

"And—and did Barnes send no answer to that letter you wrote him?" he said slowly.

Clive broke out into a laugh that was almost a sob. He took both his father's hands. "My dear, dear old father!" says he, "what a—what an—old trump you are!"

My eyes were so dim I could hardly see the two men as they embraced.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### HAS A TRAGICAL ENDING.

Clive presently answered the question which his father put to him in the last chapter by producing from the ledge of his easel a crumpled paper, full of Cavendish now, but on which was written Sir Barnes Newcome's reply to his cousin's polite invitation.

Sir Barnes Newcome wrote that he thought a reference to a friend was quite unnecessary, in the most disagreeable and painful dispute in which Mr. Clive desired to interfere as a principal; that the reasons which prevented Sir Barnes from taking notice of Colonel Newcome's shameful and ungentlemanlike conduct applied equally, as Mr. Clive Newcome very well knew, to himself; that if further insult was offered, or outrage attempted, Sir Barnes should resort to the police for protection; that he was about to quit London, and certainly should not delay his departure on account of Mr. Clive Newcome's monstrous proceedings; and that he desired to take leave of an odious subject, as of an individual whom he had striven to treat with kindness, but from whom, from youth upward, Sir Barnes Newcome had received nothing but insolence, enmity, and ill will.

"He is an ill man to offend," remarked Mr. Pendennis. "I don't think he has ever forgiven that claret, Clive."

"Pooh! the feud dates from long before that," said Clive. "Barnes wanted to lick me when I was a boy, and I declined; in fact, I think he had rather the worst of it; but then I operated freely on his shins, and that wasn't fair in war, you know."

"Heaven forgive me," cries the Colonel. "I have always felt the fellow was my enemy; and my mind is relieved, now war is declared. It has been a kind of hypocrisy with me to

shake his hand and eat his dinner. When I trusted him it was against my better instinct; and I have been struggling against it these ten years, thinking it was a wicked prejudice and ought to be overcome."

"Why should we overcome such instincts?" asks Mr. Warrington. "Why shouldn't we hate what is hateful in people, and scorn what is mean? From what friend Pen has described to me, and from some other accounts which have come to my ears, your respectable nephew is about as loathsome a little villain as crawls on the earth. Good seems to be out of his sphere, and away from his contemplation. He ill-treats every one he comes near; or, if gentle to them, it is that they may serve some base purpose. Since my attention has been drawn to the creature, I have been contemplating his ways with wonder and curiosity. How much superior nature's rogues are, Pen, to the villains you novelists put into your books! This man goes about his life business with a natural propensity to darkness and evil—as a bug crawls, and stings, and sticks. I don't suppose the fellow feels any more remorse than a cat that runs away with a mutton chop. I recognize the Evil Spirit, sir, and do honor to Ahrimanes, in taking off my hat to this young man. He seduced a poor girl in his father's country town—is it not natural? deserted her and her children—don't you recognize the beast? married for rank—could you expect otherwise from him? invites my Lord Highgate to his house, in consideration of his balance at the bank. Sir, unless somebody's heel shall crunch him on the way, there is no height to which this aspiring vermin mayn't crawl. I look to see Sir Barnes Newcome prosper more and more. I make no doubt he will die an immense capitalist, and an exalted peer of this realm. He will have a marble monument, and a pathetic funeral sermon. There is a divine in your family, Clive, that shall preach it. I will weep respectful tears over the grave of Baron Newcome, Viscount Newcome, Earl Newcome; and the children whom he has deserted, and who, in the course of time, will be sent by a grateful nation to New South Wales, will proudly say to their brother convicts, 'Yes, the Earl was our honored father!'"

"I fear he is no better than he should be, Mr. Warrington," says the Colonel, shaking his head. "I never heard the story about the deserted children."

"How should you, oh, guileless man?" cries Warrington. "I am not in the ways of scandal hearing myself, much; but

this tale I had from Sir Barnes Newcome's own county. Mr. Batters of the Newcome Independent is my esteemed client. I write leading articles for his newspaper, and when he was in town last spring, he favored me with the anecdote; and proposed to amuse the Member for Newcome by publishing it in his journal. This kind of writing is not much in my line, and out of respect to you and your young one, I believe, I strove with Mr. Batters, and entreated him, and prevailed with him not to publish the story. This is how I came to know it."

I sat with the Colonel in the evening, when he commented on Warrington's story and Sir Barnes' adventures in his simple way. He said his brother, Hobson, had been with him the morning after the dispute, reiterating Barnes' defense of his conduct, and professing, on his part, nothing but good will toward his brother. "Between ourselves, the young baronet carries matters with rather a high hand sometimes, and I am not sorry that you gave him a little dressing. But you were too hard upon him, Colonel—really you were."

"Had I known that child deserting story I would have given it harder still, sir," says Thomas Newcome, twirling his mustache, "but my brother had nothing to do with the quarrel, and very rightly did not wish to engage in it. He has an eye to business, has Master Hobson, too," my friend continued; "for he brought me a check for my private account, which of course, he said, could not remain after my quarrel with Barnes. But the Indian bank account, which is pretty large, he supposed, need not be taken away, and indeed why should it? So that, which is little business of mine, remains where it is; and brother Hobson and I remain perfectly good friends."

"I think Clive is much better since he has been quite put out of his suspense. He speaks with a great deal more kindness and good nature about the marriage than I am disposed to feel regarding it, and depend on it, has too high a spirit to show that he is beaten. But I know he is a good deal cut up, though he says nothing; and he agreed willingly enough to take a little journey, Arthur, and be out of the way when this business takes place. We shall go to Paris—I don't know where else besides. These misfortunes do good in one way, hard as they are to bear; they unite people who love each other. It seems to me my boy has been nearer to me, and likes his old father better than he has done of late."

And very soon after this talk, our friends departed.

The Bulgarian minister having been recalled, and Lady Ann Newcome's house in Park Lane being vacant, her ladyship and her family came to occupy the mansion for this eventful season, and sat once more in the dismal dining room, under the picture of the defunct Sir Brian. A little of the splendor and hospitality of old days was revived in the house; entertainments were given by Lady Ann; and among other festivities, a fine ball took place, when pretty Miss Alice, Miss Ethel's younger sister, made her first appearance in the world, to which she was afterward to be presented by the Marchioness of Farintosh. All the little sisters were charmed, no doubt, that the beautiful Ethel was to become a beautiful marchioness, who, as they came up to womanhood one after another, would introduce them severally to amiable young earls, dukes, and marquises, when they would be married off, and wear coronets and diamonds of their own right. At Lady Ann's ball I saw my acquaintance, young Mumford, who was going to Oxford next October, and about to leave Rugby, where he was at the head of the school, looking very dismal as Miss Alice whirled round the room dancing in Viscount Bustington's arms; Miss Alice, with whose mamma he used to take tea at Rugby, and for whose pretty sake Mumford did Alfred Newcome's verses for him, and let him off his thrashings. Poor Mumford! he dismally went about under the protection of young Alfred, a fourth form boy—not one soul did he know in that rattling London ballroom; his young face was as white as the large white tie donned two hours since at the Tavistock with such nervousness and beating of heart.

With these lads, and decorated with a tie equally splendid, moved about young Sam Newcome, who was shirking from his sister and his mamma. Mrs. Hobson had actually assumed clean gloves for this festive occasion. Sam stared at all the "Nobs;" and insisted upon being introduced to "Farintosh," and congratulated his lordship with much graceful ease; and then pushed about the rooms perseveringly, hanging on to Alfred's jacket. "I say, I wish you wouldn't call me Al," I heard Master Alfred say to his cousin. Seeing my face, Mr. Samuel ran up to claim acquaintance. He was good enough to say he thought Farintosh seemed devilish haughty. Even my wife could not help saying that Mr. Sam was an odious little creature.

So it was for young Alfred, and his brothers and sisters, who would want help and protection in the world, that Ethel

was about to give up her independence, her inclination, perhaps, and to bestow her life on yonder young nobleman. Looking at her as a girl devoting herself to her family, her sacrifice gave her a melancholy interest in our eyes. My wife and I watched her, grave and beautiful, moving through the rooms, receiving and returning a hundred greetings, bending to compliments, talking with this friend and that, with my lord's lordly relations, with himself—to whom she listened deferentially, faintly smiling as he spoke now and again—doing the honors of her mother's house. Lady after lady of his lordship's clan and kinsfolk complimented the girl and her pleased mother. Old Lady Kew was radiant (if one can call radiance the glances of those darkling old eyes). She sat in a little room apart; and thither people went to pay their court to her. Unwittingly I came in on this levee, with my wife on my arm. Lady Kew scowled at me over the crutch, but without a sign of recognition. "What an awful countenance the old woman has!" Laura whispered, as we retreated out of that gloomy presence.

And Doubt (as its wont is) whispered, too, a question in my ear. "Is it for her brothers and sisters only that Miss Ethel is sacrificing herself? Is it not for the coronet, and the triumph, and the fine houses?" "When two motives may actuate a friend, we surely may try and believe in the good one," says Laura. "But I am glad Clive does not marry her—poor fellow—he would not have been happy with her. She belongs to this great world; she has spent all her life in it; Clive would have entered into it very likely in her train. And you know, sir, it is not good that we should be our husbands' superiors," adds Mrs. Laura, with a courtesy.

She presently pronounced that the air was very hot in the rooms, and in fact wanted to go home to see her child. As we passed out, we saw Sir Barnes Newcome, eagerly smiling, smirking, bowing, and in the fondest conversation with his sister and Lord Farintosh. By Sir Barnes suddenly brushed Lieutenant-General Sir George Tufto, K. C. B., who, when he saw on whose foot he had trodden, grunted out, "Hm, beg your pardon!" and turning his back on Barnes, forthwith began complimenting Ethel and the Marquis. "Served with your lordship's father in Spain; glad to make your lordship's acquaintance," says Sir George. Ethel bows to us as we pass out of the rooms, and we hear no more of Sir George's conversation.

In the cloak room sits Lady Clara Newcome, with a gentleman bending over her just in such an attitude as the bride is in Hogarth's "Mariage à la Mode," as the counselor talks to her. Lady Clara starts up, as a crowd of blushes come into her wan face, and tries to smile, and rises to greet my wife, and says something about it being so dreadfully hot in the upper rooms, and so very tedious waiting for the carriages. The gentleman advances toward me with a military stride, and says, "How do you do, Mr. Pendennis? How's our young friend, the painter?" I answer Lord Highgate civilly enough, whereas my wife will scarce speak a word in reply to Lady Clara Newcome.

Lady Clara asked us to her ball, which my wife declined altogether to attend. Sir Barnes published a series of quite splendid entertainments on the happy occasion of his sister's betrothal. We read the names of all the clan Farintosh in the Morning Post, as attending these banquets. Mr. and Mrs. Hobson Newcome, in Bryanstone Square, gave also signs of rejoicing at their niece's marriage. They had a grand banquet, followed by a tea, to which latter amusement the present biographer was invited. Lady Ann, and Lady Kew and her granddaughter, and the Baronet and his wife, and my Lord Highgate, and Sir George Tufto attended the dinner; but it was rather a damp entertainment. "Farintosh," whispers Sam Newcome, "sent word just before dinner that he had a sore throat, and Barnes was as sulky as possible. Sir George wouldn't speak to him, and the Dowager wouldn't speak to Lord Highgate. Scarcely anything was drunk," concluded Mr. Sam, with a slight hiccup. "I say, Pendennis, how sold Clive will be!" And the amiable youth went off to commune with others of his parents' guests.

Thus the Newcomes entertained the Farintoshes, and the Farintoshes entertained the Newcomes. And the Dowager Countess of Kew went from assembly to assembly every evening, and to jewelers, and upholsterers, and dressmakers every morning; and Lord Farintosh seemed to grow more and more attentive as the happy day approached, and he gave away all his cigars to his brother Rob; and his sisters were delighted with Ethel, and constantly in her company, and his mother was pleased with her, and thought a girl of her spirit and resolution would make a good wife for her son; and select crowds flocked to see the service of plate at Handyman's and the diamonds which were being set for the lady; and Smee, R. A.,

painted her portrait as a souvenir for mamma when Miss Newcome should be Miss Newcome no more; and Lady Kew made a will, leaving all she could leave to her beloved granddaughter Ethel, daughter of the late Sir Brian Newcome, Baronet; and Lord Kew wrote an affectionate letter to his cousin, congratulating her and wishing her happiness with all his heart; and I was glancing over *The Times* newspaper at breakfast one morning, when I laid it down with an exclamation which caused my wife to start with surprise.

"What is it?" cries Laura, and I read as follows:

"Death of the Countess Dowager of Kew.—We regret to have to announce the awfully sudden death of this venerable lady. Her ladyship, who had been at several parties of the nobility the night before last, seemingly in perfect health, was seized with a fit, as she was waiting for her carriage and about to quit Lady Pallgrave's assembly. Immediate medical assistance was procured, and her ladyship was carried to her own house, in Queen Street, May Fair. But she never rallied, or, we believe, spoke, after the first fatal seizure, and sank at eleven o'clock last evening. The deceased, Louisa Joanna Gaunt, widow of Frederick, first Earl of Kew, was daughter of Charles, Earl of Gaunt, and sister of the late and aunt of the present Marquis of Steyne. The present Earl of Kew is her ladyship's grandson, his lordship's father, Lord Walham, having died before his own father, the first earl. Many noble families are placed in mourning by this sad event. Society has to deplore the death of a lady who has been its ornament for more than half a century, and who was known, we may say, throughout Europe for her remarkable sense, extraordinary memory, and brilliant wit."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### BARNES' SKELETON CLOSET.

The demise of Lady Kew of course put a stop for a while to the matrimonial projects so interesting to the house of Newcome. Hymen blew his torch out, put it into the cupboard for use on a future day, and exchanged his garish saffron-colored robe for decent temporary mourning. Charles Honeyman improved the occasion at Lady Whittlesea's chapel hard by; and "Death at the Festival" was one of his most thrilling sermons, reprinted at the request of some of the congregation. There were those of his flock, especially a pair whose quarter of the

fold was the organ loft, who were always charmed with the piping of that melodious pastor.

Shall we, too, while the coffin yet rests on the outer earth's surface, enter the chapel whither these void remains of our dear sister departed are borne by the smug undertaker's gentlemen, and pronounce an elegy over that bedizened box of corruption? When the young are stricken down and their roses nipped in an hour by the destroying blight, even the stranger can sympathize, who counts the scant years on the gravestone or reads the notice in the newspaper corner. The contrast forces itself on you. A fair young creature, bright and blooming yesterday, distributing smiles, levying homage, inspiring desire, conscious of her power to charm and gay with the natural enjoyment of her conquests—who, in his walk through the world, has not looked on many such a one; and, at the notion of her sudden call away from beauty, triumph, pleasure; her helpless outcries during her short pain; her vain pleas for a little respite; her sentence and its execution—has not felt a shock of pity? When the days of a long life come to its close, and a white head sinks to rise no more, we bow our own with respect as the mourning train passes, and salute the heraldry and devices of yonder pomp as symbols of age, wisdom, deserved respect, and merited honor; long experience of suffering and action. The wealth he may have achieved is the harvest which he sowed; the titles on his hearse, fruits of the field he bravely and laboriously wrought in. But to live to four-score years, and be found dancing among the idle virgins! To have had near a century of allotted time, and then be called away from the giddy notes of a May Fair fiddle! To have to yield your roses, too, and then drop out of the bony clutch of your old fingers a wreath that came from a Parisian band-box! One fancies around some graves unseen troops of mourners waiting; many and many a poor pensioner trooping to the place; many weeping charities; many kind actions; many dear friends, beloved and deplored, rising up at the toll of that bell, to follow the honored hearse; dead parents waiting above, and calling, "Come, daughter;" lost children, heaven's foundlings, hovering round like cherubim, and whispering, "Welcome, mother." Here is one who reposes after a long feast, where no love has been; after girlhood, without kindly maternal nurture; marriage, without affection; matronhood, without its precious griefs and joys; after four-score years of lonely vanity. Let us take off our hats to that