

The Adventures Harry Richmond — Volume 3 eBook

The Adventures Harry Richmond — Volume 3 by George Meredith

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Page 1

WE ARE ACCOSTED BY A BEAUTIFUL LITTLE LADY IN THE FOREST

Bowls of hot coffee and milk, with white rolls of bread to dip in them, refreshed us at a forest inn. For some minutes after the meal Temple and I talked like interchangee puff of steam, but soon subsided to our staring fit. The pipes were lit again. What we heard sounded like a language of the rocks and caves, and roots plucked up, a language of gluttons feasting; the word ja was like a door always on the hinge in every mouth. Dumpy children, bulky men, compressed old women with baked faces, and comical squat dogs, kept the villages partly alive. We observed one young urchin sitting on a stone opposite a dog, and he and the dog took alternate bites off a platter-shaped cake, big enough to require both his hands to hold it. Whether the dog ever snapped more than his share was matter of speculation to us. It was an education for him in good manners, and when we were sitting at dinner we wished our companions had enjoyed it. They fed with their heads in their plates, splashed and clattered jaws, without paying us any hospitable attention whatever, so that we had the dish of Lazarus. They were perfectly kind, notwithstanding, and allowed a portion of my great map of Germany to lie spread over their knees in the diligence, whilst Temple and I pored along the lines of the rivers. One would thrust his square-nailed finger to the name of a city and pronounce it; one gave us lessons in the expression of the vowels, with the softening of three of them, which seemed like a regulation drill movement for taking an egg into the mouth, and showing repentance of the act. 'Sarkeld,' we exclaimed mutually, and they made a galloping motion of their hands, pointing beyond the hills. Sarkeld was to the right, Sarkeld to the left, as the road wound on. Sarkeld was straight in front of us when the conductor, according to directions he had received, requested us to alight and push through this endless fir-forest up a hilly branch road, and away his hand galloped beyond it, coming to a deep place, and then to grapes, then to a tip-toe station, and under it lay Sarkeld. The pantomime was not bad. We waved our hand to the diligence, and set out cheerfully, with our bags at our backs, entering a gorge in the fir-covered hills before sunset, after starting the proposition—Does the sun himself look foreign in a foreign country?

'Yes, he does,' said Temple; and so I thought, but denied it, for by the sun's favour I hoped to see my father that night, and hail Apollo joyfully in the morning; a hope that grew with exercise of my limbs. Beautiful cascades of dark bright water leaped down the gorge; we chased an invisible animal. Suddenly one of us exclaimed, 'We 're in a German forest'; and we remembered grim tales of these forests, their awful castles, barons, knights, ladies, long-bearded dwarfs, gnomes and thin people. I commenced a legend off-hand.

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'No, no,' said Temple, as if curdling; 'let's call this place the mouth of Hades. Greek things don't make you feel funny.'

I laughed louder than was necessary, and remarked that I never had cared so much for Greek as on board Captain Welsh's vessel.

'It's because he was all on the opposite tack I went on quoting,' said Temple. 'I used to read with my father in the holidays, and your Rev. Simon has kept you up to the mark; so it was all fair. It's not on our consciences that we crammed the captain about our knowledge.'

'No. I'm glad of it,' said I.

Temple pursued, 'Whatever happens to a fellow, he can meet anything so long as he can say—I've behaved like a man of honour. And those German tales—they only upset you. You don't see the reason of the thing. Why is a man to be haunted half his life? Well, suppose he did commit a murder. But if he didn't, can't he walk through an old castle without meeting ghosts? or a forest?'

The dusky scenery of a strange land was influencing Temple. It affected me so, I made the worst of it for a cure.

'Fancy those pines saying, "There go two more," Temple. Well; and fancy this—a little earth-dwarf as broad as I'm long and high as my shoulder. One day he met the loveliest girl in the whole country, and she promised to marry him in twenty years' time, in return for a sack of jewels worth all Germany and half England. You should have seen her dragging it home. People thought it full of charcoal. She married the man she loved, and the twenty years passed over, and at the stroke of the hour when she first met the dwarf, thousands of bells began ringing through the forest, and her husband cries out, "What is the meaning of it?" and they rode up to a garland of fresh flowers that dropped on her head, and right into a gold ring that closed on her finger, and—look, Temple, look!'

'Where?' asked the dear little fellow, looking in all earnest, from which the gloom of the place may be imagined, for, by suddenly mixing it with my absurd story, I discomposed his air of sovereign indifference as much as one does the surface of a lake by casting a stone in it.

We rounded the rocky corner of the gorge at a slightly accelerated pace in dead silence. It opened out to restorative daylight, and we breathed better and chaffed one another, and, beholding a house with pendent gold grapes, applauded the diligence conductor's expressive pantomime. The opportunity was offered for a draught of wine, but we held water preferable, so we toasted the Priscilla out of the palms of our hands

in draughts of water from a rill that had the sound of aspen-leaves, such as I used to listen to in the Riversley meadows, pleasantly familiar.

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Several commanding elevations were in sight, some wooded, some bare. We chose the nearest, to observe the sunset, and concurred in thinking it unlike English sunsets, though not so very unlike the sunset we had taken for sunrise on board the Priscilla. A tumbled, dark and light green country of swelling forest-land and slopes of meadow ran to the West, and the West from flaming yellow burned down to smoky crimson across it. Temple bade—me ‘catch the disc—that was English enough.’ A glance at the sun’s disc confirmed the truth of his observation. Gazing on the outline of the orb, one might have fancied oneself in England. Yet the moment it had sunk under the hill this feeling of ours vanished with it. The coloured clouds drew me ages away from the recollection of home.

A tower on a distant hill, white among pines, led us to suppose that Sarkeld must lie somewhere beneath it. We therefore descended straight toward the tower, instead of returning to the road, and struck confidently into a rugged path. Recent events had given me the assurance that in my search for my father I was subject to a special governing direction. I had aimed at the Bench—missed it—been shipped across sea and precipitated into the arms of friends who had seen him and could tell me I was on his actual track, only blindly, and no longer blindly now.

‘Follow the path,’ I said, when Temple wanted to have a consultation.

‘So we did in the London fog!’ said he, with some gloom.

But my retort: ‘Hasn’t it brought us here?’ was a silencer.

Dark night came on. Every height stood for a ruin in our eyes, every dip an abyss. It grew bewilderingly dark, but the path did not forsake us, and we expected, at half-hour intervals, to perceive the lights of Sarkeld, soon to be thundering at one of the inns for admission and supper. I could hear Temple rehearsing his German vocabulary, ‘Brod, butter, wasser, fleisch, bett,’ as we stumbled along. Then it fell to ‘Brod, wasser, bett,’ and then, ‘Bett’ by itself, his confession of fatigue. Our path had frequently the nature of a waterway, and was very fatiguing, more agreeable to mount than descend, for in mounting the knees and shins bore the brunt of it, and these sufferers are not such important servants of the footfarer as toes and ankles in danger of tripping and being turned.

I was walking on leveller ground, my head bent and eyes half-shut, when a flash of light in a brook at my feet caused me to look aloft. The tower we had marked after sunset was close above us, shining in a light of torches. We adopted the sensible explanation of this mysterious sight, but were rather in the grip of the superstitious absurd one, until we discerned a number of reddened men.

'Robbers!' exclaimed one of us. Our common thought was, 'No; robbers would never meet on a height in that manner'; and we were emboldened to mount and request their help.

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Fronting the tower, which was of white marble, a high tent had been pitched on a green platform semicircled by pines. Torches were stuck in clefts of the trees, or in the fork of the branches, or held by boys and men, and there were clearly men at work beneath the tent at a busy rate. We could hear the pavioir's breath escape from them. Outside the ring of torchbearers and others was a long cart with a dozen horses harnessed to it. All the men appeared occupied too much for chatter and laughter. What could be underneath the tent? Seeing a boy occasionally lift one of the flapping corners, we took licence from his example to appease our curiosity. It was the statue of a bronze horse rearing spiritedly. The workmen were engaged fixing its pedestal in the earth.

Our curiosity being satisfied, we held debate upon our immediate prospects. The difficulty of making sure of a bed when you are once detached from your home, was the philosophical reflection we arrived at, for nothing practical presented itself. To arm ourselves we pulled out Miss Goodwin's paper. 'Gasthof is the word!' cried Temple. 'Gasthof, zimmer, bett; that means inn, hot supper, and bed. We'll ask.' We asked several of the men. Those in motion shot a stare at us; the torchbearers pointed at the tent and at an unseen height, muttering 'Morgen.' Referring to Miss Goodwin's paper we discovered this to signify the unintelligible word morning, which was no answer at all; but the men, apparently deeming our conduct suspicious, gave us to understand by rather menacing gestures that we were not wanted there, so we passed into the dusk of the trees, angry at their incivility. Had it been Summer we should have dropped and slept. The night air of a sharp season obliged us to keep active, yet we were not willing to get far away from the torches. But after a time they were hidden; then we saw one moving ahead. The holder of it proved to be a workman of the gang, and between us and him the strangest parley ensued. He repeated the word morgen, and we insisted on zimmer and bett.

'He takes us for twin Caspar Hausers,' sighed Temple.

'Nein,' said the man, and, perhaps enlightened by hearing a foreign tongue, beckoned for us to step at his heels.

His lodging was a woodman's hut. He offered us bread to eat, milk to drink, and straw to lie on: we desired nothing more, and were happy, though the bread was black, the milk sour, the straw mouldy.

Our breakfast was like a continuation of supper, but two little girls of our host, whose heads were cased in tight-fitting dirty linen caps, munched the black bread and drank the sour milk so thankfully, while fixing solemn eyes of wonder upon us, that to assure them we were the same sort of creature as themselves we pretended to relish the stuff. Rather to our amazement we did relish it. 'Mutter!' I said to them. They pointed to the room overhead. Temple laid his cheek on his hand. One of the little girls laid hers on the table. I said 'Doctor?' They nodded and answered 'Princess,' which seemed

perfectly good English, and sent our conjectures as to the state of their mother's health astray. I shut a silver English coin in one of their fat little hands.

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We now, with the name Sarkeld, craved of their father a direction to that place. At the door of his but he waved his hand carelessly South for Sarkeld, and vigorously West where the tower stood, then swept both hands up to the tower, bellowed a fire of cannon, waved his hat, and stamped and cheered. Temple, glancing the way of the tower, performed on a trumpet of his joined fists to show we understood that prodigious attractions were presented by the tower; we said ja and ja, and nevertheless turned into the Sarkeld path.

Some minutes later the sound of hoofs led us to imagine he had despatched a messenger after us. A little lady on a pony, attended by a tawny-faced great square-shouldered groom on a tall horse, rode past, drew up on one side, and awaited our coming. She was dressed in a grey riding-habit and a warm winter-jacket of gleaming grey fur, a soft white boa loose round her neck, crossed at her waist, white gauntlets, and a pretty black felt hat with flowing rim and plume. There she passed as under review. It was a curious scene: the iron-faced great-sized groom on his bony black charger dead still: his mistress, a girl of about eleven or twelve or thirteen, with an arm bowed at her side, whip and reins in one hand, and slips of golden brown hair straying on her flushed cheek; rocks and trees, high silver firs rising behind her, and a slender water that fell from the rocks running at her pony's feet. Half-a-dozen yards were between the charger's head and the pony's flanks. She waited for us to march by, without attempting to conceal that we were the objects of her inspection, and we in good easy swing of the feet gave her a look as we lifted our hats. That look was to me like a net thrown into moonlighted water: it brought nothing back but broken lights of a miraculous beauty.

Burning to catch an excuse for another look over my shoulder, I heard her voice:

'Young English gentlemen!'

We turned sharp round.

It was she without a doubt who had addressed us: she spurred her pony to meet us, stopped him, and said with the sweetest painful attempt at accuracy in pronouncing a foreign tongue:

'I sthink you go a wrong way?'

Our hats flew off again, and bareheaded, I seized the reply before Temple could speak.

'Is not this, may I ask you, the way to Sarkeld?'

She gathered up her knowledge of English deliberately.

'Yes, one goes to Sarkeld by sthis way here, but to-day goes everybody up to our Bella Vista, and I entreat you do not miss it, for it is some-s-thing to write to your home of.'

'Up at the tower, then? Oh, we were there last night, and saw the bronze horse, mademoiselle.'

'Yes, I know. I called on my poor sick woman in a but where you fell asleep, sirs. Her little ones are my lambs; she has been of our household; she is good; and they said, two young, strange, small gentlemen have gone for Sarkeld; and I supposed, sthey cannot know all go to our Bella Vista to-day.'

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'You knew at once we were English, mademoiselle?'

'Yes, I could read it off your backs, and truly too your English eyes are quite open at a glance. It is of you both I speak. If I but make my words plain! My "th" I cannot always. And to understand, your English is indeed heavy speech! not so in books. I have my English governess. We read English tales, English poetry—and sthat is your excellence. And so, will you not come, sirs, up when a way is to be shown to you? It is my question.'

Temple thanked her for the kindness of the offer.

I was hesitating, half conscious of surprise that I should ever be hesitating in doubt of taking the direction toward my father. Hearing Temple's boldness I thanked her also, and accepted. Then she said, bowing:

'I beg you will cover your heads.'

We passed the huge groom bolt upright on his towering horse; he raised two fingers to the level of his eyebrows in the form of a salute.

Temple murmured: 'I shouldn't mind entering the German Army,' just as after our interview with Captain Bulsted he had wished to enter the British Navy.

This was no more than a sign that he was highly pleased. For my part delight fluttered the words in my mouth, so that I had to repeat half I uttered to the attentive ears of our gracious new friend and guide:

'Ah,' she said, 'one does sthink one knows almost all before experiment. I am ashamed, yet I will talk, for is it not so? experiment is a school. And you, if you please, will speak slow. For I say of you English gentlemen, silk you spin from your lips; it is not as a language of an alphabet; it is pleasant to hear when one would lull, but Italian can do that, and do it more—am I right? soft?

'Bella Vista, lovely view,' said I.

'Lovely view,' she repeated.

She ran on in the most musical tongue, to my thinking, ever heard:

'And see my little pensioners' poor cottage, who are out up to Lovely View. Miles round go the people to it. Good, and I will tell you strangers: sthe Prince von Eppenwelzen had his great ancestor, and his sister Markgravin von Rippau said, "Erect a statue of him, for he was a great warrior." He could not, or he would not, we know not. So she said, "I will," she said, "I will do it in seven days." She does constantly amuse him, everybody at de Court. Immense excitement! For suppose it!—a statue of a warrior on



horseback, in perfect likeness, chapeau tricorne, perruque, all of bronze, and his marshal's baton. Eh bien, well, a bronze horse is come at a gallop from Berlin; sthat we know. By fortune a most exalted sculptor in Berlin has him ready,—and many horses pulled him to here, to Lovely View, by post-haste; sthat we know. But we are in extremity of puzzlement. For where is the statue to ride him? where—am I plain to you, sirs?—is sthe Marshal Furst von Eppenwelzen, our great ancestor?

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Yet the Markgräfin says, "It is right, wait!" She nods, she smiles. Our Court is all at de lake-palace odder side sthe tower, and it is bets of gems, of feathers, of lace, not to be numbered! The Markgräfin says—sthere to-day you see him, Albrecht Wohlgemuth Furst von Eppenwelzen! But no sculptor can have cast him in bronze—not copied him and cast him in a time of seven days! And we say sthis:—Has she given a secret order to a sculptor—you understand me, sirs, commission—where, how, has he sthe likeness copied? Or did he come to our speisesaal of our lake-palace disguised? Oh! but to see, to copy, to model, to cast in bronze, to travel betwixt Berlin and Sarkeld in a time of seven days? No! so-oh! we guess, we guess, we are in exhaustion. And to-day is like an eagle we have sent an arrow to shoot and know not if he will come down. For shall we see our ancestor on horseback? It will be a not-scribable joy! Or not? So we guess, we are worried. At near eleven o'clock a cannon fires, sthe tent is lifted, and we see; but I am impatient wid my breaths for de gun to go.'

I said it would be a fine sight.

'For strangers, yes; you should be of de palace to know what a fine sight! sthe finest! And you are for Sarkeld? You have friends in Sarkeld?'

'My father is in Sarkeld, mademoiselle. I am told he is at the palace.'

'Indeed; and he is English, your fater?'

'Yes. I have not seen him for years; I have come to find him.'

'Indeed; it is for love of him, your fater, sir, you come, and not speak German?'

I signified that it was so.

'She stroked her pony's neck musing.

'Because, of love is not much in de family in England, it is said,' she remarked very shyly, and in recovering her self-possession asked the name of my father.

'His name, mademoiselle, is Mr. Richmond.'

'Mr. Richmond?'

'Mr. Richmond Roy.'

She sprang in her saddle.

'You are son to Mr. Richmond Roy? Oh! it is wonderful.'

'Mademoiselle, then you have seen him lately?'

'Yes, yes! I have seen him. I have heard of his beautiful child, his son; and you it is?'

She studied my countenance a moment.

'Tell me, is he well?' mademoiselle, is he quite well?'

'Oh, yes,' she answered, and broke into smiles of merriment, and then seemed to bite her underlip. 'He is our fun-maker. He must always be well. I owe to him some of my English. You are his son? you were for Sarkeld? You will see him up at our Bella Vista. Quick, let us run.'

She put her pony to a canter up the brown path between the fir-trees, crying that she should take our breath; but we were tight runners, and I, though my heart beat wildly, was full of fire to reach the tower on the height; so when she slackened her pace, finding us close on her pony's hoofs, she laughed and called us brave boys. Temple's being no more than my friend, who had made the expedition with me out of friendship, surprised her. Not that she would not have expected it to be done by Germans; further she was unable to explain her astonishment.



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At a turning of the ascent she pointed her whip at the dark knots and lines of the multitude mounting by various paths to behold the ceremony of unveiling the monument.

I besought her to waste no time.

'You must, if you please, attend my pleasure, if I guide you,' she said, tossing her chin.

'I thank you, I can't tell you how much, mademoiselle,' said I.

She answered: 'You were kind to my two pet lambs, sir.'

So we moved forward.

CHAPTER XVI

THE STATUE ON THE PROMONTORY

The little lady was soon bowing to respectful salutations from crowds of rustics and others on a broad carriage-way circling level with the height. I could not help thinking how doubly foreign I was to all the world here—I who was about to set eyes on my lost living father, while these people were tip-toe to gaze on a statue. But as my father might also be taking an interest in the statue, I got myself round to a moderate sentiment of curiosity and a partial share of the general excitement. Temple and mademoiselle did most of the conversation, which related to glimpses of scenery, pine, oak, beech-wood, and lake-water, until we gained the plateau where the tower stood, when the giant groom trotted to the front, and worked a clear way for us through a mass of travelling sight-seers, and she leaned to me, talking quite inaudibly amid the laughter and chatting. A band of wind instruments burst out. 'This is glorious!' I conceived Temple to cry like an open-mouthed mute. I found it inspiring.

The rush of pride and pleasure produced by the music was irresistible. We marched past the tower, all of us, I am sure, with splendid feelings. A stone's throw beyond it was the lofty tent; over it drooped a flag, and flags were on poles round a wide ring of rope guarded by foresters and gendarmes, mounted and afoot. The band, dressed in green, with black plumes to their hats, played in the middle of the ring. Outside were carriages, and ladies and gentlemen on horseback, full of animation; rustics, foresters, town and village people, men, women, and children, pressed against the ropes. It was a day of rays of sunshine, now from off one edge, now from another of large slow clouds, so that at times we and the tower were in a blaze; next the lake-palace was illuminated, or the long grey lake and the woods of pine and of bare brown twigs making bays in it.

Several hands beckoned on our coming in sight of the carriages. 'There he is, then!' I thought; and it was like swallowing my heart in one solid lump. Mademoiselle had free

space to trot ahead of us. We saw a tall-sitting lady, attired in sables, raise a finger to her, and nip her chin. Away the little lady flew to a second carriage, and on again, as one may when alive with an inquiry. I observed to Temple, 'I wonder whether she says in her German, "It is my question"; do you remember?' There was no weight whatever in what I said or thought.

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She rode back, exclaiming, 'Nowhere. He is nowhere, and nobody knows. He will arrive. But he is not yet. Now,' she bent coaxingly down to me, 'can you not a few words of German? Only a smallest sum! It is the Markgräfin, my good aunt, would speak wid you, and she can no English-only she is eager to behold you, and come! You will know, for my sake, some scrap of German—ja? You will—nicht wahr? Or French? Make your glom-pudding of it, will you?'

I made a shocking plum-pudding of it. Temple was no happier.

The margravine, a fine vigorous lady with a lively mouth and livelier eyes of a restless grey that rarely dwelt on you when she spoke, and constantly started off on a new idea, did me the honour to examine me, much as if I had offered myself for service in her corps of grenadiers, and might do in time, but was decreed to be temporarily wanting in manly proportions.

She smiled a form of excuse of my bungling half-English horrid French, talked over me and at me, forgot me, and recollected me, all within a minute, and fished poor Temple for intelligible replies to incomprehensible language in the same manner, then threw her head back to gather the pair of us in her sight, then eyed me alone.

'C'est peut-etre le fils de son petit papa, et c'est tout dire.'

Such was her summary comment.

But not satisfied with that, she leaned out of the carriage, and, making an extraordinary grimace appear the mother in labour of the difficult words, said, 'Doos yo' laff?'

There was no helping it: I laughed like a madman, giving one outburst and a dead stop.

Far from looking displeased, she nodded. I was again put to the dreadful test.

'Can yo' mak' laff?'

It spurred my wits. I had no speech to 'mak' laff' with. At the very instant of my dilemma I chanced to see a soberly-clad old townsman hustled between two helpless women of the crowd, his pipe in his mouth, and his hat, wig, and handkerchief sliding over his face, showing his bald crown, and he not daring to cry out, for fear his pipe should be trodden under foot.

'He can, your Highness.'

Her quick eyes caught the absurd scene. She turned to one of her ladies and touched her forehead. Her hand was reached out to me; Temple she patted on the shoulder.

'He can—ja: du auch.'

A grand gentleman rode up. They whispered, gazed at the tent, and appeared to speak vehemently. All the men's faces were foreign: none of them had the slightest resemblance to my father's. I fancied I might detect him disguised. I stared vainly. Temple, to judge by the expression of his features, was thinking. Yes, thought I, we might as well be at home at old Riversley, that distant spot! We're as out of place here as frogs in the desert!

Riding to and fro, and chattering, and commotion, of which the margravine was the centre, went on, and the band played beautiful waltzes. The workmen in and out of the tent were full of their business, like seamen under a storm.

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'Fraulein Sibley,' the margravine called.

I hoped it might be an English name. So it proved to be; and the delight of hearing English spoken, and, what was more, having English ears to speak to, was blissful as the leap to daylight out of a nightmare.

'I have the honour to be your countrywoman,' said a lady, English all over to our struggling senses.

We became immediately attached to her as a pair of shipwrecked boats lacking provender of every sort are taken in tow by a well-stored vessel. She knew my father, knew him intimately. I related all I had to tell, and we learnt that we had made acquaintance with her pupil, the Princess Ottilia Wilhelmina Frederika Hedwig, only child of the Prince of Eppenwelzen.

'Your father will certainly be here; he is generally the margravine's right hand, and it's wonderful the margravine can do without him so long,' said Miss Sibley, and conversed with the margravine; after which she informed me that she had been graciously directed to assure me my father would be on the field when the cannon sounded.

'Perhaps you know nothing of Court life?' she resumed. 'We have very curious performances in Sarkeld, and we owe it to the margravine that we are frequently enlivened. You see the tall gentleman who is riding away from her. I mean the one with the black hussar jacket and thick brown moustache. That is the prince. Do you not think him handsome? He is very kind—rather capricious; but that is a way with princes. Indeed, I have no reason to complain. He has lost his wife, the Princess Frederika, and depends upon his sister the margravine for amusement. He has had it since she discovered your papa.'

'Is the gun never going off?' I groaned.

'If they would only conduct their ceremonies without their guns!' exclaimed Miss Sibley. 'The origin of the present ceremony is this: the margravine wished to have a statue erected to an ancestor, a renowned soldier—and I would infinitely prefer talking of England. But never mind. Oh, you won't understand what you gaze at. Well, the prince did not care to expend the money. Instead of urging that as the ground of his refusal, he declared there were no sculptors to do justice to Prince Albrecht Wohlgemuth, and one could not rely on their effecting a likeness. We have him in the dining-hall; he was strikingly handsome. Afterward he pretended—I'm speaking now of the existing Prince Ernest—that it would be ages before the statue was completed. One day the margravine induced him to agree to pay the sum stipulated for by the sculptor, on condition of the statue being completed for public inspection within eight days of the hour of their agreement. The whole Court was witness to it. They arranged for the statue, horse and man, to be exhibited for a quarter of an hour. Of course, the

margravine did not signify it would be a perfectly finished work. We are kept at a great distance, that we may not

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scrutinize it too closely. They unveil it to show she has been as good as her word, and then cover it up to fix the rider to the horse,—a screw is employed, I imagine. For one thing we know about it, we know that the horse and the horseman travelled hither separately. In all probability, the margravine gave the order for the statue last autumn in Berlin. Now look at the prince. He has his eye on you. Look down. Now he has forgotten you. He is impatient to behold the statue. Our chief fear is that the statue will not maintain its balance. Fortunately, we have plenty of guards to keep the people from pushing against it. If all turns out well, I shall really say the margravine has done wonders. She does not look anxious; but then she is not one ever to show it. The prince does. Every other minute he is glancing at the tent and at his watch. Can you guess my idea? Your father's absence leads me to think—oh! only a passing glimmer of an idea—the statue has not arrived, and he is bringing it on. Otherwise, he would be sure to be here. The margravine beckons me.'

'Don't go!' we cried simultaneously.

The Princess Ottilia supplied her place.

'I have sent to our stables for two little pretty Hungarian horses for you two to ride,' she said. 'No, I have not yet seen him. He is asked for, and de Markgräfin knows not at all. He bades in our lake; he has been seen since. The man is excitable; but he is so sensible. Oh, no. And he is full of laughter. We shall soon see him. Would he not ever be cautious of himself for a son like you?'

Her compliment raised a blush on me.

The patience of the people was creditable to their phlegm. The smoke of pipes curling over the numberless heads was the most stirring thing about them.

Temple observed to me,

'We'll give the old statue a British cheer, won't we, Richie?'

'After coming all the way from England!' said I, in dejection.

'No, no, Richie; you're sure of him now. He 's somewhere directing affairs, I suspect. I say, do let us show them we can ring out the right tune upon occasion. By jingo! there goes a fellow with a match.'

We saw the cannonier march up to the margravine's carriage for orders. She summoned the prince to her side. Ladies in a dozen carriages were standing up, handkerchief in hand, and the gentlemen got their horses' heads on a line. Temple

counted nearly sixty persons of quality stationed there. The workmen were trooping out of the tent.

Miss Sibley ran to us, saying,—

'The gun-horror has been commanded. Now then: the prince can scarcely contain himself. The gunner is ready near his gun; he has his frightful match lifted. See, the manager-superintendent is receiving the margravine's last injunctions. How firm women's nerves are! Now the margravine insists on the prince's reading the exact time by her watch. Everybody is doing it. Let us see. By my watch it is all but fifteen minutes to eleven, A.M. Dearest,' she addressed the little princess; 'would you not like to hold my hand until the gun is fired?'

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'Dearest,' replied the princess, whether in childish earnest or irony I could not divine, 'if I would hold a hand it would be a gentleman's.'

All eyes were on the Prince of Eppenwelzen, as he gazed toward the covered statue. With imposing deliberation his hand rose to his hat. We saw the hat raised. The cannon was fired and roared; the band struck up a pompous slow march: and the tent-veil broke apart and rolled off. It was like the dawn flying and sunrise mounting.

I confess I forgot all thought of my father for awhile; the shouts of the people, the braying of the brass instruments, the ladies cheering sweetly, the gentlemen giving short, hearty expressions of applause, intoxicated me. And the statue was superb—horse and rider in new bronze polished by sunlight.

'It is life-like! it is really noble! it is a true Prince!' exclaimed Miss Sibley. She translated several exclamations of the ladies and gentlemen in German: they were entirely to the same effect. The horse gave us a gleam of his neck as he pawed a forefoot, just reined in. We knew him; he was a gallant horse; but it was the figure of the Prince Albrecht that was so fine. I had always laughed at sculptured figures on horseback. This one overawed me. The Marshal was acknowledging the salute of his army after a famous victory over the infidel Turks. He sat upright, almost imperceptibly but effectively bending his head in harmony with the curve of his horse's neck, and his baton swept the air low in proud submission to the honours cast on him by his acclaiming soldiery. His three-cornered lace hat, curled wig, heavy-trimmed surcoat, and high boots, reminded me of Prince Eugene. No Prince Eugene—nay, nor Marlborough, had such a martial figure, such an animated high old warrior's visage. The bronze features reeked of battle.

Temple and I felt humiliated (without cause, I granted) at the success of a work of Art that struck us as a new military triumph of these Germans, and it was impossible not to admire it. The little Princess Ottilia clapped hands by fits. What words she addressed to me I know not. I dealt out my stock of German—'Ja, ja—to her English. We were drawn by her to congratulate the margravine, whose hand was then being kissed by the prince: he did it most courteously and affectionately. Other gentlemen, counts and barons, bowed over her hand. Ladies, according to their rank and privileges, saluted her on the cheek or in some graceful fashion. When our turn arrived, Miss Sibley translated for us, and as we were at concert pitch we did not acquit ourselves badly. Temple's remark was, that he wished she and all her family had been English. Nothing was left for me to say but that the margravine almost made us wish we had been German.

Smiling cordially, the margravine spoke, Miss Sibley translated:

'Her Royal Highness asks you if you have seen your father?'

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I shook my head.

The Princess Ottilia translated, 'Her Highness, my good aunt, would know, would you know him, did you see him?'

'Yes, anywhere,' I cried.

The margravine pushed me back with a gesture.

'Yes, your Highness, on my honour; anywhere on earth!'

She declined to hear the translation.

Her insulting disbelief in my ability to recognize the father I had come so far to embrace would have vexed me but for the wretched thought that I was losing him again. We threaded the carriages; gazed at the horsemen in a way to pierce the hair on their faces. The little princess came on us hurriedly.

'Here, see, are the horses. I will you to mount. Are they not pretty animals?' She whispered, 'I believe your father have been hurt in his mind by something. It is only perhaps. Now mount, for the Markgräfin says you are our good guests.'

We mounted simply to show that we could mount, for we would rather have been on foot, and drew up close to the right of the margravine's carriage.

'Hush! a poet is reading his ode,' said the princess. 'It is Count Fretzel von Wolfenstein.'

This ode was dreadful to us, and all the Court people pretended they liked it. When he waved his right hand toward the statue there was a shout from the rustic set; when he bowed to the margravine, the ladies and gentlemen murmured agreeably and smiled. We were convinced of its being downright hypocrisy, rustic stupidity, Court flattery. We would have argued our case, too. I proposed a gallop; Temple said,

'No, we'll give the old statue our cheer as soon as this awful fellow has done. I don't care much for poetry, but don't let me ever have to stand and hear German poetry again for the remainder of my life.'

We could not imagine why they should have poetry read out to them instead of their fine band playing, but supposed it was for the satisfaction of the margravine, with whom I grew particularly annoyed on hearing Miss Sibley say she conceived her Highness to mean that my father was actually on the ground, and that we neither of us, father and son, knew one another. I swore on my honour, on my life, he was not present; and the melancholy in my heart taking the form of extreme irritation, I spoke passionately. I rose in my stirrups, ready to shout, 'Father! here's Harry Richmond come to see you. Where



are you!' I did utter something— a syllable or two: 'Make haste!' I think the words were. They sprang from my inmost bosom, addressed without forethought to that drawling mouthing poet. The margravine's face met mine like a challenge. She had her lips tight in a mere lip-smile, and her eyes gleamed with provocation.

'Her Highness,' Miss Sibley translated, 'asks whether you are prepared to bet that your father is not on the ground?'

'Beg her to wait two minutes, and I'll be prepared to bet any sum,' said I.

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Temple took one half the circle, I the other, riding through the attentive horsemen and carriage-lines, and making sure the face we sought was absent, more or less discomposing everybody. The poet finished his ode; he was cheered, of course. Mightily relieved, I beheld the band resuming their instruments, for the cheering resembled a senseless beating on brass shields. I felt that we English could do it better. Temple from across the sector of the circle, running about two feet in front of the statue, called aloud,

'Richie! he's not here!'

'Not here!' cried I.

The people gazed up at us, wondering at the tongue we talked.

'Richie! now let 's lead these fellows off with a tiptop cheer!'

Little Temple crowed lustily.

The head of the statue turned from Temple to me.

I found the people falling back with amazed exclamations. I—so prepossessed was I—simply stared at the sudden-flashing white of the statue's eyes. The eyes, from being an instant ago dull carved balls, were animated. They were fixed on me. I was unable to give out a breath. Its chest heaved; both bronze hands struck against the bosom.

'Richmond! my son! Richie! Harry Richmond! Richmond Roy!'

That was what the statue gave forth.

My head was like a ringing pan. I knew it was my father, but my father with death and strangeness, earth, metal, about him; and his voice was like a human cry contending with earth and metal—mine was stifled. I saw him descend. I dismounted. We met at the ropes and embraced. All his figure was stiff, smooth, cold. My arms slid on him. Each time he spoke I thought it an unnatural thing: I myself had not spoken once.

After glancing by hazard at the empty saddle of the bronze horse, I called to mind more clearly the appalling circumstance which had stupefied the whole crowd. They had heard a statue speak—had seen a figure of bronze walk. For them it was the ancestor of their prince; it was the famous dead old warrior of a hundred and seventy years ago set thus in motion. Imagine the behaviour of people round a slain tiger that does not compel them to fly, and may yet stretch out a dreadful paw! Much so they pressed for a nearer sight of its walnut visage, and shrank in the act. Perhaps I shared some of their sensations. I cannot tell: my sensations were tranced. There was no warmth to revive me in the gauntlet I clasped. I looked up at the sky, thinking that it had fallen dark.

CHAPTER XVII

MY FATHER BREATHES, MOVES, AND SPEAKS

The people broke away from us like furrowed water as we advanced on each side of the ropes toward the margravine's carriage.

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I became a perfectly mechanical creature: incapable, of observing, just capable of taking an impression here and there; and in such cases the impressions that come are stamped on hot wax; they keep the scene fresh; they partly pervert it as well. Temple's version is, I am sure, the truer historical picture. He, however, could never repeat it twice exactly alike, whereas I failed not to render image for image in clear succession as they had struck me at the time. I could perceive that the figure of the Prince Albrecht, in its stiff condition, was debarred from vaulting, or striding, or stooping, so that the ropes were a barrier between us. I saw the little Princess Ottilia eyeing us with an absorbed comprehensive air quite unlike the manner of a child. Dots of heads, curious faces, peering and starting eyes, met my vision. I heard sharp talk in German, and a rider flung his arm, as if he wished to crash the universe, and flew off. The margravine seemed to me more an implacable parrot than a noble lady. I thought to myself: This is my father, and I am not overjoyed or grateful. In the same way, I felt that the daylight was bronze, and I did not wonder at it: nay, I reasoned on the probability of a composition of sun and mould producing that colour. The truth was, the powers of my heart and will were frozen; I thought and felt at random. And I crave excuses for dwelling on such trifling phenomena of the sensations, which have been useful to me by helping me to realize the scene, even as at the time they obscured it.

According to Temple's description, when the statue moved its head toward him, a shudder went through the crowd, and a number of forefingers were levelled at it, and the head moved toward me, marked of them all. Its voice was answered by a dull puling scream from women, and the men gaped. When it descended from the saddle, the act was not performed with one bound, as I fancied, but difficultly; and it walked up to me like a figure dragging logs at its heels. Half-a-dozen workmen ran to arrest it; some townswomen fainted. There was a heavy altercation in German between the statue and the superintendent of the arrangements. The sun shone brilliantly on our march to the line of carriages where the Prince of Eppenwelzen was talking to the margravine in a fury, and he dashed away on his horse, after bellowing certain directions to his foresters and the workmen, by whom we were surrounded; while the margravine talked loudly and amiably, as though everything had gone well. Her watch was out. She acknowledged my father's bow, and overlooked him. She seemed to have made her courtiers smile. The ladies and gentlemen obeyed the wave of her hand by quitting the ground; the band headed a long line of the commoner sort, and a body of foresters gathered the remnants and joined them to the rear of the procession. A liveried groom led away Temple's horse and mine. Temple declared he could not sit after seeing the statue descend from its pedestal.

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Her Highness's behaviour roughened as soon as the place was clear of company. She spoke at my father impetuously, with manifest scorn and reproach, struck her silver-mounted stick on the carriage panels, again and again stamped her foot, lifting a most variable emphatic countenance. Princess Ottilia tried to intercede. The margravine clenched her hands, and, to one not understanding her speech, appeared literally to blow the little lady off with the breath of her mouth. Her whole bearing consisted of volleys of abuse, closed by magisterial interrogations. Temple compared her Highness's language to the running out of Captain Welsh's chaincable, and my father's replies to the hauling in: his sentences were short, they sounded like manful protestations; I barely noticed them. Temple's version of it went: 'And there was your father apologizing, and the margravine rating him,' etc. My father, as it happened, was careful not to open his lips wide on account of the plaster, or thick coating of paint on his face. No one would have supposed that he was burning with indignation; the fact being, that to give vent to it, he would have had to exercise his muscular strength; he was plastered and painted from head to foot. The fixture of his wig and hat, too, constrained his skin, so that his looks were no index of his feelings. I longed gloomily for the moment to come when he would present himself to me in his natural form. He was not sensible of the touch of my hand, nor I of his. There we had to stand until the voluble portion of the margravine's anger came to an end. She shut her eyes and bowed curtly to our salute.

'You have seen the last of me, madam,' my father said to her whirling carriage-wheels.

He tried to shake, and strained in his ponderous garments. Temple gazed abashed. I knew not how to act. My father kept lifting his knees on the spot as if practising a walk.

The tent was in its old place covering the bronze horse. A workman stepped ahead of us, and we all went at a strange leisurely pace down the hill through tall pinetrees to where a closed vehicle awaited us. Here were also a couple of lackeys, who deposited my father on a bed of moss, and with much effort pulled his huge boots off, leaving him in red silk stockings. Temple and I snatched his gauntlets; Temple fell backward, but we had no thought of laughter; people were seen approaching, and the three of us jumped into the carriage. I had my father's living hand in mine to squeeze; feeling him scarcely yet the living man I had sought, and with no great warmth of feeling. His hand was very moist. Often I said, 'Dear father!—Papa, I'm so glad at last,' in answer to his short-breathed 'Richie, my little lad, my son Richmond! You found me out; you found me!' We were conscious that his thick case of varnished clothing was against us. One would have fancied from his way of speaking that he suffered from asthma. I was now gifted with a tenfold power of observation, and let nothing escape me.

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Temple, sitting opposite, grinned cheerfully at times to encourage our spirits; he had not recovered from his wonderment, nor had I introduced him. My father, however, had caught his name. Temple (who might as well have talked, I thought) was perpetually stealing secret glances of abstracted perusal at him with a pair of round infant's eyes, sucking his reflections the while. My father broke our silence.

'Mr. Temple, I have the honour,' he said, as if about to cough; 'the honour of making your acquaintance; I fear you must surrender the hope of making mine at present.'

Temple started and reddened like a little fellow detected in straying from his spell-book, which was the window-frame. In a minute or so the fascination proved too strong for him; his eyes wandered from the window and he renewed his shy inspection bit by bit as if casting up a column of figures.

'Yes, Mr. Temple, we are in high Germany,' said my father.

It must have cost Temple cruel pain, for he was a thoroughly gentlemanly boy, and he could not resist it. Finally he surprised himself in his stealthy reckoning: arrived at the full-breech or buttoned waistband, about half-way up his ascent from the red silk stocking, he would pause and blink rapidly, sometimes jump and cough.

To put him at his ease, my father exclaimed, 'As to this exterior,' he knocked his knuckles on the heaving hard surface, 'I can only affirm that it was, on horseback—ahem! particularly as the horse betrayed no restivity, pronounced perfect! The sole complaint of our interior concerns the resemblance we bear to a lobster. Human somewhere, I do believe myself to be. I shall have to be relieved of my shell before I can at all satisfactorily proclaim the fact. I am a human being, believe me.'

He begged permission to take breath a minute.

'I know you for my son's friend, Mr. Temple: here is my son, my boy, Harry Lepel Richmond Roy. Have patience: I shall presently stand unshelled. I have much to relate; you likewise have your narrative in store. That you should have lit on me at the critical instant is one of those miracles which combine to produce overwhelming testimony—ay, Richie! without a doubt there is a hand directing our destiny.' His speaking in such a strain, out of pure kindness to Temple, huskily, with his painful attempt to talk like himself, revived his image as the father of my heart and dreams, and stirred my torpid affection, though it was still torpid enough, as may be imagined, when I state that I remained plunged in contemplation of his stocking of red silk emerging from the full bronzed breech, considering whether his comparison of himself to a shell-fish might not be a really just one. We neither of us regained our true natures until he was free of every vestige of the garb of Prince Albrecht Wohlgemuth. Attendants were awaiting him at the garden-gate of a beautiful villa partly girdled by rising fir-woods on its footing of bright green meadow. They led him away, and us to bath-rooms.

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CHAPTER XVIII

WE PASS A DELIGHTFUL EVENING, AND I HAVE A MORNING VISION

In a long saloon ornamented with stags' horns and instruments of the chase, tusks of boars, spear-staves, boarknives, and silver horns, my father, I, and Temple sat down to a memorable breakfast, my father in his true form, dressed in black silken jacket and knee-breeches, purple-stockings and pumps; without a wig, I thanked heaven to see. How blithely he flung out his limbs and heaved his chest released from confinement! His face was stained brownish, but we drank old Rhine wine, and had no eye for appearances.

'So you could bear it no longer, Richie?' My father interrupted the narrative I doled out, anxious for his, and he began, and I interrupted him.

'You did think of me often, papa, didn't you?'

His eyes brimmed with tenderness.

'Think of you!' he sighed.

I gave him the account of my latest adventures in a few panting breaths, suppressing the Bench. He set my face to front him.

'We are two fools, Mr. Temple,' he said.

'No, sir,' said Temple.

'Now you speak, papa,' said I.

He smiled warmly.

'Richie begins to remember me.'

I gazed at him to show it was true.

'I do, papa—I'm not beginning to.'

At his request, I finished the tale of my life at school. 'Ah, well! that was bad fortune; this is good!' he exclaimed. 'Tis your father, my son: 'tis day-light, though you look at it through a bed-curtain, and think you are half-dreaming. Now then for me, Richie.'

My father went on in this wise excitedly:

'I was laying the foundation of your fortune here, my boy. Heavens! when I was in that bronze shell I was astonished only at my continence in not bursting. You have grown, —you have shot up and filled out. I register my thanks to your grandfather Beltham; the same, in a minor degree, to Captain Jasper Welsh. Between that man Rippenger and me there shall be dealings. He flogged you: let that pass. He exposed you to the contempt of your school-fellows because of a breach in my correspondence with a base-born ferule-swinger. What are we coming to? Richie, my son, I was building a future for you here. And Colonel Goodwin-Colonel Goodwin, you encountered him too, and his marriageable daughter—I owe it to them that I have you here! Well, in the event of my sitting out the period this morning as the presentment of Prince Albrecht, I was to have won something would have astonished that unimpressionable countryman of ours. Goodness gracious, my boy! when I heard your English shout, it went to my marrow. Could they expect me to look down on my own flesh and blood, on my son—my son Richmond—after a separation of years, and continue a statue? Nay, I followed my paternal impulse. Grant that the show was spoilt, does the Markgravin insist on

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my having a bronze heart to carry on her pastime? Why, naturally, I deplore a failure, let the cause be what it will. Whose regrets can eclipse those of the principal actor? Quotha! as our old Plays have it. Regrets? Did I not for fifteen minutes and more of mortal time sit in view of a multitude, motionless, I ask you, like a chiselled block of stone,—and the compact was one quarter of an hour, and no farther? That was my stipulation. I told her—I can hold out one quarter of an hour: I pledged myself to it. Who, then, is to blame? I was exposed to view twenty-three minutes, odd seconds. Is there not some ancient story of a monstrous wretch baked in his own bull? My situation was as bad. If I recollect aright, he could roar; no such relief was allowed to me. And I give you my word, Richie, lads both, that while that most infernal Count Fretzel was pouring forth his execrable humdrum, I positively envied the privilege of an old palsied fellow, chief boatman of the forest lake, for, thinks I, hang him! he can nod his head and I can not. Let me assure you, twenty minutes of an ordeal like that,—one posture, mind you, no raising of your eyelids, taking your breath mechanically, and your heart beating—jumping like an enraged balletdancer boxed in your bosom—a literal description, upon my honour; and not only jumping, jumping every now and then, I may say, with a toe in your throat: I was half-choked:—well, I say, twenty minutes, twenty-seven minutes and a half of that, getting on, in fact, to half-an-hour, it is superhuman!—by heavens, it is heroic!

And observe my reward: I have a son—my only one. I have been divided from him for years; I am establishing his fortune; I know he is provided with comforts: Richie, you remember the woman Waddy? A faithful soul! She obtained my consent at last—previously I had objections; in fact, your address was withheld from the woman—to call at your school. She saw Rippenger, a girl of considerable attractions. She heard you were located at Riversley: I say, I know the boy is comfortably provided for; but we have been separated since he was a little creature with curls on his forehead, scarce breeched'

I protested:

'Papa, I have been in jacket and trousers I don't know how long.'

'Let me pursue,' said my father. 'And to show you, Richie, it is a golden age ever when you and I are together, and ever shall be till we lose our manly spirit, and we cling to that,—till we lose our princely spirit, which we never will abandon—perish rather!—I drink to you, and challenge you; and, mind you, old Hock wine has charms. If Burgundy is the emperor of wines, Hock is the empress. For youngsters, perhaps, I should except the Hock that gets what they would fancy a trifle pique, turned with age, so as to lose in their opinion its empress flavour.'

Temple said modestly: 'I should call that the margravine of wines.'

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My father beamed on him with great approving splendour. 'Join us, Mr. Temple; you are a man of wit, and may possibly find this specimen worthy of you. This wine has a history. You are drinking wine with blood in it. Well, I was saying, the darling of my heart has been torn from me; I am in a foreign land; foreign, that is, by birth, and on the whole foreign. Yes!—I am the cynosure of eyes; I am in a singular posture, a singular situation; I hear a cry in the tongue of my native land, and what I presume is my boy's name: I look, I behold him, I follow a parent's impulse. On my soul! none but a fish-father could have stood against it.

Well, for this my reward is—and I should have stepped from a cathedral spire just the same, if I had been mounted on it—that I, I,—and the woman knows all my secret—I have to submit to the foul tirade of a vixen.

She drew language, I protest, from the slums. And I entreat you, Mr. Temple, with your "margravine of wines"—which was very neatly said, to be sure—note you this curious point for the confusion of Radicals in your after life; her Highness's pleasure was to lend her tongue to the language—or something like it—of a besotted fish-wife; so! very well, and just as it is the case with that particular old Hock you youngsters would disapprove of, and we cunning oldsters know to contain more virtues in maturity than a nunnery of May-blooming virgins, just so the very faults of a royal lady-royal by birth and in temper a termagant—impart a perfume! a flavour! You must age; you must live in Courts, you must sound the human bosom, rightly to appreciate it. She is a woman of the most malicious fine wit imaginable.

She is a generous woman, a magnanimous woman; wear her chains and she will not brain you with her club. She is the light, the centre of every society where she appears, like what shall I say? like the moon in a bowl of old Rhenish. And you will drain that bowl to the bottom to seize her, as it were—catch a correct idea of her; ay, and your brains are drowned in the attempt. Yes, Richie; I was aware of your residence at Riversley. Were you reminded of your wandering dada on Valentine's day? Come, my boy, we have each of us a thousand things to relate. I may be dull—I do not understand what started you on your journey in search of me. An impulse? An accident? Say, a directing angel! We rest our legs here till evening, and then we sup. You will be astonished to hear that you have dined. 'Tis the fashion with the Germans. I promise you good wine shall make it up to you for the return to school-habits. We sup, and we pack our scanty baggage, and we start tonight. Brook no insult at Courts if you are of material value: if not, it is unreservedly a question whether you like kickings.'

My father paused, yawned and stretched, to be rid of the remainder of his aches and stiffness. Out of a great yawn he said:

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'Dear lads, I have fallen into the custom of the country; I crave your permission that I may smoke. Wander, if you choose, within hail of me, or sit by me, if you can bear it, and talk of your school-life, and your studies. Your aunt Dorothy, Richie? She is well? I know not her like. I could bear to hear of any misfortune but that she suffered pain.

My father smoked his cigar peacefully. He had laid a guitar on his knees, and flipped a string, or chafed over all the strings, and plucked and thrummed them as his mood varied. We chatted, and watched the going down of the sun, and amused ourselves idly, fermenting as we were. Anything that gave pleasure to us two boys pleased and at once occupied my father. It was without aid from Temple's growing admiration of him that I recovered my active belief and vivid delight in his presence. My younger days sprang up beside me like brothers. No one talked, looked, flashed, frowned, beamed, as he did! had such prompt liveliness as he! such tenderness! No one was ever so versatile in playfulness. He took the colour of the spirits of the people about him. His vivacious or sedate man-of-the-world tone shifted to playfellow's fun in a twinkling. I used as a little fellow to think him larger than he really was, but he was of good size, inclined to be stout; his eyes were grey, rather prominent, and his forehead sloped from arched eyebrows. So conversational were his eyes and brows that he could persuade you to imagine he was carrying on a dialogue without opening his mouth. His voice was charmingly clear; his laughter confident, fresh, catching, the outburst of his very self, as laughter should be. Other sounds of laughter were like echoes.

Strange to say, I lost the links of my familiarity with him when he left us on a short visit to his trunks and portmanteaux, and had to lean on Temple, who tickled but rejoiced me by saying: 'Richie, your father is just the one I should like to be secretary to.'

We thought it a pity to have to leave this nice foreign place immediately. I liked the scenery, and the wine, and what I supposed to be the habit of the gentlemen here to dress in silks. On my father's return to us I asked him if we could not stay till morning.

'Till morning, then,' he said: 'and to England with the first lark.'

His complexion was ruddier; his valet had been at work to restore it; he was getting the sanguine hue which coloured my recollection of him. Wearing a black velvet cap and a Spanish furred cloak, he led us over the villa. In Sarkeld he resided at the palace, and generally at the lake-palace on the removal of the Court thither. The margravine had placed the villa, which was her own property, at his disposal, the better to work out their conspiracy.

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'It would have been mine!' said my father, bending suddenly to my ear, and humming his philosophical 'heigho,' as he stepped on in minuet fashion. We went through apartments rich with gilded oak and pine panellings: in one was a rough pattern of a wooden horse opposite a mirror; by no means a figure of a horse, but apparently a number of pieces contributed by a carpenter's workshop, having a rueful seat in the middle. My father had practised the attitude of Prince Albrecht Wohlgemuth on it. 'She timed me five and twenty minutes there only yesterday,' he said; and he now supposed he had sat the bronze horse as a statue in public view exactly thirty-seven minutes and a quarter. Tubs full of colouring liquid to soak the garments of the prince, pots of paint, and paint and plaster brushes, hinted the magnitude of the preparations.

'Here,' said my father in another apartment, 'I was this morning apparelled at seven o'clock: and I would have staked my right arm up to the collar-bone on the success of the undertaking!'

'Weren't they sure to have found it out in the end, papa?' I inquired.

'I am not so certain of that,' he rejoined: 'I cannot quaff consolation from that source. I should have been covered up after exhibition; I should have been pronounced imperfect in my fitting-apparatus; the sculptor would have claimed me, and I should have been enjoying the fruits of a brave and harmless conspiracy to do honour to an illustrious prince, while he would have been moulding and casting an indubitable bronze statue in my image. A fig for rumours! We show ourself; we are caught from sight; we are again on show. Now this being successfully done, do you see, Royalty declines to listen to vulgar tattle. Presumably, Richie, it was suspected by the Court that the margravine had many months ago commanded the statue at her own cost, and had set her mind on winning back the money. The wonder of it was my magnificent resemblance to the defunct. I sat some three hours before the old warrior's portraits in the dining-saloon of the lake-palace. Accord me one good spell of meditation over a tolerable sketch, I warrant myself to represent him to the life, provided that he was a personage: I incline to stipulate for handsome as well. On my word of honour as a man and a gentleman, I pity the margravine—my poor good Frau Feldmarschall! Now, here, Richie,'—my father opened a side-door out of an elegant little room into a spacious dark place, 'here is her cabinet-theatre, where we act German and French comediettas in Spring and Autumn. I have superintended it during the two or more years of my stay at the Court. Humph! 'tis over.'

He abruptly closed the door. His dress belonged to the part of a Spanish nobleman, personated by him in a Play called The Hidalgo Enraged, he said, pointing a thumb over his shoulder at the melancholy door, behind which gay scenes had sparkled.

'Papa!' said I sadly, for consolation.

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'You're change for a sovereign to the amount of four hundred and forty-nine thousand shillings every time you speak!' cried he, kissing my forehead.

He sparkled in good earnest on hearing that I had made acquaintance with the little Princess Ottilia. What I thought of her, how she looked at me, what I said to her, what words she answered, how the acquaintance began, who were observers of it,—I had to repair my omission to mention her by furnishing a precise description of the circumstances, describing her face and style, repeating her pretty English.

My father nodded: he thought I exaggerated that foreign English of hers; but, as I said, I was new to it and noticed it. He admitted the greater keenness of attention awakened by novelty.

'Only,' said he, 'I rather wonder—' and here he smiled at me inquiringly. 'Tis true,' he added, 'a boy of fourteen or fifteen— ay, Richie, have your fun out. A youngster saw the comic side of her. Do you know, that child has a remarkable character? Her disposition is totally unfathomable. You are a deep reader of English poetry, I hope,; she adores it, and the English Navy. She informed me that if she had been the English people she would have made Nelson king. The Royal family of England might see objections to that, I told her. Cries she: "Oh! anything for a sea-hero." You will find these young princes and princesses astonishingly revolutionary when they entertain brains. Now at present, just at present, an English naval officer, and a poet, stand higher in the esteem of that young Princess Ottilia than dukes, kings, or emperors. So you have seen her!' my father ejaculated musingly, and hummed, and said: 'By the way, we must be careful not to offend our grandpapa Beltham, Richie. Good acres—good anchorage; good coffers— good harbourage. Regarding poetry, my dear boy, you ought to be writing it, for I do—the diversion of leisure hours, impromptus. In poetry, I would scorn anything but impromptus. I was saying, Richie, that if tremendous misfortune withholds from you your legitimate prestige, you must have the substantial element. 'Tis your springboard to vault by, and cushions on the other side if you make a miss and fall. 'Tis the essence if you have not the odour.'

I followed my father's meaning as the shadow of a bird follows it in sunlight; it made no stronger an impression than a flying shadow on the grass; still I could verify subsequently that I had penetrated him—I had caught the outline of his meaning—though I was little accustomed to his manner of communicating his ideas: I had no notion of what he touched on with the words, prestige, essence, and odour.

My efforts to gather the reason for his having left me neglected at school were fruitless. 'Business, business! sad necessity! hurry, worry-the-hounds!' was his nearest approach to an explicit answer; and seeing I grieved his kind eyes, I abstained. Nor did I like to defend Mr. Rippenger for expecting to be paid. We came to that point once or twice, when so sharply wronged did he appear, and vehement and indignant, that I banished

thoughts which marred my luxurious contentment in hearing him talk and sing, and behave in his old ways and new habits.

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Plain velvet was his dress at dinner. We had a yellow Hock. Temple's meditative face over it, to discover the margravine, or something, in its flavour, was a picture. It was an evening of incessant talking; no telling of events straightforwardly, but all by fits—all here and there. My father talked of Turkey, so I learnt he had been in that country; Temple of the routine of our life at Riversley; I of Kiomi, the gipsy girl; then we two of Captain Jasper Welsh; my father of the Princess Ottilia. When I alluded to the margravine, he had a word to say of Mrs. Waddy; so I learnt she had been in continual correspondence with him, and had cried heavily about me, poor soul. Temple laughed out a recollection of Captain Bulsted's 'hic, haec, hoc'; I jumped Janet Ilchester up on the table; my father expatiated on the comfort of a volume of Shakespeare to an exiled Englishman. We drank to one another, and heartily to the statue. My father related the history of the margravine's plot in duck-and-drake skips, and backward to his first introduction to her at some Austrian Baths among the mountains. She wanted amusement—he provided it; she never let him quit her sight from that moment.

'And now,' he said, 'she has lost me!' He drew out of his pocket-book a number of designs for the statue of Prince Albrecht, to which the margravine's initials were appended, and shuffled them, and sighed, and said: 'Most complete arrangements! most complete! No body of men were ever so well drilled as those fellows up at Bella Vista—could not have been! And at the climax, in steps the darling boy for whom I laboured and sweated, and down we topple incontinently! Nothing would have shaken me but the apparition of my son! I was proof against everything but that! I sat invincible for close upon an hour—call it an hour! Not a muscle of me moved: I repeat, the heart in my bosom capered like an independent organ; had it all its own way, leaving me mine, until Mr. Temple, take my word for it, there is a guiding hand in some families; believe it, and be serene in adversity. The change of life at a merry Court to life in a London alley will exercise our faith. But the essential thing is that Richie has been introduced here, and I intend him to play a part here. The grandson and heir of one of the richest commoners in England—I am not saying commoner as a term of reproach—possessed of a property that turns itself over and doubles itself every ten years, may—mind you, may—on such a solid foundation as that!—and as to birth, your Highness has only to grant us a private interview.'

Temple was dazed by this mystifying address to him; nor could I understand it.

'Why, papa, you always wished for me to go into Parliament,' said I.

'I do,' he replied, 'and I wish you to lead the London great world. Such topics are for by-and-by. Adieu to them!' He kissed his wafting finger-tips.

We fell upon our random talk again with a merry rattle.

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I had to give him a specimen of my piano-playing and singing.

He shook his head. 'The cricketer and the scholar have been developed at the expense of the musician; and music, Richie, music unlocks the chamber of satinrose.'

Late at night we separated. Temple and I slept in companion-rooms. Deadly drowsy, the dear little fellow sat on the edge of my bed chattering of his wonder. My dreams led me wandering with a ship's diver under the sea, where we walked in a light of pearls and exploded old wrecks. I was assuring the glassy man that it was almost as clear beneath the waves as above, when I awoke to see my father standing over me in daylight; and in an ecstasy I burst into sobs.

'Here, Richie'—he pressed fresh violets on my nostrils— 'you have had a morning visitor. Quick out of bed, and you will see the little fairy crossing the meadow.'

I leapt to the window in time to have in view the little Princess Ottilia, followed by her faithful gaunt groom, before she was lost in the shadow of the fir-trees.

CHAPTER XIX

OUR RETURN HOMEWARD

We started for England at noon, much against my secret wishes; but my father would not afford the margravine time to repent of her violent language and injustice toward him. Reflection increased his indignation. Anything that went wrong on the first stages of the journey caused him to recapitulate her epithets and reply to them proudly. He confided to me in Cologne Cathedral that the entire course of his life was a grand plot, resembling an unfinished piece of architecture, which might, at a future day, prove the wonder of the world: and he had, therefore, packed two dozen of hoar old (uralt: he used comical German) Hock for a present to my grandfather Beltham, in the hope of its being found acceptable.

'For, Richie,' said he, 'you may not know—and it is not to win your thanks I inform you of it—that I labour unremittingly in my son's interests. I have established him, on his majority, in Germany, at a Court. My object now is to establish him in England. Promise me that it shall be the decided endeavour of your energies and talents to rise to the height I point out to you? You promise, I perceive,' he added, sharp in detecting the unpleasant predicament of a boy who is asked to speak priggishly. So then I could easily promise with a firm voice. He dropped certain explosive hints, which reminded me of the funny ideas of my state and greatness I had when a child. I shrugged at them; I cared nothing for revelations to come by-and-by. My object was to unite my father and grandfather on terms of friendship.

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This was the view that now absorbed and fixed my mind. To have him a frequent visitor at Riversley, if not a resident in the house, enlivening them all, while I, perhaps, trifled a cavalry sabre, became one of my settled dreams. The difficult part of the scheme appeared to me the obtaining of my father's consent. I mentioned it, and he said immediately that he must have his freedom. 'Now, for instance,' said he, 'what is my desire at this moment? I have always a big one perched on a rock in the distance; but I speak of my present desire. And let it be supposed that the squire is one of us: we are returning to England. Well, I want to show you a stork's nest. We are not far enough South for the stork to build here. It is a fact, Richie, that I do want to show you the bird for luck, and as a feature of the country. And in me, a desire to do a thing partakes of the impetus of steam.

Well, you see we are jogging home to England. I resist myself for duty's sake: that I can do. But if the squire were here with his yea and his nay, by heavens! I should be off to the top of the Rhine like a tornado. I submit to circumstances: I cannot, and I will not, be dictated to by men.'

'That seems to me rather unreasonable,' I remonstrated.

'It is; I am ashamed of it,' he answered. 'Do as you will, Richie; set me down at Riversley, but under no slight, mark you. I keep my honour intact, like a bottled cordial; my unfailing comfort in adversity! I hand it to you, my son, on my death-bed, and say, "You have there the essence of my life. Never has it been known of me that I swallowed an insult."

'Then, papa, I shall have a talk with the squire.'

'Make good your ground in the castle,' said he. 'I string a guitar outside. You toss me a key from the walls. If there is room, and I have leisure, I enter. If not, you know I am paving your way in other quarters. Riversley, my boy, is an excellent foothold and fortress: Riversley is not the world. At Riversley I should have to wear a double face, and, egad! a double stomach-bag, like young Jack feeding with the giant—one full of ambition, the other of provender. That place is our touchstone to discover whether we have prudence. We have, I hope. And we will have, Mr. Temple, a pleasant day or two in Paris.'

It was his habit to turn off the bent of these conversations by drawing Temple into them. Temple declared there was no feeling we were in a foreign country while he was our companion. We simply enjoyed strange scenes, looking idly out of our windows. Our recollection of the strangest scene ever witnessed filled us with I know not what scornful pleasure, and laughed in the background at any sight or marvel pretending to amuse us. Temple and I cantered over the great Belgian battlefield, talking of Bella Vista tower, the statue, the margravine, our sour milk and black-bread breakfast, the little Princess Ottilia, with her 'It is my question,' and 'You were kind to my lambs, sir,' thoughtless of

glory and dead bones. My father was very differently impressed. He was in an exultant glow, far outmatching the bloom on our faces when we rejoined him. I cried,

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'Papa, if the prince won't pay for a real statue, I will, and I'll present it in your name!'

'To the nation?' cried he, staring, and arresting his arm in what seemed an orchestral movement.

'To the margravine !'

He heard, but had to gather his memory. He had been fighting the battle, and made light of Bella Vista. I found that incidents over which a day or two had rolled lost their features to him. He never smiled at recollections. If they were forced on him noisily by persons he liked, perhaps his face was gay, but only for a moment. The gaiety of his nature drew itself from hot-springs of hopefulness: our arrival in England, our interviews there, my majority Burgundy, my revisitation of Germany—these events to come gave him the aspect children wear out a-Maying or in an orchard. He discussed the circumstances connected with the statue as dry matter-of-fact, and unless it was his duty to be hilarious at the dinner-table, he was hardly able to respond to a call on his past life and mine. His future, too, was present tense: 'We do this,' not 'we will do this'; so that, generally, no sooner did we speak of an anticipated scene than he was acting in it. I studied him eagerly, I know, and yet quite unconsciously, and I came to no conclusions. Boys are always putting down the ciphers of their observations of people beloved by them, but do not add up a sum total.

Our journey home occupied nearly eleven weeks, owing to stress of money on two occasions. In Brussels I beheld him with a little beggar-girl in his arms.

'She has asked me for a copper coin, Richie,' he said, squeezing her fat cheeks to make cherries of her lips.

I recommended him to give her a silver one.

'Something, Richie, I must give the little wench, for I have kissed her, and, in my list of equivalents, gold would be the sole form of repayment after that. You must buy me off with honour, my boy.'

I was compelled to receive a dab from the child's nose, by way of a kiss, in return for buying him off with honour.

The child stumped away on the pavement fronting our hotel, staring at its fist that held the treasure.

'Poor pet wee drab of it!' exclaimed my father. 'One is glad, Richie, to fill a creature out of one's emptiness. Now she toddles; she is digesting it rapidly. The last performance of one's purse is rarely so pleasant as that. I owe it to her that I made the discovery in time.'

In this manner I also made the discovery that my father had no further supply of money, none whatever. How it had run out without his remarking it, he could not tell; he could only assure me that he had become aware of the fact while searching vainly for a coin to bestow on the beggar-girl. I despatched a letter attested by a notary of the city, applying for money to the banker to whom Colonel Goodwin had introduced me on my arrival on the Continent. The money came, and in the meantime we had formed acquaintances and entertained them; they were chiefly half-pay English military officers, dashing men. One, a Major Dykes, my father established in our hotel, and we carried him on to Paris, where, consequent upon our hospitalities, the purse was again deficient.

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Two reasons for not regretting it were adduced by my father; firstly, that it taught me not to despise the importance of possessing money; secondly, that we had served our country by assisting Dykes, who was on the scent of a new and terrible weapon of destruction, which he believed to be in the hands of the French Government. Major Dykes disappeared on the scent, but we had the satisfaction of knowing that we had done our best toward saving the Navy of Great Britain from being blown out of water. Temple and I laughed over Major Dykes, and he became our puppet for by-play, on account of his enormous whiskers, his passion for strong drinks, and his air of secrecy. My father's faith in his patriotic devotedness was sufficient to withhold me from suspicions of his character. Whenever my instinct, or common sense, would have led me to differ with my father in opinion fun supervened; I was willing that everything in the world should be as he would have it be, and took up with a spirit of laughter, too happy in having won him, in having fished him out of the deep sea at one fling of the net, as he said, to care for accuracy of sentiment in any other particular.

Our purse was at its lowest ebb; he suggested no means of replenishing it, and I thought of none. He had heard that it was possible to live in Paris upon next to nothing with very great luxury, so we tried it; we strolled through the lilac aisles among bonnes and babies, attended military spectacles, rode on omnibuses, dined on the country heights, went to theatres, and had a most pleasurable time, gaining everywhere front places, friendly smiles, kind little services, in a way that would have been incomprehensible to me but for my consciousness of the magical influence of my father's address, a mixture of the ceremonious and the affable such as the people could not withstand.

'The poet is perhaps, on the whole, more exhilarating than the alderman,' he said.

These were the respective names given by him to the empty purse and the full purse. We vowed we preferred the poet.

'Ay,' said he, 'but for all that the alderman is lighter on his feet: I back him to be across the Channel first. The object of my instructions to you will be lost, Richie, if I find you despising the Alderman's Pegasus. On money you mount. We are literally chained here, you know, there is no doubt about it; and we are adding a nail to our fetters daily. True, you are accomplishing the Parisian accent. Paris has also this immense advantage over all other cities: 'tis the central hotel on the high-road of civilization. In Paris you meet your friends to a certainty; it catches them every one in turn; so now we must abroad early and late, and cut for trumps.' A meeting with a friend of my father, Mr. Montez Williams, was the result of our resolute adoption of this system. He helped us on to Boulogne, where my father met another friend, to whom he gave so sumptuous a dinner that we had not money enough to pay the hotel bill.

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'Now observe the inconvenience of leaving Paris,' said he. 'Ten to one we shall have to return. We will try a week's whistling on the jetty; and if no luck comes, and you will admit, Richie—Mr. Temple, I call your attention to it—that luck will scarcely come in profuse expedition through the narrow neck of a solitary seaport, why, we must return to Paris.'

I proposed to write to my aunt Dorothy for money, but he would not hear of that. After two or three days of whistling, I saw my old friend, Mr. Bannerbridge, step out of the packetboat. On condition of my writing to my aunt to say that I was coming home, he advanced me the sum we were in need of, grudgingly though, and with the prediction that we should break down again, which was verified. It occurred only a stage from Riversley, where my grandfather's name was good as coin of the realm. Besides, my father remained at the inn to guarantee the payment of the bill, while Temple and I pushed on in a fly with the two dozen of Hock. It could hardly be called a break-down, but my father was not unwilling for me to regard it in that light. Among his parting remarks was an impressive adjuration to me to cultivate the squire's attachment at all costs.

'Do this,' he said, 'and I shall know that the lesson I have taught you on your journey homeward has not been thrown away. My darling boy! my curse through life has been that the sense of weight in money is a sense I am and was born utterly a stranger to. The consequence is, my grandest edifices fall; there is no foundation for them. Not that I am worse, understand me, than under a temporary cloud, and the blessing of heaven has endowed me with a magnificent constitution. Heaven forefend that I should groan for myself, or you for me! But digest what you have learnt, Richie; press nothing on the squire; be guided by the advice of that esteemed and admirable woman, your aunt Dorothy. And, by the way, you may tell her confidentially of the progress of your friendship with the Princess Ottilia. Here I shall employ my hours in a tranquil study of nature until I see you.' Thus he sped me forward.

We sighted Riversley about mid-day on a sunny June morning. Compared with the view from Bella Vista, our firs looked scanty, our heath-tracts dull, as places having no page of history written on them, our fresh green meadows not more than commonly homely. I was so full of my sense of triumph in my adventurous journey and the recovery of my father, that I gazed on the old Grange from a towering height. The squire was on the lawn, surrounded by a full company: the Ilchesters, the Ambroses, the Wilfords, Captain and Squire Gregory Bulsted, the Rubreys, and others, all bending to roses, to admire, smell, or pluck. Charming groups of ladies were here and there; and Temple whispered as we passed them:

'We beat foreigners in our women, Richie.'

I, making it my business to talk with perfect unconcern, replied

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'Do you think so? Perhaps. Not in all cases'; all the while I was exulting at the sweet beams of England radiating from these dear early-morning-looking women.

My aunt Dorothy swam up to me, and, kissing me, murmured:

'Take no rebuff from your grandpapa, darling.'

My answer was: 'I have found him!'

Captain Bulsted sang out our names; I caught sight of Julia Rippenger's face; the squire had his back turned to me, which reminded me of my first speech with Captain Jasper Welsh, and I thought to myself, I know something of the world now, and the thing is to keep a good temper. Here there was no wire-coil to intercept us, so I fronted him quickly.

'Hulloa!' he cried, and gave me his shoulder.

'Temple is your guest, sir,' said I.

He was obliged to stretch out his hand to Temple.

A prompt instinct warned me that I must show him as much Beltham as I could summon.

'Dogs and horses all right, sir?' I asked.

Captain Bulsted sauntered near.

'Here, William,' said the squire, 'tell this fellow about my stables.'

'In excellent condition, Harry Richmond,' returned the captain.

'Oh! he 's got a new name, I 'll swear,' said the squire.

'Not I !'

'Then what have you got of your trip, eh?'

'A sharper eye than I had, sir.'

'You've been sharpening it in London, have you?'

'I've been a little farther than London, squire.'

'Well, you're not a liar.'



'There, you see the lad can stand fire!' Captain Bulsted broke in. 'Harry Richmond, I'm proud to shake your hand, but I'll wait till you're through the ceremony with your grandad.'

The squire's hands were crossed behind him. I smiled boldly in his face.

'Shall I make the tour of you to get hold of one of them, sir?' He frowned and blinked.

'Shuffle in among the ladies; you seem to know how to make friends among them,' he said, and pretended to disengage his right hand for the purpose of waving it toward one of the groups.

I seized it, saying heartily, 'Grandfather, upon my honour, I love you, and I'm glad to be home again.'

'Mind you, you're not at home till you've begged Uberly's pardon in public, you know what for,' he rejoined.

'Leaving the horse at that inn is on my conscience,' said I.

The squire grumbled a bit.

'Suppose he kicks?' said I; and the captain laughed, and the squire too, and I was in such high spirits I thought of a dozen witty suggestions relative to the seat of the conscience, and grieved for a minute at going to the ladies.

All the better; keep him there Captain Bulsted convoyed me to pretty Irish-eyed Julia Rippenger. Temple had previously made discovery of Janet Ilchester. Relating our adventures on different parts of the lawn, we both heard that Colonel Goodwin and his daughter had journeyed down to Riversley to smooth the way for my return; so my easy conquest of the squire was not at all wonderful; nevertheless, I maintained my sense of triumph, and was assured in my secret heart that I had a singular masterfulness, and could, when I chose to put it forth, compel my grandfather to hold out his hand to my father as he had done to me.

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Julia Rippenger was a guest at Riversley through. a visit paid to her by my aunt Dorothy in alarm at my absence. The intention was to cause the squire a distraction. It succeeded; for the old man needed lively prattle of a less childish sort than Janet Ilchester's at his elbow, and that young lady, though true enough in her fashion, was the ardent friend of none but flourishing heads; whereas Julia, finding my name under a cloud at Riversley, spoke of me, I was led to imagine by Captain Bulsted, as a ballad hero, a gloriful fellow, a darling whose deeds were all pardonable—a mere puff of smoke in the splendour of his nature.

'To hear the young lady allude to me in that style!' he confided to my ear, with an ineffable heave of his big chest.

Certain good influences, at any rate, preserved the squire from threatening to disinherit me. Colonel Goodwin had spoken to him very manfully and wisely as to my relations with my father. The squire, it was assumed by my aunt, and by Captain Bulsted and Julia, had undertaken to wink at my father's claims on my affection. All three vehemently entreated me to make no mention of the present of Hock to him, and not to attempt to bring about an interview. Concerning the yellow wine I disregarded their advice, for I held it to be a point of filial duty, and an obligation religiously contracted beneath a cathedral dome; so I performed the task of offering the Hock, stating that it was of ancient birth. The squire bunched his features; he tutored his temper, and said not a word. I fancied all was well. Before I tried the second step, Captain Bulsted rode over to my father, who himself generously enjoined the prudent course, in accordance with his aforegone precepts. He was floated off, as he termed it, from the inn where he lay stranded, to London, by I knew not what heaven-sent gift of money, bidding me keep in view the grand career I was to commence at Dipwell on arriving at my majority. I would have gone with him had he beckoned a finger. The four-and-twenty bottles of Hock were ranged in a line for the stable-boys to cock-shy at them under the squire's supervision and my enforced attendance, just as revolutionary criminals are executed. I felt like the survivor of friends, who had seen their blood flow.

He handed me a cheque for the payment of debts incurred in my recent adventures. Who could help being grateful for it? And yet his remorseless spilling of the kindly wine full of mellow recollections of my father and the little princess, drove the sense of gratitude out of me.

CHAPTER XX

NEWS OF A FRESH CONQUEST OF MY FATHER'S

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Temple went to sea. The wonder is that I did not go with him: we were both in agreement that adventures were the only things worth living for, and we despised English fellows who had seen no place but England. I could not bear the long separation from my father that was my reason for not insisting on the squire's consent to my becoming a midshipman. After passing a brilliant examination, Temple had the good fortune to join Captain Bulsted's ship, and there my honest-hearted friend dismally composed his letter of confession, letting me know that he had been untrue to friendship, and had proposed to Janet Ilchester, and interchanged vows with her. He begged my forgiveness, but he did love her so!—he hoped I would not mind. I sent him a reproachful answer; I never cared for him more warmly than when I saw the letter shoot the slope of the postoffice mouth. Aunt Dorothy undertook to communicate assurances of my undying affection for him. As for Janet—Temple's letter, in which he spoke of her avowed preference for Oriental presents, and declared his intention of accumulating them on his voyages, was a harpoon in her side. By means of it I worried and terrified her until she was glad to have it all out before the squire. What did he do? He said that Margery, her mother, was niggardly; a girl wanted presents, and I did not act up to my duty; I ought to buy Turkey and Tunis to please her, if she had a mind for them.

The further she was flattered the faster she cried; she had the face of an old setter with these hideous tears. The squire promised her fifty pounds per annum in quarterly payments, that she might buy what presents she liked, and so tie herself to constancy. He said aside to me, as if he had a knowledge of the sex—'Young ladies must have lots of knickknacks, or their eyes 'll be caught right and left, remember that.' I should have been delighted to see her caught. She talked of love in a ludicrous second-hand way, sending me into fits of disgusted laughter. On other occasions her lips were not hypocritical, and her figure anything but awkward. She was a bold, plump girl, fond of male society. Heriot enraptured her. I believed at the time she would have appointed a year to marry him in, had he put the question. But too many women were in love with Heriot. He and I met Kiomi on the road to the race-course on the Southdowns; the prettiest racecourse in England, shut against gipsies. A bare-footed swarthy girl ran beside our carriage and tossed us flowers. He and a friend of his, young Lord Destrier, son of the Marquis of Edbury, who knew my father well, talked and laughed with her, and thought her so very handsome that I likewise began to stare, and I suddenly called 'Kiomi!' She bounded back into the hedge. This was our second meeting. It would have been a pleasant one had not Heriot and Destrier pretended all sorts of things about our previous acquaintance. Neither of us, they said, had made a bad choice, but

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why had we separated? She snatched her hand out of mine with a grin of anger like puss in a fury. We had wonderful fun with her. They took her to a great house near the race-course, and there, assisted by one of the young ladies, dressed her in flowing silks, and so passed her through the gate of the enclosure interdicted to bare feet. There they led her to groups of fashionable ladies, and got themselves into pretty scrapes. They said she was an Indian. Heriot lost his wagers and called her a witch. She replied, 'You'll find I'm one, young man,' and that was the only true thing she spoke of the days to come. Owing to the hubbub around the two who were guilty of this unmeasured joke upon consequential ladies, I had to conduct her to the gate. Instantly, and without a good-bye, she scrambled up her skirts and ran at strides across the road and through the wood, out of sight. She won her dress and a piece of jewelry.

With Heriot I went on a sad expedition, the same I had set out upon with Temple. This time I saw my father behind those high red walls, once so mysterious and terrible to me. Heriot made light of prisons for debt. He insisted, for my consolation, that they had but a temporary dishonourable signification; very estimable gentlemen, as well as scamps, inhabited them, he said. The impression produced by my visit—the feasting among ruined men who believed in good luck the more the lower they fell from it, and their fearful admiration of my imprisoned father —was as if I had drunk a stupefying liquor. I was unable clearly to reflect on it. Daily afterwards, until I released him, I made journeys to usurers to get a loan on the faith of the reversion of my mother's estate. Heriot, like the real friend he was, helped me with his name to the bond. When my father stood free, I had the proudest heart alive; and as soon as we had parted, the most amazed. For a long while, for years, the thought of him was haunted by racketballs and bearded men in their shirtsleeves; a scene sickening to one's pride. Yet it had grown impossible for me to think of him without pride. I delighted to hear him. We were happy when we were together. And, moreover, he swore to me on his honour, in Mrs. Waddy's presence, that he and the constable would henceforth keep an even pace. His exuberant cheerfulness and charming playfulness were always fascinating. His visions of our glorious future enchained me. How it was that something precious had gone out of my life, I could not comprehend.

Julia Rippenger's marriage with Captain Bulsted was, an agreeable distraction. Unfortunately for my peace of mind, she went to the altar poignantly pale. My aunt Dorothy settled the match. She had schemed it, her silence and half-downcast look seemed to confess, for the sake of her own repose, but neither to her nor to others did that come of it. I wrote a plain warning of the approaching catastrophe to Heriot, and received his reply after it was over, to this effect:

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'In my regiment we have a tolerable knowledge of women. They like change, old Richie, and we must be content to let them take their twenty shillings for a sovereign. I myself prefer the Navy to the Army; I have no right to complain. Once she swore one thing, now she has sworn another. We will hope the lady will stick to her choice, and not seek smaller change. "I could not forgive coppers"; that 's quoting your dad. I have no wish to see the uxorious object, though you praise him. His habit of falling under the table is middling old-fashioned; but she may like him the better, or she may cure him. Whatever she is as a woman, she was a very nice girl to enliven the atmosphere of the switch. I sometimes look at a portrait I have of J. R., which, I fancy, Mrs. William Bulsted has no right to demand of me; but supposing her husband thinks he has, why then I must consult my brother officers. We want a war, old Richie, and I wish you were sitting at our mess, and not mooning about girls and women.'

I presumed from this that Heriot's passion for Julia was extinct. Aunt Dorothy disapproved of his tone, which I thought admirably philosophical and coxcombi-cally imitable, an expression of the sort of thing I should feel on hearing of Janet Ilchester's nuptials.

The daring and success of that foreign adventure of mine had, with the aid of Colonel and Clara Goodwin, convinced the squire of the folly of standing between me and him I loved. It was considered the best sign possible that he should take me down on an inspection of his various estates and his great coal-mine, and introduce me as the heir who would soon relieve him of the task.

Perhaps he thought the smell of wealth a promising cure for such fits of insubordination as I had exhibited. My occasional absences on my own account were winked at. On my return the squire was sour and snappish, I cheerful and complaisant; I grew cold, and he solicitous; he would drink my health with a challenge to heartiness, and I drank to him heartily and he relapsed to a fit of sulks, informing me, that in his time young men knew when they were well off, and asking me whether I was up to any young men's villanies, had any concealed debts perchance, because, if so—Oh! he knew the ways of youngsters, especially when they fell into bad hands: the list of bad titles rumbled on in an underbreath like cowardly thunder:—well, to cut the matter short, because, if so, his cheque-book was at my service; didn't I know that, eh? Not being immediately distressed by debt, I did not exhibit the gush of gratitude, and my sedate 'Thank you, sir,' confused his appeal for some sentimental show of affection.

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I am sure the poor old man suffered pangs of jealousy; I could even at times see into his breast and pity him. He wanted little more than to be managed; but a youth when he perceives absurdity in opposition to him chafes at it as much as if he were unaware that it is laughable. Had the squire talked to me in those days seriously and fairly of my father's character, I should have abandoned my system of defence to plead for him as before a judge. By that time I had gained the knowledge that my father was totally of a different construction from other men. I wished the squire to own simply to his loveable nature. I could have told him women did. Without citing my dear aunt Dorothy, or so humble a creature as the devoted Mrs. Waddy, he had sincere friends among women, who esteemed him, and were staunch adherents to his cause; and if the widow of the City knight, Lady Sampleman, aimed openly at being something more, she was not the less his friend. Nor was it only his powerful animation, generosity, and grace that won them.

There occurred when I was a little past twenty, already much in his confidence, one of those strange crucial events which try a man publicly, and bring out whatever can be said for and against him. A young Welsh heiress fell in love with him. She was, I think, seven or eight months younger than myself, a handsome, intelligent, high-spirited girl, rather wanting in polish, and perhaps in the protecting sense of decorum. She was well-born, of course—she was Welsh. She was really well-bred too, though somewhat brusque. The young lady fell hopelessly in love with my father at Bath. She gave out that he was not to be for one moment accused of having encouraged her by secret addresses. It was her unsolicited avowal—thought by my aunt Dorothy immodest, not by me—that she preferred him to all living men. Her name was Anna Penrhys. The squire one morning received a letter from her family, requesting him to furnish them with information as to the antecedents of a gentleman calling himself Augustus Fitz-George Frederick William Richmond Guelph Roy, for purposes which would, they assured him, warrant the inquiry. He was for throwing the letter aside, shouting that he thanked his God he was unacquainted with anybody on earth with such an infernal list of names as that. Roy! Who knew anything of Roy?

'It happens to be my father's present name,' said I.

'It sounds to me like the name of one of those blackguard adventurers who creep into families to catch the fools,' pursued the squire, not hearing me with his eyes.

'The letter at least must be answered,' my aunt Dorothy said.

'It shall be answered!' the squire worked himself up to roar. He wrote a reply, the contents of which I could guess at from my aunt's refusal to let me be present at the discussion of it. The letter despatched was written by her, with his signature. Her eyes glittered for a whole day.

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Then came a statement of the young lady's case from Bath.

'Look at that! look at that!' cried the squire, and went on, 'Look at that!' in a muffled way. There was a touch of dignity in his unforced anger.

My aunt winced displeasingly to my sight: 'I see nothing to astonish one.'

'Nothing to astonish one !' The squire set his mouth in imitation of her.

'You see nothing to astonish one? Well, ma'am, when a man grows old enough to be a grandfather, I do see something astonishing in a child of nineteen—by George! it's out o' nature. But you women like monstrosities. Oh! I understand. Here's an heiress to fifteen thousand a year. It's not astonishing if every ruined gambler and scapegrace in the kingdom's hunting her hot! no, no! that's not astonishing. I suppose she has her money in a coal mine.'

The squire had some of his in a coal-mine; my mother once had; it was the delivery of a blow at my father, signifying that he had the scent for this description of wealth. I left the room. The squire then affected that my presence had constrained him, by bellowing out epithets easy for me to hear in the hall and out on the terrace. He vowed by solemn oath he was determined to save this girl from ruin. My aunt's speech was brief.

I was summoned to Bath by my father in a curious peremptory tone implying the utmost urgent need of me.

I handed the letter to the squire at breakfast, saying, 'You must spare me for a week or so, sir.'

He spread the letter flat with his knife, and turned it over with his fork.

'Harry,' said he, half-kindly, and choking, 'you're better out of it.'

'I'm the best friend he could have by him, sir.'

'You're the best tool he could have handy, for you're a gentleman.'

'I hope I shan't offend you, grandfather, but I must go.'

'Don't you see, Harry Richmond, you're in for an infernal marriage ceremony there!'

'The young lady is not of age,' interposed my aunt.

'Eh? An infernal elopement, then. It's clear the girl's mad-head's cracked as a cocoa-nut bowled by a monkey, brains nowhere. Harry, you're not a greenhorn; you don't suspect you're called down there to stop it, do you? You jump plump into a furious lot of



the girl's relatives; you might as well take a header into a leech-pond. Come! you're a man; think for yourself. Don't have this affair on your conscience, boy. I tell you, Harry Richmond, I'm against your going. You go against my will; you offend me, sir; you drag my name and blood into the mire. She's Welsh, is she? Those Welsh are addle-pated, every one. Poor girl!

He threw a horrible tremour into his accent of pity.

My aunt expressed her view mildly, that I was sent for to help cure the young lady of her delusion.

'And take her himself!' cried the squire. 'Harry, you wouldn't go and do that? Why, the law, man, the law—the whole country 'd be up about it. You'll be stuck in a coloured caricature!'

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He was really alarmed lest this should be one of the consequences of my going, and described some of the scourging caricatures of his day with an intense appreciation of their awfulness as engines of the moral sense of the public. I went nevertheless.

CHAPTER XXI

A PROMENADE IN BATH

I found my father at his hotel, sitting with his friend Jorian DeWitt, whom I had met once before, and thought clever. He was an ex-captain of dragoons, a martyr to gout, and addicted to Burgundy, which necessitated his resorting to the waters, causing him, as he said, between his appetites and the penance he paid for them, to lead the life of a pendulum. My father was in a tempered gay mood, examining a couple of the county newspapers. One abused him virulently; he was supported by the other. After embracing me, he desired me to listen while he read out opposing sentences from the columns of these eminent journals:

'The person calling himself "Roy," whose monstrously absurd pretensions are supposed to be embodied in this self-dubbed surname . . .'

'—The celebrated and courtly Mr. Richmond Roy, known no less by the fascination of his manners than by his romantic history . . .'

'—has very soon succeeded in making himself the talk of the town . . .'

'—has latterly become the theme of our tea-tables . . .'

'—which is always the adventurer's privilege . . .'

'—through no fault of his own . . .'

'—That we may throw light on the blushing aspirations of a crow-sconced Cupid, it will be as well to recall the antecedents of this (if no worse) preposterous imitation buck of the old school . . .'

'—Suffice it, without seeking to draw the veil from those affecting chapters of his earlier career which kindled for him the enthusiastic sympathy of all classes of his countrymen, that he is not yet free from a tender form of persecution . . .'

'—We think we are justified in entitling him the Perkin Warbeck of society . . .'

'—Reference might be made to mythological heroes . . .'

Hereat I cried out mercy.

Captain DeWitt (stretched nursing a leg) removed his silk handkerchief from his face to murmur,

'The bass stedfastly drowns the treble, if this is meant for harmony.'

My father rang up the landlord, and said to him,

'The choicest of your cellar at dinner to-day, Mr. Lumley; and, mind you, I am your guest, and I exercise my right of compelling you to sit down with us and assist in consuming a doubtful quality of wine. We dine four. Lay for five, if your conscience is bad, and I excuse you.'

The man smirked. He ventured to say he had never been so tempted to supply an inferior article.

My father smiled on him.

'You invite our editorial advocate?' said Captain DeWitt.

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'Our adversary,' said my father.

I protested I would not sit at table with him. But he assured me he believed his advocate and his adversary to be one and the same, and referred me to the collated sentences.

'The man must earn his bread, Richie, boy! To tell truth, it is the advocate I wish to rebuke, and to praise the adversary. It will confound him.'

'It does me,' said DeWitt.

'You perceive, Jorian, a policy in dining these men of the Press now and occasionally, considering their growing power, do you not?'

'Ay, ay! it's a great gossiping machine, mon Roy. I prefer to let it spout.'

'I crave your permission to invite him in complimentary terms, cousin Jorian. He is in the town; remember, it is for the good of the nation that he and his like should have the opportunity of studying good society. As to myself personally, I give him carte blanche to fire his shots at me.'

Near the fashionable hour of the afternoon my father took my arm, Captain DeWitt a stick, and we walked into the throng and buzz.

'Whenever you are, to quote our advocate, the theme of tea-tables, Richie,' said my father, 'walk through the crowd: it will wash you. It is doing us the honour to observe us. We in turn discover an interest in its general countenance.'

He was received, as we passed, with much staring; here and there a lifting of hats, and some blunt nodding that incensed me, but he, feeling me bristle, squeezed my hand and talked of the scene, and ever and anon gathered a line of heads and shed an indulgent bow along them-; so on to the Casino. Not once did he offend my taste and make my acute sense of self-respect shiver by appearing grateful for a recognition, or anxious to court it, though the curtest salute met his acknowledgement.

The interior of the Casino seemed more hostile. I remarked it to him. 'A trifle more eye-glassy,' he murmured. He was quite at his easy there.

'We walk up and down, my son,' he said, in answer to a question of mine, 'because there are very few who can; even walking is an art; and if nobody does, the place is dull.'

'The place is pretty well supplied with newspapers,' said Captain DeWitt.

'And dowagers, friend Jorian. They are cousins. 'Tis the fashion to have our tattle done by machinery. They have their opportunity to compare the portrait with the original. Come, invent some scandal for us; let us make this place our social Exchange. I warrant a good bold piece of invention will fit them, too, some of them. Madam,'—my father bowed low to the beckoning of a fan, 'I trust your ladyship did not chance to overhear that last remark I made?'

The lady replied: 'I should have shut my eyes if I had. I called you to tell me, who is the young man?'

'For twenty years I have lived in the proud belief that he is my son!'

'I would not disturb it for the world.' She did me the honour to inspect me from the lowest waistcoat button to the eyebrows. 'Bring him to me to-night. Captain DeWitt, you have forsaken my whist-tables.'

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'Purely temporary fits of unworthiness, my lady.'

'In English, gout?'

'Not gout in the conscience, I trust,' said my father.

'Oh! that's curable,' laughed the captain.

'You men of repartee would be nothing without your wickedness,' the lady observed.

'Man was supposed to be incomplete—' Captain DeWitt affected a murmur.

She nodded 'Yes, yes,' and lifted eyes on my father. 'So you have not given up going to church?'

He bent and spoke low.

She humphed her lips. 'Very well, I will see. It must be a night in the early part of the week after next, then: I really don't know why I should serve you; but I like your courage.'

'I cannot consent to accept your ladyship's favour on account of one single virtue,' said he, drooping.

She waved him to move forward.

During this frothy dialogue, I could see that the ear of the assembly had been caught by the sound of it.

'That,' my father informed me, 'is the great Lady Wilts. Now you will notice a curious thing. Lady Wilts is not so old but that, as our Jorian here says of her, she is marriageable. Hence, Richie, she is a queen to make the masculine knee knock the ground. I fear the same is not to be said of her rival, Lady Denewdney, whom our good Jorian compares to an antiquated fledgeling emerging with effort from a nest of ill construction and worse cement. She is rich, she is sharp, she uses her quill; she is emphatically not marriageable. Bath might still accept her as a rival queen, only she is always behindhand in seizing an occasion. Now you will catch sight of her fan working in a minute. She is envious and imitative. It would be undoubtedly better policy on her part to continue to cut me: she cannot, she is beginning to rustle like December's oaks. If Lady Wilts has me, why, she must. We refrain from noticing her until we have turned twice. Ay, Richie, there is this use in adversity; it teaches one to play sword and target with etiquette and retenue better than any crowned king in Europe. For me now to cross to her summons immediately would be a gross breach of homage to Lady Wilts, who was inspired to be the first to break through the fence of scandal environing me. But I must still show that I am independent. These people must not suppose that I have

to cling to a party. Let them take sides; I am on fair terms with both the rivals. I show just such a nuance of a distinction in my treatment of them just such—enough, I mean, to make the flattered one warm to me, and t' other be jealous of her. Ay, Richie, these things are trivial things beyond the grave; but here are we, my boy; and, by the way, I suspect the great campaign of my life is opening.'

Captain DeWitt said that if so it would be the tenth, to his certain knowledge.

'Not great campaign!' my father insisted: 'mere skirmishes before this.'

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They conversed in humorous undertones, each in turn seeming to turn over the earth of some amusing reminiscence, so rapt, that as far as regarded their perception of it, the assembly might have been nowhere. Perhaps, consequently, they became observed with all but undivided attention. My father's hand was on my shoulder, his head toward Captain DeWitt; instead of subduing his voice, he gave it a moderate pitch, at which it was not intrusive, and was musical, to my ear charming, especially when he continued talking through his soft laughter, like a hunter that would in good humour press for his game through links of water-nymphs.

Lady Denewdney's fan took to beating time meditatively. Two or three times she kept it elevated, and in vain: the flow of their interchangeing speech was uninterrupted. At last my father bowed to her from a distance. She signalled: his eyelids pleaded short sight, awakening to the apprehension of a pleasant fact: the fan tapped, and he halted his march, leaning scarce perceptibly in her direction. The fan showed distress. Thereupon, his voice subsided in his conversation, with a concluding flash of animation across his features, like a brook that comes to the leap on a descent, and he left us.

Captain DeWitt and I were led by a common attraction to the portico, the truth being that we neither of us could pace easily nor talk with perfect abandonment under eye-fire any longer.

'Look,' said he to me, pointing at the equipages and equestrians: 'you'll see a sight like this in dozens—dozens of our cities and towns! The wealth of this country is frightful.'

My reply, addressed at the same time mentally to Temple at sea, was:

'Well, as long as we have the handsomest women, I don't care.'

Captain DeWitt was not so sure that we had. The Provencal women, the women of a part of South Germany, and certain favoured spots of Italy, might challenge us, he thought. This was a point I could argue on, or, I should rather say, take up the cudgels, for I deemed such opinions treason to one's country and an outrage to common sense, and I embarked in controversy with the single-minded intention of knocking down the man who held them.

He accepted his thrashing complacently.

'Now here comes a young lady on horseback,' he said; 'do you spy her? dark hair, thick eyebrows, rides well, followed by a groom. Is she a Beauty?'

In the heat of patriotism I declared she was handsome, and repeated it, though I experienced a twinge of remorse, like what I should have felt had I given Minerva the apple instead of Venus.

‘Oh!’ he commented, and stepped down to the road to meet her, beginning, in my hearing, ‘I am the bearer of a compliment—’ Her thick eyebrows stood in a knot, then she glanced at me and hung pensive. She had not to wait a minute before my father came to her side.

‘I knew you would face them,’ she said.

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He threw back his head like a swimmer tossing spray from his locks.

'You have read the paper?' he asked.

'You have horsewhipped the writer?' she rejoined.

'Oh! the poor penster!'

'Nay, we can't pretend to pity him!'

'Could we condescend to offer him satisfaction?'

'Would he dare to demand it?'

'We will lay the case before Lady Wilts to-night.'

'You are there to-night?'

'At Lady Denewdney's to-morrow night—if I may indulge a hope?'

'Both? Oh! bravo, bravo! Tell me nothing more just now. How did you manage it? I must have a gallop. Yes, I shall be at both, be sure of that.'

My father introduced me.

'Let me present to your notice my son, Harry Lepel Richmond, Miss Penrhys.'

She touched my fingers, and nodded at me; speaking to him:

'He has a boy's taste: I hear he esteems me moderately well-favoured.'

'An inherited error certain to increase with age!'

'Now you have started me!' she exclaimed, and lashed the flanks of her horse.

We had evidently been enacting a part deeply interesting to the population of Bath, for the heads of all the strolling groups were bent on us; and when Miss Penrhys cantered away, down dropped eyeglasses, and the promenade returned to activity. I fancied I perceived that my father was greeted more cordially on his way back to the hotel.

'You do well, Richie,' he observed, 'in preserving your composure until you have something to say. Wait for your opening; it will come, and the right word will come with it. The main things are to be able to stand well, walk well, and look with an eye at home in its socket: I put you my hand on any man or woman born of high blood.—Not a brazen eye!—of the two extremes, I prefer the beaten spaniel sort.—Blindfold me, but I put you my hand on them. As to repartee, you must have it. Wait for that, too. Do not,'



he groaned, 'do not force it! Bless my soul, what is there in the world so bad?' And rising to the upper notes of his groan: 'Ignorance, density, total imbecility, is better; I would rather any day of my life sit and carve for guests—the grossest of human trials—a detestable dinner, than be doomed to hear some wretched fellow—and you hear the old as well as the young—excruciate feelings which, where they exist, cannot but be exquisitely delicate. Goodness gracious me! to see the man pumping up his wit! For me, my visage is of an unalterable gravity whenever I am present at one of these exhibitions. I care not if I offend. Let them say I wish to revolutionize society—I declare to you, Richie boy, delightful to my heart though I find your keen stroke of repartee, still your fellow who takes the thrust gracefully, knows when he's traversed by a master-stroke, and yields sign of it, instead of plunging like a spitted buffalo and asking us to admire his agility—you follow me?—I say I hold that man—and I delight vastly in ready wit; it is the wine of language!—I regard that man as the superior being. True, he is not so entertaining.'

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My father pressed on my arm to intimate, with a cavernous significance of eyebrow, that Captain DeWitt had the gift of repartee in perfection.

'Jorian,' said he, 'will you wager our editor declines to dine with us?'

The answer struck me as only passable. I think it was:

'When rats smell death in toasted cheese.'

Captain DeWitt sprang up the staircase of our hotel to his bedroom.

'I should not have forced him,' my father mused. 'Jorian DeWitt has at times brilliant genius, Richie—in the way of rejoinders, I mean. This is his happy moment—his one hour's dressing for dinner. I have watched him; he most thoroughly enjoys it! I am myself a quick or slow dresser, as the case may be. But to watch Jorian you cannot help entering into his enjoyment of it. He will have his window with a view of the sunset; there is his fire, his warmed linen, and his shirt-studs; his bath, his choice of a dozen things he will or will not wear; the landlord's or host's menu is up against the looking-glass, and the extremely handsome miniature likeness of his wife, who is in the madhouse, by a celebrated painter, I forget his name. Jorian calls this, new birth—you catch his idea? He throws off the old and is on with the new with a highly hopeful anticipation. His valet is a scoundrel, but never fails in extracting the menu from the cook, wherever he may be, and, in fine, is too attentive to the hour's devotion to be discarded! Poor Jorian. I know no man I pity so much.'

I conceived him, I confessed, hardly pitiable, though not enviable.

'He has but six hundred a year, and a passion for Burgundy,' said my father.

We were four at table. The editor came, and his timidity soon wore off in the warmth of hospitality. He appeared a kind exciteable little man, glad of his dinner from the first, and in due time proud of his entertainer. His response to the toast of the Fourth Estate was an apology for its behaviour to my father. He regretted it; he regretted it. A vinous speech.

My father heard him out. Addressing him subsequently,

'I would not interrupt you in the delivery of your sentiments,' he said. 'I must, however, man to man, candidly tell you I should have wished to arrest your expressions of regret. They convey to my mind an idea, that on receipt of my letter of invitation, you attributed to me a design to corrupt you. Protest nothing, I beg. Editors are human, after all. Now, my object is, that as you write of me, you should have some knowledge of me; and I naturally am interested in one who does me so much honour. The facts of my life are at your disposal for publication and comment. Simply, I entreat you, say this one thing of me: I seek for justice, but I never complain of my fortunes. Providence

decides:—that might be the motto engraven on my heart. Nay, I may risk declaring it is! In the end I shall be righted. Meanwhile you contribute to my happiness by favouring me with your society.'

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'Ah, sir,' replied the little man, 'were all our great people like you! In the country—the provinces—they treat the representatives of the Fourth Estate as the squires a couple of generations back used to treat the parsons.'

'What! Have you got a place at their tables?' inquired Captain DeWitt.

'No, I cannot say that—not even below the salt. Mr. Richmond—Mr. Roy, you may not be aware of it: I am the proprietor of the opposition journals in this county. I tell you in confidence, one by itself would not pay; and I am a printer, sir, and it is on my conscience to tell you I have, in the course of business, been compelled this very morning to receive orders for the printing of various squibs and, I much fear, scurrilous things.'

My father pacified him.

'You will do your duty to your family, Mr. Hickson.'

Deeply moved, the little man pulled out proof-sheets and slips.

'Even now, at the eleventh hour,' he urged, 'there is time to correct any glaring falsehoods, insults, what not!'

My father accepted the copy of proofs.

'Not a word,—not a line! You spoke of the eleventh hour, Mr. Hickson. If we are at all near the eleventh, I must be on my way to make my bow to Lady Wilts; or is it Lady Denewdney's to-night? No, to-morrow night.'

A light of satisfaction came over Mr. Hickson's face at the mention of my father's visiting both these sovereign ladies.

As soon as we were rid of him, Captain DeWitt exclaimed,

'If that's the Fourth Estate, what's the Realm?'

'The Estate,' pleaded my father, 'is here in its infancy—on all fours—'

'Prehensile! Egad, it has the vices of the other three besides its own. Do you mean that by putting it on all fours?'

'Jorian, I have noticed that when you are malignant you are not witty. We have to thank the man for not subjecting us to a pledge of secresy. My Lady Wilts will find the proofs amusing. And mark, I do not examine their contents before submitting them to her inspection. You will testify to the fact.'

I was unaware that my father played a master-stroke in handing these proof-sheets publicly to Lady Wilts for her perusal. The incident of the evening was the display of her character shown by Miss Penrhys in positively declining to quit the house until she likewise had cast her eye on them. One of her aunts wept. Their carriage was kept waiting an hour.

'You ask too much of me: I cannot turn her out', Lady Wilts said to her uncle. And aside to my father, 'You will have to marry her.'

'In heaven's name keep me from marriage, my lady!' I heard him reply.

There was sincerity in his tone when he said that.

CHAPTER XXII

CONCLUSION OF THE BATH EPISODE

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The friends of Miss Penrhys were ill advised in trying to cry down a man like my father. Active persecution was the breath of life to him. When untroubled he was apt to let both his ambition and his dignity slumber. The squibs and scandal set afloat concerning him armed his wit, nerved his temper, touched him with the spirit of enterprise; he became a new creature. I lost sight of certain characteristics which I had begun to ponder over critically. I believed with all my heart that circumstances were blameable for much that did not quite please me. Upon the question of his magnanimity, as well as of his courage, there could not be two opinions. He would neither retort nor defend himself. I perceived some grandeur in his conduct, without, however, appreciating it cordially, as I did a refinement of discretion about him that kept him from brushing good taste while launched in ostentatious displays. He had a fine tact and a keen intuition. He may have thought it necessary to throw a little dust in my eyes; but I doubt his having done it, for he had only, as he knew, to make me jealous to blind me to his faults utterly, and he refrained.

In his allusions to the young lady he was apologetic, affectionate; one might have fancied oneself listening to a gracious judge who had well weighed her case, and exculpated her from other excesses than that of a generous folly. Jorian DeWitt, a competent critic, pronounced his behaviour consummate at all points. For my behoof, he hinted antecedent reverses to the picture: meditating upon which, I traced them to the fatal want of money, and that I might be able to fortify him in case of need, I took my own counsel, and wrote to my aunt for the loan of as large a sum as she could afford to send. Her eagerness for news of our doings was insatiable. 'You do not describe her,' she replied, not naming Miss Penrhys; and again, 'I can form no image of her. Your accounts of her are confusing. Tell me earnestly, do you like her? She must be very wilful, but is she really nice? I want to know how she appears to my Harry's mind.'

My father borrowed these letters, and returning them to me, said, 'A good soul! the best of women! There—there is a treasure lost!' His forehead was clouded in speaking. He recommended me to assure my aunt that she would never have to take a family interest in Miss Penrhys. But this was not deemed perfectly satisfactory at Riversley. My aunt wrote: 'Am I to understand that you, Harry, raise objections to her? Think first whether she is in herself objectionable. She is rich, she may be prudent, she may be a forethoughtful person. She may not be able to support a bitter shock of grief. She may be one who can help. She may not be one whose heart will bear it. Put your own feelings aside, my dearest. Our duties cannot ever be clear to us until we do. It is possible for headstrong wilfulness and secret tenderness to go together. Think whether she is capable of sacrifice before you compel her to it. Do not inflict misery wantonly. One would like to see her. Harry, I brood on your future; that is why I seem to you preternaturally anxious about you.'

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She seemed to me preternaturally anxious about Miss Penrhys.

My father listened in silence to my flippant satire on women's letters.

He answered after a pause,

'Our Jorian says that women's letters must be read like anagrams. To put it familiarly, they are like a child's field of hop-scotch. You may have noticed the urchins at their game: a bit of tile, and a variety of compartments to pass it through to the base, hopping. Or no, Richie, pooh! 'tis an unworthy comparison, this hopscotch. I mean, laddie, they write in zigzags; and so will you when your heart trumpets in your ear. Tell her, tell that dear noble good woman—say, we are happy, you and I, and alone, and shall be; and do me the favour—she loves you, my son— address her sometimes—she has been it—call her "mother"; she will like it she deserves—nothing shall supplant her!'

He lost his voice.

She sent me three hundred pounds; she must have supposed the occasion pressing. Thus fortified against paternal improvidence, I expended a hundred in the purchase of a horse, and staked the remainder on him in a match, and was beaten. Disgusted with the horse, I sold him for half his purchase-money, and with that sum paid a bill to maintain my father's credit in the town. Figuratively speaking, I looked at my hands as astonished as I had been when the poor little rascal in the street snatched my cake, and gave me the vision of him gorging it in the flurried alley of the London crowd.

'Money goes,' I remarked.

'That is the general experience of the nature of money,' said my father freshly; 'but nevertheless you will be surprised to find how extraordinarily few are the people to make allowance for particular cases. It plays the trick with everybody, and almost nobody lets it stand as a plea for the individual. Here is Jorian, and you, my son, and perhaps your aunt Dorothy, and upon my word, I think I have numbered all I know—or, ay, Sukey Sampleman, I should not omit her in an honourable list—and that makes positively all I know who would commiserate a man touched on the shoulder by a sheriff's officer—not that such an indignity is any longer done to me.'

'I hope we have seen the last of Shylock's great-grandnephew,' said I emphatically.

'Merely to give you the instance, Richie. Ay! I hope so, I hope so ! But it is the nature of money that you never can tell if the boarding's sound, once be dependent upon it. But this is talk for tradesmen.' Thinking it so myself, I had not attempted to discover the source of my father's income. Such as it was, it was paid half-yearly, and spent within a month of the receipt, for the most signal proof possible of its shameful insufficiency. Thus ten months of the year at least he lived protesting, and many with him,



compulsorily. For two months he was a brilliant man. I penetrated his mystery enough to abstain from questioning him, and enough to determine that on my coming of age he should cease to be a pensioner, petitioner, and adventurer. He aimed at a manifest absurdity.

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In the meantime, after the lesson I had received as to the nature of money, I saw with some alarm my father preparing to dig a great pit for it. He had no doubt performed wonders. Despite of scandal and tattle, and the deadly report of a penniless fortune-hunter having fascinated the young heiress, he commanded an entrance to the receptions of both the rival ladies dominant. These ladies, Lady Wilts and Lady Denewdney, who moved each in her select half-circle, and could heretofore be induced by none to meet in a common centre, had pledged themselves to honour with their presence a ball he proposed to give to the choice world here assembled on a certain illuminated day of the calendar.

'So I have now possession of Bath, Richie,' said he, twinkling to propitiate me, lest I should suspect him of valuing his achievements highly. He had, he continued, promised Hickson of the Fourth Estate, that he would, before leaving the place, do his utmost to revive the ancient glories of Bath: Bath had once set the fashion to the kingdom; why not again? I might have asked him, why at all, or why at his expense; but his lead was irresistible. Captain DeWitt and his valet, and I, and a score of ladies, scores of tradesmen, were rushing, reluctant or not, on a torrent. My part was to show that I was an athlete, and primarily that I could fence and shoot. 'It will do no harm to let it be known,' said DeWitt. He sat writing letters incessantly. My father made the tour of his fair stewardesses from noon to three, after receiving in audience his jewellers, linen-drappers, carpenters, confectioners, from nine in the morning till twelve. At three o'clock business ceased. Workmen then applying to him for instructions were despatched to the bar of the hotel, bearing the recommendation to the barmaid not to supply them refreshment if they had ever in their lives been seen drunk. At four he dressed for afternoon parade. Nor could his enemy have said that he was not the chief voice and eye along his line of march. His tall full figure maintained a superior air without insolence, and there was a leaping beam in his large blue eyes, together with the signification of movement coming to his kindly lips, such as hardly ever failed to waken smiles of greeting. People smiled and bowed, and forgot their curiosity, forgot even to be critical, while he was in sight. I can say this, for I was acutely critical of their bearing; the atmosphere of the place was never perfectly pleasing to me.

My attitude of watchful reserve, and my reputation as the heir of immense wealth, tended possibly to constrain a certain number of the inimical party to be ostensibly civil. Lady Wilts, who did me the honour to patronize me almost warmly, complimented me on my manner of backing him, as if I were the hero; but I felt his peculiar charm; she partly admitted it, making a whimsical mouth, saying, in allusion to Miss Penrhys, 'I, you know, am past twenty. At twenty forty is charming; at forty twenty.'

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Where I served him perhaps was in showing my resolution to protect him: he had been insulted before my arrival. The male relatives of Miss Penrhys did not repeat the insult; they went to Lady Wilts and groaned over their hard luck in not having the option of fighting me. I was, in her phrase, a new piece on the board, and checked them. Thus, if they provoked a challenge from me, they brought the destructive odour of powder about the headstrong creature's name. I was therefore of use to him so far. I leaned indolently across the rails of the promenade while she bent and chattered in his ear, and her attendant cousin and cavalier chewed vexation in the form of a young mustachio's curl. His horse fretted; he murmured deep notes, and his look was savage; but he was bound to wait on her, and she would not go until it suited her pleasure. She introduced him to me—as if conversation could be carried on between two young men feeling themselves simply pieces on the board, one giving check, and the other chafing under it! I need not say that I disliked my situation. It was worse when my father took to bowing to her from a distance, unobservant of her hand's prompt pull at the reins as soon as she saw him. Lady Wilts had assumed the right of a woman still possessing attractions to exert her influence with him on behalf of the family, for I had done my best to convince her that he entertained no serious thought of marrying, and decidedly would not marry without my approval. He acted on her advice to discourage the wilful girl.

'How is it I am so hateful to you?' Miss Penrhys accosted me abruptly. I fancied she must have gone mad, and an interrogative frown was my sole answer.

'Oh! I hear that you pronounce me everywhere unendurable,' she continued. 'You are young, and you misjudge me in some way, and I should be glad if you knew me better. By-and-by, in Wales.—Are you fond of mountain scenery? We might be good friends; my temper is not bad—at least, I hope not. Heaven knows what one's relatives think of one. Will you visit us? I hear you have promised your confidante, Lady Wilts.'

At a dancing party where we met, she was thrown on my hands by her ungovernable vehemence, and I, as I had told Lady Wilts, not being able to understand the liking of twenty for forty (fifty would have been nearer the actual mark, or sixty), offered her no lively sympathy. I believe she had requested my father to pay public court to her. If Captain DeWitt was to be trusted, she desired him to dance, and dance with her exclusively, and so confirm and defy the tattle of the town; but my father hovered between the dowagers. She in consequence declined to dance, which was the next worse thing she could do. An aunt, a miserable woman, was on her left; on her right she contrived, too frequently for my peace of mind, to reserve a vacant place for me, and she eyed me intently across the room, under her persistent brows, until perforce

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I was drawn to her side. I had to listen to a repetition of sharp queries and replies, and affect a flattered gaiety, feeling myself most uncomfortably, as Captain DeWitt (who watched us) said, Chip the son of Block the father. By fixing the son beside her, she defeated the father's scheme of coldness, and made it appear a concerted piece of policy. Even I saw that. I saw more than I grasped. Love for my father was to my mind a natural thing, a proof of taste and goodness; women might love him; but the love of a young girl with the morning's mystery about her! and for my progenitor!—a girl (as I reflected in the midst of my interjections) well-built, clear-eyed, animated, clever, with soft white hands and pretty feet; how could it be? She was sombre as a sunken fire until he at last came round to her, and then her sudden vivacity was surprising.

Affairs were no further advanced when I had to obey the squire's commands and return to Riversley, missing the night of the grand ball with no profound regret, except for my father's sake. He wrote soon after one of his characteristic letters, to tell me that the ball had, been a success. Immediately upon this announcement, he indulged luxurious reflections, as his manner was:

'To have stirred up the old place and given it something to dream of for the next half century, is a satisfaction, Richie. I have a kindness for Bath. I leave it with its factions reconciled, its tea-tables furnished with inexhaustible supplies of the chief thing necessary, and the persuasion firmly established in my own bosom that it is impossible to revive the past, so we must march with the age. And let me add, all but every one of the bills happily discharged, to please you. Pray, fag at your German. If (as I myself confess to) you have enjoyment of old ways, habits, customs, and ceremonies, look to Court life. It is only in Courts that a man may now air a leg; and there the women are works of Art. If you are deficient in calves (which my boy, thank heaven! will never be charged with) you are there found out, and in fact every deficiency, every qualification, is at once in patent exhibition at a Court. I fancy Parliament for you still, and that is no impediment as a step. Jorian would have you sit and wallow in ease, and buy (by the way, we might think of it) a famous Burgundy vineyard (for an investment), devote the prime of your life to the discovery of a cook, your manhood to perfect the creature's education—so forth; I imagine you are to get five years of ample gratification (a promise hardly to be relied on) in the sere leaf, and so perish. Take poor Jorian for an example of what the absence of ambition brings men to. I treasure Jorian, I hoard the poor fellow, to have him for a lesson to my boy. Witty and shrewd, and a masterly tactician (I wager he would have won his spurs on the field of battle), you see him now living for one hour of the day—absolutely twenty-three hours of the man's life are chained slaves, beasts of burden, to the four-and-twentieth! So, I repeat, fag at your German.

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'Miss Penrhys retires to her native Wales; Jorian and I on to London, to the Continent. Plinlimmon guard us all! I send you our local newspapers. That I cut entrechats is false. It happens to be a thing I could do, and not an Englishman in England except myself; only I did not do it. I did appear in what I was educated to believe was the evening suit of a gentleman, and I cannot perceive the immodesty of showing my leg. A dress that is not indecent, and is becoming to me, and is the dress of my fathers, I wear, and I impose it on the generation of my sex. However, I dined Hickson of the Fourth Estate (Jorian considers him hungry enough to eat up his twentieth before he dies—I forget the wording of the mot), that he might know I was without rancour in the end, as originally I had been without any intention of purchasing his allegiance. He offered me his columns; he wished me luck with the heiress; by his Gods, he swore he worshipped entrechats, and held a silk leg the most admirable work of the manufactures. "Sir, you're a gentleman," says he; "you're a nobleman, sir; you're a prince, you're a star of the first magnitude." Cries Jorian, "Retract that, scum! you see nothing large but what you dare to think neighbours you," and quarrels the inebriate dog. And this is the maker and destroyer of reputations in his day! I study Hickson as a miraculous engine of the very simplest contrivance; he is himself the epitome of a verdict on his period. Next day he disclaimed in his opposition penny sheet the report of the entrechats, and "the spectators laughing consumedly," and sent me (as I had requested him to do) the names of his daughters, to whom I transmit little comforting presents, for if they are nice children such a parent must afflict them.

'Cultivate Lady Wilts. You have made an impression. She puts you forward as a good specimen of our young men. 'Hem! madam.

'But, my dear boy, as I said, we cannot revive the past. I acknowledge it. Bath rebukes my last fit of ambition, and the experience is very well worth the expense. You have a mind, Richie, for discussing outlay, upon which I congratulate you, so long as you do not overlook equivalents. The system of the world is barter varied by robbery. Show that you have something in hand, and you enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that you were not robbed. I pledge you my word to it—I shall not repeat Bath. And mark you, an heiress is never compromised. I am not, I hope, responsible for every creature caught up in my circle of attraction. Believe me, dear boy, I should consult you, and another one, estimable beyond mortal speech! if I had become involved—impossible! No; I am free of all fresh chains, because of the old ones. Years will not be sufficient for us when you and I once begin to talk in earnest, when I open! To resume—so I leave Bath with a light conscience. Mixed with pleasant recollections is the transient regret that you were not a spectator

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of the meeting of the Wilts and Denewdney streams. Jorian compared them to the Rhone and the—I forget the name of the river below Geneva—dirtyish; for there was a transparent difference in the Denewdney style of dress, and did I choose it I could sit and rule those two factions as despotically as Buonaparte his Frenchmen. Ask me what I mean by scaling billows, Richie. I will some day tell you. I have done it all my life, and here I am. But I thank heaven I have a son I love, and I can match him against the best on earth, and henceforward I live for him, to vindicate and right the boy, and place him in his legitimate sphere. From this time I take to looking exclusively forward, and I labour diligently. I have energies.

'Not to boast, darling old son, I tell truth; I am only happy when my heart is beating near you. Here comes the mother in me pumping up. Adieu. Lebe wohl. The German!—the German!—may God in his Barmherzigkeit!—Tell her I never encouraged the girl, have literally nothing to trace a temporary wrinkle on my forehead as regards conscience. I say, may it please Providence to make you a good German scholar by the day of your majority. Hurrah for it! Present my humble warm respects to your aunt Dorothy. I pray to heaven nightly for one of its angels on earth. Kunst, Wissenschaft, Ehre, Liebe. Die Liebe. Quick at the German poets. Frau: Fraulein. I am actually dazzled at the prospect of our future. To be candid, I no longer see to write. Gruss' dich herzlich. From Vienna to you next. Lebe wohl!'

My aunt Dorothy sent a glance at the letter while I was folding it evidently thinking my unwillingness to offer it a sign of bad news or fresh complications. She spoke of Miss Penrhys.

'Oh! that's over,' said I. 'Heiresses soon get consoled.'

She accused me of having picked up a vulgar idea. I maintained that it was my father's.

'It cannot be your father's,' said she softly; and on affirming that he had uttered it and written it, she replied in the same tone, more effective than the ordinary language of conviction, 'He does not think it.'

The rage of a youth to prove himself in the right of an argument was insufficient to make me lay the letter out before other eyes than my own, and I shrank from exposing it to compassionate gentle eyes that would have pleaded similar allowances to mine for the wildness of the style. I should have thanked, but despised the intelligence of one who framed my excuses for my father, just as the squire, by abusing him, would have made me a desperate partisan in a minute. The vitality of the delusion I cherished was therefore partly extinct; not so the love; yet the love of him could no longer shake itself free from oppressive shadows.

Out of his circle of attraction books were my resource.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

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He would neither retort nor defend himself
I laughed louder than was necessary
'Tis the fashion to have our tattle done by machinery