

GOLDSMITHS VERLORENER ROMAN.

Unsere anschauungen über Goldsmiths art zu schaffen haben sich durch die untersuchungen der letzten jahre nicht unwesentlich geändert. Goldsmith war nicht einer jener eroberer unter den dichtern, die das gebiet der dichtkunst durch ganz neue motive bereicherten — es ist im gegenteil seltsam, wie gering seine erfindungskraft im grofsen war, und es mutet uns komisch an, wenn er in "The History of the Earth and Animated Nature" gerade diesen mangel spöttisch bei den Deutschen hervorhebt. Mit allen fasern hängt Goldsmith an seiner zeit und seiner umgebung. Die meisten gestalten und motive seiner dichtungen sind nicht aus der erfahrung und natur genommen, sind nicht selbständige schöpfungen, sondern gehen ursprünglich auf schon dichterisch geformte charaktere und handlungen zurück. Bei wenigen dichtern ist die quellenforschung so reich an ergebnissen wie bei Goldsmith. Allerdings kommen dazu noch einige charaktere, die ihm im leben begegnet waren, einige züge, welche er bei selbstanalysen eindringlich in sich wahrgenommen hatte. Gerade diese eigenen schöpfungen, die ihm naturgemäfs am meisten am herzen liegen mußten, die teilweise mit seinem herzblut getränkt waren, finden wir dann mit eigentümlicher einförmigkeit wieder und wieder in seiner dichtung. Das ist die welt, die seine dichterische phantasie erfüllte, — zu einem guten teil somit eine welt aus zweiter hand. Und über diese welt warf er den zauber seiner liebenswürdigen, oft so kindlichen denkensart, erwärmte sie mit seinem selten warmen gefühl, stattete sie mit wunderbar feinen einzelzügen aus und schilderte sie in einem entzückend leichten, einschmeichelnden stil.

Eine überraschende bestätigung für diesen mangel an erfindungskraft gibt eine alte überlieferung, die von zwei verschiedenen seiten auf uns gekommen ist und an deren wahrheit somit unmöglich zu zweifeln ist. Miss Mary Horneck, die treue freundin Goldsmiths, hat Northcote von einem zweiten roman des dichters mittheilung gemacht. Northcote spricht in seinem *Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (London, 1818, I, 326 f.) davon: "I have been informed by the Lady who requested a lock of his hair before interment, that he once read to her several chapters of a novel in manuscript which he had in contemplation, but which he did not live to finish, now irrecoverably lost." Aus derselben quelle, nur auf umwegen und so ein wenig verändert, hören wir durch Hazlitt (*Conversations of James Northcote, Esq. R. A. by William Hazlitt*, London, 1830, s. 169), daß Goldsmith kurz vor seinem tode den schwestern Horneck das erste kapitel eines romans vorgelesen habe.

Von einer zweiten seite, dem nachfolger des buchhändlers Newbery, existiert ein viel genauerer bericht, den wir James Prior (*The Life of O. G.*, London, 1837, II, 417 f.) verdanken: "Being pressed by pecuniary difficulties in 1771—1772, Goldsmith had at various periods obtained the advance of two or three hundred pounds from Newbery under the engagement of writing an novel, which after the success of the *Vicar of Wakefield* promised to be one of the most popular speculations. Considerable delay took place in the execution of his undertaking, and when at length submitted to the perusal of the bookseller, it proved to be in great measure the plot of the comedy of *The Good-natured Man*, turned into a tale. Objections being made to this, the manuscript was returned. Goldsmith declared himself unable or unwilling to write another, —."

Schon im jahre 1812 hat Southey in seinen *Omniana or Horae otiosiores*, London, s. 296, auf einen französisch gedruckten roman hingewiesen, der Goldsmith in dem titel zugeschrieben wurde. Seltsam ist, daß noch nie die interessante frage untersucht worden ist, ob dieser roman in irgend einem zusammenhange mit Goldsmith steht. Keiner seiner biographen oder herausgeber, nicht einmal Gibbs in seiner verdienstvollen ausgabe der werke wagt sich über die leichtesten vermuthungen hinaus (I, 230 ff.).

Nicht weniger als drei verschiedene ausgaben dieses einen romans sind mir bekannt geworden. Die älteste ist die von Southey erwähnte französische ausgabe: "Histoire de Francois Wills, ou le Triomphe de la Bienfaisance, par l'Auteur du Ministre de Wakefield. Traduction de l'Anglois. A Amsterdam. Chez D. J. Changuion. A Rotterdam. Chez H. Beman, Bennet & Hake. MDCCLXXIII" (Southey gibt allerdings 1774 als erscheinungsjahr). In zwei teilen.¹⁾

Die beiden anderen ausgaben sind die folgenden: "The Triumph of Benevolence; or the History of Francis Wills. By the Author of the Vicar of Wakefield. Berlin: sold by August Mylius. 1786. In two Volumes." (Mit einem titelbild von Chodowiecki.)²⁾ Und: "The Triumph of Benevolence; or the History of Francis Wills. In two Volumes. Upsala. Printed for John Fred. Edman, Printer to the Royal Academy. 1799."³⁾

Jahr und ort der ausgaben stimmen zu der überlieferung; ein widerspruch in der zeit wäre zudem unwesentlich, wir haben es in jenen erzählungen mit späten, in solchen einzelheiten kaum zuverlässigen erinnerungen zu tun. Dafs aber die erste ausgabe im ausland herauskam, ist ganz natürlich; Goldsmith hätte sonst selbst noch widerspruch erheben können, wenn ihm dieser roman zugeschrieben wurde.

Dafs die französische ausgabe nur eine übersetzung aus dem Englischen ist, kann unmöglich bezweifelt werden. An vielen stellen ist in der französischen fassung eine auffallend farblose ausdrucksweise zu bemerken, wo in der englischen entsprechend ganz charakteristische, spezifisch englische wendungen gegenüberstehen. Gleich die überschrift des ersten kapitels mit bezug auf Murphys Gray's Inn Journal (aus dem jahre 1756) spricht für die priorität der englischen fassung — im französischen text finden wir nur eine allgemeine umschreibung. Ich führe andere beispiele an: kap. IV, "an old carthorse" — "un vieux animal dont on attend impatiemment la mort"; VI, "in which is proved the great truth

¹⁾ Im Britischen Museum.

²⁾ In der Kgl. Bibliothek zu Berlin, Stadtbibl. Hamburg, Univ.-Bibl. Leipzig.

³⁾ In der Univ.-Bibl. Berlin, Greifswald.

of the adage, that it is an ill wind which blows no body good" — "la fortune visite quelquefois celui qui l'attend le moins"; (she) "concluded there must 'more be meant than met the ears'" — "elle conclut que sans trop s'en occuper, elle laisseroit au temps le soin d'éclaircir ce mystère." Zwei zeilen aus Goldsmiths ballade sind schwerfällig übersetzt. Die verse Parnells sind ganz und gar ausgelassen. Im kap. 28 werden englische wörter unübersetzt in die französische ausgabe übernommen. Doch genug mit diesen beispielen; sie liefsen sich leicht vermehren. Nur eine stelle sei noch erwähnt. Nichts ist wunderbarer und unnatürlicher in dem roman als der umschwung in einem charakter, in Priscilla, die zunächst die güte selbst ist, plötzlich aber hart und geizig wird. Die spätere englische ausgabe geht darüber kurz hinweg; in der französischen aber ist eine lange nur zu nötige begründung eingeschoben. Unmöglich würde diese von einem übersetzer weggelassen worden sein. So belegt auch diese stelle klar die priorität der englischen ausgabe.

Nach den alten überlieferungen haben wir also anzunehmen, daß Goldsmith einen neuen roman angefangen hatte, aber nur zur ausarbeitung eines teiles gekommen war. Welche teile dies sind, und wie umfangreich sie waren, ist ungewiß (einmal hören wir von einigen kapiteln, das andre mal vom ersten). Wenn nun wirklich dieser roman mit Goldsmith überhaupt und diesen bruchstücken in verbindung steht — und wir haben gesehen, daß die äufseren umstände dazu stimmen —, so müßte sich irgend ein unternehmender geist auf eine vielleicht unrechtmäßige weise in den besitz dieser teile zu setzen gewußt und sie zu einem vollständigen roman ergänzt haben. Mit einer spur von recht wurde dann das im ganzen äufserst unerfreuliche werk Goldsmith zugeschrieben. Die rechte ausnutzung dieses betruges war natürlich in England selbst unmöglich, da dort berufene den betrug garzu leicht hätten aufklären können. Das scheint mir in der tat die äufsere entstehungsgeschichte dieses romans zu sein. Die begründung sei durch die untersuchung dreier fragen versucht: Stimmt der inhalt des romans zu der überlieferung? Lassen sich in dem roman verschiedene hände erkennen? Lassen sich züge Goldsmithscher schaffens- und denkart in ihm feststellen?

Es heist, daß jene kapitel proved to be in great measure the plot of the comedy of *The Good-natured Man*, turned into a tale. Vergegenwärtigen wir uns den inhalt des lustspiels, natürlich mit ausscheidung der *Leontine-Olivia* handlung.

Der hervorstechendste charakterzug der hauptperson des lustspiels, *Honeywoods*, ist seine empfindlichkeit gegen die leiden und verlegenheiten anderer. Er ist wohlthätig gegen jedermann, ohne die geringste rücksicht auf seine eigenen erfordernisse und umstände. Er gerät dadurch selbst in die ungünstigsten verhältnisse. Dennoch hören wir, daß er einem poor gentleman and his children in the Fleet 10 guineas schicken will, denn: "must I be cruel, because he (sein drängender gläubiger) happens to be importunate; and to relieve his avarice, leave them to insupportable distress?" — Es wird ihm mitgeteilt, daß sein diener ihn habe bestehlen wollen, daß man ihn bei der tat gefaßt habe.

Honeywood: "In the fact? If so, I really think that we should pay him his wages, and turn him off."

Jarvis (sein diener): "He shall be turned off at Tyburn, the dog — —"

Honeywood: "No, *Jarvis*: it's enough that we have lost what he has stolen; let us not add to it the loss of a fellow-creature!"

Schließlich wird *Honeywood* für jemanden bürge, der aber dann entflieht. Es wird ihm nun mitgeteilt, daß sein reicher onkel (seit *Fieldings Tom Jones* pflegen solche wohlthätigen menschen immer mit entfernteren verwandten in verbindung gesetzt zu werden) ihn enterben wolle.

Jene letzte wohlthat wird ihm überhaupt verhängnisvoll: er wird als schuldner verhaftet — allerdings ist es sein eigener onkel, der seinen schuldschein aufgekauft hat, um ihn zu heilen.

Nun folgen noch zwei ereignisse, die uns hier nicht angehen, und er kommt endlich zu der einsicht, daß er kritischer bei seinem wohlthun sein muß und sein mitleid nur denen schenken darf, die in wirklicher not sind.

Wenn wir nun zu dem roman übergehen, dürfen wir natürlich nicht genau dasselbe in allem erwarten, aber doch starke ähnlichkeiten, und diese finden sich in überraschender weise.

Wie so häufig die romane in jener zeit beginnt auch dieser mit der lebensgeschichte des vaters. Frank bleibt allein als waise zurück und wird, schon als kleiner junge, von seinen drei tanten aufgenommen, denen der grofsvater, mit übergehung des eignen sohnes und enkels, sein gesamtes, grofses vermögen vermacht hat. Von früh auf zeigt er den drang wohlzutun, worin er von seiner tante Priscilla und seinem lehrer Brewer unterstützt wird. Einen trunkenen bringt er schwerverwundet ins haus; mit dem wenigen geld, das er besitzt, wird er der wohltäter und schützer einer familie. Unglücklicherweise ändert sich nun nach dem tode seiner zwei tanten (auch Brewer ist gestorben) der charakter der dritten schwester Priscilla, die plötzlich zum geizhals wird. Frank liebt und wirbt, doch zerschlägt sich die verbindung. Auf einem spazier-gange gelingt es ihm, MacGregor, einen freund Priscillas, der ihre hand gewinnen will, vor drei räubern zu retten. Sie halten zwei fest. MacGregor dankt seinem retter: "Oh! Maister Wills, are you my deliverer? In gude troth, ye're a bonny chiel: but what mun we do with these dogs here?" "Let them depart," said Wills, "their own consciences, perhaps laden with crimes, will be punishment enough for them. Affected by our lenity, they may live to repent." "Hoot awa," replied the captain; "they shall be hanged: — —" "Come, come, Captain, you have lost nothing by them, — —", und er reicht ihnen eine guinea.

Wenige tage darauf hat er ein neues erlebnis. Er sieht spät am abend in verrufener gegend ein junges mädchen, scheinbar in grofser trauer und niedergedrücktheit. Sofort wird sein mitleid erregt, er mufs sie ansprechen, und er erfährt, dafs ihr vater seit jahren unschuldig im gefängnis sitzt. Er hört ihre geschichte — um es vorwegzunehmen: eine umarbeitung des Vicar of Wakefield-motivs. Mr. Belton ist für einen freund bürge geworden, der dann entflohen ist. So ist er für ihn im gefängnis. Sofort nimmt Frank die schulden auf sich, und auch ihm wird das verhängnisvoll, und zwar wirklich (nicht nur scheinbar) verhängnisvoll, wenigstens auf lange zeit. Er mufs das haus seiner tante verlassen, einen teil des geldes, das sie für ihn ausgelegt hat, zurückzahlen, und ohne ihre unterstützung, mit der deutlichen aussicht auf enterbung, von dem geringen erbe seines vaters leben.

Eine betrachtung der weiteren handlung des romans erübrigt sich, da Goldsmith sicherlich nichts mit dem folgenden teil zu tun hatte. Die entwicklung ist nun eine ganz neue, doch lag ja dieser teil Newbery ganz sicher nicht vor.

Deutlich ist schon aus dieser darstellung, dafs Frank und Honeywood im hauptcharakterzug genau die gleichen sind. Wir finden dieselbe empfindsamkeit gegenüber fremdem leid, die gleiche stete hilfsbereitschaft, eine sehr ähnliche milde auffassung in dem urteil über den dieb bezw. wegelagerer. Allerdings erscheint in dem roman Franks anlage nicht als eine so sehr strenger zucht bedürftige schwäche wie in dem lustspiel.

Genau springt die übereinstimmung in den handlungen in die augen. Nicht weniger als drei ereignisse, dort nur erzählt, werden hier breit ausgeführt, entsprechend dem romancharakter. Ganz ähnlich ist die handlung, die zur katastrophe führt, dort zur scheinbaren, hier vorübergehend zur wirklichen. Dafs die entscheidende handlung, die Belton-geschichte, alle einzelheiten aus dem Vicar entnimmt, ist ungemein charakteristisch für Goldsmith; doch davon später.

Newberys urteil: "in a great measure the plot of the Good-natured Man, turned into a tale", ist so vollauf gerechtfertigt. Noch richtiger wäre es gewesen, wenn er hinzugefügt hätte: vereint mit einem auszug aus dem Vicar of Wakefield. Wer vermag zu sagen, ob das nicht vielleicht Newberys worte waren!

Mit dem nachweis, dafs Newberys urteil auf den roman paßt, ist eigentlich schon so gut wie bewiesen, dafs er z. t. wirklich von Goldsmith stammt. Drei entstehungsmöglichkeiten liefen sich für ihn überhaupt nur ausdenken:

Entweder wurde der roman ganz frei von irgend einem schriftsteller selbständig geschrieben; die anführung, Goldsmith sei der verfasser, wäre nur eine buchhändlerspekulation gewesen — wie unendlich seltsam, unbegreiflich und unerklärlich hätte da der zufall gespielt, dafs sein roman wirklich zufällig mit jener alten tradition übereinstimmte!

Oder aber: der roman wäre von irgend einem anonymus allein geschrieben, der von Goldsmiths verunglücktem versuch, einen zweiten roman zu schreiben, genaueres gehört hätte. Ein solches unternehmen hätte aber nur sinn und aussicht

auf erfolg gehabt, wenn diese tatsache allgemein verbreitet gewesen wäre, was zweifellos nicht der fall war, und wenn sich der anonymus auf diese tatsache irgendwie berufen, sie ausgenutzt hätte. Auch diese möglichkeit der entstehung ist abzulehnen.

So bleibt nur die dritte möglichkeit übrig: Im roman sind die originalbruchstücke Goldsmiths verarbeitet.

Eine natürliche folge dieser entstehungsart ist, daß sich in den verschiedenen teilen deutlich unterschiede in der schreibart beobachten lassen. Erschwert und wesentlich beschränkt wird diese untersuchung dadurch, daß man kein völlig entsprechendes vergleichungsmaterial bei Goldsmith hat. Der Vicar erhält durch die form der ich-erzählung sein besonderes stilgepräge, und den kondensierten, prägnanten stil der essays dürfen wir in dem weit ausgespannenen roman auf keinen fall erwarten; er wäre auf die dauer unerträglich.

Doch es gibt noch andere erschwerende umstände. Wir können nach den überlieferten nachrichten zu keinem bilde kommen, wie weit Goldsmith in seiner arbeit vorgeschritten war. Hatte Goldsmith wirklich von anfang an begonnen, wie es der eine bericht besagt? Waren es einzelne kapitel, die in einem zusammenhang standen, oder nur lose, unverbundene bruchstücke?

Dann weiter: das ganze unternehmen war eine arbeit der not, die noch dazu in den ersten anfängen unterbrochen wurde. Wir können daher nicht eine auf hoher stufe stehende, wieder und wieder durchgesehene arbeit erwarten. Und wir wissen ja, wie viel Goldsmith an seinen großen werken gebessert hat, um sie zu der bewunderten feinheit und leichtigkeit des stils zu bringen. Sicherlich hat aber Goldsmith an diese kapitel noch nicht die feile gelegt. Schließlich wissen wir auch nicht, ob der bearbeiter mit großer pietät vorgegangen ist.

Ganz absichtlich habe ich nicht die statistische feststellung der feinsten stilmittel versucht. Sie ist doch immer trügerisch, ganz besonders bei einem dichter wie Goldsmith, der bewußt einfach und anspruchslos schrieb und so unendlich schwer wirklich charakteristisch zu fassen ist. Immerhin scheint es mir doch möglich, verschiedene sinnfällige, charakteristische züge für verschiedene teile herauszuheben.

Durch Fieldings bedrückendes beispiel vor allem wurde es bei seinen nachahmern eine gewohnheit, die eigene person hervorzudrängen und sich dazu mit dem sagacious reader, wie es so oft heißt, in vertrauliche verbindung zu setzen. Besonders sind es die kapitelschlüsse, wo das, sehr oft mit einem hinweis auf die unterbrechung, beliebt wurde. Diese für Goldsmith ganz uncharakteristische form (sie läßt sich nicht etwa mit der auch in den essays geübten form der ich-erzählung vergleichen) ist ein kennzeichen für den ergänzer. Sie findet sich in allen kapiteln mit ausnahme von 5, 13 (14 hat mehrfach sehr ähnliche redewendungen), 15—19. Die direkte anrede an den gentle reader im kap. 17, die an das gefühl appelliert, hat einen ganz anderen charakter (über eine anrede in kap. 16 ist später besonders zu sprechen). Am reichsten daran, wie an all den anderen kennzeichen, ist der ganze zweite teil (sehr häufig auch here we cannot help saying — oder ähnlich), der in keiner weise für Goldsmith in betracht kommt. Diesen auffallenden, den ton des romans wesentlich bestimmenden unterschied halte ich für besonders wichtig, da sich solche anreden an den leser in manchen kapiteln viermal und mehr finden.

Weitere kennzeichen für den bearbeiter sind: kleinliche hervorhebung unbedeutender motive, das essen, geldverwendung usw.: kap. 1, 11, 13, 22, 23, 24, usw., selbstlob: 1, 21, 22, usw., auffallend schwülstiger stil: 5, 12, im anfang von 15, sehr viel dann im zweiten teil, der dazu von sentimentalität durchtränkt ist. Ungeschickte übergänge und verknüpfungen: 2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, zweiter teil. Schließlich fallen bisweilen sehr schwerfällige sätze, unerhörte häufungen von gerundien auf, wahrhafte ungetüme, so kap. 5, 6, 21, usw.

Blicken wir zurück, so sind diejenigen kapitel, die deutlich aus dem ganzen roman in ihrer schreibart herausfallen: 15, bis auf den anfang, 16, 17, 18, 19, und sie sind es auch, die meines erachtens auf Goldsmith wirklich zurückgehen, vielleicht mit noch einigen kürzeren abschnitten im vorangehenden teil. Um dieses zu beweisen, sollen umgekehrt positive züge, die für Goldsmith sprechen, aufgezeigt werden.

Die kapitel, die ihrer schreibart nach aus dem roman herausfallen, sind nun gerade diejenigen, welche einerseits am besten zu Newberys urteil passen, andererseits deutlich zu

Goldsmiths übrigen werken stimmen, sowohl in den anschauungen wie in den motiven. Der einwand, daß es sich dabei nur um eine nachahmung von Goldsmith zu handeln braucht, wäre widerlegend, wenn dieser nachweis die einzige stütze für Goldsmiths autorschaft wäre; ganz haltlos aber ist er nach den schon vorher gegebenen beweisen, welche dieser neue nur kräftigt; und andererseits wissen wir, daß die selbstwiederholung ein äußerst charakteristischer zug für Goldsmith ist.

Der inhalt dieser kapitel ist: kap. 15, 16, Wills rettet den kapitän McGregor vor den wegelagerern. Ende vom kap. 16, 17, 18, 19: Wills befreit selbstlos Belton und seine tochter, die unschuldig im gefängnis sind. Ein appell an den gläubiger, Lord Cotswold, ist fruchtlos. Betrachten wir diese kapitel eingehender.

In nachdenkliche träumerei versunken, hört Wills plötzlich hilferufe — das kompositionsmittel des gegensatzes, das Goldsmith sehr häufig und gern angewendet hat (vgl. Vicar, kap. 5, theoretisch betrachtet in kap. 8, unmittelbar dann angewendet kap. 17, 22, 28). Wills rettet M'Gregor, zeigt gegen die räuber große milde entgegen M'Gregors ansichten, der sie den gerichten übergeben will, und schenkt ihnen schliesslich sogar eine guinea. Das ganze abenteuer ist recht genau einer episode in Fieldings Tom Jones, buch XII, 14, nachgebildet. Dort werden Tom Jones und Partridge überfallen. Tom Jones überwältigt den räuber, vergibt ihm, da er selbst sagt, daß ihn nur die not dazu triebe, und schenkt ihm sogar noch einige guineas. Partridge ist aber für hängen, wenn auch der räuber verspricht, nie wieder reisende zu überfallen. Partridge fürchtet, daß er sie wahrscheinlich noch einmal berauben würde. Ein langer disput entsteht noch zwischen ihnen, von dem wir allerdings nur wenig hören; Tom drückt sein mitleid mit allen räubern dieser art aus, so lange sie sich nicht am leben anderer vergreifen. Partridge aber bleibt bei seinem standpunkt. Später taucht der räuber wieder im roman auf, und auch im Triumph wird sein späteres eingreifen schon hier vorbereitet.

Die übereinstimmungen sind außerordentlich groß. Das ist ja eben charakteristisch für Goldsmith: ganz besonders ist es Fielding, der ihm in vielen episoden zum vorbild gedient

hat. Erstaunlich unbekümmert ist Goldsmith in der übernahme kleinster einzelheiten, fügt das ganze geschickt ein und erweitert es oft sehr glücklich. Genau dasselbe läßt sich von diesem motiv sagen.

Viel ausführlicher ist hier die ausführung des räubers und vor allem der disput, in dem kaum eine gedanke ist, der sich nicht sonst bei Goldsmith findet, besonders im Vicar. Ich setze die entsprechenden stellen nebeneinander:

Tr. of B. kap. XVI: "He (der wegelagerer) may live to be a very worthy member of the community yet." — V. of W. kap. XXVII: "We should then find that creatures — might, if properly treated, serve to sinew the state in times of danger."

Tr. of B. "How could you reconcile it to yourself to punish that man with death, who had only taken part of your property." M'Gregor wendet ein: das ist gesetz. Darauf entgegnet Wills: "That must be the fault of that law." — V. of W. "Against such (mörder) all nature arises in arms; but it is not so against him who steals my property." Da das naturgesetz kein recht gibt, dem dieb das leben zu nehmen, muß ein vertrag die berechtigung sein: "But this is a false compact."

Tr. of B. "By the most equitable law, which is that of retaliation, *lex talionis*, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, is only required." — V. of W. "And beside, the compact is inadequate, and would be set aside even in a court of modern equity, as then is a great penalty for a very trifling inconvenience."

Tr. of B. "But in case of murder, I own there should be a deprivation of life; there no restoration can be; but in cases of robbery or theft — —." — V. of W. "In cases of murder their right is obvious —; but it is not so against him who steals my property." Die begründung ist verschieden!

Tr. of B. "A regulation of this kind would make a capital punishment more terrible, as it would be less common. Hanging is thought nothing of now —." V. of W. Verbrechen werden ausgerottet "not by making punishments familiar, but formidable. — — 'The people are led to lose all sense of distinction in the crime.'" — Citizen of the World, brief 80: "Well it were, if rewards and mercy alone could regulate the commonwealth:

but since punishments are sometimes necessary, let them at least be rendered terrible, by being executed seldom; —."

Überall sind bei aller übereinstimmung der hauptgedanken grofse abweichungen in den einzelheiten, in der begründung zu beobachten. Es ist eben keineswegs eine entlehnung; ein und derselbe geist gerät bei denselben problemen zu verschiedenen zeiten in dieselben gedankengänge, kommt zu denselben resultaten, wenn auch von verschiedenen seiten aus.

Bemerkenswert scheint eine vorliebe zu poetischen zitatén, die Goldsmith immer eigen war. Einmal sind es verse von Parnell (den er übrigens auch sonst zitiert hat), das andere mal zwei zeilen aus Edwin und Angelina, doch mit geändertem wortlaut, der zu dem satz, in den das zitat eingefügt ist, paßt. Meines wissens hat Goldsmith sonst nirgends eigene verse zitiert, eigene prosastellen sind dagegen häufig fast genau wörtlich wieder aufgenommen, so dafs man an diesem selbstzitierten nicht anstofs nehmen darf. Auch ein so freies schalten mit zitatén, das abändern einzelner wörter — etwas durchaus nicht gewöhnliches — begegnet bei Goldsmith mehrfach, so in *A City Night Piece* (doch nur in der ausgabe von *The Bee*), wo ein zitat Parnells solch eine vergewaltigung erfährt, oder in *A Description of Various Clubs*.

Der nächste teil, der dann wieder Goldsmith zuzuschreiben ist, beginnt teil I, s. 162, kurz vor dem schlufs des 16. kapitels. In der vorangehenden betrachtung war festgestellt, dafs sich in diesem teil die in diesem abschnitt sonst niemals vorkommende anrede an den leser findet: "In what manner he did it the reader will find in the next chapter." Nehmen wir indessen an, dafs Goldsmiths echte arbeit an der bezeichneten stelle beginnt, so ist dieser einschnitt, der beginn des kapitels unbedingt erst von dem bearbeiter eingefügt, dem dann auch diese bemerkung zuzuschreiben ist.

Der inhalt dieser in jeder beziehung eine einheit bildenden kapitel ist der folgende: Wills kehrt spät in der nacht nach hause zurück. In einer verrufenen gegend fällt ihm eine frauengestalt auf. Nicht ein verächtliches, verurteilendes wort über jene verlorenen findet sich; unhappy wretches nennt er sie. Nur den leidenden menschen sieht er in ihnen. Wir denken hier an Goldsmiths *Essay A City Night Piece* (*The Bee* nr. IV), in dem sein so leicht bewegtes, übevolltes herz

ihn die worte ausrufen läßt: "Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the sufferings of wretches I cannot relieve! Poor, houseless creatures! — Why was this heart of mine formed with so much sensibility! or why was not my fortune adapted to its impulse!" Hier, in Wills, hat er einen menschen mit demselben gefühl ausgestattet, aber auch mit den mitteln, um ihm entsprechend handeln zu können.

Wills spricht jene umherirrende an; er hört eine lange leidensgeschichte. Der vater ist seit jahren im gefängnis, sie ist ihm dorthin gefolgt, sie stehen jetzt dem hungertode gegenüber. Ausführlich erzählt dann Mr. Belton, ihr vater, Wills ihre geschichte. Beltons vater war ein bekannter des Lord Cotswold von der studienzeit her. So werden ihre beiden söhne mit einander erzogen. The young lord was as lovely in his person, as amiable in his manners. Der junge Belton wird der verwalter des gräflichen besitzes. Nach dem tode der beiden väter heiraten beide. Belton bekommt eine tochter, Sophy, die ehe des Lords ist sehr unglücklich. Er bringt viel zeit in der familie Beltons zu. Sophy ist herangewachsen. Da wird Belton bürge für einen freund über £ 400. Der aber flieht, Belton besitzt nur £ 200, da tritt Cotswold für ihn ein. Seine besuche werden häufiger und häufiger. Er macht Sophy kostbare geschenke. In sehr charakteristisch prägnanten, kurzen sätzen wird erzählt, wie er, dessen leidenschaft zum siedepunkte gestiegen ist, Sophy zu umgarnen sucht. Die eltern warnen, und sie weist ein geschenk zurück. Damit tritt die katastrophe ein. Er verlangt von Belton die einwilligung, daß er heimlich mit Sophy getraut würde. Alle seine anerbietungen, sein zorn, seine drohungen helfen nichts, Belton weist die zumutung zurück. Er macht noch einen vergeblichen versuch und sucht nun sich zu rächen. Belton verliert sein amt und wird wegen der schuld von £ 200 ins gefängnis geschickt. Seine frau stirbt nach zwei jahren, und nun bringt er schon das dritte jahr dort darabend mit seiner tochter zu.

Die ähnlichkeit mit dem Vicar of Wakefield ist offenbar. Wir haben die gleiche zusammenstellung von personen: Primrose — Olivia — Thornhill und dort Belton — Sophy — Cotswold, beide male ein adliger, der ein armes mädchen, die tochter eines abhängigen, zu gewinnen sucht. Wie stets bei

solchen wiederholungen Goldsmiths finden sich auch hier abänderungen. Cotswold ist verheiratet; seine absichten müssen daher etwas verschieden sein. Was Thornhill ganz ähnlich ausführt, wird von Cotswold nur geplant, der ganz offen Belton seinen wunsch ausspricht. Dort wird die scheinbare trauung vollzogen, hier die heimliche trauung geplant. Sobald Primrose Thornhill seinen abscheu ausspricht, Belton Cotswold widerstand leistet, werden sie aus dem haus und amt vertrieben und auf grund einer alten forderung ins gefängnis geworfen.

Nähmen wir nun dennoch an, daß Goldsmith nichts von diesem roman geschrieben hätte, so wäre ganz unverständlich, wie irgend ein schriftsteller es für das werk erspriesslich hätte halten können, nun auch noch die haupthandlung des Vicar of Wakefield verändert auszuziehen. Dagegen scheint es mir für Goldsmith ungemein charakteristisch, daß er in seiner verlegenheit, eine genügende handlung für den roman zusammenzubringen, auf zwei seiner werke, wie er es so oft tat, zurückgriff, auf eine lieblingsgestalt und auf ein lieblingsmotiv; die lieblingsgestalt des schrankenlos wohlthätigen menschen (Goldsmith schilderte sich ja stets selbst darin), den wir immer ähnlich wiederfinden, wenn auch unter verschiedenen namen, in dem Man in Black (vor allem brief 27 des Citizen of the World), in dem "berühmten S—" im Life of Richard Nash, in dem jungen Burchell (im Vicar of Wakefield), in Honeywood und nun im Frank Wills. Andererseits jenes motiv, das er aus der zeitgenössischen literatur übernommen und nun schon dreimal variiert hatte, in The History of Miss Stanton (eine geschichte, die ihm wohl zuzuschreiben ist), in der erzählung der Zelis (Citizen of the World, brief 60) und im Vicar of Wakefield. Wie er sich in seinem ersten roman durch die erfolgreichsten romane seiner zeit hatte inspirieren lassen, so griff er hier auf seine eigenen erfolgreichsten werke zurück, den Vicar of Wakefield und den Good-Natured Man.

Auch in diesem teile finden sich gleiche ansichten ausgesprochen wie in anderen werken Goldsmiths, nämlich in bezug auf die traurigen zustände in den gefängnissen. Ein solcher nachweis allein bewiese selbstverständlich nichts; die gedanken lagen in jener zeit in der luft. Aber mit den übrigen gründen zusammengenommen, ist auch dieser nach-

weis sehr wohl geeignet, das zünglein der wage bestimmt zum ausschlag zu bringen.

Die entsprechenden stellen und sätze in der beschreibung des gefängnisses und seiner zustände aus Tr. of B., kap. 17, 18 und Vicar of Wakefield, kap. 25, 27, setze ich wieder unter einander.

Tr. of B. "There may be some (unter den gefangenen), who, pursuing fraudulent methods, have drawn this heavy vengeance upon themselves: but they are few in comparison of the unfortunate; and surely the laws should make some distinction between misfortune and guilt." — V. of W. "— one large apartment — common to both felons and debtors at certain hours in the four-and-twenty."

Tr. of B. "However good and virtuous a man may be when he comes into such a place as this, yet, — — he cannot entirely escape the contagion. — — In short, a prison is but a school for roguery — —." — V. of W. "— our present prisons, which find or make men guilty, which enclose wretches for the commission of one crime, and return them, if returned alive, fitted for the perpetration of thousands."

Die negative begründung, das fehlen nicht-Goldsmithscher stilmittel, war schon früher gegeben. Sonst verdient hervorgehoben zu werden die straffheit der erzählung, die hier und da eingestreuten sentenzen, an denen der übrige roman durchaus nicht reich ist, die bei Goldsmith beliebten kurzen rechtfertigungen für kürze innerhalb der erzählung: "To repeat all our conversation is impossible; it is too affecting for my spirits, almost exhausted, to recollect their distress, or my own feelings. Let it suffice to say, that — —." Eine einzelheit, die schliesslich am stärksten für Goldsmith spricht, findet sich am ende des 19. kapitels. Wills spielt dort genau die rolle wie Burchell im V. of W.; als rettender engel bringt er den gefangenen hilfe und befreiung. Bei der schilderung der gleichen situation reproduziert Goldsmith den ganz ähnlichen gedanken. Im V. of W. heisst es (kap. 30): "Never before had I seen any thing so truly majestic as the air he assumed upon this occasion. The greatest object in the universe, says a certain philosopher, is a good man struggling with adversity; yet there is still a greater, which is the good man that comes to relieve it." Im Tr. of B. lautet die entsprechende stelle:

"And if ever Wills looked handsome, it was at that moment, when, like heaven's ministering angel, he was restoring peace to the afflicted, health to the diseased, and liberty to the prisoner."

Wenn sich so mit sicherheit ein teil von kap. 15, 16 und kap. 17—19 als Goldsmiths eigentum nachweisen lassen (starke bedenken, ohne sie überzeugend fassen zu können, habe ich auch gegen den schlufs des 19. kapitels, der zu dem folgenden, dem zweiten teil, überleitet), so ist eine natürliche frage: gehen nicht auch andere teile auf ihn zurück? Hier beginnen wir einen sehr unsicheren boden zu betreten. Widersprechende kriterien, in der behandlung der poetischen mittel und des stils, hatten sich sonst überall gefunden, und so vieles, die ganze vorgeschichte von Wills' vater und den drei schwestern, die Wills hernach erziehen, die episodische figur Jefferson, der den lehrer verschafft, die in kap. 12 ausgeführte ansicht über stadt und land, ganz besonders die so künstlich eingefügte liebesaffaire mit Miss Collins stimmen so wenig zu Goldsmith wie nur möglich. Wohl wahrscheinlich ist aber, dafs Goldsmith wenigstens einen plan für den anfang entworfen hatte (die kapitel, die ihn am meisten anzogen und ihm vor allem am leichtesten aus der feder flossen, da sie nur umarbeitungen waren, arbeitete er zuerst aus), vielleicht nur im umrifs ausgeführt hatte, die dann auseinandergerissen, mit unechten teilen verbunden und völlig überarbeitet wurden. Gelegentlich möchte man einzelne stellen, lichtblicke inmitten allgemeiner öde, Goldsmith zuschreiben, so wenn es von Frank heifst, als er zum ersten male seine tante sieht: "He went to her without reluctance, and remained with her through choice. He saw she was fond of him; and though she was homely, had a great deal of good-nature delineated in her countenance. Instinct directs animals of the domestic kind to attach themselves to those persons whom they see fond, or who take notice of them. Perhaps it may be from some expression in the face. Perhaps it is some peculiar smell, that a dog or cat shall pay more regard to, and fondle on one person in a room in preference to any body else. We know not the cause, but the effects are frequent. Children, in the same manner, and perhaps from the same principles of instinct, shall be fonder of one person than another." Das

war ein thema, das Goldsmith vielfach angezogen hatte, wie überhaupt das dilettantenhafte, über alles sprechende, alles erklärende XVIII. jahrhundert; mehr als ein mal hatte er über die instinktive abneigung gesprochen. Hier und da, durchaus aber nicht überall, findet man töne, die an Goldsmith anklingen, in der geschichte Brewers, und vielleicht auch im kap. 9, mit der anspielung auf Merry Andrew's slippers, wo Frank einem armen jungen seine schuhe gibt und dann der wohlthäter der familie wird, eine episode, die im Good-Natured Man schon angedeutet ist und im ganzen auf Tom Jones (buch III, kap. 8 ff.) zurückgeht, der für den Black George eintritt (und pferd, bibel und nachtgewand für ihn hingibt). Nirgends sehen wir aber in diesen teilen den unverfälschten Goldsmith.

Dafs der zweite teil gar nicht mit Goldsmith zu verbinden ist, kann nicht bezweifelt werden. Stil, ton und stimmung werden ganz anders. Wills wird ein schönrednerischer tugendbold, eine unerträgliche sentimentalität drängt sich hervor. Ähnlichkeiten mit dem Good-Natured Man sind gar nicht mehr vorhanden. Nichts, auch nicht der plan kann Goldsmith zugeschrieben werden.

Das hauptinteresse, das dieses teilwerk in uns erwecken kann, scheint mir ein psychologisches für Goldsmith zu sein und liegt damit in seiner entstehung. Goldsmiths hilflosigkeit, wo es galt, neue motive zu finden — allerdings darf man nicht dabei übersehen, dafs es sich nicht um eigen gestellte, sondern um eine gezwungene arbeit handelte —, seine naivität, die sich in dem zurückgreifen auf eigene werke bekundet, zeigt sich erstaunlich klar. In dem werke selbst offenbart er die gewohnte milde und geklärtheit, aber neue züge in seinen anschauungen lernen wir nicht kennen. Die erzählung selbst ist eine nicht reizlose variation der alten motive mit manchen hübschen einzelheiten; aber sein bestes gab er durchaus nicht hier, es ist eben nur sein erster und unvollendeter entwurf, in dem manches wort, mancher satz — das wird das subjektive gefühl eines jeden, der mit Goldsmith vertraut ist, sagen — von einem pietätlosen bearbeiter herrühren mag und wird.

Da nach meinen umfangreichen nachfragen nur fünf exemplare von diesem roman in Deutschland existieren (zwei davon in Berlin), so gebe ich einen abdruck der in frage kommenden teile und beginne mit dem schlufs des 15. kapitels.

But his (Wills's) reverie was disturbed by some outcries, that seemed to him to proceed from a person in distress. The thought was enough: he flew to the spot whence he supposed the noise came. He was right. A gentleman was defending himself, as well as he could, against three ruffians, who were treating him very ill, and, to all appearance, wanted to rob him. The eagerness of the attack, and the vigour of the resistance, prevented their perceiving Wills's approach. With an excellent stick, which he generally made the companion of his walks, he brought two of them to the earth; the other, deprived of his associates, fled with great nimbleness. "Sir", said the gentleman, "I am under vara great obligations till you for your timely assistance."

"Ha! Captain M'Gregor, I am very happy indeed in rendering you any service."

"Oh! Maister Wills, are you my deliverer? In gude troth, ye're a bonny chiel: but what mun we do with these dogs here?"

"Let them depart", said Wills; "their own consciences, perhaps laden with crimes, will be punishment enough for them. Affected by our lenity, they may live to repent."

"Hoot awa", replied the Captain; "they shall be hanged; we're match enough for them now, and we'll incarcerate them; they shall be made examples of in terrorem."

"Come, come, Captain, you have lost nothing by them, you are only a little frightened; let us not be instrumental in depriving these poor wretches of life. You,

Taught by that pow'r that pities you,
Shou'd learn to pity them."

"Well, weel, Maister Wills, syn ye turn advocate for them I wull na proceed to extremities. Ye may gang your gait, you lousy dogs ye, ye'll be hanged yet for a' this."

"You have had an escape now", said Wills to the fellows who stood motionless and abashed before him: "let it be a

caution to you to shun the paths of villany for the future. If necessity induced you to commit this act of violence, it may be an excuse, though a very poor one; for honest industry can never want a subsistence, or bread to eat. Lest want should prompt you to repeat your offence, divide that guinea between you; go thy ways, and do so no more. If any other cause urged you to this deed, such as wanting the means to support your idleness or extravagance, my admonitions I fear will be in vain; yet the dread of a shameful punishment, if you have no regard for virtue or honesty, should put a stop to this practice."

He held out the guinea towards the nearest of them, M'Gregor pulled back his hand. "What the de'el, Maister Wills, are you going to reward the villains?"

"You need not have prevented the young gentleman's generosity", said one of the men. "I would not have taken it from him: I see his nobleness of spirit, and admire it. The brave are always generous and humane. For my part, I have, in other times, been in a better way than this; and the reproof I have met to-night has affected me more, than corporal punishment would have done. I thank you for your lenity, Sir: it has had the desired effect. I will forsake my evil courses, and you shall have all the merit of my conversion."

"I am surprised to hear a man, who acts in the character of a robber, speak in such a style, and express such sentiments: there is some mystery in this, and if you will rely on my honour —"

"That I would willingly", returned the other; "but this mystery cannot be unravelled now. All I hope for, is to meet you in some place, when I may be able to return you the service you have done me this night. Will you tell me your name?"

"Wills."

"It is enough. I shall retain it in my memory till my dying hour; and when I dare pray, you shall be remembered."

He beckoned to his companion, who spoke not a word; and jumping over the ditch, gained the fields, and soon became invisible in the shades of night.

Chapter XVI.

A conversation. Another attempt of Wills's; its success; and another adventure begun.

"And which way do you go, Captain?"

"I am going your road, as I intended to sleep wi' my friend to-night."

"Well, then, we shall be companions."

"It's vara agreeable; but I don't believe that rascal's dying hour, as he ca's it, is far off."

"I am of another opinion, Captain: he may live to be a very worthy member of the community yet: perhaps he has a wife and children who are starving, and the only way he has of supporting them, and keeping them alive, is by committing these acts of violence."

"Weel, Sir, vara weel, Sir, it may be so; but then he ought to be hanged. When a man lives in a country governed by laws, and he transgresses any o' those laws, he should suffer such punishment as they prescribe; and if I donna mistake, there is a punishment annexed to the compounding a crime of this nature."

"There may be so", said Wills, "but I cannot suppose myself liable to punishment; or imagine I have broken any law, human or divine, by not assisting you in the apprehending those unhappy wretches, and delivering them over to the hand of justice. Suppose the crime is capital and their lives forfeited by the commission of it, how could you reconcile it to yourself to punish that man with death, who had only taken part of your property?"

"Most undoubtedly: else wherefore do we live under the law, which makes it a crime worthy death?"

"That must be the fault of that law: for by the most equitable law, which is that of retaliation, *lex talionis*, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, is only required: but, in case of murder, I own there should be a deprivation of life; there no restoration can be: but in cases of robbery or theft, where there is no corporal damage or injury sustained, if the offender was compelled to restore threefold what he had taken, or, if he had no goods of his own, to be kept to work in a house, set apart for that purpose, till the profits of his labour

should amount to the sum he was to pay, it might answer a very good end. Let him also fine to the king, as chief magistrate and head of that community, whose laws he had violated. A regulation of this kind would make a capital punishment more terrible, as it would be less common. Hanging is thought nothing of now, it's only what is seen every thay; and we have an instance that a man would rather be hanged than transported, because, during the term of his punishment, he should be obliged to work. A man who was cast for transportation petitioned his Majesty for that purpose. And I do not imagine there is a nation under the sun, who could make a song on the awful solemnity of a criminal convicted going to suffer death, and turn the whole into ridicule, but the English. A soldier, you must know, captain, acquires a mechanical courage; from seeing so many fall dead round him, he grows inured to the sight, and disregards it."

"You're vara right there, indeed, Maister Wills; it's vara true. The frequency of public executions takes awa' from the terror of them: but even allowing a' that, do you na think that you were wrong in offering a reward, of sae muckle a sum as a guinea too, to a man wha was going to cut my throat?"

"Why, captain, do you ask me that question? It is doubtless to give me an opportunity of explaining my principles. If it was mere and absolute want that induced them to commit such an action, sure it was much better to relieve them, than, by letting them continue in the same necessitous situation, compel them to be guilty of the same crime again. If it had been habitual to them, they would not have refused the money I offered. Avarice is the cause of robbery: and surely they would not hesitate at less dishonourable means of coming at money; neither would the man have spoken to me as he did: that very circumstance may shew him, that it is not necessary to use violence to get at money. Parnell has illustrated a circumstance something like this in his poem of the Hermit, in the character of the avaricious and penurious man, when the silver cup is left with him. The poet says,

With him I left the cup, to teach his mind
That heav'n can bless, if mortals will be kind.

Conscious of wanting worth, he views the bowl,
 And feels compassion touch his grateful soul.
 Thus artists melt the sullen ore of lead,
 With heaping coals of fire upon its head:
 In the kind warmth the metal learns to glow,
 And, loose from dross, the silver runs below.

Unexpected acts of beneficence have wrought wonderous changes."

"I dunna doubt it; but I believe there will be na change wrought in him. I dunna think that he wa'd be a bit the better for going to the university of Glasgow."

"May be not", said Wills, laughing.

"You misunderstand me, Sir", replied the captain, a little piqued at the joke; "I mean, that he is so hardened in his wickedness, that no gude example, or precept either, wou'd have any effect on him, or cause an amendment in his manners: and I cannot help thinking, that your intending to give the mon a guinea, was equally unprecedented and wrong; for it was only encouraging the villain, and your lenity was a' misplaced. Now, if he had been confined in prison, or hanged, as he deserved, he cou'd na' have been guilty of the same crime again: I think that you will be accessory to every crime he commits in consequence of your letting him escape now. And in gude troth, it had na' happen'd, if you had na' been the interceder for him."

"Well, captain, I am obliged to you."

"Nay, nay, not so", replied the captain, interrupting him: "You have done me a signal service, and I shou'd endeavour to return it, though it was contrary to my inclinations that the rascal escaped."

Teil I, seite 162.

It was near night when he left Mrs. Collins's, and passing through the Birdcage-walk to go through Buckingham gate to Chelsea, his eye was caught with a female, whose carriage and air bespoke her superior to the generality of the unhappy wretches that ply there continually: and earn a wretched and precarious subsistence by the most abandoned

prostitution. He walked softly behind her, and perceived a great appearance of poverty in her dress: yet she was clean, and aimed not at that flashing finery, to set off her person, that the rest did. Her hat was flapped over her eyes; nor did she lift up her head, which hung upon her breast in silent dejection. The sound of his steps behind her could not make her turn her eyes towards him: and he thought he heard her sob, but he could hear her sighs very plainly. Her pace was slow, and pensive: and she appeared regardless of every object that passed by her. Such a conduct seemed more calculated to repress, than stimulate desire. Wills followed her a long time, endeavouring to account to himself, but in vain, for her behaviour. Her apparent distress awakened his compassion, not more than her manner his curiosity: and though he was well aware of the tricks practised by the adventurers who frequent that place, prepared to accost her. In what manner he did it the reader will find in the next chapter.

Chapter XVII.

This adventure continued.

How to address her, Wills could not easily settle with himself. If she was a person really in sorrow, as she seemed, he could never have forgiven himself for speaking to her in a harsh or distressing manner. He could not behave rudely to her; that was not in his nature, even tho' he considered her as one of those victims devoted to pleasure. While he was employed in these cogitations, and undetermined how to act, she had gained the upper end of the shady walk, cast her eyes upon Rosamond's Pond, sighed, and turned about to go back again. At that moment Wills met her: and he found he must speak to her, or remain unsatisfied concerning her situation, which he wished much to know. "Where are you going, Madam?" said he, in the softest tone of voice he could possibly assume. She stopped; gazed at him, but answered not. He repeated the question. "Where are you going, Madam?"

"I am going", answered she, "to perish upon the bosom of an unfortunate father, who knows not this moment what is become of me. Don't hinder me from dying in his —"

She could no more: her sobs choaked her utterance, and she had been suffocated with the rising gust of passion, if a shower of tears had not relieved her.

Wills, who expected one of the usual answers to his question, stood thunderstruck at this reply. "Why do you think of dying, Madam? Your youth promises you a long life: and why should you turn your thoughts on the grave?"

"Want, distress, and the bitterest stings of poverty, will cut the thread of life", said she. "Mine is almost gone."

"Can money relieve you from your present necessities? If it is not beyond my power to assist you, I will willingly do it. My heart is susceptible of your woes, and I want nothing but the ability to remove them. You must let me know what they are, and perhaps I may be of service to you. Accept these two guineas from me: I have no more about me."

"And what recompence do you desire", said she, in a determined accent, "for these two guineas?"

"None other than the consideration that it has been in my power to relieve you, and that I have the conscious satisfaction of rescuing you from want."

"It is too much", returned she: "it is too much! and so unlike the customs of this world, that I can scarce believe it real: but yet I have read and heard of such exalted and disinterested generosity, and perhaps I may have now met with it. May it be so!"

Her voice faltered as she spoke. A chair happened fortunately to be near her, she threw herself into it, and indulged the flood of tears that eased her labouring heart. Wills seated himself beside her, and waited till the first pause in her distress and sobbing, to speak to her. "I assure you I have no other motive than what I told you: but your language and manners so far above your appearance, and the place you are in at this time in the evening, astonish me. Forgive my inquisitiveness, if I ask you what is the meaning of your tears? My curiosity is laudable, and the whole intention of it is to serve you."

"I cannot disbelieve it, Sir; and I will give you an opportunity of exercising your humanity. But", said she, rising, "I must hasten to my father, who is perhaps perishing for want of food at this very moment."

"Oh heavens!" said Wills, "but where is he?"

"Confined in a loathsome jail; but, indeed, Sir, for no crime, except that of being too tenacious of his own and his unhappy daughter's honour."

"Then do not delay", replied Wills, "we'll hasten together to him."

"Alas, Sir, the sight would be too shocking for you to support; I can hardly bear it myself, though accustomed and inured to misery."

They walked down the walk together. Assured of Wills's honest intentions, she supported herself by his arm as they proceeded. "But", said he, "if I cannot see him to-night, I hope you will give me leave to call and see you both to-morrow morning. Where is he? and how shall I find him out."

"His name is Belton, and he is confined in the Marshalsea Prison in the borough of Southwark."

"I do not know the place, but I shall easily find it: and you may be assured I will call there on you in the morning."

"Ah, Sir", replied Sophia Belton, "it is long since we have seen the appearance of a friend in our distressed situation: and tho' your goodness may induce you to come to us, yet it is so dreadful a place —"

"I regard not the appearance of any place, however frightful, where I can have an opportunity of serving merit or virtue in distress."

"Indeed, Sir, these are noble sentiments; but you'll learn from my father how those who professed such as these, have not adhered to them."

By this time they reached the street; and Wills, calling a coach, put her into it, and giving the coachman directions where to drive, paid him his fare, and took leave of Sophia, assuring her he should not fail to see her again in the morning.

He strode homewards as fast as he could, his mind filled with conjectures of what could be the cause of this young woman's distress, and with reflections on the scene he had gone through.

Wills, anxious to know the bottom of this affair, rose early in the morning, and his fear of breaking in upon Mr. Belton too abruptly, and sooner than he was expected, only prevented his entering the prison betimes: for he would rather have been guilty of an incivility to his superior, than offend the tender sensibility of distress by any roughness in his behaviour; and that was always so affectionate, so open, and cordial, that misery forgot her sorrows when they were alleviated by him. He waited impatiently for the time that would authorize him to appear before Mr. Belton. At length it came; and he approached the entrance of that prison, which, if thou hast never been in, it will not be amiss, gentle reader, to give thee a description of, that thou mayest know, if thou canst form an adequate idea of it from our draught, in what a wretched place those miscreants are confined, who owe their fellow subjects and fellow creatures the enormous sum of forty shillings. It is our wish that thou mayest never enter it, except, as Wills did, incited by humanity and compassion.

As you quit the main street, a dirty court presents itself to your view, which is terminated by large gates, closed with a massy bar of iron, fastened with an enormous padlock. The top of the high wall over it is guarded by a chevaux de frize, to prevent the unhappy prisoners making their escape. By a narrow door, which you go up three steps to, on your right hand, and which is secured with a weighty chain and a large lock, you enter through a dirty room, which is the station of the turnkey. The horrid clanking of the chain, or the dreadful sound of the lock, is sufficient to terrify you; but when you descend into the prison, it is wretched almost beyond description. Houses, in which are apartments for the prisoners, with scarce a window, except in those whose inhabitants can afford to pay for them. Walls tottering to their fall. A small enclosure, where those who chuse it may exercise themselves with playing at ball, is in the middle of the area of the prison; this is all the spot of earth allowed them to recreate themselves in, if it can be called recreation. The sight of this wretched place, but, above all, the appearance of the unhappy people who are confined, must afflict the hearts of those who have the smallest spark of feeling. A set of

miserable creatures, meagre through want, squalid and pale with confinement, perhaps the objects of pique and malevolence, and imprisoned at the suit of some relentless creditor, whose overgrown fortune would not suffer a perceptible diminution from the loss of five times the debt. There may be some, who, pursuing fraudulent methods, have drawn this heavy vengeance upon themselves: but they are few in comparison of the unfortunate; and surely the laws should make some distinction between misfortune and guilt.

Wills, when he beheld this horrid scene, was affected so much, that he scarce knew how to go forward. He stared about him, wild with astonishment, and melted with pity. He paused some moments, before he could recollect himself sufficiently to enquire after Mr. Belton: and he was soon put in the way of finding his room. When he knocked at the door, Sophia, who was taught to expect him, opened it; and he walked into a very small room, which, by the assiduity of Sophy, was kept clean, tho' there was scarce any furniture in it, except two chairs, a little table, and a bed without curtains, in which lay an old man whose face seemed furrowed with the tears that had trickled down his eyes and cheeks. Wills's heart was so full that he could not speak: he silently seated himself in the chair that Sophy had placed for him, while she sat down on the bed-side by her father. "This is the gentleman", said she, "that relieved me last night; this is he to whom you are indebted for your life. Indeed", added she, turning to him, "we had not eat a bit for two days before. I was able to get a little milk for my father, and that was all the support he had." Wills groaned, for his tongue was tied. He had never beheld such a scene of distress, and it was beyond his conception how human nature could exist in it. "I do not know, Sir", said old Belton, in a faint voice, "to what motive to attribute the honour of this visit from you. If to your humanity, and the desire of assisting the wretched, and alleviating the woes of the afflicted, it is truly praise-worthy, and the reward of virtuous actions will attend you for it: but, if you come here with a view of insulting my misery, or seducing that wretched girl, who has no other portion but her innocence, I pray you retire, and leave us to our fate. We have been, for some time past, expecting the

welcome hand of death to relieve us from this dreadful situation: a king of terrors to others, but to us the best of friends."

Wills, who could not bear to think that Mr. Belton should suppose he had visited them from such detestable motives, first found his speech, in vindication of himself. The old man seemed pleased with his warmth, and satisfied with his reasons. "You will excuse me", said he, "Sir, for speaking thus to you. I have suffered much from the villany of mankind. You are a stranger to me, and a young man. My poor girl here, before hunger and want had withered the roses in her cheeks, and continual weeping had dimmed the lustre of her eyes, was a desirable object: she was more, she was handsome: she was better, she was virtuous and good; the delight of her father's heart, and the consolation of his woes. Her sufferings have affected me more than my own; and the dread of what will become of her when I am dead, has given me more pain, than the separation of soul and body would."

The poor girl's tears flowed apace: the big tear rolled down the venerable old man's face: and Wills did not, could not, refuse to join them. "Sir", said he, "I was moved with your daughter's distress last night, and I am come here this day to see if I can be of any service to you in settling your affairs. Let me know if I can serve you: and be assured, I will do it to the utmost of my power."

"I believe", said Mr. Belton, "your professions are sincere: but, whether they are or not, you can do me no injury now. I am fallen below the reach of malevolence or ingratitude. I will try to collect my spirits sufficiently to give you a detail of my misfortunes, and trace the steps that brought me here. It will be a good lesson to you, Sir, who have yet numbered but few years, to teach you, that you may do infinite mischief by letting your passions get the better of justice and reason. This is the least I can do for you, in return for your civility and good treatment to that poor friendless girl last night: she was out without my knowledge."

"Misery is sacred with me, Sir", said Wills, interrupting him: "it is no merit in me to treat it with respect. But, as you are not perfectly recovered and as it may be too fatiguing to go through your history without some refreshment,

will you take it amiss, if I beg the favour of you to give me liberty to dine with you to-day? I will just step out, and order something nourishing and proper for you."

"I shall be obliged to you for your company; but Sophy knows better where to order these things than you do."

"If she will be so obliging as to shew me the way, I will go with her."

They went out together, and he soon found a tavern, from whence he ordered some broth, and other things fit for a weak stomach. But previous to his going into the house, he slipped five guineas into Sophy's hand.

"You may be in want of some necessaries. Nay, no apology or refusal; I will not hear of either: and when I think our dinner will be nearly ready, I will wait on you again. In the mean time, you had better go to your father, and assist him."

She obeyed him without hesitation: and in her way back she was obliged to call at a neighbouring pawnbroker's to release some apparel, without which her father could not appear before Wills. When the dinner was ready, he returned to Mr. Belton, whom he found up and dressed, sitting on the side of his bed to receive him. He was clean and had the appearance and demeanour of a man who had known better days. He endeavoured, weak as he was, to rise when Wills came in: but this he prevented, by sitting down on the bedside by him. They conversed on different topics for a short time, and he found Mr. Belton a man well acquainted with the world. He had also an opportunity of remarking Sophy; and saw *that beauty her father had boasted of, shed a faint lustre over her features.* Dinner coming in, put an end to their conversation. After this repast, Belton found himself much refreshed: and, thinking Wills anxious to know the cause of his misfortunes, began his story, as follows.

Chapter XVIII.

The history of Mr. Belton.

"I am the son of a physician, whose learning, skill, and understanding, were sufficient to have insured him practice, had he been known: but, as fortune was not very favourable,

he languished in obscurity; and though he lived decently and frugally, he found himself going backwards in the world. He gave me a school education, which was all he could afford. He had, in his younger days, some intimacy with Lord Cotswold, with whom he had been at college. They had not seen each other for a long while: but my father, anxious to provide for me, or give me some opportunity of settling in life, determined to pay him a visit, and apply to him for his interest. When he made himself known, his lordship embraced him, and assured him he would do everything in his power to serve me: and desired my father to bring me to him. In a few days I accordingly went; and his lordship seemed well pleased with me, and my answers to the several questions he asked me; and then proposed to my father to take me into the house to be a companion to his son, who was younger than me. "He will have an opportunity of being better instructed here", said his lordship, "and I will take care of his future fortune." My father embraced the proposal with joy; and in a short time I repaired to his house.

The young lord was as lovely in his person, as amiable in his manners: we soon grew fond of each other, and pursued our appointed exercises with mutual delight, as we were together. The time came when we were to be separated. He went to the university, and thence to travel. His father placed me under the gentleman who was his agent. "I don't mean that you should make yourself an attorney", said his lordship to me. "It is my design, that you shall supply the place of my present agent whenever he dies; and all the knowledge necessary for you, is, to be acquainted with that part of the business relative to the management of my estate. I am convinced that you will be faithful and diligent, from your attachment to me, which I have no reason to doubt of." I assured him I should never deceive his expectations.

Soon after this my father died, and I became an entire dependant on his lordship's family, for he left me nothing beside his blessing. My attention and diligence, and the character the gentleman I was with gave his lordship of me, pleased him exceedingly: he became a father to me in the room of him I had lost; and at last, by the death of the agent, I was invested with that title; and Lord Cotswold had

the greatest reason to be satisfied with my integrity and attention to his affairs.

Soon after this, the young lord came home; his friendship was as great for me as ever; and he rejoiced at my situation, which would necessarily always make me near him. He assisted at my marriage, and made my wife some very genteel presents. He was very frequently at our house; and his professions of friendship were unlimited, and I believed them sincere. His father died when he was about eighteen, and he became earl of Cotswold. Our little Sophy was at that time two years old. I was confirmed in my employment, and my eyes were delighted with a prospect of happiness that they were not to possess. Fifteen years passed away in uninterrupted felicity. My little Sophy encreased in beauty; and her accomplishments were the joy of our hearts, for she was the only one left us; we had three others, who died before they were acquainted with trouble. Lord Cotswold had married a lady with a large fortune, and though she was a very fine woman, they did not live happily together. He would be very often, for a week together, at our house: it was more agreeable, he used to say, to him than his own; and frequently complained of his unhappy situation. My wife and daughter were the constant auditors of these complaints, and ever consoled him in the best manner they could. He found comfort in their consolation, and repeated his complaints. At this period my misfortunes first began: I became security for a man whom I thought honest, and who must have been inevitably ruined if I had not served him; a man who was indebted to me for many good offices. I was bound for four hundred pounds for him: he broke his faith with me, and fled. I became liable for the money, and I had it not in the world: for I had too much regard for my lord's interest, to think of enriching myself at his expense. The persons to whom the money was due came upon me, and I had but two hundred pounds of my own. In the midst of the distress and confusion caused by this accident, Lord Cotswold came to our house. The trouble and concern that was painted so visibly on the countenances of the family alarmed him: he asked what was the matter: with some difficulty they informed him. "Let not that create you a moment's uneasiness." — He called

for pen and ink, and directly drew upon his banker for the sum that was deficient. I was abroad during this transaction: and when I came home, they met me with joy and transport. I asked the meaning of it. They shewed me the draft. "I am not surprised at his lordship's generosity", said I to my wife. "We must live frugally till we can make the sum up again for him. But where is his lordship, that I may return him my thanks?"

"He is gone away on purpose to avoid them."

"I shall see him soon again, though."

I did so, and paid him those acknowledgements he so well deserved. I offered him a bond for the money. "No, no, Belton", said he, "only leave me a memorandum that such a thing has happened."

I gave him my note instantly, payable on demand.

"This will do", said he, "very well; though if you should die, I shall never take any notice of it, and I believe you are pretty safe with it while you live."

His visits to us were more frequent than heretofore. And several presents he made Sophy, which were rich and valuable, alarmed the prudence of the mother, who began to perceive in his assiduity to our daughter, something more than friendship to the father. This she communicated to me, and I determined to watch his proceedings very narrowly, and, too soon for my peace, I found his eyes tell the secret of his heart. He used to gaze on the innocent Sophia, with the most ardent transport; not a glance, not a word, not a motion escaped him. Master of the soft arts of persuasion, he would lament his misery, and blame his fate, that had placed him with a woman he could not love: he drew his own domestic troubles in such strong and striking colours, that he forced tears from the eyes of my wife and daughter. He thought by melting her heart to pity, to inspire it with love. But while he proceeded in this manner there could be no objection made to him. And as yet he had gone no further. Sophy's charms began to expand, with all the sweetness of the blushing rose: his passion was wound up to the height; it was visible in all his words, all his actions. We thought it necessary to caution Sophia from taking any more presents from him. She obeyed us; and the next day she had occasion

to put our injunction in practice. His lordship presented her with an esclavage: it was a heart bound in diamond chains. The jewels were rich, and it was a noble present. Sophia refused it. "Why, Miss Belton, will you refuse to accept this trifle from my hands?"

"A trifle, my lord? You may think it so, but I am sure it is too costly for me to wear, and does not suit my station in life: I must therefore beg leave to decline accepting it."

"You are fit for the most exalted station", returned he, "and would do honour to it. Would to heaven you had been Lady Cotswold in the room of the present! I should have been happy, instead of the miserable wretch I am now. I beseech you, my dear Sophy, to take this: I bought it on purpose for you."

My wife, who was present at this conversation, interposed. She begged him to excuse her daughter; who had already been distinguished by several marks of his generosity and bounty; and that it would afford an opportunity to the malicious to depreciate her character, which was all she had to depend on, if she appeared decked out in such magnificent presents. She therefore entreated him to spare her the mortification and grief of hearing her child traduced through his lordship's kindness.

"Oh", said he, "you distress my heart, by this refusal: it is my greatest happiness to see her charms decorated in the most splendid manner, and her eyes outshine the diamonds."

"Oh, my lord, you should not inspire the poor child with such vain notions."

"They are the sentiments of my heart", replied he; "I can no longer conceal them. I burn, I languish for the charming Sophy. I adore her. My love drinks up my blood, and destroys me. The secret my breast has laboured with for two years is now revealed, and I am the most miserable fellow this day existing, denied the possession of her I love, and confined to her I do not."

He threw himself into an arm-chair in an extacy of passion; and covering his face with his hands, remained motionless and silent. Sophia took this opportunity to retire. My

wife remained with him. He recovered, and looking wildly about him — demanded where Sophy was.

“Retired to her chamber, my lord.”

“And can’t I see her? won’t she smile upon me? I shall go mad if she does not. Oh! Mrs. Belton”, throwing himself on his knees to my wife, and taking her hand, “have some pity on me.”

“Rise, my lord! rise, and compose yourself. What can I do? what would you have me do?”

“I know not”, said he: “I am distracted.”

He said no more, but hurried out of the house. This was the last struggle his reason had with his passion; for, from that moment, he abandoned himself entirely to the latter. I was then in the country, transacting his business. And when I came home, my wife did not fail to acquaint me with this affair. I foresaw the dreadful consequences that would attend this passion, which he, so unhappily for us, conceived for my daughter.

He came to our house as usual, and, considering the obligations I was under to him, as he still kept himself within bounds, I mentioned nothing to him of what my wife had told me. Sophy behaved as before, in hopes that time and reflection would work a cure. But I was mistaken, and only fed the flame by suffering her to be seen by him so often as she was. One day he told me he wanted to speak to me alone, and took me with him in his chariot to a tavern. We discoursed about different things till after dinner; and when he had acquired a little courage from the wine, which he drank plentifully of, during his meal, he at last disclosed his guilty passion to me. “I adore her”, said he, “and cannot live without her. I will put my life in your hands. Consent to my marrying her privately, I will give you any securities in my power, that I will leave her all the fortune I can when I die, in case that should happen before my wife’s decease: and if she shall die first, your daughter shall be my lawful wife.”

My blood grew cold at the proposal. “Oh, my lord”, said I, “let your reason and your honour get the better of your passion. What a dreadful thing do you propose! and

to whom? to a father that dotes on his child with an extravagant fondness."

"Consider", said he, interrupting me, "that you will promote her fortune beyond your utmost wishes."

"But upon what terms, good my lord? Her fame, her character will be blasted for ever: she will be accounted your mistress: I shall be held infamous pandar, who have sold the honour and eternal welfare of my daughter for gain: I shall be pointed at in the streets: and you will bring shame and disgrace on the heads of her unfortunate parents."

To repeat all our conversation is impossible. He wept, raved, swore, entreated, offered bribes, and made use of menaces: they were all equally unavailing. He only asked leave to visit her as usual. I told him it would be impossible to see her after what had passed: that I was the child of his and his father's bounty, who had made me what I was. That every thing I had in the world was at his command, except the honour of my wife and child, and my integrity. That I should always regard him as my patron and benefactor, and, as such should be truly rejoiced to see him at my house; but hoped that he would not be displeased if I prevented his seeing my daughter, for the sight of her would only inflame his passion, and make him worse.

"At your peril, Belton", said he, his eyes sparkling with rage, and his whole frame agitated by fury; "at your peril remove her."

"Her honour is dearer to me than my life: she must go where that can best protected."

I hastened from his presence homeward; and, as we lived but at a small distance from London, I repeated the conversation to my wife, and begged her to send Sophia to a friend's house, till this storm was blown over. She obeyed: and I waited, with impatience, till I knew what effect her absence would have upon him, and till I saw whether he would come near the house again. He returned the next morning. He came to me with a dejected countenance. "Well, Belton", said he, "have you been cruel enough to remove the object of all my wishes from my sight?"

"I have done, my lord, as a father ought to do, who regards his child."

"Then", said he, starting up, "perdition seize me, villain, but thou shalt pay for this insult."

I found remonstrance would be vain, and therefore braved the storm. "Before she went, my lord, she desired these toys, with which you would have purchased her honour and her happiness, to be delivered to you."

"It is false, it is hellish false. You forced them from her: and thus I will destroy them, as I will thee; but she has worn them, and they have acquired a value by that: they have to me, at least, and I will keep them for her sake for ever."

He gazed on them for a few moments. "As for you, Sir", said he, "you must resign your employment: there is another ready to take possession of it."

"It is well, my lord; I wish he may be as faithful to you as I have been."

He made no answer, but went away.

I immediatly sealed up the papers that concerned myself; left all his accounts, and every thing that related to his affairs, in proper order, and departed for London to see my dear girl. I met her, and acquainted her with this change in my fortune. She wept bitterly, and accused herself of being the cause of it. The next day, my poor wife came to me, and informed me, that the person whom Lord Cotswold had put in my place, came to my house soon after I quitted it, and had seized all my goods for rent, and not left us any thing to call our own. This stroke affected me sensibly; for I saw my Lord was determined to destroy me, as he had threatened. It is true I owed him for many years rent; but he had made me a present of the house to live in, and I thought, he would not be so ungenerous. But I could not help myself, and began to cast about me to contrive how I should support myself and family: and going out that evening, when I was about ten or a dozen yards from my friend's house, a man tapped me on the shoulder, "Is not your name Belton, Sir?"

"It is, Sir: what is your business with me?"

"I have a writ against you, at the suit of the noble Lord Cotswold for two hundred pounds and the interest: you must go along with me."

I accordingly went to his house, and sent to my poor wife and daughter an account of my situation. It is too affecting for my spirits, almost exhausted, to recollect their distress, or my own feelings. Let it suffice to say, that I have been confined here near three years at his Lordship's suit. In that time, my poor wife has sunk under the weight of her afflictions; and about a year ago she died. Happy for her that she was removed to a place of rest, ere we had experienced the most bitter and piercing wants. When his Lordship thought that distress had softened my pride, he sent one of his infamous agents to me. I soon learned the purpose of his visit, and dismissed him in such a manner, that I believe he will hardly venture here again. We have tired out every friend we had in the world, by repeated applications for assistance; for the most friendly is wearied at last with relieving the distressed; and, but for your generosity to my daughter, I should have been, ere this time, numbered with the dead. How she came to meet you, or for what purpose she left me, I know not."

"Ah, Sir", said she, "don't think of it. I don't desire to think of it myself, though it procured me the happiness of seeing this gentleman. Oh! could I sit by you, and see you expire for want?"

"Be comforted, young lady", replied Wills; "better days are yet in store for you. Pray, Sir, where does Lord Cots-wold live?"

"In — street —."

"Have you ever made any proposals to him since your confinement?"

"Never. There is but one that he will accept of, and that is the only one I never will make."

"But you don't know, my good Sir, how his heart may be softened. Perhaps his passion may have changed its object. Give me leave to go to him: I will not fail to see him in the morning, and you may get a release from him on your own terms."

"Take care, Sir, what you say to his Lordship; for, should you propose any thing dishonourable, I will never abide by it."

Wills assured him he would regard his honour as much

as his own: and Belton consented that he should go to Lord Cotswold, and speak to him on his behalf.

When they had settled these matters, Sophy prepared tea for them; and Wills became inquisitive concerning the mode of living in the prison.

"There are many real objects of compassion confined here", said Belton, "and some who are not: but however good or virtuous a man may be when he comes into such a place as this, yet, from his being obliged sometimes through necessity to keep company with the most iniquitous of mankind, who frequently resort to these places, he cannot entirely escape the contagion. There are deeds of villany set in motion in the most remote parts of the town and country, by springs which are concealed here: and a man, when once he is reduced to want, and hidden in a horrid prison, has no regard to fame, or a good character: he imagines that he has nothing worse to fear, and he thinks himself authorized to prey upon those beings who have been the cause of his misery. There are some here so base as even to take advantage of the distresses of their fellow prisoners. In short, a prison is but a school for roguery: and a man will put in practice those things when enforced by want and necessity, which he would have shuddered at the very thoughts of, if he had been at liberty, and had only a competency.

And what must that wretch feel, who has affluence, and yet has been the occasion of all your miseries? I won't fatigue you too much now, Mr. Belton; you may depend upon seeing me to-morrow, and I hope I shall be able to bring you such tidings, as will please you, and make you forget those hours of misery and anguish you have passed."

"Ah, Mr. Wills", said Belton, "you are very sanguine; but I fear that you will be disagreeably repulsed."

"I'll venture it", said he, and he took his leave of them.

Chapter XIX.

A conversation with a great man, which makes
Wills act more foolishly than ever.

Wills's thoughts were not unemployed from the time he left Belton, till the hour it was proper for him to wait on Lord Cotswold. He was considering in what manner he should

address his Lordship: whether in the pathetic style to move his pity, or in a manner to convince his reason how unjustly he had acted. He was totally undetermined: and he let necessity supply the place of time and preparation, and to his lordship's house he went. The porter informed him his lordship was at home; and when he sent up his name, though unknown, he was admitted into his lordship's apartment, who fortunately happened to be alone. He received him very politely, and invited him to partake of the breakfast that was just brought up. Wills declined it: upon which his lordship asked what had occasioned the honour of that visit to him. "I come, my Lord, to solicit charity for a man, who, burdened with years and misfortunes, sinks under his troubles, and relies upon your lordship to relieve him."

"This is a strange application to me, Sir, from you, whom I have not the pleasure of knowing, and in favour of one whom I am totally ignorant of. It may be, Sir, that he does not deserve the exertion of my charity."

"I assure you, my Lord, he does, infinitely more than the mendicant who interrupts your passage in the street, with, perhaps, a feigned tale of distress: but I know this to be real."

"But pray, Sir, favour me with his name. Am I a stranger to him?"

"You are not by any means, my Lord. His name is Belton."

"Belton", said his lordship, starting at the name; "and what have you to say from him, Sir?"

"To say, my Lord, that the miseries he has undergone, are shocking to think on, and too affecting for humanity to relate. He lies confined in a horrid, loathsome jail, that would daunt Despair even to enter: his body consumed by sickness and want, deprived of every necessary of life: his lovely daughter too, who suffers with her wretched father, is no longer the object of desire; she is the child of woe and calamity; pale, emaciated, and lost to every comfort, she is carried away by the strong tide of trouble, which she cannot resist, to an early grave. Her mother, from the same cause, has trod that path already: therefore, my Lord, to move your breast to compassion, I address you in their

behalf: if you have conceived any pique against him, were you to see him, your revenge would be satisfied — Forgive him, and, by one noble act of generosity, cancel the remembrance of those ills he has suffered from you. It will also cause you to forget them yourself, my Lord, which will be productive of more happiness to you."

"And pray, Sir, who are you, that presume thus to lesson me."

"One who, incited by the calls of humanity alone, has interested himself in his affairs, and who would do any thing to assist and relieve him; and who wishes to awaken the same sensations in your lordship; for surely they are only dormant; they cannot be destroyed, nor can there be any heart so insensible, as not to be moved at their distresses."

"You mistake, Sir", replied his lordship, grinning, and taking a pinch of snuff, "mine is, I assure you. Pray, do you know that old rascal owes me two hundred pounds besides the interest for five years, and all the expenses he has put me to? Now, Sir, would you have me make him a present of that sun? Besides, it was money lent out of my pocket."

"Certainly, my Lord, I would: nor would I put two hundred pounds in competition with any fellow-creature's life: and if he dies, what will become of his wretched daughter? Her life is wrapped in his."

"No, no, she won't die: we shall have her among us then."

"Why, my Lord, she would have paid this debt once."

"She would so, but not now: I fancy she intends to offer herself to me to try, but you may tell her it will not do."

"What! do you imagine I came as a pandar, or a procurer for your infamous pleasures, my Lord; or do I look like a man who would bargain with you for the sale of that unfortunate girl's innocence?"

"I do not know what you look like, friend; but I know the business you came about, looks very like what we call pimping: however, if the girl will consent willingly and freely, I do not know what I may be tempted to do. I assure you, Sophy was a very charming, plump little tit once, a nice bit."

"Your lordship's insolence, which you may term raillery,

is what I have never been accustomed to: and did you not owe your safety to your house, it is not your rank that should protect you from my resentment."

"Oh, then, you are her bully too, I find: I did not think that she had been so bad as that."

"I'll tell you, my Lord", said Wills, rising, "I am an English gentleman, as well entitled to good manners and civility as your lordship; and from what I know of your character, infinitely more tenacious of my honour, and am more afraid of doing what's base and unjust than you are; who, I am sorry to say it, are accustomed and inured to it. Another circumstance, my Lord; I shall neither forgive or forget these strokes of wit, and shall have an opportunity of retorting them in a manner you will not like, and in a place that you would not chuse to hear them again."

He went away without taking any other leave of his lordship; who was not sorry at his departure, as it relieved him from a very disagreeable visitor, who had told him, with a freedom he did not like, things he did not chuse to hear.

Wills, who did not really expect such treatment, was very much chagrined: especially when he considered, that he must go back to the prison with an account of this interview with Lord Cotswold. To relate every disagreeable thing that had been said to him, would have been shocking: and how to conceal them he knew not, as it would be wrong not to acquaint them with the reception he had met. — He was at the gate of the prison before he had come to any resolution: however, as they were anxious, as he imagined, to learn the result of the conference, he went in. He found them impatient for his coming: hope had not quite forsaken them; or, at least, had returned, since Wills's visit. They were both much refreshed, and altered for the better, since the preceding day: but the concern that was visible in Wills's face, caused an alteration in theirs. After satisfying his enquiries concerning their health, Belton could not refrain from asking him, how he had succeeded with Lord Cotswold, or whether he had seen him: "though I should imagine, from your looks, that you had seen him, and had a very bad reception."

"You are but too true a prophet", replied Wills. "I have seen him, and he is inexorable."

"Ah", said Belton, "I feared it. His heart knows no pity. I must suffer with patience. I have learned to do so, but 'tis a very hard lesson, Mr. Wills. Pray, Sir, if you will indulge an old man's curiosity, what did he say to you?"

Wills related their discourse partially, for he concealed the most shocking parts of it. Belton remained silent when he had finished: and Sophia sat dissolved in tears. "Oh heaven!" said she, "that my father's liberty can only be purchased by my ruin!"

"Rather by my death", replied the father: "that will soon happen now, and heaven will regard thy virtue and goodness."

Wills endeavoured to inspire them with hope, and drive these melancholy notions out of their heads: he consoled and comforted them, and assured them better days were in store.

Hope though it be a flatterer, is very agreeable to the wretched; it often deceives them, but they trust it still. This was the case with poor Belton and his daughter: and though they had no certain reason, nor any probability of supposing their circumstances would be better, yet they could not help thinking they would, because Wills said so. There is not so pleasing a companion in the world as he, who indulges us in talking of what we wish and like to hear. Wills, who desired to make the change that was to happen to them, and which he had resolved upon in his own breast, less sudden and alarming than it would otherwise appear, continually talked of Belton's getting his liberty. This, though an impossibility to them, was very pleasing; and they pressed Wills to stay and partake of their little meal, which Sophy had prepared. He consented willingly; and ate with an appetite that shewed them he was very well pleased with his dinner. He took his leave in the afternoon. "Well, Sir", said Belton. "I hope you will come and see us again. Though this is a terrible place to come to, yet you won't think so much of it by and by, when you are a little used to it."

"I don't expect to see you long here."

Wills, when he left them, went into the first coffee-house he met, and calling for a news-paper, soon saw an account of a number of people who informed the public they had money to lend on the shortest notice, and on the easiest terms. He took down three or four of their names, and repaired to one of their offices. His security was unquestionable: but he thought the terms very hard. He went to others, and found them nearly in the same story. — "These rogues", said he, "are necessary to supply the wants of the distressed; but they live upon the misfortunes and calamities that befall others. Yet it is to these I must have recourse." He accordingly happened, very unfortunately for him, to employ a man whose appearance of candour, and professions of honesty were very great, though his terms were not in the least easier than any of the others. He wanted four hundred pounds. His estate was unincumbered; and in a few days the money was procured for him: but what with brokerage, premium, and other expenses, he received little more than three hundred and forty.

Possessed of this sum, he hastened to the attorney who had Belton's note. He saw him, and demanded if he was not Lord Cotswold's attorney in that suit. He replied — He was.

"Have you got Mr. Belton's note?"

"Yes."

"Then I am come here to pay you the money; and must have a discharge from you, to clear him from prison."

"Do you know", said the worthy son of the law, staring at him, "that it is two hundred pounds, and five years interest, that makes it two hundred and fifty: and the costs are, at least, twenty pounds more?"

"Make out your bill, Sir, and you shall be paid."

"Pray, Sir, are you any relation of Mr. Belton's?"

"No, Sir: but what business is that of yours?"

"Why true, Sir, to be sure: but my Lord would like to know who it was that paid the note: for he said that Mr. Belton had no friends or relations; and was taken by his father out of charity, and, that he must starve in prison."

"That was very humane in his Lordship, truly: but I shall not give him the satisfaction to inform him who it was. However, Mr. Belton knows nothing of this transaction."

"No indeed: that's something astonishing. Perhaps his daughter —"

"Hark you, Sir, be extremely cautious what you say of that young lady: and once more proceed, and finish your writing out the demand, for I shall tender you the principal, interest, and costs; and if you refuse it —"

"No, no, Sir, I don't intend it."

"But my Lord must give a receipt in full to Mr. Belton."

"There's no occasion."

"But he will have it; and you shall give me accountable receipt for this money, and also promise me a receipt, and such a one as I desire."

"Well, Sir, you shall have it."

When Wills had got the discharge in his pocket, he hastened to the scene of distress. He had, however, prepared them for his visit, by sending them a note in the morning, informing them that he should expect their company at dinner in a certain tavern he named. This was inexplicable to them: they were sure there was something extraordinary meant by it, for Wills was not accustomed to deceive them; but what that was they knew not. Wills, when he entered, gave the discharge to the goaler, paid his fees, and hurried to the room where they were waiting his approach. "Well, Mr. Belton," said he, "did you receive my note?"

"I did, Sir; but I know not what to make of it."

"It is nothing but truth"; said he, "I have procured your liberty for this day. I have interest enough for that. Come, there is a coach waiting at the door for you: we will go and eat a comfortable bit of dinner."

"I can hardly believe this to be real", said Belton; "but I am sure you would not impose on me: therefore I will go along with you willingly."

Sophy followed him in silence: and when she saw her father on the outside of the gate, where she never expected to see him alive, the tear of joy trickled down her cheek. Wills handed them into a coach, and directed the driver to proceed to the place he intended to dine at, which was a

little way out of town. They kept a profound silence, the consequence of astonishment on one part, till the old man cried out, that he could not trust his senses; and that there was some mystery in this, which could not be unravelled without Mr. Wills's assistance. He assured him, he would not explain it till after dinner, and then they should know every thing. "I shall be exceedingly impatient till that time comes", said Belton.

After dinner was over, he took an opportunity of introducing the note, and convinced Belton that he was really at liberty. The joy of the father and daughter are not to be conceived. Wills was loaded with thanks and caresses by the old man. Sophia's tears and silence spoke the sensibility of her heart. Not but she would, had not her sex's modesty forbid it, have caressed Wills as much as her father did; for she could not help feeling some tender emotions in his favour, who had rendered them so signal a service. And if ever Wills looked handsome, it was at that moment, when, like heaven's ministering angel, he was restoring peace to the afflicted, health to the diseased, and liberty to the prisoner. He would not repress those acknowledgements which they were pouring forth; it would have been affectation. But he could not suffer them to indulge them too long, and therefore turned the discourse into another channel, and the day was spent in happiness and joy. When evening approached, he conducted them to a house where he had procured convenient and small lodgings. He promised to visit them next day, and left them to their repose, astonished at the great change that had happened to them, and at a loss how to account for it. The next morning he came according to his promise, and brought with him Lord Cotswold's acquittance. Sophia's heart dilated with joy when she saw him. And he could not help thinking her a most amiable girl; but she did not affect his heart. Belton, who regarded him as a son, recovered his health surprisingly, and entered into a consultation with him, in what manner he should contrive to support himself and his daughter: many schemes were proposed, but they were not feasible. Wills had paid for their lodgings for a month. Belton had time to turn himself about. He proposed writing to a distant relation of his, who had

been left a considerable fortune in a distant county of England, and offering himself in the capacity of overseer of her estate. That was approved of, and Wills dropped a letter as he went out, enclosing notes for thirty pounds, to support them till they should have an answer from the country; and having restored them to liberty, he returned home very well satisfied. However, not before he had enjoined them, in the strongest manner, not to say a syllable of the transaction to any body.

The End of the First Volume.

CHARLOTTENBURG.

B. NEUENDORFF.
