

TO DR. JOHN ELLIOTSON

My Dear Doctor,

Thirteen months ago, when it seemed likely that this story had come to a close, a kind friend brought you to my bedside, whence, in all probability, I never should have risen but for your constant watchfulness and skill. I like to recall your great goodness and kindness (as well as many acts of others, showing quite a surprising friendship and sympathy) at that time, when kindness and friendship were most needed and welcome.

And as you would take no other fee but thanks, let me record them here in behalf of me and mine, and subscribe myself,

Yours most sincerely and gratefully,

W. M. THACKERAY.

Preface

If this kind of composition, of which the two years' product is now laid before the public, fail in art, as it constantly does and must, it at least has the advantage of a certain truth and honesty, which a work more elaborate might lose. In his constant communication with the reader, the writer is forced into frankness of expression, and to speak out his own mind and feelings as they urge him. Many a slip of the pen and the printer, many a word spoken in haste, he sees and would recall as he looks over his volume. It is a sort of confidential talk between writer and reader, which must often be dull, must often flag. In the course of his volubility, the perpetual speaker must of necessity lay bare his own weaknesses, vanities, peculiarities. And as we judge of a man's character, after long frequenting his society, not by one speech, or by one mood or opinion, or by one day's talk, but by the tenor of his general bearing and conversation; so of a writer, who delivers himself up to you perforce unreservedly, you say, Is he honest? Does he tell the truth in the main? Does he seem actuated by a desire to find out and speak it? Is he a quack, who shams sentiment, or mouths for effect? Does he seek popularity by claptraps or other arts? I can no more ignore good fortune than any other chance which has befallen me. I have found many thousands more readers than I ever looked for. I have no right to say to these, You shall not find fault with my art, or fall asleep over my pages; but I ask you to believe that this person writing strives to tell the truth. If there is not that, there is nothing.

Perhaps the lovers of 'excitement' may care to know, that this book began with a very precise plan, which was entirely put aside. Ladies and gentlemen, you were to have been treated, and the writer's and the publisher's pocket benefited, by the recital of the most active horrors. What more exciting than a ruffian (with many admirable virtues) in St. Giles's, visited constantly by a young lady from Belgravia? What more stirring than the contrasts of society? the mixture of slang and fashionable language? the escapes, the battles, the murders? Nay, up to nine o'clock this very morning, my poor friend, Colonel Altamont, was doomed to execution, and the author only relented when his victim was actually at the window.

The 'exciting' plan was laid aside (with a very honourable forbearance on the part of the publishers), because, on attempting it, I found that I failed from want of experience of my subject; and never having been intimate with any convict in my life, and the manners of ruffians and gaol-

birds being quite unfamiliar to me, the idea of entering into competition with M. Eugene Sue was abandoned. To describe a real rascal, you must make him so horrible that he would be too hideous to show; and unless the painter paints him fairly, I hold he has no right to show him at all.

Even the gentlemen of our age—this is an attempt to describe one of them, no better nor worse than most educated men—even these we cannot show as they are, with the notorious foibles and selfishness of their lives and their education. Since the author of *Tom Jones* was buried, no writer of fiction among us has been permitted to depict to his utmost power a MAN. We must drape him, and give him a certain conventional simper. Society will not tolerate the Natural in our Art. Many ladies have remonstrated and subscribers left me, because, in the course of the story, I described a young man resisting and affected by temptation.

My object was to say, that he had the passions to feel, and the manliness and generosity to overcome them. You will not hear—it is best to know it—what moves in the real world, what passes in society, in the clubs, colleges, mess-rooms,—what is the life and talk of your sons. A little more frankness than is customary has been attempted in this story; with no bad desire on the writer's part, it is hoped, and with no ill consequence to any reader. If truth is not always pleasant, at any rate truth is best, from whatever chair—from those whence graver writers or thinkers argue, as from that at which the story-teller sits as he concludes his labour, and bids his kind reader farewell.

Kensington, Nov. 26th, 1850.

Chapter 1

Shows how First Love may interrupt Breakfast

One fine morning in the full London season, Major Arthur Pendennis came over from his lodgings, according to his custom, to breakfast at a certain Club in Pall Mall, of which he was a chief ornament. As he was one of the finest judges of wine in England, and a man of active, dominating, and inquiring spirit, he had been very properly chosen to be a member of the Committee of this Club, and indeed was almost the manager of the institution; and the stewards and waiters bowed before him as reverentially as to a Duke or a Field-Marshal.

At a quarter past ten the Major invariably made his appearance in the best blacked boots in all London, with a checked morning cravat that never was rumpled until dinner time, a buff waistcoat which bore the crown of his sovereign on the buttons, and linen so spotless that Mr. Brummel himself asked the name of his laundress, and would probably have employed her had not misfortunes compelled that great man to fly the country. Pendennis's coat, his white gloves, his whiskers, his very cane, were perfect of their kind as specimens of the costume of a military man en retraite. At a distance, or seeing his back merely, you would have taken him to be not more than thirty years old: it was only by a nearer inspection that you saw the factitious nature of his rich brown hair, and that there were a few crow's-feet round about the somewhat faded eyes of his handsome mottled face. His nose was of the Wellington pattern. His hands and wristbands were beautifully long and white. On the latter he wore handsome gold buttons given to him by his Royal Highness the Duke of York, and on the others more than one elegant ring, the chief and largest of them being emblazoned with the famous arms of Pendennis.

He always took possession of the same table in the same corner of the room, from which nobody ever now thought of ousting him. One or two mad wags and wild fellows had in former days, and in freak or bravado, endeavoured twice or thrice to deprive him of this place; but there was a

quiet dignity in the Major's manner as he took his seat at the next table, and surveyed the interlopers, which rendered it impossible for any man to sit and breakfast under his eye; and that table—by the fire, and yet near the window—became his own. His letters were laid out there in expectation of his arrival, and many was the young fellow about town who looked with wonder at the number of those notes, and at the seals and franks which they bore. If there was any question about etiquette, society, who was married to whom, of what age such and such a duke was, Pendennis was the man to whom every one appealed. Marchionesses used to drive up to the Club, and leave notes for him, or fetch him out. He was perfectly affable. The young men liked to walk with him in the Park or down Pall Mall; for he touched his hat to everybody, and every other man he met was a lord.

The Major sate down at his accustomed table then, and while the waiters went to bring him his toast and his hot newspaper, he surveyed his letters through his gold double eye-glass. He carried it so gaily, you would hardly have known it was spectacles in disguise, and examined one pretty note after another, and laid them by in order. There were large solemn dinner cards, suggestive of three courses and heavy conversation; there were neat little confidential notes, conveying female entreaties; there was a note on thick official paper from the Marquis of Steyne, telling him to come to Richmond to a little party at the Star and Garter, and speak French, which language the Major possessed very perfectly; and another from the Bishop of Ealing and Mrs. Trail, requesting the honour of Major Pendennis's company at Ealing House, all of which letters Pendennis read gracefully, and with the more satisfaction, because Glowry, the Scotch surgeon, breakfasting opposite to him, was looking on, and hating him for having so many invitations, which nobody ever sent to Glowry.

These perused, the Major took out his pocket-book to see on what days he was disengaged, and which of these many hospitable calls he could afford to accept or decline.

He threw over Cutler, the East India Director, in Baker Street, in order to dine with Lord Steyne and the little French party at the Star and Garter—the Bishop he accepted, because, though the dinner was slow, he liked to dine with bishops—and so went through his list and disposed of them according to his fancy or interest. Then he took his breakfast and looked over the paper, the gazette, the births and deaths, and the fashionable intelligence, to see that his name was down among the guests at

my Lord So-and-so's fete, and in the intervals of these occupations carried on cheerful conversation with his acquaintances about the room.

Among the letters which formed Major Pendennis's budget for that morning there was only one unread, and which lay solitary and apart from all the fashionable London letters, with a country postmark and a homely seal. The superscription was in a pretty delicate female hand, and though marked 'Immediate' by the fair writer, with a strong dash of anxiety under the word, yet the Major had, for reasons of his own, neglected up to the present moment his humble rural petitioner, who to be sure could hardly hope to get a hearing among so many grand folks who attended his levee. The fact was, this was a letter from a female relative of Pendennis, and while the grandees of her brother's acquaintance were received and got their interview, and drove off, as it were, the patient country letter remained for a long time waiting for an audience in the ante-chamber under the slop-bason.

At last it came to be this letter's turn, and the Major broke a seal with 'Fairoaks' engraved upon it, and 'Clavering St. Mary's' for a postmark. It was a double letter, and the Major commenced perusing the envelope before he attacked the inner epistle.

"Is it a letter from another Jook," growled Mr. Glowry, inwardly, "Pendennis would not be leaving that to the last, I'm thinking."

"My dear Major Pendennis," the letter ran, "I beg and implore you to come to me immediately"—very likely, thought Pendennis, and Steyne's dinner to-day—"I am in the very greatest grief and perplexity. My dearest boy, who has been hitherto everything the fondest mother could wish, is grieving me dreadfully. He has formed—I can hardly write it—a passion, an infatuation,"—the Major grinned—"for an actress who has been performing here. She is at least twelve years older than Arthur—who will not be eighteen till next February—and the wretched boy insists upon marrying her."

"Hay! What's making Pendennis swear now?"—Mr. Glowry asked of himself, for rage and wonder were concentrated in the Major's open mouth, as he read this astounding announcement.

"Do, my dear friend," the grief-stricken lady went on, "come to me instantly on the receipt of this; and, as Arthur's guardian, entreat, command, the wretched child to give up this most deplorable resolution." And, after more entreaties to the above effect, the writer concluded by signing herself the Major's 'unhappy affectionate sister, Helen Pendennis.'

"Fairoaks, Tuesday"—the Major concluded, reading the last words of the letter—"A d—d pretty business at Fairoaks, Tuesday; now let us see what the boy has to say;" and he took the other letter, which was written in a great floundering boy's hand, and sealed with the large signet of the Pendennises, even larger than the Major's own, and with supplementary wax sputtered all round the seal, in token of the writer's tremulousness and agitation.

The epistle ran thus:

"Fairoaks, Monday, Midnight.

"My Dear Uncle,—In informing you of my engagement with Miss Costigan, daughter of J. Chesterfield Costigan, Esq., of Costiganstown, but, perhaps, better known to you under her professional name of Miss Fotheringay, of the Theatres Royal Drury Lane and Crow Street, and of the Norwich and Welsh Circuit, I am aware that I make an announcement which cannot, according to the present prejudices of society at least, be welcome to my family. My dearest mother, on whom, God knows, I would wish to inflict no needless pain, is deeply moved and grieved, I am sorry to say, by the intelligence which I have this night conveyed to her. I beseech you, my dear Sir, to come down and reason with her and console her. Although obliged by poverty to earn an honourable maintenance by the exercise of her splendid talents, Miss Costigan's family is as ancient and noble as our own. When our ancestor, Ralph Pendennis, landed with Richard II. in Ireland, my Emily's forefathers were kings of that country. I have the information from Mr. Costigan, who, like yourself, is a military man.

"It is in vain I have attempted to argue with my dear mother, and prove to her that a young lady of irreproachable character and lineage, endowed with the most splendid gifts of beauty and genius, who devotes herself to the exercise of one of the noblest professions, for the sacred purpose of maintaining her family, is a being whom we should all love and reverence, rather than avoid;—my poor mother has prejudices which it is impossible for my logic to overcome, and refuses to welcome to her arms one who is disposed to be her most affectionate daughter through life.

"Although Miss Costigan is some years older than myself, that circumstance does not operate as a barrier to my affection, and I am sure will not influence its duration. A love like mine, Sir, I feel, is contracted once and for ever. As I never had dreamed of love until I saw her—I feel now that I shall die without ever knowing another passion. It is the fate of my life. It was Miss C.'s own delicacy which suggested that the difference of

age, which I never felt, might operate as a bar to our union. But having loved once, I should despise myself, and be unworthy of my name as a gentleman, if I hesitated to abide by my passion: if I did not give all where I felt all, and endow the woman who loves me fondly with my whole heart and my whole fortune.

"I press for a speedy marriage with my Emily—for why, in truth, should it be delayed? A delay implies a doubt, which I cast from me as unworthy. It is impossible that my sentiments can change towards Emily—that at any age she can be anything but the sole object of my love. Why, then, wait? I entreat you, my dear Uncle, to come down and reconcile my dear mother to our union, and I address you as a man of the world, *qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes*, who will not feel any of the weak scruples and fears which agitate a lady who has scarcely ever left her village.

"Pray, come down to us immediately. I am quite confident that—apart from considerations of fortune—you will admire and approve of my Emily.—Your affectionate Nephew, Arthur Pendennis, Jr."

When the Major had concluded the perusal of this letter, his countenance assumed an expression of such rage and horror that Glowry, the surgeon-official, felt in his pocket for his lancet, which he always carried in his card-case, and thought his respected friend was going into a fit. The intelligence was indeed sufficient to agitate Pendennis. The head of the Pendennises going to marry an actress ten years his senior,— a head-strong boy going to plunge into matrimony. "The mother has spoiled the young rascal," groaned the Major inwardly, "with her cursed sentimentality and romantic rubbish. My nephew marry a tragedy queen! Gracious mercy, people will laugh at me so that I shall not dare show my head!" And he thought with an inexpressible pang that he must give up Lord Steyne's dinner at Richmond, and must lose his rest and pass the night in an abominable tight mail-coach, instead of taking pleasure, as he had promised himself, in some of the most agreeable and select society in England.

And he must not only give up this but all other engagements for some time to come. Who knows how long the business might detain him. He quitted his breakfast table for the adjoining writing-room, and there ruefully wrote off refusals to the Marquis, the Earl, the Bishop, and all his entertainers; and he ordered his servant to take places in the mail-coach for that evening, of course charging the sum which he disbursed for the seats to the account of the widow and the young scapegrace of whom he was guardian.

A Pedigree and other Family Matters

Early in the Regency of George the Magnificent, there lived in a small town in the west of England, called Clavering, a gentleman whose name was Pendennis. There were those alive who remembered having seen his name painted on a board, which was surmounted by a gilt pestle and mortar over the door of a very humble little shop in the city of Bath, where Mr. Pendennis exercised the profession of apothecary and surgeon; and where he not only attended gentlemen in their sick-rooms, and ladies at the most interesting periods of their lives, but would condescend to sell a brown-paper plaster to a farmer's wife across the counter,—or to vend tooth-brushes, hair-powder, and London perfumery. For these facts a few folks at Clavering could vouch, where people's memories were more tenacious, perhaps, than they are in a great bustling metropolis.

And yet that little apothecary who sold a stray customer a pennyworth of salts, or a more fragrant cake of Windsor soap, was a gentleman of good education, and of as old a family as any in the whole county of Somerset. He had a Cornish pedigree which carried the Pendennises up to the time of the Druids, and who knows how much farther back? They had intermarried with the Normans at a very late period of their family existence, and they were related to all the great families of Wales and Brittany. Pendennis had had a piece of University education too, and might have pursued that career with great honour, but that in his second year at Cambridge his father died insolvent, and poor Pen was obliged to betake himself to the pestle and apron. He always detested the trade, and it was only necessity, and the offer of his mother's brother, a London apothecary of low family, into which Pendennis's father had demeaned himself by marrying, that forced John Pendennis into so odious a calling.

He quickly after his apprenticeship parted from the coarse-minded practitioner his relative, and set up for himself at Bath with his modest medical ensign. He had for some time a hard struggle with poverty; and

it was all he could do to keep the shop and its gilt ornaments in decent repair, and his bed-ridden mother in comfort: but Lady Ribstone happening to be passing to the Rooms with an intoxicated Irish chairman who bumped her ladyship up against Pen's very door-post, and drove his chair-pole through the handsomest pink bottle in the surgeon's window, alighted screaming from her vehicle, and was accommodated with a chair in Mr. Pendennis's shop, where she was brought round with cinnamon and sal-volatile.

Mr. Pendennis's manners were so uncommonly gentlemanlike and soothing, that her ladyship, the wife of Sir Pepin Ribstone, of Codlingbury, in the county of Somerset, Bart., appointed her preserver, as she called him, apothecary to her person and family, which was very large. Master Ribstone coming home for the Christmas holidays from Eton, over-ate himself and had a fever, in which Mr. Pendennis treated him with the greatest skill and tenderness. In a word, he got the good graces of the Codlingbury family, and from that day began to prosper. The good company of Bath patronised him, and amongst the ladies especially he was beloved and admired. First his humble little shop became a smart one: then he discarded the selling of tooth-brushes and perfumery, as unworthy of a gentleman of an ancient lineage: then he shut up the shop altogether, and only had a little surgery attended by a genteel young man: then he had a gig with a man to drive him; and, before her exit from this world, his poor old mother had the happiness of seeing from her bedroom window to which her chair was rolled, her beloved John step into a close carriage of his own, a one-horse carriage it is true, but with the arms of the family of Pendennis handsomely emblazoned on the panels. "What would Arthur say now?" she asked, speaking of a younger son of hers—"who never so much as once came to see my dearest Johnny through all the time of his poverty and struggles!"

"Captain Pendennis is with his regiment in India, mother," Mr. Pendennis remarked, "and, if you please, I wish you would not call me Johnny before the young man—before Mr. Parkins."

Presently the day came when she ceased to call her son by the name of Johnny, or by any other title of endearment or affection; and his house was very lonely without that kind though querulous voice. He had his night-bell altered and placed in the room in which the good old lady had grumbled for many a long year, and he slept in the great large bed there. He was upwards of forty years old when these events befell; before the war was over; before George the Magnificent came to the throne; before this history indeed: but what is a gentleman without his pedigree?

Pendennis, by this time, had his handsomely framed and glazed, and hanging up in his drawing-room between the pictures of Codrington House in Somersetshire, and St. Boniface's College, Cambridge, where he had passed the brief and happy days of his early manhood. As for the pedigree he had taken it out of a trunk, as Sterne's officer called for his sword, now that he was a gentleman and could show it.

About the time of Mrs. Pendennis's demise, another of her son's patients likewise died at Bath; that virtuous woman, old Lady Pontypool, daughter of Reginald twelfth Earl of Bareacres, and by consequence great-grand-aunt to the present Earl, and widow of John second Lord Pontypool, and likewise of the Reverend Jonas Wales, of the Armageddon Chapel, Clifton. For the last five years of her life her ladyship had been attended by Miss Helen Thistlewood, a very distant relative of the noble house of Bareacres, before mentioned, and daughter of Lieutenant R. Thistlewood, R.N., killed at the battle of Copenhagen. Under Lady Pontypool's roof Miss Thistlewood found a comfortable shelter, as far as boarding and lodging went, but suffered under such an infernal tyranny as only women can inflict on, or bear from, one another: the Doctor, who paid his visits to my Lady Pontypool at least twice a day, could not but remark the angelical sweetness and kindness with which the young lady bore her elderly relative's insults; and it was, as they were going in the fourth mourning coach to attend her ladyship's venerated remains to Bath Abbey, where they now repose, that he looked at her sweet pale face and resolved upon putting a certain question to her, the very nature of which made his pulse beat ninety, at least.

He was older than she by more than twenty years, and at no time the most ardent of men. Perhaps he had had a love affair in early life which he had to strangle—perhaps all early love affairs ought to be strangled or drowned, like so many blind kittens: well, at three-and-forty he was a collected quiet little gentleman in black stockings with a bald head, and a few days after the ceremony he called to see her, and, as he felt her pulse, he kept hold of her hand in his, and asked her where she was going to live now that the Pontypool family had come down upon the property, which was being nailed into boxes, and packed into hampers, and swaddled up with haybands, and buried in straw, and locked under three keys in green baize plate-chests, and carted away under the eyes of poor Miss Helen,—he asked her where she was going to live finally.

Her eyes filled with tears, and she said she did not know. She had a little money. The old lady had left her a thousand pounds, indeed; and

she would go into a boarding-house or into a school: in fine, she did not know where.

Then Pendennis, looking into her pale face, and keeping hold of her cold little hand, asked her if she would come and live with him? He was old compared to—to so blooming a young lady as Miss Thistlewood (Pendennis was of the grave old complimentary school of gentlemen and apothecaries), but he was of good birth, and, he flattered himself, of good principles and temper. His prospects were good, and daily mending. He was alone in the world, and had need of a kind and constant companion, whom it would be the study of his life to make happy; in a word, he recited to her a little speech, which he had composed that morning in bed, and rehearsed and perfected in his carriage, as he was coming to wait upon the young lady.

Perhaps if he had had an early love-passage, she too had one day hoped for a different lot than to be wedded to a little gentleman who rapped his teeth and smiled artificially, who was laboriously polite to the butler as he slid upstairs into the drawing-room, and profusely civil to the lady's-maid, who waited at the bed-room door; for whom her old patroness used to ring as for a servant, and who came with even more eagerness; who got up stories, as he sent in draughts, for his patient's amusement and his own profit: perhaps she would have chosen a different man—but she knew, on the other hand, how worthy Pendennis was, how prudent, how honourable; how good he had been to his mother, and constant in his care of her; and the upshot of this interview was, that she, blushing very much, made Pendennis an extremely low curtsy, and asked leave to—to consider his very kind proposal.

They were married in the dull Bath season, which was the height of the season in London. And Pendennis having previously, through a professional friend, M.R.C.S., secured lodgings in Holles Street, Cavendish Square, took his wife thither in a chaise and pair; conducted her to the theatres, the Parks, and the Chapel Royal; showed her the folks going to a drawing-room, and, in a word, gave her all the pleasures of the town. He likewise left cards upon Lord Pontypool, upon the Right Honourable the Earl of Bareacres, and upon Sir Pepin and Lady Ribstone, his earliest and kindest patrons. Bareacres took no notice of the cards. Pontypool called, admired Mrs. Pendennis, and said Lady Pontypool would come and see her, which her ladyship did, per proxy of John her footman, who brought her card, and an invitation to a concert five weeks off. Pendennis was back in his little one-horse carriage, dispensing draughts and

pills at that time: but the Ribstones asked him and Mrs. Pendennis to an entertainment, of which Mr. Pendennis bragged to the last day of his life.

The secret ambition of Mr. Pendennis had always been to be a gentleman. It takes much time and careful saving for a provincial doctor, whose gains are not very large, to lay by enough money wherewith to purchase a house and land: but besides our friend's own frugality and prudence, fortune aided him considerably in his endeavour, and brought him to the point which he so panted to attain. He laid out some money very advantageously in the purchase of a house and small estate close upon the village of Clavering before mentioned. Words cannot describe, nor did he himself ever care to confess to any one, his pride when he found himself a real landed proprietor, and could walk over acres of which he was the master. A lucky purchase which he had made of shares in a copper-mine added very considerably to his wealth, and he realised with great prudence while this mine was still at its full vogue. Finally, he sold his business at Bath, to Mr. Parkins, for a handsome sum of ready money, and for an annuity to be paid to him during a certain number of years after he had for ever retired from the handling of the mortar and pestle.

Arthur Pendennis, his son, was eight years old at the time of this event, so that it is no wonder that the latter, who left Bath and the surgery so young, should forget the existence of such a place almost entirely, and that his father's hands had ever been dirtied by the compounding of odious pills, or the preparation of filthy plasters. The old man never spoke about the shop himself, never alluded to it; called in the medical practitioner of Clavering to attend his family when occasion arrived; sunk the black breeches and stockings altogether; attended market and sessions, and wore a bottle-green coat and brass buttons with drab gaiters, just as if he had been an English gentleman all his life. He used to stand at his lodge-gate, and see the coaches come in, and bow gravely to the guards and coachmen as they touched their hats and drove by. It was he who founded the Clavering Book Club: and set up the Samaritan Soup and Blanket Society. It was he who brought the mail, which used to run through Cacklefield before, away from that village and through Clavering. At church he was equally active as a vestryman and a worshipper. At market every Thursday, he went from pen to stall, looked at samples of oats, and munched corn, felt beasts, punched geese in the breast, and weighed them with a knowing air, and did business with the farmers at the Clavering Arms, as well as the oldest frequenter of that house of call. It was now his shame, as it formerly was his pride,

to be called Doctor, and those who wished to please him always gave him the title of Squire.

Heaven knows where they came from, but a whole range of Pendennis portraits presently hung round the Doctor's oak dining-room; Lelys and Vandykes he vowed all the portraits to be, and when questioned as to the history of the originals, would vaguely say they were 'ancestors of his.' You could see by his wife's looks that she disbelieved in these genealogical legends, for she generally endeavoured to turn the conversation when he commenced them. But his little boy believed them to their fullest extent, and Roger Pendennis of Agincourt, Arthur Pendennis of Crecy, General Pendennis of Blenheim and Oudenarde, were as real and actual beings for this young gentleman as—whom shall we say?—as Robinson Crusoe, or Peter Wilkins, or the Seven Champions of Christendom, whose histories were in his library.

Pendennis's fortune, which, at the best, was not above eight hundred pounds a year, did not, with the best economy and management, permit of his living with the great folks of the county; but he had a decent comfortable society of the second-best sort. If they were not the roses, they lived near the roses, as it were, and had a good deal of the odour of genteel life. They had out their plate, and dined each other round in the moonlight nights twice a year, coming a dozen miles to these festivals; and besides the county, the Pendennises had the society of the town of Clavering, as much as, nay, more than they liked: for Mrs. Pybus was always poking about Helen's conservatories, and intercepting the operation of her soup-tickets and coal-clubs Captain Glanders (H. P., 50th Dragoon Guards) was for ever swaggering about the Squire's stables and gardens, and endeavouring to enlist him in his quarrels with the Vicar, with the Postmaster, with the Reverend F. Wapshot of Clavering Grammar School, for overflogging his son, Anglesea Glanders,—with all the village in fine. And Pendennis and his wife often blessed themselves, that their house of Fair Oaks was nearly a mile out of Clavering, or their premises would never have been free from the prying eyes and prattle of one or other of the male and female inhabitants there.

Fairoaks lawn comes down to the little river Brawl, and on the other side were the plantations and woods (as much as were left of them) of Clavering Park, Sir Francis Clavering, Bart. The park was let out in pasture and fed down by sheep and cattle, when the Pendennises came first to live at Fair Oaks. Shutters were up in the house; a splendid freestone palace, with great stairs, statues, and porticos, whereof you may see a picture in the 'Beauties of England and Wales.' Sir Richard Clavering, Sir

Francis's-grandfather, had commenced the ruin of the family by the building of this palace: his successor had achieved the ruin by living in it. The present Sir Francis was abroad somewhere; nor could anybody be found rich enough to rent that enormous mansion, through the deserted rooms, mouldy clanking halls, and dismal galleries of which, Arthur Pendennis many a time walked trembling when he was a boy. At sunset, from the lawn of Fair Oaks, there was a pretty sight: it and the opposite park of Clavering were in the habit of putting on a rich golden tinge, which became them both wonderfully. The upper windows of the great house flamed so as to make your eyes wink; the little river ran off noisily westward, and was lost in a sombre wood, behind which the towers of the old abbey church of Clavering (whereby that town is called Clavering St. Mary's to the present day) rose up in purple splendour. Little Arthur's figure and his mother's, cast long blue shadows over the grass; and he would repeat in a low voice (for a scene of great natural beauty always moved the boy, who inherited this sensibility from his mother) certain lines beginning, "These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good; Almighty! thine this universal frame," greatly to Mrs. Pendennis's delight. Such walks and conversation generally ended in a profusion of filial and maternal embraces; for to love and to pray were the main occupations of this dear woman's life; and I have often heard Pendennis say in his wild way, that he felt that he was sure of going to heaven, for his mother never could be happy there without him.

As for John Pendennis, as the father of the family, and that sort of thing, everybody had the greatest respect for him: and his orders were obeyed like those of the Medes and Persians. His hat was as well brushed, perhaps, as that of any man in this empire. His meals were served at the same minute every day, and woe to those who came late, as little Pen, a disorderly little rascal, sometimes did. Prayers were recited, his letters were read, his business dispatched, his stables and garden inspected, his hen-houses and kennel, his barn and pigstye visited, always at regular hours. After dinner he always had a nap with the Globe newspaper on his knee, and his yellow bandanna handkerchief on his face (Major Pendennis sent the yellow handkerchiefs from India, and his brother had helped in the purchase of his majority, so that they were good friends now). And so, as his dinner took place at six o'clock to a minute, and the sunset business alluded to may be supposed to have occurred at about half-past seven, it is probable that he did not much care for the view in front of his lawn windows or take any share in the poetry and caresses which were taking place there.

They seldom occurred in his presence. However frisky they were before, mother and child were hushed and quiet when Mr. Pendennis walked into the drawing-room, his newspaper under his arm. And here, while little Pen, buried in a great chair, read all the books of which he could lay hold, the Squire perused his own articles in the 'Gardener's Gazette,' or took a solemn hand at picquet with Mrs. Pendennis, or an occasional friend from the village.

Pendennis usually took care that at least one of his grand dinners should take place when his brother, the Major, who, on the return of his regiment from India and New South Wales, had sold out and gone upon half-pay, came to pay his biennial visit to Fair Oaks. "My brother, Major Pendennis," was a constant theme of the retired Doctor's conversation. All the family delighted in my brother the Major. He was the link which bound them to the great world of London, and the fashion. He always brought down the last news of the nobility, and was in the constant habit of dining with lords and great folks. He spoke of such with soldierlike respect and decorum. He would say, "My Lord Bareacres has been good enough to invite me to Bareacres for the pheasant shooting," or, "My Lord Steyne is so kind as to wish for my presence at Stillbrook for the Easter holidays;" and you may be sure the whereabouts of my brother the Major was carefully made known by worthy Mr. Pendennis to his friends at the Clavering Reading room, at Justice-meetings, or at the County-town. Their carriages would come from ten miles round to call upon Major Pendennis in his visits to Fair Oaks; the fame of his fashion as a man about town was established throughout the county. There was a talk of his marrying Miss Hunkle, of Lilybank, old Hunkle the Attorney's daughter, with at least fifteen hundred a-year to her fortune: but my brother the Major refused this negotiation, advantageous as it might seem to most persons. "As a bachelor," he said, "nobody cares how poor I am. I have the happiness to live with people who are so highly placed in the world, that a few hundreds or thousands a year more or less can make no difference in the estimation in which they are pleased to hold me. Miss Hunkle, though a most respectable lady, is not in possession of either the birth or the manners, which would entitle her to be received into the sphere in which I have the honour to move. I shall live and die an old bachelor, John: and your worthy friend, Miss Hunkle, I have no doubt, will find some more worthy object of her affection, than a worn-out old soldier on half-pay." Time showed the correctness of the surmise of the old man of the world; Miss Hunkle married a young French nobleman, and is now at this moment living at Lilybank, under the title of

Baroness de Carambole, having been separated from her wild young scapegrace of a Baron very shortly after their union.

The Major was a great favourite with almost all the little establishment of Fair Oaks. He was as good-natured as he was well bred, and had a sincere liking and regard for his sister-in-law, whom he pronounced, and with perfect truth, to be as fine a lady as any in England, and an honour to the family. Indeed, Mrs. Pendennis's tranquil beauty, her natural sweetness and kindness, and that simplicity and dignity which a perfect purity and innocence are sure to bestow upon a handsome woman, rendered her quite worthy of her brother's praises. I think it is not national prejudice which makes me believe that a high-bred English lady is the most complete of all Heaven's subjects in this world. In whom else do you see so much grace, and so much virtue; so much faith, and so much tenderness; with such a perfect refinement and chastity? And by high-bred ladies I don't mean duchesses and countesses. Be they ever so high in station, they can be but ladies, and no more. But almost every man who lives in the world has the happiness, let us hope, of counting a few such persons amongst his circle of acquaintance—women, in whose angelical natures, there is something awful, as well as beautiful, to contemplate; at whose feet the wildest and fiercest of us must fall down and humble ourselves;—in admiration of that adorable purity which never seems to do or to think wrong.

Arthur Pendennis had the good fortune to have a mother endowed with these happy qualities. During his childhood and youth, the boy thought of her as little less than an angel,—as a supernatural being, all wisdom, love, and beauty. When her husband drove her into the county town, or to the assize balls or concerts there, he would step into the assembly with his wife on his arm, and look the great folks in the face, as much as to say, "Look at that, my lord; can any of you show me a woman like that?" She enraged some country ladies with three times her money, by a sort of desperate perfection which they found in her. Miss Pybus said she was cold and haughty; Miss Pierce, that she was too proud for her station; Mrs. Wapshot, as a doctor of divinity's lady, would have the pas of her, who was only the wife of a medical practitioner. In the meanwhile, this lady moved through the world quite regardless of all the comments that were made in her praise or disfavour. She did not seem to know that she was admired or hated for being so perfect: but carried on calmly through life, saying her prayers, loving her family, helping her neighbours, and doing her duty.

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