

LUCK AND UNLUCK.

About the end of the year 1749, two vehicles were rolling rapidly, one close after the other, on the road from Paris to Versailles. The foremost was the *coche public*, which contained only one passenger, M. Pigafet, a man of much merit; the other, a brilliant equipage, drawn by two superb and vigorous horses, drove towards the dwelling of power, conveying thither Comte de M—, a nobleman renowned throughout Europe for his talents, his opulence, and his singular adventures. The noble coursers were on the point of passing, and leaving far behind them the poor hacks of the public coach—when the wheels knocked together; and the shock was so violent, that the public vehicle, its *conducteur*, its horses, and its solitary passenger, were rolled pell-mell into the middle of the road. M. Pigafet, in his fall, dislocated his right hand; Comte de M—, who was naturally a good and feeling man, made him all the apologies possible, expressed his sincere regret, and offered him a place in his carriage to finish his journey. The driver was recompensed for his misadventure; and, as soon as they arrived at Versailles, the Comte sent for a surgeon, who dressed M. Pigafet's hand. Pigafet, touched by the constant attentions of his new host, and with the chagrin which he seemed to feel for being the cause of this trifling accident, tho't it incumbent on him to relieve his conscience, and assured the Comte that the clash of the two vehicles was not to be attributed either to the restiveness of the horses, or the *maladresse* of the driver—but to the pertinacity of his own evil destiny, which had always placed a ditch between him and the object at which he aimed—a rock ahead at the mouth of every harbour he tried to enter. "My journey to Versailles was to destroy or realize a great hope," said he: "I had just arrived at the object, and I am rolled in the ditch. I ought to have expected as much—all is as it should be; and it really is more honour than I am accustomed to, to see a noble Comte in the number of the causes of my thousand-and-one catastrophes. Once, a curst lap-dog made me lose the object of my affections—a bon-mot closed the doors of the Academy upon me, perhaps forever—and a contemptible insect, I may say, hurled me from a throne."

Comte de M—, astonished at this speech, looked steadily at M. Pigafet, he nevertheless appeared to speak with calmness and sincerity. His look was tranquil and undisturbed; in fact, he showed no symptoms of being out of his mind. His host, whose curiosity had been strongly excited, again expressed all the interest he took in his fate, sought to dissuade him from drawing such sinister presages from his late accident, and concluded by requesting to be informed on the subject of those surprising adventures, of which he appeared to be the victim.

M. Pigafet, as may be conjectured from his preamble, was as much disposed to speak as the Comte to hear, and did not wait to be asked twice. "I was born in Paris," said he: "my father, an honest but towering man, had discovered in me some aptitude for intellectual labours, and thought he was providing for my future welfare in settling me to acquire, all at once, superficial information in a great number of arts and sciences—being persuaded that an acquaintance with these different branches of knowledge would qualify me to choose a path suited to my genius and my abilities."

"The progress of civilization among nations—the gradual consolidation of societies in the midst of barbarism and disturbance—this voluntary curb which force imposes on itself;—in a word, all the benefits of legislation strongly affected my mind. I accordingly betook myself to the study of law, and became an *avocat*. I had acquired some reputation at the bar, when I was called on to plead at the Chatelet, in a cause, of the justice of which I was perfectly convinced. My antagonist, a man of the name of Bernard—as mere a blunderer as ever existed, but who contrived to conceal his ignorance and fatuity under a false air of modesty—pronounced, in a stammering way, a very bad pleading, which, nevertheless, was the production of some one else. His voice lowered so much during the course of reading, that not a word was heard at the end; and a buzz of private conversation got up among the public, in the hall, and even on the bench. I spoke in my turn, and was heard with the greatest attention; but in the heat of delivery, a ve-

hement gesture which I made, deranged my wig, and gave me so grotesque an appearance, that an universal laugh burst from all quarters, which was augmented by the unlucky efforts I made to repair the disorder in my legal head-dress. I not only lost my cause, but every time I appeared at the bar, the same laugh awaited me on my occupying the tribune. I lost courage, and quitted a career in which an equivocal gesture is sufficient to compromise the rights of the widow and the orphan."

"Physical and moral inquiries into the nature of man had always great attractions for me; I was acquainted with some branches of natural science, and the medical system then in fashion seemed to me susceptible of important ameliorations. I devoted myself to medicine with ardour: I compared Hippocrates, Galen, and Avicenna with the moderns, and fancied I perceived that that sublime science had degenerated, by losing its simplicity in the hands of doctors of the *bolus* and *elixir*. I had the courage to combat inflammatory diseases by water, regimen, and bleeding; I even dared to proscribè Jesuits' bark, which then was in the height of its popularity. I obtained numberless enemies among apothecaries, wine merchants, and my brother physicians; but proud of the unexpected success, which every day awaited my exertions, I boldly pursued my course. Being called one day to consult with a physician newly admitted, I recognized in him Bernard, my old antagonist at the bar. He also had become a doctor; and differing with me as to the manner of treating our patient, he declared him a dead man if I managed him according to my system. The patient, however, confided in me, in which he did right, for he was speedily growing convalescent; when, having taken some grapes by my direction, a cursed grape-stone stuck in his œsophagus, and occasioned such violent efforts in his attempts to get rid of it, that it induced apoplexy, and he died suddenly, to the great joy of Bernard, who boasted every where of his prediction, and prated about what he called the fatal effects of my system. My reputation suffered, and his increased. In the wine-rooms and the apothecaries' shops, the clamours against me redoubled. It was in vain that I proved that the unlucky grape-stone alone had destroyed the beneficial effects of my care—nobody would listen to me. To add to my misfortune, Gil Blas appeared about the same time, and it was thought that Dr. Sangrado was drawn for me. Every body gave me the nickname, and ridicule finished what ill-luck had begun. I lost all credit—and with me, I scruple not to say, the rising edifice of the real art of curing disorders fell to the ground."

"A nick-name in France often hurts more than a bad action. The wound inflicted by the weapon of ridicule is only to be cicatrized under other skies, and in different climates. I realized my little fortune, and resolving to speculate upon it, I became a voluntary exile from my jeering country."

"Commerce, the link of nations, the parent of civilization, the perpetual source from which all the blessings and luxuries of life are supplied, is, to a thinking man, an object worthy of the most profound meditation. In spite of the contempt which little people, with great airs, or great names affect to feel for it, it is, said I, to extend or protect commerce that all wars are undertaken, that kings risk the security of their thrones, and shed the blood even of their nobles; that diplomacy supplies all the resources of genius and cunning; that the useful arts are perfected, and that an external correspondence of emulation and activity is kept up in all the civilized world. I became then a merchant; I established myself in the West Indies, into which I imported the productions of French manufactures, and sent back to France in return transatlantic commodities, always excepting Jesuits' bark: for, superior to Coriolanus, I did not wish to injure my ungrateful compatriots. My commercial transactions prospered beyond my expectations; and in a few years, my funds having increased ten-fold, permitted me to revisit, with a large fortune honorably acquired, the dear spot where I was born, and to brave the jokes and nick-names of my old rivals. With the hope of making a still more considerable addition to my fortune, I employed the greatest part of my capital in the purchase of India stuffs, then very fashionable in Paris, and embarked immediately for France, with my mind full of the most flattering projects of future happiness. The voyage was prosperous; but on disembarking I found that almost all my goods had been pierced and gnawed through by a little worm which had got into the bales. I was ruined. The next day another

ship, freighted by that same Bernard, who seemed destined to pursue me every where, arrived with a cargo of the same stuffs—he had the market to himself, and for the third time he profited by my disaster."

"Despair seized on me. A Russian general, with whom I had returned from the West Indies, advised travelling to rally my spirits, and proposed to me to accompany him into his own country, where, he said, I could not fail to obtain an advantageous employment from my varied knowledge, and the protection which, at that time, the Russian government held out to the French. I accepted his proposal, and set out for St. Petersburg, where I soon became acquainted with the most powerful men of the court. I asked for a professorship—a seat in the judicature—or a place in the administration; but a war with Sweden occupied every body's attention, and the only answer I received; *we want soldiers, not professors; we want soldiers, not secretaries*. I called on my friend the General, and he made me his aid-de-camp. The war broke out. I distinguished myself in some smart engagements, and was fortunate enough to save the life of Marshall Lacy, at the battle of Willmanstrand. From that time, he became my declared patron, and I cherished a hope of acquiring fame in a military career. I commanded the corps which was first to penetrate into the Isle of Alland; and the Empress Elizabeth, on the conclusion of peace, deigned to write me a letter, with her own hand, expressive of her satisfaction at my conduct, and appointing me governor of Astracan."

"Every thing was going on in the most favorable way possible for me; and I had no further ambition but the honor of commanding in chief in an action of sufficient importance to prove my capacity, and to give me a rank among the illustrious warriors of the north. An opportunity was soon presented. The famous Thamas Kouli Khan, who had usurped the throne of Persia, covered all of a sudden the shores of the Caspian with his warlike hordes. A considerable body of independent Tartars, excited by him, threatened the banks of the Volga, and I marched to oppose them, at the head of veteran troops, trained in the Swedish wars, reinforced by some brave Circassian Tartars, who had just implored the protection of Russia. The prospect of success did not appear to me even doubtful. Thamas was still far distant; my adversaries were not soldiers, but brigands, without discipline, commanded by chiefs without experience. Nevertheless, not dazzled with such brilliant appearances, I called to my assistance all the resources, all the stratagems of tactics: I harassed and disturbed the enemy by false marches, I deceived him by false reports, and chose the most advantageous point of attack, after having drawn up on his flanks a strong ambuscade, to divert him if he obtained any advantage at first, and to destroy him on his retreat. Well, Monsieur le Comte! would you believe it, I was beaten after all. In the middle of the action, when the battalions of the enemy were on the very point of running away, a north-easter arose all on a sudden, and drove at once into our ranks a cloud of dust so thick and burning, that they were blinded, and could not distinguish allies from adversaries. The Circassians and Russians fell upon one another; and the enemy, recalled to the battle by the advantage of his position, conquered us without any difficulty, after having, I know not how, destroyed the ambuscade which I had prepared with so much skill. Thus were the hopes of a great name, the confidence of an empress, the fruits of many years of glory and danger, blown away by a cloud of dust! Dust rendered useless the superiority of my troops, the wisdom of my measures, and the efforts of my provident tactics. But judge what was my astonishment and indignation, when I learned that the miserable vagabonds, my conquerors, had been commanded during the action by that eternal Bernard, who came across me every where in my days of misfortune! I shall not explain to you by what chance he was in Asia, as head of a horde of bandits—for I do not know it. I had little time to think of him at that moment; I had enough to do to think of myself. My government of Astracan was taken away from me; and, fearing something worse than disgrace, I hastened to return to Europe, with a design of speedily regaining France. But my destiny had decreed otherwise. A new misfortune awaited me in Germany: I fell in love."

"You will not ask how a young, handsome, rich, and romantic coquette had the art of winning my heart, by affecting alternately the tone of sentiment,

or the airs of reserve and coldness. By means of attention, *leudresses*, and sacrifices of all kinds, I thought that I at last had succeeded in disarming her rigour. One day, in a delicious *tele-a-tele*, she deigned to show me that I was not hated. I knew that the pathetic alone pleased her in love. I was violently smitten, and became eloquent: I prayed, conjured, wept, and I saw her becoming gradually more and more tender; when, to put a seal on this scene of delirium, I thought it necessary to fall at her feet. I did so; and, as ill fate would have it, I put my knee on the paw of her pet lap-dog, who barked and bit me. There was an end of the pathetic! My beauty burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter, which was my formal dismissal; for she respected herself too much to give her hand to a lover who made her laugh, and thereby dishonored her course of life, devoted to pensiveness and contemplation. You have already guessed that Bernard, the vulture ceaselessly clinging to his continually re-growing prey, was not far off. Again he profited by my mishap; and I learned that, in some time after, he married my fair coquette."

"My love, although foolish, was sincere. All taste for retirement, all desire of returning to France, had left me. I felt an ardent necessity for new emotions, which would extinguish, or at least alleviate, the regret occasioned, in spite of myself, by my silly passion. I learned that a new colonial company was organizing to explore the coasts of Guinea, from the Volta to Jackin; and I soon became one of the passengers on board the first vessel bound on this expedition. After having sojourned some time in the fertile kingdom of Juida, and finding that my companions, whom until then I considered as new argonauts, destined to carry the blessings of civilization among barbarous tribes, were only busy in carrying on the slave trade, I wished to realize, by my own exertions, the honorable intentions which I had so generously supposed for them; and traversing the territory of Adra, I pushed forward into the continent. The first Africans I met in this excursion fled at my approach, terrified at such a sight; but they speedily returned in great numbers, surrounded me with piercing shouts, formed a circle round me, seized me, manacled me, and brought me before their chief. I was in the kingdom of Dahomay, which had not till then been visited by any European."

"The great Dahomay, king of the country, was himself a little terrified when he saw me: but he recollected, as I learnt afterwards, that his grandfather, Trudo Audati, the hero of that part of Africa, had often related to him that, in his time, white men had fallen into his power during the course of his conquests. This idea encouraged him, and it was so much the better for me; for at first he was more inclined to consider me a devil than a man. In some months—thanks to the scanty vocabulary and syntax which compose the jargon of savage tribes—I was able to converse with him. Initiated by me into the mysteries of the civilization of our wonderful Europe, he took a great affection towards me. A terrible distemper, of which I cured him (by means of water, regimen, and bleeding,) advanced me still further in his good graces. I became his most intimate counsellor, and I hoped to become at last the legislator of these unknown regions. This idea pleased my imagination; and I exerted all my energies to destroy in Dahomay the atrocious and superstitious customs which affect that quarter of the African continent."

"The king, who was a man of good sense and excellent disposition, seemed to enter sometimes into my projects; but his belief in his fetiches—that power of consecration which time gives to the most absurd things—opposed continual obstacles to my philanthropic views. Nevertheless, I triumphed over every thing. Slaves were no longer sacrificed on the tomb of their masters, with his favorite wives; human victims were no longer offered up to shapeless gods of wood or stone; punishments, proportioned to transgressions, no longer crushed and confounded together crime and error; armies were recruited, without devouring all the active part of the population; and agriculture, hitherto confined to feeble women, incapable of sustaining for a long time such labors, devolved upon the men who no longer thought that cultivating the earth, and forming provident habits, were unworthy of them, when they saw abundance and comfort succeeding misery and ennui. (Concluded next week.)

LYING.

Extract from a Review of Mrs. Opie's "Illustrations of Lying in all its branches."

"There is one class of lies, which we are a little surprised did not attract a larger share of Mrs. Opie's attention; lies told by parents to their children. We believe that the slight regard in

which strict truth is held among mankind, is principally owing to the lies which are told to children by their parents during the few first years of their lives.—Then is the time that permanent impressions may be as well made as at any later period. It is then, probably, that what is called the natural propensity of a child is unfolded.—Many persons who have a great abhorrence of lying, and whip their children if they detect them in it, yet make it no scruple of telling and acting to them the most atrocious falsehoods. There are few parents who do not do this in a greater or less degree, though doubtless without dreaming they are guilty of criminal deception. With many, the whole business of managing their children is a piece of mere artifice and trick. They are cheated in their amusements, cheated in their food, cheated in their dress. Lies are told them to get them to do any thing which is disagreeable. If a child is to take physic, the mother tells him she has something good for him to drink: if recusant, she says she will send for the doctor to cut off his ears, or pull his teeth, or that she will go away and leave him, and a thousand things of the same kind, each of which may deceive once and answer the present purpose, but will invariably fail afterwards. Parents are too apt to endeavour to pacify their children by making promises they never intend to perform. If they wish, for instance, to take away some eatable which they fear will be injurious, they reconcile them by the promise of a ride, or a walk, or something else which will please them, but without any intention of gratifying them. This is lying, downright lying. People think nothing of breaking their promise to children, if the performance be not perfectly convenient.—But they are the last persons to whom promises should be broken, because they cannot comprehend the reason, if there be one, why they are not kept. Such promises should be scrupulously redeemed, tho' at the greatest inconvenience, and even when inadvertently made. For the child's moral habit is of infinitely more consequence than any such inconvenience can be to the parent."

We have only noticed a few of the cases of lying to children, but enough to illustrate the frequency of it. And yet after having pursued such a course of deception for the two or three first years of life, if the parent then finds his child is trying to deceive him, and will tell a downright lie, he wonders how he should have learned to do so, for he has always taught him to speak the truth; without reflecting that he has been lying to him from his very birth. So he attributes that habit to an innate disposition and tendency for falsehood, which he has himself been fostering and nourishing from the first.—Children soon learn to know when they are deceived many times in the same way; and the most comfortable method in the end, as well as the most conformable to the precepts of morality and religion, is never to deviate in the slightest degree from the strict truth in our intercourse with them."

The character is not formed by precept, but by example. It is in vain to tell children a year old that they must not lie, but it is very easy to teach them so by our own example.—Indeed, till taught by example, we do not believe that there is in the human mind the smallest disposition to falsehood. But the elements of the moral character are formed by example, long before a precept can be understood. People think that children under two years cannot reason, cannot draw inferences, and cannot know what a lie is.—What the nature is of the process in their mind, is more than we can discover; but the result is that they form habits in agreement with the principles according to which they have been treated. The character of a child for life is too often fixed, its moral education finished, before it is generally supposed to be begun. For our own part, when we see into what hands the forming of the mind and morals of the young so often falls, we are more surprised that the world is so good, than that it is no better. People are disposed to look back to our original constitutions for the origin of our vicious propensities, and the moral defects of our characters; but we have only to consider the common treatment of children by their parents, to find cause enough for the evil which is in the world, and which is seen so early in life. We wonder that amid all the schemes of various kinds for education at the present day, no one has adventured upon the plan of a seminary for the preparation of parents for the management of their children, since it is to them that their moral education at least is actually entrusted, and not to the instructors, who are employed after the character is formed."