

CHAPTER IV.

WITHOUT farther apology for the length to which the foregoing episode has been extended, I shall now return to Herbert, whom we left with his friend Sidney, enjoying the delight which always arises from the performance of a good action. Herbert received a message from his medical friend, informing him that the Major had passed an extremely restless night; that the fever had returned with redoubled violence; and that the symptoms were of such an unfavourable nature as to preclude all possibility of the patient's recovery, which distressing intelligence it now became Herbert's painful duty to communicate.

On receiving this afflicting intimation, for which Mrs. Walden was in part prepared by her own painful fears, she informed Herbert, that during the night Major Manby had repeatedly spoken of his kindness and attention, in terms of the utmost gratitude; and that, although his name, when he had discovered it, naturally affected him——

Here she was interrupted by Herbert, who exclaimed, "My name! Good God! Can it be possible? Is this the Major Manby of whose misfortunes I have heard so much, and whose enmity to my father was so openly declared?"

"The same, Sir," answered Mrs. Walden, who had imbibed all the prejudices of her friend; "the same, and it is thus that Providence has thrown you, Sir, in the path of the man who was so unjustly persecuted by your father, that you might in some measure atone, by your humane conduct, for the injuries Major Manby sustained at his hands. It is, perhaps, ordained by the Almighty, that the last moments of the persecuted shall be soothed and consoled by the tears of the persecutor's only child! and Heaven forbid! Captain Milton, that your humanity should draw upon you the vengeance of your father!"

"Madam," replied Herbert, hurt at the insinuations against his parent, "whatever might have been the reasons

for my father's enmity to Major Manby, of which even, my mother is utterly ignorant, you do him the utmost injustice in supposing that he would rejoice in the sorrow of an enemy. Sir Herbert Milton, madam, may have been a severe judge, but his justice, his generosity, and honour, never have been questioned."

"Forgive me, Captain Milton," replied Mrs. Walden, "forgive me if the warmth of my regard, and my remembrance of Major Manby's sufferings, should for an instant have induced me to utter a single syllable which could hurt your feelings. Oh, believe me, Sir, we all feel, deeply feel, your unparalleled kindness." And Mrs. Walden concluded by requesting him to communicate to Major Manby the painful intelligence, to which he immediately consented.

On entering his apartment, Herbert found Major Manby in a state of extreme exhaustion, apparently awaiting, with calm resignation, the period of his approaching dissolution. Seeing, however, Herbert, he made a last effort to express his gratitude for the kindness he had shown him, and to inform him of his having left to his beloved Emily whatever he possessed; adding, as he took a ring from his own finger, which he placed on Herbert's, his earnest request that he would convey to Sir Herbert his entire forgiveness for all the misery he had occasioned him.

Before the close of the evening, Major Manby had ceased to breathe; and when the first bursts of grief on the part of Emily and Mrs. Walden had in some degree subsided, arrangements were made, with the aid of Major Manby's solicitor, for the funeral, which was performed with military honours, the solemnity of which made a deep impression on the sensitive feelings of the afflicted Miss Manby.

After having assisted in the discharge of these last duties towards the remains of Major Manby, Herbert felt little inclination to enjoy the pleasures of a large dinner, to which Sidney and himself had been invited by the officers of the Legion in garrison at Harwich. Herbert begged his friend to make his excuses to the mess, on the plea of illness. "Illness! By George! Herbert, that won't do;" said Sidney: "what '*dores do Coracao*,' as the Valerosos

have it. They 'll smoke you, to a certainty, Berty; but never mind—though, of course, I comprehend—I 'll swear, if you like, not only that you are ill, but that you are as dead as the Major, and as all the Capulets into the bargain. But, I say, Herbert, you are going to work betimes! What, not give her a moment to tie up her hair, and put on a little rouge?"

"I really do not understand what you are aiming at, Sidney," replied Herbert; "but if you allude to Miss Manby, I shall merely observe that your jest is excessively out of season; so good bye to you."

Herbert had already reached the door, when his comrade, whose *sang-froid* was imperturbable, and whose greatest delight was in tormenting his friend, again attacked him, with "Come, Herbert, I say, don't be angry. Surely, you 'll agree with me in one thing,—she's a devilish fine girl. Somewhat grenadierish; but, on my word! I never saw a back more prettily *cambré*, nor a head better set on a fine pair of shoulders; that is to say, from the glance I got of it when the hood fell off, by *accident*, of course. *Ay, que Donayre!*"

"Well," answered Herbert, "and what should induce you to imagine that it was not accidental, since you lay a stress on the word?"

"Doubt, my good fellow!" rejoined the other, "I never doubt in such cases. I am too good a Christian to think that events ever occur by haphazard, in this world,—but I say, old man, do not frown so grimly, and look so dismal! Why, Herbert, you only want a label to make you twin-brother to a black dose."

"For God's sake! my dear Sidney," answered Herbert, "do not let loose that tongue of your's, which requires no laxative to ridicule every soul you meet; friend or foe, it matters not which. You make a mockery of every action, every sentiment, which is not in perfect accordance with your ideas of fashion. If Lady Dossington, or Lady Alderney, or any of your patterns, as you call them, had been in Miss Manby's place, you would have been on your knees, and prayed more audibly than the clerk."

"Amen," was the only reply Sidney made to this remark.

"And so say I," continued Herbert; "but as you never felt sorrow yourself, how can you judge of it in others?"

"Begging your pardon," retorted Sidney, "I am an admirable judge of grief and loss; for when Featherby and I were floored at the Leger, I lost 3000*l.*, and he his wits into the bargain, and I assure you our hearts and our banks were nearly breaking together; but, joking aside, Herbert, for I am going to be very serious"——

"If you intend being reasonable," answered Herbert, "I will remain; if not, I must leave you, for at present I do not feel disposed to merriment; yet, to see you for a moment without a jest on your tongue, a sneer on your lips, is something so unusual, that it is worth staying for."

"Well, then, most grave Signor," retorted his incorrigible comrade, "I'll tell you fairly: that my opinion of Miss Manby would have been more in unison with your own, had she not made such an exhibition of her sorrow: there was something, you must allow, which looked, merely looked, like affectation in her display."

"Affectation!" answered Herbert; "I could see nothing affected in the natural and heart-breaking grief which the poor girl showed at the loss of her unfortunate parent."

"Come, come, Herbert," rejoined his friend, "confess that there was a small *souçon* which savoured of theatrical exhibition; it put me in mind of the death-scene in a melodrame. Little Miss Kelly would have given her head and shoulders for the scene of the hood."

"What right," retorted Herbert, "have you to judge Miss Manby's conduct, in a manner that, were there any foundation for it, would render her more than despicable? How can you, Sidney, who care for no human being but yourself, and never felt any sorrow or annoyance, except at the loss of a race or a heavy stake at Macao; how can you pretend to enter into the feelings of a child, deprived for ever of the only being in existence in whom were centered all her joys and hopes in this world?"

"Which you intend she shall transfer to you, eh?" observed Sidney, "but you are right, most reverend father, in one thing. I have had small practice, thank God! in proceedings of this nature, having been saved the trouble

of all these sorrows ; inasmuch as my father died ere I was able to walk, and my mother followed his example before I could speak, leaving me sole heir to whatever timber little Reuben and the rest of his tribe still permit to flourish on the family acres ; and as I was the only one of 'that ilk,' and consequently horridly spoiled by my aunt, and allowed to run riot by my guardians, you must make some allowance for my ignorance in all such lachrymatory matters, and attribute it to the want of a proper field to exercise upon."

"Since you have no feelings yourself, which, I do not believe, Sidney," replied Herbert, "it is no excuse for your accusing all the rest of mankind with affectation, because they happen to shed a few tears, or evince that natural grief to which your heart has ever been a stranger."

"For the matter of that, Berty," answered his companion, "I care not who weeps, providing I may laugh. *Ægritudinem laudare*, as my jolly old tutor used to say, is but slow work ; but seriously, I think we manage these things better in London. You know, no decent creatures could think of exposing themselves in that sort of way : conceive the horror of being seen paddling up St. James's Street, *au beau milieu* of all Mr. M'Adam's mud *purées*, with a long black cloak, red eyes, and a white pocket-handkerchief, blubbering like a lower schoolboy, on being fagged at cricket. You can't do it, my good fellow, without becoming an absolute Paria ; you would be black-balled at every club in town, or get the name of the Sentimental Undertaker, or Dismal Dandy, or Black Job, or some such never-dying nickname. It's all very fine moralizing, my respectable proser ; but one cannot live in the world and fly against custom and fashion."

"Fashion !" rejoined Herbert : "thank God ! I am not one of those, who, in despite of every tie, in defiance of common decency, will ever render myself a slave to fashion or custom—a custom, above all, which bids one almost consign the last moments of the death-bed to an act of cowardice and desertion, or a fashion which directs one to fly from the still-warm body of one's friends or parents, while yet the falling lip, the distended jaw, and glassy eye, are still quivering in the grasp of death ; and ere yet the

once active limbs and fond arms which have so often pressed you in tenderness to their hearts, are enchained and fixed for ever in the marble stiffness of eternity; a custom," continued Herbert, "which bids one yield unto mercenary hands the performance of those sacred duties, which are dear even to the bosom of the untutored savage!"

Sidney, who had been beating his foot all this time against the ground, turning up his eyes, and expressing every possible symptom of impatience, now exclaimed, "*Tout ça est bien beau, superbe même*; but as I am neither a Cherokee, Pawnee, or Kickaway, I have no relish for horrid sights, and disgusting one's self with dying groans, death-rattles, skulls, and marrow-bones; though, to be sure, I once made an uncommon pleasant party to see the people hung at Newgate, and got a capital place; but then, you know, every body does that. As for your natural deaths, I think it is much better to leave all that to the nurses and people; and then, if you give the defunct a splendid funeral, why, what the deuce more can the most *exigeant* corpse in Christendom require?"

Herbert, disgusted with the levity of his companion, exclaimed, "A splendid funeral! and do you sincerely think *that* is sufficient? Does the pageantry of the gorgeous procession, which attends to its home of nothingness the remnants of the dead, with its crowd of grinning, drunken mutes, its nodding forest of plumes, which, waving in the winds, dance over the hearse as if in mockery of its senseless burthen; do the gaudy banners, and escutcheons, emblazoned with all the pomp of heraldry awaken a feeling of sorrow in the hearts of the spectators? Does the line of mourning coaches, filled with the physicians, servants, or solicitors of the deceased, who, like wreckers on the Cornish coast, are revelling in the spoils which they have plundered from the coffers of their late client; does the endless file of splendid, yet empty equipages, empty as the sorrow which directed them to follow in the train; does this, for a moment, chasten the soul, or excite emotions in the heart? No! The simple tear of the villager, as he follows to the humble church-yard the still more humble coffin of his wife or friend, must be more acceptable to the Deity, more gratifying to the spirit of the de-

parted, more impressive on the minds of the assistants, than all the noisy pomp and grandeur of the former."

"A very good song, and very well sung," exclaimed Sidney with the greatest coolness, though, during this apostrophe of Herbert's, he had been clinking his spurs, and beating time with his hands, with the most consummate ridicule and mock attention,—“an admirable *extempore*, composed during a six weeks' sojourn in the hospitals, 'Milton's Conversion of the Heathen;' but as I am too wicked to be worth having such excellent morality thrown away upon me, I shall go and dress for dinner."

"You are, I fear, incorrigible," replied Herbert:—"though, in fact, Sidney, I do not believe you are half such a reprobate as you wish to appear."

"I'faith," retorted his comrade, "I must first become worse, to be made better; that is to say, *imprimis*, be a horrid sinner, before I commence being a saint, which I believe is the usual routine; though, upon my honour, Berty, I think there is none of that humbug in you which one generally meets with in your over-righteous people; I believe you perfectly sincere in all you say; and he who says you are not the best fellow in Christendom, in despite of your little spice of goodness, why he lies, that 's all;" and then, without waiting for Herbert's reply, he walked out of the room, whistling variations to the Dead March in Saul.

On the morning subsequent to the funeral, Miss Manby and her friend left Harwich, and proceeded immediately to Park-lane, where it was necessary that they should be present, with the solicitors and trustees, at the opening of the will. By this document, which appeared to have been written immediately prior to Major Manby's departure for Flanders, Miss Manby became heiress to the whole of her late foster-father's property; which, added to the sum presented to her by her anonymous friend, would, upon her attaining her twenty-first year, place her in possession of an income exceeding two thousand pounds per annum. The testator also directed an annuity of two hundred pounds to be paid to Mrs. Walden; and earnestly entreated her to continue to reside with Emily as her friend and adviser, and strictly enjoined the latter to continue to

treat Mrs. Walden as a mother. For the first time, Emily was made acquainted with the secret of her not being related to Mr. Manby ; a circumstance which had been concealed from her by the Major even to the last moment. This discovery, though of course it gave rise to the most painful sensations in her mind, yet only served to increase her affection for the memory of the excellent man who had so bountifully provided for her. Were her parents and relations all dead ? Had she no connexions still living ? Had all her kindred perished by the fatal accident which gave her to Mr. Manby's care ? These were questions which agitated her mind perpetually. She thought, if there yet remained any of her relations in existence, that now, at least, when she was rich and independent, there could be no cause for concealing themselves. Self-interest, whatever it might have done before, could not now prevent them from coming forward. That she was of respectable parents, and probably people of fortune, was evident from the relics which were still preserved among Mr. Manby's papers at his solicitor's ; but who they were, or what was even her real name, continued a mystery, which it was impossible to unravel. She felt, indeed, ashamed of bearing a name to which she had no title ; and could hardly be persuaded by her trustees, Lord Lymington and Mr. Dropmore, to retain possession of the house and fortune which had been bequeathed to her by her beloved foster-father.

Before their departure from Harwich, Herbert Milton wrote a few lines to Mrs. Walden ; to inquire after the health of Miss Manby ; excused himself from calling, lest he should intrude upon their sorrows, and concluded by expressing his hopes that Miss Manby would permit him to renew their acquaintance at some future period, and that she would not allow her dislike to Sir Herbert to influence her feelings in regard to himself. To this note he received a very flattering answer ; and from this period he began to cherish that feeling which had been so suddenly awakened from the first time he had seen Miss Manby. A few weeks more, and Herbert was relieved from the disagreeable service which had required his presence at Harwich, and he found himself once more im-

mersed in all the gayeties of London, from which he had been absent from the period of Miss Manby's first introduction. It was soon observed, however, that Captain Milton was not so fond of dancing or going out as usual; that he looked more melancholy; in fact, something must have happened thus to have deprived him of his former gayety. "Herbert Milton's horridly in love with somebody!" said one woman. "He looks as if he were going to be married!" exclaimed another. "Who to?" eagerly demanded an interested third. "He has lost a large sum at Watier's," said one man. "I wish I had won it!" added another. "I know he has been raising money," continued a third. But as the first could never detect him flirting, or even paying more attention to one than to another, they of course settled that he must have some low attachment; while the latter, who never could convict him of play, at once decided that he was either writing a book, or that he had been bitten by the Saints.

Herbert, however, completely put all their curiosity to the rack, by keeping them in the same state of ignorance as he was in himself. He felt, it was true, less pleasure in society; he was become more indifferent for the dinners and parties which, as usual, were showered upon him, yet he was unable precisely to account for this change in his inclinations. He could not, however, attempt to deceive himself as to the degree of interest he felt in the fair orphan, though he had no idea to what an extent those feelings had taken root in his heart; nor, indeed, was it until he had proceeded on foreign service, that he discovered that he was sincerely and devotedly attached to her. He had hoped, before he left England, that his *penchant* for Miss Manby was known only to himself; he might, in some measure, perhaps, have betrayed it in his manner to her, on one of the few occasions which he had of seeing her in Park-lane; but he trusted that the world, and, above all, Lady Milton, were utterly unconscious of the real state of his mind; yet he felt himself rather taken by surprise, when, upon meeting Sidney and his cousin Alfred Milton one morning on horseback in Grosvenor-square, the former accosted him by saying,—“Rather a quaintish nag of yours, Master Herbert. What the deuce always makes

him turn sharp down to the left when Grosvenor-gate stares him in the face? *Apropos*, so your little damsel of Harwich, is no more or less than the Miss Manby, who has been all the thing this spring; and they say she is to marry Lord Henry Thursby as soon as she gets rid of her weepers. By George! old man, we shall have 'slugs in a sawpit' before long; but if ever you do fight, Herbert, as I know you can split a bullet, use my pistols; as pretty a pair of Staudenmeyer's as ever helped a man to six boards and two little ones, as Bürger calls it: I'll back them for a pony against any Manton's or Kuchenreiter's in England."

By this time they had arrived at Grosvenor-gate, when, to the no small annoyance of Herbert, and the amusement of his cousin and Sidney, the hack he rode turned sharp round, and before Herbert could pull him up, had cantered at least fifty yards down Park-lane; where, for the present, I shall leave the one party laughing loud enough to bring Mr. Fozard from his attentions to his equestrian pupils, and the other sawing away at the mouth of his astonished horse; which, from his diurnal canter in the same direction, had naturally expected the usual hint from Herbert's spurs on his arrival at the corner of the street.

CHAPTER V.

AMONG my readers there may probably be found some few of those mature ball-going individuals, who have attained that mellow period of existence, when inflexible joints, dilapidated legs, and exuberant ankles, warn them that it is high time to confine their amusements in a ball-room to the simple gratification of their eyes or ears, nor longer to expose their stiff gambadoes in the evolutions of the dance. Many of these, probably, there are, who, for more than a third of a century, have danced with every "new thing" as it was offered to the best bidder on the grand exchange of Fashion, until, in its turn, it had be-