CHARLES JAMES LEVER

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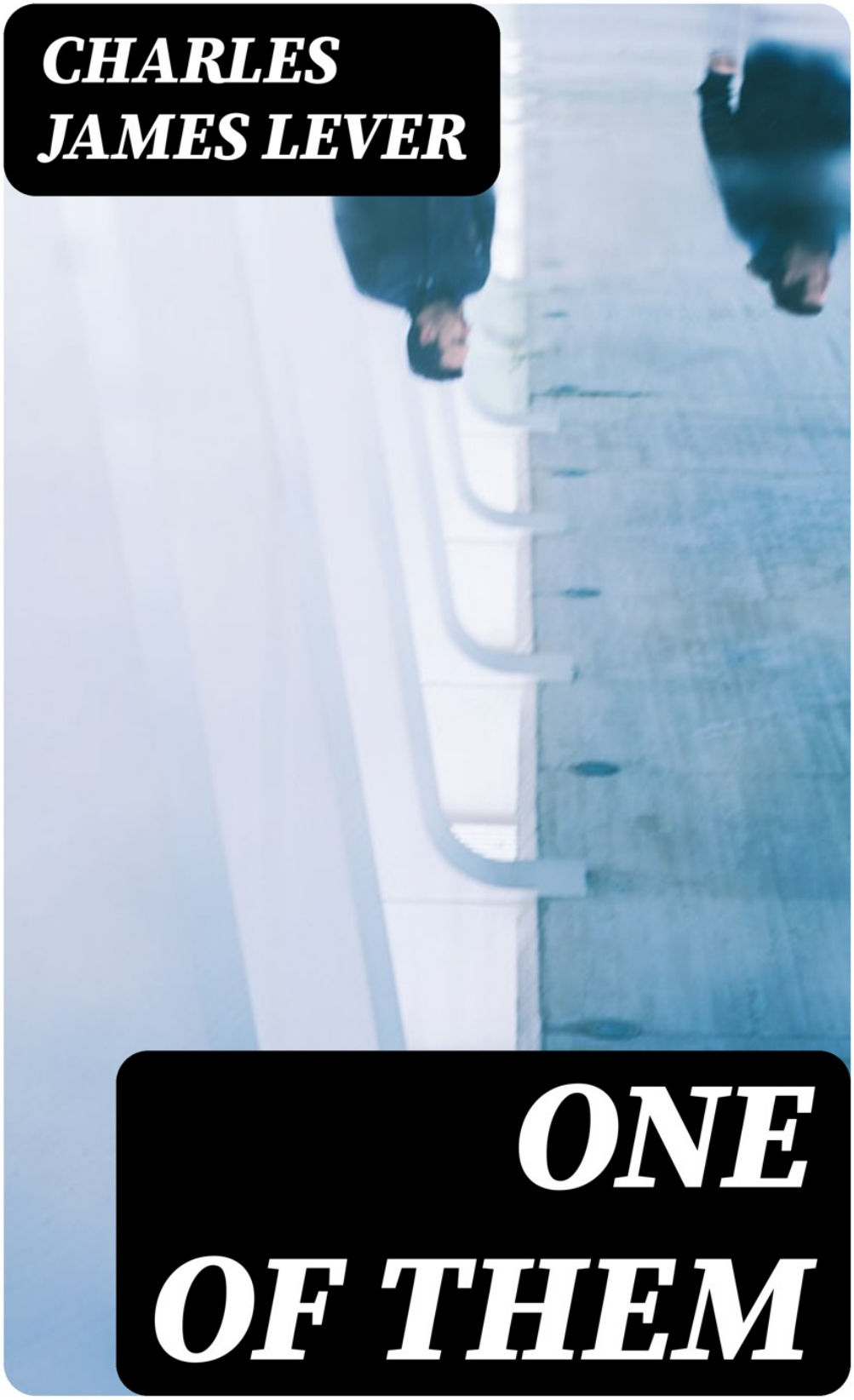

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CHAPTER I. A PIAZZA AFTER SUNSET

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One of the most depressing and languid of all objects is the aspect of an Italian city in the full noon of a hot summer's day. The massive buildings, fortress-like and stern, which show no touch of life and habitation; the glaring streets, un-traversed by a single passer; the wide piazza, staring vacantly in the broiling sun; the shop doors closed, all evidencing the season of the siesta, seem all waiting for the hour when long shadows shall fall over the scorched pavement, and some air—faint though it be—of coming night recall the population to a semblance of active existence.

With the air of a heated wayfarer, throwing open his coat to refresh himself, the city, at last, flings wide jalousie and shutter, and the half-baked inhabitant strolls forth to taste the “bel fresco.” It is the season when nationalities are seen undisturbed by the presence of strangers. No travellers are now to be met with; the heavy rumbling of the travelling-carriage no longer thunders over the massive causeway; no postilion's whip awakes the echoes of the Piazza; no landlord's bell summons the eager household to the deep-arched doorway. It is the People alone are abroad,—that gentle Italian people, quiet-looking, inoffensive as they are. A sort of languid grace, a kind of dignified melancholy, pervades their demeanor, not at all unpleasing; and if the stranger come fresh from the west of Europe, with its busy turmoil and zeal of money-getting, he cannot but experience a sense of calm and relief in the aspect of this easily

satisfied and simple population. As the gloom of evening thickens the scene assumes more of life and movement. Vendors of cooling drinks, iced lemonades, and such-like, move along with gay flags flaunting over the brilliant urnlike copper that contains the refreshing beverage. Watermelons, in all the gushing richness of color, are at every corner, and piles of delicious fruit lie under the motley glare from many a paper lantern. Along the quays and bridges, on wide terraces or jutting bastions, wherever a breath of fresh air can be caught, crowds are seated, quietly enjoying the cool hour. Not a sound to be heard, save the incessant motion of the fan, which is, to this season, what is the cicala to the hot hour of noon. One cannot help feeling struck by the aspect of a people come thus to blend, like the members of one large family. There they are, of every age and of every condition, mingling with a sort of familiar kindliness that seems like a domesticity.

In all this open-air life, with its inseparable equality, one sees the embers of that old fire which once kindled the Italian heart in the days of their proud and glorious Republics. They are the descendants of those who, in the self-same spots, discussed the acts of Doges and Senates, haughty citizens of states, the haughtiest of all their age—and now—

Whether come by chance or detained by some accident, two English travellers were seated one evening in front of the Café Doney, at Florence, in contemplation of such a scene as this, listlessly smoking their cigars; they conversed occasionally, in that “staccato” style of conversation known to smokers.

One was an elderly, fine-looking man, of that hale and hearty stamp we like to think English; the young fellow at his side was so exactly his counterpart in lineament and feature that none could doubt them to be father and son. It is true that the snow-white hair of one was represented by a rich auburn in the other, and the quiet humor that lurked about the father's mouth was concealed in the son's by a handsome moustache, most carefully trimmed and curled.

The *café* behind them was empty, save at a single table, where sat a tall, gaunt, yellow-cheeked man, counting and recounting a number of coins the waiter had given him in change, and of whose value he seemed to entertain misgivings, as he held them up one by one to the light and examined them closely. In feature he was acute and penetrating, with a mixture of melancholy and intrepidity peculiarly characteristic; his hair was long, black, and wave-less, and fell heavily over the collar of his coat behind; his dress was a suit of coffee-colored brown,—coat, waistcoat, and trousers; and even to his high-peaked conical hat the same tint extended. In age, he might have been anything from two-and-thirty to forty, or upwards.

Attracted by an extraordinary attempt of the stranger to express himself in Italian to the waiter, the young Englishman turned round, and then as quickly leaning down towards his father, said, in a subdued voice, “Only think; there he is again! The Yankee we met at Meurice's, at Spa, Ems, the Righi, Como, and Heaven knows where besides! There he is talking Italian, own brother to his French, and with the same success too!”

“Well, well, Charley,” said the other, good-humoredly, “it is not from an Englishman can come the sneer about such blunders. We make sad work of genders and declensions ourselves; and as for our American, I rather like him, and am not sorry to meet him again.”

“You surely cannot mean that. There's not a fault of his nation that he does not, in one shape or other, represent; and, in a word, he is a bore of the first water.”

“The accusation of boredom is one of those ugly confessions which ennui occasionally makes of its own inability to be interested. Now, for my part, the Yankee does not bore me. He is a sharp, shrewd man, always eager for information.”

“I 'd call him inquisitive,” broke in the younger.

“There's an honest earnestness, too, in his manner,—a rough vigor—”

“That recalls stump-oratory, and that sledge-hammer school so popular 'down west.'”

“It is because he is intensely American that I like him, Charley. I heartily respect the honest zeal with which he tells you that there are no institutions, no country, no people to be compared with his own.”

“To me, the declaration is downright offensive; and I think there is a wide interval between prejudice and an enlightened patriotism. And when I hear an American claim for his nation a pre-eminence, not alone in courage, skill, and inventive genius, but in all the arts of civilization and refinement, I own I'm at a loss whether to laugh at or leave him.”

“Take my advice, Charley, don't do either; or, if you must do one of the two, better even the last than the first.”

Half stung by the tone of reproof in these words, and half angry with himself, perhaps, for his own petulance, the young man flung the end of his cigar away, and walked out into the street. Scarcely, however, had he done so when the subject of their brief controversy arose, and approached the Englishman, saying, with a drawling tone and nasal accent, “How is your health, stranger? I hope I see you pretty well?”

“Quite so, I thank you,” said the other cordially, as he moved a chair towards him.

“You've made a considerable tour of it [pronounced 'tower'] since we met, I reckon. You were bound to do Lombardy, and the silkworms, and the rice-fields, and the ancient cities, and the galleries, and such-like,—and you 've done them?”

The Englishman bowed assent.

“Well, sir, so have I, and it don't pay. No, it don't! It's noways pleasing to a man with a right sense of human natur' to see a set of half-starved squalid loafers making a livin' out of old tombs and ruined churches, with lying stories about martyrs' thumb-nails and saints' shin-bones. That won't make a people, sir, will it?”

“But you must have seen a great deal to interest you, notwithstanding.”

“At Genoa, sir. I like Genoa,—they 're a wide-awake, active set there. They 've got trade, sir, and they know it.”

“The city, I take it, is far more prosperous than pleasant, for strangers?”

“Well now, sir, that ere remark of yours strikes me as downright narrow, and, if I might be permitted, I 'd call it mean illiberal. Why should you or I object to people who prefer their own affairs to the pleasant task of amusing us?”

“Nay, I only meant to observe that one might find more agreeable companions than men intently immersed in money-getting.”

“Another error, and a downright English error too; for it's one of your national traits, stranger, always to abuse the very thing that you do best. What are you as a people but a hard-working, industrious, serious race, ever striving to do this a little cheaper, and that a little quicker, so as to beat the foreigner, and with all that you 'll stand up and say there ain't nothing on this universal globe to be compared to loafing!”

“I would hope that you have not heard this sentiment from an Englishman.”

“Not in them words, not exactly in them terms, but from the same platform, stranger. Why, when you want to exalt a man for any great service to the state, you ain't satisfied with making him a loafer,—for a lord is just a loafer, and no more nor no less,—but you make his son a loafer, and all his descendants forever. What would you say to a fellow that had a fast trotter, able to do his mile, on a fair road, in two forty-three, who, instead of keeping him in full working condition, and making him earn his penny, would just turn him out in a paddock to burst himself with clover, and the same with all his stock, for no other earthly reason than that they were the best blood and bone to be found anywhere? There ain't sense or reason in that, stranger, is there?”

“I don't think the parallel applies.”

“Maybe not, sir; but you have my meaning; perhaps I piled the metaphor too high; but as John Jacob Byles says, 'If the charge has hit you, it don't signify a red cent what the wadding was made of.'”

“I must say I think you are less than just in your estimate of our men of leisure,” said the Englishman, mildly.

“I ain't sure of that, sir; they live too much together, like our people down South, and that's not the way to get rid of prejudices. They 've none of that rough-and-tumble with the world as makes men broad-minded and marciful and forgiving; and they come at last to that wickedest creed of all, to think themselves the superfine salt of the earth. Now, there ain't no superfine salt peculiar to any rank or class. Human natur' is good and bad everywhere,—ay, sir, I 'll go further, I 've seen good in a Nigger!”

“I'm glad to hear you say so,” said the Englishman, repressing, but not without difficulty, a tendency to smile.

“Yes, sir, there 's good amongst all men,—even the Irish.”

“I feel sorry that you should make them an extreme case.”

“Well, sir,” said he, drawing a long breath, “they're main ugly,—main ugly, that's a fact. Not that they can do *us* any mischief. Our constitution is a mill where there's never too much water,—the more power, the more we grind; and even if the stream do come down somewhat stocked with snags and other rubbish upon it, the machine is an almighty smasher, and don't leave one fragment sticking to the other when it gets a stroke at 'em. Have you never been in the States, stranger?”

“Never. I have often planned such a ramble, but circumstances have somehow or other always interfered with the accomplishment.”

“Well, sir, you 're bound to go there, if only to correct the wrong impressions of your literary people, who do nothing but slander and belie us.”

“Not latterly, surely. You have nothing to complain of on the part of our late travellers.”

“I won't say that. They don't make such a fuss about chewing and whittling, and the like, as the first fellows; but they go on a-sneering about political dishonesty, Yankee sharpness, and trade rogueries, that ain't noways pleasing, —and, what's more, it ain't fair. But as *I* say, sir, go and see for yourself, or, if you can't do that, send your son. Is n't that young man there your son?”

The young Englishman turned and acknowledged the allusion to himself by the coldest imaginable bow, and that peculiarly unspeculative stare so distinctive in his class and station.

“I 'm unreasonable proud to see you again, sir,” said the Yankee, rising.

“Too much honor!” said the other, stiffly.

“No, it ain't,—no honor whatever. It's a fact, though, and that's better. Yes, sir, I like *you!*”

The young man merely bowed his acknowledgment, and looked even more haughty than before. It was plain, however, that the American attached little significance to the disdain of his manner, for he continued in the same easy, unembarrassed tone,—

“Yes, sir, I was at Lucerne that morning when you flung the boatman into the lake that tried to prevent your landing out of the boat. I saw how you buckled to your work, and I said to myself, 'There 's good stuff there, though he looks so uncommon conceited and proud.'”

“Charley is ready enough at that sort of thing,” said the father, laughing heartily; and, indeed, after a moment of struggle to maintain his gravity, the young man gave way and laughed too.

The American merely looked from one to the other, half sternly, and as if vainly trying to ascertain the cause of their mirth. The elder Englishman was quick to see the awkwardness of the moment, and apply a remedy to it.

“I was amused,” said he, good-humoredly, “at the mention of what had obtained for my son your favorable opinion. I believe that it's only amongst the Anglo-Saxon races that pugnacity takes place as a virtue.”

“Well, sir, if a man has n't got it, it very little matters what other qualities he possesses. They say courage is a bull-dog's property; but would any one like to be lower than a bull-dog? Besides, sir, it is what has made *you* great, and *us* greater.”

There was a tone of defiance in this speech evidently meant to provoke a discussion, and the young man turned angrily round to accept the challenge, when a significant look from his father restrained him. With a few commonplace observations dexterously thrown out, the old man contrived to change the channel of conversation, and then, reminded by his watch of the lateness of the hour, he apologized for a hasty departure, and took his leave.

“Well, was I right?” said the young man, as he walked along at his father's side. “Is he not a bore, and the worst of all bores too,—a quarrelsome one?”

“I 'm not so sure of that, Charley. It was plain he did n't fancy our laughing so heartily, and wanted an explanation which he saw no means of asking for; and it was, perhaps, as a sort of reprisal he made that boastful speech; but I am deeply mistaken if there be not much to like and respect in that man's nature.”

“There may be some grains of gold in the mud of the Arno there, if any one would spend a life to search for them,” said the youth, contemptuously. And with this ungracious speech the conversation closed, and they walked on in silence.

CHAPTER II. THE VILLA CAPRINI

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It was a few days after the brief scene we have just recorded that the two Englishmen were seated, after sunset, on a little terraced plateau in front of an antiquated villa. As they are destined to be intimate acquaintances of our reader in this tale, let us introduce them by name,—Sir William Heathcote and his son Charles.

With an adherence to national tastes which are rapidly fading away, they were enjoying their wine after dinner, and the spot they had selected for it was well chosen. From the terrace where they sat, a perfect maze of richly wooded glens could be seen, crossing and recrossing each other in every direction. From the depths of some arose the light spray of boiling mountain torrents; others, less wild in character, were marked by the blue smoke curling up from some humble homestead. Many a zigzag path of trellis-vines straggled up the hillsides, now half buried in olives, now emerging in all the grotesque beauty of its own wayward course. The tall maize and the red lucerne grew luxuriously beneath the fig and the pomegranate, while here and there the rich soil, rent with heat, seemed unable to conceal its affluence, and showed the yellow gourds and the melons bursting up through the fruitful earth. It was such a scene as at once combined Italian luxuriance with the verdant freshness of a Tyrol landscape, and of which the little territory that once called itself the Duchy of Lucca can boast many instances.

As background to the picture, the tall mountains of Carrara, lofty enough to be called Alps, rose, snow-capped and jagged in the distance, and upon their summits the last rays of the setting sun now glowed with the ruddy brilliancy of a carbuncle.

These Italian landscapes win one thoroughly from all other scenery, after a time. At first they seem hard and stern; there is a want of soft distances; the eye looks in vain for the blended shadows of northern landscape, and that rustic character so suggestive of country life; but in their clear distinctness, their marvellous beauty of outline, and in that vastness of view imparted by an atmosphere of cloudless purity, there are charms indisputably great.

As the elder Englishman looked upon this fair picture, he gave a faint sigh, and said: “I was thinking, Charley, what a mistake we make in life in not seeking out such spots as these when the world goes well with us, and we have our minds tuned to enjoyment, instead of coming to them careworn and weary, and when, at best, they only distract us momentarily from our griefs.”

“And my thought,” said the younger, “was, what a blunder it is to come here at all. This villa life was only endurable by your Italian noble, who came here once a year to squabble with his 'Fattore' and grind his peasants. He came to see that they gave him his share of oil and did n't water his miserable wine; he neither had society nor sport. As to our English country-house life, what can compare with it!”

“Even that we have over-civilized, making it London in everything,—London hours, London company, topics, habits,

tastes, all smacking of town life. Who, I ask you, thinks of his country existence, nowadays, as a period of quietness and tranquil enjoyment? Who goes back to the shade of his old elms to be with himself or some favorite author that he feels to like as a dear friend?”

“No; but he goes for famous hunting and the best shooting in Europe, it being no disparagement to either that he gets back at evening to a capital dinner and as good company as he 'd find in town.”

“May is of *my* mind,” said Sir William, half triumphantly; “she said so last night.”

“And she told me exactly the reverse this morning,” said the younger. “She said the monotony of this place was driving her mad. Scenery, she remarked, without people, is pretty much what a panorama is, compared to a play.”

“May is a traitress; and here she comes to make confession to which of us she has been false,” said Sir William, gayly, as he arose to place a chair for the young girl who now came towards them.

“I have heard you both, gentlemen,” said she, with a saucy toss of her head, “and I should like to hear why I should not agree with each and disagree afterwards, if it so pleased me.”

“Oh! if you fall back upon prerogative—” began Sir William.

“I have never quitted it. It is in the sovereignty of my woman's will that I reconcile opinions seemingly adverse, and can enjoy all the splendors of a capital and all the tameness of a village. I showed you already how I could

appreciate Paris; I mean now to prove how charmed I can be with the solitudes of Marlia.”

“Which says, in plain English,” said the young man, “that you don't care for either.”

“Will you condescend to be a little more gallant than my cousin, sir,” said she, turning to Sir William, “and at least give me credit for having a mind and knowing it?”

There was a pettish half-seriousness in her tone that made it almost impossible to say whether she was amused or angry, and to this also the changeful expression of her beautiful features contributed; for, though she smiled, her dark gray eyes sparkled like one who invited a contradiction. In this fleeting trait was the secret of her nature. May Leslie was one of Fortune's spoiled children,—one of those upon whom so many graces and good gifts had been lavished that it seemed as though Fate had exhausted her resources, and left herself no more to bestow.

She had surpassing beauty, youth, health, high spirits, and immense wealth. By her father's will she had been contracted in marriage with her distant relative, Charles Heathcote, with the proviso that if, on attaining the age of nineteen, she felt averse to the match, she should forfeit a certain estate in Wales which had once belonged to the Heathcotes, and contained the old residence of that family.

Sir William and his son had been living in the retirement of a little German capital, when the tidings of this wardship reached them. A number of unfortunate speculations had driven the baronet into exile from England, and left him with a pittance barely sufficient to live in the strictest economy. To this narrow fortune Charles Heathcote had come back,

after serving in a most extravagant Hussar regiment, and taking his part in an Indian campaign; and the dashing' soldier first heard, as he lay wounded in the hospital, that he must leave the service, and retire into obscurity. If it had not been for his strong affection for his father, Charles would have enlisted as a private soldier, and taken his chance for future distinction, but he could not desert him at such a moment, nor separate himself from that share of privation which should be henceforth borne in common; and so he came back, a bronzed, brave soldier, true-hearted and daring, and, if a little stern, no more so than might be deemed natural in one who had met such a heavy reverse on the very threshold of life.

Father and son were at supper in a little arbor of their garden near Weimar, when the post brought them the startling news that May Leslie, who was then at Malta, would be at Paris in a few days, where she expected to meet them. When Sir William had read through the long letter of the lawyer, giving an account of the late General Leslie's will, with its strange condition, he handed it to his son, without a word.

The young man read it eagerly; his color changed once or twice as he went on, and his face grew harder and sterner ere he finished. “Do you mean to accept this wardship?” asked he, hurriedly.

“There are certain reasons for which I cannot decline it, Charley,” said the other, mildly. “All my life long I have been Tom Leslie's debtor, in gratitude, for as noble a sacrifice as ever man made. We were both suitors to your mother, brother officers at the time, and well received in her father's

house. Leslie, however, was much better looked on than myself, for I was then but a second son, while he was the heir of a very large estate. There could not have been a doubt that his advances would have outweighed mine in a father and mother's estimate, and as he was madly in love, there seemed-nothing to prevent his success. Finding, however, in a conversation with your mother, that her affections were mine, he not only relinquished the place in my favor, but, although most eager to purchase his troop, suffered me, his junior, to pass over his head, and thus attain the rank which enabled me to marry. Leslie went to India, where he married, and we never met again. It was only some seven or eight months ago I read of his being named governor of a Mediterranean dependency, and the very next paper mentioned his death, when about to leave Calcutta."

"It is, then, most probable that, when making this will, he had never heard of our reverses in fortune?" said the young man.

"It is almost certain he had not, for it is dated the very year of that panic which ruined me."

"And, just as likely, might never have left such a will, had he known our altered fortunes?"

"I 'm not so sure of that. At all events, I can answer for it that no change in our condition would have made Tom Leslie alter the will, if he had once made it in our favor."

"I have no fancy for the compact, read it how you may," said Charles, impatiently; "nor can I say which I like least,—the notion of marrying a woman who is bound to accept me, or accepting a forfeit to release her from the obligation."

“I own it is—embarrassing,” said Sir William, after a moment's hesitation in choosing a suitable word.

“A downright indignity, I'd call it,” said the other, warmly, “and calculated to make the man odious in the woman's eyes, whichever lot befell him.”

“The wardship must be accepted, at all events,” said Sir William, curtly, as he arose and folded up the letter.

“You are the best judge of that; for if it depended upon *me*”

“Come, come, Charley,” said Sir William, in his tone of habitual kindness, “this life of quiet obscurity and poverty that we lead here has no terrors for *me*. I have been so long away from England that if I went back to-morrow I should look in vain for any of my old companions. I have forgotten the habits and the ways of home, and I have learned to submit myself to twenty things here which would be hardships elsewhere, but I don't like to contemplate the same sort of existence for *you*; I want to speculate on a very different future; and if—if—Nay, you need not feel so impatient at a mere conjecture.”

“Well, to another point,” said the young man, hastily. “We have got, as you have just said, to know that we can live very comfortably and contentedly here, looking after our celery and seakale, and watching our silver groschen; are you so very certain that you 'd like to change all this life, and launch out into an expensive style of living, to suit the notions of a rich heiress, and, what is worse again, to draw upon *her* resources to do it?”

“I won't deny that it will cost me severely; but, until we see her and know her, Charley, until we find out whether

she may be one whose qualities will make our sacrifices easy—”

“Would you accept this charge if she were perfectly portionless, and without a shilling in the world?”

“If she were Tom Leslie's daughter, do you mean?”

“Ay, any one's daughter?”

“To be sure I would, boy; and if I were only to consult my own feelings in the matter, I 'd say that I 'd prefer this alternative to the other.”

“Then I have no more to say,” said the son, as he walked away.

Within a month after this conversation, the little cottage was shut up, the garden wicket closed with a heavy padlock, and to any chance inquirer after its late residents, the answer returned was, that their present address was Place Vendôme, Paris.

“Tell me your company,” said the old adage; but, alas! the maxim had reference to other habits than our present-day ones. With what company now does not every man mix? Bishops discuss crime and punishment with ticket-of-leave men; fashionable exquisites visit the resorts of thieves; “swell people” go to hear madrigals at Covent Garden; and, as for the Ring, it is equally the table-land to peer and pickpocket. If, then, you would hazard a guess as to a man's manners nowadays, ask not his company, but his whereabouts. Run your eye over the addresses of that twice-remanded insolvent, ranging from Norfolk Street, Strand, to Berkeley Square, with Boulogne-sur-Mer, St John's Wood, Cadiz, the New Cut, Bermondsey, and the Edgware

Road, in the interval, and say if you cannot, even out of such slight materials, sketch off his biography.

“The style is the man,” says the adage; and we might with as much truth say, “the street is the man.” In his locality is written his ways and means, his manners, his morals, his griefs, joys, and ambitions. We live in an age prolific in this lesson. Only cast a glance at the daily sacrifices of those who, to reside within the periphery of greatness, submit to a crushing rent and a comfortless abode.

Think of him who, to date his note “——— Street, Berkeley Square,” denies himself honest indulgence, all because the world has come to believe that certain spots are the “Regions of the Best,” and that they who live there must needs be that grand English ideal,—respectable.

Dear me, what unheard-of sacrifices does it demand of humble fortunes to be Respectable! what pinching and starving and saving! what self-denial and what striving! what cheerless little dinner-parties to other Respectables! what dyeing of black silks and storing of old ostrich feathers! And how and wherefore have we wandered off in this digression! Simply to say that Sir William Heathoote and his ward were living in a splendid quarter of Paris, and after that rambled into Germany, and thence to Como and down to Rome, very often delighted with their choice of residence, enjoying much that was enjoyable, but still—shall we own it?—never finding the exact place they seemed to want, nor exactly the people with whom they were willing to live in intimacy. They had been at Baden in the summer, at Como in the late autumn, at Rome in the winter, at Castellamare in

the spring,—everywhere in its season, and yet somehow—
And so they began to try that last resource of bored people,
—places out of the season and places out of common resort,
—and it was thus that they found themselves at Florence in June, and in Marlia in July.

CHAPTER III. TRAVELLING ACQUAINTANCE

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About the same hour of the same evening which we have just chronicled, a group of persons sat under some spreading chestnut-trees beside a brawling little rivulet at the Bagni de Lucca. They were travellers, chance acquaintances thrown together by the accidents of the road, and entertained for each other those varied sentiments of like and dislike, those mingled distrusts, suspicions, and beliefs, which, however unconsciously to ourselves, are part of the education travelling impresses, and which, when long persevered in, make up that acute but not always amiable individual we call “an old traveller.”

We are not about to present them all to our reader, and will only beg to introduce to his notice a few of the notabilities then present. *Place aux dames!* then; and, first of all, we beg attention to the dark-eyed, dark-haired, and very delicately featured woman, who, in half-mourning, and with a pretty but fantastically costumed girl beside her, is working at an embroidery-frame close to the river. She is a Mrs. Penthony Morris, the wife or the widow—both opinions prevail—of a Captain Penthony Morris, killed in a duel, or in India, or alive in the Marshalsea, or at Baden-Baden, as may be. She is striking-looking, admirably dressed, has a most

beautiful foot, as you may see where it rests upon the rail of the chair placed in front of her, and is, altogether, what that very smartly dressed, much-beringed, and essenced young gentleman near her has already pronounced her, “a stunning fine woman.” He is a Mr. Mosely, one of those unhappy young Londoners whose family fame is ever destined to eclipse their own gentility, for he is immediately recognized, and drawlingly do men inquire some twenty times a day, “Ain't he a son of Trip and Mosely's, those fellows in Bond Street?” Unhappy Trip and Mosely! why have you rendered yourselves so great and illustrious? why have your tasteful devices in gauze, your “sacrifices” in challis, your “last new things in grenadine,” made such celebrity around you, that Tom Mosely, “out for his travels,” can no more escape the shop than if he were languishing at a customer over a “sweet article in white tarlatan”? In the two comfortable armchairs side by side sit two indubitable specimens, male and female, of the Anglo-Saxon family,—Mr. Morgan, that florid man, wiping his polished bald head, and that fat lady fanning with all her might. Are they not English? They are “out,” and, judging from their recorded experiences, only dying to be “in” again. “Such a set of cheating, lying, lazy set of rascals are these Italians! Independence, sir; don't talk to me of that humbug! What they want is English travellers to fleece and English women to marry.” Near to these, at full length, on two chairs, one of which reclines against a tree at an angle of about forty degrees, sits our Yankee acquaintance, whom we may as well present by his name, Leonidas Shaver Quackinboss; he is smoking a “Virginian” about the size of a marshal's bâton,

and occasionally sipping at a “cobbler,” which with much pains he has compounded for his own drinking. Various others of different ranks and countries are scattered about, and in the centre of all, at a small table with a lamp, sits a short, burly figure, with a strange mixture of superciliousness and drollery in his face, as though there were a perpetual contest in his nature whether he would be impertinent or amusing. This was Mr. Gorman O'Shea, Member of Parliament for Inchabogue, and for three weeks a Lord of the Treasury when O'Connell was king.

Doing "Murray."

Mr. O'Shea is fond of public speaking. He has a taste for proposing, or seconding, or returning thanks that verges on a passion, so that even in a private dinner with a friend he has been known to arise and address his own companion in a set speech, adorned with all the graces and flowers of post-prandial eloquence. Upon the present occasion he has

been, to his great delight, deputed to read aloud to the company from that magic volume by which the Continent is expounded to Englishmen, and in whose pages they are instructed in everything, from passports to pictures, and drilled in all the mysteries of money, posting, police regulations, domes, dinners, and Divine service by a Clergyman of the Established Church. In a word, he is reciting John Murray.

To understand the drift of the present meeting, we ought to mention that, in the course of a conversation started that day at the *table d'hote* it was suggested that such of the company as felt disposed might make an excursion to Marlia to visit a celebrated villa there, whose gardens alone were amongst the great sights of Northern Italy. All had heard of this charming residence; views of it had been seen in every print-shop. It had its historical associations from a very early period. There were chambers where murders had been committed, conspiracies held, confederates poisoned. King and Kaiser had passed the night there; all of which were duly and faithfully chronicled in “John,” and impressively recited by Mr. Gorman O'Shea in the richest accents of his native Doric. “There you have it now,” said he, as he closed the volume; “and I will say, it has n't its equal anywhere for galleries, terraces, carved architraves, stuccoed ceilings, and frescos, and all the other balderdash peculiar to these places.”

“Oh, Mr. O'Shea, what profanation!” interposed Mrs. Morris; “walls immortalized by Giotto and Cimabue!”

“Have n't they got stunning names of their own?” broke in Quackinboss. “That's one of the smallest dodges to