

BOOK THE FIFTH.

THE SEA AND FATE ARE MOVED BY THE SAME BREATH.

CHAPTER I.

THE DURABILITY OF FRAGILE THINGS.

Destiny sometimes proffers us a glass of madness to drink. A hand is thrust out of the mist, and suddenly hands us the mysterious cup in which is contained the latent intoxication.

Gwynplaine did not understand.

He looked behind him to see who it was who had been addressed.

A sound may be too sharp to be perceptible to the ear; an emotion too acute conveys no meaning to the mind. There is a limit to comprehension as well as to hearing.

The wapentake and the justice of the quorum approached Gwynplaine and took him by the arms. He felt himself placed in the chair which the

sheriff had just vacated. He let it be done, without seeking an explanation.

When Gwynplaine was seated, the justice of the quorum and the wapentake retired a few steps, and stood upright and motionless, behind the seat.

Then the sheriff placed his bunch of roses on the stone table, put on spectacles which the secretary gave him, drew from the bundles of papers which covered the table a sheet of parchment, yellow, green, torn, and jagged in places, which seemed to have been folded in very small folds, and of which one side was covered with writing; standing under the light of the lamp, he held the sheet close to his eyes, and in his most solemn tone read as follows:--

"In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

"This present day, the twenty-ninth of January, one thousand six hundred and ninetieth year of our Lord.

"Has been wickedly deserted on the desert coast of Portland, with the intention of allowing him to perish of hunger, of cold, and of solitude, a child ten years old.

"That child was sold at the age of two years, by order of his most gracious Majesty, King James the Second.

"That child is Lord Fermain Clancharlie, the only legitimate son of Lord

Linnæus Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie and Hunkerville, Marquis of Corleone in Sicily, a peer of England, and of Ann Bradshaw, his wife, both deceased. That child is the inheritor of the estates and titles of his father. For this reason he was sold, mutilated, disfigured, and put out of the way by desire of his most gracious Majesty.

"That child was brought up, and trained to be a mountebank at markets and fairs.

"He was sold at the age of two, after the death of the peer, his father, and ten pounds sterling were given to the king as his purchase-money, as well as for divers concessions, tolerations, and immunities.

"Lord Fermain Clancharlie, at the age of two years, was bought by me, the undersigned, who write these lines, and mutilated and disfigured by a Fleming of Flanders, called Hardquanonne, who alone is acquainted with the secrets and modes of treatment of Doctor Conquest.

"The child was destined by us to be a laughing mask (*masca ridens*).

"With this intention Hardquanonne performed on him the operation, *Bucca fissa usque ad aures*, which stamps an everlasting laugh upon the face.

"The child, by means known only to Hardquanonne, was put to sleep and made insensible during its performance, knowing nothing of the operation which he underwent.

"He does not know that he is Lord Clancharlie.

"He answers to the name of Gwynplaine.

"This fact is the result of his youth, and the slight powers of memory he could have had when he was bought and sold, being then barely two years old.

"Hardquanonne is the only person who knows how to perform the operation Bucca fissa, and the said child is the only living subject upon which it has been essayed.

"The operation is so unique and singular that though after long years this child should have come to be an old man instead of a child, and his black locks should have turned white, he would be immediately recognized by Hardquanonne.

"At the time that I am writing this, Hardquanonne, who has perfect knowledge of all the facts, and participated as principal therein, is detained in the prisons of his highness the Prince of Orange, commonly called King William III. Hardquanonne was apprehended and seized as being one of the band of Comprachicos or Cheylas. He is imprisoned in the dungeon of Chatham.

"It was in Switzerland, near the Lake of Geneva, between Lausanne and Vevey, in the very house in which his father and mother died, that the child was, in obedience with the orders of the king, sold and given up

by the last servant of the deceased Lord Linnæus, which servant died soon after his master, so that this secret and delicate matter is now unknown to any one on earth, excepting Hardquanonne, who is in the dungeon of Chatham, and ourselves, now about to perish.

"We, the undersigned, brought up and kept, for eight years, for professional purposes, the little lord bought by us of the king.

"To-day, flying from England to avoid Hardquanonne's ill-fortune, our fear of the penal indictments, prohibitions, and fulminations of Parliament has induced us to desert, at night-fall, on the coast of Portland, the said child Gwynplaine, who is Lord Fermain Clancharlie.

"Now, we have sworn secrecy to the king, but not to God.

"To-night, at sea, overtaken by a violent tempest by the will of Providence, full of despair and distress, kneeling before Him who could save our lives, and may, perhaps, be willing to save our souls, having nothing more to hope from men, but everything to fear from God, having for only anchor and resource repentance of our bad actions, resigned to death, and content if Divine justice be satisfied, humble, penitent, and beating our breasts, we make this declaration, and confide and deliver it to the furious ocean to use as it best may according to the will of God. And may the Holy Virgin aid us, Amen. And we attach our signatures."

The sheriff interrupted, saying,--"Here are the signatures. All in

different handwritings."

And he resumed,--

"Doctor Gernardus Geestemunde.--Asuncion.--A cross, and at the side of it, Barbara Fermoy, from Tyrryf Isle, in the Hebrides; Gaizdorra, Captain; Giangirate; Jacques Quartourze, alias le Narbonnais; Luc-Pierre Capgaroupe, from the galleys of Mahon."

The sheriff, after a pause, resumed, a "note written in the same hand as the text and the first signature," and he read,--

"Of the three men comprising the crew, the skipper having been swept off by a wave, there remain but two, and we have signed, Galdeazun; Ave Maria, Thief."

The sheriff, interspersing his reading with his own observations, continued, "At the bottom of the sheet is written,--

"'At sea, on board of the Matutina, Biscay hooker, from the Gulf de Pasages.' This sheet," added the sheriff, "is a legal document, bearing the mark of King James the Second. On the margin of the declaration, and in the same handwriting there is this note, 'The present declaration is written by us on the back of the royal order, which was given us as our receipt when we bought the child. Turn the leaf and the order will be seen.'"

The sheriff turned the parchment, and raised it in his right hand, to expose it to the light.

A blank page was seen, if the word blank can be applied to a thing so mouldy, and in the middle of the page three words were written, two Latin words, *Jussu regis*, and a signature, *Jeffreys*.

"*Jussu regis, Jeffreys*," said the sheriff, passing from a grave voice to a clear one.

Gwynplaine was as a man on whose head a tile falls from the palace of dreams.

He began to speak, like one who speaks unconsciously.

"Gernardus, yes, the doctor. An old, sad-looking man. I was afraid of him. Gaizdorra, Captain, that means chief. There were women, Asuncion, and the other. And then the Provençal. His name was Capgaroupe. He used to drink out of a flat bottle on which there was a name written in red."

"Behold it," said the sheriff.

He placed on the table something which the secretary had just taken out of the bag. It was a gourd, with handles like ears, covered with wicker. This bottle had evidently seen service, and had sojourned in the water. Shells and seaweed adhered to it. It was encrusted and damascened over with the rust of ocean. There was a ring of tar round its neck, showing

that it had been hermetically sealed. Now it was unsealed and open. They had, however, replaced in the flask a sort of bung made of tarred oakum, which had been used to cork it.

"It was in this bottle," said the sheriff, "that the men about to perish placed the declaration which I have just read. This message addressed to justice has been faithfully delivered by the sea."

The sheriff increased the majesty of his tones, and continued,--

"In the same way that Harrow Hill produces excellent wheat, which is turned into fine flour for the royal table, so the sea renders every service in its power to England, and when a nobleman is lost finds and restores him."

Then he resumed,--

"On this flask, as you say, there is a name written in red."

He raised his voice, turning to the motionless prisoner,--

"Your name, malefactor, is here. Such are the hidden channels by which truth, swallowed up in the gulf of human actions, floats to the surface."

The sheriff took the gourd, and turned to the light one of its sides, which had, no doubt, been cleaned for the ends of justice. Between the

interstices of wicker was a narrow line of red reed, blackened here and there by the action of water and of time.

The reed, notwithstanding some breakages, traced distinctly in the wicker-work these twelve letters--Hardquanonne.

Then the sheriff, resuming that monotonous tone of voice which resembles nothing else, and which may be termed a judicial accent, turned towards the sufferer.

"Hardquanonne! when by us, the sheriff, this bottle, on which is your name, was for the first time shown, exhibited, and presented to you, you at once, and willingly, recognized it as having belonged to you. Then, the parchment being read to you which was contained, folded and enclosed within it, you would say no more; and in the hope, doubtless, that the lost child would never be recovered, and that you would escape punishment, you refuse to answer. As the result of your refusal, you have had applied to you the *peine forte et dure*; and the second reading of the said parchment, on which is written the declaration and confession of your accomplices, was made to you, but in vain.

"This is the fourth day, and that which is legally set apart for the confrontation, and he who was deserted on the twenty-ninth of January, one thousand six hundred and ninety, having been brought into your presence, your devilish hope has vanished, you have broken silence, and recognized your victim."

The prisoner opened his eyes, lifted his head, and, with a voice strangely resonant of agony, but which had still an indescribable calm mingled with its hoarseness, pronounced in excruciating accents, from under the mass of stones, words to pronounce each of which he had to lift that which was like the slab of a tomb placed upon him. He spoke,--

"I swore to keep the secret. I have kept it as long as I could. Men of dark lives are faithful, and hell has its honour. Now silence is useless. So be it! For this reason I speak. Well--yes; 'tis he! We did it between us--the king and I: the king, by his will; I, by my art!"

And looking at Gwynplaine,--

"Now laugh for ever!"

And he himself began to laugh.

This second laugh, wilder yet than the first, might have been taken for a sob.

The laughed ceased, and the man lay back. His eyelids closed.

The sheriff, who had allowed the prisoner to speak, resumed,--

"All which is placed on record."

He gave the secretary time to write, and then said,--

"Hardquanonne, by the terms of the law, after confrontation followed by identification, after the third reading of the declarations of your accomplices, since confirmed by your recognition and confession, and after your renewed avowal, you are about to be relieved from these irons, and placed at the good pleasure of her Majesty to be hung as plagiary."

"Plagiary," said the serjeant of the coif. "That is to say, a buyer and seller of children. Law of the Visigoths, seventh book, third section, paragraph Usurpaverit, and Salic law, section the forty-first, paragraph the second, and law of the Frisons, section the twenty-first, Deplagio; and Alexander Nequam says,--

"Qui pueros vendis, plagiarius est tibi nomen."

The sheriff placed the parchment on the table, laid down his spectacles, took up the nosegay, and said,--

"End of la peine forte et dure. Hardquanonne, thank her Majesty."

By a sign the justice of the quorum set in motion the man dressed in leather.

This man, who was the executioner's assistant, "groom of the gibbet," the old charters call him, went to the prisoner, took off the stones, one by one, from his chest, and lifted the plate of iron up, exposing

the wretch's crushed sides. Then he freed his wrists and ankle-bones from the four chains that fastened him to the pillars.

The prisoner, released alike from stones and chains, lay flat on the ground, his eyes closed, his arms and legs apart, like a crucified man taken down from a cross.

"Hardquanonne," said the sheriff, "arise!"

The prisoner did not move.

The groom of the gibbet took up a hand and let it go; the hand fell back. The other hand, being raised, fell back likewise.

The groom of the gibbet seized one foot and then the other, and the heels fell back on the ground.

The fingers remained inert, and the toes motionless. The naked feet of an extended corpse seem, as it were, to bristle.

The doctor approached, and drawing from the pocket of his robe a little mirror of steel, put it to the open mouth of Hardquanonne. Then with his fingers he opened the eyelids. They did not close again; the glassy eyeballs remained fixed.

The doctor rose up and said,--

"He is dead."

And he added,--

"He laughed; that killed him."

"'Tis of little consequence," said the sheriff. "After confession, life or death is a mere formality."

Then pointing to Hardquanonne by a gesture with the nosegay of roses, the sheriff gave the order to the wapentake,--

"A corpse to be carried away to-night."

The wapentake acquiesced by a nod.

And the sheriff added,--

"The cemetery of the jail is opposite."

The wapentake nodded again.

The sheriff, holding in his left hand the nosegay and in his right the white wand, placed himself opposite Gwynplaine, who was still seated, and made him a low bow; then assuming another solemn attitude, he turned his head over his shoulder, and looking Gwynplaine in the face, said,--

"To you here present, we Philip Denzill Parsons, knight, sheriff of the county of Surrey, assisted by Aubrey Dominick, Esq., our clerk and registrar, and by our usual officers, duly provided by the direct and special commands of her Majesty, in virtue of our commission, and the rights and duties of our charge, and with authority from the Lord Chancellor of England, the affidavits having been drawn up and recorded, regard being had to the documents communicated by the Admiralty, after verification of attestations and signatures, after declarations read and heard, after confrontation made, all the statements and legal information having been completed, exhausted, and brought to a good and just issue--we signify and declare to you, in order that right may be done, that you are Fermain Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie and Hunkerville, Marquis de Corleone in Sicily, and a peer of England; and God keep your lordship!"

And he bowed to him.

The serjeant on the right, the doctor, the justice of the quorum, the wapentake, the secretary, all the attendants except the executioner, repeated his salutation still more respectfully, and bowed to the ground before Gwynplaine.

"Ah," said Gwynplaine, "awake me!"

And he stood up, pale as death.

"I come to awake you indeed," said a voice which had not yet been heard.

A man came out from behind the pillars. As no one had entered the cell since the sheet of iron had given passage to the cortège of police, it was clear that this man had been there in the shadow before Gwynplaine had entered, that he had a regular right of attendance, and had been present by appointment and mission. The man was fat and pursy, and wore a court wig and a travelling cloak.

He was rather old than young, and very precise.

He saluted Gwynplaine with ease and respect--with the ease of a gentleman-in-waiting, and without the awkwardness of a judge.

"Yes," he said; "I have come to awaken you. For twenty-five years you have slept. You have been dreaming. It is time to awake. You believe yourself to be Gwynplaine; you are Clancharlie. You believe yourself to be one of the people; you belong to the peerage. You believe yourself to be of the lowest rank; you are of the highest. You believe yourself a player; you are a senator. You believe yourself poor; you are wealthy. You believe yourself to be of no account; you are important. Awake, my lord!"

Gwynplaine, in a low voice, in which a tremor of fear was to be distinguished, murmured,--

"What does it all mean?"

"It means, my lord," said the fat man, "that I am called Barkilphedro; that I am an officer of the Admiralty; that this waif, the flask of Hardquanonne, was found on the beach, and was brought to be unsealed by me, according to the duty and prerogative of my office; that I opened it in the presence of two sworn jurors of the Jetsam Office, both members of Parliament, William Brathwait, for the city of Bath, and Thomas Jervois, for Southampton; that the two jurors deciphered and attested the contents of the flask, and signed the necessary affidavit conjointly with me; that I made my report to her Majesty, and by order of the queen all necessary and legal formalities were carried out with the discretion necessary in a matter so delicate; that the last form, the confrontation, has just been carried out; that you have £40,000 a year; that you are a peer of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, a legislator and a judge, a supreme judge, a sovereign legislator, dressed in purple and ermine, equal to princes, like unto emperors; that you have on your brow the coronet of a peer, and that you are about to wed a duchess, the daughter of a king."

Under this transfiguration, overwhelming him like a series of thunderbolts, Gwynplaine fainted.

CHAPTER II.

THE WAIF KNOWS ITS OWN COURSE.

All this had occurred owing to the circumstance of a soldier having found a bottle on the beach. We will relate the facts. In all facts there are wheels within wheels.

One day one of the four gunners composing the garrison of Castle Calshor picked up on the sand at low water a flask covered with wicker, which had been cast up by the tide. This flask, covered with mould, was corked by a tarred bung. The soldier carried the waif to the colonel of the castle, and the colonel sent it to the High Admiral of England. The Admiral meant the Admiralty; with waifs, the Admiralty meant Barkilphedro.

Barkilphedro, having uncorked and emptied the bottle, carried it to the queen. The queen immediately took the matter into consideration.

Two weighty counsellors were instructed and consulted--namely, the Lord Chancellor, who is by law the guardian of the king's conscience; and the Lord Marshal, who is referee in Heraldry and in the pedigrees of the nobility. Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, a Catholic peer, who is hereditary Earl Marshal of England, had sent word by his deputy Earl Marshal, Henry Howard, Earl Bindon, that he would agree with the Lord

Chancellor. The Lord Chancellor was William Cowper. We must not confound this chancellor with his namesake and contemporary William Cowper, the anatomist and commentator on Bidloo, who published a treatise on muscles, in England, at the very time that Etienne Abeille published a history of bones, in France. A surgeon is a very different thing from a lord. Lord William Cowper is celebrated for having, with reference to the affair of Talbot Yelverton, Viscount Longueville, propounded this opinion: That in the English constitution the restoration of a peer is more important than the restoration of a king. The flask found at Calshor had awakened his interest in the highest degree. The author of a maxim delights in opportunities to which it may be applied. Here was a case of the restoration of a peer. Search was made. Gwynplaine, by the inscription over his door, was soon found. Neither was Hardquanonne dead. A prison rots a man, but preserves him--if to keep is to preserve. People placed in Bastiles were rarely removed. There is little more change in the dungeon than in the tomb. Hardquanonne was still in prison at Chatham. They had only to put their hands on him. He was transferred from Chatham to London. In the meantime information was sought in Switzerland. The facts were found to be correct. They obtained from the local archives at Vevey, at Lausanne, the certificate of Lord Linnæus's marriage in exile, the certificate of his child's birth, the certificate of the decease of the father and mother; and they had duplicates, duly authenticated, made to answer all necessary requirements.

All this was done with the most rigid secrecy, with what is called royal promptitude, and with that mole-like silence recommended and practised by Bacon, and later on made law by Blackstone, for affairs connected

with the Chancellorship and the state, and in matters termed parliamentary. The *jussu regis* and the signature Jeffreys were authenticated. To those who have studied pathologically the cases of caprice called "our good will and pleasure," this *jussu regis* is very simple. Why should James II., whose credit required the concealment of such acts, have allowed that to be written which endangered their success? The answer is, cynicism--haughty indifference. Oh! you believe that effrontery is confined to abandoned women? The *raison d'état* is equally abandoned. *Et se cupit ante videri*. To commit a crime and emblazon it, there is the sum total of history. The king tattoos himself like the convict. Often when it would be to a man's greatest advantage to escape from the hands of the police or the records of history, he would seem to regret the escape so great is the love of notoriety. Look at my arm! Observe the design! I am Lacenaire! See, a temple of love and a burning heart pierced through with an arrow! *Jussu regis*. It is I, James the Second. A man commits a bad action, and places his mark upon it. To fill up the measure of crime by effrontery, to denounce himself, to cling to his misdeeds, is the insolent bravado of the criminal. Christina seized Monaldeschi, had him confessed and assassinated, and said,--

"I am the Queen of Sweden, in the palace of the King of France."

There is the tyrant who conceals himself, like Tiberius; and the tyrant who displays himself, like Philip II. One has the attributes of the scorpion, the other those rather of the leopard. James II. was of this latter variety. He had, we know, a gay and open countenance, differing

so far from Philip. Philip was sullen, James jovial. Both were equally ferocious. James II. was an easy-minded tiger; like Philip II., his crimes lay light upon his conscience. He was a monster by the grace of God. Therefore he had nothing to dissimulate nor to extenuate, and his assassinations were by divine right. He, too, would not have minded leaving behind him those archives of Simancas, with all his misdeeds dated, classified, labelled, and put in order, each in its compartment, like poisons in the cabinet of a chemist. To set the sign-manual to crimes is right royal.

Every deed done is a draft drawn on the great invisible paymaster. A bill had just come due with the ominous endorsement, *Jussu regis*.

Queen Anne, in one particular unfeminine, seeing that she could keep a secret, demanded a confidential report of so grave a matter from the Lord Chancellor--one of the kind specified as "report to the royal ear." Reports of this kind have been common in all monarchies. At Vienna there was "a counsellor of the ear"--an aulic dignitary. It was an ancient Carovingian office--the auricularius of the old palatine deeds. He who whispers to the emperor.

William, Baron Cowper, Chancellor of England, whom the queen believed in because he was short-sighted like herself, or even more so, had committed to writing a memorandum commencing thus: "Two birds were subject to Solomon--a lapwing, the hudson, who could speak all languages; and an eagle, the simourganka, who covered with the shadow of his wings a caravan of twenty thousand men. Thus, under another form,

Providence," etc. The Lord Chancellor proved the fact that the heir to a peerage had been carried off, mutilated, and then restored. He did not blame James II., who was, after all, the queen's father. He even went so far as to justify him. First, there are ancient monarchical maxims. *E senioratu eripimus. In roturagio cadat.* Secondly, there is a royal right of mutilation. Chamberlayne asserts the fact.[19] *Corpora et bona nostrorum subjectorum nostra sunt*, said James I., of glorious and learned memory. The eyes of dukes of the blood royal have been plucked out for the good of the kingdom. Certain princes, too near to the throne, have been conveniently stifled between mattresses, the cause of death being given out as apoplexy. Now to stifle is worse than to mutilate. The King of Tunis tore out the eyes of his father, Muley Assem, and his ambassadors have not been the less favourably received by the emperor. Hence the king may order the suppression of a limb like the suppression of a state, etc. It is legal. But one law does not destroy another. "If a drowned man is cast up by the water, and is not dead, it is an act of God readjusting one of the king. If the heir be found, let the coronet be given back to him. Thus was it done for Lord Alla, King of Northumberland, who was also a mountebank. Thus should be done to Gwynplaine, who is also a king, seeing that he is a peer. The lowness of the occupation which he has been obliged to follow, under constraint of superior power, does not tarnish the blazon: as in the case of Abdolmumen, who was a king, although he had been a gardener; that of Joseph, who was a saint, although he had been a carpenter; that of Apollo, who was a god, although he had been a shepherd."

In short, the learned chancellor concluded by advising the

reinstatement, in all his estates and dignities, of Lord Fermain Clancharlie, miscalled Gwynplaine, on the sole condition that he should be confronted with the criminal Hardquanonne, and identified by the same. And on this point the chancellor, as constitutional keeper of the royal conscience, based the royal decision. The Lord Chancellor added in a postscript that if Hardquanonne refused to answer he should be subjected to the *peine forte et dure*, until the period called the *frodmortell*, according to the statute of King Athelstane, which orders the confrontation to take place on the fourth day. In this there is a certain inconvenience, for if the prisoner dies on the second or third day the confrontation becomes difficult; still the law must be obeyed. The inconvenience of the law makes part and parcel of it. In the mind of the Lord Chancellor, however, the recognition of Gwynplaine by Hardquanonne was indubitable.

Anne, having been made aware of the deformity of Gwynplaine, and not wishing to wrong her sister, on whom had been bestowed the estates of Clancharlie, graciously decided that the Duchess Josiana should be espoused by the new lord--that is to say, by Gwynplaine.

The reinstatement of Lord Fermain Clancharlie was, moreover, a very simple affair, the heir being legitimate, and in the direct line.

In cases of doubtful descent, and of peerages in abeyance claimed by collaterals, the House of Lords must be consulted. This (to go no further back) was done in 1782, in the case of the barony of Sydney, claimed by Elizabeth Perry; in 1798, in that of the barony of Beaumont,

claimed by Thomas Stapleton; in 1803, in that of the barony of Stapleton; in 1803, in that of the barony of Chandos, claimed by the Reverend Tymewell Brydges; in 1813, in that of the earldom of Banbury, claimed by General Knollys, etc., etc. But the present was no similar case. Here there was no pretence for litigation; the legitimacy was undoubted, the right clear and certain. There was no point to submit to the House, and the Queen, assisted by the Lord Chancellor, had power to recognize and admit the new peer.

Barkilphedro managed everything.

The affair, thanks to him, was kept so close, the secret was so hermetically sealed, that neither Josiana nor Lord David caught sight of the fearful abyss which was being dug under them. It was easy to deceive Josiana, entrenched as she was behind a rampart of pride. She was self-isolated. As to Lord David, they sent him to sea, off the coast of Flanders. He was going to lose his peerage, and had no suspicion of it. One circumstance is noteworthy.

It happened that at six leagues from the anchorage of the naval station commanded by Lord David, a captain called Halyburton broke through the French fleet. The Earl of Pembroke, President of the Council, proposed that this Captain Halyburton should be made vice-admiral. Anne struck out Halyburton's name, and put Lord David Dirry-Moir's in its place, that he might, when no longer a peer, have the satisfaction of being a vice-admiral.

Anne was well pleased. A hideous husband for her sister, and a fine step for Lord David. Mischief and kindness combined.

Her Majesty was going to enjoy a comedy. Besides, she argued to herself that she was repairing an abuse of power committed by her august father. She was reinstating a member of the peerage. She was acting like a great queen; she was protecting innocence according to the will of God that Providence in its holy and impenetrable ways, etc., etc. It is very sweet to do a just action which is disagreeable to those whom we do not like.

To know that the future husband of her sister was deformed, sufficed the queen. In what manner Gwynplaine was deformed, and by what kind of ugliness, Barkilphedro had not communicated to the queen, and Anne had not deigned to inquire. She was proudly and royally disdainful. Besides, what could it matter? The House of Lords could not but be grateful. The Lord Chancellor, its oracle, had approved. To restore a peer is to restore the peerage. Royalty on this occasion had shown itself a good and scrupulous guardian of the privileges of the peerage. Whatever might be the face of the new lord, a face cannot be urged in objection to a right. Anne said all this to herself, or something like it, and went straight to her object, an object at once grand, womanlike, and regal--namely, to give herself a pleasure.

The queen was then at Windsor--a circumstance which placed a certain distance between the intrigues of the court and the public. Only such persons as were absolutely necessary to the plan were in the secret of

what was taking place. As to Barkilphedro, he was joyful--a circumstance which gave a lugubrious expression to his face. If there be one thing in the world which can be more hideous than another, 'tis joy.

He had had the delight of being the first to taste the contents of Hardquanonne's flask. He seemed but little surprised, for astonishment is the attribute of a little mind. Besides, was it not all due to him, who had waited so long on duty at the gate of chance? Knowing how to wait, he had fairly won his reward.

This *nil admirari* was an expression of face. At heart we may admit that he was very much astonished. Any one who could have lifted the mask with which he covered his inmost heart even before God would have discovered this: that at the very time Barkilphedro had begun to feel finally convinced that it would be impossible--even to him, the intimate and most infinitesimal enemy of Josiana--to find a vulnerable point in her lofty life. Hence an access of savage animosity lurked in his mind. He had reached the paroxysm which is called discouragement. He was all the more furious, because despairing. To gnaw one's chain--how tragic and appropriate the expression! A villain gnawing at his own powerlessness!

Barkilphedro was perhaps just on the point of renouncing not his desire to do evil to Josiana, but his hope of doing it; not the rage, but the effort. But how degrading to be thus baffled! To keep hate thenceforth in a case, like a dagger in a museum! How bitter the humiliation!

All at once to a certain goal--Chance, immense and universal, loves to bring such coincidences about--the flask of Hardquanonne came, driven from wave to wave, into Barkilphedro's hands. There is in the unknown an indescribable fealty which seems to be at the beck and call of evil.

Barkilphedro, assisted by two chance witnesses, disinterested jurors of the Admiralty, uncorked the flask, found the parchment, unfolded, read it. What words could express his devilish delight!

It is strange to think that the sea, the wind, space, the ebb and flow of the tide, storms, calms, breezes, should have given themselves so much trouble to bestow happiness on a scoundrel. That co-operation had continued for fifteen years. Mysterious efforts! During fifteen years the ocean had never for an instant ceased from its labours. The waves transmitted from one to another the floating bottle. The shelving rocks had shunned the brittle glass; no crack had yawned in the flask; no friction had displaced the cork; the sea-weeds had not rotted the osier; the shells had not eaten out the word "Hardquanonne;" the water had not penetrated into the waif; the mould had not rotted the parchment; the wet had not effaced the writing. What trouble the abyss must have taken! Thus that which Gernardus had flung into darkness, darkness had handed back to Barkilphedro. The message sent to God had reached the devil. Space had committed an abuse of confidence, and a lurking sarcasm which mingles with events had so arranged that it had complicated the loyal triumph of the lost child's becoming Lord Clancharlie with a venomous victory: in doing a good action, it had mischievously placed justice at the service of iniquity. To save the victim of James II. was to give a prey to Barkilphedro. To reinstate Gwynplaine was to crush Josiana.

Barkilphedro had succeeded, and it was for this that for so many years the waves, the surge, the squalls had buffeted, shaken, thrown, pushed, tormented, and respected this bubble of glass, which bore within it so many commingled fates. It was for this that there had been a cordial co-operation between the winds, the tides, and the tempests--a vast agitation of all prodigies for the pleasure of a scoundrel; the infinite co-operating with an earthworm! Destiny is subject to such grim caprices.

Barkilphedro was struck by a flash of Titanic pride. He said to himself that it had all been done to fulfil his intentions. He felt that he was the object and the instrument.

But he was wrong. Let us clear the character of chance.

Such was not the real meaning of the remarkable circumstance of which the hatred of Barkilphedro was to profit. Ocean had made itself father and mother to an orphan, had sent the hurricane against his executioners, had wrecked the vessel which had repulsed the child, had swallowed up the clasped hands of the storm-beaten sailors, refusing their supplications and accepting only their repentance; the tempest received a deposit from the hands of death. The strong vessel containing the crime was replaced by the fragile phial containing the reparation. The sea changed its character, and, like a panther turning nurse, began to rock the cradle, not of the child, but of his destiny, whilst he grew up ignorant of all that the depths of ocean were doing for him.

The waves to which this flask had been flung watching over that past which contained a future; the whirlwind breathing kindly on it; the currents directing the frail waif across the fathomless wastes of water; the caution exercised by seaweed, the swells, the rocks; the vast froth of the abyss, taking under its protection an innocent child; the wave imperturbable as a conscience; chaos re-establishing order; the worldwide shadows ending in radiance; darkness employed to bring to light the star of truth; the exile consoled in his tomb; the heir given back to his inheritance; the crime of the king repaired; divine premeditation obeyed; the little, the weak, the deserted child with infinity for a guardian--all this Barkilphedro might have seen in the event on which he triumphed. This is what he did not see. He did not believe that it had all been done for Gwynplaine. He fancied that it had been effected for Barkilphedro, and that he was well worth the trouble. Thus it is ever with Satan.

Moreover, ere we feel astonished that a waif so fragile should have floated for fifteen years undamaged, we should seek to understand the tender care of the ocean. Fifteen years is nothing. On the 4th of October 1867, on the coast of Morbihan, between the Isle de Croix, the extremity of the peninsula de Gavres, and the Rocher des Errants, the fishermen of Port Louis found a Roman amphora of the fourth century, covered with arabesques by the incrustations of the sea. That amphora had been floating fifteen hundred years.

Whatever appearance of indifference Barkilphedro tried to exhibit, his wonder had equalled his joy. Everything he could desire was there to his

hand. All seemed ready made. The fragments of the event which was to satisfy his hate were spread out within his reach. He had nothing to do but to pick them up and fit them together--a repair which it was an amusement to execute. He was the artificer.

Gwynplaine! He knew the name. Masca ridens. Like every one else, he had been to see the Laughing Man. He had read the sign nailed up against the Tadcaster Inn as one reads a play-bill that attracts a crowd. He had noted it. He remembered it directly in its most minute details; and, in any case, it was easy to compare them with the original. That notice, in the electrical summons which arose in his memory, appeared in the depths of his mind, and placed itself by the side of the parchment signed by the shipwrecked crew, like an answer following a question, like the solution following an enigma; and the lines--"Here is to be seen Gwynplaine, deserted at the age of ten, on the 29th of January, 1690, on the coast at Portland"--suddenly appeared to his eyes in the splendour of an apocalypse. His vision was the light of Mene, Tekel, Upharsin, outside a booth. Here was the destruction of the edifice which made the existence of Josiana. A sudden earthquake. The lost child was found. There was a Lord Clancharlie; David Dirry-Moir was nobody. Peerage, riches, power, rank--all these things left Lord David and entered Gwynplaine. All the castles, parks, forests, town houses, palaces, domains, Josiana included, belonged to Gwynplaine. And what a climax for Josiana! What had she now before her? Illustrious and haughty, a player; beautiful, a monster. Who could have hoped for this? The truth was that the joy of Barkilphedro had become enthusiastic. The most hateful combinations are surpassed by the infernal munificence of the

unforeseen. When reality likes, it works masterpieces. Barkilphedro found that all his dreams had been nonsense; reality were better.

The change he was about to work would not have seemed less desirable had it been detrimental to him. Insects exist which are so savagely disinterested that they sting, knowing that to sting is to die. Barkilphedro was like such vermin.

But this time he had not the merit of being disinterested. Lord David Dirry-Moir owed him nothing, and Lord Fermain Clancharlie was about to owe him everything. From being a protégé Barkilphedro was about to become a protector. Protector of whom? Of a peer of England. He was going to have a lord of his own, and a lord who would be his creature. Barkilphedro counted on giving him his first impressions. His peer would be the morganatic brother-in-law of the queen. His ugliness would please the queen in the same proportion as it displeased Josiana. Advancing by such favour, and assuming grave and modest airs, Barkilphedro might become a somebody. He had always been destined for the church. He had a vague longing to be a bishop.

Meanwhile he was happy.

Oh, what a great success! and what a deal of useful work had chance accomplished for him! His vengeance--for he called it his vengeance--had been softly brought to him by the waves. He had not lain in ambush in vain.

He was the rock, Josiana was the waif. Josiana was about to be dashed against Barkilphedro, to his intense villainous ecstasy.

He was clever in the art of suggestion, which consists in making in the minds of others a little incision into which you put an idea of your own. Holding himself aloof, and without appearing to mix himself up in the matter, it was he who arranged that Josiana should go to the Green Box and see Gwynplaine. It could do no harm. The appearance of the mountebank, in his low estate, would be a good ingredient in the combination; later on it would season it.

He had quietly prepared everything beforehand. What he most desired was something unspeakably abrupt. The work on which he was engaged could only be expressed in these strange words--the construction of a thunderbolt.

All preliminaries being complete, he had watched till all the necessary legal formalities had been accomplished. The secret had not oozed out, silence being an element of law.

The confrontation of Hardquanonne with Gwynplaine had taken place. Barkilphedro had been present. We have seen the result.

The same day a post-chaise belonging to the royal household was suddenly sent by her Majesty to fetch Lady Josiana from London to Windsor, where the queen was at the time residing.

Josiana, for reasons of her own, would have been very glad to disobey, or at least to delay obedience, and put off her departure till next day; but court life does not permit of these objections. She was obliged to set out at once, and to leave her residence in London, Hunkerville House, for her residence at Windsor, Corleone Lodge.

The Duchess Josiana left London at the very moment that the wapentake appeared at the Tadcaster Inn to arrest Gwynplaine and take him to the torture cell of Southwark.

When she arrived at Windsor, the Usher of the Black Rod, who guards the door of the presence chamber, informed her that her Majesty was in audience with the Lord Chancellor, and could not receive her until the next day; that, consequently, she was to remain at Corleone Lodge, at the orders of her Majesty; and that she should receive the queen's commands direct, when her Majesty awoke the next morning. Josiana entered her house feeling very spiteful, supped in a bad humour, had the spleen, dismissed every one except her page, then dismissed him, and went to bed while it was yet daylight.

When she arrived she had learned that Lord David Dirry-Moir was expected at Windsor the next day, owing to his having, whilst at sea, received orders to return immediately and receive her Majesty's commands.

CHAPTER III.

AN AWAKENING.

"No man could pass suddenly from Siberia into Senegal without losing consciousness."--HUMBOLDT.

The swoon of a man, even of one the most firm and energetic, under the sudden shock of an unexpected stroke of good fortune, is nothing wonderful. A man is knocked down by the unforeseen blow, like an ox by the poleaxe. Francis d'Albescola, he who tore from the Turkish ports their iron chains, remained a whole day without consciousness when they made him pope. Now the stride from a cardinal to a pope is less than that from a mountebank to a peer of England.

No shock is so violent as a loss of equilibrium.

When Gwynplaine came to himself and opened his eyes it was night. He was in an armchair, in the midst of a large chamber lined throughout with purple velvet, over walls, ceiling, and floor. The carpet was velvet. Standing near him, with uncovered head, was the fat man in the travelling cloak, who had emerged from behind the pillar in the cell at Southwark. Gwynplaine was alone in the chamber with him. From the chair, by extending his arms, he could reach two tables, each bearing a branch of six lighted wax candles. On one of these tables there were papers and a casket, on the other refreshments; a cold fowl, wine, and brandy,

served on a silver-gilt salver.

Through the panes of a high window, reaching from the ceiling to the floor, a semicircle of pillars was to be seen, in the clear April night, encircling a courtyard with three gates, one very wide, and the other two low. The carriage gate, of great size, was in the middle; on the right, that for equestrians, smaller; on the left, that for foot passengers, still less. These gates were formed of iron railings, with glittering points. A tall piece of sculpture surmounted the central one. The columns were probably in white marble, as well as the pavement of the court, thus producing an effect like snow; and framed in its sheet of flat flags was a mosaic, the pattern of which was vaguely marked in the shadow. This mosaic, when seen by daylight, would no doubt have disclosed to the sight, with much emblazonry and many colours, a gigantic coat-of-arms, in the Florentine fashion. Zigzags of balustrades rose and fell, indicating stairs of terraces. Over the court frowned an immense pile of architecture, now shadowy and vague in the starlight. Intervals of sky, full of stars, marked out clearly the outline of the palace. An enormous roof could be seen, with the gable ends vaulted; garret windows, roofed over like visors; chimneys like towers; and entablatures covered with motionless gods and goddesses.

Beyond the colonnade there played in the shadow one of those fairy fountains in which, as the water falls from basin to basin, it combines the beauty of rain with that of the cascade, and as if scattering the contents of a jewel box, flings to the wind its diamonds and its pearls as though to divert the statues around. Long rows of windows ranged

away, separated by panopies, in relievo, and by busts on small pedestals. On the pinnacles, trophies and morions with plumes cut in stone alternated with statues of heathen deities.

In the chamber where Gwynplaine was, on the side opposite the window, was a fireplace as high as the ceiling, and on another, under a dais, one of those old spacious feudal beds which were reached by a ladder, and where you might sleep lying across; the joint-stool of the bed was at its side; a row of armchairs by the walls, and a row of ordinary chairs, in front of them, completed the furniture. The ceiling was domed. A great wood fire in the French fashion blazed in the fireplace; by the richness of the flames, variegated of rose colour and green, a judge of such things would have seen that the wood was ash--a great luxury. The room was so large that the branches of candles failed to light it up. Here and there curtains over doors, falling and swaying, indicated communications with other rooms. The style of the room was altogether that of the reign of James I.--a style square and massive, antiquated and magnificent. Like the carpet and the lining of the chamber, the dais, the baldaquin, the bed, the stool, the curtains, the mantelpiece, the coverings of the table, the sofas, the chairs, were all of purple velvet.

There was no gilding, except on the ceiling. Laid on it, at equal distance from the four angles, was a huge round shield of embossed metal, on which sparkled, in dazzling relief, various coats of arms. Amongst the devices, on two blazons, side by side, were to be distinguished the cap of a baron and the coronet of a marquis. Were they

of brass or of silver-gilt? You could not tell. They seemed to be of gold. And in the centre of this lordly ceiling, like a gloomy and magnificent sky, the gleaming escutcheon was as the dark splendour of a sun shining in the night.

The savage, in whom is embodied the free man, is nearly as restless in a palace as in a prison. This magnificent chamber was depressing. So much splendour produces fear. Who could be the inhabitant of this stately palace? To what colossus did all this grandeur appertain? Of what lion is this the lair? Gwynplaine, as yet but half awake, was heavy at heart.

"Where am I?" he said.

The man who was standing before him answered,--"You are in your own house, my lord."

CHAPTER IV.

FASCINATION.

It takes time to rise to the surface. And Gwynplaine had been thrown into an abyss of stupefaction.

We do not gain our footing at once in unknown depths.

There are routs of ideas, as there are routs of armies. The rally is not immediate.

We feel as it were scattered--as though some strange evaporation of self were taking place.

God is the arm, chance is the sling, man is the pebble. How are you to resist, once flung?

Gwynplaine, if we may coin the expression, ricocheted from one surprise to another. After the love letter of the duchess came the revelation in the Southwark dungeon.

In destiny, when wonders begin, prepare yourself for blow upon blow. The gloomy portals once open, prodigies pour in. A breach once made in the wall, and events rush upon us pell-mell. The marvellous never comes singly.

The marvellous is an obscurity. The shadow of this obscurity was over Gwynplaine. What was happening to him seemed unintelligible. He saw everything through the mist which a deep commotion leaves in the mind, like the dust caused by a falling ruin. The shock had been from top to bottom. Nothing was clear to him. However, light always returns by degrees. The dust settles. Moment by moment the density of astonishment

decreases. Gwynplaine was like a man with his eyes open and fixed in a dream, as if trying to see what may be within it. He dispersed the mist. Then he reshaped it. He had intermittances of wandering. He underwent that oscillation of the mind in the unforeseen which alternately pushes us in the direction in which we understand, and then throws us back in that which is incomprehensible. Who has not at some time felt this pendulum in his brain?

By degrees his thoughts dilated in the darkness of the event, as the pupil of his eye had done in the underground shadows at Southwark. The difficulty was to succeed in putting a certain space between accumulated sensations. Before that combustion of hazy ideas called comprehension can take place, air must be admitted between the emotions. There air was wanting. The event, so to speak, could not be breathed.

In entering that terrible cell at Southwark, Gwynplaine had expected the iron collar of a felon; they had placed on his head the coronet of a peer. How could this be? There had not been space of time enough between what Gwynplaine had feared and what had really occurred; it had succeeded too quickly--his terror changing into other feelings too abruptly for comprehension. The contrasts were too tightly packed one against the other. Gwynplaine made an effort to withdraw his mind from the vice.

He was silent. This is the instinct of great stupefaction, which is more on the defensive than it is thought to be. Who says nothing is prepared for everything. A word of yours allowed to drop may be seized in some

unknown system of wheels, and your utter destruction be compassed in its complex machinery.

The poor and weak live in terror of being crushed. The crowd ever expect to be trodden down. Gwynplaine had long been one of the crowd.

A singular state of human uneasiness can be expressed by the words: Let us see what will happen. Gwynplaine was in this state. You feel that you have not gained your equilibrium when an unexpected situation surges up under your feet. You watch for something which must produce a result. You are vaguely attentive. We will see what happens. What? You do not know. Whom? You watch.

The man with the paunch repeated, "You are in your own house, my lord."

Gwynplaine felt himself. In surprises, we first look to make sure that things exist; then we feel ourselves, to make sure that we exist ourselves. It was certainly to him that the words were spoken; but he himself was somebody else. He no longer had his jacket on, or his esclavine of leather. He had a waistcoat of cloth of silver; and a satin coat, which he touched and found to be embroidered. He felt a heavy purse in his waistcoat pocket. A pair of velvet trunk hose covered his clown's tights. He wore shoes with high red heels. As they had brought him to this palace, so had they changed his dress.

The man resumed,--

"Will your lordship deign to remember this: I am called Barkilphedro; I am clerk to the Admiralty. It was I who opened Hardquanonne's flask and drew your destiny out of it. Thus, in the 'Arabian Nights' a fisherman releases a giant from a bottle."

Gwynplaine fixed his eyes on the smiling face of the speaker.

Barkilphedro continued:--

"Besides this palace, my lord, Hunkerville House, which is larger, is yours. You own Clancharlie Castle, from which you take your title, and which was a fortress in the time of Edward the Elder. You have nineteen bailiwicks belonging to you, with their villages and their inhabitants. This puts under your banner, as a landlord and a nobleman, about eighty thousand vassals and tenants. At Clancharlie you are a judge--judge of all, both of goods and of persons--and you hold your baron's court. The king has no right which you have not, except the privilege of coining money. The king, designated by the Norman law as chief signor, has justice, court, and coin. Coin is money. So that you, excepting in this last, are as much a king in your lordship as he is in his kingdom. You have the right, as a baron, to a gibbet with four pillars in England; and, as a marquis, to a scaffold with seven posts in Sicily: that of the mere lord having two pillars; that of a lord of the manor, three; and that of a duke, eight. You are styled prince in the ancient charters of Northumberland. You are related to the Viscounts Valentia in Ireland, whose name is Power; and to the Earls of Umfraville in Scotland, whose name is Angus. You are chief of a clan, like Campbell, Ardmannach, and

Macallummore. You have eight barons' courts--Reculver, Baston, Hell-Kerters, Hombles, Moricambe, Grundraith, Trenwardraith, and others. You have a right over the turf-cutting of Pillinmore, and over the alabaster quarries near Trent. Moreover, you own all the country of Penneth Chase; and you have a mountain with an ancient town on it. The town is called Vinecaunton; the mountain is called Moilenlli. All which gives you an income of forty thousand pounds a year. That is to say, forty times the five-and-twenty thousand francs with which a Frenchman is satisfied."

Whilst Barkilphedro spoke, Gwynplaine, in a crescendo of stupor, remembered the past. Memory is a gulf that a word can move to its lowest depths. Gwynplaine knew all the words pronounced by Barkilphedro. They were written in the last lines of the two scrolls which lined the van in which his childhood had been passed, and, from so often letting his eyes wander over them mechanically, he knew them by heart. On reaching, a forsaken orphan, the travelling caravan at Weymouth, he had found the inventory of the inheritance which awaited him; and in the morning, when the poor little boy awoke, the first thing spelt by his careless and unconscious eyes was his own title and its possessions. It was a strange detail added to all his other surprises, that, during fifteen years, rolling from highway to highway, the clown of a travelling theatre, earning his bread day by day, picking up farthings, and living on crumbs, he should have travelled with the inventory of his fortune placarded over his misery.

Barkilphedro touched the casket on the table with his forefinger.

"My lord, this casket contains two thousand guineas which her gracious Majesty the Queen has sent you for your present wants."

Gwynplaine made a movement.

"That shall be for my Father Ursus," he said.

"So be it, my lord," said Barkilphedro. "Ursus, at the Tadcaster Inn. The Serjeant of the Coif, who accompanied us hither, and is about to return immediately, will carry them to him. Perhaps I may go to London myself. In that case I will take charge of it."

"I shall take them to him myself," said Gwynplaine.

Barkilphedro's smile disappeared, and he said,--"Impossible!"

There is an impressive inflection of voice which, as it were, underlines the words. Barkilphedro's tone was thus emphasized; he paused, so as to put a full stop after the word he had just uttered. Then he continued, with the peculiar and respectful tone of a servant who feels that he is master,--

"My lord, you are twenty-three miles from London, at Corleone Lodge, your court residence, contiguous to the Royal Castle of Windsor. You are here unknown to any one. You were brought here in a close carriage, which was awaiting you at the gate of the jail at Southwark. The

servants who introduced you into this palace are ignorant who you are; but they know me, and that is sufficient. You may possibly have been brought to these apartments by means of a private key which is in my possession. There are people in the house asleep, and it is not an hour to awaken them. Hence we have time for an explanation, which, nevertheless, will be short. I have been commissioned by her Majesty--"

As he spoke, Barkilphedro began to turn over the leaves of some bundles of papers which were lying near the casket.

"My lord, here is your patent of peerage. Here is that of your Sicilian marquisate. These are the parchments and title-deeds of your eight baronies, with the seals of eleven kings, from Baldret, King of Kent, to James the Sixth of Scotland, and first of England and Scotland united. Here are your letters of precedence. Here are your rent-rolls, and titles and descriptions of your fiefs, freeholds, dependencies, lands, and domains. That which you see above your head in the emblazonment on the ceiling are your two coronets: the circlet with pearls for the baron, and the circlet with strawberry leaves for the marquis.

"Here, in the wardrobe, is your peer's robe of red velvet, bordered with ermine. To-day, only a few hours since, the Lord Chancellor and the Deputy Earl Marshal of England, informed of the result of your confrontation with the Comprachico Hardquanonne, have taken her Majesty's commands. Her Majesty has signed them, according to her royal will, which is the same as the law. All formalities have been complied with. To-morrow, and no later than to-morrow, you will take your seat in

the House of Lords, where they have for some days been deliberating on a bill, presented by the crown, having for its object the augmentation, by a hundred thousand pounds sterling yearly, of the annual allowance to the Duke of Cumberland, husband of the queen. You will be able to take part in the debate."

Barkilphedro paused, breathed slowly, and resumed.

"However, nothing is yet settled. A man cannot be made a peer of England without his own consent. All can be annulled and disappear, unless you acquiesce. An event nipped in the bud ere it ripens often occurs in state policy. My lord, up to this time silence has been preserved on what has occurred. The House of Lords will not be informed of the facts until to-morrow. Secrecy has been kept about the whole matter for reasons of state, which are of such importance that the influential persons who alone are at this moment cognizant of your existence, and of your rights, will forget them immediately should reasons of state command their being forgotten. That which is in darkness may remain in darkness. It is easy to wipe you out; the more so as you have a brother, the natural son of your father and of a woman who afterwards, during the exile of your father, became mistress to King Charles II., which accounts for your brother's high position at court; for it is to this brother, bastard though he be, that your peerage would revert. Do you wish this? I cannot think so. Well, all depends on you. The queen must be obeyed. You will not quit the house till to-morrow in a royal carriage, and to go to the House of Lords. My lord, will you be a peer of England; yes or no? The queen has designs for you. She

destines you for an alliance almost royal. Lord Fermain Clancharlie, this is the decisive moment. Destiny never opens one door without shutting another. After a certain step in advance, to step back is impossible. Whoso enters into transfiguration, leaves behind him evanescence. My lord, Gwynplaine is dead. Do you understand?"

Gwynplaine trembled from head to foot.

Then he recovered himself.

"Yes," he said.

Barkilphedro, smiling, bowed, placed the casket under his cloak, and left the room.

CHAPTER V.

WE THINK WE REMEMBER; WE FORGET.

Whence arise those strange, visible changes which occur in the soul of man?

Gwynplaine had been at the same moment raised to a summit and cast into

an abyss.

His head swam with double giddiness--the giddiness of ascent and descent. A fatal combination.

He felt himself ascend, and felt not his fall.

It is appalling to see a new horizon.

A perspective affords suggestions,--not always good ones.

He had before him the fairy glade, a snare perhaps, seen through opening clouds, and showing the blue depths of sky; so deep, that they are obscure.

He was on the mountain, whence he could see all the kingdoms of the earth. A mountain all the more terrible that it is a visionary one. Those who are on its apex are in a dream.

Palaces, castles, power, opulence, all human happiness extending as far as eye could reach; a map of enjoyments spread out to the horizon; a sort of radiant geography of which he was the centre. A perilous mirage!

Imagine what must have been the haze of such a vision, not led up to, not attained to as by the gradual steps of a ladder, but reached without transition and without previous warning.

A man going to sleep in a mole's burrow, and awaking on the top of the Strasbourg steeple; such was the state of Gwynplaine.

Giddiness is a dangerous kind of glare, particularly that which bears you at once towards the day and towards the night, forming two whirlwinds, one opposed to the other.

He saw too much, and not enough.

He saw all, and nothing.

His state was what the author of this book has somewhere expressed as the blind man dazzled.

Gwynplaine, left by himself, began to walk with long strides. A bubbling precedes an explosion.

Notwithstanding his agitation, in this impossibility of keeping still, he meditated. His mind liquefied as it boiled. He began to recall things to his memory. It is surprising how we find that we have heard so clearly that to which we scarcely listened. The declaration of the shipwrecked men, read by the sheriff in the Southwark cell, came back to him clearly and intelligibly. He recalled every word, he saw under it his whole infancy.

Suddenly he stopped, his hands clasped behind his back, looking up to the ceilings--the sky--no matter what--whatever was above him.

"Quits!" he cried.

He felt like one whose head rises out of the water. It seemed to him that he saw everything--the past, the future, the present--in the accession of a sudden flash of light.

"Oh!" he cried, for there are cries in the depths of thought. "Oh! it was so, was it! I was a lord. All is discovered. They stole, betrayed, destroyed, abandoned, disinherited, murdered me! The corpse of my destiny floated fifteen years on the sea; all at once it touched the earth, and it started up, erect and living. I am reborn. I am born. I felt under my rags that the breast there palpitating was not that of a wretch; and when I looked on crowds of men, I felt that they were the flocks, and that I was not the dog, but the shepherd! Shepherds of the people, leaders of men, guides and masters, such were my fathers; and what they were I am! I am a gentleman, and I have a sword; I am a baron, and I have a casque; I am a marquis, and I have a plume; I am a peer, and I have a coronet. Lo! they deprived me of all this. I dwelt in light, they flung me into darkness. Those who proscribed the father, sold the son. When my father was dead, they took from beneath his head the stone of exile which he had placed for his pillow, and, tying it to my neck, they flung me into a sewer. Oh! those scoundrels who tortured my infancy! Yes, they rise and move in the depths of my memory. Yes; I see them again. I was that morsel of flesh pecked to pieces on a tomb by a flight of crows. I bled and cried under all those horrible shadows. Lo! it was there that they precipitated me, under the crush of those who

come and go, under the trampling feet of men, under the undermost of the human race, lower than the serf, baser than the serving man, lower than the felon, lower than the slave, at the spot where Chaos becomes a sewer, in which I was engulfed. It is from thence that I come; it is from this that I rise; it is from this that I am risen. And here I am now. Quits!"

He sat down, he rose, clasped his head with his hands, began to pace the room again, and his tempestuous monologue continued within him.

"Where am I?--on the summit? Where is it that I have just alighted?--on the highest peak? This pinnacle, this grandeur, this dome of the world, this great power, is my home. This temple is in air. I am one of the gods. I live in inaccessible heights. This supremacy, which I looked up to from below, and from whence emanated such rays of glory that I shut my eyes; this ineffaceable peerage; this impregnable fortress of the fortunate, I enter. I am in it. I am of it. Ah, what a decisive turn of the wheel! I was below, I am on high--on high for ever! Behold me a lord! I shall have a scarlet robe. I shall have an earl's coronet on my head. I shall assist at the coronation of kings. They will take the oath from my hands. I shall judge princes and ministers. I shall exist. From the depths into which I was thrown, I have rebounded to the zenith. I have palaces in town and country: houses, gardens, chases, forests, carriages, millions. I will give fêtes. I will make laws. I shall have the choice of joys and pleasures. And the vagabond Gwynplaine, who had not the right to gather a flower in the grass, may pluck the stars from heaven!"

Melancholy overshadowing of a soul's brightness! Thus it was that in Gwynplaine, who had been a hero, and perhaps had not ceased to be one, moral greatness gave way to material splendour. A lamentable transition! Virtue broken down by a troop of passing demons. A surprise made on the weak side of man's fortress. All the inferior circumstances called by men superior, ambition, the purblind desires of instinct, passions, covetousness, driven far from Gwynplaine by the wholesome restraints of misfortune, took tumultuous possession of his generous heart. And from what had this arisen? From the discovery of a parchment in a waif drifted by the sea. Conscience may be violated by a chance attack.

Gwynplaine drank in great draughts of pride, and it dulled his soul. Such is the poison of that fatal wine.

Giddiness invaded him. He more than consented to its approach. He welcomed it. This was the effect of previous and long-continued thirst. Are we an accomplice of the cup which deprives us of reason? He had always vaguely desired this. His eyes had always turned towards the great. To watch is to wish. The eaglet is not born in the eyrie for nothing.

Now, however, at moments, it seemed to him the simplest thing in the world that he should be a lord. A few hours only had passed, and yet the past of yesterday seemed so far off! Gwynplaine had fallen into the ambush of Better, who is the enemy of Good.

Unhappy is he of whom we say, how lucky he is! Adversity is more easily resisted than prosperity. We rise more perfect from ill fortune than from good. There is a Charybdis in poverty, and a Scylla in riches. Those who remain erect under the thunderbolt are prostrated by the flash. Thou who standest without shrinking on the verge of a precipice, fear lest thou be carried up on the innumerable wings of mists and dreams. The ascent which elevates will dwarf thee. An apotheosis has a sinister power of degradation.

It is not easy to understand what is good luck. Chance is nothing but a disguise. Nothing deceives so much as the face of fortune. Is she Providence? Is she Fatality?

A brightness may not be a brightness, because light is truth, and a gleam may be a deceit. You believe that it lights you; but no, it sets you on fire.

At night, a candle made of mean tallow becomes a star if placed in an opening in the darkness. The moth flies to it.

In what measure is the moth responsible?

The sight of the candle fascinates the moth as the eye of the serpent fascinates the bird.

Is it possible that the bird and the moth should resist the attraction?

Is it possible that the leaf should resist the wind? Is it possible that

the stone should refuse obedience to the laws of gravitation?

These are material questions, which are moral questions as well.

After he had received the letter of the duchess, Gwynplaine had recovered himself. The deep love in his nature had resisted it. But the storm having wearied itself on one side of the horizon, burst out on the other; for in destiny, as in nature, there are successive convulsions. The first shock loosens, the second uproots.

Alas! how do the oaks fall?

Thus he who, when a child of ten, stood alone on the shore of Portland, ready to give battle, who had looked steadfastly at all the combatants whom he had to encounter, the blast which bore away the vessel in which he had expected to embark, the gulf which had swallowed up the plank, the yawning abyss, of which the menace was its retrocession, the earth which refused him a shelter, the sky which refused him a star, solitude without pity, obscurity without notice, ocean, sky, all the violence of one infinite space, and all the mysterious enigmas of another; he who had neither trembled nor fainted before the mighty hostility of the unknown; he who, still so young, had held his own with night, as Hercules of old had held his own with death; he who in the unequal struggle had thrown down this defiance, that he, a child, adopted a child, that he encumbered himself with a load, when tired and exhausted, thus rendering himself an easier prey to the attacks on his weakness, and, as it were, himself unmuzzling the shadowy monsters in ambush

around him; he who, a precocious warrior, had immediately, and from his first steps out of the cradle, struggled breast to breast with destiny; he, whose disproportion with strife had not discouraged from striving; he who, perceiving in everything around him a frightful occultation of the human race, had accepted that eclipse, and proudly continued his journey; he who had known how to endure cold, thirst, hunger, valiantly; he who, a pigmy in stature, had been a colossus in soul: this Gwynplaine, who had conquered the great terror of the abyss under its double form, Tempest and Misery, staggered under a breath--Vanity.

Thus, when she has exhausted distress, nakedness, storms, catastrophes, agonies on an unflinching man, Fatality begins to smile, and her victim, suddenly intoxicated, staggers.

The smile of Fatality! Can anything more terrible be imagined? It is the last resource of the pitiless trier of souls in his proof of man. The tiger, lurking in destiny, caresses man with a velvet paw. Sinister preparation, hideous gentleness in the monster!

Every self-observer has detected within himself mental weakness coincident with aggrandisement. A sudden growth disturbs the system, and produces fever.

In Gwynplaine's brain was the giddy whirlwind of a crowd of new circumstances; all the light and shade of a metamorphosis; inexpressibly strange confrontations; the shock of the past against the future. Two Gwynplaines, himself doubled; behind, an infant in rags crawling through

night--wandering, shivering, hungry, provoking laughter; in front, a brilliant nobleman--luxurious, proud, dazzling all London. He was casting off one form, and amalgamating himself with the other. He was casting the mountebank, and becoming the peer. Change of skin is sometimes change of soul. Now and then the past seemed like a dream. It was complex; bad and good. He thought of his father. It was a poignant anguish never to have known his father. He tried to picture him to himself. He thought of his brother, of whom he had just heard. Then he had a family! He, Gwynplaine! He lost himself in fantastic dreams. He saw visions of magnificence; unknown forms of solemn grandeur moved in mist before him. He heard flourishes of trumpets.

"And then," he said, "I shall be eloquent."

He pictured to himself a splendid entrance into the House of Lords. He should arrive full to the brim with new facts and ideas. What could he not tell them? What subjects he had accumulated! What an advantage to be in the midst of them, a man who had seen, touched, undergone, and suffered; who could cry aloud to them, "I have been near to everything, from which you are so far removed." He would hurl reality in the face of those patricians, crammed with illusions. They should tremble, for it would be the truth. They would applaud, for it would be grand. He would arise amongst those powerful men, more powerful than they. "I shall appear as a torch-bearer, to show them truth; and as a sword-bearer, to show them justice!" What a triumph!

And, building up these fantasies in his mind, clear and confused at the

same time, he had attacks of delirium,--sinking on the first seat he came to; sometimes drowsy, sometimes starting up. He came and went, looked at the ceiling, examined the coronets, studied vaguely the hieroglyphics of the emblazonment, felt the velvet of the walls, moved the chairs, turned over the parchments, read the names, spelt out the titles, Buxton, Homble, Grundraith, Hunkerville, Clancharlie; compared the wax, the impression, felt the twist of silk appended to the royal privy seal, approached the window, listened to the splash of the fountain, contemplated the statues, counted, with the patience of a somnambulist, the columns of marble, and said,--

"It is real."

Then he touched his satin clothes, and asked himself,--

"Is it I? Yes."

He was torn by an inward tempest.

In this whirlwind, did he feel faintness and fatigue? Did he drink, eat, sleep? If he did so, he was unconscious of the fact. In certain violent situations instinct satisfies itself, according to its requirements, unconsciously. Besides, his thoughts were less thoughts than mists. At the moment that the black flame of an irruption disgorges itself from depths full of boiling lava, has the crater any consciousness of the flocks which crop the grass at the foot of the mountain?

The hours passed.

The dawn appeared and brought the day. A bright ray penetrated the chamber, and at the same instant broke on the soul of Gwynplaine.

And Dea! said the light.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

URSUS UNDER DIFFERENT ASPECTS.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT THE MISANTHROPE SAID.

After Ursus had seen Gwynplaine thrust within the gates of Southwark Jail, he remained, haggard, in the corner from which he was watching. For a long time his ears were haunted by the grinding of the bolts and bars, which was like a howl of joy that one wretch more should be enclosed within them.