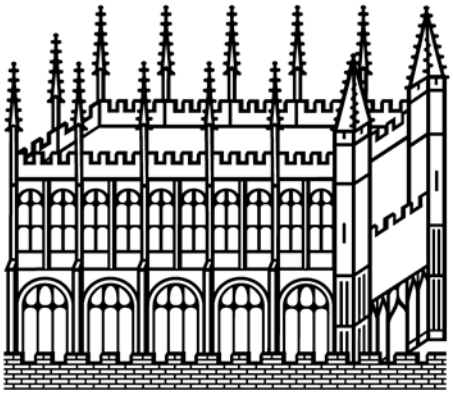

A

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BY MRS. INCHBALD.

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SIMPLE STORY.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN Miſs Milner arrived at Bath, ſhe thought it the moſt altered place ſhe had ever ſeen—ſhe was miſtaken—it was herſelf that was changed.

The walks were melancholy, the company inſipid, the ball-room fatigueing—for, ſhe had left behind all that could charm or pleaſe her.

Though ſhe found herſelf much leſs happy than when ſhe was at Bath before, yet ſhe felt, that ſhe would not, even to enjoy all that paſt happineſs, be again reduced to the being ſhe was at that period.—Thus does the lover conſider the extinction of his paſſion with the ſame horror as the libertine looks upon annihilation; the one would rather live hereafter (though in all the tortures deſcribed as conſtituting his future ſtate) than ceaſe to exiſt; ſo there are no tortures which a lover would not ſuffer, rather than ceaſe to love.

In the wide proſpect of melancholy before her, Miſs Milner's fancy caught hold of the only comfort which preſented itſelf; and this, faint as it was, in the total abſence of every other, her imagination painted to her as exceſſive.

The

The comfort was a letter from Miſs Woodley—a letter, in which the ſubject of her love would moſt aſſuredly be mentioned, and in whatever terms, it would ſtill be the means of delight.

A letter arrived—ſhe devoured it with her eyes.—The poſt mark denoting from whence it came, the name of "Milner Lodge" writtenon the top, were all ſources of pleaſure—and ſhe read ſlowly every line it contained, to procraſtinate the pleaſing expectation ſhe enjoyed, till ſhe ſhould arrive at the name of Dorriforth. At laſt, her impatient eye caught the word, three lines beyond the place ſhe was reading—irreſiſtibly, ſhe ſkipped over thoſe lines, and fixed on the point to which ſhe was attracted.

Miſs Woodley was cautious in her indulgence; ſhe made the ſlighteſt mention of Dorriforth; ſaying only, "He was extremely concerned, and even dejected, at the little hope there was of his couſin, Lord Elmwood's, recovery."—Short and trivial as this paſſage was, it was ſtill more important to Miſs Milner than any other in the letter—ſhe read it again and again, conſidered, and reflected upon it.—Dejected, thought ſhe, what does that word exactly mean?—did I ever ſee Mr. Dorriforth dejected?—how, I wonder, does he look in that ſtate?—Thus did ſhe muſe, while the cauſe of his dejection, though a moſt ſerious one, and pathetically deſcribed by Miſs Woodley, ſcarce arreſted her attention once.—She ran over with haſte the account of Lord Elmwood's ſtate of health; ſhe certainly pitied him while

while ſhe thought of him, but ſhe did not think of him long. To die, was a hard fate for a young nobleman juſt in poſſeſſion of his immenſe fortune, and on the eve of marriage with a beautiful young woman; but Miſs Milner thought Heaven might be ſtill better than all this, and ſhe had no doubt but his Lordſhip would go thither. The forlorn ſtate of Miſs Fenton ought to have been a ſubject for compaſſion, but ſhe knew that Lady had reſignation to bear any lot with patience, and that a trial of her fortitude, might be more flattering to her vanity than to be Counteſs of Elmwood; in a word, ſhe ſaw no one's misfortunes equal to her own, becauſe ſhe ſaw no one ſo little able to bear misfortune.

She replied to Miſs Woodley's letter, and dwelt very long on that ſubject which her friend had paſſed over lightly; this was another indulgence; and this epiſtolary intercourſe was now the only enjoyment ſhe poſſeſſed. From Bath ſhe paid ſeveral viſits with Lady Luneham—all were alike tedious and melancholy.

But her guardian wrote to her, and though it was on a topic of ſorrow, the letter gave her joy—the ſentiments it expreſſed were trite and common-place, yet ſhe valued them as the deareſt effuſions of friendſhip and affection; and her hands trembled, and her heart beat with rapture while ſhe wrote the anſwer, though ſhe knew it would not be received by him with one emotion like thoſe which ſhe experienced.—In her ſecond

letter

letter to Miſs Woodley, ſhe prayed like a perſon inſane to be taken home from confinement, and like a lunatic proteſted, in ſenſible language, ſhe "Had no diſorder." But her friend replied, "That very declaration proves its violence." And aſſured her, nothing leſs than placing her affections elſewhere, ſhould induce her to believe but that ſhe was incurable.

The third letter from Milner Lodge brought the news of Lord Elmwood's death.—Miſs Woodley was exceedingly affected by this event, and ſaid little elſe on any other ſubject.—Miſs Milner was ſhocked when ſhe read the words "He is dead," and inſtantly thought, "How tranſient are all ſublunary things!—Within a few years *I* ſhall be dead—and how happy will it then

be, if I have reſiſted every temptation to the alluring pleaſures of this life!"—The happineſs of a peaceful death occupied her contemplation for near an hour; but at length, every virtuous and pious ſentiment this meditation inſpired, ſerved but to remind her of the many ſentences ſhe had heard from her guardian's lips upon the ſame ſubject—her thoughts were again fixed on him, and ſhe could think of nothing beſides.

In a ſhort time after this, her health became impaired from the indiſpoſition of her mind; ſhe languiſhed, and was once in imminent danger. During a ſlight delirium of her fever, Miſs Woodley's name and her guardian's were inceſſantly repeated; Lady Luneham ſent them immediate word of this, and they both haſtened to Bath, and arrived

arrived there juſt as her diſorder had taken a favourable turn. As ſoon as ſhe became perfectly recollected, her firſt care, knowing the frailty of her heart, was to enquire what ſhe had uttered while delirious.—Miſs Woodley, who was by her bed-ſide, begged her not to be alarmed on that account, and aſſured her ſhe knew, from all her attendants, that ſhe had only ſpoken with a friendly remembrance (as was really the caſe) of thoſe perſons who were dear to her.

She wiſhed to know whether her guardian was come to ſee her, but ſhe had not the courage to aſk before her friend, and ſhe in her turn was afraid by the too ſudden mention of his name, to diſcompoſe her. Her maid, however, after ſome little time, entered the chamber, and

and whiſpered Miſs Woodley. Miſs Milner aſked inquiſitively "What ſhe ſaid?"

The maid replied ſoftly, "Lord Elmwood, Madam, wiſhes to come and ſee you for a few moments, if you will allow him;"

At this reply Miſs Milner ſtared wildly.

"I thought," ſaid ſhe, "I thought Lord Elmwood had been dead—are my ſenſes diſordered ſtill?"

"No, my dear," anſwered Miſs Woodley, "it is the preſent Lord Elmwood who wiſhes to ſee you; he whom you left ill when you came hither, *is* dead."

"And who is the preſent Lord Elmwood?" ſhe aſked.

Miſs Woodley, after a ſhort heſitation, replied—"Your guardian."

"And

"And ſo he is," cried Miſs Milner; "he is the next heir—I had forgot.—But is it poſſible that he is here?"

"Yes—" returned Miſs Woodley with a grave voice and manner, to moderate that glow of ſatisfaction which for a moment ſparkled even in her languid eye, and bluſhed over her pallid countenance.—"Yes—as he heard you were ill, he thought it right to come and ſee you."

"He is very good," ſhe anſwered, and the tear ſtarted in her eyes.

"Would you pleaſe to ſee his Lordſhip?" aſked her maid.

"Not yet, not yet," ſhe replied; "let me recollect myſelf firſt." And ſhe looked with a timid doubt upon her friend, to aſk if it was proper.

Miſs Woodley could hardly ſupport this humble reference to her judgement,

from

from the wan face of the poor invalid, and taking her by the hand, whiſpered, "You ſhall do what you pleaſe.—In a few minutes Lord Elmwood was introduced.

To thoſe who ſincerely love, every change of ſituation or circumſtances in the object beloved, appears an advantage.—So, the acquiſition of a title and eſtate was, in Miſs Milner's eye, an ineſtimable advantage to her guardian, not on account of their real value, but that any change, inſtead of diminiſhing her paſſion, would have ſerved only to increaſe it—even a change to the utmoſt poverty.

When he entered—the ſight of him ſeemed to be too much for her, and after the firſt glance ſhe turned her head away.—The ſound of his voice encouraged

raged her, however, to look once more —and then ſhe riveted her eyes upon him.

" It is impoſſible, my dear Miſs Milner," he gently whiſpered, " to ſay, what joy I feel that your diſorder has ſubſided."

But though it was impoſſible to ſay, it was poſſible to *look* what he felt, and his looks expreſſed his feelings.—In the zeal of thoſe ſenſations, he laid hold of her hand, and held it between his—this he did not himſelf know——but ſhe did.

" You have prayed for me, my Lord, I make no doubt?" ſaid ſhe, and ſmiled, as if thanking him for thoſe prayers.

" Fervently, ardently!" — returned he; and the fervency with which he had prayed ſpoke in every feature.

" But

"But I am a proteſtant, you know, and if I had died ſuch, do you believe I ſhould have gone to Heaven?"

"Moſt aſſuredly that would not have prevented you."

"But Mr. Sandford does not think ſo."

"He muſt; for he means to go there himſelf."

To keep her guardian with her, Miſs Milner ſeemed inclined to converſe; but her ſolicitous friend gave Lord Elmwood a look, which implied that it might be injurious to her, and he retired.

They had only one more interview before he left the place, at which Miſs Milner was capable of ſitting up—he was with her, however, but a very ſhort time, ſome neceſſary concerns relative

to

to his late kinſman's affairs, calling him in haſte to London. Miſs Woodley continued with her friend till ſhe ſaw her entirely reinſtated in her health: during which time her guardian was frequently the ſubject of their private converſation; and upon thoſe occaſions Miſs Milner has ſometimes brought Miſs Woodley to acknowledge, "That could Mr. Dorriforth have poſſibly foreſeen the early death of the laſt Lord Elmwood, it had been more for the honour of his religion (as that ancient title would now after him become extinct), if he had preferred marriage vows to thoſe of celibacy.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN the time for Miſs Woodley's departure arrived, Miſs Milner entreated earneſtly to accompany her home, and made the moſt ſolemn promiſes that ſhe would guard not only her behaviour, but her very thoughts, within the limitation her friend ſhould preſcribe. Miſs Woodley at length yielded thus far, "That as ſoon as Lord Elmwood was ſet out on his journey to Italy, where ſhe had heard him ſay that he ſhould ſoon be obliged to go, ſhe would no longer deny her the pleaſure of returning; and if (after the long abſence which muſt conſequently take place between him and her) ſhe could poſitively affirm the

ſuppreſſion of her paſſion was the happy reſult, ſhe would then take her word, and riſk the danger of ſeeing them once more reſide together."

This conceſſion having been obtained, they parted; and as winter was now far advanced, Miſs Woodley returned to her aunt's houſe in town, from whence Mrs. Horton was, however, preparing to remove, in order to ſuperintend Lord Elmwood's houſe, (which had been occupied by the late Earl,) in Groſvenor Square; and her niece was to accompany her.

If Lord Elmwood was not deſirous Miſs Milner ſhould conclude her viſit and return to his protection, it was partly from the multiplicity of affairs in which he was at this time engaged, and

partly from having Mr. Sandford now entirely placed with him as his chaplain; for he dreaded, that living in the ſame houſe, their natural antipathy might be increaſed even to averſion. — Upon this account, he once thought of adviſing Mr. Sandford to take up his abode elſewhere; but the great pleaſure he took in his ſociety, joined to the bitter mortification he knew ſuch a propoſal would be to his friend, would not ſuffer him to make it.

Miſs Milner all this time was not thinking upon thoſe ſhe hated, but on thoſe ſhe loved. — Sandford never came into her thoughts, while the image of Lord Elmwood never left them. — One morning, as ſhe ſat talking to Lady Luneham on various ſubjects, but thinking alone on him, Sir Harry Luneham, with

with another gentleman, a Mr. Fleetmond, came in, and the converſation turned upon the improbability, during the preſent Lord Elmwood's youth, that he ſhould ever inherit the title and eſtate which had now fallen to him — and ſaid Mr. Fleetmond, "Independent of the fortune, it muſt be matter of infinite joy to Mr. Dorriforth."

"No," anſwered Sir Harry, "independent of the fortune, it muſt be a motive of concern to him; for he muſt now regret, beyond meaſure, his folly in taking prieſt's orders—thus depriving himſelf of the hopes of an heir, ſo that his title, at his death, will be loſt."

"By no means," replied Mr. Fleetmond; "he may yet have an heir, for he will certainly marry."

"Marry!" cried the Baronet.

" Yes," anſwered the other, " it was that I meant by the joy it might probably give him, beyond the poſſeſſion of his eſtate and title."

" How be married?" ſaid Lady Luneham, " Has he not taken a vow never to marry?"

" Yes," anſwered Mr. Fleetmond, " but there are no *religious* vows, from which the ſovereign Pontiff at Rome cannot grant a diſpenſation, as thoſe commandments which are made by the church, the church has always the power to revoke; and when it is for the general good of religion, his holineſs thinks it incumbent on him, to publiſh his bull, and remit all penalties for their non-obſervance; and certainly it is for the honour of the Catholics, that this Earldom ſhould continue in a Catholic family. — In ſhort, I'll venture to lay a wager

wager, my Lord Elmwood is married within a year.

Miſs Milner, who liſtened with attention, feared ſhe was in a dream, or deceived by the pretended knowledge of Mr. Fleetmond, who might know nothing—yet all that he had ſaid was very probable; and he was himſelf a Roman Catholic, ſo that he muſt be well informed on the ſubject upon which he ſpoke.———If ſhe had heard the direſt news that ever ſounded in the ears of the moſt ſuſceptible of mortals, the agitation of her mind and perſon could not have been ſtronger — ſhe felt, while every word was ſpeaking, a chill through all her veins — it was a pleaſure too exquiſite, not to bear along with it the ſenſation of exquiſite pain; of which ſhe was ſo ſenſible, that for a few mo-

ments it made her wiſh that ſhe had not heard the intelligence; though, very ſoon after, ſhe would not but have heard it for the world.

As ſoon as ſhe had recovered from her firſt aſtoniſhment and joy, ſhe wrote to Miſs Woodley an exact account of what ſhe had heard, and received this anſwer,

" I am ſorry any body ſhould have " given you this piece of information, " becauſe it was a taſk, in executing " which, I had promiſed myſelf ex- " treme ſatisfaction — but the fear that " your health was not yet ſtrong enough " to ſupport, without ſome danger, the " burthen of hopes which I knew would, " upon this occaſion, preſs upon you, I " deferred my communication, and it

" has

" has been anticipated. Yet, as you
" ſeem in doubt as to the reality of
" what you have been told, perhaps
" this confirmation of it may fall very
" little ſhort of the firſt news; eſpe-
" cially when it is enforced by my re-
" queſt, that you will come to us, as
" ſoon as you can with propriety leave
" Lady Luneham.

" Come, my dear Miſs Milner, and
" find in your once rigid monitor a
" faithful confidante.—I will no longer
" threaten to diſcloſe a ſecret you have
" truſted me with, but leave it either to
" the wiſdom or ſenſibility of *his* heart,
" (who is now to penetrate into the
" hearts of our ſex, in ſearch of one
" that may beat in uniſon with his own)
" to find it out.—I no longer condemn,
" but congratulate you on your paſſion;
" and will aſſiſt you with all my advice

" and my earneſt wiſhes, that it may " obtain a return."

This letter was another of thoſe excruciating pleaſures, that almoſt reduced Miſs Milner to the grave.—Her appetite forſook her; and ſhe vainly endeavoured, for ſeveral nights, to cloſe her eyes.—She thought ſo much upon the proſpect of accompliſhing her wiſhes, that ſhe could admit no other idea; not even invent one probable excuſe for leaving Lady Luneham before the appointed time, which was then at the diſtance of two months. She wrote to Miſs Woodley to beg her contrivance, to reproach her for keeping the ſecret ſo long from her, and to thank her for having revealed it in ſo kind a manner at laſt.—She begged alſo to be acquainted how Mr. Dorriforth (for ſtill ſhe called him by

that name) ſpoke and thought of this ſudden change in his deſtiny.

Miſs Woodley's reply was a ſummons for her to town upon ſome pretended buſineſs, which ſhe avoided explaining, but which entirely ſilenced Lady Luneham's entreaties for her ſtay.

To her queſtion concerning Lord Elmwood ſhe anſwered, "It is a ſubject on which he ſeldom ſpeaks—he appears juſt the ſame he ever did, nor could you by any part of his conduct, conceive that any ſuch change had taken place." Miſs Milner exclaimed to herſelf, "I am glad he is not altered—if his words, looks, or manner, were any thing different from what they formerly were, I ſhould not like him ſo well." And juſt the reverſe would have been the caſe, had Miſs Woodley ſent her word he was changed.—The day for her leaving Bath

was

was fixed; ſhe expected it with rapture, but before its arrival, ſunk under the care of expectation; and when it came, was ſo much indiſpoſed, as to be obliged to defer her journey for a week.

At length ſhe found herſelf in London—in the houſe of her guardian—and that guardian no longer bound to a ſingle life, but *enjoined* to marry. He appeared in her eyes, as in Miſs Woodley's, the ſame as ever, or perhaps more endearing than ever, as it was the firſt time ſhe had beheld him with hope.—Mr. Sandford did *not* appear the ſame; yet he was in reality as ſurly and as diſreſpectful in his behaviour to her as uſual; but ſhe did not obſerve, or ſhe did not feel his moroſe temper as heretofore—he ſeemed amiable, mild, and gentle; at leaſt this was the happy medium

dium through which her ſelf-complacent mind began to ſee him; for good humour, like the jaundice, makes every one of its own complection.

CHAPTER III.

LORD Elmwood was preparing to go abroad, for the purpoſe of receiving in form, the diſpenſation from his vows; it was, however, a ſubject he ſeemed carefully to avoid ſpeaking upon; and when by any accident he was obliged to mention it, it was without any marks either of ſatisfaction or concern.

Miſs Milner's pride began to be alarmed.—While he was Mr. Dorriforth, and confined to a ſingle life, his indifference to her charms was rather an honourable than a reproachful trait in his character, and in reality, ſhe admired him for the inſenſibility. — But on the

eve

eve of being at liberty, and on the eve of making his choice, ſhe was offended *that* choice was not immediately fixed upon her.—She had been accuſtomed to receive the devotion of every man who ſaw her, and not to obtain it of the man from whom, of all others, ſhe moſt wiſhed it, was cruelly humiliating.—She complained to Miſs Woodley, who adviſed her to have patience; but that was one of the virtues in which ſhe was the leaſt practiſed.

Encouraged, nevertheleſs, by her friend in the commendable deſire of gaining the affections of him, who poſſeſſed all her own, ſhe, however, left no means unattempted for the conqueſt—but ſhe began with too great a certainty of ſucceſs, not to be ſenſible of the deepeſt mortification in the diſappointment—

ment—nay, ſhe anticipated a diſappoint-ment, as ſhe had before anticipated her ſucceſs, by turns feeling the keeneſt emotions from hope and from deſpair.

As theſe paſſions alternately governed her, ſhe was alternately in ſpirits or dejected; in good or in ill humour; and the viciſſitudes of her proſpect at length gave to her behaviour an air of caprice, which not all her follies had till now produced.—This was not the way to ſecure the affections of Lord Elmwood; ſhe knew it was not; and before him ſhe was under ſome reſtriction.—Sandford obſerved this, and without reſerve, added to the liſt of her other failings, hypocriſy. It was plain to ſee that Mr. Sandford eſteemed her leſs and leſs every day; and as he was the perſon who moſt influenced the opinion of her guardian, he

he became to her, very ſoon, an object not merely of diſlike, but of abhorrence.

Theſe mutual ſentiments were diſcoverable in every word and action, while they were in each other's company; but ſtill in his abſence, Miſs Milner's good nature, and total freedom from malice, never ſuffered her to utter a ſentence injurious to his intereſt. — Sandford's charity did not extend thus far; and ſpeaking of her with ſeverity one evening while ſhe was at the opera, "His meaning," as he ſaid, "but to caution her guardian againſt her faults," Lord Elmwood replied,

"There is one fault, however, Mr. Sandford, I cannot lay to her charge."

"And what is that, my Lord?" cried Sandford, eagerly, "What is that one fault, which Miſs Milner has not?"

"I never,"

"I never," replied Lord Elmwood, "heard Miſs Milner, in your abſence, utter a ſyllable to your diſadvantage."

"She dares not, my Lord, becauſe ſhe is in fear of you; and ſhe knows you would not ſuffer it."

"She then," anſwered his Lordſhip, "pays me a much higher compliment than you do; for you freely cenſure her, and yet imagine I will ſuffer it."

"My Lord," replied Sandford, "I am undeceived now, and ſhall never take that liberty again."

As Lord Elmwood always treated Sandford with the utmoſt reſpect, he began to fear he had been deficient in that article upon this occaſion; and the diſpoſition which had induced him to take his ward's part, was likely, in the end, to prove unfavourable to her; for perceiving

perceiving Sandford was offended at what had paſſed, as the only means of retribution, he began himſelf to lament her volatile and captious propenſities; in which lamentation, Sandford, now forgetting his affront, joined with the heartieſt concurrence, adding,

You, Sir, having now other cares to employ your thoughts, ought to inſiſt upon her marrying, or retiring into the country."

She returned home juſt as this converſation was finiſhed, and Sandford, the moment ſhe entered, rang for his candle to retire. Miſs Woodley, who had been at the opera with Miſs Milner, cried,

" Bleſs me, Mr. Sandford, are you not well, you are going to leave us ſo early ?"

He replied, " No, I have a pain in my head."

Miſs Milner, who never liſtened to complaints without ſympathy, roſe immediately from her ſeat, ſaying,

" I think I never heard you, Mr. Sandford, complain of indiſpoſition before.—Will you accept of my ſpecific for the head-ach? Indeed it is a certain relief—I'll fetch it inſtantly."

She went haſtily out of the room, and returned with a bottle, which, ſhe aſſured him, " Was a preſent from Lady Luneham, and would certainly cure him."—And ſhe preſſed it upon him with ſuch an anxious earneſtneſs, that with all his churliſhneſs he could not refuſe taking it.

This was but a common-place civility, ſuch as is paid by one enemy to another every day; but the *manner* was the

the material part.—The unaffected concern, the attention, the good will, ſhe demonſtrated in this little incident, was that which made it remarkable; and immediately took from Lord Elmwood the diſpleaſure to which he had been juſt before provoked, or rather tranſformed it into a degree of admiration. Even Sandford was not inſenſible to her behaviour, and in return, when he left the room, "Wiſhed her a good night."

To her and Miſs Woodley, who had not been witneſſes of the preceding converſation, what ſhe had done appeared of no merit; but to the mind of Lord Elmwood, the merit was infinite; and upon the departure of Sandford, he began to be unuſually cheerful. He firſt reproached the ladies for not offering him a place in their box at the opera.

" Would you have gone, my Lord?" aſked Miſs Milner, highly delighted.

" Certainly," returned he, " had you invited me."

" Then from this day I give you a general invitation; nor ſhall any other company be admitted but thoſe whom you approve."

" I am very much obliged to you," ſaid he.

" And you," continued ſhe, " who have been accuſtomed only to church-muſic, will be more than any one, enchanted with hearing the ſofter muſic of love."

" What raviſhing pleaſures you are preparing for me!" returned he, " I know not whether my weak ſenſes will be able to ſupport them!"

She had her eyes upon him when he ſpoke this, and ſhe diſcovered in his, that were

were fixed upon her, a ſenſibility unexpected—a kind of faſcination which enticed her to look on, while her eye-lids fell involuntarily before its mighty force, and a thouſand bluſhes crowded over her face.——He was ſtruck with theſe ſudden ſignals; haſtily recalled his former countenance, and ſtopt the converſation.

Miſs Woodley, who had been a ſilent obſerver for ſome time, now thought a word or two from her would be acceptable rather than troubleſome.

"And pray, my Lord," ſaid ſhe, "when do you go to France?"

"To Italy you mean;—I ſhall not go at all," ſaid he. "My ſuperiors are very indulgent, for they diſpenſe with all my duties.—I ought, and I meant, to have gone abroad; but as a variety of con-

cerns require my preſence in England, every neceſſary ceremony has taken place here."

"Then your Lordſhip is no longer in orders?" ſaid Miſs Woodley.

"No; they have been reſigned theſe five days."

"My Lord, I give you joy," ſaid Miſs Milner.

He thanked her, but added with a ſigh, "If I have given up content in ſearch of joy, I ſhall perhaps be a loſer by the venture."—Soon after this, he wiſhed them a good night, and retired.

Happy as Miſs Milner found herſelf in his company, ſhe ſaw him leave the room with infinite ſatisfaction, becauſe her heart was impatient to give a looſe to its hopes on the boſom of Miſs Woodley.—She bade Mrs. Horton imme-

immediately good night, and in her friend's apartment gave way to all the language of paſſion, warmed with the confidence of meeting its return.—She deſcribed the ſentiments ſhe had read in Lord Elmwood's looks; and though Miſs Woodley had beheld them too, Miſs Milner's fancy heightened the expreſſion of every glance, till her conſtruction became, by degrees, ſo extremely favourable to her own wiſhes, that had not her friend been preſent, and known in what meaſure to eſtimate thoſe ſymptoms, ſhe muſt infallibly have thought, by the joy to which they gave birth, that he had openly avowed a paſſion for her.

Miſs Woodley, therefore, thought it her duty to allay theſe ecſtaſies, and repreſented to her, ſhe might be deceived

in her hopes—or even ſuppoſing his wiſhes inclined towards her, there were yet great obſtacles between them.—"Would not Sandford, who directed his every thought and purpoſe, be conſulted upon this? and if he was, upon what, but the moſt romantic affection on the part of Lord Elmwood, had Miſs Milner to depend? and his Lordſhip was not a man to be ſuſpected of ſubmitting to the exceſs of any paſſion."—Thus did Miſs Woodley argue, leſt her friend ſhould be miſled by her wiſhes; yet, in her own mind ſhe ſcarce harboured a doubt that any thing would thwart them.—The ſucceeding circumſtance proved ſhe was miſtaken.

Another gentleman of family and fortune made overtures to Miſs Milner; and her guardian, ſo far from having his thoughts

thoughts inclined towards her on his own account, pleaded this lover's cauſe even with more zeal than he had pleaded for Sir Edward and Lord Frederick; thus at once deſtroying all thoſe plans of happineſs which poor Miſs Milner had formed.

In conſequence, her melancholy humour was now predominant; ſhe confined herſelf at home, and yet, by her own order, was denied to all her viſitors. —Whether this aroſe from pure melancholy, or the ſtill lingering hope of making her conqueſt, by that ſedateneſs of manners which ſhe knew her guardian admired, ſhe herſelf perhaps did not perfectly know. — Be that as it may, Lord Elmwood could not but obſerve this change, and one morning thought fit to mention, and to applaud it.

Miſs

Miſs Woodley and ſhe were at work together when he came into the room; and after ſitting ſeveral minutes, and talking upon indifferent ſubjects, to which his ward replied with a dejection in her voice and manner—he ſaid,

"Perhaps I am wrong, Miſs Milner, but I have obſerved that you are lately more thoughtful than uſual."

She bluſhed, as ſhe always did when the ſubject was herſelf.—He continued, "Your health appears perfectly reſtored, and yet I have obſerved, you take no delight in you former amuſements."

"Are you ſorry for that, my Lord?"

"No, I am extremely glad; and I was going to congratulate you upon the change.—But give me leave to enquire, to what lucky accident we may attribute this alteration?"

"Your

"Your Lordſhip then thinks all my commendable deeds ariſe from accident, and that I have no virtues of my own."

"Pardon me, I think you have many." This he ſpoke emphatically; and her bluſhes increaſed.

He reſumed—"How can I doubt of a lady's virtues, when her countenance gives me ſuch evident proofs of them?—Believe me, Miſs Milner, that in the midſt of your gayeſt follies, while you thus continue to bluſh, I ſhall reverence your internal ſenſations."

"Oh! my Lord, did you know ſome of them, I am afraid you would think them unpardonable."

This was ſo much to the purpoſe, that Miſs Woodley found herſelf alarmed—but without reaſon—Miſs Milner loved

too ſincerely, to reveal it to the object. ——He anſwered,

"And did you know ſome of mine, you might think them equally unpardonable."

She turned pale, and could no longer guide her needle—in the fond tranſport of her heart ſhe imagined that his love for her was among the ſenſations to which he alluded.—She was too much embarraſſed to reply, and he continued,

"We have all much to pardon in one another: and I know not whether the officious perſon who forces, even his good advice, is not as blameable as the obſtinate one, who will not liſten to it. —And now, having made a preface to excuſe you, ſhould you once more refuſe mine, I ſhall venture to give it."

"My Lord," I have never yet refuſed to follow your advice, but where

my

my own peace of mind was ſo nearly concerned, as to have made me culpable, had I complied."

" Well, Madam, I ſubmit to your determinations; and ſhall never again oppoſe your inclination to remain ſingle.'

This ſentence, as it excluded the idea of ſoliciting for himſelf, gave her the utmoſt pain; and her eye glanced at him full of reproach.—He did not obſerve it, but went on.

" While you continue unmarried, it ſeems to have been your father's intention that you ſhould continue under my immediate care; but as I mean for the future to reſide chiefly in the country—anſwer me candidly, do you think you could be happy there, for at leaſt three parts of the year?"

" After

"After a ſhort heſitation, ſhe replied, —"I have no objection."

"I am glad to hear it," he returned eagerly, "for it is my earneſt deſire to have you with me—your welfare is dear to me as my own; and were we apart, continual apprehenſions would prey upon my mind."

The tear ſtarted in her eye, at the earneſtneſs that accompanied theſe words; —he ſaw it, and to ſoften her ſtill more with the ſenſe of his eſteem for her, he increaſed his earneſtneſs while he ſaid,

"If you will take the reſolution to quit London for the time I mention, there ſhall be no means omitted to make the country all you can wiſh—I ſhall inſiſt upon Miſs Woodley's company for both our ſakes; and it will not only be *my* ſtudy to form ſuch a ſociety as you may approve, but I am certain it will be likewiſe

likewiſe the ſtudy of Lady Elmwood——"

He was going on, but as if a poniard had thruſt her to the heart, ſhe writhed under this unexpected ſtroke.

He ſaw her countenance change—he looked at her ſtedfaſtly.

It was not a common change from joy to ſorrow, from content to uneaſineſs, which Miſs Milner diſcovered—ſhe felt, and ſhe expreſſed anguiſh.—Lord Elmwood was alarmed and ſhocked.—She did not weep, but ſhe called Miſs Woodley to come to her, with a voice that indicated a degree of agony.

"My Lord," (cried Miſs Woodley, ſeeing his conſternation, and trembling leſt he ſhould gueſs the ſecret), "My Lord, Miſs Milner has again deceived you—you muſt not take her from London—

don—it is that, which is the cauſe of her uneaſineſs."

He ſeemed more amazed ſtill, and ſtill more ſhocked at her duplicity than at her torture.—" Good Heaven! exclaimed he, " How am I to accompliſh her wiſhes? What am I to do? How can I judge, if ſhe will not confide in me, but thus for ever deceive me?"

She leaned, pale as death, on the ſhoulder of Miſs Woodley, her eye fixed, with apparent inſenſibility to all that was ſaid, while he continued,

" Heaven is my witneſs, if I knew—If I could conceive the means how to make her happy, I would ſacrifice my own happineſs to hers."

" My Lord," ſaid Miſs Woodley with a ſmile, " perhaps I may call upon you hereafter to fulfil your word."

He

He was totally ignorant what ſhe meant, nor had he leiſure, from the confuſion of his thoughts, to reflect upon her meaning; he nevertheleſs replied, with warmth, "Do.—You ſhall find I'll perform it.——Do.—I will faithfully perform it."

Though Miſs Milner was conſcious this declaration could not, in delicacy, be ever adduced againſt him; yet the fervent and ſolemn manner in which he made it, cheered her ſpirits; and as perſons enjoy the reflection of having in their poſſeſſion ſome valuable gem, though they are determined never to uſe it, ſo ſhe upon this, was comforted and grew better.—She now lifted up her head, and leaned it on her hand, as ſhe ſat by the ſide of a table — ſtill ſhe did not ſpeak, but ſeemed overcome with ſorrow.—As her ſituation became, how-

ever, leſs alarming, her guardian's pity and affright began to take the colour of reſentment; and though he did not ſay ſo, he was, and looked, highly offended.

At this juncture Mr. Sandford entered.—On beholding the preſent party, it required not his ſagacity to ſee, at the firſt view, that they were all uneaſy; but inſtead of the ſympathy this might have excited in ſome diſpoſitions, Mr. Sandford, after caſting a look at each of them, appeared in high ſpirits.

"You ſeem unhappy, my Lord," ſaid he, with a ſmile.

"You do *not*—Mr. Sandford," Lord Elmwood replied.

"No, my Lord, nor would I, were I in your ſituation.—What ſhould make a man of ſenſe out of temper but a

worthy object?" — And he looked at Miſs Milner.

"There are no objects unworthy our care," replied Lord Elmwood.

"But there are objects on whom all care is fruitleſs, your Lordſhip will allow."

"I never yet deſpaired of any one, Mr. Sandford."

"And yet there are perſons, of whom it is preſumption to entertain hopes." — And he looked again at Miſs Milner.

"Does your head ach, Miſs Milner?" aſked her friend, ſeeing her hold it with her hand.

"Very much," returned ſhe.

"Mr. Sandford," ſaid Miſs Woodley, did you uſe all thoſe drops Miſs Milner gave you for a pain in the head?"

"Yes," anſwered he, "I did."—But the queſtion at that moment ſomewhat embarraſſed him.

"And I hope you found benefit from them," ſaid Miſs Milner, with great kindneſs, as ſhe roſe from her ſeat, and walked ſlowly out of the room.

Though Miſs Woodley followed her, ſo that Mr. Sandford was left alone with Lord Elmwood, and might have continued his unkind inſinuations without one reſtraint, yet his lips were cloſed for the preſent.—He looked down on the carpet—twitched himſelf upon his chair—and began to talk of the weather.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN the firſt tranſports of deſpair were paſt, Miſs Milner ſuffered herſelf to be once more in hope. — She found there were no other means to ſupport her life; and to her comfort, her friend was much leſs ſevere on the preſent occaſion than ſhe expected. — No engagement between mortals was, in Miſs Woodley's opinion, binding like that entered into with heaven; and whatever vows Lord Elmwood had poſſibly made to another, ſhe juſtly ſuppoſed that no woman's love for him equalled Miſs Milner's — it was prior to all others too, and that eſtabliſhed her claim to contend at leaſt for ſucceſs; and in a con-

tention, what rival would not fall before her?

It was not difficult to gueſs who this rival was; or if they were a little time in ſuſpence, Miſs Woodley ſoon arrived at the certainty, by inquiring of Mr. Sandford; who, unſuſpecting why ſhe aſked, readily informed her the intended Lady Elmwood was no other than Miſs Fenton; and that their marriage would be ſolemnized as ſoon as the mourning for the late Lord Elmwood was over.—This laſt intelligence made Miſs Woodley ſhudder — ſhe repeated it, however, to Miſs Milner, word for word.

"Happy! happy woman!" exclaimed Miſs Milner of Miſs Fenton; "ſhe has received the firſt fond impulſe of his heart, and has had the tranſcendent happineſs of teaching him to love!"

"By

"By no means," returned Miſs Woodley, finding no other ſuggeſtion likely to comfort her; "do not ſuppoſe that his marriage is the reſult of love—it is no more than a duty, a neceſſary arrangement, and this you may plainly ſee by the wife on whom he has fixed.—Miſs Fenton was thought a proper match for his couſin, and that ſame propriety has transferred her to him."

It was eaſy to convince Miſs Milner that all her friend ſaid was truth, for ſhe wiſhed it ſo. "And oh!" ſhe exclaimed, "could I but ſtimulate paſſion, againſt the cold influence of propriety——Do you think, my dear Miſs Woodley," (and ſhe looked with ſuch begging eyes, it was impoſſible not to anſwer as ſhe wiſhed,) "do you think it would be unjuſt to Miſs Fenton, were I to inſpire her deſtined huſband with a paſſion

which ſhe may not have inſpired, and which I believe *ſhe* cannot feel?"

Miſs Woodley pauſed a minute, and then anſwered, "No;"—but there was a heſitation in her manner of delivery—ſhe *did* ſay, "No," but ſhe looked as if ſhe was afraid ſhe ought to have ſaid "Yes."—Miſs Milner, however, did not give her time to recall the word, or to alter its meaning by adding others to it, but ran on eagerly, and declared, "As that was her opinion, ſhe would abide by it, and do all ſhe could to ſupplant her rival."—In order, nevertheleſs, to juſtify this determination, and ſatisfy the conſcience of Miſs Woodley, they both concluded that Miſs Fenton's heart was not engaged in the intended marriage, and conſequently that ſhe was indifferent whether it ever took place or not.

Since

Since the death of the late Earl, ſhe had not been in town; nor had the preſent Earl been near the place where ſhe reſided, ſince the week in which her lover died; of courſe, nothing ſimilar to love could have been declared at ſo early a period; and if it had been made known at a later, it muſt only have been by letter, or by the deputation of Mr. Sandford, who they knew had been once in the country to viſit her; but how little he was qualified to enforce a tender paſſion, was a comfortable reflection.

Revived by theſe conjectures, of which ſome were true, and others falſe; the very next day a gloom overſpread their bright proſpects, on Mr. Sandford's ſaying, as he entered the breakfaſt-room,

" Miſs

" Miſs Fenton, ladies, deſired me to preſent her compliments."

" Is ſhe in town?" aſked Mrs. Horton.

" She came yeſterday morning," returned Sandford, " and is at her brother's, in Ormond Street; my Lord and I ſupped there laſt night, and that made us ſo late home."

Lord Elmwood entered ſoon after, and bowing to his ward, confirmed what had been ſaid, by telling her, that " Miſs Fenton had charged him with her kindeſt reſpects."

" How does poor Miſs Fenton look?" Mrs. Horton aſked Lord Elmwood.

" To which queſtion Sandford replied, " Beautiful—ſhe looks beautifully."

" She has got over her uneaſineſs, I ſuppoſe then?" ſaid Mrs. Horton — not dream-

dreaming that ſhe was aſking the queſtion before her new lover.

" Uneaſy !" replied Sandford, " uneaſy at any trial this world can ſend ? That would be highly unworthy of her."

" But ſometimes women do fret at ſuch things," replied Mrs. Horton, innocently.

Lord Elmwood aſked Miſs Milner— " If ſhe meant to ride, this delightful day ?"

While ſhe was heſitating—

" There are different kinds of women," (ſaid Sandford, directing his diſcourſe to Mrs. Horton;) " there is as much difference between ſome women, as between good and evil ſpirits."

Lord Elmwood aſked Miſs Milner again—If ſhe took an airing ?

She replied, " No."

" And

"And beauty," continued Sandford, "when endowed upon ſpirits that are evil, is a mark of their greater, their more extreme wickedneſs.—Lucifer was the moſt beautiful of all the angels in paradiſe"——

"How do you know?" ſaid Miſs Milner.

"But the beauty of Lucifer" (continued Sandford, in perfect neglect and contempt of her queſtion,) "was an aggravation of his guilt; becauſe it ſhewed a double ſhare of ingratitude to the Divine Creator of that beauty."

"Now you talk of angels," ſaid Miſs Milner, "I wiſh I had wings; and I ſhould like to fly through the park this morning."

"You would be taken for an angel in good earneſt," ſaid Lord Elmwood.

Sandford was angry at this little compliment, and cried, "I ſhould think the ſerpent's ſkin would be much more characteriſtic."

"My Lord," cried ſhe, "does not Mr. Sandford uſe me ill?"—Vext with other things, ſhe felt herſelf extremely hurt at this, and made the appeal almoſt in tears.

"Indeed, I think he does." And he looked at Sandford as if he was diſpleaſed.

This was a triumph ſo agreeable to her, that ſhe immediately pardoned the offence; but the offender did not ſo eaſily pardon her.

"Good morning, ladies," ſaid Lord Elmwood, riſing to go away.

"My Lord," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "you promiſed Miſs Milner to accompany

pany her one evening to the opera; this is opera night."

"Will you go, my Lord?" aſked Miſs Milner, in a voice ſo ſoft, that he ſeemed as if he wiſhed, but could not reſiſt it."

"I am to dine at Mr. Fenton's to-day," he replied; "and if he and his ſiſter will go, and you will allow them part of your box, I will promiſe to come."

This was a condition by no means acceptable to her; but as ſhe felt a deſire to ſee him in the company of his intended bride, (for ſhe fancied ſhe could perceive his ſecret ſentiments, could ſhe once ſee them together) ſhe anſwered not ungraciouſly, "Yes, my compliments to Mr. and Miſs Fenton,

and

and I hope they will favour me with their company."

"Then, Madam, if they come, you may expect me—elſe not." He bowed and left the room.

All the day was paſſed in anxious expectation by Miſs Milner, what would be the event of the evening: for upon her penetration that evening all her future proſpects ſhe thought depended.—If ſhe ſaw by his looks, by his words, or aſſiduities, that he loved Miſs Fenton, ſhe flattered herſelf ſhe would never think of him again with hope; but if ſhe obſerved him treat her with inattention or indifference, ſhe would cheriſh, from that moment, the fondeſt expectations.—Againſt that ſhort evening her toilet was conſulted the whole day: the alternate hope and fear which fluttered in

in her heart, gave a more than uſual brilliancy to her eyes, and more than uſual bloom to her complection.—But vain was her beauty; vain all her care to decorate that beauty; vain her many looks to her box-door in hopes to ſee it open—Lord Elmwood never came.

The muſic was diſcord—every thing ſhe ſaw was diſguſting—in a word, ſhe was miſerable.

She longed impatiently for the curtain to drop, becauſe ſhe was uneaſy where ſhe was—yet ſhe aſked herſelf, "Shall I be leſs unhappy at home? Yes; at home I ſhall ſee Lord Elmwood, and that will be happineſs.—But he will behold me with neglect, and that will be miſery!—Ungrateful man! I will no longer think of him."—Yet could ſhe have

have thought of him, without joining in the ſame idea Miſs Fenton, her anguiſh had been ſupportable; but while ſhe painted them as lovers, the tortures of the rack are but a few degrees more painful than thoſe which ſhe endured.

There are but few perſons who ever felt the real paſſion of jealouſy, becauſe few have felt the real paſſion of love; but with thoſe who have experienced them both, jealouſy not only affects the mind, but every fibre of their frame; and Miſs Milner's every limb felt agonizing torment, when Miſs Fenton, courted and beloved by Lord Elmwood, was preſent to her imagination.

The moment the opera was finiſhed, ſhe flew haſtily down ſtairs, as if to fly from the ſufferings ſhe experienced.—

She did not go into the coffee-room, though repeatedly urged by Miſs Woodley, but waited at the door till her carriage drew up.

Piqued — heart-broken — full of reſentment againſt the object of her uneaſineſs, and inattentive to all that paſſed, a hand gently touched her own, and the moſt humble and inſinuating voice ſaid, "Will you permit me to hand you to your carriage?" She was awaked from her reverie, and found Lord Frederick Lawnly by her ſide.—Her heart, juſt then melting with tenderneſs to another, was perhaps more acceſſible than heretofore; or burſting with reſentment, thought this the moment to retaliate. Whatever paſſion reigned that inſtant, it was favourable to the deſires of Lord Frederick, and ſhe looked as if ſhe was

glad

glad to ſee him; he beheld this with the rapture and the humility of a lover; and though ſhe did not feel the leaſt particle of love in return, ſhe felt gratitude in proportion to the inſenſibility with which ſhe had been treated by her guardian; and Lord Frederick's ſuppoſition was not very erroneous, if he miſtook this gratitude for a latent ſpark of affection. The miſtake, however, did not force from him his reſpect: he handed her to her carriage, bowed low, and diſappeared. Miſs Woodley wiſhed to divert her thoughts from the object which could only make her wretched, and as they rode home, by many encomiums upon Lord Frederick, endeavoured to incite her to a regard for him; Miſs Milner was diſpleaſed at the attempt, and exclaimed,

"What, love a rake, a man of profeſſed gallantry? impoſſible.—To me, a common rake is as odious, as a common proſtitute is to a man of the niceſt feelings.—Where can be the joy, the pride, of inſpiring a paſſion which fifty others can equally inſpire?"

"Strange," cried Miſs Woodley, "that you, who poſſeſs ſo many follies incident to your ſex, ſhould, in the diſpoſal of your heart, have ſentiments ſo contrary to women in general."

"My dear Miſs Woodley," returned ſhe, "put in competition the languid addreſſes of a libertine, with the animated affection of a ſober man, and judge which has the dominion? Oh! in my calendar of love, a ſolemn Lord Chief Juſtice, or a devout archbiſhop, ranks before a licentious king."

Miſs Woodley ſmiled at an opinion which ſhe knew half her ſex would ridicule; but by the air of ſincerity with which it was delivered, ſhe was convinced her recent behaviour to Lord Frederick was but the mere effect of chance.

Lord Elmwood's carriage drove to his door juſt at the time hers did; Mr. Sandford was with him, and they were both come from paſſing the evening at Mr. Fenton's.

"So, my Lord," ſaid Miſs Woodley, as ſoon as they met in the apartment, "you did not come to us?"

"No," anſwered he, "I was ſorry; but I hope you did not expect me."

"Not expect you, my Lord?" cried Miſs Milner; "Did not you ſay that you would come?"

"If I had, I certainly ſhould have come," returned he, "but I only ſaid ſo conditionally."

"That I am a witneſs to," cried Sandford, "for I was preſent at the time, and he ſaid it ſhould depend upon Miſs Fenton."

"And ſhe, with her gloomy diſpoſition," ſaid Miſs Milner, "choſe to ſit at home."

"Gloomy diſpoſition?" repeated Sandford: She has a great ſhare of ſprightlineſs—and I think I never ſaw her in better ſpirits than ſhe was this evening, my Lord?"

Lord Elmwood did not ſpeak.

"Bleſs me, Mr. Sandford," cried Miſs Milner, "I meant no reflection upon Miſs Fenton's diſpoſition; I only meant to cenſure her taſte for ſtaying at home."

" I think," replied Sandford, " a much heavier cenſure ſhould be paſſed upon thoſe who prefer rambling abroad."

" But I hope, ladies, my not coming," ſaid Lord Elmwood, " was no inconvenience to you; for you had ſtill, I ſee, a gentleman with you.

" Oh! yes, two gentlemen," anſwered the ſon of Lady Evans, a lad from ſchool, whom Miſs Milner had taken along with her.

" What two?" aſked Lord Elmwood.

Neither Miſs Milner nor Miſs Woodley anſwered.

" You know, Madam," ſaid young Evans, " that handſome gentleman who handed you into your carriage, and you called my Lord."

"Oh! he means Lord Frederick Lawnly," ſaid Miſs Milner careleſſly, but a bluſh of ſhame ſpread over her face.

"And did he hand you into your coach?" aſked Lord Elmwood earneſtly.

"By mere accident, my Lord," Miſs Woodley replied, "for the crowd was ſo great——"

"I think, my Lord," ſaid Sandford, "it was very lucky that you were *not* there."

"Had Lord Elmwood been with us, we ſhould not have had occaſion for the aſſiſtance of any other," ſaid Miſs Milner.

"Lord Elmwood has been with you, Madam," returned Sandford, "very frequently, and yet——"

"Mr.

"Mr. Sandford," ſaid Lord Elmwood, interrupting him, "it is near bed-time, your converſation keeps the ladies from retiring."

"Your Lordſhip's does not," ſaid Miſs Milner, "for you ſay nothing."

"Becauſe, Madam, I am afraid to offend."

"But do not you alſo hope to pleaſe? and without riſking the one, it is impoſſible to arrive at the other."

"I think, at preſent, the riſk would be too hazardous, and ſo I wiſh you a good night." And he went out of the room ſomewhat abruptly.

"Lord Elmwood," ſaid Miſs Milner, "is very grave—he does not look like a man who has been paſſing the evening with the woman he loves."

"Perhaps he is melancholy at parting from her," ſaid Miſs Woodley.

"More

"More likely offended," ſaid Sandford, "at the manner in which that lady has ſpoken of her."

"Who, I? I proteſt I ſaid nothing——"

"Nothing? Did not you ſay that ſhe was gloomy?"

"Nothing but what I thought—I was going to add, Mr. Sandford."

"When you think unjuſtly, you ſhould not expreſs your thoughts."

"Then, perhaps, I ſhould never ſpeak."

"And it were better you did not, if what you ſay is to give pain.—Do you know, Madam, that my Lord is going to be married to Miſs Fenton?"

"Yes," anſwered Miſs Milner.

"Do you know that he loves her?"

"No," anſwered Miſs Milner.

"How,

"How! do you ſuppoſe he does not?"

"I ſuppoſe that he does, yet I don't know it."

"Then if you ſuppoſe that he does, how can you have the imprudence to find fault with her before him?"

"I did not.—To call her gloomy, was, I knew, to commend her both to him and to you, who admire ſuch tempers."

"Whatever her temper is, *every one* admires it; and ſo far from its being what you have deſcribed, ſhe has great vivacity; vivacity which comes from the heart."

"No, if it *came* from thence, I ſhould admire it too; but it reſts there, and no one is the better for it.

"Pſhaw!" ſaid Miſs Woodley, "it is time for us to retire; you and Mr. Sand-

Sandford muſt finiſh your diſpute in the morning,"

"Diſpute, Madam!" ſaid Sandford, "I never diſputed with any one below a doctor of divinity in my life.—I was only cautioning your friend not to make light of thoſe virtues which it would do her honour to poſſeſs.—Miſs Fenton is a moſt amiable young woman, and worthy of juſt ſuch a huſband as my Lord Elmwood will make her."

"I am ſure," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "Miſs Milner thinks ſo—ſhe has a high opinion of Miſs Fenton—ſhe was at preſent only jeſting."

"But, Madam, a jeſt is a very pernicious thing, when delivered with a malignant ſneer.—I have known a jeſt deſtroy a lady's reputation—I have known a jeſt give one perſon a diſtaſte for

for another—I have known a jeſt break off a marriage."

"But I ſuppoſe there is no apprehenſion of that in the preſent caſe?" ſaid Miſs Woodley—wiſhing he might anſwer in the affirmative.

"Not that I can foreſee.—No, Heaven forbid," he replied, "for I look upon them to be formed for each other—their diſpoſitions, their purſuits, their inclinations the ſame.—Their paſſions for each other juſt the ſame—pure—white as ſnow."

"And I dare ſay, not warmer," replied Miſs Milner.

He looked provoked beyond meaſure.

"My dear," cried Miſs Woodley, "how can you talk thus? I believe in my heart you are only envious, becauſe

becauſe my Lord Elmwood has not offered himſelf to you."

"To her!" ſaid Sandford, affecting an air of the utmoſt ſurpriſe; "to her?—Do you think he received a diſpenſation from his vows, to become the huſband of a coquette—a ——."—He was going on.

"Nay, Mr. Sandford," cried Miſs Milner, "I believe, after all, my worſt crime, in your eyes, is that of being a heretic."

"By no means—it is the only circumſtance that can apologize for your faults; and if you had not that excuſe, there would be none for you."

"Then, at preſent, there *is* an excuſe—I thank you, Mr. Sandford—this is the kindeſt thing you ever ſaid to me. But I am vext to ſee that you are ſorry you have ſaid it."

"Angry

"Angry at your being a heretic!" he reſumed—"Indeed I ſhould be much more concerned to ſee you a diſgrace to our religion."

Miſs Milner had not been in a good humour the whole evening—ſhe had been provoked ſeveral times to the full extent of her patience: but this harſh ſentence hurried her beyond all bounds, and ſhe aroſe from her ſeat in the moſt violent agitation, exclaiming, "What have I done to be thus treated?"

Though Mr. Sandford was not a man eaſily intimidated, he was upon this occaſion evidently alarmed; and ſtared about him with ſo violent an expreſſion of ſurpriſe, that it partook, in ſome degree, of fear.—Miſs Woodley claſped her friend in her arms, and cried with the tendereſt affection and pity, "My dear Miſs Milner, be compoſed."

Miſs

Miſs Milner ſat down, and was ſo for a minute; but her dead ſilence was almoſt as alarming to Sandford as her rage had been; and he did not perfectly recover himſelf till he ſaw tears pouring down her face.—He then heaved a ſigh of content that it had ſo ended; but in his heart reſolved never to forget the ridiculous affright into which he had been thrown.—He ſtole out of the room without uttering a ſyllable—but as he never retired to reſt before he had repeated a long form of evening prayer, when he came to that part which ſupplicates "Grace for the wicked," he mentioned Miſs Milner's name with the moſt fervent devotion.

CHAPTER V.

OF the many reſtleſs nights that Miſs Milner paſſed, this was not one.—It is true, ſhe had a weight of care upon her heart, even heavier than uſual, but the burden had overcome her ſtrength:—wearied out with hopes, with fears, and, at the end, with diſappointment and rage, ſhe ſunk at once into a deep ſlumber. But the more forgetfulneſs had then prevailed, the more powerful was the force of remembrance when ſhe awoke. At firſt, ſo ſound had her ſleep been, that ſhe had a difficulty in calling to mind why ſhe was unhappy; but that ſhe *was* unhappy ſhe well recollected—when the

cauſe came to her memory, ſhe would have ſlept again—but it was impoſſible.

Though her reſt had been ſound, it had not been refreſhing — ſhe was far from well, and ſent word of her indiſpoſition, as an apology for not being preſent at breakfaſt. — Lord Elmwood looked concerned when the meſſage was delivered—Mr. Sandford ſhook his head.

" Miſs Milner's health is not good!" ſaid Mrs. Horton a few minutes after.

Lord Elmwood laid down the newſpaper to attend to her.

" To me, there is ſomething very extraordinary about her," continued Mrs. Horton, finding ſhe had caught his Lordſhip's attention.

" So there is to me," added Sandford, with a ſarcaſtic ſneer.

" And

"And ſo there is to me," ſaid Miſs Woodley, with a ſerious face and a heart-felt ſigh.

Lord Elmwood gazed by turns at each, as each delivered their ſentiments —and when they were all ſilent, he looked bewildered, not knowing what judgement to form, from any of theſe ſentences.

Soon after breakfaſt, Mr. Sandford withdrew to his own apartment: Mrs. Horton, in a little time, went to hers: Lord Elmwood and Miſs Woodley were left alone. He immediately roſe from his ſeat, and ſaid,

"I think, Miſs Woodley, Miſs Milner was extremely to blame, though I did not chuſe to tell her ſo before Mr. Sandford, in giving Lord Frederick an opportunity of ſpeaking to her, unleſs

ſhe means that he ſhall renew his addreſſes."

"That, I am ſure," replied Miſs Woodley, "ſhe does *not* mean — and I aſſure you, my Lord, ſeriouſly, it was by mere accident ſhe ſaw him yeſterday evening, or permitted his attendance upon her to her carriage."

"I am glad to hear it," he returned quickly; "for although I am not of a ſuſpicious nature, yet in regard to her affection for him, I cannot but ſtill have my doubts."

"You need have none, my Lord," replied Miſs Woodley, with a ſmile of confidence.

"And yet you muſt own her behaviour has warranted them—has it not been in this particular, incoherent and unaccountable?"

"The

"The behaviour of a perſon in love, no doubt," ſaid Miſs Woodley.

"Don't I ſay ſo?" replied he warmly; "and is not that a juſt reaſon for my ſuſpicions?"

"But is there only one man in the world on whom thoſe ſuſpicions can fix?" ſaid Miſs Woodley, with the colour mounting into her face.

"Not that I know of—not one more that I know of," he replied, with aſtoniſhment at what ſhe had inſinuated, and yet with a perfect aſſurance that ſhe was in the wrong.

"Perhaps I am miſtaken," anſwered ſhe.

"Nay, that is impoſſible too," returned he with anxiety—"You ſhare her confidence — you are perpetually with her; and if ſhe did not confide in you, (which I know, and rejoice that ſhe

does) you would yet be acquainted with all her inclinations."

"I believe I am *perfectly* acquainted with them," replied Miſs Woodley, with a ſignificance in her voice and manner which convinced him there was ſome ſecret to learn.

After a heſitation ——

"It is far from me," replied he, "to wiſh to be entruſted with the private ſentiments of thoſe who deſire to withhold them from me; much leſs would I take any unfair means to be informed of them.—To aſk any more queſtions of you, I believe, would be unfair.—Yet I cannot but lament that I am not as well informed as you are.—I wiſh to prove my friendſhip to Miſs Milner, but ſhe will not ſuffer me—and every ſtep that I take for her happineſs, I take in the moſt perplexing uncertainty."

Miſs

Miſs Woodley ſighed — but ſhe did not ſpeak.—He ſeemed to wait for her reply; but as ſhe made none, he proceeded ——

"If ever breach of confidence could be tolerated, I certainly know no occaſion that would ſo juſtly authoriſe it as the preſent.—I am not only proper from character, but from circumſtances, to be relied upon — my intereſt is ſo nearly connected with the intereſt, and my happineſs with the happineſs of my ward, that thoſe principles, as well as my honour, would protect her againſt every peril ariſing from my being truſted."

"Oh! my Lord," cried Miſs Woodley, with a moſt forcible accent, "*You* are the laſt perſon on earth ſhe would pardon me for entruſting."

"Why ſo?" ſaid he, warmly. "But that is the way — the perſon who is our

friend we diſtruſt — where a common intereſt is concerned, we are aſhamed of drawing on a common danger—afraid of advice, though that advice is to ſave us. —— Miſs Woodley," ſaid he, changing his voice with exceſs of earneſtneſs, "do you not believe, that I would do any thing to make Miſs Milner happy?"

"Any thing in honour, my Lord."

"She can deſire nothing farther."— He replied in agitation, "Are her deſires ſo unwarrantable, that I cannot grant them?"

Miſs Woodley again did not ſpeak — and he continued ——

"Great as my friendſhip is, there are certainly bounds to it—bounds that ſhall ſave her in ſpite of herſelf;"— and he raiſed his voice.

"In

"In the diſpoſal of themſelves," reſumed he, with a leſs vehement tone, "that great, that terrific diſpoſal in marriage, (at which I have always looked with fear and diſmay) there is no accounting for the raſhneſs of a woman's choice, or ſometimes for the depravity of her taſte.—But in ſuch a caſe, Miſs Milner's election of a huſband ſhall not direct mine.—If ſhe does not know how to eſtimate her own value, I do.—Independent of her fortune, ſhe has beauty to captivate the heart of any man; and with all her follies, ſhe has a frankneſs in her manner, an unaffected wiſdom in her thoughts, a vivacity in her converſation, and withal, a ſoftneſs in her demeanour, that might alone engage the affections of a man of the niceſt ſentiments, and the ſtrongeſt underſtanding.—I will not ſee all theſe qualities

lities and accompliſhments debaſed.—It is my office to protect her from the conſequences of a degrading choice, and I will."

"My Lord, Miſs Milner's taſte is not a depraved one; it is but too refined."

"What can you mean by that, Miſs Woodley? You talk myſteriouſly.—Is ſhe not afraid that I will thwart her inclinations?"

"She is ſure that you will, my Lord."

"Then muſt not the perſon be unworthy of her?"

Miſs Woodley roſe from her ſeat—ſhe claſped her hands — every look and every geſture proved her alternate reſolution and irreſolution of proceeding.—Lord Elmwood's attention was arreſted before

before; but now it was fixed to a degree which her manner only could occaſion.

"My Lord," ſaid ſhe, with a tremulous voice, "promiſe me, declare to me, nay, ſwear to me, that it ſhall ever remain a ſecret in your own breaſt, and I will reveal to you, on whom ſhe has placed her affections."

This preparation made Lord Elmwood tremble, and he ran over inſtantly in his mind all the perſons he could recollect, in order to arrive at the knowledge by thought, quicker than by words.—It was in vain he tried, and he once more turned his inquiring eyes upon Miſs Woodley.—He ſaw her ſilent and covered with confuſion.—Again he ſearched his own thoughts, nor ineffectually as before.—At the firſt glance, the

object was preſented, and he beheld—*himſelf.*

The rapid emotion of varying paſſions, which immediately darted over his features, informed Miſs Woodley that her ſecret was diſcovered—ſhe hid her face, while the tears that fell down to her boſom, confirmed the truth of his ſuggeſtion, beyond what oaths could have done.—A ſhort interval of ſilence followed, during which, ſhe ſuffered tortures for the manner in which he would next addreſs her—two ſeconds gave her this reply:

"For God's ſake take care what you are doing—you are deſtroying my proſpects of futurity—you are making this world too dear to me."

Her drooping head was then lifted up, and ſhe caught the eye of Dorri-

forth;

forth; ſhe ſaw it beam expectation, amazement, joy, ardour, and love.—— Nay, there was a fire, a vehemence in the quick faſcinating rays it ſent forth, ſhe never before had ſeen—it filled her with alarm—ſhe wiſhed him to love Miſs Milner, but to love her with moderation.—Miſs Woodley was too little verſed in the ſubject, to know, this would have been not to love at all; at leaſt, not to the extent of breaking through engagements, and all the various obſtacles that ſtill militated againſt their union.

Lord Elmwood was ſenſible of the embarraſſment his preſence gave Miſs Woodley, and underſtood the reproaches which ſhe ſeemed to vent upon herſelf in ſilence.—To relieve her from both, he laid his hand with force upon his heart,

heart, and ſaid, "Do you believe me?"

"I do, my Lord," ſhe anſwered, trembling.

"I will make no unjuſt uſe of what I know," he replied with firmneſs.

"I believe you, my Lord."

"But for what my paſſions now dictate," continued he, "I will not anſwer.—They are confuſed—they are triumphant at preſent.—I have never yet, however, been vanquiſhed by them; and even upon this occaſion, my reaſon ſhall combat them to the laſt—and my reaſon ſhall fail me, before I do wrong."

He was going to leave the room—ſhe followed him, and cried, "But, my Lord, how ſhall I ſee again the unhappy object of my treachery?"

"See

" See her," replied he, " as one to whom you meant no injury, and to whom you have done none."

" But ſhe would account it an injury."

" We are not judges of what belongs to ourſelves," he replied — " I am tranſported at the tidings you have revealed, and yet, perhaps, I had better never have heard them."

Miſs Woodley was going to ſay ſomething farther, but as if incapable of attending to her, he haſtened out of the room.

CHAPTER VI.

MISS Woodley ſtood for ſome time to conſider which way ſhe was to go.—The firſt perſon ſhe met, would enquire why ſhe had been weeping? and if Miſs Milner was to aſk the queſtion, in what words could ſhe tell, or in what manner deny the truth?—To avoid her was her firſt caution, and ſhe took the only method; ſhe had a hackney-coach ordered, rode ſeveral miles out of town, and returned to dinner with ſo little remains of her ſwoln eyes, that complaining of the head-ach was a ſufficient excuſe for them.

Miſs

Miſs Milner was enough recovered to be preſent at dinner, though ſhe ſcarce taſted a morſel. Lord Elmwood did not dine at home, at which Miſs Woodley rejoiced, but at which Mr. Sandford appeared highly diſappointed. — He aſked the ſervants ſeveral times, what he ſaid when he went out? They replied, "Nothing more than that he ſhould not be at home to dinner."—"I can't imagine where he dines?" ſaid Sandford. —"Bleſs me, Mr. Sandford, can't you gueſs?" (cried Mrs. Horton, who by this time was made acquainted with his intended marriage) "He dines with Miſs Fenton to be ſure."—"No," replied Sandford, "he is not there; I came from thence juſt now, and they had not ſeen him all day."—Poor Miſs Milner, on this, ate ſomething; for

where we hope for nothing, we receive ſmall indulgences with joy.

Notwithſtanding the anxiety and trouble under which Miſs Woodley had laboured all the morning, her heart for many weeks had not felt ſo light as it did this day at dinner.—The confidence that ſhe repoſed in the promiſes of Lord Elmwood—the firm reliance ſhe had upon his delicacy and his juſtice—the unabated kindneſs with which her friend received her, while ſhe knew that no one ſuſpicious thought had taken harbour in her boſom—and the conſcious integrity of her own intentions, though ſhe might have been miſled by her judgement, all comforted her with the hope, ſhe had done nothing ſhe ought to wiſh recalled. —But although ſhe felt thus tranquil, in reſpect to what ſhe had divulged,

yet

yet ſhe was a good deal embarraſſed with the dread of next ſeeing Lord Elmwood.

Miſs Milner, not having ſpirits to go abroad, paſſed the evening at home.—She read part of a new opera, played upon her guitar, muſed, ſighed, occaſionally talked with Miſs Woodley, and ſo paſſed the tedious hours till near ten, when Mrs. Horton aſked Mr. Sandford to play a game at piquet, and on his excuſing himſelf, Miſs Milner offered in his ſtead, and was gladly accepted. —They had juſt begun to play when Lord Elmwood came into the room—Miſs Milner's countenance immediately brightened, and though ſhe was in a negligent morning dreſs, and looked paler than uſual, ſhe did not look leſs beautiful.—Miſs Woodley was leaning on

the back of her chair to obſerve the game, and Mr. Sandford ſat reading one of the Fathers at the other ſide of the fire place. Lord Elmwood, as he advanced to the table, bowed, not having ſeen the ladies ſince the morning, or Miſs Milner that day: they returned the ſalute, and he was going up to Miſs Milner, (as if to enquire of her health) when Mr. Sandford, laying down his book, ſaid,

"My Lord, where have you been all day?"

"I have been very buſy," replied he, and walking from the card-table, went up to him.

Miſs Milner played one card for another.

"You have been at Mr. Fenton's this evening, I ſuppoſe?" ſaid Sandford.

"No, not at all to-day."

"How came that about, my Lord?"

Miſs Milner played the ace of diamonds, inſtead of the king of hearts.

"I ſhall call to-morrow," anſwered Lord Elmwood; and then walking with a very ceremonious air up to Miſs Milner, ſaid, "He hoped ſhe was perfectly recovered."

Mrs. Horton begged her "To mind what ſhe was about."

She replied, "I am much better, Sir."

He then returned to Sandford again; but never, during all this time, did his eye once encounter Miſs Woodley's; and ſhe, with equal care, avoided his.

Some cold diſhes were now brought up for ſupper—Miſs Milner loſt her deal, and the game ended.

As they were arranging themſelves at the ſupper-table, "Do, Miſs Milner," ſaid Mrs. Horton, "have ſomething warm for your ſupper; a chicken boiled, or ſomething of that kind; you have eat nothing all to-day."

With feelings of humanity, and apparently no other ſenſation—but never did he feel his philanthropy ſo forcible—Lord Elmwood ſaid, "Let me beg of you, Miſs Milner, to have ſomething provided for you."

The earneſtneſs and emphaſis with which theſe few words were pronounced, were more flattering than the fineſt turned compliment would have been; her gratitude was expreſſed in bluſhes, and by aſſuring him ſhe was now "So well, as to ſup on the diſhes before her."—She ſpoke, however, and had not made the trial; for the moment ſhe carried a morſel to her lips,

lips, ſhe laid it on her plate again, and turned paler, from the vain endeavour to force her appetite. Lord Elmwood had always been attentive to her; but now he watched her as he would a child; and when he ſaw by her ſtruggles that ſhe could not eat, he took her plate from her; gave her ſomething elſe; and all with a care and watchfulneſs in his looks, as if he had been a tender-hearted boy, and ſhe his darling bird, the loſs of which would embitter all the joy of his holidays.

This attention had ſomething in it ſo tender, ſo officious, and yet ſo ſincere, that it brought the tears into Miſs Woodley's eyes, attracted the notice of Mr. Sandford, and the obſervation of Mrs. Horton; while the heart of Miſs Milner

overflowed with a gratitude, that gave place to no ſentiment except her love.

To relieve the anxiety which her guardian expreſſed, ſhe endeavoured to appear cheerful, and that anxiety, at length, really made her ſo.—He now preſſed her to take one glaſs of wine with ſuch ſolicitude, that he ſeemed to ſay a thouſand things beſides.—Sandford ſtill made his obſervations, and being unuſed to conceal his thoughts before the preſent company, he ſaid bluntly,

"Miſs Fenton was indiſpoſed the other night, my Lord, and you did not ſeem half ſo anxious about her."

Had Sandford laid all Lord Elmwood's eſtate at Miſs Milner's feet, or preſented her with that eternal bloom which

which adorns the face of a goddeſs, he would have done leſs to endear himſelf to her, than by that one ſentence — ſhe looked at him with a moſt benign countenance, and felt affliction that ſhe had ever offended him.

" Miſs Fenton," Lord Elmwood replied, " has a brother with her: her health and happineſs are in *his* care— Miſs Milner's are in mine."

" Mr. Sandford," ſaid Miſs Milner, " I am afraid that I behaved uncivilly to you laſt night — will you accept of an atonement?"

" No, Madam," returned he, " I accept no expiation without amendment."

" Well, then," ſaid ſhe, ſmiling, " ſuppoſe I promiſe never to offend you again, what then?"

" Why then, you'll break your promiſe."

" Do

"Do not promiſe him," ſaid Lord Elmwood, "for he means to provoke you to it."

In the like converſation the evening paſſed, and Miſs Milner retired to reſt in far better ſpirits than her morning's proſpect had given her the leaſt pretence to hope. Miſs Woodley, too, had cauſe to be well pleaſed; but her pleaſure was in great meaſure eclipſed by the reflection, that there was ſuch a perſon as Miſs Fenton—ſhe wiſhed ſhe had been equally acquainted with hers as with Miſs Milner's heart, and ſhe would then have acted without injuſtice to either; but Miſs Fenton had of late ſhunned their ſociety, and even in their company was of a temper too reſerved ever to diſcover her mind; — Miſs Woodley was obliged,

obliged, therefore, to act to the beſt of her own judgement only, and leave all events to Providence.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VII.

WITHIN a few days, in the houſe of Lord Elmwood, every thing, and every perſon, wore a new face.—He, was the profeſt lover of Miſs Milner — ſhe, the happieſt of human beings — Miſs Woodley partaking in the joy — Mr. Sandford lamenting, with the deepeſt concern, that Miſs Fenton had been ſupplanted; and what added poignantly to his concern was, that ſhe had been ſupplanted by Miſs Milner. — Though a churchman, he bore his diſappointment with the impatience of one of the laity: he could hardly ſpeak to Lord Elmwood; he would not look at Miſs Milner, and was diſpleaſed with every one.

—It

—It was his intention, when he firſt became acquainted with Lord Elmwood's reſolution, to quit his houſe; and as the Earl had, with the utmoſt degree of inflexibility, reſiſted all his good counſel upon this ſubject, he reſolved, in quitting him, never to be his adviſer again. —But, in preparing to leave his friend, his pupil, his patron, and yet him, who, upon moſt occaſions, implicitly obeyed his will, the ſpiritual got the better of the temporal man, and he determined to ſtay, leſt in totally abandoning him to the purſuit of his own paſſions, he ſhould make his puniſhment even greater than his offence.—" My Lord," ſaid he, " on the ſtormy ſea, upon which you are embarked, though you will not ſhun the rocks that your faithful pilot would point out, he will, nevertheleſs, ſail in your company,

company, and lament over your watery grave. The more you ſlight my advice, the more you want it; ſo that, until you command me to leave your houſe, (as I ſuppoſe you will ſoon do, to oblige your Lady) I will continue along with you."

Lord Elmwood liked him ſincerely, and was glad that he took this reſolution; yet as ſoon as his reaſon and affections had once told him that he ought to break with Miſs Fenton, and marry his ward, he became ſo decidedly of this opinion, that Sandford's never had the moſt trivial weight; nor would he even flatter the ſuppoſed authority he poſſeſſed over him, by urging him to remain in his houſe a ſingle day, contrary to his inclinations. Sandford obſerved, with grief, this firmneſs; but finding it vain

to

to contend, ſubmitted — not, however, with a good grace.

Amidſt all the perſons affected by this change in Lord Elmwood's marriage deſigns, Miſs Fenton was, perhaps, affected the leaſt— ſhe would have been content to have married, ſhe was content to live ſingle.—Mr. Sandford had been the firſt who made overtures to her on the part of Lord Elmwood, and was the firſt ſent to aſk her to diſpenſe with the obligation— She received both of theſe propoſals with the ſame inſipid ſmile of approbation, and the ſame cold indifference at the heart.

It was a perfect knowledge of this diſpoſition in his intended wife which had given to Lord Elmwood's thoughts on matrimony the idea of dreary winter; but

but the ſenſibility of Miſs Milner had now reverſed that proſpect into perpetual ſpring; or the dearer variety of ſpring, ſummer, and autumn.

It was a knowledge alſo of this torpor in Miſs Fenton's nature, from which he formed the purpoſe of breaking with her; for Lord Elmwood ſtill retained enough of the prieſt's ſanctity to have yielded up his own happineſs, and even that of his beloved ward, rather than have plunged one heart into affliction by his perfidy. This, before he offered his hand to Miſs Milner, he was perfectly convinced would not be the caſe—even Miſs Fenton herſelf aſſured him, that her thoughts were more upon the joys of Heaven than upon thoſe of earth; and as this circumſtance would, ſhe believed, induce her to retire into a convent, ſhe thought it a happy, rather than an unhappy, event.

event.—Her brother, on whom her fortune devolved if ſhe took this reſolution, was exactly of her opinion.

Loſt in the maze of happineſs that ſurrounded her, Miſs Milner oftentimes aſked her heart, and her heart whiſpered like a flatterer, "Yes." Are not my charms even more invincible than I ever believed them to be?—Dorriforth, the grave, the ſanctified, the anchorite Dorriforth, by their force, is animated to all the ardour of the moſt impaſſioned lover—while the proud prieſt, the auſtere guardian, is humbled, if I but frown, into the verieſt ſlave of love.—She then aſked, "Why did I not keep him longer in ſuſpenſe? He could not have loved me more, I believe: but my power over him might have been greater

ſtill. — I am the happieſt of women in the affection he has proved to me, but I wonder whether it would exiſt under ill treatment? If it would not, he ſtill does not love me as I wiſh to be loved — if it would, my triumph, my felicity, would be enhanced." — Theſe thoughts were mere phantoms of the brain, and never by ſyſtem put into action; but repeatedly indulged, they were practiſed by caſual occurrences; and the dear-bought experiment of being loved in ſpite of her faults, (a glory proud women ever aſpire to) was, at preſent, the ambition of Miſs Milner.

Unthinking woman! ſhe did not reflect, that to the ſearching eye of Lord Elmwood, ſhe had faults, with her utmoſt care to conceal or overcome them, ſufficient

ſufficient to try all his love, and all his patience. But what female is not fond of experiments? To which, how few do not fall a ſacrifice!

Perfectly ſecure in the affections of the man ſhe loved, her declining health no longer threatened her: her declining ſpirits returned as before; and the ſuſpicions of her guardian being now changed to the liberal confidence of a doating lover, ſhe again profeſſed all her former follies, all her faſhionable levities, and indulged them with leſs reſtraint than ever.

For a while, blinded by his paſſion, Lord Elmwood encouraged and admired every new proof of her reſtored happineſs; nor till ſufferance had tempted her beyond her uſual bounds, did he remon-

ſtrate.—But ſhe, who, as his ward, had been ever gentle, and (when he ſtrenuouſly oppoſed) always obedient; became, as a miſtreſs, ſometimes haughty, and to oppoſition, always inſolent.—He was ſurpriſed, but the novelty pleaſed him.—And Miſs Milner, whom he tenderly loved, could put on no change, or appear in no new character that did not, for the time ſhe adopted it, ſeem to become her.

Among the many cauſes of complaint which ſhe gave him, want of œconomy in the diſpoſal of her income was one. Bills and drafts came upon him without number, while the account, on her part, of money expended, amounted chiefly to articles of dreſs that ſhe ſometimes never wore, toys that were out of faſhion before

fore they were paid for, and charities directed by the force of whim. — Another complaint was, as uſual, extreme late hours, and often company that he did not approve.

She was charmed to ſee his love ſtruggling with his cenſure — his politeneſs with his anxiety — and by the light, frivolous, or reſentful manner in which ſhe treated his admonitions, ſhe triumphed in ſhewing to Miſs Woodley, and, more eſpecially to Mr. Sandford, how much ſhe dared upon the ſtrength of his affections.

Every thing in preparation for their marriage, which was to take place at Elmwood Houſe during the ſummer months, ſhe reſolved for the ſhort time ſhe had to remain in London to let no

occaſion paſs of taſting all thoſe pleaſures that were not likely ever to return; but which, though eager as ſhe was in their purſuit, ſhe never placed in competition with thoſe ſhe hoped would ſucceed — thoſe more ſedate and ſuperior joys, of domeſtic and conjugal happineſs. —Often, merely to haſten on the tedious hours that intervened, ſhe varied and diverted them, with the many recreations her intended huſband could not approve.

It ſo happened, and it was unfortunate it did, that a lawſuit concerning ſome poſſeſſions in the Weſt Indies, and other intricate affairs that came with his title and eſtate, frequently kept Lord Elmwood from his houſe part of the day; ſometimes the whole evening; and when at home, would often cloſet him for hours with his lawyers. — But while he

he was thus off his guard, Sandford never was — and had Miſs Milner been the deareſt thing on earth to him, he could not have watched her more narrowly; or had ſhe been the fraileſt thing on earth, he could not have been more hard upon her, in all the accounts of her conduct he gave to her guardian.—Lord Elmwood knew, on the other hand, that Sandford's failing was to think ill of Miſs Milner—he pitied him for it, and he pitied her for it — and in all the aggravation which his repreſentations gave to her real follies, affection for them both, in the heart of Dorriforth, ſtood between that and every other impreſſion.

But facts are glaring; and he, at length, beheld thoſe faults in their true colours, though previouſly pointed out by the prejudice of Mr. Sandford.

As ſoon as Sandford perceived his friend's uneaſineſs, "There, my Lord!" cried he, exultingly, "did I not always ſay the marriage was an improper one? — but you would not be ruled — you would not ſee."

"Can you blame *me* for not ſeeing," replied his Lordſhip, "when *you* were blind? — Had you been diſpaſſionate, had you ſeen Miſs Milner's virtues as well as her faults, I ſhould have believed, and been guided by you — but you ſaw her failings only, and therein have been equally deceived with me, who have only beheld her perfections."

"My obſervations, however, my Lord, would have been of moſt uſe to you; for I have ſeen what to avoid."

"But mine have been the moſt charitable,"

ritable," replied he; "for I have ſeen—what I muſt always love."

Sandford ſighed, and lifted up his hands.

"Mr. Sandford," reſumed Lord Elmwood, with a voice and manner ſuch as he uſed to put on when not all the power of Sandford, or of any other, could change his fixed determination, "Mr. Sandford, my eyes are now open to every failing, as well as to every accompliſhment; to every vice, as well as to every virtue of Miſs Milner; nor will I ſuffer myſelf to be again prepoſſeſſed in her favour, by your prejudice againſt her—for I believe it was compaſſion at your unkind treatment that firſt gained her my heart."

"I, my Lord?" cried Sandford; "do not load me with the burden—

with

with the mighty burden, of your love for her."

"Do not interrupt me.—Whatever your meaning has been, the effect of it is what I have deſcribed.—Now, I will no longer," continued he, "have an enemy, ſuch as you have been, to heighten her charms, which are too tranſcendent in their native ſtate. I will hear no more complaints againſt her, but I will watch her cloſely myſelf—and if I find her mind and heart (ſuch as my ſuſpicions have of late whiſpered) too frivolous for that ſubſtantial happineſs I look for with an object ſo beloved, depend upon my word—the marriage ſhall yet be broken off."

"I depend upon your word; it *will* then," replied Sandford eagerly.

"You are unjuſt, Sir, in ſaying ſo before the trial," replied Lord Elmwood,

wood, " and your injuſtice ſhall make me more cautious, leſt I follow your example."

" But, my Lord——"

" My mind is made up, Mr. Sandford," returned he, interrupting him; " I am no longer engaged to Miſs Milner than ſhe ſhall deſerve I ſhould be—but in my obſervations, I will take care not to wrong her as you have done."

" My Lord, call my obſervations wrong, when you have reflected upon them as a man, and not as a lover—diveſt yourſelf of your paſſion, and meet me upon equal ground."

" I will meet no one—I will conſult no one—my own judgement ſhall be the judge, and in a few months marry, or—*baniſh me from her for ever.*"

There

There was ſomething in theſe laſt words, in the tone and firmneſs with which they were delivered, that the heart of Sandford reſted upon with content—they bore the ſymptoms of a menace that would be executed; and he parted from his patron with congratulations upon his wiſdom, and the warmeſt aſſurances of his firm reliance on his *word*.

Lord Elmwood having come to this reſolution, was more compoſed than he had been for ſeveral days before; while the horror of domeſtic wrangles—a family without ſubordination—a houſe without œconomy—in a word, a wife without diſcretion, had been perpetually preſent to his mind.

Mr.

Mr. Sandford, although he was a man of underſtanding, of learning, and a complete caſuiſt, yet all the faults he himſelf committed, were entirely—for want of knowing better.—He conſtantly reproved faults in others, and he was moſt aſſuredly too good a man not to have corrected and amended his own, had they been known to him—but they were not.—He had been for ſo long a time the ſuperior of all with whom he lived, had been ſo buſied with inſtructing others, that he had not recollected that himſelf wanted inſtructions—and in ſuch awe did his habitual ſeverity keep all about him, that although he had numerous friends, not one told him of his failings—except juſt now Lord Elmwood, but whom, in this inſtance, as a man in love, he would not credit.—Was there not then ſome reaſon for him

to

to ſuppoſe he had no faults?—his enemies, indeed, hinted that he had, but enemies he never hearkened to; and thus, with all his good ſenſe, wanted the ſenſe to follow the rule, *Believe what your enemies ſay of you, rather than what is ſaid by your friends.* This rule attended to, would make a thouſand amiable, who are now the reverſe; and would have made him a perfectly upright character.—For could an enemy, to whom he would have liſtened, have whiſpered to Sandford as he left Lord Elmwood, "Cruel, barbarous man! you go away with your heart ſatisfied, nay, even elated, in the proſpect that Miſs Milner's hopes, on which ſhe alone exiſts, thoſe hopes which keep her from the deepeſt affliction, and cheriſh her with joy and gladneſs, will all be diſappointed.—You flatter yourſelf it is for the

ſake

ſake of your friend Lord Elmwood that you rejoice, and becauſe he has eſcaped a danger.—You wiſh him well; but there is another cauſe for your exultation which you will not ſeek to know—it is, that in his ſafety, ſhall dwell the puniſhment of his ward. — For ſhame! for ſhame! forgive her faults, as this of yours requires to be forgiven."

Had any one ſaid this to Sandford, whom he would have credited, or had his own heart ſuggeſted it, he was a man of that rectitude and conſcientiouſneſs, that he would have returned immediately to Lord Elmwood, and have ſtrengthened all his favourable opinions of his intended wife — but having no ſuch monitor, he walked on, highly contented, and meeting Miſs Woodley, ſaid, with an air of triumph,

"Where's your friend?—where's Lady Elmwood?"

Miſs Woodley ſmiled, and anſwered—She was gone with ſuch and ſuch ladies to an auction.—"But why give her that title already, Mr. Sandford?"

"Becauſe," anſwered he, "I think ſhe will never have it."

"Bleſs me, Mr. Sandford," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "you ſhock me!"

"I thought I ſhould," replied he, "and therefore I told it you."

"For Heaven's ſake, what has happened?"

"Nothing new — her indiſcretions only."

"I know ſhe is imprudent," ſaid Miſs Woodley — "I can ſee that her conduct is often exceptionable — but then Lord Elmwood ſurely loves her, and love will overlook a great deal."

"He

"He *does* love her — but he has underſtanding and reſolution.— He loved his ſiſter too, tenderly loved her, and yet when he had taken the reſolution, and paſſed his word that he would never ſee her again — even upon her death-bed he would not retract it—no entreaties could prevail upon him. — And now, though he maintains, and I dare ſay loves, her child, yet you remember, when you brought him home, that he would not bear him in his ſight."

"Poor Miſs Milner!" ſaid Miſs Woodley, in the moſt pitying accents.

"Nay," ſaid Sandford, "Lord Elmwood has not *yet* paſſed his word, that he will never ſee her more — he has only threatened to do it;—but I know enough of him to know, that his threats are generally the ſame as if the actions were done."

"You are very good," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "to acquaint me of this in time — I may now warn Miſs Milner of it, and ſhe may obſerve more circumſpection."

"By no means," cried Sandford, haſtily — "What would you warn her for? — It will do her no good — beſides," added he, "I don't know whether Lord Elmwood does not expect ſecreſy on my part; and if he does——"

"But, with all deference to your opinion," ſaid Miſs Woodley, (and with all deference did ſhe ſpeak) "don't you think, Mr. Sandford, that ſecreſy upon this occaſion would be wicked? For conſider the anguiſh that it may occaſion to my friend; and if, by adviſing her, we can ſave her from ——" She was going on.

"You

"You may call it wicked, Madam, not to inform her of it," cried he; "but I call a breach of confidence — if it *was* divulged to me in confidence——"

He was going to explain; but Miſs Milner entered, and put an end to the diſcourſe. — She had been paſſing the whole morning at an auction, and had laid out near two hundred pounds, in different things for which ſhe had no one uſe, but bought them becauſe they were ſaid to be cheap — among the reſt was a lot of books upon chemiſtry, and ſome Latin authors.

"Why, Madam," cried Sandford, looking over the catalogue where her purchaſes were marked by a pencil, "do you know what you have done? — You can't read a word of theſe books."

"Can't I, Mr. Sandford? — But I aſ-

ſure you that you will be very much pleaſed with them, when you ſee how elegantly they are bound."

"My dear," ſaid Mrs. Horton, "why have you bought china? You and my Lord Elmwood have more now, than you have places to put them in."

"Very true, Mrs. Horton—I forgot that—but then you know I can give theſe away."

Lord Elmwood was in the room at the concluſion of this converſation—— he ſhook his head and ſighed.

"My Lord," ſaid ſhe, "I have had a very agreeable morning; but I wiſhed for you—if you had been with me, I ſhould have bought a great many other things; but I did not like to appear unreaſonable in your abſence."

Sandford fixed his inquiſitive eyes upon

upon Lord Elmwood, to obſerve his countenance — he ſmiled, but appeared thoughtful.

" And, oh! my Lord, I have bought you a preſent," ſaid ſhe.

" I do not wiſh for a preſent, Miſs Milner."

" What not from me?—Very well."

" If you preſent me with yourſelf, it is all that I aſk."

Sandford moved upon his chair, as if he ſat uneaſy.

" Why then, Miſs Woodley," ſaid Miſs Milner, " *you* ſhall have the preſent. — But then it won't ſuit you — it is for a gentleman. — I'll keep it and give it to Lord Frederick the firſt time I meet with him. — I ſaw him this morning, and he looked divinely — I longed to ſpeak to him."

Miſs Woodley caſt, by ſtealth, an eye of apprehenſion upon Lord Elmwood's face, and trembled at ſeeing it flushed with reſentment.

Sandford ſtared with both his eyes full upon him: then drew himſelf upright on his chair, and took a pinch of ſnuff upon the ſtrength of his uneaſineſs.

A ſilence enſued.

After a ſhort time—"You all appear melancholy," ſaid Miſs Milner: "I wiſh I had not come home yet."

Miſs Woodley was in agony—ſhe ſaw Lord Elmwood's extreme diſpleaſure, and dreaded leſt he ſhould expreſs it by ſome words he could not recall, or ſhe could not forgive—therefore, whiſpering to her ſhe had ſomething particular to ſay, ſhe took her out of the room.

The

The moment ſhe was gone, Mr. Sandford roſe nimbly from his ſeat, rubbed his hands, walked briſkly acroſs the room, then aſked Lord Elmwood in a cheerful tone, "Whether he dined at home to-day?"

That which had given Sandford cheerfulneſs, had ſo depreſſed Lord Elmwood, that he ſat dejected and ſilent.—At length he anſwered in a faint voice, "No, I believe I ſhall *not* dine at home."

"Where is your Lordſhip going to dine?" aſked Mrs. Horton; "I thought we ſhould have had your company to-day; Miſs Milner dines at home, I believe."

"I have not yet determined where I ſhall dine," replied he, taking no notice of the concluſion of her ſpeech.

"My Lord, if you mean to go to the hotel, I'll go with you if you pleaſe," cried Sandford officiouſly.

"With all my heart, Sandford;" and they both went out together, before Miſs Milner returned to the apartment.

CHAPTER VII.

MISS Woodley, for the firſt time, diſobeyed the will of Mr. Sandford; and as ſoon as Miſs Milner and ſhe were alone, repeated all he had revealed to her; accompanying the recital, with her uſual teſtimonies of ſympathy and affection.—But had the genius of Sandford preſided over this diſcovery, it could not have influenced the mind of Miſs Milner to receive the intelligence with a temper more exactly the oppoſite of that which it was the intention of the informer to recommend. Inſtead of ſhuddering at the menace Lord Elmwood had uttered, ſhe ſaid, ſhe "Dared him

to

to perform it." "He dares not," repeated ſhe.

"Why dares not?" ſaid Miſs Woodley.

"Becauſe he loves me too well—becauſe his own happineſs is too dear to him."

"I believe he loves you," replied Miſs Woodley, "and yet there is a doubt if——"

"There ſhall be no longer a doubt," —cried Miſs Milner, "I'll put him to the proof."

"For ſhame, my dear! you talk inconſiderately—what can you mean by proof?"

"I mean I will do ſomething that no prudent man *ought* to forgive; and yet, with all his vaſt ſhare of prudence, *he* ſhall forgive it, and make a ſacrifice of juſt reſentment to partial affection."

"But

"But if you ſhould be diſappointed, and he ſhould *not* make the ſacrifice?" ſaid Miſs Woodley.

"Then I have only loſt a man who had no regard for me."

"He may have a great regard for you, notwithſtanding."

"But for the love I have felt, and do ſtill feel, for my Lord Elmwood, I will have ſomething more than a *great regard* in return."

"You have his love, I am ſure."

"But is it ſuch as mine? — *I* could love *him* if he had a thouſand faults.— And yet," ſaid ſhe, recollecting herſelf, "and yet, I believe his being faultleſs, was the firſt cauſe of my paſſion."

Thus ſhe talked on — ſometimes in anger, ſometimes apparently jeſting—till her ſervant came to let her know the

dinner was ready. — Upon entering the dining-room, and ſeeing Lord Elmwood's place at table vacant, ſhe ſtarted back. She was diſappointed of the pleaſure ſhe expected in dining with him; and his ſudden abſence, ſo immediately after the intelligence that ſhe had received from Miſs Woodley, increaſed her uneaſineſs.—She drew her chair, and ſat down with an indifference, that ſaid ſhe ſhould not eat; and as ſoon as ſhe was ſeated, ſhe put her fingers ſullenly to her lips, nor touched her knife and fork, nor ſpoke a word in reply to any thing that was ſaid to her during the whole dinner.—Miſs Woodley and Mrs. Horton were both too well acquainted with the good diſpoſition of her heart, to take offence, or appear to notice this behaviour. — They dined, and ſaid nothing either to provoke or ſooth her. —

Juſt as the dinner was going to be removed, a loud rap came at the door—"Who is that?" ſaid Mrs. Horton.—One of the ſervants went to the window, and anſwered, "My Lord and Mr. Sandford, Madam."—"Come back to dinner, as I live," cried Mrs. Horton.—

Miſs Milner continued her poſition and ſaid nothing — but at the corners of her mouth, which her fingers did not entirely cover, there were diſcoverable, a thouſand dimpled graces like ſmall convulſive fibres, which a reſtrained ſmile upon Lord Elmwood's return, had ſent there.

Lord Elmwood and Sandford entered.

"I am glad you are returned, my Lord," ſaid Mrs. Horton, "for Miſs Milner would not eat a morſel."

"It was only becauſe I had no appetite,"

petite," returned ſhe, bluſhing like crimſon.

"We ſhould not have come back," ſaid Sandford, "but at the place where we went to dine, all the rooms were filled with company."

Lord Elmwood put the wing of a fowl on Miſs Milner's plate, but without previouſly aſking if ſhe choſe any; yet ſhe condeſcended to eat—they ſpoke to each other too in the courſe of converſation, but it was with a reſerve that appeared as if they had been quarrelling, and felt ſo to themſelves, though no ſuch circumſtance had happened.

Two weeks paſſed away in this kind of diſtant behaviour on both ſides, without either venturing a direct quarrel, and without either expreſſing (except inadver-

inadvertently) their ſtrong affection for each other.

During this time they were once, however, very near becoming the deareſt friends in expreſſion, as well as in ſentiment.—This aroſe from a favour that he granted, in compliance with her deſire, though that deſire had not been expreſſed, but merely inſinuated; and as it was a favour which he had refuſed to the repeated requeſts of many of his friends, the value of the obligation was heightened.

She and Miſs Woodley had taken an airing to ſee the poor child, young Ruſhbrook. Lord Elmwood inquiring of the ladies how they had paſſed their morning, Miſs Milner frankly told him; and added, "What pain it gave her to leave

leave the child behind, as he had again cried to come away with her."

"Go for him then to-morrow," ſaid Lord Elmwood, "and bring him home."

"Home!" ſhe repeated, with ſurpriſe.

"Yes," replied he, "if you deſire it, this ſhall be his home — you ſhall be a mother, and I will, henceforward, be a father to him."

Sandford, who was preſent, looked unuſually ſour at this high token of regard for Miſs Milner; yet, with reſentment on his face, he wiped a tear of joy from his eye, for the boy's ſake — his frown was the force of prejudice, his tear the force of nature.

Ruſhbrook was brought home; and whenever Lord Elmwood wiſhed to ſhew a kindneſs to Miſs Milner, without directing

recting it immediately to her, he took his nephew upon his knee, talked to him, and told him, he "Was glad they had become acquainted."

In the various, though delicate, ſtruggles for power between Miſs Milner and her guardian, there was not one perſon a witneſs to theſe incidents, who did not ſuppoſe, that all would at laſt end in wedlock — for the moſt common obſerver perceived, that ardent love was the foundation of every diſcontent, as well as of every joy they experienced.—One great incident, however, totally reverſed the hope of all future accommodation.

The faſhionable Mrs. G—— gave a maſked ball; tickets were preſented to perſons of quality and faſhion; among the reſt, three were ſent to Miſs

Milner. — She had never been at a maſquerade, and received them with ecſtaſy—the more eſpecially, as the maſque being at the houſe of a woman of faſhion, ſhe did not conceive there could be any objection to her going.—She was miſtaken — the moment ſhe mentioned it to Lord Elmwood, he deſired her, ſomewhat ſternly, "Not to think of being there."—She was vext at the prohibition, but more at the manner in which it was delivered, and flatly ſaid, "That ſhe ſhould certainly go."

She expected a rebuke for this, but what alarmed her much more, he ſaid not a word; but looked with a reſignation, which foreboded her more ſorrow, than the ſevereſt reproaches would have done. — She ſat for a minute, reflecting how to rouſe him from this compoſure— ſhe firſt thought of attacking him with upbraidings;

upbraidings; then ſhe thought of ſoothing him; and at laſt of laughing at him. —This was the moſt unpardonable of all, and yet, this ſhe ventured upon.

"I am ſure your Lordſhip," ſaid ſhe, "with all your ſaintlineſs, can have no objection to my being preſent at the maſquerade, if I go as a Nun."

He made no reply.

"That is a habit," continued ſhe, "which covers a multitude of faults—and, for that evening, I may have the chance of making a conqueſt even of you—nay, I queſtion not, if under that inviting attire, even the pious Mr. Sandford would not ogle me."

"Huſh!" ſaid Miſs Woodley.

"Why huſh?" cried Miſs Milner, aloud, though Miſs Woodley had ſpoken in a whiſper, "I am ſure," continued ſhe, "I am only repeating what

I have read in books, about nuns and their confeſſors."

"Your conduct, Miſs Milner," replied Lord Elmwood, "gives evident proofs of the authors you have read; you may ſpare yourſelf the trouble of quoting them."

Her pride was hurt at this, beyond bearing; and as ſhe could not, like him, govern her anger, it flufhed in her face, and almoſt forced her tears.

"My lord," ſaid Miſs Woodley, (in a tone ſo ſoft and peaceful, that it ſhould have calmed the reſentment of both,) "my Lord, ſuppoſe you were to accompany Miſs Milner? there are tickets for three, and you can then have no objection."

Miſs Milner's brow was immediately ſmoothed; and ſhe fetched a ſigh, in anxious

anxious expectation that he would conſent.

" I go, Miſs Woodley?" he replied, with aſtoniſhment, " Do you imagine I would play the buffoon at a maſquerade?"

Miſs Milner's face changed into its former ſtate.

" I have ſeen grave characters there, my Lord," ſaid Miſs Woodley.

" Dear Miſs Woodley," cried Miſs Milner, " why perſuade Lord Elmwood to put on a maſk, juſt at the time he has laid it aſide?"

His patience was now tempted to its height, and he anſwered, " If you ſuſpect it, Madam, you ſhall find me changed."

Pleaſed that ſhe had been able at laſt to irritate him, ſhe ſmiled with a degree of triumph, and in that humour was

going to reply; but before ſhe could ſpeak four words, and before ſhe thought of it, he abruptly left the room.

She was highly offended at this inſult, and declared, "From that moment ſhe baniſhed him from her heart for ever." And to prove that ſhe ſet his love and his anger at equal defiance, ſhe immediately ordered her carriage, and ſaid, ſhe "Was going to ſome of her acquaintance, whom ſhe knew to have tickets, and with whom ſhe would fix upon the habit ſhe was to appear in at the maſquerade; for nothing, unleſs ſhe was locked up, ſhould alter the reſolution ſhe had formed, of being there." To remonſtrate at that moment, Miſs Woodley knew would be in vain; her coach

coach was at the door, and ſhe drove away.

She did not return to dinner, nor till it was late in the evening; Lord Elmwood was at home, but he never once mentioned her name.

She came home, after he had retired, in great ſpirits; and then, for the firſt time, in her whole life, appeared careleſs what he might think of her behaviour:—but her whole thoughts were occupied upon the buſineſs which had employed the chief of her day; and her dreſs engroſſed all her converſation, as ſoon as Miſs Woodley and ſhe were alone.—She told her, ſhe had been ſhewn the greateſt variety of beautiful and becoming dreſſes ſhe had ever beheld; "And yet," ſaid ſhe, "I have at laſt fixed upon a very plain one; but

one I look ſo well in, that you will hardly know me, when I have it on."

"You are ſeriouſly then reſolved to go," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "if you hear no more on the ſubject from your guardian?"

"Whether I do or not, Miſs Woodley, I am equally reſolved to go."

"But you know, my dear, he has deſired you not—and you uſed always to obey his commands."

"As my guardian, I certainly did obey him; and I could obey him as a huſband; but as a lover, I will not."

"Yet that is the way never to have him for a huſband."

"As he pleaſes—for if he will not ſubmit to be my lover, I will not ſubmit to be his wife—nor has he the affection that I require in a huſband."

Thus,

Thus the old ſentiments, repeated again and again, prevented a ſeparation till towards morning.

Miſs Milner, for that night, dreamt leſs of her guardian than of the maſquerade. On the evening of the next day it was to be—ſhe was up early, breakfaſted in her dreſſing-room, and remained there moſt of the day, buſied in a thouſand preparations for the night; one of them was, to take every particle of powder out of her hair, and have it curled all over in falling ringlets. Her next care was, that her dreſs ſhould exactly fit, and diſplay her fine perſon to the beſt advantage—it did ſo.—Miſs Woodley entered as it was trying on, and was all aſtoniſhment at the elegance of the habit, and its beautiful effect upon her

her graceful perſon; but, moſt of all, ſhe was aſtoniſhed at her venturing on ſuch a character—for though it repreſented the goddeſs of Chaſtity, yet from the buſkins, and the petticoat feſtooning far above the ancle, it had, on the firſt glance, the appearance of a female much leſs virtuous.— Miſs Woodley admired this dreſs, yet objected to it; but as ſhe admired firſt, her objections after had no weight.

"Where is Lord Elmwood?" ſaid Miſs Milner — "he muſt not ſee me."

"No, for heaven's ſake," cried Miſs Woodley, "I would not have him ſee you for the univerſe."

"And yet," returned the other, with a ſigh, "why am I then thus pleaſed with my dreſs? for I had rather he ſhould admire

admire me than all the world beſides, and yet he is not to ſee me in it."

" But he would not admire you ſo dreſt," ſaid Miſs Woodley.

" How ſhall I contrive to avoid him," ſaid Miſs Milner, " if he ſhould offer to hand me into my carriage? — But I believe he will not be in good humour enough for that."

" You had better dreſs at the houſe of the ladies with whom you go," ſaid Miſs Woodley; and this was agreed upon.

At dinner they learnt that Lord Elmwood was to go that evening to Windſor, in order to be in readineſs for the king's hunt early in the morning. This intelligence having diſperſed Miſs Milner's fears, ſhe concluded upon dreſſing at home.

Lord

Lord Elmwood appeared at dinner, in an even, but not in a good temper; — the ſubject of the maſquerade was never brought up, nor indeed was it once in his thoughts; for though he was offended at his ward's behaviour on the occaſion, and thought ſhe committed a fault in telling him, "She would go," yet he never ſuſpected ſhe meant to do ſo, not even at the time ſhe ſaid it, much leſs that ſhe would perſiſt, coolly and deliberately, in ſo direct a contradiction to his will.—She, for her part, flattered herſelf, that his going to Windſor, was intended in order to give her an opportunity of paſſing the evening as ſhe pleaſed, without his being obliged to know of it, and conſequently to complain.— Miſs Woodley, who was willing

to hope as ſhe wiſhed, began to be of the ſame opinion; and, without reluctance, dreſt herſelf as a wood nymph to accompany her friend.

CHAPTER IX.

AT half after eleven, Miſs Milner's chair, and another with Miſs Woodley, took them from Lord Elmwood's, to call upon the party (wood-nymphs and huntreſſes) who were to accompany them, and make up the ſuite of Diana.

They had not left the houſe two minutes, when a thundering rap came at the door—it was Lord Elmwood in a poſt chaiſe.—Upon ſome occaſion the next day's hunt was put off: he had been made acquainted with it, and came from Windſor at that late hour.—After he had informed Mrs. Horton and Mr. Sand-

Sandford, who were ſitting together, of the cauſe of his ſudden return, and had ſupper ordered for him, he inquired, "What company had juſt left the houſe?"

"We have been alone the whole evening, my Lord," replied Mrs. Horton.

"Nay," returned he, "I ſaw two chairs, with ſeveral ſervants, come out of the door as I drove up, but what livery I could not diſcern."

"We have had no creature here," repeated Mrs. Horton.

"Nor has Miſs Milner?" aſked he.

This brought Mrs. Horton to her recollection, and ſhe cried, "Oh! now I know;"——and then checked herſelf, as if ſhe knew too much.

"What do you know, Madam?" ſaid he, ſharply.

"No-

"Nothing,"—ſaid Mrs. Horton, "I know nothing," and ſhe lifted up her hands and ſhook her head.

"So all people ſay, who know a great deal," cried Sandford, "and I ſuſpect that is at preſent your caſe."

"Then I know more than I wiſh, I am ſure, Mr. Sandford," returned ſhe, ſhrugging up her ſhoulders.

Lord Elmwood was all impatience.

"Explain, Madam, explain."

"Dear my Lord," ſaid ſhe, "if your Lordſhip will recollect, you may juſt have the ſame knowledge that I have."

"Recollect what?" ſaid he ſternly.

"The quarrel you and your ward had about the maſquerade."

"What of that? ſhe is not gone there?" he cried.

"I am

"I am not ſure ſhe is," returned Mrs. Horton; "but if your Lordſhip ſaw two ſedan chairs going out of this houſe, I cannot but ſuſpect it muſt be Miſs Milner and my niece going to the maſquerade."

He made no anſwer, but rang the bell violently.—A ſervant entered.—"Send Miſs Milner's maid hither," ſaid he, "immediately."—The man withdrew.

"Nay, my Lord," cried Mrs. Horton, "any of the other ſervants could tell you juſt as well, whether Miſs Milner is at home, or gone out."

"Perhaps not," replied he.

The maid entered.

"Where is your miſtreſs?" ſaid Lord Elmwood.

The woman had received no orders to conceal where the ladies were gone, and

yet a ſecret influence which governs the thoughts of all waiting-women and chambermaids, whiſpered to her that ſhe ought not to tell the truth.

"Where is your miſtreſs?" repeated he, in a louder voice than before.

"Gone out, my Lord," ſhe replied.

"Where?"

"My Lady did not tell me."

"And don't you know?"

"No, my Lord," ſhe anſwered, and without bluſhing.

"Is this the night of the maſquerade?" ſaid he.

"I don't know, my Lord, upon my word; but, I believe, my Lord, it is not."

Sandford, as ſoon as Lord Elmwood had aſked the laſt queſtion, ran haſtily to the table, at the other ſide of the room, took ſomething from it, and returned

turned to his place again—and when the maid ſaid, " It was not the night of the maſquerade," he exclaimed, " But it is, my Lord, it is—yes, it is," and ſhewing a newſpaper in his hand, pointed to the paragraph which contained the information.

" Leave the room," ſaid Lord Elmwood to the woman, " I have done with you."—She withdrew.

" Yes, yes, here it is," repeated Sandford, with the paper in his hand.——He then read the paragraph: " *The maſquerade at the honourable Mrs. G——'s this evening*"— ' This evening, my Lord, you find'—" *it is expected will be the moſt brilliant, of any thing of the kind, for theſe many years paſt.*"

" They ſhould not put ſuch things in the papers," ſaid Mrs. Horton, " to tempt young women to their ruin."

The word ruin grated upon Lord Elmwood's ear, and he ſaid to the ſervant who came to wait on him, while he ſupped, "Take the ſupper away."—He had not attempted either to eat, or even to ſit down; and he now walked backwards and forwards in the room, loſt in thought and care.

A little time after, one of Miſs Milner's footmen came in upon ſome occaſion, and Mr. Sandford ſaid to him, "Pray did you attend your lady to the maſquerade?"

"Yes, Sir," replied the man.

Lord Elmwood ſtopt himſelf ſhort in his walk, and ſaid to the ſervant, "You did."

"Yes, my Lord," replied he.

He walked again.

"I ſhould

"I ſhould like to know what ſhe was dreſt in," ſaid Mrs. Horton; and turning to the ſervant, "Do you know what your lady had on?"

"Yes, Madam," replied the man, "ſhe was in men's clothes."

"How?" cried Lord Elmwood.

"You tell a ſtory, to be ſure," ſaid Mrs. Horton to the ſervant.

"No," cried Sandford, "I am ſure he does not; for he is an honeſt good young man, and would not tell a lie upon any account—would you?"

Lord Elmwood ordered Miſs Milner's woman to be again ſent up.—She came.

"In what dreſs did your lady go to the maſquerade?" aſked he, and with a look ſo extremely moroſe, it ſeemed to command the anſwer in a word, and the anſwer of truth.

A mind, with a ſpark of ſenſibility more than ſhe poſſeſſed, could not have equivocated with ſuch an interrogator, but her reply was, "She went in her own dreſs, my Lord."

"Was it a man's, or a woman's dreſs?" aſked he, with a look of the ſame command.

"Ha, ha, my Lord," (half laughing and half crying) "a woman's dreſs, to be ſure, my Lord."

On which Sandford cried,

"Call the footman up, and let him confront her."

He was called; but Lord Elmwood, now diſguſted at the ſcene, withdrew to the further end of the room, and left Sandford to queſtion them.

With

With all the authority and conſequence of a country magiſtrate, Sandford—his back to the fire, and the witneſſes before him, began with the footman.

"In what dreſs do you ſay, that you ſaw your lady, when you attended, and went along with her, to the maſquerade?"

"In men's clothes," replied the man, boldly and firmly as before.

"Bleſs my ſoul, George, how can you ſay ſuch a thing?" cried the woman.

"What dreſs do *you* ſay ſhe went in?" cried Sandford to her.

"In women's clothes, indeed, Sir."

"This is very odd!" ſaid Mrs. Horton.

"Had ſhe on, or had ſhe not on, a coat?" aſked Sandford.

"Yes, Sir, a petticoat," replied the woman.

"Do *you* ſay ſhe had on a petticoat?" ſaid Sandford to the man.

"I can't anſwer exactly for that," replied he, "but I know ſhe had boots on."

"They were not boots," replied the maid, with vehemence—"indeed, Sir, (turning to Sandford) they were only half boots."

"My girl," ſaid Sandford kindly to her, "your own evidence convicts her.—What has a woman to do with *any* boots?"

Impatient at this mummery, Lord Elmwood roſe, ordered the ſervants out

of the room, and then, looking at his watch, found it was near one.—"At what hour am I to expect her home?" ſaid he.

"Perhaps not till three in the morning," anſwered Mrs. Horton.

"Three! more likely ſix," cried Sandford.

"I can't wait with patience till that time," anſwered he, with a moſt anxious ſigh.

"You had better go to bed, my Lord," ſaid Mrs. Horton; "and, by ſleeping, the time will paſs away unperceived."

"If I *could* ſleep, Madam."

"Will you play a game of cards, my Lord?" ſaid Sandford, "for I will not leave you till ſhe comes home; and though I am not uſed to ſit up all night——"

"All

"All night!" repeated Lord Elmwood; "ſhe dares not ſtay all night."

"And yet, after going," ſaid Sandford, "in defiance to your commands, I ſhould ſuppoſe ſhe dared."

"She is in good company, at leaſt, my Lord," ſaid Mrs. Horton.

"She does not know herſelf what company ſhe is in," replied Lord Elmwood.

"How ſhould ſhe," cried Sandford, "where every one hides his face?"

Till five o'clock in the morning, in ſuch converſation as this, the hours paſſed away.—Mrs. Horton, indeed, retired to her chamber at two, and left the gentlemen to a more ſerious diſcourſe, but a diſcourſe ſtill leſs advantageous to poor Miſs Milner.

She,

She, during this time, was at the ſcene of pleaſure ſhe had painted to herſelf, and all the pleaſure it gave her was, that ſhe was ſure ſhe ſhould never deſire to go to a maſquerade again.—The crowd and buſtle fatigued her—the freedom offended her delicacy — and though ſhe perceived that ſhe was the firſt object of admiration in the place, yet there was one perſon ſtill wanting to admire; and the remorſe at having tranſgreſſed his injunctions for ſo trivial an entertainment, weighed upon her ſpirits, and added to its wearineſs. — She would have come away ſooner than ſhe did, but ſhe could not, with any degree of good manners, leave the company with whom ſhe went; and not till half after four, were they prevailed on to return.

Daylight

Daylight juſt peeped through the ſhutters of the room in which Lord Elmwood and Sandford were ſitting, when the ſound of her carriage, and the ſudden ſtop it made at the door, cauſed Lord Elmwood to ſtart from his chair. —He trembled extremely, and looked pale. — Sandford was aſhamed to ſeem to notice it, yet he could not help aſking him, "To take a glaſs of wine."— He took it—and for once, evinced he was reduced ſo low, as to be *glad* even of ſuch a reſource.

What paſſion thus agitated Lord Elmwood at this criſis, it is hard to define. — Perhaps it was indignation at Miſs Milner's imprudence, and the ſatisfaction he felt at being on the point of revenge — perhaps it was emotion ariſing from joy, to find that ſhe was ſafe —

perhaps

perhaps it was perturbation at the regret he felt that he muſt upbraid her — perhaps it was not one alone of theſe ſenſations, but all of them combined.

She, wearied out with the tedious night's diſſipation, and leſs joyous than melancholy, had fallen aſleep as ſhe rode home, and came half aſleep out of her carriage.—" Light me to my bedchamber inſtantly," ſaid ſhe to her maid, who waited in the hall to receive her. — But one of Lord Elmwood's valets went up to her, and anſwered, " Madam, my Lord deſires to ſee you before you go to bed."

" Your Lord!" ſhe cried, " Is he not out of town?"

" No, Madam, my Lord has been at home ever ſince you went out; and has been

been ſitting up with Mr. Sandford, waiting for you."

She was wide awake immediately.—The heavineſs was removed from her eyes, but fear, grief, and ſhame, ſeized upon her heart.— She leaned againſt her maid, as if unable to ſupport herſelf under thoſe feelings, and ſaid to Miſs Woodley,

"Make my excuſe—I cannot ſee him to-night — I am unfit — indeed I cannot."

Miſs Woodley was alarmed at the idea of going to him by herſelf, and thus, perhaps, irritating him ſtill more: ſhe, therefore, ſaid, "He has ſent for you; for heaven's ſake, do not diſobey him a ſecond time."

"No, dear Madam, don't," cried her woman, "for he is like a lion — he has been ſcolding me."

"Good God!" exclaimed Miſs Milner, (and in a tone that ſeemed prophetic) "Then he is not to be my huſband, after all."

"Yes," cried Miſs Woodley, "if you will only be humble, and appear ſorry,—You know your power over him, and all may yet be well."

She turned her ſpeaking eyes upon her friend, the tears ſtarting from them, her lips trembling—"Do I not appear ſorry?" ſhe cried.

The bell at that moment rang furiouſly, and they mended their pace to the door of the apartment where Lord Elmwood was.

"No, this is only fright," replied Miſs Woodley—"Say to him you are ſorry, and beg his pardon."

"I cannot," ſaid ſhe, "if Mr. Sandford is with him."

The

The ſervant opened the door, and ſhe and Miſs Woodley went in. — Lord Elmwood, by this time, was compoſed, and received her with a ſlight inclination of his head—ſhe bowed to him in return, and ſaid, with ſome marks of humility,

" I ſuppoſe, my Lord, I have done wrong."

" You have indeed, Miſs Milner," anſwered he; " but do not ſuppoſe, that I mean to upbraid you: I am, on the contrary, going to releaſe you from any ſuch apprehenſion *for the future*."

Thoſe laſt three words he delivered with a countenance ſo ſerious and ſo determined, with an accent ſo firm and ſo decided, they pierced through her heart. —Yet ſhe did not weep, or even ſigh; but

but her friend, knowing what ſhe felt, exclaimed, " Oh !" as if for her.

She herſelf ſtrove with her anguiſh, and replied, (but with a faltering voice) " I expected as much, my Lord."

" Then, Madam, you perhaps expect *all* that I intend ?"

" In regard to myſelf," ſhe replied, " I ſuppoſe I do."

" Then," ſaid he, " you may expect that in a few days we ſhall part."

" I am prepared for it, my Lord," ſhe anſwered, and, while ſhe ſaid ſo, ſunk upon a chair.

" My Lord, what you have to ſay farther," ſaid Miſs Woodley, in tears, " defer till the morning — Miſs Milner, you ſee, is not able to bear it now."

" I have nothing to *ſay* farther," replied he, coolly — " I have now only to act."

"Lord Elmwood," cried Miſs Milner, divided between grief and anger, "you think to terrify me by your menaces—but I can part with you—heaven knows I can—your late behaviour has reconciled me to a ſeparation."

On this he was going out of the room—but Miſs Woodley, catching hold of him, cried, "Oh! my Lord, do not leave her in this ſorrow—pity her weakneſs, and forgive it."—She was proceeding; and he ſeemed as if inclining to liſten, when Sandford called out in a ſharp tone,

"Miſs Woodley, what do you mean?"—She gave a ſtart, and deſiſted.

Lord Elmwood then turned to Sandford, and ſaid, "Nay, Mr. Sandford, you need entertain no doubts of me—I have judged, and have deter——"

He

He was going to ſay determined; but Miſs Milner, who dreaded the word, interrupted the period, and exclaimed, "Oh! could my poor father know the days of ſorrow I have experienced ſince his death, how would he repent his fatal choice of a protector!"

This ſentence, in which his friend's memory was recalled, with an additional alluſion to her long and ſecret affection for him, affected Lord Elmwood much —he was moved, but aſhamed of being ſo, and as ſoon as poſſible conquered the propenſity.—Yet, for a ſhort interval, he did not know whether to go out of the room, or to remain in it; whether to ſpeak, or to be ſilent.— At length he turned towards her, and ſaid,

"Appeal to your father in ſome other form —in that (pointing at her dreſs) he

will not know you. — Reflect upon him, too, in your moments of diſſipation, and let his idea controul your indiſcretions— not merely in an hour of contradiction call peeviſhly upon his name, only to wound the deareſt friend you have."

There was a degree of truth, and a degree of paſſionate feeling, in the concluſion of this ſpeech, that alarmed Sandford — he caught up one of the candles, and, laying hold of his friend's elbow, drew him out of the room, crying, " Come, my Lord, come to your bedchamber — it is very late — it is morning — it is time to riſe." And by a continual repetition of theſe words, in a very loud voice, drowned whatever Lord Elmwood, or any other perſon, might have wiſhed either to have ſaid or to have heard.

In

In this manner, Lord Elmwood was forced out of the apartment, and the evening's entertainment concluded.

CHAPTER X.

TWO whole days paſſed in the bitterest ſuſpence on the part of Miſs Milner, while neither one word or look from Lord Elmwood, denoted the moſt trivial change of the ſentiments he had declared, on the night of the maſquerade.—Still thoſe ſentiments, or intentions, were not explicitly delivered; they were more like intimations, than ſolemn declarations — for though he had ſaid, "He would never reproach her *for the future*," and that "She might expect they ſhould part," he had not poſitively ſaid they ſhould; and upon this doubtful meaning of his words, ſhe hung

with the ſtrongeſt agitation of hope and of fear.

Miſs Woodley ſeeing the diſtreſs of her mind, (much as ſhe endeavoured to conceal it) entreated, nay implored of her, to permit her to be a mediator; to ſuffer her to aſk for a private interview with Lord Elmwood, and if ſhe found him inflexible, to behave with a proper ſpirit in return; but if he appeared not abſolutely averſe to a reconciliation, to offer it in ſo cautious a manner, that it might take place without farther uneaſineſs on either ſide. But Miſs Milner peremptorily forbade this, and acknowledging to her friend every weakneſs ſhe felt on this occaſion, yet concluded with ſolemnly declaring, "That after what had paſſed between her and Lord Elmwood, *he* muſt be the firſt who

ſhould make the conceſſion, before ſhe herſelf would condeſcend to be reconciled."

"I believe I know Lord Elmwood's temper," replied Miſs Woodley, "and I do not think he will be eaſily induced to beg pardon for a fault which he thinks *you* have committed."

"Then he does not love me."

"Pſhaw! Miſs Milner, this is the old argument.—He may love you too well to ſpoil you—conſider that he is your guardian as well as your lover, he means alſo to become your huſband; and he is a man of ſuch nice honour, that he will not indulge you with any power before marriage, to which he does not intend to ſubmit hereafter."

"But tenderneſs, affection, the politeneſs due from a lover to his miſtreſs, demands his ſubmiſſion; and as I now

deſpair

deſpair of enticing, I will oblige him to it—at leaſt I'll make the trial, and know my fate at once."

"What do you mean to do?"

"Invite Lord Frederick to the houſe, and aſk my guardian's conſent for our immediate union; you will then ſee, what effect that will have upon his pride."

"But you will then make it too late for him to be humble. — If you reſolve on this, my dear Miſs Milner, you are undone at once — you may thus hurry yourſelf into a marriage with a man you do not love, and the miſery of your whole future life may be the reſult.—Or, would you force Mr. Dorriforth (I mean Lord Elmwood) to another duel with my Lord Frederick?"

"No, call him Dorriforth,"— anſwered ſhe, with the tears ſtealing from her eyes; "I thank you for calling him ſo;

ſo; for by that name alone, is he dear to me."

"Nay, Miſs Milner, with what rapture did you not receive his love, as Lord Elmwood!"

"But under this title he has been barbarous; under the firſt, he was all friendſhip and tenderneſs."

Notwithſtanding Miſs Milner indulged herſelf in all theſe ſoft bewailings to her friend — before Lord Elmwood ſhe maintained a degree of pride and ſteadineſs which ſurpriſed even him, who had perhaps ever thought leſs of her love for him, than any other perſon.— She now began to fear ſhe had gone too far in diſcovering her affection, and reſolved to make trial of a contrary method.—She determined to retrieve that haughty character which had inſpired

ſo

ſo many of her admirers with paſſion, and take the chance of the effect upon this only one, to whom ſhe ever acknowledged a mutual attachment.—But although ſhe acted this character well — ſo well, that every one but Miſs Woodley thought her in earneſt — yet, with nice and attentive anxiety, ſhe watched even the ſlighteſt circumſtances, that might revive her hopes, or confirm her deſpair. Lord Elmwood's behaviour was calculated only to produce the latter — he was cold, polite, and perfectly indifferent.—Yet, whatever his manners now were, they did not remove from her recollection what they had been — ſhe recalled, with delight, the ardour with which he had firſt declared his paſſion to her, and the thouſand proofs he had ſince given of its reality.—From the conſtancy of his diſpoſition, ſhe depended

pended much, that ſentiments like theſe were not totally eradicated; and from the extreme deſire which Mr. Sandford now, more than ever, diſcovered of depreciating her in his patron's eſteem—from the now, more than common zeal, which urged him to take Lord Elmwood from her company, whenever he had it in his power, ſhe was led to believe, that while his friend entertained ſuch ſtrong fears of his relapſing into love, ſhe had reaſon to indulge the ſtrongeſt hopes that he would.

But the reſerve, and even indifference, that ſhe had ſo well aſſumed for a few days, and which might perhaps have effected her deſign, ſhe had not the patience to perſevere in, without calling levity to their aid. — She viſited repeatedly without ſaying where, or with whom—

whom — kept later hours than uſual — appeared in the higheſt ſpirits — ſung, laughed, and never heaved a ſigh — but when ſhe was alone.

Still Lord Elmwood protracted a reſolution, that he was determined he would never break when taken.

Miſs Woodley was extremely uneaſy, and with cauſe; ſhe ſaw her friend was providing herſelf with a weight of cares, that ſhe would ſoon find infinitely too much for her ſtrength to bear — ſhe would have reaſoned with her, but all her arguments had long ſince proved unavailing. — She wiſhed to ſpeak to Lord Elmwood upon the ſubject, and (unknown to her) plead her excuſe; but he apprehended Miſs Woodley's intention, and evidently ſhunned her.—

Mr. Sandford was now the only perſon to whom ſhe could ſpeak of Miſs Milner, and the delight he took to expatiate on her faults, was more ſorrow to her friend, than not to ſpeak of her at all. She, therefore, ſat a ſilent ſpectator, waiting with dread for the time when ſhe, who now ſcorned her advice, would fly to her in vain for comfort.

Sandford had, however, ſaid one thing to Miſs Woodley, which gave her a ray of hope. During their converſation on the ſubject, (not by way of conſolation to her, but as a reproach to Lord Elmwood) he one day angrily exclaimed, "And yet, notwithſtanding all this provocation, he has not come to the determination that he will think no more of her — he lingers and he heſitates—

tates -- I never ſaw him ſo weak upon any occaſion before."

This was joyful hearing to Miſs Woodley; ſtill, ſhe could not but reflect, the longer he was in coming to this determination, the more irrevocable it would be, when once taken; and every moment that paſſed, ſhe trembled leſt it ſhould be the very moment, in which Lord Elmwood ſhould reſolve to baniſh Miſs Milner from his heart.

Amongſt her unpardonable indiſcretions, during this trial upon the temper of her guardian, was the frequent mention of many gentlemen, who had been her profeſt admirers, and the mention of them with partiality. — Teaſed, if not tortured, by this, Lord Elmwood ſtill behaved with a manly evenneſs of temper, and neither appeared provoked on the

the ſubject, nor inſolently careleſs. — In a ſingle inſtance, however, this calmneſs was near deſerting him.

Entering the drawing-room, one evening, he ſtarted, on ſeeing Lord Frederick Lawnly there, in earneſt converſation with Miſs Milner.

Mrs. Horton and Miſs Woodley were both indeed preſent, and Lord Frederick was talking in an audible voice, upon ſome indifferent ſubjects; but with that impreſſive manner, in which a man never fails to ſpeak to the woman he loves, be the ſubject what it may.— The moment Lord Elmwood ſtarted, which was the moment he entered, Lord Frederick aroſe.

" I beg your pardon, my Lord," ſaid

ſaid Lord Elmwood, "I proteſt I did not know you."

"I ought to entreat your Lordſhip's pardon," returned Lord Frederick, "for this intruſion, which an accident alone has occaſioned. Miſs Milner has been almoſt overturned by the careleſsneſs of a lady's coachman, in whoſe carriage ſhe was, and therefore ſuffered me to bring her home in mine."

"I hope you are not hurt," ſaid Lord Elmwood to Miſs Milner, but his voice was ſo much affected by what he felt, that he could ſcarce articulate the words. —Not with the apprehenſion that ſhe was hurt, was he thus agitated, for the gaiety of her manners convinced him *that* could not be the caſe, nor did he indeed ſuppoſe any accident, of the kind mentioned, had occurred; but the circumſtance of unexpectedly ſeeing

Lord Frederick had taken him off his guard, and being totally unprepared, he could not conquer thoſe marks of the ſurpriſe, and of the ſhock it had given him.

Lord Frederick, who had heard nothing of his intended union with his ward, (for it was even kept a ſecret, at preſent, from every ſervant in the houſe) imputed this diſcompoſure to the perſonal reſentment he might bear him, in conſequence of their duel; for though Lord Elmwood had aſſured the uncle of Lord Frederick, (who once waited upon him on the ſubject of Miſs Milner) that all reſentment was, on his part, entirely at an end; and that he was willing to conſent to his ward's marriage with his nephew, if ſhe would concur herſelf;

yet

yet Lord Frederick doubted the ſincerity of this, and would ſtill have had the delicacy not to have entered Lord Elmwood's houſe, but encouraged by Miſs Milner, and emboldened by his love. Perſonal reſentment was therefore the conſtruction he put upon Lord Elmwood's emotion on entering the room; but Miſs Milner and Miſs Woodley knew his agitation to ariſe from a far different cauſe.

After his entrance, Lord Frederick did not attempt once to reſume his ſeat, but having bowed moſt reſpectfully to all preſent, he took his leave; while Miſs Milner followed him as far as the door, and repeated her thanks for his protection.

Lord Elmwood was hurt beyond meaſure; but he had a ſecond concern, and that was, that he had not the power to conceal how much he was affected.—He trembled—when he attempted to ſpeak, he ſtammered—he perceived his face burning with confuſion; and thus one confuſion gave birth to another, till his ſtate was pitiable.

Miſs Milner, with all her aſſumed gaiety and real inſolence, had not, however, the inſolence to ſeem as if ſhe obſerved him; ſhe had only the confidence to obſerve him by ſtealth.—And Mrs. Horton and Miſs Woodley, having opportunely begun a diſcourſe upon ſome trivial occurrences, gave him time to recover himſelf by degrees—yet, ſtill it was merely by degrees; for the impreſſion which this incident had made, was deep,

deep, and not eaſily to be eraſed.—The entrance of Mr. Sandford, who knew nothing of what had happened, was alſo ſome relief; for he entered into a converſation with him, which they very ſoon retired into the library to terminate.—Miſs Milner, taking Miſs Woodley with her, went directly to her own apartment, and there exclaimed in rapture,

"He is mine—he loves me—and he is mine for ever."

Miſs Woodley congratulated her upon believing ſo, but confeſſed ſhe herſelf "Had her fears."

"What fears?" cried Miſs Milner: "don't you perceive that he loves me?"

"I do," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "but that I always believed; and, I think, if he loves you now, he has yet the good ſenſe to know that he has reaſon to hate you."

"What has good ſenſe to do with love?" returned Miſs Milner — "If a lover of mine ſuffers his underſtanding to get the better of his affection——"

And the ſame arguments were going to be repeated; but Miſs Woodley interrupted her, by requiring an explanation of her conduct as to Lord Frederick, whom, at leaſt, ſhe was treating with cruelty, if ſhe only made uſe of his affection to ſtimulate that of Lord Elmwood.

"By no means, my dear Miſs Woodley," returned ſhe — "I have, indeed, done with my Lord Frederick from this day; and he has certainly given me the proof I wanted of Lord Elmwood's love; but then I did not engage him to this by the ſmalleſt ray of hope.— No, do not ſuſpect me of that, while my heart was another's: and I aſſure you, ſeriouſly,

ouſly, that it was from the circumſtance we deſcribed he came with me home — yet, I muſt own, that if I had not had this deſign upon Lord Elmwood's jealouſy in idea, I would have walked on foot through the ſtreets, rather than have ſuffered his rival's civilities. — But he preſſed his ſervices ſo violently, and my Lady Evans (in whoſe coach I was when the accident happened) preſſed me ſo violently to accept them, that he cannot expect any farther meaning from this acquieſcence than my own convenience."

Miſs Woodley was going to reply, when ſhe reſumed,

"Nay, if you intend to ſay I have done wrong, ſtill I am not ſorry for it, when it has given me ſuch convincing proofs of Lord Elmwood's love.— Did you ſee him? — I am afraid you did not

ſee how he trembled ? — and that manly voice faltered, as mine does ſometimes— his proud heart was humbled too, as mine is now and then.—Oh ! Miſs Woodley, I have been counterfeiting indifference to *him* — I now find that all *his* indifference to *me* has been counterfeit, and that we not only love, but that we love equally."

" Suppoſe this all as you hope—I yet think it highly neceſſary that your guardian ſhould be informed, ſerioufly informed, it was mere accident (for, at preſent, that plea ſeems but as a ſubterfuge) which brought Lord Frederick hither."

" No, that will be deſtroying the work ſo ſucceſsfully begun. — I will not ſuffer any explanation to take place, but let my Lord Elmwood act juſt as his

love ſhall dictate; and now I have no longer a doubt of its exceſs, inſtead of ſtooping to him, I wait in the certain expectation of his ſubmiſſion to me."

CHAP-

CHAPTER XI.

IN vain, for three long days, did Miſs Milner wait impatiently for this ſubmiſſion; not a ſign, not a ſymptom appeared—nay, Lord Elmwood had, ſince the evening of Lord Frederick's viſit, (which, at the time it happened, ſeemed to affect him ſo exceedingly) become juſt the ſame man he was before the circumſtance occurred; except, indeed, that he was leſs thoughtful, and now and then cheerful; but without any appearance that his cheerfulneſs was affected. —Miſs Milner was vext—ſhe was alarmed—but was aſhamed to confeſs thoſe humiliating ſenſations, even to Miſs Woodley—ſhe ſupported, therefore, when

when in company, the vivacity ſhe had ſo long aſſumed; but gave way, when alone, to a ſtill greater degree of melancholy than uſual. She no longer applauded her ſcheme of bringing Lord Frederick to the houſe, and trembled, leſt, on ſome pretence, he ſhould dare to call again. But as theſe were feelings her pride would not ſuffer her to diſcloſe to her friend, who would have condoled with her, their effects were doubly poignant.

Sitting in her dreſſing-room one forenoon with Miſs Woodley, and burdened with a load of grief that ſhe bluſhed to acknowledge, while her companion was charged with apprehenſions that ſhe too was loath to diſcloſe, one of Lord Elmwood's valets tapped gently at the door, and delivered a letter to Miſs Milner. —

By

By the perſon who brought it, as well as by the addreſs, ſhe knew it came from Lord Elmwood, and laid it down upon her toilet, as if ſhe was fearful to unfold it.

"What is that?" ſaid Miſs Woodley.

"A letter from Lord Elmwood," replied Miſs Milner.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Miſs Woodley.

"Nay," returned ſhe, "it is, I have no doubt, a letter to beg my pardon."—But her reluctance to open it plainly evinced ſhe did not think ſo.

"Do not read it yet," ſaid Miſs Woodley.

"I do not intend it," replied ſhe, trembling extremely.

"Will you dine firſt?" ſaid Miſs Woodley.

"No

" No — for not knowing its contents, I ſhall not know how to conduct myſelf towards him."

Here a ſilence followed.—Miſs Milner took up the letter — looked earneſtly at the hand-writing on the outſide — at the ſeal—inſpected into its folds—and ſeemed to wiſh, by ſome equivocal method, to gueſs at the contents, without having the courage to come at the certain knowledge of them.

Curioſity, at length, got the better of her fears — ſhe opened the letter, and, ſcarce able to hold it while ſhe read, ſhe read the following words :——

" Madam,

" While I conſidered you only as my " ward, my friendſhip for you was un-

" bounded

" bounded — when I looked upon you
" as a woman formed to grace a faſhion-
" able circle, my admiration equalled
" my friendſhip — and when fate per-
" mitted me to behold you in the tender
" light of my betrothed wife, my ſoaring
" love left thoſe humbler paſſions at a
" diſtance.

" That you have ſtill my friendſhip,
" my admiration, and even my love, I
" will not attempt to deceive either my-
" ſelf or you by diſavowing; but ſtill,
" with a firm aſſurance, I declare, that
" prudence outweighs them all; and I
" have not, from henceforward, a wiſh
" to be regarded by you in any other re-
" ſpect than as one 'who wiſhes you
" well.' — That you ever beheld me in
" the endearing quality of a deſtined
" and an affectionate huſband, (ſuch as I

" would have proved) was a deception
" upon my hopes: they own the decep-
" tion, and are humiliated — but I en-
" treat you to ſpare their farther trial,
" and for a ſingle week do not inſult me
" with the open preference of another.
" In the ſhort ſpace of that period I
" ſhall have taken my leave of you —
" *for ever*.

" I ſhall viſit Italy, and ſome other
" parts of the continent; from whence I
" propoſe paſſing to the Weſt Indies, in
" order to inſpect my poſſeſſions there:
" — nor ſhall I return to England till
" after a few years abſence; in which
" time I hope to become once more re-
" conciled to the change of ſtate I am
" enjoined — a change I now moſt fer-
" vently wiſh could be entirely diſ-
" penſed with.

" The

" The occaſion of my remaining here
" a week longer, is to ſettle ſome neceſ-
" ſary affairs, among which the princi-
" pal is, that of delivering to a friend,
" a man of worth and of tenderneſs, all
" thoſe writings which have inveſted me
" with the power of my guardianſhip—
" he will, the day after my departure,
" (without one upbraiding word) reſign
" them to you in my name; and even
" your father, could he behold the re-
" ſignation, would concur in its pro-
" priety.

" And now, my dear Miſs Milner,
" let not affected reſentment, contempt,
" or levity, oppoſe that ſerenity, which,
" for the week to come, I wiſh to enjoy.
" — By complying with this requeſt,
" give me to believe, that, ſince you

" have

" have been under my care, you think
" I have, at leaſt, faithfully diſcharged
" ſome part of my duty. — And where-
" ever I have been inadequate to your
" wiſhes, attribute my demerits to ſome
" infirmity of mind, rather than to a
" negligence of your happineſs. — Yet,
" be the cauſe what it will, ſince theſe
" faults have exiſted, I acknowledge
" them, and beg your pardon.

" However time, and a ſucceſſion of
" objects, may eradicate more tender
" ſentiments, I am ſure *never* to loſe the
" livelieſt anxiety for your welfare—and
" with all that ſolicitude, which I can-
" not deſcribe, I entreat for your own
" ſake, for mine—when we ſhall be far
" aſunder — and for the ſake of your
" dead father's memory, that, *you will*

" *call, upon every important occaſion, your*
" *ſerious judgement to direct you.*

" I am, Madam,

" Your ſincereſt friend,

" ELMWOOD."

After ſhe had read every ſyllable of this letter, it dropped from her hands; but ſhe uttered not a word.—There was, however, a paleneſs in her face, a deadneſs in her eye, and a kind of palſy over her frame, which Miſs Woodley, who had ſeen her in every ſtage of her uneaſineſs, never had ſeen before.

" I do not want to read the letter," ſaid Miſs Woodley; " your looks tell me its contents."

" They will then diſcover to Lord Elmwood," replied ſhe, " what I feel; but

but heaven forbid — that would ſink me even lower than I am."

Scarce able to move, ſhe roſe, and looked in her glaſs, as if to arrange her features, and impoſe upon him: — alas! it was of no avail—a ſerenity of mind could alone effect what ſhe deſired.

"You muſt endeavour," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "to feel the diſpoſition you wiſh to make appear."

"I will," replied ſhe, "I will feel a proper pride—and a proper ſcorn of this treatment."

And ſo deſirous was ſhe to attain the appearance of theſe ſentiments, that ſhe made the ſtrongeſt efforts to calm her thoughts, in order to acquire it.

"I have but a few days to remain with him," ſhe ſaid to herſelf, "and we part for ever — in thoſe few days it

is not only my duty to obey his commands, or rather comply with his requeſt, but it is alſo my wiſh to leave upon his mind an impreſſion, which may not add to the ill opinion he has formed of me, but, perhaps, ſerve to diminiſh it.—If, in every other inſtance, my conduct has been blameable, he ſhall, at leaſt in this, acknowledge its merit.—The fate I have drawn upon myſelf, he ſhall find I can be reſigned to; and he ſhall be convinced, that the woman, of whoſe weakneſs he has had ſo many fatal proofs, is yet in poſſeſſion of ſome fortitude—fortitude, to bid him farewell, without diſcovering one affected or one real pang, though her death ſhould be the immediate conſequence."

Thus ſhe reſolved, and thus ſhe acted.—The ſevereſt judge could not have arraigned

arraigned her conduct, from the day ſhe received Lord Elmwood's letter, to the day of his departure. — She had, indeed, involuntary weakneſſes, but none with which ſhe did not ſtruggle, and, in general, her ſtruggles were victorious.

The firſt time ſhe ſaw him after the receipt of his letter, was on the evening of the ſame day—ſhe had a little concert of amateurs of muſic, and was herſelf ſinging and playing when he entered the room: the connoiſſeurs immediately perceived ſhe loſt the tune—but Lord Elmwood was no connoiſſeur in the art, and he did not obſerve it.

They occaſionally ſpoke to each other during the evening, but the ſubjects were general—and though their manners every

time they ſpoke, were perfectly polite, they were not marked with the ſmalleſt degree of familiarity. — To deſcribe his behaviour exactly, it was the ſame as his letter, polite, friendly, compoſed, and reſolved. — Some of the company ſtaid ſupper, which prevented the embarraſſment that muſt unavoidably have ariſen, had the family been by themſelves.

The next morning they all breakfaſted in their ſeparate apartments—more company dined with them — in the evening, and at ſupper, Lord Elmwood was from home.

Thus, all paſſed on as peaceably as he had requeſted, and Miſs Milner had not betrayed one particle of frailty; when, the third day at dinner, ſome gentlemen of

of his acquaintanc being at table, one of them ſaid,

" And ſo, my Lord, you abſolutely ſet off on Tueſday morning?"

This was Friday.

Sandford and he both replied at the ſame time, " Yes." And Sandford, but not Lord Elmwood, looked at Miſs Milner when he ſpoke.—Her knife and fork gave a ſudden ſpring in her hand, but no other emotion witneſſed what ſhe felt.

" Aye, Elmwood," cried another gentleman at table, " you'll bring home, I am afraid, a foreign wife, and that I ſhan't forgive."

" It is his errand abroad, I make no doubt." ſaid another viſitor.

Before he could return an anſwer, Sandford cried, " And what objection

to a foreigner for a wife? do not crowned heads all marry foreigners? and who happier in the married ſtate than ſome kings?"

Lord Elmwood directed his eyes to the ſide of the table, oppoſite to that where Miſs Milner ſat.

"Nay," (anſwered one of the gueſts, who was a country gentleman) "what do you ſay, ladies — do you think my Lord ought to go out of his own nation for a wife?" and he looked at Miſs Milner for the reply.

Miſs Woodley, uneaſy at her friend's being thus forced to give an opinion upon ſo delicate a ſubject, endeavoured to ſatisfy the gentleman, by anſwering to the queſtion herſelf: "Whoever my Lord Elmwood marries, Sir," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "he, no doubt, will be happy."

"But

"But what ſay you, Madam?" aſked the gentleman, ſtill keeping his eyes on Miſs Milner.

"That whoever Lord Elmwood marries, he *deſerves* to be happy." returned ſhe, with the utmoſt command of her voice and looks; for Miſs Woodley, by replying firſt, had given her time to collect herſelf.

The colour flew to Lord Elmwood's face, as ſhe delivered this ſhort ſentence; and Miſs Woodley perſuaded herſelf, ſhe ſaw a tear ſtart in his eye.

Miſs Milner did not look that way.

In an inſtant he found means to change the ſubject, but that of his journey ſtill employed the converſation; and what horſes, ſervants, and carriage he took with him, was minutely aſked, and ſo accurately anſwered, either by himſelf or by Mr. Sandford, that Miſs Milner,

Milner, although ſhe had known her doom before, till now had received no circumſtantial account of it—and as circumſtances increaſe or diminiſh all we feel, the hearing theſe things told, increaſed the bitterneſs of their truth.

Soon after dinner the ladies retired; and from that time, though Miſs Milner's behaviour continued the ſame, yet her looks and her voice were totally altered — for the world, ſhe could not have looked cheerfully; for the world, ſhe could not have ſpoken with a ſprightly accent; ſhe frequently began in one, but not three words could ſhe utter, before her tones ſunk into dejection.— Not only her colour, but her features became changed; her eyes loſt their brilliancy, her lips ſeemed to hang without the power of motion, her head drooped,

drooped, and her dreſs was neglected.—Conſcious of this appearance, and conſcious of the weakneſs from whence it aroſe, it was her deſire to hide herſelf from the only object ſhe could have wiſhed to have charmed.—Accordingly, ſhe ſat alone, or with Miſs Woodley in her own apartment, as much as was conſiſtent with that civility which her guardian had requeſted, and which forbade her totally abſenting herſelf.

Miſs Woodley felt ſo acutely the torments of her friend, that had not her reaſon told her, that the inflexible mind of Lord Elmwood, was fixed beyond her power to ſhake, ſhe had caſt herſelf at his feet, and implored the return of his affection and tenderneſs, as the only means to ſave his once-beloved ward from an untimely death. But her underſtanding

derſtanding—her knowledge of his firm and immoveable temper; and of all his provocations — her knowledge of his word, long ſince given to Sandford, "That if once reſolved, he would not recall his reſolution."—The certainty of the various plans arranged for his travels, all convinced her, that by any interference, ſhe would only expoſe Miſs Milner's love and delicacy, to a contemptuous rejection.

If the converſation did not every day turn upon the ſubject of Lord Elmwood's departure — a converſation he evidently avoided himſelf — yet, every day, ſome new preparation for his journey, ſtruck either the ear or the eye of Miſs Milner — and had ſhe beheld a frightful ſpectre, ſhe could not have ſhuddered with more horror, than when

ſhe

ſhe unexpectedly paſſed his large trunks in the hall, nailed and corded, ready to be ſent off to meet him at Venice. — At the ſight, ſhe flew from the company that happened to be with her, and ſtole to the firſt lonely corner of the houſe to conceal her tears—ſhe reclined her head upon her hands, and bedewed them with the ſudden anguiſh that had overcome her.— She heard a footſtep advancing towards the ſpot where ſhe hoped to have been concealed; ſhe lifted up her eyes, and ſaw Lord Elmwood. — Pride, was the firſt emotion his preſence inſpired — pride, which aroſe from the humility into which ſhe was plunged.

She looked at him earneſtly, as if to imply, " What now, my Lord?"

He only anſwered with a bow, which expreſſed theſe words: " I beg

your pardon." And immediately withdrew.

Thus each underſtood the other's language, without either having uttered a word.

The juſt conſtruction ſhe put upon his looks and behaviour upon this occaſion, kept up her ſpirits for ſome little time; and ſhe bleſſed heaven, repeatedly, for the ſingular favour of ſhewing to her, clearly, by this accident, his negligence of her ſorrows, his total indifference.

The next day was the eve of that on which he was to depart — of the day on which ſhe was to bid adieu to Dorriforth, to her guardian, to Lord Elmwood; to all her hopes at once.

The

The moment ſhe awoke on Monday morning, the recollection, that this was, perhaps, the laſt day ſhe was ever again to ſee him, ſoftened all the reſentment his yeſterday's conduct had raiſed: forgetting his auſterity, and all ſhe had once termed cruelties, ſhe now only remembered his friendſhip, his tenderneſs, and his love. — She was impatient to ſee him, and promiſed herſelf, for this laſt day, to neglect no one opportunity of being with him. For that purpoſe ſhe did not breakfaſt in her own room, as ſhe had done for ſeveral mornings before, but went into the breakfaſt-room, where all the family in general met. — She was rejoiced on hearing his voice as ſhe opened the door, yet the ſound made her tremble ſo much, that

that ſhe could ſcarcely totter to the table.

Miſs Woodley looked at her as ſhe entered, and was never ſo ſhocked at ſeeing her; for never had ſhe yet ſeen her look ſo ill.—As ſhe approached, ſhe made an inclination of her head to Mrs. Horton, then to her guardian, as was her cuſtom, when ſhe firſt ſaw them in a morning—he looked in her face as he bowed, then turned his eyes upon the fire place, rubbed his forehead, and began talking with Mr. Sandford.

Sandford, during breakfaſt, by accident threw his eyes upon Miſs Milner; his attention was caught by her deathly countenance, and he looked earneſtly. —He then turned to Lord Elmwood to ſee

ſee if he was obſerving her appearance — he was not — and ſo much were her thoughts engaged on him alone, that ſhe did not once perceive Sandford gazing at her.

Mrs. Horton, after a little while, obſerved, "It was a beautiful morning."

Lord Elmwood ſaid, "He thought he heard it rain in the night."

Sandford cried, "For his part he ſlept too well to know." And then (unaſked) held a plate with biſcuits to Miſs Milner — it was the firſt civility he had ever in his life offered her; ſhe ſmiled at the whimſicality of the circumſtance, but ſhe took one in return for his attention. — He looked grave beyond his uſual gravity, and yet not with his uſual ill temper. She did not eat

what ſhe had ſo politely taken, but laid it down ſoon after.

Lord Elmwood was the firſt who roſe from breakfaſt, and he did not return to dinner.

At dinner, Mrs. Horton ſaid, "She hoped he would, however, favour them with his company at ſupper."

To which Sandford replied, "No doubt, for you will hardly any of you ſee him in the morning; as we ſhall be off by ſix, or ſoon after."

Sandford was not going abroad with Lord Elmwood, but was to go with him as far as Dover.

Theſe words of his—"*Not ſee Lord Elmwood in the morning*—[never again to ſee him after this evening,] were like the knell of death to Miſs Milner.—She felt

felt the ſymptoms of fainting, and eagerly ſnatched a glaſs of wine, which the ſervant was holding to Sandford, (who had called for wine) and drank a part of it.—As ſhe returned the glaſs to the ſervant, ſhe began to apologize to Mr. Sandford for her ſeeming rudeneſs, but before ſhe could utter what ſhe meant, he ſaid, good-naturedly, "Never mind—you are very welcome—I am glad you took it."—She looked at him to obſerve, whether he had really ſpoken kindly, or ironically; but before his countenance could ſatisfy her, her thoughts were called away from that trivial circumſtance, and again fixed upon Lord Elmwood.

The moments ſeemed tedious till he came home to ſupper, and yet, when ſhe reflected for how ſhort a time the reſt of the evening would continue, ſhe

wiſhed to defer the hour of his return for months.—At ten o'clock he arrived; and at half after ten the family, without any viſitor, met at ſupper.

Miſs Milner had conſidered, that the period for her to counterfeit appearances, was diminiſhed now to a very ſhort one; and ſhe rigorouſly enjoined herſelf not to ſhrink from the little which remained.—The certain end, that would be ſo ſoon put to this painful deception, encouraged her to ſtruggle through it with redoubled zeal; and this was but neceſſary, as her weakneſs increaſed.—She therefore liſtened, ſhe talked, and even ſmiled with the reſt of the company, nor did their vivacity ſeem to ariſe, from a much leſs compulſive ſource than her own.

It was paſt twelve, when Lord Elmwood looked at his watch, and riſing from his ſeat, went up to Mrs. Horton, and taking her hand, ſaid, "Till I ſee you again, Madam, I ſincerely wiſh you every happineſs."

Miſs Milner fixed her eyes upon the table before her.

"My Lord," replied Mrs. Horton, "I ſincerely wiſh you health and happineſs likewiſe."

He then went to Miſs Woodley, and taking her hand, repeated much the ſame, as he had ſaid to Mrs. Horton.

Miſs Milner now trembled beyond all power of concealment.

"My Lord," replied Miſs Woodley, a good deal affected, "I ſincerely hope my prayers for your happineſs may be heard."

She and Mrs. Horton were both ſtanding as well as Lord Elmwood; but Miſs Milner kept her ſeat, till his eye was turned upon her, and he moved ſlowly towards her; ſhe then roſe: — every one who was preſent, attentive to what he would now ſay, and how ſhe would receive what he ſaid, here caſt their eyes upon them, and liſtened with impatience.—They were all diſappointed — he did not utter a ſyllable. — Yet he took her hand, and held it cloſely between his. — He then bowed moſt reſpectfully and left her.

No "I wiſh you well; — I wiſh you health and happineſs." — No "Prayers for bleſſings on her." — Not even the word "Farewell," eſcaped his lips — perhaps, to have attempted any of theſe, might have choaked his utterance.

She

She had behaved with fortitude the whole evening, and ſhe continued to do ſo, till the moment he turned away from her. — Her eyes then overflowed with tears, and in the agony of her mind, not knowing what ſhe did, ſhe laid her cold hand upon the perſon next to her — it happened to be Sandford; but not obſerving it was he, ſhe graſped his hand with violence—yet he did not ſnatch it away, nor look at her with his wonted ſeverity. — And thus ſhe ſtood, ſilent and motionleſs, while Lord Elmwood bowed once more to all the company, and retired.

Sandford had ſtill Miſs Milner's hand fixed upon his; and when the door was ſhut after Lord Elmwood, he turned

his head to look in her face, and turned it with ſome marks of apprehenſion for the grief he might find there. — She ſtrove to overcome that grief, and after a heavy ſigh, ſat down, as if reſigned to the fate to which ſhe was decreed.

Inſtead of following Lord Elmwood, as uſual, Sandford poured out a glaſs of wine, and drank it. — A general ſilence enſued for near three minutes. — At laſt, turning himſelf round on his ſeat, towards Miſs Milner, who ſat like a ſtatue of deſpair at his ſide, "Will you breakfaſt with us to-morrow?" ſaid he.

She made no anſwer.

"We ſhan't breakfaſt before half after ſix," continued he, "I dare ſay; and if you can riſe ſo early—why do."

"Miſs

" Miſs Milner," ſaid Miſs Woodley, (for ſhe caught eagerly at the hope of her paſſing this night in leſs unhappineſs than ſhe had foreboded) " pray riſe at that hour to breakfaſt; Mr. Sandford would not invite you, if he thought it would diſpleaſe Lord Elmwood."

" Not I." replied Sandford, churliſhly.

" Then deſire her maid to call her." ſaid Mrs. Horton to Miſs Woodley.

" Nay, ſhe will be awake, I have no doubt." returned her niece.

" No;" replied Miſs Milner, " ſince Lord Elmwood has thought proper to take his leave of me, without even ſpeaking a word; by my own deſign, never will I ſee him again." And here tears burſt forth, as if her heart burſt at the ſame time.

" Why

"Why did not *you* ſpeak to *him?*" cried Sandford—"Pray did *you* bid *him* farewell?—and I don't ſee why one is not as much to be blamed, in that reſpect, as the other."

"I was too weak to ſay I wiſhed him happy," cried Miſs Milner; "but, heaven is my witneſs, I do wiſh him ſo from my ſoul."

"And do you imagine he does not wiſh you ſo too?" cried Sandford.—"You ſhould judge him by your own heart; and what you feel for him, imagine he feels for you, my dear."

Though "*my dear*" is a trivial phraſe, yet from certain people, and upon certain occaſions, it is a phraſe of infinite comfort and aſſurance.—Mr. Sandford ſeldom ſaid "my dear" to any one; to Miſs

Miſs Milner never; and upon this occaſion, and from him, it was an expreſſion moſt precious.

She turned to him with a look of gratitude; but as ſhe only looked, and did not ſpeak, he roſe up, and ſoon after ſaid, with a friendly tone he had ſeldom uſed in her preſence, "I ſincerely wiſh you a good night."

As ſoon as he was gone, Miſs Milner exclaimed, "However my fate may have been precipitated by the unkindneſs of Mr. Sandford, yet, for that particle of concern which he has ſhown for me this night, I will always be grateful to him."

"Ay," cried Mrs. Horton, "good Mr. Sandford may ſhow his kindneſs now, without any danger from its conſequences.—

ſequences.—Now Lord Elmwood is going away for ever, he is not afraid of your ſeeing him once again." And ſhe thought ſhe praiſed him by this ſuggeſtion.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN Miſs Milner retired to her bedchamber, Miſs Woodley went with her, nor would leave her the whole night — but in vain did ſhe perſuade her to reſt — ſhe abſolutely refuſed; and declared ſhe would never, from that hour, indulge repoſe.—"The part I undertook to perform," cried ſhe, "is over — I will now, for my whole life, appear in my own character, and give a looſe to the anguiſh I endure."

As daylight ſhowed itſelf—"And yet I might ſee him once again," ſaid ſhe—"I might ſee him within theſe two hours, if I pleaſed, for Mr. Sandford invited me."

"If

"If you think, my dear Miſs Milner," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "that a ſecond parting from Lord Elmwood would but give you a ſecond agony, in the name of heaven do not ſee him any more—but, if you think your mind would be eaſier, were you to bid each other adieu in a more direct manner than you did laſt night, let us go down and breakfaſt with him.—I'll go before, and prepare him for your reception—you ſhall not ſurpriſe him—and I will let him know, it is by Mr. Sandford's invitation you are coming."

She liſtened with a ſmile to this propoſal, yet objected to the indelicacy of her wiſhing to ſee him, after he had taken his leave—but as Miſs Woodley, nevertheleſs, perceived that ſhe was inclined to infringe this delicacy, of which ſhe had ſo proper a ſenſe, ſhe eaſily perſuaded

ſuaded her, it was impoſſible for the moſt ſuſpicious perſon (and Lord Elmwood was far from ſuch a character) to ſuppoſe, that the paying him a viſit at that period of time, could be with the moſt diſtant idea of regaining his heart, or of altering one reſolution he had taken.

In this opinion Miſs Milner acquieſced; yet ſhe had not the courage to form the determination that ſhe would go.

Daylight now no longer peeped, but ſtared upon them. — Miſs Milner went to the looking-glaſs, breathed upon her hands and rubbed them on her eyes; put ſome powder into her hair; yet ſaid, after all, "I dare not ſee him again."

"You may do as you pleaſe," ſaid Miſs Woodley, "but I will. I that have

have lived for ſo many years under the ſame roof with him, and on the moſt friendly terms, and he going away, perhaps for theſe ten years, perhaps for ever, I ſhould think it a diſreſpect not to ſee him to the laſt moment of his remaining in the houſe."

"Then do you go," ſaid Miſs Milner, eagerly; "and if he ſhould aſk for me, I will gladly come, you know; but if he does not aſk for me, I will not — and pray don't deceive me."

Miſs Woodley promiſed her not to deceive her; and ſoon after, as they heard the ſervants paſs about the houſe, and the clock had ſtruck ſix, Miſs Woodley went to the breakfaſt-room.

She found Lord Elmwood there in his travelling dreſs, ſtanding penſively by the fire place — and, as he did not dream of

ſeeing her, he ſtarted when ſhe entered, and, with an appearance of alarm, ſaid, "Dear Miſs Woodley, what's the matter?"—She replied, "Nothing, my Lord; but I could not be ſatisfied without ſeeing your Lordſhip once again, while I had it in my power."

"I thank you," he returned with a ſigh—the heavieſt and moſt intelligent ſigh ſhe ever heard him condeſcend to give.—She imagined, alſo, that he looked as if he wiſhed to aſk how Miſs Milner did, but would not allow himſelf the indulgence.—She was half inclined to mention her to him, and was debating in her mind whether ſhe ſhould or not, when Mr. Sandford came into the room, ſaying, as he entered,

"For heaven's ſake, my Lord, where did you ſleep laſt night?"

"Why do you aſk?" ſaid he.

"Becauſe," replied Sandford, "I went into your bedchamber juſt now, and I found your bed made.—You have not ſlept there to-night."

"I have ſlept no where," returned he; "I could not ſleep—and having ſome papers to look over, and to riſe early, I thought I might as well not go to bed at all."

Miſs Woodley was pleaſed at the frank manner in which he made this confeſſion, and could not reſiſt the ſtrong impulſe to ſay, "You have done juſt then, my Lord, like Miſs Milner, for ſhe has not been in bed the whole night."

Miſs Woodley ſpoke this in a negligent manner, and yet, Lord Elmwood echoed back the words with ſolicitude, "Has not Miſs Milner been in bed the whole night?"

"If

"If ſhe is up, why does not ſhe come and take ſome coffee?" ſaid Sandford, as he began to pour it out.

"If ſhe thought it would be agreeable," returned Miſs Woodley, "I dare ſay ſhe would." And ſhe looked at Lord Elmwood while ſhe ſpoke, though ſhe did not abſolutely addreſs him; but he made no reply.

"Agreeable!" returned Sandford, angrily—"Has ſhe then a quarrel with any body here? or does ſhe ſuppoſe any body here bears enmity to *her?*—Is ſhe not in peace and charity?"

"Yes," replied Miſs Woodley, "that I am ſure ſhe is."

"Then bring her hither," ſaid he, "directly.—Would ſhe have the wickedneſs to imagine we are not all friends with her?"

Miſs Woodley left the room, and found Miſs Milner almoſt in deſpair, leſt ſhe ſhould hear Lord Elmwood's carriage drive off before her friend's return.

"Did he ſend for me?" were the words ſhe uttered as ſoon as ſhe ſaw her.

"Mr. Sandford did, in his preſence," returned Miſs Woodley, "and you may go with the utmoſt decorum, or I would not tell you ſo."

She required no proteſtations of this, but readily followed her beloved adviſer, whoſe kindneſs never appeared in ſo amiable a light as at that moment.

On entering the room, through all the dead white of her preſent complec-

tion,

tion, ſhe bluſhed to a crimſon. — Lord Elmwood roſe from his ſeat, and brought a chair for her to ſit down.

Sandford looked at her inquiſitively, ſipped his tea, and ſaid, "He never made tea to his own liking."

Miſs Milner took a cup, but had ſcarce ſtrength to hold it.

It ſeemed but a very ſhort time they were at breakfaſt, when the carriage, that was to take Lord Elmwood away, drove to the door. — Miſs Milner ſtarted at the ſound — ſo did he — but ſhe had nearly dropped her cup and ſaucer; on which Sandford took them out of her hand, ſaying,

"Perhaps you had rather have coffee?"

Her lips moved, but he could not hear what ſhe ſaid.

A ſervant came in, and told Lord Elmwood, "The carriage was at the door."

He replied, "Very well." But though he had breakfaſted, he did not attempt to move.

At laſt, riſing briſkly from his ſeat, as if it was neceſſary to go in haſte, when he did go; he took up his hat, which he had brought with him into the room, and was turning to Miſs Woodley to take his leave, when Sandford cried, "My Lord, you are in a great hurry." — And then, as if he wiſhed to give poor Miſs Milner every moment he could, added, (looking about) "I don't know where I have laid my gloves."

Lord Elmwood, after repeating to Miſs

Miſs Woodley his laſt night's farewell, now went up to Miſs Milner, and taking one of her hands, again held it between his, but ſtill without ſpeaking — while ſhe, unable to ſuppreſs her tears as heretofore, ſuffered them to fall in torrents.

"What is all this?" cried Sandford, going up to them in anger.

They neither of them replied, or changed their ſituation.

"Separate this moment," cried Sandford, "or be ſeparated only by death."

The commanding and awful manner in which he ſpoke this ſentence, made them both turn to him in amazement, and almoſt petrified with the ſenſation his words had cauſed.

He left them for a moment, and going to a ſmall bookcaſe in one corner of the room, took out of it a book,

and returning with it in his hand, ſaid,

"Lord Elmwood, do you love this woman?"

"More than my life." He replied, with the moſt heartfelt accents.

He then turned to Miſs Milner — "Can you ſay the ſame by him?"

She ſpread her hands over her eyes, and cried, "Oh, heavens!"

"I believe you *can* ſay ſo," returned Sandford; "and in the name of God, and your own happineſs, ſince this is the caſe, let me put it out of your power to part."

Lord Elmwood gazed at him with wonder! and yet, as if enraptured by the ſudden appearance of a change in his proſpects.

She ſighed with a kind of trembling

ecſtaſy; while Sandford, with all the dignity of his official character, delivered theſe words ——

"My Lord, while I thought my counſel might ſave you from the worſt of misfortunes, conjugal ſtrife, I importuned you hourly; and ſet forth your danger in the light it appeared to me.—But though old, and a prieſt, I can ſubmit to think I have been in an error; and I now firmly believe, it is for the welfare of you both to become man and wife.—My Lord, take this woman's marriage vows — you can aſk no fairer promiſes of her reform — ſhe can give you none half ſo ſacred, half ſo binding; and I ſee by her looks that ſhe will mean to keep them. — And my dear," continued he, addreſſing himſelf to her,

"act

" act but under the dominion of thoſe vows, to a huſband of ſenſe and virtue, like him, and you will be all that I, himſelf, or even heaven, can deſire.—Now, then, Lord Elmwood, this moment give her up for ever, or this moment, conſtrain her by ſuch ties from offending you, as ſhe ſhall not *dare* to violate."

Lord Elmwood ſtruck his forehead in doubt and agitation; but ſtill holding her hand, he cried, " I cannot part from her." — Then feeling this reply as equivocal, he fell upon his knees, and cried, " Will you pardon my heſitation?—and will you, in marriage, ſhow me that tender love you have not ſhown me yet? — Will you, in poſſeſſing all my affections, bear with all my infirmities?"

She

She raiſed him from her feet, and by the expreſſion of her face, by the tears that bathed his hands, gave him confidence.

He turned to Sandford—then placing her by his own ſide, as the form of matrimony requires, gave this for a ſign to Sandford that he ſhould begin the ceremony.—On which, he opened his book, and—married them.

While with a countenance—manner—and voice, ſo ſerious, and ſo fervent, he performed theſe rites, that every idea of jeſt, or even of lightneſs, was abſent from the mind of all who were preſent.

Miſs Milner, covered with ſhame, ſunk on the boſom of Miſs Woodley.

When the ring was wanting, Lord

Elmwood ſupplied it with one from his own hand, but throughout all the reſt of the ceremony, appeared loſt in zealous devotion to heaven. — Yet, no ſooner was it finiſhed, than his thoughts deſcended to this world.—He embraced his bride with all the tranſport of the fondeſt, happieſt bridegroom, and in raptures called her by the endearing name of "wife."

"But ſtill, my Lord," cried Sandford, "you are only married by your own church and conſcience, not by your wife's, or by the law of the land; and let me adviſe you not to defer that marriage long, leſt in the time you diſagree, and ſhe ſhould refuſe to become your legal ſpouſe.

"I think there is danger," returned Lord

Lord Elmwood, " and therefore our ſecond marriage muſt take place to-morrow."

To this the ladies objected, and Sandford was to fix their ſecond wedding-day, as he had done their firſt.—He, after conſideration, gave them four days.

Miſs Woodley then recollected (for every one elſe had forgot it) that the carriage was ſtill at the door to convey Lord Elmwood abroad.—It was of courſe diſmiſſed—and one of thoſe great incidents of delight which Miſs Milner that morning taſted, was to look out of the window, and ſee this very carriage drive from the door unoccupied.

Never was there a more rapid change from

from deſpair to happineſs—to happineſs perfect and ſupreme — than was that, which Miſs Milner and Lord Elmwood experienced in one ſingle hour.

The few days that intervened between this and their legal marriage, were paſſed in the delightful care of preparing for that happy day — yet, with all its delights inferior to the firſt, when every joy was doubled by the expected ſorrow.

Nevertheleſs, on that firſt wedding-day, that joyful day, which reſtored her loſt lover to her hopes again; even on that *very* day, after the ſacred ceremony was over, Miſs Milner — (with all the fears, the tremors, the ſuperſtition of her ſex)—felt an excruciating ſhock; when, looking on the ring Lord Elmwood had put

put upon her finger, in haſte, when he married her, ſhe perceived it was a — MOURNING RING.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.