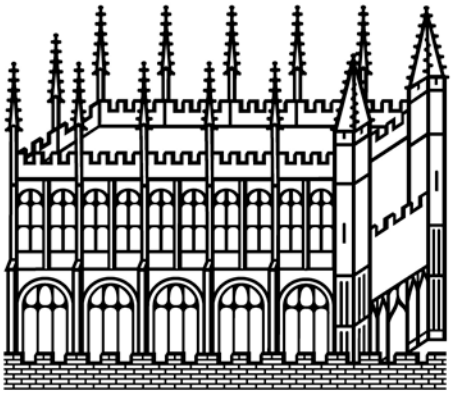

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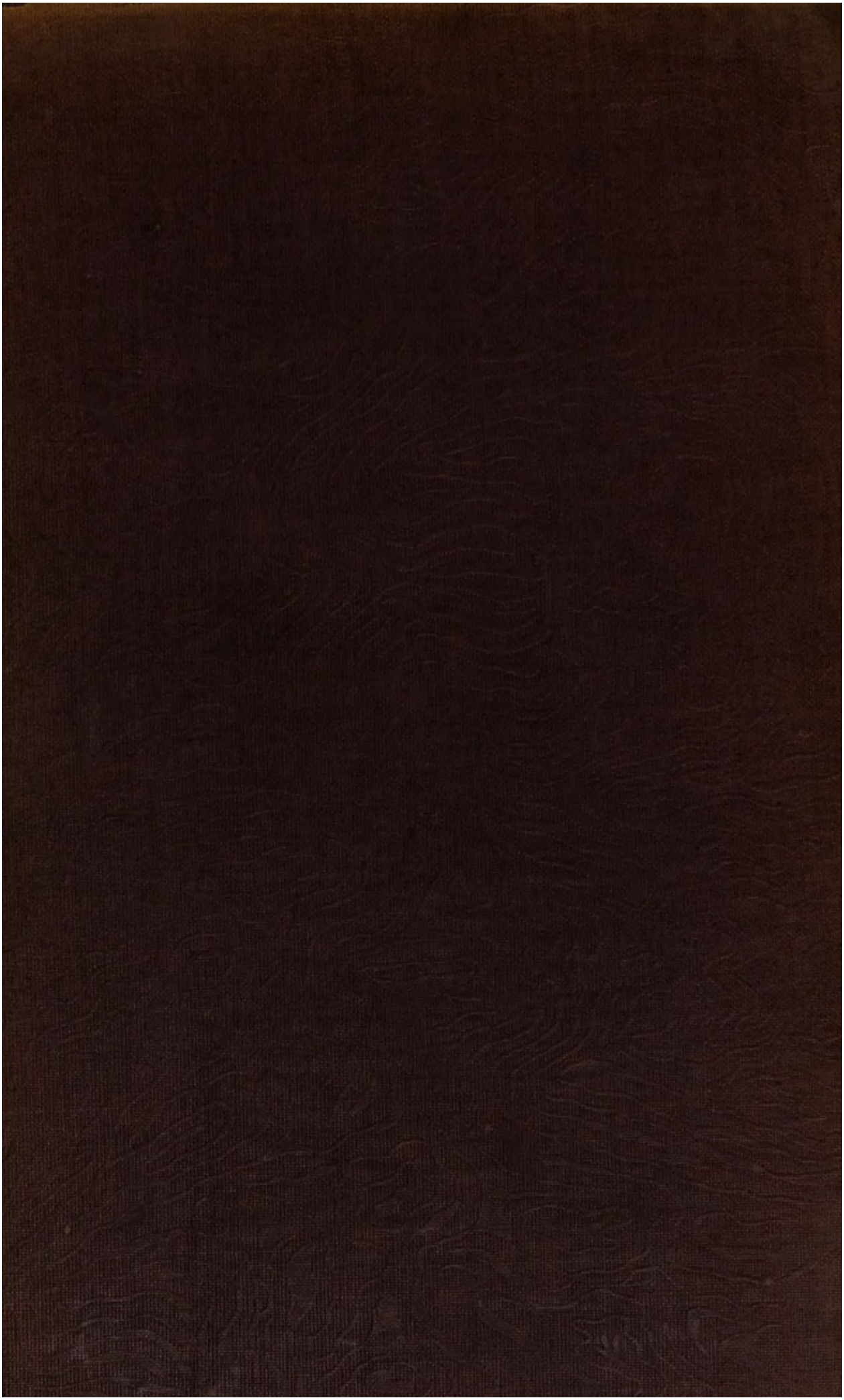

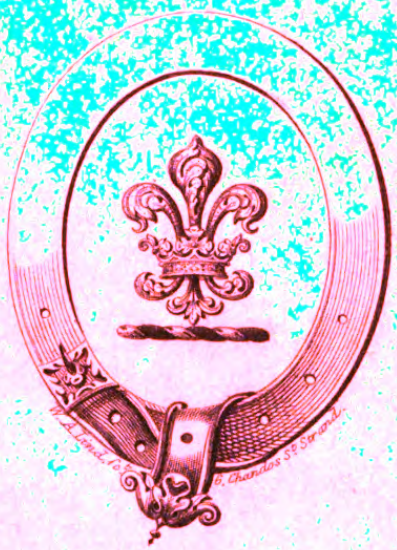

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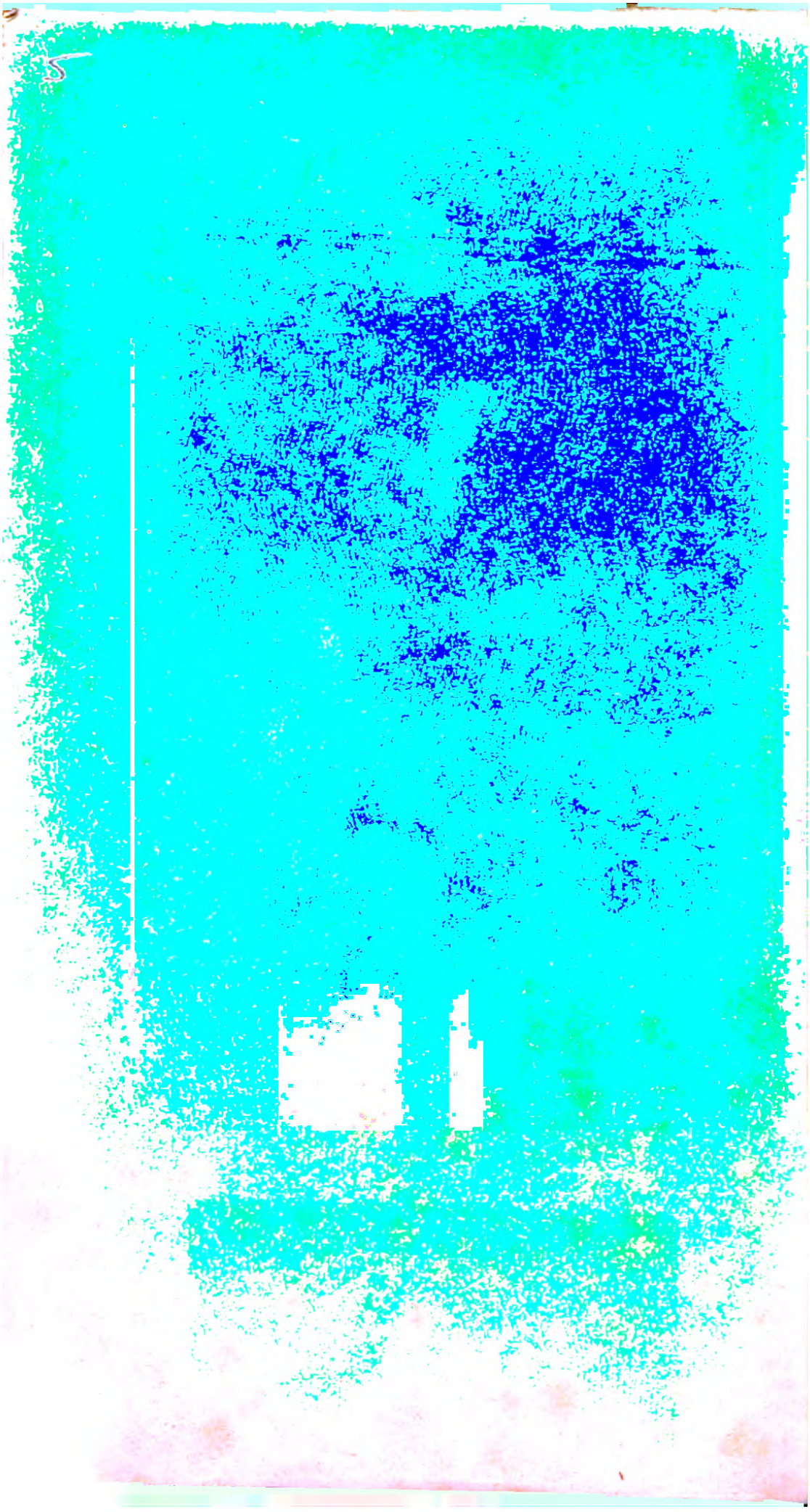

W. Harvey. E. Finden.

# TALES OF FASHIONABLE LIFE.

"Read and believe the confirmation of it, under your son's own hand, in this packet. His own hand indeed! His seal unbroken. But how—when—where—why was it kept so long, and how came it into your hands?"

*Absentee. Page 15.*

LONDON, PUBLISHED 1833, BY BALDWIN & CRADOCK, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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BY

MARIA EDGEWORTH.

VOL. V.

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*Absentee, P. 51.*

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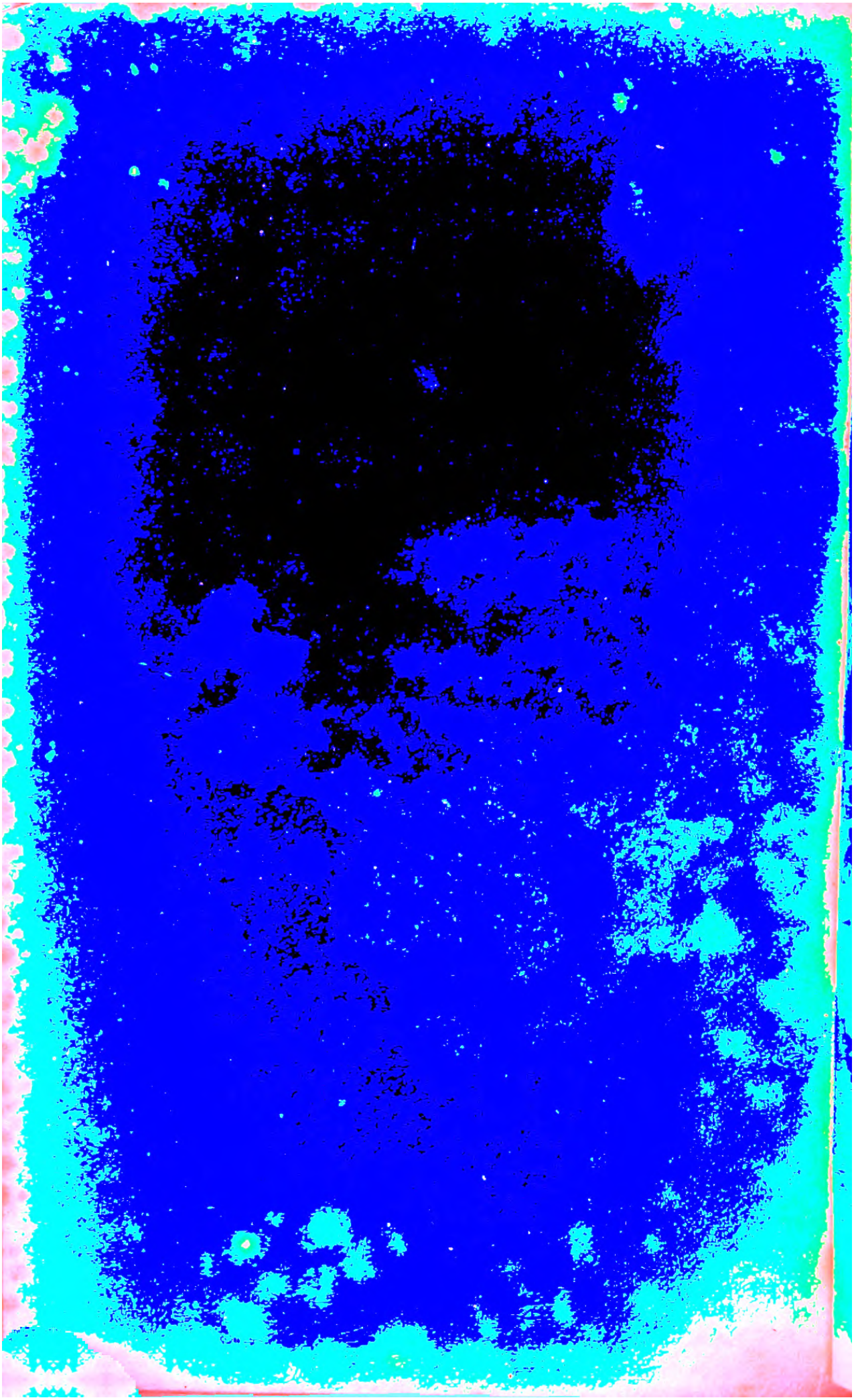

# TALES AND NOVELS

BY

## MARIA EDGEWORTH.

IN EIGHTEEN VOLUMES.

VOL. X.

CONTAINING

## TALES OF FASHIONABLE LIFE,

VOL. V.

AND

## THE MODERN GRISELDA.

*LONDON:*

PRINTED FOR BALDWIN AND CRADOCK;

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# THE ABSENTEE.

## CHAPTER XVI.

In what words of polite circumlocution, or of cautious diplomacy, shall we say, or hint, that the deceased ambassador's papers were found in shameful disorder. His excellency's executor, sir James Brooke, however, was indefatigable in his researches. He and lord Colambre spent two whole days in looking over portfolios of letters, and memorials, and manifestoes, and bundles of paper of the most heterogeneous sorts; some of them without any docket or direction to lead to a knowledge of their contents; others written upon in such a manner as to give an erroneous notion of their nature; so that it was necessary to untie every paper separately. At last, when they had opened, as they thought, every paper, and, wearied and in despair, were just on the point of giving up the search, lord Colambre spied a bundle of old newspapers at the bottom of a trunk.

"They are only old Vienna Gazettes; I looked at them," said sir James.

Lord Colambre, upon this assurance, was going to throw them into the trunk again; but observing that the bundle had not been untied, he opened it, and withinside of the newspapers he found a rough copy

of the ambassador's journal, and with it the packet, directed to Ralph Reynolds, sen., esq., Old Court, Suffolk, per favour of his excellency earl * * * * *— a note on the cover, signed O'Halloran, stating when received by him, and the date of the day when delivered to the ambassador—seals unbroken. Our hero was in such a transport of joy at the sight of this packet, and his friend sir James Brooke so full of his congratulations, that they forgot to curse the ambassador's carelessness, which had been the cause of so much evil.

The next thing to be done was to deliver the packet to Ralph Reynolds, Old Court, Suffolk. But when lord Colambre arrived at Old Court, Suffolk, he found all the gates locked, and no admittance to be had. At last an old woman came out of the porter's lodge, who said Mr. Reynolds was not there, and she could not say where he was. After our hero had opened her heart by the present of half a guinea, she explained, that she " could not *justly* say where he was, because that he never let any body of his own people know where he was any day; he had several different houses and places in different parts, and far off counties, and other shires, as she heard, and by times he was at one and by times at another. The names of two of the places, Toddrington and Little Wrestham, she knew; but there were others to which she could give no direction. He had houses in odd parts of London, too, that he let; and sometimes, when the lodgers' time was out, he would go, and be never heard of for a month, may be, in one of them. In short, there was no telling or saying where he

was or would be one day of the week, by where he had been the last."

When lord Colambre expressed some surprise that an old gentleman, as he conceived Mr. Ralph Reynolds to be, should change places so frequently, the old woman answered, "that though her master was a deal on the wrong side of seventy, and though, to look at him, you'd think he was glued to his chair, and would fall to pieces if he should stir out of it, yet he was as alert, and thought no more of going about, than if he was as young as the gentleman who was now speaking to her. It was old Mr. Reynolds's delight to come down and surprise his people at his different places, and see that they were keeping all tight."

"What sort of a man is he?—Is he a miser?" said lord Colambre.

"He is a miser, and he is not a miser," said the woman. "Now he'd think as much of the waste of a penny as another man would of a hundred pounds, and yet he would give a hundred pounds easier than another would give a penny, when he's in the humour. But his humour is very odd, and there's no knowing where to have him; he's cross-grained, and more *positiver*-like than a mule; and his deafness made him worse in this, because he never heard what nobody said, but would say on his own way—he was very *odd*, but not *cracked*—no, he was as clear-headed, when he took a thing the right way, as any man could be, and as clever, and could talk as well as any member of parliament—and good-natured, and kind-hearted, where he would take a fancy—

but then, may be, it would be to a dog (he was remarkable fond of dogs), or a cat, or a rat, even, that he would take a fancy, and think more of 'em than he would of a Christian. But, poor gentleman, there's great allowance," said she, " to be made for him, that lost his son and heir—that would have been heir to all, and a fine youth that he doted upon. But," continued the old woman, in whose mind the transitions from great to little, from serious to trivial, were ludicrously abrupt, " that was no reason why the old gentleman should scold me last time he was here, as he did, for as long as ever he could stand over me, only because I killed a mouse who was eating my cheese; and, before night, he beat a boy for stealing a piece of that same cheese; and he would never, when down here, let me set a mouse-trap."

" Well, my good woman," interrupted lord Colambre, who was little interested in this affair of the mouse-trap, and nowise curious to learn more of Mr. Reynolds's domestic economy, " I'll not trouble you any farther, if you can be so good as to tell me the road to Toddrington, or to Little Wickham, I think you call it."

" Little Wickham!" repeated the woman, laughing—" Bless you, sir, where do you come from?—It's Little Wrestham: sure every body knows, near Lantry; and keep the *pike* till you come to the turn at Rotherford, and then you strike off into the by-road to the left, and then turn again at the ford to the right. But, if you are going to Toddrington, you don't go the road to market, which is at the first

turn to the left, and the cross country road, where there's no quarter, and Toddrington lies—but for Wrestham, you take the road to market."

It was some time before our hero could persuade the old woman to stick to Little Wrestham, or to Toddrington, and not to mix the directions for the different roads together—he took patience, for his impatience only confused his director the more. In process of time he made out, and wrote down, the various turns that he was to follow, to reach Little Wrestham; but no human power could get her from Little Wrestham to Toddrington, though she knew the road perfectly well; but she had, for the seventeen last years, been used to go "the other road," and all the carriers went that way, and passed the door, and that was all she could certify.

Little Wrestham, after turning to the left and right as often as his directory required, our hero happily reached: but, unhappily, he found no Mr. Reynolds there; only a steward, who gave nearly the same account of his master as had been given by the old woman, and could not guess even where the gentleman might now be. Toddrington was as likely as any place—but he could not say.

"Perseverance against fortune." To Toddrington our hero proceeded, through cross country roads—such roads!—very different from the Irish roads. Waggon ruts, into which the carriage wheels sunk nearly to the nave—and, from time to time, "sloughs of despond," through which it seemed impossible to drag, walk, wade, or swim, and all the time with a

sulky postilion. "O, how unlike my Larry!" thought lord Colambre.

At length, in a very narrow lane, going up a hill, said to be two miles of ascent, they overtook a heavy laden waggon, and they were obliged to go step by step behind it, whilst, enjoying the gentleman's impatience much, and the postilion's sulkiness more, the waggoner, in his embroidered frock, walked in state, with his long sceptre in his hand.

The postilion muttered "curses not loud, but deep." Deep or loud, no purpose would they have answered; the waggoner's temper was proof against curse in or out of the English language; and from their snail's pace neither *Dickens*, nor devil, nor any postilion in England could make him put his horses. Lord Colambre jumped out of the chaise, and, walking beside him, began to talk to him; and spoke of his horses, their bells, their trappings; the beauty and strength of the thill-horse—the value of the whole team, which his lordship happening to guess right within ten pounds, and showing, moreever, some skill about road-making and waggon-wheels, and being fortunately of the waggoner's own opinion in the great question about conical and cylindrical rims, he was pleased with the young chap of a gentleman; and, in spite of the chuffiness of his appearance and churlishness of his speech, this waggoner's bosom being "made of penetrable stuff," he determined to let the gentleman pass. Accordingly, when half way up the hill, and the head of the fore-horse came near an open gate, the waggoner, without

saying one word or turning his head, touched the horse with his long whip—and the horse turned in at the gate, and then came, "Dobbin!—Jeho!" and strange calls and sounds, which all the other horses of the team obeyed; and the waggon turned into the farm-yard.

"Now, master! while I turn, you may pass."

The covering of the waggon caught in the hedge as the waggon turned in; and as the sacking was drawn back, some of the packages were disturbed—a cheese was just rolling off on the side next lord Colambre; he stopped it from falling: the direction caught his quick eye—"To Ralph Reynolds, esq."—"*Toddrington*" scratched out; "Red Lion Square, London," written in another hand below.

"Now I have found him! And surely I know that hand!" said lord Colambre to himself, looking more closely at the direction.

The original direction was certainly in a hand-writing well known to him—it was lady Dashfort's.

"That there cheese, that you're looking at so cur'ously," said the waggoner, "has been a great traveller; for it came all the way down from Lon'on, and now it's going all the way up again back, on account of not finding the gentleman at home; and the man that booked it told me as how it came from foreign parts."

Lord Colambre took down the direction, tossed the honest waggoner a guinea, wished him good night, passed, and went on. As soon as he could, he turned into the London road—at the first town, got a place in the mail—reached London—saw his father

—went directly to his friend, count O'Halloran, who was delighted when he beheld the packet. Lord Colambre was extremely eager to go immediately to old Reynolds, fatigued as he was; for he had travelled night and day, and had scarcely allowed himself, mind or body, one moment's repose.

"Heroes must sleep, and lovers too; or they soon will cease to be heroes or lovers!" said the count. "Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! this night; and to-morrow morning we'll finish the adventures in Red Lion Square, or I will accompany you when and where you will; if necessary, to earth's remotest bounds."

The next morning lord Colambre went to breakfast with the count. The count, who was not in love, was not up, for our hero was half an hour earlier than the time appointed. The old servant Ulick, who had attended his master to England, was very glad to see lord Colambre gain, and, showing him into the breakfast parlour, could not help saying, in defence of his master's punctuality, "Your clocks, I suppose, my lord, are half an hour faster than ours: my master will be ready to the moment."

The count soon appeared—breakfast was soon over, and the carriage at the door; for the count sympathised in his young friend's impatience. As they were setting out, the count's large Irish dog pushed out of the house door to follow them; and his master would have forbidden him, but lord Colambre begged that he might be permitted to accompany them; for his lordship recollected the old woman's having mentioned that Mr. Reynolds was fond of dogs.

They arrived in Red Lion Square, found the house of Mr. Reynolds, and, contrary to the count's prognostics, found the old gentleman up, and they saw him in his red night-cap at his parlour window. After some minutes' running backwards and forwards of a boy in the passage, and two or three peeps taken over the blinds by the old gentleman, they were admitted.

The boy could not master their names; so they were obliged reciprocally to announce themselves—"Count O'Halloran, and lord Colambre." The names seemed to make no impression on the old gentleman; but he deliberately looked at the count and his lordship, as if studying *what* rather than *who* they were. In spite of the red night-cap, and a flowered dressing-gown, Mr. Reynolds looked like a gentleman, an odd gentleman—but still a gentleman.

As count O'Halloran came into the room, and as his large dog attempted to follow, the count's look expressed—

"Say, shall I let him in, or shut the door?"

"O, let him in, by all means, sir, if you please! I am fond of dogs; and a finer one I never saw: pray, gentlemen, be seated," said he—a portion of the complacency, inspired by the sight of the dog, diffusing itself over his manner towards the master of so fine an animal, and even extending to the master's companion, though in an inferior degree. Whilst Mr. Reynolds stroked the dog, the count told him that "the dog was of a curious breed, now almost

extinct—the Irish greyhound; only one nobleman in Ireland, it is said, has a few of the species remaining in his possession——Now, lie down, Hannibal," said the count. "Mr. Reynolds, we have taken the liberty, though strangers, of waiting upon you——"

"I beg your pardon, sir," interrupted Mr. Reynolds; "but did I understand you rightly, that a few of the same species are still to be had from one nobleman in Ireland? Pray, what is his name?" said he, taking out his pencil.

The count wrote the name for him, but observed, that "he had asserted only that a few of these dogs remained in the possession of that nobleman; he could not answer for it that they were *to be had.*"

"O, I have ways and means," said old Reynolds; and, rapping his snuff-box, and talking, as it was his custom, loud to himself, "Lady Dashfort knows all those Irish lords: she shall get one for me—ay! ay!"

Count O'Halloran replied, as if the words had been addressed to him, "Lady Dashfort is in England."

"I know it, sir; she is in London," said Mr. Reynolds, hastily. "What do you know of her?"

"I know, sir, that she is not likely to return to Ireland, and that I am; and so is my young friend here: and if the thing can be accomplished, we will get it done for you."

Lord Colambre joined in this promise, and added, that, "if the dog could be obtained, he would undertake to have him safely sent over to England."

"Sir—gentlemen! I'm much obliged; that is,

when you have done the thing I shall be much obliged. But, may be, you are only making me civil speeches!"

"Of that, sir," said the count, smiling with much temper, "your own sagacity and knowledge of the world must enable you to judge."

"For my own part, I can only say," cried lord Colambre, "that I am not in the habit of being reproached with saying one thing and meaning another."

"Hot! I see," said old Reynolds, nodding as he looked at lord Colambre: "Cool!" added he, nodding at the count. "But a time for every thing; I was hot once: both answers good for their ages."

This speech lord Colambre and the count tacitly agreed to consider as another *apart*, which they were not to hear, or seem to hear. The count began again on the business of their visit, as he saw that lord Colambre was boiling with impatience, and feared that he should *boil over*, and spoil all. The count commenced with, "Mr. Reynolds, your name sounds to me like the name of a friend; for I had once a friend of that name: I once had the pleasure (and a very great pleasure it was to me) to be intimately acquainted abroad, on the continent, with a very amiable and gallant youth—your son!"

"Take care, sir," said the old man, starting up from his chair, and instantly sinking down again, "take care! Don't mention him to me—unless you would strike me dead on the spot!"

The convulsed motions of his fingers and face worked for some moments; whilst the count and

lord Colambre, much shocked and alarmed, stood in silence.

The convulsed motions ceased; and the old man unbuttoned his waistcoat, as if to relieve some sense of oppression; uncovered his gray hairs; and, after leaning back to rest himself, with his eyes fixed, and in reverie for a few moments, he sat upright, again in his chair, and exclaimed, as he looked round, "Son!—Did not somebody say that word? Who is so cruel to say that word before me? Nobody has ever spoken of him to me—but once, since his death! Do you know," sir, said he, fixing his eyes on count O'Halloran, and laying his cold hand on him, "do you know where he was buried, I ask you, sir? do you remember how he died?"

"Too well! too well!" cried the count, so much affected as to be scarcely able to pronounce the words; "he died in my arms: I buried him myself!"

"Impossible!" cried Mr. Reynolds. "Why do you say so, sir?" said he, studying the count's face with a sort of bewildered earnestness. "Impossible! His body was sent over to me in a lead coffin; and I saw it—and I was asked——and I answered, 'in the family vault.' But the shock is over," said he: "and, gentlemen, if the business of your visit relates to that subject, I trust I am now sufficiently composed to attend to you. Indeed, I ought to be prepared; for I had reason, for years, to expect the stroke; and yet, when it came, it seemed sudden!—it stunned me—put an end to all my worldly prospects—left me childless, without a single descendant,

or relation near enough to be dear to me! I am an insulated being!"

"No, sir, you are not an insulated being," said lord Colambre: "you have a near relation, who will, who must be dear to you; who will make you amends for all you have lost, all you have suffered—who will bring peace and joy to your heart: you have a grand-daughter.

"No, sir; I have no grand-daughter," said old Reynolds, his face and whole form becoming rigid with the expression of obstinacy. "Rather have no descendant, than be forced to acknowlege an illegitimate child."

"My lord, I entreat as a friend—I command you to be patient," said the count, who saw lord Colambre's indignation suddenly rise.

"So, then, this is the purpose of your visit," continued old Reynolds: "and you come from my enemies, from the St. Omars, and you are in a league with them," continued old Reynolds: "and all this time it is of my eldest son you have been talking."

"Yes, sir," replied the count; "of captain Reynolds, who fell in battle, in the Austrian service, about nineteen years ago—a more gallant and amiable youth never lived."

Pleasure revived through the dull look of obstinacy in the father's eyes.

"He was, as you say, sir, a gallant, an amiable youth, once—and he was my pride, and I loved him, too, once—but did not you know I had another?"

"No, sir, we did not—we are, you may perceive, totally ignorant of your family and of your affairs—

we have no connection whatever or knowledge of any of the St. Omars."

"I detest the sound of the name," cried lord Colambre.

"O good! good!—Well! well! I beg your pardon, gentlemen, a thousand times—I am a hasty, very hasty old man; but I have been harassed, persecuted, hunted by wretches, who got a scent of my gold; often in my rage I longed to throw my treasure-bags to my pursuers, and bid them leave me to die in peace. You have feelings, I see, both of you, gentlemen; excuse, and bear with my temper."

"Bear with you! Much enforced, the best tempers will emit a hasty spark," said the count, looking at lord Colambre, who was now cool again; and who, with a countenance full of compassion, sat with his eyes fixed upon the poor—no, not the poor, but the unhappy old man.

"Yes, I had another son," continued Mr. Reynolds, "and on him all my affections concentrated when I lost my eldest, and for him I desired to preserve the estate which his mother brought into the family. Since you know nothing of my affairs, let me explain to you: that estate was so settled, that it would have gone to the child, even the daughter of my eldest son, if there had been a legitimate child. But I knew there was no marriage, and I held out firm to my opinion. 'If there was a marriage,' said I, 'show me the marriage certificate, and I will acknowlege the marriage, and acknowledge the child:' but they could not, and I knew they could not; and I kept the estate for my darling boy," cried the old

gentleman, with the exultation of successful positiveness again appearing strong in his physiognomy: but, suddenly changing and relaxing, his countenance fell, and he added, "But now I have no darling boy. What use all!—all must go to the heir at law, or I must will it to a stranger—a lady of quality, who has just found out she is my relation—God knows how! I'm no genealogist—and sends me Irish cheese, and Iceland moss, for my breakfast, and her waiting gentlewoman to namby-pamby me. O, I'm sick of it all—see through it—wish I was blind—wish I had a hiding-place, where flatterers could not find me—pursued, chased—must change my lodgings again to-morrow—will, will——I beg your pardon, gentlemen, again: you were going to tell me, sir, something more of my eldest son; and how I was led away from the subject, I don't know; but I meant only to have assured you that his memory was dear to me, till I was so tormented about that unfortunate affair of his pretended marriage, that at length I hated to hear him named; but the heir at law, at last, will triumph over me."

"No, my good sir, not if you triumph over yourself, and do justice," cried lord Colambre; "if you listen to the truth, which my friend will tell you, and if you will read and believe the confirmation of it, under your son's own hand, in this packet."

"His own hand indeed! His seal—unbroken. But how—when—where—why was it kept so long, and how came it into your hands?"

Count O'Halloran told Mr. Reynolds that the

packet had been given to him by captain Reynolds on his death-bed; related the dying acknowledgment which captain Reynolds had made of his marriage; and gave an account of the delivery of the packet to the ambassador, who had promised to transmit it faithfully. Lord Colambre told the manner in which it had been mislaid, and at last recovered from among the deceased ambassador's papers. The father still gazed at the direction, and re-examined the seals.

"My son's hand-writing—my son's seals! But where is the certificate of the marriage?" repeated he; "if it is withinside of this packet, I have done great *in*——but I am convinced it never was a marriage. Yet I wish now it could be proved—only, in that case, I have for years done great——"

"Won't you open the packet, sir?" said lord Colambre.

Mr. Reynolds looked up at him with a look that said, "I don't clearly know what interest you have in all this." But, unable to speak, and his hands trembling so that he could scarcely break the seals, he tore off the cover, laid the papers before him, sat down, and took breath. Lord Colambre, however impatient, had now too much humanity to hurry the old gentleman: he only ran for the spectacles, which he espied on the chimney-piece, rubbed them bright, and held them ready. Mr. Reynolds stretched his hand out for them, put them on, and the first paper he opened was the certificate of the marriage: he read it aloud, and, putting it down, said, "Now I acknowledge the marriage. I always said, if there

is a marriage there must be a certificate. And you see now there is a certificate—I acknowledge the marriage."

"And now," cried lord Colambre, "I am happy, positively happy. Acknowledge your grand-daughter, sir—acknowledge miss Nugent."

"Acknowledge whom, sir?"

"Acknowledge miss Reynolds — your grand-daughter; I ask no more—do what you will with your fortune."

"O, now I understand—I begin to understand this young gentleman is in love—but where is my grand-daughter? how shall I know she is my grand-daughter? I have not heard of her since she was an infant—I forgot her existence—I have done her great injustice."

"She knows nothing of it, sir," said lord Colambre, who now entered into a full explanation of miss Nugent's history, and of her connexion with his family, and of his own attachment to her; concluding the whole by assuring Mr. Reynolds that his grand-daughter had every virtue under heaven. "And as to your fortune, sir, I know that she will, as I do, say——"

"No matter what she will say," interrupted old Reynolds; "where is she? When I see her, I shall hear what she says. Tell me where she is—let me see her. I long to see whether there is any likeness to her poor father. Where is she? Let me see her immediately."

"She is one hundred and sixty miles off, sir, at Buxton."

"Well, my lord, and what is a hundred and sixty miles? I suppose you think I can't stir from my chair, but you are mistaken. I think nothing of a journey of a hundred and sixty miles—I am ready to set off to-morrow—this instant."

Lord Colambre said, that he was sure miss Reynolds would obey her grandfather's slightest summons, as it was her duty to do, and would be with him as soon as possible, if this would be more agreeable to him. "I will write to her instantly," said his lordship, "if you will commission me."

"No, my lord, I do not commission—I will go—I think nothing, I say, of a journey of a hundred and sixty miles—I'll go—and set out to-morrow morning."

Lord Colambre and the count, perfectly satisfied with the result of their visit, now thought it best to leave old Reynolds at liberty to rest himself, after so many strong and varied feelings. They paid their parting compliments, settled the time for the next day's journey, and were just going to quit the room, when lord Colambre heard in the passage a well-known voice—the voice of Mrs. Petito.

"O, no, my lady Dashfort's best compliments, and I will call again."

"No, no," cried old Reynolds, pulling his bell; "I'll have no calling again—I'll be hanged if I do! Let her in now, and I'll see her—Jack! let in that woman now or never."

"The lady's gone, sir, out of the street door."

"After her, then—now or never, tell her."

"Sir, she was in a hackney coach."

Old Reynolds jumped up, and went to the window himself, and, seeing the hackney coachman just turning, beckoned at the window, and Mrs. Petito was set down again, and ushered in by Jack, who announced her as, "the lady, sir." The only lady he had seen in that house.

"My dear Mr. Reynolds, I'm so obliged to you for letting me in," cried Mrs. Petito, adjusting her shawl in the passage, and speaking in a voice and manner well mimicked after her betters. "You are so very good and kind, and I am so much obliged to you."

"You are not obliged to me, and I am neither good nor kind," said old Reynolds.

"You strange man," said Mrs. Petito, advancing graceful in shawl drapery; but she stopped short. "My lord Colambre and count O'Halloran, as I hope to be saved!"

"I did not know Mrs. Petito was an acquaintance of yours, gentlemen," said Mr. Reynolds, smiling shrewdly.

Count O'Halloran was too polite to deny his acquaintance with a lady who challenged it by thus naming him; but he had not the slightest recollection of her, though it seems he had met her on the stairs when he visited lady Dashfort at Killpatrickstown. Lord Colambre was "indeed *undeniably an old acquaintance:*" and as soon as she had recovered from her first natural start and vulgar exclamation, she with very easy familiarity hoped "my lady Clonbrony, and my lord, and miss Nugent, and all her friends in the family, were well;" and said, "she did not know whether she was to congratulate

his lordship or not upon miss Broadhurst, my lady Berryl's marriage, but she should soon have to hope for his lordship's congratulations for another marriage in *her* present family—lady Isabel to colonel Heathcock, who was come in for a large *portion*, and they are buying the wedding clothes—sights of clothes—and the di'monds, this day; and lady Dashfort and my lady Isabel sent me especially, sir, to you, Mr. Reynolds, and to tell you, sir, before any body else; and to hope the cheese *come* safe up again at last; and to ask whether the Iceland moss agrees with your chocolate, and is palatable? it's the most *diluent* thing upon the universal earth, and the most *tonic* and fashionable—the duchess of Torcaster takes it always for breakfast, and lady St. James too is quite a convert, and I hear the duke of V * * * takes it too."

"And the devil may take it too, for any thing that I care," said old Reynolds.

"O, my dear, dear sir! you are so refractory a patient."

"I am no patient at all, ma'am, and have no patience either: I am as well as you are, or my lady Dashfort either, and hope, God willing, long to continue so."

Mrs. Petito smiled aside at lord Colambre, to mark her perception of the man's strangeness. Then, in a cajoling voice, addressing herself to the old gentleman, "Long, long, I hope, to continue so, if Heaven grants my daily and nightly prayers, and my lady Dashfort's also. So, Mr. Reynolds, if the ladies' prayers are of any avail, you ought to be

purely, and I suppose ladies' prayers have the precedency in efficacy. But it was not of prayers and death-bed affairs I came commissioned to treat—but of weddings my diplomacy was to speak: and to premise my lady Dashfort would have come herself in her carriage, but is hurried out of her senses, and my lady Isabel could not in proper modesty; so they sent me as their *double*, to hope you, my dear Mr. Reynolds, who is one of the family relations, will honour the wedding with your presence."

"It would be no honour, and they know that as well as I do," said the intractable Mr. Reynolds. "It will be no advantage, either; but that they do not know as well as I do. Mrs. Petito, to save you and your lady all trouble about me in future, please to let my lady Dashfort know that I have just received and read the certificate of my son captain Reynolds's marriage with miss St. Omar. I have acknowledged the marriage. Better late than never; and to-morrow morning, God willing, shall set out with this young nobleman for Buxton, where I hope to see, and intend publicly to acknowledge, my grand-daughter—provided she will acknowledge me."

"*Crimini!*" exclaimed Mrs. Petito, "what new turns are here? Well, sir, I shall tell my lady of the *metamorphoses* that have taken place, though by what magic I can't guess. But, since it seems annoying and inopportune, I shall make my *finale*, and shall thus leave a verbal P.P.C.—as you are leaving town, it seems, for Buxton so early in the morning. My lord Colambre, if I see rightly into a millstone, as I hope and believe I do on the present occasion, I

have to congratulate your lordship (haven't I?) upon something like a succession, or a windfall, in this *denewment.* And I beg you'll make my humble respects acceptable to the *ci-devant* miss Grace Nugent that was; and I won't *derrogate* her by any other name in the interregnum, as I am persuaded it will only be a temporary name, scarce worth assuming, except for the honour of the public adoption; and that will, I'm confident, be soon exchanged for a viscount's title, or I have no sagacity or sympathy. I hope I don't (pray don't let me) put you to the blush, my lord."

Lord Colambre would not have let her, if he could have helped it.

"Count O'Halloran, your most obedient! I had the honour of meeting you at Killpatricks-town," said Mrs. Petito, backing to the door, and twitching her shawl. She stumbled, nearly fell down, over the large dog—caught by the door, and recovered herself—Hannibal rose and shook his ears. "Poor fellow! you are of my acquaintance, too." She would have stroked his head; but Hannibal walked off indignant, and so did she.

Thus ended certain hopes: for Mrs. Petito had conceived that her *diplomacy* might be turned to account; that in her character of an ambassadress, as lady Dashfort's double, by the aid of Iceland moss in chocolate, of flattery properly administered, and of bearing with all her *dear* Mr. Reynolds's *oddnesses* and *roughnesses*, she might in time—that is to say, before he made a new will—become his dear Mrs. Petito; or (for stranger things have happened and

do happen every day), his dear Mrs. Reynolds! Mrs. Petito, however, was good at a retreat; and she flattered herself that at least nothing of this underplot had appeared: and at all events she secured, by her services in this embassy, the long looked-for object of her ambition, lady Dashfort's scarlet velvet gown—"not yet a thread the worse for the wear!" One cordial look at this comforted her for the loss of her expected *octogenaire;* and she proceeded to discomfit her lady, by repeating the message with which strange old Mr. Reynolds had charged her. So ended all lady Dashfort's hopes of his fortune.

Since the death of his youngest son, she had been indefatigable in her attentions, and sanguine in her hopes: the disappointment affected both her interest and her pride, as an *intrigante.* It was necessary, however, to keep her feelings to herself; for if Heathcock should hear any thing of the matter before the articles were signed, he might "be off!"—so she put him and lady Isabel into her coach directly—drove to Rundell and Bridges', to make sure at all events of the jewels.

In the mean time count O'Halloran and lord Colambre, delighted with the result of their visit, took leave of Mr. Reynolds, after having arranged the journey, and appointed the hour for setting off the next day. Lord Colambre proposed to call upon Mr. Reynolds in the evening, and introduce his father, lord Clonbrony; but Mr. Reynolds said, "No, no! I'm not ceremonious. I have given you proofs enough of that, I think, in the short time we've been already acquainted. Time enough to introduce your

father to me when we are in a carriage, going our journey: then we can talk, and get acquainted: but merely to come this evening in a hurry, and say, 'Lord Clonbrony, Mr. Reynolds;—Mr. Reynolds, lord Clonbrony'—and then bob our two heads at one another, and scrape one foot back, and away!—where's the use of that nonsense at my time of life, or at any time of life? No, no! we have enough to do without that, I dare say.——Good morning to you, count O'Halloran! I thank you heartily. From the first moment I saw you, I liked you: lucky too, that you brought your dog with you! 'Twas Hannibal made me first let you in; I saw him over the top of the blind. Hannibal, my good fellow! I'm more obliged to you than you can guess."

"So are we all," said lord Colambre.

Hannibal was well patted, and then they parted. In returning home they met sir James Brooke.

"I told you," said sir James, "I should be in London almost as soon as you. Have you found old Reynolds?"

"Just come from him."

"How does your business prosper? I hope as well as mine."

A history of all that had passed up to the present moment was given, and hearty congratulations received.

"Where are you going now, sir James?—cannot you come with us?" said lord Colambre and the count.

"Impossible," replied sir James;—"but, perhaps, you can come with me—I'm going to Rundell and

Bridges', to give some old family diamonds either to be new set or exchanged. Count O'Halloran, I know you are a judge of these things; pray come and give me your opinion."

"Better consult your bride elect!" said the count.

"No; she knows little of the matter—and cares less," replied sir James.

"Not so this bride elect, or I mistake her much," said the count, as they passed by the window, at Rundell and Bridges', and saw lady Isabel, who with lady Dashfort, had been holding consultation deep with the jeweller; and Heathcock, playing *personage muet.*

Lady Dashfort, who had always, as old Reynolds expressed it, "her head upon her shoulders,"—presence of mind where her interests were concerned, ran to the door before the count and lord Colambre could enter, giving a hand to each—as if they had all parted the best friends in the world.

"How do? how do?—Give you joy! give me joy! and all that. But mind! not a word," said she, laying her finger upon her lips, "not a word before Heathcock of old Reynolds, or of the best part of the old fool—his fortune!"

The gentlemen bowed, in sign of submission to her ladyship's commands; and comprehended that she feared Heathcock might *be off*, if the best part of his bride (her fortune, or her *expectations*) were lowered in value or in prospect.

"How low is she reduced," whispered lord Colambre, "when such a husband is thought a prize—and to be secured by a manœuvre!" He sighed.

"Spare that generous sigh!" said sir James Brooke: "it is wasted."

Lady Isabel, as they approached, turned from a mirror, at which she was trying on a diamond crescent. Her face clouded at the sight of count O'Halloran and lord Colambre, and grew dark as hatred when she saw sir James Brooke. She walked away to the farther end of the shop, and asked one of the shopmen the price of a diamond necklace, which lay upon the counter.

The man said he really did not know; it belonged to lady Oranmore; it had just been new set for one of her ladyship's daughters, "who is going to be married to sir James Brooke—one of the gentlemen, my lady, who are just come in."

Then, calling to his master, he asked him the price of the necklace: he named the value, which was considerable.

"I really thought lady Oranmore and her daughters were vastly too philosophical to think of diamonds," said lady Isabel to her mother, with a sort of sentimental sneer in her voice and countenance. "But it is some comfort to me to find, in these pattern-women, philosophy and love do not so wholly engross the heart, that they

'Feel every vanity in fondness lost.'"

"'Twould be difficult, in some cases," thought many present.

"'Pon honour, di'monds are cursed expensive things, I know!" said Heathcock. "But, be that as it may," whispered he to the lady, though loud

enough to be heard by others, "I've laid a damned round wager, that no woman's diamonds married this winter, under a countess, in Lon'on, shall eclipse lady Isabel Heathcock's! and Mr. Rundell here's to be judge."

Lady Isabel paid for this promise one of her sweetest smiles; one of those smiles which she had formerly bestowed upon lord Colambre, and which he had once fancied expressed so much sensibility—such discriminative and delicate penetration.

Our hero felt so much contempt, that he never wasted another sigh of pity for her degradation. Lady Dashfort came up to him as he was standing alone; and, whilst the count and sir James were settling about the diamonds, "My lord Colambre," said she, in a low voice, "I know your thoughts, and I could moralize as well as you, if I did not prefer laughing—you are right enough; and so am I, and so is Isabel; we are all right. For look here: women have not always the liberty of choice, and therefore they can't be expected to have always the power of refusal."

The mother, satisfied with her convenient optimism, got into her carriage with her daughter, her daughter's diamonds, and her precious son-in-law, her daughter's companion for life.

"The more I see," said count O'Halloran to lord Colambre, as they left the shop, "the more I find reason to congratulate you upon your escape, my dear lord."

"I owe it not to my own wit or wisdom," said lord Colambre; "but much to love, and much to

friendship," added he, turning to sir James Brooke: "here was the friend who early warned me against the siren's voice; who, before I knew the lady Isabel, told me what I have since found to be true, that

> 'Two passions alternately govern her fate—
> Her business is love, but her pleasure is hate.'"

"That is dreadfully severe, sir James," said count O'Halloran; "but, I am afraid, is just."

"I am sure it is just, or I would not have said it," replied sir James Brooke. "For the foibles of the sex, I hope, I have as much indulgence as any man, and for the errors of passion as much pity; but I cannot repress the indignation, the abhorrence I feel against women cold and vain, who use their wit and their charms only to make others miserable."

Lord Colambre recollected at this moment lady Isabel's look and voice, when she declared that she would let her little finger be cut off to purchase the pleasure of inflicting on lady de Cressy, for one hour, the torture of jealousy.

"Perhaps," continued sir James Brooke, "now that I am going to marry into an Irish family, I may feel, with peculiar energy, disapprobation of this mother and daughter on another account; but you, lord Colambre, will do me the justice to recollect, that before I had any personal interest in the country, I expressed, as a general friend to Ireland, antipathy to those who return the hospitality they received from a warm-hearted people, by publicly setting the example of elegant sentimental hypocrisy, or daring disregard of decorum, by privately endea-

vouring to destroy the domestic peace of families, on which, at last, public as well as private virtue and happiness depend. I do rejoice, my dear lord Colambre, to hear you say that I had any share in saving you from the siren; and now I will never speak of these ladies more. I am sorry you cannot stay in town to see—but why should I be sorry—we shall meet again, I trust, and I shall introduce you; and you, I hope, will introduce me to a very different charmer. Farewell!—you have my warm good wishes, wherever you go."

Sir James turned off quickly to the street in which lady Oranmore lived, and lord Colambre had not time to tell him that he knew and admired his intended bride. Count O'Halloran promised to do this for him.

"And now," said the good count, "I am to take leave of you; and I assure you I do it with so much reluctance, that nothing less than positive engagements to stay in town would prevent me from setting off with you to-morrow; but I shall be soon, very soon, at liberty to return to Ireland; and Clonbrony Castle, if you will give me leave, I will see before I see Halloran Castle."

Lord Colambre joyfully thanked his friend for this promise.

"Nay, it is to indulge myself. I long to see you happy—long to behold the choice of such a heart as yours. Pray do not steal a march upon me—let me know in time. I will leave every thing—even my friend the minister's secret expedition—for your wedding. But I trust I shall be in time."

"Assuredly you will, my dear count; if ever that wedding——"

"*If*," repeated the count.

"*If*," repeated lord Colambre. "Obstacles which, when we last parted, appeared to me invincible, prevented my having ever even attempted to make an impression on the heart of the woman I love; and if you knew her, count, as well as I do, you would know that her love could 'not unsought be won.'"

"Of that I cannot doubt, or she would not be your choice; but when her love is sought, we have every reason to hope," said the count, smiling, "that it may, because it ought to be, won by tried honour and affection. I only require to be left in hope."

"Well, I leave you hope," said lord Colambre: "Miss Nugent—miss Reynolds, I should say, has been in the habit of considering a union with me as impossible; my mother early instilled this idea into her mind. Miss Nugent thought that duty forbad her to think of me; she told me so: I have seen it in all her conduct and manners. The barriers of habit, the ideas of duty, cannot, ought not, to be thrown down, or suddenly changed, in a well-regulated female mind. And you, I am sure, know enough of the best female hearts, to be aware that time——"

"Well, well, let this dear good charmer take her own time, provided there's none given to affectation, or prudery, or coquetry; and from all these, of course, she must be free; and of course I must be content. Adieu."

## CHAPTER XVII.

As lord Colambre was returning home, he was overtaken by sir Terence O'Fay.

"Well, my lord," cried sir Terence, out of breath, "you have led me a pretty dance all over the town: here's a letter somewhere down in my safe pocket for you, which has cost me trouble enough. Phoo! where is it now?—it's from miss Nugent," said he, holding up the letter. The direction to Grosvenor-square, London, had been scratched out; and it had been redirected by sir Terence to the lord viscount Colambre, at sir James Brooke's, bart., Brookwood, Huntingdonshire, or elsewhere, with speed. "But the more haste the worse speed; for away it went to Brookwood, Huntingdonshire, where I knew, if any where, you was to be found; but, as fate and the post would have it, there the letter went coursing after you, while you were running round, and *back*, and forwards, and every where, I understand, to Toddrington and Wrestham, and where not, through all them English places, where there's no cross-post: so I took it for granted that it found its way to the dead-letter office, or was sticking up across a pane in the d—d post-master's window at Huntingdon, for the whole town to see, and it a love-letter, and some puppy to claim it, under false pretence; and you all the time without it, and it might breed a coolness betwixt you and miss Nugent."

"But, my dear sir Terence, give me the letter now you have me."

"O my dear lord, if you knew what a race I have had, missing you here by five minutes, and there by five seconds—but I have you at last, and you have it—and I'm paid this minute for all I liquidated of my substance, by the pleasure I have in seeing you crack the seal and read it. But take care you don't tumble over the orange woman—orange barrows are a great nuisance, when one's studying a letter in the streets of London, or the metropolis. But never heed; stick to my arm, and I'll guide you, like a blind man, safe through the thick of them."

Miss Nugent's letter, which lord Colambre read in spite of the jostling of passengers, and the incessant talking of sir Terence, was as follows:—

"Let me not be the cause of banishing you from your home and your country, where you would do so much good, and make so many happy. Let me not be the cause of your breaking your promise to your mother; of your disappointing my dear aunt os cruelly, who has complied with all our wishes, and who sacrifices, to oblige us, her favourite tastes. How could she be ever happy in Ireland—how could Clonbrony Castle be a home to her, without her son? If you take away all she had of amusement and *pleasure,* as it is called, are not you bound to give her, in their stead, that domestic happiness, which she can enjoy only with you, and by your means? If, instead of living with her, you go into the army, she will be in daily, nightly anxiety and alarm about you; and her son will, instead of being a comfort, be a source of torment to her.

"I will hope that you will do now, as you have always hitherto done, on every occasion where I have seen you act, what is right, and just, and kind. Come here on the day you promised my aunt you would; before that time I shall be in Cambridgeshire, with my friend lady Berryl; she is so good as to come to Buxton for me—I shall remain with her, instead of returning to Ireland. I have explained my reasons to my dear aunt——Could I have any concealment from her, to whom, from my earliest childhood, I owe every thing that kindness and affection could give? She is satisfied—she consents to my living henceforward with lady Berryl. Let me have the pleasure of seeing, by your conduct, that you approve of mine.

"Your affectionate cousin
"and friend,
"GRACE NUGENT."

This letter, as may be imagined by those who, like him, are capable of feeling honourable and generous conduct, gave our hero exquisite pleasure. Poor, good-natured sir Terence O'Fay enjoyed his lordship's delight; and forgot himself so completely, that he never even inquired whether lord Colambre had thought of an affair on which he had spoken to him some time before, and which materially concerned sir Terence's interest. The next morning, when the carriage was at the door, and sir Terence was just taking leave of his friend lord Clonbrony, and actually in tears, wishing them all manner of happiness, though he said there was none left now in

London, or the wide world, even, for him—lord Colambre went up to him, and said, "Sir Terence, you have never inquired whether I have done your business."

"O my dear, I'm not thinking of that now—time enough by the post—I can write after you; but my thoughts won't turn for me to business now—no matter."

"Your business is done," replied lord Colambre.

"Then I wonder how you could think of it, with all you had upon your mind and heart. When any thing's upon my heart, good morning to my head, it's not worth a lemon. Good bye to you, and thank you kindly, and all happiness attend you."

"Good bye to you, sir Terence O'Fay," said lord Clonbrony; "and, since it's so ordered, I must live without you."

"Oh! you'll live better without me, my lord; I am not a good liver, I know, nor the best of all companions, for a nobleman, young or old; and now you'll be rich, and not put to your shifts and your wits, what would I have to do for you?—Sir Terence O'Fay, you know, was only *the poor nobleman's friend,* and you'll never want to call upon him again, thanks to your jewel, your Pitt's-diamond of a son there. So we part here, and depend upon it you're better without me—that's all my comfort, or my heart would break. The carriage is waiting this long time, and this young lover's aching to be off. God bless you both!—that's my last word."

They called in Red Lion-square, punctual to the moment, on old Mr. Reynolds, but his window-shut-

ters were shut; he had been seized in the night with a violent fit of the gout, which, as he said, held him fast by the leg. "But here," said he, giving lord Colambre a letter, "here's what will do your business without me. Take this written acknowledgment I have penned for you, and give my grand-daughter her father's letter to read—it would touch a heart of stone—touched mine—wish I could drag the mother back out of her grave, to do her justice—all one now. You see, at last, I'm not a suspicious rascal, however, for I don't suspect you of palming a false grand-daughter upon me."

"Will you," said lord Colambre, "give your grand-daughter leave to come up to town to you, sir? You would satisfy yourself, at least, as to what resemblance she may bear to her father: miss Reynolds will come instantly, and she will nurse you."

"No, no; I won't have her come. If she comes, I won't see her—sha'n't begin by nursing me—not selfish. As soon as I get rid of this gout, I shall be my own man, and young again, and I'll soon be after you across the sea, that sha'n't stop me: I'll come to —what's the name of your place in Ireland?—and see what likeness I can find to her poor father in this grand-daughter of mine, that you puffed so finely yesterday. And let me see whether she will wheedle me as finely as Mrs. Petito would. Don't get ready your marriage settlements, do you hear, till you have seen my will, which I shall sign at—what's the name of your place? Write it down there; there's pen and

ink; and leave me, for the twinge is coming, and I shall roar."

"Will you permit me, sir, to leave my own servant with you to take care of you? I can answer for his attention and fidelity."

"Let me see his face, and I'll tell you."

Lord Colambre's servant was summoned.

"Yes, I like his face. God bless you!—Leave me."

Lord Colambre gave his servant a charge to bear with Mr. Reynolds's rough manner and temper, and to pay the poor old gentleman every possible attention. Then our hero proceeded with his father on his journey, and on this journey nothing happened worthy of note. On his first perusal of the letter from Grace, lord Colambre had feared that she would have left Buxton with lady Berryl before he could reach it; but, upon recollection, he hoped that the few lines he had written, addressed to his mother *and* miss Nugent, with the assurance that he should be with them on Wednesday, would be sufficient to show her that some great change had happened, and consequently sufficient to prevent her from quitting her aunt, till she could know whether such a separation would be necessary. He argued wisely, more wisely than Grace had reasoned; for, notwithstanding this note, she would have left Buxton before his arrival, but for lady Berryl's strength of mind, and positive determination not to set out with her till lord Colambre should arrive to explain. In the interval, poor Grace was, indeed, in an anxious state

of suspense; and her uncertainty, whether she was doing right or wrong, by staying to see lord Colambre, tormented her most.

"My dear, you cannot help yourself: be quiet," said lady Berryl: "I will take the whole upon my conscience; and I hope my conscience may never have any thing worse to answer for."

Grace was the first person who, from her window, saw lord Colambre, the instant the carriage drove to the door. She ran to her friend lady Berryl's apartment. "He is come!—Now, take me away!"

"Not yet, my sweet friend! Lie down upon this sofa, if you please; and keep yourself tranquil, whilst I go and see what you ought to do; and depend upon me for a true friend, in whose mind, as in your own, duty is the first object."

"I depend on you entirely," said Grace, sinking down on the sofa: "and you see I obey you!"

"Many thanks to you for lying down, when you can't stand."

Lady Berryl went to lord Clonbrony's apartment; she was met by sir Arthur. "Come, my love! come quick!—lord Colambre is arrived."

"I know it; and does he go to Ireland? Speak instantly, that I may tell Grace Nugent."

"You can tell her nothing yet, my love; for we know nothing. Lord Colambre will not say a word till you come; but I know, by his countenance, that he has good and extraordinary news."

They passed rapidly along the passage to lady Clonbrony's room.

"O my dear, dear lady Berryl, come! or I shall

die with impatience," cried lady Clonbrony, in a voice and manner between laughing and crying. "There, now you have congratulated, are very happy, and very glad, and all that—now, for mercy's sake, sit down, lord Clonbrony! for Heaven's sake, sit down—beside me here—or any where! Now, Colambre, begin; and tell us all at once!"

But as nothing is so tedious as a twice told tale, lord Colambre's narrative need not here be repeated. He began with count O'Halloran's visit, immediately after lady Clonbrony had left London; and went through the history of the discovery that captain Reynolds was the husband of miss St. Omar, and the father of Grace: the dying acknowledgment of his marriage; the packet delivered by count O'Halloran to the careless ambassador—how recovered, by the assistance of his executor, sir James Brooke; the travels from Wrestham to Toddrington, and thence to Red-Lion-square; the interview with old Reynolds, and its final result: all was related as succinctly as the impatient curiosity of lord Colambre's auditors could desire.

"O, wonder upon wonder! and joy upon joy!" cried lady Clonbrony. "So my darling Grace is as legitimate as I am, and an heiress after all. Where is she? where is she? In your room, lady Berryl?—O, Colambre! why wouldn't you let her be by?—Lady Berryl, do you know, he would not let me send for her, though she was the person of all others most concerned!"

"For that very reason, ma'am; and that lord Colambre was quite right, I am sure you must be sensi-

ble, when you recollect, that Grace has no idea that she is not the daughter of Mr. Nugent: she has no suspicion that the breath of blame ever lighted upon her mother. This part of the story cannot be announced to her with too much caution; and, indeed, her mind has been so much harassed and agitated, and she is at present so far from strong, that great delicacy——"

"True! very true, lady Berryl," interrupted lady Clonbrony; "and I'll be as delicate as you please about it afterwards: but, in the first and foremost place, I must tell her the best part of the story—that she's an heiress; that never killed any body!"

So, darting through all opposition, lady Clonbrony made her way into the room where Grace was lying —"Yes, get up! get up! my own Grace, and be surprised—well you may!—you are an heiress, after all."

"Am I, my dear aunt?" said Grace.

"True, as I'm lady Clonbrony—and a very great heiress—and no more Colambre's cousin than lady Berryl here. So now begin and love him as fast as you please—I give my consent—and here he is."

Lady Clonbrony turned to her son, who just appeared at the door.

"O mother! what have you done?"

"What have I done?" cried lady Clonbrony, following her son's eyes:—"Lord bless me!—Grace fainted dead—Lady Berryl! O, what have I done? My dear lady Berryl, what shall we do?"

Lady Berryl hastened to her friend's assistance.

"There! her colour's coming again," said lord

Clonbrony; "come away, my dear lady Clonbrony, for the present, and so will I—though I long to talk to the darling girl myself; but she is not equal to it yet."

When Grace came to herself, she first saw lady Berryl leaning over her, and, raising herself a little, she said, "What has happened?—I don't know yet —I don't know whether I am happy or not.—Explain all this to me, my dear friend; for I am still as if I were in a dream."

With all the delicacy which lady Clonbrony deemed superfluous, lady Berryl explained. Nothing could surpass the astonishment of Grace, on first learning that Mr. Nugent was not her father. When she was told of the stigma that had been cast on her birth; the suspicions, the disgrace, to which her mother had been subjected for so many years—that mother, whom she had so loved and respected; who had, with such care, instilled into the mind of her daughter the principles of virtue and religion; that mother whom Grace had always seen the example of every virtue she taught; on whom her daughter never suspected that the touch of blame, the breath of scandal, could rest—Grace could express her sensations only by repeating, in tones of astonishment, pathos, indignation—"My mother!—my mother!—my mother!"

For some time she was incapable of attending to any other idea, or of feeling any other sensations. When her mind was able to admit the thought, her friend soothed her, by recalling the expressions of lord Colambre's love—the struggle by which he had

been agitated, when he fancied a union with her opposed by an invincible obstacle.

Grace sighed, and acknowledged that, in prudence, it ought to have been an *invincible* obstacle—she admired the firmness of his decision, the honour with which he had acted towards her. One moment she exclaimed, "Then, if I had been the daughter of a mother who had conducted herself ill, he never would have trusted me!" The next moment she recollected, with pleasure, the joy she had just seen in his eyes—the affection, the passion, that spoke in every word and look; then dwelt upon the sober certainty, that all obstacles were removed. "And no duty opposes my loving him!—And my aunt wishes it! my kind aunt! and my dear uncle! should not I go to him?—But he is not my uncle, she is not my aunt. I cannot bring myself to think that they are not my relations, and that I am nothing to them."

"You may be every thing to them, my dear Grace," said lady Berryl:—"whenever you please, you may be their daughter."

Grace blushed, and smiled, and sighed, and was consoled. But then she recollected her new relation, Mr. Reynolds, her grandfather, whom she had never seen, who had for years disowned her—treated her mother with injustice. She could scarcely think of him with complacency: yet, when his age, his sufferings, his desolate state, were represented, she pitied him; and, faithful to her strong sense of duty, would have gone instantly to offer him every assistance and attention in her power. Lady Berryl assured her that Mr. Reynolds had positively forbidden her going

to him; and that he had assured lord Colambre he would not see her if she went to him. After such rapid and varied emotions, poor Grace desired repose, and her friend took care that it should be secured to her for the remainder of the day.

In the mean time, lord Clonbrony had kindly and judiciously employed his lady in a discussion about certain velvet furniture, which Grace had painted for the drawing-room at Clonbrony Castle.

In lady Clonbrony's mind, as in some bad paintings, there was no *keeping;* all objects, great and small, were upon the same level.

The moment her son entered the room, her ladyship exclaimed, "Every thing pleasant at once! Here's your father tells me, Grace's velvet furniture's all packed: really, Soho's the best man in the world of his kind, and the cleverest—and so, after all, my dear Colambre, as I always hoped and prophesied, at last you will marry an heiress."

"And Terry," said lord Clonbrony, "will win his wager from Mordicai."

"Terry!" repeated lady Clonbrony, "that odious Terry!—I hope, my lord, that he is not to be one of my comforts in Ireland."

"No, my dear mother; he is much better provided for than we could have expected. One of my father's first objects was to prevent him from being any encumbrance to you. We consulted him as to the means of making him happy; and the knight acknowledged that he had long been casting a sheep's eye at a little snug place, that will soon be open, in his native country—the chair of assistant barrister at

the sessions. 'Assistant barrister!' said my father; 'but, my dear Terry, you have been all your life evading the laws, and very frequently breaking the peace; do you think this has qualified you peculiarly for being a guardian of the laws?' Sir Terence replied, 'Yes, sure; set a thief to catch a thief is no bad maxim. And did not Mr. Colquhoun, the Scotchman, get himself made a great justice, by his making all the world as wise as himself, about thieves of all sorts, by land and by water, and in the air too, where he detected the mud-larks?—And is not Barrington chief-justice of Botany Bay?"

"My father now began to be seriously alarmed, lest sir Terence should insist upon his using his interest to make him an assistant barrister. He was not aware that five years' practice at the bar was a necessary accomplishment for this office; when, fortunately for all parties, my good friend, count O'Halloran, helped us out of the difficulty, by starting an idea full of practical justice. A literary friend of the count's had been for some time promised a lucrative situation under government: but, unfortunately, he was a man of so much merit and ability, that they could not find employment for him at home, and they gave him a commission, I should rather say a contract, abroad, for supplying the army with Hungarian horses. Now the gentleman had not the slightest skill in horse-flesh; and, as sir Terence is a complete *jockey*, the count observed that he would be the best possible deputy for his literary friend. We warranted him to be a thorough

going friend; and I do think the coalition will be well for both parties. The count has settled it all, and I left sir Terence comfortably provided for, out of your way, my dear mother; and as happy as he could be, when parting from my father."

Lord Colambre was assiduous in engaging his mother's attention upon any subject, which could for the present draw her thoughts away from her young friend; but, at every pause in the conversation, her ladyship repeated, "So Grace is an heiress, after all —so, after all, they know they are not cousins! Well, I prefer Grace, a thousand times over, to any other heiress in England. No obstacle, no objection. They have my consent. I always prophesied Colambre would marry an heiress; but why not marry directly?"

Her ardour and impatience to hurry things forward seemed now likely to retard the accomplishment of her own wishes; and lord Clonbrony, who understood rather more of the passion of love than his lady ever had felt or understood, saw the agony into which she threw her son, and felt for his darling Grace. With a degree of delicacy and address of which few would have supposed lord Clonbrony capable, his lordship co-operated with his son in endeavouring to keep lady Clonbrony quiet, and to suppress the hourly thanksgivings of Grace's *turning out an heiress*. On one point, however, she vowed she would not be overruled—she would have a splendid wedding at Clonbrony Castle, such as should become an heir and heiress; and the wedding, she hoped,

would be immediately on their return to Ireland: she should announce the thing to her friends directly on her arrival at Clonbrony Castle.

"My dear," said lord Clonbrony, "we must wait, in the first place, the pleasure of old Mr. Reynolds's fit of the gout."

"Why, that's true, because of his will," said her ladyship; "but a will's soon made, is not it? That can't be much delay."

"And then there must be settlements," said lord Clonbrony; "they take time. Lovers, like all the rest of mankind, must submit to the law's delay. In the mean time, my dear, as these Buxton baths agree with you so well, and as Grace does not seem to be over and above strong for travelling a long journey, and as there are many curious and beautiful scenes of nature here in Derbyshire—Matlock, and the wonders of the Peak, and so on—which the young people would be glad to see together, and may not have another opportunity soon—why not rest ourselves a little? For another reason, too," continued his lordship, bringing together as many arguments as he could—for he had often found, that though lady Clonbrony was a match for any single argument, her understanding could be easily overpowered by a number, of whatever sort—"besides, my dear, here's sir Arthur and lady Berryl come to Buxton on purpose to meet us; and we owe them some compliment, and something more than compliment, I think: so I don't see why we should be in a hurry to leave them, or quit Buxton—a few weeks sooner or later can't signify—and Clonbrony Castle will be

getting all the while into better order for us. Burke is gone down there; and if we stay here quietly, there will be time for the velvet furniture to get there before us, and to be unpacked, and up in the drawing-room."

"That's true, my lord," said lady Clonbrony; "and there is a great deal of reason in all you say—so I second that motion, as Colambre, I see, subscribes to it."

They stayed some time in Derbyshire, and every day lord Clonbrony proposed some pleasant excursion, and contrived that the young people should be left to themselves, as Mrs. Broadhurst used so strenuously to advise; the recollection of whose authoritative maxims fortunately still operated upon lady Clonbrony, to the great ease and advantage of the lovers.

Happy as a lover, a friend, a son; happy in the consciousness of having restored a father to respectability, and persuaded a mother to quit the feverish joys of fashion for the pleasures of domestic life; happy in the hope of winning the whole heart of the woman he loved, and whose esteem, he knew, he possessed and deserved; happy in developing every day, every hour, fresh charms in his destined bride—we leave our hero, returning to his native country.

And we leave him with the reasonable expectation that he will support through life the promise of his early character; that his patriotic views will extend with his power to carry wishes into action; that his attachment to his warm-hearted countrymen will still increase upon farther acquaintance; and that he will

long diffuse happiness through the wide circle, which is peculiarly subject to the influence and example of a great resident Irish proprietor.

LETTER FROM LARRY TO HIS BROTHER, PAT BRADY, AT MR. MORDICAI'S, COACHMAKER, LONDON.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"Yours of the 16th, enclosing the five pound note for my father, came safe to hand Monday last; and with his thanks and blessing to you, he commends it to you herewith enclosed back again, on account of his being in no immediate necessity, nor likelihood to want in future, as you shall hear forthwith; but wants you over with all speed, and the note will answer for travelling charges; for we can't enjoy the luck it has pleased God to give us, without *yees;* put the rest in your pocket, and read it when you've time.

"Old Nick's gone, and St. Dennis along with him, to the place he come from—praise be to God! The *ould* lord has found him out in his tricks; and I helped him to that, through the young lord that I driv, as I informed you in my last, when he was a Welshman, which was the best turn ever I did, though I did not know it no more than Adam that time. So *ould* Nick's turned out of the agency clean and clear; and the day after it was known, there was surprising great joy through the whole country; not surprising, either, but just what you might, knowing him, rasonably expect. He (that is, old Nick and St. Dennis) would have been burnt that night—I *mane,* in *effigy,* through the town of Clon-

brony, but that the new man, Mr. Burke, came down that day too soon to stop it, and said, 'it was not becoming to trample on the fallen,' or something that way, that put an end to it; and though it was a great disappointment to many, and to me in particular, I could not but like the jantleman the better for it any how. They say, he is a very good jantleman, and as unlike old Nick or the saint as can be; and takes no duty fowl, nor glove, nor sealing money; nor asks duty work nor duty turf. Well, when I was disappointed of the *effigy*, I comforted myself by making a bonfire of old Nick's big rick of duty turf, which, by great luck, was out in the road, away from all dwelling-house, or thatch, or yards, to take fire: so no danger in life or objection. And such another blaze! I wished you'd seed it—and all the men, women, and children, in the town and country, far and near, gathered round it shouting and dancing like mad!—and it was light as day quite across the bog, as far as Bartley Finnigan's house. And I heard after, they seen it from all parts of the three counties, and they thought it was St. John's Eve in a mistake—or couldn't make out what it was; but all took it in good part, for a good sign, and were in great joy. As for St. Dennis and *ould* Nick, an attorney had his foot upon 'em with an habere a latitat, and three executions hanging over 'em: and there's the end of rogues! and a great example in the country. And—no more about it; for I can't be wasting more ink upon them that don't deserve it at my hands, when I want it for them that do, as you shall see. So some weeks past, and there was

great cleaning at Clonbrony Castle, and in the town of Clonbrony; and the new agent's smart and clever: and he had the glaziers, and the painters, and the slaters, up and down in the town wherever wanted; and you wouldn't know it again. Thinks I, this is no bad sign! Now, cock up your ears, Pat! for the great news is coming, and the good. The master's come home, long life to him! and family come home yesterday, all entirely! The *ould* lord and the young lord, (ay, there's the man, Paddy!) and my lady, and miss Nugent. And I driv miss Nugent's maid and another; so I had the luck to be in it along *wid* 'em, and see all, from first to last. And first, I must tell you, my young lord Colambre remembered and noticed me the minute he lit at our inn, and condescended to beckon me out of the yard to him, and axed me—'Friend Larry,' says he, 'did you keep your promise?'——'My oath again the whiskey, is it?' says I. 'My lord, I surely did,' said I; which was true, as all the country knows I never tasted a drop since. 'And I'm proud to see your honour, my lord, as good as your word, too, and back again among us.' So then there was a call for the horses; and no more at that time passed betwix' my young lord and me, but that he pointed me out to the *ould* one, as I went off. I noticed and thanked him for it in my heart, though I did not know all the good was to come of it. Well no more of myself, for the present.

"Ogh, it's I driv 'em well; and we all got to the great gate of the park before sunset, and as fine an evening as ever you see; with the sun shining on the

tops of the trees, as the ladies noticed; the leaves changed, but not dropped, though so late in the season. I believe the leaves knew what they were about, and kept on, on purpose to welcome them; and the birds were singing, and I stopped whistling, that they might hear them; but sorrow bit could they hear when they got to the park gate, for there was such a crowd, and such a shout, as you never see—and they had the horses off every carriage entirely, and drew 'em home, with blessings, through the park. And, God bless 'em! when they got out, they did'nt go shut themselves up in the great drawing-room, but went straight out to the *tir*rass, to satisfy the eyes and hearts that followed them. My lady *laning* on my young lord, and miss Grace Nugent that was, the beautifullest angel that ever you set eyes on, with the finest complexion, and sweetest of smiles, *laning* upon the *ould* lord's arm, who had his hat off, bowing to all, and noticing the old tenants as he passed by name. O, there was great gladness and tears in the midst; for joy I could scarce keep from myself.

"After a turn or two upon the *tir*rass, my lord Colambre *quit* his mother's arm for a minute, and he come to the edge of the slope, and looked down and through all the crowd for some one.

"'Is it the widow O'Neil, my lord?' says I; 'she's yonder, with the white kerchief, betwixt her son and daughter, as usual.'

"Then my lord beckoned, and they did not know which of the *tree* would stir; and then he gave *tree* beckons with his own finger, and they all *tree* came

fast enough to the bottom of the slope forenent my lord: and he went down and helped the widow up (O, he's the true jantleman), and brought 'em all *tree* up on the *tir*rass, to my lady and miss Nugent; and I was up close after, that I might hear, which wasn't manners, but I couldn't help it. So what he said I don't well know, for I could not get near enough, after all. But I saw my lady smile very kind, and take the widow O'Neil by the hand, and then my lord Colambre *'troduced* Grace to miss Nugent, and there was the word *namesake*, and something about a check curtain; but, whatever it was, they was all greatly pleased: then my lord Colambre turned and looked for Brian, who had fell back, and took him with some commendation, to my lord his father. And my lord the master said, which I did'nt know till after, that they should have their house and farm at the *ould* rent; and at the surprise, the widow dropped down dead; and there was a cry as for ten *berrings*. 'Be qui'te,' says I, 'she's only kilt for joy;' and I went and lift her up, for her son had no more strength that minute than the child new born; and Grace trembled like a leaf, as white as the sheet, but not long, for the mother came to, and was as well as ever when I brought some water, which miss Nugent handed to her with her own hand.

"'That was always pretty and good,' said the widow, laying her hand upon miss Nugent, 'and kind and good to me and mine.'

"That minute there was music from below. The

blind harper, O'Neil, with his harp, that struck up 'Gracey Nugent.'

"And that finished, and my lord Colambre smiling, with the tears standing in his eyes too, and the *ould* lord quite wiping his, I ran to the *tir*rass brink to bid O'Neil play it again; but as I run, I thought I heard a voice call 'Larry!'

"'Who calls Larry?' says I.

"'My lord Colambre calls you, Larry,' says all at once; and four takes me by the shoulders and spins me round. 'There's my young lord calling you, Larry—run for your life.'

"So I run back for my life, and walked respectful, with my hat in my hand, when I got near.

"'Put on your hat, my father desires it,' says my lord Colambre. The *ould* lord made a sign to that purpose, but was too full to speak. 'Where's your father?' continues my young lord. 'He's very *ould*, my lord,' says I.—'I didn't *ax* you now *ould* he was,' says he; 'but where is he?'—'He's behind the crowd below, on account of his infirmities; he couldn't walk so fast as the rest, my lord,' says I; 'but his heart is with you, if not his body.'—'I must have his body too: so bring him bodily before us; and this shall be your warrant for so doing,' said my lord, joking: for he knows the *natur* of us, Paddy, and how we love a joke in our hearts, as well as if he had lived all his life in Ireland; and by the same token will, for that *rason*, do what he pleases with us, and more may be than a man twice as good, that never would smile on us.

"But I'm telling you of my father. 'I've a warrant for you, father,' says I; 'and must have you bodily before the justice, and my lord chief justice.' So he changed colour a bit at first; but he saw me smile. 'And I've done no sin,' said he; 'and, Larry, you may lead me now, as you led me all my life.'

"And up the slope he went with me as light as fifteen; and, when we got up, my lord Clonbrony said, 'I am sorry an old tenant, and a good old tenant, as I hear you were, should have been turned out of your farm.'

"'Don't fret, it's no great matter, my lord,' said my father. 'I shall be soon out of the way; but if you would be so kind to speak a word for my boy here, and that I could afford, while the life is in me, to bring my other boy back out of banishment.'

"'Then,' says my lord Clonbrony, 'I'll give you and your sons three lives, or thirty-one years, from this day, of your former farm. Return to it when you please. And,' added my lord Colambre, 'the flaggers, I hope, will be soon banished.' O, how could I thank him—not a word could I proffer—but I know I clasped my two hands, and prayed for him inwardly. And my father was dropping down on his knees, but the master would not let him; and *obsarved,* that posture should only be for his God. And, sure enough, in that posture, when he was out of sight, we did pray for him that night, and will all our days.

"But, before we quit his presence, he called me

back, and bid me write to my brother, and bring you back, if you've no objections, to your own country.

"So come, my dear Pat, and make no delay, for joy's not joy complate till you're in it—my father sends his blessing, and Peggy her love. The family entirely is to settle for good in Ireland, and there was in the castle yard last night a bonfire made by my lord's orders of the *ould* yellow damask furniture, to plase my lady, my lord says. And the drawing-room, the butler was telling me, is new hung; and the chairs with velvet as white as snow, and shaded over with natural flowers by miss Nugent. Oh! how I hope what I guess will come true, and I've *rason* to believe it will, for I dreamt in my bed last night it did. But keep yourself to yourself—that miss Nugent (who is no more miss Nugent, they say, but miss Reynolds, and has a new found grandfather, and is a big heiress, which she did not want in my eyes, nor in my young lord's), I've a notion, will be sometime, and may be sooner than is expected, my lady viscountess Colambre—so haste to the wedding. And there's another thing: they say the rich *ould* grandfather's coming over;—and another thing, Pat, you would not be out of the fashion—and you see it's growing the fashion not to be an Absentee.

"Your loving brother,

"Larry Brady."

1812.

# MADAME DE FLEURY.

## CHAPTER I.

"There oft are heard the notes of infant wo,
The short thick sob, loud scream, and shriller squall.
How can you, mothers, vex your infants so?" POPE.

"D'ABORD, madame, c'est impossible!—Madame ne descendra pas ici?"* said François, the footman of Mad. de Fleury, with a half expostulatory, half indignant look, as he let down the step of her carriage at the entrance of a dirty passage, that led to one of the most miserable-looking houses in Paris.

"But what can be the cause of the cries which I hear in this house?" said Mad. de Fleury.

"'Tis only some child, who is crying," replied François: and he would have put up the step, but his lady was not satisfied.

"'Tis nothing in the world," continued he, with a look of appeal to the coachman, "it *can* be nothing, but some children, who are locked up there above. The mother, the workwoman my lady wants, is not at home, that's certain."

"I must know the cause of these cries; I must

* In the first place, my lady, it is impossible! Surely my lady will not get out of her carriage here?

see these children," said Mad. de Fleury, getting out of her carriage.

François held his arm for his lady as she got out.

"Bon!" cried he, with an air of vexation. "Si madame la veut absolument, à la bonne heure!—Mais madame sera abimée. Madame verra que j'ai raison. Madame ne montera jamais ce vilain escalier. D'ailleurs c'est au cinquième. Mais, madame, c'est impossible." *

Notwithstanding the impossibility, Mad. de Fleury proceeded; and bidding her talkative footman wait in the entry, made her way up the dark, dirty, broken staircase, the sound of the cries increasing every instant, till, as she reached the fifth story, she heard the shrieks of one in violent pain. She hastened to the door of the room from which the cries proceeded; the door was fastened, and the noise was so great, that though she knocked as loud as she was able, she could not immediately make herself heard. At last the voice of a child from within answered, "The door is locked—mamma has the key in her pocket, and won't be home till night; and here's Victoire has tumbled from the top of the big press, and it is she that is shrieking so."

Mad. de Fleury ran down the stairs which she had ascended with so much difficulty, called to her footman, who was waiting in the entry, despatched him for a surgeon, and then she returned to obtain from some people who lodged in the house assistance to

* To be sure it must be as my lady pleases—but my lady will find it terribly dirty!—my lady will find I was right—my lady will never get up that shocking staircase—it is impossible!

force open the door of the room in which the children were confined.

On the next floor there was a smith at work, filing so earnestly that he did not hear the screams of the children. When his door was pushed open, and the bright vision of Mad. de Fleury appeared to him, his astonishment was so great that he seemed incapable of comprehending what she said. In a strong provincial accent he repeated, "*Plait-il?*" and stood aghast till she had explained herself three times: then suddenly exclaiming, "Ah! c'est ça!"—he collected his tools precipitately, and followed to obey her orders. The door of the room was at last forced half open, for a press that had been overturned prevented its opening entirely. The horrible smells that issued did not overcome Mad. de Fleury's humanity: she squeezed her way into the room, and behind the fallen press saw three little children: the youngest, almost an infant, ceased roaring, and ran to a corner: the eldest, a boy of about eight years old, whose face and clothes were covered with blood, held on his knee a girl younger than himself, whom he was trying to pacify, but who struggled most violently, and screamed incessantly, regardless of Mad. de Fleury, to whose questions she made no answer.

"Where are you hurt, my dear?" repeated Mad. de Fleury in a soothing voice. "Only tell me where you feel pain?"

The boy, showing his sister's arm, said, in a surly tone—"It is this that is hurt—but it was not I did it."

"It was, it *was*," cried the girl as loud as she

could vociferate: "it was Maurice threw me down from the top of the press."

"No—it was you that were pushing me, Victoire, and you fell backwards.—Have done screeching, and show your arm to the lady."

"I can't," said the girl.

"She won't," said the boy.

"She *cannot*," said Mad. de Fleury, kneeling down to examine it. "She cannot move it: I am afraid that it is broken."

"Don't touch it! don't touch it!" cried the girl, screaming more violently.

"Ma'am, she screams that way for nothing often," said the boy. "Her arm is no more broke than mine, I'm sure; she'll move it well enough when she's not cross."

"I am afraid," said Mad. de Fleury, "that her arm is broken."

"Is it indeed?" said the boy, with a look of terror.

"O! don't touch it—you'll kill me, you are killing me," screamed the poor girl, whilst Mad. de Fleury with the greatest care endeavoured to join the bones in their proper place, and resolved to hold the arm till the arrival of the surgeon.

From the feminine appearance of this lady, no stranger would have expected such resolution; but with all the natural sensibility and graceful delicacy of her sex, she had none of that weakness or affectation, which incapacitates from being useful in real distress. In most sudden accidents, and in all domestic misfortunes, female resolution and presence

of mind are indispensably requisite: safety, health, and life, often depend upon the fortitude of women. Happy they, who, like Mad. de Fleury, possess strength of mind united with the utmost gentleness of manner and tenderness of disposition!

Soothed by this lady's sweet voice, the child's rage subsided; and no longer struggling, the poor little girl sat quietly on her lap, sometimes writhing and moaning with pain.

The surgeon at length arrived: her arm was set: and he said, "that she had probably been saved much future pain by Mad. de Fleury's presence of mind."

"Sir,—will it soon be well?" said Maurice to the surgeon.

"O yes, very soon, I dare say," said the little girl. "To-morrow, perhaps; for now that it is tied up, it does not hurt me to signify—and after all, I do believe, Maurice, it was not you threw me down."

As she spoke, she held up her face to kiss her brother.—"That is right," said Mad. de Fleury; "there is a good sister."

The little girl put out her lips, offering a second kiss, but the boy turned hastily away to rub the tears from his eyes with the back of his hand.

"I am not cross now: am I, Maurice?" said she.

"No, Victoire, I was cross myself when I said *that*."

As Victoire was going to speak again, the surgeon imposed silence, observing, that she must be put to

bed, and should be kept quiet. Mad. de Fleury laid her upon the bed, as soon as Maurice had cleared it of the things with which it was covered; and as they were spreading the ragged blanket over the little girl, she whispered a request to Mad. de Fleury, that she would "stay till her mamma came home, to beg Maurice off from being whipped, if mamma should be angry."

Touched by this instance of goodness, and compassionating the desolate condition of these children, Mad. de Fleury complied with Victoire's request; resolving to remonstrate with their mother for leaving them locked up in this manner. They did not know to what part of the town their mother was gone; they could tell only, "that she was to go to a great many different places to carry back work, and to bring home more; and that she expected to be in by five." It was now half after four.

Whilst Mad. de Fleury waited, she asked the boy to give her a full account of the manner in which the accident had happened.

"Why, ma'am," said Maurice, twisting and untwisting a ragged handkerchief as he spoke, "the first beginning of all the mischief was, we had nothing to do; so we went to the ashes to make dirt pies: but Babet would go so close that she burnt her petticoat, and threw about all our ashes, and plagued us, and we whipped her: but all would not do, she would not be quiet; so to get out of her reach, we climbed up by this chair on the table to the top of the press, and there we were well enough for a little while, till somehow we began to quarrel about the

old scissors, and we struggled hard for them, till I got this cut."

Here he unwound the handkerchief, and for the first time showed the wound, which he had never mentioned before.

"Then," continued he, "when I got the cut, I shoved Victoire, and she pushed at me again, and I was keeping her off, and her foot slipped, and down she fell; and caught by the press-door, and pulled it and me after her, and that's all I know."

"It is well that you were not both killed," said Mad. de Fleury. "Are you often left locked up in this manner by yourselves, and without any thing to do?"

"Yes, always, when mamma is abroad—except sometimes we are let out upon the stairs, or in the street; but mamma says we get into mischief there."

This dialogue was interrupted by the return of the mother. She came up stairs slowly, much fatigued, and with a heavy bundle under her arm.

"How now! Maurice? how comes my door open? What's all this?" cried she in an angry voice; but seeing a lady sitting upon her child's bed, she stopped short in great astonishment. Mad. de Fleury related what had happened, and averted her anger from Maurice, by gently expostulating upon the hardship and hazard of leaving her young children in this manner during so many hours of the day.

"Why, my lady," replied the poor woman, wiping her forehead, "every hard-working woman in Paris does the same with her children; and what can I do else? I must earn bread for these helpless ones, and

to do that I must be out backwards and forwards, and to the furthest parts of the town, often from morning till night, with those that employ me; and I cannot afford to send the children to school, or to keep any kind of a servant to look after them; and when I'm away, if I let them run about these stairs and entries, or go into the streets, they do get a little exercise and air to be sure, such as it is; on which account I do let them out sometimes; but then a deal of mischief comes of that, too—they learn all kinds of wickedness, and would grow up to be no better than pickpockets, if they were let often to consort with the little vagabonds they find in the streets. So what to do better for them I don't know."

The poor mother sat down upon the fallen press, looked at Victoire, and wept bitterly. Mad. de Fleury was struck with compassion: but she did not satisfy her feelings merely by words or comfort, or by the easy donation of some money—she resolved to do something more, and something better.

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## CHAPTER II.

"Come often, then; for haply in my bow'r
Amusement, knowledge, wisdom, thou may'st gain:
If I one soul improve, I have not liv'd in vain."

BEATTIE.

IT is not so easy to do good as those who have never attempted it may imagine; and they who without

consideration follow the mere instinct of pity, often by their imprudent generosity create evils more pernicious to society than any which they partially remedy. "Warm Charity, the general friend," may become the general enemy, unless she consults her head as well as her heart. Whilst she pleases herself with the idea that she daily feeds hundreds of the poor, she is perhaps preparing want and famine for thousands. Whilst she delights herself with the anticipation of gratitude for her bounties, she is often exciting only unreasonable expectations, inducing habits of dependence, and submission to slavery.

Those who wish to do good should attend to experience, from whom they may receive lessons upon the largest scale that time and numbers can afford.

Mad. de Fleury was aware that neither a benevolent disposition nor a large fortune was sufficient to enable her to be of real service, without the constant exercise of her judgment. She had therefore listened with deference to the conversation of well-informed men upon those subjects on which ladies have not always the means or the wish to acquire extensive and accurate knowledge. Though a Parisian belle, she had read with attention some of those books which are generally thought too dry or too deep for her sex. Consequently her benevolence was neither wild in theory, nor precipitate nor ostentatious in practice.

Touched with compassion for a little girl, whose arm had been accidentally broken, and shocked by the discovery of the confinement and the dangers to which numbers of children in Paris were doomed,

she did not make a parade of her sensibility. She did not talk of her feelings in fine sentences to a circle of opulent admirers, nor did she project for the relief of the little sufferers some magnificent establishment, which she could not execute nor superintend. She was contented with attempting only what she had reasonable hopes of accomplishing.

The gift of education she believed to be more advantageous than the gift of money to the poor; as it ensures the means both of future subsistence and happiness. But the application even of this incontrovertible principle requires caution and judgment. To crowd numbers of children into a place called a school, to abandon them to the management of any person called a schoolmaster or a schoolmistress, is not sufficient to secure the blessings of a good education. Mad. de Fleury was sensible that the greatest care is necessary in the choice of the person to whom young children are to be intrusted: she knew that only a certain number can be properly directed by one superintendant; and that by attempting to do too much, she might do nothing, or worse than nothing. Her school was formed, therefore, on a small scale, which she could enlarge to any extent, if it should be found to succeed. From some of the families of poor people, who in earning their bread are obliged to spend most of the day from home, she selected twelve little girls, of whom Victoire was the eldest, and she was between six and seven.

The person under whose care Mad. de Fleury wished to place these children was a nun of the

*Sœurs de la Charité*, with whose simplicity of character, benevolence, and mild, steady temper, she was thoroughly acquainted. Sister Frances was delighted with the plan. Any scheme that promised to be of service to her fellow-creatures was sure of meeting with her approbation; but this suited her taste peculiarly, because she was extremely fond of children. No young person had ever boarded six months at her convent without becoming attached to good sister Frances.

The period of which we are writing was some years before convents were abolished; but the strictness of their rules had in many instances been considerably relaxed. Without much difficulty, permission was obtained from the abbess for our nun to devote her time during the day to the care of these poor children, upon condition that she should regularly return to her convent every night before evening prayers. The house which Mad. de Fleury chose for her little school was in an airy part of the town; it did not face the street, but was separated from other buildings at the back of a court, retired from noise and bustle. The two rooms intended for the occupation of the children were neat and clean, but perfectly simple, with whitewashed walls, furnished only with wooden stools and benches, and plain deal tables. The kitchen was well lighted (for light is essential to cleanliness), and it was provided with utensils; and for these appropriate places were allotted, to give the habit and the taste of order. The school-room opened into a garden larger than is usually seen in towns. The nun, who had been

accustomed to purchase provisions for her convent, undertook to prepare daily for the children breakfast and dinner; they were to sup and sleep at their respective homes. Their parents were to take them to sister Frances every morning, when they went out to work, and to call for them upon their return home every evening. By this arrangement, the natural ties of affection and intimacy between the children and their parents would not be loosened; they would be separate only at the time when their absence must be inevitable. Mad. de Fleury thought that any education which estranges children entirely from their parents must be fundamentally erroneous; that such a separation must tend to destroy that sense of filial affection and duty, and those principles of domestic subordination, on which so many of the interests, and much of the virtue and happiness, of society depend. The parents of these poor children were eager to trust them to her care, and they strenuously endeavoured to promote what they perceived to be entirely to their advantage. They promised to take their daughters to school punctually every morning—a promise which was likely to be kept, as a good breakfast was to be ready at a certain hour, and not to wait for any body. The parents looked forward with pleasure also to the idea of calling for their little girls at the end of their day's labour, and of taking them home to their family supper. During the intermediate hours, the children were constantly to be employed, or in exercise. It was difficult to provide suitable employments for their early age; but even the youngest of those admitted

could be taught to wind balls of cotton, thread, and silk, for haberdashers; or they could shell peas and beans, &c. for a neighbouring *traiteur;* or they could weed in a garden. The next in age could learn knitting and plain-work, reading, writing, and arithmetic. As the girls should grow up, they were to be made useful in the care of the house. Sister Frances said she could teach them to wash and iron, and that she would make them as skilful in cookery as she was herself. This last was doubtless a rash promise; for in most of the mysteries of the culinary art, especially in the medical branches of it, in making savoury messes palatable to the sick, few could hope to equal the neat-handed sister Frances. She had a variety of other accomplishments; but her humility and good sense forbade her, upon the present occasion, to mention these. She said nothing of embroidery, or of painting, or of cutting out paper, or of carving in ivory, though in all these she excelled: her cuttings-out in paper were exquisite as the finest lace; her embroidered housewives, and her painted boxes, and her fan-mounts, and her curiously-wrought ivory toys, had obtained for her the highest reputation in the convent, amongst the best judges in the world. Those only who have philosophically studied and thoroughly understand the nature of fame and vanity can justly appreciate the self-denial, or magnanimity, of sister Frances, in forbearing to enumerate or boast of these things. She alluded to them but once, and in the slightest and most humble manner.

"These little creatures are too young for us to

think of teaching them any thing but plain-work at present; but if hereafter any of them should show a superior genius, we can cultivate it properly! Heaven has been pleased to endow me with the means—at least our convent says so."

The actions of sister Frances showed as much moderation as her words; for though she was strongly tempted to adorn her new dwelling with those specimens of her skill, which had long been the glory of her apartment in the convent, yet she resisted the impulse, and contented herself with hanging over the chimney-piece of her school-room a Madonna of her own painting.

The day arrived when she was to receive her pupils in their new habitation. When the children entered the room for the first time, they paid the Madonna the homage of their unfeigned admiration. Involuntarily the little crowd stopped short at the sight of the picture. Some dormant emotions of human vanity were now awakened—played for a moment about the heart of sister Frances—and may be forgiven. Her vanity was innocent and transient, her benevolence permanent and useful. Repressing the vain-glory of an artist, as she fixed her eyes upon the Madonna her thoughts rose to higher objects, and she seized this happy moment to impress upon the minds of her young pupils their first religious ideas and feelings. There was such unaffected piety in her manner, such goodness in her countenance, such persuasion in her voice, and simplicity in her words, that the impression she made was at once serious, pleasing, and not to be effaced. Much de-

pends upon the moment and the manner in which the first notions of religion are communicated to children: if these ideas be connected with terror, and produced when the mind is sullen or in a state of dejection, the future religious feelings are sometimes of a gloomy, dispiriting sort; but if the first impression be made when the heart is expanded by hope or touched by affection, these emotions are happily and permanently associated with religion. This should be particularly attended to by those who undertake the instruction of the children of the poor, who must lead a life of labour, and can seldom have leisure or inclination when arrived at years of discretion, to re-examine the principles early infused into their minds. They cannot in their riper age conquer by reason those superstitious terrors, or bigoted prejudices, which render their victims miserable, or perhaps criminal. To attempt to rectify any errors in the foundation, after an edifice has been constructed, is dangerous: the foundation, therefore, should be laid with care. The religious opinions of sister Frances were strictly united with just rules of morality, strongly enforcing, as the essential means of obtaining present and future happiness, the practice of the social virtues; so that no good or wise persons, however they might differ from her in modes of faith, could doubt the beneficial influence of her general principles, or disapprove of the manner in which they were inculcated.

Detached from every other worldly interest, this benevolent nun devoted all her earthly thoughts to the children of whom she had undertaken the charge.

She watched over them with unceasing vigilance, whilst diffidence of her own abilities was happily supported by her high opinion of Mad. de Fleury's judgment. This lady constantly visited her pupils every week; not in the hasty, negligent manner in which fine ladies sometimes visit charitable institutions, imagining that the honour of their presence is to work miracles, and that every thing will go on rightly when they have said, "*Let it be so,*" or, "*I must have it so.*" Mad. de Fleury's visits were not of this dictatorial or cursory nature. Not minutes, but hours, she devoted to these children—she who could charm by the grace of her manners, and delight by the elegance of her conversation, the most polished circles* and the best-informed societies of Paris, preferred to the glory of being admired the pleasure of being useful:—

> "Her life, as lovely as her face,
> Each duty mark'd with every grace;
> Her native sense improved by reading,
> Her native sweetness by good-breeding."

* It was of this lady that Marmontel said – "She has the art of making the most common thoughts appear new, and the most uncommon simple, by the elegance and clearness of her expressions."

## CHAPTER III.

"Ah me! how much I fear lest pride it be;
But if that pride it be, which thus inspires,
Beware, ye dames! with nice discernment see
Ye quench not too the sparks of nobler fires."

SHENSTONE.

By repeated observation, and by attending to the minute *reports* of sister Frances, Mad. de Fleury soon became acquainted with the habits and temper of each individual in this little society. The most intelligent and the most amiable of these children was Victoire. Whence her superiority arose, whether her abilities were naturally more vivacious than those of her companions, or whether they had been more early developed by accidental excitation, we cannot pretend to determine, lest we should involve ourselves in the intricate question respecting natural genius—a metaphysical point, which we shall not in this place stop to discuss. Till the world has an accurate philosophical dictionary (a work not to be expected in less than half a dozen centuries), this question will never be decided to general satisfaction. In the mean time, we may proceed with our story.

Deep was the impression made on Victoire's heart by the kindness that Mad. de Fleury showed her at the time her arm was broken; and her gratitude was expressed with all the enthusiastic *fondness* of childhood. Whenever she spoke or heard of Mad. de Fleury, her countenance became interested and

animated, in a degree that would have astonished a cool English spectator. Every morning her first question to sister Frances was—"Will *she* come to-day?"—If Mad. de Fleury was expected, the hours and the minutes were counted, and the sand in the hourglass that stood on the school-room table was frequently shaken. The moment she appeared, Victoire ran to her, and was silent; satisfied with standing close beside her, holding her gown when unperceived, and watching, as she spoke and moved, every turn of her countenance. Delighted by these marks of sensibility, sister Frances would have praised the child, but was warned by Mad. de Fleury to refrain from injudicious eulogiums, lest she should teach her affectation.

"If I must not praise, you will permit me at least to love her," said sister Frances.

Her affection for Victoire was increased by compassion: during two months the poor child's arm hung in a sling, so that she could not venture to play with her companions. At their hours of recreation, she used to sit on the school-room steps, looking down into the garden at the scene of merriment, in which she could not partake.

For those who know how to find it, there is good in every thing. Sister Frances used to take her seat on the steps, sometimes with her work, and sometimes with a book; and Victoire, tired of being quite idle, listened with eagerness to the stories which sister Frances read, or watched with interest the progress of her work: soon she longed to imitate what she saw done with so much pleasure, and begged to be taught

to work and read. By degrees she learned her alphabet; and could soon, to the amazement of her schoolfellows, read the names of all the animals in sister Frances's *picture book*. No matter how trifling the thing done, or the knowledge acquired, a great point is gained by giving the desire for employment. Children frequently become industrious from impatience of the pains and penalties of idleness. Count Rumford showed that he understood childish nature perfectly well, when, in his house of industry at Munich, he compelled the young children to sit for some time idle in a gallery round the hall, where others a little older than themselves were busied at work. During Victoire's state of idle convalescence, she acquired the desire to be employed, and she consequently soon became more industrious than her neighbours. Succeeding in her first efforts, she was praised—was pleased, and persevered till she became an example of activity to her companions. But Victoire, though now nearly seven years old, was not quite perfect. Naturally, or accidentally, she was very passionate, and not a little self-willed.

One day being mounted, horsemanlike, with whip in hand, upon the banister of the flight of stairs leading from the school-room to the garden, she called in a tone of triumph to her playfellows, desiring them to stand out of the way, and see her slide from top to bottom. At this moment sister Frances came to the school-room door, and forbade the feat: but Victoire, regardless of all prohibition, slid down instantly, and moreover was going to repeat the glorious operation, when sister Frances, catching hold of her

arm, pointed to a heap of sharp stones that lay on the ground upon the other side of the banisters.

"I am not afraid," said Victoire.

"But if you fall there, you may break your arm again."

"And if I do I can bear it," said Victoire. "Let me go, pray let me go: I must do it."

"No; I forbid you, Victoire, to slide down again! —Babet, and all the little ones, would follow your example, and perhaps break their necks."

The nun, as she spoke, attempted to compel Victoire to dismount: but she was so much of a heroine, that she would do nothing upon compulsion. Clinging fast to the banisters, she resisted with all her might; she kicked and screamed, and screamed and kicked; but at last her feet were taken prisoners; then grasping the railway with one hand, with the other she brandished high the little whip.

"What!" said the mild nun, "would you strike me with that *arm?*"

The arm dropped instantly—Victoire recollected Mad. de Fleury's kindness the day when the arm was broken: dismounting immediately, she threw herself upon her knees in the midst of the crowd of young spectators, and begged pardon of sister Frances. For the rest of the day she was as gentle as a lamb; nay, some assert that the effects of her contrition were visible during the remainder of the week.

Having thus found the secret of reducing the little rebel to obedience by touching her on the tender point of gratitude, the nun had recourse to this ex-

pedient in all perilous cases: but one day, when she was boasting of the infallible operation of her charm, Mad. de Fleury advised her to forbear recurring to it frequently, lest she should wear out the sensibility she so much loved. In consequence of this counsel, Victoire's violence of temper was sometimes reduced by force, and sometimes corrected by reason; but the principle and the feeling of gratitude were not exhausted or weakened in the struggle. The hope of reward operated upon her generous mind more powerfully than the fear of punishment; and Mad. de Fleury devised rewards with as much ability as some legislators invent punishments.

Victoire's brother Maurice, who was now of an age to earn his own bread, had a strong desire to be bound apprentice to the smith who worked in the house where his mother lodged. This most ardent wish of his soul he had imparted to his sister: and she consulted her benefactress, whom she considered as all-powerful in this, as in every other affair.

"Your brother's wish shall be accomplished," replied Mad. de Fleury, "if you can keep your temper one month. If you are never in a passion for a whole month, I will undertake that your brother shall be bound apprentice to his friend the smith. To your companions, to sister Frances, and above all to yourself, I trust, to make me a just report this day month."

## CHAPTER IV.

"You she preferr'd to all the gay resorts,
Where female vanity might wish to shine,
The pomp of cities, and the pride of courts."

LYTTELTON.

AT the end of the time prescribed, the judges, including Victoire herself, who was the most severe of them all, agreed she had justly deserved her reward. Maurice obtained his wish; and Victoire's temper never relapsed into its former bad habits—so powerful is the effect of a well-chosen motive!—Perhaps the historian may be blamed for dwelling on such trivial anecdotes; yet a lady, who was accustomed to the conversation of deep philosophers and polished courtiers, listened without disdain to these simple annals. Nothing appeared to her a trifle that could tend to form the habits of temper, truth, honesty, order, and industry;—habits which are to be early induced, not by solemn precepts, but by practical lessons. A few more examples of these shall be recorded, notwithstanding the fear of being tiresome.

One day little Babet, who was now five years old, saw, as she was coming to school, an old woman, sitting at a corner of the street, beside a large black brazier full of roasted chestnuts. Babet thought that the chestnuts looked and smelled very good; the old woman was talking earnestly to some people, who were on her other side; Babet filled her work-bag with chestnuts, and then ran after her mother

and sister, who, having turned the corner of the street, had not seen what passed. When Babet came to the school-room, she opened her bag with triumph, displayed her treasure, and offered to divide it with her companions. "Here, Victoire," said she, "here is the largest chestnut for you."

But Victoire would not take it; for she said that Babet had no money, and that she could not have come honestly by these chestnuts. She spoke so forcibly upon this point, that even those who had the tempting morsel actually at their lips, forbore to bite; those who had bitten laid down their half-eaten prize; and those who had their hands full of chestnuts, rolled them back again towards the bag. Babet cried with vexation.

"I burned my fingers in getting them for you, and now you won't eat them!—Nor I must not eat them!" said she: then curbing her passion, she added, "But at any rate, I won't be a thief. I am sure I did not think it was being a thief just to take a few chestnuts from an old woman, who had such heaps and heaps: but Victoire says it is wrong, and I would not be a thief for all the chestnuts in the world—I'll throw them all into the fire this minute!"

"No; give them back again to the old woman," said Victoire.

"But maybe, she would scold me for having taken them," said Babet; "or who knows but she might whip me?"

"And if she did, could not you bear it?" said

Victoire: "I am sure I would rather bear twenty whippings than be a thief."

"Twenty whippings! that's a great many," said Babet; "and I am so little, consider—and that woman has such a monstrous arm!—Now if it was sister Frances, it would be another thing. But come! if you will go with me, Victoire, you shall see how I will behave."

"We will all go with you," said Victoire.

"Yes, all!" said the children; "and sister Frances, I dare say, would go, if you asked her."

Babet ran and told her, and she readily consented to accompany the little penitent to make restitution. The chestnut woman did not whip Babet, nor even scold her; but said she was sure, that since the child was so honest as to return what she had taken, she would never steal again. This was the most *glorious* day of Babet's life, and the happiest. When the circumstance was told to Mad. de Fleury, she gave the little girl a bag of the best chestnuts the old woman could select, and Babet with great delight shared her reward with her companions.

"But, alas! these chestnuts are not roasted. O, if we could but roast them!" said the children.

Sister Frances placed in the middle of the table, on which the chestnuts were spread, a small earthenware furnace—a delightful toy, commonly used by children in Paris to cook their little feasts.

"This can be bought for sixpence," said she: "and if each of you twelve earn one halfpenny a-piece to-day, you can purchase it to-night, and I

will put a little fire into it, and you will then be able to roast your chestnuts."

The children ran eagerly to their work—some to wind worsted for a woman who paid them a *liard* for each ball, others to shell peas for a neighbouring *traiteur*—all rejoicing that they were able to earn *something*. The elder girls, under the directions and with the assistance of sister Frances, completed making, washing, and ironing, half a dozen little caps, to supply a baby-linen warehouse. At the end of the day, when the sum of the produce of their labours was added together, they were surprised to find, that, instead of one, they could purchase two furnaces. They received and enjoyed the reward of their united industry. The success of their first efforts was fixed in their memory: for they were very happy roasting the chestnuts, and they were all (sister Frances inclusive) unanimous in opinion that no chestnuts ever were so good, or so well roasted. Sister Frances always partook in their little innocent amusements; and it was her great delight to be the dispenser of rewards, which at once conferred present pleasure, and cherished future virtue.

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## CHAPTER V.

"To virtue wake the pulses of the heart,
And bid the tear of emulation start."—ROGERS.

VICTOIRE, who gave constant exercise to the benevolent feelings of the amiable nun, became every day

more dear to her. Far from having the selfishness of a favourite, Victoire loved to bring into public notice the good actions of her companions. "Stoop down your ear to me, sister Frances," said she, "and I will tell you a secret—I will tell you why my friend Annette is growing so thin—I found it out this morning—she does not eat above half her soup every day. Look, there's her porringer covered up in the corner—she carries it home to her mother, who is sick, and who has not bread to eat."

Mad. de Fleury came in, whilst sister Frances was yet bending down to hear this secret; it was repeated to her; and she immediately ordered that a certain allowance of bread should be given to Annette every day to carry to her mother during her illness.

"I give it in charge to you, Victoire, to remember this, and I am sure it will never be forgotten. Here is an order for you upon my baker: run and show it to Annette. This is a pleasure you deserve; I am glad that you have chosen for your friend a girl who is so good a daughter. Good daughters make good friends."

By similar instances of goodness Victoire obtained the love and confidence of her companions, notwithstanding her manifest superiority. In their turn, they were eager to proclaim her merits; and as sister Frances and Mad. de Fleury administered justice with invariable impartiality, the hateful passions of envy and jealousy were never excited in this little society. No servile sycophant, no malicious detractor, could rob or defraud their little virtues of their due reward.

"Whom shall I trust to take this to Mad. de Fleury?" said sister Frances, carrying into the garden where the children were playing a pot of fine jonquils, which she had brought from her convent.—"These are the first jonquils I have seen this year, and finer I never beheld! Whom shall I trust to take them to Mad. de Fleury this evening?—It must be some one who will not stop to stare about on the way, but who will be very, very careful—some one in whom I can place perfect dependence."

"It must be Victoire, then," cried every voice.

"Yes, she deserves it to-day particularly," said Annette, eagerly; "because she was not angry with Babet, when she did what was enough to put any body in a passion. Sister Frances, you know this cherry-tree which you grafted for Victoire last year, and that was yesterday so full of blossoms—now you see, there is not a blossom left!—Babet plucked them all this morning to make a nosegay."

"But she did not know," said Victoire, "that pulling off the blossoms would prevent my having any cherries."

"O, I am very sorry I was so foolish," said Babet; "Victoire did not even say a cross word to me."

"Though she was excessively anxious about the cherries," pursued Annette, "because she intended to have given the first she had to Mad. de Fleury."

"Victoire, take the jonquils—it is but just," said sister Frances. "How I do love to hear them all praise her!—I knew what she would be from the first."

With a joyful heart Victoire took the jonquils,

promised to carry them with the utmost care, and not to stop to stare on the way. She set out to Mad. de Fleury's hotel, which was in *La Place de Louis Quinze.* It was late in the evening, the lamps were lighting, and as Victoire crossed the Pont de Louis Seize, she stopped to look at the reflection of the lamps in the water, which appeared in succession, as they were lighted, spreading as if by magic along the river. While Victoire leaned over the battlements of the bridge, watching the rising of these stars of fire, a sudden push from the elbow of some rude passenger precipitated her pot of jonquils into the Seine. The sound it made in the water was thunder to the ear of Victoire; she stood for an instant vainly hoping it would rise again, but the waters had closed over it for ever.

"Dans cet état affreux, que faire ?
..... Mon devoir."

Victoire courageously proceeded to Mad. de Fleury's, and desired to see her.

"D'abord c'est impossible—madame is dressing to go to a concert;" said François. "Cannot you leave your message ?'

"O no," said Victoire; "it is of great consequence —I must see *her* myself; and she is so good, and you too, monsieur François, that I am sure you will not refuse."

"Well, I remember one day you found the seal of my watch, which I dropped at your school-room door—one good turn deserves another. If it is possible, it shall be done—I will inquire of madame's

woman."—"Follow me up stairs," said he, returning in a few minutes; "madame will see you."

She followed him up the large staircase, and through a suite of apartments sufficiently grand to intimidate her young imagination.

"Madame est dans son cabinet. Entrez—mais entrez donc, entrez toujours."

Mad. de Fleury was more richly dressed than usual; and her image was reflected in the large looking-glass, so that at the first moment Victoire thought she saw many fine ladies, but not one of them the lady she wanted.

"Well, Victoire, my child, what is the matter?"

"O, it is her voice!—I know you now, madame, and I am not afraid—not afraid even to tell you how foolish I have been. Sister Frances trusted me to carry for you, madame, a beautiful pot of jonquils, and she desired me not to stop on the way to stare; but I did stop to look at the lamps on the bridge, and I forgot the jonquils, and somebody brushed by me, and threw them into the river—and I am very sorry I was so foolish."

"And I am very glad that you are so wise as to tell the truth, without attempting to make any paltry excuses. Go home to sister Frances, and assure her that I am more obliged to her for making you such an honest girl than I could be for a whole bed of jonquils."

Victoire's heart was so full that she could not speak —she kissed Mad. de Fleury's hand in silence, and then seemed to be lost in contemplation of her bracelet.

"Are you thinking, Victoire, that you should be much happier, if you had such bracelets as these?—Believe me, you are mistaken if you think so; many people are unhappy, who wear fine bracelets; so, my child, content yourself."

"Myself! O madam, I was not thinking of myself—I was not wishing for bracelets—I was only thinking that——"

"That what?"

"That it is a pity you are so very rich; you have every thing in this world that you want, and I can never be of the least use to *you*—all my life I shall never be able to do *you* any good—and what," said Victoire, turning away to hide her tears, "what signifies the gratitude of such a poor little creature as I am?"

"Did you never hear the fable of the lion and the mouse, Victoire?"

"No, madam—never!"

"Then I will tell it to you."

Victoire looked up with eyes of eager expectation—François opened the door to announce that the marquis de M—— and the comte de S—— were in the saloon; but Mad. de Fleury staid to tell Victoire her fable—she would not lose the opportunity of making an impression upon this child's heart.

It is whilst the mind is warm that the deepest impressions can be made. Seizing the happy moment sometimes decides the character and the fate of a child. In this respect what advantages have the rich and great in educating the children of the poor! they have the power which their rank, and all its decora-

tions, obtain over the imagination. Their smiles are favours; their words are listened to as oracular; they are looked up to as beings of a superior order. Their powers of working good are almost as great, though not quite so wonderful, as those formerly attributed to beneficent fairies.

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## CHAPTER VI.

"Knowledge for them unlocks her *useful* page,
And virtue blossoms for a better age."—BARBAULD.

A FEW days after Mad. de Fleury had told Victoire the fable of the lion and the mouse, she was informed by sister Frances that Victoire had put the fable into verse. It was wonderfully well done for a child of nine years old, and Mad. de Fleury was tempted to praise the lines; but, checking the enthusiasm o the moment, she considered whether it would be advantageous to cultivate her pupil's talent for poetry. Excellence in the poetic art cannot be obtained without a degree of application for which a girl in her situation could not have leisure. To encourage her to become a mere rhyming scribbler, without any chance of obtaining celebrity or securing subsistence, would be folly and cruelty. Early prodigies, in the lower ranks of life, are seldom permanently successful; they are cried up one day, and cried down the next. Their productions rarely have that superiority which secures a fair preference in the great literary

market. Their performances are, perhaps, said to be—*wonderful, all things considered, &c.* Charitable allowances are made; the books are purchased by associations of complaisant friends or opulent patrons; a kind of forced demand is raised, but this can be only temporary and delusive. In spite of bounties and of all the arts of protection, nothing but what is intrinsically good will long be preferred, when it must be purchased. But granting that positive excellence is attained, there is always danger that for works of fancy the taste of the public may suddenly vary; there is a fashion in these things; and when the mode changes, the mere literary manufacturer is thrown out of employment; he is unable to turn his hand to another trade, or to any but his own peculiar branch of the business. The powers of the mind are often partially cultivated in these self-taught geniuses. We often see that one part of their understanding is nourished to the prejudice of the rest—the imagination, for instance, at the expence of the judgment: so that, whilst they have acquired talents for show, they have none for use. In the affairs of common life, they are utterly ignorant and imbecile—or worse than imbecile. Early called into public notice, probably before their moral habits are formed, they are extolled for some play of fancy or of wit, as Bacon calls it, some *juggler's trick of the intellect;* they immediately take an aversion to plodding labour, they feel raised above their situation; *possessed* by the notion that genius exempts them, not only from labour, but from vulgar rules of prudence, they soon disgrace themselves by their conduct, are

deserted by their patrons, and sink into despair, or plunge into profligacy.*

Convinced of these melancholy truths, Mad. de Fleury was determined not to add to the number of those imprudent or ostentatious patrons, who sacrifice to their own amusement and vanity the future happiness of their favourites. Victoire's verses were not handed about in fashionable circles, nor was she called upon to recite them before a brilliant audience, nor was she produced in public as a prodigy; she was educated in private, and by slow and sure degrees, to be a good, useful, and happy member of society. Upon the same principles which decided Mad. de Fleury against encouraging Victoire to be a poetess, she refrained from giving any of her little pupils accomplishments unsuited to their situation. Some had a fine ear for music, others showed powers of dancing; but they were taught neither dancing nor music—talents which in their station were more likely to be dangerous than serviceable. They were not intended for actresses or opera-girls, but for shop-girls, mantua-makers, work-women, and servants of different sorts; consequently they were instructed in things which would be most necessary and useful to young women in their rank of life. Before they were ten years old, they could do all kinds of plain needlework, they could read and write well, and they were mistresses of the common rules of arithmetic. After this age, they were practised by a writing-master in drawing out bills neatly, keeping accounts, and applying to every-day use their knowledge of arithmetic. Some

* To these observations there are honourable exceptions.

were taught by a laundress to wash, and *get up* fine linen and lace; others were instructed by a neighbouring *traiteur* in those culinary mysteries with which sister Frances was unacquainted. In sweetmeats and confectionaries she yielded to no one; and she made her pupils as expert as herself. Those who were intended for ladies' maids were taught mantua-making, and had lessons from Mad. de Fleury's own woman in hairdressing.

Amongst her numerous friends and acquaintances, and amongst the shopkeepers whom she was in the habit of employing, Mad. de Fleury had means of placing and establishing her pupils suitably and advantageously: of this both they and their parents were aware, so that there was a constant and great motive operating continually to induce them to exert themselves, and to behave well. This reasonable hope of reaping the fruits of their education, and of being immediately rewarded for their good conduct; this perception of the connexion between what they are taught and what they are to become, is necessary to make young people assiduous: for want of attending to these principles, many splendid establishments have failed to produce pupils answerable to the expectations which had been formed of them.

During seven years that Mad. de Fleury persevered uniformly on the same plan, only one girl forfeited her protection—a girl of the name of Manon; she was Victoire's cousin, but totally unlike her in character.

When very young, her beautiful eyes and hair caught the fancy of a rich lady, who took her into

her family as a sort of humble playfellow for her children. She was taught to dance and to sing: she soon excelled in these accomplishments, and was admired, and produced as a prodigy of talent. The lady of the house gave herself great credit for having discerned, and having *brought forward,* such talents. Manon's moral character was in the mean time neglected. In this house, where there was a constant scene of hurry and dissipation, the child had frequent opportunities and temptations to be dishonest. For some time she was not detected; her caressing manners pleased her patroness, and servile compliance with the humours of the children of the family secured their good-will. Encouraged by daily petty successes in the art of deceit, she became a complete hypocrite. With culpable negligence, her mistress trusted implicitly to appearances; and without examining whether she was really honest, she suffered her to have free access to unlocked drawers and valuable cabinets. Several articles of dress were missed from time to time; but Manon managed so artfully, that she averted from herself all suspicion. Emboldened by this fatal impunity, she at last attempted depredations of more importance. She purloined a valuable snuff-box—was detected in disposing of the broken parts of it at a pawnbroker's, and was immediately discarded in disgrace; but by her tears and vehement expressions of remorse, she so far worked upon the weakness of the lady of the house, as to prevail upon her to conceal the circumstance that occasioned her dismissal. Some months afterwards Manon, pleading that she was thoroughly

reformed, obtained from this lady a recommendation to Mad. de Fleury's school. It is wonderful that people, who in other respects profess and practise integrity, can be so culpably weak as to give good characters to those who do not deserve them: this is really one of the worst species of forgery. Imposed upon by this treacherous recommendation, Mad. de Fleury received into the midst of her innocent young pupils one who might have corrupted their minds secretly and irrecoverably. Fortunately a discovery was made in time of Manon's real disposition. A mere trifle led to the detection of her habits of falsehood. As she could not do any kind of needlework, she was employed in winding cotton; she was negligent, and did not in the course of the week wind the same number of balls as her companions; and to conceal this, she pretended that she had delivered the proper number to the woman, who regularly called at the end of the week for the cotton. The woman persisted in her account; the children in theirs; and Manon would not retract her assertion. The poor woman gave up the point; but she declared that she would the next time send her brother to make up the account, because he was *sharper* than herself, and would not be imposed upon so easily. The ensuing week the brother came, and he proved to be the very pawnbroker to whom Manon formerly offered the stolen box: he knew her immediately; it was in vain that she attempted to puzzle him, and to persuade him that she was not the same person. The man was clear and firm. Sister Frances could scarcely believe what she heard.

Struck with horror, the children shrunk back from Manon, and stood in silence. Mad. de Fleury immediately wrote to the lady who had recommended this girl, and inquired into the truth of the pawnbroker's assertions. The lady, who had given Manon a false character, could not deny the facts, and could apologize for herself only by saying, that "she believed the girl to be partly reformed, and that she hoped, under Mad. de Fleury's judicious care, she would become an amiable and respectable woman."

Mad. de Fleury, however, wisely judged, that the hazard of corrupting all her pupils should not be incurred for the slight chance of correcting one, whose bad habits were of such long standing. Manon was expelled from this happy little community—even sister Frances, the most mild of human beings, could never think of the danger to which they had been exposed without expressing indignation against the lady who recommended such a girl as a fit companion for her blameless and beloved pupils.

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## CHAPTER VII.

"Alas! regardless of their doom,
The little victims play:
No sense have they of ills to come,
No care beyond to-day."—GRAY.

GOOD legislators always attend to the habits, and what is called the genius, of the people they have to govern. From youth to age, the taste for whatever

is called *une fête* pervades the whole French nation. Mad. de Fleury availed herself judiciously of this powerful motive, and connected it with the feelings of affection more than with the passion for show. For instance, when any of her little people had done any thing particularly worthy of reward, she gave them leave to invite their parents to a *fête* prepared for them by their children, assisted by the kindness of sister Frances.

One day—it was a holiday obtained by Victoire's good conduct—all the children prepared in their garden a little feast for their parents. Sister Frances spread the table with a bountiful hand, the happy fathers and mothers were waited upon by their children, and each in their turn heard with delight from the benevolent nun some instance of their daughter's improvement. Full of hope for the future, and of gratitude for the past, these honest people ate and talked, whilst in imagination they saw their children all prosperously and usefully settled in the world. They blessed Mad. de Fleury in her absence, and they wished ardently for her presence.

"The sun is setting, and Mad. de Fleury is not yet come," cried Victoire; "she said she would be here this evening—What can be the matter?"

"Nothing is the matter, you may be sure," said Babet, "but that she has forgotten us—she has so many things to think of."

"Yes; but I know she never forgets us," said Victoire; "and she loves so much to see us all happy together, that I am sure it must be something very extraordinary that detains her."

Babet laughed at Victoire's fears: but presently even she began to grow impatient; for they waited long after sunset, expecting every moment that Mad. de Fleury would arrive. At last she appeared, but with a dejected countenance, which seemed to justify Victoire's foreboding. When she saw this festive company, each child sitting between her parents, and all at her entrance looking up with affectionate pleasure, a faint smile enlivened her countenance for a moment; but she did not speak to them with her usual ease. Her mind seemed preoccupied by some disagreeable business of importance. It appeared that it had some connexion with them; for as she walked round the table with sister Frances, she said with a voice and look of great tenderness, "Poor children! how happy they are at this moment!—Heaven only knows how soon they may be rendered, or may render themselves, miserable!"

None of the children could imagine what this meant; but their parents guessed that it had some allusion to the state of public affairs. About this time some of those discontents had broken out, which preceded the terrible days of the revolution. As yet, most of the common people, who were honestly employed in earning their own living, neither understood what was going on, nor foresaw what was to happen. Many of their superiors were not in such happy ignorance—they had information of the intrigues that were forming; and the more penetration they possessed, the more they feared the consequences of causes which they could not control. At the house of a great man, with whom she had

dined this day, Mad. de Fleury had heard alarming news. Dreadful public disturbances, she saw, were inevitable; and whilst she trembled for the fate of all who were dear to her, these poor children had a share in her anxiety. She foresaw the temptations, the dangers, to which they must be exposed, whether they abandoned, or whether they abided by, the principles their education had instilled. She feared that the labour of years would perhaps be lost in an instant, or that her innocent pupils would fall victims even to their virtues.

Many of these young people were now of an age to understand and to govern themselves by reason; and with these she determined to use those preventive measures which reason affords. Without meddling with politics, in which no amiable or sensible woman can wish to interfere, the influence of ladies in the higher ranks of life may always be exerted with perfect propriety, and with essential advantage to the public, in conciliating the inferior classes of society, explaining to them their duties and their interests, and impressing upon the minds of the children of the poor sentiments of just subordination and honest independence. How happy would it have been for France, if women of fortune and abilities had always exerted their talents and activity in this manner, instead of wasting their powers in futile declamations, or in the intrigues of party.

## CHAPTER VIII.

"E'en now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done."

GOLDSMITH.

MADAME DE FLEURY was not disappointed in her pupils. When the public disturbances began, these children were shocked by the horrible actions they saw. Instead of being seduced by bad example, they only showed anxiety to avoid companions of their own age, who were dishonest, idle, or profligate. Victoire's cousin Manon ridiculed these *absurd* principles, as she called them; and endeavoured to persuade Victoire that she would be much happier if she *followed the fashion.*

"What! Victoire, still with your work-bag on your arm, and still going to school with your little sister, though you are but a year younger than I am, I believe!—thirteen last birthday, were not you?—Mon Dieu! Why, how long do you intend to be a child? and why don't you leave that old nun, who keeps you in leading-strings?—I assure you, nuns, and schoolmistresses, and schools, and all that sort of things, are out of fashion now—we have abolished all that—we are to live a life of reason now—and all soon to be equal, I can tell you; let your Mad. de Fleury look to that, and look to it yourself; for with all your wisdom, you might find yourself in the wrong box by sticking to her, and that side of the

question.—Disengage yourself from her, I advise you, as soon as you can.—My dear Victoire! believe me, you may spell very well—but you know nothing of the rights of man, or the rights of woman."

"I do not pretend to know any thing of the rights of men, or the rights of women," cried Victoire; "but this I know, that I never can or will be ungrateful to Mad. de Fleury. Disengage myself from her! I am bound to her for ever, and I will abide by her till the last hour I breathe."

"Well, well! there is no occasion to be in a passion—I only speak as a friend, and I have no more time to reason with you; for I must go home, and get ready my dress for the ball to-night."

"Manon, how can you afford to buy a dress for a ball?"

"As you might, if you had common sense, Victoire—only by being a *good citizen.* I and a party of us *denounced* a milliner and a confectioner in our neighbourhood, who were horrible aristocrats; and of their goods forfeited to the nation we had, as was our just share, such delicious *marangles,* and charming ribands?—O Victoire! believe me, you will never get such things by going to school, or saying your prayers either. You may look with as much scorn and indignation as you please, but I advise you to let it alone, for all that is out of fashion, and may moreover bring you into difficulties. Believe me, my dear Victoire, your head is not deep enough to understand these things—you know nothing of politics."

"But I know the difference between right and

wrong, Manon: politics can never alter that, you know."

"Never alter that!—there you are quite mistaken," said Manon: "I cannot stay to convince you now—but this I can tell you, that I know secrets that you don't suspect."

"I do not wish to know any of your secrets, Manon," said Victoire, proudly.

"Your pride may be humbled, citoyenne Victoire, sooner than you expect," exclaimed Manon, who was now so provoked by her cousin's contempt, that she could not refrain from boasting of her political knowledge. "I can tell you, that your fine friends will in a few days not be able to protect you. The abbé Tracassier is in love with a dear friend of mine, and I know all the secrets of state from her—and I know what I know. Be as incredulous as you please, but you will see that, before this week is at end, monsieur de Fleury will be guillotined, and then what will become of you? Good morning, my proud cousin."

Shocked by what she had just heard, Victoire could scarcely believe that Manon was in earnest; she resolved, however, to go immediately and communicate this intelligence, whether true or false, to Mad. de Fleury. It agreed but too well with other circumstances, which alarmed this lady for the safety of her husband. A man of his abilities, integrity, and fortune, could not in such times hope to escape persecution. He was inclined to brave the danger; but his lady represented that it would not be courage, but rashness and folly, to sacrifice his life to the vil-

lany of others, without probability or possibility of serving his country by his fall.

M. de Fleury, in consequence of these representations, and of Victoire's intelligence, made his escape from Paris; and the very next day *placards* were put up in every street, offering a price for the head of citoyen Fleury, *suspected of incivisme.*

Struck with terror and astonishment at the sight of these *placards,* the children read them as they returned in the evening from school; and little Babet in the vehemence of her indignation mounted a lamplighter's ladder, and tore down one of the papers. This imprudent action did not pass unobserved: it was seen by one of the spies of citoyen Tracassier, a man who, under the pretence of zeal *pour la chose publique,* gratified without scruple his private resentments and his malevolent passions. In his former character of an abbé, and a man of wit, he had gained admittance into Mad. de Fleury's society. There he attempted to dictate both as a literary and religious despot. Accidentally discovering that Mad. de Fleury had a little school for poor children, he thought proper to be offended, because he had not been consulted respecting the regulations, and because he was not permitted, as he said, to take the charge of this little flock. He made many objections to sister Frances, as being an improper person to have the spiritual guidance of these young people: but as he was unable to give any just reason for his dislike, Mad. de Fleury persisted in her choice, and was at last obliged to assert, in opposition to the domineering abbé, her right to judge

and decide in her own affairs. With seeming politeness, he begged ten thousand pardons for his conscientious interference. No more was said upon the subject; and as he did not totally withdraw from her society till the revolution broke out, she did not suspect that she had any thing to fear from his resentment. His manners and opinions changed suddenly with the times; the mask of religion was thrown off; and now, instead of objecting to sister Frances as not being sufficiently strict and orthodox in her tenets, he boldly declared, that a nun was not a fit person to be intrusted with the education of any of the young citizens—they should all be *des élèves de la patrie.* The abbé, become a member of the Committee of Public Safety, denounced Mad. de Fleury, in the strange jargon of the day, as "*the fosterer of a swarm of bad citizens, who were nourished in the anticivic prejudices* de l'ancien régime, *and fostered in the most detestable superstitions, in defiance of the law.*" He further observed, that he had good reason to believe that some of these little *enemies to the constitution* had contrived and abetted M. de Fleury's escape. Of their having rejoiced at it in a most indecent manner, he said he could produce irrefragable proof. The boy who saw Babet tear down the *placard* was produced, and solemnly examined; and the thoughtless action of this poor little girl was construed into a state crime of the most horrible nature. In a declamatory tone, Tracassier reminded his fellow-citizens, that in the ancient Grecian times of virtuous republicanism (times of which France ought to show herself emu-

lous), an Athenian child was condemned to death for having made a plaything of a fragment of the gilding that had fallen from a public statue. The orator, for the reward of his eloquence, obtained an order to seize every thing in Mad. de Fleury's school-house, and to throw the nun into prison.

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## CHAPTER IX.

"Who now will guard bewilder'd youth
Safe from the fierce assault of hostile rage?—
Such war can Virtue wage?"

At the very moment when this order was going to be put in execution, Mad. de Fleury was sitting in the midst of the children, listening to Babet, who was reading Æsop's fable of *the old man and his sons*. Whilst her sister was reading, Victoire collected a number of twigs from the garden: she had just tied them together; and was going, by sister Frances's desire, to let her companions try if they could break the bundle, when the attention of the moral of the fable was interrupted by the entrance of an old woman, whose countenance expressed the utmost terror and haste, to tell what she had not breath to utter. To Mad. de Fleury she was a stranger; but the children immediately recollected her to be the *chestnut woman*, to whom Babet had some years age restored certain purloined chestnuts.

"Fly!" said she, the moment she had breath to

speak: "Fly!—they are coming to seize every thing here—carry off what you can—make haste—make haste!—I came through a by-street. A man was eating chestnuts at my stall, and I saw him show one that was with him the order from citoyen Tracassier. They'll be here in five minutes—quick!—quick!—You, in particular," continued she, turning to the nun, "else you'll be in prison."

At these words, the children, who had clung round sister Frances, loosed their hold, exclaiming, "Go! go quick: but where? where?—we will go with her."

"No, no!" said madame de Fleury, "she shall come home with me—my carriage is at the door."

"Ma belle dame!" cried the chestnut woman, "your house is the worst place she can go to—let her come to my cellar—the poorest cellar in these days is safer than the grandest palace."

So saying, she seized the nun with honest roughness, and hurried her away. As soon as she was gone, the children ran different ways, each to collect some favourite thing, which they thought they could not leave behind. Victoire alone stood motionless beside Mad. de Fleury; her whole thoughts absorbed by the fear that her benefactress would be imprisoned. "O madame! dear, dear madame de Fleury, don't stay! don't stay!"

"O children, never mind these things."

"Don't stay, madame, don't stay! I will stay with them—I will stay—do you go."

The children hearing these words, and recollecting Mad. de Fleury's danger, abandoned all their little property, and instantly obeyed her orders to go

home to their parents. Victoire at last saw Mad. de Fleury safe in her carriage. The coachman drove off at a great rate; and a few minutes afterwards Tracassier's myrmidons arrived at the school-house. Great was their surprise, when they found only the poor children's little books, unfinished samplers, and half-hemmed handkerchiefs. They ran into the garden to search for the nun. They were men of brutal habits; yet as they looked at every thing round them, which bespoke peace, innocence, and childish happiness, they could not help thinking it was a pity to destroy what *could do the nation no great harm after all.* They were even glad that the nun had made her escape, since they were not answerable for it; and they returned to their employer, satisfied for once without doing any mischief: but citizen Tracassier was of too vindictive a temper to suffer the objects of his hatred thus to elude his vengeance. The next day Mad. de Fleury was summoned before his tribunal, and ordered to give up the nun, against whom, as a suspected person, a decree of the law had been obtained.

Mad. de Fleury refused to betray the innocent woman: the gentle firmness of this lady's answers to a brutal interrogatory was termed insolence; she was pronounced a refractory aristocrat, dangerous to the state; and an order was made out to seal up her effects, and to keep her a prisoner in her own house.

## CHAPTER X.

"Alas! full oft on Guilt's victorious car
The spoils of Virtue are in triumph borne,
While the fair captive, mark'd with many a scar,
In lone obscurity, oppress'd, forlorn,
Resigns to tears her angel form."—BEATTIE.

A CLOSE prisoner in her own house, Mad. de Fleury was now guarded by men suddenly become soldiers, and sprung from the dregs of the people; men of brutal manners, ferocious countenances, and more ferocious minds. They seemed to delight in the insolent display of their newly-acquired power. One of these men had formerly been convicted of some horrible crime, and had been sent to the galleys by M. de Fleury. Revenge actuated this wretch under the mask of patriotism, and he rejoiced in seeing the wife of the man he hated a prisoner in his custody. Ignorant of the facts, his associates were ready to believe him in the right, and to join in the senseless cry against all who were their superiors in fortune, birth, and education. This unfortunate lady was forbidden all intercourse with her friends, and it was in vain she attempted to obtain from her jailers intelligence of what was passing in Paris.

"Tu verras—Tout va bien—Ca ira," were the only answers they deigned to make: frequently they continued smoking their pipes in obdurate silence. She occupied the back rooms of her house, because her guards apprehended that she might from the

front windows receive intelligence from her friends. One morning she was awakened by an unusual noise in the streets; and upon her inquiring the occasion of it, her guards told her she was welcome to go to the front windows, and satisfy her curiosity. She went, and saw an immense crowd of people surrounding a guillotine, that had been erected the preceding night. Mad. de Fleury started back with horror—her guards burst into an inhuman laugh, and asked whether her curiosity was satisfied. She would have left the room; but it was now their pleasure to detain her, and to force her to continue the whole day in this apartment. When the guillotine began its work, they had even the barbarity to drag her to the window, repeating, "It is there you ought to be!—It is there your husband ought to be!—You are too happy, that your husband is not there this moment. But he will be there—the law will overtake him—he will be there in time—and you too!"

The mild fortitude of this innocent, benevolent woman made no impression upon these cruel men. When at night they saw her kneeling at her prayers, they taunted her with gross and impious mockery; and when she sunk to sleep, they would waken her by their loud and drunken orgies: if she remonstrated, they answered, "The enemies of the constitution should have no rest."

Mad. de Fleury was not an enemy to any human being; she had never interfered in politics; her life had been passed in domestic pleasures, or employed for the good of her fellow-creatures. Even in this

hour of personal danger she thought of others more than of herself: she thought of her husband, an exile in a foreign country, who might be reduced to the utmost distress, now that she was deprived of all means of remitting him money. She thought of her friends, who, she knew, would exert themselves to obtain her liberty, and whose zeal in her cause might involve them and their families in distress. She thought of the good sister Frances, who had been exposed by her means to the unrelenting persecution of the malignant and powerful Tracassier. She thought of her poor little pupils, now thrown upon the world without a protector. Whilst these ideas were revolving in her mind, one night, as she lay awake, she heard the door of her chamber open softly, and a soldier, one of her guards, with a light in his hand, entered: he came to the foot of her bed; and, as she started up, laid his finger upon his lips.

"Don't make the least noise," said he in a whisper; "those without are drunk, and asleep. Don't you know me?—Don't you remember my face?"

"Not in the least; yet I have some recollection of your voice."

The man took off the bonnet-rouge—still she could not guess who he was.—"You never saw me in an uniform before, nor without a black face."

She looked again, and recollected the smith, to whom Maurice was bound apprentice, and remembered his *patois* accent.

"I remember you," said he, "at any rate; and

your goodness to that poor girl the day her arm was broken, and all your goodness to Maurice—But I've no time for talking of that now—get up, wrap this great coat round you—don't be in a hurry, but make no noise, and follow me."

She followed him; and he led her past the sleeping sentinels, opened a back door into the garden, hurried her, almost carried her, across the garden, to a door at the furthest end of it, which opened into Les Champs Elysées—"La voilà!" cried he, pushing her through the half-opened door. "God be praised!" answered a voice, which Mad. de Fleury knew to be Victoire's, whose arms were thrown round her with a transport of joy.

"Softly; she is not safe yet—wait till we get her home, Victoire," said another voice, which she knew to be that of Maurice. He produced a dark lantern, and guided Mad. de Fleury across the Champs Elysées, and across the bridge, and then through various by-streets, in perfect silence, till they arrived safely at the house where Victoire's mother lodged, and went up those very stairs which she had ascended in such different circumstances several years before. The mother, who was sitting up waiting most anxiously for the return of her children, clasped her hands in an ecstasy, when she saw them return with Mad. de Fleury.

"Welcome, madame! Welcome, dear madame! but who would have thought of seeing you here, in such a way? Let her rest herself—let her rest; she is quite overcome. Here, madame, can you sleep on this poor bed."

"The very same bed you laid me upon the day my arm was broken," said Victoire.

"Ay, Lord bless her!" said the mother; "and though it's seven good years ago, it seemed but yesterday that I saw her sitting on that bed, beside my poor child, looking like an angel. But let her rest, let her rest—we'll not say a word more, only God bless her; thank Heaven, she's safe with us at last!"

Mad. de Fleury expressed unwillingness to stay with these good people, lest she should expose them to danger; but they begged most earnestly that she would remain with them without scruple.

"Surely, madame," said the mother, "you must think that we have some remembrance of all you have done for us, and some touch of gratitude."

"And surely, madame, you can trust us, I hope," said Maurice.

"And surely you are not too proud to let us do something for you. The lion was not too proud to be served by the poor little mouse," said Victoire. "As to danger for us," continued she, "there can be none; for Maurice and I have contrived a hiding-place for you, madame, that can never be found out—let them come spying here as often as they please, they will never find her out, will they, Maurice? Look, madame, into this lumber-room—you see it seems to be quite full of wood for firing; well, if you creep in behind, you can hide yourself quite snug in the loft above, and here's a trap-door into the loft that nobody ever would think of—for we have hung these old things from the top of it, and

who could guess it was a trap-door? So you see, dear madame, you may sleep in peace here, and never fear for us."

Though but a girl of fourteen, Victoire showed at this time all the sense and prudence of a woman of thirty. Gratitude seemed at once to develope all the powers of her mind. It was she and Maurice who had prevailed upon the smith to effect Mad. de Fleury's escape from her own house. She had invented, she had foreseen, she had arranged every thing; she had scarcely rested night or day since the imprisonment of her benefactress; and now that her exertions had fully succeeded, her joy seemed to raise her above all feeling of fatigue; she looked as fresh and moved as briskly, her mother said, as if she was preparing to go to a ball.

"Ah! my child," said she, "your cousin Manon, who goes to those balls every night, was never so happy as you are this minute."

But Victoire's happiness was not of long continuance; for the next day they were alarmed by intelligence that Tracassier was enraged beyond measure at Mad. de Fleury's escape, that all his emissaries were at work to discover her present hiding-place, that the houses of all the parents and relations of her pupils were to be searched, and that the most severe denunciations were issued against all by whom she should be harboured. Manon was the person who gave this intelligence, but not with any benevolent design; she first came to Victoire, to display her own consequence; and to terrify her, she related all she knew from a soldier's wife, who

was M. Tracassier's mistress. Victoire had sufficient command over herself to conceal from the inquisitive eyes of Manon the agitation of her heart; she had also the prudence not to let any one of her companions into her secret, though, when she saw their anxiety, she was much tempted to relieve them, by the assurance that Mad. de Fleury was in safety. All the day was passed in apprehension. Mad. de Fleury never stirred from her place of concealment: as the evening and the hour of the domiciliary visits approached, Victoire and Maurice were alarmed by an unforeseen difficulty. Their mother, whose health had been broken by hard work, in vain endeavoured to suppress her terror at the thoughts of this domiciliary visit; she repeated incessantly that she knew they should all be discovered, and that her children would be dragged to the guillotine before her face. She was in such a distracted state, that they dreaded she would, the moment she saw the soldiers, reveal all she knew.

"If they question me, I shall not know what to answer," cried the terrified woman. "What can I say?—What can I do?"

Reasoning, entreaties, all were vain; she was not in a condition to understand, or even to listen to, any thing that was said. In this situation they were, when the domiciliary visitors arrived—they heard the noise of the soldiers' feet on the stairs—the poor woman sprang from the arms of her children; but at the moment the door was opened, and she saw the glittering of the bayonets, she fell at full length in a swoon on the floor—fortunately be-

fore she had power to utter a syllable. The people of the house knew, and said, that she was subject to fits on any sudden alarm; so that her being affected in this manner did not appear surprising. They threw her on a bed, whilst they proceeded to search the house: her children staid with her; and, wholly occupied in attending to her, they were not exposed to the danger of betraying their anxiety about Mad. de Fleury. They trembled, however, from head to foot, when they heard one of the soldiers swear that all the wood in the lumber-room must be pulled out, and that he would not leave the house till every stick was moved; the sound of each log, as it was thrown out, was heard by Victoire: her brother was now summoned to assist. How great was his terror, when one of the searchers looked up to the roof, as if expecting to find a trap-door! fortunately, however, he did not discover it. Maurice, who had seized the light, contrived to throw the shadows so as to deceive the eye. The soldiers at length retreated; and with inexpressible satisfaction Maurice lighted them down stairs, and saw them fairly out of the house. For some minutes after they were in safety, the terrified mother, who had recovered her senses, could scarcely believe that the danger was over. She embraced her children by turns with wild transport; and with tears begged Mad. de Fleury to forgive her cowardice, and not to attribute it to ingratitude, or to suspect that she had a bad heart. She protested that she was now become so courageous, since she found that she had gone through this trial successfully, and

since she was sure that the hiding-place was really so secure, that she should never be alarmed at any domiciliary visit in future. Mad. de Fleury, however, did not think it either just or expedient to put her resolution to the trial. She determined to leave Paris; and, if possible, to make her escape from France. The master of one of the Paris diligences was brother to François, her footman: he was ready to assist her at all hazards, and to convey her safely to Bourdeaux, if she could disguise herself properly; and if she could obtain a pass from any friend under a feigned name.

Victoire—the indefatigable Victoire—recollected that her friend Annette had an aunt, who was nearly of Mad. de Fleury's size, and who had just obtained a pass to go to Bourdeaux to visit some of her relations. The pass was willingly given up to Mad. de Fleury; and upon reading it over it was found to answer tolerably well—the colour of the eyes and hair at least would do; though the words *un nez gros* were not precisely descriptive of this lady's. Annette's mother, who had always worn the provincial dress of Auvergne, furnished the high *cornette*, stiff stays, boddice, &c.; and equipped in these, Mad. de Fleury was so admirably well disguised, that even Victoire declared she should scarcely have known her. Money, that most necessary passport in all countries, was still wanting: as seals had been put upon all Mad. de Fleury's effects the day she had been first imprisoned in her own house, she could not save even her jewels. She had, however, one ring on her finger of some value. How to dispose of it

without exciting suspicion was the difficulty. Babet, who was resolved to have her share in assisting her benefactress, proposed to carry the ring to a *colporteur*—a pedlar, or sort of travelling jeweller, who had come to lay in a stock of hardware at Paris: he was related to one of Mad. de Fleury's little pupils, and readily disposed of the ring for her: she obtained at least two thirds of its value—a great deal in those times.

The proofs of integrity, attachment, and gratitude, which she received in these days of peril, from those whom she had obliged in her prosperity, touched her generous heart so much, that she has often since declared she could not regret having been reduced to distress. Before she quitted Paris, she wrote letters to her friends, recommending her pupils to their protection; she left these letters in the care of Victoire, who to the last moment followed her with anxious affection. She would have followed her benefactress into exile, but that she was prevented by duty and affection from leaving her mother, who was in declining health.

Mad. de Fleury successfully made her escape from Paris. Some of the municipal officers in the towns through which she passed on her road were as severe as their ignorance would permit in scrutinising her passport. It seldom happened that more than one of these petty committees of public safety could read. One usually spelled out the passport as well as he could, whilst the others smoked their pipes, and from time to time held a light up to the lady's face, to examine whether it agreed with the description.

"Mais toi! tu n'as pas le nez gros!" said one of her judges to her. "Son nez est assez gros, et c'est moi qui le dit," said another. The question was put to the vote; and the man who had asserted what was contrary to the evidence of his senses was so vehement in supporting his opinion, that it was carried in spite of all that could be said against it. Mad. de Fleury was suffered to proceed on her journey. She reached Bourdeaux in safety. Her husband's friends—the good have always friends in adversity—her husband's friends exerted themselves for her with the most prudent zeal. She was soon provided with a sum of money sufficient for her support for some time in England; and she safely reached that free and happy country, which has been the refuge of so many illustrious exiles.

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## CHAPTER XI.

"Cosi rozzo dìamante appena splende
Dalla rupe natìa quand' esce fuora,
E a poco a poco lucìdo se rende
Sotto l'attenta che lo lavora."

Mad. de Fleury joined her husband, who was in London; and they both lived in the most retired and frugal manner. They had too much of the pride of independence to become burthensome to their generous English friends. Notwithstanding the variety of difficulties they had to encounter, and the number

of daily privations to which they were forced to submit, yet they were happy—in a tranquil conscience, in their mutual affection, and the attachment of many poor but grateful friends. A few months after she came to England, Mad. de Fleury received, by a private hand, a packet of letters from her little pupils. Each of them, even the youngest, who had but just begun to learn joining-hand, would write a few lines in this packet.

In various hands, of various sizes, the changes were rung upon these simple words:

"MY DEAR MADAME DE FLEURY,

"I love you—I wish you were here again—I will be *very very* good whilst you are away. If you stay away ever so long, I shall never forget you, nor your goodness; but I hope you will soon be able to come back, and this is what I pray for every night. Sister Frances says I may tell you that I am very good, and Victoire thinks so too."

This was the substance of several of their little letters. Victoire's contained rather more information:—

"You will be glad to *learn* that dear sister Frances is safe, and that the good chestnut woman, in whose cellar she took refuge, did not get into any difficulty. After you were gone, M. T—— said that he did not think it worth while to pursue her, as it was only you he wanted to humble. Manon, who has, I do not know how, means of knowing, told me this. Sister Frances is now with her abbess, who, as well

as every body else that knows her, is very fond of her. What was a convent is no longer a convent: the nuns are turned out of it. Sister Frances's health is not so good as it used to be, though she never complains; I am sure she suffers much; she has never been the same person since that day when we were driven from our happy school-room. It is all destroyed—the garden and every thing. It is now a dismal sight. Your absence also afflicts sister Frances much, and she is in great anxiety about all of us. She has the six little ones with her every day, in her own apartment, and goes on teaching them, as she used to do. We six eldest go to see her as often as we can. I should have begun, my dear Mad. de Fleury, by telling you, that, the day after you left Paris, I went to deliver all the letters you were so very kind to write for us in the midst of your hurry. Your friends have been exceedingly good to us, and have placed us all. Rose is with Mad. la Grace, your mantua-maker, who says she is more handy and more expert at cutting out than girls she has had these three years. Marianne is in the service of Mad. de V——, who has lost a great part of her large fortune, and cannot afford to keep her former waiting-maid. Mad. de V—— is well pleased with Marianne, and bids me tell you that she thanks you for her. Indeed, Marianne, though she is only fourteen, can do every thing her lady wants. Susanne is with a confectioner; she gave sister Frances a box of *bonbons* of her own making this morning; and sister Frances, who is a judge, says they are excellent; she only wishes you could taste them.

Annette and I (thanks to your kindness!) are in the same service, with Mad. Feuillot, the *brodeuse,* to whom you recommended us: she is not discontented with our work, and indeed sent a very civil message yesterday to sister Frances on this subject; but I believe it is too flattering for me to repeat in this letter. We shall do our best to give her satisfaction. She is glad to find that we can write tolerably, and that we can make out bills and keep accounts; this being particularly convenient to her at present, as the young man she had in the shop is become an *orator,* and good for nothing but *la chose publique:* her son, who could have supplied his place, is ill; and Mad. Feuillot herself, not having had, as she says, the advantage of such a good education as we have been blessed with, writes but badly, and knows nothing of arithmetic. Dear Mad. de Fleury, how much, how very much we are obliged to you! We feel it every day more and more: in these times, what would have become of us, if we could do nothing useful? Who *would,* who *could* be burdened with us? Dear madame, we owe every thing to you—and we can do nothing, not the least thing, for you! —My mother is still in bad health, and I fear will never recover: Babet is with her always, and sister Frances is very good to her. My brother Maurice is now so good a workman that he earns a louis a week. He is very steady to his business, and never goes to the revolutionary meetings, though once he had a great mind to be an orator of the people, but never since the day that you explained to him that he knew nothing about equality and the rights of

men, &c. How could I forget to tell you, that his master the smith, who was one of your guards, and who assisted you to escape, has returned without suspicion to his former trade? and he declares that he will never more meddle with public affairs. I gave him the money you left with me for him. He is very kind to my brother—yesterday Maurice mended for Annette's mistress the lock of an English writing-desk, and he mended it so astonishingly well, that an English gentleman, who saw it, could not believe the work was done by a Frenchman; so my brother was sent for, to prove it, and they were forced to believe it. To-day he has more work than he can finish this twelvemonth—all this we owe to you. I shall never forget the day when you promised that you would grant my brother's wish to be apprenticed to the smith, if I was not in a passion for a month—that cured me of being so passionate.

"Dear Mad. de Fleury, I have written you too long a letter, and not so well as I can write when I am not in a hurry; but I wanted to tell you every thing at once, because, may be, I shall not for a long time have so safe an opportunity of sending a letter to you. "VICTOIRE."

Several months elapsed before Mad. de Fleury received another letter from Victoire: it was short, and evidently written in great distress of mind. It contained an account of her mother's death. She was now left at the early age of sixteen an orphan. Mad. Feuillot, the *brodeuse,* with whom she lived, added a few lines to her letter, penned with difficulty and

strangely spelled, but expressive of her being highly pleased with both the girls recommended to her by Mad. de Fleury, especially Victoire, who she said was such a treasure to her, that she would not part with her on any account, and should consider her as a daughter. "I tell her not to grieve so much; for though she has lost one mother, she has gained another for herself, who will always love her; and besides, she is so useful, and in so many ways, with her pen and her needle, in accounts, and every thing that is wanted in a family or a shop, she can never want employment or friends in the worst times; and none can be worse than these, especially for such pretty girls as she is, who have all their heads turned, and are taught to consider nothing a sin that used to be sins. Many gentlemen, who come to our shop, have found out that Victoire is very handsome, and tell her so; but she is so modest and prudent, that I am not afraid for her. I could tell you, madame, a good anecdote on this subject, but my paper will not allow, and besides my writing is so difficult."

Above a year elapsed before Mad. de Fleury received another letter from Victoire: this was in a parcel, of which an emigrant took charge: it contained a variety of little offerings from her pupils, instances of their ingenuity, their industry, and their affection: the last thing in the packet was a small purse labelled in this manner—

"*Savings from our wages and earnings, for her who taught us all we know.*"

## CHAPTER XII.

"Dans sa pompe élégante, admirez Chantilly,
De héros en héros, d'âge en âge, embelli."

DE LILLE.

THE health of the good sister Frances, which had suffered much from the shock her mind received at the commencement of the revolution, declined so rapidly in the course of the two succeeding years, that she was obliged to leave Paris, and she retired to a little village in the neighbourhood of Chantilly. She chose this situation, because here she was within a morning's walk of Mad. de Fleury's country-seat. The château de Fleury had not yet been seized as national property, nor had it suffered from the attacks of the mob, though it was in a perilous situation, within view of the high road to Paris. The Parisian populace had not yet extended their outrages to this distance from the city; and the poor people who lived on the estate of Fleury, attached from habit, principle, and gratitude to their lord, were not disposed to take advantage of the disorder of the times, to injure the property of those from whom they had all their lives received favours and protection. A faithful old steward had the care of the castle and the grounds. Sister Frances was impatient to talk to him, and to visit the château, which she had never seen; but for some days after her arrival in the village, she was so much fatigued and so weak, that she could not attempt so long a walk. Victoire had

obtained permission from her mistress to accompany the nun for a few days to the country, as Annette undertook to do all the business of the shop during the absence of her companion. Victoire was fully as eager as sister Frances to see the faithful steward and the château de Fleury, and the morning was now fixed for their walk: but in the middle of the night they were wakened by the shouts of a mob, who had just entered the village fresh from the destruction of a neighbouring castle. The nun and Victoire listened; but in the midst of the horrid yells of joy, no human voice, no intelligible word, could be distinguished: they looked through a chink in the window-shutter, and they saw the street below filled with a crowd of men, whose countenances were by turns illuminated by the glare of the torches which they brandished.

"Good Heavens!" whispered the nun to Victoire: "I should know the face of that man who is loading his musket—the very man whom I nursed ten years ago, when he was dying of a jail fever!"

This man, who stood in the midst of the crowd, taller by the head than the others, seemed to be the leader of the party; they were disputing whether they should proceed further, spend the remainder of the night in the village alehouse, or return to Paris. Their leader ordered spirits to be distributed to his associates, and exhorted them in a loud voice to proceed in their glorious work. Tossing his firebrand over his head, he declared that he would never return to Paris till he had razed to the ground the château de Fleury. At these words, Victoire, forgetful of

all personal danger, ran out into the midst of the mob, pressed her way up to the leader of these ruffians, caught him by the arm, exclaiming, "You will not touch a stone in the château de Fleury—I have my reasons—I say you will not suffer a stone in the château de Fleury to be touched."

"And why not?" cried the man, turning astonished; "and who are you, that I should listen to you?"

"No matter who I am," said Victoire; "follow me, and I will show you one to whom you will not refuse to listen. Here!—here she is," continued Victoire, pointing to the nun, who had followed her in amazement; "here is one to whom you will listen —yes, look at her well: hold the light to her face."

The nun, in a supplicating attitude, stood in speechless expectation.

"Ay, I see you have gratitude, I know you will have mercy," cried Victoire, watching the workings in the countenance of the man; "you will save the château de Fleury, for her sake—who saved your life."

"I will," cried this astonished chief of a mob, fired with sudden generosity. "By my faith you are a brave girl, and a fine girl, and know how to speak to the heart, and in the right moment. Friends, citizens! this nun, though she is a nun, is good for something. When I lay dying of a fever, and not a soul else to help me, she came and gave me medicines and food—in short, I owe my life to her. 'Tis ten years ago, but I remember it well; and now it is our turn to rule, and she shall be paid as she

deserves. Not a stone of the château de Fleury shall be touched!"

With loud acclamations, the mob joined in the generous enthusiasm of the moment, and followed their leader peaceably out of the village. All this passed with such rapidity as scarcely to leave the impression of reality upon the mind. As soon as the sun rose in the morning, Victoire looked out for the turrets of the château de Fleury, and she saw that they were safe—safe in the midst of the surrounding devastations. Nothing remained of the superb palace of Chantilly but the white arches of its foundation!

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## CHAPTER XIII.

"When thy last breath, ere Nature sank to rest,
Thy meek submission to thy God express'd;
When thy last look, ere thought and feeling fled,
A mingled gleam of hope and triumph shed;
What to thy soul its glad assurance gave—
Its hope in death, its triumph o'er the grave?
The sweet remembrance of unblemish'd youth,
Th' inspiring voice of innocence and truth!"

ROGERS.

THE good sister Frances, though she had scarcely recovered from the shock of the preceding night, accompanied Victoire to the château de Fleury. The gates were opened for them by the old steward and his son Basile, who welcomed them with all the eagerness with which people welcome friends in time

of adversity. The old man showed them the place; and through every apartment of the castle went on, talking of former times, and with narrative fondness told anecdotes of his dear master and mistress. Here his lady used to sit and read—here was the table at which she wrote—this was the sofa on which she and the ladies sat the very last day she was at the castle, at the open windows of the hall, whilst all the tenants and people of the village were dancing on the green.

"Ay, those were happy times," said the old man; "but they will never return."

"Never! O do not say so," cried Victoire.

"Never during my life, at least," said the nun in a low voice, and with a look of resignation.

Basile, as he wiped the tears from his eyes, happened to strike his arm against the chord of Mad. de Fleury's harp, and the sound echoed through the room.

"Before this year is at an end," cried Victoire, "perhaps that harp will be struck again in this château by Mad. de Fleury herself. Last night we could hardly have hoped to see these walls standing this morning, and yet it is safe—not a stone touched! O we shall all live, I hope, to see better times!"

Sister Frances smiled, for she would not depress Victoire's enthusiastic hope: to please her, the good nun added, that she felt better this morning than she had felt for months, and Victoire was happier than she had been since Mad. de Fleury left France. But, alas! it was only a transient gleam. Sister Frances relapsed, and declined so rapidly, that even Victoire,

whose mind was almost always disposed to hope, despaired of her recovery. With placid resignation, or rather with mild confidence, this innocent and benevolent creature met the approach of death. She seemed attached to earth only by affection for those whom she was to leave in this world. Two of the youngest of the children which had formerly been placed under her care, and who were not yet able to earn their own subsistence, she kept with her, and in the last days of her life she continued her instructions to them with the fond solicitude of a parent. Her father confessor, an excellent man, who never even in these dangerous times shrunk from his duty, came to attend sister Frances in her last moments, and relieved her mind from all anxiety, by promising to place the two little children with the lady who had been abbess of her convent, who would to the utmost of her power protect and provide for them suitably. Satisfied by this promise, the good sister Frances smiled upon Victoire, who stood beside her bed, and with that smile upon her countenance expired.——It was some time before the little children seemed to comprehend, or to believe, that sister Frances was dead: they had never before seen any one die; they had no idea what it was to die, and their first feeling was astonishment: they did not seem to understand why Victoire wept. But the next day, when no sister Frances spoke to them, when every hour they missed some accustomed kindness from her,—when presently they saw the preparations for her funeral,—when they heard that she was to be buried in the earth, and that they

should never see her more.—they could neither play nor eat, but sat in a corner holding each other's hands, and watching every thing that was done for the dead by Victoire.

In those times the funeral of a nun, with a priest attending, would not have been permitted by the populace. It was therefore performed as secretly as possible: in the middle of the night the coffin was carried to the burial-place of the Fleury family; the old steward, his son Basile, Victoire, and the good father confessor, were the only persons present. It is necessary to mention this, because the facts were afterwards misrepresented.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

"The character is lost!
Her head adorn'd with lappets, pinn'd aloft,
And ribands streaming gay, superbly rais'd,
Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand
For more than half the tresses it sustains."

COWPER.

UPON her return to Paris, Victoire felt melancholy; but she exerted herself as much as possible in her usual occupation; finding that employment and the consciousness of doing her duty were the best remedies for sorrow.

One day, as she was busy settling Mad. Feuillot's accounts, a servant came into the shop, and inquired for mademoiselle Victoire: he presented her a note,

which she found rather difficult to decipher. It was signed by her cousin Manon, who desired to see Victoire at her hotel. "*Her hotel!*" repeated Victoire with astonishment. The servant assured her that one of the finest hotels in Paris belonged to his lady, and that he was commissioned to show her the way to it. Victoire found her cousin in a magnificent house, which had formerly belonged to the prince de Salms. Manon, dressed in the disgusting, indecent extreme of the mode, was seated under a richly-fringed canopy. She burst into a loud laugh as Victoire entered.

"You look just as much astonished as I expected," cried she. "Great changes have happened since I saw you last—I always told you, Victoire, I knew the world better than you did. What has come of all your schooling, and your mighty goodness, and your gratitude truly?—Your patroness is banished and a beggar, and you a drudge in the shop of a *brodeuse*, who makes you work your fingers to the bone, no doubt.—Now you shall see the difference. Let me show you my house; you know it was formerly the hotel of the prince de Salms, he that was guillotined the other day; but you know nothing, for you have been out of Paris this month, I understand. Then I must tell you, that my friend Villeneuf has acquired an immense fortune! by assignats, made in the course of a fortnight—I say an immense fortune! and has bought this fine house—Now do you begin to understand?"

"I do not clearly know whom you mean by your friend Villeneuf," said Victoire.

"The hairdresser, who lived in our street," said Manon; "he became a great patriot, you know, and orator; and, what with his eloquence and his luck in dealing in assignats, he has made his fortune and mine."

"And yours! then he is your husband!"

"That does not follow—that is not necessary—but do not look so shocked—every body goes on the same way now; besides, I had no other resource—I must have starved—I could not earn my bread as you do. Besides, I was too delicate for hard work of any sort—and besides——but come, let me show you my house—you have no idea how fine it is."

With anxious ostentation, Manon displayed all her riches, to excite Victoire's envy.

"Confess, Victoire," said she at last, "that you think me the happiest person you have ever known. ——You do not answer; whom did you ever know that was happier?"

"Sister Frances, who died last week, appeared to be much happier," said Victoire.

"The poor nun!" said Manon, disdainfully. "Well, and whom do you think the next happiest?"

"Madame de Fleury."

"An exile and a beggar!—O, you are jesting now, Victoire—or—envious. With that sanctified face, citoyenne—perhaps I should say mademoiselle Victoire, you would be delighted to change places with me this instant. Come, you shall stay with me a week, to try how you like it."

"Excuse me," said Victoire, firmly; "I cannot stay with you, Manon—you have chosen one way of

life, and I another—quite another. I do not repent my choice—may you never repent yours!—Farewell!"

"Bless me! what airs! and with what dignity she looks! Repent of my choice!—a likely thing, truly. Am not I at the top of the wheel?"

"And may not the wheel turn?" said Victoire.

"Perhaps it may," said Manon; "but till it does I will enjoy myself. Since you are of a different humour, return to Mad. Feuillot, and *figure* upon cambric and muslin, and make out bills, and nurse old nuns, all the days of your life. You will never persuade me, however, that you would not change places with me if you could. Stay till you are tried, mademoiselle Victoire. Who was ever in love with you, or your virtues?—Stay till you are tried."

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## CHAPTER XV.

"But beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree,
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon watch with unenchanted eye
To save her blossoms, or defend her fruit."—MILTON.

THE trial was nearer than either Manon or Victoire expected. Manon had scarcely pronounced the last words, when the ci-devant hairdresser burst into the room, accompanied by several of his political associates, who met to consult measures for the good of the nation. Among these patriots was the abbé Tracassier.

"Who is that pretty girl who is with you, Manon?" whispered he; "a friend of yours, I hope?"

Victoire left the room immediately, but not before the profligate abbé had seen enough to make him wish to see more. The next day he went to Mad. Feuillot's, under pretence of buying some embroidered handkerchiefs; he paid Victoire a profusion of extravagant compliments, which made no impression upon her innocent heart, and which appeared ridiculous to her plain good sense. She did not know who he was, nor did Mad. Feuillot; for though she had often heard of the abbé, yet she had never seen him. Several succeeding days he returned, and addressed himself to Victoire, each time with increasing freedom. Mad. Feuillot, who had the greatest confidence in her, left her entirely to her own discretion. Victoire begged her friend Annette to do the business of the shop, and staid at work in the back parlour. Tracassier was much disappointed by her absence; but as he thought no great ceremony necessary in his proceedings, he made his name known in a haughty manner to Mad. de Feuillot, and desired that he might be admitted into the back parlour, as he had something of consequence to say to Mlle. Victoire in private. Our readers will not require to have a detailed account of this tête-à-tête; it is sufficient to say, that the disappointed and exasperated abbé left the house muttering imprecations. The next morning a note came to Victoire, apparently from Manon: it was directed by her, but the inside was written by an unknown hand, and contained these words:—

"You are a charming, but incomprehensible girl —since you do not like compliments, you shall not be addressed with empty flattery. It is in the power of the person who dictates this, not only to make you as rich and great as your cousin Manon, but also to restore to fortune and to their country the friends for whom you are most interested. Their fate as well as your own is in your power: if you send a favourable answer to this note, the persons alluded to will, to-morrow, be struck from the list of emigrants, and reinstated in their former possessions. If your answer is decidedly unfavourable, the return of your friends to France will be thenceforward impracticable, and their château, as well as their house in Paris, will be declared national property, and sold without delay to the highest bidder. To you, who have as much understanding as beauty, it is unnecessary to say more. Consult your heart, charming Victoire! be happy, and make others happy. This moment is decisive of your fate and of theirs, for you have to answer a man of a most decided character."

Victoire's answer was as follows:—

"My friends would not, I am sure, accept of their fortune, or consent to return to their country, upon the conditions proposed; therefore I have no merit in rejecting them."

Victoire had early acquired good principles, and that plain, steady, good sense, which goes straight to its object, without being dazzled or imposed upon by sophistry. She was unacquainted with the refine-

ments of sentiment, but she distinctly knew right from wrong, and had sufficient resolution to abide by the right. Perhaps many romantic heroines might have thought it a generous self-devotion to have become in similar circumstances the mistress of Tracassier; and those who are skilled "to make the worse appear the better cause" might have made such an act of heroism the foundation of an interesting, or at least a fashionable, novel. Poor Victoire had not received an education sufficiently refined to enable her to understand these mysteries of sentiment. She was even simple enough to flatter herself that this libertine patriot would not fulfil his threats, and that these had been made only with a view to terrify her into compliance. In this opinion, however, she found herself mistaken. M. Tracassier was indeed a man of the most decided character, if this term may properly be applied to those who act uniformly in consequence of their ruling passion. The château de Fleury was seized as national property. Victoire heard this bad news from the old steward, who was turned out of the castle along with his son, the very day after her rejection of the proposed conditions.

"I could not have believed that any human creature could be so wicked!" exclaimed Victoire, glowing with indignation; but indignation gave way to sorrow.

"And the château de Fleury is really seized?—and you, good old man, are turned out of the place where you were born?—and you, too, Basile?—and Mad. de Fleury will never come back again!—and

perhaps she may be put into prison in a foreign country, and may die for want——and I might have prevented all this!"

Unable to shed a tear, Victoire stood in silent consternation, whilst Annette explained to the good steward and his son the whole transaction. Basile, who was naturally of an impetuous temper, was so transported with indignation, that he would have gone instantly with the note from Tracassier to *denounce* him before the whole National Convention, if he had not been restrained by his more prudent father. The old steward represented to him, that as the note was neither signed nor written by the hand of Tracassier, no proof could be brought home to him, and the attempt to convict one of so powerful a party would only bring certain destruction upon the accusers. Besides, such was at this time the general depravity of manners, that numbers would keep the guilty in countenance. There was no crime which the mask of patriotism could not cover.

"There is one comfort we have in our misfortunes, which these men can never have," said the old man; "when their downfall comes, and come it will most certainly, they will not feel as we do, INNOCENT. Victoire, look up! and do not give way to despair—all will yet be well."

"At all events, you have done what is right,—so do not reproach yourself," said Basile. "Every body—I mean every body who is good for any thing—must respect, admire, and love you, Victoire."

## CHAPTER XVI.

" Ne mal cio che v'annoia;
Quello e vero gioire
Che nasce da virtude dopo il soffrire."

BASILE had not seen without emotion the various instances of goodness which Victoire showed during the illness of sister Frances. Her conduct towards M. Tracassier increased his esteem and attachment; but he forbore to declare his affection, because he could not, consistently with prudence, or with gratitude to his father, think of marrying, now that he was not able to maintain a wife and family. The honest earnings of many years of service had been wrested from the old steward at the time the château de Fleury was seized, and he now depended on the industry of his son for the daily support of his age. His dependence was just, and not likely to be disappointed; for he had given his son an education suitable to his condition in life. Basile was an exact arithmetician, could write an excellent hand, and was a ready draughtsman and surveyor. To bring these useful talents into action, and to find employment for them, with men by whom they would be honestly rewarded, was the only difficulty—a difficulty which Victoire's brother Maurice soon removed. His reputation as a smith had introduced him, among his many customers, to a gentleman of worth and scientific knowledge, who was at this time employed to make models and plans of all the

fortified places in Europe; he was in want of a good clerk and draughtsman, of whose integrity he could be secure. Maurice mentioned his friend Basile; and upon inquiry into his character, and upon trial of his abilities, he was found suited to the place, and was accepted. By his well-earned salary he supported himself and his father; and began, with the sanguine hopes of a young man, to flatter himself that he should soon be rich enough to marry, and that then he might declare his attachment to Victoire. Notwithstanding all his boasted prudence, he had betrayed sufficient symptoms of his passion to have rendered a declaration unnecessary to any clear-sighted observer: but Victoire was not thinking of conquests; she was wholly occupied with a scheme of earning a certain sum of money for her benefactress, who was now, as she feared, in want. All Mad. de Fleury's former pupils contributed their share to the common stock; and the mantuamaker, the confectioner, the servants of different sorts, who had been educated at her school, had laid by, during the years of her banishment, an annual portion of their wages and savings: with the sum which Victoire now added to the fund, it amounted to ten thousand livres. The person who undertook to carry this money to Mad. de Fleury, was François, her former footman, who had procured a pass to go to England as a hairdresser. The night before he set out was a happy night for Victoire, as all her companions met, by Mad. Feuillot's invitation, at her house; and after tea they had the pleasure of packing up the little box, in which each, beside the money,

sent some token of their gratitude, and some proof of their ingenuity. They would with all their hearts have sent twice as many *souvenirs* as François could carry.

"D'abord c'est impossible!" cried he, when he saw the box that was prepared for him to carry to England: but his good-nature was unable to resist the entreaties of each to have her offering carried, "which would take up no room."

He departed—arrived safe in England—found out Mad. de Fleury, who was in real distress, in obscure lodgings at Richmond. He delivered the money, and all the presents of which he had taken charge: but the person to whom she trusted a letter, in answer to Victoire, was not so punctual, or was more unlucky; for the letter never reached her, and she and her companions were long uncertain whether their little treasure had been received. They still continued, however, with indefatigable gratitude, to lay by a portion of their earnings for their benefactress; and the pleasure they had in this perseverance made them more than amends for the loss of some little amusements, and for privations to which they submitted in consequence of their resolution.

In the mean time Basile, going on steadily with his employments, advanced every day in the favour of his master, and his salary was increased in proportion to his abilities and industry; so that he thought he could now, without any imprudence, marry. He consulted his father, who approved of his choice; he consulted Maurice as to the probability of his being accepted by Victoire; and encouraged

by both his father and his friend, he was upon the eve of addressing himself to Victoire, when he was prevented by a new and unforeseen misfortune. His father was taken up, by an emissary of Tracassier's, and brought before one of their revolutionary committees, where he was accused of various acts of incivisme. Among other things equally criminal, it was proved, that one Sunday, when he went to see La Petite Trianon, then a public-house, he exclaimed, "C'est ici que la canaille danse, et que les honnêtes gens pleurent!"

Basile was present at this mock examination of his father—he saw him on the point of being dragged to prison—when a hint was given that he might save his father by enlisting immediately, and going with the army out of France. Victoire was full in Basile's recollection—but there was no other means of saving his father. He enlisted, and in twenty-four hours left Paris.

What appear to be the most unfortunate circumstances of life often prove ultimately the most advantageous. Indeed, those who have knowledge, activity, and integrity, can convert the apparent blanks in the lottery of fortune into prizes. Basile was recommended to his commanding officer by the gentleman who had lately employed him as a clerk—his skill in drawing plans, and in taking rapid surveys of the country through which they passed, was extremely useful to his general; and his integrity made it safe to trust him as a secretary. His commanding officer, though a brave man, was illiterate, and a secretary was to him a necessary of life. Basile

was not only useful, but agreeable; without any mean arts, or servile adulation, he pleased, by simply showing the desire to oblige, and the ability to serve.

"Diable!" exclaimed the general one day, as he looked at Basile's plan of a town, which the army was besieging. "How comes it that you are able to do all these things? But you have a genius for this sort of work, apparently."

"No, sir," said Basile, "these things were taught to me, when I was a child, by a good friend."

"A good friend he was indeed! He did more for you than if he had given you a fortune; for, in these times, that might have been soon taken from you; but now you have the means of making a fortune for yourself."

This observation of the general's, obvious as it may seem, is deserving of the serious consideration of those who have children of their own to educate, or who have the disposal of money for public charities. In these times, no sensible person will venture to pronounce that a change of fortune and station may not await the highest and the lowest; whether we rise or fall in the scale of society, personal qualities and knowledge will be valuable. Those who fall, cannot be destitute; and those who rise, cannot be ridiculous or contemptible, if they have been prepared for their fortune by proper education. In shipwreck, those who carry their all in their minds are the most secure.

But to return to Basile. He had sense enough not to make his general jealous of him by any un-

seasonable display of his talents, or any officious intrusion of advice, even upon subjects which he best understood.

The talents of the warrior and the secretary were in such different lines, that there was no danger of competition; and the general, finding in his secretary the soul of all the arts, good sense, gradually acquired the habit of asking his opinion on every subject that came within his department. It happened that the general received orders from the Directory at Paris, to take a certain town, let it cost what it would, within a given time: in his perplexity, he exclaimed before Basile against the unreasonableness of these orders, and declared his belief that it was impossible he should succeed, and that this was only a scheme of his enemies to prepare his ruin. Basile had attended to the operations of the engineer who acted under the general, and perfectly recollected the model of the mines of this town, which he had seen when he was employed as draughtsman by his Parisian friend. He remembered, that there was formerly an old mine, that had been stopped up somewhere near the place where the engineer was at work; he mentioned *in private* his suspicions to the general, who gave orders in consequence; the old mine was discovered, cleared out, and by these means the town was taken the day before the time appointed. Basile did not arrogate to himself any of the glory of this success—he kept his general's secret and his confidence. Upon their return to Paris, after a fortunate campaign, the general was more grateful than some

others have been, perhaps because more room was given by Basile's prudence for the exercise of this virtue.

"My friend," said he to Basile, "you have done me a great service by your counsel, and a greater still by holding your tongue. Speak now, and tell me freely, if there is any thing I can do for you. You see, as a victorious general, I have the upper hand amongst these fellows—Tracassier's scheme to ruin me missed—whatever I ask will at this moment be granted; speak freely, therefore."

Basile asked what he knew Victoire most desired—that M. and Mad. de Fleury should be struck from the list of emigrants, and that their property now in the hands of the nation should be restored to them. The general promised that this should be done. A warm contest ensued upon the subject between him and Tracassier; but the general stood firm; and Tracassier, enraged, forgot his usual cunning, and quarrelling irrevocably with a party now more powerful than his own, he and his adherents were driven from that station in which they had so long tyrannized. From being the rulers of France, they in a few hours became banished men, or, in the phrase of the times, *des déportés*.

We must not omit to mention the wretched end of Manon. The man with whom she lived perished by the guillotine. From his splendid house she went upon the stage—did not succeed—sunk from one degree of profligacy to another; and at last died in an hospital.

In the mean time, the order for the restoration of the Fleury property, and for permission for the Fleury family to return to France, was made out in due form, and Maurice begged to be the messenger of these good tidings:—he set out for England with the order.

Victoire immediately went down to the château de Fleury, to get every thing in readiness for the reception of the family.

Exiles are expeditious in their return to their native country. Victoire had but just time to complete her preparations, when M. and Mad. de Fleury arrived at Calais. Victoire had assembled all her companions, all Mad. de Fleury's former pupils; and the hour when she was expected home, they with the peasants of the neighbourhood were all in their holiday clothes, and according to the custom of the country singing and dancing. Without music and dancing there is no perfect joy in France. Never was *fête du village* or *fête du Seigneur* more joyful than this.

The old steward opened the gate—the carriage drove in. Mad. de Fleury saw that home, which she had little expected ever more to behold; but all other thoughts were lost in the pleasure of meeting her beloved pupils.

"My children!" cried she, as they crowded round her the moment she got out of her carriage—"My dear *good* children!"

It was all she could say. She leaned on Victoire's arm as she went into the house, and by degrees re-

covering from the almost painful excess of pleasure, began to enjoy what she yet only confusedly felt.

Several of her pupils were so much grown and altered in their external appearance, that she could scarcely recollect them till they spoke, and then their voices and the expression of their countenances brought their childhood fully to her memory. Victoire, she thought, was changed the least, and at this she rejoiced.

The feeling and intelligent reader will imagine all the pleasure that Mad. de Fleury enjoyed this day; nor was it merely the pleasure of a day. She heard from all her friends, with prolonged satisfaction, repeated accounts of the good conduct of these young people during her absence. She learned with delight how her restoration to her country and her fortune had been effected; and is it necessary to add, that Victoire consented to marry Basile, and that she was suitably portioned, and, what is better still, that she was perfectly happy?—M. de Fleury rewarded the attachment and good conduct of Maurice, by taking him into his service; and making him his manager under the old steward at the château de Fleury.

On Victoire's wedding-day, Mad. de Fleury produced all the little offerings of gratitude which she had received from her and her companions during her exile. It was now her turn to confer favours, and she knew how to confer them both with grace and judgment.

"No gratitude in human nature! No gratitude in the lower classes of the people!" cried she: "How

much those are mistaken who think so! I wish they could know my history and the history of these *my children,* and they would acknowledge their error."

*Edgeworthstown*, 1805.

# EMILIE DE COULANGES.

"I AM young, I am in good health," said Emilie de Coulanges; "I am not to be pitied. But my poor mamma, who has been used all her life to such luxuries! And now to have only her Emilie to wait upon her! Her Emilie, who is but an awkward *femme de chambre!* But she will improve, it must be hoped; and as to the rest, things, which are now always changing, and which cannot change for the worse, must soon infallibly change for the better—and mamma will certainly recover all her property one of these days. In the mean time (if mamma is tolerably well), we shall be perfectly happy in England—that charming country, which, perhaps, we should never have seen but for this terrible revolution!—Here we shall assuredly find friends. The English are such good people!—Cold, indeed, at first—that's their misfortune: but then the English coldness is of manner, not of heart. Time immemorial, they have been famous for making the best friends in the world; and even to us, who are their *natural enemies,* they are generous in our distress. I have heard innumerable instances of their hospitality to our emigrants; and mamma will certainly not be the first exception. At her Hotel de Coulanges,

she always received the English with distinguished attention; and though our hotel, with half Paris, has changed its name since those days, the English have too good memories to forget it, I am sure."

By such speeches Emilie endeavoured to revive her mother's spirits. To a most affectionate disposition and a feeling heart she joined all the characteristic and constitutional gaiety of her nation; a gaiety which, under the pressure of misfortune, merits the name of philosophy, since it produces all the effects and is not attended with any of the parade of stoicism.

Emilie de Coulanges was a young French emigrant, of a noble family, and heiress to a large estate; but the property of her family had been confiscated during the revolution. She and her mother, la comtesse de Coulanges, made their escape to England. Mad. de Coulanges was in feeble health, and much dispirited by the sudden loss of rank and fortune. Mlle. de Coulanges felt the change more for her mother than for herself; she always spoke of her mother's misfortunes, never of her own.

Upon their arrival in London, Emilie, full of life and hope, went to present some of her mother's letters of recommendation. One of them was addressed to Mrs. Somers. Mlle. de Coulanges was particularly delighted by the manner in which she was received by this lady.

"No English coldness!—no English reserve!—So warm in her expressions of kindness!—so eager in her offers of service!" Emilie could speak of nothing for the remainder of the day, but "cette

charmante Mad. Somers!" The next day, and the next, and the next, she found increasing reasons to think her charming. Mrs. Somers exerted herself, indeed, with the most benevolent activity, to procure for Mad. de Coulanges every thing that could be convenient or agreeable. She prepared apartments in her own house for the mother and daughter, which she absolutely insisted upon their occupying immediately: she assured them that they should not be treated as visitors, but as inmates and friends of the family. She pressed her invitation with such earnestness, and so politely urged her absolute right to show her remembrance of the civilities which she had received at Paris, that there was no possibility of persisting in a refusal. The pride of high birth would have revolted at the idea of becoming dependent, but all such thoughts were precluded by the manner in which Mrs. Somers spoke; and the comtesse de Coulanges accepted of the invitation, resolving, however, not to prolong her stay, if affairs in her own country should not take a favourable turn. She expected remittances from a Paris banker, with whom she had lodged a considerable sum—all that could be saved in ready money, in jewels, &c. from the wreck of her fortune: with this sum, if she should find all schemes of returning to France and recovering her property impracticable, she determined to live, in some retired part of England, in the most economic manner possible. But, in the mean time, as economy had never been either her theory or her practice, and as she considered retreat from *the world* as the worst thing, next to death, that could befall a woman, she

was glad to put off the evil hour. She acknowledged that ill health made her look some years older than she really was; but she could not think herself yet old enough to become *devout;* and, till that crisis arrived, she, of course, would not willingly be banished from *society.* So that, upon the whole, she was well satisfied to find herself established in Mrs. Somers's excellent house; where, but for the want of three antechambers, and of the Parisian quantity of looking-glass on every side of every apartment, la comtesse might have fancied herself at her own Hotel de Coulanges. Emilie would have been better contented to have been lodged and treated with less magnificence; but she rejoiced to see that her mother was pleased, and that she became freer from her *vapeurs noirs.** Emilie began to love Mrs. Somers for making her mother well and happy—to love her with all the fearless enthusiasm of a young, generous mind, which accepts of obligation without any idea that gratitude may become burdensome. Mrs. Somers excited not only affection—she inspired admiration. Capable of the utmost exertion and of the most noble sacrifices for her friends, the indulgence of her generosity seemed not only to be the greatest pleasure of her soul, but absolutely necessary to her nature. To attempt to restrain her liberality was to provoke her indignation, or to incur her contempt. To refuse her benefits was to forfeit her friendship. She grew extremely fond of her present guests, because, without resistance, they permitted her to load them with

* *Vapeurs noirs*— vulgularly known by the name of *blue devils.*

favours. According to her custom, she found a thousand perfections in those whom she obliged. She had considered la comtesse de Coulanges, when she knew her at Paris, as a very well-bred woman, but as nothing more; yet now she discovered that Mad. de Coulanges had a superior understanding and great strength of mind;—and Emilie, who had pleased her when a child, only by the ingenuous sweetness of her disposition and vivacity of her manners, was now become a complete angel—no angel had ever such a variety of accomplishments—none but an angel could possess such a combination of virtues. Mrs. Somers introduced her charming and noble emigrants to all her numerous and fashionable acquaintance; and she would certainly have quarrelled with any one who did not at least appear to sympathise in her sentiments. Fortunately there was no necessity for quarrelling; these foreigners were well received in every company, and Emilie pleased universally; or, as Mad. de Coulanges expressed it, "Elle avoit des grands *succès* dans la société." The French comtesse herself could hardly give more emphatic importance to the untranslateable word *succès* than Mrs. Somers annexed to it upon this occasion. She was proud of producing Emilie as her protégée; and the approbation of others increased her own enthusiasm: much as she did for her favourite, she longed to do more.—An opportunity soon presented itself.

One evening, after Mad. de Coulanges had actually tired herself with talking to the crowd, which her vivacity, grace, and volubility had attracted about

her sofa, she ran to entrench herself in an arm-chair by the fireside, sprinkled the floor round her with *eau de senteur*, drew, with her pretty foot, a line of circumvallation, and then, shaking her tiny fan at the host of assailants, she forbade them, under pain of her sovereign displeasure, to venture within the magic circle, or to torment her by one more question or compliment. It was now absolutely necessary to be serious, and to study the politics of Europe. She called for the French newspapers, which Mrs. Somers had on purpose for her; and, provided with a pinch of snuff, from the ever-ready box of a French abbé, whose arm was permitted to cross the line of demarcation, Mad. de Coulanges began to study. Silence ensued—for novelty always produces silence in the first instant of surprise. An English gentleman wrote on the back of a letter an offer to his neighbour of a wager, that the silence would be first broken by the French countess, and that it could not last above two minutes. The wager was accepted, and watches were produced. Before the two minutes had expired, the pinch of snuff dropped from the countess's fingers, and, clasping her hands together, she exclaimed "Ah! ciel!"——The surrounding gentlemen, who were full of their wager, and who had heard from the lady, during the course of the evening, at least a dozen exclamations of nearly equal vehemence about the merest trifles, were more amused than alarmed at this instant: but Emilie, who knew her mother's countenance, and who saw the sudden change in it, pressed through the circle, and just caught her mother in her arms as she fainted.

Mrs. Somers, much alarmed, hastened to her assistance. The countess was carried out of the room, and every body was full of pity and of curiosity. When Mad. de Coulanges recovered from her fainting fit, she was seized with one of her nervous attacks; so that no explanation could be obtained. Emilie and Mrs. Somers looked over the French paper, but could not find any paragraph unusually alarming. At length, more composed, the countess apologized for the disturbance which she had occasioned; thanked Mrs. Somers repeatedly for her kindness; but spoke in a hurried manner, as if she did not well know what she said. She concluded by declaring that she was subject to these nervous attacks, that she should be quite well the next morning, and that she did not wish that any one should sit up with her during the night except Emilie, who was used to her ways. With that true politeness which understands quickly the feelings and wishes of others, Mrs. Somers forbore to make any ill-timed inquiries or officious offers of assistance; but immediately retired, and ordered the attendants to leave the room, that Mad. Coulanges and her daughter might be at perfect liberty. Early in the morning Mrs. Somers heard somebody knock softly at her door. It was Emilie.

"Mrs. Masham told me that you were awake, madam, or I should not——"

"Come in, come in, my dearest Emilie—I am awake—wide awake. Is your mother better?"

"Alas! no, madam!"

"Sit down, my dear, and do not call me *madam*, so coldly.—I do not deserve it."

"My dear friend! friend of mamma! my dearest friend!" cried Emilie, bursting into tears, and seizing Mrs. Somers's hand; "do not accuse me of coldness to you. I am always afraid that my French expressions should sound exaggerated to English ears, and that you should think I say too much to be sincere in expressing my gratitude."

"My sweet Emilie, who could doubt your sincerity?—none but a brute or a fool: but do not talk to me of gratitude."

"I must," said Emilie; "for I feel it."

"Prove it to me, then, in the manner I like best—in the only manner I like—by putting it in my power to serve you. I do not intrude upon your mother's confidence—I make no inquiries; but do me the justice to tell me how I can be of use to her—or rather to you. From you I expect frankness. Command my fortune, my time, my credit, my utmost exertions—they are all, they ever have been, they ever shall be, whilst I have life, at the command of my friends. And are not you my friend?"

"Generous lady!—You overpower me with your goodness."

"No praises, no speeches!—Actions for me!—Tell me how I can serve you."

"Alas! *you*, even you, can do us no good in this business."

"That I will never believe, till I know the business."

"The worst of it is," said Emilie, "that we must leave you."

"Leave me! Impossible!" cried Mrs. Somers, starting up.—"You shall not leave me, that I am determined upon. Why cannot you speak out at once, and tell me what is the matter, Emilie? How can I act, unless I am trusted? and who deserves to be trusted by you, if I do not?"

"Assuredly nobody deserves it better; and if it were only my affair, dear Mrs. Somers, you should have known it as soon as I knew it myself; but it is mamma's, more than mine."

"Madame la comtesse, then, does not think me worthy of her confidence," said Mrs. Somers, in a haughty tone, whilst displeasure clouded her whole countenance. "Is that what I am to understand from you, Mlle. de Coulanges?"

"No, no; that is not what you are to understand, dear madam—my dear friend, I should say," cried Emilie, alarmed. "Certainly I have explained myself ill, or you could not suspect mamma for a moment of such injustice. She knows you to be most worthy of her confidence; but on this occasion her reserve, believe me, proceeds solely from motives of delicacy, which you could not but approve."

"Motives of delicacy, my dear Emilie," said Mrs. Somers, softening her tone, but still with an air of dissatisfaction—"motives of delicacy, my dear Emilie, are mighty pretty sounding words; and, at your age, I used to think them mighty grand things; but I have long since found out that *motives of delicacy* are usually the excuse of weak minds for not

speaking the plain truth to their friends. People quit the straight path from motives of delicacy, may be, to a worm or a beetle—vulgar souls, observe, I rank only as worms and beetles; they cross our path every instant in life; and those who fear to give them offence must deviate and deviate, till they get into a labyrinth, from which they can never extricate themselves, or be extricated. My Emilie, I am sure, will always keep the straight road—I know her strength of mind. Indeed, I did expect strength of mind from her mother; but, like all who have lived a great deal in the world, she is, I find, a slave to motives of delicacy."

"Mamma's delicacy is of a very different sort from what you describe, and what you dislike," said Emilie. "But since persisting in her reserve would, as I see, offend one whom she would be most sorry to displease, permit me to go this moment and persuade her to let me tell you the simple truth."

"Go—run, my dear. Now I know my Emilie again. Now I shall be able to do some good."

By the time that Emilie returned, Mrs. Somers was dressed: she had dressed in the greatest hurry imaginable, that she might be ready for action,—instantaneous action,—if the service of her friends, as she hoped, required it. Emilie brought the newspaper in her hand, which her mother had been reading the preceding night.

"Here is all the mystery," said she, pointing to a paragraph which announced the failure of a Paris banker. "Mamma lodged all the money she had left in this man's hands."

"And is that all?—I really expected something much more terrible."

"It is terrible to mamma; because, depending on this man's punctuality, she has bought in London clothes and trinkets—chiefly for me, indeed—and she has no immediate means of paying these debts; but, if she will only keep her mind tranquil, all will yet be well. You flatter me that I play tolerably on the piano-forte and the harp; you will recommend me, and I can endeavour to teach music. So that, if mamma will but be well, we shall not be in any great distress—except in leaving you; that is painful, but must be done. Yes, it absolutely must. Mamma knows what is proper, and so do I. We are not people to encroach upon the generosity of our friends. I need not say more; for I am sure that Mrs. Somers, who is herself so well-born and well-educated, must understand and approve of mamma's way of thinking."

Mrs. Somers replied not one word, but rang her bell violently—ordered her carriage.

"Do not you breakfast, madam, before you go out?" said the servant.

"No—no."

"Not a dish of chocolate, ma'am?"

"My carriage, I tell you.——Emilie, you have been up all night: I insist upon your going to bed this minute, and upon your sleeping till I come back again. La comtesse always breakfasts in her own room; so I have no apologies to make for leaving her. I shall be at home before her toilette is finished, and hope she will then permit me to pay my respects to

her—you will tell her so, my dear. I must be gone instantly.——Why will they not let me have this carriage?—Where are those gloves of mine?—and the key of my writing-desk?—Ring again for the coach."

Between the acting of a generous thing and the first motion, all the interim was, with Mrs. Somers, a delicious phantasma; and her ideas of time and distance were as extravagant as those of a person in a dream. She very nearly ran over Emilie in her way down stairs, and then said, "Oh! I beg pardon a thousand times, my dear!—I thought you had been in bed an hour ago."

The toilette of Mad. de Coulanges, this morning, went on at the usual rate. Whether in adversity or prosperity, this was to la comtesse an elaborate, but never a tedious work. Long as it had lasted, it was, however, finished; and she had full leisure for a fit and a half of the vapours, before Mrs. Somers returned—she came in with a face radiant with joy.

"Fortunately, most fortunately," cried she, "I have it in my power to repair the loss occasioned by the failure of this good-for-nothing banker! Nay, positively, Mad. de Coulanges, I must not be refused," continued she, in a peremptory manner. "You make an enemy, if you refuse a friend."

She laid a pocket-book on the table, and left the room instantly. The pocket-book contained notes to a very considerable amount, surpassing the sum which Mad. de Coulanges had lost by her banker; and on a scrap of paper was written in pencil, "Mad. de Coulanges must never return this sum, for it is

utterly useless to Mrs. Somers; as the superfluities it was appropriated to purchase are now in the possession of one who will not sell them."

Astonished equally at the magnitude and the manner of the gift, Mad. de Coulanges repeated, a million of times, that it was "noble! très noble! une belle action!"—that she could not possibly accept of such an obligation—that she could not tell how to refuse it—that Mrs. Somers was the most generous woman upon earth—that Mrs. Somers had thrown her into a terrible embarrassment.

Then la comtesse had recourse to her smelling-bottle, consulted Emilie's eyes, and answered them.

"Child! I have no thoughts of accepting; but I only ask you how I can refuse, after what has been said, without making Mrs. Somers my enemy? You see her humour—English humours must not be trifled with—her humour, you see, is to give. It is a shocking thing for people of our birth to be reduced to receive, but we cannot avoid it without losing Mrs. Somers's friendship entirely; and that is what you would not wish to do, Emilie."

"O no, indeed!"

"Now we must be under obligations to our milliner and jeweller, if we do not pay them immediately; for these sort of people call it a favour to give credit for a length of time: and I really think that it is much better to be indebted to Mrs. Somers than to absolute strangers and to rude tradespeople. It is always best to have to deal with polite persons."

"And with generous persons!" cried Emilie;

"and a more generous person than Mrs. Somers, I am sure, cannot exist."

"And then," continued Mad. de Coulanges, "like all these rich English, she can afford to be generous. I am persuaded that this Mrs. Somers is as rich as a Russian princess; yes, as rich as the Russian princess with the superb diadem of diamonds. You remember her at Paris?"

"No, mamma, I forget her," answered Emilie, with a look of absence of mind.

"Bon Dieu! what can you be thinking of?" exclaimed Mad. de Coulanges. "You forget the Russian princess, with the diamond diadem, that was valued at 200,000 livres!—She wore it at her presentation—it was the conversation of Paris for a week: you must recollect it, Emilie?"

"O, yes: I recollect something about its cutting her forehead."

"Not at all, my dear; how you exaggerate! The princess only complained, by way of something to say, that the weight of the diamonds made her head ache."

"Was that all?"

"That was all. But I will tell you what you are thinking of, Emilie—quite another thing—quite another person—broad Mad. Vanderbenbruggen: her diamonds were not worth looking at; and they were so horribly set, that she deserved all manner of misfortunes, and to be disgraced in public, as she was. For you know the bandeau slipt over her great forehead; and instead of turning to the gentlemen,

and ordering some man of sense to arrange her head-dress, she kept holding her stiff neck stock still, like an idiot; she actually sat, with the patience of a martyr, two immense hours, till somebody cried, 'Ah! madame, here is the blood coming!' I see her before me this instant. Is it possible, my dear Emilie, that you do not remember the difference between this *buche* of a Mad. Vanderbenbruggen, and our charming princess? but you are as dull as Mad. Vanderbenbruggen herself, this morning."

The vivacious countess having once seized upon the ideas of Mad. Vanderbenbruggen, the charming princess, and the fine diamonds, it was some time before Emilie could recall her to the order of the day —to the recollection of her banker's failure, and of the necessity of giving an answer to generous Mrs. Somers. The decision of Mad. de Coulanges was probably at last influenced materially by the gay ideas of "stars and dukes, and all their sweeping train," associated with Mad. Vanderbenbruggen's image. The countess observed, that, after the style in which she had been used to live in the first company at Paris, it would be worse than death to be buried alive in some obscure country town in England; and that she would rather see Emilie guillotined at once, than condemned, with all her grace and talents, to work, like a galley slave, at a tambour frame for her bread all the days of her life.

Emilie assured her mother that she should cheerfully submit to much greater evils than that of working at a tambour frame; and that, as far as her own feelings were concerned, she should infinitely prefer

living by labour to becoming dependent. She therefore entreated that her mother might not, from any false tenderness for her Emilie, decide contrary to her own principles or wishes.

Mad. de Coulanges, after looking in the glass, at length determined that it would be best to accept of Mrs. Somers's generous offer; and Emilie, who usually contrived to find something agreeable in all her mother's decisions, rejoiced that, by this determination, Mrs. Somers at least would be pleased. Mrs. Somers, indeed, was highly gratified; and her expressions of satisfaction were so warm, that any body would have thought she was the person receiving, instead of conferring, a great favour. She thanked Emilie, in particular, for having vanquished her mother's false delicacy. Emilie blushed at hearing this undeserved praise; and assured Mrs. Somers that all the merit was her mother's.

"What!" cried Mrs. Somers hastily, "was it contrary to your opinion?—Were you treacherous—were you my enemy—Mlle. de Coulanges?"

Emilie replied that she had left the decision to her mother; that she confessed she had felt some reluctance to receive a pecuniary obligation, even from Mrs. Somers; but that she had rather be obliged to her than to any body in the world, except to her mamma.

This explanation was not perfectly satisfactory to Mrs. Somers, and there was a marked coldness in her manner towards Emilie during the remainder of the day. Her affectionate and grateful disposition made her extremely sensible to this change; and, when she

retired to her own room at night, she sat down beside her bed, and shed tears for the first time since she had been in England. Mrs. Somers happened to go into Emilie's room to leave some message for Mad. de Coulanges—she found Emilie in tears—inquired the cause—was touched and flattered by her sensibility—kissed her—blamed herself—confessed she had been extremely unreasonable—acknowledged that her temper was naturally too hasty and susceptible, especially with those she loved—but assured Emilie that this, which had been their first, should be their last quarrel;—a rash promise, considering the circumstances in which they were both placed. Those who receive and those who confer great favours are both in difficult situations; but the part of the benefactor is the most difficult to support with propriety. What a combination of rare qualities is essential for this purpose! Amongst others, sense, delicacy, and temper. Mrs. Somers possessed all but the last; and, unluckily, she was not sensible of the importance of this deficiency. Confident and proud, that, upon all the grand occasions where the human heart is put to the trial, she could display superior generosity, she disdained attention to the minutiæ of kindness. This was inconvenient to her friends; because occasion for a great sacrifice of the heart occurs, perhaps, but once in a life, whilst small sacrifices of temper are requisite every day, and every hour.*

* Since this was written, the author has seen the same

Mrs. Somers had concealed from Mad. de Coulanges and from Emilie the full extent of their obligation: she told them, that the sum of money which she offered had become useless to her, because it had been destined to the purchase of some superfluities, which were now in the possession of another person. The fact was, that she had been in treaty for two fine pictures, a Guido and a Correggio; these pictures might have been hers, but that on the morning, when she heard of the failure of the banker of Mad. de Coulanges, she had hastened to prevent the money from being paid for them. She was extremely fond of paintings, and had long and earnestly desired to possess these celebrated pictures; so that she had really made a great sacrifice of her taste and of her vanity. For some time she was satisfied with her own self-complacent reflections: but presently she began to be displeased that Mad. de Coulanges and Emilie did not see the full extent of her sacrifice. She became provoked by their want of penetration in not discovering all that she studiously concealed; and

thoughts so much better expressed in the following lines that she cannot forbear to quote them :—

Since trifles make the sum of human things,
And half our mis'ry from our foibles springs;
Since life's best joys consist in peace and ease,
And few can save or serve, but all may please:
Oh! let th' ungentle spirit learn from hence,
A small unkindness is a great offence.
Large bounties to bestow we wish in vain;
But all may shun the guilt of giving pain.

SENSIBILITY. *By Mrs. H. More.*

her mind, going on rapidly from one step to another, decided that this want of penetration arose from a deficiency of sensibility.

One day, some of her visitors, who were admiring the taste with which she had newly furnished a room, inquired for what those two compartments were intended, looking at the compartments which had been prepared for the famous pictures. Mrs. Somers replied that she had not yet determined what she should put there: she glanced her eye upon Mad. de Coulanges and upon Emilie, to observe whether they *felt as they ought to do.* Mad. de Coulanges, imagining that an appeal was made to her taste, decidedly answered, that nothing would have so fine an effect as handsome looking-glasses: "Such," added she, "as we have at Paris. No house is furnished without them—they are absolute necessaries of life. And, no doubt, these places were originally intended for mirrors."

"No," said Mrs. Somers, dryly, and with a look of great displeasure: "No, madame la comtesse, those places were not originally intended for looking-glasses."

The countess secretly despised Mrs. Somers for her want of taste; but, being too well bred to dispute the point, she confessed that she was no judge—that she knew nothing of the matter; and then immediately turned to her abbé, and asked him if he remembered the superb mirrors in Mad. de V——'s charming house on the Boulevards. "It is," said she, "in my opinion, one of the very best houses in Paris. There you enter the principal apartments by

an antechamber, such as you ought to see in a great house, with real ottomanes, covered with buff trimmed with black velvet; and then you pass through the spacious salle à manger and the delightful saloon, hung with blue silk, to the *bijou* of a boudoir, that looks out upon the garden, with the windows shaded by the most beautiful flowering shrubs in summer, and in winter adorned with exotics. Then you see, through the plate-glass door of the boudoir, into the gallery of paintings—I call it a gallery, but it is, in fact, a delightful room, not a gallery—where you are not to perish with cold, whilst you admire the magnificence of the place. Not at all: it is warmed by a large stove, and you may examine the fine pictures at your ease, or, as you English would say, in comfort. This gallery must have cost M. de V—— an immense sum. The connoisseurs say that it is really the best collection of Flemish pictures in the possession of any individual in France. By the bye, Mrs. Somers, there is, amongst others, an excellent Van Dyck, a portrait of your Charles the First, when a boy, which I wonder that none of you rich English have purchased."

The countenance of Mrs. Somers had clouded over more and more during this speech; but the heedless countess went on, with her usual volubility.

"Yet, no doubt, M. de V—— would not sell this Van Dyck: but he would, I am told, part with his superb collection of prints, which cost him 30,000 of your pounds. He must look for a purchaser amongst those Polish and Russian princes who have nothing to do with their riches—for instance, my

friend Lewenhof, who complained that he was not able to spend half his income in Paris; that he could not contrive to give an entertainment that cost him money enough. What can he do better than commence amateur?—then he might throw away money as fast as his heart could wish. M. l'Abbé, why do not you, or some man of letters, write directly, and advise him to this, for the good of his country? What a figure those prints would make in Petersburgh!—and how they would polish the Russians! But, as a good Frenchwoman, I ought to wish them to remain at Paris: they certainly cannot be better than where they are."

"True," cried Emilie, "they cannot be better than where they are, in the possession of those generous friends. I used to love to see Mad. de V—— in the midst of all her fine things, of which she thought so little. Her very looks are enough to make one happy—all radiant with good-humoured benevolence. I am sure one might always salute Mad. de V—— with the Chinese compliment, 'Felicity is painted in your countenance.'"

This was a compliment which could not be paid to Mrs. Somers at the present instant; for her countenance was as little expressive of felicity as could well be imagined. Emilie, who suddenly turned and saw it, was so much struck that she became immediately silent. There was a dead pause in the conversation. Mad. de Coulanges was the only unembarrassed person in company; she was very contentedly arranging her hair upon her forehead opposite to a looking-glass. Mrs. Somers broke the silence by observing,

that, in her opinion, there was no occasion for more mirrors in this room; and she added, in a voice of suppressed anger, "I did originally intend to have filled those unfortunate blanks with something more to my taste."

Mad. de Coulanges was too much occupied with her ringlets to hear or heed this speech. Mrs. Somers fixed her indignant eyes upon Emilie, who, perceiving that she was offended, yet not knowing by what, looked embarrassed, and simply answered, "Did you?"

This reply, which seemed as neutral as words could make it, and which was uttered not only with a pacific but with an intimidated tone, incensed Mrs. Somers beyond measure. It put the finishing stroke to the whole conversation. All that had been said about elegant houses—antechambers—mirrors—pictures—amateurs—throwing away money; and the generous Mad. de V——, *who was always good-humoured,* Mrs. Somers fancied was meant *for her.* She decided that it was absolutely impossible that Emilie could be so stupid as not to have perfectly understood that the compartments had been prepared for the Guido and Correggio, which she had so generously sacrificed; and the total want of feeling—of common civility—evinced by Emilie's reply, was astonishing, was incomprehensible.

The more she reflected upon the words, the more of artifice, of duplicity, of ingratitude, of insult, of meanness she discovered in them. In her cold fits of ill-humour, this lady was prone to degrade, as monsters below the standard of humanity, those

whom, in the warmth of her enthusiasm, she had exalted to the state of angelic perfection. Emilie, though aware that she had unwittingly offended, was not aware how low she had sunk in her friend's opinion: she endeavoured, by playful wit and caresses, to atone for her fault, and to reinstate herself in her favour. But playful wit and caresses were aggravating crimes: they were proofs of obstinacy in deceit, of a callous conscience, and of a heart that was not to be touched by the marked displeasure of a benefactress. Three days and three nights did the displeasure of Mrs. Somers continue in full force, and manifest itself by a variety of signs, which were lost upon Mad. de Coulanges, but which were all intelligible to poor Emilie. She made several attempts to bring on an explanation, by saying, "Are you not well?—Is any thing the matter, dear Mrs. Somers?" But these questions were always coldly answered by, "I am perfectly well, I thank you, Mlle. de Coulanges—why should you imagine that any thing is the matter with me?"

At the end of the third day of reprobation, Emilie, who could no longer endure this state, resolved to take courage and to ask pardon for her unknown offence. That night she went, trembling like a real criminal, into Mrs. Somers's dressing-room, kissed her forehead, and said, "I hope you have not such a head-ache as I have?"

"Have you the head-ache?—I am sorry for it," said Mrs. Somers; "but you should take something for it—what will you take?"

"I will take nothing, except—your forgiveness."

"My forgiveness!—you astonish me, Mlle. de Coulanges! I am sure that I ought to ask yours, if I have said a word that could possibly give you reason to imagine I am angry—I really am not conscious of any such thing; but if you will point it out to me——"

"You cannot imagine that I come to accuse you, dear Mrs. Somers; I do not attempt even to justify myself: I am convinced that, if you are displeased, it cannot be without reason."

"But still you do not tell me how I have shown this violent displeasure: I have not, to the best of my recollection, said an angry or a hasty word."

"No; but when we love people, we know when they are offended, without their saying a hasty word —your manner has been so different towards me these three days past."

"My manner is very unfortunate. It is impossible always to keep a guard over our manners: it is sufficient, I think, to guard our words."

"Pray do not guard either with me," said Emilie; "for I would a thousand times rather that a friend should say or look the most angry things than that she should conceal from me what she thought; for then, you know, I might displease her continually without knowing it, and perhaps lose her esteem and affection irretrievably, before I was aware of my danger—and with *you*—with you, to whom we owe so much!"

Touched by the feeling manner in which Emilie spoke, and by the artless expression of her countenance, Mrs. Somers's anger vanished, and she

exclaimed, "I have been to blame—I ask your pardon, Emilie—I have been much to blame—I have been very unjust—very ill-humoured—I see I was quite wrong—I see that I was quite mistaken in what I imagined."

"And what did you imagine?" said Emilie.

"*That* you must excuse me from telling," said Mrs. Somers; "I am too much ashamed of it—too much ashamed of myself. Besides, it was a sort of thing that I could not well explain, if I were to set about it; in short, it was the silliest trifle in the world: but I assure you that if I had not loved you very much, I should not have been so foolishly angry. You must forgive these little infirmities of temper—you know my heart is as it should be."

Emilie embraced Mrs. Somers affectionately; and, in her joy at this reconciliation, and in the delight she felt at being relieved from the uneasiness which she had suffered for three days, loved her friend the better for this quarrel: she quite forgot the pain in the pleasure of the reconciliation; and thought that, even if Mrs. Somers had been in the wrong, the candour with which she acknowledged it more than made amends for the error.

"You must forgive these little infirmities of temper—you know my heart is as it should be."

Emilie repeated these words, and said to herself, "Forgive them! yes, surely; I should be the most ungrateful of human beings if I did otherwise."

Without being the most ungrateful of human beings, Emilie, however, found it very difficult to keep her resolution.

Almost every day she felt the apprehension or the certainty of having offended her benefactress: and the causes by which she gave offence were sometimes so trifling, as to elude her notice; so mysterious, that they could not be discovered; or so various and anomalous, that, even when she was told in what manner she had displeased, she could not form any rule, or draw any inference, for her future conduct. Sometimes she offended by differing, sometimes by agreeing, in taste or opinion with Mrs. Somers. Sometimes she perceived that she was thought positive; at other times, too complying. A word, a look, or even silence—passive silence—was sufficient to affront this susceptible lady. Then she would go on with a string of deductions, or rather of imaginations, to prove that there must be something wrong in Emilie's disposition; and she would insist upon it, that she knew better what was passing, or what would pass, in her mind, than Emilie could know herself. Nothing provoked Mrs. Somers more than the want of success in any of her active attempts to make others happy. She was continually angry with Emilie for not being sufficiently pleased or grateful for things which she had not the vanity to suspect were intended for her gratification, or which were not calculated to contribute to her amusement: this humility, or this difference of taste, was always considered as affectation or perversity. One day, Mrs. Somers was angry with Emilie because she did not thank her for inviting a celebrated singer to her concert; but Emilie had no idea that the singer was invited on her account: of this nothing could con-

vince Mrs. Somers. Another day, she was excessively displeased because Emilie was not so much entertained as she had expected her to be at the installation of a knight of the garter.

"Mad. de Coulanges expressed a wish to see the ceremony of the installation; and, though I hate such things myself, I took prodigious pains to procure tickets, and to have you well placed——"

"Indeed, I was very sensible of it, dear madam."

"May be so, my dear; but you did not look as if you were: you seemed tired to death, and said you were sleepy; and ten times repeated, 'Ah! qu'il fait chaud?' But this is what I am used to—what I have experienced all my life. The more pains a person takes to please and oblige, the less they can succeed, and the less gratitude they are to expect."

Emilie reproached herself, and resolved that, upon the next similar trial, she would not complain of being sleepy or tired; and that she would take particular care not to say—"Ah! qu'il fait chaud!" A short time afterwards she was in a crowded assembly, at the house of a friend of Mrs. Somers, a *rout*—a species of entertainment of which she had not seen examples in her own country (it appeared to her rather a barbarous mode of amusement, to meet in vast crowds, to squeeze or to be squeezed, without a possibility of enjoying any rational conversation). Emilie was fatigued, and almost fainting, from the heat, but she bore it all with a smiling countenance and heroic gaiety: for this night she was determined not to displease Mrs. Somers. On their return home, she was rather surprised and

disappointed to find this lady in a fit of extreme ill-humour.

"I wanted to get away two hours ago," cried she; "but you would not understand any of my hints, Mlle. de Coulanges; and when I asked you whether you did not find it very hot, you persisted in saying, 'Not in the least—not in the least.'"

Mrs. Somers was the more angry upon this occasion, because she recollected having formerly reproached Emilie, at the installation, for complaining of the heat: and she persuaded herself, that this was an instance of perversity in Emilie's temper, and a sly method of revenging herself for the past. Nothing could be more improbable, from a girl of such a frank, forgiving, sweet disposition; and no one would have been so ready to say so as Mrs. Somers in another mood; but the moment that she was irritated, she judged without common sense—never from general observations, but always from particular instances. It was in vain that Emilie disclaimed the motives attributed to her: she was obliged to wait the return of her friend's reason, and in the mean time to bear her reproaches—which she did with infinite patience. Unfortunately this patience soon became the source of fresh evils. Because Emilie was so gentle, and so ready to acknowledge and to believe herself to be in the wrong, Mrs. Somers became convinced that she herself was in the right in all her complaints; and she fancied that she had great merit in passing over so many defects in one whom she had so much obliged, and who professed so much gratitude. Between the fits of her ill-

humour, she would, however, waken to the full sense of Emilie's goodness, and would treat her with particular kindness, as if to make amends for the past. Then, if Emilie could not immediately resume that easy, gay familiarity of manner, which she used to have before experience had taught her the fear of offending, Mrs. Somers grew angry again, and decided that Emilie had not sufficient elevation of soul to understand her character, or to forgive the *little infirmities* of the best of friends. When she was under the influence of this suspicion, every thing that Emilie said or looked was confirmation strong. Mrs. Somers was apt in conversation to throw out general reflections that were meant to apply to particular persons; or to speak with one meaning obvious to all the company, and another to be understood only by some individual whom she wished to reproach. This art, which she had often successfully practised upon Emilie, she, for that reason, suspected that Emilie tried upon her. And then the utmost ingenuity was employed to torture words into strange meanings: she would misinterpret the plainest expressions, or attribute to them some double, mysterious signification.

One evening, Emilie had been reading a new novel, the merits of which were eagerly discussed by the company. Some said that the heroine was a fool: others, that she was a mad woman; some, that she was not either, but that she acted as if she were both; another party asserted that she was every thing that was great and good, and that it was impossible to paint in truer colours the passion of love.

Mrs. Somers declared herself of this opinion; but Emilie, who happened not to be present when this declaration was made, on coming into the room and joining in the conversation, gave a diametrically opposite judgment: she said, that the author had painted the enthusiasm with which the heroine yielded to her passion, instead of the violence of the passion to which she yielded. The French abbé, to whom Emilie made this observation, repeated it triumphantly to Mrs. Somers, who immediately changed colour, and replied, in a constrained voice, "Certainly that is a very apposite remark, and vastly well expressed; and I give Mlle. de Coulanges infinite credit for it."

Emilie, who knew every inflection of Mrs. Somers's voice, and every turn of her countenance, perceived that these words of praise were accompanied with strong feelings of displeasure. She was much embarrassed, especially as her friend fixed her eyes upon her whilst she blushed; and this made her blush ten times more: she was afraid that the company, who were silent, should take notice of her distress; and therefore she went on talking very fast about the novel, though scarcely knowing what she said. She made sundry blunders in names and characters, which were eagerly corrected by the astonished Mad. de Coulanges, who could not conceive how any body could forget the dramatis personæ of the novel of the day. Mrs. Somers, all the time, preserved silence, as if she dared not trust herself to speak; but her compressed lips showed sufficiently the constraint under which she laboured. Whilst every body else

went on talking, and helping themselves to refreshments which the servants were handing about, Mrs. Somers continued leaning on the mantel-piece in a deep reverie, pulling her bracelet round and round upon her wrist, till she was roused by Mad. de Coulanges, who appealed for judgment upon her new method of preparing an orange.

"C'est à la corbeille—Tenez!" cried she, holding it by a slender handle of orange-peel; "Tenez! c'est à la corbeille!"

Mrs. Somers, with a forced smile, admired the orange-basket; but said, that, for her part, her hands were not sufficiently dexterous to imitate this fashion: "I," said she, "can only do like the king of Prussia and *other people*—squeeze the orange, and throw the peel away. By the bye, how absurd it was of Voltaire to be angry with the king of Prussia for that witty and just apologue."

"*Just!*" repeated Emilie.

"Just!" reiterated Mrs. Somers, in a harsh voice: "surely you think it so. For my part, I like the king the better for avowing his principles—all the world act as he did, though few avow it."

"What!" said Emilie, in a low voice, "do not you believe in the reality of gratitude?"

"Apparently," cried Mad. de Coulanges, who was still busy with her orange, "apparently, madame is a disciple of our Rochefoucault, and allows of no principle but self-love. In that case, I shall have as bitter quarrels with her as I have with you, mon cher abbé;—for Rochefoucault is a man I detest, or, rather, I detest his maxims—the duke himself, they

say, was the most amiable man of his day. Only conceive, that such a man should ascribe all our virtues to self-love and vanity!"

"And, perhaps," said the abbé, "it was merely vanity that made him say so—he wished to write a witty, satirical book; but I will lay a wager he did not think as ill of human nature as he speaks of it."

"He could hardly speak or think too ill of it," said Mrs. Somers, "if he judged of human nature by such speeches as that of the king of Prussia about his friend and the orange."

"But," said Emilie, in a timid voice, "would it not be doing poor human nature injustice to judge of it by such words as those? I am convinced, with M. l'abbé, that some men, for the sake of appearing witty, speak more malevolently than they feel; and, perhaps, this was the case with the king of Prussia."

"And Mlle. de Coulanges thinks, then," said Mrs. Somers, "that it is quite allowable, for the sake of appearing witty, to speak malevolently?"

"Dear madam! dear Mrs. Somers!—no!" cried Emilie; "you quite misunderstood me."

"Pardon me, I thought you were justifying the king of Prussia," continued Mrs. Somers; "and I do not well see how that can be done without allowing—what many people do in practice, though not in theory—that it is right, and becoming, and prudent, to sacrifice a friend for a bon-mot."

The angry emphasis, and pointed manner, in which Mrs. Somers spoke these words, terrified and completely abashed Emilie, who saw that something

more was meant than met the ear. In her confusion she ran over a variety of thoughts; but she could not recollect any thing that she had ever said, which merited the name of a bon-mot—and a malevolent bon-mot! "Surely what I said about that foolish novel cannot have offended Mrs. Somers?—How is it possible!—She cannot be so childish as to be angry with me merely for differing with her in opinion. What I said might be bad criticism, but it could not be malevolent; it referred only to the heroine of a novel. Perhaps the author may be a friend of hers, or some person who is in distress, and whom she has generously taken under her protection. Why did not I think of this before?—I was wrong to give my opinion so decidedly: but then my opinion is of so little consequence; assuredly it can neither do good nor harm to any author. When Mrs. Somers considers this, she will be pacified; and when she is once cool again, she will feel that I could not mean to say any thing ill-natured."

The moment Mrs. Somers saw that Emilie was sensible of her displeasure, she exerted herself to assume, during the remainder of the evening, an extraordinary appearance of gaiety and good-humour. Every body shared her smiles and kindness, except the unfortunate object of her indignation: she behaved towards Mlle. de Coulanges with the most punctilious politeness; but "all the cruel language of the eye" was sufficiently expressive of her real feelings. Emilie bore with this infirmity of temper with resolute patience: she expected that the fit would last only till she could ask an explanation;

and she followed Mrs. Somers, as was her usual custom upon such occasions, to her room at night, in order to assert her innocence. Mrs. Somers walked into her room in a reverie, without perceiving that she was followed by Emilie—threw herself into a chair—and gave a deep sigh.

"What is the matter, my dear friend!" Emilie began; but, on hearing the sound of her voice, Mrs. Somers started up with sudden anger; then, constraining herself, she said, "Pardon me, Mlle. de Coulanges, if I tell you that I really am tired to-night—body and mind—I wish to have rest for both if possible—would you be so very obliging as to pull that bell for Masham?—I wish you a very good night.——I hope Mad. de Coulanges will have her ass's milk at the proper hour to-morrow—I have given particular orders for that purpose."

"Your kindness to mamma, dear Mrs. Somers," said Emilie, "has been invariable, and——"

"Spare me, I beseech you, Mlle. de Coulanges, all these *grateful speeches*—I really am not prepared to hear them with temper to-night. Were you so good as to ring that bell—or will you give me leave to ring it myself?"

"If you insist upon it," said Emilie, gently withholding the tassel of the bell; "but if you would grant me five minutes—one minute—you might perhaps save yourself and me a sleepless night."

Mrs. Somers, incapable of longer commanding her passion, made no reply, but snatched the bell-rope, and rang violently—Emilie let go the tassel and withdrew. She heard Mrs. Somers say to herself, as she

left the room—"This is too much—too much—really too much!—hypocrisy I cannot endure.—Any thing but hypocrisy!"

These words hurt Emilie more than any thing Mrs. Somers had ever said: her own indignation was roused, and she was upon the point of returning to vindicate herself; but gratitude, if not prudence, conquered her resentment: she recollected her promise to bear with the temper of her benefactress; she recollected all Mrs. Somers's kindness to her mother; and quietly retired to her room, determining to wait till morning for a more favourable opportunity to speak.—After passing a restless night, and dreaming the common dream of falling down precipices, and the uncommon circumstance of dragging Mrs. Somers after her by a bell-rope, she wakened to the confused, painful remembrance of all that had passed the preceding evening. She was anxious to obtain admittance to Mrs. Somers as soon as she was dressed; but Masham informed her that her lady had given particular orders that she should "*not be disturbed.*" When Mrs. Somers made her appearance late at breakfast, there was the same forced good-humour in her countenance towards the company in general, and the same punctilious politeness towards Emilie, which had before appeared. She studiously avoided all opportunity of explaining herself; and every attempt of Emilie's towards a reconciliation, either by submissive gentleness or friendly familiarity, was disregarded, or noticed with cold disdain. Yet all this was visible only to her; for every body else observed that Mrs. Somers was

in remarkably good spirits, and in the most actively obliging humour imaginable. After breakfast she proposed and arranged various parties of pleasure: she went with Mad. de Coulanges to pay several visits; a large company dined with her; and at night she went to a concert. In the midst of these apparent amusements, Emilie was made as unhappy as the marked, yet mysterious, displeasure of a benefactress could render a person of real sensibility. As she did not wish to expose herself to a second repulse, she forbore to follow Mrs. Somers to her room at night; but she sent her this note by Mrs. Masham.

"I have done or said something to offend you, dear Mrs. Somers. If you knew how much pain I have felt from your displeasure, I am sure you would explain to me what it can be. Is it possible that my differing in opinion from you about the heroine of the novel can have offended you?—Perhaps the author of the book is a friend of yours, or under your protection. Be assured, that if this be the case, I did not in the least suspect it at the time I made the criticism. Perhaps it was this to which you alluded when you said that the king of Prussia was not the only person who would not hesitate to sacrifice a friend for a bon-mot. What injustice you do me by such an idea! I will not here say one word about my gratitude or my affection, lest you should again reproach me with hypocrisy—any thing else I am able to bear. Pray write, if you will not speak to me.

"EMILIE."

When Emilie was just falling asleep, Masham came into her room with a note in her hand.

"Mademoiselle, I am sorry to waken you; but my mistress thought you would not sleep, unless you read this note to-night."

Emilie started up in her bed, and read the following *note* of four pages.

"Yes, I will write, because I am ashamed to speak to you, my dear Emilie. I beg your pardon for pulling the bell-cord so violently from your hand last night—you must have thought me quite ill-bred; and still more, I reproach myself for what I said about *hypocrisy*.—You have certainly the sweetest and gentlest temper imaginable—would to Heaven I had! But the strength of my feelings absolutely runs away with me. It is the doom of persons of great sensibility to be both unreasonable and unhappy; and often, alas! to involve in their misery those for whom they have the most enthusiastic affection. You see, my dear Emilie, the price you must pay for being my friend; but you have strength of mind joined to a feeling heart, and you will bear with my defects. Dissimulation is not one of them. In spite of all my efforts, I find it is impossible ever to conceal from you any of even my most unreasonable fancies—your note, which is so characteristically frank and artless, has opened my eyes to my own folly. I must show you that, when I am in my senses, I do you justice. You deserve to be treated with perfect openness; therefore, however humiliating the explanation, I will confess to you the real cause

of my displeasure. When you spoke of the heroine of this foolish novel, what you said was so applicable to some part of my own history and character, that I could not help suspecting you had heard the facts from a person with whom you spent some hours lately; and I was much hurt by your alluding to them in such a severe and public manner. You will ask me, how I could conceive you to be capable of such unprovoked malevolence: and my answer is, 'I cannot tell;' I can only say, such is the effect of the unfortunate susceptibility of my heart, or, to speak more candidly, of my temper. I confess I cannot, in these particulars, alter my nature. Blame me as much as I blame myself; be as angry as you please, or as you can, my gentle friend: but at last you must pity and forgive me.

"Now that all this affair is off my mind, I can sleep in peace: and so, I hope, will you, my dear Emilie—Good night! If friends never quarrelled, they would never taste the joys of reconciliation. Believe me,

"Your ever sincere and affectionate

"A. SOMERS."

No one tasted the joys of reconciliation more than Emilie; but, after reiterated experience, she was inclined to believe that they cannot balance the evils of quarrelling. Mrs. Somers was one of those, who "confess their faults, but never mend;" and who expect, for this gratuitous candour, more applause than others would claim for the real merit of reformation. So far did this lady carry her admiration of

her own candour, that she was actually upon the point of quarrelling with Emilie again, the next morning, because she did not seem sufficiently sensible of the magnanimity with which she had confessed herself to be ill-tempered. These few specimens are sufficient to give an idea of this lady's powers of tormenting; but, to form an adequate notion of their effect upon Emilie's spirits, we must conceive the same sort of provocations to be repeated every day, for several months. Petty torments, incessantly repeated, exhaust the most determined patience.

All this time, Mad. de Coulanges went on very smoothly with Mrs. Somers; for she had not Emilie's sensibility; and, notwithstanding her great quickness, a hundred things might pass, and did pass, before her eyes, without her seeing them. She examined no farther than the surface; and, provided that there was not any deficiency of those *little attentions* to which she had been accustomed, it never occurred to her that a friend could be more or less pleased: she did not understand or study physiognomy; a smile of the lips was, to her, always a sufficient token of approbation; and, whether it were merely conventional, or whether it came from the heart, she never troubled herself to inquire. Provided that she saw at dinner the usual *couverts*, and that she had a sufficient number of people to converse with, or rather to talk to, she was satisfied that every thing was right. All the variations in Mrs. Somers's temper were unmarked by her, or went under the general head, *vapeurs noirs*. This species of ig-

norance, or confidence, produced the best effects; for as Mrs. Somers could not, without passing the obvious bounds of politeness, make Mad. de Coulanges sensible of her displeasure, and as she had the utmost respect for the countess's opinion of her good breeding, she was, to a certain degree, compelled to command her temper. Mad. de Coulanges often, without knowing it, tried it terribly, by differing from her in taste and judgment, and by supporting her own side of the question with all the enthusiastic volubility of the French language. Sometimes the English and French music were compared—sometimes the English and French painters; and every time the theatre was mentioned, Mad. de Coulanges pronounced an eulogium on her favourite French actors, and triumphed over the comparison between the elegance of the French, and the *grossièreté* of the English taste for comedy.

"Good Heaven!" said she, "your fashionable comedies would be too absurd to make the lowest of our audiences at the Boulevards laugh; you have excluded sentiment and wit, and what have you in their place? Characters out of drawing and out of nature; grotesque figures, such as you see in a child's magic lantern. Then you talk of English humour —I wish I could understand it; but I cannot be diverted with seeing a tailor turned gentleman pricking his father with a needle, or a man making grimaces over a jug of sour beer."

Mrs. Somers, piqued perhaps by the justice of some of these observations, would dryly answer, that it was impossible for a foreigner to comprehend En-

glish humour—that she believed the French, in particular, were destitute of taste for humour.

Mad. de Coulanges insisted upon it, that the French have humour; and Molière furnished her with many admirable illustrations.

Emilie, in support of her mother, read a passage from that elegant writer, M. Suard,* who has lately

* " Il est très-difficile de se faire une idée nette de ce que les Anglais entendent par ce mot; on a tenté plusieurs fois sans succès d'en donner une définition précise. Congreve, qui assurement a mis beaucoup d'*humour* dans ses comédies, dit, que c'est *une manière singulière et inévitable de faire ou de dire quelque chose, qui est naturelle et propre à un homme seul, et qui distingue ses discours et ses actions des discours et des actions de tout autre.*

" Cette définition, que nous traduisons littéralement, n'est pas lumineuse ; elle conviendrait également à la manière dont Alexandre parle et agit dans Plutarque, et à celle dont Sancho parle et agit dans Cervantes. Il y a apparence que l'*humour* est comme l'esprit, et que ceux qui en ont le plus ne savent pas trop bien ce que c'est.

" Nous croyons que ce genre de plaisanterie consiste surtout dans des idées ou des tournures originales, qui tiennent plusau caractère qu'à l'esprit, et qui semblent échapper à celui qui les produit.

" L'homme d'*humour* est un plaisant sérieux, qui dit des choses plaisantes sans avoir l'air de vouloir être plaisant. Au reste, une scene de Vanbrugh ou une satire de Swift, feront mieux sentir ce que c'est, que toutes les définitions du monde. Quant à la prétention de quelques Anglais sur la possession exclusive de l'*humour*, nous pensons que si ce qu'ils entendent par ce mot est un genre de plaisanterie qu'on ne trouve ni dans Aristophane, dans Plaute, et dans Lucien, chez les anciens ; ni dans l'Arioste, le Berni, le Pulci, et tant d'autres, chez les Italiens ; ni dans Cervantes, chez les Espagnols ; ni dans Rabener, chez les Alle-

attacked, with much ability, the pretensions of the English to the exclusive possession of humour.

Mrs. Somers then changed her ground, and inveighed against French tragedy, and the unnatural tones and attitudes of the French tragic actors.

"Your heroes on the French stage," said she, "always look over their right shoulders, to express magnanimous disdain; and a lover, whether he be Grecian or Roman, Turk, Israelite, or American, must regularly show his passion by the pompous emphasis with which he pronounces the word MADAME! —a word which must certainly have, for a French audience, some magical charm, incomprehensible to other nations."

What was yet more incomprehensible to Mad. de Coulanges, was the enthusiasm of the English for that bloody-minded barbarian Shakspeare, who is never satisfied till he has strewed the stage with dead bodies; who treats his audience like children, that are to be frightened out of their wits by ghosts of all sorts and sizes in their winding sheets; or by a set of old beggarmen, dressed in women's clothes, armed with broomsticks, and dancing and howling out their nonsensical song round a black kettle.

Mrs. Somers, smiling as in scorn, would only reply, "Madame la comtesse, yours is Voltaire's

mands : ni dans la Pantagruel, la satire Ménippée, le Roman comique, les comédies de Moliere, de Dufrèny, de Regnard etc., nous ne savons pas ce qui c'est, et nous ne prendrons pas la peine de la chercher."—*Suard, Melanges de Litterature*, vol. iv., p. 366.

Shakspeare, not ours.—Have you read Mrs. Montagu's essay upon Shakspeare?"

"No."

"Then positively you must read it before we say one word more upon the subject."

Mad. de Coulanges, though unwilling to give up the pleasure of talking, took the book, which Mrs. Somers pressed upon her, with a promise to read it through some morning; but, unluckily, she chanced to open it towards the end, and happened to see some animadversions upon Racine, by which she was so astonished and disgusted that she could read no more. She threw down the book, defying *any good critic to point out a single bad line in Racine.* "This is a defiance I have heard made by men of letters of the highest reputation in Paris," added la comtesse: "have not you, Mons. l'Abbé?"

The abbé, who was madame's common voucher, acceded, with this slight emendation—that he had heard numbers defy any critic of good taste to point out a flat line in *Phædre.*

Mrs. Somers would, perhaps, have acknowledged the beauties of Phædre, if she had not been piqued by this defiance; but exaggeration on one side produced injustice on the other: and these disputes about Racine and Shakspeare were continually renewed, and never ended to the satisfaction of either party. Those who will not make allowances for national prejudice, and who do not consider how much all our tastes are influenced by early education, example, and the accidental association of ideas, may dispute for ever without coming to any conclusion;

especially, if they avoid stating any distinct proposition; if each of the combatants set up a standard of his own, as the universal standard of taste; and if, instead of arguments, both parties have recourse to wit and ridicule. In these skirmishes, however, Mad. de Coulanges, though apparently the most eager for victory, never seriously lost her temper—her eagerness was more of manner than of mind; after pleading the cause of Racine, as if it were a matter of life and death, as if the fate of Europe or the universe depended upon it, she would turn to discuss the merits of a riband with equal vehemence, or coolly observe that she was hoarse, and that she would quit Racine for a better thing—*de l'eau sucré.* Mrs. Somers, on the contrary, took the cause of Shakspeare, or any other cause that she defended, seriously to heart. The wit or raillery of her adversary, if she affected not to be hurt by it at the moment, left a sting in her mind which rankled long and sorely. Though she often failed to refute the arguments brought against her, yet she always rose from the debate precisely of her first opinion; and even her silence, which Mad. de Coulanges sometimes mistook for assent or conviction, was only the symptom of contemptuous pity—the proof that she deemed the understanding of her opponent beneath all fair competition with her own. The understanding of Mad. de Coulanges had, indeed, in the space of a few months, sunk far below the point of mediocrity, in Mrs. Somers's estimation—she had begun by overvaluing, and she ended by underrating it. She at first had taken it for granted that Mad. de

Coulanges possessed a "very superior understanding and great strength of mind;" then she discovered that la comtesse was "uncommonly superficial, even for a Frenchwoman;" and at last she decided, that "really Mad. de Coulanges was a very silly woman."

Mrs. Somers now began to be seriously angry with Emilie for always being of her mother's opinion: "It is really, Mlle. de Coulanges, carrying your filial affection too far. We cold-hearted English can scarcely conceive this sort of fervid passion, which French children express about every thing, the merest trifle, that relates to *mamma!*—Well! it is an amiable national prejudice; and one cannot help wishing that it may never, like other amiable enthusiasms, fail in the moment of serious trial."

Emilie, touched to the quick upon a subject nearest her heart, replied with a degree of dignity and spirit which surprised Mrs. Somers, who had never seen in her any thing but the most submissive gentleness. "The affection, whether enthusiastic or not, which we French children profess for our parents, has been of late years put to some strong trials, and has not been found to fail. In many instances it has proved superior to all earthly terrors —to imprisonment — to torture — to death — to Robespierre. Daughters have sacrificed themselves for their parents.——Oh! if *my* life could have saved my father's!"

Emilie clasped her hands, and looked up to heaven with the unaffected expression of filial piety in her countenance. Every body was silent. Mrs. Somers

was struck with regret—with remorse—for the taunting manner in which she had spoken.

"My dearest Emilie, forgive me!" cried she; "I am shocked at what I said."

Emilie took Mrs. Somers's hand between hers, and endeavoured to smile. Mrs. Somers resolved that she would keep, henceforward, the strictest guard upon her own temper; and that she would never more be so ungenerous, so barbarous, as to insult one who was so gentle, so grateful, so much in her power, and so deserving of her affection. These good resolutions, formed in the moment of contrition, were, however, soon forgotten: strong emotions of the heart are transient in their power; habits of the temper permanent in their influence.—Like a child who promises to be always *good*, and forgets its promise in an hour, Mrs. Somers soon grew tired of keeping her temper in subjection. It did not, indeed, break out immediately towards Emilie; but, in her conversations with Mad. de Coulanges, the same feelings of irritation and contempt recurred; and Emilie, who was a clear-sighted bystander, suffered continual uneasiness upon these occasions—uneasiness, which appeared to Mad. de Coulanges perfectly causeless, and at which she frequently expressed her astonishment. Emilie's prescient kindness often, indeed, "felt the coming storm;" while her mother's careless eye saw not, even when the dark cloud was just ready to burst over her head. With all the innocent address of which she was mistress, Emilie tried to turn the course of the conversation whenever it tended towards *dangerous* subjects of discussion; but

her mother, far from shunning, would often dare and provoke the war; and she would combat long after both parties were in the dark, even till her adversary quitted the field of battle, exclaiming, "*Let us have peace on any terms, my dear countess!—I give up the point to you, Mad. de Coulanges.*"

This last phrase Emilie particularly dreaded, as the precursor of ill-humour for some succeeding hours. Mrs. Somers at length became so conscious of her own inability to conceal her contempt or to command her temper, that she was almost as desirous as Emilie could be to avoid these arguments; and, the moment the countess prepared for the attack, she would recede, with "Excuse me, Mad. de Coulanges: we had better not talk upon these subjects—it is of no use—really of no manner of use: let us converse upon other topics—there are subjects enough, I hope, upon which we shall always agree."

Emilie was at first rejoiced at this arrangement, but the constraint was insupportable to her mother: indeed, the circle of proper subjects for conversation contracted daily; for not only the declared offensive topics were to be avoided, but innumerable others, bordering on or allied to them, were to be shunned with equal care—a degree of caution of which the volatile countess was utterly incapable. One day, at dinner, she asked the gentleman opposite to her, "How long this intolerable rule—of talking only upon subjects where people are of the same opinion—had been the fashion, and what time it would probably last in England?—If it continue much longer, I must fly the country," said she. "I would almost as

soon, at this rate, be a prisoner in Paris, as in your land of freedom. You value, above all things, your liberty of the press—now to me, liberty of the tongue, which is evidently a part, if not the best part, of personal liberty, is infinitely more dear. Bon Dieu! —even in l'Abbaye one might talk of Racine!"

Mad. de Coulanges spoke this half in jest, half in earnest; but Mrs. Somers took it wholly in earnest, and was most seriously offended. Her feelings upon the occasion were strongly expressed in a letter to a friend, to whom she had, from her infancy, been in the habit of confiding all her joys and sorrows—all the histories of her loves and hates—of her quarrels and reconciliations. This friend was an elderly lady, who, besides possessing superior mental endowments which inspired admiration, and a character which commanded high respect, was blest with an uncommonly placid, benevolent temper. This enabled her to do what no other human being had ever accomplished—to continue in peace and amity, for upwards of thirty years, with Mrs. Somers. The following is one of many hundreds of epistolary complaints or invectives, which during the course of that time, this "much enduring lady" was doomed to read and answer.

"TO LADY LITTLETON.

"For once, my dear friend, I am secure of your sympathising in my indignation—my long suppressed, just, virtuous indignation—yes, virtuous; for I do hold indignation to be a part of virtue: it is the natural, proper expression of a warm heart and a strong

character against the cold-blooded vices of meanness and ingratitude. Would that those to whom I allude could feel it as a punishment!—but no, this is not the sort of punishment they are formed to feel. Nothing but what comes home to their interests—their paltry interests!—their pleasures—their selfish pleasures!—their amusements—their frivolous amusesures! can touch souls of such a sort. To this half-formed race of *worldings*, who are scarce endued with a moral sense, the generous expression of indignation always appears something incomprehensible—ridiculous; or, in their language, *outré! inouï!* With such beings, therefore, I always am—as much as my nature will allow me to be—upon my guard; I keep within what they call the bounds of politeness—their dear politeness! What a system of *simagreé* it is, after all! and how can honest human nature bear to be penned up all its days by the Chinese paling of ceremony, or that French filigree work, *politesse?* English human nature cannot endure this, as *yet;* and I am glad of it—heartly glad of it——Now to the point.

"You guess that I am going to speak of the Coulanges. Yes, my dear friend, you were quite right in advising me, when I first became acquainted with them, not to give way blindly to my enthusiasm—not to be too generous, or to expect too much gratitude. Gratitude! why should I ever expect to meet with any?—Where I have most deserved, most hoped for it, I have been always most disappointed. My life has been a life of sacrifices!—thankless and fruitless sacrifices! There is not any possible species

of sacrifice of interest, pleasure, happiness, which I have not been willing to make—which I have not made—for my friends—for my enemies. Early in life, I gave up a lover I adored to a friend, who afterwards deserted me. I married a man I detested to oblige a mother, who at last refused to see me on her death-bed. What exertions I made for years to win the affection of the husband to whom I was only bound in duty! My generosity was thrown away upon him—he died—I became ambitious—I had means of gratifying my ambition—a splendid alliance was in my power. Ambition is a strong passion as well as love—but I sacrificed it without hesitation to my children—I devoted myself to the education of my two sons, one of whom has never, in any instance, since he became his own master, shown his mother tenderness or affection; and who, on some occasions, has scarcely behaved towards her with the common forms of respect and duty. Despairing, utterly despairing, of gratitude from my own family and natural friends, I looked abroad, and endeavoured to form friendships with strangers, in hopes of finding more congenial tempers. I spared nothing to earn attachment—my time, my health, my money. I lavished money so, as even, notwithstanding my large income, to reduce myself frequently to the most straitened and embarrassing circumstances. And by all I have done, by all I have suffered, what have I gained?—not a single friend—except yourself. You on whom I have never conferred the slightest favour, you are at this instant the only friend upon earth by whom I am really beloved. To you, who know my

whole history, I may speak of myself as I have done, Heaven knows! not with vanity, but with deep humiliation and bitterness of heart. The experience of my whole life leaves me only the deplorable conviction that it is impossible to do good, that it is vain to hope even for friendship from those whom we oblige.

" My last disappointment has been cruel, in proportion to the fond hopes I had formed. I cannot cure myself of this credulous folly. I did form high expectations of happiness from the society and gratitude of this Mad. and Mlle. de Coulanges; but the mother turns out to be a mere frivolous French comtesse, ignorant, vain, and positive—as all ignorant people are; full of national prejudices, which she supports in the most absurd and petulant manner. Possessed with the insanity, common to all Parisians, of thinking that Paris is the whole world, and that nothing can be good taste, or good sense, or good manners, but what is *à-la-mode de Paris;* through all her boasted politeness, you see, even by her mode of praising, that she has a most illiberal contempt for all who are not Parisians—she considers the rest of the world as barbarians. I could give you a thousand instances; but her conversation is really so frivolous, that it is not worth reciting. I bore with it day after day for several months with a patience for which, I am sure, you would have given me credit; and I let her go on eternally with absurd observations upon Shakspeare, and extravagant nonsense about Racine. To avoid disputing with her, I gave up every point—I acqui-

esced in all she said—and only begged to have peace. Still she was not satisfied. You know there are tempers which never can be contented, do what you will to please them. Mad. de Coulanges actually quarrelled with me for begging that we might have peace; and that we might talk upon subjects where we should not be likely to disagree. This will seem to you incredible; but it is the nature of French caprice: and for this I ought to have been prepared. But, indeed, I never could have prepared myself for the strange manner in which this lady thought proper to manifest her anger this day at dinner, before a large company. She spoke absolutely, notwithstanding all her good breeding, in the most brutally ungrateful manner; and, after all I have done for her, she represented me as being as great a tyrant as Robespierre, and spoke of my house as a more intolerable prison than any in Paris!!! I only state the fact to you, without making any comments—I never yet saw so thoroughly selfish and unfeeling a human being.

"The daughter has as far too much as the mother has too little sensibility. Emilie plagues me to death with her fine feelings and her sentimentality, and all her French parade of affection, and superfluity of endearing expressions, which mean nothing, and disgust English ears. She is always fancying that I am angry or displeased with her or with her mother; and then I am to have tears, and explanations, and apologies: she has not a mind large enough to understand my character: and if I were to explain to eternity, she would be as much in the dark as ever.

Yet, after all, there is something so ingenuous and affectionate about this girl that I cannot help loving her, and that is what provokes me; for she does not, nor ever can, feel for me the affection that I have for her. My little hastiness of temper she has not strength of mind sufficient to bear—I see she is dreadfully afraid of me, and more constrained in my company than in that of any other person. Not a visitor comes, however insignificant, but Mlle. de Coulanges seems more at her ease, and converses more with them than with me—she talks to me only of gratitude, and such stuff. She is one of those feeble persons who, wanting confidence in themselves, are continually afraid that they shall not be grateful enough; and so they reproach and torment themselves, and refine and *sentimentalize,* till gratitude becomes burdensome (as it always does to weak minds), and the very idea of a benefactor odious. Mlle. de Coulanges was originally unwilling to accept of any obligation from me: she knew her own character better than I did. I do not deny that she has a heart; but she has no soul: I hope you understand and feel the difference. I rejoice, my dear lady Littleton, that you are coming to town immediately. I am harassed almost to death between want of feeling and fine feeling. I really long to see you and to talk over all these things. Nobody but you, my dear friend, ever understood me.—Farewell!

"Yours affectionately,

"A. SOMERS."

To this long letter, lady Littleton replied by the following short note.

"I hope to see you the day after to-morrow, my dear friend; in the mean time, do not decide, irrevocably, that Mlle. de Coulanges has no soul.

"Yours affectionately,

"L. LITTLETON."

Mrs. Somers was rather disappointed by the calmness of this note; and she was most impatient to see lady Littleton, that she might work up her mind to the proper pitch of indignation. She stationed a servant at her ladyship's house to give her notice the moment of her arrival in town. The instant that she was informed of it she ordered her carriage; and the whole of her conversation during this visit was an invective against Emilie and Mad. de Coulanges. The next day, Emilie, who had heard the most enthusiastic eulogiums upon lady Littleton, expressed much satisfaction on finding that she was come to town; and requested Mrs. Somers's permission to accompany her on her next visit. The request was rather embarrassing; but Mrs. Somers granted it, with a sort of constrained civility. It was fortunate for Emilie that she was so unsuspicious; for her manner was consequently frank, natural, and affectionate; and she appeared to the greatest advantage to lady Littleton. Mrs. Somers threw herself back in the chair and sat silent, whilst Emilie, in hopes of pleasing her, conversed with the utmost freedom with her friend. The conversation, at last, was interrupted by an exclamation from Mrs. Somers, "Good Heavens! my dear lady Littleton, how can

you endure this smell of paint? It has made my head ache terribly—where does it come from?"

"From my bedchamber," said lady Littleton. "They have, unluckily, misunderstood my orders; and they have freshly painted every one in my house."

"Then it is impossible that you should sleep here —I will not allow you—it will poison you—it will give you the palsy immediately—it is destruction—it is death. You must come home with me directly —I insist upon it——But, no," said she, checking herself, with a look of sudden disappointment, "no, my dearest friend! I cannot invite you; for I have not a bed to offer you."

"Yes, mine—you forget mine—dear Mrs. Somers," cried Emilie; "you know I can sleep with mamma."

"By no means, Mlle. de Coulanges; you cannot possibly imagine——"

"I only imagine the truth," said Emilie, "that this arrangement would be infinitely more convenient to mamma; I know she likes to have me in the room with her. Pray, dear Mrs. Somers, let it be so."

Mrs. Somers made many ceremonious speeches: but lady Littleton seemed so well inclined to accept Emilie's offered room, that she was obliged to yield. She was vexed to perceive that Emilie's manners pleased lady Littleton; and, after they returned home, the activity with which Emilie moved her books, her drawing box, work, &c., furnished Mrs. Somers with fresh matter for displeasure. At night, when lady Littleton went to take possession of her apartment, and when she observed how active and

obliging Mlle. de Coulanges had been, Mrs. Somers shook her head, and replied, "All this is just a proof to me of what I asserted, lady Littleton—and what I must irrevocably assert—that Mlle. de Coulanges has no soul. You are a new acquaintance, and I am an old friend. She exerts herself to please you; she does not care what I think or what I feel about the matter. Now this is just what I call having no soul."

"My dear Mrs. Somers," said lady Littleton, "be reasonable; and you must perceive that Emilie's eagerness to please me arises from her regard and gratitude to you: she has, I make no doubt, heard that I am your intimate friend, and your praises have disposed her to like me.—Is this a proof that she has no soul?"

"My dear lady Littleton, we will not dispute about it—I see you are fascinated, as I was at first. Manner is a prodigious advantage—but I own I prefer solid English sincerity. Stay a little: as soon as Mlle. de Coulanges thinks herself secure of you, she will completely abandon me. I make no doubt that she will complain to you of my bad temper and ill usage; and I dare say that she will succeed in prejudicing you against me."

"She will succeed only in prejudicing me against herself, if she attempt to injure you," said lady Littleton; "but, till I have some plain proof of it, I cannot believe that any person has such a base and ungrateful disposition."

Mrs. Somers spent an hour and a quarter in explaining her causes of complaint against both mother

and daughter; and she at last retired much dissatisfied, because her friend was not as angry as she was, but persisted in the resolution to see more before she decided. After passing a few days in the house with Mlle. de Coulanges, lady Littleton frankly declared to Mrs. Somers that she thought her complaints of Emilie's temper quite unreasonable, and that she was a most amiable and affectionate girl. Respect for lady Littleton restrained Mrs. Somers from showing the full extent of her vexation; she contented herself with repeating, "Mlle. de Coulanges is certainly a very amiable young woman—I would by no means prejudice you against her—but when you know her as well as I do, you will find that she has no soul."

Mrs. Somers, in the course of four-and-twenty hours, found a multitude of proofs in support of her opinion; but they were none of them absolutely satisfactory to lady Littleton's judgment. Whilst they were debating about her character, Emilie came into the room to show Mrs. Somers a *French* translation, which she had been making, of a pretty little English poem, called "The Emigrant's Grave." It was impossible to be displeased with the translation, or with the motive from which it was attempted; for it was done at the particular request of Mrs. Somers. This lady's ingenuity, however, did not fail to discover some cause for dissatisfaction. Mlle. de Coulanges had adapted the words to a French, and not to an English air.

"This is a favourite air of mamma's," said Emilie,

"and I thought that she would be pleased by my choosing it."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Somers, in her constrained voice, "I remember that the countess de Coulanges and her friend—or your friend—M. de Brisac, were charmed with this air, when you sang it the other night. I found fault with it, I believe—but then you had a majority against me; and with some people that is sufficient. Few ask themselves *what constitutes a majority*—numbers or sense. Judgments and tastes may differ in value; but one vote is always as good as another, in the opinion of those who are decided merely by numbers."

"I hope that I shall never be one of those," said Emilie. "Upon the present occasion I assure you, my dear Mrs. Somers, that I was influenced by——"

"O! my dear Mlle. de Coulanges," interrupted Mrs. Somers, "you need not give yourself the trouble to explain about such a trifle—the thing is perfectly clear. And nothing is more natural than that you should despise the taste of a friend when put in competition with that of a lover."

"Of a lover!"

"Yes, of a lover. Why should Mlle. de Coulanges think it necessary to look astonished? But young ladies imagine this sort of dissimulation is becoming; and can I hope to meet with an exception, or to find one superior to the *finesse* of her sex?——I beg your pardon, Mlle. de Coulanges, I really forgot that lady Littleton was present when this terrible word lover escaped—but I can assure you that

frankness is not incompatible with *her* ideas of delicacy."

"You are mistaken, dear Mrs. Somers; indeed you are mistaken," said Emilie; "but you are displeased with me now, and I will take a more favourable moment to set you right. In the mean time, I will go and water the hydrangia, which I forgot, and which I reproached myself for forgetting yesterday."

Emilie left the room.

"Are you convinced now, my dear lady Littleton," cried Mrs. Somers, "that this girl has no soul—and very little heart?"

"I am convinced only that she has an excellent temper," said lady Littleton. "I hope you do not think a good temper is incompatible with a heart or a soul."

"I will tell you what I think, and what I am sure of," cried Mrs. Somers, raising her voice; "that Mlle. de Coulanges will be a constant cause of dispute and uneasiness between you and me, lady Littleton—I foresee the end of this. As a return for all I have done for her and her mother, she will rob me of the affections of one whom I love and esteem, respect and admire—as she well knows—above all other human beings. She will rob me of the affections of one who has been my friend, my best, my only constant friend, for twenty years!——Oh! why am I doomed eternally to be the victim of ingratitude?"

In spite of lady Littleton's efforts to stop and calm her, Mrs. Somers burst out of the room in an agony of passion. She ran up a back staircase which led to her dressing-room, but suddenly stopped when she

came to the landing-place, for she found Emilie watering her plants.

"Look, dear Mrs. Somers, this hydrangia is just going to blow; though I was so careless as to forget to water it yesterday."

"I beg, Mlle. de Coulanges, that you will not trouble yourself," said Mrs. Somers, haughtily. "Surely there are servants enough in this house whose business it is to remember these things."

"Yes," said Emilie, "it is their business, but it is my pleasure. You must not, indeed you must not, take my watering-pot from me!"

"Pardon me, I must, mademoiselle—you are very condescending and polite, and I am very blunt and rude, or whatever you please to think me. But the fact is, that I am not to be flattered by what the French call *des petites attentions:* they are suited to little minds, but not to me. You will never know my character, Mlle. de Coulanges—I am not to be pleased by such means."

"Teach me then better means, my dear friend, and do not bid me despair of ever pleasing you," said Emilie, throwing her arms round Mrs. Somers to detain her.

"Excuse me—I am an Englishwoman, and do not love *embrassades,* which mean nothing," said Mrs. Somers, struggling to disengage herself; and she rushed suddenly forward, without perceiving that Emilie's foot was entangled in her train. Emilie was thrown from the top of the stairs to the bottom. Mrs. Somers screamed—lady Littleton came out of her room.

"She is dead!—I have killed her!"—cried Mrs. Somers. Lady Littleton raised Emilie from the ground—she was quite stunned by the violence of the fall.

"Oh! speak to me! dearest Emilie, speak once more!" said Mrs. Somers.

As soon as Emilie could speak, she assured Mrs. Somers that she should be quite well in a few minutes. When she attempted, however, to walk, she found she was unable to move, for her ankle was violently sprained: she was carried into lady Littleton's room, and placed upon a sofa. She exerted herself to bear the pain she felt, that she might not alarm or seem to reproach Mrs. Somers; and she repeatedly blamed herself for the awkwardness with which she had occasioned her own fall. Mrs. Somers, in the greatest bustle and confusion, called every servant in the house about her, sent them different ways for all the remedies she had ever heard of for a sprain; then was sure Emilie's skull was fractured—asked fifty times in five minutes whether she did not feel a certain sickness in her stomach, which was the infallible sign of "*something wrong*"—insisted upon her smelling at salts, vinegar, and various essences; and made her swallow, or at least taste, every variety of drops and cordials. By this time Mad. de Coulanges, who was at her toilette, had heard of the accident, and came running in half dressed; the hurry of Mrs. Somers's manner, the crowd of assistants, the quantity of remedies, the sight of Emilie stretched upon a sofa, and the sound of the word *fracture*, which caught her ear, had such an effect upon the countess, that she

was instantly seized with one of her nervous attacks; and Mrs. Somers was astonished to see Emilie spring from the sofa to assist her mother. When Mad. de Coulanges recovered, Emilie used all her powers of persuasion to calm her spirits, laughed at the idea of her skull being fractured, and said, that she had only twisted her ankle, which would merely prevent her from dancing for a few days. The countess pitied herself for having such terribly weak nerves—congratulated herself upon her daughter's safety—declared that it was a miracle how she could have escaped, in falling down such a narrow staircase—observed, that, though the stairs in London were cleaner and better carpeted, the staircases of Paris were at least four times as broad, and, consequently, a hundred times as safe. She then reminded Emilie of an anecdote mentioned by Mad. de Genlis about a princess of France, who, when she retired to a convent, complained bitterly of the narrowness of the staircase, which, she said, she found a real misfortune to be obliged to descend. "Tell me, Emilie, what was the name of the princess?"

"The princess Louisa of France, I believe, mamma," replied Emilie.

Mad. de Coulanges repeated, "Ay, the princess Louisa of France;" and then, well satisfied, returned to finish her toilette.

"You have an excellent memory, Mlle. de Coulanges," said Mrs. Somers, looking with an air of pique at Emilie. "I really am rejoiced to see you so much yourself again—I thought you were seriously hurt."

"I told you that I was not," said Emilie, forcing a smile.

"Yes, but I was such a fool as to be terrified out of my senses by seeing you lie down on the sofa. I might have saved myself and you a great deal of trouble. I must have appeared ridiculously officious. I saw indeed that I was troublesome; and I seem to be too much for you now. I will leave you with lady Littleton, to explain to her how the accident happened. Pray tell the thing just as it was—do not spare me, I beg. I do not desire that lady Littleton, or any friend I have upon earth, should think better of me than I deserve. Remember, you have my free leave, Mlle. de Coulanges, to speak of me as you think—so don't spare me!" cried Mrs. Somers, shutting the door with violence as she left the room.

"Lean upon me, my dear," said lady Littleton, who saw that Emilie turned exceedingly pale, and looked towards a chair, as if she wished to reach it, but could not.

"I thought," said she, in a faint voice, "that this pain would go off, but it is grown more violent." Emilie could say no more; she had borne intense pain as long as she was able: and now, quite overcome, she leaned back, and fainted. Lady Littleton threw open the window, sprinkled water upon Emilie's face, and gave her assistance in the kindest manner, without calling any of the servants; she knew that the return of Mrs. Somers would do more harm than good. Emilie soon recovered her recollection; and, whilst lady Littleton was rubbing the sprained ankle with ether, in hopes of lessening the

pain, she asked how the accident had happened.—Emilie replied simply, that she had entangled her foot in Mrs. Somers's gown. "I understand, from what Mrs. Somers hinted when she left the room," said lady Littleton, "that she was somehow in fault in this affair, and that you could blame her if you would; but I see that you will not; and I love you the better for justifying the good opinion that I had formed of you, Emilie.——But I will not talk sentiment to you now—you are in too much pain to relish it."

"Not at all," said Emilie: "I feel more pleasure than pain at this moment; indeed my ankle does not hurt me now that I am quite still—the pleasant cold of the ether has relieved the pain. How kind you are to me, lady Littleton, and how much I am obliged to you for judging so favourably of my character!"

"You are not obliged to me, my dear, for I do you only justice."

"Justice is sometimes felt as the greatest possible obligation, especially by those who have experienced the reverse.—But," said Emilie, checking herself, "let me not blame Mrs. Somers, or incline you to blame her. I should do very wrong, indeed, if I were, in return for all she had done for us, to cause any jealousies or quarrels between her and her best friend. Oh! that is what I most dread! To prevent it, I would—it is not polite to say so—but I would, my dear lady Littleton, even withdraw myself from your society. This very day you return to your own house. You were so good as to ask me to go often to

see you: forgive me if I do not avail myself of this kind permission. You will know my reasons; and I hope they are such as you will approve."

A servant came in, to say that her ladyship's carriage was at the door.

"One word more before you go, my dear lady Littleton," said Emilie, with a supplicating voice and countenance. "Tell me, I beseech you—for you have been her friend from her childhood, and must know better than any one living—tell me how I can please Mrs. Somers. I begin to be afraid that I shall at last be weary of my fruitless efforts, and I dread—above all things I dread—that my affection for her should be worn out. How painful it would be to sustain the continual weight of obligation without being able to feel the pleasure of gratitude!"

Lady Littleton was going to reply, but she was prevented by the sudden entrance of Mrs. Somers with her face of wrath.

"So, lady Littleton, you are actually going, I find!—And I have not had one moment of your conversation. May I be allowed—if Mlle. de Coulanges has finished her mysteries—to say a few words to you?"

"You will give me leave, I am sure, Emilie," said lady Littleton, "to repeat to Mrs. Somers every word that you have said to me?"

"Yes, every word," said Emilie, blushing, yet speaking with firmness. "I have no mysteries—I do not wish to conceal from Mrs. Somers any thing that I say or think."

Mrs. Somers seized lady Littleton's arm, and left

the room; but when she had entire possession of her friend's ear, she had nothing to say, or nothing that she would say, except half sentences, reproaching her for not staying longer, and insinuating that Emilie would be the cause of their separating for ever.—"Now, as you have her permission, will you favour me with a repetition of her last conversation?"

"Not in your present humour, my dear," said lady Littleton: "this is not the happy moment to speak reason to you. Adieu! I give you four-and-twenty hours' grace before I declare you a bankrupt in temper. You shall hear from me to-morrow; for, on some subjects, I have always found it better to write than to speak to you."

Mrs. Somers continued during the remainder of the day in a desperate state of ill-humour, which was increased by finding that Mlle. de Coulanges could neither stand nor walk. Mrs. Somers was persuaded that Emilie, if she would have exerted herself, could have done both, but that she preferred exciting the pity of the whole house; and this, all circumstances considered, was a proof of total want of generosity and gratitude. The next morning, however, she was alarmed by hearing from Mrs. Masham, whom she had sent to attend upon Mlle. de Coulanges, that her ankle was violently swelled and inflamed.—Just when the full tide of her affections was beginning to flow in Emilie's favour, Mrs. Somers received the following letter from lady Littleton:—

"Enclosed, I have sent you, as well as I can re-

collect it, every word of the conversation that passed yesterday between Mlle. de Coulanges and me. If I were less anxious for your happiness, and if I had not so high an opinion of the excellence of your disposition, I should wish, my dear friend, to spare both you and myself the pain of speaking and hearing the truth. But I know that I have preserved your affection many years beyond the usual limits of female friendship, by daring to speak to you with perfect sincerity, and by trusting to the justice of your better self. Perhaps you would rather have a compliment to your generosity than to your justice; but in this I shall not indulge you, because I think you already set too high a value upon generosity. It has been the misfortune of your life, my dear friend, to believe that, by making great sacrifices, and conferring great benefits, you could ensure to yourself, in return, affection and gratitude. You mistake both the nature of obligation and the effect which it produces on the human mind. Obligations may command gratitude, but can never ensure love. If the benefit be of a pecuniary nature, it is necessarily attended with a certain sense of humiliation, which destroys the equality of friendship. Of whatever description the favour may be, it becomes burdensome, if gratitude be expected as a tribute, instead of being accepted as the free-will offering of the heart: 'still paying still to owe' is irksome, even to those who have nothing satanic in their natures. A person who has received a favour is in a defenceless state with respect to a benefactor; and the benefactor who makes an improper use of the power which

gratitude gives becomes an oppressor. I know your generous spirit, and I am fully sensible that no one has a more just idea than you have of the delicacy that ought to be used towards those whom you have obliged; but you must permit me to observe, that your practice is not always conformable to your theory. Temper is doubly necessary to those who love, as you do, to confer favours: it is the duty of a benefactress to command her feelings, and to refrain absolutely from every species of direct or indirect reproach; else her kindness becomes only a source of misery; and even from the benevolence of her disposition she derives the means of giving pain.

"I have said enough; and I know that you will not be offended. The moment your understanding is convinced and your heart touched, all paltry jealousies and petty irritations subside, and you are always capable of acting in a manner worthy of yourself. Adieu!—May you, my dear friend, preserve the affections of one who feels for you, I am convinced, the most sincere gratitude. You will reap a rich harvest, if you do not, with childish impatience, disturb the seeds that you have sown, to examine whether they are growing.

"Your faithful friend,

"L. LITTLETON."

This letter had an immediate and strong effect upon the mind of Mrs. Somers: she went directly with it open in her hand to Emilie. "Here," said she, "is the letter of a noble-minded woman, who dares to speak truth, painful truth, to her best friend. She

does me justice in being convinced that I shall not be offended; she does me justice in believing that an appeal to my candour and generosity cannot be in vain, especially when it is made by her voice. Emilie, you shall see that I am worthy to have a sincere friend; you shall see that I can even command my temper, when I have what, to my own feelings and understanding, appears adequate motive. But, my dear, you are in pain—let me look at this ankle—I am absolutely afraid to see it!—Good Heavens! how it is swelled!—And I fancied, all yesterday, that you could have walked upon it!—And I thought you wanted only to excite pity!——My poor child!—I have used you barbarously—most barbarously!" cried Mrs. Somers, kneeling down beside the sofa. "And can you ever forgive me?—Yes! that sweet smile tells me that you can."

"All I ask of you," said Emilie, embracing Mrs. Somers, "is to believe that I am grateful, and to continue to make me love you as long as I live. This must depend upon you more than upon myself."

"I know it, my dear," said Mrs. Somers. "Be satisfied—I will not wear out your affections. You have dealt fairly with me. I love you for having the courage to speak as you think.—But now that it is all over, I must tell you what it was that displeased me—for I hate half reconciliations: I will tell you all that passed in my mind."

"Pray do," said Emilie; "for then I shall know how to avoid displeasing you another time."

"No danger of that, my dear. You will never make me angry again; for I am sure you will now

be as frank towards me as I am towards you. It was not your adapting that little poem to a French rather than to an English air that displeased me—I am not quite so childish as to be offended by such a trifle; but I own I did not like your saying that you chose it merely to comply with your mother's taste.—And you will acknowledge, Emilie, there was a want of sincerity, a want of candour, in your affected look of astonishment, when I mentioned M. de Brisac. I do not claim your confidence as a right —God forbid!—But if the warmest desire for your happiness, the most affectionate sympathy, can merit confidence——But I will not say a word that can imply reproach. On the contrary, I will only assure you, that I have penetration sufficient always to know your wishes, and activity enough to serve you effectually, even without being your confidante. I shall this night see a friend who is in power—I will speak to him about M. de Brisac: I have hopes that his pension from our government may be doubled,"

"I wish it may, for his sake," said Emilie; "but certainly not for my own."

"Oh! Mlle. de Coulanges!—But I have no right to extort confidence. I will not, as I said before, utter a syllable that can imply reproach. Let me go on with what I was telling you of my intentions. As soon as the pension is doubled, I will speak to Mad. de Coulanges about M. de Brisac."

"For Heaven's sake, do not!" interrupted Emilie; "for you would do me the greatest possible injury. Mamma would then think it a suitable match, and she would wish me to marry him; and nothing could

make me more unhappy than to be under the necessity of acting contrary to my duty—of disobeying and displeasing her for ever—or else of uniting myself to M. de Brisac, whom I can neither love nor esteem."

"Is it possible," exclaimed Mrs. Somers, with joyful astonishment, "is it possible that I have been under a mistake all this time? My dearest Emilie! now you are every thing I first thought you! Indeed, I could not think with patience of your making such a match; for M. de Brisac is a mere nothing—worse than a mere nothing; a coxcomb, and a peevish coxcomb."

"And how could you suspect me of loving such a man?" said Emilie.

"I never thought you loved him, but I thought you would marry him. French marriages, you know, according to *l'ancien régime*, in which you were brought up, were never supposed to be affairs of the heart, but mere alliances of interest, pride, or conconvenience."

"Yes—*des mariages de convenance*," said Emilie. "We have suffered terribly by the revolution; but I owe to it one blessing, which, putting what mamma has felt out of the question, I should say has overbalanced all our losses: I have escaped—what must have been my fate, in the ancient order of things—*un mariage de convenance*. I must tell you how I escaped by a happy misfortune," continued Emilie, suddenly recovering her vivacity of manner. "The family of M. de Brisac had settled, with mine, that I was to be la comtesse de Brisac—But we lost our

property, and M. le comte his memory. Mamma was provoked and indignant—I rejoiced. When I saw how shabbily he behaved, could I do otherwise than rejoice at having escaped being his wife? M. le comte de Brisac soon lost his hereditary honours and possessions—Heaven forgive me, for not pitying him! I was only glad mamma now agreed with me that we had nothing to regret. I had hoped that we should never have heard more of him: but, lo! here he is again in my way, with a commission in your English army, and a pension from your generous king, which make him, amongst poor emigrants, a man of consequence. And he has taken it into his head to sigh for me, because I laugh at him; and he talks of his sentiments!—sentiments!—he who has no principles!——"

"My noble-minded Emilie!" cried Mrs. Somers; "I cannot express to you the delight I feel at this explanation. How could I be such an idiot as not sooner to see the truth! But I was misled by the solicitude that Mad. de Coulanges showed about this M. de Brisac; and I foolishly concluded that you and your mother were one. On the contrary, no two people can be more different, thank Heaven! —I beg your pardon for that thanksgiving—I see it distresses you, my dear Emilie—and, believe me, I never was less disposed to give you pain—I have made you suffer too much already, both in mind and body. This terrible ankle——"

"It does not give me any pain," said Emilie, "except when I attempt to walk; and it is no great misfortune to be obliged to be quiet for a few days."

Mrs. Somers's whole soul was now intent upon the means of making her young friend amends for all she had suffered: this last conversation had raised her to the highest point both of favour and esteem. Mrs. Somers was now revolving in her mind a scheme, which she had formed in the first moments of her partiality for Emilie—a scheme of marrying her to her son. She had often quarrelled with this son; but she persuaded herself that Emilie would make him every thing that was amiable and respectable, and that she would form an indissoluble bond of family union and felicity. "Then," said she to herself, "Emilie will certainly be established according to her mother's satisfaction. M. de Brisac cannot possibly stand in the way here; for my son has name and fortune, and every thing that Mad. de Coulanges can desire."

Mrs. Somers wrote immediately to summon her son home. In the mean time, delighted with this new and grand project, and thinking herself sure of success, she neglected, according to her usual custom, the "little courtesies of life;" and all lady Littleson's excellent observations upon the nature of gratitude, and the effect produced on the mind by obligations, were entirely obliterated from her memory.

Emilie's sprained ankle confined her to the house for some weeks; both Mad. de Coulanges and Mrs. Somers began by offering in the most eager manner, in competition with each other, to stay at home every evening to keep her company; but she found that she could not accept of the offer of one without offending the other: she knew that her mother would

have *les vapeurs noirs,* if she was not in *society ;* and as she had reason to apprehend that Mrs. Somers could not, with the best intentions possible, remain three hours alone, with even a dear friend, without finding or making some subject of quarrel, she wisely declined all these kind offers. In fact, these were *trifling sacrifices,* which it would not have suited Mrs. Somers's temper to make: for there was no glory to be gained by them. She regularly came every evening, as soon as she was dressed, to pity Emilie—to repeat her wish that she might be allowed to stay at home—then to step into her carriage, and drive away to spend four hours in company which she professed to hate.

Lady Littleton made no complimentary speeches, but every day she contrived to spend some time with Emilie ; and, by a thousand small but kind instances of attention, which asked neither for admiration nor gratitude, she contributed to Emilie's daily happiness.

This ready sympathy, and this promptitude to oblige in trifles, became extremely agreeable to Mlle. de Coulanges: perhaps from the contrast with Mrs. Somers's defects, lady Littleton's manners pleased her peculiarly. She was under no fear of giving offence, so that she could speak her sentiments or express her feelings without constraint: and, in short, she enjoyed in this lady's society, a degree of tranquillity of mind and freedom to which she had long been a stranger. Lady Littleton had employed her excellent understanding in studying the minute circumstances which tend to make people, of different

characters and tempers, agree and live happily together; and she understood and practised so successfully all the *honest* arts of pleasing, that she rendered herself the centre of union to a large circle of relations, many of whom she had converted into friends. This she had accomplished without any violent effort, without making any splendid sacrifices, but with that calm, gentle, persevering kindness of temper, which, when united to good sense, forms the real happiness of domestic life, and the true perfection of the female character. Those who have not traced the causes of family quarrels would not readily guess from what slight circumstances they often originate: they arise more frequently from small defects in temper than from material faults of character. People who would perhaps sacrifice their fortunes or lives for each other cannot, at certain moments, give up their will or command their humour in the slightest degree.

Whilst Emilie was confined by her sprained ankle, she employed herself in embroidering and painting various trifles, which she intended to offer as *souvenirs* to her English friends. Amongst these, the prettiest was one which she called *the watch of Flora.** It was a dial plate for a pendule, on which the hours were marked by flowers—by those flowers which open or close their petals at particular times of the day. "Linnæus has enumerated forty-six flowers which possess this kind of sensibility; and has marked," as he says, "their respective hours of

* See Botanic Garden, canto 2.

rising and setting." From these forty-six Emilie wished to select the most beautiful: she had some difficulty in finding such as would suit her purpose, especially as the observations made in the botanic gardens of Upsal could not exactly agree with our climate. She sometimes applied to Mrs. Somers for assistance; but Mrs. Somers repeatedly forgot to borrow for her the botanical books which she wanted: this was too small a service for her to remember. She was provoked at last by Emilie's reiterated requests, and vexed by her own forgetfulness; so that Mlle. de Coulanges at last determined not to run the risk of offending, and she reluctantly laid aside her dial-plate.

Young people of vivacious and inventive tempers, who know what it is to be eagerly intent upon some favourite little project, will give Emilie due credit for her forbearance. Lady Littleton, though not a young person, could so far sympathise in the pursuits of youth as to feel for Emilie's disappointment. "No," said she, "you must not lay aside your watch of Flora; perhaps I can help you to what you want." She was indefatigable in the search of books and flowers; and, by assisting her in the pursuit of this slight object, she not only enabled her to spend many happy hours, but was of the most essential service to Emilie. It happened, that one morning, when lady Littleton went to Kew Gardens to search in the hot-houses for some of the flowers, and to ascertain their hours of closing, she met with a French botanist, who had just arrived from Paris, who came to examine the arrangement of Kew

Gardens, and to compare it with that of the Jardin des Plantes. He paid some deserved compliments to the superiority of Kew Gardens; and, with the ease of a Frenchman, he entered into conversation with lady Littleton. As he inquired for several French emigrants, she mentioned the name of Mad. de Coulanges, and asked whether he knew to whom the property of her family now belonged. He said, "that it was still in the possession of that *scelerat* of a steward, who had, by his informations, brought his excellent master, le comte de Coulanges, to the guillotine. But," added the botanist, "if you, madam, are acquainted with any of the family, will you give them notice that this wreteh is near his end; that he has, within a few weeks, had two strokes of apoplexy; and that his eldest son by no means resembles him; but is a worthy young man, who, to my certain knowledge, is shocked at his father's crimes, and who might be prevailed upon, by a reasonable consideration, to restore to the family, to whom it originally belonged, the property that has been seized. I have more than once, even in the most dangerous times, heard him (in confidence) express the strongest attachment to the descendant of the good master, who loaded him in his childhood with favours. These sentiments he has been, of course, obliged to dissemble, and to profess directly the contrary principles: it can only be by such means that he can gain possession of the estate, which he wishes to restore to the rightful owners. He passes for as great a scoundrel as his father: this is not the least of his merits. But, madam, you may

depend upon the correctness of my information, and of my knowledge of his character. I was once, as a man of science, under obligation to the late comte de Coulanges, who gave me the use of his library; and most happy should I think myself, if I could by any means be instrumental in restoring his descendants to the possession of that library."

There was such an air of truth and frankness in the countenance and manner of this gentleman, that, notwithstanding the extraordinary nature of his information, and the still more extraordinary facility with which it was communicated, lady Littleton could not help believing him. He gave her ladyship his address; told her that he should return to Paris in a few days; and that he should be happy if he could be made, in any manner, useful to Mad. de Coulanges. Impatient to impart all this good news to her friends, lady Littleton hastened to Mrs. Somers's; but just as she put her hand on the lock of Emilie's door, she recollected Mrs. Somers, and determined to tell her the first, that she might have the pleasure of communicating the joyful tidings. From her knowledge of the temper of her friend, lady Littleton thought that this would be peculiarly gratifying to her; but, contrary to all rational expectation, Mrs. Somers heard the news with an air of extreme mortification, which soon turned into anger. She got up and walked about the room, whilst lady Littleton was speaking; and, as soon as she had finished her story, exclaimed, "Was there ever any thing so provoking!"

She continued walking, deep in reverie, whilst

lady Littleton sat looking at her in amazement. Mrs. Somers having once formed the *generous* scheme of enriching Emilie by a marriage with her son, was actually disappointed to find that there was a probability that Mlle. de Coulanges should recover a fortune which would make her more than a suitable match for Mr. Somers. There was another circumstance that was still more provoking—this property was likely to be recovered without the assistance of Mrs. Somers. There are people who would rather that their best friends should miss a piece of good fortune than that they should obtain it without their intervention. Mrs. Somers at length quieted her own mind by the idea that all lady Littleton had heard might have no foundation in truth.

"I am surprised, my dear friend, that a person of your excellent judgment can, for an instant, believe such a strange story as this," said Mrs. Somers. "I assure you, I do not give the slightest credit to it; and, in my opinion, it would be much better not to say one word about the matter, either to Emilie or Mad. de Coulanges: it will only fill their minds with false and absurd hopes. Mad. de Coulanges will torment herself and me to death with conjectures and exclamations; and we shall hear of nothing but the Hotel de Coulanges, and the Chateau de Coulanges, from morning till night; and, after all, I am convinced she will never see either of them again."

To this assertion, which Mrs. Somers could support only by repeating that it was her conviction—that it was her unalterable conviction—lady Little-

ton simply replied, that it would be improper not to mention what had happened to Mad. de Coulanges, because this would deprive her of an opportunity of judging and acting for herself in her own affairs. "This French gentleman has offered to carry letters, or to do her any service in his power; and we should not be justifiable in concealing this: the information may be false, but of that Mad. de Coulanges should at least have an opportunity of judging; she should see this botanist, and she will recollect whether what he says of the count, and his allowing him the use of his library, be true or false: from these circumstances we may obtain some farther reason to believe or disbelieve him. I should be sorry to excite hopes which must end in disappointment; but the chance of good, in this case, appears to me far greater than the chance of evil."

"Very well, my dear lady Littleton," interrupted Mrs. Somers, "you will follow your judgment, and I must be allowed to follow mine, though I make no doubt that yours is superior. Manage this business as you please: I will have nothing to do with it. It is your opinion that Mad. de Coulanges and her daughter should hear this wonderfully fine story; therefore I beg you will be the relater—I must be excused—for my part, I can't give any credit to it—no, not the slightest. But your judgment is better than mine, lady Littleton—you will act as you think proper, and manage the whole business yourself—I am sure I wish you success with all my heart."

Lady Littleton, by a mixture of firmness and gentleness in her manner, so far worked upon the temper

of Mrs. Somers, as to prevail upon her to believe that the management of the business was not her object; and she even persuaded Mrs. Somers to be present when the intelligence was communicated to Mad. de Coulanges and Emilie. She could not, however, forbear repeating, that she did not believe the story:—this incredulity afforded her a plausible pretext for not sympathising in the general joy. Mad. de Coulanges was alternately in ecstasy and in despair, as she listened to lady Littleton or to Mrs. Somers: her exclamations would have been much less frequent and violent, if Mrs. Somers had not provoked them, by mixing with her hopes a large portion of fear. The next day, when she saw the French gentleman, her hopes were predominant: for she recollected perfectly having seen this gentleman, in former times, at the Hotel de Coulanges; she knew that he was *un savant;* and that he had, before the revolution, the reputation of being a very worthy man. Mad. de Coulanges, by lady Littleton's advice, determined, however, to be cautious in what she wrote to send to France by this gentleman. Emilie took the letters to Mrs. Somers, and requested her opinion; but she declined giving any.

"I have nothing to do with the business, Mlle. de Coulanges," said she; "you will be guided by the opinion of my lady Littleton."

Emilie saw that it was in vain to expostulate; she retired in silence, much embarrassed as to the answer which she was to give to her mother, who was waiting to hear the opinion of Mrs. Somers. Mad. de Coulanges, impatient with Emilie, for bringing her

only a reference to lady Littleton's opinion, went herself, with what she thought the most amiable politeness, to solicit the advice of Mrs. Somers; but she was astonished, and absolutely shocked, by the coldness and want of good breeding with which this lady persisted in a refusal to have any thing to do with the business, or even to read the letters which waited for her judgment. The countess opened her large eyes to their utmost orbicular extent; and, after a moment's *silence*, the strongest possible expression that she could give of amazement, she also retired, and returned to Emilie, to demand from her an explanation of what she could not understand. The ill-humour of Mrs. Somers, now that Mad. de Coulanges was wakened to the perception of it, was not, as it had been to poor Emilie, a subject of continual anxiety and pain, but merely matter of astonishment and curiosity. She looked upon Mrs. Somers as an English *oddity*, as a *lusus naturæ;* and she alternately asked Emilie to account for these strange appearances, or shrugged up her shoulders, and submitted to the impossibility of a Frenchwoman's ever understanding such *extravagances*.

"Ah que c'est bizarre!—Mais, mon enfant, expliquez moi donc tout ça—Mais ça ne s'explique point—Certes c'est une Anglaise qui sçait donner, mais qui ne sçait pas vivre.—Voltaires s'y connaissait mieux que moi apparemment—et heureusement."

Content with this easy method of settling things, Mad. de Coulanges sealed and despatched her letters, appealed no more to Mrs. Somers for advice, and, when she saw any extraordinary signs of

displeasure, repeated to herself—"Ah que c'est bizarre!" And this phrase was for some time a quieting charm. But as the anxiety of the countess increased, at the time when she expected to receive the decisive answer from her steward's son, she talked with incessant and uncontrollable volubility of her hopes and fears—her conjectures and calculations—and of the Chateau and Hotel de Coulanges; and she could not endure to see that Mrs. Somers heard all this with affected coldness or real impatience.

"How is this possible, Emilie!" said she. "Here is a woman who would give me half her fortune, and who yet seems to wish that I should not recover the whole of mine! Here is a woman who would move heaven and earth to serve me in her own way; but who, nevertheless, will not give me either a word of advice or a look of sympathy, in the most important affair and the most anxious moment of my life! But this is more than *bizarre*—this is intolerably provoking. For my part, I would rather a friend would deny me any thing than sympathy: without sympathy there is no society—there is no living—there is no talking. I begin to feel my obligations a burden; and, positively, with the first money I receive from my estates, I will relieve myself from my pecuniary debt to this generous but incomprehensible Englishwoman."

Every day Emilie dreaded the arrival of the post, when her mother asked, "Are there any letters from Paris?"—Constantly the answer was—"No."—— Mrs. Somers's look was triumphant; and Mad. de

Coulanges applied regularly to her smelling-bottle or her snuff-box to conceal her emotion, which Mrs. Somers increased by indirect reflections upon the absurdity of those who listen to idle reports, and build castles in the air. Having set her opinion in opposition to lady Littleton's, she supported it with a degree of obstinacy, and even acrimony, which made her often transgress the bounds of that politeness which she had formerly maintained in all her differences with the comtesse.

Mad. de Coulanges could no longer consider her humour as merely *bizarre*—she found it *insupportable;* and Mrs. Somers appeared to her totally changed, and absolutely odious, now that she was roused by her own sufferings to the perception of those evils which Emilie had long borne with all the firmness of principle, and all the philosophy of gratitude. Not a day passed without her complaining to Emilie of some *grossièreté* from Mrs. Somers. Mad. de Coulanges suffered so much from irritation and anxiety, that her *vapeurs noirs* returned with tenfold violence. Emilie had loved Mrs. Somers, even when most unreasonable towards herself, as long as she behaved with kindness to her mother; but now that, instead of a source of pleasure, she became the hourly cause of pain to Mad. de Coulanges, Emilie's affection could no farther go; and she really began to dislike this lady—to dread to see her come into the room—and to tremble at hearing her voice. Emilie could judge only by what she saw; and she could not divine that Mrs. Somers was occupied, all this time, with the generous scheme of marrying her

to her son and heir, and of settling upon her a large fortune; nor could she guess, that all the ill-humour in Mrs. Somers originated in the fear that her friends should be made either rich or happy without her assistance. Her son's delaying to return home, according to her mandate, had disappointed and vexed her extremely. Every day, when the post came in, she inquired for letters with almost as much eagerness as Mad. de Coulanges. At length a letter came from Mr. Somers, to inform his impatient mother that he should certainly be in town the beginning of the ensuing week. Delighted by this news, she could not refrain from the temptation of opening her whole mind to Emilie; though she had previously resolved not to give the slightest intimation of her scheme to any one, not even to lady Littleton, till a definitive answer had been received from Paris, respecting the fortune of Mad. de Coulanges. Often, when Mrs. Somers was full of some magnanimous design, the merest trifle that interrupted the full display of her generosity threw her into a passion, even with those whom she was going to serve. So it happened in the present instance. She went, with her open letter in her hand, to the countess's apartment, where unluckily she found M. de Brisac, who was going to read the French newspapers to madame. Mrs. Somers sat down beside Emilie, who was painting the last flower of her watch of Flora. Mrs. Somers wrote on a slip of paper, "Don't ask M. de Brisac to read the papers, for I want to speak to you." She threw down the note before Emilie, who was so intent upon what she was

about that she did not immediately see it—Mrs. Somers touched her elbow—Emilie started, and let fall her brush, which made a blot upon her dial-plate.

"Oh! what a pity!—Just as I had finished my work," cried Emilie, "I have spoiled it!"

M. de Brisac laid down the newspaper to pour forth compliments of condolence.—Mrs. Somers tore the piece of paper as he approached the table, and said, with some asperity, "One would think this was a matter of life and death, by the terms in which it is deplored."

M. de Brisac, who stood so that Mrs. Somers could not see him, shrugged his shoulders, and looked at Mad. de Coulanges, who answered him by another look, that plainly said, "This is English politeness!"

Emilie, who saw that her mother was displeased, endeavoured to change the course of her thoughts, by begging M. de Brisac to go on with what he was reading from the French papers. This was a fresh provocation to Mrs. Somers, who forgot that Emilie had not read the words on the slip of paper which had been torn; and consequently could not know all Mrs. Somers's impatience for his departure. M. de Brisac read, in what this lady called his *unemphatic French tone,* paragraph after paragraph, and column after column, whilst her anxiety to have him go every moment increased. She moulded her son's letter into all manner of shapes as she sat in penance. To complete her misfortunes, something in the paper put Mad. de Coulanges in mind of

former times; and she began a long history of the destruction of some fine old tapestry hangings in the Chateau de Coulanges, at the beginning of the revolution: this led to endless melancholy reflections; and at length tears began to flow from the fine eyes of the countess.

Just at this instant a butterfly flew into the room, and passed by Mad. de Coulanges, who was sitting near the open window. "O! the beautiful butterfly!" cried she, starting up to catch it. "Did you ever see such a charming creature? Catch it, M. de Brisac!—Catch it, Emilie!—Catch it, Mrs. Somers!"

With the tears yet upon her cheeks, Mad. de Coulanges began the chase, and M. de Brisac followed, beating the air with his perfumed handkerchief, and the butterfly fluttered round the table at which Emilie was standing.

"Eh! M. de Brisac, catch it!—Catch it, Emilie!" repeated her mother.—"Catch it, Mrs. Somers, for the love of Heaven!"

"*For the love of Heaven!*" repeated Mrs. Somers, who, immoveably grave, and sullenly indignant, kept aloof during this chase.

"Ah! pour le coup, papillon, je te tiens!" cried la comtesse, and with eager joy she covered it with a glass, as it lighted on the table.

"Mlle. de Coulanges," cried Mrs. Somers, "I acknowledge, now, that I was wrong in my criticism of Caroline de Lichtfield. I blamed the author for representing Caroline, at fifteen, or just when she is going to be married, as running after butterflies.

I said that, at that age, it was too frivolous—out of drawing—out of nature. But I should have said only, that it was out of *English nature*.—I stand corrected."

Mad. de Coulanges and M. de Brisac again interchanged looks, which expressed "*Est il possible!*" And la comtesse then, with an unusual degree of deliberation and dignity in her manner, walked out of the room. Emilie, who saw that her mother was extremely offended, was much embarrassed—she went on washing the blot out of her drawing. M. de Brisac stood silently looking over her, and Mrs. Somers opposite to him, wishing him fairly at the antipodes. M. de Brisac, to break the silence, which seemed to him as if it never would be broken, asked Mlle. de Coulanges if she had ever seen the stadtholder's fine collection of butterflies, and if she did not admire them extremely. No, she never had; but she said that she admired extremely the generosity the stadtholder had shown in sacrificing, not only his fine collection of butterflies, but his most valuable pictures, to save the lives of the poor French emigrants, who were under his protection.

At the sound of the word generosity, Mrs. Somers became attentive; and Emilie was in hopes that she would recover her temper, and apologize to her mother: but at this moment a servant came to tell Mlle. de Coulanges that la comtesse wished to speak to her immediately. She found her mother in no humour to receive any apology, even if it had been offered: nothing could have hurt Mad. de

Coulanges more than the imputation of being frivolous.

"Frivole!—frivole!—moi frivole!" she repeated, as soon as Emilie entered the room. "My dear Emilie! I would not live with this Mrs. Somers for the rest of my days, were she to offer me Pitt's diamond, or the whole mines of Golconda!——Bon Dieu!—neither money nor diamonds, after all, can pay for the want of kindness and politeness!—There is lady Littleton, who has never done us any favour, but that of showing us attention and sympathy; I protest I love her a million of times better than I can love Mrs. Somers, to whom we owe so much. It is in vain, Emilie, to remind me that she is our benefactress. I have said that over and over to myself, till I am tired, and till I have absolutely lost all sense of the meaning of the word. Bitterly do I repent having accepted of such obligations from this strange woman; for, as to the idea of regaining our estate, and paying my debt to her, I have given up all hopes of it. You see that we have no letters from France. I am quite tired out. I am convinced that we shall never have any good news from Paris. And I cannot, I will not, remain longer in this house. Would you have me submit to be treated with disrespect? Mrs. Somers has affronted me before M. de Brisac, in a manner that I cannot, that I ought not, to endure—that you, Emilie, ought not to wish me to endure. I positively will not live upon the bounty of Mrs. Somers. There is but one way of extricating ourselves. M. de Brisac —Why do you turn pale, child?—M. de Brisac has

this morning made me a proposal for you, and the best thing we can possibly do is to accept of it."

"The best!—Pray don't say the best!" cried Emilie. "Ah! dear mamma, for me the worst! Let me beseech you not to sacrifice my happiness for ever by such a marriage!"

"And what other can you expect, Emilie, in your present circumstances?"

"None," said Emilie.

"And here is an establishment—at least an independence for you—and you call it sacrificing your happiness for ever to accept of it!"

"Yes," said Emilie; "because it is offered to me by one whom I can neither love nor esteem. Dearest mamma! can you forget all his former meanness of conduct?"

"His present behaviour makes amends for the past," said Mad. de Coulanges, "and entitles him to my esteem and to yours, and that is sufficient. As to love—well educated girls do not marry for love."

"But they ought not to marry without feeling love, should they?" said Emilie.

"Emilie! Emilie!" said her mother, "these are strange ideas that have come into the heads of young women since the revolution. If you had remained safe in your convent, I should have heard none of this nonsense."

"Perhaps not, mamma," said Emilie, with a deep sigh. "But should I have been happier?"

"A fine question, truly!—How can I tell? But this I can ask you—How can any girl expect to be happy, who abandons the principles in which she was

bred up, and forgets her duty to the mother by whom she has been educated—the mother, whose pride, whose delight, whose darling, she has ever been? O Emilie; this is to me worse than all I have ever suffered!"

Mad. de Coulanges burst into a passion of tears, and Emilie stood looking at her in silent despair.

"Emilie, you cannot deceive me," cried her mother; "you cannot pretend that it is simply your want of esteem for M. de Brisac which renders you thus obstinately averse to the match. You are in love with another person."

"Not in love," said Emilie, in a faltering voice.

"You cannot deceive me, Emilie—remember all you said to me about the stranger who was our fellow prisoner at the Abbaye. You cannot deny this, Emilie."

"Nor do I, dear mamma," said Emilie. "I *cannot* deceive you, indeed I *would* not; and the best proof that I do not wish to deceive you—that I never attempted it—is, that I told you all I thought and felt about that stranger. I told you that his honourable, brave, and generous conduct towards us, when we were in distress, made an impression upon my heart—that I preferred him to any person I had ever seen—and I told you, my dear mamma, that——"

"You told me too much," interrupted Mad. de Coulanges; "more than I wished to hear—more than I will have repeated, Emilie. This is romance and nonsense. The man, whoever he was—and Heaven knows who he was!—behaved very well, and was a very agreeable person: but what then? are you ever

likely to see him again? Do you even know his birth—his name—his country—or any thing about him, but that he was brave and generous?—So are fifty other men, five hundred, five thousand, five million, I hope. But is this any reason that you should refuse to marry M. de Brisac? Henry the Fourth was brave and generous two hundred years ago. That is as much to the purpose. You have as much chance of establishing yourself, if you wait for Henry the Fourth to come to life again, as if you wait for this nameless nobody of a hero—who is perhaps married, after all—who knows!—Really, Emilie, this is too absurd!"

"But, dear mamma, I cannot marry one man and love another——love I did not quite mean to say. But whilst I prefer another, I cannot, in honour, marry M. de Brisac."

"Honour!—Love!—But in France, in my time, who ever heard of a young lady's being in love before she was married? You astonish, you frighten, you shock me, child! Recollect yourself, Emilie! Misfortune may have deprived you of the vast possessions to which you are heiress; but do not, therefore, degrade yourself and me by forgetting your principles, and all that the representative of the house of Coulanges ought to remember. And as for myself—have I no claim upon your affections, Emilie?—have not I been a fond mother?"

"Oh, yes!" said Emilie, melting into tears. "Of your kindness I think more than of any thing else!—more than of the whole house of Coulanges!"

"Do not let me see you in tears, child!' said

Mad. de Coulanges, moved by Emilie's grief. "Your tears hurt my nerves more even than Mrs. Somers's *grossièreté*. You must blame Mrs. Somers, not me, for all this—her temper drives me to it—I cannot live with her. We have no alternative. Emilie, my sweet child! make me happy!—I am miserable in this house. Hitherto you have ever been the best of daughters, and you shall find me the most indulgent of mothers. One whole month I will give you to change your mind, and recollect your duty. At the end of that time, I must see you Mad. de Brisac, and in a house of your own.—In the house of Mrs. Somers I will not, I cannot longer remain."

Poor Emilie was glad of the reprieve of one month. She retired from her mother's presence in silent anguish, and hastened to her own apartment, that she might give way to her grief. There she found Mrs. Somers waiting for her, seated in an arm-chair, with an open letter in her hand.

"Why do you start, Emilie? You look as if you were sorry to find me here," cried Mrs. Somers—"IF THAT be the case, Mlle. de Coulanges——"

"O Mrs. Somers! do not begin to quarrel with me at this moment, for I shall not be able to bear it —I am sufficiently unhappy already!" said Emilie.

"I am extremely sorry that any thing should make you unhappy, Emilie," said Mrs. Somers; "but I think that you had never less reason than at this moment to suspect me of an intention of quarrelling with you—I came here with a very different design. May I know the cause of your distress?"

Emilie hesitated, for she did not know how to ex-

plain the cause without imputing blame either to Mrs. Somers or to her mother—she could only say—"*M. de Brisac*——"

"What!" cried Mrs. Somers, "your mother wants you to marry him?"

"Yes."

"Immediately?"

"In one month."

"And you have consented?"

"No—But—"

"*But*—Good Heavens! Emilie, what weakness of mind there is in that *But*—"

"Is it weakness of mind to fear to disobey my mother—to dread to offend her for ever—to render her unhappy—and to deprive her, perhaps, even of the means of subsistence?"

"*The means of subsistence!* my dear. This phrase, you know, can only be a figure of rhetoric," said Mrs. Somers. "Your refusing M. de Brisac cannot deprive your mother of the means of subsistence. In the first place, she expects to recover her property in France."

"No," said Emilie; "she has given up these hopes—you have persuaded her that they are vain."

"Indeed I think them so. But still you must know, my dear, that your mother can never be in want of the means of subsistence, nor any of the conveniences, and, I may add, luxuries of life, whilst I am alive."

Emilie sighed; and when Mrs. Somers urged her more closely, she said, "Mamma has not, till lately, been accustomed to live on the bounty of others; the

sense of dependence produces many painful feelings, and renders people more susceptible than perhaps they would be, were they on terms of equality."

"To what does all this tend, my dear?" interrupted Mrs. Somers. "Is Mad. de Coulanges offended with me?—Is she tired of living with me?—Does she wish to quit my house?—And where does she intend to go?—Oh! that is a question that I need not ask!—Yes, yes—I have long foreseen it—you have arranged it admirably—you go to lady Littleton, I presume?"

"Oh, no!"

"To M. de Brisac?"

"Mamma wishes to go——"

"Then to M. de Brisac, for Heaven's sake, let her go," cried Mrs. Somers, bursting into a fit of laughter, which astonished Emilie beyond measure. "To M. de Brisac let her go—'tis the best thing she can possibly do, my dear; and seriously to tell you the truth, I have always thought it would be an excellent match. Since she is so much prepossessed in his favour, can she do better than marry him? and, as he is so much attached to the house of Coulanges, when he cannot have the daughter, can he do better than marry the mother?—Your mother does not look too old for him, when she is well rouged; and I am sure, if she heard me say so, she would forgive me all the rest—butterfly, frivolity, and all inclusive. Permit me, Emilie, to laugh."

"I cannot permit any body to laugh at mamma," said Emilie; "and Mrs. Somers is the last person who I should have supposed would have been in-

clined to laugh, when I told her that I was really unhappy."

"My dear Emilie, I forgive you for being angry, because I never saw you angry before; and that is more than you can say for me. You do me justice, however, by supposing that I should be the last person to laugh when you are in woe, unless I thought —unless I was sure—that I could remove the cause, and make you completely happy."

"That, I fear, is impossible," said Emilie: "for mamma's pride and her feelings have been so much hurt, that I do not think any apology would now calm her mind."

"Apology!—I am not in the least inclined to make any. Can I tell Mad. de Coulanges that I do not think her frivolous?—Impossible, indeed, my dear! I will do any thing else to oblige you. But I have as much pride, and as much feeling, in my own way, as any of the house of Coulanges: and if, after all I have done, madame can quarrel with me about a butterfly, I must say, not only that she is the most frivolous, but the most ungrateful woman upon earth; and, as she desires to quit my house, far from attempting to detain her, I can only wish that she may accomplish her purpose as soon as possible—as soon as it may suit her own convenience. As for you, Emilie, I do not suspect you of the ingratitude of wishing to leave me—I can make distinctions, even when I have most reason to be angry. I do not blame you, my dear—I do not even ask you to blame your mother. I respect your filial piety—I am sure you must think her to blame, but I do not desire you to

say so. Could any thing be more barbarously selfish than the plan of marrying *you* to this M. de Brisac, that *she* might have an establishment more to her taste than my house has been able to afford?"

Emilie attempted, but in vain, to say a few words for her mother. Mrs. Somers ran on with her own thoughts.

"And at what a time, at what a cruel time for me, did Mad. de Coulanges choose to express her desire to leave my house—at the moment when my whole soul was intent upon a scheme for the happiness of her daughter! Yes, Emilie, for your happiness!—And, my dear, your mother's conduct shall change nothing in my views. You I have always found uniformly kind, gentle, grateful—I will say no more—I have found in you, Emilie, real magnanimity. I have tried your temper much—sometimes too much—but I have always found you proof against these petty trials. Your character is suited to mine. I love you, as if you were my daughter, and I wish you to be my daughter.——Now you know my whole mind, Emilie. My son—my *eldest* son, I should with emphasis say, if I were speaking to Mad. de Coulanges—will be here in a few days: read this letter. How happy I shall be if you find him—or if you will make him—such as you can entirely approve and love! You will have power over him—your influence will do what his mother's never could accomplish. But whatever reasons I may have to complain of him, this is not the time to state them—you will connect him with me. At all events, he is a man of honour and a gentleman; and as he is not, thank Heaven!

under the debasing necessity of considering fortune in the choice of a wife, he is, at least in this respect, worthy of my dear and high-minded Emilie."

Mrs. Somers paused, and fixed her eyes eagerly on Emilie, impatient for her answer, and already half provoked by not seeing the sudden transition of countenance which she had pictured in her imagination. With a mixture of dignity and affectionate gratitude in her manner, Emilie was beginning to thank Mrs. Somers for the generous kindness of her intention; but this susceptible lady interrupted her, and exclaimed, "Spare me your thanks, Mlle. de Coulanges, and tell me at once what is passing in your mind; for something very extraordinary is certainly passing there, which I cannot comprehend. Surely you cannot for a moment imagine that your mother will insist upon your now accepting of M. de Brisac; or, if she does, surely you would not have the weakness to yield. I must have some proof of strength of mind from my friends. You must judge for yourself, Emilie, or you are not the person I take you for. You will have full opportunity of judging in a few days. Will you promise me that you will decide entirely for yourself, and that you will keep your mind unbiassed? Will you promise me this? And will you speak, at all events, my dear, that I may understand you?"

Emilie, who saw that even before she spoke Mrs. Somers was on the brink of anger, trembled at the idea of confessing the truth—that her heart was already biassed in favour of another: she had, however, the courage to explain to her all that passed in

her mind. Mrs. Somers heard her with inexpressible disappointment. She was silent for some minutes. At last she said, in a voice of constrained passion, "Mlle. de Coulanges, I have only one question to ask of you—you will reflect before you answer it, because on your reply depends the continuance or utter dissolution of our friendship—do you, or do you not, think proper to refuse my son before you have seen him?"

"Before I have seen Mr. Somers, it surely can be no affront to you or to him," said Emilie, "to decline an offer that I cannot accept, especially when I give as my reason, that my mind is prepossessed in favour of another. With that prepossession, I cannot unite myself to your son: I can only express to you my gratitude—my most sincere gratitude—for your kind and generous intentions, and my hopes that he will find, amongst his own countrywomen, one more suited to him than I can be. His fortune is far above——"

"Say no more, I beg, Mlle. de Coulanges—I asked only for a simple answer to a plain question. You refuse my son—you refuse to be my daughter. I am satisfied—perfectly satisfied. I suppose you have arranged to go to lady Littleton's. I heartily hope that she may be able to make her house more agreeable to you than I could render mine. Shake hands, Mlle. de Coulanges. You have my best wishes for your health and happiness.——Here we part."

"Oh! do not let us part in anger!" said Emilie.

"In anger!—Not in the least—I never was cooler in my life. You have completely cooled me—you have shown me the folly of that warmth of friendship which can meet with no return."

"Would it be a suitable return for your warm friendship to deceive your son?" said Emilie.

"To deceive me, I think still less suitable!" cried Mrs. Somers.

"And how have I deceived you?"

"You know best. Why was I kept in ignorance till the last moment? Why did you never confide your thoughts to me, Emilie? Why did you never till now say one word to me of this strange attachment?"

"There was no necessity for speaking till now," said Emilie. "It is a subject I never named to any one except to mamma—a subject on which I did not think it right to speak to any one but to a parent."

"Your notions of right and wrong, ma'am, differ widely from mine—we are not fit to live together. I have no idea of a friend's concealing any thing from me: without entire confidence, there is no friendship—at least no friendship with me. Pray no tears. I am not fond of *scenes*. Nobody ever is that feels much.—Adieu!—Adieu!"

Mrs. Somers hurried out of the room, repeating, "I'll write directly—this instant—to lady Littleton. Mad. de Coulanges shall not be kept prisoner in *my* house." Emilie stood motionless.

In a few minutes Mrs. Somers returned with an unfolded letter, which she put into Emilie's passive

hand. "Read it, ma'am, I beg—read it. I do every thing openly—every thing handsomely, I hope—whatever may be my faults."

The letter was written with a rapid hand, which was scarcely legible, especially to a foreigner. Emilie, with her eyes full of tears, had no chance of deciphering it.

"Do not hurry yourself, ma'am," said Mrs. Somers. "I will leave you my letter to show to madame la comtesse, and then you will be so good as to despatch it.—Mlle. de Coulanges," cried Mrs. Somers, "you will be so obliging as to refrain from mentioning to the countess the foolish offer that I made you in my son's name this morning. There is no necessity for mortifying my pride any farther—a refusal from you is quite decisive—so pray let there be no consultations. As to the rest, the blame of our disagreement will of course be thrown upon me."

As Emilie moved towards the door, Mrs. Somers said, "Mlle. de Coulanges, I beg pardon for calling you back: but should you ever think of this business or of me, hereafter, you will do me the justice to remember that I made the proposal to you at a time when I was under the firm belief that you would never recover an inch of your estates in France."

"And you, dear Mrs. Somers, if you should ever think of me hereafter," said Emilie, "will, I hope, remember that my answer was given under the same belief."

With a look which seemed to refuse assent, Mrs. Somers continued, "I am as well aware, ma'am, as you, or Mad. de Coulanges, can be, that if you

should recover your hereditary property, the heiress of the house of Coulanges would be a person to whom my son should not presume to aspire."

"O Mrs. Somers! Is not this cruel mockery—undeserved by me—unworthy of you?"

"Mockery!—Ma'am, it is not three days since your mother was so positive in her expectations of being in the Hotel de Coulanges before next winter, that she was almost in fits because I ventured to differ on this point from her and lady Littleton—Lady Littleton's judgment is much better than mine, and has, of course, had its weight—very justly—— But I insist upon your understanding clearly that it had no weight with me in this affair. Whatever you may imagine, I never thought of the Coulanges estate."

"Believe me, I never could have imagined that you did. If *I* could suspect Mrs. Somers of interested motives," said Emilie, with emotion so great that she could scarcely articulate the words, "I must be an unfeeling—an ungrateful idiot!"

"No, not an idiot, Mlle. de Coulanges—nobody can mistake you for an idiot: but, as I was going to say, if you inquire, lady Littleton can tell you that I was absolutely provoked when I first heard you had a chance of recovering your property—you may smile, ma'am, but it is perfectly true. I own I might have been more prudent; but prudence, in affairs of the heart, is not one of my virtues: I own, however, it would have been more prudent to have refrained from making this proposal, till you had received a positive answer from France."

"And why?" said Emilie. "Whatever that answer might have been, surely you must be certain that it would not have made any alteration in my conduct.—You are silent, Mrs. Somers!—You wound me to the heart!——Oh! do me justice!—Justice is all I ask."

"I think that I do you justice—full justice—Mlle. de Coulanges; and if it wounds you to the heart, I am sorry for it; but that is not my fault."

Emilie's countenance suddenly changed from the expression of supplicating tenderness to haughty indignation. "You doubt my integrity!" she exclaimed: "then, indeed, Mrs. Somers, it is best that we should part!"

Mlle. de Coulanges disappeared, and Mrs. Somers shut herself up in her room, where she walked backwards and forwards for above an hour, then threw herself upon a sofa, and remained nearly another hour, till Mrs. Masham came to say that it was time to dress for dinner. She then started up, saying aloud, "I will think no more of these ungrateful people."

"They are gone, ma'am," said Mrs. Masham—"gone, and gave no vails!—which I don't think *on*, upon my own account, God knows! for if millions were offered me, in pocket-pieces, I would not touch one from any soul that comes to the house, having enough, and more than enough, from my own generous lady, who is the only person I stoop to receive from with pleasure. But there are others in the house who are accustomed to vails, and, after staying so long, it was a little ungenteel to go without so

much as offering any one any thing—and to go in such a hurry and huff—taking only a French leave, after all! I must acknowledge with you, ma'am, that they are the ungratefullest people that ever were seen in England. Why, ma'am, I went backwards and forwards often enough into their apartments, to try to make out the cause of the packings and messages to the washerwoman, that I might inform you, but nothing transpired; yet I am certain, in their hearts, they are more black and ungrateful than any that ever were born; for there!—at the last moment, when even, for old acquaintance sake, the tears stood in my eyes, there was miss Emilie, sitting as composedly as a judge, painting a butterfly's wing on some of her Frenchifications! Her eyes were red, to do her justice; but whether with painting or crying, I can't pretend to be certain. But as to Mad. de Coulanges, I can answer for her that the sole thing in nature she thought of, in leaving this house, was the bad step of the hackney-coach."

"Hackney-coach!" cried Mrs. Somers, with surprise. "Did they go away in a hackney-coach?"

"Yes, ma'am, much against the countess's stomach, I am sure: I only wish you had seen the face she made when the glass would not come up."

"But why did not they take my carriage, or wait for lady Littleton's? They were, it seems, in a violent hurry to be gone," said Mrs. Somers.

"So it seems, indeed, ma'am—no better proof of their being the most ungratefullest people in the universe: but so it is, by all accounts, with all of their nation—the French having no constant hearts

for any thing but singing, and dancing, and dressing, and making merry-andrews of themselves. Indeed, I own, till to-day, I thought miss Emilie had less of the merry-andrew nature than any of her country; but the butterfly has satisfied me that there is no striving against climate and natural character, which conquer gratitude and every thing else."

Mrs. Somers sighed, and told Masham that she had said enough upon this disagreeable subject. At dinner the subject was renewed by many visitors, who, as soon as they found that Mad. and Mlle. de Coulanges had left Mrs. Somers, began to find innumerable faults with the French in general, and with the countess and her daughter in particular. On the chapter of gratitude they were most severe; and Mrs. Somers was universally pitied for having so much generosity, and blamed for having had so much patience. Every body declared that they foresaw how she would be treated; and the exclamations of wonder at lady Littleton's inviting to her house those who had behaved so ill to her friend were unceasing. Mrs. Somers all the time denied that she had any cause of complaint against either Mad. de Coulanges or her daughter; but the company judiciously trusted more to her looks than her words. Every thing was said or hinted that could exasperate her against her former favourites: for Mad. de Coulanges had made many enemies by engrossing an unreasonable share in the conversation; and Emilie by attracting too great a portion of attention by her beauty and engaging manners. Malice often overshoots the mark: Mrs. Somers was at first glad to

hear the objects of her indignation abused; but at last she began to think the profusion of blame greater than was merited, and when she retired to rest at night, and when Masham began with, "O, ma'am! do you know that Mlle. de Coulanges——" Mrs. Somers interrupted her, and said, "Masham, I desire to hear nothing more about Mlle. de Coulanges: I have heard her and her mother abused, without ceasing, these two hours, and that is enough."

"Lord! ma'am, I was not going to abuse them—God forbid! I was just going to tell you," cried Masham, "that never was any thing so mistaken as all I said before dinner. Just now, ma'am, when I went into the little dressing-room, within Mad. de Coulanges' room, and happened to open the wardrobe, I was quite struck back with shame at my own unjustice: there, ma'am, poor miss Emilie left something—and out of her best things!—to every maid-servant in the house; all directed in her own hand, and with a good word for each; and this ring for me, which she is kind enough to say is of no value but to put me in mind of all the attentions I have shown her and her mother—which, I am sure, were scarcely worth noticing, especially at such a time when she had enough to do, and her heart full, no doubt, poor soul!—There are her little paintings and embroideries, and pretty things, that she did when she was confined with her sprain, all laid out in order—'tis my astonishment how she found time!—and directed to her friends in London, as keepsakes:—and the very butterfly that I was so angry with her for staying to finish, is on something for you, ma'am; and

here's a packet that was with it, and that nobody saw till this minute."

"Give it me!" cried Mrs. Somers. She tore it open, and found, in the first place, the pocketbook, full of bank notes, which she had given Mad. de Coulanges, with a few polite but haughty lines from the countess, saying that only twenty guineas had been used, which she hoped, at some future period, to be able to repay. Then came a note from Emilie, in which Mrs. Somers found her own letter to lady Littleton.—Emilie expressed herself as follows.

"Many thanks for the enclosed, but we have determined not to go to lady Littleton's: at least we will take care not to be the cause of quarrel between friends to whom we are so much obliged.—No, dear Mrs. Somers! we do not part in anger. Excuse me, if the last words I said to you were hasty—they were forced from me by a moment of passion—but it is past: all your generosity, all your kindness, the recollection of all that you have done, all that you have wished for my happiness, rush upon my mind; and every other thought, and every other feeling, is forgotten. Would to Heaven that I could express to you my gratitude by actions!—but words, alas! are all that I have in my power—and where shall I find words that can reach your heart! I had better be silent, and trust to time and to you. I know your generous temper—you will soon blame yourself for having judged too severely of Emilie. But do not reproach yourself—do not let this give you a moment's uneasiness: the clouds pass away, and

the blue sky remains. Think only—as I ever shall —of your goodness to mamma and to me. Adieu!

" EMILIE DE COULANGES."

Mrs. Somers was much affected by this letter, and by the information that Emilie and her mother had declined taking refuge with lady Littleton, lest they should occasion jealousies between her and her friend. Generous people are, of all others, the most touched by generosity of sentiment or of action. Mrs. Somers went to bed, enraged against herself—but it was now too late.

In the mean time, Emilie and her mother were in an obscure lodging, at a haberdasher's near Golden Square. The pride of Mad. de Coulanges, at first, supported her even beyond her daughter's expectations; she uttered no complaints, but frequently repeated, " Mais nous sommes bien ici, très bien—we cannot expect to have things as well as at the Hotel de Coulanges." In a short time she was threatened with fits of her *vapeurs noirs;* but Emilie, with the assistance of her whole store of French songs, a bird-organ, a lap-dog, and a squirrel, belonging to the girl of the house, contrived to avert the danger for the present—as to the future, she trembled to think of it. M. de Brisac seemed to be continually in her mother's thoughts; and whatever occurred, or whatever was the subject of conversation, Mad. de Coulanges always found means to end with " *apropos to M. de Brisac.*" Faithful to her promise, however, which Emilie, with the utmost delicacy, recalled to her mind, she declared that she would not give M.

de Brisac an answer till the end of the month, which she had allowed her daughter for reflection, and that, till that period, she would not even let him know where they were to be found. Emilie thought that the time went very fast, and her mother evidently rejoiced at the idea that the month would soon be at an end. Emilie endeavoured, with all her skill, to demonstrate to her mother that it would be possible to support themselves, by her industry and ingenuity, without this marriage; and to this, Mad. de Coulanges at first replied, "Try, and you will soon be tired, child." Emilie's spirits rose on receiving this permission: she began by copying music for a music-shop in the neighbourhood; and her mother saw, with astonishment, that she persevered in her design, and that no fatigue or discouraging circumstances could vanquish her resolution.

"Good Heavens! my child," said she, "you will wear yourself to a skeleton with copying music, and with painting, and embroidery, beside stooping so many hours over that tambour frame. My dear, how can you bear all this?"

"How!—Oh! dear mamma!" said Emilie, "there is no great difficulty in all this to me—the difficulty, the impossibility would be, to live happily with a man I despise."

"I wish," cried Mad. de Coulanges, "I wish to all the saints, that that hero of yours, that fellow prisoner of ours, at the Abbaye, with his humanity, and his generosity, and his courage, and all his fine qualities, had kept out of your way, Emilie: I wish he were fairly at the bottom of the Black Sea."

"But you forget that he was the means of obtaining your liberty, mamma."

"I wish I could forget it—I am always doomed to be obliged to those whom I cannot love. But, after all, you might as well think of the khan of Tartary as of this man, whom we shall never hear of more. Marry M. de Brisac, like a reasonable creature, and do not let me see you bending, as you do, for ever, over a tambour frame, wasting your fine eyes and spoiling your charming shape."

"But, mamma," said Emilie, "would it not be much worse to marry one man, and like another?"

"For mercy's sake! say something new to me, Emilie; at all events, I have heard this a hundred times."

"The simple truth, alas!" said Emilie, "must always be the same: I wish I could put it in any new light that would please you, dear mamma."

"It never can please me, child," cried Mad. de Coulanges, angrily; "nor can you please me, neither, as you are going on. Fine heroism, truly!—you will sacrifice your duty and your mother to your obstinacy in an idle fancy. But, remember, the last days of the month are at hand—longer I will not listen to such provoking nonsense—it has half killed me already."

Neither lap-dog, squirrel, bird-organ, nor Emilie's whole stock of French songs, could longer support the vivacity of Mad. de Coulanges; for some days she had passed the time in watching and listening to the London cries, as she sat at her window: the figures and sounds in this busy part of the town

were quite new to her; and, whilst the novelty lasted, she was, like a child, good-humoured and full of exclamations. The want of some one to listen to these exclamations was an insupportable evil; she complained terribly of her daughter's silence, whilst she was attending to her different employments. This want of conversation, and of all the luxuries she enjoyed at the house of Mrs. Somers, her anger against that lady, her loss of all hope of hearing from France, and her fear that Emilie would at last absolutely refuse to obey and marry M. de Brisac, all together operated so powerfully upon Mad. de Coulanges, that she really fell sick, and kept her bed. Emilie now confined herself to her mother's room, and attended her with the most affectionate care, and with a degree of anxiety, which those only can comprehend who have believed themselves to be the cause of the illness of a friend—of a parent. Mad. de Coulanges would sometimes reply, when her daughter asked her if such or such a thing had done her good, "No, my child, nothing will do me good but your obedience, which you refuse me—perhaps on my deathbed."

Though Emilie did not apprehend that her mother was in any immediate danger, yet these continual fits of low spirits and nervous attacks excited much alarm. Emilie's reflections on her own helpless situation contributed to magnify her fears: she considered that she was a stranger, a foreigner, without friends, without credit, almost without money, and deprived, by the necessary attendance on her sick mother, of all power to earn any by her own exertions. The bodily fatigue that she endured, even

without any mental anxiety, would have been sufficient to wear out the spirits of a more robust person than Emilie. She had no human being to assist her but a young girl, a servant-maid belonging to the house, who, fortunately, was active and good-natured; but her mistress was excessively cross, vulgar, and avaricious; avarice, indeed, often seemed to conquer in her the common feelings of humanity. Once, whilst Mad. de Coulanges was extremely ill, she forced her way into her bedchamber, to insist upon changing the counterpane upon the bed, which, she said, was too good to be stained with coffee: another day, when she was angry with Mlle. de Coulanges, for having cracked a basin by heating some soup for her mother, she declared, in the least ceremonious terms possible, that she hated to have any of the French *refugees* and emigrants in the house, for that she was not accustomed to let her lodgings to folk that nobody ever came near to visit, and that lived only upon soups and salads, and such low stuff; "and who, when they were ill, never so much as called in a physician, or even a nurse, but must take up the time of people that were not bound to wait upon them."

Mlle. de Coulanges bore all this patiently rather than run the hazard of removing to other lodgings whilst her mother was so ill. The countess had a prejudice against English physicians, as she affirmed that it was impossible that they could understand French constitutions, especially hers, which was different from that of any other human being, and which, as she said, only one medical man in France

rightly understood. At last, however, she yielded to the persuasions of her daughter, and permitted Emilie to send for a physician. When she inquired what he thought of her mother, he said, that she was in a nervous fever, and that unless her mind was kept free from anxiety he could not answer for her recovery. Mad. de Coulanges looked full at her daughter, who was standing at the foot of her bed; a mist came before Emilie's eyes, a cold dew covered her forehead, and she was forced to hold by the bed-post to support herself.

At this instant the door opened, and lady Littleton appeared. Emilie sprang forward, and threw herself into her arms—Mad. de Coulanges started up in her bed, exclaiming "Ah Ciel!" and then all were silent—except the mistress of the house, who went on making apologies about the dirt of her stairs, and its being Friday night. But as she at length perceived that not a soul in the room knew a word she was saying, she retreated. The physician took leave—and, when they were thus left at liberty, lady Littleton seated herself in the broken arm-chair beside the bed, and told Mad. de Coulanges that Mrs. Somers had been very unhappy, in consequence of their quarrel; and that she had been indefatigable in her inquiries and endeavours to find out the place of their retreat; that she had at last given up the search in despair. "But," continued lady Littleton, "it has been my good fortune to discover you by means of this flower of Emilie's painting"—(she produced a little hand-screen, which Emilie had lately made, and which she

had sent to be disposed of at the Repository for Ingenious Works). "I knew it to be yours, my dear, because it is an exact resemblance of one upon your watch of Flora, which was drawn from the flower I brought you from Kew Gardens. Now you must not be angry with me for finding you out, nor for begging of you to be reconciled to poor Mrs. Somers, who has suffered much in your absence—much from the idea of what you would endure—and more from her self-reproaches. She has, indeed, an unfortunate susceptibility of temper, which makes her sometimes forget both politeness and justice: but, as you well know, her heart is excellent. Come, you must promise me to meet her at my house, as soon as you are able to go out, my dear Mad. de Coulanges."

"I do not know when that will be," replied Mad. de Coulanges, in a sick voice: "I was never so ill in my life—and so the physician says. But I am revived by seeing lady Littleton—she is, and ever has been, all goodness and politeness to us. I am ashamed that she should see us in such a miserable place. Emilie, give me my other night-riband, and the wretched little looking-glass."

Mad. de Coulanges sat up and arranged her head-dress. At this moment, lady Littleton took Emilie aside, and put into her hand a letter from France!—"I would not speak of it suddenly to your mother, my dear," said she; "but you will find the proper time. I hope it contains good news—at present, I will have patience. You shall see me again soon; and you must, at all events, let me take you

from this miserable place. Mrs. Somers has been punished enough.—Adieu!—I long to know the news from France."

The news from France was such as made the looking-glass drop from the hand of Mad. de Coulanges. It was a letter from the son of her old steward, to tell her that his father was dead—that he was now in possession of all the family fortune, which he was impatient to restore to the wife and daughter of his former master and friend.

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Mad. de Coulanges, in an ecstasy of joy—"Heaven be praised! we shall once more see dear Paris, and the hotel de Coulanges!"

"Heaven be praised!" cried Emilie, "I shall never more see M. de Brisac. My mother, I am sure, will no longer wish me to marry him."

"No, in truth," said the countess, "it would now be a most unequal match, and one to which he is by no means entitled. How fortunate it is that I had not given him my promise!—After all, your aversion to him, child, was quite providential. Now you may form the most splendid alliance that your heart can desire."

"My heart," said Emilie, sighing, "desires no splendid alliance. But had you not better lie down, dear mamma?—You will certainly catch cold—and remember, your mind must be kept quiet."

It was impossible to keep her mind quiet; she ran on from one subject to another with extravagant volubility; and Emilie was afraid that she would, the next day, be quite exhausted; but, on the con-

trary, after talking above half the night, she fell into a sound sleep; and when she wakened, after having slept fourteen hours, she declared that she would no longer be kept a prisoner in bed. The renovating effects of joy and the influence of the imagination were never more strongly displayed. "Le malheur passé n'est bon qu'à être oublié" was la comtesse's favourite maxim—and to do her justice, she was as ready to forget past quarrels as past misfortunes. She readily complied with Emilie's request that she would, as soon as she was able to go out, accompany her to lady Littleton's, that they might meet and be reconciled to Mrs. Somers.

"She has the most tormenting temper imaginable," said the countess; "and I would not live with her for the universe—Mais d'ailleurs c'est la meilleure femme du monde."

If, instead of being the best woman in the world, Mrs. Somers had been the worst; and if, instead of being a benefactress, she had been an enemy, it would have been all the same thing to the countess; for, in this moment, she was, as usual, like a child, a *friend* to every creature of every kind.

Her volubility was interrupted by the arrival of lady Littleton, who came to carry Mad. de Coulanges and Emilie to her house, where, as her ladyship said, Mrs. Somers was impatiently waiting for them. Lady Littleton had prevented her from coming to this poor lodging-house, because she knew that the being seen there would mortify the pride of some of the house of Coulanges.

Mrs. Somers was indeed waiting for them with in-

expressible impatience. The moment she heard their voices in the hall at lady Littleton's, she ran down stairs to meet them; and as she embraced Emilie she could not refrain from bursting into tears.

"Tears of joy, these must be," cried Mad. de Coulanges: "We are all happy now—perfectly happy —Are not we?—Embrace me, Mrs. Somers—Emilie shall not have all your heart—I have some gratitude as well as my daughter; and I should have none if I did not love you—especially at this moment."

Mad. de Coulanges was, by this time, at the head of the stairs; a servant opened the drawing-room door; but something was amiss with the strings of her sandals—she would stay to adjust them—and said to Emilie, "Allez, allez—entrez."

Emilie obeyed. An instant afterwards Mad. de Coulanges thought she heard a sudden cry, either of joy or grief, from Emilie—she hurried into the drawing-room.

"Bon Dieu! c'est notre homme de l'Abbaye!" cried she, starting back at the sight of a gentleman who had been kneeling at Emilie's feet, and who arose as she entered.

"My son!" said Mrs. Somers, eagerly presenting him to Mad. de Coulanges—"my son! whom it is in your power to make the happiest or the most miserable of men!"

"In my power!—in Emilie's, you mean, I suppose," said the countess, smiling. "She is so good a girl that I cannot make her miserable; and as for you, Mrs. Somers, the honour of your alliance—and our obligations——But then I shall be miserable

myself if she does not go back with me to the hotel de Coulanges—Ah! Ciel!—And then poor M. de Brisac, he will be miserable, unless, to comfort him, I marry him myself."——Half laughing, half crying, Mad. de Coulanges scarcely knew what she said or did.

It was some time before she was sufficiently composed to understand clearly what was said to her by any person in the room, though she asked half a dozen times, at least, from every one present, an explanation of all that had happened.

Lady Littleton was the only person who could give an explanation. She had contrived this meeting, and even Mrs. Somers had not foreseen the event—she never suspected that her own son was the very person to whom Emilie was attached, and that it was for Emilie's sake her son had hitherto refused to comply with her earnest desire that he should marry and settle in the world. He had no hopes that she would consent to his marrying a French girl without fortune, because she formerly quarrelled with him for refusing to marry a rich lady of quality, who happened to be, at that time, high in her favour. Upon the summons home that he received from her, he was alarmed by the apprehension that she had some new alliance in view for him, and he resolved, before he saw his mother, to trust his secret to lady Littleton, who had always been a mediatrix and peace-maker. He declined telling the name of the object of his affections; but, from his description, and from many concomitant dates and circumstances, lady Littleton was led to suspect

that it might be Emilie de Coulanges. She consequently contrived an interview, which she knew must be decisive.

Mad. de Coulanges, whose imagination was now at Paris, felt rather disappointed at the idea of her daughter's marrying an Englishman, who was neither a count, a marquis, nor even a baron; but lady Littleton at length obtained that consent which she knew would be necessary to render Emilie happy, even in following the dictates of her heart, or her reason.

Some conversation passed between lady Littleton and Mrs. Somers about a dormant title in the Somers' family, which might be revived. This made a wonderful impression on the countess. She yielded, as she did every thing else, with a good grace.

History does not say, whether she did or did not console M. de Brisac: we are only informed that, immediately after her daughter's marriage, she returned to Paris, and gave a splendid ball at her hotel de Coulanges. We are further assured that Mrs. Somers never quarrelled with Emilie from the day of her marriage till the day of her death—but that is incredible.

1803.

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END OF

TALES OF FASHIONABLE LIFE.

THE

# MODERN GRISELDA,

## A TALE.

"And since in man right reason bears the sway,
Let that frail thing, weak woman, have her way."

POPE.

THE

# MODERN GRISELDA.

## CHAPTER I.

" Blest as th' immortal gods is he,
The youth who fondly sits by thee,
Who sees and hears thee all the while,
Softly speak and sweetly smile."

" Is not this ode set to music, my dear Griselda ? " said the happy bridegroom to his bride.

" Yes, surely, my dear: did you never hear it ? "

" Never; and I am glad of it, for I shall have the pleasure of hearing it for the first time from you, my love: will you be so kind as to play it for me ? "

" Most willingly," said Griselda, with an enchanting smile; " but I am afraid that I shall not be able to do it justice," added she, as she sat down to her harp, and threw her white arm across the chords.

" Charming ! Thank you, my love," said the bridegroom, who had listened with enthusiastic devotion. —" Will you let me hear it once more ? "

The complaisant bride repeated the strain.

"Thank you, my dear love," repeated her husband. This time he omitted the word " *charming*" —she missed it, and, pouting prettily, said,

" I never can play any thing so well the second time as the first."—She paused: but as no compli-

ment ensued, she continued, in a more pettish tone, "And for that reason, I do hate to be made to play any thing twice over."

"I did not know that, my dearest love, or I would not have asked you to do it; but I am the more obliged to you for your ready compliance."

"Obliged!—O, my dear, I am sure you could not be the least obliged to me, for I know I played it horridly: I hate flattery."

"I am convinced of that, my dear, and therefore I never flatter: you know I did not say that you played as well the last time as the first, did I?"

"No, I did not say you did," cried Griselda, and her colour rose as she spoke: she tuned her harp with some precipitation——"This harp is terribly out of tune."

"Is it? I did not perceive it."

"Did not you, indeed? I am sorry for that."

"Why so, my dear?"

"Because, my dear, I own that I would rather have had the blame thrown on my harp than upon myself?"

"Blame? my love!—But I threw no blame either on you or your harp. I cannot recollect saying even a syllable that implied blame."

"No, my dear, you did not say a syllable; but in some cases the silence of those we love is the worst, the most mortifying species of blame."

The tears came into Griselda's beautiful eyes.

"My sweet love," said he, "how can you let such a trifle affect you so much?"

"Nothing is a trifle to me which concerns those

I love," said Griselda.——Her husband kissed away the pearly drops which rolled over her vermeil-tinctured cheeks. "My love," said he, "this is having too much sensibility."

"Yes, I own I have too much sensibility," said she, "too much, a great deal too much, for my own happiness.—Nothing ever can be a trifle to me which marks the decline of the affection of those who are most dear to me."

The tenderest protestations of undiminished and unalterable affection could not for some time reassure this timid sensibility: but at length the lady suffered herself to be comforted, and with a languid smile said, that she hoped she was mistaken—that her fears were perhaps unreasonable—that she prayed to Heaven they might in future prove groundless.

A few weeks afterwards her husband unexpectedly met with Mr. Granby, a friend, of whose company he was particularly fond: he invited him home to dinner, and was talking over past times in all the gaiety and innocence of his heart, when suddenly his wife rose and left the room.—As her absence appeared to him long, and as he had begged his friend to postpone *an excellent story* till her return, he went to her apartment and called "Griselda!—Griselda, my love!"——No Griselda answered.—He searched for her in vain in every room in the house: at last, in an alcove in the garden, he found the fair dissolved in tears.

"Good heavens! my dear Griselda, what can be the matter?"

A melancholy, not to say sullen, silence was

maintained by his dear Griselda, till this question had been reiterated in all the possible tones of fond solicitude and alarm: at last, in broken sentences, she replied that she saw he did not love her—never had loved her; that she had now but too much reason to be convinced that all her fears were real, not imaginary; that her presentiments, alas! never deceived her; that she was the most miserable woman on earth.

Her husband's unfeigned astonishment she seemed to consider as an aggravation of her woes, and it was an additional insult to plead ignorance of his offence.

If he did not understand her feelings, it was impossible, it was needless to explain them. He must have lost all sympathy with her, all tenderness for her, if he did not know what had passed in her mind.

The man stood in stupid innocence. Provoked to speak more plainly, the lady exclaimed, "Unfeeling, cruel, barbarous man!—Have not you this whole day been trying your utmost skill to torment me to death? and, proud of your success, now you come to enjoy your triumph."

"Success!—triumph!"

"Yes, triumph!—I see it in your eyes—it is in vain to deny it.—All this I owe to your friend Mr. Granby. Why he should be my enemy—I! who never injured him, or any body living, in thought, word, or deed—why he should be my enemy?"——

"Enemy!—My love, this is the strangest fancy! Why should you imagine that he is your enemy?"

"He *is* my enemy—nobody shall ever convince me of the contrary; he has wounded me in the tenderest point, and in the basest manner: has not he done his utmost, in the most artful, insidious way,—even before my face,—to persuade you that you were a thousand times happier when you were a bachelor than you are now—than you ever have been since you married me?"

"O, my dear Griselda, you totally misunderstand him: such a thought never entered his mind."

"Pardon me, I know him better than you do."

"But I have known him ever since I was a child."

"That is the very reason you cannot judge of him as well as I can: how could you judge of character when you were a child?"

"But now that I am a man——"

"Now that you are a man you are prejudiced in his favour by all the associations of your childhood —all those associations," continued the fair one, renewing her tears, "all those early associations which are stronger than every other species of affection—all those associations which I never *can* have in your mind, which ever must act against me, and which no merit—if I had any merit—no tenderness, no fidelity, no fondness of mine, can ever hope to balance in the heart of the man I love."

"My dearest Griselda! be reasonable, and do not torment yourself and me for no earthly purpose about these associations: really it is ridiculous. Come, dry these useless tears, let me beseech you, my love. You do not know how much pain they give me, unreasonable as they are."

At these words they flowed more bitterly.

"Nay, my love, I conjure you to compose yourself, and return to the company: you do not know how long you have been away, and I too. We shall be missed; we shall make ourselves ridiculous."

"If it be ridiculous to love, I shall be ridiculous all my life. I am sorry you think me so; I knew it would come to this; I must bear it, if I can," said Griselda; "only be so kind to excuse me from returning to the company to-night—indeed I am not fit, I am not able: say that I am not well; indeed, my love, you may say so with truth.—Tell your friend that I have a terrible head-ache, and that I am gone to bed—but not to rest," added she, in a lower and more plaintive tone, as she drew her hand from her husband's, and in spite of all his entreaties retired to her room with an air of heart-broken resignation.

Whoever has had the felicity to be beloved by such a wife as our Griselda, must have felt how much the charms of beauty are heightened by the anguish of sensibility. Even in the moment when a husband is most tormented by her caprices, he feels that there is something so amiable, so flattering to his vanity in their source, that he cannot complain of the killing pleasure. On the contrary, he grows fonder of his dear tormentor; he folds closer to him this pleasing bosom ill.

Griselda perceived the effects, and felt the whole extent of the power of sensibility; she had too much prudence, however, at once to wear out the excitability of a husband's heart; she knew that the influ-

ence of tears, potent as it is, might in time cease to be irresistible, unless aided by the magic of smiles; she knew the power of contrast even in charms; she believed the poets, who certainly understand these things, and who assure us that the very existence of love depends on this blest vicissitude. Convinced, or seemingly convinced, of the folly of that fond melancholy in which she persisted for a week, she next appeared all radiant with joy; and she had reason to be delighted by the effect which this produced. Her husband, who had not yet been long enough her husband to cease to be her lover, had suffered much from the obstinacy of her sorrow; his spirits had sunk, he had become silent, he had been even seen to stand motionless with his arms folded; he was in this attitude when she approached and smiled upon him in all her glory. He breathed, he lived, he moved, he spoke.—Not the influence of the sun on the statue of Memnon was ever more exhilarating.

Let any candid female say, or, if she will not say, imagine, what she should have felt at that moment in Griselda's place.—How intoxicating to human vanity, to be possessed of such powers of enchantment!—How difficult to refrain from their exercise!—How impossible to believe in their finite duration!

## CHAPTER II.

"*Some* hope a lover by their faults to win,
As spots on ermine beautify the skin."

When Griselda thought that her husband had long enough enjoyed his new existence, and that there was danger of his forgetting the taste of sorrow, she changed her tone.——One day, when he had not returned home exactly at the appointed minute, she received him with a frown,—such as would have made even Mars himself recoil, if Mars could have beheld such a frown upon the brow of his Venus.

"Dinner has been kept waiting for you this hour, my dear."

"I am very sorry for it; but why did you wait, my dear? I am really very sorry I am so late, but (looking at his watch) it is only half past six by me."

"It is seven by me."

They presented their watches to each other; he, in an apologetical, she, in a reproachful attitude.

"I rather think you are too fast, my dear," said the gentleman.

"I am very sure you are too slow, my dear," said the lady.

"My watch never loses a minute in the four-and-twenty hours," said he.

"Nor mine a second," said she.

"I have reason to believe I am right, my love," said the husband, mildly.

"Reason!" exclaimed the wife, astonished; "what reason can you possibly have to believe you are right, when I tell you I am morally certain you are wrong, my love?"

"My only reason is, that I set my watch by the sun to-day."

"The sun must be wrong, then," cried the lady, hastily.—"You need not laugh; for I know what I am saying—the variation, the declination, must be allowed for in computing it with the clock. Now you know perfectly well what I mean, though you will not explain it for me, because you are conscious I am in the right."

"Well, my dear, if *you* are conscious of it, that is sufficient. We will not dispute any more about such a trifle.—Are they bringing up dinner?"

"If they know that you are come in; but I am sure I cannot tell whether they do or not.—Pray, my dear Mrs. Nettleby," cried the lady, turning to a female friend, and still holding her watch in her hand, "what o'clock is it by you? There is nobody in the world hates disputing about trifles as much as I do; but I own I do love to convince people that I am in the right."

Mrs. Nettleby's watch had stopped. How provoking!—Vexed at having no immediate means of convincing people that she was in the right, our heroine consoled herself by proceeding to criminate her husband, not in this particular instance, where he pleaded guilty, but upon the general charge of being always late for dinner, which he strenuously denied.

There is something in the species of reproach,

which advances thus triumphantly from particulars to generals, peculiarly offensive to every reasonable and susceptible mind: and there is something in the general charge of being always late for dinner, which the punctuality of man's nature cannot easily endure, especially if he be hungry. We should humbly advise our female friends to forbear exposing a husband's patience to this trial, or at least to temper it with much fondness, else mischief will infallibly ensue. For the first time Griselda saw her husband angry; but she recovered him by saying, in a softened tone, "My love, you must be sensible that I can have but one reason for being so impatient for your return home.—If I liked your company less, I should not complain so much of your want of punctuality."

Finding that this speech had the desired effect, it was afterwards repeated with variations whenever her husband stayed from home to enjoy any species of amusement, or to gratify any of his friends. When he betrayed symptoms of impatience under this constraint, the expostulations became more urgent, if not more forcible.

"Indeed, my dear, I take it rather unkindly of you that you pay so little attention to my feelings——"

"I see I am of no consequence to you *now;* I find every body's society is preferred to mine: it was not always so.—Well! it is what I might have expected——"

"Heigho!——Heigho!——"

Griselda's sighs were still persuasive, and her

husband, notwithstanding that he felt the restraints which daily multiplied upon his time and upon his personal liberty becoming irksome, had not the barbarity to give pain to the woman by whom he was so tenderly beloved. He did not consider that in this case, as well as in many others, apparent mercy is real cruelty. The more this monopolising humour of his wife's was indulged, the more insatiable it became. Every person, every thing but herself was to be excluded from his heart; and when this sole patent for pleasure was granted to her, she became rather careless in its exercise, as those are apt to do who fear no competitors. In proportion as her endeavours to please abated, her expectations of being adored increased: the slightest word of blame, the most remote hint that any thing in her conduct, manners, or even dress, could be altered for the better, was the signal for battle or for tears.

One night she wept for an hour, and debated for two, about an alteration in her head-dress, which her husband unluckily happened to say made it more becoming. *More becoming!* implied that it was before unbecoming. She recollected the time when every thing she wore was becoming in his eyes—but that time, alas! was completely past; and she only wished that she could forget that it had ever been.

"To have been happy is additional misery."

This misery may appear comic to some people, but it certainly was not so to our heroine's unfortunate husband. It was in vain that, in mitigation of his offence, he pleaded total want of knowledge

in the arcana of the toilette, absolute inferiority of taste, and a willing submission to the decrees of fashion.

This submission was called indifference—this calmness construed into contempt. He stood convicted of having said that the lady's dress was unbecoming—she was certain that he thought more than he said, and that every thing about her was grown disagreeable to him.

It was in vain he represented that his affection had not been created, and could not be annihilated, by such trifles; that it rested on the solid basis of esteem.

"Esteem!" cried his wife—"that is the unkindest stroke of all! When a man begins to talk of esteem, there is an end of love."

To illustrate this position, the fair one, as well as the disorder of her mind would permit, entered into a refined disquisition, full of all the metaphysics of gallantry, which proved that love—genuine love—is an æthereal essence, a union of souls, regulated by none of those formal principles, and founded upon none of those vulgar moral qualities on which friendship, and the other connexions of society, depend. Far, far above the jurisdiction of reason, true love creates perfect sympathy in taste, and an absolute identity of opinion upon all subjects, physical, metaphysical, moral, political, and economic. After having thus established her theory, her practice was wonderfully consistent, and she reasonably expected from her husband the most exact conformity to her principles—of course, his five senses and his under-

standing were to be identified with hers. If he saw, heard, felt, or understood differently from her, he did not, could not love her. Once she was offended by his liking white better than black; at another time she was angry with him for loving the taste of mushrooms. One winter she quarrelled with him for not admiring the touch of satin, and one summer she was jealous of him for listening to the song of a blackbird. Then because he could not prefer to all other odours the smell of jessamine, she was ready "to die of a rose in aromatic pain." The domain of taste, in the more enlarged sense of the word, became a glorious field of battle, and afforded subjects of inextinguishable war. Our heroine was accomplished, and knew how to make all her accomplishments and her knowledge of use. As she was mistress not only of the pencil, but of all "the cant of criticism," she had infinite advantages in the wordy war. From the *beau ideal* to the choice of a snuffer-dish, all came within her province, and was to be submitted, without appeal, to her instinctive sense of moral order.—Happy fruits of knowledge!—Happy those who can thus enlarge their intellectual dominion, and can vary eternally the dear delight of giving pain. The range of opinion was still more ample than the province of taste, affording scope for all the joys of assertion and declamation—for the opposing of learned and unlearned authorities—for the quoting the opinions of friends—counting voices instead of arguments—wondering at the absurdity of those who can be of a different way of thinking—appealing to the judgment of the whole world—or resting perfectly

satisfied with her own. Sometimes the most important, sometimes the most trivial, and seemingly uninteresting subjects, gave exercise to Griselda's powers; and in all cases being entirely of her opinion was the only satisfactory proof of love.

Our heroine knew how, with able generalship, to take advantage of time and situation. Just before the birth of their child, which, by the bye, was born dead, a dispute arose between the husband and wife concerning public and private education, which, from its vehemence, alarmed the gentleman into a perfect conviction that he was in the wrong. Scarcely had Griselda gained this point, when a question arose at the tea-table respecting the Chinese method of making tea. It was doubted by some of the company whether it was made in a tea-pot or a tea-cup. Griselda gave her opinion loudly for the tea-pot—her lord and master inclined to the tea-cup; and as neither of them had been in China, they could debate without fear of coming to a conclusion. The subject seemed at first insignificant; but the lady's method of managing it supplied all deficiencies, and roused all the passions of human nature on the one side or the other. Victory hung doubtful; but our heroine won the day by taking time into the account.—Her adversary was in a hurry to go to meet some person on business, and quitted the field of battle.

## CHAPTER III.

"Self-valuing Fancy, highly-crested Pride,
Strong sovereign Will, and some desire to chide."

"THERE are," says Dr. Johnson, "a thousand familiar disputes which reason can never decide; questions that elude investigation, and make logic ridiculous—cases where something must be done, and where little can be said.—Wretched would be the pair above all names of wretchedness who should be doomed to adjust by reason every morning all the detail of a domestic day."

Our heroine made a double advantage of this passage: for she regularly reasoned where logic was ridiculous, and could not be prevailed upon to listen to reason when it might have been useful.—She substituted her *will* most frequently for arguments, and often opposed it to her husband's, in order to give him the merit of sacrificing his wishes. When he wanted to read, she suddenly wished to walk; when he wished to walk, she was immersed in her studies. When he was busy, she was talkative; when he was eager to hear her converse, she was inclined to be silent. The company that he liked, she disliked; the public amusements that she most frequented were those of which he least approved. This species of wilfulness was the strongest proof of her solicitude about his good opinion.—She could not bear, she said, that he should consider her as a child, who was not able to govern herself. She could

not believe that a man had confidence in her unless he proved it by leaving her at liberty to decide and act for herself.

Sometimes she receded, sometimes she advanced in her claims; but without marking the daily ebbs and flows of her humour, it is sufficient to observe, that it continually encroached upon her husband's indulgence. She soon insisted upon being *consulted*, that is, obeyed, in affairs which did not immediately come under the cognizance of her sex —politics inclusive. This apparently exorbitant love of power was veiled under the most affectionate humility.

"O, my love! I know you despise my abilities; you think these things above the comprehension of poor women. I know I am but your plaything after all: you cannot consider me for a moment as your equal or your friend—I see that!—You talk of these things to your friend Mr. Granby—I am not worthy to hear them.—Well, I am sure I have no ambition, except to possess the confidence of the man I love."

The lady forgot that she had, upon a former occasion, considered a profession of esteem from her husband as an insult, and, that, according to her definition of true love, esteem was incompatible with its existence.

Tacitus remarks, that it is common with princes to will contradictories; in this characteristic they have the honour to resemble some of the fair sex, as well as all spoiled children. Having every feasible wish gratified, they are obliged to wish for what is impossible, for want of something to desire or to do:

they are compelled to cry for the moon, or for new worlds to conquer.—Our heroine having now attained the summit of human glory and happiness, and feeling almost as much ennui as was expressed by the conqueror of the world, yawned one morning, as she sat tête-à-tête with her husbond, and said—

"I wish I knew what was the matter with me this morning.—Why do you keep the newspaper all to yourself, my dear?"

"Here it is for you, my dear: I have finished it."

"I humbly thank you for giving it to me when you have done with it—I hate stale news.—Is there any thing in the paper? for I cannot be at the trouble of hunting it."

"Yes, my dear, there are the marriages of two of our friends——"

"Who? Who?"

"Your friend the widow Nettleby, to her cousin John Nettleby."

"Mrs. Nettleby! Lord! but why did you tell me?"

"Because you asked me, my dear."

"Oh, but it is a hundred times pleasanter to read the paragraph one's self: one loses all the pleasure of the surprise by being told.—Well! whose was the other marriage?"

"Oh, my dear, I will not tell you—I will leave you the pleasure of the surprise."

"But you see I cannot guess it.—How provoking you are, my dear! Do pray tell it me."

"Our friend Mr. Granby."

"Mr. Granby!—Dear! Why did not you make

me guess? I should have guessed him directly: But why do you call him our friend? I am sure he is no friend of mine, nor ever was; I took an aversion to him, as you may remember, the very first day I saw him: I am sure he is no friend of mine."

"I am sorry for it, my dear; but I hope you will go and see Mrs. Granby?"

"Not I, indeed, my dear.—Who was she?"

"Miss Cooke."

"Cooke!—but there are so many Cookes.—— Can't you distinguish her any way?—Has she no Christian name?"

"Emma, I think—yes, Emma."

"Emma Cooke!—No; it cannot be my friend Emma Cooke—for I am sure she was cut out for an old maid."

"This lady seems to me to be cut out for a good wife."

"May be so—I am sure I'll never go to see her—Pray, my dear, how came you to see so much of her?"

"I have seen very little of her, my dear: I only saw her two or three times before she was married."

"Then, my dear, how could you decide that she is cut out for a good wife?—I am sure you could not judge of her by seeing her only two or three times, and before she was married."

"Indeed, my love, that is a very just observation."

"I understand that compliment perfectly, and thank you for it, my dear.—I must own I can bear any thing better than irony."

"Irony! my dear; I was perfectly in earnest."

"Yes, yes; in earnest—so I perceive—I may naturally be dull of apprehension, but my feelings are quick enough: I comprehend you too well. Yes—it is impossible to judge of a woman before marriage, or to guess what sort of a wife she will make. I presume you speak from experience; you have been disappointed yourself, and repent your choice."

"My dear, what did I say that was like this! Upon my word I meant no such thing; I really was not thinking of you in the least."

"No—you never think of me now: I can easily believe that you were not thinking of me in the least."

"But I said that only to prove to you that I could not be thinking ill of you, my dear."

"But I would rather that you thought ill of me than that you did not think of me at all."

"Well, my dear," said her husband, laughing, "I will even think ill of you, if that will please you."

"Do you laugh at me?" cried she, bursting into tears. "When it comes to this, I am wretched indeed! Never man laughed at the woman he loved! As long as you had the slightest remains of love for me, you could not make me an object of derision: ridicule and love are incompatible, absolutely incompatible. Well, I have done my best, my very best, to make you happy, but in vain. I see I am not *cut out* to be a good wife. Happy, happy Mrs. Granby!"

"Happy I hope sincerely that she will be with my friend; but my happiness must depend on you, my love; so, for my sake, if not for your own, be composed, and do not torment yourself with such fancies."

"I do wonder," cried our heroine, starting from her seat, "whether this Mrs. Granby is really that miss Emma Cooke. I'll go and see her directly; see her I must."

"I am heartily glad of it, my dear; for I am sure a visit to his wife will give my friend Granby real pleasure."

"I promise you, my dear, I do not go to give him pleasure, or you either; but to satisfy my own—*curiosity*."

The rudeness of this speech would have been intolerable to her husband if it had not been for a certain hesitation in the emphasis with which she pronounced the word curiosity, which left him in doubt as to her real motive.

Jealousy is sometimes thought to be a proof of love; and, in this point of view, must not all its caprices, absurdities, and extravagancies, be graceful, amiable, and gratifying?

A few days after Griselda had satisfied her curiosity, she thus, in the presence of her husband, began to vent her spleen:

"For heaven's sake, dear Mrs. Nettleby," cried she, addressing herself to the new-married widow, who came to return her wedding visit—"for pity's sake, dear Mrs. Nettleby, can you or any body else tell me what possessed Mr. Granby to marry Emma Cooke?"

"I am sure I cannot tell, for I have not seen her yet."

"You will be less able to tell after you have seen her, and still less after you have heard her."

"What, then, she is neither a wit nor a beauty! I'm quite surprised at that; for I thought, to be sure, Mr. Granby, who is such a judge and such a critic, and so nice about female manners, would not have been content without something very extraordinary.'

"Nothing can be more ordinary."

"Astonishing! but I am quite tired of being astonished at marriages! One sees such strange matches every day, I am resolved never to be surprised at any thing: who *can*, that lives in the world? But really now I am surprised at Mr. Granby. What! is she nothing?"

"Nothing—absolutely nothing; a cipher; a nonentity."

"Now really? you do not tell me so," said Mrs. Nettleby. "Well, I am so disappointed; for I always resolved to take example by Mr. Granby's wife."

"I would rather that she should take warning by me," said Griselda, laughing. "But to be candid, I must tell you that to some people's taste she is a pattern wife—a perfect Grizzle. She and I should have changed names—or characters. Which, my dear?" cried she appealing to her husband.

"Not names, my dear," answered he.

The conversation might here have ended happily, but unluckily our heroine could not be easily satisfied before Mrs. Nettleby, to whom she was proud of showing her conjugal ascendancy.

"My dear," said she to her husband, "a-propos to pattern wives: you have read Chaucer's Tales. Do

you seriously like or dislike the real, original, old Griselda?"

"It is so long since I have seen her that I cannot tell," replied he.

"Then, my dear, you must read the story over again, and tell me without evasion."

"And if he could read it before Mrs. Granby and me, what a compliment that would be to one bride," added the malicious Mrs. Nettleby, "and what a lesson for another!"

"O it must be so! it must be so!" cried Griselda. "I will ask her here on purpose to a reading party; and you, my dear Mrs. Nettleby, will come for your lesson. You, my love, who read so well—and who, I am sure, will be delighted to pay a compliment to your favourite, Mrs. Granby—you will read, and I will—weep. On what day shall it be? Let me see: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, I'm engaged: but Sunday is only a party at home; I can put that off:—then Sunday let it be."

"Sunday, I am unluckily engaged, my dear," said her husband.

"Engaged? O nonsense! You have no engagements of any consequence: and when I put off *my* party on purpose to have the pleasure of hearing you read, oblige me, my love, for once."

"My love, to oblige you, I will do any thing."

Griselda cast a triumphant glance at Mrs. Nettleby, which said as plainly as a look could say, "You see how I rule him!"

## CHAPTER IV.

" Feels every vanity in fondness lost,
And asks no power but that of pleasing most."

On Sunday evening a large company assembled at our heroine's summons. They were all seated in due form: the reader with his book open, and waiting for the arrival of the bride, for whom a conspicuous place was destined, where the spectators, and especially Mrs. Nettleby and our Griselda, could enjoy a full view of her countenance.

" Lord bless me! it is getting late: I am afraid— I am really afraid Mrs. Granby will not come."

The ladies had time to discuss who and what she was: as she had lived in the country, few of them had seen, or could tell any thing about her; but our heroine circulated her opinion in whispers, and every one was prepared to laugh at *the pattern wife, the original Griselda revived,* as Mrs. Nettleby sarcastically called her.

Mrs. Granby was announced. The buzz was hushed and the titter suppressed; affected gravity appeared in every countenance, and all eyes turned with malicious curiosity upon the bride as she entered.—The timidity of Emma's first appearance was so free both from awkwardness and affectation, that it interested at least every gentleman present in her favour. Surrounded by strangers, but quite unsuspicious that they were prepared to consider her as an object of ridicule or satire, she won her way to

the lady of the house, to whom she addressed herself as to a friend.

"Is not she quite a different person from what you had expected?" whispered one of the ladies to her neighbour, as Emma passed. Her manner seemed to solicit indulgence rather than to provoke envy. She was very sorry to find that the company had been waiting for her; she had been detained by the sudden illness of Mr. Granby's mother.

Whilst Emma was making this apology, some of the audience observed that she had a remarkably sweet voice; others discovered that there was something extremely feminine in her person. A gentleman, who saw that she was distressed at the idea of being seated in the conspicuous place to which she was destined by the lady of the house, got up, and offered his seat, which she most thankfully accepted.

"O, my dear Mrs. Granby, I cannot possibly allow you to sit there," cried the lady of the house. "You must have the honours of the day," added she, seizing Emma's hand to conduct her to the *place of honour*.

"Pray excuse me," said Mrs. Granby, "honours are so little suited to me: I am perfectly well here."

"But with that window *at your back*, my dear madam!" said Mrs. Nettleby.

"I do not feel the slightest breath of air. But perhaps I crowd these ladies."

"Not in the least, not in the least," said the ladies, who were on each side of her: they were won by the irresistible gentleness of Emma's manner. Our heroine was vexed to be obliged to give up her

point; and relinquishing Mrs. Granby's hand, returned to her own seat, and said in a harsh tone to her husband,

"Well! my dear, if we are to have any reading to-night, you had better begin."

The reading began; and Emma was so completely absorbed, that she did not perceive that most of the audience were intent upon her. Those who act any part may be ridiculous in the playing it, but those are safe from the utmost malignity of criticism who are perfectly unconscious that they have any part to perform. Emma had been abashed at her first appearance in an assembly of strangers, and concerned by the idea that she had kept them waiting; but as soon as this embarrassment passed over, her manners resumed their natural ease—a degree of ease which surprised her judges, and which arose from the persuasion that she was not of sufficient consequence to attract attention. Our heroine was provoked by the sight of this insolent tranquillity, and was determined that it should not long continue. The reader came to the promise which Gualtherus exacts from his bride:—

"Swear that with ready will and honest heart,
Like or dislike, without regret or art,
In presence or alone, by night or day,
All that I will you fail not to obey;
All I intend to forward, that you seek,
Nor ever once object to what I speak.
Nor yet in part alone my wish fulfil;
Nor though you do it, do it with ill-will;
Nor with a forced compliance half refuse;
And acting duty, all the merit lose.

To strict obedience add a willing grace,
And let your soul be painted in your face;
No reasons given, and no pretences sought,
To swerve in deed or word, in look or thought."

"Well, ladies!" cried the modern Griselda, "what do you think of this?"

Shrill exclamations of various vehemence expressed with one accord the sentiments, or rather feelings, of almost all the married ladies who were present.

"Abominable! Intolerable! Insufferable! Horrible! I would rather have seen the man perish at my feet; I would rather have died: I would have remained unmarried all my life rather than have submitted to such terms."

A few young unmarried ladies who had not spoken, or who had not been heard to speak in the din of tongues, were appealed to by the gentlemen next them. They could not be prevailed upon to pronounce any distinct opinion: they qualified, and hesitated, and softened, and equivocated, and "were not positively able to judge, for really they had never thought upon the subject."

Upon the whole, however, it was evident that they did not betray that natural horror which pervaded the more experienced matrons. All agreed that the terms were "hard terms," and ill expressed: some added, that only love could persuade a woman to submit to them: and some still more sentimental maidens, in a lower voice, were understood to say, that as nothing is impossible to Cupid, they might be induced to such submission; but that it must be

by a degree of love which they solemnly declared they had never felt or could imagine as yet.

"For my part," cried the modern Griselda, "I would sooner have lived an old maid to the days of Methusalem than have been so mean as to have married any man on earth upon such terms. But I know there are people who can never think 'marriage dear-bought.' My dear Mrs. Granby, we have not yet heard your opinion, and we should have had yours first, as bride."

"I forgot that I was bride," said Emma.

"Forgot! Is it possible?" cried Mrs. Nettleby: "now this is an excess of modesty of which I have no notion."

"But for which Mr. Granby," continued our heroine, turning to Mr. Granby, who at this moment entered the room, "ought to make his best bow. Here is your lady, sir, who has just assured us that she forgot she was a bride: bow to this exquisite humility."

"Exquisite vanity!" cried Mr. Granby; "she knows

'How much the wife is dearer than the bride.'"

"She will be a singularly happy woman if she knows that this time twelvemonth," replied our heroine, darting a reproachful look at her silent husband. "In the mean time, do let us hear Mrs. Granby speak for herself; I must have her opinion of Griselda's promise to obey her lord, right or wrong, in all things, no reasons given, to submit in deed, and word, and look, and thought. If Mrs. Granby tells

us that is her theory, we must all reform our practice."

Every eye was fixed upon Emma, and every ear was impatient for her answer.

"I should never have imagined," said she, smiling, "that any person's practice could be influenced by my theory, especially as I have no theory."

"No more humility, my dear; if you have no theory, you have an opinion of your own, I hope, and we must have a distinct answer to this simple question: Would you have made the promise that was required from Griselda?"

"No," answered Emma; "distinctly no; for I could never have loved or esteemed the man who required such a promise."

Disconcerted by this answer, which was the very reverse of what she expected; amazed at the modest self-possession with which the timid Emma spoke, and vexed by the symptoms of approbation which Emma's words and voice excited, our heroine called upon her husband, in a more than usually authoritative tone, and bid him—read on.

He obeyed. Emma became again absorbed in the story, and her countenance showed how much she felt all its beauties, and all its pathos. Emma did all she could to repress her feelings; and our heroine all she could to make her and them ridiculous. But in this attempt she was unsuccessful; for many of the spectators, who at her instigation began by watching Emma's countenance to find subject for ridicule, ended by sympathizing with her unaffected sensibility.

When the tale was ended, the modern Griselda, who was determined to oppose as strongly as possible the charms of spirit to those of sensibility, burst furiously forth into an invective against the meanness of her namesake, and the tyranny of the odious Gualtherus.

"*Could* you have forgiven him, Mrs. Granby? could you have forgiven the monster?"

"He repented," said Emma; "and does not a penitent cease to be a monster?"

"O, I never, never would have forgiven him, penitent or not penitent; I would not have forgiven him such sins."

"I would not have put it into his power to commit them," said Emma.

"I confess the story never touched me in the least," cried our heroine.

"Perhaps for the same reason that Petrarch's friend said that he read it unmoved," replied Mrs. Granby: "because he could not believe that such a woman as Griselda ever existed."

"No, no, not for that reason: I believe many such poor, meek, mean-spirited creatures exist."

Emma was at length wakened to the perception of her friend's envy and jealousy; but—

"She mild forgave the failing of her sex."

"I cannot admire the original Griselda, or any of her imitators," continued our heroine.

"There is no great danger of her finding imitators in these days," said Mr. Granby. "Had Chaucer lived in our enlightened times, he would doubtless have drawn a very different character."

The modern Griselda looked "fierce as ten furies." Emma softened her husband's observation by adding, "that allowance should certainly be made for poor Chaucer, if we consider the times in which he wrote. The situation and understandings of women have been so much improved since his days. Women were then slaves, now they are free. My dear," whispered she to her husband, "your mother is not well; shall we go home?"

Emma left the room; and even Mrs. Nettleby, after she was gone, said, "Really she is not ugly when she blushes."

"No woman is ugly when she blushes," replied our heroine; "but, unluckily, a woman cannot *always* blush."

Finding that her attempt to make Emma ridiculous had failed, and that it had really placed Mrs. Granby's understanding, manners, and temper in a most advantageous and amiable light, Griselda was mortified beyond measure. She could scarcely bear to hear Emma's name mentioned.

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## CHAPTER V.

"She that can please, is certain to persuade,
To-day is lov'd, to-morrow is obey'd."

A FEW days after the reading party, Griselda was invited to spend an evening at Mrs. Granby's.

"I shall not go," said she, throwing down the card with an air of disdain.

"I shall go," said her husband, calmly.

"You will go, my dear!" cried she, amazed. "You will go without *me?*"

"Not without you, if you will be so kind as to go with me, my love," said he.

"It is quite out of my power," said she: "I am engaged to my friend, Mrs. Nettleby."

"Very well, my dear," said he; "do as you please."

"Certainly I shall. And I am surprised, my dear, that you do not go to see Mr. John Nettleby."

"I have no desire to see him, my dear. He is, as I have often heard you say, an obstinate fool. He is a man I dislike particularly."

"Very possibly; but you ought to go to see him notwithstanding."

"Why so, my dear?"

"Because he is married to a woman I like. If you had any regard for me, your own feelings would have saved you the trouble of asking that question."

"But, my dear, should not your regard for me also suggest to you the propriety of keeping up an acquaintance with Mrs. Granby, who is married to a man I like, and who is not herself an obstinate fool?"

"I shall not enter into any discussion upon the subject," replied our heroine; for this was one of the cases where she made it a rule never to reason. "I can only say that I have my own opinion, and that I beg to be excused from keeping up any acquaintance whatever with Mrs. Granby."

"And I beg to be excused from keeping up any

acquaintance whatever with Mr. Nettleby," replied her husband.

"Good Heavens!" cried she, raising herself upon the sofa, on which she had been reclining, and fixing her eyes upon her husband, with unfeigned astonishment: "I do not know you this morning, my dear."

"Possibly not, my dear," replied he; "for hitherto you have seen only your lover; now you see your husband."

Never did metamorphosis excite more astonishment. The lady was utterly unconscious that she had had any part in producing it—that she had herself dissolved the spell. She raged, she raved, she reasoned, in vain. Her point she could not compass. Her cruel husband persisted in his determination not to go to see Mr. John Nettleby. Absolutely astounded, she was silent. There was a truce for some hours. She renewed the attack in the evening, and ceased not hostilities for three succeeding days and nights, in reasonable hopes of wearying the enemy, still without success.

The morning rose, the great, the important day, which was to decide the fate of the visit. The contending parties met as usual at breakfast; they seemed mutually afraid of each other, and stood at bay. There was a forced calm in the gentleman's demeanour—treacherous smiles played upon the lady's countenance. He seemed cautious to prolong the suspension of hostilities—she fond to anticipate the victory. The name of Mrs. Granby, or of Mr.

John Nettleby, was not uttered by either party, nor did either inquire where the other was to spend the evening. At dinner, they met again, and preserved on this delicate subject a truly diplomatic silence; whilst on the topics foreign to their thoughts, they talked with admirable fluency: actuated by as sincere desire as ever was felt by negotiating politicians to establish peace on the broadest basis, they were, *with the most perfect consideration*, each other's devoted, and most obedient humble servants. Candour, however, obliges us to confess, that though the deference on the part of the gentleman was the most unqualified and praiseworthy, the lady was superior in her inimitable air of frank cordiality. The *volto sciolto* was in her favour, the *pensieri stretti* in his. Any one but an ambassador would have been deceived by the husband; any one but a woman would have been duped by the wife.

So stood affairs when, after dinner, the high and mighty powers separated. The lady retired to her toilette. The gentleman remained with his bottle. He drank a glass of wine extraordinary. She stayed half an hour more than usual at her mirror. Arrayed for battle, our heroine repaired to the drawing-room, which she expected to find unoccupied;—the enemy had taken the field.

"Dressed, my dear?" said he.

"Ready, my love!" said she.

"Shall I ring the bell for your carriage, my dear?" said the husband.

"If you please. You go with me, my dear?" said the wife.

"I do not know where you are going, my love."

"To Mrs. Nettleby's of course,—and you?"

"To Mrs. Granby's."

The lightning flashed from Griselda's eyes, ere he had half pronounced the words. The lightning flashed without effect.

"To Mrs. Granby's!" cried she, in a thundering tone. "To Mrs. Granby's!" echoed he. She fell back on the sofa, and a shower of tears ensued. Her husband walked up and down the room, rang again for the carriage, ordered it in the tone of a master. Then hummed a tune. The fair one sobbed: he continued to sing, but was out in the time. The lady's sobs grew alarming, and threatened hysterics. He threw open the window, and approached the sofa on which she lay. She, half recovering, unclasped one bracelet; in haste to get the other off, he broke it. The footman came in to announce that the carriage was at the door. She relapsed, and seemed in danger of suffocation from her pearl necklace, which she made a faint effort to loosen from her neck.

"Send your lady's woman instantly," cried Griselda's husband to the footman.

Our heroine made another attempt to untie her necklace, and looked up towards her husband with supplicating eyes. His hands trembled; he entangled the strings. It would have been all over with him if the maid had not at this instant come to his assistance. To her he resigned his perilous post; retreated precipitately; and before the enemy's forces could rally, gained his carriage, and carried his point.

"To Mr. Granby's!" cried he, triumphantly. Arrived there, he hurried to Mr. Granby's room.

"Another such victory," cried he, throwing himself into an arm-chair, "another such victory, and I am undone."

He related all that had just passed between him and his wife.

"Another such combat," said his friend, "and you are at peace for life."

We hope that our readers will not, from this speech, be induced to consider Mr. Granby as an instigator of quarrels between man and wife; or, according to the plebeian but expressive apophthegm, one who would come between the bark and the tree. On the contrary, he was most desirous to secure his friend's domestic happiness; and, if possible, to prevent the bad effects which were likely to ensue from excessive indulgence, and inordinate love of dominion. He had a high respect for our heroine's powers, and thought that they wanted only to be well managed. The same force which, ill directed, bursts the engine, and scatters destruction, obedient to the master-hand, answers a thousand useful purposes, and works with easy, smooth, and graceful regularity. Griselda's husband, or, as he now deserves to have his name mentioned, Mr. Bolingbroke, roused by his friend's representations, and perhaps by a sense of approaching danger, resolved to assume the guidance of his wife, or at least of himself. In opposition to his sovereign lady's will, he actually spent this evening as he pleased.

## CHAPTER VI.

" E sol quei giorni io mi vidi contenta,
Ch'averla compiaciuto mi trovai."

" You are a great deal more courageous than I am, my dear," said Emma to her husband, after Mr. Bolingbroke had left them. " I should be very much afraid of interfering between your friend and his wife."

" What is friendship," said Mr. Granby, " if it will run no risks? I must run the hazard of being called a mischief-maker."

" That is not the danger of which I was thinking," said Emma; " though I confess that I should be weak enough to fear that a little: but what I meant to express was an apprehension of our doing harm where we most wish to do good."

" Do you, my dear Emma, think Griselda incorrigible?"

" No, indeed," cried Emma, with anxious emphasis; " far from it. But without thinking a person incorrigible, may we not dislike the idea of inflicting correction? I should be very sorry to be the means of giving Griselda any pain; she was my friend when we were children; I have a real regard for her, and if she does not now seem disposed to love me, that must be my fault, not hers: or if it is not my fault, call it my misfortune. At all events, I have no right to force myself upon her acquaintance. She prefers Mrs. Nettleby; I have not the false humility to say, that I think Mrs. Nettleby will

prove as safe or as good a friend as I hope I should be. But of this Mrs. Bolingbroke has a right to judge. And I am sure, far from resenting her resolution to avoid my acquaintance, my only feeling about it, at this instant, is the dread that it should continue to be a matter of dispute between her and her husband."

"If Mr. Bolingbroke insisted, or if I advised him to insist upon his wife's coming here, when she does not like it," said Mr. Granby, "I should act absurdly, and he would act unjustly; but all that he requires is equality of rights, and the liberty of going where *he* pleases. She refuses to come to see you; he refuses to go to see Mr. John Nettleby. Which has the best of the battle?"

Emma thought it would be best if there were no battle; and observed, that refusals and reprisals would only irritate the parties, whose interest and happiness it was to be pacified and to agree. She said, that if Mr. Bolingbroke, instead of opposing his will to that of his wife, which, in fact, was only conquering force by force, would speak reasonably to her, probably she might be induced to yield, or to command her temper. Mrs. Granby suggested, that a compromise, founded on an offer of mutual sacrifice and mutual compliance, might be obtained. That Mr. Bolingbroke might promise to give up some of his time to the man he disliked, upon condition that Griselda should submit to the society of a woman to whom she had an aversion.

"If she consented to this," said Emma, "I would do my best to make her like me; or at least to make

her time pass agreeably at our house: her liking me is a matter of no manner of consequence."

Emma was capable of putting herself entirely out of the question, when the interest of others was at stake; her whole desire was to conciliate, and all her thoughts were intent upon making her friends happy. She seemed to live in them more than in herself, and from sympathy arose the greatest pleasure and pain of her existence. Her sympathy was not of that useless kind which is called forth only by the elegant fictitious sorrows of a heroine of romance; hers was ready for all the occasions of real life; nor was it to be easily checked by the imperfections of those to whom she could be of service. At this moment, when she perceived that her husband was disgusted by Griselda's caprice, she said all she could think of in her favour: she recollected every anecdote of Griselda's childhood, which showed an amiable disposition; and argued, that it was not probable her temper should have entirely changed in a few years. Emma's quick-sighted good-nature could discern the least portion of merit, where others could find only faults; as certain experienced eyes can discover grains of gold in the sands, which the ignorant have searched, and abandoned as useless. In consequence of Emma's advice—for who would reject good advice, offered with so much gentleness?—Mr. Granby wrote a note to Mr. Bolingbroke, to recommend the compromise which she had suggested. Upon his return home, Mr. Bolingbroke was informed that his lady had gone to bed much indisposed; he spent a restless night, notwithstand-

ing all his newly-acquired magnanimity. He was much relieved in the morning by his friend's note, and blessed Emma for proposing the compromise.

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## CHAPTER VII.

"Each widow to her secret friend alone
Whisper'd;—thus treated, he had had his own."

MR. BOLINGBROKE waited with impatience for Griselda's appearance the next morning; but he waited in vain: the lady breakfasted in her own apartment, and for two hours afterwards remained in close consultation with Mrs. Nettleby, whom she had summoned the preceding night by the following note:

"I have been prevented from spending this evening with you, my dearest Mrs. Nettleby, by the strangest conduct imaginable: I am sure you will not believe it when I tell it to you. Come to me, I conjure you, as early to-morrow as you possibly can, that I may explain to you all that has passed, and consult as to the future. My dearest friend, I never was so much in want of an adviser. Ever yours,

"GRISELDA."

At this consultation, Mrs. Nettleby expressed the utmost astonishment at Mr. Bolingbroke's strange conduct, and assured Griselda, that if she did not exert herself, all was lost, and she must give up the

hopes of ever having her own way again as long as she lived.

"My dear," said she, "I have had some experience in these things; a wife must be either a tyrant or a slave: make your choice; now is your time."

"But I never knew him say or do any thing unkind before," said Griselda.

"Then the first offence should be properly resented. If he finds you forgiving, he will become encroaching; 'tis the nature of man, depend upon it."

"He always yielded to me till now," said Griselda; "but even when I was ready to go into fits, he left me; and what could I do then?"

"You astonish me beyond expression! You who have every advantage—youth, wit, accomplishments, beauty! My dear, if you cannot keep a husband's heart, who can ever hope to succeed?"

"Oh! as to his heart, I have no doubts of his heart, to do him justice," said Griselda; "I know he loves me—passionately loves me."

"And yet you cannot manage him! And you expect me to pity you? Bless me, if I had half your advantages, what I would make of them! But if you like to be a tame wife, my dear—if you are resolved upon it, tell me so at once, and I will hold my tongue."

"I do not know well what I am resolved upon," said Griselda, leaning her head in a melancholy posture upon her hand: "I am vexed, out of spirits, and out of sorts."

"Out of sorts! I am not surprised at that: but

out of spirits! My dear creature, you who have every thing to put you in spirits. I am never so much *myself* as when I have a quarrel to fight out."

"I cannot say that is the case with me, unless where I am sure of the victory."

"And it is your own fault if you are not always sure of it."

"I thought so till last night; but I assure you last night he showed such a spirit!"

"Break that spirit, my dear, break it, or else it will break your heart."

"The alternative is terrible," said Griselda, "and more terrible perhaps than you could imagine, or I either till now: for would you believe it, I never loved him in my life half so well as I did last night in the midst of my anger, and when he was doing every thing to provoke me?"

"Very natural, my dear; because you saw him behave with spirit, and you love spirit; so does every woman; so does every body; show him that you have spirit too, and he will be as angry as you were, and love you as well in the midst of his anger, whilst you are doing every thing to provoke him."

Griselda appeared determined to take this good advice one moment, and the next hesitated.

"But, my dear Mrs. Nettleby, did you always find this succeed yourself?"

"Yes, always."

This lady had the reputation indeed of having broken the heart of her first husband; how she would manage her second was yet to be seen, as her honeymoon was but just over. The pure love of mischief

was not her only motive in the advice which she gave to our heroine; she had, like most people, mixed motives for her conduct. She disliked Mr. Bolingbroke, because he disliked her; yet she wished that an acquaintance should be kept up between him and her husband, because Mr. Bolingbroke was a man of fortune and fashion.

Griselda promised that she would behave with that proper spirit, which was to make her at once amiable and victorious; and the friends parted.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

"With patient, meek, submissive mind,
To her hard fate resign'd."

POTTER'S ÆSCHYLUS.

LEFT to her own good genius, Griselda reflected that novelty has the most powerful effect upon the heart of man. In all the variations of her humour, her husband had never yet seen her in the sullen mood; and in this she now sat prepared to receive him. He came with an earnest desire to speak to her in the kindest and most reasonable manner. He began by saying how much it had cost him to give her one moment's uneasiness:—his voice, his look, were those of truth and love.

Unmoved, Griselda, without raising her leaden eyes, answered in a cold voice, "I am very sorry that you should have felt *any* concern upon my account."

"*Any!* my love; you do not know how *much* I have felt this night."

She looked upon him with civil disbelief; and replied, "that she was sure she ought to be much obliged to him."

This frigid politeness repressed his affection: he was silent for some moments.

"My dear Griselda," said he, "this is not the way in which we should live together; we who have every thing that can make us contented: do not let us throw away our happiness for trifles not worth thinking of."

"If we are not happy, it is not my fault," said Griselda.

"We will not inquire whose fault it is, my dear; let the blame rest upon me: let the past be forgotten; let us look towards the future. In future, let us avoid childish altercations, and live like reasonable creatures. I have the highest opinion of your sex in general, and of you in particular; I wish to live with my wife as my equal, my friend; I do not desire that my will should govern: where our inclinations differ, let reason decide between us; or where it is a matter not worth reasoning about, let us alternately yield to one another," He paused.

"I do not desire or expect that you should ever henceforward yield to my wishes either in trifles or in matters of consequence," replied Griselda, with provoking meekness; "you have taught me my duty: the duty of a wife is to submit; and submit I hope I shall in future, without reply or reasoning, to your sovereign will and pleasure."

"Nay, my dear," said he, "do not treat me as a brutal tyrant, when I wish to do every thing in my power to make you happy. Use your own excellent understanding, and I shall always, I hope, be inclined to yield to your reasons."

"I shall never trouble you with my reasons; I shall never use my own understanding in the least: I know that men cannot bear understanding in women; I shall always, as it is my duty, submit to your better judgment."

"But, my love, I do not require duty from you; this sort of blind submission would be mortifying, instead of gratifying to me from a wife."

"I do not know what a wife can do to satisfy a husband, if submitting in every thing be not sufficient."

"I say it would be too much for me, my dearest love!"

"I can do nothing but submit," repeated the perverse Griselda, with a most provoking immoveable aspect of humility.

"Why *will* you not understand me, my dear?" cried her husband.

"It is not my fault if I cannot understand you, my dear: I do not pretend to have your understanding," said the fair politician, affecting weakness to gain her point; like those artful canditates for papal dominion, who used to affect decrepitude and imbecility, till they secured at once absolute power and infallibility.

"I know my abilities are quite inferior to yours, my dear," said Griselda; "but I thought it was

sufficient for a woman to know how to obey; I can do no more."

Fretted beyond his patience, her husband walked up and down the room greatly agitated, whilst she sat content and secure in tranquil obstinacy.

"You are enough to provoke the patience of Job, my dear," cried her husband; "you'll break my heart."

"I am sorry for it, my dear; but if you will only tell me what I can do more to please you, I will do it."

"Then, my love," cried he, taking hold of her white hand, which hung in a lifeless attitude over the arm of the couch, "be happy, I conjure you! all I ask of you is to be happy."

"That is out of my power," said she, mildly, suffering her husband to keep her hand, as if it was an act of duty to submit to his caresses. He resigned her hand; her countenance never varied; if she had been slave to the most despotic sultan of the East, she could not have shown more utter submission than she displayed to this most indulgent European "husband lover."

Unable to command his temper, or to conceal how much he was hurt, he rose and said, "I will leave you for the present, my dear; some time when you are better disposed to converse with me, I will return."

"Whenever you please, sir; all times are alike to me: whenever you are at leisure, I can have no choice."

## CHAPTER IX.

"And acting duty all the merit lose."

Some hours afterwards, hoping to find his sultana in a better humour, Mr. Bolingbooke returned; but no sooner did he approach the sofa on which she was still seated, than she again seemed to turn into stone, like the princess Rhezzia, in the Persian Tales; who was blooming and charming, except when her husband entered the room. The unfortunate princess Rhezzia loved her husband tenderly, but was doomed to this fate by a vile enchanter. If she was more to be pitied for being subject to involuntary metamorphosis, our heroine is surely more to be admired, for the constancy with which she endured a self-inflicted penance; a penance calculated to render her odious in the eyes of her husband.

"My dear," said this most patient of men, "I am sorry to renew any ideas that will be disagreeable to you; I will mention the subject but once more, and then let it be forgotten for ever—our foolish dispute about Mr. Nettleby. Let us compromise the matter. I will bear Mr. John Nettleby for your sake, if you will bear Mrs. Granby for mine. I will go to see Mr. Nettleby to-morrow, if you will come the day afterwards with me to Mr. Granby's. Where husband and wife do not agree in their wishes, it is reasonable that each should yield a little of their will to the other. I hope this compromise will satisfy you, my dear."

"It does not become a wife to enter into any compromise with her husband; she has nothing to do but to obey, as soon as he signifies his pleasure. I shall go to Mr. Granby's on Tuesday, as you command."

"Command! my love."

"As you——whatever you please to call it."

"But are you satisfied with this arrangement, my dear?"

"It is no manner of consequence whether I am or not."

"To me, you know, it is of the greatest: you must be sensible that my sincere wish is to make you happy: I give you some proof of it by consenting to keep up an acquaintance with a man whose company I dislike."

"I am much obliged to you, my dear; but as to your going to see Mr. John Nettleby, it is a matter of perfect indifference to me; I only just mentioned it as a thing of course; I beg you will not do it on my account: I hope you will do whatever you think best, and what pleases yourself, upon this and every other occasion. I shall never more presume to offer my advice."

Nothing more could be obtained from the submissive wife; she went to Mr. Granby's; she was all duty, for she knew the show of it was the most provoking thing upon earth to a husband, at least to such a husband as hers. She therefore persisted in this line of conduct, till she made her victim at last exclaim,—

"I love thee and hate thee, but if I can tell
The cause of my love and my hate, may I die.
I can feel it, alas! I can feel it too well,
That I love thee and hate thee, but cannot tell why."

His fair one was much flattered by this confession; she triumphed in having excited "this contrariety of feelings;" nor did she foresee the possibility of her husband's recollecting that stanza which the school-boy, more philosophical than the poet, applies to his tyrant.

Whilst our heroine was thus acting to perfection the part of a dutiful wife, Mrs. Nettleby was seconding her to the best of her abilities, and announcing her amongst all their acquaintance, in the interesting character of—"a woman that is very much to be pitied."

"Poor Mrs. Bolingbroke! — Don't you think, ma'am, she is very much changed since her marriage?—Quite fallen away!—and all her fine spirits, what are become of them?—It really grieves my heart to see her.—O, she is a very unhappy woman! really to be pitied, if you knew but all."

Then a significant nod, or a melancholy mysterious look, set the imagination of the company at work; or, if this did not succeed, a whisper in plain terms pronounced Mr. Bolingbroke "a sad sort of husband, a very odd-tempered man, and, in short, a terrible tyrant; though nobody would guess it, who only saw him in company; but men are such deceivers!"

Mr. Bolingbroke soon found that all his wishes were thwarted, and all his hopes of happiness crossed,

by the straws which this evil-minded dame contrived to throw in his way. Her influence over his wife he saw increased every hour: though they visited each other every day, these ladies could never meet without having some important secrets to impart, and conjurations were to be performed in private, at which a husband could not be permitted to assist. Then notes without number were to pass continually, and these were to be thrown hastily into the fire at the approach of the enemy. Mr. Bolingbroke determined to break this league, which seemed to be more a league of hatred than of amity.——The London winter was now over, and, taking advantage of the continuance of his wife's perverse fit of duty and unqualified submission, he one day requested her to accompany him into the country, to spend a few weeks with his friend Mr. Granby, at his charming place in Devonshire. The part of a wife was to obey, and Griselda was bound to support her character. She resolved, however, to make her obedience cost her lord as dear as possible, and she promised herself that this party of pleasure should become a party of pain. She and her lord were to travel in the same carriage with Mr. and Mrs. Granby. Griselda had only time, before she set off, to write a hasty billet to Mrs. Nettleby, to inform her of these intentions, and to bid her adieu till better times. Mrs. Nettleby sincerely regretted this interruption of their hourly correspondence; for she was deprived not only of the pleasure of hearing, but of making matrimonial complaints. She had now been married two months; and her fool began to grow restive; no animal on earth

is more restive than a fool: but, confident that Mrs. Nettleby will hold the bridle with a strong hand, we leave her to pull against his hard mouth.

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## CHAPTER X.

"Plaisir ne l'est qu'autant qu'on le partage."

We pass over the infinite variety of petty torments, which our heroine contrived to inflict upon her fellow-travellers during her journey down to Devonshire. Inns, food, beds, carriage, horses, baggage, roads, prospect, hill, dale, sun, wind, dust, rain, earth, air, fire, and water, all afforded her matter of complaint. It was astonishing that Emma discovered none of these inconveniences; but, as fast as they were complained of, she amused herself in trying to obviate them.

Lord Kames has observed, that a power to recall at will pleasing objects would be a more valuable gift to any mortal than ever was bestowed in a fairy tale. With this power Emma was endowed in the highest perfection; and as fast as our heroine recollected some evil that had happened, or was likely to happen, Emma raised the opposite idea of some good, past, present, or future; so that it was scarcely possible even for the spirit of contradiction personified to resist the magic of her good humour. No sooner did she arrive at her own house, than she contrived a variety of ways of showing attention and kindness to her guest; and when all this was received with

sullen indifference, or merely as tributes due to superiority, Emma was not discouraged in her benevolence, but, instead of being offended, seemed to pity her friend for "having had her temper so unhappily spoiled."

"Griselda is so handsome," said Mrs. Granby one day, in her defence, "she has such talents,—she has been so much admired, worshipped, and indulged,—that it would be wonderful if she were not a little spoiled. I dare say that, if I had been in her place, my brain would never have stood the intoxication. Who can measure their strength, or their weakness, till they are tried? Another thing should be considered; Griselda excites envy, and though she may not have more faults than her neighbours, they are more noticed, because they are in the full light of prosperity. What a number of motes swarm in a single ray of light, coming through the shutter of a darkened room! There are not more motes in that spot than in any other part of the room, but the sun-beams show them more distinctly. The dust that lives in snug obscurity should consider this, and have mercy upon its fellow dust."

In Emma's kindness there was none of the parade of goodness; she seemed to follow her natural disposition; and, as Griselda once said of her, to be good because she could not help it. She required neither praise nor thanks for any thing that she did; and, provided her friends were happy, she was satisfied, without ever wishing to be admired as the cause of that happiness. Her powers of pleasing were chiefly remarkable for lasting longer than others,

and the secret of their permanence was not easily guessed, because it was so simple. It depended merely on the equability of her humour. It is said, that there is nothing marvellous in the colours of those Egyptian monuments which have been the admiration of ages; the secret of their duration is supposed to depend simply on the fineness of the climate and invariability of the temperature.—But

"Griselda will admit no wandering muse."

Mrs. Bolingbroke was by this time tired of continuing in one mood, even though it was the sullen; and her genius was cramped by the constraint of affected submission. She recovered her charming spirits soon after she came into the country, and for a short time no mortal mixture of earth's mould could be more agreeable. She called forth every charm; she was all gaiety, wit, and smiles; she poured light and life upon conversation.

As the marquis de Chastellux said of some fascinating fair one—"She had no expression without grace, and no grace without expression." It was delightful to our heroine to hear it said, "How charming Mrs. Bolingbroke can be when she pleases; when she wishes to captivate, how irresistible!—Who can equal Mrs. Bolingbroke when she is in one of her *good days?*"

The triumph of eclipsing Mrs. Granby would have been delightful, but that Emma seemed to feel no mortification from being thrown into the shade; she seemed to enjoy her friend's success so sincerely, that it was impossible to consider her as a rival.

She had so carefully avoided noticing any little disagreement or coolness between Mr. and Mrs. Bolingbroke, that it might have been doubted whether she attended to their mutual conduct; but the obvious delight she took in seeing them again on good terms with each other proved that she was not deficient in penetration. She appeared to see only what others desired that she should see, upon these delicate occasions, where voluntary blindness is not artifice, but prudence. Mr. Bolingbroke was now enchanted with Griselda, and ready to exclaim every instant, "Be ever thus!"

Her husband thought he had found a mine of happiness; he began to breathe, and to bless his kind stars. He had indeed lighted unexpectedly upon a rich vein, but it was soon exhausted, and all his farther progress was impeded by certain vapours, dangerous to approach. Fatal sweets! which lure the ignorant to destruction, but from which the more experienced fly with precipitation.——Our heroine was now fully prepared to kill her husband with kindness; she was afraid, if he rode, that his horse would throw him; if he walked, that he would tire himself; if he sat still, that he must want exercise; if he went out, that he would catch cold; if he stayed at home, that he was kept a prisoner; if he did not eat, that he was sick; if he did eat, that he would be sick;—&c. &c. &c. &c. There was no end to these fond fears: he felt that there was something ridiculous in submitting to them; and yet to resist in the least was deemed the height of unkindness and ingratitude. One night she fell into a fit of

melancholy, upon his laughing at her fears, that he should kill himself, by standing for an instant at an open window, on a fine night, to look at a beautiful rising moon. When he endeavoured to recover her from her melancholy, it was suddenly converted into anger, and, after tears, came a storm of reproaches. Her husband, in consideration of the kindness of her original intention, passed over her anger, and even for some days refrained from objecting to any regimen she prescribed for his health and happiness. But his forbearance failed him at length, and he presumed to eat some salad, which his wife "knew would disagree with him." She was provoked afterwards, because she could not make him allow that it had made him ill. She termed this extreme obstinacy; he pleaded that it was simple truth. Truth upon some occasions is the most offensive thing that can be spoken: the lady was enraged, and, after saying every thing provoking that matrimonial spleen could suggest, when he in his turn grew warm, she cooled, and said, "You must be sensible, my dear, that all I say and do arises from affection."

"O, my love," said he, recovering his good humour, "this never-failing opiate soothes my vanity, and lulls my anger; then you may govern me as you please. Torment me to death,—I cannot oppose you."

"I suppose," said she, "you think me like the vampire-bat, who fans its victim to sleep with its wings, whilst she sucks its life-blood."

"Yes, exactly," said he, smiling: "thank you for the apt allusion."

"Very apt, indeed," said she; and a thick gloom overspread her countenance. She persisted in taking his assent in sober earnest. "Yes," said she, "I find you think all my kindness is treacherous. I will show you no more, and then you cannot accuse me of treachery."

It was in vain that he protested he had been only in jest; she was convinced that he was in earnest; she was suddenly afflicted with an absolute incapacity of distinguishing jest from earnest. She recurred to the idea of the vampire-bat, whenever it was convenient to her to suppose that her husband thought strange things of her, which never entered his brain. This bat proved to him a bird of ill omen, which preceded a train of misfortunes, that no mortal foresight could reach, and no human prudence avert. His goddess was not to be appeased by any propitiatory or expiatory sacrifice.

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## CHAPTER XI.

"Short is the period of insulting power,
Offended Cupid finds his vengeful hour."

FINDING it impossible to regain his fair one's favour, Mr. Bolingbroke absented himself from her presence. He amused himself for some days with his friend Mr. Granby, in attending to a plantation which he was laying out in his grounds. Griselda was vexed to perceive that her husband could find any amuse-

ment independent of her; and she never failed, upon his return, to mark her displeasure.

One morning the gentlemen had been so much occupied with their plantation, that they did not attend the breakfast-table precisely in due time: the contrast in the looks of the two ladies when their husbands entered the room was striking. Griselda was provoked with Mrs. Granby for being so good humoured.

"Lord bless me! Mrs. Granby, how you spoil these men," cried she.

All the time the gentlemen were at breakfast, Mrs. Bolingbroke played with her tea-spoon, and did not deign to utter a syllable; and when the gentlemen left the breakfast-table, and returned to their business, Griselda, who was, as our readers may have observed, one of the fashionable lollers by profession, established herself upon a couch, and began an attack upon Emma, for spoiling her husband in such a sad manner. Emma defended herself in a playful way, by answering that she could not venture to give unnecessary pain, because she was not so sure as some of her friends might be of their power of giving pleasure. Mrs. Bolingbroke proceeded to descant upon the difference between friendship and love: with some vanity, and some malice, she touched upon the difference between the *sorts of sentiments* which different women excited. Passion, she argued, could be kept alive only by a certain happy mixture of caprice and grace, coldness and ill-humour. She confessed that, for her part, she never could be content with the friendship of a husband.

Emma, without claiming or disclaiming her pretensions to love, quoted the saying of a French gentleman:

"L'Amitié est l'Amour sans ailes."
"Friendship is Love deprived of his wings."

Griselda had no apprehension that love could ever fly from her, and she declared she could not endure him without his wings.

Our heroine did not imagine that any of the little vexations which she habitually inflicted upon her husband could really diminish his regard. She never had calculated the prodigious effects which can be produced by petty causes constantly acting. Indeed this is a consideration, to which the pride or shortsightedness of human nature is not prone.

Who in contemplating one of Raphael's finest pictures, fresh from the master's hand, ever bestowed a thought upon the wretched little worm which works its destruction? Who that beholds the gilded vessel gliding in gallant trim—"youth at the prow, and pleasure at the helm;" ever at that instant thought of——barnacles? The imagination is disgusted by the anticlimax; and of all species of the bathos, the sinking from visionary happiness to sober reality is that from which human nature is most averse. The wings of the imagination, accustomed to ascend, resist the downward flight.

Confident of her charms, heedless of danger, habituated to think her empire absolute and eternal; our heroine, to amuse herself, and to display her power to Emma, persisted in her practice of tor-

menting. The ingenuity with which she varied her tortures was certainly admirable. After exhausting old ones, she invented new; and when the new lost their efficacy, she recurred to the old. She had often observed, that the blunt method of contradicting, which some bosom friends practise in conversation, is of sovereign power to provoke; and this consequently, though unpolite, she disdained not to imitate. It had the greater effect, as it was in diametrical opposition to the style of Mrs. Granby's conversation; who, in discussions with her husband, or her intimate friends, was peculiarly and habitually attentive to politeness.

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## CHAPTER XII.

"Ella biasmandol sempre, e dispregiando
Se gli venia piu sempre inimicando."

By her judicious and kind interposition, Emma often prevented the disagreeable consequences that threatened to ensue from Griselda's disputatious habits; but one night it was past her utmost skill to avert a violent storm, which arose about the pronunciation of a word. It began about eleven o'clock. Just as the family were sitting down to supper, seemingly in perfect harmony of spirits, Mr. Bolingbroke chanced to say, "I think the wind is rising." (He pronounced the word *wĭnd, short.*)

"*Wĭnd!* my dear," cried his wife, echoing his pronunciation; "do, for heaven's sake, call it wind."

The lady sounded this word long.

"Wind! my love," repeated he after her: "I doubt whether that be the right pronunciation."

"I am surprised you can doubt it," said she, "for I never heard any body call it *wĭnd* but yourself."

"Did not you, my love? that is very extraordinary: many people, I believe, call it *wĭnd*."

"Vulgarians, perhaps!"

"Vulgarians! No, indeed, my dear; very polite, well-informed people."

Griselda, with a look of unutterable contempt, reiterated the word *polite*.

"Yes, my dear, *polite*," persisted Mr. Bolingbroke, who was now come to such a pass, that he would defend his opinion in opposition to hers, stoutly and warmly. "Yes, *polite*, my dear, I maintain it; the most *polite* people pronounce it as I do."

"You may maintain what you please, my dear," said the lady, coolly; "but I maintain the contrary."

"Assertion is no proof on either side, I acknowledge," said Mr. Bolingbroke, recollecting himself.

"No, in truth," said Mrs. Bolingbroke, "especially such an absurd assertion as yours, my dear. Now I will go no farther than Mrs. Granby:—Mrs. Granby, did you ever hear any person, who knew how to speak, pronounce wind—*wĭnd?*"

"Mrs. Granby, have not you heard it called *wĭnd* in good company?"

The disputants eagerly approached her at the same instant, and looked as if their fortunes or lives depended upon the decision.

"I think I have heard the word pronounced both ways, by well-bred and well-informed people," said Mrs. Granby.

"That is saying nothing, my dear," said Mrs. Bolingbroke, pettishly.

"This is saying all I want," said Mr. Bolingbroke, satisfied.

"I would lay any wager, however, that Mr. ****, if he were here, would give it in my favour; and I suppose you will not dispute his authority."

"I will not dispute the authority of Sheridan's Dictionary," cried Mr. Bolingbroke, taking it down from the book-case, and turning over the leaves hastily.—"Sheridan gives it for me, my dear," said he, with exultation.

"You need not speak with such triumph, my dear, for I do not submit to Sheridan."

"No! Will you submit to Kenrick, then?"

"Let us see what he says, and I will then tell you," said the lady. "No—Kenrick was not of her opinion, and he was no authority." Walker was produced; and this battle of the pronouncing dictionaries seemed likely to have no end. Mrs. Granby, when she could be heard, remarked that it was difficult to settle any dispute about pronunciation, because in fact no reasons could be produced, and no standard appealed to but custom, which is perpetually changing; and, as Johnson says, "whilst our language is variable with the caprice of all who use it, words can no more be ascertained in a dictionary, than a grove in the agitation of a storm can be accurately delineated from its picture in the water."

The combatants would scarcely allow Emma time to finish this allusion, and certainly did not give themselves time to understand it; but continued to fight about the word custom, the only word that they had heard.

"Yes, custom! custom!" cried they at once, "custom must decide, to be sure." Then came *my* custom and *your* custom; the custom of the stage, the custom of the best company, the custom of the best poets; and all these were opposed to one another with increasing rapidity. "Good heavens, my dear! did you ever hear Kemble say, 'Rage on, ye *wĭnds!*' —Ridiculous!"

"I grant you on the stage it may be winds; but in common conversation it is allowable to pronounce it as I do, my dear."

"I appeal to the best poets, Mr. Bolingbroke; nothing can be more absurd than your way of——"

"Listen, lively lordlings all!" interrupted Emma, pressing with playful vehemence between the disputants; "I must be heard, for I have not spoken this half hour, and thus I pronounce—You both are right, and both are wrong.

"And now, my good friends, had not we better go to rest?" said she, "for it is past midnight."

As they took their candles, and went up stairs, the parties continued the battle: Mrs. Bolingbroke brought quotations innumerable to her aid, and in a shrill tone repeated,

"'He might not let e'en the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly.'

——— ——— " ' pass by me as the idle wind,
Which I respect not.'

" ' And let her down the wind to prey at fortune.'

" ' Blow, thou winter's wind,
Thou art not so unkind.'

" ' Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks ; rage, blow.' "

Her voice was raised to the highest pitch : it was in vain that her husband repeated that he acknowledged the word should be called as she pronounced it in poetry ; she reiterated her quotations and her assertions till at last she knew not what she said ; her sense failed the more her anger increased. At length Mr. Bolingbroke yielded. Noise conquers sometimes where art fails.

" Thus," said he, " the hawk that could not be hoodwinked, was at last tamed, by being exposed to the din of a blacksmith's hammer."

Griselda was incensed by this remark, and still more by the allusion, which she called the second edition of the vampire-bat. Both husband and wife went to sleep mutually displeased, and more disgusted with each other than they had ever been since their marriage: and all this for the pronunciation of a word!

Early in the morning they were wakened by a messenger, who brought an express, informing Mr. Bolingbroke that his uncle was not expected to live, and that he wished to see him immediately. Mr. Bolingbroke rose instantly; all the time that he was dressing, and preparing in the greatest hurry for his

journey, Griselda tormented him by disputing about the propriety of his going, and ended with "Promise me to write every post, my dear; positively you must."

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## CHAPTER XIII.

"He sighs for freedom, she for power."

Mr. Bolingbroke did not comply with his wife's request, or rather with her injunction, to write *every post:* and when he did write, Griselda always found some fault with his letters. They were too short, too stiff, or too cold, and "very different, indeed," she said, "from what he used to write before he was married." This was certainly true; and absence was not at the present crisis the most advantageous thing possible to our heroine. Absence is said to extinguish a weak flame, and to increase a strong one. Mr. Bolingbroke's passion for his Griselda had, by some means, been of late diminished. He parted from her with the disagreeable impression of a dispute upon his mind. As he went farther from her he perceived that instead of dragging a lengthened chain, his chain grew lighter. His uncle recovered: he found agreeable society in the neighbourhood; he was persuaded to prolong his stay: his mind, which had been continually harrassed, now enjoyed some tranquillity. On an unlucky evening, he recollected Martial's famous epigram and his wife, in one and the same instant:

" My mind still hovering round about you,
I thought I could not live without you ;
But now we have lived three weeks asunder,
How I lived with you is the wonder."

In the mean time, our heroine's chief amusement, in her husband's absence, was writing to complain of him to Mrs. Nettleby. This lady's answers were now filled with a reciprocity of conjugal abuse ; she had found, to her cost, that it is the most desperate imprudence to marry a fool, in the hopes of governing him. All her powers of tormenting were lost upon her blessed help-mate. He was not to be moved by wit or sarcasm, eloquence or noise, tears or caresses, reason, jealousy, or the opinion of the world.

What did he care what the world thought, he would do as he pleased himself; he would be master in his own house: it did not signify talking or crying, or being in the right; right or wrong, he would be obeyed ; a wife should never govern him ; he had no notion of letting a woman rule, for his part; women were born to obey, and promised it in church. As to jealousy, let his wife look to that; if she did not choose to behave properly, he knew his remedy, and would as soon be divorced as not: " Rule a wife and have a wife" was the burden of his song.

It was in vain to goad his insensible nature, in hopes of obtaining any good: vain as the art said to be possessed by Linnæus, of producing pearls by pricking oysters. Mrs. Nettleby, the witty, the spirited widow Nettleby, was now in the most hopeless and abject condition; tyrannized over by a dunce,— and who could pity her? not even her dear Griselda.

One day Mrs. Bolingbroke received an epistle of seven pages from *poor* Mrs. Nettleby, giving a full and true account of Mr. Nettleby's extraordinary obstinacy about "the awning of a pleasure-boat, which he would not suffer to be made according to her directions, and which consequently caused the oversetting of the boat, and *very nearly* the deaths of all the party." Tired with the long history, and with the notes upon the history of this adventure, in Mrs. Nettleby's declamatory style, our heroine walked out to refresh herself. She followed a pleasant path in a field near the house, and came to a shady lane, where she heard Mr. and Mrs. Granby's voices. She went towards the place. There was a turn in the lane, and a thick hedge of hawthorn prevented them from being immediately seen. As she approached, she heard Mr. Granby saying to Emma, in the fondest tone of affection, "My dear Emma, pray let it be done the way that you like best."

They were looking at a cottage which they were building. The masons had, by mistake, followed the plan which Mr. Granby proposed, instead of that which Emma had suggested. The wall was half built; but Mr. Granby desired that it might be pulled down and altered to suit Emma's taste.

"Bless me!" cried Griselda, with great surprise, "are you really going to have it pulled down, Mr. Granby?"

"Certainly," replied he; "and what is more, I am going to help to pull it down."

He ran to assist the masons, and worked with a degree of zeal, which increased Mrs. Bolingbroke's astonishment.

"Good Heavens!—He could not do more for you if you were his mistress."

"He never did so much for me, till I was his wife," said Emma.

"That's strange!—Very unlike other men. But, my dear," said Mrs. Bolingbroke, taking Mrs. Granby's arm, and drawing her aside, "how did you acquire such surprising power over your husband?"

"By not desiring it, I believe," replied Emma, smiling; "I have never used any other art."

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## CHAPTER XIV.

"Et cependant avec toute sa diablerie,
Il faut que je l'appele et mon cœur et ma mie."

Our heroine was still meditating upon the extraordinary method by which Emma had acquired power over her husband, when a carriage drove down the lane, and Mr. Bolingbroke's head appeared looking out of the chaise window. His face did not express so much joy as she thought it ought to display at the sight of her, after three weeks' absence. She was vexed, and received him coldly. He turned to Mr. and Mrs. Granby, and was not miserable. Griselda did not speak one word during their walk home; still her husband continued in good spirits: she was more and more out of humour, and took no pains to conceal her displeasure. He bore it well, but then he seemed to feel it so little, that she was

exasperated beyond measure; she seized the first convenient opportunity, when she found him alone, of beginning a direct attack.

"This is not the way in which you *used* to meet me, after an absence ever so short." He replied, that he was really very glad to see her, but that she, on the contrary, seemed sorry to see him.

"Because you are quite altered now," continued she, in a querulous tone. "I always prophesied, that you would cease to love me."

"Take care, my dear," said he, smiling; "some prophecies are the cause of their own accomplishment,—the sole cause. Come, my Griselda," continued he, in a serious tone, "do not let us begin to quarrel the moment we meet." He offered to embrace her, but she drew back haughtily. "What! do you confess that you no longer love me?" cried she.

"Far from it: but it is in your own power," said he hesitating, "to diminish or increase my love."

"Then it is no love, if it can be either increased or diminished," cried she; "it is no love worth having. I remember the day when you swore to me, that your affection could not be increased or diminished."

"I was *in* love in those days, my dear, and did not know what I swore," said Mr. Bolingbroke, endeavouring to turn the conversation: "never reproach a man, when he is sober, with what he said when he was drunk."

"Then you are sober now, are you?" cried she, angrily.

"It is to be hoped I am," said he, laughing.

"Cruel, barbarous man!" cried she.

"For being sober?" said he: "have not you been doing all you could to sober me these eighteen months, my dear? and now do not be angry if you have in some degree succeeded."

"Succeeded!—Oh wretched woman! this is thy lot!" exclaimed Griselda, clasping her hands in an agony of passion. "Oh that my whole unfortunate sex could *see* me,—could *hear* you at this instant! Never, never did the love of man endure one twelve-month after marriage. False, treacherous, callous, perjured tyrant! leave me! leave me!"

He obeyed; she called him back, with a voice half suffocated with rage, but he returned not.

Never was departing love recalled by the voice of reproach. It is not, as the poet fables, at the sight of human ties, that Cupid is frightened, for he is blind; but he has the most delicate ears imaginable: scared at the sound of female objurgation, Love claps his wings and urges his irrevocable flight.

Griselda remained for some time in her apartment to indulge her ill-humour; she had leisure for this indulgence; she was not now, as formerly, disturbed by the fond interruptions of a husband. Longer had her angry fit lasted, but for a circumstance, which may to many of our readers appear unnatural: our heroine became hungry. The passions are more under the control of the hours of meals* than any one, who has not observed human life out of novels,

* De Retz' Memoirs.

can easily believe. Dinner-time came, and Mrs. Bolingbroke appeared at dinner as usual. In the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Granby pride compelled Griselda to command herself, and no one could guess what had passed between her and her husband: but no sooner was she again tête-à-tête with him, than her reproaches recommenced with fresh violence.—"Will you only do me the justice to tell me, Mr. Bolingbroke," cried she, "what reason you have to love me less?"

"Reason, my dear," said he; "you know love is independent of reason, according to your own definition: love is involuntary, you cannot therefore blame me for its caprices."

"Insulting casuistry!" said she, weeping; "sophistical nonsense! Have you any rational complaint to make against me, Bolingbroke?"

"I make no complaints, rational or irrational, my dear; they are all on your side.

"And well they may be," cried Griselda, "when you treat me in such a barbarous manner: but I do not complain; the world shall be my judge; the world will do me justice, if you will not. I appeal to every body who knows me, have I ever given you the slightest cause for ill usage? Can you accuse me of any extravagance, of any imprudence, sir?"

"I accuse you of neither, Mrs. Bolingbroke."

"No, because you cannot, sir; my character, my fidelity is unimpeached, unimpeachable; the world will do me justice."

Griselda contrived to make even her virtues causes of torment. Upon the strength of this unimpeachable

fidelity, she thought she might be as ill-humoured as she pleased; she seemed now to think that she had acquired an indefeasible right to reproach her husband, since she had extorted from him the confession that he loved her less, and that he had no crime to lay to her charge. Ten days passed on in this manner; the lady becoming every hour more irritable, the gentleman every hour more indifferent.

To have revived or killed affection *secundem artem,* the fair practitioner should now have thrown in a little jealousy: but, unluckily, she was so situated, that this was impossible. No object any way fit for the purpose was at hand; nothing was to be found within ten miles of her but honest country squires; and,

> "With all the powers of nature and of art,
> She could not break one stubborn country heart."

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## CHAPTER XV.

> "To whom the virgin majesty of Eve,
> As one who loves and some unkindness meets,
> With sweet austere composure thus replies."

Many privileges are, and ought to be, allowed to the virgin majesty of the sex; and even when the modern fair one does not reply with all the sweet austere composure of Eve, her anger may have charms for a lover. There is a certain susceptibility of temper, that sometimes accompanies the pride of

virtue, which indicates a quick sense of shame, and warm feelings of affection; in whatsoever manner this may be shown, it appears amiable and graceful. And if this sensibility degenerate into irritability, a lover pardons it in his mistress; it is her prerogative to be haughty; and if he be dexterous to seize "the moment of returning love," it is often his interest to promote quarrels, for the sake of the pleasures of reconciliation. The jealous doubts, the alternate hopes and fears, attendant on the passion of love, are dear to the lover whilst his passion lasts; but when that subsides—as subside it must—his taste for altercation ceases. The proverb which favours the quarrels of lovers may prove fatal to the happiness of husbands; and woe be to the wife who puts her faith in it. There are, however, people who would extend that dangerous maxim even to the commerce of friendship; and it must be allowed (for morality neither in small matters nor great can gain any thing by suppressing the truth), it must be allowed that in the commencement of an intimacy the quarrels of friends may tend to increase their mutual regard, by affording to one or both of them opportunities of displaying qualities superior even to good humour; such as truth, fidelity, honour, or generosity. But whatever may be the sum total of their merit, when upon long acquaintance it comes to be fully known and justly appreciated, the most splendid virtues or talents can seldom compensate in domestic life for the want of temper. The fallacy of a maxim, like the absurdity of an argument, is sometimes best proved by pushing it as far as it can go, by observing

all its consequences. Our heroine, in the present instance, illustrates this truth to admiration: her life and her husband's had now become a perpetual scene of disputes and reproaches; every day the quarrels grew more bitter, and the reconciliations less sweet.

One morning, Griselda and her husband were present, whilst Emma was busy showing some poor children how to plait straw for hats.

"Next summer, my dear, when we are settled at home, I hope you will encourage some manufacture of this kind amongst the children of our tenants," said Mr. Bolingbroke to his lady.

"I have no genius for teaching manufactures of this sort," replied Mrs. Bolingbroke, scornfully.

Her husband urged the matter no farther. A few minutes afterwards, he drew out a straw from a bundle, which one of the children held.

"This is a fine straw!" said he, carelessly.

"Fine straw!" cried Mrs. Bolingbroke: "no—that is very coarse. This," continued she, pulling one from another bundle; "this is a fine straw, if you please."

"I think mine is the finest," said Mr. Bolingbroke.

"Then you must be blind, Mr. Bolingbroke," cried the lady, eagerly comparing them.

"Well, my dear," said he, laughing, "we will not dispute about straws."

"No, indeed," said she; "but I observe whenever you know you are in the wrong, Mr. Bolingbroke, you say, *we will not dispute, my dear:* now pray look

at these straws, Mrs. Granby, you that have eyes,—which is the finest?"

"I will draw lots," said Emma, taking one playfully from Mrs. Bolingbroke; "for it seems to me that there is little or no difference between them."

"No difference? O my dear Emma!" said Mrs. Bolingbroke.

"My dear Griselda," cried her husband, taking the other straw from her and blowing it away; "indeed it is not worth disputing about: this is too childish."

"Childish!" repeated she, looking after the straw, as it floated down the wind; "I see nothing childish in being in the right: your raising your voice in that manner never convinces me. Jupiter is always in the wrong, you know, when he has recourse to his thunder."

"Thunder, my dear Griselda, about a straw! Well, when women are determined to dispute, it is wonderful how ingenious they are in finding subjects. I give you joy, my dear, of having attained the perfection of the art: you can now literally dispute about straws."

Emma insisted at this instant upon having an opinion about the shape of a hat, which she had just tied under the chin of a rosy little girl of six years old; upon whose smiling countenance she fixed the attention of the angry lady.

All might now have been well; but Griselda had a pernicious habit of recurring to any slight words of blame which had been used by her friends. Her husband had congratulated her upon having attained

the perfection of the art of disputing, since she could cavil about straws. This reproach rankled in her mind. There are certain diseased states of the body, in which the slightest wound festers, and becomes incurable. It is the same with the mind; and our heroine's was in this dangerous predicament.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

"Que suis je?—qu'ai je fait? Que dois je faire encore?
Quel transport me saisit? Quel chagrin me dévore?"

Some hours after the quarrel about the straws, when her husband had entirely forgotten it, and was sitting very quietly in his own apartment writing a letter, Griselda entered the room with a countenance prepared for great exploits.

"Mr. Bolingbroke," she began in an awful tone of voice, "if you are at leisure to attend to me, I wish to speak to you upon a subject of some importance."

"I am quite at leisure, my dear; pray sit down: what is the matter? you really alarm me!"

"It is not my intention to alarm you, Mr. Bolingbroke," continued she in a still more solemn tone; "the time is past when what I have to say could have alarmed: I am persuaded that you will now hear it without emotion, or with an emotion of pleasure."

She paused; he laid down his pen, and looked all expectation.

"I am come to announce to you a fixed, unalterable resolution—To part from you, Mr. Bolingbroke.'

"Are you serious, my dear?"

"Perfectly serious, sir."

These words did not produce the revolution in her husband's countenance which Griselda had expected. She trembled with a mixed indescribable emotion of grief and rage, when she heard him calmly reply, "Let us part, then, Griselda, if that be your wish; but let me be sure that it is your wish: I must have it repeated from your lips when you are perfectly calm."

With a voice inarticulate from passion, Griselda begun to assure him that she was perfectly calm; but he stopped her, and mildly said, "Take four-and-twenty hours to consider of what you are about, Griselda; I will be here at this time to-morrow to learn your final determination."

Mr. Bolingbroke left the room.

Mrs. Bolingbroke was incapable of thinking: she could only feel. Conflicting passions assailed her heart. All the woman rushed upon her soul; she loved her husband more at this instant than she had ever loved him before. His firmness excited at once her anger and her admiration. She could not believe that she had heard his *words rightly*. She sat down to recall minutely every circumstance of what had just passed, every word, every look; she finished by persuading herself, that his calmness was affected, that the best method she could possibly take was by a show of resistance to bully him out of his indifference. She little knew what she hazarded; when the danger of losing her husband's love was

imaginary, and solely of her own creating, it affected her in the most violent manner; but now that the peril was real and imminent, she was insensible to its existence.

A celebrated traveller in the Alps advises people to imagine themselves walking amidst precipices, when they are safe upon smooth ground; and he assures them that by this practice they may inure themselves so to the idea of danger, as to prevent all sense of it in the most perilous situations.

The four-and-twenty hours passed; and at the appointed moment our heroine and her husband met. As she entered the room, she observed that he held a book in his hand, but was not reading: he put it down, rose deliberately, and placed a chair for her, in silence.

"I thank you, I would rather stand," said she: he put aside the chair, and walked to a door at the other end of the room, to examine whether there was any one in the adjoining apartment.

"It is not necessary that what we have to say should be overheard by servants," said he.

"I have no objection to being overheard," said Griselda: "I have nothing to say of which I am ashamed, and all the world must know it soon."

As Mr. Bolingbroke returned towards her, she examined his countenance with an inquisitive eye. It was expressive of concern; grave, but calm.

Whoever has seen a balloon—the reader, however impatient, must listen to this allusion—whoever has seen a balloon, may have observed that in its flaccid state it can be folded and unfolded with the greatest ease, and it is manageable even by a child; but

when once filled, the force of multitudes cannot restrain, nor the art of man direct its course. Such is the human mind—so tractable before, so ungovernable after it fills with passion. By slow degrees, unnoticed by our heroine, the balloon had been filling. It was full; but yet it was held down by strong cords: it remained with her to cut or not to cut them.

"Reflect before you speak, my dear Griselda," said her husband; "consider that on the words which you are going to pronounce depend your fate and mine."

"I have reflected sufficiently," said she, "and decide, Mr. Bolingbroke—to part."

"Be it so!" cried he; fire flashed from his eyes; he grew red and pale in an instant. "Be it so," repeated he, in an irrevocable voice—"We part for ever!"

He vanished before Griselda could speak or think. She was breathless; her limbs trembled; she could not support herself; she sunk she knew not where. She certainly loved her husband better than any thing upon earth, except power. When she came to her senses, and perceived that she was alone, she felt as if she was abandoned by all the world. The dreadful words "for ever," still sounded in her ears. She was tempted to yield her humour to her affection. It was but a momentary struggle; the love of sway prevailed. When she came more fully to herself, she recurred to the belief that her husband could not be in earnest, or at least that he would never persist, if she had but the courage to brave him to the utmost.

## CHAPTER XVII.

"L'ai je vu se troubler, et me plaindre un moment?
En ai je pu tirer un seul gémissement?"

ASHAMED of her late weakness, our heroine rallied all her spirits, and resolved to meet her husband at supper with an undaunted countenance. Her provoking composure was admirably prepared: but it was thrown away, for Mr. Bolingbroke did not appear at supper. When Griselda retired to rest, she found a note from him on her dressing-table; she tore it open with a triumphant hand, certain that it came to offer terms of reconciliation.

"You will appoint whatever friend you think proper, to settle the terms of our separation. The time I desire to be as soon as possible. I have not mentioned what has passed to Mr. or Mrs. Granby; you will mention it to them or not, as you think fit. On this point, as on all others, you will henceforward follow your own discretion.

"T. BOLINGBROKE."

"Twelve o'clock;
"Saturday, Aug. 10th."

Mrs. Bolingbroke read and re-read this note, weighed every word, examined every letter, and at last exclaimed aloud, "He will not, cannot part from me."

"He cannot be in earnest," thought she. "Either he is acting a part, or he is in a passion. Perhaps he is instigated by Mr. Granby: no, that cannot be, because he says he has not mentioned it to Mr. or Mrs. Granby, and he always speaks the truth. If

Emma had known it, she would have prevented him from writing such a harsh note, for she is such a good creature. I have a great mind to consult her; she is so indulgent, so soothing. But what does Mr. Bolingbroke say about her? He leaves me to my own discretion, to mention what has passed or not. That means, mention it, speak to Mrs. Granby, that she may advise you to submit. I will not say a word to her; I will out-general him yet. He cannot leave me when it comes to the trial."

She sat down, and wrote instantly this answer to her husband's note:

"I agree with you entirely, that the sooner we part the better. I shall write to-morrow to my friend Mrs. Nettleby, with whom I choose to reside. Mr. John Nettleby is the person I fix upon to settle the terms of our separation. In three days I shall have Mrs. Nettleby's answer. This is Saturday: on Tuesday, then, we part—for ever.

"GRISELDA BOLINGBROKE."

Mrs. Bolingbroke summoned her maid. "Deliver this note," said she, "with your own hand; do not send Le Grand with it to his master."

Griselda waited impatiently for her maid's return.

"No answer, madam."

"No answer! are you certain?"

"Certain, ma'am: my master only said, 'Very well.'"

"And why did not you ask him if there was any answer?"

"I did, ma'am. I said, 'Is there no answer for my lady?' 'No answer,' said he."

"Was he up?"

"No, ma'am: he was in bed."

"Was he asleep when you went in?"

"I cannot say positively, ma'am: he undrew the curtain as I went in, and asked, 'Who's there?'"

"Did you go in on tiptoe?"

"I forget really, ma'am."

"You forget really! Idiot!"

"But, ma'am, I recollect he turned his head to go to sleep as I closed the curtain."

"You need not wait," said Mrs. Bolingbroke.

Provoked beyond the power of sleep, Mrs. Bolingbroke gave free expression to her feelings, in an eloquent letter to Mrs. Nettleby; but even after this relief, Griselda could not rest; so much was she disturbed by the repose that her husband enjoyed, or was reputed to enjoy. In the morning she placed her letter in full view upon the mantelpiece in the drawing-room, in hopes that it would strike terror into the heart of her husband. To her great mortification, she saw Mr. Bolingbroke, with an unchanged countenance, give it to the servant, who came to ask for "letters for the post." She had now three days of grace, before Mrs. Nettleby's answer could arrive; but of these she disdained to take advantage: she never mentioned what had passed to Mrs. Granby, but persisted in the same haughty conduct towards her husband, persuaded that she should conquer at last.

The third day came, and brought an answer from Mrs. Nettleby. After a prodigious parade of professions, a decent display of astonishment at Mr. Bolingbroke's strange conduct, and pity for her dear

Griselda, Mrs. Nettleby came to the point, and was sorry to say, that Mr. Nettleby was in one of his obstinate fits, and could not be brought to listen to the scheme so near her heart: "He would have nothing to do, he said, with settling the terms of Mr. and Mrs. Bolingbroke's separation, not he!—He absolutely refuses to meddle between man and wife; and calls it meddling," continued Mrs. Nettleby, "to receive you as an inmate, after you have parted from your husband. Mr. Bolingbroke, he says, has always been very civil to him, and came to see him in town; therefore he will not encourage Mrs. Bolingbroke in her tantarums. I represented to him, that Mr. B. desires the thing, and leaves the choice of a residence to yourself: but Mr. Nettleby replied, in his brutal way, that you might choose a residence where you would, except in his house; that his house was his castle, and should never be turned into an asylum for runagate wives; that he would not set such an example to his own wife, &c. But," continued Mrs. Nettleby, "you can imagine all the foolish things he said, and I need not repeat them, to vex you and myself. I know that he refuses to receive you, my dear Mrs. Bolingbroke, on purpose to provoke me. But what can one do or say to such a man?—Adieu, my dear. Pray write when you are at leisure, and tell me how things are settled, or rather what is settled upon you; which, to be sure, is now the only thing that you have to consider.

"Ever yours, affectionately,

"R. H. NETTLEBY.

"P.S. Before you leave Devonshire, do, my dear, get me some of the fine Devonshire lace; three or

four dozen yards will do. I trust implicitly to your taste. You know I do not mind the price; only let it be broad, for narrow lace is my aversion."

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

"Lost is the dear delight of giving pain!"

Mortified by her dear friend's affectionate letter and postscript, Griselda was the more determined to persist in her resolution to brave her husband to the utmost. The catastrophe, she thought, would always be in her own power; she recollected various separation scenes in novels and plays, where the lady, after having tormented her husband or lover by every species of ill conduct, reforms in an instant, and a reconciliation is effected by some miraculous means. Our heroine had seen lady Townley admirably well acted, and doubted not that she could now perform her part victoriously. With this hope, or rather in this confidence, she went in search of Mr. Bolingbroke. He was not in the house; he had gone out to take a solitary walk. Griselda hoped that she was the object of his reflections, during his lonely ramble.

"Yes," said she to herself, "my power is not exhausted: I shall make his heart ache yet; and when he yields, how I will revenge myself!"

She rang for her woman, and gave orders to have every thing immediately prepared for her departure. "As soon as the trunks are packed, let them be orded, and placed in the great hall," said she.

Our heroine, who had a happy memory, full well recollected the effect which the sight of the corded trunks produced in the "Simple Story," and she thought the stroke so good that it would bear repetition. With malice prepense, she therefore prepared the blow, which she flattered herself could not fail to astound her victim. Her pride still revolted from the idea of consulting Mrs. Granby; but some apology was requisite for thus abruptly quitting her house. Mrs. Bolingbroke began in a tone that seemed intended to preclude all discussion.

"Mrs. Granby, do you know that Mr. Bolingbroke and I have come to a resolution to be happy the rest of our lives; and, for this purpose, we find it expedient to separate. Do not start or look so shocked, my dear. This word separation may sound terrible to some people, but I have, thank Heaven! sufficient strength of mind to hear it with perfect composure. When a couple who are chained together pull different ways, the sooner they break their chain the better. I shall set out immediately for Weymouth. You will excuse me, my dear Mrs. Granby; you see the necessity of the case."

Mrs. Granby, with the most delicate kindness, began to expostulate; but Griselda declared that she was incapable of using a friend so ill as to pretend to listen to advice, when her mind was determined irrevocably. Emma had no intention, she said, of obtruding her advice, but she wished that Mrs. Bolingbroke would give her own excellent understanding time to act, and that she would not throw away the happiness of her life in a fit of passion. Mrs. Boling-

broke protested that she never was freer from passion of every sort than she was at this moment. With an unusually placid countenance, she turned from Mrs. Granby and sat down to the piano-forte. "We shall not agree if I talk any more upon this subject." continued she, "therefore I had better sing. I believe my music is better than my logic: at all events I prefer music."

In a fine *bravuru* style Griselda then began to sing—

> "What have I to do with thee,
> Dull, unjoyous constancy," &c.

And afterwards she played all her gayest airs to convince Mrs. Granby that her heart was quite at ease. She continued playing for an unconscionable time, with the most provoking perseverance.

Emma stood at the window, watching for Mr. Bolingbroke's return. "Here comes Mr. Bolingbroke! —How melancholy he looks!—Oh, my dear Griselda," cried she, stopping Mrs. Bolingbroke's hand as it ran gaily over the keys, "this is no time for mirth or bravado: let me conjure you——"

"I hate to be conjured," interrupted Griselda, breaking from her; "I am not a child, to be coaxed and kissed and sugar-plummed into being good, and behaving prettily. Do me the favour to let Mr. Bolingbroke know that I am in the study, and desire to speak to him for one minute."

No power could detain the peremptory lady: she took her way to the study, and rejoiced as she crossed the hall, to see the trunks placed as she had ordered.

It was impossible that her husband could avoid seeing them the moment he should enter the house.—What a satisfaction !——Griselda seated herself at ease in an arm-chair in the study, and took up a book which lay open on the table. Mr. Bolingbroke's pencil-case was in it, and the following passage was marked:

" Il y a un lieu sur la terre où les joies pures sont inconnues ; d'où la politesse est exilée et fait place à l'égoîsme, à la contradiction, aux injures à demi-voilées ; le remords et l'inquiétude, furies infatigables, y tourmentent les habitans. Ce lieu est la maison de deux époux qui ne peuvent ni s'estimer, ni s'aimer.

" Il y a un lieu sur la terre où le vice ne s'introduit pas, où les passions tristes n'ont jamais d'empire, où le plaisir et l'innocence habitent toujours ensemble, où les soins sont chers, où les travaux sont doux, où les peines s'oublient dans les entretiens, où l'on jouit du passé, du present, de l'avenir ; et c'est la maison de deux époux qui s'aiment."*

A pang of remorse seized Griselda, as she read these words; they seemed to have been written on purpose for her. Struck with the sense of her own folly, she paused,—she doubted;—but then she thought that she had gone too far to recede. Her pride could not bear the idea of acknowledging that she had been wrong, or of seeking reconcilement.

" I could live very happily with this man ; but then to yield the victory to him!—and to reform! ——No, no,—all reformed heroines are stupid and odious."

* M. de Saint Lambert, Œuvres Philosophiques, tome 2.

## CHAPTER XIX.

"And, vanquish'd, quit victoriously the field."

GRISELDA flung the book from her as her husband entered the room.

"You have had an answer, madam, from your friend, Mrs. Nettleby, I perceive," said he calmly.

"I have, sir. Family reasons prevent her from receiving me at present; therefore I have determined upon going to Weymouth, where, indeed, I always wished to spend this summer."

Mr. Bolingbroke evinced no surprise, and made not the slightest opposition. Mrs. Bolingbroke was so much vexed, that she could scarcely command her countenance: she bit her lip violently.

"With respect to any arrangements that are to be made, I am to understand that you wish me to address myself to Mr. J. Nettleby," said her husband.

"No, to myself, if you please; I am prepared to listen, sir, to whatever you may have to propose."

"These things are always settled best in writing," replied Mr. Bolingbroke. "Be so obliging as to leave me your direction, and you shall hear from me, or from Mrs. Granby, in a few days."

Mrs. Bolingbroke hastily wrote a direction upon a card, and put it into her husband's hand, with as much unconcern as she could maintain. Mr. Bolingbroke continued, precisely in the same tone: "If you have any thing to suggest, that may contribute to your future convenience, madam, you will be so good as to leave a memorandum with me, to which I shall attend."

He placed a sheet of paper before Mrs. Bolingbroke, and put a pen into her hand. She made an effort to write, but her hand trembled so that she could not form a letter. Her husband took up Saint Lambert, and read, or seemed to read.——"Open the window, Mr. Bolingbroke," said she. He obeyed, but did not, as formerly, "hang over her enamoured." He had been so often duped by her fainting fits and hysterics, that now, when she suffered in earnest, he suspected her of artifice. He took up his book again, and marked a page with his pencil. She wrote a line with a hurried hand, then starting up, flung her pen from her, and exclaimed—"I need not, will not write; I have no request to make to you, Mr. Bolingbroke; do what you will; I have no wishes, no wish upon earth——but to leave you."

"That wish will be soon accomplished, madam," replied he unmoved.

She pulled the bell till it broke.—A servant appeared.

"My carriage to the door directly, if you please, sir," cried she.

A pause ensued. Griselda sat swelling with unutterable rage.—"Heavens! have you no feeling left?" exclaimed she, snatching the book from his hand; "have you no feeling left, Mr. Bolingbroke, for any thing?"

"You have left me none for some things, Mrs. Bolingbroke, and I thank you. All this would have broken my heart six months ago."

"You have no heart to break, cried she."—The carriage drove to the door.

"One word more, before I leave you for ever, Mr Bolingbroke," continued she.—"Blame yourself, not me, for all this.—When we were first married, you humoured, you spoiled me; no temper could bear it.—Take the consequences of your own weak indulgence.——Farewell."

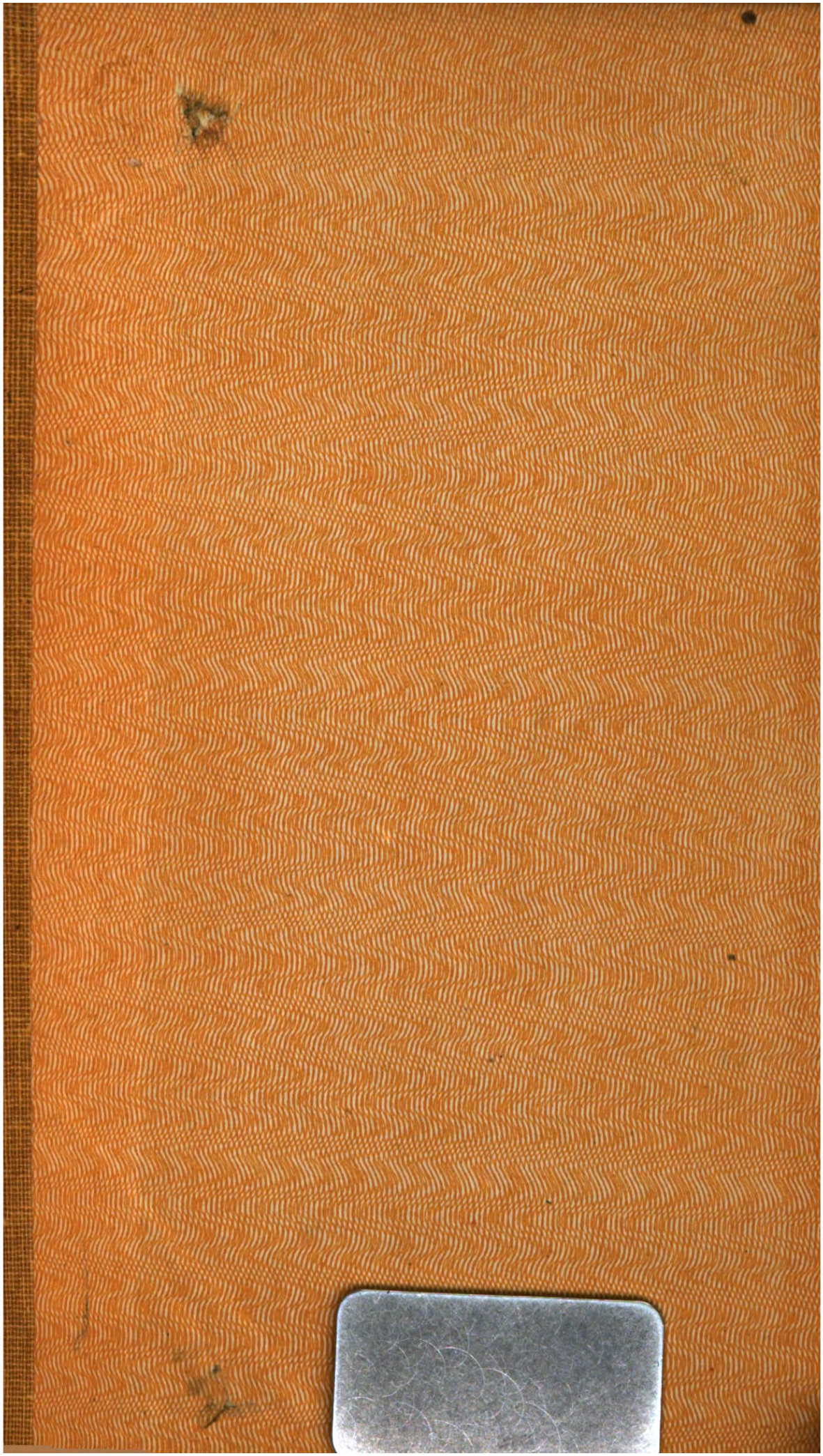
He made no effort to retain her, and she left the room.

——— ——— "Thus it shall befall
Him who to worth in woman overtrusting
Lets her will rule: restraint she will not brook;
And left to herself, if evil thence ensue,
She first his *weak indulgence* will accuse."

A confused recollection of this warning of Adam's was in Mr. Bolingbroke's head at this moment.

Mrs. Bolingbroke's carriage drove by the window, and she kissed her hand to him as she passed. He had not sufficient presence of mind to return the compliment. Our heroine enjoyed this last triumph of superior temper.

Whether the victory was worth the winning, whether the modern Griselda persisted in her spirited sacrifice of happiness, whether she was ever reconciled to her husband, or whether the fear of "reforming and growing stupid" prevailed, are questions which we leave to the sagacity or the curiosity of her fair contemporaries.

"He that knows better how to tame a shrew,
Let him now speak, 'tis charity to shew."

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