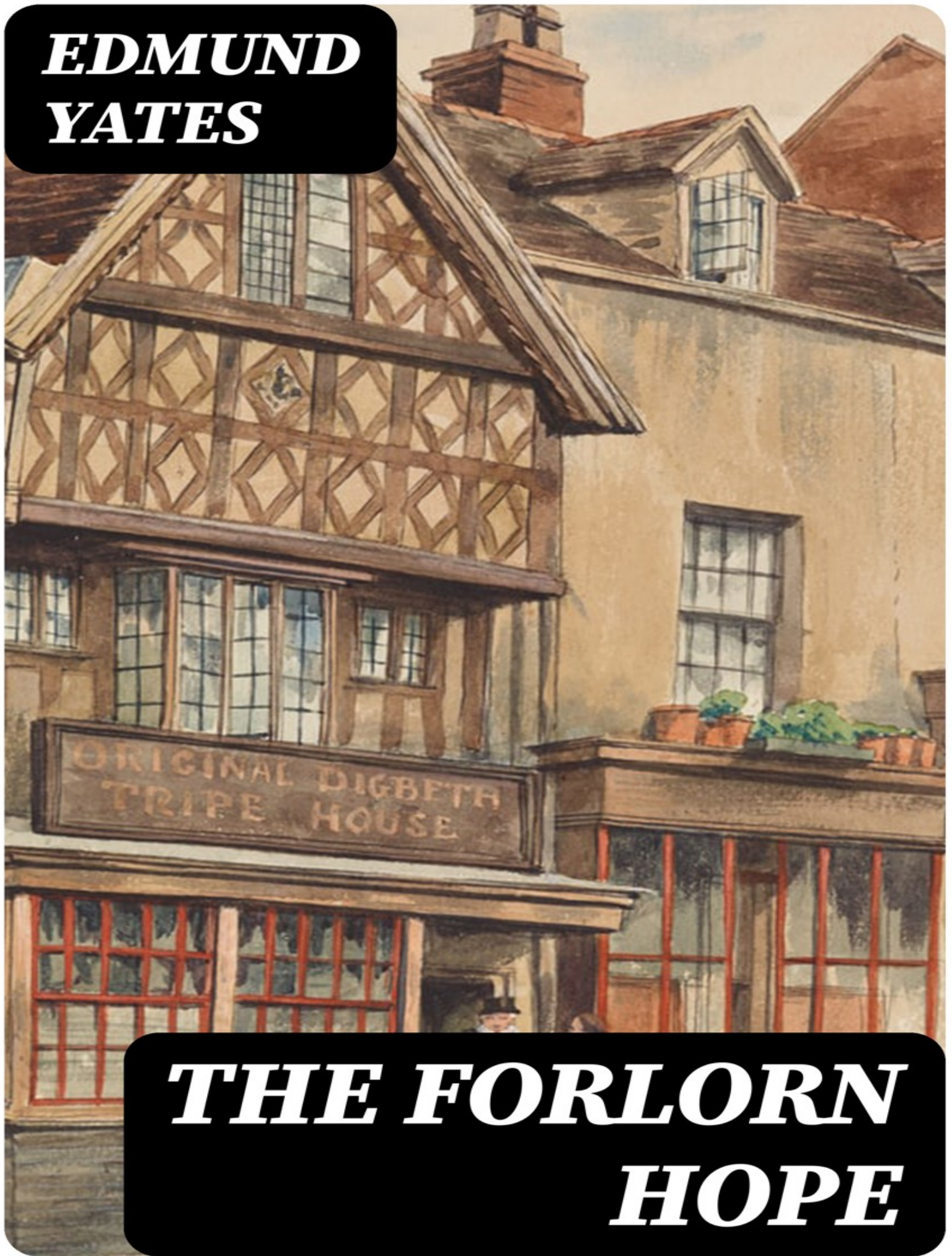


***EDMUND  
YATES***



***THE FORLORN  
HOPE***

**Edmund Yates**

# **The Forlorn Hope**

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# CHAPTER I.

## "Sound an Alarm."

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The half-hour dressing-bell rung out as Sir Duncan Forbes jumped from the hired carriage which had borne him the last stage of his journey to Kilsyth, and immediately followed his servant, who had put in a pantomimically abrupt appearance at the carriage-door, to his room. The steaming horses shook their sides, and rattled their harness dismally, in the dreary autumnal evening; but a host of gillies and understrappers had hurried out at the noise of the approaching wheels, and so quickly despoiled the carriage of its luggage, that within a very few minutes its driver--comforted by something over his fare, in addition to a stiff glass of the incomparable Kilsyth whisky--was slowly wending his way back, over a road which to any one but a Highlander would have seemed impassable in the fog that had begun to cloud the neighbouring mountains in an almost impenetrable shroud of misty gray. From the cold, chilly, damp mountain air, from the long solitary ride, for the last twenty miles of which he had not met a human creature, to the airy bedroom with its French paper, the bright wood-fire burning on its hearth, the wax candles on the dressing-table, the drawn chintz curtains, the neat writing-table, the little shelf of prettily-bound well-chosen books, was a transition indeed for Duncan Forbes. One glance around sufficed to show him all these things, and to

show him in addition the steaming bath, the warmed linen, the other various arrangements for his comfort which the forethought of Dixon his servant had prepared for him. He was used to luxuries, and thoroughly accustomed to rough it; he was not an impressionable young man; but there are times, even if we be only eight-and-twenty, good-looking, and in the Household Brigade, when we feel a kind of sympathy with the working-man who declared that "life was not all beer and skittles," and are disposed to look rather more seriously than usual upon our own condition and our surroundings. The journey from Glenlaggan--it is, it must be confessed, an awful road--had had its effect on Duncan Forbes. Why he should have permitted himself to be worked upon either by a sense of solitude, or by an involuntary tribute to the wildness of the scenery, or perhaps by dyspepsia, arising a recent change of living, to fall temporarily into a low state of mind; to think about his duns, debts, and difficulties; to wonder why he was not at that moment staying with his mother in Norfolk, instead of plunging into the depths of the Highlands; to think of his cousin Ethel Spalding, and to clench his fists violently and mutter strong expressions as the image of a certain Dundas Adair, commonly called Lord Adair, rose before him simultaneously with that of his said cousin; why he then fell into a state which was half lachrymose and half morose, impelling him to refresh himself from a silver flask, and to make many mental resolutions as to his future life,--why he did all this is utterly immaterial to us, as Sir Duncan Forbes is by no manner of means our hero, in fact has very little to do with our story. But the journey had its effect upon him,

and rendered the comfort and luxury of Kilsyth doubly precious in his eyes. So that when he had had his bath, and, well advanced in his dressing, was luxuriating in the comfort of cleanliness and fresh linen, and the prospect of an excellent dinner, he had sufficiently returned to his normal condition to ask Dixon--who had preceded him by a couple of days--whether the house was full, and who were there.

"House quite full, sir," replied Dixon. "Colonel Jefferson, sir, of the First Life-guards; Capting Severn, sir, of the Second Life-guards, and his lady; Markis Towcester, as have jist jined the Blues; Honble Capting Shaddock, of the Eighteenth 'Ussars; Lord Roderick Douglas, of the Scots Fusiliers; and--"

"Drop the Army List, Dixon," growled his master, at that moment performing heavily on his head with a pair of hair-brushes; "who else is here?"

"There's the Danish Minister, sir--which I won't try to pronounce his name--and his lady; and there's the Dook and Duchess of Northallerton--which the Dook has the gout that bad, his man told me--used to be in our ridgment, Sir Duncan, and was bought out by his mother on his father's death--as to be past bearin' sometimes; and Lady Fairfax, sir; and Lady Dunkeld, as is Lady Muriel's cousin, sir; and a Mr. Pitcairn, as is a distant relation of the family's; and a Mr. Fletcher, as is, I'm told, a hartist, or something of that kind, sir--he hasn't brought a man here, sir; so I'm unable to say; but he seems to be well thought of, sir; quite at his ease, as they say, among the company, sir."

"Dear me!" said Duncan Forbes, suspending the action of the hair-brushes for a moment, while he grinned grimly;



"you seem to be a great observer, Dixon."

"Well, sir, one can't keep one's hears shut entirely, nor one's eyes, and I noticed this gentleman took a kind of leading part in the talk at dinner, sir, yesterday. O, I forgot, sir; Miss Kilsyth have not been well for the last two or three days, sir; kep' her room, havin' caught cold returnin' from a luncheon-party up at what they call a shealing--kind of 'ut, sir, in the 'ills, where they put up when stalkin', as I make out, sir,--and her maid says is uncommon low and bad."

"Ill, is she?--Miss Kilsyth? Jove, that's bad! Haven't they sent for a doctor, or that kind of thing?"

"Yes, sir, they have sent for a doctor; and he's been, sir; leastways when I say doctor, sir, I mean to say the 'pothecary from the village, sir. Comes on a shady kind of a cob, sir, and I shouldn't say knew much about it. Beg your pardon, sir--dinner gong!"

Sir Duncan Forbes' toilette is happily complete at the time of this announcement, and he sallies downstairs towards the drawing-room. Entering, he finds most of the company already assembled; and in the careless glance which he throws around as the door closes behind him, he recognises a bevy of London friends, looking, with perhaps the addition of a little bronze in the men, and a little plumpness in the ladies, exactly as he left them at the concluding ball of the season two months ago. Some he has not seen for a longer period, his host among them. Kilsyth of Kilsyth, keen sportsman, whether with rod or gun; landlord exercising influence over his tenants, not by his position alone, but by the real indubitable interest which he takes in their well-being; lord-lieutenant of his county, first patron

and best judge at its agricultural meetings, chairman of the bench of magistrates, prime mover in the herring fishery,-- what does Kilsyth of Kilsyth do in London? Little enough, truth to tell; gives a very perfunctory attendance at the House of Commons, meets old friends at Brookes's, dines at a few of the earlier meetings of the Fox Club, and does his utmost to keep out of the way of the Liberal whip, who dare not offend him, and yet grieves most lamentably over his shortcomings at St. Stephen's. See him now as he stands on the hearth-rug, with his back to the drawing-room fire, a hale hearty man, whose fifty years of life have never bent his form nor scarcely dimmed the fire in his bright blue eye. Life, indeed, has been pretty smooth and pleasant to Kilsyth since, when a younger son, he was gazetted to the 42d; and after a slight sojourn in that distinguished regiment, was sent for by his father to take the place of his elder brother, killed by the bursting of a gun when out on a stalk. A shadow--deep enough at the moment, but now mercifully lightened by Time, the grim yet kindly consoler--had fallen across his path when his wife, whom he loved so well, and whom he had taken from her quiet English home, where, a simple parson's daughter, she had captivated the young Highland officer, had died in giving birth to a second child. But he had survived the shock; and long afterwards, when he had succeeded to the family title and estates, and was, indeed, himself well on the way to middle age, had married again. Kilsyth's second wife was the sister of a Scottish earl of old family and small estate, a high-bred woman, much younger than her husband, who had borne him two children (little children at the time our story opens), and who, not

merely in her Highland neighbourhood, but in the best society of London, in which she was ungrudgingly received, was looked upon as a pattern wife. With the name of Lady Muriel Kilsyth the most inveterate scandalmongers had never ventured to make free. The mere fact of her being more than twenty years younger than her husband had given them the greatest hope of onslaught when the marriage was first announced; but Lady Muriel had calmly faced her foes, and not the most observant of them had as yet espied the smallest flaw in her harness. Her behaviour to her husband, without being in the least degree gushing, was so thoroughly circumspect, they lived together on such excellent terms of something that was evidently more than amity, though it never pretended to devotion, that the scandalmongers were utterly defeated. Balked in one direction, they launched out in another; they could not degrade the husband by their pity, but they could mildly annoy the wife with reflections on her conduct to her stepchildren. "Poor little things," they said, "with such an ambitious woman for stepmother, and children of her own to think of! Ronald may struggle on; but as for poor Madeleine-" and uplifted eyebrows and shrugged shoulders completed the sentence. It is needless to say that Kilsyth himself heard none of these idle babblings, or that if he had, he would have treated them with scorn. "My lady" was to him the incarnation of every thing that was right and proper, that was clever and far-seeing; he trusted her implicitly in every matter; he looked up to and respected her; he suffered himself to be ruled by her, and she ruled him very gently and with the greatest talent and tact in every matter of his

life save one. Lady Muriel was all-powerful with her husband, except when, as he thought, her views were in the least harsh or despotic towards his daughter Madeleine; and then he quietly but calmly held his own way. Madeleine was his idol, and no one, not even his wife, could shake him in his adoration of her. As he stands on the hearth-rug, there is a shadow on his bright cheery face, for he has had bad news of his darling since he came in from shooting,--has been forbidden to go to her room lest he should disturb her; and at each opening of the door he looks anxiously in that direction, half wishing, half fearing Lady Muriel's advent with the doctor's latest verdict on the invalid.

The thin slight wiry man talking to Kilsyth, and rattling on garrulously in spite of his friend's obvious preoccupation, is Captain Sèvern, perhaps the best steeple-chase rider in England, and untouchable at billiards by any amateur. He is a slangy, turfy, raffish person, hating ladies' society, and using a singular vocabulary full of *Bell's-Life* idioms. He is, however, well connected, and has a charming wife, for whose sake he is tolerated; a lovely little fairy of a woman, whose heart is as big as her body; the merriest, most cheerful, best-tempered creature, trolling out her little French *chansons* in a clear bird-like voice; acting in charades with infinite character and piquancy; and withal the idol of the poor in the neighbourhood of their hunting-box in Leicestershire; and the quickest, softest, and most attentive nurse in sickness, as a dozen of her friends could testify.

That bald head which you can just see over the top of the *Morning Post* belongs to the Duke of Northallerton, who has been all his life more or less engaged in politics; who has,

when his party has been in office, held respectively the important positions of Postmaster-General and Privy Seal; and who was never so well described as by one of his private secretaries, who declared tersely that his grace was a "kind old pump." Outwardly he is a tall man of about fifty-five, with a high forehead, which has stood his friend through life, and obtained him credit for gifts which he never possessed, a boiled-gooseberry eye, a straight nose, and projecting buck-teeth. As becomes an old English gentleman, he wears a very high white cravat and a large white waistcoat; indeed it is only within the last few years that he has relinquished his blue coat and gold buttons, and very tight pantaloons. He is reading the paper airily through his double glasses, and uttering an occasional "Ha!" and "Dear me!" as he wades through the movements of the travelling aristocracy; but from time to time he removes the glasses from his nose, and looks up with a half-peevish glance at his neighbour, Colonel Jefferson. Charley Jefferson (no one ever called him any thing else) has a large photograph album before him, at which he is not looking in the least; on the contrary, his glance is directed straight in front of him; and as he stands six feet four, his eyes, when he is sitting, would be about on a level with a short man's head; and he is tugging at his great sweeping grizzled moustache, and fidgeting with his leg, and muttering between his clinched teeth at intervals short phrases, which sound like "Little brute! break his neck! beastly little cad!" and suchlike.

The individual thus objurgated by the Colonel is highly thought of by Sir Bernard Burke, and known to Debrett as

John Ulick Delatribe, Marquis of Towcester, eldest son of the Duke of Plymouth, who has just been gazetted to the Blues, after some years at Eton and eighteen months' wandering on the Continent. Though he is barely twenty, a more depraved young person is rarely to be found; his tutor, the Rev. Merton Sandford, who devoted the last few years of his life to him, and who has retired to his well-earned preferment of the largest living in the duke's gift, lifts up his eyes and shakes his head when, over a quiet bottle of claret with an old college friend, he speaks of Lord Towcester. The boy's reputation had preceded him to London; a story from the Viennese Embassy, of which he was the hero, came across in a private note to Blatherwick of the F.O., enclosed in the official white sheep-skin despatch-bag, and before night was discussed in half the smoking-rooms in Pall-Mall. The youngsters laughed at the anecdote and envied its hero; but older men looked grave; and Charley Jefferson, standing in the middle of a knot of men on the steps of the Rag, said he was deuced glad that the lad wasn't coming into his regiment; for if that story were true, the service would be none the better for such an accession to it, as, if it were his business, he should take an early opportunity of pointing out; and the listeners, who knew that Colonel Jefferson was the best soldier and the strictest martinet throughout the household cavalry, and who marked the expression of his face as he pulled his moustache and strode away after delivering his dictum, thought that perhaps it was better for Towcester that his lot was cast in a different corps. You would not have thought there was much harm in the boy, though, from his appearance. Look at him

now, as he bends over Lady Fairfax, until his face almost touches her soft glossy hair. It is a round, boyish, ingenuous face, though the eyes are rather deeply set, and there is something cruel about the mouth which the thin downy moustache utterly fails to hide. As Lady Fairfax turns her large dark eyes on her interlocutor, and looks up at him, her brilliant white teeth flashing in an irrepressible smile, the Colonel's growls become more frequent, and he tugs at his moustache more savagely than ever. Why? If you know any thing about these people, you will remember that ten years ago, when Emily Fairfax was Emily Ponsonby, and lived with her old aunt, Lady Mary, in the dull rambling old house at Kew, Charley Jefferson, a penniless cornet in what were then the 13th Light Dragoons, was quartered at Hounslow; danced, rode, and flirted with her; carried off a lock of her hair when the regiment was ordered to India; and far away up country, in utter ignorance of all that was happening in England, used to gaze at it and kiss it, long after Miss Ponsonby had married old Lord Fairfax, and had become the reigning belle of the London season. Old Lord Fairfax is dead now, and Charley Jefferson has come into his uncle's fortune; and there is no cause or impediment why these twain should not become one flesh, save that Emily is still coquettish, and Charley is horribly jealous; and so matters are still in the balance.

The little old gentleman in the palpable flaxen wig and gold spectacles, who is poring over that case of Flaxman's cameos in genuine admiration, is Count Bulow, the Danish Ambassador; and the little old lady whose face is so wrinkled as to suggest an idea of gratitude that she is a

lady, and consequently is not compelled to shave, is his wife. They are charming old people, childless themselves, but the cause of constant matchmaking in others. More flirtations come to a successful issue in the embassy at Eaton-place than in any other house in town; and the old couple, who have for years worthily represented their sovereign, are sponsors to half the children in Belgravia. They are both art-lovers, and their house is crammed with good things--pictures from Munich and Düsseldorf, choice bits of Thorwaldsen, big elk-horns, and quaint old Scandinavian drinking-cups. Old Lady Potiphar, who has the worst reputation and the bitterest tongue in London, says you meet "odd people" at the Bulows'; said "odd people" being artists and authors, English and foreign. Mr. Fletcher, R. A., who is just now talking to the Countess, is one of the most favoured guests at the embassy, but he is not an "odd person," even to Lady Potiphar, for he goes into what she calls "sassiety," and has been "actially asked to Mar'bro' House"--where Lady Potiphar is not invited. A quiet, unpretending, gentlemanly, middle-aged man, Mr. Fletcher; wearing his artistic honours with easy dignity, and by no means oblivious of the early days when he gave drawing-lessons at per hour to many of the nobility who now call him their friend. There are three or four young ladies present, who need no particular description, and who are dividing the homage of Captain Shaddock; while Lord Roderick Douglas, a young nobleman to whom Nature has been more bountiful in nose than in forehead, and Mr. Pitcairn, a fresh-coloured, freckled, blue-eyed gentleman, lithe and active as a



greyhound, are muttering in a corner, making arrangements for the next day's shooting.

The entrance of Sir Duncan Forbes caused a slight commotion in the party; and every one had a look or a word of welcome for the new comer, for he was a general favourite. He moved easily from group to group, shaking hands and chatting pleasantly. Kilsyth, who was specially fond of him, grasped his hand warmly; the Duke laid aside the *Morning Post* in the midst of a most interesting leader, in which Mr. Bright was depicted as a pleasant compound of Catiline and Judas Iscariot; Count Bulow gave up his cameos; and even grim Charley Jefferson relaxed in his feverish supervision of Lord Towcester.

As for the ladies, they unanimously voted Duncan charming, quite charming, and could not make too much of him.

"And where have you come from, Duncan?" asked Kilsyth, when the buzz consequent on his entrance had subsided.

"Last, from Burnside," said Duncan.

"Burnside!--where's Burnside?" asked Captain Severn shortly.

"Burnside is on the Tay, the prettiest house in all Scotland, if I may venture to say so, being at Kilsyth; of course it don't pretend to any thing of this kind. It's a mere doll's-house of a place, nothing but a shooting-box; but in its way it's a perfect paradise."

"Are you speaking by the card, Duncan?" said Count Bulow, with the slightest foreign accent; "or was there some

Peri in this paradise that gave it such fascination in your eyes?"

"Peri! No indeed, Count," replied. Duncan, laughing; "Burnside is a bachelor establishment,--rigidly proper, quite monastic, and all that kind of thing. It belongs to old Sir Saville Rowe, who was a swell doctor in London--O, ages ago!"

"Sir Saville Rowe!" exclaimed the Duke; "I know him very well. He was physician to the late King, and was knighted just before his majesty's death. I haven't seen him for years, and thought he was dead."

"He's any thing but that, Duke. A remarkably healthy old man, and as jolly as possible; capital company still, though he's long over seventy. And his place is really lovely; the worst of it is, it's such a tremendous distance from here. I've been travelling all day; and as it is I thought I was late for dinner. The gong sounded as I left my room."

"You were late, Duncan; you always are," said Kilsyth, with a smile. "But the Duchess is keeping you in countenance tonight, and Lady Muriel has not shown yet. She is up with Madeleine, who is ill, poor child."

"Ah, so I was sorry to hear. What is it? Nothing serious, I hope?"

"No, please God, no. But she caught cold, and is a little feverish tonight: the doctor is with her now, and we shall soon have his report. Ah, here is the Duchess."

The Duchess of Northallerton, a tall portly woman, with a heavy ruminating expression of face, like a sedate cow, entered as he spoke, and advancing said a few gracious nothings to Duncan Forbes. She was closely followed by a

servant, who, addressing his master, said that Lady Muriel would be engaged for a few minutes longer with the doctor, and had ordered dinner to be served.

The conversation at dinner, falling into its recent channel, was resumed by Lord Towcester, who said, "Who had you at this doctor's, Duncan? Queer sort of people, I suppose?"

"Some of his patients, perhaps," said Lady Fairfax, showing all her teeth.

"Black draught and that sort of thing to drink, and cold compresses on the sideboard," said Captain Severn, who was nothing if not objectionable.

"I never had better living, and never met pleasanter people," said Duncan Forbes pointedly. "They wouldn't have suited you, perhaps, Severn, for they all talked sense; and none of them knew the odds on any thing--though that might have suited you perhaps, as you'd have been able to win their money."

"Any of Sir Saville's profession?" cut in the Duke, diplomatically anxious to soften matters.

"Only one--a Dr. Wilmot; the great man of the day, as I understand."

"O, every body has heard of Wilmot," said half-a-dozen voices.

"He's the great authority on fever, and that kind of thing," said Jefferson. "Saved Broadwater's boy in typhus last year when all the rest of them had given him up."

"Dr. Wilmot remains there," said Duncan; "our party broke up yesterday, but Wilmot stays on. He and I had a

tremendous chat last night, and I never met a more delightful fellow."

At this moment Lady Muriel entered the room, and as she passed her husband's chair laid a small slip of paper on the table by his plate; then went up to Duncan Forbes, who had risen to receive her, and gave him a hearty welcome. Kilsyth took an opportunity of opening the paper, and the healthy colour left his cheeks as he read:

*"M. is much worse tonight. Dr. Joyce now pronounces it undoubted scarlet-fever."*

The old man rose from the table, asking permission to absent himself for a few moments; and as he moved, whispered to Duncan, who was sitting at his right-hand, "You said Dr. Wilmot was still at Burnside?"

Receiving an answer in the affirmative, he hurried into the hall, wrote a few hasty lines, and gave them to the butler, saying, "Tell Donald to ride off at once to Acray, and telegraph this message. Tell him to gallop all the way."

## **CHAPTER II.**

### **Master and Pupil.**

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Duncan Forbes was given to exaggeration, as is the fashion of the day; but he had scarcely exaggerated the beauty of Burnside, even in the rapturous terms which he chose to employ in speaking of it. It was, indeed, a most lovely spot, standing on the summit of a high hill, wooded from base to crest, and with the silver Tay--now rushing over a hard pebbly bed, now softly flowing in a scarcely fathomable depth of still water through a deep ravine with towering rocks on either side--bubbling at its feet. From the higher windows--notably from the turret; and it was a queer rambling turreted house, without any preponderating style of architecture, but embracing, and that not unpicturesquely, a great many--you looked down upon the pretty little town of Dunkeld, with its broad bridge spanning the flood, and the gray old tower of its cathedral rearing itself aloft like a hoary giant athwart the horizon, and the trim lawn of the ducal residence in the distance--an oasis of culture in a desert of wildness, yet harmonising sufficiently with its surroundings. Sloping down the steep bank on which the house was placed, and overhanging the brawling river beneath, ran a broad gravel path, winding between the trees, which at certain points had been cut away to give the best views of the neighbouring scenery; and on this path, at an early hour on the morning succeeding the night on which

Duncan Forbes had arrived at Kilsyth, two men were walking, engaged in earnest conversation. An old man one of them, but in the enjoyment of a vigorous old age: his back is bowed, and he uses a stick; but if you remark, he does not use it as a crutch, lifting it now and again to point his remark, or striking it on the ground to emphasize his decision. A tall old man, with long white hair flowing away from under the brim of his wideawake hat, with bright blue eyes and well-cut features, and a high forehead and white hands, with long lithe clever-looking fingers. Those eyes and fingers have done their work in their day, professionally and socially. Those eyes have looked into the eyes of youth and loveliness, and have read in them that in a few months their light would be quenched for ever; those fingers have clasped the beating pulses of seemingly full and vigorous manhood, and have recognised that the axe was laid at the root of the apparently tall and flourishing tree, and that in a little time it would topple headlong down. Those eyes "looked love to eyes that spake again;" those hands clasped hands that returned their clasp, and that trembled fondly and confidingly within them; that voice, professionally modulated to babble of sympathy, compassion, and hope, trembled with passion and whispered all its human aspirations into the trellised ear of beauty, once and once only. Looking at the old gentleman, so mild and gentle and benevolent, with his shirt-front sprinkled with snuff, and his old-fashioned black gaiters and his gouty shoes, you could hardly imagine that he was the hero of a scandal which five-and-thirty years before had rung through society, and given the *Satirist*, and other scurrilous publications of the time,

matter for weeks and weeks of filthy comment. And yet it was so. Sir Saville Rowe (then Dr. Rowe), physician to one of the principal London hospitals, and even then a man of mark in his profession, was called in to attend a young lady who represented herself as a widow, and with whom, after a time, he fell desperately in love. For months he attended her through a trying illness, from which, under his care, she recovered. Then, when her recovery was complete, he confessed his passion, and they were engaged to be married. One night, within a very short time of the intended wedding, he called at her lodgings and found a man there, a coarse slangy blackguard, who, after a few words, abruptly proclaimed himself to be the lady's husband, and demanded compensation for his outraged honour. Words ensued; and more than words: the man--half-drunk, all bully--struck the doctor; and Rowe, who was a powerful man, and who was mad with rage at what he imagined was a conspiracy, returned the blows with interest. The police were summoned, and Rowe was hauled off to the station-house; but on the following day the prosecutor was not forthcoming, and the doctor was liberated. The scandal spread, and ruffians batted on it, as they ever will; but Dr. Rowe's courage and professional skill enabled him to live it down; and when, two years after, in going round a hospitalward with his pupils, he came upon his old love at the verge of death, his heart, which he thought had been sufficiently steeled, gave way within him, and once more he set himself to the task of curing her. He did all that could be done; had her removed to a quiet suburban cottage, tended by the most experienced nurses, never grudged one

moment of his time to visit her constantly; but it was too late: hard living and brutal treatment had done their work; and Dr. Rowe's only love died in his arms, imploring Heaven's blessings on him. That wound in his life, deep as it was, has long since cicatrised and healed over, leaving a scar which was noticeable to very few long before he attained to the first rank in his profession and received the titular reward of his services to royalty. He has for some time retired from active practice, though he will still meet in consultation some old pupil or former colleague; but he takes life easily now, passing the season in London, the autumn in Scotland, and the winter at Torquay; in all of which places he finds old friends chatable and kindly, who help him to while away the pleasant autumn of his life.

The other man is about eight-and-thirty, with keen bright brown eyes, a broad brow, straight nose, thin lips, and heavy jaw, indicative of firmness, not to say obstinacy; a tall man with stooping shoulders, and a look of quiet placid attention in his face; with a slim figure, a jerky walk, and a habit of clasping his hands behind his back, and leaning forward as though listening; a man likely to invite notice at first sight from his unmistakable earnestness and intellect, otherwise a quiet gentlemanly man, whose profession it was impossible to assign, yet who was obviously a man of mark in his way. This was Chudleigh Wilmot, who was looked upon by those who ought to know as *the* coming man in the London medical profession; whose lectures were to be attended before those of any other professor at St. Vitus's Hospital; whose contributions on fever cases to the *Scalpel* had given the *Times* subject-matter for a leader, in which he



had been most honourably mentioned; and who was commencing to reap the harvest of honour and profit which accrues to the fortunate few. He is an old pupil of Sir Saville Rowe's, and there is no one in whose company the old gentleman has greater delight.

"Smoke, Chudleigh, smoke! Light up at once. I know you're dying to have your cigar, and daren't out of deference to me. Fancy I'm your master still, don't you?"

"Not a bit of it, old friend. I've given up after-breakfast smoking as a rule, because, you see, that delightful bell in Charles-street begins to ring about a quarter to ten, and--"

"So much the better. Let them ring. They were knockers in my day, and I recollect how delighted I used to be at every rap. But there's no one to ring or knock here; and so you may take your cigar quietly. I've been longing for this time; longing to have what the people about here call a 'crack' with you--impossible while those other men were here; but now I've got you all to myself."

"Yes," said Wilmot, who by this time had lighted his cigar--"yes, and you'll have me all to yourself for the next four days; that is to say, if you will."

"If I will! Is there any thing in the world could give me greater pleasure? I get young again, talking to you, Chudleigh. I mind me of the time when you used to come to lecture, a great raw boy, with, I should say, the dirtiest hands and the biggest note-book in the whole hospital." And the old gentleman chuckled at his reminiscence.

"Well, I've managed to wash the first, and to profit by the manner in which I filled the second from your lectures," said Wilmot, not without a blush.

"Not a bit, not a bit," interposed Sir Saville; "you would have done well enough without any lectures of mine, though I'm glad to think that in that celebrated question of anæsthetics you stuck by me, and enabled me triumphantly to defeat Macpherson of Edinburgh. That was a great triumph for us, that was! Dear me, when I think of the charlatans! Eh, well, never mind; I'm out of all that now. So, you have a few days more, you were saying, and you're going to give them up to me."

"Nothing will please me so much. Because, you see, I shall make it a combination of pleasure and business. There are several things on which I want to consult you,--points which I have reserved from time to time, and on which I can get no such opinion as yours. I'm not due in town until the 3d of next month. Whittaker, who has taken my practice, doesn't leave until the 5th, which is a Sunday, and even then only goes as far as Guildford, to a place he's taken for some pheasant-shooting; a nice, close, handy place, where Mrs. Whittaker can accompany him. She thinks he's so fascinating, that she does not like to let him out of her sight."

"Whittaker! Whittaker!" said Sir Saville; "is it a bald man with a cock-eye?--used to be at Bartholomew's."

"That's the man! He's in first-rate practice now, and deservedly, for he's thoroughly clever and reliable; but his beauty has not improved by time. However, Mrs. Whittaker doesn't see that; and it's with the greatest difficulty he ever gets permission to attend a lady's case."

"You must be thankful Mrs. Wilmot isn't like that."

"O, I am indeed," replied Wilmot shortly. "By the way, I've never had an opportunity of talking to you about your marriage, and about your wife, Chudleigh. I got your wedding-cards, of course; but that's--ah, that must be three years ago."

"Four."

"Four! Is it indeed so long? Tut, tut! how time flies! I've called at your house in London, but your wife has not been at home; and as I don't entertain ladies, you see, of course I've missed an opportunity of cultivating her acquaintance."

"Ye-es. I've heard Mrs. Wilmot say that she had seen your cards, and that she was very sorry to have been out when you called," said Dr. Wilmot with, in him, a most unnatural hesitation.

"Yes, of course," said old Sir Saville, with a comical look out of the corners of his eyes, which fell unheeded on his companion. "Well, now, as I've never seen her, and as I'm not likely to see her now,--for I am an old man, and I've given up ceremony visits at my time of life,--tell me about your wife, Chudleigh; you know the interest I take in you; and that, perhaps, may excuse my asking about her. Does she suit you? Are you happy with her?"

Wilmot looked hard for an instant at his friend with a sudden quick glance of suspicion, then relaxed his brows, and laughed outright.

"Certainly, my dear Sir Saville, you are the most original of men. Who on earth else would have dreamt of asking a man such a home question? It's worse than the queries put in the proposal papers of insurance-offices. However, I'm

glad to be able to give a satisfactory answer. I *am* happy with my wife, and she *does* suit me."

"Yes; but what I mean is, are you in love with her?"

"Am I what?"

"In love with her. I mean, are you always thinking of her when you are away from her? Are you always longing to get back to her? Does her face come between you and the book you are reading? When you are thinking-out an intricate case, and puzzling your brains as to how you shall deal with it, do you sometimes let the whole subject slip out of your mind, to ponder over the last words she said to you, the last look she gave you?"

"God bless your soul, my dear old friend! You might as well ask me if I didn't play leap-frog with the house-surgeon of St. Vitus's, or challenge any member of the College of Physicians to a single-wicket match. Those are the *délassements* of youth, my dear sir, that you are talking about; of very much youth indeed."

"I know one who wasn't 'very much youth' when he carried out the doctrine religiously," said the old gentleman in reply.

"Ah, then perhaps the lady wasn't his wife," said Wilmot, without the smallest notion of the dangerous ground on which he was treading. "No, the fact is simply this: I am, as you know, a man absorbed in my profession. I have no leisure for nonsense of the kind you describe, nor for any other kind of nonsense. My wife recognises that perfectly; she does all the calling and visiting which society prescribes. I go to a few old friends' to dinner in the season, and sometimes show up for a few minutes at the house of a

patient where Mrs. Wilmot thinks it necessary for me to be seen. We each fulfil our duties perfectly, and we are in the evening excellent friends."

"Ye-es," said Sir Saville doubtfully; "that's all delightful, and--"

"As to longing to get back to her, and face coming between you and your book, and always thinking, and that kind of thing," pursued Wilmot, not heeding him, "I recollect, when I was a dresser at the hospital, long before I passed the College, I had all those feelings for a little cousin of mine who was then living at Knightsbridge with her father, who was a clerk in the Bank of England. But then he died, and she married--not the barber, but another clerk in the Bank of England, and I never thought any more about it. Believe me, my dear friend, except to such perpetual evergreens as yourself, those ideas die off at twenty years of age."

"Well, perhaps so, perhaps so," said the old gentleman; "and I daresay it's quite-right, only--well, never mind. Well, Chudleigh, it's a pleasant thing for me, remembering you, as I said, a great hulking lad when you first came to lecture, to see you now carrying away every thing before you. I don't know that you're quite wise in giving Whittaker your practice, for he's a deep designing dog; and you can tell as well as I do how a word dropped deftly here and there may steal away a patient before the doctor knows where he is, especially with old ladies and creatures of that sort. But, however, it's the slack time of year,--that's one thing to be said,--when everybody that's any body is safe to be out of town. Ah, by the way, that reminds me! I was glad to see by

the *Morning Post* that you had had some very good cases last season."

"The *Morning Post*!--some very good cases! What do you mean?"

"I mean, I saw your name as attending several of the nobility: 'His lordship's physician, Dr. Wilmot, of Charles Street,' et cetera; that kind of thing, you know."

"O, do you congratulate me on those? I certainly pulled young Lord Coniston, Lord Broadwater's son, through a stiff attack of typhus; but as I would have done the same for his lordship's porter's child, I don't see the value of the paragraph. By the way, I shouldn't wonder if I were indebted to the porter for the paragraph."

"Never mind, my dear Chudleigh, whence the paragraph comes, but be thankful you got it. 'Sweet,' as Shakespeare says,--'sweet are the uses of advertisement;' and our profession is almost the only one to which they are not open. The inferior members of it, to be sure, do a little in the way of the red lamp and the vaccination gratis; but when you arrive at any eminence you must not attempt any thing more glaring than galloping about town in your carriage, and getting your name announced in the best society."

"The best society!" echoed Wilmot with an undisguised sneer. "My dear Sir Saville, you seem to have taken a craze for Youth, Beauty, and High Life, and to exalt them as gods for your idolatry."

"For *my* idolatry! No, my boy, for yours. I don't deny that when I was in the ring, I did my best to gain the approbation of all three, and that I succeeded I may say without vanity. But I'm out of it now, and I can only give counsel to my