

about beggarly counts? Florac's family is one of the noblest and most ancient in Europe. It is more ancient than your illustrious friend the barber-surgeon; it was illustrious before the house, ay, or the pagoda of Kew was in existence." And he went on to describe how Florac, by the demise of his kinsman, was now actually Prince de Montcontour, though he did not choose to assume that title. Very likely the noble Gascon drink, in which George had been indulging, imparted a certain warmth and eloquence to his description of Florac's good qualities, high birth, and considerable patrimony. Barnes looked quite amazed and scared at these announcements, then laughed and declared once more that Warrington was chaffing him.

"As sure as the Black Prince was lord of Aquitaine—as sure as the English were masters of Bordeaux—and why did we ever lose the country?" cries George, filling himself a bumper,—“every word I have said about Florac is true;” and Florac coming in at this juncture, having just finished his cigar, George turned round and made him a fine speech in the French language, in which he lauded his constancy and good-humor under evil fortune, paid him two or three more cordial compliments, and finished by drinking another great bumper to his good health.

Florac took a little wine; replied “with effusion” to the toast which his excellent, his noble friend had just carried. We rapped our glasses at the end of the speech. The landlord himself seemed deeply touched by it as he stood by with a fresh bottle. “It is good wine—it is honest wine—it is capital wine,” says George, “and honi soit qui mal y pense! What business have you, you little beggar, to abuse it? My ancestor drank the wine and wore the motto round his leg long before a Newcome ever showed his pale face in Lombard Street.” George Warrington never bragged about his pedigree except under certain influences. I am inclined to think that on this occasion he really did find the claret very good.

“You don't mean to say,” says Barnes, addressing Florac in French, on which he piqued himself, “que vous avez un tel manche à votre nom, et que vous ne l'usez pas?”

Florac shrugged his shoulders: he at first did not understand that familiar figure of English speech, or what was meant by “having a handle to your name.” “Montcontour cannot dine better than Florac,” he said. “Florac has two louis in his pocket, and Montcontour exactly forty shillings. Florac's

proprietor will ask Montcontour to-morrow for five weeks' rent; and as for Florac's friends, my dear, they will burst out laughing to Montcontour's nose! How droll you English are!” this acute French observer afterward said, laughing, and recalling the incident. “Did you not see how that little Barnes, as soon as he knew my title of prince, changed his manner and became all respect toward me?” This, indeed, M. de Florac's two friends remarked with no little amusement. Barnes began quite well to remember their pleasant days at Baden, and talked of their acquaintance there; Barnes offered the Prince the vacant seat in the brougham, and was ready to set him down anywhere that he wished in town.

“Bah!” says Florac; “we came by the steamer, and I prefer the *pénibot*.” But the hospitable Barnes nevertheless called upon Florac the next day. And now, having partially explained how the Prince de Montcontour was present at Mr. Barnes Newcome's wedding, let us show how it was that Barnes' first cousin, the Earl of Kew, did not attend that ceremony.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

RETURNS TO LORD KEW.

We do not propose to describe at length or with precision the circumstances of the duel which ended so unfortunately for young Lord Kew. The meeting was inevitable; after the public acts and insult of the morning, the maddened Frenchman went to it convinced that his antagonist had willfully outraged him, eager to show his bravery upon the body of an Englishman, and as proud as if he had been going into actual war. That commandment, the sixth in our decalogue, which forbids the doing of murder, and the injunction which directly follows on the same table, have been repealed by a very great number of Frenchmen for many years past; and to take the neighbor's wife and his life subsequently has not been an uncommon practice with the politest people in the world. Castillonnes had no idea but that he was going to the field of honor; stood with an undaunted scowl before his enemy's pistol; and discharged his own and brought down his opponent with grim satisfaction, and a comfortable conviction afterward that he

had acted *en galent homme*. "It was well for this milor that he fell at the first shot, my dear," the exemplary young Frenchman remarked; "a second might have been yet more fatal to him. Ordinarily I am sure of my *coup*, and you conceive that in an affair so grave it was absolutely necessary that one or other should remain on the ground." Nay, should M. de Kew recover from his wound, it was M. de Castillonnes' intention to propose a second encounter between himself and that nobleman. It had been Lord Kew's determination never to fire upon his opponent; a confession which he made not to his second, poor scared Lord Rooster, who bore the young Earl to Kehl, but to some of his nearest relatives, who happened, fortunately, to be not far from him when he received his wound, and who came with all the eagerness of love to watch by his bedside.

We have said that Lord Kew's mother, Lady Walham, and her second son were staying at Hombourg, when the Earl's disaster occurred. They had proposed to come to Baden to see Kew's new bride, and to welcome her; but the presence of her mother-in-law deterred Lady Walham, who gave up her heart's wish in bitterness of spirit, knowing very well that a meeting between the old Countess and herself could only produce the wrath, pain, and humiliation which their coming together always occasioned. It was Lord Kew who bade Rooster send for his mother, and not for Lady Kew; and as soon as she received those sad tidings, you may be sure the poor lady hastened to the bed where her wounded boy lay.

The fever had declared itself, and the young man had been delirious more than once. His wan face lighted up with joy when he saw his mother; he put his little feverish hand out of the bed to her—"I knew you would come, dear," he said, "and you know I never would have fired upon the poor Frenchman." The fond mother allowed no sign of terror or grief to appear upon her face, so as to disturb her first-born and darling; but, no doubt, she prayed by his side as such loving hearts know how to pray, for the forgiveness of his trespass, who had forgiven those who sinned against him. "I knew I should be hit, George," said Kew to his brother when they were alone; "I always expected some such end as this. My life has been very wild and reckless; and you, George, have always been faithful to our mother. You will make a better Lord Kew than I have been, George. God bless you." George flung himself down with sobs by his brother's bedside, and swore Frank had always been the best fellow, the best

brother, the kindest heart, the warmest friend in the world. Love—prayer—repentance, thus met over the young man's bed. Anxious and humble hearts, his own the least anxious and the most humble, awaited the dread award of life or death; and the world, and its ambition and vanities, were shut out from the darkened chamber where the awful issue was being tried.

Our history has had little to do with characters resembling this lady. It is of the world, and things pertaining to it. Things beyond it, as the writer imagines, scarcely belong to the novelist's province. Who is he, that he should assume the divine's office, or turn his desk into a preacher's pulpit? In that career of pleasure, of idleness, of crime, we might call it (but that the chronicler of worldly matters had best be chary of applying hard names to acts which young men are doing in the world every day), the gentle, widowed lady, mother of Lord Kew, could but keep aloof, deploring the course upon which her dear young prodigal had entered; and praying with that saintly love, those pure supplications with which good mothers follow their children, for her boy's repentance and return. Very likely her mind was narrow; very likely the precautions which she had used in the lad's early days, the tutors and directors she had set about him, the religious studies and practices to which she would have subjected him, had served only to vex and weary the young pupil, and to drive his high spirit into revolt. It is hard to convince a woman perfectly pure in her life and intentions, ready to die, if need were, for her own faith, having absolute confidence in the instruction of her teachers, that she and they (with all their sermons) may be doing harm. When the young catechist yawns over his reverence's discourse, who knows but it is the doctor's vanity which is enraged, and not Heaven which is offended? It may have been, in the differences which took place between her son and her, the good Lady Walham never could comprehend the lad's side of the argument; or how his protestantism against her doctrines should exhibit itself on the turf, the gaming-table, or the stage of the opera-house; and thus, but for the misfortune under which poor Kew now lay bleeding, these two loving hearts might have remained through life asunder. But by the boy's bedside: in the paroxysms of his fever; in the wild talk of his delirium; in the sweet patience and kindness with which he received his dear nurse's attentions; the gratefulness with which he thanked the servants who waited on him; the forti-

tude with which he suffered the surgeon's dealings with his wounds, the widowed woman had an opportunity to admire with exquisite thankfulness the generous goodness of her son; and, in those hours, those sacred hours passed in her own chamber, of prayers, fears, hopes, recollections, and passionate maternal love, wrestling with fate for her darling's life, no doubt the humbled creature came to acknowledge that her own course regarding him had been wrong; and, even more for herself than for him, implored forgiveness.

For some time George Barnes had to send but doubtful and melancholy bulletins to Lady Kew and the Newcome family at Baden, who were all greatly moved and affected by the accident which had befallen poor Kew. Lady Kew broke out in wrath and indignation. We may be sure the Duchesse d'Ivry offered to condole with her upon Kew's mishap the day after the news arrived at Baden; and indeed, came to visit her. The old lady had just received other disquieting intelligence. She was just going out, but she bade her servant to inform the Duchess that she was nevermore at home to the Duchesse d'Ivry. The message was not delivered properly, or the person for whom it was intended did not choose to understand it, for presently, as the Countess was hobbling across the walk on her way to her daughter's residence, she met the Duchesse d'Ivry, who saluted her with a demure courtesy and a commonplace expression of condolence. The Queen of Scots was surrounded by the chief part of her court, saving of course, MM. Castillonnes and Punter, absent on service. "We were speaking of this deplorable affair," said Mme. d'Ivry (which indeed was the truth, although she said it). "How we pity you, madame!" Blackball and Loder, Cruchecassée and Schlangenbad assumed sympathetic countenances.

Trembling on her cane, the old Countess glared out upon Mme. d'Ivry. "I pray you, madame," she said in French, "never again to address me the word. If I had, like you, assassins in my pay, I would have you killed. Do you hear me?" And she hobbled on her way. The household to which she went was in terrible agitation; the kind Lady Ann frightened beyond measure, poor Ethel full of dread, and feeling guilty, almost, as if she had been the cause, as indeed she was the occasion, of Kew's misfortune. And the family had further cause of alarm from the shock which the news had given to Sir Brian. It has been said that he had had illnesses of late which caused his friends much anxiety. He had passed

two months at Aix-la-Chapelle, his physicians dreading a paralytic attack; and Mme. d'Ivry's party still sauntering on the walk, the men smoking their cigars, the women breathing their scandal, now beheld Dr. Finck issuing from Lady Ann's apartments, and wearing such a face of anxiety that the Duchess asked with some emotion, "Had there been a fresh bulletin from Kehl?"

"No, there has been no fresh bulletin from Kehl; but two hours since Sir Brian Newcome had had a paralytic seizure."

"Is he very bad?"

"No," says Dr. Finck, "he is not very bad."

"How inconsolable M. Barnes will be!" said the Duchess, shrugging her haggard shoulders. Whereas, the fact was that Mr. Barnes retained perfect presence of mind under both of the misfortunes which had befallen his family. Two days afterward the Duchess' husband arrived himself, when we may presume that exemplary woman was too much engaged with her own affairs to be able to be interested about the doings of other people. With the Duke's arrival the court of Mary Queen of Scots was broken up. Her Majesty was conducted to Loch Leven, where her tyrant soon dismissed her very last lady-in-waiting, the confidential Irish secretary, whose performance had produced such a fine effect among the Newcomes.

Had poor Sir Brian Newcome's seizure occurred at an earlier period of the autumn, his illness no doubt would have kept him for some months confined at Baden; but as he was pretty nearly the last of Dr. Von Finck's bath patients, and that eminent physician longed to be off to the Residenz, he was pronounced in a fit condition for easy traveling in rather a brief period after his attack, and it was determined to transport him to Mannheim, and thence by water to London and Newcome.

During all this period of their father's misfortune no sister of charity could have been more tender, active, cheerful, and watchful than Miss Ethel. She had to wear a kind face, and exhibit no anxiety when occasionally the feeble invalid made inquiries regarding poor Kew at Baden; to catch the phrases as they came from him; to acquiesce, or not to deny, when Sir Brian talked of the marriages—both marriages—taking place at Christmas. Sir Brian was especially eager for his daughter's, and repeatedly, with his broken words, and smiles and caresses, which were now quite senile, declared that his

Ethel would make the prettiest countess in England. There came a letter or two from Clive, no doubt, to the young nurse in her sick-room. Manly and generous, full of tenderness and affection, as those letters surely were, they could give but little pleasure to the young lady—indeed, only add to her doubts and pain.

She had told none of her friends as yet of those last words of Kew's, which she interpreted as a farewell on the young nobleman's part. Had she told them they very likely would not have understood Kew's meaning as she did, and persisted in thinking that the two were reconciled. At any rate, while he and her father were still lying stricken by the blows which had prostrated them both, all questions of love and marriage had been put aside. Did she love him? She felt such a kind pity for his misfortune, such an admiration for his generous gallantry, such a remorse for her own wayward conduct and cruel behavior toward this most honest, and kindly, and affectionate gentleman, that the sum of regard which she could bestow upon him might surely be said to amount to love. For such a union as that contemplated between them, perhaps for any marriage, no greater degree of attachment was necessary as the common cement. Warm friendship and thorough esteem and confidence—I do not say that our young lady calculated in this matter-of-fact way—are safe properties invested in the prudent marriage stock, multiplying and bearing an increasing value with every year. Many a young couple of spendthrifts get through their capital of passion in the first twelve months, and have no love left for the daily demands of after life. Oh, me! for the day when the bank account is closed, and the cupboard is empty, and the firm of Damon & Phyllis insolvent!

Miss Newcome, we say, without doubt, did not make her calculations in this debtor and creditor fashion; it was only the gentlemen of that family who went to Lombard Street. But suppose she thought that regard, and esteem, and affection being sufficient, she could joyfully and with almost all her heart bring such a portion to Lord Kew; that her harshness toward him as contrasted with his own generosity, and above all with his present pain, infinitely touched her; and suppose she fancied that there was another person in the world to whom, did fates permit, she could offer not esteem, affection, pity only, but something ten thousand times more precious? We are not in the young lady's secrets; but if she has some

as she sits by her father's chair and bed, who day or night will have no other attendant; and, as she busies herself to interpret his wants, silently moves on his errands, administers his potions, and watches his sleep, thinks of Clive, absent and unhappy, of Kew, wounded and in danger, she must have subject enough of thought and pain. Little wonder that her cheeks are pale and her eyes look red; she has her cares to endure now in the world, and her burden to bear in it, and somehow she feels she is alone, since that day when poor Clive's carriage drove away.

In a mood of more than ordinary depression and weakness Lady Kew must have found her granddaughter upon one of the few occasions after the double mishap, when Ethel and her elder were together. Sir Brian's illness, as it may be imagined, affected a lady very slightly who was of an age when these calamities occasion but small disquiet, and who, having survived her own father, her husband, her son, and witnessed their lordships' respective demises with perfect composure, could not reasonably be called upon to feel any particular dismay at the probable departure from this life of a Lombard Street banker who happened to be her daughter's husband. In fact, not Barnes Newcome himself could await that event more philosophically. So, finding Ethel in this melancholy mood, Lady Kew thought a drive in the fresh air would be of service to her, and, Sir Brian happening to be asleep, carried the young girl away in her barouche.

They talked about Lord Kew, of whom the accounts were encouraging, and who is mending in spite of his silly mother and her medicines, "and as soon as he is able to move we must go and fetch him, my dear," Lady Kew graciously said, "before that foolish woman has made a Methodist of him. He is always led by the woman who is nearest him, and I know one who will make of him just the best little husband in England." Before they had come to this delicate point the lady and her grandchild had talked Kew's character over, the girl, you may be sure, having spoken feelingly and eloquently about his kindness and courage and many admirable qualities. She kindled when she heard the report of his behavior at the commencement of the fracas with M. de Castillonnes, his great forbearance and good-nature, and his resolution and magnanimity when the moment of collision came.

But when Lady Kew arrived at that period of her discourse in which she stated that Kew would make the best little hus-

band in England, poor Ethel's eyes filled with tears; we must remember that her high spirit was worn down by watching and much varied anxiety, and then she confessed that there had been no reconciliation, as all the family fancied, between Frank and herself—on the contrary, a parting, which she understood to be final; and she owned that her conduct toward her cousin had been most capricious and cruel, and that she could not expect they should ever again come together. Lady Kew, who hated sick-beds and surgeons, except for herself; who hated her daughter-in-law above all, was greatly annoyed at the news which Ethel gave her; made light of it, however, and was quite confident that a very few words from her would place matters on their old footing, and determined on forthwith setting out for Kehl. She would have carried Ethel with her, but that the poor Baronet with cries and moans insisted on retaining his nurse, and Ethel's grandmother was left to undertake this mission by herself, the girl remaining behind, acquiescent, not unwilling; owning openly a great regard and esteem for Kew, and the wrong which she had done him; feeling secretly a sentiment which she had best smother. She had received a letter from that other person, and answered it, with her mother's cognizance, but about this little affair neither Lady Ann nor her daughter happened to say a word to the manager of the whole family.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IN WHICH LADY KEW LEAVES HIS LORDSHIP QUITE CONVALESCENT.

Immediately after Lord Kew's wound, and as it was necessary to apprise the Newcome family of the accident which had occurred, the good-natured young Kew had himself written a brief note to acquaint his relatives with his mishap, and had even taken the precaution to antedate a couple of billets to be dispatched on future days; kindly forgeries, which told the Newcome family and the Countess of Kew that Lord Kew was progressing very favorably, and that his hurt was trifling. The fever had set in, and the young patient was lying in great danger, as most of the laggards at Baden knew, when his friends there were set at ease by this fallacious bulletin. On the third day after the accident Lady Walham arrived with

her younger son, to find Lord Kew in the fever which ensued after the wound. As the terrible anxiety during the illness had been Lady Walham's, so was hers the delight of the recovery. The commander-in-chief of the family, the old lady at Baden, showed her sympathy by sending couriers, and repeatedly issuing orders to have news of Kew. Sick-beds scared her away invariably. When illness befell a member of her family she hastily retreated from before the sufferer, showing her agitation of mind, however, by excessive ill-humor to all the others within her reach.

A fortnight passed, a ball had been found and extracted, the fever was over, the wound was progressing favorably, the patient advancing toward convalescence, and the mother, with her child once more under her wing, happier than she had been for seven years past, during which her young prodigal had been running the thoughtless career of which he himself was weary, and which had occasioned the fond lady such anguish. Those doubts which perplex many a thinking man, and when formed and uttered, give many a fond and faithful woman pain so exquisite, had most fortunately never crossed Kew's mind. His early impressions were such as his mother had left them, and he came back to her as she would have him, as a little child, owning his faults with a hearty, humble repentance, and with a thousand simple confessions lamenting the errors of his past days. We have seen him tired and ashamed of the pleasures which he was pursuing; of the companions who surrounded him, of the brawls and dissipation which amused him no more. In those hours of danger and doubt, when he had lain, with death perhaps before him, making up his account of the vain life which probably he would be called upon to surrender, no wonder this simple, kindly, modest, and courageous soul thought seriously of the past and of the future; and prayed, and resolved, if a future were awarded to him, it should make amends for the days gone by; and surely, as the mother and son read together the beloved assurance of the divine forgiveness, and of that joy which angels feel in heaven for a sinner repentant, we may fancy in the happy mother's breast a feeling somewhat akin to that angelic felicity, a gratitude and joy of all others the loftiest, the purest, the keenest. Lady Walham might shrink with terror at the Frenchman's name, but her son could forgive him, with all his heart, and kiss his mother's hand, and thank him as the best friend of his life.