

THE ABSENTEE.

CHAPTER I.

"Are you to be at Lady Clonbrony's gala next week?" said Lady Langdale to Mrs. Dareville, whilst they were waiting for their carriages in the crush-room of the opera-house.

"Oh, yes! every body's to be there, I hear," replied Mrs. Dareville. "Your ladyship, of course?"

"Why, I don't know; if I possibly can. Lady Clonbrony makes it such a point with me, that I believe I must look in upon her for a few minutes. They are going to a prodigious expense on this occasion. Soho tells me the reception rooms are all to be new furnished, and in the most magnificent style."

"At what a famous rate those Clonbronies are dashing on," said colonel Heathcock. "Up to any thing."

"Who are they?—these Clonbronies, that one hears of so much of late?" said her grace of Torcaster. "Irish absentees, I know. But how do they support all this enormous expense?" "The son *will* have a prodigiously fine estate when some Mr. Quin dies," said Mrs. Dareville.

"Yes, every body who comes from Ireland *will* have a fine estate when somebody dies," said her grace. "But what have they at present?"

"Twenty thousand a year, they say," replied Mrs. Dareville.

"Ten thousand, I believe," cried Lady Langdale.

"Ten thousand, have they?—possibly," said her grace. "I know nothing about them—have no acquaintance among the Irish. Torcaster knows something of Lady Clonbrony; she has fastened herself by some means upon him; but I charge him not to *commit* me. Positively, I could not for any body, and much less for that sort of person, extend the circle of my acquaintance."

"Now that is so cruel of your grace," said Mrs. Dareville, laughing, "when poor Lady Clonbrony works so hard, and pays so high to get into certain circles."

"If you knew all she endures, to look, speak, move, breathe, like an Englishwoman, you would pity her," said Lady Langdale.

"Yes, and you *cawnt* conceive the *peens* she *teeke*s to talk of the *teebles* and *cheers*, and to thank Q, and with so much *teeste* to speak pure English," said Mrs. Dareville.

"Pure cockney, you mean," said Lady Langdale.

"But does Lady Clonbrony expect to pass for English?" said the duchess.

"Oh, yes! because she is not quite Irish *bred and born*—only bred, not born," said Mrs. Dareville. "And she could not be five minutes in your grace's company, before she would tell you that she was *Henglish*, born in *Hoxfordshire*."

"She must be a vastly amusing personage—I should like to meet her if one could see and hear her incog.," said the duchess. "And Lord Clonbrony, what is he?"

"Nothing, nobody," said Mrs. Dareville: "one never even hears of him."

"A tribe of daughters, too, I suppose?"

"No, no," said Lady Langdale; "daughters would be past all endurance."

"There's a cousin, though, a Miss Nugent," said Mrs. Dareville, "that Lady Clonbrony has with her."

"Best part of her, too," said Colonel Heathcock—"d—d fine girl!—never saw her look better than at the opera to-night!"

"Fine *complexion!* as Lady Clonbrony says, when she means a high colour," said Lady Langdale.

"Miss Nugent is not a lady's beauty," said Mrs. Dareville. "Has she any fortune, colonel?"

"'Pon honour, don't know," said the colonel.

"There's a son, somewhere, is not there?" said Lady Langdale.

"Don't know, 'pon honour," replied the colonel.

"Yes—at Cambridge—not of age yet," said Mrs. Dareville. "Bless me! here is Lady Clonbrony come back. I thought she was gone half an hour ago!"

"Mamma," whispered one of Lady Langdale's daughters, leaning between her mother and Mrs. Dareville, "who is that gentleman that passed us just now?"

"Which way?"

"Towards the door.—There now, mamma, you can see him. He is speaking to Lady Clonbrony—to Miss Nugent—now Lady Clonbrony is introducing him to Miss Broadhurst."

"I see him now," said Lady Langdale, examining him through her glass; "a very gentlemanlike looking young man indeed."

"Not an Irishman, I am sure, by his manner," said her grace.

"Heathcock!" said Lady Langdale, "who is Miss Broadhurst talking to?"

"Eh! now really—'pon honour—don't know," replied Heathcock.

"And yet he certainly looks like somebody one should know," pursued

Lady Langdale, "though I don't recollect seeing him any where before."

"Really now!" was all the satisfaction she could gain from the insensible, immovable colonel. However, her ladyship, after sending a whisper along the line, gained the desired information, that the young gentleman was Lord Colambre, son, only son, of Lord and Lady Clonbrony—that he was just come from Cambridge—that he was not yet of age—that he would be of age within a year; that he would then, after the death of somebody, come into possession of a fine estate by the mother's side; "and therefore, Cat'rine, my dear," said she, turning round to the daughter who had first pointed him out, "you understand we should never talk about other people's affairs."

"No, mamma, never. I hope to goodness, mamma, Lord Colambre did not hear what you and Mrs. Dareville were saying!"

"How could he, child?—He was quite at the other end of the world."

"I beg your pardon, ma'am—he was at my elbow, close behind us; but I never thought about him till I heard somebody say 'my lord—'"

"Good heavens!—I hope he didn't hear."

"But, for my part, I said nothing," cried Lady Langdale.

"And for my part, I said nothing but what every body knows," cried Mrs. Dareville.

"And for my part, I am guilty only of hearing," said the duchess. "Do, pray, Colonel Heathcock, have the goodness to see what my people are about, and what chance we have of getting away to-night."

"The Duchess of Torcaster's carriage stops the way!"—a joyful sound to Colonel Heathcock and to her grace, and not less agreeable, at this instant, to Lady Langdale, who, the moment she was disembarassed of the duchess, pressed through the crowd to Lady Clonbrony, and addressing her with smiles and complacency, was

charmed to have a little moment to speak to her—could *not* sooner get through the crowd—would certainly do herself the honour to be at her ladyship's gala. While Lady Langdale spoke, she never seemed to see or think of any body but Lady Clonbrony, though, all the time, she was intent upon every motion of Lord Colambre; and whilst she was obliged to listen with a face of sympathy to a long complaint of Lady Clonbrony's, about Mr. Soho's want of taste in ottomans, she was vexed to perceive that his lordship showed no desire to be introduced to her or to her daughters; but, on the contrary, was standing talking to Miss Nugent. His mother, at the end of her speech, looked round for "Colambre"—called him twice before he heard—introduced him to Lady Langdale, and to Lady Cat'rine, and Lady Anne — —, and to Mrs. Dareville; to all of whom he bowed with an air of proud coldness, which gave them reason to regret that their remarks upon his mother and his family had not been made *sotto voce*.

"Lady Langdale's carriage stops the way!" Lord Colambre made no offer of his services, notwithstanding a look from his mother. Incapable of the meanness of voluntarily listening to a conversation not intended for him to hear, he had, however, been compelled, by the pressure of the crowd, to remain a few minutes stationary, where he could not avoid hearing the remarks of the fashionable friends: disdaining dissimulation, he made no attempt to conceal his displeasure. Perhaps his vexation was increased by his consciousness that there was some mixture of truth in their sarcasms. He was sensible that his mother, in some points—her manners, for instance—was obvious to ridicule and satire. In Lady Clonbrony's address there was a mixture of constraint, affectation, and indecision, unusual in a person of her birth, rank, and knowledge of the world. A natural and unnatural manner seemed struggling in all her gestures, and in every syllable that she articulated—a naturally free, familiar, good-natured, precipitate, Irish manner, had been schooled, and schooled late in life, into a sober, cold, still, stiff deportment, which she mistook for English. A strong Hibernian accent she had, with infinite difficulty, changed into an English tone. Mistaking reverse of wrong for right, she caricatured the English pronunciation; and the extraordinary precision of her London phraseology betrayed her not to be a Londoner, as the man who strove to

pass for an Athenian was detected by his Attic dialect. Not aware of her real danger, Lady Clonbrony was, on the opposite side, in continual apprehension every time she opened her lips, lest some treacherous *a* or *e*, some strong *r*, some puzzling aspirate or non-aspirate, some unguarded note, interrogative, or expostulatory, should betray her to be an Irishwoman. Mrs. Dareville had, in her mimicry, perhaps, a little exaggerated, as to the *teebles* and *cheers*, but still the general likeness of the representation of Lady Clonbrony was strong enough to strike and vex her son. He had now, for the first time, an opportunity of judging of the estimation in which his mother and his family were held by certain leaders of the ton, of whom, in her letters, she had spoken so much, and into whose society, or rather into whose parties, she had been admitted. He saw that the renegado cowardice with which she denied, abjured, and reviled her own country, gained nothing but ridicule and contempt. He loved his mother; and, whilst he endeavoured to conceal her faults and foibles as much as possible from his own heart, he could not endure those who dragged them to light and ridicule. The next morning, the first thing that occurred to Lord Colambre's remembrance, when he awoke, was the sound of the contemptuous emphasis which had been laid on the words IRISH ABSENTEES!— This led to recollections of his native country, to comparisons of past and present scenes, to future plans of life. Young and careless as he seemed, Lord Colambre was capable of serious reflection. Of naturally quick and strong capacity, ardent affections, impetuous temper, the early years of his childhood passed at his father's castle in Ireland, where, from the lowest servant to the well-dressed dependent of the family, every body had conspired to wait upon, to fondle, to flatter, to worship, this darling of their lord. Yet he was not spoiled—not rendered selfish; for in the midst of this flattery and servility, some strokes of genuine generous affection had gone home to his little heart: and though unqualified submission had increased the natural impetuosity of his temper, and though visions of his future grandeur had touched his infant thought, yet, fortunately, before he acquired any fixed habits of insolence or tyranny, he was carried far away from all that were bound or willing to submit to his commands, far away from all signs of hereditary grandeur—plunged into one of our great public schools—into a new world. Forced to struggle, mind and body, with his equals, his

rivals, the little lord became a spirited school-boy, and in time, a man. Fortunately for him, science and literature happened to be the fashion among a set of clever young men with whom he was at Cambridge. His ambition for intellectual superiority was raised, his views were enlarged, his tastes and his manners formed. The sobriety of English good sense mixed most advantageously with Irish vivacity: English prudence governed, but did not extinguish, his Irish enthusiasm. But, in fact, English and Irish had not been invidiously contrasted in his mind: he had been so long resident in England, and so intimately connected with Englishmen, that he was not obvious to any of the commonplace ridicule thrown upon Hibernians; and he had lived with men who were too well informed and liberal to misjudge or depreciate a sister country. He had found, from experience, that, however reserved the English may be in manner, they are warm at heart; that, however averse they may be from forming new acquaintance, their esteem and confidence once gained, they make the most solid friends. He had formed friendships in England; he was fully sensible of the superior comforts, refinement, and information, of English society; but his own country was endeared to him by early association, and a sense of duty and patriotism attached him to Ireland.—"And shall I too be an absentee?" was a question which resulted from these reflections—a question which he was not yet prepared to answer decidedly.

In the mean time, the first business of the morning was to execute a commission for a Cambridge friend. Mr. Beryl had bought from Mr. Mordicai, a famous London coachmaker, a curricule, *warranted sound*, for which he had paid a sound price, upon express condition that Mr. Mordicai should be answerable for all repairs of the curricule for six months. In three, both the carriage and body were found to be good for nothing—the curricule had been returned to Mordicai—nothing had since been heard of it, or from him; and Lord Colambre had undertaken to pay him and it a visit, and to make all proper inquiries. Accordingly, he went to the coachmaker's; and, obtaining no satisfaction from the underlings, desired to see the head of the house. He was answered that Mr. Mordicai was not at home. His lordship had never seen Mr. Mordicai; but just then he saw, walking across the yard, a man who looked something like a Bond-street coxcomb, but not the least like a gentleman, who

called, in the tone of a master, for "Mr. Mordicai's barouche!"—It appeared; and he was stepping into it, when Lord Colambre took the liberty of stopping him; and, pointing to the wreck of Mr. Berryl's curricle, now standing in the yard, began a statement of his friend's grievances, and an appeal to common justice and conscience, which he, unknowing the nature of the man with whom he had to deal, imagined must be irresistible. Mr. Mordicai stood without moving a muscle of his dark wooden face—indeed, in his face there appeared to be no muscles, or none which could move; so that, though he had what are generally called handsome features, there was, altogether, something unnatural and shocking in his countenance. When, at last, his eyes turned and his lips opened, this seemed to be done by machinery, and not by the will of a living creature, or from the impulse of a rational soul. Lord Colambre was so much struck with this strange physiognomy, that he actually forgot much he had to say of springs and wheels—But it was no matter—Whatever he had said, it would have come to the same thing; and Mordicai would have answered as he now did; "Sir, it was my partner made that bargain, not myself; and I don't hold myself bound by it, for he is the sleeping partner only, and not empowered to act in the way of business. Had Mr. Berryl bargained with me, I should have told him that he should have looked to these things before his carriage went out of our yard."

The indignation of Lord Colambre kindled at these words—but in vain: to all that indignation could by word or look urge against Mordicai, he replied, "May be so, sir: the law is open to your friend—the law is open to all men, who can pay for it."

Lord Colambre turned in despair from the callous coachmaker, and listened to one of his more compassionate-looking workmen, who was reviewing the disabled curricle; and, whilst he was waiting to know the sum of his friend's misfortune, a fat, jolly, Falstaff-looking personage came into the yard, and accosted Mordicai with a degree of familiarity which, from a gentleman, appeared to Lord Colambre to be almost impossible.

"How are you, Mordicai, my good fellow?" cried he, speaking with a strong Irish accent.

"Who is this?" whispered Lord Colambre to the foreman, who was examining the curricule.

"Sir Terence O'Fay, sir—There must be entire new wheels."

"Now tell me, my tight fellow," continued Sir Terence, holding Mordicai fast, "when, in the name of all the saints, good or bad, in the calendar, do you reckon to let us sport the *suicide*?"

"Will you be so good, sir, to finish making out this estimate for me?" interrupted Lord Colambre.

Mordicai forcibly drew his mouth into what he meant for a smile, and answered, "As soon as possible, Sir Terence." Sir Terence, in a tone of jocose, wheedling expostulation, entreated him to have the carriage finished *out of hand*: "Ah, now! Mordy, my precious! let us have it by the birthday, and come and dine with us o' Monday at the Hibernian Hotel—there's a rare one—will you?"

Mordicai accepted the invitation, and promised faithfully that the *suicide* should be finished by the birthday. Sir Terence shook hands upon this promise, and, after telling a good story, which made one of the workmen in the yard—an Irishman—grin with delight, walked off. Mordicai, first waiting till the knight was out of hearing, called aloud, "You grinning rascal! mind, at your peril, and don't let that there carriage be touched, d'ye see, till farther orders."

One of Mr. Mordicai's clerks, with a huge long feathered pen behind his ear, observed that Mr. Mordicai was right in that caution, for that, to the best of his comprehension, Sir Terence O'Fay, and his principal too, were over head and ears in debt.

Mordicai coolly answered, that he was well aware of that, but that the estate could afford to dip farther; that, for his part, he was under no apprehension; he knew how to look sharp, and to bite before he was bit: that he knew Sir Terence and his principal were leagued together to give the creditors *the go by*; but that, clever as they were both at that work, he trusted he was their match.

"Immediately, sir—Sixty-nine pound four, and the perch—Let us see—Mr. Mordicai, ask him, ask Paddy, about Sir Terence," said the foreman, pointing back over his shoulder to the Irish workman, who was at this moment pretending to be wondrous hard at work.

However, when Mr. Mordicai defied him to tell him any thing he did not know, Paddy, parting with an untasted bit of tobacco, began and recounted some of Sir Terence O'Fay's exploits in evading duns, replevying cattle, fighting sheriffs, bribing *subs*, managing cants, tricking *custodees*, in language so strange, and with a countenance and gestures so full of enjoyment of the jest, that, whilst Mordicai stood for a moment aghast with astonishment, Lord Colambre could not help laughing, partly at, and partly with, his countryman. All the yard were in a roar of laughter, though they did not understand half of what they heard; but their risible muscles were acted upon mechanically, or maliciously, merely by the sound of the Irish brogue.

Mordicai, waiting till the laugh was over, dryly observed, that "the law is executed in another guess sort of way in England from what it is in Ireland;" therefore, for his part, he desired nothing better than to set his wits fairly against such *sharks*—that there was a pleasure in doing up a debtor, which none but a creditor could know.

"In a moment, sir; if you'll have a moment's patience, sir, if you please," said the slow foreman to Lord Colambre; "I must go down the pounds once more, and then I'll let you have it."

"I'll tell you what, Smithfield," continued Mr. Mordicai, coming close beside his foreman, and speaking very low, but with a voice trembling with anger, for he was piqued by his foreman's doubts of his capacity to cope with Sir Terence O'Fay; "I'll tell you what, Smithfield, I'll be cursed if I don't get every inch of them into my power— you know how."

"You are the best judge, sir," replied the foreman; "but I would not undertake Sir Terence; and the question is, whether the estate will answer the *tote* of the debts, and whether you know them all for certain—"

"I do, sir, I tell you: there's Green— there's Blancham— there's Gray— there's Soho"— naming several more— "and, to my knowledge, Lord Clonbrony—"

"Stop, sir," cried Lord Colambre, in a voice which made Mordicai and every body present start;—"I am his son—"

"The devil!" said Mordicai.

"God bless every bone in his body, then, he's an Irishman!" cried Paddy; "and there was the _ra_ son my heart warmed to him from the first minute he come into the yard, though I did not know it till now."

"What, sir! are you my Lord Colambre?" said Mr. Mordicai, recovering, but not clearly recovering, his intellects: "I beg pardon, but I did not know you *was* Lord Colambre—I thought you told me you was the friend of Mr. Berryl."

"I do not see the incompatibility of the assertion, sir," replied Lord Colambre, taking from the bewildered foreman's unresisting hand the account which he had been so long *furnishing*.

"Give me leave, my lord," said Mordicai—"I beg your pardon, my lord; perhaps we can compromise that business for your friend Mr. Berryl; since he is your lordship's friend, perhaps we can contrive to *compromise* and *split the difference*."

To compromise, and split the difference, Mordicai thought were favourite phrases, and approved Hibernian modes of doing business, which would conciliate this young Irish nobleman, and dissipate the proud tempest, which had gathered, and now swelled in his breast.

"No, sir, no!" cried Lord Colambre, holding firm the paper: "I want no favour from you. I will accept of none for my friend or for myself."

"Favour! No, my lord, I should not presume to offer—But I should wish, if you'll allow me, to do your friend justice."

Lord Colambre, recollecting that he had no right, in his pride, to fling away his friend's money, let Mr. Mordicai look at the account; and his impetuous temper in a few moments recovered by good sense, he considered, that, as his person was utterly unknown to Mr. Mordicai, no offence could have been intended to him, and that, perhaps, in what had been said of his father's debts and distress, there might be more truth than he was aware of. Prudently, there-

fore, controlling his feelings, and commanding himself, he suffered Mr. Mordicai to show him into a parlour to *settle* his friend's business. In a few minutes the account was reduced to a reasonable form, and, in consideration of the partner's having made the bargain, by which Mr. Mordicai felt himself influenced in honour, though not bound in law, he undertook to have the curricie made better than new again, for Mr. Berryl, for twenty guineas. Then came awkward apologies to Lord Colambre, which he ill endured. "Between ourselves, my lord," continued Mordicai—

But the familiarity of the phrase. "Between ourselves"—this implication of equality—Lord Colambre could not admit: he moved hastily towards the door, and departed.

CHAPTER II.

Full of what he had heard, and impatient to obtain farther information respecting the state of his father's affairs, Lord Colambre hastened home; but his father was out, and his mother was engaged with Mr. Soho, directing, or rather being directed, how her apartments should be fitted up for her gala. As Lord Colambre entered the room, he saw his mother, Miss Nugent, and Mr. Soho, standing at a large table, which was covered with rolls of paper, patterns, and drawings of furniture: Mr. Soho was speaking in a conceited, dictatorial tone, asserting that there was no "colour in nature for that room equal to *the belly-o'-the fawn*;" which *belly-o'-the fawn* he so pronounced, that Lady Clonbrony understood it to be *la belle uniforme*, and, under this mistake, repeated and assented to the assertion, till it was set to rights, with condescending superiority, by the upholsterer. This first architectural upholsterer of the age, as he styled himself, and was universally admitted to be by all the world of fashion, then, with full powers given to him, spoke *en maître*. The whole face of things must be changed. There must be new hangings, new draperies, new cornices, new candelabras, new every thing!—

"The upholsterer's eye, in fine frenzy rolling,
Glances from ceiling to floor, from floor to ceiling;
And, as imagination bodies forth
The form of things unknown, the upholsterer's pencil
Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a NAME."

Of the value of a NAME no one could be more sensible than Mr. Soho.

"Your la'ship sees—this is merely a scratch of my pencil. Your la'ship's sensible—just to give you an idea of the shape, the form of the thing. You fill up your angles here with *encoinières*—round your walls with the *Turkish tent drapery*—a fancy of my own—in apricot cloth, or crimson velvet, suppose, or, *en flute*, in crimson satin dra-

peries, fanned and riched with gold fringes, *en suite*—intermediate spaces, Apollo's head with gold rays—and here, ma'am, you place four *chancelières*, with chimeras at the corners, covered with blue silk and silver fringe, elegantly fanciful—with my STATIRA CANOPY here—light blue silk draperies—aërial tint, with silver balls—and for seats here, the SERAGLIO OTTOMANS, superfine scarlet—your paws—griffin—golden—and golden tripods, here, with antique cranes—and oriental alabaster tables here and there—quite appropriate, your la'ship feels.

"And let me reflect. For the next apartment, it strikes me—as your la'ship don't value expense—the *Alhambra hangings*—my own thought entirely—Now, before I unrol them, Lady Clonbrony, I must beg you'll not mention I've shown them. I give you my sacred honour, not a soul has set eye upon the Alhambra hangings except Mrs. Dareville, who stole a peep; I refused, absolutely refused, the Duchess of Torcaster—but I can't refuse your la'ship—So see, ma'am— (unrolling them)—scagliola porphyry columns supporting the grand dome—entablature, silvered and decorated with imitative bronze ornaments: under the entablature, a *valence in pelmets*, of puffed scarlet silk, would have an unparalleled grand effect, seen through the arches—with the TREBISOND TRELlice PAPER, Would make a *tout ensemble*, novel beyond example. On that trebisond trellice paper, I confess, ladies, I do pique myself.

"Then, for the little room, I recommend turning it temporarily into a Chinese pagoda, with this *Chinese pagoda paper*, with the *porcelain border*, and josses, and jars, and beakers, to match; and I can venture to promise one vase of pre-eminent size and beauty.—Oh, indubitably! if your la'ship prefers it, you can have the *Egyptian hieroglyphic paper*, with the *ibis border* to match!—The only objection is, one sees it every where—quite antediluvian—gone to the hotels even; but, to be sure, if your la'ship has a fancy—at all events, I humbly recommend, what her grace of Torcaster longs to patronise, my MOON CURTAINS, with candlelight draperies. A demi-saison elegance this—I hit off yesterday—and—True, your la'ship's quite correct—out of the common completely. And, of course, you'd have the *sphynx candelabras*, and the phoenix argands—Oh! nothing else lights now, ma'am!—Expense!—Expense of the whole!—Impossible

to calculate here on the spot!—but nothing at all worth your ladyship's consideration!"

At another moment, Lord Colambre might have been amused with all this rhodomontade, and with the airs and voluble conceit of the orator; but, after what he had heard at Mr. Mordicai's, this whole scene struck him more with melancholy than with mirth. He was alarmed by the prospect of new and unbounded expense; provoked, almost past enduring, by the jargon and impertinence of this upholsterer; mortified and vexed to the heart, to see his mother the dupe, the sport of such a coxcomb.

"Prince of puppies!—Insufferable!—My own mother!" Lord Colambre repeated to himself, as he walked hastily up and down the room.

"Colambre, won't you let us have your judgment—your *teeste*?" said his mother.

"Excuse me, ma'am—I have no taste, no judgment in these things."

He sometimes paused, and looked at Mr. Soho, with a strong inclination to—. But knowing that he should say too much if he said any thing, he was silent; never dared to approach the council table—but continued walking up and down the room, till he heard a voice which at once arrested his attention and soothed his ire. He approached the table instantly, and listened, whilst Miss Nugent said every thing he wished to have said, and with all the propriety and delicacy with which he thought he could not have spoken. He leaned on the table, and fixed his eyes upon her—years ago he had seen his cousin—last night he had thought her handsome, pleasing, graceful—but now he saw a new person, or he saw her in a new light. He marked the superior intelligence, the animation, the eloquence of her countenance, its variety, whilst alternately, with arch raillery, or grave humour, she played off Mr. Soho, and made him magnify the ridicule, till it was apparent even to Lady Clonbrony. He observed the anxiety lest his mother should expose her own foibles; he was touched by the respectful, earnest kindness—the soft tones of persuasion with which she addressed her—the care not to presume upon her own influence—the good sense, the taste, she showed, yet not displaying her superiority—the address, temper,

and patience, with which she at last accomplished her purpose, and prevented Lady Clonbrony from doing any thing preposterously absurd, or exorbitantly extravagant.

Lord Colambre was actually sorry when the business was ended—when Mr. Soho departed—for Miss Nugent was then silent; and it was necessary to remove his eyes from that countenance on which he had gazed unobserved. Beautiful and graceful, yet so unconscious was she of her charms, that the eye of admiration could rest upon her without her perceiving it—she seemed so intent upon others as totally to forget herself. The whole train of Lord Colambre's thoughts was so completely deranged, that, although he was sensible there was something of importance he had to say to his mother, yet when Mr. Soho's departure left him opportunity to speak, he stood silent, unable to recollect any thing but—Grace Nugent.

When Miss Nugent left the room, after some minutes' silence, and some effort, Lord Colambre said to his mother, "Pray, madam, do you know any thing of Sir Terence O'Fay?"

"I!" said Lady Clonbrony, drawing up her head proudly; "I know he is a person I cannot endure. He is no friend of mine, I can assure you—nor any such sort of person."

"I thought it was impossible!" cried Lord Colambre, with exultation.

"I only wish your father, Colambre, could say as much," added Lady Clonbrony.

Lord Colambre's countenance fell again; and again he was silent for some time.

"Does my father dine at home, ma'am?"

"I suppose not; he seldom dines at home."

"Perhaps, ma'am, my father may have some cause to be uneasy about—"