

LITERATURE, &c.

FROM COBBETT'S MAGAZINE.
FAUNTLEROY, THE BANK FORGER.

FAUNTLEROY suffered for forging the names of the owners of Bank Stock, by which he feloniously caused to be transferred into his own hands considerable—nay, enormous sums of money; still, however, continuing to pay the owners of the Stock their half-yearly dividends on the same; it is to be observed, that he forged no names, nor made free with any sums of money belonging to those who were not connected with him in the way of business. As a banker, he was agent to the stock-holders residing in the country; and was authorized by them to receive the Bank Dividends accruing on their stock. The banking-house in which he was a partner being on one occasion run hard upon and in want of money, Fauntleroy, who was always estimated as a superior financier, undertook to raise the required sum, and this he did the very next morning. What he said to his partners, or how he accounted for his possession of the money, has not yet been known; probably, they were too hurried at the moment, and too glad to have the timely supply to be over-nice in their enquiries. It is, however, now known that he went to the Bank, and by means of forgery, transferred the money he obtained from the name of a customer to that of his own, conceiving that the party would, probably, so long as he lived, wish to sell out his stock, and, therefore, would remain unconscious of the use which had been made of it so long as he regularly received his dividends; if, however, it should occur that the stock was required, he calculated, as agent to the party, that he should have time to replace it, even if he should be driven to the necessity of making free with another person's stock in the same way as heretofore. And this he actually subsequently did many times; until he got involved in a labyrinth of transferred stock, and his accounts so built up one on the other, that there was no retreating before the world as an honest man—no path open to him either to stop payment or go on—nothing before him but ultimate ruin, disgrace, and punishment: yet in this state, by plunging desperately, and as it were during the worst, he maintained the credit of the banking-house for upwards of eight years after the first fraud is supposed to have been committed. All this period, it should be observed, that his partners were totally in the dark as to his proceedings, he being the only real active partner in the firm.

Fauntleroy could, every day up to the one of his apprehension, have possessed himself of sufficient money to have carried himself out of danger; and if he could have brought himself to a life of obscurity and seclusion, might have spent the remainder of his days in independence. This alternative, he said, constantly occurred to him; but although, at last, hourly in anticipation of detection, and notwithstanding the horror which at times came over his mind at his impending fate, he was, as he himself affirmed, spell-bound to the spot, which he never could summon resolution enough to break. This may in a matter be accounted for by his attachment to more than one female; he was naturally amorous, and ultimately became licentious. Men with perturbed minds sometimes purchase their *lethe*, or *repentance*, from Bacchus: Fauntleroy went to another market for his draught or drug—that of Venus. A passion of any kind, by excessive indulgence will soon become pernicious, a more striking instance of which never occurred than in this case. When wearied and oppressed with intensity of reflection, and borne down with the horrors of an ignominious death, and when nothing could rouse him even when in prison, his conduct towards women was remarkable. Had it been lawful or consistent with the rules of Christian propriety to have made an experiment with him, I am convinced from memoranda in my possession and other facts known to me, that he would, if the opportunity had been allowed him, have gone through all the forms of making love to any female thrown in his way, and have continued so to engage himself up to the last hours perhaps of his existence. In point of fact, this is not a *postulatum*, it all but did occur, dead as he was to all worldly affairs; while under sentence of death, the sight of a female awakened recollections which were incompatible with his then awful situation, and which can only be accounted for upon the principle I have stated: viz. morbid action of the nervous system, occasioned by the associations of the mind touching the chord of former recollections; but of this presently I shall have something more to say. During the whole period that he was conscious of being criminal, he never could endure to be left alone to his own thoughts; when, therefore, disengaged from business, his whole time was spent, if not in visiting and receiving parties, in the company of his kept mistresses.

There is probably no instance on record, judging from Fauntleroy's education and station in life, of a sensitive mind enduring for so long a period a state of peril and danger, yet keeping up all the external appearance of gaiety and self-possession; though his acquaintances now saw that it was evident he laboured to be at ease. There can be no doubt but that the latter part of his career was spent in making efforts to disengage himself from his own thoughts, the hardest task for man to perform, and it is highly probable, had his detention been protracted much longer, that his mind would have been broken down under the energies his unhappy situation called upon him to exert. The force of a fall is always in proportion to the height from which we are hurled; the truth of this aphorism was illustrated in this case; he had no hope from the moment of his apprehension, his depression was the work of an instant; the sight of the officer, whom he knew when he came into his presence, (Plank, of Marlborough-street Police-office,) operated upon him like a *coup de soleil*, and he never afterwards rallied; his heart, indeed, must always have been like a watch, which knows no repose till it ceases to beat. As regards money, for several

years he appears to have been reckless of consequences; his habits were of the most extravagant character; only a few hours before he was taken into custody, he had given some directions for furniture which was to be sent to Brighton, where he was fitting up a house for the residence of a female in a style unusually superb for any private person. When giving directions for the manufacture of some costly sashes and furniture, he said (this was on the very day he was apprehended) "Let every thing be done in a manner to eclipse the King's Pavilion; if my house be not so large as his palace, it may at least be as richly decorated." He was a very liberal subscriber to public charities, and often gave a sovereign when asked for alms by casual beggars in the streets; at other times he either was or affected to be very parsimonious; but all inconsistencies in a man thus circumstanced may be ascribed to a troubled mind. When first placed before the public as a suspected criminal, at Marlborough-street Police-office, he appeared in a great coat, crouching his head into the collar of it for the purpose of concealing as much as possible his countenance, and with his arms folded. When committed to Newgate, he found favour with some of the City Aldermen, being accommodated, contrary to all recent custom, with very comfortable apartments in a portion of the prison devoted to the use of one of the head turnkeys and his family, in this instance consisting of himself, wife and servant.

His trial is already before the public; it required but the forms of the Court to pronounce a verdict of guilty, and for the judge to pass the sentence of the law, viz.—death. After which he gradually wore down by the intensity of internal agony, and the prospect of death before him; towards the last, he declined in flesh so rapidly, losing altogether his animal spirits, that if it had been possible to keep him another day, or even a few hours longer under the same impression of his proximity to the grim monster, it is a question whether pulsation would not have ceased under the mere apprehension of death. Even when sentence of death has been passed on him, and after the order for his execution arrived, he was allowed still to remain in the turnkey's apartments, instead of being removed to the cells, as is customary with all prisoners the instant a verdict of guilty for a capital offence is allowed against them. It may be asked, whether there is either policy or justice in making these distinctions. Fauntleroy, if he could enjoy any bed, had a soft one up to the morning of his execution; besides this he had another indulgence granted to him, the companionship of a favourite spaniel dog, upon which he was wont to look when sitting in his chair for hours; this animal he gave to the turnkey's wife, but after he lost his master he pined and wasted rapidly away until he died, when the owner of him (Mrs. H.) caused him to be stuffed, and placed in the turnkey's lodge, which leads to the apartments once occupied by his master in Newgate; and there was to be seen a short time since a monument of fidelity to man when deserted by all the rest of the world. On the evening previous to the execution of Fauntleroy, the turnkey's wife went into his room, after having placed his clean linen, &c. ready for the forthcoming awful event, and asked him if there was any thing further she could do for him; upon which he sprang up, and in the most romantic and impassioned manner said, after falling upon his knees before her, "My dear lady," at the same time taking her hands and kissing them vehemently, "you behold the fallen Fauntleroy before you, I cannot but admire you! I cannot but adore you!" The object of his addresses exclaimed, "For God's sake, Mr. Fauntleroy, don't kneel to me, you must have other occasions to kneel." "But I will," he continued, saying, "what can I do for you? What shall I say to you?" then turning his pockets inside out, said, "Here, this is all," holding out some money, "that is left in the world to Fauntleroy to bestow on any one, take it for my sake, with this purse." He then handed her his purse, containing three sovereigns, with which, conceiving him to be (as she said) light-headed, she escaped from the room. It is very currently reported that his friends, through influence with the City authorities, caused a narcotic draught to be given him the evening before he underwent his sentence. Be this as it may, it is very certain that in the morning he was quite unconscious of what was being done with him. He was taken from his room at thirty-five minutes after seven, and led between two men to the press-yard, there to be pinioned, and as the clock struck eight, the procession which usually accompanies these miserable men to the scaffold, moved through the devious and long winding passages to the fatal drop; all the way to which he was supported, and also while the finisher of the law performed his duty, being apparently in a perfect stupor during the whole proceedings.

COUNTER COURTSHIP.

PETER, after passing regularly through the grandes of apprentice and shopman, had for some years been established in business for himself. His shop, like its master, was not of the dashing kind, but it had two tolerably large windows, one on each side of the door, and they were both deftly decorated every morning with such of his commodities as he judged most likely to captivate the attention of passengers. All went on well for some time; his gains were not large, but they were steady and regular as himself, and he was perfectly contented with his prospects, till he became acquainted with Miss Clarinda Bodkin, a young lady owning to almost thirty, and withal a great proficient in the mysteries of millinery and mantua-making. Their friendship commenced across the counter; but Peter's attentions to his fair customer soon increased beyond all regular measure, and he was haunted by strange dreams of love and ambition, two master-passions which have overthrown many a mightier man. "Now, if Miss Clarinda would but have me," said he,

'we might divide the shop, and have a linen-draper's side and a haberdashery and millinery side, and one would help the other. I'm sure it would answer. There'd be only one rent to pay, and a double business, add it would be so comfortable too!'—and he rubbed his hands and resolved, as he termed it, to 'pop the question' on the very first opportunity. But when the question was popped, it was received in a very unsatisfactory manner. Perhaps he said too much about the millinery side of the shop, and too little about the lady; or the moment of his declaration might have been unfortunately chosen, as he had just finished reading a novel, the hero of which was, too probably, a fire-eating dragon-fighting, castle-scaling personage, very different from Peter Snook. After thanking him for the preference he had given her, she proceeded to comfort him with the assurance that she had no doubt he would very soon be able to find some other person perfectly qualified to make him happy, but that, for her own part, she had no idea of altering her condition. And forthwith she commenced plying her needle with wonted rapidity upon a piece of work she had in her hand: Peter placed his hands upon his knees and looked at the fire, and then at the cold-hearted fair one, and then at the fire again, and so on alternately for some time, for he knew not what to say, but felt, as he afterwards described it, 'struck all of a heap, and very uneasy in his mind.' At length, just as he had begun to stammer out something about hoping she 'would think better of it,' one of Miss Bodkin's best customers came to try on some article of dress, and such things being out of Peter's line, he was obliged to move off, and thus terminated the first conference. It was some consolation afterward to the unsuccessful wooer to find that he had not lost a customer; by the rash declaration of his passion. Miss Bodkin came as before to his shop, certainly she should have found it difficult to be served so well elsewhere, for Peter always waited upon her himself, and if she complained of the dearth of any article, rather than 'part for a trifle,' he said she should have it at 'prime cost.' Now, whether he really did let her have many excellent bargains, to induce her to continue her visits, or whether she felt disposed to give Peter an opportunity of 'popping the question' a second time, must remain uncertain, but it was, that two successive days seldom passed without her having occasion for something in his line, and she made no scruple of saying that she should always give him a decided preference, as long as she found that he did not charge higher than his neighbours. In this state things continued from January till May, when our linen-draper waxed bolder, and having laid in a choice assortment of spring patterns, and decked his two windows, with more than usual care, he ventured to hint how complete the appearance of the shop would be if one of them were filled with millinery and haberdashery. His shopman was out at the time & Miss Bodkin and he were *tele-a-lete*, the counter being between them. A piece of muslin, concerning which they had been some previous bargaining, was lying upon it, and as one was praising and the other was examining its texture, it happened that their hands came in contact beneath its folds. The lady was sensible of a very affectionate pressure, as Peter exclaimed—'Take it at your own price, miss!—and you have only to say the word, and all the goods in the shop will be yours on the same terms!' 'La! Mr. Snook!' said she, 'how can you talk so?' 'I mean what I say, honour bright,' replied he, 'and you know it too, miss. I'm not one of those who say a thing one time and deny it another; and so, if you've a mind, there's no more need be said about the matter.' 'La! Mr. Snook! you hurt my hand!' cried Miss Clarinda. 'I wouldn't for the world!' exclaimed the estatic draper. 'Oh! if I could but call it mine!' And leaning forward on the counter, he stooped and pressed it eagerly to his lips. 'La! Mr. Snook!' again cried the lady, 'how can you be so foolish! Only consider where we are! Suppose any body was to come in, what would they think?' 'I don't care what anybody thinks,' said Peter, retaining the faintly struggling hand; 'I can't think of anybody but you, and I don't care who knows it!' 'La! I declare if I had known I would have sent my apprentice for the muslin,' observed Miss Bodkin. 'Do let my hand go! See! I declare there's a customer at the door.' 'Then, tell me you are not offended,' said Peter earnestly, and keeping fast hold. 'No, no,' replied the milliner quickly, 'but I should not like to be seen so.' The hand was immediately released, and as the fresh customer was opening the door she continued, in a gay tone and manner:—'You really quite terrified me! There is a time and a place for all things. Give me the muslin now, and—I'm sure I don't know what I was going to say—but it's all your fault.' 'Certainly, miss,' observed Peter, instantly resuming his habits of the counter as the other customer approached; and, folding up the muslin with due precision, he added:—'Any other article that I can have the pleasure of showing you this morning, miss?' The reply was in