

Night and Morning.

BOOK IV.

Continued.

CHAPTER VI.

Times—Each thing's a thief;—
The laws, your curb and whip, in the if rough
Have uncheck'd theft.

The sweet degree that this brief world affords,
To such as may the passive drug of it
Freely command.—*Times of Africa.*

On the day and at the hour fixed for the interview, Mr. Beaumont, who had visited Mr. Beaumont, Lord Liburne seated in the library of his brother-in-law, and before the elbow-chair, on which he lolled carelessly, was our old friend Mr. Sharp, of Bow street notability.

"Mr. Sharp," said the peer, "I have seen you in the papers, and I expect a man here who professes to give Mr. Beaumont, my brother-in-law, some information about a law suit." It is necessary to know the exact value of the evidence. I would like to ascertain all particulars in the paper, so far as to see just what the paper fair—in the half note hint when he enters unobserved yourself—but as he is pro ably a stranger to you, note him still more when he leaves the house; follow him at a distance; find out where he lives, whom he associates with, what visits, their names and directions, what his character and calling are—in a word, everything you can, and report to me each evening. Dog him well, never lose sight of him—you will be handsomely paid. You understand?"

"Ah! said Mr. Sharp, "leave me alone my lord. Been employed before by your lordship's brother-in-law. We know what's what."

"I don't doubt it. To your post—I expect him every moment."

And, in fact, Mr. Sharp had only ensured himself in the porter's chair when the stepmother looked at the door, in another moment he was shown in to Lord Liburne.

"Sir," said his lordship, without rising, "be as good, as to take a chair. Mr. Beaumont is obliged to leave town—he has asked me to see you; one of his family—his son is my sister—you may be as frank with me as with him,—more so, perhaps."

"I beg the favour of your name, sir," said the stranger, adjusting his collar.

"Your first—business is business."

"Well, then, Captain Smith."

"Of what alignment?"

"Half-pay."

"I am Lord Liburne. Your name is Smith—hump!" added the peer, looking over some notes before him. "I see it is also one of the names appealed to by Mrs. Morton."

At this remark, and still more at the look which accompanied it, the countenance, before impudent and complacent, of Captain Smith, fell into visible embarrassment; he cleared his throat and said, with a little hastiness:

"My lord, this wretch is living."

No doubt of it—witnesses never die where property is concerned and imposture intended."

At this moment the servant entered, and the little note quietly folded, before Lord Liburne, he glanced at it in surprise—opened, and read as follows, in pencil:

"My Lord—I know the man; take care of him; he is as big a rogue as ever slept; he was transported some three years ago, and has been serving his shortness by the Home, his absent with out leave. We used to call him Dashing Jerry. That are younger we went after, by Mr. Beaumont's wish, was a pal of his. 'Cause the liberty I take."

"J. Sharp."

While Lord Liburne had listened to the candle, and spelt his way through it, Captain Smith, recovering his self-composure, thus proceeded:

"Imposture, my lord! Imposture! I really don't understand. Your lordship seems to think me a scoundrel, but I am quite unscrupulous. I am sure it is quite same to me; and if Mr. Beaumont does not think proper to see me himself, why I'd best make my bow."

And Captain Smith rose.

"Stay a moment, sir. What Mr. Beaumont may yet tell, I cannot say; but I know this, you are charged with a very grave offence, and if you witness or witnesses you may have fifty, for what I care are equally guilty, so much the worse for you."

"My lord, I really don't comprehend."

"Then I will be more plain. I accuse you of deviating an infamous falsehood for the purpose of extorting money. Let your witnesses appear in court, and I promise that you, they, am I this young man, Mr. Morton, who claim they act as you do, be exonerated for conspiracy. Concerning all these subjects, who are the most notorious, and the most mean of being thoroughly well informed."

The twenty-third Presidential election, with its stupendous grandeur, a third term of power and plunder, and still more as the countenance, before impudent and complacent, of Captain Smith, fell into visible embarrassment; he cleared his throat and said, with a little hastiness:

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