

Vanity Fair by William Makepeace Thackeray

Chapter 11

"Arcadian Simplicity"

Besides these honest folks at the Hall (whose simplicity and sweet rural purity surely show the advantage of a country life over a town one), we must introduce the reader to their relatives and neighbours at the Rectory, Bute Crawley and his wife.

The Reverend Bute Crawley was a tall, stately, jolly, shovel-hatted man, far more popular in his county than the Baronet his brother. At college he pulled stroke-oar in the Christchurch boat, and had thrashed all the best bruisers of the "town." He carried his taste for boxing and athletic exercises into private life; there was not a fight within twenty miles at which he was not present, nor a race, nor a coursing match, nor a regatta, nor a ball, nor an election, nor a visitation dinner, nor indeed a good dinner in the whole county, but he found means to attend it. You might see his bay mare and gig-lamps a score of miles away from his Rectory House, whenever there was any dinner-party at Fuddlestone, or at Roxby, or at Wapshot Hall, or at the great lords of the county, with all of whom he was intimate. He had a fine voice; sang "A southerly wind and a cloudy sky"; and gave the "whoop" in chorus with general applause. He rode to hounds in a pepper-and-salt frock, and was one of the best fishermen in the county.

Mrs. Crawley, the rector's wife, was a smart little body, who wrote this worthy divine's sermons. Being of a domestic turn, and keeping the house a great deal with her daughters, she ruled absolutely within the Rectory, wisely giving her husband full liberty without. He was welcome to come and go, and dine abroad as many days as his fancy dictated, for Mrs. Crawley was a saving woman and knew the price of port wine. Ever since Mrs. Bute carried off the young Rector of Queen's Crawley (she was of a good family, daughter of the late Lieut. Colonel Hector McTavish, and she and her mother played for Bute and won him at Harrowgate), she had been a prudent and thrifty wife to him. In spite of her care, however, he was always in debt. It took him at least ten years to pay off his college bills contracted during his father's lifetime. In the year 179—, when he was just clear of these incumbrances, he

gave the odds of 100 to 1 (in twenties) against Kangaroo, who won the Derby. The Rector was obliged to take up the money at a ruinous interest, and had been struggling ever since. His sister helped him with a hundred now and then, but of course his great hope was in her death—when “hang it” (as he would say), “Matilda must leave me half her money.”

So that the Baronet and his brother had every reason which two brothers possibly can have for being by the ears. Sir Pitt had had the better of Bute in innumerable family transactions. Young Pitt not only did not hunt, but set up a meeting house under his uncle’s very nose. Rawdon, it was known, was to come in for the bulk of Miss Crawley’s property. These money transactions—these speculations in life and death—these silent battles for reversionary spoil—make brothers very loving towards each other in Vanity Fair. I, for my part, have known a five-pound note to interpose and knock up a half century’s attachment between two brethren; and can’t but admire, as I think what a fine and durable thing Love is among worldly people.

It cannot be supposed that the arrival of such a personage as Rebecca at Queen’s Crawley, and her gradual establishment in the good graces of all people there, could be unremarked by Mrs. Bute Crawley. Mrs. Bute, who knew how many days the sirloin of beef lasted at the Hall; how much linen was got ready at the great wash; how many peaches were on the south wall; how many doses her ladyship took when she was ill—for such points are matters of intense interest to certain persons in the country—Mrs. Bute, I say, could not pass over the Hall governess without making every inquiry respecting her history and character. There was always the best understanding between the servants at the Rectory and the Hall. There was always a good glass of ale in the kitchen of the former place for the Hall people, whose ordinary drink was very small—and, indeed, the Rector’s lady knew exactly how much malt went to every barrel of Hall beer—ties of relationship existed between the Hall and Rectory domestics, as between their masters; and through these channels each family was perfectly well acquainted with the doings of the other. That, by the way, may be set down as a general remark. When you and your brother are friends, his doings are indifferent to you. When you have quarrelled, all his outgoings and incomings you know, as if you were his spy.

Very soon then after her arrival, Rebecca began to take a regular place in Mrs. Crawley's bulletin from the Hall. It was to this effect: "The black porker's killed—weighed x stone—salted the sides—pig's pudding and leg of pork for dinner. Mr. Cramp from Mudbury, over with Sir Pitt about putting John Blackmore in gaol— Mr. Pitt at meeting (with all the names of the people who attended)— my lady as usual—the young ladies with the governess."

Then the report would come—the new governess be a rare manager—Sir Pitt be very sweet on her—Mr. Crawley too—He be reading tracts to her—"What an abandoned wretch!" said little, eager, active, black-faced Mrs. Bute Crawley.

Finally, the reports were that the governess had "come round" everybody, wrote Sir Pitt's letters, did his business, managed his accounts—had the upper hand of the whole house, my lady, Mr. Crawley, the girls and all—at which Mrs. Crawley declared she was an artful hussy, and had some dreadful designs in view. Thus the doings at the Hall were the great food for conversation at the Rectory, and Mrs. Bute's bright eyes spied out everything that took place in the enemy's camp—everything and a great deal besides.

Mrs. Bute Crawley to Miss Pinkerton, The Mall, Chiswick.

Rectory, Queen's Crawley, December—.

My Dear Madam,—Although it is so many years since I profited by your delightful and invaluable instructions, yet I have ever retained the fondest and most reverential regard for Miss Pinkerton, and dear Chiswick. I hope your health is good. The world and the cause of education cannot afford to lose Miss Pinkerton for many many years. When my friend, Lady Fuddleston, mentioned that her dear girls required an instructress (I am too poor to engage a governess for mine, but was I not educated at Chiswick?)—"Who," I exclaimed, "can we consult but the excellent, the incomparable Miss Pinkerton?" In a word, have you, dear madam, any ladies on your list, whose services might be made available to my kind friend and neighbour? I assure you she will take no governess but of your choosing.

My dear husband is pleased to say that he likes everything which comes

from miss Pinkerton's school. How I wish I could present him and my beloved girls to the friend of my youth, and the admired of the great lexicographer of our country! If you ever travel into Hampshire, Mr. Crawley begs me to say, he hopes you will adorn our rural Rectory with your presence. 'Tis the humble but happy home of

Your affectionate Martha Crawley

P.S. Mr. Crawley's brother, the baronet, with whom we are not, alas! upon those terms of UNITY in which it becomes brethren to dwell, has a governess for his little girls, who, I am told, had the good fortune to be educated at Chiswick. I hear various reports of her; and as I have the tenderest interest in my dearest little nieces, whom I wish, in spite of family differences, to see among my own children—and as I long to be attentive to any pupil of yours—do, my dear Miss Pinkerton, tell me the history of this young lady, whom, for your sake, I am most anxious to befriend.—M. C.

Miss Pinkerton to Mrs. Bute Crawley.

Johnson House, Chiswick, Dec. 18—.

Dear Madam,—I have the honour to acknowledge your polite communication, to which I promptly reply. 'Tis most gratifying to one in my most arduous position to find that my maternal cares have elicited a responsive affection; and to recognize in the amiable Mrs. Bute Crawley my excellent pupil of former years, the sprightly and accomplished Miss Martha MacTavish. I am happy to have under my charge now the daughters of many of those who were your contemporaries at my establishment—what pleasure it would give me if your own beloved young ladies had need of my instructive superintendence!

Presenting my respectful compliments to Lady Fuddleston, I have the honour (epistolarily) to introduce to her ladyship my two friends, Miss Tuffin and Miss Hawky.

Either of these young ladies is perfectly QUALIFIED to instruct in Greek, Latin, and the rudiments of Hebrew; in mathematics and history; in Spanish, French, Italian, and geography; in music, vocal and instrumental; in dancing, without the aid of a master; and in the elements

of natural sciences. In the use of the globes both are proficient. In addition to these Miss Tuffin, who is daughter of the late Reverend Thomas Tuffin (Fellow of Corpus College, Cambridge), can instruct in the Syriac language, and the elements of Constitutional law. But as she is only eighteen years of age, and of exceedingly pleasing personal appearance, perhaps this young lady may be objectionable in Sir Huddleston Fuddlestone's family.

Miss Letitia Hawky, on the other hand, is not personally well-favoured. She is twenty-nine; her face is much pitted with the small-pox. She has a halt in her gait, red hair, and a trifling obliquity of vision. Both ladies are endowed with every moral and religious virtue. Their terms, of course, are such as their accomplishments merit. With my most grateful respects to the Reverend Bute Crawley, I have the honour to be,

Dear Madam,

Your most faithful and obedient servant, Barbara Pinkerton.

P.S. The Miss Sharp, whom you mention as governess to Sir Pitt Crawley, Bart., M.P., was a pupil of mine, and I have nothing to say in her disfavour. Though her appearance is disagreeable, we cannot control the operations of nature: and though her parents were disreputable (her father being a painter, several times bankrupt, and her mother, as I have since learned, with horror, a dancer at the Opera); yet her talents are considerable, and I cannot regret that I received her out of charity. My dread is, lest the principles of the mother—who was represented to me as a French Countess, forced to emigrate in the late revolutionary horrors; but who, as I have since found, was a person of the very lowest order and morals—should at any time prove to be hereditary in the unhappy young woman whom I took as an OUTCAST. But her principles have hitherto been correct (I believe), and I am sure nothing will occur to injure them in the elegant and refined circle of the eminent Sir Pitt Crawley.

Miss Rebecca Sharp to Miss Amelia Sedley.

I have not written to my beloved Amelia for these many weeks past, for what news was there to tell of the sayings and doings at Humdrum Hall, as I have christened it; and what do you care whether the turnip crop is

good or bad; whether the fat pig weighed thirteen stone or fourteen; and whether the beasts thrive well upon mangelwurzel? Every day since I last wrote has been like its neighbour. Before breakfast, a walk with Sir Pitt and his spud; after breakfast studies (such as they are) in the schoolroom; after schoolroom, reading and writing about lawyers, leases, coal-mines, canals, with Sir Pitt (whose secretary I am become); after dinner, Mr. Crawley's discourses on the baronet's backgammon; during both of which amusements my lady looks on with equal placidity. She has become rather more interesting by being ailing of late, which has brought a new visitor to the Hall, in the person of a young doctor. Well, my dear, young women need never despair. The young doctor gave a certain friend of yours to understand that, if she chose to be Mrs. Glauber, she was welcome to ornament the surgery! I told his impudence that the gilt pestle and mortar was quite ornament enough; as if I was born, indeed, to be a country surgeon's wife! Mr. Glauber went home seriously indisposed at his rebuff, took a cooling draught, and is now quite cured. Sir Pitt applauded my resolution highly; he would be sorry to lose his little secretary, I think; and I believe the old wretch likes me as much as it is in his nature to like any one. Marry, indeed! and with a country apothecary, after— No, no, one cannot so soon forget old associations, about which I will talk no more. Let us return to Humdrum Hall.

For some time past it is Humdrum Hall no longer. My dear, Miss Crawley has arrived with her fat horses, fat servants, fat spaniel— the great rich Miss Crawley, with seventy thousand pounds in the five per cents., whom, or I had better say which, her two brothers adore. She looks very apoplectic, the dear soul; no wonder her brothers are anxious about her. You should see them struggling to settle her cushions, or to hand her coffee! “When I come into the country,” she says (for she has a great deal of humour), “I leave my toady, Miss Briggs, at home. My brothers are my toadies here, my dear, and a pretty pair they are!”

When she comes into the country our hall is thrown open, and for a month, at least, you would fancy old Sir Walpole was come to life again. We have dinner-parties, and drive out in the coach-and-four the footmen put on their newest canary-coloured liveries; we drink claret and champagne as if we were accustomed to it every day. We have wax candles in the schoolroom, and fires to warm ourselves with. Lady Crawley is made to put on the brightest pea-green in her wardrobe, and

my pupils leave off their thick shoes and tight old tartan pelisses, and wear silk stockings and muslin frocks, as fashionable baronets' daughters should. Rose came in yesterday in a sad plight—the Wiltshire sow (an enormous pet of hers) ran her down, and destroyed a most lovely flowered lilac silk dress by dancing over it—had this happened a week ago, Sir Pitt would have sworn frightfully, have boxed the poor wretch's ears, and put her upon bread and water for a month. All he said was, "I'll serve you out, Miss, when your aunt's gone," and laughed off the accident as quite trivial. Let us hope his wrath will have passed away before Miss Crawley's departure. I hope so, for Miss Rose's sake, I am sure. What a charming reconciler and peacemaker money is!

Another admirable effect of Miss Crawley and her seventy thousand pounds is to be seen in the conduct of the two brothers Crawley. I mean the baronet and the rector, not our brothers—but the former, who hate each other all the year round, become quite loving at Christmas. I wrote to you last year how the abominable horse-racing rector was in the habit of preaching clumsy sermons at us at church, and how Sir Pitt snored in answer. When Miss Crawley arrives there is no such thing as quarrelling heard of—the Hall visits the Rectory, and vice versa—the parson and the Baronet talk about the pigs and the poachers, and the county business, in the most affable manner, and without quarrelling in their cups, I believe—indeed Miss Crawley won't hear of their quarrelling, and vows that she will leave her money to the Shropshire Crawleys if they offend her. If they were clever people, those Shropshire Crawleys, they might have it all, I think; but the Shropshire Crawley is a clergyman like his Hampshire cousin, and mortally offended Miss Crawley (who had fled thither in a fit of rage against her impracticable brethren) by some strait-laced notions of morality. He would have prayers in the house, I believe.

Our sermon books are shut up when Miss Crawley arrives, and Mr. Pitt, whom she abominates, finds it convenient to go to town. On the other hand, the young dandy—"blood," I believe, is the term— Captain Crawley makes his appearance, and I suppose you will like to know what sort of a person he is.

Well, he is a very large young dandy. He is six feet high, and speaks with a great voice; and swears a great deal; and orders about the servants, who all adore him nevertheless; for he is very generous of his money, and the domestics will do anything for him. Last week the

keepers almost killed a bailiff and his man who came down from London to arrest the Captain, and who were found lurking about the Park wall—they beat them, ducked them, and were going to shoot them for poachers, but the baronet interfered.

The Captain has a hearty contempt for his father, I can see, and calls him an old put, an old Snob, an old CHAW-BACON, and numberless other pretty names. He has a dreadful reputation among the ladies. He brings his hunters home with him, lives with the Squires of the county, asks whom he pleases to dinner, and Sir Pitt dares not say no, for fear of offending Miss Crawley, and missing his legacy when she dies of her apoplexy. Shall I tell you a compliment the Captain paid me? I must, it is so pretty. One evening we actually had a dance; there was Sir Huddleston Fuddleston and his family, Sir Giles Wapshot and his young ladies, and I don't know how many more. Well, I heard him say—"By Jove, she's a neat little filly!" meaning your humble servant; and he did me the honour to dance two country-dances with me. He gets on pretty gaily with the young Squires, with whom he drinks, bets, rides, and talks about hunting and shooting; but he says the country girls are BORES; indeed, I don't think he is far wrong. You should see the contempt with which they look down on poor me! When they dance I sit and play the piano very demurely; but the other night, coming in rather flushed from the dining-room, and seeing me employed in this way, he swore out loud that I was the best dancer in the room, and took a great oath that he would have the fiddlers from Mudbury.

"I'll go and play a country-dance," said Mrs. Bute Crawley, very readily (she is a little, black-faced old woman in a turban, rather crooked, and with very twinkling eyes); and after the Captain and your poor little Rebecca had performed a dance together, do you know she actually did me the honour to compliment me upon my steps! Such a thing was never heard of before; the proud Mrs. Bute Crawley, first cousin to the Earl of Tiptoff, who won't condescend to visit Lady Crawley, except when her sister is in the country. Poor Lady Crawley! during most part of these gaieties, she is upstairs taking pills.

Mrs. Bute has all of a sudden taken a great fancy to me. "My dear Miss Sharp," she says, "why not bring over your girls to the Rectory?—their cousins will be so happy to see them." I know what she means. Signor Clementi did not teach us the piano for nothing; at which price Mrs.

Bute hopes to get a professor for her children. I can see through her schemes, as though she told them to me; but I shall go, as I am determined to make myself agreeable—is it not a poor governess’s duty, who has not a friend or protector in the world? The Rector’s wife paid me a score of compliments about the progress my pupils made, and thought, no doubt, to touch my heart— poor, simple, country soul!—as if I cared a fig about my pupils!

Your India muslin and your pink silk, dearest Amelia, are said to become me very well. They are a good deal worn now; but, you know, we poor girls can’t afford des fraiches toilettes. Happy, happy you! who have but to drive to St. James’s Street, and a dear mother who will give you any thing you ask. Farewell, dearest girl,

Your affectionate Rebecca.

P.S.—I wish you could have seen the faces of the Miss Blackbrooks (Admiral Blackbrook’s daughters, my dear), fine young ladies, with dresses from London, when Captain Rawdon selected poor me for a partner!

When Mrs. Bute Crawley (whose artifices our ingenious Rebecca had so soon discovered) had procured from Miss Sharp the promise of a visit, she induced the all-powerful Miss Crawley to make the necessary application to Sir Pitt, and the good-natured old lady, who loved to be gay herself, and to see every one gay and happy round about her, was quite charmed, and ready to establish a reconciliation and intimacy between her two brothers. It was therefore agreed that the young people of both families should visit each other frequently for the future, and the friendship of course lasted as long as the jovial old mediatrix was there to keep the peace.

“Why did you ask that scoundrel, Rawdon Crawley, to dine?” said the Rector to his lady, as they were walking home through the park. “I don’t want the fellow. He looks down upon us country people as so many blackamoors. He’s never content unless he gets my yellow-sealed wine, which costs me ten shillings a bottle, hang him! Besides, he’s such an infernal character—he’s a gambler—he’s a drunkard—he’s a profligate in every way. He shot a man in a duel—he’s over head and ears in debt, and he’s robbed me and mine of the best part of Miss Crawley’s fortune.

Waxy says she has him”—here the Rector shook his fist at the moon, with something very like an oath, and added, in a melancholious tone, “—, down in her will for fifty thousand; and there won’t be above thirty to divide.”

“I think she’s going,” said the Rector’s wife. “She was very red in the face when we left dinner. I was obliged to unlace her.”

“She drank seven glasses of champagne,” said the reverend gentleman, in a low voice; “and filthy champagne it is, too, that my brother poisons us with—but you women never know what’s what.”

“We know nothing,” said Mrs. Bute Crawley.

“She drank cherry-brandy after dinner,” continued his Reverence, “and took curacao with her coffee. I wouldn’t take a glass for a five-pound note: it kills me with heartburn. She can’t stand it, Mrs. Crawley—she must go—flesh and blood won’t bear it! and I lay five to two, Matilda drops in a year.”

Indulging in these solemn speculations, and thinking about his debts, and his son Jim at College, and Frank at Woolwich, and the four girls, who were no beauties, poor things, and would not have a penny but what they got from the aunt’s expected legacy, the Rector and his lady walked on for a while.

“Pitt can’t be such an infernal villain as to sell the reversion of the living. And that Methodist milksop of an eldest son looks to Parliament,” continued Mr. Crawley, after a pause.

“Sir Pitt Crawley will do anything,” said the Rector’s wife. “We must get Miss Crawley to make him promise it to James.”

“Pitt will promise anything,” replied the brother. “He promised he’d pay my college bills, when my father died; he promised he’d build the new wing to the Rectory; he promised he’d let me have Jibb’s field and the Six-acre Meadow—and much he executed his promises! And it’s to this man’s son—this scoundrel, gambler, swindler, murderer of a Rawdon Crawley, that Matilda leaves the bulk of her money. I say it’s un-Christian. By Jove, it is. The infamous dog has got every vice except

hypocrisy, and that belongs to his brother.”

“Hush, my dearest love! we’re in Sir Pitt’s grounds,” interposed his wife.

“I say he has got every vice, Mrs. Crawley. Don’t Ma’am, bully me. Didn’t he shoot Captain Marker? Didn’t he rob young Lord Dovedale at the Cocoa-Tree? Didn’t he cross the fight between Bill Soames and the Cheshire Trump, by which I lost forty pound? You know he did; and as for the women, why, you heard that before me, in my own magistrate’s room.”

“For heaven’s sake, Mr. Crawley,” said the lady, “spare me the details.”

“And you ask this villain into your house!” continued the exasperated Rector. “You, the mother of a young family—the wife of a clergyman of the Church of England. By Jove!”

“Bute Crawley, you are a fool,” said the Rector’s wife scornfully.

“Well, Ma’am, fool or not—and I don’t say, Martha, I’m so clever as you are, I never did. But I won’t meet Rawdon Crawley, that’s flat. I’ll go over to Huddleston, that I will, and see his black greyhound, Mrs. Crawley; and I’ll run Lancelot against him for fifty. By Jove, I will; or against any dog in England. But I won’t meet that beast Rawdon Crawley.”

“Mr. Crawley, you are intoxicated, as usual,” replied his wife. And the next morning, when the Rector woke, and called for small beer, she put him in mind of his promise to visit Sir Huddleston Fuddleston on Saturday, and as he knew he should have a wet night, it was agreed that he might gallop back again in time for church on Sunday morning. Thus it will be seen that the parishioners of Crawley were equally happy in their Squire and in their Rector.

Miss Crawley had not long been established at the Hall before Rebecca’s fascinations had won the heart of that good-natured London rake, as they had of the country innocents whom we have been describing. Taking her accustomed drive, one day, she thought fit to order that “that little governess” should accompany her to Mudbury. Before they had returned

Rebecca had made a conquest of her; having made her laugh four times, and amused her during the whole of the little journey.

“Not let Miss Sharp dine at table!” said she to Sir Pitt, who had arranged a dinner of ceremony, and asked all the neighbouring baronets. “My dear creature, do you suppose I can talk about the nursery with Lady Fuddlestone, or discuss justices’ business with that goose, old Sir Giles Wapshot? I insist upon Miss Sharp appearing. Let Lady Crawley remain upstairs, if there is no room. But little Miss Sharp! Why, she’s the only person fit to talk to in the county!”

Of course, after such a peremptory order as this, Miss Sharp, the governess, received commands to dine with the illustrious company below stairs. And when Sir Huddleston had, with great pomp and ceremony, handed Miss Crawley in to dinner, and was preparing to take his place by her side, the old lady cried out, in a shrill voice, “Becky Sharp! Miss Sharp! Come you and sit by me and amuse me; and let Sir Huddleston sit by Lady Wapshot.”

When the parties were over, and the carriages had rolled away, the insatiable Miss Crawley would say, “Come to my dressing room, Becky, and let us abuse the company”—which, between them, this pair of friends did perfectly. Old Sir Huddleston wheezed a great deal at dinner; Sir Giles Wapshot had a particularly noisy manner of imbibing his soup, and her ladyship a wink of the left eye; all of which Becky caricatured to admiration; as well as the particulars of the night’s conversation; the politics; the war; the quarter-sessions; the famous run with the H.H., and those heavy and dreary themes, about which country gentlemen converse. As for the Misses Wapshot’s toilettes and Lady Fuddlestone’s famous yellow hat, Miss Sharp tore them to tatters, to the infinite amusement of her audience.

“My dear, you are a perfect trouvaille,” Miss Crawley would say. “I wish you could come to me in London, but I couldn’t make a butt of you as I do of poor Briggs no, no, you little sly creature; you are too clever—Isn’t she, Firkin?”

Mrs. Firkin (who was dressing the very small remnant of hair which remained on Miss Crawley’s pate), flung up her head and said, “I think Miss is very clever,” with the most killing sarcastic air. In fact, Mrs.

Firkin had that natural jealousy which is one of the main principles of every honest woman.

After rebuffing Sir Huddleston Fuddlestone, Miss Crawley ordered that Rawdon Crawley should lead her in to dinner every day, and that Becky should follow with her cushion—or else she would have Becky’s arm and Rawdon with the pillow. “We must sit together,” she said. “We’re the only three Christians in the county, my love”—in which case, it must be confessed, that religion was at a very low ebb in the county of Hants.

Besides being such a fine religionist, Miss Crawley was, as we have said, an Ultra-liberal in opinions, and always took occasion to express these in the most candid manner.

“What is birth, my dear!” she would say to Rebecca—“Look at my brother Pitt; look at the Huddlestons, who have been here since Henry II; look at poor Bute at the parsonage—is any one of them equal to you in intelligence or breeding? Equal to you—they are not even equal to poor dear Briggs, my companion, or Bowls, my butler. You, my love, are a little paragon—positively a little jewel—You have more brains than half the shire—if merit had its reward you ought to be a Duchess—no, there ought to be no duchesses at all— but you ought to have no superior, and I consider you, my love, as my equal in every respect; and—will you put some coals on the fire, my dear; and will you pick this dress of mine, and alter it, you who can do it so well?” So this old philanthropist used to make her equal run of her errands, execute her millinery, and read her to sleep with French novels, every night.

At this time, as some old readers may recollect, the genteel world had been thrown into a considerable state of excitement by two events, which, as the papers say, might give employment to the gentlemen of the long robe. Ensign Shafton had run away with Lady Barbara Fitzurse, the Earl of Bruin’s daughter and heiress; and poor Vere Vane, a gentleman who, up to forty, had maintained a most respectable character and reared a numerous family, suddenly and outrageously left his home, for the sake of Mrs. Rougemont, the actress, who was sixty-five years of age.

“That was the most beautiful part of dear Lord Nelson’s character,” Miss Crawley said. “He went to the deuce for a woman. There must be good in a man who will do that. I adore all impudent matches.— What I like

best, is for a nobleman to marry a miller's daughter, as Lord Flowerdale did—it makes all the women so angry—I wish some great man would run away with you, my dear; I'm sure you're pretty enough.”

“Two post-boys!—Oh, it would be delightful!” Rebecca owned.

“And what I like next best, is for a poor fellow to run away with a rich girl. I have set my heart on Rawdon running away with some one.”

“A rich some one, or a poor some one?”

“Why, you goose! Rawdon has not a shilling but what I give him. He is *crible de dettes*—he must repair his fortunes, and succeed in the world.”

“Is he very clever?” Rebecca asked.

“Clever, my love?—not an idea in the world beyond his horses, and his regiment, and his hunting, and his play; but he must succeed— he's so delightfully wicked. Don't you know he has hit a man, and shot an injured father through the hat only? He's adored in his regiment; and all the young men at Wattier's and the Cocoa-Tree swear by him.”

When Miss Rebecca Sharp wrote to her beloved friend the account of the little ball at Queen's Crawley, and the manner in which, for the first time, Captain Crawley had distinguished her, she did not, strange to relate, give an altogether accurate account of the transaction. The Captain had distinguished her a great number of times before. The Captain had met her in a half-score of walks. The Captain had lighted upon her in a half-hundred of corridors and passages. The Captain had hung over her piano twenty times of an evening (my Lady was now upstairs, being ill, and nobody heeded her) as Miss Sharp sang. The Captain had written her notes (the best that the great blundering dragoon could devise and spell; but dulness gets on as well as any other quality with women). But when he put the first of the notes into the leaves of the song she was singing, the little governess, rising and looking him steadily in the face, took up the triangular missive daintily, and waved it about as if it were a cocked hat, and she, advancing to the enemy, popped the note into the fire, and made him a very low curtsy, and went back to her place, and began to sing away again more merrily than ever.

“What’s that?” said Miss Crawley, interrupted in her after-dinner doze by the stoppage of the music.

“It’s a false note,” Miss Sharp said with a laugh; and Rawdon Crawley fumed with rage and mortification.

Seeing the evident partiality of Miss Crawley for the new governess, how good it was of Mrs. Bute Crawley not to be jealous, and to welcome the young lady to the Rectory, and not only her, but Rawdon Crawley, her husband’s rival in the Old Maid’s five per cents! They became very fond of each other’s society, Mrs. Crawley and her nephew. He gave up hunting; he declined entertainments at Fuddleston: he would not dine with the mess of the depot at Mudbury: his great pleasure was to stroll over to Crawley parsonage—whither Miss Crawley came too; and as their mamma was ill, why not the children with Miss Sharp? So the children (little dears!) came with Miss Sharp; and of an evening some of the party would walk back together. Not Miss Crawley—she preferred her carriage—but the walk over the Rectory fields, and in at the little park wicket, and through the dark plantation, and up the checkered avenue to Queen’s Crawley, was charming in the moonlight to two such lovers of the picturesque as the Captain and Miss Rebecca.

“O those stars, those stars!” Miss Rebecca would say, turning her twinkling green eyes up towards them. “I feel myself almost a spirit when I gaze upon them.”

“O—ah—Gad—yes, so do I exactly, Miss Sharp,” the other enthusiast replied. “You don’t mind my cigar, do you, Miss Sharp?” Miss Sharp loved the smell of a cigar out of doors beyond everything in the world—and she just tasted one too, in the prettiest way possible, and gave a little puff, and a little scream, and a little giggle, and restored the delicacy to the Captain, who twirled his moustache, and straightway puffed it into a blaze that glowed quite red in the dark plantation, and swore—“Jove—aw—Gad—aw—it’s the finest segaw I ever smoked in the world aw,” for his intellect and conversation were alike brilliant and becoming to a heavy young dragoon.

Old Sir Pitt, who was taking his pipe and beer, and talking to John Horrocks about a “ship” that was to be killed, espied the pair so occupied from his study-window, and with dreadful oaths swore that if it

wasn't for Miss Crawley, he'd take Rawdon and bundle un out of doors, like a rogue as he was.

“He be a bad'n, sure enough,” Mr. Horrocks remarked; “and his man Flethers is wuss, and have made such a row in the housekeeper's room about the dinners and hale, as no lord would make—but I think Miss Sharp's a match for'n, Sir Pitt,” he added, after a pause.

And so, in truth, she was—for father and son too.