

CHAPTER II.

RETURNS FROM ROME TO PALL MALL.

One morning in the month of July, when there was actually sunshine in Lamb Court, and the two gentlemen who occupied the third-floor chambers there in partnership were engaged, as their custom was, over their pipes, their manuscripts, and their Times newspaper, behold a fresh sunshine burst into their room in the person of young Clive, with a bronzed face, and a yellow beard and mustaches, and those bright cheerful eyes, the sight of which was always so welcome to both of us. "What, Clive! What, the young one! What, Benjamin!" shout Pendennis and Warrington. Clive had obtained a very high place indeed in the latter's affections, so much so, that if I could have found it in my heart to be jealous of such a generous brave fellow, I might have grudged him his share of Warrington's regard. He blushed up with pleasure to see us again. Pidgeon, our boy, introduced him with a jubilant countenance; and Flanagan, the laundress, came smirking out of the bedroom, eager to get a nod of recognition from him, and bestow a smile of welcome upon everybody's favorite, Clive.

In two minutes an armchair full of magazines, slips of copy, and books for review, was emptied over the neighboring coal scuttle, and Clive was in the seat, a cigar in his mouth, as comfortable as if he had never been away. When did he come? Last night. He was back in Charlotte Street, at his old lodgings; he had been to breakfast in Fitzroy Square that morning; James Binnie chirped for joy at seeing him. His father had written to him desiring him to come back and see James Binnie; pretty Miss Rosey was very well, thank you; and Mrs. Mack? Wasn't Mrs. Mackenzie delighted to behold him? "Come, sir, on your honor and conscience, didn't the widow give you a kiss on your return?" Clive sends an uncut number of the Pall Mall Gazette flying across the room at the head of the inquirer; but blushes so sweetly, that I have very little doubt some such pretty meeting had taken place.

What a pity it is he had not been here a short while since for a marriage in high life, to give away his dear Barnes, and

sign the book, along with the other dignitaries! We described that ceremony to him, and announced the promotion of his friend, Florac, now our friend also, Director of the great Anglo-Gallic Railway, the Prince de Montcontour. Then Clive told us of his deeds during the winter; of the good fun he had had at Rome, and the jolly fellows he had met there. Was he going to astonish the world by some grand pictures? He was not. The more he worked, the more discontented he was with his performances, somehow; but J. J. was coming out very strong; J. J. was going to be a stunner. We turned with pride and satisfaction to that very number of the Pall Mall Gazette which the youth had flung at us, and showed him a fine article by F. Bayham, Esq., in which the picture sent home by J. J. was enthusiastically lauded by the great critic.

So he was back among us, and it seemed but yesterday he had quitted us. To Londoners everything seems to have happened but yesterday; nobody has time to miss his neighbor who goes away. People go to the Cape, or on a campaign, or on a tour round the world, or to India, and return with a wife and two or three children, and we fancy it was only the other day they left us, so engaged is every man in his individual speculations, studies, struggles; so selfish does our life make us—selfish, but not ill-natured. We are glad to see an old friend, though we do not weep when he leaves us. We humbly acknowledge, if fate calls us away likewise, that we are no more missed than any other atom.

After talking for a while, Mr Clive must needs go into the city, whither I accompanied him. His interview with Messrs. Jolly & Baines, at the house in Fog Court, must have been very satisfactory; Clive came out of the parlor with a radiant countenance. "Do you want any money, old boy?" says he; "the dear old governor has placed a jolly sum to my account, and Mr Baines has told me how delighted Mrs. Baines and the girls will be to see me at dinner. He says my father has made a lucky escape out of one house in India, and a famous investment in another. Nothing could be more civil; how uncommonly kind and friendly everybody is in London. Everybody!" Then bestowing ourselves in a hansom cab, which had probably just deposited some other capitalist in the city, we made for the West End of the town, where Mr. Clive had some important business to transact with his tailors. He discharged his outstanding little account with easy liber-

ality, blushing as he pulled out of his pocket a new check-book, page one of which he bestowed on the delighted artist. From Mr. B.'s shop to Mr. Truefitt's is but a step. Our young friend was induced to enter the hairdresser's and leave behind him a great portion of the flowing locks and the yellow beard which he had brought with him from Rome. With his mustache he could not be induced to part; painters and cavalry officers having a right to those decorations. And why should not this young fellow wear smart clothes, and a smart mustache, and look handsome, and take his pleasure, and bask in his sun when it shone? Time enough for flannel and a fire when the winter comes, and for gray hair and cork-soled boots in the natural decline of years.

Then we went to pay a visit at a hotel in Jermyn Street to our friend Florac, who was now magnificently lodged there. A powdered giant lolling in the hall, his buttons emblazoned with prodigious coronets, took our cards up to the Prince. As the door of an apartment on the first floor opened we heard a cry as of joy; and that nobleman, in a magnificent Persian dressing-gown, rushing from the room, plunged down the stairs and began kissing Clive, to the respectful astonishment of Titan in livery.

"Come that I present you, my friends," our good little Frenchman exclaimed, "to Mme. la—to my wife!" We entered the drawing room; a demure little lady, of near sixty years of age, was seated there, and we were presented in form to Mme. la Princesse de Montcontour, née Higg, of Manchester. She made us a stiff little courtesy, but looked not ill-natured; indeed, few women could look at Clive Newcome's gallant figure and brave smiling countenance and keep a frown on their own very long.

"I have 'eard of you from somebodys else besides the Prince," said the lady, with rather a blush. "Your uncle has spoke to me hoften about you, Mr. Clive, and about your good father."

"C'est son Directeur," whispers Florac to me. I wondered which of the firm of Newcome had taken that office upon him.

"Now you are come to England," the lady continued (whose Lancashire pronunciation being once indicated, we shall henceforth, out of respect to the Princess' rank, generally pre-omit)—"now you are come to England, we hope to see you often. Not here in this noisy hotel, which I can't bear, but in

the country. Our house is only three miles from Newcome—not such a grand place as your uncle's; but I hope we shall see you there a great deal, and your friend, Mr. Pendennis, if he is passing that way." The invitation to Mr. Pendennis, I am bound to say, was given in terms by no means so warm as those in which the princess' hospitality to Clive were professed.

"Shall we meet you at your Huncle 'Obson's?" the lady continued, to Clive; "his wife is a most charming, well-informed woman, has been most kind and civil, and we dine there to-day. Barnes and his wife have gone to spend the honeymoon at Newcome. Lady Clara is a sweet dear thing, and her pa and ma most affable, I am sure. What a pity Sir Brian couldn't attend the marriage! There was everybody there in London, a'most. Sir Harvey Diggs says he is mending very slowly. In life we are in death, Mr. Newcome! Isn't it sad to think of him, in the midst of all his splendor and prosperity, and he so infirm and unable to enjoy them! But let us hope for the best, and that his health will soon come round!"

With these and similar remarks, in which poor Florac took but very small share (for he seemed dumb and melancholy in the company of the Princess, his elderly spouse), the visit sped on; Mr. Pendennis, to whom very little was said, having leisure to make his silent observations upon the person to whom he had been just presented.

As there lay on the table two neat little packages, addressed "The Princess de Montcontour"—an envelope to the same address, with "The Prescription, No. 9396," farther inscribed on the paper, and a sheet of note-paper bearing cabalistic characters, and the signature of that most fashionable physician, Sir Harvey Diggs, I was led to believe that the lady of Montcontour was, or fancied herself, in a delicate state of health. By the side of the physic for the body was medicine for the soul—a number of pretty little books in Middle-age bindings, in antique type many of them, adorned with pictures of the German school, representing demure ecclesiastics, with their heads on one side, children in long starched nightgowns, virgins bearing lilies, and so forth—from which it was to be concluded that the owner of the volumes was not so hostile to Rome as she had been at an earlier period of her religious life; and that she had migrated (in spirit) from Clapham to Knightsbridge, as so many wealthy mercantile families have

likewise done in the body. A long strip of embroidery, of the Gothic pattern, furthermore betrayed her present inclinations; and the person observing these things, while nobody was taking any notice of him, was amused when the accuracy of his conjectures was confirmed by the reappearance of the gigantic footman, calling out, "Mr. 'Oneyman," in a loud voice, and preceding that divine into the room.

"C'est le Directeur. Venez fumer dans ma chambre, Pen," growled Florac, as Honeyman came sliding over the carpet, his elegant smile changing to a blush when he beheld Clive, his nephew, seated by the Princess' side. This, then, was the uncle who had spoken about Clive and his father to Mme. de Florac. Charles seemed in the best condition. He held out two brand-new, lavender-colored kid gloves to shake hands with his dear Clive; Florac and Mr. Pendennis vanished out of the room as he appeared, so that no precise account can be given of this affecting interview.

When I quitted the hotel, a brown brougham, with a pair of beautiful horses, the harness and panels emblazoned with the neatest little ducal coronets you ever saw, and a cipher under each crown as easy to read as the arrow headed inscriptions on one of Mr. Layard's Assyrian chariots, was in waiting, and I presumed that Mme. la Princess was about to take an airing.

Clive had passed the avuncular banking-house in the city, without caring to face his relatives there. Mr. Newcome was now in sole command, Mr. Barnes being absent at Newcome, the Baronet little likely ever to enter bank parlor again. But his bounden duty was to wait on the ladies; and, of course, only from duty's sake, he went the very first day and called in Park Lane.

"The family was absent ever since the marriage simminery last week," the footman, who had accompanied the party to Baden, informed Clive, when he opened the door and recognized that gentleman. "Sir Brian pretty well, thank you, sir. The family was at Brighting. That is, Miss Newcome is in London staying with her grandmamma in Queen Street, May Fear, sir." The varnished doors closed upon Jeames within; the brazen knockers grinned their familiar grin at Clive, and he went down the blank steps discomfited. Must it be owned that he went to a club, and looked in the "Directory" for the number of Lady Kew's house in Queen Street? Her ladyship had a furnished house for the season. No such

noble name was to be found among the inhabitants of Queen Street.

Mrs Hobson was from home; that is, Thomas had orders not to admit strangers on certain days, or before certain hours; so that Aunt Hobson saw Clive without being seen by the young man. I cannot say how much he regretted that mischance. His visits of propriety were thus all paid, and he went off to dine dutifully with James Binnie, after which meal he came to a certain rendezvous given to him by some bachelor friends for the evening.

James Binnie's eyes brightened up with pleasure on beholding his young Clive; the youth, obedient to his father's injunction, had hastened to Fitzroy Square immediately after taking possession of his old lodgings—his, during the time of his absence. The old properties and carved cabinets, the picture of his father looking melancholy out of the canvas, greeted Clive strangely on the afternoon of his arrival. No wonder he was glad to get away from a solitude peopled with a number of dismal recollections, to the near hospitality of Fitzroy Square, and his guardian and friend there.

James had not improved in health during Clive's ten months absence. He had never been able to walk well, or take his accustomed exercise, after his fall. He was no more used to riding than the late Mr. Gibbon, whose person James somewhat resembled, and of whose philosophy our Scottish friend was an admiring scholar. The Colonel gone, James would have arguments with Mr. Honeyman over their claret, bring down the famous XVth and XVth chapters of the "Decline and Fall" upon him, and quite get the better of the clergyman. James, like many other skeptics, was very obstinate, and for his part believed that almost all parsons had as much belief as the Roman augurs in their ceremonies. Certainly, poor Honeyman, in their controversies, gave up one article after another, flying from James' assault; but the battle over, Charles Honeyman would pick up these accouterments which he had flung away in his retreat, wipe them dry, and put them on again.

Lamed by his fall, and obliged to remain much within doors, where certain society did not always amuse him, James Binnie sought excitement in the pleasures of the table, partaking of them the more freely now that his health could afford them the less. Clive, the sly rogue, observed a great improvement in the commissariat since his good father's time, ate his

dinner with thankfulness, and made no remarks. Nor did he confide to us for a while his opinion that Mrs. Mack bored the good gentleman most severely; that he pined away under her kindnesses; sneaked off to his study-chair and his nap; was only too glad when some of the widow's friends came, or she went out; seeming to breathe more freely when she was gone, and drink his wine more cheerily when rid of the intolerable weight of her presence.

I protest the great ills of life are nothing—the loss of your fortune is a mere flea-bite; the loss of your wife—how many men have supported it, and married comfortably afterward? It is not what you lose, but what you have daily to bear, that is hard. I can fancy nothing more cruel, after a long easy life of bachelorhood, than to have to sit day after day with a dull, handsome woman opposite; to have to answer her speeches about the weather, housekeeping, and what not; to smile appropriately when she is disposed to be lively (that laughing at the jokes is the hardest part), and to model your conversation so as to suit her intelligence, knowing that a word used out of its downright signification will not be understood by your fair breakfast-maker. Women go through this simpering and smiling life, and bear it quite easily. Theirs is a life of hypocrisy. What good woman does not laugh at her husband's or father's jokes and stories time after time, and would not laugh at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, if he told them? Flattery is their nature—to coax, flatter, and sweetly befool someone is every woman's business. She is none if she declines this office. But men are not provided with such powers of humbug or endurance—they perish and pine away miserably when bored—or they shrink off to the club or public-house for comfort. I want to say as delicately as I can, and never liking to use rough terms regarding a handsome woman, that Mrs. Mackenzie, herself being in the highest spirits and the best humor, extinguished her half-brother, James Binnie, Esq.; that she was as a malaria to him, poisoning his atmosphere, numbing his limbs, destroying his sleep—that day after day as he sat down at breakfast, and she leveled commonplaces at her dearest James, her dearest James became more wretched under her. And no one could see what his complaint was. He called in the old physicians at the club. He dosed himself with poppy, and mandragora, and blue pill—lower and lower went poor James' mercury. If he wanted to move to Brighton or Cheltenham, well and good. Whatever were

her engagements, or whatever pleasures darling Rosey might have in store, dear thing!—at her age, my dear Mrs. Newcome, would not one do all to make a young creature happy?—under no circumstances could I think of leaving my poor brother.

Mrs. Mackenzie thought herself a most high-principled woman; Mrs. Newcome had also a great opinion of her. These two ladies had formed a considerable friendship in the past months, the captain's widow having an unaffected reverence for the banker's lady, and thinking her one of the best-informed and most superior of women in the world. When she had a high opinion of a person Mrs. Mack always wisely told it. Mrs. Newcome in her turn thought Mrs. Mackenzie a very clever, agreeable, lady-like woman—not accomplished, but one could not have everything. “No, no, my dear,” says simple Hobson, “never would do to have every woman as clever as you are, Maria. Women would have it all their own way then.”

Maria, as her custom was, thanked God for being so virtuous and clever, and graciously admitted Mrs. and Miss Mackenzie into the circle of adorers of that supreme virtue and talent. Mr. Newcome took little Rosey and her mother to some parties. When any took place in Bryanstone Square, they were generally allowed to come to tea.

When, on the second day of his arrival, the dutiful Clive went to dine with Mr. James, the ladies, in spite of their raptures at his return and delight at seeing him, were going in the evening to his aunt. Their talk was about the Princess all dinner-time. The Prince and Princess were to dine in Bryanstone Square. The Princess had ordered such and such things at the jeweler's—the Princess would take rank over an English earl's daughter—over Lady Ann Newcome, for instance. “Oh, dear! I wish the Prince and Princess were smothered in the Tower,” growled James Binnie; “since you have got acquainted with 'em I have never heard of anything else.”

Clive, like a wise man, kept his counsel about the Prince and Princess, with whom we have seen that he had had the honor of an interview that very day. But after dinner Rosey came round and whispered to her mamma, and after Rosey's whisper mamma flung her arms round Rosey's neck and kissed her, and called her a thoughtful darling. “What do you think this creature says, Clive?” says Mrs. Mack, still holding her darling's little hand. “I wonder I had not thought of it myself.”

"What is it, Mrs. Mackenzie?" asks Clive, laughing.

"She says why should not you come to your aunt's with us? We are sure Mrs. Newcome would be most happy to see you."

Rosey, with a little hand put to mamma's mouth, said, "Why did you tell—you naughty mamma! Isn't she a naughty mamma, Uncle James?" More kisses follow after this sally, of which Uncle James receives one with perfect complacency; mamma crying out as Rosey retires to dress, "That darling child is always thinking of others—always!"

Clive says, "he will sit and smoke a cheroot with Mr. Binnie, if they please." James' countenance falls. "We have left off that sort of thing here, my dear Clive, a long time," cries Mrs. Mackenzie, departing from the dining room.

"But we have improved the claret, Clive, my dear boy!" whispers Uncle James. "Let us have another bottle, and we will drink to the dear Colonel's good health and speedy return—God bless him! I say, Clive, Tom seems to have had a most fortunate escape out of Winter's house—thanks to our friend Rummun Loll, and to have got into a capital good thing with this Bundlecund Bank. They speak famously of it at Hanover Square, and I see the Hurkaru quotes the shares at a premium already."

Clive did not know anything about the Bundlecund Bank, except a few words in a letter from his father, which he had found in the city this morning. "And an uncommonly liberal remittance the governor has sent me home, sir." Upon which they fill another bumper to the Colonel's health.

Mamma and Rosey come and show their pretty pink dresses before going to Mrs. Newcome's, and Clive lights a cigar in the hall—and isn't there a jubilation at the "Haunt" when the young fellow's face appears above the smoke-clouds there?

CHAPTER III.

AN OLD STORY.

Many of Clive's Roman friends were by this time come to London, and the young man renewed his acquaintance with them, and had speedily a considerable circle of his own. He thought fit to allow himself a good horse or two, and appeared in the park among other young dandies. He and M. de Montcontour were sworn allies. Lord Fareham, who had pur-

chased J. J.'s picture, was Clive's very good friend; Major Pendennis himself pronounced him to be a young fellow of agreeable manners, and very favorably *vu* (as the Major happened to know) in some very good quarters.

Ere many days Clive had been to Brighton to see Lady Ann and Sir Brian, and good Aunt Honeyman, in whose house the Baronet was lodged; and I suppose he found out, by some means or other, where Lady Kew lived in May Fair.

But her ladyship was not at home, nor was she at home on the second day, nor did there come any note from Ethel to her cousin. She did not ride in the park as of old. Clive, *bien vu* as he was, did not belong to that great world as yet, in which he would be pretty sure to meet her every night at one of those parties where everybody goes. He read her name in the paper morning after morning, as having been present at Lady This's entertainment and Lady That's ministerial *réunion*. At first he was too shy to tell what the state of the case was, and took nobody into his confidence regarding his little *tendre*.

There he was riding through Queen Street, May Fair, attired in splendid raiment; never missing the park; actually going to places of worship in the neighborhood; and frequenting the opera—a waste of time which one would never have expected in a youth of his nurture. At length, a certain observer of human nature remarking his state, rightly conjectured that he must be in love, and taxed him with the soft impeachment—on which the young man, no doubt anxious to open his heart to someone, poured out all that story which has before been narrated; and told how he thought his passion cured, and how it was cured; but when he heard from Kew at Naples that the engagement was over between him and Miss Newcome, Clive found his own flame kindle again with new ardor. He was wild to see her. He dashed off from Naples instantly on receiving the news that she was free. He had been ten days in London without getting a glimpse of her. "That Mrs. Mackenzie bothers me so I hardly know where to turn," said poor Clive, "and poor little Rosey is made to write me a note about something twice a day. She's a good, dear little thing—little Rosey—and I really had thought once of—of—oh, never mind that! O Pen! I'm up another tree now! and a poor miserable young beggar I am!" In fact, Mr. Pendennis was installed as confidant, vice J. J.—absent on leave.

This is a part which, especially for a few days, the present biographer has always liked well enough. For a while at least,