

THE RAILWAY MAN

AND

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HIS CHILDREN

BY

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IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II

London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
AND NEW YORK
1891

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**RICHARD CLAY AND SONS, LIMITED,
LONDON AND BUNGAY.**

THE RAILWAY MAN

AND

HIS CHILDREN

CHAPTER I

"YES, he is rather a dreadful spectacle," said Lady Leighton. "Now, one wonders he likes to exhibit himself about the world, where he once was so well known in another way. There's nothing so strange as human vanity, Mr. Rowland. I think he rather likes to show as a sort of prize example of suffering and misery. It's a distinction in its way. He had the distinction of being one of the handsomest men of his day, and of behaving more badly than almost anybody else, and now he's the most deplorable sufferer—always the first you know, whatever he's at."

"You are a little hard upon him, Lady Leighton."

"Not a bit too hard. I know the man so well. We've always been very good friends——"

"What! Though he behaved more badly than

almost anybody else ?” Rowland said, with a laugh. Evelyn, who, knowing what her friend meant, and still smarting as she was from the previous encounter, felt it almost as an added injury, looked on with the gravest face, feeling herself unable to speak.

“ Well !—you don’t know society as I do. You’ve spent your life in primitive countries. where men fly at each other’s throats when they disapprove of each other. We don’t do that here. We carry on our relations all the same. Sometimes, however, we speak very plainly, I am glad to say. Ned Saumarez knows exactly what I think of him, but he comes to see me as if we were the dearest of friends.”

“ I don’t understand society,” said Rowland, “ and I don’t think I should ever know that part of it. How is anybody to know which you prefer, the good or the bad, if you treat them just the same ? ”

“ Oh, everybody knows what I think of him, including himself,” said Madeline, lightly : “ that’s one of our refinements. And so you are going to have Rose and Eddy to visit you in the country. You are a couple of bold people—with a boy and a girl of your own. Of course there will be fallings in love.”

Rowland laughed again, opening his mouth in simple enjoyment of the joke as he took it. “ I think I can answer for my two,” he said.

“ Oh, you can’t answer for anybody ! ” said Lady Leighton, somewhat sharply. “ Rose is a girl of the period, and scorns that kind of thing—so does

my Mabel, save the mark! They are both going to do all sorts of things as soon as they are out—walk the hospitals! I don't know what absurd projects they have. But Eddy, I warn you, is a *mauvais sujet*, Evelyn. He is like his father. He makes love to everybody. I don't know what age Miss Rowland is——"

"Eighteen," said her father.

Lady Leighton threw up her hands. "His natural prey! And she has been brought up in the country, I suppose, and believes anything that is said to her——"

"She has been brought up," said Rowland a little displeased with the turn the conversation was taking, "in Glasgow which is a very different thing from the country, and perhaps not so much given to the innocence of faith."

"Oh," said Lady Leighton, making a dead pause. She had not the least idea how a girl could be brought up in Glasgow any more than if it had been Timbuctoo. The country she comprehended; town she comprehended—but Glasgow! A "smart" lady's information stops long before it comes to such a point as that.

"Perhaps," said Evelyn, troubled by all this, "I have been imprudent. It is awkward, anyhow, to have these young people coming to us so soon, when we are scarcely settled; but it is hard to say no when one is appealed to, for the good of others."

"I hope," said Rowland, "it is an appeal you never will refuse. It shocks me rather to hear you

now discussing your future guests. Don't they become sacred as soon as you invite them, like the strangers in a Bedouin's tent? That's our old Scotch way."

"Mr. Rowland, you are a darling," said Lady Leighton, "quite too great a darling, Evelyn, for this wicked world. I am so glad you have invited me! But is it not the Scotch way to tear one into little pieces after one is gone? The balance must be kept straight somehow."

"It is not the way in my house," he said with a certain severity, not liking that little scoff at the Scotch way, though he had brought it on himself. Rowland had no objection to have his fling at his fellow-Scot when occasion served. He had vituperated the Glasgow tradesmen largely for being slow, for being behind the time. He had thought everything "provincial"—the hardest word to be applied to such a huge and important place; but he felt offended when any one else followed his example. Evelyn had begun to know the look in his face.

That afternoon when they had completed all their last *emplettes*, chosen everything, ordered everything they wanted, and were seated together over the little tea-table which has once more become, though under changed circumstances from those of the eighteenth century, one of the confidential centres of life in England, a visitor appeared who disturbed their talk, and gave to the astonished Rowland another new sensation. He was tired with much movement,

declaring that London fatigued him more than the hottest of the plains, and that the shops made a greater call on his energies than any railway or canal he had ever had to do with ; and the rest and comparative coolness of the room was pleasant to them both, the beginning of the day having been unlucky, and a disagreeable turn given, as sometimes happens, to all its occurrences. There is something in luck after all, and perhaps the primitive people who turn back from the day's adventure at sea and labour on land, because they have met an ill-omened passenger—an evil eye—have more reason in their superstition than is generally supposed. That morning's encounter with the invalid in his chair had been bad for the Rowlands. They had found nothing they wanted. The persons they desired to see had been out of the way. The commissions they had given were not executed to their mind. Everybody knows that sometimes, without any apparent cause, this will be the case to the trial of one's temper and the confusion of all one's arrangements. Some one else had snapped up the picture which they had selected at the picture-dealer's. There had been nothing successful that they had done that day. Rowland, of course, was too enlightened and modern to think of anything like an evil eye. But Evelyn was old-fashioned, and not without a touch of natural and womanish superstition. She set it down to the score of Saumarez and that meeting which she had wished so

much to avoid ; and the thought oppressed her more than the contrarieties of the day. "It was all our unlucky meeting with that man," she even went so far as to say when she came in, jaded and disappointed, feeling the unsuccessful day all the more that everything hitherto had been so very much the reverse. "Do you think he threw a spell upon us?" Rowland said with a laugh. "He doesn't look at all unlike an old magician, to say the truth." Evelyn's little outburst of temper somehow soothed her husband. And though he grumbled a little at the heat, which was worse than Indian, and declared that the English were asses never to have introduced the punkah, yet he soon recovered his elasticity of mind. And when the door opened and Miss Saumarez was announced, he was lounging in the easiest way upon a sofa, and discoursing to his wife, as he loved to discourse, upon the beautiful country to which he was about to take her, and the views from the colonnade which encircled Rosmore.

"Miss Saumarez." There walked in a tall girl in the simplest of dresses, but without a soil or sign of dust, or crease, or crumple of any description, perfectly self-possessed, yet perfectly unpretending, with that air of being and knowing that she was the best of her kind, which is born with some people, and to others is utterly beyond the possibility of being acquired. Rosamond would not have been fluttered, she would have known perfectly what to do and how to behave her-

self, had she walked into the presence of the Queen instead of into that of James Rowland, who, very much flustered, and conscious that he had loosed his necktie a little, and that his collar was not so stiff as it ought to be, got up in much surprise and discomfiture. Evelyn rose slowly from her low chair, with a feeling more wretched still. A sort of sick loathing of the very name, and of the connection she had so foolishly allowed herself to be drawn into, overwhelmed her ; and it was all she could do to keep this sensation out of her face as Rosamond came forward and offered a peachy cheek to her to kiss. The young lady took in the aspect of things in a moment.

"I am afraid I have disturbed you," she said, "just when you are tired and resting. I asked the man if it was a good time, but he did not know. They never know anything, those servants in a hotel. But I will go away directly, as soon as I have asked one little question. Thank you very much, but I don't think I had better sit down."

She had a high-bred voice, soft, but perfectly clear, with the finest low intonation. She spoke very quietly, but Rosamond always had the gift of being heard.

"Yes, yes, you must sit down," said Rowland awakening to a more agreeable sentiment as he handed her a chair.

"We have just come in," said Evelyn. "You must forgive me : we have had a very tiring day."

"It is so hot and dusty, I do not wonder. One feels as if one were breathing dust and noise and people, anything but air. But you have it hotter in India," she said turning her face towards Rowland, with a little gracious acknowledgment of his presence, and of what and who he was.

"It is hotter, but there are more appliances. I was saying to my wife we should have had a punkah."

"Something that the poor natives pull and pull to give you air? I have heard of that—but who punkahs them?" said Rosamond, with a sweet severity, as if calling upon him to give an account of tyranny and selfish misgovernment, presumably, yet perhaps not inexcusably, his fault.

"I am afraid we don't think much on that subject," said Rowland; "they are natives, you know, and like it—not the punkah, but the heat."

"Ah! there is, of course, always something to be said on both sides of a question. Dear Mrs. Rowland, I came to you from my father, who gets a great fidget with his illness. Since he cannot move himself, he likes to keep some one always in motion. It was to ask when we were to go to you, Eddy and I. I thought it would be better to wait until you let us know, but father thinks those who are to be obliged should take all the trouble, which of course is just, too. So will you please think it was not wanton intrusion, but to save you the trouble of writing a note?"

"I'll answer for my wife, that she could not be

otherwise than glad to see you," said Rowland, astonished to see that Evelyn hesitated.

Miss Rosamond gave him a pretty bow and smile, but it was evident that she considered his judgment an exceedingly small matter, and did not at all accept his answering for his wife, as he ignorantly thought himself quite qualified to do.

"Indeed, you must not think I take your coming as intrusion. And, of course, you must arrange your visits beforehand."

"It is scarcely that," said Rosamond. "We have not many visits to arrange : people don't ask a girl who is not out, except it is for charity, like you. And Eddy is rather a pickle : I have not concealed that from you. Nor is it to tell us the very day, as if I were putting a pistol to your head. Indeed, I only came because I was sent. Father is often exceedingly tiresome, but it is easier to do what he tells one than to argue with him that it is not what one ought to do."

"We have scarcely had time yet to consider what we shall be doing. Our house, you know, is scarcely in order yet. I hardly know what accommodation there is, or how we shall arrange matters. I know nothing yet but what I have been told. But as soon as we are quite settled," said Evelyn, "you may be sure that I will let you know."

"To be sure," said Rosamond ; "I knew my instinct was right. Now, that is just what I wanted. I shall be able to satisfy father."

"But, my dear," cried Rowland in horror, "of

course you will be delighted to see this young lady whenever she pleases. There is plenty of accommodation, and we could be doing nothing in which we should not be glad to have the pleasure of her company."

"Let me settle, please, James," said Evelyn, a little crossly. "These things want arranging, as Rosamond quite knows."

Consternation filled the mind of the man who did not know the ways of society. To allow an intending guest to feel as if by any possibility she might not be welcome at any time, overwhelmed him with dismay. He got up and walked to the window to free himself at least from responsibility—to be no party to such an astounding act of inhospitableness. Certainly that was not "our Scotch way." He stood there a little, with his back to them, listening to the soft voices running on. He was very susceptible to the music of these mellow, well-bred voices. And the girl's had no sound of offence in it, neither had Evelyn's any hardness. He stood looking at the street, while they had it out between them, calculating the times and seasons. Not for about a month did the Saumarez family leave London. Miss Rosamond had to go to her grandmother's, and it was the time of Eddy's examination; so that arrangement was necessary on both sides. He stood there feeling more and more every moment what an ignoramus he was. He would have bidden the young people to come at once, to accompany him

through all the difficulties of settling down, had he had his way ; and to accept such an invitation would have disturbed all their plans as well as Evelyn's. Well, well ! in this respect it was evident that the calm society way was the best. And yet, middle-aged as he was, and acquainted with the world as he believed himself to be, he felt that he would not have liked to have a proposed visit from himself discussed and regulated like this.

"I hope you have settled," he said, coming back from the window, when the soft ripple of the voices came to a little pause.

"Oh, yes, the 5th of October ; thank you very much," said Rosamond. "That will suit us quite, extremely well. Father will still be at Aix, and Eddy's exam. will be over, and I shall have finished with grandmamma. Thank you so very much, dear Mrs. Rowland. Now I see father was right in making me come—though I did disturb you at the first."

"Only because I was a little cross, my dear, and tried——"

"I don't believe she is ever cross—is she ?" said Rosamond, appealing to Rowland. "We shall see how you put up with Eddy. Eddy is enough to make any one cross. Of course he will break down in his exam. : he always has done it, and he always will. There are some boys who seem to go on like that on purpose that everybody may see they will not take the trouble. There seems some pride among boys as to not taking trouble. They are

ashamed to say they have worked for anything. And father seems to understand it, but I do not."

"Neither do I, Miss Rosamond," said Rowland ; "you and I will agree. I think a young fellow should be flogged that goes on like that."

"I should not like Eddy to be flogged," said Rosamond, in her cool, even, sweet voice. "Of course he was flogged at Eton—swished, as they call it—and he did not mind one bit. They rather like it. They are proud of what is a shame, and ashamed of things they ought to be proud of. That's one of the things Eddy says 'that no girl can understand.'"

Rowland approached the table where the tea still stood, and where the young lady was eating bread and butter in her composed and reasonable way. "Do you go to a great many balls?" he said, in the tone which he might have applied to a child.

Rosamond regarded him from top to toe with her calm luminous eyes. She paused a moment as if wondering at such extreme fatuity. Then she said, "I am not out yet," with great seriousness. A few minutes later she unbent. "I do not wonder you are surprised. I am eighteen, but father's condition stops him from doing many things—that he does not care to do. Grandmother is too old to go to Court, and nobody has cared very much to take me. I shall perhaps be presented next year."

"By the by," said Rowland, looking with eagerness at his wife.

"What is it, James?"

"Oh, nothing," he said, going off again to the window. Both of the ladies divined at once what he wanted to say; Evelyn with a faint regretful sense of the excitement which he betrayed; Rosamond with a much more prosaic feeling that here was something which they wanted to consult each other about. She would have liked to stay to hear what it was, but a better instinct persuaded her that it was time to go away.

"You have some one with you?" said Evelyn, as she rose to go.

"I have Champion: he always takes care of me. I do not often bring him out at this hour; but he is quite sufficient for a protector. Ah, might I bring Champion? He does nothing wrong, never misbehaves, nor attempts to lie on sofas. He is a gentleman. *Might* I bring him? It would be such a favour, for the house will be shut up, and grand-mamma cannot bear dogs."

"Is it a dog?—to be sure!" said Rowland. "I suppose that's in my department, Evelyn? My son Archie and you will get on very well, if you are fond of dogs."

"Oh!" said Rosamond. There was something in that monosyllable which implied a good deal more. "Oh," it seemed to say, "you have a son Archie, and he is fond of dogs? I don't make much account of your son Archie—still—" There was all this in the varying of her tone; but she did not ask any questions. She presented her peach-

like cheek once more to Evelyn to be kissed, and she offered her hand with a little inclination of a curtsy to Rowland. He went down stairs with her, though she remonstrated, and watched her untie her dog from the railings with a sense of wondering, wistful admiration. "Oh," he breathed in his heart, "if Marion was but like that!" He burst into words when he got up stairs. "Oh, if I could but see Marion like that!" This exclamation was quite unintentional and involuntary: he was startled into it, and almost regretted he had said it the moment the words were out.

"Why?" said Evelyn, wondering. Then she added, "I hope Marion will end by being something much better than that."

"Better!" he paused a little. "I wish I saw her at all like that. The voice, and the manner, and the dress. That girl talks almost like you: how composed she is—taking everything just as it ought to be taken: understanding—You have something about you, people in your class—you are more philosophical—you seem to know what things mean, even a child like that: while Marion—poor little Marion—she is ready to cry or fly into a passion about anything—nothing—and to say little impertinent, senseless things—Even the very dress—"

"Dear James, I say what I mean. Probably dear little Marion is far better in her naturalness than this. I mean nothing against Rosamond. She is made up of so many things. She is natural too, but it is a nature which is full of art. You

would not like Marion to understand as she does, poor child. As for the dress——”

He had received this with much shaking of his head. Marion's naturalness! If only Evelyn might find it so. He thought Rosamond much more natural for his part, and he was very grateful to his wife for the “dear little Marion,” which indeed was more the fruit of opposition in Evelyn than of an affection which she could scarcely have been expected to feel for a girl whom she had never seen. He caught at the last words as something to which he could reply—“The dress?”

“I have been thinking about that. It is a great pity you did not bring them both up with you to town, James, for that purpose. It was almost certain there would be deficiencies in dress.”

He smote upon his thigh in disgust with himself. “If I had only thought of that! Indeed I did think of it; but I thought—in short I got out of heart a little with the whole concern. I thought—I would keep you from disappointment as long as I could; keep you from seeing what they are; what little, common, foolish——Evelyn, I have had a terrible disappointment, a hideous sort of undeception. It is all my own fault—that I should have been such a heartless fool as to leave them there all these years!”

Evelyn got up to support him in this sudden breakdown. She put her arm round the big shoulders, which it would not half encircle. “James, dear James! what nonsense you are talking. Your

children and your Mary's—no, no, my good man ! you are excited ; you are over-anxious ; you have judged the poor dear children too hardly. Shall we stay another week and have them down here, and set the clothes to rights ? Fancy you, of all people in the world, being so much influenced by a question of clothes ! ”

“ If it were only that ! ” he said, holding her close to him, almost weeping on her shoulder. It was safer not to investigate what it was that made the strong man's eyes so wet and sore. Evelyn did not attempt any such prying, but let him hide himself—he so much stronger than she was—in her soft hold, and swallow the sob that was in his capacious heart. No one ever guessed but in that moment, what it was to James Rowland to have lost his ideal children, the little things with all their sweetness whom he remembered, and to have found the common place young man and woman whom he now knew. Evelyn's tender sympathy, compassion, and presently the tremulous laugh with which she began to jest and tease him about his devotion to externals, his fancy for fine clothes, brought him at last to himself. He was a little ashamed to feel his eyes red, to know that he must look almost like a woman who had been crying when he raised his head to the light. But all that Evelyn did to betray her knowledge was a little kiss upon his eyes, which she gave him heartily, as if in spite of herself. And then they sat down to consider the question, which was decided at last in

favour of "going home," as Evelyn called it, there to take such steps for a complete renewal of Marion's wardrobe as her taste and knowledge would suggest. It was easy to talk of the clothes, to which she had playfully directed the conversation—too serious and too emotional to be otherwise discussed: but both of them were very well aware that a great deal more was meant.

It was some time after that, when the gravity of the situation had been dissipated, and lighter thoughts and talk came in, that he asked her with a little shamefacedness, whether she had gone through that ceremonial to which Rosamond Saumarez had referred. "I suppose you have been—presented, as they call it," he said with a laugh.

"Oh, yes—at the proper time, when I was a girl. I was only at one drawing-room after that. We were too poor to afford the dress."

"You are not too poor now to afford—whatever you please in that way—Evelyn:" he laughed, abashed and shy, but eager, "should you think it right to—go again."

"Oh, yes," she said by no means so earnestly. "I hope you would not dislike it, James."

"Dislike it!—to show one's reverence and homage to the Queen? Good heavens, no! if a man felt good enough—It seems as if it should be a kind of duty, Evelyn."

"Yes," she said, not so fervent even now; "but not this year. I can take Marion next spring."

He laughed so that he almost cried. "And I suppose I shall have to get myself up in some ridiculous costume or other to go with you—me and little Mey—a pair of guys—before the Queen!"

CHAPTER II

THIS sudden glimpse into her husband's deeper nature which it was so easy to lose sight of in his genial and easy exterior, touched Evelyn more than words could say. She entered into his profound discontent with the tenderest sympathy, a little appalled by it indeed, and by the prospect of struggling in her own person with the two grown-up children, who were so much more difficult a problem at the age they had now reached than had they been younger. She contemplated the prospect with no little dismay. The words of his faltering disclosure, "little, common, foolish," were of all others the words most difficult to reconcile with any higher or generous quality. The only thing that seemed to have broken the shock to James was that the boy had his mother's eyes. But what, Evelyn said to herself with a little shudder, would the mother herself have appeared to Rowland now, if she had been living all these years stagnant in their old world, growing fat and prosaic, while he had gained so many new experiences? And how

much might his disappointment have to do with herself, and that faculty of seeing things through other eyes which comes with sympathy and close intercourse. He might not have required so much from his little Marion, poor child, if it had not been for Evelyn. So much the greater, then, was her responsibility who had accustomed him to a different standard, and so unintentionally brought to him an acute pang. Evelyn said to herself that, however *désillusionné* her husband might be, she must try to keep a motherly glamour in her own eyes. She must endeavour to suffer long and be kind, to think no evil—neither to be disgusted nor discouraged. It was perhaps partly her fault. She must take it upon her own shoulders and refuse to see anything that was undesirable to be seen. But it was very difficult for her to form any just idea of what was the special trouble which she had to expect—even of how the littleness and commonness would show themselves. She thought of a wild girl speaking broad Scotch, a young man with sinewy limbs, and perhaps (forgive her ignorance) a kilt, speaking the language which in books is put into the lips of the Celt. They were not Celts, she knew, and Glasgow was not a place for gillies and wild Highlanders. But of the gillies and wild Highlanders she did know a little, though of Glasgow, nothing, no more than if it had been in the South Seas. She tried to compose the imagination which painted a highly-coloured tableau, full of red hair and freckles, and a wonderful primitive

speech. Always, she felt she must recollect, James might have judged them less severely but for herself, though she in her own person would be the last to throw any cold shade upon them. It is needless to say that this new light shed an illumination that was much less tempting upon the house of which he was so proud, and which her discriminating judgment soon made out, according to the graphic description of Marion, to be chiefly "a view." She had learned to recognize the imposing object it must be from the Clyde steamer after the description which her husband had given her so often, and from the same source she recognized the corresponding view from the colonnade upon the Clyde and the passing boats. These were the chief things he had told her—and no society, and that unkempt, uncultured two. In her innermost retirement Evelyn shuddered a little at what was before her.

It was not a very pleasant prospect, especially with Rosamond's clear eyes observing everything in the interior, and carrying back her report to the world. However, all this had to be faced courageously. She had undertaken the burden, and she must fit it to her back. No one could help her with it, nor was it fit that she should desire to elude it. It was henceforward her work in the world, and to comfort her husband in his discontentment; to charm it away; to persuade him that things were better than he thought; and, lastly and chiefly, to make them so, was her

occupation, the trust she had received. She did not confess either to him or any one the alarm it gave her. She laughed him quietly out of his depression. "You will see things will arrange themselves," she said. But it must be confessed that when Evelyn set out, surrounded by every luxury, with a railway director to hand her into a special carriage, and all the officials, great and small, bowing down before the great Indian railway man, she was disposed to think all this honour and glory something like a farce, considering what she was going to. Had she travelled in the simplest way, nobody taking any notice, with the humblest quiet house awaiting her, without these "complications," how much more light-hearted would she have been! But fortunately James liked the attention of the railway people: a King's Cross director was an important functionary in his eyes. The inspectors and porters to him were like the regiment to a military man. It was agreeable to have the recognition that he was somebody, that his life had not been spent in vain.

Meanwhile, the news of the approaching arrival had a very great effect in Sauchiehall Road, whither Mr. Rowland had written directing that Marion and Archie should proceed to Rosmore on Tuesday, to be there when he arrived with his wife. "You can go down in the morning," he wrote, "and tell the housekeeper we shall be at home for dinner. Nothing more than this will be needed, she will know what to do. You can

occupy the rooms you preferred when you were at Rosmore with me, but with this reservation, that Mrs. Rowland may make other arrangements when she comes." This perhaps was not a very judicious way of presenting his wife to his children, but few men are judicious in this particular. He intended that they should understand at once that Evelyn was sovereign mistress of the house.

"Mrs. Rowland," said Auntie Jean, "and the housekeeper!" her voice sank below her breath in apparent awe, but this was only the cloak of other emotions. "Oh, the ingratitude," she cried, "of men—though many and many a time has he thankit me for being so good to you bairns, that have been like my ain. And now he has gotten a housekeeper, and never even offered me the place: there is nae gratitude in men."

"You the place—of the housekeeper? She's just a servant," said Marion.

"And what am I but just a servant? I've been ane, ye needna deny't, to you: it's been aye your pleasure that has been followed, no mine: and I was a servant lass before I was married, and thought no shame. No: I have nane of your silly pride about words. A housekeeper with a good wage and a good house behind her, and the command of all the orders, is a very responsible person. He might at least have given me the offer and I would have thought it no discredit. It would have been a grand provision for me at my age."

"I would never have consented," said Archie, for once taking the first word. "A servant in my father's house!"

"Nor me," said Marion, "it's just out of the question. I would never have spoken to him if he had dared to offer that to you."

"I would have thought it nae discredit," said Mrs. Jean. "And ye'll maybe, with all your pride, tell me what's to become of me now? It's little, very little, I have laid away. My heart was aye set on to do ye full justice. A' my young days ye have had the best of them. I've seen many a good place go past me, and even a good man, but I would never gie up my trust; and now ye are going away without a tear in your e'e, or a word in your mouth for your auld aunty—that was just too faithful to you. And I'll have to take a place somegate for my living. He might have given me the offer at the least."

"If you think my father will leave you without a provision," said Archie——

"A provision!" said Marion, more doubtfully, "that's a great thing—but a little assistance you may be quite sure—and we'll always come and see you, and bring you anything we can. Aunty, ye need not be taking up time with little things of yours when there's us to settle about. We must go, as papa says we are to go. Is there anything I will be wanting to wear?"

"We might all die and be buried, and Mey's first thought would be what she would have to wear!"

"That's reasonable enough," said the aunt; "she would want mourning if only one of the family—but we needna think of that till the time comes. There wouldna be much wanted for me," she went on, beguiled, however, by the doleful, delightful subject, though it was contrary to her own injunction; "there's little crape ever wasted on a poor aunty in these days. 'Oh, it's no a very near relation—just our aunt,' they will say, and oot in a' the colours of the rainbow in six months or less."

"Aunty Jean," said Marion, in her calm little voice; "it's no a funeral we're thinking of, but to go down to Rosmore on Tuesday to meet papa—and mamma."

"I wouldna stoop to call her mamma. I would call her just Mrs. Rowland, as he says."

"I have settled in my mind about that," said the girl, "but not about my frock. Will I wear that one he bought me at MacColl's shop? The body's not made, but Miss Peebles would do it if she got her orders to-night; or I might wear my silk? If you would tell me what you think about that, and just let the other things alone."

"Ye have nae mair feeling," protested Mrs. Brown, "than a little cat—as ye are."

"But a cat has no need to take thought about its dress," said Marion, philosophically, "and see, I'm wanting to make a good impression. My silk would maybe look too grown up, and trying to be grand; and it's a very rustling silk, like your red one, aunty. But I notice that very soft silks

are the fashion, and white is becoming to me. If the body was made like that one of Janet MacColl's——"

"With plenty of nice red ribbons——"

"No red ribbons at all," cried Marion, "but just muslin work, and all white. In white," she continued, with natural perception, "you cannot go far wrong. I wish I was as easy in my mind about Archie. His trousers are all bags at the knees, and there's something about his coat——Papa," said Marion, "is an old gentleman, but there's something quite different about his coat."

"I would just imagine sae," said Mrs. Brown with contempt. "What is he caring about his coat, a man of his age, whereas Archie's but a young lad! I would buy a pair of lavender gloves, Archie. With all that money in your pocket ye may weel allow yourself a pair of gloves, and Marion too."

"Oh, I will buy her as many gloves as she likes," said Archie, with something of the tone of the millionaire—as he felt himself to be. He had the remains of the twenty pounds in his pocket after having got many gratifications out of it, including the dinner to the lads, which had been highly successful, but not very costly, and he was on the whole very well satisfied with himself.

"I canna remember," said Mrs. Brown, "that ye have offered gloves or onything else, or so much as a flower, to me. But that's a very different question," she added, with satirical briskness; "I'm

just mysel' the old glove that ye toss away. It's done its part, poor thing, but ye've nae mair use for it.—Mey, slip the new frock on ye that I may see how it looks, and then you could run to Miss Peebles. If she canna do it, I will just have to cobble it up for you mysel'."

"I'm going to have no cobbling up," said Marion decisively. "She must just do it, whether she can or not. She would be very fain to get jobs from Rosmore."

"Aunty, did ye mean yon—about my never giving ye anything?" said Archie, when May had gone.

"Me, laddie? No, no, I didna mean it. I was just in a girning humour. She doesna see it, and you dinna see it; and maybe I think more than I should about the dirty siller, and how I am to make my living after having been used to owre muckle comfort and ease. But it's just my life that's going from me," cried Mrs. Brown, putting her handkerchief to her eyes. "If I did speak about the house-keeper's place, it was no for the grand situation nor the wages, nor even the perquisites, it was just that I would have been near my bairns. I would have seen my bairns—them the young lady and the young gentleman, and me the servant woman; but I could have seen them every day, and now the Lord kens if I'll ever see them mair."

"Aunty, we're not savages nor brute beasts: how can ye think ye will never see us mair?"

"My laddie," she said in her tears; "it's no only

that you'll be taken from me, but I'll have to think of mysel' too. I canna keep up a house like this over my head, nor a servant to do my work. I will have to get lodgers, or take a place, or do something for my bread. I will maybe leave Gleska a'thegither," she added in a tone of despair as who should have said leave paradise; "for I have my little pride like other folk, and I wouldna like them that have kent me here, with every comfort about me, to see me taiglin' after a wheen lodgers, or standing about the register office looking for a place."

"Aunty Jean, ye cannot for a moment think that my father would leave you like that without a provision. If he does, I will leave *him*."

"Oh, Archie, hold your peace; it's not your part to speak."

"I will!" cried the boy, flushing red. "I will never go near his grand house. He may do what he likes, he will get nothing out of me. I was just in an awful state of delight when he was coming home," said Archie; "you know I was. It was the king enjoying his ain again, like the songs. I thought everything in the world was coming right." He turned a little aside and dashed something out of the corner of his eye. "Aunty," he said in an altered voice, "I will confess to you that I am real disappointed in my father. He's no the man I expected. He's like other men, crabbed and thinking of himself. Even when he does a kind thing, as he did about that money, it's in such a

way that you just want to fling it back in his face !”

“Oh, dinna say that,” cried Mrs. Brown alarmed ; “you mustna say that. He has his ain ways of thinking, but he’s a good father, Archie. Look how he has kept you all your lives with every luxury ; he’s grudged you nothing. It was just for me to say what you wanted, and as much as you wanted it was aye ready ; never an objection in his mind. Oh, no, no ! you must never say that ! To turn you against your papaw is the last thing in the world that would please me. Look what he’s done for us a’ for years and years. I always kent it had to stop some time or other. At first I thought when he came hame, we would just all go to him and keep thegither. I didna realize what a grand wealthy gentleman he had grown. I thought of the siller and nothing else. I expected he would be just like what he was in the foundry, but rich ; and that’s what I brought you up to expect. It was just a dreadful mistake. I saw it all the moment I set eyes upon him. I just divined it before that when I heard of his new wife. It’s my fault : you’ve not been brought up as ye ought to have been, for I didna understand things, Archie. Now I understand. But oh, my bonnie man, dinna take up a grudge against your papaw ! He’s been as kind to me as ever he could be. Now he’s done wi’ me, and I’m no more wanted. I’ve nae claim upon him that he should provide for me, a great, muckle, strong woman, no fifty, quite able to work.

But for the Lord's sake, Archie, whatever you do, dinna you turn on your papaw!"

"Aunty Jean," said the lad who was half sobbing too, "I think he's a just man, and, as you say, he has never grudged money. If he provides for you, I'll give you my word I'll do justice to him. I'll listen to no prejudice. I'll just give him my best attention, and maybe we'll come to understand one another. But if he doesn't, God forgive him for it, for I'll not. I'll come back here, and I'll take a situation, and we'll fend together. You shall have no lodger but me; you'll be housekeeper to nobody but me. This shall just be the test for him, if he's the man I thought him or no. And if it's no, he may search the world for a son: he'll get none of me!"

"Oh, my ain laddie!" said Mrs. Brown, choked by tears and emotion. She could say nothing more, for at this moment the door opened and Marion entered, wearing the skirt of the pretty dress which her father had allowed her to buy at Mr. MacColl's splendid shop. The stuff intended to make the "body" was wound round her shoulders. She resembled exceedingly one of the figures which make so fine an appearance in the shops. It was an ideal which would certainly have satisfied her highest desires. She was too much absorbed to notice the emotion of the others. "You see," she said as she came in, "the skirt is very nice and wants no altering. It is just my length, which is a providence. I think this is far better than my silk."

Mrs. Brown awakening to a new interest, got up and walked round her, inspecting the garment closely. Perhaps she was glad of the occasion of concluding an interview which was agitating to both ; but the attraction of the half-made dress would have been a great one in any circumstances. Archie took the opportunity to escape, neither having nor pretending to have any interest in the matter, while a very keen and close discussion went on about the manner of "making up the body." In respect to this these ladies were not of the same mind, Mrs. Brown being reluctant to accept Marion's new theory of simplicity, which the sharp little girl had picked up somehow since the change which had come in her fortunes. Aunt Jean wanted bright ribbons, a sash, a bow at the throat "to brighten it up," as she said. But Marion held her own. It was only at the close of the controversy that she found out that anything had been amiss. She turned upon her aunt as if she were making an accusation. "Your eyes are red," she said ; "you've been crying !" with a tone in which there was a certain sense of injury, as of one who had been left out.

"Weel, if I have been crying, it's naething extraordinary," said Mrs. Brown ; "naething to call for your notice."

"What is it that's the matter now ?"

"You have just not as much heart as would lie on a sixpence, to ask me such a question. There's your father will be just like you. He

will think nothing about it. He will think I should just give ye up as I took ye; the one as pleasant as the other. Oh, it is very little that folk kens, when they begin, how it's to end."

"But I suppose," said Marion, "you would like us to have the advantage now that he has come home? You never expected we were just to bide on with you."

"Oh, no, I never expected it: I'm no just a fool for all the way that ye set up your little neb to me."

"Well," said Marion, "then what have ye to complain of, Auntie Jean? You knew all the time: it was always his meaning to come home; and ye have always spoken about it. Both Archie and me, we've learned to look forward to it; and ye would like us to lose all the advantage now!"

"It's you that just canna understand. It's maybe not your fault. I was very muckle taken up with mysel' and what I had to put on, when I was your age. No your mother: she was aye different. It's me rather that you're like—for all that ye'll think shame to speak to me in the street three months after this day."

"What for should I think shame to speak to you," said Marion; "for everybody knows ye belong to us, Auntie Jean? There would be no reason for that: we cannot hide it if we wanted to hide it. It would just be bringing odium on ourselves."

"And that's a' ye have to say?"

"What more should I say? I'll just go and take off the skirt, and run round to Miss Peebles about the body; for between this and Tuesday there's very little time."

"There is none to lose, that's true. Ye had better tell her that ye want it on Monday night, for they're never to be lippen't to, thae mantua-makers."

"That will be the best way." But perhaps she felt a little compunctious; for she paused at the door to throw a look back and a word. "I think ye may make your mind easy, Auntie Jean, that papa will not do a shabby thing either to us or to you."

Mrs. Brown raised her hand to dismiss the subject with a certain natural pride. But though she would not discuss it with Marion, in whose calculations affection was not taken into account, it was not without a certain comfort that she adopted this conclusion. No, he would not do a shabby thing. It had never been his character. Even when he was a working man, Jims Rowland had never been shabby. He might be a wee hard to them that offended him, but shabby—no. There was comfort in that. So that perhaps, after all, Marion's matter-of-fact consolation was practically of more importance than her brother's feeling. "She's no an ill creature after all," Mrs. Brown said to herself.

The "body" was fortunately done in time, and the dress put on with much satisfaction when

Tuesday came, which proved to be, fortunately, a fine day—a day on which a white dress was not inappropriate. Mrs. Brown wept plentifully as the young pair left her. To them it was only a “ploy,” but to her it was the parting—the end of her brighter life. She looked after them with maternal pride, proud of their good looks and their best clothes, and even the new boxes that were piled upon the top of the cab. She might have been invited to go down with them to break the parting a little. He might have thought of a little thing like that, not to treat her just as if she were an old nurse, to be dismissed when they were done with her. Jean looked after them with streaming eyes. They were not thinking that it was good-bye: they had left half of their things behind: they were coming back—oh, very often, and certainly in a day or two, they both said. It was only a ploy to them. And so well as they looked—two young things that anybody might be proud of. She thought of Rowland’s triumph in showing them to his wife, and how astonished that proud lady would be to see the two, just so lady-like and so gentleman-like! That was Mrs. Brown’s view of the case, and it gave her consolation in the middle of her woe.

The young people were surprised that their appearance in the boat and at the pier, where they landed, was not the subject of any demonstration. If their father had been received as a person of importance, how much more should they who were

not elderly or old-fashioned like him, but in all the triumph of their youth—his heirs, to whom everything would eventually belong. There was, however, only the dog-cart, no more, waiting for them at the pier, with Sandy the groom, who was too friendly by half, and not nearly so much impressed as he ought to have been with their importance. They spent an hour or two by themselves, which would have hung very heavy on their hands had not Archie darted down to see the dogs, and Marion employed herself in arranging her “things” in her room, which was nearly as large as the whole area of the house in Sauchiehall Road. And then the important moment came. The dog-cart had been good enough for them, but it was not good enough for Mrs. Rowland, and it was in the great new resplendent landau that Marion solemnly drove down, all alone, and looking important enough to fill the whole carriage, to meet the lady whom she called mamma.

CHAPTER III.

EVELYN came fully up to her husband's expectations, which were not small, in the way of admiration. She had not, indeed, been thinking much about the beauty of the country, her mind being fully occupied by matters more important, so that the Clyde and the loch, and Rosmore, burst upon her more or less as a surprise. She delighted Rowland, whose whole being was on the watch to see what she would say, by her exclamations. "What a beautiful situation ! What a lovely view the people must have who live there. What is— Oh !" She broke off abruptly, seeing the flush of pleasure and broad smile of happiness which came over his face. "So that is Rosmore," she added : "I can see it in your face !"

"Ay, that's just Rosmore," he said, with a thickness in his voice ; "and this is just the spot, if this confounded boat would stand still for a moment, where I have watched for it appearing ever since I was a lad, and wished and wondered if it would ever be mine." He put his arm through hers, as

he had a way of doing, and held her close—"And now it is mine ; and you are mine, Evelyn, that was still more unlikely by far."

"You must not flatter me by comparing me to that beautiful place ; and I pray God you may be very happy in it now you have got it. It is certainly an ideal place."

"Is it not ?" cried Rowland, delighted. It is to be feared that he did not at that moment remember his poor homely Mary, who had been with him so often when he watched for the opening in the trees, and worshipped his idol afar off. "Toots, nonsense," Mary had said, with a laugh at his absurdity, so many times. He did not think of her, but Evelyn did, with a curious tenderness for the simple little woman who, probably, by this time would have developed into a stout and matter-of-fact matron, and disappointed her husband as much as his children had done, although the love between them had been as true and full of natural poetry as any *dans les temps*. Evelyn was quite aware of her husband's shortcomings, and that there were various superficial failings in him which justified the superficial judgment that he was "not a gentleman," that most damning of English criticism ; but she knew at the same time how it was that the fact of his son not appearing a gentleman was the source of grief to him, and how critical his eyes would be, and how exacting his demands in this respect. Poor little Mary ! Perhaps it was as well that she had died in the far-off poetical time.

Evelyn felt a little moisture in the corner of her eye, and made a promise in her heart to the wife of James Rowland, from the foundry, who was so different from James Rowland, the great railway man from India. "I will do what I can for them, Mary!" was what Evelyn said. Her husband saw the little glimmer on her eyelash, and pressed her arm with fond delight and pride. "I can never be thankful enough," he said, "Evelyn, for the way you enter into your rough husband's feelings—my bonnie lady of Rosmore!" That was the very foundry lad who spoke, the very poet of the iron-works, whose imagination ran in the ways of iron and steel, and who had attained for himself so incalculable a triumph—everything, and more than everything, that heart could desire—Rosmore, and its bonnie lady! His emotion touched his wife, not displeased—as what woman would be?—to feel herself the very crown of his acquisition; yet her heart went back all the more to poor Mary, whose arm he had probably held in the same way while he glowered with adoration at the white colonnade from the deck of this very steamboat (if steamboats live so long), and who had said, "Toots, Jims, what nonsense!" with her Glasgow accent, thinking that in that particular her husband, who was so clever, and soon might rise to be foreman, was little better than a fool.

After this ecstatic moment was over, they both fell into silence, a little anxious for the approaching meeting: he for what she would think of his chil-

dren : she for what the children would turn out to be. She had begun to doubt a little whether the son would be an unkempt lad in a kilt, like the nephew with whom Mrs. Reuben Butler, once of that same parish, had made disastrous acquaintance. The shabby young men about Glasgow and Greenock had not been of the kind of the Whistler, as indeed, on second thoughts, her reason convinced her Archie was not the least likely to be : nor would Marion probably have the red hair and the short tartan frock, which had been her first idea of what was the probable appearance of the girl with whom Rowland had been so much disappointed. The sight in the distance of a white and dark speck on the Rosmore pier, as the boat crossed the shining loch, brought Rowland's heart to his mouth, and made him almost incapable of speech. "Yon will be them," he said with a parched mouth, gripping her arm. And Evelyn did not feel disposed to say anything, or to remark upon the beauty of the hills, though they lighted up in all their purple hollows, and threw out all their blue peaks, as if to catch her attention. Nature has a wonderful charm, if there is not some human emotion before her to pre-occupy both heart and eye. The range of mountains at the head of the loch were after all not of half so much importance as the little white figure on the pier head, of which scarcely the first fact of its existence was as yet perceptible, or the taller one that already seemed to sway and lounge with idle limbs beside her.

Evelyn kept her eyes fixed upon them as she drew nearer and nearer, and gradually a feeling of relief stole into her heart. There was nothing so very alarming that James should have made such a fuss ! "My dear James," she said turning to him, "I suppose you did it for a joke : your Marion is a dear little girl." He pressed her arm close, but he could not say anything : his middle-aged heart was beating. "Archie I must study more at leisure, but he looks very nice too," she added with more of an effort. Perhaps after all the boy would have been better in a kilt, with his hair over his eyes, like the Whistler in the *Heart of Midlothian*. She looked on breathless as the steamboat drew to the pier. Certainly they would rush on board to greet their father, to bring him home in triumph, even if they were less anxious to make her acquaintance ; but Marion and Archie did not budge an inch. They stood there, on the defensive, a little defiant, staring, waiting till they were spoken to ; and in the bustle of the arrival, the haste of the transference from the quickly departing steamboat to the land with all the baggage which Rowland, with his habits of personal superintendence, did not think the maid and man whom they had brought able to deal with, Evelyn found herself flung upon the two without any introduction. She put out her hand to her stepdaughter. "You are Marion, I am sure," she said, drawing the girl towards her and kissing her on both cheeks. "I am very glad to see you, my dear."

"And so am I—to see you—mamma," said the

girl reddening and staring. The name felt to Evelyn like a stone flung in her face.

"And this is Archie," she said, transferring Marion's somewhat unwilling, hot little gloved hand to her left, and holding out the other to the boy. He for his part made no answer, but gave her a quick look, and then withdrew his eyes. "Your father is too busy to think about us till the luggage is all right," she said; "but I hope we are going to be, we three, very great friends."

"Oh, we'll be all that," said Marion with a laugh working her hand out of Evelyn's hold. Archie made no reply; he too drew his hand away from her as soon as she had shaken it, which was the only thing, so far as he was aware, that any one could want to do with another person's hand. He gave her a second look as he did this, which Evelyn did not perceive, but in which Mary's eyes made a little, a very little, essay, of a reply to her had she but seen it. She stood by them a moment, not knowing how to proceed further, with the little crowd of the pier pressing round, and the wheelbarrow for the luggage knocking against the group. "Is that our carriage?" said Evelyn. "Don't you think the best thing you could do would be to put your sister and me into it, until your father gets through his troubles?" Put her into it! Archie had not an idea what she meant. Was he to lift her up and set her down in it, like a doll? He stared and hung about on those loose legs of his,

which could not even stand firm, and followed her awkwardly to the carriage, where the footman stood opening the door. What was there for Archie to do? The footman was there to help them in, if they needed to be helped in. He followed them, and hung about, the most unnecessary personage. The footman belonged to the turn-out, he was in his proper place; but where was the need of Archie? Evelyn took pity upon him, when she saw his helpless looks. "Go and see if you can be of use to your father," she said. Of use to his father! when there were two servants with his father. It was their business not Archie's. He turned and went reluctantly back again, with his idle legs and his hands in his pockets. The Archie of Sauchiehall Road would have picked up a portmanteau and carried it in with the greatest cheerfulness; but this was the Archie of Rosmore.

"Well, there you are," said Rowland, shaking hands with him cursorily. "Just show Stanchion, will you, where the cart is for the luggage. I suppose they've sent something to bring him up and Mrs. Rowland's maid."

Archie knew nothing about it, and said so. "You said you had given all the directions."

"So I did, but you might show the man the way at least," said Rowland, hurrying forward to the carriage. Archie stood among the crowd, with the boxes and barrows bumping at his legs, for a full minute more, then, as his better angel began to get

the advantage, took one hand out of his pocket, and made a step to the tall and fussy valet, who stood among a mountain of boxes. "Yonder's the cart from the House," he said, pointing to the highway, where the cart and dog-cart stood among the trees. "It's no use telling me yonder's the cart. You'll better lend a hand, young man, or how are them boxes to get there?" said Mr. Rowland's gentleman, who prided himself in being a better gentleman than his master. To understand the rage that boiled up in Archie's breast, it would be necessary to fathom the angry contempt with which a Scotch clerk of the humbler kind, but capable of being a great merchant one day, or even a Scotch artizan, regards a domestic servant, however magnificent. Archie could have slain Mr. Stanchion where he stood. He did not laugh as his father's son ought to have done, at the mistake. As he swung round on his heel, his father called out from the carriage, "Hallo, Archie, Mrs. Rowland wants to know if you're coming with us: make haste." He stared a moment with a sullen countenance, and then, turning again, walked quickly off without a word.

"He says he would rather walk," said Evelyn, "which is what young men generally do."

"I did not hear him say a word."

"Nor me, papa," said Marion, with a laugh. She thought Archie's "sulks" were a good joke, and, to do her justice, saw no harm in them, nor anticipated any consequences from his ill temper.

"We just never mind," she added, feeling mistress of the position, "when he's in an ill key." And Marion was very gracious to her father and his wife as they drove home. She pointed out to Mrs. Rowland various points of view. "That's the Chieftain's Leap, but it's nothing to see, just a red scaur, and trees growing all about; but a little further on is a good view of Greenock and the docks and the big chimney smoking, and up there you can see down upon Kilrossie, where everybody goes for the salt water—for the sea-bathing I mean."

"The salt water is a very picturesque description," said Evelyn, "and full of local colour." She laughed at herself for her own words, but it was better to make talk of any kind, than to see that cloud settling down on her husband's face.

"And down there," said Marion, "is Rankine's cottage, the old gamekeeper who has the dogues. He is a cripple creature himself since he had his accident, but the dogues are very nice little things. Archie has bought two. He says they will be good for watch-dogs about the House. And Rankine himself is a very funny old man to talk to—but I do not care for him, for he is always on about Lady Jean."

"Who is Lady Jean?"

"Oh, she is the Earl's sister; old, and not pretty, and not married. I don't know why they make such a fuss about her. There's no interest in a person like that."

"Don't you think you might let somebody get in a word from time to time?" said Rowland; "I have heard nothing but your little voice ever since we arrived."

"Well, I hope my little voice is better than nothing, papa. And you will not hear very much from Archie. He is just as sulky as he can be about Auntie Jean. He thinks she should have come down here with us, to see us settled, and make acquaintance with mamma, and all that. The very idea! but boys have so little sense. That is not what Auntie Jean cares so much about herself. She is more concerned in her mind about what she is to do next."

"Is Auntie Jean the lady who brought you up? Indeed, then, I do think, James, that she has not been very nicely treated. She has been so devoted to the children. It was the least thing you could do to ask her to bring them home, and let me show how we appreciated her goodness and affection. You must give me the address, Marion, and I will write to-morrow."

"Oh," said Marion with a gasp, raising herself bolt upright, "that's not necessary—that's not at all necessary. Auntie never expected ——"

"I am afraid I must take upon myself to be the judge of what is necessary," said Mrs. Rowland with the sweetest smile in the world. Her soft peremptoriness was for her husband as well as for his daughter. For Rowland, too, had responded with a gasp to the suggestion of inviting Jean, and his

wife's gentle assumption of supreme authority took him as much by surprise as it did Marion. He began, too, with an anxious "But ——" but got no farther. Jean at Rosmore was something which his imagination could not reach.

"*But* is not a word which exists in autocratic countries," said Evelyn laughing. "Constitutional surroundings alone encourage such expressions, and I'll have no dissent in Rosmore. Didn't you hail me Lady as we came over that glorious Firth?"—Evelyn would not perhaps have used the words had she not meant to reduce her husband to instantaneous submission. She thought, indeed, that the Firth was very fine, but her usual principles were against hyperbole. It would be hard, however, to refuse to a good woman the legitimate use of certain weapons because they are used to a large extent by women who are not good. And the "glorious Firth" and his wife's smile together were far more than James Rowland could make head against. I do not think indeed that such artillery was needed. He had not the least objection, but on the contrary, the greatest pride and pleasure in thinking of her as the autocrat and supreme mistress of Rosmore, to ask any splendid visitor she liked, even Royalty, should it cost him half his fortune. It was, however, a little bewildering when it was not Royalty but Jean Brown.

"But I don't think she can come," said Marion's little monotonous voice coming in, "so you may put

your mind at rest, papa, for she would not like to leave the house with just Bell in it. She is thinking of selling the things, for she will not want to keep up a big house like that when there is nobody but herself, and no allowance ; but she will have to take care of them all the more not to let them be spoiled by a servant lass. And she will think she has not good enough clothes——.” Marion here made a very perceptible examination of Mrs. Rowland’s dress, which was not “a silk” nor “a satin,” but simple grey stuff and made in the most unassuming way : “I don’t see that,” she continued with an obvious comparison, “for she has some very nice silks, and she might come very well, so far as that goes. But for another thing, she could not spend the money. When it was for us, she never minded : but she always grudges a railway ticket for herself.”

“What do you mean about selling her things, and no allowance ?” said Rowland hastily ; but he added, “We need not discuss that here. But of course, my dear, what you decide upon must be done.”

“So I intend,” said Mrs. Rowland, with a laughing bow to him, as of a queen to a king. “We shall have a great deal to settle when we get home, and I hope that everybody will be pleased with my despotism.”

“Oh, as for that,” said Marion, taking upon herself again the rôle of expositor, “I’ve always read that a lady should be the mistress in her own side ;

the gentleman, outside ; and she's not to meddle with him ; but the lady——"

"I assure you I shall meddle with him, Marion. The flower garden, for instance, I shall take entirely into my hands. In short, I don't know the thing in which I shall not meddle."

"The lady," said Marion, raising her voice a little, "should have all the house to manage, and the children, and all within her own sphere. The books all say that woman's sphere is Home."

"With a great many capital letters."

"You may be meaning some joke with your capital letters, but I'm saying just what I've read. It's nothing about politics nor business—nor that kind of thing ; but to sit at the fireside and give her orders, and everybody to be at her beck and call."

"Excellent, Marion ; you have said your lesson very well, and I hope you mean to be at this lady's beck and call."

"I don't know," said Marion, "that it means the grown-up children : for when you get to be eighteen or so, you are supposed to be able to judge for yourself. But it was no lesson. It was just what I've read in books. I have always been very fond of reading books."

"You could not do better, my dear ; and we must read some books together," said Evelyn. Then she thought there had been enough of Marion for the moment. "The woods are beautiful," she said, "and I see, James, the mountains you told me

of. Is that Ben Ros—that great shoulder rising over the loch, or the peak in the distance that is so blue and misty? You must tell me when we have time, every name. I think I should prefer to stop the carriage and walk the rest of the way.”

“That is just what I would like you to do,” said her husband, “for every step’s enchanted ground.”

Marion did not know what to do, whether to join them in this walk, as curiosity suggested, or to drive home in state, as if it were she who was the mistress of everything. The paths, however, were damp in places, as they usually were, and she reflected that she could walk when she pleased, but that if her pretty white dress was marked with mud, it would have to be washed, and that nothing, not even a white dress, looks so well after it is washed. And also her shoes were thin : they were worked with beads, and she wore them over a pair of open-work stockings. The boggy parts would be just ruination to her pretty shoes. Mrs. Rowland had strong leather ones, and a grey dress that would take no harm. “For my part,” she said, “I would be better in the house, for I have a headache. I would like to come too, but if I got my feet wet, it would give me a cold, and I might never get well.”

“By all means drive home,” said Evelyn. “Your shoes are much too thin for walking, and see that tea is ready when we come in. Now, James.”

He took her away to the opening, from which the loch was visible, and pointed out to her, hill by hill, the whole range, lying under the evening sunshine and the flying shadows; now one peak coming out, now another, now a sudden gleam, like some sun-signal calling forth an unseen knoll into glory, among all the other unnoticed slopes, now a deep purple mantle of royal wealth coming down over the great veiled shoulder of a chosen mountain. During the few minutes they stood there gazing, a hundred transformations took place upon those heights. At what strange games were those Titans playing—veiling themselves, unveiling, retiring into mist, breaking out as with a shout, into the sudden light? Evelyn, for a moment, forgot everything as she gazed at this rapid drama of the hills. She was recalled to herself by the tremble in Rowland's arm as he held hers. He had been as happy and proud in her enthusiasm as if the beloved mountains were part of himself: but there was something more important to him even than the hills. He gave her arm a close pressure as she was silent for a moment, and said close in her ear, with a tremor in his tone, "Evelyn, what do you think of them?"

The question brought her back to a prospect more near and important than the hills, one that she had been glad to put aside for the moment in favour of this wonderful and delightful scene. The moment at least was something gained, and she said to herself that she never would forget it—this

first glimpse at the surroundings of her home. The other now had to be faced again, the interior landscape, which was not so delightful. "I think, dear James," she said, "that they are both very shy and very strange between us two. They don't know me at all, and you so little. Nature works, of course, on your side, but even Nature must have a little time. And for me, Nature is rather against me than for me. We must wait before we form any judgment."

"But your first impression is—bad, or if not bad yet——"

"It is not bad at all! Don't take up false ideas. They are both so shy——"

"Shy! Evelyn! do you think what you are saying? Marion shy!"

"It is because she is shy that she chatters, poor little girl! Did you never know that was a form it took? Archie is silent, and she chatters. He is a little—rude, and she is a little—talkative. It is all from the same cause. You did not tell me what a pretty little thing she was, James."

"Pretty!—do you think she is pretty? She is not the least of your kind, Evelyn."

"I hope she is of a better kind. Next spring, when she has learned to make her curtsy, and is dressed regardless of expense; for I will take *carte blanche*, I warn you, so far as Marion is concerned—you shall see! She will make a sensation at the drawing-room."

A glow of beatitude came over James Rowland's

face. He almost hurt her arm with the pressure he gave it. "You think so? You really think so, Evelyn—before the Queen?" The warmth ran to his very heart, and came back in a sort of dew of happiness to his eyes. His little girl before the Queen! perhaps to be noted by that mother sovereign herself with a kindly eye. *His* child! and he there to look on, paying the homage it would be more than his duty to pay. He stood for a moment clasping Evelyn's arm, too glad to speak. And then—for the pain is more persistent than the pleasure—he added in a low confidential tone, "But the boy—is just a lout, poor lad?" It sounded like an assertion, but it was a question, and of the most anxious kind.

"He is no lout, you unjust, abominable parent. I see at once the eyes you told me of—his mother's eyes."

"One would think, to hear you, that you had seen his mother!"

"I have through your eyes, James. I will never forget that first day. And I thought of her as we came across the Clyde."

"It was more than I did, Evelyn—with you there."

"She must have been there with you often, and thought you were talking nonsense; and now you have got all you ever dreamed of——"

"And more!" he said; "and more!" again pressing her arm.

"And now we have got to make it up," said

Evelyn, "to the two whom she has left to you—and to me, through you, James."

"She was an innocent, simple creature, Evelyn!"

"She was your wife, James. Don't go into the house which you have dreamed of for so long without thinking of her who never lived to be its mistress."

Rowland took off his hat. "I had a sore heart to lose my poor Mary," he said; "God bless her in Heaven, where she is; but I have got the best blessing a man can have in Rosmore."

CHAPTER IV

MRS. BROWN did not come to Rosmore, though she received a letter from Mrs. Rowland which dissolved her at the first moment of reading in tears and gratitude, but which afterwards she began to fear must have "some motive," though it was difficult to imagine what. For why should the lady be so kind to her? she asked herself. There are a great many good people in the world and especially women, who are haunted with this idea of a "motive," and cannot shake themselves free of it. Jean was herself an innocent person enough, acting upon impulse continually. But all the more was she anxious to investigate the supposed mysterious meaning and suggestion of self-interest which could have dictated Evelyn's kind and simple letter. "I should have wished that you had come with the children to settle them in their new home, where, of course, there will always be a room for you, their affectionate guardian, who have been a mother to them; but at least I hope you will come now, and that you

will approve of all my arrangements for them." It was difficult to find anything in this that could be objected to, and Jean wept over it at first, as has been said ; but then her habitual distrust came in. "What will the woman be wanting with me ? It will be to give herself credit with Jims, and throw a' the blame on me—but I'll no fa' into the snare," she said to herself, falling into it instantly, if snare it was. When Archie appeared in the afternoon to fetch her, she shook her head. "Na, na, I'm no gaun—no a fit. It's just some plan for exposing your poor mammaw's family, and letting him see we're not to be evened to *her*. No, no, I will never set my fit within Rosmore."

Archie himself, though he had gone to Glasgow on Mrs. Rowland's gentle compulsion to escort his aunt, was not perhaps very anxious that she should come. Though he was full of affection for her, it is to be feared that already the cold eye of the butler had worked its effect upon Archie. He felt himself grow red and a cold dew come over his forehead when he thought of that functionary holding his silver dish at Mrs. Brown's elbow. What unutterable things would be in his eye ! Archie felt that Morris looked at himself with a pitying wonder. What, then, would he feel for Mrs. Brown ? Therefore he was not disposed to press the matter. As for Mrs. Rowland, the lively prejudice with which he had met her, had been kept up with difficulty in her presence, and he could throw no light on the motive she could have

in asking Mrs. Brown. There was, alas, no difficulty whatever in proving to the most casual observer that Mr. Rowland's family, which in this case was Mrs. Brown's family, could not in any way be "evened" to the new wife who was supreme at Rosmore. To bring Mrs. Brown to make that doubly sure was a work of supererogation. Archie did not say this to his aunt, but with a burning sense of disadvantages which he had never suspected before he felt it in his own breast.

"And how is Mey getting on?" said Jean, when this question was decided.

"Oh, well enough. She is just copying everything she sees, like a little parrot, as she is."

"There's no harm in that," said Jean, "for I suppose the leddy's real well-bred and a' that. It would be nothing but that he marriet her for. He was aye an ambitious man, Jims Rowland. But ch! he's a good-hearted man—just ower good. I got a letter from him this morning, and he says the allowance will just go on, and I'm to keep the house, and make myself comfortable."

Jean's ready tears flowed forth upon this argument. "It's awfu' kind," she sobbed; "I wouldna say a word against one of them, nor do a thing to vex him. If he had been my ain brother, he couldna have been more kind—I'm just at my ease for life; and if you could tell me ony thing I could do to please him——"

"Maybe it would please him," said Archie doubtfully, "if you were to come to Rosmore."

"Na, na, I'll no do that—just to graitify that prideful woman. But ye can tell him that I want the house for his, and that whatever use can be made of it to send things to, or to come for a night's lodging instead of one of thae dear hotels—it will be ready. There will be beds ready, and linen aired ready to put on, night and day," said Mrs. Brown in the fervour of her gratitude. "And ye can say to *her*, Archie, that I'm very much obliged, but that I have not sleepit out of my own house for years, which is just the real truth, as ye can certify, though maybe it's no just the reason in the present case; and ye may say I will be glad to see her if she comes to Gleskie—which is no perhaps exactly the case, but we maun be ceevil. Mind ye must always be ceevil, whatever happens. It would give her a grand hold upon ye, if ye were ever wanting in respec'."

"I've no reason to think she's wanting any hold upon me," said Archie, with a little irritation.

"Eh!" said his aunt, holding up a warning finger, "she's laying her spell on you too! I'll no go near her, or she might make a fool o' me. It's easy enough to make a fool o' me. I just greet at a kind word—I canna help mysel.' When I got her letter wi' a' its fine words, I just grat till I was blin'; but then I asked myself what for should she be that ceevil to me?"

"It was maybe only for kindness after all," said Archie.

"Dinna you be a born idiot to trust in that.

Na, na, it's no without a motive, take my word for it," Jean said.

It was hard, however, for the closest observer to find out what the motive could be. Evelyn had no small effort to make to overcome her own natural objections to the society of the two young people, one of whom studied her like a pattern book, while the other eyed her from his corner with a hostility scantily veiled by that attempt to be "ceevil" which his aunt had enjoined upon him. Archie's attitude, however, was on the whole less trying than that of Marion, who studied and copied Mrs. Rowland's manners, her tone, as far as she could master it, her little tricks of gesture, till Evelyn became ridiculous to herself; which is a very curious experience. When she saw little Marion with her slight person throw back her head as Evelyn was aware she had herself the habit of doing, and drop her hand by her side, which was another peculiarity, swaying it slightly as she walked, a trick for which Evelyn had suffered much in her youth, the laugh which burst from her in spite of herself was not pleasant. Evelyn was tall, while Marion was little; she was forty, and Marion was eighteen. She belonged a little, she was aware, to a by-gone school, which had been stately rather than piquant, and Marion's infantile prettiness was adapted to a quite different principle. It was ludicrous to watch growing and increasing day by day the travesty of herself which was before her eyes in her husband's little

girl. Sometimes her impatience with the copy was so great that the woman's instincts of outraged personality were upon her, and she could have seized and shaken the folly out of the little flatterer and imitator. But I need not say that this was the merest flutter of nerves on Evelyn's part, and that she never really departed from her *rôle* of patience. The worst of it was that James began gradually to perceive, and not only to perceive, but regard with delight, this imitation process. "I really think she is growing a little like you, Evelyn!" he said, when his wife had been driven nearly to an end of her toleration, and it was all she could do to keep from her countenance a contraction—which Marion would probably have reproduced next day, to the confusion of all concerned.

In this way, however, a great superficial improvement was notable in the girl. She learned in an inconceivably short time how to manage all the circumstances of her changed life, adapting herself to everything as one to the manner born. No temptation of being respectful to the butler ever came to Marion. She treated him and the rest of the fine servants as if they were cabbages; which was her rendering of the easy and genial indifference with which Mrs. Rowland received the services she had never been accustomed to consider extraordinary. Evelyn's manner to the maid in her room, though she might not say a word to her, was the easy composure of a woman

perfectly considerate and friendly, and ready on any occasion to show her natural interest in the fellow-creature so near to her, both by word and deed. But Marion's indifference went the length of insult, though she had no intention of anything but to follow exactly her stepmother's example. The demeanour of the one was just that kind of quiet familiar affability and ease which characterizes a relationship in which there is no desire, on the part of the superior at least, for any more demonstration than is felt, or unnecessary intercourse; but Marion's was a kind of brutality by which the inferior was made to feel as if she had no existence at all except as a ministrant to certain wants. Thus the little girl achieved that polish of the Tartar, which, when scratched, shows the savage through.

Archie was not at all of this kind. And sometimes when Evelyn looked up suddenly and found him with his averted head, shoulder turned the side she was sitting on, and blank of dull opposition, she felt it almost a relief. Now and then some sentiment on her part, something quite unthought of which she said or did, and which probably had no connection whatever with himself, would make him look full at her with those eyes which Rowland had called his mother's eyes—the honest soft blue, not too profound, but clear as the sky, in which at least the perception of the heart was not wanting, whether it was accompanied or not by any higher light of the spirit. What Archie knew or did not

know it was difficult to say, for he never spoke when he could help it, and then chiefly in answer to questions which were seldom of an intellectual kind. Something had been said at first about the University, or rather, as both Archie and his father called it, "the College," which meant, as Evelyn came slowly to understand, the same thing—only so far different that Glasgow or Edinburgh was the University meant, and not Oxford or Cambridge. That his son should go to "the College" had been Rowland's intent, but the idea seemed to drop all the more completely, of course, that it was the summer vacation, and nothing could be done for the moment. Archie however, instead of exerting himself like Marion to acquire a new, if it should happen to be a fictitious, standing ground, remained a sort of unknown quantity in his father's house. With all the efforts she could make Evelyn did not succeed in forming anything but the most slight acquaintance with her stepson, and neither (which was more extraordinary still) did his father attain to more than an acquaintance. Sometimes Archie would be drawn into an expression of opinion on a political subject, which naturally was, as a rule, in opposition to his father, and at once crushed by him; upon which the boy with not unnatural wrath return into his shell more closely than before. One time, indeed, Evelyn had found herself on the very verge of attaining his confidence, or so at least she thought. It was on the day—momentous day—when Rankine judged the two little dogs to be

sufficiently mature to be sent home to their master. They were brought up to the great door which was at one end of the colonnade. Nothing more amusing could be than the two little bundles of fur and fun deposited at her feet by Sandy the groom, who was delighted with his errand, though a little discomposed to find nobody but "the mistress."

"They'll be for the young gentleman," he said shamefaced.

"What delightful little things," said Evelyn, who, like all well-conditioned persons, loved dogs. "Go and find Mr. Archibald, Sandy. I'll take care of them till he comes."

When Archie appeared in great haste and for once glowing with pleasure, he found her seated in the centre of a great rug on the floor of the hall with the two little dogs in convulsions of delight beside her, barking, biting, rolling and struggling upon the soft carpet, and undaunted with the something so unknown to them—a lady in a soft silken dress to play with. Perhaps the little things recognized only this of Evelyn's many excellences, that she wore an exceptionally soft gown—not like Jenny Rankine's rough homespun. Dogs are very susceptible to this superiority of texture.

"Come and look at your doggies, Archie," she said without looking up. "I have taken possession of them, or they have taken possession of me. Where did you find such delights? There is nothing so nice as a puppy, except a baby perhaps—and you, I know, would not appreciate that."

"Why would I not appreciate that?" said Archie roughly (being thereto moved by suggestions from Aunt Jean).

Mrs. Rowland gave a glance up at the clouded countenance of the sullen boy, surprised but saying nothing, and he ended as he generally did when alone with her, by feeling ashamed of himself.

"They're Rankine's doggies—a particular breed," he added more civilly than usual to make up. "He's the old gamekeeper, and he's given himself up to dogues ever since his accident."

This was quite a long speech for Archie to make.

"He has given himself up to it with great success," said Evelyn. "You must take me to see him. These are just at the most delightful stage. I said there was nothing so nice except a baby. But kittens are almost as nice before they grow to be cats."

"They cannot be so nice," said Archie, "because they do grow to be cats; and these will be dogues when they're grown up."

Evelyn pondered a little over this dogmatic proposition before she answered: "You put it in an original way, but I think I agree with you, Archie. And what are these little things called—or have they got names—or shall we confer some on the spot?"

"Rankine hasn't much imagination: he calls them just Roy and Dhu—that means red and black in Gaelic. But you spell the last D-h-u."

"Roy and Dhu are very good names," said Evelyn. "I would keep to them, I think: they sound well even if Rankine has not much imagination."

"He has a great deal of Gaelic," said Archie: "he writes things in papers about poetry and stuff. He discourses to me sometimes, but I never mind."

"Then you don't care for poetry and stuff?"

"How should I, in Gaelic, which I don't understand?" The conversation, however, was thus getting upon general topics, which Archie eschewed, and he suddenly awoke to the danger of being drawn into a *tête-à-tête* with his step-mother. "The dogues will be spoiling your dress and a bother to you."

"I have never confessed to your father," she said "that I am very fond of dogs. I don't think he likes them. Suppose you and I set up a little kennel of our own. You will want dogs for the shooting when the time comes, and I have not seen one about the place."

"No, there are none. Gilmour—that's the gamekeeper—has two or three. He says there's a good deal of shooting," said Archie, led out of himself by the interest of this subject, about which he had gleaned a little further information. It excited and charmed the lad, for he was full of eagerness to do things like other young men of his age, but afraid to show his ignorance to begin with.

"Your father has not said much about it. He is

not a shooting man, you know. You will have to go out with the gamekeeper and bring us our first grouse."

"I'll not bring in many grouse," he said almost under his breath.

"You are not a good shot? Never mind: you are young enough to mend that. The great thing is to keep cool and not get flurried, I believe."

"Oh, I don't suppose lassies"—he corrected himself quickly with a violent blush—"ladies know much about it."

"Perhaps not," said Evelyn, "but my father was one of the best shots in Northamptonshire. It is not a very great distinction," she added with a smile. "I could quite forgive a man for not shooting at all."

"It's no a crime," said Archie, as if to himself, and with a tone of defiance.

"Oh no, quite the reverse—neither one way nor another. I think," she added with a little hesitation, "that your father, though he does not shoot himself, would be pleased if you showed a little enthusiasm about it. Forgive me for saying so. It is worth while taking a little trouble to please him, he cares so much——"

"Not for me," said Archie, setting his pale face within his high collar like a rock.

"Oh, you silly boy!—more for you in that way than for any living creature. And very naturally, for are not you his heir—his successor—to represent him in anything he does not do himself?"

"For pride, then," said Archie, throwing down rather roughly upon the rug one of the dogs with which he was playing, "not for anything else."

"Oh, poor little doggie," said Evelyn, seeing it inexpedient to continue this subject, and then she added more lightly, "What are they to be called then, Archie? Roy and Dhu?"

"Whatever you like," cried the young man. "I care nothing for them now: they are just little brutes that fawn on anybody. You may call them Red and Black, if you like, like the cards. I don't care if I never saw them more."

And he turned upon his heel and strode away. But these were words too dignified and tragical to suit with Archie's appearance, which was not that of the hero of romance who grandly does those things. To turn on your heel and stride away, you ought to be six feet at least, with chest and shoulders to match. Archie was about five feet six, stooped, and was badly dressed. He had not yielded to any soft compulsion on this point, as Marion had done so easily. He had begun to perceive it himself, nay, he could see that the youngest footman's cut of livery suit was better than his. But he clung to his old suit all the same.

The shooting which Mr. Rowland had taken along with Rosmore was not very great—a few grouse on the hillside, a few partridges late in the season, some pheasants as tame as poultry in those delightful woods which were so pleasant to wander in (when your shoes were thick and you

did not mind the damp), but not sufficient to entertain many birds. I don't know how rich men generally who have made their money, and have not been used to those luxuries, arrange about the shooting in the fine "places" which they buy and retire to when their portion is made—whether they fall naturally into the habit of it, and shoot like the other gentlemen, or whether it is a matter that lies heavy on their mind. It certainly lay very heavy on the mind of Archie, who was too shy to acknowledge that he knew nothing about that mode of exercise, and therefore went out with the keeper when the dreadful moment came in great perturbation, not frightened, indeed, for his gun, or for shooting himself, which would have been a certain deliverance, but for cutting a ridiculous figure in the eyes of Roderick, the gamekeeper, who talked to him, the inexperienced Glasgow boy, as he would have talked to any young gentleman who had been accustomed to the moors from his cradle. Archie did not reflect that Roderick knew perfectly where he had come from and how he had been bred, and that this assumption that he knew all about it was indeed pure ridicule on the keeper's part, which would have been completely divested of its sting if the lad had possessed sufficient courage to say that he was a novice. But he did not, and the consequence was a few days of utter humiliation and weariness, after which Archie became painfully capable of shooting within a few yards of

the bird, and once actually brought down a rabbit, to his great exultation, yet remorse. Poor rabbit, what had it done to have its freedom and its life thus cut short? But the lad durst no more express this sentiment than he durst say that he had never fired a gun in his life before that terrible Twelfth when he went out for the first time on the hillside and barked his unaccustomed shins, and made his arms ache and his head swim with the fatiguing, sickening hopeless day. Rowland had been warned that there was no game to be had which would justify him in inviting company. "Me and the young gentleman—twa guns—we will want nae mair—just enough to keep up a bit supply for the hoose," Roderick said with a twinkle in his eye. And as Archie made no protest, his father thought that somehow or other the boy who had never had anything to do all his life must know how to manage his gun.

There were some ideas of going out to the hill with luncheon, which Evelyn, however, seeing the terror and despair at once in the lad's eyes, discouraged.

"No," she said, "men only pretend to like it when there's a party: they never like it when they mean serious work."

"Do you ever desire work, Archie?" said his father. "Come in with a good bag, there's a good fellow."

"If I might speak a word, sir," said Roderick,

"the finest fallow in the world will no bring up a cheeper if there's nane to come."

"Well, well, start early, and good luck to you," said Rowland.

And they all came out to meet the pair returning in the afternoon, Archie more dead than alive, with his hands blistered and his shins scratched, and the look of absolute exhaustion on his face, but somehow with a bird or two in his bag which he was not conscious of, still less of how they got there.

"Ou ay, there's aye a hare or twa," said the gamekeeper; "but it was very warm on the hill, and Mr. Archibald is not used to the work, as few gentlemen are the first day. I'll take your gun, sir, and I'll take your bag, and the ladies will give ye a lift hame."

Archie obeyed, and clambered into the carriage, the most dilapidated sportsman, perhaps, that the evening of the twelfth ever saw.

"Well, sir, had ye good sport?" said his father, feeling a glow of pride in the performances of the boy.

"Oh, I don't know if you call that good sport," the lad said with a gasp.

But this was set down to modesty, or fatigue, or crossness, which unfortunately had grown of late to be a recognized quality of Archie. And Mr. Rowland himself took down a brace of grouse to the Manse next morning, a proud father handing out "my son's birds," as if Archie had been the

finest shot in the world. But this was not Archie's fault, who knew nothing of the transaction. He managed to be able to carry his gun like other feeble sportsmen after that terrible initiation. Thus both Mr. Rowland's children learned to adapt themselves to the duties of their new sphere.

CHAPTER V

ROWLAND'S ideas of the absence of society in his new home were confounded by the number of visits his wife received within the first six weeks of their stay at Rosmore. It had, I have no doubt, been noised abroad that the wife of the great railway man was, in the loose but convenient phraseology of the time, "a lady," and that there was therefore no appreciable peril to the gentility of her caller, from making her acquaintance. Lady Jean, of course, was one of the first to call upon her brother's tenant. Her arrival was attended by circumstances of which James Rowland could never think afterwards without shame and humiliation. Indeed it all but happened to him to turn the little shabby old lady who was trudging through the woods in short petticoats and a waterproof to the kitchen door as the natural entrance. Lady Jean was a little woman of about fifty, who had long ceased to take the least pride in her appearance, or to care what people thought on the subject. This

last presumption was of course quite unnecessary in the parish of Rosmore, where everybody knew who she was, and where, had she gone about in cloth of gold, it would have made no particular difference. She wore tweed accordingly with the most reckless indifference to quality (I believe the quality was generally good—it came in bales from Romanes and Paterson, which the Glasgow shopkeepers thought disloyal to them, and unpatriotic)—one society gown after another being manufactured for her as need arose ; and she was fond of giving a gown-piece to any girl that might strike her fancy, walked well, and was, as she expressed it in pregnant Scotch, “purpose like.” This is not to say that Lady Jean could not be every inch the Earl’s sister when occasion demanded, and strike terror into the Radical multitude, or that she did not possess, and occasionally wear, a wardrobe more fitted to her condition.

Her arrival at Rosmore had nearly led to disastrous effects, as I have said. For when Mr. Rowland saw the little old lady nimbly climbing the hill, with the tweed petticoats reaching to her ankles, and her hat bearing traces of encounters with several showers, he had not a doubt in his mind that she was a friend of the housekeeper or some of the servants. He had said “Hi !” and he was hurrying along partly out of kindness, for the way to the servants’ entrance was shorter than the one which swept round to the front of the

house, when he saw Archie meet and pause to answer the old lady's questions. His father, deeply critical, yet not so critical as he would have been had he known who the visitor was, saw his son turn and accompany her, taking off his hat, which Rowland thought unnecessary (though to be over civil was always better than being rude) not to the servants' door, but up to the left hand, to the front of the house. He had another "Hi!" on his very lips, but stopped, thinking he might as well leave it to Archie, no great harm being possible. If the housekeeper's friend did get admission at the great door, what then? He gave a regretful thought to the evident fact that Archie was more at home with the old lady than he was with people in his own position. Mr. Rowland shook his head sadly over this, and said to himself that it was in the boy's blood, and that he would never make a gentleman: yet comforted himself next moment and justified Archie by declaring to himself with some warmth that he had a better opinion of a lad when he was civil to those who had but little claim to the civility of their neighbours.

Consequent upon this, however, a little curiosity about this old lady came into Rowland's mind. She was perhaps some ancient sempstress—some old pensioner of "the family," which was a title only accorded by the public in general to the Clydesdale family, not to the interlopers at present at the house. The old person was very nimble whoever she was, and she had "neat feet,"

Mr. Rowland remarked, who had always an eye for a good point in a woman—very neat feet—shod with strong, purpose-like shoes. If Marion would only learn to have shoes like that instead of the things like paper she went about in. He went on very much at his leisure, following till the old lady disappeared under the colonnade. It would do her good to get a glimpse of the hall with its Indian carpets and wonderful hangings. Its fine to show a poor old body like that once in a way what wealth can do. It would be a thing for her to make a great gossip about in the village when she got home. Mr. Rowland was still smiling with the pleasure of this benevolent view when he saw Archie come out again. "Who is that old dame you were showing in? I'm glad to see you so civil," said the father.

"Civil!" said the young man. And then he added with his usual look of suppressed indignation, "I'm surprised you did not know her: it is Lady Jean."

"Lady Jean!!" but a thousand notes of admiration could not express the dismay of Rowland when he found out that he had very nearly called out "Hi!" to Lady Jean.

Lady Jean was greatly pleased with Mrs. Rowland, whom she described as "probably a little too English for this place—but very well-meaning, and a gentlewoman. It appears I once knew her grandmother," said Lady Jean. This, so far as the point was concerned, was as good as a patent of nobility.

Her grandmother!—it added the charm of antiquity to all the rest—though, indeed, Lady Jean was not more than a dozen years older than Mrs. Rowland. Evelyn had besought the Earl's sister to let her take charge of "the poor" in the village, which gave Lady Jean occasion for a lecture, which pleased her. "But I must ask you not to call them the poor. They are neighbours not so well off in this world's goods as we are. 'Poor folk' is an allowable phrase, meaning a large class: and it is mostly neighbourly kindness, not charity, that you will be called on to give. Something off your own table to the sick and ailing—that's a fashion of speaking—something off your housekeeper's table, not French dishes, will be the best, and a helping hand with the schooling, and a kind thought of the old people. That is what you want here."

"But that is very much what is wanted everywhere," Evelyn said.

"Very true, but there are Scotch susceptibilities which you must respect," said Lady Jean. She liked to make this explanation, and then to laugh at it, with a twinkle in her eye.

But her conclusion was that Mrs. Rowland was a most creditable person. "Rich, oh richer than anybody has a right to be—but not much the worse considering—just a well-looking, well-mannered gentlewoman."

Nothing could be more satisfactory than this report. It ran up the loch and across the mountains. The Duchess heard of it in her quarters

among the hills. It flew east to another duchess on the lowland side. Of course I need not say to people who know the country which was the one duchess and which the other. In the course of time they both called, which was a prodigious distinction : and so did all the smaller gentry, and some of those great Glasgow potentates who build themselves new castles upon the banks of the Clyde. Some of them were very fine gentlemen indeed, but they were "mixed," and some were only "Glasgow builders" of a kind quite unknown to Evelyn. One whose carriage would have made a sensation in Hyde Park, even in the days of hammercloth, with two powdered footmen behind, had the manner still of the blacksmith he had originally been. Mr. Rowland rather liked these personages, especially the old gentleman who had been a blacksmith. He stood up in a group with two or three of them who represented among them heaven knows how many millions, and thrust his hands into his pockets and talked investments and money. Why should not people talk money who have more of that than of anything else? Painters talk of their pictures, and literary men of their books. Why not millionaires of that which makes them so? Rowland was very intelligent, and he liked to talk upon money subjects ; but an occasional laying of the heads together with a few other rich men over the subject of money was refreshing to him, as it is refreshing to an artist after long deprivation to find himself once more among his own kind.

With all this flash of fine society, however, which so soon made an end of Rowland's fears, it is astounding how much in the foreground of the picture was Miss Eliza, briefly described as "of the Burn" in the nomenclature of the parish. What Miss Eliza's surname was, and what was implied by the designation "of the Burn," it was really quite unnecessary to add. The same surname is so very general in Scotch west country parishes, that it confers little distinction in itself. Miss Eliza came to call in a little wickerwork carriage, called a clothes-basket by her friends, with a russet pony to draw it and an equally russet groom or stable-boy to look after the vehicle when she 'made a call. Miss Eliza drove the pony herself, with Colin generally behind, to whom she threw a word occasionally when a longer time than usual elapsed without meeting anybody on the road : but as the kind woman knew everybody, from the fishwife who came over with her creels from Kilrossie during the season of the saut water, up to the Earl himself, when he happened to be seen in those regions, or even the Duchess, who was a still more rare visitor, there was but little time for her to entertain Colin with a special remark. "How do you do the day?" she said with a wave of her whip in salutation of her friends. "How's a' with you, David? I hope the hoast is better, and that you like the lozenges.—Good morning, Mrs. Dean, and isn't it just a pleasure to see such a fine day : grand for the hay, as I have been saying all the way down

the loch, fifty times if I've said it once. I'm hoping they'll get it all well carted in at Rowanson, and a fine heavy crop it is, just a pleasure to see.—Eh, is that you, Lizzie, with your basket? It's awfu' heavy for you, my poor lass, and you not got up your strength yet. Climb up beside Colin: I'll, take ye a bittie of the way.—Good-day to ye, minister. Ye see I've got Lizzie Chalmers in the basket. Ye must just give her a good talking to, for she's come out before she has got up her strength. Would you like any of her fish at the Manse? I would call and leave them on my way back, with pleasure, and it would aye be something for her to take home. I will have some of the herrings and the little haddies myself, though the haddies are not equal to the Fife haddies, and the herrings are not so good as Loch Fyne. Oh yes, I am just going to Rosmore. I hear she's just an uncommon nice person, and a credit to the loch-side.—Dear me, there's Lady Jean. It's a sight for sore eyes to see you now, and a sore trouble to think you're in the parish no longer, and I can scarcely offer to give you a lift when I have Lizzie Chalmers in the cart. Isn't she just a very presentable sort of person? I'm meaning the new lady at the house, no Lizzie: we all know everything there is to know about her. And I hope his lordship is quite well, and you are not finding Ardnachrean damp.—Dear, bless me, there is the doctor, and I want to ask him about young Rankine, and make him speak his mind to Lizzie there. Good-day to you all, good-day."

If it may be suggested that a country lady driving her own machine could scarcely be likely to meet so much company on a country road, I must say in my own defence that it was the same day on which Lady Jean had paid her visit to Mrs. Rowland, which accounted for her ; and as for the usual inhabitants of Rosmore, from the minister down to old David, they were all to be met with in the afternoon, within a few hundred yards. Lizzie Chalmers, it is true, was from Kilrossie, and did not come every day, but she was the only one of the party with the exception of Lady Jean who was not to be met with about the same hour on the same road every day.

“Is he any better, doctor?” said Miss Eliza, coming down upon the doctor with a little rush of the russet pony, prompted by a smarter than ordinary flourish of the whip. “Yes, I was afraid it was his own fault, the foolish fellow. Men are just idiots rushing upon destruction, and him so sensible when he is *himself*. There is Lizzie Chalmers, behind me in the basket, just as silly in another way, coming out with her heavy creel before she is well over her trouble. I would wish you to speak very seriously to her, doctor. You must just lay me out my herrings and haddies, and the codfish for the Manse, it will make your creel the lighter. And Colin, fill you that long basket with grass to make a nice caller bed for the fish.—And here we are at the gate of Rosmore, and to take you further would just be to take you out of your way. Help

her out, Colin, and you can put out the biggest codfish—if it's too much for them, I'll make them a present of it, and they can send the rest to that ne'er-do-weel's poor wife, poor thing. And Lizzie, my woman, here's another shilling for you. Stay at home and look after the bairns, and don't come out to-morrow. Now, Rufus, on you go, my man. It's a stiff brae, and I know you don't like it; but we'll just make Colin get out and run. Come away, my bonnie man," said Miss Eliza with a chirrup, as she slanted the pony's head towards the brae. Having no one else to speak to, she talked to Rufus, who was very well used to it, and responded by little shakings of his head and jinglings of his harness. "Come away," she added, meaning, "go on"; "it's a stey brae, but ye must just go at it with a stout heart, and it will be over in a moment. Come away, my bonnie man! Just jump in too Colin, and not let him cool after that fine burst, for I like to come in at the door with a dash, and Rufus can do it if he likes. Now down with ye again, and give a good peal to the bell.—Will Mrs. Rowland be in this afternoon?" she added, with a sweep of the whip towards the footman at the door. Then Miss Eliza got down a little more dexterously than an inexperienced spectator would have looked for. She went into Rosmore in the same cheerful manner, talking all the way. The footman, it is true, was English, and an unknown quantity, but even to him Miss Eliza found something to say.

"They will 'be in, both Mrs. Rowland and the

young lady? That is very lucky for me, for in a fine day like this most people are on the road. They will be using the long drawing-room with the view? Well, I do not blame them: it is best though Lady Jean used to keep it for company.—Who will ye say? Oh, there is my card, that is the most sensible way.—My dear Mrs. Rowland, I am very glad to make your acquaintance. We have heard just everything that is good of you, and I have been most anxious to welcome you to the parish. And this is Miss Rowland? Dear me, how delighted all the young folk will be to hear of such an addition. And now that you have got settled down a little, I hope you like the house?"

"The house is delightful," said Evelyn, "and so are the views. My husband prepared me for the beauty of the country, but he said very little about the excellence inside."

"He would know but little," said Miss Eliza. "They're not noticing about houses, the men folk. And as for the views, we have been settled here this forty years since we came quite young creatures ourselves; but I've never tired of this. I've never got indifferent, as you generally do, with what you've seen every day: it's just as new to me now as it was at the first."

"It is a beautiful country," said Evelyn civilly.

"Is it not—just a blessed country! Eh, if the people were but equal. 'Every prospect pleases,' you remember the hymn says, 'and only man—' No, no, I will not say that man is vile: that is a

great deal too strong. What I complain of in very religious folk is that they are censuring their neighbours, when perhaps, if the truth was known, their neighbours— But we must not pursue that subject. Man is not vile, but he's not so satisfying as the everlasting hills."

"Oh," said Marion, with the little fictitious intonation which copied Evelyn's, "but men are more amusing than the mountains." She herself was not by any means so amusing in her diction since she had become an echo of Mrs. Rowland in her gesture and voice.

"The young ladies," said Miss Eliza with a laugh "are mostly of that opinion, and I should not say nay, for I have not less than six nephews coming to-morrow for tennis, and everything that they can find that is diverting. They are either at the college, for there's a summer session in the scientific classes, or else they're in offices, and they come down to us on Saturday to play. I hope you'll come up to the Burn, you and your brother, to meet my young men. There will be a view or two as well. And after the diversion there will be a kind of supper, and then they will see you home."

Marion did not know how to act in such an emergency, but it was understood that the invitation was accepted. And Miss Eliza returned after half an hour's talking, full of the genius of the mistress of the house, and the wealth of its fitting up. "There would need to be something very

sustaining in the sense of good old blood in your veins, and a family that has existed for generations," she said, "for if I was Lady Jean, I could not bear to see how the house is changed, just by the railway man. For it was always a bare, cauldrie sort of house. I used to feel that there were not carpets enough on the floor, nor coals enough in the grate. Now it's just all blazing and shining with warmth—curtains that just clothe the place, and pictures on the walls, and grand carpets that your foot sinks in. It may not be such good taste, but it is far more comfortable. And Mrs. Rowland is a most personable woman, and him a very good sort of a man."

"And the daughter, Aunt Eliza?" cried the miss, to whom this was the most interesting part of all.

"The daughter—well, she's just a young lady like the rest. I asked her to come to-morrow, and you can judge for yourself," Miss Eliza said.

The minister and his wife formed a still more interesting part of the immediate society of the little place, and puzzled Evelyn, who had been brought up in the somewhat narrow creed of her country to ignore everything but "the Church," and to look with small respect upon dissenters in general as a community of uneducated people. She did not at all know what to make of the trim and well-dressed pair who called upon her, he in garments almost more sacerdotal than if he had been a priest of All Saints, Elizabeth Street, and she with the fashion-

able cut of her dress shadowed by the inevitable mackintosh. This was the Scotch minister whom she had met with in pictures in a very different aspect, but of whom she knew nothing in real life except that she had a puzzled comprehension that he did not belong to "the Church," but yet was—what was he?—a kind of vicar or rector after another fashion, like yet quite unlike the vicars and rectors whom she knew. Mrs. Rowland had her limitations like others, and did not know what to think. But she was, as ever, charmingly polite, and did her best to please these bewildering neighbours. She apologized for not having yet been to church, giving some excuse of tiredness or headache. As a matter of fact the headache had been a result of the same bewilderment which made her so curious and so unassured about the position of Mr. Dean. A Scottish gentlewoman in England would have had no such ignorance; which is a curious fact, and one, perhaps, which proves the superiority of the wealthier and more remote ecclesiastical economy.

"I dare say," said Mrs. Dean, "that you were not sure if you should come to our church. There is an Episcopalian Chapel in Kilrossie. As you are English, Mrs. Rowland, it's perhaps there you should go."

"Indeed, I cannot say," said Evelyn, "I have never gone anywhere but to the parish church—but—I don't quite understand——"

"We both understand perfectly," said Mrs. Dean

“that you would miss the ritual and your beautiful prayer-book. We have a great sympathy for that. There is nothing in the prayer-book, I am sure, that would be a stumbling-block to my husband, and he sometimes takes a collect just straight out of it without any kind of clipping or trimming. There is a great movement in Scotland, which perhaps you are not acquainted with, to improve the baldness of our services, and make them more generally attractive. We have a harmonium,” Mrs. Dean said with pride, “and I am happy to say that our choir is beginning to chant just extraordinarily well. You will see no such terrible difference as maybe you think.”

Evelyn held her peace, being more and more bewildered with every word. She wondered what Mrs. Reuben Butler, *née* Jeanie Deans, who was once the minister's wife of this parish, would have thought of this statement. She only bowed in reply, not being for her own part at all qualified to speak.

“Alexander will explain to you far better than I can, and you will find no intolerance in him. He perhaps agrees better with you,” she added, with a smile, “than with the old-fashioned folk who insist upon keeping up all the difference.—Alexander, Mrs. Rowland would like you to explain the way we're trying to bridge over the debateable land between our establishment and the other. Just come here. I will change places with you.” The good wife, with these words, rose and took a

chair beside Rowland, to whom her husband had been talking, which was very self-denying on the part of the minister's wife, there being nothing at all novel in the gentleman of the house, whereas there was a great deal that was novel in the lady, and therefore interesting. She relinquished the post to the minister, who was perhaps better able to expound—was he better able to expound?—the problem of that ecclesiastical movement in Scotland which is so much more puzzling to unsophisticated English understandings, prepared for polemics and opposition, than the good old conventional figure of the Presbyterian Calvinist, which is a primitive type that everybody knows.

"I don't know what there is to explain," said Mr. Dean, taking, nothing loth, the chair his wife had vacated: he too preferred the mistress to the master of the house. "Our services—but then Mrs. Rowland will understand them better when she has seen them."

"Oh, I was very tired after my long journey—and I had a headache."

"She was not out of her bed," replied Rowland, as if his wife were being blamed.

"I am sure," said Mr. Dean, "that if I was Mrs. Rowland, I should not go through the tedious drawl of the old-fashioned Scotch church on any account, or listen to a sermon an hour long, which is what some of our neighbouring clergymen still indulge in. But it is modified in Rosmore church, and I promise you you shall not have more of me

than twenty minutes. We have very decent music, thanks to my wife. In short, for a country service in an out-of-the-way place like this, I'm glad to think that we are making it much more attractive."

"Attractive?" Evelyn said, more bewildered than ever. "To whom were they intended to be attractive? To the persons to whom they were addressed?"

"It is in no way necessary," said the minister, "that music and everything that is pleasant should be appropriated by one body. We can take up our inheritance in that way just as fitly as the Episcopalians. I am not a bigoted Presbyterian," he said, "even in the way of Church government, which is really the only peculiar part of our economy. I think it is just as good as the other. I don't think that either of them is divinely appointed. I am used to presbytery, you are used to bishops—very well. We need not go to loggerheads about that. I know a bishop or two, and I've always found them very friendly, without being inclined to bow down to kiss the pastoral ring any more than the papal toc."

"You are not so peaceably inclined when you come home from a Presbytery meeting, Alexander," said the wife of his bosom. "For my part I am rather fond of the lawn sleeves. I think equality of ministers is just as great nonsense as equality generally. Don't you think so, Mr. Rowland? When young Lord Rosmore says to me we are all born equal, I just say to him, 'Bah! As if anybody

in his senses would put my husband and Johnny Shanks at the head of the loch upon the same level !' You will remember Johnny Shanks ? just a nobody ; whereas Alexander——"

"My wife," said Mr. Dean, while this was going on, "likes the decorative side. Lawn sleeves and gaitered legs take her fancy. But if there is one thing convenient in our simplicity, it is that we are saved all the millinery questions. And that I think goes for a great deal."

Evelyn had never been ecclesiastically minded, and was but vaguely aware what the millinery question meant. As for the rest, though she was an intelligent woman, these two people might as well have talked Hebrew to her : there was no understanding in her mind.

CHAPTER VI

IT was October when the young Saumarezes arrived at Rosmore. October is very lovely in the west of Scotland. The trees are thinned but still glowing, the birches like lamps of gold among the darker woods, scattering round them, as the leaves drop, a golden underground that gives out light. The great line of mountains at the head of the loch were lightly touched with snow. The villas on the banks came out more brightly from the thinned foliage, and stood reflected in the shining water, with all the tints round them of red rowan berries and dazzling autumnal leaves. The air had a clearness as of the rarefied air of high altitudes. There had not been any rain for ten days, so remarkable a fact that the district in general was beginning to fear the failure of its wells.

In such an evening, while the sun lavished its last rays upon the loch and the opposite shore, bathing them in golden light, Rosamond and Edward came across in the steamboat to the whole Rowland family, which awaited them on the pier.

I am wrong, however, to say the whole family : for Archie, who had been seized by a strong repugnance to the newcomers without any reason—a fact which, of course, made it more strong—was not of the number. He had gone up the loch or the hill with a determined intention of returning only in time for dinner. If truth had been told, he was extremely curious, even anxious about the young man who was of his own age, about whom there could be no doubt that he was a gentleman born to everything which Archie had not been born to, yet possessed. He did not think at all about the pretty sister, who probably would have most engaged the interest of the ordinary youth of twenty. But the more Archie was curious, the less had he any intention of showing it. He listened himself to what was said, but he asked no questions. Finally he started, half an hour before they went to meet the newcomers, for a long walk up the hill.

“It is too lovely,” said Rosamond, presenting her cheek as usual, that Mrs. Rowland should kiss it. “I wish some one had told me that it was a beautiful place. I never began to look till we got into the steamboat. I am not in the least tired, thank you. Eddy! where are you, Eddy? One never knows where to find him. He is always picking up everywhere some fellow he knows. He is not nice to travel with, because there are so many fellows he knows.”

Here there advanced from the other end of the boat, and bounded across the gangway just before

it was withdrawn, a short young man, with a travelling cap upon one side of his head and a cigar in his mouth. He had to make a jump upon the pier amid a shout of "Take care, will ye!" and "What are ye doing, lad?" from the man at the pier; and dropped like a projectile in the midst of the group which, so undistinguished was Eddy's appearance, were not looking for him except his sister, who put out a hand as if to help him. "That was cleverly done," said Rowland, opposing his own substantial bulk to arrest the stranger who was standing in their midst; "but I would advise you, my young friend, to bestir yourself sooner, and not run such a risk again."

"Oh, it is his way," replied Rosamond. "You would not think it, but this is Eddy, Mrs. Rowland. He is like nobody one ever saw."

Certainly he was not like his handsome father, the young Edward Saumarez whom Evelyn remembered so well. She had been half afraid of seeing a reproduction of his old look. But that was one of the anticipatory troubles that she might well have spared herself. He was short; his hair was light and scanty; his eyes half lost under many folds of loose eyebrows, and a brow which contracted with what some unkind critic had called the short-sighted scowl, was rather small. His nose was turned up a little. Marion, who, in the interests of Archie, had been looking forward, half with hope and half with fear, to the arrival of a beautiful youth—a darling of society, exquisitely clothed and of distinguished

appearance—felt a pang, half of disappointment, half of relief. Perhaps the relief was the stronger. Archie!—why, Archie was taller, better looking, and more a man than this little shambling fellow! The foolish father felt much more cordial to Eddy, and grasped him strongly by the hand.

“You’re welcome to Rosmore, both you and your sister,” he said.

There came an answer from Eddy’s lips which sounded very much like “Who’s this?” but a glance from his sister brought him to himself and he made his bow accordingly.

“I’m very glad to be here, I can tell you,” said Eddy. “Never knew such a beast of a journey—tumbled out of one carriage into another, and then Glasgow, and then a boat, and I don’t know all what. How do you do? Been here long?—and have you got any sport? It’s just like my luck to come so late.”

“My son,” said Rowland with ineffable pleasure—for he did not feel ashamed of his son now, quite the reverse in sight of this shabby young lad, who looked like nothing at all—“has arranged a day for you, and I think you’ll find a bird or two yet.”

“That’s all right,” said Eddy. “How do you do, Mrs. Rowland? It is very pretty, as Rose says, but I’m not a man for the picturesque myself. Oh, you’re going to walk? Excuse me, I’m not much of a walking man: I’ll go with the ladies, if it’s the same to you.”

“Certainly,” said Rowland amazed, but always

with a certain exultation on Archie's account. This an example for Archie ! the boy was twice the man this fellow was. It is not good to rejoice in the disadvantages of other people, but he had been so sure, and professed his pleasure in it, that Saumarez's son—a man in the best society—could be a model for Archie, that the satisfaction in finding him so shabby a little fellow was more than words could say. He did not need to be ashamed of his own boy in this company at least. Mr. Rowland started to walk, while the little man jumped into his place in the carriage, with a certain elation, as if somebody had given him something he acknowledged to himself.

"How jolly of you to come to meet us," said Eddy, "country fashion. We were wondering, Rose and I, if there would be a dog-cart or something. Never expected this luxury. Rose, did you see after the luggage ? I had no time to think of it—met a fellow who was with me at Eton—one of the great plucked, don't you know—run all over the country in crowds at this time of the year."

"Yes," said Rosamond with her calm air, "he was plucked of course, Mrs. Rowland. I told you we could not come any sooner because of his exam. Of course I knew quite well how it would turn out, and so I told father. But there are some things that people will not believe. I never can see the good, for my part, of going in for exams. that you are sure not to pass."

"Oh," said Eddy light-heartedly, "it is always

something to do—keeps you from feeling that you've got no centre to your life, don't you know. I like a sort of fixed point ; if you don't work up to it, of course that's your fault, but all the same an object,—a fine thing. Don't you agree with me, Miss Rowland ?" said the young man, turning round a little to look into the face of his companion on the front seat, who had given up her place to Rosamond without any pleasure and was now studying that young lady in every line of her costume, with something of the same sensation of mingled disappointment and relief which her father had experienced. Marion was accustomed now to all the subtleties of the toilette. She was more respectful of Rosamond's grey gown than she had been of Evelyn's travelling dress ; but she perceived at a glance that from this visitor there would be little to learn.

" I don't know what you mean by an object. I think most gentlemen's object is to please themselves," Marion said.

" That's what you call epigrammatic, ain't it," said Eddy, " and severe ?"

" Oh, I just say what I think," said Marion. She had not had a young man given her to play with since the days of the students who laughed at her saucy speeches, and said among themselves that Rowland's sister was clever, much cleverer than he was ; and the prospect was agreeable to her. Not that there was anything attractive in Eddy personally, but still he was of the kind of mouse

to her cat—or cat to her mouse, as sometimes happens in that sort of exercise. They eyed each other with furtive glances, both aware of this probable relationship.

“Father has left Aix,” said Rosamond, “they have sent him to some other place which it is supposed may do him good. Of course so long as he has Rogers with him we know that he is well attended to. I hope we shall not stay too long and bore you, Mrs. Rowland. Would it be too much to say a month? I hope you will be so kind as to tell us if you want our rooms for other visitors, or get tired of us. Of course people always do in society, or it would be impossible to get on.”

“Yes, I promise, my dear, I shall tell you if I get tired of you,” said Evelyn.

“We have been for a fortnight with grand-mamma. I think we bored her very much. She told us she had people coming for the 22nd. But we really could not get away on the 22nd. One’s grandmother is not the same as any one else, do you think? However much she may be bored, it is right that she should put up with it. We don’t go there very much. Once in a year is not a great deal. She never has anything to say to father: he makes her so nervous, she says. She will soon say that Eddy makes her nervous too: when there is no smoking-room, perhaps it may be a little unpleasant to smell his cigars; but if there is anything at all in being a grandmother—then she

is of course impatient that he has not passed his exam. I cannot see why, for my part. They ought to have known it from the first. If you will not even open a book, how can you expect to pass any exam.?"

"My object, I allow, is to amuse myself," said Eddy to Marion, dropping his voice, as it is the right thing to do when you wish to set up a separate conversation. "I am quite candid, as you are—and, tell me, isn't that yours too?"

"I am afraid you will not find it very easy," said Marion, "to amuse yourself at Rosmore."

"What! is there nothing to do?" said Eddy, looking a little dismayed.

"We never see anybody from morning to night but the old maids out of the village. And we never go anywhere. There was a ball at Campbellton, but they refused it, and there was one at Eagle's Craig, but they just went themselves."

"Good heavens!" cried Eddy, "what depravity! you never mean to say that the old people, papa and mamma——"

"They just went themselves!" said Marion with an indignation almost too terrible for words.

"This must be looked into," said Eddy, "it is almost beyond belief."

"I will tell you after," said Marion, as the conversation on the other side of the carriage came to a pause.

Thus Mr. Edward Saumarez, jun., procured for himself, without a moment's delay, something to

do at Rosmore. And Marion Rowland found at once an additional interest in life. It was quite innocent, and as trivial as could have been desired. In the evening after dinner she confided a part of her troubles to him, and then the next day, when the young visitors were conducted by the young people of the house to see the neighbourhood, Marion managed so that Rosamond went on with Archie, while she herself followed attended by Eddy. And the sight of the two pairs thus arranged was amusing enough. Rosamond went on in advance, very quickly, with her smooth firm step, and her head held high, as she walked in London, where, intent upon her own business, this young woman of the period passed where she pleased, as safe in her own protection and that, but in a most secondary degree, of her mastiff, as safely as Una with her lion ; while Archie walked by her, a step behind, finding it slightly difficult to keep up with her long yet graceful steps, and still more difficult to answer the occasional questions which she addressed to him without turning her head. Archie for his own part could not, however he cudgelled his brains, find out anything to say to this beautiful young lady. He felt her to be miles, nay Alps above him, and that he could not say anything which did not feel common, vulgar, mean—like a boy in a shop talking to a princess. He kept striving to keep up with her, yet never quite kept up with her save when she stopped suddenly and turned with the same

swiftness of movement with which she walked to look out on the water or up to the hills, when he would outgo her, and be compelled to swing himself round with an effort to get back to his place.

"What is the name of that hill?" she asked, all at once coming to one of those sudden pauses.

"That?" said Archie, anxiously turning to quite another point; "oh, that is Ben Ros—or no, I think it is what they call The Miller—if it is not Rosdhu."

"You don't seem to know very much about them," said the stately girl, and then she set off again, certainly indifferent to the blundering explanation he made that he was afraid he had a bad memory, and that one person said one thing and one another, so that it was difficult to know. At another time it was on the sea-side that Rosamond paused, demanding to know the name of the lighthouse in the distance, and what was the shadowy height to be seen far off down the course of the Clyde. If it had cost him his life, poor Archie could not remember whether he had been told that this peak was Goatfell or if it was one of the Cumbraes, which he knew lay "that way." And the light: what was it that Roderick called the light? If he had ever dreamt that he would be interrogated this way, Archie would have given his whole attention to the acquisition of local knowledge. A cold perspiration came out upon his forehead, as he stammered out answers which

he was sure were all wrong. "Oh!" said Miss Saumarez, not even deigning to cast a glance at him. Eddy did not suffer half so much from his unsuccessful examination as poor Archie did from this totally unexpected process, which showed him the profound depth of his ignorance. What a fool she must think him! What an idiot he was!

"I am afraid, Mr. Rowland, you don't admire your own country so much as I do," Rosamond said at the end of the walk, with a smile that went over his head like an arrow, which she did not even take the trouble to aim at him. And he was tongue-tied and could not say a word, could not think of anything to say; though after she had gone on, a dozen little darts of words which he might have said, came into his mind, wounding himself with little pricks instead of compelling her to respect him a little, as, if they had but come soon enough, they might have done.

Meanwhile the other pair had got on, as Eddy would have said, like a house on fire. Marion had given him the whole history of the ball at Eagle's Craig, to which she had been invited with her stepmother; but to which Mrs. Rowland had gone alone—with diamonds round her neck and in her hair.

"She would not have had any diamonds but for papa," said Marion. "She was quite nobody when he married her."

"Oh, now I don't think that can be true," said Eddy, "for my governor, you know—" an impulse

of wisdom checked the young man—"couldn't have known her, could he, if she had been nobody?"

"Well, at least she was nobody out in India," said Marion, "and to see her now! And I had to stay at home—me, papa's own daughter, and the only one, and a very good dancer! And it was her that went to the ball, an old lady, and me, I had to stay at home!"

"It is a sort of thing that would justify an appeal to parliament," said Eddy, "but there must have been some sort of reason alleged. Perhaps you had not a frock?"

"I have dozens of frocks," said Marion, turning upon him with a gleam in her eye.

"Or you did not know the people?"

"I know heaps of people; that is, I did not know them myself, but what does it matter about that when I am papa's daughter, and he could just—buy them all up!"

"Oh," said Eddy, taken a little aback—for though he was accustomed to a great deal of slang and much frank speaking, it was not generally quite of this kind. "Then," he said, "I am at my wits' end, and I can't think what they meant."

"They said," cried Marion, "that I was not out."

"Oh," said Eddy again.

"But what did that matter—for who would have ever known? And it was a delightful ball, with a great many officers. And I am a fine

dancer," said Marion with a deep sigh of mingled indignation and regret.

"Oh, as for that, there is no doubt," said Eddy, "you are as light as a feather, and with those pretty little feet——"

"No, I am not as light as a feather: I am just the weight I ought to be, and my feet are just the same as other people's; but I know," said Marion with conviction, "that I am good at dancing. Archie is not very good at it, and he is not fond of it."

"He does not look as if he would be," said Eddy, with a look at the son of the house tramping on before them at a considerable distance in close pursuit of the lady who was in his charge.

"No," said Marion, "he never was fond of it—are you?"

"Oh, I adore it," said the young man, "when I have a partner to my mind. You and I, Miss Marion, would fly like the wind. We'd leave everybody behind us. I'll tell you what we must do to make up for that Ravenscraig—no, Eagle's Craig—business, we'll make them give a ball here."

"A ball at Rosmore!"

"The very thing! while we are here. Rosamond has not come out either, but, as you say, who will ever know? We may as well have our fun, and you and she can keep each other in countenance. Nobody will tell—and what would it matter if they did? Why, girls not out are to be seen everywhere—always at balls at home. You put on a high dress,"

"No," cried Marion, "I would rather die than go to a dance in a high dress."

"Well, don't then," said the complacent Eddy, "anything you please. Oh, don't be afraid. I will speak to Mrs. Rowland. I can be as independent as you like when there's any occasion for it. And my governor, you know, poor old chap——"

"Do you mean 'your papa?'" said Marion.

"Well, I don't call him so," said Eddy with a laugh. "There was a story, don't you know, about him and your mamma-in-law. The governor behaved badly, but she has a sneaking kindness for him all the same. That's why we are here."

"Oh!" cried Marion with a gasp of excitement, "tell me! for I know nothing about her. I want to know about her. I was sure there was some story."

"The governor was a sad dog when he was young," said Eddy. "Oh, he's a nice fellow to blow a fellow up for some trifle not half so bad as himself. He was up to anything that was naughty. It's funny, isn't it, to hear of these anti-diluvian lovers—my old governor, who can't move a limb, poor old chap, and this prim lady here who looks like a saint."

"As if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth," said Marion; "but I always knew there was some story. Be quick and tell me, for they are coming back."

"I will tell you another time. Can't we come out to-night in the moonlight to smoke a cigarette? Did you ever try a cigarette? Oh, all the girls do!

I'll teach you how. It makes you much better company when you don't mind a cigarette—Hi! here's Rosamond down upon us. Not a word to her whatever I tell you. And your brother coming lagging behind as if she had given him a touch of the lash. She's a rare one for that ; keeps a fellow in his place, as if she was too grand to mind."

"Oh, Archie is just as grand as she is," said the girl, slightly offended ; "and it is just his way to keep behind. I would like to see anybody giving my brother a touch of the lash !"

"It is not because he is your brother, but because he is himself," said Eddy. "I don't mean any offence. I mean that's Rosamond's way. She is like the governor, don't you know. She has got a great deal of the devil in her. So have you, I should think."

"Me!" said Marion, much shocked. "I am not what you think at all."

"Yes," said Eddy, "I am sure you are what I think. As nice as girls are made, but plenty of devilry and a spirit for anything. That is precisely what I like best."

"Well," said Marion, "I will allow that I have a great deal of spirit, if that's what you call the—— ; but you shouldn't say bad words. Do you mean that girls are not made so nice as men ? for I think you're very impudent to say so, and me a girl that you are speaking to."

"Girls," said Eddy, with an air of authority, "are sometimes much better, and sometimes they are a

great deal worse than men. There's no medium in them. You are one of the nice ones, so of course you are a great deal nicer than a fellow like me, or even your brother. I am a dreadful little beggar, and that is the truth."

"Oh, you like to say ill things of yourself."

"No, I don't if they weren't true. You hit me off exactly, the very first thing, when you said men had no object but to amuse themselves. You must be awfully clever as well as nice. I don't see what we're in the world for but to enjoy ourselves. I'm sure I didn't ask to come, and I dare say I sha'n't have a very long life, so I mean it to be a merry one, I can tell you. As for the governor," said Eddy, "he has no right to complain. Rose is too good for him, but he deserves to have me to keep him in mind of how naughty he has been."

"What have you done," said Marion interested, "that is so——naughty, as you say?"

"Oh, you would like to know?" he said, opening his eyes wide, with a laugh. "Perhaps if I were to tell you, you would never speak to me any more."

"I am not that kind," said Marion. "I would always speak to you, whatever you did—if you were sorry."

"Ah! but the chief thing in me is that I am not a bit sorry," said Eddy.—"Are you going back already you two? You go off like a hunter, Rose, never minding who toils after you. Miss Rowland and I are going further on."

"There is a beautiful view up there," said

Rosamond, pointing to the west, "if you cared about views, and the mountains are beautiful in that direction, but as you never would look at a landscape in your life——"

"Not when I had mettle more attractive," said Eddy, with a look at Marion ; and then he laughed out, "When I can combine both, I like it very much."

"May, it is perhaps going to rain. I would not advise you to go very far," said Archie, who was more susceptible than his sister to the light compliment and the laughter. But Marion stood her ground.

"Since we came to Rosmore," she said, "it has always been going to rain, and we can shelter under the trees, and it does no harm. I have promised to Mr. Saumarez to show him Ben Ros before we go in."

"I am very anxious to make the acquaintance of Ben Ros," said Eddy with a laugh. "*Au revoir*, you people who have accomplished that part already. I don't suppose you are deeply attached to Ben Ros—what do you call him—are you? But it is always a good excuse for a walk—and a talk."

"You never call me by my name," said Marion ; "you say just *you*, as if I were not a person at all."

"Because you would be angry if I called you by your name."

"Me angry! Why, I am just Miss Rowland to everybody, servants and all."

"I suppose you don't rank me with the servants? I shall say Marion or nothing—and of course you would not allow me—or May, that is your name too, and the prettiest of all."

"May is short for Marion," she said with a blush.

"And I'm to call you so? Then I shall do nothing but call you by it. May, May—it is the prettiest name in the world."

Thus there came into conjunction another two who were not Mr. Rowland's two, nor perhaps a two who were very desirable companions for each other, yet who suited each other, as Mr. Edward Saumarez eloquently expressed it, down to the ground.

CHAPTER VII.

"A BALL! It is not Archie, I am sure, who would like a ball," said Mrs. Rowland from the sofa where Eddy had been sitting by her, in an attitude of respectful adoration for some time. He had cast repeated startling glances at Marion, calling her observation while he was so engaged. And Marion, seated at a distance with a book held up in front of her face, gave way now and then to little bursts of laughter, which she quickly repressed. It was infinitely ludicrous to Marion that any one should pretend to advise Mrs. Rowland, a woman of that age; but Eddy, she thought, played his part to perfection, and it was the funniest thing in the world.

Rosamond was seated at the piano, playing as it were in an undertone, and for her own pleasure, various bits of music, one suggesting another, as one verse of poetry suggests another. She was a good musician, but she did not attempt to play to so indifferent an audience, though Rowland was always certainly civil in his desire to "have a little

music," when he came into the drawing-room after dinner. The good man knew that this was the right thing, and that Miss Saumarez would expect to be asked, and sat and yawned dutifully through what he privately thought to himself "just a terrible jingle," out of respect to his guest. But Rowland had not left the dining-room on this occasion. He had a playfellow of his own who had dined with him, and was now engaging him in much more congenial talk. Archie was not much more educated in music than his father; but there was in his unpossessed being a power of perception only half developed, of beautiful things. A sonata would have disconcerted him as much as it did Rowland; but the bits of melody that Rosamond was playing, and which he called in his simplicity tunes, seemed to make an atmosphere about her which was poetically appropriate, and filled the background of the large partially lighted sitting-room. The group on the sofa, with Marion's detached figure full in the light of a lamp, seemed like a group on the stage, carrying on the thread of some half-comprehended story. Rosamond and the music belonged to a different sphere. There were shaded candles upon the piano, throwing a white light upon a pair of white hands, moving softly over the ivory keys; behind, the curtains were drawn back from one of the rounded windows, a line of moonlight came in, and in the distance from the corner in which Archie was seated unseen there was a glimmer visible of the distant waters of the Clyde, in glistening life

and movement under the white blaze of the moon. Archie's heart was full of strange and uncomprehended emotion. He was in a new world, listening to those soft strains which touched him as the light might touch a being coming to life, and feeling the vague enchantment of the night, the presence, like a charm, of the half-seen figure, half dark, half light, at the piano, and this subtle atmosphere in which she breathed. He had said very little to Rosamond in the week during which they had lived under the same roof. She despised him quite frankly, taking no pains to disguise it. He read in her looks that she thought him a lout, a fool, a nuisance, and he was not angry or even surprised that she should think so. But he had no such thoughts of her. He liked to watch her, as he liked to look (but this he had never betrayed to any one) at the hills. He liked this atmosphere of the music, which seemed to have a curious appropriateness to her—not that he appreciated the music, although she was playing, he thought, some very pretty tunes, but it suited her somehow. He had not read much poetry, and could not remember any that would apply to her as a better instructed man might have done ; but the whole scene had a vague poetry which filled in a dim sort of way Archie's inarticulate soul. He listened sitting in what was almost the dark, listening and listening though he did not suppose she even knew he was there.

But the sound of one's own name penetrates

distance and music and even the envelopment of thought in the strangest way. He heard Mrs. Rowland say that Archie, she could see, would not desire a ball, and the impulse of opposition sprang up quick and strong within him.

"Why should I not like a ball as well as the rest?" he said out of his corner, raising his voice that his opinion might be heard.

"There! I told you so," said Eddy; "who wouldn't wish for a ball in this house? The floor in the hall is perfect—it is wasting a good thing not to dance upon it. I am sure you of all people, dear lady, are not one to waste good things. Then fancy what a thing for us. We should make acquaintance with everybody, and probably reap a harvest of invitations. We are on the prowl. We want to be asked to places. The governor would feel how nobly you had done your part by us—and——and——"

That shower of fluent words flowed on, but Archie's attention to it suddenly failed. For out of the dimness nearer to him, through the sound of the softly tinkling notes, came a soft but very distinct question—"Why should you, Mr. Rowland, wish for a ball?"

"I don't," he cried abruptly in his surprise.

"Then you gave a false impression. Mrs. Rowland must think from what you said that you gave the project your support." She spoke without turning her head, playing softly all the while, speaking in her usual calm and serious vein.

"I would not oppose," said Archie, "what Marion wanted, and you."

"You are quite right to put Marion first. It is not generally accounted civil, but it was honest, and I like it from you. I do not care—I am not fond of dancing. There are so many things more important in this life. I should have been surprised if you had wished it," she added after an interval, during which she had gone on modulating, with her hands pressed down upon the keys.

"Would you tell me why?" said Archie, timidly out of the dim world behind her.

"Oh," she said, "not because it is the fashion with a certain sort of young man, for I don't suppose you would—" she meant to say "know," in her disdain, but moved by some better feeling, said instead "care. But I should not think you were fond of dancing," she said, pressing firmly upon the two bass keys.

"You think," said Archie, emboldened by the fact that she could not see him, "that I don't look much like dancing. And it's true. I am not good at it. Marion is, though," he said after a little pause.

"And what has that got to do with you?"

"Oh!" he said surprised. Then after a pause, "I would naturally like her to be pleased."

"You would naturally—like her to be pleased?" Rosamond ceased her playing and turned right round upon the music stool, facing him. But the light of the candles was now entirely behind her,

shining upon the ribbons of her sash—shining a line of colour beyond her white figure, but leaving her countenance invisible as before. “Why?” she said after an interval, “Why?”

“Why?”

“Yes, yes, why? Don’t I speak plain? Why? I want to know why?”

“But there is no why to it,” said Archie, “it is just so.”

She sat dark against the light and thought over this proposition for some time. “Well,” she said at length, “but you are inconsistent. You go against your father in everything, and this lady—who is so out of place here—”

“Why,” said Archie hotly, “is she so much out of place here?”

“Oh!” said Rosamond, and turning round again she burst into a loud heroic tuneful strain, filling the still room with a clamour of sound. In a few minutes more she had changed into a waltz. Then there occurred a complete transformation scene. Eddy jumped up from his seat by Mrs. Rowland, and snatched or seemed to snatch Marion from her chair, and the pair began to fly and flout about the room, as lightly as a pair of birds. Eddy Saumarez was not an elegant cavalier, but he danced very well, and Marion had not done herself more than justice when she said that she was “very good at it.” They threaded the intricacies of the furniture with the greatest lightness and ease, and whirled from dark to light and from light to dark, from

where Mrs. Rowland sat looking on with a smile in the full revelation of a large lamp, to where Archie sat unseen in his corner. Rosamond never turned her head but played on, varying the tune with an *esprit*, which her brother followed, ducking and anon sweeping on the light figure of the girl with all the art of an accomplished performer. Archie, taken completely by surprise at first, watched them with a vague sensation of pleasure in the same, which was against all his prepossessions. The sudden indignation in his mind died out. The novelty and suddenness of the movement beguiled him out of himself. There appeared suddenly at the open door while the dancers still went on, all preliminary sound being drowned by the music, the jovial and ruddy countenances of Rowland and his friend, who stood looking on with broad smiles. "Well done," cried the master of the house clapping his hands; and then, as if this had been the signal, Rosamond concluded in a moment with a resounding chord and the dancers stopped short.

"Well, that was a pretty sight—are we to have no more of it?" Rowland said,

"I think I can manage an old-world waltz," said Evelyn, "for Rosamond no doubt would like a turn too."

"No, thanks—Eddy will never dance with me—and I like the piano best."

"Nonsense, nonsense," said the master of the house. "Where's Archie? Get up, ye lout! can ye see a pretty girl wanting a dance and not be on

your feet in a moment? Come, Evelyn, let us have the old-world waltz, and see the young ones enjoy themselves."

"Come on," said Eddy to his partner. "It will be as slow as a funeral, but it's fine all the same. Come on, and never mind."

Rosamond stood up by the piano with a perfectly serious face. She turned half round towards Archie's corner, who, in an agony of incapacity and reluctance, hesitated to make a step towards her. Rosamond did not care any more for the young man than if he had been a cabbage. He had no mystery or attraction for her, as she had for him, nor was her *amour propre* affected by his hesitation. She said, scarcely looking at him from the pitch to which her head thrown high seemed to reach, above every one, "Are we to dance?" in those clear tones of unaffected indifference and disdain. She knew that she would be bumped against all the furniture, and expected to be thrown upon the rock of Mr. Rowland standing in the middle of the room where Eddy and Marion encircled, brushed with their wings, wound into the gyrations of their indefatigable whirl; but she was resigned, and ready for the sacrifice. To poor Archie it was a far more serious affair. He came slowly forward, slouching his shoulders and bending his head. "You were right in thinking I was not fit for it," he said, "if it's disagreeable to you, you will remember it's not my fault." She put out her hand without a word and placed it on his shoulder. I have read many

rhapsodies about the manly character of a waltz, in which two people on the verge of love find themselves suddenly swept together into paradise ; but the unhappy young man who cannot dance, who finds a fair partner suddenly, in spite of himself, thrust into his awkward arms, who does not know what to do with her, nor with his own unlucky fate, and the things which seem suddenly to spring up and put themselves into his way—no one, so far as I know, has ever found any interest in the sufferings of such an unlucky hero. He held himself as far apart from her as possible as he turned her slowly round, wondering if she hated him, if she would ever again look at him, afraid to glance at her lest he should read disgust in her face. A time of giddy anguish followed, how long or how short Archie could not tell. He supposed that Rosamond exerted herself to keep him up, to guide him blindly about the room ; for when those horrible gyrations were over, and the whirl ceased, and the walls began once more to settle straight into their places, he heard himself addressed with noisy congratulations. “ Well done, Archie, you’re not such a duffer after all,” cried his father. “ Bravo, Rowland ! ” said Eddy. Mrs. Rowland laughed and clapped her hands. “ You are far better at it than I thought,” said Marion. Rosamond alone stood as serious as before, her breathing a little quickened, looking at it as if she thought she might have soiled the hand which had been upon his shoulder. He felt as if he could have struck her as he turned away his head.

"After this," said Mrs. Rowland, "I must tell you what the children want, James. I was opposing it as in duty bound, but their little performance, I am sure, has thrown you on their side: they want us to give a ball."

"A ball!" said Mr. Rowland with many notes of interrogation, and then he added with the broad smile, which in its warmth and ruddiness breathed a little intimation of being after dinner, "Why not?"

"Ah, I knew you would be on their side. I have been resisting as in duty bound——"

"And why in duty bound? In your heart," said Rowland, "it is you who are always on their side. I may have my little moments of fatherly wrath. A father is nothing, you know, Ledgen, if he does not find fault."

"That's quite so," said the great ironmaster, who had been dining with the great railway man. "We must keep up our authority, and discipline must always be preserved."

"But she stands up for them through thick and thin," said the happy man. "I cannot wallop my own niggers, so to speak, meaning to give my boy a wiggling, but she pushes in, standing up for two. To hear her speak, you would think my two were angels, and I an old curmudgeon always finding fault: that's the beauty of a wife."

"Well," said Evelyn, "never mind; I am to give in, I suppose. You know, James, it will turn the whole house upside down."

"We'll put it right again," he said.

"And probably make a revolution among the servants."

"We'll crush the revolution, or get other servants in their places."

"And you will have no comfort in your life for at least three days—the day before the performance, the day of the performance, and the day after the performance."

"Hoot!" said Rowland, and he said no more.

"It will not be a bad plan at all if ye think anything of my opinion," said the ironmaster. "I'm but new in my place myself, a matter of two or three years. And one of the first things I did was to give a ball. It was a very popular thing—we just got in everybody. The young folk, who are very important, who just give you a great lift in reconciling a place where they are pleased, and the mothers that come with them, and all the intermediate ones that are neither young nor old, that are hanging at a loose thread. If your house is a good size, you can ask anybody; and this is a very fair size," said the other rich man, looking condescendingly round the drawing-room, which was certainly not so immense as his great new-built castle down the Clyde.

"Oh, it's big enough," said Rowland, a little wounded in his feelings. To compare Rosmore to any brand new house with fictitious battlements and towers, was at once a brutality and a bad joke. "We will get in a good number here," he said, look-

ing round him complacently, "and as we have nothing but Eastern carpets, there will be the less trouble. Well, my dear, that is settled. I am not such a stern parent as I get the credit of being, and the bairns shall have their will."

"I told you I could make her do it," said Eddy to Marion behind the shelter of the book of pictures which she had taken up again.

"It was neither you nor her that did it," said Marion: "it was papa."

"It was because she put it to him so cleverly. You will see Mrs. Rowland will always follow my lead. She can't forget that I am my father's son."

"Will you tell me that story?" said Marion, whose curiosity he had raised and allowed to drop a dozen times.

"Some time or other," said Eddy. "I like to keep you on the tenter hooks. You look prettier than ever when you have a fit of curiosity which makes your eyes shine. Do you know your eyes give out sparks when you look at me like that?"

"Like a cat?" said Marion; "that is no compliment."

"Yes, just like a cat, torturing the poor little mouse that she has fascinated with her big shining eyes." He opened his own eyes wide with a threatening movement of his hand, at which they both laughed. "Before she devours him, she tortures him," he said. Which was it? he or she? But poor little Marion had not the faintest idea that she was in the way of being devoured. She

did not require very fine methods ; but accepted the compliments and the badinage in her simplicity. It amused her extremely to "tease" him, as she thought, to make little rude speeches and show her innocent power. After all it was innocent enough, and artless, if without much delicacy or dignity. So much meaning as was in it was all on Eddy's side.

There was no question of cat or mouse between the other two, who stood by each other's side without movement, without looking at each other, while the question of the ball was discussed. Rosamond at last said to her partner, speaking as usual from her full height, and without even turning her head his way : "You do not dance so very badly, if you would take time and not be flurried." It was the same advice which Evelyn had given him about his shooting, and which he had resented then, as he resented this counsel now.

"You are very kind to encourage me. I have no desire to learn," he said.

"Oh, that's silly," said Rosamond. "Why shouldn't you learn? Why shouldn't you make yourself a little agreeable, Mr. Rowland? No, of course it is nothing to me. I see you for a few weeks, a great deal of you, and then perhaps I never see you again. It does not matter to me in the very least. Still it is a pity to see a man sitting as you do—not speaking, not taking an interest in anything. What is the good of being a man at all?"

Archie was very much taken aback by this onslaught. He stared at her for a moment helplessly. His wit was not quick enough to make any lively rejoinder as he might have done. All he could say was rather vulgar, and said with an injured, offended air—"I did not make myself."

"You ought to make yourself," said the severe young judge, "if you are not made properly to begin with; but that is not the question. Don't you know it makes everybody uncomfortable to see the son of the house sitting behind never saying anything. I hate to be made uncomfortable," said Rosamond, "it makes me think all sorts of horrid things. But there is nothing the matter with you. You are not deformed or bad in your head, or out of health, or badly snubbed. Mrs. Rowland keeps looking at you: she does not know what to do; and you make *me* horribly uncomfortable," said Rosamond with energy; "that was why I made you get up and dance."

"It wasn't very successful," said Archie with a grim smile; "don't you wish you had let it alone?"

"No, I don't wish I had let it alone. I should like to take you by the shoulders and shake you. Oh, if I were your sister!" She broke off with a suggestive grind of her white teeth. "Eddy is bad enough," she added after a moment. "He's a little ape: I can do nothing with him; but I could put up with even Eddy better than I could put up with you—if I were your sister."

"But fortunately you are not my sister."

"No, nor your stepmother either," said Rosamond with energy, "or I don't know what I should do. Can't you talk a little, can't you try to dance a bit, can't you be like other people? Usually I don't advise other people so very much: they chatter for ever and ever, and talk a great deal of nonsense. But it reconciles one to them. When one sees you—"

"Perhaps I had better take myself off," said Archie, "and then you will not have that annoyance any more."

"You want to try to make me out to be a meddler and a busybody," said Rosamond; "but I am not that. I only say what I feel. Why, *you* should be the one to make the house pleasant! You are going out to shoot to-morrow, you and Eddy, and we are to bring you your luncheon out on the hill. You ought to be all full of *petits soucis*, and make it pleasant for us; but you will not. I know what you will do. You will sit down on a stone as far away as you can go, and you will bend down your brow, and perhaps turn your back, and never say one word."

"I shall do nothing of the kind," said Archie, red with rage, especially as she shrugged up her shoulders, and put down her chin, and contracted her forehead in a manner which he felt to be more or less like himself.

"Yes you will," said Rosamond, with the point-blank contradiction of youth.

"No, I will not," cried the boy, forgetting everything but his wrongs. A hot moisture came to his eyes. "I hate shooting," he said; "I hate company. I hate all those antics I was not brought up to. What business have you to come here and want London manners from me?"

"You poor boy," said Rosamond, shaking her highly poised head. "London manners," she said in a tone of the mildest philosophy, "are often just what yours are. Men in London are being rude like you. They pretend to care for nothing; not to hear what people say to them. It is smart to be uncivil, don't you know? If you keep it up, you will be the fashion when you go to town."

Archie clenched his fist in the height of his passion; not, of course, to hit out at Rosamond, but at somebody—at the London men—at the detestable world.

"Oh, you may be angry," said the young lady, "but it is quite true. Should you like to dance with me again, Mr. Rowland, for you see Eddy and Marion are off once more? and Mrs. Rowland plays very well—really very nicely, for such an old-fashioned thing as she is playing. If you do not choose to dance, as there is nobody else to take me out, perhaps you will kindly say so, and then we need not continue standing here."

Said Archie, with a gasp, with sudden humility, "I can't dance at all; do you want to make a fool of me? If you think it is my fault, you are quite

mistaken. I don't want to be ridiculous. I would talk and do things if I could——"

"Come along then and try," said the girl. "Don't be flurried and nervous. Let us make for the other end of the room, where there is not much light—and do remember not to knock against your father. That was not bad at all ; now, one turn more, and then make for the window, and take me out."

"You will catch cold," said Archie, breathlessly.

"Oh, I'm not afraid ; and it will make an end of it. Here we are," she cried, as they emerged suddenly into the moonlight. "Now give me your arm please, and take me round to the back door. Eddy will be after us in a moment ; it will be just the chance for him. That was all very well for ten minutes, but it would not do to carry it on all night. Oh !" she said, suddenly, "look ! look !"

They had come out suddenly upon the colonnade, and in a moment stood in another world. Far below the Clyde lay like molten silver, in a ripple of glistening movement, with the mass of trees, wholly denuded of their leaves, paving it on either side. Into the opening glided in a moment a little pleasure boat, with a white sail catching the white blaze of the moon. It was wafted by in a moment as they stood, appearing and disappearing like a bird across the silver tide. The sky, a wide, vast vault of blue, flaked with little white clouds, seemed to envelop and hold that little vignette of earth and sky. In the far distance was the darkness of

heaven's vault, the smoke of the town on the other side, with a few lights appearing out of it here and there. Rosamond, forgetting herself in the sudden sensation, pressed his arm with her fingers to call his attention. "Did you ever see it like that before?" she said.

"Never!" said Archie, with a fervour of which he was not himself conscious, feeling as if all the evil conditions of life had vanished and paradise come.

Was this another version of the cat and the mouse?

CHAPTER VIII

THE luncheon on the hill-side would have been probably as successful as these parties ever are, had it not been for one incident. In the train of the little pony cart which carried the food, and which had to be led over the rougher parts by Sandy the groom, there appeared a stranger whom Mrs. Rowland and her visitors had seen at two or three corners on the way, so long as it was possible to drive: supposed a tourist—which was a being very little esteemed at Rosmore, where tourists were divided into two sections, one labelled as being “from Glasgow,” who was at once the most innocent and the most objectionable; while the other, in the slang of the district, was called B.T. or British tourist, and was presumably “from the south,” a flattering appellation which means England in these regions. This man had been persistently making his way with much toil, but apparent inoffensiveness to the top of the hill, and the ladies had not interfered with his freedom. I may say, however (which is a view not perhaps popularly

taken), that there are two ways of regarding the indiscriminate presence of tourists everywhere as exemplified in the question of footpaths. The tourist ought to know that wherever he appears he is objectionable to the natives of a country, save to those who sell him provisions, and take him in to lodge ; and that his undesired presence upon private property, is regarded by all who possess any, whether it be a grass plot or a hillside, with unmitigated aversion. It is at least as hard for the proprietor to put up with him, as it is for him to be shut out from one particular view—which is no better than other views which are to be procured on other people's property, or even from the high road. If it were then fully understood that there was a hardship on both sides, it might be easier to come to an understanding. Mrs. Rowland and the young ladies regarded the figure of the tourist toiling upwards with natural hostility. "What right has any man on our hill !" Marion said ; and there was one occasion on which Rosamond had actually extended a foot, with the intention of jumping out of the pony carriage and warning off the intruder.

"I do not mind in the least telling him that he is on private property, if you wish it, Mrs. Rowland."

"My dear, though it is private property, it is only the wild side of a mountain," said Evelyn ; "the poor man is doing harm to nothing but our feelings."

"If he was to be shot," said the persistent Marion, "we would be blamed for not warning him."

Perhaps Mrs. Rowland thought it would not be a bad thing if the stranger was shot (very slightly), as the best way of proving the peril of such unauthorized wanderings. But she said nothing and drove on, until the path was lost in the moor, and the ladies had to get out and walk.

It was too much of a good thing, however, they all felt, when the same man was seen to reappear, following closely in the footsteps of Sandy, who led the pony with the luncheon. They had reached by this time the appointed spot on the hill, which was high above the loch, a sort of natural platform, where a circle of grass broke the darker surface of the heather and underwood. Great bushes of high-growing ling, with the faded bells all stiffened into russet upon them, stood round this oasis, which was kept green, and in a wet season something more than green, by the burn which made half a circuit round it, leaping downwards from little ridge to ridge of its course. All around among the heather grew the sweet gale, or bog-myrtle, sending up a grateful sweetness when any one crushed a self-sacrificing plant. The sky was of the triumphant yet not too well assured brightness, which is peculiar to Highland skies—a sort of heavenly triumph over difficulties, chastened by the sense that the conquered clouds may blow back at any moment. Deep down, the loch lay like a blue mirror, with

all the little clouds floating upon it like boats, in reflections, among the grey willows and the yellow autumnal foliage. Was the grass, so velvet, mossy, and beautiful of this little circle—slightly wet, perhaps boggy, “saft,” as Sandy said? Far from us be the thought: besides it was heaped with shawls and plaids, and what did it matter? The only members of the party who thought of the view were Evelyn and Rosamond. The others were satiated with views. And what did Eddy and Marion care for anything but their eternal war of words, their little mutual rudenesses and compliments? About Archie’s sentiments nobody knew. Sometimes he turned his back to the loch, sometimes would be seen with his eyes intent, as if he were watching something on the opposite side.

“Oh,” said Marion suddenly, with a long-drawn breath, “there is that man again!”

“What man?”

They had all been seated on the dry ridge of the ling, rustling and stiff with its desiccated flowers, above the less trustworthy level of the grass, and were watching with interest the broken hobble of the cart with the baskets, over the uneven ground.

“Roderick will tell him—” said Mrs. Rowland, “and persuade him to go away.”

“Ay will I, mem,” said the gamekeeper, jocund but grim. “I’ll persuade him—in the drawing of a breath.”

Here an exclamation from Eddy startled every-

body. "Oh, hold on!" was all the young man said; but his tone had an expression which somehow roused the attention of every one. He made a spring among the heather towards the objectionable visitor. "Is it you, Johnson? I thought you were gone," he was heard to say. And then it appeared that he had something private to add to the intruder, for he drew him away under the shelter of the clump of rowan trees, which lent an illumination of red berries to the scene.

The luncheon had been spread out, and everything was ready to begin upon when Eddy, certainly under the circumstances the most useful member of the party, came back. He was slowly followed by the tourist, and bore a somewhat embarrassed look. "Mrs. Rowland, may I introduce a friend of mine, Johnson of—St. Chad's?" His countenance had been full of perplexity, but in the momentary pause which preceded the utterance of the last words, he suddenly recovered himself. "Distinguished don," he added, "no end of a scholar. Came up here for a reading party; but some of them have not arrived yet."

Mr. Johnson did not come up to Evelyn's ideas of a distinguished don; but Mrs. Rowland was aware that appearances are often deceptive in the case of such great personages, and it did not occur to her that October was an unlikely moment for a reading party. She was perhaps the only one who attached any significance at all to the words. She begged Mr. Johnson to find a seat for himself, and

share their luncheon. He was an insignificant person, with furtive eyes and a sallow complexion, clothed in the usual tweeds. "I am sure, madam, I am much obliged to you," he said; which was somewhat startling; but dons are often very old-fashioned, as Evelyn was aware.

The conversation went on as if he were not there. He was a taciturn person, but gave a great and concentrated attention to the basket. To see him eating and drinking recalled to Evelyn stories which everybody in her youth had been fond of telling to the disadvantage of the dons.

"You have very little in your bag. I would have killed more myself," said Marion.

"Ah, I dare say," Eddy replied; "you've no heart and no conscience, and what would you care what you killed? A man or two in the bag would have made it much heavier."

"As if I would take the trouble to shoot men!"

"And a woman can't be tried for man-slaughter," said Eddy: and they both laughed as if, except their own rather poor fun, there was nothing that was of any interest in the world.

Rosamond kept her stately pose, her lofty manner of treating the subject under discussion, but she was perhaps scarcely more elevated in her aim. "Can you tell me the names of the mountains, now?" she said, with an emphasis which only Archie understood.

And he woke up from that self-absorbed dulness which was the aspect he presented in

general, and pointed out to her peak after peak, not without an occasional glance at Roderick in the background, who gave him a nod back again over the young lady's head. Evelyn looked on perceiving all these little details with an unembarrassed attention. It was seldom she was so free to observe what was going on about her: the business of a large household, to which she was yet unaccustomed, the calls of her husband upon her attention, the cares of the mistress of the house to keep everything going, had lessened her possibilities of observation. But the position of an elder woman in the midst of a little company of this description is sometimes almost uncomfortably free. There is no pretence made of any particular regard to her amusement, and she is allowed to observe at her leisure. Evelyn perceived, with a little alarm, the position of affairs. Was it perhaps accidental—a mere fortuitous conjunction of the two who most attracted each other? Was it perhaps a plan, a scheme? She had been so long out of the world of social scheming that she had forgotten its ways. She observed for a little with a half benign amusement the skirmishing of Marion and Eddy, the little onslaughts and withdrawals, provocations not much more refined than a milkmaid's jibes, responses not in better taste. Mrs. Rowland had not thought much of the "style" of Edward Saumarez, the younger, from the beginning—an old-fashioned word, which in the language of the

present day would mean that she thought him "bad form." Words change, and so do all forms of expression, but the actual fact does not alter. As she mentally compared this commonplace young man, whose manners she thought bad, and whose person was so entirely without distinction, with his father—the love of her own youth, the handsome, distinguished, courtly Saumarez of another day, a sudden rush of painful feeling came over Evelyn. Was this what he intended? Was it to be so done that she herself should seem the schemer, the matchmaker, promoting the advantage of his son and daughter above that of her husband's children? Nobody remarked how Evelyn was looking, or inquired what it was that gave occasion for that sudden flush and paleness. Was this what it meant—his eagerness to connect his children with her, that she should invite them, assume the responsibility of them? Evelyn saw everything that might have been in his mind as with the flash of a sudden light. He had jilted her, but she had never ceased to care for him, people would say; as witness the results. Had she not thrown her husband's boy and girl, inexperienced, suspecting nothing, made of money, into the grip of those clever Saumarezes?

Evelyn got up from her seat in the horror of the thought that thus came into her mind, and with the sensation that she must do something at once to put an end to it. But nobody even remarked her movement, and she sat down again

with a pant of baffled eagerness. Rosamond and Archie sat with their backs to her, full of their own subject: the dull boy was awakening under that siren's touch; while Marion and Eddy kept up a deafening chatter about something much more interesting than the mountains or waters—themselves; each moving on the lines that answered best. Was the plan laid out in all its details? Had they come with their instructions to captivate these two homely Rowlands before the other harpies had so much as got note of them, to anticipate all competition? It was just such a heartless scheme as he might have conceived in his unsoftened, unchastened suffering. And Madeline Leighton's words came back upon Evelyn's mind with a sudden horror: "He will compromise you, if he can, with your husband." How angry she had been, thinking only of the ordinary sense of these words. Ah! here was another sense—a sense she had never dreamt of! If Eddy Saumarez with his bad little record, his short story of as much folly as could be crammed into a life of twenty, asked Marion's father for her hand and fortune—and Archie, with the power of sullen opposition which was in him, proclaimed his intention of marrying Rosamond, to whom would her husband turn as the cause of these premature engagements? Who would be blamed by the world? Would any one believe that she had not thought of such a contingency? Would James——James, whose soul trusted in her? Oh,

villain and traitor! was this his way of punishing her for having escaped from his influence, for the late happiness that had made her so much better off than he was? Madeline's warning had not been strong enough or clear enough to save her. Evelyn clasped her hands in her lap till the pressure hurt her, and looked on helpless at the work which was going so briskly on at her side, the work which she would be believed to have planned—with eyes which could scarcely endure the sight.

"I have always observed," Rosamond was saying, with the air of a sage, "that the more you take an interest in anything, the more amused you are. Everything is tiresome when you don't take an interest. My father is an instance. He is never out of his chair: he can't do anything without Rogers, not even raise himself up. You would think he had a dreadful life: but he has not: he watches the people, and knows everything that happens. I am a little like that myself. Now Eddy has no such interest in anything. He likes horses and billiards and that sort of thing, and bad company generally." Rosamond gave a glance behind at Eddy's acquaintance, who was making a perfectly good luncheon, and keeping up a furtive observation of everybody round him. "I don't like," she said, "the looks of that man. Do you think he belongs to any college? I don't."

"He is not like the college men I have seen," Archie ventured to say.

"No, of course he is not: he is more like a scout out on a holiday.—As you are so kind as to pay some attention to what I say, Mr. Rowland, please remember that Eddy is not at all to be relied upon. He would think it was quite a good joke to bring in a man like that. Don't let him, whatever you do, have an invitation to the ball."

"If your brother asks for it—" said Archie.

"Never mind my brother: you will do a great deal better if you trust me," said Rosamond. There was a little pause, and then a murmur from Archie, which Evelyn could not hear; but she drew her own conclusions. It was: "And am I not doing that with all my heart!"

"Oh!" Rosamond said, elevating her eyebrows slightly, casting for almost the first time a glance down upon him. It seemed to give her some surprise, not unmingled with apprehension, and she drew a little further off from the heather, and caught a branch of the gale, as if disturbed for once in her composure. The scent of it, as the girl crushed it in her hand, rose to Mrs. Rowland and remained in her consciousness ever after as something associated with anxiety and care.

Meanwhile Marion and Eddy were chatting so continuously, sometimes in confidential whispers, sometimes with outbursts of sound and laughter, that no one could be any the wiser as to what they said. "He is no more a don than I am," Eddy was confessing; "it was the first thing I could think of to give him a countenance."

There never was a more villainous one than he has by nature. No, I won't tell you what he is: he's mixed up with all sorts of people. What a lark to have him asked to the ball! Do you think she would do it? To introduce him everywhere as Johnson of Chad's, and see how he would behave! I shall not let you dance with him though, or any nice girl I know."

"Oh, I would dance with him if he asked me," said Marion. "If you think that I would be guided by you!"

"I know more about that than you do," said Eddy. "You sha'n't, I can tell you: for one thing, I mean to dance with you myself all the night. We go so well together, you and I. And I know how to square the chaperons—especially *her*. She won't dare to say anything against me."

"If you think that I would let her interfere!" said Marion; "but you are not to get things all your own way. I'll just dance with whom I please—and maybe not with you at all."

"We'll see about that," said Eddy.

"Yes, we'll see about it," cried the girl, and then there was a great laugh, as if this had been the wittiest observation in the world.

If Evelyn did not hear this, she saw it, with all the advantages of spectatorship seeing more in the game than the actors themselves were aware of, probably more (which is the drawback of spectatorship) than had any existence. Would James think she was in the plot? Would he

believe it was of her invention, or that she had carried it out consciously for the advantage of the others? In her first hurried discovery of this aspect of affairs, it did not occur to Evelyn that James was a man of an old-fashioned type, who believed in true love, and might sympathize with his children if they were impressed by such an influence, more than with any wise counsel or hesitation as to means. She herself, whatever her sentiments might be, belonged to a world more moved by conventional laws. She thought that she saw him with reproach in his face, looking at her as he never had done, severely, reproachfully—he to whom she owed so much, not only wealth and consideration, but tenderness and kindness, and absolute trust—Trust! that was the greatest of all: and he would think that she had betrayed him.

Mr. Johnson, so-called of St. Chad's, finished the substantial part of his banquet about this moment, and with a glance at the pastry which was visible, laid out upon the white cloth, stirred a little in his nest of heather, making the long spikes of the ling rustle, and calling forth again that pungent sweetness of the gale. Mrs. Rowland, to whom incivility was impossible, and who, though doubtful, still felt it more comprehensible that a distinguished don might be of evil appearance than that Eddy Saumarez could have told her a lie, turned towards him to see what were his wants. He was not without an ambition

to shine in polite conversation, and Evelyn's was not the aspect to discourage such attempts. He said, waving his hand as if to include the whole party, "This is a very cheerful way, if you will let me say so, of meeting for the first time."

"Yes?" said Evelyn, interrogatively.

"It's a beautiful scene," said the stranger, "and the pie was excellent. What a nice way for ladies to join in sport, when the men's tired and ready to be tumbled over at the first shot—ha, ha,—as seems to be the case, ma'am, in your vicinity."

"Sir?" said Mrs. Rowland.

"I don't want to give offence," said Johnson of St. Chad's, "but I should say, if ever there was one, that there is a case." He indicated with his eyebrows the chatting pair, too busy to pay attention to their neighbours, on Mrs. Rowland's other side.

"A case? I do not really know what you mean," she said hurriedly.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said the man, "if I remark what I oughtn't. These sort of things are generally remarked—but some people takes them very serious," he added, nodding his head confidentially.

"Takes them serious!" If this was a college don, he had certainly a very strange way of speaking.

"I think you are mistaken," said Mrs. Rowland. "I don't know of anything that is going on—except luncheon. May I offer you some of these,

as your friend is too busy to see that you have what you want."

"Ah, he is a fellow that knows what *he* wants," said the don admiringly, "and doesn't trouble himself what other people thinks. Thank you very much, I'll take some grateful—" he added "ly," after he had drawn a breath, making a little choke over the word—"gratefully, that's what I mean. A man gets out of his manners never seeing a lady for—a whole term sometimes," he said.

Was he a college don? More and more puzzled was poor Evelyn, who could believe in anything rather than that she had been told what was not true. But whatever it was, she felt that it was better not to leave this person to his false ideas in respect to the young people. "Perhaps I ought to tell you," she said, "that you are making a mistake. There is no case, if that means an—engagement, or anything of that sort. My son and daughter are very young, and so are their friends. They are boys and girls together—no one, on either side, would hear of anything of the kind."

"Oh!" said the man, who was certainly not a gentleman, whatever else he might be. He put down his plate and gave a keen look across Mrs. Rowland to Eddy, who was far too much engaged to notice anything. "Oh!" he said again; then after a pause: "I'm an old hand," he added, "it may be you that are mistaken, ma'am, and not me."

Mrs. Rowland did not think proper to say more. One way or other it must, she thought, be a matter of entire indifference to this disreputable-looking stranger what were the circumstances of Eddy Saumarez. She rose from her throne of heather, taking no further notice of the visitor, and disturbing the party altogether, to the resentment of everybody. "I have only just begun to have my lunch," said Marion—and "Is it really time to be going?" Rosamond asked with a fine tone of surprise. The young men said little; but their faces showed their feelings. "That is the worst of it," said Eddy, in an audible whisper, "a chaperon is sure to spoil sport. She doesn't mean any harm, but she does it by instinct." And of the two pairs no one budged. Evelyn was alone among these young conspirators and the vulgar commentator who had sought to make himself agreeable by putting her terrors into words. She wandered a little further upon the hillside, and gathered a handful of the white Grass of Parnassus, and the little blue orchid which is to be found on these hills, to give herself a countenance, not knowing how to act or what to do; whether to speak to her husband or to endeavour in her own person to divide the bonds which had grown up so fast. But how could she do this? What did they care for what she said, these independent young people? What hold had she over them, one way or another? And yet it would be said that she had been the chief actor in everything, that it was

she who had thrown them together ; she who had plotted to throw James Rowland's wealth into the hands and house of the Saumarezes. The thought was intolerable ; her whole mind cried out against it, protesting that it was not to be borne ; but how was she to free herself from this knot in which she was enveloped ? What was she to do ?

CHAPTER IX

IT need scarcely be said that the young Saumarezes had been early made acquainted with Rankine's cottage in the wood, and with the wonderful qualities of the "sma'" family which he kept about him. The humours of Roy and Dhu were by this time among the most cheerful features of the house at Rosmore. That little pair went tumbling over each other with ferocious curiosity into every corner, sniffing and investigating: they gave each other the word when, in the far distance, a carriage began to grind, or a footstep to disturb the gravel approaching the door—and flew like two balls of fur, with two little pairs of gleaming eyes and no legs to speak of, helter-skelter, head-over-heels to defend the house with ferocious, if infantile, barking. They walked out with Mrs. Rowland when she went out upon the lawn, making futile efforts to get upon the edge of her dress, and so be carried along as in a triumphal car on the silken train that touched the ground. They superintended every setting out and return-

ing home, all but opening the door of the carriage when their mistress appeared. Archie had given them up to her, with a sort of revulsion of feeling kicking them from him when he found that the doggies hung on to his stepmother's skirts in spite of all other blandishments. He addressed them only in kindly intercourse when she was out of the way, but when she appeared, gave a kick to one and tossed the other down out of his hands. They had this quality that they never were hurt, always came up again in a jovial entanglement of legs and hair, and were not too proud to talk to any one who would talk to them. Even the solemn butler, of whom Archie always continued to stand in awe, had been seen in a corner on his knees with a supply of biscuits, endeavouring to teach them to beg; which was an unsuccessful effort, since the little soft unformed backbones were as yet unfit for the effort. The young visitors, it is needless to say, were at once initiated into the worship of Roy and Dhu, and to become the happy possessors of other members of the family had early become the ambition of both Rosamond and Eddy—genuine on her part, perhaps only a pretext on his. For the worship of the dog is a very widespreading and varied rite, followed by some out of a real understanding of those faithful, little-discriminating, and often puzzled retainers of humanity, but by many out of pure vacancy and for love of the inferior company of grooms and kennel-keepers, who are

the retainers, in their turn, of the nobler breed. It was natural that Eddy should gravitate towards a place where the dull hours were to be got through by such means. And Rosamond liked the little humorous creatures, and was amused by the old gamekeeper, and had pleasure in the quaint unknown aspect of the cottage life. Besides all these, when they escaped one morning together from the house, at a moment when Marion was out of the way, and Archie occupied, there was a little pleasure in the mere act of escaping and in the opportunity for consultations of their own. More than half their month in Rosmore was now over, and they had occasion for a little mutual understanding. It was a crisp morning of late October, very still, hoar frost white in all the hollows, and not yet melted into dew on the trees. Heaps of yellow leaves had come down in the night, and lay like gold at the foot of the now thin and trembling birches. The red trunks of the fir trees came out warmly in the sharpness of the atmosphere, and the big bunches of the rowan berries drooped in consciousness of the approaching fall.

"What luck," said Eddy, "to get off for once without those other two, as old Rowland calls them, at our heels."

Rosamond assented briefly, but added, by way of qualification, "It is you generally who are at Marion's heels."

"Look here, Rose," said the brother, "you know

the governor better than I do. What was his object in sending you and me here?"

"To get rid of us for a month, and have no responsibility," said Rosamond promptly.

"Oh, come, that's not reason enough for him. Did he mean me to make up to this little thing here? I suppose she's made of money—at least the father is; but what he'll give her for her fortune is an unknown quantity. I don't think he is very fond of her; do you? And I say, how old is Mrs. Rowland?—something would depend on that."

"How should I know how old Mrs. Rowland is; and what would it matter if she were as old as—father himself?"

"She must be near it," said Eddy thoughtfully, "or he would not have gone after her in his young days. Of course if she has no children, don't you see, it makes all the difference. Let's assume that she'll have no children: then he must leave all his money between those two, and that would not be bad. If I am to marry for money, I don't mean to let myself go cheap."

"You would be worth so very much to any woman!" said Rosamond in high disdain.

"I am worth a decent sum," said Eddy, "which is more than you are, for as much as you think of yourself; I and the old tumble-down house, which is what silly people like you admire so much—when the governor hops off. If this new place does him a great deal of good, as he believes it will, I sha'n't have such a good chance."

"Poor father!" said Rosamond, but with perfect composure, "it is a pity to raise his hopes."

"So I think," said Eddy: "when you've had *that* before you for so long, you ought to be able to make up your mind to it. And it isn't as if he did not have his fling in his day. However, the question is, what did he mean when he sent us here? Was it you or was it me?"

"What do you mean by me?" said Rosamond with irritation; "father knows quite well what I am going to do."

"Oh, yes, I believe you!" said Eddy, "doctoring or something, isn't it? That is all bosh. You must just do like the rest. The question is, will old Rowland divide the money? when the one would be as good as the other, and I shouldn't mind very much. But if the girl has only a little bit of a fortune, and the boy all the rest—that indicates you, my dear; and as you are always admiring the country, I suppose you are making up your mind to your fate?"

"I would not marry Archie Rowland if there was not another man in the world," said Rosamond calmly. "Indeed, you may say there is not another man in the world, for I have no intention of marrying at all."

"Then you are treating him as badly as can be," said Eddy, "and you ought to be turned out of the house."

"I!" said Rosamond, raising her calm eyebrows a little. "Why? It is only men who are pulled

up for behaving badly. I am bringing him into shape. He is a great deal better already, and you will see he will behave quite decently at the ball."

"If we could only find out," said Eddy, who after all was but moderately interested in that side of the question which did not concern himself, "whether old Rowland means to divide the money! I should think he would, an old fellow with a sense of justice and who has made his own money. Why shouldn't the girl have as much as the boy?"

"Why shouldn't I have Gilston as well as you? That," said Rosamond, "cuts both ways."

"That's quite a different thing," said Eddy. "Gilston isn't money, the more's the pity; I wish it was."

"You may be very glad it is not; for it would soon be gone in that case, and nothing would be left."

"Well," said Eddy, reflectively, "it's always bait to catch a fish; no money, but a fine old house in the country, and a good name. The question is," he said with much gravity, "whether it's good enough to spend all that upon this little girl here, and perhaps find out at the end that she was no such prize after all? Why can't one go honestly to the man and ask him, 'What do you mean to give your daughter?'"

"You might try," said Rosamond, with a laugh.

"And get turned out of the house! They would do it in France and never think twice; but in England it must be love, forsooth—Love!" said

Eddy, with great disdain. "What is there to love in a little chit like that?"

"She is a pretty little thing," said Rosamond, philosophically, "and she is quick enough. She would soon be just like other people, if she were about in town for a little. But, Eddy, what is the use of talking when you are far too young to marry? At your age father could not have intended that."

"I shall soon be old enough to be pulled up," said Eddy, "on my own account. Don't you know I'll come of age in the beginning of the year? After that no one can come on the governor for my infant wants, don't you know. I wish they would: he wouldn't give them a farthing, and I should get all the fun; but they are far too cute for that. This Johnson fellow, don't you know——"

"The don?" said Rosamond; "has he lent you money? I thought these men had never any money to lend."

"Oh, that depends!" said Eddy. He burst into a great laugh, but immediately restrained himself. "He could get me into a pretty scrape if he liked, so I must keep friends with him. I mean to get Mother Rowland to ask him to the ball."

"How dare you call her Mother Rowland?" said the girl, stamping her foot.

"Oh, dare! I dare do—whatever suits me," said the young man. "Look here," he added, "I don't want you to dance with him all the same."

Rosamond turned upon her brother and gave him a look of scorn. It was not often that she

condescended to look at any one to whom she was talking ; but her glance was very direct and keen when she took the trouble. And she did not make any reply. They were by this time at the entrance to the gamekeeper's cottage, and she swept in at the always open door. " May we come in ? " she condescended to say, but did not pause for an answer. Old Rankine was sitting up in bed, taking his forenoon refreshment : which he himself described as " supping a wheen broth."

" Oh, you're welcome, my young leddy. Ye will have come about the dowg ; but I think it is mair civil, in an ordinary way, if you would just chap at the door."

" That's what I say," said Eddy ; " but she takes her own way. I hope you're better, Rankine, and no rheumatism. It's not so cold, for there's no wind this morning ; but the hoar frost is still lying under the trees."

" Ay," said Rankine, " there will be rain the morn. These white frosts aye brings rain, no to say that it's ever sweered to come. I'm muckle obliged to you for asking for me. You're the only one of the young folk at the House that ever minds I am a man. And a very ill man. They think I'm some kind of a creature for producin' dowgs."

" I am very sorry for you," said Rosamond ; " my father is like you, he cannot move ; but he does not like people to ask him how he is."

" Ay, ay, ye hae a father like me ? Poor gentleman, I'm sure he has my compassion," said Rankine,

"especially if he has no favourite purshoot like mine that makes the time pass."

"Well, let us see your favourite purshoot," said Eddy; "let us see them. They are great fun, the little beasts."

"I am no reduced to that state of intelligence," said the gamekeeper, "to call the breeding o' dowgs a purshoot. I just leave that to nature. What I really am, and I'm proud o't, is an antiquary. There's no many things ye can bring to me in the way of antiquities that would puzzle me. I've seen when half o' this," he laid his hand on a paper on the bed, "was my writing—whiles questions and whiles answers. It's maybe no a profitable kind of study. I make nothing by it in the way of money, but it's real entertaining. I'm just as pleased when a number comes in with me, answering a' the scholars and puttin'g them right, or them answering me and putting me right, as if it was so much siller in my pooch."

"Oh ay," said his wife, in the background, "you have had an awfu' troke with the papers, John Rankine; but it would have sert ye muckle better if you had written something that would be of use, and got a little by it. Good siller is out o' place in nobody's pooch."

"Do you mean to say that you—write for the papers?" said Rosamond.

"That do I, my bonny leddy; and ye should just recommend a study like mine to your father, poor gentleman. You'll see many a thing from me

there. I'm Ros-beg, that's the name I took ; which means the little Ros, just as Rosmore means the muckle Ros, and Ben Ros the hill. I'm grand upon Hieland antiquities, and considered one o' the first authorities. Ye'll see, ye'll see," said Rankine, waving his hand as he held out the paper to his visitor. It was a very well-known paper, one in which a great many questions are put and answered. The reader will not need to be told its highly respectable name.

"Is it you that has written all this about some bard—Donald—I can't say his name? And there's an answer from Ben Cruachan, and one from Mr. Davies, and G. Johnson—oh, Eddy! St. Chad's, Cambridge!"

"I say," Eddy had begun, "hand us out some of the doggies, and don't talk ;" but when he saw the page which Rosamond held out to him, he laughed out till the cottage rang. "Oh ho," he said, "Johnson! Here is a lark! Johnson! Now we'll have some fun. I say, gamekeeper! Johnson's here."

"What is your will, sir?" said Rankine, with great dignity. The purveyor of dogs could take a joke, but not the contributor to *Notes and Queries*. In the latter capacity, John Rankine veiled his bonnet to none.

"Why, Johnson, I tell you. Johnson's here! Don't you know what I mean? Johnson, the don," and Eddy laughed again till the tears ran down his cheeks. "I'll bring him to see you, old

fellow. You shall have your fight out, and I'll back you, old boy, to him, six to one."

"My learned correspondent!" said Rankine, with a look of excitement. And then he turned to Rosamond. "Your brother is a wild laddie, but I suppose what he says is true?"

"I suppose so," said Rosamond, with great gravity, while Eddy did his best to subdue the convulsions of laughter into which he had fallen. His sister was impatient of Eddy's joke, and of the whole matter. "Let us, please, see the little dogs," she said.

"Yes; but I'm far more interested about the other thing," said Rankine, "for I would like well to put forth my views in a mair extended form. The space of the paper is real limited. They will sometimes leave out just your maist conclusive argument. Dod! but I'd like a crack with Mr. Johnson fine."

"I wish you would not laugh like a fool," said Rosamond, frowning. "What is there to laugh about? Mr. Johnson is not nearly so nice-looking as Mr. Rankine, and I think he'll be disappointed in him. But you need not go on making a ridiculous noise in this way. I wish to have one of the little dogs to give to a lady I know. She will be very kind to it. She is my grandmamma. She likes her dogs better than anything else in the world."

"The dogues are fine creatures," said Rankine, "but no to be made a first object. I dinna agree with that. A leddy that likes her dogs better than

anything else will just probably spile them, baith their health and their moral nature. Ye will observe, mem, that I am not wanting to sell my dogues. I have aye plenty of customers for them : the first houses in the land has my dogues. It's no as if I was keen to sell. She will no doubt feed them in a ridiculous way—sweet biscuits and made dishes, instead of good porridge and a bone at a time. Na, I think I'll no give you one for your grandmammaw, though I dinna like to disappoint a bonnie young leddie. If it was for yoursel' now—"

"I would like to have this one for myself," said Rosamond, as the little half-blind puppy curled on her lap, and nibbled at her fingers. "It will be like little Roy at Rosmore."

"That will it!" said old Rankine in the fervour of generous acquiescence, "or maybe even finer. And ye shall have it, ye shall have it! I will give ye my directions, and ye'll make a principle of carrying them out. If ye do that, ye'll keep the little beastie in good health, and aye clean and pleasant—and he'll be a pleasure to ye a' his days. There are no finer bred dogues in a' Scotland, though I say it that maybe shouldn't. And if ye'll be guided by me, ye'll just call him Roy too. It is a fine handy little name. I call them all the same, like Dandy Dinmont's terriers in Sir Walter, as maybe ye will remember. It's a kind of token of the race: and ye may make real pleasant acquaintances about the world, or maybe, wha kens, be

directed to a braw gentleman that will make ye a fine partner for life—just by the circumstance of having twa doggies by the name of Roy, baith from Rosmore!”

Rankine ended with a faint guffaw partly at his own humour, partly in the emotion of giving up to a stranger one of his cherished infants. He dived again into the mysterious receptacle in which the puppies feebly squealed and whined, within reach of his hand, and produced, all warm and blurred from that nest, another ball of fur. “Ye can tak’ your choice,” he said; “this ane is of the line of Roy as well as that ane. It is the last I have, and I dinna see my way to pleasure Lady Jean till maybe geyan weel on in the next year. If ye were to fancy the twa, I wadna grudge them to ye: for I think you know what you’re about with dogues. Would you like to have it? Oh, it’s not to please me but to please you. I can dispose of the double of what I have got, or am like to get. There’s not a person comes to Rosmore but is keen for one of Rankine’s dogues. But I’m that pleased with you and your sense, that, if ye like, I’ll let you have the twa.”

Rosamond accepted the favour in her stately way. “Have we any money, Eddy?” she said. It did not in the least trouble her when her brother for answer turned his pockets inside out. “It does not matter in the least,” she said. “I should like to have them both, and the money will come somehow.” She was not touched with doubt as Archie

had been about the possibilities of paying. She was aware that she was poor, and had not a penny ; but most things she wanted were procured for her in one way or another. This had been Rosamond's experience since ever she remembered, and naturally it gave her mind a great calm.

"And yon you were saying about Mr. Johnson?" said the gamekeeper, turning to Eddy when the bargain was made.—"Wha's that chapping at the door?" he added impatiently. "Some gangrel body with an e'e to the dogues, and muckle Roy out there just a senseless beast that bids a body welcome, and hasna a bark in him. Janet, woman! wha's that chappin' at the door?"

"It's I," said a voice that made Eddy start. "It's a friend—of your master's, my good man."

"My maister's!" said Rankine. "Wha's that I would like to ken? Janet, just shut the door upon his nose, the uncivil person. My maister's! It will be some English towerist body that kens no better," he added condescendingly with a wave of his hand. "You may let him come in."

"Why, Rankine," cried Eddy, "you are in luck! This is the very gentleman—of St. Chad's, Cambridge. Johnson, come in—you're in luck too, I can tell you. Here's the champion that holds another view. You're on the Welsh side, aren't you?—here's the great authority, Ros-beg, that takes the other view."

"What?" said Johnson, coming in a little blinded from the winterly sunshine outside into the com-

parative gloom of the cottage, where the window was half covered with the drawn blind to keep out the sun. Mrs. Rankine had a notion, shared by many simple housekeepers, that the sun puts out the fire. "Eh—ah, who are you? I'll swear that's Eddy Saumarez's voice."

Rosamond rose up from her place by the game-keeper's bedside, and put back the puppy. The very sound of this man's voice offended her. To be sure it was the usual thing for everybody to say Eddy Saumarez. She had seen him discussed by that name in the sporting papers, the horrible crumpled things which he left about—there was nothing surprising in it; but there was something exasperating in the sound of his voice.

"Oh, Miss Saumarez," he said, stepping back a little. Her presence startled him as much as his appearance exasperated her.

"I think," she said, "as you've found your friend I'll go back by myself, Eddy. And goodbye, Mr. Rankine. I will pay the greatest attention to your instructions when you send me the dogs."

Then without taking any notice of the intruder, except by the slightest of bows, Rosamond turned and walked away. She waved her hand to Janet, but Janet was accustomed to scant ceremony, and was not offended. Rosamond was vaguely uneasy about this man and his frequent re-appearance, and Eddy's intention of having him asked to Rosmore. Of course Mrs. Rowland would do it if she were asked. Rosamond was not aware of the impression

he had already made on Evelyn's mind. Nor had she any doubts as to the truth of Eddy's description. Everything, she was aware, had changed at the University as at other places. There were no tests, and anybody might become a don. Of course, if he was a don, there was no reason why he should not be given an invitation for any entertainment. But only she, Rosamond, would not countenance him. She would neither dance with him nor talk with him. His appearance meant no good to Eddy if he were a hundred times a don. Eddy was a boy whom it was impossible to keep out of mischief whatever happened. If anything went wrong, she felt sure her father would hold her responsible, which would be extremely unjust, for what could she do? Thus she reasoned with herself as she walked very quickly through the woods, hurrying home. Home! it was not home. In about ten days or so this visit would be over, and if Eddy played any tricks, probably Mrs. Rowland would never ask them again. And Eddy was almost certain to play tricks of one kind or another. His flirtation with Marion must come to some end. And what *did* father mean by sending him there? Was it intended that he should marry Marion? was Marion rich enough to make father wish that Eddy should marry her? These questions became disagreeably present with Rosamond as she walked back to the house, and gave her a great feeling of insecurity and discomfort of every kind. It really was not safe to go anywhere with Eddy: he was

sure to get himself into scrapes, and have disreputable acquaintances appearing after him. A curve of annoyance came over Rosamond's smooth brow. It did not occur to her, however, as a thing possible that any blame in any other way could turn upon herself.

CHAPTER X

"COME along, Johnson," said Eddy; "don't be shy. The nature of great scholars, Rankine, is that they're dreadfully shy, don't you know. A man that you couldn't put out by the heaviest argument will give in at the sight of a young lady. That's like our friend here: he thinks every woman he sees is going to bite him, or—marry him perhaps out of hand, as you do in Scotland, don't you know."

"There is a great deal o' nonsense prevalent about Scotch marriages," said Rankine. "It's nothing of the kind. Come away ben, Mr. Johnson, I'm real glad to see you. Dod! he's no so lo'esome in his ain person that he should be frichtened for the leddies; but study's mair embellishin' for the mind than the body. Come in by, sir, and gi'e me a shake o' your hand. You and me's had mony a controversy, but nane sae bitter but that we may meet as friends."

"Eh! what's the man saying? What have I got to do with him?" cried Johnson stumbling in, with eyes as yet unaccustomed to the light.

"I tell you," said Eddy, "of course you never expected to find here the great Ros-beg, your opponent on the question of— What question was it, Rankine? Don't attempt to hide your honours Johnson, my boy. Everybody here knows you're Johnson of St. Chad's. You have only got to behave yourself as such, and recognize the power of learning wherever you see it. This, I tell you, is Ros-beg, your adversary on——"

"I say, Eddy, none of your humbug! I've got to talk to you on serious business, and here you are agoing on with your pranks to drive a man out of his senses."

"I have nothing to do with it," said Eddy. "This gentleman here in the bed, though you mightn't think it, is a great scholar, Johnson. He's driven you into a corner and holds you there. We know what you mean when you pretend ignorance. It's because you're shut up. You might find an argument if you were in your own study among all your books at St. Chad's; but here, face to face with the great Ros-beg, you've not got a word to say."

"Be canny with him, be canny with him, sir," said Rankine, a glow of complacency on his face. "A man's no to be expected to be ready wi' his weepens just at a moment's notice. Coming into a Highland cottage, how was he to think he was to be confronted by an adversary? Na, na; great allowances must be made. Sit down, sir, and tak' time and come to yourself."

"By Jove!" said Johnson, with most un-don-like force, "I think you mean to drive me mad, Eddy Saumarez! One day it's with your ladies, and another day it's with this old——"

"Let him get it oot, let him get it oot," cried Rankine. "Oh, ay! it's easier to abuse your opponent than to answer him; that's a trick weel kent in controversy. An auld—what, sir?—get it oot; it will ease your mind, and it will do me nae hairm."

"Johnson, you fool, can't you see that you've got a character to keep up?" cried Eddy, half-choking with laughter. The youth was full of mischievous delight in his mystification, but he was not without a meaning behind it, which was the thing most interesting to his present victim.

"I see your game, Mr. Eddy," said Johnson; "but you ain't going to get the better of me. Be done with that stuff, and come out and let us have a bit of serious talk. You know as well as I do what's hanging over your head. If you can't bring him something to stop his mouth, that old cove will—— or give him security as you're to be married before a certain day. I don't mind who I speak before. If you'll not listen to me one time, you'll have to listen another!" cried Johnson, working himself up into energy. Eddy stood facing the light with the ruddy glow of the flames playing over him, his somewhat worn and pale young face broadened with laughter. The effect of his youth, and perhaps a special impishness of

nature, gave him a delight in mischief which the most serious emergency could not destroy.

"I told you," he said, "this man's always got his thoughts filled with marrying—especially in Scotland, where you can always do it at a moment's notice. When he's not in terror for himself he's in terror for me."

"Ye may deliver your soul o' a' such terrors," said Rankine angrily. "There's naebody will marry ye here but the minister, and him no afore a' inquiry's made. There's an awfu' deal o' nonsense prevalent about Scotch marriages. It's a question I would have no objection to argue oot with ye, if ye prefer that to a mair learned subject," said the gamekeeper with a disdainful wave of his hand.

"I argue!" cried Johnson; "I'll not argue; it ain't my line. I'm not a parson, nor I ain't a lawyer; I'm a plain man, by Jove! I've got my own business, and I know how to do it; and this I tell you, Master Eddy, if you ain't ready with that cash, and before the month's out, come by it as ye will——"

"Can't you hold your d——d tongue! Can't you see what's expected of you!" said Eddy in a rapid whisper. "Rankine," he said, raising his voice, "I'm ashamed of my man. He hasn't pluck enough to come up to the scratch. The sight of you has routed him hand and foot. There's no spirit left in him at all."

"He never said a truer word," said Rankine, "than when he said he couldna argue. I'm glad

he has that much knowledge o' himsel'. It was aye a wonder to me that the editor let him in wi' his *disjectae membrae* and hotchpotch o' reasoning. I'm no surprised, for my pairt; but after this ex-heebition, I'm thinking it would be just as weel to tak' the cratur away. It's a'e thing to ha'e the gift o' sound argument, which is no given to everybody, and it's anither thing to be ceevil to a man in his ain house. Maybe, however, he thinks because I'm here in a cottage and no able for any exertion, that it's no me. But I can gi'e him evidence that it's me." Rankine put up his hand to a box of papers fastened within his reach by the wall and dived into it, much as, on the other hand, he dived into the nest of his dogs. "There's the editor's ain hand of write addressed to John Rankine, Esquire, which will maybe convince him. No that it matters a brass bodle to me if a man, when he's worsted in arguments, forgets his mainners. It's just of as little consequence as the yelping of thae beasties of dogues." Rankine took the puppies, who had been stumbling, with little whines and sniffs, over the heights and hollows of his own person, and dropped them one after another into what seemed some invisible pocket, their disappearance acting as a sort of energetic punctuation to his words. The letter, which he had flung towards the stranger, was indeed directed as he had said, and disclosed as it fell on the bed a number of proof-sheets or cuttings, very conclusive to the instructed eye. But Mr. Johnson did not look at

them at all. He said, "What have I to do with the old—gentleman's letters," substituting that word for "fool," which he had intended to use, on the compulsion of Eddy's eye.

"Then, good-bye, Rankine, I'll soon come back," said Eddy, shaking the old gamekeeper's hand; "but look here, I'll bring no more of my grand friends to see you from the Universities, if you are going to crumple them up like this."

Rankine laughed the satisfied laugh of the controversialist who has demolished his adversary. "He hadna a word to say for himself, no' a word. It's one thing compiling nonsense out o' books in a library, and meeting a man face to face. Ye just saw for yoursel' that the beggar hadna a word to say."

"Eh me," said Janet, who had gone out to the door to see the visitors fairly off, "that was an awfu' like man to be one of your great scholars, as ye call them. I've seen the college gentlemen in my young days, and fine lads some o' them were. I wadna have believed that was a college gentleman if it had been tell't to me."

"And what do you know about it?" said Rankine, scornfully. "There's the evidence that he just would not face me, the moment he heard who I was. I never thought he had the root of the maitter in him. Just a blethering retailer o' other men's opinions, no fit to haud his ain in any real controversy. I'm a wee disappointed, for it would have been a grand sensation to have it oot with ane of those Oxford ignoramuses in my ain house ;

but ye see he could not put out a finger without his authorities at his back. I think I'll maybe take a pickle mair broth."

"If yon's a college man and a gentleman," said Janet, "I'll just allow that I never was mair deceivit in my life."

Eddy took his friend's arm as they issued out from the shadow of the cottage. "Why didn't you show fight?" he said, "you fool! You can act well enough when you like. Why didn't you be civil and draw him out? He'd have done all the talk himself, and you'd have saved your character as a college fellow and a don."

"There's been enough of this nonsense," said Johnson. "I tried it on with the lady the other day, and I put my foot into it. She didn't believe I was a don, as you call it, any more—than any other person would. What was I to say to that old fool? I didn't know what he was talking about. Look here, we must have some serious talk, none of your humbug. I have my orders as clear as daylight. If he can't pay up—"

"I know," said Eddy, impatiently, "I know! I've heard all that before."

"You'll not hear it again, my fine fellow, or else it'll be before the judge for something that is more ticklish than debt. Don't you know there's that little bit of paper as was refused at the bank. No assets, just your luck to keep you from the Old Bailey. But he's got it all the time. If you're safe to marry the railway man's daughter, perhaps I

might get him persuaded to wait. For I'm your friend, Eddy Saumarez, you know as I always stand your friend when you don't play any of your tricks. I can't go bail for him that he'll do that ; for what with putting him off, and never answering his letters, and letting things swing, he's in the temper of the very — ; but if it's certain and settled, and the figure of her fortune known, and all that—”

“You saw for yourself how things were going,” said Eddy, not without a faint blush of shame, “the other day on the hill.”

“Oh, I saw you, fast enough—carrying on. But when I said to the lady, ‘That’s a case if ever there was one,’ she looked at me as if she could have knocked me down. ‘If you mean it’s an engagement,’ she says, as sharp as anything, ‘you’re mistaken, and it wouldn’t be allowed for a minute on either side.’”

“You put that into her head, you everlasting fool !” cried Eddy. And then with an effort of self-control, or rather with the natural facility of his easy temper, he added, bursting into a laugh, “She’s the stepmother, and they hate her all round. The more she opposes it the more it’s sure to be, so you see there’s more things in heaven and earth, Johnson, than are in your philosophy. What she says is just the thing that will never come to pass. I say, if you’ll behave a little decent, and get up the character, I’ll make her send you an invitation to the big ball !”

"The ball!"

"I know you're fond of high life, and seeing smart people: and you can act when you like. Now look here, put a good face upon it and let's have a little more time. Write to him that you've got a promise of having everything settled if you wait till after the 30th, and that you're going to a ball at Rowland's house under my wing; and then you'll wire about the engagement and all that as soon as ever it comes off. You'll never have such a chance again," said Eddy; "*crème de la crème*, my boy, and all that sort of thing."

"People of the place," said Johnson, with a sneer.

"People of the place! Well, I hope when it's Clydesdale and his lot, that's good enough for you. And perhaps you call the Duke of Arran one of the people of the place. So he is, for it all belongs to him: and the Huntingshaws and the Herons, who, I rather think, have been heard of even in London town."

"Oh, well," said Johnson, with half cager, half reluctant acquiescence; "but if that lady is the one to give the invitations, you will never get her to ask me."

"We'll see about that," said Eddy, complacently. "I think I know what I'm about."

"You know a deal too well what you're about. For a fellow of your age, you are the oldest fellow and the most artful I ever knew. I do believe it's only to gain time, and that there's nothing in it. Carrying on with a girl is nothing to you; you can

get 'em to believe you when another fellow hasn't even the chance to have a hearing. There's that tall one, your sister, looks at me as if I was the dirt under her feet. I'll tell you what, if you'll make her give me a dance at this thundering ball of yours, I'll do it—whatever the governor may say."

"Well you can ask her," said Eddy, in lightness of heart, "like any other gentleman. You don't want an introduction, because you've met her before. A woman can't refuse without being ill-bred, and nobody could ever say of the Saumarez that they were ill-bred. Of course she'll dance with you—if you ask her," he said with a laugh.

"What's that laugh for?" said Johnson, suspiciously.

"Oh, come, if a man isn't allowed to laugh! It's for the fun of the thing. I've seen you in a good many queer circumstances, but I never saw you at a society ball dancing with girls—of that sort, don't you know. I'll get you an introduction to the Duchess," cried Eddy, "and you can ask her to dance. By Jove! what fun it will be! I shouldn't wonder if you had what they call a great success. But mind, whatever you do, you must learn up the part."

"Where shall I get it?" said Johnson. The idea of success in the world which was "smart" turned his head. The thought went through his mind that it might be but the beginning of triumph. The Duchess, if she found his dancing to her mind, might invite him during the season. She

might ask him to the Cumbraes, that princely mansion. The light swam in Johnson's eyes. He felt as if he were on the verge of a new world. He could learn a part with any man, and mind his cues and enter into his *rôle*. Where could he get it? He ran over all the plays he knew, which was saying a good deal, but he could not remember the part of a don. "Hang it all," he said, "I wish you had introduced me as a plunger or a Guardsman, or something of that sort. I could have got 'em as easy as look at 'em; but I don't remember no don."

"There are plenty in novels," said Eddy.

"Oh, novels!—I don't read any except the yellow kind. I say, how d'ye dress the part? Is it a long coat and a white tie? or what is it? I don't know nothing about it," said Johnson, falling in his anxiety into the dialect of his kind.

"In the evening," said Eddy, "all gentlemen dress alike, except when they're parsons. Johnson of St. Chad's is not a parson. Probably in the daytime he wears an easy coat, and smokes a pipe. But we'd better leave that. You only want your evening things—I suppose they're decently cut—and a flower in your coat; but mind you have not a bouquet like a coachman at a drawing-room."

"I think I know enough for that," said the novice; "but you'd better get me one of those dashed novels if I'm to learn up the part."

They walked on in silence for a few minutes towards the moor; great visions filled the mind

of Johnson. "I say," he resumed after a while, "couldn't you get me asked for the shooting one day? The young fellow ain't much of a swell, whatever the rest of them may be; and I should like to shoulder a gun on a real moor, just for once in a way. It's a thing to have done. The governor would like it too. 'My son's up shooting in Scotland,' he'd tell everybody, 'with some of his smart friends.'"

"He can say it all the same, whether or not," said Eddy.

"That's true; but it feels much nicer when there's something in it. I say—I don't mind standing a sovereign to the gamekeeper, if you'll manage that. I'd give a sovereign any day to have some birds to send up to town with that heather stuff round 'em, and a label, 'From A. Johnson, Esquire.'"

"You had better give the sovereign to me," said Eddy, "if I am to take the trouble of it. Well, I'll try—and you'll have to get up that part too, Johnson, the don on the moors."

"Oh, I ain't frightened for that. Do they ask you to shoot at the Cumbraes—that's the Duke's place?" said Johnson, with greater and greater visions of delight rising before his eyes.

"They don't ask me, but they might ask you," cried Eddy, with a peal of laughter. "'In for a penny, in for a pound.' When once you get to know a Duke, all the rest follows like clockwork."

"That was what I thought," Johnson said modestly. He marched on by Eddy's side for

some time over the heather. Then he paused, and looked his companion in the face. "Mind," he said, "I don't say as I sha'n't like all this very much, and if I get on, I shall never forget as it was you as launched me, Master Eddy. But that's not to interfere with business: you'll have to keep to your day and square your account, or else the governor will be down upon you, and there's not a little thing in the whole affair as won't be brought to the light of day."

"And who will that harm most?" said Eddy. "I'll pay up, of course; but who do you think would suffer most—I, only a boy when you got me into your accursed hands, or *him*, an old bloated, money-lending, sixty per cent., blood-sucking——"

"Keep a civil tongue in your head. Do you think he'll mind what the papers may say? Look here, Eddy Saumarez, why don't you go to your governor and make a clean breast of it, and settle it up so as nothing should ever be brought against you again? You've got a lot of relations that wouldn't like to be dragged through the mud."

"Do you think they mind what the papers may say?" said Eddy, sardonically; "when that's the case on both sides, there can't be much to be done either way."

"Well, smart people don't, somehow," said Johnson, "no more than we do—they're so used to it. It ain't my business to dictate how you're to do it, but somehow you'll have to do it. You may get the money how you please, but you must get it,

and not a moment later than the 31st. Now that's settled, I can give my thoughts to getting up the part."

When he was left by his companion, Eddy went up by himself upon the moors, which was a kind of excursion he did not usually enjoy. He went up breasting the hill like a deer or a mountaineer, nor caring where he went, through ling and bracken, among the prickly whins, and over the treacherous quagmires of moss and bog. Something was in his mind which made him indifferent to all the accidents of the way. When he had reached the very top of the ridge he threw himself down upon the dark heather with his face upon the ground, falling as if he had been shot, and lay there for a few moments motionless as if he had died. Nature accommodates herself very easily to any vagary of rest. The dark figure seemed for a moment to disturb and break the line of vegetation, but had not been there a moment before the grasses and the ling seemed to take a new beginning, starting up from under him, the long myrtles rustling their heads, the Grass of Parnassus waving its white stars. So they would have done had he been dead, covering him over, hiding him in the bosom of the soil. He lay for a little while thus, harmonized and composed into quiet under the still touch of the hill, so that when he got up again he seemed to leave a broad and angry void where he had been. What passed in his mind while he buried his face in the coolness of the earth, and hid himself from the eye

of day, it would be hard to tell—perhaps only the working of his quick brain as to what he could do in the emergency in which he found himself, perhaps compunction, miserable thoughts of the past, more miserable reflections on the future. But nothing of this was visible when he raised himself from that momentary collapse. He sat down upon the heather with his face towards the lake, and pondered, clutching at his hair with both his hands, setting his elbows on his knees. What was it he was thinking of out there upon the lonely moor, not a living creature near him except the wild creatures on the hills, the insects in the moorland vegetation. His short-sighted eyes roamed vaguely over the heather, pausing upon here and there a gleam of water in a hollow, turning instinctively, like a child toward a light, to the deep loch lying far below. But he saw little or nothing with these wandering eyes. They were bent upon visionary objects, seeing scenes and visions which had nothing to do with the moor or the loch of Rosmore.

Presently Eddy took something from his pocket, a piece of paper with a few words upon it, which he studied intently. His eyes came back from their roaming to fix themselves intently, with the contraction of the eyebrows which marked their defect upon the paper. They were sharp eyes though they were short-sighted, seeing everything within their limited range with a keenness and mastery of every detail quite unusual, a power of observation which was more precious than the longest sight.

What was it he was trying to master? A few uninteresting words, nothing of the slightest importance. Then he took out a pencil and wrote something, repeating the same characters again and again. What was it? He kept the paper so cautiously in his hand that had he been startled by any intruder he could have doubled it up in a moment, and hidden it in his hollowed palm. It was somewhat strange to see such a precaution taken on the wide stretch of moor, which was as desolate as a moor could be, some part of it dark with the blistered stems of heather which had been burned, the rest dewy and glistening with the moisture with which a few days of rain had soaked the country. The very insects were hushed by the cold of the October afternoon. A few desolate cheepings low among the heather betrayed a lowly nest here and there. In the distance a road came like a black ribbon over a corner of the slope. Eddy sent another anxious look round him, and returned to his paper, writing the same letters over and over again. Was it the name of his love? What was it? He held it so carefully under the shadow of his hand that even had some one risen silently from the heather, and looked over his shoulder, it would have been difficult to see.

This was not exactly what happened. What happened was that—coming along the dark road in the distance, Eddy spied a figure, which made him start to his feet and hastily return to his pocket the little document. He sat down again, but with

his face that way, watching who it was who was approaching. There was something in the outline and the gait, those points which are all the short-sighted have to go upon, which seemed to indicate a person he knew. It was not the moment which Eddy would have chosen to encounter Archie Rowland, but there was something in his own occupation just suspended, and in the curious fancy which had brought him here, the object which he only knew, which made him eager to disarm any possible suspicion on the part of his hosts at Rosmore—which impelled him at least not to avoid the meeting. Suddenly he got up and began waving his arms about to attract the attention of the passer-by, who, pausing and standing still a moment to consider who called him, at length decided to change his course and came towards the figure thus signalling to him across the summit of the hill.

CHAPTER XI

ARCHIE came over the hill, lifting his feet high among the heather. He had changed in his aspect a little since the old Glasgow days. For one thing he had changed his tailor, which always makes a great difference. And three months of the fresh Highland air and outdoor exercise, and something too of the growing habit of a little authority and command, and that of having things done for him, of saying to this man, go, and he goeth, and to another, come, and he cometh, had changed the looks of Archie. And another more subtle influence had changed him. His brow had cleared of an overhanging cloud, once too ready to come down at a moment's notice. He held his head more erect. It was not perhaps that he was in reality more sure of himself—but at least he had somehow acquired the air of being so—and he was of course more accustomed and at ease in the habits of his new life.

He could not think why he had been called in this way; and did not indeed recognize Eddy,

whose presence here on the top of the moor was the last thing any one could have expected. Eddy was not fond of long walks. To stroll down to the beach with his hands in his pocket, and when he had got there, to sit on a rock and throw stones into the water, was the hardest exercise he generally indulged in, except a day's shooting now and then, when he showed himself, notwithstanding his indolence, as to the manner born—a thing which Archie could never do. But how he should have got up here without any motive was a thing which young Rowland could not understand. "Is it you?" he cried with surprise when he came near enough to recognize his guest.

"It's just me—which I perceive is the formula here," cried Eddy. "I've no right to invite you to sit down, as this is your own place; but I can recommend that ling bush. It's dry, and there is no gorse about to prick into your vitals. Are you in a hurry, or can you wait a bit here?"

"Oh, I am in no hurry," said Archie. "It's not easy to be in a hurry when you've got nothing to do."

"Do you think so? I'm always in a hurry and always late—though I have nothing to do."

"I suppose it's according to a man's nature," said Archie.

"Everything is that if you go to the bottom of things. You're one of the restless fellows that want to be doing—I don't. I love idleness," said

Eddy, stretching himself back over the ling, with his arms extended over his head and his eyes on the sky. The sky was covered with clouds, yet there was a break of blue just over Eddy's head, which he regarded complacently as if it had been made for his special use.

"I was surprised to see you up so far—it's a good climb from the loch side."

"So it is," said Eddy; "it was not for want of something to do. So long as there's a billiard table handy, thank heaven, you never need be without occupation. If there's nobody to have a game with, you can at least be improving your own play."

"I did not think of that," said Archie.

"No, for you don't appreciate billiards," cried the other, "which is a pity, for it's a fine game. I say, Rowland, when are we to have another day's shooting? This ball takes up a lot of time; but I hope you'll take me out on the hills at least one day again before I go?"

"When you like," Archie said shortly.

"Well, that's curt," said Eddy with a laugh; "And I always like, don't you know. By the way, I've got a sort of a—favour to ask you. I don't know what you'll say."

Archie did not make any reply but looked up, waiting without much excitement for the demand, whatever it might be.

"Well, it's this," said Eddy embarrassed, which was almost a new sensation to him, and gave him

a sense of youth and freshness which in its way was delightful. "I don't know what you'll say to me for asking such a thing. It's not as if you had your governor out and a lot of bigwigs. A couple of young fellows doesn't matter."

Archie kept his face towards his companion with the same look of indifferent expectation, but he said nothing to help him on.

"It is not even like an invitation to the house ; and the ladies probably will not be coming out again."

There was faintly indicated on Archie's countenance a question as to this latter statement—a sort of interrogating curl in the curve of his eyebrows ; but the young man was chary of his words, and spoke no more than was indispensable.

"It is getting late in the season you know," said Eddy, "and cold for them."

"They don't mind the cold," said Archie.

"Well, it's rather cutting up here, and Mrs. Rowland— isn't so young as the girls. However I'm afraid they didn't care for my man when he appeared before. It was bad taste, I allow, thrusting himself into the midst of our party. But I don't pretend that he's much in the way of breeding. He's a good fellow—enough—and he never had any opportunity of this sort of thing when he was younger. It's that man Johnson, don't you know. He's hanging about here. I am always knocking up against him. He would be awfully pleased if you'd ask him to come with us

out shooting. And I don't think he'll do much harm."

"Oh," said Archie, "the college man."

"Yes," replied Eddy, wincing a little, "the college man." He had not minded at all promulgating that fiction to the ladies. It was immense fun. To do him justice it had been struck off on the spur of the moment, without any intention ; but to say it to Rowland, two fellows on the hillside, was a different matter. He began to pull up the tenacious roots of the ling with both hands, struggling with them, and did not meet Archie's eyes. Nothing could be more innocent than Archie's eyes, which suspected nothing. Archie had scarcely been conscious of Johnson's presence at all. He had made no mental remarks as to the breeding or want of breeding of the stranger. He had no theories about a College Don. It is doubtful, indeed, whether he had any clear impression as to what that character was. Eddy added quickly, "He's a little uncouth. They don't see much society, these fellows. I would not mix him up with the ladies: but he would be awfully pleased—and when it's only two young fellows on a moor, you and me—"

"Oh, I have no objections," said Archie. "Ask him if you like, Saumarez ; it was hardly necessary to take the trouble of asking me."

"You are an awfully good fellow, Rowland!" said Eddy, struck with a faint and very temporary sense of shame.

"Oh, if that's all," cried Archie, with a smile which lighted up his face. It pleased him that anybody should think so, and still more that Eddy Saumarez should think so. In the exhilaration of that encouragement he went a little further, as the simple giver pleased with his own liberality is so apt to do.

"If there is anything else we can do for him—I'll tell Roderick to see that it's all right. And we can go out any day you like. I'm not such a hearty sportsman as you. If it wasn't a kind of duty—but it's pleasant when somebody enjoys it," he said with a glow upon his brightened face.

"I enjoy it—down to the ground," said Eddy. "It's not that there's so very much game; but then one has it all one's own way. Nobody poking in before you, saying, 'My bird?' and then a young fellow has to give in. You're a lucky dog, Rowland—the cock of the walk so far as the moor goes, and thought no end of at home."

"Do you think so?" said Archie, with a sort of painful gratification. "I'm afraid that's more than I can believe. I'm a disappointment to my father, Saumarez. I don't know what he expected, but he expected something very different from me."

"They are always like that," said Eddy, with the air of an authority. "They put you in a certain grind, and then they look out for something quite different. I am just the product of my training; but the governor jaws at me as if I were

a monster : though if all tales be true, he could have given me odds, at my worst."

Eddy spoke with the composed expression of a man whose worst had been very bad, and who had fathomed all the secrets of life. Archie could not but look on with a certain respect, though his blameless mind recoiled a little from this man of knowledge. He had no experiences of his own, save of the most trifling kind, to produce.

"The worse of it all," said Eddy, "is the money. We have all that's nice, you know, in the way of living, and places to go to and so forth, but never any money in our pockets. I don't know if the governor himself is much better. It all goes on quite smoothly, and I suppose it gets paid. I don't know. I never have a penny to bless myself with."

"Oh, there's no want here in that way," said Archie. He took out a card case from his pocket, and took a piece of paper from it. "Here is something my father gave me this morning, for extra expenses, he said. I told him I had no extra expenses, but it was no use. And I don't know what to do with it," Archie said ; "you can't buy anything at Rosmore. I'll pay it into my bank, which is his bank too, and there it will lie."

"Good life, Rowland ! No use !" cried Eddy, with eager eyes fixed upon the cheque. He took it out of his companion's hand, and examined it, gloating over every line. "One hundred pounds, James Rowland," he cried. "I wish I had a few signatures like that. I wish he'd take a few pieces

of paper out of his pocket of this description and offer them to me."

"I dare say he would," said Archie, calmly, "if he knew you were in such great need of them ; but you are just romancing on that score."

"Romancing !" cried Eddy. "I romancing ! It shows how little you know. You can't think, Rowland, what temptations a young fellow is subjected to. And then all sorts of harpies about, thirsting for your blood. Before you know where you are, they've got you hard and fast, and after that you never dare call your soul your own. Why this fellow John——, I mean a man in London, has got his horrid thumb on me !— Romancing !" cried Eddy, "I'd give my little finger for a bit of paper like that—and one a day as long as they lasted for ever and ever."

To see Archie's countenance while his companion was speaking was an experience in its way. He raised himself erect the first minute out of his habitual lounging and careless attitude. His brow cleared more and more. He pushed his hat back, revealing it with the heavy ruddy hair, pushed back too, and standing up in a thick crest : his eyes so often overcast, or gleaming out in sudden gleams, half-timorous, half-defiant, were bent steadily upon Eddy's face with something celestial in their blueness—his mother's eyes. He had never looked out upon the world so openly, so free, with so little self-consciousness, since the first day when his father's heart had risen at the first look of him in

the humble parlour at Sauchiehall Road ; and there was something of a new-developed soul, something higher, something deeper in that look now.

"Would ye that?" he said, in his native tone and accent. He took up the paper where Eddy had laid it down, spread out upon the ling for admiration. "Your little finger would be of no use to me," he said ; "but if ye want this so much, and I don't want it at all, take it, Saumarez. You are very welcome to it, and it's little use to me."

Eddy raised his eyes suddenly, with a gleam of eager covetousness, to the other's face. They were hazel eyes, with a peculiar reddish gleam, and flashed out like lanterns on the steadfast blue of Archie's look. Then a flush came over his face, and his eyelids, which were full and in many folds, went over these two lamps like curtains drawn. "Rowland, you cover me with shame," he said, in a voice only half audible, trembling in the air.

"What for?" said Archie: as his countenance brightened, his tone went back more and more to that obnoxious Glasgow, which his father so disliked to hear. But though it was Glasgow, there was the very soul of music in Archie's voice. It became soft and round and dewy and liquid, with the qualities of all melting things in one. "What for? when you want it so much, and me not at all. I have nothing to do with it; and you——"

"I have a hundred things to do with it," cried Eddy, "if I could only tell you!—if you would only

understand ! But you wouldn't—an honest fellow like you, that never had a thought you were ashamed of. Oh, yes, it's life or death, that is about what it is ! I could perhaps grapple on, and struggle out. Perhaps—I don't know if it would be enough—— Oh, I say, Rowland, it's too great a temptation. Put it away, back in your pocket. What does it matter what becomes of a wretched fellow like me !”

There was just enough reality in this struggle against himself to give to Eddy what was generally absent from his best endeavours—an air of truth. He did try to work himself up to the point of refusing this sudden windfall which had dropped into his very hand.

“ Well,” said Archie, “ don't give it up for that. I have a little more in the bank. It is not very much ; it's about fifty pounds more. My father gives me an allowance. It's a new thing for me to have all that money, and I just never spend it. What would I spend it upon here ? I got two of Rankine's little dogues—but they're paid for, the little dashed beasts that have taken to—somebody else—that don't care a button for me. Come, take it, lad : and if you'll come to my room when we get home, I'll give ye a cheque for the rest. If it was to buy anything, ye might demur, and say as well me as you ; but when it's to free you of something on your mind——”

“ I should think it was on my mind,” Eddy said, not looking up at the other face which beamed

benignant upon him. Archie perhaps, was never so much at ease with himself, so conscious of power and faculty, so flattered and gratified during his whole life.

“Well—and I have nothing on my mind,” he said with a happy laugh. He doubled up the cheque and thrust it into Eddy’s hand. “And just come to my room as soon as you get back—or perhaps——” He paused a little, wondering, as he had a favour to confer, which was the best way. “I’ll tell ye what’s the best. I’ll come to yours, and then there will be no difficulty,” Archie said.

He went down over the shoulder of the hill to Rosmore, never feeling for a moment the roughness of the way, laughing at himself as he stuck in a bog or stumbled over a rock, elated, happy, twice the man he was when he threaded slowly through the harsh bushes of the ling to where Eddy awaited him. What a half-hour that had been. He had never been able to be of use to any one all his life. The experience was quite new to him, delightful above all words. He did not even remember for some time that it was Rosamond’s brother whom he thus had it in his power to deliver from mysterious and unknown troubles. The first recollection of that additional inducement produced upon him indeed rather a sobering than an exciting effect. He divined instinctively that to Rosamond this would be a horror and humiliation. Heaven forbid she should ever know! He

felt nothing but delight in being able to do something for Eddy, but the thought of Rosamond covered him with sudden cold dews of alarm. Never, never, must Rosamond know. She would blame him for it, Archie foresaw. It would raise a mountain of horrible obstacles between them. She would resent the mere possibility of such a link between her brother and himself. He must warn Eddy in the first place, who was so careless, who might let it out at any moment ; and in the next, he must take every precaution that no one should ever discover what had passed. Even his cheque might be compromising to Eddy ; there must be no way of betraying him, no possibility left. He turned over in his mind, as he hurried home, all the precautions that could be taken to conceal the transaction. Archie was not a man of business. He had little knowledge of the ways of banks and the manner of passing money from one hand to another. But when the heart is concerned, the mind becomes ingenious. And he had thought it well out, and how it was to be done, so that whatever secrets might be revealed, nothing of this should ever come out against Eddy, before he had reached home.

Eddy himself was too much ashamed of the part he was playing to walk home with the young man who had thus come to his help. There was so much grace left in him that he could not do that. He made the excuse that he was going a little way up the loch to speak to Alick Chalmers, the

universal agent, about something that was wanted for the decoration of the ball-room, and when Archie had left him he stood watching his progress over the hill till he was out of sight. He had been really touched by Archie's kindness, and by the absolute trust that young Rowland had showed in him, and something of compunction, something of unwonted tenderness was in Eddy's eyes as he looked after that good Samaritan. "What a good fellow he is," he said to himself; "but, Jove! how badly he carries himself. To think he should treat a man like that whom he knows so little as he knows me; but I ought to have gone with him, for he'll be on his nose before he gets down to the road."

He could not but laugh at the manner in which Archie cannoned off a big boulder and nearly rolled down the hill at one point in his progress. His heart was still touched, but yet to be as awkward as that was what no man had any right to be. Then he threw himself down on the heather again and thought, steadily following out with puckered eyebrows and a set face the scheme which had sprung to being in his brain when he set his eyes on the cheque which now kept him warm against his bosom. How much fun and frolic there was in that bit of paper, if he could have used it for his own pleasure. It gleamed across him that he might yet use it for his own pleasure and let everything slide; but there are some things that are more necessary than pleasure even to the

most sordid mind. He had hailed this money as a benediction from heaven when it first dropped so unexpectedly into his hands, to enable him perhaps to arrange his most pressing affairs and deliver himself from a galling presence. But by the time Eddy rose from his seat among the heather, the most lively feeling he felt in his mind was resignation, and a sense that he was giving up his personal wishes in the noble way of paying an old debt, when he might have got so much fun out of the money ! It was a wonderful change of view.

He took his way to the upper end of the loch, but not to see Alick Chalmers. He went on for a mile or two on the crest of the hill, and then dropped down upon a little cluster of houses on a little knoll among the harvest fields where the scanty crop was only being gathered in in the end of October. Johnson came out of one of those houses as the young man approached.

"If you've anything particular to say let us go up the hill," he said. "It ain't safe talking in these little holes. They can hear you in the other room, if not next door."

"What makes you think I have anything to say?"

"Well, there's those invitations you promised me," said Johnson.

"Promised you ! I said I'd ask for you. I'll get them if you'll do what I want for me."

"Not a farthing more money, Master Eddy ; it's

no use speaking. To mention it even would be as much as my place is worth."

"You fool! who's talking of money?" said Eddy.

They mounted up slowly till they came to a little green knoll, a sort of oasis in the waste of the heather.

"There's nobody can listen here," he said. "I've brought you a payment on account, Johnson. Look here, if you'll get him to take this, and wait for the rest till I can get it——"

"I daren't make such a proposal, Master Eddy; he'll have all or none—the whole sum, every penny—or he'll write and expose you."

"Hold your tongue, I say. Look at it first and see—it's as good as sovereigns counted out upon the table—it's not like a bill or that sort——"

"You don't suppose he'd take a bill off *you*?"

"You needn't be so dead sarcastic," said Eddy. "He's had many a worse fellow than me to deal with. Look here, Johnson, a hundred pounds down—or perhaps I could make it a hundred and fifty. It's a pity to refuse good money. If anything were to happen to me to-morrow; if you were to put some shot into me, for instance, on Friday on the moor——"

"Do you mean?" cried Johnson, his unwholesome white face lighting up with pleasure. "I can't do what you want, Mr. Eddy, for it don't depend upon me: but I'll never forget what you've

done for me, man. It's the thing I've wished most."

"And do you think," said Eddy, "I'm going to do that for nothing? Not such a fool, my fine fellow. A hundred and fifty, Johnson—down; and as good as gold paid over the counter. Wire him that it's an offer, and that you'll be able to push business among the swells you will meet. I can introduce you to half the bigwigs about—and if you don't make something out of them.—But I must have that confounded paper back."

"I don't wonder that you say so; but it's no use speaking. If I—it depended upon me! and, Master Eddy, if I can do you a good turn another time I will. You never can tell when you may want a good turn."

"I want this good turn—that confounded bit of paper, and a little ease of my life. Look here!—and there's more where that came from."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Johnson. He took the cheque out of the young man's hands and examined it closely. "Yes," he said; "it's as good as gold. Lord, what a pity, when he was doing it, he didn't go a little bit farther and add a nought! Another nought, and just a little bit of change in one word. Bless us all, how easy he could have done it—a touch of the pen." Johnson put his hand on the cheque, pointing out lightly here and there where the improvement could have been made. "The one would be just as easy to him as

the other," he said. "And think! then you would be set right in a moment; that bit of paper given up, and everything squared. When you have a friend like this, why can't you get him to do something that's of real use? A hundred's nothing; I would advise you to keep that for yourself. It might be of use to you for pocket-money. It's of no use to us."

"It's precisely a hundred pounds' worth of use," said Eddy.

"Ah! if you take it in that way; but *he* wouldn't take it in that way. He would say it's the tenth part of our claim, and I'm not going to let a young fellow like that (he would say—mind, it's not me) off for a tenth of our claim. How much more money (he would say) d'ye think we'd get out of him after he had his bit of paper back. No, no, Master Eddy, no use to try on that little dodge, he's far too old a bird. But, so far as I am concerned, if there's anything in a moderate way I could help you in, after what you're going to do for me——"

"How do you know I'll do it for you now? It's nothing for nothing in this world," said Eddy, fiercely. "If you don't help me, why should I take any trouble? Your day's shooting and your ball depend upon me, and I'm willing to see you through these and introduce you to all the bigwigs, but if I get nothing in return——"

"Only a word of advice," said Johnson. "Go back to your friend, Master Eddy, and get him to

alter that thing there ; he could do it with a scratch of his pen. Another nought, and there's nothing easier for a man, when it's his own writing, to change a word. If it looks blotchy, don't you know, he puts his initials to show it's all right—I've seen it done a dozen times—that's all he's got to do, and everything would be square. Take it back to him, Master Eddy, that's my advice."

"I think you're the devil in person, Johnson," was what Eddy replied.

CHAPTER XII.

ON the evening of the same day Archie Rowland knocked at Eddy's door. It had been an evening of the lively order, which had now become habitual at Rosmore. Eddy and Marion had carried all before them. After a long discussion of the details of the ball, the decorations in which Eddy was collaborating with Mrs. Rowland, and fertile in a thousand suggestions, Rosamond had again struck up a waltz on the piano, and the two gayest members of the party had immediately started off. There were present some of Miss Eliza's many nieces and nephews from the Burn, and in a few minutes two or three couples had "taken the floor," winding in and out of the furniture, with difficulties which increased the mirth. Mr. Rowland himself had come in from the dining-room while this lively scene was going on, and had looked upon it benignantly for a minute or two in the doorway, but had ended by going away amused but perhaps a little bored by this unreasoning invasion of his quiet, as the father of a family not unfrequently does,

not displeased that his children should enjoy themselves, but with an odd sense of bachelorhood and detachment as he takes refuge in his library, supposing him to have one. Evelyn had been looking on too, still more benignant, glad that the youthful members of the party should be occupied anyhow, ready to take her place at the piano, and help them to keep it up, yet a little disturbed by the withdrawal of her husband, and instantly conscious, sympathetically, that the too-prominent and continual amusement of the young people had its disadvantageous side. Probably had she been their mother, she would have taken their part more warmly, and with a vague blame in her mind of the man who could not blot himself out as she did, for what pleased the children. Archie, to whom this evening, in the greater number of performers, Rosamond could not offer herself as a partner, felt like his father, a little annoyed and very much amazed with himself for feeling annoyed. How much better, he said to himself, to be like Saumarez, able to give himself up to what other people wished, to amuse them, and make the evening "go off" for the guests. Archie felt that he himself would never be up to that. He would never be able to forget himself and throw off all his cares, and sacrifice himself on the altar of his guests. A secret longing forced itself upon him to get rid of them all, to be quiet, even as in the dull evenings before the arrival of the visitors. The evenings had been very dull, but still— As for

the old life in Glasgow, Archie somehow did not go back to that—it had retired so very far away out of his ken. If it had been thirty years ago instead of four months it could not have become more completely impossible, a thing got into the abyss of the past, not to be thought of any more.

It was late when he walked softly through the dim corridor up stairs, in which one lamp only was burning low, making a sort of darkness visible. Everybody was asleep, or at least so it appeared from the absolute stillness of the house. He felt as if his step now and then coming upon a plank in the flooring which creaked, must startle the people retired in those silent rooms like the tread of a thief in the night. Nothing could be more unlike a thief than Archie was, stealing along in the dark to give away all he possessed in the world to a man whom he did not by any means love, who was his neighbour only in the broadest sense of the word, one who wanted something which he possessed. He had made out all his generous foolish plans, as to how it could be best done, so that nobody need ever know that he had come to Eddy's aid, not even a banker's clerk. He knocked softly at the door from underneath which there was a glimmer of light, the only one in the long corridor where any sign of life was to be seen. His knock was not responded to for the first moment. He heard a little rustle and movement of paper, and then he knocked a second time, and

again after a little interval Eddy came and opened the door.

"Oh, it's you, Rowland," he said, admitting him instantly.

Eddy had been sitting at a writing table, with a number of papers before him, over which he had tossed a newspaper, the first thing that came handy, when he heard Archie's knock. There was no reason why he should have covered up his papers so. What he had been lost in contemplation of was Archie's cheque, which was stretched out before him in his blotting book, and which he was poring over with no doubt the grateful sensations which a man has when a friend holds out to him, when he is drowning, a helpful hand. He had been looking at it with his head on one side, and a look of earnest and fixed observation, sometimes making a visionary line with his pencil in the air, here and there. Perhaps a little regret about that nought that was wanting might be in his mind. Eddy was very hard pressed. The bit of paper which the money-lender had in his possession, which he held over the unfortunate young man's head, demanding a ransom as cruel and extravagant as any blood-money, was enough to ruin Eddy for ever and ever. No aid or succour from his friends would enable him to get over it, and he dared not on account of this exorbitant demand made upon him, or attempt to have it ratified. He must pay it or he himself must sink to the very pit of social annihilation. Eddy was very well known to be a

little *mauvais sujet*, as his father had been before him. Still that was a thing which society could ignore: it could even have permitted him to marry an heiress, with a sensation of pleasure in having him so well disposed of; but the bit of paper in the usurer's hand was a different matter. That was a thing which could not be admitted, and could not be forgotten. At all hazards, at all costs, that must be got rid of. If there only had been that other nought, if only a *t* had been prefixed to the *h* of the hundred, and sundry other unimportant alterations made! It was impossible not to think of this, not to see how easy it would have been, had Mr. Rowland been possessed by so good an idea. What a pity! what a pity! Eddy with all his thinking could not imagine a plan by which Rowland could be made to do that: and yet how easy it would be! He threw the Glasgow paper over it when he heard the knock at the door.

"Oh, is it you, Rowland? Come in. I was just looking at the—paper before I went to bed."

"It's little interest it can have for you—a Glasgow paper," said Archie with a smile. And then he said, "I've come to speak about what we were saying this afternoon on the hill."

"Yes?" said Eddy. He has repented already, he said to himself with a deep-drawn breath.

Archie stammered and hesitated, and blushed as he sat down at the table. He began to rustle and pluck at the corner of the paper unconsciously with those awkward fingers which he never knew

what to do with. "I've been thinking," he said, and could get out no more.

"Look here," said Eddy nervously, "if you've been thinking, Rowland, as would be quite natural, that you were taken by surprise to-day on the hill, that you handed over that cheque to me in a moment of weakness, and that now on thinking it over you felt that you had been a fool, and that my troubles were no concern of yours—don't beat about the bush. I have been thinking just the same myself. It's monstrous you should be put out about a fellow's concerns whom you had never seen a month ago, and never may see again. Say it out, there's a good fellow; don't hesitate and spare my feelings. I agree beforehand in every word you say."

Archie sat open-mouthed while his companion delivered very rapidly this little oration, in which there was a great deal of genuine feeling: for Eddy thought it was almost inevitable that such a rash piece of generosity should be repented of, and yet was in so much mental excitement concerning the matter altogether, that his mind was full of impatient resentment against the man whose action (mentally) he approved, and whom he believed to be doing the most natural thing in the world.

"I suppose," said Archie, "it's the natural thing, because a man is a little behind in his company manners, and all that, and can't ride, or shoot, or dance, or anything as well as you, that you should make sure he is a cad all round, as you say."

"What do you mean?" cried Eddy, with his sharp eyes doing all he knew to read a face to him altogether inscrutable in the simplicity of its single-mindedness.

"So long as you don't ask me to discuss what *you* mean," said Archie, with a careless disdain which stung the other: for, indeed, the lad was desperate in the feeling of being unable to get himself understood, whether from one side or another. "I've been thinking," he said, "the best way of getting that money without compromising—any person. It's a transaction between ourselves that nobody has anything to do with. My father might ask to see my bank book. I am perhaps doing him the same injustice that I think you are doing me; but he might, for my own good, if he thought I was spending too much. Now, I don't want him to poke into this, and find perhaps your name, or—— Therefore I was thinking, suppose we go up to Glasgow, you and me? There's these things that you want for the ball—that would be a very good excuse. And then I can draw out the money myself, in notes or gold, or whatever you please, which will leave no record on the books, so that I will be in it alone if there should be any remarks, and not you. Do you see? Here's the cheque for the other fifty pounds. You can have it that way if you like, of course; but I can't help thinking it would be better my way."

"Rowland," said Eddy, giving him one glance, then withdrawing his eyes quickly, as from an

inspection he could not bear; "do you do all this for my sake?"

"I don't know that it's for any one's sake. It's just the easiest way—not to compromise any one. If I'm asked for an explanation, I can give it in my own way—about myself. But if I am asked for an explanation about you, I neither could give it, nor would I: you see the difference. It's just a plain business view."

"It is not a common kind of business," said Eddy; "it's the first time I ever heard that sort of thing called business. You're a queer fellow, Rowland; but I think you must be about the best fellow I ever knew."

"Nothing of the sort," said Archie. "I have something I don't want, and you want something you haven't got. We niffer, that's all. Oh, I suppose you don't understand that word, it's Scotch. We exchange, that's what it means."

"And what do I give in exchange?" said Eddy. The question was asked rather of himself than of Archie, who made no reply, except a little shame-faced laugh. Young Saumarez reflected a little, with working eyebrows and twitching mouth. He said at last, "I'll take you at your word, Rowland; this will make it a debt of honour. I'll take you at your word. A thing that's got no evidence, that you couldn't recover, is the only thing that presses on a man's conscience. I'll take you at your word."

Archie again gave vent to a little laugh of em-

barrassment and confused relief. He did not enter into the reasoning. Debts of honour, or debts of any kind, were unknown to him. It had driven him almost distracted to think how he was to pay for the two little puppies from Rankine—the doggies which he always thought of with a little bitterness, who had abandoned him and gone over to the enemy. No more than Eddy could have understood that difficulty, could Archie understand how it might be supposed he was securing himself against loss by astutely giving the character of a debt of honour to the money he was bestowing upon his fellow-creature who was in need. He said simply, "We will consider this as settled, then ; and we'll run up to Glasgow to-morrow. I can show you the place: it is not like London, perhaps ; but there's things in it you couldn't see in London. There's a boat about ten o'clock."

"Oh, I say ! that means getting up in the middle of the night."

"Well, there's one at twelve. We'll get there before the bank shuts. You'll not be able to see so much of the town."

"I can live without that," said Eddy.

"Well, Glasgow's a very fine place," said Archie gravely, not wishing to permit any disparagement of his native town: and then he rose from the table. He had already unconsciously pulled the newspaper half away, and as he rose up his movement displayed it altogether, and he could not help seeing, notwithstanding Eddy's eager half-move-

ment to cover it again, the cheque lying opened out upon the blotting-book underneath. He said hastily, "You were just going to send it away——"

"Yes," said Eddy, his heart beating, not understanding the question, but seizing at it as he would have done at any means of escape.

"Then I just came in time," said Archie, with a pleased smile.

Eddy took up the cheque, with a feeling of despair clutching at his heart. "You had better have it back," he said.

"You can bring it up with you," said Archie; "nobody is likely to ripe your pockets and see what's in them in the middle of the night."

With this enigmatical speech, which Eddy did not in the least understand, Rowland bade him a hurried good-night, and took himself away.

Ripe his pockets: what did that mean? but this problem did not occupy much of the precious time which Eddy had to give up to thinking. He found the pencil lying where he had left it, the cabalistic pencil which he had been waving over Archie's cheque, hoping perhaps to convey thus into it the alterations which James Rowland could have made so easily, which would have cost that millionaire so little, and done Eddy such a world of advantage. A malison on all millionaires! What they might do with a sweep of the pen, without ever feeling it, without knowing that a crumb had fallen off their well-covered tables for a dog to eat! Eddy flung the pencil from him in his indignation. The fellow

meant very well, he allowed that. There was advantage in keeping this little transaction quite dark, in obliterating all traces of the loan or gift given him in this way. But, confound the fellow, all the same ! Eddy flung his pencil out of his hand, and it fell on the floor at the foot of the table where Archie had been sitting. The dumb articles that one throws away generally have a prompt revenge over us in having to be groped after next minute ; and this was what happened to Eddy. But as he stooped to pick it up his heart began to beat with a wild commotion which almost choked him : for there at the foot of the table, underneath the chair which Archie had pushed away, lay a long booklet in a green paper cover. There could be no doubt to the most ignorant what it was. It was Archie's cheque-book, which he had brought in, in case Eddy should, after all, have preferred his money that way, with a cheque written out for Archie's spare fifty pounds on the first page, and a dozen more blank cheques behind. The blood mounted up to Eddy's face. It came in such a rush that he could scarcely see for the moment ; and yet he knew very well what it was, and the inconceivable opportunity which the devil—was it the devil, or that something not always benevolent which people call providence, had put into his hand ?

He scarcely went to bed at all that night. Hosts, armies, legions of thoughts came up and possessed him like an invaded country, marching and counter-marching through his mind. It was not without a

struggle that he yielded, it was not without many struggles. Half-a-dozen times at least he was the victor, and rejected conclusively, triumphantly, the idea set before him; and then the landscape would change, the perspective alter, and regrets, doubts, convictions that wrong was right, specious arguments to show how entirely it had always been so, would rise up and bring back the rushing tide of battle. And then there were things he had to do. He went to bed only when the morning grey had come up over the little town on the other side of the loch, bringing it out of the darkness with a curious furtive aspect, stealing into the light as if it had been lying in wait for this moment, which indeed was quite true. He tossed himself on his bed, and courted sleep ineffectually for half an hour, but after that time it came with all the force of a despot. He slept, as men or boys sleep only at twenty, till the day was bright all over the loch. At twenty! oh heavens, was that all the age he was, that haggard little grey face waking up and remembering in the great pale shining of the light.

He went into Archie's room on his way down stairs and put back the cheque-book which he had found. Archie had breakfasted an hour before, and explained to the family that he was going to Glasgow by the mid-day boat, and Saumarez with him, to see after those things for the ball.

"You seem to be getting great friends with Eddy," Mrs. Rowland said in the pause which followed this speech. The words were simple

enough, but they went with a wave of interest round the table.

"Well, no harm, Evelyn, no harm," said Rowland, pleased that his boy was making friends in what the poor man in his heart called "our own position."

Marion put on a little conscious look, blushed a little and smiled a little, as if she knew the private cause of this friendship—while Rosamond opened a little wider her steady eyes, and turned them with an inquiry upon Archie. He did not shrink from the attention thus attracted towards him : his heart was soft to Eddy, to whom he was about to do so great a service. It is a wonderfully softening process to be very good to any one, and makes us think better of the objects of our kindness. Eddy had become more interesting to Archie than he had ever thought it possible he would find him ; and this not for any one's sake, not even for Rosamond's, but for his own. The only effect, curiously enough, of this incident was to deepen his dislike to his stepmother. She was the one to question and object, he thought. Perhaps she thought him not good enough for Eddy—most likely, as Eddy was of her own kind. Eddy, though so late that the party had all dispersed from the table, except Mrs. Rowland herself, who was reading her letters, and Marion, who was making pretence of looking over the fashion papers in order to wait for his appearance, was in great spirits and full of the expedition he was about to make.

"Rowland is going to show me everything," he said. He made a very bad breakfast, eating nothing, but he was full of talk and apparent enjoyment, and begged the ladies to give him commissions. "Archie may forget, but I will not forget." He insisted that Marion and his sister should walk down to the pier to see them off.

"Come along, Rose," he called to her as they all came out on the colonnade, "don't you see I am going out sight-seeing. I am a British tourist. I am not sure that I am not a Tripper—and Rowland is taking care of me. Come and see me safe into the boat." He continued in an extremely cheerful condition all the way to the ferry, keeping up a fire of banter.

"The laddie's fey, I think," said old Saunders on the pier, who resented too much liberty.

"And, Eddy, I don't think you are well. I think you are feverish," said Rosamond.

"You don't say those sisterly things," said Eddy to Marion.

"Oh," cried the girl, "I just never mind. What would I do if I were to make myself uneasy about everything? It is time enough when there is any occasion. And Archie would never mind what I said."

"But I should mind always," said Eddy, lowering his voice.

"You! but you would not like me to ask you if you were feverish."

"I should tell you I was always feverish—with

rage, when I saw you wasting your attention listening to fellows like that nephew. It is that that has made my head ache," cried Eddy. "I thirst for his blood."

"He has never done you any harm," said Marion demurely.

"Thank heaven no one is coming to-night. I shall have you all to myself to-night. There will be no nephews about. I shall make Archie take me to where you used to live."

"Oh, you wouldn't like that at all," said Marion. "It's not a place to see. We were put there when we were little children, when it didn't matter where we lived. Don't go to any such place. There's nothing to see."

"There would always be some trace of you," said Eddy, making great use of his eyes. And then they both burst into a laugh.

"You're so silly that one doesn't know how to speak to you," said Marion, "but for all that don't go there."

Rosamond walked along with her long tread in stately seriousness after them. She said "You are very kind to take Eddy in hand. He wants so much to be steadied, and get a little solidity. I would much rather have him with you than with more——" She paused a moment, and looked her companion over with her steady gaze.

"How? You mean better company," he said.

"No, I don't mean that. I mean—people in the

world: he is so much better out of the world, and seeing nobody he ever knew before."

"Among the natives," said Archie with a laugh.

Rosamond did not contradict him or look as if he had made any mistake. She said with a sigh, "Eddy wants a great deal of looking after. I wish I could find some one to pay a little attention to him. He will be good for a few days, and then he will go all wrong, as if he had never pulled up before." She sighed, and added, "Keep him safe for me to-day. Don't let him go and roam about spending money."

"I will do my best."

"Are you a man that spends money yourself, Mr. Rowland? People don't do that in Scotland, do they? They are different."

"They cannot do that," said Archie, with a laugh, "when they have nothing in their pockets to spend."

"I beg your pardon. I thought you had quantities of money," Rosamond said.

CHAPTER XIII.

THERE was not very much conversation between the two young men as they went to Glasgow. Eddy, indeed, would talk for a few minutes from time to time in his usual way, but presently would fall into silence, from which he roused up feverishly with suppressed excitement in his eyes, to rattle on once more for a brief time, asking hasty and often absurd questions, and making fun of the answers which Archie in puzzled seriousness made. Humour had not much share in Archie's constitution. He had been light-hearted enough in his earlier development, and joked like the rest in the rather noisy fun of the class to which he belonged ; but his father's return, and the revolution that had taken place in his existence, had taken all the fun out of Archie, and made life very serious to him. Eddy's "chaff," the light art of turning everything into ridicule, which, when there is no sympathetic ear to hear, falls so flat and sounds so dreary, perplexed his graver companion. Archie concluded charitably and not untruly that it was excitement that produced this varying behaviour, the dead

silence and the chatter of speech. He believed that Eddy's troubles about money and the relief he was himself about to bring to them were the cause. He himself thought that a hundred and fifty pounds was an immense sum, and that there was scarcely any embarrassment possible to a youth of his own age which could not be amply covered by that. Archie had known "fellows in debt" often enough, but a ten pound-note, or twenty at the outside, would have made their hearts dance. And he thought with a sense that he himself was acting the part of providence, that a complete and perfect deliverance must result in this case. He said to himself, that when Eddy had actually the money in his hands—which he intended to draw out himself and hand over in notes to his companion—his mind would be more calm.

The transaction at the bank was managed quite satisfactorily. Archie would not even permit Eddy to accompany him inside, but left him gazing vacantly into the shop-windows while he accomplished his business. Very little passed between them when it was completed. Archie thrust the little packet of notes into Eddy's hand. "They're small ones," he said, "I thought that was best." And Eddy grasped Archie's hand and gave him a look in which gratitude was blended with what Archie imagined to be joy—in his salvation so to speak : but which was in reality a delightful consciousness of the possession of money, and of the great joke involved in his benefactor's conviction that he was

doing a great thing. Eddy did not think so much of the hundred and fifty pounds. He concluded that it was the merest trifle to the millionaire's son, who, of course, had only got to ask his father for more if he wanted it. Eddy put it into his pocket carelessly, though with much pleasure. It did not mean the payment of debt, which to him was but a mediocre satisfaction ; it meant various things much more agreeable—the spending of money, which is an inexhaustible pleasure so long as the where-withal lasts.

After this they went to see various of the sights of Glasgow, in which Eddy, it must be allowed, was not very much interested—the Cathedral, for one, which Archie looked upon as the most glorious building in the world, but which young Saumarez cared about as little for as he would have cared for any other cathedral under the sun. Eddy yawned as he walked about the aisles and investigated the crypt. He cared neither for the architecture nor the antiquity, nor for the painted glass, nor even for Rob Roy, which latter interest poor Archie considered infallible. Nor were the other sights more exciting to him. He suggested luncheon as far more interesting either than the Necropolis, the College, or the Broomielaw : and after the luncheon, which he did not consider highly satisfactory, asked with much languor and fatigue of expression, whether Rowland had not some one he wanted to call on instead of bothering about any more Glasgow sights

Archie coloured high at this question, not on Eddy's account, but with a curious feeling of shame, which was also a feeling of guilt. To be in Glasgow without going to see his aunt would be, he was aware, an unpardonable and heartless thing. It would wound her deeply if she knew, and even if she never knew, it would be no less a mean and abominable thing to do. Nevertheless the presence of Eddy had been enough to make him put this from his mind as an impossibility. "I was not thinking of calling anywhere," he said.

"But you must have people that you want to see. Let's go and see somebody," Eddy said. "I like people. I'm not a fellow for seeing sights."

"I might take you to see the football at the Westpark—if you are fond of football."

"Oh, I don't mind it," said Eddy; "let's go and see the football. It is better than staring at things neither you nor I care about."

"Oh, I care about that," said Archie: and as he thought of the old field in which his old companions used to meet, a certain warmth from the old times came over the heart. He had been rather a fine performer at football in his day, and the Westpark men had meant to play the College that very season, he recollected. He had not appeared at the field since the season began. His place there knew him no more. Nevertheless, to see them at their practice would be something, and he might meet some of the fellows between whom and himself there was now such a gulf fixed. Saumarez would

be startled no doubt by their noisy ways, and their broad Scotch : but what did it matter after all what Saumarez thought ? They went accordingly to the Westpark where, with pleasure but alarm, he had conducted his father four months ago, when cricket was going on. Happy lads ! they had but changed from cricket into football, while Archie—What changes, what changes his life had undergone !

They got to the field before the play had begun, and Archie was loudly welcomed by several of his old friends. "What's come of ye, man, all this time ?" "Eh, Archie ! you're a sight for sair een." "Are ye back in Glaskie, or are ye just on a visit ?" Archie shook hands with a whole band, and replied that he was only up for the day, but that he felt he must come and see them, and hear what was going on ; and he had a friend with him—a friend from England. The young athletes clustered round, delighted to see any friend of Archie's. They asked Eddy questions about the game "in the south." "But I don't know much about the south," he said. "Harrow's the farthest south I know." Archie's friends, though they were but Glasgow lads, knew enough to know that Harrow merited respectful treatment, and they led the stranger to the best place to see the game which was just beginning. The two young men stood and watched with great interest for some time, and then in this new springing of kindly associations, Archie felt it was impossible to go back without seeing his aunt. To come here and not go to Aunt Jean, to run the

risk of wounding her to the heart : for some one would be sure to tell her he had been seen at Westpark—he felt that it was impossible he should do this thing. He touched Eddy on the shoulder at the very crisis of the interest and whispered, “I’m going to run away for ten minutes to see an old friend. I’ll come back for you here.”

“Not a bit,” said Eddy, promptly. “I’ll go with you. My interest is not overwhelming in the match. I’d much rather go——”

“Oh, it is not a place you will care for,” said Archie, much embarrassed.

“Never mind ; I’ll come with you,” said his companion, and what could Archie say ? He made a hurried explanation to one of the performers that he was compelled to go, and the two left the field. Even then Archie made another attempt to throw off this too close companion.

“It’s a pity,” he said, “to take you away. I’m not going to see anybody that’s interesting. It is an old body, an old—relation; nothing that will please you.”

“You don’t do me justice,” said Eddy. “I tell you people are what I care for ; and you know my taste for ladies. Old ladies are my favourite study—when there are no young ones in the way.”

“There are no young ones,” said Archie, in despair ; “and I don’t want to take you away.”

“Oh, I like it,” said Eddy, and thrust his hand through the other’s arm.

There was, therefore, nothing to be done but to accept the leading of fate. How strange and

wonderful now were all these familiar ways that led to the Sauchiehall Road ! Already the work of time and change had operated upon them. They were narrow, and mean, and grey, not comfortable and friendly as they had once looked. The houses small and poor, the streets confined and filthy, the whole complexion of the place altered. He had not known what a homely, poor part of the town it was : he saw it now as if it were a new place with which he was making acquaintance for the first time.

And when he came in sight of the house in Sauchiehall Road, the familiar house with its front door, so dignified a feature, and the big elderberry tree filling up the little space before the door ! The blinds were drawn carefully half over the window, except in the little parlour down stairs, where everything was open, the little muslin curtain over the lower part of the window tucked up that Mrs. Brown might see—who was sitting there at her knitting, carefully looking out upon the street, for something new. What a changed life it was for Mrs. Brown ; no young people running out and in, no merry companions, no little vanities to minister to, no little quarrels and frettings, but a dead load of solitary comfort, good things which she ate alone, and new dresses which nobody saw. She gave “ a skreigh,” as she herself would have said, as she saw Archie coming up the path, and flew herself to open the door for him. “ Eh, my bonnie man ! ” cried Mrs. Brown. She did not

fling herself on his neck and kiss him, for that was not according to her reserved Scotch ways, but she held both his hands, and swayed him slightly by them, gazing into his face with eyes full of ecstasy and tears. "Eh, Archie, but it's a pleasure to see ye. Eh, my bonnie man!"

"I am glad to see you again, Aunty Jean," said Archie. "I was in Glasgow for the day, and I've come to see you; and I've got a friend with me—a friend from England."

"Oh," said Mrs. Brown, perceiving Eddy's not very distinguished figure behind. She made him something between a curtsy and a bow. "I am sure," she said, "any friend of Archie's is welcome to me, sir. Come in and take a seat. I'm glad to see ye—But oh, Archie, my man! the sight of my own laddie is just light to my een. And how is a wi' you, my bonnie boy?—and Mey? And are ye getting on well at Rosmore? And is your father well? and the leddy? I have so many questions to ask I dinna know when to stop. Eh, Archie, how I have missed you—life itself is not the same—and Mey! I just sit dowie all the day, and care for nothing, looking out at my window as if I might see ye pass, and sitting by the fireside and listening as if I might hear ye coming down the stair. Eh, but life's a different thing when there's naething but an old wife sitting her lane by her fireside——"

And here Mrs. Brown broke down and cried; but looking up smiling, in the midst of her tears, bade them tell her if they had got their dinner, or

what she could give them. "I will have mince-collops ready in a moment," she said.

"I told Rowland so," said Eddy, "that he should have come and asked you for some dinner instead of going to that queer place in—what do you call the street? but he thought it would be giving you too much trouble. That's the worst of that modest sort of dreadfully proud fellow. He can't be got to see that you would like to take the trouble—for him."

"Eh, laddie," cried Mrs. Brown, her face lighting up through the half-dried tears; "are ye a warlock, or how do ye ken? That's just heaven's truth; and though he's blate, he's awfu' proud: and ye must be a lad of uncommon sense to ken."

"Yes," said Eddy, modestly, "I've always been noted for my sense; but I am not at all proud, and I think if you were to make some of your nice tea for us—I am quite sure that you make delightful tea."

"Hear to him!" said Mrs. Brown, delighted. "Ye shall have your tea, my young gentleman, and a pleasure it will be to serve ye. I will just ask Bell if the kettle is boiling: and Archie, ye can show your friend the pictures of Mey and you when you were bairns, and the views your father sent home from India, and anything you can find to amuse him. I'll no be a minute." She left the two young men alone together while she hurried to the kitchen to see after the tea.

"Let me see the picture of your sister and

you, not the views from India, Rowland," said Eddy.

"Saumarez," cried Archie, clearing his throat ; "I told you this was a—relation. She brought us up, and she was very kind to us. I can't have her laughed at, you know."

"Laughed at?" cried Eddy ; "how you misunderstand ! I found out all that in the twinkling of an eye. And as for being disrespectful to your aunt, it is not I that will ever be disrespectful ; besides which, I delight in an old lady like that—Was the kettle boiling, Mrs. Brown ?"

"'Deed it was," said Mrs. Brown, "and Bell will bring the tea ben in a minute or two, as soon as it has had time to mask. I never let it stand long after I have maskit the tea. And how are ye getting on, Archie, my bonnie lad, at Rosmore ? Are ye getting more familiar ? are ye liking it better ? And Mey ? Ye are such poor letter writers, I must take my chance of hearing all I can when you're at hand. Four months, Archie, and neither the one nor the ither of you has been near. That's no what you ought to have done. You that were just like bairns of my ain."

"It is not my fault, aunty. We have not been in Glasgow since we left. There has been always something to do. Either my father has wanted me, or May has been busy, or something has been in the way. We have had people visiting in the house." Archie looked instinctively at Eddy to help him out.

"We have been there for a long time," said Eddy. "People very hard to keep amused, always making claims upon them. Of course we had not the pleasure of knowing you, dear Mrs. Brown; and we have been the greatest bother——"

"Oh, dinna say so," cried Aunt Jean: "sure am I they were very glad of the bother, and real pleased to have ye there. And so am I delighted that Archie should have such a friend as you. No, I'm not so unreasonable. I was giving a bit jeer at them to see what they would say for themselves, and what excuse they would give. But I was wanting no excuse. I'm just overjoyed that they have such friends. And if they werena coming about me every day, well I kent the reason. I would rather see them doing their duty in their father's house, and taking their proper place, than fiddling and fyking about me."

"We've been neglectful, Aunt Jean," said Archie, "but we'll do better after this." The sense that he had been good to one, in one direction, made his heart all the softer in every way. "It's all been so new, and there is so much to learn; but it will never happen again."

"Na, na, ye must not take me in earnest like that," said Jean. "I gie a girn, but—I've no evil meaning. And here's the tea. Just draw in your chair and come near the table, Mr.—, but I didn't rightly catch your name."

"Most people call me Eddy," said the young man with a laugh.

"And a very good name too. You'll be from the south? though I have kent many Adies in our ain country. But ye have a grand way of speaking, and I hope, Archie, ye'll take an example. I'm no fond of knapping English, but it's a' the fashion, and mair does it than has ony right."

"I will just speak as I was born to speak," said Archie, with a taste of his native obstinacy.

"Weel, weel, it's no for me to interfere. But ye havena said a word about Mey? She might have come with ye, to look in upon her auld aunt. But it was aye oot of sight oot of mind with Mey. Ye are mair faithful, Archie. Have you heard of the great changes in the Road? (Mrs. Brown said Rod.) Lizzie White, that was once out and in the house every day, she is married upon Mr. Wright, a watchmaker in Buchanan Street—just a very excellent match. Oh, yes, ye must mind very well, for I used to think that if ye wasna both so young— And then the Cowcaddens, that made just a great show, with cabs at their door every day, and pairties and dancing and a dinna ken all what—has failed, poor man, and the house roupit, and them living in some poor close somewhere, just as miserable as they can be, which shows what prideful wasting and high living must come to. And oh, Archie, there's is another thing I just want to speak to you about. You mind Colin Lamont, that was at the College, and meaning to be a minister—poor lad! he's fallen into a dwining and an ill way, and they say he maun go to Egypt or

some of thae places. And his folk are poor folk ; and he just smiles and says 'They might as well tell me to gang to the moon.' Archie, I had the pen in my hand yesterday to write you a letter Eh, laddie, ye aye had an open hand. If ye would may be spare out of your abundance a little siller to help this poor lad ! He would never ask it, but from an auld comrade that was so well off, there could be nae reason for refusing. Archie, if your heart were to speak."

There was a dead pause, and it seemed to poor Archie that heaven was against him. He who would have been so ready, so anxious to offer anything he had—and he had nothing ! He could not speak ; and that this demand should have been made before Eddy made it more dreadful still. But Eddy did not take it in that point of view. He was not called upon to say anything. He sat calmly eating the cake with which Mrs. Brown had supplied him. Eddy was not embarrassed at all ; he was much interested in a half-comic way to know how Rowland would get out of it. To a fellow like that it would be hard to refuse, and Eddy felt that it was a very good thing he had got all the money, or else to a certainty the fool would have given it to this other man, who probably would do much better to stay at home. He ate his cake, therefore, and drank his tea with an amused and interested mind, looking on with a perfectly tranquil perception of all that was involved.

"Aunt Jean," said Archie, stammering and blushing, "I am more sorry than words can say—but I have not got the money. I would give it—or my heart's blood if I could—to an old friend like Colin. But I haven't it. I haven't it! If it would do at the New Year—"

"He will likely be in his grave by the New Year," said Mrs. Brown, "if he canna get away." Jean had drawn herself within herself, so to speak. She rose a head taller as she sat, over her teatray, her portly person seemed to draw in, the beaming expression departed from her face. To be refused! and by her own boy! and before a stranger! and with a lee! for how could he be without money. He that had got a twenty pound note as she herself knew, only four months before, just a fortune for a callant like Archie? besides more no doubt where that came from, Jims Rowland being just too liberal. It was to Mrs. Brown as if all the waves of the Clyde had dashed into her face. For a moment she could make no reply.

"Archie," she said at last, solemnly, "I'm no fond of much troke about money between friends. It's very likely to lead to ill-blood. But I thought for Colin, that ye once were so fond of, if I might speak—you have maybe," she said with keen irony, "forgotten who he was. I've often seen that folk have but short memories that rise in the world. He's the lad who got you into your grand club. Ye may not think much of it now, but it was a grand thing for ye then. It was him ye used to

consult about your debating and all that, and that was sae good at the footba' and that learnt ye—"

"Do you think I have forgotten, auntie? I have forgotten nothing," cried Archie, starting up from the table. "It's just despair," he said, under his breath. "I havena got it! I havena got it!" He began to pace about the room as his father did with his hands thrust into the depths of his empty pockets, and his shoulders up to his ears. As for Eddy, he turned aside a little and took up the paper Mrs. Brown had been reading, by way of relieving them of the embarrassment of his presence as much as possible during this family dispute.

"Well!" said Mrs. Brown, "it is the first time I have askit anything of ye, and it will be the last time, Archie Rowland. Let's say no more about it. I thought it was just a thing ye would have made no hesitation about, but been mair ready to give than me to ask."

"And so I would," he cried, "and so I would!" with a sort of groan out of his very heart.

"We will just say no more about it," said Mrs. Brown, with dignity. "Sit down and take your tea."

"I am wanting no tea," said Archie.

"You will sit down and bide quiet at any rate, and not disturb other folk. Mr. Adie, I am very glad that ye like your tea; it's aye a good sign in a young man if he likes his tea. It shows he's no thinking of ither beverages that are mair to the taste of so many unfortunate lads in this world.

Ye'll maybe be from London, which is a muckle place, I have always heard, and full o' temptation. Eh, laddies, but ye should be awfu' careful not to put yourselves into temptation. A very little thing will do it. Ye will maybe think," said Mrs. Brown, making a desperate attempt to fathom the cause of Archie's behaviour, and explain its enormity, "that to take an interest in racing horses or even in playin' cards or dice or the like of that, is no just a cardinal crime. But oh, it leads to a' the rest! Ye will maybe think nothing of losing a shilling or twa, or even a pound or twa upon a game. That's bad enough, oh it's bad enough! It may keep ye from doing a good turn to a neighbour in time of need, it may make ye powerless for good, just as it makes ye an instrument for evil; but that's not all. It leads from bad to worse. It's like the daughter o' the horse-leech, it's aye crying 'Give, give.' It's like a whum-mel down a hill, the longer ye go the faster ye go. Oh, laddies! when I think how young ye are, and a' the dangers in your way, and what soft hearts some of ye had, and how soon they harden when ye think of nothing but yoursel—"

"Aunty," said Archie, "we have got the train to catch, and the boat to catch, and we will have to go."

"I will not detain ye, Archie," said Mrs. Brown with the air of a duchess, "so long as ye give Mr. Adie the time to finish his tea. Good morning to you, sir, and I am very glad to have seen

ye in my poor bit place. Ye will maybe give my love to my niece, Mey. And good-bye to ye, Archie. I hope that everything good will be aye in your path, and that ye may never want a kind friend, nor one to succour ye in time of need."

To tell the feelings with which Archie heard the door of his childhood shut upon him with a decisive clash as if for ever, is more than I have words or power to do. He was shamed, abandoned, given up—and without any fault of his. Eddy was extremely entertaining all the way home. He had of course too much good taste and good breeding to refer in any way to the family quarrel of which he had been so unlucky as to be the witness. To ignore it altogether and do his best to divert his companion's mind, and make him forget, was of course the thing which in the circumstances a man of good feeling would do.

CHAPTER XIV.

THERE was great curiosity at Rosmore to hear what the young men had done and what they had seen in Glasgow: in the chief place, no doubt on account of the decorations for the ball, which were of so much importance, and in which Eddy's taste was expected to accomplish such great things. Eddy had so much to say on this point, that the brief interval in the drawing-room before dinner was wholly taken up with his account of his arrangements and purchases.

"If it all succeeds as I expect," said Eddy, "I know what I shall do, Mrs. Rowland. It will make a revolution in my life. I will follow the example of other *fils de famille* and set myself up as a decorator. Don't you know? Algy Fergusson makes heaps of money by it. When you are going to give a ball, he takes everything in hand, charges you a certain sum, and supplies whatever you want, from the flowers on the stairs to a few dancing men in the best society, if that is wanted. I shall follow him in humble imitation. No, I'm

not going to tell you too much. Mrs. Rowland has given me *carte blanche*. Wait till you see."

"It's a queer trade," said Rowland; "but something might be made of it. I would advise you, however, Eddy, to look out for something more like a man."

"Oh, it is very like my kind of man," said Eddy; "not yours, sir: but there's not very much of me."

Rowland, like everybody else, had learned to call young Saumarez, according to the fashion of the day, by his *petit nom*. And he laughed with great good humour at this self-description. The young man was the most entertaining study of what he considered the manners of the best society to the master of Rosmore. Eddy's lightness and ease and imperturbability amused him more than he could say, and at the same time filled him with respect. It was all the more evident in comparison with Archie's easily roused temper and irritable self-consciousness, which saw in everything a shadow of blame, and never was at ease, or able to take anything lightly. Rowland watched the effect upon his son of intercourse with the other light-hearted lad with the greatest secret anxiety. He thought with pleasure that Eddy had "taken to" his uncultured, uneasy boy, and that Archie would "learn manners" from contact with the other youth, who, though so little to look at, not such a nice-looking fellow as Archie, was yet so much more a man of the world. Eddy's cheerful admission of his own defects, and that there was

not very much of him, delighted Rowland. How it disarmed criticism! Would Archie, he wondered, ever attain to that easy mind, and unembarrassed faculty of taking the sting out of any jibe by tranquil pre-assertion of his own deficiencies? It was not a thing which Mr. Rowland could himself have attained, but he saw its advantages. It did not seem, however, in the meantime that Archie had made much progress in acquiring this gift. He took little part in the conversation which young Saumarez kept up so lightly. It was Eddy who told the story of their day in Glasgow, and owned to having yawned in the Cathedral. Archie was silent, as was his wont. He kept a little apart, and said nothing. Sometimes he cast a glance of strange meaning at the lively conversationalist who made their expedition sound so amusing. What was it that look meant? It was Archie's usual way—his inability to understand the happier natures. They all noted that occasional glance, and all gave the same interpretation to it: for what, indeed, could it mean else? There was nothing else to arouse his surprise, the wondering half-question in his eyes.

Archie's wonder, indeed, was beyond words. To think that, with such a light heart, the transaction which had already cost himself so much should be taken by the other, without a thought of the penalty involved, or the shame it had already brought. Perhaps Eddy did not realize that shame, or what it was to the young man to be

suspected of unkindness, of selfishness, of wasting upon miserable pursuits of his own the money that might have saved the life of another. A year ago nothing could have made Archie himself realize such a position, for he had never possessed money, and could not in the nature of things have been asked for it, and this probably was why Saumarez was so obtuse. There was another thing, however, which Archie could not understand, but which he was deeply grateful for: and that was that Eddy made not the slightest reference in his lively narrative of the day's proceedings to the visit to Mrs. Brown. Why? But Archie could not tell—it only vaguely increased the trouble in his mind, while more or less soothing it externally: and he did not know whether it was not his duty to mention it himself. They might think him ashamed of Aunt Jean if he said nothing, and yet the recollection of that visit was so painful that he preferred not to speak of it, and was grateful to his companion for leaving it out of his easy and amusing tale. After dinner Eddy was as much the hero of the moment as he had been before. He had various experiments to make as to the lights, as to the flowers, and all the details of the ballroom, for the due regulation of which the group of admiring spectators followed him up and down, hanging upon his words. Archie followed at the end of the train, still wondering, saying to himself, that no doubt the money which apparently was to cost himself so dear, had so relieved Eddy's mind

that he could not restrain himself, that he felt a new man: that was no doubt the cause of his vivacity, the lightness of his heart. Archie remembered how he had himself felt when relieved of the burden of the debt to Rankine for the little dogs, and other small matters which had been on his mind before he had received his father's first gift of twenty pounds. That gift had come to him amid painful circumstances, but when the first effect produced by them had died away, how glad he had been to have it, to clear himself from the small burdens which were as lead upon his soul! Eddy was much more a man of the world than he, and his liabilities were far greater, but he thought he could understand how he must feel from those sensations of his own. He could not but think, however, that in Eddy's place he would have said something—he would have given a look or a grasp of the hand to his benefactor to show him that he appreciated and felt what he had done, especially if that benefactor had been likely to get into trouble for it. Then Archie, pondering behind backs, while all that lively chatter was going on, remembered himself that he had not said a word of gratitude to his father for the twenty pounds, had neither felt nor spoken any gratitude. Ah, but I am not his father, Archie said to himself. With this thought, however, came another reflection, that up to this moment he had never shown any thankfulness to his father, who had bestowed so many gifts upon him. He had been embarrassed and

awkward, and had taken everything for granted. Who was he to blame another for the same sentiment which was so strong in himself? "Only just I am not his father," Archie said.

It was when the party was breaking up for the night that Marion seized upon her brother, drawing him into a corner of the hall where the lights were extinguished, and where in the recess of a window there was a sheltered place beyond the reach of observation. She caught him by the arm and drew him aside there, until the others had dispersed, and then a piece of inquiry which he had not anticipated burst upon Archie. "Were you at Auntie Jean's? Did you take him to Auntie Jean's?" Marion exclaimed breathlessly, holding his arm with her hands as if in a vice.

"You heard him," said Archie, avoiding the question, "telling all where we had been."

"Were you not there? Did you not go there? He never said a word, but he could not speak if you didn't. Archie, tell me on your word—were you not there?"

Archie saw that her eyes were gleaming, and her face pale. He did not know what to make of this sudden assault, nor what it could matter to Marion whether he had or had not gone to see Auntie Jean. He answered at last, however, with reluctance,

"Yes, we were there."

"You were there! you took him there!" cried the girl, her eyes in the dark shooting out sparks of fire. She seized him again by the arm and

shook him violently. "Oh, I knew you would do it! What do you care for keeping up our name? If it had been anybody else you might have done what you pleased—but him!"

"Why him?" said Archie; "what is he? Do you think I could neglect an old friend, not to speak of my nearest kin, and her that brought us up—"

"Oh, what's in that?—brought us up! She was well paid for it," cried Marion, "and now established for her life, and everything provided, because papa thinks she was kind to us."

"She was very kind."

"She was not unkind," said Marion. "She just made us serve her purpose and keep her in an easy life. If she had been unkind it would have been the same as killing the goose that laid the golden eggs. And now you've exposed us and showed just what we were, and where we came from, to Eddy Saumarez! Oh, Archie, man! could you not have said she was an old nurse, or something like that, and then there could have been no objection? I would have had my wits about me if I had been in such an emergency. You might so easily have said she was our old nurse; but that's what you could never do, to take thought for our credit and not to expose us."

"I don't know what you mean by exposing us," said Archie indignantly, "and as for disowning our Aunt Jean——"

"Oh, disowning is just a grand word! I mean

nothing of the kind. I could just be as fond of aunty in private as you. And what could she expect more? It would show she was self-seeking and full of her own pride if she wanted us to expose ourselves for her. What does that mean? It just means that we have our position to keep up. We belong to the upper classes and not to Sauchiehall Road. I would not have let the like of Eddy Saumarez know that we had any connection with Sauchiehall Road except with an old nurse or the like of that. An old nurse explains everything," said Marion. "I will just let him understand that's how it is, and that we call her aunty because we are fond of her. You may do that and no harm—just for kindness. And what is she more than an old nurse? You know yourself she would not come to Rosmore for that—not to expose us. Her and me we both understand. I will just explain it all."

"One would think," said Archie, "that Saumarez was of great importance, and what he thought. And most likely he thinks nothing about it. His mind is full of his own affairs."

"And what are his own affairs?" said Marion scornfully. "Maybe that is one of his own affairs," she added with a faint blush, as Archie turned upon her in surprise. "You never can tell what may turn out to be important and what not. Eddy is just nothing in himself. But though he will have no money, he will have a good property and a fine house, and a position and all that. And we have

plenty of money and nothing more. It might be a thing to be taken into consideration on both sides. But you will never understand that, nor perhaps papa either, and I will just have all the responsibility thrown upon myself."

"What responsibility?" said Archie, more and more astonished.

"Oh!" she cried, with a little stamp of her foot, "as if the like of you would ever understand!" She gave him a little indignant push from her in the impatience of her soul; but turned to him again after a moment's interval. "I am not saying, mind," said Marion, "that there is anything in it. There may be nothing in it. It may just pass over, and be of no consequence. I will maybe be in a much better position when I have gone to court, and have been seen in society and all that. But you should remember, Archie, that we're just very new people. Papa is a new man. His name is known, but except for our money we are just nobody. Now mamma is different. I was angry at the time to think that papa had married again and brought in a grand lady that would look down upon you and me; but I have come to a different way of thinking now. I just study her and take a lesson by her, and I can see if we are to get on in the world that she is the one to help us most."

"I don't want her help," cried Archie, "and if that's what you call getting on in the world——"

"Oh," cried Marion, with a sigh of impatience, "you are just like a bairn. To think that you can-

not see for yourself, you that are a man! What are we to do if we don't get into society? You would rather be back in the Sauchiehall Road, with your football and your friends, than in a grand house like this, with nobody that cares for you, and nothing that you can do."

"May," said the young man sadly, "many a time I have thought that myself—far rather! It was a kind of living, and this is none—to be waited on hand and foot when you're not used to it, and feel like a fool, and have nothing to do. But that's not all the harm it's done. When I went back to the Sauchiehall Road, I was just as much out of place there! That's ended: and the other is begun, and there's no satisfaction anywhere. I will be faithful to Auntie Jean, poor body, that was so kind to us, while I have a breath to draw," he exclaimed with energy. Then sinking into despondency, "But I cannot go back there, and I am out of place here; and there is no good that I can see in a world that's all a vain show, both for the rich and the poor."

"Well," said Marion, with a certain satisfaction, "you see then just as I do. We must get ourselves well into what we have, for we never can go back to what we were. And the only way that we can do it is by ——" She broke off with a little laugh. "You can find it out for yourself, but you need not put a spoke into another person's wheel. I am not saying that Eddy Saumarez will be of any consequence in the end. Maybe I will not care to know them after I have been to court. I will not com-

mit myself, you may be sure. I will aye have a way of escape, if I should change my mind. But it was just silly beyond measure to give him a story about Auntie Jean. He will take her off, and make everybody laugh. You can see yourself how he makes fun, and takes everybody off. That is what amuses people, and makes them ask him. He could make it very funny about Auntie Jean. Oh, I know all they say, and I'm getting to understand. If you can tell them stories, and keep them laughing, it's all they think of. And you to give him the occasion with poor Auntie Jean!"

"He had better not let me hear him say a word about Auntie Jean," said Archie, between his closed teeth.

"Oh, he'll not let you hear him," said Marion. She was altogether unconscious of the fact that Eddy took herself off with perfect effect, so that even Mrs. Rowland had difficulty in looking severe enough.

Archie went to join the party in the smoking-room after this conversation, with more uneasiness than ever. He was not quite clear about his sister's meaning. Marion was too far-seeing, too full of calculations for her brother. He had himself his own thoughts: but they were of a very different turn from hers. Rosamond Saumarez was to Archie a being of a different species from himself or any one belonging to him. It had not occurred to him that he could appropriate this beautiful lady, and make life more possible by her means. She

was still upon her pedestal, a thing apart, a being to be remotely admired, scarcely even as yet worshipped : for in worship itself there is a certain appropriation, and his imagination had not gone so far as that, had not ventured to use any pronoun of possession, even with goddess attached to it. In no way had he imagined that she could ever be his but always something beyond reach, as superior to him as earth is to heaven. The impression she produced upon him was subduing rather than exciting. To think that there could be such a distance between him and any other human creature, as there was between him and Rosamond, doubled the mystery and awe of the world on the threshold of which he was standing, to the disturbed and unsatisfied mind of the boy-man, so rudely shaken out of all his old habitudes, so little at home in his new. At no time could Marion's frank calculations of how she could help herself up the ascent she meant to climb, by grasping a chance hand, this man's or another's, as happened to suit her best, have been possible to her brother. He faintly apprehended what she meant, but found it so uncongenial that his mind declined to look into it. There are some who feel themselves forced, in the course of nature, to investigate, and come to the bottom of such questions ; and there are some who shake themselves uneasily free of an examination which could end in nothing but pain.

Archie had no wish to think badly of Marion, to bring down the ideal of his sister : so he shook off

the question of her meaning and left it alone. There was not much pleasure to him in sitting in the smoking-room, where he found his father and Eddy in full discussion, the latter bearing all the *frais* of the conversation, and making his host laugh with his lively descriptions and sketches. Archie was conscious that he presented a complete foil and contrast to Eddy as he went in and seated himself a little in the background, notwithstanding the invitations of both the gentlemen to draw his chair nearer to the fire. He liked to skulk behind, Rowland thought angrily, with vexation, to himself—never could take his place simply, always kept behind backs. Perhaps young Saumarez was not any more than Archie the son he would have chosen. But yet what a difference there was !

The day of the ball was approaching apace, and everything in the house began to feel the excitement of the coming event. There was less than a week to go, when Eddy broached the subject of Johnson—of Chad's—and the possibility of procuring him an invitation.

"Oh," he said, "there is that—friend of mine up at the head of the loch. (Naturally, Eddy, however much he might endeavour to conceal the fact, said "lock," but I need not spoil my orthography by repeating his error.) I wonder if you would be inclined to let me bring him, Mrs. Rowland ? I scarcely like to ask ; but he's all alone, you know, and knows nobody, and looks wistful when one sees him,"

"You should bring him in to dinner, Eddy," said the ever-hospitable Rowland.

"No, sir, I don't think I should like to do that. He has not paid the extra twopence for manners. In a crowd he might pass muster, but at your table——"

There was the faintest emphasis on the words, which inferred a delicate compliment. And Rowland was pleased.

"Mr. Johnson?" said Evelyn, doubtfully. "I did not feel quite sure about him. He was a little—odd."

"College dons are generally odd," said the unblushing Eddy.

"Are you quite certain, my dear boy, that he is a college don?"

"For my own part," said Eddy presently, "I should probably like him much better if he were not. But I suppose there can't be two Johnsons—of Chad's?"

"No, I suppose not," said Evelyn, still doubtfully. "At the same time," she added, "one would have thought if there was one thing you could be sure of in a college don it would be grammar—and his—and that they should talk like gentlemen."

"I don't know," said Eddy, reflectively, "that one can be so very sure of that; now that everything goes by competition, you can't tell by his profession that any man is a gentleman. Besides, they speak Latin between themselves," said the young man, with an unmoved countenance.

"Eddy!" cried Rosamond.

"Well, they do. I allow it's queer, but I have heard them *avec mes propres oreilles, va!* and Latin grammar is quite different from English—far more elaborate, and that sort of thing. English translated out of Latin would naturally sound a little strange."

Even Evelyn looked at him with a little surprise, uncertain whether to laugh or not. She was but little interested in the ways of college dons. She had a kind of belief that there was something in what he said about competition. The gardener's son was at college, and if he came to be a don he would no doubt remain a little inelegant in point of grammar.

While she was thus pondering, her husband took the matter in hand.

"Send him an invitation as Eddy's friend," he said, in his large and liberal way; "if he were a coal-heaver what does it matter, so long as he is Eddy's friend? And I don't suppose the young ladies will think of his conversation; they will be more interested in his dancing. It's a question of heel and toe, and not of h's."

"I don't know that he dances much," said Eddy; "but he could always prop up a doorway, and it would please him awfully to come and look on."

"You'll ask him, of course, Evelyn," Mr. Rowland said.

And he was asked, of course; and the invitation

was handed to him next day on the hillside, where he met Archie and Eddy and the gamekeeper, and was supplied with a gun, to the great disdain of the latter functionary.

"That man has never had a gun in his hands till this day," said Roderick, aside; "keep out of his road, for any sake, Mr. Airchie: he will never hit a grouse, but he might put a wheen shots into you or me."

"I was not very much better myself," said Archie. "I can feel for him, Roderick."

"Oh, you," said the gamekeeper. It was his young master he was speaking to, and that has a wonderfully mollifying influence. "You were maybe no to call experienced, but you were neither frightened for your gun nor sweerd to use her. Keep you to that side, Mr. Airchie, and if the other gentleman gets it, it's just his ain friend, and he maun bear the brunt."

"I thought you liked Mr. Saumarez, Roderick?"

"So I do like him, though he has an awfu' funny name. He has a good eye for a bird, and will make a fine shot when he's come to his prime, and just makes you lose your manners with his fun and nonsense. But if he brings out a stick like this upon the moor, he must just rin the risk of him. Come you, Mr. Airchie, to this side."

Eddy, on his hand, had something to say to his guest. "Have you got me that thing?" he said.

"They won't give it up till they see the money, Master Eddy. I've told you so before."

"Very well, Johnson. I have an invitation for you, in my pocket, to the ball—and I have a cheque in my pocket, which is better than money. You shall neither have the one nor the other till I have that paper in my own hands."

"Give and take then, Master Eddy," said the other.

"You ass, keep down the muzzle of your gun! No. I must have it in my hands to see it's all right before I let you touch the other. Oh, just as you please! but that's my last word."

"You don't suppose I carry it about in my pocket?" said Johnson.

"I suppose nothing. I only tell you what I'll do. Give it me that I may see it's right and the genuine thing, and you shall have the cheque, which is as good a cheque as any in the world, whatever the other may be."

"You might play me some tricks, or stop it at the bank," said Johnson.

"By Jove! that's an idea. I'll do so, if you don't look sharp with that other thing."

"Well," said Johnson, "if that's how it is to be, I'll bring it up to you to-morrow morning to the house—and then you can introduce me to the ladies. I ought to know them first, before I come to the dance."

"No," said Eddy, "you can come to the ball, where it will be fun: but if you come near the house till the night of the ball, I'll let off my gun by accident, as you'll do presently if you don't

mind, and take your wretched life. Now, you hear. You can come to old Rankine's cottage in the wood to-morrow, if you like, at twelve. You can say you want a dog—he'll not let you have it, for he never sells them to cads; but it will do for an excuse."

"By Jove!" said Johnson, "if you don't mind what you say, I've got a gun, and I can have an accident too."

"Put it down, you ass!" cried Eddy, striking down the muzzle of the gun, which, in the confusion, went off, nearly knocking down by the concussion the unfortunate Johnson, and ploughing into the heather and mossy soil. The neophyte thought he had killed somebody, and fell down on his wretched knees. "I swear to God I never meant nothing. I never meant to 'it any man," he cried.

"Oh, get up, you brute, and hold your tongue," cried Eddy. He added, shaking him by the shoulder, "If you talk when you're at Rosmore, you'll be turned out of the house. I've told them you speak nothing but Latin—mind you hold your tongue if you don't want to do for both yourself and me."

CHAPTER XV.

EDDY took his morning walk to Rankine's cottage next day ; but he did not meet any one there. He went in and endeavoured to treat with the old gamekeeper for a dog, but found the old man quite indisposed for any such negotiation.

"Na, na," he said, "I have nae dogues that I can part with. They're a' bespoken. Lady Jean has mostly friends that want them, and I have but few this year. I canna part with one o' them. Mr. Archie, from Rosmore House, he came and picked up my best. I couldna well refuse the son o' the place—but that's thrown me far behind. Ye'll excuse me for saying it, but you're a stranger, my young gentleman, and I'm my lord's auld servant, and Lady Jean's. I must think o' them first."

"Do you think I would not be kind to it, you old sceptic?" said Eddy.

"I wasna saying ye would not be kind to it. There's few folk wicked to dogues. I was saying I have none to dispose of. Ye will not be staying very lang at the Hoose? Ye've been here a good

while, the young lady and you. Few visitors bide as lang nowadays. I canna tell whether it's the faut of having so many enjoyments, or if it's the faut of the hosts that dinna give a sufficient welcome; but I notice that it's three days, and that kind of a veesit that's popular now. No time to turn yoursel' round in. Just the day of coming and the day of going, and one or at the most twa days between."

"We are not like that," said Eddy, "we have come for a visitation, don't you see: but I am sorry you think that we are staying too long."

"Oh, it is none o' my business," said Rankine, with a serious face. "I'm thinking ye will be taking the road after this ball—they're a' talking about it. To hear what they say you would think it was ane o' the Queen's balls."

"Well," said Eddy, "I flatter myself it will be quite as pretty. By the way, Rankine, have you had any more encounters with that great scholar, don't you know—the college man from Oxford—that I saw here?"

"I'm glad," said Rankine, "that you've given me an occasion of speaking. Sir, ye're young, and your experience is no great, though you have a real good opinion of yourself. Yon's nae college man—or, if maybe in these times he may have gotten himself to be a college man—at least I can say this of him, that he's nae gentleman. Just you be awfu' careful what you're about wi' yon man. I would not trust him a foot's length out of my

sight. He has nae root o' the matter in him: neither ceevility, which is little thought upon, I allow, in the training of a college—nor learning. He is awfu' cautious no to open his mouth on sich subjects; but my impression is that he has naething to say, and he's nae mair a gentleman than yon doug. Mair! I'm meaning far less. Rover's a real gentleman. He'll make place for ye by the fire, and he'll give you his best attention when you speak, and thank ye when ye do him a pleasure. A good doug of a good breed might learn manners to a prince; but as for yon friend of yours—"

"I never said he was a friend of mine," said Eddy, "but you are too severe, Rankine. How should you be such a judge, not being a gentleman yourself?"

The old gamekeeper's ruddy colour deepened a little.

"Sir," he said, "I've aye found the best sign of a well-bred man was that he gave credit to other folk of being as good as himself—if no better. Them that fail in that will never come up to my standard. Ye think nae doubt that ye ken better than me—but just you take warning from an auld man. I've seen a' kinds. Maybe you are no aware that I was much about the world in my younger years with my lord—and my lord wasna very particular in these days, though he's a douce man now. I've seen a' kinds; but a worse kind than yon Johnson man—"

"Johnson of St. Chad's, Rankine—mind what you're saying."

"He's nae mair of St. Chad's than I am! There's both a note and a query in my paper from the real man—on a subject, it is true, that he doesna understand—he goes clean against my reasoning, which to any unprejudiced mind would be mair than conclusive; but it's dated from a place away in Wales, or somewhere far to the south of this. Na, na, yon man is nae scholar, and if ye'll take my word for it, nae gentleman, either. His name may be Johnson, but he's just masqueradin' in another's local designation, and I wouldna trust him, no a fit beyond what I could see him. Ye are a very clever lad, but ye canna have the experience of the like o' me."

"Here he is, Rankine; you may be right, but you must be civil," Eddy said.

"Ceevil! in my ain house. He kens John Rankine little that thinks it needful to tell me that. Good-morning to ye, sir," said the gamekeeper, raising his voice. "Come ben without hesitation, there's naebody but freends here."

"Oh, friends! I don't seek my friends in a hole like this," said Johnson, evidently bent on showing his quality. "I've nearly been blown away coming along your infernal loch, and I've been in the mud up to my ankles on what you call the paths in the wood."

"It's a pity," said Rankine grimly, "that the

maker of them was not mair careful to suit baith land and water to your needs."

"The maker of them," said Johnson, "could have understood nothing about making roads—some of your country fellows that are behind in everything. Oh, you are here, Master Eddy. I've come to see after one of these little dogs you talk so much about."

"And what may you be wanting with a little dogue?" said Rankine, with scrupulous politeness.

"I?—just what other people want I suppose. Let's see, old gentleman, what sort you have got."

"I have no little dogues," said the gamekeeper, folding his hands on his chest. The impulse was so strong upon him to dip into the nest, where their small conversation, as they tumbled over each other, was quite audible, that he had to grasp his coat with his hands, in order to refrain.

"I can hear them squeaking," said Johnson.

Rankine turned a serene glance upon Eddy. "Ye see," he said, "what I tellt ye. What kind of a person would use a word like that? My dogues, sir," he added, "are all bespoke. I have certain ladies and gentlemen, great friends of mine, that get a' I can spare. Ye hear naething squeaking here, but just a few remarks made atween themselves by a sma' family, that are of as good blood and race as any here."

"Oh, come, my man," said Johnson, "I'm not a softy to be cheated out of my money like that. I'll give a fair price, but you needn't think to take

me in, with your ladies and gentlemen. I know what a dog is worth."

"Hold hard, Johnson," said Eddy. "It's a monopoly, don't you know, and Rankine can do what he likes. He knows a lot, I can tell you. He knows you're in South Wales or somewhere and not here—"

"I?" cried Johnson again. "I never was in Wales in my life."

"I tellt ye sae, sir," said Rankine significantly; "and that being proved, I hope you will mind the rest of my advice."

"What is he saying, Master Eddy? What has he been advising you? Something about me? I'll trouble you, my man, to keep your advice where you keep your dogs, and not to interfere with me."

"I am no man o' yours," said Rankine, "any more than you are a man o' mine. I advise my friends for their good just when I please. Ye are in my poor bit dwelling, and that gives ye a privilege, but I must do my duty by a young gentleman that is a veesitor at the Hoose, and therefore more or less under what I may call my protection when he comes to see me."

"You are no match for him, Johnson," said Eddy, laughing. "You needn't try. Come along, old fellow. I'll show you that business I told you of. Don't be afraid, Rankine. Whatever I do that's wrong it will be my own fault and not his. I'm young, but I know a thing or two for all that."

"Mair than you should—mair than you should!"

cried the gamekeeper ; " but come again soon and see me, sir ; there's a hantle mair advice I would like to give ye. Janet," said Rankine solemnly to his wife as the door was closed, " if there's any devilry comes to your ears, mind you it's that man."

" Hoots, John," said Mrs. Rankine, who had come " ben " with her glistening arms wrapped in her apron, from the midst of her washing, at the sound of the opening door : it was almost all that good woman ever said.

In about half an hour from this time Eddy Saumarez reached Rosmore, and made his way to his room in much haste. He was drenched with the rain, which for some time had been coming down small and soft, but persistent, after the fashion of the west country, and only waved his hand to the party collected over the great fire in the hall, where the decorations were already being put up. " I am so wet, I must change before I can be of any use," he said, as he passed : but before he succeeded in gaining the shelter of his room, his sister came out upon him from hers, where she seemed to have been keeping watch. She put her hand upon his wet sleeve and detained him.

" Eddy," she said, " what have you been doing ? You have got into some scrape ? For goodness' sake remember where you are, and all that depends upon it." Rosamond was very serious, she had even a pucker of anxiety on her usually smooth brow.

"I have got very wet," said Eddy, "if that's what you mean : and probably a bad cold depends on it, which would be pleasant on the eve of a ball. If you've got a sermon to preach you can do it after. I must change my clothes now."

"Oh, what does getting wet matter," said Rosamond, "or catching cold either ? Who is this man you have made them ask ? If it's any one that ought not to come, and father hears of it——"

"It's Johnson—of St. Chad's," said Eddy, pausing to laugh at his joke, which had already prospered so much beyond his hopes.

"What do you know of St. Chad's ? And father, who set me to keep you straight ? Eddy, I didn't mind any humbugging with grandmamma, she deserves it, and you had a great deal of provocation : but they're good people here——"

"Who are good people ? My little girl, or your fellow, that you can turn round your finger ? I'll answer for them, my child. And the father, with his money——"

"He has been very kind to us," said Rosamond. "I will not have him mystified. Tell me who this man is, or I will go straight to Mrs. Rowland and tell her not to let him come."

"Oh, he'll come fast enough," said Eddy, "he's got his invitation ; all the country couldn't keep him from coming. But if you have any bravos at your disposition, and can have him waylaid and thrown into the loch, do it, my dear, with my blessing ; I sha'n't mind."

"Then why, why did you make them ask him?" cried Rosamond.

Eddy laughed; there was excitement in his laugh, but there was also amusement. "Why?" he said, "for fun! Isn't that reason enough? To watch him will be the best joke that ever was. I'm to introduce him to all the bigwigs, and sha'n't I do it, too! Find me a title for Miss Eliza, Rose. How he'll listen to her!—and lend the nephews money——"

"Eddy, it's some wretched money-lender——"

"Well," said Eddy, with a laugh, "there are many worse trades: they must have it, or they couldn't lend it. Go away and let me change my wet clothes."

Rosamond went away as she was bidden, partially satisfied. She was a girl of great experience in many ways. She knew the shifts of living when there is very little money to live on, and yet all the luxuries of existence have to be secured. She was not acquainted with the expedient of doing without what you cannot afford to buy, but all the other manners of doing it were tolerably familiar to her. She had none of that shrinking from a money-lender which people, who know nothing about them, are apt to suffer from. She even appreciated the advantage of keeping on good terms with members of that fraternity. It was one of their weaknesses to be eager about getting into society, putting on a semblance of gentility. Rosamond went back to her room, with that air of a princess which was

natural to her, shaking her head a little over Eddy's joke, but not so disturbed by it as she had been. Her only hope was that Johnson would not come to the ball covered with jewellery, that he would understand the wisdom of holding his tongue and refraining from the dance. She herself knew very well how to defend herself from the penalty of dancing with him. Rosamond was not out, but yet she was aware of those guiles by which girls, obliged to accept any partner that offers, defend themselves from carrying out their engagements when that is necessary. She was in no uneasiness on her own account, and a faint sense that it would be fun to see the money-lender floundering among people who after all, whatever airs they might give themselves, were not, Rosamond reflected, in society, stole through her mind. It does not matter so much when people are not in society who they associate with. Who thinks of their lesser distinctions? You are in society or you are not; and if the latter is the case what does it matter? This was the thought in her mind. She hoped that Johnson was not too Hebraic, that his nose was less pronounced than usual, and his eyes less shining. Indeed, as she endeavoured to recall his appearance, he had no speciality in the way of nose, so that really on the whole there would be little harm done. If any society man happened to be there who recognized the money-lender, he could either divine the real state of the case or suppose that the Rowlands were not so well off as they

looked. And in neither case would that do any harm.

Eddy, for his part, locked his door behind him when he got inside his own room : and he risked the cold which would be so awkward on the eve of the ball, by remaining still for some time in his wet clothes. What he did was to take a paper from his pocket, which he carried to the light of the window, examining it closely, holding it up to the daylight, which was subdued by the overhanging shadow of the trees, and the clouds of rain sweeping up from the sea. Then after reading it over line by line, he took it, holding it very closely in both hands as if he had been afraid that it might take wings to itself and flee away, to the smouldering fire—for it was nearly the end of October, and fires were very necessary to combat the damp of the place. Then Eddy put the paper carefully into the centre of the fire where it curled up and blackened and began to smoke, but did not burst into flame until he had seized the box of matches on the mantelpiece and had strewed a handful upon it. Then there was a series of small distinct reports like minute guns, and the whole flamed up. His clothes steamed as he stood before the fire, but he was not aware of it, nor that the damp was meantime penetrating into every muscle and limb.

After this Eddy dressed himself cheerfully in dry clothes and went down stairs. He had never been more lively or entertaining. He went down to find the whole party occupied with their letters, which

came in before lunch, making that meal either a joyful feast or a meal of anxiety. Rowland it was who knitted his brows most keenly after he had received his letters. Over one of them he lingered long, casting glances occasionally at Archie, who had no letters and who was amusing himself furtively with the two dogs, Roy and Dhu, which he had abandoned on discovering that they took to his stepmother more than to himself. Such a preference is always irritating to the legitimate owner of dog or man. He could not forgive them for their bad taste: nevertheless, when Mrs. Rowland was out of the way the infantile graces of the two puppies were more than flesh and blood could stand out against. He had withdrawn into a deep recess of the hall, in which there was a window, and where he considered himself free from inspection, and there was rolling over the two little balls, with their waving limbs and the gleams of fun that were visible under the tufts of hair that fell over their eyes. Though they were rolling over and over each other in the height of play, attacking and retreating before Archie's hands, with which he pulled their ears and tails, now lifting one, now another, by some illegitimate portion of hair, each little dog kept an eye upon where the mistress sat, retired in a large chair, reading her letters, waiting till she moved or looked, and ready at a moment to pick themselves up, get upon their respective legs, and run out of the recess, one after the other, as if they had been anxiously awaiting the moment when her attention

suppose," might relax and she would have leisure to bestow upon her faithful retainers. It was not, however, Mrs. Rowland, but her husband, who disturbed the pastime. He looked up from his letter and called "Archie!" in a voice which meant mischief. Archie looked up startled.

"Yes," he said, "I am here."

"How was it you never mentioned that you had gone to see Mrs. Brown the other day when you were in Glasgow?"

Archie raised himself up, pushing the puppies away from him. "I—scarcely could have been in Glasgow," he said, though with a slight faltering in his voice, it was so little true, "without going to see Aunt Jean."

"That is true enough," said his father, in a slightly softened tone. "It was of course your first duty: but—is this story she tells me true?"

"She is very little likely," said Archie, "to tell anything that is not true; but I don't know what she has told you."

"She says—that she asked you to help a poor comrade of yours who is ill, and must go away to save his life, and that you refused—is that true?"

Archie stood in the vacant space formed by the recess, turning his face towards his father—pale, miserable, half-defiant, without a word to say.

"Is that true?" said Rowland, his voice pealing through the hall. It disturbed the whole party, drawing their attention from their letters. Mrs. Rowland looked up with an air half of terror, half

of compassion. "James, James!" she said in a low voice.

"Let alone, Evelyn! you don't understand. Do you hear me, sir? Come forward; don't skulk, as you are always doing. Is it true?"

Archie made a step forward, his brows bent over his eyes, his head sunk between his shoulders. He saw them all turning to him—his stepmother with a compassionate look, which he could tolerate less than if it had been the triumph and satisfaction which he believed she felt; Rosamond raising her head from the letter she was reading with a half contemptuous surprise; and Eddy! Eddy in the background, unseen by any, sending over their heads a look of half-amused, half sympathetic comment, opening his eyes wide and raising his eyebrows. Eddy looked—not as if he had anything to do with it, but as if partly indignant, partly astonished, yet as good as saying—"That is just as they all do."

"Yes," said Archie, at last; "it is true."

His father began, with an exclamation, to speak, but recalled to himself by another low but emphatic call from his wife, "James, James!" restrained himself. He gave Archie, however, a look, under which the unfortunate young man fell back, feeling as if something had struck him to his heart. Oh, the contempt in it, the indignation, as of something unworthy a word! and to know that he did not deserve it, and yet have his lips sealed and nothing to say for himself. It was almost harder to

bear than any fury of reproach. Archie felt himself shamed in the way in which shame was most bitter, and in the presence of those who made his disgrace most terrible to bear—the girl whom he admired with a kind of adoration, and the woman whom he hated without knowing why. As he stood there, drawn back a step, lowering, gloomy, his eyes sunk in their sockets, he looked the picture of conscious meanness, and almost guilt. And such he appeared to his father, whose passion of disappointment and rage of offended affection was scarcely to be restrained. Rowland got up from his seat abruptly and went into the library, which was the room he used. He came back in a minute or two holding a cheque in his hand, which he tossed at his son, as he had once tossed the twenty pound note. "Send that," he said, "to your aunt for your friend." He walked back towards his place, then turned again, and adding, "By to-day's post," sat down with his face towards the fire.

Archie stood for a moment with the cheque lying at his feet. All the old rebellion rose within his heart. It was more bitter this time than the last. Should he leave it there lying, the wretched money, and turn his back upon his father, who even when he was kind was so in scorn, and flung the help for the friend, whom he believed Archie had refused to help, as he would have flung a bone to a dog. Should he go and leave it, and turn his back upon this house for ever? There was a moment's struggle, very bitter and sore, in Archie's breast: and then he

remembered Colin, the pale-faced lad, whose illness, it had been no great surprise, but so overwhelming a blow to hear of, just at the moment when he had made himself incapable of helping him. Then he stooped down, and picking up the paper went to the writing-table and wrote a hasty letter, stooping over the blotting-book as he stood. "Aunt Jean," he wrote, "you have done me a very ill turn, but I do not blame you : and my father will perhaps end by driving me desperate ; and most likely you will none of you ever know the reason. But here's the money for Colin Lamont, though it's been flung at my head like the time before, and though I have not even you to take my part now. Anyhow it will be good for him. His is a better case, however ill he is, than mine.—A. ROWLAND."

Archie put this letter and the cheque into an envelope, which he placed conspicuously on the table that his father might see it, and then he left the house, with a soul more heavy and a heart more sore than words could say.

"Your brother is always getting to loggerheads with your father," said Eddy to Marion, who was helping him with a design for the wall. "You should give him good advice, and get him to take a jaw pleasantly. They all do it, don't you know?"

"Who all do it?—but I'm astonished at papa," said Marion ; "for why should Archie give all his money to a lad that was not at all of his kind, but just a companion for a while, when we were—not

as we are now. Archie has not so much money that he could give it away to—a friend.”

“Why should he indeed?” said Eddy. “Friends that want money are always to be had in plenty; but money is best in one’s pocket, which is the right place for it, as you say.”

“I am just surprised at papa,” said Marion; “for it should be a father’s part to keep us from foolishness, and not to put it into our heads. Archie is silly enough without giving him any encouragement. He was always for giving things away; and this Colin—for I am sure it must be Colin—is just one that will never be better whatever is done for him. It is just throwing away money. Shall I cut out all these leaves the same, or would it be better if they were a little different, like leaves upon a tree?”

“Oh, make them like the drawing, please,” said Eddy. “Archie is a very good fellow, but he takes things too seriously. What is the use of looking so tragical? The best of fathers loves a chance for a sermon. You must speak to him like a mother, Miss May.”

“I have always been the most sensible,” said May; “but I am the youngest, and I don’t see how I could speak to him like a mother. I will, perhaps, speak to papa, and tell him how wrong it is, when a boy is disposed to be saving and takes care of his money, to put such things in his head. For what could Colin Lamont matter to him in comparison with himself! And where would we have been now, if papa had thrown away his

money and made that kind of use of it ! It is not for Archie's sake, for Archie is just very silly ; but I think I will perhaps speak to papa."

And then they returned with enthusiasm to the decorations for the hall.

Poor Archie, for his part, wandered out disconsolate upon the hills : everything was turning out badly for him. There had been a moment when things were better, when he had overcome various troubles—his unaccustomed gun, and Roderick and the groom, and the sudden valse into which he had been driven, with still less chance of escape. For a week or two things had gone so well, that he had begun to trust a little in his fate ; but now again the balance had turned, and everything was going badly. Small comfort was there in prospect for him. He had denuded himself altogether of all his revenues, and now there came upon him the consciousness of many things that would be required of him, many claims which he would be unable to respond to. He would not have a sixpence to give to a boy, or a penny to a beggar. He would have to guard against every little expense as if he were a beggar himself. He could not go to Glasgow again, however much he might wish to do so, scarcely even to go across the ferry. He had nothing, and would have nothing till Christmas, these long and weary months. And Eddy did nothing but lift his eyebrows, half-amused at the misery of which he was the cause. And never could Archie explain, neither to his

father, nor to Aunt Jean, the reason why he had refused her prayer for Colin Lamont. When he thought of that, Archie gnashed his teeth, and in the silence of the hillside, dashed his clenched hands into the air. He must bear it all and never say a word—and all the time see before him the other, smiling, who could make it all plain. But Archie did not know how much greater and more awful trouble was yet in store.

CHAPTER XVI

THE night of the ball arrived at last. The stables in Rosmore, and all the accommodation to be had in the neighbourhood, were filled with horses and carriages of every description. Everybody had come. The great element of success, which predetermines the question, the arrival of all expected, made the hearts of the hosts glad. Rowland had forgotten that little episode which still hung heavy on Archie's soul, and stood beaming, the proudest man in the county, to receive his guests. The sound of the arrivals was music to his ears. That he, so simple as he stood there, the foundry lad, the railway man, the creator of his own fortune, should be receiving the best people in the countryside, opening large and liberal doors of hospitality, entertaining in the superior position of a host people whose names he had heard afar off in those early days, was a sort of happiness which he could scarcely believe, and which filled his heart with a glow of elation and proud delight. Perhaps it was not a very elevated or elevating sentiment. To shake hands with the Earl of Clydesdale, and

welcome him to one's house, might not fill one's own bosom with any sense of bliss. But Lord Clydesdale was to James Rowland the king of his native district, high above all cavil or partnership, and there could be no such evident sign to him of the glorious position to which he had himself attained. This sense of triumph beamed all over him, and made his accent more and more cordial, his anxiety about the pleasure of his guests more and more warm. There was nothing he would not have done to add to the brightness of the joyous assembly. The least little momentary shade of dulness in any corner went to his heart. When he saw either girl or boy who was not dancing, he would come down upon them like a rescue party, providing partner, or supper, or refreshment, or repose, whatsoever they wanted. It could not be said that his success and glory made him selfish. He wanted everybody to enjoy as he was himself enjoying. Impossible to imagine a more beneficent form of success.

He had quite forgotten his censure of Archie. He clapped him on the shoulder when he appeared, with an exhortation—"Now, Archie, man! shake yourself together—put your best foot foremost—make it go off! Mind, we are all upon our promotion. If it is not the finest ball that has been given on Clydeside I will never hold up my head more." This address a little lightened Archie's heart, still sore and heavy from the blame to which he had been subject—so undeservedly as he knew, but as

nobody else was aware. And he was young, and though alarmed by the part he had himself to play, it was not in human nature not to feel some stir of exhilaration in the arrival of all that fine company, the music striking up, the crowd of other young people streaming in. What he would have thought of admission to such a scene a year ago ! To be sure, this was chastened by the thought of the important part he had to play, as son of the house. He found Rosamond at his elbow, after his father had given him that exhortation.

"You should ask Lady Jean first," said the young lady, holding, as usual, her head high and not looking at him while she spoke.

"Me—ask Lady Jean ! to what ?" he asked, with an uneasy laugh.

"To dance, of course—unless the Duchess comes : is the Duchess coming ? Without her you have nothing better than a baronet and his wife. Therefore, unless your father dances, you must take out Lady Jean."

"My father—dances ?" cried Archie, with an uncontrollable laugh. It seemed to him the most ridiculous idea in the world.

"Most gentlemen do in their own houses," said Rosamond, "but if he does not, then you. Lady Jean first. Then Lady Marchbanks : and not for some time that little pretty woman, whose husband was knighted the other day. She is my lady too, and perhaps you would never know the difference. But please to mind what I say."

"Lady this, and Lady that—and when am I to come to you?" said Archie, taking a little courage.

"Oh, I will keep one for you—not till you have got through all your duty dances. That is the disadvantage many people say of a ball in one's own house. But I like responsibility," said Rosamond. "It is better than thinking merely what will be most fun."

By the inspiration of this double charge, Archie became a new man. He led Lady Jean very tremulously, it must be allowed, through a quadrille—or she led him, it would perhaps be better to say ; but he was very docile and very humble, and her ladyship did not dislike the modest young man, who, for the first time for some days, opened full his mother's eyes, innocent and honest, upon those to whom he spoke. She said, "He's not an ill lad, that young Rowland," to the ladies about her. And Miss Eliza repeated it up and down the room. "We all know what dear Lady Jean means," cried that lady. "She is maybe sparing of her praises, but when she does say a good word, it comes from the heart. He has many things to contend against, but he's not an ill lad. I have always said it myself. Few women have greater opportunities of studying young folk than I have, though I'm only, as you may say, an old maid myself. And so is Lady Jean for that matter. We are just a real respectable fraternity—or would it be better to say sisterhood?—but that's a word with other meanings.

No, he's not an ill lad. He has always been very civil to me, and the boys all like him. They say there's no humbug in him. But Lady Jean is the one to give a thing its right name."

Whether any echo of this comforting report reached Archie's ken it would be hard to tell, but it somehow blew across his father's ears, and made him laugh till the tears came to his eyes. He sought out Evelyn in the midst of her guests to report it to her. "It's Scotch praise," he said, "but it means more than you would suppose."

"I think it is very poor praise, and Archie deserves a great deal better," said his wife, which pleased him too.

"But that from Lady Jean is more than raptures from another," he replied.

As for Eddy Saumarez, though he was not much to look at, he was always a popular man, as he himself said, in a ballroom. He did not dance very gracefully, nor indeed, though his confidence in himself carried him through all kinds of performances creditably, was he a graceful person in any way: but he was adroit, and despite his somewhat insignificant person, strong, and carried his partner skilfully through the most complicated crowd. His enjoyment of the evening was interrupted or increased (it would be difficult to say which) by the appearance of a man whom nobody knew, and most people took for one of the servants (a supposition very injurious to Mr. Rowland's servants, who were well-made, well set-up

individuals, excellent specimens of humanity). Johnson wore an evening coat with long tails, too long for him, and a white tie with long ends, too big for him, and gloves with half-an-inch of vacant finger, which made his hands look like a bundle of loose skeins of white yarn. His face wore an anxious look as he came in unnoticed, eagerly looking for the only face he knew. Even the genial Rowland, who was ready to welcome everybody, passed over this personage with vague surprise, supposing that he must belong to some reserve force of the pantry, or had been brought in in attendance on some guest. He knew nobody but Eddy, and Eddy, who was dancing without intermission, contrived never to catch his *protégé's* eyes. It was not that he was unconscious of the presence of this visitor, whom nobody took any notice of. On the contrary, Eddy kept a careful watch upon him in his corner.

"Look yonder," he said to his partner; "but don't look as if you were looking. Do you see that queer little being in the corner? Oh, yes, I know him; but I don't mean to see him. He has got an invitation here by mistake, and he depends on me to introduce him right and left. Who is he? ah, that's what I can't tell. He is not a man I shall introduce to you. Did you ever see such a droll little beggar? I knew he would be fun. There he goes prowling into the other corner, where he thinks he will catch my eye. But I don't mean him to catch my eye. Oh, you know well enough,

don't you, how to avoid seeing any one you don't want to see? Cruel? no: he has no business to be here. The little brute must pay for his impudence. Reverse, shall we? Ah, he thought he had me then!" Eddy said with a laugh. "We were running right into him. But you'll see I shall get clear away."

Perhaps Rosamond heard some part of this talk as her brother darted past. For it was she in all her pride who sailed up to poor Johnson in his corner, who was diving under the dancers' arms and stretching over their shoulders, in a vain attempt to attract the attention of his false friend.

"You are looking for my brother," she said, "and he is paying no attention. He seldom does when it is not for his own advantage. But perhaps I may do as well."

Johnson murmured something about surprise and honour. "You will do just as well, Miss Saumarez, if you will introduce me to some nice girls," he said eagerly. "Master Eddy promised me: but I know his promises is like pie crust. May I have the pleasure of the next dance?"

Rosamond almost looked at him in her scorn—the next dance; as though every place on her card had not been filled in the first five minutes.

"I will dance a quadrille with you," she said, "if you will remain here quietly till I am ready, and not ask any one else."

"Oh, miss!" cried Johnson, in delight; "fancy my conducting myself like a gay Lothario, and

asking any one else, when I have an offer from you ! ”

Rosamond was not used to blushing, but she coloured high at this. She did not see the fun of it as Eddy would have done. She had no sense of humour.

“ If you will wait here till I am ready, I will dance with you,” she said.

Johnson had been very indignant and deeply disappointed, not to be introduced to “ the big-wigs,” as Eddy had promised. But when Eddy’s beautiful sister proposed to him to dance with her, not even waiting to be asked, his feelings sustained a wonderful change. He relaxed his watch upon Eddy, and waited with wonderful patience for the blissful moment when he should take his place among that dazzling throng. With this before him, he could enjoy the sight and the ecstatic sensation of forming part of that assembly, even though he knew no bigwigs. When they saw him dancing with Miss Saumarez, who was one of the beauties, if not, Johnson thought, flattered and flattering, *the* beauty of the evening, they would change their minds about him. And indeed, the shabby little man made an extraordinary sensation when he joined, by the side of Miss Saumarez, the next quadrille. Who was he ? where did he come from ? everybody asked. And whispers ran among the throng that a person so shabby, dancing with Miss Saumarez, one of the house party, must to the blood of the millionaires

belong, and was probably the scion of a secondary Rothschild. Much curiosity was roused concerning him, and shabby as he looked, there is little doubt that after Rosamond he might have danced with almost any one he pleased. As a matter of fact, Archie, always good-natured, and unsuspecting of anything remarkable about Johnson, introduced him to several ladies, who did not object to allow him to inscribe his name upon their programmes. And Marion did more than this. She was just standing up with him for a waltz, and with her hand on his arm was about to enter the field, when another change occurred which made Johnson's appearance and behaviour more extraordinary than ever. He suddenly stopped in the midst, just at the moment when he ought to have put his limp hand upon her waist, a contact which Rosamond had been unable to submit to, but which Marion, with her much less cultivated sense, found quite unobjectionable.

"Excuse me, miss, for a moment," Johnson said, dropping her arm, and leaving her alone in the midst of the dancers.

He had seen something in the distance which made him turn pale. And it happened that at that moment, after so long and so ineffectually attempting to catch Eddy's eye, he at last succeeded in doing so without the slightest difficulty. Eddy had been startled beyond expression by the sight of Johnson's shabby figure by his sister's side, and distracted by this sight from all idea of fun; and

restraining with difficulty the impulse he had to seize the fellow by the shoulders and turn him out—which evidently he had no right to do—had followed him, no longer now with laughing eyes that saw every movement while appearing to see nothing, but with the furious gaze of the plotter upon whom the tables are turned. When Johnson started, shrank, and dropped Marion's arm, Eddy, watching, saw the whole pantomime, and saw also the fellow's almost imperceptible signal towards the window, which stood open behind its drawn, curtains for the ventilation of the great warm heated hall. Eddy turned his own sharp, suspicious eyes toward the spot at which Johnson had looked, and there he saw a somewhat startling sight—a man in morning dress, buttoned up in a warm overcoat, like a visitor newly arrived, standing at the hall door, and gazing with astonishment as at a totally unexpected scene. The sight startled him, though he did not know why. It could be nothing to him, so far as he knew. He did not know what it could be to Johnson. But he was startled. The man looked like some commercial functionary, business-like, and serious, surprised beyond measure to find himself suddenly introduced from the open air and quiet, frosty, chilly night, to the crowded ball-room with all its decorations.

Eddy made a dive through the throng towards the window, with an explanation to those around him that the draught was too much for Lady Jean.

"I must try and draw the curtains down," he said, with a shrug of his shoulders at the unreasonableness of women. And in another moment was outside, standing under the brilliant cold stars, which looked down coldly upon this curious little unexpected effect.

"What's the matter?" he said breathlessly to the other dark figure, conspicuous only by the whiteness of his large shirt, among the bushes.

"I don't know," said Johnson, "unless you've been at it again, Master Eddy. Did you see that man? That's the clerk at the bank that cashed your cheque. I don't know what brings him here, if you don't. Anyhow, I thought it the best policy to slip away."

Eddy's teeth began to chatter—perhaps with the cold.

"You confounded fool!" he said, "did you give them the chance of identifying you? I didn't think you would have been such an ass."

"As for that," cried Johnson, "I'm square. I've only got to say it was given me by you, my fine young fellow. By George, I never had no suspicion. And p'raps it ain't that—p'rhaps it's something else; but it looks fishy seeing that fellow in the middle of all the folks dancing. It has given me a turn! I hope, Master Eddy, for your own sake, as you have not been at it again."

"Oh, what's that to you!" cried Eddy impatiently. He was biting his lower lip till it bled, unconsciously to himself.

"It might be a great deal to me," said Johnson, "if it is not on the square. They've a set of queer laws of their own in Scotland: you never know where you are with them; and you didn't trouble yourself very much to get me partners, Mr. Eddy. Oh, ah, didn't see me; tell that to them as will believe it."

"If you think you are in danger, Johnson, from the arrival of that fellow," said Eddy, "you'd better scuttle. They don't understand a joke, these bank men."

"A joke," cried Johnson. "Me that am on the square if ever a man was! and you that—"

"Have nothing at all to do with it," said Eddy, with cool superiority. "If you think that you're likely to get into trouble, take my advice and walk home. I'll pitch you out a coat, and it's a fine night. You should start to-morrow, as soon as it's day; and I advise you to get over the hills to Kilrossie, and take the boat there. Good-night—it's cold standing out here jabbering about nothing. You should never have come; and how dared you touch a lady, you little snob!" Eddy cried.

"By George!" cried the other; and then he added with complacency in his tone: "If it's Miss Saumarez, she is a stunner, Master Eddy. It was she—that offered to me."

"You confounded, miserable little cad," said Eddy, furiously driving him back among the bushes with a sudden blow. But he stole back to the house on the outskirts of the crowd, and seizing the

first coat he could find, pitched it out of a window above on Johnson's head. He had humanity enough, though he was not unwilling to sacrifice the scapegoat, to give him something warm to wrap himself in. After this he returned to the ballroom, with a thousand apologies to his partner, and eloquent description of the difficulty he had found in so arranging the curtains as to keep the draught from Lady Jean. "The shortest way would have been to shut the window, I know," said Eddy, "but we can't have the ballroom made into a black hole of Calcutta, can we? So I compromised matters, as I always do."

"Do you, Mr. Saumarez?" said the young lady with a look of faith, such as young ladies often wear—ready to receive what he said as truth, or to laugh at it as transparent humbug, it did not matter which. And Eddy danced all night undisturbed and imperturbable. The bank clerk was nothing to him. He sat out two square dances with Miss Monteith, the heiress. But every other on the programme Eddy danced, even the Scotch reel, of which he said, "I shall only make you all laugh, of course, but never mind." Everybody did laugh, no doubt, at his performance, but they liked him all the better for trying it. It was a part of the programme into which Archie entered with spirit, for once sure of his ground. This was at a tolerably advanced period, when the guests who lived at the greatest distance were already ordering their carriages, and Archie, in the absence of his father, after the reel was over, had to preside over all the

arrangements for the conclusion of the most successful entertainment that had ever been known in Rosmore, and to give Lady Jean his arm to the door. "It has been a pleasant party," said Lady Jean. "And you must come over and see us, and have a day or two with my brother on the moors. Clydesdale, I am telling young Mr. Rowland he must come over and see what he can do among the grouse, some fine day very soon."

"You must do that," said the Earl himself. "You must do that. I will write and fix a day."

What greater honour could have been done to the son of the railway man? He felt the glory of it, though the thought of such a visit was enough to take all the courage out of Archie. He stood a little dazed by the honour that had been done him, watching the carriage as it drove away, and pleased to feel the cold fresh air upon his forehead, when the butler came up to him with a serious face. "Mr. Archibald," he said, "the master would like to see you in the library as soon as the principal people are gone."

"Very well," said Archie, a little surprised; but he made no haste to obey his father's call. There were a few more dances after the great people were gone, and Miss Eliza had made three or four ineffectual starts before she could collect her party together, who were the last to go. "Indeed, Mr. Archie," she said, "you will just be worn off your feet hunting up these wild lassies for me. For the moment you've found one, there's a new waltz

started, and the other three are on the floor. And when they've done, Helen's off again just to have a last turn, and there's nothing left for it that I can see but for you and me to perform a *pas seul* to frighten them all away. Here they are at last, the whole four, which is all that can be squeezed into Alick Chalmers's coach, whatever we do. And the lads must just walk, it will do them good after the three or four suppers they've had. And it has been a beautiful ball. I see your mammaw and papaw have stolen away, which I'm not surprised at, considering how late it is. You will say good-night to them for me, and many thanks for a delightful evening. And ye must all come up to your tea to-morrow and talk it over. Good-night—and good-night."

Eddy was at the carriage door also, superintending with much laughter the packing in of the five ladies in their ball-dresses into Alick's fly. All the dignified and ceremonious leave-takings were over—this was pure l'ght-hearted fun and frolic. While Miss Eliza's four young ladies were still waving their handkerchiefs from the windows of the coach as it disappeared into the darkness, and "the boys," an equal number of them, four young men, were buttoning their coats and lighting their cigars, the butler appeared again. Once more he touched Archie on the shoulder, this time with more solemnity than ever. "Mr. Archibald," he said, the master is waiting for you in the library. You're to go to him without another moment's delay."

"What have you been doing, Rowland—are you going to get a wiggling?" said Eddy. "Thank heaven," he added with a yawn, "my governor's several hundred miles away."

Archie did not make any reply: but he was not at that moment in any fear of a wiggling. Lady Jean's gracious words, and the fun of Miss Eliza's good-humoured party, had brought warmth and confidence to his heart. There could be nothing to be laid to his charge to-night. He knew that he had done his duties well, better than ever before. He had been careful of everybody's comfort, emancipating himself by that thought from his native shyness and fear of putting himself forward. Perhaps his father meant to say something kind to him, to express some satisfaction. It was with this feeling of confidence and ease, a feeling so unusual to him, and even with a little pleasurable sense of expectation, that Archie turned the handle of the library door.

END OF VOL. II.

RICHARD CLAY AND SONS, LIMITED.
LONDON AND BUNGAY.