

Vanity Fair by William Makepeace Thackeray

Chapter 61

"In Which Two Lights are Put Out"

There came a day when the round of decorous pleasures and solemn gaieties in which Mr. Jos Sedley's family indulged was interrupted by an event which happens in most houses. As you ascend the staircase of your house from the drawing towards the bedroom floors, you may have remarked a little arch in the wall right before you, which at once gives light to the stair which leads from the second story to the third (where the nursery and servants' chambers commonly are) and serves for another purpose of utility, of which the undertaker's men can give you a notion. They rest the coffins upon that arch, or pass them through it so as not to disturb in any unseemly manner the cold tenant slumbering within the black ark.

That second-floor arch in a London house, looking up and down the well of the staircase and commanding the main thoroughfare by which the inhabitants are passing; by which cook lurks down before daylight to scour her pots and pans in the kitchen; by which young master stealthily ascends, having left his boots in the hall, and let himself in after dawn from a jolly night at the Club; down which miss comes rustling in fresh ribbons and spreading muslins, brilliant and beautiful, and prepared for conquest and the ball; or Master Tommy slides, preferring the banisters for a mode of conveyance, and disdaining danger and the stair; down which the mother is fondly carried smiling in her strong husband's arms, as he steps steadily step by step, and followed by the monthly nurse, on the day when the medical man has pronounced that the charming patient may go downstairs; up which John lurks to bed, yawning, with a sputtering tallow candle, and to gather up before sunrise the boots which are awaiting him in the passages—that stair, up or down which babies are carried, old people are helped, guests are marshalled to the ball, the parson walks to the christening, the doctor to the sick-room, and the undertaker's men to the upper floor—what a memento of Life, Death, and Vanity it is—that arch and stair—if you choose to consider it, and sit on the landing, looking up and down the well! The doctor will come up to us too for the last time there, my friend in motley. The nurse will look in at the curtains, and you take no notice—and then she will fling open the

windows for a little and let in the air. Then they will pull down all the front blinds of the house and live in the back rooms— then they will send for the lawyer and other men in black, &c. Your comedy and mine will have been played then, and we shall be removed, oh, how far, from the trumpets, and the shouting, and the posture-making. If we are gentlefolks they will put hatchments over our late domicile, with gilt cherubim, and mottoes stating that there is “Quiet in Heaven.” Your son will new furnish the house, or perhaps let it, and go into a more modern quarter; your name will be among the “Members Deceased” in the lists of your clubs next year. However much you may be mourned, your widow will like to have her weeds neatly made—the cook will send or come up to ask about dinner—the survivor will soon bear to look at your picture over the mantelpiece, which will presently be deposed from the place of honour, to make way for the portrait of the son who reigns.

Which of the dead are most tenderly and passionately deplored? Those who love the survivors the least, I believe. The death of a child occasions a passion of grief and frantic tears, such as your end, brother reader, will never inspire. The death of an infant which scarce knew you, which a week’s absence from you would have caused to forget you, will strike you down more than the loss of your closest friend, or your first-born son—a man grown like yourself, with children of his own. We may be harsh and stern with Judah and Simeon—our love and pity gush out for Benjamin, the little one. And if you are old, as some reader of this may be or shall be old and rich, or old and poor—you may one day be thinking for yourself—”These people are very good round about me, but they won’t grieve too much when I am gone. I am very rich, and they want my inheritance—or very poor, and they are tired of supporting me.”

The period of mourning for Mrs. Sedley’s death was only just concluded, and Jos scarcely had had time to cast off his black and appear in the splendid waistcoats which he loved, when it became evident to those about Mr. Sedley that another event was at hand, and that the old man was about to go seek for his wife in the dark land whither she had preceded him. “The state of my father’s health,” Jos Sedley solemnly remarked at the Club, “prevents me from giving any large parties this season: but if you will come in quietly at half-past six, Chutney, my boy, and fake a homely dinner with one or two of the old set—I shall be always glad to see you.” So Jos and his acquaintances dined and drank their claret among themselves in silence, whilst the sands of life were

running out in the old man's glass upstairs. The velvet-footed butler brought them their wine, and they composed themselves to a rubber after dinner, at which Major Dobbin would sometimes come and take a hand; and Mrs. Osborne would occasionally descend, when her patient above was settled for the night, and had commenced one of those lightly troubled slumbers which visit the pillow of old age.

The old man clung to his daughter during this sickness. He would take his broths and medicines from scarcely any other hand. To tend him became almost the sole business of her life. Her bed was placed close by the door which opened into his chamber, and she was alive at the slightest noise or disturbance from the couch of the querulous invalid. Though, to do him justice, he lay awake many an hour, silent and without stirring, unwilling to awaken his kind and vigilant nurse.

He loved his daughter with more fondness now, perhaps, than ever he had done since the days of her childhood. In the discharge of gentle offices and kind filial duties, this simple creature shone most especially. "She walks into the room as silently as a sunbeam," Mr. Dobbin thought as he saw her passing in and out from her father's room, a cheerful sweetness lighting up her face as she moved to and fro, graceful and noiseless. When women are brooding over their children, or busied in a sick-room, who has not seen in their faces those sweet angelic beams of love and pity?

A secret feud of some years' standing was thus healed, and with a tacit reconciliation. In these last hours, and touched by her love and goodness, the old man forgot all his grief against her, and wrongs which he and his wife had many a long night debated: how she had given up everything for her boy; how she was careless of her parents in their old age and misfortune, and only thought of the child; how absurdly and foolishly, impiously indeed, she took on when George was removed from her. Old Sedley forgot these charges as he was making up his last account, and did justice to the gentle and uncomplaining little martyr. One night when she stole into his room, she found him awake, when the broken old man made his confession. "Oh, Emmy, I've been thinking we were very unkind and unjust to you," he said and put out his cold and feeble hand to her. She knelt down and prayed by his bedside, as he did too, having still hold of her hand. When our turn comes, friend, may we have such company in our prayers!

Perhaps as he was lying awake then, his life may have passed before him—his early hopeful struggles, his manly successes and prosperity, his downfall in his declining years, and his present helpless condition—no chance of revenge against Fortune, which had had the better of him—neither name nor money to bequeath—a spent-out, bootless life of defeat and disappointment, and the end here! Which, I wonder, brother reader, is the better lot, to die prosperous and famous, or poor and disappointed? To have, and to be forced to yield; or to sink out of life, having played and lost the game? That must be a strange feeling, when a day of our life comes and we say, “To-morrow, success or failure won’t matter much, and the sun will rise, and all the myriads of mankind go to their work or their pleasure as usual, but I shall be out of the turmoil.”

So there came one morning and sunrise when all the world got up and set about its various works and pleasures, with the exception of old John Sedley, who was not to fight with fortune, or to hope or scheme any more, but to go and take up a quiet and utterly unknown residence in a churchyard at Brompton by the side of his old wife.

Major Dobbin, Jos, and Georgy followed his remains to the grave, in a black cloth coach. Jos came on purpose from the Star and Garter at Richmond, whither he retreated after the deplorable event. He did not care to remain in the house, with the—under the circumstances, you understand. But Emmy stayed and did her duty as usual. She was bowed down by no especial grief, and rather solemn than sorrowful. She prayed that her own end might be as calm and painless, and thought with trust and reverence of the words which she had heard from her father during his illness, indicative of his faith, his resignation, and his future hope.

Yes, I think that will be the better ending of the two, after all. Suppose you are particularly rich and well-to-do and say on that last day, “I am very rich; I am tolerably well known; I have lived all my life in the best society, and thank Heaven, come of a most respectable family. I have served my King and country with honour. I was in Parliament for several years, where, I may say, my speeches were listened to and pretty well received. I don’t owe any man a shilling: on the contrary, I lent my old college friend, Jack Lazarus, fifty pounds, for which my executors will not press him. I leave my daughters with ten thousand pounds apiece—very good portions for girls; I bequeath my plate and furniture, my house in Baker Street, with a handsome jointure, to my widow for

her life; and my landed property, besides money in the funds, and my cellar of well-selected wine in Baker Street, to my son. I leave twenty pound a year to my valet; and I defy any man after I have gone to find anything against my character.” Or suppose, on the other hand, your swan sings quite a different sort of dirge and you say, “I am a poor blighted, disappointed old fellow, and have made an utter failure through life. I was not endowed either with brains or with good fortune, and confess that I have committed a hundred mistakes and blunders. I own to having forgotten my duty many a time. I can’t pay what I owe. On my last bed I lie utterly helpless and humble, and I pray forgiveness for my weakness and throw myself, with a contrite heart, at the feet of the Divine Mercy.” Which of these two speeches, think you, would be the best oration for your own funeral? Old Sedley made the last; and in that humble frame of mind, and holding by the hand of his daughter, life and disappointment and vanity sank away from under him.

“You see,” said old Osborne to George, “what comes of merit, and industry, and judicious speculations, and that. Look at me and my banker’s account. Look at your poor Grandfather Sedley and his failure. And yet he was a better man than I was, this day twenty years—a better man, I should say, by ten thousand pound.”

Beyond these people and Mr. Clapp’s family, who came over from Brompton to pay a visit of condolence, not a single soul alive ever cared a penny piece about old John Sedley, or remembered the existence of such a person.

When old Osborne first heard from his friend Colonel Buckler (as little Georgy had already informed us) how distinguished an officer Major Dobbin was, he exhibited a great deal of scornful incredulity and expressed his surprise how ever such a feller as that should possess either brains or reputation. But he heard of the Major’s fame from various members of his society. Sir William Dobbin had a great opinion of his son and narrated many stories illustrative of the Major’s learning, valour, and estimation in the world’s opinion. Finally, his name appeared in the lists of one or two great parties of the nobility, and this circumstance had a prodigious effect upon the old aristocrat of Russell Square.

The Major’s position, as guardian to Georgy, whose possession had been

ceded to his grandfather, rendered some meetings between the two gentlemen inevitable; and it was in one of these that old Osborne, a keen man of business, looking into the Major's accounts with his ward and the boy's mother, got a hint, which staggered him very much, and at once pained and pleased him, that it was out of William Dobbin's own pocket that a part of the fund had been supplied upon which the poor widow and the child had subsisted.

When pressed upon the point, Dobbin, who could not tell lies, blushed and stammered a good deal and finally confessed. "The marriage," he said (at which his interlocutor's face grew dark) "was very much my doing. I thought my poor friend had gone so far that retreat from his engagement would have been dishonour to him and death to Mrs. Osborne, and I could do no less, when she was left without resources, than give what money I could spare to maintain her."

"Major D.," Mr. Osborne said, looking hard at him and turning very red too—"you did me a great injury; but give me leave to tell you, sir, you are an honest feller. There's my hand, sir, though I little thought that my flesh and blood was living on you—" and the pair shook hands, with great confusion on Major Dobbin's part, thus found out in his act of charitable hypocrisy.

He strove to soften the old man and reconcile him towards his son's memory. "He was such a noble fellow," he said, "that all of us loved him, and would have done anything for him. I, as a young man in those days, was flattered beyond measure by his preference for me, and was more pleased to be seen in his company than in that of the Commander-in-Chief. I never saw his equal for pluck and daring and all the qualities of a soldier"; and Dobbin told the old father as many stories as he could remember regarding the gallantry and achievements of his son. "And Georgy is so like him," the Major added.

"He's so like him that he makes me tremble sometimes," the grandfather said.

On one or two evenings the Major came to dine with Mr. Osborne (it was during the time of the sickness of Mr. Sedley), and as the two sat together in the evening after dinner, all their talk was about the departed hero. The father boasted about him according to his wont, glorifying

himself in recounting his son's feats and gallantry, but his mood was at any rate better and more charitable than that in which he had been disposed until now to regard the poor fellow; and the Christian heart of the kind Major was pleased at these symptoms of returning peace and good-will. On the second evening old Osborne called Dobbin William, just as he used to do at the time when Dobbin and George were boys together, and the honest gentleman was pleased by that mark of reconciliation.

On the next day at breakfast, when Miss Osborne, with the asperity of her age and character, ventured to make some remark reflecting slightly upon the Major's appearance or behaviour—the master of the house interrupted her. "You'd have been glad enough to git him for yourself, Miss O. But them grapes are sour. Ha! ha! Major William is a fine feller."

"That he is, Grandpapa," said Georgy approvingly; and going up close to the old gentleman, he took a hold of his large grey whiskers, and laughed in his face good-humouredly, and kissed him. And he told the story at night to his mother, who fully agreed with the boy. "Indeed he is," she said. "Your dear father always said so. He is one of the best and most upright of men." Dobbin happened to drop in very soon after this conversation, which made Amelia blush perhaps, and the young scapegrace increased the confusion by telling Dobbin the other part of the story. "I say, Dob," he said, "there's such an uncommon nice girl wants to marry you. She's plenty of tin; she wears a front; and she scolds the servants from morning till night." "Who is it?" asked Dobbin. "It's Aunt O.," the boy answered. "Grandpapa said so. And I say, Dob, how prime it would be to have you for my uncle." Old Sedley's quavering voice from the next room at this moment weakly called for Amelia, and the laughing ended.

That old Osborne's mind was changing was pretty clear. He asked George about his uncle sometimes, and laughed at the boy's imitation of the way in which Jos said "God-bless-my-soul" and gobbled his soup. Then he said, "It's not respectful, sir, of you youngers to be imitating of your relations. Miss O., when you go out adriving to-day, leave my card upon Mr. Sedley, do you hear? There's no quarrel betwixt me and him anyhow."

The card was returned, and Jos and the Major were asked to dinner— to a dinner the most splendid and stupid that perhaps ever Mr. Osborne gave; every inch of the family plate was exhibited, and the best company was asked. Mr. Sedley took down Miss O. to dinner, and she was very gracious to him; whereas she hardly spoke to the Major, who sat apart from her, and by the side of Mr. Osborne, very timid. Jos said, with great solemnity, it was the best turtle soup he had ever tasted in his life, and asked Mr. Osborne where he got his Madeira.

“It is some of Sedley’s wine,” whispered the butler to his master. “I’ve had it a long time, and paid a good figure for it, too,” Mr. Osborne said aloud to his guest, and then whispered to his right-hand neighbour how he had got it “at the old chap’s sale.”

More than once he asked the Major about—about Mrs. George Osborne—a theme on which the Major could be very eloquent when he chose. He told Mr. Osborne of her sufferings—of her passionate attachment to her husband, whose memory she worshipped still—of the tender and dutiful manner in which she had supported her parents, and given up her boy, when it seemed to her her duty to do so. “You don’t know what she endured, sir,” said honest Dobbin with a tremor in his voice, “and I hope and trust you will be reconciled to her. If she took your son away from you, she gave hers to you; and however much you loved your George, depend on it, she loved hers ten times more.”

“By God, you are a good feller, sir,” was all Mr. Osborne said. It had never struck him that the widow would feel any pain at parting from the boy, or that his having a fine fortune could grieve her. A reconciliation was announced as speedy and inevitable, and Amelia’s heart already began to beat at the notion of the awful meeting with George’s father.

It was never, however, destined to take place. Old Sedley’s lingering illness and death supervened, after which a meeting was for some time impossible. That catastrophe and other events may have worked upon Mr. Osborne. He was much shaken of late, and aged, and his mind was working inwardly. He had sent for his lawyers, and probably changed something in his will. The medical man who looked in pronounced him shaky, agitated, and talked of a little blood and the seaside; but he took neither of these remedies.

One day when he should have come down to breakfast, his servant missing him, went into his dressing-room and found him lying at the foot of the dressing-table in a fit. Miss Osborne was apprised; the doctors were sent for; Georgy stopped away from school; the bleeders and cuppers came. Osborne partially regained cognizance, but never could speak again, though he tried dreadfully once or twice, and in four days he died. The doctors went down, and the undertaker's men went up the stairs, and all the shutters were shut towards the garden in Russell Square. Bullock rushed from the City in a hurry. "How much money had he left to that boy? Not half, surely? Surely share and share alike between the three?" It was an agitating moment.

What was it that poor old man tried once or twice in vain to say? I hope it was that he wanted to see Amelia and be reconciled before he left the world to one dear and faithful wife of his son: it was most likely that, for his will showed that the hatred which he had so long cherished had gone out of his heart.

They found in the pocket of his dressing-gown the letter with the great red seal which George had written him from Waterloo. He had looked at the other papers too, relative to his son, for the key of the box in which he kept them was also in his pocket, and it was found the seals and envelopes had been broken—very likely on the night before the seizure—when the butler had taken him tea into his study, and found him reading in the great red family Bible.

When the will was opened, it was found that half the property was left to George, and the remainder between the two sisters. Mr. Bullock to continue, for their joint benefit, the affairs of the commercial house, or to go out, as he thought fit. An annuity of five hundred pounds, chargeable on George's property, was left to his mother, "the widow of my beloved son, George Osborne," who was to resume the guardianship of the boy.

"Major William Dobbin, my beloved son's friend," was appointed executor; "and as out of his kindness and bounty, and with his own private funds, he maintained my grandson and my son's widow, when they were otherwise without means of support" (the testator went on to say) "I hereby thank him heartily for his love and regard for them, and beseech him to accept such a sum as may be sufficient to purchase his

commission as a Lieutenant-Colonel, or to be disposed of in any way he may think fit.”

When Amelia heard that her father-in-law was reconciled to her, her heart melted, and she was grateful for the fortune left to her. But when she heard how Georgy was restored to her, and knew how and by whom, and how it was William’s bounty that supported her in poverty, how it was William who gave her her husband and her son—oh, then she sank on her knees, and prayed for blessings on that constant and kind heart; she bowed down and humbled herself, and kissed the feet, as it were, of that beautiful and generous affection.

And gratitude was all that she had to pay back for such admirable devotion and benefits—only gratitude! If she thought of any other return, the image of George stood up out of the grave and said, “You are mine, and mine only, now and forever.”

William knew her feelings: had he not passed his whole life in divining them?

When the nature of Mr. Osborne’s will became known to the world, it was edifying to remark how Mrs. George Osborne rose in the estimation of the people forming her circle of acquaintance. The servants of Jos’s establishment, who used to question her humble orders and say they would “ask Master” whether or not they could obey, never thought now of that sort of appeal. The cook forgot to sneer at her shabby old gowns (which, indeed, were quite eclipsed by that lady’s finery when she was dressed to go to church of a Sunday evening), the others no longer grumbled at the sound of her bell, or delayed to answer that summons. The coachman, who grumbled that his ‘osses should be brought out and his carriage made into an hospital for that old feller and Mrs. O., drove her with the utmost alacrity now, and trembling lest he should be superseded by Mr. Osborne’s coachman, asked “what them there Russell Square coachmen knew about town, and whether they was fit to sit on a box before a lady?” Jos’s friends, male and female, suddenly became interested about Emmy, and cards of condolence multiplied on her hall table. Jos himself, who had looked on her as a good-natured harmless pauper, to whom it was his duty to give victuals and shelter, paid her and the rich little boy, his nephew, the greatest respect—was anxious that she should have change and amusement after her troubles and trials, “poor

dear girl”—and began to appear at the breakfast-table, and most particularly to ask how she would like to dispose of the day.

In her capacity of guardian to Georgy, she, with the consent of the Major, her fellow-trustee, begged Miss Osborne to live in the Russell Square house as long as ever she chose to dwell there; but that lady, with thanks, declared that she never could think of remaining alone in that melancholy mansion, and departed in deep mourning to Cheltenham, with a couple of her old domestics. The rest were liberally paid and dismissed, the faithful old butler, whom Mrs. Osborne proposed to retain, resigning and preferring to invest his savings in a public-house, where, let us hope, he was not unprosperous. Miss Osborne not choosing to live in Russell Square, Mrs. Osborne also, after consultation, declined to occupy the gloomy old mansion there. The house was dismantled; the rich furniture and effects, the awful chandeliers and dreary blank mirrors packed away and hidden, the rich rosewood drawing-room suite was muffled in straw, the carpets were rolled up and corded, the small select library of well-bound books was stowed into two wine-chests, and the whole paraphernalia rolled away in several enormous vans to the Pantehnicon, where they were to lie until Georgy's majority. And the great heavy dark plate-chests went off to Messrs. Stumpy and Rowdy, to lie in the cellars of those eminent bankers until the same period should arrive.

One day Emmy, with George in her hand and clad in deep sables, went to visit the deserted mansion which she had not entered since she was a girl. The place in front was littered with straw where the vans had been laden and rolled off. They went into the great blank rooms, the walls of which bore the marks where the pictures and mirrors had hung. Then they went up the great blank stone staircases into the upper rooms, into that where grandpapa died, as George said in a whisper, and then higher still into George's own room. The boy was still clinging by her side, but she thought of another besides him. She knew that it had been his father's room as well as his own.

She went up to one of the open windows (one of those at which she used to gaze with a sick heart when the child was first taken from her), and thence as she looked out she could see, over the trees of Russell Square, the old house in which she herself was born, and where she had passed so many happy days of sacred youth. They all came back to her, the

pleasant holidays, the kind faces, the careless, joyful past times, and the long pains and trials that had since cast her down. She thought of these and of the man who had been her constant protector, her good genius, her sole benefactor, her tender and generous friend.

“Look here, Mother,” said Georgy, “here’s a G.O. scratched on the glass with a diamond, I never saw it before, I never did it.”

“It was your father’s room long before you were born, George,” she said, and she blushed as she kissed the boy.

She was very silent as they drove back to Richmond, where they had taken a temporary house: where the smiling lawyers used to come bustling over to see her (and we may be sure noted the visit in the bill): and where of course there was a room for Major Dobbin too, who rode over frequently, having much business to transact on behalf of his little ward.

Georgy at this time was removed from Mr. Veal’s on an unlimited holiday, and that gentleman was engaged to prepare an inscription for a fine marble slab, to be placed up in the Foundling under the monument of Captain George Osborne.

The female Bullock, aunt of Georgy, although despoiled by that little monster of one-half of the sum which she expected from her father, nevertheless showed her charitableness of spirit by being reconciled to the mother and the boy. Roehampton is not far from Richmond, and one day the chariot, with the golden bullocks emblazoned on the panels, and the flaccid children within, drove to Amelia’s house at Richmond; and the Bullock family made an irruption into the garden, where Amelia was reading a book, Jos was in an arbour placidly dipping strawberries into wine, and the Major in one of his Indian jackets was giving a back to Georgy, who chose to jump over him. He went over his head and bounded into the little advance of Bullocks, with immense black bows in their hats, and huge black sashes, accompanying their mourning mamma.

“He is just of the age for Rosa,” the fond parent thought, and glanced towards that dear child, an unwholesome little miss of seven years of age.

“Rosa, go and kiss your dear cousin,” Mrs. Frederick said. “Don’t you know me, George? I am your aunt.”

“I know you well enough,” George said; “but I don’t like kissing, please”; and he retreated from the obedient caresses of his cousin.

“Take me to your dear mamma, you droll child,” Mrs. Frederick said, and those ladies accordingly met, after an absence of more than fifteen years. During Emmy’s cares and poverty the other had never once thought about coming to see her, but now that she was decently prosperous in the world, her sister-in-law came to her as a matter of course.

So did numbers more. Our old friend, Miss Swartz, and her husband came thundering over from Hampton Court, with flaming yellow liveries, and was as impetuously fond of Amelia as ever. Miss Swartz would have liked her always if she could have seen her. One must do her that justice. But, *que voulez vous?*—in this vast town one has not the time to go and seek one’s friends; if they drop out of the rank they disappear, and we march on without them. Who is ever missed in Vanity Fair?

But so, in a word, and before the period of grief for Mr. Osborne’s death had subsided, Emmy found herself in the centre of a very genteel circle indeed, the members of which could not conceive that anybody belonging to it was not very lucky. There was scarce one of the ladies that hadn’t a relation a Peer, though the husband might be a drysalter in the City. Some of the ladies were very blue and well informed, reading Mrs. Somerville and frequenting the Royal Institution; others were severe and Evangelical, and held by Exeter Hall. Emmy, it must be owned, found herself entirely at a loss in the midst of their clavers, and suffered woefully on the one or two occasions on which she was compelled to accept Mrs. Frederick Bullock’s hospitalities. That lady persisted in patronizing her and determined most graciously to form her. She found Amelia’s milliners for her and regulated her household and her manners. She drove over constantly from Roehampton and entertained her friend with faint fashionable fiddle-faddle and feeble Court slip-slop. Jos liked to hear it, but the Major used to go off growling at the appearance of this woman, with her twopenny gentility. He went to sleep under Frederick Bullock’s bald head, after dinner, at one of the banker’s best parties (Fred was still anxious that the balance

of the Osborne property should be transferred from Stumpy and Rowdy's to them), and whilst Amelia, who did not know Latin, or who wrote the last crack article in the Edinburgh, and did not in the least deplore, or otherwise, Mr. Peel's late extraordinary tergiversation on the fatal Catholic Relief Bill, sat dumb amongst the ladies in the grand drawing-room, looking out upon velvet lawns, trim gravel walks, and glistening hot-houses.

"She seems good-natured but insipid," said Mrs. Rowdy; "that Major seems to be particularly epris."

"She wants ton sadly," said Mrs. Hollyock. "My dear creature, you never will be able to form her."

"She is dreadfully ignorant or indifferent," said Mrs. Glowry with a voice as if from the grave, and a sad shake of the head and turban. "I asked her if she thought that it was in 1836, according to Mr. Jowls, or in 1839, according to Mr. Wapshot, that the Pope was to fall: and she said—'Poor Pope! I hope not—What has he done?'"

"She is my brother's widow, my dear friends," Mrs. Frederick replied, "and as such I think we're all bound to give her every attention and instruction on entering into the world. You may fancy there can be no mercenary motives in those whose disappointments are well known."

"That poor dear Mrs. Bullock," said Rowdy to Hollyock, as they drove away together—"she is always scheming and managing. She wants Mrs. Osborne's account to be taken from our house to hers—and the way in which she coaxes that boy and makes him sit by that blear-eyed little Rosa is perfectly ridiculous."

"I wish Glowry was choked with her Man of Sin and her Battle of Armageddon," cried the other, and the carriage rolled away over Putney Bridge.

But this sort of society was too cruelly genteel for Emmy, and all jumped for joy when a foreign tour was proposed.