents, and friends, and even strangers to the family interested by the cruel fate of Lucy, scour the country round.

Telegraphs did not then outstrip the flying ruffian, but the police did its best, though small were its means. Tracts of unoccupied land, near the metropolis, gave ready shelter to many wild and lawless characters. Escape and concealment were matters of very small difficulty, while all attempts at detection were doubtful and dangerous. By the many, it was supposed that some desperate fortune-hunter had carried off Lucy; that she was secreted somewhere near the coast till he could embark with her for the continent, and once there, marry her. Foreign governments were written to. A search instituted at all the ports to which she might have been taken, or from whence she might have been put into a vessel. Alas! while this was all done, days, weeks, nay months, passed away.

What became of those who had so loved and cherished Lucy—of him who contemplated her almost as his wife—who, on the
last evening they had met, put that little ring on her finger, revelling in the hopes of future bliss?

Mine is not the pen of a novelist. I can but record the facts as they were related to me, again and again by her, the bosom friend of Lucy. I was a child. Her hair was grey, but the flush of pain would come back to her face, and the tears overflow, before she could finish that sad, sad story.

General suspicion had fallen on no particular person. *The only one* who could profit by Lucy's disappearance or death was Lucy's uncle. No word of the little scene recorded some days back had passed the lips of those who witnessed it, except to my grandmother, and then in strictest confidence. Besides, her uncle was "an honourable man"—a magistrate—a country gentleman. Who would dare suspect him?

The circumstances had only to be told (so the world said) to absolve him.

On the morning after the fatal occurrence, when no tidings could be obtained of Lucy, my grandfather took a fresh horse, and rode
hurriedly down into Essex, through the low ground, to where Lucy's uncle resided, at the old manorial house, which had for centuries belonged to the family.

He rode up the avenue at a rapid pace, wishing to arrive suddenly and unannounced. He did so, and found the uncle of Lucy alone, quietly employed new potting some favourite plants in the greenhouse, in his morning gown and his slippers, with a cheerful placid countenance.

He looked up as my grandfather threw open the glass door, with a haste and energy that shivered the panes, and sent a few of the plants rolling to the ground.

"Where is Lucy?" were the first words with which he addressed her uncle, fixing his eyes upon him with all the power of scrutiny his profession had so well exercised, even beyond his natural gift that way. "Where is Lucy?" he sternly demanded, and his voice, deep and hollow, rung through the air, as the sound of the last trumpet, calling the sinner to judgment.

"My dear sir, what's the matter?" said the
other with perfect serenity. "Is she not with you? How uncomfortably hot you look. Do take care; I rather value those plants you have knocked down." And he stooped and carefully collected the fragments of a tuberose that had been fractured.

"Have you heard me? Have you heard nothing?" inquired my grandfather, still scrutinizing the face of the man before him.

"Really, if you speak in riddles," was the reply, "I must wait patiently till you unravel them. But let us go in and have some breakfast. Here!" said he, to the gardener, who was in attendance, "take Mr. M——'s horse to the stables, and pick up those broken pots."

"Hold!" interrupted my grandfather. "Leave me my horse; or, rather, bring me a fresh one; the best horse you have in your stables, and prepare one for yourself. You and every man here must aid me. The country round; this very house must be searched. I have a warrant. Lucy has been carried off."

Surprise and alarm now became visible on the face of all present. Lucy's uncle started;
made question upon question, called loudly for the servants, determined instantly to ride to town to thoroughly sift the matter—to recover possession of her person. By degrees his excitement appeared to abate; he calmed down again, and pulling my grandfather aside,

"Ah, I see!" he said, "I see through it all."

"You do?" exclaimed my grandfather.

"Yes, yes! A ruse of the young fellow; he wants to frighten me out of my consent. We shall have a penitential letter from the young people, saying they are waiting to be married at my convenience; and when I have sent my consent, they will reappear. Very good! ha, ha, ha! I see it all; and you have alarmed us all about nothing. Take it cool, my good friend, take it cool."

"Sir," said my grandfather, losing all patience, "the young man whom you speak of has no more carried her off than"—"than you have," would have been the natural termination; but, something choked the words. And a flood of angry feelings, mastering him for an instant, he continued, "He is in the bitterest agony, searching for her at this moment.
Heaven pity him! for I never saw a man suffer so deeply, so keenly."

An expression of a curious nature crossed the face of the man he was speaking to—something like a gleam of savage joy. So, at least, it appeared to him who spoke to him; and it recalled him to his purpose.

And my grandfather, waving his hand, impatiently observed, "We lose time," and with scant courtesy added, "Let me pass, sir; the house must at once be searched."

"Really!" said the uncle of Lucy, with a slight curl on his lip.

"And the grounds," added my grandfather.

"We will go together," was the reply. "I will merely ask the housekeeper—for—for the keys. I was prepared for this as your first move.. I had ordered her to be in waiting with the keys."

"How! When were you prepared? By whom? Who told you? You said you did not know. Who has been here? How should you be prepared?" were the rapid questions poured in by my grandfather.
"Ha!—I mean—since you arrived. I told the gardener, I believe, who held your horse."

"You did not, sir," said my grandfather, sternly.

"Well, the other man who was here just now. This terrible news quite confounds a fellow's memory. Here! Jackson—Thomas—fetch the keys from the housekeeper."

"I will fetch them myself," said my grandfather, and he walked quickly forward to where the old housekeeper was advancing; a sickly, pinched-faced woman, who rather halted in her gait from an accident in her childhood, but was now approaching her master as briskly as her lameness permitted her.

My grandfather hastened his pace, and came up before the woman had time to interchange any words with her master; but she seemed to make a slight sign to him as she came near; so slight it might be intentional, or an accidental twitching of the eye and mouth.

"My good woman," he said, "you had
orders from your master to have the keys ready?"

"Yes, sir," she answered, "I have just heard he wanted them. The lads were speaking about a search. But, Lord love them, who would bring the poor lamb here?"

"May I ask you, who told you about all this? How did you know?"

"Bless you, sir," she added, with a slight quaver in her voice, "they were all speaking together; and then they went off right and left to tell the news, and look for the young lady. Mayhap, you'll find her come back when you get back to town."

A faint hope; nay, even a strong hope that it might be so, visited the heart of my grandfather.

Except some little equivocation about the keys, easily explained by the natural hurry and agitation of the scene, all seemed innocent of harm, or of any guilty knowledge. Still he prosecuted the search, in which he was assisted by Lucy's uncle, the housekeeper, and the domestics. The grounds were visited, though he hardly knew how to find a
plea for this scrutiny, so hard it seemed to fix a doubt upon the *honourable magistrate* before him, who smiled and bowed and talked as one who took little interest in the matter.

He said, "That young man is shamming; he is, depend upon it—they acted in concert. Who but he knew of the exact date of that visit to Madame de B—?"

"You did," said my grandfather, "you have more than once met her there, and walked home with her."

"That reminds me," said the man, in reply, "of those happy walks—what a pretty little child she was. Well, we must see this matter made all right: I will give my consent; the young people shall be happy—circulate *that*; it will soon bring Lucy out of her hiding-place. Won't she be d—d glad to be married to her idol."

Again a gleam flashed from the eyes of this man; he seemed half conscious of it, and closed his lids over those evil-looking eyes, which had glanced so fiercely on Lucy with, as she said, a mixture of love and hate. However, he turned blandly to my grandfather, and
offered him refreshments after his useless and fatiguing ride.

"There can be no tarrying," said my grandfather, sadly and sternly, as he returned to the steps of the house; "this deed shall not escape the justice of man; I will know no rest by night nor by day till I have brought the perpetrators to condign punishment. If hundreds of pounds won't tempt some of the infamous abettors of this misdeed to reveal the truth, thousands shall be offered. Lucy shall be restored to us or avenged."

Alas! it was said in earnest; and yet skill, courage, and devotion availed not. Hopes were kindled, sickened, died away.

No tidings came of Lucy. Not one fragment, not one atom of intelligence, could be obtained to throw any light upon the poor girl's fate.

A deep and settled melancholy made ravages in the youthful beauty of my grandmother. The fiery impatience of the first few days wore into despondency; despondency changed into despair, as the year was nearly completed since that evening when Lucy and
her lover, with my grandmother, were together planning what should be done upon the wedding-day, when the wedding itself had been half acted at her wish, and the little ruby ring had been put on Lucy's slender finger, and two young beating hearts had vowed in silence eternal constancy.

My grandfather, fearing the effects of this event upon his wife, and tolerably secure in the high position his talents and his connexions had obtained for him, declared his marriage publicly, and they now occupied a handsome house in London. Constantly, however, did the mysterious fate of Lucy occupy their thoughts.

Often my grandfather would reproach himself for having felt and acted harshly towards Lucy's uncle, who nourished, it was said, with vehement pertinacity, his grief for the loss of his niece, whose disappearance he had at first refused to believe in. Yet an irrepressible
Lucy.

suspicion of that man was ever harassing and haunting his mind.

It was also said that the uncle of Lucy shut himself up for days together; that he would see no one; with fierce and dark words he scared away those who forced themselves upon his privacy; that he refused even to take charge of the estate, which, however, the law compelled him to do. At times he was almost like a maniac, and would be heard raving and exclaiming. At last the servants became afraid of him; one left after another. The old housekeeper alone steadily kept her place, amid many changes, looking paler, lamer than ever, yet never resting.

The mansion was almost untenanted. Room after room was shut up. The paths were covered with grass, the beautiful gardens became a wilderness, and the master of the house—can we say the owner?—ah! there lay the doubt—wasted away, and grew more livid and more savage day by day; and now the day was coming round when Lucy, the fair-haired lovely Lucy, if alive, would attain her majority, the day appointed for her marriage.
This time was watched by one more of that small party whom we have seen together—now so scattered. Her lover—near at home—far—wide—had been his researches. He had crossed the Channel, he had visited foreign cities, he had searched and ceased not. A fever was in his veins; but a curious consolation had kept him up. He had dreamt that on the anniversary of the day they parted he should see her once more. It was not surprising that the memory of that, their last meeting, should cling to him even in sleep; but this dream dwelt so forcibly upon his mind that it brought him home, it brought him to my grandfather's once more; he had almost a hopeful look. He said, "My dream pointed to that home that was to have been ours; let us go there."

"Her uncle is like a madman," said my grandfather. "I had letters speaking so strongly of the damage doing to the estate that, as I am guardian of her who may once more be restored to us, I have obtained legal powers to send down a competent person to examine the property and report upon it."
Ride with me, we will go there to-morrow."

The morrow, in silence and sorrow, the young man and my grandfather were preparing for their journey, when a sound was heard in the passage. The gentleman sent down to examine the property was at the door; he came in. His face was very pale, his hands trembled, though a man little used to tremble or turn pale.

"Come, sir," he said, "I beseech you at once, and your wife also is summoned, come in the carriage that I have, with me, my errand will not bear delay; come, and brace up your courage, for I fear it will hardly bear you through."

"Speak! what is it? for God's sake let me know!" eagerly exclaimed my grandfather.

"Lucy, we fear, is found; but, poor girl—" Here the hard man of business fairly gave way, and cried like a child, he could not continue. He had seen her but once before: had he seen her again? he hoped not.

He was again entreated to speak, "Nothing can be so bad as this suspense."
“Do not say so,” said the official, “nothing can be so bad as the reality, if it be so; but you must come, your wife must come; you are both summoned. But there is an inquest; it may not be her, it may not be Lucy.”

The courage of all did break down. The rest was told, with many an interruption—a dismal story; it has happened before, it will again.

A poor girl had been found drowned in a deep pond at the back of the old manor house; her death must have been recent, but not sufficiently so easily to recognize who she had been. My grandfather and his wife had been summoned, as said above, as the persons most likely to be able to identify the body if it were still possible. Such was the urgency of the case that my grandmother, the friend, the tender loving friend who had held her in her bosom and pressed her sweet rosy lips so often to her own, was called to this cruel duty, to look on and identify Lucy, if it could be done. They went.

I have said she was of a high and courageous spirit. A determination to forward the
ends of justice, if it were indeed Lucy, taught my grandmother not to shrink back from this sad ordeal. A lingering faint hope that it might not be her, but an unknown victim of some deed of vengeance, also urged her on.

Many had looked and failed to identify her; she must do her part, if she died for it.

No cry of terror escaped her lips, as she drew near the sad remains. But her eyes would not, could not turn to that defaced and miserable form, or seek the face beneath the hair matted with mud, and leaves, and water-plants.

"Madam," said the coroner, "I fear we are putting you to useless pain; no one has been able to identify the deceased, and thus the ends of justice will be frustrated; but we may yet have some proofs which will guide us to a right conclusion.

"Here is a lock of hair which was cut off better to ascertain the colour; and here, just removed from the fourth finger of the left hand, is a ring: there are persons in the room who say that you know something about it." Both were laid before her.
She took within her hand the ring. It was a golden circlet, with a ruby heart attached. She lifted the lock of hair from the table; it was fair, soft, and glossy. She pressed them to her heart. Her blanched lips moved; she tried to speak, but no words came.

All gathered round her in breathless silence. She seemed almost paralysed, but yet the heart, against which were pressed the little ring, the fair soft hair, was gaining strength for the last effort of love and courage.

Waving aside those who stood around her, she moved slowly forward. She approached the shrouded figure; she bent over the drooping head of her, whom the rest shrunk from with doubt and dread.

She raised her hand for a moment, then turned suddenly away.

"See!" said one of the persons there, in a low whisper, "she does not know her!"

She had only stopped and turned aside to thrust into her bosom a little spray that, with a light and trembling hand, she had disengaged from the long, waving, entangled hair.
"She has not recognized her," said another person, with some disappointment.

She started; perhaps at that moment the last hope, that she had nourished against reason, against conviction, was almost crushed out. But she would own to no certainty from such confused and doubtful impulses. Her resolution faltered not; but with a gasp, an unspoken prayer, for what she hardly knew, she again bent forward, and, lifting back those trailing masses of dishevelled hair from off the death-stained features, she fixed upon them her eyes with one long shuddering look. But some mist seemed to blind her. Again she looked—again—nearer, nearer, drew her beautiful face, white and rigid as if the life-blood had ceased to flow—nearer still—then her eyes dilated, a sort of horror-struck consciousness came into them, and in a voice of agony, clear, ringing, shrill, she cried out, "It is her! It is Lucy!"

Before she could be caught she fell backwards in a deadly swoon. She was removed. The evidence was conclusive. But all was now still more completely to be known.
The wretched uncle of Lucy demanded to be heard.

"I did not do it!" he said. "I did not do it! She did it herself!"

Here was an acknowledgment which was soon followed by other statements.

How he had loved her as a woman, and had hated her as the heir of property he considered should have been his own. To this was added, his jealousy, his growing torment at her happy love, at her rich prospects.

How he had tried for months to detach her from her lover; but, convinced of the impossibility, he had with deep skill planned the scheme by which he became master of her person.

The agents he had worked with had been sent off one by one to America, and well paid to remain away. How at the very time they came to seek her, she was in his power, though not in the house.

The pale housekeeper, who had been born in the outskirts of Epping Forest, had many friends amongst the bands of desperadoes who occasionally visited that locality. Lucy,
on being taken out of London, was deposited with one of these bands, and passed in silence and secrecy from one to the other. Then, as they gradually neared the woods that encircled the old manor house in Essex, she was visited and spoken to by her terrible uncle. The poor girl had recognized him, whom no one else recognized, in the "tall black man" who had seized her.

She exhausted entreaties, prayers, and even (coming from her sweet angelic lips, it sounded strange) she exhausted even menaces to be set free.

At a later period, when fear and ill-usage had pretty well cleared the old manor house of its domestics, she was carried there; and there exposed to the hateful persecution of her uncle, who deeply vowed she should never leave it, but as his wife, or in her coffin.

He never doubted conquering the will of that little frail fair puppet, as he thought her, that painted doll that stood between him and his inheritance, and yet for whom he felt so mad a passion.
A fierce relentless woman, mother of the sickly housekeeper, watched her with ceaseless vigilance. Belonging to the gipsy race, then widely spread through England, she received constant tidings from every quarter, and had been mainly instrumental in concealing Lucy during the first hot pursuit.

But even this old worn-out woman, paid with handfuls of gold, would stay no longer; she wanted the rustle of the fallen leaves under her feet, the light of the stars above her at night, the free air of heaven, and the voices of her people as they gathered round the fire at the wood side: and one dark stormy autumnal evening, she stole out to meet her own tribe in the forest glades.

It was now Lucy's turn to watch with a palpitating heart the retreating figure in the darkness. With what a transport of joy she saw herself deserted by this hateful guard. The fierce man had left her, for a few hours at least; but he had left her swearing deep oaths through his clenched teeth that he would have her, he would make her his, before that day came round on which the law
released her from his control, if she could appeal to it. Desperation urged her on to make one more effort at all risks. He had threatened her with death, if she attempted to escape. But the way was open; the woman had left a window on the ground floor unclosed, by which she had made her own exit. Quick as thought, Lucy passed through it, though even then, she was convinced she saw her uncle in the dark shadow of the avenue, advancing towards the house. She flew onwards; she dare not turn to look again. But she was right. He was there. He saw her. He turned instantly to pursue her. He gained on her in the desperate race. He caught at her, snatched hold of her dress, and menaced her with his unclasped knife. She struggled, she resisted. He knew not that he had wounded her, for she broke from him, and fled once more.

Familiar with every pathway on her father's land, she made direct for the covert of the reeds, on the side of the wide piece of water behind the house; but her strength was ebbing very, very, fast. She had re-
ceived a deep cut in the neck. Though hope and terror had given double speed to her steps, she began to feel that she was weak and faint from loss of blood.

An instant’s pause for breath, a moment’s chance, to press her hand upon the wound, and stop its bleeding—and she might yet have escaped, yet have been restored to her friends, yet have been a happy bride. Oh! but for one of the many who had sought her, and wept, and prayed for her, to sustain her now; the hand even of a child would have guided her safe along the slippery path.

The uncle of Lucy, distanced for a moment in the pursuit, soon lost sight of her under the shadows of the trees that grew thickly by the water side; but he rushed on, cursing the flying fugitive: he believed she was still before him, he could no longer in the dark night guess which way she had taken. He kept on his rash and headlong chase; he did not find her, he believed she had escaped, he imagined she would reach her friends, that all his wickedness had been committed in vain.

He raved, he became almost frantic, he
meditated leaving the country secretly; but he who had contrived so well to decoy the tender bird into his snare, could plan nothing for his own safety. He knew not of her death, he daily expected exposure and punishment, yet could not or would not fly from it.

The discovery on that dreadful day was his punishment and his doom. His reason forsook him entirely, and he was removed to a mad house as a permanent inmate.

A distant relation inherited the property; and the old manor house has been pulled down. A handsome modern structure is erected on the same site, and an ornamental lake has taken the place of the old pond.

The hearts that suffered are at rest, the hearts that suffered then; but humanity is little modified, and tender and noble spirits still struggle with despair; but amidst their sorrows we think there are some will find a pitying sigh for poor Lucy.

A few words remain to be added of him
who had hoped to be the happy bridegroom of Lucy.

He saw the pale coryanthemum and the funeral yew spread on the path that led to the village church, as the defaced remains of poor Lucy were carried thither; he saw her laid in her lowly grave: a simple cross in white marble, with her name on it, and the day of her death, was erected on the spot. When this was done, he exchanged into a regiment in India.

He did not find there the early death he sought, but honours came thick upon him, and riches from various sources, to which he was apparently indifferent. On his return to England he was welcomed by many friends of both sexes. It is said a noble and beautiful woman turned wooer, and would have married him, trusting to her charms to gain the affections of that heart after marriage which had remained insensible to her.

But he again left England, preferring a solitary and rambling life. Men called him the Invulnerable.

When affairs bore a bad aspect in the
Peninsula, after the death of Sir John Moore, he returned from the East to England, and asked to be employed. He was a brave officer, and had held a distinguished command in India.

His offers were accepted; he went out to join his regiment. Not long after, during one of the sieges that marked the course of our army through Spain, he was wounded. His men carried him to the rear, but their efforts could not save him; he died before assistance could be obtained.

The men were moved to tears, for he was much liked; then one of them turned and whispered to another. He said, in trying to tear open his clothes to examine the wound, his fellow-soldier, a rough, but kindhearted man, had broken a little chain, which seemed to have been worn round the neck, and to which was attached a small gold ring, with a ruby heart; the chain was of fair hair.

One of the men suggested appropriating the ring and throwing the hair away; but the soldier who had unwittingly broken it, said, "No,
put it in the grave with him; men used to talk about his never caring for a woman; but that ring was never made for a man to wear, and the hair must have been long and soft to plait into such a chain as this: put them into the grave with him."

It was done.
At the time when the sovereigns of Europe all turned upon Napoleon, and the reverses he had sustained in the Russian campaign chilled the hearts of his friends, and gave fresh courage to his enemies, the old king of Saxony stood almost alone as his ally. Even he, dreading for his people the consequences of war, endeavoured, by retiring from Dresden, to avoid any further share in the fierce contests that were devastating the country. When, therefore, Napoleon, after defeating the combined armies of Prussia and Russia at Lutzen, arrived at Dresden, the king of Saxony was absent.

The public records, however, tell us, "that on the 12th of May, 1813, Napoleon went to
meet the king of Saxony, who made a solemn entry into his capital amongst the acclamations of his people, and the sound of cannon, and the ringing of bells; Napoleon riding by the side of the venerable prince, and leaving him not, till he had accompanied him to his palace, there to resume his residence."

This we read in the public records, but in no history have I met with any of the details of the curious scene which preceded and even caused the return of the king of Saxony. The old king, who, as well as the whole of his family, were personally attached to Napoleon, felt in a terrible dilemma between his wishes and his fears. Napoleon had resided at his court as the master of Europe, at least, as lord of the continent. In the palace of the king, at Dresden, he had received the homage of the ambassadors of all the continental powers. There, the king of Prussia, in person, waited amongst others, for the word from the mighty conqueror, which was to make or unmake him. But to the Saxon family, Napoleon could always unbend. In their simple minds they
had even at one time hoped to give him their princess as wife, when a wife was sought for to prolong his dynasty. He had been their friend: he had been the protector of Saxony: he would have added land, power, and lustre to that country. How could they join his enemies and theirs against him?

The old king pleaded with his ministers for neutrality at least. That he would not stop there, that he would be led on by that powerful and extraordinary man, and be crushed with his falling fortunes, was the conviction of his ministers, unless he could be removed from his influence.

It was then arranged by those who had the weal of Saxony at heart, that the old king should retire from the seat of government for a time, under the pretext of ill health, and abide in quiet away from his capital.

In the meantime, three regents were appointed to guide the affairs of the kingdom. The youngest, but by far the best statesman of the three, was Joseph von Zezschwitz, and what passed was related to me by him: a man so honourable, that his memory is still
cherished in Saxony by every class, and his noble charities remain to testify of his disinterestedness and his love for his country.

It was his aim and object to keep Saxony free from the struggle. To oppose Napoleon would be ungrateful, to aid him was ruin to Saxony. He awaited then with his compeers the arrival of the emperor, determined to save Saxony and his king.

As it has been said already, after the battle of Lutzen, the emperor arrived in Dresden. He was immediately apprised of the absence of the king. Dark grew his brow, and anger kindled in his eyes. "Who governs here?" It was explained to him that the three regents had been appointed till the restoration of the king's health. "Send for them. Am I heard?"

Two of the regents, learning from the messenger how hot burnt the emperor's ire, would fain have found sundry pretexts to avoid the interview. Joseph von Zezschwitz at once proceeded to wait upon the emperor, and was at last reluctantly followed by the other two.
The emperor had been pacing the apartment, and his pale face was strangely moved.

"Never," said Joseph von Zezschwitz, "shall I forget that moment. Incensed as was the emperor, the grand majesty of his bearing, the decision and resolution in the firm outline of the compressed lips, the terrors of the eyes fixed in his full wrath upon them as they advanced."

No one was offered a seat for the conclave. The emperor leaned forward, grasping the back of the chair that had been placed for him. The others prepared their speeches and revolved their explanations in their minds, making ready to bear their part in the interview. It was shorter than they expected.

"Gentlemen," said the emperor, in a quick short tone like the sharp rattle of artillery, "Gentlemen, where is your king?"

"The king," began the elder of the regents, "much regrets . . . ."

"Where is your king?"

"At Königstein, your majesty. He would have wished . . . ."

"What is the distance?"
"About seven Germanstunden...and he..."

"It will take you that number of hours to reach him—less, if your messenger ride well: one hour for preparation, seven for return; in fifteen hours your king can be—must be here. If he appears not, I shall know who are traitors to him, your country, and to me. Gentlemen, if he is not here to-morrow, by twelve, by ——," here followed a tremendous oath, "you shall answer for it with your heads."

This intimation was short, but decisive. The emperor turned on his heel and left them where they stood. Not one word farther could be uttered. He was gone. Their fine oration, their well-conned excuses, all was dust blown down by the breath of him, who knew no trifling.

Some attempt was made to send one of the general officers to claim a brief delay, or obtain mitigated orders. The thing was impossible. The only one who ventured to seek him returned with an account that the emperor was unapproachable: "The time was short, they had best lose none."
The two elder regents shrunk beneath the wrath of the emperor; they instantly despatched messengers to the king, entreat ing him to return by the appointed time. They implored him not to put their lives and persons in jeopardy by an useless resistance, but to make every effort to comply to the letter with the emperor’s demand, nor waste a minute in preparations.

Joseph von Zezschwitz alone met undaunted the fierce anger of Napoleon. He saw into the future; he felt that Germany had risen as a strong man from sleep; that from the Baltic to the Rhine, the heaving tide of patriotism was rushing headlong on to overwhelm the doomed victor of a hundred fights.

He could have rushed into the battle-field and shed his blood for Napoleon, as his brother, the noble spirited Adolph von Zezschwitz, had done—a general at the early age of thirty, who had remained in Russia a prisoner in the hands of the Cossacks, and whose adventures and deliverance will be related hereafter. He honoured the genius
of the man; he even loved Napoleon, not only for what he would have done for Saxony, but for the peculiar kindness which had always marked his demeanour towards all the members of the Saxon royal family.

But now, he must fight one battle for his country, with his utmost strength. The best and truest of his friends was sought out; he bade him take horse instantly, outstrip the messengers of the other regents, and bear to the king this message—"Yield not; listen not; let no prayers or arguments bring you back to Dresden, while Napoleon is there, or you are lost—your country is lost." He accompanied this verbal injunction with a letter, written in haste, but which contained a rapid sketch of what was most likely to move his sovereign, of the ills that would fall on Saxony, if he continued to side with Napoleon.

His friend remonstrated with him. "If this should fall into the hands of the emperor!"

"Go," said Joseph von Zezschwitz, "go: God give you safe conduct to the king. If need be, carry him farther away. Fear not
for me. Let what will be the consequences, I will bear them cheerfully, if I can save my country."

In the space of an hour, Napoleon once more sent for the regents. He enquired if his commands had been obeyed. He was assured by the two elder regents that they had sent to the king; they trusted he would be back at the time specified.

"You do not speak, sir," said the emperor to Monsieur de Zezschwitz, and a silence of a minute followed. "I wait your reply," continued the emperor. Joseph von Zezschwitz could not help looking at the clock which stood on the mantelpiece. He feared his messenger might still be overtaken and stopped. He hesitated; again he felt reassured. The best and swiftest horse in the king's stables bore his friend, whose zeal he could not doubt.

The emperor abated something of the rigour of his countenance. "I see, sir, you fear your king may not sufficiently hasten his return. If you have done your part, you need not fear."
"Your majesty," said Joseph Zezschwitz, with grave, thoughtful earnestness, "I only fear my king will obey the summons of my two colleagues. They have pressed his return. I have not."

Napoleon raised his eyes, and looked steadily at the man who spoke to him—who dared to acknowledge he had opposed his most stringent commands. A word brought to his side an officer who stood near. "Sir, you will see that gentleman does not leave the palace till—till the king of Saxony arrives."

"Monsieur," said the officer, on the emperor's turning aside, "I will not say you are under arrest, but,—" and with characteristic French politeness, he added, "if monsieur wishes anything to be sent for while he remains a few hours, I shall be happy to attend to any of his wishes. The night is at hand; I will give orders for a chamber to be prepared in the palace. Je suis désolé si cela dérange monsieur."

M. de Zezschwitz had not been prepared
for this detention, but he bowed and followed the officer to an apartment, where everything was soon arranged for his personal comfort; but his mind continued greatly affected between hopes and fears. His individual fate was too much bound up with those he loved, for him to be indifferent to it. Still, his chief anxiety lay here—had he done all in his power to prevent the king’s return? Should he have gone himself? But he felt sure his person was known, and watched, and he would not have been allowed to proceed. He went over and over again all he had urged upon the king, and felt satisfied that he had missed nothing, short as the time was, which it was of importance he should say.

The night was passed uneasily enough by all. The emperor had been incensed beyond all control by this attempt to keep from him his old ally. Every bitter passion was at work.

A mighty host of enemies surrounded him. Immense masses of Russian and Prussian troops pressed upon him. Bavaria, already
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waver ing, seemed about to join his foes. Westphalia had already done so. But above all, the defection of Bernadotte stung him to the quick; and when he saw him leading the fine troops of his new kingdom, under the banner of Russia, to fight against his former brother-in-arms, he exclaimed, with concentrated rage in his heart, and scorn on his lip, "Il donne à nos ennemis la clef de notre politique — la tactique de nos armées — et leur montre le chemin du sol sacré."

At such a crisis, Saxony, apparently so insignificant, became almost the centre of his operations, and a "point-d'appui" he could not spare. Hence, we may infer with what stern impatience he counted out the hours that should bring him back its monarch, as a staunch and trusted friend, or crush his hopes of retaining this, the last stronghold of his power in Germany.

To return to Joseph von Zezschwitz. The heart of the noble and self-denying patriot was full of hope for his king. Some brief arrangements he had made, in case the emperor should wreak his disappointment upon
him. His was no hard or stony nature. His anxiety at the present moment about those he most loved was almost more than he could sustain with firmness. It was not very long since he had removed his wife and two beautiful boys, who blessed their union, from Dresden. Fears were then entertained, and events indeed proved correctly, that this city would have to go through the horrors of a siege. Many other persons also endeavoured to place their wives and their children in safety. The difficulty was, where; as the whole country was, more or less, overrun with troops. But Joseph von Zezschwitz had made selection of a little village not far from Pirna, on the Elbe. Here was a small château, which his family might occupy, it was hoped, unmolested. The distance was not too great from Dresden for him occasionally to visit them, and assure himself personally of their safety.

Dreary and desolate as had been his last visit there, his thoughts dwelt on it, almost incessantly, during the long night. He recalled it, step by step, and his head sunk on
his breast absorbed in grief. Then, as the large bell of the Frauen Kirche tolled out the hour of three, he arose, opened the window, and gazed out into the darkness, and a vow and a prayer escaped his lips—a prayer that he might rejoin those beloved ones in mutual safety, when all these trou-
blous times were over. And should it be so, he made a vow that the noblest home that could be raised, for the fatherless and the widow, should be built at his expense, and endowed by his means, on the spot where he had last seen his wife, and his two lovely children.

We have said he recalled the circumstances of his last meeting. Let me briefly record them here.

The stirring events crowded into the last few weeks had prevented his usual visits for a longer period than usual. The absence of the king threw increased difficulties and cares in the way of those in power; and Joseph von Zezschwitz had tried in vain for a few hours' respite to seek those who were dearest to him on earth.
But the intelligence, that troops had been ordered to find quarters in the different villages in the neighbourhood, was brought to Monsieur de Zezschwitz. He immediately ordered horses, and rode, accompanied by his faithful Jager, towards the village where they resided. He had started before daybreak; he rode on through the early morning hours; a low mist hung over every object. The grass drooped, dank and heavy by the road side; the peasants, of whom but few were seen, shrunk away at the sound of horses' feet. They went, with gloomy forebodings, to till the ground and labour in the fields where they might never reap, while the demon of war ravaged the country.

At last the long chaussée turned westward towards the village. Dimly through the mist rose the low church steeple of that alternately swelling and indented form peculiar to Germany.

The weary horses were urged on to greater speed, and, with an aching presentiment of evil, Monsieur de Zezschwitz looked round him as they arrived at the village green.
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early *hausfrau* swept the open doorway; no maiden with her milk-pails and burnished cups stepped from house to house; only, where the last time he had been here, stood the fair child, heir of his name and fortune, with his infant brother by his side, peeping through the half-open door of the garden of the little château—there was now standing a trooper’s horse, his bridle thrown over the rail, hot and panting; the flowers in the little garden were crushed as if many feet had been there. The house had all its shutters closed, save one below, from whence odours of tobacco were escaping, while fragments of pipes and a dragoon’s sword, which lay on the sill, bespoke the presence of soldiers.

“Good God, where are they? What has happened?” was all the husband and father could say; his tongue clove to his mouth, his face was convulsed, and his limbs shook, and he sprung from his horse, threw the reins to his follower, and staggered to the doorway. There, gazing through the open entrance into the large dining hall, he beheld indeed soldiers, no one but soldiers, stretched in sleep.
around; on the floor, the sofas, the table; one only stirred, and asked him what he wanted there? then turned again and fell into a heavy stupor.

But tripping down stairs at the sound of his approach came a little maiden, daughter to the clerk, the favourite playmate of his boys. He was rushing past her, to see if his wife and children were above, were well, were safe. She shook her head. "No one there; no one, only sick soldiers."

"No one—where then?" he exclaimed.
"Gone—all gone!"
"Where—when? for God's sake, tell me what you know?"
"Oh! dear, sir, don't look so. My lady went—went directly after the funeral."
"Funeral! what funeral?"
"The sweet boy!" answered the girl, bursting into tears; "it was so sudden; we thought my lady would have died too."
"My child! which?"
"Oh, the little one! he looked so lovely. My lady cut off some of his golden ringlets before they buried him. How often used I
to twist them round my fingers. She gave me one. Here it is!” and the girl put her hand in her dress and drew it out.

Grief for a few moments mastered every other feeling. The father took the little ringlet; it was pressed to his lips; the tears fell fast over it. Was it all he should see of the lovely boy?

But he must hear more—all—and where were they? He never doubted what the little girl told him. She had been noticed for her intelligence and her attachment to the two boys. They had even been entrusted to her care for many an hour to play in the walled garden of the château. The girl’s affection for them had brought her through the sleeping soldiers to seek the place they lately occupied, and gather up some tokens of their presence, left perchance in the haste of their sorrowing flight.

But quickly the tears were wiped away, and Monsieur de Zezschwitz, by rapid questioning, obtained from the young girl all the sad history.

They were returning, she said, from even-
ing prayers with her lady; both the boys looking so joyous, so beautiful. As they came on the village green, some troopers rode up with an officer at their head. They asked for the curé, and demanded quarters immediately for some sick of their regiment, who were following in carts hired from the peasantry. They were Prussians, and spoke quietly but firmly. The curé hesitated, but the officer took the matter into his own hands, and looking round, soon decided where to place his men. Most houses were marked down to hold a certain number; but the château, being the largest house in the village, had a more than double share.

Madame de Zezschwitz slowly returned to her château; much distressed that this untoward event should bring her little family into contact with any soldiers, still anxious to relieve, as much as lay in her power, those who suffered.

She instantly despatched a messenger to her husband, to certify what had befallen, and demand his advice.

That night she remained in the château,
retreating to the upper apartments, and leaving to the soldiers the lower part of the house. But, alas! the illness from which these men were suffering (though the secret had been well kept by the officers, who feared to see their men left deserted and uncared for) was one of those low infectious fevers, that rapidly carried off all who were attacked.

The sweet child, their youngest, a beautiful boy of four years old, had been laid down to rest in his little cot, moved to an upper chamber; but as the night came on he woke shivering and in pain. The mother's alarm and agony can be imagined. A vision of the truth glanced through her mind. With haste and terror, unmindful of all else, she flew for the medical man of the village. He was standing at the threshold of his door, his hands full of medicines prepared for the unhappy men brought that evening amongst them. She addressed him eagerly, entreatling him to come to her child. He followed her.

"Ah, madame!" said he, "this is sad indeed. I have been seeing these men. It is a heavy visitation, this fever which is on
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them. Our poor village! Had I known, you should have been moved at all risks. But now, we must nurse your precious child where he is. We cannot move him."

The tale is soon told. The fever which seized most fiercely on the finest and most vigorous children, soon laid low the little sufferer. He sunk indeed so rapidly that time was not left for the remedies to have a chance.

The mother, in her overwhelming distress, had not even the relief of hearing from her husband. Her messenger rode too good a horse; he had been dismounted by some of the soldiers, and recommended to travel on foot—a safer mode, they observed, of proceeding for him; it should be their care to manage his horse and break him in properly against his return. The man remonstrated; but the thrust of a pike brought his argument to a close.

The deadly nature of the malady, its rapid progress wherever the unfortunate soldiers were placed, spread consternation in the village, and every one fled from the devoted spot.
One sad duty remained to the mother to perform in haste and sorrow, before she too fled with her only remaining son from the scene of desolation. The good curé found a quiet and solitary spot in the green churchyard, where the last rites of religion sanctified the grave of that beloved child, his mother and his brother shedding hot tears on the little coffin, as it was lowered into its lonely resting-place. Then the mother wrapped her arms round her eldest, now her only child, and bearing him away, entered with him a small covered waggon, the only conveyance even gold could procure, and passed through the village, on into the dark woods away from the fatal spot, still pressing her son in her arms, still fearing to hear him, too, speak of pain, or murmur out cries in feverish thirst. All the direction she could give, in her grief and desolation, was—"On still further—further."

The peasant who had driven them, however, brought back word to the curé, that, after proceeding some hours over the rough forest road, he had ventured to deviate some-
what from the track, and take the lady and her son to a spot so secluded that he thought in his simple mind "no fever nor soldiers" could reach her or the child; a large old farm house belonging to some relations of his, which stood amidst a few acres of land redeemed from the forest, where they would have "the best of milk, eggs, and welcome." He brought back from there one more letter from the lady to her husband, which had been forwarded to Dresden, but could not have arrived till Joseph von Zezschwitz had left that city.

Monsieur de Zezschwitz learnt some of these details from the little girl, who eagerly narrated all she knew; more from the good old curé. With him he went to the churchyard, and the old man silently pointed to a low mound where a rustic cross of wood had been recently placed; it was the mother's last request, and he had not forgotten it.

But the father dared not waste the hours in unavailing grief, when duty bade him act. His practical and expansive mind soon saw
the precautions necessary to check the spread of this contagious disease among the inhabitants, and the measures that might be taken to relieve the soldiers from much of their suffering. A few brief but comprehensive orders set a new face on everything; then hastening on the track of her who had fled with the only remaining pledge of their love, he felt as he rode on towards them once more the terrible anguish of suspense. Had that child, too, taken the fearful malady? his beloved wife, was she safe; or had her bereavement and fatigue not Overpowered her?

He found her sorrowing indeed, but not ill; his only boy looked more lovely than ever; his large blue eyes dimmed with tears, then glistening with joy to be clasped once more in his father's arms.

It was a brief meeting. Duty recalled Monsieur de Zezschwitz to Dresden; the regent could not indulge the feelings of either the husband or the father. One short hour was all he gave himself with those so dear; then with renewed haste he returned to his post.
But all these sufferings passed through his mind that night, when hour after hour the fate of Saxony, and perhaps his own, lay in the balance.

The two other regents, whose ready subservience to the emperor would, they hoped, insure his favour, still passed a sleepless night.

If the king were restive, and would not return; what then! might not Napoleon execute his threats, and wreak his vengeance upon them?

While these different men—the emperor, the upright councillor, the uneasy regents—watched with anxious eyes the dawning of the morning, the venerable monarch was rolling slowly back to his capital.

He had cast in his lot with Napoleon. Napoleon had been his protector in the days of his power. He alone would have raised Saxony to a place among nations. He was his friend. Now the emperor looked to his honour to stand by him in the hour of need. The old man's heart was not chilled; honour, constancy, and good faith, seemed to call
loudly upon him; he would not resist the appeal: perhaps he could not if he would.

Tears had rolled down the old king's cheeks, as he read the urgent appeal of his faithful minister and regent. But, even considerations for the safety of his representatives, and especially of the one who so nobly devoted himself to stand in the gap, moved him to return. He yielded; and, mounting the state coach, with his aged queen by his side, he gave orders that they should be driven back to Dresden with all possible speed.

But such speed as royal vehicles in Saxony could make was not great. The large and lumbering carriage rocked heavily on the roads, much cut up by the passage of artillery. The horses were lashed forward, and did their best, but the harness, a compound of ropes and leather, strange to behold, groaned and cracked at the unwonted pace. The usual runners, in yellow liveries, were left behind, while aides-de-camp and chamberlains were huddled together in un-
seemly violation of etiquette, in two vehicles behind.

The great bell of the Frauen Kirche, which had rung out the first hours of morning, now announced nine o'clock. No intelligence had yet come from the absent monarch. All was gloomy and sombre at the palace. The emperor had not again asked a question, or spoken on the subject; he moved with a dark face among his generals, giving orders, and hearing reports.

Nine had long struck. The gilded hand of the large town clock was on the stroke of ten. No king of Saxony appeared. But a solitary calèche dashed down the street; an officer and two chamberlains were in it. Instantly asking for the emperor, they were shown into his presence.

The emperor motioned all away, while he received them. None could see the expression of his face as he heard the words of the officer, "I come from his majesty of Saxony," —a pause, a breathless pause.

The emperor made an impatient gesture
for him to continue, but no word escaped from his compressed lips.

"He will, sire, be here directly."

"Ha!" said the emperor, and his chest heaved as if a load were suddenly moved off it. "Generals! to horse! order the bells to be rung—an imperial welcome to our good and true ally! Out, sirs, to meet him. Let a royal salute be fired. Away, to horse, to meet the good king, our faithful friend!"

Away went generals, and officers, and soldiers, and citizens. The bells rang, the cannons sounded their welcome—ominous welcome; the fair ladies crowded the balconies, and Napoleon himself rode out to meet the returning monarch, and "left not the side of the venerable prince," says the historian, "till he had conducted him to his palace."

Perhaps, there, some private words cautioned the old king to keep between themselves the rather imperial coercion which had preceded the imperial welcome. But the point was gained: the ally and Saxony were pre-
The three regents were sent for; they were complimented *en masse*, for having restored the king to his capital and to his ally.

But, turning apart from the rest, the emperor laid his hand on the shoulder of Monsieur de Zezschwitz. "Sir," he said, "you are a brave and wise man; Napoleon honours you; he would have servants, nay, friends of your stamp; but the emperor could deal with you but as he did: are we friends?"

They shook hands: it was a mutual honour, and a mutual regard marked all their future intercourse. Nevertheless, when in a few short weeks the venerable king viewed, from the windows of his own palace, his beautiful capital, the Florence of Germany, surrounded by the countless hosts of Russia and her wild bands of Cossacks, Prussia's serried ranks, and fresh bodies of Swedish troops marching to take possession of the besieged town, the country desolated and devastated, destruction laying low all that was lovely and
The Three Regents.

peaceful and fertile as nature and art could make it, he may have repented not following the honest counsel of the faithful and far-sighted regent.

It is true that on the very eve of falling into the hands of his enemies with his family and his city, and its sickening and famished inhabitants, the great emperor, his ally, left everything to come to his rescue.

When the worn-out troops of Saint Cyr could do no more, when the inhabitants clamoured for a surrender, when all seemed hopeless, and Dresden was about to surrender, a cry arose, "Napoleon, Napoleon is here." He passed, we are told, "au galop" the bridge, battered and broken as it was; his troops followed "à pas de charge;" he spent a few moments in consoling the royal family, and then with Ney by his side and Murat at hand, proceeded to attack the troops that surrounded the town and drive them back.

What prodigies of valour were done that day. The description of Murat (by Major von Odeleben, a Saxon, and an eye-witness) almost makes us smile: "Now, like that
vain, brave, glorious leader, he rode up the gorge of Plauen, sword in hand, his mantle, embroidered with gold, thrown back over his shoulder, at the head of his carabineers and cuirassiers, and precipitated himself upon the Austrian infantry, which fled on every side."

Napoleon and his imperial guard were not idle. The first cannon-ball brought down Moreau, fighting, like Bernadotte, against his countrymen; and Prince Schwartzenburg, viewing the posture of affairs so suddenly reversed, exclaimed,

"The emperor is in Dresden! We can not doubt it. The moment to take it is past. Let us only endeavour to secure a safe retreat."

The slaughter had been dreadful, but by three the following afternoon, the town was free. Its besiegers were gone. But brief was the respite from the horrors of war.

And not long after, when sharing the sad flight to Leipzic—when watching from the little tower that still stands over the gate, the changing fortunes of that three days' strife—when refusing the last and only offer his im-
perial ally could make him, to accompany him still further in his retreat to Paris—when he sadly declined, for what else remained for him to do, but to yield to his fate, since his very army had turned against him and Napoleon, carried away by the cry of their German brethren for the great fatherland—when left hopeless to the mercy of the sovereigns, and conducted away to Berlin, the king must have felt how well and wisely Joseph von Zezschwitz had counselled him, even at the peril of his life.

The old king was in course of time restored to his kingdom. But with how lowered a position in Europe. How deeply wounded by Prussian policy; how, still clinging to the name of Napoleon and to his dreams of greatness and glory for Saxony, had the emperor been able to accomplish all he had intended.

Monsieur de Zezschwitz had the happiness of finding his wife safe with their only child, who was cherished and adored as the greatest of treasures. And well did Monsieur de Zezschwitz remember the prayer and the vow of that
memorable night. A splendid building was erected on the spot where that sweet boy drooped and died,—a memorial to him that was lost, and of thankfulness for him that was preserved; and for their reunion in safety after the horrors of war had swept by, and peace once more was restored to their home. In memory of his vow, this large and noble hospital was built for the fatherless and the widow. And many an orphan has been raised there whose prayers and thanks have been poured out for his benefactor, and for the noble family to which he belonged, with all the energy of German enthusiasm.

The only son, the heir and owner of his father's name and estates, lately visited England. But, though he has retired now to the quiet enjoyment of country life, other younger branches of the family still serve their king in posts of honour and distinction; and the services of Joseph von Zezschwitz, and his high-minded self-devotion to his country and his sovereign, in the stormy days of old, have never been forgotten by the royal family of Saxony.
It may be thought that Joseph von Zezschwitz was to blame for allowing his wife and children to remain at a distance from him during a time so full of danger. It will be seen that still greater dangers were incurred by those who remained during this period within the walls of Dresden.
THE SISTERS AND THE FOUR PORTRAITS.
THE SISTERS AND THE FOUR PORTRAITS.

We hear much of German enthusiasm. Some curious facts connected with it came under my own observation. Improbable as the circumstances may appear, they are related with the most scrupulous adherence to truth. The names only of those concerned have I permitted myself to change, for reasons which must be obvious.

A friend and relation of Joseph von Zezschwitz, regent of Saxony, had also the painful honour of holding a post in the government at that trying period of which mention has already been made.

He had also a young wife and one child. A wife noble by birth, of an unbroken descent of many generations; nurtured in the
midst of luxury and refinement; a woman remarkable for the beauty of her countenance and for a form of feminine delicacy and grace.

Karl von Schomburg, taking a different view of the dangers that surrounded them, determined to retain his wife and child near him, that with his own eyes he might watch over their safety.

They had a large and stately mansion in Dresden. Crowds of domestics that custom and their rank demanded, lined the halls and ante-chambers, ever ready to obey the slightest summons of the lady or her child.

Everything was done and thought of by Monsieur de Schomburg which was possible to screen his wife and her infant son from the miseries of war. He could, in no wise, make up his mind to part from them; they continued therefore to remain with him, even after the allied troops, marching upon Dresden, besieged that unfortunate town.

Amelia von Schomburg—(I have retained the real Christian names of all, particularly wishing to mark a similarity in her name and her sister’s, of whom we shall hear more in
course of time)—Amelia von Schomburg had the additional grief and terror of seeing her husband obliged daily to cross the most dangerous parts of the lines in the discharge of the duties of his office. Still, I have seen a portrait of her taken at this time. A fair and expansive forehead, flowing auburn hair; eyes large and of the deepest blue, with eyelashes dark and long; a complexion of glowing beauty, the rich blood mantling on the cheek almost in a blush; the mouth full, rosy, smiling.

Yes, even at that period of alarm and uncertainty, the eyes were brilliant, the smile divine.

And such was she represented to me: though darker and darker, daily, grew the prospect around, her brave heart bore up, where stern men shrunk and pined. The husband declares that whenever he returned to his home, he was met, not by a blanched and terrified woman, but by a beaming look, a joyful word; a sweet sunshiny welcome that cheered and refreshed him like a light from heaven. And those who have never lived
where war was raging, cannot easily do full justice to the heroism of this charming woman. Now, alas! she had not only to tremble for her husband’s safety as he crossed and recrossed the deadly lines, but all the horrors of war were crowding on them. In every house, troops were billeted; to every house were brought the wounded and the dying.

In the house occupied by Karl von Schomburg and his wife, eighty soldiers (I speak accurately) were quartered. It is true, the house being large and the servants numerous, at first they could be well attended to. But a shortness of provisions began to make itself felt; and not long after, a deadly fever, more resembling the plague than any of the fevers of the country, spread from house to house.

These overcrowded houses could no longer contain the inhabitants. The churches, the public buildings, even the streets were filled with the unfortunate soldiers who lay in their last agonies. The malady declared itself, as in the plague, by black spots which made their appearance on divers parts of the body: few, indeed, were the patients rescued if once so
and the Four Portraits.

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seized. Rapidly these spots extended, and death followed in twelve or twenty-four hours.

The house of Karl von Schomburg had hitherto been wonderfully preserved from infection. Amelia, his wife, herself constantly superintended the provisions prepared for the soldiers quartered upon them, and gave orders that everything should be done to procure relief for the wounded if possible. But her servants did not share her zeal; this was a case quite out of their calculations. They felt the general alarm. All was bad enough now, but they feared worse things for the future.

The enemy's balls; the shattering of their walls and defences; the dreadful crowding of the inhabitants and troops in the apparently devoted city; the raging malady around; the sufferings and terror that existed on every side; the fear of the last dire onslaught of the invading and conquering armies, with the horrid Cossacks riding at pleasure through their streets;—here was enough to unman the stoutest hearts, and domestics are not ex-
pected always to be heroes. The natural result followed. Most of the servants left at once. The rest shortly followed. No others could be found to engage themselves, with the exception of one faithful creature, an old nurse of Amelia’s, who had been with her in her infancy, and who now came to assist her and to watch over the child.

So that the high-born Amelia von Schomburg herself, with the assistance of this one woman, prepared and dressed the food that was still obtained, though with difficulty, for the soldiers and officers quartered in her house; and with still more care and trouble arranged the evening meal for her husband, when he would come in weary and exhausted, and, but for her, utterly dispirited.

But the scarcity increased from day to day. Money, however lavishly offered, failed often to procure what was necessary to support life; and only by great and unwearied efforts could Amelia von Schomburg procure sufficient food for those under her charge. Then, then the blooming cheek of Amelia wasted away; the slight form grew more attenuated; the white
hand, thin, and almost transparent; but the smile, the bright and cheerful look, the sweet, joyous welcome, were there still.

The soldiers and officers, obliged to tax her bounty and her strength, viewed her as she passed amongst them, even as they would the sainted Madonna. No weariness could extract a murmur from her. Always at her post, the spirit within her gave strength to that fragile frame; and whatever woman could do, was done for every one beneath her roof.

But there was one being beneath it, one little idol of her heart, whose tiny footsteps had just learnt to follow hers from room to room; one precious, beloved being, for whom, in secret, such agony rent her soul, that the courage with which she armed herself would sometimes well nigh give way.

Her eyes, so loving, so tender, dare not rest upon her boy; her lips quivered when he put up his rosy mouth to kiss her. She would take him in her arms, and bury his head in her bosom, while her tears fell drop by drop upon his glossy curls. But none witnessed her agony, none suspected her despair.
What pains racked the mother's heart for her darling child, as famine and pestilence hemmed them in: God only knows to whom she poured out in silence inward and fervent prayers. But so active, so energetic a mind, could not rest there. All that forethought could devise, or ingenuity invent, was done to secure that sweet child against the famine that was already felt, and that might more cruelly, more hopelessly, seize upon them.

It was not till long, long after that warm heart had ceased to beat, that the dreadful anxiety she had been enduring at this period was discovered. For on a subsequent occasion, when the house they inhabited during the siege was about to be refurnished and remodelled, the fruits of the mother's care were made perceptible.

There, in that room where slept her darling child, the wainscot, the recesses, the very walls themselves, from whence the paper had been carefully raised, and the plaster scratched away, behind every object where a hiding place could be contrived, were secreted articles of food, such as might best resist decay, and
sustain the existence of her poor child; with prayers and injunctions, that if found by any but herself, as they valued their souls, they would give them to her boy, to keep him from the last extremities of hunger. In a private drawer of her secretaire was also found a plan of the room sketched out, with coloured marks indicating where food was hid.

What must have been her sensations as she made these secret provisions against a time when her child might be dying of hunger? What a fate did she contemplate for her darling boy, and with what heroism did she turn from these desolating duties, to smooth her brow, and deck her face in hopeful smiles, to receive her husband!

At length, when every heart in that poor city called out in its despair to the French general, to yield the place to its besiegers; when the fierce legions thirsting for prey and rapine, and the wild Cossack with his long lance, seemed less terrible than death by inches from famine and disease; when human fortitude could endure no more, and for an emperor who was not theirs, and a
cause they no longer wished to espouse; when Saint Cyr, attacked without and within, held out but feebly with a hopeless zeal, and found himself unable to withstand another day—not even many hours, against the overwhelming hosts of the enemy; when nothing was heard but the wailing of the dying mingled with the sharp fire of the musketry, which encircles nearer and nearer those that fight and those that famish; in that critical hour, at that most critical moment, a cry arose, a rush was made, all eyes turn to see the cause of this fresh outbreak. Was it the enemy rushing in to finish the work pestilence had begun?

No—this was shouting—crowds—firing—flags and banners waving—trumpets resounding; and suddenly a horseman, outriding all, appears on the bridge.

"It is Napoleon."
"Vive l'Empereur!"
"Dresden is saved!"

Dresden is saved; the siege is raised! The city is free! Plenty, serenity, joy is reigning where lately death played his gaunt game;
and the silver waters of the Elbe flow on amid the quiet parks and gardens that are still partially left around the town.

True, the king of Saxony himself, with heavy heart, signed the order which laid low many an acre of cherished wood and blossoming shrub.

The Grosse Garten lost more than half its trees. Only a small remnant was spared by the interposition of Baron F—_.

The generals in command pleaded loudly for every stock and stick to be cut to the ground that could afford shelter to the allied troops.

But all was hopeful once more; the old king feasted in his palace in honour of the French marshals; while the emperor was still there, moving among them with a proud step, and eyes that gleamed with triumph.

Along the banks of the Elbe, abutting on the bridge, the scene of so much strife, is a fine and sheltered promenade. Some venerable elms form an avenue, and throw the shadows of their wide arms across the turf beneath. Karl von Schomburg, with his wife
Amelia and their little boy, were pacing under the old trees, and looking with longing eyes over the blue country beyond.

"To-morrow, my Allerliebste, we shall leave this dreadful town; we shall have such enjoyment, such relief, away from these scenes," was Karl von Schomburg's remark to his wife; he continued more eagerly, "How we will ramble amongst the groves and gardens of our dear home; how happy we will be after all our troubles, now we are safe through them all. Never, dearest Amelia, but for you, could I have sustained myself; how wonderfully you did everything, my beloved. See our sweet boy; he will be proud of his mother. Now all danger is over, we shall be free for a time; all will be happiness and joy for us. At daylight, we start; all is ready. The morning will be lovely; see how the sun sets gloriously in the golden sky."

She answered not; he turned surprised. When had her heart and lip not responded to every appeal from him; a strange fear came over him.

She was gazing at the sun as it sunk,
radiant in glory; but where was the glow on her cheek, the light in her eye? An ashy paleness had stolen over her countenance; her eyes were fixed, but something like tears stood in them. A slight tremor passed through her frame as she leant on her husband's arm; then, once more, her face beamed with a sweetness almost more of heaven than earth.

"It is nothing, my beloved; let us sit down—a sudden faintness."

They stepped backwards to the bench; her head drooped forward for a moment; the evening breeze had blown back her loose and flowing mantle, the sleeve beneath was transparent, the white slender arm was clearly seen through the thin lace.

"Ach, Gott in Himmel!—Oh, God in heaven!" escaped her lips.

A violet mark, as if a hand too tightly clasping, had left a finger-mark on that slight wrist; there—there—she knew—she saw it all. In an instant conviction seized every one; even the poor child shook and whispered as he looked up in their faces with his wan face, 

"Liebe mutterchen, du hast die Krankheit;"
oh weh! oh weh!"—Sweetest mother, you have the illness; oh weh! oh weh!

It was so.—Carried home almost in the arms of her husband, who flew for remedies, where remedies were useless, she lay in the very room where all her hidden preparations had been made, where all her hidden tears had sapped her life; here now lay stretched the tender wife and mother, awaiting the arrival of the king of terrors.

She had watched too many to doubt for one instant of the deadly symptoms; another and another of the blue, dark marks, marred the marble whiteness of her arm.

Why follow up the sad scene? Before the sun had shot his first ruddy beams across the heavens, Amelia von Schomburg had ceased to suffer.

On the face, though calmed in death, such heavenly beauty rested, that it almost seemed as if the happy and glorious spirit was still there—reposing but in sleep.

Who can depict the grief of the husband? At the very moment he was congratulating himself that all their sorrows were over; when
he conceived himself about to repay in happy love her cares, her tenderness, her courage, her devotion, he feels his beloved snatched from his grasp. No help for her, who had helped so many. Young, beautiful, and good, she has fallen at the very threshold of her life, but not before she had given the brightest example of every womanly grace and virtue.

The husband's grief was great. He was even haunted by a fear that he had sometimes repulsed with a hasty word, or a smothered complaint, his wife's angelic tenderness.

Still, he had loved her dearly. What a solace and a comfort she had been to him!

And his motherless boy; how would the poor child get through the little distresses of childhood, its illnesses, its troubles, without a mother's care? And he, a solitary being, his home lonely and desolate—it could not be—no, it could not be endured. Like many widowers, the more he had loved his wife, the more he wanted another. The transition from the past to the future is rapid, and appears inconsistent; but human nature is inconsistent.
In short, I relate a real history, not a romance, in which it would appear more interesting to leave the bereaved husband a mourner for life, or, at least, a widower for years.

Perhaps the German enthusiasm I have spoken of, or sentimentality in general, was not the *forte* of our friend. But, be that as it may, the year had hardly expired before he came to the conclusion it was not good for man to be alone.

Where then could he seek one to replace her he had lost? It was difficult. She was noble—his new wife must not be less so. She was beautiful—he felt he never could love one who was not: young, and rich; for his last wife had brought him an ample dower, and riches never come amiss. She must be good, and gentle, and loving. How could *he* bear harsh words, cold looks, or chilling indifference?

Here are many requisites. Still, one there was possessed them all; but the circumstances were peculiar—his suit might fail. Yet, strange to say, in its very peculiarity he felt hope.
This wife had an only sister, a few years younger than herself. Between these sisters had subsisted an affection which it would be difficult for any pen to portray. A deep enthusiastic attachment, rivetted by years of mutual confidence. Not a thought had the one sister concealed from the other, as they grew up side by side.

It is true that the sister we have already become acquainted with, as the wife of Karl von Schomburg, not only was the elder by a few years, but her mind was of a firmer mould. In all things she took the lead; still she never failed to consult with careful tenderness her younger sister’s feelings and impressions; and they needed consulting, for an over sensibility, a shrinking, timid, sensitiveness pervaded her character, and weakened her health.

Always united, inseparable, Amelia and Emilia, similar in name, in pursuits, each lovely and loving, were almost one. Indeed, it was not without much difficulty, and the many prayers of her friends, and of her lover, that Amelia was induced to separate
herself from her sister, and enter into the marriage tie.

Frequent visits, however, had not failed to bring them together, and to foster their sisterly affection. The sensitive Emilia, looking more than ever upon her sister as something angelic, and attaching herself to her sister's child with all the enthusiasm of her nature.

After the death of Amelia, she had found her only solace in almost maternal cares for the little motherless boy.

To English readers, who are used to the stringent laws forbidding marriage with a deceased wife's sister, laws not canvassed then as now, it may appear strange that it was towards this lovely and devoted sister that Karl von Schomburg turned his thoughts often and often.

As he saw her sitting with his child in her arms, pressing her lips to his, and murmuring sweet words, or laying the boy's head on her bosom, and soothing him to sleep with fond caresses, he longed to seal by the marriage vow the union between them. Who
consoled so beautifully the child, might console the father.

Great was the consternation of Emilia when he first hazarded an expression of his wishes. She shrank from him as if he had been on the point of committing murder, so fearfully did she think he was sinning against the memory of her sister.

But time works wonders; and the clinging resistless love of the little boy did much. Karl von Schomburg announced his firm intention of marrying again.

If he chose a wife alien to them, the little treasure, her sister's legacy of love, must be taken from her, and delivered up to a strange mother-in-law.

In the end, a wonderful change came over her mind. The shrinking Emilia seemed to have been invested with some of the energy of her sister. She would consent. She would become the second wife of Karl von Schomburg, the mother of his child; but she had some conditions to make.

Karl must complete his term of widowhood, even to the end of the second year;
complete it in full. Then, when the anniversary of her sister's wedding day came round, in the same church (it was the church attached to the domains of their family), at the same altar where Amelia had stood as a bride, she would consent to be united in holy matrimony to Karl von Schomburg.

But at the same time a tablet of white marble should be erected near the altar to her sister's memory, on which should be engraved the dates of her marriage and her death. Below, on the same tablet, should be engraved, she said, hereafter, the dates of her own marriage and her own death, and with a morbid tenacity she persisted in writing out for the tablet both dates.

Three years and three days her sister had lived as the wife of Karl von Schomburg, before her life was cut short.

So long did Emilia say, and no longer, not by an hour, should she live as his wife; after that she should die and go to her sister, and tell her what she had done for her and her child's sake.

Karl von Schomburg was glad on any
terms to secure the sweet and gentle Emilia for his second wife. He smiled at her gloomy prognostics; he contemplated years of comfort and domestic enjoyment. Emilia became his wife. Frequently she would sit for hours by his side speaking of her sister, and holding her sister’s child in her arms.

The portrait of Amelia still hung over the secretaire in the saloon they occupied. Her husband would have had it removed, as suggesting too often sad remembrances to his young wife. He caused her portrait to be painted the same size to occupy its place; but Emilia refused to have her sister’s removed, and placed hers beside it.

A strange contrast subsisted between them. Amelia we have already described. Emilia had the same beautiful dark blue eyes, though they were almost always cast down; her features were classical, delicately chiselled; but her lips were pale, and her face as marble white, while a clear line of jet black marked the eyebrow. Her glossy, silken black hair was drawn Madonna-like round her head.

I have seen the pictures together, side by
side, as they were placed then, and they rivetted my gaze. I could not take my eyes from one but to fix them on the other. One would have thought the man could not have been found who had had two such wives.

Let the reader bear these portraits in mind, for the fate of Karl von Schomburg was later in life decided by these portraits; or rather, I should say, by the position they occupied in his drawing room.

Time passed. The dark prognostics of the pale Emilia seemed to be vanishing from the minds of every one; more so, when after being married little more than a year, she became a mother, and of a beautiful boy. "In all things like my sister," she murmured, with a slight tremor, as her boy was brought to her, to lay beside her and take the first delicious drops his little lips could suck from his mother's breast.

On referring to dates, it was found that, by
a curious coincidence, the birth of her child was on the same day of the same month as that on which his elder brother had also made his appearance, to the joy of his mother, the dead Amelia.

This coincidence sunk deeply into the mind of Emilia; she never referred to it; but in her diary it was marked with a deep line, and a reference to the fact.

The occupation which the two boys afforded her (for the elder, her sister's child, was never put aside, as if less dear to her than her own; on the contrary, fresh tokens of love were heaped upon him), but the interest and occupation afforded her by the children, had a beneficial effect upon her mind. A slight bloom sometimes visited her cheek; an unusual animation was noticed in her look and manners.

Sometimes joy, sometimes sorrow flitted over her features; generally, it was hoped, she was truly happy.

Her husband, it is true, could not be so much with her: again employed officially, his duties often called him from home; but yet
his fate was one many men might envy; and he indeed considered himself comfortably settled. He had a beautiful, gentle, high-born wife; he was surrounded with all the elegances and luxuries of life; and his boys, little lively fellows, the admiration of all beholders, were as fond of each other as boys could be.

Their mother, for a mother indeed she was to both, idolized them equally. She spent almost her whole time with them by day, and at night would sit by them as they slept, in the chamber where had been discovered, on its being repaired for their reception after their marriage, small relics of those morsels of food, which Amelia, her loved, her cherished sister had concealed in every crevice.

Poor Amelia! her heart then palpitated with agonizing fears for her child,—her child, now a noble little fellow of some six years old.

How would Emilia take him by the hand and place him opposite the portrait we have so often spoken of,—the portrait of his
mother. Then she would tell him long histories of his mother's childhood, of her youth, of her marriage, of her death; and the little fellow would look wistfully at the sky, and up above the sun, where he thought his mother dwelt, and run forth and hide his tears, and make inward vows to be strong as she had been, and love and care for all, and care nothing for himself, so that he could give help to others, and be—that was the end and sum of all his wishes—and be like his mother.

It was about this time I arrived in Dresden. Karl von Schomburg, a relation and a friend, failed not to recount much of what is told here. He said the period was at hand his Emilia had named as the appointed time to follow her sister to the grave. He was, however, more inclined to smile than tremble at her fancy; all seemed so well, so comfortable at home.

Karl von Schomburg was in the full enjoy-
ment of wealth, honours, and peace. He did not distress himself. He felt some sorrow but much pride in telling of the beauty and excellence of his first wife, of the sweetness and docility of the second, of his two fine boys, and of the little girls that he intended still to have, and wondered which sister they would resemble.

A large musical party was given by a friend of ours, with an amiable desire to celebrate our arrival. Karl von Schomburg promised to be there; nay, he even promised, having earlier in life studied the violin, to take some share in one particular part of the performance.

Just before the party, he came to our rooms. "It is very unlucky," he said, "about this party. As I was sitting with my wife at breakfast, she opened her pocket book and put it before me. I did not see the drift. She said, 'You see the date?' So I looked, and it unluckily happens to be the anniversary of that very sad event—my dear Amelia—my first wife, you know. I would not have promised for the world, if I had
and the Four Portraits.

known; I will go and put it off,—I meant to—I was going; but they reminded me of Emilia's very foolish fancy that—that she is to die that day; they say if I put it off and remain at home, it will look as if I really feared she had spoken true. Then how many I should put out: that quintett in which I take a part. It is very unlucky; it is annoying; but I shall certainly remain at home.”

On arriving at our friend's house, however, where the musical party was arranged, the first person I saw was Karl von Schomburg; he said, “Ah! you are surprised after what I said this morning. In fact, my wife would not let me stay—she would not allow it. She was quite determined.”

“Emilia determined? she who always yields?” I said.

“Well it was so,” he replied; “and she seemed to make such a point of it. Then, she looked so particularly well, she had such a bright colour, she looked remarkably handsome. Her eyes so brilliant, upon my word, I never saw her look so like her sister!”

We sat down, and heard some splendid
music. The supper was ordered at ten,—the usual delays brought it to eleven. There were to be after supper some toasts, in the English fashion, to gratify what is supposed in Germany to be the ruling passion in English breasts, "Ponche" and toasts.

Karl von Schomburg was on his legs; the glass was in his hand; he was intending to drink the health of the English travellers. His lips were just parted to commence an oration; and I see him now, standing, half bowing to the company, on whom he was looking round with a consequential yet condescending air,—when a loud and sudden peal of the bell at the great gates rung sharp, shrill, and discordant—another and another. There was hurry and confusion on the stairs. Some excuses, some delay, and then the door was opened with an eager hand, and a servant came in, hesitating, stammering, pale, confused, to where stood, with the glass still in his hand, Karl von Schomburg.

"Guädiger Herr—you are sent for—Madame—your wife—is ill."
A moment's silence fell on all, for a fear came suddenly over every one. Karl von Schomburg still stood gazing on the man as if he did not comprehend, but conviction seemed to come upon him, his features worked and changed, and he fell back almost as if in a fit—speechless, stunned. It was but for an instant; he was up, off, away, before any could assist him. But haste availed not; all was over before he reached the house.

A few lines were put into his hand—

"My dear Karl—I would save you a sight I knew would distress you. My hour is come. I go to rejoin my sister. Be kind to our children."

And indeed a few minutes before twelve the gentle Emilia had closed her eyes in death. The spirit was gone; life was extinct.

They told him how all day she had followed from room to room the young children, fixing her tender eyes upon them, pressing them alternately to her bosom; she had seen them tranquilly sleeping as the evening closed in; she had spent some time arranging her papers; again and again she had stood before
the portrait of her sister; but to none had she spoken or complained of illness; her devotions had been long and fervent, but when were they not so?

A little before eleven she retired to her room, habited as she was, without removing her dress,—it was black, for she never had been prevailed on to lay aside mourning for her sister; she lay down upon the bed,—she must have felt a coming faintness, for a glass of water was on the table by her side; and there, in silence and alone, she must have breathed her last breath.

When Karl von Schomburg arrived, heated and distressed, she lay there, more lovely than in life. Her face was pale,—the paleness of death; her black hair wound, as was her custom, round her head; her hands were folded on her bosom; within them was a small gold cross—it had been her sister's.

In death had returned a likeness, hardly ever noticed till that morning, to her sister; something of the angelic smile, something, as if bright and happy thoughts had animated the features before they grew rigid in death.
and the Four Portraits.

None knew from what malady she died. Perhaps the inward presentiment had worked its own fulfilment, and consumed her life at the very moment she had anticipated.

Such things have been.* Never was one more fitted by over-wrought sensibility, and a delicate and most sensitive physical construction to exemplify what power the mind of an enthusiast may have over the body.

All I have related are the facts, simply as they occurred, and are well known to many, even beyond the immediate circle of her family and friends.

The boys grew to be fine young men. I saw them again some years afterwards. Happily, they inherited more of the phlegmatic character of the father, than any over-wrought ardour of German enthusiasm.

Their father—what of him? He grieved deeply, sincerely, for his second wife. The

* Lord Lyttleton.
loss of two such fair beings, perishing one after another by his side, greatly saddened and discomposed him. He seemed more and more to appreciate the comforts and blessings of married life, from which he was again cut off by the melancholy event we have recorded.

His home seemed indeed desolate. The childish plays of his boys were a poor substitute for the absorbed attention of a lovely woman. He could not rally from this loss. He went often and often to mourn over his misfortunes to the house of an old chamberlain, who still held office about the royal household, a distant relation of his own.

Here a cheerful family circle was at hand, and he was always welcome. But it did not suit his habits or his health to go from home. He liked the chamberlain and he liked the chamberlain’s family; some of them at least.

But what was the use of the bright handsome English fire-place he had caused to be substituted for his German stove, if he was never more to enjoy at home a cheerful comfortable fireside?
At last it did occur to him, that a lively, active, and amiable young woman, the chamberlain's eldest daughter, who had for some years directed her father's affairs with great discretion and judgment—was a wonderful hand at domestic arrangements, and very skilful in the management of the younger members of the family, might greatly improve matters at his own house.

He did not long wait to make the experiment. She was asked, and she was willing; and ere long was installed into the place held by the two sisters successively.

And, indeed, Karl von Schomburg, no longer quite so young or quite so active, began to enjoy life in a quiet reasonable way; with dinners of the true, old-fashioned German length, the old chamberlain and a few of the junior members of his family, gathered round the well-filled board.

Civic honours came thick upon Karl von Schomburg. His co-dignitaries were nowise unwilling to share the sumptuous meals. And where the lovely Amelia had sought a hiding place for a few scanty crumbs of biscuit, lest
the child of her love should perish from hunger, they feasted, and lived in plenty, to the great gratification of all parties there assembled.

Years flew by. The painter who had so successfully painted the portraits of the two first wives was summoned to take a likeness of the last.

The drawing room presented ample space for it to be hung up without displacing those who already occupied the wall. Some, more curious than discreet, asked the third wife whether this assemblage of the pictures, was altogether the most pleasing arrangement for her.

But Constance, so was named the present wife of Karl von Schomburg, seemed to think it quite natural. Besides, hers was on the opposite wall, and from thence her commonplace but good-tempered face seemed to be viewing her predecessors with cheerful complacency.

She did not see why she should wish them away. "They were both so pretty." Pretty! lovely, she should have said, as a poet's dream, in their refined and thrilling beauty; but Constance, at least, was not romantic.
She was very happy, and so was her husband. Surely now he is settled for the rest of his life in quiet content. No more sad and startling losses; no more strange and sudden calamities.

But death is no respecter of persons. I am sorry to interrupt the recital of the even tenour of their comfortable existence; but truth demands it. A cold, caught in returning from a grand feast, proved to the cheerful Constance she was not invulnerable. To cold followed cough and fever. The doctors came. The nurses watched. The husband shook his head sadly.

In short, he found himself, before another month, once more a widower. His sons had married and settled in life; it was a hard thing, he said, a very hard thing, he could not have a wife who would live. He thought, really, he had not been fairly dealt with by fate.

He could not understand it, it was too bad; and now, he was richer than ever—older—stouter. He wanted rest and quiet, and good dinners, and there was no one to
order them. Besides, female society, and female care,—he had taken ample pains to supply himself with both, against old age. Few men had gone so often to the altar, or, if they had, with such charming, such agreeable women. He was proud of the wives he had chosen; but that made it all the worse for him to be without any now that he was considerably advanced in life.

Passing through Dresden, after a lapse of years, I again fell in with Karl von Schomburg. He invited me to his house. He called for me in his carriage. Certainly, I missed something of the gallantry of his former self, when I saw him reclining in the most comfortable corner, while he left to the ladies who accompanied us, the smaller comforts and smaller honours of the seat with the back to the horses. But he was now a man well versed in the knowledge of self-indulgence. He could no longer put himself out for any one. But it certainly
was a great deprivation to him not to have a partner by his side—a fine woman to show off, to show his friends that he had still an eye for beauty, and could enslave the fair.

I left him at Dresden. I returned to England. Not long after, I met an acquaintance who had also visited Dresden, though not for some years—a fine-made English woman, of good birth, and good fortune. She asked for a few moments' private conversation.

"You remember," she said, "many years ago, we used to meet a young man—an interesting young widower, whose wife had died, after the siege of Dresden, in a very romantic manner? Well," she continued, "I have a letter from him."

"Indeed! really! and on what subject?"

"To tell you the truth, it is an offer of marriage."

"Oh! you do not surprise me."

"No? I thought you would be much surprised at his remembering me. Probably, after such circumstances, he never would have thought of matrimony again—after losing that sweet creature; but, he appears
at last to have some wish, in fact, it seems he has always nourished the recollection of me—and so, now, he has decided on marrying again. We are a little older; I am altered..."

"But not the less charming," I added quickly. It was my real conviction.

"And," continued she, without noticing my interruption, "and he, he must look older of course; it is some years since we met. I was then seventeen; I am now—well, no matter;—I was saying he must be somewhat changed. Have you seen him since that time?"

I had to confess I had seen him, and certainly thought him changed.

"Still," replied the handsome questioner, "he tells me he is very high in the state. He has a splendid income, for a German: his family is amongst the first in the kingdom. He has also, he tells me, a fine estate and mansion in the country. I was always very partial to those German family mansions—palaces we might almost call them. Then, one is so much made of in those small capitals. He tells me, too, he has an admirable establish-
ment; and the German character is so estimable."

I let the speaker run on. It was evident the proposal had been couched in the most tempting words. And the lady he had pitched upon was very fond of travel, and adventure, and continental life. And her recollection of Karl von Schomberg, "the interesting widower," evidently worked with all he had stated into something like a favourable impression, too favourable by half for my ideas.

Can this man be going to obtain, as a fourth wife, this prize, for which so many far more worthy have sighed in vain! Forbid it heaven!

I have always feared to move one single step in making or marring a marriage. But truth, honesty, compassion almost for the handsome woman, with all her advantages of person and of station, every consideration, forbade me to stand neuter here; and I looked, if I did not speak, dissent.

Something contradictory in human nature, more particularly in female nature, on these
subjects, made her incline even more favourably towards the proposed alliance, on finding I was against it.

In fact, she had conjured up a pleasant picture of an Englishwoman's popularity in Germany; it was the country she preferred after her own. She was sure time could not have taken all that was agreeable from the "interesting widower." She should be the object of so much attention, and move in the highest society.

She really was on the point of yielding to his solicitations, when a stronger impulse led me on against habit, against prudence, against my own judgment, which cried out, "Interfere not in these matters;"—as I said, a stronger impulse led me on, and the words broke almost involuntarily from my lips, "Good heavens! and would you let your picture hang fourth upon the wall?"

"Picture the fourth! what can you mean?"

A hurried sketch was given of Karl von Schomburg's history. A curious change came over the handsome face of my friend. But she continued to make some remarks as
I proceeded. The second marriage was certainly romantic—she had never heard of it; the third—well, it is not quite unusual; but more wives—she smiled rather disdainfully—

"But what exactly about the pictures?"

I felt rather a malicious pleasure in detailing the appearance of the saloon: the two sisters, Constance the last wife, and all as large as life, looking down on the new comer. Her picture, no doubt, would make a suitable fourth.

"Never!" she exclaimed, with rising colour and a sparkling eye; "say no more, if you please, it is enough."

And the desk was drawn forward, the paper stretched on it. With a rapid pen, a few lines were soon written: they were but few; I fear not many compliments or thanks for the intended honour could have found a place; but still they were decisive if not tender.

A shrug and a pshaw! when those lines reached the German staats rath (state councillor), showed those who knew him that he had received a refusal, and that he bore it with philosophy.
A grand dinner to his civic friends, which his housekeeper, bred up to a due knowledge of all the functions of her office by the excellent Constance, had found herself capable of organizing, greatly pacified and consoled his mind.

Besides, his housekeeper really lived—lived on, which was satisfactory and considerate of her; and continued to be able to care for her master and her master's guests. He had now his carriage, corners, and all, to himself, which was fortunate, as his figure had not grown smaller, and his love of ease had superseded all other loves.

The English lady, whom he considered had shown "bad taste" in declining his addresses, married shortly after—her only difficulty being the choice of admirers, as there were many candidates for her favour.

Not one thought more had ever arisen of Karl von Schomburg. That vision of the two sisters' portraits, beautiful though they might be, confronting the third, and now to be again confronted by the fourth wife, was not to be endured. That vision had turned
the scale against Karl von Schomburg instantly and irretrievably.

Once more in my wanderings I returned to the pleasant city of Dresden. Karl von Schomburg soon recognized me, and invited me to meet some of his friends. Certainly, under his roof hospitality and conviviality reigned supreme.

The dinner lasted long; but, finally, it was over; the guests abandoned themselves to the agreeable reminiscences of departed viands, occasionally interrupted by some learned comments on the respective merits of the different wines.

I had found myself placed opposite the pictures of the sisters. The portraits had faded somewhat, and their lustre become dimmed; but still they shed, as of yore, a soft and mysterious influence over my spirits.

More than once during the dinner I had raised my eyes and gazed silently upon them; but that once concluded, I could no longer contain the restlessness, the impatience that had come over me.

I rose and went forth; my steps seemed
drawn towards the old terrace garden, abutting on the bridge, and overlooking the silver waters of the Elbe.

I stood under the shadow of the noble trees where Amelia von Schomburg had taken her farewell walk at Dresden with her husband and her cherished child.

In the many events of life, in the subsequent adventures of the different characters I have spoken of, the first strong impressions, of course, had faded away.

But strange to say, because it had faded away, because the past was forgotten and all changed, and no one suffered, and no one lamented the loss of that sweet and courageous creature; it seemed more sad, the tears fell fast from my eyes, and the memory of all these things arose in my mind, as if of yesterday.
THE NIGHT-FIRE OF THE APENNINES AND THE COURIER.
THE NIGHT-FIRE OF THE APENNINES AND THE COURIER.

Long before Italy had raised her head from under the hard hand of despotism, or taken her proud seat at the council of nations—when the land of the olive and the vine was still enthralled, and the name of Freedom awoke more memories of past, than hopes of future glory—long, long ago, we visited almost every part of that fair land.

Travelling not as now—by railroad, express, steaming along, while vale and hill, and lake and islet appear and disappear with tantalizing rapidity—but as a pilgrimage of love and admiration—slowly passing, and often pausing: remaining for days in its old and half deserted cities. Indeed, our travelling
establishment not only permitted, but almost required these pleasant detentions.

Our party was large. We were too many for one carriage, though ours was of the true old-fashioned size and make—a landau, with high and wide coach-box in front, and an equally large and commodious seat behind. It was richly painted, with arms and emblazonry on either panel, and mounted, at every corner, with silver crests in bold relief. Its appearance added greatly to the respect generally felt by hotel keepers for the English "Milor;" and, no doubt, also added to the lengthy bills which they presented.

Six horses were not always sufficient to draw this comfortable, but by no means light, equipage. I remember ascending some of the steep ridges of the Apennines, with an additional pair of horses, and four cream-coloured bullocks, much to the delight of the children of the party, who looked on at our attelage, as on a gay and grand procession; while we worked our way up the long hills, at the top of which our oxen and our extra men were dismissed, the men shaking their
black locks, and showing their white teeth, well pleased with the small gratuity of a few soldi.

A gentleman accompanied us who drove his own carriage and horses: a mode of travelling from which he never departed, although he had traversed most of the countries of Europe.

The second seat in his carriage was much coveted, and occupied, at his request, by one or other of our party. His companionship enhanced the pleasure of every scene, and smoothed down every difficulty. His name would awake an echo in many a heart, for he was known, loved, and honoured throughout England, and by his influence and eloquence, led a large party in the state. But we will say no more of him at present. I shall have occasion to refer to him hereafter, and then it shall not be as our nameless fellow-traveller.

Let me return once more to the Apennines, and give a brief account of our visit to the mysterious night-fire, on the mountain ridge.

We had been ascending, slowly, in the hot,
The scorching sun, hill after hill, towards a little desolate-looking village, known by the euphonious name of "Scarica l'Asino;" and it was dusk before we arrived at the old rambling inn; at that time the largest and almost the only substantial building in the place. Much bustle and hurry ensued, and great preparations set on foot for our reception. The children were stowed away into immense beds, with dark green hangings, out of which peeped the rosy faces of the young boys, as if they had been little cherubs nestling there.

Our English servant maidens, with many an "oh!" and "ah!" and "bless me!" at the wild country round us, and the scant accommodation of the old and dilapidated hotel—the servants are always the most discontented and fastidious travellers—they, with Luigi, our Italian courier, to keep them in good humour, were installed round a comfortable supper, at least the most comfortable a village in the Apennines could supply—piles of eggs, fish fried in floating oil, and goat's milk—a whole flock had been hastily driven in, and milked for the family of the Principessa; for
here we found our titles and our dignities had increased to little short of regal rank; the poor and humble people at this solitary place were quite dazzled by the splendour of our "set out." It was only when we had seen domestics and children happily settled, that we, the élite of our party, set out on what our pretty hostess considered the most "miserable" of expeditions—a night walk over the mountains, to see the mysterious fire of the Apennines.

It was, perhaps, not a little adventurous. Stories of robbers and assassinations ran through Italy then, as now; but not with quite so much truth in them.

We would frequently hear re-echoed again and again one and the same story of attack and murder. It would be unfolded to us in a half whisper as we crossed the frontier. In the neighbourhood of Bologna we recognized the same story under a change of names.—At Forli, it would rise up in its original version; but under the ghost-like shadows of the wood where, in days of yore, Hannibal had conquered the Romans, it appeared again
dressed in new horrors, by the dark-looking master of the post-house, who smiled a grim smile, if he had excited the fears of the traveller to the proper pitch,—which, of course, would be manifest by an immediate order for the whole body-guard of four mounted soldiers, which the inn boasted of possessing, to protect, some say, to entrap, the rich, the timorous, and the unwary.

At the latter place, I must confess, we accepted the guard, but chiefly because we were willing to add to the picturesqueness of the scene this suitable accompaniment; and their scrambling horses, dashing in and out of the wood on either side, or caracolling on the margin of the lake, enlivened the view wonderfully.

But we are not yet so far; we are walking over the bare ridge of the Apennine. We had provided ourselves with two guides, partly trusting to them as escorts also. But before we had gone away many hundred paces from the village, a whisper was interchanged amongst us, that the guides appeared themselves the wildest and most savage-looking Italians we had yet seen.
Still our party was numerous—it chiefly consisted of ladies, fortunately active, lively, and tolerably enthusiastic for English girls—and would not hear of turning back.

So on we went, over the brown scorched heaths cheery enough, with the broad moon pouring down a flood of light, and every rock and stunted tree standing out clear and defined.

However, a slight misgiving visited even the gayest and most thoughtless of the party, when turning aside from the wide and well-defined path, the men led us down a steep and broken descent, and across a wild track, into a dark and narrow valley.

We stopped, and held a rapid consultation. "This was far more than half-a-mile. We were to see the distant fire at half-a-mile from the village." We had walked on and on, and left the high ground, where we could easily have retraced our steps.

"Where were they leading us?"

Were we to become "a story," and be led into some robber's den, to be assassinated in our turn. Some one suggested we should
still, at once, endeavour to make the best of our way back. But we all know Englishmen, (and Englishwomen too, perhaps,) would rather die any day than be laughed at—rather face death than ridicule.

"What would be said if we came back, and had not seen it? No, we are in for it, let us go on."

All joined in the decision. In fact, we were now pretty well at the men's mercy. At any moment a whistle might, if they had accomplices, bring a whole band around us.

We must trust them—for better, for worse. And, after all, there was the party at the inn. There was the host who had furnished the guides; who is to pay him if we are all massacred? And the piles of eggs, and the goats that had been brought from the mountain to be milked; and the supper, and the bottles of good Italian wine we knew our courier would be consuming, besides all he meant also to carry off, for the use of the family (so he said, at least).

With what comfortable confidence did we
repose on the long bill the landlord was even then probably concocting, and on the heavy handful of dollars he was to deposit in his leathern purse, ere we and our train of horses and of carriages should emerge from the shattered gates of his court-yard. No, we are safe! or, at all events, he will grievously revenge our disappearance on all present and future robbers. And we proceeded once more with fresh courage through the dark copse that shut out the moon, stumbling a little over broken stumps and twisted roots, but pushing manfully forward; and, at last, well were we rewarded.

We had hardly emerged from the little wood, when close before us, there, without any apparent earthly cause, in the midst of a low marshy flat, flared and flickered the night-fire of the Apennines.

The surface of the meadow seemed covered for a circle of some twenty yards with flat stones, piled a yard or more high; and from amidst these arose a blue and livid flame, swaying backwards and forwards with the night wind, and all the brighter, and better
seen, for that a huge cloud had obscured the face of the moon, and some drops of rain fell on the ground. But the men told us that the fire always burnt brighter for the wet, and thus indeed it was—it cast a pale and glimmering lustre on the dark figures of our guides, who stooped forward, and with a rugged branch they had brought with them from the wood, moved one or two of the outermost stones.

On doing so, a higher and fiercer flame shot up; but all was soon again as if it had not been disturbed, the whole pile resembling nothing I have ever seen before or since.

In height the flame might be from three to five yards; warmth there was none, or but little; the stones themselves seemed not blackened, but retained a dull ochre-like appearance; and no smoke ascended that could be perceived. A smaller fire of a similar description burnt a short distance from us on the same marshy land.

We looked our full at this wild and curious scene; but our garments, beginning to feel cold and damp from the fine small rain that
fell, we took our leave unwillingly of this mysterious light.

With better confidence we now followed the steps of our guides, and, with joyous haste, threaded the little wood and remounted the broken ground; and just as we stood on the edge of the high ridge, our guides turned round—

"Look, look! signori miei, look!"—and there, as the night had grown darker and our eyes now sought in the right direction, we distinguished, far away in the distant gloom, a flickering light, darting up now and then high and bright into the damp air; and justifying thus our guides' assertion,—the fire could be seen half-a-mile from the village.

We were rejoiced at our success, at our courage, our perseverance, and our safe return; but no less so at the sight of a glorious tureen-full of hot soup, a little too rich of the oil, a home-made cake of Indian corn, and a fine round flask of vin dupays, generously left us by our courier, after having safely secured a bottle of good Falernian wine for his own use in his havresack, according
to the laudable custom we have already noticed.

However, to do the fellow justice, if a long stage, or an empty larder at the road-side inn where we changed horses, covered the faces of our little ones with a shade of disappointed expectation; or if the ladies of the party looked a little pale for want of refreshment after a long ramble, Luigi would turn to the said havresack, stowed away amongst the imperials, and from thence bring out so tempting a meal, that it would have done for a luncheon on a Derby day, or a pic-nic in the lily-carpetted woods of Aspley Guise.

A roast kid, almost entire—the kids were, it is true, little larger than hares—then wine, the finest wines, he knew so well to choose; small loaves of marvellous whiteness; dried fruits, and cakes, and dates; and then—procured openly or surreptitiously from the nearest vineyard while we were in the Milanese—the most delicious grapes, fresh gathered. All, or some of these things, spread out on the grass (not green as in England, but of a rich brown, and with an
aromatic smell about it, that gave in sweetness what it wanted in freshness)—on this grass, and under an old oak tree, Luigi would spread out a repast, by no means to be despised; and his talents in this line secured him full immunity for sundry little acts of self-appropriation that were not undiscovered, though they remained unnoticed.

He was a first-rate courier, and always obtained for us the best accommodation at the best inns; and horses to our carriages when others were waiting in vain.

The sight of a rival carriage, as we approached a post-house, would send him off like a shot on the small black mare he usually rode. And while the rival carriage, ignorant of his existence, would content itself with keeping a little ahead of us, fondly flattering itself thus to secure the best, if not the only horses at the change-house, the fiery little Luigi had ordered out three pair for us, over which he stood guard, till we arrived, prepared to fight to the death for the horses and the “Principessa,” having devoted himself with special gallantry to the service of the fair and
amiable lady who always went by that designation in Italy after the night at Scarica l’Asino.

Besides, Luigi was a man staunch to the back-bone, where the family was concerned which was under his charge, except certain little peccadillos which are known to the reader. It was a matter of honour with him that none should be so well served, so well lodged, or pay so high, as the family he was with.

But his morality troubled him very little, especially in his private affairs. He was a thorough philosopher of a courier. He took the world as he found it, and determined to make the best of his opportunities.

An affecting little scene occurred at Rome, where he still served us, which illustrated this. He had, while we were wintering in Florence, brought a charming black-eyed Florentine, to introduce to us as his wife. We were not surprised at her wishing to follow him to Rome, when we removed our penates to that city, where a large hotel, after the Italian fashion, had been engaged for us, and where a dozen servants might have been
harboured, of whom you heard little and saw less. It takes four Italians, at a moderate computation, to do the work of one English footman.

Here, after some persuasion, our courier permitted the black-eyed Florentine to come. But as we stood one morning under the wide Porte Cochère, undecided which way to lionize that day, a pale but beautiful woman, in the picturesque costume of a Roman peasant, drew near, and, with low bows, begged to know if Luigi, the courier, was not serving "la Principessa Inglese?"

Her features were modelled in that perfect mould, which in England is seldom seen, except amongst the highest classes, and then rarely; but which is frequently to be met with amongst the women of Albano, and one or two other places south of Rome. A regular outline, not Grecian, but only deviating from the Grecian to gain in the charm of expression.

We were much struck with the manners and appearance of this woman, who, as she stood respectfully, but somewhat proudly, in her
calm statue-like beauty, seemed formed to excite love and admiration.

"Yes!" was the reply. "Why do you want him? He is not in."

What was our astonishment when she said, "Principessa, I am his wife. I come to stay with him."

"And the rosy Florentine, the black-eyed!" we mentally exclaimed. We had not long to wonder, or to ask. She, too, had seen the new comer, had heard her words.

She rushed forwards. Her cheeks were scarlet. Her eyes blazed. Her fingers clutched. She flew as a hawk upon its prey, and would have seized, I verily believe, the pale Roman by the throat, if we had not interfered.

But rapid explanations and expostulations followed—tears, sobs, shrieks, from the half-distracted Florentine; while the Roman grew paler and paler, and was about to withdraw when the disputed hero himself came in. He was no ways discomposed.

"Ebben Catterina—eh! via! Come! a little reason" (this to the Florentine).
“Maria! my divine Maria!” turning to the Roman, “don’t go away, all shall be arranged, only remain there one moment. *Padrone mie*, forgive these silly women; it is nothing at all, *non s’incommodi!* I will arrange all directly.”

And, marvellous to say, he was as good as his word. The weeping, sobbing Catterina was borne into the porter’s lodge. A few words, perhaps kisses, perhaps piastres, had served as admirable recipes.

The fair Florentine had absolutely consented to go back to Florence, and there await the return of ourselves and our courier, her husband.

The Roman wife, whose colour had seemed to come and go very rapidly, though she hardly moved or spoke, appeared also to have recovered her calmness.

And when Luigi returned, and announced the approaching departure of the weeping Catterina, and advanced to lead his divine Maria, with great honour, into his apartment, at our hotel, she passed us with a
cold triumphant smile, which might have suited the lip of some of the heroines of old.

Catterina was true to her promise, and went off that very evening with a Russian family, who were returning to Florence.

As these proceedings did not quite chime in with our English ideas of morality and propriety, Luigi was sent for to the salon, to be remonstrated with and dismissed.

But the courier's defence was as astonishing as his coolness:

"Ah! signori miei," he said, "what would you have? Can a poor man like me travel about with his wife from city to city? It is impossible. So, you see, I choose a wife in every city; and, I do assure you, Santa Maria knows it, and all the saints, that I am honourably married to all. I have a wife in Paris; oh! she is very pretty, but not very discreet. I have a wife in London; that is rather an unfortunate affair; she is always ill, and she always wants much money for her doctor's bills. I have a wife in Moscow—oh,
signori! I am a very good husband, and do all I can to make them happy—*que voulez vous de plus?*"

The man's conviction was so perfect of his own honourable conduct, and of his devotion to the church.—"He had received the blessing of the priest on every union, the holy virgin be praised."—We saw that to reason with him was useless, to convince him he was wrong would have been impossible. We contented ourselves with fixing an early term for the close of his services.

But, with all his faults and all his wives, he certainly was, it must be owned, the most effective courier we ever had. Sorely did we miss the gallant Luigi. The posting back to Florence was a very different thing under his more scrupulous successor, Giacomo, though he had but one wife, and a very ugly one she was.
ROME.

THE TOMB OF THE HORATII AND CURIATII.
I write of Rome, not of the political Rome of the present day, but of Rome as it was in the earlier part of this century—tranquil in its decay—a Rome of ruins and sepulchres. The Rome of our early imaginations, where stood the palaces of the Caesars—though the ivy wreathes over the crumbling stones, and the wild weeds grow rank where emperors had won their laurel crowns.

What novel sensations, what poetical feelings, swelled the soul, and rushed into the heart, as the vetturino, drawing in his team of mules, halted suddenly, and with uplifted arm pointed over the dim Campagna, far away to that spot so dear to story; and with a pardonable enthusiasm, called out, "Roma! Roma!" You gazed with
awe and reverence, as on the features of the dead. This was "long, long ago."

The fire-breathing steam-engine now rushes along over where, in the grand stillness of that desolate Campagna, the venerable aqueduct stretched its low arches across the plain.

Then the Campagna was, indeed, desolate; a solitary individual here and there raised a pale, sallow face as you passed, and returned sadly to his work in the deadly "maremma."

A broken tomb, a tall ghastly-looking post, on which hung fragments of what had once been the arm of a brigand; a strange, close damp atmosphere pervading all, fitly prepared one for passing into the scene of long departed existence. No life seemed to breathe in the miasma-struck inhabitants, who shrunk away, and hid themselves in ditches and in swamps.

No life in the solitary buildings and ruins (chiefly tombs), no life in the dull damp olive-coloured fields, where no fresh young corn sprung up, no herds browsed, nor any of the many-handed sons of agriculture worked their lives away.
All was scorched, brown, dark, lonely in the country that surrounded the eternal city; at least, as we traversed it, from the north. Night closed in as we entered the capital; not the Capitol,—that was an after and a strange sight; but, entering at the Porta del Popolo, we almost stared to see modern-looking houses, and modern-looking people lining the streets and the footpaths.

We alighted; then a flight of steps, ye gods! what a flight of steps—how long, how endless—led to a suite of rooms, high up in a noble hotel, which had been chosen for us for their coolness, by a friend. We reposed, and wondered to find ourselves really in Rome!

English, nay French and Russians, now visit in dozens the “devoted city;” but then the visits of English were few and far between, and they were almost as much a wonder to Rome, as Rome was to them.

Madame de Stael has given us, perhaps, the best itinerary of Rome, in *Corinne*, even superior to Murray’s own. Far be it from me to tread in the steps of the one or the other.
But let me take the reader out of Rome a short distance with me, on a lovely spring day, before the heat had become painful; and let us travel as far as Albano—let us watch the beautiful women, the only beautiful women we saw in Italy; yet, merely peasants, but with such noble features, such noble forms, that you no longer felt doubtful how to personify in your imagination a Portia, or even an Agrippina.

The men by no means equal the women in appearance; they were mean looking, though the black and dazzling eye, common amongst Italians, shone out under the dark brows, and the features generally indicated intelligence, if not refinement.

A grand ceremony was to take place that day; the Pope was to bless the people. His Holiness had passed us on the road. Our carriage drew out of the way to let him pass. We stood up, in conformity with the general custom; but an Italian gentleman of our party, Monsieur de Ciampolini, could not be induced to get up, or even to remove his hat; a violent scepticism, and a horror of priests
of all classes, is a malady, of which the paroxysms increase as you approach nearer to the seat and the head of papacy.

Nevertheless, his Holiness, passing over this solitary token of disrespect, leaned forward out of the wide window of his state equipage, and, lifting his hands as he spoke, delivered his benediction; and none could avoid looking with reverence on the old man, who had endured meekly, and with dignity, much suffering. I speak not of the present Pope, but of Pius the Seventh, who had won the esteem of all men, by his resignation, his piety, and his charities. His venerable head was a model for a painter, while the features showed the traces of mental anxiety and of age; the hair, as left by the tonsure, was of a glossy black, even as that of a young man, and fell waving round the head.

We had seen him at the funeral of a cardinal. A splendid ceremony it was. The church of St. John Lateran was hung in black up to the arched roof. Innumerable tapers shone out like stars from the darkness. In the centre of the church, an enormous
catafalque, covered with rich red velvet, was erected, and on it lay the cardinal in his robes. The face uncovered, and, I speak as an eye-witness, the cheeks rouged; such was the custom. The hands, white in death, lay folded on the bosom. All was surrounded by an immense hedge of silver candelabra, between which and the bed of state sufficient room was left for the Pope and his cardinals to pass, preceded by young boys bearing censers; and as they swung them backwards and forwards, rich fumes of incense ascended round the dead, and filled the church with spicy odours.

Then we had seen the venerable Pope, nay, we had been placed by the Swiss guards on the steps, leading to the high altar, where the Pope himself officiated, assisted by the cardinals.

Happily for us, and for the reputation of Englishmen, those struggles and contests had not yet taken place, which young men of fortune, our countrymen, thought it incumbent upon them to get up, even on the steps of the
altar, to prove their independence, and show their skill in the science of the ring, by knocking down a few Swiss guardsmen, under the very eye of the Pope, in his triple crown.

Something in the appearance of our party, which prepossessed even the hardy Swiss guarding the Pope's person, had on this, as on other occasions, procured us the utmost attention and civility. I cannot say, whether it was the respect and courtesy we were anxious to show to all those who imagined themselves to be engaged in a holy duty, or whether we owed it to the great beauty and sweetness of some of those of the female sex, who deigned to join us; but, certainly, on all occasions, we received marks of the most considerate kindness from every official, and invariable respect and deference from all menials.

I have ventured to allude to the great personal attraction of some of our party; for one, the loveliest of all, was with us on the day we visited Albano; and that beauty, and those charms of manner and address...
which set it off, became cruel sources of trouble to a young Trappist.

After having remained spectators of the religious ceremony at Albano, and seen the devout population, on their knees, receive the papal benediction, we pushed our researches farther, and, having heard of a celebrated ruin, the ruin of a fountain, where streams of sulphuric water gushed forth, not far from Albano, we set off on foot, bent on discovering it.

We had been told it was in the garden of a monastery, and that it was shown to strangers. This information, I may say, for those who are determined explorers like ourselves, was in great part erroneous; but that is not much to the purpose at present.

We proceeded, choosing the most sheltered paths, towards the spot that had been pointed out to us; but no monastery could we see.

We rested awhile at a little road-side inn; the cloth was spread under a dilapidated arbour, over which clambered a luxuriant vine. Milk, with figs, and other dried fruit, was brought. The garden commanded a view of
the path, as it ascended the broken and rocky ground above us.

We were most discomfited at the prospect of having to return, without seeing the celebrated spot we were in search of.

The host and hostess had been questioned, but in vain. Just at this moment, a monk was seen descending the path which led by our resting place.

Our fair friend, Marian F——, whom we have already mentioned, and whose zeal in the search had led us almost unwillingly so far, instantly rose. Here was a charming opportunity! a monk probably from the very monastery we were in search of! and the monks we met “always were so courteous.”

She moved rapidly towards him, stated what was the object of our search, and requested to be directed aright. The monk made no reply. “My Italian,” thought she, “sounds strange in his ears;” and with infinite grace and sweetness, she repeated her words more distinctly, accompanied with amiable excuses. Still he replied not, his head was bent towards the ground, even his
eyes barely travelled with hasty glances towards his fair interlocutor, or if he did so far venture, they were most rapidly withdrawn.

Again she returned to the charge. She fancied she had ill-expressed herself, and intimated a desire to visit a monastery, probably his monastery.

M. de Ciampololini, whose attention had been engrossed in other matters, suddenly sprung up, then laughed, then tried to beckon her away. "Ah! do you not know?" he said. "Ah! la signorina is too cruel! she is stopping a Trappist; she wants to make him speak! to look at a woman! Ah! c'est trop fort," and again he repeated his signals of recall.

But the fair Marian, intent on gaining the information she wished, read in the averted gaze of the young monk only a difficulty in understanding her.

She was not used to be baffled, or unsuccessful. There was something not only gentle but gentlemanly under the monk's garb; a fine intelligent face, though pale, and melancholy, and averted. He could not be
stupid or rude! it could only be that he did not comprehend her. He was moving away, she gently laid her hand on his arm, to arrest his steps, when, close upon them, came another monk, older, stern, severe; he spoke with few but decisive words.

"Signora, we are Trappists, *il parlare non ci e permesso,*" speaking it is forbidden us. "But he is a novice. *Gran Dio,* what penance can atone for him and me." She was shocked, startled; still one word of explanation. The fountain in the garden of their monastery, that strangers visited? "No fountain, no strangers," he replied. "*Gran Dio! in their garden!*

He was a chief of their order, and he might be forgiven; "but the young man—the novice, has he spoken?" and he cast his eyes and hands up. "*No,* he had *not* spoken," said the fair lady very decidedly.

"But he has looked?" She blushed—a rosy tell-tale colour mounted involuntarily to her cheek; her lips could not deny what she knew so well; and even, on the pale face of the novice, who, if he had looked but ever so
hastily, had yet seen, as a gleam of paradise—of the earthly paradise, from which he was for ever shut out—that lovely countenance, now expressive of embarrassment and regret.

"Ah!" said she, "I am very unhappy to have caused——"

"Say no more, signora. Pass on your way. We go to receive the blessing of the holy father. May it serve to blot out this sin!"

And the old and severe monk once more lifted his hands, this time to give a parting blessing as a signal of dismissal.

Even his eyes rested, perhaps, a moment longer than they ought on the beautiful woman, who had thus forced both the younger and the aged man into a breach of the strict rule of their order.

M. de Ciampolini pressed forwards as soon as they were well out of sight; for, strange to say, mixed up with scepticism and disgust, there still exists a fear of these stern churchmen in the Italian mind. He waited then till they had turned an angle of the road, and could
not see that he was a companion of the heretic, who had broken through the awe that hems in all of their order.

Then, approaching her in fits of laughter, "Ah, signorina! what have you done? That poor young man! you have shot darts and arrows into his holy mind. What days of penance, and what nights of remorse!"

But our fair friend stood pained and silent; the pale, but handsome Trappist, what a fate was his! What had driven him to this cruel estrangement from his kind—this awful, living death, well for the old and worn-out denizens of the world, whose lives are well-nigh over, and whose friends, and whose beloved ones are, perhaps, ere this, at rest in the grave! But for one so young in life! for him she had just seen?

To all of us it was a joke, long remembered against her. How she had tormented the poor novice, and brought him to grief; but to her, some inward feeling, a commiseration deep and lasting, ever brought a sadness to her brow, as the recollection of that meeting rose again before her.
I REMEMBER one other excursion in which our lovely friend Marian F— offered to officiate as guide; though successful in discovering the object of our search, she again met with a disappointment and a repulse, though not in quite so romantic a manner.

No visitor to Rome is ignorant that the tomb of the Horatii and Curiatii still exists; at least, is said to exist; and a tomb, of a curious and unique shape, does indeed bear every appearance of having been erected as a memorial to them.

It consists of a square pile, from which should rise six small towers; five are perfect, while the base of the sixth is all
that appears. It is said to have been so erected at the time; and, in consideration of the one survivor, the sixth tower was not to be completed, until he should have finished a life so dear to Rome, and which had been so serviceable to his country.

The building bears signs of great antiquity; it is formed chiefly of the small Roman brick, and is only imposing as far as it is connected with the event it celebrates.

But the situation! The most picturesque imaginable. It can hardly be the spot where the contest took place, which is generally spoken of as a plain. Here is no plain, but we found ourselves, on the contrary, as we approached the spot, shut in by the winding of a small valley. The valley suddenly opened, and an almost circular space, covered with the softest turf, was disclosed to our view.

In the midst stood the tomb; over it stretched the arms of a gigantic walnut tree, the largest I ever beheld, almost roofing in both the tomb and the green sward around it.

But, I have lost sight of our fair conduc-
tress, who, with light step and elated countenance, was flying round the tomb, amongst the moss-covered stones that lay about. Book and pencil in hand,—enchanted at having come with such correctness on the object of our search.

"Here we must stop." "Here must we examine the baskets we had brought with us, and dine on their contents;" but before this something else must be examined, something, indeed, "most interesting."

She had heard there was an entrance to the tomb. We could not find it. There appeared to be some mistake; but an exclamation of pleasure from Marian told us she had discovered it. We had looked up for the gateway, we should have looked down; for there, amongst the tall foxgloves and the wild herbage, close to the ground, was a small archway—"delightful!"

Not Belzoni, when he first gained entrance to the Pyramids, could have felt such a glow of satisfaction.

In a moment our leader, who was very young, very active, and full of antiquarian
enthusiasm, was on her knees, seeking to penetrate with her eyes the semi-darkness, that was all she could discover. The arch, I said, was low, but her spirit was high—full of high-flown admiration, and longing to behold all connected with this curious monument.

Monsieur de Ciampolini, who was again with us, had more than once visited this spot with ladies; but ladies who were soon satisfied, who came less to see, than to say they had seen—who, after dismounting from their horses, arranging their fair ringlets, and shaking out the plaits in their long riding habits, had mounted again, and ridden on through the tempting shades of the valley. He beheld, with a species of amazement, our prolonged admiration; but who can describe his horror when he saw our guide, half stooping, half creeping, attempt to enter the low portal.

"Signorina! per l' amor del cielo—what would you do? Go not there! Will you not stop her? There are, no doubt, robbers—perhaps serpents—what will become of her?"
We were deaf to his entreaties; we had explored many a passage and recess, which Italians cared not to enter; and, indeed, our curiosity was alive: we were only anxious to follow in her wake; at least, those who were still active and young enough. And all were proceeding to the entrance, through which our friend's white dress was just seen fluttering in the dim light of the interior—when a sudden cry startles us all, and out in pallid haste comes the fair face of our guide—limbs, dress, mantle, all are extricated, before we hardly know how it is achieved. Putting her finger on her lip, she pulls us rapidly away—then comes laughter, horror, dismay, all mixed.

M. de Ciampolini was not exactly right. There were no robbers—no serpents—but a Roman family, of the lowest class, half disrobed and busily employed. They had all collected under a ray of light that fell across the hollow space within the tomb, and that ray of light disclosed a scene familiar to all travellers in Italy, but seldom seen in such perfection. The mother, the father, the little
The Tomb of the Horatii and Curiatii.

Brood of sun-burnt imps, were all engaged in a chase we will not particularize. But the woman's long hair was down, and clustered on her shoulders; a long and thin-legged maiden had her hands among the masses, a look of eager triumph on her face; the little ones laid their shock heads on their mother's lap, whose hands were busy among their curls; the father attended to his own. So intent were they on their interesting search, they hardly noticed the intruder, who, indeed, was out again, as soon as in. And it is wonderful how, from that time, the young and enthusiastic Marian utterly abandoned the office of guide to the interior of Italian tombs.

Happily for us, she resumed ere long her leadership to all the fountains, and ruins, and tombs, and palaces round Rome, so long as the bright light of day, or the silver rays of the moon, showed us there were no groups of Roman beggars, lying perdue, to stumble upon.
EVENINGS IN LONDON.

I.

THE COUNTESS OF C—, THE PRINCE OF WALES, AND THE IRISH FRIEND.

"HOT COCKLES."

VOL. I.
EVENINGS IN LONDON.

I.

THE COUNTESS OF C——, THE PRINCE OF WALES,
AND THE IRISH FRIEND.

“HOT COCKLES.”

The house of the Countess of C—— was well known in London, during the years 1802 and 1803, for its brilliant and recherché assemblies.

Foreign ministers could, in its magnificent saloons, meet with the leading men of all parties. The Prince of Wales, then in the pride and vigour of his manhood, commanding the confidence of a large political clique, and standing on far higher ground than he did afterwards as regent of the kingdom, could there find the first wits of the day, and other congenial spirits, with whom to while away an hour.
The Countess of C—was proud, perhaps prouder than any of the great and celebrated personages who frequented her house. Yet there was one deep, gnawing grief, that marred all the brightness of her station—she was not born to it. Down, low among the very dregs of the people, had this haughty woman first drawn breath.

Her father, an Irishman, kept, in a back and dismal street of his native town, a small shop of miscellaneous articles. But, it was in Ireland, far away from the ken of the great London world; and no railroads and "excursion trains" then carried prying eyes into those obscure regions.

Nay! even if some wandering tourist did visit their town, and make sketches of their churches, and inns, and market houses, and roam about for picturesque spots to illustrate on his return, he assuredly never would traverse that dim and dingy lane, where this child, born in poverty, and clad in rags, strayed in and out unheeded. Her golden hair, wonderfully long and glossy, hung in confused ringlets over a face most hand-
some, but not always most clean. Oh! mysteries of the human heart! What fathoms deep did the countess bury these horrid memories! Even there, among these scenes, might she have dragged on her youth, her beauty unknown, her fortunes no higher than to be the handmaid of some upstart tradesman's purse-proud wife—when a friend came to this abode of poverty and dirt. The little child was looked at, pitied, and redeemed. Brought away from that home, where a miserable and dying father saw only ruin before him for this, his only child—ruin, or the tender mercies of an Irish workhouse; clad in garments suited to another and a higher sphere; and taken to a home where comforts abounded on every side, where masters and teachers were sent for to cultivate the talents of this singular and beautiful girl, whose restless, active, and ambitious mind had power to apply itself to all her kind friend wished; this poor denizen of the small, miserable shop, shot up in beauty and intelligence, as if the blood of a race of kings had been in her veins. Her form, even in those youthful
Evenings in London.

days, had something grand and commanding in its loveliness. Wherever she went, a ready supply of money, provided by the friend, enabled her to oblige many who were her companions, though better born and better bred than herself. One of these, on leaving, to return to her home with a relation in London, invited the young girl to accompany her.

The future countess appeared in circles where her tact and skill admirably served her, and her resplendent beauty still more. If not descended from a race of kings, she knew how to dress up a history of a father of high birth, fallen into misfortune, and living in retirement, with hopes of future wealth.

Her appearance created a sensation.—Adorers surrounded her, and the Earl of C——considered himself a most fortunate man in carrying off as his bride one so admirably fitted to bear a coronet, to head his table, and to do the honours of his establishment. She was courted and admired. Her house became the rendezvous of all that was fashionable in London.
And what of the friend—the Irish friend, whose helping hand had raised her to this pinnacle?

No words can describe the aversion, the detestation, the countess felt for this individual. Everything had been done which her consummate skill could devise to keep him at a distance. He alone had the real secret of the past. She would sometimes refuse to believe, even in her own heart, that she had ever been other than she was: and this living memento; "this odious, horrid man!" as she mentally exclaimed; would she might never see him more.

She begun to entertain well-founded hopes it might be so. By a prolonged and obstinate silence, by a complete neglect of all his letters and inquiries, she thought that she had effectually freed herself from him; but latterly, he had recommenced his correspondence to her; if correspondence that might be called, which was carried on only on one side.

Matters were indeed changed with them. Some unforeseen and unfortunate circumstances had robbed him of his fortune, and
he found himself in his old age penniless and helpless.

Helpless! He who had built up her prosperity, without whom she would have worn out her life in obscurity and ignominy.

He had now one child—a son. His endeavours had been so far crowned with success, that this son, a fine high-spirited young man of twenty-two, had been promised an honourable and lucrative post in India; he had engaged himself, should he obtain this post, to transmit to his father yearly a sufficient sum to keep him from want, if it did not supply him with luxuries. All yet required, was the recommendation of a powerful person in England to speak for the young man's respectability.

"Now," pleaded the Irish friend, "a few words from your husband, and all is right." He would be himself in London, said the last letter; he would wait upon her on the evening of the 15th of that month; they were to sail next day, for he had decided on accompanying his son to India. He had not, he said, cultivated high acquaintances; but all
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depended on the recommendation he had asked for, on a few words in his son's favour, from a member of the government.—Her husband held office under the ministers then in power.

As the friend of her youth, as the artificer of her fortunes, as the father of an only son, whose every hope depended on this one chance, he besought her to speak to her husband, and procure for him the few lines that would open to his son an honourable career for life, and save his own old age from misery and want.

The countess had been taking her daily drive around the park; she had returned somewhat irritated. General Andréossi, the newly arrived French ambassador, had not sufficiently appreciated her condescension in giving him the entrée to her exclusive petits soupers, though he had bowed an acceptance to her large party for the night.

She turned listlessly over the cards and notes that lay upon her table, when suddenly her countenance darkened. Amongst these fashionable memoranda lay a thick odd-shaped
letter from Ireland. One half-averted glance revealed the hated hand-writing.

"What new torment!" she exclaimed inwardly. She would have thrown it from her; but, on second thoughts, opened and unfolded it with disdain in every motion of her white aristocratic hands.

She had begun to hope the obnoxious friend had ceased to exist; or, if he still existed, had come to the wise determination of troubling her no more.

Reposing in security on this happy supposition, great was her consternation on beholding this ill-looking bit of paper; and, bending her eyes upon it, a shivering dizziness came over her, as she marked the signature of her "Irish friend."

A brief glance at the dates and at the contents showed her he was to be in London but for that one day. It told her also his last (indeed, it had been his only) request.

Could she—would she, inform her husband of this man's claim? Sustain the enquiries of who?—what?—when?—where? Was it for her to put a clue into the hands of the
earl—of the world—which they might follow up through that dark distant labyrinth to her home, to her birthplace, which she wished for ever to forget?

No! this man must not be seen—must not be heard—must not be known.

It was easy. In one day he would be gone. She could say she was ill—she was away—she was out of town; that was best.

When he was in India, he should hear from her. False promise. Never—never—did she intend he should hear from her again.

What mattered it to her, he should starve out a few lingering years; others had done so; and his son, let him work or starve too. What could it be to her?

Were they to thrust in their poverty and misery on her, now she was the queen of fashion, and the leader of the ton. With trembling fingers she seized a pen, and rapidly wrote a few lines.

As we have said, a brief reference to his letter showed her that very night was the 15th, the time he said he would see her—"n'importe."
Neither then, nor ever, was her determination—and that night, least of all. It was her grandest gala of the season. All London would be there. She resumed her pen.

"Really, her lord had no interest—she was herself ill—on the point of leaving England for some time. She hoped he would succeed, and his son, better than they expected, even without the recommendation he sought. Some other time—anything else. When they returned to England (‘ah! may they leave their bones on the scorching plains of India!’ was the unspoken but burning wish of the excited countess)—when they returned to England, she ‘should be glad to see them.’"

Question not the truth of this picture, gentle reader. Nothing hardens the heart like the round of London fashionable gaieties—its kindling ambitions, its heartless friendships, its merciless rejection of the unwelcome intruder, its rigid demand for the pass-word of its exclusive members. No line of demarcation more cuts off the uninitiated in the races of India, in the mysteries of Egyptian priesthood of former days, than in London,
the unlucky aspirant, from a lower set. Trample him down. What mortifications are too severe a retribution for his insolence? If he is a pet author—a millionaire; if he can play on his chin, or if his mother has been frail, and her admirer a crowned head—something may be done for him—he may be a lion for a season or two, perhaps. And then poor Rogers or Moore, or some other gifted soul, whose lays resound from clime to clime, and heart to heart, may still claim a place at the aristocratic board; if they will shine out, if they will amuse, or astonish, or excite the fashionable and blasé individuals who assemble to discuss scientific entrées and French wines, at a dinner, perhaps some three or four hours after the sun has set. This may be a philippic, but it is only aimed against one particular set—the votaries of fashion and the victims of dissipation. For amongst the high and noble in our land, what virtues, what self-denial, what generous sentiments are indigenous, what softness of manners and of heart, what active benevolence, what unobtrusive piety!
I am no radical, railing at all in high places. But look at the pale, sodden, weary faces, of many who, year after year, drag on through a mere "London life," and see, if soul and body do not shrink and degenerate; and men are left, and women too, selfish, insensible, and worn out.

I return to the countess—an apt illustration of this class. She shook from her the fears and disgust that had come over her. They had been the only sentiments awakened in her bosom by the letter she had received from the Irish friend.

One thrill of joy came over her to think how soon he would be gone. The nightmare of years would be dispelled. Her secret safe.

The evening came. The countess fluttered, irritated, but triumphant, never looked more handsome. Splendid jewels decked her person, and diamonds glittered in her hair. Her robe of blue and gold fell in rich folds around her noble figure. Guest after guest made their appearance, and were received with almost queen-like state and majesty. The royal party arrived with many a star and
order on their breasts. The Prince of Wales himself was ere long seated with his beautiful hostess at cards, an attendant group of lords and ladies standing around. When, suddenly, a rapid step was heard, a slight hurry, a wordy contest amongst the domestics, even within the very saloon graced by the presence of His Royal Highness.

Two or three bepowdered and deliveried footmen strove to hold back a tall, gaunt man, in old and rusty black. But he hurled them from him with a back-handed Irish blow, and stalking rapidly through the throng, up to the countess, as she sat smiling in honourable state opposite the prince, at the small and elegant card table, "Oh, Molly M'Store," cried he, in rich Irish brogue, as he seized her two hands, and shook them unmercifully, "Oh, Molly M'Store, but right glad I am to see you. Why, you and I have not met like this since we last played hot cockles behind your father's counter!"

The words were out—out with a loud chuckling laugh. The prince himself started, stared, listened, and finally laughed as well,
while the "Irish friend, with his rich Irish brogue," went on with his souvenirs, holding fast by the countess' trembling hands.

Truth was in his tone; truth in her faltering eye, her speechless lips, her deadly pallor.

Her old friend, stung to the quick by her ingratitude and hard-heartedness, had felt a burning desire to revenge and punish. A few enquiries revealed the facts to him: that the countess was well, had company, and who would be there. Casting aside his own quiet and gentlemanly character, while the passions of his race and his country gained the ascendant, he hastily adopted the shabbiest dress, and the broadest brogue, forced himself in, and by one short sentence did the thing.

All crowded round the table. "Hot cockles!"—"behind her father's counter!" The words flew round and round the circle. High-bred decorum and gravity gave way; all bent forward to see the daring intruder. There he was, still by the countess—in high glee apparently, holding a conversation abounding in Irishisms, and sparkling with
the wit and fun of his country, with the prince himself, who drew him out, and to whom he showed the countess' own note pleading indisposition, incapacity, &c. &c. As he did so, he again seized her hands, and vowed he was delighted to see her so mistaken.

"Ill!" he said, "why she never had a finer colour than that in her life." Indeed, the colour had mounted over neck, cheek, and brow; and the prince, who had enjoyed the scene highly, now felt compassion for her, and led away the unwelcome visitor amidst a knot of gentlemen, to amuse them with his grotesque pictures of Irish life.

The countess recovered sufficient command over herself and her countenance to resume her duties as hostess. She acted out her part that evening, and, after the one first shock, was never seen to wince or shake. She walked more haughtily than ever among her noble guests, though something told her keen eye that not an ear in that gay assembly but had been listening to the hated words. Those "hot cockles" burnt into her proud heart, and before the morning she was far
more "ill" than in her base deceit she had pretended to be; and for many months the countess "left England" in deed and in truth.

Some seasons passed. The crowding events of those times, the breaking up of the peace, and other causes, making many a change in the society in which she moved, gave her a hope that the story of the "hot cockles" was forgotten, and, at last, those brilliant soirées were renewed.

But across the haughty and beautiful countenance of the countess a shadow had passed that never left it, and a character always worldly, selfish, and unfeeling, became doubly seared by that one deadly mortification—never to be forgotten by herself, and, worst of all, liable to be remembered by the circle in which alone she cared to live.

And what of the Irish friend? It is said, "Revenge is sweet." He did not find it so very pleasant. The élan that had carried him through what he half thought a righteous vengeance, had subsided. How little did the mortification he had inflicted
calm the deep anxiety of his heart. On the morning after the party, he sat with his own son opposite to him, at a small breakfast table, in an old-fashioned hotel. They were both silent—spirit stricken. In a few hours the vessel was to sail. How had he fed up the young man's hopes, till he was full of expectation, of certainty! How had he drawn him on with assurances that he knew one who could not—would not fail him in this hour of need!

Now a long dreary voyage was to be performed—the one condition unfulfilled on which the appointment depended. The result—doubtful. Rejection would leave them forlorn and desperate in a foreign land.

The vengeance of last night appeared to the father but as the last effort of some comic actor, who laughs and gives the finishing thrust to his enemy on the scene, but, while his good acting brings down thunders of applause, he shrinks behind the curtain to droop and die of some hidden and consuming malady. He now could hardly gather strength, yet wished to make some semblance of cheer-
fulness. It was shallow, and kindled no response.

Still his son, though he found no words, smiled; but it was a wan, ghastly smile. He dare not look at his father as he smiled, for his piercing, yet tender, eyes were fixed on him, and the young man hoped not to betray his trouble and despondency.

The breakfast was, as yet, untouched; and almost with a groan the father pressed upon his companion some little delicacy, which had been added by their attentive hostess to the early meal.

The windows of the room they were in looked street-ways. A sickly yellow light struggled in, which told the sun was there, shining on the last day that was to see them in England. Both unconsciously turned their eyes towards it. Suddenly it was obscured—they were on the ground floor—and the jarring, rattling noise of wheels furiously driven gave notice that some vehicle had dashed up to the door of the hotel. The next instant a gentleman was in the room. His dress was handsome, though somewhat
disordered, and certainly was not a morning costume. There was a slight unsteadiness in his gait, but he leant his hand upon the table where they were sitting, and at once, without introduction or apology, addressed the elder of the two; and if there were some traces of a night of debauch in the general appearance of his person, his head had got clear enough, evidently, to know very well what it was about; and, when he spoke, the words he used, and his manner of speaking, seemed apparently kind, though rather imperious.

"I was afraid," he said, "I should be too late. I sent you this last night by General B——;" and he laid a written paper on the table. "I sent this to you as soon as you left the Countess of C——'s. He could not find you. I only learnt that he was unsuccessful an hour ago. We had been making a night of it. Don't let that young man do the same. I believe I fell asleep or something of the sort. On waking, the first thing I saw was daylight through the shutters, and General B——. 'Is all right?' I asked. 'Have you seen our 'Irish friend?"' He owned he had failed, and
could not make out where you were. I was confoundedly vexed. Fortunately, you left that countess's note with me after you showed it me last night—ha! ha!” There was a pause followed this laugh.

"Your royal highness,” said the “Irish friend,” who had at once recognized the Prince of Wales, in the individual who addressed them, “may I ask you why you have taken this trouble about me?”

The prince changed his tone, and threw more earnestness into his manner.

“"A fine young fellow like that,” said he, pointing across the table, “if he wants to serve his king, shall not want a chance. The few words I have here written may serve as well, perhaps better, than any from the Earl of C——. Take that letter with you, and deliver it according to the address.” And then, thrusting a pocket-book into the hands of the father, “Take that, too, for your son; if he will not accept it as a gift from one who loves Ireland well, let him repay both capital and interest in good and loyal service to his country and his king.”
A wild hurrah! broke with Irish vehemence from the young man. The father sought to press the prince’s hand to his lips; but he was gone, as he came, instantaneously.

Who knows the Irish nature—warm, impetuous, irrepressible—will easily imagine what indelible gratitude lived in the father’s heart to the prince. He did not fail to partake the ardent enthusiasm of his countrymen, who at that time believed devotedly in him. He did not survive his Indian voyage long enough to see the dreams of the patriots of his country melt away.

But whatever the prince did or did not do for Ireland, he had given peace and plenty to the few remaining years of him who we can only name as the “Irish Friend.” His son had drunk in the words of the prince with the ardour of youth. He entered into the military career in India, backed by the powerful name which signed the letter entrusted to his father. It was not the only act of kindness and protection shown him from the same quarter; and the young man rose to so high a grade in his profession, and so well
worked out his debt "to his country and his king," that honours and distinctions fell to his lot; and subsequently, in a title familiar to us all, and written on the immortal tablets of history, was sunk the cognomen of his father, whom we have only introduced to the reader as the "Irish Friend."
EVENINGS IN LONDON.

II.

We have taken a brief glimpse at "Evenings in London," in 1802—1803.

We have entered the gilded saloons of the Countess of C——. We have even followed some of the personages we met there to the morrow's daylight, which so often brings unexpected changes, and, happily, sometimes very welcome ones.

But, now, using an author's privilege, we once more raise the curtain. More than thirty years have passed. The willow waves over the tomb of Napoleon. Mighty events, that shook Europe like an earthquake, have done their worst, and their best.
The Prince of Wales has been regent, has been king, and is dead.

The topics of the day are strikingly different: instead of the grand victories of our armies and our fleets, conversation drags a weary round over the opera, the weather, and the last new novel.

Byron has sung his immortal lays, and is no more; and many have passed away whose sweet and inspired pens have added a lustre to the literature of our country.

There is a lull in politics, in poetry, in prose.

London society, even of the highest and gayest order, expends its energies in a dull uniformity. The world is almost at peace, and a singular stagnation of ideas prevails.

A few houses, a few leaders of fashion, venture to break in upon the weary monotony of the evening amusements. They resolve that something must be done. But what? Private theatricals? No—in London, they can scarcely be tolerated. Certainly not, when young girls are to play the heroines. Yet the ecstacies of the lover when addressed
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to a young man in petticoats, become ludicrous in the extreme; and we laugh where we ought to weep for the desponding adorer.

If girls act, it must be in the country—in the paternal "country house." There alone it can be done—amongst the favoured guests of the family, who meet to pass "a merry Christmas" together under the same hospitable roof, and where the faithful lover on the scene, and the happy marriage that winds up all, are but forerunners of some real attachment brought to a successful issue; when the village bells, hard by the lordly mansion, will ring out some few months after a joyous wedding, with bridesmaids, and garlands, and a colossal frosted cake!

This is the only lawful upshot of private theatricals; and the drama must be enacted in the country.

Long live the holly! We will set our faces against no Christmas revelry, ending so happily, in due season.

But, private theatricals in London! Ha! where the worn-out beau lisps out his tale of love, in a new suit and knee-buckles, to
a modest, timid, true-hearted girl, who looks around at her audience, and trembles, or ought to tremble! No—forbid it, delicacy and English pride.

We want no hoary, blasé libertine to bring his knowledge of green-room science amongst our pure, high-bred girls. Their touch contaminates. Let them keep to the actress and her set;—let them wait humbly on her smiles at morning rehearsals, or throng her benefit nights, and throw down bouquets amidst the plaudits of a dazzled and dazzling audience.

We can endure no promiscuous handling of palms, no sighing out the adoration of a hacknied and worthless heart under the false colours of a Romeo or any other stage lover.

English women have been the idols of the world. All Europe bows down to them, and imputes to them surpassing excellence. Let them not descend from their pedestal—let them not lower their standard, but bear it high up in the blue sky, pointing heavenward; not downward, to the grovelling earth.
Faithful wives, tender mothers, admirable in your self-devotion, imitate never the vile wheedling arts of baser minds, nor sink into the sickly sentimentality, the sophisticated, hesitating virtue of the heroine of French literature. Be firm in your right and holy purposes. Dare to be good, as you are fascinating.

Oh! little island, “set in a silver sea,” whose queen has spread on every side the bright lustre of her goodness and her gifts, keep your high fame. Be ever first among nations—because not only your sons are brave, but your daughters are virtuous. The glory of the world will indeed be overshadowed if England and her fine-hearted people should ever fall from their noble position.

I have lived much away from my own country. A considerable part of my life has been spent under the hot vivifying rays of a foreign sun. I have lived in many lands; but I have loved my own. While we pass, smiling, through the vineyards of Italy, or the “beau pays de France,”
or linger in more distant regions, an English heart still warms to the "old countrie." But, above all, fair-haired daughters of Albion, we feel a glow of pride for you, and in you. Let me here quote a few lines from a poet somewhat out of fashion:

"May my song soften as thy daughters, I,
Britannia, hail! for beauty is their own,
The feeling heart, simplicity of life,
And elegance and taste—the faultless form,
Shaped by the hand of harmony—the cheek,
Where the live crimson thro' the native white,
Soft shooting o'er the face, diffuses bloom
And every nameless grace—the parted lip,
Like the red rosebud, moist with morning dew,
Breathing delight; and, under flowing jet,
Or sunny ringlets, or of circling brown;
The neck slight shaded, and the swelling breast—
The look resistless, piercing to the soul,
And by the soul informed, when drest in love,
She sits high smiling in the conscious eye."

Thomson's Seasons.

Now let us return to our evenings in London.
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THE ANTICIPATED EXPLOSION—SAFETY AND SUCCESS—AND THE EXPULSION OF THE FIERY MONSTER.

I have passed some censures on private theatricals in London; but our leading stars of fashion decided that there was still a picturesque and intellectual amusement open to all. And if taste, and judgment, and learning, and research, and tact, were combined, something most beautiful and interesting could be achieved. It was decided there were to be tableaux—not anything commonplace, but a series of tableaux from a celebrated work. Everything was to be correct—costume of course, adjuncts and backgrounds equally so. The thing was to be done as nobody ever had done it before, and thus a fresh zest and glory would be given to the brilliant parties of the Honourable Mrs. L——— S———.

But, by some counter arrangements, the performance did not come off at the parties of the Honourable Mrs. L——— S———.
The "tableaux" nearly suffered a collapse. Rival houses claimed the representation. The delay was great, and dangerous as delays always are to every undertaking. Diplomatic agents hurried backwards and forwards, and, at last, one triumphant competitor gained the day. The tableaux were to be represented at the largest house, and mathematical measurement decided the dispute.

In this house we were visiting at the time. We were pressed to prolong our stay. It was evident we were wanted. We had some practice in these matters.

The slender black-eyed Florentine, the brilliant Spanish brunette, the agaçante Parisian, the somewhat more solid but enthusiastic German, and even the loveliest of Polish countesses, had been grouped by our hands at the various capitals of Europe. We had obtained some celebrity in this line, but we feared to lose it.

The spirit of Punch is too much abroad in England. I mean the publication, not the beverage. We English are terrible quizzers;
but there were many to encourage our efforts, if not to share our responsibility.

The first step had been taken. A morning consultation had been held, in which the beauty and grace of our different friends, and their capabilities to sustain the various characters, were most critically discussed.

This conclave held its deliberations in strict secrecy. Who would have ventured to complain of a want of height in the charming lady X. Y. Z., or hint at the high shoulders of the fashionable hero A. B. C., (both candidates for characters in the tableaux that were in preparation,) if all had not vowed a stringent vow to keep these discussions as private as if life and death were at stake?

One was rejected for being too animated to keep still, another for being too still to look animated; but, at last, all the characters were distributed "to perfection." Nor were our tableaux chosen at hap-hazard. A poem, that had startled the world, led it captive in admiration, and laid perhaps the first stone of the mighty reputation of its...
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author, was selected. It was full of romance, and a variety of consecutive scenes were taken from it. To be faithful, let me at once say, it was The Lay of the Last Minstrel, by Walter Scott.

Some of the great composers of the day wrote music for the occasion. Choruses of many beautiful voices chanted the words of the poet to melodies suitting the different scenes.

There was a great effort on our part, and on the part of many friends of Walter Scott, to make this representation worthy of the great author. His youngest son supplied Henry of Cranstoun with accoutrements. His daughter greatly desired to be present; but, under the afflicting dispensation which had so wrung her affectionate nature, she feared to meet the excitement. But many suggestions were given by those who so well knew their father's views.

Painters, whose names are famous at home and abroad, forsook their ateliers to study fresh subjects for their canvas, in the groups
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that were formed. All the celebrities in London asked for and received invitations. A sensation was decidedly created. Society was on the *qui vive*.

Exertions were redoubled. The evening for the display arrived, and all seemed ready. All the preparations necessary for effect were completed. The lords, the knights, the minstrel, the Duchess of Buccleugh and all her fair attendants, the Lady of Branksome and the goblin page, were assembled. The thundering knocks at the door, and the roll of ceaseless carriages, announced the arrival of distinguished guests. One brief moment of suspense is left, and then—to commence.

But that brief moment! It had nearly been signalized by a deadly, a terrific catastrophe.

Large masses of light had been scientifically arranged; but, at this last instant, the kindling touch had been conveyed to a gigantic candelabra, from whose outspreading arms more than two dozen immense jets of gas threw up their golden flames under globes of...
crystal. Glorious and grand our butler stood beside it. In fact, it had been brought by himself to the house that very morning with a team of six horses, in response to the cry of "More light! more light!"

But, horror upon horror! from some unknown cause this dazzling contrivance began to utter strange cries and groans, hissing and crackling.

"Put it out! carry it away!" was the general exclamation. Lambent flames and fiery vapours began to play about the twisted trunk, causing in all beholders great terror and confusion.

"Put it out! take it away!" was again the cry from every side. But no one seemed particularly inclined to approach the tall and many armed monster, breathing forth fire and flame. None knew from which side some sudden and terrific explosion might not burst forth.

"Take it away!" again cried the ladies, with a wail like a Greek chorus—"If it goes off what will become of us?"
It was no easy matter "to take it away;" and if it did "go off," it certainly was not likely to be in the pleasantest manner. About a dozen men had been employed in rearing it into its place. It had been brought in piecemeal through the doors, and built up inside the room in all its splendour, and the men had departed, for on the morrow only was it intended it should be removed.

The lamps upon it were put out, certainly, after one or two had been put up by mistake in the haste, cracking the glasses, and adding more noise, more flare, and more confusion to the general panic.

Some relief was experienced when it was learnt that the master of the house had sent for the owner of the "monster candelabra," and that he was on his way for our rescue.

Meanwhile, guests continued to arrive; the wide and massy curtains across the folding doors did their duty well, and shut out sight and sound. But messengers and spies were despatched to ascertain the state of mind of the spectators. They were found to be all
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ready, ranged on the seats which had been prepared for them, impatient for the opening scene—most impatient!

Reckless of our state of terror and dismay, reckless of the struggles of William of Deloraine and Henry of Cranstoun, working side by side, in vain endeavours to carry forth the brazen and formidable dragon from the room, the unpitying composer struck up his opening piece: while the remainder of the dramatis-personæ stood by and looked on in horrified suspense.

But, once more the roll of chariot wheels is heard; the door opens. In came the owner of the fiery dragon, accompanied by two valets, with faces blackened, and hands and leather aprons ditto, fresh from the labours of their craft.

Few words were wasted. A light passed rapidly along the monster's giant trunk and sturdy arms elicited the fact of many small escapes; ours was a great one. The creature was breathing forth fire at every pore.

We were now calm—triumphant. The danger
had not been overrated. The man himself owned that certainly something might be said to be out of order. "Lucky it did not burst. Gas enough there to blow the house up."

Exactly our opinion. But the man must be silenced, instantly, effectually. A few such words, caught by the audience on the other side, might send them flying wildly from the spot in every direction.

The monster was speedily dethroned. The blackened varlets laid him prostrate, and took him limb from limb; and thus dismembered and dishonoured, he was carried off the stage amidst great (though silent) demonstrations of applause.

As the last vestige of our formidable foe was borne from our gaze, we smiled once more upon each other, with a sense of indescribable relief.

"Good reason shall we have to be proud," was whispered from one to the other, "if our pre-arranged surprises and effects cause half such a commotion in the breasts of our expectant spectators, as we have just expe-
rienced; or if, when all is over, we could detect one-tenth part of the glow of satisfaction that illuminated our countenances at that moment."

We were saved! The house was saved! Our reputations were saved! The tableaux could go forward.

It is true, the opening morceau had been played through.

The eminent composer, who presided at a magnificent piano of Stodhart's in the front saloon, abandoned to the audience, had gone through the whole of his piece, not without considerable astonishment that the choruses, the hidden pibrochs, the "distant drum," had not fallen in to perform their parts at the proper moment. Still, his brilliant touch and quick conception had supplied the deficiency.

A word, conveyed to him via a sweet elfin-looking child, who played our goblin's part, gave him the clue, and begged him to recommence.

He condescended to do so amidst the plau-
dits of the audience,—enchanted with the wild melodies of one of their favourite composers, executed by himself.

The choruses, the hidden pibrochs, and the "distant drum," now chimed in at the right moment.

The beau monde was enraptured. They vouchsafed to be enthusiastic, and the curtains were drawn back for the first tableau amidst exclamations of delight.

Perhaps the scene that was revealed was not unworthy of the enthusiasm it excited. Though shorn somewhat of the glories of our "grand effect of light," by the removal of our dangerous intruder, still, a sombre hue was not inappropriate to the mysterious bower of the "Lady of Branksome"—that bower

" 'That was guarded by word and by spell,
Deadly to hear and deadly to tell;
Jesu, Maria! guard us well!
No living wight but the lady alone
Had dared to cross the threshold stone."

The spirits' voices were all the more imposing for a shade of gloom. But, as the plot
cleared up, the stage became lit with greater brilliancy; and, by the time the bridal scene wound up the series, a hundred lights of purest wax shone down their radiance on the lovely heroine, as she yielded her hand to Henry of Cranstoun. Her white robes glistened like silver under the nuptial veil; and the Lady of Branksome, represented by the handsomest woman in London, cleared from her noble brow the shadows of her grief, and lifted her classical face towards heaven, with lips apart, and framing a blessing, while she abjured for ever the spells that had proved but a delusion.

Our poor little goblin page had duly disappeared in a flash of fire; but the young heir also represented, like the goblin page, by a lovely little maiden of some five years old, but possessing besides the requisite of long flaxen curls, and wide blue eyes, knelt in his rich velvets, half hid beneath the gossamer folds and snowy drapery of his fair sister.

The harp of the last of the minstrels rung out its chords as the voice of the aged bard
owned himself not deserted, neglected, or oppressed, but honoured "as he sunk to rest."

The closing group shone out in the resplendent hue of the glowing amaranth, as is made practicable by the skilful in such matters, and all ended in one brilliant display.

Alas! evanescent as it was glorious.
EVENINGS IN LONDON.

III.

We have noticed the performers, let us devote a few words to the society out of which they were chosen. Among those who met at the houses of our friends, evening after evening, were men whose names will ever be remembered while the literature of our country holds a place in the estimation of the world. There also was one who at present guides events, and sways the destinies of nations by his wonderful skill, and the astonishing power of his talent and energy.

But first let us notice a poet of our own land. Quiet, melancholy looking—in a dress of extreme neatness—we see enter the author
of *Gertrude of Wyoming*, whose hand traced the spirit-stirring lines of *Hohenlinden*; whose genius, if not so prolific as some of his co-temporaries, has still struck with thrilling chords the lyre of Apollo. It is one of the sad verities of life, that Campbell, with his high descent from an ancient and honourable family, with his talent and renown, and with the influence which he possessed, and which enabled him to aid so materially in many admirable institutions, still should have died miserably in a mean residence in a French town, bowed down with debt, far from the friends of his palmy days. He died in the Rue St. Jean, Haute Ville, Boulogne-sur-Mer, in 1844. It is well known that he was in the receipt of a government pension of £200 a year, but his affairs were in irretrievable disorder. At his death he resumed his fitting station among the celebrated men of our land, since he was buried in Westminster Abbey.

But there was another, and a very different writer, who mingled but once only with the rest—of a different sex, and of different gifts.
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If her high-toned and poetical romances do not, unlauded, excite a heart-felt interest, all praise of ours would be superfluous.

When the aged, though still interesting, authoress of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, and many other excellent works of fiction, entered the room, all must have felt as if one of her own sensitive and noble minded heroines stood before us.

Her black velvet robe fell around her, without fictitious aid to expand its amplitude. A black velvet toque, with clustering feathers of the same sable hue, added to her height, and gave something of a peculiar and majestic style to her figure.

Her features were marked and pale, her eyes large and lustrous, and her voice gentle and tender in its tone.

She came on the occasion of the tableaux from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, already spoken of.

Her pleasure was expressed warmly. Perhaps she would not have been ill pleased if one or other of her own admirable works had
been *mise en scène* with so much care and splendour. But, with earnest and graceful acknowledgments, she recognized the fitness of the poem we had chosen, and she spoke with evident emotion of its suffering author.

She rarely at that time quitted her own home, or mingled with the world she had described so well, and where she was still welcomed with respect and admiration.

A few foreign princes, not long domesticated in England, had come, like her, on the night of the tableaux. One Italian duke in particular, accustomed to the perfection of operatic performances at the beautiful theatre of San Carlo, bestowed, after a small criticism, unnumbered encomiums on the music, which had enlivened the various scenes represented on that occasion.

Frank Stone, the celebrated artist, acted on that night, I believe, for the first time in his life, a double part. He represented, with remarkable fidelity, that stalwart knight, William of Deloraine; and moreover, as the great portrait painter of the day, on the same
evening, sketched the first outlines of an incomparable picture, a characteristic likeness of the Honourable Mrs. L. S——, as the Lady of Branksome, in the midst of her enchantments.

I have already said how beautiful was the representative of this proud and stately woman. She who enacted this part was capable of acting any, on the grand theatre of life, so unbounded were her endowments, and so numerous her talents.

Her husband, a colonel in the army, who had distinguished himself at Waterloo, and who was subsequently the Earl of H——, was not at that time occupying a very magnificent house; nor did he even reside within the strict boundaries of the aristocratic purlieus; but yet their soirées were the crowded resort of the most remarkable persons in London for fashion and for wit.

There were collected a complete galaxy of stars. Let us follow the file of carriages, and after waiting patiently (or impatiently) for our turn to be "set down," let us enter. It is true no grand array of powdered footmen
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herald you from step to step, proclaiming your name in every tone, till its echoes ring along the corridors; but an erect military-looking butler, who has seen service with his master on the field of battle, before he served him in his present peaceful capacity, does you the honour to announce you himself.

You need not look long before you recognize some "celebrities." The aged Godwin is at your left. He occupies his accustomed corner; and watches the passing world, whose voices could no longer cheer him—he was deaf. But his spare grey hair, his lined and sunken countenance, argue that he can neither suffer nor rejoice much longer on this nether earth.

But who is that, with white and ghost-like face, who bends over him; and with subdued but indicative gestures, unwinds the mazes of the glittering crowds, and brings to his comprehension that which is passing around him; and makes the old man feel one still among them; and tells him, in her own mild patient way, "who is who" and "why that one is here"—and "wherefore another is not there;"
and kindles an interest in the passing scene in the dreary, wasted bosom of the old man?

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Ever and anon, bearing in mind a pure and holy purpose—daughter, wife, mother of an infidel—she has herself awakened to the noble aspirations of the Christian; and at the bottom of every movement, every thought, every act, is the aching hope to excite in her aged father the devout, comforting, ennobling tenets of the faith she has only herself lately learnt to appreciate.

Alas! the heart is worn out, and the brain of the old man takes in no new ideas. As he has lived, so he must die—in a dreary desolate infidelity. Believing in no future, sinking dust to dust; feeling his wondrous faculties decay, and moaning and mourning over the loss, as everlasting and irreparable.

It is his daughter, who is hanging over him with unwearying affection; her own white and rigid countenance, changing now and then, but, only as if a spasm crossed it; with eyes so deeply set, so full of some dark troubled memory. Who mingles with none, speaks to
none, except to that one aged man. It is his daughter—the wife of Shelley—the widow.

She is not without one interest left in life; nay, two—her father and her son. But the world beyond was all dead to her when the silvery waves of the Mediterranean, with their white spray, closed over the sinking boat—over him whom she loved so well.

We have said she spoke to none save her father; but we were wrong. There was one other present to whom she sometimes gasped out a few short words.

Trelawney was there; he who had been there on that day; and, through all those painful scenes, the friend of Byron and her husband.

We had heard from him—told with all the graphic details of an eye-witness—that sad history.

Trelawney was not a man given to weep; but, while he was looking at her as she leant, with her colourless statue-like face, over her father's chair, tears were certainly in his eyes as he exclaimed with a half shudder, "Ah!
when she was first told of his loss, her shriek—"I hear it still!"

We were in the midst of a gay crowd of dancers. "Make way, make way," for the giddy whirl of the waltz.

Its mazes thicken; the revolving circles spin round with planet-like evolutions, but without the splendid order reigning in the skies. Escape becomes advisable, imperative. Let us retreat. See that comfortable boudoir, with its crimson curtains. The table is covered with writing materials; and in the centre a costly and curious inkstand of solid silver. That silver inkstand has a history. It was taken from the carriage of Napoleon, after the battle of Waterloo; and near this relic of the "Grand Empereur," and leaning against the table on which it stands, is a gentleman, slight in figure, with a young girl, taller than himself, his partner, by him. They are, or appear to be, both listening to the distant music of the waltz. Not much conversation
is passing between them, and no interchange of glances. It is not a flirtation; we may enter.

A word—a name whispered in our ear, makes us turn suddenly our eyes upon him. But there is nothing to arrest attention. The name was striking—that was all—then. His figure was small, but not diminutive, and his face would not be remarkable where many handsome men were present. His costume was in no respect essentially foreign, but one distinctive mark, nowhere noticed, perhaps, so much as in a ball-room, denoted a French origin: the feet are small as a woman's, and the bright points of the glossy black shoe but just pass the hem of the trowser. The hands are small, white, and feminine—as far as we could judge, for they are soon cased again in gloves of snowy whiteness. The arm, that lightly touched his partner's waist as he enquired if she were ready to join the dancers, seemed little fitted to give support. His head was chiefly remarkable (at that time) for a profusion of hair, giving it perhaps rather an undue preponderance over the
rest of the figure, which is of a neat but firm mould.

The young girl is a little impatient of the quiescence of her partner, "who has not," she thinks, "much in him," and whom she would willingly exchange for some more efficient cavalier.

Oh, did you know, fair girl, what destinies await him, whom you look at so negligently. That little hand, which touches yours so lightly, and hesitates whether it may lead you a few steps forward towards the music, shall wield a sceptre with an iron grasp; the arm you deem too weak almost to lean on, shall uphold the mighty rule of empire over the most civilized nation of the continent, and on that very account the most difficult to govern—in endeavouring to do which so many have broken down. But a still greater power shall be his. Skill to combine, genius to conceive, and courage to exercise a new and wonderful control over the contending nations of the globe. From the east, and from the west, shall come the wise and the powerful, to wait for his nod, and read in his
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looks the changing fate of surrounding millions. *To wait*, we may well say, for in that inscrutable face none can read, till he himself unveils his purposes.

As many of our readers were, no doubt, familiar with the personal appearance of "le Prince Louis," as he was called generally at this time, we will say no more at present, but content ourselves with quoting, in support of the brief picture we have given, the words of Monsieur de la Gueronnière:—"Louis Napoleon est un homme supérieur, mais cette supériorité se cache sous des dehors douteux. Sa vie est toute intérieure; sa parole ne trahit pas son inspiration; son geste ne traduit pas son audace; son regard ne reflète pas son ardeur; sa démarche ne révèle pas sa résolution." I will only add one decided encomium to what has been already said:—he danced, as he did everything else, well.

In singular contrast to the future emperor, and yet as constant in her attendance at the same
soirées, was a tall, demonstrative, and, if not handsome, still agreeable, woman—frank, natural, and cordial; excitable, talkative, and decidedly attractive. This was the gifted poetess, L. E. L., Miss Landon, whose early death robbed us of many sweet and melting lays. Her figure, as I have said, was tall, and at this time, thin; her costume original, and peculiar to herself, and not being precisely according to the fashion of the day, exaggerated both her height, and a certain leanness, which could not fail to strike the eye. Her head, elevated on an unusually long neck, was small, comparatively speaking; and in contradistinction to the upward tendency of ladies' hair at that period, which was massed on the top of the head, hers, though luxuriant, was tightly drawn round her head, leaving it almost like a black ball. Her face, piquant and vivacious, was destitute of regularity; her neck and arms were bare and thin; her white muslin dress—I had almost said frock, so closely did it resemble the holiday dress of a young girl not yet emancipated from school—was short and
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scanty, barely reaching to the ankles. Still there was a fascination about her, a beaming, gentle enthusiasm in her eye, a charm about her whole demeanour, that made her a favourite in society, even as her writings had made her in the world at large.

But, had it not been the poetess, whose soft effusions breathed purity and love, and who had something appealing in her look and manner, unaffected and simple as it was, one might have smiled at her general appearance; worse still, one might have quizzed, but it would have been high treason against goodness and against genius.

What could the richest robes of the most fashionable woman, worn with a sweeping elegance that defied criticism, have won upon our hearts, compared with one simple line of that young poetess?

If you desire to see a fashionable authoress, who has painted society with the hand of a connoisseur—there is Lady Charlotte Bury. With her is a fair-haired girl of some thirteen summers. The child has a sort of innate elegance; her flaxen hair floats, waving over
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her neck and shoulders; her robe is white, but all the well-turned folds indicate grace and youthful simplicity. A tall, well-made, well-dressed man is talking to her.

Even then, the ladies raved about him. Nor in London only: the solitary maiden, seated in the dark parlour of some old manor house, hung, forgetful of all, over his thrilling stories. Men swore by his heroes; learnt gourmandise from his epicures, politics from his highwaymen. The author of Pelham, Paul Clifford, Eugene Aram, &c., &c., &c., was eminently agreeable in society. There was an interest, too, awakened by the history of his own untold life.

A dash of romance had marked his early career. He had known well the entrancing, overwhelming power of the blind deity. He had loved one whom he believed to be a perfect woman.

He made her his own, by many a noble sacrifice. He imagined that he had secured domestic happiness; but he found that he had instead to drink deep of the bitter waters of domestic strife.
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The idol before whom he knelt was the Nemesis who threw a pall over those bright visions of mutual felicity. All early hopes are dead and buried. But let us not thrust an offensive pity on him who has never uttered a complaint.

However, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton was not formed to sink supine under any blow. To those who study his character, it seems to rise in estimation, as he enters on a sphere of more extended usefulness and interest.

Benevolence and charity have no abler advocate. In the wide field of human want and suffering he strives to stretch a helping hand to all.

The poor cottager, the honest mechanic, arrest his attention; the struggling farmer, with his failing crops and heavy rent, has his enlightened support.

The worn-out artist, young in years, old in wretchedness, growing pale over the works of his hand, which no longer bring him the bread he needs so much, shares no less than these the benefits of his active sympathy. Mark next the poor author. Talent and
misery have both left their mark upon the high, white forehead, the sunken eye, the pinched attenuated features. He perishes on the door-step of the temple of fame, where his elder brother in literature holds so high a place.

He turns a look of envy on him; but the envy is succeeded by a very different sentiment, when he sees him stoop from his well-earned elevation, and bend an eye of compassion upon his sinking strength. More than this, he steps forward, and has at once tendered his powerful assistance.

Let us leave them for awhile. But when we return that way again, we find the poor author has gained all he has sought for.

He, too, has taken an honoured place in the temple of fame. The public, and he himself, have learned to appreciate his talents, which, but for the timely and generous assistance of the author of The Disowned, might never have been acknowledged.

Again the actor, in the feebleness of his old age, whose means have failed him with
his expended vigour, and who now, with faltering tongue and tottering steps, and with thin and ghastly visage, haunts the scenes of former triumphs, and treads neglected and forsaken across those same boards where once he represented with startling truth the grandest conceptions of Shakespeare amidst thunders of applause—he shall not drop broken-hearted into the pauper's grave. One well versed in the sad mystery of the human heart has marked his sufferings, and those of his brethren in his craft, and help, and comfort, and kindness, and consideration, shall cheer the old man's heart, nor desert him while life is in him. These and other unnumbered acts of active charity shall earn a brighter crown than the gay circle of beauties, who crowd round the young and handsome author, would willingly weave for him. As he looks and listens listlessly to many a complimentary speech—for the ladies did not spare them—his eyes seek our beautiful hostess. But she is accustomed to receive adulation, and has too many worshippers at her shrine to bestow more than some passing
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smiles, even on those most courted by the world.

The curious old clock that stands amidst a crowd of Chinese idols and mediæval monstrosities, has rung out its hours unheeded. Dancing is still carried on with marvellous pertinacity, though an extreme languor pervades the motions of the cavaliers—all "languished" in those days—men most of all. What would the young "exquisites," who drew their lingering legs along the few figures of a French quadrille, or turned automaton-like in the stately waltz, swimming majestically round the room in a half-dreaming style—what would the lisping, lazy young guardsman of those days, have said to the fiery ardour of the present fashionable dances—the flying lightning-like steps of the galops, mazurkas, and valses à deux temps?

Perhaps—so linked are great things with small—the energy which awoke in the dance was the preface to the splendid up-rising of Englishmen; of our volunteers, with their wonderful activity of strength and sinew, and of the fine manly and healthy enthusiasm
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which has taken the place of self-indulgence and affectation. But let us not loose our pen on that heart-stirring subject.

See! how dangerous it is to touch upon the present. Its clear, vivid, tangible figures soon shut from our view the shadowy outlines of the past. The groups just now all gathered round us, tinted with the colours of life—recede—grow indistinct—disappear. We sigh; but sighs do not recall the vanished forms.

The freshness of the present, the marvellous power of the eye upon the brain, has brought other images, too distinctly before us. The little blue-winged butterfly that has just settled on a waving flower before our window, absorbs the mind with its airy gyrations, its delicate tints, its fancies and its frolics, especially now that a companion butterfly, of similar colour and proportions, has come out from some glossy chrysalis to toy and wing a tantalizing flight around it. Ah! the butterflies—the flower—and the shadow of a figure passing on amidst those flowers—real, moving, present—de-
noting the approach of one well loved, whose voice we shall really hear—the shadow, the flower, and the butterflies, have hid from our mental view authors and emperors and fashionable exquisites and gilded rooms. For to-day forgive us. All is gone—To-morrow we will shut our shutters, and open that pile of letters by the light of the lamp—they treat of the by-gone days, and once more the past will live before us, and we will resume Evenings in London.
FREDERICK WILLIAM III.
OF PRUSSIA.
In travelling from the Tyrol into Saxony, we were compelled, by a variety of reasons, to make a détour for the sake of visiting Carlsbad.

The stream of fashionable visitors sets strongly in towards the more accessible watering-places near the banks of the Rhine, so that even now Carlsbad is not much frequented by English visitors. But at the time of which we write, its society was almost entirely composed of Germans from the neigh-
bouring states; a stray Russian prince or two now and then showing himself there with a train of couriers, jügers, and whiskered domestics.

We know that its hot springs have a reputation almost unrivalled for the wonderful cures that have been effected by them, both on old and young.

It was perhaps unfortunate that neither I, nor any of the friends who were with me, had exactly anything to be cured of; since here was an admirable opportunity rarely enjoyed by Englishmen. But a family inhabiting a remote château in Bohemia had given us the meeting here.

They had conceived the most exalted idea of the charms of Carlsbad; indeed, the month spent there comprised the whole gaiety of the year; the rest of which was passed in their old and somewhat dilapidated castle, amongst the stiff pictures of their ancestors, and surrounded by miles of almost impenetrable fir woods.

But to all of us Carlsbad wore a cheerful and sunny aspect as we drove through it to
take possession of our apartments. We were told the king of Prussia was on a visit here; some said, to take the waters; others, more deeply versed in court matters, smiled, and shook their heads, and talked about "la belle comtesse." It was also said that we should probably see his majesty at the assembly in the evening.

He was here in a supposed incognito, which gave him more freedom, and also interfered less with the pleasures and amusements of other visitors, than if he had been surrounded by court etiquette and court dignitaries.

We were somewhat surprised when, passing down the principal thoroughfare, along which were trees and benches, we perceived one of our German friends, who acted as cicerone, indulging in a series of nods and winks. This pantomime became more animated when he saw we were still at fault.

Near us were two or three officers in military undress, lounging on the benches. We found our friend inclined, with provoking pertinacity, to pass and repass one particular bench. We were anxious to proceed on our
day's ramble, and were rather worried and tormented at this useless delay; especially as we saw nothing remarkable in either the promenade or the officers.

One was a tall, gentlemanly man, with long thin legs, and a quiet but not unpleasant countenance; also of the long and thin order. By his side was a stouter man, older and more worn in appearance: the occupation of both seemed, as the French appropriately term it, "de lorgner les passants."

As our rather numerous party had been led by two or three times already, and had, we presumed, attracted more than sufficient notice, we declined passing the same way, on a fresh tour de promenade up and down the causeway.

"Well," said our friend, as we got at last fairly to the end of the street, "well, you saw him?"

"Saw whom?"

"Why, the king, of course!"

Then followed explanations. We felt we had been led unknowingly into an act of extreme rudeness, and we did not disguise our
displeasure at the transaction, till we saw our good-humoured German friend quite subdued by our discontent.

"He had engaged to show us the sights of Carlsbad; of course the king of Prussia was one of them."

There was no making him understand our scruples; but, as we heard that there would be quite a crowd of visitors in the Assembly Rooms, we fully hoped, amongst so many, to escape recognition from his majesty, if he were there. Still, we inwardly chafed at having been paraded up and down before the incognito, as if he had been a tiger in his den, though we said no more, and smiled again on our German friend. Who could help it? his blundering bonhommie was a shield against all our reproaches. However, the different springs were visited; the bubbling Brunnen, in all their different temperatures, tested and tasted.

The evening came, and, according to the fashion of the place, we resorted to the grand saloons.

They were already full; but we soon recog-
nized the officer of the morning promenade—his majesty of Prussia. He was leaning over the chair of a young girl of some eighteen or nineteen years—a brilliant brunette, with a sweet and child-like expression of countenance.

She was talking rapidly, often laughing merrily. The rosy lips as they parted showed a row of fine small pearly teeth. Many eyes were upon her; but a simple gaiety seemed to animate her, as she repeatedly looked up into the grave, expressionless face of the king.

Something she was telling him amused her much. He might be listening, for he did not move, and his eyes, bent downwards, rested on her countenance with a steadfastness as if they were there rivetted, almost without his being aware of what he was doing.

At this moment the music struck up, and after a brilliant march, and some operatic pieces, which were executed with great skill and effect, finished with a "polonaise," a dance we knew then only by name, but at that time much the vogue in German courts; in-
deed, for many years it was the only dance in which the old king of Saxony allowed the princesses of his family to join, till the marriages of the younger branches brought in strange innovations.

Here it was in peculiar favour, being patronized by the King William, and suited to his grave and somewhat saturnine demeanour.

It was a stately dance, if dance be not altogether a misnomer, for the whole mystery consisted in the gentleman taking out the lady, who had accepted him as her cavalier, and leading her in procession behind other couples, in a slow march through the rooms, round and round again, backwards and forwards, till the music ceased, when he would reconduct her to her seat—conversation being allowed, and even expected, during the perambulation.

Our party had been soon surrounded by a gay crowd; friends of our friends gathered round us; the ladies had many claimants for their hands, some introduced by our German friends, some by the master of the ceremonies.
But one came—the only one—whom no one introduced, and all fell back to give him precedence; the king of Prussia, stepping forward, requested with a low bow the honour of dancing with a young and beautiful girl, who was the belle of our party.

Having just accepted one of the cavaliers, who had been introduced to her as a partner for the polonaise, she answered, as she returned his bow, with a "regret that it was so, but she was unfortunately engaged."

His majesty looked puzzled for a moment. "Ma chère demoiselle," said an elegant and amiable looking woman behind her, leaning over her shoulder, "it is his majesty; you must not refuse him. You must accept."

His majesty stood waiting the result.

Our fair countrywoman arose, and tendering him her hand, they walked away together. Other couples followed, and the procession moved along its usual course, up and down the long saloon, till the strain was completed.

His majesty, who was not famous for conversational powers, still endeavoured to entertain, after his fashion, the young English girl.
He caused a moment’s embarrassment by referring to the morning.

“You are new in Carlsbad. I saw you this morning.”

“Quite new,” replied his young partner, with a blush and a smile, “we knew nothing of Carlsbad; we knew no one. We did not know your majesty this morning, or...”

It was his turn to smile—

“Or you would not have done me the honour of passing quite so often?”

“Certainly not,” said the fair girl, with more frankness than etiquette exactly allowed of. But it was such a relief to her, it came off so genuine, the king’s face expressed a momentary amusement.

But he again paused for another subject.

“Have you been at Paris?”

Her answer was affirmative. “Did his majesty like Paris?” she continued. Another pause; he had expected her to say more in reply, and she waited for him. At last it was evident the subject was not one to interest him. He passed on to another question.

“You come from Italy?”
"Ah! your majesty knows that!" said our young friend, amused and perplexed how he should know; and she expressed her surprise to him.

A compliment followed. He said he had asked who was *la belle, la charmante personne* who had passed him so often in the morning promenade. He had been told Mademoiselle was *Anglaise*, and that she had just arrived from Italy. "He admired English beauty."

Another pause; for this was followed by the king turning his eyes away from the "English beauty," and carrying them across the room to where the bright brunette sat, watching the dance, and wistfully eyeing the king and his partner.

The English girl had now a fair shot at his majesty.

"And I think," she added, a little slily, "your majesty admires *German* beauty too."

She knew not how close the mark her random shot had hit.

He positively started, looked round full in the eyes of his young partner, spoke not for
a moment, a red tinge rose slowly to his brow; he made no answer, and his grave features looked compressed and stern.

It was soon over; something kindly and gentle came back to his face. He said at last, "Do you know that lady—who she is?"

"I only know she has the sweetest countenance I have seen for long!" warmly ejaculated the young Englishwoman. "She looks," added she, "as if she were a charming girl."

Again a peculiar light came into his majesty's eyes, but he made no reply. His manner, however, was kinder, and he made some brief but amiable remarks on the neighbourhood of Carlsbad, and once more an approving sort of smile passed for an instant across his features, as he led his partner back to her seat, and bowed as he retired.

The rather pretty and elegant woman who had spoken before leant forward again and said,

"Je vous fais mes compliments, dear lady, but you have fascinated his majesty. What interesting conversation have you had with him? We were all watching you."
"Indeed!" said our young countrywoman, "indeed! nothing passed—nothing particular."

"Oh!" said the lady, "that won't do. We know his way here; he was interested—he was pleased. What were you speaking of to make so favourable an impression in so short a time? He has only generally three questions for the ladies he dances with; he always begins with, 'Have you been at Paris?'"

"Well, he asked me that!"

"But that was not all?" said she.

"No; we were speaking of beauty. I was admiring the beauty of that young girl . . . ."

"That young girl!" said she, with a look of amusement and surprise; "which? who?"

"Her, who is now again talking to the king."

"That one! that is good! you really did! and what did you say?"

"How lovely she is!—but do not you think so?"

"Ah! and what did his majesty say?"

"I cannot exactly recollect. Perhaps he did not agree with me. I recollect now: he asked me if I knew her."
"Ah, c'est délicieux!" answered she, laughing; "and you do not really know?"

"Know what?" asked our fair compatriot.

"Why, that in ten days' time, that young girl will be his wife."

"Wife?—wife of the king of Prussia?"

"Even so."

Then we who had gathered round her were initiated into this new wonder. How that mere child, that simple-minded merry girl, had so lodged the darts of love in the heart of King William, that he could know no peace till all opposition was overcome; and it was now arranged that a private marriage should unite them in the course of the coming week.

Her family were as much against it as his own; they insisted on her being recognized as queen if she married the king. While his family could not bear that the throne of the almost sainted Louise, whom all Germany mourned for, and whose heroic spirit had urged on the mighty cry for freedom, which roused the whole nation, and drove its youth-

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ful defenders to shed their heart's blood on the battle-field—his family could not bear that the throne from which the idolized queen had sunk into an early grave, should be occupied by one so little resembling her.

Nor could the court, nor the princes of Prussia bear to be presided over by one so young, so unpractised.

The very naïveté and simplicity, the very ignorance of court etiquettes, and court factions, and court restraints, which gave her such a charm in the eyes of the king, were an offence in the eyes of all around him. And while, on one hand, her uncle, now that her father was dead, the representative of the family, and one of the proudest of German nobles, fretted and stormed at the idea of a private marriage, the rest of the world blamed and abused the king for even this concession, a concession without which he would never have obtained the affections of the sweet girl who really loved him.

It was a matter of much reflection to the king by what new honours or marks of favour he could propitiate the family of the bride.
At last the gift of a baronial castle, and a splendid estate around it, was accepted as a mark of relenting condescension by the old man.

But the Countess Harach—such was the name of the elected bride of the king—had a mother, to whom she was tenderly attached, and who had stood out stoutly for having her child crowned, as well as married.

"How can we satisfy your mother?" said the king, as they met on the wedding morning, a short hour before the ceremony. "How can we satisfy your mother?"

The young and beautiful bride, in the plenitude of her power over the expectant bridegroom, hesitated.

Many, mortified at the elevation of the youthful countess, had whispered, that all her simplicity was assumed—that it was only the deeper cunning—that the cloven foot would peep out at last—that she was secretly unprincipled, covetous, ambitious.

They trembled as the king, in the fulness of his love and admiration, gazed on his lovely bride, and again pressed her to tell him what
she desired—what he should do for her mother—for her.

"I will refuse you nothing!" he said.

"Only speak! I pledge my royal honour to what I say! Ask for what you will! I again pledge my word—I will refuse you nothing!"

Now the courtiers trembled. What would the young bride not ask for at this moment of her supreme power?

Hark, she speaks!

She had even stopped to reflect, as if in doubt. But a gesture of the king encouraged her to proceed.

"What will she not ask for?" again whispered the courtiers; "what place of honour or emolument—what titles—what rank? A king is before her—a kingdom at her feet. Listen! she speaks. She will be crowned queen yet!" exclaimed the by-standers.

At last she did speak, first looking wistfully in the king's face.

"Ah!" said she, after another pause for reflection, "you recollect yesterday . . . ."

"Well!" said the king, impatiently almost,
so eager was he to gratify her in anything that she might wish.

"Yesterday!" she continued, "we saw such a beautiful box . . . ."

"A box!"

"Yes, a box, you know, of bonbons. Mamma is so fond of bonbons. Will you give her that? I know she will be pleased."

For a moment all were still. Envy was disarmed. The most hardened grumblers turned an eye of admiration on the young bride. This utter disinterestedness, this real, innocent, child-like confidence; this full confidence in him she loved—whom she would bind to nothing—on whom she was content to repose, in the conviction all would be right. All this was acknowledged, as a low whisper of relief and of admiration ran round the courtly circle.

What could he give? It was him, not what he could give, she coveted. All felt touched, abashed, moved, before that child.

The king pressed her in his arms—pressed that true unselfish little heart against his own; and for a moment all was forgot, but
the love that lay there for him, which he returned with a loyal and ardent affection—even till death snapped asunder the tie that bound them together.

It will perhaps be a satisfaction to the reader to know that, great as was the opposition on the part of the king's family to the step he had taken, this artless girl, effected by her unvarying sweetness and simplicity what could not have been achieved by the deepest schemes.

She not only retained the affections of the king, but she won the esteem and consideration of all around her. Her place next the king, on all but solemn occasions of state, was never contested.

Her radiant smile dispelled many a gathering storm; her gentle influence gradually extended on every side. Unwilling as she was to interfere, still, when called upon, this influence could be used; but always—with a rare instinct and feminine tact—she would
recognize and support the right side. Rend-erizing even more than due honour where honour was due, she herself won golden opinions from all ranks.

A halo of brightness seemed to rest upon the head of one so good, so gentle, so truthful, worth far more than the royal diadem, which, had she but stretched forth her hand, might have graced her brow.

END OF VOL. I.
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