

**THIRD SCENE.--LONDON.**

**CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH. - GEOFFREY AS A LETTER-WRITER.**

LORD HOLCHESTER'S servants--with the butler at their head--were on the look-out for Mr. Julius Delamayn's arrival from Scotland. The appearance of the two brothers together took the whole domestic establishment by surprise. Inquiries were addressed to the butler by Julius; Geoffrey standing by, and taking no other than a listener's part in the proceedings.

"Is my father alive?"

"His lordship, I am rejoiced to say, has astonished the doctors, Sir. He rallied last night in the most wonderful way. If things go on for the next eight-and-forty hours as they are going now, my lord's recovery is considered certain."

"What was the illness?"

"A paralytic stroke, Sir. When her ladyship telegraphed to you in Scotland the doctors had given his lordship up."

"Is my mother at home?"

"Her ladyship is at home to you,, Sir."

The butler laid a special emphasis on the personal pronoun. Julius turned to his brother. The change for the better in the state of Lord Holchester's health made Geoffrey's position, at that moment, an embarrassing one. He had been positively forbidden to enter the house. His one excuse for setting that prohibitory sentence at defiance rested on the assumption that his father was actually dying. As matters now stood, Lord Holchester's order remained in full force. The under-servants in the hall (charged to obey that order as they valued their places) looked from "Mr. Geoffrey" to the butler, The butler looked from "Mr. Geoffrey" to "Mr. Julius." Julius looked at his brother. There was an awkward pause. The position of the second son was the position of a wild beast in the house--a creature to be got rid of, without risk to yourself, if you only knew how.

Geoffrey spoke, and solved the problem

"Open the door, one of you fellows," he said to the footmen. "I'm off."

"Wait a minute," interposed his brother. "It will be a sad disappointment to my mother to know that you have been here, and gone away again without seeing her. These are no ordinary circumstances, Geoffrey. Come up stairs with me--I'll take it on myself."

"I'm blessed if I take it on myself!" returned Geoffrey. "Open the door!"

"Wait here, at any rate," pleaded Julius, "till I can send you down a message."

"Send your message to Nagle's Hotel. I'm at home at Nagle's--I'm not at home here."

At that point the discussion was interrupted by the appearance of a little terrier in the hall. Seeing strangers, the dog began to bark. Perfect tranquillity in the house had been absolutely insisted on by the doctors; and the servants, all trying together to catch the animal and quiet him, simply aggravated the noise he was making. Geoffrey solved this problem also in his own decisive way. He swung round as the dog was passing him, and kicked it with his heavy boot. The little creature fell on the spot, whining piteously. "My lady's pet dog!" exclaimed the butler. "You've broken its ribs, Sir." "I've broken it of barking, you mean," retorted Geoffrey. "Ribs be hanged!" He turned to his brother. "That settles it," he said, jocosely. "I'd better defer the pleasure of calling on dear mamma till the next opportunity. Ta-ta, Julius. You know where to find me. Come, and dine. We'll give you a steak at Nagle's that will make a man of you."

He went out. The tall footmen eyed his lordship's second son with unaffected respect. They had seen him, in public, at the annual festival of the Christian-Pugilistic-Association, with "the gloves" on. He could have beaten the biggest man in the hall within an inch of his life in three minutes. The porter bowed as he threw open the door. The whole interest and attention of the domestic establishment then present was concentrated on Geoffrey. Julius went up stairs to his mother without attracting the slightest notice.

The month was August. The streets were empty. The vilest breeze that blows--a hot east wind in London--was the breeze abroad on that day. Even Geoffrey appeared to feel the influence of the weather as the cab carried him

from his father's door to the hotel. He took off his hat, and unbuttoned his waistcoat, and lit his everlasting pipe, and growled and grumbled between his teeth in the intervals of smoking. Was it only the hot wind that wrung from him these demonstrations of discomfort? Or was there some secret anxiety in his mind which assisted the depressing influences of the day? There was a secret anxiety in his mind. And the name of it was--Anne.

As things actually were at that moment, what course was he to take with the unhappy woman who was waiting to hear from him at the Scotch inn?

To write? or not to write? That was the question with Geoffrey.

The preliminary difficulty, relating to addressing a letter to Anne at the inn, had been already provided for. She had decided--if it proved necessary to give her name, before Geoffrey joined her--to call herself Mrs., instead of Miss, Silvester. A letter addressed to "Mrs. Silvester" might be trusted to find its way to her without causing any embarrassment. The doubt was not here. The doubt lay, as usual, between two alternatives. Which course would it be wisest to take?--to inform Anne, by that day's post, that an interval of forty-eight hours must elapse before his father's recovery could be considered certain? Or to wait till the interval was over, and be guided by the result? Considering the alternatives in the cab, he decided that the wise course was to temporize with Anne, by reporting matters as they then stood.

Arrived at the hotel, he sat down to write the letter--doubted--and tore it up--doubted again--and began again--doubted once more--and tore up the second letter--rose to his feet--and owned to himself (in unprintable language) that he couldn't for the life of him decide which was safest--to write or to wait.

In this difficulty, his healthy physical instincts sent him to healthy physical remedies for relief. "My mind's in a muddle," said Geoffrey. "I'll try a bath."

It was an elaborate bath, proceeding through many rooms, and combining many postures and applications. He steamed. He plunged. He simmered. He stood under a pipe, and received a cataract of cold water on his head. He was laid on his back; he was laid on his stomach; he was respectfully pounded and kneaded, from head to foot, by the knuckles of accomplished practitioners. He came out of it all, sleek, clear rosy, beautiful. He returned to the hotel, and took up the writing materials--and behold the intolerable indecision seized him again, declining to be washed out! This time he laid it all to Anne. "That infernal woman will be the ruin of me," said Geoffrey, taking up his hat. "I must try the dumb-bells."

The pursuit of the new remedy for stimulating a sluggish brain took him to a public house, kept by the professional pedestrian who had the honor of training him when he contended at Athletic Sports.

"A private room and the dumb-bells!" cried Geoffrey. "The heaviest you have got."

He stripped himself of his upper clothing, and set to work, with the heavy weights in each hand, waving them up and down, and backward and forward, in every attainable variety of movement, till his magnificent muscles seemed on the point of starting through his sleek skin. Little by little his animal spirits roused themselves. The strong exertion intoxicated the strong man. In sheer excitement he swore cheerfully--invoking thunder and lightning, explosion and blood, in return for the compliments profusely paid to him by the pedestrian and the pedestrian's son. "Pen, ink, and paper!" he roared, when he could use the dumb-bells no longer. "My mind's made up; I'll write, and have done with it!" He sat down to his writing on the spot; actually finished the letter; another minute would have dispatched it to the post--and, in that minute, the maddening indecision took possession of him once more. He opened the letter again, read it over again, and tore it up again. "I'm out of my mind!" cried Geoffrey, fixing his big bewildered blue eyes fiercely on the professor who trained him. "Thunder and lightning! Explosion and blood! Send for Crouch."

Crouch (known and respected wherever English manhood is known and respected) was a retired prize-fighter. He appeared with the third and last remedy for clearing the mind known to the Honorable Geoffrey Delamayn--namely, two pair of boxing-gloves in a carpet-bag.

The gentleman and the prize-fighter put on the gloves, and faced each other in the classically correct posture of pugilistic defense. "None of your play, mind!" growled Geoffrey. "Fight, you beggar, as if you were in the Ring again with orders to win." No man knew better than the great and terrible Crouch what real fighting meant, and what heavy blows might be given even with such apparently harmless weapons as stuffed and padded gloves. He pretended, and only pretended, to comply with his patron's request. Geoffrey rewarded him for his polite forbearance by knocking him down. The great and terrible rose with unruffled composure. "Well hit, Sir!" he said. "Try it with the other hand now." Geoffrey's temper was not under similar control. Invoking everlasting destruction on the frequently-blackened eyes of Crouch, he threatened instant withdrawal of his patronage and support unless the polite pugilist hit, then and there, as hard as he could. The hero of a

hundred fights quailed at the dreadful prospect. "I've got a family to support," remarked Crouch. "If you will have it, Sir--there it is!" The fall of Geoffrey followed, and shook the house. He was on his legs again in an instant--not satisfied even yet. "None of your body-hitting!" he roared. "Stick to my head. Thunder and lightning! explosion and blood! Knock it out of me! Stick to the head!" Obedient Crouch stuck to the head. The two gave and took blows which would have stunned--possibly have killed--any civilized member of the community. Now on one side of his patron's iron skull, and now on the other, the hammering of the prize-fighter's gloves fell, thump upon thump, horrible to hear--until even Geoffrey himself had had enough of it. "Thank you, Crouch," he said, speaking civilly to the man for the first time. "That will do. I feel nice and clear again." He shook his head two or three times, he was rubbed down like a horse by the professional runner; he drank a mighty draught of malt liquor; he recovered his good-humor as if by magic. "Want the pen and ink, Sir?" inquired his pedestrian host. "Not I!" answered Geoffrey. "The muddle's out of me now. Pen and ink be hanged! I shall look up some of our fellows, and go to the play." He left the public house in the happiest condition of mental calm. Inspired by the stimulant application of Crouch's gloves, his torpid cunning had been shaken up into excellent working order at last. Write to Anne? Who but a fool would write to such a woman as that until he was forced to it? Wait and see what the chances of the next eight-and-forty hours might bring forth, and then write to her, or desert her, as the event might decide. It lay in a nut-shell, if you could only see it. Thanks to Crouch, he did see it--and so away in a pleasant temper for a dinner with "our fellows" and an evening at the play!

**CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH. - GEOFFREY IN THE MARRIAGE MARKET.**

THE interval of eight-and-forty hours passed--without the occurrence of any personal communication between the two brothers in that time.

Julius, remaining at his father's house, sent brief written bulletins of Lord Holchester's health to his brother at the hotel. The first bulletin said, "Going on well. Doctors satisfied." The second was firmer in tone. "Going on excellently. Doctors very sanguine." The third was the most explicit of all. "I am to see my father in an hour from this. The doctors answer for his recovery. Depend on my putting in a good word for you, if I can; and wait to hear from me further at the hotel."

Geoffrey's face darkened as he read the third bulletin. He called once more for the hated writing materials. There could be no doubt now as to the necessity of communicating with Anne. Lord Holchester's recovery had put him back again in the same critical position which he had occupied at Windygates. To keep Anne from committing some final act of despair, which would connect him with a public scandal, and ruin him so far as his expectations from his father were concerned, was, once more, the only safe policy that Geoffrey could pursue. His letter began and ended in twenty words:

"DEAR ANNE,--Have only just heard that my father is turning the corner. Stay where you are. Will write again."

Having dispatched this Spartan composition by the post, Geoffrey lit his pipe, and waited the event of the interview between Lord Holchester and his eldest son.

Julius found his father alarmingly altered in personal appearance, but in full possession of his faculties nevertheless. Unable to return the pressure of his son's hand--unable even to turn in the bed without help--the hard eye of the old lawyer was as keen, the hard mind of the old lawyer was as clear, as ever. His grand ambition was to see Julius in Parliament. Julius was offering himself for election in Perthshire, by his father's express desire, at that moment. Lord Holchester entered eagerly into politics before his eldest son had been two minutes by his bedside.

"Much obliged, Julius, for your congratulations. Men of my sort are not easily killed. (Look at Brougham and Lyndhurst!) You won't be called to the Upper House yet. You will begin in the House of Commons--precisely as I wished. What are your prospects with the constituency? Tell me exactly how you stand, and where I can be of use to you."

"Surely, Sir, you are hardly recovered enough to enter on matters of business yet?"

"I am quite recovered enough. I want some present interest to occupy me. My thoughts are beginning to drift back to past times, and to things which are better forgotten." A sudden contraction crossed his livid face. He looked hard at his son, and entered abruptly on a new question. "Julius!" he resumed, "have you ever heard of a young woman named Anne Silvester?"

Julius answered in the negative. He and his wife had exchanged cards with Lady Lundie, and had excused themselves from accepting her invitation to the lawn-party. With the exception of Blanche, they were both quite ignorant of the persons who composed the family circle at Windygates.

"Make a memorandum of the name," Lord Holchester went on. "Anne Silvester. Her father and mother are dead. I knew her father in former times. Her mother was ill-used. It was a bad business. I have been thinking of it again, for the first time for many years. If the girl is alive and about the world she may remember our family name. Help her, Julius, if she ever wants help, and applies to you." The painful contraction passed across his face once more. Were his thoughts taking him back to the memorable summer evening at the Hampstead villa? Did he see the deserted woman swooning at his feet again? "About your election?" he asked, impatiently. "My mind is not used to be idle. Give it something to do."

Julius stated his position as plainly and as briefly as he could. The father found nothing to object to in the report--except the son's absence from the field of action. He blamed Lady Holchester for summoning Julius to London. He was annoyed at his son's being there, at the bedside, when he ought to have been addressing the electors. "It's inconvenient, Julius," he said, petulantly. "Don't you see it yourself?"

Having previously arranged with his mother to take the first opportunity that offered of risking a reference to Geoffrey, Julius decided to "see it" in a light for which his father was not prepared. The opportunity was before him. He took it on the spot.



"It is no inconvenience to me, Sir," he replied, "and it is no inconvenience to my brother either. Geoffrey was anxious about you too. Geoffrey has come to London with me."

Lord Holchester looked at his eldest son with a grimly-satirical expression of surprise.

"Have I not already told you," he rejoined, "that my mind is not affected by my illness? Geoffrey anxious about me! Anxiety is one of the civilized emotions. Man in his savage state is incapable of feeling it."

"My brother is not a savage, Sir."

"His stomach is generally full, and his skin is covered with linen and cloth, instead of red ochre and oil. So far, certainly, your brother is civilized. In all other respects your brother is a savage."

"I know what you mean, Sir. But there is something to be said for Geoffrey's way of life. He cultivates his courage and his strength. Courage and strength are fine qualities, surely, in their way?"

"Excellent qualities, as far as they go. If you want to know how far that is, challenge Geoffrey to write a sentence of decent English, and see if his courage doesn't fail him there. Give him his books to read for his degree, and, strong as he is, he will be taken ill at the sight of them. You wish me to see your brother. Nothing will induce me to see him, until his way of life (as you call it) is altered altogether. I have but one hope of its ever being altered now. It is barely possible that the influence of a sensible woman--possessed of such advantages of birth and fortune as may compel respect, even from a savage--might produce its effect on Geoffrey. If he wishes to find his way back into this house, let him find his way back into good society first, and bring me a daughter-in-law to plead his cause for him--whom his mother and I can respect and receive. When that happens, I shall begin to have some belief in Geoffrey. Until it does happen, don't introduce your brother into any future conversations which you may have with Me. To return to your election. I have some advice to give you before you go back. You will do well to go back to-night. Lift me up on the pillow. I shall speak more easily with my head high."

His son lifted him on the pillows, and once more entreated him to spare himself.

It was useless. No remonstrances shook the iron resolution of the man who



had hewed his way through the rank and file of political humanity to his own high place apart from the rest. Helpless, ghastly, snatched out of the very jaws of death, there he lay, steadily distilling the clear common-sense which had won him all his worldly rewards into the mind of his son. Not a hint was missed, not a caution was forgotten, that could guide Julius safely through the miry political ways which he had trodden so safely and so dextrously himself. An hour more had passed before the impenetrable old man closed his weary eyes, and consented to take his nourishment and compose himself to rest. His last words, rendered barely articulate by exhaustion, still sang the praises of party manoeuvres and political strife. "It's a grand career! I miss the House of Commons, Julius, as I miss nothing else!"

Left free to pursue his own thoughts, and to guide his own movements, Julius went straight from Lord Holchester's bedside to Lady Holchester's boudoir.

"Has your father said any thing about Geoffrey?" was his mother's first question as soon as he entered the room.

"My father gives Geoffrey a last chance, if Geoffrey will only take it."

Lady Holchester's face clouded. "I know," she said, with a look of disappointment. "His last chance is to read for his degree. Hopeless, my dear. Quite hopeless! If it had only been something easier than that; something that rested with me--"

"It does rest with you," interposed Julius. "My dear mother!--can you believe it?--Geoffrey's last chance is (in one word) Marriage!"

"Oh, Julius! it's too good to be true!"

Julius repeated his father's own words. Lady Holchester looked twenty years younger as she listened. When he had done she rang the bell.

"No matter who calls," she said to the servant, "I am not at home." She turned to Julius, kissed him, and made a place for him on the sofa by her side. "Geoffrey shall take that chance," she said, gayly--"I will answer for it! I have three women in my mind, any one of whom would suit him. Sit down, my dear, and let us consider carefully which of the three will be most likely to attract Geoffrey, and to come up to your father's standard of what his daughter-in-law ought to be. When we have decided, don't trust to writing. Go yourself and see Geoffrey at his hotel."

Mother and son entered on their consultation--and innocently sowed the seeds of a terrible harvest to come.

## **CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH. - GEOFFREY AS A PUBLIC CHARACTER.**

TIME had advanced to after noon before the selection of Geoffrey's future wife was accomplished, and before the instructions of Geoffrey's brother were complete enough to justify the opening of the matrimonial negotiation at Nagle's Hotel.

"Don't leave him till you have got his promise," were Lady Holchester's last words when her son started on his mission.

"If Geoffrey doesn't jump at what I am going to offer him," was the son's reply, "I shall agree with my father that the case is hopeless; and I shall end, like my father, in giving Geoffrey up."

This was strong language for Julius to use. It was not easy to rouse the disciplined and equable temperament of Lord Holchester's eldest son. No two men were ever more thoroughly unlike each other than these two brothers. It is melancholy to acknowledge it of the blood relation of a "stroke oar," but it must be owned, in the interests of truth, that Julius cultivated his intelligence. This degenerate Briton could digest books--and couldn't digest beer. Could learn languages--and couldn't learn to row. Practiced the foreign vice of perfecting himself in the art of playing on a musical instrument and couldn't learn the English virtue of knowing a good horse when he saw him. Got through life. (Heaven only knows how!) without either a biceps or a betting-book. Had openly acknowledged, in English society, that he didn't think the barking of a pack of hounds the finest music in the world. Could go to foreign parts, and see a mountain which nobody had ever got to the top of yet--and didn't instantly feel his honor as an Englishman involved in getting to the top of it himself. Such people may, and do, exist among the inferior races of the Continent. Let us thank Heaven, Sir, that England never has been, and never will be, the right place for them!

Arrived at Nagle's Hotel, and finding nobody to inquire of in the hall, Julius applied to the young lady who sat behind the window of "the bar." The young lady was reading something so deeply interesting in the evening newspaper that she never even heard him. Julius went into the coffee-room.

The waiter, in his corner, was absorbed over a second newspaper. Three gentlemen, at three different tables, were absorbed in a third, fourth, and fifth newspaper. They all alike went on with their reading without noticing the entrance of the stranger. Julius ventured on disturbing the waiter by

asking for Mr. Geoffrey Delamayn. At the sound of that illustrious name the waiter looked up with a start. "Are you Mr. Delamayn's brother, Sir?"

"Yes."

The three gentlemen at the tables looked up with a start. The light of Geoffrey's celebrity fell, reflected, on Geoffrey's brother, and made a public character of him.

"You'll find Mr. Geoffrey, Sir," said the waiter, in a flurried, excited manner, "at the Cock and Bottle, Putney."

"I expected to find him here. I had an appointment with him at this hotel."

The waiter opened his eyes on Julius with an expression of blank astonishment. "Haven't you heard the news, Sir?"

"No!"

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed the waiter--and offered the newspaper.

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed the three gentlemen--and offered the three newspapers.

"What is it?" asked Julius.

"What is it?" repeated the waiter, in a hollow voice. "The most dreadful thing that's happened in my time. It's all up, Sir, with the great Foot-Race at Fulham. Tinkler has gone stale."

The three gentlemen dropped solemnly back into their three chairs, and repeated the dreadful intelligence, in chorus--"Tinkler has gone stale."

A man who stands face to face with a great national disaster, and who doesn't understand it, is a man who will do wisely to hold his tongue and enlighten his mind without asking other people to help him. Julius accepted the waiter's newspaper, and sat down to make (if possible) two discoveries: First, as to whether "Tinkler" did, or did not, mean a man. Second, as to what particular form of human affliction you implied when you described that man as "gone stale."

There was no difficulty in finding the news. It was printed in the largest type, and was followed by a personal statement of the facts, taken one way--

which was followed, in its turn, by another personal statement of the facts, taken in another way. More particulars, and further personal statements, were promised in later editions. The royal salute of British journalism thundered the announcement of Tinkler's staleness before a people prostrate on the national betting book.

Divested of exaggeration, the facts were few enough and simple enough. A famous Athletic Association of the North had challenged a famous Athletic Association of the South. The usual "Sports" were to take place--such as running, jumping, "putting" the hammer, throwing cricket-balls, and the like--and the whole was to wind up with a Foot-Race of unexampled length and difficulty in the annals of human achievement between the two best men on either side. "Tinkler" was the best man on the side of the South. "Tinkler" was backed in innumerable betting-books to win. And Tinkler's lungs had suddenly given way under stress of training! A prospect of witnessing a prodigious achievement in foot-racing, and (more important still) a prospect of winning and losing large sums of money, was suddenly withdrawn from the eyes of the British people. The "South" could produce no second opponent worthy of the North out of its own associated resources. Surveying the athletic world in general, but one man existed who might possibly replace "Tinkler"--and it was doubtful, in the last degree, whether he would consent to come forward under the circumstances. The name of that man--Julius read it with horror--was Geoffrey Delamayn.

Profound silence reigned in the coffee-room. Julius laid down the newspaper, and looked about him. The waiter was busy, in his corner, with a pencil and a betting-book. The three gentlemen were busy, at the three tables, with pencils and betting-books.

"Try and persuade him!" said the waiter, piteously, as Delamayn's brother rose to leave the room.

"Try and persuade him!" echoed the three gentlemen, as Delamayn's brother opened the door and went out.

Julius called a cab and told the driver (busy with a pencil and a betting-book) to go to the Cock and Bottle, Putney. The man brightened into a new being at the prospect. No need to hurry him; he drove, unasked, at the top of his horse's speed.

As the cab drew near to its destination the signs of a great national excitement appeared, and multiplied. The lips of a people pronounced, with a grand unanimity, the name of "Tinkler." The heart of a people hung

suspended (mostly in the public houses) on the chances for and against the possibility of replacing "Tinkler" by another man. The scene in front of the inn was impressive in the highest degree. Even the London blackguard stood awed and quiet in the presence of the national calamity. Even the irrepressible man with the apron, who always turns up to sell nuts and sweetmeats in a crowd, plied his trade in silence, and found few indeed (to the credit of the nation be it spoken) who had the heart to crack a nut at such a time as this. The police were on the spot, in large numbers, and in mute sympathy with the people, touching to see. Julius, on being stopped at the door, mentioned his name--and received an ovation. His brother! oh, heavens, his brother! The people closed round him, the people shook hands with him, the people invoked blessings on his head. Julius was half suffocated, when the police rescued him, and landed him safe in the privileged haven on the inner side of the public house door. A deafening tumult broke out, as he entered, from the regions above stairs. A distant voice screamed, "Mind yourselves!" A hatless shouting man tore down through the people congregated on the stairs. "Hooray! Hooray! He's promised to do it! He's entered for the race!" Hundreds on hundreds of voices took up the cry. A roar of cheering burst from the people outside. Reporters for the newspapers raced, in frantic procession, out of the inn, and rushed into cabs to put the news in print. The hand of the landlord, leading Julius carefully up stairs by the arm, trembled with excitement. "His brother, gentlemen! his brother!" At those magic words a lane was made through the throng. At those magic words the closed door of the council-chamber flew open; and Julius found himself among the Athletes of his native country, in full parliament assembled. Is any description of them needed? The description of Geoffrey applies to them all. The manhood and muscle of England resemble the wool and mutton of England, in this respect, that there is about as much variety in a flock of athletes as in a flock of sheep. Julius looked about him, and saw the same man in the same dress, with the same health, strength, tone, tastes, habits, conversation, and pursuits, repeated infinitely in every part of the room. The din was deafening; the enthusiasm (to an uninitiated stranger) something at once hideous and terrifying to behold. Geoffrey had been lifted bodily on to the table, in his chair, so as to be visible to the whole room. They sang round him, they danced round him, they cheered round him, they swore round him. He was hailed, in maudlin terms of endearment, by grateful giants with tears in their eyes. "Dear old man!" "Glorious, noble, splendid, beautiful fellow!" They hugged him. They patted him on the back. They wrung his hands. They prodded and punched his muscles. They embraced the noble legs that were going to run the unexampled race. At the opposite end of the room, where it was physically impossible to get near the hero, the enthusiasm vented itself in feats of strength and acts of destruction.

Hercules I. cleared a space with his elbows, and laid down--and Hercules II. took him up in his teeth. Hercules III. seized the poker from the fireplace, and broke it on his arm. Hercules IV. followed with the tongs, and shattered them on his neck. The smashing of the furniture and the pulling down of the house seemed likely to succeed--when Geoffrey's eye lighted by accident on Julius, and Geoffrey's voice, calling fiercely for his brother, hushed the wild assembly into sudden attention, and turned the fiery enthusiasm into a new course. Hooray for his brother! One, two, three--and up with his brother on our shoulders! Four five, six--and on with his brother, over our heads, to the other end of the room! See, boys--see! the hero has got him by the collar! the hero has lifted him on the table! The hero heated red-hot with his own triumph, welcomes the poor little snob cheerfully, with a volley of oaths. "Thunder and lightning! Explosion and blood! What's up now, Julius? What's up now?"

Julius recovered his breath, and arranged his coat. The quiet little man, who had just muscle enough to lift a dictionary from the shelf, and just training enough to play the fiddle, so far from being daunted by the rough reception accorded to him, appeared to feel no other sentiment in relation to it than a sentiment of unmitigated contempt.

"You're not frightened, are you?" said Geoffrey. "Our fellows are a roughish lot, but they mean well."

"I am not frightened," answered Julius. "I am only wondering--when the Schools and Universities of England turn out such a set of ruffians as these--how long the Schools and Universities of England will last."

"Mind what you are about, Julius! They'll cart you out of window if they hear you."

"They will only confirm my opinion of them, Geoffrey, if they do."

Here the assembly, seeing but not hearing the colloquy between the two brothers, became uneasy on the subject of the coming race. A roar of voices summoned Geoffrey to announce it, if there was any thing wrong. Having pacified the meeting, Geoffrey turned again to his brother, and asked him, in no amiable mood, what the devil he wanted there?

"I want to tell you something, before I go back to Scotland," answered Julius. "My father is willing to give you a last chance. If you don't take it, my doors are closed against you as well as his."



Nothing is more remarkable, in its way, than the sound common-sense and admirable self-restraint exhibited by the youth of the present time when confronted by an emergency in which their own interests are concerned. Instead of resenting the tone which his brother had taken with him, Geoffrey instantly descended from the pedestal of glory on which he stood, and placed himself without a struggle in the hands which vicariously held his destiny--otherwise, the hands which vicariously held the purse. In five minutes more the meeting had been dismissed, with all needful assurances relating to Geoffrey's share in the coming Sports--and the two brothers were closeted together in one of the private rooms of the inn.

"Out with it!" said Geoffrey. "And don't be long about it."

"I won't be five minutes," replied Julius. "I go back to-night by the mail-train; and I have a great deal to do in the mean time. Here it is, in plain words: My father consents to see you again, if you choose to settle in life--with his approval. And my mother has discovered where you may find a wife. Birth, beauty, and money are all offered to you. Take them--and you recover your position as Lord Holchester's son. Refuse them--and you go to ruin your own way."

Geoffrey's reception of the news from home was not of the most reassuring kind. Instead of answering he struck his fist furiously on the table, and cursed with all his heart some absent woman unnamed.

"I have nothing to do with any degrading connection which you may have formed," Julius went on. "I have only to put the matter before you exactly as it stands, and to leave you to decide for yourself. The lady in question was formerly Miss Newenden--a descendant of one of the oldest families in England. She is now Mrs. Glenarm--the young widow (and the childless widow) of the great iron-master of that name. Birth and fortune--she unites both. Her income is a clear ten thousand a year. My father can and will, make it fifteen thousand, if you are lucky enough to persuade her to marry you. My mother answers for her personal qualities. And my wife has met her at our house in London. She is now, as I hear, staying with some friends in Scotland; and when I get back I will take care that an invitation is sent to her to pay her next visit at my house. It remains, of course, to be seen whether you are fortunate enough to produce a favorable impression on her. In the mean time you will be doing every thing that my father can ask of you, if you make the attempt."

Geoffrey impatiently dismissed that part of the question from all consideration.

"If she don't cotton to a man who's going to run in the Great Race at Fulham," he said, "there are plenty as good as she is who will! That's not the difficulty. Bother that!"

"I tell you again, I have nothing to do with your difficulties," Julius resumed. "Take the rest of the day to consider what I have said to you. If you decide to accept the proposal, I shall expect you to prove you are in earnest by meeting me at the station to-night. We will travel back to Scotland together. You will complete your interrupted visit at Lady Lundie's (it is important, in my interests, that you should treat a person of her position in the county with all due respect); and my wife will make the necessary arrangements with Mrs. Glenarm, in anticipation of your return to our house. There is nothing more to be said, and no further necessity of my staying here. If you join me at the station to-night, your sister-in-law and I will do all we can to help you. If I travel back to Scotland alone, don't trouble yourself to follow--I have done with you." He shook hands with his brother, and went out.

Left alone, Geoffrey lit his pipe and sent for the landlord.

"Get me a boat. I shall scull myself up the river for an hour or two. And put in some towels. I may take a swim."

The landlord received the order--with a caution addressed to his illustrious guest.

"Don't show yourself in front of the house, Sir! If you let the people see you, they're in such a state of excitement, the police won't answer for keeping them in order."

"All right. I'll go out by the back way."

He took a turn up and down the room. What were the difficulties to be overcome before he could profit by the golden prospect which his brother had offered to him? The Sports? No! The committee had promised to defer the day, if he wished it--and a month's training, in his physical condition, would be amply enough for him. Had he any personal objection to trying his luck with Mrs. Glenarm? Not he! Any woman would do--provided his father was satisfied, and the money was all right. The obstacle which was really in his way was the obstacle of the woman whom he had ruined. Anne! The one insuperable difficulty was the difficulty of dealing with Anne.

"We'll see how it looks," he said to himself, "after a pull up the river!"

The landlord and the police inspector smuggled him out by the back way unknown to the expectant populace in front. The two men stood on the river-bank admiring him, as he pulled away from them, with his long, powerful, easy, beautiful stroke.

"That's what I call the pride and flower of England!" said the inspector. "Has the betting on him begun?"

"Six to four," said the landlord, "and no takers."

Julius went early to the station that night. His mother was very anxious. "Don't let Geoffrey find an excuse in your example," she said, "if he is late."

The first person whom Julius saw on getting out of the carriage was Geoffrey--with his ticket taken, and his portmanteau in charge of the guard.