

The Adventures of Philip
Vol. I

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by

William Makepeace Thackeray

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I. DOCTOR FELL	1
CHAPTER II. AT SCHOOL AND AT HOME	9
CHAPTER III. A CONSULTATION	17
CHAPTER IV. A GENTEEL FAMILY	24
CHAPTER V. THE NOBLE KINSMAN	35
CHAPTER VI. BRANDON'S	48
CHAPTER VII. IMPLETUR VETERIS BACCHI	58
CHAPTER VIII. WILL BE PRONOUNCED TO BE CYNICAL BY THE BENEVOLENT	71
CHAPTER IX. CONTAINS ONE RIDDLE WHICH IS SOLVED, AND PERHAPS SOME MORE	76
CHAPTER X. IN WHICH WE VISIT 'ADMIRAL BYNG'	85
CHAPTER XI. IN WHICH PHILIP IS VERY ILL-TEMPERED	94
CHAPTER XII. DAMOCLES	106
CHAPTER XIII. LOVE ME LOVE MY DOG	122
CHAPTER XIV. CONTAINS TWO OF PHILIP'S MISHAPS	132
CHAPTER XV. SAMARITANS	147
CHAPTER XVI. IN WHICH PHILIP SHOWS HIS METTLE	154
CHAPTER XVII. BREVIS ESSE LABORO	170
CHAPTER XVIII. DRUM IST'S SO WOHL MIR IN DER WELT	179
CHAPTER XIX. QU'ON EST BIEN À VINGT ANS	194

CHAPTER XX. COURSE OF TRUE LOVE	204
CHAPTER XXI. TREATS OF DANCING, DINING, DYING	216
CHAPTER XXII. PULVIS ET UMBRA SUMUS	231
CHAPTER XXIII. IN WHICH WE STILL HOVER ABOUT THE ELYSIAN FIELDS	238

CHAPTER I. DOCTOR FELL

'NOT attend her own son when he is ill!' said my mother. 'She does not deserve to have a son!' And Mrs. Pendennis looked towards her own only darling whilst uttering this indignant exclamation. As she looked, I know what passed through her mind. She nursed me, she dressed me in little caps and long-clothes, she attired me in my first jacket and trousers. She watched at my bedside through my infantile and juvenile ailments. She tended me through all my life, she held me to her heart with infinite prayers and blessings. She is no longer with us to bless and pray; but from heaven, where she is, I know her love pursues me; and often and often I think she is here, only invisible.

'Mrs. Firmin would be of no good,' growled Dr. Goodenough. 'She would have hysterics, and the nurse would have two patients to look after.'

'Don't tell me,' cries my mother, with a flush on her cheeks. 'Do you suppose if that child' (meaning, of course, her paragon) 'were ill, I would not go to him?'

'My dear, if that child were hungry, you would chop off your head to make him broth,' says the doctor, sipping his tea.

'*Potage à la bonne femme*,' says Mr. Pendennis. 'Mother, we have it at the club. You would be done with milk, eggs, and a quantity of vegetables. You would be put to simmer for many hours in an earthen pan, and—'

'Don't be horrible, Arthur!' cries a young lady, who was my mother's companion of those happy days.

'And people when they knew you would like you very much.'

My uncle looked as if he did not understand the allegory.

'What is this you are talking about—*potage à la*—what-d'ye-call-'im?' says he. 'I thought we were speaking of Mrs. Firmin, of Old Parr Street. Mrs. Firmin is a doosid delicate woman,' interposed the Major. 'All the females of that family are. Her mother died early. Her sister, Mrs. Twysden, is very delicate. She would be of no more use in a sick-room than a-than a bull in a china-shop, begad! and she might catch the fever, too.'

'And so might you, Major!' cries the doctor. 'Aren't you talking to me, who have just come from the boy? Keep your distance, or I shall bite you.'

The old gentleman gave a little backward movement with his chair.

'Gad it's no joking matter,' says he; 'I've known fellows catch fevers at—at ever so much past my age. At any rate, the boy is no boy of mine, begad! I dine at Firmin's house, who has married into a good family, though he is only a doctor, and—'

'And pray what was my husband?' cried Mrs. Pendennis.

'Only a doctor, indeed!' calls out Goodenough. 'My dear creature, I have a great mind to give him the scarlet fever this minute!'

'My father was a surgeon and apothecary, I have heard,' says the widow's son.

'And what then? And I should like to know if a man of one of the most ancient families in the kingdom—in the empire, begad!—hasn't a right to pursoo a learned, a useful, an honourable profession. My brother John was—'

'A medical practitioner!' I say, with a sigh.

And my uncle arranges his hair, puts his handkerchief to his teeth, and says—

'Stuff! nonsense — no patience with these personalities, begad! Firmin is a doctor, certainly—so are you—so are others. But Firmin is a university man, and a gentleman. Firmin has travelled, Firmin is intimate with some of the best people in England, and has married into one of the first families. Gad, sir, do you suppose that a woman bred up in the lap of luxury—in the very lap, sir—at Kingwood and Whipham, and at Ringwood House in Walpole Street, where she was absolute mistress, begad—do you suppose such a woman is fit to be nurse-tender in a sick-room? She never *was* fit for that, or for anything except—'(here the Major saw smiles on the countenances of some of his audience)—'except, I say, to preside at Ringwood House and—and adorn society, and that sort of thing. And if such a woman chooses to run away with her uncle's doctor, and marry below her rank—why, *I* don't think it's a laughing matter, hang me if I do.'

'And so she stops at the Isle of Wight, whilst the poor boy remains at the school,' sighs my mother.

'Firmin can't come away. He is in attendance on the Grand Dook. The Prince is never easy without Firmin. He has given him his Order of the Swan. They are moving heaven and earth in high quarters; and I bet you even, Goodenough, that that boy whom you have been attending will be a baronet—if you don't kill him off with your confounded potions and pills, begad!'

Dr. Godenough only gave a humph and contracted his great eyebrows.

My uncle continued—

'I know what you mean. Firmin is a gentlemanly man—a handsome man. I remember his father, Brand Firmin, at Valenciennes with the Dook of York—one of the handsomest men in Europe. Firebrand Firmin they used to call him—a red-headed fellow—a tremendous duellist; shot an Irishman—became serious in after life, and that sort of thing—quarrelled with his son, who was doosid wild in early

days. Gentlemanly man, certainly, Firmin. Black hair: his father had red. So much the better for the Doctor; but—but—we understand each other, I think, Goodenough? and you and I have seen some queer fishes in our time.'

And the old gentleman winked and took his snuff graciously, and, as it were, puffed the Firmin subject away.

'Was it to show me a queer fish that you took me to Dr. Firmin's house in Parr Street?' asked Mr. Pendennis of his uncle. 'The house was not very gay, nor the mistress very wise, but they were all as kind as might be; and I am very fond of the boy.'

'So did Lord Ringwood, his mother's uncle, like him,' cried Major Pendennis. 'That boy brought about a reconciliation between his mother and his uncle, after her runaway match. I suppose you know she ran away with Firmin, my dear?'

My mother said 'she had heard something of the story.' And the Major once more asserted that Dr. Firmin was a wild fellow twenty years ago. At the time of which I am writing he was Physician to the Plethoric Hospital, Physician to the Grand Duke of Groningen, and Knight of his Order of the Black Swan, member of many learned societies, the husband of a rich wife, and a person of no small consideration.

As for his son, whose name figures at the head of these pages, you may suppose he did not die of the illness about which we had just been talking. A good nurse waited on him, though his mamma was in the country. Though his papa was absent, a very competent physician was found to take charge of the young patient, and preserve his life for the benefit of his family, and the purposes of this history.

We pursued our talk about Philip Firmin and his father, and his grand-uncle the Earl, whom Major Pendennis knew intimately well, until Dr. Goodenough's carriage was announced, and our kind physician took leave of us, and drove back to London. Some who spoke on that summer evening are no longer here to speak or listen. Some who were young then have topped the hill and are descending towards the valley of the shadows. 'Ah,' says old Major Pendennis, shaking his brown curls, as the Doctor went away; 'did you see, my good soul, when I spoke about his *confrère*, how glum Goodenough looked? They don't love each other, my dear. Two of a trade don't agree, and besides I have no doubt the other doctor-fellows are jealous of Firmin, because he lives in the best society. A man of good family, my dear. There has already been a great *rapprochement*; and if Lord Ringwood is quite reconciled to him, there's no knowing what luck that boy of Firmin's may come to.'

Although Dr. Goodenough might think but lightly of his *confrère*, a great portion of the public held him in much higher estimation: and especially in the little community of Grey Friars, of which the kind reader has heard in previous works of the present biographer, Dr. Brand Firmin was a very great favourite, and received

with much respect and honour. Whenever the boys at that school were afflicted with the common ailments of youth, Mr. Spratt, the school apothecary, provided for them; and by the simple though disgusting remedies which were in use in those times, generally succeeded in restoring his young patients to health. But if young Lord Egham (the Marquis of Ascot's son, as my respected reader very likely knows) happened to be unwell, as was frequently the case, from his Lordship's great command of pocket-money and imprudent fondness for the contents of the pastrycook's shop; or if any very grave case of illness occurred in the school, then, quick, the famous Dr. Firmin, of Old Parr Street, Burlington Gardens, was sent for; and an illness must have been very severe, if *he* could not cure it. Dr. Firmin had been a schoolfellow, and remained a special friend, of the head-master. When young Lord Egham, before mentioned (he was our only lord, and therefore we were a little proud and careful of our darling youth), got the erysipelas, which swelled his head to the size of a pumpkin, the doctor triumphantly carried him through his illness, and was complimented by the head boy in his Latin oration on the annual speech-day for his superhuman skill and god-like delight *salutem hominibus dando*. The head-master turned towards Dr. Firmin, and bowed: the governors and bigwigs buzzed to one another, and looked at him: the boys looked at him: the physician held his handsome head down towards his shirt-frill. His modest eyes would not look up from the spotless lining of the broad-brimmed hat on his knees. A murmur of applause hummed through the ancient hall, a scuffling of young feet, a rustling of new cassocks among the masters, and a refreshing blowing of noses ensued, as the orator polished off his period, and then passed to some other theme.

Amidst the general enthusiasm, there was one member of the auditory scornful and dissentient. This gentleman whispered to his comrade at the commencement of the phrase concerning the Doctor *the*, I believe of Eastern derivation, monosyllable 'Bosh!' and he added sadly, looking towards the object of all this praise, 'He can't construe the Latin—though it is all a parcel of humbug.'

'Hush, Phil!' said his friend; and Phil's face flushed red, as Dr. Firmin, lifting up his eyes, looked at him for one moment; for the recipient of all this laudation was no other than Phil's father.

The illness of which we spoke had long since passed away Philip was a schoolboy no longer, but in his second year at the university, and one of half-a-dozen young men, ex-pupils of the school, who had come up for the annual dinner. The honours of this year's dinner were for Dr. Firmin, even more than for Lord Ascot in his star and ribbon, who walked with his arm in the Doctor's into chapel. His Lordship faltered when, in his after-dinner speech, he alluded to the inestimable services and skill of his tried old friend, whom he had known as a fellow-pupil in those walls—(loud cheers)—whose friendship had been the delight of his life—a friendship which he prayed might be the inheritance of their children. (Immense applause; after which Dr. Firmin spoke.)

The Doctor's speech was perhaps a little commonplace; the Latin quotations which he used were not exactly novel; but Phil need not have been so angry or ill-behaved. He went on sipping sherry, glaring at his father, and muttering observations that were anything but complimentary to his parent. 'Now look,' says he, 'he is going to be overcome by his feelings. He will put his handkerchief up to his mouth, and show his diamond ring. I told you so! It's too much. I can't swallow this...this sherry. I say, you fellows, let us come out of this, and have a smoke somewhere.' And Phil rose up and quitted the dining-room, just as his father was declaring what a joy, and a pride, and a delight it was to him to think that the friendship with which his noble friend honoured him was likely to be transmitted to their children, and that when he had passed away from this earthly scene (cries of 'No, no!' 'May you live a thousand years!') it would be his joy to think that his son would always find a friend and protector in the noble, the princely house of Ascot.

We found the carriages waiting outside Grey Friars Gate, and Philip Firmin, pushing me into his father's, told the footman to drive home, and that the Doctor would return in Lord Ascot's carriage. Home then to Old Parr Street we went, where many a time as a boy I had been welcome. And we retired to Phil's private den in the back buildings of the great house: and over our cigars we talked of the Founder's-day Feast, and the speeches delivered; and of the old Cistercians of our time, and how Thompson was married, and Johnson was in the army, and Jackson (not red-haired Jackson, pig-eyed Jackson) was first in his year, and so forth; and in this twaddle were most happily engaged, when Phil's father flung open the tall door of the study.

'Here's the governor!' growled Phil; and in an undertone, 'What does *he* want?'

'The governor,' as I looked up, was not a pleasant object to behold. Dr. Firmin had very white false teeth, which perhaps were a little too large for his mouth, and these grinned in the gaslight very fiercely. On his cheeks were black whiskers, and over his glaring eyes fierce black eyebrows, and his bald head glittered like a billiard-ball. You would hardly have known that he was the original of that melancholy philosophic portrait which all the patients admired in the Doctor's waiting-room.

'I find, Philip, that you took my carriage,' said the father; 'and Lord Ascot and I had to walk ever so far for a cab!'

'Hadh't he got his own carriage? I thought, of course he would have his carriage on a state-day, and that you would come home with the lord,' said Philip.

'I had promised to bring *him* home, sir! said the father.

'Well, sir, I'm very sorry,' continued the son curtly.

'Sorry!' screams the other.

'I can't say any more, sir, and I *am* very sorry,' answers Phil; and he knocked the ash of his cigar into the stove.

The stranger within the house hardly knew how to look on its master or his son. There was evidently some dire quarrel between them. The old man glared at the young one, who calmly looked his father in the face. Wicked rage and hate seemed to flash from the Doctor's eyes, and anon came a look of wild pitiful supplication towards the guest, which was most painful to bear. In the midst of what dark family mystery was I? What meant this cruel spectacle of the father's terrified anger, and the son's scorn?

'I—I appeal to you, Pendennis,' says the Doctor, with a choking utterance and a ghastly face.

'Shall we begin *ab ovo*, sir?' says Phil. Again the ghastly look of terror comes over the father's face.

'I—I promise to bring one of the first noblemen in England,' gasps the Doctor, 'from a public dinner, in my carriage; and my son takes it, and leaves me and Lord Ascot to walk!—Is it fair, Pendennis? Is it the conduct of a gentleman to a gentleman; of a son to a father?'

'No, sir,' I said gravely, 'nothing can excuse it.' Indeed I was shocked at the young man's obduracy and undutifulness.

'I told you it was a mistake!' cries Phil, reddening. 'I heard Lord Ascot order his own carriage; I made no doubt he would bring my father home. To ride in a chariot with a footman behind me, is no pleasure to me, and I would far rather have a Hansom and a cigar. It was a blunder, and I am sorry for it—there! And if I live to a hundred I can't say more.'

'If you are sorry, Philip,' groans the father, 'it is enough. You remember, Pendennis, when—when my son and I were not on this—on this footing,' and he looked up for a moment at a picture which was hanging over Phil's head—a portrait of Phil's mother; the lady of whom my own mother spoke, on that evening when we had talked of the boy's illness. Both the ladies had passed from the world now, and their images were but painted shadows on the wall.

The father had accepted an apology, though the son had made none. I looked at the elder Firmin's face, and the character written on it I remembered such particulars of his early history as had been told to me; and I perfectly recalled that feeling of doubt and misliking which came over my mind when I first saw the Doctor's handsome face some few years previously, when my uncle first took me to the Doctor's in Old Parr Street; little Phil being then a flaxen-headed, pretty child who had just assumed his first trousers, and I a fifth-form boy at school.

My father and Dr. Firmin were members of the medical profession. They had been bred up as boys at the same school, whither families used to send their sons from

generation to generation, and long before people had ever learned that the place was unwholesome. Grey Friars was smoky, certainly; I think in the time of the Plague great numbers of people were buried there. But had the school been situated in the most picturesque swamp in England, the general health of the boys could not have been better. We boys used to hear of epidemics occurring in other schools, and were almost sorry that they did not come to ours, so that we might shut up, and get longer vacations. Even that illness which subsequently befell Phil Firmin himself attacked no one else—the boys all luckily going home for the holidays on the very day of poor Phil's seizure; but of this illness more anon. When it was determined that little Phil Firmin was to go to Grey Friars, Phil's father bethought him that Major Pendennis, whom he met in the world and society, had a nephew at the place, who might protect the little fellow, and the Major took his nephew to see Dr. and Mrs. Firmin one Sunday after church, and we had lunch at Old Parr Street, and there little Phil was presented to me, whom I promised to take under my protection. He was a simple little man; an artless child, who had not the least idea of the dignity of a fifth-form boy. He was quite unabashed in talking to me and other persons, and has remained so ever since. He asked my uncle how he came to have such odd hair. He partook freely of the delicacies on the table. I remember he hit me with his little fist once or twice, which liberty at first struck me with a panic of astonishment, and then with a sense of the ridiculous so exquisitely keen, that I burst out into a fit of laughter. It was, you see, as if a stranger were to hit the Pope in the ribs, and call him 'Old boy'; as if Jack were to tweak one of the giants by the nose; or Ensign Jones to ask the Duke of Wellington to take wine. I had a strong sense of humour, even in those early days, and enjoyed this joke accordingly.

'Philip!' cries mamma, 'you will hurt Mr. Pendennis.'

'I will knock him down!' shouts Phil. Fancy knocking *me* down,—me, a fifth-form boy!

'The child is a perfect Hercules,' remarks the mother.

'He strangled two snakes in his cradle,' says the Doctor, looking at me. (It was then, as I remember, I felt *Dr. Fell* towards him.)

'La, Dr. Firmin!' cries mamma, 'I can't bear snakes. I remember there was one at Rome, when we were walking one day, a great large snake, and I hated it, and I cried out, and I nearly fainted; and my uncle Ringwood said I ought to like snakes, for one might be an agreeable rattle; and I have read of them being charming in India, and I dare say you have, Mr. Pendennis, for I am. told you are very clever; and I am not in the least; I wish I were; but my husband is, very— and so Phil will be. Will you be a very clever boy, dear? He was named after my dear papa, who was killed at Busaco when I was quite, quite a little thing, and we we mourning, and we went to live with my uncle Ringwood afterwards; hut Maria and I had both our own fortunes; and I am sure I little thought I should marry a physician—la, one of Uncle Ringwood's grooms, I should as soon have thought of marrying him!—

but, you know, my husband is one of the cleverest men *in the world*. Don't tell me, —you are, dearest, and you know it; and when a man is clever, I don't value his rank in life; no, not if he was that fender; and I always said to Uncle Ringwood, "Talent I will marry, for talent I adore"; and I *did* marry you, Dr. Firmin, you know I did, and this child is your image. And you will be kind to him at school,' says the poor lady, turning to me, her eyes filling with tears, 'for talent is always kind, except Uncle Ringwood, and he was very—'

'A little more wine, Mr. Pendennis?' said the Doctor—*Dr. Fell* still, though he was most kind to me. 'I shall put my little man under your care, and I know you will keep him from harm. I hope you will do us the favour to come to Parr Street whenever you are free. In my father's time we used to come home of a Saturday from school, and enjoyed going to the play.' And the Doctor shook me cordially by the hand, and, I must say, continued his kindness to me as long as ever I knew him. When we went away, my uncle Pendennis told me many stories about the great Earl and family of Ringwood, and how Dr. Firmin had made a match—a match of the affections—with this lady, daughter of Philip Ringwood, who was killed at Busaco; and how she had been a great beauty, and was a perfect *grande dame* always; and, if not the cleverest, certainly one of the kindest and most amiable women in the world.

In those days I was accustomed to receive the opinions of my informant with such respect that I at once accepted this statement as authentic. Mrs. Firmin's portrait, indeed, was beautiful: it was painted by young Mr. Harlowe, that year he was at Rome, and when in eighteen days he completed a copy of the 'Transfiguration,' to the admiration of all the Academy; but I, for my part, only remember a lady, weak and thin and faded, who never came out of her dressing-room until a late hour in the afternoon, and whose superannuated smiles and grimaces used to provoke my juvenile sense of humour. She used to kiss Phil's brow; and, as she held the boy's hand in one of her lean ones, would say, 'Who would suppose such a great boy as that could be my son?' 'Be kind to him when I am gone,' she sighed to me, one Sunday evening, when I was taking leave of her, as her eyes filled with tears, and she placed the thin hand in mine for the last time. The Doctor, reading by the fire, turned round and scowled at her from under his tall shining forehead.

You are nervous, Louisa, and had better go to your room, I told you you had, he said abruptly. 'Young gentlemen, it is time for you to be off to Grey Friars. Is the cab at the door, Brice?' And he took out his watch—his great shining watch, by which he had felt the pulses of so many famous personages, whom his prodigious skill had rescued from disease. And at parting, Phil flung his arms round his poor mother, and kissed her under the glossy curls; the borrowed curls! and he looked his father resolutely in the face (whose own glance used to fall before that of the boy), and bade him a gruff good-night, ere we set forth for Grey Friars.

CHAPTER II. AT SCHOOL AND AT HOME

I DINED yesterday with three gentlemen, whose time of life may be guessed by their conversation, a great part of which consisted of Eton reminiscences and lively imitations of Dr. Keate. Each one, as he described how he had been flogged, mimicked to the best of his power the manner and the mode of operating of the famous Doctor. His little parenthetical remarks during the ceremony were recalled with great facetiousness: the very *hwhish* of the rods was parodied with thrilling fidelity, and after a good hour's conversation, the subject was brought to a climax by a description of that awful night when the Doctor called up squad after squad of boys from their beds in their respective boarding-houses, whipped through the whole night, and castigated I don't know how many hundred rebels. All these mature men laughed, prattled, rejoiced, and became young again, as they recounted their stories; and each of them heartily and eagerly bade the stranger to understand how Keate was a thorough gentleman. Having talked about their floggings, I say, for an hour at least, they apologised to me for dwelling upon a subject which after all was strictly local: but, indeed, their talk greatly amused and diverted me, and I hope, and am quite ready, to hear all their jolly stories over again.

Be not angry, patient reader of former volumes by the author of the present history, if I am garrulous about Grey Friars, and go back to that ancient place of education to find the heroes of our tale. We are young but once. When we remember that time of youth, we are still young. He over whose head eight or nine lustres have passed, if he wishes to write of boys, must recall the time when he himself was a boy. Their habits change; their waists are longer or shorter; their shirt-collars stick up more or less; but the boy is the boy in King George's time as in that of his Royal niece—once our maiden Queen, now the anxious mother of many boys. And young fellows are honest, and merry, and idle, and mischievous, and timid, and brave, and studious, and selfish, and generous, and mean, and false, and truth-telling, and affectionate, and good, and bad, now as in former days. He with whom we have mainly to do is a gentleman of mature age now walking the street with boys of his own. He is not going to perish in the last chapter of these memoirs—to die of consumption with his love weeping by his bedside, or to blow his brains out in despair, because she has been married to his rival, or killed out of a gig or otherwise done for in the last chapter but one. No, no; we will have no dismal endings. Philip Firmin is well and hearty at this minute, owes no man a shilling, and can enjoy his glass of port in perfect comfort. So, my dear miss, if you want a pulmonary romance, the present won't suit you. So, young gentleman, if you are for melancholy, despair, and sardonic satire, please to call at some other shop. That Philip shall ave his trials is a matter of course—may they be interesting, though

they do not end dismally! That he shall fall and trip in his course sometimes is pretty certain. Ah, who does not upon this life-journey of ours? Is not our want the occasion of our brother's charity, and thus does not good come out of that evil? When the traveller (of whom the Master spoke) fell among the thieves, his mishap was contrived to try many a heart beside his own—the Knave's who robbed him, the Levite's and Priest's who passed him by as he lay bleeding, the humble Samaritan's whose hand poured oil into his wound, and held out its pittance to relieve him.

So little Philip Firmin was brought to school by his mamma in her carriage, who entreated the housekeeper to have a special charge of that angelic child; and as soon as the poor lady's back was turned, Mrs. Bunce emptied the contents of the little boy's trunk into one of sixty or seventy little cupboards, wherein reposed other boys' clothes and haberdashery: and then Mrs. Firmin requested to see the Rev. Mr. X., in whose house Philip was to board, and besought him, and explained many things to him, such as the exceeding delicacy of the child's constitution, etc. etc.: and Mr. X., who was very good-natured, patted the boy kindly on the head, and sent for the other Philip, Philip Ringwood, Phil's cousin, who had arrived at Grey Friars an hour or two before; and Mr. X. told Ringwood to take care of the little fellow; and Mrs. Firmin, choking behind her pocket-handkerchief, gurgled out a blessing on the grinning youth, and at one time had an idea of giving Master Ringwood a sovereign, but paused, thinking he was too big a boy, and that she might not take such a liberty, and presently she was gone; and little Phil Firmin was introduced to the long-room and his schoolfellows of Mr. X.'s house; and having plenty of money, and naturally finding his way to the pastrycook's, the next day, after school, he was met by his cousin Ringwood and robbed of half the tarts which he had purchased. A fortnight afterwards, the hospitable Doctor and his wife asked their young kinsman to Old Parr Street, Burlington Gardens, and the two boys went; but Phil never mentioned anything to his parents regarding the robbery of tarts, being deterred, perhaps, from speaking by awful threats of punishment which his cousin promised to administer when they got back to school, in case of the little boy's confession. Subsequently, Master Ringwood was asked once in every term to Old Parr Street; but neither Mrs. Firmin, nor the Doctor, nor Master Firmin, liked the Baronet's son, and Mrs. Firmin pronounced him a violent rude boy.

I, for my part, left school suddenly and early, and my little *protégé* behind me. His poor mother, who had promised herself to come for him every Saturday, did not keep her promise. Smithfield is a long way from Piccadilly; and an angry cow once scratched the panels of her carriage, causing her footman to spring from his board into a pigpen, and herself to feel such a shock, that no wonder she was afraid of visiting the City afterwards. The circumstances of this accident she often narrated to us. Her anecdotes were not numerous, but she told them repeatedly. In imagination, sometimes, I can hear her ceaseless simple cackle; see her faint eyes, as she prattles on unconsciously, and watch the dark looks of her handsome silent

husband, scowling from under his eyebrows and smiling behind his teeth. I dare say he ground those teeth with suppressed rage sometimes. I dare say to bear with her endless volubility must have tasked his endurance. He may have treated her ill, but she tried him. She, on her part, may have been a not very wise woman, but she was kind to me. Did not her housekeeper make me the best of tarts, and keep goodies from the company dinners for the young gentlemen when they came home? Did not her husband give me of his fees? I promise you, after I had seen Dr. Fell a few times, that first unpleasing impression produced by his darkling countenance and sinister good looks wore away. He was a gentleman. He had lived in the great world, of which he told anecdotes delightful to boys to hear; and he passed the bottle to me as if I was a man.

I hope and think I remembered the injunction of poor Mrs. Firmin to be kind to her boy. As long as we stayed together at Grey Friars, I was Phil's champion whenever he needed my protection, though of course I could not always be present to guard the little scapegrace from all the blows which were aimed at his young face by pugilists of his own size. There were seven or eight years' difference between us (he says ten, which is absurd, and which I deny); but I was always remarkable for my affability, and, in spite of our disparity of age, would often graciously accept the general invitation I had from his father for any Saturday and Sunday when I would like to accompany Philip home.

Such an invitation is welcome to any schoolboy. To get away from Smithfield, and show our best clothes in Bond Street, was always a privilege. To strut in the Park on Sunday, and nod to the other fellows who were strutting there too, was better than remaining at school, 'doing "Diatessaron,"' as the phrase used to be, having that endless roast-beef for dinner, and hearing two sermons in chapel. There may have been more lively streets in London than Old Parr Street; but it was pleasanter to be there than to look at Goswell Street over Grey Friars' wall; and so the present biographer and reader's very humble servant found Dr Firmin's house an agreeable resort. Mamma was often ailing, or, if well, went out into the world with her husband; in either case, we boys had a good dinner provided for us, with the special dishes which Phil loved; and after dinner we adjourned to the play, not being by any means too proud to sit in the pit with

Mr Brice, the Doctor's confidential man. On Sunday we went to church at Lady Whittlesea's, and back to school in the evening; when the Doctor almost always *gave us a fee*. If he did not dine at home (and I own his absence did not much damp our pleasure), Brice would lay a small enclosure on the young gentlemen's coats, which we transferred to our pockets. I believe schoolboys disdain fees in the present disinterested times.

Everything in Dr. Firmin's house was as handsome as might be, and yet somehow the place was not cheerful. One's steps fell noiselessly on the faded Turkey carpet; the room was large, and all save the dining-table in a dingy twilight. The picture of Mrs. Firmin looked at us from the wall, and followed us about with wild violet

eyes. Philip Firmin had the same violet odd bright eyes, and the same coloured hair of an auburn tinge; in the picture it fell in long wild masses over the lady's back as she leaned with bare arms on a harp. Over the sideboard was the Doctor, in a black velvet coat and a fur collar, his hand on a skull, like Hamlet. Skulls of oxen, horned, with wreaths, formed the cheerful ornaments of the cornice. On the side-table glittered a pair of cups, given by grateful patients, looking like receptacles rather for funereal ashes than for festive flowers or wine. Brice, the butler, wore the gravity and costume of an undertaker. The footman stealthily moved hither and thither, bearing the dinner to us; we always spoke under our breath whilst we were eating it. 'The room don't look more cheerful of a morning when the patients are sitting here, I can tell you,' Phil would say; indeed, we could well fancy that it was dismal. The drawing-room had a rhubarb-coloured flock paper (on account of the governor's attachment to the shop, Master Phil said), a great piano, a harp smothered in a leather bag in the corner, which the languid owner now never touched; and everybody's face seemed scared and pale in the great looking-glasses, which reflected you over and over again into the distance, so that you seemed to twinkle off right through the Albany into Piccadilly.

Old Parr Street has been a habitation for generations of surgeons and physicians. I suppose the noblemen for whose use the street was intended in the time of the early Georges fled, finding the neighbourhood too dismal, and the gentlemen in black coats came and took possession of the gilded gloomy chambers which the sacred *mode* vacated. These mutations of fashion have always been matters of profound speculation to me. Why shall not one moralise over London, as over Rome, or Baalbec, or Troy town? I like to walk among the Hebrews of Wardour Street, and fancy the place as it once was, crowded with chairs and gilt chariots, and torches flashing in the hands of the running footmen. I have a grim pleasure in thinking that Golden Square was once the resort of the aristocracy, and Monmouth Street the delight of the genteel world. What shall prevent us Londoners from musing over the decline and fall of city sovereignties, and drawing our cockney morals? As the late Mr. Gibbon meditated his history leaning against a column in the Capitol, why should not I muse over mine, reclining under an arcade of the Pantheon? Not the Pantheon at Rome, in the Cabbage Market by the Piazza Navona, where the immortal gods were worshipped,—the immortal gods who are now dead; but the Pantheon in Oxford Street, ladies, where you purchase feeble pomatums, music, glassware, and baby-linen; and which has its history too. Have not Selywn, and Walpole, and March, and Carlisle figured there? Has not Prince Florizel flounced through the hall in his rustling domino, and danced there in powdered splendour? and when the ushers refused admission to lovely Sophy Baddeley, did not the young men, her adorers, draw their rapiers and vow to slay the doorkeepers; and, crossing the glittering blades over the enchantress's head, make a warlike triumphal arch for her to pass under, all flushed, and smiling, and perfumed, and painted? The lives of streets are as the lives of men, and shall not the street-preacher, if so minded, take for the text of his sermon the stones in the gutter? That you were once

the resort of the fashion, O Monmouth Street! by the invocation of blessed St. Giles shall I not improve that sweet thought into a godly discourse, and make the ruin edifying? *O mes frères!* There were splendid thoroughfares, dazzling company, bright illuminations, in *our* streets when our hearts were young: we entertained in them a noble youthful company of chivalrous hopes and lofty ambitions; of blushing thoughts in snowy robes spotless and virginal. See, in the embrasure of the window, where you sat looking to the stars, and nestling by the soft side of your first love, hang Mr. Moses's bargains of turned old clothes, very cheap; of worn old boots, bedraggled in how much and how many people's mud; a great bargain. See I along the street, strewn with flowers once mayhap—a fight of beggars for the refuse of an apple-stall, or a tipsy basket-woman reeling shrieking to the station. O me! O my beloved congregation! I have preached this stale sermon to you for ever so many years. O my jolly companions, I have drunk many a bout with you, and always found *vanitas vanitatum* written on the bottom of the pot!

I choose to moralise now when I pass the place. The garden has run to seed, the walks are mildewed, the statues have broken noses, the gravel is dank with green moss, the roses are withered, and the nightingales have ceased to make love. It *is* a funereal street, Old Parr Street, certainly; the carriages which drive there ought to have feathers on the roof, and the butlers who open the doors should wear weepers—so the scene strikes you now as you pass along the spacious empty pavement. You are bilious, my good man. Go and pay a guinea to one of the doctors in those houses: there are still doctors there. He will prescribe taraxacum for you, or pil: hydrarg: Bless you! in *my* time, to us gentlemen of the fifth form, the place was bearable. The yellow fogs didn't damp our spirits—and we never thought them too thick to keep us away from the play: from the chivalrous Charles Kemble, I tell you, my Mirabel, my Mercutio, my princely Falconbridge: from his adorable daughter (O my distracted heart!): from the classic Young: from the glorious Long Tom Coffin: from the unearthly Vanderdecken—'Return, O my love, and we'll never never part' (where art thou, sweet singer of that most thrilling ditty of my youth?): from the sweet sweet 'Victonne' and the 'Bottle Imp.' Oh, to see that 'Bottle Imp' again, and hear that song about the 'Pilgrim of Love'! Once—but, hush! this is a secret—we had private boxes, the Doctor's grand friends often sending him these; and, finding the opera rather slow, we went to a concert in M-d-n Lane, near Covent Garden, and heard the most celestial glees, over a supper of fizzing sausages and mashed potatoes, such as the world has never seen since. We did no harm; but I dare say it was very wrong. Brice, the butler, ought not to have taken us. We bullied him, and made him take us where we liked. We had rum-shrub in the housekeeper's room, where we used to be diverted by the society of *other* butlers of the neighbouring nobility and gentry, who would step in. Perhaps it was wrong to leave us so to the company of servants. Dr. Firmin used to go to his grand parties, Mrs. Firmin to bed. 'Did we enjoy the performance last night?' our host would ask at breakfast. 'Oh, yes, we enjoyed the performance!' But

my poor Mrs. Firmin fancied that we enjoyed 'Semiramide' or the 'Donna del Lago'; whereas we had been to the pit at the Adelphi (out of our own money), and seen that jolly John Reeve, and laughed—laughed till we were fit to drop—and stayed till the curtain was down. And then, we would come home, and, as aforesaid, pass a delightful hour over supper, and hear the anecdotes of Mr. Brice's friends, the other butlers. Ah, that was a time indeed! There never was any liquor so good as rum-shrub, never; and the sausages had a flavour of Elysium. How hushed we were when Dr. Firmin, coming home from his parties, let himself in at the street-door! Shoeless, we crept up to our bedrooms. And we came down to breakfast with innocent young faces—and let Mrs. Firmin, at lunch, prattle about the opera; and there stood Brice and the footman behind us, looking quite grave, the abominable hypocrites!

Then, sir, there was a certain way, out of the study window, or through the kitchen, and over the leads, to a building, gloomy indeed, but where I own to have spent delightful hours of the most flagitious and criminal enjoyment of some delicious little Havannahs, ten to the shilling. In that building there were stables once, doubtless occupied by great Flemish horses and rumbling gold coaches of Walpole's time: but a celebrated surgeon, when he took possession of the house, made a lecture-room of the premises—'And this door,' says Phil, pointing to one leading into the mews, 'was very convenient for having *the bodies* in and out'—a cheerful reminiscence. Of this kind of furniture there was now very little in the apartment, except a dilapidated skeleton in a corner, a few dusty casts of heads, and bottles of preparations on the top of an old bureau, and some mildewed harness hanging on the walls.

This apartment became Mr. Phil's smoking-room when, as he grew taller, he felt himself too dignified to sit in the kitchen regions: the honest butler and housekeeper themselves sitting out to their young master that his place was elsewhere than among the servants. So there, privately and with great delectation, we smoked many an abominable cigar in that dreary back room, the gaunt walls and twilight ceilings of which were by no means melancholy to us, who found forbidden pleasures the sweetest, after the absurd fashion of boys. Dr. Firmin was an enemy to smoking, and ever accustomed to speak of the practice with eloquent indignation. 'It was a low practice—the habit of cabmen, pot-house frequenters, and Irish apple-women,' the Doctor would say, as Phil and his friend looked at each other with a stealthy joy. Phil's father was ever scented and neat, the pattern of handsome propriety. Perhaps he had a clearer perception regarding manners than respecting morals; perhaps his conversation was full of platitudes, his talk (concerning people of fashion chiefly) mean and uninteresting, his behaviour to young Lord Egham rather fulsome and lacking of dignity. Perhaps, I say, the idea may have entered into young Mr. Pendennis's mind that his hospitable entertainer and friend, Dr. Firmin, of Old Parr Street, was what at the present day might be denominated an old humbug; but modest young men do not come quickly to such unpleasant conclusions regarding their seniors. Dr. Firmin's manners were so good,

his forehead was so high, his frill so fresh, his hands so white and slim, that for some considerable time we ingenuously admired him; and it was not without a pang that we came to view him as he actually was—no, not as he actually was—no man whose early nurture was kindly can judge quite impartially the man who has been kind to him in boyhood.

I quitted school suddenly, leaving my little Phil behind me, a brave little handsome boy, endearing himself to old and young by his good looks, his gaiety, his courage, and his gentlemanly bearing. Once in a way a letter would come from him, full of that artless affection and tenderness which fills boys' hearts, and is so touching in their letters. It was answered with proper dignity and condescension on the senior boy's part. Our modest little country home kept up a friendly intercourse with Dr. Firmin's grand London mansion, of which, in his visits to us, my uncle, Major Pendennis, did not fail to bring news. A correspondence took place between the ladies of each house. We supplied Mrs. Firmin with little country presents, tokens of my mother's goodwill and gratitude towards the friends who had been kind to her son. I went my way to the university, having occasional glimpses of Phil at school. I took chambers in the Temple, which he found great delight in visiting; and he liked our homely dinner from Dick's, and a bed on the sofa, better than the splendid entertainments in Old Parr Street and his great gloomy chamber there. He had grown by this time to be ever so much taller than his senior, though he always persists in looking up to me unto the present day.

A very few weeks after my poor mother passed that judgment on Mrs. Firmin, she saw reason to regret and revoke it. Phil's mother, who was afraid, or perhaps was forbidden, to attend her son in his illness at school, was taken ill herself.

Phil returned to Grey Friars in a deep suit of black; the servants on the carriage wore black too; and a certain tyrant of the place, beginning to laugh and jeer because Firmin's eyes filled with tears at some ribald remark, was gruffly rebuked by Sampson major, the cock of the whole school; and with the question, 'Don't you see the poor beggar's in mourning, you great brute?' was kicked about his business.

When Philip Firmin and I met again, there was crape on both our hats. I don't think either could see the other's face very well. I went to see him in Parr Street, in the vacant melancholy house, where the poor mother's picture was yet hanging in her empty drawing-room.

'She was always fond of you, Pendennis,' said Phil. 'God bless you for being so good to her. You know what it is to lose—to lose what loves you best in the world. I didn't know how—how I loved her, till I had lost her.' And many a sob broke his words as he spoke.

Her picture was removed from the drawing-room presently into Phil's own little study—the room in which he sat and defied his father. What had passed between them? The young man was very much changed. The frank looks of old days were gone, and Phil's face was haggard and bold. The Doctor would not let me have a

word more with his son after he had found us together, but with dubious appealing looks, followed me to the door, and shut it upon me. I felt that it closed upon two unhappy men.

CHAPTER III. A CONSULTATION

SHOULD I peer into Firmin's privacy, and find the key to that secret? What skeleton was there in the closet? In the *Cornhill Magazine*, you may remember, there were some verses about a portion of a skeleton. Did you remark how the poet and present proprietor of the human skull at once settled the sex of it, and determined off-hand that it must have belonged to a woman? Such skulls are locked up in many gentlemen's hearts and memories. Bluebeard, you know, had a whole museum of them—as that imprudent little last wife of his found out to her cost. And, on the other hand, a lady, we suppose, would select hers of the sort which had carried beards when in the flesh. Given a neat locked skeleton cupboard, belonging to a man of a certain age, to ascertain the sex of the original owner of the bones, you have not much need of a picklock or a blacksmith. There is no use in forcing the hinge, or scratching the pretty panel. *We* know what is inside—we arch rogues and men of the world. Murders, I suppose, are not many—enemies and victims of our hate and anger, destroyed and trampled out of life by us, and locked out of sight: but corpses of our dead loves, my dear sir—my dear madam—have we not got them stowed away in cupboard after cupboard, in bottle after bottle? Oh, fie! And young people! What doctrine is this to preach to *them*, who spell your book by papa's and mamma's knee? Yes, and how wrong it is to let them go to church, and see and hear papa and mamma publicly on their knees, calling out, and confessing to the whole congregation, that they are sinners! So, though I had not the key, I could see through the panel and the glimmering of the skeleton inside.

Although the elder Firmin followed me to the door, and his eyes only left me as I turned the corner of the street, I felt sure that Phil ere long would open his mind to me, or give me some clue to that mystery. I should hear from him why his bright cheeks had become hollow, why his fresh voice, which I remember so honest and cheerful, was now harsh and sarcastic, with tones that often grated on the hearer, and laughter that gave pain. It was about Philip himself that my anxieties were. The young fellow had inherited from his poor mother a considerable fortune—some eight or nine hundred a year, we always understood. He was living in a costly, not to say extravagant manner. I thought Mr. Philip's juvenile remorses were locked up in the skeleton closet, and was grieved to think he had fallen in mischief's way. Hence, no doubt, might arise the anger between him and his father. The boy was extravagant and headstrong; and the parent remonstrant and irritated.

I met my old friend Dr. Goodenough at the club one evening; and as we dined together I discoursed with him about his former patient, and recalled to him that

day, years back, when the boy was ill at school, and when my poor mother and Phil's own were yet alive.

Goodenough looked very grave.

'Yes,' he said, 'the boy was very ill; he was nearly gone at that time—at that time—when his mother was in the Isle of Wight, and his father dangling after a prince. We thought one day it was all over with him; but—'

'But a good doctor interposed between him and *pallida mors*.'

'A good doctor? a good nurse! The boy was delirious, and had a fancy to walk out of window, and would have done so, but for one of my nurses. You know her.'

'What! the Little Sister?'

'Yes, the Little Sister.'

'And it was she who nursed Phil through his fever, and saved his life? I drink her health. She is a good little soul.'

'Good!' said the Doctor, with his gruffest voice and frown.—(He was always most fierce when he was most tender-hearted.) 'Good, indeed! Will you have some more of this duck?—Do. You have had enough already, and it's very unwholesome. Good, sir? But for women, fire and brimstone ought to come down and consume this world. Your dear mother was one of the good ones. I was attending you when you were ill, at those horrible chambers you had in the Temple, at the same time when young Firmin was ill at Grey Friars. And I suppose I must be answerable for keeping two scapegraces in the world.'

'Why didn't Dr. Firmin come to see him?'

'Hm! his nerves were too delicate. Besides, he *did* come. Talk of the * * *'

The personage designated by asterisks was Phil's father, who was also a member of our club, and who entered the dining-room, tall, stately, and pale, with his stereotyped smile, and wave of his pretty hand. By the way, that smile of Firmin's was a very queer contortion of the handsome features. As you came up to him, he would draw his lips over his teeth, causing his jaws to wrinkle (or dimple, if you will) on either side. Meanwhile his eyes looked out from his face, quite melancholy and independent of the little transaction in which the mouth was engaged. Lips said, 'I am a gentleman of fine manners and fascinating address, and I am supposed to be happy to see you. How do you do?' Dreary, sad, as into a great blank desert, looked the dark eyes. I *do* know one or two, but only one or two faces of men, when oppressed with care, which can yet smile *all over*.

Goodenough nods grimly to the smile of the other doctor, who blandly looks at our table, holding his chin in one of his pretty hands.

'How do?' growls Goodenough. 'Young hopeful well?'

'Young hopeful sits smoking cigars till morning with some friends of his,' says Firmin, with the sad smile directed towards me this time. 'Boys will be boys.' And he pensively walks away from us with a friendly nod towards me; examines the dinner-card in an attitude of melancholy grace; points with the jewelled hand to the dishes which he will have served, and is off, and simpering to another acquaintance at a distant table.

'I thought he would take that table,' says Firmin's cynical *confrère*.

'In the draught of the door? Don't you see how the candle flickers? It is the worst place in the room!'

'Yes; but don't you see who is sitting at the next table?'

Now at the next table was a n-blem-n of vast wealth, who was growling at the quality of the mutton cutlets, and the half-pint of sherry which he had ordered for his dinner. But as his Lordship has nothing to do with the ensuing history, of course we shall not violate confidence by mentioning his name. We could see Firmin smiling on his neighbour with his blandest melancholy, and the waiters presently bearing up the dishes which the Doctor had ordered for his own refection. *He* was no lover of mutton-chops and coarse sherry, as I knew who had partaken of many a feast at his board I could see the diamond twinkle on his pretty hand as it daintily poured out creaming wine from the ice-pail by his side—the liberal hand that had given me many a sovereign when I was a boy.

'I can't help liking him,' I said to my companion, whose scornful eyes were now and again directed towards his colleague.

'This port is very sweet. Almost all port is sweet now,' remarks the Doctor.

'He was very kind to me in my schooldays; and Philip was a fine little fellow.'

'Handsome a boy as ever I saw. Does he keep his beauty? Father was a handsome man—very. Quite a lady-killer—I mean out of his practice!' adds the grim Doctor. 'What is the boy doing?'

'He is at the university. He had his mother's fortune. He is wild and unsettled, and I fear he is going to the bad a little.'

'Is he? Shouldn't wonder!' grumbles Goodenough.

We had talked very frankly and pleasantly until the appearance of the other doctor, but with Firmin's arrival Goodenough seemed to button up his conversation. He quickly stumped away from the dining-room to the drawing-room, and sat over a novel there until time came when he was to retire to his patients or his home.

That there was no liking between the doctors, that there was a difference between Philip and his father, was clear enough to me; but the causes of these differences I had yet to learn. The story came to me piecemeal; from confessions here, admissions there, deductions of my own. I could not, of course, be present at many

of the scenes which I shall have to relate as though I had witnessed them; and the posture, language, and inward thoughts of Philip and his friends, as here related, no doubt are fancies of the narrator in many cases; but the story is as authentic as many histories, and the reader need only give such an amount of credence to it as he may judge that its verisimilitude warrants.

Well, then, we must not only revert to that illness which befell when Philip Firmin was a boy at Grey Friars, but go back yet farther in time to a period which I cannot precisely ascertain.

The pupils of old Gandish's painting academy may remember a ridiculous little man, with a great deal of wild talent, about the ultimate success of which his friends were divided. Whether Andrew was a genius, or whether he was a zany, was always a moot question among the frequenters of the Greek Street billiard-rooms, and the noble disciples of the Academy and St. Martin's Lane. He may have been crazy and absurd; he may have had talent too: such characters are not unknown in art or in literature. He broke the Queen's English; he was ignorant to a wonder; he dressed his little person in the most fantastic raiment and queerest cheap finery: he wore a beard, bless my soul! twenty years before beards were known to wag in Britain. He was the most affected little creature, and, if you looked at him, would *pose* in attitudes of such ludicrous dirty dignity, that if you had had a dun waiting for money in the hall of your lodging-house, or your picture refused at the Academy—if you were suffering under ever so much calamity—you could not help laughing. He was the butt of all his acquaintances the laughing-stock of high and low, and he had as loving, gentle, faithful, honourable a heart as ever beat in a little bosom. He is gone to his rest now; his palette and easel are waste timber; his genius, which made some little flicker of brightness, never shone much, and is extinct. In an old album that dates back for more than a score of years, I sometimes look at poor Andrew's strange wild sketches. He might have done something had he continued to remain poor; but a rich widow, whom he met at Rome, fell in love with the strange errant painter, pursued him to England, and married him in spite of himself.

His genius drooped under the servitude: he lived but a few short years, and died of a consumption, of which the good Goodenough's skill could not cure him.

One day, as he was driving with his wife in her splendid barouche through the Haymarket, he suddenly bade the coachman stop, sprang over the side of the carriage before the steps could be let fall, and his astonished wife saw him shaking the hands of a shabbily dressed little woman who was passing,—shaking both her hands, and weeping, and gesticulating, and twisting his beard and mustachios, as his wont was when agitated. Mrs. Montfitchet (the wealthy Mrs. Carrickfergus she had been, before she married the painter), the owner of a young husband, who had sprung from her side, and out of her carriage, in order to caress a young woman passing in the street, might well be disturbed by this demonstration; but she was a kind-hearted woman, and when Montfitchet, on reascending into the family coach,

told his wife the history of the person of whom he had just taken leave, she cried plentifully too. She bade the coachman drive straightway to her own house: she rushed up to her own apartments, whence she emerged, bearing an immense bag full of wearing apparel, and followed by a panting butler, carrying a bottle-basket and a pie: and she drove off, with her pleased Andrew by her side, to a court in St. Martin's Lane, where dwelt the poor woman with whom he had just been conversing.

It had pleased Heaven, in the midst of dreadful calamity, to send her friends and succour. She was suffering under misfortune, poverty, and cowardly desertion. A man who had called himself Brandon when he took lodgings in her father's house, had married her, brought her to London, tired of her, and left her. She had reason to think he had given a false name when he lodged with her father: he fled, after a ten months, and his real name she never knew. When he deserted her, she went back to her father, a weak man, married to a domineering woman who pretended to disbelieve the story of her marriage, and drove her from the door. Desperate, and almost mad, she came back to London, where she still had some little relics of property that her fugitive husband left behind him. He promised, when he left her, to remit her money; but he sent none, or she refused it—or, in her wildness and despair, lost the dreadful paper which announced his desertion, and that he was married before, and that to pursue him would ruin him, and he knew she never would do *that*—no, however much he might have wronged her.

She was penniless then,—deserted by all,—having made away with the last trinket of her brief days of love, having sold the last little remnant of her poor little stock of clothing,—alone in the great wilderness of London, when it pleased God to send her succour in the person of an old friend who had known her, and even loved her, in happier days. When the Samaritans came to this poor child, they found her sick and shuddering with fever. They brought their doctor to her, who is never so eager as when he runs up a poor man's stair. And, as he watched by the bed where her kind friends came to help her, he heard her sad little story of trust and desertion.

Her father was a humble person who had seen better days; and poor little Mrs. Brandon had a sweetness and simplicity of manner which exceedingly touched the good Doctor. She had little education, except that which silence, long-suffering, seclusion, will sometimes give. When cured of her illness, there was the great and constant evil of poverty to meet and overcome. How was she to live? He got to be as fond of her as of a child of his own. She was tidy, thrifty, gay at times, with a little simple cheerfulness. The little flowers began to bloom as the sunshine touched them. Her whole life hitherto had been cowering under neglect, and tyranny, and gloom.

Mr. Montfitchet was for coming so often to look after the little outcast whom he had succoured, that I am bound to say Mrs. M. became hysterically jealous, and waited for him on the stairs as he came down swathed in his Spanish cloak, pounced on him, and called him a monster. Goodenough was also, I fancy,

suspicious of Montfitchet, and Montfitchet of Goodenough. Howbeit, the Doctor vowed that he never had other than the feeling of a father towards his poor little *protégé*, nor could any father be more tender. He did not try to take her out of her station in life. He found, or she found for herself, a work which she could do. 'Papa used to say no one ever nursed him so nice as I did,' she said. 'I think I could do that better than anything, except my needle, but I like to be useful to poor sick people best. I don't think about myself then, sir.' And for this business good Mr. Good-enough had her educated and employed.

The widow died in course of time whom Mrs. Brandon's father had married, and her daughters refused to keep him, speaking very disrespectfully of this old Mr. Gann, who was, indeed, a weak old man. And now Caroline came to the rescue of her old father. She was a shrewd little Caroline. She had saved a little money. Goodenough gave up a country-house, which he did not care to use, and lent Mrs. Brandon the furniture. She thought she could keep a lodging-house and find lodgers. Montfitchet had painted her. There was a sort of beauty about her which the artists admired. When Ridley the Academician had the small-pox, she attended him, and caught the malady. She did not mind; not she. 'It won't spoil my beauty,' she said.

Nor did it. The disease dealt very kindly with her little modest face. I don't know who gave her the nickname, but she had a good roomy house in Thornhaugh Street, an artist on the first and second floor; and there never was a word of scandal against the Little Sister, for was not her father in permanence sipping gin-and-water in the ground-floor parlour? As we called her 'the Little Sister,' her father was called 'the Captain'—a bragging, lazy, good-natured old man—not a reputable captain—and very cheerful, though the conduct of his children, he said, had repeatedly broken his heart.

I don't know how many years the Little Sister had been on duty when Philip Firmin had his scarlet fever. It befell him at the end of the term, just when all the boys were going home. His tutor and his tutor's wife wanted their holidays, and sent their own children out of the way. As Phil's father was absent, Dr. Goodenough came, and sent his nurse in. The case grew worse, so bad that Dr. Firmin was summoned from the Isle of Wight, and arrived one evening at Grey Friars—Grey Friars so silent now, so noisy at other times with the shouts and crowds of the playground.

Dr. Goodenough's carriage was at the door when Dr. Firmin's carriage drove up.

'How was the boy?'

'He had been very bad. He had been wrong in the head all day, talking and laughing quite wild-like,' the servant said. The father ran up the stairs.

Phil was in a great room, in which were several empty beds of boys gone home for the holidays. The windows were opened into Grey Friars Square. Goodenough

heard his colleague's carriage drive up, and rightly divined that Phil's father had arrived. He came out, and met Firmin in the anteroom.

'Head has wandered a little. Better now, and quiet,' and the one doctor murmured to the other the treatment which he had pursued.

Firmin stepped in gently towards the patient, near whose side the Little Sister was standing.

'Who is it?' asked Phil.

'It is I, dear. Your father,' said Dr. Firmin, with real tenderness in his voice.

The Little Sister turned round once, and fell down like a stone by the bedside/

'You infernal villain!' said Goodenough, with an oath, and a step forward. 'You are the man!'

'Hush! The patient, if you please, Dr. Goodenough,' said the other physician.

CHAPTER IV. A GENTEEL FAMILY

HAVE you made up your mind on the question of seeming and being in the world? I mean, suppose you *are* poor, is it right for you to *seem* to be well off? Have people an honest right to keep up appearances? Are you justified in starving your dinner-table in order to keep a carriage? to have such an expensive house that you can't by any possibility help a poor relation? to array your daughters in costly milliners' wares because they live with girls whose parents are twice as rich? Sometimes it is hard to say where honest pride ends and hypocrisy begins. To obtrude your poverty is mean and slavish: as it is odious for a beggar to ask compassion by showing his sores. But to simulate prosperity—to be wealthy and lavish thrice a year when you ask your friends, and for the rest of the time to munch a crust and sit by one candle—are the folks who practise this deceit worthy of applause or a whipping? Sometimes it is noble pride, sometimes shabby swindling. When I see Eugenia with her dear children exquisitely neat and cheerful; not showing the slightest semblance of poverty, or uttering the smallest complaint; persisting that Squanderfield, her husband, treats her well, and is good at heart; and denying that he leaves her and her young ones in want; I admire and reverence that noble falsehood—that beautiful constancy and endurance which disdains to ask compassion. When I sit at poor Jezebella's table, and am treated to her sham bounties and shabby splendour, I only feel anger for the hospitality, and that dinner, and guest, and host, are humbugs together.

Talbot Twysden's dinner-table is large, and the guests most respectable. There is always a bigwig or two present, and a dining dowager who frequents the greatest houses. There is a butler who offers you wine; there's a *menu du dîner* before Mrs. Twysden; and to read it you would fancy you were at a good dinner. It tastes of chopped straw. Oh, the dreary sparkle of that feeble champagne; the audacity of that public-house sherry; the swindle of that acrid claret; the fiery twang of that clammy port. I have tried them all, I tell you! It is sham wine, a sham dinner, a sham welcome, a sham cheerfulness among the guests assembled. I feel that that woman eyes and counts the cutlets as they are carried off the tables; perhaps watches that one which you try to swallow. She has counted and grudged each candle by which the cook prepares the meal. Does her big coachman fatten himself on purloined oats and beans, and Thorley's food for cattle? Of the rinsings of those wretched bottles the butler will have to give a reckoning in the morning. Unless you are of the very great *monde*, Twysden and his wife think themselves better than you are, and seriously patronise you. They consider it is a privilege to be invited to those horrible meals to which they gravely ask the greatest folks in the country. I actually met Winton there—the famous Winton—the best dinner-giver