Chapter XXXVI

"Tis strange to see the humors of these men, These great aspiring spirits, that should be wise: . . . . . For being the nature of great spirits to love To be where they may be most eminent; They, rating of themselves so farre above Us in conceit, with whom they do frequent, Imagine how we wonder and esteeme All that they do or say; which makes them strive To make our admiration more extreme, Which they suppose they cannot, 'less they give Notice of their extreme and highest thoughts. - DANIEL: Tragedy of Philotas.

Mr Vincy went home from the reading of the will with his point of view considerably changed in relation to many subjects. He was an open-minded man, but given to indirect modes of expressing himself: when he was disappointed in a market for his silk braids, he swore at the groom; when his brother-in-law Bulstrode had vexed him, he made cutting remarks on Methodism; and it was now apparent that he regarded Fred's idleness with a sudden increase of severity, by his throwing an embroidered cap out of the smoking-room on to the hall-floor.

'Well, sir,' he observed, when that young gentleman was moving off to bed, 'I hope you've made up your mind now to go up next term and pass your examination. I've taken my resolution, so I advise you to lose no time in taking yours.'

Fred made no answer: he was too utterly depressed. Twenty-four hours ago he had thought that instead of needing to know what he should do, he should by this time know that he needed to do nothing: that he should hunt in pink, have a first-rate hunter, ride to cover on a fine hack, and be generally respected for doing so; moreover, that he should be able at once to pay Mr Garth, and that Mary could no longer have any reason for not marrying him. And all this was to have come without study or other inconvenience, purely by the favor of providence in the shape of an old gentleman's caprice. But now, at the end of the twenty-four hours, all those firm expectations were upset. It was 'rather hard lines' that while he was smarting under this disappointment he should be treated as if he could have helped it. But he went away silently and his mother pleaded for him.

'Don't be hard on the poor boy, Vincy. He'll turn out well yet, though that wicked man has deceived him. I feel as sure as I sit here, Fred will turn out well - else why was he brought back from the brink of the grave? And I call it a robbery: it was like giving him the land, to promise it; and what is promising, if making everybody believe is not promising? And you see he did leave him ten thousand pounds, and then took it away again.'

‘Took it away again!’ said Mr Vincy, pettishly. ‘I tell you the lad's an unlucky lad, Lucy. And you've always spoiled him.’

‘Well, Vincy, he was my first, and you made a fine fuss with him when he came. You were as proud as proud,’ said Mrs Vincy, easily recovering her cheerful smile.

‘Who knows what babies will turn to? I was fool enough, I dare say,’ said the husband - more mildly, however.

‘But who has handsomer, better children than ours? Fred is far beyond other people's sons: you may hear it in his speech, that he has kept college company. And Rosamond - where is there a girl like her? She might stand beside any lady in the land, and only look the better for it. You see - Mr Lydgate has kept the highest company and been everywhere, and he fell in love with her at once. Not but what I could have wished Rosamond had not engaged herself. She might have met somebody on a visit who would have been a far better match; I mean at her schoolfellow Miss Willoughby's. There are relations in that family quite as high as Mr Lydgate's.’

‘Damn relations!’ said Mr Vincy; ‘I've had enough of them. I don't want a son-in-law who has got nothing but his relations to recommend him.’

‘Why, my dear,’ said Mrs Vincy, ‘you seemed as pleased as could be about it. It's true, I wasn't at home; but Rosamond told me you hadn't a word to say against the engagement. And she has begun to buy in the best linen and cambric for her underclothing.’

‘Not by my will,’ said Mr Vincy. ‘I shall have enough to do this year, with an idle scamp of a son, without paying for wedding-clothes. The times are as tight as can be; everybody is being ruined; and I don't believe Lydgate has got a farthing. I shan't give my consent to their marrying. Let 'em wait, as their elders have done before 'em.’

‘Rosamond will take it hard, Vincy, and you know you never could bear to cross her.’

‘Yes, I could. The sooner the engagement's off, the better. I don't believe he'll ever make an income, the way he goes on. He makes enemies; that's all I hear of his making.’

‘But he stands very high with Mr Bulstrode, my dear. The marriage would please *him*, I should think.’

‘Please the deuce!’ said Mr Vincy. ‘Bulstrode won't pay for their keep. And if Lydgate thinks I'm going to give money for them to set up

housekeeping, he's mistaken, that's all. I expect I shall have to put down my horses soon. You'd better tell Rosy what I say.'

This was a not infrequent procedure with Mr Vincy - to be rash in jovial assent, and on becoming subsequently conscious that he had been rash, to employ others in making the offensive retractation. However, Mrs Vincy, who never willingly opposed her husband, lost no time the next morning in letting Rosamond know what he had said. Rosamond, examining some muslin-work, listened in silence, and at the end gave a certain turn of her graceful neck, of which only long experience could teach you that it meant perfect obstinacy.

'What do you say, my dear?' said her mother, with affectionate deference.

'Papa does not mean anything of the kind,' said Rosamond, quite calmly. 'He has always said that he wished me to marry the man I loved. And I shall marry Mr Lydgate. It is seven weeks now since papa gave his consent. And I hope we shall have Mrs Bretton's house.'

'Well, my dear, I shall leave you to manage your papa. You always do manage everybody. But if we ever do go and get damask, Sadler's is the place - far better than Hopkins's. Mrs Bretton's is very large, though: I should love you to have such a house; but it will take a great deal of furniture - carpeting and everything, besides plate and glass. And you hear, your papa says he will give no money. Do you think Mr Lydgate expects it?'

'You cannot imagine that I should ask him, mamma. Of course he understands his own affairs.'

'But he may have been looking for money, my dear, and we all thought of your having a pretty legacy as well as Fred; - and now everything is so dreadful - there's no pleasure in thinking of anything, with that poor boy disappointed as he is.'

'That has nothing to do with my marriage, mamma. Fred must leave off being idle. I am going up-stairs to take this work to Miss Morgan: she does the open hemming very well. Mary Garth might do some work for me now, I should think. Her sewing is exquisite; it is the nicest thing I know about Mary. I should so like to have all my cambric frilling double-hemmed. And it takes a long time.'

Mrs Vincy's belief that Rosamond could manage her papa was well founded. Apart from his dinners and his coursing, Mr Vincy, blustering as he was, had as little of his own way as if he had been a prime minister: the force of circumstances was easily too much for him, as it is for most pleasure-loving florid men; and the circumstance

called Rosamond was particularly forcible by means of that mild persistence which, as we know, enables a white soft living substance to make its way in spite of opposing rock. Papa was not a rock: he had no other fixity than that fixity of alternating impulses sometimes called habit, and this was altogether unfavorable to his taking the only decisive line of conduct in relation to his daughter's engagement - namely, to inquire thoroughly into Lydgate's circumstances, declare his own inability to furnish money, and forbid alike either a speedy marriage or an engagement which must be too lengthy. That seems very simple and easy in the statement; but a disagreeable resolve formed in the chill hours of the morning had as many conditions against it as the early frost, and rarely persisted under the warming influences of the day. The indirect though emphatic expression of opinion to which Mr Vincy was prone suffered much restraint in this case: Lydgate was a proud man towards whom innuendoes were obviously unsafe, and throwing his hat on the floor was out of the question. Mr Vincy was a little in awe of him, a little vain that he wanted to marry Rosamond, a little indisposed to raise a question of money in which his own position was not advantageous, a little afraid of being worsted in dialogue with a man better educated and more highly bred than himself, and a little afraid of doing what his daughter would not like. The part Mr Vincy preferred playing was that of the generous host whom nobody criticises. In the earlier half of the day there was business to hinder any formal communication of an adverse resolve; in the later there was dinner, wine, whist, and general satisfaction. And in the mean while the hours were each leaving their little deposit and gradually forming the final reason for inaction, namely, that action was too late. The accepted lover spent most of his evenings in Lowick Gate, and a love-making not at all dependent on money-advances from fathers-in-law, or prospective income from a profession, went on flourishingly under Mr Vincy's own eyes. Young love-making - that gossamer web! Even the points it clings to - the things whence its subtle interlacings are swung - are scarcely perceptible: momentary touches of fingertips, meetings of rays from blue and dark orbs, unfinished phrases, lightest changes of cheek and lip, faintest tremors. The web itself is made of spontaneous beliefs and indefinable joys, yearnings of one life towards another, visions of completeness, indefinite trust. And Lydgate fell to spinning that web from his inward self with wonderful rapidity, in spite of experience supposed to be finished off with the drama of Laure - in spite too of medicine and biology; for the inspection of macerated muscle or of eyes presented in a dish (like Santa Lucia's), and other incidents of scientific inquiry, are observed to be less incompatible with poetic love than a native dulness or a lively addiction to the lowest prose. As for Rosamond, she was in the water-lily's expanding wonderment at its own fuller life, and she too was spinning industriously at the mutual web. All this went on in the corner of the drawing-room where the piano stood, and subtle as it was, the light made it a sort of rainbow

visible to many observers besides Mr Farebrother. The certainty that Miss Vincy and Mr Lydgate were engaged became general in Middlemarch without the aid of formal announcement.

Aunt Bulstrode was again stirred to anxiety; but this time she addressed herself to her brother, going to the warehouse expressly to avoid Mrs Vincy's volatility. His replies were not satisfactory.

'Walter, you never mean to tell me that you have allowed all this to go on without inquiry into Mr Lydgate's prospects?' said Mrs Bulstrode, opening her eyes with wider gravity at her brother, who was in his peevish warehouse humor. 'Think of this girl brought up in luxury - in too worldly a way, I am sorry to say - what will she do on a small income?'

'Oh, confound it, Harriet! What can I do when men come into the town without any asking of mine? Did you shut your house up against Lydgate? Bulstrode has pushed him forward more than anybody. I never made any fuss about the young fellow. You should go and talk to your husband about it, not me.' 'Well, really, Walter, how can Mr Bulstrode be to blame? I am sure he did not wish for the engagement.'

'Oh, if Bulstrode had not taken him by the hand, I should never have invited him.'

'But you called him in to attend on Fred, and I am sure that was a mercy,' said Mrs Bulstrode, losing her clew in the intricacies of the subject.

'I don't know about mercy,' said Mr Vincy, testily. 'I know I am worried more than I like with my family. I was a good brother to you, Harriet, before you married Bulstrode, and I must say he doesn't always show that friendly spirit towards your family that might have been expected of him.' Mr Vincy was very little like a Jesuit, but no accomplished Jesuit could have turned a question more adroitly. Harriet had to defend her husband instead of blaming her brother, and the conversation ended at a point as far from the beginning as some recent sparring between the brothers-in-law at a vestry meeting.

Mrs Bulstrode did not repeat her brother's complaints to her husband, but in the evening she spoke to him of Lydgate and Rosamond. He did not share her warm interest, however; and only spoke with resignation of the risks attendant on the beginning of medical practice and the desirability of prudence. 'I am sure we are bound to pray for that thoughtless girl - brought up as she has been,' said Mrs Bulstrode, wishing to rouse her husband's feelings.

'Truly, my dear,' said Mr Bulstrode, assentingly. 'Those who are not of this world can do little else to arrest the errors of the obstinately worldly. That is what we must accustom ourselves to recognize with regard to your brother's family. I could have wished that Mr Lydgate had not entered into such a union; but my relations with him are limited to that use of his gifts for God's purposes which is taught us by the divine government under each dispensation.'

Mrs Bulstrode said no more, attributing some dissatisfaction which she felt to her own want of spirituality. She believed that her husband was one of those men whose memoirs should be written when they died.

As to Lydgate himself, having been accepted, he was prepared to accept all the consequences which he believed himself to foresee with perfect clearness. Of course he must be married in a year - perhaps even in half a year. This was not what he had intended; but other schemes would not be hindered: they would simply adjust themselves anew. Marriage, of course, must be prepared for in the usual way. A house must be taken instead of the rooms he at present occupied; and Lydgate, having heard Rosamond speak with admiration of old Mrs Bretton's house (situated in Lowick Gate), took notice when it fell vacant after the old lady's death, and immediately entered into treaty for it.

He did this in an episodic way, very much as he gave orders to his tailor for every requisite of perfect dress, without any notion of being extravagant. On the contrary, he would have despised any ostentation of expense; his profession had familiarized him with all grades of poverty, and he cared much for those who suffered hardships. He would have behaved perfectly at a table where the sauce was served in a jug with the handle off, and he would have remembered nothing about a grand dinner except that a man was there who talked well. But it had never occurred to him that he should live in any other than what he would have called an ordinary way, with green glasses for hock, and excellent waiting at table. In warming himself at French social theories he had brought away no smell of scorching. We may handle even extreme opinions with impunity while our furniture, our dinner-giving, and preference for armorial bearings in our own case, link us indissolubly with the established order. And Lydgate's tendency was not towards extreme opinions: he would have liked no barefooted doctrines, being particular about his boots: he was no radical in relation to anything but medical reform and the prosecution of discovery. In the rest of practical life he walked by hereditary habit; half from that personal pride and unreflecting egoism which I have already called commonness, and half from that naivete which belonged to preoccupation with favorite ideas.

Any inward debate Lydgate had as to the consequences of this engagement which had stolen upon him, turned on the paucity of time rather than of money. Certainly, being in love and being expected continually by some one who always turned out to be prettier than memory could represent her to be, did interfere with the diligent use of spare hours which might serve some 'plodding fellow of a German' to make the great, imminent discovery. This was really an argument for not deferring the marriage too long, as he implied to Mr Farebrother, one day that the Vicar came to his room with some pond-products which he wanted to examine under a better microscope than his own, and, finding Lydgate's tableful of apparatus and specimens in confusion, said sarcastically -

'Eros has degenerated; he began by introducing order and harmony, and now he brings back chaos.'

'Yes, at some stages,' said Lydgate, lifting his brows and smiling, while he began to arrange his microscope. 'But a better order will begin after.'

'Soon?' said the Vicar.

'I hope so, really. This unsettled state of affairs uses up the time, and when one has notions in science, every moment is an opportunity. I feel sure that marriage must be the best thing for a man who wants to work steadily. He has everything at home then - no teasing with personal speculations - he can get calmness and freedom.'

'You are an enviable dog,' said the Vicar, 'to have such a prospect - Rosamond, calmness and freedom, all to your share. Here am I with nothing but my pipe and pond-animalcules. Now, are you ready?'

Lydgate did not mention to the Vicar another reason he had for wishing to shorten the period of courtship. It was rather irritating to him, even with the wine of love in his veins, to be obliged to mingle so often with the family party at the Vincys', and to enter so much into Middlemarch gossip, protracted good cheer, whist-playing, and general futility. He had to be deferential when Mr Vincy decided questions with trenchant ignorance, especially as to those liquors which were the best inward pickle, preserving you from the effects of bad air. Mrs Vincy's openness and simplicity were quite unstreaked with suspicion as to the subtle offence she might give to the taste of her intended son-in-law; and altogether Lydgate had to confess to himself that he was descending a little in relation to Rosamond's family. But that exquisite creature herself suffered in the same sort of way: - it was at least one delightful thought that in marrying her, he could give her a much-needed transplantation.

‘Dear!’ he said to her one evening, in his gentlest tone, as he sat down by her and looked closely at her face -

But I must first say that he had found her alone in the drawing-room, where the great old-fashioned window, almost as large as the side of the room, was opened to the summer scents of the garden at the back of the house. Her father and mother were gone to a party, and the rest were all out with the butterflies.

‘Dear! your eyelids are red.’

‘Are they?’ said Rosamond. ‘I wonder why.’ It was not in her nature to pour forth wishes or grievances. They only came forth gracefully on solicitation.

‘As if you could hide it from me!’? said Lydgate, laying his hand tenderly on both of hers. ‘Don't I see a tiny drop on one of the lashes? Things trouble you, and you don't tell me. That is unloving.’

‘Why should I tell you what you cannot alter? They are every-day things: - perhaps they have been a little worse lately.’

‘Family annoyances. Don't fear speaking. I guess them.’

‘Papa has been more irritable lately. Fred makes him angry, and this morning there was a fresh quarrel because Fred threatens to throw his whole education away, and do something quite beneath him. And besides - ‘

Rosamond hesitated, and her cheeks were gathering a slight flush. Lydgate had never seen her in trouble since the morning of their engagement, and he had never felt so passionately towards her as at this moment. He kissed the hesitating lips gently, as if to encourage them.

‘I feel that papa is not quite pleased about our engagement,’ Rosamond continued, almost in a whisper; ‘and he said last night that he should certainly speak to you and say it must be given up.’

‘Will you give it up?’ said Lydgate, with quick energy - almost angrily.

‘I never give up anything that I choose to do,’ said Rosamond, recovering her calmness at the touching of this chord.

‘God bless you!’ said Lydgate, kissing her again. This constancy of purpose in the right place was adorable. He went on: -

‘It is too late now for your father to say that our engagement must be given up. You are of age, and I claim you as mine. If anything is done to make you unhappy, - that is a reason for hastening our marriage.’

An unmistakable delight shone forth from the blue eyes that met his, and the radiance seemed to light up all his future with mild sunshine. Ideal happiness (of the kind known in the Arabian Nights, in which you are invited to step from the labor and discord of the street into a paradise where everything is given to you and nothing claimed) seemed to be an affair of a few weeks' waiting, more or less.

‘Why should we defer it?’ he said, with ardent insistence. ‘I have taken the house now: everything else can soon be got ready - can it not? You will not mind about new clothes. Those can be bought afterwards.’

‘What original notions you clever men have!’ said Rosamond, dimpling with more thorough laughter than usual at this humorous incongruity. ‘This is the first time I ever heard of wedding-clothes being bought after marriage.’

‘But you don't mean to say you would insist on my waiting months for the sake of clothes?’ said Lydgate, half thinking that Rosamond was tormenting him prettily, and half fearing that she really shrank from speedy marriage. ‘Remember, we are looking forward to a better sort of happiness even than this - being continually together, independent of others, and ordering our lives as we will. Come, dear, tell me how soon you can be altogether mine.’

There was a serious pleading in Lydgate's tone, as if he felt that she would be injuring him by any fantastic delays. Rosamond became serious too, and slightly meditative; in fact, she was going through many intricacies of lace-edging and hosiery and petticoat-tucking, in order to give an answer that would at least be approximative.

‘Six weeks would be ample - say so, Rosamond,’ insisted Lydgate, releasing her hands to put his arm gently round her.

One little hand immediately went to pat her hair, while she gave her neck a meditative turn, and then said seriously -

‘There would be the house-linen and the furniture to be prepared. Still, mamma could see to those while we were away.’

‘Yes, to be sure. We must be away a week or so.’

‘Oh, more than that!’ said Rosamond, earnestly. She was thinking of her evening dresses for the visit to Sir Godwin Lydgate's, which she

had long been secretly hoping for as a delightful employment of at least one quarter of the honeymoon, even if she deferred her introduction to the uncle who was a doctor of divinity (also a pleasing though sober kind of rank, when sustained by blood). She looked at her lover with some wondering remonstrance as she spoke, and he readily understood that she might wish to lengthen the sweet time of double solitude.

'Whatever you wish, my darling, when the day is fixed. But let us take a decided course, and put an end to any discomfort you may be suffering. Six weeks! - I am sure they would be ample.'

'I could certainly hasten the work,' said Rosamond. 'Will you, then, mention it to papa? - I think it would be better to write to him.' She blushed and looked at him as the garden flowers look at us when we walk forth happily among them in the transcendent evening light: is there not a soul beyond utterance, half nymph, half child, in those delicate petals which glow and breathe about the centres of deep color?

He touched her ear and a little bit of neck under it with his lips, and they sat quite still for many minutes which flowed by them like a small gurgling brook with the kisses of the sun upon it. Rosamond thought that no one could be more in love than she was; and Lydgate thought that after all his wild mistakes and absurd credulity, he had found perfect womanhood - felt as if already breathed upon by exquisite wedded affection such as would be bestowed by an accomplished creature who venerated his high musings and momentous labors and would never interfere with them; who would create order in the home and accounts with still magic, yet keep her fingers ready to touch the lute and transform life into romance at any moment; who was instructed to the true womanly limit and not a hair's- breadth beyond - docile, therefore, and ready to carry out behests which came from that limit. It was plainer now than ever that his notion of remaining much longer a bachelor had been a mistake: marriage would not be an obstruction but a furtherance. And happening the next day to accompany a patient to Brassing, he saw a dinner-service there which struck him as so exactly the right thing that he bought it at once. It saved time to do these things just when you thought of them, and Lydgate hated ugly crockery. The dinner-service in question was expensive, but that might be in the nature of dinner-services. Furnishing was necessarily expensive; but then it had to be done only once.

'It must be lovely,' said Mrs Vincy, when Lydgate mentioned his purchase with some descriptive touches. 'Just what Rosy ought to have. I trust in heaven it won't be broken!'

‘One must hire servants who will not break things,’ said Lydgate. (Certainly, this was reasoning with an imperfect vision of sequences. But at that period there was no sort of reasoning which was not more or less sanctioned by men of science.)

Of course it was unnecessary to defer the mention of anything to mamma, who did not readily take views that were not cheerful, and being a happy wife herself, had hardly any feeling but pride in her daughter's marriage. But Rosamond had good reasons for suggesting to Lydgate that papa should be appealed to in writing. She prepared for the arrival of the letter by walking with her papa to the warehouse the next morning, and telling him on the way that Mr Lydgate wished to be married soon.

‘Nonsense, my dear!’ said Mr Vincy. ‘What has he got to marry on? You'd much better give up the engagement. I've told you so pretty plainly before this. What have you had such an education for, if you are to go and marry a poor man? It's a cruel thing for a father to see.’

‘Mr Lydgate is not poor, papa. He bought Mr Peacock's practice, which, they say, is worth eight or nine hundred a-year.’

‘Stuff and nonsense! What's buying a practice? He might as well buy next year's swallows. It'll all slip through his fingers.’

‘On the contrary, papa, he will increase the practice. See how he has been called in by the Chettams and Casaubons.’

‘I hope he knows I shan't give anything - with this disappointment about Fred, and Parliament going to be dissolved, and machine-breaking everywhere, and an election coming on - ‘

‘Dear papa! what can that have to do with my marriage?’

‘A pretty deal to do with it! We may all be ruined for what I know - the country's in that state! Some say it's the end of the world, and be hanged if I don't think it looks like it! Anyhow, it's not a time for me to be drawing money out of my business, and I should wish Lydgate to know that.’

‘I am sure he expects nothing, papa. And he has such very high connections: he is sure to rise in one way or another. He is engaged in making scientific discoveries.’

Mr Vincy was silent.

‘I cannot give up my only prospect of happiness, papa Mr Lydgate is a gentleman. I could never love any one who was not a perfect

gentleman. You would not like me to go into a consumption, as Arabella Hawley did. And you know that I never change my mind.'

Again papa was silent.

'Promise me, papa, that you will consent to what we wish. We shall never give each other up; and you know that you have always objected to long courtships and late marriages.'

There was a little more urgency of this kind, till Mr Vincy said, 'Well, well, child, he must write to me first before I can answer him,' - and Rosamond was certain that she had gained her point.

Mr Vincy's answer consisted chiefly in a demand that Lydgate should insure his life - a demand immediately conceded. This was a delightfully reassuring idea supposing that Lydgate died, but in the mean time not a self-supporting idea. However, it seemed to make everything comfortable about Rosamond's marriage; and the necessary purchases went on with much spirit. Not without prudential considerations, however. A bride (who is going to visit at a baronet's) must have a few first-rate pocket-handkerchiefs; but beyond the absolutely necessary half-dozen, Rosamond contented herself without the very highest style of embroidery and Valenciennes. Lydgate also, finding that his sum of eight hundred pounds had been considerably reduced since he had come to Middlemarch, restrained his inclination for some plate of an old pattern which was shown to him when he went into Kibble's establishment at Brassing to buy forks and spoons. He was too proud to act as if he presupposed that Mr Vincy would advance money to provide furniture-; and though, since it would not be necessary to pay for everything at once, some bills would be left standing over, he did not waste time in conjecturing how much his father-in-law would give in the form of dowry, to make payment easy. He was not going to do anything extravagant, but the requisite things must be bought, and it would be bad economy to buy them of a poor quality. All these matters were by the bye. Lydgate foresaw that science and his profession were the objects he should alone pursue enthusiastically; but he could not imagine himself pursuing them in such a home as Wrench had - the doors all open, the oil-cloth worn, the children in soiled pinafores, and lunch lingering in the form of bones, black-handled knives, and willow-pattern. But Wrench had a wretched lymphatic wife who made a mummy of herself indoors in a large shawl; and he must have altogether begun with an ill-chosen domestic apparatus.

Rosamond, however, was on her side much occupied with conjectures, though her quick imitative perception warned her against betraying them too crudely.

'I shall like so much to know your family,' she said one day, when the wedding journey was being discussed. 'We might perhaps take a direction that would allow us to see them as we returned. Which of your uncles do you like best?'

'Oh, - my uncle Godwin, I think. He is a good-natured old fellow.'

'You were constantly at his house at Quallingham, when you were a boy, were you not? I should so like to see the old spot and everything you were used to. Does he know you are going to be married?'

'No,' said Lydgate, carelessly, turning in his chair and rubbing his hair up.

'Do send him word of it, you naughty undutiful nephew. He will perhaps ask you to take me to Quallingham; and then you could show me about the grounds, and I could imagine you there when you were a boy. Remember, you see me in my home, just as it has been since I was a child. It is not fair that I should be so ignorant of yours. But perhaps you would be a little ashamed of me. I forgot that.'

Lydgate smiled at her tenderly, and really accepted the suggestion that the proud pleasure of showing so charming a bride was worth some trouble. And now he came to think of it, he would like to see the old spots with Rosamond.

'I will write to him, then. But my cousins are bores.'

It seemed magnificent to Rosamond to be able to speak so slightingly of a baronet's family, and she felt much contentment in the prospect of being able to estimate them contemptuously on her own account.

But mamma was near spoiling all, a day or two later, by saying -

'I hope your uncle Sir Godwin will not look down on Rosy, Mr Lydgate. I should think he would do something handsome. A thousand or two can be nothing to a baronet.'

'Mamma!' said Rosamond, blushing deeply; and Lydgate pitied her so much that he remained silent and went to the other end of the room to examine a print curiously, as if he had been absent-minded. Mamma had a little filial lecture afterwards, and was docile as usual. But Rosamond reflected that if any of those high-bred cousins who were bores, should be induced to visit Middlemarch, they would see many things in her own family which might shock them. Hence it seemed desirable that Lydgate should by-and-by get some first-rate position elsewhere than in Middlemarch; and this could hardly be difficult in the case of a man who had a titled uncle and could make

discoveries. Lydgate, you perceive, had talked fervidly to Rosamond of his hopes as to the highest uses of his life, and had found it delightful to be listened to by a creature who would bring him the sweet furtherance of satisfying affection - beauty - repose - such help as our thoughts get from the summer sky and the flower-fringed meadows.

Lydgate relied much on the psychological difference between what for the sake of variety I will call goose and gander: especially on the innate submissiveness of the goose as beautifully corresponding to the strength of the gander.