

# MIDDLEMARCH

By  
George Eliot

*To my dear Husband,  
George Henry Lewes, in  
this nineteenth year of our  
blessed union.*

## PRELUDE

Who that cares much to know the history of man, and how the mysterious mixture behaves under the varying experiments of Time, has not dwelt, at least briefly, on the life of Saint Theresa, has not smiled with some gentleness at the thought of the little girl walking forth one morning hand-in-hand with her still smaller brother, to go and seek martyrdom in the country of the Moors? Out they toddled from rugged Avila, wide-eyed and helpless-looking as two fawns, but with human hearts, already beating to a national idea; until domestic reality met them in the shape of uncles, and turned them back from their great resolve. That child-pilgrimage was a fit beginning. Theresa's passionate, ideal nature demanded an epic life: what

were many-volumed romances of chivalry and the social conquests of a brilliant girl to her? Her flame quickly burned up that light fuel; and, fed from within, soared after some illimitable satisfaction, some object which would never justify weariness, which would reconcile self-despair with the rapturous consciousness of life beyond self. She found her epos in the reform of a religious order.

That Spanish woman who lived three hundred years ago, was certainly not the last of her kind. Many Therasas have been born who found for themselves no epic life wherein there was a constant unfolding of far-resonant action; perhaps only a life of mistakes, the offspring of a certain spiritual grandeur ill-matched with the meanness of opportunity; perhaps a tragic failure which found no sacred poet and sank unwept into oblivion. With dim lights and tangled circumstance they tried to shape their thought and deed in noble agreement; but after all, to common eyes their struggles seemed mere inconsistency and formlessness; for these later-born Therasas were helped by no coherent social faith and order which could perform the function of knowledge for the ardently willing soul. Their ardor alternated between a vague ideal and the common yearning of womanhood; so that the one was disapproved as extravagance, and the other condemned as a lapse.

Some have felt that these blundering lives are due

to the inconvenient indefiniteness with which the Supreme Power has fashioned the natures of women: if there were one level of feminine incompetence as strict as the ability to count three and no more, the social lot of women might be treated with scientific certitude. Meanwhile the indefiniteness remains, and the limits of variation are really much wider than any one would imagine from the sameness of women's coiffure and the favorite love-stories in prose and verse. Here and there a cygnet is reared uneasily among the ducklings in the brown pond, and never finds the living stream in fellowship with its own oary-footed kind. Here and there is born a Saint Theresa, foundress of nothing, whose loving heart-beats and sobs after an unattained goodness tremble off and are dispersed among hindrances, instead of centring in some long-recognizable deed.

# BOOK I

## MISS BROOKE

### CHAPTER I

*"Since I can do no good because a woman,  
Reach constantly at something that is near it.*

— **The Maid's Tragedy: BEAUMONT AND  
FLETCHER.**

Miss Brooke had that kind of beauty which seems to be thrown into relief by poor dress. Her hand and wrist were so finely formed that she could wear sleeves not less bare of style than those in which the Blessed Virgin appeared to Italian painters; and her profile as well as her stature and bearing seemed to gain the more dignity from her plain garments, which by the side of provincial fashion gave her the impressiveness of a fine quotation from the Bible, — or from one of our elder poets, — in a paragraph of to-day's newspaper. She was usually spoken of as being remarkably clever, but with the addition that her sister Celia had more common-sense. Nevertheless, Celia wore scarcely more trimmings; and it was only to close observers that her dress differed from her sister's, and had a shade of coquetry in its arrangements; for Miss Brooke's plain dressing was due to mixed conditions, in most of which her sister shared. The pride of being ladies had

something to do with it: the Brooke connections, though not exactly aristocratic, were unquestionably "good: " if you inquired backward for a generation or two, you would not find any yard-measuring or parcel-tying forefathers—anything lower than an admiral or a clergyman; and there was even an ancestor discernible as a Puritan gentleman who served under Cromwell, but afterwards conformed, and managed to come out of all political troubles as the proprietor of a respectable family estate. Young women of such birth, living in a quiet country-house, and attending a village church hardly larger than a parlor, naturally regarded frippery as the ambition of a huckster's daughter. Then there was well-bred economy, which in those days made show in dress the first item to be deducted from, when any margin was required for expenses more distinctive of rank. Such reasons would have been enough to account for plain dress, quite apart from religious feeling; but in Miss Brooke's case, religion alone would have determined it; and Celia mildly acquiesced in all her sister's sentiments, only infusing them with that common-sense which is able to accept momentous doctrines without any eccentric agitation. Dorothea knew many passages of Pascal's *Pensees* and of Jeremy Taylor by heart; and to her the destinies of mankind, seen by the light of Christianity, made the solitudes of feminine fashion appear an occupation for Bedlam. She could not reconcile the anxieties of a

spiritual life involving eternal consequences, with a keen interest in gimp and artificial protrusions of drapery. Her mind was theoretic, and yearned by its nature after some lofty conception of the world which might frankly include the parish of Tipton and her own rule of conduct there; she was enamoured of intensity and greatness, and rash in embracing whatever seemed to her to have those aspects; likely to seek martyrdom, to make retractations, and then to incur martyrdom after all in a quarter where she had not sought it. Certainly such elements in the character of a marriageable girl tended to interfere with her lot, and hinder it from being decided according to custom, by good looks, vanity, and merely canine affection. With all this, she, the elder of the sisters, was not yet twenty, and they had both been educated, since they were about twelve years old and had lost their parents, on plans at once narrow and promiscuous, first in an English family and afterwards in a Swiss family at Lausanne, their bachelor uncle and guardian trying in this way to remedy the disadvantages of their orphaned condition.

It was hardly a year since they had come to live at Tipton Grange with their uncle, a man nearly sixty, of acquiescent temper, miscellaneous opinions, and uncertain vote. He had travelled in his younger years, and was held in this part of the county to have contracted a too rambling habit of mind. Mr. Brooke's conclusions were as difficult to predict as the weather:

it was only safe to say that he would act with benevolent intentions, and that he would spend as little money as possible in carrying them out. For the most glutinously indefinite minds enclose some hard grains of habit; and a man has been seen lax about all his own interests except the retention of his snuff-box, concerning which he was watchful, suspicious, and greedy of clutch.

In Mr. Brooke the hereditary strain of Puritan energy was clearly in abeyance; but in his niece Dorothea it glowed alike through faults and virtues, turning sometimes into impatience of her uncle's talk or his way of "letting things be" on his estate, and making her long all the more for the time when she would be of age and have some command of money for generous schemes. She was regarded as an heiress; for not only had the sisters seven hundred a-year each from their parents, but if Dorothea married and had a son, that son would inherit Mr. Brooke's estate, presumably worth about three thousand a-year—a rental which seemed wealth to provincial families, still discussing Mr. Peel's late conduct on the Catholic question, innocent of future gold-fields, and of that gorgeous plutocracy which has so nobly exalted the necessities of genteel life.

And how should Dorothea not marry? — a girl so handsome and with such prospects? Nothing could hinder it but her love of extremes, and her insistence on

regulating life according to notions which might cause a wary man to hesitate before he made her an offer, or even might lead her at last to refuse all offers. A young lady of some birth and fortune, who knelt suddenly down on a brick floor by the side of a sick laborer and prayed fervidly as if she thought herself living in the time of the Apostles—who had strange whims of fasting like a Papist, and of sitting up at night to read old theological books! Such a wife might awaken you some fine morning with a new scheme for the application of her income which would interfere with political economy and the keeping of saddle-horses: a man would naturally think twice before he risked himself in such fellowship. Women were expected to have weak opinions; but the great safeguard of society and of domestic life was, that opinions were not acted on. Sane people did what their neighbors did, so that if any lunatics were at large, one might know and avoid them.

The rural opinion about the new young ladies, even among the cottagers, was generally in favor of Celia, as being so amiable and innocent-looking, while Miss Brooke's large eyes seemed, like her religion, too unusual and striking. Poor Dorothea! compared with her, the innocent-looking Celia was knowing and worldly-wise; so much subtler is a human mind than the outside tissues which make a sort of blazonry or clock-face for it.





Yet those who approached Dorothea, though prejudiced against her by this alarming hearsay, found that she had a charm unaccountably reconcilable with it. Most men thought her bewitching when she was on horseback. She loved the fresh air and the various aspects of the country, and when her eyes and cheeks glowed with mingled pleasure she looked very little like a devotee. Riding was an indulgence which she allowed herself in spite of conscientious qualms; she felt that she enjoyed it in a pagan sensuous way, and always looked forward to renouncing it.

She was open, ardent, and not in the least self-admiring; indeed, it was pretty to see how her imagination adorned her sister Celia with attractions altogether superior to her own, and if any gentleman

appeared to come to the Grange from some other motive than that of seeing Mr. Brooke, she concluded that he must be in love with Celia: Sir James Chettam, for example, whom she constantly considered from Celia's point of view, inwardly debating whether it would be good for Celia to accept him. That he should be regarded as a suitor to herself would have seemed to her a ridiculous irrelevance. Dorothea, with all her eagerness to know the truths of life, retained very childlike ideas about marriage. She felt sure that she would have accepted the judicious Hooker, if she had been born in time to save him from that wretched mistake he made in matrimony; or John Milton when his blindness had come on; or any of the other great men whose odd habits it would have been glorious piety to endure; but an amiable handsome baronet, who said "Exactly" to her remarks even when she expressed uncertainty, — how could he affect her as a lover? The really delightful marriage must be that where your husband was a sort of father, and could teach you even Hebrew, if you wished it.

These peculiarities of Dorothea's character caused Mr. Brooke to be all the more blamed in neighboring families for not securing some middle-aged lady as guide and companion to his nieces. But he himself dreaded so much the sort of superior woman likely to be available for such a position, that he allowed himself to be dissuaded by Dorothea's objections, and was in

this case brave enough to defy the world-that is to say, Mrs. Cadwallader the Rector's wife, and the small group of gentry with whom he visited in the northeast corner of Loamshire. So Miss Brooke presided in her uncle's household, and did not at all dislike her new authority, with the homage that belonged to it.

Sir James Chettam was going to dine at the Grange to-day with another gentleman whom the girls had never seen, and about whom Dorothea felt some venerated expectation. This was the Reverend Edward Casaubon, noted in the county as a man of profound learning, understood for many years to be engaged on a great work concerning religious history; also as a man of wealth enough to give lustre to his piety, and having views of his own which were to be more clearly ascertained on the publication of his book. His very name carried an impressiveness hardly to be measured without a precise chronology of scholarship.

Early in the day Dorothea had returned from the infant school which she had set going in the village, and was taking her usual place in the pretty sitting-room which divided the bedrooms of the sisters, bent on finishing a plan for some buildings (a kind of work which she delighted in), when Celia, who had been watching her with a hesitating desire to propose something, said-

"Dorothea, dear, if you don't mind-if you are not very busy-suppose we looked at mamma's jewels

to-day, and divided them? It is exactly six months to-day since uncle gave them to you, and you have not looked at them yet."

Celia's face had the shadow of a pouting expression in it, the full presence of the pout being kept back by an habitual awe of Dorothea and principle; two associated facts which might show a mysterious electricity if you touched them incautiously. To her relief, Dorothea's eyes were full of laughter as she looked up.

"What a wonderful little almanac you are, Celia! Is it six calendar or six lunar months?"

"It is the last day of September now, and it was the first of April when uncle gave them to you. You know, he said that he had forgotten them till then. I believe you have never thought of them since you locked them up in the cabinet here."

"Well, dear, we should never wear them, you know." Dorothea spoke in a full cordial tone, half caressing, half explanatory. She had her pencil in her hand, and was making tiny side-plans on a margin.

Celia colored, and looked very grave. "I think, dear, we are wanting in respect to mamma's memory, to put them by and take no notice of them. And," she added, after hesitating a little, with a rising sob of mortification, "necklaces are quite usual now; and Madame Poincon, who was stricter in some things even than you are, used to wear ornaments. And Christians

generally-surely there are women in heaven now who wore jewels." Celia was conscious of some mental strength when she really applied herself to argument.

"You would like to wear them?" exclaimed Dorothea, an air of astonished discovery animating her whole person with a dramatic action which she had caught from that very Madame Poincon who wore the ornaments. "Of course, then, let us have them out. Why did you not tell me before? But the keys, the keys!" She pressed her hands against the sides of her head and seemed to despair of her memory.

"They are here," said Celia, with whom this explanation had been long meditated and prearranged.

"Pray open the large drawer of the cabinet and get out the jewel-box."

The casket was soon open before them, and the various jewels spread out, making a bright parterre on the table. It was no great collection, but a few of the ornaments were really of remarkable beauty, the finest that was obvious at first being a necklace of purple amethysts set in exquisite gold work, and a pearl cross with five brilliants in it. Dorothea immediately took up the necklace and fastened it round her sister's neck, where it fitted almost as closely as a bracelet; but the circle suited the Henrietta-Maria style of Celia's head and neck, and she could see that it did, in the pier-glass opposite.

"There, Celia! you can wear that with your Indian

muslin. But this cross you must wear with your dark dresses."

Celia was trying not to smile with pleasure. "O Dodo, you must keep the cross yourself."

"No, no, dear, no," said Dorothea, putting up her hand with careless deprecation.

"Yes, indeed you must; it would suit you-in your black dress, now," said Celia, insistingly. "You *might* wear that."

"Not for the world, not for the world. A cross is the last thing I would wear as a trinket." Dorothea shuddered slightly.

"Then you will think it wicked in me to wear it," said Celia, uneasily.

"No, dear, no," said Dorothea, stroking her sister's cheek. "Souls have complexions too: what will suit one will not suit another."

"But you might like to keep it for mamma's sake."

"No, I have other things of mamma's-her sandal-wood box which I am so fond of-plenty of things. In fact, they are all yours, dear. We need discuss them no longer. There-take away your property."

Celia felt a little hurt. There was a strong assumption of superiority in this Puritanic toleration, hardly less trying to the blond flesh of an unenthusiastic sister than a Puritanic persecution.

"But how can I wear ornaments if you, who are the elder sister, will never wear them?"

"Nay, Celia, that is too much to ask, that I should wear trinkets to keep you in countenance. If I were to put on such a necklace as that, I should feel as if I had been pirouetting. The world would go round with me, and I should not know how to walk."

Celia had unclasped the necklace and drawn it off. "It would be a little tight for your neck; something to lie down and hang would suit you better," she said, with some satisfaction. The complete unfitness of the necklace from all points of view for Dorothea, made Celia happier in taking it. She was opening some ring-boxes, which disclosed a fine emerald with diamonds, and just then the sun passing beyond a cloud sent a bright gleam over the table.

"How very beautiful these gems are!" said Dorothea, under a new current of feeling, as sudden as the gleam. "It is strange how deeply colors seem to penetrate one, like scent. I suppose that is the reason why gems are used as spiritual emblems in the Revelation of St. John. They look like fragments of heaven. I think that emerald is more beautiful than any of them."

"And there is a bracelet to match it," said Celia. "We did not notice this at first."

"They are lovely," said Dorothea, slipping the ring and bracelet on her finely turned finger and wrist, and holding them towards the window on a level with her eyes. All the while her thought was trying to justify

her delight in the colors by merging them in her mystic religious joy.

"You *would* like those, Dorothea," said Celia, rather falteringly, beginning to think with wonder that her sister showed some weakness, and also that emeralds would suit her own complexion even better than purple amethysts. "You must keep that ring and bracelet-if nothing else. But see, these agates are very pretty and quiet."

"Yes! I will keep these-this ring and bracelet," said Dorothea. Then, letting her hand fall on the table, she said in another tone-"Yet what miserable men find such things, and work at them, and sell them!" She paused again, and Celia thought that her sister was going to renounce the ornaments, as in consistency she ought to do.

"Yes, dear, I will keep these," said Dorothea, decidedly. "But take all the rest away, and the casket."

She took up her pencil without removing the jewels, and still looking at them. She thought of often having them by her, to feed her eye at these little fountains of pure color.

"Shall you wear them in company?" said Celia, who was watching her with real curiosity as to what she would do.

Dorothea glanced quickly at her sister. Across all her imaginative adornment of those whom she loved, there darted now and then a keen discernment, which



was not without a scorching quality. If Miss Brooke ever attained perfect meekness, it would not be for lack of inward fire.

"Perhaps," she said, rather haughtily. "I cannot tell to what level I may sink."

Celia blushed, and was unhappy: she saw that she had offended her sister, and dared not say even anything pretty about the gift of the ornaments which she put back into the box and carried away. Dorothea too was unhappy, as she went on with her plan-drawing, questioning the purity of her own feeling and speech in the scene which had ended with that little explosion.

Celia's consciousness told her that she had not been at all in the wrong: it was quite natural and justifiable that she should have asked that question, and she repeated to herself that Dorothea was inconsistent: either she should have taken her full share of the jewels, or, after what she had said, she should have renounced them altogether.

"I am sure-at least, I trust," thought Celia, "that the wearing of a necklace will not interfere with my prayers. And I do not see that I should be bound by Dorothea's opinions now we are going into society, though of course she herself ought to be bound by them. But Dorothea is not always consistent."

Thus Celia, mutely bending over her tapestry, until she heard her sister calling her.

"Here, Kitty, come and look at my plan; I shall think I am a great architect, if I have not got incompatible stairs and fireplaces."

As Celia bent over the paper, Dorothea put her cheek against her sister's arm caressingly. Celia understood the action. Dorothea saw that she had been in the wrong, and Celia pardoned her. Since they could remember, there had been a mixture of criticism and awe in the attitude of Celia's mind towards her elder sister. The younger had always worn a yoke; but is there any yoked creature without its private opinions?

## CHAPTER II

*"Dime; no ves aquel caballero que hacia nosotros viene sobre un caballo rucio rodado que trae puesto en la cabeza un yelmo de oro?" 'Lo que veo y columbro,' respondio Sancho, 'no es sino un hombre sobre un as no pardo como el mio, que trae sobre la cabeza una cosa que relumbra.' 'Pues ese es el yelmo de Mambrino,' dijo Don Quijote."*

— CERVANTES.

*"Seest thou not yon cavalier who cometh toward us on a dapple-gray steed, and weareth a golden helmet?' 'What I see,' answered Sancho, 'is nothing but a man on a gray ass like my own, who carries something shiny on his head.' 'Just so,' answered Don Quixote: 'and that resplendent object is the helmet of Mambrino.'"*

"Sir Humphry Davy?" said Mr. Brooke, over the soup, in his easy smiling way, taking up Sir James Chettam's remark that he was studying Davy's Agricultural Chemistry. "Well, now, Sir Humphry Davy; I dined with him years ago at Cartwright's, and Wordsworth was there too—the poet Wordsworth, you know. Now there was something singular. I was at Cambridge when Wordsworth was there, and I never met him—and I dined with him twenty years afterwards at Cartwright's. There's an oddity in things, now. But Davy was there: he was a poet too. Or, as I may say, Wordsworth was poet one, and Davy was poet two. That was true in every sense, you know."

Dorothea felt a little more uneasy than usual. In the beginning of dinner, the party being small and the room still, these notes from the mass of a magistrate's mind fell too noticeably. She wondered how a man like Mr. Casaubon would support such triviality. His manners, she thought, were very dignified; the set of his iron-gray hair and his deep eye-sockets made him resemble the portrait of Locke. He had the spare form and the pale complexion which became a student; as different as possible from the blooming Englishman of the red-whiskered type represented by Sir James Chettam.

"I am reading the Agricultural Chemistry," said this excellent baronet, "because I am going to take one of the farms into my own hands, and see if something cannot be done in setting a good pattern of farming among my tenants. Do you approve of that, Miss Brooke?"

"A great mistake, Chettam," interposed Mr. Brooke, "going into electrifying your land and that kind of thing, and making a parlor of your cow-house. It won't do. I went into science a great deal myself at one time; but I saw it would not do. It leads to everything; you can let nothing alone. No, no-see that your tenants don't sell their straw, and that kind of thing; and give them draining-tiles, you know. But your fancy farming will not do-the most expensive sort of whistle you can buy: you may as well keep a pack of hounds."

"Surely," said Dorothea, "it is better to spend money in finding out how men can make the most of the land which supports them all, than in keeping dogs and horses only to gallop over it. It is not a sin to make yourself poor in performing experiments for the good of all."

She spoke with more energy than is expected of so young a lady, but Sir James had appealed to her. He was accustomed to do so, and she had often thought that she could urge him to many good actions when he was her brother-in-law.

Mr. Casaubon turned his eyes very markedly on Dorothea while she was speaking, and seemed to observe her newly.

"Young ladies don't understand political economy, you know," said Mr. Brooke, smiling towards Mr. Casaubon. "I remember when we were all reading Adam Smith. *There* is a book, now. I took in all the new ideas at one time-human perfectibility, now. But some say, history moves in circles; and that may be very well argued; I have argued it myself. The fact is, human reason may carry you a little too far-over the hedge, in fact. It carried me a good way at one time; but I saw it would not do. I pulled up; I pulled up in time. But not too hard. I have always been in favor of a little theory: we must have Thought; else we shall be landed back in the dark ages. But talking of books, there is Southey's 'Peninsular War.' I am reading that of a

morning. You know Southey?"

"No" said Mr. Casaubon, not keeping pace with Mr. Brooke's impetuous reason, and thinking of the book only. "I have little leisure for such literature just now. I have been using up my eyesight on old characters lately; the fact is, I want a reader for my evenings; but I am fastidious in voices, and I cannot endure listening to an imperfect reader. It is a misfortune, in some senses: I feed too much on the inward sources; I live too much with the dead. My mind is something like the ghost of an ancient, wandering about the world and trying mentally to construct it as it used to be, in spite of ruin and confusing changes. But I find it necessary to use the utmost caution about my eyesight."

This was the first time that Mr. Casaubon had spoken at any length. He delivered himself with precision, as if he had been called upon to make a public statement; and the balanced sing-song neatness of his speech, occasionally corresponded to by a movement of his head, was the more conspicuous from its contrast with good Mr. Brooke's scrappy slovenliness. Dorothea said to herself that Mr. Casaubon was the most interesting man she had ever seen, not excepting even Monsieur Liret, the Vaudois clergyman who had given conferences on the history of the Waldenses. To reconstruct a past world, doubtless with a view to the highest purposes of truth-what a

work to be in any way present at, to assist in, though only as a lamp-holder! This elevating thought lifted her above her annoyance at being twitted with her ignorance of political economy, that never-explained science which was thrust as an extinguisher over all her lights.

"But you are fond of riding, Miss Brooke," Sir James presently took an opportunity of saying. "I should have thought you would enter a little into the pleasures of hunting. I wish you would let me send over a chestnut horse for you to try. It has been trained for a lady. I saw you on Saturday cantering over the hill on a nag not worthy of you. My groom shall bring Corydon for you every day, if you will only mention the time."

"Thank you, you are very good. I mean to give up riding. I shall not ride any more," said Dorothea, urged to this brusque resolution by a little annoyance that Sir James would be soliciting her attention when she wanted to give it all to Mr. Casaubon.

"No, that is too hard," said Sir James, in a tone of reproach that showed strong interest. "Your sister is given to self-mortification, is she not?" he continued, turning to Celia, who sat at his right hand.

"I think she is," said Celia, feeling afraid lest she should say something that would not please her sister, and blushing as prettily as possible above her necklace. "She likes giving up."

"If that were true, Celia, my giving-up would be

self-indulgence, not self-mortification. But there may be good reasons for choosing not to do what is very agreeable," said Dorothea.

Mr. Brooke was speaking at the same time, but it was evident that Mr. Casaubon was observing Dorothea, and she was aware of it.

"Exactly," said Sir James. "You give up from some high, generous motive."

"No, indeed, not exactly. I did not say that of myself," answered Dorothea, reddening. Unlike Celia, she rarely blushed, and only from high delight or anger. At this moment she felt angry with the perverse Sir James. Why did he not pay attention to Celia, and leave her to listen to Mr. Casaubon? — if that learned man would only talk, instead of allowing himself to be talked to by Mr. Brooke, who was just then informing him that the Reformation either meant something or it did not, that he himself was a Protestant to the core, but that Catholicism was a fact; and as to refusing an acre of your ground for a Romanist chapel, all men needed the bridle of religion, which, properly speaking, was the dread of a Hereafter.

"I made a great study of theology at one time," said Mr. Brooke, as if to explain the insight just manifested. "I know something of all schools. I knew Wilberforce in his best days. Do you know Wilberforce?"

Mr. Casaubon said, "No."



"Well, Wilberforce was perhaps not enough of a thinker; but if I went into Parliament, as I have been asked to do, I should sit on the independent bench, as Wilberforce did, and work at philanthropy."

Mr. Casaubon bowed, and observed that it was a wide field.

"Yes," said Mr. Brooke, with an easy smile, "but I have documents. I began a long while ago to collect documents. They want arranging, but when a question has struck me, I have written to somebody and got an answer. I have documents at my back. But now, how do you arrange your documents?"

"In pigeon-holes partly," said Mr. Casaubon, with rather a startled air of effort.

"Ah, pigeon-holes will not do. I have tried pigeon-holes, but everything gets mixed in pigeon-holes: I never know whether a paper is in A or Z."

"I wish you would let me sort your papers for you, uncle," said Dorothea. "I would letter them all, and then make a list of subjects under each letter."

Mr. Casaubon gravely smiled approval, and said to Mr. Brooke, "You have an excellent secretary at hand, you perceive."

"No, no," said Mr. Brooke, shaking his head; "I cannot let young ladies meddle with my documents. Young ladies are too flighty."

Dorothea felt hurt. Mr. Casaubon would think

that her uncle had some special reason for delivering this opinion, whereas the remark lay in his mind as lightly as the broken wing of an insect among all the other fragments there, and a chance current had sent it alighting on *her* .

When the two girls were in the drawing-room alone, Celia said-

"How very ugly Mr. Casaubon is!"

"Celia! He is one of the most distinguished-looking men I ever saw. He is remarkably like the portrait of Locke. He has the same deep eye-sockets."

"Had Locke those two white moles with hairs on them?"

"Oh, I dare say! when people of a certain sort looked at him," said Dorothea, walking away a little.

"Mr. Casaubon is so sallow."

"All the better. I suppose you admire a man with the complexion of a cochon de lait."

"Dodo!" exclaimed Celia, looking after her in surprise. "I never heard you make such a comparison before."

"Why should I make it before the occasion came? It is a good comparison: the match is perfect."

Miss Brooke was clearly forgetting herself, and Celia thought so.

"I wonder you show temper, Dorothea."

"It is so painful in you, Celia, that you will look

at human beings as if they were merely animals with a toilet, and never see the great soul in a man's face."

"Has Mr. Casaubon a great soul?" Celia was not without a touch of naive malice.

"Yes, I believe he has," said Dorothea, with the full voice of decision. "Everything I see in him corresponds to his pamphlet on Biblical Cosmology."

"He talks very little," said Celia

"There is no one for him to talk to."

Celia thought privately, "Dorothea quite despises Sir James Chettam; I believe she would not accept him." Celia felt that this was a pity. She had never been deceived as to the object of the baronet's interest. Sometimes, indeed, she had reflected that Dodo would perhaps not make a husband happy who had not her way of looking at things; and stifled in the depths of her heart was the feeling that her sister was too religious for family comfort. Notions and scruples were like spilt needles, making one afraid of treading, or sitting down, or even eating.

When Miss Brooke was at the tea-table, Sir James came to sit down by her, not having felt her mode of answering him at all offensive. Why should he? He thought it probable that Miss Brooke liked him, and manners must be very marked indeed before they cease to be interpreted by preconceptions either confident or distrustful. She was thoroughly charming to him, but of course he theorized a little about his attachment. He

was made of excellent human dough, and had the rare merit of knowing that his talents, even if let loose, would not set the smallest stream in the county on fire: hence he liked the prospect of a wife to whom he could say, "What shall we do?" about this or that; who could help her husband out with reasons, and would also have the property qualification for doing so. As to the excessive religiousness alleged against Miss Brooke, he had a very indefinite notion of what it consisted in, and thought that it would die out with marriage. In short, he felt himself to be in love in the right place, and was ready to endure a great deal of predominance, which, after all, a man could always put down when he liked. Sir James had no idea that he should ever like to put down the predominance of this handsome girl, in whose cleverness he delighted. Why not? A man's mind—what there is of it—has always the advantage of being masculine, — as the smallest birch-tree is of a higher kind than the most soaring palm, — and even his ignorance is of a sounder quality. Sir James might not have originated this estimate; but a kind Providence furnishes the limpest personality with a little gum or starch in the form of tradition.

"Let me hope that you will rescind that resolution about the horse, Miss Brooke," said the persevering admirer. "I assure you, riding is the most healthy of exercises."

"I am aware of it," said Dorothea, coldly. "I think

it would do Celia good-if she would take to it."

"But you are such a perfect horsewoman."

"Excuse me; I have had very little practice, and I should be easily thrown."

"Then that is a reason for more practice. Every lady ought to be a perfect horsewoman, that she may accompany her husband."

"You see how widely we differ, Sir James. I have made up my mind that I ought not to be a perfect horsewoman, and so I should never correspond to your pattern of a lady." Dorothea looked straight before her, and spoke with cold brusquerie, very much with the air of a handsome boy, in amusing contrast with the solicitous amiability of her admirer.

"I should like to know your reasons for this cruel resolution. It is not possible that you should think horsemanship wrong."

"It is quite possible that I should think it wrong for me."

"Oh, why?" said Sir James, in a tender tone of remonstrance.

Mr. Casaubon had come up to the table, teacup in hand, and was listening.

"We must not inquire too curiously into motives," he interposed, in his measured way. "Miss Brooke knows that they are apt to become feeble in the utterance: the aroma is mixed with the grosser air. We must keep the germinating grain away from the light."

Dorothea colored with pleasure, and looked up gratefully to the speaker. Here was a man who could understand the higher inward life, and with whom there could be some spiritual communion; nay, who could illuminate principle with the widest knowledge a man whose learning almost amounted to a proof of whatever he believed!

Dorothea's inferences may seem large; but really life could never have gone on at any period but for this liberal allowance of conclusions, which has facilitated marriage under the difficulties of civilization. Has any one ever pinched into its pilulous smallness the cobweb of pre-matrimonial acquaintanceship?

"Certainly," said good Sir James. "Miss Brooke shall not be urged to tell reasons she would rather be silent upon. I am sure her reasons would do her honor."

He was not in the least jealous of the interest with which Dorothea had looked up at Mr. Casaubon: it never occurred to him that a girl to whom he was meditating an offer of marriage could care for a dried bookworm towards fifty, except, indeed, in a religious sort of way, as for a clergyman of some distinction.

However, since Miss Brooke had become engaged in a conversation with Mr. Casaubon about the Vaudois clergy, Sir James betook himself to Celia, and talked to her about her sister; spoke of a house in town, and asked whether Miss Brooke disliked London. Away from her sister, Celia talked quite easily, and Sir

James said to himself that the second Miss Brooke was certainly very agreeable as well as pretty, though not, as some people pretended, more clever and sensible than the elder sister. He felt that he had chosen the one who was in all respects the superior; and a man naturally likes to look forward to having the best. He would be the very Mawworm of bachelors who pretended not to expect it.

### CHAPTER III

"Say, goddess, what  
ensued, when Raphael,  
The affable  
archangel...  
Eve  
The story heard  
attentive, and was filled  
With admiration, and  
deep muse, to hear  
Of things so high and  
strange."

— Paradise Lost, B.  
vii.

If it had really occurred to Mr. Casaubon to think

of Miss Brooke as a suitable wife for him, the reasons that might induce her to accept him were already planted in her mind, and by the evening of the next day the reasons had budded and bloomed. For they had had a long conversation in the morning, while Celia, who did not like the company of Mr. Casaubon's moles and sallowness, had escaped to the vicarage to play with the curate's ill-shod but merry children.

Dorothea by this time had looked deep into the ungauged reservoir of Mr. Casaubon's mind, seeing reflected there in vague labyrinthine extension every quality she herself brought; had opened much of her own experience to him, and had understood from him the scope of his great work, also of attractively labyrinthine extent. For he had been as instructive as Milton's "affable archangel;" and with something of the archangelic manner he told her how he had undertaken to show (what indeed had been attempted before, but not with that thoroughness, justice of comparison, and effectiveness of arrangement at which Mr. Casaubon aimed) that all the mythical systems or erratic mythical fragments in the world were corruptions of a tradition originally revealed. Having once mastered the true position and taken a firm footing there, the vast field of mythical constructions became intelligible, nay, luminous with the reflected light of correspondences. But to gather in this great harvest of truth was no light or speedy work. His notes already made a formidable



range of volumes, but the crowning task would be to condense these voluminous still-accumulating results and bring them, like the earlier vintage of Hippocratic books, to fit a little shelf. In explaining this to Dorothea, Mr. Casaubon expressed himself nearly as he would have done to a fellow-student, for he had not two styles of talking at command: it is true that when he used a Greek or Latin phrase he always gave the English with scrupulous care, but he would probably have done this in any case. A learned provincial clergyman is accustomed to think of his acquaintances as of "lords, knyghtes, and other noble and worthi men, that conne Latyn but lytille."

Dorothea was altogether captivated by the wide embrace of this conception. Here was something beyond the shallows of ladies' school literature: here was a living Bossuet, whose work would reconcile complete knowledge with devoted piety; here was a modern Augustine who united the glories of doctor and saint.

The sanctity seemed no less clearly marked than the learning, for when Dorothea was impelled to open her mind on certain themes which she could speak of to no one whom she had before seen at Tipton, especially on the secondary importance of ecclesiastical forms and articles of belief compared with that spiritual religion, that submergence of self in communion with Divine perfection which seemed to her to be expressed in the

best Christian books of widely distant ages, she found in Mr. Casaubon a listener who understood her at once, who could assure her of his own agreement with that view when duly tempered with wise conformity, and could mention historical examples before unknown to her.

"He thinks with me," said Dorothea to herself, "or rather, he thinks a whole world of which my thought is but a poor twopenny mirror. And his feelings too, his whole experience-what a lake compared with my little pool!"

Miss Brooke argued from words and dispositions not less unhesitatingly than other young ladies of her age. Signs are small measurable things, but interpretations are illimitable, and in girls of sweet, ardent nature, every sign is apt to conjure up wonder, hope, belief, vast as a sky, and colored by a diffused thimbleful of matter in the shape of knowledge. They are not always too grossly deceived; for Sinbad himself may have fallen by good-luck on a true description, and wrong reasoning sometimes lands poor mortals in right conclusions: starting a long way off the true point, and proceeding by loops and zigzags, we now and then arrive just where we ought to be. Because Miss Brooke was hasty in her trust, it is not therefore clear that Mr. Casaubon was unworthy of it.

He stayed a little longer than he had intended, on a slight pressure of invitation from Mr. Brooke, who

offered no bait except his own documents on machine-breaking and rick-burning. Mr. Casaubon was called into the library to look at these in a heap, while his host picked up first one and then the other to read aloud from in a skipping and uncertain way, passing from one unfinished passage to another with a "Yes, now, but here!" and finally pushing them all aside to open the journal of his youthful Continental travels.

"Look here—here is all about Greece. Rhamnus, the ruins of Rhamnus—you are a great Grecian, now. I don't know whether you have given much study to the topography. I spent no end of time in making out these things—Helicon, now. Here, now! — 'We started the next morning for Parnassus, the double-peaked Parnassus.' All this volume is about Greece, you know," Mr. Brooke wound up, rubbing his thumb transversely along the edges of the leaves as he held the book forward.

Mr. Casaubon made a dignified though somewhat sad audience; bowed in the right place, and avoided looking at anything documentary as far as possible, without showing disregard or impatience; mindful that this desultoriness was associated with the institutions of the country, and that the man who took him on this severe mental scamper was not only an amiable host, but a landholder and *custos rotulorum*. Was his endurance aided also by the reflection that Mr. Brooke was the uncle of Dorothea?

Certainly he seemed more and more bent on making her talk to him, on drawing her out, as Celia remarked to herself; and in looking at her his face was often lit up by a smile like pale wintry sunshine. Before he left the next morning, while taking a pleasant walk with Miss Brooke along the gravelled terrace, he had mentioned to her that he felt the disadvantage of loneliness, the need of that cheerful companionship with which the presence of youth can lighten or vary the serious toils of maturity. And he delivered this statement with as much careful precision as if he had been a diplomatic envoy whose words would be attended with results. Indeed, Mr. Casaubon was not used to expect that he should have to repeat or revise his communications of a practical or personal kind. The inclinations which he had deliberately stated on the 2d of October he would think it enough to refer to by the mention of that date; judging by the standard of his own memory, which was a volume where a *vide supra* could serve instead of repetitions, and not the ordinary long-used blotting-book which only tells of forgotten writing. But in this case Mr. Casaubon's confidence was not likely to be falsified, for Dorothea heard and retained what he said with the eager interest of a fresh young nature to which every variety in experience is an epoch.

It was three o'clock in the beautiful breezy autumn day when Mr. Casaubon drove off to his

Rectory at Lowick, only five miles from Tipton; and Dorothea, who had on her bonnet and shawl, hurried along the shrubbery and across the park that she might wander through the bordering wood with no other visible companionship than that of Monk, the Great St. Bernard dog, who always took care of the young ladies in their walks. There had risen before her the girl's vision of a possible future for herself to which she looked forward with trembling hope, and she wanted to wander on in that visionary future without interruption. She walked briskly in the brisk air, the color rose in her cheeks, and her straw bonnet (which our contemporaries might look at with conjectural curiosity as at an obsolete form of basket) fell a little backward. She would perhaps be hardly characterized enough if it were omitted that she wore her brown hair flatly braided and coiled behind so as to expose the outline of her head in a daring manner at a time when public feeling required the meagreness of nature to be dissimulated by tall barricades of frizzed curls and bows, never surpassed by any great race except the Feejeean. This was a trait of Miss Brooke's asceticism. But there was nothing of an ascetic's expression in her bright full eyes, as she looked before her, not consciously seeing, but absorbing into the intensity of her mood, the solemn glory of the afternoon with its long swathes of light between the far-off rows of limes, whose shadows touched each other.

All people, young or old (that is, all people in those ante-reform times), would have thought her an interesting object if they had referred the glow in her eyes and cheeks to the newly awakened ordinary images of young love: the illusions of Chloe about Strephon have been sufficiently consecrated in poetry, as the pathetic loveliness of all spontaneous trust ought to be. Miss Pippin adoring young Pumpkin, and dreaming along endless vistas of unwearying companionship, was a little drama which never tired our fathers and mothers, and had been put into all costumes. Let but Pumpkin have a figure which would sustain the disadvantages of the shortwaisted swallow-tail, and everybody felt it not only natural but necessary to the perfection of womanhood, that a sweet girl should be at once convinced of his virtue, his exceptional ability, and above all, his perfect sincerity. But perhaps no persons then living—certainly none in the neighborhood of Tipton—would have had a sympathetic understanding for the dreams of a girl whose notions about marriage took their color entirely from an exalted enthusiasm about the ends of life, an enthusiasm which was lit chiefly by its own fire, and included neither the niceties of the trousseau, the pattern of plate, nor even the honors and sweet joys of the blooming matron.

It had now entered Dorothea's mind that Mr. Casaubon might wish to make her his wife, and the idea that he would do so touched her with a sort of

reverential gratitude. How good of him-nay, it would be almost as if a winged messenger had suddenly stood beside her path and held out his hand towards her! For a long while she had been oppressed by the indefiniteness which hung in her mind, like a thick summer haze, over all her desire to make her life greatly effective. What could she do, what ought she to do? — she, hardly more than a budding woman, but yet with an active conscience and a great mental need, not to be satisfied by a girlish instruction comparable to the nibblings and judgments of a discursive mouse. With some endowment of stupidity and conceit, she might have thought that a Christian young lady of fortune should find her ideal of life in village charities, patronage of the humbler clergy, the perusal of "Female Scripture Characters," unfolding the private experience of Sara under the Old Dispensation, and Dorcas under the New, and the care of her soul over her embroidery in her own boudoir-with a background of prospective marriage to a man who, if less strict than herself, as being involved in affairs religiously inexplicable, might be prayed for and seasonably exhorted. From such contentment poor Dorothea was shut out. The intensity of her religious disposition, the coercion it exercised over her life, was but one aspect of a nature altogether ardent, theoretic, and intellectually consequent: and with such a nature struggling in the bands of a narrow teaching, hemmed in by a social life which seemed

nothing but a labyrinth of petty courses, a walled-in maze of small paths that led no whither, the outcome was sure to strike others as at once exaggeration and inconsistency. The thing which seemed to her best, she wanted to justify by the completest knowledge; and not to live in a pretended admission of rules which were never acted on. Into this soul-hunger as yet all her youthful passion was poured; the union which attracted her was one that would deliver her from her girlish subjection to her own ignorance, and give her the freedom of voluntary submission to a guide who would take her along the grandest path.

"I should learn everything then," she said to herself, still walking quickly along the bridle road through the wood. "It would be my duty to study that I might help him the better in his great works. There would be nothing trivial about our lives. Every-day things with us would mean the greatest things. It would be like marrying Pascal. I should learn to see the truth by the same light as great men have seen it by. And then I should know what to do, when I got older: I should see how it was possible to lead a grand life here-now-in England. I don't feel sure about doing good in any way now: everything seems like going on a mission to a people whose language I don't know;-unless it were building good cottages-there can be no doubt about that. Oh, I hope I should be able to get the people well housed in Lowick! I will draw



plenty of plans while I have time."

Dorothea checked herself suddenly with self-rebuke for the presumptuous way in which she was reckoning on uncertain events, but she was spared any inward effort to change the direction of her thoughts by the appearance of a cantering horseman round a turning of the road. The well-groomed chestnut horse and two beautiful setters could leave no doubt that the rider was Sir James Chettam. He discerned Dorothea, jumped off his horse at once, and, having delivered it to his groom, advanced towards her with something white on his arm, at which the two setters were barking in an excited manner.

"How delightful to meet you, Miss Brooke," he said, raising his hat and showing his sleekly waving blond hair. "It has hastened the pleasure I was looking forward to."

Miss Brooke was annoyed at the interruption. This amiable baronet, really a suitable husband for Celia, exaggerated the necessity of making himself agreeable to the elder sister. Even a prospective brother-in-law may be an oppression if he will always be presupposing too good an understanding with you, and agreeing with you even when you contradict him. The thought that he had made the mistake of paying his addresses to herself could not take shape: all her mental activity was used up in persuasions of another kind. But he was positively obtrusive at this moment, and his

dimpled hands were quite disagreeable. Her roused temper made her color deeply, as she returned his greeting with some haughtiness.

Sir James interpreted the heightened color in the way most gratifying to himself, and thought he never saw Miss Brooke looking so handsome.

"I have brought a little petitioner," he said, "or rather, I have brought him to see if he will be approved before his petition is offered." He showed the white object under his arm, which was a tiny Maltese puppy, one of nature's most naive toys.

"It is painful to me to see these creatures that are bred merely as pets," said Dorothea, whose opinion was forming itself that very moment (as opinions will) under the heat of irritation.

"Oh, why?" said Sir James, as they walked forward.

"I believe all the petting that is given them does not make them happy. They are too helpless: their lives are too frail. A weasel or a mouse that gets its own living is more interesting. I like to think that the animals about us have souls something like our own, and either carry on their own little affairs or can be companions to us, like Monk here. Those creatures are parasitic."

"I am so glad I know that you do not like them," said good Sir James. "I should never keep them for myself, but ladies usually are fond of these Maltese

dogs. Here, John, take this dog, will you?"

The objectionable puppy, whose nose and eyes were equally black and expressive, was thus got rid of, since Miss Brooke decided that it had better not have been born. But she felt it necessary to explain.

"You must not judge of Celia's feeling from mine. I think she likes these small pets. She had a tiny terrier once, which she was very fond of. It made me unhappy, because I was afraid of treading on it. I am rather short-sighted."

"You have your own opinion about everything, Miss Brooke, and it is always a good opinion."

What answer was possible to such stupid complimenting?

"Do you know, I envy you that," Sir James said, as they continued walking at the rather brisk pace set by Dorothea.

"I don't quite understand what you mean."

"Your power of forming an opinion. I can form an opinion of persons. I know when I like people. But about other matters, do you know, I have often a difficulty in deciding. One hears very sensible things said on opposite sides."

"Or that seem sensible. Perhaps we don't always discriminate between sense and nonsense."

Dorothea felt that she was rather rude.

"Exactly," said Sir James. "But you seem to have the power of discrimination."

"On the contrary, I am often unable to decide. But that is from ignorance. The right conclusion is there all the same, though I am unable to see it."



"I think there are few who would see it more readily. Do you know, Lovegood was telling me yesterday that you had the best notion in the world of a plan for cottages-quite wonderful for a young lady, he thought. You had a real *genus* , to use his expression.

He said you wanted Mr. Brooke to build a new set of cottages, but he seemed to think it hardly probable that your uncle would consent. Do you know, that is one of the things I wish to do-I mean, on my own estate. I should be so glad to carry out that plan of yours, if you would let me see it. Of course, it is sinking money; that is why people object to it. Laborers can never pay rent to make it answer. But, after all, it is worth doing."

"Worth doing! yes, indeed," said Dorothea, energetically, forgetting her previous small vexations. "I think we deserve to be beaten out of our beautiful houses with a scourge of small cords-all of us who let tenants live in such sties as we see round us. Life in cottages might be happier than ours, if they were real houses fit for human beings from whom we expect duties and affections."

"Will you show me your plan?"

"Yes, certainly. I dare say it is very faulty. But I have been examining all the plans for cottages in Loudon's book, and picked out what seem the best things. Oh what a happiness it would be to set the pattern about here! I think instead of Lazarus at the gate, we should put the pigsty cottages outside the park-gate."

Dorothea was in the best temper now. Sir James, as brother in-law, building model cottages on his estate, and then, perhaps, others being built at Lowick, and more and more elsewhere in imitation-it would be as if

the spirit of Oberlin had passed over the parishes to make the life of poverty beautiful!

Sir James saw all the plans, and took one away to consult upon with Lovegood. He also took away a complacent sense that he was making great progress in Miss Brooke's good opinion. The Maltese puppy was not offered to Celia; an omission which Dorothea afterwards thought of with surprise; but she blamed herself for it. She had been engrossing Sir James. After all, it was a relief that there was no puppy to tread upon.

Celia was present while the plans were being examined, and observed Sir James's illusion. "He thinks that Dodo cares about him, and she only cares about her plans. Yet I am not certain that she would refuse him if she thought he would let her manage everything and carry out all her notions. And how very uncomfortable Sir James would be! I cannot bear notions."

It was Celia's private luxury to indulge in this dislike. She dared not confess it to her sister in any direct statement, for that would be laying herself open to a demonstration that she was somehow or other at war with all goodness. But on safe opportunities, she had an indirect mode of making her negative wisdom tell upon Dorothea, and calling her down from her rhapsodic mood by reminding her that people were staring, not listening. Celia was not impulsive: what she had to say could wait, and came from her always with

the same quiet staccato evenness. When people talked with energy and emphasis she watched their faces and features merely. She never could understand how well-bred persons consented to sing and open their mouths in the ridiculous manner requisite for that vocal exercise.

It was not many days before Mr. Casaubon paid a morning visit, on which he was invited again for the following week to dine and stay the night. Thus Dorothea had three more conversations with him, and was convinced that her first impressions had been just. He was all she had at first imagined him to be: almost everything he had said seemed like a specimen from a mine, or the inscription on the door of a museum which might open on the treasures of past ages; and this trust in his mental wealth was all the deeper and more effective on her inclination because it was now obvious that his visits were made for her sake. This accomplished man condescended to think of a young girl, and take the pains to talk to her, not with absurd compliment, but with an appeal to her understanding, and sometimes with instructive correction. What delightful companionship! Mr. Casaubon seemed even unconscious that trivialities existed, and never handed round that small-talk of heavy men which is as acceptable as stale bride-cake brought forth with an odor of cupboard. He talked of what he was interested in, or else he was silent and bowed with sad civility. To

Dorothea this was adorable genuineness, and religious abstinence from that artificiality which uses up the soul in the efforts of pretence. For she looked as reverently at Mr. Casaubon's religious elevation above herself as she did at his intellect and learning. He assented to her expressions of devout feeling, and usually with an appropriate quotation; he allowed himself to say that he had gone through some spiritual conflicts in his youth; in short, Dorothea saw that here she might reckon on understanding, sympathy, and guidance. On one-only one-of her favorite themes she was disappointed. Mr. Casaubon apparently did not care about building cottages, and diverted the talk to the extremely narrow accommodation which was to be had in the dwellings of the ancient Egyptians, as if to check a too high standard. After he was gone, Dorothea dwelt with some agitation on this indifference of his; and her mind was much exercised with arguments drawn from the varying conditions of climate which modify human needs, and from the admitted wickedness of pagan despots. Should she not urge these arguments on Mr. Casaubon when he came again? But further reflection told her that she was presumptuous in demanding his attention to such a subject; he would not disapprove of her occupying herself with it in leisure moments, as other women expected to occupy themselves with their dress and embroidery-would not forbid it when-Dorothea felt rather ashamed as she detected herself in these



speculations. But her uncle had been invited to go to Lowick to stay a couple of days: was it reasonable to suppose that Mr. Casaubon delighted in Mr. Brooke's society for its own sake, either with or without documents?

Meanwhile that little disappointment made her delight the more in Sir James Chettam's readiness to set on foot the desired improvements. He came much oftener than Mr. Casaubon, and Dorothea ceased to find him disagreeable since he showed himself so entirely in earnest; for he had already entered with much practical ability into Lovegood's estimates, and was charmingly docile. She proposed to build a couple of cottages, and transfer two families from their old cabins, which could then be pulled down, so that new ones could be built on the old sites. Sir James said "Exactly," and she bore the word remarkably well.

Certainly these men who had so few spontaneous ideas might be very useful members of society under good feminine direction, if they were fortunate in choosing their sisters-in-law! It is difficult to say whether there was or was not a little wilfulness in her continuing blind to the possibility that another sort of choice was in question in relation to her. But her life was just now full of hope and action: she was not only thinking of her plans, but getting down learned books from the library and reading many things hastily (that she might be a little less ignorant in talking to Mr.

Casaubon), all the while being visited with conscientious questionings whether she were not exalting these poor doings above measure and contemplating them with that self-satisfaction which was the last doom of ignorance and folly.

## CHAPTER IV

*1st Gent.*

Our deeds are fetters  
that we forge ourselves.

*2d Gent.*

Ay, truly: but I think it  
is the world  
That brings the iron.

"Sir James seems determined to do everything you wish," said Celia, as they were driving home from an inspection of the new building-site.

"He is a good creature, and more sensible than any one would imagine," said Dorothea, inconsiderately.

"You mean that he appears silly."

"No, no," said Dorothea, recollecting herself, and

laying her hand on her sister's a moment, "but he does not talk equally well on all subjects."

"I should think none but disagreeable people do," said Celia, in her usual purring way. "They must be very dreadful to live with. Only think! at breakfast, and always."

Dorothea laughed. "O Kitty, you are a wonderful creature!" She pinched Celia's chin, being in the mood now to think her very winning and lovely-fit hereafter to be an eternal cherub, and if it were not doctrinally wrong to say so, hardly more in need of salvation than a squirrel. "Of course people need not be always talking well. Only one tells the quality of their minds when they try to talk well."

"You mean that Sir James tries and fails."

"I was speaking generally. Why do you catechise me about Sir James? It is not the object of his life to please me."

"Now, Dodo, can you really believe that?"

"Certainly. He thinks of me as a future sister-that is all." Dorothea had never hinted this before, waiting, from a certain shyness on such subjects which was mutual between the sisters, until it should be introduced by some decisive event. Celia blushed, but said at once-

"Pray do not make that mistake any longer, Dodo. When Tantripp was brushing my hair the other day, she said that Sir James's man knew from Mrs. Cadwallader's maid that Sir James was to marry the

eldest Miss Brooke."

"How can you let Tantripp talk such gossip to you, Celia?" said Dorothea, indignantly, not the less angry because details asleep in her memory were now awakened to confirm the unwelcome revelation. "You must have asked her questions. It is degrading."

"I see no harm at all in Tantripp's talking to me. It is better to hear what people say. You see what mistakes you make by taking up notions. I am quite sure that Sir James means to make you an offer; and he believes that you will accept him, especially since you have been so pleased with him about the plans. And uncle too-I know he expects it. Every one can see that Sir James is very much in love with you."

The revulsion was so strong and painful in Dorothea's mind that the tears welled up and flowed abundantly. All her dear plans were embittered, and she thought with disgust of Sir James's conceiving that she recognized him as her lover. There was vexation too on account of Celia.

"How could he expect it?" she burst forth in her most impetuous manner. "I have never agreed with him about anything but the cottages: I was barely polite to him before."

"But you have been so pleased with him since then; he has begun to feel quite sure that you are fond of him."

"Fond of him, Celia! How can you choose such

odious expressions?" said Dorothea, passionately.

"Dear me, Dorothea, I suppose it would be right for you to be fond of a man whom you accepted for a husband."

"It is offensive to me to say that Sir James could think I was fond of him. Besides, it is not the right word for the feeling I must have towards the man I would accept as a husband."

"Well, I am sorry for Sir James. I thought it right to tell you, because you went on as you always do, never looking just where you are, and treading in the wrong place. You always see what nobody else sees; it is impossible to satisfy you; yet you never see what is quite plain. That's your way, Dodo." Something certainly gave Celia unusual courage; and she was not sparing the sister of whom she was occasionally in awe. Who can tell what just criticisms Murr the Cat may be passing on us beings of wider speculation?

"It is very painful," said Dorothea, feeling scourged. "I can have no more to do with the cottages. I must be uncivil to him. I must tell him I will have nothing to do with them. It is very painful." Her eyes filled again with tears.

"Wait a little. Think about it. You know he is going away for a day or two to see his sister. There will be nobody besides Lovegood." Celia could not help relenting. "Poor Dodo," she went on, in an amiable staccato. "It is very hard: it is your favorite *fad* to

draw plans."

"*Fad* to draw plans! Do you think I only care about my fellow-creatures' houses in that childish way? I may well make mistakes. How can one ever do anything nobly Christian, living among people with such petty thoughts?"

No more was said; Dorothea was too much jarred to recover her temper and behave so as to show that she admitted any error in herself. She was disposed rather to accuse the intolerable narrowness and the purblind conscience of the society around her: and Celia was no longer the eternal cherub, but a thorn in her spirit, a pink-and-white nullifidian, worse than any discouraging presence in the "Pilgrim's Progress." The *fad* of drawing plans! What was life worth-what great faith was possible when the whole effect of one's actions could be withered up into such parched rubbish as that? When she got out of the carriage, her cheeks were pale and her eyelids red. She was an image of sorrow, and her uncle who met her in the hall would have been alarmed, if Celia had not been close to her looking so pretty and composed, that he at once concluded Dorothea's tears to have their origin in her excessive religiousness. He had returned, during their absence, from a journey to the county town, about a petition for the pardon of some criminal.

"Well, my dears," he said, kindly, as they went up to kiss him, "I hope nothing disagreeable has happened

while I have been away."

"No, uncle," said Celia, "we have been to Freshitt to look at the cottages. We thought you would have been at home to lunch."

"I came by Lowick to lunch—you didn't know I came by Lowick. And I have brought a couple of pamphlets for you, Dorothea—in the library, you know; they lie on the table in the library."

It seemed as if an electric stream went through Dorothea, thrilling her from despair into expectation. They were pamphlets about the early Church. The oppression of Celia, Tantripp, and Sir James was shaken off, and she walked straight to the library. Celia went up-stairs. Mr. Brooke was detained by a message, but when he re-entered the library, he found Dorothea seated and already deep in one of the pamphlets which had some marginal manuscript of Mr. Casaubon's, — taking it in as eagerly as she might have taken in the scent of a fresh bouquet after a dry, hot, dreary walk.

She was getting away from Tipton and Freshitt, and her own sad liability to tread in the wrong places on her way to the New Jerusalem.

Mr. Brooke sat down in his arm-chair, stretched his legs towards the wood-fire, which had fallen into a wondrous mass of glowing dice between the dogs, and rubbed his hands gently, looking very mildly towards Dorothea, but with a neutral leisurely air, as if he had nothing particular to say. Dorothea closed her

pamphlet, as soon as she was aware of her uncle's presence, and rose as if to go. Usually she would have been interested about her uncle's merciful errand on behalf of the criminal, but her late agitation had made her absent-minded.

"I came back by Lowick, you know," said Mr. Brooke, not as if with any intention to arrest her departure, but apparently from his usual tendency to say what he had said before. This fundamental principle of human speech was markedly exhibited in Mr. Brooke. "I lunched there and saw Casaubon's library, and that kind of thing. There's a sharp air, driving. Won't you sit down, my dear? You look cold."

Dorothea felt quite inclined to accept the invitation. Some times, when her uncle's easy way of taking things did not happen to be exasperating, it was rather soothing. She threw off her mantle and bonnet, and sat down opposite to him, enjoying the glow, but lifting up her beautiful hands for a screen. They were not thin hands, or small hands; but powerful, feminine, maternal hands. She seemed to be holding them up in propitiation for her passionate desire to know and to think, which in the unfriendly mediums of Tipton and Freshitt had issued in crying and red eyelids.

She bethought herself now of the condemned criminal. "What news have you brought about the sheep-stealer, uncle?"

"What, poor Bunch? — well, it seems we can't



get him off-he is to be hanged."

Dorothea's brow took an expression of reprobation and pity.

"Hanged, you know," said Mr. Brooke, with a quiet nod. "Poor Romilly! he would have helped us. I knew Romilly. Casaubon didn't know Romilly. He is a little buried in books, you know, Casaubon is."

"When a man has great studies and is writing a great work, he must of course give up seeing much of the world. How can he go about making acquaintances?"

"That's true. But a man mopes, you know. I have always been a bachelor too, but I have that sort of disposition that I never moped; it was my way to go about everywhere and take in everything. I never moped: but I can see that Casaubon does, you know. He wants a companion-a companion, you know."

"It would be a great honor to any one to be his companion," said Dorothea, energetically.

"You like him, eh?" said Mr. Brooke, without showing any surprise, or other emotion. "Well, now, I've known Casaubon ten years, ever since he came to Lowick. But I never got anything out of him-any ideas, you know. However, he is a tiptop man and may be a bishop-that kind of thing, you know, if Peel stays in. And he has a very high opinion of you, my dear."

Dorothea could not speak.

"The fact is, he has a very high opinion indeed of

you. And he speaks uncommonly well—does Casaubon. He has deferred to me, you not being of age. In short, I have promised to speak to you, though I told him I thought there was not much chance. I was bound to tell him that. I said, my niece is very young, and that kind of thing. But I didn't think it necessary to go into everything. However, the long and the short of it is, that he has asked my permission to make you an offer of marriage—of marriage, you know," said Mr. Brooke, with his explanatory nod. "I thought it better to tell you, my dear."

No one could have detected any anxiety in Mr. Brooke's manner, but he did really wish to know something of his niece's mind, that, if there were any need for advice, he might give it in time. What feeling he, as a magistrate who had taken in so many ideas, could make room for, was unmixedly kind. Since Dorothea did not speak immediately, he repeated, "I thought it better to tell you, my dear."

"Thank you, uncle," said Dorothea, in a clear unwavering tone. "I am very grateful to Mr. Casaubon. If he makes me an offer, I shall accept him. I admire and honor him more than any man I ever saw."

Mr. Brooke paused a little, and then said in a lingering low tone, "Ah?... Well! He is a good match in some respects. But now, Chettam is a good match. And our land lies together. I shall never interfere against your wishes, my dear. People should have their own

way in marriage, and that sort of thing-up to a certain point, you know. I have always said that, up to a certain point. I wish you to marry well; and I have good reason to believe that Chettam wishes to marry you. I mention it, you know."

"It is impossible that I should ever marry Sir James Chettam," said Dorothea. "If he thinks of marrying me, he has made a great mistake."

"That is it, you see. One never knows. I should have thought Chettam was just the sort of man a woman would like, now."

"Pray do not mention him in that light again, uncle," said Dorothea, feeling some of her late irritation revive.

Mr. Brooke wondered, and felt that women were an inexhaustible subject of study, since even he at his age was not in a perfect state of scientific prediction about them. Here was a fellow like Chettam with no chance at all.

"Well, but Casaubon, now. There is no hurry-I mean for you. It's true, every year will tell upon him. He is over five-and-forty, you know. I should say a good seven-and-twenty years older than you. To be sure, — if you like learning and standing, and that sort of thing, we can't have everything. And his income is good—he has a handsome property independent of the Church—his income is good. Still he is not young, and I must not conceal from you, my dear, that I think his

health is not over-strong. I know nothing else against him."

"I should not wish to have a husband very near my own age," said Dorothea, with grave decision. "I should wish to have a husband who was above me in judgment and in all knowledge."

Mr. Brooke repeated his subdued, "Ah? — I thought you had more of your own opinion than most girls. I thought you liked your own opinion—liked it, you know."

"I cannot imagine myself living without some opinions, but I should wish to have good reasons for them, and a wise man could help me to see which opinions had the best foundation, and would help me to live according to them."

"Very true. You couldn't put the thing better—couldn't put it better, beforehand, you know. But there are oddities in things," continued Mr. Brooke, whose conscience was really roused to do the best he could for his niece on this occasion. "Life isn't cast in a mould—not cut out by rule and line, and that sort of thing. I never married myself, and it will be the better for you and yours. The fact is, I never loved any one well enough to put myself into a noose for them. It *is* a noose, you know. Temper, now. There is temper. And a husband likes to be master."

"I know that I must expect trials, uncle. Marriage is a state of higher duties. I never thought of it as mere

personal ease," said poor Dorothea.

"Well, you are not fond of show, a great establishment, balls, dinners, that kind of thing. I can see that Casaubon's ways might suit you better than Chettam's. And you shall do as you like, my dear. I would not hinder Casaubon; I said so at once; for there is no knowing how anything may turn out. You have not the same tastes as every young lady; and a clergyman and scholar—who may be a bishop—that kind of thing—may suit you better than Chettam. Chettam is a good fellow, a good sound-hearted fellow, you know; but he doesn't go much into ideas. I did, when I was his age. But Casaubon's eyes, now. I think he has hurt them a little with too much reading."

"I should be all the happier, uncle, the more room there was for me to help him," said Dorothea, ardently.

"You have quite made up your mind, I see. Well, my dear, the fact is, I have a letter for you in my pocket." Mr. Brooke handed the letter to Dorothea, but as she rose to go away, he added, "There is not too much hurry, my dear. Think about it, you know."



When Dorothea had left him, he reflected that he had certainly spoken strongly: he had put the risks of marriage before her in a striking manner. It was his duty to do so. But as to pretending to be wise for young people, — no uncle, however much he had travelled in his youth, absorbed the new ideas, and dined with celebrities now deceased, could pretend to judge what sort of marriage would turn out well for a young girl who preferred Casaubon to Chettam. In short, woman

was a problem which, since Mr. Brooke's mind felt blank before it, could be hardly less complicated than the revolutions of an irregular solid.

## CHAPTER V

*"Hard students are commonly troubled with gowts, catarrhs, rheums, cachexia, bradypepsia, bad eyes, stone, and collick, crudities, oppilations, vertigo, winds, consumptions, and all such diseases as come by over-much sitting: they are most part lean, dry, ill-colored... and all through immoderate pains and extraordinary studies. If you will not believe the truth of this, look upon great Tostatus and Thomas Aquainas' works; and tell me whether those men took pains."*

— **BURTON'S**  
**Anatomy of Melancholy,**  
**P. I, s. 2.**

This was Mr. Casaubon's letter.

MY DEAR MISS BROOKE, — I have your guardian's permission to address you on a subject than which I have none more at heart. I am not, I trust, mistaken in the recognition of some deeper correspondence than that of date in the fact that a consciousness of need in my own life had arisen contemporaneously with the possibility of my becoming acquainted with you. For in the first hour of meeting you, I had an impression of your eminent and perhaps exclusive fitness to supply that need (connected, I may say, with such activity of the affections as even the preoccupations of a work too special to be abdicated could not uninterruptedly dissimulate); and each succeeding opportunity for observation has given the impression an added depth by convincing me more emphatically of that fitness which I had preconceived, and thus evoking more decisively those affections to which I have but now referred. Our conversations have, I think, made sufficiently clear to you the tenor of my life and purposes: a tenor unsuited, I am aware, to the commoner



order of minds. But I have discerned in you an elevation of thought and a capability of devotedness, which I had hitherto not conceived to be compatible either with the early bloom of youth or with those graces of sex that may be said at once to win and to confer distinction when combined, as they notably are in you, with the mental qualities above indicated. It was, I confess, beyond my hope to meet with this rare combination of elements both solid and attractive, adapted to supply aid in graver labors and to cast a charm over vacant hours; and but for the event of my introduction to you (which, let me again say, I trust not to be superficially coincident with foreshadowing needs, but providentially related thereto as stages towards the completion of a life's plan), I should presumably have gone on to the last without any attempt to lighten my solitariness by a matrimonial union.

Such, my dear Miss Brooke, is the accurate statement of my feelings; and I rely on your kind indulgence in venturing now to ask you how far your own are of a nature to confirm my happy presentiment. To be accepted by you as your husband and the earthly guardian of

your welfare, I should regard as the highest of providential gifts. In return I can at least offer you an affection hitherto unwasted, and the faithful consecration of a life which, however short in the sequel, has no backward pages whereon, if you choose to turn them, you will find records such as might justly cause you either bitterness or shame. I await the expression of your sentiments with an anxiety which it would be the part of wisdom (were it possible) to divert by a more arduous labor than usual. But in this order of experience I am still young, and in looking forward to an unfavorable possibility I cannot but feel that resignation to solitude will be more difficult after the temporary illumination of hope.

In any case, I shall remain,

Yours with sincere devotion,

***EDWARD CASAUBON.***

Dorothea trembled while she read this letter; then she fell on her knees, buried her face, and sobbed. She could not pray: under the rush of solemn emotion in which thoughts became vague and images floated uncertainly, she could but cast herself, with a childlike sense of reclining, in the lap of a divine consciousness

which sustained her own. She remained in that attitude till it was time to dress for dinner.

How could it occur to her to examine the letter, to look at it critically as a profession of love? Her whole soul was possessed by the fact that a fuller life was opening before her: she was a neophyte about to enter on a higher grade of initiation. She was going to have room for the energies which stirred uneasily under the dimness and pressure of her own ignorance and the petty peremptoriness of the world's habits.

Now she would be able to devote herself to large yet definite duties; now she would be allowed to live continually in the light of a mind that she could reverence. This hope was not unmixed with the glow of proud delight—the joyous maiden surprise that she was chosen by the man whom her admiration had chosen. All Dorothea's passion was transfused through a mind struggling towards an ideal life; the radiance of her transfigured girlhood fell on the first object that came within its level. The impetus with which inclination became resolution was heightened by those little events of the day which had roused her discontent with the actual conditions of her life.

After dinner, when Celia was playing an "air, with variations," a small kind of tinkling which symbolized the aesthetic part of the young ladies' education, Dorothea went up to her room to answer Mr. Casaubon's letter. Why should she defer the answer?

She wrote it over three times, not because she wished to change the wording, but because her hand was unusually uncertain, and she could not bear that Mr. Casaubon should think her handwriting bad and illegible. She piqued herself on writing a hand in which each letter was distinguishable without any large range of conjecture, and she meant to make much use of this accomplishment, to save Mr. Casaubon's eyes. Three times she wrote.

MY DEAR MR. CASAUBON, —  
I am very grateful to you for loving me,  
and thinking me worthy to be your wife.  
I can look forward to no better happiness  
than that which would be one with yours.  
If I said more, it would only be the same  
thing written out at greater length, for I  
cannot now dwell on any other thought  
than that I may be through life

Yours devotedly,

***DOROTHEA BROOKE.***

Later in the evening she followed her uncle into the library to give him the letter, that he might send it in the morning. He was surprised, but his surprise only issued in a few moments' silence, during which he pushed about various objects on his writing-table, and finally stood with his back to the fire, his glasses on his nose, looking at the address of Dorothea's letter.

"Have you thought enough about this, my dear?" he said at last.

"There was no need to think long, uncle. I know of nothing to make me vacillate. If I changed my mind, it must be because of something important and entirely new to me."

"Ah! — then you have accepted him? Then Chettam has no chance? Has Chettam offended you—offended you, you know? What is it you don't like in Chettam?"

"There is nothing that I like in him," said Dorothea, rather impetuously.

Mr. Brooke threw his head and shoulders backward as if some one had thrown a light missile at him. Dorothea immediately felt some self-rebuke, and said—

"I mean in the light of a husband. He is very kind, I think—really very good about the cottages. A well-meaning man."

"But you must have a scholar, and that sort of thing? Well, it lies a little in our family. I had it myself—that love of knowledge, and going into everything—a little too much—it took me too far; though that sort of thing doesn't often run in the female-line; or it runs underground like the rivers in Greece, you know—it comes out in the sons. Clever sons, clever mothers. I went a good deal into that, at one time. However, my dear, I have always said that people

should do as they like in these things, up to a certain point. I couldn't, as your guardian, have consented to a bad match. But Casaubon stands well: his position is good. I am afraid Chettam will be hurt, though, and Mrs. Cadwallader will blame me."

That evening, of course, Celia knew nothing of what had happened. She attributed Dorothea's abstracted manner, and the evidence of further crying since they had got home, to the temper she had been in about Sir James Chettam and the buildings, and was careful not to give further offence: having once said what she wanted to say, Celia had no disposition to recur to disagreeable subjects. It had been her nature when a child never to quarrel with any one—only to observe with wonder that they quarrelled with her, and looked like turkey-cocks; whereupon she was ready to play at cat's cradle with them whenever they recovered themselves. And as to Dorothea, it had always been her way to find something wrong in her sister's words, though Celia inwardly protested that she always said just how things were, and nothing else: she never did and never could put words together out of her own head. But the best of Dodo was, that she did not keep angry for long together. Now, though they had hardly spoken to each other all the evening, yet when Celia put by her work, intending to go to bed, a proceeding in which she was always much the earlier, Dorothea, who was seated on a low stool, unable to occupy herself

except in meditation, said, with the musical intonation which in moments of deep but quiet feeling made her speech like a fine bit of recitative-

"Celia, dear, come and kiss me," holding her arms open as she spoke.

Celia knelt down to get the right level and gave her little butterfly kiss, while Dorothea encircled her with gentle arms and pressed her lips gravely on each cheek in turn.

"Don't sit up, Dodo, you are so pale to-night: go to bed soon," said Celia, in a comfortable way, without any touch of pathos.

"No, dear, I am very, very happy," said Dorothea, fervently.

"So much the better," thought Celia. "But how strangely Dodo goes from one extreme to the other."

The next day, at luncheon, the butler, handing something to Mr. Brooke, said, "Jonas is come back, sir, and has brought this letter."

Mr. Brooke read the letter, and then, nodding toward Dorothea, said, "Casaubon, my dear: he will be here to dinner; he didn't wait to write more-didn't wait, you know."

It could not seem remarkable to Celia that a dinner guest should be announced to her sister beforehand, but, her eyes following the same direction as her uncle's, she was struck with the peculiar effect of the announcement on Dorothea. It seemed as if

something like the reflection of a white sunlit wing had passed across her features, ending in one of her rare blushes. For the first time it entered into Celia's mind that there might be something more between Mr. Casaubon and her sister than his delight in bookish talk and her delight in listening. Hitherto she had classed the admiration for this "ugly" and learned acquaintance with the admiration for Monsieur Liret at Lausanne, also ugly and learned. Dorothea had never been tired of listening to old Monsieur Liret when Celia's feet were as cold as possible, and when it had really become dreadful to see the skin of his bald head moving about. Why then should her enthusiasm not extend to Mr. Casaubon simply in the same way as to Monsieur Liret? And it seemed probable that all learned men had a sort of schoolmaster's view of young people.

But now Celia was really startled at the suspicion which had darted into her mind. She was seldom taken by surprise in this way, her marvellous quickness in observing a certain order of signs generally preparing her to expect such outward events as she had an interest in. Not that she now imagined Mr. Casaubon to be already an accepted lover: she had only begun to feel disgust at the possibility that anything in Dorothea's mind could tend towards such an issue. Here was something really to vex her about Dodo: it was all very well not to accept Sir James Chettam, but the idea of marrying Mr. Casaubon! Celia felt a sort of shame



mingled with a sense of the ludicrous. But perhaps Dodo, if she were really bordering on such an extravagance, might be turned away from it: experience had often shown that her impressibility might be calculated on. The day was damp, and they were not going to walk out, so they both went up to their sitting-room; and there Celia observed that Dorothea, instead of settling down with her usual diligent interest to some occupation, simply leaned her elbow on an open book and looked out of the window at the great cedar silvered with the damp. She herself had taken up the making of a toy for the curate's children, and was not going to enter on any subject too precipitately.

Dorothea was in fact thinking that it was desirable for Celia to know of the momentous change in Mr. Casaubon's position since he had last been in the house: it did not seem fair to leave her in ignorance of what would necessarily affect her attitude towards him; but it was impossible not to shrink from telling her. Dorothea accused herself of some meanness in this timidity: it was always odious to her to have any small fears or contrivances about her actions, but at this moment she was seeking the highest aid possible that she might not dread the corrosiveness of Celia's pretty carnally minded prose. Her reverie was broken, and the difficulty of decision banished, by Celia's small and rather guttural voice speaking in its usual tone, of a remark aside or a "by the bye."

"Is any one else coming to dine besides Mr. Casaubon?"

"Not that I know of."

"I hope there is some one else. Then I shall not hear him eat his soup so."

"What is there remarkable about his soup-eating?"

"Really, Dodo, can't you hear how he scrapes his spoon? And he always blinks before he speaks. I don't know whether Locke blinked, but I'm sure I am sorry for those who sat opposite to him if he did."

"Celia," said Dorothea, with emphatic gravity, "pray don't make any more observations of that kind."

"Why not? They are quite true," returned Celia, who had her reasons for persevering, though she was beginning to be a little afraid.

"Many things are true which only the commonest minds observe."

"Then I think the commonest minds must be rather useful. I think it is a pity Mr. Casaubon's mother had not a commoner mind: she might have taught him better." Celia was inwardly frightened, and ready to run away, now she had hurled this light javelin.

Dorothea's feelings had gathered to an avalanche, and there could be no further preparation.

"It is right to tell you, Celia, that I am engaged to marry Mr. Casaubon."

Perhaps Celia had never turned so pale before.

The paper man she was making would have had his leg injured, but for her habitual care of whatever she held in her hands. She laid the fragile figure down at once, and sat perfectly still for a few moments. When she spoke there was a tear gathering.

"Oh, Dodo, I hope you will be happy." Her sisterly tenderness could not but surmount other feelings at this moment, and her fears were the fears of affection.

Dorothea was still hurt and agitated.

"It is quite decided, then?" said Celia, in an awed under tone. "And uncle knows?"

"I have accepted Mr. Casaubon's offer. My uncle brought me the letter that contained it; he knew about it beforehand."

"I beg your pardon, if I have said anything to hurt you, Dodo," said Celia, with a slight sob. She never could have thought that she should feel as she did. There was something funereal in the whole affair, and Mr. Casaubon seemed to be the officiating clergyman, about whom it would be indecent to make remarks.

"Never mind, Kitty, do not grieve. We should never admire the same people. I often offend in something of the same way; I am apt to speak too strongly of those who don't please me."

In spite of this magnanimity Dorothea was still smarting: perhaps as much from Celia's subdued astonishment as from her small criticisms. Of course all

the world round Tipton would be out of sympathy with this marriage. Dorothea knew of no one who thought as she did about life and its best objects.

Nevertheless before the evening was at an end she was very happy. In an hour's tete-a-tete with Mr. Casaubon she talked to him with more freedom than she had ever felt before, even pouring out her joy at the thought of devoting herself to him, and of learning how she might best share and further all his great ends. Mr. Casaubon was touched with an unknown delight (what man would not have been?) at this childlike unrestrained ardor: he was not surprised (what lover would have been?) that he should be the object of it.

"My dear young lady-Miss Brooke-Dorothea!" he said, pressing her hand between his hands, "this is a happiness greater than I had ever imagined to be in reserve for me. That I should ever meet with a mind and person so rich in the mingled graces which could render marriage desirable, was far indeed from my conception. You have all-nay, more than all-those qualities which I have ever regarded as the characteristic excellences of womanhood. The great charm of your sex is its capability of an ardent self-sacrificing affection, and herein we see its fitness to round and complete the existence of our own. Hitherto I have known few pleasures save of the severer kind: my satisfactions have been those of the solitary student. I have been little disposed to gather

flowers that would wither in my hand, but now I shall pluck them with eagerness, to place them in your bosom."

No speech could have been more thoroughly honest in its intention: the frigid rhetoric at the end was as sincere as the bark of a dog, or the cawing of an amorous rook. Would it not be rash to conclude that there was no passion behind those sonnets to Delia which strike us as the thin music of a mandolin?

Dorothea's faith supplied all that Mr. Casaubon's words seemed to leave unsaid: what believer sees a disturbing omission or infelicity? The text, whether of prophet or of poet, expands for whatever we can put into it, and even his bad grammar is sublime.

"I am very ignorant-you will quite wonder at my ignorance," said Dorothea. "I have so many thoughts that may be quite mistaken; and now I shall be able to tell them all to you, and ask you about them. But," she added, with rapid imagination of Mr. Casaubon's probable feeling, "I will not trouble you too much; only when you are inclined to listen to me. You must often be weary with the pursuit of subjects in your own track. I shall gain enough if you will take me with you there."

"How should I be able now to persevere in any path without your companionship?" said Mr. Casaubon, kissing her candid brow, and feeling that heaven had vouchsafed him a blessing in every way suited to his peculiar wants. He was being unconsciously wrought

upon by the charms of a nature which was entirely without hidden calculations either for immediate effects or for remoter ends. It was this which made Dorothea so childlike, and, according to some judges, so stupid, with all her reputed cleverness; as, for example, in the present case of throwing herself, metaphorically speaking, at Mr. Casaubon's feet, and kissing his unfashionable shoe-ties as if he were a Protestant Pope. She was not in the least teaching Mr. Casaubon to ask if he were good enough for her, but merely asking herself anxiously how she could be good enough for Mr. Casaubon. Before he left the next day it had been decided that the marriage should take place within six weeks. Why not? Mr. Casaubon's house was ready. It was not a parsonage, but a considerable mansion, with much land attached to it. The parsonage was inhabited by the curate, who did all the duty except preaching the morning sermon.

## CHAPTER VI

My lady's tongue is  
like the meadow blades,  
That cut you stroking  
them with idle hand.  
Nice cutting is her  
function: she divides

With spiritual edge the  
millet-seed,  
And makes intangible  
savings.

As Mr. Casaubon's carriage was passing out of the gateway, it arrested the entrance of a pony phaeton driven by a lady with a servant seated behind. It was doubtful whether the recognition had been mutual, for Mr. Casaubon was looking absently before him; but the lady was quick-eyed, and threw a nod and a "How do you do?" in the nick of time. In spite of her shabby bonnet and very old Indian shawl, it was plain that the lodge-keeper regarded her as an important personage, from the low curtsy which was dropped on the entrance of the small phaeton.

"Well, Mrs. Fitchett, how are your fowls laying now?" said the high-colored, dark-eyed lady, with the clearest chiselled utterance.

"Pretty well for laying, madam, but they've ta'en to eating their eggs: I've no peace o' mind with 'em at all."

"Oh, the cannibals! Better sell them cheap at once. What will you sell them a couple? One can't eat fowls of a bad character at a high price."

"Well, madam, half-a-crown: I couldn't let 'em go, not under."

"Half-a-crown, these times! Come now-for the Rector's chicken-broth on a Sunday. He has consumed all ours that I can spare. You are half paid with the sermon, Mrs. Fitchett, remember that. Take a pair of tumbler-pigeons for them-little beauties. You must come and see them. You have no tumblers among your pigeons."

"Well, madam, Master Fitchett shall go and see 'em after work. He's very hot on new sorts; to oblige you."

"Oblige me! It will be the best bargain he ever made. A pair of church pigeons for a couple of wicked Spanish fowls that eat their own eggs! Don't you and Fitchett boast too much, that is all!"

The phaeton was driven onwards with the last words, leaving Mrs. Fitchett laughing and shaking her head slowly, with an interjectional "*Surely, surely!*" — from which it might be inferred that she would have found the country-side somewhat duller if the Rector's lady had been less free-spoken and less of a skinflint. Indeed, both the farmers and laborers in the parishes of Freshitt and Tipton would have felt a sad lack of conversation but for the stories about what Mrs. Cadwallader said and did: a lady of immeasurably high birth, descended, as it were, from unknown earls, dim as the crowd of heroic shades—who pleaded poverty, pared down prices, and cut jokes in the most companionable manner, though with a turn of tongue



that let you know who she was. Such a lady gave a neighborliness to both rank and religion, and mitigated the bitterness of uncommuted tithe. A much more exemplary character with an infusion of sour dignity would not have furthered their comprehension of the Thirty-nine Articles, and would have been less socially uniting.

Mr. Brooke, seeing Mrs. Cadwallader's merits from a different point of view, winced a little when her name was announced in the library, where he was sitting alone.

"I see you have had our Lowick Cicero here," she said, seating herself comfortably, throwing back her wraps, and showing a thin but well-built figure. "I suspect you and he are brewing some bad politics, else you would not be seeing so much of the lively man. I shall inform against you: remember you are both suspicious characters since you took Peel's side about the Catholic Bill. I shall tell everybody that you are going to put up for Middlemarch on the Whig side when old Pinkerton resigns, and that Casaubon is going to help you in an underhand manner: going to bribe the voters with pamphlets, and throw open the public-houses to distribute them. Come, confess!"

"Nothing of the sort," said Mr. Brooke, smiling and rubbing his eye-glasses, but really blushing a little at the impeachment. "Casaubon and I don't talk politics much. He doesn't care much about the philanthropic

side of things; punishments, and that kind of thing. He only cares about Church questions. That is not my line of action, you know."

"Ra-a-ther too much, my friend. I have heard of your doings. Who was it that sold his bit of land to the Papists at Middlemarch? I believe you bought it on purpose. You are a perfect Guy Faux. See if you are not burnt in effigy this 5th of November coming. Humphrey would not come to quarrel with you about it, so I am come."

"Very good. I was prepared to be persecuted for not persecuting-not persecuting, you know."

"There you go! That is a piece of clap-trap you have got ready for the hustings. Now, *do not* let them lure you to the hustings, my dear Mr. Brooke. A man always makes a fool of himself, speechifying: there's no excuse but being on the right side, so that you can ask a blessing on your humming and hawing. You will lose yourself, I forewarn you. You will make a Saturday pie of all parties' opinions, and be pelted by everybody."

"That is what I expect, you know," said Mr. Brooke, not wishing to betray how little he enjoyed this prophetic sketch-"what I expect as an independent man. As to the Whigs, a man who goes with the thinkers is not likely to be hooked on by any party. He may go with them up to a certain point-up to a certain point, you know. But that is what you ladies never understand."

"Where your certain point is? No. I should like to be told how a man can have any certain point when he belongs to no party-leading a roving life, and never letting his friends know his address. 'Nobody knows where Brooke will be-there's no counting on Brooke'-that is what people say of you, to be quite frank. Now, do turn respectable. How will you like going to Sessions with everybody looking shy on you, and you with a bad conscience and an empty pocket?"

"I don't pretend to argue with a lady on politics," said Mr. Brooke, with an air of smiling indifference, but feeling rather unpleasantly conscious that this attack of Mrs. Cadwallader's had opened the defensive campaign to which certain rash steps had exposed him. "Your sex are not thinkers, you know-varium et mutabile semper-that kind of thing. You don't know Virgil. I knew"-Mr. Brooke reflected in time that he had not had the personal acquaintance of the Augustan poet-"I was going to say, poor Stoddart, you know. That was what *he* said. You ladies are always against an independent attitude-a man's caring for nothing but truth, and that sort of thing. And there is no part of the county where opinion is narrower than it is here-I don't mean to throw stones, you know, but somebody is wanted to take the independent line; and if I don't take it, who will?"

"Who? Why, any upstart who has got neither blood nor position. People of standing should consume

their independent nonsense at home, not hawk it about. And you! who are going to marry your niece, as good as your daughter, to one of our best men. Sir James would be cruelly annoyed: it will be too hard on him if you turn round now and make yourself a Whig sign-board."

Mr. Brooke again winced inwardly, for Dorothea's engagement had no sooner been decided, than he had thought of Mrs. Cadwallader's prospective taunts. It might have been easy for ignorant observers to say, "Quarrel with Mrs. Cadwallader;" but where is a country gentleman to go who quarrels with his oldest neighbors? Who could taste the fine flavor in the name of Brooke if it were delivered casually, like wine without a seal? Certainly a man can only be cosmopolitan up to a certain point.

"I hope Chettam and I shall always be good friends; but I am sorry to say there is no prospect of his marrying my niece," said Mr. Brooke, much relieved to see through the window that Celia was coming in.

"Why not?" said Mrs. Cadwallader, with a sharp note of surprise. "It is hardly a fortnight since you and I were talking about it."

"My niece has chosen another suitor-has chosen him, you know. I have had nothing to do with it. I should have preferred Chettam; and I should have said Chettam was the man any girl would have chosen. But there is no accounting for these things. Your sex is

capricious, you know."

"Why, whom do you mean to say that you are going to let her marry?" Mrs. Cadwallader's mind was rapidly surveying the possibilities of choice for Dorothea.

But here Celia entered, blooming from a walk in the garden, and the greeting with her delivered Mr. Brooke from the necessity of answering immediately. He got up hastily, and saying, "By the way, I must speak to Wright about the horses," shuffled quickly out of the room.

"My dear child, what is this? — this about your sister's engagement?" said Mrs. Cadwallader.

"She is engaged to marry Mr. Casaubon," said Celia, resorting, as usual, to the simplest statement of fact, and enjoying this opportunity of speaking to the Rector's wife alone.

"This is frightful. How long has it been going on?"

"I only knew of it yesterday. They are to be married in six weeks."

"Well, my dear, I wish you joy of your brother-in-law."

"I am so sorry for Dorothea."

"Sorry! It is her doing, I suppose."

"Yes; she says Mr. Casaubon has a great soul."

"With all my heart."

"Oh, Mrs. Cadwallader, I don't think it can be

nice to marry a man with a great soul."

"Well, my dear, take warning. You know the look of one now; when the next comes and wants to marry you, don't you accept him."

"I'm sure I never should."

"No; one such in a family is enough. So your sister never cared about Sir James Chettam? What would you have said to *him* for a brother-in-law?"

"I should have liked that very much. I am sure he would have been a good husband. Only," Celia added, with a slight blush (she sometimes seemed to blush as she breathed), "I don't think he would have suited Dorothea."

"Not high-flown enough?"

"Dodo is very strict. She thinks so much about everything, and is so particular about what one says. Sir James never seemed to please her."

"She must have encouraged him, I am sure. That is not very creditable."

"Please don't be angry with Dodo; she does not see things. She thought so much about the cottages, and she was rude to Sir James sometimes; but he is so kind, he never noticed it."

"Well," said Mrs. Cadwallader, putting on her shawl, and rising, as if in haste, "I must go straight to Sir James and break this to him. He will have brought his mother back by this time, and I must call. Your uncle will never tell him. We are all disappointed, my

dear. Young people should think of their families in marrying. I set a bad example-married a poor clergyman, and made myself a pitiable object among the De Bracys-obliged to get my coals by stratagem, and pray to heaven for my salad oil. However, Casaubon has money enough; I must do him that justice. As to his blood, I suppose the family quarterings are three cuttle-fish sable, and a commentator rampant. By the bye, before I go, my dear, I must speak to your Mrs. Carter about pastry. I want to send my young cook to learn of her. Poor people with four children, like us, you know, can't afford to keep a good cook. I have no doubt Mrs. Carter will oblige me. Sir James's cook is a perfect dragon."

In less than an hour, Mrs. Cadwallader had circumvented Mrs. Carter and driven to Freshitt Hall, which was not far from her own parsonage, her husband being resident in Freshitt and keeping a curate in Tipton.

Sir James Chettam had returned from the short journey which had kept him absent for a couple of days, and had changed his dress, intending to ride over to Tipton Grange. His horse was standing at the door when Mrs. Cadwallader drove up, and he immediately appeared there himself, whip in hand. Lady Chettam had not yet returned, but Mrs. Cadwallader's errand could not be despatched in the presence of grooms, so she asked to be taken into the conservatory close by, to

look at the new plants; and on coming to a contemplative stand, she said-

"I have a great shock for you; I hope you are not so far gone in love as you pretended to be."

It was of no use protesting, against Mrs. Cadwallader's way of putting things. But Sir James's countenance changed a little. He felt a vague alarm.

"I do believe Brooke is going to expose himself after all. I accused him of meaning to stand for Middlemarch on the Liberal side, and he looked silly and never denied it-talked about the independent line, and the usual nonsense."

"Is that all?" said Sir James, much relieved.

"Why," rejoined Mrs. Cadwallader, with a sharper note, "you don't mean to say that you would like him to turn public man in that way-making a sort of political Cheap Jack of himself?"

"He might be dissuaded, I should think. He would not like the expense."

"That is what I told him. He is vulnerable to reason there-always a few grains of common-sense in an ounce of miserliness. Miserliness is a capital quality to run in families; it's the safe side for madness to dip on. And there must be a little crack in the Brooke family, else we should not see what we are to see."

"What? Brooke standing for Middlemarch?"

"Worse than that. I really feel a little responsible. I always told you Miss Brooke would be such a fine



match. I knew there was a great deal of nonsense in her—a flighty sort of Methodistical stuff. But these things wear out of girls. However, I am taken by surprise for once."

"What do you mean, Mrs. Cadwallader?" said Sir James. His fear lest Miss Brooke should have run away to join the Moravian Brethren, or some preposterous sect unknown to good society, was a little allayed by the knowledge that Mrs. Cadwallader always made the worst of things. "What has happened to Miss Brooke? Pray speak out."

"Very well. She is engaged to be married." Mrs. Cadwallader paused a few moments, observing the deeply hurt expression in her friend's face, which he was trying to conceal by a nervous smile, while he whipped his boot; but she soon added, "Engaged to Casaubon."

Sir James let his whip fall and stooped to pick it up. Perhaps his face had never before gathered so much concentrated disgust as when he turned to Mrs. Cadwallader and repeated, "Casaubon?"

"Even so. You know my errand now."

"Good God! It is horrible! He is no better than a mummy!" (The point of view has to be allowed for, as that of a blooming and disappointed rival.)

"She says, he is a great soul.—A great bladder for dried peas to rattle in!" said Mrs. Cadwallader.

"What business has an old bachelor like that to

marry?" said Sir James. "He has one foot in the grave."

"He means to draw it out again, I suppose."

"Brooke ought not to allow it: he should insist on its being put off till she is of age. She would think better of it then. What is a guardian for?"

"As if you could ever squeeze a resolution out of Brooke!"

"Cadwallader might talk to him."

"Not he! Humphrey finds everybody charming. I never can get him to abuse Casaubon. He will even speak well of the bishop, though I tell him it is unnatural in a beneficed clergyman; what can one do with a husband who attends so little to the decencies? I hide it as well as I can by abusing everybody myself. Come, come, cheer up! you are well rid of Miss Brooke, a girl who would have been requiring you to see the stars by daylight. Between ourselves, little Celia is worth two of her, and likely after all to be the better match. For this marriage to Casaubon is as good as going to a nunnery."

"Oh, on my own account-it is for Miss Brooke's sake I think her friends should try to use their influence."

"Well, Humphrey doesn't know yet. But when I tell him, you may depend on it he will say, 'Why not? Casaubon is a good fellow-and young-young enough.' These charitable people never know vinegar from wine till they have swallowed it and got the colic. However,

if I were a man I should prefer Celia, especially when Dorothea was gone. The truth is, you have been courting one and have won the other. I can see that she admires you almost as much as a man expects to be admired. If it were any one but me who said so, you might think it exaggeration. Good-by!"

Sir James handed Mrs. Cadwallader to the phaeton, and then jumped on his horse. He was not going to renounce his ride because of his friend's unpleasant news-only to ride the faster in some other direction than that of Tipton Grange.

Now, why on earth should Mrs. Cadwallader have been at all busy about Miss Brooke's marriage; and why, when one match that she liked to think she had a hand in was frustrated, should she have straightway contrived the preliminaries of another? Was there any ingenious plot, any hide-and-seek course of action, which might be detected by a careful telescopic watch? Not at all: a telescope might have swept the parishes of Tipton and Freshitt, the whole area visited by Mrs. Cadwallader in her phaeton, without witnessing any interview that could excite suspicion, or any scene from which she did not return with the same unperturbed keenness of eye and the same high natural color. In fact, if that convenient vehicle had existed in the days of the Seven Sages, one of them would doubtless have remarked, that you can know little of women by following them about in their

pony-phaetons. Even with a microscope directed on a water-drop we find ourselves making interpretations which turn out to be rather coarse; for whereas under a weak lens you may seem to see a creature exhibiting an active voracity into which other smaller creatures actively play as if they were so many animated tax-pennies, a stronger lens reveals to you certain tiniest hairlets which make vortices for these victims while the swallower waits passively at his receipt of custom. In this way, metaphorically speaking, a strong lens applied to Mrs. Cadwallader's match-making will show a play of minute causes producing what may be called thought and speech vortices to bring her the sort of food she needed. Her life was rurally simple, quite free from secrets either foul, dangerous, or otherwise important, and not consciously affected by the great affairs of the world. All the more did the affairs of the great world interest her, when communicated in the letters of high-born relations: the way in which fascinating younger sons had gone to the dogs by marrying their mistresses; the fine old-blooded idiocy of young Lord Tapir, and the furious gouty humors of old Lord Megatherium; the exact crossing of genealogies which had brought a coronet into a new branch and widened the relations of scandal, — these were topics of which she retained details with the utmost accuracy, and reproduced them in an excellent pickle of epigrams, which she herself enjoyed the more

because she believed as unquestionably in birth and no-birth as she did in game and vermin. She would never have disowned any one on the ground of poverty: a De Bracy reduced to take his dinner in a basin would have seemed to her an example of pathos worth exaggerating, and I fear his aristocratic vices would not have horrified her. But her feeling towards the vulgar rich was a sort of religious hatred: they had probably made all their money out of high retail prices, and Mrs. Cadwallader detested high prices for everything that was not paid in kind at the Rectory: such people were no part of God's design in making the world; and their accent was an affliction to the ears. A town where such monsters abounded was hardly more than a sort of low comedy, which could not be taken account of in a well-bred scheme of the universe. Let any lady who is inclined to be hard on Mrs. Cadwallader inquire into the comprehensiveness of her own beautiful views, and be quite sure that they afford accommodation for all the lives which have the honor to coexist with hers.

With such a mind, active as phosphorus, biting everything that came near into the form that suited it, how could Mrs. Cadwallader feel that the Miss Brookes and their matrimonial prospects were alien to her? especially as it had been the habit of years for her to scold Mr. Brooke with the friendliest frankness, and let him know in confidence that she thought him a poor creature. From the first arrival of the young ladies in

Tipton she had prearranged Dorothea's marriage with Sir James, and if it had taken place would have been quite sure that it was her doing: that it should not take place after she had preconceived it, caused her an irritation which every thinker will sympathize with. She was the diplomatist of Tipton and Freshitt, and for anything to happen in spite of her was an offensive irregularity. As to freaks like this of Miss Brooke's, Mrs. Cadwallader had no patience with them, and now saw that her opinion of this girl had been infected with some of her husband's weak charitableness: those Methodistical whims, that air of being more religious than the rector and curate together, came from a deeper and more constitutional disease than she had been willing to believe.

"However," said Mrs. Cadwallader, first to herself and afterwards to her husband, "I throw her over: there was a chance, if she had married Sir James, of her becoming a sane, sensible woman. He would never have contradicted her, and when a woman is not contradicted, she has no motive for obstinacy in her absurdities. But now I wish her joy of her hair shirt."

It followed that Mrs. Cadwallader must decide on another match for Sir James, and having made up her mind that it was to be the younger Miss Brooke, there could not have been a more skilful move towards the success of her plan than her hint to the baronet that he had made an impression on Celia's heart. For he was

not one of those gentlemen who languish after the unattainable Sappho's apple that laughs from the topmost bough-the charms which

"Smile like the knot of  
cowslips on the cliff,  
Not to be come at by  
the willing hand."

He had no sonnets to write, and it could not strike him agreeably that he was not an object of preference to the woman whom he had preferred. Already the knowledge that Dorothea had chosen Mr. Casaubon had bruised his attachment and relaxed its hold. Although Sir James was a sportsman, he had some other feelings towards women than towards grouse and foxes, and did not regard his future wife in the light of prey, valuable chiefly for the excitements of the chase. Neither was he so well acquainted with the habits of primitive races as to feel that an ideal combat for her, tomahawk in hand, so to speak, was necessary to the historical continuity of the marriage-tie. On the contrary, having the amiable vanity which knits us to those who are fond of us, and disinclines us to those who are indifferent, and also a good grateful nature, the mere idea that a woman had a kindness towards him spun little threads of tenderness from out his heart towards hers.

Thus it happened, that after Sir James had ridden

rather fast for half an hour in a direction away from Tipton Grange, he slackened his pace, and at last turned into a road which would lead him back by a shorter cut. Various feelings wrought in him the determination after all to go to the Grange to-day as if nothing new had happened. He could not help rejoicing that he had never made the offer and been rejected; mere friendly politeness required that he should call to see Dorothea about the cottages, and now happily Mrs. Cadwallader had prepared him to offer his congratulations, if necessary, without showing too much awkwardness. He really did not like it: giving up Dorothea was very painful to him; but there was something in the resolve to make this visit forthwith and conquer all show of feeling, which was a sort of file-biting and counter-irritant. And without his distinctly recognizing the impulse, there certainly was present in him the sense that Celia would be there, and that he should pay her more attention than he had done before.

We mortals, men and women, devour many a disappointment between breakfast and dinner-time; keep back the tears and look a little pale about the lips, and in answer to inquiries say, "Oh, nothing!" Pride helps us; and pride is not a bad thing when it only urges us to hide our own hurts-not to hurt others.

## CHAPTER VII



*"Piacer e popone  
Vuol la sua stagione."*  
— **Italian Proverb.**

Mr. Casaubon, as might be expected, spent a great deal of his time at the Grange in these weeks, and the hindrance which courtship occasioned to the progress of his great work—the Key to all Mythologies—naturally made him look forward the more eagerly to the happy termination of courtship. But he had deliberately incurred the hindrance, having made up his mind that it was now time for him to adorn his life with the graces of female companionship, to irradiate the gloom which fatigue was apt to hang over the intervals of studious labor with the play of female fancy, and to secure in this, his culminating age, the solace of female tendance for his declining years. Hence he determined to abandon himself to the stream of feeling, and perhaps was surprised to find what an exceedingly shallow rill it was. As in droughty regions baptism by immersion could only be performed symbolically, Mr. Casaubon found that sprinkling was the utmost approach to a plunge which his stream would afford him; and he concluded that the poets had much exaggerated the force of masculine passion. Nevertheless, he observed with pleasure that Miss Brooke showed an ardent submissive affection which promised to fulfil his most agreeable previsions of

marriage. It had once or twice crossed his mind that possibly there was some deficiency in Dorothea to account for the moderation of his abandonment; but he was unable to discern the deficiency, or to figure to himself a woman who would have pleased him better; so that there was clearly no reason to fall back upon but the exaggerations of human tradition.

"Could I not be preparing myself now to be more useful?" said Dorothea to him, one morning, early in the time of courtship; "could I not learn to read Latin and Greek aloud to you, as Milton's daughters did to their father, without understanding what they read?"

"I fear that would be wearisome to you," said Mr. Casaubon, smiling; "and, indeed, if I remember rightly, the young women you have mentioned regarded that exercise in unknown tongues as a ground for rebellion against the poet."

"Yes; but in the first place they were very naughty girls, else they would have been proud to minister to such a father; and in the second place they might have studied privately and taught themselves to understand what they read, and then it would have been interesting. I hope you don't expect me to be naughty and stupid?"

"I expect you to be all that an exquisite young lady can be in every possible relation of life. Certainly it might be a great advantage if you were able to copy the Greek character, and to that end it were well to

begin with a little reading."

Dorothea seized this as a precious permission. She would not have asked Mr. Casaubon at once to teach her the languages, dreading of all things to be tiresome instead of helpful; but it was not entirely out of devotion to her future husband that she wished to know Latin and Greek. Those provinces of masculine knowledge seemed to her a standing-ground from which all truth could be seen more truly. As it was, she constantly doubted her own conclusions, because she felt her own ignorance: how could she be confident that one-roomed cottages were not for the glory of God, when men who knew the classics appeared to conciliate indifference to the cottages with zeal for the glory? Perhaps even Hebrew might be necessary—at least the alphabet and a few roots—in order to arrive at the core of things, and judge soundly on the social duties of the Christian. And she had not reached that point of renunciation at which she would have been satisfied with having a wise husband: she wished, poor child, to be wise herself. Miss Brooke was certainly very naive with all her alleged cleverness. Celia, whose mind had never been thought too powerful, saw the emptiness of other people's pretensions much more readily. To have in general but little feeling, seems to be the only security against feeling too much on any particular occasion.

However, Mr. Casaubon consented to listen and

teach for an hour together, like a schoolmaster of little boys, or rather like a lover, to whom a mistress's elementary ignorance and difficulties have a touching fitness. Few scholars would have disliked teaching the alphabet under such circumstances. But Dorothea herself was a little shocked and discouraged at her own stupidity, and the answers she got to some timid questions about the value of the Greek accents gave her a painful suspicion that here indeed there might be secrets not capable of explanation to a woman's reason.

Mr. Brooke had no doubt on that point, and expressed himself with his usual strength upon it one day that he came into the library while the reading was going forward.

"Well, but now, Casaubon, such deep studies, classics, mathematics, that kind of thing, are too taxing for a woman-too taxing, you know."

"Dorothea is learning to read the characters simply," said Mr. Casaubon, evading the question. "She had the very considerate thought of saving my eyes."

"Ah, well, without understanding, you know-that may not be so bad. But there is a lightness about the feminine mind-a touch and go-music, the fine arts, that kind of thing-they should study those up to a certain point, women should; but in a light way, you know. A woman should be able to sit down and play you or sing you a good old English tune. That is what I like; though I have heard most things-been at the opera in Vienna:

Gluck, Mozart, everything of that sort. But I'm a conservative in music-it's not like ideas, you know. I stick to the good old tunes."

"Mr. Casaubon is not fond of the piano, and I am very glad he is not," said Dorothea, whose slight regard for domestic music and feminine fine art must be forgiven her, considering the small tinkling and smearing in which they chiefly consisted at that dark period. She smiled and looked up at her betrothed with grateful eyes. If he had always been asking her to play the "Last Rose of Summer," she would have required much resignation. "He says there is only an old harpsichord at Lowick, and it is covered with books."

"Ah, there you are behind Celia, my dear. Celia, now, plays very prettily, and is always ready to play. However, since Casaubon does not like it, you are all right. But it's a pity you should not have little recreations of that sort, Casaubon: the bow always strung-that kind of thing, you know-will not do."

"I never could look on it in the light of a recreation to have my ears teased with measured noises," said Mr. Casaubon. "A tune much iterated has the ridiculous effect of making the words in my mind perform a sort of minuet to keep time-an effect hardly tolerable, I imagine, after boyhood. As to the grander forms of music, worthy to accompany solemn celebrations, and even to serve as an educating influence according to the ancient conception, I say

nothing, for with these we are not immediately concerned."

"No; but music of that sort I should enjoy," said Dorothea. "When we were coming home from Lausanne my uncle took us to hear the great organ at Freiberg, and it made me sob."

"That kind of thing is not healthy, my dear," said Mr. Brooke. "Casaubon, she will be in your hands now: you must teach my niece to take things more quietly, eh, Dorothea?"

He ended with a smile, not wishing to hurt his niece, but really thinking that it was perhaps better for her to be early married to so sober a fellow as Casaubon, since she would not hear of Chettam.

"It is wonderful, though," he said to himself as he shuffled out of the room-"it is wonderful that she should have liked him. However, the match is good. I should have been travelling out of my brief to have hindered it, let Mrs. Cadwallader say what she will. He is pretty certain to be a bishop, is Casaubon. That was a very seasonable pamphlet of his on the Catholic Question:-a deanery at least. They owe him a deanery."

And here I must vindicate a claim to philosophical reflectiveness, by remarking that Mr. Brooke on this occasion little thought of the Radical speech which, at a later period, he was led to make on the incomes of the bishops. What elegant historian would neglect a striking opportunity for pointing out

that his heroes did not foresee the history of the world, or even their own actions? — For example, that Henry of Navarre, when a Protestant baby, little thought of being a Catholic monarch; or that Alfred the Great, when he measured his laborious nights with burning candles, had no idea of future gentlemen measuring their idle days with watches. Here is a mine of truth, which, however vigorously it may be worked, is likely to outlast our coal.

But of Mr. Brooke I make a further remark perhaps less warranted by precedent—namely, that if he had foreknown his speech, it might not have made any great difference. To think with pleasure of his niece's husband having a large ecclesiastical income was one thing—to make a Liberal speech was another thing; and it is a narrow mind which cannot look at a subject from various points of view.

## CHAPTER VIII

"Oh, rescue her! I am  
her brother now,  
And you her father.  
Every gentle maid  
Should have a  
guardian in each  
gentleman."

It was wonderful to Sir James Chettam how well he continued to like going to the Grange after he had once encountered the difficulty of seeing Dorothea for the first time in the light of a woman who was engaged to another man. Of course the forked lightning seemed to pass through him when he first approached her, and he remained conscious throughout the interview of hiding uneasiness; but, good as he was, it must be owned that his uneasiness was less than it would have been if he had thought his rival a brilliant and desirable match. He had no sense of being eclipsed by Mr. Casaubon; he was only shocked that Dorothea was under a melancholy illusion, and his mortification lost some of its bitterness by being mingled with compassion.

Nevertheless, while Sir James said to himself that he had completely resigned her, since with the perversity of a Desdemona she had not affected a proposed match that was clearly suitable and according to nature; he could not yet be quite passive under the idea of her engagement to Mr. Casaubon. On the day when he first saw them together in the light of his present knowledge, it seemed to him that he had not taken the affair seriously enough. Brooke was really culpable; he ought to have hindered it. Who could speak to him? Something might be done perhaps even



now, at least to defer the marriage. On his way home he turned into the Rectory and asked for Mr. Cadwallader. Happily, the Rector was at home, and his visitor was shown into the study, where all the fishing tackle hung. But he himself was in a little room adjoining, at work with his turning apparatus, and he called to the baronet to join him there. The two were better friends than any other landholder and clergyman in the county—a significant fact which was in agreement with the amiable expression of their faces.

Mr. Cadwallader was a large man, with full lips and a sweet smile; very plain and rough in his exterior, but with that solid imperturbable ease and good-humor which is infectious, and like great grassy hills in the sunshine, quiets even an irritated egoism, and makes it rather ashamed of itself. "Well, how are you?" he said, showing a hand not quite fit to be grasped. "Sorry I missed you before. Is there anything particular? You look vexed."

Sir James's brow had a little crease in it, a little depression of the eyebrow, which he seemed purposely to exaggerate as he answered.

"It is only this conduct of Brooke's. I really think somebody should speak to him."

"What? meaning to stand?" said Mr. Cadwallader, going on with the arrangement of the reels which he had just been turning. "I hardly think he means it. But where's the harm, if he likes it? Any one

who objects to Whiggery should be glad when the Whigs don't put up the strongest fellow. They won't overturn the Constitution with our friend Brooke's head for a battering ram."

"Oh, I don't mean that," said Sir James, who, after putting down his hat and throwing himself into a chair, had begun to nurse his leg and examine the sole of his boot with much bitterness. "I mean this marriage. I mean his letting that blooming young girl marry Casaubon."

"What is the matter with Casaubon? I see no harm in him-if the girl likes him."

"She is too young to know what she likes. Her guardian ought to interfere. He ought not to allow the thing to be done in this headlong manner. I wonder a man like you, Cadwallader-a man with daughters, can look at the affair with indifference: and with such a heart as yours! Do think seriously about it."

"I am not joking; I am as serious as possible," said the Rector, with a provoking little inward laugh. "You are as bad as Elinor. She has been wanting me to go and lecture Brooke; and I have reminded her that her friends had a very poor opinion of the match she made when she married me."

"But look at Casaubon," said Sir James, indignantly. "He must be fifty, and I don't believe he could ever have been much more than the shadow of a man. Look at his legs!"

"Confound you handsome young fellows! you think of having it all your own way in the world. You don't understand women. They don't admire you half so much as you admire yourselves. Elinor used to tell her sisters that she married me for my ugliness-it was so various and amusing that it had quite conquered her prudence."

"You! it was easy enough for a woman to love you. But this is no question of beauty. I don't *like* Casaubon." This was Sir James's strongest way of implying that he thought ill of a man's character.

"Why? what do you know against him?" said the Rector laying down his reels, and putting his thumbs into his armholes with an air of attention.

Sir James paused. He did not usually find it easy to give his reasons: it seemed to him strange that people should not know them without being told, since he only felt what was reasonable. At last he said-

"Now, Cadwallader, has he got any heart?"

"Well, yes. I don't mean of the melting sort, but a sound kernel, *that* you may be sure of. He is very good to his poor relations: pensions several of the women, and is educating a young fellow at a good deal of expense. Casaubon acts up to his sense of justice. His mother's sister made a bad match-a Pole, I think-lost herself-at any rate was disowned by her family. If it had not been for that, Casaubon would not have had so much money by half. I believe he went

himself to find out his cousins, and see what he could do for them. Every man would not ring so well as that, if you tried his metal. *You* would, Chettam; but not every man."

"I don't know," said Sir James, coloring. "I am not so sure of myself." He paused a moment, and then added, "That was a right thing for Casaubon to do. But a man may wish to do what is right, and yet be a sort of parchment code. A woman may not be happy with him. And I think when a girl is so young as Miss Brooke is, her friends ought to interfere a little to hinder her from doing anything foolish. You laugh, because you fancy I have some feeling on my own account. But upon my honor, it is not that. I should feel just the same if I were Miss Brooke's brother or uncle."

"Well, but what should you do?"

"I should say that the marriage must not be decided on until she was of age. And depend upon it, in that case, it would never come off. I wish you saw it as I do-I wish you would talk to Brooke about it."

Sir James rose as he was finishing his sentence, for he saw Mrs. Cadwallader entering from the study. She held by the hand her youngest girl, about five years old, who immediately ran to papa, and was made comfortable on his knee.

"I hear what you are talking about," said the wife. "But you will make no impression on Humphrey. As long as the fish rise to his bait, everybody is what he

ought to be. Bless you, Casaubon has got a trout-stream, and does not care about fishing in it himself: could there be a better fellow?"

"Well, there is something in that," said the Rector, with his quiet, inward laugh. "It is a very good quality in a man to have a trout-stream."

"But seriously," said Sir James, whose vexation had not yet spent itself, "don't you think the Rector might do some good by speaking?"

"Oh, I told you beforehand what he would say," answered Mrs. Cadwallader, lifting up her eyebrows. "I have done what I could: I wash my hands of the marriage."

"In the first place," said the Rector, looking rather grave, "it would be nonsensical to expect that I could convince Brooke, and make him act accordingly. Brooke is a very good fellow, but pulpy; he will run into any mould, but he won't keep shape."

"He might keep shape long enough to defer the marriage," said Sir James.

"But, my dear Chettam, why should I use my influence to Casaubon's disadvantage, unless I were much surer than I am that I should be acting for the advantage of Miss Brooke? I know no harm of Casaubon. I don't care about his Xisuthrus and Fee-fo-fum and the rest; but then he doesn't care about my fishing-tackle. As to the line he took on the Catholic Question, that was unexpected; but he has

always been civil to me, and I don't see why I should spoil his sport. For anything I can tell, Miss Brooke may be happier with him than she would be with any other man."

"Humphrey! I have no patience with you. You know you would rather dine under the hedge than with Casaubon alone. You have nothing to say to each other."

"What has that to do with Miss Brooke's marrying him? She does not do it for my amusement."

"He has got no good red blood in his body," said Sir James.

"No. Somebody put a drop under a magnifying-glass and it was all semicolons and parentheses," said Mrs. Cadwallader.

"Why does he not bring out his book, instead of marrying," said Sir James, with a disgust which he held warranted by the sound feeling of an English layman.

"Oh, he dreams footnotes, and they run away with all his brains. They say, when he was a little boy, he made an abstract of 'Hop o' my Thumb,' and he has been making abstracts ever since. Ugh! And that is the man Humphrey goes on saying that a woman may be happy with."

"Well, he is what Miss Brooke likes," said the Rector. "I don't profess to understand every young lady's taste."

"But if she were your own daughter?" said Sir

James.

"That would be a different affair. She is *not* my daughter, and I don't feel called upon to interfere. Casaubon is as good as most of us. He is a scholarly clergyman, and creditable to the cloth. Some Radical fellow speechifying at Middlemarch said Casaubon was the learned straw-chopping incumbent, and Freke was the brick-and-mortar incumbent, and I was the angling incumbent. And upon my word, I don't see that one is worse or better than the other." The Rector ended with his silent laugh. He always saw the joke of any satire against himself. His conscience was large and easy, like the rest of him: it did only what it could do without any trouble.

Clearly, there would be no interference with Miss Brooke's marriage through Mr. Cadwallader; and Sir James felt with some sadness that she was to have perfect liberty of misjudgment. It was a sign of his good disposition that he did not slacken at all in his intention of carrying out Dorothea's design of the cottages. Doubtless this persistence was the best course for his own dignity: but pride only helps us to be generous; it never makes us so, any more than vanity makes us witty. She was now enough aware of Sir James's position with regard to her, to appreciate the rectitude of his perseverance in a landlord's duty, to which he had at first been urged by a lover's complaisance, and her pleasure in it was great enough

to count for something even in her present happiness. Perhaps she gave to Sir James Chettam's cottages all the interest she could spare from Mr. Casaubon, or rather from the symphony of hopeful dreams, admiring trust, and passionate self devotion which that learned gentleman had set playing in her soul. Hence it happened that in the good baronet's succeeding visits, while he was beginning to pay small attentions to Celia, he found himself talking with more and more pleasure to Dorothea. She was perfectly unconstrained and without irritation towards him now, and he was gradually discovering the delight there is in frank kindness and companionship between a man and a woman who have no passion to hide or confess.

## CHAPTER IX

*1st Gent.*

An ancient land in  
ancient oracles  
Is called "law-thirsty":  
all the struggle there  
Was after order and a  
perfect rule.  
Pray, where lie such  
lands now?...



Why, where they lay  
of old-in human souls.

Mr. Casaubon's behavior about settlements was highly satisfactory to Mr. Brooke, and the preliminaries of marriage rolled smoothly along, shortening the weeks of courtship. The betrothed bride must see her future home, and dictate any changes that she would like to have made there. A woman dictates before marriage in order that she may have an appetite for submission afterwards. And certainly, the mistakes that we male and female mortals make when we have our own way might fairly raise some wonder that we are so fond of it.

On a gray but dry November morning Dorothea drove to Lowick in company with her uncle and Celia. Mr. Casaubon's home was the manor-house. Close by, visible from some parts of the garden, was the little church, with the old parsonage opposite. In the beginning of his career, Mr. Casaubon had only held the living, but the death of his brother had put him in possession of the manor also. It had a small park, with a fine old oak here and there, and an avenue of limes towards the southwest front, with a sunk fence between park and pleasure-ground, so that from the

drawing-room windows the glance swept uninterruptedly along a slope of greensward till the limes ended in a level of corn and pastures, which often seemed to melt into a lake under the setting sun. This was the happy side of the house, for the south and east looked rather melancholy even under the brightest morning. The grounds here were more confined, the flower-beds showed no very careful tendance, and large clumps of trees, chiefly of sombre yews, had risen high, not ten yards from the windows. The building, of greenish stone, was in the old English style, not ugly, but small-windowed and melancholy-looking: the sort of house that must have children, many flowers, open windows, and little vistas of bright things, to make it seem a joyous home. In this latter end of autumn, with a sparse remnant of yellow leaves falling slowly athwart the dark evergreens in a stillness without sunshine, the house too had an air of autumnal decline, and Mr. Casaubon, when he presented himself, had no bloom that could be thrown into relief by that background.

"Oh dear!" Celia said to herself, "I am sure Freshitt Hall would have been pleasanter than this." She thought of the white freestone, the pillared portico, and the terrace full of flowers, Sir James smiling above them like a prince issuing from his enchantment in a rose-bush, with a handkerchief swiftly metamorphosed from the most delicately odorous petals-Sir James, who

talked so agreeably, always about things which had common-sense in them, and not about learning! Celia had those light young feminine tastes which grave and weatherworn gentlemen sometimes prefer in a wife; but happily Mr. Casaubon's bias had been different, for he would have had no chance with Celia.

Dorothea, on the contrary, found the house and grounds all that she could wish: the dark book-shelves in the long library, the carpets and curtains with colors subdued by time, the curious old maps and bird's-eye views on the walls of the corridor, with here and there an old vase below, had no oppression for her, and seemed more cheerful than the easts and pictures at the Grange, which her uncle had long ago brought home from his travels—they being probably among the ideas he had taken in at one time. To poor Dorothea these severe classical nudities and smirking Renaissance-Correggiosities were painfully inexplicable, staring into the midst of her Puritanic conceptions: she had never been taught how she could bring them into any sort of relevance with her life. But the owners of Lowick apparently had not been travellers, and Mr. Casaubon's studies of the past were not carried on by means of such aids.

Dorothea walked about the house with delightful emotion. Everything seemed hallowed to her: this was to be the home of her wifehood, and she looked up with eyes full of confidence to Mr. Casaubon when he drew

her attention specially to some actual arrangement and asked her if she would like an alteration. All appeals to her taste she met gratefully, but saw nothing to alter. His efforts at exact courtesy and formal tenderness had no defect for her. She filled up all blanks with unmanifested perfections, interpreting him as she interpreted the works of Providence, and accounting for seeming discords by her own deafness to the higher harmonies. And there are many blanks left in the weeks of courtship which a loving faith fills with happy assurance.

"Now, my dear Dorothea, I wish you to favor me by pointing out which room you would like to have as your boudoir," said Mr. Casaubon, showing that his views of the womanly nature were sufficiently large to include that requirement.

"It is very kind of you to think of that," said Dorothea, "but I assure you I would rather have all those matters decided for me. I shall be much happier to take everything as it is—just as you have been used to have it, or as you will yourself choose it to be. I have no motive for wishing anything else."

"Oh, Dodo," said Celia, "will you not have the bow-windowed room up-stairs?"

Mr. Casaubon led the way thither. The bow-window looked down the avenue of limes; the furniture was all of a faded blue, and there were miniatures of ladies and gentlemen with powdered hair

hanging in a group. A piece of tapestry over a door also showed a blue-green world with a pale stag in it. The chairs and tables were thin-legged and easy to upset. It was a room where one might fancy the ghost of a tight-laced lady revisiting the scene of her embroidery. A light bookcase contained duodecimo volumes of polite literature in calf, completing the furniture.

"Yes," said Mr. Brooke, "this would be a pretty room with some new hangings, sofas, and that sort of thing. A little bare now."

"No, uncle," said Dorothea, eagerly. "Pray do not speak of altering anything. There are so many other things in the world that want altering-I like to take these things as they are. And you like them as they are, don't you?" she added, looking at Mr. Casaubon. "Perhaps this was your mother's room when she was young."

"It was," he said, with his slow bend of the head.

"This is your mother," said Dorothea, who had turned to examine the group of miniatures. "It is like the tiny one you brought me; only, I should think, a better portrait. And this one opposite, who is this?"

"Her elder sister. They were, like you and your sister, the only two children of their parents, who hang above them, you see."

"The sister is pretty," said Celia, implying that she thought less favorably of Mr. Casaubon's mother. It was a new opening to Celia's imagination, that he came of a family who had all been young in their time-the

ladies wearing necklaces.

"It is a peculiar face," said Dorothea, looking closely. "Those deep gray eyes rather near together-and the delicate irregular nose with a sort of ripple in it-and all the powdered curls hanging backward. Altogether it seems to me peculiar rather than pretty. There is not even a family likeness between her and your mother."

"No. And they were not alike in their lot."

"You did not mention her to me," said Dorothea.

"My aunt made an unfortunate marriage. I never saw her."

Dorothea wondered a little, but felt that it would be indelicate just then to ask for any information which Mr. Casaubon did not proffer, and she turned to the window to admire the view. The sun had lately pierced the gray, and the avenue of limes cast shadows.

"Shall we not walk in the garden now?" said Dorothea.

"And you would like to see the church, you know," said Mr. Brooke. "It is a droll little church. And the village. It all lies in a nut-shell. By the way, it will suit you, Dorothea; for the cottages are like a row of alms-houses-little gardens, gilly-flowers, that sort of thing."

"Yes, please," said Dorothea, looking at Mr. Casaubon, "I should like to see all that." She had got nothing from him more graphic about the Lowick cottages than that they were "not bad."

They were soon on a gravel walk which led chiefly between grassy borders and clumps of trees, this being the nearest way to the church, Mr. Casaubon said. At the little gate leading into the churchyard there was a pause while Mr. Casaubon went to the parsonage close by to fetch a key. Celia, who had been hanging a little in the rear, came up presently, when she saw that Mr. Casaubon was gone away, and said in her easy staccato, which always seemed to contradict the suspicion of any malicious intent-

"Do you know, Dorothea, I saw some one quite young coming up one of the walks."

"Is that astonishing, Celia?"

"There may be a young gardener, you know-why not?" said Mr. Brooke. "I told Casaubon he should change his gardener."

"No, not a gardener," said Celia; "a gentleman with a sketch-book. He had light-brown curls. I only saw his back. But he was quite young."

"The curate's son, perhaps," said Mr. Brooke. "Ah, there is Casaubon again, and Tucker with him. He is going to introduce Tucker. You don't know Tucker yet."

Mr. Tucker was the middle-aged curate, one of the "inferior clergy," who are usually not wanting in sons. But after the introduction, the conversation did not lead to any question about his family, and the startling apparition of youthfulness was forgotten by

every one but Celia. She inwardly declined to believe that the light-brown curls and slim figure could have any relationship to Mr. Tucker, who was just as old and musty-looking as she would have expected Mr. Casaubon's curate to be; doubtless an excellent man who would go to heaven (for Celia wished not to be unprincipled), but the corners of his mouth were so unpleasant. Celia thought with some dismalness of the time she should have to spend as bridesmaid at Lowick, while the curate had probably no pretty little children whom she could like, irrespective of principle.

Mr. Tucker was invaluable in their walk; and perhaps Mr. Casaubon had not been without foresight on this head, the curate being able to answer all Dorothea's questions about the villagers and the other parishioners. Everybody, he assured her, was well off in Lowick: not a cottager in those double cottages at a low rent but kept a pig, and the strips of garden at the back were well tended. The small boys wore excellent corduroy, the girls went out as tidy servants, or did a little straw-plaiting at home: no looms here, no Dissent; and though the public disposition was rather towards laying by money than towards spirituality, there was not much vice. The speckled fowls were so numerous that Mr. Brooke observed, "Your farmers leave some barley for the women to glean, I see. The poor folks here might have a fowl in their pot, as the good French king used to wish for all his people. The French eat a



good many fowls-skinny fowls, you know."

"I think it was a very cheap wish of his," said Dorothea, indignantly. "Are kings such monsters that a wish like that must be reckoned a royal virtue?"

"And if he wished them a skinny fowl," said Celia, "that would not be nice. But perhaps he wished them to have fat fowls."

"Yes, but the word has dropped out of the text, or perhaps was subauditum; that is, present in the king's mind, but not uttered," said Mr. Casaubon, smiling and bending his head towards Celia, who immediately dropped backward a little, because she could not bear Mr. Casaubon to blink at her.

Dorothea sank into silence on the way back to the house. She felt some disappointment, of which she was yet ashamed, that there was nothing for her to do in Lowick; and in the next few minutes her mind had glanced over the possibility, which she would have preferred, of finding that her home would be in a parish which had a larger share of the world's misery, so that she might have had more active duties in it. Then, recurring to the future actually before her, she made a picture of more complete devotion to Mr. Casaubon's aims in which she would await new duties. Many such might reveal themselves to the higher knowledge gained by her in that companionship.

Mr. Tucker soon left them, having some clerical work which would not allow him to lunch at the Hall;

and as they were re-entering the garden through the little gate, Mr. Casaubon said-

"You seem a little sad, Dorothea. I trust you are pleased with what you have seen."

"I am feeling something which is perhaps foolish and wrong," answered Dorothea, with her usual openness-"almost wishing that the people wanted more to be done for them here. I have known so few ways of making my life good for anything. Of course, my notions of usefulness must be narrow. I must learn new ways of helping people."

"Doubtless," said Mr. Casaubon. "Each position has its corresponding duties. Yours, I trust, as the mistress of Lowick, will not leave any yearning unfulfilled."

"Indeed, I believe that," said Dorothea, earnestly. "Do not suppose that I am sad."

"That is well. But, if you are not tired, we will take another way to the house than that by which we came."

Dorothea was not at all tired, and a little circuit was made towards a fine yew-tree, the chief hereditary glory of the grounds on this side of the house. As they approached it, a figure, conspicuous on a dark background of evergreens, was seated on a bench, sketching the old tree. Mr. Brooke, who was walking in front with Celia, turned his head, and said-

"Who is that youngster, Casaubon?"

They had come very near when Mr. Casaubon answered-

"That is a young relative of mine, a second cousin: the grandson, in fact," he added, looking at Dorothea, "of the lady whose portrait you have been noticing, my aunt Julia."

The young man had laid down his sketch-book and risen. His bushy light-brown curls, as well as his youthfulness, identified him at once with Celia's apparition.

"Dorothea, let me introduce to you my cousin, Mr. Ladislaw. Will, this is Miss Brooke."

The cousin was so close now, that, when he lifted his hat, Dorothea could see a pair of gray eyes rather near together, a delicate irregular nose with a little ripple in it, and hair falling backward; but there was a mouth and chin of a more prominent, threatening aspect than belonged to the type of the grandmother's miniature. Young Ladislaw did not feel it necessary to smile, as if he were charmed with this introduction to his future second cousin and her relatives; but wore rather a pouting air of discontent.

"You are an artist, I see," said Mr. Brooke, taking up the sketch-book and turning it over in his unceremonious fashion.



"No, I only sketch a little. There is nothing fit to be seen there," said young Ladislaw, coloring, perhaps with temper rather than modesty.

"Oh, come, this is a nice bit, now. I did a little in this way myself at one time, you know. Look here, now; this is what I call a nice thing, done with what we used to call *brio* ." Mr. Brooke held out towards the two girls a large colored sketch of stony ground and trees, with a pool.

"I am no judge of these things," said Dorothea, not coldly, but with an eager deprecation of the appeal to her. "You know, uncle, I never see the beauty of those pictures which you say are so much praised. They are a language I do not understand. I suppose there is some relation between pictures and nature which I am too ignorant to feel-just as you see what a Greek sentence stands for which means nothing to me." Dorothea looked up at Mr. Casaubon, who bowed his head towards her, while Mr. Brooke said, smiling nonchalantly-

"Bless me, now, how different people are! But you had a bad style of teaching, you know-else this is just the thing for girls-sketching, fine art and so on. But you took to drawing plans; you don't understand morbidezza, and that kind of thing. You will come to my house, I hope, and I will show you what I did in this way," he continued, turning to young Ladislaw, who had to be recalled from his preoccupation in observing Dorothea. Ladislaw had made up his mind that she must be an unpleasant girl, since she was going to marry Casaubon, and what she said of her stupidity about pictures would have confirmed that opinion even if he had believed her. As it was, he took her words for a covert judgment, and was certain that she thought his sketch detestable. There was too much cleverness in her apology: she was laughing both at her uncle and himself. But what a voice! It was like the voice of a

soul that had once lived in an Aeolian harp. This must be one of Nature's inconsistencies. There could be no sort of passion in a girl who would marry Casaubon. But he turned from her, and bowed his thanks for Mr. Brooke's invitation.

"We will turn over my Italian engravings together," continued that good-natured man. "I have no end of those things, that I have laid by for years. One gets rusty in this part of the country, you know. Not you, Casaubon; you stick to your studies; but my best ideas get undermost-out of use, you know. You clever young men must guard against indolence. I was too indolent, you know: else I might have been anywhere at one time."

"That is a seasonable admonition," said Mr. Casaubon; "but now we will pass on to the house, lest the young ladies should be tired of standing."

When their backs were turned, young Ladislaw sat down to go on with his sketching, and as he did so his face broke into an expression of amusement which increased as he went on drawing, till at last he threw back his head and laughed aloud. Partly it was the reception of his own artistic production that tickled him; partly the notion of his grave cousin as the lover of that girl; and partly Mr. Brooke's definition of the place he might have held but for the impediment of indolence. Mr. Will Ladislaw's sense of the ludicrous lit up his features very agreeably: it was the pure

enjoyment of comicality, and had no mixture of sneering and self-exaltation.

"What is your nephew going to do with himself, Casaubon?" said Mr. Brooke, as they went on.

"My cousin, you mean-not my nephew."

"Yes, yes, cousin. But in the way of a career, you know."

"The answer to that question is painfully doubtful. On leaving Rugby he declined to go to an English university, where I would gladly have placed him, and chose what I must consider the anomalous course of studying at Heidelberg. And now he wants to go abroad again, without any special object, save the vague purpose of what he calls culture, preparation for he knows not what. He declines to choose a profession."

"He has no means but what you furnish, I suppose."

"I have always given him and his friends reason to understand that I would furnish in moderation what was necessary for providing him with a scholarly education, and launching him respectably. I am-therefore bound to fulfil the expectation so raised," said Mr. Casaubon, putting his conduct in the light of mere rectitude: a trait of delicacy which Dorothea noticed with admiration.

"He has a thirst for travelling; perhaps he may turn out a Bruce or a Mungo Park," said Mr. Brooke. "I

had a notion of that myself at one time."

"No, he has no bent towards exploration, or the enlargement of our geognosis: that would be a special purpose which I could recognize with some approbation, though without felicitating him on a career which so often ends in premature and violent death. But so far is he from having any desire for a more accurate knowledge of the earth's surface, that he said he should prefer not to know the sources of the Nile, and that there should be some unknown regions preserved as hunting grounds for the poetic imagination."

"Well, there is something in that, you know," said Mr. Brooke, who had certainly an impartial mind.

"It is, I fear, nothing more than a part of his general inaccuracy and indisposition to thoroughness of all kinds, which would be a bad augury for him in any profession, civil or sacred, even were he so far submissive to ordinary rule as to choose one."

"Perhaps he has conscientious scruples founded on his own unfitness," said Dorothea, who was interesting herself in finding a favorable explanation. "Because the law and medicine should be very serious professions to undertake, should they not? People's lives and fortunes depend on them."

"Doubtless; but I fear that my young relative Will Ladislaw is chiefly determined in his aversion to these callings by a dislike to steady application, and to that kind of acquirement which is needful instrumentally,



but is not charming or immediately inviting to self-indulgent taste. I have insisted to him on what Aristotle has stated with admirable brevity, that for the achievement of any work regarded as an end there must be a prior exercise of many energies or acquired facilities of a secondary order, demanding patience. I have pointed to my own manuscript volumes, which represent the toil of years preparatory to a work not yet accomplished. But in vain. To careful reasoning of this kind he replies by calling himself Pegasus, and every form of prescribed work 'harness.'"

Celia laughed. She was surprised to find that Mr. Casaubon could say something quite amusing.

"Well, you know, he may turn out a Byron, a Chatterton, a Churchill-that sort of thing-there's no telling," said Mr. Brooke. "Shall you let him go to Italy, or wherever else he wants to go?"

"Yes; I have agreed to furnish him with moderate supplies for a year or so; he asks no more. I shall let him be tried by the test of freedom."

"That is very kind of you," said Dorothea, looking up at Mr. Casaubon with delight. "It is noble. After all, people may really have in them some vocation which is not quite plain to themselves, may they not? They may seem idle and weak because they are growing. We should be very patient with each other, I think."

"I suppose it is being engaged to be married that

has made you think patience good," said Celia, as soon as she and Dorothea were alone together, taking off their wrappings.

"You mean that I am very impatient, Celia."

"Yes; when people don't do and say just what you like." Celia had become less afraid of "saying things" to Dorothea since this engagement: cleverness seemed to her more pitiable than ever.

## CHAPTER X

*"He had caught a great cold, had he had no other clothes to wear than the skin of a bear not yet killed."*

— FULLER.

Young Ladislaw did not pay that visit to which Mr. Brooke had invited him, and only six days afterwards Mr. Casaubon mentioned that his young relative had started for the Continent, seeming by this cold vagueness to waive inquiry. Indeed, Will had declined to fix on any more precise destination than the entire area of Europe. Genius, he held, is necessarily intolerant of fetters: on the one hand it must have the utmost play for its spontaneity; on the other, it may confidently await those messages from the universe

which summon it to its peculiar work, only placing itself in an attitude of receptivity towards all sublime chances. The attitudes of receptivity are various, and Will had sincerely tried many of them. He was not excessively fond of wine, but he had several times taken too much, simply as an experiment in that form of ecstasy; he had fasted till he was faint, and then supped on lobster; he had made himself ill with doses of opium. Nothing greatly original had resulted from these measures; and the effects of the opium had convinced him that there was an entire dissimilarity between his constitution and De Quincey's. The superadded circumstance which would evolve the genius had not yet come; the universe had not yet beckoned. Even Caesar's fortune at one time was, but a grand presentiment. We know what a masquerade all development is, and what effective shapes may be disguised in helpless embryos.-In fact, the world is full of hopeful analogies and handsome dubious eggs called possibilities. Will saw clearly enough the pitiable instances of long incubation producing no chick, and but for gratitude would have laughed at Casaubon, whose plodding application, rows of note-books, and small taper of learned theory exploring the tossed ruins of the world, seemed to enforce a moral entirely encouraging to Will's generous reliance on the intentions of the universe with regard to himself. He held that reliance to be a mark of genius; and certainly

it is no mark to the contrary; genius consisting neither in self-conceit nor in humility, but in a power to make or do, not anything in general, but something in particular. Let him start for the Continent, then, without our pronouncing on his future. Among all forms of mistake, prophecy is the most gratuitous.

But at present this caution against a too hasty judgment interests me more in relation to Mr. Casaubon than to his young cousin. If to Dorothea Mr. Casaubon had been the mere occasion which had set alight the fine inflammable material of her youthful illusions, does it follow that he was fairly represented in the minds of those less impassioned personages who have hitherto delivered their judgments concerning him? I protest against any absolute conclusion, any prejudice derived from Mrs. Cadwallader's contempt for a neighboring clergyman's alleged greatness of soul, or Sir James Chettam's poor opinion of his rival's legs, — from Mr. Brooke's failure to elicit a companion's ideas, or from Celia's criticism of a middle-aged scholar's personal appearance. I am not sure that the greatest man of his age, if ever that solitary superlative existed, could escape these unfavorable reflections of himself in various small mirrors; and even Milton, looking for his portrait in a spoon, must submit to have the facial angle of a bumpkin. Moreover, if Mr. Casaubon, speaking for himself, has rather a chilling rhetoric, it is not therefore certain that there is no good work or fine feeling in him.

Did not an immortal physicist and interpreter of hieroglyphs write detestable verses? Has the theory of the solar system been advanced by graceful manners and conversational tact? Suppose we turn from outside estimates of a man, to wonder, with keener interest, what is the report of his own consciousness about his doings or capacity: with what hindrances he is carrying on his daily labors; what fading of hopes, or what deeper fixity of self-delusion the years are marking off within him; and with what spirit he wrestles against universal pressure, which will one day be too heavy for him, and bring his heart to its final pause. Doubtless his lot is important in his own eyes; and the chief reason that we think he asks too large a place in our consideration must be our want of room for him, since we refer him to the Divine regard with perfect confidence; nay, it is even held sublime for our neighbor to expect the utmost there, however little he may have got from us. Mr. Casaubon, too, was the centre of his own world; if he was liable to think that others were providentially made for him, and especially to consider them in the light of their fitness for the author of a "Key to all Mythologies," this trait is not quite alien to us, and, like the other mendicant hopes of mortals, claims some of our pity.

Certainly this affair of his marriage with Miss Brooke touched him more nearly than it did any one of the persons who have hitherto shown their disapproval

of it, and in the present stage of things I feel more tenderly towards his experience of success than towards the disappointment of the amiable Sir James. For in truth, as the day fixed for his marriage came nearer, Mr. Casaubon did not find his spirits rising; nor did the contemplation of that matrimonial garden scene, where, as all experience showed, the path was to be bordered with flowers, prove persistently more enchanting to him than the accustomed vaults where he walked taper in hand. He did not confess to himself, still less could he have breathed to another, his surprise that though he had won a lovely and noble-hearted girl he had not won delight, — which he had also regarded as an object to be found by search. It is true that he knew all the classical passages implying the contrary; but knowing classical passages, we find, is a mode of motion, which explains why they leave so little extra force for their personal application.

Poor Mr. Casaubon had imagined that his long studious bachelorhood had stored up for him a compound interest of enjoyment, and that large drafts on his affections would not fail to be honored; for we all of us, grave or light, get our thoughts entangled in metaphors, and act fatally on the strength of them. And now he was in danger of being saddened by the very conviction that his circumstances were unusually happy: there was nothing external by which he could account for a certain blankness of sensibility which

came over him just when his expectant gladness should have been most lively, just when he exchanged the accustomed dulness of his Lowick library for his visits to the Grange. Here was a weary experience in which he was as utterly condemned to loneliness as in the despair which sometimes threatened him while toiling in the morass of authorship without seeming nearer to the goal. And his was that worst loneliness which would shrink from sympathy. He could not but wish that Dorothea should think him not less happy than the world would expect her successful suitor to be; and in relation to his authorship he leaned on her young trust and veneration, he liked to draw forth her fresh interest in listening, as a means of encouragement to himself: in talking to her he presented all his performance and intention with the reflected confidence of the pedagogue, and rid himself for the time of that chilling ideal audience which crowded his laborious uncreative hours with the vaporous pressure of Tartarean shades.

For to Dorothea, after that toy-box history of the world adapted to young ladies which had made the chief part of her education, Mr. Casaubon's talk about his great book was full of new vistas; and this sense of revelation, this surprise of a nearer introduction to Stoics and Alexandrians, as people who had ideas not totally unlike her own, kept in abeyance for the time her usual eagerness for a binding theory which could bring her own life and doctrine into strict connection

with that amazing past, and give the remotest sources of knowledge some bearing on her actions. That more complete teaching would come-Mr. Casaubon would tell her all that: she was looking forward to higher initiation in ideas, as she was looking forward to marriage, and blending her dim conceptions of both. It would be a great mistake to suppose that Dorothea would have cared about any share in Mr. Casaubon's learning as mere accomplishment; for though opinion in the neighborhood of Freshitt and Tipton had pronounced her clever, that epithet would not have described her to circles in whose more precise vocabulary cleverness implies mere aptitude for knowing and doing, apart from character. All her eagerness for acquirement lay within that full current of sympathetic motive in which her ideas and impulses were habitually swept along. She did not want to deck herself with knowledge-to wear it loose from the nerves and blood that fed her action; and if she had written a book she must have done it as Saint Theresa did, under the command of an authority that constrained her conscience. But something she yearned for by which her life might be filled with action at once rational and ardent; and since the time was gone by for guiding visions and spiritual directors, since prayer heightened yearning but not instruction, what lamp was there but knowledge? Surely learned men kept the only oil; and who more learned than Mr. Casaubon?



Thus in these brief weeks Dorothea's joyous grateful expectation was unbroken, and however her lover might occasionally be conscious of flatness, he could never refer it to any slackening of her affectionate interest.

The season was mild enough to encourage the project of extending the wedding journey as far as Rome, and Mr. Casaubon was anxious for this because he wished to inspect some manuscripts in the Vatican.

"I still regret that your sister is not to accompany us," he said one morning, some time after it had been ascertained that Celia objected to go, and that Dorothea did not wish for her companionship. "You will have many lonely hours, Dorothea, for I shall be constrained to make the utmost use of my time during our stay in Rome, and I should feel more at liberty if you had a companion."

The words "I should feel more at liberty" grated on Dorothea. For the first time in speaking to Mr. Casaubon she colored from annoyance.

"You must have misunderstood me very much," she said, "if you think I should not enter into the value of your time-if you think that I should not willingly give up whatever interfered with your using it to the best purpose."

"That is very amiable in you, my dear Dorothea," said Mr. Casaubon, not in the least noticing that she was hurt; "but if you had a lady as your companion, I

could put you both under the care of a cicerone, and we could thus achieve two purposes in the same space of time."

"I beg you will not refer to this again," said Dorothea, rather haughtily. But immediately she feared that she was wrong, and turning towards him she laid her hand on his, adding in a different tone, "Pray do not be anxious about me. I shall have so much to think of when I am alone. And Tantripp will be a sufficient companion, just to take care of me. I could not bear to have Celia: she would be miserable."

It was time to dress. There was to be a dinner-party that day, the last of the parties which were held at the Grange as proper preliminaries to the wedding, and Dorothea was glad of a reason for moving away at once on the sound of the bell, as if she needed more than her usual amount of preparation. She was ashamed of being irritated from some cause she could not define even to herself; for though she had no intention to be untruthful, her reply had not touched the real hurt within her. Mr. Casaubon's words had been quite reasonable, yet they had brought a vague instantaneous sense of aloofness on his part.

"Surely I am in a strangely selfish weak state of mind," she said to herself. "How can I have a husband who is so much above me without knowing that he needs me less than I need him?"

Having convinced herself that Mr. Casaubon was

altogether right, she recovered her equanimity, and was an agreeable image of serene dignity when she came into the drawing-room in her silver-gray dress—the simple lines of her dark-brown hair parted over her brow and coiled massively behind, in keeping with the entire absence from her manner and expression of all search after mere effect. Sometimes when Dorothea was in company, there seemed to be as complete an air of repose about her as if she had been a picture of Santa Barbara looking out from her tower into the clear air; but these intervals of quietude made the energy of her speech and emotion the more remarked when some outward appeal had touched her.

She was naturally the subject of many observations this evening, for the dinner-party was large and rather more miscellaneous as to the male portion than any which had been held at the Grange since Mr. Brooke's nieces had resided with him, so that the talking was done in duos and trios more or less inharmonious. There was the newly elected mayor of Middlemarch, who happened to be a manufacturer; the philanthropic banker his brother-in-law, who predominated so much in the town that some called him a Methodist, others a hypocrite, according to the resources of their vocabulary; and there were various professional men. In fact, Mrs. Cadwallader said that Brooke was beginning to treat the Middlemarchers, and that she preferred the farmers at the tithe-dinner, who

drank her health unpretentiously, and were not ashamed of their grandfathers' furniture. For in that part of the country, before reform had done its notable part in developing the political consciousness, there was a clearer distinction of ranks and a dimmer distinction of parties; so that Mr. Brooke's miscellaneous invitations seemed to belong to that general laxity which came from his inordinate travel and habit of taking too much in the form of ideas.

Already, as Miss Brooke passed out of the dining-room, opportunity was found for some interjectional "asides."

"A fine woman, Miss Brooke! an uncommonly fine woman, by God!" said Mr. Standish, the old lawyer, who had been so long concerned with the landed gentry that he had become landed himself, and used that oath in a deep-mouthed manner as a sort of armorial bearings, stamping the speech of a man who held a good position.

Mr. Bulstrode, the banker, seemed to be addressed, but that gentleman disliked coarseness and profanity, and merely bowed. The remark was taken up by Mr. Chichely, a middle-aged bachelor and courting celebrity, who had a complexion something like an Easter egg, a few hairs carefully arranged, and a carriage implying the consciousness of a distinguished appearance.

"Yes, but not my style of woman: I like a woman

who lays herself out a little more to please us. There should be a little filigree about a woman-something of the coquette. A man likes a sort of challenge. The more of a dead set she makes at you the better."

"There's some truth in that," said Mr. Standish, disposed to be genial. "And, by God, it's usually the way with them. I suppose it answers some wise ends: Providence made them so, eh, Bulstrode?"

"I should be disposed to refer coquetry to another source," said Mr. Bulstrode. "I should rather refer it to the devil."

"Ay, to be sure, there should be a little devil in a woman," said Mr. Chichely, whose study of the fair sex seemed to have been detrimental to his theology. "And I like them blond, with a certain gait, and a swan neck. Between ourselves, the mayor's daughter is more to my taste than Miss Brooke or Miss Celia either. If I were a marrying man I should choose Miss Vincy before either of them."

"Well, make up, make up," said Mr. Standish, jocosely; "you see the middle-aged fellows early the day."

Mr. Chichely shook his head with much meaning: he was not going to incur the certainty of being accepted by the woman he would choose.

The Miss Vincy who had the honor of being Mr. Chichely's ideal was of course not present; for Mr. Brooke, always objecting to go too far, would not have

chosen that his nieces should meet the daughter of a Middlemarch manufacturer, unless it were on a public occasion. The feminine part of the company included none whom Lady Chettam or Mrs. Cadwallader could object to; for Mrs. Renfrew, the colonel's widow, was not only unexceptionable in point of breeding, but also interesting on the ground of her complaint, which puzzled the doctors, and seemed clearly a case wherein the fulness of professional knowledge might need the supplement of quackery. Lady Chettam, who attributed her own remarkable health to home-made bitters united with constant medical attendance, entered with much exercise of the imagination into Mrs. Renfrew's account of symptoms, and into the amazing futility in her case of all strengthening medicines.

"Where can all the strength of those medicines go, my dear?" said the mild but stately dowager, turning to Mrs. Cadwallader reflectively, when Mrs. Renfrew's attention was called away.

"It strengthens the disease," said the Rector's wife, much too well-born not to be an amateur in medicine. "Everything depends on the constitution: some people make fat, some blood, and some bile—that's my view of the matter; and whatever they take is a sort of grist to the mill."

"Then she ought to take medicines that would reduce-reduce the disease, you know, if you are right, my dear. And I think what you say is reasonable."

"Certainly it is reasonable. You have two sorts of potatoes, fed on the same soil. One of them grows more and more watery—"

"Ah! like this poor Mrs. Renfrew—that is what I think. Dropsy! There is no swelling yet—it is inward. I should say she ought to take drying medicines, shouldn't you? — or a dry hot-air bath. Many things might be tried, of a drying nature."

"Let her try a certain person's pamphlets," said Mrs. Cadwallader in an undertone, seeing the gentlemen enter. "He does not want drying."

"Who, my dear?" said Lady Chettam, a charming woman, not so quick as to nullify the pleasure of explanation.

"The bridegroom-Casaubon. He has certainly been drying up faster since the engagement: the flame of passion, I suppose."

"I should think he is far from having a good constitution," said Lady Chettam, with a still deeper undertone. "And then his studies—so very dry, as you say."

"Really, by the side of Sir James, he looks like a death's head skinned over for the occasion. Mark my words: in a year from this time that girl will hate him. She looks up to him as an oracle now, and by-and-by she will be at the other extreme. All flightiness!"

"How very shocking! I fear she is headstrong. But tell me—you know all about him—is there anything very

bad? What is the truth?"

"The truth? he is as bad as the wrong physic-nasty to take, and sure to disagree."

"There could not be anything worse than that," said Lady Chettam, with so vivid a conception of the physic that she seemed to have learned something exact about Mr. Casaubon's disadvantages. "However, James will hear nothing against Miss Brooke. He says she is the mirror of women still."

"That is a generous make-believe of his. Depend upon it, he likes little Celia better, and she appreciates him. I hope you like my little Celia?"

"Certainly; she is fonder of geraniums, and seems more docile, though not so fine a figure. But we were talking of physic. Tell me about this new young surgeon, Mr. Lydgate. I am told he is wonderfully clever: he certainly looks it—a fine brow indeed."

"He is a gentleman. I heard him talking to Humphrey. He talks well."

"Yes. Mr. Brooke says he is one of the Lydgates of Northumberland, really well connected. One does not expect it in a practitioner of that kind. For my own part, I like a medical man more on a footing with the servants; they are often all the cleverer. I assure you I found poor Hicks's judgment unflinching; I never knew him wrong. He was coarse and butcher-like, but he knew my constitution. It was a loss to me his going off so suddenly. Dear me, what a very animated



conversation Miss Brooke seems to be having with this Mr. Lydgate!"

"She is talking cottages and hospitals with him," said Mrs. Cadwallader, whose ears and power of interpretation were quick. "I believe he is a sort of philanthropist, so Brooke is sure to take him up."

"James," said Lady Chettam when her son came near, "bring Mr. Lydgate and introduce him to me. I want to test him."

The affable dowager declared herself delighted with this opportunity of making Mr. Lydgate's acquaintance, having heard of his success in treating fever on a new plan.

Mr. Lydgate had the medical accomplishment of looking perfectly grave whatever nonsense was talked to him, and his dark steady eyes gave him impressiveness as a listener. He was as little as possible like the lamented Hicks, especially in a certain careless refinement about his toilet and utterance. Yet Lady Chettam gathered much confidence in him. He confirmed her view of her own constitution as being peculiar, by admitting that all constitutions might be called peculiar, and he did not deny that hers might be more peculiar than others. He did not approve of a too lowering system, including reckless cupping, nor, on the other hand, of incessant port wine and bark. He said "I think so" with an air of so much deference accompanying the insight of agreement, that she

formed the most cordial opinion of his talents.

"I am quite pleased with your protege," she said to Mr. Brooke before going away.

"My protege? — dear me! — who is that?" said Mr. Brooke.

"This young Lydgate, the new doctor. He seems to me to understand his profession admirably."

"Oh, Lydgate! he is not my protege, you know; only I knew an uncle of his who sent me a letter about him. However, I think he is likely to be first-rate-has studied in Paris, knew Broussais; has ideas, you know-wants to raise the profession."

"Lydgate has lots of ideas, quite new, about ventilation and diet, that sort of thing," resumed Mr. Brooke, after he had handed out Lady Chettam, and had returned to be civil to a group of Middlemarchers.

"Hang it, do you think that is quite sound? — upsetting The old treatment, which has made Englishmen what they are?" said Mr. Standish.

"Medical knowledge is at a low ebb among us," said Mr. Bulstrode, who spoke in a subdued tone, and had rather a sickly air. "I, for my part, hail the advent of Mr. Lydgate. I hope to find good reason for confiding the new hospital to his management."

"That is all very fine," replied Mr. Standish, who was not fond of Mr. Bulstrode; "if you like him to try experiments on your hospital patients, and kill a few people for charity I have no objection. But I am not

going to hand money out of my purse to have experiments tried on me. I like treatment that has been tested a little."

"Well, you know, Standish, every dose you take is an experiment-an experiment, you know," said Mr. Brooke, nodding towards the lawyer.

"Oh, if you talk in that sense!" said Mr. Standish, with as much disgust at such non-legal quibbling as a man can well betray towards a valuable client.

"I should be glad of any treatment that would cure me without reducing me to a skeleton, like poor Grainger," said Mr. Vincy, the mayor, a florid man, who would have served for a study of flesh in striking contrast with the Franciscan tints of Mr. Bulstrode. "It's an uncommonly dangerous thing to be left without any padding against the shafts of disease, as somebody said, — and I think it a very good expression myself."

Mr. Lydgate, of course, was out of hearing. He had quitted the party early, and would have thought it altogether tedious but for the novelty of certain introductions, especially the introduction to Miss Brooke, whose youthful bloom, with her approaching marriage to that faded scholar, and her interest in matters socially useful, gave her the piquancy of an unusual combination.

"She is a good creature-that fine girl-but a little too earnest," he thought. "It is troublesome to talk to such women. They are always wanting reasons, yet

they are too ignorant to understand the merits of any question, and usually fall back on their moral sense to settle things after their own taste."

Evidently Miss Brooke was not Mr. Lydgate's style of woman any more than Mr. Chichely's. Considered, indeed, in relation to the latter, whose mind was matured, she was altogether a mistake, and calculated to shock his trust in final causes, including the adaptation of fine young women to purplefaced bachelors. But Lydgate was less ripe, and might possibly have experience before him which would modify his opinion as to the most excellent things in woman.

Miss Brooke, however, was not again seen by either of these gentlemen under her maiden name. Not long after that dinner-party she had become Mrs. Casaubon, and was on her way to Rome.

## CHAPTER XI

"But deeds and  
language such as men do  
use,

And persons such as  
comedy would choose,

When she would show  
an image of the times,

And sport with human  
follies, not with crimes."

— **BEN JONSON.**

Lydgate, in fact, was already conscious of being fascinated by a woman strikingly different from Miss Brooke: he did not in the least suppose that he had lost his balance and fallen in love, but he had said of that particular woman, "She is grace itself; she is perfectly lovely and accomplished. That is what a woman ought to be: she ought to produce the effect of exquisite music." Plain women he regarded as he did the other severe facts of life, to be faced with philosophy and investigated by science. But Rosamond Vincy seemed to have the true melodic charm; and when a man has seen the woman whom he would have chosen if he had intended to marry speedily, his remaining a bachelor will usually depend on her resolution rather than on his. Lydgate believed that he should not marry for several years: not marry until he had trodden out a good clear path for himself away from the broad road which was quite ready made. He had seen Miss Vincy above his horizon almost as long as it had taken Mr. Casaubon to become engaged and married: but this learned gentleman was possessed of a fortune; he had assembled his voluminous notes, and had made that sort of reputation which precedes performance, — often

the larger part of a man's fame. He took a wife, as we have seen, to adorn the remaining quadrant of his course, and be a little moon that would cause hardly a calculable perturbation. But Lydgate was young, poor, ambitious. He had his half-century before him instead of behind him, and he had come to Middlemarch bent on doing many things that were not directly fitted to make his fortune or even secure him a good income. To a man under such circumstances, taking a wife is something more than a question of adornment, however highly he may rate this; and Lydgate was disposed to give it the first place among wifely functions. To his taste, guided by a single conversation, here was the point on which Miss Brooke would be found wanting, notwithstanding her undeniable beauty. She did not look at things from the proper feminine angle. The society of such women was about as relaxing as going from your work to teach the second form, instead of reclining in a paradise with sweet laughs for bird-notes, and blue eyes for a heaven.

Certainly nothing at present could seem much less important to Lydgate than the turn of Miss Brooke's mind, or to Miss Brooke than the qualities of the woman who had attracted this young surgeon. But any one watching keenly the stealthy convergence of human lots, sees a slow preparation of effects from one life on another, which tells like a calculated irony on the indifference or the frozen stare with which we look

at our unIntroduced neighbor. Destiny stands by sarcastic with our dramatis personae folded in her hand.

Old provincial society had its share of this subtle movement: had not only its striking downfalls, its brilliant young professional dandies who ended by living up an entry with a drab and six children for their establishment, but also those less marked vicissitudes which are constantly shifting the boundaries of social intercourse, and begetting new consciousness of interdependence. Some slipped a little downward, some got higher footing: people denied aspirates, gained wealth, and fastidious gentlemen stood for boroughs; some were caught in political currents, some in ecclesiastical, and perhaps found themselves surprisingly grouped in consequence; while a few personages or families that stood with rocky firmness amid all this fluctuation, were slowly presenting new aspects in spite of solidity, and altering with the double change of self and beholder. Municipal town and rural parish gradually made fresh threads of connection-gradually, as the old stocking gave way to the savings-bank, and the worship of the solar guinea became extinct; while squires and baronets, and even lords who had once lived blamelessly afar from the civic mind, gathered the faultiness of closer acquaintanceship. Settlers, too, came from distant counties, some with an alarming novelty of skill, others with an offensive advantage in cunning. In fact, much

the same sort of movement and mixture went on in old England as we find in older Herodotus, who also, in telling what had been, thought it well to take a woman's lot for his starting-point; though Io, as a maiden apparently beguiled by attractive merchandise, was the reverse of Miss Brooke, and in this respect perhaps bore more resemblance to Rosamond Vincy, who had excellent taste in costume, with that nymph-like figure and pure blindness which give the largest range to choice in the flow and color of drapery. But these things made only part of her charm. She was admitted to be the flower of Mrs. Lemon's school, the chief school in the county, where the teaching included all that was demanded in the accomplished female—even to extras, such as the getting in and out of a carriage. Mrs. Lemon herself had always held up Miss Vincy as an example: no pupil, she said, exceeded that young lady for mental acquisition and propriety of speech, while her musical execution was quite exceptional. We cannot help the way in which people speak of us, and probably if Mrs. Lemon had undertaken to describe Juliet or Imogen, these heroines would not have seemed poetical. The first vision of Rosamond would have been enough with most judges to dispel any prejudice excited by Mrs. Lemon's praise.

Lydgate could not be long in Middlemarch without having that agreeable vision, or even without making the acquaintance of the Vincy family; for



though Mr. Peacock, whose practice he had paid something to enter on, had not been their doctor (Mrs. Vincy not liking the lowering system adopted by him), he had many patients among their connections and acquaintances. For who of any consequence in Middlemarch was not connected or at least acquainted with the Vincys? They were old manufacturers, and had kept a good house for three generations, in which there had naturally been much intermarrying with neighbors more or less decidedly genteel. Mr. Vincy's sister had made a wealthy match in accepting Mr. Bulstrode, who, however, as a man not born in the town, and altogether of dimly known origin, was considered to have done well in uniting himself with a real Middlemarch family; on the other hand, Mr. Vincy had descended a little, having taken an innkeeper's daughter. But on this side too there was a cheering sense of money; for Mrs. Vincy's sister had been second wife to rich old Mr. Featherstone, and had died childless years ago, so that her nephews and nieces might be supposed to touch the affections of the widower. And it happened that Mr. Bulstrode and Mr. Featherstone, two of Peacock's most important patients, had, from different causes, given an especially good reception to his successor, who had raised some partisanship as well as discussion. Mr. Wrench, medical attendant to the Vincy family, very early had grounds for thinking lightly of Lydgate's professional discretion, and there was no report about

him which was not retailed at the Vincys', where visitors were frequent. Mr. Vincy was more inclined to general good-fellowship than to taking sides, but there was no need for him to be hasty in making any new man acquaintance. Rosamond silently wished that her father would invite Mr. Lydgate. She was tired of the faces and figures she had always been used to—the various irregular profiles and gaits and turns of phrase distinguishing those Middlemarch young men whom she had known as boys. She had been at school with girls of higher position, whose brothers, she felt sure, it would have been possible for her to be more interested in, than in these inevitable Middlemarch companions. But she would not have chosen to mention her wish to her father; and he, for his part, was in no hurry on the subject. An alderman about to be mayor must by-and-by enlarge his dinner-parties, but at present there were plenty of guests at his well-spread table.

That table often remained covered with the relics of the family breakfast long after Mr. Vincy had gone with his second son to the warehouse, and when Miss Morgan was already far on in morning lessons with the younger girls in the schoolroom. It awaited the family laggard, who found any sort of inconvenience (to others) less disagreeable than getting up when he was called. This was the case one morning of the October in which we have lately seen Mr. Casaubon visiting the Grange; and though the room was a little overheated

with the fire, which had sent the spaniel panting to a remote corner, Rosamond, for some reason, continued to sit at her embroidery longer than usual, now and then giving herself a little shake, and laying her work on her knee to contemplate it with an air of hesitating weariness. Her mamma, who had returned from an excursion to the kitchen, sat on the other side of the small work-table with an air of more entire placidity, until, the clock again giving notice that it was going to strike, she looked up from the lace-mending which was occupying her plump fingers and rang the bell.

"Knock at Mr. Fred's door again, Pritchard, and tell him it has struck half-past ten."

This was said without any change in the radiant good-humor of Mrs. Vincy's face, in which forty-five years had delved neither angles nor parallels; and pushing back her pink capstrings, she let her work rest on her lap, while she looked admiringly at her daughter.

"Mamma," said Rosamond, "when Fred comes down I wish you would not let him have red herrings. I cannot bear the smell of them all over the house at this hour of the morning."

"Oh, my dear, you are so hard on your brothers! It is the only fault I have to find with you. You are the sweetest temper in the world, but you are so tetchy with your brothers."

"Not tetchy, mamma: you never hear me speak in an unladylike way."

"Well, but you want to deny them things."

"Brothers are so unpleasant."

"Oh, my dear, you must allow for young men. Be thankful if they have good hearts. A woman must learn to put up with little things. You will be married some day."

"Not to any one who is like Fred."

"Don't decry your own brother, my dear. Few young men have less against them, although he couldn't take his degree-I'm sure I can't understand why, for he seems to me most clever. And you know yourself he was thought equal to the best society at college. So particular as you are, my dear, I wonder you are not glad to have such a gentlemanly young man for a brother. You are always finding fault with Bob because he is not Fred."

"Oh no, mamma, only because he is Bob."

"Well, my dear, you will not find any Middlemarch young man who has not something against him."

"But"-here Rosamond's face broke into a smile which suddenly revealed two dimples. She herself thought unfavorably of these dimples and smiled little in general society. "But I shall not marry any Middlemarch young man."

"So it seems, my love, for you have as good as refused the pick of them; and if there's better to be had, I'm sure there's no girl better deserves it."

"Excuse me, mamma-I wish you would not say, 'the pick of them.'"

"Why, what else are they?"

"I mean, mamma, it is rather a vulgar expression."

"Very likely, my dear; I never was a good speaker. What should I say?"

"The best of them."

"Why, that seems just as plain and common. If I had had time to think, I should have said, 'the most superior young men.' But with your education you must know."

"What must Rosy know, mother?" said Mr. Fred, who had slid in unobserved through the half-open door while the ladies were bending over their work, and now going up to the fire stood with his back towards it, warming the soles of his slippers.

"Whether it's right to say 'superior young men,'" said Mrs. Vincy, ringing the bell.

"Oh, there are so many superior teas and sugars now. Superior is getting to be shopkeepers' slang."

"Are you beginning to dislike slang, then?" said Rosamond, with mild gravity.

"Only the wrong sort. All choice of words is slang. It marks a class."

"There is correct English: that is not slang."

"I beg your pardon: correct English is the slang of prigs who write history and essays. And the strongest

slang of all is the slang of poets."

"You will say anything, Fred, to gain your point."

"Well, tell me whether it is slang or poetry to call an ox a leg-plaiter."

"Of course you can call it poetry if you like."

"Aha, Miss Rosy, you don't know Homer from slang. I shall invent a new game; I shall write bits of slang and poetry on slips, and give them to you to separate."

"Dear me, how amusing it is to hear young people talk!" said Mrs. Vincy, with cheerful admiration.

"Have you got nothing else for my breakfast, Pritchard?" said Fred, to the servant who brought in coffee and buttered toast; while he walked round the table surveying the ham, potted beef, and other cold remnants, with an air of silent rejection, and polite forbearance from signs of disgust.

"Should you like eggs, sir?"

"Eggs, no! Bring me a grilled bone."

"Really, Fred," said Rosamond, when the servant had left the room, "if you must have hot things for breakfast, I wish you would come down earlier. You can get up at six o'clock to go out hunting; I cannot understand why you find it so difficult to get up on other mornings."

"That is your want of understanding, Rosy. I can get up to go hunting because I like it."

"What would you think of me if I came down two

hours after every one else and ordered grilled bone?"

"I should think you were an uncommonly fast young lady," said Fred, eating his toast with the utmost composure.

"I cannot see why brothers are to make themselves disagreeable, any more than sisters."

"I don't make myself disagreeable; it is you who find me so. Disagreeable is a word that describes your feelings and not my actions."

"I think it describes the smell of grilled bone."

"Not at all. It describes a sensation in your little nose associated with certain finicking notions which are the classics of Mrs. Lemon's school. Look at my mother; you don't see her objecting to everything except what she does herself. She is my notion of a pleasant woman."

"Bless you both, my dears, and don't quarrel," said Mrs. Vincy, with motherly cordiality. "Come, Fred, tell us all about the new doctor. How is your uncle pleased with him?"

"Pretty well, I think. He asks Lydgate all sorts of questions and then screws up his face while he hears the answers, as if they were pinching his toes. That's his way. Ah, here comes my grilled bone."

"But how came you to stay out so late, my dear? You only said you were going to your uncle's."

"Oh, I dined at Plymdale's. We had whist. Lydgate was there too."

"And what do you think of him? He is very gentlemanly, I suppose. They say he is of excellent family-his relations quite county people."

"Yes," said Fred. "There was a Lydgate at John's who spent no end of money. I find this man is a second cousin of his. But rich men may have very poor devils for second cousins."

"It always makes a difference, though, to be of good family," said Rosamond, with a tone of decision which showed that she had thought on this subject. Rosamond felt that she might have been happier if she had not been the daughter of a Middlemarch manufacturer. She disliked anything which reminded her that her mother's father had been an innkeeper. Certainly any one remembering the fact might think that Mrs. Vincy had the air of a very handsome good-humored landlady, accustomed to the most capricious orders of gentlemen.

"I thought it was odd his name was Tertius," said the bright-faced matron, "but of course it's a name in the family. But now, tell us exactly what sort of man he is."

"Oh, tallish, dark, clever-talks well-rather a prig, I think."

"I never can make out what you mean by a prig," said Rosamond.

"A fellow who wants to show that he has opinions."



"Why, my dear, doctors must have opinions," said Mrs. Vincy. "What are they there for else?"

"Yes, mother, the opinions they are paid for. But a prig is a fellow who is always making you a present of his opinions."

"I suppose Mary Garth admires Mr. Lydgate," said Rosamond, not without a touch of innuendo.

"Really, I can't say." said Fred, rather glumly, as he left the table, and taking up a novel which he had brought down with him, threw himself into an arm-chair. "If you are jealous of her, go oftener to Stone Court yourself and eclipse her."

"I wish you would not be so vulgar, Fred. If you have finished, pray ring the bell."

"It is true, though-what your brother says, Rosamond," Mrs. Vincy began, when the servant had cleared the table. "It is a thousand pities you haven't patience to go and see your uncle more, so proud of you as he is, and wanted you to live with him. There's no knowing what he might have done for you as well as for Fred. God knows, I'm fond of having you at home with me, but I can part with my children for their good. And now it stands to reason that your uncle Featherstone will do something for Mary Garth."

"Mary Garth can bear being at Stone Court, because she likes that better than being a governess," said Rosamond, folding up her work. "I would rather not have anything left to me if I must earn it by

enduring much of my uncle's cough and his ugly relations."

"He can't be long for this world, my dear; I wouldn't hasten his end, but what with asthma and that inward complaint, let us hope there is something better for him in another. And I have no ill-will toward's Mary Garth, but there's justice to be thought of. And Mr. Featherstone's first wife brought him no money, as my sister did. Her nieces and nephews can't have so much claim as my sister's. And I must say I think Mary Garth a dreadful plain girl-more fit for a governess."

"Every one would not agree with you there, mother," said Fred, who seemed to be able to read and listen too.

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Vincy, wheeling skilfully, "if she *had* some fortune left her, — a man marries his wife's relations, and the Garths are so poor, and live in such a small way. But I shall leave you to your studies, my dear; for I must go and do some shopping."

"Fred's studies are not very deep," said Rosamond, rising with her mamma, "he is only reading a novel."

"Well, well, by-and-by he'll go to his Latin and things," said Mrs. Vincy, soothingly, stroking her son's head. "There's a fire in the smoking-room on purpose. It's your father's wish, you know-Fred, my dear-and I always tell him you will be good, and go to college

again to take your degree."

Fred drew his mother's hand down to his lips, but said nothing.

"I suppose you are not going out riding to-day?" said Rosamond, lingering a little after her mamma was gone.

"No; why?"

"Papa says I may have the chestnut to ride now."

"You can go with me to-morrow, if you like. Only I am going to Stone Court, remember."

"I want to ride so much, it is indifferent to me where we go." Rosamond really wished to go to Stone Court, of all other places.

"Oh, I say, Rosy," said Fred, as she was passing out of the room, "if you are going to the piano, let me come and play some airs with you."

"Pray do not ask me this morning."

"Why not this morning?"

"Really, Fred, I wish you would leave off playing the flute. A man looks very silly playing the flute. And you play so out of tune."

"When next any one makes love to you, Miss Rosamond, I will tell him how obliging you are."

"Why should you expect me to oblige you by hearing you play the flute, any more than I should expect you to oblige me by not playing it?"

"And why should you expect me to take you out riding?"

This question led to an adjustment, for Rosamond had set her mind on that particular ride.

So Fred was gratified with nearly an hour's practice of "Ar hyd y nos," "Ye banks and braes," and other favorite airs from his "Instructor on the Flute;" a wheezy performance, into which he threw much ambition and an irrepressible hopefulness.

## CHAPTER XII

"He had more tow on  
his distaffe  
Than Gerveis knew."

— CHAUCER.

The ride to Stone Court, which Fred and Rosamond took the next morning, lay through a pretty bit of midland landscape, almost all meadows and pastures, with hedgerows still allowed to grow in bushy beauty and to spread out coral fruit for the birds. Little details gave each field a particular physiognomy, dear to the eyes that have looked on them from childhood: the pool in the corner where the grasses were dank and trees leaned whisperingly; the great oak shadowing a bare place in mid-pasture; the high bank where the ash-trees grew; the sudden slope of the old marl-pit

making a red background for the burdock; the huddled roofs and ricks of the homestead without a traceable way of approach; the gray gate and fences against the depths of the bordering wood; and the stray hovel, its old, old thatch full of mossy hills and valleys with wondrous modulations of light and shadow such as we travel far to see in later life, and see larger, but not more beautiful. These are the things that make the gamut of joy in landscape to midland-bred souls—the things they toddled among, or perhaps learned by heart standing between their father's knees while he drove leisurely.

But the road, even the byroad, was excellent; for Lowick, as we have seen, was not a parish of muddy lanes and poor tenants; and it was into Lowick parish that Fred and Rosamond entered after a couple of miles' riding. Another mile would bring them to Stone Court, and at the end of the first half, the house was already visible, looking as if it had been arrested in its growth toward a stone mansion by an unexpected budding of farm-buildings on its left flank, which had hindered it from becoming anything more than the substantial dwelling of a gentleman farmer. It was not the less agreeable an object in the distance for the cluster of pinnacled corn-ricks which balanced the fine row of walnuts on the right.

Presently it was possible to discern something that might be a gig on the circular drive before the front

door.

"Dear me," said Rosamond, "I hope none of my uncle's horrible relations are there."

"They are, though. That is Mrs. Waule's gig—the last yellow gig left, I should think. When I see Mrs. Waule in it, I understand how yellow can have been worn for mourning. That gig seems to me more funereal than a hearse. But then Mrs. Waule always has black crape on. How does she manage it, Rosy? Her friends can't always be dying."

"I don't know at all. And she is not in the least evangelical," said Rosamond, reflectively, as if that religious point of view would have fully accounted for perpetual crape. "And, not poor," she added, after a moment's pause.

"No, by George! They are as rich as Jews, those Waules and Featherstones; I mean, for people like them, who don't want to spend anything. And yet they hang about my uncle like vultures, and are afraid of a farthing going away from their side of the family. But I believe he hates them all."

The Mrs. Waule who was so far from being admirable in the eyes of these distant connections, had happened to say this very morning (not at all with a defiant air, but in a low, muffled, neutral tone, as of a voice heard through cotton wool) that she did not wish "to enjoy their good opinion." She was seated, as she observed, on her own brother's hearth, and had been

Jane Featherstone five-and-twenty years before she had been Jane Waule, which entitled her to speak when her own brother's name had been made free with by those who had no right to it.

"What are you driving at there?" said Mr. Featherstone, holding his stick between his knees and settling his wig, while he gave her a momentary sharp glance, which seemed to react on him like a draught of cold air and set him coughing.

Mrs. Waule had to defer her answer till he was quiet again, till Mary Garth had supplied him with fresh syrup, and he had begun to rub the gold knob of his stick, looking bitterly at the fire. It was a bright fire, but it made no difference to the chill-looking purplish tint of Mrs. Waule's face, which was as neutral as her voice; having mere chinks for eyes, and lips that hardly moved in speaking.

"The doctors can't master that cough, brother. It's just like what I have; for I'm your own sister, constitution and everything. But, as I was saying, it's a pity Mrs. Vincy's family can't be better conducted."

"Tchah! you said nothing o' the sort. You said somebody had made free with my name."

"And no more than can be proved, if what everybody says is true. My brother Solomon tells me it's the talk up and down in Middlemarch how unsteady young Vincy is, and has been forever gambling at billiards since home he came."

"Nonsense! What's a game at billiards? It's a good gentlemanly game; and young Vincy is not a clodhopper. If your son John took to billiards, now, he'd make a fool of himself."

"Your nephew John never took to billiards or any other game, brother, and is far from losing hundreds of pounds, which, if what everybody says is true, must be found somewhere else than out of Mr. Vincy the father's pocket. For they say he's been losing money for years, though nobody would think so, to see him go coursing and keeping open house as they do. And I've heard say Mr. Bulstrode condemns Mrs. Vincy beyond anything for her flightiness, and spoiling her children so."

"What's Bulstrode to me? I don't bank with him."

"Well, Mrs. Bulstrode is Mr. Vincy's own sister, and they do say that Mr. Vincy mostly trades on the Bank money; and you may see yourself, brother, when a woman past forty has pink strings always flying, and that light way of laughing at everything, it's very unbecoming. But indulging your children is one thing, and finding money to pay their debts is another. And it's openly said that young Vincy has raised money on his expectations. I don't say what expectations. Miss Garth hears me, and is welcome to tell again. I know young people hang together."

"No, thank you, Mrs. Waule," said Mary Garth. "I dislike hearing scandal too much to wish to repeat it."



Mr. Featherstone rubbed the knob of his stick and made a brief convulsive show of laughter, which had much the same genuineness as an old whist-player's chuckle over a bad hand. Still looking at the fire, he said-

"And who pretends to say Fred Vincy hasn't got expectations? Such a fine, spirited fellow is like enough to have 'em."

There was a slight pause before Mrs. Waule replied, and when she did so, her voice seemed to be slightly moistened with tears, though her face was still dry.

"Whether or no, brother, it is naturally painful to me and my brother Solomon to hear your name made free with, and your complaint being such as may carry you off sudden, and people who are no more Featherstones than the Merry-Andrew at the fair, openly reckoning on your property coming to *them*. And me your own sister, and Solomon your own brother! And if that's to be it, what has it pleased the Almighty to make families for?" Here Mrs. Waule's tears fell, but with moderation.

"Come, out with it, Jane!" said Mr. Featherstone, looking at her. "You mean to say, Fred Vincy has been getting somebody to advance him money on what he says he knows about my will, eh?"

"I never said so, brother" (Mrs. Waule's voice had again become dry and unshaken). "It was told me by

my brother Solomon last night when he called coming from market to give me advice about the old wheat, me being a widow, and my son John only three-and-twenty, though steady beyond anything. And he had it from most undeniable authority, and not one, but many."

"Stuff and nonsense! I don't believe a word of it. It's all a got-up story. Go to the window, missy; I thought I heard a horse. See if the doctor's coming."

"Not got up by me, brother, nor yet by Solomon, who, whatever else he may be-and I don't deny he has oddities-has made his will and parted his property equal between such kin as he's friends with; though, for my part, I think there are times when some should be considered more than others. But Solomon makes it no secret what he means to do."

"The more fool he!" said Mr. Featherstone, with some difficulty; breaking into a severe fit of coughing that required Mary Garth to stand near him, so that she did not find out whose horses they were which presently paused stamping on the gravel before the door.

Before Mr. Featherstone's cough was quiet, Rosamond entered, bearing up her riding-habit with much grace. She bowed ceremoniously to Mrs. Waule, who said stiffly, "How do you do, miss?" smiled and nodded silently to Mary, and remained standing till the coughing should cease, and allow her uncle to notice

her.

"Heyday, miss!" he said at last, "you have a fine color. Where's Fred?"

"Seeing about the horses. He will be in presently."

"Sit down, sit down. Mrs. Waule, you'd better go."

Even those neighbors who had called Peter Featherstone an old fox, had never accused him of being insincerely polite, and his sister was quite used to the peculiar absence of ceremony with which he marked his sense of blood-relationship. Indeed, she herself was accustomed to think that entire freedom from the necessity of behaving agreeably was included in the Almighty's intentions about families. She rose slowly without any sign of resentment, and said in her usual muffled monotone, "Brother, I hope the new doctor will be able to do something for you. Solomon says there's great talk of his cleverness. I'm sure it's my wish you should be spared. And there's none more ready to nurse you than your own sister and your own nieces, if you'd only say the word. There's Rebecca, and Joanna, and Elizabeth, you know."

"Ay, ay, I remember-you'll see I've remembered 'em all-all dark and ugly. They'd need have some money, eh? There never was any beauty in the women of our family; but the Featherstones have always had some money, and the Waules too. Waule had money

too. A warm man was Waule. Ay, ay; money's a good egg; and if you 've got money to leave behind you, lay it in a warm nest. Good-by, Mrs. Waule." Here Mr. Featherstone pulled at both sides of his wig as if he wanted to deafen himself, and his sister went away ruminating on this oracular speech of his. Notwithstanding her jealousy of the Vincys and of Mary Garth, there remained as the nethermost sediment in her mental shallows a persuasion that her brother Peter Featherstone could never leave his chief property away from his blood-relations:-else, why had the Almighty carried off his two wives both childless, after he had gained so much by manganese and things, turning up when nobody expected it? — and why was there a Lowick parish church, and the Waules and Powderells all sitting in the same pew for generations, and the Featherstone pew next to them, if, the Sunday after her brother Peter's death, everybody was to know that the property was gone out of the family? The human mind has at no period accepted a moral chaos; and so preposterous a result was not strictly conceivable. But we are frightened at much that is not strictly conceivable.

When Fred came in the old man eyed him with a peculiar twinkle, which the younger had often had reason to interpret as pride in the satisfactory details of his appearance.

"You two misses go away," said Mr.

Featherstone. "I want to speak to Fred."

"Come into my room, Rosamond, you will not mind the cold for a little while," said Mary. The two girls had not only known each other in childhood, but had been at the same provincial school together (Mary as an articulated pupil), so that they had many memories in common, and liked very well to talk in private. Indeed, this tete-a-tete was one of Rosamond's objects in coming to Stone Court.

Old Featherstone would not begin the dialogue till the door had been closed. He continued to look at Fred with the same twinkle and with one of his habitual grimaces, alternately screwing and widening his mouth; and when he spoke, it was in a low tone, which might be taken for that of an informer ready to be bought off, rather than for the tone of an offended senior. He was not a man to feel any strong moral indignation even on account of trespasses against himself. It was natural that others should want to get an advantage over him, but then, he was a little too cunning for them.

"So, sir, you've been paying ten per cent for money which you've promised to pay off by mortgaging my land when I'm dead and gone, eh? You put my life at a twelvemonth, say. But I can alter my will yet."

Fred blushed. He had not borrowed money in that way, for excellent reasons. But he was conscious of having spoken with some confidence (perhaps with

more than he exactly remembered) about his prospect of getting Featherstone's land as a future means of paying present debts.

"I don't know what you refer to, sir. I have certainly never borrowed any money on such an insecurity. Please do explain."

"No, sir, it's you must explain. I can alter my will yet, let me tell you. I'm of sound mind-can reckon compound interest in my head, and remember every fool's name as well as I could twenty years ago. What the deuce? I'm under eighty. I say, you must contradict this story."

"I have contradicted it, sir," Fred answered, with a touch of impatience, not remembering that his uncle did not verbally discriminate contradicting from disproving, though no one was further from confounding the two ideas than old Featherstone, who often wondered that so many fools took his own assertions for proofs. "But I contradict it again. The story is a silly lie."

"Nonsense! you must bring dockiments. It comes from authority."

"Name the authority, and make him name the man of whom I borrowed the money, and then I can disprove the story."

"It's pretty good authority, I think-a man who knows most of what goes on in Middlemarch. It's that fine, religious, charitable uncle o' yours. Come now!"

Here Mr. Featherstone had his peculiar inward shake which signified merriment.

"Mr. Bulstrode?"

"Who else, eh?"

"Then the story has grown into this lie out of some sermonizing words he may have let fall about me. Do they pretend that he named the man who lent me the money?"

"If there is such a man, depend upon it Bulstrode knows him. But, supposing you only tried to get the money lent, and didn't get it-Bulstrode 'ud know that too. You bring me a writing from Bulstrode to say he doesn't believe you've ever promised to pay your debts out o' my land. Come now!"

Mr. Featherstone's face required its whole scale of grimaces as a muscular outlet to his silent triumph in the soundness of his faculties.

Fred felt himself to be in a disgusting dilemma.

"You must be joking, sir. Mr. Bulstrode, like other men, believes scores of things that are not true, and he has a prejudice against me. I could easily get him to write that he knew no facts in proof of the report you speak of, though it might lead to unpleasantness. But I could hardly ask him to write down what he believes or does not believe about me." Fred paused an instant, and then added, in politic appeal to his uncle's vanity, "That is hardly a thing for a gentleman to ask." But he was disappointed in the result.

"Ay, I know what you mean. You'd sooner offend me than Bulstrode. And what's he? — he's got no land hereabout that ever I heard tell of. A speckilating fellow! He may come down any day, when the devil leaves off backing him. And that's what his religion means: he wants God A'mighty to come in. That's nonsense! There's one thing I made out pretty clear when I used to go to church-and it's this: God A'mighty sticks to the land. He promises land, and He gives land, and He makes chaps rich with corn and cattle. But you take the other side. You like Bulstrode and speckilation better than Featherstone and land."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Fred, rising, standing with his back to the fire and beating his boot with his whip. "I like neither Bulstrode nor speculation." He spoke rather sulkily, feeling himself stalemated.

"Well, well, you can do without me, that's pretty clear," said old Featherstone, secretly disliking the possibility that Fred would show himself at all independent. "You neither want a bit of land to make a squire of you instead of a starving parson, nor a lift of a hundred pound by the way. It's all one to me. I can make five codicils if I like, and I shall keep my bank-notes for a nest-egg. It's all one to me."

Fred colored again. Featherstone had rarely given him presents of money, and at this moment it seemed almost harder to part with the immediate prospect of



bank-notes than with the more distant prospect of the land.

"I am not ungrateful, sir. I never meant to show disregard for any kind intentions you might have towards me. On the contrary."

"Very good. Then prove it. You bring me a letter from Bulstrode saying he doesn't believe you've been cracking and promising to pay your debts out o' my land, and then, if there's any scrape you've got into, we'll see if I can't back you a bit. Come now! That's a bargain. Here, give me your arm. I'll try and walk round the room."

Fred, in spite of his irritation, had kindness enough in him to be a little sorry for the unloved, unvenerated old man, who with his dropsical legs looked more than usually pitiable in walking. While giving his arm, he thought that he should not himself like to be an old fellow with his constitution breaking up; and he waited good-temperedly, first before the window to hear the wonted remarks about the guinea-fowls and the weather-cock, and then before the scanty book-shelves, of which the chief glories in dark calf were Josephus, Culpepper, Klopstock's "Messiah," and several volumes of the "Gentleman's Magazine."

"Read me the names o' the books. Come now! you're a college man."

Fred gave him the titles.

"What did missy want with more books? What

must you be bringing her more books for?"

"They amuse her, sir. She is very fond of reading."

"A little too fond," said Mr. Featherstone, captiously. "She was for reading when she sat with me. But I put a stop to that. She's got the newspaper to read out loud. That's enough for one day, I should think. I can't abide to see her reading to herself. You mind and not bring her any more books, do you hear?"

"Yes, sir, I hear." Fred had received this order before, and had secretly disobeyed it. He intended to disobey it again.

"Ring the bell," said Mr. Featherstone; "I want missy to come down."

Rosamond and Mary had been talking faster than their male friends. They did not think of sitting down, but stood at the toilet-table near the window while Rosamond took off her hat, adjusted her veil, and applied little touches of her finger-tips to her hair-hair of infantine fairness, neither flaxen nor yellow. Mary Garth seemed all the plainer standing at an angle between the two nymphs—the one in the glass, and the one out of it, who looked at each other with eyes of heavenly blue, deep enough to hold the most exquisite meanings an ingenious beholder could put into them, and deep enough to hide the meanings of the owner if these should happen to be less exquisite. Only a few children in Middlemarch looked blond by the side of

Rosamond, and the slim figure displayed by her riding-habit had delicate undulations. In fact, most men in Middlemarch, except her brothers, held that Miss Vincy was the best girl in the world, and some called her an angel. Mary Garth, on the contrary, had the aspect of an ordinary sinner: she was brown; her curly dark hair was rough and stubborn; her stature was low; and it would not be true to declare, in satisfactory antithesis, that she had all the virtues. Plainness has its peculiar temptations and vices quite as much as beauty; it is apt either to feign amiability, or, not feigning it, to show all the repulsiveness of discontent: at any rate, to be called an ugly thing in contrast with that lovely creature your companion, is apt to produce some effect beyond a sense of fine veracity and fitness in the phrase. At the age of two-and-twenty Mary had certainly not attained that perfect good sense and good principle which are usually recommended to the less fortunate girl, as if they were to be obtained in quantities ready mixed, with a flavor of resignation as required. Her shrewdness had a streak of satiric bitterness continually renewed and never carried utterly out of sight, except by a strong current of gratitude towards those who, instead of telling her that she ought to be contented, did something to make her so. Advancing womanhood had tempered her plainness, which was of a good human sort, such as the mothers of our race have very commonly worn in all latitudes

under a more or less becoming headgear. Rembrandt would have painted her with pleasure, and would have made her broad features look out of the canvas with intelligent honesty. For honesty, truth-telling fairness, was Mary's reigning virtue: she neither tried to create illusions, nor indulged in them for her own behoof, and when she was in a good mood she had humor enough in her to laugh at herself. When she and Rosamond happened both to be reflected in the glass, she said, laughingly-

"What a brown patch I am by the side of you, Rosy! You are the most unbecoming companion."

"Oh no! No one thinks of your appearance, you are so sensible and useful, Mary. Beauty is of very little consequence in reality," said Rosamond, turning her head towards Mary, but with eyes swerving towards the new view of her neck in the glass.

"You mean my beauty," said Mary, rather sardonically.

Rosamond thought, "Poor Mary, she takes the kindest things ill." Aloud she said, "What have you been doing lately?"

"I? Oh, minding the house-pouring out syrup-pretending to be amiable and contented-learning to have a bad opinion of everybody."

"It is a wretched life for you."

"No," said Mary, curtly, with a little toss of her head. "I think my life is pleasanter than your Miss

Morgan's."

"Yes; but Miss Morgan is so uninteresting, and not young."

"She is interesting to herself, I suppose; and I am not at all sure that everything gets easier as one gets older."

"No," said Rosamond, reflectively; "one wonders what such people do, without any prospect. To be sure, there is religion as a support. But," she added, dimpling, "it is very different with you, Mary. You may have an offer."

"Has any one told you he means to make me one?"

"Of course not. I mean, there is a gentleman who may fall in love with you, seeing you almost every day."

A certain change in Mary's face was chiefly determined by the resolve not to show any change.

"Does that always make people fall in love?" she answered, carelessly; "it seems to me quite as often a reason for detesting each other."

"Not when they are interesting and agreeable. I hear that Mr. Lydgate is both."

"Oh, Mr. Lydgate!" said Mary, with an unmistakable lapse into indifference. "You want to know something about him," she added, not choosing to indulge Rosamond's indirectness.

"Merely, how you like him."

"There is no question of liking at present. My liking always wants some little kindness to kindle it. I am not magnanimous enough to like people who speak to me without seeming to see me."

"Is he so haughty?" said Rosamond, with heightened satisfaction. "You know that he is of good family?"

"No; he did not give that as a reason."

"Mary! you are the oddest girl. But what sort of looking man is he? Describe him to me."

"How can one describe a man? I can give you an inventory: heavy eyebrows, dark eyes, a straight nose, thick dark hair, large solid white hands-and-let me see-oh, an exquisite cambric pocket-handkerchief. But you will see him. You know this is about the time of his visits."

Rosamond blushed a little, but said, meditatively, "I rather like a haughty manner. I cannot endure a rattling young man."

"I did not tell you that Mr. Lydgate was haughty; but il y en a pour tous les goûts, as little Mamselle used to say, and if any girl can choose the particular sort of conceit she would like, I should think it is you, Rosy."

"Haughtiness is not conceit; I call Fred conceited."

"I wish no one said any worse of him. He should be more careful. Mrs. Waule has been telling uncle that Fred is very unsteady." Mary spoke from a girlish

impulse which got the better of her judgment. There was a vague uneasiness associated with the word "unsteady" which she hoped Rosamond might say something to dissipate. But she purposely abstained from mentioning Mrs. Waule's more special insinuation.

"Oh, Fred is horrid!" said Rosamond. She would not have allowed herself so unsuitable a word to any one but Mary.

"What do you mean by horrid?"

"He is so idle, and makes papa so angry, and says he will not take orders."

"I think Fred is quite right."

"How can you say he is quite right, Mary? I thought you had more sense of religion."

"He is not fit to be a clergyman."

"But he ought to be fit."-"Well, then, he is not what he ought to be. I know some other people who are in the same case."

"But no one approves of them. I should not like to marry a clergyman; but there must be clergymen."

"It does not follow that Fred must be one."

"But when papa has been at the expense of educating him for it! And only suppose, if he should have no fortune left him?"

"I can suppose that very well," said Mary, dryly.

"Then I wonder you can defend Fred," said Rosamond, inclined to push this point.

"I don't defend him," said Mary, laughing; "I would defend any parish from having him for a clergyman."

"But of course if he were a clergyman, he must be different."

"Yes, he would be a great hypocrite; and he is not that yet."

"It is of no use saying anything to you, Mary. You always take Fred's part."

"Why should I not take his part?" said Mary, lighting up. "He would take mine. He is the only person who takes the least trouble to oblige me."

"You make me feel very uncomfortable, Mary," said Rosamond, with her gravest mildness; "I would not tell mamma for the world."

"What would you not tell her?" said Mary, angrily.

"Pray do not go into a rage, Mary," said Rosamond, mildly as ever.

"If your mamma is afraid that Fred will make me an offer, tell her that I would not marry him if he asked me. But he is not going to do so, that I am aware. He certainly never has asked me."

"Mary, you are always so violent."

"And you are always so exasperating."

"I? What can you blame me for?"

"Oh, blameless people are always the most exasperating. There is the bell-I think we must go



down."

"I did not mean to quarrel," said Rosamond, putting on her hat.

"Quarrel? Nonsense; we have not quarrelled. If one is not to get into a rage sometimes, what is the good of being friends?"

"Am I to repeat what you have said?" "Just as you please. I never say what I am afraid of having repeated. But let us go down."

Mr. Lydgate was rather late this morning, but the visitors stayed long enough to see him; for Mr. Featherstone asked Rosamond to sing to him, and she herself was so kind as to propose a second favorite song of his-"Flow on, thou shining river"-after she had sung "Home, sweet home" (which she detested). This hard-headed old Overreach approved of the sentimental song, as the suitable garnish for girls, and also as fundamentally fine, sentiment being the right thing for a song.

Mr. Featherstone was still applauding the last performance, and assuring missy that her voice was as clear as a blackbird's, when Mr. Lydgate's horse passed the window.

His dull expectation of the usual disagreeable routine with an aged patient-who can hardly believe that medicine would not "set him up" if the doctor were only clever enough-added to his general disbelief in Middlemarch charms, made a doubly effective

background to this vision of Rosamond, whom old Featherstone made haste ostentatiously to introduce as his niece, though he had never thought it worth while to speak of Mary Garth in that light. Nothing escaped Lydgate in Rosamond's graceful behavior: how delicately she waived the notice which the old man's want of taste had thrust upon her by a quiet gravity, not showing her dimples on the wrong occasion, but showing them afterwards in speaking to Mary, to whom she addressed herself with so much good-natured interest, that Lydgate, after quickly examining Mary more fully than he had done before, saw an adorable kindness in Rosamond's eyes. But Mary from some cause looked rather out of temper.

"Miss Rosy has been singing me a song-you've nothing to say against that, eh, doctor?" said Mr. Featherstone. "I like it better than your physic."

"That has made me forget how the time was going," said Rosamond, rising to reach her hat, which she had laid aside before singing, so that her flower-like head on its white stem was seen in perfection above-her riding-habit. "Fred, we must really go."

"Very good," said Fred, who had his own reasons for not being in the best spirits, and wanted to get away.

"Miss Vincy is a musician?" said Lydgate, following her with his eyes. (Every nerve and muscle in Rosamond was adjusted to the consciousness that she was being looked at. She was by nature an actress of

parts that entered into her physique: she even acted her own character, and so well, that she did not know it to be precisely her own.)

"The best in Middlemarch, I'll be bound," said Mr. Featherstone, "let the next be who she will. Eh, Fred? Speak up for your sister."

"I'm afraid I'm out of court, sir. My evidence would be good for nothing."

"Middlemarch has not a very high standard, uncle," said Rosamond, with a pretty lightness, going towards her whip, which lay at a distance.

Lydgate was quick in anticipating her. He reached the whip before she did, and turned to present it to her. She bowed and looked at him: he of course was looking at her, and their eyes met with that peculiar meeting which is never arrived at by effort, but seems like a sudden divine clearance of haze. I think Lydgate turned a little paler than usual, but Rosamond blushed deeply and felt a certain astonishment. After that, she was really anxious to go, and did not know what sort of stupidity her uncle was talking of when she went to shake hands with him.

Yet this result, which she took to be a mutual impression, called falling in love, was just what Rosamond had contemplated beforehand. Ever since that important new arrival in Middlemarch she had woven a little future, of which something like this scene was the necessary beginning. Strangers, whether

wrecked and clinging to a raft, or duly escorted and accompanied by portmanteaus, have always had a circumstantial fascination for the virgin mind, against which native merit has urged itself in vain. And a stranger was absolutely necessary to Rosamond's social romance, which had always turned on a lover and bridegroom who was not a Middlemarcher, and who had no connections at all like her own: of late, indeed, the construction seemed to demand that he should somehow be related to a baronet. Now that she and the stranger had met, reality proved much more moving than anticipation, and Rosamond could not doubt that this was the great epoch of her life. She judged of her own symptoms as those of awakening love, and she held it still more natural that Mr. Lydgate should have fallen in love at first sight of her. These things happened so often at balls, and why not by the morning light, when the complexion showed all the better for it? Rosamond, though no older than Mary, was rather used to being fallen in love with; but she, for her part, had remained indifferent and fastidiously critical towards both fresh sprig and faded bachelor. And here was Mr. Lydgate suddenly corresponding to her ideal, being altogether foreign to Middlemarch, carrying a certain air of distinction congruous with good family, and possessing connections which offered vistas of that middle-class heaven, rank; a man of talent, also, whom it would be especially delightful to enslave: in fact, a

man who had touched her nature quite newly, and brought a vivid interest into her life which was better than any fancied "might-be" such as she was in the habit of opposing to the actual.

Thus, in riding home, both the brother and the sister were preoccupied and inclined to be silent. Rosamond, whose basis for her structure had the usual airy slightness, was of remarkably detailed and realistic imagination when the foundation had been once presupposed; and before they had ridden a mile she was far on in the costume and introductions of her wedded life, having determined on her house in Middlemarch, and foreseen the visits she would pay to her husband's high-bred relatives at a distance, whose finished manners she could appropriate as thoroughly as she had done her school accomplishments, preparing herself thus for vaguer elevations which might ultimately come. There was nothing financial, still less sordid, in her previsions: she cared about what were considered refinements, and not about the money that was to pay for them.

Fred's mind, on the other hand, was busy with an anxiety which even his ready hopefulness could not immediately quell. He saw no way of eluding Featherstone's stupid demand without incurring consequences which he liked less even than the task of fulfilling it. His father was already out of humor with him, and would be still more so if he were the occasion

of any additional coolness between his own family and the Bulstrodes. Then, he himself hated having to go and speak to his uncle Bulstrode, and perhaps after drinking wine he had said many foolish things about Featherstone's property, and these had been magnified by report. Fred felt that he made a wretched figure as a fellow who bragged about expectations from a queer old miser like Featherstone, and went to beg for certificates at his bidding. But-those expectations! He really had them, and he saw no agreeable alternative if he gave them up; besides, he had lately made a debt which galled him extremely, and old Featherstone had almost bargained to pay it off. The whole affair was miserably small: his debts were small, even his expectations were not anything so very magnificent. Fred had known men to whom he would have been ashamed of confessing the smallness of his scrapes. Such ruminations naturally produced a streak of misanthropic bitterness. To be born the son of a Middlemarch manufacturer, and inevitable heir to nothing in particular, while such men as Mainwaring and Vyan-certainly life was a poor business, when a spirited young fellow, with a good appetite for the best of everything, had so poor an outlook.

It had not occurred to Fred that the introduction of Bulstrode's name in the matter was a fiction of old Featherstone's; nor could this have made any difference to his position. He saw plainly enough that the old man

wanted to exercise his power by tormenting him a little, and also probably to get some satisfaction out of seeing him on unpleasant terms with Bulstrode. Fred fancied that he saw to the bottom of his uncle Featherstone's soul, though in reality half what he saw there was no more than the reflex of his own inclinations. The difficult task of knowing another soul is not for young gentlemen whose consciousness is chiefly made up of their own wishes.

Fred's main point of debate with himself was, whether he should tell his father, or try to get through the affair without his father's knowledge. It was probably Mrs. Waule who had been talking about him; and if Mary Garth had repeated Mrs. Waule's report to Rosamond, it would be sure to reach his father, who would as surely question him about it. He said to Rosamond, as they slackened their pace-

"Rosy, did Mary tell you that Mrs. Waule had said anything about me?"

"Yes, indeed, she did."

"What?"

"That you were very unsteady."

"Was that all?"

"I should think that was enough, Fred."

"You are sure she said no more?"

"Mary mentioned nothing else. But really, Fred, I think you ought to be ashamed."

"Oh, fudge! Don't lecture me. What did Mary say

about it?"

"I am not obliged to tell you. You care so very much what Mary says, and you are too rude to allow me to speak."

"Of course I care what Mary says. She is the best girl I know."

"I should never have thought she was a girl to fall in love with."

"How do you know what men would fall in love with? Girls never know."

"At least, Fred, let me advise *you* not to fall in love with her, for she says she would not marry you if you asked her."

"She might have waited till I did ask her."

"I knew it would nettle you, Fred."





"Not at all. She would not have said so if you had not provoked her." Before reaching home, Fred concluded that he would tell the whole affair as simply as possible to his father, who might perhaps take on himself the unpleasant business of speaking to Bulstrode.

## BOOK II OLD AND YOUNG

### CHAPTER XIII

*1st Gent.*

How class your  
man? — as better than the  
most,

Or, seeming better,  
worse beneath that cloak?

As saint or knave,  
pilgrim or hypocrite?

*2d Gent.*

Nay, tell me how you  
class your wealth of books

The drifted relics of all  
time.

As well sort them at  
once by size and livery:

Vellum, tall copies,  
and the common calf

Will hardly cover  
more diversity

Than all your labels  
cunningly devised

To class your unread  
authors.

In consequence of what he had heard from Fred, Mr. Vincy determined to speak with Mr. Bulstrode in his private room at the Bank at half-past one, when he was usually free from other callers. But a visitor had come in at one o'clock, and Mr. Bulstrode had so much to say to him, that there was little chance of the interview being over in half an hour. The banker's speech was fluent, but it was also copious, and he used up an appreciable amount of time in brief meditative pauses. Do not imagine his sickly aspect to have been of the yellow, black-haired sort: he had a pale blond skin, thin gray-besprinkled brown hair, light-gray eyes, and a large forehead. Loud men called his subdued tone an undertone, and sometimes implied that it was

inconsistent with openness; though there seems to be no reason why a loud man should not be given to concealment of anything except his own voice, unless it can be shown that Holy Writ has placed the seat of candor in the lungs. Mr. Bulstrode had also a deferential bending attitude in listening, and an apparently fixed attentiveness in his eyes which made those persons who thought themselves worth hearing infer that he was seeking the utmost improvement from their discourse. Others, who expected to make no great figure, disliked this kind of moral lantern turned on them. If you are not proud of your cellar, there is no thrill of satisfaction in seeing your guest hold up his wine-glass to the light and look judicial. Such joys are reserved for conscious merit. Hence Mr. Bulstrode's close attention was not agreeable to the publicans and sinners in Middlemarch; it was attributed by some to his being a Pharisee, and by others to his being Evangelical. Less superficial reasoners among them wished to know who his father and grandfather were, observing that five-and-twenty years ago nobody had ever heard of a Bulstrode in Middlemarch. To his present visitor, Lydgate, the scrutinizing look was a matter of indifference: he simply formed an unfavorable opinion of the banker's constitution, and concluded that he had an eager inward life with little enjoyment of tangible things.

"I shall be exceedingly obliged if you will look in

on me here occasionally, Mr. Lydgate," the banker observed, after a brief pause. "If, as I dare to hope, I have the privilege of finding you a valuable coadjutor in the interesting matter of hospital management, there will be many questions which we shall need to discuss in private. As to the new hospital, which is nearly finished, I shall consider what you have said about the advantages of the special destination for fevers. The decision will rest with me, for though Lord Medlicote has given the land and timber for the building, he is not disposed to give his personal attention to the object."

"There are few things better worth the pains in a provincial town like this," said Lydgate. "A fine fever hospital in addition to the old infirmary might be the nucleus of a medical school here, when once we get our medical reforms; and what would do more for medical education than the spread of such schools over the country? A born provincial man who has a grain of public spirit as well as a few ideas, should do what he can to resist the rush of everything that is a little better than common towards London. Any valid professional aims may often find a freer, if not a richer field, in the provinces."

One of Lydgate's gifts was a voice habitually deep and sonorous, yet capable of becoming very low and gentle at the right moment. About his ordinary bearing there was a certain fling, a fearless expectation of success, a confidence in his own powers and

integrity much fortified by contempt for petty obstacles or seductions of which he had had no experience. But this proud openness was made lovable by an expression of unaffected good-will. Mr. Bulstrode perhaps liked him the better for the difference between them in pitch and manners; he certainly liked him the better, as Rosamond did, for being a stranger in Middlemarch. One can begin so many things with a new person! — even begin to be a better man.

"I shall rejoice to furnish your zeal with fuller opportunities," Mr. Bulstrode answered; "I mean, by confiding to you the superintendence of my new hospital, should a maturer knowledge favor that issue, for I am determined that so great an object shall not be shackled by our two physicians. Indeed, I am encouraged to consider your advent to this town as a gracious indication that a more manifest blessing is now to be awarded to my efforts, which have hitherto been much with stood. With regard to the old infirmary, we have gained the initial point—I mean your election. And now I hope you will not shrink from incurring a certain amount of jealousy and dislike from your professional brethren by presenting yourself as a reformer."

"I will not profess bravery," said Lydgate, smiling, "but I acknowledge a good deal of pleasure in fighting, and I should not care for my profession, if I did not believe that better methods were to be found

and enforced there as well as everywhere else."

"The standard of that profession is low in Middlemarch, my dear sir," said the banker. "I mean in knowledge and skill; not in social status, for our medical men are most of them connected with respectable townspeople here. My own imperfect health has induced me to give some attention to those palliative resources which the divine mercy has placed within our reach. I have consulted eminent men in the metropolis, and I am painfully aware of the backwardness under which medical treatment labors in our provincial districts."

"Yes;-with our present medical rules and education, one must be satisfied now and then to meet with a fair practitioner. As to all the higher questions which determine the starting-point of a diagnosis-as to the philosophy of medical evidence-any glimmering of these can only come from a scientific culture of which country practitioners have usually no more notion than the man in the moon."

Mr. Bulstrode, bending and looking intently, found the form which Lydgate had given to his agreement not quite suited to his comprehension. Under such circumstances a judicious man changes the topic and enters on ground where his own gifts may be more useful.

"I am aware," he said, "that the peculiar bias of medical ability is towards material means.

Nevertheless, Mr. Lydgate, I hope we shall not vary in sentiment as to a measure in which you are not likely to be actively concerned, but in which your sympathetic concurrence may be an aid to me. You recognize, I hope; the existence of spiritual interests in your patients?"

"Certainly I do. But those words are apt to cover different meanings to different minds."

"Precisely. And on such subjects wrong teaching is as fatal as no teaching. Now a point which I have much at heart to secure is a new regulation as to clerical attendance at the old infirmary. The building stands in Mr. Farebrother's parish. You know Mr. Farebrother?"

"I have seen him. He gave me his vote. I must call to thank him. He seems a very bright pleasant little fellow. And I understand he is a naturalist."

"Mr. Farebrother, my dear sir, is a man deeply painful to contemplate. I suppose there is not a clergyman in this country who has greater talents." Mr. Bulstrode paused and looked meditative.

"I have not yet been pained by finding any excessive talent in Middlemarch," said Lydgate, bluntly.

"What I desire," Mr. Bulstrode continued, looking still more serious, "is that Mr. Farebrother's attendance at the hospital should be superseded by the appointment of a chaplain-of Mr. Tyke, in fact-and that no other spiritual aid should be called in."

"As a medical man I could have no opinion on such a point unless I knew Mr. Tyke, and even then I should require to know the cases in which he was applied." Lydgate smiled, but he was bent on being circumspect.

"Of course you cannot enter fully into the merits of this measure at present. But"-here Mr. Bulstrode began to speak with a more chiselled emphasis-"the subject is likely to be referred to the medical board of the infirmary, and what I trust I may ask of you is, that in virtue of the cooperation between us which I now look forward to, you will not, so far as you are concerned, be influenced by my opponents in this matter."

"I hope I shall have nothing to do with clerical disputes," said Lydgate. "The path I have chosen is to work well in my own profession."

"My responsibility, Mr. Lydgate, is of a broader kind. With me, indeed, this question is one of sacred accountableness; whereas with my opponents, I have good reason to say that it is an occasion for gratifying a spirit of worldly opposition. But I shall not therefore drop one iota of my convictions, or cease to identify myself with that truth which an evil generation hates. I have devoted myself to this object of hospital-improvement, but I will boldly confess to you, Mr. Lydgate, that I should have no interest in hospitals if I believed that nothing more was concerned therein



than the cure of mortal diseases. I have another ground of action, and in the face of persecution I will not conceal it."

Mr. Bulstrode's voice had become a loud and agitated whisper as he said the last words.

"There we certainly differ," said Lydgate. But he was not sorry that the door was now opened, and Mr. Vincy was announced. That florid sociable personage was become more interesting to him since he had seen Rosamond. Not that, like her, he had been weaving any future in which their lots were united; but a man naturally remembers a charming girl with pleasure, and is willing to dine where he may see her again. Before he took leave, Mr. Vincy had given that invitation which he had been "in no hurry about," for Rosamond at breakfast had mentioned that she thought her uncle Featherstone had taken the new doctor into great favor.

Mr. Bulstrode, alone with his brother-in-law, poured himself out a glass of water, and opened a sandwich-box.

"I cannot persuade you to adopt my regimen, Vincy?"

"No, no; I've no opinion of that system. Life wants padding," said Mr. Vincy, unable to omit his portable theory. "However," he went on, accenting the word, as if to dismiss all irrelevance, "what I came here to talk about was a little affair of my young scapegrace, Fred's."

"That is a subject on which you and I are likely to take quite as different views as on diet, Vincy."

"I hope not this time." (Mr. Vincy was resolved to be good-humored.) "The fact is, it's about a whim of old Featherstone's. Somebody has been cooking up a story out of spite, and telling it to the old man, to try to set him against Fred. He's very fond of Fred, and is likely to do something handsome for him; indeed he has as good as told Fred that he means to leave him his land, and that makes other people jealous."

"Vincy, I must repeat, that you will not get any concurrence from me as to the course you have pursued with your eldest son. It was entirely from worldly vanity that you destined him for the Church: with a family of three sons and four daughters, you were not warranted in devoting money to an expensive education which has succeeded in nothing but in giving him extravagant idle habits. You are now reaping the consequences."

To point out other people's errors was a duty that Mr. Bulstrode rarely shrank from, but Mr. Vincy was not equally prepared to be patient. When a man has the immediate prospect of being mayor, and is ready, in the interests of commerce, to take up a firm attitude on politics generally, he has naturally a sense of his importance to the framework of things which seems to throw questions of private conduct into the background. And this particular reproof irritated him more than any

other. It was eminently superfluous to him to be told that he was reaping the consequences. But he felt his neck under Bulstrode's yoke; and though he usually enjoyed kicking, he was anxious to refrain from that relief.

"As to that, Bulstrode, it's no use going back. I'm not one of your pattern men, and I don't pretend to be. I couldn't foresee everything in the trade; there wasn't a finer business in Middlemarch than ours, and the lad was clever. My poor brother was in the Church, and would have done well-had got preferment already, but that stomach fever took him off: else he might have been a dean by this time. I think I was justified in what I tried to do for Fred. If you come to religion, it seems to me a man shouldn't want to carve out his meat to an ounce beforehand:-one must trust a little to Providence and be generous. It's a good British feeling to try and raise your family a little: in my opinion, it's a father's duty to give his sons a fine chance."

"I don't wish to act otherwise than as your best friend, Vincy, when I say that what you have been uttering just now is one mass of worldliness and inconsistent folly."

"Very well," said Mr. Vincy, kicking in spite of resolutions, "I never professed to be anything but worldly; and, what's more, I don't see anybody else who is not worldly. I suppose you don't conduct business on what you call unworldly principles. The only difference

I see is that one worldliness is a little bit honester than another."

"This kind of discussion is unfruitful, Vincy," said Mr. Bulstrode, who, finishing his sandwich, had thrown himself back in his chair, and shaded his eyes as if weary. "You had some more particular business."

"Yes, yes. The long and short of it is, somebody has told old Featherstone, giving you as the authority, that Fred has been borrowing or trying to borrow money on the prospect of his land. Of course you never said any such nonsense. But the old fellow will insist on it that Fred should bring him a denial in your handwriting; that is, just a bit of a note saying you don't believe a word of such stuff, either of his having borrowed or tried to borrow in such a fool's way. I suppose you can have no objection to do that."

"Pardon me. I have an objection. I am by no means sure that your son, in his recklessness and ignorance-I will use no severer word-has not tried to raise money by holding out his future prospects, or even that some one may not have been foolish enough to supply him on so vague a presumption: there is plenty of such lax money-lending as of other folly in the world."

"But Fred gives me his honor that he has never borrowed money on the pretence of any understanding about his uncle's land. He is not a liar. I don't want to make him better than he is. I have blown him up

well-nobody can say I wink at what he does. But he is not a liar. And I should have thought-but I may be wrong-that there was no religion to hinder a man from believing the best of a young fellow, when you don't know worse. It seems to me it would be a poor sort of religion to put a spoke in his wheel by refusing to say you don't believe such harm of him as you've got no good reason to believe."

"I am not at all sure that I should be befriending your son by smoothing his way to the future possession of Featherstone's property. I cannot regard wealth as a blessing to those who use it simply as a harvest for this world. You do not like to hear these things, Vincy, but on this occasion I feel called upon to tell you that I have no motive for furthering such a disposition of property as that which you refer to. I do not shrink from saying that it will not tend to your son's eternal welfare or to the glory of God. Why then should you expect me to pen this kind of affidavit, which has no object but to keep up a foolish partiality and secure a foolish bequest?"

"If you mean to hinder everybody from having money but saints and evangelists, you must give up some profitable partnerships, that's all I can say," Mr. Vincy burst out very bluntly. "It may be for the glory of God, but it is not for the glory of the Middlemarch trade, that Plymdale's house uses those blue and green dyes it gets from the Brassing manufactory; they rot the

silk, that's all I know about it. Perhaps if other people knew so much of the profit went to the glory of God, they might like it better. But I don't mind so much about that-I could get up a pretty row, if I chose."

Mr. Bulstrode paused a little before he answered. "You pain me very much by speaking in this way, Vincy. I do not expect you to understand my grounds of action-it is not an easy thing even to thread a path for principles in the intricacies of the world-still less to make the thread clear for the careless and the scoffing. You must remember, if you please, that I stretch my tolerance towards you as my wife's brother, and that it little becomes you to complain of me as withholding material help towards the worldly position of your family. I must remind you that it is not your own prudence or judgment that has enabled you to keep your place in the trade."

"Very likely not; but you have been no loser by my trade yet," said Mr. Vincy, thoroughly nettled (a result which was seldom much retarded by previous resolutions). "And when you married Harriet, I don't see how you could expect that our families should not hang by the same nail. If you've changed your mind, and want my family to come down in the world, you'd better say so. I've never changed; I'm a plain Churchman now, just as I used to be before doctrines came up. I take the world as I find it, in trade and everything else. I'm contented to be no worse than my

neighbors. But if you want us to come down in the world, say so. I shall know better what to do then."

"You talk unreasonably. Shall you come down in the world for want of this letter about your son?"

"Well, whether or not, I consider it very unhandsome of you to refuse it. Such doings may be lined with religion, but outside they have a nasty, dog-in-the-manger look. You might as well slander Fred: it comes pretty near to it when you refuse to say you didn't set a slander going. It's this sort of thing-this tyrannical spirit, wanting to play bishop and banker everywhere-it's this sort of thing makes a man's name stink."

"Vincy, if you insist on quarrelling with me, it will be exceedingly painful to Harriet as well as myself," said Mr. Bulstrode, with a trifle more eagerness and paleness than usual.

"I don't want to quarrel. It's for my interest-and perhaps for yours too-that we should be friends. I bear you no grudge; I think no worse of you than I do of other people. A man who half starves himself, and goes the length in family prayers, and so on, that you do, believes in his religion whatever it may be: you could turn over your capital just as fast with cursing and swearing:-plenty of fellows do. You like to be master, there's no denying that; you must be first chop in heaven, else you won't like it much. But you're my sister's husband, and we ought to stick together; and if I

know Harriet, she'll consider it your fault if we quarrel because you strain at a gnat in this way, and refuse to do Fred a good turn. And I don't mean to say I shall bear it well. I consider it unhandsome."

Mr. Vincy rose, began to button his great-coat, and looked steadily at his brother-in-law, meaning to imply a demand for a decisive answer.

This was not the first time that Mr. Bulstrode had begun by admonishing Mr. Vincy, and had ended by seeing a very unsatisfactory reflection of himself in the coarse unflattering mirror which that manufacturer's mind presented to the subtler lights and shadows of his fellow-men; and perhaps his experience ought to have warned him how the scene would end. But a full-fed fountain will be generous with its waters even in the rain, when they are worse than useless; and a fine fount of admonition is apt to be equally irrepressible.

It was not in Mr. Bulstrode's nature to comply directly in consequence of uncomfortable suggestions. Before changing his course, he always needed to shape his motives and bring them into accord with his habitual standard. He said, at last-

"I will reflect a little, Vincy. I will mention the subject to Harriet. I shall probably send you a letter."

"Very well. As soon as you can, please. I hope it will all be settled before I see you to-morrow."

## CHAPTER XIV



"Follows here the  
strict receipt  
For that sauce to  
dainty meat,  
Named Idleness,  
which many eat  
By preference, and  
call it sweet:  
First watch for  
morsels, like a hound  
Mix well with buffets,  
stir them round  
With good thick oil of  
flatteries,  
And froth with mean  
self-lauding lies.  
Serve warm: the  
vessels you must choose  
To keep it in are dead  
men's shoes."

Mr. Bulstrode's consultation of Harriet seemed to have had the effect desired by Mr. Vincy, for early the next morning a letter came which Fred could carry to Mr. Featherstone as the required testimony.

The old gentleman was staying in bed on account of the cold weather, and as Mary Garth was not to be seen in the sitting-room, Fred went up-stairs immediately and presented the letter to his uncle, who, propped up comfortably on a bed-rest, was not less able than usual to enjoy his consciousness of wisdom in distrusting and frustrating mankind. He put on his spectacles to read the letter, pursing up his lips and drawing down their corners.

"Under the circumstances I will not decline to state my conviction-tchah! what fine words the fellow puts! He's as fine as an auctioneer-that your son Frederic has not obtained any advance of money on bequests promised by Mr. Featherstone-promised? who said I had ever promised? I promise nothing-I shall make codicils as long as I like-and that considering the nature of such a proceeding, it is unreasonable to presume that a young man of sense and character would attempt it-ah, but the gentleman doesn't say you are a young man of sense and character, mark you that, sir! — As to my own concern with any report of such a nature, I distinctly affirm that I never made any statement to the effect that your son had borrowed money on any property that might accrue to him on Mr. Featherstone's demise-bless my heart! 'property'-accrue-demise! Lawyer Standish is nothing to him. He couldn't speak finer if he wanted to borrow. Well," Mr. Featherstone here looked over his spectacles

at Fred, while he handed back the letter to him with a contemptuous gesture, "you don't suppose I believe a thing because Bulstrode writes it out fine, eh?"

Fred colored. "You wished to have the letter, sir. I should think it very likely that Mr. Bulstrode's denial is as good as the authority which told you what he denies."

"Every bit. I never said I believed either one or the other. And now what d' you expect?" said Mr. Featherstone, curtly, keeping on his spectacles, but withdrawing his hands under his wraps.

"I expect nothing, sir." Fred with difficulty restrained himself from venting his irritation. "I came to bring you the letter. If you like I will bid you good morning."

"Not yet, not yet. Ring the bell; I want missy to come."

It was a servant who came in answer to the bell.

"Tell missy to come!" said Mr. Featherstone, impatiently. "What business had she to go away?" He spoke in the same tone when Mary came.

"Why couldn't you sit still here till I told you to go? I want my waistcoat now. I told you always to put it on the bed."

Mary's eyes looked rather red, as if she had been crying. It was clear that Mr. Featherstone was in one of his most snappish humors this morning, and though Fred had now the prospect of receiving the

much-needed present of money, he would have preferred being free to turn round on the old tyrant and tell him that Mary Garth was too good to be at his beck. Though Fred had risen as she entered the room, she had barely noticed him, and looked as if her nerves were quivering with the expectation that something would be thrown at her. But she never had anything worse than words to dread. When she went to reach the waistcoat from a peg, Fred went up to her and said, "Allow me."

"Let it alone! You bring it, missy, and lay it down here," said Mr. Featherstone. "Now you go away again till I call you," he added, when the waistcoat was laid down by him. It was usual with him to season his pleasure in showing favor to one person by being especially disagreeable to another, and Mary was always at hand to furnish the condiment. When his own relatives came she was treated better. Slowly he took out a bunch of keys from the waistcoat pocket, and slowly he drew forth a tin box which was under the bed-clothes.

"You expect I am going to give you a little fortune, eh?" he said, looking above his spectacles and pausing in the act of opening the lid.

"Not at all, sir. You were good enough to speak of making me a present the other day, else, of course, I should not have thought of the matter." But Fred was of a hopeful disposition, and a vision had presented itself of a sum just large enough to deliver him from a certain

anxiety. When Fred got into debt, it always seemed to him highly probable that something or other-he did not necessarily conceive what-would come to pass enabling him to pay in due time. And now that the providential occurrence was apparently close at hand, it would have been sheer absurdity to think that the supply would be short of the need: as absurd as a faith that believed in half a miracle for want of strength to believe in a whole one.

The deep-veined hands fingered many bank-notes-one after the other, laying them down flat again, while Fred leaned back in his chair, scorning to look eager. He held himself to be a gentleman at heart, and did not like courting an old fellow for his money. At last, Mr. Featherstone eyed him again over his spectacles and presented him with a little sheaf of notes: Fred could see distinctly that there were but five, as the less significant edges gaped towards him. But then, each might mean fifty pounds. He took them, saying-

"I am very much obliged to you, sir," and was going to roll them up without seeming to think of their value. But this did not suit Mr. Featherstone, who was eyeing him intently.

"Come, don't you think it worth your while to count 'em? You take money like a lord; I suppose you lose it like one."

"I thought I was not to look a gift-horse in the

mouth, sir. But I shall be very happy to count them."

Fred was not so happy, however, after he had counted them. For they actually presented the absurdity of being less than his hopefulness had decided that they must be. What can the fitness of things mean, if not their fitness to a man's expectations? Failing this, absurdity and atheism gape behind him. The collapse for Fred was severe when he found that he held no more than five twenties, and his share in the higher education of this country did not seem to help him. Nevertheless he said, with rapid changes in his fair complexion-

"It is very handsome of you, sir."

"I should think it is," said Mr. Featherstone, locking his box and replacing it, then taking off his spectacles deliberately, and at length, as if his inward meditation had more deeply convinced him, repeating, "I should think it handsome."

"I assure you, sir, I am very grateful," said Fred, who had had time to recover his cheerful air.

"So you ought to be. You want to cut a figure in the world, and I reckon Peter Featherstone is the only one you've got to trust to." Here the old man's eyes gleamed with a curiously mingled satisfaction in the consciousness that this smart young fellow relied upon him, and that the smart young fellow was rather a fool for doing so.

"Yes, indeed: I was not born to very splendid

chances. Few men have been more cramped than I have been," said Fred, with some sense of surprise at his own virtue, considering how hardly he was dealt with. "It really seems a little too bad to have to ride a broken-winded hunter, and see men, who, are not half such good judges as yourself, able to throw away any amount of money on buying bad bargains."

"Well, you can buy yourself a fine hunter now. Eighty pound is enough for that, I reckon-and you'll have twenty pound over to get yourself out of any little scrape," said Mr. Featherstone, chuckling slightly.

"You are very good, sir," said Fred, with a fine sense of contrast between the words and his feeling.

"Ay, rather a better uncle than your fine uncle Bulstrode. You won't get much out of his spekulations, I think. He's got a pretty strong string round your father's leg, by what I hear, eh?"

"My father never tells me anything about his affairs, sir."

"Well, he shows some sense there. But other people find 'em out without his telling. *He'll* never have much to leave you: he'll most-like die without a will-he's the sort of man to do it-let 'em make him mayor of Middlemarch as much as they like. But you won't get much by his dying without a will, though you *are* the eldest son."

Fred thought that Mr. Featherstone had never been so disagreeable before. True, he had never before

given him quite so much money at once.

"Shall I destroy this letter of Mr. Bulstrode's, sir?" said Fred, rising with the letter as if he would put it in the fire.

"Ay, ay, I don't want it. It's worth no money to me."

Fred carried the letter to the fire, and thrust the poker through it with much zest. He longed to get out of the room, but he was a little ashamed before his inner self, as well as before his uncle, to run away immediately after pocketing the money. Presently, the farm-bailiff came up to give his master a report, and Fred, to his unspeakable relief, was dismissed with the injunction to come again soon.

He had longed not only to be set free from his uncle, but also to find Mary Garth. She was now in her usual place by the fire, with sewing in her hands and a book open on the little table by her side. Her eyelids had lost some of their redness now, and she had her usual air of self-command.

"Am I wanted up-stairs?" she said, half rising as Fred entered.

"No; I am only dismissed, because Simmons is gone up."

Mary sat down again, and resumed her work. She was certainly treating him with more indifference than usual: she did not know how affectionately indignant he had felt on her behalf up-stairs.



"May I stay here a little, Mary, or shall I bore you?"

"Pray sit down," said Mary; "you will not be so heavy a bore as Mr. John Waule, who was here yesterday, and he sat down without asking my leave."

"Poor fellow! I think he is in love with you."

"I am not aware of it. And to me it is one of the most odious things in a girl's life, that there must always be some supposition of falling in love coming between her and any man who is kind to her, and to whom she is grateful. I should have thought that I, at least, might have been safe from all that. I have no ground for the nonsensical vanity of fancying everybody who comes near me is in love with me."

Mary did not mean to betray any feeling, but in spite of herself she ended in a tremulous tone of vexation.

"Confound John Waule! I did not mean to make you angry. I didn't know you had any reason for being grateful to me. I forgot what a great service you think it if any one snuffs a candle for you." Fred also had his pride, and was not going to show that he knew what had called forth this outburst of Mary's.

"Oh, I am not angry, except with the ways of the world. I do like to be spoken to as if I had common-sense. I really often feel as if I could understand a little more than I ever hear even from young gentlemen who have been to college." Mary had

recovered, and she spoke with a suppressed rippling under-current of laughter pleasant to hear.

"I don't care how merry you are at my expense this morning," said Fred, "I thought you looked so sad when you came up-stairs. It is a shame you should stay here to be bullied in that way."

"Oh, I have an easy life-by comparison. I have tried being a teacher, and I am not fit for that: my mind is too fond of wandering on its own way. I think any hardship is better than pretending to do what one is paid for, and never really doing it. Everything here I can do as well as any one else could; perhaps better than some-Rosy, for example. Though she is just the sort of beautiful creature that is imprisoned with ogres in fairy tales."

"*Rosy!*" cried Fred, in a tone of profound brotherly scepticism.

"Come, Fred!" said Mary, emphatically; "you have no right to be so critical."

"Do you mean anything particular-just now?"

"No, I mean something general-always."

"Oh, that I am idle and extravagant. Well, I am not fit to be a poor man. I should not have made a bad fellow if I had been rich."

"You would have done your duty in that state of life to which it has not pleased God to call you," said Mary, laughing.

"Well, I couldn't do my duty as a clergyman, any

more than you could do yours as a governess. You ought to have a little fellow-feeling there, Mary."

"I never said you ought to be a clergyman. There are other sorts of work. It seems to me very miserable not to resolve on some course and act accordingly."

"So I could, if-" Fred broke off, and stood up, leaning against the mantel-piece.

"If you were sure you should not have a fortune?"

"I did not say that. You want to quarrel with me. It is too bad of you to be guided by what other people say about me."

"How can I want to quarrel with you? I should be quarrelling with all my new books," said Mary, lifting the volume on the table. "However naughty you may be to other people, you are good to me."

"Because I like you better than any one else. But I know you despise me."

"Yes, I do-a little," said Mary, nodding, with a smile.

"You would admire a stupendous fellow, who would have wise opinions about everything."

"Yes, I should." Mary was sewing swiftly, and seemed provokingly mistress of the situation. When a conversation has taken a wrong turn for us, we only get farther and farther into the swamp of awkwardness. This was what Fred Vincy felt.

"I suppose a woman is never in love with any one she has always known-ever since she can remember; as

a man often is. It is always some new fellow who strikes a girl."

"Let me see," said Mary, the corners of her mouth curling archly; "I must go back on my experience. There is Juliet-she seems an example of what you say. But then Ophelia had probably known Hamlet a long while; and Brenda Troil-she had known Mordaunt Merton ever since they were children; but then he seems to have been an estimable young man; and Minna was still more deeply in love with Cleveland, who was a stranger. Waverley was new to Flora MacIvor; but then she did not fall in love with him. And there are Olivia and Sophia Primrose, and Corinne-they may be said to have fallen in love with new men. Altogether, my experience is rather mixed."

Mary looked up with some roguishness at Fred, and that look of hers was very dear to him, though the eyes were nothing more than clear windows where observation sat laughingly. He was certainly an affectionate fellow, and as he had grown from boy to man, he had grown in love with his old playmate, notwithstanding that share in the higher education of the country which had exalted his views of rank and income.

"When a man is not loved, it is no use for him to say that he could be a better fellow-could do anything-I mean, if he were sure of being loved in return."

"Not of the least use in the world for him to say

he *could* be better. Might, could, would-they are contemptible auxiliaries."

"I don't see how a man is to be good for much unless he has some one woman to love him dearly."

"I think the goodness should come before he expects that."

"You know better, Mary. Women don't love men for their goodness."

"Perhaps not. But if they love them, they never think them bad."

"It is hardly fair to say I am bad."

"I said nothing at all about you."

"I never shall be good for anything, Mary, if you will not say that you love me-if you will not promise to marry me-I mean, when I am able to marry."

"If I did love you, I would not marry you: I would certainly not promise ever to marry you."

"I think that is quite wicked, Mary. If you love me, you ought to promise to marry me."

"On the contrary, I think it would be wicked in me to marry you even if I did love you."

"You mean, just as I am, without any means of maintaining a wife. Of course: I am but three-and-twenty."

"In that last point you will alter. But I am not so sure of any other alteration. My father says an idle man ought not to exist, much less, be married."

"Then I am to blow my brains out?"

"No; on the whole I should think you would do better to pass your examination. I have heard Mr. Farebrother say it is disgracefully easy."

"That is all very fine. Anything is easy to him. Not that cleverness has anything to do with it. I am ten times cleverer than many men who pass."

"Dear me!" said Mary, unable to repress her sarcasm; "that accounts for the curates like Mr. Crowse. Divide your cleverness by ten, and the quotient—dear me! — is able to take a degree. But that only shows you are ten times more idle than the others."

"Well, if I did pass, you would not want me to go into the Church?"

"That is not the question—what I want you to do. You have a conscience of your own, I suppose. There! there is Mr. Lydgate. I must go and tell my uncle."

"Mary," said Fred, seizing her hand as she rose; "if you will not give me some encouragement, I shall get worse instead of better."

"I will not give you any encouragement," said Mary, reddening. "Your friends would dislike it, and so would mine. My father would think it a disgrace to me if I accepted a man who got into debt, and would not work!"

Fred was stung, and released her hand. She walked to the door, but there she turned and said: "Fred, you have always been so good, so generous to me. I am not ungrateful. But never speak to me in that

way again."

"Very well," said Fred, sulkily, taking up his hat and whip. His complexion showed patches of pale pink and dead white. Like many a plucked idle young gentleman, he was thoroughly in love, and with a plain girl, who had no money! But having Mr. Featherstone's land in the background, and a persuasion that, let Mary say what she would, she really did care for him, Fred was not utterly in despair.

When he got home, he gave four of the twenties to his mother, asking her to keep them for him. "I don't want to spend that money, mother. I want it to pay a debt with. So keep it safe away from my fingers."

"Bless you, my dear," said Mrs. Vincy. She doted on her eldest son and her youngest girl (a child of six), whom others thought her two naughtiest children. The mother's eyes are not always deceived in their partiality: she at least can best judge who is the tender, filial-hearted child. And Fred was certainly very fond of his mother. Perhaps it was his fondness for another person also that made him particularly anxious to take some security against his own liability to spend the hundred pounds. For the creditor to whom he owed a hundred and sixty held a firmer security in the shape of a bill signed by Mary's father.

## CHAPTER XV

"Black eyes you have  
left, you say,  
Blue eyes fail to draw  
you;  
Yet you seem more  
rapt to-day,  
Than of old we saw  
you.

"Oh, I track the fairest  
fair  
Through new haunts  
of pleasure;  
Footprints here and  
echoes there  
Guide me to my  
treasure:

"Lo! she  
turns-immortal youth  
Wrought to mortal  
stature,  
Fresh as starlight's  
aged truth —  
Many-named Nature!"



A great historian, as he insisted on calling himself, who had the happiness to be dead a hundred and twenty years ago, and so to take his place among the colossi whose huge legs our living pettiness is observed to walk under, glories in his copious remarks and digressions as the least imitable part of his work, and especially in those initial chapters to the successive books of his history, where he seems to bring his armchair to the proscenium and chat with us in all the lusty ease of his fine English. But Fielding lived when the days were longer (for time, like money, is measured by our needs), when summer afternoons were spacious, and the clock ticked slowly in the winter evenings. We belated historians must not linger after his example; and if we did so, it is probable that our chat would be thin and eager, as if delivered from a campstool in a parrot-house. I at least have so much to do in unraveling certain human lots, and seeing how they were woven and interwoven, that all the light I can command must be concentrated on this particular web, and not dispersed over that tempting range of relevancies called the universe.

At present I have to make the new settler Lydgate better known to any one interested in him than he could possibly be even to those who had seen the most of him since his arrival in Middlemarch. For surely all must admit that a man may be puffed and belauded, envied, ridiculed, counted upon as a tool and fallen in love

with, or at least selected as a future husband, and yet remain virtually unknown-known merely as a cluster of signs for his neighbors' false suppositions. There was a general impression, however, that Lydgate was not altogether a common country doctor, and in Middlemarch at that time such an impression was significant of great things being expected from him. For everybody's family doctor was remarkably clever, and was understood to have immeasurable skill in the management and training of the most skittish or vicious diseases. The evidence of his cleverness was of the higher intuitive order, lying in his lady-patients' immovable conviction, and was unassailable by any objection except that their intuitions were opposed by others equally strong; each lady who saw medical truth in Wrench and "the strengthening treatment" regarding Toller and "the lowering system" as medical perdition. For the heroic times of copious bleeding and blistering had not yet departed, still less the times of thorough-going theory, when disease in general was called by some bad name, and treated accordingly without shilly-shally-as if, for example, it were to be called insurrection, which must not be fired on with blank-cartridge, but have its blood drawn at once. The strengtheners and the lowerers were all "clever" men in somebody's opinion, which is really as much as can be said for any living talents. Nobody's imagination had gone so far as to conjecture that Mr. Lydgate could

know as much as Dr. Sprague and Dr. Minchin, the two physicians, who alone could offer any hope when danger was extreme, and when the smallest hope was worth a guinea. Still, I repeat, there was a general impression that Lydgate was something rather more uncommon than any general practitioner in Middlemarch. And this was true. He was but seven-and-twenty, an age at which many men are not quite common-at which they are hopeful of achievement, resolute in avoidance, thinking that Mammon shall never put a bit in their mouths and get astride their backs, but rather that Mammon, if they have anything to do with him, shall draw their chariot.

He had been left an orphan when he was fresh from a public school. His father, a military man, had made but little provision for three children, and when the boy Tertius asked to have a medical education, it seemed easier to his guardians to grant his request by apprenticing him to a country practitioner than to make any objections on the score of family dignity. He was one of the rarer lads who early get a decided bent and make up their minds that there is something particular in life which they would like to do for its own sake, and not because their fathers did it. Most of us who turn to any subject with love remember some morning or evening hour when we got on a high stool to reach down an untried volume, or sat with parted lips listening to a new talker, or for very lack of books

began to listen to the voices within, as the first traceable beginning of our love. Something of that sort happened to Lydgate. He was a quick fellow, and when hot from play, would toss himself in a corner, and in five minutes be deep in any sort of book that he could lay his hands on: if it were *Rasselas* or *Gulliver*, so much the better, but *Bailey's Dictionary* would do, or the Bible with the Apocrypha in it. Something he must read, when he was not riding the pony, or running and hunting, or listening to the talk of men. All this was true of him at ten years of age; he had then read through "*Chrysal, or the Adventures of a Guinea*," which was neither milk for babes, nor any chalky mixture meant to pass for milk, and it had already occurred to him that books were stuff, and that life was stupid. His school studies had not much modified that opinion, for though he "did" his classics and mathematics, he was not pre-eminent in them. It was said of him, that Lydgate could do anything he liked, but he had certainly not yet liked to do anything remarkable. He was a vigorous animal with a ready understanding, but no spark had yet kindled in him an intellectual passion; knowledge seemed to him a very superficial affair, easily mastered: judging from the conversation of his elders, he had apparently got already more than was necessary for mature life. Probably this was not an exceptional result of expensive teaching at that period of short-waisted coats, and other fashions which have not yet recurred.

But, one vacation, a wet day sent him to the small home library to hunt once more for a book which might have some freshness for him: in vain! unless, indeed, he took down a dusty row of volumes with gray-paper backs and dingy labels—the volumes of an old Cyclopaedia which he had never disturbed. It would at least be a novelty to disturb them. They were on the highest shelf, and he stood on a chair to get them down. But he opened the volume which he first took from the shelf: somehow, one is apt to read in a makeshift attitude, just where it might seem inconvenient to do so. The page he opened on was under the head of Anatomy, and the first passage that drew his eyes was on the valves of the heart. He was not much acquainted with valves of any sort, but he knew that valvae were folding-doors, and through this crevice came a sudden light startling him with his first vivid notion of finely adjusted mechanism in the human frame. A liberal education had of course left him free to read the indecent passages in the school classics, but beyond a general sense of secrecy and obscenity in connection with his internal structure, had left his imagination quite unbiassed, so that for anything he knew his brains lay in small bags at his temples, and he had no more thought of representing to himself how his blood circulated than how paper served instead of gold. But the moment of vocation had come, and before he got down from his chair, the world was made new to him by a presentiment of endless

processes filling the vast spaces planked out of his sight by that wordy ignorance which he had supposed to be knowledge. From that hour Lydgate felt the growth of an intellectual passion.

We are not afraid of telling over and over again how a man comes to fall in love with a woman and be wedded to her, or else be fatally parted from her. Is it due to excess of poetry or of stupidity that we are never weary of describing what King James called a woman's "makdom and her fairnesse," never weary of listening to the twanging of the old Troubadour strings, and are comparatively uninterested in that other kind of "makdom and fairnesse" which must be wooed with industrious thought and patient renunciation of small desires? In the story of this passion, too, the development varies: sometimes it is the glorious marriage, sometimes frustration and final parting. And not seldom the catastrophe is bound up with the other passion, sung by the Troubadours. For in the multitude of middle-aged men who go about their vocations in a daily course determined for them much in the same way as the tie of their cravats, there is always a good number who once meant to shape their own deeds and alter the world a little. The story of their coming to be shapen after the average and fit to be packed by the gross, is hardly ever told even in their consciousness; for perhaps their ardor in generous unpaid toil cooled as imperceptibly as the ardor of other youthful loves, till

one day their earlier self walked like a ghost in its old home and made the new furniture ghastly. Nothing in the world more subtle than the process of their gradual change! In the beginning they inhaled it unknowingly: you and I may have sent some of our breath towards infecting them, when we uttered our conforming falsities or drew our silly conclusions: or perhaps it came with the vibrations from a woman's glance.

Lydgate did not mean to be one of those failures, and there was the better hope of him because his scientific interest soon took the form of a professional enthusiasm: he had a youthful belief in his bread-winning work, not to be stifled by that initiation in makeshift called his 'prentice days; and he carried to his studies in London, Edinburgh, and Paris, the conviction that the medical profession as it might be was the finest in the world; presenting the most perfect interchange between science and art; offering the most direct alliance between intellectual conquest and the social good. Lydgate's nature demanded this combination: he was an emotional creature, with a flesh-and-blood sense of fellowship which withstood all the abstractions of special study. He cared not only for "cases," but for John and Elizabeth, especially Elizabeth.

There was another attraction in his profession: it wanted reform, and gave a man an opportunity for some indignant resolve to reject its venal decorations

and other humbug, and to be the possessor of genuine though undemanded qualifications. He went to study in Paris with the determination that when he came home again he would settle in some provincial town as a general practitioner, and resist the irrational severance between medical and surgical knowledge in the interest of his own scientific pursuits, as well as of the general advance: he would keep away from the range of London intrigues, jealousies, and social truckling, and win celebrity, however slowly, as Jenner had done, by the independent value of his work. For it must be remembered that this was a dark period; and in spite of venerable colleges which used great efforts to secure purity of knowledge by making it scarce, and to exclude error by a rigid exclusiveness in relation to fees and appointments, it happened that very ignorant young gentlemen were promoted in town, and many more got a legal right to practise over large areas in the country. Also, the high standard held up to the public mind by the College of Physicians, which gave its peculiar sanction to the expensive and highly rarefied medical instruction obtained by graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, did not hinder quackery from having an excellent time of it; for since professional practice chiefly consisted in giving a great many drugs, the public inferred that it might be better off with more drugs still, if they could only be got cheaply, and hence swallowed large cubic measures of physic prescribed



by unscrupulous ignorance which had taken no degrees. Considering that statistics had not yet embraced a calculation as to the number of ignorant or canting doctors which absolutely must exist in the teeth of all changes, it seemed to Lydgate that a change in the units was the most direct mode of changing the numbers. He meant to be a unit who would make a certain amount of difference towards that spreading change which would one day tell appreciably upon the averages, and in the mean time have the pleasure of making an advantageous difference to the viscera of his own patients. But he did not simply aim at a more genuine kind of practice than was common. He was ambitious of a wider effect: he was fired with the possibility that he might work out the proof of an anatomical conception and make a link in the chain of discovery.

Does it seem incongruous to you that a Middlemarch surgeon should dream of himself as a discoverer? Most of us, indeed, know little of the great originators until they have been lifted up among the constellations and already rule our fates. But that Herschel, for example, who "broke the barriers of the heavens"-did he not once play a provincial church-organ, and give music-lessons to stumbling pianists? Each of those Shining Ones had to walk on the earth among neighbors who perhaps thought much more of his gait and his garments than of anything which was to give him a title to everlasting fame: each

of them had his little local personal history sprinkled with small temptations and sordid cares, which made the retarding friction of his course towards final companionship with the immortals. Lydgate was not blind to the dangers of such friction, but he had plenty of confidence in his resolution to avoid it as far as possible: being seven-and-twenty, he felt himself experienced. And he was not going to have his vanities provoked by contact with the showy worldly successes of the capital, but to live among people who could hold no rivalry with that pursuit of a great idea which was to be a twin object with the assiduous practice of his profession. There was fascination in the hope that the two purposes would illuminate each other: the careful observation and inference which was his daily work, the use of the lens to further his judgment in special cases, would further his thought as an instrument of larger inquiry. Was not this the typical pre-eminence of his profession? He would be a good Middlemarch doctor, and by that very means keep himself in the track of far-reaching investigation. On one point he may fairly claim approval at this particular stage of his career: he did not mean to imitate those philanthropic models who make a profit out of poisonous pickles to support themselves while they are exposing adulteration, or hold shares in a gambling-hell that they may have leisure to represent the cause of public morality. He intended to begin in his own case some

particular reforms which were quite certainly within his reach, and much less of a problem than the demonstrating of an anatomical conception. One of these reforms was to act stoutly on the strength of a recent legal decision, and simply prescribe, without dispensing drugs or taking percentage from druggists. This was an innovation for one who had chosen to adopt the style of general practitioner in a country town, and would be felt as offensive criticism by his professional brethren. But Lydgate meant to innovate in his treatment also, and he was wise enough to see that the best security for his practising honestly according to his belief was to get rid of systematic temptations to the contrary.

Perhaps that was a more cheerful time for observers and theorizers than the present; we are apt to think it the finest era of the world when America was beginning to be discovered, when a bold sailor, even if he were wrecked, might alight on a new kingdom; and about 1829 the dark territories of Pathology were a fine America for a spirited young adventurer. Lydgate was ambitious above all to contribute towards enlarging the scientific, rational basis of his profession. The more he became interested in special questions of disease, such as the nature of fever or fevers, the more keenly he felt the need for that fundamental knowledge of structure which just at the beginning of the century had been illuminated by the brief and glorious career of Bichat,

who died when he was only one-and-thirty, but, like another Alexander, left a realm large enough for many heirs. That great Frenchman first carried out the conception that living bodies, fundamentally considered, are not associations of organs which can be understood by studying them first apart, and then as it were federally; but must be regarded as consisting of certain primary webs or tissues, out of which the various organs-brain, heart, lungs, and so on-are compacted, as the various accommodations of a house are built up in various proportions of wood, iron, stone, brick, zinc, and the rest, each material having its peculiar composition and proportions. No man, one sees, can understand and estimate the entire structure or its parts-what are its frailties and what its repairs, without knowing the nature of the materials. And the conception wrought out by Bichat, with his detailed study of the different tissues, acted necessarily on medical questions as the turning of gas-light would act on a dim, oil-lit street, showing new connections and hitherto hidden facts of structure which must be taken into account in considering the symptoms of maladies and the action of medicaments. But results which depend on human conscience and intelligence work slowly, and now at the end of 1829, most medical practice was still strutting or shambling along the old paths, and there was still scientific work to be done which might have seemed to be a direct sequence of

Bichat's. This great seer did not go beyond the consideration of the tissues as ultimate facts in the living organism, marking the limit of anatomical analysis; but it was open to another mind to say, have not these structures some common basis from which they have all started, as your sarsnet, gauze, net, satin, and velvet from the raw cocoon? Here would be another light, as of oxy-hydrogen, showing the very grain of things, and revising all former explanations. Of this sequence to Bichat's work, already vibrating along many currents of the European mind, Lydgate was enamoured; he longed to demonstrate the more intimate relations of living structure, and help to define men's thought more accurately after the true order. The work had not yet been done, but only prepared for those who knew how to use the preparation. What was the primitive tissue? In that way Lydgate put the question-not quite in the way required by the awaiting answer; but such missing of the right word befalls many seekers. And he counted on quiet intervals to be watchfully seized, for taking up the threads of investigation-on many hints to be won from diligent application, not only of the scalpel, but of the microscope, which research had begun to use again with new enthusiasm of reliance. Such was Lydgate's plan of his future: to do good small work for Middlemarch, and great work for the world.

He was certainly a happy fellow at this time: to

be seven-and-twenty, without any fixed vices, with a generous resolution that his action should be beneficent, and with ideas in his brain that made life interesting quite apart from the cultus of horseflesh and other mystic rites of costly observance, which the eight hundred pounds left him after buying his practice would certainly not have gone far in paying for. He was at a starting-point which makes many a man's career a fine subject for betting, if there were any gentlemen given to that amusement who could appreciate the complicated probabilities of an arduous purpose, with all the possible thwartings and furtherings of circumstance, all the niceties of inward balance, by which a man swims and makes his point or else is carried headlong. The risk would remain even with close knowledge of Lydgate's character; for character too is a process and an unfolding. The man was still in the making, as much as the Middlemarch doctor and immortal discoverer, and there were both virtues and faults capable of shrinking or expanding. The faults will not, I hope, be a reason for the withdrawal of your interest in him. Among our valued friends is there not some one or other who is a little too self-confident and disdainful; whose distinguished mind is a little spotted with commonness; who is a little pinched here and protuberant there with native prejudices; or whose better energies are liable to lapse down the wrong channel under the influence of transient solicitations?

All these things might be alleged against Lydgate, but then, they are the periphrases of a polite preacher, who talks of Adam, and would not like to mention anything painful to the pew-renters. The particular faults from which these delicate generalities are distilled have distinguishable physiognomies, diction, accent, and grimaces; filling up parts in very various dramas. Our vanities differ as our noses do: all conceit is not the same conceit, but varies in correspondence with the minutiae of mental make in which one of us differs from another. Lydgate's conceit was of the arrogant sort, never simpering, never impertinent, but massive in its claims and benevolently contemptuous. He would do a great deal for noodles, being sorry for them, and feeling quite sure that they could have no power over him: he had thought of joining the Saint Simonians when he was in Paris, in order to turn them against some of their own doctrines. All his faults were marked by kindred traits, and were those of a man who had a fine baritone, whose clothes hung well upon him, and who even in his ordinary gestures had an air of inbred distinction. Where then lay the spots of commonness? says a young lady enamoured of that careless grace. How could there be any commonness in a man so well-bred, so ambitious of social distinction, so generous and unusual in his views of social duty? As easily as there may be stupidity in a man of genius if you take him unawares on the wrong subject, or as

many a man who has the best will to advance the social millennium might be ill-inspired in imagining its lighter pleasures; unable to go beyond Offenbach's music, or the brilliant punning in the last burlesque. Lydgate's spots of commonness lay in the complexion of his prejudices, which, in spite of noble intention and sympathy, were half of them such as are found in ordinary men of the world: that distinction of mind which belonged to his intellectual ardor, did not penetrate his feeling and judgment about furniture, or women, or the desirability of its being known (without his telling) that he was better born than other country surgeons. He did not mean to think of furniture at present; but whenever he did so it was to be feared that neither biology nor schemes of reform would lift him above the vulgarity of feeling that there would be an incompatibility in his furniture not being of the best.

As to women, he had once already been drawn headlong by impetuous folly, which he meant to be final, since marriage at some distant period would of course not be impetuous. For those who want to be acquainted with Lydgate it will be good to know what was that case of impetuous folly, for it may stand as an example of the fitful swerving of passion to which he was prone, together with the chivalrous kindness which helped to make him morally lovable. The story can be told without many words. It happened when he was studying in Paris, and just at the time when, over and



above his other work, he was occupied with some galvanic experiments. One evening, tired with his experimenting, and not being able to elicit the facts he needed, he left his frogs and rabbits to some repose under their trying and mysterious dispensation of unexplained shocks, and went to finish his evening at the theatre of the Porte Saint Martin, where there was a melodrama which he had already seen several times; attracted, not by the ingenious work of the collaborating authors, but by an actress whose part it was to stab her lover, mistaking him for the evil-designing duke of the piece. Lydgate was in love with this actress, as a man is in love with a woman whom he never expects to speak to. She was a Provencale, with dark eyes, a Greek profile, and rounded majestic form, having that sort of beauty which carries a sweet matronliness even in youth, and her voice was a soft cooing. She had but lately come to Paris, and bore a virtuous reputation, her husband acting with her as the unfortunate lover. It was her acting which was "no better than it should be," but the public was satisfied. Lydgate's only relaxation now was to go and look at this woman, just as he might have thrown himself under the breath of the sweet south on a bank of violets for a while, without prejudice to his galvanism, to which he would presently return. But this evening the old drama had a new catastrophe. At the moment when the heroine was to act the stabbing of her

lover, and he was to fall gracefully, the wife veritably stabbed her husband, who fell as death willed. A wild shriek pierced the house, and the Provencale fell swooning: a shriek and a swoon were demanded by the play, but the swooning too was real this time. Lydgate leaped and climbed, he hardly knew how, on to the stage, and was active in help, making the acquaintance of his heroine by finding a contusion on her head and lifting her gently in his arms. Paris rang with the story of this death:-was it a murder? Some of the actress's warmest admirers were inclined to believe in her guilt, and liked her the better for it (such was the taste of those times); but Lydgate was not one of these. He vehemently contended for her innocence, and the remote impersonal passion for her beauty which he had felt before, had passed now into personal devotion, and tender thought of her lot. The notion of murder was absurd: no motive was discoverable, the young couple being understood to dote on each other; and it was not unprecedented that an accidental slip of the foot should have brought these grave consequences. The legal investigation ended in Madame Laure's release. Lydgate by this time had had many interviews with her, and found her more and more adorable. She talked little; but that was an additional charm. She was melancholy, and seemed grateful; her presence was enough, like that of the evening light. Lydgate was madly anxious about her affection, and jealous lest any

other man than himself should win it and ask her to marry him. But instead of reopening her engagement at the Porte Saint Martin, where she would have been all the more popular for the fatal episode, she left Paris without warning, forsaking her little court of admirers. Perhaps no one carried inquiry far except Lydgate, who felt that all science had come to a stand-still while he imagined the unhappy Laure, stricken by ever-wandering sorrow, herself wandering, and finding no faithful comforter. Hidden actresses, however, are not so difficult to find as some other hidden facts, and it was not long before Lydgate gathered indications that Laure had taken the route to Lyons. He found her at last acting with great success at Avignon under the same name, looking more majestic than ever as a forsaken wife carrying her child in her arms. He spoke to her after the play, was received with the usual quietude which seemed to him beautiful as clear depths of water, and obtained leave to visit her the next day; when he was bent on telling her that he adored her, and on asking her to marry him. He knew that this was like the sudden impulse of a madman-incongruous even with his habitual foibles. No matter! It was the one thing which he was resolved to do. He had two selves within him apparently, and they must learn to accommodate each other and bear reciprocal impediments. Strange, that some of us, with quick alternate vision, see beyond our infatuations, and even while we rave on the heights,

behold the wide plain where our persistent self pauses and awaits us.

To have approached Laure with any suit that was not reverentially tender would have been simply a contradiction of his whole feeling towards her.

"You have come all the way from Paris to find me?" she said to him the next day, sitting before him with folded arms, and looking at him with eyes that seemed to wonder as an untamed ruminating animal wonders. "Are all Englishmen like that?"

"I came because I could not live without trying to see you. You are lonely; I love you; I want you to consent to be my wife; I will wait, but I want you to promise that you will marry me-no one else."

Laure looked at him in silence with a melancholy radiance from under her grand eyelids, until he was full of rapturous certainty, and knelt close to her knees.

"I will tell you something," she said, in her cooing way, keeping her arms folded. "My foot really slipped."

"I know, I know," said Lydgate, deprecatingly. "It was a fatal accident-a dreadful stroke of calamity that bound me to you the more."

Again Laure paused a little and then said, slowly, "*I meant to do it.*"

Lydgate, strong man as he was, turned pale and trembled: moments seemed to pass before he rose and stood at a distance from her.

"There was a secret, then," he said at last, even vehemently. "He was brutal to you: you hated him."

"No! he wearied me; he was too fond: he would live in Paris, and not in my country; that was not agreeable to me."

"Great God!" said Lydgate, in a groan of horror. "And you planned to murder him?"

"I did not plan: it came to me in the play-*I meant to do it.*"

Lydgate stood mute, and unconsciously pressed his hat on while he looked at her. He saw this woman-the first to whom he had given his young adoration-amid the throng of stupid criminals.

"You are a good young man," she said. "But I do not like husbands. I will never have another."

Three days afterwards Lydgate was at his galvanism again in his Paris chambers, believing that illusions were at an end for him. He was saved from hardening effects by the abundant kindness of his heart and his belief that human life might be made better. But he had more reason than ever for trusting his judgment, now that it was so experienced; and henceforth he would take a strictly scientific view of woman, entertaining no expectations but such as were justified beforehand.

No one in Middlemarch was likely to have such a notion of Lydgate's past as has here been faintly shadowed, and indeed the respectable townsfolk there

were not more given than mortals generally to any eager attempt at exactness in the representation to themselves of what did not come under their own senses. Not only young virgins of that town, but gray-bearded men also, were often in haste to conjecture how a new acquaintance might be wrought into their purposes, contented with very vague knowledge as to the way in which life had been shaping him for that instrumentality. Middlemarch, in fact, counted on swallowing Lydgate and assimilating him very comfortably.

## CHAPTER XVI

"All that in woman is  
adored  
In thy fair self I  
find —  
For the whole sex can  
but afford  
The handsome and the  
kind."

— SIR CHARLES  
SEDLEY.

The question whether Mr. Tyke should be

appointed as salaried chaplain to the hospital was an exciting topic to the Middlemarchers; and Lydgate heard it discussed in a way that threw much light on the power exercised in the town by Mr. Bulstrode. The banker was evidently a ruler, but there was an opposition party, and even among his supporters there were some who allowed it to be seen that their support was a compromise, and who frankly stated their impression that the general scheme of things, and especially the casualties of trade, required you to hold a candle to the devil.

Mr. Bulstrode's power was not due simply to his being a country banker, who knew the financial secrets of most traders in the town and could touch the springs of their credit; it was fortified by a beneficence that was at once ready and severe-ready to confer obligations, and severe in watching the result. He had gathered, as an industrious man always at his post, a chief share in administering the town charities, and his private charities were both minute and abundant. He would take a great deal of pains about apprenticing Tegg the shoemaker's son, and he would watch over Tegg's church-going; he would defend Mrs. Strype the washerwoman against Stubbs's unjust exaction on the score of her drying-ground, and he would himself scrutinize a calumny against Mrs. Strype. His private minor loans were numerous, but he would inquire strictly into the circumstances both before and after. In

this way a man gathers a domain in his neighbors' hope and fear as well as gratitude; and power, when once it has got into that subtle region, propagates itself, spreading out of all proportion to its external means. It was a principle with Mr. Bulstrode to gain as much power as possible, that he might use it for the glory of God. He went through a great deal of spiritual conflict and inward argument in order to adjust his motives, and make clear to himself what God's glory required. But, as we have seen, his motives were not always rightly appreciated. There were many crass minds in Middlemarch whose reflective scales could only weigh things in the lump; and they had a strong suspicion that since Mr. Bulstrode could not enjoy life in their fashion, eating and drinking so little as he did, and worreting himself about everything, he must have a sort of vampire's feast in the sense of mastery.

The subject of the chaplaincy came up at Mr. Vincy's table when Lydgate was dining there, and the family connection with Mr. Bulstrode did not, he observed, prevent some freedom of remark even on the part of the host himself, though his reasons against the proposed arrangement turned entirely on his objection to Mr. Tyke's sermons, which were all doctrine, and his preference for Mr. Farebrother, whose sermons were free from that taint. Mr. Vincy liked well enough the notion of the chaplain's having a salary, supposing it were given to Farebrother, who was as good a little



fellow as ever breathed, and the best preacher anywhere, and companionable too.

"What line shall you take, then?" said Mr. Chichely, the coroner, a great coursing comrade of Mr. Vincy's.

"Oh, I'm precious glad I'm not one of the Directors now. I shall vote for referring the matter to the Directors and the Medical Board together. I shall roll some of my responsibility on your shoulders, Doctor," said Mr. Vincy, glancing first at Dr. Sprague, the senior physician of the town, and then at Lydgate who sat opposite. "You medical gentlemen must consult which sort of black draught you will prescribe, eh, Mr. Lydgate?"

"I know little of either," said Lydgate; "but in general, appointments are apt to be made too much a question of personal liking. The fittest man for a particular post is not always the best fellow or the most agreeable. Sometimes, if you wanted to get a reform, your only way would be to pension off the good fellows whom everybody is fond of, and put them out of the question."

Dr. Sprague, who was considered the physician of most "weight," though Dr. Minchin was usually said to have more "penetration," divested his large heavy face of all expression, and looked at his wine-glass while Lydgate was speaking. Whatever was not problematical and suspected about this young man—for example, a

certain showiness as to foreign ideas, and a disposition to unsettle what had been settled and forgotten by his elders—was positively unwelcome to a physician whose standing had been fixed thirty years before by a treatise on Meningitis, of which at least one copy marked "own" was bound in calf. For my part I have some fellow-feeling with Dr. Sprague: one's self-satisfaction is an untaxed kind of property which it is very unpleasant to find deprecated.

Lydgate's remark, however, did not meet the sense of the company. Mr. Vincy said, that if he could have *his* way, he would not put disagreeable fellows anywhere.

"Hang your reforms!" said Mr. Chichely. "There's no greater humbug in the world. You never hear of a reform, but it means some trick to put in new men. I hope you are not one of the 'Lancet's' men, Mr. Lydgate—wanting to take the coronership out of the hands of the legal profession: your words appear to point that way."

"I disapprove of Wakley," interposed Dr. Sprague, "no man more: he is an ill-intentioned fellow, who would sacrifice the respectability of the profession, which everybody knows depends on the London Colleges, for the sake of getting some notoriety for himself. There are men who don't mind about being kicked blue if they can only get talked about. But Wakley is right sometimes," the Doctor added,

judicially. "I could mention one or two points in which Wakley is in the right."

"Oh, well," said Mr. Chichely, "I blame no man for standing up in favor of his own cloth; but, coming to argument, I should like to know how a coroner is to judge of evidence if he has not had a legal training?"

"In my opinion," said Lydgate, "legal training only makes a man more incompetent in questions that require knowledge of another kind. People talk about evidence as if it could really be weighed in scales by a blind Justice. No man can judge what is good evidence on any particular subject, unless he knows that subject well. A lawyer is no better than an old woman at a post-mortem examination. How is he to know the action of a poison? You might as well say that scanning verse will teach you to scan the potato crops."

"You are aware, I suppose, that it is not the coroner's business to conduct the post-mortem, but only to take the evidence of the medical witness?" said Mr. Chichely, with some scorn.

"Who is often almost as ignorant as the coroner himself," said Lydgate. "Questions of medical jurisprudence ought not to be left to the chance of decent knowledge in a medical witness, and the coroner ought not to be a man who will believe that strychnine will destroy the coats of the stomach if an ignorant practitioner happens to tell him so."

Lydgate had really lost sight of the fact that Mr.

Chichely was his Majesty's coroner, and ended innocently with the question, "Don't you agree with me, Dr. Sprague?"

"To a certain extent-with regard to populous districts, and in the metropolis," said the Doctor. "But I hope it will be long before this part of the country loses the services of my friend Chichely, even though it might get the best man in our profession to succeed him. I am sure Vincy will agree with me."

"Yes, yes, give me a coroner who is a good coursing man," said Mr. Vincy, jovially. "And in my opinion, you're safest with a lawyer. Nobody can know everything. Most things are 'visitation of God.' And as to poisoning, why, what you want to know is the law. Come, shall we join the ladies?"

Lydgate's private opinion was that Mr. Chichely might be the very coroner without bias as to the coats of the stomach, but he had not meant to be personal. This was one of the difficulties of moving in good Middlemarch society: it was dangerous to insist on knowledge as a qualification for any salaried office. Fred Vincy had called Lydgate a prig, and now Mr. Chichely was inclined to call him prick-eared; especially when, in the drawing-room, he seemed to be making himself eminently agreeable to Rosamond, whom he had easily monopolized in a tete-a-tete, since Mrs. Vincy herself sat at the tea-table. She resigned no domestic function to her daughter; and the matron's

blooming good-natured face, with the two volatile pink strings floating from her fine throat, and her cheery manners to husband and children, was certainly among the great attractions of the Vincy house-attractions which made it all the easier to fall in love with the daughter. The tinge of unpretentious, inoffensive vulgarity in Mrs. Vincy gave more effect to Rosamond's refinement, which was beyond what Lydgate had expected.

Certainly, small feet and perfectly turned shoulders aid the impression of refined manners, and the right thing said seems quite astonishingly right when it is accompanied with exquisite curves of lip and eyelid. And Rosamond could say the right thing; for she was clever with that sort of cleverness which catches every tone except the humorous. Happily she never attempted to joke, and this perhaps was the most decisive mark of her cleverness.

She and Lydgate readily got into conversation. He regretted that he had not heard her sing the other day at Stone Court. The only pleasure he allowed himself during the latter part of his stay in Paris was to go and hear music.

"You have studied music, probably?" said Rosamond.

"No, I know the notes of many birds, and I know many melodies by ear; but the music that I don't know at all, and have no notion about, delights me-affects me.

How stupid the world is that it does not make more use of such a pleasure within its reach!"

"Yes, and you will find Middlemarch very tuneless. There are hardly any good musicians. I only know two gentlemen who sing at all well."

"I suppose it is the fashion to sing comic songs in a rhythmic way, leaving you to fancy the tune—very much as if it were tapped on a drum?"

"Ah, you have heard Mr. Bowyer," said Rosamond, with one of her rare smiles. "But we are speaking very ill of our neighbors."

Lydgate was almost forgetting that he must carry on the conversation, in thinking how lovely this creature was, her garment seeming to be made out of the faintest blue sky, herself so immaculately blond, as if the petals of some gigantic flower had just opened and disclosed her; and yet with this infantine blondness showing so much ready, self-possessed grace. Since he had had the memory of Laure, Lydgate had lost all taste for large-eyed silence: the divine cow no longer attracted him, and Rosamond was her very opposite. But he recalled himself.

"You will let me hear some music to-night, I hope."

"I will let you hear my attempts, if you like," said Rosamond. "Papa is sure to insist on my singing. But I shall tremble before you, who have heard the best singers in Paris. I have heard very little: I have only

once been to London. But our organist at St. Peter's is a good musician, and I go on studying with him."

"Tell me what you saw in London."

"Very little." (A more naive girl would have said, "Oh, everything!" But Rosamond knew better.) "A few of the ordinary sights, such as raw country girls are always taken to."

"Do you call yourself a raw country girl?" said Lydgate, looking at her with an involuntary emphasis of admiration, which made Rosamond blush with pleasure. But she remained simply serious, turned her long neck a little, and put up her hand to touch her wondrous hair-plaits-an habitual gesture with her as pretty as any movements of a kitten's paw. Not that Rosamond was in the least like a kitten: she was a sylph caught young and educated at Mrs. Lemon's.

"I assure you my mind is raw," she said immediately; "I pass at Middlemarch. I am not afraid of talking to our old neighbors. But I am really afraid of you."

"An accomplished woman almost always knows more than we men, though her knowledge is of a different sort. I am sure you could teach me a thousand things-as an exquisite bird could teach a bear if there were any common language between them. Happily, there is a common language between women and men, and so the bears can get taught."

"Ah, there is Fred beginning to strum! I must go

and hinder him from jarring all your nerves," said Rosamond, moving to the other side of the room, where Fred having opened the piano, at his father's desire, that Rosamond might give them some music, was parenthetically performing "Cherry Ripe!" with one hand. Able men who have passed their examinations will do these things sometimes, not less than the plucked Fred.

"Fred, pray defer your practising till to-morrow; you will make Mr. Lydgate ill," said Rosamond. "He has an ear."

Fred laughed, and went on with his tune to the end.

Rosamond turned to Lydgate, smiling gently, and said, "You perceive, the bears will not always be taught."

"Now then, Rosy!" said Fred, springing from the stool and twisting it upward for her, with a hearty expectation of enjoyment. "Some good rousing tunes first."

Rosamond played admirably. Her master at Mrs. Lemon's school (close to a county town with a memorable history that had its relics in church and castle) was one of those excellent musicians here and there to be found in our provinces, worthy to compare with many a noted Kapellmeister in a country which offers more plentiful conditions of musical celebrity. Rosamond, with the executant's instinct, had seized his



manner of playing, and gave forth his large rendering of noble music with the precision of an echo. It was almost startling, heard for the first time. A hidden soul seemed to be flowing forth from Rosamond's fingers; and so indeed it was, since souls live on in perpetual echoes, and to all fine expression there goes somewhere an originating activity, if it be only that of an interpreter. Lydgate was taken possession of, and began to believe in her as something exceptional. After all, he thought, one need not be surprised to find the rare conjunctions of nature under circumstances apparently unfavorable: come where they may, they always depend on conditions that are not obvious. He sat looking at her, and did not rise to pay her any compliments, leaving that to others, now that his admiration was deepened.

Her singing was less remarkable, but also well trained, and sweet to hear as a chime perfectly in tune. It is true she sang "Meet me by moonlight," and "I've been roaming"; for mortals must share the fashions of their time, and none but the ancients can be always classical. But Rosamond could also sing "Black-eyed Susan" with effect, or Haydn's canzonets, or "Voi, che sapete," or "Batti, batti"-she only wanted to know what her audience liked.

Her father looked round at the company, delighting in their admiration. Her mother sat, like a Niobe before her troubles, with her youngest little girl

on her lap, softly beating the child's hand up and down in time to the music. And Fred, notwithstanding his general scepticism about Rosy, listened to her music with perfect allegiance, wishing he could do the same thing on his flute. It was the pleasantest family party that Lydgate had seen since he came to Middlemarch. The Vincys had the readiness to enjoy, the rejection of all anxiety, and the belief in life as a merry lot, which made a house exceptional in most county towns at that time, when Evangelicalism had cast a certain suspicion as of plague-infection over the few amusements which survived in the provinces. At the Vincys' there was always whist, and the card-tables stood ready now, making some of the company secretly impatient of the music. Before it ceased Mr. Farebrother came in—a handsome, broad-chested but otherwise small man, about forty, whose black was very threadbare: the brilliancy was all in his quick gray eyes. He came like a pleasant change in the light, arresting little Louisa with fatherly nonsense as she was being led out of the room by Miss Morgan, greeting everybody with some special word, and seeming to condense more talk into ten minutes than had been held all through the evening. He claimed from Lydgate the fulfilment of a promise to come and see him. "I can't let you off, you know, because I have some beetles to show you. We collectors feel an interest in every new man till he has seen all we have to show him."

But soon he swerved to the whist-table, rubbing his hands and saying, "Come now, let us be serious! Mr. Lydgate? not play? Ah! you are too young and light for this kind of thing."

Lydgate said to himself that the clergyman whose abilities were so painful to Mr. Bulstrode, appeared to have found an agreeable resort in this certainly not erudite household. He could half understand it: the good-humor, the good looks of elder and younger, and the provision for passing the time without any labor of intelligence, might make the house beguiling to people who had no particular use for their odd hours.

Everything looked blooming and joyous except Miss Morgan, who was brown, dull, and resigned, and altogether, as Mrs. Vincy often said, just the sort of person for a governess. Lydgate did not mean to pay many such visits himself. They were a wretched waste of the evenings; and now, when he had talked a little more to Rosamond, he meant to excuse himself and go.

"You will not like us at Middlemarch, I feel sure," she said, when the whist-players were settled. "We are very stupid, and you have been used to something quite different."

"I suppose all country towns are pretty much alike," said Lydgate. "But I have noticed that one always believes one's own town to be more stupid than any other. I have made up my mind to take Middlemarch as it comes, and shall be much obliged if

the town will take me in the same way. I have certainly found some charms in it which are much greater than I had expected."

"You mean the rides towards Tipton and Lowick; every one is pleased with those," said Rosamond, with simplicity.

"No, I mean something much nearer to me."

Rosamond rose and reached her netting, and then said, "Do you care about dancing at all? I am not quite sure whether clever men ever dance."

"I would dance with you if you would allow me."

"Oh!" said Rosamond, with a slight deprecatory laugh. "I was only going to say that we sometimes have dancing, and I wanted to know whether you would feel insulted if you were asked to come."

"Not on the condition I mentioned."

After this chat Lydgate thought that he was going, but on moving towards the whist-tables, he got interested in watching Mr. Farebrother's play, which was masterly, and also his face, which was a striking mixture of the shrewd and the mild. At ten o'clock supper was brought in (such were the customs of Middlemarch) and there was punch-drinking; but Mr. Farebrother had only a glass of water. He was winning, but there seemed to be no reason why the renewal of rubbers should end, and Lydgate at last took his leave.

But as it was not eleven o'clock, he chose to walk in the brisk air towards the tower of St. Botolph's, Mr.

Farebrother's church, which stood out dark, square, and massive against the starlight. It was the oldest church in Middlemarch; the living, however, was but a vicarage worth barely four hundred a-year. Lydgate had heard that, and he wondered now whether Mr. Farebrother cared about the money he won at cards; thinking, "He seems a very pleasant fellow, but Bulstrode may have his good reasons." Many things would be easier to Lydgate if it should turn out that Mr. Bulstrode was generally justifiable. "What is his religious doctrine to me, if he carries some good notions along with it? One must use such brains as are to be found."

These were actually Lydgate's first meditations as he walked away from Mr. Vincy's, and on this ground I fear that many ladies will consider him hardly worthy of their attention. He thought of Rosamond and her music only in the second place; and though, when her turn came, he dwelt on the image of her for the rest of his walk, he felt no agitation, and had no sense that any new current had set into his life. He could not marry yet; he wished not to marry for several years; and therefore he was not ready to entertain the notion of being in love with a girl whom he happened to admire. He did admire Rosamond exceedingly; but that madness which had once beset him about Laure was not, he thought, likely to recur in relation to any other woman. Certainly, if falling in love had been at all in question, it would have been quite safe with a creature

like this Miss Vincy, who had just the kind of intelligence one would desire in a woman-polished, refined, docile, lending itself to finish in all the delicacies of life, and enshrined in a body which expressed this with a force of demonstration that excluded the need for other evidence. Lydgate felt sure that if ever he married, his wife would have that feminine radiance, that distinctive womanhood which must be classed with flowers and music, that sort of beauty which by its very nature was virtuous, being moulded only for pure and delicate joys.

But since he did not mean to marry for the next five years-his more pressing business was to look into Louis' new book on Fever, which he was specially interested in, because he had known Louis in Paris, and had followed many anatomical demonstrations in order to ascertain the specific differences of typhus and typhoid. He went home and read far into the smallest hour, bringing a much more testing vision of details and relations into this pathological study than he had ever thought it necessary to apply to the complexities of love and marriage, these being subjects on which he felt himself amply informed by literature, and that traditional wisdom which is handed down in the genial conversation of men. Whereas Fever had obscure conditions, and gave him that delightful labor of the imagination which is not mere arbitrariness, but the exercise of disciplined power-combining and

constructing with the clearest eye for probabilities and the fullest obedience to knowledge; and then, in yet more energetic alliance with impartial Nature, standing aloof to invent tests by which to try its own work.

Many men have been praised as vividly imaginative on the strength of their profuseness in indifferent drawing or cheap narration:-reports of very poor talk going on in distant orbs; or portraits of Lucifer coming down on his bad errands as a large ugly man with bat's wings and spurts of phosphorescence; or exaggerations of wantonness that seem to reflect life in a diseased dream. But these kinds of inspiration Lydgate regarded as rather vulgar and vinous compared with the imagination that reveals subtle actions inaccessible by any sort of lens, but tracked in that outer darkness through long pathways of necessary sequence by the inward light which is the last refinement of Energy, capable of bathing even the ethereal atoms in its ideally illuminated space. He for his part had tossed away all cheap inventions where ignorance finds itself able and at ease: he was enamoured of that arduous invention which is the very eye of research, provisionally framing its object and correcting it to more and more exactness of relation; he wanted to pierce the obscurity of those minute processes which prepare human misery and joy, those invisible thoroughfares which are the first lurking-places of anguish, mania, and crime, that

delicate poise and transition which determine the growth of happy or unhappy consciousness.

As he threw down his book, stretched his legs towards the embers in the grate, and clasped his hands at the back of his head, in that agreeable afterglow of excitement when thought lapses from examination of a specific object into a suffusive sense of its connections with all the rest of our existence-seems, as it were, to throw itself on its back after vigorous swimming and float with the repose of unexhausted strength-Lydgate felt a triumphant delight in his studies, and something like pity for those less lucky men who were not of his profession.

"If I had not taken that turn when I was a lad," he thought, "I might have got into some stupid draught-horse work or other, and lived always in blinkers. I should never have been happy in any profession that did not call forth the highest intellectual strain, and yet keep me in good warm contact with my neighbors. There is nothing like the medical profession for that: one can have the exclusive scientific life that touches the distance and befriend the old fogies in the parish too. It is rather harder for a clergyman: Farebrother seems to be an anomaly."

This last thought brought back the Vincys and all the pictures of the evening. They floated in his mind agreeably enough, and as he took up his bed-candle his lips were curled with that incipient smile which is apt to



accompany agreeable recollections. He was an ardent fellow, but at present his ardor was absorbed in love of his work and in the ambition of making his life recognized as a factor in the better life of mankind-like other heroes of science who had nothing but an obscure country practice to begin with.

Poor Lydgate! or shall I say, Poor Rosamond! Each lived in a world of which the other knew nothing. It had not occurred to Lydgate that he had been a subject of eager meditation to Rosamond, who had neither any reason for throwing her marriage into distant perspective, nor any pathological studies to divert her mind from that ruminating habit, that inward repetition of looks, words, and phrases, which makes a large part in the lives of most girls. He had not meant to look at her or speak to her with more than the inevitable amount of admiration and compliment which a man must give to a beautiful girl; indeed, it seemed to him that his enjoyment of her music had remained almost silent, for he feared falling into the rudeness of telling her his great surprise at her possession of such accomplishment. But Rosamond had registered every look and word, and estimated them as the opening incidents of a preconceived romance-incidents which gather value from the foreseen development and climax. In Rosamond's romance it was not necessary to imagine much about the inward life of the hero, or of his serious business in the world: of course, he had a