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THE VIRGINIANS

CHAPTER XLVIII

AN APPARITION

Going off in his wrath from his morning's conversation with Harry, Mr. Draper thought he heard the young prisoner speak behind him; and, indeed, Harry had risen, and uttered a half exclamation to call the lawyer back. But he was proud, and the other offended: Harry checked his words, and Draper did not choose to stop. It wounded Harry's pride to be obliged to humble himself before the lawyer, and to have to yield from mere lack and desire of money. "An hour hence will do as well," thought Harry, and lapsed sulkily on to the bed again. No, he did not care for Maria Esmond. No: he was ashamed of the way in which he had been entrapped into that engagement. A wily and experienced woman, she had cheated his boyish ardour. She had taken unfair advantage of him, as her brother had at play. They were his own flesh and blood, and they ought to have spared him. Instead, one and the other had made a prey of him, and had used him for their selfish ends. He thought how they had betrayed the rights of hospitality: how they had made a victim of the young kinsman who came confiding within their gates. His heart was sore wounded: his head sank back on his pillow: bitter tears wetted it. "Had they come to Virginia," he thought, "I had given them a different welcome!"

He was roused from this mood of despondency by Gumbo's grinning face at his door, who said a lady was come to see Master Harry, and behind the lad came the lady in the capuchin, of whom we have just made mention. Harry sat up, pale and haggard, on his bed. The lady, with a sob, and almost ere the servant-man withdrew, ran towards the young prisoner, put her arms round his neck with real emotion and a maternal tenderness, sobbed over his pale cheek and kissed it in the midst

of plentiful tears, and cried out-

"Oh, my Harry! Did I ever think to see thee here?"

He started back, scared as it seemed at her presence, but she sank down at the bedside, and seized his feverish hand, and embraced his knees. She had a real regard and tenderness for him. The wretched place in which she found him, his wretched look, filled her heart with a sincere love and pity.

"I-I thought none of you would come!" said poor Harry,

with a groan.

More tears, more kisses of the hot young hand, more clasps and pressure with hers, were the lady's reply for a moment or two.

"Oh, my dear! my dear! I cannot bear to think of thee in

misery," she sobbed out.

Hardened though it might be, that heart was not all marble—that dreary life not all desert. Harry's mother could not have been fonder, nor her tones more tender than those of his kins-

woman now kneeling at his feet.

"Some of the debts, I fear, were owing to my extravagance!" she said (and this was true). "You bought trinkets and jewels in order to give me pleasure. Oh, how I hate them now! I little thought I ever could! I have brought them all with me, and more trinkets—here! and here! and all the money I have in the world!"

And she poured brooches, rings, a watch, and a score or so of guineas into Harry's lap. The sight of which strangely

agitated and immensely touched the young man.

"Dearest, kindest cousin!" he sobbed out.

His lips found no more words to utter, but yet, no doubt, they served to express his gratitude, his affection, his emotion.

He became quite gay presently, and smiled as he put away some of the trinkets, his presents to Maria, and told her into what danger he had fallen by selling other goods which he had purchased on credit; and how a lawyer had insulted him just now upon this very point. He would not have his dear Maria's money—he had enough, quite enough for the present: but he valued her twenty guineas as much as if they had been twenty thousand. He would never forget her love and kindness; no, by all that was sacred he would not! His mother should know of all her goodness. It had cheered him when he was just on the point of breaking down under his disgrace and misery. Might Heaven bless her for it! There is no need to pursue beyond this the cousins' conversation. The dark day seemed brighter to Harry after Maria's visit: the imprisonment not so

hard to bear. The world was not all selfish and cold. Here was a fond creature who really and truly loved him. Even Castlewood was not so bad as he had thought. He had expressed the deepest grief at not being able to assist his kinsman. He was hopelessly in debt. Every shilling he had won from Harry he had lost on the next day to others. Anything that lay in his power he would do. He would come soon and see Mr. Warrington: he was in waiting to-day, and as much a prisoner as Harry himself. So the pair talked on cheerfully and affectionately until the darkness began to close in, when Maria, with a sigh, bade Harry farewell.

The door scarcely closed upon her, when it opened to admit

Draper.

"Your humble servant, sir," says the attorney. His voice jarred upon Harry's ear, and his presence offended the young man.

"I had expected you some hours ago, sir," he curtly said.

"A lawyer's time is not always his own, sir," said Mr. Draper, who had just been in consultation with a bottle of port at the "Grecian." "Never mind, I'm at your orders now. Presume it's all right, Mr. Warrington. Packed your trunk? Why now, there you are in your bed-gown still. Let me go down and settle whilst you call in your black man and titivate a bit. I've a coach at the door, and we'll be off and dine with the old lady."

"Are you going to dine with the Baroness de Bernstein,

pray?"

"Not me-no such honour. Had my dinner already. It's

you are a-going to dine with your aunt, I suppose?"

"Mr. Draper, you suppose a great deal more than you know," says Mr. Warrington, looking very fierce and tall, as he folds his brocade dressing-gown round him.

"Great goodness, sir, what do you mean?" asks Draper.

"I mean, sir, that I have considered, and that, having given my word to a faithful and honourable lady, it does not become me to withdraw it."

"Confound it, sir!" shrieks the lawyer. "I tell you she has lost the paper. There's nothing to bind you—nothing.

Why, she's old enough to be-"

"Enough, sir," says Mr. Warrington, with a stamp of his foot. "You seem to think you are talking to some other pettifogger. I take it, Mr. Draper, you are not accustomed to have dealings with men of honour."

"Pettifogger, indeed," cries Draper in a fury. "Men of

honour, indeed! I'd have you to know, Mr. Warrington, that I'm as good a man of honour as you. I don't know so many gamblers and horse-jockeys, perhaps. I haven't gambled away my patrimony, and lived as if I was a nobleman on two hundred a year. I haven't bought watches on credit, and pawned—touch me if you dare, sir," and the lawyer sprang to the door.

"That is the way out, sir. You can't go through the window,

because it is barred," says Mr. Warrington.

"And the answer I take to my client is No, then!" screamed

out Draper.

Harry stepped forward, with his two hands clenched. "If you utter another word," he said, "I'll—" The door was shut rapidly—the sentence was never finished, and Draper went away fur ous to Madame de Bernstein, from whom, though he gave her the best version of his story, he got still fiercer language than he had received from Mr. Warrington himself.

"What? Shall she trust me, and I desert her?" says Harry, stalking up and down his room in his flowing rustling brocade. "Dear, faithful, generous woman! If I lie in prison for years,

I'll be true to her."

Her lawyer dismissed after a stormy interview, the desolate old woman was fain to sit down to the meal which she had hoped to share with her nephew. The chair was before her which he was to have filled, the glasses shining by the silver. One dish after another was laid before her by the silent major-domo, and tasted and pushed away. The man pressed his mistress at last. "It is eight o'clock," he said. "You have had nothing all day. It is good for you to eat." She could not eat. She would have her coffee. Let Case go get her coffee. The lacqueys bore the dishes off the table, leaving their mistress sitting at it before the vacant chair.

Presently the old servant re-entered the room without his lady's coffee and with a strange scared face, and said, "Mr.

WARRINGTON!"

The old woman uttered an exclamation, got up from her arm-chair, but sank back in it trembling very much. "So you are come, sir, are you?" she said with a fond shaking voice. "Bring back the—Ah!" here she screamed. "Gracious God, who is it?" Her eyes stared wildly: her white face looked ghastly through her rouge. She clung to the arms of her chair for support, as the visitor approached her.

A gentleman whose face and figure exactly resembled Harry Warrington, and whose voice, when he spoke, had tones strangely similar, had followed the servant into the room. He bowed low

towards the Baroness.

"You expected my brother, madam?" he said. "I am but now arrived in London. I went to his house. I met his servant at your door, who was bearing this letter for you. I thought I would bring it to your Ladyship before going to him." And the stranger laid down a letter before Madam Bernstein.

"Are you "-gasped out the Baroness-" are you my nephew,

that we supposed was-"

"Was killed—and is alive! I am George Warrington, madam, and I ask his kinsfolk, What have you done with my brother?"

"Look, George!" said the bewildered old lady. "I expected him here to-night—that chair was set for him—I have been waiting for him, sir, till now—till I am quite faint—— I don't like—I don't like being alone. Do stay and sup with me!"

"Pardon me, madam. Please God, my supper will be with

Harry to-night!"

"Bring him back. Bring him back here on any conditions! It is but five hundred pounds! Here is the money, sir, if you need it!"

"I have no want, madam. I have money with me that can't

be better employed than in my brother's service."

"And you will bring him to me, sir! Say you will bring him to me!"

Mr. Warrington made a very stately bow for answer, and quitted the room, passing by the amazed domestics, and calling

with an air of authority to Gumbo to follow.

Had Mr. Harry received no letters from home? Master Harry had not opened all his letters the last day or two. Had he received no letter announcing his brother's escape from the French settlements and return to Virginia? Oh, no! No such letter had come, else Master Harry certainly tell Gumbo. Quick, horses! Quick by Strand to Temple Bar! Here is the house of Captivity, and the Deliverer come to the rescue!

CHAPTER XLIX

FRIENDS IN NEED

Quick, hackney-coach steeds, and bear George Warrington through Strand and Fleet Street to his imprisoned brother's rescue! Any one who remembers Hogarth's picture of a London hackney-coach and a London street road at that period, may fancy how weary the quick time was, and how long seemed the journey—scarce any lights, save those carried by link-boys; badly hung coaches; bad pavements; great holes in the road, and vast quagmires of winter mud. That drive from Piccadilly to Fleet Street seemed almost as long to our young man as the journey from Marlborough to London which he had performed

in the morning.

He had written to Harry announcing his arrival at Bristol. He had previously written to his brother, giving the great news of his existence and his return from captivity. There was war between England and France at that time; the French privateers were for ever on the look-out for British merchant-ships, and seized them often within sight of port. The letter bearing the intelligence of George's restoration must have been on board one of the many American ships of which the French took possession. The letter telling of George's arrival in England was never opened by poor Harry; it was lying at the latter's apartments, which it reached on the third morning after Harry's captivity, when the angry Mr. Ruff had refused to give up any

single item more of his lodger's property.

To these apartments George first went on his arrival in London, and asked for his brother. Scared at the likeness between them, the maid-servant who opened the door screamed, and ran back to her mistress. The mistress not liking to tell the truth, or to own that poor Harry was actually a prisoner at her husband's suit, said Mr. Warrington had left his lodgings; she did not know where Mr. Warrington was. George knew that Clarges Street was close to Bond Street. Often and often had he looked over the London map. Aunt Bernstein would tell him where Harry was. He might be with her at that very moment. George had read in Harry's letters to Virginia about Aunt Bernstein's kindness to Harry. Even Madam Esmond was softened by it (and especially touched by a letter which the Baroness

wrote—the letter which caused George to pack off post haste for Europe, indeed). She heartily hoped and trusted that Madam Beatrix had found occasion to repent of her former bad ways. It was time, indeed, at her age; and Heaven knows that she had plenty to repent of! I have known a harmless good old soul of eighty, still bepommelled and stoned by irreproachable ladies of the straitest sect of the Pharisees, for a little slip which occurred long before the present century was born, or she herself was twenty years old. Rachel Esmond never mentioned her eldest daughter: Madam Esmond Warrington never mentioned her sister. No. In spite of the order for remission of the sentence -in spite of the hand-writing on the floor of the Temple-there is a crime which some folks never will pardon, and regarding which female virtue especially is inexorable.

I suppose the Virginians' agent at Bristol had told George fearful stories of his brother's doings. Gumbo, whom he met at his aunt's door, as soon as the lad recovered from his terror at the sudden re-appearance of the master whom he supposed dead, had leisure to stammer out a word or two respecting his young master's whereabouts, and present pitiable condition; and hence Mr. George's sternness of demeanour when he presented himself to the old lady. It seemed to him a matter of course that his brother in difficulty should be rescued by his relations. Oh, George, how little you know about London and London ways! Whene'er you take your walks abroad, how many poor you meet: if a philanthropist were for rescuing all of them, not all the wealth of all the provinces of America would suffice him!

But the feeling and agitation displayed by the old lady touched her nephew's heart, when, jolting through the dark streets towards the house of his brother's captivity, George came to think of his aunt's behaviour. "She does feel my poor Harry's misfortune," he thought to himself. "I have been too hasty in judging her." Again and again, in the course of his life, Mr. George had to rebuke himself with the same crime of being too hasty. How many of us have not? And, alas, the mischief done, there's no repentance will mend it. Quick, coachman! We are almost as slow as you are in getting from Clarges Street to the Temple. Poor Gumbo knows the way to the bailiff's house well enough. Again the bell is set ringing. The first door is opened to George and his negro; then that first door is locked warily upon them, and they find themselves in a little passage with a little Jewish janitor; then a second door is unlocked, and they enter into the house. The Jewish janitor stares, as by his

flaring tallow-torch he sees a second Mr. Warrington before him. Come to see that gentleman? Yes. But wait a moment. This is Mr. Warrington's brother from America. Gumbo must go and prepare his master first. Step into this room. There's a gentleman already there about Mr. W.'s business (the porter says), and another upstairs with him now. There's no end of people have been about him.

The room into which George was introduced was a small apartment which went by the name of Mr. Amos's office, and where, by a guttering candle, and talking to the bailiff, sat a stout gentleman in a cloak and a laced hat. The young porter carried his candle too, preceding Mr. George, so there was a sufficiency of

light in the apartment.

"We are not angry any more, Harry!" says the stout gentleman, in a cheery voice, getting up and advancing with an outstretched hand to the newcomer. "Thank God, my boy! Mr. Amos here says there will be no difficulty about James and me being your bail, and we will do your business by breakfast-time in the morning. Why . . . Angels and ministers of grace! who are you?" And he started back as the other had hold of his hand.

But the stranger grasped it only the more strongly. "God bless you, sir!" he said. "I know who you are. You must be Colonel Lambert of whose kindness to him my poor Harry wrote. And I am the brother whom you have heard of, sir; and who was left for dead in Mr. Braddock's action; and came to life again after eighteen months amongst the French; and live to thank God and thank you for your kindness to my Harry,"

continued the lad, with a faltering voice.

"James! James! here is news!" cries Mr. Lambert to a gentleman in red, who now entered the room. "Here are the dead come alive! Here is Harry Scapegrace's brother come back, and with his scalp on his head, too!" (George had taken his hat off, and was standing by the light.) "This is my brother bail, Mr. Warrington! This is Lieutenant-Colonel James Wolfe, at your service. You must know there has been a little difference between Harry and me, Mr. George. He is pacified, is he, James?"

"He is full of gratitude," says Mr. Wolfe, after making his

bow to Mr. Warrington.

"Harry wrote home about Mr. Wolfe, too, sir," said the young man, "and I hope my brother's friends will be so kind as to be mine."

"I wish he had none other but us, Mr. Warrington. Poor Harry's fine folks have been too fine for him, and have ended by

landing him here."

"Nay, your honours, I have done my best to make the young gentleman comfortable; and, knowing your honour before, when you came to bail Captain Watkins, and that your security is perfectly good,—if your honour wishes, the young gentleman can go out this very night, and I will make it all right with the lawyer in the morning," says Harry's landlord, who knew the rank and respectability of the two gentlemen who had come to offer bail for his young prisoner.

"The debt is five hundred and odd pounds, I think?" said Mr. Warrington. "With a hundred thanks to these gentlemen, I can pay the amount at this moment into the officer's hands, taking the usual acknowledgment and caution. But I can never forget, gentlemen, that you helped my brother at his need, and, for doing so, I say thank you, and God bless you, in my mother's

name and mine."

Gumbo had, meanwhile, gone upstairs to his master's apartment, where Harry would probably have scolded the negro for returning that night, but that the young gentleman was very much soothed and touched by the conversation he had had with the friend who had just left him. He was sitting over his pipe of Virginia in a sad mood (for, somehow, even Maria's goodness and affection, as she had just exhibited them, had not altogether consoled him; and he had thought, with a little dismay, of certain consequences to which that very kindness and fidelity bound him), when Mr. Wolfe's homely features and eager outstretched hand came to cheer the prisoner, and he heard how Mr. Lambert was below, and the errand upon which the two officers had come. In spite of himself, Lambert would be kind to him. In spite of Harry's ill-temper, and needless suspicion and anger, the good gentleman was determined to help him if he might—to help him even against Mr. Wolfe's own advice, as the latter frankly told Harry. "For you were wrong, Mr. Warrington," said the Colonel, "and you wouldn't be set right; and you, a young man, used hard words and unkind behaviour to your senior, and what is more, one of the best gentlemen who walk God's earth. You see, sir, what his answer hath been to your wayward temper. You will bear with a friend who speaks frankly with you? Martin Lambert hath acted in this as he always doth, as the best Christian, the best friend, the most

kind and generous of men. Nay, if you want another proof of his goodness, here it is: he has converted me, who, as I don't care to disguise, was angry with you for your treatment of him, and has absolutely brought me down here to be your bail. Let us both cry Peccavimus! Harry, and shake our friend by the hand! He is sitting in the room below. He would not come

here till he knew how you would receive him."

"I think he is a good man!" groaned out Harry. "I was very angry and wild at the time when he and I met last, Colonel Wolfe. Nay, perhaps he was right in sending back those trinkets, hurt as I was at his doing so. Go down to him, will you be so kind, sir? and tell him I am sorry, and ask his pardon, and—and, God bless him for his generous behaviour." And here the young gentleman turned his head away, and rubbed his hand across his eyes.

"Tell him all this thyself, Harry!" cries the Colonel, taking the young fellow's hand. "No deputy will ever say it half so

well. Come with me now."

"You go first, and I'll-I'll follow,-on my word I will. See! I am in my morning-gown! I will but put on a coat and come to him. Give him my message first. Just-just prepare him for me!" says poor Harry, who knew he must do it, but yet

did not much like that process of eating of humble-pie.

Wolfe went out smiling-understanding the lad's scruples well enough, perhaps. As he opened the door, Mr. Gumbo entered it; almost forgetting to bow to the gentleman, profusely courteous as he was on ordinary occasions,—his eyes glaring round, his great mouth grinning—himself in a state of such high excitement and delight that his master remarked his condition.

"What, Gum? What has happened to thee? Hast thou

got a new sweetheart?"

No, Gum had not got no new sweetheart, Master.

"Give me my coat. What has brought thee back?"

Gum grinned prodigiously. "I have seen a ghost, Mas'r!" he said.

"A ghost! and whose, and where?"

"Whar? Saw him at Madam Bernstein's house. Come with him here in the coach! He downstairs now with Colonel Lambert!" Whilst Gumbo is speaking, as he is putting on his master's coat, his eyes are rolling, his head is wagging, his hands are trembling, his lips are grinning.
"Ghost—what ghost?" says Harry, in a strange agitation.

"Is anybody—is—my mother come?"

"No, sir; no, Master Harry!" Gumbo's head rolls nearly off in its violent convolutions, and his master, looking oddly at him, flings the door open and goes rapidly down the stair.

He is at the foot of it, just as a voice within the little office, of which the door is open, is saying, "and, for doing so, I say thank you, and God bless you, in my mother's name and mine."

"Whose voice is that?" calls out Harry Warrington, with a

strange cry in his own voice.

"It's the ghost's, Mas'r!" says Gumbo, from behind; and Harry runs forward to the room,—where, if you please, we will pause a little minute before we enter. The two gentlemen who were there, turned their heads away. The lost was found again. The dead was alive. The prodigal was on his brother's heart,—his own full of love, gratitude, repentance.

"Come away, James! I think we are not wanted any more here," says the Colonel. "Good-night, boys. Some ladies in Hill Street won't be able to sleep for this strange news. Or will you go home and sup with 'em, and tell them the story!"

No, with many thanks, the boys would not go and sup tonight. They had stories of their own to tell. "Quick, Gumbo, with the trunks. Good-bye, Mr. Amos!" Harry felt almost unhappy when he went away.

CHAPTER L

CONTAINING A GREAT DEAL OF THE FINEST MORALITY

When first we had the honour to be presented to Sir Miles Warrington at the King's drawing-room, in St. James's Palace, I confess that I, for one—looking at his jolly round face, his broad round waistcoat, his hearty country manner,—expected that I had lighted upon a most eligible and agreeable acquaintance at last, and was about to become intimate with that noblest specimen of the human race, the bepraised of songs and men, the good old English country gentleman. In fact, to be a good old country gentleman is to hold a position nearest the gods, and at the summit of earthly felicity. To have a large unencumbered rent-roll, and the rents regularly paid by adoring farmers, who bless their stars at having such a landlord as his honour; to have no tenant holding back with his money, excepting just one, perhaps, who does so in order to give occasion

to Good Old Country Gentleman to show his sublime charity and universal benevolence of soul-to hunt three days a week, love the sport of all things, and have perfect good health and good appetite in consequence—to have not only good appetite, but a good dinner; to sit down at church in the midst of a chorus of blessings from the villagers, the first man in the parish, the benefactor of the parish, with a consciousness of consummate desert, saying, "Have mercy upon us miserable sinners," to be sure, but only for form's sake, because the words are written in the book, and to give other folks an example:—a G. O. C. G. a miserable sinner! So healthy, so wealthy, so jolly, so much respected by the vicar, so much honoured by the tenants, so much beloved and admired by his family, amongst whom his story of grouse in the gun-room causes laughter from generation to generation; -this perfect being a miserable sinner! Allons done! Give any man good health and temper, five thousand a year, the adoration of his parish, and the love and worship of his family, and I'll defy you to make him so heartily dissatisfied with his spiritual condition as to set himself down a miserable anything. If you were a Royal Highness, and went to church in the most perfect health and comfort, the parson waiting to begin the service until Your R. H. came in, would you believe yourself to be a miserable etc.? You might when racked with gout, in solitude, the fear of death before your eyes, the doctor having cut off your bottle of claret, and ordered arrowroot and a little sherry,—you might then be humiliated, and acknowledge your own shortcomings, and the vanity of things in general; but, in high health, sunshine, spirits, that word miserable is only a form. You can't think in your heart that you are to be pitied much for the present. If you are to be miserable, what is Colin Ploughman, with the ague, seven children, two pounds a year rent to pay for his cottage, and eight shillings a week? No: a healthy, rich, jolly country gentleman, if miserable, has a very supportable misery: if a sinner, has very few people to tell him so.

It may be he becomes somewhat selfish; but at least he is satisfied with himself. Except my Lord at the Castle, there is nobody for miles and miles round so good or so great. His admirable wife ministers to him, and to the whole parish, indeed: his children bow before him: the vicar of the parish reverences him: he is respected at quarter-sessions: he causes poachers to tremble: off go all hats before him at market: and round about his great coach, in which his spotless daughters and

sublime lady sit, all the country-town tradesmen cringe, bare-headed, and the farmers' women drop innumerable curtseys. From their cushions in the great coach the ladies look down beneficently, and smile on the poorer folk. They buy a yard of ribbon with affability; they condescend to purchase an ounce of salts, or a packet of flower-seeds: they deign to cheapen a goose: their drive is like a royal progress: a happy people is supposed to press round them and bless them. Tradesmen bow, farmers' wives bob, town-boys, waving their ragged hats, cheer the red-faced coachman as he drives the fat bays, and cry, "Sir

Miles for ever! Throw us a halfpenny, my Lady!"

But suppose the market-woman should hide her fat goose when Sir Miles's coach comes, out of terror lest my Lady, spying the bird, should insist on purchasing it a bargain? Suppose no coppers ever were known to come out of the royal coach window? Suppose Sir Miles regaled his tenants with notoriously small beer, and his poor with especially thin broth? This may be our fine old English gentleman's way. There have been not a few fine English gentlemen and ladies of this sort; who patronised the poor without ever relieving them, who called out "Amen!" at church as loud as the clerk; who went through all the forms of piety, and discharged all the etiquette of old English gentlemanhood; who bought virtue a bargain, as it were, and had no doubt they were honouring her by the purchase. Poor Harry, in his distress, asked help from his relations: his aunt sent him a tract and her blessing; his uncle had business out of town, and could not, of course, answer the poor boy's petition. How much of this behaviour goes on daily in respectable life, think you? You can fancy Lord and Lady Macbeth concocting a murder, and coming together with some little awkwardness, perhaps, when the transaction was done and over; but my Lord and Lady Skinflint, when they consult in their bedroom about giving their luckless nephew a helping hand, and determine to refuse, and go down to family prayers, and meet their children and domestics, and discourse virtuously before them, and then remain together, and talk nose to nose,—what can they think of one another? and of the poor kinsman fallen among the thieves, and groaning for help unheeded? How can they go on with those virtuous airs? How can they dare look each other in the face?

Dare? Do you suppose they think they have done wrong? Do you suppose Skinflint is tortured with remorse at the idea of the distress which called to him in vain, and of the hunger which he sent empty away? Not he. He is indignant with