Mrs. Ryle it might not be altogether prudent to allude to the heirship of Cris to Trevlyn Hold.

The sum named conciliated the ear of Mr. Apperley, otherwise he had not listened with any favour to the plan. "Ten thousand pounds! And Wall but a middle-aged man! That's worth thinking of, George."

"I could never live in a shop; the close air, the confinement, would stifle me," said George, with a groan, putting aside for the moment his more forcible objections.

"You'd rather live in a thunder-storm, with the rain coming down on your head in bucketfuls," said Mr. Chattaway, sarcastically.

"A great deal," said George.

Farmer Apperley did not detect the irony of Mr. Chattaway's remark, or the bitterness of the answer. "You'll say next, boy, that you'd rather go for a sailor, and be exposed to the weather night and day, perched midway between sky and water!"

"So I would," was George's truthful answer. "Mamma! let me stay at the farm!" he cried, the nervous motion of his hands, the strained countenance, proving how momentous was the question to his grieved heart. "You do not know how useful I should soon become! And papa wished it."

Mrs. Ryle shook her head. "You are too young, George, to be of use. No."

George seemed to turn white; face, and heart, and all. He was approaching Mrs. Ryle with an imploring gesture; but Mr. Chattaway caught his arm and pushed him towards his seat again. "George, if I were you, I would not, on this day, cross my mother."

George glanced at her. Not a shade of love, of relenting, was there on her countenance. Cold, haughty, self-willed, it always was; but more cold, more haughty, more self-willed than usual now. He turned and left the room, his heart bursting, crossed the kitchen, and passed into the room whence his father had been carried only two hours before.

"Oh, papa! papa!" he sobbed, "if you were only back again!"

CHAPTER VIII.

INCIPIENT REBELLION.

Borne down by the powers above him, George Ryle could only succumb to their will. Persuaded by the eloquence of Mr. Chattaway, Mrs. Ryle became convinced that placing George in the establishment of Wall and Barnes was the most appropriate thing that could be found for him, the most promising. The wonder was, that she should have brought herself to listen to Chattaway at all, or have entertained for a moment any proposal emanating from him. There could have been but one solution to the riddle: that of her own anxiety to get George settled in something away from home. Down deep in the heart of Mrs. Ryle, there was seated a deep sense of injury—of injustice—of wrong. It had been seated there ever since the death of Squire Trevlyn, influencing her actions, warping her temper—the question of the heirship of Trevlyn. Her father had bequeathed Trevlyn Hold to Chattaway; and Chattaway's son was now the heir; whereas, in her opinion, it was her son, Trevlyn Ryle, who should be occupying that desirable distinction. How Mrs. Ryle reconciled it to her conscience to ignore the claims of young Rupert Trevlyn, she best knew.

She did ignore them. She cast no more thought to Rupert in connection with the succession to Trevlyn, than if he had not been in existence. He had been barred from it by the Squire's will, and there it ended. But, failing heirs to her two dead brothers, it was *her* son who should have come in. Was she not the eldest daughter? What right had that worm, Chattaway, to have insinuated himself into the home of the Squire? into—it may be said—his heart? and so willed over to himself the inheritance?

A bitter fact to Mrs. Ryle; a fact which rankled in her heart by night and by day; a turning from the path of justice which she firmly intended to see turned back again. She saw not how it was to be accomplished; she knew not by what means it could be brought about; she divined not yet how she should help in it; but she was fully determined that it should be Trevlyn Ryle eventually to possess Trevlyn Hold. Never, Cris Chattaway.

A determination immutable as the rock; a purpose in the furtherance of which she never swerved nor faltered; there it lay in the archives of her most secret thoughts, a part and parcel of herself, not the less nourished because never spoken of. It may be, that in the death of her husband she saw her way to the end somewhat more clearly; that his removal was but one impediment taken from the path. She had never given utterance to her ambitious hopes for Trevlyn but once; and that had been to her husband. His reception of them was a warning to her never to speak of them again to him. No son of his, he said, should inherit Trevlyn Hold whilst the children of Joseph Trevlyn lived. If Chattaway chose to wrest their rights from them, to make his son Cris usurper after him, he, Mr. Ryle, could not hinder it; but his own boy Treve should never take act or part in so crying a wrong. So long as Rupert and Maude Trevlyn lived, he could never recognize other rights than theirs. From that time forward Mrs. Ryle held her tongue to her husband, as she had done to all else; but the roots of the project grew deeper and deeper in her heart, overspreading all its healthy fibres.

With this great destiny in view for Treve, it will readily be understood why she did not purpose bringing him up to any profession, or sending him out in the world. Her intention was, that Treve should live at home, as soon as his school-days were over; should be master of Trevlyn Farm, until he could become master of Trevlyn Hold. And for this reason, and this alone, she did not care to keep George with her. Trevlyn Farm might be a living for one son; it would not be for two: neither would two masters on it answer, although they were brothers. It is true, a thought at times crossed her whether it might not be well, in the interests of the farm, to retain George. He would soon become useful; he would be trustworthy; her interests would be his; and she felt dubious about confiding all management to John Pinder. But these suggestions were overruled by the thought that it would not be desirable for George to acquire a footing on the farm as its master, and then to be turned from it when the time came for Treve. As much for George's sake as for Treve's, she felt this; and she determined to place George at something away, where his interests and Treve's would not clash with each other.

Wall and Barnes were flourishing and respectable tradesmen, silk-mercers and linen-drapers; their establishment a large one, the oldest and best-conducted in Barmester. Had it been

suggested to Mrs. Ryle to place Treve there, she would have retorted in haughty indignation. And yet she was sending George!

What Mr. Chattaway's precise object could be in wishing to get George away from home, he alone knew. That he had such an object, there could be no shadow of doubt; and Mrs. Ryle's usual clear-sightedness must have been just then obscured, not to perceive it. Had his own interests or pleasure not been in some way involved, Chattaway would have taken no more heed as to what became of George, than he did of a clod of earth in that miserable field just rendered famous by the doings of the ill-conditioned bull. It was Chattaway who did it all. He negotiated with Wall and Barnes; he brought news of his success to Mrs. Ryle; he won over Farmer Apperley. Wall and Barnes had occasionally taken a youth without premium—the youth being expected to perform an unusual variety of work for the favour, to be at once an apprentice and a general factotum, at the beck and call of the establishment. Under those concessions, Wall and Barnes had been known to forego the usual premium; and this great boon was, through Mr. Chattaway, offered to George Ryle. Chattaway boasted of it; he enlarged upon his luck to George; and Mrs. Ryle—accepted it.

And George? Every pulse in his body coursed on in fiery indignation against the measure, every feeling of his heart rebelled at it. But, of opposition, he could make none: none that served him. Chattaway quietly put him down; Mrs. Ryle met all his remonstrances with the answer that she had *decided;* and Farmer Apperley laboured to convince him that it was a slice of good fortune, which any one (under the degree of a gentleman who rode to cover in a scarlet coat and white smalls) might jump at. Was not Wall, who had not yet reached his five-and-fortieth yea, a ten-thousand-pound man? Turn where George would, there appeared to be no escape for him; no refuge. He must give up all the dreams of his life—not that the dreams had been as yet particularly defined—and become what his mind quite revolted at, what he knew he should never do anything but dislike bitterly. Had he been a less right-minded boy, less dutiful, he would have openly rebelled, have defied Chattaway, have declined to obey Mrs. Ryle. But that sort of rebellion George did not enter upon. The injunction of his dead father lay on him all too forcibly—"Obey and reverence your mother." And so the agreement was made, and

George Ryle was to go to Wall and Barnes, to be bound to them for seven years.

He stood leaning out of the casement window, the night before he was to enter; his aching brow bared to the cold air, cloudy as the autumn sky. Treve was fast asleep, in his own little bed in the far corner, shaded and sheltered by its curtains; but there was no such peaceful sleep for George. The thoughts to which he was giving vent were not altogether profitable ones; and certain questions which arose in his mind had been better left out of it.

"What *right* have they so to dispose of me?" he asked, alluding, it must be confessed, to the trio, Chattaway, Mrs. Ryle, and Mr. Apperley. "They *know* that if papa had lived, they would not have dared to urge my being put to it. I wonder what it will end in? I wonder whether I shall have to be at it always? It is *not* right to put a poor fellow to what he hates most of all in life, and what he'll hate for ever and for ever."

He gazed out at the low gloomy stretch of land lying under the night sky, looking as desolate as he was. "I'd rather go for a sailor!" broke from him in his despair; "I'd rather——"

A hot hand on his shoulder caused him to start and turn. There stood Nora.

"If I didn't say one of you boys was out of bed! What's this for, George? What are you doing?—trying to catch your death at the open window?"

"As good catch my death, for all I see, as live in this world, now," was George's answer.

"As good be a young simpleton and confess to it," retorted Nora, angrily. "What's the matter, George?"

"Why should they force me to that place at Barmester?" cried George, following up his grieved thoughts, rather than replying to Nora's question. "I wish Chattaway had been a thousand miles away first! What business has he to interfere about me?"

"I wish I was queen at odd moments, when work seems to be coming in seven ways at once, and only one pair of hands to do it," quoth Nora.

George turned from the window. "Nora, look here! You know I am a gentleman born: *is* it right to put me to it?"

Nora evaded an answer. She felt nearly as much as the boy did; but she saw no way of escape for him, and therefore would not oppose it.

There was no way of escape. Chattaway had decided it, Mrs. Ryle had acquiesced, and George was conducted to the new house, and took up his abode in it, rebellious feelings choking his heart, rebellious words rising to his lips.

But he did his utmost to beat the rebellion down. The charge of his dead father was ever before him—to render all duty and obedience to his step-mother—and George was mindful of it. He felt as one crushed under a whole weight of despair; he felt as one who had been rudely thrust from his proper place on earth: but he did constant battle with himself and his wrongs, and strove to make the best of it. How bitter the struggle was, none, save himself, knew; its remembrance would never die out from his memory.

The new work seemed terrible; not for its amount, though that was great; but from its nature. To help make up this parcel, to undo that; to take down these goods, to put up others. He ran to the post with letters—and that was a delightful phase of his life, compared with the rest of its phases—he carried out big bundles in brown paper; once a yard measure was added. He had to stand behind the counter, and roll and unroll goods, and measure tapes and ribbons, and bow and smile, and say "sir" and "ma'am." You will readily conceive what all this was to a proud boy. George might have run away from it altogether, but that the image of that table in the sitting-room, and of him who lay upon it, was ever before him, whispering to him to shrink not from his duty.

Not a moment of idleness was allowed to George; however the shopmen might enjoy leisure intervals when customers were few, there was no interval of leisure for him. He was the new scapegoat of the establishment; often doing the work that of right did not belong to him. It was perfectly well known to the young men that he had entered as a working apprentice; one who was not to be particular in work he did, or its quantity; and therefore he was not spared. He had taken his books with him, classics and others; he soon found that he might as well have left them at home. Not one minute in all the twenty-four hours could he devote to them. His hands were full of work until the last moment, up to bed-time; and no reading was permitted in the chambers. "Where is the use of my having gone to school at all?" he would sometimes ask himself. He would soon become as oblivious of Latin and Greek as Mr. Chattaway could wish; and his prospects of adding to his

stock of learning were such as would have gladdened Farmer Apperley's heart.

One Saturday, when George had been there about three weeks, and when the day was drawing near for the indentures to be signed, binding him to the business for years, Mr. Chattaway rode up in the very costume that was the subject of Farmer Apperley's ire, when worn by those who ought not to afford to wear it. The hounds had met that day near Barmester, had found their fox, and been led a round-about chase, the fox bringing them back to their starting-point, to resign his brush; and the master of Trevlyn Hold, on his splashed but fine hunter, in his scarlet coat, white smalls and boots, splashed also, rode through Barmester on his return, and pulled up at the door of Wall and Barnes. Giving his horse to a street boy to hold, he entered the shop, whip in hand.

The scarlet coat, looming in unexpectedly, caused a flutter in the establishment. Saturday was market-day, and the shop was unusually full. The customers looked round in admiration, the shopmen with envy. Little chance was there, thought those hard-worked, unambitious young men, that they should ever wear a scarlet coat, and ride to cover on a blood hunter. Mr. Chattaway, of Trevlyn Hold, was an object of consideration just then. He shook hands with Mr. Wall, who came forward from some remote region; he turned and shook hands condescendingly with George.

"And how does he suit?" blandly inquired Mr. Chattaway. "Can you make anything of him?"

"He does his best," was the reply of Mr. Wall. "Awkward at present; but we have had others who have been as awkward at first, I think, and who have turned out valuable assistants in the long-run. I am willing to take him."

"That's all right, then," said Mr. Chattaway. "I'll call in and tell Mrs. Ryle. Wednesday is the day he is to be bound, I think?"

"Wednesday," assented Mr. Wall.

"I shall be here. I am glad to take this trouble off Mrs. Ryle's hands. I hope you like your employment, George."

"I do not like it at all," replied George. And he spoke out fearlessly, although his master stood by.

"Oh, indeed!" said Mr. Chattaway, with a false-sounding laugh. "Well, I did not suppose you would like it too well at first."

Mr. Wall laughed also, a hearty, kindly laugh. "Never yet was there an apprentice liked his work too well," said he. "It's their first taste of the labour of life. George Ryle will like it better when he is used to it."

"I never shall," thought George. But he supposed it would not quite do to say so; neither would it answer any end. Mr. Chattaway shook hands with Mr. Wall, gave a nod to George, and he and his scarlet coat loomed out again.

"Will it last my life?—will this dreadful slavery last my life?" burst from George Ryle's rebellious heart.

CHAPTER IX.

EMANCIPATION.

On the following day, Sunday, George walked home: Mrs. Ryle had told him he might come and spend the day at the Farm. All were at church except Molly, and George went to meet them. Several groups were coming along; and presently he met Cris Chattaway, Rupert Trevlyn, and his brother Treve, walking together.

"Where's mamma?" asked George.

"She stepped indoors with Mrs. Apperley," answered Treve. "She said she'd follow me on directly."

"How do you relish linen-drapering?" asked Cris Chattaway, in a chaffing sort of manner, as George turned with them. "Horrid, isn't it?"

"There's only about one thing in this world more horrid," answered George.

"My father said you expressed fears before you went that you'd find the air at the shop stifling," went on Cris, not asking what the one exception might be. "Is it hopelessly so?"

"Isn't it!" returned George. "The black hole in Calcutta must have been cool and pleasant in comparison with it."

"I wonder you are alive," continued Cris.

"I wonder I am," said George, equably. "I was quite off in a faint one day, when the shop was at the fullest. They thought they must have sent for you, Cris; that the sight of you might bring me to again."

"There you go!" exclaimed Treve Ryle. "I wonder it