

# *Vanity Fair* by William Makepeace Thackeray

## Chapter 67

"Which Contains Births, Marriages, and Deaths"

Whatever Becky's private plan might be by which Dobbin's true love was to be crowned with success, the little woman thought that the secret might keep, and indeed, being by no means so much interested about anybody's welfare as about her own, she had a great number of things pertaining to herself to consider, and which concerned her a great deal more than Major Dobbin's happiness in this life.

She found herself suddenly and unexpectedly in snug comfortable quarters, surrounded by friends, kindness, and good-natured simple people such as she had not met with for many a long day; and, wanderer as she was by force and inclination, there were moments when rest was pleasant to her. As the most hardened Arab that ever careered across the desert over the hump of a dromedary likes to repose sometimes under the date-trees by the water, or to come into the cities, walk into the bazaars, refresh himself in the baths, and say his prayers in the mosques, before he goes out again marauding, so Jos's tents and pilau were pleasant to this little Ishmaelite. She picketed her steed, hung up her weapons, and warmed herself comfortably by his fire. The halt in that roving, restless life was inexpressibly soothing and pleasant to her.

So, pleased herself, she tried with all her might to please everybody; and we know that she was eminent and successful as a practitioner in the art of giving pleasure. As for Jos, even in that little interview in the garret at the Elephant Inn, she had found means to win back a great deal of his good-will. In the course of a week, the civilian was her sworn slave and frantic admirer. He didn't go to sleep after dinner, as his custom was in the much less lively society of Amelia. He drove out with Becky in his open carriage. He asked little parties and invented festivities to do her honour.

Tapeworm, the Charge d'Affaires, who had abused her so cruelly, came to dine with Jos, and then came every day to pay his respects to Becky. Poor Emmy, who was never very talkative, and more glum and silent than ever after Dobbin's departure, was quite forgotten when this

superior genius made her appearance. The French Minister was as much charmed with her as his English rival. The German ladies, never particularly squeamish as regards morals, especially in English people, were delighted with the cleverness and wit of Mrs. Osborne's charming friend, and though she did not ask to go to Court, yet the most august and Transparent Personages there heard of her fascinations and were quite curious to know her. When it became known that she was noble, of an ancient English family, that her husband was a Colonel of the Guard, Excellenz and Governor of an island, only separated from his lady by one of those trifling differences which are of little account in a country where Werther is still read and the *Wahlverwandtschaften* of Goethe is considered an edifying moral book, nobody thought of refusing to receive her in the very highest society of the little Duchy; and the ladies were even more ready to call her *du* and to swear eternal friendship for her than they had been to bestow the same inestimable benefits upon Amelia. Love and Liberty are interpreted by those simple Germans in a way which honest folks in Yorkshire and Somersetshire little understand, and a lady might, in some philosophic and civilized towns, be divorced ever so many times from her respective husbands and keep her character in society. Jos's house never was so pleasant since he had a house of his own as Rebecca caused it to be. She sang, she played, she laughed, she talked in two or three languages, she brought everybody to the house, and she made Jos believe that it was his own great social talents and wit which gathered the society of the place round about him.

As for Emmy, who found herself not in the least mistress of her own house, except when the bills were to be paid, Becky soon discovered the way to soothe and please her. She talked to her perpetually about Major Dobbin sent about his business, and made no scruple of declaring her admiration for that excellent, high-minded gentleman, and of telling Emmy that she had behaved most cruelly regarding him. Emmy defended her conduct and showed that it was dictated only by the purest religious principles; that a woman once, &c., and to such an angel as him whom she had had the good fortune to marry, was married forever; but she had no objection to hear the Major praised as much as ever Becky chose to praise him, and indeed, brought the conversation round to the Dobbin subject a score of times every day.

Means were easily found to win the favour of Georgy and the servants. Amelia's maid, it has been said, was heart and soul in favour of the

generous Major. Having at first disliked Becky for being the means of dismissing him from the presence of her mistress, she was reconciled to Mrs. Crawley subsequently, because the latter became William's most ardent admirer and champion. And in those nightly conclaves in which the two ladies indulged after their parties, and while Miss Payne was "brushing their 'airs," as she called the yellow locks of the one and the soft brown tresses of the other, this girl always put in her word for that dear good gentleman Major Dobbin. Her advocacy did not make Amelia angry any more than Rebecca's admiration of him. She made George write to him constantly and persisted in sending Mamma's kind love in a postscript. And as she looked at her husband's portrait of nights, it no longer reproached her—perhaps she reproached it, now William was gone.

Emmy was not very happy after her heroic sacrifice. She was very distraite, nervous, silent, and ill to please. The family had never known her so peevish. She grew pale and ill. She used to try to sing certain songs ("Einsam bin ich nicht alleine," was one of them, that tender love-song of Weber's which in old-fashioned days, young ladies, and when you were scarcely born, showed that those who lived before you knew too how to love and to sing) certain songs, I say, to which the Major was partial; and as she warbled them in the twilight in the drawing-room, she would break off in the midst of the song, and walk into her neighbouring apartment, and there, no doubt, take refuge in the miniature of her husband.

Some books still subsisted, after Dobbin's departure, with his name written in them; a German dictionary, for instance, with "William Dobbin,—th Reg.," in the fly-leaf; a guide-book with his initials; and one or two other volumes which belonged to the Major. Emmy cleared these away and put them on the drawers, where she placed her work-box, her desk, her Bible, and prayer-book, under the pictures of the two Georges. And the Major, on going away, having left his gloves behind him, it is a fact that Georgy, rummaging his mother's desk some time afterwards, found the gloves neatly folded up and put away in what they call the secret-drawers of the desk.

Not caring for society, and moping there a great deal, Emmy's chief pleasure in the summer evenings was to take long walks with Georgy (during which Rebecca was left to the society of Mr. Joseph), and then

the mother and son used to talk about the Major in a way which even made the boy smile. She told him that she thought Major William was the best man in all the world—the gentlest and the kindest, the bravest and the humblest. Over and over again she told him how they owed everything which they possessed in the world to that kind friend's benevolent care of them; how he had befriended them all through their poverty and misfortunes; watched over them when nobody cared for them; how all his comrades admired him though he never spoke of his own gallant actions; how Georgy's father trusted him beyond all other men, and had been constantly befriended by the good William. "Why, when your papa was a little boy," she said, "he often told me that it was William who defended him against a tyrant at the school where they were; and their friendship never ceased from that day until the last, when your dear father fell."

"Did Dobbin kill the man who killed Papa?" Georgy said. "I'm sure he did, or he would if he could have caught him, wouldn't he, Mother? When I'm in the Army, won't I hate the French?—that's all."

In such colloquies the mother and the child passed a great deal of their time together. The artless woman had made a confidant of the boy. He was as much William's friend as everybody else who knew him well.

By the way, Mrs. Becky, not to be behind hand in sentiment, had got a miniature too hanging up in her room, to the surprise and amusement of most people, and the delight of the original, who was no other than our friend Jos. On her first coming to favour the Sedleys with a visit, the little woman, who had arrived with a remarkably small shabby kit, was perhaps ashamed of the meanness of her trunks and bandboxes, and often spoke with great respect about her baggage left behind at Leipzig, which she must have from that city. When a traveller talks to you perpetually about the splendour of his luggage, which he does not happen to have with him, my son, beware of that traveller! He is, ten to one, an impostor.

Neither Jos nor Emmy knew this important maxim. It seemed to them of no consequence whether Becky had a quantity of very fine clothes in invisible trunks; but as her present supply was exceedingly shabby, Emmy supplied her out of her own stores, or took her to the best milliner in the town and there fitted her out. It was no more torn collars now, I

promise you, and faded silks trailing off at the shoulder. Becky changed her habits with her situation in life—the rouge-pot was suspended—another excitement to which she had accustomed herself was also put aside, or at least only indulged in in privacy, as when she was prevailed on by Jos of a summer evening, Emmy and the boy being absent on their walks, to take a little spirit-and-water. But if she did not indulge—the courier did: that rascal Kirsch could not be kept from the bottle, nor could he tell how much he took when he applied to it. He was sometimes surprised himself at the way in which Mr. Sedley’s Cognac diminished. Well, well, this is a painful subject. Becky did not very likely indulge so much as she used before she entered a decorous family.

At last the much-bragged-about boxes arrived from Leipzig; three of them not by any means large or splendid; nor did Becky appear to take out any sort of dresses or ornaments from the boxes when they did arrive. But out of one, which contained a mass of her papers (it was that very box which Rawdon Crawley had ransacked in his furious hunt for Becky’s concealed money), she took a picture with great glee, which she pinned up in her room, and to which she introduced Jos. It was the portrait of a gentleman in pencil, his face having the advantage of being painted up in pink. He was riding on an elephant away from some cocoa-nut trees and a pagoda: it was an Eastern scene.

“God bless my soul, it is my portrait,” Jos cried out. It was he indeed, blooming in youth and beauty, in a nankeen jacket of the cut of 1804. It was the old picture that used to hang up in Russell Square.

“I bought it,” said Becky in a voice trembling with emotion; “I went to see if I could be of any use to my kind friends. I have never parted with that picture—I never will.”

“Won’t you?” Jos cried with a look of unutterable rapture and satisfaction. “Did you really now value it for my sake?”

“You know I did, well enough,” said Becky; “but why speak—why think—why look back! It is too late now!”

That evening’s conversation was delicious for Jos. Emmy only came in to go to bed very tired and unwell. Jos and his fair guest had a charming tete-a-tete, and his sister could hear, as she lay awake in her adjoining

chamber, Rebecca singing over to Jos the old songs of 1815. He did not sleep, for a wonder, that night, any more than Amelia.

It was June, and, by consequence, high season in London; Jos, who read the incomparable Galignani (the exile's best friend) through every day, used to favour the ladies with extracts from his paper during their breakfast. Every week in this paper there is a full account of military movements, in which Jos, as a man who had seen service, was especially interested. On one occasion he read out—“Arrival of the —th regiment. Gravesend, June 20.—The Ramchunder, East Indiaman, came into the river this morning, having on board 14 officers, and 132 rank and file of this gallant corps. They have been absent from England fourteen years, having been embarked the year after Waterloo, in which glorious conflict they took an active part, and having subsequently distinguished themselves in the Burmese war. The veteran colonel, Sir Michael O'Dowd, K.C.B., with his lady and sister, landed here yesterday, with Captains Posky, Stubble, Macraw, Malony; Lieutenants Smith, Jones, Thompson, F. Thomson; Ensigns Hicks and Grady; the band on the pier playing the national anthem, and the crowd loudly cheering the gallant veterans as they went into Wayte's hotel, where a sumptuous banquet was provided for the defenders of Old England. During the repast, which we need not say was served up in Wayte's best style, the cheering continued so enthusiastically that Lady O'Dowd and the Colonel came forward to the balcony and drank the healths of their fellow-countrymen in a bumper of Wayte's best claret.”

On a second occasion Jos read a brief announcement—Major Dobbin had joined the —th regiment at Chatham; and subsequently he promulgated accounts of the presentations at the Drawing-room of Colonel Sir Michael O'Dowd, K.C.B., Lady O'Dowd (by Mrs. Malloy Malony of Ballymalony), and Miss Glorvina O'Dowd (by Lady O'Dowd). Almost directly after this, Dobbin's name appeared among the Lieutenant-Colonels: for old Marshal Tiptoff had died during the passage of the —th from Madras, and the Sovereign was pleased to advance Colonel Sir Michael O'Dowd to the rank of Major-General on his return to England, with an intimation that he should be Colonel of the distinguished regiment which he had so long commanded.

Amelia had been made aware of some of these movements. The correspondence between George and his guardian had not ceased by any

means: William had even written once or twice to her since his departure, but in a manner so unconstrainedly cold that the poor woman felt now in her turn that she had lost her power over him and that, as he had said, he was free. He had left her, and she was wretched. The memory of his almost countless services, and lofty and affectionate regard, now presented itself to her and rebuked her day and night. She brooded over those recollections according to her wont, saw the purity and beauty of the affection with which she had trifled, and reproached herself for having flung away such a treasure.

It was gone indeed. William had spent it all out. He loved her no more, he thought, as he had loved her. He never could again. That sort of regard, which he had proffered to her for so many faithful years, can't be flung down and shattered and mended so as to show no scars. The little heedless tyrant had so destroyed it. No, William thought again and again, "It was myself I deluded and persisted in cajoling; had she been worthy of the love I gave her, she would have returned it long ago. It was a fond mistake. Isn't the whole course of life made up of such? And suppose I had won her, should I not have been disenchanted the day after my victory? Why pine, or be ashamed of my defeat?" The more he thought of this long passage of his life, the more clearly he saw his deception. "I'll go into harness again," he said, "and do my duty in that state of life in which it has pleased Heaven to place me. I will see that the buttons of the recruits are properly bright and that the sergeants make no mistakes in their accounts. I will dine at mess and listen to the Scotch surgeon telling his stories. When I am old and broken, I will go on half-pay, and my old sisters shall scold me. I have geliebt und gelebet, as the girl in *Wallenstein*' says. I am done. Pay the bills and get me a cigar: find out what there is at the play to-night, Francis; to-morrow we cross by the *Batavier*." He made the above speech, whereof Francis only heard the last two lines, pacing up and down the *Boompjes* at Rotterdam. The *Batavier* was lying in the basin. He could see the place on the quarter-deck where he and Emmy had sat on the happy voyage out. What had that little Mrs. Crawley to say to him? Psha; to-morrow we will put to sea, and return to England, home, and duty!

After June all the little Court Society of Pumpnickel used to separate, according to the German plan, and make for a hundred watering-places, where they drank at the wells, rode upon donkeys, gambled at the redoutes if they had money and a mind, rushed with hundreds of their

kind to gourmandise at the tables d'hote, and idled away the summer. The English diplomatists went off to Teopltitz and Kissingen, their French rivals shut up their chancellerie and whisked away to their darling Boulevard de Gand. The Transparent reigning family took too to the waters, or retired to their hunting lodges. Everybody went away having any pretensions to politeness, and of course, with them, Doctor von Glauber, the Court Doctor, and his Baroness. The seasons for the baths were the most productive periods of the Doctor's practice—he united business with pleasure, and his chief place of resort was Ostend, which is much frequented by Germans, and where the Doctor treated himself and his spouse to what he called a “dib” in the sea.

His interesting patient, Jos, was a regular milch-cow to the Doctor, and he easily persuaded the civilian, both for his own health's sake and that of his charming sister, which was really very much shattered, to pass the summer at that hideous seaport town. Emmy did not care where she went much. Georgy jumped at the idea of a move. As for Becky, she came as a matter of course in the fourth place inside of the fine barouche Mr. Jos had bought, the two domestics being on the box in front. She might have some misgivings about the friends whom she should meet at Ostend, and who might be likely to tell ugly stories—but bah! she was strong enough to hold her own. She had cast such an anchor in Jos now as would require a strong storm to shake. That incident of the picture had finished him. Becky took down her elephant and put it into the little box which she had had from Amelia ever so many years ago. Emmy also came off with her Lares—her two pictures—and the party, finally, were, lodged in an exceedingly dear and uncomfortable house at Ostend.

There Amelia began to take baths and get what good she could from them, and though scores of people of Becky's acquaintance passed her and cut her, yet Mrs. Osborne, who walked about with her, and who knew nobody, was not aware of the treatment experienced by the friend whom she had chosen so judiciously as a companion; indeed, Becky never thought fit to tell her what was passing under her innocent eyes.

Some of Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's acquaintances, however, acknowledged her readily enough,—perhaps more readily than she would have desired. Among those were Major Loder (unattached), and Captain Rook (late of the Rifles), who might be seen any day on the Dike, smoking and staring at the women, and who speedily got an introduction



to the hospitable board and select circle of Mr. Joseph Sedley. In fact they would take no denial; they burst into the house whether Becky was at home or not, walked into Mrs. Osborne's drawing-room, which they perfumed with their coats and mustachios, called Jos "Old buck," and invaded his dinner-table, and laughed and drank for long hours there.

"What can they mean?" asked Georgy, who did not like these gentlemen. "I heard the Major say to Mrs. Crawley yesterday, 'No, no, Becky, you shan't keep the old buck to yourself. We must have the bones in, or, dammy, I'll split.' What could the Major mean, Mamma?"

"Major! don't call him Major!" Emmy said. "I'm sure I can't tell what he meant." His presence and that of his friend inspired the little lady with intolerable terror and aversion. They paid her tipsy compliments; they leered at her over the dinner-table. And the Captain made her advances that filled her with sickening dismay, nor would she ever see him unless she had George by her side.

Rebecca, to do her justice, never would let either of these men remain alone with Amelia; the Major was disengaged too, and swore he would be the winner of her. A couple of ruffians were fighting for this innocent creature, gambling for her at her own table, and though she was not aware of the rascals' designs upon her, yet she felt a horror and uneasiness in their presence and longed to fly.

She besought, she entreated Jos to go. Not he. He was slow of movement, tied to his Doctor, and perhaps to some other leading-strings. At least Becky was not anxious to go to England.

At last she took a great resolution—made the great plunge. She wrote off a letter to a friend whom she had on the other side of the water, a letter about which she did not speak a word to anybody, which she carried herself to the post under her shawl; nor was any remark made about it, only that she looked very much flushed and agitated when Georgy met her, and she kissed him, and hung over him a great deal that night. She did not come out of her room after her return from her walk. Becky thought it was Major Loder and the Captain who frightened her.

"She mustn't stop here," Becky reasoned with herself. "She must go away, the silly little fool. She is still whimpering after that gaby of a

husband—dead (and served right!) these fifteen years. She shan't marry either of these men. It's too bad of Loder. No; she shall marry the bamboo cane, I'll settle it this very night."

So Becky took a cup of tea to Amelia in her private apartment and found that lady in the company of her miniatures, and in a most melancholy and nervous condition. She laid down the cup of tea.

"Thank you," said Amelia.

"Listen to me, Amelia," said Becky, marching up and down the room before the other and surveying her with a sort of contemptuous kindness. "I want to talk to you. You must go away from here and from the impertinences of these men. I won't have you harassed by them: and they will insult you if you stay. I tell you they are rascals: men fit to send to the hulks. Never mind how I know them. I know everybody. Jos can't protect you; he is too weak and wants a protector himself. You are no more fit to live in the world than a baby in arms. You must marry, or you and your precious boy will go to ruin. You must have a husband, you fool; and one of the best gentlemen I ever saw has offered you a hundred times, and you have rejected him, you silly, heartless, ungrateful little creature!"

"I tried—I tried my best, indeed I did, Rebecca," said Amelia deprecatingly, "but I couldn't forget—"; and she finished the sentence by looking up at the portrait.

"Couldn't forget him!" cried out Becky, "that selfish humbug, that low-bred cockney dandy, that padded booby, who had neither wit, nor manners, nor heart, and was no more to be compared to your friend with the bamboo cane than you are to Queen Elizabeth. Why, the man was weary of you, and would have jilted you, but that Dobbin forced him to keep his word. He owned it to me. He never cared for you. He used to sneer about you to me, time after time, and made love to me the week after he married you."

"It's false! It's false! Rebecca," cried out Amelia, starting up.

"Look there, you fool," Becky said, still with provoking good humour, and taking a little paper out of her belt, she opened it and flung it into

Emmy's lap. "You know his handwriting. He wrote that to me—wanted me to run away with him—gave it me under your nose, the day before he was shot—and served him right!" Becky repeated.

Emmy did not hear her; she was looking at the letter. It was that which George had put into the bouquet and given to Becky on the night of the Duchess of Richmond's ball. It was as she said: the foolish young man had asked her to fly.

Emmy's head sank down, and for almost the last time in which she shall be called upon to weep in this history, she commenced that work. Her head fell to her bosom, and her hands went up to her eyes; and there for a while, she gave way to her emotions, as Becky stood on and regarded her. Who shall analyse those tears and say whether they were sweet or bitter? Was she most grieved because the idol of her life was tumbled down and shivered at her feet, or indignant that her love had been so despised, or glad because the barrier was removed which modesty had placed between her and a new, a real affection? "There is nothing to forbid me now," she thought. "I may love him with all my heart now. Oh, I will, I will, if he will but let me and forgive me." I believe it was this feeling rushed over all the others which agitated that gentle little bosom.

Indeed, she did not cry so much as Becky expected—the other soothed and kissed her—a rare mark of sympathy with Mrs. Becky. She treated Emmy like a child and patted her head. "And now let us get pen and ink and write to him to come this minute," she said.

"I—I wrote to him this morning," Emmy said, blushing exceedingly. Becky screamed with laughter—"Un biglietto," she sang out with Rosina, "eccolo qua!"—the whole house echoed with her shrill singing.

Two mornings after this little scene, although the day was rainy and gusty, and Amelia had had an exceedingly wakeful night, listening to the wind roaring, and pitying all travellers by land and by water, yet she got up early and insisted upon taking a walk on the Dike with Georgy; and there she paced as the rain beat into her face, and she looked out westward across the dark sea line and over the swollen billows which came tumbling and frothing to the shore. Neither spoke much, except now and then, when the boy said a few words to his timid companion,

indicative of sympathy and protection.

“I hope he won’t cross in such weather,” Emmy said.

“I bet ten to one he does,” the boy answered. “Look, Mother, there’s the smoke of the steamer.” It was that signal, sure enough.

But though the steamer was under way, he might not be on board; he might not have got the letter; he might not choose to come. A hundred fears poured one over the other into the little heart, as fast as the waves on to the Dike.

The boat followed the smoke into sight. Georgy had a dandy telescope and got the vessel under view in the most skilful manner. And he made appropriate nautical comments upon the manner of the approach of the steamer as she came nearer and nearer, dipping and rising in the water. The signal of an English steamer in sight went fluttering up to the mast on the pier. I daresay Mrs. Amelia’s heart was in a similar flutter.

Emmy tried to look through the telescope over George’s shoulder, but she could make nothing of it. She only saw a black eclipse bobbing up and down before her eyes.

George took the glass again and raked the vessel. “How she does pitch!” he said. “There goes a wave slap over her bows. There’s only two people on deck besides the steersman. There’s a man lying down, and a—chap in a—cloak with a—Hooray!—it’s Dob, by Jingo!” He clapped to the telescope and flung his arms round his mother. As for that lady, let us say what she did in the words of a favourite poet—“Dakruoen gelasasa.” She was sure it was William. It could be no other. What she had said about hoping that he would not come was all hypocrisy. Of course he would come; what could he do else but come? She knew he would come.

The ship came swiftly nearer and nearer. As they went in to meet her at the landing-place at the quay, Emmy’s knees trembled so that she scarcely could run. She would have liked to kneel down and say her prayers of thanks there. Oh, she thought, she would be all her life saying them!

It was such a bad day that as the vessel came alongside of the quay there were no idlers abroad, scarcely even a commissioner on the look out for the few passengers in the steamer. That young scapegrace George had fled too, and as the gentleman in the old cloak lined with red stuff stepped on to the shore, there was scarcely any one present to see what took place, which was briefly this:

A lady in a dripping white bonnet and shawl, with her two little hands out before her, went up to him, and in the next minute she had altogether disappeared under the folds of the old cloak, and was kissing one of his hands with all her might; whilst the other, I suppose, was engaged in holding her to his heart (which her head just about reached) and in preventing her from tumbling down. She was murmuring something about—forgive—dear William—dear, dear, dearest friend—kiss, kiss, kiss, and so forth—and in fact went on under the cloak in an absurd manner.

When Emmy emerged from it, she still kept tight hold of one of William's hands, and looked up in his face. It was full of sadness and tender love and pity. She understood its reproach and hung down her head.

“It was time you sent for me, dear Amelia,” he said.

“You will never go again, William?”

“No, never,” he answered, and pressed the dear little soul once more to his heart.

As they issued out of the custom-house precincts, Georgy broke out on them, with his telescope up to his eye, and a loud laugh of welcome; he danced round the couple and performed many facetious antics as he led them up to the house. Jos wasn't up yet; Becky not visible (though she looked at them through the blinds). Georgy ran off to see about breakfast. Emmy, whose shawl and bonnet were off in the passage in the hands of Mrs. Payne, now went to undo the clasp of William's cloak, and—we will, if you please, go with George, and look after breakfast for the Colonel. The vessel is in port. He has got the prize he has been trying for all his life. The bird has come in at last. There it is with its head on his shoulder, billing and cooing close up to his heart, with soft outstretched fluttering wings. This is what he has asked for every day

and hour for eighteen years. This is what he pined after. Here it is—the summit, the end—the last page of the third volume. Good-bye, Colonel—God bless you, honest William!—Farewell, dear Amelia—Grow green again, tender little parasite, round the rugged old oak to which you cling!

Perhaps it was compunction towards the kind and simple creature, who had been the first in life to defend her, perhaps it was a dislike to all such sentimental scenes—but Rebecca, satisfied with her part in the transaction, never presented herself before Colonel Dobbin and the lady whom he married. “Particular business,” she said, took her to Bruges, whither she went, and only Georgy and his uncle were present at the marriage ceremony. When it was over, and Georgy had rejoined his parents, Mrs. Becky returned (just for a few days) to comfort the solitary bachelor, Joseph Sedley. He preferred a continental life, he said, and declined to join in housekeeping with his sister and her husband.

Emmy was very glad in her heart to think that she had written to her husband before she read or knew of that letter of George’s. “I knew it all along,” William said; “but could I use that weapon against the poor fellow’s memory? It was that which made me suffer so when you—”

“Never speak of that day again,” Emmy cried out, so contrite and humble that William turned off the conversation by his account of Glorvina and dear old Peggy O’Dowd, with whom he was sitting when the letter of recall reached him. “If you hadn’t sent for me,” he added with a laugh, “who knows what Glorvina’s name might be now?”

At present it is Glorvina Posky (now Mrs. Major Posky); she took him on the death of his first wife, having resolved never to marry out of the regiment. Lady O’Dowd is also so attached to it that, she says, if anything were to happen to Mick, bedad she’d come back and marry some of ‘em. But the Major-General is quite well and lives in great splendour at O’Dowdstown, with a pack of beagles, and (with the exception of perhaps their neighbour, Hoggarty of Castle Hoggarty) he is the first man of his county. Her Ladyship still dances jigs, and insisted on standing up with the Master of the Horse at the Lord Lieutenant’s last ball. Both she and Glorvina declared that Dobbin had used the latter SHEAMFULLY, but Posky falling in, Glorvina was consoled, and a beautiful turban from Paris appeased the wrath of Lady O’Dowd.

When Colonel Dobbin quitted the service, which he did immediately after his marriage, he rented a pretty little country place in Hampshire, not far from Queen's Crawley, where, after the passing of the Reform Bill, Sir Pitt and his family constantly resided now. All idea of a Peerage was out of the question, the Baronet's two seats in Parliament being lost. He was both out of pocket and out of spirits by that catastrophe, failed in his health, and prophesied the speedy ruin of the Empire.

Lady Jane and Mrs. Dobbin became great friends—there was a perpetual crossing of pony-chaises between the Hall and the Evergreens, the Colonel's place (rented of his friend Major Ponto, who was abroad with his family). Her Ladyship was godmother to Mrs. Dobbin's child, which bore her name, and was christened by the Rev. James Crawley, who succeeded his father in the living: and a pretty close friendship subsisted between the two lads, George and Rawdon, who hunted and shot together in the vacations, were both entered of the same college at Cambridge, and quarrelled with each other about Lady Jane's daughter, with whom they were both, of course, in love. A match between George and that young lady was long a favourite scheme of both the matrons, though I have heard that Miss Crawley herself inclined towards her cousin.

Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's name was never mentioned by either family. There were reasons why all should be silent regarding her. For wherever Mr. Joseph Sedley went, she travelled likewise, and that infatuated man seemed to be entirely her slave. The Colonel's lawyers informed him that his brother-in-law had effected a heavy insurance upon his life, whence it was probable that he had been raising money to discharge debts. He procured prolonged leave of absence from the East India House, and indeed, his infirmities were daily increasing.

On hearing the news about the insurance, Amelia, in a good deal of alarm, entreated her husband to go to Brussels, where Jos then was, and inquire into the state of his affairs. The Colonel quitted home with reluctance (for he was deeply immersed in his History of the Punjaub which still occupies him, and much alarmed about his little daughter, whom he idolizes, and who was just recovering from the chicken-pox) and went to Brussels and found Jos living at one of the enormous hotels in that city. Mrs. Crawley, who had her carriage, gave entertainments, and lived in a very genteel manner, occupied another suite of apartments

in the same hotel.

The Colonel, of course, did not desire to see that lady, or even think proper to notify his arrival at Brussels, except privately to Jos by a message through his valet. Jos begged the Colonel to come and see him that night, when Mrs. Crawley would be at a soiree, and when they could meet alone. He found his brother-in-law in a condition of pitiable infirmity—and dreadfully afraid of Rebecca, though eager in his praises of her. She tended him through a series of unheard-of illnesses with a fidelity most admirable. She had been a daughter to him. “But—but—oh, for God’s sake, do come and live near me, and—and—see me sometimes,” whimpered out the unfortunate man.

The Colonel’s brow darkened at this. “We can’t, Jos,” he said. “Considering the circumstances, Amelia can’t visit you.”

“I swear to you—I swear to you on the Bible,” gasped out Joseph, wanting to kiss the book, “that she is as innocent as a child, as spotless as your own wife.”

“It may be so,” said the Colonel gloomily, “but Emmy can’t come to you. Be a man, Jos: break off this disreputable connection. Come home to your family. We hear your affairs are involved.”

“Involved!” cried Jos. “Who has told such calumnies? All my money is placed out most advantageously. Mrs. Crawley—that is—I mean— it is laid out to the best interest.”

“You are not in debt, then? Why did you insure your life?”

“I thought—a little present to her—in case anything happened; and you know my health is so delicate—common gratitude you know—and I intend to leave all my money to you—and I can spare it out of my income, indeed I can,” cried out William’s weak brother-in-law.

The Colonel besought Jos to fly at once—to go back to India, whither Mrs. Crawley could not follow him; to do anything to break off a connection which might have the most fatal consequences to him.

Jos clasped his hands and cried, “He would go back to India. He would



do anything, only he must have time: they mustn't say anything to Mrs. Crawley—she'd—she'd kill me if she knew it. You don't know what a terrible woman she is," the poor wretch said.

"Then, why not come away with me?" said Dobbin in reply; but Jos had not the courage. "He would see Dobbin again in the morning; he must on no account say that he had been there. He must go now. Becky might come in." And Dobbin quitted him, full of forebodings.

He never saw Jos more. Three months afterwards Joseph Sedley died at Aix-la-Chapelle. It was found that all his property had been muddled away in speculations, and was represented by valueless shares in different bubble companies. All his available assets were the two thousand pounds for which his life was insured, and which were left equally between his beloved "sister Amelia, wife of, &c., and his friend and invaluable attendant during sickness, Rebecca, wife of Lieutenant-Colonel Rawdon Crawley, C.B.," who was appointed administratrix.

The solicitor of the insurance company swore it was the blackest case that ever had come before him, talked of sending a commission to Aix to examine into the death, and the Company refused payment of the policy. But Mrs., or Lady Crawley, as she styled herself, came to town at once (attended with her solicitors, Messrs. Burke, Thurtell, and Hayes, of Thavies Inn) and dared the Company to refuse the payment. They invited examination, they declared that she was the object of an infamous conspiracy, which had been pursuing her all through life, and triumphed finally. The money was paid, and her character established, but Colonel Dobbin sent back his share of the legacy to the insurance office and rigidly declined to hold any communication with Rebecca.

She never was Lady Crawley, though she continued so to call herself. His Excellency Colonel Rawdon Crawley died of yellow fever at Coventry Island, most deeply beloved and deplored, and six weeks before the demise of his brother, Sir Pitt. The estate consequently devolved upon the present Sir Rawdon Crawley, Bart.

He, too, has declined to see his mother, to whom he makes a liberal allowance, and who, besides, appears to be very wealthy. The Baronet lives entirely at Queen's Crawley, with Lady Jane and her daughter, whilst Rebecca, Lady Crawley, chiefly hangs about Bath and

Cheltenham, where a very strong party of excellent people consider her to be a most injured woman. She has her enemies. Who has not? Her life is her answer to them. She busies herself in works of piety. She goes to church, and never without a footman. Her name is in all the Charity Lists. The destitute orange-girl, the neglected washerwoman, the distressed muffin-man find in her a fast and generous friend. She is always having stalls at Fancy Fairs for the benefit of these hapless beings. Emmy, her children, and the Colonel, coming to London some time back, found themselves suddenly before her at one of these fairs. She cast down her eyes demurely and smiled as they started away from her; Emmy scurrying off on the arm of George (now grown a dashing young gentleman) and the Colonel seizing up his little Janey, of whom he is fonder than of anything in the world—fonder even than of his History of the Punjaub.

“Fonder than he is of me,” Emmy thinks with a sigh But he never said a word to Amelia that was not kind and gentle, or thought of a want of hers that he did not try to gratify.

Ah! Vanitas Vanitatum! which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? or, having it, is satisfied?—come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out.