

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-

come as stale as themselves, or was swept off the boards by death, marriage, or the spirit of grace. Of these, many must have been witnesses to the last expiring sigh of Ranelagh, and assisted at the first coming to light of the modern Almack's—Almack's "*du second lit*" issue of the marriage of the well-powdered and substantial Willis, with the brick-and-mortar relic of the defunct worthy of that name. Poor souls! deeply do I sympathise with them if they are reduced to the enjoyment of that enviable, that flattering distinction, which is in fact tantamount to a *lettre de cachet* to Terpsichore's Bastille, or, at all events, is an open announcement of their inoffensive decay—I mean the pleasing compliment uttered by some fair creature, who, with great apparent *naïveté*, says,—“Oh, Sir John, you are so good-natured, and I know you do not dance, do let me say I am engaged to you, if a bore asks me to waltz.” Envidable lot! where one finds himself with more nominal partners at one moment than half the young men in an hour, where half-a-dozen pretty innocent mouths are fibbing through thick and through thin on the strength of one's infirmities, and from which one derives no other advantage than the necessity of helping them out in their fable, or, perhaps, the pleasure of bringing a duel on one's shoulders; for I have known more than one rejected youth become extremely troublesome on these occasions, and endeavour to revenge themselves on their fair refusers, by venting their anger on the worn-out hack who is saddled with these phantom engagements, and who must, at all events, either fight, lie, sit down, or beg pardon. I address myself more particularly to this respectable band of “Captain Sentries,” because, in the first place, they have more time on their hands, or rather on their feet, to walk about and make their observations at balls, and are more at leisure to take strict notice of the charms or defects of the various fair personages who crowd, what the Morning Post calls, “the Nobility's grand assembly at Willis's Rooms;” where, in the olden time, they have paraded a minuet with the grandmothers, walked country dances with the mammas, and are now reduced to the simple criticism of the daughters, as they whisk round the room in a waltz, or slide through a *Française*.

I now, therefore, challenge any of these critical worthies to declare, if either in the golden period of their youth, or the more leaden epoch of their maturity, they ever saw a more lovely being than the *protégée* of Lady Lymington, or if ever they witnessed more decided admiration among the men, or more undisguised envy among the women, than that created by Emily Manby upon her first appearance at Almack's. Never were more exclamations uttered of "Who can that be with Lady Lymington?—Nobody one knows!—One of her nieces?—Oh dear no! some country *protégée* of old papa Lymington—Do you know she's rather good-looking.—Too tall.—Charming foot!—Horrid shoe!—Sweet tripping!—Too scanty.—What a pretty dress!—Affectation of simplicity.—Expressive countenance.—Too tragic.—But look, my dear, do you know, I do not think she is so very plain.—Lord Henry is just going to dance with her—It's very funny!—Well! I declare, Colonel Acton is talking to her! really she is rather handsome!—How strange! the Duke of Buxton is being introduced; she must be somebody!—He has asked her to all his parties!—How very fine her figure is! what beautiful eyes!—Oh! she must be some foreigner of rank: I shall go and ask Lady Lymington to bring her to my ball!"

These and a hundred more observations were made on the blushing Emily as she was led to the dance, and placed in the set by the gay, handsome, and *recherché* Lord Henry Thursby, whom all the mothers coveted for his fortune, and most of the girls a little for his person, and a great deal for his estates; while the kind-hearted Lady Lymington, delighted at the effect produced by her young friend, placed herself on one of the sofas to enjoy the pleasure of witnessing Emily's successful *debut* in the dance, where she acquitted herself in a manner that might have made her instructress, the graceful Bigotini, somewhat jealous.

It has ever been such an established rule in all works of this nature, to give a species of portrait of the heroine, that I cannot find it in my heart to deviate from the acknowledged custom; but if the pencil of our first painter failed in giving to his canvass the grace, sensibility, and animation of the original, I trust some indulgence will

be granted to me, if I produce but a feeble outline of the beautiful Emily. If there was any fault in the appearance of Miss Manby, it was in her stature, which was certainly a little above the common height of the fair persons around her, yet this trifling excess was completely neutralized by the inimitable contour of her figure, and the matchless roundness and just proportions of her form. Her hair, which was of the finest texture and most glossy black, shaded with its rich and luxuriant masses a complexion which vied in clearness and brilliancy with the purest crystal; her eyes were lighter, much lighter than her hair, though of a dark and brilliant hazel, with that soft and tender expression which Leonardo da Vinci has given to the Belle Feronnière, and were fringed with long and silken lashes, which almost united at their extremities; while two eyebrows, traced as it were with a fine pencil, curved in gentle arches above them. Her profile had more resemblance to that of the effeminate Antinous, than to the bust of any nymph or goddess which I can remember, though the formal outline was broken by a slight indenture at the base of the forehead. Her ear was remarkable not only for its delicacy, but for being *set on* with that peculiar grace which is rarely to be met with, save in ancient gems or intaglios, which is generally the characteristic of the finest antique heads. Her mouth was small; and her smiles disclosed a set of teeth, whose whiteness and regularity, had they been more in fashion, might have sent poor Waite, naughty Waite, to a much poorer and perhaps more premature grave. Her left cheek was indented with one of those little wells, those "*pozzetti che forma un dolce riso in bella guancia*," so prettily described by Petrarch or Guarini, I forget which. The form of her head and neck was peculiar, and from its position on her shoulders, gave to her appearance that blood-like look, which one could only compare to the gaze of the race-horse, or the noble erectness of the deer when suddenly aroused from his lair. Add to this, a bust slightly inclined to *embonpoint*, an arm that might have served as a model for that of Canova's Hebe, the most delicate and beautiful hand, and a foot which did not yield in perfection to that of the Princess Pauline herself, and you may form

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some idea of what Emily Manby was in her eighteenth year, when first presented by Lady Lymington in the fashionable world. To many this portrait may appear too highly coloured and exaggerated; but I can assure them, if I have erred, that it has not been on the side of flattery.

Not only the personal charms, but the gentleness and unaffected manners of Lady Lymington's *protégée*, became the theme of general praise, and attracted the attention not only of all the young men, but, in despite of jealousy, constrained the women also to avow that Emily was a charming creature. The encomiums and assiduities of half-a-dozen particular men, who are, in fact, almost the arbiters of all young ladies' destinies in the highest circles, are quite sufficient to bring any young woman into fashion, and to establish her on the very pinnacle of fashionable glory. The example of such a select jury, who are themselves the chosen deputies of fashion, is sure to be followed by their admirers or imitators, and inevitably entrains the opinions of all the rest of the London world; for who would dare to find a spot or discover a blemish in any young lady, whom a few of the crack members of White's have condescended to notice by their praise or attentions?

The Countess of Lymington, who was no longer young, but still retained all the vivacity and gayety of her youth, in addition to the most dignified and graceful manners, used often to rally Emily upon her success in the world. "Really, my dear," said the Countess to Emily, one night at the Opera, "some kind fairy must have taken me this season under her special protection, and gifted me with the power of attracting the youth and fashion of London about my person. I have sat in this box for half-a-dozen years, and have rarely had my attention diverted from the music by visitors, unless, indeed, some old lords and beaux *passés* took pity upon me, or perhaps wanted a good place to see the ballet themselves. But now we are crowded almost to inconvenience by all the smart men in town; while one hears nothing else in the passages but 'Box-keeper, which is Lady Lymington's?' or 'Box-keeper, open Lady Lymington's box.' And then, my

dear, we have a continued battery of glasses directed at us from the pit."

Emily could only blush, and half serious, half smiling, reply to her kind protectress—"My dear Lady Lymington, I know little of the world, but I am aware that it will fly in crowds to see a new melo-drame or spectacle of any kind which, after a short season, when its novelty is past, is cast away and forgotten for ever; while year after year, it will return with renovated delight and pleasure, to the good, the beautiful, and noble works, which for ages to come will continue to amuse and instruct."

"Yes," replied Lady Lymington, not displeased with Emily's compliment, "the works you allude to grow more valuable from their age; even a musty parchment cover and tattered frontispiece, add merit to them in the eye of an amateur; but this is not the case with us poor women; youth, novelty, and smart dresses, are absolutely necessary for us. When once these horrid wrinkles make their appearance, adieu to admirers; for now-a-days, we do not meet with those amiable Counts de Nivernois, who could appear to feel as much affection for my gray hairs, as their royal master might have expressed for your raven locks: but," continued the Countess, laughing, "I should much like to know how this marvellous change has been effected? What is the reason, that had I now as many arms as Briareus, I should still require more to occupy all those that are projected for my acceptance when I go to my carriage; whereas, last year, I was generally obliged to trust to the assistance of my footmen to carry me through the crowd; now, the lungs not only of all Mr. Ebers's people, but those of half the young men in town, are exerted in calling my servants? I am certainly grown very seductive, or else the cunning personages are making love to me, in order to obtain more easy access to you; but, I shall disappoint them all, my dear, as I intend to reserve you for myself."

There was more meant in the latter remark of Lady Lymington than Emily could understand; and, indeed, she felt so confused and grateful to her kind friend, that she paid little attention to an observation which might

have awakened hopes and expectations in the mind of most young girls, of a very flattering and agreeable nature—hopes which, in the present instance, were not entirely in the power of Emily to realize.

The affection and kindness of Lady Lymington for her young friend had indeed been strongly marked from the period of her first arrival in England; and, if possible, these attentions were increased after the death of Major Manby, Emily becoming almost a constant visiter and resident in St. James's Square. In fact, Lady Lymington, from her affection for Miss Manby, had long fondly cherished the hope of bringing about an union between her young friend and her Ladyship's second son, Lord Henry Thursby, whose marked attentions to Miss Manby were becoming every day more evident.

In the mean time, Herbert, whose attachment for Emily had been gradually increasing from the period of their first interview at Harwich, watched with extreme anxiety the assiduities of Lord Henry Thursby, and even doubted the possibility of his attaining the object for which he had ventured to hope; while Emily, on her part, evidently appeared, notwithstanding, to manifest stronger feelings towards Herbert than could easily be accounted for, even by the kind attentions he had shown to her during the distressing circumstances of her late severe affliction.

Of all the young women Lady Milton had ever met, Emily was essentially the person whom she would have preferred as a daughter-in-law, had Herbert been independent of his father, or had she herself sufficient influence over her husband to soften his resentment, or obtain his sanction; but she dreaded the unbending nature of the Baronet, and the anticipation of his displeasure made her tremble for the effects of the disappointment on the mind of her son.

It was at this period that Herbert received orders to hold himself in readiness for foreign service, an event which Lady Milton hoped would drive all remembrance of Emily from his mind, and thus prevent the possibility of a rupture with his father.

The moment at length arrived, when it was necessary for Herbert to proceed with his battalion to the place of

embarkation. For some days prior to his departure, he had summoned sufficient courage to abstain from visiting in Park-lane, wisely considering that the agitation of his mind might have led him to commit himself by avowing his sentiments, an avowal which he imagined could only have the effect of distressing Emily, and by revealing the truth to himself, drive from his heart that hope to which it still clung, in despite of the dictates of reason and circumstances. To leave London, however, without either speaking or writing to Mrs. Walden or Miss Manby, was more than he could bring himself to consent to; he therefore chose the latter. After, however, writing a dozen notes, some of which he found too long, others too laconic, some too formal, and others too sentimental; after pacing up and down his room for an hour, and re-copying what he had already torn, he at last abandoned all hope of being able to produce any thing which exactly suited his purpose; and as the time had now arrived within a few minutes for the assembly of his battalion on the parade at the Horse Guards, he again embraced his disconsolate mother, and, in despite of all his resolutions, found himself once more in the presence of Emily.

Fearful of avowing his sentiments, he hastily bid Miss Manby and Mrs. Walden adieu, in a voice almost inarticulate from emotion, and springing on his horse, and putting the animal to its utmost speed, endeavoured for a moment to dissipate his grief by the rapidity of his motion, nor did he slacken his pace, until his progress was impeded by the crowds which were assembling to witness the departure of the troops. And shortly after, amidst the sobs and tears of their relatives, the brave men commenced their march towards the Spanish frontier.

It was not until the last sound of Herbert's footsteps had died upon her ear; it was not until she had the conviction of his being gone, perhaps for ever, that Emily discovered to its full extent, how intensely her heart was interested in his welfare, and how completely her own existence was interwoven with that of the young soldier. Now, however, the truth rushed upon her mind in all its verity; and giving way to the force of those feelings which she had hitherto endeavoured to repress, and, indeed, of whose

extent she had been until now ignorant, she burst into tears, and throwing her arms round the neck of Mrs. Walden, confessed to her indulgent companion the real state of her sentiments.

Aware of the insuperable objection which would in all probability exist in the breast of Sir Herbert Milton to their union, Mrs. Walden endeavoured, by every means in her power, to prevail on Emily to discountenance the idea, and to receive in their true character the attentions of Lord Henry Thursby, the real nature of which she now, for the first time, thought it necessary distinctly to communicate, but in vain; no argument, no statement of the probable consequences, could induce Emily to remove Herbert from her view as the object of her lasting attachment; nor did she afterwards hesitate, when conversing with Lady Lymington on the subject, to make known to her Ladyship the real state of her feelings, and firmly, yet gratefully, to decline the honour intended her; in the union proposed between herself and her Ladyship's elegant and accomplished son, Lord Henry Thursby.

CHAPTER VI.

NOTWITHSTANDING the mystery with which Herbert Milton had endeavoured to envelope his attachment for Emily, in despite of his determined secrecy, and the coolness with which he had constantly repulsed every effort on the part of Sidney to dive into his thoughts, the latter was not long before he discovered the real situation of Herbert's mind; and with the usual ardour and good-nature of his disposition, he resolved to lend Herbert every assistance in his power, during the absence of the former in Spain.

Scarcely had Lord Henry Thursby's refusal by Emily been made known, that Sidney communicated the whole circumstance to his friend, accompanying this intelligence with a few remarks upon the probable motives which had induced Miss Manby to reject a marriage so brilliant: