

Chapter LI

Party is Nature too, and you shall see By force of Logic how they both agree: The Many in the One, the One in Many; All is not Some, nor Some the same as Any: Genus holds species, both are great or small; One genus highest, one not high at all; Each species has its differentia too, This is not That, and He was never You, Though this and that are AYES, and you and he Are like as one to one, or three to three.

No gossip about Mr Casaubon's will had yet reached Ladislaw: the air seemed to be filled with the dissolution of Parliament and the coming election, as the old wakes and fairs were filled with the rival clatter of itinerant shows; and more private noises were taken little notice of. The famous 'dry election' was at hand, in which the depths of public feeling might be measured by the low flood-mark of drink. Will Ladislaw was one of the busiest at this time; and though Dorothea's widowhood was continually in his thought, he was so far from wishing to be spoken to on the subject, that when Lydgate sought him out to tell him what had passed about the Lowick living, he answered rather waspishly -

'Why should you bring me into the matter? I never see Mrs Casaubon, and am not likely to see her, since she is at Freshitt. I never go there. It is Tory ground, where I and the 'Pioneer' are no more welcome than a poacher and his gun.'

The fact was that Will had been made the more susceptible by observing that Mr Brooke, instead of wishing him, as before, to come to the Grange oftener than was quite agreeable to himself, seemed now to contrive that he should go there as little as possible. This was a shuffling concession of Mr Brooke's to Sir James Chettam's indignant remonstrance; and Will, awake to the slightest hint in this direction, concluded that he was to be kept away from the Grange on Dorothea's account. Her friends, then, regarded him with some suspicion? Their fears were quite superfluous: they were very much mistaken if they imagined that he would put himself forward as a needy adventurer trying to win the favor of a rich woman.

Until now Will had never fully seen the chasm between himself and Dorothea - until now that he was come to the brink of it, and saw her on the other side. He began, not without some inward rage, to think of going away from the neighborhood: it would be impossible for him to show any further interest in Dorothea without subjecting himself to disagreeable imputations - perhaps even in her mind, which others might try to poison.

'We are forever divided,' said Will. 'I might as well be at Rome; she would be no farther from me.' But what we call our despair is often

only the painful eagerness of unfed hope. There were plenty of reasons why he should not go - public reasons why he should not quit his post at this crisis, leaving Mr Brooke in the lurch when he needed 'coaching' for the election, and when there was so much canvassing, direct and indirect, to be carried on. Will could not like to leave his own chessmen in the heat of a game; and any candidate on the right side, even if his brain and marrow had been as soft as was consistent with a gentlemanly bearing, might help to turn a majority. To coach Mr Brooke and keep him steadily to the idea that he must pledge himself to vote for the actual Reform Bill, instead of insisting on his independence and power of pulling up in time, was not an easy task. Mr Farebrother's prophecy of a fourth candidate 'in the bag' had not yet been fulfilled, neither the Parliamentary Candidate Society nor any other power on the watch to secure a reforming majority seeing a worthy nodus for interference while there was a second reforming candidate like Mr Brooke, who might be returned at his own expense; and the fight lay entirely between Pinkerton the old Tory member, Bagster the new Whig member returned at the last election, and Brooke the future independent member, who was to fetter himself for this occasion only. Mr Hawley and his party would bend all their forces to the return of Pinkerton, and Mr Brooke's success must depend either on plumpers which would leave Bagster in the rear, or on the new minting of Tory votes into reforming votes. The latter means, of course, would be preferable.

This prospect of converting votes was a dangerous distraction to Mr Brooke: his impression that waverers were likely to be allured by wavering statements, and also the liability of his mind to stick afresh at opposing arguments as they turned up in his memory, gave Will Ladislaw much trouble.

'You know there are tactics in these things,' said Mr Brooke; 'meeting people half-way - tempering your ideas - saying, 'Well now, there's something in that,' and so on. I agree with you that this is a peculiar occasion - the country with a will of its own - political unions - that sort of thing - but we sometimes cut with rather too sharp a knife, Ladislaw. These ten-pound householders, now: why ten? Draw the line somewhere - yes: but why just at ten? That's a difficult question, now, if you go into it.'

'Of course it is,' said Will, impatiently. 'But if you are to wait till we get a logical Bill, you must put yourself forward as a revolutionist, and then Middlemarch would not elect you, I fancy. As for trimming, this is not a time for trimming.'

Mr Brooke always ended by agreeing with Ladislaw, who still appeared to him a sort of Burke with a leaven of Shelley; but after an interval the wisdom of his own methods reasserted itself, and he was again

drawn into using them with much hopefulness. At this stage of affairs he was in excellent spirits, which even supported him under large advances of money; for his powers of convincing and persuading had not yet been, tested by anything more difficult than a chairman's speech introducing other orators, or a dialogue with a Middlemarch voter, from which he came away with a sense that he was a tactician by nature, and that it was a pity he had not gone earlier into this kind of thing. He was a little conscious of defeat, however, with Mr Mawmsey, a chief representative in Middlemarch of that great social power, the retail trader, and naturally one of the most doubtful voters in the borough - willing for his own part to supply an equal quality of teas and sugars to reformer and anti-reformer, as well as to agree impartially with both, and feeling like the burgesses of old that this necessity of electing members was a great burthen to a town; for even if there were no danger in holding out hopes to all parties beforehand, there would be the painful necessity at last of disappointing respectable people whose names were on his books. He was accustomed to receive large orders from Mr Brooke of Tipton; but then, there were many of Pinkerton's committee whose opinions had a great weight of grocery on their side. Mr Mawmsey thinking that Mr Brooke, as not too 'clever in his intellects,' was the more likely to forgive a grocer who gave a hostile vote under pressure, had become confidential in his back parlor.

'As to Reform, sir, put it in a family light,' he said, rattling the small silver in his pocket, and smiling affably. 'Will it support Mrs Mawmsey, and enable her to bring up six children when I am no more? I put the question *fictiously*, knowing what must be the answer. Very well, sir. I ask you what, as a husband and a father, I am to do when gentlemen come to me and say, 'Do as you like, Mawmsey; but if you vote against us, I shall get my groceries elsewhere: when I sugar my liquor I like to feel that I am benefiting the country by maintaining tradesmen of the right color.' Those very words have been spoken to me, sir, in the very chair where you are now sitting. I don't mean by your honorable self, Mr Brooke.'

'No, no, no - that's narrow, you know. Until my butler complains to me of your goods, Mr Mawmsey,' said Mr Brooke, soothingly, 'until I hear that you send bad sugars, spices - that sort of thing - I shall never order him to go elsewhere.'

'Sir, I am your humble servant, and greatly obliged,' said Mr Mawmsey, feeling that politics were clearing up a little. 'There would be some pleasure in voting for a gentleman who speaks in that honorable manner.'

'Well, you know, Mr Mawmsey, you would find it the right thing to put yourself on our side. This Reform will touch everybody by-and-by - a

thoroughly popular measure - a sort of A, B, C, you know, that must come first before the rest can follow. I quite agree with you that you've got to look at the thing in a family light: but public spirit, now. We're all one family, you know - it's all one cupboard. Such a thing as a vote, now: why, it may help to make men's fortunes at the Cape - there's no knowing what may be the effect of a vote,' Mr Brooke ended, with a sense of being a little out at sea, though finding it still enjoyable. But Mr Mawmsey answered in a tone of decisive check.

'I beg your pardon, sir, but I can't afford that. When I give a vote I must know what I am doing; I must look to what will be the effects on my till and ledger, speaking respectfully. Prices, I'll admit, are what nobody can know the merits of; and the sudden falls after you've bought in currants, which are a goods that will not keep - I've never; myself seen into the ins and outs there; which is a rebuke to human pride. But as to one family, there's debtor and creditor, I hope; they're not going to reform that away; else I should vote for things staying as they are. Few men have less need to cry for change than I have, personally speaking - that is, for self and family. I am not one of those who have nothing to lose: I mean as to respectability both in parish and private business, and noways in respect of your honorable self and custom, which you was good enough to say you would not withdraw from me, vote or no vote, while the article sent in was satisfactory.'

After this conversation Mr Mawmsey went up and boasted to his wife that he had been rather too many for Brooke of Tipton, and that he didn't mind so much now about going to the poll.

Mr Brooke on this occasion abstained from boasting of his tactics to Ladislaw, who for his part was glad enough to persuade himself that he had no concern with any canvassing except the purely argumentative sort, and that he worked no meaner engine than knowledge. Mr Brooke, necessarily, had his agents, who understood the nature of the Middlemarch voter and the means of enlisting his ignorance on the side of the Bill - which were remarkably similar to the means of enlisting it on the side against the Bill. Will stopped his ears. Occasionally Parliament, like the rest of our lives, even to our eating and apparel, could hardly go on if our imaginations were too active about processes. There were plenty of dirty-handed men in the world to do dirty business; and Will protested to himself that his share in bringing Mr Brooke through would be quite innocent.

But whether he should succeed in that mode of contributing to the majority on the right side was very doubtful to him. He had written out various speeches and memoranda for speeches, but he had begun to perceive that Mr Brooke's mind, if it had the burthen of remembering any train of thought, would let it drop, run away in

search of it, and not easily come back again. To collect documents is one mode of serving your country, and to remember the contents of a document is another. No! the only way in which Mr Brooke could be coerced into thinking of the right arguments at the right time was to be well plied with them till they took up all the room in his brain. But here there was the difficulty of finding room, so many things having been taken in beforehand. Mr Brooke himself observed that his ideas stood rather in his way when he was speaking.

However, Ladislaw's coaching was forthwith to be put to the test, for before the day of nomination Mr Brooke was to explain himself to the worthy electors of Middlemarch from the balcony of the White Hart, which looked out advantageously at an angle of the market-place, commanding a large area in front and two converging streets. It was a fine May morning, and everything seemed hopeful: there was some prospect of an understanding between Bagster's committee and Brooke's, to which Mr Bulstrode, Mr Standish as a Liberal lawyer, and such manufacturers as Mr Plymdale and Mr Vincy, gave a solidity which almost counterbalanced Mr Hawley and his associates who sat for Pinkerton at the Green Dragon. Mr Brooke, conscious of having weakened the blasts of the 'Trumpet' against him, by his reforms as a landlord in the last half year, and hearing himself cheered a little as he drove into the town, felt his heart tolerably light under his buff-colored waistcoat. But with regard to critical occasions, it often happens that all moments seem comfortably remote until the last.

'This looks well, eh?' said Mr Brooke as the crowd gathered. 'I shall have a good audience, at any rate. I like this, now - this kind of public made up of one's own neighbors, you know.'

The weavers and tanners of Middlemarch, unlike Mr Mawmsey, had never thought of Mr Brooke as a neighbor, and were not more attached to him than if he had been sent in a box from London. But they listened without much disturbance to the speakers who introduced the candidate, one of them - a political personage from Brassing, who came to tell Middlemarch its duty - spoke so fully, that it was alarming to think what the candidate could find to say after him. Meanwhile the crowd became denser, and as the political personage neared the end of his speech, Mr Brooke felt a remarkable change in his sensations while he still handled his eye-glass, trifled with documents before him, and exchanged remarks with his committee, as a man to whom the moment of summons was indifferent.

'I'll take another glass of sherry, Ladislaw,' he said, with an easy air, to Will, who was close behind him, and presently handed him the supposed fortifier. It was ill-chosen; for Mr Brooke was an abstemious man, and to drink a second glass of sherry quickly at no great interval

from the first was a surprise to his system which tended to scatter his energies instead of collecting them. Pray pity him: so many English gentlemen make themselves miserable by speechifying on entirely private grounds! whereas Mr Brooke wished to serve his country by standing for Parliament - which, indeed, may also be done on private grounds, but being once undertaken does absolutely demand some speechifying.

It was not about the beginning of his speech that Mr Brooke was at all anxious; this, he felt sure, would be all right; he should have it quite pat, cut out as neatly as a set of couplets from Pope. Embarking would be easy, but the vision of open sea that might come after was alarming. 'And questions, now,' hinted the demon just waking up in his stomach, 'somebody may put questions about the schedules. - Ladislaw,' he continued, aloud, 'just hand me the memorandum of the schedules.'

When Mr Brooke presented himself on the balcony, the cheers were quite loud enough to counterbalance the yells, groans, brayings, and other expressions of adverse theory, which were so moderate that Mr Standish (decidedly an old bird) observed in the ear next to him, 'This looks dangerous, by God! Hawley has got some deeper plan than this.' Still, the cheers were exhilarating, and no candidate could look more amiable than Mr Brooke, with the memorandum in his breast-pocket, his left hand on the rail of the balcony, and his right trifling with his eye-glass. The striking points in his appearance were his buff waistcoat, short-clipped blond hair, and neutral physiognomy. He began with some confidence.

'Gentlemen - Electors of Middlemarch!'

This was so much the right thing that a little pause after it seemed natural.

'I'm uncommonly glad to be here - I was never so proud and happy in my life - never so happy, you know.'

This was a bold figure of speech, but not exactly the right thing; for, unhappily, the pat opening had slipped away - even couplets from Pope may be but 'fallings from us, vanishings,' when fear clutches us, and a glass of sherry is hurrying like smoke among our ideas. Ladislaw, who stood at the window behind the speaker, thought, 'it's all up now. The only chance is that, since the best thing won't always do, floundering may answer for once.' Mr Brooke, meanwhile, having lost other clues, fell back on himself and his qualifications - always an appropriate graceful subject for a candidate.

'I am a close neighbor of yours, my good friends - you've known me on the bench a good while - I've always gone a good deal into public questions - machinery, now, and machine-breaking - you're many of you concerned with machinery, and I've been going into that lately. It won't do, you know, breaking machines: everything must go on - trade, manufactures, commerce, interchange of staples - that kind of thing - since Adam Smith, that must go on. We must look all over the globe: - 'Observation with extensive view,' must look everywhere, 'from China to Peru,' as somebody says - Johnson, I think, 'The Rambler,' you know. That is what I have done up to a certain point - not as far as Peru; but I've not always stayed at home - I saw it wouldn't do. I've been in the Levant, where some of your Middlemarch goods go - and then, again, in the Baltic. The Baltic, now.'

Plying among his recollections in this way, Mr Brooke might have got along, easily to himself, and would have come back from the remotest seas without trouble; but a diabolical procedure had been set up by the enemy. At one and the same moment there had risen above the shoulders of the crowd, nearly opposite Mr Brooke, and within ten yards of him, the effigy of himself: buff-colored waistcoat, eye-glass, and neutral physiognomy, painted on rag; and there had arisen, apparently in the air, like the note of the cuckoo, a parrot-like, Punch-voiced echo of his words. Everybody looked up at the open windows in the houses at the opposite angles of the converging streets; but they were either blank, or filled by laughing listeners. The most innocent echo has an impish mockery in it when it follows a gravely persistent speaker, and this echo was not at all innocent; if it did not follow with the precision of a natural echo, it had a wicked choice of the words it overtook. By the time it said, 'The Baltic, now,' the laugh which had been running through the audience became a general shout, and but for the sobering effects of party and that great public cause which the entanglement of things had identified with 'Brooke of Tipton,' the laugh might have caught his committee. Mr Bulstrode asked, reprehensively, what the new police was doing; but a voice could not well be collared, and an attack on the effigy of the candidate would have been too equivocal, since Hawley probably meant it to be pelted.

Mr Brooke himself was not in a position to be quickly conscious of anything except a general slipping away of ideas within himself: he had even a little singing in the ears, and he was the only person who had not yet taken distinct account of the echo or discerned the image of himself. Few things hold the perceptions more thoroughly captive than anxiety about what we have got to say. Mr Brooke heard the laughter; but he had expected some Tory efforts at disturbance, and he was at this moment additionally excited by the tickling, stinging sense that his lost exordium was coming back to fetch him from the Baltic.

'That reminds me,' he went on, thrusting a hand into his side-pocket, with an easy air, 'if I wanted a precedent, you know - but we never want a precedent for the right thing - but there is Chatham, now; I can't say I should have supported Chatham, or Pitt, the younger Pitt - he was not a man of ideas, and we want ideas, you know.'

'Blast your ideas! we want the Bill,' said a loud rough voice from the crowd below.

Immediately the invisible Punch, who had hitherto followed Mr Brooke, repeated, 'Blast your ideas! we want the Bill.' The laugh was louder than ever, and for the first time Mr Brooke being himself silent, heard distinctly the mocking echo. But it seemed to ridicule his interrupter, and in that light was encouraging; so he replied with amenity -

'There is something in what you say, my good friend, and what do we meet for but to speak our minds - freedom of opinion, freedom of the press, liberty - that kind of thing? The Bill, now - you shall have the Bill' - here Mr Brooke paused a moment to fix on his eye-glass and take the paper from his breast-pocket, with a sense of being practical and coming to particulars. The invisible Punch followed: -

'You shall have the Bill, Mr Brooke, per electioneering contest, and a seat outside Parliament as delivered, five thousand pounds, seven shillings, and fourpence.'

Mr Brooke, amid the roars of laughter, turned red, let his eye-glass fall, and looking about him confusedly, saw the image of himself, which had come nearer. The next moment he saw it dolorously bespattered with eggs. His spirit rose a little, and his voice too.

'Buffoonery, tricks, ridicule the test of truth - all that is very well' - here an unpleasant egg broke on Mr Brooke's shoulder, as the echo said, 'All that is very well;' then came a hail of eggs, chiefly aimed at the image, but occasionally hitting the original, as if by chance. There was a stream of new men pushing among the crowd; whistles, yells, bellowings, and fifes made all the greater hubbub because there was shouting and struggling to put them down. No voice would have had wing enough to rise above the uproar, and Mr Brooke, disagreeably anointed, stood his ground no longer. The frustration would have been less exasperating if it had been less gamesome and boyish: a serious assault of which the newspaper reporter 'can aver that it endangered the learned gentleman's ribs,' or can respectfully bear witness to 'the soles of that gentleman's boots having been visible above the railing,' has perhaps more consolations attached to it.

Mr Brooke re-entered the committee-room, saying, as carelessly as he could, 'This is a little too bad, you know. I should have got the ear of the people by-and-by - but they didn't give me time. I should have gone into the Bill by-and-by, you know,' he added, glancing at Ladislaw. 'However, things will come all right at the nomination.'

But it was not resolved unanimously that things would come right; on the contrary, the committee looked rather grim, and the political personage from Brassing was writing busily, as if he were brewing new devices.

'It was Bowyer who did it,' said Mr Standish, evasively. 'I know it as well as if he had been advertised. He's uncommonly good at ventriloquism, and he did it uncommonly well, by God! Hawley has been having him to dinner lately: there's a fund of talent in Bowyer.'

'Well, you know, you never mentioned him to me, Standish, else I would have invited him to dine,' said poor Mr Brooke, who had gone through a great deal of inviting for the good of his country.

'There's not a more paltry fellow in Middlemarch than Bowyer,' said Ladislaw, indignantly, 'but it seems as if the paltry fellows were always to turn the scale.'

Will was thoroughly out of temper with himself as well as with his 'principal,' and he went to shut himself in his rooms with a half-formed resolve to throw up the 'Pioneer' and Mr Brooke together. Why should he stay? If the impassable gulf between himself and Dorothea were ever to be filled up, it must rather be by his going away and getting into a thoroughly different position than by staying here and slipping into deserved contempt as an understrapper of Brooke's. Then came the young dream of wonders that he might do - in five years, for example: political writing, political speaking, would get a higher value now public life was going to be wider and more national, and they might give him such distinction that he would not seem to be asking Dorothea to step down to him. Five years: - if he could only be sure that she cared for him more than for others; if he could only make her aware that he stood aloof until he could tell his love without lowering himself - then he could go away easily, and begin a career which at five-and-twenty seemed probable enough in the inward order of things, where talent brings fame, and fame everything else which is delightful. He could speak and he could write; he could master any subject if he chose, and he meant always to take the side of reason and justice, on which he would carry all his ardor. Why should he not one day be lifted above the shoulders of the crowd, and feel that he had won that eminence well? Without doubt he would leave Middlemarch, go to town, and make himself fit for celebrity by 'eating his dinners.'

But not immediately: not until some kind of sign had passed between him and Dorothea. He could not be satisfied until she knew why, even if he were the man she would choose to marry, he would not marry her. Hence he must keep his post and bear with Mr Brooke a little longer.

But he soon had reason to suspect that Mr Brooke had anticipated him in the wish to break up their connection. Deputations without and voices within had concurred in inducing that philanthropist to take a stronger measure than usual for the good of mankind; namely, to withdraw in favor of another candidate, to whom he left the advantages of his canvassing machinery. He himself called this a strong measure, but observed that his health was less capable of sustaining excitement than he had imagined.

'I have felt uneasy about the chest - it won't do to carry that too far,' he said to Ladislav in explaining the affair. 'I must pull up. Poor Casaubon was a warning, you know. I've made some heavy advances, but I've dug a channel. It's rather coarse work - this electioneering, eh, Ladislav? dare say you are tired of it. However, we have dug a channel with the 'Pioneer' - put things in a track, and so on. A more ordinary man than you might carry it on now - more ordinary, you know.'

'Do you wish me to give it up?' said Will, the quick color coming in his face, as he rose from the writing-table, and took a turn of three steps with his hands in his pockets. 'I am ready to do so whenever you wish it.'

'As to wishing, my dear Ladislav, I have the highest opinion of your powers, you know. But about the 'Pioneer,' I have been consulting a little with some of the men on our side, and they are inclined to take it into their hands - indemnify me to a certain extent - carry it on, in fact. And under the circumstances, you might like to give up - might find a better field. These people might not take that high view of you which I have always taken, as an alter ego, a right hand - though I always looked forward to your doing something else. I think of having a run into France. But I'll write you any letters, you know - to Althorpe and people of that kind. I've met Althorpe.'

'I am exceedingly obliged to you,' said Ladislav, proudly. 'Since you are going to part with the 'Pioneer,' I need not trouble you about the steps I shall take. I may choose to continue here for the present.'

After Mr Brooke had left him Will said to himself, 'The rest of the family have been urging him to get rid of me, and he doesn't care now about my going. I shall stay as long as I like. I shall go of my own movements and not because they are afraid of me.'