DOCTOR THORNE

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By

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ILLUSTRATED &

PUBLISHED BY

E-KİTAP PROJESİ & CHEAPEST BOOKS



www.cheapestboooks.com

www.facebook.com/EKitapProjesi

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Istanbul

ISBN: 978-605-7566-51-5

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CHAPTER I

The Greshams of Greshamsbury

Before the reader is introduced to the modest country medical practitioner who is to be the chief personage of the following tale, it will be well that he should be made acquainted with some particulars as to the locality in which, and the neighbours among whom, our doctor followed his profession.

There is a county in the west of England not so full of life, indeed, nor so widely spoken of as some of its manufacturing leviathan brethren in the north, but which is, nevertheless, very dear to those who know it well. Its green pastures, its waving wheat, its deep and shady and—let us add—dirty lanes, its paths and stiles, its tawny-coloured, well-built rural churches, its avenues of beeches, and frequent Tudor mansions, its constant county hunt, its social graces, and the general air of clanship which pervades it, has made it to its own inhabitants a favoured land of Goshen. It is purely agricultural; agricultural in its produce, agricultural in its poor, and agricultural in its pleasures. There are towns in it, of course; dépôts from whence are brought seeds and groceries, ribbons and fire-shovels; in which markets are held and county balls are carried on; which return members to Parliament, generally—in spite of Reform Bills, past, present, and coming—in accordance with the dictates of some neighbouring land magnate: from whence emanate the country postmen, and where is located the supply of post-horses necessary for county visitings. But these towns add nothing to the importance of the county; they consist, with the exception of the assize town, of dull, all but death-like single streets. Each possesses two pumps, three hotels, ten shops, fifteen beer-houses, a beadle, and a market-place.

Indeed, the town population of the county reckons for nothing when the importance of the county is discussed, with the exception, as before said, of the assize town, which is also a cathedral city. Herein is a

clerical aristocracy, which is certainly not without its due weight. A resident bishop, a resident dean, an archdeacon, three or four resident prebendaries, and all their numerous chaplains, vicars, and ecclesiastical satellites, do make up a society sufficiently powerful to be counted as something by the county squirearchy. In other respects the greatness of Barsetshire depends wholly on the landed powers.

Barsetshire, however, is not now so essentially one whole as it was before the Reform Bill divided it. There is in these days an East Barsetshire, and there is a West Barsetshire; and people conversant with Barsetshire doings declare that they can already decipher some difference of feeling, some division of interests. The eastern moiety of the county is more purely Conservative than the western; there is, or was, a taint of Peelism in the latter; and then, too, the residence of two such great Whig magnates as the Duke of Omnium and the Earl de Courcy in that locality in some degree overshadows and renders less influential the gentlemen who live near them.

It is to East Barsetshire that we are called. When the division above spoken of was first contemplated, in those stormy days in which gallant men were still combatting reform ministers, if not with hope, still with spirit, the battle was fought by none more bravely than by John Newbold Gresham of Greshamsbury, the member for Barsetshire. Fate, however, and the Duke of Wellington were adverse, and in the following Parliament John Newbold Gresham was only member for East Barsetshire.

Whether or not it was true, as stated at the time, that the aspect of the men with whom he was called on to associate at St Stephen's broke his heart, it is not for us now to inquire. It is certainly true that he did not live to see the first year of the reformed Parliament brought to a close. The then Mr Gresham was not an old man at the time of his death, and his eldest son, Francis Newbold Gresham, was a very young man; but, notwithstanding his youth, and notwithstanding other grounds of objection which stood in the way of such preferment, and which must be explained, he was chosen in his father's place. The father's services had been too recent, too well appreciated, too thoroughly in unison with the feelings of those around him to allow of any other choice; and in this

way young Frank Gresham found himself member for East Barsetshire, although the very men who elected him knew that they had but slender ground for trusting him with their suffrages.

Frank Gresham, though then only twenty-four years of age, was a married man, and a father. He had already chosen a wife, and by his choice had given much ground of distrust to the men of East Barsetshire. He had married no other than Lady Arabella de Courcy, the sister of the great Whig earl who lived at Courcy Castle in the west; that earl who not only voted for the Reform Bill, but had been infamously active in bringing over other young peers so to vote, and whose name therefore stank in the nostrils of the staunch Tory squires of the county.

Not only had Frank Gresham so wedded, but having thus improperly and unpatriotically chosen a wife, he had added to his sins by becoming recklessly intimate with his wife's relations. It is true that he still called himself a Tory, belonged to the club of which his father had been one of the most honoured members, and in the days of the great battle got his head broken in a row, on the right side; but, nevertheless, it was felt by the good men, true and blue, of East Barsetshire, that a constant sojourner at Courcy Castle could not be regarded as a consistent Tory. When, however, his father died, that broken head served him in good stead: his sufferings in the cause were made the most of; these, in unison with his father's merits, turned the scale, and it was accordingly decided, at a meeting held at the George and Dragon, at Barchester, that Frank Gresham should fill his father's shoes.

But Frank Gresham could not fill his father's shoes; they were too big for him. He did become member for East Barsetshire, but he was such a member—so lukewarm, so indifferent, so prone to associate with the enemies of the good cause, so little willing to fight the good fight, that he soon disgusted those who most dearly loved the memory of the old squire.

De Courcy Castle in those days had great allurements for a young man, and all those allurements were made the most of to win over young Gresham. His wife, who was a year or two older than himself, was a fashionable woman, with thorough Whig tastes and aspirations, such as

became the daughter of a great Whig earl; she cared for politics, or thought that she cared for them, more than her husband did; for a month or two previous to her engagement she had been attached to the Court, and had been made to believe that much of the policy of England's rulers depended on the political intrigues of England's women. She was one who would fain be doing something if she only knew how, and the first important attempt she made was to turn her respectable young Tory husband into a second-rate Whig bantling. As this lady's character will, it is hoped, show itself in the following pages, we need not now describe it more closely.

It is not a bad thing to be son-in-law to a potent earl, member of Parliament for a county, and a possessor of a fine old English seat, and a fine old English fortune. As a very young man, Frank Gresham found the life to which he was thus introduced agreeable enough. He consoled himself as best he might for the blue looks with which he was greeted by his own party, and took his revenge by consorting more thoroughly than ever with his political adversaries. Foolishly, like a foolish moth, he flew to the bright light, and, like the moths, of course he burnt his wings. Early in 1833 he had become a member of Parliament, and in the autumn of 1834 the dissolution came. Young members of three or four-and-twenty do not think much of dissolutions, forget the fancies of their constituents, and are too proud of the present to calculate much as to the future. So it was with Mr Gresham. His father had been member for Barsetshire all his life, and he looked forward to similar prosperity as though it were part of his inheritance; but he failed to take any of the steps which had secured his father's seat.

In the autumn of 1834 the dissolution came, and Frank Gresham, with his honourable lady wife and all the de Courcys at his back, found that he had mortally offended the county. To his great disgust another candidate was brought forward as a fellow to his late colleague, and though he manfully fought the battle, and spent ten thousand pounds in the contest, he could not recover his position. A high Tory, with a great Whig interest to back him, is never a popular person in England. No one can trust him, though there may be those who are willing to place him, untrusted, in high positions. Such was the case with Mr Gresham. There

were many who were willing, for family considerations, to keep him in Parliament; but no one thought that he was fit to be there. The consequences were, that a bitter and expensive contest ensued. Frank Gresham, when twitted with being a Whig, foreswore the de Courcy family; and then, when ridiculed as having been thrown over by the Tories, foreswore his father's old friends. So between the two stools he fell to the ground, and, as a politician, he never again rose to his feet.

He never again rose to his feet; but twice again he made violent efforts to do so. Elections in East Barsetshire, from various causes, came quick upon each other in those days, and before he was eight-and-twenty years of age Mr Gresham had three times contested the county and been three times beaten. To speak the truth of him, his own spirit would have been satisfied with the loss of the first ten thousand pounds; but Lady Arabella was made of higher mettle. She had married a man with a fine place and a fine fortune; but she had nevertheless married a commoner and had in so far derogated from her high birth. She felt that her husband should be by rights a member of the House of Lords; but, if not, that it was at least essential that he should have a seat in the lower chamber. She would by degrees sink into nothing if she allowed herself to sit down, the mere wife of a mere country squire.

Thus instigated, Mr Gresham repeated the useless contest three times, and repeated it each time at a serious cost. He lost his money, Lady Arabella lost her temper, and things at Greshamsbury went on by no means as prosperously as they had done in the days of the old squire.

In the first twelve years of their marriage, children came fast into the nursery at Greshamsbury. The first that was born was a boy; and in those happy halcyon days, when the old squire was still alive, great was the joy at the birth of an heir to Greshamsbury; bonfires gleamed through the country-side, oxen were roasted whole, and the customary paraphernalia of joy, usual to rich Britons on such occasions were gone through with wondrous éclat. But when the tenth baby, and the ninth little girl, was brought into the world, the outward show of joy was not so great.

Then other troubles came on. Some of these little girls were sickly, some very sickly. Lady Arabella had her faults, and they were such as were extremely detrimental to her husband's happiness and her own; but that of being an indifferent mother was not among them. She had worried her husband daily for years because he was not in Parliament, she had worried him because he would not furnish the house in Portman Square, she had worried him because he objected to have more people every winter at Greshamsbury Park than the house would hold; but now she changed her tune and worried him because Selina coughed, because Helena was hectic, because poor Sophy's spine was weak, and Matilda's appetite was gone.

Worrying from such causes was pardonable it will be said. So it was; but the manner was hardly pardonable. Selina's cough was certainly not fairly attributable to the old-fashioned furniture in Portman Square; nor would Sophy's spine have been materially benefited by her father having a seat in Parliament; and yet, to have heard Lady Arabella discussing those matters in family conclave, one would have thought that she would have expected such results.

As it was, her poor weak darlings were carried about from London to Brighton, from Brighton to some German baths, from the German baths back to Torquay, and thence—as regarded the four we have named—to that bourne from whence no further journey could be made under the Lady Arabella's directions.

The one son and heir to Greshamsbury was named as his father, Francis Newbold Gresham. He would have been the hero of our tale had not that place been pre-occupied by the village doctor. As it is, those who please may so regard him. It is he who is to be our favourite young man, to do the love scenes, to have his trials and his difficulties, and to win through them or not, as the case may be. I am too old now to be a hard-hearted author, and so it is probable that he may not die of a broken heart. Those who don't approve of a middle-aged bachelor country doctor as a hero, may take the heir to Greshamsbury in his stead, and call the book, if it so please them, "The Loves and Adventures of Francis Newbold Gresham the Younger."

And Master Frank Gresham was not ill adapted for playing the part of a hero of this sort. He did not share his sisters' ill-health, and though the only boy of the family, he excelled all his sisters in personal appearance. The Greshams from time immemorial had been handsome. They were broad browed, blue eyed, fair haired, born with dimples in their chins, and that pleasant, aristocratic dangerous curl of the upper lip which can equally express good humour or scorn. Young Frank was every inch a Gresham, and was the darling of his father's heart.

The de Courcys had never been plain. There was too much hauteur, too much pride, we may perhaps even fairly say, too much nobility in their gait and manners, and even in their faces, to allow of their being considered plain; but they were not a race nurtured by Venus or Apollo. They were tall and thin, with high cheek-bones, high foreheads, and large, dignified, cold eyes. The de Courcy girls had all good hair; and, as they also possessed easy manners and powers of talking, they managed to pass in the world for beauties till they were absorbed in the matrimonial market, and the world at large cared no longer whether they were beauties or not. The Misses Gresham were made in the de Courcy mould, and were not on this account the less dear to their mother.

The two eldest, Augusta and Beatrice, lived, and were apparently likely to live. The four next faded and died one after another—all in the same sad year—and were laid in the neat, new cemetery at Torquay. Then came a pair, born at one birth, weak, delicate, frail little flowers, with dark hair and dark eyes, and thin, long, pale faces, with long, bony hands, and long bony feet, whom men looked on as fated to follow their sisters with quick steps. Hitherto, however, they had not followed them, nor had they suffered as their sisters had suffered; and some people at Greshamsbury attributed this to the fact that a change had been made in the family medical practitioner.

Then came the youngest of the flock, she whose birth we have said was not heralded with loud joy; for when she came into the world, four others, with pale temples, wan, worn cheeks, and skeleton, white arms, were awaiting permission to leave it.

Such was the family when, in the year 1854, the eldest son came of age. He had been educated at Harrow, and was now still at Cambridge; but, of course, on such a day as this he was at home. That coming of age must be a delightful time to a young man born to inherit broad acres and wide wealth. Those full-mouthed congratulations; those warm prayers with which his manhood is welcomed by the grey-haired seniors of the county; the affectionate, all but motherly caresses of neighbouring mothers who have seen him grow up from his cradle, of mothers who have daughters, perhaps, fair enough, and good enough, and sweet enough even for him; the soft-spoken, half-bashful, but tender greetings of the girls, who now, perhaps for the first time, call him by his stern family name, instructed by instinct rather than precept that the time has come when the familiar Charles or familiar John must by them be laid aside; the "lucky dogs," and hints of silver spoons which are poured into his ears as each young compeer slaps his back and bids him live a thousand years and then never die; the shouting of the tenantry, the good wishes of the old farmers who come up to wring his hand, the kisses which he gets from the farmers' wives, and the kisses which he gives to the farmers' daughters; all these things must make the twenty-first birthday pleasant enough to a young heir. To a youth, however, who feels that he is now liable to arrest, and that he inherits no other privilege, the pleasure may very possibly not be quite so keen.

The case with young Frank Gresham may be supposed to much nearer the former than the latter; but yet the ceremony of his coming of age was by no means like that which fate had accorded to his father. Mr Gresham was now an embarrassed man, and though the world did not know it, or, at any rate, did not know that he was deeply embarrassed, he had not the heart to throw open his mansion and receive the county with a free hand as though all things were going well with him.

Nothing was going well with him. Lady Arabella would allow nothing near him or around him to be well. Everything with him now turned to vexation; he was no longer a joyous, happy man, and the people of East Barsetshire did not look for gala doings on a grand scale when young Gresham came of age.

Gala doings, to a certain extent, there were there. It was in July, and tables were spread under the oaks for the tenants. Tables were spread, and meat, and beer, and wine were there, and Frank, as he walked round and shook his guests by the hand, expressed a hope that their relations with each other might be long, close, and mutually advantageous.

We must say a few words now about the place itself. Greshamsbury Park was a fine old English gentleman's seat—was and is; but we can assert it more easily in past tense, as we are speaking of it with reference to a past time. We have spoken of Greshamsbury Park; there was a park so called, but the mansion itself was generally known as Greshamsbury House, and did not stand in the park. We may perhaps best describe it by saying that the village of Greshamsbury consisted of one long, straggling street, a mile in length, which in the centre turned sharp round, so that one half of the street lay directly at right angles to the other. In this angle stood Greshamsbury House, and the gardens and grounds around it filled up the space so made. There was an entrance with large gates at each end of the village, and each gate was guarded by the effigies of two huge pagans with clubs, such being the crest borne by the family; from each entrance a broad road, quite straight, running through to a majestic avenue of limes, led up to the house. This was built in the richest, perhaps we should rather say in the purest, style of Tudor architecture; so much so that, though Greshamsbury is less complete than Longleat, less magnificent than Hatfield, it may in some sense be said to be the finest specimen of Tudor architecture of which the country can boast.

It stands amid a multitude of trim gardens and stone-built terraces, divided one from another: these to our eyes are not so attractive as that broad expanse of lawn by which our country houses are generally surrounded; but the gardens of Greshamsbury have been celebrated for two centuries, and any Gresham who would have altered them would have been considered to have destroyed one of the well-known landmarks of the family.

Greshamsbury Park—properly so called—spread far away on the other side of the village. Opposite to the two great gates leading up to the mansion were two smaller gates, the one opening on to the stables,

kennels, and farm-yard, and the other to the deer park. This latter was the principal entrance to the demesne, and a grand and picturesque entrance it was. The avenue of limes which on one side stretched up to the house, was on the other extended for a quarter of a mile, and then appeared to be terminated only by an abrupt rise in the ground. At the entrance there were four savages and four clubs, two to each portal, and what with the massive iron gates, surmounted by a stone wall, on which stood the family arms supported by two other club-bearers, the stone-built lodges, the Doric, ivy-covered columns which surrounded the circle, the four grim savages, and the extent of the space itself through which the high road ran, and which just abutted on the village, the spot was sufficiently significant of old family greatness.

Those who examined it more closely might see that under the arms was a scroll bearing the Gresham motto, and that the words were repeated in smaller letters under each of the savages. "Gardez Gresham," had been chosen in the days of motto-choosing probably by some herald-at-arms as an appropriate legend for signifying the peculiar attributes of the family. Now, however, unfortunately, men were not of one mind as to the exact idea signified. Some declared, with much heraldic warmth, that it was an address to the savages, calling on them to take care of their patron; while others, with whom I myself am inclined to agree, averred with equal certainty that it was an advice to the people at large, especially to those inclined to rebel against the aristocracy of the county, that they should "beware the Gresham." The latter signification would betoken strength—so said the holders of this doctrine; the former weakness. Now the Greshams were ever a strong people, and never addicted to a false humility.

We will not pretend to decide the question. Alas! either construction was now equally unsuited to the family fortunes. Such changes had taken place in England since the Greshams had founded themselves that no savage could any longer in any way protect them; they must protect themselves like common folk, or live unprotected. Nor now was it necessary that any neighbour should shake in his shoes when the Gresham frowned. It would have been to be wished that the present

Gresham himself could have been as indifferent to the frowns of some of his neighbours.

But the old symbols remained, and may such symbols long remain among us; they are still lovely and fit to be loved. They tell us of the true and manly feelings of other times; and to him who can read aright, they explain more fully, more truly than any written history can do, how Englishmen have become what they are. England is not yet a commercial country in the sense in which that epithet is used for her; and let us still hope that she will not soon become so. She might surely as well be called feudal England, or chivalrous England. If in western civilised Europe there does exist a nation among whom there are high signors, and with whom the owners of the land are the true aristocracy, the aristocracy that is trusted as being best and fittest to rule, that nation is the English. Choose out the ten leading men of each great European people. Choose them in France, in Austria, Sardinia, Prussia, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Spain (?), and then select the ten in England whose names are best known as those of leading statesmen; the result will show in which country there still exists the closest attachment to, the sincerest trust in, the old feudal and now so-called landed interests.

England a commercial country! Yes; as Venice was. She may excel other nations in commerce, but yet it is not that in which she most prides herself, in which she most excels. Merchants as such are not the first men among us; though it perhaps be open, barely open, to a merchant to become one of them. Buying and selling is good and necessary; it is very necessary, and may, possibly, be very good; but it cannot be the noblest work of man; and let us hope that it may not in our time be esteemed the noblest work of an Englishman.

Greshamsbury Park was very large; it lay on the outside of the angle formed by the village street, and stretched away on two sides without apparent limit or boundaries visible from the village road or house. Indeed, the ground on this side was so broken up into abrupt hills, and conical-shaped, oak-covered excrescences, which were seen peeping up through and over each other, that the true extent of the park was much magnified to the eye. It was very possible for a stranger to get into it and to find some difficulty in getting out again by any of its known gates;

and such was the beauty of the landscape, that a lover of scenery would be tempted thus to lose himself.

I have said that on one side lay the kennels, and this will give me an opportunity of describing here one especial episode, a long episode, in the life of the existing squire. He had once represented his county in Parliament, and when he ceased to do so he still felt an ambition to be connected in some peculiar way with that county's greatness; he still desired that Gresham of Greshamsbury should be something more in East Barsetshire than Jackson of the Grange, or Baker of Mill Hill, or Bateson of Annesgrove. They were all his friends, and very respectable country gentlemen; but Mr Gresham of Greshamsbury should be more than this: even he had enough of ambition to be aware of such a longing. Therefore, when an opportunity occurred he took to hunting the county.

For this employment he was in every way well suited—unless it was in the matter of finance. Though he had in his very earliest manly years given such great offence by indifference to his family politics, and had in a certain degree fostered the ill-feeling by contesting the county in opposition to the wishes of his brother squires, nevertheless, he bore a loved and popular name. Men regretted that he should not have been what they wished him to be, that he should not have been such as was the old squire; but when they found that such was the case, that he could not be great among them as a politician, they were still willing that he should be great in any other way if there were county greatness for which he was suited. Now he was known as an excellent horseman, as a thorough sportsman, as one knowing in dogs, and tender-hearted as a sucking mother to a litter of young foxes; he had ridden in the county since he was fifteen, had a fine voice for a view-hallo, knew every hound by name, and could wind a horn with sufficient music for all hunting purposes; moreover, he had come to his property, as was well known through all Barsetshire, with a clear income of fourteen thousand a year.

Thus, when some old worn-out master of hounds was run to ground, about a year after Mr Gresham's last contest for the county, it seemed to all parties to be a pleasant and rational arrangement that the hounds

should go to Greshamsbury. Pleasant, indeed, to all except the Lady Arabella; and rational, perhaps, to all except the squire himself.

All this time he was already considerably encumbered. He had spent much more than he should have done, and so indeed had his wife, in those two splendid years in which they had figured as great among the great ones of the earth. Fourteen thousand a year ought to have been enough to allow a member of Parliament with a young wife and two or three children to live in London and keep up their country family mansion; but then the de Courcys were very great people, and Lady Arabella chose to live as she had been accustomed to do, and as her sister-in-law the countess lived: now Lord de Courcy had much more than fourteen thousand a year. Then came the three elections, with their vast attendant cost, and then those costly expedients to which gentlemen are forced to have recourse who have lived beyond their income, and find it impossible so to reduce their establishments as to live much below it. Thus when the hounds came to Greshamsbury, Mr Gresham was already a poor man.

Lady Arabella said much to oppose their coming; but Lady Arabella, though it could hardly be said of her that she was under her husband's rule, certainly was not entitled to boast that she had him under hers. She then made her first grand attack as to the furniture in Portman Square; and was then for the first time specially informed that the furniture there was not matter of much importance, as she would not in future be required to move her family to that residence during the London seasons. The sort of conversations which grew from such a commencement may be imagined. Had Lady Arabella worried her lord less, he might perhaps have considered with more coolness the folly of encountering so prodigious an increase to the expense of his establishment; had he not spent so much money in a pursuit which his wife did not enjoy, she might perhaps have been more sparing in her rebukes as to his indifference to her London pleasures. As it was, the hounds came to Greshamsbury, and Lady Arabella did go to London for some period in each year, and the family expenses were by no means lessened.

The kennels, however, were now again empty. Two years previous to the time at which our story begins, the hounds had been carried off to the seat of some richer sportsman. This was more felt by Mr Gresham than any other misfortune which he had yet incurred. He had been master of hounds for ten years, and that work he had at any rate done well. The popularity among his neighbours which he had lost as a politician he had regained as a sportsman, and he would fain have remained autocratic in the hunt, had it been possible. But he so remained much longer than he should have done, and at last they went away, not without signs and sounds of visible joy on the part of Lady Arabella.

But we have kept the Greshamsbury tenantry waiting under the oak-trees by far too long. Yes; when young Frank came of age there was still enough left at Greshamsbury, still means enough at the squire's disposal, to light one bonfire, to roast, whole in its skin, one bullock. Frank's virility came on him not quite unmarked, as that of the parson's son might do, or the son of the neighbouring attorney. It could still be reported in the Barsetshire Conservative *Standard* that "The beards wagged all" at Greshamsbury, now as they had done for many centuries on similar festivals. Yes; it was so reported. But this, like so many other such reports, had but a shadow of truth in it. "They poured the liquor in," certainly, those who were there; but the beards did not wag as they had been wont to wag in former years. Beards won't wag for the telling. The squire was at his wits' end for money, and the tenants one and all had so heard. Rents had been raised on them; timber had fallen fast; the lawyer on the estate was growing rich; tradesmen in Barchester, nay, in Greshamsbury itself, were beginning to mutter; and the squire himself would not be merry. Under such circumstances the throats of a tenantry will still swallow, but their beards will not wag.

"I minds well," said Farmer Oaklerath to his neighbour, "when the squoire hisself comed of age. Lord love 'ee! There was fun going that day. There was more yale drank then than's been brewed at the big house these two years. T'old squoire was a one'er."

"And I minds when squoire was borned; minds it well," said an old farmer sitting opposite. "Them was the days! It an't that long ago neither. Squoire a'nt come o' fifty yet; no, nor an't nigh it, though he

looks it. Things be altered at Greemsbury"—such was the rural pronunciation—"altered sadly, neebor Oaklerath. Well, well; I'll soon be gone, I will, and so it an't no use talking; but arter paying one pound fifteen for them acres for more nor fifty year, I didn't think I'd ever be axed for forty shilling."

Such was the style of conversation which went on at the various tables. It had certainly been of a very different tone when the squire was born, when he came of age, and when, just two years subsequently, his son had been born. On each of these events similar rural fêtes had been given, and the squire himself had on these occasions been frequent among his guests. On the first, he had been carried round by his father, a whole train of ladies and nurses following. On the second, he had himself mixed in all the sports, the gayest of the gay, and each tenant had squeezed his way up to the lawn to get a sight of the Lady Arabella, who, as was already known, was to come from Courcy Castle to Greshamsbury to be their mistress. It was little they any of them cared now for the Lady Arabella. On the third, he himself had borne his child in his arms as his father had before borne him; he was then in the zenith of his pride, and though the tenantry whispered that he was somewhat less familiar with them than of yore, that he had put on somewhat too much of the de Courcy airs, still he was their squire, their master, the rich man in whose hand they lay. The old squire was then gone, and they were proud of the young member and his lady bride in spite of a little hauteur. None of them were proud of him now.

He walked once round among the guests, and spoke a few words of welcome at each table; and as he did so the tenants got up and bowed and wished health to the old squire, happiness to the young one, and prosperity to Greshamsbury; but, nevertheless, it was but a tame affair.

There were also other visitors, of the gentle sort, to do honour to the occasion; but not such swarms, not such a crowd at the mansion itself and at the houses of the neighbouring gentry as had always been collected on these former gala doings. Indeed, the party at Greshamsbury was not a large one, and consisted chiefly of Lady de Courcy and her suite. Lady Arabella still kept up, as far as she was able, her close connexion with Courcy Castle. She was there as much as

possible, to which Mr Gresham never objected; and she took her daughters there whenever she could, though, as regarded the two elder girls, she was interfered with by Mr Gresham, and not unfrequently by the girls themselves. Lady Arabella had a pride in her son, though he was by no means her favourite child. He was, however, the heir of Greshamsbury, of which fact she was disposed to make the most, and he was also a fine gainly open-hearted young man, who could not but be dear to any mother. Lady Arabella did love him dearly, though she felt a sort of disappointment in regard to him, seeing that he was not so much like a de Courcy as he should have been. She did love him dearly; and, therefore, when he came of age she got her sister-in-law and all the Ladies Amelia, Rosina etc., to come to Greshamsbury; and she also, with some difficulty, persuaded the Honourable Georges and the Honourable Johns to be equally condescending. Lord de Courcy himself was in attendance at the Court—or said that he was—and Lord Porlock, the eldest son, simply told his aunt when he was invited that he never bored himself with those sort of things.

Then there were the Bakers, and the Batesons, and the Jacksons, who all lived near and returned home at night; there was the Reverend Caleb Oriel, the High-Church rector, with his beautiful sister, Patience Oriel; there was Mr Yates Umbleby, the attorney and agent; and there was Dr Thorne, and the doctor's modest, quiet-looking little niece, Miss Mary.

CHAPTER II

Long, Long Ago

As Dr Thorne is our hero—or I should rather say my hero, a privilege of selecting for themselves in this respect being left to all my readers—and as Miss Mary Thorne is to be our heroine, a point on which no choice whatsoever is left to any one, it is necessary that they shall be introduced and explained and described in a proper, formal manner. I quite feel that an apology is due for beginning a novel with two long dull chapters full of description. I am perfectly aware of the danger of such a course. In so doing I sin against the golden rule which requires us all to put our best foot foremost, the wisdom of which is fully recognised by novelists, myself among the number. It can hardly be expected that any one will consent to go through with a fiction that offers so little of allurement in its first pages; but twist it as I will I cannot do otherwise. I find that I cannot make poor Mr Gresham hem and haw and turn himself uneasily in his arm-chair in a natural manner till I have said why he is uneasy. I cannot bring in my doctor speaking his mind freely among the bigwigs till I have explained that it is in accordance with his usual character to do so. This is unartistic on my part, and shows want of imagination as well as want of skill. Whether or not I can atone for these faults by straightforward, simple, plain story-telling—that, indeed, is very doubtful.

Dr Thorne belonged to a family in one sense as good, and at any rate as old, as that of Mr Gresham; and much older, he was apt to boast, than that of the de Courcys. This trait in his character is mentioned first, as it was the weakness for which he was most conspicuous. He was second cousin to Mr Thorne of Ullathorne, a Barsetshire squire living in the neighbourhood of Barchester, and who boasted that his estate had remained in his family, descending from Thorne to Thorne, longer than

had been the case with any other estate or any other family in the county.

But Dr Thorne was only a second cousin; and, therefore, though he was entitled to talk of the blood as belonging to some extent to himself, he had no right to lay claim to any position in the county other than such as he might win for himself if he chose to locate himself in it. This was a fact of which no one was more fully aware than our doctor himself. His father, who had been first cousin of a former Squire Thorne, had been a clerical dignitary in Barchester, but had been dead now many years. He had had two sons; one he had educated as a medical man, but the other, and the younger, whom he had intended for the Bar, had not betaken himself in any satisfactory way to any calling. This son had been first rusticated from Oxford, and then expelled; and thence returning to Barchester, had been the cause to his father and brother of much suffering.

Old Dr Thorne, the clergyman, died when the two brothers were yet young men, and left behind him nothing but some household and other property of the value of about two thousand pounds, which he bequeathed to Thomas, the elder son, much more than that having been spent in liquidating debts contracted by the younger. Up to that time there had been close harmony between the Ullathorne family and that of the clergyman; but a month or two before the doctor's death—the period of which we are speaking was about two-and-twenty years before the commencement of our story—the then Mr Thorne of Ullathorne had made it understood that he would no longer receive at his house his cousin Henry, whom he regarded as a disgrace to the family.

Fathers are apt to be more lenient to their sons than uncles to their nephews, or cousins to each other. Dr Thorne still hoped to reclaim his black sheep, and thought that the head of his family showed an unnecessary harshness in putting an obstacle in his way of doing so. And if the father was warm in support of his profligate son, the young medical aspirant was warmer in support of his profligate brother. Dr Thorne, junior, was no roué himself, but perhaps, as a young man, he had not sufficient abhorrence of his brother's vices. At any rate, he stuck to him manfully; and when it was signified in the Close that Henry's

company was not considered desirable at Ullathorne, Dr Thomas Thorne sent word to the squire that under such circumstances his visits there would also cease.

This was not very prudent, as the young Galen had elected to establish himself in Barchester, very mainly in expectation of the help which his Ullathorne connexion would give him. This, however, in his anger he failed to consider; he was never known, either in early or in middle life, to consider in his anger those points which were probably best worth his consideration. This, perhaps, was of the less moment as his anger was of an unenduring kind, evaporating frequently with more celerity than he could get the angry words out of his mouth. With the Ullathorne people, however, he did establish a quarrel sufficiently permanent to be of vital injury to his medical prospects.

And then the father died, and the two brothers were left living together with very little means between them. At this time there were living, in Barchester, people of the name of Scatcherd. Of that family, as then existing, we have only to do with two, a brother and a sister. They were in a low rank of life, the one being a journeyman stone-mason, and the other an apprentice to a straw-bonnet maker; but they were, nevertheless, in some sort remarkable people. The sister was reputed in Barchester to be a model of female beauty of the strong and robuster cast, and had also a better reputation as being a girl of good character and honest, womanly conduct. Both of her beauty and of her reputation her brother was exceedingly proud, and he was the more so when he learnt that she had been asked in marriage by a decent master-tradesman in the city.

Roger Scatcherd had also a reputation, but not for beauty or propriety of conduct. He was known for the best stone-mason in the four counties, and as the man who could, on occasion, drink the most alcohol in a given time in the same localities. As a workman, indeed, he had higher reputate even than this: he was not only a good and very quick stone-mason, but he had also a capacity for turning other men into good stone-masons: he had a gift of knowing what a man could and should do; and, by degrees, he taught himself what five, and ten, and twenty—latterly, what a thousand and two thousand men might accomplish

among them: this, also, he did with very little aid from pen and paper, with which he was not, and never became, very conversant. He had also other gifts and other propensities. He could talk in a manner dangerous to himself and others; he could persuade without knowing that he did so; and being himself an extreme demagogue, in those noisy times just prior to the Reform Bill, he created a hubbub in Barchester of which he himself had had no previous conception.

Henry Thorne among his other bad qualities had one which his friends regarded as worse than all the others, and which perhaps justified the Ullathorne people in their severity. He loved to consort with low people. He not only drank—that might have been forgiven—but he drank in tap-rooms with vulgar drinkers; so said his friends, and so said his enemies. He denied the charge as being made in the plural number, and declared that his only low co-reveller was Roger Scatcherd. With Roger Scatcherd, at any rate, he associated, and became as democratic as Roger was himself. Now the Thornes of Ullathorne were of the very highest order of Tory excellence.

Whether or not Mary Scatcherd at once accepted the offer of the respectable tradesman, I cannot say. After the occurrence of certain events which must here shortly be told, she declared that she never had done so. Her brother averred that she most positively had. The respectable tradesman himself refused to speak on the subject.

It is certain, however, that Scatcherd, who had hitherto been silent enough about his sister in those social hours which he passed with his gentleman friend, boasted of the engagement when it was, as he said, made; and then boasted also of the girl's beauty. Scatcherd, in spite of his occasional intemperance, looked up in the world, and the coming marriage of his sister was, he thought, suitable to his own ambition for his family.

Henry Thorne had already heard of, and already seen, Mary Scatcherd; but hitherto she had not fallen in the way of his wickedness. Now, however, when he heard that she was to be decently married, the devil tempted him to tempt her. It boots not to tell all the tale. It came out clearly enough when all was told, that he made her most distinct

promises of marriage; he even gave her such in writing; and having in this way obtained from her her company during some of her little holidays—her Sundays or summer evenings—he seduced her. Scatcherd accused him openly of having intoxicated her with drugs; and Thomas Thorne, who took up the case, ultimately believed the charge. It became known in Barchester that she was with child, and that the seducer was Henry Thorne.

Roger Scatcherd, when the news first reached him, filled himself with drink, and then swore that he would kill them both. With manly wrath, however, he set forth, first against the man, and that with manly weapons. He took nothing with him but his fists and a big stick as he went in search of Henry Thorne.

The two brothers were then lodging together at a farm-house close abutting on the town. This was not an eligible abode for a medical practitioner; but the young doctor had not been able to settle himself eligibly since his father's death; and wishing to put what constraint he could upon his brother, had so located himself. To this farm-house came Roger Scatcherd one sultry summer evening, his anger gleaming from his bloodshot eyes, and his rage heightened to madness by the rapid pace at which he had run from the city, and by the ardent spirits which were fermenting within him.

At the very gate of the farm-yard, standing placidly with his cigar in his mouth, he encountered Henry Thorne. He had thought of searching for him through the whole premises, of demanding his victim with loud exclamations, and making his way to him through all obstacles. In lieu of that, there stood the man before him.

"Well, Roger, what's in the wind?" said Henry Thorne.

They were the last words he ever spoke. He was answered by a blow from the blackthorn. A contest ensued, which ended in Scatcherd keeping his word—at any rate, as regarded the worst offender. How the fatal blow on the temple was struck was never exactly determined: one medical man said it might have been done in a fight with a heavy-headed stick; another thought that a stone had been used; a third suggested a stone-mason's hammer. It seemed, however, to be proved

subsequently that no hammer was taken out, and Scatcherd himself persisted in declaring that he had taken in his hand no weapon but the stick. Scatcherd, however, was drunk; and even though he intended to tell the truth, may have been mistaken. There were, however, the facts that Thorne was dead; that Scatcherd had sworn to kill him about an hour previously; and that he had without delay accomplished his threat. He was arrested and tried for murder; all the distressing circumstances of the case came out on the trial: he was found guilty of manslaughter, and sentenced to be imprisoned for six months. Our readers will probably think that the punishment was too severe.

Thomas Thorne and the farmer were on the spot soon after Henry Thorne had fallen. The brother was at first furious for vengeance against his brother's murderer; but, as the facts came out, as he learnt what had been the provocation given, what had been the feelings of Scatcherd when he left the city, determined to punish him who had ruined his sister, his heart was changed. Those were trying days for him. It behoved him to do what in him lay to cover his brother's memory from the obloquy which it deserved; it behoved him also to save, or to assist to save, from undue punishment the unfortunate man who had shed his brother's blood; and it behoved him also, at least so he thought, to look after that poor fallen one whose misfortunes were less merited than those either of his brother or of hers.

And he was not the man to get through these things lightly, or with as much ease as he perhaps might conscientiously have done. He would pay for the defence of the prisoner; he would pay for the defence of his brother's memory; and he would pay for the poor girl's comforts. He would do this, and he would allow no one to help him. He stood alone in the world, and insisted on so standing. Old Mr Thorne of Ullathorne offered again to open his arms to him; but he had conceived a foolish idea that his cousin's severity had driven his brother on to his bad career, and he would consequently accept no kindness from Ullathorne. Miss Thorne, the old squire's daughter—a cousin considerably older than himself, to whom he had at one time been much attached—sent him money; and he returned it to her under a blank cover. He had still

enough for those unhappy purposes which he had in hand. As to what might happen afterwards, he was then mainly indifferent.

The affair made much noise in the county, and was inquired into closely by many of the county magistrates; by none more closely than by John Newbold Gresham, who was then alive. Mr Gresham was greatly taken with the energy and justice shown by Dr Thorne on the occasion; and when the trial was over, he invited him to Greshamsbury. The visit ended in the doctor establishing himself in that village.

We must return for a moment to Mary Scatcherd. She was saved from the necessity of encountering her brother's wrath, for that brother was under arrest for murder before he could get at her. Her immediate lot, however, was a cruel one. Deep as was her cause for anger against the man who had so inhumanly used her, still it was natural that she should turn to him with love rather than with aversion. To whom else could she in such plight look for love? When, therefore, she heard that he was slain, her heart sank within her; she turned her face to the wall, and laid herself down to die: to die a double death, for herself and the fatherless babe that was now quick within her.

But, in fact, life had still much to offer, both to her and to her child. For her it was still destined that she should, in a distant land, be the worthy wife of a good husband, and the happy mother of many children. For that embryo one it was destined—but that may not be so quickly told: to describe her destiny this volume has yet to be written.

Even in those bitterest days God tempered the wind to the shorn lamb. Dr Thorne was by her bedside soon after the bloody tidings had reached her, and did for her more than either her lover or her brother could have done. When the baby was born, Scatcherd was still in prison, and had still three months' more confinement to undergo. The story of her great wrongs and cruel usage was much talked of, and men said that one who had been so injured should be regarded as having in nowise sinned at all.

One man, at any rate, so thought. At twilight, one evening, Thorne was surprised by a visit from a demure Barchester hardware dealer, whom he did not remember ever to have addressed before. This was the

former lover of poor Mary Scatcherd. He had a proposal to make, and it was this:—if Mary would consent to leave the country at once, to leave it without notice from her brother, or talk or éclat on the matter, he would sell all that he had, marry her, and emigrate. There was but one condition; she must leave her baby behind her. The hardware-man could find it in his heart to be generous, to be generous and true to his love; but he could not be generous enough to father the seducer's child.

"I could never abide it, sir, if I took it," said he; "and she,—why in course she would always love it the best."

In praising his generosity, who can mingle any censure for such manifest prudence? He would still make her the wife of his bosom, defiled in the eyes of the world as she had been; but she must be to him the mother of his own children, not the mother of another's child.

And now again our doctor had a hard task to win through. He saw at once that it was his duty to use his utmost authority to induce the poor girl to accept such an offer. She liked the man; and here was opened to her a course which would have been most desirable, even before her misfortune. But it is hard to persuade a mother to part with her first babe; harder, perhaps, when the babe had been so fathered and so born than when the world has shone brightly on its earliest hours. She at first refused stoutly: she sent a thousand loves, a thousand thanks, profusest acknowledgements for his generosity to the man who showed her that he loved her so well; but Nature, she said, would not let her leave her child.

"And what will you do for her here, Mary?" said the doctor. Poor Mary replied to him with a deluge of tears.

"She is my niece," said the doctor, taking up the tiny infant in his huge hands; "she is already the nearest thing, the only thing that I have in this world. I am her uncle, Mary. If you will go with this man I will be father to her and mother to her. Of what bread I eat, she shall eat; of what cup I drink, she shall drink. See, Mary, here is the Bible;" and he covered the book with his hand. "Leave her to me, and by this word she shall be my child."

The mother consented at last; left her baby with the doctor, married, and went to America. All this was consummated before Roger Scatcherd

was liberated from jail. Some conditions the doctor made. The first was, that Scatcherd should not know his sister's child was thus disposed of. Dr Thorne, in undertaking to bring up the baby, did not choose to encounter any tie with persons who might hereafter claim to be the girl's relations on the other side. Relations she would undoubtedly have had none had she been left to live or die as a workhouse bastard; but should the doctor succeed in life, should he ultimately be able to make this girl the darling of his own house, and then the darling of some other house, should she live and win the heart of some man whom the doctor might delight to call his friend and nephew; then relations might spring up whose ties would not be advantageous.

No man plumed himself on good blood more than Dr Thorne; no man had greater pride in his genealogical tree, and his hundred and thirty clearly proved descents from MacAdam; no man had a stronger theory as to the advantage held by men who have grandfathers over those who have none, or have none worth talking about. Let it not be thought that our doctor was a perfect character. No, indeed; most far from perfect. He had within him an inner, stubborn, self-admiring pride, which made him believe himself to be better and higher than those around him, and this from some unknown cause which he could hardly explain to himself. He had a pride in being a poor man of a high family; he had a pride in repudiating the very family of which he was proud; and he had a special pride in keeping his pride silently to himself. His father had been a Thorne, and his mother a Thorold. There was no better blood to be had in England. It was in the possession of such properties as these that he condescended to rejoice; this man, with a man's heart, a man's courage, and a man's humanity! Other doctors round the county had ditch-water in their veins; he could boast of a pure ichor, to which that of the great Omnium family was but a muddy puddle. It was thus that he loved to excel his brother practitioners, he who might have indulged in the pride of excelling them both in talent and in energy! We speak now of his early days; but even in his maturer life, the man, though mellowed, was the same.

This was the man who now promised to take to his bosom as his own child a poor bastard whose father was already dead, and whose

mother's family was such as the Scatcherds! It was necessary that the child's history should be known to none. Except to the mother's brother it was an object of interest to no one. The mother had for some short time been talked of; but now the nine-days' wonder was a wonder no longer. She went off to her far-away home; her husband's generosity was duly chronicled in the papers, and the babe was left untalked of and unknown.

It was easy to explain to Scatcherd that the child had not lived. There was a parting interview between the brother and sister in the jail, during which, with real tears and unaffected sorrow, the mother thus accounted for the offspring of her shame. Then she started, fortunate in her coming fortunes; and the doctor took with him his charge to the new country in which they were both to live. There he found for her a fitting home till she should be old enough to sit at his table and live in his bachelor house; and no one but old Mr Gresham knew who she was, or whence she had come.

Then Roger Scatcherd, having completed his six months' confinement, came out of prison.

Roger Scatcherd, though his hands were now red with blood, was to be pitied. A short time before the days of Henry Thorne's death he had married a young wife in his own class of life, and had made many resolves that henceforward his conduct should be such as might become a married man, and might not disgrace the respectable brother-in-law he was about to have given him. Such was his condition when he first heard of his sister's plight. As has been said, he filled himself with drink and started off on the scent of blood.

During his prison days his wife had to support herself as she might. The decent articles of furniture which they had put together were sold; she gave up their little house, and, bowed down by misery, she also was brought near to death. When he was liberated he at once got work; but those who have watched the lives of such people know how hard it is for them to recover lost ground. She became a mother immediately after his liberation, and when her child was born they were in direst want; for Scatcherd was again drinking, and his resolves were blown to the wind.

The doctor was then living at Greshamsbury. He had gone over there before the day on which he undertook the charge of poor Mary's baby, and soon found himself settled as the Greshamsbury doctor. This occurred very soon after the birth of the young heir. His predecessor in this career had "bettered" himself, or endeavoured to do so, by seeking the practice of some large town, and Lady Arabella, at a very critical time, was absolutely left with no other advice than that of a stranger, picked up, as she declared to Lady de Courcy, somewhere about Barchester jail, or Barchester court-house, she did not know which.

Of course Lady Arabella could not suckle the young heir herself. Ladies Arabella never can. They are gifted with the powers of being mothers, but not nursing-mothers. Nature gives them bosoms for show, but not for use. So Lady Arabella had a wet-nurse. At the end of six months the new doctor found Master Frank was not doing quite so well as he should do; and after a little trouble it was discovered that the very excellent young woman who had been sent express from Courcy Castle to Greshamsbury—a supply being kept up on the lord's demesne for the family use—was fond of brandy. She was at once sent back to the castle, of course; and, as Lady de Courcy was too much in dudgeon to send another, Dr Thorne was allowed to procure one. He thought of the misery of Roger Scatcherd's wife, thought also of her health, and strength, and active habits; and thus Mrs Scatcherd became the foster-mother to young Frank Gresham.

One other episode we must tell of past times. Previous to his father's death, Dr Thorne was in love. Nor had he altogether sighed and pleaded in vain; though it had not quite come to that, that the young lady's friends, or even the young lady herself, had actually accepted his suit. At that time his name stood well in Barchester. His father was a prebendary; his cousins and his best friends were the Thornes of Ullathorne, and the lady, who shall be nameless, was not thought to be injudicious in listening to the young doctor. But when Henry Thorne went so far astray, when the old doctor died, when the young doctor quarrelled with Ullathorne, when the brother was killed in a disgraceful quarrel, and it turned out that the physician had nothing but his profession and no settled locality in which to exercise it; then, indeed,

the young lady's friends thought that she was injudicious, and the young lady herself had not spirit enough, or love enough, to be disobedient. In those stormy days of the trial she told Dr Thorne that perhaps it would be wise that they should not see each other any more.

Dr Thorne, so counselled, at such a moment,—so informed then, when he most required comfort from his love, at once swore loudly that he agreed with her. He rushed forth with a bursting heart, and said to himself that the world was bad, all bad. He saw the lady no more; and, if I am rightly informed, never again made matrimonial overtures to any one.

CHAPTER III

Dr. Thorne

And thus Dr Thorne became settled for life in the little village of Greshamsbury. As was then the wont with many country practitioners, and as should be the wont with them all if they consulted their own dignity a little less and the comforts of their customers somewhat more, he added the business of a dispensing apothecary to that of physician. In doing so, he was of course much reviled. Many people around him declared that he could not truly be a doctor, or, at any rate, a doctor to be so called; and his brethren in the art living around him, though they knew that his diplomas, degrees, and certificates were all *en règle*, rather countenanced the report. There was much about this new-comer which did not endear him to his own profession. In the first place he was a new-comer, and, as such, was of course to be regarded by other doctors as being *de trop*. Greshamsbury was only fifteen miles from Barchester, where there was a regular dépôt of medical skill, and but eight from Silverbridge, where a properly established physician had been in residence for the last forty years. Dr Thorne's predecessor at Greshamsbury had been a humble-minded general practitioner, gifted with a due respect for the physicians of the county; and he, though he had been allowed to physic the servants, and sometimes the children of Greshamsbury, had never had the presumption to put himself on a par with his betters.

Then, also, Dr Thorne, though a graduated physician, though entitled beyond all dispute to call himself a doctor, according to all the laws of all the colleges, made it known to the East Barsetshire world, very soon after he had seated himself at Greshamsbury, that his rate of pay was to be seven-and-sixpence a visit within a circuit of five miles, with a proportionally increased charge at proportionally increased distances. Now there was something low, mean, unprofessional, and democratic in

this; so, at least, said the children of Æsculapius gathered together in conclave at Barchester. In the first place, it showed that this Thorne was always thinking of his money, like an apothecary, as he was; whereas, it would have behoved him, as a physician, had he had the feelings of a physician under his hat, to have regarded his own pursuits in a purely philosophical spirit, and to have taken any gain which might have accrued as an accidental adjunct to his station in life. A physician should take his fee without letting his left hand know what his right hand was doing; it should be taken without a thought, without a look, without a move of the facial muscles; the true physician should hardly be aware that the last friendly grasp of the hand had been made more precious by the touch of gold. Whereas, that fellow Thorne would lug out half a crown from his breeches pocket and give it in change for a ten shilling piece. And then it was clear that this man had no appreciation of the dignity of a learned profession. He might constantly be seen compounding medicines in the shop, at the left hand of his front door; not making experiments philosophically in materia medica for the benefit of coming ages—which, if he did, he should have done in the seclusion of his study, far from profane eyes—but positively putting together common powders for rural bowels, or spreading vulgar ointments for agricultural ailments.

A man of this sort was not fit society for Dr Fillgrave of Barchester. That must be admitted. And yet he had been found to be fit society for the old squire of Greshamsbury, whose shoe-ribbons Dr Fillgrave would not have objected to tie; so high did the old squire stand in the county just previous to his death. But the spirit of the Lady Arabella was known by the medical profession of Barsetshire, and when that good man died it was felt that Thorne's short tenure of Greshamsbury favour was already over. The Barsetshire regulars were, however, doomed to disappointment. Our doctor had already contrived to endear himself to the heir; and though there was not even then much personal love between him and the Lady Arabella, he kept his place at the great house unmoved, not only in the nursery and in the bedrooms, but also at the squire's dining-table.

Now there was in this, it must be admitted, quite enough to make him unpopular with his brethren; and this feeling was soon shown in a marked and dignified manner. Dr Fillgrave, who had certainly the most respectable professional connexion in the county, who had a reputation to maintain, and who was accustomed to meet, on almost equal terms, the great medical baronets from the metropolis at the houses of the nobility—Dr Fillgrave declined to meet Dr Thorne in consultation. He exceedingly regretted, he said, most exceedingly, the necessity which he felt of doing so: he had never before had to perform so painful a duty; but, as a duty which he owed to his profession, he must perform it. With every feeling of respect for Lady ——, a sick guest at Greshamsbury—and for Mr Gresham, he must decline to attend in conjunction with Dr Thorne. If his services could be made available under any other circumstances, he would go to Greshamsbury as fast as post-horses could carry him.

Then, indeed, there was war in Barsetshire. If there was on Dr Thorne's cranium one bump more developed than another, it was that of combativeness. Not that the doctor was a bully, or even pugnacious, in the usual sense of the word; he had no disposition to provoke a fight, no propense love of quarrelling; but there was that in him which would allow him to yield to no attack. Neither in argument nor in contest would he ever allow himself to be wrong; never at least to any one but to himself; and on behalf of his special hobbies, he was ready to meet the world at large.

It will therefore be understood, that when such a gauntlet was thus thrown in his very teeth by Dr Fillgrave, he was not slow to take it up. He addressed a letter to the Barsetshire Conservative *Standard*, in which he attacked Dr Fillgrave with some considerable acerbity. Dr Fillgrave responded in four lines, saying that on mature consideration he had made up his mind not to notice any remarks that might be made on him by Dr Thorne in the public press. The Greshamsbury doctor then wrote another letter, more witty and much more severe than the last; and as this was copied into the Bristol, Exeter, and Gloucester papers, Dr Fillgrave found it very difficult to maintain the magnanimity of his reticence. It is sometimes becoming enough for a man to wrap himself in

the dignified toga of silence, and proclaim himself indifferent to public attacks; but it is a sort of dignity which it is very difficult to maintain. As well might a man, when stung to madness by wasps, endeavour to sit in his chair without moving a muscle, as endure with patience and without reply the courtesies of a newspaper opponent. Dr Thorne wrote a third letter, which was too much for medical flesh and blood to bear. Dr Fillgrave answered it, not, indeed, in his own name, but in that of a brother doctor; and then the war raged merrily. It is hardly too much to say that Dr Fillgrave never knew another happy hour. Had he dreamed of what materials was made that young compounder of doses at Greshamsbury he would have met him in consultation, morning, noon, and night, without objection; but having begun the war, he was constrained to go on with it: his brethren would allow him no alternative. Thus he was continually being brought up to the fight, as a prize-fighter may be seen to be, who is carried up round after round, without any hope on his own part, and who, in each round, drops to the ground before the very wind of his opponent's blows.

But Dr Fillgrave, though thus weak himself, was backed in practice and in countenance by nearly all his brethren in the county. The guinea fee, the principle of *giving* advice and of selling no medicine, the great resolve to keep a distinct barrier between the physician and the apothecary, and, above all, the hatred of the contamination of a bill, were strong in the medical mind of Barsetshire. Dr Thorne had the provincial medical world against him, and so he appealed to the metropolis. The *Lancet* took the matter up in his favour, but the *Journal of Medical Science* was against him; the *Weekly Chirurgeon*, noted for its medical democracy, upheld him as a medical prophet, but the *Scalping Knife*, a monthly periodical got up in dead opposition to the *Lancet*, showed him no mercy. So the war went on, and our doctor, to a certain extent, became a noted character.

He had, moreover, other difficulties to encounter in his professional career. It was something in his favour that he understood his business; something that he was willing to labour at it with energy; and resolved to labour at it conscientiously. He had also other gifts, such as conversational brilliancy, an aptitude for true good fellowship, firmness

in friendship, and general honesty of disposition, which stood him in stead as he advanced in life. But, at his first starting, much that belonged to himself personally was against him. Let him enter what house he would, he entered it with a conviction, often expressed to himself, that he was equal as a man to the proprietor, equal as a human being to the proprietress. To age he would allow deference, and to special recognised talent—at least so he said; to rank also, he would pay that respect which was its clear and recognised prerogative; he would let a lord walk out of a room before him if he did not happen to forget it; in speaking to a duke he would address him as his Grace; and he would in no way assume a familiarity with bigger men than himself, allowing to the bigger man the privilege of making the first advances. But beyond this he would admit that no man should walk the earth with his head higher than his own.

He did not talk of these things much; he offended no rank by boasts of his own equality; he did not absolutely tell the Earl de Courcy in words, that the privilege of dining at Courcy Castle was to him no greater than the privilege of dining at Courcy Parsonage; but there was that in his manner that told it. The feeling in itself was perhaps good, and was certainly much justified by the manner in which he bore himself to those below him in rank; but there was folly in the resolution to run counter to the world's recognised rules on such matters; and much absurdity in his mode of doing so, seeing that at heart he was a thorough Conservative. It is hardly too much to say that he naturally hated a lord at first sight; but, nevertheless, he would have expended his means, his blood, and spirit, in fighting for the upper house of Parliament.

Such a disposition, until it was thoroughly understood, did not tend to ingratiate him with the wives of the country gentlemen among whom he had to look for practice. And then, also, there was not much in his individual manner to recommend him to the favour of ladies. He was brusque, authoritative, given to contradiction, rough though never dirty in his personal belongings, and inclined to indulge in a sort of quiet raillery, which sometimes was not thoroughly understood. People did not always know whether he was laughing at them or with them; and some people were, perhaps, inclined to think that a doctor should not laugh at all when called in to act doctorially.

When he was known, indeed, when the core of the fruit had been reached, when the huge proportions of that loving trusting heart had been learned, and understood, and appreciated, when that honesty had been recognised, that manly, and almost womanly tenderness had been felt, then, indeed, the doctor was acknowledged to be adequate in his profession. To trifling ailments he was too often brusque. Seeing that he accepted money for the cure of such, he should, we may say, have cured them without an offensive manner. So far he is without defence. But to real suffering no one found him brusque; no patient lying painfully on a bed of sickness ever thought him rough.

Another misfortune was, that he was a bachelor. Ladies think, and I, for one, think that ladies are quite right in so thinking, that doctors should be married men. All the world feels that a man when married acquires some of the attributes of an old woman—he becomes, to a certain extent, a motherly sort of being; he acquires a conversance with women's ways and women's wants, and loses the wilder and offensive sparks of his virility. It must be easier to talk to such a one about Matilda's stomach, and the growing pains in Fanny's legs, than to a young bachelor. This impediment also stood much in Dr Thorne's way during his first years at Greshamsbury.

But his wants were not at first great; and though his ambition was perhaps high, it was not of an impatient nature. The world was his oyster; but, circumstanced as he was, he knew that it was not for him to open it with his lancet all at once. He had bread to earn, which he must earn wearily; he had a character to make, which must come slowly; it satisfied his soul that, in addition to his immortal hopes, he had a possible future in this world to which he could look forward with clear eyes, and advance with a heart that would know no fainting.

On his first arrival at Greshamsbury he had been put by the squire into a house, which he still occupied when that squire's grandson came of age. There were two decent, commodious, private houses in the village—always excepting the rectory, which stood grandly in its own grounds, and, therefore, was considered as ranking above the village residences—of these two Dr Thorne had the smaller. They stood exactly at the angle before described, on the outer side of it, and at right angles

to each other. They both possessed good stables and ample gardens; and it may be as well to specify, that Mr Umbleby, the agent and lawyer to the estate, occupied the larger one.

Here Dr Thorne lived for eleven or twelve years, all alone; and then for ten or eleven more with his niece, Mary Thorne. Mary was thirteen when she came to take up permanent abode as mistress of the establishment—or, at any rate, to act as the only mistress which the establishment possessed. This advent greatly changed the tenor of the doctor's ways. He had been before pure bachelor; not a room in his house had been comfortably furnished; he at first commenced in a makeshift sort of way, because he had not at his command the means of commencing otherwise; and he had gone on in the same fashion, because the exact time had never come at which it was imperative in him to set his house in order. He had had no fixed hour for his meals, no fixed place for his books, no fixed wardrobe for his clothes. He had a few bottles of good wine in his cellar, and occasionally asked a brother bachelor to take a chop with him; but beyond this he had touched very little on the cares of housekeeping. A slop-bowl full of strong tea, together with bread, and butter, and eggs, was produced for him in the morning, and he expected that at whatever hour he might arrive in the evening, some food should be presented to him wherewith to satisfy the cravings of nature; if, in addition to this, he had another slop-bowl of tea in the evening, he got all that he ever required, or all, at least, that he ever demanded.

But when Mary came, or rather, when she was about to come, things were altogether changed at the doctor's. People had hitherto wondered—and especially Mrs Umbleby—how a gentleman like Dr Thorne could continue to live in so slovenly a manner; and how people again wondered, and again especially Mrs Umbleby, how the doctor could possibly think it necessary to put such a lot of furniture into a house because a little chit of a girl of twelve years of age was coming to live with him.

Mrs Umbleby had great scope for her wonder. The doctor made a thorough revolution in his household, and furnished his house from the ground to the roof completely. He painted—for the first time since the

commencement of his tenancy—he papered, he carpeted, and curtained, and mirrored, and linened, and blanketed, as though a Mrs Thorne with a good fortune were coming home to-morrow; and all for a girl of twelve years old. "And how," said Mrs Umbleby, to her friend Miss Gushing, "how did he find out what to buy?" as though the doctor had been brought up like a wild beast, ignorant of the nature of tables and chairs, and with no more developed ideas of drawing-room drapery than an hippopotamus.

To the utter amazement of Mrs Umbleby and Miss Gushing, the doctor did it all very well. He said nothing about it to any one—he never did say much about such things—but he furnished his house well and discreetly; and when Mary Thorne came home from her school at Bath, to which she had been taken some six years previously, she found herself called upon to be the presiding genius of a perfect paradise.

It has been said that the doctor had managed to endear himself to the new squire before the old squire's death, and that, therefore, the change at Greshamsbury had had no professional ill effects upon him. Such was the case at the time; but, nevertheless, all did not go smoothly in the Greshamsbury medical department. There was six or seven years' difference in age between Mr Gresham and the doctor, and, moreover, Mr Gresham was young for his age, and the doctor old; but, nevertheless, there was a very close attachment between them early in life. This was never thoroughly sundered, and, backed by this, the doctor did maintain himself for some years before the fire of Lady Arabella's artillery. But drops falling, if they fall constantly, will bore through a stone.

Dr Thorne's pretensions, mixed with his subversive professional democratic tendencies, his seven-and-sixpenny visits, added to his utter disregard of Lady Arabella's airs, were too much for her spirit. He brought Frank through his first troubles, and that at first ingratiated her; he was equally successful with the early dietary of Augusta and Beatrice; but, as his success was obtained in direct opposition to the Courcy Castle nursery principles, this hardly did much in his favour. When the third daughter was born, he at once declared that she was a very weakly flower, and sternly forbade the mother to go to London.

The mother, loving her babe, obeyed; but did not the less hate the doctor for the order, which she firmly believed was given at the instance and express dictation of Mr Gresham. Then another little girl came into the world, and the doctor was more imperative than ever as to the nursery rules and the excellence of country air. Quarrels were thus engendered, and Lady Arabella was taught to believe that this doctor of her husband's was after all no Solomon. In her husband's absence she sent for Dr Fillgrave, giving very express intimation that he would not have to wound either his eyes or dignity by encountering his enemy; and she found Dr Fillgrave a great comfort to her.

Then Dr Thorne gave Mr Gresham to understand that, under such circumstances, he could not visit professionally at Greshamsbury any longer. The poor squire saw there was no help for it, and though he still maintained his friendly connexion with his neighbour, the seven-and-sixpenny visits were at an end. Dr Fillgrave from Barchester, and the gentleman at Silverbridge, divided the responsibility between them, and the nursery principles of Courcy Castle were again in vogue at Greshamsbury.

So things went on for years, and those years were years of sorrow. We must not ascribe to our doctor's enemies the sufferings, and sickness, and deaths that occurred. The four frail little ones that died would probably have been taken had Lady Arabella been more tolerant of Dr Thorne. But the fact was, that they did die; and that the mother's heart then got the better of the woman's pride, and Lady Arabella humbled herself before Dr Thorne. She humbled herself, or would have done so, had the doctor permitted her. But he, with his eyes full of tears, stopped the utterance of her apology, took her two hands in his, pressed them warmly, and assured her that his joy in returning would be great, for the love that he bore to all that belonged to Greshamsbury. And so the seven-and-sixpenny visits were recommenced; and the great triumph of Dr Fillgrave came to an end.

Great was the joy in the Greshamsbury nursery when the second change took place. Among the doctor's attributes, not hitherto mentioned, was an aptitude for the society of children. He delighted to talk to children, and to play with them. He would carry them on his

back, three or four at a time, roll with them on the ground, race with them in the garden, invent games for them, contrive amusements in circumstances which seemed quite adverse to all manner of delight; and, above all, his physic was not nearly so nasty as that which came from Silverbridge.

He had a great theory as to the happiness of children; and though he was not disposed altogether to throw over the precepts of Solomon—always bargaining that he should, under no circumstances, be himself the executioner—he argued that the principal duty which a parent owed to a child was to make him happy. Not only was the man to be made happy—the future man, if that might be possible—but the existing boy was to be treated with equal favour; and his happiness, so said the doctor, was of much easier attainment.

"Why struggle after future advantage at the expense of present pain, seeing that the results were so very doubtful?" Many an opponent of the doctor had thought to catch him on the hip when so singular a doctrine was broached; but they were not always successful. "What!" said his sensible enemies, "is Johnny not to be taught to read because he does not like it?" "Johnny must read by all means," would the doctor answer; "but is it necessary that he should not like it? If the preceptor have it in him, may not Johnny learn, not only to read, but to like to learn to read?"

"But," would say his enemies, "children must be controlled." "And so must men also," would say the doctor. "I must not steal your peaches, nor make love to your wife, nor libel your character. Much as I might wish through my natural depravity to indulge in such vices, I am debarred from them without pain, and I may almost say without unhappiness."

And so the argument went on, neither party convincing the other. But, in the meantime, the children of the neighbourhood became very fond of Dr Thorne.

Dr Thorne and the squire were still fast friends, but circumstances had occurred, spreading themselves now over a period of many years, which almost made the poor squire uneasy in the doctor's company. Mr Gresham owed a large sum of money, and he had, moreover, already

sold a portion of his property. Unfortunately it had been the pride of the Greshams that their acres had descended from one to another without an entail, so that each possessor of Greshamsbury had had the full power to dispose of the property as he pleased. Any doubt as to its going to the male heir had never hitherto been felt. It had occasionally been encumbered by charges for younger children; but these charges had been liquidated, and the property had come down without any burden to the present squire. Now a portion of this had been sold, and it had been sold to a certain degree through the agency of Dr Thorne.

This made the squire an unhappy man. No man loved his family name and honour, his old family blazon and standing more thoroughly than he did; he was every whit a Gresham at heart; but his spirit had been weaker than that of his forefathers; and, in his days, for the first time, the Greshams were to go to the wall! Ten years before the beginning of our story it had been necessary to raise a large sum of money to meet and pay off pressing liabilities, and it was found that this could be done with more material advantage by selling a portion of the property than in any other way. A portion of it, about a third of the whole in value, was accordingly sold.

Boxall Hill lay half-way between Greshamsbury and Barchester, and was known as having the best partridge shooting in the county; as having on it also a celebrated fox cover, Boxall Gorse, held in very high repute by Barsetshire sportsmen. There was no residence on the immediate estate, and it was altogether divided from the remainder of the Greshamsbury property. This, with many inward and outward groans, Mr Gresham permitted to be sold.

It was sold, and sold well, by private contract to a native of Barchester, who, having risen from the world's ranks, had made for himself great wealth. Somewhat of this man's character must hereafter be told; it will suffice to say that he relied for advice in money matters upon Dr Thorne, and that at Dr Thorne's suggestion he had purchased Boxall Hill, partridge-shooting and gorse cover all included. He had not only bought Boxall Hill, but had subsequently lent the squire large sums of money on mortgage, in all which transactions the doctor had taken part. It had therefore come to pass that Mr Gresham was not

unfrequently called upon to discuss his money affairs with Dr Thorne, and occasionally to submit to lectures and advice which might perhaps as well have been omitted.

So much for Dr Thorne. A few words must still be said about Miss Mary before we rush into our story; the crust will then have been broken, and the pie will be open to the guests. Little Miss Mary was kept at a farm-house till she was six; she was then sent to school at Bath, and transplanted to the doctor's newly furnished house a little more than six years after that. It must not be supposed that he had lost sight of his charge during her earlier years. He was much too well aware of the nature of the promise which he had made to the departing mother to do that. He had constantly visited his little niece, and long before the first twelve years of her life were over had lost all consciousness of his promise, and of his duty to the mother, in the stronger ties of downright personal love for the only creature that belonged to him.

When Mary came home the doctor was like a child in his glee. He prepared surprises for her with as much forethought and trouble as though he were contriving mines to blow up an enemy. He took her first into the shop, and then into the kitchen, thence to the dining-rooms, after that to his and her bedrooms, and so on till he came to the full glory of the new drawing-room, enhancing the pleasure by little jokes, and telling her that he should never dare to come into the last paradise without her permission, and not then till he had taken off his boots. Child as she was, she understood the joke, and carried it on like a little queen; and so they soon became the firmest of friends.

But though Mary was a queen, it was still necessary that she should be educated. Those were the earlier days in which Lady Arabella had humbled herself, and to show her humility she invited Mary to share the music-lessons of Augusta and Beatrice at the great house. A music-master from Barchester came over three times a week, and remained for three hours, and if the doctor chose to send his girl over, she could pick up what was going on without doing any harm. So said the Lady Arabella. The doctor with many thanks and with no hesitation, accepted the offer, merely adding, that he had perhaps better settle separately with Signor Cantabili, the music-master. He was very much obliged to Lady

Arabella for giving his little girl permission to join her lessons to those of the Miss Greshams.

It need hardly be said that the Lady Arabella was on fire at once. Settle with Signor Cantabili! No, indeed; she would do that; there must be no expense whatever incurred in such an arrangement on Miss Thorne's account! But here, as in most things, the doctor carried his point. It being the time of the lady's humility, she could not make as good a fight as she would otherwise have done; and thus she found, to her great disgust, that Mary Thorne was learning music in her schoolroom on equal terms, as regarded payment, with her own daughters. The arrangement having been made could not be broken, especially as the young lady in nowise made herself disagreeable; and more especially as the Miss Greshams themselves were very fond of her.

And so Mary Thorne learnt music at Greshamsbury, and with her music she learnt other things also; how to behave herself among girls of her own age; how to speak and talk as other young ladies do; how to dress herself, and how to move and walk. All which, she, being quick to learn, learnt without trouble at the great house. Something also she learnt of French, seeing that the Greshamsbury French governess was always in the room.

And then, some few years later, there came a rector, and a rector's sister; and with the latter Mary studied German, and French also. From the doctor himself she learnt much; the choice, namely, of English books for her own reading, and habits of thought somewhat akin to his own, though modified by the feminine softness of her individual mind.

And so Mary Thorne grew up and was educated. Of her personal appearance it certainly is my business as an author to say something. She is my heroine, and, as such, must necessarily be very beautiful; but, in truth, her mind and inner qualities are more clearly distinct to my brain than her outward form and features. I know that she was far from being tall, and far from being showy; that her feet and hands were small and delicate; that her eyes were bright when looked at, but not brilliant so as to make their brilliancy palpably visible to all around her; her hair was dark brown, and worn very plainly brushed from her forehead; her

lips were thin, and her mouth, perhaps, in general inexpressive, but when she was eager in conversation it would show itself to be animated with curves of wondrous energy; and, quiet as she was in manner, sober and demure as was her usual settled appearance, she could talk, when the fit came on her, with an energy which in truth surprised those who did not know her; aye, and sometimes those who did. Energy! nay, it was occasionally a concentration of passion, which left her for the moment perfectly unconscious of all other cares but solicitude for that subject which she might then be advocating.

All her friends, including the doctor, had at times been made unhappy by this vehemence of character; but yet it was to that very vehemence that she owed it that all her friends so loved her. It had once nearly banished her in early years from the Greshamsbury schoolroom; and yet it ended in making her claim to remain there so strong, that Lady Arabella could no longer oppose it, even when she had the wish to do so.

A new French governess had lately come to Greshamsbury, and was, or was to be, a great pet with Lady Arabella, having all the great gifts with which a governess can be endowed, and being also a protégée from the castle. The castle, in Greshamsbury parlance, always meant that of Courcy. Soon after this a valued little locket belonging to Augusta Gresham was missing. The French governess had objected to its being worn in the schoolroom, and it had been sent up to the bedroom by a young servant-girl, the daughter of a small farmer on the estate. The locket was missing, and after a while, a considerable noise in the matter having been made, was found, by the diligence of the governess, somewhere among the belongings of the English servant. Great was the anger of Lady Arabella, loud were the protestations of the girl, mute the woe of her father, piteous the tears of her mother, inexorable the judgment of the Greshamsbury world. But something occurred, it matters now not what, to separate Mary Thorne in opinion from that world at large. Out she then spoke, and to her face accused the governess of the robbery. For two days Mary was in disgrace almost as deep as that of the farmer's daughter. But she was neither quiet nor dumb in her disgrace. When Lady Arabella would not hear her, she went to Mr Gresham. She forced her uncle to move in the matter. She gained

over to her side, one by one, the potentates of the parish, and ended by bringing Mam'selle Larron down on her knees with a confession of the facts. From that time Mary Thorne was dear to the tenantry of Greshamsbury; and specially dear at one small household, where a rough-spoken father of a family was often heard to declare, that for Miss Mary Thorne he'd face man or magistrate, duke or devil.

And so Mary Thorne grew up under the doctor's eye, and at the beginning of our tale she was one of the guests assembled at Greshamsbury on the coming of age of the heir, she herself having then arrived at the same period of her life.

CHAPTER IV

Lessons from Courcy Castle

It was the first of July, young Frank Gresham's birthday, and the London season was not yet over; nevertheless, Lady de Courcy had managed to get down into the country to grace the coming of age of the heir, bringing with her all the Ladies Amelia, Rosina, Margaretta, and Alexandrina, together with such of the Honourable Johns and Georges as could be collected for the occasion.

The Lady Arabella had contrived this year to spend ten weeks in town, which, by a little stretching, she made to pass for the season; and had managed, moreover, at last to refurnish, not ingloriously, the Portman Square drawing-room. She had gone up to London under the pretext, imperatively urged, of Augusta's teeth—young ladies' teeth are not unfrequently of value in this way;—and having received authority for a new carpet, which was really much wanted, had made such dexterous use of that sanction as to run up an upholsterer's bill of six or seven hundred pounds. She had of course had her carriage and horses; the girls of course had gone out; it had been positively necessary to have a few friends in Portman Square; and, altogether, the ten weeks had not been unpleasant, and not inexpensive.

For a few confidential minutes before dinner, Lady de Courcy and her sister-in-law sat together in the latter's dressing-room, discussing the unreasonableness of the squire, who had expressed himself with more than ordinary bitterness as to the folly—he had probably used some stronger word—of these London proceedings.

"Heavens!" said the countess, with much eager animation; "what can the man expect? What does he wish you to do?"

"He would like to sell the house in London, and bury us all here for ever. Mind, I was there only for ten weeks."

"Barely time for the girls to get their teeth properly looked at! But Arabella, what does he say?" Lady de Courcy was very anxious to learn the exact truth of the matter, and ascertain, if she could, whether Mr Gresham was really as poor as he pretended to be.

"Why, he said yesterday that he would have no more going to town at all; that he was barely able to pay the claims made on him, and keep up the house here, and that he would not—"

"Would not what?" asked the countess.

"Why, he said that he would not utterly ruin poor Frank."

"Ruin Frank!"

"That's what he said."

"But, surely, Arabella, it is not so bad as that? What possible reason can there be for him to be in debt?"

"He is always talking of those elections."

"But, my dear, Boxall Hill paid all that off. Of course Frank will not have such an income as there was when you married into the family; we all know that. And whom will he have to thank but his father? But Boxall Hill paid all those debts, and why should there be any difficulty now?"

"It was those nasty dogs, Rosina," said the Lady Arabella, almost in tears.

"Well, I for one never approved of the hounds coming to Greshamsbury. When a man has once involved his property he should not incur any expenses that are not absolutely necessary. That is a golden rule which Mr Gresham ought to have remembered. Indeed, I put it to him nearly in those very words; but Mr Gresham never did, and never will receive with common civility anything that comes from me."

"I know, Rosina, he never did; and yet where would he have been but for the de Courcys?" So exclaimed, in her gratitude, the Lady Arabella; to speak the truth, however, but for the de Courcys, Mr Gresham might have been at this moment on the top of Boxall Hill, monarch of all he surveyed.

"As I was saying," continued the countess, "I never approved of the hounds coming to Greshamsbury; but yet, my dear, the hounds can't have eaten up everything. A man with ten thousand a year ought to be able to keep hounds; particularly as he had a subscription."

"He says the subscription was little or nothing."

"That's nonsense, my dear. Now, Arabella, what does he do with his money? That's the question. Does he gamble?"

"Well," said Lady Arabella, very slowly, "I don't think he does." If the squire did gamble he must have done it very slyly, for he rarely went away from Greshamsbury, and certainly very few men looking like gamblers were in the habit of coming thither as guests. "I don't think he does gamble." Lady Arabella put her emphasis on the word gamble, as though her husband, if he might perhaps be charitably acquitted of that vice, was certainly guilty of every other known in the civilised world.

"I know he used," said Lady de Courcy, looking very wise, and rather suspicious. She certainly had sufficient domestic reasons for disliking the propensity; "I know he used; and when a man begins, he is hardly ever cured."

"Well, if he does, I don't know it," said the Lady Arabella.

"The money, my dear, must go somewhere. What excuse does he give when you tell him you want this and that—all the common necessaries of life, that you have always been used to?"

"He gives no excuse; sometimes he says the family is so large."

"Nonsense! Girls cost nothing; there's only Frank, and he can't have cost anything yet. Can he be saving money to buy back Boxall Hill?"

"Oh no!" said the Lady Arabella, quickly. "He is not saving anything; he never did, and never will save, though he is so stingy to me. He *is* hard pushed for money, I know that."

"Then where has it gone?" said the Countess de Courcy, with a look of stern decision.

"Heaven only knows! Now, Augusta is to be married. I must of course have a few hundred pounds. You should have heard how he

groaned when I asked him for it. Heaven only knows where the money goes!" And the injured wife wiped a piteous tear from her eye with her fine dress cambric handkerchief. "I have all the sufferings and privations of a poor man's wife, but I have none of the consolations. He has no confidence in me; he never tells me anything; he never talks to me about his affairs. If he talks to any one it is to that horrid doctor."

"What, Dr Thorne?" Now the Countess de Courcy hated Dr Thorne with a holy hatred.

"Yes; Dr Thorne. I believe that he knows everything; and advises everything, too. Whatever difficulties poor Gresham may have, I do believe Dr Thorne has brought them about. I do believe it, Rosina."

"Well, that is surprising. Mr Gresham, with all his faults, is a gentleman; and how he can talk about his affairs with a low apothecary like that, I, for one, cannot imagine. Lord de Courcy has not always been to me all that he should have been; far from it." And Lady de Courcy thought over in her mind injuries of a much graver description than any that her sister-in-law had ever suffered; "but I have never known anything like that at Courcy Castle. Surely Umbleby knows all about it, doesn't he?"

"Not half so much as the doctor," said Lady Arabella.

The countess shook her head slowly; the idea of Mr Gresham, a country gentleman of good estate like him, making a confidant of a country doctor was too great a shock for her nerves; and for a while she was constrained to sit silent before she could recover herself.

"One thing at any rate is certain, Arabella," said the countess, as soon as she found herself again sufficiently composed to offer counsel in a properly dictatorial manner. "One thing at any rate is certain; if Mr Gresham be involved so deeply as you say, Frank has but one duty before him. He must marry money. The heir of fourteen thousand a year may indulge himself in looking for blood, as Mr Gresham did, my dear"—it must be understood that there was very little compliment in this, as the Lady Arabella had always conceived herself to be a beauty—"or for beauty, as some men do," continued the countess, thinking of the choice that the present Earl de Courcy had made; "but Frank must marry

money. I hope he will understand this early; do make him understand this before he makes a fool of himself; when a man thoroughly understands this, when he knows what his circumstances require, why, the matter becomes easy to him. I hope that Frank understands that he has no alternative. In his position he must marry money."

But, alas! alas! Frank Gresham had already made a fool of himself.

"Well, my boy, I wish you joy with all my heart," said the Honourable John, slapping his cousin on the back, as he walked round to the stable-yard with him before dinner, to inspect a setter puppy of peculiarly fine breed which had been sent to Frank as a birthday present. "I wish I were an elder son; but we can't all have that luck."

"Who wouldn't sooner be the younger son of an earl than the eldest son of a plain squire?" said Frank, wishing to say something civil in return for his cousin's civility.

"I wouldn't for one," said the Honourable John. "What chance have I? There's Porlock as strong as a horse; and then George comes next. And the governor's good for these twenty years." And the young man sighed as he reflected what small hope there was that all those who were nearest and dearest to him should die out of his way, and leave him to the sweet enjoyment of an earl's coronet and fortune. "Now, you're sure of your game some day; and as you've no brothers, I suppose the squire'll let you do pretty well what you like. Besides, he's not so strong as my governor, though he's younger."

Frank had never looked at his fortune in this light before, and was so slow and green that he was not much delighted at the prospect now that it was offered to him. He had always, however, been taught to look to his cousins, the de Courcys, as men with whom it would be very expedient that he should be intimate; he therefore showed no offence, but changed the conversation.

"Shall you hunt with the Barsetshire this season, John? I hope you will; I shall."

"Well, I don't know. It's very slow. It's all tillage here, or else woodland. I rather fancy I shall go to Leicestershire when the partridge-

shooting is over. What sort of a lot do you mean to come out with, Frank?"

Frank became a little red as he answered, "Oh, I shall have two," he said; "that is, the mare I have had these two years, and the horse my father gave me this morning."

"What! only those two? and the mare is nothing more than a pony."

"She is fifteen hands," said Frank, offended.

"Well, Frank, I certainly would not stand that," said the Honourable John. "What, go out before the county with one untrained horse and a pony; and you the heir to Greshamsbury!"

"I'll have him so trained before November," said Frank, "that nothing in Barsetshire shall stop him. Peter says"—Peter was the Greshamsbury stud-groom—"that he tucks up his hind legs beautifully."

"But who the deuce would think of going to work with one horse; or two either, if you insist on calling the old pony a huntress? I'll put you up to a trick, my lad: if you stand that you'll stand anything; and if you don't mean to go in leading-strings all your life, now is the time to show it. There's young Baker—Harry Baker, you know—he came of age last year, and he has as pretty a string of nags as any one would wish to set eyes on; four hunters and a hack. Now, if old Baker has four thousand a year it's every shilling he has got."

This was true, and Frank Gresham, who in the morning had been made so happy by his father's present of a horse, began to feel that hardly enough had been done for him. It was true that Mr Baker had only four thousand a year; but it was also true that he had no other child than Harry Baker; that he had no great establishment to keep up; that he owed a shilling to no one; and, also, that he was a great fool in encouraging a mere boy to ape all the caprices of a man of wealth. Nevertheless, for a moment, Frank Gresham did feel that, considering his position, he was being treated rather unworthily.

"Take the matter in your own hands, Frank," said the Honourable John, seeing the impression that he had made. "Of course the governor knows very well that you won't put up with such a stable as that. Lord

bless you! I have heard that when he married my aunt, and that was when he was about your age, he had the best stud in the whole county; and then he was in Parliament before he was three-and-twenty."

"His father, you know, died when he was very young," said Frank.

"Yes; I know he had a stroke of luck that doesn't fall to everyone; but—"

Young Frank's face grew dark now instead of red. When his cousin submitted to him the necessity of having more than two horses for his own use he could listen to him; but when the same monitor talked of the chance of a father's death as a stroke of luck, Frank was too much disgusted to be able to pretend to pass it over with indifference. What! was he thus to think of his father, whose face was always lighted up with pleasure when his boy came near to him, and so rarely bright at any other time? Frank had watched his father closely enough to be aware of this; he knew how his father delighted in him; he had had cause to guess that his father had many troubles, and that he strove hard to banish the memory of them when his son was with him. He loved his father truly, purely, and thoroughly, liked to be with him, and would be proud to be his confidant. Could he then listen quietly while his cousin spoke of the chance of his father's death as a stroke of luck?

"I shouldn't think it a stroke of luck, John. I should think it the greatest misfortune in the world."

It is so difficult for a young man to enumerate sententiously a principle of morality, or even an expression of ordinary good feeling, without giving himself something of a ridiculous air, without assuming something of a mock grandeur!

"Oh, of course, my dear fellow," said the Honourable John, laughing; "that's a matter of course. We all understand that without saying it. Porlock, of course, would feel exactly the same about the governor; but if the governor were to walk, I think Porlock would console himself with the thirty thousand a year."

"I don't know what Porlock would do; he's always quarrelling with my uncle, I know. I only spoke of myself; I never quarrelled with my father, and I hope I never shall."

"All right, my lad of wax, all right. I dare say you won't be tried; but if you are, you'll find before six months are over, that it's a very nice thing to master of Greshamsbury."

"I'm sure I shouldn't find anything of the kind."

"Very well, so be it. You wouldn't do as young Hatherly did, at Hatherly Court, in Gloucestershire, when his father kicked the bucket. You know Hatherly, don't you?"

"No; I never saw him."

"He's Sir Frederick now, and has, or had, one of the finest fortunes in England, for a commoner; the most of it is gone now. Well, when he heard of his governor's death, he was in Paris, but he went off to Hatherly as fast as special train and post-horses would carry him, and got there just in time for the funeral. As he came back to Hatherly Court from the church, they were putting up the hatchment over the door, and Master Fred saw that the undertakers had put at the bottom 'Resurgam.' You know what that means?"

"Oh, yes," said Frank.

"'I'll come back again,'" said the Honourable John, construing the Latin for the benefit of his cousin. "'No,' said Fred Hatherly, looking up at the hatchment; 'I'm blessed if you do, old gentleman. That would be too much of a joke; I'll take care of that.' So he got up at night, and he got some fellows with him, and they climbed up and painted out 'Resurgam,' and they painted into its place, 'Requiescat in pace;' which means, you know, 'you'd a great deal better stay where you are.' Now I call that good. Fred Hatherly did that as sure as—as sure as—as sure as anything."

Frank could not help laughing at the story, especially at his cousin's mode of translating the undertaker's mottoes; and then they sauntered back from the stables into the house to dress for dinner.

Dr Thorne had come to the house somewhat before dinner-time, at Mr Gresham's request, and was now sitting with the squire in his own book-room—so called—while Mary was talking to some of the girls upstairs.

"I must have ten or twelve thousand pounds; ten at the very least," said the squire, who was sitting in his usual arm-chair, close to his littered table, with his head supported on his hand, looking very unlike the father of an heir of a noble property, who had that day come of age.

It was the first of July, and of course there was no fire in the grate; but, nevertheless, the doctor was standing with his back to the fireplace, with his coat-tails over his arms, as though he were engaged, now in summer as he so often was in winter, in talking, and roasting his hinder person at the same time.

"Twelve thousand pounds! It's a very large sum of money."

"I said ten," said the squire.

"Ten thousand pounds is a very large sum of money. There is no doubt he'll let you have it. Scatcherd will let you have it; but I know he'll expect to have the title deeds."

"What! for ten thousand pounds?" said the squire. "There is not a registered debt against the property but his own and Armstrong's."

"But his own is very large already."

"Armstrong's is nothing; about four-and-twenty thousand pounds."

"Yes; but he comes first, Mr Gresham."

"Well, what of that? To hear you talk, one would think that there was nothing left of Greshamsbury. What's four-and-twenty thousand pounds? Does Scatcherd know what rent-roll is?"

"Oh, yes, he knows it well enough: I wish he did not."

"Well, then, why does he make such a bother about a few thousand pounds? The title-deeds, indeed!"

"What he means is, that he must have ample security to cover what he has already advanced before he goes on. I wish to goodness you had no further need to borrow. I did think that things were settled last year."

"Oh if there's any difficulty, Umbleby will get it for me."

"Yes; and what will you have to pay for it?"

"I'd sooner pay double than be talked to in this way," said the squire, angrily, and, as he spoke, he got up hurriedly from his chair, thrust his hands into his trousers-pockets, walked quickly to the window, and immediately walking back again, threw himself once more into his chair.

"There are some things a man cannot bear, doctor," said he, beating the devil's tattoo on the floor with one of his feet, "though God knows I ought to be patient now, for I am made to bear a good many things. You had better tell Scatcherd that I am obliged to him for his offer, but that I will not trouble him."

The doctor during this little outburst had stood quite silent with his back to the fireplace and his coat-tails hanging over his arms; but though his voice said nothing, his face said much. He was very unhappy; he was greatly grieved to find that the squire was so soon again in want of money, and greatly grieved also to find that this want had made him so bitter and unjust. Mr Gresham had attacked him; but as he was determined not to quarrel with Mr Gresham, he refrained from answering.

The squire also remained silent for a few minutes; but he was not endowed with the gift of silence, and was soon, as it were, compelled to speak again.

"Poor Frank!" said he. "I could yet be easy about everything if it were not for the injury I have done him. Poor Frank!"

The doctor advanced a few paces from off the rug, and taking his hand out of his pocket, he laid it gently on the squire's shoulder. "Frank will do very well yet," said the he. "It is not absolutely necessary that a man should have fourteen thousand pounds a year to be happy."

"My father left me the property entire, and I should leave it entire to my son;—but you don't understand this."

The doctor did understand the feeling fully. The fact, on the other hand, was that, long as he had known him, the squire did not understand the doctor.

"I would you could, Mr Gresham," said the doctor, "so that your mind might be happier; but that cannot be, and, therefore, I say again, that Frank will do very well yet, although he will not inherit fourteen thousand pounds a year; and I would have you say the same thing to yourself."

"Ah! you don't understand it," persisted the squire. "You don't know how a man feels when he—Ah, well! it's no use my troubling you with what cannot be mended. I wonder whether Umbleby is about the place anywhere?"

The doctor was again standing with his back against the chimney-piece, and with his hands in his pockets.

"You did not see Umbleby as you came in?" again asked the squire.

"No, I did not; and if you will take my advice you will not see him now; at any rate with reference to this money."

"I tell you I must get it from someone; you say Scatcherd won't let me have it."

"No, Mr Gresham; I did not say that."

"Well, you said what was as bad. Augusta is to be married in September, and the money must be had. I have agreed to give Moffat six thousand pounds, and he is to have the money down in hard cash."

"Six thousand pounds," said the doctor. "Well, I suppose that is not more than your daughter should have. But then, five times six are thirty; thirty thousand pounds will be a large sum to make up."

The father thought to himself that his younger girls were but children, and that the trouble of arranging their marriage portions might well be postponed a while. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.

"That Moffat is a griping, hungry fellow," said the squire. "I suppose Augusta likes him; and, as regards money, it is a good match."

"If Miss Gresham loves him, that is everything. I am not in love with him myself; but then, I am not a young lady."

"The de Courcys are very fond of him. Lady de Courcy says that he is a perfect gentleman, and thought very much of in London."

"Oh! if Lady de Courcy says that, of course, it's all right," said the doctor, with a quiet sarcasm, that was altogether thrown away on the squire.

The squire did not like any of the de Courcys; especially, he did not like Lady de Courcy; but still he was accessible to a certain amount of gratification in the near connexion which he had with the earl and countess; and when he wanted to support his family greatness, would sometimes weakly fall back upon the grandeur of Courcy Castle. It was only when talking to his wife that he invariably snubbed the pretensions of his noble relatives.

The two men after this remained silent for a while; and then the doctor, renewing the subject for which he had been summoned into the book-room, remarked, that as Scatcherd was now in the country—he did not say, was now at Boxall Hill, as he did not wish to wound the squire's ears—perhaps he had better go and see him, and ascertain in what way this affair of the money might be arranged. There was no doubt, he said, that Scatcherd would supply the sum required at a lower rate of interest than that at which it could be procured through Umbleby's means.

"Very well," said the squire. "I'll leave it in your hands, then. I think ten thousand pounds will do. And now I'll dress for dinner." And then the doctor left him.

Perhaps the reader will suppose after this that the doctor had some pecuniary interest of his own in arranging the squire's loans; or, at any rate, he will think that the squire must have so thought. Not in the least; neither had he any such interest, nor did the squire think that he had any. What Dr Thorne did in this matter the squire well knew was done for love. But the squire of Greshamsbury was a great man at Greshamsbury;

and it behoved him to maintain the greatness of his squirehood when discussing his affairs with the village doctor. So much he had at any rate learnt from his contact with the de Courcys.

And the doctor—proud, arrogant, contradictory, headstrong as he was—why did he bear to be thus snubbed? Because he knew that the squire of Greshamsbury, when struggling with debt and poverty, required an indulgence for his weakness. Had Mr Gresham been in easy circumstances, the doctor would by no means have stood so placidly with his hands in his pockets, and have had Mr Umbleby thus thrown in his teeth. The doctor loved the squire, loved him as his own oldest friend; but he loved him ten times better as being in adversity than he could ever have done had things gone well at Greshamsbury in his time.

While this was going on downstairs, Mary was sitting upstairs with Beatrice Gresham in the schoolroom. The old schoolroom, so called, was now a sitting-room, devoted to the use of the grown-up young ladies of the family, whereas one of the old nurseries was now the modern schoolroom. Mary well knew her way to the sanctum, and, without asking any questions, walked up to it when her uncle went to the squire. On entering the room she found that Augusta and the Lady Alexandrina were also there, and she hesitated for a moment at the door.

"Come in, Mary," said Beatrice, "you know my cousin Alexandrina." Mary came in, and having shaken hands with her two friends, was bowing to the lady, when the lady condescended, put out her noble hand, and touched Miss Thorne's fingers.

Beatrice was Mary's friend, and many heart-burnings and much mental solicitude did that young lady give to her mother by indulging in such a friendship. But Beatrice, with some faults, was true at heart, and she persisted in loving Mary Thorne in spite of the hints which her mother so frequently gave as to the impropriety of such an affection.

Nor had Augusta any objection to the society of Miss Thorne. Augusta was a strong-minded girl, with much of the de Courcy arrogance, but quite as well inclined to show it in opposition to her mother as in any other form. To her alone in the house did Lady Arabella show much deference. She was now going to make a suitable