more money, treated himself to comfortable rooms in Paris, at the very same hotel where the young Marquis of Farintosh occupied lodgings much more splendid, and where he lived, no doubt, so as to be near the professor who was still teaching his lordship the polka. Indeed it must be said that Lord Farintosh made great progress under this artist, and that he danced very much better in his third season than in the first and second years after he had come upon the town. From the same instructor the Marquis learned the latest novelties in French conversation, the choicest oaths and phrases (for which he was famous), so that, although his French grammar was naturally defective, he was enabled to order a dinner at Philippe's, and to bully a waiter or curse a hackney coachman with extreme volubility. A young nobleman of his rank was received with the distinction which was his due by the French sovereign at that period; and at the Tuileries, and the houses of the French nobility which he visited, M. le Marquis de Farintosh excited considerable remark by the use of some of the phrases which his young professor had taught to him. People even went so far as to say that the Marquis was an awkward and dull young man of the very worst manners.

Whereas the young Clive Newcome—and it comforted the poor fellow's heart somewhat, and, be sure, pleased Ethel, who was looking on at his triumphs—was voted the most charming young Englishman who had been seen for a long time in our salons. Mme. de Florac, who loved him as a son of her own, actually went once or twice into the world in order to see his début. Mme. de Montcontour inhabited a part of the Hôtel de Florac and received society there. The French people did not understand what bad English she talked, though they comprehended Lord Farintosh's French blunders. "M. Newcome is an artist! What a noble career!" cries a great French lady, the wife of a marshal, to the astonished Miss Newcome. "This young man is the cousin of the charming mees? You must be proud to possess such a nephew, madame!" says another French lady to the Countess of Kew—who, you may be sure, is delighted to have such a relative. And the French lady invites Clive to her reception expressly in order to make herself agreeable to the old Comtesse. Before the cousins have been three minutes together in Mme. de Florac's salon, she sees that Clive is in love with Ethel Newcome. She takes the boy's hand and says, *"J'ai votre secret, mon ami"*: and her eyes regard him for a moment as fondly, as tenderly, as ever they looked at his father. Oh, what tears have they shed, gentle eyes! Oh, what faith has it kept, tender heart! If love lives through all life; and survives through all sorrow; and remains steadfast with us through all changes; and in all darkness of spirit burns brightly; and if we die deplores us forever and loves still equally; and exists with the very last gasp and throb of the faithful bosom—whence it passes with the pure soul beyond death; surely it shall be immortal! Though we who remain are separated from it, is it not ours in heaven? If we love still those we lose, can we altogether lose those we love? Forty years have passed away. Youth and dearest memories revisit her, and hope almost wakes up again out of its grave, as the constant lady holds the young man's hand and looks at the son of Thomas Newcome.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOTEL DE FLORAC.

Since the death of the Duc d'Ivry, the husband of Mary Queen of Scots, the Comte de Florac, who is now the legitimate owner of the ducal title, does not choose to bear it, but continues to be known in the world by his old name. The old Count's world is very small. His doctor, and his director, who comes daily to play his game of piquet; his daughter's children, who amuse him by their laughter, and play round his chair in the garden of his hotel; his faithful wife and one or two friends as old as himself form his society. His son, the Abbé, is with them but seldom. The austerity of his manners frightens his old father, who can little comprehend the religionism of the new school. After going to hear his son preach through Lent at Notre Dame, where the Abbé de Florac gathered a great congregation, the old Count came away quite puzzled at his son's declamations. "I do not understand your new priests," he says; "I knew my son had become a Cordélier; I went to hear him, and found he was a Jacobin. Let me make my salut in quiet, my good Léonore. My director answers for me, and plays a game of trictrac into the bargain with me." Our history has but little to do with this venerable nobleman. He has his chamber looking out into the garden

of his hotel; his faithful old domestic to wait upon him; his House of Peers to attend, when he is well enough; his few acquaintances to help him to pass the evening. The rest of the hotel he gives up to his son, the Vicomte de Florac, and Mme. la Princesse de Montcontour, his daughter-in-law.

When Florac has told his friends of the club why it is he has assumed a new title—as a means of reconciliation (a reconciliation all philosophical, my friends) with his wife, née Higg of Manchester, who adores titles, like all Anglaises, and has recently made a great succession—everybody allows that the measure was dictated by prudence, and there is no more laughter at his change of name. The Princess takes the first floor of the hotel at the price paid for it by the American general, who has returned to his original pigs at Cincinnati. Had not Cincinnatus himself pigs on his farm, and was he not a general and member of congress too? The honest Princess has a bedchamber, which to her terror she is obliged to open of reception evenings, when gentlemen and ladies play cards there. It is fitted up in the style of Louis XVI. In her bed is an immense looking-glass surmounted by stucco Cupids; it is an alcove which some powdered Venus, before the Revolution, might have reposed in. Opposite that looking-glass, between the tall windows, at some forty feet distance, is another huge mirror, so that when the poor Princess is in bed, in her prim old curl papers, she sees a vista of elderly princesses twinkling away into the dark perspective; and is so frightened that she and Betsy, her Lancashire maid, pin up the jonquil silk curtains over the bed mirror, after the first night; though the Princess never can get it out of her head that her image is still there behind the jonquil hangings, turning as she turns, waking as she wakes, etc. The chamber is so vast and lonely that she has a bed made for Betsy in the room. It is, of course, whisked away into a closet on reception evenings. A boudoir, rose-tendre, with more Cupids and nymphs, by Boucher, sporting over the door-panels—nymphs who may well shock old Betsy and her old mistress—is the Princess' morning-room. "Ah, mum, what would Mr. Humper at Manchester, Mr. Jowls of Newcome" (the ministers whom, in early days, Miss Higg used to sit under) "say if they was browt into this room!" But there is no question of Mr. Jowls and Mr. Humper, excellent dissenting divines, who preached to Miss Higg, being brought into the Princesse de Montcontour's boudoir.

That paragraph respecting a conversion in high life, which F. B. in his enthusiasm inserted in the Pall Mall Gazette, caused no small excitement in the Florac family. The Florac family read the Pall Mall Gazette, knowing that Clive's friends were engaged in that periodical. When Mme. de Florac, who did not often read newspapers, happened to cast her eye upon that poetic paragraph of F. B.'s, you may fancy with what a panic it filled the good and pious lady. Her son become a Protestant! After all the grief and trouble his wildness had occasioned to her, Paul forsake his religion! But that her husband was so ill and aged as not to be able to bear her absence, she would have hastened to London to rescue her son out of that perdition. She sent for her younger son, who undertook the embassy; and the Prince and Princesse de Montcontour, in their hotel at London, were one day surprised by the visit of the Abbé de Florac.

As Paul was quite innocent of any intention of abandoning his religion, the mother's kind heart was very speedily set at rest by her envoy. Far from Paul's conversion to Protestantism, the Abbé wrote home the most encouraging accounts of his sister-in-law's precious dispositions. He had communications with Mme. de Montcontour's Anglican director, a man of not powerful mind, wrote M. l'Abbé, though of considerable repute for eloquence in his sect. The good dispositions of his sister-in-law were improved by the French clergyman, who could be most captivating and agreeable when a work of conversion was in hand. The visit reconciled the family to their English relative, in whom good-nature and many other good qualities were to be seen now that there were hopes of reclaiming her. It was agreed that Mme. de Montcontour should come and inhabit the Hôtel de Florac at Paris; perhaps the Abbé tempted the worthy lady by pictures of the many pleasures and advantages she would enjoy at that capital. She was presented at her own court by the French ambassadress of that day; and was received at the Tuileries with a cordiality which flattered and pleased her.

Having been presented herself, Mme. la Princesse in turn presented to her august sovereign Mrs. T. Higg and Miss Higg of Manchester, and Mrs. Samuel Higg of Newcome; the husbands of those ladies (the Princess' brothers) also sporting a court dress for the first time. Sam Higg's neighbor, the member for Newcome, Sir Brian Newcome, Bart., was too ill to act as Higg's sponsor before Majesty; but Barnes New-

come was uncommonly civil to the two Lancashire gentlemen, though their politics were different to his and Sam had voted against Sir Brian at his last election. Barnes took them to dine at a club, recommended his tailor, and sent Lady Clara Pulleyn to call on Mrs. Higg, who pronounced her to be a pretty woman and most haffable. The Countess of Dorking would have been delighted to present these ladies, had the Princess not luckily been in London to do that office. The Hobson Newcomes were very civil to the Lancashire party, and entertained them splendidly at dinner. I believe Mrs. and Mr. Hobson themselves went to court this year, the latter in a deputy-lieutenant's uniform.

If Barnes Newcome was so very civil to the Higg family, we may suppose he had good reason. The Higgs were very strong in Newcome, and it was advisable to conciliate them. They were very rich, and their account would not be very disagreeable at the bank. Mme. de Montcontour's—a large, easy, private account—would be more pleasant still. And Hobson Brothers having entered largely into the Anglo-Continental Railway, whereof mention has been made, it was a bright thought of Barnes to place the Prince of Montcontour, etc., etc., on the French direction of the railway; and to take the princely prodigal down to Newcome with his new title, and reconcile him to his wife and the Higg family. Barnes, we may say, invented the principality; rescued the Vicomte de Florac out of his dirty lodgings in Leicester Square, and sent the Prince of Montcontour back to his worthy middle-aged wife again. The disagreeable dissenting days were over. A brilliant young curate of Dr. Bulders', who also wore long hair, straight waistcoats, and no shirt-collars, had already reconciled the Vicomtesse de Florac to the persuasion whereof the ministers are clad in that queer uniform. The landlord of their hotel in St. James' got his wine from Sherrick and sent his families to Lady Whittlesea's chapel. The Rev. Charles Honeyman's eloquence and amiability were appreciated by his new disciple—thus the historian has traced here step by step how all these people became acquainted.

Sam Higg, whose name was very good on 'Change in Manchester and London, joined the direction of the Anglo-Continental. A brother had died lately, leaving his money among them, and his wealth had added considerably to Mme. de Florac's means; his sister invested a portion of her capital in her husband's name. The shares were at a premium, and gave

a good dividend. The Prince de Montcontour took his place with great gravity at the Paris board, whither Barnes made frequent flying visits. The sense of capitalism sobered and dignified Paul de Florac; at the age of five-and-forty he was actually giving up being a young man, and was not ill-pleased at having to enlarge his waistcoats and to show a little gray in his mustache. His errors were forgotten; he was *bien vu* by the government. He might have had the Embassy Extraordinary to Queen Pomaré; but the health of Mme. la Princesse was delicate. He paid his wife visits every morning, appeared at her parties and her opera box, and was seen constantly with her in public. He gave quiet little dinners still, at which Clive was present sometimes; and had a private door and key to his apartments, which were separated by all the dreary length of the reception rooms from the mirrored chamber and jonquil couch where the Princess and Betsy reposed. When some of his London friends visited Paris, he showed us these rooms and introduced us duly to Mme. la Princesse. He was as simple and as much at home in the midst of these splendors as in the dirty little lodgings in Leicester Square, where he painted his own boots and cooked his herring over the tongs. As for Clive, he was the infant of the house; Mme. la Princesse could not resist his kind face, and Paul was as fond of him in his way as Paul's mother in hers. Would he live at the Hôtel de Florac? "There was an excellent atélier in the pavilion, with a chamber for his servant. No! you will be most at ease in apartments of your own. You will have here but the society of women. I do not rise till late; and my affairs, my board, call me away for the greater part of the day. Thou wilt but be ennuyé, to play trictrac with my old father. My mother waits on him. My sister au second is given up entirely to her children, who always have the *pituite*. Mme. la Princesse is not amusing for a young man. Come and go when thou wilt, Clive, my garçon, my son; thy cover is laid. Wilt thou take the portraits of all the family? Hast thou want of money? I had at thy age, and almost ever since, *mon ami;* but now we swim in gold; and when there is a louis in my purse, there are ten francs for thee." To show his mother that he did not think of the Reformed religion, Paul did not miss going to mass with her on Sunday. Sometimes Mme. Paul went too, between whom and her mother-in-law there could not be any liking, but there was now great civility. They saw each other once a day.

Mme. Paul always paid her visit to the Count de Florac; and Betsy, her maid, made the old gentleman laugh by her briskness and talk. She brought back to her mistress the most wonderful stories which the old man told her about his doings during the Emigration—before he married Mme. la Comtesse—when he gave lessons in dancing, *parbleu!* There was his fiddle still, a trophy of those old times. He chirped, and coughed, and sang, in his cracked old voice, as he talked about them. "Lor! bless you, mum," says Betsy, "he must have been a terrible old man!" He remembered the times well enough, but the stories he sometimes told over twice or thrice in an hour. I am afraid he had not repented sufficiently of those wicked old times. Else why did he laugh and giggle so when he recalled them? He would laugh and giggle till he was choked with his old cough; and old Saint Jean, his man, came and beat M. le Comte on the back, and made M. le Comte take a spoonful of his syrup.

Between two such women as Mme. de Florac and Lady Kew, of course, there could be little liking or sympathy. Religion, love, duty, the family, were the French lady's constant occupation—duty and the family, perhaps, Lady Kew's aim too—only the notions of duty were different in either person, Lady Kew's idea of duty to her relatives being to push them on in the world; Mme. de Florac's to soothe, to pray, to attend them with constant watchfulness, to strive to mend them with pious counsel. I don't know that one lady was happier than the other. Mme. de Florac's eldest son was a kindly prodigal; her second had given his whole heart to the Church; her daughter had centered hers on her own children, and was jealous if their grandmother laid a finger on them. So Léonore de Florac was quite alone. It seemed as if Heaven had turned away all her children's hearts from her. Her daily business in life was to nurse a selfish old man, into whose service she had been forced in early youth by a paternal decree which she never questioned; giving him obedience, striving to give him respect—everything but her heart, which had gone out of her keeping. Many a good woman's life is no more cheerful; a spring of beauty, a little warmth and sunshine of love, a bitter disappointment, followed by pangs and frantic tears, then a long, monotonous story of submission. "Not here, my daughter, is to be your happiness," says the priest; "whom Heaven loves it afflicts." And he points out to her the agonies of suffering saints of her sex; assures her of their

present beatitudes and glories; exhorts her to bear her pains with a faith like theirs, and is empowered to promise her a like reward.

The other matron is not less alone. Her husband and son are dead, without a tear for either—to weep was not in Lady Kew's nature. Her grandson, whom she had loved, perhaps, more than any human being, is rebellious and estranged from her; her children separated from her save one, whose sickness and bodily infirmity the mother resents as disgraces to herself. Her darling schemes fail somehow. She moves from town to town, and ball to ball, and hall to castle, forever uneasy and always alone. She sees people scared at her coming; is received by sufferance and fear, rather than by welcome; likes perhaps the terror which she inspires, and to enter over the breach rather than through the hospitable gate. She will try and command wherever she goes, and trample over dependents and society with a grim consciousness that it dislikes her, a rage at its cowardice, and an unbending will to domineer. To be old, proud, lonely, and not have a friend in the world—that is her lot in it. As the French lady may be said to resemble the bird which, the fables say, feeds her young with her blood; this one, if she has a little natural liking for her brood, goes hunting hither and thither and robs meat for them. And so, I suppose, to make the simile good, we must compare the Marquis of Farintosh to a lamb, for the nonce, and Miss Ethel Newcome to a young eaglet. Is it not a rare provision of nature (or fiction of poets, who have their own natural history) that the strong-winged bird can soar to the sun and gaze at it, and then come down from heaven and pounce on a piece of carrion?

After she became acquainted with certain circumstances Mme. de Florac was very interested about Ethel Newcome, and strove in her modest way to become intimate with her. Miss Newcome and Lady Kew attended Mme. de Montcontour's Wednesday evenings. "It is as well, my dear, for the interests of the family that we should be particularly civil to these people," Lady Kew said; and accordingly she came to the Hôtel de Florac, and was perfectly insolent to Mme. la Princesse every Wednesday evening. Toward Mme. de Florac even Lady Kew could not be rude. She was so gentle as to give no excuse for assault; Lady Kew vouchsafed to pronounce that Mme. de Florac was "très grande dame"—"of the sort which is almost impossible to find nowadays," Lady Kew

said, who thought she possessed this dignity in her own person. When Mme. de Florac, blushing, asked Ethel to come and see her, Ethel's grandmother consented with the utmost willingness. "She is very *dévote* I have heard, and will try to convert you. Of course you will hold your own about that sort of thing; and have the good sense to keep off theology. There is no Roman Catholic *parti* in England or Scotland that is to be thought of for a moment. You will see they will marry young Lord Derwentwater to an Italian princess; but he is only seventeen, and his directors never lose sight of him. Sir Bartholomew Fawkes will have a fine property when Lord Campion dies, unless Lord Campion leaves the money to the convent where his daughter is—and of the other families, who is there? I made every inquiry purposely—that is, of course, one is as anxious to know about the Catholics as about one's own people; and little Mr. Rood, who was one of my poor brother Steyne's lawyers, told me there is not one young man of that party at this moment who can be called a desirable person. Be very civil to Mme. de Florac; she sees some of the old legitimists, and you know I am *brouillée* with that party of late years."

"There is the Marquis de Montluc, who has a large fortune for France," said Ethel gravely; "he has a hump-back, but he is very spiritual. M. de Cadillan paid me some compliments the other night, and even asked George Barnes what my dot was. He is a widower, and has a wig and two daughters. Which do you think would be the greatest incumbrance, grandmamma—a hump-back, or a wig and two daughters? I like Mme. de Florac; for the sake of the borough, I must try and like poor Mme. de Montcontour, and I will go and see them, whenever you please."

So Ethel went to see Mme. de Florac. She was very kind to Mme. de Préville's children, Mme. de Florac's grandchildren; she was gay and gracious with Mme. de Montcontour. She went again and again to the Hôtel de Florac, not caring for Lady Kew's own circle of statesmen and diplomatists, Russian and Spanish and French, whose talk about the courts of Europe—who was in favor at St. Petersburg, and who was in disgrace at Schönbrunn—naturally did not amuse the lively young person. The goodness of Mme. de Florac's life, the tranquil grace and melancholy kindness with which the French lady received her, soothed and pleased Miss Ethel. She came and reposed in Mme. de Florac's quiet chamber, or sat in the shade in the sober old garden of her hotel, away from all the trouble and chatter of the salons, the gossip of the embassies, the fluttering ceremonial of the Parisian ladies' visits in their fine toilets, the *fadaises* of the dancing dandies, and the pompous mysteries of the old statesmen who frequented her grandmother's apartment. The world began for her at night, when she went in the train of the old Countess from hotel to hotel, and danced waltz after waltz with Prussian and Neapolitan secretaries, with princes, officers of ordonnance—with personages even more lofty, very likely—for the court of the Citizen King was then in its splendor, and there must surely have been a number of nimble young royal highnesses who would like to dance with such a beauty as Miss Newcome. The Marquis of Farintosh had a share in these polite amusements. His English conversation was not brilliant as yet, although his French was eccentric; but at the court balls, whether he appeared in his uniform of the Scotch Archers or in his native Glenlivat tartan, there certainly was not in his own or the public estimation a handsomer young nobleman in Paris that season. It has been said that he was greatly improved in dancing; and for a young man of his age, his whiskers were really extraordinarily large and curly.

Miss Newcome, out of consideration for her grandmother's strange antipathy to him, did not inform Lady Kew that a young gentleman by the name of Clive occasionally came to visit the Hôtel de Florac. At first, with her French education, Mme. de Florac never would have thought of allowing the cousins to meet in her house; but with the English it was different. Paul assured her that in the English châteaux *les meess* walked for entire hours with the young men, made parties of the fish, mounted to horse with them, the whole with the permission of the mothers. "When I was at Newcome Miss Ethel rode with me several times," Paul said; "*à preuve* that we went to visit an old relation of the family who adores Clive and his father." When Mme. de Florac questioned her son about the young Marquis to whom it was said Ethel was engaged, Florac flouted the idea. "Engaged! This young Marquis is engaged to the Théâtre des Variétés, my mother. He laughs at the notion of an engagement. When one charged him with it of late at the club, and asked how Mlle. Louqsor—she is so tall that they call her the Louqsor—she is an *odalisque obélisque,* ma mère; when one asked how the

Louqsor would pardon his pursuit of Miss Newcome, my Ecoassais permitted himself to say in full club that it was Miss Newcome pursued him—that nymph, that Diane, that charming and peerless young creature! On which, as the others laughed and his friend M. Walleye applauded, I dare to say in my turn, 'M. le Marquis, as a young man, not familiar with our language, you have said what is not true, milor, and, therefore, luckily, not mischievous. I have the honor to count of my friends the parents of the young lady of whom you have spoken. You never could have intended to say that a young miss who lives under the guardianship of her parents and is obedient to them; whom you meet in society all the nights, and at whose door your carriage is to be seen every day, is capable of that with which you charge her so gayly. These things say themselves, monsieur, in the *coulisses* of the theater, of women from whom you learn our language; not of young persons pure and chaste, M. de Farintosh! Learn to respect your compatriots; to honor youth and innocence everywhere, monsieur! And when you forget yourself, permit one who might be your father to point where you are wrong.' "

"And what did he answer?" asked the Countess.

"I attended myself to a *soufflet*," replied Florac; "but his reply was much more agreeable. The young insulary, with many blushes and a *gros juron*, as his polite way is, said he had not wished to say a word against that person. 'Of whom the name,' cried I, 'ought never to be spoken in these places.' Herewith our little dispute ended."

So occasionally Mr. Clive had the good luck to meet with his cousin at the Hôtel de Florac, where, I dare say, all the inhabitants wished he should have his desire regarding this young lady. The Colonel had talked early to Mme. de Florac about this wish of his life, impossible then to gratify because Ethel was engaged to Lord Kew. Clive, in the fullness of his heart, imparted his passion to Florac, and in answer to Paul's offer to himself had shown the Frenchman that kind letter in which his father bade him carry aid to "Léonore de Florac's son," in case he should need it. The case was all clear to the lively Paul. "Between my mother and your good Colonel there must have been an affair of the heart in the early days during the Emigration." Clive owned his father had told him as much, at least that he himself had been attached to Mlle. de Blois. "It is for that that her heart yearns toward thee, that I have felt myself *entrained* toward thee since I saw thee"—Clive momentarily expected to be kissed again. "Tell thy father that I feel—am touched by his goodness, with an eternal gratitude, and love everyone that loves my mother." As far as wishes went, these two were eager promoters of Clive's little love affair; and Mme. la Princesse became equally not less willing. Clive's good looks and good nature had had their effects upon that good-natured woman, and he was as great a favorite with her as with her husband. And thus it happened that when Miss Ethel came to pay her visit, and sat with Mme. de Florac and her grandchildren in the garden, Mr. Newcome would sometimes walk up the avenue there and salute the ladies.

If Ethel had not wanted to see him, would she have come? Yes; she used to say she was going to Mme. de Préville's, not to Mme. de Florac's, and would insist, I have no doubt, that it was Mme. de Préville whom she went to see (whose husband was a member of the Chamber of Deputies, a conseiller d'Etat, or other French bigwig), and that she had no idea of going to meet Clive or that he was more than a casual acquaintance at the Hôtel de Florac. There was no part of her conduct in all her life which this lady, when it was impugned, would defend more strongly than this intimacy at the Hôtel de Florac. It is not with this I quarrel especially. My fair young readers, who have seen a half-dozen of seasons, can you call to mind the time when you had such a friendship for Emma Tomkins that you were always at the Tomkins' and notes were constantly passing between your house and hers? When her brother, Paget Tomkins, returned to India, did not your intimacy with Emma fall off? If your younger sister is not in the room, I know you will own as much to me. I think you are always deceiving yourselves and other people. I think the motive you put forward is very often not the real one, though you will confess neither to yourself nor to any human being what the real motive is. I think that what you desire you pursue, and are as selfish in your way as your bearded fellow-creatures are. And as for the truth being in you, of all the women in a great acquaintance, I protest there are but—never mind. A perfectly honest woman, a woman who never flatters, who never manages, who never cajoles, who never conceals, who never uses her eyes, who never speculates on the effect which she produces, who never is conscious of unspoken admiration—what a monster, I say, would such a female be! Miss Hopkins, you have been a coquette since

you were a year old; you worked on your papa's friends in the nurse's arms by the fascination of your lace frock and pretty new sash and shoes; when you could just toddle, you practiced your arts upon other children in the square, poor little lambkins sporting among the daisies; and *nunc in ovilia, mox in reluctantes dracones,* proceeding from the lambs to reluctant dragoons, you tried your arts upon Captain Paget Tomkins, who behaved so ill and went to India without—without making those proposals which of course you never expected. Your intimacy was with Emma. It has cooled. Your sets are different. The Tomkinses are not quite, etc., etc. You believe Captain Tomkins married a Miss O'Grady, etc., etc. Ah, my pretty, my sprightly Miss Hopkins, be gentle in your judgment of your neighbors!

CHAPTER IX.

CONTAINS TWO OR THREE ACTS OF A LITTLE COMEDY.

All this story is told by one who, if he was not actually present at the circumstances here narrated, yet had information concerning them, and could supply such a narrative of facts and conversations as is, indeed, not less authentic than the details we have of other histories. How can I tell the feelings in a young lady's mind; the thoughts in a young gentleman's bosom? As Professor Owen or Professor Agassiz takes a fragment of a bone, and builds an enormous forgotten monster out of it, wallowing in primeval quagmires, tearing down leaves and branches of plants that flourished thousands of years ago, and perhaps may be coal by this time—so the novelist puts this and that together; from the footprint finds the foot; from the foot, the brute who strode on it; from the brute, the plant he browsed on, the marsh in which he swam (and thus, in his humble way, a physiologist too, depicts the habits, size, appearance of the beings whereof he has to treat); traces this slimy reptile through the mud, and describes his habits, filthy and rapacious; prods down this butterfly with a pin, and depicts his beautiful coat and embroidered waistcoat; points out the singular structure of yonder more important animal, the megatherium of his history.

Suppose then, in the quaint old garden of the Hôtel de

Florac, two young people are walking up and down in an avenue of lime trees which are still permitted to grow in that ancient place. In the center of that avenue is a fountain, surmounted by a Triton so gray and moss-eaten that, though he holds his conch to his swelling lips, curling his tail in the arid basin, his instrument has had a sinecure for at least fifty years; and did not think fit even to play when the Bourbons, in whose time he was erected, came back from their exile. At the end of the lime-tree avenue is a broken-nosed damp Faun, with a marble panpipe, who pipes to the spirit ditties which I believe never had any tune. The *perron* of the hotel is at the other end of the avenue; a couple of Caesars on either side of the door window, from which the inhabitants of the hotel issue into the garden—Caracalla frowning over his moldy shoulder at Nerva, on to whose clipped hair the roofs of the gray château have been dribbling for ever so many long years. There are more statues gracing this noble place. There is Cupid, who has been at the point of kissing Psyche this half-century at least, though the delicious event has never come off through all those blazing summers and dreary winters; there is Venus and her boy under the damp little dome of a cracked old temple. Through the alley of this old garden, in which their ancestors have disported in hoops and powder, M. de Florac's chair is wheeled by St. Jean, his attendant; Mme. de Préville's children trot about, and skip, and play at cache-cache. The R. P. de Florac (when at home) paces up and down and meditates his sermons; Mme. de Florac sadly walks sometimes to look at her roses; and Clive and Ethel Newcome are marching up and down; the children, and their bonne of course, being there jumping to and fro; and Mme. de Florac, having just been called away to M. le Comte, whose physician has come to see him.

Ethel says, "How charming and odd this solitude is; and how pleasant to hear the voices of the children, playing in the neighboring convent garden," of which they can see the new chapel rising over the trees.

Clive remarks that "The neighboring hotel has curiously changed its destination. One of the members of the Directory had it; and, no doubt, in the groves of its garden, Mme. Tallien, and Mme. Récamier, and Mme. Beauharnais have danced under the lamps. Then a marshal of the Empire inhabited it. Then it was restored to its legitimate owner M. le Marquis de Bricquabracque, whose descendants, having