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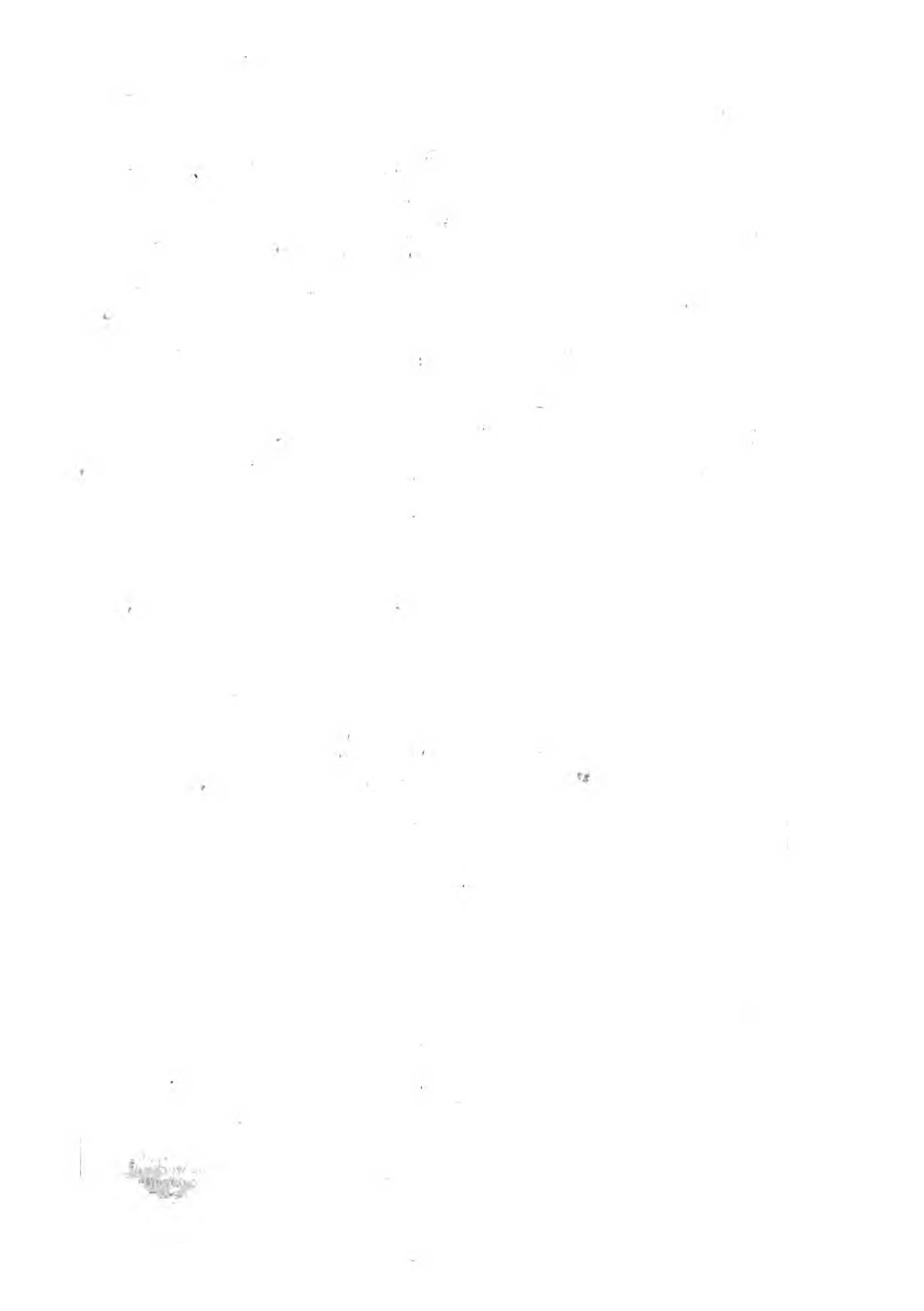
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THE
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BY *Mary. Gardner*

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON,

AUTHOR OF "THE BELLE OF A SEASON," "IDLER IN FRANCE," ETC. ETC. ETC

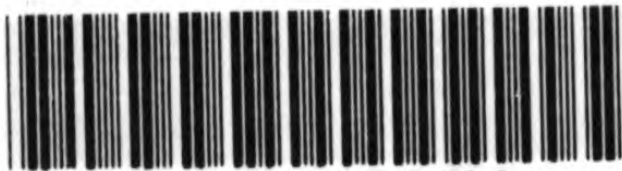


249. 3. 577.

LONDON:

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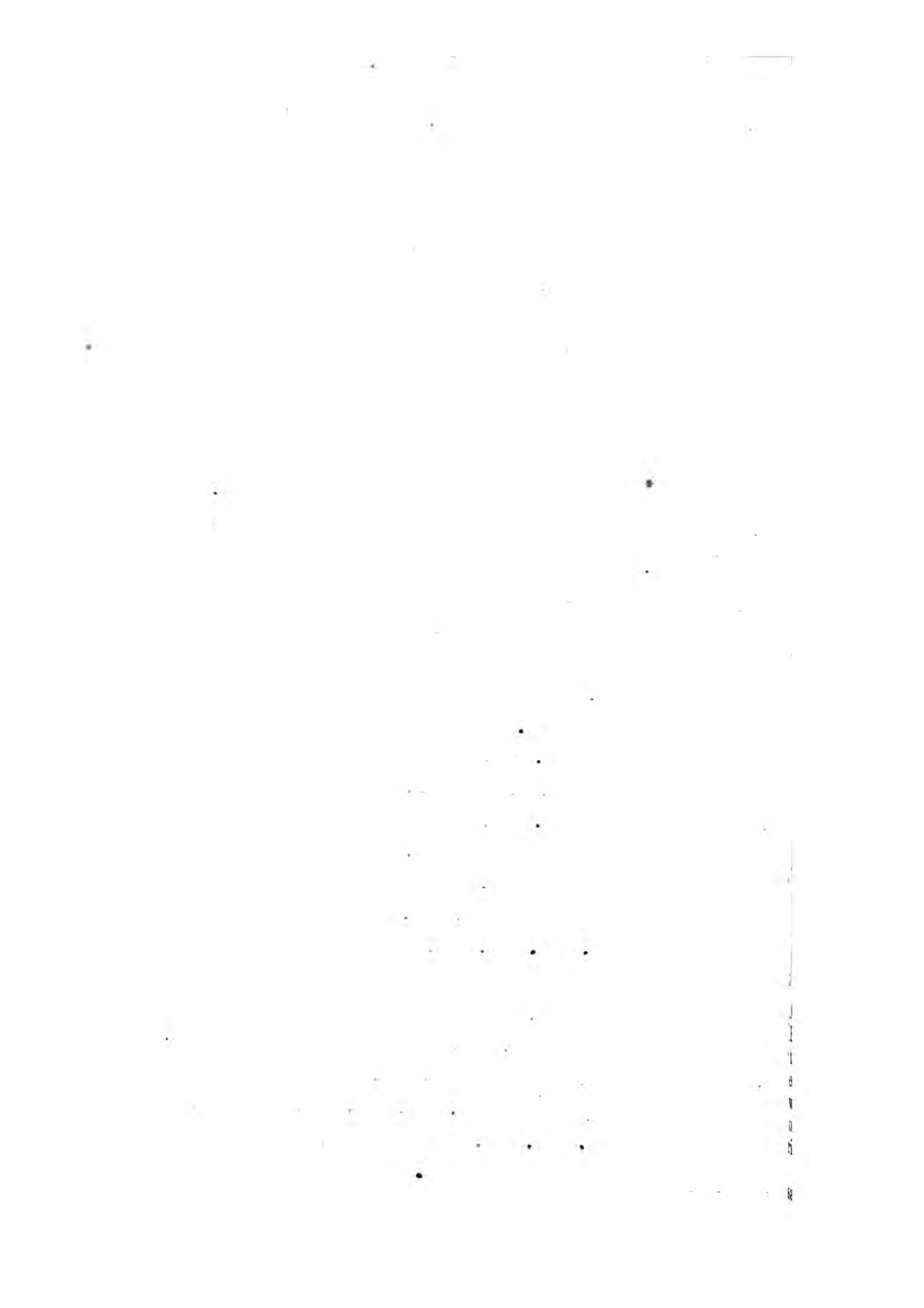
PRINTED BY PETER AND GALPIN, LA BELLE SAUVAGE YARD,
LUDGATE HILL.



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THE LOTTERY OF LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

BORN of humble but honest parents, I was so fortunate as to attract the notice of Abraham Mortimer, a retired banker, who had purchased a large estate, on which was the small farm occupied by my father, Richard Wallingford. Mr. Mortimer had married late in life, and lost the object of his affections, who died soon after giving birth to an only son. The child was little less than idolised by his doting parent; and, when old enough to have a preceptor, it was suggested that a playfellow, to share his lessons, might excite emulation, while a companion in his exercise would tend to give him more pleasure in them. I, then in my twelfth year, was selected to fill this post. I had often attracted the notice of Mr. Mortimer as he rode by the door of my father, who was his tenant, and who having three other children, and not being in affluent circumstances, was not unwilling to accept the kind offer of his landlord, to undertake the education of his son, and afterwards to place him in some reputable profession.

Percy Mortimer, unlike the generality of only sons, was wholly unspoilt by the indulgence of his father. Good-tempered, kind-hearted, and generous, he hailed the acquisition of a companion of his own age with delight, and soon became fondly attached to me, who regarded "the young master," as the child was styled, with the warmest affection.

The emulation excited between us never engendered an envious feeling in the breasts of either. The commendations lavished on Percy by his doting father, were even more gratifying to me than to the object of them; and often would Percy interrupt the eulogiums, by reminding his parent that I merited them quite as well as he did. The only interruptions to the happiness I enjoyed, originated in the contemptuous treatment I not unfrequently experienced from the servants of my benefactor.

"Marry come up!" would Mrs. Turnbull, the fat housekeeper, say, often loud enough to be heard by me, as she beheld us mount

our ponies together, "if it isn't queer to see a trumpery farmer's son treated for all the world like the young squire, and not the least difference made between them."

"Set a beggar on horseback and he'll ride to the ——," chimed the butler. "Well, I hope master won't have no cause to repent his generosity, or to remember the old saying about pulling a rod to whip himself."

"Some people have the luck of it," resumed Mrs. Turnbull. "Now, if master had taken your little boy, Mr. Manningtree, I'd have thought it quite nat'ral like, seeing as how you've served in the family so long; and I'm sure he's a nice spirited little fellow, and so I have thought ever since he broke the gardener's windows for forbidding him to touch the fruit, and set his dog at the beggars' children."

"Why, yes, Mrs. Turnbull, I must say as how Billy is as sharp a chap as a man can see in a ride of twenty miles. Why, he knocked out a tooth of widow Browning's son t'other day, and has boxed half the boys in the school, as their black eyes bear witness. Though I say it, as shouldn't say it, Billy is as 'cute a boy as any in the parish; ay, and would be as good-looking a boy, too, only for his bandy legs, that little cast he has in his eyes, and his hair being so red."

"As for a cast in the heyes, Mr. Manningtree," observed Mrs. Turnbull, "there's many a one as thinks it a beauty; and as for red hair, doesn't it bring white skin with it?"

Now, be it known that Mrs. Turnbull squinted, and had very red hair, which the butler had totally forgotten, when he referred to their being detrimental to comeliness.

"Oh! in a woman, Mrs. Turnbull, they certainly are a beauty, of that there can't be a doubt; for only look at the picturs of Teeshin,* I mean of them there pretty creturs, who have not so much clothes on as might be wished, owing, I suppose, to chintz, muslin, and cotton not being so cheap when he painted as these articles are now."

"Fye, Mr. Manningtree! don't mention such things. I'm sure I never go into the breakfast-room, to take orders of a morning, without being ashamed to meet master's eye, on account of that there Wenus, who is lollopping, half dressed, and them other plump creturs as is bathing in a river."

"Faith! Mrs. Turnbull, I never look at 'em without thinking of you."

"For shame! for shame! Mr. Manningtree; don't go for to mention such a thing; what would people say if they heard you? I've been a married woman, Mr. Manningtree, a matter of twenty-five years, and poor Thomas Turnbull, peace be to his soul, never said no such thing in his life."

* Titian.

"May be he never saw a Teeshin pictur, Mrs. Turnbull? if he had, he could not help seeing the likeness."

"Now, I declare, Mr. Manningtree, you make me all no how, indeed you do—for shame! But we was a talking about that there young chap, Dick Wallingford, I think as how he takes on, and gives himself great airs."

"So do I, Mrs. Turnbull. He's a cunning fellow, too; and I can't abide cunning people."

"No, nor I neither, Mr. Manningtree."

"Why, would you believe it, the day after James, the new footman, came, the young master was mad because he had not cleaned the shoes of Master Richard (as we are told to call him); for I had been telling him, the evening before, as how he was only the son of a poor trumpery farmer, as was taken in out of charity, to divart the young squire. Well, when the young chap finds his shoes dirty, what does he do but begins cleaning 'em with his pocket handkerchief and some water, when in comes Mary, housemaid, and tells him, it is a shame for him to dirt the room after such a fashion, and that it was easy to see he was not a gentleman born, or he wou'd not go for to do such a thing as to clean his own shoes. Mary, housemaid, spoke so loud, that the young master heard her, came into the room, ordered her to leave it directly, and then sent for me, and said, 'If ever any one neglected to clean the shoes of Master Richard, he would tell his papa, and get them discharged.' Would you believe it, Mrs. Turnbull, that there young hypocrite turns round in a jiffy, and says, he hopes Master Percy won't say another word about the matter, for that he doesn't mind doing everything for himself, just the same as he'd have to do, if he was in his father's house; and then the young master goes up to him, and puts his arm round his shoulders, quite like a brother, and says, 'But you sha'n't, my dear Richard; the servants *shall* wait on you the same as on me, *that* they shall; so mind what I say, Manningtree, or *I'll* tell my papa.'"

"Did I ever?—no, I never heard of such doings. No good will come of it, Mr. Manningtree."

The good temper, for which I always had credit, and the desire of not giving trouble, which I invariably evinced, were insufficient to conciliate the goodwill of the servants of my patron, and many were the slights and humiliations they endeavoured to inflict on me, but which this same good temper of mine, and a certain portion of good sense, not often met with in people of my age, lightened the sense of.

Time passed rapidly on, and we had each now completed our nineteenth year. Percy was to be entered at Christchurch College, as a gentleman commoner, and I was to be placed as a clerk in the banking-house of Mortimer, Allison, and Finsbury, in which my benefactor was still a sleeping partner.

"How I wish you were coming to Oxford with me, my dear

Richard," said Percy to me, a few days before the separation, to which both looked forward with so much dread.

"I too wish it," answered I, "more, much more, than I can tell you; but your father wills it otherwise."

"Greatly as I shall regret our separation, Richard, I prefer it to having you entered as a sizar at Christchurch; *that* I could not bear, brought up as we have been like brothers."

"I should feel no humiliation in it, dear Percy," said I, "for though you have ever treated me as an equal, I have not forgotten the difference in our stations: the poor farmer's son knows that his cannot be the same path as that traced for the son of his generous benefactor."

"That is precisely the only fault I ever have had to find with you, Richard. You are ever reminding me of a kindness on the part of my father, that has been amply repaid by the advantages I have derived from the example of perseverance and application which you have given to his half—nay, more than half-spoilt son, who without it, might have been now a dunce, and disappointed his too indulgent father's expectations."

Percy Mortimer entered Christchurch a few days after the above conversation; and on the same day, I left the abode in which I had passed so many happy days, and became an inmate in the banking-house of Messrs. Mortimer, Allison, and Finsbury, in Mincing-lane. I had never neglected my parents, or sisters and brothers, during my residence at Mr. Mortimer's. The pocket-money, and gifts so liberally supplied to me by Percy, were nearly all transferred to my family; and whenever I could snatch an hour from my own studies, or the recreations of my companion, which I was expected to share, it was devoted to the instruction of my brothers and sisters. Of these, one amply repaid the trouble and pains I had taken for her improvement, the gentle and pretty Margaret, who applied herself with diligence to the tasks I assigned her. To her, now in her fourteenth year, I transferred the few books I could call my own, consisting of Goldsmith's "Abridged Histories," Milton's "Paradise Lost," Thomson's "Seasons," and the "Spectator," and having taken an affectionate leave of my family, I bade adieu to the country.

Great was the disappointment I experienced on my arrival at the dingy house in Mincing-lane, where I was henceforth to take up my residence. Impressed with a vivid notion of the grandeur of London, the little I had seen of it in my passage through the crowded streets of the city, accorded so little with my pre-conceived ideas, that I sank back into the coach in which I had seated myself and placed my luggage on leaving the stage-coach, disheartened and oppressed by the sense of loneliness peculiar to a stranger on the first entrance into a crowded capital, in which, among the dense masses of people he sees moving about him, he knows not a single face, expects not to see a single hand held out

to welcome him with a kindly pressure, or a familiar voice to greet his ear. The dingy banking-house in Mincing-lane achieved the gloom that was stealing over my feelings; and, as I paid the coachman the sum demanded (being only thrice the amount to which he was entitled), and asked a surly-looking porter who stood at the door to assist me in removing my luggage into the dwelling, I experienced a sadness and sense of isolation, to which I had been hitherto a stranger. Cold and formal was the reception given to me by the partners of the bank, to one of whom I presented a letter of introduction from Mr. Mortimer. They eyed me with scrutinising glances, then exchanged looks, in which little of approval was visible, and the effect of which was not calculated to exhilarate the depressed spirits of a stranger like myself.

"As you are probably fatigued by your journey, you can retire to the apartment prepared for you," said Mr. Allison, "and tomorrow you will enter on your duty. The porter will show you your room."

I felt thankful for permission to retire, and, bowing, hastened to avail myself of it; but my gratitude was diminished, when I saw that the hour of closing the bank had arrived, as all the clerks were withdrawing from their high stools, and hurrying away with an activity that denoted their satisfaction at being released from their daily uninteresting toil.

"I thought you were the new clerk, when you asked me to help you in with your trunk," said the porter, when I requested him to show me my room.

"You were never afore in Lunnun, I take it?"

"Never," answered I.

"I guessed as much, when I seed you give that there coachman three times more than his fare. You mustn't do that, for it's no use whatsomever being himposed on, and only gets a man laughed at."

"I thank you for your advice," replied I, and the civility with which I said so, made John Stebbings (who be it known to our readers had a passion for giving advice) my friend for life.

"You will find Mrs. Chatterton, the housekeeper, a very good and tidy woman; and, provided you keeps good hours, and is regular at meals, she will make you very comfortable," said John Stebbings, as he conducted me up stairs.

He opened the door of a very gloomy room, in which was a table laid for dinner; and, seated by the fire, a respectable looking elderly woman, with considerable remains of beauty, who, with spectacles on nose, was busily employed in knitting a stocking.

"Here be the new clerk, Mrs. Chatterton," said John Stebbings, raising his voice to a very loud key.

"What do you say, Mr. Stebbings?" answered the old dame, turning round leisurely.

"This here young gentleman be's the new clerk," repeated Stebbings, in the tone of a Stentor.

"Why don't you speak a little louder, Mr. Stebbings?—I never hear a word you say."

"Speak a little louder, indeed; why, hang me, if the old lady don't get deafer and deafer every day," and, approaching close to her ear, he bellowed rather than spoke—"This here be's the new clerk."

"Then, why couldn't you say so at first, Mr. Stebbings?"

"As if I didn't. Well, it surely is a great misfortune to be deaf. I wouldn't be deaf for all the world—that I wouldn't," said John Stebbings.

"How do you do, young gentleman?" said Mrs. Chatterton, civilly, and with a most benevolent smile: "your bedroom is prepared for you, and dinner will be served up in a few minutes. This way, if you please. What did you say your name was?"

"Richard Wallingford, ma'am."

"What?"

"Richard Wallingford, ma'am," and I spoke louder than I had ever spoken before.

"Speak a little louder, young man; it's very strange no one will speak loud enough at present to be heard. When I was young, everybody spoke loud enough."

"Ay, ay, I warrant me you weren't as deaf as a post then, as you are now," said John Stebbings, as he proceeded towards the door, with my trunk on his shoulders; and scarcely had he uttered the remark, when, coming in contact with a chair which he had not observed, and which had been left out of its place by Mrs. Chatterton, who had been winding cotton on its back, he stumbled over it, and fell to the ground, while the trunk, coming on a pile of plates placed before the fire, crashed them in pieces.

"Was there ever such a man?" said Mrs. Chatterton, "always breaking and falling over everything! Why can't you wear spectacles, John Stebbings? You're as blind as a bat, that you are; but you won't allow it—you're so obstinate."

"No more blinder than my neighbours," growled John Stebbings, "and not deaf into the bargain, as some of us be," and he began rubbing his leg, which had sustained some injury by its contact with the chair.

"Bless me! if he hasn't broken a dozen of plates. What will the *firm* say, when they see four shillings down again for plates?"

"I've broken my shin, and that's worse nor the plates," muttered Stebbings; "but that comes of putting chairs out in the middle of the room to throw people down."

"Here's a glass of cordial, it will do you good, Mr. Stebbings," and the old lady opened a cupboard, and poured out a glass of some liquid which she handed to Stebbings, who, nothing loth, drank to her good health, while she murmured—"Tis a pity he's so blind, poor man; I wish he would wear spectacles:" and he having emptied the glass of its contents, turned to me and remarked that "There was not a better-hearted woman alive than Mrs. Chat-
and it was a great pity she was so deaf."

CHAPTER II.

THE bed-chamber allotted to me, though small, and furnished in the most homely style, was clean, an agreeable fact which Mrs. Chatterton called on me to remark, as she installed me in it.

"Here is soap for you, young man,—good old brown Windsor soap. The firm allows a cake a month to each clerk, which is ample for those who are not so stupid as some are, who forget it in the wash-hand basin. Such people never come to much good; for how can a man take care of great things, who begins by forgetting small? Here is a chest of drawers for your clothes, and a boot-jack for your separate use. The firm are very liberal in allowing a boot-jack to each room. You are the only clerk who has a bed-chamber to himself; and, therefore, this boot-jack belongs exclusively to this room. I have had the initials of the firm cut on it, M. A. F.; it prevents mistake. I will leave you now, and order dinner to be served; in five minutes more it will be on the table. You will just have time to wash your hands, and smooth down your hair. Hold the candle, Mr. Stebbings, if you please, not so close to my cap, for fear of fire. I wish you would wear spectacles, indeed I do."

"And I, and every one else who knows you, wish that you would have a speaking-trumpet," muttered John Stebbings. "How droll it is she can find out that I can't see so well as I could forty years ago, but she can't discover that she is as deaf as a post."

The ringing of a bell announced that dinner was served before I had completed the arrangement of my hasty toilet; but I hurried to the room in which I had previously seen the table laid, and found that five clerks and Mrs. Chatterton had already taken their seats at it. A substantial piece of boiled beef and carrots smoked on the board; and a dish of potatoes flanked the opposite side.

"Gentlemen, this is Mr. Richard Wallingford, the new clerk," said Mrs. Chatterton, and each of the five clerks looked inquiringly at the new-comer, and nodded to me, but without speaking, their mouths being too full for speech. Mrs. Chatterton helped me to a substantial slice of beef, and added to it a supply of carrots that might have satisfied the most voracious appetite.

"Gentlemen, how do you like your fare?" demanded she; a needless question, as the avidity with which the huge slices disappeared from each plate save mine, bore ample testimony to the approval of the dinner. "I hope, young gentlemen, you like your beef? Our butcher is considered one of the best in Leadenhall-market, and my mode of having it boiled has always given the greatest satisfaction."

"You need not give yourself the trouble to scream yours^el^e"

hoarse by attempting to make the old lady hear," said a young man, whose dress, air, and manner indicated a desire of being considered a smart, if not a pretty man too, but whom nature had wholly unfitted for enacting the part.

"What does Mr. Bingly say?" asked Mrs. Chatterton, "something civil, I am sure." The simplicity and goodness indicated by the question set the table in a roar, while the said Mr. Bingly, moving his lips as if speaking, looked at Mrs. Chatterton as though he was addressing her, a piece of mockery that still more increased the laughter of the junior portion of the party.

"I see you are all laughing; and I dare say something pleasant has been said, but strange to say, I have only caught a word here and there in all Mr. Bingly has uttered. I wish people would speak a little louder. When I was young, every one spoke louder, and I never used to miss a word of what was said."

The beef and vegetables having been removed by a stout and active maiden who acted in the capacity of cook and parlour-maid, a huge wedge of Cheshire cheese, flanked by a foaming tankard of ale, was placed on the table, and the glasses of the party being filled from it, Mrs. Chatterton proposed the health of the firm.

"I have drunk this same toast, young gentleman, for forty years, and make a point that it should be drank here every day. And a good right we have to drink the health of the firm, for there is not a better in the city of London."

Mr. Bingly now taking his glass in hand, looked respectfully at Mrs. Chatterton, and bowing his head to her, gravely said—"I heartily wish, old Mother Chatterbox, that you, and your everlasting pieces of beef and dry cheese, only fit to bait mouse-traps with, were far away," and he raised the glass of ale to his lips.

"Thank you, Mr. Bingly, you are always polite, I must say," and elevating the glass to her mouth, "I wish you the same."

The happiest repartee ever uttered by a wit, never produced more laughter than did the answer of Mrs. Chatterton, who again expressed her desire that people would speak as loud as they did when she was young. Of the four other clerks seated round the board, two were elderly men, of grave and reserved manners, and two were about the age of Mr. Bingly, whose style of dress and behaviour they evidently emulated. They waited to see whether he would patronise the new comer, before they extended any encouragement to me, while the two elderly clerks seemed scarcely conscious of my presence.

"I am for the play," said Mr. Bingly, "if you like to go, Mr. — what did you say your name was?"

"Wallingford," answered I.

"I'll conduct you."

"I am obliged to you, but I prefer remaining at home."

"You are right, young man,—yes, quite right," observed the two elderly clerks, and they looked graciously at me.

"What! not desire to see Miss Tree, and Kean, or Miss Helen Faucit and Macready? 'Pon my soul! the acting of these great stars quite electrifies me. They are fine creatures."

"What do you think of the acting in the early scenes, Bingly?" asked one of the elderly clerks.

"Think! why very fine, monstrous fine to be sure, but why do you ask?"

"Because as you only go at the half-price, I thought it likely you may never have seen them."

A laugh on the part of Bingly's imitators followed this remark.

"If I were you, I would for once put together the sums for two admissions of half-price, and see the whole piece, if only just for the novelty of the thing."

"Ha, ha! not so bad, 'pon my soul, not so bad!" and Bingly affected to laugh.

The table being now cleared, I rose to seek my bed-room, for the purpose of arranging my clothes and books, and having placed them in order, and written a letter to my friend Percy Mortimer, I returned to the sitting-room, where I found the two elderly clerks busily engaged in a game of chess, Mrs. Chatterton knitting, and two of the young men occupied in reading two well-thumbed and soiled novels, from the next circulating library. Mr. Bingly had gone out.

"If you wish to converse, Mr. Wallingford," said Mrs. Chatterton, "I will have great pleasure in a little sociable chat with you; but I must beg of you to speak louder."

A suppressed titter from the young men marked that they were not so deeply interested in the novels they were perusing, as not to be aware of what was going on in the room.

"You see Mr. Murdoch and Mr. Burton," continued Mrs. Chatterton, "playing chess at the same table, and on the same board where they have played for the last forty years. Night after night there they are, never weary. I wonder they can go on for so many years without being tired of it."

"Well, that's a good 'un, however," said one of the young men, "when here has she been knitting stockings, day after day, and night after night, for nearly as long a period as they have played chess; yet she wonders they can be amused with their game."

"It is wonderful how time flies," resumed Mrs. Chatterton; "and so I often think, when I look over and see Mr. Murdoch and Mr. Burton seated in the same spot, and engaged in the same amusement year after year; and, would you believe it, Mr. Wallingford, it sometimes seems to me as if it was impossible that it could be thirty-five years since I first saw them sitting there, everything appears so exactly the same,—except that people don't speak so loud? When we always do the same things, and at the same hours, it makes the time pass quite pleasantly, though I can't get Mr. Bingly to think so. Ah, well! he'll come to my opinion when

he grows older,—that he will. Doing the same thing at the same hours, keeps people young much longer, I can tell you. Why, I declare, except that Mr. Murdoch has lost all his hair, and his front teeth, and is grown so very corpulent, I don't see much change in him; and, as for Mr. Burton, only that he wears that light-coloured wig, instead of having his head nearly bald, as it was when I first saw him, and his having lost his flesh and got lame, he is just the same man he used to be thirty-five years ago. I, too, am very little changed. Indeed, my friends tell me they don't see the least alteration, which shows what a fine thing it is to be always doing the same thing. Up at six in the summer, and seven in the winter—off to Leadenhall-market thrice a week in winter, and every day in summer, by eight in the morning; home by nine—breakfast on the table by five minutes after. In the kitchen to look about dinner at ten—see the rooms are perfectly cleaned at half-past ten—scold Kitty. Look over the linen at eleven, repair whatever may require mending. Read the *Morning Post* at twelve, and at one o'clock sit down comfortably to my knitting. At two, Kitty brings me a mouthful of cold meat, a slice of bread, and a glass of beer; and, at half-past two, I take up my knitting again until dinner time, after which the evening passes just the same as you see. O! it's a great blessing to have the time pass so pleasantly,—isn't it, Mr. Richard? I dare say you were very sorry to leave your village, because you knew every face and step around the place, and every one knew you? Now, the city of London seems to me to be *my* village. I know every shop, and every owner of a shop, from Mincing-lane to Leadenhall-market—ay, and in the market too, I know most of the folk, and they know me: and you could not feel more strange in the streets to-morrow, than I should were I to find myself in the village where I was born."

"He's fairly in for it," said one of the young clerks to the other. "I'll be blessed if she aint coming to her visit to her native village: you'll see she'll tell him the whole story."

"He'll never be such a spoony as to sit listening to it," answered the other.

"But you heard nearly the half of it."

"Ay, that was because I was a stranger, and not up to the old girl's long yarns."

"You were a stranger, and she took you in," whispered the other, loud enough to be heard by me, who felt somewhat abashed at finding myself considered as a victim to the garrulous Mrs. Chatterton, although the evident good-nature of the old lady induced me to lend her, what it was plain she received as a compliment, a patient hearing. Tea being now served by the active Kitty, who, with it, brought a supply of buttered muffins, that might have satiated the appetite of a Dando; Mrs. Chatterton busied herself in pouring out the "beverage that cheers, but not inebriates," the steams of which sent up a grateful odour. Even the chess-players

left their game, and Messrs. Thomas and Wilson, their well-thumbed novels, to partake this evening repast ; and when I saw the rapidity with which muffin after muffin disappeared; and cup after cup was replenished, I no longer felt surprised at the copious supply provided by the indefatigable Kitty. At half-past ten o'clock, the party retired to their separate chambers, but not before Mrs. Chatterton reminded me, that at five minutes after nine, breakfast would be on the table.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN I awoke the next morning, I was surprised to find, on opening my window, that a dense yellow fog precluded the possibility of seeing any object from it, save a few tall chimneys crowned by lurid-coloured, conical-shaped pots, rising from the mis-shapen roofs of the adjacent houses. Nothing could be more gloomy than the prospect of this "darkness visible," offering a dreary contrast to the wide-stretching domain of Oak Park, with its huge old trees, beneath which the deer loved to nestle; and the sleek cows and snowy fleeced sheep cropped their daily food. The density of the atmosphere impeded the freedom of my respiration, and damped the natural tone of cheerfulness of my mind, but I soon reasoned myself into better spirits; and when I entered the eating-room, received the matinal greetings of Mrs. Chatterton, with assumed if not real cheerfulness.

"What weather! there never was anything like it," said Mr. Murdoch.

"So you have said every similar day for the last thirty-five years, and we have had many such days," replied Mr. Burton.

"Would you believe it, I was obliged to pay a link-boy to light me home last night?" observed Mr. Bingly; "and in the theatre, the fog was so thick that one could not see across the house."

"You are finding fault with the butter again, Mr. Bingly," said Mrs. Chatterton, "but it's no use, there is no better to be had at present, I can tell you."

"Not I," answered Mr. Bingly, "I'm tired of finding fault. I really believe the old woman's nose is as blunt to the sense of smelling as her ears are to that of hearing; for if she *could* smell, we should not have such stuff as this," pointing to the pat of butter to which he had helped himself.

Messrs. Thomas and Wilson were too busily occupied in discussing the toast, and washing it down with large cups of tea, to join in the remarks, rather than conversation, of the other clerks.

At length, the morning meal being concluded, and Mr. Murdoch

having looked at his huge silver watch (which resembled a turnip in form and size), he announced that the moment was arrived for entering the office, to which he led the way. The apartment was of considerable dimensions, and along it was ranged a long line of counters, with desks, before which stood high stools, waiting their daily occupants. Mr. Murdoch pointed out the one designed for me, and I seated myself before a huge ledger open on the desk, while that grave functionary explained to me the duties I was expected to discharge. Lamps were lighted through the apartment, but even with the aid supplied by them, it was still gloomy and dingy, the lurid flame casting its dull light over the countenances of the clerks seated at the desks, and on those who kept continually making their entries and exits, as well as on the heaps of golden coin, which the cashier was serving out with a sort of shovel, to meet the demands of the several busy-looking men, who presented checks to him. Every one appeared intent on business; even Bingly seemed to forget the pleasures of half-price attendance at the theatre; Thomas and Wilson looked as if they never had devoted an evening to a novel; and Murdoch and Burton forgot the fascination of chess, while, with spectacles on nose, they looked over unwieldy books, and made entries in them.

At ten o'clock the partners, or the *firm*, as Mrs. Chatterton loved to designate them, took their station in an inner room, each seated before a desk, and deeply interested in the perusal of the morning papers. Into this sanctum only the privileged customers of the house were admitted; and a tolerably accurate guess of the state of his banking-book might be made, from the coldness or cordiality with which each visitor was greeted, as well as by the politeness or *brusquerie* of the individual himself.

Though a novice, I was soon enabled to form a conclusion that the civilest, best dressed, and most gentlemanlike-looking men, were not those who received the most attention from the Messrs. Allison and Finsbury; and that these gentlemen, in turn, were treated with much less politeness by certain plainly-dressed, stern-looking men, chiefly of the ages of from fifty to sixty, who walked unceremoniously into the sanctum, excluded the view of the fire from the partners, by standing with their backs turned to it—and kept their hats on, according to English practice.

The creaking of the ever-opening door, the hum of voices, the frequent coughs, and still more frequent half-suppressed yawns and sneezes, the rattling of money, and the sounds of a multiplicity of pens scratching the paper they were inditing, never ceased for a moment, while, from a distance, came the mingled noises peculiar to the eastern portion of the modern Babylon, all of which produced a sensation of dulness and drowsiness on my spirits, that I felt it difficult to repel.

At five o'clock came the accustomed reprieve, and gladly did I welcome it, though the society assembled in Mrs. Chatterton's room

offered little to interest or amuse me. The dinner table presented precisely the same aspect as on the previous day, the only difference being, that a voluminous leg of boiled mutton usurped the place previously assigned to the beef.

Dinner being concluded, I sought the privacy of my chamber, for the purpose of writing to my benefactor, Mr. Mortimer, and also to my father. So great and sudden had been the change in my mode of life within the last forty-eight hours, that I felt as if weeks, nay months, had elapsed since I had left the country. All was new and strange to me, while the habits of those among whom I found myself thrown, seemed to be as little changed by my presence, as if a new piece of furniture, instead of a new companion, had been introduced into the chamber.

There was something dispiriting in the consciousness of this indifference—a consciousness experienced more or less by every individual on first entering a circle of strangers, but more especially a circle of strangers, but more especially a circle in which the politeness and good-breeding peculiar to polished society is not known, and the absence of which leaves the natural egotism of men more openly exposed. I gave a sigh to the recollection of my late happy home, and remembered, with a lively sense of gratitude, the cordial kindness ever extended towards me by Percy Mortimer. A summons to tea interrupted the pensive reverie in which, after having sealed my letters, I indulged.

The large, well ventilated, and comfortable apartment, surrounded with well-filled book-cases, in which my friend Percy, his preceptor and myself, were wont to pursue our studies, was brought before my mind's eye. The pleasant conversation that followed our readings, and the observations that illustrated them, recurred vividly to my memory, and when the knock at my door recalled me to the actual present, the contrast it presented saddened me.

The evening meal being despatched, and the inmates of Mrs. Chatterton's apartment having resumed their usual occupations, I felt as wholly alone as if I were the sole occupant. But I was not long suffered to remain in the state of abstraction into which I had fallen; for, with the good-nature peculiar to women, and which even in the humble class to which Mrs. Chatterton appertained, is seldom lost sight of, that good person, looking up from her interminable knitting, beckoned me to draw nearer to her side.

"You seem mopish like, Mr. Richard," said she. "And no wonder. Ah! I can feel for you, that I can, at finding yourself among total strangers. Every one experiences this at first, but some how or other, one gets used to it at last; and then (though you will hardly believe this at present) one gets so accustomed to the place and people with whom one lives, that when one goes back to where one spent one's youthful days, it seems more strange than the place one left."

"He's in for it, I'll be blessed if he ain't!" said Wilson to

Thomas, in a voice audible to every individual in the room, except the deaf Mrs. Chatterton.

"Yes, I give him joy of the long story," answered Thomas, and both tittered as they resumed their well-thumbed novels.

"Well, Mr. Richard, I wasn't always as you see me now," said Mrs. Chatterton, clearing her throat in a manner that indicated a preparation for a long story. "No, Mr. Richard; I was as brisk and lively a girl as you'd see in a day's walk, and in our village of Buttermuth—did you ever hear of Buttermuth, in Hertfordshire?"

A nod of dissent on my part supplied the place of words.

"Well, I'm sure I wonder it is not more generally known—folk used to say that there was not many girls like Lucy Mildred. My name was Lucy Mildred before I married, for I was called after my grand-aunt, as good a woman as could be found in all Hertfordshire. I always loved Buttermuth, and every tree and hedge in it, as if they were living creatures. Ay, Mr. Richard! and I loved the people too, even old cross Dame Parsons, as she used to be called, who never allowed a single creature to come within reach of her, without giving him or her advice. Often and often used she to stop me to tell me what to do, and what to leave undone; and sure enough it was very tiresome, especially when I was in a hurry; and most of the young folk used to run away from her, and tell her to keep her lectures for the long days, but I never did so, but used to wait patiently and thank her, though I thought that she must have nothing to amuse her, or she would not pass all her time in giving advice, moreover when so few would listen, and still fewer would follow it. There couldn't be a merrier girl than I was, when just as I turned nineteen, my mother got a letter from a sister she had in London, saying that her husband having died, and she having no children, and she being well to do in the world like, she wished to have one of her nieces sent up to keep her company. Betsy, my eldest sister, had been some time married, so she could not go, and Sarah was engaged to be married in a few months, so father and mother thought it best to send *me*, though the notion of parting with me made them very sad. From the moment I heard I was to go, I became fonder of my father, mother, and sisters, than ever I had been before, though, God knows, I always loved them dearly; and as for the place, I looked on every tree and flower with regret, for I thought I'd be far away when the leaves were falling, and that I couldn't be there to rejoice when they came out fresh and beautiful again in the spring. The very birds seemed like friends; and many a tear I shed when I bade good-bye to those I had known since I was born, but above all, to my parents and sisters. When I took leave of Dame Parsons, she blessed me. 'You were always a good girl, Lucy Mildred,' said she, 'and were never in a hurry, like all the other foolish girls in the village, who never will wait to hear a word of advice. Take this guinea, and with it my counsel never to do anything in haste——'"

"The old un has attended to the counsel," said Wilson.

“ ‘ Always listen to your elders, and never think you don't want advice.’ ”

“ I'd have filled the coach had I put into it all the presents that were made me by the neighbours—cakes, oranges, apples, pin-cushions, purses, and ribbons,—but I'm anticipating my departure.

“ When I awoke the morning I was to leave home—I had cried myself to sleep the night before—and heard the cock crowing, and thought that I should no more be awakened by the sound, I began to weep afresh ; and when I looked on Sarah, who was asleep by my side, and saw the tears were still on her eye-lashes, I felt as if my heart would break. And the bright daylight was shining through the white dimity curtains, and the dew was sparkling on the honeysuckle and roses that grew against the casement, and the old walnut-tree chest of drawers, that I had so often rubbed, looked as polished as Mr. Bingly's boots—oh ! I felt a love even to the poor old furniture, every article of which, even now though fifty-six years are passed since then, appeared to me as dear friends, from whom it was pain to part. The sobs I could not restrain, awoke Sarah. For a moment she looked surprised ; but then came the recollection that we were to part, and she fell on my shoulder and wept.

“ ‘ How I should like, dear sister,’ said she, ‘ to see the chamber in which you are to sleep in your new home—the bed, the pattern of the paper, the curtains, and even the tables, chairs, and chest of drawers—for then I could fancy everything about and around you. You will know at certain hours that I am in our old room, thinking of you, looking at all the objects familiar to our eyes since we were little children, all of which will remind me of you, and this is some comfort ; but until you write me every particular about your room, I shan't know how to picture you to myself in your new abode,’ and poor Sarah's tears broke out afresh. ‘ But there is one way, dear sister,’ said she, ‘ by which we can be together, in spirit at least, and that is by kneeling down, night and morning, at the same hour to pray, as we have been used to do from our infancy. Promise me that you will never forget to do this, for it will be my greatest consolation when you are far away.’ ”

“ I promised, and we knelt down that moment and prayed ; and, though the tears streamed down our cheeks, we felt consoled. Prayers are blessed things, Mr. Richard, for young and old. They often comforted me in my youth ; and now, when age has laid its heavy hand on me, they lighten my spirits.”

“ What a spoony the fellow must be,” whispered Wilson to Thomas, “ to listen to old Mother Chatterton's twaddle.”

“ Ay, ay, but he'll soon be too wise for that,” answered Thomas.

“ Yes, Mr. Richard,” resumed the old woman, “ prayers are indeed blessed things, for they lead our minds to the absent, to the dead ; and those we have mourned for do not seem *quite* lost : it is while we are praying for them that we have the liveliest hope of meeting them again.”

CHAPTER IV.

"BUT to go back to my story," resumed Mrs. Chatterton, the next evening.—"At last the stage-coach stopped at the Black Bear, which was but a short distance from our cottage, and the horn sounded to tell us we must part, and we all arose, and embraced each other over and over again, and my mother and sisters accompanied me to the coach-office. How many times did my poor mother tell the coachman and the guard to take care of me; though sister Betsy expressed her wonder at such fears, and declared that *she* would be very glad to undertake such a journey of twice the length, and by herself; for what could happen in a good stage-coach, and with a steady driver? Betsy was always a very different person from Sarah, and not half so much liked by the family; neither did she show much affection to any of us, being wholly taken up with her husband, and a slave to her love of good eating.

"How anxiously my dear mother looked at the three passengers who were already seated in the coach, and expressed her hopes that they would be kind to her poor child. Many of the neighbours came to see me off, and each brought some little token of regard. My mother and sisters clasped me in their arms by turns, until the guard hurried me into the coach, and in a minute more it rattled off, while I stretched forth my head from the window, and saw the dear ones I had left, standing on the same spot, weeping bitterly. Is it not strange, Mr. Richard, that I can remember that moment as well as if it happened an hour ago, though many things that only occurred a few years back have escaped my recollection? Is it not strange?

"'Don't take on so, young woman,' said an old man with a sour face, and wearing spectacles, who was seated opposite to me; 'it's no use whatsoever to cry, for it will be all the same in a hundred years hence.'

"'Let her have her cry out, it will do her good,' remarked an elderly woman at my side; 'it's only the youthful that can shed tears so freely; and a time will come, when this poor young thing may wish to be able to cry as she does now.'

"'For my part, I can't see the good of crying,' observed a young man who had a pale face and weak eyes; 'if people leave old friends, they must hope to find new ones; and, to my thinking, new friends are much the pleasantest.'

"'You'll not think so when you have lived longer in the world,' answered the old woman.

"'There you happen to be wrong,' said the young man flip-

pantly, 'for I have lived more in the world, though not half so long, as you have.'

" 'It's to be hoped you have profited by it,' replied the old woman.

" 'It will be all the same in a hundred years hence,' rejoined the old man.

" 'It will *not* be all the same, and a man of your years should not put such heathenish notions into the heads of young people,' said the old woman, somewhat angrily.

" 'And what notions pray, would *you* think it right to put into their heads instead?' asked the man with spectacles.

" 'Ay, ma'am, tell us that?' asked the young man.

" 'I would put into the heads of the youthful, that on their own good or evil conduct, depends what their fate will be here and hereafter.'

" 'I thought as much,' answered the young man, superciliously.

" 'I hope you will always think so,' said the old woman.

" 'But, if I should not?'

" 'Why, then, it will be all the same in a hundred years hence,' rejoined the old man.

"The elderly woman was about to enter into a discussion on this point, when the coach stopped at an alehouse to take up a parcel, and she instantly forgot her desire of refuting the opinions of her adversary, and asked for a glass of water, which she kindly put to my lips, saying, 'Drink this, my dear, it will do you good.'

"There was something so motherly in the action, and in the mode of it, that it recalled similar acts of kindness often experienced from my own mother, and brought the tears afresh to my eyes; but I no longer felt so strange and deserted like as before, now that one of my own sex, and a respectable looking woman too, seemed to take such an interest in me.

" 'You'll soon forget the country, when you have once seen what a delightful place Lunnon is,' said the young man. 'I can't bear being out of it long, though I do make the folk stare when I go home into the country,' and he looked complacently at his dress. 'How they do examine the cut of my clothes, and the shape of my hat, when I go to church.'

" 'More shame for them,' remarked the elderly woman, 'for when people go to the house of God, they ought to think of other matters than dress, and such like foolish things.'

" 'It will be all the same in a hundred years hence,' observed the old man.

" 'No, it will *not* be all the same,' said the elderly woman, angrily, 'and you may find it won't be, to your cost; you ought not to put such thoughts into the heads of young people, if you are so weak as to entertain them yourself.'

" 'Weak!' reiterated the old man, 'what do you call weak? I am a philosopher—a freethinker.'

“ ‘I’m sorry for you,’ said my new acquaintance, sighing deeply ; ‘but I suspected as much. Then you are weak indeed ! God bring you to a better state of mind.’

“ ‘I’m a bit of a freethinker myself,’ said the young man, and he pulled up the collars of his shirt, conceitedly.

“ ‘Do you know what a freethinker means?’ demanded the old woman.

“ ‘To be sure I do—ha ! ha ! ha ! know what it means, indeed ; that’s a good idea. Why, it means a person who is not afraid of doing or saying what he thinks fit ; in short, it is—it is a sort of a philosopher, as this gentleman very properly explained.’

“ ‘I’ll tell you what *I* think it means,’ replied the elderly woman. ‘A poor weak vain mortal, who not having sufficient understanding to comprehend the greatness and goodness of God, doubts or denies *his* power.’

“ ‘You think, then, that I shall suffer hereafter for my free-thinking?’ asked the young man, with a contemptuous smile.

“ ‘I judge not, lest I be judged,’ answered the old woman ; ‘but I believe, that if not hereafter, you will suffer on earth, for as you cannot expect to escape from the trials and sorrows to which all are born, what consolation can you hope for them, or where look for patience to support them, if you disbelieve in a future state—a state where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest?’

“ ‘It will be all the same in a hundred years hence, that is my consolation,’ said the old man.

“ ‘Yes, it will be all the same in a hundred years hence,’ repeated the young man. At this moment we became suddenly sensible that the coach was moving with a frightful velocity, and, as we were descending a very steep hill, we all became apprehensive of danger—‘O Lord ! O Lord ! we shall be killed,’ exclaimed the young man, his face growing ghastly from the force of terror ; the old man grasped the holder at the side of the coach and clung convulsively to it, his countenance expressing all the agony of fear, while the old woman fervently recommended herself to the protection of heaven. We had nearly reached the bottom of the steep hill, when the coach was overturned, and I lost all consciousness of what occurred, until I found myself on the road-side, supported by a woman, who was applying cold water to my face and temples, from which blood was streaming, occasioned by some cuts from the shattered glass of the coach-window, with which it had come violently in contact. The old man was extended on the ground, groaning from the pain of a broken leg ; the young one was bemoaning the fracture of his left arm ; and the elderly woman, who had dislocated her wrist, and was severely bruised, was returning thanks to God for having escaped so well.

“ ‘My leg ! my leg !’ exclaimed the old man. ‘I’m sure it is

broken in two or three places. Never was there anything like the pain I suffer.'

" 'My arm is much worse,' groaned the young man. 'No one can have an idea of the excruciating torture I endure.'

" 'Let us thank the Almighty that we have escaped with our lives,' said the old woman.

" 'Thank God, indeed,' murmured the would-be philosopher, 'for a broken leg.'

" 'Yes, and for a broken arm,' added the young man; 'I see nothing to be thankful for.'

" 'Can you not be consoled by the reflection that it will be all the same in a hundred years hence?' asked the old woman, somewhat sarcastically. 'This is the consolation of philosophy, is it? just what I thought. It enables you to mock religion, and the dependence on Providence which it inspires, but it cannot teach you to support pain, notwithstanding your constant boast, that it will be all the same in a hundred years hence.'

" 'Get me conveyed to the next inn as speedily as possible, and despatch some one for a surgeon,' said the would-be philosopher, writhing with pain, and turning from the calm, but searching glance of the old woman.

" 'Yes, take us to the next inn as quick as you can,' rejoined the young man. 'You can have no idea what my sufferings are, and some people,' and he looked angrily at the old woman, 'are so spiteful, that they have no pity for other people when they have had their precious limbs broken.'

" 'You wrong me, for I see you allude to me,' observed the old lady; 'gladly would I afford you any relief in my power, but I wished you to become sensible of the weakness, as well as wickedness of the principle avowed by our fellow-traveller.'

" 'Don't mind her, let her talk on; it will be all the same in a hundred years hence.—Oh! my leg, my leg, will no one support my leg?'

" 'I will,' said the old woman, and she extended the only hand which the accident permitted her to use, and with the utmost gentleness and tenderness, supported the shattered limb, while four men placed the groaning freethinker on a door, in order to remove him to the inn. A surgeon was called in, and the old woman refused to allow him to examine her wrist, until he had set the fractured limbs of her fellow-travellers.

" 'We pursued our journey to London alone, the two men being unable to proceed, and the rest of the route passed without accident, the excellent old lady giving me the best advice, and a cordial invitation to visit her in Gracechurch-street, where she resided. She took me in a coach to my aunt's dwelling, for my relation having waited herself at the coach office for nearly an hour in expectation of my arrival, had returned to her home, leaving instructions for me to follow her in a hackney-coach; but my new friend would

not trust me alone, so took me herself to my aunt's, into whose arms she confided me, promising to pay me a visit in a few days."

"Now comes the history of the London adventures," said Wilson to Thomas, "was there ever such a proser in the world as Mother Chatterton?"

"What did you say, Mr. Wilson?" asked the old dame.

"I said," answered Wilson, speaking as loud as he could, "that I could listen for ever to your story, it is so very entertaining," and he thrust his tongue into his cheek, and winked at Thomas.

"'Tis very kind of you, I'm sure, to think so," replied Mrs. Chatterton, with a look of the utmost complacency.

"I hope you'll not leave out a single circumstance that took place after your arrival in London," said Thomas, slyly; "for it would be a pity for Mr. Wallingford to miss anything in such a lively story."

"Indeed you are too flattering, Mr. Thomas. I was afraid you would be tired of hearing it."

"Never, Mrs. Chatterton, never. It's much more amusing than the history of Clarissa Harlowe. Why, you have not told it to us more than eight or nine times. Do you remember, Wilson, how often she has set us to sleep with it?" The last remark was uttered in a low tone of voice.

"Bless me! it's nearly twelve o'clock," observed Mrs. Chatterton. "Well, how time flies! I did not think it was so late;"—and having rang for the maid, who officiated in the various services of cook and parlour-maid, she retired to her chamber, civilly wishing good-night to her companions.

"I do not wonder at your looking tired," said Wilson, "for the old woman's story is enough to set any one to sleep: I am surprised you can listen to it."

"You would find it much more amusing to read a novel," said Thomas, "and you could, moreover, close it when you were tired, which can't be done with Mrs. Chatterton's clapper."

"Mrs. Chatterton is an excellent and kind-hearted woman," observed Mr. Burton, who had that moment won his party at chess, and was consequently in unusual good humour: "yes, Mrs. Chatterton is a highly respectable person, and merits the attention which Mr. Wallingford shows her—ay, and which reflects credit on him," resumed Mr. Burton.

CHAPTER V.

ONE day so exactly resembled another in the domicile in which I now found myself, that I felt disposed to acknowledge the truth of Mrs. Chatterton's observation on the effect of a monotonous routine of existence. My mind became sobered down to it; and I could have fancied that I had been weeks, nay, months, instead of days, an inhabitant in the dingy mansion in Mincing-lane. In the evening Mrs. Chatterton resumed her drowsy reminiscences, to which I listened with a patience, if not with an interest, that won her regard. Letters from Percy Mortimer proved, that, amidst the occupations and amusements of his college life, he had not forgotten his humble friend, to whom, with all the frankness peculiar to his nature, he poured out his feelings as unaffectedly as when we rambled together through the park, at that pleasant home to which my thoughts so often reverted.

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Chatterton, next evening, taking up her knitting and narrative together, "we left off my story at the point of my arrival in London. My aunt's reception was less cordial and affectionate than I had anticipated; and this coldness made me think still more frequently of those dear relations whom I had left behind. I was continually dreaming of them, and pining for the green fields, and the songs of the birds, the fresh air that used to stir my hair and make my brow feel so cool, but above all, for my mother and Sarah. My aunt cared nothing about the country, and had no pleasure in talking of it, which prevented me from opening my heart to her, so I felt so solitary that I could not reconcile myself to my new abode. It's a sad thing, Mr. Richard, to live with those who have no interest about what one is always thinking of, and to be obliged to keep one's thoughts locked up in one's own heart, when one is longing to be able to tell them to those who could sympathise with us.

"Mrs. Elrington, for that was the name of my female fellow-traveller in the coach, came often to see me, and my aunt allowed me sometimes to go and spend an evening with her. There I met a young man, her nephew, who was a clerk in the firm of Mortimer, Allison, and Finsbury, and who always spent the Sabbath with her. He was the handsomest young man I had ever seen; had eyes as dark as a sloe, but so mild withal, that his glances moved me whenever—and it was very often—I found his eyes fixed on mine. His hair was a bright glossy brown, and curled beautifully; and his teeth were for all the world like newly-blanchéd almonds. Then he had a voice so musical, the tones of it still dwell in my ears as fresh as if heard only an hour ago.

“Well, well,” and Mrs. Chatterton wiped her eyes, “it is strange I never can speak of him without tears. This fine young man, Mr. Richard, soon began to think that his aunt’s house was never so pleasant as when I was in it, yet he loved her as tenderly as if she were his own mother. He remarked how my heart yearned for the country, and would continually draw me out to speak of it. He took a lively interest in all I told him about our garden at home, and the flowers that filled it; and this made me like him all the better. Then his aunt used to tell me how kind and attentive he was to her, and what a good husband she was sure he would make; and I began to think so too, though still I maintained a maidenly reserve with him, because I had often heard my mother say that a young girl ought never to let a man know that she liked him, until he had made an offer of marriage. One day, it was my birthday, he brought me a present; and that gift, though it was but a trifling one, gave me more pleasure than any I had ever received before. It was a flower-pot, with a fine double wall-flower in it. No! Mr. Richard, I’ll never forget the effect produced on my mind and heart by that wall-flower. From that moment to this I have never smelt a wall-flower without thinking of him; and though he has been above thirty-five years in his grave, the perfume of it brings him back to my memory, as fresh as if we only parted yesterday. He had heard me say how much I liked a large wall-flower close to my bed-room window at home, and was it not thoughtful of him to remember it? Another thing was strange—which was, that from the day he gave me that wall-flower, it seemed as if he was one of those dear ones at home, for I could not think of them without his being mingled with my thoughts; and, as I was continually thinking of them, so he too was constantly in my mind—I watered my wall-flower, and watched it as never flower was watched before. I used to wash off the black spots that were continually falling on it, and almost weep that it should be so disfigured. Oh! the odour of that poor flower changed the whole place; for when it stood on my window-sill, and that a little gleam of sunshine used to penetrate between the chimneys and slanting roofs of the adjoining houses, I used to forget how dreary and dingy was the aspect of the spot, and was carried back in imagination to the garden at home by the perfume of my poor wall-flower. I used to sit thinking of my mother and of Sarah; ay, and to tell the truth, of *him*, too, who gave it to me, whenever I could find time.

“My aunt was a little disposed to jealousy, and soon began to think that I liked Mrs. Elrington better than herself. She found many excuses for preventing me from going to see her half so often as I was invited; and whenever Mrs. Elrington mentioned her nephew, which she often did, and always with praise, my aunt would shake her head, and say, she was sure he was like all other young men, no wiser or better than he should be. This used to hurt poor Mrs. Elrington’s feelings very much, but mine still more;

and I felt my cheeks burn while my aunt was railing against young men in general; but especially against those amongst them who were spoilt by doting mothers or aunts.

“Mrs. Elrington, too, though a most estimable woman, had always a great desire of correcting the opinions of those she conversed with, and would often find fault with those of my aunt, who, having a high opinion of her own wisdom, could ill brook having it called in question. By degrees a coolness grew between the two old ladies—Mrs. Elrington used to say, that Mrs. Appleshaw was an uncharitable woman, who thought ill of every one; and my aunt used to say that Mrs. Elrington was half a methodist, and much addicted to correcting those who were much wiser than herself.

“Though I saw Mrs. Elrington’s nephew much less frequently than during the first year of our acquaintance, I thought of him every day more and more; and he, too, felt similarly, and used to tell me so whenever, and it was but seldom, he could snatch a moment to whisper to me, when his aunt or mine were looking another way.

“At length, one day Mrs. Elrington came to my aunt’s house. The moment she entered I guessed there was something more than common in the visit, for she wore her best cloak, bonnet, and gown. She said she wished to speak alone with my aunt, who told me to go up to my room. How my heart beat, and how my cheeks burned; I counted every minute, and long enough they seemed, until, after having waited an hour or so, I heard Mrs. Elrington go away; but as I was not called down, I remained in my room until dinner was ready. My aunt’s face was very red, which boded no good, as it always denoted that she was in an ill-humour. The meal passed nearly in silence, but she carved the joint of meat before her with an air of impatience, found fault with the maid who waited on us, helped me as if she would have rather not, and gave nothing to her favourite cat.

“No sooner was dinner cleared away than she looked at me with a stern glance, and asked me if I knew what brought Mrs. Elrington to her house that day? I answered that I did not; upon which she said, ‘that the impudence of some people was surprising, when a poor clerk in a banking-house proposed to marry *her* niece; and his aunt, forsooth, thought him entitled to do so—nay, more, came herself to make the offer.’

“You might have knocked me down with a feather, so overcome was I by this news. I trembled at my aunt’s anger, grieved that she should think the proposal presumptuous; but, nevertheless, the joy of knowing that I was *indeed* beloved, and sought by the man who occupied so much of my thoughts, was uppermost in my mind.

“‘Why, how is this?’ said my aunt, ‘you don’t seem the least surprised or vexed at the folly of that stupid Mrs. Elrington, or her blockhead of a nephew!’

“Think, Mr. Richard, of her calling Henry a blockhead! ‘Indeed aunt,’ said I, ‘that is to say—I don’t know whether—I mean—that perhaps——’

“‘The girl is positively crazy!’ interrupted my aunt. ‘What does all this mean? You don’t know—that is, you *do* know, and probably authorised this piece of impudence.’

“‘Indeed, aunt,’ said I—but I could get no further, for my tears flowed so fast I could not speak.

“‘What is the girl crying about?’ asked she; ‘I suppose the next thing you will tell me is, that you are in love, as they call it, with this silly young chap? It’s no use crying, I can tell you, for I will have no niece of mine making a fool of herself. I never was in love, and why should you be, I should like to know? Handsome is that handsome does. If this stupid young man had a comfortable independence to support you, and leave you free from want at his death, you might be in love as much as you like, for then you would have some excuse for liking him; but a poor clerk, forsooth, I never heard of such a thing!’

“The thoughts conjured up in my mind by the notion of the death of the man I loved—for the probability of so sad an event I had never for a moment previously contemplated—made my tears flow with increased bitterness.

“‘You may cry until you are tired,’ said my aunt, angrily, ‘but you shan’t make a fool of me, I can tell you. You shall not see this silly young man, or his old fool of an aunt, any more, if I can help it; for I won’t have a niece of mine to come on the parish when she is left a widow, with perhaps half a dozen troublesome ugly little children to look after.’

“‘But, dear aunt,’ said I, though I trembled so much I could scarcely speak, ‘*he* may not die before me; he is healthy, aunt.’

“‘Don’t talk nonsense, child; every woman who has common sense should look forward to the death of her husband: ay, and prepare for it before she marries. I did so, and insisted on having a comfortable provision before I consented to wed Mr. Appleshaw. If you *are* determined to fall in love, which I now begin to believe, let *me* choose the man; though even then you would act more wisely by not falling in love, for men take advantage when girls are such fools as to like them, and always make a poorer provision for them.’

“‘But I know, aunt, I could not live if I had the misfortune to lose a husband I loved.’

“‘Fiddle-de-dee! don’t tell me any such nonsense. Live, indeed! as if grief ever killed any one. You are a silly girl, and know nothing of the world. Listen to my advice, and you will profit by adopting it. Never think of any man who cannot leave you a comfortable provision. There is old Mr. Dobson round the corner, who is as rich as a Jew, I have noticed him looking at you

very often as if he admired you. *He* would make an excellent match; or there is Mr. Milderton, who keeps the tobacconist's shop in Bishopsgate-street, and who could settle a good round sum on you. In case you marry him, you need not change the mark on your clothes, as the M. will still serve, and this will save a good deal of trouble.'

"The recollection of the odour of my poor wall-flower, brought in opposition to the nauseous smell of the tobacconist's shop, and the contrast of the owner of it, whose violent squint and lameness I had observed when my aunt had two or three times paused to converse with him as we passed his door, renewed my tears, which so enraged my aunt, that she told me I was an obstinate, disobedient, self-willed fool; and that, if I ever again saw the silly young man I was making such a fuss about, she would send me back to the country. This threat alarmed me, for I could not bear to think of leaving the place where the man I loved dwelt. It was something to be in the same city, to know there was a possibility of seeing him in the street, even though I dared not speak to him, and this was better than going wholly out of his reach.

"The following Sunday, the first object I saw on entering the pew in the church which my aunt frequented was my poor Henry seated opposite, and I trembled from head to foot lest my aunt should also see him. Luckily, she was so short-sighted that she never noticed him. How my heart beat when I saw that he had a sprig of wall-flower in the button-hole of his coat; and how hot I felt my cheeks grow, when he pressed it to his lips, and gave me such a tender look. I never took my eyes off my prayer-book again until the service was over; for I thought it would be sinful indeed, to give my attention to anything but God in his own temple—still the thought of Henry's being there was a comfort. Our prayers were mingling together beneath the same roof, our hearts were lifted up to the Almighty, and this was a blessing. My aunt never perceived Henry! but, unfortunately, Mr. Milderton, the tobacconist did, and lost no time in informing her that the young man whom he saw coming to her house sometimes, had been to church the Sunday before, and never took his eyes off her niece.

"'Oh! the cunning baggage, never to have told me of this,' said my aunt; 'I'll soon send her into the country, that's what I'll do; ay, and leave her there, too, until she forgets that there young chap.'

"I was an unwilling listener to the conversation between Mr. Milderton and my aunt; being seated at work in a small back room, separated only by a thin partition from the one she occupied, and verified the truth of the old proverb that listeners never hear good of themselves.

"'Don't blame your niece too much, she is young and inexperienced, and it may be that she never even saw that the young man was at church.'

“ ‘Don’t tell me, Mr. Milderton, about her being young and inexperienced; as if her being so was not an additional reason for consulting me, and taking my advice in everything; and as to her not seeing that the stupid young man was at church, I’ll warrant me, she saw him before she sat down in her pew, ay, and planned the meeting too. I’m a woman, Mr. Milderton, and know well enough what passes in the minds of those young fools.’

“ ‘All I can say, Mrs. Appleshaw, is, that she never took her eyes off her prayer-book during the whole service, or the long sermon.’

“ ‘Fiddle-de-dee! you are a simpleton, Mr. Milderton, and don’t understand women as well as I do. Why, they can see even when their eyes are cast down, better than men can when their eyes are wide open. Yes, she shall go into the country, that she shall.’

“ ‘Before I knew Henry, how joyful would this resolution of my aunt have rendered me, for I longed to see my old home again, and thought of little else; but now to leave the place where he dwelt, the place where I might hope to see him, even though the happiness of conversing with him was denied me, made me miserable. Mr. Milderton had no sooner taken his departure, than my aunt summoned me to her presence, and announced her determination that I should return to my parents the next day, adding, that she would write a few lines by the post forthwith, to prepare them for my reception.

“ ‘I command you not to let that silly woman, Mrs. Elrington, know that you are leaving town,’ said my aunt; ‘and as to her stupid nephew, much as I have reason to be dissatisfied with you, I do not think quite so ill of you as to suspect that you would write to *him*.’

“ ‘The rest of the day was occupied in packing up my clothes, listening to the advice, mingled with reproaches, of my aunt, and indulging in melancholy reflections. How often did I reproach myself for feeling so indifferent to the prospect of meeting my family—a prospect that, were it not for my affection for Henry, would have filled me with delight, while now, I could think of nothing but my separation from him.

“ ‘When at night I retired to the little bedroom in which I had so often thought of, and dreamt of him, I could no longer control the tears I had checked in the presence of my aunt. I looked again and again at my poor wall-flower, and pondered whether it would be possible to take it with me into the country? but as my aunt had declared her intention of accompanying me to the coach office in the morning, I knew I could not venture to carry the flower-pot without its being seen by her, and leading to some disagreeable comment; and to put it in my box would be impossible. While I was watering the flower with my tears, Anna, the servant of my aunt, entered the chamber on tip-toes, and without shoes, and

softly closing the door, told me not to speak above my breath, lest her mistress should hear us.

“ ‘ Ah, miss !’ said the good-natured girl, ‘ how sorry I am that you are going, for it was a pleasure to have some one in the house as could smile, or say a civil word to one ; for, as to missis, she does nothing but scold from morning till night ; and I am sure, miss, it’s a blessing to you as has friends to go to, while I,’ and here poor Anna’s tears streamed, ‘ am an orphan, and bound by the parish to missis, so she may scold me as much as she likes, and I can’t help it.’

“ Having spoken a few kind words to the poor girl, she asked me what I meant to do with my wall-flower ?

“ I know, miss, you won’t like to leave it here, for I’ve noticed you often and often looking at it so lovingly, just for all the world as I used to look at a poor sparrow I once caught, and kept for many months, until that wicked spiteful cat of missis killed it one day. I never knew what it was to have anything to love, until I got that poor bird, miss, and I thought my heart would break when I lost it. I was thinking, miss, that when you are gone, the first time missis sends me out anywhere, I could take the flower, pot and all, to Mrs. Elrington, and tell her, with your love, to take care of it for your sake.’

“ I was delighted with Anna’s project, for by it Mrs. Elrington would become acquainted with my departure, and Henry would learn it from her. I could have hugged the good girl for the offer, and gladly consented to avail myself of it, though conscience whispered that by so doing I evaded the commands of my aunt ; nor could all the sophistry with which I tried to reason myself into the belief, that as the project had not originated with me, I was not to be blamed for adopting it, silence my self-reproaches.

“ ‘ Yes, miss,’ resumed Anna, ‘ I’m sure and sartain that Mrs. Elrington and her nevey will take care of it, for I know they both like you ; and I’ll tell ’em how sorrow you were, and how you cried when you looked at the poor flower, and I’ll just give ’em a hint’ —(how I felt my cheeks glow as she added)—‘ that it wasn’t the parting with missis that made you so sorrowful. So you see, miss, that missis will find they can learn you are gone, and where to also, in spite of all her orders to me, not to take any letters for you, or not to give you any.’

“ Though grieved and mortified that my aunt should have mistrusted me, I desired Anna not on any account to tell Mrs. Elrington anything that could convey a notion that I was ungrateful to to my aunt—a caution that not only surprised, but irritated Anna.

“ ‘ And what had you to be grateful for, miss?’ asked she. ‘ Didn’t you do all the needlework of the house, which, before you came, she was always obliged to put out, and pay dear for ? Didn’t you bear with all her contrariness and scoldings, as if you

were, like me, a poor orphan, put out apprentice by the parish?—and what has she ever done, except to pay for the little bit of breakfast and dinner you eat; which isn't worth being grateful to any one for.'

"I bestowed a few trifling presents on poor Anna, emptied the contents of my purse, amounting to three or four shillings, the remains of my brother's parting gift, into her hand, and dismissed her, overpowered with gratitude, and dissolved in tears.

"The thought that it was the last night I should sleep in the same town with Henry, kept me long from finding the repose of which I stood so much in need, and I was in the midst of a dream, in which he was repeating his vows of eternal love to me, when my aunt roused me from my sleep, uttering reproaches on my laziness. I hurried through my dressing, gulped down the hot tea offered me, and long before my aunt had despatched the muffins and buttered toast, which, as usual, she found fault with, while eating most heartily of them, I was ready to set out for the coach office.

"'Just like you,' said she; 'put off getting up until the last moment, in order that I should be obliged to half choke myself with my breakfast; and you will undertake your long journey with an empty stomach, get home, looking as if I had starved you, and then your family will fancy you have been ill-used.'

"'Suppose I put up a few nice sandwiches for miss?' said Anna, who was replenishing the tea-pot.

"'Do so,' answered my aunt, 'but prepare them quickly, for I cannot wait: and if you hadn't been a fool, you'd have thought of having them ready; but every one about me thinks of nothing, but leaves the burden of all things on my shoulders.' When we were entering the hackney-coach, poor Anna could not repress her tears.

"'God be with you, miss,' sobbed the good-hearted girl, 'and send you a safe journey. Ah, miss! you are happy, for you are going to those that will love you,' and here her tears impeded her utterance.

"'Marry come up!' said my aunt. 'Pray, who gave you leave to cry, just as if you were one of the family. What can you know of people loving?—you, who have neither friend nor relation in the wide world, and only me to depend on, who keep you out of charity.'

"'Ay, so you tell me every day, ten times at least,' answered Anna.

"'Does the saucy wench dare to reply to me?' said my aunt, her cheeks growing red with anger; but before she could vent her ire on Anna, the hackney-coach was driven on, and nearly the whole time we were going to the office, was passed in reproaches on the ingratitude of servants, and the pity due to those who had the misfortune to require their services. Our parting was unmarked by any tenderness on her part, and the tears shed by me,

if the truth must be owned, were given to Henry and his kind aunt. The last words I heard her utter as the coach rolled away from the coach office were, 'Don't make a fool of yourself by crying, for that will do you no good; you see I never cry.'

"There were only two person besides myself in the coach. One of these was an old man who wore spectacles, and was exceedingly deaf; and the other a boy of about twelve years old, who seemed of an inquisitive turn, as he commenced a string of questions to the old man, who only became conscious of being addressed, when his impatient companion pulled the lapel of his coat, an appeal which drew forth the confession, 'I am a little hard of hearing, young gentleman.'

"As our heavy vehicle rolled over the pavement, I looked anxiously in the faces of the persons passing along the streets, thinking that, by some happy chance, I might see Henry; and so occupied were my thoughts by his image, that I fancied every tall young man I saw, bore a resemblance to him. When we had left the streets, and reached the suburbs—where lines of small, trim-looking houses, with flower-pots in the well-cleaned windows, and little gardens in front, showed that their owners aspired to consider them rural dwellings—I thought how happy I should be, if married to Henry, and established in one of these neat abodes, his good aunt residing with us. I pictured to myself the simple but neat furniture, the white dimity curtains, with their gay chintz borders, the comfortable easy-chair for Mrs. Elrington, and, above all, the quantity of double wall-flowers with which our garden should be stocked, until I almost fancied that to be reality which only my fancy painted. I was aroused from this happy day-dream by finding my cloak pulled by my youthful fellow-traveller, who, when I turned towards him, asked me—'Are you also deaf? I have been asking you questions this last half-hour. How I hate having people deaf,—don't you?'

"'It must certainly be very disagreeable to those who are so,' answered I.

"'O! I was not thinking of them, they soon get used to it; but for those who are *not* deaf, it is very enraging to be obliged to ask the same question half-a-dozen times before one can make oneself heard. Look at that old man; you see *he* doesn't mind a bit being as deaf as a post; he looks as happy as if he could hear every word that is said. Where are you going to?'

"'To Buttermuth,' replied I.

"'Have you been long in London?'

"'Yes, a considerable time.'

"'What took you to London?'

"'A stage-coach,' answered I, somewhat maliciously.

"'O! I don't mean *how* you went, but *why* you went?'

"'To stay with an aunt.'

"'What! that cross old woman that came with you to the

coach office? Didn't you hate her? I'm sure I should. How old are you?'

" 'Eighteen.'

" 'Six whole years older than I am. I wish I was eighteen, for then I should be done with school. Did you not think I was more than twelve years old?—everybody takes me to be thirteen. What's your name?'

" 'Lucy.'

" 'Lucy what?'

" 'Mildred.' It would be tedious, Mr. Richard, to tell you one half the questions this troublesome boy asked me; but so wholly did he preclude the possibility of my indulging my own thoughts, that I heartily wished myself released from his company, and formed the resolution, if ever again thrown into the society of a school-boy, to affect deafness, until I could ascertain that my freedom from that infirmity would not expose me to the annoyance under which I was then suffering. I had nearly lost patience with my inquisitor, when, the coach having stopped to change horses, an old woman with a basket well stored with oranges and cakes approached the window, and so wholly engrossed the attention of my troublesome companion that I had a reprieve. He expended the whole contents of his purse in purchasing a supply of her cakes and fruit, and laid in a stock that might have served a moderate appetite for several days. He devoured the cakes so rapidly, that even our fellow-traveller advised him to forbear, but the counsel seemed only to urge him on, and when they had disappeared, he had recourse to the oranges, the juice of which left ineffaceable marks on my gown, in spite of all my efforts to protect it from his reckless mode of satisfying his gluttonous propensities. The motion of the carriage, operating on his over-charged stomach, produced the most painful effect on the youth, and its consequence the most disagreeable one on his unfortunate fellow-travellers. Suffice it to say, that my garments were rendered unwearable, and the coat of the deaf man was spoilt. He bore this annoyance less patiently than I did; but his reproaches seemed to have no effect on the boy, who continued to suffer from the result of his gluttony until the coach stopped at our village, and I was released from the disgusting position I had occupied ever since his illness had commenced."

The sound of the clock striking twelve, warned Mrs. Chatterton that it was time to withdraw for the night; and she, unmindful of the sneering remarks often uttered, during the course of her narrative, by Messrs. Thomas and Wilson, assured me that she would continue her little history, now that she saw how much it interested me; for it was a pleasure, she said, to find so attentive a listener.

"And not only a pleasure but a rarity too," said Wilson, in an under tone; "for the old woman never found any of us so patient under the infliction. You surely can't be such a flat as to find any

amusement in her old humdrum adventures?" continued Wilson, addressing himself to me, with a contemptuous air, which he took little pains to conceal.

"As much, probably, as you find in the novel which you have been reading," answered I. "I prefer truth, however simple and unvarnished, to fiction, unless it be the work of some author of acknowledged merit; and as I do not attempt to question your right to indulge your taste, you will be so good as to leave me to the indulgence of mine."

"Well said, young man!" exclaimed Mr. Murdoch, who was then lighting his bed-chamber candle, and who from that hour treated me with more kindness.

CHAPTER VI.

"WELL, Mr. Richard, let me see, where did we break off last night?" said Mrs. Chatterton.

"You were just arrived at Buttermuth," answered I.

"And so I was, now I recollect it—thank you, Mr. Richard, for remembering it so well. Ah! when you come to be old, Mr. Richard, you will find it a great pleasure to recall the days of your youth, even though when those days were actually passing, you might have thought them sorrowful enough; but time softens everything, and enables one to speak of events calmly, that once filled the mind with sadness. I feel, when relating my trials to you, as if they had occurred to some one else, though many a tear they cost me when they happened; but all connected with our youth, has in old age, a charm in it, just as the recollection of summer with its sunshine, blue skies, green trees, and bright flowers, comes back to us in the dark and dreary days of winter, and we wonder we were not more happy when that joyous season was ours.

"I found my mother waiting my arrival at the coach office, and, although she looked more gravely than I had ever before seen her do, she welcomed me with all a mother's tenderness. How changed appeared our village, and everything around it! The houses looked small and mean, the place itself deserted, and our garden, of which I had so often thought during my absence, and given such descriptions of to Mrs. Elrington and her nephew, seemed to shrink into insignificance, as I passed through its narrow gravel walk to enter our house. The rooms of our cottage struck me as having diminished in size, and the plain, but well-scrubbed chairs and tables, looked shabby after the smarter furniture of my aunt and Mrs. Elrington. The scene was altogether different from what I had expected, though in what the difference consisted, I

really could not tell, for no alteration had been made during my absence. The change was not in the place, but in me; and when I ought to have felt nothing but joy at being restored to my home and kind parents and sisters, a sadness I could neither conceal nor control stole over me, and brought the tears to my eyes. My mother grew more grave as she observed my grief.

“ ‘I fear, child,’ said she, ‘that what your aunt wrote us, is but too true, and that you have formed an improper attachment, your obstinacy in continuing which, against her advice, compelled her to send you back. This is a sad blow to us, for though we should have been heartily glad to have you with us again, yet, for you to be sent away with only a few hours’ notice, when we and all our neighbours thought you were to remain with your aunt during her life, is a very sad affair. What will people say or think? Dame Parsons will be going from house to house, talking of it, I warrant me. Oh! Lucy, my unthinking, but dear child, what a pity it is that you have behaved so ill!’

“As soon as my tears would allow me to speak, I told the whole truth to my mother, who kissed me affectionately, and declared her perfect belief in my statement; and, becoming now more composed, I unpacked my clothes, and having changed my dress, set off to see my sister, whom my heart yearned to embrace. I expected to find her the lively and fond creature I had left her, but one glance showed me she was no longer the same. When I entered, she was sitting by the cradle of her child, rocking it with her foot, while her hands were busily employed at needlework. She seemed to have grown ten years older in the year and a half I had been absent, and there was a staid, orderly look about her, wholly unlike the gay aspect for which she was formerly remarkable. She made a motion to rise when she saw me, but looking at the cradle, checked herself, waved her hand towards me to indicate the necessity of silence, then beckoned me to her embrace, and having pressed me in her arms, silently pointed to the sleeping babe, and whispered, ‘Poor dear little soul! she is cutting a tooth, and has not closed her eyes the whole night.’

“ ‘You look, my dear sister, as if you had not closed yours for many nights,’ said I, remarking her heavy eyes and pale cheeks.

“ ‘O! I don’t mind it,’ replied she, ‘as long as my own darling can procure a little repose in the day. Is she not a sweet pretty creature, sister?’ and she drew aside the little white curtain that shaded the child’s face. The movement, gentle as it had been, awoke the infant, who, forthwith, began to utter the most piercing cries.

“ ‘Don’t let her see you, sister,’ said the alarmed mother; ‘the sight of a strange face always sets her crying. Poor dear pet! she is naturally the quietest child in the whole world, but cutting her teeth plagues her so, that it makes her quite fretful. Bless its dear, sweet, pretty face!—there’s a darling, don’t cry!’ and she

dandled the screaming child, bestowing on it the most tender expressions, and covering its face with kisses. 'Isn't your niece a beauty?' asked my sister. 'See what laughing blue eyes she has, and what a lovely little mouth!'

"The eyes being filled with tears, precluded me not only from judging of their colour, but from forming a notion of their capability of laughing, and the mouth, being distended to its utmost extent by screaming, looked anything but lovely when my sister called my attention to it.

"'Ah! you can't imagine what a blessing it is, Lucy, to have a child,' and she looked at hers with eyes beaming with affection.

"'How glad I am to see you again, dear sister,' said I, and I kissed her cheek. This involuntary endearment on my part passed unnoticed on hers, and I resumed, 'How long it seems since we parted.'

"'Do you think so?' answered Sarah. 'Baby is now seven months' old, and as I did not marry until two months after you went, and I was nearly ten months a wife before I became a mother, you must have been nineteen months away. Well, I'm sure I didn't think it had been half so long; but time flies so fast when one has a good husband and such a darling as this,' and she again kissed her child. 'See what a dear, sweet, nice creature she is! look at her legs, and now she is as quiet as a lamb—bless her dear heart!'

"It was true the child had ceased to cry, and for a simple reason, the mother had stopped its screams by filling its mouth; but even while greedily imbibing the maternal nutriment, the tears still continued to flow from the ill-shaped eyes of my sister's idol, while she, nevertheless, indulged in the most lavish praises of its temper, as well as of its beauty.

"'I am so glad you are returned,' said Sarah, and I felt pleased at even this expression of kindness, though it by no means answered my expectations of the joy she would experience at our first meeting after our long and only separation; but my satisfaction became diminished when she added, 'Yes, I am very glad you are come back, for I wanted so much to show you my darling baby.' In fact, I discovered that Sarah, my own dear Sarah, at parting with whom I had wept so bitterly nineteen months before, had now become so wholly engrossed by her husband and child, as to regard me with indifference, and to desire my return home solely that I might see her child. She had no interest, no thought for aught save the two objects she idolised, and was too artless to conceal this fact. I left her cottage with a dejected heart. This, then, was the meeting I had so often pictured to myself, so often dreamt of during my absence; yet how different was it from what I had expected it would be! I wept as I compared the reality with the imaginary re-union, and, finding I had no longer a place in my sister's affections or happiness, I wished myself back again in Lon-

don, where, at least, I was necessary to the happiness of Mrs. Elrington, her nephew, and poor Anna, the servant of my aunt.

“The first discovery of the altered feelings of one on whom a person had fondly relied, and who, from infancy, had been tenderly cherished and implicitly trusted in, is a severe trial to the heart. I felt this, and, while lamenting the indifference of Sarah, was persuaded that were I the wife of Henry Chatterton—a lot I considered the most blessed in life—my affection for my sister would have remained unchanged, as I never could forget our infant sports and girlish confidences, when we were so very dear to each other. It was with depressed spirits I then proceeded to my sister Betsy, whom I found busily engaged in preparing dinner for her family. The fumes from a savoury mess seething on the fire, impregnated the whole house, and bore evidence that onions formed no inconsiderable portion of the ingredients.

“‘And so here you are, sister, back again in the country, and right glad I dare to swear you are, to find yourself safe at Butter-muth. Lawk! how pale and thin you *do* look, to be sure; but no wonder, if all that folk tell me about Lunnon be true. Why, I’m told one can never get half enough to eat there, things are so dear. You’ll stay and dine with us, won’t you? and a good dinner you shall have, I warrant you. Here’s my children, see what fine fellows they are,’ pointing to two sturdy boys and a girl. ‘Bless your heart! they eat as much in a day as their father, and he’s no bad hand at a knife and fork. Throw in a few more onions Meggy into the stew,’ addressing a red-elbowed wench, ‘and add a lump of pork, it will give richness to it, for the beef was somewhat lean. Dear me, how nicely it smells. Don’t it make you hungry, sister?’

“‘I want my dinner,’ said the elder boy; ‘and I too!’ screamed the younger, in which cry the little sister joined. ‘And I must have strong ale,’ said the child; ‘and I too,’ reiterated his brother.

“‘Will you be quiet, you naughty troublesome brats, or I’ll whip you all round,’ said my sister. ‘They are so spoilt by their father,’ whispered she, ‘that there is no bearing them.’ The children, as if anxious to prove the accuracy of their mother’s representations, became still more riotous and insubordinate; and so great was their clamour, notwithstanding the angry reproaches, accompanied by sundry boxes on the ears from my sister, that I was compelled to abridge my visit and return home, with a head aching severely from the noise of my troublesome nephews, and the boisterous proceedings of their enraged mother.

“I found my father seated by the little oak table which I had so often polished in former days, and which had lost none of its brightness under the care of my excellent mother. He was gravely listening to her justification of my conduct, and embraced me affectionately; but, shall I confess it, the odour of the farm-yard, with which his smock-frock and leathern gaiters were reeking,

almost overpowered me, after having been so long unaccustomed to it.

“ ‘But what is the objection to this young chap that Dame Appleshaw writes about?’ asked my father. ‘She says that he is a weak, silly fool, that can make no settlement on our girl when he dies: just what she said of me when I proposed to marry thee, old girl; yet I’ve made thee a good husband as times go, ha’n’t I? and if God calls me away from thee to-morrow, I’ll leave thee free from want, and what more can any reasonable woman desire, I should like to know? Is this same young chap a wild ‘un? does he drink, game, idle away his time, and torment his old aunt?’

“ ‘No, dear father,’ answered I, trembling while I spoke, ‘he is the nicest young man I ever saw, so genteel, so good, so kind to his aunt.’

“ ‘Ay, there it is, always the nicest young man; that’s just what every one of them there foolish girls always says,’ muttered my father.

“ ‘It’s just what I said about you,’ rejoined my mother, ‘so you need not find fault with it.’

“ ‘No, dang my buttons if I ought, or if I will either!’ said he, and he rose from his seat, and kissed my mother’s cheek. ‘And so thee said I was the nicest young man, and so good and so genteel; come, old girl, and give us another buss for that,’ and the old man again affectionately embraced my mother.

“ ‘And what has this said young chap got to live on, girl?’ demanded he.

“ ‘I never heard, father,’ answered I.

“ ‘How should she know, poor thing!’ said my mother; ‘I dare say she never gave a thought to the matter, any more than I did when you came a courting me.’

“ ‘What trade has the young chap got to live by?’ asked my father.

“ ‘He is a clerk in a great banking-house in the city, father; for I heard his aunt telling mine that he had an excellent situation.’

“ ‘Why, then, he can’t have less than from eighty to a hundred pounds a year salary,’ observed my father, rubbing his hands; ‘and the girl of our class that wouldn’t find that enough to live decently and comfortably on, must be more unreasonable than any child of mine is, I hope; so I think your aunt has behaved like a fool, and so I’ll tell her whenever I see her: and as for the young chap, if he comes down here whenever he gets a holiday from his office, why we’ll show him we are not so great or grand in our notions as Mrs. Appleshaw, who was always a selfish woman,—yes, wife, she always was, so it’s no use your shaking your head, and making long faces, for I always speak my mind, that’s what I do, and I have no notion of her sending off our child at a few hours’ notice, just for all the world as if the girl had behaved badly, and was about to disgrace herself and us, and so I’ll write and tell her.’

“Evening came; and while I arranged my things in the little bed-room formerly shared with Sarah, the perfume of the flowers floated in through the open window, and the song of the blackbird and the thrush stole on my ear. How often, when pent in my close confined chamber in London, had I recalled all that was now around me with a pensive pleasure, and compared it with that gloomy little room and its dreary prospect of slanting roofs and chimney-pots, where the mewing of cats, and the busy hum of loud voices, carriages, and carts, alone were heard: yet now, restored to the scene so often and fondly remembered, it brought not the gratification then anticipated, and I could only think of the distance that separated me from Henry, and the little chance there seemed to be that we should ever meet again. The odour of the wall-flower that filled the room, brought his image so forcibly before me, that I could not restrain my tears; though it seemed strange too, that a perfume which, when in London, always recalled my home so fondly to my mind, could, now that I was there, only bring back the thoughts of Henry; and gladly would I have resigned that home, so often pined for when absent from it, and the balmy air, and fresh breathing flowers of the garden, that filled my cheerful-looking little chamber, for the gloomy one in London, with my solitary, drooping, but well-beloved wall-flower, the gift of Henry, and the knowledge that we were in the same city, and might see each other, though only at a distance. Nay, the sound of the muffin-bell, or the milkman’s cry, once considered so monotonous, would have been at that moment preferred by me to the carols of the birds, then giving such delightful music, because those sounds would have proved my vicinity to him I loved, while these I was listening to, only reminded me of the distance that separated us.

“Young and inexperienced as I was, I felt that the fruition of our wishes does not always bring happiness, if indeed that blessing ever can be ours on earth; and the reflection of how often I had longed to be where I now was, yet found not that which I had anticipated, brought that truth home to my mind. At our homely but comfortable evening meal, the conversation of my parents reminded me that I had been long a stranger at the board, for they talked only of persons and subjects about whom and which I had no longer any interest, while I sat silent, thinking of the dingy little parlour of my aunt, endeared to me by the recollection that Henry had often been in it, and that when I partook the repasts with her, I was always cheered by the hope of seeing him the next day, or day after; or, at all events, I had the consolation of knowing he was not far distant. How inconsistent are our notions, Mr. Richard! The home of my infancy now seemed more strange to me than the abode of my aunt; and, if the truth must be owned, I would have preferred supporting her ill-humour for sake of remaining near Henry, than finding myself, as at present, far

removed from him ; and though with my parents, discovering by their conversation that they had got accustomed to my absence, and felt an interest in objects in which I no longer experienced any.

“ Day after day, succeeded by weeks and months, passed away, but brought me no comfort : the hope I had indulged of hearing, if not from Henry, at least from his kind aunt, became fainter and fainter, and I truly felt how ‘ hope deferred maketh the heart sick,’ when time passed slowly by without bringing me tidings from him so dear to me.

“ The reproachful letter written by my father to my aunt remained unanswered, so that all ties with London now seemed broken ; and the reflection that such was the case filled me with sadness. How often did it occur to me to write to Henry ; but then came maidenly pride and modesty to whisper the impropriety and indelicacy of such a proceeding. No, as he wrote not, and in all human probability, thought not of me, sooner would I let my heart break than address him ; and that it would eventually break I entertained little doubt, as what maiden, in similar circumstances, under twenty, ever does ? And as my cheek grew paler and my appetite failed, I used to think, that cold-hearted and faithless as his silence proved him to be, how would his conscience reprove him whenever he should learn that I was laid in my grave ? I used to dwell for hours on this thought. I even selected a sunny spot in the churchyard, near a beautiful willow-tree, where I wished to be buried ; and I determined, that when death was approaching, I would write a last farewell to him, and entreat him to visit my grave.

“ In the twilight hour, as I sate alone in my little chamber, tears would chace each other down my cheeks, as I recalled to mind his looks, and words, and the soft tones of his voice ; and I felt that *his* tears too would flow, whenever he came to look on the spot where I was laid, and that he would mourn for having neglected one who loved him so well, until the thought of his sorrow melted me ; and then I would resolve not to let him know my fate, lest it should render him too unhappy. I, who had then never read a novel in my life, had, strange to say, precisely the same feelings and fancies that I have since found in such books, which makes me think that all young girls in love have similar ones, which renders novel-writing an easier task to women than to men. Though I met kindness and affection from my family, I experienced little or no sympathy. My father, wholly engrossed by his little farm, which occupied him all day, seldom saw me, except during meals, when he only remarked ‘ that the girl had lost her appetite ; and no wonder, from having been so long shut up in London.’

“ And my mother, who was busied from morning till night with her dairy, poultry-yard, and household concerns, seemed unconscious that aught more than a delicacy of health, brought on by ‘ the bad air of that smoky place Lunnon, and which would soon

pass away, now that I was come home,' was the matter. Anxious to conceal my depression of spirits, I used to exert myself to the utmost, in order to assist my mother in her daily occupations; but my heart was not in the task, and she used often to remark, 'Well, child, how strange it is, you don't go about your work at all as you used to do before you went up to Lunnon; you, that would set about it, formerly, as brisk as a bee, I warrant me, and would carol like a bird all the time that the hands were as busy as ants.'

"My sister Sarah had no time or thought for any one except her husband and child; and when my altered looks were remarked in her presence, always said—

" 'Ah! wait till she has got a good husband like mine, and a sweet beautiful baby like this,' holding up her little one, 'and she'll do well enough, that she will. Why, Lord love ye! I used to be as dull and moping as she is, before I was married; but ever since I have not had time to think about anything but how happy I am, busy all day long with keeping my house neat and tidy, and nursing this precious little darling. Ay, get married, sister; that's the way to be happy, for women are of no use, except to look after husbands and children.'

"My sister Betsy we seldom saw, and when we did, her presence afforded little gratification. Her whole thoughts seemed to be engrossed by the coarse and unwomanly pleasure of eating; and her conversation continually turned to the subject of savoury dishes, and the best mode of concocting them, on which she dwelt with an unction that, to use her own phrase, made her mouth water.

" 'How strange it is, Lucy,' she would sometimes say to me, 'that after being so long in Lunnon, you have not brought home a single recipe for making a good dish. I wonder you left town without bringing a cookery-book with you,—it would have been a great comfort to me, who am so fond of trying my hand at new dishes. Had aunt nothing new or remarkable at her table, in the way of cookery? Well, for my part, I can't see the good of people going up to Lunnon, except it be to bring down some new inventions in the eating line. I must be off, for we have the finest and fattest goose to-day for dinner, that I've seen this year. I stuffed it myself, before I came out, with plenty of sage and onions, and it smelt so savoury, that the thoughts of it makes me hungry.' This is a specimen of the general conversation of my sister; judge then if her visits could be any pleasure to me.

"I sometimes wondered that I heard not from Anna, who was so attached to me, and who so deeply regretted my departure from London. She knew my address, and judging from our conversation relative to the wall-flower, more than suspected the anxiety I would feel to hear what had been said by Henry and his aunt, when she took back that cherished gift to them. Alas! I was ignorant of an insurmountable obstacle to the poor girl's addressing me, which was,

that she could neither read nor write, and so attributed to forgetfulness, that which necessity compelled.

“ My Bible now became my sole consolation. Every moment that I could snatch from my household cares was devoted to its perusal, and by degrees, I found a calm resignation take the place of the fretfulness and impatience to which I had previously given way. No tongue can utter—no pen describe, the soothing effect of that blessed book on my mind! It is true, Dame Parsons, and other neighbours of ours, sometimes disturbed my tranquillity by their idle questions, dictated by a prying curiosity, with which they assailed me whenever we met.

“ ‘ So, Lucy, here you are back again with us. Why did you leave Lunnon? And who has your aunt got to take care of her now?’ would Dame Parsons say. ‘ I warrant me the old lady must miss you, after being used to you, pretty near two years,’ would another observe; while a third would inquire when I had heard from my aunt, and when I intended to return to her?

“ These questions, so often repeated, I confessed used to vex and mortify me; and I, not having sense enough to conceal it, betrayed the annoyance I felt, and so confirmed the evil suspicions to which my unexpected return to my parents had given rise. Various were the reports circulated through the village, as to the probable cause of my quitting my aunt, and all of them, as we soon learned, were anything but charitable towards me. Let not people imagine that the unsophisticated inhabitants of a rustic village, are more free from the propensity to scandal, than are those of cities, or less prone to credit and circulate injurious surmises and aspersions. On the contrary, I really think they are even more addicted to scandal, probably because they have fewer subjects to occupy their attention. I used to weep bitter tears, when some gossiping neighbour, professing friendly motives, would come, and repeat to my mother the tales circulated about relative to me. That those among whom I had been born and bred, and whom I had never wilfully offended, should take a pleasure in defaming me, grieved me so severely, that the consciousness of my own innocence failed to console me under these trials; but this knowledge of the falsehood of the reports to my disadvantage taught me to extend that charity towards others, denied to me, and rendered me ever after incredulous to the evil reports spread against persons similarly accused or suspected.

“ Months passed away, but brought me no tidings of Henry, or Mrs. Elrington. My aunt never having noticed the reproachful letter addressed to her by my father, I now ceased to indulge my hopes of ever hearing from or seeing Henry again.

“ Winter had now set in, with its cold and cheerless days, and long dull evenings, during which time seemed to creep with feet of lead, and my spirits became even more damped than before; when one day, a week before Christmas, when the snow covered the

ground, and the sleet was driven against the windows, I was throwing a few crumbs to the poor robin red-breasts that sought shelter on the window-sill, when I saw a stranger open the garden-gate, and approach rapidly towards the house. He was so enveloped in a large cloak, that muffled him up to his chin, that not only his figure, but a portion of his face was concealed, yet at one glance, I recognised him to be Henry. I uttered a faint cry, and sank breathless on a chair, my heart throbbing so wildly, as to deny me the power of speech, and so prevent me from flying to open the door, to give the welcome visitor admittance. My mother, who heard the knock, was the first to answer the summons, and in reply to Henry's inquiries for me, led him into the little parlour where I was seated.

"To describe our meeting would be impossible; my joy and agitation too well revealed the secret of my heart; and his, satisfied my mother that her child had not loved in vain, as she had lately begun to think.

"When the emotion into which we had both been thrown by our meeting had subsided, Henry took from his pocket a letter addressed to my father, and handed me one from his aunt.

" 'This,' said he, pointing to the first, 'was given to me by Mrs. Appleshaw, whom I left in good health, and whom I have latterly seen frequently.'

" 'How!' exclaimed I, in undisguised surprise, 'is it possible that my aunt has become reconciled to you?'

" 'Yes, perfectly,' answered he; 'but the letter from her, of which I am the bearer, will explain everything.'

" 'How long has this reconciliation taken place?' asked I.

" 'Only a short time, or I should have sooner taken advantage of it, to hurry down to Buttermuth, though but for a few hours, as it is only at Christmas and Easter that we are permitted to be absent from our office in the city.'

"My father entered while Henry was speaking, and stared not a little at seeing a stranger seated so familiarly at his fireside.

" 'This, my dear,' said my mother, 'is the young man from Lunnon that Lucy told us about.'

" 'Yes, father, this is Henry,' whispered I.

" 'And right glad I am to see you down here,' said my father, holding out his hand cordially, and seizing that of Henry; 'and there is some one else here, who is even more glad to see you, my lad, than I am,' and he looked archly in my face, and smiled and nodded, while I felt my cheeks grow as red as a rose. 'Sit you down, my boy, sit you down,' continued my father. 'What! old wife, have you not had the gumption to offer him a glass of warm elder-wine and a hot toast in it, such a bitter cold day as this, and after his journey? Hang it all! the women never think of the creature comforts, when there is a bit of love in the case; but I'll warrant me, the young man won't be sorry to get som'at to stay

his stomach till our meal be ready,—and hark you, my dear, let a good fat fowl be put to the fire without delay, for I have heard that these Lunnuners be cruel fond of country-fed poultry. And where's your portmanty, my lad?'

" 'I left it at the inn,' said Henry.

" 'And more shame for you! Send off Bill Thompson directly for it, dame; and let us make our young friend feel at home. Will that elder-wine never be warm?—ah! here it comes at last. Fill up a tumbler for the lad, Lucy, and let us drink to our better acquaintance.'

" 'I've brought a letter for you, sir, from Mrs. Appleshaw.'

" 'You have, have you? and what can she write to me for? She behaved cruel ill to my child, that's what she did; and here has my poor Lucy, who used to be as blithe as a lark, been moping and crying at the spiteful tales invented by some of our gossiping neighbours, and all because the poor girl was packed off, without rhyme or reason, or due notice to prepare us for her return, and so prevent the gossips from being surprised by it, and making it an excuse for their surmises. 'Twas bad enough for poor Lucy to be sent away from the young man she liked——'

" 'O, father!' exclaimed I, blushing to my very temples.

" 'Yes, I *say liked*,' resumed my father. 'Why should you be ashamed of my speaking the truth, girl? Didn't I, and your mother, too, see as plain as could be, that your pale face and heavy sighs—ay, and your red eyes into the bargain, wasn't because you had left your aunt, or that the ill-natured folk in the village invented lies about you?'

" 'Pray, father,' interrupted I; but Henry gave me a look so full of gratitude and affection, that I had not the courage to contradict my father's assertion.

" 'The lad behaved fair and above board, girl—that he did. He proposed openly and honestly for you through his aunt to yours, and if Dame Appleshaw hadn't been a greater fool than I took her to be, she'd have said yes instead of no, and you'd have been married some months ago, instead of being fretting and moping as you have been.'

" Another look full of love from Henry, consoled me for the shame I experienced at my father's disclosure of my feelings, and my lover, to save me from further embarrassment, drew his attention to the letter of my aunt.

" 'Mrs. Appleshaw,' said he, 'did not formerly know me as well as she has since done; but she now renders me justice, and fully approves of me as a husband for her niece, provided you, sir, and her mother have no objection.'

" 'Who cares a fig whether she approves or not!' exclaimed my father, angrily. 'I approve, my wife approves, and as for the girl herself, man, I verily believe whether we did or not, *she* would continue to like you just the same. Take her, young man, and with

her our blessing. I haven't got much else to give her; but a couple of hundred pounds shall be paid you on the wedding-day, and though a small fortune, it is better than nothing.'

"Henry seized my father's hand, which he shook heartily, kissed my mother's cheek, and then timidly approached to take my hand.

" 'Give her a buss, man,' said my father, and then for the first time my lips were pressed by those of any man, except my father.

"How rapidly flew the hours during that happy day! Even now, though age has chilled the heart then so warm, I feel that the remembrance of that blessed time can make it beat quicker; and now, in my old age, I thank God that I have shared the love, and helped to make the happiness of an honest and worthy man.

"I did not find time to read the letter of Mrs. Elrington until night, but what need had I for any addition to my joy? Was not Henry there, seated by my side, by a cheerful hearth, our affection sanctioned by my parents, who, gazing fondly on us both, were almost as happy as ourselves? Before we parted for the night, my father read aloud the letter of my aunt, the contents of which were as follows:—

" 'My dear brother-in-law,—Henry Chatterton will be the bearer of this letter, and takes with it my hearty good wishes, that you and my sister will reward his kindness to me, by bestowing on him the hand of Lucy, of which he has proved himself most worthy.'

" 'Whew!' said my father, screwing his lips into a whistle, as he was wont to do when aught surprised him. 'What's in the wind now? So, it is only because he has been kind to *her* that he is to get our girl! Just like her, selfish to the last. But what can he have done to change her so?'

" 'Nothing more than any one else would have done in my place,' replied Henry, modestly; 'but Mrs. Appleshaw overrates the little service I was able to render her.'

" 'Then she must be greatly changed, indeed,' observed my father; 'for I never knew her to overrate any kindness or service rendered her before.'

" 'Pray don't be ill-natured,' said my mother, who always pleaded for her sister.

" 'Have you played in the funds for her, and doubled her fortune?—have you said amen to all she thought right?—and have you proved to her, either that you will outlive my daughter, and so preclude the necessity of a large marriage settlement, or that you can make one?' asked my father; 'for I know no other means by which you could get her to write in your favour.'

" 'I have done none of these things,' replied Henry, smiling.

"And my mother, gently chiding her husband, made him resume the perusal of his letter.

" 'I was on the eve of beggary, when this excellent young man

discovered the approaching ruin of the house in which my property was lodged, apprised me of it, and enabled me to withdraw my money three days before the holder became insolvent. Without his zeal, activity, and knowledge of business, I should never have been enabled to recover my money before the failure of the house in question, nor could I have procured such advantageous terms for it as I now have done; for when, alarmed at the possibility of future risk, I determined on sinking the whole of what I possess in an annuity for my life, which, at my advanced age, will give me a much better income than I formerly enjoyed, Mr. Henry Chatterton managed the whole affair for me.'

" 'Just like her!' exclaimed my father; 'selfish to the last; never thinking of any one but herself, and sinking all to increase a larger income than she requires, and when she knows she can have so short a time to receive it: thus depriving herself of the power of leaving a guinea to those who are to come after her.'

" 'My mother raised her hands and eyes, and looked the sadness she did not express; for this news was a painful surprise to her, from having always calculated that her children would, at her sister's death, benefit by it.

" 'And so you only won the old woman's good will by helping her to cheat her nieces out of their expectations?' said my father. 'Well, I can't be angry with you, for it proves you are not a covetous person; but, hang me! if ever I'll forgive her for showing she has so little liking to my children, after my having always been so kind a brother-in-law to her.'

" 'My salary being now raised to one hundred and fifty pounds a year,' said Henry, 'which, with prudence and good management, will enable me to support a wife comfortably, I have no fear for the future, and had no wish to influence Mrs. Appleshaw in the disposal of her property. Blessed with the possession of this dear girl,' and he took my hand, 'I have nothing left to desire; nor did I look for the fortune you are so kind and generous as to say you will bestow upon her, and which, if at all inconvenient to you, I will readily resign.'

" 'You are a generous, noble-minded fellow,' said my father, shaking him by the hand, 'and if I had three times as much, it should be equally divided between Lucy and her sisters.'

" The letter from Mrs. Elrington was filled with the kindest expressions and good wishes. She told me, that from our first acquaintance, she desired that I should become the wife of her nephew, but that, being so unkindly treated by my aunt when she made the proposal, her pride had been so hurt, that she had discouraged Henry from addressing me or my parents, especially as I had never written a line to her, which she fully expected I would do. It was only on my aunt's lately acknowledging to Henry that she believed I entertained an attachment to him, which was the cause of her sending me back to my family, that she had sanctioned

Henry's coming to propose for me ; and she urged me not to trifle with his happiness, but to accept him at once, adding, that one who had proved himself so dutiful a son and nephew, could not fail to be an excellent husband.

" A present of a neat gown-piece from this kind woman, was taken out of Henry's portmanteau, and excited the admiration of my mother and our servant, both of whom declared they had never seen anything so beautiful before. My sisters and their husbands were invited to come and dine with us the following day, and came in their best clothes ; Sarah bringing the baby with them, its cap ornamented with a cockade of cherry-coloured ribbon, and its frock tied with the same. Betsy and her husband brought the two boys, who were as noisy as possible. My sisters' husbands, with their coarse red faces and redder hands, looked quite clownish near Henry, who appeared so genteel, that I am sure Sarah could not help seeing the difference between the two men. She showed the child to Henry, and asked him ' whether he ever saw such a one in London ? ' while Betsy declared that hers were much finer, adding, ' she heard all the children in London were poor pale-faced things, as indeed, for the matter of that, so were the men and women too ; ' and she looked in his face, and then at me, in a way which almost made me angry, but I felt too happy to give way to ill-humour. When Betsy saw my new gown, she seemed quite jealous, and Sarah added, ' that for her part, she did not care about finery, nor would I when once I had a dear sweet baby like hers, which, however, she was afraid I never would have if I was obliged to live in Lunnon, where no one ever had fine children.' I felt both ashamed and angry that she should talk in this manner before Henry ; but I had noticed soon after my return home, that she no longer experienced the same attachment towards me as formerly ; and that all her affection and interest being centered in her husband, who was a very selfish man, and cared little about wounding the feelings of others. My brothers-in-law talked only of farming, bad and good crops, and feeding cattle ; and, seeing that Henry was ignorant on these subjects, seemed to consider him as an inferior being, which greatly mortified me. In short, neither the husbands nor the wives were disposed to show any regard to the man who was to be so soon their brother-in-law, and seemed displeased at the attention and kindness with which my father and mother treated him, while his behaviour towards them was polite and friendly, which I could see was all for my sake.

" Though the snow was deep on the ground, the sun sometimes shone out for a short time, and Henry and I would ramble out together. Oh ! how happy we used to feel, when I would lead him to all my favourite walks ; and, dreary and unlovely as the country looked with its leafless trees, he used to praise its beauty because I liked it, and had so often described it to him when we

first began to love each other. He used to tell me how carefully he had preserved my poor wall-flower, how often he had kissed it, and what regret he felt that both his aunt and himself had been absent when Anna had brought it to their house. They had never after seen her, although they wished it so much, in order to learn every particular relative to me. And, unfortunately, their servant who saw Anna was deaf, so did not hear the message she left. He told me how he went Sunday after Sunday to the church my aunt attended, in the hope of seeing me, and how miserable he felt when she entered alone; yet still he thought I was left at home to prevent his seeing me, or that I was ill; and then he used to be wretched, and walk up and down before my aunt's house, thinking he might catch a glance of me at the windows. He did not know I had left London until he called on my aunt to inform her of the danger her property was in, and actually believed on entering the house, that I was still an inmate, and that he might be permitted to behold me. My aunt did not seem to believe his statement relative to the approaching ruin of the house in which her property was lodged, until he assured her, in the most solemn manner, of the fact; and though she employed him to extricate her money, it was only when the bankruptcy of the firm alluded to was announced in the gazette, that she felt the extent of her obligations to him. Then, and not till then, did she confess to him why, and where I was gone, and sanction his visit to me; but she made it a condition that he should not leave London or write to me, until he had vested her money in an annuity for her life. This, and much more, did Henry tell me, interlarding his information with vows of the tenderest love, and so happy did I feel, that I scarcely wished to end those blissful days of courtship, though he was continually pressing me to name the day for our marriage. How proud used I to feel, as we walked arm-and-arm through the village, before the ill-natured gossips who had made such spiteful remarks on me, a short time before. The news of our approaching marriage proved the falsehood of all their reports, and they were forced to admit that there was not so genteel or handsome a young man in the whole place as Henry.

“Everything being arranged, I was married ten days after Henry's arrival at Buttermuth, and his leave of absence having nearly expired, we set out for London the day after. What a happy journey that was, and how kind a welcome did we meet with from good Mrs. Elrington, who had prepared everything for our reception. A small cottage with a little garden, at Brompton, had been taken for us, and our kind aunt had made it so neat and pretty, that I could do nothing but admire it when I arrived. Henry pointed out to me a beautiful China flower-pot, into which the old one containing my poor wall-flower had been placed, for he would not suffer it to be transplanted lest it should be injured, and valued the original old flower-pot because it had been touched by

me. Our aunt Elrington brought me the keys of the house the next morning, saying that *now* I was the mistress; but I returned them, telling her it would be my pride and pleasure to be her assistant in the household duties, and Henry pressed us both in his arms, while tears of joy started into the eyes of all three.

“ ‘Didn’t I tell you, my dear child,’ said our excellent aunt, ‘even before you saw Lucy, that she was precisely the wife I should select for you, had I the choice of a hundred maidens?’ ”

“ ‘Yes, my dear aunt,’ replied Henry, ‘and did I not say that unless I fell in love, nothing would tempt me to marry?’ ”

“ ‘But I knew well enough you couldn’t help loving Lucy.’ ”

“ ‘Yes, my good aunt, and you are dearer to me than ever, for making me acquainted with her.’ ”

“The day after our arrival, we thought it right to go and visit my aunt. We found her full of complaints of the trouble and annoyance entailed on her by the increased expenditure she had deemed it necessary to adopt ever since the addition to her income, obtained by the life annuity.

“With what feelings did I find myself again in that little parlour, in which I had so often thought of Henry, and grieved at our separation; and there was he, looking all happiness—my friend, my husband—from whom nothing but death could now part me.

“ ‘I hope you have insured your life for Lucy?’ asked my aunt; ‘there is no time to be lost in such affairs, I assure you; for I have known several men much more healthy-looking than you are, Mr. Henry, carried off suddenly, before they had time to make any provision for their wives; and now that I look attentively at you, I think I discover some symptoms that indicate a delicacy of the chest.’ ”

“Henry, observing that I was terrified at this remark, could not forbear from smiling, as he assured my aunt that he never had a cough in his life; but she, regardless of this assertion, urged me in the most strenuous terms not to allow him to postpone the insurance; ‘for,’ added she, ‘let the worst happen, by adopting my advice you will be comfortable when he is gone.’ The thoughts engendered in my mind by her words, brought tears to my eyes, and Henry, vexed at her annoying me, could hardly conceal his displeasure. I asked her leave to go and see my old chamber, which I felt a childish desire to visit.

“ ‘Certainly, if you wish it,’ answered she, ‘but, for the life of me, I cannot imagine what pleasure you can find in going into a cold room, when you can stay here and enjoy a good fire?’ ”

“ ‘Pray let me accompany you, my own Lucy?’ said Henry; ‘I should so much like to see the room you occupied so long.’ ”

“ ‘There is nothing to see in it, I assure you,’ observed my aunt, ‘for the day after Lucy went away I had everything taken out of it, in order that Anna, who I caught crying there when she

ought to have been at her work, might not any longer have the silly excuse she gave me, of being made melancholy at looking at the bed Miss Lucy slept on, and her chair, and her table, which, though the sight of them made her cry, yet she liked to see, just as if there was anything to make one weep in looking at such things.'

"Poor Anna followed Henry and I up stairs, and cordial and affectionate was her greeting to us.

" 'Ah! Miss Lucy—but I beg pardon, you are now Mrs. Chatterton—how glad I am to see you again. And the poor wall-flower—you remember it, ma'am—I'm sure I took it myself the moment you left the house, well knowing how missis would throw it out of the window if she found it; but Mrs. Elrington and Mr. Henry were both out, and though I left a long message with the old woman who opened the door for me, I never heard any more of the poor flower. How sorry I was, Miss Lucy—Mrs. Chatterton I meant to say—that I was no scholar, for had I known how to write I would have written to them, ay, and to you too, for my mind was continually bent on you. Missis is more cross and discontented than ever, since she buys so much more of everything than she used to do, for we can't eat half the provisions, and the rest spoils, and then she grows angry, and she says that all she wants is to spend every shilling on herself, and so not leave anything behind her, except as much as will pay for her funeral. No one knows what I suffer, Miss Lucy—Mrs. Chatterton I mean—but next month my apprenticeship will be up, and if you would have pity on me and take me into your service, I would work all day, ay, and all night too, if you required it, to show my gratitude.'

"We made poor Anna a present, and Henry promised to place her in the family of a relation of his, where she would be comfortable, for he knew that if he engaged her my aunt would consider herself ill-used by us. Cake and wine was pressed on us by my aunt when we descended.

" 'Pray have some,' said she; 'don't spare it, for there is plenty more in the house. Now that my income is so much larger than formerly, I have a double quantity of things brought into the house, and not liking company, there is so much more than I can consume that Anna gets more to eat than is good for her; so pray eat plenty of cake!'

" 'Don't you think you would be more comfortable, ma'am, if you occasionally invited a few friends to dine or drink tea with you?' said Henry.

" 'Not at all; quite the contrary; for people are so fond of contradicting and having their own way, that I never feel as if I was the mistress of my own house when visitors are here; so I prefer being alone.'

"We took leave of my aunt, inviting her to visit us whenever

she pleased, to which she answered, 'that she did not much like visiting—that going in an omnibus, among all sorts of people, was out of the question; a cab was a mode of conveyance unsafe and unpleasant; and as to hiring a coach, it was an expense that few visits were worth the trouble of incurring.'

"How closely I clung to the arm of Henry, and how happy did I feel that I belonged to him as the door of my aunt's gloomy dwelling closed after us.

"'It is not good to live alone, my dear Lucy,' said he; 'you see one of the consequences—your poor aunt, for poor she is, even with her increased income, has so long thought only of self, that all society has now become irksome to her; and the addition to her fortune, instead of adding to her happiness by giving her the power of assisting the less fortunate, only decreases her comfort by inducing a useless expenditure the fruits of which, she not being able to consume, are wasted, and the waste annoys her. Those who are not so happy as to have family ties, should form friendly relations with deserving people, for the heart, like the earth, runs to waste if allowed to remain uncultivated.'

"Well, Mr. Richard, the winter passed rapidly away as time always does when happily spent, and spring began to manifest itself in the budding leaves of the trees in our little garden, and in the chirruping of the birds that flocked to it to feast on the crumbs we scattered with lavish hands for their sustenance. Henry left his home every morning at half-past eight, and returned to it at six. How frequently used I to find myself looking at the clock, and counting the hours that must elapse before that which would restore him to me. Yet those hours were not idly spent, for, between attending to my household duties, working at my needle, and preparing some little dainty with which to surprise Henry at dinner, I never was unemployed. I felt that a wife could never too much exert herself to render his home a scene of comfort and happiness to a husband whose days were spent in providing the means for her support, and who devoted himself cheerfully to his daily toil, while *she* was exempt from all labour, save the labour of love of rendering the home he had given her a blissful one.

"Mrs. Elrington, the best and kindest of aunts, finding how anxious I was to learn all that she could teach, took a pleasure in showing me how to do everything that her nephew liked, and I profited so well by her lessons, that, in a short time, she declared, 'I could make puddings, pies, and cakes, better than herself; and as to preparing Henry's favourite dishes, no cook,' she said, 'could surpass me.' The commendations of this excellent woman urged me to exertion, for which the praises of Henry rewarded me dearly. Our house was the abode of peace and love; and I felt that every little art or industry I could use to adorn it rendered it still more dear to him; whose daily toil was soothed by

the happiness he found in it. I would rise with the lark to prepare his favourite cake for his breakfast, escort him a little way on his road to town, and give him, at parting, a nosegay from our own garden, that, as he used to tell me, was the envy of all the clerks in the office with him—its fragrance perfuming the whole room. When the hour approached for his return I would set out to encounter him, and we felt as much delight at meeting after the separation of ten hours, as others do after as many weeks or months. We used to work in our garden together in the evenings until it was dark, then enjoy our simple evening meal with increased relish from the pure air and exercise, and then Henry would read aloud some entertaining and good book, while his aunt and I were employed at needlework till the hour of repose arrived, when, having joined in prayer, we sought our pillows. Those were happy days, and I trust in the Almighty I received such blessings with a grateful spirit. How often since have I reflected on past happiness, and wondered how, having tasted it, I have been enabled to support the sad change that followed. But ‘God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,’ and *He* has taught me to bow to his holy will.

“I had not been above six months a wife when my poor aunt was found dead in her bed, without having betrayed any previous symptom of illness. This event was a great shock to me, and, occurring when I was advanced in pregnancy, seriously affected my health. My mother, to whom would have devolved the furniture, china, and linen of her sister had there been sufficient money left to defray the funeral expenses, had a useless journey to London; for, my aunt having acted up to her selfish principle of expending the whole of her income, and being on the eve of receiving the third quarter’s payment of her annuity which would have become due in a week after her decease, had only a trifling balance in the hands of her banker. Thus, for two quarter’s income she had sunk the whole of her fortune, and not only left nothing to her relations, but was indebted to them for a portion of the expense of her interment.

“But, bless me, it is late! Time passes so fast when one is thinking of days gone by, that I had no notion it was bed-time. I hope I don’t tire your patience out with my old story. Good night, good night!”

CHAPTER VII.

THE cordiality of Mrs. Chatterton increased daily. She anticipated those little wants peculiar to a young man absent from female relatives—looked over my linen, repaired it when required, and prepared many palatable remedies for colds and headaches which

she would insist on my taking, and, in short, acted in every respect towards me as a parent. Her partiality induced the good will of Messrs. Murdoch and Burton, who, impressed with a high opinion of her, were disposed to think well of any one for whom she evinced a friendship. The junior clerks Bingly, Thomas, and Wilson were less liberally inclined. They attributed the respectful deference, which the age and kindness of Mrs. Chatterton elicited from me, to a sordid and artful desire of ingratiating myself in her favour, and never noticed any instance of our mutual good understanding without exchanging sundry smiles and significant glances, of which I longed for an occasion to show my sense of resentment, without incurring the disapprobation of either my kind friend Mrs. Chatterton, or Messrs. Murdoch and Burton.

I had now got so accustomed to the routine of my daily duties in the banking-house, that the confinement ceased to be as irksome to me as at the commencement, and the zeal and attention with which I discharged them, secured to me the good opinion of the partners of the firm. Even John Stebbing, the porter, treated me with a degree of respect he was far from showing towards Messrs. Bingly, Thomas, or Wilson, to whom he often held me up as an example, saying, "Ay, Mr. Wallingford is something like what a young man of business should be. He never keeps any one up late at night to let him in as some others do, a thing which, if known to Messrs. Mortimer, Allison, and Co., would draw down their just anger." Though I occasionally heard from Percy Mortimer, his letters were no longer as confidential or as long as formerly. Always kind, there was a constraint and reserve in them that pained me, and it required all my reason to make me fully sensible that this was but in the natural course of events, as, thrown into the daily society of persons of his own station in life, and with similar habits and pursuits, it could not be expected that he should still retain the same warmth of feeling towards one whose prospects were so widely different, and whose destiny was to be in a sphere so far removed from his own. He sometimes referred to his associates, and named lords and baronets with whom it appeared he passed a good deal of his time.

Shall I confess my weakness, it gave me many a pang to find that others had taken the place I once possessed in his regard, and something like jealousy would creep into my mind, but I allowed not the feeling to dwell there long; but, thankful for past friendship, I determined to merit future goodwill by ever retaining that attachment to the son of my benefactor, which had been so early implanted in my heart. My sister Margaret wrote to me frequently, and it gave me the utmost pleasure to mark the development of her mind, and the progress she was making—nearly self-taught—in those branches of education in the first elements of which I had instructed her. Mrs. Chatterton would listen with pleasure while I talked of Margaret, and when I purchased a few

instructive books for her, would add some useful gift from herself and send kind messages. My mother, in return, would send a *fat turkey* or a couple of fine fowls, an attention that not only gratified her for whom it was meant, but conciliated the goodwill of Messrs. Murdoch and Burton, who partook of these rural dainties.

“Well, Richard,” resumed Mrs. Chatterton the next evening, “we left off, I think, at my poor aunt’s death, and arrival of my dear mother in London. The kind reception afforded to her by Mrs. Elrington and my husband, and the comfortable home in which she found me so happily settled, consoled her for the death of a sister, whose want of affection had many years been a source of pain to her. After spending several days with us, she returned to Buttermuth, highly satisfied with my lot, and blessing those who rendered it so happy. We took the poor faithful Anna into our service, and liked her not the less, that she betrayed a regret for the death of her late mistress that could hardly be expected, when the harshness and unkindness she had experienced at her hands had been taken into consideration. Time passed so fleetly, that when the Sabbath reminded us that a week had glided by, it seemed as if not more than half that number of days had elapsed. The monotony of those peaceful and happy days, far from being considered dull or tiresome, lent them a charm. It was a continuous chain of pleasurable thoughts and feelings, unbroken by aught that could occasion pain; and, like a clear and gentle stream, rolled smoothly and calmly along. How delightful was it to sit round the cheerful fire, my husband reading aloud some instructive book, while I actively plied my needle in making preparations for the expected little stranger, every thought and anticipation of whom sent a thrill of inexpressible happiness through my breast. The interest, too, which our good aunt took in the habiliments, increased my attachment to her; her drawers and presses, long unopened, were now ransacked in search of laces and cambric for years unused, that they might be converted into caps and robes for the infant; and when Henry would put one of the little caps, with its neat frills, on his finger, and wonder how diminutive a thing could contain the head of a human being, how I longed to see the dear object for whom it was designed, and pictured to myself its little face, shrouded with its pretty lace borders. Our kind aunt and Henry were never tired of admiring the baby clothes, and praising my skill in their manufacture. Mrs. Elrington would hope that the child might be a boy, and like its father, while Henry would pray that it might be a girl, and like me. I see, even now, his bright eyes beaming with affection as he bent them on my face, and redoubled all those attentions so gratifying to a wife, who is about to be, for the first time, a mother.

“At length came the time of trial, and for some hours my life was in considerable danger. But it pleased the Almighty to spare

me ; and after being for some time reduced to a state of languor, as if between life and death, the first cry of my infant repaid me tenfold for all I had endured. Ah, what mother's heart ever forgot that cry ! It touched a spring in mine that gushed forth with unutterable tenderness, and I sank into a deep sleep, to awaken in eight hours after to the blessed consciousness of being indeed a mother.

“ Who can paint the delight of pressing the delicate velvet cheek of one's first born, of hearing its gentle breathing, or even its shrill cry ! of looking at its fragile limbs and tiny features, in each of which the doting mother searches, and imagines that she finds a resemblance to those of an adored husband. Well do such joys repay her for weeks of suffering ! But when her infant's lips first imbibe sustenance from her breast, how indescribably delicious are her sensations ! Tears of rapture stole from my eyes, as I felt the milky stream impelled by the dear lips of the little being who nestled to my heart, and saw the looks of delight with which its father regarded us both. Every day was now fraught with a new interest, for each brought increased strength and beauty to my child. When its clear blue eyes would turn towards the candle, or sometimes fix, for a moment, on my face, I could not divest myself of the notion that they already could distinguish objects, and would almost smother it with kisses. But when at length the dear babe would really notice those around him, and learned to know his father and me, what words can do justice to my delight ? Then came his smiles when played with, his attempts to articulate, followed some weeks after by his successful effort to say mam-ma, and pap-pa ; sounds dwelt on with a rapture known only to a mother's heart. Then the employment of his rosy dimpled fingers, which he would often twist in my ringlets, hide in my bosom ; and, last of all, when he began to walk, and would rush into my extended arms, and crow with pride and pleasure at the achievement, how did my heart swell with rapture !

“ My husband doted on the baby boy, and our good aunt lavished praises and kisses on him, as she taught him to clap hands when his father returned home, and to say, ‘ *Papa is tun,*’ for papa is come. I felt my happiness to be so great, that in the midst of its enjoyment I sometimes trembled lest some unforeseen event should occur to destroy it. I would look around on the objects so dear to my heart, and which constituted my felicity, until tears would start into my eyes, and I would retire to my chamber to prostrate myself before the Giver of these blessings, to beseech Him to grant me their continuance. Oh, yes ! my happiness was too great to last, and so a vague and indescribable presentiment often whispered to me.

“ The first interruption to it, was the illness of our excellent aunt. Medical advice, and a strict attention to the regime and medicines it prescribed, failed to restore her health ; and, after the

lapse of a few weeks, it became but too evident that we should lose from our little circle that worthy woman, whose affection and good sense had so largely contributed to its happiness. She bore her sufferings with a patience that endeared her, if possible, still more to us all, speaking words of consolation to us until the last, and resigned her soul, offering up prayers for our happiness. Hers was, indeed, the death-bed of a Christian, soothed by the hopes held out to her by *Him* whose precepts she had followed, and whose promises disarmed even death of his terrors. How truly edifying was the scene that death-bed presented, and how often has the recollection of it since comforted me! Long did we miss that mild and cheerful face from our humble board,—long turn with a sigh from her vacant chair by the blazing hearth, whence we felt it would be like a sacrilege to remove it; and when the pleasant spring brought out the leaves and flowers, we failed not to remember with sadness, that she who once welcomed them with us, was gone for ever from this beautiful world; for so it still appeared to us, even though we had been taught to know that in a brief time those fondly loved may be snatched from us. The death of the old appears so natural an event, that though we may truly regret the loss, the sorrow is of a more gentle nature than when the young are taken from us. The memory of our good aunt was fondly cherished by us all. Her mild wisdom and hopeful trust in Divine Providence were often referred to; and, though gone from this earth, her spirit seemed still to linger with those who in life she had so fondly loved.

“Our little Henry grew in health and beauty,—each month gave him fresh strength,—and so wrapt up were his father and I in the lovely little fellow, that we desired no other child to rival him in our affection. We kept up a regular, though not frequent, interchange of letters with our father and mother, who, now advancing far into the vale of years, urged us to pay them a visit, and Henry having obtained a fortnight’s holiday at Easter, we set out for Buttermuth. With what pride and pleasure did I place my boy in the arms of his grandmother, and see his grandfather, with spectacles on nose, examine his limbs, while he proclaimed that they were as firm and as fat as if the child had never been out of the country. The little darling, too, took an immediate fancy to the aged couple,—would climb on their knees, pat their faces with his fat hands, and hold up his rosy little mouth to them to be kissed.

“‘You have indeed, my dear,’ would my mother say, ‘brought up the child well. Why he never cries for anything, and always does what you or his father tell him; how different from your sister’s children, who really are unbearable, everlastingly screaming for something or other.’

“My sisters, their husbands, and my little nephews and nieces, now four in number, came to welcome us to Buttermuth, and

never did I encounter such noisy and troublesome little creatures. They spoilt one of my best gowns, by wiping their dirty fingers on it after daubing them with currant-jam, and screamed with anger when I reproved them, though in a gentle manner.

“ ‘Don’t cry, darling,’ said their mother, ‘you may wipe your fingers on my gown as much as you please, for I never wear any dress that can be spoiled. Indeed, I wonder how people who have children ever do, for it is so natural to the little dears to touch and pull everything they see, that it would be cruel to prevent them.’

“ ‘Don’t you think, sister, that your little boy looks very delicate?’ observed my sister Betsy; ‘I don’t like that high forehead of his. There was poor Mrs. Johnson’s little boy who died last year of water on the brain, and *he* had just such a forehead.’

“ I turned in alarm to look on the beautiful brow of my child, for everything alarms a fond mother; but its perfect form, often previously remarked, hushed my fears, while a smile on the lips of my husband betrayed his suspicion that there was more malice than kindness in the observation of my sister.

“ ‘You should hear little Henry repeat his lessons and his catechism,’ said my mother, proud of her little grandson’s progress.

“ ‘O! if you have been already setting down the poor child to lessons,’ replied Betsy, addressing me, ‘it is no wonder that he looks so unhealthy. Poor child! it is a pity, for he might have been as stout and hearty as mine are, if he had been brought up like them.’

“ ‘How can you say he is unhealthy-looking?’ asked my mother; ‘I never saw a finer child.’

“ ‘Why, look at his fairness,’ answered my sister, ‘it is not, it can’t be wholesome; then his cheeks are pink, and pink cheeks, Nurse Wilson says, are always a sign of consumption. There was Mrs. Tomkinson’s daughter, that died of a decline last Christmas was a twelvemonth, and don’t you remember what a bright pink spot she always used to have on one of her cheeks.’

“ Again I turned in terror to look on the face of my boy, and again I was reassured by the healthful bloom on his round and dimpled cheeks.

“ ‘But Henry’s complexion is not a spot,’ said my mother, vexed at my sister’s observations. ‘Never have I seen a more healthy red and white well mixed together, and not at all like a spot.’

“ ‘He is not at all like my boys,’ replied my sister, ‘only look at the difference!’

“ ‘There is, indeed, a difference, for they are as brown as berries from the sun,’ replied my mother.

“ ‘Ay! that’s what I call a healthy look; that’s how a boy ought to be,’ answered my sister.

“ When we sat down to dinner, each of her children at once

demanded to be helped, and their demands not being attended to, they began to scream.

“ ‘Do let them have something to keep them quiet,’ said their mother, ‘or there will be no peace with them. Don’t cry, Dick, my darling, and you shall have something so nice.’

“ ‘But I will cry, if I like it,’ answered the rude urchin, and he set up a scream, which was quickly echoed by his brother and sister.

“ ‘There they go,’ said their father; ‘this’ is the music they regale me with every day at their meals. I’m sure I often wish I was deaf, to be saved from hearing their noise.’

“ ‘How can you be so cross and unjust?’ replied my sister, ‘when you know there are not better children in the whole parish of Buttermuth.’

“ ‘I know there are not more troublesome ones,’ rejoined the husband.

“ ‘Ay, that’s what I often tell my old woman,’ said my father; ‘there’s no peace with them; always screaming for everything they see, and tormenting every one about ’em.’

“ ‘It’s easy to see,’ observed my sister, looking spitefully at my boy, ‘that new brooms sweep clean. The new grandchild has put my poor little ones out of favour; but never mind, they’ll not thrive the worse for all the faults people find with them, and I wish other people’s children looked as healthy as they do—that’s what I do.’

“ We returned to our home, well pleased to find ourselves again beneath its peaceful roof, and all the better in point of health for our visit to the country. Months passed rapidly away. Our boy grew every day more interesting, and really made a surprising progress in his learning, considering that as yet he had no teachers save his father and I. Often would my husband hurry home, in order to give him a lesson before he went to bed, and as often would he compliment me on the intelligence and docility of the child. Henry was now able to accompany me in my walks to meet his father, and when he saw him at a distance, would bound joyfully to meet him, leaving me far behind.

“ One fine evening that we set out on our usual walk, Henry, perceiving his father approach, snatched his little hand from mine, and ran eagerly forward. I saw him running rapidly along, and felt all a mother’s pride in the grace and agility of his movements, when, on a sudden, I heard a shriek, saw a number of persons run, and form a circle, through which the driver of a stage-coach was endeavouring to force his horses, while the people hemmed them in on every side, uttering reproaches and execrations. A vague sense of terror filled my mind, and caused my heart to beat so violently that I could hardly move; nevertheless, I tried to advance, and struggled through the crowd now assembled around the coach, when—oh! horror of horrors!—I beheld my boy, covered with

blood, and clasped in the arms of his father. I saw no more, for I fell insensible on the road, and awoke not to consciousness until I found myself in bed in my own house, and my agonised husband watching over me.

“How dreadful was the return to consciousness! and with it the recollection of the appalling misfortune that had befallen me. My first burst of anguish was received on that fond and faithful breast that had so often pillowed my head; for my husband, clasping me in his arms, mingled his tears with mine, while whispering that we must now endeavour to console each other, and submit, with resignation, to the will of *Him*, who had thought fit to send us this heavy trial. I prayed to be let see my child; and though the few friendly neighbours, who had come to offer their aid to us in this time of trouble, tried to persuade me not to see him, Henry bore, rather than led me to the little chamber where all that now remained to me of my precious boy was laid. O God! never shall I forget that sight! Even now, after the lapse of many a long and weary year, it presents itself to my mind’s eye as vividly as when these aged eyes beheld it.

“There, laid on his little white bed, bending over which I had so often watched and blessed his slumbers, was my late blooming child—him, whom, only eight hours before, I had seen bounding in life and health by my side, now cold and lifeless, but still beautiful, even in death, the lovely face wearing the same calm and blessed expression I had so frequently remarked in it when he slept. The tender hand of his agonised father had removed from the hair and face every trace of the gory stream that covered them when I last beheld my child, and carefully concealed the mangled form from my view, leaving only the head revealed. The setting sun threw its bright rosy beams on that young, fair, and open brow, and on those round and dimpled cheeks, giving them a hue of life, and even tinged with red those now pale lips, so lately dyed with a rich crimson, that made them resemble a parted cherry—those lips so often fondly pressed to mine, and which seldom opened without uttering words of love. The casement opening into the little garden had not been closed, and the breath of evening came through it, waving the light curtains of his little bed, and stirring the soft silken curls around his face. I could have believed that my darling only slept, and that a kiss of mine could, as it had often formerly done, awaken him, and I bent down and pressed my parched and burning lips on his cold and rigid ones; but the touch brought the conviction of the fearful truth at once to my mind, and, uttering a faint cry, I again found relief in insensibility. A burning fever followed the repeated fainting fits with which I had been seized, and, for many days, my life was despaired of. During this malady I was haunted by the scene I had witnessed, and even by still more appalling ones. Sometimes I saw my boy rushing along in all his wonted joyousness; and the next struggling, bleeding, and muti-

lated beneath the feet of horses. At others, I fancied that I saw a coach borne rapidly along by fiery steeds, and rushed forward to snatch my child out of their reach, but in the attempt me-thought I fell, and felt the wheels of the ponderous vehicle crush my brain, while the dying cries of my boy inflicted still greater agony. It was my husband's hand that applied the cooling beverage to my burning lips, and supported my aching head during this long illness; and it was his voice that soothed my agony, even when unconscious of his presence. When reason again resumed her empire, how did I deplore the sad change that had taken place in my once happy home. No longer did the bright face of my child, or his dear lisping accents enliven it. I missed him every hour, and was sometimes almost doubtful of my own identity, when now no longer blessed with that dear object, that lent existence so great a charm. My husband, fearful that the sight of the little bed, playthings, or clothes, of our lost angel, would but serve to keep alive the unavailing grief into which I was plunged, had them all carefully removed and locked up, so that not a trace remained to remind me that I had been a mother. This absence of all connected with my lost darling, made me sometimes think that all the blissful hours enjoyed during his brief and spotless life, were but a happy dream from which I had now awakened, and increased, instead of mitigating, my sorrow. I would, in such moments, endeavour to recall his image, his smiles, and his voice, to memory, in order to prove to myself that I had not always been childless; and when I had brought back that adored face, now shrouded in the grave, and the tones of that sweet voice, now hushed for ever, the sense of my deprivation became so overwhelming that I have prayed for forgetfulness.

“Alas! ungrateful as I was, I remembered not, that if the Almighty had taken one blessing from me, I was still rich in the possession of another—that Henry, the husband of my choice, the father of our lost child, was still spared to me; but it is one of the peculiarities of grief to lose the sense of what still remains of happiness, in regret for what is lost. I would sit whole days brooding over my sorrow, and indulging the most fantastic notions connected with it. If the rain poured in torrents against my casement, I would start with a shudder at the thought that it was falling on *his* grave; and so much did this idea haunt me, that I urged Henry to have a marble monument erected over the grassy mound in which he was laid. I visited the spot continually, and, when sure of not being overheard, or seen, would kneel down and kiss the icy marble, and address the most endearing epithets to the cold, dull ear of death.

“My husband was now compelled to devote a more than ordinary time to the duties of his office, in order to make up for the days he had been kept away by our affliction, and my long and dangerous illness which followed it. When he returned late in the

evening he would assume a cheerfulness that was, I afterwards ascertained, very foreign to the real state of his feelings, but which he put on in the vain hope of enlivening me; while I, absorbed in my selfish grief, inwardly reproached him for his want of sympathy with it, and for so soon becoming reconciled to the loss of the idolised object that occupied all my thoughts.

“One evening, when I had been more than usually depressed through the day, and my husband and I were about to sit down to our simple meal, I heard a noise in the room over that in which we were, like the falling of somebody; and, forgetful for the moment, I started up, and exclaimed, ‘My boy has fallen and hurt himself; Henry—Henry, my darling, come to mamma!’ At that moment my eyes fell on the face of his father, and never shall I forget its expression! Pale as marble, there was a look of anguish in the countenance, that, at one glance, revealed all that the doting father had suffered; and how great must have been the effort to conceal those sufferings from me! I rose, and threw myself into his arms, our tears mingled, and from that moment I endeavoured to console him who had hitherto done violence to his own feelings, in order to soothe mine.”

CHAPTER VIII.

“MY sister Betsy and her husband came to London in some months after this time, to have a holiday, as she said, and see all the fine sights. Henry invited them to take up their abode with us, a proposal which was not accepted until an exact calculation had been made by them, as to whether it would be cheaper to take a lodging and pay for their board, or to have the daily expense of hackney coaches or the stage incurred for their excursions from our house. Having ascertained that the latter was the least expensive plan, they came to us; and before they were one day beneath our roof, made us heartily wish them safely back again at Buttermuth.

“‘I did not bring any of my children with me,’ said my sister; ‘for I thought it would renew your grief to see what fine hearty creatures they are. Besides, I was fearful they might meet with the same accident that happened to your little boy. Who’d have thought of his coming to such a death, kept tied, as he always was, to your apron string? but it’s always the way, when children are cooped up like that, they are sure to run into mischief the moment they get loose. I never heard the particulars of how it happened; sister, pray tell me.’

“A burst of tears, that I could not repress, checked, for a moment, my sister’s unfeeling inquiries; but they were soon

renewed, nor did they cease until she had brought me into a paroxysm of grief.

“ ‘ Well, I did not expect to find you so little resigned,’ resumed she, ‘ to the will of God. You ought to be glad ; for, after all, it is for the better ; for the poor little fellow was but a weak, sickly child after all ; and had he lived, would have cost you a fortune in doctors’ and apothecaries’ bills. What have you done with his clothes ? they can’t be any use to you now ; and I was thinking they would exactly fit my little William, who is only a year and a half younger than your Henry was, but who is quite as big, if not more so.’ ”

“ ‘ How strange your little dinners seem to us,’ would my sister say, when we had, at great inconvenience to ourselves, and no little expense, changed our dinner hour, and provided what we considered a plentiful repast. ‘ Such small, lean legs of mutton and skimping pieces of beef, and only two miserable little dishes of vegetables. To us, who are accustomed to great joints of fat meat, and a profusion of garden stuff, it looks quite odd, and makes one much more hungry to see your dinners. It is lucky we did not bring any of the children ; for, I assure you, any two of them would eat up all that is on this table in a jiffy. Why don’t you have large fat geese or turkeys for dinner ? or even fowls ? We always have such a plenty, that we have only to send out to the farm-yard whenever we wish to have poultry for dinner. Well, for my part, I wouldn’t live in Lunnon for the world ; I’m sure I’d be starved downright. Then your house is so clean, it makes one feel quite uncomfortable ; I’m always afraid of dirtying it : the bars of the grate look as bright as if there had never been a fire in it ; the windows and the steps before the door are rubbed each morning, I see ; what a waste of time. Then you have a clean table-cloth every day, which is a piece of extravagance in a place where washing is so dear.’ ”

“ But it would be an endless task to repeat one half of my sister’s remarks on my humble abode and mode of living, always delivered with a self-complacent declaration of the infinite superiority of her own. There was no night of the week that she and her husband did not visit some one of the theatres, and unceremoniously demand that a hot meat supper should be prepared for their return.

“ ‘ I come back so peckish,’ would she say, ‘ that unless I eat a good meal I cannot close my eyes all night.’ ”

“ ‘ I do not know about the closing the eyes,’ said her husband ; ‘ but I’m sure I never heard any one snore as you do ; supper or no supper, it’s all the same, I can’t get a wink of sleep for the noise you make.’ ”

“ ‘ Me snore ? well, that’s a good one, to be sure ; why, it’s you that snore enough to awaken all the house.’ ”

“ At length, the visit of my sister and her husband drew to a close ; but not until their innumerable wants, and indelicate avowals

of them, had nearly exhausted my patience, and considerably increased our quarter's bills to our tradespeople.

"The day previous to their departure she asked me 'whether I had not observed the great change in my husband's appearance? He is in a galloping consumption, you may be sure,' said she; 'I saw it, and so did my master, the first day we came.'

"Seeing my face become pale with apprehension, she added, 'I dare say he may live some months; for I have seen people linger a long time after the doctors had given them over: but, I think it my duty to warn you, in order that you may be prepared for the worst; and, after all, it is better, as he is consumptive, that he should be taken away while you are yet young enough to marry again, than that he should be left until you are grown an old woman; and now that you will have no incumbrance, which is another piece of luck, you may get a husband well to do in the world. And I'd advise you, when all is over, to come down to Buttermuth, for there is Farmer Bolton, who is looking out for a wife to take care of his children, and he would make you an excellent husband. There's no use in crying, sister,' continued she, observing the tears she wrung from me; 'we must all be resigned to the will of Providence; and it's only flying in the face of God to be grieving at the trials it pleases *Him* to send.'

"Horror-struck by the terrible intelligence conveyed in the first part of her unfeeling discourse, I was scarcely conscious of all that followed it. I sat revolving on the possibility of my Henry's being indeed, as she represented him, doomed to an early death, without my having discovered any one of the fatal symptoms that, as she asserted, had struck her and her husband on their arrival. I recalled with terror any cough, however slight or temporary, with which he had been assailed since our marriage, and magnified it until I blamed my own blindness to that which had become evident to others, and worked myself into a state of misery and alarm, that I had much difficulty in concealing from my husband when he returned home. I gazed with breathless alarm on his face as he entered the room, and attributed the heightened colour occasioned by exercise to the fatal malady which my unfeeling sister had persuaded me had marked him for an early death. Day by day I was haunted by apprehension for him. It was in vain that he assured me he was in perfect health, and that to an unprejudiced eye every indication of it was visible in his appearance. I could not for many months conquer my fears; and when at length I began to be convinced that my alarm had been groundless, a letter from my sister renewed my fears, by reminding me that the insidious disease which she felt assured my husband was labouring under, often deceived not only the patient himself, but those around him; and, consequently, she advised me 'to prepare for the worst.'

"But even out of evil cometh good; for the anxiety into which I was thrown for months relative to Henry, did more towards

lessening the grief occasioned by my child's death, than did all the reasoning of my friends, or my own prudent resolves on the subject. The dread of losing him filled every thought, and the love I felt for him the day we were united at the altar, was light in comparison with that which I experienced, when the fear of his being snatched from me presented itself. Woman must live in, and for another, otherwise she fulfils not her mission on earth; and though its fulfilment may entail ceaseless anxiety, and too often misery, yet only when discharging it can she know happiness, for then does she administer to that of another.'

"About this period we received intelligence of the sudden death of my sister Betsy's husband. The event was announced to me in the following letter from her:—

"'Who would have thought,' wrote she 'that my poor John would have been snatched away—he who was so stout and hearty—while your husband, who has certainly a consumption, is still alive? Never was he in better health than the day before I lost him. He ate a good supper—for poor dear soul! he had an appetite that made me think he'd live to be a hundred—of roast goose, stuffed with sage and onions, of which he was always very fond. I never saw him eat more, and then he had some toasted cheese, and drank some of our strongest home-brewed ale, not above a quart or so, and a couple of glasses of brandy to keep down the goose, as he said; and I heard him snoring and snorting like, as comfortable as possible, till I fell asleep, and when I awoke he was dead by my side. The doctor who attended the inquest, said his death was occasioned by eating and drinking too much at supper; but I'll never believe it, for I have seen him eat quite as much most nights ever since we were married, and if it never hurt him before, why should it then? I miss him terribly, especially at meals, for it is so solitary to have no one to carve for one; but it's no use to grieve, and I have a good deal to do, and to think of; for, as he died without a will, I come in for my thirds, and so must stir myself to keep things straight. The children begin to be a great trouble to me, now that they have no father to give 'em a box on the ear, or a good blow across the shoulders, whenever they are more impudent than usual. You are a lucky woman to have no children, for the old saying, that "they are a certain plague, but a very uncertain comfort," is quite true. I already find it quite impossible to manage the boys, and suppose that I shall be compelled to marry again as soon as the year is up, in order to have some one to keep them in order, as well as to take care of the farm, where everything seems to be at sixes and sevens. A poor lone woman is much to be pitied, and so says my neighbour, Farmer Thompson, of Sudly. You may remember him, for father and mother used to talk of his being a little wild. He has now sown his wild oats, as the saying is, and has been very steady of late. My poor husband used to say (God forgive him for being so un-

charitable!) that it was because he had no more money to spend that he became so steady; but I'm sure it was from seeing the folly of his past doings. He is a very personable man, and is very neighbourly to me.'

"I felt half offended when Henry, to whom I gave my sister's letter to read, began to smile at the portion of it that was relative to Farmer Thompson. 'You'll see, my dear,' said he 'that when the year is up, nay probably before, your sister will marry her neighbour, and give her children a stepfather, who will not only master them, but govern her too.'

"And so it actually turned out, even before the year was finished; and in less than three years after, Farmer Thompson ran away to America, after he had spent every shilling belonging to my poor sister and her children; and she and they were obliged to go and live with my father and mother, whose comfort and peace, the wild doings of the boys, and the repining of my sister, completely destroyed. My husband kindly apprenticed one of the boys, and my father did the same by the other, but both ran away from their masters; the one went to sea, and the other enlisted, and neither had been heard of. When Henry and I went to Buttermuth to visit my father and mother the year before we lost them—for they died within a couple of months of each other—we found my sister much changed. She complained bitterly of Farmer Thompson.

"'If I could only hear of his death, it would make my mind easy and comfortable,' said she.

"'Why, what difference can it make to you?' observed my mother; 'he can't come back on account of his debts, therefore you will not be troubled with him any more, so it's the same as if he was dead!'

"'Not at all,' answered my sister, 'for if I was sure he was dead, I could marry again.'

"'Marry again!' ejaculated my mother; 'heaven knows, you have had enough of marriage, I should think.'

"'Those who have been accustomed to have a husband and a house of their own, never can be comfortable in another person's house,' said my sister; 'and though Thompson was a bad husband, all men are not like him. Nor do I think that he would have been so bad, only for the way he was plagued with them two unruly boys of mine, who were enough to drive any man out of his wits. Their poor father, God forgive him, spoilt 'em so completely. He little thought, poor man! what trouble they would be to whatever stepfather I gave them, or he wouldn't have let 'em become so unruly; but people never think of what's to come, or if they did, they would be more reasonable, for sake of those that are to outlive them.' Henry stole a sly glance at me when he heard this speech, and I found it difficult to restrain myself from smiling.

“ ‘ Well, the poor boys paid dearly for their unruly ways,’ said my mother, ‘ for surely no poor creatures were ever more unkindly used than they were by their stepfather. Why, they have ran away from home, and come here with their faces bearing the marks of his violence, many a time; and you told me, daughter, that you often quarrelled with that bad man for beating them so continually.’

“ ‘ And more fool I,’ answered my sister, ‘ for taking their parts, for that only caused ill-blood between me and my husband; who, if I had not interfered, would not have gone off to the public-house, as he used to do on such occasions, where he fell into bad company and renewed his old courses.’

“ ‘ It was a pity you were so obstinate as to marry him against the advice of all your friends,’ remarked my mother, provoked into the observation by the unfeeling comments of my sister. ‘ We all knew well enough what a graceless chap he was, and what a bad husband he would be likely to make.’

“ ‘ Well, it’s my belief, that if I had not had such troublesome boys, Thompson would have made a very good husband, but their doings spoilt his temper; and it was all the fault of their poor father, God forgive him!’ My mother shook her head and turned up her eyes, a common custom of hers when she dissented from the opinions of those she conversed with; and when talking to me on the subject a few days after, when we were alone, she told me that she dreaded the future destiny of my sister, as she plainly saw she was not yet corrected.

“ ‘ She has the rage to be married,’ added my mother, ‘ and in spite of the severe lesson she has received, would, if a widow to-morrow, marry the first worthless man who would ask her.’

“ Soon after our visit to Buttermuth, my husband returned from his office one evening with a much more grave countenance than usual, for he ever entered his humble home with a serene aspect and fond words. He told me, that Messrs. Mortimer, Allison, and Finsbury had proposed to him to proceed to the West Indies, for the arrangement of some commercial concerns of theirs of great importance, and which, owing to the sudden death of their agent there, required the immediate presence of some confidential person on the spot.

“ ‘ I owe them too many favours,’ said Henry, ‘ to decline complying with their wishes; but I confess, my dear Lucy, that the thought of leaving you for a couple of years is so heavy a trial that it unmans me.’

“ ‘ But cannot I accompany you?’ interrupted I, eagerly.

“ ‘ No,’ replied my husband, ‘ it cannot be; for when I arrive in the West Indies I am not to be stationary, but must proceed to the different places where the firm of Mortimer, Allison, and Finsbury have commercial transactions.’

“ Bathed in tears, I fell on his shoulder, and wept long and

bitterly; nor could he restrain his tears, while he endeavoured to reconcile me to what he considered it to be his duty to do. We passed nearly a sleepless night; and when at length I sank into slumber, my dreams were coloured by the sad thoughts that filled my waking hours. In ten days from the one in which Henry announced to me the offer that had been made to him, he embarked for the West Indies, leaving me overwhelmed with a grief that neither my reason, nor the hope of his safe return, could mitigate. Dreadful was that parting! Even now I cannot dwell on it.

“When he was gone I wondered, and blamed myself for having consented to his departure. All the arguments and motives he had urged to reconcile me to the measure, seemed, now that he was no longer present to utter them, vague and dissatisfactory; and could I have but recalled him, never would I have permitted him to leave me. His departure seemed like a painful dream, but from which, alas! there was no awaking.

“The morning after he had sailed, when I awoke, I vainly put forth my hand in search of his. I burst into tears of anguish, when I remembered that two long and dreary years must elapse before I could again behold him to whose heart I had been so fondly pressed only the day before. And there was the pillow on which his dear head had reposed. Oh! how interminable appeared the time to be got over before it would again rest on it! I wished that I could sleep through the next two years, and only awaken to welcome *him* back, without whom life would have no longer any attractions for me. Every object around me reminded me continually of my poor Henry;—the chair in which he used to sit, the table at which he wrote. How did my tears flow afresh, when I sat down to my solitary repasts, and saw his vacant seat! Then came the thought of how many tedious months must elapse before I could even hear from him? Days rolled on without rendering me more reconciled to his absence; and when the evening closed in, and that I endeavoured to beguile the tedious hours by working at my needle, how did I miss him who used to read aloud to me, and make me forget the flight of time.

“I found some consolation in reading works on the West Indies, and making myself acquainted with the manners and customs of those with whom he was to spend so many months; yet the thought of the vast distance that separated us was continually recurring to me; and the boundless sea, with its countless waves rising up between us, inspired me with a sense of dread not to be expressed. Did the wind blow a little louder than usual, I trembled with terror lest it boded a coming storm; and when the rain came pattering against my casement, I thought that *he* might be exposed to it, and looked with sorrow at his vacant chair by the blazing hearth, so lately rendered cheerful by his presence.

“How strange and wayward are the imaginings of love. There

were moments when I felt with bitterness that, surrounded by new and exciting objects of interest, Henry might either cease to think of me, or lose that relish for his home that had hitherto formed its chief blessing for me. My humble abode was as a temple dedicated to him. Every article it contained had been selected by him, and was endeared by a thousand fond recollections. Were it possible for me to forget him, those silent monitors would have recalled him to my memory, while *he* had *nought* but our Bible, a lock of my hair, and the sweet memory of the past, to remind him of me in that far and strange land to which every day was bearing him nearer. Yet there were hours in which our hearts must hold communion together, whatever might be the distance that divided us—the hours of prayer at morning and night, when we had been wont to offer up our supplications to the Divinity. The Sabbath too, when we attended the house of God, could never be passed over without tender thoughts being mingled in our devotions.

“The consciousness of this sympathy was a consolation; and in the hours, and on the occasions I have named, my beloved husband, though separated from me by a vast distance, seemed almost present to me, so certain was I that he too was praying while I knelt. The thought of our early days of love came back to me with vividness. Our trials, our marriage, and the happy days that followed it, seemed present to me, as if they had only recently occurred; while, strange to say, it seemed as if Henry had been gone a whole year before half that period had elapsed, so long did the time of our separation seem. At length came a letter from him; and, oh! with what joy and transport did I receive it! How did my heart beat and my hands tremble as I broke the seal! And yet the reflection that months had elapsed since this precious letter was written damped my joy. I read it with streaming eyes, for the expressions of tenderness with which it was filled renewed afresh the bitter sense of our separation, and made the period fixed for our re-union seem more than ever remote. How many times was that precious letter read over! It was placed in my bosom all day, and beneath my pillow at night, until another letter from the same dear hand arrived to replace it.

“My parents died about this time; my mother having only survived her old and faithful partner a few weeks. They bequeathed to me a couple of hundred pounds, and left to my sister Betsy, who had been wholly dependent on them, the farm and stock, with one hundred pounds in cash. My poor sister Sarah was in a dying state when they were removed from this life, and followed them shortly after; and she having lost her only child some months before, my father and mother thought it right to leave the bulk of their fortune, not to the daughter they most loved, but to her who most required their aid.

“The loss of my parents and sister threw a deep gloom over my

spirits, already so depressed by the absence of Henry; and while I was still mourning their deaths, a letter from Betsy reached me. She wrote to say, that seven years having now elapsed since she last received any tidings from her unworthy husband, she determined on considering him as dead, and on again entering the married state.

“ ‘I am told,’ wrote she, ‘that when a husband has been that number of years absent, without having been heard of, a wife is at liberty to marry again; and, having found a person likely to render me happy, I am decided on availing myself of the privilege of which I only lately became aware. The person I have chosen is Mr. Macgrowler, an Irish clergyman, lately arrived here, and one of the finest preachers in the world. I may well be proud of engaging the affections of such a man; and, though, like all great men, he has got his enemies, who have left no stone unturned to prevent me marrying him, nothing shall dissuade me from becoming his wife. To show you how superior a man he is, I send you the following; which letter I received from him this morning:—

“ ‘It’s yourself that’s a jewel of a woman; and lucky enough I consider myself to have come to Buttermuth to have found you. Yes, although it may be sinful to love anything on earth as I love you, I hope to obtain pardon for this sin by leading you, like a lost lamb, to the fold from which you have so long strayed. Didn’t I buffet Satan last night, when Doctor Snowgrass thried to bother me before my congregation?’ ‘Are you in holy orthers?’ says he. ‘Am I not?’ says I. ‘I’d like to see the man that would deny it,’ says I; and with that, didn’t I draw myself up like a king, and look at him as if he was nothing?—‘Misguided man!’ says he, ‘why have you left your church and your pastor? Have I not been a faithful shepherd to my flock?’—‘Is it traiting Christians like sheep you’d be?’ says I: ‘but, faith! that same doesn’t surprise me; for sure, don’t ye devour ’em?’ How that sly rogue, Tom Halcomb, winked and laughed, and Bill Jackson enjoyed the joke.—‘Your language convinces me that you are not in holy orders,’ says Doctor Snowgrass. —‘Bethershin,*’ says I; ‘but there’s many a one, and you have the proof of it before your eyes, that prefers praying in the open air with me, to being shut up in a close church with you; and as for the women, God bless them! I’d like to know which they prefer, you or me?’ With that he walked off, seeing that he couldn’t hold up against my arguments; and how could he, poor man? but that’s neither here nor there. What I now write to you for is, to tell you, that the sooner you make up your mind to make me happy—ay, and yourself too,—the better. You are, to all intents and purposes, relaced from your former marriage vows; for, as your husband that was, has never had the politeness nor decency to write you a line, just to tell you whether

* Irish for “may be so.”

he was alive or dead, during the last seven years, you are now free to marry again ; and, if he came back the week after, to claim you, you might turn your back on him and laugh in his face. We understand the law tin times better in Ireland than the English do ; so you may be sure of what I tell you. You say, that no clergyman here will marry us, you darlint of the world ! but what's to hinder us from going to the next county and being married ? And, indeed, for the matter of that, 'twill be more comfortable than being stared at by a parcel of fools, who, because they don't know the law, think you have no right to marry. Once you are the Reverend Mrs. Macgrowler, you may laugh in your sleeve at the ignorant spalpeens. I'm coming to take a sociable bit of supper with you to-night—you jewel of a woman ! Don't put yourself to any expense or throuble on account of that same. A roast goose, stuffed with potatoes and onions, will do very well ; but, mind you don't forget what I tould you, about the manner of boiling the potatoes.'

"An attempt had been made to efface the next paragraph of Macgrowler's letter, but it had not succeeded, for a request for the loan of five pounds was still discernible. I lost not a moment in writing to my poor imprudent sister, to warn her against the folly and sin she was about to commit, and to assure her that she would render herself liable to an action for bigamy, if she persisted in carrying her project into effect ; but, alas ! my advice was disregarded, and a letter from an old friend of my father's soon after informed me, that my unfortunate sister, after having disposed of everything she possessed, had left Buttermuth with Macgrowler, with the avowed intention of being married at the first place where they could get the ceremony performed.

"Ten days after this intelligence I was disagreeably surprised by the arrival of my sister and Macgrowler. They came in a hackney-coach, and I heard him coolly order the driver to bring in two large boxes from it.—'This, sister, is my husband,' said Betsy, pointing to Macgrowler, who approached with open arms to embrace me, but I drew back, and said, that I could not receive him as such, and must therefore request him to withdraw.

"'Arragh ! would you be for going between a woman and her lawful husband ?' said he, looking at me with a face of the most unblushing impudence.

"'I cannot, sister, consent to receive this man beneath my roof,' said I ; and, however painful to my feelings it may be to say so, you cannot take up your abode here with him. Should you ever want a roof to shelter you, and that you forsake your sinful companionship, you will find me willing to comfort and console you.'

"'Why, you surely can't be so inhospitable as to refuse to receive my wife and I for a few days ?' said Macgrowler, assuming an artful leer, that increased my disgust for him.

"'I am surprised, sister,' interrupted Betsy, 'that you can re-

to acknowledge my husband, when under this same roof you lodged my first husband and me when we visited London !'

" 'I refuse to receive this person, because I know he is *not* legally your husband,' replied I. My sister now got very angry ; called me unkind, unnatural, and ungrateful ; and Macgrowler, perceiving that I was not to be talked into receiving him as a guest, told me I ought to be ashamed of myself for being so unnatural a sister.

" 'Come away, Mrs. Macgrowler,' said he, 'and don't be after wasting your breath in talking to her. There's plenty of lodgings to be had in Lunnon. Hackney-coachman ! hackney-coachman ! come here, man alive, and take back the boxes to the coach.'

" While this scene occurred, the garden-gate had been left open, and a beggar woman, with four half-naked children at her heels, and twins in her arms, had entered, and were now close to my door, imploring charity. No sooner had the poor woman heard the voice of Macgrowler, than rushing forward, she seized him by the arm, looked anxiously in his face, and bursting into a fit of tears, she exclaimed, throwing herself on her knees—' Oh ! then God in his mercy be thanked, for he has heard my prayers and granted them. Isn't it my own Thomash that I have found at last ? Down on your marrow-bones, childer, sure here's your father : praise be to *His* holy name that led me to this spot. Ah ! cuishla-ma-chree ! sure it's your own poor Judy that came over all the way across the say* to look for you ; and here's the two *bucka leen* † bawns that God sent me while you were away. Look at the crathurs ! sure they're the living image of your own purty self, my own jewel of a husband. But you don't say a word to me,—nor so much as give me a kiss—nor look at the twins I've brought you, though sure any father might be proud of 'em ! And now I see it, how finely dressed you are—arragh, Thomash ! what's come to you, and where have you been so long ?'

" 'The woman is mad,' said Macgrowler, 'I never saw her before in all my born days.'

" 'Never saw your own lawful wife, and the mother of your six living childer, and the two blessed angels that are in heaven !—Oh, Thomash, Thomash !—avourneen. Can you put this shame on your own poor Judy ?' and the poor woman wept in agony.

" 'Daddy, daddy,' said the two elder boys, who now fully recognised their father, and who rushed up to embrace him, while the little girls clung to their mother, and began to cry.

" 'Come, my dear,' said Macgrowler, his face flushed to crimson, 'come away.'

" 'Let go my husband, woman, and call away these troublesome brats,' said my sister.

" 'Your husband ! your husband !' repeated the poor Irish

* Sea.

† Fair boys.

woman, 'then God forgive you for telling such a story, and pardon *him* who stands by unmoved to hear it. Oh, Thomash O'Gallogher! is it mad or deceitful you are to deny your own lawful wife and 'childer, and in a foreign land!—the heart of me will break, that's what it will,—ogh hone! ogh hone!' and she sobbed in uncontrollable anguish.

"Macgrowler attempted to pass her, but she seized his knees with desperation with one hand, while with the other she clasped the twins to her bosom. Her cries, and those of the children, attracted a crowd around the door, among which were two policemen, who entered the house and demanded the cause of the disturbance?

"'Take up that nasty beggar and her brats,' said my sister, 'and send them to prison. This is the Reverend Mr. Macgrowler, the great preacher and my husband.'

"'Yes,' said Macgrowler, 'I'm one of the clargy, and this lady is my wife.'

"'Don't believe him, gentlemen, don't believe him,' exclaimed the poor Irishwoman. 'His name is Tom O'Gallogher, and he's my lawful husband and the father of these six poor children, and of two more that lie buried in the churchyard of Killballyowen. Oh! little did I think that when we both knelt over their graves and shed our tears together, that he'd deny the mother that bore them;' and here her sobs impeded her utterance.

"It was evident that Macgrowler's better feelings were excited by this appeal; for his lip quivered, and his eyes became moistened, and I observed that he no longer tried to shake off the two sturdy, half-naked, but good-looking boys, that held the skirts of his coat, and kept crying 'Daddy, avourneen, daddy!'

"'Why don't you take up that troublesome mad woman, and free my husband from these dirty boys?' demanded my sister.

"'There's no occasion in life to hurt the poor woman or the children,' interposed Macgrowler, when he saw one of the policemen somewhat roughly endeavouring to force the woman to release himself from her grasp, while the other was pulling away the boys.

"'Here's my certificate, that I have kept in my bosom night and day ever since I left Killballyowen,' said the woman, drawing forth a small leather bag, in which was a certificate of her marriage, and a crooked sixpence with a hole in it.—'Arragh! look there, Thomash, the last gift you ever gave me when you were going away to England for the harvest. Many is the time since then that these poor children and I have wanted the bit and the sup, but I'd never part with this crooked sixpence.'

"One of the policemen read the certificate aloud, and then asked the woman whether she knew any one in London that could identify her husband?

"'Sure, I never was in Lunnon in all my born days,' replied

she. 'I came over from Ireland to look for my husband, when I could no longer bear the trouble that was breaking my heart, when all the other boys that went over for the harvest, came back, bringing their earnings to their families, and brought no news of him. I've been thrying to keep life and soul together, by earning a little at the hop-gathering, always hoping that I would see or hear of *him*, about whom I was thinking night and day, and was now on my way to Lunnon, though afraid to find myself and these poor crethurs in such an over-grown place, when I heard his voice (and the sound of it went through my dark heart like a flash of lightning, making it as bright as day) calling out "hackney-coachman, hackney-coachman."' Hardened as was Macgrowler, his countenance underwent many changes, as he listened to the artless statement of the poor woman.

"'Is there no mark by which you could identify your husband?' asked one of the policeman, with a magisterial air.

"'Fifty—fifty marks,' replied the woman. 'Wouldn't I know the roguish eyes, and the pretty forehead, and the curly hair, and the laughing mouth, and the nate limbs of him, among a thousand?'

"'I don't mean that,' said the policeman, 'but has he no particular mark?'

"'Yes, to be sure he has—one of his teeth, at the right side of his mouth, is broken. It was a blow from Pat Drolegan, which knocked the dhudeen* he was smoking against the tooth, and broke it, and mad enough I was when it happened!'

"'Allow me to examine your teeth,' said the policeman.

"'Certainly sir, certainly; with all the pleasure in life.'

"'Why, the woman is right enough, *here* is a broken tooth!' exclaimed the policeman.

"'O! yes, I broke it eating nuts,' said Macgrowler.

"'And he has a large mole at the back of his neck, under his cravat,' said the woman, a piece of intelligence that brought a blush of crimson to the cheek of Macgrowler.

"'Let me see your neck, sir,' asked the policeman.

"'It isn't very agreeable for a gentleman to be obliged to take off his neckcloth,' said Macgrowler, hesitating.

"'But it is not very agreeable for a gentleman to be sent to Botany Bay for bigamy,' observed the policeman; 'so I advise you to show your neck at once.'

"'No sooner had Macgrowler put his hand up to untie his cravat, than the woman stopped the movement, and turning to the policeman, demanded 'whether a man could really be transported for bigamy?'

"'Certainly, nothing could save him,' answered he. She gave a deep sigh, her eyes became suffused with tears, and her lips quivered, as she earnestly gazed at Macgrowler.

*A short pipe.

“ ‘Now gentlemen,’ said she, ‘that I have looked again, and closely examined him (whom I took to be my husband) more attentively, I find I was mistaken. I am sorry,’ and her voice became choked by her deep emotion, ‘that I have given so much trouble, but the gentleman need not take off his cravat, I am convinced he’s not my husband.’

“The effort was too much for the poor creature, and she fell fainting at the feet of *him*, for whose safety she had resigned her rights. The poor children began crying, and kissing their poor mother, whose temples I chafed with cold water, while the twins were placed on a sofa.

“Macgrowler, no longer able to control his feelings, tore himself from the grasp of my sister, who endeavoured, but in vain, to restrain him, rushed forward, and threw himself on his knees by the side of the fainting woman, whom he pressed with frantic fondness to his heart, exclaiming, ‘Judy, O! my own dear Judy, have I killed you by my cruelty? Isn’t it myself that’s a baste to deny my own lawful wife, and pretend never to have seen her before? Arragh! come to yourself, ma yourneen,* my darlint, and I’ll declare in the face of all the world, that it’s yourself that’s my only true and rightful wife.’ The poor Irishwoman opened her eyes, and fixed them, for a moment, with a glance of unutterable tenderness on the face of her husband. She then put her hand to her brow, as if to recall her bewildered thoughts, and after a moment’s reflection, turned to the policemen and said—

“ ‘Gentlemen, don’t believe what he says; he’s mistaken, indeed he is, and doesn’t know what he says. That lady there,’ pointing to my sister, ‘is his wife, sure its easily seen, for look how well dressed both he and she are, while I’m only a poor crethur, that being light-headed from fatigue and sorrow, made a grate mistake, and have given a terrible sight of trouble, for which I ax pardon.’

“ ‘Judy, my own darlint Judy! it’s no use to deny the truth; if the gallows was before me, and I richly deserve it, I’d never again be such a wild baste as to deny you. *You* are my wife, my throe and only wife; and if you’ll forgive me this time, I’ll never lave you again while I live.’

“ ‘Then you acknowledge that you have committed bigamy?’ said one of the policemen. ‘You are also his wife, ma’am, are you not?’ continued the man, turning to my sister.

“ ‘To be sure I am,’ answered she, looking very much confused.

“ ‘I told you so—gentlemen, I told you so,’ said the poor Irishwoman.

“ ‘He’s *my* husband, and must come with me,’ said my sister.

“ ‘Divil a foot, Mrs. Macgrowler; and for the matter of that, you know right well, that though the banns have been three times

* My dear.

called, I have always put off the ceremony; for, bad as I am, my conscience tould me it would be a shame to take you in.'

" 'Oh! you vile shocking man,' exclaimed my sister, bursting into a fit of hysterical weeping. 'But I'll have the law against you, that's what I'll do.'

" 'Sure, if I *had* married you, you might do that same; but as I have not, and as you can't say that I have not behaved civil and genteel to you all the time, it's not over decent in you to show your teeth when you can't bite. And now, Judy, ma vourneen, before all this genteel company, I'll tell you the truth. When I was thinking of going back to Ireland with my earnings after the harvest, sure I got the typhus faver, and while I was down in it and out of my mind, the bad people about me took every farthing I had in the world. A field-preacher, who I met by chance, took pity on me. His name was Macgrowler, and he had a great character for fine preaching. Well, he assisted me, and behaved very charitable, but he caught the faver from me, and it carried him off. As we were both strangers in the little village where he died, sure a thought came into my head, and I tould the people he was my uncle; and after giving him a dacent wake, and burying him genteelly, I took possession of his clothes and his watch, and a couple of pounds that was left after all expences were paid. And then it came into my head, that as I had taken everything belonging to him, I'd take his name and turn preacher myself. There's nothing easier in life than to turn field-preacher, for a man has only to get up on a table, and threaten all the people with the divil, and throw up one's arms, and get into a passion, and they'll sware he's a wonderful preacher. Well, I tried my hand in two or three little villages and had great success; that is, the people flocked round me and listened, and said it was a fine discourse; but the money came very slowly, and I thought to myself, sure if things go on this way, I'll be a long time before I can make up a purse to take back to my poor Judy and our childer.'

" 'Sure you were always good, cuishla-ma-chree,' interrupted Judy, quite forgetting his recent deception, and looking at him with eyes beaming with affection.

" 'Well, then, I came to Buttermuth, and I begun preaching, and sure enough I soon got a large congregation, for all the idle boys and girls, and crowds of women, came to hear me. The women are mighty fond of field-preachers, and especially if they frighten 'em about Satan.* I got invitations from many of 'em to dine and sup with 'em; and, faith! mighty good males they gave me, but none of 'em was so sweet on me as this lady here. She was never satisfied but when I was at her house, and she tould me how happy she would be if she had a clergyman like me for a husband; and how she had a good matter of money, and could by selling her stock and furniture, and the interest in her farm, get a

* Satan.

good round sum more. And then, she used to say I was such an elegant preacher, and beat the Rev. Dr. Snowgrass all to nothing, which plased me gratly. All this put the notion into my head, that if I could marry her under my false name, and got hould of half her money, I would be off for ould Ireland the minute I left the church door, and make my poor Judy and the childer rich for life.'

" 'Good luck to you, my dear Thomash, for thinking of us!' exclaimed Judy.

" 'Thinking of you, ma vourneen dheelish! Sure then it's the rale love I bore *you*, that put it into my head to decaive this lady. But she can't say I ever took the laste advantage of her, except persuading her, that as her husband was seven years away without writing to her, she might marry again. And when the business come to the point, I couldn't for the life of me bring myself to marry her, but put it off from day to day; and here she is, as innocent of any harm from me as the day I first clapped my two good-looking eyes on her, and she has lost nothing except one five-pound note which she lent me, and which I sint off to Killballyowen the same day to my poor Judy.'

" 'Ogh! then 'tis yourself that's the moral of a rale good husband,' murmured Judy.

" 'You are a wicked deceiver, that's what you are!' sobbed my sister, 'and you have made me spend ever so much money in feasting you in different public-houses.'

" 'Is it me, you crethur of the world? It's no such thing; for I often tould you that I'd rather have a good dish of potatoes and a rasher of bacon, with a bottle of the mountain dew, the true Inishowen, than all them dainties you were so fond of. Wasn't it yourself that was always ordhering fat pullets, and geese, and ducks, and porther, and strong ale, in spite of all my good advice; and, faith! to tell the truth, you ate and drank more of 'em than ever I did.'

" 'You vile ungrateful man! I'm only sorry that you had not married me, that I might punish you for bigamy,' said my sister, still weeping.

" 'God forgive you, ma'am, for such a wicked wish; for, sure, instead of being angry at having escaped the sin into which you might have tumbled had Thomash married you, you ought to thank God, ay, be my troth, and Thomash too, that you're free from sin, though not free from folly; for sure it was not sinsible, no, nor decent either, to lave your home and kin with a stranger, and go thravelling around the country without being married.'

" 'There was so much good sense in this reproof, that all who were present, except the person to whom it was directed, acknowledged its justice; and I, greatly interested in favour of the poor Irishwoman, presented her with a couple of guineas, for which she was most grateful, and then advised her and her husband to depart.

They took leave, offering me many thanks and blessings; but before they left the house, Judy expressed her conviction, that what was faulty in the conduct of her husband originated solely in his affection for her and 'the childer;' though, as she said, those who did not know his good heart as well as she did, might not think he had taken the best mode of showing it, in intending to marry another woman.

"Imprudent and absurd-as had been the conduct of my sister, I could not but pity the humiliating position in which she was now placed; and yet I confess I felt no desire that a person whose habits and tastes were so wholly opposed to mine should take up her abode beneath my roof. It is a great trial for a sister to be compelled to renounce all companionship with one so nearly allied by the ties of kindred; one who has been cradled in infancy in the same arms, who has slumbered on the same pillow, who has shared the same innocent sports, and the same childish sorrows. The memory of those days of infancy and girlhood came back to reproach me for the alienation of which I felt conscious, but of which good sense dictated the necessity. These tender reminiscences of the past pleaded in my heart against the whispers of judgment and experience, and induced me to speak words of consolation to my sister, who still continued to weep.

"'It's no use to preach to me after this fashion,' said she; 'it's easy to talk, but hard to practise; and any woman who has feeling would find it hard to live alone, without a husband to carve a joint of meat for one, or to help to blow up the servants when they require it. But I am very peckish—fretting always makes me hungry; so the sooner you have dinner the better. I should like to have a beef-steak, with some fried onions, and a bit of Cheshire cheese after; and mind you don't forget to order some treble-X ale.'

"I was hardly less surprised than disgusted at the free-and-easy style in which my sister issued her orders, while yet weeping over her disappointed matrimonial hopes and projects; but I, nevertheless, sent out for the articles she wished for.

"When she ascended to the room prepared to receive her, her first exclamation on entering it was, 'Well, this chamber is precisely as it was when my poor dear first husband shared it with me. And there, I vow, is the same little table, on which he used to place a glass of brandy-and-water, to be ready in case I felt thirsty in the night. He had many good points, poor man! was an excellent carver, which is an essential thing in a husband, and could brew the best punch I ever tasted. He was a great loss to me; and all I have to reproach his memory with is, the having spoilt his children so much, that their doings destroyed my happiness with my second husband; compelled him to seek pleasure at the public-house, instead of being comfortable at home with me; and, in the end, drove him out of the country, leaving me in the most painful situ-

ation in which any woman can be placed, that is, without the absolute certainty of a husband's death.'

" 'Surely you cannot wish to have this certainty,' said I, 'if, as you say, you really like your husband?'

" 'I would not wish him dead if he was with me, and contributing to *my* happiness,' replied my sister; 'but, if he really is alive, as I may never see him again, would it not be more satisfactory to me to hear of his death? for then I could marry openly at Buttermuth without the spiteful neighbours making a fuss about it, or Doctor Snowgrass protesting against it. A lone woman's position is, to me, a most disagreeable one; some people may like it,' and she glanced somewhat maliciously at me; 'but then it must be those who have had the misfortune to be married to half-dead and alive men, that have been pinned down to their desks all day, and who come home in the evening so tired that they have not spirits to eat, drink, and enjoy themselves.'

" Dinner being served, we sat down to table; and when the covers were removed, and the beef-steak and potatoes alone met the gaze of my sister, she gave a look of such utter disappointment, that I could scarcely refrain from smiling.

" 'I hope there's another beef-steak on the gridiron?' said she.

" 'There will be quite enough for us,' answered I; 'for I am a little eater.'

" 'That may be; but I have a good appetite, I can tell you, and especially whenever I have fretted; and I've been so cut up to-day, that I'm as peckish as possible. Your servant doesn't know how to send up a beef-steak with fried onions, I can tell you. They should be served with plenty of butter, and all on the same dish, instead of having the onions on a separate plate.'

" Observing that I did not help myself to any onions, she could not forbear expressing her wonder at my want of taste.

" 'Ah! if you had been married to either of my husbands, you'd have liked onions as well as I do,' said she; 'a beef-steak is not worth a farthing without them; and I never can eat one without thinking of both of them, the onions reminds me of 'em so much. Do you know that this porter is but poor washy stuff? I'm sure your servant did not ask for the three X's. But surely you're not done eating already? for my part, I've not half dined. Poor John used to say—ay, and for the matter of that, so used my last husband too, that it was a pleasure to sit down to meals with me, for they never had to eat alone, as I kept them company with the knife and fork as long as they could eat. I hate a dinner without a man, for I'm sociable like. Have you got any pickled onions in the house?'

" When informed that I had not, she shook her head, and said, 'What! no pickles of any sort?'

" 'No.'

“Well, that is extraordinary. I hope you have not forgot the Cheshire cheese?”

“‘It’s lucky you are a little eater,’ resumed she, as the last fragment of a very large beef-steak disappeared from the dish, ‘for if you had a natural appetite there would not have been half enough.’

“A pancake was now brought up, on seeing which, my sister, without any ceremony, ordered another to be prepared, and then asked for some brandy and sugar to make sauce for it.

“‘What! no brandy in the house?’ said she, lifting up her hands and eyes. ‘Well, I can’t say you understand much about comfort. Send out the girl for some, and you may as well order a bottle, for I always take a glass or two of strong punch after dinner. No wonder you look so pale and keep so thin, when you drink nothing but water; you should follow my example, and you’d find yourself all the better for it, I can tell you, and much more sociable too.’

CHAPTER IX.

“NEVER did an evening pass off so heavily as that which followed the dinner I have just described.

“‘Have you no neighbours to drop in and play a game of cards?’ On being told that I never played cards, she could not restrain her astonishment.

“‘And how *do you* get through the evening?’ demanded she.

“‘I read, work, or write,’ answered I.

“‘Well, some people have such odd ways,’ observed she. ‘What a relief it must be to your husband to see a little life in foreign parts, and how dull it will be for him to come back here.’

“The tea-things had not been removed more than hour, when, although she had eaten a plentiful supply of bread and butter with her tea, she declared that she felt so hungry that she must have a bit of something for supper.

“‘A rasher of bacon and a couple of eggs—a Welsh rabbit, or any other light matter,’ she said, would do. ‘Whenever I make a poor dinner,’ added she, ‘I am obliged to have supper, or I can’t close my eyes at night.’

“My servant wholly unaccustomed to such demands, and my larder ill provided to meet them, a compliance with those of my sister was productive of much embarrassment in my little household. It being dark, my young woman was afraid to venture out alone in search of the articles required to furnish a meal, and I really felt unwilling to send her out at so unseasonable an hour.

“O! for the matter of that, rather than go to bed with an empty stomach (though how it could be empty after the quantity I had seen her devour I could not imagine) I will go out myself to buy what is wanted.’

“In spite of my representations of the impropriety of exposing herself to insult or annoyance in the streets, unprotected, at such an hour, she put on her cloak and bonnet, and sallied forth, leaving me alarmed and ashamed at her inconsiderate proceedings. She had been absent nearly two hours, during which time I really felt terrified lest some unpleasant adventure had occurred to her in a neighbourhood so lonely as that in which my dwelling was placed, when I heard loud voices, among which hers could be distinguished, and sundry knocks at the gate of the little garden in front of my house. I trembled from head to foot, while my servant, not less alarmed than myself, unlocked the hall-door.

“‘Keep him prisoner, I charge you,’ said my sister. ‘At your peril I charge you not to let him go. A young villain, to rob me of the provisions I had just bought.’

“The door being opened, I beheld two or three policemen, two of whom held a young lad by the arms, while he was crying bitterly, and entreating to be liberated.

“‘Keep him in custody; the young dog shall be punished if it costs me five pounds, that he shall,’ said my sister.

“‘But we have found no stolen articles upon him,’ observed one of the policemen.

“‘Because he threw them away, the young robber, but I’ll make him repent it, that I will.’

“‘Let me go! for God sake let me go!’ exclaimed the weeping boy. ‘I have not tasted food these two days, and have not a farthing in the world, nor a roof to shelter me.’

“‘Serve you right, you young thief! Mind, policemen, I’ll have justice, cost what it may. A pretty pass, indeed, things are come to, if a respectable woman like me can’t step out to buy a morsel of supper without being robbed.’

“‘I never meant to rob her, indeed I did not,’ sobbed the boy. ‘I only told her I was starving, and begged her to give me something in charity. She began to scold me, and I, grown desperate with hunger, made a snatch at the sausage in her hand, when she threw away the things she held, and caught fast hold of me, crying out until the police came up.’

“‘You see that the young rogue confesses that he attempted to rob me, therefore you must keep him prisoner,’ said my sister.

“I now advanced into the garden, and entreated her to let the unhappy youth be liberated, seeing that he was driven by starvation to make the attempt to seize the food.

“‘I’ll do no such thing, the law shall take its course,’ replied she; ‘as sure as my name is Betsy Thomson, I’ll prosecute the thief.’

“ ‘Oh! mother, mother,’ exclaimed the boy, ‘forgive me, forgive me!’

“ ‘Bring him up to the lamp,’ said my sister, ‘that I may see his face.’

“ ‘Ah! mother, I wish I had never left Buttermuth,’ sobbed the poor boy, ‘and I never would, only that stepfather was always a beating me.’

“ ‘’Tis he, sure enough,’ said my sister, ‘and a pretty business he has made of it; but he was always a good-for-nothing chap, and I was in hopes I was rid of him.’

“ ‘Well, dang my buttons! if ever I seed such an humnatural mother in all my born days,’ said one of the policemen.

“ ‘No, nor I neither,’ said the other.

“ ‘I entreat you to let this unfortunate boy go,’ said I to the policeman, slipping at the same time a five-shilling piece into his hand; ‘his mother can no longer wish you to detain him.’

“ ‘But I will not take charge of him, that I won’t,’ said she. ‘I’ll never be hampered any more with children; and as for this scapegrace——’

“ ‘Oh! mother, have pity on me,’ sobbed the boy.

“ My heart was melted; I took the unfortunate youth by the hand, led him into the house, the policeman making no objection, and even my servant was touched to tears, while the unnatural mother was wholly unmoved. He devoured some bread with a voraciousness that proved he had been famishing, and he was so thin that he was almost reduced to a skeleton. I had a bed prepared for him, in spite of the fears openly expressed in his presence by his mother, that he would rob the house during the night; and my servant, previous to his taking possession of it, supplied him with soap and warm water in the scullery, to remove the dirt with which he was begrimed. I was obliged to ask my sister to cease uttering the bitter reproaches with which she overwhelmed him, and which drew tears from him.

“ ‘I told you,’ said she, ‘before you took him out of the hands of the police, that I would not take charge of him, so now you must be answerable for him, and a troublesome job you will have, I can tell you.’

“ When I left my chamber the next morning, I discovered that my sister had taken her departure. She had written me a few lines, saying that the sight of her graceless son was so painful to her, that she could not remain under the same roof with him; and that she might hear no more of him, she would not furnish me with her address. She hoped I would not have cause to repent my folly in taking him into the house; but, if I had, I must remember it was entirely contrary to her advice.

“ ‘The poor boy is very ill, ma’am,’ said my servant; ‘his head wanders, and he talks such wild things.’

“ I found him in a high state of delirium, imploring to be for-

given, and calling on his mother to have pity on him. I could not restrain my tears, as I listened to the incoherent ravings of the poor boy, and marked the careworn face on which starvation had made such ravages. I sent for a physician, who after attentively examining the unfortunate youth, declared that he could hold out no hopes of his recovery. A violent fever had seized him, and his constitution was so undermined by being so long exposed to the hardships and privations of extreme poverty, that he soon sunk under it. His reason was restored a few hours before he breathed his last. He looked around in vain for his mother, and besought me to implore her forgiveness for him. All that kindness could effect to soothe his last hours was done for him, and his expressions of gratitude and resignation proved that he possessed a nature on which kind treatment would have produced the happiest result, had life been spared him. I saw him consigned to a humble grave, close to that which held my own lost child, and was thankful that his last hours were passed beneath a friendly roof, and his eyes closed by an aunt's hands.

"Slowly did the time pass, my dear Richard, and anxiously did I count it during the first year's absence of my husband. Every ship that left Barbadoes brought me letters from him, breathing affection and impatience to return to me; but fresh difficulties were presented every day to the final arrangement of the business that had taken him there, and I experienced all the sickness of heart produced by hope deferred, as the period of our re-union was from month to month protracted. I heard nothing of my sister, and my recollections of her were so fraught with pain, that I prayed I might see her no more, unless it pleased the Almighty to vouchsafe to change her heart.

"Henry had frequently mentioned in his letters, having formed a friendship with a Mr. Herbertson, a rich merchant at Barbadoes, who, pleased with his society, had shown him the utmost hospitality and kindness. This friend, an old bachelor, without any near relations, proposed to take Henry into partnership in his business, and even talked of making him his heir, if, after a longer intimacy, he continued to like him as well as he then did.

" 'These offers, however tempting,' wrote Henry, 'I should not think myself justified in accepting, until I had perfectly wound up the complicated affair that has brought me here, and return to England to close all accounts with the firm in Mincing-lane, from whom I have experienced such good treatment. When this is accomplished, I will, if you, my dear Lucy, have no objection, avail myself of Mr. Herbertson's kind intentions in my favour, and conduct you to the West Indies, where such an unexpected and brilliant prospect opens itself to us.'

"At length a letter arrived, stating that the affair on which he had been so long employed was finally terminated; and that my husband's passage was taken in the first homeward-bound ship.

How great was my joy at this intelligence, and how was my impatience for our meeting increased by the knowledge that a few months must now restore him so fondly loved to me. I became restless and nervous from the moment that I knew he had embarked. Every breeze, however gentle, alarmed—and every murky cloud terrified me. If the shutter of my chamber moved at night, I fancied there was a storm, and arose in an agitation that precluded sleep for many hours after.

“At length the joyful intelligence reached me, that the ship in which Henry had sailed was arrived in the Downs, and I instantly set off for Portsmouth to meet him. It was a fine day in spring, and every object in nature looked so bright, that I felt as if all around sympathised in the happiness with which my heart was overflowing at the prospect of soon being pressed in the arms of my dear husband. Every mile-stone passed was noted with pleasure, as bringing me nearer to him I so longed to meet, and anticipations of delight filled my whole soul. Arrived at Portsmouth, I hurried to the place indicated, and there learned that the passengers of the *Orient* had disembarked a few hours before, and were staying at the Crown hotel. I flew rather than run to that inn, and, breathless with joyful agitation, inquired for Henry.

“‘Mr. Chatterton did you say, ma’am?’ asked the pert-looking waiter. ‘Mary Chambermaid, show this lady to No. 18, the sick gentleman’s room.’

“‘Sick, sick!’ reiterated I, with an agony proportioned to the joy that only a moment before made my heart palpitate so quickly.

“‘Yes, ma’am, the gentleman was brought here half an hour ago, very poorly.’

“I clung to the banister of the stairs for support, for I felt myself becoming so faint that I could hardly stand, yet I made a desperate effort to ascend, and at length reached the door of No. 18. I trembled so violently, that the chambermaid humanely lent me her arm, and uttered something about her hopes that the poor gentleman would soon get better.

“It now occurred to me, that if my husband was indeed so ill as he was represented to be, the sight of me, without due preparation, might prove dangerous to him; so I asked the chambermaid to enter the room and announce that I was arrived. I heard her do this; but I listened in vain for the tones of that dear and well-known voice, and, nearly excited to madness by the fears this silence awakened, I opened the door and tottered into the room. There, stretched on a bed, his face as pale as the pillow on which his head reposed, lay my poor Henry, seemingly unconscious of all that passed around him. I uttered no cry, though I felt ready to drop, but staggered towards the bed, trembling lest its occupant was indeed lifeless. I touched that emaciated hand, and he faintly opened his eyes, recognised me, and made an effort to rise and embrace me; and then, overpowered by the attempt, relapsed into

insensibility. The medical man, who had been sent for previous to my arrival, now came, and the captain of the *Orient* soon followed. He was a kind-hearted man, who had taken a great interest in his unfortunate passenger, and who had done all that lay in his power for him. He told me, that the rupture of a blood-vessel in the chest, occasioned by violent sea-sickness, had reduced my husband to his present weak state; and he tried to encourage those hopes of his recovery that it was but too evident to me that the doctor, who was present, did not authorise. Alas! a few hours justified my worst fears. Henry breathed his last before ten o'clock that night, without ever being able to utter a word, or even to show that he was conscious of my presence. How fearful was the transition from the joyful anticipations of the morning to the overwhelming grief of that night! Even now, though so many years have since passed, I cannot think of it without tears." And here poor Mrs. Chatterton wept bitterly.

"I spent the next day in a stupor of grief, that left me helpless and hopeless. Incapable of acting or reflecting, I was alive only to the consciousness of the overwhelming blow that had so unexpectedly crushed me, when I was indulging in blissful anticipations of the future. And there lay the object on which every hope of happiness had rested, cold and motionless, insensible to the agony I was enduring; the pale and rigid face seemed to mock the anguish that filled my soul, and chilled my burning lips as I pressed them to that marble brow, over which my tears fell unheeded. And was it thus my Henry was restored to me, after nearly three long and weary years of absence, cheered only by the prospect of his return? I addressed him by the fondest epithets, as if he could hear the words of affection that were once so soothing to his ear, and I almost expected to see those pale and rigid lips move to answer my passionate ejaculations. That was a dreadful day! The bright sun came streaming into the windows, and its beams fell on that still, cold brow, rendering it even more ghastly. I shut out the light, whose splendour formed such a contrast with the darkness that filled my soul, and I turned with loathing from the sounds of laughter, and the music of a hand-organ in the street, angered that sunshine or gaiety should exist, while he on whose life my every hope of happiness rested, was sleeping in death, and could never more enjoy either. Night brought better thoughts. In the silence and dim light of the chamber of death, I could pray for the resignation hitherto denied me; and as I knelt by the bed on which all that remained to me of him so fondly loved rested, I felt that in prayer must I henceforth alone seek for consolation, until summoned to join him, 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.'

"Never had I experienced the efficacy of prayer as on that night. Now that all hope of happiness here had forsaken me, I looked beyond the grave to find it by a re-union with my lost Henry and our

child, and dwelt with satisfaction on the reflection of the brevity of life, and the frail tenure of that existence which now separated me from the loved and lost. I could not then think it possible that a long life could be lent me when deprived of all that made it desirable, and dreamt not that I should live to be the old woman you now see, and who calmly relates the trials that then filled her heart with such intense grief.

“How strange and inscrutable is the human heart! mine, in its agony, shrunk at the idea of bearing the load of existence—become so oppressive by the loss of him I loved. Yet, now that age has deadened its feelings, and blunted its sensibility—when I have outlived nearly all the friends of my youth and maturity—I can look forward with satisfaction to a protracted span of life, though subjected to all the infirmities from which old age is never exempt.

“I experienced the utmost kindness from the hostess of the inn and her husband, and on the second day after the demise of my poor husband, I attended his remains to their last sad resting-place, and saw them placed by the side of our boy and my poor nephew. How solemn was the service read over him! Every word of it was impressed on my memory. Never can I forget the pang that shot through my heart as the first shovelful of earth fell on his coffin. It seemed as if now indeed we were separated for ever, and a fresh sense of my bereavement was experienced. As the earth closed over the coffin, until the last bit of it was hid from my aching sight, I bent forward loth to part from it; and then, exhausted by my sorrow, I sank on a low tomb near his grave, unable to tear myself from the spot. How it jarred my nerves to overhear the commonplace conversation of the men employed in completing the grave! I felt indignation mingle with my grief that they could thus talk and jest, while I was overwhelmed with sorrow; but when one of them broke into a popular song, I could support my vicinity to them no longer, and with trembling limbs and a breaking heart, I hurried to the coach that was waiting for me, casting many a glance behind at the mound of earth that covered the remains of him so dear to me.

“When I entered my home again—that home so lately left with joyful anticipation of meeting with my poor Henry, and of returning to it with him—how great was my anguish! Previously to leaving town, I had taken out his clothes, and had them carefully brushed. His linen was placed on clothes-horses, for the purpose of being aired. His hat and gloves were on the *commode*; and his writing apparatus all arranged by my own hands, to be ready for his use when we arrived, met my sight; while *he*, for whom these fond preparations had been so lately made—where was he? Those only who have been in a similar situation can imagine the vivid emotions caused by beholding the apparel, or objects used by the loved and lost. The shock occasioned by the death seems renewed, and yet there are moments, when looking at these well-known

articles, that one doubts that he to whom they belonged is indeed gone for ever. How passionately did I press them to my lips, and bedew them with my fast falling tears! How vain and empty sounded the trite words of consolation uttered by my servant! I felt almost angry at her well-meaning but useless attempt to comfort me, and sought my bed that I might avoid her presence. And there were the two pillows arranged. Oh! you know not—you cannot know what I experienced on seeing them, and yet I would not have the one formerly used by him removed for all the world; and even still that pillow is always placed next to mine, and my head will rest on it in the grave.

“You are young, Mr. Richard, and as yet have had no troubles, so you cannot know the tenderness with which a bereaved heart clings to aught that reminds one of happier days. I am rich in relics, sacred as having belonged to *him*; and, though valueless to others, I would not part with them for treasures that might tempt many a stately dame.

CHAPTER X.

“THE firm behaved to me with the utmost kindness. They paid me a year’s salary of my poor Henry, and the housekeeper who had presided for many years over this establishment, having soon after died, they offered me her vacant situation, which I have now filled forty-five years with satisfaction to my employers and to myself, and I trust also to those who board and lodge in this establishment, and to whose comfort I can conscientiously say I have done all in my power to administer. It seems but as yesterday that I came here, bowed down with grief, yet thankful for having a home provided for me.

“Time is a wonderful consoler, Mr. Richard, and when joined to religion can effect miracles. At first, I would weep for hours in my chamber, and felt a melancholy pleasure in the indulgence. Nay, for months after, if but for a moment I forgot my sorrow and gave way to a smile, I used to be seized with remorse, and bitterly reproach myself that I could thus forget my poor Henry. But this weak indulgence of grief proved its own remedy, for that which commenced in real sorrow, after a year or so, became a habit, and imagination was called in to the aid of memory to sustain the regret, I sinfully thought it my duty to keep up.

“Such is human nature, that we more frequently destroy grief than grief destroys us. We become, in the course of time, accustomed to the losses and privations which at first we deemed insupportable, and the sting is often removed from the heart, before the eye has ceased to weep.

“As years rolled on, I learned to take an interest in the humble duties I was called on to discharge. I could think of other and happier days, without the anguish experienced during my first years of widowhood, and having surrounded myself with the furniture and other objects that had belonged to my former abode, I could, when alone, summon up the memory of the loved and lost, recalled by the sight of what had been so familiar to them. I have met with invariable kindness from the firm, and with a friendly attention from the elder clerks. Indeed, the younger ones have not been uncivil, except that sometimes I have thought—but it might only be fancy—that they did not show the interest that might have been expected, to the story to which you, my dear young friend, have listened with such patience and sympathy.”

A few days after Mrs. Chatterton had narrated her simple history to me, my sister Margaret arrived in town, and took up her abode with that kind and excellent woman, who received her with the greatest cordiality. I experienced the utmost pleasure in seeing my dear sister again, and felt highly gratified at finding the progress she had made in her education during my absence. Nor was I the only person to whom her presence afforded satisfaction, for Messrs. Murdoch and Burton showed an interest in this new addition to the dinner-table, very pleasing to me, while the junior clerks became more particular in their dress, and appeared less anxious to escape from the little circle assembled round the tea-table of Mrs. Chatterton of an evening. I had no occasion to counsel Margaret with respect to the manner in which she ought to conduct herself towards the young men with whom she found herself associated. Nothing could be more prudent or correct than her behaviour towards them; while, to the elderly gentlemen, she evinced that attention so becoming from the young to the old,—an attention which seemed to be peculiarly gratifying to them.

About this time, my young friend Percy Mortimer arrived in London from Cambridge, and soon wrote to request me to call on him at a fashionable hotel in the west-end. I hurried off the next morning by seven o'clock, in order that I might be back in time for entering my office at the usual hour; and was not a little surprised at finding the porter of the hotel half asleep in his chair, and two or three yawning half-dressed waiters reclining on benches in the hall. When I asked to be shown to Mr. Percy Mortimer's room, they all rubbed their eyes as if to open them, and looked at me with perfect astonishment pictured in their faces.

“Mr. Percy Mortimer!” repeated one of them, superciliously. “Why, he has not been three hours in his bed, and I dare say would little like to be awakened out of his first sleep at such an unseasonable hour as this.”

“But I have come by his own request.”

“Did he name this hour?”

“No, certainly he did not; he asked me to come to him

as soon as possible, and I only got his note last night at eleven o'clock."

"Oh! then you are the person he expected last night?" said the waiter, staring impertinently at me. "Had you come to him then you would, in all probability, be now in your bed, as he is, for he did not let any of his guests go away until past four o'clock this morning."

"I must see him, however," said I, "so pray show me his room."

"If you *will* insist on disturbing him, mind that I warned you against it, and take the blame on yourself;" and so saying, the waiter conducted me to a chamber, the door of which he opened, and then retired. A loud snoring proclaimed that my friend was asleep, but I hesitated not to disturb his slumber, a task I found more difficulty in accomplishing than I had anticipated, for it was not until I had repeatedly, and somewhat roughly, too, shaken him by the shoulder, that he awoke, and even then, he was some minutes before he became conscious of my presence.

"Let me sleep, and be — to you!" murmured he, yawning and stretching himself. "What the devil do you want? Let me sleep, I tell you again, for I have a splitting headache."

When at length he opened his eyes, he exclaimed—"What, is it you, my dear Richard?" and he shook me heartily by the hand. His was in so high a state of fever, that I could readily credit his assertion of having, as he said, a splitting headache. "Now that you have awoke me, ring the bell, and have the windows opened; and do, my dear fellow, order me some soda-water, with a little brandy in it, for that infernal champagne last night has made me as feverish and thirsty as the devil."

I cannot express the surprise I felt at hearing my friend interlard his discourse with phrases that, when we parted, he would have been as unwilling as myself to utter. The tacit admission, too, of the previous night's excess, shocked as much as it astonished me. But when daylight was admitted into his chamber, and its beams fell on his pale and haggard countenance, I could hardly repress the exclamation of alarm that rose to my lips at his altered looks.

"Why, Dick, what an outlandish-looking animal you are!" said he. "Who the devil would suppose that you are a denizen of London? By Jove! you look ten times more countrified than our High-street shopmen at Oxford. Why the deuce do you not dress a little more like other people?"

This question rather annoyed me, I confess, for I had put on my best suit, and truth to say, thought myself a very presentable person. Something of what was passing in my mind must have been revealed by my face, for Percy Mortimer, with a kindness that reminded me of former times, said—

"Come, old fellow, never mind; you shall have a coat built by Berton, pantaloons made by Pike, a hat from Denizard, and boots

from Gradelle. I'll teach you to tie a cravat *à la mode*—and if, when thus equipped, you will learn to move a little more like other people, and look less sanctimonious, I will not be ashamed to introduce you among my set, who are, I assure you, the most fashionable at Christchurch. We kept it up very late last night; Elmsdale, the pleasantest fellow in the world when he chooses, was in high force, and Asherwood quite himself. They'll astonish you, my boy, I can assure you; but when you get used to them, you'll like them amazingly."

"You forget that my time is so much occupied, that I have no leisure to enjoy even your society, my dear Percy," replied I. "I must be in the counting-house every morning by nine, and cannot leave it before five in the evening."

"But from five in the afternoon, the time at which we generally sally out for the first time in the day, until nine next morning, your time is surely your own?"

"I devote the evenings to reading aloud to my sister and Mrs. Chatterton, who is really a second mother to me."

"What, do you never go to the theatres, or seek the relaxation of a sly supper at a tavern, with some of your fellow-clerks?"

"Never."

"By Jove! I suspect you are turned Methodist, Dick."

"I am unchanged, Percy; the alteration is in you."

Here the waiter announced the arrival of a fashionable tailor, hatter, and bootmaker, who were ordered to come up in succession; and while he retired to execute Mortimer's instructions, the latter said—

"Now is your time, Dick; my tradespeople shall measure you for proper habiliments; for I swear, in your present dress you look like nothing but a Methodist preacher."

"Excuse me, Percy, I cannot incur unnecessary expense."

"Why, what a stingy hound you are grown! I did not, however, mean that *you* should pay for the clothes! They can be put in my bills, and the old governor will pay for them!"

"Pardon me, dear Percy, but I really cannot suffer this."

"Are you grown so proud, Richard, as to refuse a trifling present from me?"

"No, indeed, Percy; but the dress that suits your station would be so wholly unfit for mine, that my wearing it would expose me to the animadversions and ridicule of those with whom I live."

"Don't be obstinate, Dick, there's a good fellow; let me order the things, and then you can appear with me in the set with whom I associate; whereas, in your present dress, it is impossible. You shall come and meet them here when I give them dinners, as I shall continually do; you shall go to the play with us, and after that to some of the *petit soupers*, when you shall see some of the prettiest and gayest women in London. Such creatures! by Jove, it will do you good to look at them!"

"Impossible, Percy: I must not be tempted to do that which my judgment disapproves!"

Here the exclamation of ridicule, which I saw by the expression of Percy's face was ready to escape his lips, was interrupted by the entrance of a young man, who, though his dress bore evident symptoms of having been hastily put on, and was not such as he would have voluntarily presented himself in before strangers, yet he could not be mistaken for anything but a person of birth and fashion. With him entered, unceremoniously, two men, whose ruffianly appearance offered a striking contrast to the elegance of his. Short, and thick set, with countenances in which a hardened expression of vulgarity and impudence shone pre-eminently, they had a peculiar insolence of manner that might have revealed their calling to any one less ignorant on such subjects than myself.

"How is this, my dear Elmsdale?" said Percy Mortimer, regarding with undisguised astonishment the two intruders who stood close to his friend.

"The truth is, my dear fellow," replied Lord Elmsdale, "these two gentlemen (pointing with a sarcastic smile to the men) disturbed my slumbers at a most unconscionable hour this morning, and have taken such a fancy to my company, that I have not been able to induce them to relinquish it ever since; nay more, they seem determined to lodge me in apartments not quite so commodious as those I have hitherto been in the custom of inhabiting; but where they think they may always be sure of finding me."

"His lordship likes a joke," said one of the men, with a smile that revealed a set of teeth resembling in colour nothing so much as the keys of an old harpsichord.

"Ay, ay—his lordship's a vag," observed the other.

"Vy, the upshot of this here matter is, sir," said the least ill-looking of the two men, "that my lord must go with us to a sponging-house, a thing his lordship by no manner of means likes, as why, bekase it is not the most hagreeablest place in the world for a gemman to find himself, unless he has a friend who will settle the business for him."

"Only fancy, Mortimer," said Lord Elmsdale, "that rascally scoundrel, Merrington the tailor, whom I have recommended to all my friends, has had the impudence and ingratitude to have me arrested for his d——d bill. Is it not too bad?"

"It is shameful," replied Percy Mortimer, "but what is to be done?"

"That is precisely what I came to ask you, my dear fellow," said Lord Elmsdale.

"I am as poor as Job, and not half so patient," observed Percy Mortimer. "The governor has been abominable stingy of late, and has threatened to cut off the supplies until I retrench, a thing the most difficult in the world to accomplish, as no one ever knows when to commence? How much is the sum?"

"Not a great deal," answered Lord Elmsdale, "only three hundred; but my purse is so drained by buying Barrington's hunters, that I have not a guinea to spare."

"Sell the hunters," said Percy Mortimer; "I know Asherwood is dying to have them."

"What! part with my horses! No; hang me if I do! and above all to such a screw as Asherwood. Why, would you believe it, the fellow had the cool impertinence to write me a note an hour ago, in answer to my request to come and assist me, that he could not bear to see a friend in distress, and therefore must decline."

"You have not yet told me the amount of the sum for which you are in 'durance vile,'" said Percy Mortimer.

"Only three hundred," replied Lord Elmsdale.

"You forget the costs, my lord," interrupted one of the bailiffs; "they come up to forty-eight, seventeen, and eleven-pence."

"Three hundred and fifty will cover the whole," resumed Lord Elmsdale, "and if you can lend me that sum, my dear Mortimer, you will really oblige me."

"'Pon my soul! I have not so much at my banker's at this moment, and my allowance will not become due for two months," assured Percy.

"Well, if you will accept a bill at two months for me, it will do quite as well," said Lord Elmsdale, with the utmost coolness, "and I dare say this gentleman," turning to one of the sheriff's officers, "will be able to get it discounted for me."

"Vy, you see, my lord," answered the bailiff, "money never was so scarce as at present, so I don't know whether I could get it done or not. There's the Marquis of Willerton, who is willing to pay sixty per cent. for as much money as he can get, and will take any quantity of champagne and claret at the lender's own prices; and the Earl of Hardingbrook, who does not object to pay sixty-five per cent., and is as generous as a prince into the bargain. When noblemen behave as sich, and hact in this princely manner, why money becomes scarcer and scarcer; so I don't think I could get a bill cashed for you for less than the noblemen I have mentioned pay."

"No, hang it! that is too much, and I really cannot consent to such usurious interest," said Lord Elmsdale.

"Then you had better make up your mind at vonst to come with us," answered the sheriff's officer, gruffly; "for we have already lost all the morning waiting on you; and as for usurious interest, I don't know what you mean, when the law has now passed to purtect honest men by enabling 'em to get as high an hinterest as they can for their money. And a good job, too, for it was a shame to see how when a man was so obliging as to lend money to keep a gemman out of prison, that same gemman or his friends would take advantage of the law against usury, and cheat him. But matters are now changed, and fathers and guardians

are fit to go mad because they can't hindict men for usury; and those as has money to lend, drink a bumper every day to the health of the kind and sensible gemmen as had the new law passed."

"Will you give me your acceptance, my dear Mortimer?" asked Lord Elmsdale, "for I see there is nothing left but to comply with the terms of these harpies."

"If you will pledge me your honour it shall be paid, I will accept it," answered Percy Mortimer.

"I give you my honour," replied Lord Elmsdale.

"His lordship has given that to so many," whispered one of the men, "that he can't have much of it left."

"Ring the bell, and send for a stamp," said Percy Mortimer.

"There's no hoccasion," observed Mr. Ben Eliason, the sheriff's officer, drawing out a large pocket-book, "I always keeps a few ready in this here book in case of haccidents."

"Draw the bill at three months date, for four hundred pounds," said Percy Mortimer.

"That won't do, sir, no vays at all, bekase there will be sixty pounds for the premium, and ten pounds for the interest of the sixty, so that the bill must be made out for four hundred and seventy pounds."

"What! is it possible that you have the conscience to charge interest on so large a premium?" exclaimed Lord Elmsdale.

"Vy, my lord, I have a large family, and brings 'em up respectably, and that's hacting haccording to my principle. I also expects as how your lordship will take six dozen of my best champagne, at seven pound a dozen. There aint better to be had in all Lunnon, and it's as cheap as dirt."

"What the devil am I to do with your bad wine?" demanded Lord Elmsdale.

"Vy, as other folks do, my lord—drink it."

"Heaven defend me from inflicting such a trial on my constitution! Why, I was half poisoned the other day when dining with Lord Hardingbrook; and your confession of having made him take your champagne, explains the cause," observed Lord Elmsdale.

"Vy, then, my lord, you'll add another two per cent. to the bill, or I will not discount it, that's all; so do as you please."

"I have no house to receive it," muttered Lord Elmsdale.

"Vy, can't you send it to some of them there young ladies as you are friends with at the hopera? I'll be bound not one of 'em will refuse it, and 'twill do 'em a deal of good, poor young creaturs! into the bargain."

Both Lord Elmsdale and Percy Mortimer laughed at this suggestion of Mr. Ben Eliason, who resumed, "It's quite true, my lord, the young creaturs takes to it like mother's milk; and if there is no lady to whom you could send the vine, vy, p'raps

this here gemman wouldn't hobject to take it, for he seems a wery hobliging gemman; and, moreover, as he has haccepted the bill, it would be a genteel compliment."

"No, no!" said Percy Mortimer, "I will have nothing to say to it."

"Well, my lord, I must say as how your lordship is very hard on me, and that too after I behaved so purlitely to you. Vy, you know yourself I might have harrested you yesterday in the park, when you was a hescorting that there beautiful countess as lives in Grosvenor-square, or have nabbed you in St. James's afore all them there chaps in the club windows, vich would have set 'em a chattering for a veek, for they are mighty glad whenever a friend falls into a trouble, though they pretend to be so wery sorry, and talk and talk until they have told it to every one they meet, always making the matter a little worse than it really is."

"Well, then, if it must be so, add the two per cent. to the bill," said Lord Elmsdale; "better do that than poison some unfortunate person with your wine."

The two per cent. was added, the bill accepted, and given into the hands of Mr. Ben Eliason; and Lord Elmsdale said to that personage, "I conclude, sir, that I am now released from the pleasure of your society?"

"Not yet, my lord; I cannot let you go free huntill I have searched the sheriff's-court, to see if there are any other writs against you. I'll send off my man to examine in a jiffey. Has your lordship got a sovereign in your pocket to give him to pay the expense?"

"What! *more* to pay?" exclaimed Lord Elmsdale, putting his hand into his waistcoat pockets, one after the other; and then drawing it out, he said he had forgotten his purse, and asked Percy Mortimer to lend him a sovereign; with which request the latter having complied, the gold coin was transferred into the hand of Mr. Ben Eliason; and I, finding that it only wanted a quarter to nine, took a hasty leave of my friend, and hurried off to my office, which I entered breakfastless, and pitying him for the difficulties which I plainly saw must soon environ him, from the extravagant and reckless associates with which he seemed to be surrounded, and the imprudent facility with which he met their demands on him.

The next day Percy Mortimer came to me at five in the afternoon, the hour he knew I should be released from my office. Dressed in a style of fashion peculiar to what are called dandies, I could scarcely have recognised my friend, so wholly altered was his appearance. Pale and haggard, his looks but too well denoted that the previous night had been passed in one of those orgies alike destructive to health and morals. After the first salutation was over—

"I want you, my dear Richard," said he, "to render me a

service. The governor, as I told you yesterday, has grown stingy, and will not stand my demands for money."

Seeing the surprise expressed in my countenance, he added, "You look incredulous, but, by Jove! I have stated the fact."

"What! your father?—the most generous of men, and the most indulgent of parents! You must indeed have far exceeded all the bounds of moderation, if you have exhausted *his* patience, my dear Percy."

"I must confess, Richard, that *I have* been a little imprudent; but young men will be young men, and the governor has pulled me up somewhat sharply: but to the point—I want money, and have come to you to know if you can procure me a loan?"

"The firm will surely advance you a loan sooner than to me,—indeed, I dare not propose such a measure to them," replied I.

"Why who the devil ever dreamt of asking you to do such a thing? and as for *my* asking them, I would just as soon—ay, and sooner too—apply to the old governor himself. No, what I want is, for you to try if, among any of your friends, jews or gentiles, you could obtain me five hundred pounds?"

"I have few acquaintances in London, my dear Percy, and still fewer friends. I know not a single money-lender in London, and consequently cannot render you the service you require; and even if I could, the specimen of extortion, so ruinous in its consequences, which I witnessed yesterday in your room, would preclude me from adopting any step to facilitate such loans. I have two years and a half salary nearly untouched, and it is entirely at your service. Do not be offended at my proposing so slight an obligation to one to whom I owe so many and weighty ones; and, trifling as the sum is to you who are accustomed to a large expenditure, it may prevent your having recourse to money-lenders."

"Heaven help your innocence! my poor Richard," Percy replied; "the sum you have so wisely saved, and so generously offered to lend me, would be but as a drop of water in the ocean, to relieve my wants. I have lent all my ready money to my college friends, and have, besides, accepted their bills to a very serious amount, so that I now find myself positively without funds to meet the exigencies of the moment, or to pay my own tradespeople, who are becoming clamorous and importunate."

"But can, or will none of your college friends repay any of the sums they owe you?"

"Yes, when their governors die, but not before. Why, bless you! they are all even worse off in their pecuniary affairs than I am, for their credit is less good; it being well known to the money-lenders that they have raised the wind, by post-obits payable on the death of their governors, to nearly the full value of their rent-rolls, whereas I have not yet had recourse to this measure, and the rogues know my governor is rich. The fact is, I like my father too well to calculate on his death, although he *is* grown somewhat

stingy of late; but I suppose the insufficiency of his allowance proceeds from his ignorance of the expensive habits in which gentlemen commoners indulge in Christchurch. You cannot imagine the demand for money there. Why, the price of three hunters will swallow up nearly a year's allowance. A first-rate horse cannot be had for much less than four or five hundred; and two or three hacks cost from eighty to one hundred each. Then a stud groom, with his long bills and helpers innumerable, come to a heavy sum, without counting liveries for the said groom and helpers. You know not, my dear Richard, what it is to have a rascally valet, with a weekly book in which shoe-strings, and tooth-picks, blacking, and brushes, form the prominent items of an illegible, ill-spelt, and half-blotted account, always amounting to a sum that might stock the shop of a dealer in these articles. Hang me! if I ever can guess where my fellow gets the money he swears he pays for me! Add to these, bills for soda-water, of which beverage an inordinate quantity is consumed in the mornings at my chambers, probably because an equally inordinate quantity of wine has been consumed there the previous night. But there would be no end to the causes I could assign for my want of cash, were I to recapitulate even half the drains on my purse: suffice it to say, that never was proverb more true than that which says, 'that gold makes itself wings to fly away.'"

"I have bethought me of a plan," said I, "that may lead to some good. Allow me to consult my excellent and kind friend Mrs. Chatterton. She has many friends among monied people, and could perhaps suggest some means of procuring what you require."

"Surely you do not refer to that prosy old woman who used, and I dare say still continues to set every one around her asleep by her long stories?"

"Yes, Mrs. Chatterton is, I believe, somewhat addicted to long stories, but is nevertheless one of the most worthy women in the world, and will, I know, be glad to render you any service in her power."

"Very well, name my difficulties to her, and I will call here about nine o'clock this evening to learn the result. What a bore it is that you should live so far off from the haunts of civilisation; but you can't help it, Richard, so it's no use talking about it. Let me see my old acquaintance, your sister Margaret; for I remember our childish days perfectly, when I used to bestow on her pictures, books, and playthings, and she used to clap her hands with joy on seeing me approach. Those were pleasant times, Richard,—ay, pleasanter perhaps than the present, the amusement and friends of which are so expensive. Good-bye until nine o'clock—good-bye."

Mrs. Chatterton had waited dinner nearly an hour for me, an attention I could have well dispensed with, when I saw how ill-humoured it rendered the clerks, senior as well as junior. When

the meal was over, Messrs. Murdoch and Burton settled at their chess-board, and Messrs. Bingly, Thomas, and Wilson departed for the theatre, for half-price enjoyment, of which they still retained their preference. I mentioned to Mrs. Chatterton, in the presence of Margaret, the difficulties of my friend Percy Mortimer.

"O! brother," exclaimed my sister, "I have five pounds; take them and give them to poor Mr. Percy Mortimer, who was always so kind to me."

"What does Margaret say?" asked Mrs. Chatterton.

I could hardly repress a smile, when I repeated to her the innocent girl's offer.

"Bless you, my dear child!" said she, "five pounds indeed! why, I dare be sworn, one hundred would not be sufficient to meet his wants. Oh! those young men—those young men—what terrible spendthrifts they are! And with such a generous father too, one who refused him nothing. 'Twill be a heavy blow on Mr. Mortimer, that it will, when he finds out his son's extravagance."

"It will be a still heavier one," said I, "if he finds that his son has been raising money at ruinous interest from usurious money-lenders—harpies who fatten on the substance of the unwary."

"Surely Mr. Percy will not have recourse to such a measure, Richard?"

"He has no other resource, my dear Mrs. Chatterton. He requires five hundred pounds to extricate him from present embarrassments, fears to provoke his father's anger by applying to him, and unless some friend can assist in finding a loan for him on equitable terms, he will fall into the hands of the Jews."

"This must not be—this must not be," said Mrs. Chatterton. "I, yes I, who owe all I possess to the firm of which his good father is at the head, will not suffer it. I have vested all my savings in the funds, and they amount to no inconsiderable sum. I will sell out a portion, and save this heedless young man from ruin, and his father from chagrin. But a thought strikes me. What if Mr. Mortimer should discover that I have supplied his son with money, and imagine that in so doing I have encouraged his extravagance? And, above all, should the assistance I mean to offer be the means of shielding Mr. Percy from the disagreeable but salutary effects of his imprudence, and so check the reflections likely to be awakened by annoyance, I should never forgive myself. I will see the young gentleman, and speak to him, and endeavour to make him sensible of the folly of his ways. If I perceive that he is resolved to be wise in future, I will advance even all my little fortune; and perhaps this act of confidence and good-nature, by which I expose my declining days to the chance of poverty, may, if he has a good heart, assist in working his reformation."

While we were yet conversing on this subject, Percy Mortimer entered the room. He appeared to be much struck with the alteration and improvement in my sister Margaret, who, from the pretty

child he had left, had grown into a blooming and beautiful girl, who received his friendly greetings with a modesty and grace that increased his apparent admiration. There was a gravity mingled with the kindness of Mrs. Chatterton's reception that seemed to make an impression on him; and when, after having made a signal to Margaret to retire to her own chamber, the good old lady, with great good sense and feeling, pointed out to Percy Mortimer the inevitable ruin he would draw on himself, and the sorrow he would entail on his excellent father, it was evident that she had not spoken in vain. She then offered him the loan of five hundred pounds, and the delicacy with which she did so, made a still more forcible impression on Percy, whose goodness of heart enabled him to duly appreciate her kindness.

It was not without considerable reluctance that he consented to accept her offer, for his delicacy shrunk from availing himself of it. At length, his scruples being vanquished, it was arranged that the five hundred pounds was to be withdrawn from the funds, and appropriated to his use as speedily as possible.

Percy proposed to spend the remainder of the evening with us; and the senior clerks, being too much engaged with their chess-board to interrupt or heed our conversation, and the junior ones being at one of the theatres, we were enabled to chat with perfect freedom. Margaret, who had been summoned to make tea, took a part in the discourse, and surprised, as well as delighted Percy by the cheerfulness, good sense, and *naïveté* of her remarks. He seldom took his eyes off her face, and listened with untiring interest to her observations. At half-past eleven o'clock, a late hour for Mrs. Chatterton and Margaret, though an unusually early one for Percy Mortimer, he took his leave, declaring that he had not passed so rational or so agreeable an evening for a long while, and expressing his hope that he might be often permitted to repeat the pleasure.

"He is a fine, and, I am quite sure, a good young man," said Mrs. Chatterton, the moment he had departed.

"And so handsome," added Margaret, half unconsciously, her cheek becoming suffused with blushes, as the glance of Mrs. Chatterton's somewhat grave expression of surprise met her eye.

"Yes, Margaret, he is, as you say, handsome," observed that worthy woman, looking gravely at the blushing face of my sister; "but as the old phrase has it, 'handsome is that handsome does;' and the doings of Mr. Percy Mortimer, I regret to say, as far at least as prudence goes, have not been very recommendable."

Margaret blushed still more deeply, and seemed occupied in intently counting the faded squares and flowers in the nearly worn-out carpet of the room.

The next day, as had been agreed on, Mrs. Chatterton left the house after breakfast, in order to instruct her broker to sell out of the funds, and returned before mid-day, bringing with her five

hundred pounds, which were to be transferred to Percy Mortimer at two o'clock. Punctual as a lover he arrived precisely at that hour, and having received the money, and given his promissory note for the amount, he still lingered in the apartment, frequently, as Mrs. Chatterton subsequently told me, looking anxiously towards the door. At length he inquired, but not without evident symptoms of embarrassment, "where Margaret was?"

"She is occupied, sir," answered Mrs. Chatterton, somewhat coldly, and he soon after took his leave.

While we sat chatting in the evening, to our great surprise Percy Mortimer entered.

"I am come to ask for a cup of tea," said he; and then observing the grave aspect of Mrs. Chatterton, he added, "I found last evening pass so pleasantly, that I have ventured to intrude again."

Margaret coloured to her very temples; and the quickened movement of her heart, visible by the agitation of the snowy kerchief that shaded her bust, betrayed the excitement that the visit occasioned her. I perceived at a glance that Percy Mortimer was not a welcome guest to Mrs. Chatterton; and from the frequent looks she bent on Margaret, I discovered that she suspected that my sister was the object that attracted Percy to pay this unexpected, and, to her, unwished for visit. For myself, I felt so sincerely attached to this friend of my boyhood, that his presence afforded me pleasure, and I almost blamed my good old Mrs. Chatterton for the reserve and coldness of her manner towards him. Margaret blushed and stammered every time Percy addressed her; and though she seldom raised her eyes from the work which occupied her delicate fingers, it was plain that she was perfectly conscious that his were rarely withdrawn from her face.

The junior clerks—who, contrary to their usual custom of visiting some one of the theatres, had remained at home during the whole evening—intently eyed Percy Mortimer, whose dress appeared to excite no less surprise than admiration in their eyes. He was, or seemed to be, hardly aware of their presence; though he acknowledged with politeness that of the senior clerks, with whom he had, in his boyhood, formed a slight acquaintance. When he had withdrawn, and Margaret had retired to her chamber, Mrs. Chatterton told me it was her desire that the visits of Mr. Percy Mortimer should not be encouraged.

"I perceive," continued that worthy woman, "that he is already smitten, as it is called, by your sister; and more still, that she is but too well disposed to return his attachment. They must be kept asunder, my dear Richard; for it would be but a bad return for the continued kindness that I have, during so many years, experienced from the firm of Mortimer and Co., and the protection afforded to you by Mr. Percy's father, were we to give that young gentleman opportunities for cultivating an attachment to Margaret, which never could be sanctioned by him. We must also consider

what is due to your sister, whose peace of mind might be seriously injured, were she much longer permitted to enjoy the society of one, who, whatever may be his imprudence, possesses such agreeable manners and good looks that few young women could remain insensible to his attentions. I know it is hard for you to repel the approaches of the friend of your childhood; but remember, it is necessary for his welfare, as well as for that of your sister, and that the task will become a more difficult one, the longer it is deferred."

It was impossible to dissent from Mrs. Chatterton's opinion; yet the thought of appearing cold or ungrateful to Percy was most painful to me, which she perceiving by my countenance, kindly undertook to explain our feelings to Percy Mortimer on his next visit.

The following day, Mrs. Chatterton was surprised by the arrival of a middle-aged man of gentlemanly manners and appearance, who having announced himself as her nephew, inquired anxiously for tidings of his mother and brother, with whom he expressed his ardent desire to share the fortune with which Providence had been pleased to bless him. He was deeply affected when informed that his aunt could give him no intelligence of his mother, and that his brother was no more, and evinced an affection towards her whom he now considered almost as a parent, that excited a lively feeling in the breast of that excellent woman. He revealed to her, that having entered as cabin-boy on board an Indiaman, he had been so fortunate as to conciliate the good opinion of an old gentleman of great wealth returning to India, after a fruitless search for his relations, among whom he wished to spend the remaining years of his life, and to bequeath the fortune acquired by business during a forty years' residence in the burning climes of the east.

Finding neither relative nor friend in England, all those whom he had formerly known having died during his long absence, he determined to return to Bombay, and spend his declining days among those acquaintances with whom he had lived during the last years, and was on his voyage back, broken in health and spirits from the disappointment he had encountered in England, when the attentions he had experienced from the active and kind-hearted little cabin-boy, won his good-will. On arriving at Bombay, he declared his intention of providing for the lad, took him to his house, procured for him good masters; and having had reason to be satisfied with his progress in his studies, and above all with the affectionate devotion with which his *protégé* repaid his kindness, he adopted him as his heir, and twenty years afterwards died, bequeathing to him his large fortune.

Mrs. Chatterton carefully concealed from her nephew the folly and culpability of his mother; and he, forgetful of the unkindness and selfishness which marked her conduct in his childhood, took every step to discover whether she was still living, that he might

provide for her. The advertisements he caused to be inserted in the newspapers, at length elicited intelligence of her ; for a person, beneath whose roof she had expired in a state of distress, answered the inquiries, by which her son ascertained that she had contracted another marriage with a quack doctor, who, having plundered her of nearly all she possessed, deserted her ; soon after which an indigestion, produced by a surfeit of her favourite dish, roast goose, purchased with seven shillings of her last sovereign, put a period to her existence.

The aunt and nephew being all that now remained of the family, Mr. Jervis earnestly pressed his aunt to go and reside with him, which she having declined, he purchased a most commodious house for her, which he caused to be handsomely furnished, and insisted on her taking possession of it ; settling on her an ample income, for supplying not only the comforts, but the elegancies of life.

While Fortune's ever-moving wheel was scattering favours on Mrs. Chatterton, the firm of Mortimer, Allison, Finsbury, and Co., to which she was so sincerely attached, encountered a severe reverse from the fickle goddess. The failure of a great banking-house in India, in which they were partners, and the pressure of bankruptcies in America and at home, occurring at the same time, plunged them into such difficulties, that they were compelled to call a meeting of their creditors ; and the large fortune of Mr. Mortimer, who, unfortunately for himself, had permitted his name to remain as a sleeping partner in the firm, becoming liable for the debts, was engulfed in the general ruin. The shock was too much for him, whose constitution had been weakened by long and recent illness. He soon sunk under the blow, leaving his son Percy nearly penniless, and without a profession. Then it was that Mrs. Chatterton proved the gratitude for her late friend, which she had so often expressed ; for she entreated her nephew to come forward to his assistance, and that worthy man readily answered to her call.

While they were consulting on the most efficient means of providing for Percy, he, poor fellow ! awakened from the follies in which he had lately been plunged, bitterly deplored his errors, and upbraided himself with a deep remorse, for the anxiety and chagrin his reckless extravagance must have caused his father.

Salutary, though painful, were the reflections in which he now indulged ; and Mrs. Chatterton, who witnessed his regrets for the past, and heard his prudent resolves for the future, no longer excluded him from her house, where, from every member of the domestic circle assembled around her, he experienced the most cordial sympathy and affection.

Percy Mortimer, bowed down by sorrow, was a much more interesting, and, consequently, a more dangerous person in the eyes of a girl like Margaret, than when, enacting the *rôle* of a dissipated man of fashion, he seemed conscious of his own attractions, and doubted not their effect on others. The love that maidenly

modesty might, and would have concealed from its object, had his prosperity still placed so great a disparity between them, now shone forth in every glance, and modulated every tone of the low and sweet voice of Margaret, when addressing him.

While affairs were in this state, Mrs. Chatterton was waited on one day by Mr. Bristow, one of the partners of an eminent solicitors' house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, who, to her great surprise and joy, acquainted her that a large fortune, bequeathed to her late husband, with reversion to her, now awaited her acceptance. This unexpected bequest came from Mr. Herbertson, who had been several years dead, but whose will, having been mislaid, was only discovered a short time before, in a box that had been overlooked in the search made for it by the executors of the deceased lawyer, in whose hands it had been placed.

"You are now, madam," said Mr. Bristow, "in the possession of no less a sum than eighty-five thousand pounds—a noble fortune, which I heartily wish you health to enjoy."

When the first emotions of surprise and joy had subsided in the heart of Mrs. Chatterton, she sighed deeply, and tears filled her eyes. "Ah!" said she, "had my poor Henry, and our blessed boy, lived to see this day, how happy would this unexpected acquisition of fortune have rendered me! To have seen *them* raised to affluence, would indeed have been a source of joy and thanksgiving to me; but now, an old and childless widow, fast approaching the tomb where those blessed objects repose, of what avail is this vast wealth? My nephew, now my only remaining relative, is already in possession of a large fortune, so needs not any portion of mine. Ah! had my husband and child lived—but let me not be ungrateful, or murmur at the decrees of an all-wise Providence. Have I not," and she looked around the tea-table where we were seated, and, smiling through her tears, continued—"have I not children left? Yes, Richard and Margaret—ay, and Percy Mortimer too, ye shall be my children, and from this hour I adopt you as such. No thanks, no tears. You, Richard and Margaret, have behaved towards me with all the affection and duty that children could show a parent, and have soothed my declining days. Your father, Percy, was a father and a friend to me, when I was left alone in the world, and I only discharge a debt of gratitude in adopting his son. Messrs. Allison and Finsbury, too, shall be assisted, for they are childless, and a few thousands may be of use. Come and embrace me, my children, and promise that you will never forsake your old adopted mother, until you have laid her in the grave, by the side of those dear ones whom she has so fondly remembered. You, my children, Richard and Margaret, listened to the simple story of the prosy old woman, without feeling, or at least, without exhibiting any symptoms of the impatience and disgust so generally experienced by the young and gay. You shared my tears, when I wept in recounting the heavy trials I had undergone in losing my

poor Henry and our boy, and I loved you for this sympathy, so precious to a heart that had been so long deprived of it. You believed me, when I told you of my husband's goodness—a goodness that, while he lived, was the blessing of my life, and which even now has brought affluence, that enables me to provide so amply for those dear to me. Yes, my children, it was that goodness which no one could live near him without being sensible of, which won the esteem of Mr. Herbertson, and induced him to make the bequest he has done; for what could he know of me, except that he judged that so excellent a man as Henry was, could not have been so fondly attached to an unworthy woman? This great fortune, then, I look on as coming to me from my dear husband, for it was acquired solely by his merit and goodness.”

The nephew of Mrs. Chatterton, who emulated her in generosity and kindness of heart, highly approved of her intentions in our favour, and lent her his assistance in carrying them into effect. But it was not alone to us that this excellent woman extended her benefactions. She liberally assisted the junior clerks of the firm, who had been domiciled with her in the establishment in which I had the good fortune to find her; secured a competency to John Stebbings, the old porter, and two servants who had so long waited on her; and made handsome presents to the senior clerks, who had, fortunately, by their prudence, secured for themselves a maintenance. In short, all who had formed a part of the domestic circle in Mincing-lane, had reason to bless her. By her generosity I was enabled to provide for my father and brothers, by placing them in a large farm amply stocked, where they enjoy all the comforts of life, and where they have accumulated a considerable fortune. The debts of Percy Mortimer were discharged by Mrs. Chatterton, by whose counsel he determined henceforth to be guided. He returned no more to college, and his noble friends at Christchurch, having heard of the failure of the house to which his father had belonged, took no trouble to renew their acquaintance with him.

“It is strange,” said Percy to me one day, “that neither Lords Elmsdale nor Asherton have ever replied to the letters I wrote them! Both are deeply in my debt, for I repeatedly lent them money; and, as you are aware, I accepted a bill for four hundred and seventy pounds for Elmsdale the day he was arrested by his tailor.”

“Both these lords,” replied I, “know the misfortune that has occurred to the firm of which your lamented father was the head; and, consequently, imagine that you can no longer render them the same services that proved so opportune on former occasions. They therefore are disposed, as their silence proves, to forget an acquaintance from whom they can no more derive any advantage.”

“But surely Elmsdale will pay the bill I accepted for him!”

“I am much inclined to doubt it: he has just got into parliament,

which will protect his person from arrest ; and be assured he will leave you to pay this bill, which, if I mistake not, will become due in a few days."

"I cannot think quite so ill of him," said Percy Mortimer ; "although I admit that his unfeeling and ungrateful conduct, in not replying to my letters, justifies your suspicions."

In a few days after this conversation, I accompanied my sister Margaret and Percy Mortimer to the Exhibition, and while the latter stopped to speak to a neighbour of his late father's, Margaret and I paused before a picture from the admirable pencil of Edwin Landseer, around which several persons were assembled. Two young men of the group turned from the picture, and staring rudely at my sister, embarrassed her so much that she asked me to move on. I had been so intently admiring the *chef-d'œuvre* of art before me, that I had not observed the impertinence of these young men, until the proposal of my sister to change our position, drew my attention to them ; and no sooner did I look, than I recognised in one of them Lord Elmsdale. Unabashed by the sternness with which I regarded him, he still continued to gaze at Margaret, whose blushing cheeks betrayed the annoyance his rudeness occasioned her.

At this moment Percy Mortimer joined us, and placing himself by the side of my sister, began to express his admiration of the picture that had attracted us. Lord Elmsdale turned his head aside, and whispering his companion, they both moved off without betraying any symptom of recognition of Percy Mortimer, whose face crimsoned at this open avoidance of him by his old friends. I felt inclined to resent the impertinence of Lord Elmsdale's manner of staring at Margaret ; but, unwilling to excite observation in such a crowd, I only showed my sense of his rudeness by glancing sternly at him whenever I saw his eyes turned towards her. As we were leaving the room, our exit was impeded near the doorway by the pressure of the crowd, and we again found ourselves in contact with Lord Elmsdale and his companion. The former, taking advantage of our proximity, pressed so closely behind Margaret, that I felt her shrink ; and, turning to observe the cause, I saw him withdraw his hand, which it now became evident he had presumed to touch her with. I pushed him from her with a violence that left no doubt of my intention to insult him, and he, becoming red in the face with anger, demanded "why I did so?"

Percy Mortimer instantly said, "Lord Elmsdale, your insolence to me in not acknowledging my acquaintance, I intended to demand satisfaction for in another place ; but your ungentlemanly and unmanly conduct in pressing against this lady, requires immediate notice. Let me have your address, and yours also, Lord Asherwood !"

"I am not aware that I have any account to render you, sir," replied Lord Asherwood, "and consequently see no necessity to comply with your request."

"Here is mine," said Lord Elmsdale, handing a card to Percy Mortimer; and, with an air of the utmost *hauteur*, he and his friend turned on their heels, and left the room.

Margaret, trembling with emotion, entreated Percy to be calm, while her countenance bore evidence of the terror in which this disagreeable *fracas* had plunged her. The persons around us, who had heard the conversation, and witnessed the giving of the card, stared so much at us, that, in pity to the feelings of my sister, we hurried from the place, and having left her in safety at the residence of Mrs. Chatterton—reiterating her entreaties to us "to take no further notice of the rudeness of that odious lord," as she called him—we retraced our steps, and entered a coffee-house, to consult on what had best be done.

Percy there wrote a letter to Lord Elmsdale, demanding a hostile meeting, the time and place to be immediately named by any friend his lordship would appoint to act for him on the occasion. I was to take this letter, and act as second to Percy—a position for which my inexperience of such affairs nearly incapacitated me. My own anger had been so much excited towards Lord Elmsdale, that I heartily wished to punish him for his impudent behaviour to my sister, and determined on doing so as soon as Percy's quarrel with him was arranged. And yet, even while under the influence of passion, the religious sentiments so carefully instilled in my youth, operated on my mind, and whispered, in the still, small voice of conscience, that to seek the life of another, or to expose that of my friend, was acting contrary to the precepts I had received. Yet would the libertine glance of Elmsdale, fixed on my pure and innocent sister, even while leaning on a brother's arm, recur to my memory and kindle afresh the wrath that reason and religion had tried to vanquish; and the insolent superciliousness of both these lordlings would again seem present, and add fuel to the flame of my anger. I found Lord Elmsdale had not yet returned to the hotel where he resided, so having left a card with my address, I returned to the coffee-house, where Percy Mortimer had agreed to wait for me. He, however, was not there; and, on my questioning the waiter whether no message had been left for me by my friend, he informed me that, shortly after my departure, two men having entered the coffee-room in which the young gentleman was reading a newspaper, they had gone up and spoken to him, and he having entered a coach with them, had driven off, leaving no message whatever.

"The truth is, sir," said the waiter, "I am of opinion that the young gentleman was harrested, and is gone with the sheriff's officers, for such I'm sure they were, to a sponging-house."

I gave instructions to the waiter, that in case any letter should arrive for me, it was to be forwarded immediately to Mrs. Chatterton's; and then, much depressed in spirits, I returned to her abode. Margaret, on seeing me enter alone, instantly concluded that some-

thing fatal had occurred to Percy Mortimer ; and, in the terror and agitation occasioned by this supposition, betrayed the depth of the attachment to him, which her maidenly reserve had hitherto concealed.

It was in vain that I assured her that Percy had not been seen, or even heard from Lord Elmsdale, since the altercation at the Exhibition ; his absence, which I could not satisfactorily explain, confirmed her worst apprehensions, and produced a violent attack of nerves. Mrs. Chatterton, too, when dinner was served, and Percy did not appear, became exceedingly alarmed, and the repast was removed untouched. I told her the waiter's suspicions relative to Percy's having been arrested : the quarrel with Lord Elmsdale she had not heard of, for poor Margaret, fearful of revealing the deep interest she felt on the subject, had not named it to her.

"What ! has he again got into debt ?" asked Mrs. Chatterton, her countenance betraying her dissatisfaction at the notion.

I told her my opinion relative to the bill he had accepted for Lord Elmsdale ; but the worthy woman could not bring herself to credit that such baseness could be practised by a nobleman or gentleman.

"What ! leave another to suffer for a debt which he never incurred ?" said she. "Can there be such a dishonourable man ?"

While she was speaking on this subject, a letter was brought to me from Percy Mortimer, which fully proved the truth of my suspicions. He wrote from a sponging-house in Chancery-lane, belonging to no less a personage than the identical Mr. Benjamin Eliason, whom I had formerly seen in the chamber of Percy Mortimer, when my too good-natured friend had saved Lord Elmsdale from a prison, by accepting the very bill for the amount of which he himself was now arrested.

"Go to the poor young man immediately, my dear Richard," said Mrs. Chatterton ; "but stay—I forgot that it is no use going unless you take the means of liberating him. Give me my spectacles and cheque-book. How much did you say it was ?"

"Four hundred and seventy pounds was the original sum, if I remember rightly," said I.

"Well, then, I will draw for five hundred and fifty," said Mrs. Chatterton, "for probably there will be additional expenses to pay."

CHAPTER XI.

FURNISHED with the cheque for five hundred and fifty pounds, I set off for Chancery-lane, and having arrived at a shabby house, remarkable for its uncleanness, even in a neighbourhood where every house looks dingy and dirty, I desired to be shown to Mr.

Percy Mortimer's apartment. A tawdrily-dressed woman, with slip-shod shoes, led me up a flight of stairs, that evidently had not come in contact with aught used for cleaning during many a long day, and the accumulation of dirt testified to the numerous persons in the habit of using them, as well as to the extent of their perambulations in the neighbouring filthy streets.

"Please to hopen the door, Mr. Eliason, there be a gemman here as wants to see Mr. Pursy," said the woman; on which Mr. Benjamin Eliason came forth from a small room adjoining that at which she had knocked, breathing not of Araby the blest, but of bad tobacco. Eying me with a scrutinising glance, and drawing a key from his pocket, he applied it to the lock, and in another moment I found myself standing by my friend Percy Mortimer, who rose, and rushed to meet me.

A gaudy paper, bearing several stains of wine, and caricatures drawn in pen and ink, covered the walls of the chamber. A glass, the frame of which was larger than the mirror it bordered, and which said frame was covered with a very soiled yellow muslin, ornamented the chimney-piece, on which were placed sundry delf images and vases of grotesque shapes, not a single one of which had escaped unbroken. Window curtains of crimson moreen trimmed with yellow fringe, were suspended from brass poles, terminated by the thyrsus of Bacchus; these same curtains had shared with the paper the libations of wine offered up probably to the jolly god, whose attribute adorned the brass poles. The chairs and sofa were so rickety as to create alarm in the minds of those compelled to use them, and partook the wine stains so liberally showered on the paper and curtains. The carpet had several rents, and its colours were begrimed with dirt, while the table, covered with a worsted cloth that had once been crimson, bordered with a yellow lace, bore innumerable marks of glasses of all sizes, imbedded in a stratum of filth, the accumulation of many months. An odour of tobacco, guiltless of ever having seen the Havannah, impregnated the room, and disputed with an overcoming smell of various spirituous liquors.

Two bottles of wine, untasted, a plate with some dirty-looking biscuits, and another containing half a dozen of half-decayed oranges, with a few sheets of bad letter-paper, a broken inkstand, and steel pen, graced the table. Never did I behold my poor friend Percy Mortimer so wholly subdued as when he wrung my hand.

"You see," exclaimed he, "how infamously Lord Elmsdale has behaved to me!"

"Vy, lor bless you, sir!" interrupted Mr. Benjamin Eliason, "I'd have laid five pounds—ay, that I would, and more too—that he'd have let you into this here scrape, as soon as ever I heard that he'd got into parliament. It's the way with all them there young chaps; and you're not the first by no means as has suffered for their doings."

"You remember, Richard, how he pledged his honour," said Percy.

"His honour!" repeated Mr. Ben. Eliason, contemptuously: "Vy, there's not a pawnbroker in all London would take that there pledge for a penny-piece. Ven I heard him say it I laughed downright, for I knowed how he had sarved other friends afore you, sir. But you ha'n't dined, Mr. Pursy; wouldn't you like to have something? I can have a tender rump-steak, or a lamb-chop, sent up to you in a jiffey."

"No, no—thank you Mr. Eliason, I have no appetite—I really could not eat," replied Percy.

"But your friend, Mr. Pursy, may be he'd like to dine, for perhaps he was disturbed when he was sitting down to dinner?"

"No, thank you, I've dined," replied I.

"Vell, then, if as how you've dined already, I suppose you'll not hobject to my sarving up a bottle of champagne well hiced? 'twill do Mr. Pursy good, and keep hup his spirits."

"No—no champagne," said Percy, impatiently.

"Vell, if you prefers claret, it's all the same to me: I never forces no gemman to drink anything he does not like. I've 'ad some of the most tiptop young noblemen and gemmen in Lunnon in this same room, which I always resarves for genteel company; and not von of 'em can say as how Benjamin Eliason hever forced him to drink against his hinclination. No! what I say is fair enough. Hevery gemman, says I, is expected to call for something has a compliment to the house; he may drink it hor not, jist as he pleases."

"But you have already sent up sherry and madeira, which, though I have not touched, I am willing to pay for," replied Percy Mortimer.

"Vell, and if I have, vy, that was above three hours ago, and has both them there bottles have got hot and stale, they are of no use whatsomenever to nobody," answered Mr. Benjamin Eliason. "It's usual for gemmen has hoccupies the best room, which this here is, to call for something every hour or so, for the good of the house. And if it was not for this custom, how could I let gemmen stay here snug and comfortable, enjoying themselves hour after hour, while my men are running round the town with letters to their friends? And a good profit my men make of it; for while I can only sell a few bottles of wine at little more than folk pay at the fashionable hotels at the west hend, my chaps can fill their pockets with money.—'Say I'm gone out of town, and my servants don't know where,' says one of the friends a poor gentleman has sent to, and he slips my man a sovereign.—'Tell him I'm in bed with a brain fever, and the doctors von't let me hopen no letters,' says a third, tipping him a bit of gold; and 'Take back the letter, and I'm gone to the Continent,' says a fourth. Mayhap some one of my friends, more courageous than than the others, writes an

answer, saying—‘How very sorry they are, that they cannot be of no use on the present hoccasion, as they are tied down by a solemn promise not to lend money, nor go security for no man.’—Another gemman writes that—‘His wife von’t let him,’ though it be vell known his wife, poor lady, never had power to prevent him doing anything he pleased; and others say, p’raps more truly, that they are themselves so pressed for money, that they can’t help him, though they’d do anything else in the world to sarve him. I’ve often found sich letters half torn on this table or on the carpet, when the poor gemman has been removed to prison. Hin short, sir, there’s no hend to the hexcuses that gemmen make their friends when they most want ’em; vich make me think, sir, that no von really has friends hexcept those has is sure never to have the least hoccasion in life for their services. I’ve seen gemmen turn white and red in the face when my men has come back with such lies; and I’ve thought as how it was a terrible trial to ’em too; but when I have heard some of ’em say—‘How unlucky! if so, or so, had been in town, *he* would have immediately come to me;’ when I knowed all the time, that this same chap the poor gemman had such trust in, had given a handful of silver to my man to say he was gone from Lunnon, when he was giving a grand dinner at home all the while, I have pitied the poor gemman who was so deceived.”

“What is to be done, Richard?” asked Percy Mortimer. “I see no use in remaining here incurring heavy expense, and think it better to go at once to prison.”

“I have here the means,” replied I, “of extricating you. Mrs. Chatterton, the moment she heard of your difficulty, gave me money to settle it.”

“Excellent woman! but what must she think of me?”

“She knows, dear Richard, that this is no recent folly; she pities you for the severe lesson you have received; and pardons the imprudence into which your good-nature and inexperience hurried you; while she despises the unworthy man for whom you have placed yourself in this painful position.”

“Amiable and admirable as she is, and after all that she has already done for me, how can I thus trespass on her generosity? I really am overpowered by the deep sense I entertain of her kindness.”

“Mr. Eliason, will you be so obliging as to let me know the amount of your claim on my friend?” I asked.

“Vy, let me see, sir,—the hamount with hexpenses and hall, comes to five hundred and heleven pounds, nine shillings and sixpence. Then there’s the little hexpenses for the coach, the hire of this room, the vine, and other matters. But, if you please, sir, my wife, who hunderstands this business, will make hout the bill.” And, so saying, he went to the top of the stairs, taking care, however, to lock the door on the outside, and called out to her to make up the bill.

In a few minutes he returned, bringing a soiled half-sheet of foolscap paper, of the contents of which the following is a faithful transcript :—

	£	s.	d.
To a Hackney Coach	0	8	6
To Hapartment	2	2	0
To 1 bottle of Sherry	0	8	6
To do. Madeira	0	10	6
To Biscuits	0	2	6
To Horanges	0	3	0
To Letter-paper	0	2	6
To Sealing-wax	0	2	0
To Wax Candles	0	5	0
To Man for taking letter	0	10	6
	<hr/>		
	£4	15	0

Having discharged all expenses, and made, not without the suggestion of Mr. Benjamin Eliason, a present of two pounds to his wife, which, as he assured me, "was always done by every gemman has hoccupied the best room;" and rewarded his own politeness by a five-pound note, which, he told us, was the least sum he was in the habit of receiving on similar occasions, we gladly quitted Chancery-lane, and left its dingy precincts as hastily as possible.

"We must first call at the coffee-house, to inquire if any answer has been sent from Lord Elmsdale," said Percy Mortimer. So we turned our steps thither, and found the following note:—

"Lord Elmsdale, though not acknowledging any right on the part of Mr. Mortimer to demand an explanation from him, will have no objection to give the meeting required, provided Mr. Mortimer can find any gentleman (the word underlined) with whom his friend Lord Asherwood can arrange time and place for it."

I saw Percy's face become crimson as he perused this letter, which he was in the act of putting into his pocket, when I urged him to let me see it. He resisted my entreaties for some time, but at length gave me the note, observing—"That such insolence was beneath my notice."

"It is a mere excuse to refuse me satisfaction," continued Percy; "but I will find a mode of defeating it."

I felt my cheeks glow with anger; and had I, at the moment, encountered Lord Elmsdale, I do not think I could have resisted inflicting on him the manual chastisement his insolence so well merited; not that the denial of my right to be considered a gentleman, according to his notion of the character, wounded me; but that having insulted my sister, he was so unmanly as to seek a pretext for not meeting her defender.

While we were concerting on what had best be done, Percy Mortimer saw a college friend of his, Lord Mordaunt, pass the window; and rushing into the street, he soon returned, bringing with him that young nobleman, to whom he presented me. He

related the whole affair, arrest and all, to Lord Mordaunt, who immediately offered to be his friend on this occasion, and evinced the kindest interest in Percy.

"Leave this business in my hands," said he, "and either come to me at Mordaunt-house, or let me have your address, that I may be able to communicate with you."

We returned to Mrs. Chatterton's, where the warmest reception awaited us; for that worthy woman, anxious to lessen the sense of obligation under which the grateful heart of Percy Mortimer was obviously oppressed, evinced an increased sentiment of affection towards him. The altered looks of my sister Margaret, whose face, from an extreme paleness, blushed a rosy red as Percy entered the room where she was seated with Mrs. Chatterton, escaped not the eager glances of her lover, for that such she was, had for some time become evident to all. Yet, as no avowal of his passion had passed his lips, and that his manner to Margaret was as respectful and reserved as possible, neither Mrs. Chatterton nor myself had thought it right to speak to him on the subject. When retiring for the night, my sister, as was her custom, shook hands with Percy Mortimer, he started at finding that her hand was burning.

"Good heavens! Mar—that is, Miss Wallingford—you are ill," exclaimed he.

"Only a slight cold," said Margaret; "I shall be better to-morrow."

"What did he say?" demanded Mrs. Chatterton.

"Miss Wallingford is ill—very ill," replied Percy.

"You are right, my young friend, she is in a high state of fever; and, now I think of it, she has looked very ill ever since she returned from her walk with you. Why, it was only a minute before you returned, Richard, that she was as pale as a ghost, and the instant she saw you she became as red as a rose."

"I shall be better, indeed I shall be better, after a good night's rest," said Margaret, who, giving her arm to Mrs. Chatterton, ascended to her chamber.

"You know not, Richard, you cannot know," said Percy, "how passionately, how fondly, I love your sister. Were I possessed of millions, they should be placed at her feet; but, poor and dependent, how can I hope that she, you, or Mrs. Chatterton, would listen to my vows with patience, much less sanction them? Ah, Richard! were I the rich person I was brought up to think I should be, with what pride and pleasure would I sue for Margaret's hand; but now—yes, I know it is folly, worse than folly, to think of asking her to become mine."

"If I know aught of Mrs. Chatterton's heart, my dear Percy," replied I, "she would not disapprove your attachment to Margaret, or offer any opposition to its being rewarded by her hand; and as to my sister, I am much deceived if she does not warmly reciprocate

your affection, proofs of which I have often noticed, when she, poor dear girl, was little aware of the discovery I had made. What my feelings towards you, my dear Percy, are, you can more easily imagine than I can express; for I have never ceased to remember the kindness and delicacy with which you forgot, and tried to make me also forget, the difference between our births and fortunes, when your generous father took me from comparative poverty, to share the advantages of the liberal education he was bestowing on you, his only son. Though no longer possessed of the fortune you once anticipated, I still think that had my sister thousands for her portion, a marriage with you would be the highest honour she could attain—so you may judge the happiness it gives me to hear what you have just told me. I will, if you desire it, open the subject to Mrs. Chatterton."

"At what a moment does the delightful intelligence, that your beautiful sister is not indifferent to my affection, reach me. Should I fall, you will tell her how fondly, how fervently, I loved her; and how long my poverty has prevented me from making known to her the sentiments of my heart. I cannot doubt, now that Lord Mordaunt has undertaken the arrangement of my quarrel, that Lord Elmsdale must meet me; and though I highly disapprove duelling, yet, as society is at present constituted, I have not moral courage enough to decline seeking satisfaction for the insults I have received. How many grave reflections—ay, and tender ones too, my dear Richard, press on my mind at this moment, when my reason so strongly pleads against the course that worldly opinion has urged me to adopt. I must retire, and pray to the Almighty for pardon for thus daring to disobey *His* precept."

At an early hour next morning, Percy received a letter from Lord Mordaunt, informing him that he had seen Lord Asherwood, and demanded a meeting between Lord Elmsdale and him, which had been immediately assented to; "but previously to its taking place," continued Lord Mordaunt, "I told Asherwood that all pecuniary transactions between Lord Elmsdale and you, must be finally settled. This is the usual course in such matters, and you must not depart from it."

In two hours after, a second letter from Lord Mordaunt reached Percy, in which he said that Lord Elmsdale, not being able to repay the money due to Percy Mortimer, had consented to make an apology, which he hoped would be satisfactory to Mortimer's feelings; in which, having disclaimed all intention of offering any offence to my friend, or to the lady in whose society he had met him at the Exhibition, he expressed his regret that anything on his part should have justified the supposition of his entertaining such an intention.

"Is it not abominable," said Percy Mortimer, handing the letter to me, "that a man in so elevated a sphere as that to which Lord Elmsdale belongs, should be so wanting in principle and

feeling as to act in this manner? He is really a disgrace to his rank."

"I fear there are but too many who are so," replied I; "men who accept obligations when it suits their convenience, and who, forgetful of them, repay those who have conferred them with ingratitude and insolence."

"That there are persons so base I cannot deny," observed Percy, "but does not the conduct of Lord Mordaunt redeem many such. Nor is he, believe me, a solitary example; for, at college, I have known many young noblemen who resemble him, while those few who pursue the same course as Lords Elmsdale and Asherwood, are happily few in number. If I have been the dupe of such men, the fault was mine. Anxious to place myself on an equality with young men of rank, I administered to the wants of those whose extravagance had placed them in difficulties, and foolishly imagined that by conferring obligations on them, I made them my friends. I have discovered my mistake too late, it is true, to profit by it, but I am not ashamed to avow my error."

Lord Mordaunt called on Percy Mortimer the next day, and after inquiring into his prospects with all the kindness of a friend, informed him that he had a proposal to make, of which he thought his acceptance would be highly advantageous. "My father," continued he, "has just been appointed ambassador to Vienna, and requires a private secretary. He will, at my recommendation, immediately name you. The pay, though not large, will enable you to live like a gentleman. You will be lodged at the embassy, and have a seat at his table. If you require a few hundreds, permit me to be your banker; for, be assured, I cannot have a greater pleasure than in being of use to you. If, as I anticipate, you discharge your duty in a manner to satisfy my father, you need entertain no apprehensions for your future career; for he has interest enough, and the inclination will not, I am sure, be wanting, to push you forward in the diplomatic line. What say you, my dear Mortimer—shall I immediately name it to him?"

When Mrs. Chatterton was informed of Lord Mordaunt's friendly offer, she instantly told Percy that it had long been her intention to render him independent. "Six hundred a year shall be settled on you forthwith," said she, "with a considerable increase hereafter; so you are at liberty to accept or decline the proposal of Lord Mordaunt, as you judge best."

Margaret, who was present at the conversation, turned as pale as a lily; and having vainly tried to suppress or conceal her agitation, fell fainting on the sofa on which she was seated.

No longer master of his feelings, Percy Mortimer betrayed his long attachment by the fondest epithets addressed to Margaret, who, on opening her eyes, discovered him kneeling at her feet, and chafing her cold hands in his.

A scene of great tenderness followed her return to animation.

Percy poured forth the long-concealed secret of his heart, and she listened to the avowal with a pleasure that left him little doubt of her participation in the sentiments he avowed.

Mrs. Chatterton declared, that as the young people were so much attached to each other, it would be a pity to separate them ; and as she could not resign the society of Margaret, Percy must give up the appointment offered him by Lord Mordaunt, and reside with her, and become a country gentleman.

While preparations were making for the nuptials, the estate of Oak Park, the residence of the late Mr. Mortimer, was brought to the hammer, and Mrs. Chatterton became the purchaser.

Lord Mordaunt, who was a frequent visitor, was pleased to form so good an opinion of me, that the appointment offered to Percy, was, at his request, conferred on me, and shortly after my sister's marriage I accompanied the Marquis of Montrevor to Vienna.

Before my departure, which my good and kind friend, Mrs. Chatterton, would gladly have prevented, she settled on me one thousand pounds a year, which enabled me to hold the position which I had attained, with that independence which is so advantageous in all stations. My dislike to an idle life was the true and only plea I could urge for leaving my benefactress ; and as I left her with those who I well knew would do all that could be effected for her comfort and happiness, I had the less compunction in resisting her entreaties to remain with her. I had the good fortune to conciliate the esteem and regard of the Marquis of Montrevor, and after spending three years beneath the same roof with him and his family, had the happiness to win the affection of the Lady Mary Mordaunt, whose hand was bestowed on me, soon after which, through his lordship's interest, I obtained the appointment of minister to Turin.

The nephew of Mrs. Chatterton, who became acquainted with the Marquis of Montrevor and his family, through my alliance with them, has married the sister of my wife, and is now a distinguished member of the House of Commons.

Mrs. Chatterton is at present in her eightieth year, but still cheerful and healthy ; she resides at Oak Park ; and Percy Mortimer and my sister, with a fine boy and girl, of which they are the proud and happy parents, add to, if they do not form the happiness of her life.

My relations have been so prosperous, that my brothers have married into wealthy and respectable families, and are now esteemed among the gentry of the country ; while my father and mother, who have converted the old farm-house into a neat cottage *orné*, are frequent and welcome visitors at Oak Park.

Lady Mary and I passed the last Christmas with Mrs. Chatterton ; where a large family party, including her nephew and his wife, with Lord Mordaunt, were assembled ; and a merrier group could not have been found.

Lord Elmsdale, after pursuing a career of folly and extravagance, ended his days a short time ago by the pistol of a husband whose wife he had defamed, and who had refused to accept the apology which the pusillanimity of the defamer had induced him to proffer.

Lord Asherwood still may be seen at the clubs, where his dull and thrice-told tales render his conversation irksome to all who come in contact with him ; and where he not unfrequently vents his spleen on the blindness of Fortune, for having, in one of her unaccountable freaks, elevated into another sphere from that in which he was born, the *parvenu* Richard Wallingford.

VERONICA OF CASTILLE.

THERE dwelt not in all Castille a fairer maiden than Veronica d'Alcantara. Left an orphan in her childhood, and the heiress of immense possessions, the guardianship of herself and fortune was confided to a distant relative, the Conde Ribiero. In his castle, in a remote province, were passed the first years of her girlhood ; where, under the superintendence of a kind-hearted and devoted duenna, she attained all the accomplishments deemed necessary for a lady of ancient descent, who boasted of blue blood in her veins, and whose wealth surpassed that of every hidalgo in the province. The Conde Ribiero had a nephew, a youth of wild and ungoverned passions, whose name had been more than once linked with crime ; and who no sooner saw the fair ward of his uncle, and heard of her broad lands, than he determined to appropriate both to himself. It was not that his heart was touched by the charms of the fair Veronica ; for, truth to tell, all captivating as they were, they made but little impression on him. Her wealth was the attraction ; though he rejoiced that her surpassing beauty would exempt him from the suspicion of having sought her solely from mercenary motives. His uncle, the Conde Ribiero, marked with satisfaction the preference accorded by Don Manuel de Mendoza to the fair Veronica. He looked on the alliance of his ward and heir as the means of enriching the impoverished fortunes of the latter, and upholding the fast-falling dignity of his ancient house ; and in this agreeable prospect, forgot the vices of his nephew, reports of which had frequently reached him, coupled with irrefragable proofs of their truth.

Don Manuel was a constant guest in the secluded castle of the Conde Ribiero, where no insidious art was left untried to win the affections of the young and lovely heiress. Flattery assailed the inexperienced girl in all the seductive tones of a man who had often, and successfully, availed himself of this redoubtable weapon

against the gentler sex ; but, sooth to say, though the flattery pleased her passing well, she loved not the flatterer. The vanity of Don Manuel became wounded, as he marked the unaffected indifference of her whom he had determined to wed. That he, the most favoured of all the young men who distinguished themselves in the heartless course of gallantry at Madrid and had won the smiles of its proudest dames, should fail to captivate a mere girl, who had never left the solitude of her provincial abode, surprised and mortified him ! His indifference towards Veronica soon began to assume a stronger, sterner sentiment—that of positive dislike, as his wounded vanity writhed under the daily and evident symptoms of her distaste. Not all the dissimulation in which he was so well skilled, could at times conceal his hatred towards the fair and artless Veronica. Often did his more wary uncle reproach him, *not* for the sentiment, but for its unwise exposure, and prophesy that it would preclude the fulfilment of the schemes and wishes of both. Then would the wily Don Manuel, after such advice, smooth his brow, dress his face in smiles, and court the heiress with all his practised arts ; but she continued as insensible as before, her perfect indifference rendering her as unconscious of his real dislike, as regardless of his affected preference.

Veronica had now attained her seventeenth year, when a letter from the court summoned the Conde Ribiero and his beautiful ward to visit Madrid. This summons, a compliance with which could not be evaded, filled the uncle and nephew with alarm. The beauty and wealth of Veronica could not fail, they felt convinced, to attract universal attention and admiration ; and it was but too probable that the heart which had resisted all the arts of Don Manuel, would yield to one of the many suitors likely to try to win it in the dangerous focus of the courtly circle. They already saw, in anticipation, the prey they had so long deemed their own, become the property of another, but how to avert this impending evil they knew not. Various were the plans devised by this unworthy pair to detain Veronica from Madrid until she should consent to become the wife of Don Manuel ; but the order for repairing thither was so peremptory, and the time granted for obeying it so brief, that they despaired of finding any satisfactory excuse for non-compliance.

Veronica evinced such unequivocal symptoms of pleasure when informed that she was soon to exchange her gloomy abode for the brilliant one of Madrid, that her guardian and his nephew saw that her desire to leave the Castle de Ribiero, would offer a strong obstacle to any plan they might attempt to frustrate it. Don Manuel, at the suggestion of his uncle, redoubled his attentions to Veronica ; and she, elated at the prospect of her speedy emancipation from a dwelling endeared to her by no tie of affection, no recollection of happy days, in the artlessness of her nature, permitted a portion of the exhilaration she felt, to mingle in her con-

verse with her guardian and his nephew ; whose vanity led him to attribute her unusual complacency and gaiety, to a growing sentiment of kindness towards himself. But while the Conde Ribiero and Don Manuel retarded their departure to the utmost permitted limit, and reflected on every possible means of finding a pretext for detaining Veronica at the castle, chance offered one, the very evening previous to that fixed for their leaving the country, which they seized with avidity. Veronica complained of illness, and in a few hours was pronounced, by the leech of the neighbouring village, to be suffering under the measles, a malady then raging in the neighbourhood. He asserted that the symptoms were so favourable, and the constitution of the patient so good, that her recovery could not fail to take place in two or three weeks, and pronounced that he would answer for her safety. Under these circumstances, the Conde Ribiero and his nephew determined to proceed to Madrid forthwith, rejoiced that the beautiful and wealthy heiress could not be exhibited at court for some time, and determined to use every effort to prevent her ever appearing there, until she was presented as the bride of Don Manuel de Mendoza.

Left to the care of her affectionate duenna and the skilful leech, and aided by an excellent constitution, Veronica soon recovered from her illness, and with all the buoyancy of mind peculiar to the young on leaving the sick chamber, sought the fresh and fragrant air with renovated feelings of delight. Mounted on her palfrey, and attended by an attached domestic, she would ride gaily forth, and for the first time mistress of her actions, extend her excursions many miles beyond the walls of the umbrageous park, within which her duenna strictly enjoined her to limit them.

Of all duennas, Donna Olympia Albufera was the most tractable. She loved the Lady Veronica as though she had been her child, and never could resist her pleadings. A smile, or an affectionate entreaty from the fair young creature over whose childhood she had watched with almost maternal assiduity and tenderness, were generally found sufficient to silence the objections of Donna Olympia ; but a caress or a tear were proved to be irresistible. The attendant who followed Veronica in her equestrian excursions, knew no will but hers ; and relying on the indulgence of Donna Olympia, and the devotion of Huguez, the fair heiress now took advantage of her freedom from the presence of her guardian and his nephew, to extend her rides nearly seven miles into the surrounding country, the wild beauty of which surprised and delighted her. When she returned at a late hour from these protracted expeditions, Donna Olympia forgot to chide her for her long absence, in the pleasure the good woman experienced in seeing her partake her light repast with an unusually good appetite ; and though she urged, the next day, her request that her dear young lady would not stray so far from home, she welcomed her back with as much affection as if the entreaty had not been disregarded.

These were happy days, and Veronica felt them to be so, though health and the enjoyment of air and exercise, constituted their chief pleasure; but to a young and pure mind these simple enjoyments furnish more gratification than the palled voluptuary can find in the most varied amusements.

Riding through a neighbouring forest one day, Veronica was surprised by encountering a knight, whose noble air and fine countenance, though seen only for a moment, made a deep impression on her. He drew up his charger, and uncovered his head while she passed, bowing low, and fixing on her face an impassioned glance from the most lustrous eyes that ever met her gaze. She returned the salute with dignified courtesy and maidenly reserve, and passed on, leaving the knight lost in admiration of her beauty. When she had proceeded some distance she demanded of Huguez, if he knew the knight they had met?

"Yes, lady," replied he, "it is no other than Don Alphonso de Pampluna; I recognised him in a moment by his noble air and fine face, although I have not seen him since his childhood."

The Lady Veronica felt a complacency towards Huguez as he uttered these words, that she had never previously experienced; and she longed to question him still farther about the knight, but was deterred by a consciousness of already feeling an interest about him that had never before been excited in her breast. Encouraged by her first and only questions relative to the stranger, Huguez, on arriving at a narrow and somewhat abrupt defile, under pretence of thinking his lady's safety required a closer attendance, advanced nearer to her, and resumed the subject which had occupied both their thoughts since they had met the knight.

"Yes, lady, I knew it could be no other than Don Alphonso de Pampluna, the bravest warrior, and truest knight, in all Castille. Ay, I warrant me, he remembered old Huguez, though it is now seven years since I last saw him, for he smiled when I bent me to the pummel of my saddle in passing him. Ah! I should know that smile, and those white teeth of his, among a thousand, that I should. There will be rejoicings in the castle, and in the village, I warrant me, at his return, for he is loved by all—so good, so generous, and so thoughtful of others. How many hearts will beat the quicker for seeing him! and how many tongues will bless his name!"

"I knew not," replied Veronica, timidly, "that the Duke de Pampluna had any other son than the marquess, who is reported to be in such ill health."

"Don Alphonso is the duke's second son, lady," answered Huguez, not a little proud of the encouragement to speak given him by his noble mistress. "He has travelled much, madam, has been in various countries, and is now returned to help to soothe the last days of his brother, and to comfort the duke under the heavy calamity that threatens soon to deprive him of his elder son. The marquess is so good, that his death will cause universal regret,

notwithstanding that his place will be nobly filled by Don Alphonso; and the brothers have been so fondly attached since their boyhood, that the accession of rank and wealth will be a poor consolation to Don Alphonso for the loss of such a brother. Ah, lady! the rich and great have their troubles as well as the poor and lowly, and, heaven knows, the Duke de Pampluna has had his share!"

The Lady Veronica listened to the garrulous old servitor with deep interest, and he, gratified by it, made his horse amble closer to her Andalusian palfrey, still keeping a little in the rear to mark his respect.

"What have been the causes of the duke's troubles?" inquired the Lady Veronica.

"Bless me, lady! have you never heard the sad story?"

"Never, Huguez."

"That is strange," muttered the old man; "and perhaps the Conde de Ribiero would resent my communicating it."

"Do tell me, Huguez," said the Lady Veronica, in her sweetest accents—those accents which few could have resisted, and least of all the ancient domestic, whose love of gossiping was only equalled by his love and devotion to his youthful mistress.

"I am thinking, lady," said he, "that as you have never heard of the sad events to which I referred, it is probable that the conde, your guardian, did not wish you to be informed of them, and consequently might resent my telling you."

The curiosity of the Lady Veronica was still more excited by this hesitation of the old servitor to gratify it; and she so strongly urged Huguez to recite the tale, and promised so faithfully not to divulge it, that he at length related it to her.

"The Duke de Pampluna had been the friend as well as neighbour of the Conde de Ribiero, and their families frequently met. The duke was the happy father of two of the finest boys in all Spain, and he and his duchess loved their children so passionately, that their very existence seemed bound up in that of their sons. In his visits to the castle of the duke, the Conde Ribiero was frequently accompanied by his nephew, Don Manuel de Mendoza, who was about the same age as the eldest son of the duke, and the youths practised their lessons in horsemanship, tilting, fencing, and shooting, together. The marquess, then as fine a youth as ever mounted a courser or handled a lance, so far surpassed Don Manuel in all manly feats, that a strong sentiment of jealousy took possession of the heart of the latter, and every new achievement of his rival increased the baneful passion. When, as not unfrequently occurred, the marquess had unhorsed or disarmed his antagonist, Don Manuel would break out into the most violent fits of rage, and vow to be revenged. But all this passed with the attendants as proofs of the impetuosity of youth, and was never repeated beyond their own circle.

“The duke and duchess, with their sons, came to spend a few days at the Castle de Ribiero. As usual, the three youths, followed by their servitors, adjourned to the manege, and it was agreed that a tilting-match should take place between the marquess and Don Manuel. The superior address of the former soon rendered him victorious, and the rage of Don Manuel, at being defeated, became so ungovernable, that, observing Don Alphonso applaud his brother's prowess, he rushed on the child, then only in his twelfth year (Don Manuel being five years his senior), and struck him so violently with his lance, that he fell from his pony, the blood flowing from the wound inflicted on his arm by the point of the weapon. Maddened by seeing his brother struck down and bleeding, the marquess rushed on Don Manuel, who, shrinking on one side, avoided the blow aimed at him by his adversary, and pierced him in the side. The marquess reeled in his saddle, and fell fainting into the arms of the attendants, who had rushed to separate the combatants, but, alas! arrived too late to prevent the misfortune which occurred.

“At this moment, the Duchess de Pampluna, accompanied by the maiden sister of the Conde de Ribiero, entered the manege, in order to see her sons enjoy their exercise, little dreaming of the fearful sight that awaited her; and beholding both her children apparently dead, and their garments stained with blood, she uttered a piercing shriek, and fell to the earth. Violent convulsions ensued, in which state she continued until the rupture of a blood-vessel in the head put an end to her sufferings and her life in the brief space of two hours. When the duke returned from a ride with the Conde de Ribiero, he found that the beloved partner of his life was no more, and that he was threatened with the loss of his first-born son, while the younger was not exempt from danger, the child being reduced to great weakness by the loss of blood.”

The Lady Veronica shuddered, and felt her previous dislike to Don Manuel increased into a positive abhorrence as she listened to this sad tale.

“Ah! lady, that was a fearful day, and never since has any one of the house of Pampluna entered the castle of Ribiero. The very name is proscribed; nor can it be wondered at, when one reflects on the affliction that luckless visit entailed on the duke, for never since has the young marquess had an hour's health, which is to be attributed to the event of that day. The conde, your guardian, sent away his nephew, fearful that the retainers of the house of Pampluna would avenge on him the death of their beloved mistress, and the melancholy fate of their young lord, who, from the wound inflicted by Don Manuel, had his lungs so injured, that his life has been considered in daily danger. From being one of the finest youths ever seen, he dwindled nearly to a shadow; incapable of the least bodily exertion, he has dragged on an existence of pain and suffering, to be terminated—Heaven only knows how soon—by

death ; for it is said he is now reduced to nearly the last extremity."

"And the knight we lately met, how came he to leave his suffering brother, whilst he journeyed into distant lands?" demanded the Lady Veronica.

"Why, madam, no sooner had he reached his sixteenth year, than remembering how the death of his lady mother, and the sufferings of his idolised brother, had been caused by Don Manuel, he determined to avenge them, or die in the attempt. He never forgot that it was in seeking to punish Don Manuel for his aggression on himself that the marquess received the wound that was reducing him to the grave ; and the recollection made him burn to challenge him who had brought such misery on his family. The knowledge of this resolution, and the dread of losing the last prop of his noble house, determined the duke on sending Don Alphonso to travel ; and he has only now returned, after an absence of seven years, to see his beloved brother before he dies."

Observing the effect produced on the Lady Veronica by his narrative, Huguez, dreading to indispose her towards Don Manuel, now endeavoured to palliate his crimes.

"He was then but a mere youth, lady, hardly out of childhood, and youth is ever wild and wilful. Don Manuel is now changed ; I warrant me, he has doubtless often repented the rashness of his boyhood ; and it is to save his feelings that the name of Pampluna is never mentioned in his presence. You will remember your promise, lady, and not betray my having intrusted you with this secret?"

Whilst Veronica repeated her assurance of never revealing what he had told her, a shot was fired from a wood that bordered the road, which so startled her steed, that he plunged violently, and dashed back with fearful velocity through a bridle-path that led in the direction of the Castle of Ribiero. Fearful of urging his flight by pursuit, Huguez endeavoured to keep his lady in sight by crossing some fields ; and in an attempt to clear a steep fence that intervened, was thrown from his horse, which escaped, and followed the course so lately taken by the terrified steed of the Lady Veronica. Though much bruised by his fall, the old man essayed to overtake the fugitives, but tried in vain ; the sounds of the retreating feet of the horses were soon lost to his ear, and the most serious apprehensions for the safety of his young mistress obtained possession of his mind. Whilst he, panting with fatigue, advanced as quickly as his bruised leg and the infirmities of age would allow him, the Lady Veronica was borne rapidly along towards a deep ravine, through which gushed a mountain torrent, swollen by recent rain, and whose turbid waters had overflowed their banks, and dashed impetuously over the large rocks scattered on each side. She saw her danger without the power of averting it, for every attempt to turn the horse in a contrary direction was in vain ;

when at the moment the maddened steed was rushing down the ravine, a horseman cleared a high hedge on the left of the steep declivity, and throwing himself before him, seized the bridle, and arrested his further progress. The next moment, the Lady Veronica, half fainting with terror, was removed from her courser by her deliverer, who, one glance showed her, was no other than Don Alphonso de Pampluna.

This interview sealed the destinies of both; for though no word of love was spoken, each experienced that deep emotion which ever marks the commencement of true affection, and yielded to the new and delicious sentiment that pervaded their hearts, forgetful of the past and regardless of the future.

Whilst, seated on a bank, they conversed together, the horses tied to a tree, a peasant had stopped the steed of Huguez, and restored it to its owner; who now joined his lady and her deliverer, overjoyed to find her in safety. As the Lady Veronica pointed out to the old servitor how near she had been to the foaming torrent, towards which her courser was rushing when Don Alphonso de Pampluna rescued her, such an expression of gratitude and tenderness shone in her beautiful countenance, that Don Alphonso felt he could have perilled his safety, nay his very life, a hundred times, to have reaped so rich a reward. He thanked her by looks eloquent as her own, spoke kindly to Huguez, referring with a deep sigh to his boyish remembrance of him, and having assisted the Lady Veronica to mount her courser, rode by her side until they reached the entrance to the park of Ribiero. Here he took leave, with a manner in which the most profound tenderness and deep respect struggled for mastery; and when, after advancing a considerable way, the fair Veronica, urged by an irresistible impulse, turned to look again at the gate where she had left him, she beheld him, as if transfixed to the spot, still gazing on her receding figure.

With what different feelings did she re-enter the Castle Ribiero, to those with which she had left it but a few hours before. She was a new being. Existence appeared to possess charms which she had not previously suspected; her heart beat with emotions hitherto unknown; and the image of Don Alphonso was never for a moment absent from her thoughts. Donna Olympia Albufera remarked with pleasure the heightened coloured and beaming eyes of her lovely charge; and talked of the marvellous effect of long rides in improving the complexion. But when, during the evening, she found the Lady Veronica abstracted, silent, and pensive, she averred that however such excursions might heighten the roses in her cheeks, they had not an advantageous influence on the spirits, for that she had never known her young lady so thoughtful before.

In her dreams that night, the Lady Veronica was again with Don Alphonso. Again she heard the music of his voice—again her eye sank beneath the tender glance of his: and she only awoke from her slumbers to the blissful conviction that in her ride that

day they should again meet; for she felt this encounter to be certain, though neither of the lovers had alluded to it the day before. It was consequently with an impatience more nearly approaching to ill-humour than she had ever previously known, that she saw the rain descending in showers, as she looked from her lattice. She watched the dense clouds with an anxiety as deep as it was new, and sighed as she marked that the gloomy horizon portended many hours of unceasing rain. Never had a day appeared so interminably long and irksome to her as this; she could settle to no occupation, though several were tried; and the unsuspecting Donna Olympia more than once observed that her young lady must be indisposed, so unusual was her pre-occupation and pensiveness.

The next day the sun shone brilliantly. Again she rode out, and on arriving at the park-gate, was more than half disposed to take the route where she had encountered Don Alphonso; but a sentiment of feminine delicacy forbade it, and she took, though not without an internal struggle, the contrary direction. She had proceeded but a short distance, when she met him who occupied all her thoughts, and who, even more impatient than herself for another interview, had been for some time watching for her from a neighbouring hill; whence, seeing the direction she had taken, he had galloped across some fields, and turned his horse so as to meet, instead of having the appearance of pursuing her. Their ride was a long one; and ere they parted, an avowal of the most passionate love was breathed to no unwilling ear by Don Alphonso; and replied to by downcast eyes, blushing cheeks, and a pearly tear that bedewed them.

Day after day they met, every interview rendering them still more fondly devoted to each other; until tidings came, that the Conde de Ribiero was soon to return to his castle, and with him Don Manuel de Mendoza.

The day this intelligence arrived, dreading that it might perhaps be the last when she could ride out attended only by Huguez, the Lady Veronica met her lover. His brow was overcast, and his cheek pale as marble as he pressed his lips to the delicate hand yielded to his grasp. He told her that his brother, the object in life next to her the most dear to him, was so much worse in health, that a few days, perhaps a few hours, might terminate his existence.

"This is most probably the last day that I can leave his couch of pain, until all is over," said Don Alphonso, and his eyes became suffused with tears, "but you will think of me, adorable Veronica, and while I soothe the bed of death, your sweet voice will bid me not yield to despair, in losing the noblest brother and truest friend that man ever was blest with."

"Alas!" replied Veronica, "even had this heavy affliction been spared, we could not have continued to meet, for the Conde de Ribiero and his nephew have announced their approaching

return, and I shall no longer be at liberty to ride out, except attended by them."

"These are, indeed, sad tidings," said Don Alphonso, and his cheeks glowed, and his eyes flashed. "Does the destroyer of my sainted mother, the slayer of my beloved brother, come hither to behold the completion of the misery his accursed hand has wrought on our house? Comes he here to triumph in our desolation, to witness the despair of my aged sire, and to see me consign to a premature grave, the brother who received his death wound in avenging the cowardly violence committed on me, whilst yet a child? His deeds call for vengeance,—be mine! oh, gracious Providence! thy instrument to smite him."

"Would'st thou expose a life so precious to thy parent, whose sole consolation thou soon must be—so necessary to"—"me," the Lady Veronica would have said, but modesty and terror checked her utterance, and the tears she could not suppress, flowed down her cheeks.

"To save my father a pang, and to preserve thee, idol of my soul, from sorrow, I would do much, but let the destroyer of my brother beware how he crosses my path, lest my long slumbering vengeance awake to annihilate him."

The lovers parted this day with a deeper sadness than either had ever felt at saying farewell, though never had they uttered the word without a regret known only to hearts as devoted as theirs, when parting even for a brief space. As they pursued the paths that led to their separate homes, until their figures were lost in the distance, often did they pause to look back at each other.

On reaching the castle of Ribiero, the Lady Veronica learned with dismay that a courier had arrived there, to announce the death of the conde, his master (which event had occurred suddenly at an inn, on the route the previous night), and that the corpse of the defunct, attended by his nephew and domestics, would arrive the next day. This intelligence cast a gloom over the castle, for the Conde de Ribiero, though a weak man, was a mild and generous master; whose greatest faults originated in an overweening affection for his worthless nephew, to whom he had bequeathed his fortune. Every one in the castle dreaded the change likely to be effected by the new possessor; for Don Manuel was equally disliked and feared. To the Lady Veronica, who had ever experienced gentle treatment, if not kindness from her late guardian, the news brought unaffected regret; but whilst she lamented the departed, she forgot not (and she accused herself of selfishness in remembering it at such a moment), that she was now released from all dependence on the will of another, and was free to bestow her hand where her heart was already given. Unconnected by even a remote tie of blood with the new Conde de Ribiero, there could no longer be any obstacle to her union with Don Alphonso, whenever he claimed her for his bride; and this thought soothed

the sorrow she felt for the death of her guardian. She determined to wait in the castle until the obsequies of the deceased were over, and then to remove with Donna Olympia to the home of her fathers.

The next night, the funeral procession reached the castle, headed by Don Manuel, now Conde de Ribiero, who entered it rather as a triumphant conqueror, than as a mourner for the most indulgent of uncles. The undisguised satisfaction he evinced on taking possession of his newly acquired wealth, no less shocked than disgusted the inhabitants of the castle. But when, with indecent haste, within an hour after his arrival, he ordered the corpse of the late conde to be consigned to the tomb, all were filled with indignation.

The next morning, at an early hour, the new Conde de Ribiero was examining every cabinet, and ransacking every coffer of the deceased, and before noon, he had discharged all the servitors of his late uncle, whose age or infirmities rendered them unfit for active service. There were naught but tears, murmurings, and prophetic shakes of the head, to be seen among the dependents, as they were ordered to leave the roof that had so long sheltered them, and under which they had hoped to have closed their eyes. No will belonging to the dead could be found, or if found (which was shrewdly suspected), was ever produced, and even a scanty pittance to support the infirmities of age, was denied those who had spent their best days in the service of the late conde. Huguez was among the dismissed, but he was immediately engaged by the Lady Veronica, to form one of her retinue.

On the evening of the day after his arrival at the castle, the conde sought the chamber appropriated to the Lady Veronica, and approached to take her hand with the air of one who seemed to think he had a right to it. She withdrew it with an air of dignified reserve that displeased him, and he was at no pains to conceal his displeasure.

"You are cold and haughty, methinks," said he, "and receive me not as befits a betrothed bride to receive her future lord."

The undissembled surprise of the Lady Veronica on hearing this speech, seemed to increase his anger, and when she proudly told him that she never had, and never would consider him in any other light than that of a mere acquaintance, his rage knew no bounds. He swore that she should never leave the castle but as his wife, and at the termination of their stormy interview, absolutely locked her up as a prisoner in her chamber, and put the key in his pocket.

While this scene was passing at the Castle de Ribiero, Don Alphonso de Pampluna was watching by the couch of pain of his beloved brother, and endeavouring to cheer the spirits of his aged sire. The first intelligence of the death of the Conde de Ribiero was brought to him by the faithful Huguez, who, informed by Donna Olympia that the Lady Veronica was incarcerated in her

chamber, by the unworthy successor of the late conde, thought it right to make Don Alphonso acquainted with the state of affairs. The indignation of the lover knew no bounds when he heard of the treatment to which she was subjected; and he vowed that he would rescue her from the power of her unmanly persecutor, or perish in the attempt. He instantly determined to call on the conde to restore the Lady Veronica immediately to freedom, or to meet him in single combat forthwith.

This challenge was despatched by a trusty hand, and its receipt threw the Conde de Ribiero into the most ungovernable rage. He hurried to the chamber of his fair prisoner, and demanded if she knew its writer. Her answer in the affirmative enraged him beyond measure; but when, after having reproached, and even threatened her with personal violence, she acknowledged, with all the *fierté* of her race, that she loved the Marquess de Pampluna, and never would be the bride of any other, his fury became desperate, and he vowed to take deadly vengeance on her lover. He wrote, and fixed an hour and place for the combat. The spot selected was an opening in a forest, a few miles distant from the castle, a wild and unfrequented place, bounded on one side by a steep and perpendicular rock, at the base of which flowed a deep river.

The Conde de Ribiero, as dastardly in spirit as violent in temper, having heard much of the prowess in arms of him who had challenged him to combat, dreaded the result of the encounter, and determined to try and take vengeance by a mode less doubtful than that afforded by an honourable combat. Among his retainers, there was one named Diego, of great physical force and reputed skill in arms; and him he decided on having recourse to in this dilemma. He promised a large reward to Diego, if, when Don Alphonso de Pampluna advanced to the place appointed for the combat, he would rush out from ambush and slay him before he had time to draw his sword to defend himself; promising, that if Don Alphonso fell not by the arm of this mercenary assassin, he would himself sally forth from a concealment, whence he could await the result of the *rencontre*, and if required, assist in despatching his foe. The close of the evening was the hour agreed on for the meeting, and unsuspecting of treachery, Don Alphonso rode forth, unattended, to the appointed place. He had arrived within a short distance of it, when Diego rushed from the adjoining thicket, and attacked him with a fury and vigour which would have soon terminated the fight had Don Alphonso been a less accomplished swordsman; but quickly recovering from the momentary surprise caused by the vile treachery practised on him, he not only defended himself from the thrusts of his powerful assailant, but aimed a blow at him that laid him, mortally wounded, at his feet.

The dastardly Conde de Ribiero witnessed with dismay the defeat of his mercenary, and would have fled, but the neighing of his horse betrayed his place of concealment, and the indignant Don

Alphonso, hurling defiance at him, braved him to the combat. His pusillanimity afforded so easy a conquest to his opponent, that his anger changed to contempt, and he was on the point of abandoning the too unequal fight, when the charger of De Ribiero becoming unmanageable, his rider, who was as little skilled in equitation as in arms, suddenly checked him up so violently, that the animal, rearing, fell with him down the precipice. Shocked at this catastrophe, which was the work of a moment, Don Alphonso approached the edge of the stupendous abyss, and shuddered as he beheld the wretched De Ribiero and his steed dashed from rock to rock, their forms growing every instant smaller, until they were lost in the foaming torrent beneath. Another eye had also been a witness to this awful event; for Huguez, having met the horse of the mortally wounded mercenary returning to the castle, and suspecting some act of treachery from the known character of Diego, mounted the steed, and directing him towards the place whence he had come, reached it only a few minutes before the close of the eventful scene.

The wounded man was conveyed to the castle, where, previous to his death, he confessed the plot formed by his worthless master against the life of Don Alphonso.

The first act of the latter was to deliver the Lady Veronica from her prison, and to lead her to the castle of his sire, where she was warmly welcomed; and soon became the bride of her deliverer, the consolation of his father and brother, and the honoured mistress of his ancient house.

SCENES

IN

THE LIFE OF A PORTRAIT PAINTER.

SCENE I.

“INDEED, my dear friend, you will destroy your health by this incessant labour,” said Charles Dormer, a young barrister in the Temple, to Frederick Emmerson, an artist, as they sat in the studio of the latter. “You should take exercise, and be more in the open air than you are, or you will inevitably kill yourself.”

“It is not the want of air or exercise that injures me, I assure you, Charles; it is the desire, the burning desire, to satisfy not only others, but myself. You know not what it is to work for hours, with a fair ideal in the imagination which the hand in vain endeavours to represent, and then to feel how far short falls the attempt to portray what is so intensely felt. Look here!” and he drew back a curtain and exposed to view, a picture representing two young girls of such exquisite beauty, that Charles Dormer uttered an exclamation of delight, “Ah! my friend, if these im-

perfect resemblances please you, what would be your feelings of admiration—of wonder—could you but see the originals; then would you turn with the same dissatisfaction that I do, from these pale and imperfect representations of charms to which Lawrence himself, who so well understood female loveliness, and so admirably delineated it, would have found it impossible to render justice. Day after day, have I vainly attempted to give the canvas her smile,” and he pointed to one of the faces, “which haunts me, but finding that impossible, I have endeavoured to paint that serious but sweet expression which so often pervades her countenance. This is my last attempt; but it almost maddens me to look on it; for it is no more to be compared to her than I am to Hercules.”

“Nevertheless, it is lovely,” said Dormer; “and the other beauty—who is she?”

“Lady Isabella Crichton, the cousin of Lady Emily.”

“Lord Blasonberrie and Lady Emily Home,” said the servant of Emmerson, throwing open the door, leaving Dormer just time to rush into a small room inside the studio, where he had previously not unfrequently ensconced himself when similarly caught by the visitors of his friend.

“Good morrow, Mr. Emmerson; we are early, but I was longing to see what progress you had made with the portraits. Why, bless my soul, they are perfect. But you have changed the expression of my daughter’s; yesterday it smiled, and I was very well satisfied—no easy matter to accomplish, Mr. Emmerson, I can tell you, when a father has but one daughter—yet now it looks grave, and I like it, if anything, better than before. Yes, it is perfect.”

“I am made but too happy and proud, my lord, by your approbation; but I confess I have not satisfied myself.”

“Come here, Emily, let me look at you—stand there, my child, near the picture—there—take off your bonnet, my love.”

Lady Emily did as she was told; and even Dormer, who could see her reflected in a glass opposite the door, through the opening of which he was peeping, confessed to himself that the portrait failed to render justice to the beautiful original.

“What do you think of the picture, my child?” asked the father.

“It appears to me to be faultless, father; only, perhaps, that my cousin’s resemblance is less beautiful than the original, and mine is a little too——” handsome, she would have said, but a dread of being thought desirous of a compliment deterred her from uttering the word, and she filled up the sentence by saying, “too young.”

Never before had Dormer heard such a voice; low and sweet, yet distinct—there was melody in all its tones.

“Too young, Emily? O! that is capital. Why, to hear you,

one would suppose that you were no longer in the first blush of youth. Too young, indeed! why, how old do you take my daughter to be, Mr. Emmerson?"

"About seventeen, my lord."

"Right; she is *just* seventeen, and not yet a week over her birthday. The more I look on the portraits, the better I like them. Isabella looks round with that haughty air I have sometimes remarked in her, and Emily, in spite of the fine feathers which I insisted on her wearing, has precisely that expression I've remarked so often in her face, when nursing me when I've been laid up in the gout. I know that look well, and so I ought, for I too often call it forth by the frequent attacks, which always alarm my dear little nurse," and the fond father drew his daughter closer to his side, and bestowed a glance on her so full of affection, that her dove-like eyes became humid with tenderness. "You must come down to Blasonberrie Castle, Mr. Emmerson, when the season is over in London. You shall paint another picture of my daughter for me, and one of me for her. You see, Emily, I don't forget my promise to you of sitting again for my portrait."

The simple "thank you, dear father," uttered by this lovely girl, seemed more eloquent than aught Emmerson ever listened to before, and Dormer nearly agreed with him in this opinion.

"When may I send for the picture, Mr. Emmerson? I am longing to have it home, now that my niece has left us; it will extend your fame, too."

"In a week, my lord, I hope it will be quite finished."

"Good morning, Mr. Emmerson, good morning — take my arm, Emily." And Lord Blasonberrie and his lovely girl departed.

When Charles Dormer entered the studio again, he found Frederick Emmerson standing entranced before the picture, and so wholly engrossed by it, as to be unconscious of the presence of his friend. "No," muttered he, "I cannot bear to look on it; it has none of her beauty, none of those thousand indescribable charms which I see, but cannot portray. I must——"

"Not change a single feature," interrupted Dormer; "for, be assured, your picture is as like as art can be to nature."

"Is she not more than painting can express, or youthful poets fancy when they love?" asked Emmerson.

"Yes, indeed, she is exquisitely beautiful; and what a voice! It is a pity she is so chary of it though, for I think she did not utter above ten words while here. Is she always so taciturn?"

"She talks but little; yet, strange to say, I never remarked it until you asked me the question."

"Those aristocratic dames, however young, are apt, I am told, to remind us of our lower degree, of the difference of our station; and there can certainly be no surer mode of effecting this than by silence."

"You wrong her, she is not proud," said Emmerson, with a warmth that evinced how deep was the interest excited by all that touched on Lady Emily Home.

"Is she then dull, or inanimate?"

"Dull, or inanimate! You could not surely have seen her face with its varying expression, each and all beautiful, or you would not ask this."

"How, then, do you explain her silence?"

"Now that you remind me of it, I should say that it proceeded from thoughtfulness. When painting her, I have felt a sentiment approaching to awe in the contemplation of such rare, such intellectual loveliness, something like what I believe Raphael to have experienced when painting those Madonnas we delight to look on. I could no more commence a conversation on ordinary topics with Lady Emily Home, than I could bring myself to sing a bacchanalian song before one of Raphael's Virgins. The intelligence of her countenance precludes the suspicion of dulness, and the candour and gentleness of it banishes that of pride. Had she spoken often, I could not have painted her, for her voice thrills through my frame. Her cousin, whom many might pronounce to be as handsome, never produced this effect on me."

"My dear Frederick, you are smitten—by all that is good, you are! You may well open your eyes and stare at me, like one awakened suddenly from sleep, but such is the fact."

"You offend, you pain me, by this ill-timed pleasantry, Charles; do not, if you love me, resume it. It seems like a profanation to make her the subject of a jest."

"By Jove! I was never more serious in my life, Frederick; take care of yourself, or yours will be a desperate case. Be warned in time."

"As well might I presume 'to love some bright particular star' as this peerless lady; both are alike beyond my reach; and know you not the line—

'None without hope e'er loved the brightest fair?'

"Yes, and the sequel, too—

'For love will hope where reason would despair,'"

said Dormer, looking archly at his friend.

"No, no; the sentiment inspired by this lovely girl is not love; it is something totally different,—awe, reverence, devotion, if you will, but not that passion experienced by every-day men for pretty women. Never do I look on her without being reminded of the lines in *Comus*—

'A thousand liveried angels lacky her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream, and solemn vision,
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,
Till oft converse with heav'nly habitants

Begin to cast a beam on th' outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal.' ”

“ Well, if this be not love, I know not what is. Deceive not yourself, Frederick, with regard to your own feelings, lest you discover when too late that you are their dupe,” and so saying, Charles Dormer hurried from the studio, to avoid the repetition of the denial of the truth of his suspicions, which he perceived Emerson was about to utter, leaving him angry and agitated at the expression of them.

“ I thought he knew me better,” soliloquised Emmerson. “ In love, indeed! Bah! how I dislike this term, used by fashionable libertines to express some temporary caprice often felt for an unworthy object, by lawyers' clerks, ay, and even by men-milliners, to define the gross inclination excited towards some dress-maker, or retailer of tapes and bobbins. Beautiful Lady Emily! how different is the sentiment you excite in my breast! Even here in the privacy of my studio, in which this faint shadow of your loveliness seems to consecrate the chamber, I no more durst dwell on your pictured face, though wrought by my own hand, with other or freer gaze than the devotee regards the idol of his worship, than I durst look into your deep azure eyes when your presence transforms this homely room into a temple, whose sanctity I tremble to invade by the indulgence of one unholy desire, one earthly passion. Yet I can examine the likeness of the Lady Isabella Crighton with as much calmness as if it was the portrait of my grandmother. Others, in my place, might feast upon the exquisite beauty of the resemblance I have wrought, lovely Lady Emily, faint and unworthy as it is, when compared with you; but I approach it with awe, and shrink before the calm and pure expression of the inanimate eyes as I should do before the radiance of the living ones.”

SCENE II.

Pale and thoughtful, Frederick Emmerson stood before his easel, on the day following the one described, and on which was placed a portrait nearly finished. Seated in a chair was a man of about fifty-five, whose rotund form displayed a vast expanse of white Marseilles, in the shape of a waistcoat, around which a glossy blue coat, with bright gilt buttons, formed an unpicturesque background. A huge bunch of seals, suspended from a massive gold chain that hung from the pocket of his nether garment, furnished occupation for one hand, the fingers of which were continually playing with them; while the other, on the last finger of which sparkled a large diamond ring, reposed on the arm of his chair. In his well-plaited chemise-frill shone a solitaire of considerable value, which he from time to time arranged, so as to exhibit it still more conspicuously. The rubicund face that protruded above the some-

what tightened neckcloth, told a tale of long-continued indulgence in the pleasures of the table. The chin reminded one of the breast of the pelican, and seemed filled with some portion of the produce of the purple grape, so freely quaffed by its owner, and though closely packed beneath the cravat, was continually endeavouring to overpass its boundary. The lips were thick and dry looking; the nose, of large dimensions, was of a still deeper tint of red than the cheeks; and the eyes resembled nothing so much as bottled gooseberries. The forehead retreated so suddenly, that it gave the notion of having done so to avoid a contact with the fiery red nose beneath, which seemed to have parched up the natural crystalline of the eyes that twinkled near them. A dark, juvenile-looking wig crowned the head, and ill suited the light coloured and bristly eyebrows, which denoted the natural hue of the departed hair.

"May I look, Mr. Emerson?"

"If you desire it, sir; but I think it would be better to wait until the portrait is more advanced."

"No! no! I'll look at once," and Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson advances to the picture. "Don't you think that the face is too red? I surely can't be said to have a red face?"

"It does not strike me as having too much colour."

"Take off some of the red, I'm sure 'twill look better."

"It really would injure the general effect."

"Hang general effect! what care I for it."

"But my picture, sir."

"Your picture! *mine*, you mean; and, as it is mine, I must have it done in my own way."

"But the likeness, sir."

"Ay, the likeness! that's the very thing I mean, that's what I want, to have it made more like; for at present it is not at all like—not a bit; there is ten times—ay, twenty times too much colour. And the nose! you can't say the nose is like. Why, it's positively redder than the cheeks, and that's not natural, is it? No one's nose is redder than the cheeks. You must change all that, indeed you must. When you have changed the cheeks and nose, I'll tell you what next to do, for the eyes and mouth must be altered—totally altered."

Emerson nearly groaned, and felt tempted to decline again touching the picture; but the recollection of a mother and two sisters wholly dependent on him, checked the impulse.

Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson again seated himself, and said—"Now look at me, and you will see that my nose is not red, and that the cheeks are quite of another colour."

Emerson looked, and saw that the exertion of moving, and perhaps also the displeasure experienced by his sitter, had rendered the face so much more red, that his portrait looked pale in comparison with the original. Again the dispirited artist groaned internally over his disagreeable task, as he took up his pencil.

"I don't think you paint diamonds well," said Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson. "Why can't you make them shine? Look at this pin and ring; see how they glisten, and show different colours, red, green, and yellow, and send out rays! Why can't you paint them so, instead of merely putting a spot of white paint, that looks like nothing but a dab of bread sauce?"

Emmerson's servant now announced that Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson's carriage was come, and in it a lady who desired to come up.

"A friend of mine, who I wish to see my picture—may she come up, Mr. Emmerson?"

"Certainly, sir."

And in walked the lady. "So glad to see you, *dear* Mr. B. T.; hope I haven't kept you waiting; longing to see your portrait. Dear me, how beautiful it is! The very image! Did I ever?—no, I never, saw such a likeness. Just your smile too. It's quite perfect. Pray, Mr. Emmerson, don't touch it any more, for fear of injuring the resemblance."

"Humph!" muttered or rather growled Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson, upon which the lady cast an anxious glance at him. "Don't you think it is a great deal too red in the face, Mrs. Meredith?"

"Oh dear! yes; a *great* deal too red, ten times too much colour. How could I be so stupid as not to have seen that at the first glance? But I was so delighted, and so flurried that——"

"But don't you observe that the nose is unlike? It's positively even more red than the cheeks."

"Well, so it is; where were my eyes not to have seen it? O! Mr. ——— I beg your pardon, your name ———"

"Emmerson, madam."

"O! Mr. Emmerson, you must be very particular, *I*—that is, *we*—would not have his nose painted the least different from what it is for all the world. Every one says he has such a good nose, quite a pet of a nose. And now that I look steadily at the picture, I declare I begin to think it is not half so like as I at first thought it. Why, it's much too old—yes, positively twenty years too old, and hasn't got that very remarkable sort of a look that Mr. B. T. has sometimes.

"I told you, Mr. Emmerson, that it wasn't like; and you see this lady, who knows my face better perhaps than any one else, is of the same opinion. *I* don't care about the matter myself, but one likes to have one's friends satisfied, you know."

"Paint the cheeks a delicate pink, Mr. Emmoton, just like what you see; and the nose not a bit red, for Mr. B. T.'s nose never is red; and make the figure much slighter—in fact, exactly like his; and give the face that very remarkable look that it has sometimes. Now, pray mind this, and then I'm sure the picture will be as like as possible."

"Yes, do what Mrs. Meredith tells you; no one knows my face better than she does."

"I know it by heart," whispered the lady, which whisper produced a gentle tap on the arm from Mr. Burnaby Tomkinson, and sundry "ha, has" from her.

The announcement of another sitter sent away Mrs. Meredith and her friend, who left the studio, declaring that they would return in a few days, and that they hoped to find the picture entirely changed.

SCENE III.

"I hope you will be as successful as you always are, Mr. Emerson," said a lady in widow's weeds, the paleness of whose face, though it told of sorrow and delicate health, impaired not its beauty.

"I trust I shall be able to satisfy you, madam," was the reply, as Emmerson arranged his canvas, and looked at his colours.

"I have brought his uniform, as I wish to have him painted in it," and a deep sigh heaved the bosom of the speaker.

"How I should like to have your picture, mother, to hang up in my berth—but no, I wouldn't like the other midshipmen or sailors to see it; I'd rather have a miniature, to keep in my desk, with my Bible and all your letters, or to have tied round my neck, that I might look at it whenever I had a moment to myself. Whenever I get any prize-money, I'll send it home to have your miniature done for me, mother, that I will."

The speaker was a beautiful boy of about twelve years old, with a singular mixture of gentleness and manliness in his countenance, that at one glance excited a strong interest in his favour in the sensitive mind of Frederick Emmerson. The boy looked continually towards his mother with such tenderness beaming in his handsome face, that the artist caught the beautiful expression, and ere more than two hours had elapsed, fixed it on his canvas. During that period the mother had more than once been compelled to leave her seat, and pretend to be occupied in examining the drawings that were hung round the room, in order that she might wipe away the tears that continually started to her eyes, as the thought of the approaching separation with her son, the only tie that now bound her to existence, haunted her. But her emotion escaped not the observation of the youth, and a tear springing into his deep blue eyes, marked his sympathy with it. Once or twice he rose from his chair, and embraced her, whispering words of love, that only increased the gushing tears he sought to arrest.

"When I am an admiral, mother, you shall have as good a house as we had once—ay, and a carriage too, and you shall come on board my ship in my boat, manned by my sailors," and the eyes of the generous boy sparkled with animation and pleasure at the anticipation, while those of the fond mother glistened through her tears.

Frederick Emmerson requested her to sit by her son, saying as an excuse for so doing, that he could paint his picture better if the sitter's eyes were not continually turning across the room to her.

"Then I must hold her hand in mine, if I may not look at her," said the youth, "for I shall be with her so short a time, that I want to have as much of her as possible," a *naïve* avowal repaid by a glance of inexpressible love by the mother.

There she sat, her eyes beaming with tenderness, fixed on her son; and Emmerson, charmed with the maternal beauty of the character of her countenance, rapidly made one of his most successful likenesses, while the mother and son were totally unconscious that he was not painting the latter.

"May I now look at the portrait, Mr. Emmerson?" asked the lady, after two hours' patient sitting from the time she had changed her position, yet so wholly engrossed was she by her melancholy reflections as to have forgotten the lapse of time.

"Pardon me, madam, for wishing this young gentleman to see my work first."

The youth left his seat, and, on advancing near the easel, clapped his hands with delight, and exclaimed—" 'Tis she!—'tis she!—O! mother, dear mother, how happy I am!—look, look, so exactly like you, and just as you have looked ever since I was made a midshipman." The boy hugged his mother with rapture, and then turning to Frederick Emmerson, seized his hand, and wrung it, saying, "Ah! when I'm an admiral, you shall see that I do not forget this."

The mother, overcome by a sense of gratitude to Emmerson, for the delicacy and promptitude with which he had anticipated the wish of her son, endeavoured to thank him; but when he held up the portrait of the beautiful boy, her full heart relieved itself by a shower of tears.

"Only wait, dear mother, till I get my first prize-money, and Mr. Emmerson shall have it all, that he shall. O! you don't know how I have longed to have your picture, that I might look at it when I am on the sea, and so far from you, that it will seem all like a dream that I can be so distant from my own dear mother."

"Words are poor, sir, to tell you how I feel your kindness," sobbed rather than spoke the mother, as she reached out her small and attenuated hand to Frederick Emmerson, while the manly boy seizing the other hand of the artist, wrung it affectionately, and repeated, "Only wait till I get my prize-money, and you shall see," and "When I am an admiral all my cabin shall be covered with pictures of my mother painted by you."

Emmerson never felt half the pleasure in receiving the most munificent remuneration given him for any of his works, that he did in refusing the payment pressed on him by the grateful mother, and in the reflection that he had lightened the sorrow of separation to her noble and warm-hearted boy.

"Yes, even the poor have their enjoyments," said he, "when their talents enable them to bestow a happiness that wealth cannot always command, and such occasions make me forget for the time

being the wearing cares of life, when the existence of those dear to me, depending on this poor hand, compel an exercise of it that is more than my weak frame can well support."

SCENE IV.

"You will not require me to sit long, nor frequently, I hope," said Lady Lamerton, the widow of a city knight and *millionaire*, who had bequeathed to her the greater portion of his wealth.

This lady was in her fortieth year, and had been so much less kindly treated by Nature than by Fortune, that her utmost efforts—and they were indefatigable—to supply the absence of every feminine attraction by the aid of art, only served to render her ugliness still more remarkable. A profusion of black ringlets fell over cheeks covered with rouge, and shaded eyes, whose obliquity of vision gave a peculiarly disagreeable expression to her countenance. Her lips were so unnaturally red, as to look like thin pieces of sealing-wax, and when open, displayed teeth whose decay might perhaps with reason be attributed to their proximity to their painted portals. A dress suited to blooming eighteen, and an affectation unsuited to any age, added to the disagreeable effect of this mass of ugliness, the first glance of which shocked Emmerson.

"I detest sitting, and indeed I never would have consented to have my portrait done, were it not that I have been so tormented by all my friends. I hope you will not require more than three sittings."

"I am sorry, madam, that I cannot specify precisely what number of sittings will be necessary to complete the portrait, but I hope not a great many."

"O! that's what all you artists say. Must I take off my bonnet?"

"If you wish to be painted in your hair."

"Certainly I do. But how do you think I ought to be dressed? Lord Alverstock says I look best in a costume *à-la-Vandyke*, and Sir Henry St. Ives insists that a modern dress suits me better."

"Whichever you prefer, madam. Will you be so obliging as to be seated?"

"What! must I positively sit in that chair mounted on three high steps?"

"The light is most advantageous in that position, madam."

"Well, if it must be so; you are all just the same, always making one sit in some particular chair or corner, just as if it could make any difference."

"Be so obliging as to turn a little to the right, and look at me."

"How tiresome! won't it do as well if I look any other way? I hate staring, or being stared at. I desired two or three of my friends to come and stay here while I am sitting, that I might not be too much bored; I wonder they have not come."

"I am afraid their presence might interrupt my labour."

"And why so, pray?"

"By preventing your sitting as tranquilly as could be desired."

"How very odd!—but all you artists are just the same, always wanting one to sit as if one was screwed to one's chair. Let me see how far you have got."

"Pray do not ask to see the picture until it is more advanced."

"Why, you have been half an hour—yes, a full half hour, for I've had my watch in my hand all the time, and yet you do not wish to let me see what you have been doing; but that was just the way with Sir Thomas Lawrence, *he* couldn't bear to let people look at their portraits the first sitting; yes, you are all the same. O dear! (and an unsuppressed yawn followed the exclamation) how very tiresome sitting for one's picture is. Could you not let me read, or do something to amuse myself?"

"I am sorry you——"

"So you all say; but now, do let me look, it will divert me a little."

"I hope you will excuse me, madam."

And here two or three voices on the stairs announced the arrival of visitors, and prevented the expression of impatience the lady was on the point of uttering.

"So you are come at last," said she, as two men of fashionable exteriors entered the room; "why did you not come sooner? I have been here a whole hour, yes, positively an hour by my watch, and am tired to death; and Mr. Emmerson won't let me see what he has been doing."

"I only waited to give time for some progress to be made with the picture," said one; "and I could not get away before," said the other.

"Do look, Lord Alverstook, and tell me if Mr. Emmerson has at all succeeded."

"I have done so little," said Emmerson, "that you can hardly judge."

"*Au contraire*, the sketch is very like, and promises to be excellent."

"Now, let Sir Henry St. Ives see it."

The latter gentleman examined the portrait, shook his head, and then said, "Don't you think the mouth wants something?"

"Certainly, I have only sketched it, and the want of colour——"

"O! yes, I see now, *it is* the want of colour, and Lady Lamerton has such peculiarly red lips."

"It was one of Lawrence's great merits that he always painted the lips so very red; when I sate to him," said the lady, "he made the lips of my portrait even redder than mine."

"I deny that," said Sir Henry St. Ives, "it would be impossible; for yours are as red as my jockey's jacket, in which he won the Oaks for me last year."

"What a comparison! Did you ever hear such a one, Lord Alverstock?"

"I should have compared them to coral, but even that is too hackneyed," answered his lordship, with a bow.

"Well, if my jockey's jacket does not satisfy you, what say you to the shell of a boiled lobster? for, hang me! if I ever see one without thinking of your ladyship's lips."

Peals of laughter from Lady Lamerton and Lord Alverstock followed this last speech, during which Frederick Emmerson, annoyed and disgusted, heartily wished the group away.

"Well, I shall never forget the boiled lobster," said the lady, "how very original! yet, after all, I don't think my lips are so *very* much redder than other people's,—do you, Lord Alverstock?"

"They are so much more beautiful than those of other people, that no comparison can be instituted."

"How like you, Lord Alverstock, to say so; you always are so polite, and have something civil to say,—hasn't he, Sir Henry?"

"Alverstock doesn't want the art of paying compliments, I must acknowledge."

"O! then *you* think he complimented when he spoke of the beauty of my lips," said the lady, with an air of pique.

"No, in *that* instance he could not compliment; I defy him to say more of them than they deserve."

"*Apropos* of lips—did you see Mrs. Luxmore biting hers all last evening at Lady Dashwood's to make them look red?"

"You don't say so?"

"Positively."

"Then, by Jove! her husband has a better chance of being rid of her than I thought."

"Why so? do, pray tell us?"

"Because her lips have half an inch thick of paint on them."

"Poor Mrs. Luxmore! how very shocking! but are you quite sure it is true?"

"Certain."

"I had no idea that any application of that sort to the lips was pernicious," said Lady Lamerton, her face assuming a look of considerable alarm, on observing which the two gentlemen in attendance on her, exchanged very comical glances, and Emmerson wondered at the unblushing effrontery with which both of them answered—

"O! to be sure not, how could *you* know anything of such things, *you* who never have occasion to use such aids?"

"No, *you* could spare some of your beauty, instead of seeking to add to it."

"Have you seen my new *parure* of rubies and diamonds, Lord Alverstock?"

"I have not remarked them, I confess; but who can look at ornaments when you are near them?"

"Ay, that's what I say," observed Sir Henry St. Ives; "beautiful women make a great mistake when they put on rich jewels; they should leave them to be worn by ugly women, who require something to set them off."

"But when people have large fortunes, they are expected to make a suitable appearance," said the purse-proud *parvenue* Lady Lamerton.

"With due submission to your better judgment," observed Lord Alverstock, "I should say that simplicity of dress in people of great wealth was a mark of refined taste."

"And I think that if rich people must show they are rich, they cannot take a better method than by having handsome carriages, a stable full of fine horses, and giving capital dinners, and plenty of them," said the baronet.

"You are so fond of horses, Sir Henry," said the lady. "But bless me! I have positively been here two hours; really, Lord Alverstock and Sir Henry, you have made yourselves so agreeable that I have not felt the time heavy since you came. I could not have remained half the time had you not been here. I hope, Mr. Emmerson, you have nearly finished the picture?"

"I have been unable, madam, to advance it much while you have been laughing or talking."

"That's just the way with all you artists; you fancy people can sit whole hours in a chair, bored to death without moving. But let me see it."

"Really, madam, I——"

"It's no use refusing, I must positively look," and suiting the action to the word, Lady Lamerton rose from her seat, and placed herself before the picture. After contemplating it for a few minutes, she exclaimed, "I don't think it the least like! Only look at the eyes! mine, surely are different?"

"Very different, indeed," said the baronet.

"The nose, too, is wholly unlike mine; and the mouth is at least twice as large. The chin may be a little like, but what is that dark thing under it? I surely have no discoloration under the chin?"

"That is the shadow produced by the chin. The portrait, madam, is not, as I previously assured you, sufficiently advanced to enable you to judge of the resemblance."

"Then why is it not, pray?"

"No picture of this size, madam, and in oil, can be sufficiently advanced in a sitting of two hours."

"So you all say, you are all just the same. Look, Lord Alverstock, do you think it has the least likeness?"

"I must say I think it will be like, at present it is merely *ébauché*."

"I'm sorry *you* think it ever will, or ever *can* be like," said the lady, angrily; "and your last remark renders the picture

more objectionable. Tell me, Sir Henry, if *you* find it resembles me?"

"I can't say I do," replied the wily baronet; "but I think with Alverstock, it has a very *débauché* look."

"Sir!" said Emmerson, his pale cheek becoming red with anger.

"I only repeat what Lord Alverstock said, Mr. Emmerson."

"Yes, Sir Henry only repeated what Lord Alverstock remarked," interrupted the lady, "and I think it very improper that you should have given me that sort of look."

A peal of laughter from Lord Alverstock seemed to increase the ire of Lady Lamerton, and made Sir Henry look amazed. "I said no such thing," said the peer, as soon as his laughter subsided enough to permit him to speak, "I merely said the picture was but *ébauché*, and not being aware that Sir Henry does not know French, I could not imagine the word could be mistaken."

The baronet looked angry, and the lady offended. The first muttered something about the folly of using French words when English would do better, and the latter said, that "for her part, she never regretted her ignorance of a language which she was quite sure was very objectionable."

It was clear that the lady was offended with the peer, for having admitted that the portrait bore any resemblance to her, and his laughter at the mistake relative to the French phrase added to her displeasure.

Lord Alverstock and Sir Henry St. Ives, both men of ruined fortunes, were seeking to retrieve them by a marriage with the rich widow. The baronet, gross and ignorant, was more suited to the lady's taste; but the rank of the peer disposed her to barter her gold for his coronet. It was while her mind was thus undecided, that the good breeding which prompted Lord Alverstock to avoid wounding the feelings of Emmerson by agreeing in the unjust answer pronounced by Lady Lamerton on her portrait, gave the first advantage over him to his rival, who, not only still more needy in circumstances, but infinitely less delicate in mind, was ready to assent to whatever the lady, whose wealth he aspired to possess, asserted.

The party soon withdrew, and a short time after Emmerson read in the newspaper the announcement of the marriage of Sir Henry St. Ives to the Lady Lamerton, relict of the late Sir Matthew Lamerton, knight, of Clapham Rise. An union which the scene in his studio had not a little tended to facilitate. The portrait was never completed, for the simple reason, that the lady deeming it unlikely that the artist could render justice to her charms, never returned again to favour him with a sitting, and forgot to pay the half price generally advanced on the first commencement of a picture.

GALERIA;

OR, THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

“ Pourquoi tous les hommes ne voyent-ils pas sans une emotion profonde les ruines, même les plus humble ? ne serait-ce partout simplement pour eux un image du malheur dont ils sentent diversement le poids ? Si les cimetières font penser à la mort, un village abandonné fait songer au peines de la vie ; mais la mort est un malheur prévu, tandis que les peines de la vie sont infinies ; or, l’infini n’est-il pas le secret des grandes mélancholies ? ” — BALZAC.

“ WOULD the signora like to see the deserted village ? ” asked the master of the post-house where we stopped to refresh our horses, on our route from Rome to the Castle of Bracciano : “ it is not above a quarter of a mile from this place, and those few strangers who travel our road all go to examine it. ”

Luigi, for so was the master of this post-house named, was a handsome, intelligent-looking man : his military bearing, and the mustache that shaded his lip, denoted he had served in the army ; and a politeness and gentleness in his manner bore evidence that he had been accustomed to present himself before ladies ; his language was correct, and, as well as his appearance and manner, indicated that he had seen much of the world, while a certain romantic air betrayed that its contact had not obliterated the natural bias of his character, which was that of a reflective and sentimental turn.

“ There stands the village, ” said he, pointing to a mass of buildings seated on an eminence, overlooking the fertile valley of Arona ; along which the clear and sparkling river of that name glided like a silvery serpent, but shaping itself, sporting through verdant meadows, and then losing itself amidst wooded knolls. We set out to visit Galeria, our communicative host acting as guide ; and, after a short walk, found ourselves on a rustic bridge, at the base of the eminence on which the ruined village is seated ; and which, seen from this spot, has a most picturesque appearance.

Crossing the bridge we ascended a steep and winding road, each turn of which presented rich beauties, and arrived at an arched gate of stone-work, surmounted by a clock whose dial still remained, though the hands that had been wont to mark the flight of time had disappeared.

This gate formed the entrance into Galeria, and the view from it was beautiful. The village consisted of about fifty houses, containing from three to five rooms each, many of them having their rude walls covered with gaudy prints of saints and martyrs, attired in robes of glaring scarlet, ultra-marine blue and bright yellow, and possessing little of the beauty of holiness—being most hideous to behold ; the artist who designed them having carefully

avoided all violation of the scriptural commandment, "Not to make unto ourselves the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth."

The doors and windows still remained, and some wooden articles of furniture were scattered around; the ashes stood on the deserted hearths, wild flowers and ivy nearly covered the windows, and innumerable birds were flitting about and sending forth their joyful notes. Each house had its garden, once neat and trim, as our guide assured us, but now presenting little wildernesses, intermingled with bright flowers peeping forth from the tangled mazes of shrubs and weeds that had nearly overgrown them. A silence interrupted only by the carols of the birds, reigned around; and as we pulled the latch of the doors of many of these humble cottages and entered the deserted chambers, the echoes of our steps sent forth a melancholy sound. A small cemetery, with its wooden and stone crosses nearly covered by briars, nettles, and weeds, stood at one side of the village, and on the other was a deep well, with its bucket and chain, the iron thickly coated by the rust, which was the consequence of its long disuse and exposure to the weather. Near to this neglected implement was a stone bench, sheltered by a clump of trees, where probably the aged peasants had been wont to enjoy the delicious evenings only to be found in a southern climate; and in front of it was a level space, which looked as if it had been the play-ground, or the scene of the dances of the young.

A small chapel, with its cross and bell, a fragment of the rope for ringing the latter still hanging from the wall, showed that the humble inhabitants of this secluded spot were not forgetful of religion. Here all the drama of life had been performed, from the *entrée* to the *exit*; but where were the performers? Not a soul was to be seen, not even a domestic animal passing through the grass-grown streets—all—all were fled!

"Ah, signora!" said our host of the post-house in answer to my exclamation, "it is a long and a melancholy story; but, if you wish, I will relate it. My poor mother—peace be to her soul!—often repeated it to me as we sat on the bench in the porch, when the moonlight was silvering the old gateway of Galeria, and shining on the dial of the clock which looked like the face of a spirit.

"Well, signora, forty years ago this same deserted village was a scene of active and cheerful industry; parents surrounded by their children and grand-children, young people who had grown up together, and learned to love ere yet the meaning of the word was known to them; for, in our sunny clime, signora, we experience the passion before reason is sufficiently mature to enable us to combat its violence—we are unconscious of either the cause or the consequences. In the lonely and quiet spot over which we are now passing, the sounds of the guitar and tambourine, mingled

with the hum of joyous voices every evening when amusement succeeded the labours of the day. Among all the young women of Galeria, Vincenza Martelli was the most beautiful; her slight and graceful form lost none of its charms in the pretty *camiciuola* * and short, full, plaited *gonnella* † of our Roman peasant dress, and her glossy raven hair appeared still more black and shining, in contrast with the snowy *fettola* ‡ that was laid in a square fold over it. Her straight brows, and the bright eyes that sparkled beneath them, gave expression to her oval and clear brown face; and if the rose shone not on her cheek, the rich red of her lip made one forget its absence. Her teeth, signora, my poor mother used to say, were as white as young almonds when they first leave the shell; and her laugh was as joyous as sunshine. The neighbours used to pause to look at her as she returned from the well, an amphora of water on her head, so balanced that not a single drop escaped though her hands did not touch it; and her step was so light, that it seemed as if her little feet would not crush a flower. Every one talked of her beauty except Giovanni Spinelli, who felt its power the most—he was never tired of looking at her; and, even while they were yet children, the neighbours used to call them the lovers.

“Giovanni was the handsomest youth in the village, and perhaps it was for this reason that rumour first distinguished him as a fitting partner for Vincenza. He sought for her the ripest grapes, and most melting figs; the first violets of the spring and the last rose of the summer were sure to be hers; for it is only by such simple gifts, signora, that the poor and humble can show their affection. Vincenza would receive them with pleasure, and repay Giovanni with a smile and kind words; nor was a glance wanting such as love alone can bestow. She would place the flowers in her hair and bosom, where they remained until, seeking her lowly couch, she consigned them to a vase of water fresh from the fountain, and placed them on the table close by her pillow, beneath the picture of the Madonna. At other times, she would weave the flowers into a garland for the large image of her patron saint that adorned the chapel; and it was allowed that no girl in the village could weave a garland to be compared with that of Vincenza.

“The affection of Vincenza and Giovanni had grown with their growth, and strengthened with their strength; neither could remember when it had commenced, or when they had been able to support existence asunder. Together they sung the love ditties that they played on the guitar, or danced the tarantella to the merry sound of the tambourine; together they had knelt and prayed at the shrine of the Madonna, and offered up votive flowers before the images of their tutelar saints. Each had become associated with the thoughts, feelings, dreams, and hopes of the other; they had never contemplated the possibility of even a temporary

* Bodice.

† Petticoat.

‡ Plaited kerchief.

separation ; their little hamlet was the world to them, the boundary of their wishes, and the scene where their happiness was to be crowned.

“The chapel now before us, signora, was viewed by the lovers as the place where one day their vows were to be sanctified, their children to be baptised, and their own bodies to be deposited, previously to their consignment to their last narrow home ; all this had occurred to all who, under their observation or within their knowledge, had, like them, grown together, loved, and married ; and therefore Vincenza and Giovanni believed it would be their fate.

“This supposed certainty of the future, threw an additional shade of tenderness over the feelings of the young people : they wholly depended on each other for happiness, and the few hours of absence that the manual labours of Giovanni in the fields occupied, were sustained and counted with impatience by both. How often has Vincenza looked to the west, to see whether the sun gave token of seeking his couch, that being the signal of Giovanni’s return. Seldom had he repaired to the field without bearing in his hat a bouquet of flowers, the gift of Vincenza ; and as seldom did he return without bringing some rustic offering to her.

“Ah ! signora, the richest gifts which the grand can bestow, yield not such pure pleasure as the humble offerings of the poor and lowly ! I, signora, have seen much of the world ; I have served in the army, and been many years a courier, during which time I have been employed in some noble families ; and on occasions of marriages, have seen jewels given which might ransom a prince, and whose dazzling lustre made my eyes ache, without their conferring half the delight that a single riband or kerchief of silk has excited in the breast of one of our peasants, when presented by the hand of love.

“Ay, you grand ones of the earth, signora, have so many different sources of gratification, that when you love, it is only another enjoyment added to your vast store ; but, with us, love constitutes the whole, the sole, the only one ! You have each your different pursuits, your different pleasures, and can amuse yourselves so well when asunder, that you depend not on each other for happiness. Forgive me, signora, for my boldness in expressing my reflections, and permit me to return to my narrative.

“So genuine had been the affection of the lovers, that it created a sympathy and respect throughout the hamlet ; their parents treated them as affianced ; and each rural belle or beau quoted them as models of example to the other, when dissatisfied by negligence or coquetry ; for, even in the most remote hamlet, signora, a woman is still a woman.

“Many years before the period to which I refer, a dangerous malady had reduced the father of Giovanni to the brink of the grave ; and the despairing wife had vowed, before her patron saint,

that if her husband recovered, she would devote her eldest son to the church.

“The illness terminated favourably; and she prepared to fulfil the duty she had imposed upon herself. Andrea was the name of the youth on whom this rigid fortune was entailed, but, happily, his calm contemplative turn of mind rendered him not unfitted for its endurance.

“While yet a child, he was treated as a chosen vessel; one who was to be an intermediate point between those dear to him and the God he was to serve. The monastic habit was assumed by him ere he had yet quitted the plays of boyhood; and he met with affectionate indulgence, from the knowledge that he was doomed soon to leave his native village and all that he loved, to live in cloistered solitude at a few miles distance.

“The spires of his convent you may see yonder, signora; but they are more visible at sunset, when the last rays of the bright luminary tinge them. My mother has told me, that often and often did she see Andrea, with Vincenza and Giovanni leaning on his shoulders, their arms crossed as they leant on him, pausing to watch those glittering spires fading in the horizon; and the lovers would draw closer to Andrea, reminded by them, that soon he would be torn from them, and be condemned to the solitude of that cloister. How many hopes of affection did they exchange with this dear brother! Andrea, in return, promising to pray for their happiness in his daily orisons before the altar, and in his cell. They dwelt on the visits they should make him; the flowers, fruit, and new honey they would bring him. Giovanni archly adding, in spite of the blushing cheek of Vincenza, which she vainly endeavoured to conceal on the shoulder of Andrea, that their first-born son should be named Andrea.

“Such was the fascination of this mild and affectionate youth, that his presence was felt to be a source of pleasure instead of a restraint to the lovers. He was scarcely less dear to Vincenza than to Giovanni, and was necessary to the happiness of both. He had now reached his seventeenth year; Giovanni was a year younger—Vincenza had completed her fifteenth birthday. In a few days, Andrea was to enter the convent, and his approaching departure cast a gloom over the hamlet. At this period continued and heavy rain had swollen the Arona; and instead of the blue and limpid stream which you now perceive, it had become a rapid and discoloured flood. A pet lamb, given by Giovanni to Vincenza, had wandered from the hamlet to the banks of the river, into which it unfortunately fell as she approached to secure it. Unmindful of the depth and rapidity of the current, Vincenza rushed in to save her favourite, and was soon carried away by the force of the torrent. She was on the point of sinking, when Andrea arrived at the spot, and threw himself into the river to rescue her. He seized her by the long tresses that escaped from the bodkin which confined them,

and drew her towards the shore ; when, overcome by the exertion, and borne down by the weight of the monastic cloak, he was carried away by the current, and sank to rise no more, at the very moment his brother arrived to snatch Vincenza from the arms of death.

“ Giovanni would have left his Vincenza (lifeless as she appeared) on the bank, and have rushed into the water to share Andrea’s fate ; but that he was forcibly withheld by some of the peasants, who, returning from their labour, had arrived in time to witness the catastrophe, and to save Giovanni from suicide. It was many hours ere Vincenza was restored to animation, or that she became sensible of the danger she had escaped ; but when returning consciousness brought the fearful scene before her, she scarcely might be said to rejoice in her restoration to an existence that she knew was purchased by the life of Andrea ; and throwing herself into the arms of Giovanni, and mingling her tears with his, she prayed him to forgive her for having deprived him of a brother.

“ When the lifeless corpse of Andrea was discovered, his clenched hand still grasped a tress of raven hair, which even death itself had failed to compel him to relinquish ; and his contracted brow and compressed lips, marked the struggle he had made to save her to whom it had belonged. Bitter were the tears that bedewed his pale forehead, while, bending over him, Vincenza and Giovanni passionately expressed their resolution, ever and fondly to cherish the memory of his virtues and disastrous fate ; then, feeling that in losing this dear and trusted brother, one of the links of the chain that united them was broken, they vowed henceforth to be all to each other. Alas ! they foresaw not that this terrible affliction, their first in the school of trials, would be the cause of so much future misery, and that their lives, hitherto so tranquil and happy, were never more to know peace.

“ No sooner had the mortal remains of Andrea been consigned to the grave, bedewed by the tears of all the village, than the mother declared that Giovanni, her only surviving son, must be devoted to the church in the place of him she had lost. In vain were the tears and despair of the lovers, rendered now doubly dear to each other by the grief that Andrea’s death had caused them—in vain were the intercessions of relatives, friends, and neighbours—the superstitious and bigoted mother was resolved on the sacrifice of her child, of whose fate she now became the sole arbitress, in consequence of the death of her husband, which occurred a few days after that of Andrea.

“ To his wife, the deceased parent, a weak and good-natured man, and the richest in the village, bequeathed all his wealth ; with the chief portion of which, she proclaimed her intention of endowing the convent as soon as Giovanni should pronounce his vows. This declaration enlisted the whole of the monks on her side ; and entreaties, representations, and promises having failed to produce

any effect on Giovanni, an order was procured from the commandant of a neighbouring town, for a party of military to tear him from the arms of his agonised and despairing Vincenza, and bear him to the convent, where he was kept a close prisoner.

“The deep anguish of Vincenza failed to produce any effect on the obdurate mother of her lover; nay, the poor girl was looked upon by the inflexible fanatic, as an impious creature, who wanted to place herself between her son and heaven. Vincenza used to sit for hours on a rustic seat that commanded a view of the convent spires; and, when the deepening shades of evening hid them from her sight, she would return pale and silent to her cheerless home, and throw herself on that pillow from which peaceful slumber had now fled for ever.

“The unhappiness of the youthful lovers had thrown a gloom over the whole village; for, though a superstitious dread of the monks had checked the expressions of the sympathy all felt, it had but rendered the feeling more profound. The sounds of the guitar or tambourine were no longer heard to break on the stillness of evening: gloom had succeeded to cheerfulness in the lately happy village, and all was changed. Poor Giovanni had undergone a system of persecution, instigated even less by superstition than by the cupidity of the monks, who wished to insure the wealth promised by his mother. Coercion had been tried in vain; persuasion, too, had hitherto failed to induce him to repeat the vows that must separate him for ever from his Vincenza; but when he discovered that on his compliance depended his sole chance of ever again leaving the walls of his convent, he yielded a reluctant and painful assent, and pronounced himself the servant of God, while his heart beat tumultuously with an earthly passion.

“Six additional dreary months were added to those already passed in his monastic prison, ere Giovanni was permitted to pass its guarded portals. Each hour of this period had been counted with bitterness of feeling by Vincenza, who sometimes accused her lover of weakness or inconstancy, in yielding to their separation (unconscious of the persecution he was undergoing), but she still oftener wept their fate; shedding those bitter tears that sear the cheek on which they fall, and refresh not the heart from which they spring.

“The mother of Giovanni was taken dangerously ill, and when her recovery was hopeless, her son was permitted, for the first time, to leave his convent, that he might close her dying eyes. He arrived but in time to perform this filial office; for, in a few minutes after he had entered her chamber, she expired. By her bedside he found Vincenza, who had nursed her through her malady, and who, worn out by grief and watching by the sick-bed, was scarcely to be recognised.

“Those who were in the outer room declared, that for some time they heard convulsive sobs, and deep groans mingled with

whispers ; and then a *silence* befitting the chamber of death, prevailed. When an hour had elapsed, and not a sound had manifested itself to the attentive ears of the anxious listeners, they entered the room, and to their utter astonishment, found only the lifeless corpse of the mother, the face still wet with the tears of Giovanni and Vincenza. A door, that conducted from the chamber into the garden was open, and evidently indicated the mode of the lovers' escape.

"Whither had they gone ? was the question all asked, but none could solve. Could Vincenza, the good, the pure-minded Vincenza, have eloped with a priest ? No ! so daring an impiety was too dreadful even to be imagined ; and yet, how else account for their disappearance ?

"The two monks who had been sent to guard Giovanni from the convent, returned thither to tell the dreadful tale of sacrilege ; and their superior despatched emissaries through all the surrounding country, to arrest the unhappy and, as they were termed, impious pair. Still no tidings could be obtained of them ; no one had seen —no one had heard, any trace of them. The monks took possession of all that the deceased widow had left ; and by their rapacity disgusted all the inhabitants of Galeria.

"Well, signora, various were the conjectures formed on every side, as to the probable fate of the lovers : they were believed to be living in sin together in some distant part of the country ; and, truth to say, many people were more inclined to pity than to condemn them.

"Summer had come again ; the waters of the Arona had receded from its banks, and some peasants had entered the bed of the river, to obtain gravel for the repair of the road, when their attention was attracted by a dark mass half shrouded by sand. They removed it, and discovered at the very spot where Andrea had perished, the bodies of the lovers locked in each other's arms, and wrapped in the monastic cloak of Giovanni !

"My mother saw them, signora, and she told me that the long tresses of Vincenza were wound round the ill-fated youth, as if to prevent their remains from being separated, even in death.

"They were the last who were ever placed in the cemetery : here, signora, is their grave, the only one preserved free from the weeds and nettles that overgrow the others ; for my poor mother performed this humble task while she lived, in memory of their fidelity and misfortunes ; and since her death, I have faithfully fulfilled the office.

"The monks, enraged at the pity displayed by the inhabitants of Galeria, pronounced a curse on the village, which so alarmed the natives, that they fled the spot, leaving nearly all their household goods and utensils behind ; and this became the Deserted Village."

THE DREAM.

“AND ye love him still, Kathleen?”

“Faix and I do; sore against my will, too, sometimes: but troth, ma vourneen, for the life of me I can't help it.”

“Yet, sure, haven't ye tould me, that he's as cross as may be, when he hasn't the dhrop of dhrink, and as cross as *can* be, when he has it, that he neglects the childer, and snaps his fingers in ye'r face, when you want to keep him from the Dun Cow; and afther all this ye love him? Well, for my part, I'm but a lone woman, to be sure, and never knew what it was—God be praised!—to have a man on my own floor, houlding out against me, ever since I lost my poor father—pace be to his sowl!—last Christmas was eleven years; but I think I could no more bear with such traitment as you put up with, Kathleen, then I could fly.”

“Arragh cuishla-ma-chree; it is *because* you've been a lone woman, and have not been used to have a man on your floor, houlding out against you, that it seems so hard to bear. One gets used to everything in the course of time; and many is the thing that seemed disagreeable enough at first, that has come so pleasant at last, that sure one has got to like it.”

“That's what my poor ould granny used to say, in regard to the snuff. ‘When I used to take a snisheen at first,’ said she (may the heavens be her bed this blessed night!), ‘I didn't like it much; but afther I had taken it for some time, faix I got used to it, and liked it; and many's the lonesome hour it has helped me over.’”

“Well, thin, so it is with a husband's ways; one feels a saucy word, or an impudent shake of the head, just ready to answer him, but if one has the luck to keep in both, faix 'twill be a great blessing.”

“But how did ye find out the craft to keep 'em in, Kathleen? For, troth, they come so quick to me, whinever I'm vexed, that oi' they go, whether I will or no.”

“Well, then, Pegg asthore, I'll tell you how it all happened. Though as 'twas only a dhream, a simple dhream, mayhap you'll not think so seriously of it as I did. But dhreams come direct from heaven! bekase, as they appear to us when we are asleep, and can't help ourselves, it's clear that God, who always purtects the helpless, sends 'em to us.”

“Then faix, Kathleen, it's yerself that's the quare woman to be believing in dhreams? But tell me what it was you dhreamt, avourneen.”

“'Twas a fine summer evening, Peggy, as ever shone out of the heavens. The bees were flitting about from flower to flower, and saying, with their playsant voices, ‘What a sweet life we

lade!' The birds were singing such music, that those who had once listened to it with the ears of their hearts, wants no better. And the red sun was going to bed, behind purple curtains, fringed with goold, richer than any king's, when I sat at the open window, that same window, Peggy, that you now see. The sweet smell of the flowers came to me; the brown cuckoo hopped over the field, and repeated his cry as clear as could be; the cows lowed in the distance, and every bird and baste—ay, and the little tiny crathurs, that are smaller than the birds, might be heard too—all was so still and calm. Oh! in such summer-nights, one may hear the voice of Heaven, if one keeps one's mind quiet, and looks up to God! But my mind—God forgive me!—wasn't quiet, for I was vexed and angry. 'Well,' says I to myself, 'here I am, this beautiful night, and Andy promised he would come home before the sun had gone to bed, and there he has drawn his purple curtains, and put out his blessed light, and yet the man of the house does not come to me! Sure, 'tis to the Dun Cow he's gone, to dhrink with them limbs of the devil; and this is the way that a poor woman is kept, like a *mhoodaun*,* watching the long hours, while he's spending the trifle he's airn'd!' With that, up gets the anger in my breast, and the heart of me began to bait, and my cheeks got as hot as a lime-kiln. 'I'll go after him,' says I, 'to the Dun Cow, and give him a bit of my mind, that I will!' But then I begun to remember that Biddy Phelan used to go after Mick, her husband, until he got so used to it, that he would say he couldn't go till Biddy came for him; and I said to myself, 'It shall never be said, that I, a dacent girl, wint afther my husband to a shibeen shop.' 'But, thin, 'twould sarve him right, and may be teach him bether,' whispered the Evil Spirit in my ears, 'if you were to spake to him afore the wild boys he's dhrinking with;' and I up, and threw the tail of my gound over my shoulders, and crossed the treshold. 'If he should speak crossly to you, Kathleen, before all them chaps, wouldn't it be a terrible downfal to ye?' said a little voice in my heart, no louder than the humming of a bee. 'Faith, 'tis yerself that's right enough,' said I; and I let down the tail of my gound, and begun to cry like a child. Well, I cried till I fell fast asleep; for, though people say that sleep seldomer comes to the eyes that have been shedding tears, I have always found the contrary; and I remember the last thought I had afore I slept was, What a baste my husband was to lave me alone, while he was spending his airnings at the Dun Cow! I slept, and I dhreamt that I was so angry with him, that I prayed to God to take him to himself, for that I'd rather lave him intirely, than have him laving me to go to the Dun Cow to throw away his money. 'Well, you shall have your will, honest woman,' says Death to me; 'but remember, that once I have granted your prayer, you'll never see your husband again, except a corpse.'

* A fool.

With that I saw my poor boy laid in his bed, *our bed*, where we spent many a blessed night. His face was as pale as marble, Peggy, when the moon is shining out in the churchyard. His hair was like the boughs of the willow, wet and drooping with the heavy dews of night; and his lips were cold and silent as the grave. Oh, God! I shall never forget what I felt, when I looked at him in that moment. I threw my arms round him—my hot tears drenched his frozen face—I called him by every tender name—but he answered me not, he heeded me not. The memory of all our love—the happy hours of our courtship—and the more happy ones when I first stood on his floor as a bride, came back to me; and I thought I had never really truly loved him before. And there he lay, with that beauty on his pale and lifeless face, that death gives when he has struck the blow, just as if he wished to make us more sorrowful for what we have lost. I tried all I could to remember how often my poor boy had vexed me, in the hopes of its stopping my grief; but would you believe it, Peggy? I could call to mind nothing but all the fond words and the loving actions of him, until my very heart seemed breaking, and I prayed to God either to restore *him* to life, or to take me with him. ‘Remember, woman,’ said a voice, that sounded like the wind when it comes sighing through a wood, when first the leaves begin to fall, ‘remember that I told you, if onest I granted your prayer for his death, you should never see him again but as a corpse. I’m thinking ’tis yerself that’s sorry enough for your wickedness in wishing for his death; but it’s too late now. You couldn’t bear to lose him for an hour or two at the Dun Cow, but now you must lose him for ever and a day. You’ll see his plaisant smile no more, nor hear his loving voice.’ ‘Andy, Andy, cuishla-ma-chree, don’t lave me! don’t lave me!’ cried I, like one that had lost all *raison*, and the big tears running down my cheeks!’ ‘Faith, and I won’t, my darlint,’ said a voice, the sound of which I never expected to hear again in this world. ‘Sure, here I am, my *colleen dhas*!’ and he hugged me against his warm heart, for it was no other than Andy himself that had come home from the Dun Cow, and all the throuble I was in about his death was a dhream. From that night I have never scoulded him, nor said a cross word about his going to the Dun Cow; for whenever an angry thought was coming into my head, I remembered my dhream, and thanked God he wasn’t dead.

“Oh, Peggy, dear! Such warnings as that are blessed things, and teach us to bare and forbare. Praise be to *His* holy name who sends ’em!”

THE HONEYMOON.

“Some persons pay for a month of honey with a life of vinegar.”

NOVELS and comedies end generally with a marriage, because, after that event, it is supposed that nothing remains to be told.

This supposition is erroneous, as the history of many a wedded pair might exemplify; for how many hearts have fallen away from their allegiance, after hands have been joined by the saffron-robed god, which had remained true, while suffering all the pangs that from time immemorial have attended the progress of the archer-boy?

Passion—possession—what a history is comprised in these two words! But how often might its moral be conveyed in a third—indifference?

Marriage, we are told, is the portal, where love resigns his votaries to the dominion of sober reason; but, alas! many have so little predilection for his empire, that they rather endeavour to retain the illusions of the past, gone for ever, than to be content with the reality in their power.

During the days of courtship, the objects beloved are viewed through a magic mirror which gives only perfections to the sight; but after marriage, a magnifying glass stands to supply its place, which draws objects so unpleasingly near, that even the most trivial defects are made prominent.

Courtship is a dream—marriage the time of awaking;—fortunate are they who can lay aside their visions for the more commonplace happiness of life, without disappointment or repining.

The hero and heroine of our sketch were not of these; they had loved passionately—wildly. Their parents had, from motives of prudence, opposed their union, considering them as too young to enter a state which requires more wisdom to render it one of happiness, than most of its votaries are disposed to admit.

This opposition produced its natural result, an increase of violence in the passion of the lovers. Henri de Belleville was ready to commit any action, however rash, to secure the hand of Hermance de Montesquieu, and she did all that a well brought up young French lady could be expected to do—she fell dangerously ill. Her illness and danger drove her lover to desperation, while it worked so effectually on the fears of her parents, that they yielded a reluctant consent to the marriage, which was to be solemnised the moment that she was restored to health. The first interview between the lovers was truly touching: both declared they must have died had their marriage not been agreed to, and both firmly believed what they asserted.

Henri de Belleville being now received as the future husband of Hermance, passed nearly the whole of his time with her, seated

by the *chaise-longue* of the convalescent, marking, with delight, the return of health's roses to her delicate cheek, and promising her unchanging, devoted, eternal love.

"Yes, dearest Hermance," would he say, "Hermance, you are mine, *wholly* mine! I shall have no will but yours, never shall I quit your presence. Oh! how tormenting it is to be forced to leave you, to be told by your mother that I fatigue you by the length of my visits, and to be absent from you so many long and heavy hours. And you, Hermance, do you feel as I do?—do you mourn my absence, and count with impatience the hour for our meeting?"

The answer may be guessed; yet though tender as youthful and loving lips could utter, it scarcely satisfied the jealous and *exigeant* lover.

"But will you always love me as at present?" asked the timid girl. "I have *heard* such strange tales of the difference between the lover and the husband; nay, indeed, I have *seen*: for the Vicomte de Belmonte *now* leaves my poor friend Elise for whole hours, yet you may remember that before *they* were married, he, too, would hardly bear to be absent from her side. Ah! were *you* to change like him, I should be wretched."

"You wrong yourself and me, my adored Hermance, by supposing me capable of acting like De Belmonte; and, besides, your poor friend, though a very charming person, does not resemble *you*. Ah! what woman ever did? If she only possessed one half your charms he could not tear himself away from her. No! dearest; years shall only prove that my passion for you can know no change, and never, never shall the husband be less ardent than the lover! I have planned all our future life: it shall pass as a summer day—bright and genial. We will retire from Paris, which I have hated ever since I loved you; its noise, its tumultuous pleasures distract me. I could not bear to see you gazed at, followed, and admired. No! I feel, my Hermance, that it would drive me mad. But you, my beloved, will you not sigh to leave the pleasures of the metropolis, and to exchange a crowd of admirers for one devoted heart?"

"How can you ask such a question?" replied Hermance, pouting her pretty lip, and placing her little white hand within his; "I shall be delighted to leave Paris; for I could not bear to see you talking to the Duchesse de Monforte, and a dozen other women, as you used to be when I first knew you; and when all my young friends used to remark how strange it was that the married women occupied the attention of the young men so much, that they scarcely took any notice of us spinsters. I should be very jealous, Henri, I can tell you, were you to show more than distant politeness to any woman but me."

And her smooth brow became for a moment contracted, at the recollection of his former publicly marked attentions to certain ladies of fashion.

The little white hand was repeatedly pressed to his lips, as he assured her again and again, that it would become irksome to him to be compelled to converse with any woman but herself; and her brow resumed its former unruffled calmness.

"I have taken the most beautiful cottage *orné* at Bellevue; it is now fitting up by Le Sage, as if to receive a fairy queen. *Such a boudoir!* how you will like it! We will walk, ride, drive, read, draw, and sing together—in short, we shall never be a moment asunder; but perhaps, Hermance, you will get tired of me?"

"How cruel, how unjust, to suppose it possible!" was the answer.

In such day-dreams did the hours of convalescence of the fair invalid pass away, interrupted only by the pleasant task of examining and selecting the various articles for the *trousseau*, rendered all the pleasanter by the impassioned compliments of the lover, who declared that while each and all were most becoming, they still borrowed their best grace from her whom they were permitted to adorn.

He taught her to look forward to wedlock as a state of uninterrupted happiness, where love was for ever to bestow his sunny smiles, and never to spread his wings. They were to be free from all the ills to which poor human nature is subject. Sorrow or sickness they dreamt not of; and even *ennui*, that most alarming of all the evils in a French man or woman's catalogue, they feared not; for how could it reach two people who had such a delightful and inexhaustible subject of conversation as was offered by *themselves*.

At length the happy morn arrived; and after the celebration of the marriage, the wedded pair, contrary to all established usage in France on similar occasions, left Paris and retired to the cottage *orné* at Bellevue.

The first few days of bridal felicity, marked by delicate and engrossing attentions, and delicious flatteries, flew quickly by; reiterated declarations of perfect happiness were daily, hourly exchanged; and the occasional interruptions to their *tête-à-tête*, offered by the visits of friends, was found to be the only drawback to their enjoyment.

After the lapse of a week, however, our wedded lovers became a little more sensible to the claims of friendship. Fewer confidential glances were now exchanged between them, expressive of their impatience at the lengthened visits of their acquaintances; they began to listen with something like interest to the gossip of Paris, and not unfrequently extended their hospitality to those who were inclined to accept it. In short, they evinced slight symptoms of a desire to enter again into society, though they declared to each other that this change arose from their wish not to appear unkind, or ill-bred, to their acquaintances. They even found that such casual interruptions served to give a new zest to the delights of their *têtes-à-tête*. Yet each marked, in secret, that "a change came o'er the spirit of their dream;" and that when no visitors dropped in,

the days seemed unusually long and monotonous. *They* were ashamed to acknowledge this alteration, and endeavoured to conceal their feelings by increased demonstrations of affection, but the forced smiles of both, insensibly extended to yawns; and they began to discover that there must be something peculiarly heavy in the atmosphere to produce such effects.

When they drove, or rode out, they no longer sought the secluded wooded lanes in the romantic neighbourhood, as they had invariably done during the first ten days of their marriage, but kept on the high-road or the frequented one in the Bois de Boulogne. Hermance observed, with a sigh, that Henri not unfrequently turned his head to observe some fair equestrian who galloped by them, and Henri discovered, with some feeling allied to pique, that Hermance had eyes for every distinguished-looking cavalier whom they encountered—though, to be sure, it was but a transient glance that she bestowed on them. Each was aware that the change equally operated on both; but neither felt disposed to pardon it in the other. Hermance most felt it; for, though conscious of her own desire to see and be seen again, she was deeply offended that her husband betrayed the same predilection for society. They became silent and abstracted.

“I am sure,” would Hermance say to herself, “he is now regretting the gaieties of Paris; and this fickleness after only two weeks of marriage! It is too bad; but men are shocking creatures! yet, I must own, Paris is much more agreeable than Bellevue. Heigh-ho! I wish we were back there. How I long to show my beautiful dresses and my pearls at the *soirées!*—and when Henri sees me admired, as I am sure I shall be, he will become as attentive and as amusing as he used to be. Yes! Paris is the only place where lovers are kept on the *qui-vive* by a constant round of gaieties, instead of sinking into a state of apathy, by being left continually dependent on each other.”

While these reflections were passing in the mind of Hermance, Henri was thinking it was very strange that she no longer amused or interested him so much as a few weeks before.

“Here am I,” he would say to himself, “shut up in this retirement, away from all my occupations and amusements, leading nearly as effeminate a life as Achilles at Scyros, devoting all my time to Hermance; and yet she does not seem sensible of the sacrifice I am making. Women are very selfish creatures: there she is, as abstracted as if two years had elapsed since our marriage, instead of two weeks; and, I dare be sworn, wishing herself back at Paris to display her *trousseau*, and be admired. This fickleness is too bad! but women are all the same. I wish we were back at Paris; I wonder if they miss me much at the club?”

Henri no longer flatteringly applauded the *toilette* of Hermance, a want of attention which no woman, and least of all, a French woman, is disposed to pardon.

He could now (and the reflection wounded her self-love) doze comfortably while she sung one of his favourite songs—songs which only a few days before, called forth his most passionate plaudits.

He no longer dwelt in rapturous terms on her beauty ; and she, consequently, could not utter the blushing yet gratified disclaimers to such compliments, or return them by similar ones. No wonder then, that their conversation, having lost its chief charm, was no longer kept up with spirit, but sunk into common-place observations.

“ Yes ! ” Hermance would mentally own, “ he is changed—cruelly changed.”

She was forced to admit that he was still kind, gentle, and affectionate ; but was kindness, gentleness, and affection, sufficient to supply the place of the rapturous, romantic felicity she had anticipated ? No ! Hermance felt they were not, and pique mingled with her disappointment. These reflections would fill her eyes with tears ; and a certain degree of reserve was assumed towards Henri, that tended not to impart animation to his languid, yet invariably affectionate attentions.

Each day made Henri feel still more forcibly the want of occupation. He longed for a gallop, a day’s hunting, or shooting ; in short, for any manly amusement, to be partaken of with some of his former companions.

Hercules plying the distaff, could not be more out of his natural element, than our married Benedict, shut up for whole hours in the luxurious boudoir of his wife ; or sauntering round and round again through the pretty, but confined, pleasure-ground which encircled his cottage. It is true, he could ride out with Hermance, but then she was so timid an equestrian, that a gallop was a feat of horsemanship she dared not essay ; and to leave her with his groom while *he* galloped, would be uncivil. After they had strolled arm-in-arm the usual number of turns in the pleasure-ground, repeated nearly the same observations that the flowers, weather, and points of view, had so frequently elicited, looked at their watches, and were surprised to find it was not yet time to dress for dinner. At length that hour arrived, regarded by some as the happiest of the twenty-four ; and our wedded pair found themselves at the table, with better appetites and less sentiment than lovers are supposed to possess. In short, the stomach seemed more alive than the heart—a fact which rather astonished the delicacy of the gentle Hermance.

During the first few bridal days, their servants had been dismissed from attendance in the *salle-à-manger*, because their presence was deemed a restraint. Besides, Henri liked to help Hermance himself, without the intervention of a servant ; and, with the assistance of dumb waiters, their *tête-à-tête* dinners had passed off, as they said, deliciously.

In the course of a fortnight, however, they required so many

little acts of attendance, that it was deemed expedient to dismiss the dumb waiters, and call in the aid of their living substitutes.

"How tiresome it is of our cook," said Henri, "to give us the same *potage* continually."

"Did you not examine the *menu*?" replied Hermance.

"I scarcely looked at it," was the answer, "for I hate ordering dinners; or, in truth, knowing what I am to have at that repast until I see it, and here, I vow (as the servant uncovered the *entrées*), are the eternal *côtelettes-d'agneau* and *filets-de-volaille*, which we have so often, that I am fatigued with seeing them."

"Do you not remember, *cher ami*," said Hermance, "that you told me you liked *soupe-au-riz* better than any other, and that the *entrées* now before us, are precisely those which you said you preferred?"

"Did I, love?" replied Henri, with an air of nonchalance; "well, then, the fact is, we have had them so frequently of late, that I am tired of them; one tires of everything after a time."

A deeper tint on the cheek of Hermance, and a tear which trembled in her eye, might have told Henri that his last observation had given rise to some painful reflections in her mind. But, alas! both blush and tear were unnoticed by him, as he was busily engaged in discussing the *filets-de-volaille*.

"You do not eat, dear Hermance," said Henri, at length, having done ample justice to the decried *entrées*. "Let me give you a little of this *rôti*, it is very tender."

"It is only more unfortunate for that,"* replied Hermance, with a deep sigh; "but I cannot eat;" and with difficulty she suppressed the tears that filled her eyes, while a smile stole over the lips of her husband at her sentimental reproach.

Hermance felt hurt at the smile, and offended at observing that Henri continued to partake as copiously of the *rôti* as he had previously done of the *entrées*. How unfeeling, how indelicate to continue to devour, when *she* had refused to eat!

As soon as dinner was concluded, and the servants had withdrawn, Henri remarked, for the first time, that the eyes of his wife were dimmed with tears.

"How is this, dearest!" exclaimed he—"you have been weeping—are you ill?" and he attempted to take her hand, but it was withdrawn, and her face averted, while she applied her handkerchief to her gushing eyes, and wept with uncontrolled emotion. "Speak to me, I beseech you, Hermance!" continued Henri, endeavouring again to take her hand; "how have I offended you?"

"I see it, I see it all, but too plainly," sobbed the weeping Hermance; "you no longer love me! I have observed your growing indifference day after day, and tried not to believe the cruel change; but now,"—and here her tears streamed afresh—"I can no longer doubt your fickle nature, when I hear you avow that you get tired

* The words used by a French lady to her husband on a similar occasion

of everything—which means every person—and this to me, who, only a few weeks ago, you professed to adore! Oh! it is too cruel! why did I marry?” and here sobs interrupted her words.

“You wrong me! indeed you do, dear Hermance; I said one tires of things; but I never said or meant that one gets tired of persons. Come, this is childish; let me wipe these poor eyes,” and he kissed her brow while gently performing the operation.

“Then why have you seemed so different of late?” sobbed Hermance, letting him now retain the hand he pressed to his lips.

“In what has the difference consisted, dear love?” asked Henri.

“You no longer seem delighted when I enter the room, or join you in the garden, after being absent half an hour.

“*Half* an hour!” reiterated Henri, with a faint smile.

“Yes! a *whole* half hour,” replied Hermance, placing an emphasis on the word “whole.” “You used to appear enchanted when I came into the saloon at Paris, and always flew to meet me. You never admire my dress now, though you were wont to examine and commend all that I wore; and you doze while I am singing the songs, which a few weeks ago threw you into ecstasies.”

Poor Hermance wept afresh at the recapitulation of the symptoms of her husband’s growing indifference, while he soothed her with loving words and tender epithets.

Having in some measure reassured her by his affectionate manner, harmony was again established; but the veil was removed from the eyes of both, never again to be resumed.

They perceived that the love—unceasing, ecstatic—of which they had dreamt before their union, was a chimera existing only in imagination; and they awoke with sobered feelings, to seek content in rational affection, instead of indulging in romantic expectations of a happiness that never falls to the lot of human beings; each acknowledging, with a sigh, that even in a marriage of love, the brilliant anticipations of imagination are never realised; that disappointment awaits poor mortals even in that brightest portion of existence—the Honeymoon.

MARY LESTER.

A TALE OF ERROR.

“*Quel vago impallider che'l dolce riso
D'un amorsa nebbia ricoverse.*”—*Petrarch.*

“One lovely bush of the pale virgin thorn,
Bent o'er a little heap of lowly turf,
Is all the sad memorial of her worth—
All that remains to mark where she is laid.”

Joanna Baillie's "Rayner."

It was a lovely evening in the early part of August, 1827, when a brilliant sun was sinking in the horizon, and tinging all round with

his golden beams, that a travelling carriage and four was seen rapidly descending a hill on the north road. In the carriage, supported by pillows, reclined a young man, on whose high brow and noble countenance disease had stamped its seal in fearful characters, though the natural beauty of the sufferer still shone forth triumphantly over the ravages of ill health. His languid head rested on the shoulder of a young and beautiful girl, and his upturned eyes were fixed, with an expression of unutterable love, on hers. The last rosy rays of sunset, falling on the pale brow of the young man, showed like a red cloud passing over snow, and contrasted sadly with its marble hue.

"Mary, my blessed love," said the invalid, "pull the check-string, and order Sainville to urge the postillions to advance still quicker."

"Be composed, dearest Henry, replied the young lady; "observe you not that the velocity with which we advance has increased the difficulty of your breathing. You will destroy yourself by this exertion."

"Mary, you know not how essential it is to my peace of mind that we should reach Gretna Green most rapidly; every moment is precious, and the anxiety that preys on me is even still more fatal to my frame than the velocity of our pace. Tell Sainville then, dearest, to urge the postillions."

Mary pulled the check-string, and Sainville soon stopped the carriage, and stood by the step. The change that the last hour had produced on the countenance of his master struck the servant with dismay; and he almost feared he should see him expire, as, gasping for breath, he turned his eager eyes on those of Sainville, and laying his hand on the arm of the alarmed servant, said, "Remember, Sainville, that my life—nay, more than life, depends on my reaching Gretna Green in a few hours. Give the postillions gold—promise them all, everything, if they will advance with all possible speed."

The postillions urged their steeds, and the carriage whirled along with fearful rapidity, while the invalid pressed with a nervous grasp the small trembling hand that rested within his.

Who were this young and interesting pair, at whose dreams of love and happiness the gaunt fiend, Death, smiled in mockery, while he held his dart suspended over them? To tell you who they were, it is necessary to return to the village of Dawlish, in Devonshire, where dwelt Mrs. Lester, the widow of a field-officer, who was killed at the battle of Waterloo, and who left his still young and beautiful wife, with an infant daughter, a scanty provision, and little else, save the distinguished reputation that his well-known bravery had gained in a life devoted to the service of his country, and sealed by his blood.

Colonel Lester's had been a love marriage, but, unlike the generality of such unions, the love had increased with the years that had

united them ; and they felt so happy as nearly to forget that their marriage had deprived them of the affection and countenance of their mutual relatives, who had declined all intercourse with two poor and wilful persons, as they considered them, who were determined to marry from pure affection, contrary to the advice of all their friends. It was not until death had snatched her husband from her, that Mrs. Lester felt the consequences of her imprudent marriage. Left alone and unprotected, with an infant daughter, how did she wish to claim for her child that protection from her family for which she was too proud to sue for herself ! And it was not without many struggles with her pride that she had appealed to their sympathy. This appeal had been unanswered ; for the relatives to whom it had been addressed found it still more prudent to decline an intercourse with an ill-provided widow, than it had formerly been to renew one with the happy wife of a meritorious officer, likely to arrive at distinction in his profession.

Mrs. Lester retired from the busy world, and fixed her residence in a small, neat cottage at Dawlish, determined to devote her whole time to the education of her child. This spot had been endeared to her by her having spent some of the happiest days of her life there, with Colonel Lester, soon after her marriage ; and she found a melancholy pleasure in tracing their former haunts in its neighbourhood, when, leaning on his arm, and supported by his affection, the future offered only bright prospects. All the love she had felt for her husband was now centred in his child ; and the youthful Mary grew, beneath a mother's tender and fostering care, all that the fondest parent could desire—lovely in person, and pure in mind.

She had only reached her sixteenth year, when, in the summer of 1827, the young Lord Mordaunt came to Dawlish, to try the benefit of change of air in a complaint which threatened to terminate in consumption. The cottage next to Mrs. Lester's was taken for the invalid ; and his physician having occasion to refer to that lady for the character of a female servant, an acquaintance was formed that led to an introduction to his patient, who found the society of the mother and daughter so much to his taste, that no day passed that did not find him a visitor at Woodbine Cottage. He would spend whole hours by the drawing or work-table of Mary, correcting her sketches, reading aloud to her, or giving descriptions of the different foreign countries he had visited.

Lord Mordaunt was a young man so attractive in person and manners, that it would have been difficult for a much more fastidious judge than Mary Lester, not to have been captivated by his attentions ; and his delicate health served still more to excite a strong interest for him, while it banished all thoughts of alarm, even from the breast of the prudent mother, who looked on him with sorrow, as one foredoomed to an early grave. It is perhaps one of the most amiable proofs of the tenderness of women's hearts—their sympathy and affection, which health and gaiety might fail

to produce. The power was exemplified in the conduct of Mary Lester; for when, in their daily walks, in which Lord Mordaunt now attended them, his pale cheek assumed a hectic hue, from the exertion, and his eyes beamed with more than their usual lustre, those of Mary would fill with tears as she marked the first precursors of decay. With trembling anxiety she would urge him to repose himself on some rustic bench; and when he yielded to her entreaties, would hang over him with feelings, of whose source and extent her innocence kept her in ignorance, or led her to attribute solely to pity.

Days passed away, each one increasing the attachment of the young people, and confirming the fears of Lord Mordaunt's physician, while he alone appeared unconscious of his danger. His passion seemed to bind him by new ties of life; and when pain and lassitude reminded him that he was ill, he looked on the blooming cheek and beaming eye of Mary, and asked himself—if one, who felt for her the love that quickened the pulsations of his throbbing heart, could be indeed approaching the cold and cheerless grave? and he clung with renewed hope to existence, now that it had become so valuable.

At this period, a sprained ankle confined Mrs. Lester to the house; and she confided Mary every day to the care of Dr. Erskine and his patient, to pursue their accustomed walk. The doctor was skilled in botany and geology, and the neighbourhood of Dawlish presented many specimens in both sciences capable of arresting his attention; hence the lovers were frequently left alone in their rambles while he collected treasures for his *hortus siccus*, or cabinet; and the conversation, which, under the eye of the dignified matron, or grave doctor, had always been confined to general topics, now became purely personal. When young people begin to talk of themselves, sentiment soon colours the conversation; and, from sentimental conversation to love, how quick is the transition! When Lord Mordaunt first avowed his passion, the pure and heartless Mary's innocent reply was—"Oh, how happy dear mamma will be!" But a cloud that passed over the brow of her lover, showed that he anticipated not the same effect on Mrs. Lester.

"Do not, dearest, if you value my peace," said he, "inform your mother of our attachment. My family would oppose it so strongly, that she would think herself obliged to refuse her sanction—nay, she would, I am sure, think it her duty to prohibit our meeting. A separation from you I could not support; and but one mode awaits us to avert it. Fly with me, my beloved Mary, to Scotland; our marriage once accomplished, my family must be reconciled to it—at least, they cannot divide us; and your mother will be saved the blame of having aided it."

Day after day, the same reasoning was tried by the impassioned lover, and listened to with less reluctance by the too confiding girl; and as she heard the tender reproaches he uttered, and his

reiterated avowals of his increasing illness, caused, as he asserted, by the anxiety that preyed on his mind at her hesitating to elope with him, and marked the growing delicacy of his appearance, her scruples and fears vanished, and, in an evil hour, she left the happy home of her childhood, and the unsuspecting mother who idolised her. A thousand pangs shot through the heart of this innocent and hitherto dutiful daughter, as she prepared to leave the peaceful roof that had sheltered her infancy. She paused at the chamber door of her sleeping parent, and called down blessings on her head, and was only sustained in her resolution to accompany her lover, by the recollection she was to confer happiness—nay, life, on him, and, that a few days would see her return to her mother, the happy wife of Lord Mordaunt.

It is the happiness they believe they are to confer, and not that which they hope to receive, that influences the conduct of women; and many a one has fallen a victim to generous affection, who could have resisted the pleadings of selfishness. At the moment of leaving her home, Mary thought only of others: her lover and her mother occupied all her thoughts, and never, perhaps, did she more truly love that mother, than when unconsciously planting a dagger in her heart, by the step she was about to take. Never let the young and unsuspecting do evil, in order that good may ensue. Mary knew that she was about to do wrong; but she was persuaded by her lover, that it was the only possible means of securing their future happiness; and she yielded to the temptation.

The valet of Lord Mordaunt, who was in the confidence of his master, made all the necessary arrangements for the elopement; and the lovers left the village of Dawlish while the unsuspecting mother and Dr. Erskine soundly slept, unthinking of the rash step the persons so dear to them were taking.

They had only pursued their route one day and night, when the rupture of the blood-vessel in the chest wrought so fearful a change in Lord Mordaunt that he became sensible of his danger, and trembled at the idea of dying before he could bequeath his name to his adored Mary. His whole soul was now bent on fulfilling this duty; but, alas! the very anxiety that preyed on him only rendered its accomplishment more difficult. Still he proceeded, resisting all Mary's entreaties to stop to repose himself, and was within a few stages of his destination;—no post-horses were to be had, and the agonies of disappointed hope were now added to the mortal pangs that shot through the frame of the dying man. He was removed from his carriage and laid on a couch, while the agonised girl bent over him in speechless woe.

"Remember, Sainville," murmured Mordaunt, in broken accents, "that this lady would have been my wife, had life been spared me to reach Gretna. Tell my father and mother that it was I who urged—who forced her to this flight, and to look on her as their daughter."

Here agitation overpowered his feeble frame, and he sunk fainting on his pillow, from whence he never moved again, as death, in

a few hours, closed his mortal sufferings. The hapless Mary stayed by him while a spark of life yet lingered; but when the hand that grasped hers relaxed its hold, she fell in a swoon nearly as cold and rigid as the corpse beside her. For many days a violent fever rendered her insensible to the miseries of her situation. During her delirium she repeatedly called on her mother and lover to save her from some imagined enemy who was forcing her from them, and the mistress of the inn, and the chamber-maids who assisted her, were melted into tears by the pathos of her incoherent complaints.

Intelligence of the death of Lord Mordaunt had been despatched to Mordaunt Castle, the seat of his father, and, in due time, the confidential agent of his lordship, accompanied by a London undertaker, arrived to perform the funeral obsequies.

Youth and a good constitution had enabled Mary to triumph over her malady; and, though reduced to extreme languor, reason once more resumed its empire over her brain; but, with returning consciousness, came the fearful heart-rending recollection of the death-scene she had witnessed, and she shrunk, with morbid distaste, from a life that now no longer offered her a single charm. Her entreaties won from the humane mistress an avowal that the mortal remains of him she had loved were to be removed for interment the following day, and she insisted upon looking at them once again. It was evening, when, pale and attenuated, presenting only the shadow of her former self, Mary Lester, supported by the pitying females who had watched over her illness, entered the chamber of death. Her eyes fell on the marble brow and finely chiselled features of Lord Mordaunt, beautiful even in death, and an involuntary shudder betrayed her feelings. She motioned to be alone, and there was an earnestness and calmness in the looks and gestures that pleaded for this last indulgence, that rendered a compliance with it irresistible. She looked at the face so beloved, every lineament of which was graven in ineffaceable characters on her heart,—that face which never before met her glance without repaying it with one of unutterable tenderness. While she yet gazed in mute despair, and tears, nature's kind relief, were denied to her burning eyes, the last rays of the sun, setting in brilliant splendour, fell on the calm countenance of her lover, tinging its marble paleness with faint red.

"It was thus, Henry, you looked when I last saw the sun's dying beams fall on your beautiful brow," ejaculated the heart-broken girl; "ah, no! for then those lovely eyes, now for ever veiled in death, sought mine with looks of deep, deep love, and silenced the reproaches of the monitor within my breast. But now, O God of mercy! who shall silence it, or who shall speak comfort to me? Look at me once again. Henry, adored Henry! let me once more hear the blessed sound of that voice!" and she paused, as if awaiting the result of her passionate invocation. Then, turning away, "Fool! senseless fool that I am!" she exclaimed, "he heeds me not! he has fled for ever! and I am alone—alone, for evermore—in a

world that can never again hold forth a single illusion to me. O mother! dear, dear mother! and was it for this I deserted you? I thought to return to you a proud and happy bride, and that *he* would plead, successfully plead, for your pardon for my first fault. But there he lies, who should have pleaded, cold and speechless, and I live to see him so lie. Henry! beloved Henry! thy lips have never yet pressed mine; pure and respectful love restrained each ardent impulse, and in thy devoted attachment I found my best shield. But now, now, when thine can no longer return the pressure, O! let me thus imprint the first seal of love!" and she pressed her pale and trembling lips to the cold and rigid ones of Mordaunt, and fainted in the action.

It was long ere the kind exertions of the women, who rushed in from the adjoining room on hearing her fall, could restore animation to the exhausted frame of Mary; and when they succeeded, the first sentences that struck on her ears were the following dialogue between Mr. Sable, the undertaker, and Sainville.

"Je vous dit, dat is I tell you, Monsieur Sable, dat cette demoiselle, dis young lady, vas to be de lady, c'est à dire, l'épouse—de vife of my lord. He cannot tell you so himself, parcequ'il est mort, for he be dead; but I do tell to you vat he did tell to me with his last words."

"Why, you see, Mr. Sainville," replied the obtuse Sable, "I cannot outstep my orders; and the affair has a very awkward appearance, to say the least of it. A portionless young lady, as I understood her to be, eloping with a rich young nobleman of splendid expectations, and in the last stage of consumption—why, look you, it has a very suspicious aspect. The marquis is a very stern and severe nobleman, and the marchioness is as proud as Lucifer; neither would for a moment countenance a young person who had no legitimate claims on their consideration, and whom they would naturally look on as an artful adventuress, who had taken advantage of the weakness and partiality of their son to entrap him into an engagement which, luckily, he did not live to complete. Mr. Scruple, the lawyer, has explained all this to me; and therefore, neither he nor I can interfere in making any arrangements for the return of the young person to her friends; and as to her accompanying the funeral procession to Mordaunt Castle, it is out of the question."

"And dis you call religion and humanity in dis country?" said the angry Sainville; "had my dear young lord lived three hours longer, cette jeune et charmante demoiselle, dat is, dis young lady and pretty lady, would have been Miladi Mordaunt, and Monsieur Scruple and yourself vould have bowed de knees to her with great respect. De marquis and de marchioness must den have treated her as la veuve—de vidow of deir son, and all homage and honours vould be given to her; but now dat she vants everyting, you give her notings, and my dear dead lord's last words go for noting at all,

except with me; but I will not desert her who was so loved by my dear lost master. I will attend her to her home."

Here a burst of tears interrupted the angry tirade of poor Sainville, who only *felt*, while Sable reasoned. But what were the feelings of Mary at this coarse *exposé* of her position! She was ready to sink into the earth; and, for a moment forgetting how useless was the measure, she ran to the bed where lay the inanimate corpse of *him* who once would have shielded her from even the approach of the semblance of insult, and throwing herself on the lifeless body, called on Henry, her dear Henry, to protect and save her, and to vindicate her suspected purity.

A return of fever and delirium kept the unfortunate Mary many days on the brink of the grave, and those around her thought that each hour must terminate at once her life and sufferings. When consciousness again returned to her, she found that Sainville, the faithful servant of Lord Mordaunt, having performed the last melancholy duties to the mortal remains of his loved master, had returned to offer his services to conduct her to her mother. She thankfully accepted them; and when able to bear the motion of a carriage, Sainville, having secured the attendance of one of the women who had nursed her in her illness, placed her, propped by pillows, in the most comfortable chaise he could procure, and slowly retraced the route they had so lately pursued under such different circumstances. Mary's agonised thoughts dwelt on the sad contrast of the only two journeys she had ever taken, and were only drawn for moments from the lover she had lost, to the mother she was going to meet. "If I can only reach her arms, lay my throbbing head on her bosom and die, I have nothing left to desire," thought the heart-stricken girl. But her cup of bitterness was not yet quite filled to the brim, though she believed it was overflowing. Arrived at Dawlish, she observed an unusual silence in the streets through which the carriage passed: Sainville being recognised, many persons approached him, and, waving their heads, observed, "You have come too late—it is all over—the funeral took place an hour ago."

Mary heard no more; she was borne senseless into the desolate home, where no fond mother waited to receive her; for she who would have taken her to her heart had that day been laid in the grave. The shock which the elopement of her daughter occasioned Mrs. Lester brought on a paralytic seizure, from which she was but slowly recovering, when a harsh letter, filled with the bitterest reproaches and most unfounded accusations from the Marquis of Deloraine, the father of Lord Mordaunt, caused a fresh attack, which in a few hours terminated her existence. This letter was written during the first violence of grief, on hearing of the death of an only son, the last hope of an ancient house. He attributed that death to the fatigues of the hurried journey to Scotland, which fatal step the proud marquis unjustly accused the mother of abetting. He branded the unhappy Mary with epithets that struck daggers into her mother's breast, and brought on a return of her malady,

which ended in death. By the imprudence of the old female servant, this harrowing letter was given to Mary. She read every word, while cold tremors shook her exhausted frame; and having laid the letter on her heart, closed her eyes, as if overcome with fatigue; and it was not until some hours after, that the old attendant found that the slumber was the sleep of death—expiating with her life her first and last error.

ISOTTA GRIMANI.

A VENETIAN STORY.

“ Venice, proud city, based upon the sea,
 A marvel of man’s enterprise and power;
 Glorious even in thy ruin, who can gaze
 On thee, and not bethink them of the past
 When thou didst rise as by magician’s wand,
 On the blue waters like a mirror spread,
 Reflecting temples, palaces, and domes,
 In many lengthened shadows o’er the deep?
 They who first reared thee, little deemed, I ween,
 That thou, their refuge won from out the sea,
 (When despotism drove them from the land)
 Should bend and fall by that same cold stern thrall,
 That exiled them, here to erect a home,
 Where freedom might their children’s birthright be,
 Wealth, and its offspring Luxury, combined,
 To work thy ruin by Corruption’s means,
 How art thou fallen from thine high estate,
 The Rome of ocean, visited like her,
 By pilgrims journeying from their distant lands,
 To view what yet remains to vouch the past,
 When thou wert glorious as the seven crowned hills,
 Ere yet barbarian hordes had wrought their doom.
 Here Commerce flourished, pouring riches in,
 With floating Argosies from distant ports;
 And paying with a lavish hand for Art,
 That still lends glory, Venice, to thy walls!
 Here came the trophies of thy prowess, too,
 The steeds, Lysippus, that thy chisel wrought.
 Along thy waters, lined by palaces
 (Rich, and fantastic, as the poet’s dream),
 Are mingled minarets, fretted domes, and spires,
 Of rarest sculpture, that appear to float
 Gently away upon their liquid base.
 Nor doth this seem more wondrous than all else
 That meets my gaze where all things seem untrue;
 As if Romance a fitting home had found,
 To people with creations of the brain.”

“ THIS, signor, is the Palazzo Grimani,” said the *cicerone*, as we stepped from our gondola on a marble staircase, nearly covered with a green and glutinous substance, the sediment of the impure water of the canal, which was not only offensive to our olfactory nerves, but dangerously slippery.

A loud ring of the bell summoned the *custode*, whose eyes twinkled with pleasure in anticipation of the *buonamano*, for which his accustomed palm already felt impatient. Having opened the ponderous doors which creaked on their rusted hinges, and unclosed the massive shutters that excluded the light and air, he donned a faded livery-coat, that looked as if coeval with the palazzo itself, and after many respectful salutations to me, and familiar ones to my guide, conducted us from the large and gloomy entrance-hall, where he armed himself with a huge bunch of keys, to the grand suite of apartments. The interiors of Venetian palaces bear a striking resemblance to each other. Each contains nearly the same number of saloons, hung with leather stamped with faded gold or silver, tapestry, velvets, and silks, crowned by ceilings, whose gorgeousness makes the eyes ache. Each apartment has the usual number of exquisitely-painted and gilded doors, with architraves of the rarest alabasters and marbles, and most of them have small chambers, peculiar to Venetian houses, projecting from a large one, over the canal, offering something between an ancient oratory and modern boudoir, and affording a delicious retreat for a *siesta*, a book, or the enjoyment of that not less admired Italian luxury, the *dolce far niente*, which none but Creoles and Italians know how to enjoy. It is not the fine carvings, the massive and splendid furniture, the rare hangings, nor the gorgeous ceilings, on which the eye loves to dwell in those once magnificent, and now, alas! fast-decaying edifices. No! though they claim the tribute of a passing gaze, we fix on the glorious pictures, the triumphs of Genius and Art, in which the great and the beautiful still live on canvas, to immortalise the master hands that gave them to posterity.

Having stopped more than the usual time allotted to travellers, in silent wonder and admiration, before the golden-tinted *chef-d'œuvre* of Giorgione, whose pencil seems to have been dipped in sunbeams, so glowing are the hues it has infused; and having loitered, unwilling to depart, before the ripe and mellow treasures of Titian, in whose portraits, the pure and eloquent blood seems still to speak, I was at last preparing to quit the palace, intending to reserve for another day the pictures of Tintoretto, Bassano, and Paolo Veronese, whose velvets and satins attracted my admiration more than the finest specimens of those materials ever produced by Lyonesse, Genoese, or English loom, when my eyes and steps were arrested by a picture from the pencil of the Veronese, more beautiful than any that I had yet seen. It portrayed a young and lovely lady, in a rich Venetian dress, with a countenance of such exceeding expression, that it fascinated my attention.

"That portrait, signor, attracts the admiration of your countrymen, more than any other in this fine collection," said the *custode*, observing the interest it had excited. "It represents the only child of the great Grimani, and was painted by Paolo, soon after he returned from Rome, where he went in the suite of her noble father, who was ambassador at the papal court. Yes, signor,"

continued the *custode*, drawing himself up proudly, "it was in this very palazzo that Paolo Cagiari, then lately arrived, poor and unfriended, from Verona, was taken under the protection of Grimani, and beheld those *cenae*, whose gorgeousness he has immortalised, rendering the suppers of Paolo Veronese more celebrated than the famed ones of the luxurious Lucullus."

The *custode* betrayed not a little self-complacency at this display of his erudition; and my *cicerone*, while he whispered to me that Jacopo Zuccarelli passed for a very learned man, seemed not a little vain of his compatriot.

"The signora must have been singularly beautiful," remarked I to Jacopo; "but an air of deep melancholy pervades the countenance."

"Yes, signor, and great cause had the ill-fated lady for grief," and he sighed deeply.

"Family secrets cease to be such, after the lapse of centuries, Signor Jacopo," said I; "and if not trespassing too much on your time, I should much like to hear the history of the original of that beautiful portrait before us."

"It is a long story, signor," muttered Jacopo, shaking his head, and pulling from his waistcoat-pocket a large old silver watch, that looked as if it were one of the first made by Peter Hele, and which he regarded in a way that indicated rather an unwillingness to gratify my curiosity. The chink of a purse which I drew from mine, and the electrifying touch of a piece of gold, which I placed in his hand, quickly overcame his reluctance, and having expressed his desire that his communication should be made to me *alone*, I dismissed my *cicerone*, who seemed offended at the exclusion.

"Yes, yes, I warrant me, signor, Leonardi is sadly vexed because I would not let him listen to my story, that he might himself tell it to every *forestière* who may come to see this palace, and so take the bread from my mouth: that is the way with them all, a grasping and avaricious race! The story, signor, is as much my exclusive property as is the right of showing the pictures; and these are not times, the saints know, to yield up to another one of the sole means left me for earning a scanty subsistence. *Poverta non è vizio*, Heaven be thanked! else were many culpable. Besides, signor, I could not bear to have the history of a descendant of this noble house mutilated by vulgar lips, and profaned by obscene commentaries. How could such a person as Leonardi comprehend the feelings, or do justice to the motives of a scion of the Grimani stock? No, signor, it requires not only learning, but some similarity of sentiment with the noble, to execute befittingly such a task as this!"

Jacopo drew himself up, and looked so self-complacent, that I feared he would forget the heroine of his promised tale, in his more vivid interest for her biographer. Some little symptom of impatience was, I fear, but too visible in my countenance, for he apologised for his digression, which he said had been solely occa-

sioned by the evident curiosity of the artful and grasping *cicerone*.

“Well, signor, to begin my story, the Lady Isotta Grimani, whose portrait is before us, was considered the most beautiful of all the ladies in Venice in her day; yet though nobody contested this fact, none of the young Venetian nobles were so deeply penetrated by it as Rodrigo Manfredoni, a descendant of one of the oldest families we can boast. This same Rodrigo Manfredoni was esteemed the handsomest man in Venice, and so far surpassed the other young nobles, that it might well be said of him, ‘*Natura lo fece è poi ruppe la stampa.*’ His fortune was unhappily not only unequal to support the dignity of his name, but, alas! insufficient to supply the wants of even a private gentleman.

“This poverty had been entailed on him by the prodigality of his ancestors, and compelled him to dwell in a palace, crumbling fast to decay, surrounded with every badge of the ancient splendour of his house: thus reminding him, with increased bitterness, of its fallen fortunes. He felt his poverty, signor; as only a proud spirit feels it,—it made him still prouder; and this drew on him the dislike and sarcasms of his unimpoverished but less noble contemporaries, which though not displayed in his presence—for his was not a temper to have borne even the semblance of an indignity—were freely exhibited in his absence. The consciousness of his poverty haunted him like a dark shadow, forbidding present enjoyment, and precluding future hope. But if his pride stood between him and those who would have willingly extended their friendship to him, it also saved him from much humiliation. Why did it not preserve him from love?

“Rodrigo Manfredoni, while yet in the flower of manhood, led a life of great seclusion, passing whole days in poring over the mildewed and musty *tomes*, with which the vast library in his palazzo was stored; forgetting, in reflecting on the past, the mortifications of the actual present.

“Well can I, signor, understand the tranquil pleasure of such a life, for I have pursued it for years. Yes, great is the luxury of living in the past, when the present and the future are clouded. It is a consolation, signor, to converse with the great and wise of antiquity, who give us their best thoughts, when the weak and worldly-minded moderns give us but words, and those not worth remembering.”

After this sally, a pause of self-gratulation ensued: finding himself, however, unsupported by a respondent admiration from me, Jacopo shortly resumed.

“Rodrigo mixed rarely in society; and when in it, the cold dignity of his bearing, and the ceremonious reserve of his manners, repelled all approaches to familiarity.

“‘As proud as Lucifer,’ was the phrase generally applied to him when he was the subject, as not unfrequently happened, of animadversion; ‘and handsome as a fallen angel too!’ would some-

fair dame murmur, as her eye glanced on his noble countenance and stately figure.

“At a grand *fête* given to celebrate the sixteenth anniversary of the birth of the Lady Isotta, all the nobles of Venice were assembled in this palace, and amongst them came Il Conte Manfredoni. It was the first time that the Lady Isotta had been seen, except in the privacy of the domestic circle; but the fame of her rare beauty had gone forth, and all were anxious to judge if it had been exaggerated. The ladies were strongly disposed to think that her charms had been over-praised; the young nobles, on the contrary, were sure that more than justice had not been rendered them, and the old ones were content with the knowledge that whatever doubt might exist as to her present attractions, none could be offered as to the vast wealth of her father, whose sole heiress she was.

“But though the guests at the palace were prepared to see beauty of no common order, they were astonished at the surpassing loveliness of the Lady Isotta. All eyes were fixed on her, while hers fell beneath the passionate glances they encountered at every side; but not until they had met the deep gaze of Rodrigo Manfredoni,—a gaze whose soul-beaming expression sent the bright blood mantling to her delicate cheek,—did she derive any satisfaction from the admiration she excited; while he stood as if rooted to the spot, unable to remove his eyes from her faultless face. When the Lady Isotta lifted her snowy eyelids again, the same deep, passionate gaze encountered her timid glance; and neither ever forgot the look they then exchanged.

“Yes, signor, however you cold inhabitants of the chilly north may doubt it, there is such a thing as love at first sight, and this story proves it, for *in un batter d'occhio*, their hearts were gone.

“When the *cena*, which in those days always crowned a *fête*, was announced, the young Isotta's heart palpitated with the hope that the only cavalier on whom her eyes had rested for a moment, would approach to lead her to the banquet, and involuntarily she looked towards him. Again their eyes met, though he was retiring from the apartment, and had at the moment turned to bestow a parting glance on the beautiful being whose image was already stamped on his heart.

“That glance, signor, was like the dart the Parthians let fly when retreating—it took a sure and fatal aim; and from that moment every thought, every feeling of the young Isotta, was absorbed by the stately and handsome stranger.

“‘Where is Manfredoni?’ demanded Grimani, looking round. ‘Will he not, on so joyous an occasion as the present, break through his general habits of austerity, and partake our festivity? He surely will not depart without pledging a bumper of ruby wine to the health of the heiress of our house?’

“‘His excellency has left the palace,’ replied the *major domo*—and a smile was exchanged by many of the guests around—a smile that passed not unheeded by the fair mistress of the *fête*.

“ ‘Yes, he is proud as Lucifer,’ was the rejoinder to a remark made by one of a group near her.

“ ‘And of what,’ asked a young noble, with a sneer, ‘except it be of his poverty?’

“ ‘That,’ replied another, ‘would be a curious cause for pride—(the speaker was a rich man).

“ ‘And yet,’ said a distinguished-looking cavalier, ‘when a man is the last descendant of so ancient a house as Manfredoni’s, without the means of supporting its pristine splendour, he may well be pardoned the pride that induces him to decline partaking hospitalities he cannot return.’

“ Isotta felt an instantaneous predilection in favour of the last speaker; and Manfredoni, with his noble air, and high and pale brow, round which clustered short and profuse curls, dark as the raven’s wing, seemed invested with new attractions, now that she learnt that he was proud and poor—a union of qualities that, however uncongenial to the worldly natures of men, seldom fails to excite interest in the generous minds of women.

“ ‘His house is ancient enough, heaven knows,’ said a former speaker; ‘so ancient that it must soon crumble to pieces over its master’s head, unless he can find some rich heiress to act as a Caryatide, and prop it up, or that he turn his vast store of erudition to a profitable account by discovering the philosopher’s verb stone—which no one has a better chance of finding, if the old proverb be true, that *la poverta e la madre di tutti l’arti*.’

“ How Isotta shrunk with disgust from this sneer, and turned from the splendour and gaiety around her to dwell on the image of Manfredoni, with his deep melancholy eyes—those eyes that had encountered hers with a glance of such passionate tenderness. She painted him to her imagination, retiring from the gilded illuminated saloons of her home, to the dark and cheerless chambers of his ruined palace, and a tear dimmed her eye at the picture her fancy formed.

“ The *fête* ended, and the guests retired; the Lady Isotta sought her sleeping-room with feelings as new as they were overpowering. Love had entered her youthful breast in the guise of pity—one of the most irresistible the sly archer can assume to win woman’s heart. She turned with distaste from the costly elegance of every object that met her gaze, because they formed a painful contrast with the ruined home of him she already loved—that home whose cheerless desolation her fancy had but too faithfully portrayed. Her attendant, who was no other than her nurse, who had never left her since her birth, struck with the pensiveness of her countenance, inquired with anxiety if she were ill?

“ ‘No, *cara Beatrice*, only fatigued with all the noise and glare,’ and she sunk languidly on a low couch near the window. ‘Extinguish all the lights save one, and veil that; for all this gilding, and the glowing colours of the hangings, oppress me by their brightness.’

“ ‘Did you not tell me, *Beatrice mia,*’ asked Isotta, eagerly, after a moment’s pause, ‘that, before you came to this palace, you had dwelt with the Manfredoni?’

“ ‘Yes, *carissima signorina,*’ replied the nurse; ‘I have told you often of the happy days I spent in that noble family, so often, that I thought, that is I feared, you were weary of hearing the name, you looked so coldly indifferent when I repeated it; but why, *cara signora,* do you ask me now?’

“Ere the Lady Isotta could reply, the sound of a guitar was heard from a gondola beneath the balcony. She made a sign to have the casement opened, and her nurse had no sooner done so, than she exclaimed—

“ ‘Surely I know that voice?’ and, on looking again, Beatrice discovered in him who touched the instrument with a master’s hand, no other than Il Conte Rodrigo Manfredoni.

“Now was the cause of her youthful lady’s question explained; but if any doubt remained, it was removed by the song that followed the first prelude.

SONG.

Doth slumber veil thine eyes of light,
That shine like stars in dewy night;
Or dwell they on the moonlit sea,
Whence glides my gondola to thee?

Each gentle breeze that murmurs by,
Seems perfumed by thy balmy sigh:
They stole their fragrance from thy lip,
As bees from flow’rets, sweetness sip.

Thine eyes, but thrice mine own have met,
But oh! their softness thrills me yet,
As woman’s glance ne’er thrilled before,
Waking this heart to hope once more.

Sleep on—but be thy dreams of me,
For in thy slumber I would be
Thy thought, as thou for ever art
Enshrined within this burning heart.

Still o’er thy couch may angels keep
Their watch, to guard thee while in sleep,
And mayst thou wake refreshed and bright,
As opening roses meet the light.

Oh! couldst *thou* dream, how in my soul,
That ne’er till now knew Love’s control,
Thy glance has chased away despair,
And filled its place with visions fair!

“Isotta sat covered with blushes, her eyes cast down, lest their dewy radiance should disclose how truly every note of the melodious voice she had listened to, touched an answering chord in her heart, and her maidenly reserve alarmed lest her nurse should discover how deeply she participated the feeling expressed by the singer.

“Beatrice sighed deeply as she bade her lady good night; but the fair Isotta was too much engrossed by the new and delicious

emotions which occupied her breast, to observe the unusual pensiveness of her affectionate attendant, who, with the prescience of age, already foresaw the danger that menaced the peace of the heiress of Grimani.

“The gondola disappeared, and the signora sought her pillow, to dream of love, as only pure minds and noble natures dream, ere experience has dimmed the brightness that youth sheds upon all around it.

“Night after night, might the same gondola be seen beneath that balcony, and the same liquidly harmonious voice be heard floating from it; but no longer were the notes tremulous from timidity, as on the first serenade; for now he who sung was assured of the answering affection of the lady of his love. The nurse, won over to their interest by her attachment to the lovers, had consented to be the medium of correspondence between them, and no day passed without bringing an interchange of letters, in which the passionate feelings of both were poured forth with all the genuine fervency that a first love, and in the sunny South, can dictate. Those were happy days, signor, and they felt them to be so; but when was bliss found to be of long duration? I have read that happiness resembleth the bird of Paradise, which, though often in view, never lights upon the earth.

“And now a vague rumour reached the nurse, that the hand of the Lady Isotta was promised to Il Conte Barbarigo, a young nobleman of immense possessions, but of a stern and coarse mind, in short, the very reverse of the noble Manfredoni. Too soon was this rumour confirmed by Grimani announcing to his gentle daughter that in a few days she was to become the bride of Barbarigo.

“Overpowered by the suddenness of the blow that threatened to prove fatal to her peace, she nearly fainted, and her father having left her to the care of her faithful nurse, retired without suspecting that aught save maidenly reserve and surprise, had produced the agitation and deep emotion he had witnessed. Into the sympathising bosom of Beatrice were poured all the sorrows of the Lady Isotta; anxiously did both anticipate the nocturnal visit of Manfredoni, that he might be consulted on the course to be adopted.

“At the accustomed hour his gondola was moored beneath the balcony, and the following song thrilled on the ear and heart of her to whom it was addressed, the elasticity of spirit it breathed forming a sad contrast to the gloomy presentiment that filled her breast.

SONG.

Love can waken hope
In hearts where long it slept!
Love can make joy beam
In eyes that long have wept,

Love can make all bright,
That clouded was before;
'Tis life's purest gift,
And Heaven can grant no more.

Fortune, now I scorn
Thy persecuting hate,
For on Love alone
Depends Rodrigo's fate.

"How did the happy security of her lover, as indicated in his song, add poignancy to the depressed feelings of his lovely mistress.

"A letter detailing the announcement made to her by her father, and which she had spent the last hour in writing, was thrown with the accustomed *bouquet* of flowers into the gondola, which she saw float away, with a heaviness of heart, to which she had hitherto been a stranger.

"At an early hour the next morning, the nurse betook herself to the Palazzo Manfredoni, and as she passed through its vast chambers, and contemplated its faded splendour, she sighed at the cheerless prospects of her young lady, to whom no alternative was left but poverty and love, or splendour without affection. Yet still the faithful nurse had enough of the woman left in her heart, though it was chilled by age, to be quite sure that the Lady Isotta would be happier in the ruined palace of Manfredoni with him for her wedded lord than in the magnificent one of Barbarigo, married to its heartless owner.

"Women, signor, all believe in the indestructibility of love, and the necessity of religion; and she is no true woman who doubts the power of either.

"Beatrice found Manfredoni pale and sterner than she had ever previously beheld him, and it was evident from his haggard looks, and discomposed dress, that he had not slept.

"'How fares your lady, good nurse?' asked he.

"'Alas! signor, but sick at heart.'

"'Fool, fool! that I was,' exclaimed Rodrigo, passionately, 'to cast over her young and sunny life the dark cloud that has so long lowered on mine. It was madness! nay, worse, to win her—to share a love so unprosperous as mine must ever be; and yet, selfish maniac that I was, I forgot all the misery in which I was steeped, in the intoxicating happiness of loving and being beloved.'

"'That happiness, *eccellenza*, is still yours,' said the nurse.

"'Call it not happiness, it is misery, Beatrice, situated as I am. What, would you have me transplant the beautiful but delicate flower from the sunny home where it grew and flourishes, to the cold and cheerless spot in which I am forced to dwell? Would you, nurse, who love her, urge me to unite her bright destiny with my dreary one? Is this ruined pile,' and he looked around him with bitterness, 'a suitable home for her who has been cradled in

luxury, and who knows not, even by report, the privations that stern poverty imposes? Behold, good nurse, the fast-decaying walls of my ancestral house, and tell me if loving, nay, adoring Isotta as I do, I could dare condemn her to share such a fate as mine? Would not she, bright and lovely as she is, appear in this gloomy abode like a sunbeam illuminating a prison, or like the flowers she gave me yester evening'—(pointing to the *bouquet*, which was in a vase of rock crystal enriched with precious gems, one of the last wrecks of the costly treasures of art that had appertained to his ancestors)—'sadly out of her natural sphere?'

" 'Woe is me, *eccellenza*, that you thought not of all this, ere you had won her virgin heart,' replied the nurse; 'but now that heart is yours, will not the Lady Isotta be more wretched in splendour without you, than in——.' Beatrice paused.

" 'Poverty with me, you would say,' interrupted Manfredoni, and the colour rose to his very brow.

" 'But, signor, my lord her father loves her dearly; he may relent, and——'

" 'Bestow the richly-dowered heiress of his house on the ruined Manfredoni,' said Rodrigo.

" 'Well, well, signor conte, there would be nothing strange in that; your house is as ancient as his own, and heiresses, as richly endowed as his, have intermarried with your great ancestors. But if he should refuse,' said Beatrice, urged on by her knowledge of the immovable attachment of her mistress, and the misery that must be hers, unless united to Rodrigo, 'why not make her yours secretly before the altar, and so preclude the possibility of her being forced to wed another?'

" Manfredoni turned to her haughtily, and she was awed by the dignity of his aspect, and the sternness of his regard, as he exclaimed, 'You forget that Grimani might consider me rather as the stealer of his heiress, than the passionate lover of his beautiful daughter!'

" 'Can you allow pride to influence you at such a moment, signor?' asked the nurse, reproachfully, 'or can you reflect more on what her father *may think*, than on what she *must feel*? Pride, *eccellenza*, ought to keep people from getting into scrapes, but alas! it seldom does, and woe is me, still more seldom helps to get them out of them.'

" What more the good nurse said, 'twere bootless to repeat, let it suffice to say, that her representations, aided by the passionate love of Manfredoni, conquered his pride, and that she was the bearer of a letter from him to the Lady Isotta, filled with expressions of an affection as true and ardent as ever quickened the pulses of a youthful heart, yet breathing the remorse he felt at urging her to an union, which must expose her to poverty like his. Isotta had no dread of this gaunt spectre which has appalled so many stout hearts, and impelled to so many vile actions. Her notions of it were, like all those of her high station and unbounded wealth, vague and indistinct. They presented only to her imagi-

nation less gorgeous *salons*, fewer domestics, less luxurious repasts, and there was nothing to alarm her in such a prospect; but she thought not of it. She dwelt only on the happiness of being indissolubly united to her dear Rodrigo, and of having him ever—ever, near her. Her father, she was sure, would pardon their stolen nuptials, her first, her sole offence, and would soon learn to love Manfredoni,—how could it be otherwise? But even had she witnessed the dreary reality of her lover's situation, hers was not a mind to have shrunk from partaking of it, or a heart that would have cooled beneath the chilling influence of poverty.

“The generous devotion of Isotta vanquished the last struggles of pride in Rodrigo's breast, and it was agreed that on the ensuing night the nurse should disguise her young lady in the mantilla of her niece, and with her leave the Palazzo Grimani, meet in the next street Manfredoni, who was to conduct them to a church, where a priest would be in attendance to join their hands, and pronounce the nuptial benediction. On the morning of this eventful day, Il Conte Barbarigo was led to the apartment of Isotta, by her father, and presented as her affianced husband. The trembling lady essayed to address her parent, but her timidity overpowered her resolution, the words died on her lips, and he left Barbarigo to plead his own suit, ere she had recovered sufficient self-command to speak. How greatly was her repugnance to her suitor increased when in him she recognised the person who had so unfeelingly and contemptuously commented on the poverty of Manfredoni, the first night that she had ever seen him! He poured forth a rhapsody of compliments to her, and self-gratulations on his own good fortune in having secured a prize which all must desire to possess, and seizing the trembling hand of Isotta, would have pressed his lips on it, had she not instantly and proudly snatched it from his rude grasp, informing him that though his suit was sanctioned by her father, *she* had quite determined on not acceding to it. The surprise with which he heard this declaration was mingled with more of indignation than was befitting a lover to display before the lady to whose affection he aspired; and his tone approached to insolence as he demanded, rather than entreated to know, if he was to attribute her refusal of his addresses to a preference for another, or to a personal dislike to himself. Her natural dignity led her to resent the impertinence of his manner by answering that she considered it quite sufficient to state that she decidedly declined his offer; and so saying, with an air of offended delicacy, she withdrew from the chamber.

“Grimani was nearly as astonished, and quite as vexed as Barbarigo, when the latter recounted to him the unfavourable result of his interview with the Lady Isotta.

“‘Be assured she loves another,’ said the rejected suitor, regarding his image complacently in the mirror opposite to which he had taken his station, ‘otherwise I do not think she could have declined my proposals so decidedly.’

“ ‘ Her loving another is out of the question,’ said Grimani ; ‘ for she has never seen a man except myself and her confessor, since the night of her presentation. I must ascertain the motives of this inexplicable refusal, and I trust the result will prove that she cannot long remain inexorable to your vows.’ ”

“ Grimani hurried to the apartment of his daughter, giving way to the first angry feeling she had ever excited in his breast ; and sternly demanded why she had presumed to act in disobedience to his wishes.

“ The lady Isotta tremblingly avowed her repugnance to Barbarigo, and falling at the feet of her father, confessed that she loved *another*.

“ ‘ How ?—when ?—and where,’ asked the astonished and enraged Grimani, ‘ have you seen any one to love ? tell me instantly, I command you.’ ”

“ The name of Manfredoni had no sooner been pronounced by her faltering tongue, than his rage became ungovernable.

“ ‘ What ! ’ exclaimed he, ‘ would you wed a beggar—one whose palace is crumbling into ruins around him, and only fit for the abode of the foul birds of night ? One whose ungovernable pride and squalid poverty, render him the subject of ridicule among all the nobles ? It is absurd, and excites my choler, to think that a daughter of mine should be so infatuated ; but I shall conquer this obstinacy.’ ”

“ Kindness might have softened the feelings of Isotta, but the contemptuous expressions used by her father aroused a pride and wilfulness hitherto foreign to her nature ; and as he left the apartment, uttering invectives against her and her lover, she rejoiced in the thought, that in a few hours she should be Manfredoni’s bride, and atone to him by her devoted love, for all the slights and injuries poverty had entailed on him. At the appointed hour Isotta, disguised in the habiliments of her nurse’s niece, and with her veil drawn closely over her face, supported by the arm of the faithful Beatrice, stole tremblingly from the home of her childhood ; and being met by Manfredoni, was conducted to church, where a priest joined their hands. Never did Hymen’s bonds unite two more enamoured hearts than Rodrigo’s and Isotta’s, who now pressed each other’s hands, and listened to each other’s voices for the first time. The progress of their love had been so rapid, that no opportunity of meeting had offered at any of the *fêtes* to which both might have been invited, and to enter the Palazzo Grimani clandestinely, thereby compromising the delicacy of her who was dearer to him than life, was never thought of by the honourable and high-minded Rodrigo. But even had such been his desire, his fair mistress would not have consented, nor would the nurse have permitted a step so likely to prove injurious to the unsullied purity of her young charge. Now, however, as the husband of Isotta, he had a right to enter, and the nurse willingly took charge of the ladder of ropes, with which, on leaving the church, the bridegroom

had charged her, and which she was to secure to the balustrade of the balcony, and throw down when his gondola approached.

“It was not without deep reluctance that the married lovers separated on arriving near the Palazzo Grimani, though with the assurance of meeting again in the space of a few brief hours. The nurse had to entreat and chide again and again, yet still those fond hands, that had never before that night been interlaced, were loth to quit the tender grasp that bound them together, and their enraptured ears drank in the new and unaccustomed tones of those delicious voices, that had hitherto only been heard faintly at a distance, now breathing whispers of fervent, happy affection, uttered in all the sincerity and confidence that wedded love can alone bestow.

“The new-made bride and her nurse regained their apartment in safety, the ladder was made fast, the Lady Isotta trembling at the seeming fragility of the rope, and Beatrice reassuring her of its strength. How often and proudly did the bride press to her lips the golden symbol of that union on which the church had so lately bestowed its benediction, and repeat, that *now* not even her father could separate her from her husband. The lady had retired to her couch, and the nurse having heard the gondola approach beneath the balcony, some twenty minutes before the appointed hour, uttered an exclamation at the impatience of love, which had sent Manfredoni so much sooner than she looked for his coming, again entreated her lady not to permit her lord to speak save in the lowest whispers, lest his voice should be heard, withdrew, leaving the nuptial chamber in total darkness, the moment she heard the ladder of ropes fall into the gondola beneath.

“Quickly a step was heard ascending, the casement was closed, and Isotta whispered—

“‘Rodrigo, my love, my lord, my husband! speak to me only in the lowest tones, for we may be overheard. Does not our stolen marriage appear like a dream? It is only this blessed ring that you so lately gave me at the altar that convinces me I am indeed your wife, for ever, and ever yours.’

“Two hours had flown by, when Grimani rushed into his daughter’s chamber, followed by eight armed men, who buried their stilettos deep in the breast of him on whose shoulder the head of Isotta reclined, and whose death-shriek awoke her from slumber.

“The blaze of their torches fell full on the face of the murdered man, in whose scowling lineaments she discovered not the countenance of her husband, but those of the hateful Barbarigo.

* * * * *

“The suspicion that secret meetings had taken place between the lovers had determined Grimani to employ spies to watch the palazzo at night. A conviction that the Lady Isotta’s rejection of his suit had arisen from a preference to another, had induced Barbarigo also to watch, and he did so in person. On the previous night he had seen a gondola approach the balcony of the Grimani alace, had heard the serenade, and observed the lady and her nurse

let drop a letter to the cavalier who was in it, he had tracked the gondola on its return to the Palazzo Manfredoni, and ascertained that it was its master who had thus held a clandestine correspondence with the Lady Isotta. Suspicions the most injurious to her honour flashed on his unworthy mind; yet still the desire to possess her hand, and by that means acquire the immense wealth to which she was heiress, remained in its pristine force. The ensuing night he again approached in his gondola, with the intention of watching the movements of his rival, and of frustrating, if possible, his plans, when seeing the ladder of ropes thrown down, and the light withdrawn, he instantly adopted the fiend-like notion of taking advantage of the discovery he had made, and of thus securing by the most foul means, the prize he sought to possess.

“ Before ascending the balcony, he charged two of his gondoliers, who were, in truth, brayoes in his pay, to intercept any gondola that approached the palazzo, and to silence for ever, with their stilettoes, any cavalier who might occupy it. Too well had his orders been obeyed, for the corse of Manfredoni, pierced by many wounds, was a few days after drawn forth from the canal.

“ Grimani’s spies had discovered that a cavalier had entered the apartment of his daughter by a ladder of ropes; but as he was with the Council of Ten, in the palazzo of the doge, he was not apprised of the circumstance till nearly two hours after it had occurred. Concluding that the nocturnal intruder could be no other than Manfredoni, he determined on taking signal vengeance on him, by getting him shut up in the prison of the inquisition; but when he found his daughter in the arms of him whom he imagined to be her seducer, his vindictive rage knew no bounds, and he ordered the attendants to efface the stain on the honour of his ancient house, by the blood of him who had inflicted it.

“ The piercing shriek with which the Lady Isotta recognised the face of her infamous betrayer, was the last knell of her departing reason. She never showed the slightest symptom of recollection after, except by insisting on being always attired as a bride; a harmless fancy, in which her unhappy father indulged her, and seated on a low ottoman, she would sit for hours gazing on the nuptial ring which still encircled the finger on which Manfredoni had placed it.

“ Beatrice, signor, was the great-grandmother of my father, she related this story so often to her descendants, that one of them, distinguished for that love of literature which marked our family, and which, without vanity, I may say has descended to us from father to son, wrote down the particulars, which I have so many times perused, that I repeat the history *con amore*, as you may have observed, signor, with my own comments thereupon. And by whom could the sad tale be related with greater claims for sympathy than from a descendant of the faithful nurse of its unhappy though lovely heroine?”

MATRIMONY.

"A something light as air—a look,
 A word unkind or wrongly taken—
 Oh! love that tempests never shook,
 A breath, a touch like this hath shaken.
 And ruder words will soon rush in,
 To spread the breach that words begin:
 And eyes forget the gentle ray
 They wore in courtship's smiling day;
 And voices lose the tone that shed
 A tenderness round all they said;
 Till fast declining, one by one,
 The sweetnesses of love are gone,
 And hearts, so lately mingled, seem
 Like broken clouds—or like the stream,
 That smiling left the mountain's brow,
 As though its waters ne'er could sever,
 Yet, ere it reach the plain below,
 Break into floods, that part for ever."

LALLA ROOKIE.

"WE had a very agreeable party to-day, and the Merringtons are really pleasant people. Their *chef* is a good *artiste*, and they always manage to draw around them people who suit each other," said Lord Henry Fitzhardinge to his young and fair wife, as they drove from Lord Merrington's mansion in Grosvenor-square.

Lord Henry Fitzhardinge, be it known to our readers, was just six weeks married; and the said six weeks had passed in a sojourn at the lakes, where a picturesque dwelling on the banks of Windermere had enabled the newly-wedded pair to enjoy all the privacy so much desired during the early days of marriage. This dinner at Lord Merrington's had been the first accepted engagement since their arrival in London, a few days before, and consequently was the first interruption to the *tête-à-tête* repasts to which they had lately been accustomed.

"But you are silent, Emily," resumed he; "did you not think the party an agreeable one?"

"Not particularly so," replied the lady.

"I wonder at that," rejoined Lord Henry, "for you sate next the Marquis of Allerton, who is considered a remarkably pleasant man."

"I am rarely delighted with utter strangers, I confess," resumed Lady Emily; "but this is an old-fashioned peculiarity from which *you* seem to be exempt."

"*Delighted* is a strong expression, Emily, particularly as applied to utter strangers! But now do, like a dear, good girl, tell me what has gone wrong."

So saying, he drew his wife tenderly towards his side, and stooped to impress a kiss on her delicate cheek.—Lady Emily shrank

from his embrace, and turned her head in an opposite direction, a movement that excited the first symptom approaching to displeasure that she had ever caused in the mind of her husband.

Unwilling to indulge in this growing dissatisfaction towards his fair young wife, Lord Henry again addressed her, saying, "Pray, my sweet love, leave off this child's-play, and tell me why you are out of humour."

"Out of humour!" reiterated the lady; "*well*, if you designate unhappiness by the epithet of ill-humour, I had better conceal my feelings altogether."

It was now Lord Henry's turn to echo the words of his wife.

"Unhappiness!" repeated he; "why, Emily, you really surprise, as well as mortify me. In heaven's name, what cause for unhappiness can *you* have?"

By the light of the carriage lamps he now saw an embroidered handkerchief applied to the eyes of his wife, and plainly heard the rising sobs, that heaved the shawl which covered her beautiful bust. Again he wound his arm fondly round her symmetrical waist, and whispered—

"Emily, my own Emily, why do you weep? Indeed, you alarm and distress me."

At this moment the carriage stopped at the door of their mansion in Belgrave-square, which being thrown open, showed the well-lighted vestibule in which were ranged some half-dozen liveried domestics, headed by the *maitre-d'hôtel* and groom of the chambers, formally drawn up to receive their lord and lady. Each and all of the inquisitorial band stole furtive glances at the face of Lady Emily, on which the traces of recent tears were but too visible.

She thought not of the prying eyes that marked her sadness, being engrossed wholly by the feelings that occupied her mind. Not so, however, Lord Henry: *he* observed that the attention of his servants was awakened, and experienced additional dissatisfaction from his apprehension of the comments they were likely to make on their lady's evident emotion.

He offered his arm to assist her to ascend the stairs; but she affected not to see that he did so, and held by the balustrade. The groom of the chambers, who preceded them, had no sooner thrown open the door of her ladyship's dressing-room, than Lady Emily hastily rang the bell for her *femme-de-chambre*; thus precluding the explanation which her mortified lord anxiously sought. The lady sank into a *bergère*, and gave free course to the tears suppressed while ascending to her room; and just as she was sullenly repelling the attempt of Lord Henry to wipe them from her cheek, *Marabout*, her attendant, entered.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!* vat miladi is eel, *n'est-ce pas?* Vill I send for de doctors, de apotecaries, and everybody?"

So saying, the bustling Frenchwoman ran to the toilet-table, and seized a *flacon* of *eau-d'Hongrie*, which she held toward the nostrils of her weeping mistress.

"O, miladi ave the asteriks! I see vell someting make miladi eel, or somebody vex her."

And this discreet conjecture was followed by a suspicious glance towards Lord Henry, who was affectionately holding the little white hand, on the delicate finger of which he had placed the nuptial ring but six fleeting weeks before.

As he looked on the flushed cheeks, down which the tears were streaming from red eyes, he could hardly fancy that the being before him was the lovely creature whom, only a few hours previously, he led forth beaming with health and gaiety; and it must be confessed the change in her appearance, excited more ill-humour than pity in his heart; for candour compels us to declare that, *malgré* all the poets who have prated about the attraction of beauty in tears, we have never seen a single illustration in proof of their assertions on this point, nor met a single husband who did not shrink in distaste from the exhibition.

"What can be the matter with her?" thought Lord Henry. "This is a pleasant commencement of the conjugal scenes that Mortimer used to describe! Well, I thought Emily was exempt from such folly; but all women, it seems, are alike."

Though these unpleasant thoughts passed through his mind, he nevertheless checked the oppressive attentions of the bustling *Marabout*, poured out a glass of water, which he held to the swollen lips of his wife, and applied some *eau-d'Hongrie* to her flushed and throbbing forehead.

During these operations, *Marabout*, deeply mortified, remarked with the acuteness peculiar to her class, and a satisfaction caused by her ill-will towards Lord Henry for having repulsed her troublesome *petits soins*, that her lady evinced a very unusual coldness towards her liege lord.

"Aha!" thought the *soubrette*, "de moon of oney is over; *she* cry, *he* look cross; she not say one vord of all de loaf she say to him at oder time—*tant mieux*, dey make me vexed vid deir too much loaf."

Lord Henry, finding that his presence afforded no relief to the inexplicable chagrin of his wife, at length withdrew to his dressing-room; and, truth to say, never before felt so little impatient to rejoin her. He passed in review all that had occurred at dinner and during the *soirée* at Lord Merrington's; but could discover no cause for the tears he had witnessed. They must have consequently proceeded from ill-humour; yet Emily had been so sweet-tempered ever since their marriage, that he could hardly bring himself to think that without any provocation she could be thus unreasonable. At length, his *toilette de nuit* completed (and he had taken more than thrice the ordinary time employed for the operation), he sought the dressing-room of his wife. Though prepared for bed, she had not dismissed *Marabout*, who stood beside her chair with a mingled look of consternation and pity, as if her lady was in imminent danger.

“Milor, madame is so eel, dat I tink it be very proper to send for one or two doctors.”

“Do, for heaven’s sake, speak, Emily!” said Lord Henry; “are you ill?”

“I shall be better by-and-by,” sobbed the lady; “but do not speak to me, I cannot bear it, indeed I cannot,” and here she wept anew.

“You may go, *Marabout*,” said Lord Henry.

“*Mais, milor, si miladi*——”

“Go,” repeated Lord Henry, impatiently, “your presence is not required.”

The *femme-de-chambre* having withdrawn, Lord Henry once more entreated his wife to acquaint him with the cause of her tears.

“Do not ask me, Henry, I’ll try to forget it; but *indeed* I have been so—wounded, so—wretched, that——,” and a fresh burst of tears interrupted the completion of the sentence.

“But you really must tell me, Emily; why should you have any concealment from me?”

“How strange, how unfeeling, Henry, that you *should* not have guessed! Ah! this proves that there is little of that sympathy between us, that I foolishly fancied existed.”

“Well, I assure you, Emily, however unfeeling it may appear, I cannot even imagine what has distressed you; and as it is growing late, and you have occasion for repose, I entreat you will at once tell me.”

“Can it indeed be possible, Henry, that you were not aware that my agitation proceeded from the attentions, ay, the *marked* attentions you lavished on that odious Lady Allerton, all the time of dinner.”

“*Marked* attentions, Emily! Why I swear that nothing more than the ordinary politeness expected from every man towards the woman he sits next at dinner, was paid by me.”

“Oh! Henry, how *can* you say so? when you know you talked to her all the time; yes, and you laughed with her too, when she was speaking of some book that *she* had read, and that you had read, but of which I don’t know a page; and you were both so much amused at finding your tastes agreed, that neither of you seemed to think of any one else at table. Oh! she is an odious flirt, and I never shall like her, that I shan’t, and so I let her see, when she said she would call on me.”

“Good heavens, Emily! is it possible that you can have been so absurd, as to offend a person who is, in every respect, so desirable an acquaintance—a woman, universally considered to be one of the most *distinguée* in England?”

“And you, Henry, is it possible that you have the courage openly to display your *enticement* for her, *even* to my face? This is too cruel!” and here the tears of Lady Emily flowed afresh.

"You really provoke me, Emily; how *can* you be so foolish as to imagine for a moment, that an idea of paying anything more than common politeness to Lady Allerton, ever entered my head?"

"Do you call it nothing more than common politeness to look in her face each time you addressed her, or that she spoke to you? to offer to pour out water for her with such a softness of manner, as if it were me to whom you were speaking; *me*, whom you have a thousand times sworn that you adore. And all this attention to a person whom you have never seen above half-a-dozen times in your life?"

"Who ever heard of such folly? Emily, Emily, I never expected such absurd weakness from you! What is there more ill-bred, than to avert the eyes from the person with whom one converses? And really as to offering water in a soft tone of voice, I cannot help laughing at such a charge. I cannot conceive any one, with the pretensions to gentlemanlike manner, addressing a woman in any other than a gentle tone."

"There is a vast difference in the modes of looking at, or speaking to people, Henry; and you know it as well as I do, you positively looked with tenderness on that odious woman, whom I shall always hate, and only occasionally glanced towards me; with a provoking smile, too, as if it was quite natural that *she* should be the principal object of your attention at table. I could not swallow a morsel, and felt ready every moment to burst into tears; while that tiresome husband of hers kept boring me with his officious civilities, instead of checking the disgusting levity of his coquetish wife, which he ought to be ashamed to permit."

"What injustice and absurdity! Lady Allerton accused of being a coquette, and guilty of levity! Never was there a charge so wholly unfounded."

"Oh! I see, Lord Henry, you cannot bear to have the least fault found with her. You would have all the world think her as perfect as you do."

"I perceive, Lady Emily, it is useless to persist in my endeavours to pacify your ridiculous suspicions, and therefore I shall abstain from any further explanation."

"You adopt the general mode used by those who cannot justify their conduct. But I am a fool to suffer from your unkindness. I should, like you, forget that I am married, and think only of the person who happens to sit next me; and if I loved you as little as you do me, this would be an easy task; but I—I——" and sobs checked her utterance.

This avowal of love awakened the tenderness of Lord Henry, which, truth to own, had been slumbering during the discussion, sent to sleep by the ruefully-changed aspect of his wife, and this first display of unfounded jealousy. He threw his arms fondly around her, swore that no woman on earth could fascinate his eyes but her; and that he did violence to his inclinations, by showing even the ordinary attentions of society to another.

His appeased wife once more smiled, and lavished on him all the touching demonstrations of tenderness, which are the consolations for the quarrels of married lovers, during the first year of wedlock, before the frequency of domestic jars has impaired the delicate bloom of affection, which, like that on the peach, constitutes one of its chief attractions, and which, when once destroyed, can never be restored.

Strange to say, when Lord Henry and Lady Emily sat at breakfast next morning, and that he looked on her beautiful face, the recollection of its changed aspect the night before, came back to him with a painful emotion; and as he wondered how aught so fair and gentle could have been so angry and disfigured, he breathed a prayer that he might not often be condemned to behold her countenance as it then appeared. Desirous of preventing the recurrence of scenes similar to that of the previous night, he entered into an explanation of the conduct expected in general society; and hinted that any deviation from established usages, on his part, would expose them to ridicule.

“You do not mean to say,” asked Lady Emily, “that men are expected to make love to every flirt to whom they may sit next?”

“Really, Emily, you are very provoking, thus to confound ordinary civilities with those attentions peculiar to affection.”

“And you, Henry, are more than provoking in employing this sophistry to impose on my inexperience.”

With a patience, the exercise of which was very new to Lord Henry, and a tact not generally possessed, he endeavoured to explain the attentions every man was expected to pay to the lady by whom he happened to be placed; and urged that any omission of them would be deemed a solecism in good breeding. Lady Emily listened with sundry symptoms of impatience, while her *caro sposo* touched on those points, and interrupted him by declaring that *she* never could become used to see him paying attention to any woman but herself.

“Let me entreat you, Emily, unless you wish to render us both objects of ridicule to all our acquaintance, conquer these unreasonable fancies, and learn to draw a line of distinction between the civilities which all men are obliged to offer to women in society, and those that are prompted by a decided preference. To have you named as a jealous wife, would be painful and humiliating to me; and better would it be to abandon society altogether, than to subject ourselves to the mockery that always awaits those who expose their weaknesses.”

“But can you heed what a whole set of people, about whom we care nothing, may think?” asked Lady Emily. “One wish of yours, dearest Henry, is of more importance to me, than the opinion of the whole world united! Why should not *my* wishes have an equal influence with you?”

“Explain those wishes, Emily, that I may distinctly compre-

hend them ; for at present, I confess, I do not quite understand your meaning."

" Well, then, my beloved, when we *are* obliged to go into society, or receive at home, I would wish you, when compelled to speak to other women, never to look at them with those dear eyes, just as you do at me when we are alone ; but while speaking to them, to look at me, and never to talk to them on any but the most commonplace and uninteresting topics : never to become animated during the conversation, and never to indulge in those soft and deep tones of voice, to which I cannot bear any woman's ear but mine should listen."

Lord Henry burst into a laugh, which he vainly endeavoured to suppress ; but it found no echo from his wife.

" Would you not also wish me always, Emily, to select the ugliest and oldest woman to sit next."

" Unfortunately, Henry, as the stupid rules of precedence leave no choice, such an arrangement, however desirable it might be, is not practicable ; but as the mode of gratifying my wishes, which I pointed out, is, I hope you will adopt it."

" Now imagine me, my own Emily, seated by a lady at dinner, while you are on the opposite side of the table. An *épergne* obstructs our eyes from encountering without an exertion ; but, in order to satisfy you, I, while addressing a comment on the heat or cold of the day, the dulness of town, or the dust of the park, to my female neighbour, turn round like a machine on a chimney-top, to catch your glance, giving you the *preconcerted* look of tenderness, which if observed by the guests around, would set them all laughing at us."

While uttering these words, Lord Henry enacted the gestures he described, so comically, that Lady Emily was forced to join in his mirth, and they separated for the morning, in perfect good-humour ; but without having come to any definitive understanding as to what Lady Emily *could*, or could *not* patiently bear.

In the street, Lord Henry encountered an old friend and school-fellow, Mr. Sydney, whom he had not seen for some time ; and anxious to present him to Lady Emily, invited him to dine with them *en trio*. When he came home, to escort her on horseback, he mentioned the pleasure he anticipated in making his chosen friend known to her.

" Sydney is an excellent fellow, and I am sure you will like him if only on my account, for he is one of my dearest friends."

Lady Emily looked disconcerted, but said nothing.

" How is this, love ?" asked her husband ; " you do not seem pleased at my having asked Sydney to dinner."

" Why, to say the truth, I had anticipated so much happiness in a *tête-à-tête* with you, Henry, after that large and dull party, yesterday, that I confess I *am* a little disappointed, however amiable your friend may be."

" He is a good-humoured, kind-hearted creature," resumed Lord

Henry. "We travelled all over the Continent together, lived in one house in London, while I was a *garçon*; and, in short, were for many years inseparable."

"Oh, yes! I remember you used to be continually praising him, and wondering whether he would like me," said the lady, with a countenance in which little symptoms of pleasure were visible.

"No, there you wrong me. I could not doubt whether he, whether every one, could resist liking my Emily; and I only hope she will like him; for I confess I should be annoyed, if my wife did not like the man I most esteem."

"I dare say we shall get on very well; only, as I have before told you, I am not given to take fancies to strangers."

Lord Henry felt hurt and mortified at the tone adopted by his wife on this occasion; and the reflection it induced led to a longer silence than usually occurred between them. Lady Emily was the first to break it.

"I suppose, Henry," said she, pettishly, "that your thoughts are so occupied by your friend, that you have none to bestow on your wife?"

"I was thinking, Emily, that I wished my wife evinced a more cordial feeling towards my friend."

Further private conversation was precluded by their being joined by two or three acquaintances, who left them not until they returned from their ride, when it was time to adjourn to dress for dinner.

When Mr. Sydney arrived, Lord Henry led him, with all the unceremonious cordiality of a brother, to Lady Henry.

"Emily has heard me speak of you so often," said he, "that she feels as if you were as old friends as we are."

The formal courtesy, and the top of her gloved fingers which met Mr. Sydney's outstretched hand, ill accorded with this assertion; but Mr. Sydney, though somewhat checked in his friendly advances, attributed the coldness of his reception to the youthful timidity of the fair creature before him, whose exquisite loveliness justified his friend's taste, and disposed Sydney to like her.

"I met Aubrey yesterday," said Mr. Sydney, "and never saw a man so totally changed by wedlock as he is. He seemed afraid to show the pleasure he felt at meeting me, and positively shrank in dismay when I bantered him on some of our former joint follies. I have heard, that when a man weds, it is deemed necessary for him to change his servants, but I was not aware he should change his friends. How strange, that marriage should produce such a metamorphosis! But this is one of the mysteries of that holy state, which a *garçon* never can comprehend. You, I see, my dear fellow, are unchanged: thanks, I suppose, to the amiability of Lady Emily."

Had Mr. Sydney not been so exceedingly short-sighted, one glance at Lady Emily would have rendered him aware of the indiscretion he had committed; but unconscious of the change in her aspect, he continued to talk.

"How long it is, since we last met!" said Mr. Sydney, as soon as the servants having retired allowed a perfect freedom from constraint.

"How frequently did I think of you at Rome and Naples, where we passed such pleasant days together!"

Lady Emily looked displeased; and her husband observing the expression of her countenance, made an effort to turn the subject of conversation.

"I quite long to take Emily to Italy, and show her all our old haunts, Sydney," said he.

"Apropos of our old haunts," observed Mr. Sydney, "whom do you think I met at Albano, when I went there to seek a little fresh air, after having been half broiled by an unusually warm May at Rome? Can you guess?"

"I have not the most remote idea," replied Lord Henry, with a look of such perfect indifference, as indicated he had no curiosity on the subject.

"Well, then, I encountered the bewitching widow, as you used to call her, Mrs. Montagu Clifford, still in a high state of single blessedness, though she had exhibited her white teeth, and sung her Spanish *letrillas* all over Italy. By-the-by, she made kind inquiries after you, though I suspect you hardly merited them."

Lady Emily's cheek grew red, and she gave a glance of anger at her husband, that brought the scene of jealousy of the previous night forcibly to his recollection. Again he endeavoured to direct the conversation to other topics; but his wife observing his effort, far from showing any sense of gratitude, denoted by her angry glances her suspicion that he dreaded some disagreeable disclosure from the loquacity of his friend. She rose to withdraw, and, though affectionately urged by Lord Henry to stay with them a little longer, left the room; saying, she doubted not that they would be glad to have a *tête-à-tête*, to talk over their *agreeable reminiscences* of past times.

Lord Henry was ill at ease, as he remarked the look of displeasure that clouded the countenance of his wife; and the anticipation of another scene of tears, sullenness, or reproaches, haunted his imagination so forcibly, that his friend at length struck, by the air *distrain* with which he listened to him, proposed adjourning to the drawing-room.

Arrived there, they found that Lady Emily had retired to her apartment, leaving a message with the groom of the chambers that a bad headache obliged her to withdraw.

"I must quit you, Sydney, for a short time," said Lord Henry, looking not a little disconcerted, "to go and see Emily; she has not been well of late, and was suffering all the time of dinner."

He sought his wife's dressing-room, not as hitherto, with lover-like steps of impatience, but rather as a culprit who dreads a reproof, though he had no consciousness of having given offence. Few things can be more disagreeable than this same anticipation of a

lecture, or what is still worse, a cold or sullen reception, from a beloved object whom one is anxious to please, yet who takes umbrage at trifles, and resents the imagined offence either by recrimination, silence, or tears. He felt an incipient dread of the time likely to elapse before he could return to his friend; the wearisome efforts to be employed to extract an avowal of the imagined grievance, the protracted chagrin of the grieved, and the necessarily prolonged attempts to console.

As these thoughts passed through his mind, he was almost tempted, *malgré* his sincere affection for his wife, to wish himself once more a bachelor, with all the comfortable independence and irresponsibility attached to the state of single blessedness. He entered the chamber with even more than usual gentleness; but ere he had crossed its threshold, a signal from the self-important *Mara-bout*, indicated the necessity of a more stealthy pace.

"*Milor, miladi est bien souffrante, she have de megrin, de chagrin,*" whispered the *femme-de-chambre*, glancing reproaches all the time she spoke at Lord Henry, who felt a more than ordinary disinclination towards the attendant of his wife, on observing the air of impertinent confidence assumed by her on this occasion.

He approached the *lit de repos*, on which Lady Emily reclined, and seeing that she slept not, he ventured to hope that her indisposition was not of a serious nature.

"I am very poorly," said the lady; "my head aches dreadfully; but pray do not let me detain you from your friend."

"If you really are ill, Emily, can you imagine that I could leave you? The supposition is unkind."

A dead silence followed this remark, broken only by the deep sighs of Lady Emily.

"Had I not better immediately send for medical advice?" asked Lord Henry, affectionately, and he took her hand in his. "There is, however, no symptom of fever in this dear hand," said he, and he pressed it to his lips.

"You surely ought not to leave your friend alone any longer?" said Lady Emily, with an air that denoted her expectation that her husband would reply, "What are all the friends in the world to me when you are indisposed?"

"I will just go to Sydney, send him away," resumed Lord Henry, "and return to you immediately."

"No, really, I cannot permit you to sacrifice the pleasure of Mr. Sydney's society, in which it was previously quite evident you took such delight," said the lady; "for you had neither eyes nor ears for any one else during dinner, and remained so long with him after it, that I considered it not to be unlucky that my illness furnished an excuse for leaving you to enjoy your *tête-à-tête*."

"How can you be so unreasonable—so childish?" asked Lord Henry.

"I think Mr. Sydney might have had the tact to forbear repeating his reminiscences of your bachelor days, and your *bewitching*

widow, in my presence, at least," said Lady Emily; "for it cannot be agreeable to find the epithet bewitching, which I foolishly thought you had never applied to any one but me, has been lavished on a person who, judging even from the mode in which she was named, seems little better than a husband-hunting adventuress."

Lady Emily's cheeks flushed, and her eyes sparkled with animation, if not anger, as she uttered this reproach.

"Good heavens, Emily! how silly, how absurd, thus to take offence where not the slightest was meant to be offered. Do you suppose I could, without compromising your dignity, and leading my friend to believe that you were weak and unreasonable, like too many other women, make him understand that references to my bachelor days are interdicted? Would you not have cause to be offended, if I told him your foolish susceptibility on this point?"

"There could be no necessity for such a measure, Lord Henry, had you, as you ought to have done, explained to your obtuse friend, that you wished to forget all your past life, and to remember events only from the date of our affection."

"Sydney would laugh at me were I to confess anything half so ridiculous," replied Lord Henry.

"Oh! if you attach more importance to Mr. Sydney's opinion than mine, I have nothing more to say," and a cambric handkerchief was applied to the tearful eyes of the lady.

"Emily, Emily, why will you thus trifle with our happiness? What would you have me do to satisfy you? A short time ago, I little doubted that I should ever be compelled to ask the mortifying question, for I believed you were satisfied—were happy. Tell me what are your wishes, for I cannot endure the repetition of scenes such as these."

"I wish," replied the lady, her accents broken by sobs, "that you would avoid all those odious people with whom you lived before you knew me, and thus preclude the chance of my feelings being wounded by their indelicate reminiscences of a time when, as they would fain make me believe, you were gay, amused—nay, Henry—happy, without me; *me*, on whom you have said a thousand times within the last three blissful months, your happiness wholly and solely depended. I cannot, indeed I cannot, dear Henry, bear to hear them refer to your past life, when even the idea that you could have lived without me inflicts torture!"

There was so much tenderness in this sentiment, unreasonable as the wishes of her who uttered it were felt to be by her husband, that the displeasure which her *exigeance* might have produced, was forgotten in the affection which it evinced; and still more softened by the appealing look of the dark, lustrous eyes, fondly fixed on his face, he pressed his lips on her fair brow, and called her his dear, his own Emily.

"I have quite forgotten poor Sydney all this time," said Lord Henry; "I really must go to him."

"Oh! Henry, how can you think of any one but me? Heaven

knows I never bestow a thought on any other human being than you; yet here, even in the moment that I am disposed to forget the chagrin of the last three hours—chagrin that has weighed more heavily on my spirits than I can express—you can remember this tiresome friend of yours, who has caused it all. No, I never *shall*, never *can* be happy, until you break asunder your odious bachelor friendships; forget all your previous life, and learn to think that you have only really, truly, lived since we have known each other."

Lord Henry felt a strong inclination to smile at this romantic notion of his wife, which, however flattering it might be to his vanity, augured ill for his prospect of that good understanding and freedom from constraint, which he thought such essential ingredients in the cup of connubial felicity. But he conquered the disposition to laughter, looked as grave as he could, and having again pressed the delicate little hand held out towards him in a reproving posture, left the room to join Sydney, preparing sundry relations of the illness of Lady Emily as an apology for his protracted absence. Truth to say, he felt not a little abashed at the consciousness of the ridiculous figure he should make while detailing the same apologies to his friend.

"Pshaw!" muttered he, "a bachelor can never understand these sort of conjugal embarrassments; a brother Benedict would divine the whole thing in a moment."

On entering the library, he found it empty; and, though relieved from the necessity of making false excuses, the thought that Sydney would be sure to go to his club and account for his unusually early apparition there, by detailing the sudden illness of his hostess and the absence of his host with his suspicion of the cause.

"I shall be an object of ridicule among the whole club," said he; and this presentiment tended not to smooth his brow, as, with no inconsiderable portion of irritation, he again sought the dressing-room of his wife.

"How kind, dearest Henry, to have dismissed our tormentor, and to have returned to me so soon! How did you get rid of him?"

"He saved me all trouble on that point," replied Lord Henry, with a look that denoted anything but satisfaction, "by taking himself off."

"Oh, I am so glad!" said Lady Emily; "for I anticipated his staying at least half an hour. But you don't look as if you participated in my gladness, Henry! Can it be possible that you prefer his society to mine?"

"I confess, Emily, that I *am* annoyed at his going off without any explanation. Sydney can be sarcastic, and comic too, when he pleases; and his version of my uxoriousness given to our mutual friends at the club, could not fail to draw their quizzical animadversions on us both."

"And this is the man *you* call your friend, Henry? How unlike *my* notions of one!"

"Sydney, nevertheless, has proved himself a very sincere friend on more than one occasion, Emily."

"Yet you believe that he would be capable of turning you into ridicule at the club! This was not the sort of friendship that subsisted between dear Frances Lorimer and me. *She* would not, *could not* breath a word to imply a censure on me. Ah! *ours* was, indeed, a true friendship! Did we not write to each other every day such long, long letters, always cross-lined? Did we not dress in the same colours, wear bracelets of each other's hair, and rings with the same devices, dote on the same poetry, read the same works of fiction, like and dislike the same people? and, in short, assimilate ourselves in dress, sentiments, and pursuits, until each had lost her own identity in that of her friend? And yet, Henry, this friend I have neglected, nay, I have forgotten in the all-engrossing affection you created in my breast, while *you* can attach importance to the opinions of this Mr. Sydney, whom you admit to be capable of giving a sarcastic version of your attachment to your wife!"

"Your inexperience, Emily, unfits you for judging of mundane friendships. Those between men are wholly different from the romantic, exaggerated, and unenduring delusions named friendship by girls in their teens, commenced in the school-room and ended in the honeymoon."

"Mine for dear Frances ended not in the honeymoon, for was it not a sweet occupation, during the first days of our marriage, to write and tell her of my happiness?"

"But our honeymoon is scarcely yet over, Emily, and nevertheless, you confess that you have neglected, nay, forgotten your friend. Now, I wrote no exaggerated accounts of my connubial bliss to Sydney, nor did he expect that I should. Yet our friendship has remained the same ever since we left Eton together; and I confess I should be pained at its being diminished, or broken off, notwithstanding that I acknowledge my belief of his capability of quizzing my conjugal *faiblesse* to our mutual acquaintance at the club."

"Oh, Henry! it is so provoking to hear your worldly-minded sentiments on subjects so sacred as love and friendship!"

"Should you not rather say, Emily, that it is fortunate they are not more exalted, since, as you prohibit the indulgence of the latter as being incompatible with the duties entailed by the former, an adherence to friendship would expose me to your displeasure?"

"You wilfully misunderstand me, Henry—*indeed* you do. No one attaches more value to friendship than I."

"Then why wish to wean me from Sydney?"

"Because he has no feeling, no sympathy, no tact."

"He is not generally accused of being deficient in these qualities, Emily, I assure you."

“And I persist, Henry, in thinking, that if he *really* possessed them, he would not, on the first day he was presented to your wife, refer, in her presence, to your bachelor days and your bewitching widows, because none but an obtuse-minded man could be unconscious that a refined woman, fondly attached to her husband, could be otherwise than deeply pained at such reminiscences.”

Neither parties were convinced by the arguments of the other, nay, more—each considered the other unreasonable. Mutual affection, however, operated as a soother in this their second matrimonial dissension, as effectually as it had done on their first; and like an April sun which quickly dries up the showers that preceded its appearance, soon banished every trace of discontent, and again all was love and peace. But brief was the duration of this halcyon state. A late night in the House of Commons, led to as angry a debate between Lord Henry and Lady Emily as is often witnessed *within* the House; and the disputants stood in as much need of being called to order, as the most animated member who ever incurred and deserved the remonstrance of that much enduring functionary—the Speaker.

Quarrel No. 3 was not so easily adjusted as the former two; for domestic disagreements have this peculiarity, that each succeeding one finds those engaged in them less disposed to make or accept concessions. It were tedious to relate the arguments offered by Lady Emily, to prove that a husband who loves his wife, could not, or at least *ought* not, to attend the House of Commons; and the logical reasoning by which Lord Henry endeavoured to convince her, that he who discharged not his duty to his country, was not capable of being a loving spouse. Arguments, nay, even tears, were found unavailing to convince Lord Henry that his attendance at St. Stephen's was a just cause of unhappiness to his wife. He sternly persisted in his resolution to attend the House of Commons, when any subject of importance was likely to be discussed; and three days, felt to be of interminable length by Lady Emily, rolled over their heads, before a perfect reconciliation was accomplished.

But alas! this estrangement of three days led to a result that furnished cause for future dissension. The consciousness that a cold reception awaited him at home, induced Lord Henry, one night that the House of Commons had adjourned at an earlier hour than ordinary, to yield to the request of some old friends, to drop into their club and sup; and so agreeable did he find his companions, that he returned not to his home until daylight. Poor Lady Emily, who had impatiently counted the many hours of his absence, by the pendule on her table, met him with a face pale as marble, on which the effect of her late vigil and anxiety might be traced in legible characters. Her pallid looks were a reproach that his conscience whispered he had merited; and which might have been more effectual in precluding similar sins on his part, than any other means, had she trusted to them alone. But, unfortunately, she recapitulated all she had endured; the hope that every step

the square, every sound of carriage-wheels, were his ; and the consequent alarm and disappointment that followed the frustration of these hopes. Men are seldom so little disposed to pity the sufferings they have caused, as when conscience tells them they have been in the wrong.

Lord Henry became *ennuyé*, as his *cara sposa* dwelt on the misery of her solitary vigil, and somewhat brusquely remarked, "that it might have been avoided had she more wisely sought her pillow. The house did not adjourn until very late ; he could not get away sooner, and he hoped she would never again sit up for him."

"And this," thought Lady Emily, "is the consolation offered me for my anxiety, and the many hours of wretchedness undergone during this long, long night. Oh, Henry ; who that saw you in our delicious dwelling, by the calm lake of Windermere, whose unruffled surface was not smoother than the current of our lives, and where an hour passed away from me, was counted as an infliction not bearable, could believe that you could thus change !"

The tears stole down her pallid cheek as she made this reflection, and bathed her pillow as she continued to ponder long after her husband had tasted the balm of sleep denied to her.

The next day as they rode through the park, one of his companions of the previous night joined them, and referred to its agreeability.

"We got a very good supper, did we not ?" said he. "No one can prepare a supper like Ude."

Lord Henry positively blushed, as the reproachful eyes of his offended wife were fixed on his face.

"Do you know," continued his friend, who was not *un peu indiscret et bavard*, "that poor Aubrey is not allowed to go to Crockford's, Madame *son épouse* thinking the frequenting of that agreeable club incompatible with the dignified position of a married man. The consequence is, that Aubrey swears he never enters the place, yet contrives to sup there most nights on his way back from the House of Commons, and persuades his wife that he was detained at the house. Every married man now endeavours to secure a seat in parliament, because it furnishes so good an excuse for late hours and absence from home."

Lord Henry looked as embarrassed as he felt, and heartily wished his indiscreet friend a hundred miles off ; while Lady Emily felt as much indignation as grief, at thus discovering that the deception practised by other men, had been indulged in by him whom she believed to have been as incapable of finding pleasure in the haunts of his bachelor days, as of descending to a subterfuge to conceal his renewed attendance there. Trivial as this error of the husband may appear to some of our readers, it aimed the first blow at the confidence of the wife in his veracity—a blow so fatal to conjugal happiness. *He* felt all that was passing in her mind ; and, with the unreasonableness peculiar to selfishness, was more disposed

to resent the censure implied by her looks, than to atone for the cause of it.

He argued in his own mind, that as the duplicity to which he had descended had been instigated by what he called her absurd *exigence*, his practise of it was consequently compulsory. How many men have similarly reasoned, and how many women have provoked the same results by their imprudent expectations, and resentments when such expectations have been disappointed!

Never did a pair, who had only two months worn the chains of Hymen, enter their home with feelings less attuned to love than Lord Henry and Lady Emily. Mutual dissatisfaction pervaded the minds of both; yet, strange to say, this very dissatisfaction owed its bitterness and existence to an ill-regulated affection, which led each to expect in the other that freedom from error, rarely, if ever, accorded to weak mortals.

"I thought him so perfect," said Lady Emily to herself, "so incapable of falsehood. Oh! what a cruel disappointment!"

"How unjust! how absurd!" thought Lord Henry, "to resent as an injury the trifling deception produced by my desire of not giving her pain, which I knew my honest avowal of the supper at Crockford's would have inflicted. Women are the most unreasonable creatures in the world. If one tells them the truth, they pout or weep; and what man can patiently bear either of these feminine habitudes? If one conceals the fact, from the desire of saving them from annoyance, then, forsooth, the poor devil of a husband is, if detected, regarded as a monster of deception and falsehood, and punished for the very error into which a too compassionate disposition led him."

The *tête-à-tête* dinner, anticipated with pleasure by husband and wife, proved more disagreeable to both, than they, a few hours before, had imagined possible. Each dreaded a recurrence to the subject that pained them, yet could think of no other. The evening passed not more pleasantly than the dinner, and was felt by both to be interminable. What a melancholy contrast did it offer to the delicious ones enjoyed in their solitude, when they were all the world to each other!—before *she* had learned to doubt his truth, or he to dread or resent her displeasure.

The announcement that his cabriolet was at the door, was a relief to them. He muttered a few words of his regret at the necessity of leaving her; and, as his lips slightly pressed her cheek, it required no little effort on her part to repress the tears that were ready to bedew them, while she silently and passively received, without returning his caress. It was not thus that they had been wont to part even for an hour. He would fondly loiter, unwilling to tear himself from her presence, and she would as fondly urge his stay. But now—all was changed, and they *felt*, but dared not revert to the alteration. The tears, repressed in his presence, flowed abundantly when Lord Henry left the house. They were the bitterest his wife had ever shed; for they mourned the death of

those young and romantic hopes of happiness, the completion of which are to be found only in the pages of fiction.

While Lady Emily still continued to weep in uncontrollable emotion, the doors of the library were thrown open, and before she could discern who entered, she was fondly pressed in the arms of her sister, Lady Lutterworth. The senior of Lady Emily by three years, and nearly that period a wife, Lady Lutterworth had acquired all the experience which is the inevitable result of a constant intercourse with society. She, too, had, during the first months of her marriage, wept over the destruction of those illusions peculiar to the young and romantic; illusions fated to be dissolved by the sober realities of life—and had learned to value the steady affection of the husband, which supersedes the more animated, but brief devotion of the lover. She had passed through the phases of the honeymoon, and noted the barometer of love, from extreme heat to variable, and found the quicksilver remain steadily fixed at temperate. Nevertheless, though she might sometimes give a sigh to the memory of her departed illusions, she was satisfied, nay, more, was happy in her domestic life. Arrived but late that evening in London, from the Continent, where she had been sojourning during the last two years, she could not repress her impatience to embrace the dear sister she had left budding into beauty when she last beheld her, and had hurried off in a *voiture de remise*, from the Clarendon, as soon as she and her lord had finished the late dinner that awaited their arrival.

“But how is this, dear Emily—you have been weeping?” were the first words uttered by Lady Lutterworth, after having again and again pressed her sister to her heart.

“I’ve been nervous, and somewhat low-spirited,” replied Lady Emily, and the tears streamed afresh from her eyes as she spoke.

“Where is Lord Henry? I long to become acquainted with my new brother,” said Lady Lutterworth.

“He is gone to the House of Commons,” answered Lady Emily.

“Which I dare say you find to be just as plaguy an affair as I used to consider the House of Lords the first year of my marriage, *n’est-ce pas, ma chère petite sœur?* Oh, how well I remember counting the long, dull hours, that I thought interminable, while my lord and master was discharging his senatorial duties, listening to the pungent satire of a Lyndhurst, or the bitter irony of a Brougham. I recollect, too, the heroic courage with which I resisted the attacks of the drowsy god Morpheus, for the praiseworthy purpose of being able to tell Lutterworth what a sleepless wretched night I had passed. I have struck my repeater, when so overpowered by drowsiness as to be almost incapable of counting its silvery sounds, that I might be able to acquaint my *caro sposo* how many, many hours I had counted. And then how offended, how angry I used to feel, when he has said, ‘Why not go to sleep,

Louisa? You would then have been unconscious of the tardy flight of time, and I see you can hardly keep your eyes open.' I *did* learn wisdom, *did* go to sleep, and acquired sufficient philosophy to be amused the morning after a late debate, in listening to a *résumé* of it from Frederick, instead of looking, if not uttering reproaches for his having occasioned me such long vigils."

"But where is Lord Lutterworth?" inquired Lady Emily.

"Indulging in a most comfortable *siesta*, in a chair which he has pronounced to be perfect for such indulgence," replied Lady Lutterworth. "He will then visit his club, hear the *on-dits*, and become *au fait* of all that is passing in London, which will be retailed and detailed to me at *déjeuner* to-morrow."

"And does he indulge in these *siestas* in your presence?" demanded Lady Emily, her brow elevated into an angular curve, indicative of displeasure and surprise.

"Does he *not*!" answered Lady Lutterworth. "Yes, my dear little sister, *et sans cérémonie, sans peur, et sans reproche.*"

"And *you* suffer it?" asked Lady Emily.

"Ay, more; arrange the pillow, and make as little noise as possible, lest I interrupt his slumber," answered Lady Lutterworth.

"But surely, sister, this is very undignified! We ought not to forego those attentions, those *petits soins*, to which we are entitled, and which form the *agrémens* of wedded life."

"Yes, Emily, during the honeymoon, perhaps; but be assured that the sooner a wife resigns these *petits soins* only voluntarily paid while she is yet a bride, the better will it be for her future happiness. Let her *receive* with pleasure every demonstration of her husband's affection, without ever *exact*ing a single one. Let her ever welcome him with smiles, and conceal the tears his absence costs her. *If he will* sleep, and husbands have all a peculiar tendency to court 'tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,' is it not wiser to insure his gratitude, by administering all gentle appliances to render his slumbers agreeable, than to resent, though unable to prevent, the indulgence."

"But then, sister, we are so loved, so adored, during courtship, and the early days of marriage, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to bring ourselves to be content with the common-place civilities into which husbands allow their attentions to degenerate when the honeymoon is over."

"Wo to her, Emily, who cannot soon and cheerfully submit to be content with such! It is the false notions engendered during the days of courtship and the honeymoon, that lay the foundation for many, if not all the dissensions that too frequently embitter married life. Men, the lords of the creation, forego their prerogatives, when they stoop to sue and propitiate those whom they believe themselves born to protect, if not to command. The object attained, for which this sacrifice was offered, they quickly resume their natural and ill-concealed sense of superiority, and begin to

treat her whom they seemed to consider a goddess, as a creature sent into the world to contribute to their wants and wishes. A deposed monarch, driven from the throne where he commanded universal homage from his subjects, is not placed in a more false position, by expecting similar demonstrations of respect in exile, than a wife is, who exacts in the staid and unromantic position of a matron, the devoted attentions offered to her during the illusive hours of courtship and the first bridal days. Let, then, both the deposed sovereigns resign with 'decent dignity' the homage they can no longer command, and they will best insure that continued regard which, though more homely, is not less precious."

The words of Lady Lutterworth made a deep impression on the mind of her fair young sister, who, the moment that lady retired, sought her pillow; and though a few natural tears dewed her cheeks, as she resigned the sweet but delusive hopes of youth and romance, which led her to imagine that the husband would ever continue the lover, she went to sleep with the firm resolve of seeking content, and of conferring happiness in the discharge of her duties.

When Lord Henry returned from the House of Commons—and this night he did so without dropping in at his club—he found his fair young wife asleep, her cheeks still retaining the traces of recent tears. There was something peculiarly touching in the sight of that beautiful and youthful face, thus marked with sorrow, though under the blessed influence of sleep. The rich crimson lips still quivered, and broken sobs escaped them, like those of a slumbering child who had wept itself to unconsciousness; and a tear still trembled beneath the long silken lash that shaded the fair and delicate cheek.

Lord Henry stood in mute admiration, regarding the lovely object before him, and felt all the lover's enthusiasm and husband's tenderness revive in his heart from the contemplation. His own name, uttered in the softest tone of affection, stole from the lips of the sleeper, and was followed by a sigh so deep as to agitate the snowy drapery that shrouded her finely-formed bust. That sigh appealed more powerfully to his feelings, than the most eloquent speech could have done; and he reproached himself severely for having caused it.

"Poor, dear Emily!" thought he, "even in her dreams I am remembered. And I can be so unfeeling as to blame her disappointment at finding me so much less faultless than she expected! So pure a mind as hers cannot be expected to make allowance for the breach of veracity she has discovered, where she thought all was truth! And I, like a brute, could be angry, instead of endeavouring to soothe her wounded feelings!"

These salutary reflections produced a happy result. The morrow's sun shone on the reconciliation of Lord Henry and Lady Emily. He acknowledged the error into which a desire to avoid displeasing her had hurried him; he explained the sacrifices

entailed by the conventional usages of fashionable life ; the necessity of occasionally submitting to them ; the expediency of a wife's cheerfully yielding to these unavoidable interruptions to domestic bliss ; and by a perfect confidence in her husband, and a freedom from exacting a monopoly of his attentions, only practicable in the solitude of their country-seat, exempting him from the painful necessity of concealment or prevarication.

The tenderness with which his advice was bestowed, insured its adoption. From that day forth Lady Emily learned to bear seeing her husband behave with the courtesy practised by every well-bred man towards women, without feeling any jealousy ; submitted without uneasiness to his frequently engaging his old friends to dinner, nay, could smile at the mention of the "bewitching widow," and hear of his occasionally supping at his club without being made unhappy.

A letter despatched a few days after to her dear friend, Lady Frances Lorimer, in answer to one from that young lady announcing her approaching nuptials, contained such excellent advice on the danger of young wives exacting attentions only paid during the days of courtship, that it had the best effect on that lady. This judicious counsel considerably lowered the exaggerated and romantic expectations she had previously indulged of the unbroken felicity of wedded lovers, and saved the husband of Lady Frances from the scenes of domestic chagrin that had clouded the conjugal happiness of Lord Henry and Lady Emily Fitzhardinge, during their first entrance as a wedded pair into fashionable life in London.

THE GAMESTERS.

A FRENCH STORY.

" Let no man trust the first false step of guilt,
It hangs upon a precipice,
Whose steep descent in last perdition ends."

" Such is the fate of guilt, to make slaves tools,
And then to make 'em masters by our secrets."

MADAME DE TOURNAVILLE was left a widow at an early age, with an only child, a daughter of ten years old, whose beauty and docility were as remarkable as a certain nervous temperament, that gave to her a shyness and timidity which checked the playful gaiety of childhood, and rendered her susceptible of fear on the slightest occasions.

The long illness of her husband, and the confinement and anxiety it entailed, followed by her deep grief at his death, had so impaired the naturally delicate health of Madame de Tournaville, that in a few months she followed him to the tomb ; leaving her daughter, with a large fortune, to the guardianship of a relation, the Comte

de Breteul, who had been for many years the intimate friend of Monsieur de Tournaville, and the adviser of his widow during the few months that she survived him.

The Comte de Breteul was a widower with a son and daughter, both senior to Matilde de Tournaville by six or seven years. The young De Breteul was in the army, where he had already distinguished himself, and Louise his sister had but lately returned from the *pension* where she had been educated, to preside over the establishment in the paternal mansion. Louise de Breteul was beautiful, gentle, amiable, and accomplished, with a steadiness and decorum remarkable for her years; and with manners whose suavity never failed to conciliate the good opinion of those who had opportunities of knowing her. She soon acquired the devoted affection of the youthful Matilde, and repaid it with sisterly attachment, and an unceasing care bestowed on her education. The Comte de Breteul's exterior was more *distingué* than attractive; for though he possessed *l'air noble* in an eminent degree, his countenance was forbidding, and, in spite of the polished elegance of his manners, repelled confidence and familiarity.

He occupied a fine hôtel in the Rue de Varennes, Faubourg Saint Germain, and lived in a style suitable to the large fortune he inherited from his ancestors. It was with pleasure that Louise superintended the studies of her interesting *protégée*, and with pride that she marked her progress in them. Matilde had a great facility in acquiring all that was taught her, and an affectionate and grateful manner of evincing her sense of the kindness and zeal of her instructors, that increased their exertions in the pleasing task. Her beauty, which had been remarkable from her infancy, developed itself with increased charms as she advanced towards womanhood; but the timidity of her character, instead of diminishing, appeared unhappily to become more fixed. The gazelle was not more shy than Matilde, nor more graceful; for her timidity had nothing of *gaucherie* in it. Those who could have seen her chasing a butterfly in the garden among flowers scarcely more blooming than herself, or standing on the point of her delicate feet striving to peep into a bird's nest, while she held back the branches of the shrubs that concealed it, would have allowed that she looked like some fabled wood-nymph, whose element was flowers and sunshine. A strange voice or step never failed to alarm her, and send her flying, like a startled dove, to the side of Louise, whose presence always reassured her.

Louise de Breteul had refused several unexceptionable proposals of marriage, being determined not to leave her father, and above all, her young *élève*, until tempted by some offer in which her heart was more interested than in those she had already received. Time had passed with rapid strides, and Matilde was now entered on her sixteenth year. As yet she had seen nothing of the world, and Louise, who preferred the calm enjoyment of the domestic circle to the gaieties that courted her abroad, had partaken but rarely of

them. The hours fled cheerfully and happily by, occupied in reading, drawing, music, and embroidery. It was a pleasing sight to behold these two young and lovely girls engaged in their daily avocations : Matilde seated by the side of her friend, would read aloud to her ; while Louise, at the end of each page, commented on the passages, or in turn read to Matilde, while she exercised her pencil, and the freshly-plucked roses in the vase, which she loved to copy, wore not a brighter hue than graced her cheek, when Louise commended the fidelity with which she had transferred them to paper.

They would wander for hours through the umbrageous shades of the vast garden belonging to the hôtel, watching the growth of the beautiful flowers and plants with which it abounded, and admiring the rare birds in the aviary, which they were accustomed to feed, and which sent forth joyful notes when they approached.

About this period, Gustave de Breteul arrived at Paris to visit his family, and was accompanied by a brother officer, the young Vicomte de Villeneuve, whose presence soon seemed as gratifying to Louise as it was disagreeable to her father. He would observe the movements of his son's friend with an anxious eye, and if he conversed with, or seemed to show any attention towards Matilde, he became evidently discomposed, and almost stern towards the Vicomte de Villeneuve. The coldness of the reception given him by the Comte de Breteul prevented not the frequent visits of that young gentleman to the Hôtel de Breteul, and it soon became visible that he was more attracted there by the smiles of the fair sister of his friend, than even by the friend himself, warm and sincere as was his attachment to him. A mutual sentiment of the most tender nature had taken place between the vicomte and Louise, which was soon revealed to the delighted Gustave, who loved his sister and his friend better than aught else on earth, save a certain *demoiselle*, the only sister of that friend, to whom he had plighted his faith ; having, during the last year, conceived for her a passion as sincere as it was reciprocal. In fact, his present visit was made expressly with the intention to solicit his father's consent to their union, and his friend had accompanied him to give all the necessary information relative to the fortune and prospects of his sister. The attachment which the Vicomte de Villeneuve had formed for Louise, seemed to complete the anticipations of happiness that Gustave nourished in his breast, and he looked forward with feelings of delight to the double alliance of the two families. Gustave was about to solicit an interview with his father to lay open the state of his heart, when the Comte de Breteul required his presence in the library.

" I have sent for you, my son," said he, " to talk over future plans, in which you are deeply interested, and I flatter myself that in fulfilling them, you will find that I have not been unmindful of your happiness. For a long period I have decided on bestowing on you the hand of my fair and amiable ward, Matilde de Tournaville. Her person, all must admit to be lovely ; her accomplish-

ments, gentleness, and good sense, no one can doubt; and her fortune leaves nothing to be desired by the most prudent father. But how is this? you seem far from feeling the delight I had anticipated; you have not, you cannot have, a single objection to urge against Matilde."

"Far from it, my father," replied Gustave; "no one can be more ready to acknowledge the charms and good qualities of Mademoiselle de Tournaville than myself. But my affections are bestowed on another, and when you summoned me to your presence, I was on the point of demanding an audience to declare to you the state of my heart—I love, and am beloved by the sister of my friend; and only wait for your sanction to ratify the vows we have interchanged."

"Do I hear right?" asked the angry father; while disappointment and rage strove for mastery in his agitated breast. "Is it thus that you would dash to the ground the hopes which I have so long indulged? But no! you cannot be so ungrateful, so selfish—you will, now that you know my wishes, abandon this silly project, and give your hand to Matilde."

"Never! my father," said Gustave, firmly but respectfully; "my vows are pledged to Elise de Villeneuve: her fortune—though to it I have not given a thought—is equal to that of Matilde; her family is more noble, and therefore no reason can exist for declining a marriage on which all my hopes of happiness depend."

"Are my feelings, then," said the father, "to be counted for nothing? And how long is it since French fathers have ceased to exercise the right of disposing of the hands of their children? In England, where sons are so negligently educated that the heir of every noble house thinks he has a right to select a wife for himself, such infractions of duty may possibly occur; but in France, we are not yet arrived at this degree of licence; and I declare to you, that I never will consent to your marriage with any one but Matilde."

So saying, he quitted the room, leaving Gustave perfectly confounded by this first display of harsh parental authority, but fully resolved to resist it. He determined on writing a letter of remonstrance to his father; and unwilling to acquaint his friend with the unfavourable result of the interview, lest he should feel offended at the unaccountable objection of the comte to the proposed union, he decided on leaving Paris for a couple of days, both to afford time to his father to reflect coolly on his letter and give it a definitive answer, and to avoid meeting De Villeneuve until he had received it. Writing, therefore, a brief note to his friend to apologise for his absence, he departed from Paris, a prey to gloomy thoughts, which formed a painful contrast with the joyful anticipations in which he had indulged only a few hours before.

Ignorant of the state of irritation into which his son's declaration had plunged the Comte de Breteul, De Villeneuve, with the

permission of Louise, had sought him, and demanded her hand. An angry refusal, and an intimation that his future visits would be dispensed with in the Rue de Varennes, was the answer that awaited the disappointed and astonished lover, who left the library, the scene of his audience, with nearly equally strong sentiments of dislike towards the father, as of passionate tenderness for the daughter. Previously to quitting the house he sought his beloved Louise, and in a few hurried words related to her the cruel disappointment he had encountered. He urged her to be firm, and should her father speak to her on the subject, he implored her to avow with candour their attachment, and the conviction of its stability.

How had a few hours changed the happy prospects of the lovers! They were confounded by the unexpected turn affairs had taken; for so unexceptionable was the fortune and position of the Vicomte de Villeneuve, that a doubt of his proposals being listened to with pleasure by the Comte de Breteul, had never occurred to them. Louise felt this disappointment of the heart with perhaps more severity, that it was the first she had known. Her feelings had not been deprived of their virgin purity by a succession of youthful fancies, each chasing away the recollection of the former; an evil which too often affects youthful minds, whose facility to receive impressions is in general greater than their power to retain them. Her attachment to De Villeneuve was her first lesson of love; she felt it to be indelible, and was overpowered with anguish at finding the obstacles that impeded her happiness. She waited with impatience the return of her brother—he who alone could sympathise with her, could counsel, or intercede for her. The feelings of this gentle and high-minded girl, which had hitherto preserved their even tenor, like some gliding stream flowing smoothly along, and reflecting only the fairest images on its glassy surface, were now like the mountain torrent, swollen by rains, and rocked by the tempest.

When Matilde, unconscious of passing events, approached her loved guide and protectress, to pursue the appointed studies of the day, it was only by a violent effort that Louise could assume an appearance of calmness. The force of her emotions struck her with alarm; and as Matilde displayed her drawings, or played some favourite air, to which she had endeavoured to give more than usual expression in order to win the commendations of her friend, Louise shrank abashed from the innocent and happy girl, self-reproved by the thought, that while she thus abandoned herself to the engrossing emotions that filled her heart, she was unhallowed for the part of mistress to one whose purity had never been sullied by passion.

Two gloomy days had tediously drawn to a conclusion when Gustave returned, and the unhappy Louise poured into his sympathising ear the disappointment with which her hopes had been crushed. He found a long letter from De Villeneuve, written

under all the excitement of feelings which the interview with the Comte de Breteul was calculated to produce; and urging Gustave not only to give him a speedy meeting, but immediately to arrange for him an interview with Louise in his presence; declaring that to endure existence any longer without seeing her he felt to be impossible. He implored Gustave by the love he bore to Elise, by their long friendship, and by his affection for Louise, to grant this request. He proposed that they should meet in the garden of the Hôtel de Breteul, which could be arranged by their admitting him by a private door that opened into the Rue de Babylon. Gustave consented to this plan, and while they are concerting measures to carry it into effect, we must take a retrospective view of the circumstances that had led the Comte de Breteul to offer such an unaccountable opposition to the happiness of his children.

In early youth he had made what is called a love-match, and during the brief duration of his wedded life had possessed a happiness that rarely accompanies marriages in the formation of which passion has had more influence than reason. The Comtesse de Breteul, on her death-bed, to which in a few fleeting hours a violent malady had conducted her, with the short-sighted selfishness of an ill-regulated affection, had extorted from her agonised husband a solemn promise that he would never give her a successor in his heart, or place over his children an alien mother. This request, framed by love, led, as we shall see, to the most fatal results, and drove from the pale of domestic bliss a man who might have dispensed and partaken that blessing. The first violent grief of the bereaved husband having subsided into the stagnant calm of morbid melancholy, he sought in vain to find relief in his former avocations. Books failed to give him their wonted solace, because every page of his favourite authors teemed with passages marked by the pencil of her he sought to forget; and the sympathy of their tastes, brought thus before him, renewed the overwhelming grief her loss had occasioned. His home had now become unbearable to him, for it was fraught with images of the past. Her vacant chair opposite to his own; the *tabouret* on which her delicate feet used to repose; the vase, now empty, in which the flowers she loved were wont to adorn her table; the unfinished sketches from her pencil, still resting on the easel; and her harp where she had last awakened its tones, all—all spoke to him of the happy past, and rendered the present insupportable. It was to fly from this state of gloomy grief that he sought forgetfulness in play; that fearful remedy which, like the poisons introduced in medicine, is so much more destructive than the malady it may banish. The excitement at first produced was such a relief to his harassed feelings, that he had recourse to it as the victim of acute pain flies to opiates, when suffering has conquered fortitude, and forgetfulness for a few brief hours is all he hopes to obtain. The fatal habit of play grew on him,—nay, soon became the engrossing passion of his life, until fortune, fame, peace, all were sacrificed to its destructive indul-

gence. His large funded property, touched by the burning fingers of the reckless gamester, had melted like snow before the sun, and when Madame de Tournaville placed in his power the ample fortune of her orphan daughter, he stood on the verge of ruin, into which, without this timely aid, in a few months he must have inevitably been plunged. The gradations of vice are only imperceptible to the wretched dupe who passes through them. A few months before, and the Comte de Breteul would have spurned the idea, that he could be even suspected of risking the property of his own children, a property which he considered as a sacred deposit confided to his care; but *now* he blushed not to risk that of his youthful ward, and saw thousand after thousand of it disappear in the same fatal gulf which had swallowed up his own.

The Comte de Breteul had not lost the vast sums that had led to his ruin without having made acquaintances as disreputable to his fame as the pursuit by which he formed them was destructive to his fortune. Men of all countries, as ruined in reputation as in purse, had now become his associates; sums of money lost to them, which he had not always the power to pay, had placed him in their disgraceful dependence, and they no longer felt under their former restraint in his presence. The Comte de Breteul, a naturally proud man, had not reached this humiliating state of degradation without frequent self-reproach, and sickening feelings of disgust; but the hope, the deceptive hope of regaining his losses, that hope which lures the gamester to destruction, still led him on. He had been living on credit for some months, and retained but a few thousand francs of the once large fortune of Matilde de Tournaville in his possession, when by the death of a relation a large sum of money was bequeathed to her, which was to descend to him and his children in case of her dying childless. This had occurred only a few days before the arrival of Gustave de Breteul at Paris, and the guilty and ruined father determined on forming a marriage between Matilde and his son, which would give him the power of appropriating at least a portion of this money to his own pressing exigencies, and prevent the discovery of his dishonest waste of her paternal fortune, as he knew that both Matilde and Gustave would leave the whole of their pecuniary concerns to his management.

With this plan in view, the only one which offered a chance of concealing his dishonourable conduct, and its ruinous results, it may easily be imagined with what dread he watched the looks of the Vicomte de Villeneuve, trembling lest any attachment should be formed between him and Matilde, and with what anger he discovered his son's engagement to Mademoiselle de Villeneuve, which offered a bar to the completion of his plan. The marriages of his children in the family of De Villeneuve could not take place without the state of his fortune being made known; and once known, would they, could they be permitted by any prudent parents? Who would consent to receive the portionless son and daughter of a ruined, dishonest gamester? No, his gentle and high-minded

Louise, and his honourable and impetuous Gustave would be spurned by the parents of De Villeneuve, and *he—he* would be the cause of all this. There was agony, there was bitterness in the thought, and the reproaches which his too lately-awakened conscience whispered almost avenged the crime that excited them. The unhappy man still loved his children, fondly, truly loved them: and perhaps the cruel injustice he had committed in reducing them to poverty, added poignancy to his affection; for remorse and pity were allied to his parental feelings.

This affection for his offspring, which, had he been untainted with the vice that had caused his ruin, would have been a source of the purest happiness to him, was now the instrument of his heaviest punishment; for the pangs of disappointed hope which he had inflicted on them in opposing their love, recoiled on his own heart, making him feel that he had brought misery on those whose felicity he might have insured.

He was writhing under repentance for the past, and terror for the future, when le Chevalier Roussel was announced, and *his* presence added poignancy to the bitter feelings to which the guilty Comte de Breteul was a prey.

Roussel was a *chevalier d'industrie*, who, though far from being *sans reproche*, was *sans peur*, and who had attained a proficiency in the science he professed, never acquired but at the price of infamy. Luckily for society that it is so, the exposure which ultimately awaits such characters limits the power of plundering that their knowledge of the art might otherwise afford them. Gamesters, like alchymists, pass their lives in endeavouring to acquire gold, but never arrive at the end to which all else is sacrificed; and dazzled by alluring and magnificent dreams of ever-eluding riches, both close their days in equal disappointment and poverty.

Le Chevalier Roussel was a man so hardened in crime, that he had become almost reckless of its consequences. Never did temptation to commit any enormity, however heinous, present itself to him, but his moral turpitude and desperate fortunes prompted him to yield a ready assent; invariably consoling himself with the sophistical reasoning which had already led him into so much guilt, that a crime more or less in the catalogue of his, was of no importance. He had passed the Rubicon of sin, and felt there was no returning; and this desperate consciousness of his irremediable ignominy prompted him to take a fiend-like pleasure in luring others to pursue a similar course. He now came as an importunate creditor to the Comte de Breteul, determined to enforce payment *coûte qui coûte*. The haughtiness and ill-disguised contempt for Roussel and his associates, which that unhappy man could not always conceal, had engendered a feeling of hatred in the breast of the chevalier, which induced him to vow that he would humble the proud spirit of his arrogant debtor, by plunging him into *crimes* that would reduce him to a level with himself. Hitherto

De Breteul was unstained by any other delinquency than his appropriation of the fortune of his ward, and the vice that led to it. He was ignorant of the arts by which he had been plundered, and had only advanced the *first* step in the career of a gamester, that of being the dupe, but had not yet arrived at that of being the defrauder, which, according to some writer, is the second and inevitable stage. In yielding to the crime of robbing his ward, he had disguised the enormity of the action to his paralysed feelings of rectitude, by the sophistry of a vitiated parental tenderness, which whispered that the course he had adopted was the *only means* of rescuing his children from poverty and shame. The conversion of all the affections intended as sources of happiness, into the acutest torments the guilty can experience, is but one of the fatal and certain consequences of crime. The love which the unfortunate man bore his offspring, now became the avenger of his vices; he shrank reprovèd before their untarnished integrity of mind, and received the proofs of attachment and respect they showered on him, with shuddering consciousness, that if they knew his guilt they would turn from him with shame and loathing.

Roussel found him almost maddened by the various and conflicting emotions which assailed him, and his presence and its cause served but to increase his excitement.

"Why, why have you come to my house?" demanded the comte. "Have I not forbidden you to appear here? You might have written to me, or trusted to our meeting at the usual place; but *here*, where my children and my ward reside, this is no fit place for *you*—that is, for *us* to meet," added the alarmed man, correcting the first observation, as the recollection of the power which his creditor possessed flashed on his mind.

"I must say that your reception is not very gracious," replied Roussel; "but I forgive it, because I see you are agitated—I am come for the money you owe me; I have forborne to press you for some days; but my wants are so urgent, that I can wait no longer."

It was in vain that the Comte de Breteul pleaded for time, even for a few days, to enable him to comply with this arrogant and hostile demand; Roussel was inflexible.

"I know all the intricacies of your situation," said the wily gamester; "you are ruined, irrecoverably ruined; you have not only spent your own fortune and that of your children, but you have robbed your ward—nay, start not," seeing that De Breteul was angered, "for he who hesitated not to commit the action has no right to take offence at the name. In a short time, the course you have pursued *must* be notorious, and what then will be your position? Branded by a crime that adds disgrace to the poverty you have drawn on your children, how could you again meet them? But one way remains to save *them* from penury, and you from infamy."

"Name it, name it!" cried the agonised father (forgetting

in his anxiety for his children the indignation which the insolent familiarity of Roussel's observations had excited), "and if my heart's blood be the price, willingly, oh! most willingly, shall it be paid."

"You speak idly," said the unfeeling Roussel; "of what advantage could your death be to your children? You can leave them no inheritance but—shame! for, were you by suicide to evade the exposure that awaits you, your children must still bear the disgrace of your crime, which cannot be concealed. No, *your* death avails them not, but the death of—another, would save you and *them*."

"What! would you make me an assassin, base and wicked as you are?" asked De Breteul, while his cheek became blanched, and his lips trembled with emotion.

"You suffer your imagination to get the better of your reason, and of your good manners, too," said Roussel, with a malignant scowl; "I am neither so base nor so wicked as yourself; for I have plundered no orphan confided to me by a dying parent. Yes, yes, you may look as fierce as you please, yet you dare not deny the degrading accusation. You *have* violated the most sacred trust that man can repose in man; you *have* committed an act of dishonour that admits neither of extenuation nor atonement; and as a traitor to the dead, and the despoiler of the living, I denounce you! But come, it is useless for us to quarrel; our disunion will do more mischief than good perhaps to both of us; so let us remain friends," he added, with an ironical smile; "for *yours* is not a position in which you can make an enemy with impunity."

Rage and shame struggled in the breast of the once proud Comte de Breteul, as he found himself, even in the lofty chambers of his noble ancestors, triumphantly bearded by the reckless miscreant, to an equality with whom his fatal passion for gaming had so unhappily reduced him.

"You are more alarmed by words than deeds," resumed Roussel; "you resent the accusation of your crime, but you shrank not from its commission, else would your ward be now the heiress of a noble patrimony instead of being a defrauded pauper. You have spontaneously and remorselessly devoted her to beggary and humiliation; and yet, forsooth, in the redundancy of your exceeding charity, you would hesitate, nay, turn in horror from the less cruel act of abridging the sufferings you have yourself created. She is young and innocent, therefore her transition from this world of care to a better and happier state, must be a desirable event. Let her live her natural time poor and unfriended, what has she to hope, and what must she not have to endure? Her beauty will expose her to the snares of the wealthy and designing libertine; and her poverty will instigate her to become his prey. Remember, too, that a long life of misery and shame may await her! for degradation and infamy, though they murder peace of mind, but slowly undermine the

physical sources of existence. You who have reduced her to the prospect of this career, can alone save her from its endurance by sending her pure and undefiled to heaven. You will thus rescue your children from poverty, and all its humiliating attendants, and yourself from everlasting disgrace—do you, *can* you hesitate? If so, take the consequences of your weakness; and remember, when it will be too late, that you had once the power of extricating your children, and you yourself from the retribution which now awaits you.”

“I will not, I cannot imbrue my hands in innocent blood,” said De Breteul, with horror depicted in his face; “all—everything is better than such a crime,” and he looked with terror at his hands, as if he already expected to see them dyed with the sanguine stream of life.

“Who talked of shedding blood?” said the crafty Roussel; “faugh—faugh! not I, I’m sure; such barbarisms are now exploded from civilised society. But let us not dispute about words; listen to me without interruption:—Mademoiselle de Tournaville dead, you succeed to the large property she has lately inherited. This will be amply sufficient to enable you to replace the fortune left her by her mother, to satisfy any inquisitive heir that may spring up, as also to leave a provision for your children, who, thus enabled to marry the objects of their choice, will bless you for their happiness. To accomplish these most desirable results, you have only to send a soul to heaven as pure as when it left the hands of its Creator. I am your friend, and can instruct you to extinguish the vital spark, so as to leave no possibility of detection. The death of this young person is indispensably necessary to preserve your honour, peace—nay, your life; and yet in return for the accomplishment of an object so imperious, I only require you to pay me the sum of twenty-five thousand francs, in addition to the sum you already owe me, and which I must have forthwith.”

The sophistry of Roussel, acting on the excited feelings of the fallen and guilty De Breteul, triumphed over the remaining sentiments of humanity in his demoralised heart. The proverb says, that they whom destiny would destroy, she first renders insane; and experience proves, that fate never wholly conquers man, until he has yielded up reason at the shrine of passion.

In the unhappy Comte de Breteul, we find another instance of the truth of this maxim. Hideous and glaring as was the fallacy of the inculcation, yet his mind being prostrated by the conflicts and temptations to which it had been subjected, this wretched man, instigated by a knave more plausible, more crafty, and more callous than himself, was ultimately induced to implicitly believe, that in order to conceal the crime of appropriating his ward’s fortune, and to preserve his children from disgrace, he was justified in laying on his soul the fearful crime of murder—of steeping himself in guilt a hundredfold more atrocious than that which he had already committed.

Let no one who has entered on the path of vice say, So far, and no farther will I go. The first step leads to destruction; for rarely can the wretch who has taken it, extricate himself from its consequences.

But though De Breteul listened to the proposal of Roussel, it was long ere he could bring himself to do more than listen to it. To leave him thus conscience-stricken and alarmed formed no part of the plan of Roussel, and he insisted that his dupe should accompany him to a *restaurant* to dine, at the same time proposing that afterwards they should once more try their luck at the gaming-table. Glad to escape from an interview with his daughter and Matilde in his present state of mind, De Breteul left his house with Roussel, who having ordered a dinner *recherché*, and after it plied his companion with wine, disclosed to him his plan for destroying the beautiful and innocent orphan. He proposed to procure, from the mechanics by whom it is employed, a quantity of wax of a peculiar tenacity, and to spread it very thick on a piece of linen. De Breteul was to enter Matilde's chamber, while she slept, and placing this preparation on her mouth, to press it tightly until it should produce suffocation, and yet leave no external marks of violence. Excited as he was by wine, and maddened by circumstances, still the mind of De Breteul recoiled from the perpetration of this atrocious crime; but the modern Mephistophiles, too skilled in all the fiendlike arts of temptation to allow himself to be baffled by either the apprehensions or contrition of his intended victim, led him once more to the gaming-table—that certain and fatal gulf of every manly virtue.

There having by the same unfair means which had already reduced him to ruin, despoiled him of the few thousand francs he yet possessed, with a heavy additional debt, desperation rendered him reckless, and he was ready, even eager, for the commission of any crime his betrayer might dictate. Armed, therefore, with the intended instrument of destruction, they returned at a late hour to the Hôtel de Breteul. And now we must leave them prepared for guilt, while we return to the other parties in this domestic tragedy.

It had been decided that the interview between the lovers and Gustave de Breteul should take place in the garden, when all the family in the hôtel should be in bed, with the exception of the Comte de Breteul, who was in the habit of returning late. As he sometimes entered by the garden, it was also arranged that, to prevent his detecting the interview between his son and daughter and De Villeneuve, as soon as the latter was admitted by the small door, from the Rue de Babylon, the two friends, with Louise, should retire to the most distant part of the garden.

These arrangements having been narrated, we must now proceed to the night of the intended rendezvous. Louise had retired to her chamber, which though it was next that of Matilde looked on the court, while Matilde's opened on the garden. She was im-

patiently awaiting the signal concerted with her brother, for her to join him in his room, whence she was to pass into the garden, with which it communicated, when Matilde rushed into the apartment pale and terrified, declaring that she had heard voices at her window, and that she was afraid to remain alone in her chamber. It immediately occurred to Louise that the voices heard by Matilde were those of De Villeneuve and her brother, and anxious to join them, as also to quiet the alarm of the agitated girl, she desired her to enter her bed, and that, as she had no fears, she would occupy Matilde's, a proposal that was readily accepted.

Having left Mademoiselle de Tournaville restored to composure, Louise wrapped a shawl round her, and stole to the door of her brother's chamber, when she met him coming in search of her. They quickly entered the garden, found De Villeneuve at the private door, which Gustave opened for him, and all three retired to a remote spot, where half an hour flew rapidly by ere they had thought that even a quarter of that brief period had elapsed.

A heavy shower of rain induced Gustave to conduct the reluctant Louise to the house, and while she sought her pillow, and resigned herself to the balmy influence of sleep, he returned to his friend, and passed a couple of hours in discussing their plans for the present and the future. They were at length about to separate, and had approached the private door, when, to their utter amazement, they discovered a man with his hat drawn over his eyes, and enveloped in a large cloak, applying a key to the lock with one hand, while in the other he held a dark-lantern. They both rushed forward and seized him, under the conviction that he was a robber; while he, in evident trepidation, stated that he had entered the garden with the Comte de Breteul, and was retiring, making use of the key given him by that gentleman. There was an evident embarrassment and mystery about this person that led them to doubt his statement, and Gustave insisted on his returning with them to the house, in order that they might confront him with the comte. Finding them bent on this course, he was forced to yield, and, turning to Gustave, he said—

“Well, be it so. You say you are his son. Now, mark me, *he* will not thank you for this interference; but on your head be its consequences. A time may come when you will wish that you had not stopped me.”

Gustave and De Villeneuve conducted the stranger to the door of the chamber of the Comte de Breteul, which, contrary to his usual custom, they found locked on the inside, and it was not until Gustave had repeatedly called to his father that the latter replied; but he still declined opening the door, and his voice betrayed evident symptoms of agitation.

The stranger cried aloud to him—

“De Breteul, I have been stopped, in leaving your garden, by your son, who holds me a prisoner until you have certified that I

accompanied you into this house, was thence returning to my residence, and that the key I was employing for that purpose was confided to me by yourself."

"Yes, yes, my son, all that he states is correct," groaned father than spoke the Comte de Breteul; "so let him depart in peace."

"Excuse," continued he, addressing the stranger, "the interruption you have met with, I pray you; for my son knew not that you were a ——" "friend" he would have added, but the word died on his tongue. The rebuked young men looked at each other in silent amazement, and allowed the stranger to depart; who, darting on them a glance, in which every malevolent passion was expressed, hastily and in silence withdrew.

Gustave and De Villeneuve slowly left the ante-room, pondering on the extraordinary occurrence they had witnessed, and willing to give the stranger time to quit the garden ere they entered it. As they paced the gravel-walk, Gustave broke silence by saying—

"This is all very mysterious; I cannot comprehend how my father can hold intercourse with a man such as he who has left us; for if ever I saw villain written in the human countenance, it surely is in his."

De Villeneuve paused for a few minutes, and then replied—

"My dear friend, there is a subject on which I had intended to have spoken to you, but delicacy has hitherto induced me to postpone it; as, however, our *rencontre* with this mysterious stranger seems in some way connected with it, perhaps it is better that I should now disclose it. Your father is looked upon as a gamester—nay, more, report states him to be a ruined one. This stranger may be, must be, one of the wretches who frequent the gaming-houses, and who have aided and participated in his ruin. How else can we explain your father's intercourse with such a man, and the agitation which his voice denoted? This knave probably returned to-night with his dupe to the hôtel, to receive either money or valuables for sums lost at play; and your father, ashamed to let the porter see him enter with such a companion, admitted him by the garden, and evidently intended that he should have retreated by the same route. Had we searched him, we should most likely have found either the contents of your father's *coffre-fort*, or some valuable jewels; but, *n'importe*, it must be our business to relieve the Comte de Breteul from any distress he may have brought on himself by this fearful passion for play, and so terminate all intercourse between him and such dangerous and disgraceful associates as the man who has left us. I have a large sum of money in my own power, the fortune left me by my aunt; it shall be all at his service, and I, my dear Gustave, shall be but too happy if I can extricate from his present dangerous entanglements him who is the father of my Louise and of you, and who, I trust, may soon be mine and my sister's."

To find the parent, whom, from his infancy, he had revered

nearly as much as loved, a reputed and dangerous gamester, was a cruel blow to the filial feelings of Gustave; and to see him the acknowledged associate of the vile person who had left them, was a severe humiliation; but the warmth of friendship displayed on this emergency by De Villeneuve soothed him, and while passionately thanking his warm-hearted friend, a strong sense of gratitude and affection for a moment superseded his other too painful emotions. "Here," said De Villeneuve, "take this pocket-book; I had nearly forgotten it, though I brought it in consequence of the reports I had heard, and the opinions I have formed of the extent of your father's pecuniary embarrassments. It contains half the sum at my disposal, and to-morrow the remainder shall be forthcoming. Nay, dear Gustave," seeing his friend hesitate, "do not pain me by a refusal. Are we not brothers as well as friends, and will not *your* father shortly be *mine*?"

Gustave yielded to the solicitations of De Villeneuve, and they parted, animated by cheering hopes of the morrow—that morrow so fraught with misery. But let me not anticipate.

De Villeneuve had reached the door of the garden, and was about to apply the key to the lock, when a sudden blow from a dagger prostrated him on the earth. Rapidly drawing the reeking weapon from the deep wound it had inflicted, the assassin struck it a second time into the body of his victim; then deliberately wiping it in the grass, he concealed it beneath his cloak, and hurried from the spot, carefully locking the door after him, and taking away the key.

The Comte de Breteul and his son met in the breakfast-room at the usual hour on the following morning, the former with an embarrassed air and a care-worn brow, while his heavy eyes denoted that repose had been a stranger to his pillow. Gustave felt for him, and accounted for his troubled looks by the knowledge he had acquired of his pecuniary difficulties and entanglements. There was no recurrence made to the *rencontre* of the past night, and both laboured under a restraint that neither knew how to surmount, when the door opened and Matilde entered.

At the sight of his ward, a cry of horror escaped from the unhappy Comte de Breteul, and he fell fainting on the floor. Gustave and Matilde assisted to replace him in his chair, and animation had but just returned, when Claudine, the aged attendant of Louise, rushed distracted into the *salon*, and with cries of anguish and despair, announced that her dear young lady, her precious Mademoiselle Louise, was dead!

The confusion, horror, and grief of the family may be imagined, but cannot be described. Gustave and Matilde flew to the chamber where the beautiful Louise lay extended, cold and motionless, but lovely even in death. The brother, nearly frantic, ordered the servants to fly for doctors, and commenced chafing her cold limbs, totally forgetting in this new and overpowering affliction the state of his father, when a party of *gendarmes* rudely entered the room,

and made him their prisoner, on the charge of having murdered the Comte de Villeneuve in the garden on the previous night. They dragged him from the room, where lay the inanimate form of Louise, unmindful of his entreaties and frantic prayers to be allowed to continue his efforts to restore her, and forced him into the *salon*, where his wretched father continued in nearly a state of insensibility. They now examined his person, and on discovering the pocket-book of De Villeneuve, whose name was written in it, and the large sum it contained, they declared that this evidence of his guilt was conclusive.

They subsequently, either casually or intentionally, added, that the anonymous information they had received that morning, stated that the pocket-book would be found in his possession, and that the body of the murdered man was concealed beneath some shrubs in the garden, where they had discovered it. When the wretched father heard the accusation against his son, the pride and idol of his life, he tried to speak, but the effort was unavailing; the powers of motion and utterance were paralysed, and his son was forcibly dragged a prisoner from the house that contained a dead sister and a dying father.

Gustave was overwhelmed with horror by the accumulated misery of his maddening situation. The murder of his friend—that friend so fondly cherished, whose life he would willingly have sacrificed his own to have saved, seemed to add the finishing blow to his despair; and *he—he* charged with murder! Oh! it was too, too horrible! and he closed his eyes as if to shut out the dreadful images that presented themselves to his mind.

He had not been many hours in prison, though the mental sufferings he was enduring made them appear an eternity, when Claudine arrived to acquaint him that he had no longer a father, the Comte de Breteuil having expired shortly after his son had been dragged from his presence.

"Father, sister, friend, all—all are gone!" groaned Gustave; "would to heaven that I were with them!" and he threw himself in agony on the wretched bed on which he was sitting.

"No! dear Monsieur Gustave," said Claudine, "*all* are not yet lost; you have still a friend, for the Comte de Villeneuve yet lives, and the doctors say he will recover."

"Oh! God be thanked!" exclaimed Gustave; "tell me, tell me, my good Claudine, how this has occurred?"

"Why, my dear young master," resumed she, "when the comte was found, as they supposed, dead in the garden, he was only in a deep swoon from loss of blood. He was soon restored to animation; and though he is very weak and languid, the doctors all say he will certainly recover. He has already spoken, and declared your innocence, God be praised! as also his knowledge of the assassin; so that in a few hours you must be released from this hateful prison."

To return thanks to the Almighty Providence that had pre-

served De Villeneuve, and justified himself from the foul crime with which he stood charged, was the first movement of Gustave; but soon came the bitter recollection of the death of his father and Louise, that dearly-loved sister and companion of his youth.

"My sister! my blessed sister!" exclaimed Gustave: "Oh! had you been spared me!" and a burst of passionate grief unmanned him.

"You see, my dear Monsieur Gustave," said Claudine, "the Comte de Villeneuve was *supposed* to be dead," laying an emphasis on the word *supposed*, "and yet *he* is still alive. God is good; so do not despair, for our precious mademoiselle *may* be restored to us."

"What do you, what can you mean, Claudine? Oh! keep me not in suspense!" cried the agitated Gustave, "tell me, tell me, does she live?"

"Be calm, my dear young master, prepare yourself for joyful news. She does live, and you shall soon see her. Under Providence, the dear Mademoiselle Matilde and I saved her; for by friction and restoratives we had elicited signs of life before the doctors came, and they say she will recover if she is kept quiet."

The joy of Gustave may be imagined; he hugged the good old Claudine again and again, and it was only on recollecting the death of his father that he could check the transport which the recovery of his sister had occasioned. He hastily dismissed Claudine in order that Louise might not be deprived of her care, and sat him down to reflect on the occurrences of the last few eventful hours.

A short time brought the order for his release from prison, and he flew to his home, where he found his sister much better than his most sanguine hopes had led him to expect. The only account she could give of her sudden seizure was, that she was awaked from sleep by a sense of suffocation, and when she tried to move, her endeavour was violently repressed by some person who forcibly held her, until her struggles were terminated by insensibility. The appearance of the mysterious stranger in the garden recurred to the recollection of Gustave, and suspicion that *he* was in some way connected with the tragic events of the previous night, rushed to his mind. These suspicions were confirmed by De Villeneuve, who told him that as the moonbeams fell on the countenance of his assassin when he gave him the second wound, he recognised in him the miscreant whom they had discovered in the garden. The meeting between the friends was most affecting. The danger to which Louise had been exposed, was concealed from her lover; lest in his present languid state, a knowledge of it might occasion an excitement which should be prejudicial to his recovery.

When Roussel and the Comte de Breteul had reached the chamber in which they supposed Matilde to sleep, her guardian had not sufficient resolution to enter it; and therefore, on the hardened Roussel devolved the commission of the murderous task, which his

wretched and vacillating accomplice dared not even to witness. Thus, the panic-stricken slave of conscience, he remained cowering on the threshold, while his own daughter was attempted to be made the victim of her parent's guilt!

Just as the fiend-like assassin conceived he had completed his atrocious crime, he was alarmed by the sound of voices in the garden. He hastily removed the hateful mask before the final extinction of the vital spark had been effected, and then carefully wiped from the pale face of the unfortunate girl all stain and discoloration, until not a vestige remained of the means that had been employed. De Breteul, overcome with feelings of remorse and horror, and shrinking from the sight of the murderer, after a few hurried words of promised reward, let him out of the house, giving him the key of the garden-door; and then, overcome with terror, had locked himself in his chamber. The *rencontre* of Roussel with his son appeared to his guilty conscience as a certain clue to the detection of his crime, and he passed a night of such fearful torment as had shaken his frame, and death already waved his dart over him.

The sight of Matilde, whom he believed dead, achieved the blow; but ere he sank under it, he had the misery of beholding his son seized as a criminal, and of meeting his fate without a friend or relation to close his dying eyes, yet happy in thus escaping the infamy his crimes merited.

When Roussel had left the presence of the friends on the fatal night, he concealed himself in the garden, in the hope that chance might disclose to him some portion of their intentions. The result answered his expectations, for he overheard all their conversation. He thus discovered that the gaming propensities of the Comte de Breteul were now known to his son, and that the plan suggested by De Villeneuve of assisting him with money, would probably extricate his dupe out of his hands. This knowledge alone would have been sufficient to instigate him to the commission of any atrocity; but his rancorous mind was still further excited by the disgust and antipathy the friends had exhibited towards himself; and thus impelled both by apprehension and malignity, he determined to remove the one and gratify the other, by murdering De Villeneuve and accusing Gustave of the crime. The pocket-book and money given by De Villeneuve, if found on Gustave, would, he felt certain, be received as conclusive proof of his guilt. He retired to his lodging, wrote a note to the *commissaire de police*, informing him of the murder, and then resolved to absent himself for some time from Paris, fearing that the Comte de Breteul, in the horror of seeing his son accused of murder, might betray the other fatal part of the tragedy, and implicate his safety.

On leaving Paris, Roussel directed his course to Mantes; where, having remained a few days, he took an outside seat on the *Diligence* to return, and was *one* of three people killed by the overturning of that vehicle.

Thus perished within a week from the period of his double attempt at murder, a wretch whose life had been one long tissue of crime, and with him was buried the secret of the guilty participation of the Comte de Breteul, whose children were thus happily saved the deep and enduring misery which must have arisen on their knowledge of their parent's infamy. In a few months the double alliance between the houses of De Villeneuve and De Breteul took place, and they enjoy all the felicity they deserve. The amiable Matilde has found a husband in a near neighbour of De Villeneuve's, and continues as much attached as ever to her dear friend Louise, whose society constitutes one of her greatest sources of happiness.

Nothing now remains except to wish our readers all the blessings enjoyed by our heroines and heroes, but without their trials, and to impress on their minds the counsel to *Beware of gaming*.

THE COQUETTE:

A TALE.

CATHERINE SEYMOUR was the prettiest girl at Cheltenham, and of this fact no one seemed more fully aware than the young lady herself; yet, strange to say, each new proof she received of it, in the admiration she excited, appeared to give her as much satisfaction as if she had been sceptical as to the extent and power of her personal claims—a scepticism of which no one suspected her. There are some passions that increase with their gratification. Ambition and avarice are of this number; but the thirst for admiration is still more insatiable, and, if once indulged, is rarely if ever satisfied. Of this truth the vanity of Catherine Seymour offered an example. Left with an only sister, orphans, at an early age, they had been confided to the care of an aunt fully competent to the task of superintending their education, and forming their minds, had she found Catherine as docile and unspoilt as her sister Frances, who was three years her junior; but, unhappily, Catherine had imbibed, from a vain and weak-minded mother, the pernicious belief of the supremacy of beauty, and the no less pernicious conviction that she possessed beauty of no ordinary degree. Her aunt endeavoured, but in vain, to correct the overweening vanity of her niece; but it had taken too deep root ever to be eradicated, and its consequences exposed her not unfrequently to the ridicule of her enemies, and to the pity of her friends.

Catherine was now in her twentieth year, and boasted of having achieved nearly as many conquests as she had numbered years; the last three Cheltenham seasons had witnessed her triumphs, and various had been the admirers assigned to her by the ephemeral visitors of the place. Still she remained unmarried, and unsought in marriage—a circumstance that astonished herself much more

than it did any of her acquaintances, who proclaimed that she was too great a flirt and coquette to be sought for any longer partnership than that of a ball.

Frances had now completed her seventeenth year, and though much less brilliantly attractive than her sister, it was generally remarked that the admirers who were drawn to Mrs. Seymour's by Catherine's beauty, were retained by Frances's *naïveté*, gentleness, and animation. Many had been the young men who had, on a first acquaintance, entertained thoughts of seeking Catherine in marriage; but the second or third ball of their *séjour* generally opened their eyes to the ruling passion of the young lady, who thought it absolutely necessary that each new-comer should yield homage to her charms, and sought this homage so openly as to disgust the admirers previously acquired, who were shocked at witnessing the coquetries directed to others that each had thought so agreeable when himself was their only object.

Catherine's vanity for a long time rendered her unconscious of any diminution in the attention of admirers, or the transfer of them to her sister; for as long as the places of the seceders were supplied by new flatterers, she thought not of them; but when, at the close of the fashionable season, she found herself neglected, and saw Frances securing unéquivocal marks of regard from those who had once sought her own smiles, she felt a sensation as new as it was painful to her vain mind, and endeavoured by every means in her power to win back her former admirers.

At this period arrived Sir Richard Spencer, a handsome young man, of ancient family, large fortune, and agreeable manners. He had only lately returned from a continental tour, and had come to Cheltenham to visit an uncle who had been his guardian. No sooner had he seen Catherine than he became fascinated by her beauty, and her sparkling vivacity riveted the chains that her charms had thrown over him. For a week he danced with her every night, rode with her every day, and saw his attentions received with such apparent pleasure, that he only waited a longer acquaintance to declare himself a suitor for her hand. His uncle had observed all this partiality with no slight portion of alarm; for his annual visits to Cheltenham had made him acquainted with the coquettish propensities of Catherine. Had he, however, been slow to remark them, his notice however could not fail to have been called to them by the uncharitable innuendoes, piquant jests, and sapient predictions of the mothers and aunts of all the young ladies with whom he came in contact, who, in virtue of their consanguinity, take peculiar pleasure in animadverting on the errors, imagined or real, of the reigning belle of their *coterie*, from the disinterested motive of making them generally known to the marrying men.

Mr. Sydenham hesitated whether he should inform his nephew of the besetting sin of Miss Seymour; for being a man of the world, he had not reached his fiftieth year without having observed that

the interference of friends and advisers often only serves to accelerate the marriages it was meant to avert, and he hoped the arrival of some new admirer might furnish his nephew with ocular demonstration of the fact he wished to impress on his mind, namely, the habitual coquetry of Catherine. When, however, he saw the intimacy daily increasing, and that the season drew near its close without offering any new beau as a rival, anxiety for his nephew induced him to ask Sir Richard if the reports in general circulation of his attachment to Miss Seymour were correct, "or merely," added Mr. Sydenham, significantly, "like the various reports which have assigned the young lady to half a dozen different suitors every year that I have been here."

Sir Richard blushed and looked embarrassed, for there was something in the remark and tone of his uncle that displeased him; but quickly recovering himself, he replied, that he certainly admired Miss Seymour very much, thought her a charming person, but that as yet he had not proposed to her, though he had nearly determined on so doing in a few days. Alarmed for his nephew's future happiness, which he thought could not fail to be compromised by such a marriage, Mr. Sydenham lost sight of his usual coolness and judgment, and with more warmth than discretion, revealed every particular he had seen or heard of the coquetry, that all agreed to attribute to the young lady. The natural consequences ensued. The lover defended with much more warmth than the uncle attacked; nay, the injustice, as he imagined, of the censures passed on Catherine, only served to increase his affection.

He left Mr. Sydenham's house and proceeded directly to that of Mrs. Seymour, which he quitted an hour after as the accepted lover of her niece. The terms of intimacy on which Sir Richard had been received at Mrs. Seymour's had given Frances an opportunity of appreciating his various good qualities and powers of pleasing, until she had unconsciously learned to regard him with feelings of interest much stronger than she was aware of.

The first moment that she became sensible of this, was when Catherine, in the flush of gratified vanity, burst into the room where Frances was practising at her harp, and proclaimed that she was the affianced wife of Sir Richard Spencer. "I shall be so happy," added Catherine; "for he has a fine house in Grosvenor-square, and a magnificent place in the country. He is to have the family jewels reset for me, and will write by this post to order two new carriages. This is delightful—don't you envy me, Frances? Fancy how I shall outshine all those who have been giving themselves airs here!"

Frances hardly dared to trust herself with words, so overpowering and new were the emotions that overwhelmed her; but on pressing the cheek of her sister, her tremulous lips breathed forth wishes for her happiness as sincere as if that happiness had not been secured at the expense of her own, as she at that moment felt

it to be. In all the gay anticipations of the future, amidst self complacent recapitulations of the splendour that awaited her, the good qualities of *him* who was to bestow them, were never alluded to by Catherine; and Frances could not suppress a sigh as she reflected that, had it been *her* happy lot to have been chosen by Sir Richard Spencer, himself, and not his possessions, would have been the chief object in her anticipations of happiness.

Mrs. Seymour rejoiced in the prospects of her niece; but could not conceal from herself that they promised a more brilliant future for Catherine than for him who was to share them; and she thought with regret, that a day might come when the ardent lover might have cause to lament his choice.

The gentle Frances, in the privacy of her chamber, schooled her heart to conquer this its first predilection; and when she met Sir Richard, and was addressed by him as his future sister, she stifled the pang that struggled in her breast, and offered him her congratulations with kind cordiality. But still each day discovering some new quality, or some fresh trait of amiability in her sister's suitor, increased the admiration and esteem for him that had become rooted in the pure and fresh feelings of Frances; and it required a constant effort on the part of the innocent and unhappy girl, to conceal the preference she had so unconsciously entertained from him who had excited it, and those who surrounded her. Often did she pray for the speedy completion of the marriage, thinking that when it had taken place, and that Sir Richard had become indeed her brother, her feelings towards him would alter; and she firmly resisted his and her sister's proposal to accompany them to London when the ceremony should be over, being determined to avoid living under the same roof until she had conquered her fatal attachment.

Catherine, now sure of her conquest, no longer took the same pains to retain that she had taken to acquire it. She seemed to receive the attentions of Sir Richard as a right rather than as a pleasure; and as he saw more of her in the domestic circle, he was struck with the conviction, that the most sparkling belle of a ball-room is not always the most agreeable companion at home. The undeviating sweetness of temper and mild cheerfulness of Frances made themselves observed by the contrast they offered to the petulance and not unfrequent vapidness of her sister, who wanting the excitement of fresh admiration, often sunk into inanition, or showed unequivocal symptoms of *ennui*—little flattering to the *amour propre* of a lover, though not sufficiently marked to give him the right of resenting them. Had he known the effort it cost Frances to assume a cheerfulness of manner, when her spirits were bowed down by the consciousness of an attachment she felt it was a crime to indulge, how much more would he have esteemed her, and how infinitely valued the self-command—one of the noblest qualities a woman can possess—that thus enabled her to perform the duties to those around her, and to contribute to their hap-

piness, when she had ceased to look forward with hope to her own!

Sir Richard was summoned to London by his solicitor for the final arrangement of the marriage settlement, and the day before his departure, when walking with Catherine and her sister, they met a young man of fashionable, but unprepossessing appearance, to whose rude stare and familiar nod Sir Richard Spencer returned a very cold bow. "Who is that?" asked Catherine, whose experienced eye, at one glance, detected a man of fashion in the stranger, and whose vanity was gratified by the fixed stare with which he regarded her.

"That," replied Sir Richard, "is Lord Wilmingham; we were at college together; but he is a man whose reputation and manners I so much disapprove, that I avoid all intercourse with him as much as possible."

Three or four days after Sir Richard's departure, the last ball of the season was to take place, and, to the surprise and displeasure of Mrs. Seymour, Catherine announced her intention of attending it. In vain her aunt and sister dwelt on the impropriety, now that her marriage was announced, of going to a ball in the absence of Sir Richard. She was obstinate, and thinking herself freed from the jurisdiction of her aunt, persevered in her intention; and Mrs. Seymour was obliged to accompany her, to prevent her placing herself under the protection of some less unexceptionable *chaperon*, as she intended to have done in the event of her refusal.

They had only been a few minutes in the room, Catherine glittering with ornaments presented to her by Sir Richard, and attracting general admiration by her beauty and animation, when Lord Wilmingham approached with Lady Severn, who presented him to Mrs. Seymour and her nieces. He immediately engaged Catherine's hand for the next dance; and, to the surprise and indignation of Frances, she observed her giddy sister receiving, with undisguised pleasure, his marked attentions. Mrs. Seymour noticed this conduct with equal pain; and made several signs to Catherine that she was drawing the eyes of all around on her by her flirtation; but the wilful girl persevered, and had the imprudence to continue to dance with Lord Wilmingham, even when custom required a change of partners.

At the end of the second dance, Mrs. Seymour joined her niece, and endeavoured by the coldness of her manner to check the forward and presuming attentions of Lord Wilmingham; but it was evident the encouragement given him by the young lady rendered him careless of the disapprobation of the old, and he continued near Catherine, engrossing her conversation for the greater part of the evening.

They had no sooner entered the carriage to return home, than Mrs. Seymour reprehended her niece for the levity and impropriety of her conduct. Catherine angrily asserted her right of receiving

what she chose to call the polite attentions of any or every person who offered them. The discussion ended like the generality of discussions when one person is in the wrong, yet determined not to avow it—in mutual displeasure; and Catherine retired for the night with the fixed determination of giving Lord Wilmingham every opportunity of cultivating her acquaintance; while Mrs. Seymour felt equally decided on prohibiting it.

Frances sought her sister next morning, and, with affectionate mildness, reminded her of what Sir Richard Spencer had said of Lord Wilmingham, and that, having so spoken, he would naturally feel displeased at finding that his affianced wife had formed an acquaintance with him in his absence, Catherine petulantly disclaimed Sir Richard's right to control her actions until the marriage had taken place, adding, that circumstances might prevent its ever taking place; and when Frances showed her displeasure at this comment, she triumphantly demanded whether it would not be more eligible, as well as agreeable, for her to be Countess of Wilmingham, than the wife of a simple baronet, adding, that Lord Wilmingham was much more to her taste in every respect than Sir Richard. "But," said the heartless coquette, "I shall not discard the latter until I am quite sure of the former; so don't look so alarmed Frances, for I know what I am about." In vain were Frances's representations of the dishonourable conduct her sister was pursuing, that sister was determined on following her own selfish plans, and they parted mutually dissatisfied.

Frances, while grieving over the heartlessness of her sister, and the unhappiness its possible consequences might entail, was angry with herself for feeling that the effect it would produce on Sir Richard touched her more deeply than that which it would have on the destiny of her sister; but no one selfish hope or sentiment entered into her pure mind, though love, that promoter of selfishness in so many breasts, reigned triumphantly in hers.

When Lord Wilmingham called at Mrs. Seymour's door next day he was not admitted, and Catherine, who anticipated this denial, took care to let him see her at the window, and to show by the cordiality of her salutation, that his not being received was not *her* fault. When the ladies walked out in an hour after, he immediately joined them, and not all the cold looks and constrained manner of Mrs. Seymour and Frances could chase him from the side of Catherine until he had escorted them back to their home. The next day he called again, was again refused admittance, and, as on the former day, Catherine exhibited herself at the window, expressing by her looks and gestures how much she regretted not being allowed to receive him. Such evident encouragement would have led a much less presuming man than her new admirer to persevere in his attentions. But Lord Wilmingham wanted no such encouragement. He seldom reflected on the possible effects of any of his actions either towards others or himself; the gratification of his own selfish enjoyments occupied all his thoughts, and to accom-

plish any plan that led to them, he would stop at no sacrifice, except that of self. Devoted to pleasure, he sought it in every shape in which it presented itself to his eyes or imagination, and in his chase of the *ignis fatuus* which for ever lured him on, many had been the victims who were left to weep over their credulity and his perfidy. A violent hatred to Sir Richard Spencer had been engendered in his mind, on observing, a year or two before, the marked coldness with which his advances to a renewal of acquaintance were declined by the baronet, and he only waited an opportunity of avenging his mortified feelings. He came to Cheltenham with a dissipated young man of fashion of his acquaintance, and the day after was struck with the beauty of Catherine, when he saw her walking with Sir Richard. Public rumour soon made him acquainted with their engagement, and, with fiend-like malice, he determined to seek an introduction to her, and to follow it up by attentions that could not fail to offend the baronet, even if they did not succeed in shaking the fidelity of his betrothed.

The absence of Sir Richard, and Catherine's own levity, soon furnished the unprincipled libertine with an opportunity to follow up his plans, and the first night of their acquaintance, in the brief space of a few hours, with insidious compliments, half avowals of love, and affected broken sentences of despair at her engagement, he made the infatuated and vain coquette believe that she had inspired him with a violent passion, and that she had only to break through her engagement with Sir Richard to have the coronet of Lord Wilmingham offered for her acceptance. The encouragement given him by Catherine far surpassed his hopes; with a single glance he penetrated her character, for his own bad qualities rendered him quick-sighted, and furnished him with an unerring clue for discovering those of others. At moments he almost determined to discontinue his attentions, and let the marriage proceed, thinking that such a wife would be sure to be the severest misfortune that he could desire to befall his enemy; but then his vanity urged him to persevere, that he might humiliate and wound the feelings of Sir Richard by winning the affections of his betrothed mistress, when he fancied himself most sure of them. Though he admired the beauty of Catherine, he felt no stronger sentiment towards her than mere personal admiration. She was one of the last women he would have selected for a wife, as, in this respect, he followed the wisdom of the wicked, if wisdom can ever rest with such, in requiring in those with whom they would connect themselves that virtue and goodness to which they are conscious of not possessing even a claim in their own persons.

Catherine was to be made the instrument of this unprincipled man's vengeance on her affianced husband; and, when this was accomplished, he cared not what might become of her.

Finding Mrs. Seymour's precautions deprived him of seeing Catherine, he determined to write to her; and having observed she was continually at the window or balcony that looked towards the

road leading from Mrs. Seymour's suburban villa to Cheltenham, he decided on being himself that evening the bearer of a letter which he intended to throw up to the balcony.

Sir Richard having terminated his business sooner than he anticipated, left London without apprising his fair friends at Cheltenham, intending to give them an agreeable surprise, by presenting himself at the villa when they least expected him, and was approaching it when, in the twilight, he observed a man throw something up to the balcony, and a female immediately after advance to speak to him. The noise his horse's steps made were evidently heard by the persons, for the female quickly retreated from the balcony, and the man, who could not conceal himself, Sir Richard having come too suddenly upon him, proved to be Lord Wilmingham. Astonishment and indignation took possession of his mind, and his first impulse was to stop him; but Lord Wilmingham galloped quickly away, and Sir Richard entered the house surprised and alarmed at what he had witnessed.

The possibility that the woman who was carrying on a clandestine correspondence with the worthless Lord Wilmingham might be his own Catherine, his affianced wife, had never, for a moment, suggested itself to his imagination. No, that was beyond the pale of possibility; but he instantly concluded that it was Frances, and was shocked and grieved beyond measure, that one so young, and whom he had considered so pure-minded and amiable, should have degraded herself with a person of whose reputation and bad conduct he had informed her. He found Mrs. Seymour and Catherine in the drawing-room, and the agitation the latter discovered on his entrance, was viewed by him as a flattering proof of the effect his unexpected arrival produced on her; but when, in a few minutes after, Frances entered the room, and on seeing him (not having heard of his arrival) blushed deeply, trembled, and then turned pale, he could not suppress a marked coldness of manner at what he considered the indubitable proofs of her conscious guilt; and, during his visit, she frequently found his eyes fixed on her face with an expression of severity, as new as it was painful to her. Not wishing to commit her with her aunt, until he had first spoken with Catherine, and tried the efficacy of his own representations to Frances, he contented himself with merely remarking, that he had met Lord Wilmingham near the villa; and stealing a glance at Frances, observed her cheeks suffused with blushes, while Mrs. Seymour discovered evident symptoms of discomposure. Had he looked at that moment at Catherine, her visible embarrassment must have struck him, but having judged poor Frances guilty, he confined his examination to her.

"Lord Wilmingham is a most dissolute and unprincipled young man," added Sir Richard, with warmth, "and a most improper acquaintance for ladies. When I saw him so near your abode this evening, I feared he might be received by you on visiting terms,

and I regret not having more strongly warned you against him before my departure.

He stole another look at Frances, and found she blushed more than ever; while Mrs. Seymour replied, that Lord Wilmingham had been presented to them, but that Frances having told her Sir Richard had expressed a dislike and disapprobation of him, she had declined his visits. "Does this young creature, then, add hypocrisy to levity and imprudence?" thought Sir Richard, and the indignation he felt was expressed in the stern glance he cast at Frances, who, observing it, became more confused and agitated than before.

When he came to the villa next day, he found Frances alone, and immediately, in a grave and brotherly tone, remonstrated with her on the danger and impropriety of carrying on a clandestine correspondence, and with a person whose bad reputation she had herself communicated to her aunt. The alarmed girl demanded an explanation, and he angrily told her all that he had seen the night before. She trembled, turned as pale as death, and appeared ready to sink to the earth; and he, pitying what he considered to be her feelings of shame, took her hand with kindness, and promised that if she would break off all correspondence with Lord Wilmingham, he would recur to the subject no more; and hastily left the room to go in search of Catherine in the garden, leaving Frances more dead than alive.

"And must I lose his esteem too," sobbed the unhappy girl, "and be considered by him as having pursued a conduct abhorrent to my nature? All but this I could have borne;" and tears of wounded pride and delicacy gushed in torrents from her eyes. "Oh! could I be but vindicated in his eyes! But no! this never can be, without exposing *her* he loves, and making him wretched by the discovery; and I will bear all rather than that he should suffer."

This is woman's love, when woman is, as nature meant her to be, pure-minded and unselfish; her own sufferings appear more easy to be borne than that of him she loves; at least, she is always ready to make the experiment when she thinks it can save him.

Frances sought her sister when Sir Richard had retired at night, and with tears and burning blushes declared the humiliating suspicions to which the improper conduct of that sister had exposed her.

"You did not, I hope, undeceive Sir Richard?" said the selfish Catherine; "for what he thinks of your proceedings can be no sort of consequence to *you*; but if, after all, I should marry him, it would be very disagreeable to have him discover that it was *I*, and not *you*, who was the object of Lord Wilmingham's attentions."

The unfeeling and indelicate selfishness of her sister shocked and disgusted Frances, who, having entreated her never again to see Lord Wilmingham, under pain of telling the whole truth to their aunt, left her to seek in her own chamber the only consolation that now awaited her—the consciousness of having acted as she believed she ought.

A sleepless night, and the agitation she had experienced, affected the health of Frances so much, that the next morning saw her on the bed of sickness, unable to rise; and when Sir Richard came in the evening, he found Mrs. Seymour in great alarm, the physician who had been called in having pronounced Frances in a high state of fever. Mrs. Seymour and Catherine being in attendance in the chamber of the invalid, Sir Richard was left alone, and occupied himself in turning over the leaves of some albums until it became too dark to see. Waiting to bid Catherine adieu before he retired for the night, he reclined on a sofa in a recess near the window, and fell into a slumber, from which he was awakened by voices from the balcony. Half asleep and awake, he had not time to move, when the following dialogue struck his ears, and he became rooted to the spot as he listened to it:—

“No, I tell you positively, I will not marry Sir Richard,” said Catherine, “even though the day is fixed. I never liked him, and *now* I dislike him more and more every day.”

“But may I rely on you?” said a voice, which Sir Richard instantly recognised for that of Lord Wilmingham.

“Yes, yes—I promise never to have any one but you,” replied Catherine; “but only fancy,” continued she, “that stupid Sir Richard saw you throw the letter the night before last on the balcony, and fancied that it was Frances who took it up; he lectured her, and the simpleton, luckily for us, let him remain in his error. She thought this heroism entitled her to the privilege of scolding me, and has given me a lesson worthy of aunt. But that is not the strangest part of the business; the agitation caused by all this has brought on a fever; under the influence of which she has revealed—but no, you would never guess, so I must tell it to you—nothing less than that she is in love with this stupid Sir Richard. But hush! did I not hear some noise? Go away, and come back at the same hour to-morrow night.”

Sir Richard had listened with breathless horror and astonishment to this dialogue; but when the injustice he had committed towards the pure-minded and excellent Frances was revealed, and her passion for himself was discovered, his arms involuntarily dropped on the sofa; and this was the noise that interrupted Catherine’s revelations, and made her dismiss Lord Wilmingham. For a moment he was disposed to approach the balcony, and show the unworthy pair that he had heard the whole of their conversation; but a little reflection taught him, that in so doing, Catherine would be aware of his having heard her sister’s secret, and that thus the delicacy of Frances would be wounded. He therefore remained quiet until his faithless mistress had passed out of the room; and then seizing his hat, he left the house, offering up fervent thanks that he had discovered, ere too late, the duplicity, meanness, and total want of principle of her whom he had regarded as his wife, and filled with admiration for the amiable Frances, and anxiety for her safety.

He wrote a brief and explicit letter to Catherine next morning, acquainting her that he had seen her interview with Lord Wilmingham the night before, and declining all pretensions to her hand, he left her to explain the cause to her aunt, and for ever broke off the projected alliance. The vain girl, for a short time rejoiced at his dereliction, believing that she should now become the wife of Lord Wilmingham; but when having despatched a few hurried lines to that worthless man, announcing the fact, she received only a cold billet saying that he was called to France on business of importance, and wishing her all happiness, without even so much as hinting that they should ever meet again, her vanity and want of principle received its own punishment in the deep humiliation which the frustration of all her ambitious hopes entailed on her.

In a few months, Frances became the happy wife of Sir Richard Spencer, and is now the no less happy mother of four lovely children; while Catherine continues to exhibit her faded charms at Cheltenham, with as little prospect of changing her name as her character, and is pointed at by moralising mothers and warning aunts, as a fearful example of the dangers of coquetting.

THE BEAUTY AND HER SISTER.

PART I.

“BE sure, Rainsford, not to let Miss Emily put up her veil while she is walking, and keep her in the shade as much as possible,” was the prohibition uttered by Lady Mansel to the upper nurse, previously to the morning promenade of the young lady.

“But *why*, Mrs. Rainsford, may I not put up my veil?” asked the child in a few minutes after, when this prohibition was referred to by the attentive nurse. “I am so warm, and I want so much to see all the pretty primroses, cowslips, and daisies around us, and this disagreeable veil does so torment me, making everything look as green as itself, and clinging to my lips every time I open them.”

“Then *don't* open them, miss,” was the reply of the sapient nurse, an advice that her youthful and lively charge was but little disposed to follow.

“But *why*,” reiterated the child, pertinaciously, “may I not put up my veil, as well as sister does hers?”

“Because your mamma is afraid that the sun would spoil your complexion, miss.”

“Why will it spoil mine more than sister's?”

“Miss Mansel's skin is not so fair as yours, miss; and therefore my lady is not so particular about it.”

“Then I'm sure I wish that mine was as brown as the gipsy's we saw the other day, if I might but walk in the sunshine, and see the beautiful flowers, without this tiresome veil.”

"You'll not wish that, miss, when you're grown up to be a woman."

"Yes, but I shall though, for what's the good of being fair?"

"It makes people handsome, miss."

"And what's the good of being handsome?"

"It's a great good, miss, for then they are admired"

"But grandmamma says it is better to be good than handsome, and loved than admired. What is the difference between being loved and admired, Rainsford?" asked Emily.

"I'm sure, miss, I hardly know," replied Rainsford, looking puzzled.

"That's what you always say," rejoined Emily, poutingly, "when I ask you a question."

"Well, then, miss, as far as I know, the difference is—one admires those that are handsome, and loves those that are good."

"But could not one be handsome and good too, Rainsford?" demanded Emily, with a look that indicated a consciousness of being the first.

"I suppose it's very difficult, miss, seeing as how there are so very few in the world that are both."

"Grandmamma says that beauty is far inferior to goodness," said Emily; "for that on goodness depends our happiness."

"Her ladyship is right," said Mrs. Rainsford, complacently—for Rainsford, be it known to our readers, was a plain woman—"handsome is as handsome does," say I, 'and beauty is but skin deep after all,' " continued she.

"Then sister is *not* handsome, and that's the reason why she is allowed to walk out without a veil?"

"I didn't say she is not handsome, Miss Emily," said Mrs. Rainsford, alarmed.

"I thought you did," replied the acute child, with a thoughtful air.

"No, indeed, Miss Emily, I said no such thing; and I should get into great trouble if you told Miss Mansel, or my lady, or the Dowager Lady Mansel, that I said so."

"But *why* should you get into trouble if I told them?"

"Because *no* lady likes to have it said that she is not handsome."

"But if it is true, then ladies would not be vexed?—for grandmamma says people should always speak the truth."

"Not about people's *looks*, miss, I assure you, for it would offend many."

"Then it is only good to speak the truth about *things*, and not about *persons*—is that what you mean, Rainsford?"

"Indeed, Miss Emily, you do so puzzle me with your questions, and you take one up so, that there is no knowing how to answer you, so I won't say another word while we are out;" a resolution to which the embarrassed Mrs. Rainsford adhered, while the *naïve* Emily was left to pursue the reflections which the preceding dia-

logue had given birth to in her mind, and which conduced to the philosophical conclusion,—that to be fair was a great drawback upon enjoyment, as it entailed the necessity of always wearing a veil in the sunshine, and the newly acquired worldly wisdom, that people disliked being told they were not handsome, however true the assertion might be.

Another year saw Miss Emily transferred to the care of Mademoiselle Lavasseur, a French governess, and now commenced another species of annoyance, to which she was subjected by her beauty. Miss Lavasseur was not only extremely plain, but had a physiognomy that would for ever have excluded her from being selected by a disciple of Lavater's for the post she now filled. A consciousness of her ugliness, though it failed to engender humility, gave birth in her envious breast to an unconquerable dislike to all who possessed beauty; hence, Emily became the object of her aversion and injustice.

The injudicious exhortations of Lady Mansel, not to permit Emily to study too much, for fear of injuring her eyes; not to allow her to draw, or write, except standing, lest it might contract her chest; not to play the harp or pianoforte, though for both these instruments she had evinced considerable talent, lest the points of her fingers should be flattened, increased her dislike to her young charge.

But, *en revanche*, Emily was permitted to devote more than double the usual time given to the acquirement of such an accomplishment, to her *maître-de-danse*, that her carriage and movements might be improved, their natural grace, though remarkable, not satisfying the false and fastidious taste of her lady mother. Miss Mansel being destitute of personal attractions, it was resolved that their absence should be atoned for by the most assiduous cultivation of her mind; her ill-tempered governess urging her to increased attention to her studies, by injudiciously reminding her that *she* was *not* a beauty, and, consequently, must be well educated. The system pursued towards both the young ladies, was calculated to produce the worst results; but fortunately, neither of them had bad tempers, and the good sense of their grandmother served as a corrective to the evil influence that presided over the school-room.

"Beauties may be allowed to be ignorant," would Mademoiselle Lavasseur often say, looking spitefully at poor Emily, as she sat in a listless posture, her small mouth frequently distended to a yawn, induced by the *ennui*, arising from want of occupation; an observation that never failed to bring a blush of humiliation to the cheek of the elder sister, and of shame to that of the younger.

"Are all beauties silly, grandmamma?" would Miss Mansel ask, a question which led the good old lady to an exposition of the manifold dangers to which beauty subjected its possessors, not the least of which, consisted in the erroneous belief, often entertained, that its presence rendered the cultivation of talents and acquirements unnecessary. Emily's naïve interrogation of, "Are all clever people

disagreeable, grandmamma?" called forth a reply that convinced her that clever and disagreeable were *not* synonymous terms, however much the conduct of Mademoiselle Lavasseur—who was vaunted by Lady Mansel as a model of cleverness—had led the child to that conclusion.

"Hold up your head, Miss Emily, and turn out your feet. Why bless me! how ungracefully you are lounging in your chair," was the often repeated remark of the governess.

"I am *so* tired," uttered between a sigh and a yawn, was the general reply.

"Tired, indeed! and with what, pray?—with doing nothing, I suppose."

"Yes, I believe so; for I do *so* want to have something to do."

"Well, then, sit straight, turn out your feet, and unravel this floss silk, it will occupy you; but mind you hold it with the point of your fingers, lightly, airily, not as a housemaid holds her duster, but as a lady ought to hold whatever she touches. And you, Miss Mansel, you also seem fatigued."

"Yes, mademoiselle, I am a little tired. I have learned so many lessons to-day that they are all mixed up in my head together, just as the pieces of my dissected maps are, when I shake them over the table. I can't remember any one of them distinctly, and the confusion this causes in my head makes it ache," replied the jaded girl, whose pale cheek and heavy eyes bore evidence to the truth of her assertion of fatigue.

"But remember, *ma chère*, that when you go to dessert, your mother will examine the progress you have made during the day; and how gratifying it will be, while people are remarking the beauty of your sister, as they are continually doing, that *you* also get some praise. This will be the reward of your diligence, *ma chère*, and is it not worth studying for?"

"Grandmamma told me," said Miss Mansell, thoughtfully, "that the object of instruction was to strengthen the mind, and not for the display of acquirement."

"Your grandmamma is an old lady, who goes little into society, and consequently knows nothing of the present mode of thinking on such points," replied the superficial and flippant governess. "*Nous avons changé toute cela*, I can assure her ladyship, and people are now only anxious to acquire what they can show off; on the same principle that our shopkeepers in France lay in little more stock than they can exhibit in their windows."

As the lessons of Miss Mansel were repeated aloud to her governess, her sister received the benefit of oral information, to which she listened with interest, as a relief from the tedium of idleness,—hence she gained a general elementary knowledge; and not having, like her sister, a number of tasks to learn by rote, the information she thus attained became fixed in her mind. Miss Mansell was a prodigy of accomplishments, but in the art of thinking—that art so little cultivated in modern systems of education—she was totally

unversed. Her mind was filled with a mass of crude and undigested knowledge, over which she possessed no power. It was like a lumber-room, in which things, not in actual use, were stored away, but being piled one on another without order or method, it was difficult to get at any of them when required ; while her sister, whose knowledge was so much more limited, could reason and reflect on that little, and render it available.

At seventeen, Miss Mansel was introduced to the fashionable world ; and, in the course of a short time, was celebrated as a young lady of great accomplishments. Her drawings were honoured by the approbation of an illustrious personage, herself remarkable for her love of, and skill in, the art of design, and were pronounced worthy of the admiration of all the cognoscenti. Her performance on the harp and pianoforte, was allowed to rivalise with that of the most scientific performers of the day ; and she spoke French, Italian, German, and Spanish, quite as fluently as if she could *think* in any of these languages—a power denied her in them, as well as in that of her native one. In short, Miss Mansel resembled an automaton wound up to go through a certain number of exhibitions, all of which she performed with precision ; and this, in fashionable circles—the only society she frequented—was amply sufficient to satisfy those who look not beyond the surface, of the just claims the young lady possessed to the applause with which her exhibitions were crowned. The admiration which the musical talents of Miss Mansel excited, induced her vain mother to give frequent concerts, at which most of the celebrated public singers of the day were invited to assist, and all the extensive circle of her fashionable acquaintance were present. It was fearful to see this young and innocent girl placed by the side of opera-singers, whose *vices* were tolerated for the sake of their voices ; and disgusting to mark the easy familiarity with which some of these signors and signoras returned the condescending politeness of their patrons.

Miss Mansel not only soon became inured to the public exhibition of her musical talents, but the applause they excited became necessary to her enjoyment. All her other accomplishments were neglected, that this one should have more time bestowed on its cultivation ; and she submitted, without murmuring, to a fatigue nearly equal to that to which the professional singers, with whom she was so constantly brought into contact, were subjected.

“ I shall follow your advice, and propose to Miss Mansel,” said Lord Westonville, a bachelor of forty, to his lady mother.

Certain symptoms of a want of renovation in both health and purse, had led his lordship to adopt this prudent resolution ; but he was willing to lead his mother to imagine, that in the adoption, he was wholly influenced by her advice.

“ She is no beauty, it is true,” continued he, with something like a sigh (for he still retained some portion of his youthful predilection in favour of good looks) ; “ but she is an admirable musician, and sings charmingly.”

"Yes," replied Lady Westonville, "she is, indeed, a most accomplished young woman, and let me tell you, such are the most rational companions after all. For my part, I am astonished that men can be so silly as to marry beauties—(her ladyship had never been one)—but such folly generally brings its own punishment. Look at Lord Leominster—see what he got by marrying a beauty; then there is Mr. Marly, what a position is he placed in! and all, forsooth, because he *would* marry a beauty—I have no patience with such fools!" and the good old lady got angry at the bare recollection of the folly on which she commented.

"Well then, the die is cast," said Lord Westonville; and, in truth, had he not so frequently cast the *die*, he had not been compelled to seek a rich wife instead of a handsome one. "To-morrow I will make the offer." The offer was made, and accepted eagerly by Lady Mansel, to whom the ancient *noblesse* and high fashion of the suitor were irresistible attractions; and calmly by her daughter, whose most pleasurable anticipation of the future, arose from the power she concluded that her marriage would confer—of giving *many*, and going to *all* the *recherché* concerts of every season. She thought with complacency, of the vast extent of the library at Westonville-house, and fully decided on dislodging the precious *tomes* that filled it, and converting it into a *salle-de-musique*, where she should preside, surrounded by applauding *amateurs* and envious professors. When bantered by some of his *roué* companions on the prospect of his becoming a Benedict, Lord Westonville would laughingly assert, that he would acquire *harmony* at least, by the change, and that he gained *notes* in every way by the arrangement—while the bride elect declared that she would give *such* concerts as would excite the envy of all London.

The marriage soon took place; "the happy couple"—as the newspapers announced them to be—were whirled off with all due celerity to his lordship's country-seat, where the new-made matron was delighted by finding a ball-room affording ample space for a *salle-de-musique*, large enough to hold five hundred people *comfortably*, as she styled it.

"But where are they to be found?" asked her lord; "and where are the performers to come from?"

"Can we not manage it, as easily as they do the musical festivals, in the provincial towns?" was the sapient reply of the lady.

"Why, not *quite* so easily," rejoined Lord Westonville, "the performers being, in the cases you allude to, paid from the funds received from the audience; and, as I conclude your ladyship—(and he uttered this with a smile approaching to a sneer)—does not intend to *sell* admissions to your concerts, the expense of those on the extensive scale you propose would be far too great for most private fortunes, and certainly for mine; so you must make up your mind to be satisfied with performing to a very limited audience, while we are in the country."

We will leave the "happy couple to pass the honey-moon," with

as little discord and as few jars as may be expected between two persons so little formed to play a duet together ; while we return to Emily, the unaccomplished beauty, now installed in all the honours of a successful *debutante*, for fashionable celebrity, much to the satisfaction of her lady mother, and the great delight of herself. Admiration followed her steps wherever she turned ; every girl with pretensions to beauty—and many *without* any cause for such—adopted her *coiffure*, while affecting to depreciate the face it so well suited. Robes were named *after*, songs written *on*, and *galoppes* and *mazourkas* composed *for her*. The newspapers “prated of her whereabouts” with all the flattering unctiousness with which these signs of the times first dictate to the public, and then re-echo its voice. No one *off the stage* ever danced so well as the beautiful Emily ; and this her *sole* accomplishment (we mean no pun), made *dancing* the rage during the hottest summer ever remembered in London. She insured the brilliant success of a fancy-fair, by the announcement of her intended presence ; and the sale of an annual, by granting her portrait for its frontispiece. She bore her blushing honours joyously, if not meekly, satisfied with herself and the world—that is, the fashionable world, the only one of which she knew anything. Life seemed to her as a continued festival, during this the first season of her entrance to society. *Fête* followed *fête*, and ball—ball, interrupted only by operas, plays, and concerts. A train of admirers hovered round her at night, at every party she attended, and caracoled beside her carriage as she was driven through the Park, to the excitement of no slight portion of envy in the breasts of her contemporaries, if not competitors.

Many were the aspirants for her smiles, and some of the number were well disposed to seek her hand ; but as yet, no one of her admirers satisfied the ambitious views of her mother, who, in the plenitude of her wisdom, made high rank and great wealth (two advantages that, of late years, rarely meet in the same person) indispensable requisites in the fortunate man who was to possess the hand of her beautiful daughter. Among the crowd of admirers there was one, whose air *distingué* and fine countenance had excited a more than common interest in the mind of Emily.

At the first two or three balls at which they had met he had been her partner, but after that, though she saw him at every ball given during the season, he sought her hand no more, and only noticed her by a formal bow. This piqued her curiosity,—if it did not do more ; and more than once she involuntarily looked towards him, but quickly turned her eyes in another direction, on finding his fixed on her face, with a glance that betokened evident admiration. How strange, that he should appear to admire and yet not approach her ! And frequently did Emily find herself endeavouring to solve this unaccountable conduct of his.

Henry Wilmot, for so was this gentleman named, occupied more of the thoughts of the beauty than did all her admirers put together. She was not in love with him, it is true, but she was

very well disposed to become so, provided she had any good reason to think that *he* loved her; for Emily possessed a large share of modesty and maidenly reserve, and was of the same opinion as Lady Mary Wortley Montague, who, in her verses to Sir William Younge, says—

“Our wishes should be in our keeping,
Till you tell us what they should be.”

Though, by the by, and *par parenthèse*, Lady Mary was, at the moment she wrote the said verses, violating the decorum she praised, as the lines that follow those we have quoted contain a decided declaration of love for the baronet, which drew from him as decided a rejection and rebuke as ever was written. No; Emily was not a girl to let herself love a man, however captivating, who had not professed himself *captivated*, though she did think oftener of Henry Wilmot than she had ever thought of any of his sex.

The season drew to a close, and many a disappointed hope and aching heart marked its rapid flight. The streets became hotter and more deserted; the mignonette was running fast to seed in all the windows of the fashionable squares and streets; and the flowers, nearly as faded as their mistresses, were no longer redolent of their sweets, but nearly covered with dust, drooped their withered petals over the *jardiniers* that they lately adorned. Dense clouds of dust, and unsavoury odours assailed the eyes and olfactory nerves of those who went into the streets, and the Park resembled a vast sheet of too often washed nankeen, the sun having “made the green” one dingy yellow; over which the smoke-dried trees waved their dusty leaves. A few carriages still rolled along, in which sat young ladies, straining their eyes to catch a view, *en passant*, of the last *beaux of summer*, the Lord Johns, Henrys, and Edwards, the partners of many a ball; and a few fair equestrians might still be seen cantering along; while groups of young men were arranging their parties for grouse shooting in Scotland, with all the animation that the prospect of a change of scene and habits never fail to produce in the sybarite minds of such idlers. Here and there might be seen some gallant gay Lothario, with pale-yellow gloved hand resting on the door of a britscha, whose mistress listened with anxiety to the whispered plan of meetings, at whatever place her liege lord intended to take her during the autumn; and husbands were assiduously looking after—not their own but—the wives of their friends, and arranging visits at their different chateaux during the partridge and pheasant shooting.

Many a fair cheek had lost its bloom, and many a heart its peace, during the last three months; and many were those, who, now going into the distasteful solitude of a country-house, or the more distasteful amphibious existence of a watering-place, carried with them the memory of blighted hopes and remembered errors, while, perhaps, the selfish men who had led to both, were antici-

pating with pleasure a total change of scene, and an escape from the shackles, either imposed, or threatened to be imposed, on their freedom. Long bills and long faces were prevalent; husbands looked sulky, fathers morose, mothers grave, and young wives melancholy. But, alas! for those who wished to become wives, and saw the day of departure draw near, with the conviction that the part of the old proverb which states that "man proposes and God disposes," is untrue now-a-days; for never were men so little given to proposing, except it be at *écarté*,—they, indeed, were in a most pitiable state!

How did the sombre perspective of the paternal mansion, with its diurnal occupations, and long drowsy evenings, alarm them! The grassy parks, with their noble old trees, spreading their umbrageous shadows over herds of of browsing deer or glossy kine,—the interminable avenues, across which glided the timid hare, or the woods through which flew the startled pheasants, were thought of with dread, as compared with the parched and dusky park; where, if neither shade nor freshness was to be obtained, beaux were to be met with, and hope might be indulged. But to return from young ladies in general, to one young lady in particular, Emily saw the close of the season arrive with much the same feelings that she would have left a brilliant *fête*—the regret of its departure cheered by the belief of its certain renewal. Her cheek was a shade more pale, her eyes a degree less brilliant than three months before; for late hours, heated rooms, and the rational mode—universally adopted during a London season—of running through a course of balls, routs, operas, concerts, and plays, that would impair the most robust constitution, had somewhat weakened hers, and rendered a temporary retirement necessary, if not desirable. She nevertheless quitted London the undeposed sovereign of its beauties, having reigned, and been acknowledged as such, a whole season,—an empire that few beauties have so long sustained undisputed.

We pass over the long autumn, and longer winter, spent in the country, which intervened between her first and second season in London, lest our readers might find the detail of it as dull as our heroine did the reality. Accustomed to the factitious excitement of continual amusement, and as continual admiration, the monotony of a country life appeared insupportably dull to one who possessed so very few resources within herself, for rendering the flight of the arch enemy, Time, less tediously felt. Dancing, the only accomplishment she had acquired, was nearly useless, when its practice was only called into action at an occasional dull county ball, to be opened with a still more dull county member, or provincial dandy. Books she was debarred from enjoying by the prohibition of her mother, who left but few, and those not of an amusing character, within her reach; so that it is not to be wondered at, that poor Emily sighed for the return of Spring, when she anticipated again enjoying the same round of brilliant amusements

and intoxicating admiration, that had rendered the past season so delightful to her. It is true there were moments—nay, more than moments—hours, when wandering through the fine scenery of her home, her heart acknowledged the charms of all-beauteous nature, and her imagination revelled in them. The velvet lawns, the fields enamelled with flowers, the trees waving their leafy honours over grassy mounds, rendered almost impervious to the sunbeams that tried to pierce through them, and the rising woods, whose dense green seemed as a verdant wall, excluding all, save the blue mountains, and bluer skies that rose above them. The wild birds sending forth notes of joy, and the rich flowers exhaling perfume,—each, and all of these had charms for Emily; but she wanted some one to whom she could say how charming all this was; or, perhaps, she wanted still more that cultivation of mind that would have enabled her to derive a still greater enjoyment—an all-sufficing sense of peaceful happiness, and gratitude from such scenes and objects. The poetry of such scenes was slumbering in her soul as music in an instrument, but it required a master hand to awaken it.

Behold her once more whirled into the giddy vortex of fashion, fully counting on being again, as formerly, its idol.

Alas! she was now a deposed sovereign; another, not a fairer, but a *newer* votary, was proclaimed the reigning beauty of the season; and Emily found herself thrown down from the throne, to which, only a few fleeting months before, she had been elevated by the fickle crowd, who now offered to her successor the homage that had been hers, and burned the incense that had smoked on the altars raised to her charms, on that erected to those of another. Her *coiffure* was no longer adopted by other *belles*; her peculiarities no longer imitated; robes were no more named after her; songs no longer written on, nor new gallopades nor waltzes dedicated to her. Fancy-fairs hailed her no more as their magnet of attraction, and annuals sought not her countenance. In short, she had fallen into the sear and yellow leaf,—her occupation was gone!

Emily looked into the mirror to see if this strange change in her late brilliant position arose from a diminution in the beauty that had achieved her empire: but for once a mirror deceived not; for it gave back from its polished surface the same lovely face, only wearing a more *reflective* expression than it exhibited the year before. London now became irksome to her; wherever she went she saw her successor receiving the homage so lately hers, or heard the most exaggerated reports of her charms and their influence.

“I too was a beauty!” sighed poor Emily, in the solitude of her dressing-room; when, with more pensiveness than the Arcadians are represented on perusing the inscription on the tomb in Poussin’s delineation of one of the fairest scenes in Arcady the Blest, she contemplated her own image in the mirror.

“But of what advantage was my beauty?” soliloquised Emily; “it won me a short-lived admiration, it is true, but it did not win!

me love." And then followed the recollection of Henry Wilmot, mingled with a feminine curiosity, in which a stronger feeling than mere womanly vanity might be traced, of whether *he* too admired the new beauty? "Ah!" sighed Emily, "had I not been dazzled by the general admiration I excited, I might have created a real sentiment of affection in some worthy heart; but *idols* meet with more public worship than private devotion."

Emily now began to *think*, a mental operation to which few young ladies of seventeen are much prone, and fewer still have leisure or capability for, in a London season. Seldom is an acquaintance formed with thought, without its ripening into a *friendship*—the most advantageous perhaps of all those which beauty ever forms. She sought books, and found in the good ones placed in her hands by a few acquaintances, whom her unpretending simplicity of character and gentleness of manners had captivated, a source of inexhaustible interest and delight. Her mind quickly expanded, and her natural acuteness enabled her to comprehend, as it were intuitively, and at a grasp, the knowledge that a neglected education had hitherto debarred her from. The charming *naïveté* of her remarks, and the natural good sense that distinguished them, attracted those whom her ephemeral celebrity had kept at a distance; and, from their conversation, she derived at once instruction and delight. Her thirst for information was only to be satisfied by deep draughts of the Pierean spring, and the facility with which she acquired knowledge, soon became apparent. Her countenance gained new charms by the expression of intelligence it now wore; and she ceased to sigh at the recollection—nay, almost to remember the days of her vain triumph, with regret, or to lament its cessation.

Among the persons who frequented the house of Lady Mansel, was Dr. Herbert, a man of singular skill in his profession, and as singular for the vast erudition with which his mind was stored, and the readiness with which its attainments were brought forth in his conversation, which was at once profound yet perspicacious, imaginative, and brilliant. Dr. Herbert was scarcely more *recherché* as a physician, than as an instructive and amusing companion: his opinion on literary points was generally respected; and, while prescribing for the bodily ailments of his patients, he was never inattentive to the mental ones, and could always name the work most likely to afford amusement, or beguile the tedium of convalescence. It was the good fortune of Emily to attract the attention of this clever and worthy man, and to inspire a warm interest in his breast. His frequent visits to the mother, who was, or fancied herself in want of his skill, gave him constant opportunities of conversing with the daughter. He supplied her with well chosen books, and elicited her sentiments on them, drawing forth her dormant powers of mind, and, by supplying it only with healthful food, strengthened while cultivating it. Dr. Herbert was also the physician of Mrs. Wilmot, and happened,

inadvertently, while sitting with that lady one day, to mention what a charming person Miss Mansel was.

"Yes, very beautiful, I understand," said Mrs. Wilmot;—"but uninformed—a mere beauty."

"But a very unspoilt one, mother," observed her son, who was looking over the morning papers; "for I never saw a girl so much admired betray so little symptom of vanity."

It was now the turn of Dr. Herbert to speak, and he pronounced an eloquent eulogium on Emily: he admitted how grievously her education had been neglected, and dwelt with animation on the good sense that led her to apply, with such patient diligence, to repair this misfortune, and the natural ability that rendered this task so easy and successful. In short, the good doctor said all that he thought, and nothing more than his *protégée* deserved; and as he was known to be no enthusiast, his opinion was respected by his hearers, one of whom was but too well disposed to believe all that could be asserted in favour of the beautiful girl he had danced with two or three times the previous season, and avoided ever after. Why had he avoided her? Ah, there lies the mystery!—a mystery that often puzzled and pained the fair Emily to solve, but which, if she had solved, the pain would not have been diminished.

Attracted by her beauty, Henry Wilmot had sought an introduction to Miss Mansel, though with a preconceived prejudice against professed beauties, that required all the unaffected modesty of Emily's demeanour to conquer sufficiently, for him to seek her acquaintance. He attributed to maidenly reserve and youthful timidity, the monosyllabic replies with which she met all his remarks on the last new novel, or the light literature of the day. He held in dread, if not in horror, the well read young ladies of the modern school, who read all, judge all, and pronounce on all, with courage at least, if not often with judgment; yet still he could have wished that the lovely creature he was addressing had been less reserved in expressing her opinions; for he thought, and with reason, that there is no better criterion for judging of a woman, than by the books she prefers, and the passages in them that she remembers. He consoled himself with the belief, that so intelligent a countenance could not belong to a dull or weak intellect, and that on a further acquaintance, her reserve would subside, and permit him to form a better estimation of her mental qualifications.

At this epoch, dining one day at Lady Tyrconnel's, where the beauty of Miss Mansel was the subject of conversation, some one remarked that that young lady was very deficient in conversation, never replying but in monosyllables.

"That is not very extraordinary," observed Lady Tyrconnel; "for her late governess is now with my daughters; and a very clever, intelligent person she is; and she tells me, that Lady Mansel prohibited her second daughter's being instructed in any of the accomplishments taught young ladies, dancing alone excepted, fearful that the application necessary for acquiring them might

impair her beauty; so that the poor girl literally knows nothing, being only sufficiently instructed to prevent her speaking ungrammatically in French or English. Mademoiselle Lavasseur declares, that since her infancy the poor young person has heard of nothing but her beauty, and that consequently, she is *bête comme Dieu sait quoi*. Lady Westonville, the elder sister, not being a beauty, was allowed to acquire all that mademoiselle could teach her, aided by the best masters in London; so she is, I understand, a prodigy of accomplishments."

As Lady Tyrconnel was known to be neither peculiarly ill-natured, nor of unstrict veracity, had no daughters to bring out, whose success in society Emily might have endangered, and was herself past the age of being either envious or jealous of the beauty of the season, Henry Wilmot listened to her statement with painful interest, and a perfect belief in its correctness. Now were the monosyllabic replies of Emily accounted for, and the resolution formed, which he afterwards adhered to, of avoiding her; for a merely beautiful girl, without mental cultivation, was, in his opinion, little better than an automaton, and one he should blush to love; though to love her he felt a very growing inclination. Dr. Herbert's description renewed all this feeling, and the first time he encountered Emily at a ball, he, to her surprise and pleasure, asked her to dance.

The *gallope* over, seated by the side of his fair partner, Henry Wilmot talked on the common topics of the day, and no longer was he answered by concise negatives or affirmatives, though her manner was quite as far removed from that unbecoming freedom which marks so many young ladies, as from the stupid commonplaces that appertain to the conversation of others of the sex. Her observations were characterised by good sense, refined taste, and that delicate tact which is a sure proof of mental superiority, and were delivered in words at once well chosen and elegant, and with a tone and manner equally removed from an awkward reserve as from levity or boldness. Henry Wilmot became fascinated, and sought the hand of Emily at every ball during the season: while she never opened a book without wondering what Mr. Wilmot would think of it, or dressed for a *fête*, without hoping that her toilet would please him. It was towards the close of the season, at a *déjeûné* given to five hundred friends by the Marchioness of Waldershaw at her beautiful villa, that Henry Wilmot declared himself the lover of Emily, and sought her permission to address her mother. She had known, for some time, that he loved her—for what woman, however young, remains long ignorant of a passion she has inspired? and, least of all, when she partakes it. Yet this avowal, though it convinced her of what she would have been wretched to doubt, the affection of him to whom she had given her heart even before he asked it, brought a pang that followed the first joyful sensation, almost overpowered by maiden bashfulness, that his declaration filled her soul with.

Emily remembered with dread her mother's often repeated assertion, that never would she grant her hand to any untitled suitor, whatever his wealth might be, and that nothing less than a marquise, at least, would satisfy her views. Knowing this, and knowing also the obstinacy of her mother's character, why—why had she encouraged the attentions of Mr. Wilmot? and why had she allowed herself to love one whose suit her mother never would sanction? These were questions that Emily asked herself, alas! too late. The mischief was done, and her heart shrank before the prospect that presented itself to her mind. How was she to tell Henry that nothing short of a strawberry-leaf coronet could satisfy her mother's views? And yet, was it not better to tell him so, in kind and sorrowing words, than let the avowal come in harsh and imperious words from her mother? Henry Wilmot's fortune was so large, and his family so ancient, that it never occurred to him that Lady Mansel could reject his proposal; hence the embarrassment and pensive air of Emily alarmed and almost offended him. She broke her mother's sentiments to him with all the tact that so peculiarly belonged to her, and, to console him, promised that to no one save him, should the little hand that trembled in his ever belong.

In short, Emily left the garden of Waldershaw-house, with plighted vows, though she sighed as she reflected how remote was the period at which (if ever) she could become Henry Wilmot's wife. She saw, in *triste* perspective, long, long years of hope deferred and sickness of heart; with candidates for her hand, encouraged by her mother, and repulsed by herself, and the consequent discord her repulses would be sure to cause, imbittering her life. All this, and more, Emily foreboded, for she had imagination as well as sense; and never did a young lady seek her pillow the night of the first positive avowal of love, from the man she prefers, with more sadness than did she.

"Yes," sighed Emily, Shakspeare was right—

"The course of true love never did run smooth,
But either it was different in blood—
Or else misgrafted, in respect of years;
Or else it stood upon the choice of friends—
Or if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
That (in a spleen) unfolds both heav'n and earth;
And, ere a man hath power to say behold,
The jaws of darkness to devour it up—
So quick bright things come to confusion."

"And now mine will be the dreary lot of dragging on existence with a heart and hand plighted to one whom my mother never will sanction."

Parents find it difficult to understand that the creature, who

for years was obedient to their commands, and dependent on their will, should, on arriving at womanhood, refuse compliance with the first, and assert their independence of the second. They forget that their offspring, in ceasing to be children, are prone to entertain sentiments and opinions that are often totally opposite to theirs, and are jealous of the freedom of volition, if not of action, that they seek to display.

To permit daughters to think, feel, or act for themselves, is far from agreeable to the generality of parents; who feel it, as one may imagine the parent bird of a nest to do when she first sees her young ones take wing and then fly away for ever, while *she* is left to brood over the forsaken nest. It never entered into the weak mind of Lady Mansel, that *her* daughter could for a moment dispute her wishes, and this conviction she too often betrayed in the avowal of her plans and expectations for Emily's future prospects, to admit of her remaining ignorant of her mother's imagined supremacy not only over her conduct but her destiny. Luckily for her daughter, Lady Mansel seldom attended balls and routs, so that she was confided to the care of a *chaperone*, who observed not, or if she observed, reported not to *madame mère*, the constant attentions of Mr. Wilmot to Emily.

A visit was now to be paid to Lady Westonville, the first since her marriage; as that lady had not seen her mother or sister since that period, Lord Westonville not having quitted his seat in the country since he had taken his bride there. Melancholy was the parting of Emily and Henry Wilmot, yet she resisted his urgent entreaties, and the secret inclinations of her own heart, to keep up a clandestine correspondence with him. When were they to meet again? was a question that both scarcely dared to ask themselves, for the *next spring* seemed at an interminable distance from August, to those who loved, and must be through these long intervening months separated. Both felt—but Emily's woman's heart much more poignantly—the certainty that day after day, week after week, and month after month, must roll away before they could again meet. To breathe the same air, to be sure that their eyes would encounter in the streets or in the park, each and every day, had hitherto given happiness; then the balls, routs, and concerts, where they could always exchange a few words, and where Emily could, and regularly did, *à la dérobée*, give Henry the *bouquet* she had worn—had kept alive hope and strengthened affection, and was much to hearts that loved like theirs,—and now all this was to cease.

PART II.

THE journey to Westonville Castle was as dull as a journey could be, undertaken by a mother who thought only of two objects: the first, the pleasure of seeing in her own baronial castle, in all its feudal splendour, the daughter for whom she had secured the rank and privileges of nobility; and the second, the expectation of soon

seeing her second daughter even more brilliantly placed: while Emily thought only that every mile they went took her still further from him she loved, and from whom, long—long months would separate her. That either of her daughters could be unhappy under the circumstances she desired for them, their mother would not allow herself to doubt; for grandeur and wealth were, in her opinion, the only real sources of terrestrial happiness.

But as all journeys, whether agreeable or otherwise, must have an end, the close of the second day brought Lady Mansel and Emily to the massive gates of Westonville Castle; and as a glorious sunset tinged the well wooded landscape before them, and shone on the coroneted griffins that surmounted the columns of the gates, the elated mother smiled with complacency, and even condescended to acknowledge by a stately bow, the low one of the gray-headed porter, as he threw back the gates to give her carriage entrance. Every step, as they approached the castle, increased the happiness of Lady Mansel, for every object presented to her sight spoke of grandeur, and above all, of feudal grandeur. The inequalities of the richly wooded park, here rising into abrupt acclivities crowned with oaks, coeval with the castle, and there spreading out into green and velvet lawns, through which serpentine a clear and rapid river, spanned by a handsome stone bridge of one arch, that might have vied with that of the famed Rialto at Venice, for its beauty and solidity. Herds of deer were browsing around, and flocks of sheep, and droves of cows, were seen in the distance, winding their way to the homestead.

The repose and freshness of the scene was soothing to the feelings of Emily, and as she caught a view of the green vistas, past which the carriage was rapidly whirled, she mentally promised herself the enjoyment of many a ramble among them. Nothing increases a love of rural scenery, or enhances its enjoyment so much, as a love of reading. Emily, during the last few months, had acquired a passion for it, and the books judiciously selected by Dr. Herbert, and afterwards chosen by Henry Wilmot, had been perused with an avidity, and were remembered with a distinctness, known only to those born with an inherent love of literature, and long debarred from the power of gratifying their taste for it. Every fair scene in nature now excited new feelings of delight in Emily; she traced in them the sources of inspiration of the poets who had the most captivated her fancy; and in the thousand nameless but delicious sensations they awakened in her breast, and the thoughts to which they gave rise, Emily was herself a poet, though totally unconscious of it.

“How different is Westonville Castle from the generality of noblemen’s seats!” exclaimed Lady Mansel, as she caught the first view of its lofty towers and massive buttresses, rising through stately trees. “This is indeed a castle, and a feudal one; how unlike the modern puny buildings, misnamed castles, with their white stone fronts and tiny towers, looking like card-castles or baby-

houses for over-grown puppets. How happy Priscilla must be, as the mistress of such a residence !”

The good lady's soliloquy was interrupted by their arriving at the drawbridge, and as the carriage rattled over it with a stunning noise, that nearly deafened Emily, she could hear her mother's voice, expressing her admiration of even this somewhat disagreeable remains of baronial grandeur.

Lord Westonville met them in the entrance-hall, all courtesy ; and Lady Westonville having hastily embraced her mother, was in Emily's arms, where she was long and fondly pressed, before the latter had time to look around her. Not so Lady Mansel : she saw, remarked, and praised all, to the evident satisfaction of her noble son-in-law, as he led her along, Lady Westonville and her sister following.

“ How glad I am that you are come, dear Emily !” said the mistress of the castle. “ This is such a dull place that I am *ennuyé* nearly to extinction ; no balls, no concerts—only think, Emily, no concerts !—you look incredulous, but positively it is true. No one to applaud when one sings, or to understand when one has conquered a difficulty in music. *Apropos* of difficulties—only fancy when I had been practising for several hours to make myself perfect in a most difficult cavatina, which I at length mastered, and appealed to Lord Westonville if it was not very difficult, his coolly answering that it was, but that he only wished it had been impossible ; and when I told him that it was a very uncivil remark, he said he supposed I, of course, knew who had originally made it. I naturally concluded it was himself, and told him so ; when—would you believe it, Emily ?—he looked very ill-natured, and said that if half the time given to conquer such difficulties as the one I had just achieved was bestowed in acquiring useful information, men would more frequently find rational companions than scientific performers in their wives, and that I should not be ignorant that it was the celebrated Dr. Johnson who had originally made the observation he had repeated.”

The splendid library into which Lord Westonville led Lady Mansel, followed by Emily and her sister, drew forth *expressions* of admiration in Lady Mansel, and excited the *feeling* in Emily. “ How can any one be dull,” thought she, “ with such resources as this room contains, within her reach ?” but she sighed at remembering how little calculated her sister's education had been to enable her to appreciate its treasures, and mentally promised that she would use every endeavour to open to her that fountain of peace and unalloyed enjoyment—reading—whence she had herself derived so much advantage.

“ Have there been many brilliant private concerts this season ? ” demanded Lady Westonville of her mother, almost as soon as they were seated ; a question that brought a smile, half supercilious and half pitying, to the lip of her lord.

“ Name not concerts to me, my dear Priscilla,” replied Lady Mansel ; “ the very name makes me nervous.”

Lord Westonville looked applause, and said—"Indeed, I do not wonder, for one is positively *ennuyé* to death by them. Every day of the season brings at least half a dozen letters from *signors* who play on one string, or who have invented an additional one to the regular number; from prodigies from every land, with most *unpronounceable* names, and *unbearable* performances, who come to England, that *cul-de-sac* and *el dorado* for charlatans to change their notes for ours, and laugh at our credulity in believing in their wonderful attractions."

"How can you say so?" said Lady Westonville; "but you have no soul for music."

"No, I reserve my soul for something worthier; but though I have no *soul* for music, as you say, Priscilla, I have an *ear*, and that has been often most marvellously offended by the wars waged against harmony by many of the *signors* and *signoras* who come over to discover the badness of our climate, the obtuseness of our ears, and the gullibility of our natures, and go back to their own countries with their easily acquired wealth, to laugh at our folly, and pronounce that there is no nation that knows so little of music as ours, or pays so extravagantly for it."

"You are always declaiming against music," said Lady Westonville.

"No, you mistake, Priscilla; it is the abuse, and not the use of music to which I object. I think good music a high source of gratification, and a great humaniser of the mind and temper."

"But you object, as I do, my dear lord," chimed in Lady Mansel, with an air of self-complacency, "to being pestered all day, and every day, with beseeching letters to honour *signor* this, or *signora* that's concert with your patronage; and at having, heaven only knows how many half-guineas to pay for tickets one never used, and to people one hopes never to see."

"But, dear mamma, you used to like concerts nearly as well as I do; how comes it, then, that you have lost your taste for them?"

"I never liked *public* concerts, Priscilla, I can assure you; and only liked *private* ones for the pleasure of seeing all the mothers of my acquaintance dying with envy and jealousy, at your so far excelling their daughters."

Emily blushed at the stupid avowal; Lady Westonville looked pleased at having her past triumphs referred to; and her lord's elevated eye-brows, and a suppressed smile that played over his lips, denoted that his favourable opinion of his mother-in-law was not increased by her candour.

While looking over the newspapers, at a late breakfast next day, Lord Westonville announced that "his majesty had been graciously pleased to create William Henry Wilmot, Earl of Dunkeld, Marquis of Dunkeld, with remainder to his son, Henry George Wilmot, Viscount Finmore, and in case of his dying without male issue lawfully begotten, the marquissate to descend to the next male heir, and to his heirs."

“How unaccountable,” said Lord Westonville, “that one of the oldest of the Scots earls could condescend to accept a new made title; for my part, I cannot understand such a want of self-respect,” and he drew himself up with an air of dignity. “I have heard that he found great difficulty in persuading the premier to consent to the patent’s being extended beyond his son, but patience and perseverance have accomplished it.”

Emily felt the blood mount to her cheeks at this allusion to Henry Wilmot; but as no one of the party were aware of the interest she took in him, her blushes passed unnoticed.

“Well, I am almost as great an admirer of ancient titles as your lordship can be,” said Lady Mansel, “of which I gave a proof in making poor dear Sir Hildebrand refuse to be made a baron, when his late majesty was graciously pleased to offer to bestow that dignity on him. ‘No, Sir Hildebrand,’ said I, when he showed me a letter from the premier, ‘let us not be among the new made nobility; I prefer being the wife of the oldest baronet in England to being that of the youngest baron;’ nevertheless a marquise, added to so ancient an earldom, is not to be slighted, and I think Lord Dunkeld was right in accepting it.”

“Mamma has not forgotten her predilection for strawberry-leaved coronets,” thought Emily, with a sigh, “and would be now more disposed to be civil to Henry on account of this remote chance of possessing one.” Lady Mansel having various letters of importance (as she said) to write, but which, in fact, were merely epistles to several of her female friends, who having been less fortunate than herself in finding magnificent feudal castles for their daughters, she was impatient to vex and mortify, by a description of that which hailed hers for its mistress. Many were the letters, dated “Westonville Castle,” and sealed with a seal having a similar inscription, that left her fair and fat hands by the next post, in which the most pompous descriptions of the place, and the brilliant position of her daughter were given,—every line of which she knew would speak daggers to the *dear* friends to whom they were addressed. While her ladyship was penning her florid description, and Lord Westonville was taking his accustomed ride, the sisters were left to enjoy a *tête-à-tête*.

“Well, dear Emily,” said Lady Westonville, intrenching herself in her *bergère*, “what a consolation it is for me, to have some one to whom I can tell how bored I am in this fine castle, that mamma seems to think so charming, and that I would willingly barter for the smallest house in Upper Brook or Grosvenor-street, or even one in a less agreeable position. I remember once hearing that tiresome and pedantic Lady Roseath say, that in solitude, however beautiful, one always wanted some person to whom one could say, how beautiful it was; but I think one wants much more to have some person to whom one can say how dull—how insufferably dull it is!” and she sank into the luxurious chair, with a look of exhaustion, and a half-repressed yawn, that indicated the *ennui* to which she had long been an unresisting victim.

"I do all that woman can do to abridge 'the leaden-footed hours,' to which I cannot give wings," continued Lady Westonsville; "*par parenthèse*, the *conchetti* is, like most Italian ones, pretty; and I met it the other day in a song in the last new opera,—*mais hélas! quoi faire?* One can't stay in bed *much* after two in the afternoon, nor remain much longer than two hours dressing; that brings me to half-past four, when I take what old dowagers and nurses call *an airing*, which lasts till half-past six, through a park that looks as if only made for herds of fat deer to browse in, or through a village where all the men, women, and children, make bows and courtseys to me; then I come home to dress for a drowsy *tête-à-tête* dinner, with *mio caro sposo*, or a nearly as dull a one, with a few of our delectable country neighbours. Heigh-ho! Emily, who would be a *dame châtelaine*, to endure such a vegetating kind of existence as mine?"

"But your music, Priscilla; how comes it that you have left that, which used to fill up so many hours of your time, out of the catalogue of your diurnal occupations?"

"Simply, *cara sorella*, because it no longer forms one of them."

"Is it possible, that having arrived at such rare excellence, you have left off your music?"

"Such is, however, the fact. How was it possible to continue to devote whole hours to its practice with no eager ears to listen, or hands to applaud—nay, more, with a husband who looked like a martyr all the time I was displaying my skill on the harp or piano-forte? As well might you expect an orator to go through a long oration, or a professed wit to utter his *bon mots*, without a soul to listen, or a *danseuse* to ascend in air (as we have seen the sylph-like Queen of Dance, Taglioni do) without the beating of white gloves, as me to practise without the cheering prospect of applause."

"But do you not read?"

"Oh, yes! all the musical reviews in the papers, the accounts of all the concerts and operas, and critiques on the singers."

"You don't read any of the light literature of the day then?"

"Light do you call it? *Ma foi!* I find it monstrous heavy. Novels on fashionable life are so impertinent and untrue, that I have no patience with them. They make us talk nonsense *below* our intellects, or epigrammatic witty sentences *above* them. You know how monotonously insipid is the routine of fashionable life, leaving positively nothing to describe; yet the modern novelists paint their views of it much as the artists paint transparencies, colouring their pictures much more coarsely than a faithful copy of the reality ought to admit."

"*Belle lettre* and poetry have surely charms, Priscilla?"

"*Hélas! ma très chère sœur*, I have not yet discovered them; for I have merely dipped lightly into either."

"Let me, dear Priscilla, make you better acquainted with them;

for though I have only recently cultivated their intimacy myself, I long to induce you to like them ; you, in return, shall teach me the elementary parts of the science of music, which at present I love, as one ignorant of botany does sweet-scented plants, because they *are* sweet, but without any more knowledge."

" *Crede mia*, you will find me but an unapt scholar, *sorella* ; nevertheless, I will submit to your wishes."

The two sisters forthwith commenced a system of mutual instruction ; and as neither were deficient in natural ability, their progress was rapid. Lady Westonville soon became quite as fond of reading as Emily ; and even when Lady Mansel's departure left her in solitude, she no longer felt it, as hitherto, irksome. Her husband having discovered her newly acquired taste for study, recommended to her attention the works most likely to increase it ; and being a well-educated man, opened the stores of his mind in conversation with her, instead of, as formerly, talking only of trivial subjects. Mutual respect and companionship sprung up between them ; and her accomplishments were now considered as most agreeable accessories to their evening hours, because no longer looked upon by her who possessed them as the whole and sole object of a woman's life, but as a means of rendering some portion of it a source of delight to herself and others.

Lady Mansel and Emily proceeded from Westonville Castle to Worthing, where they intended sojourning some weeks, for the benefit of the sea air, which had been recommended for Emily, whose drooping health and depressed spirits had lately excited the fears of her mother.

Emily Mansel was not a love-sick, weak girl, abandoning herself to a hopeless passion, though it must be confessed, her attachment to Henry Wilmot was almost without hope :—no, she struggled to bear up against the depressing conviction, that her youth, if not her life, might be wasted in hope deferred, and her heart sickened at the cheerless prospect. During her walks on the beach, attended only by her maid and a footman, she daily met a group that excited her interest, though the persons who composed it were unknown to her. It consisted of a pale and languid-looking man, of about forty, supported by pillows, and wheeled in a merlin chair. By his side walked a lady of singular beauty, in whose expressive countenance the traces of care and anxiety were deeply marked ; and on a donkey, attended by a male and female servant, was seated a lovely boy of three years old, whose rosy cheeks and short crisp curls, resembling those of the antique statue of the infant Hercules, denoted more than ordinary vigour. The appearance of this healthful child formed a painful contrast with that of the invalid, whose eyes followed the boy with an expression of pride and pleasure, that betrayed the paternal tie that united them ; while the lady looked from the father to the son with an air of melancholy, which told that the fearful dissimilarity in their aspects had not escaped her attention,

Each day that Emily encountered this group the cheek of the invalid grew paler, the eyes more eager in their glances, and, as usual, they followed the robust boy, who bestrode his donkey with as much hilarity as Bacchus is represented to display when astride his wine-cask. He would try to urge the animal's speed by applying the ornamented whip, of which he seemed not a little vain, to its shoulder, crying out boldly—"See, see, papa, how I make it go! do leave that nasty chair, and mount a horse, and come with me."

"Pray, my lord, don't hit Neddy," cried the panting nurse, who with difficulty kept by the side of the ambling donkey; while the delighted parents looked at their child with their hearts in their eyes, as his profuse curls, agitated by the quick movement of the animal, wantoned in the air, and were blown against his rosy cheeks.

"How like he is to your portrait at home, dearest!" said the lady, with a sigh; "it must have been painted when you were his age."

"Would that I dare hope, Mary, to see a boy of his," answered the father; "but that is not to be; I shall be in the vault of my ancestors long—long before our boy has ceased to be a child."

Emily passed rapidly on, that she might not be a listener to a conversation, every word of which, though totally unacquainted with the interlocutors, had deeply pained her; her heart was filled with pity for them, and a sentiment of self-reproach mingled with it, as she reflected how much more to be deplored was the position of the lady she had passed than was her own, for in one case, even hope was denied, the pallid face of the invalid too well denoting that he was fast approaching "that bourne, whence no traveller returns." She left the road to enter a nursery-garden, her thoughts still occupied with the unknown group she had passed, when her ears were assailed by loud cries from the road, which was parallel with the garden.

She rushed to the hedge that divided them, and beheld a stage-coach dragged along with fearful velocity, while on the road lay a blood-stained mass, round which were collected half a dozen people; and female shrieks were mingled with the loud voices of men.

That something dreadful had occurred she felt certain, and her heart sickened with apprehension. She proceeded as fast as her trembling limbs would bear her to the spot, and became nearly transfixed with horror, as she beheld the lovely woman she had so lately passed on the road, clasping to her breast, in a state of distraction, the crushed and gory corse of the lately lovely child she had seen on the donkey but a few minutes before; his golden and luxuriant curls dabbled with blood, and his cherub face so mutilated, as to retain no trace of its beauty.

The unhappy father, who had witnessed the terrible catastrophe, was seized at the moment with an attack of paralysis, and his countenance was awful to behold, for it was evident he was still in possession of his mental faculties, though his physical ones had nearly all sunk under the blow he had just received. Emily flew to support the distracted mother, who still clasped the bleeding corse

of her child, and seeing the servants incapable of thinking, and nearly of acting, she commanded them to conduct the wretched parents to the house of the nurseryman, while she despatched a messenger to Worthing for a physician, and a carriage to move the unhappy pair to their home.

The sobbing nurse told Emily, that his little lordship, as she styled the child, had persevered in hitting the donkey with his whip, until the animal became restive, diverged from the footpath where they were leading him, and a stage-coach, rapidly driven, coming suddenly up at the corner of the road, the leaders shied at the donkey, and by a violent plunge brought the unwieldy vehicle over the ass and its luckless rider, crushing both to death in an instant.

While Emily was supporting the fainting mother, who had sunk exhausted into the arms of one of the attendants, a travelling chariot approached rapidly, and was stopped by the crowd, which had already collected. A well-known voice exclaiming—"Oh, God! it is—it is my cousin!" struck on the ear of Emily; and in an instant after Henry Wilmot was assisting her to bear the fainting lady to the nurseryman's house. Here a new trial awaited him; for speechless, and apparently dying, they found the Marquis of Dunkeld, for he it was, who, it was evident, recognised his cousin Henry Wilmot, and looked at him with an expression of unutterable anguish.

"Oh, Emily! dear Emily! what a scene for you to witness," exclaimed Henry, as she bathed the temples of Lady Dunkeld with water; and he gently removed her lifeless son from her convulsive grasp, and then pressed again and again the palsied hand of the father, who vainly struggled to articulate. Medical aid soon arrived—doctor after doctor coming to offer assistance,—but alas! their efforts were unavailing, for Lord Dunkeld breathed his last before his unhappy wife had recovered from the swoon into which she had fallen. Emily supported her in the carriage in which she was placed, nor left her until she was laid in her bed. Her affection for Henry Wilmot was immeasurably enhanced by observing the tenderness and attention he lavished on the hapless widow of his cousin, and the deep regret he evinced for the fatal events she had witnessed. Before she left the house of mourning, she promised to return speedily again, to watch over the unhappy lady, so deeply bereaved; and her lover felt more than ever attached and devoted to her, as he witnessed her sensibility and soothing kindness to his afflicted relative.

Innumerable were the questions of Lady Mansel when her daughter had returned, as to all the particulars of the fearful catastrophe that had occurred, with even the most minute details, of which she wished to be made acquainted; and, when a burst of tears, which Emily could not control, as her obtuse mother dwelt on the particulars, had relieved her excited feelings, she was not a little shocked to hear her parent express her wonder that she could

thus weep for utter strangers. She made some objections to Emily's immuring herself in a sick-room with a tearful mourner; but yielded assent at length, not, as her daughter believed, to the pleadings of humanity, but, if the truth must be confessed, because she recollected that the mourner was a marchioness, and that attentions paid to her at such a period, would probably lead to a friendship that might considerably extend her visiting list, and knowledge of a portion of the nobility with whom she had hitherto formed only a slight acquaintance. Lady Mansel's concerts and balls were always fully and fashionably attended; and she, in return, was engaged to most of the parties given to some three or five hundred persons every season by great ladies, when all on their porter's list were invited, and many amongst the number who never were seen at the *recherché* reunions in the same mansions. Lady Mansel was always one of the crowd, but never was she invited to a dinner where cabinet ministers and ambassadors, with a sprinkling of the *élite* of London, were to be found. She was never seen at a *petit souper* after the opera or Vauxhall, or at private theatricals at Monmouthshire-house, and felt rather indignant at coming in contact with the quintessence of fashion only in crowds. Here then was an excellent opportunity of establishing a friendship with one of the leaders of *haut ton*, and she determined it should not be lost.

Emily devoted many hours of every day to Lady Dunkeld, and had the consolation of finding that her presence was most soothing to that lady's feelings; and when Henry Wilmot, now Marquis of Dunkeld, left Worthing to accompany the remains of his relatives to their last home, he entreated Emily to continue her kind attentions to his widowed cousin. A similarity of disposition and tastes drew Lady Dunkeld towards her youthful friend, who could sympathise in her sorrow, and dwell on the only prospect that can cheer a mourner—that blessed future—where the *lost* are found. Lady Dunkeld had been for some months prepared for a fatal termination to the malady of her husband, still, with the wilfulness of love, she had refused to believe it was possible that she should lose him so soon; for how difficult is it to believe that a mind still vigorous, and a heart glowing with affection, are to pass away from all they cling to—from all whose happiness they make—even though the frail tenement they occupy, gives warning of its fragility!

But even when the adoring wife permitted herself to believe that the husband of her choice, the preferred lover of her youth, might leave her on earth a bereaved and desolate widow, still her blooming, her beautiful boy was before her, with health glowing on his dimpled cheek, sparkling in his clear bright eye, and displaying itself in every movement of his vigorous frame. *He*, at least, would live to cheer her wounded heart and support his ancient name; but now, father and son were both in one hour snatched from her for ever, and she was left with only the memory of the past, and the blessed future to support her. She would sit the whole

day with the portraits of her husband and son before her, telling Emily, who listened with pitying interest, of all the details of their goodness, and all the endearing peculiarities so fondly dwelt on by the mourner. The marked books and manuscripts of Lord Dunkeld, with his gloves, his pencils, and pen, were ever near her, and the toys of her lost boy, were never out of her sight. She was thus surrounded by all that could keep them alive in her memory; and the dwelling on them, to one who *could* sympathise in her feelings, seemed to pour a balm on her sorrows.

As soon as the Marquis of Dunkeld had performed the last sad duties to his deceased relatives, he went back to Worthing to visit his widowed cousin. Perhaps the prospect of meeting Emily increased his impatience to return, for however good are men, even the best require some selfish motive to induce them to seek the house of mourning. Emily was leaving Lady Dunkeld's residence to proceed to her own, when she met the marquis, who had left his carriage at the inn. He insisted on accompanying her home, nor could he resist addressing her in the language of love, entreating her permission to lay his proposals before her mother, that he might at least be admitted as an accepted suitor, during the months they both deemed it necessary should elapse before they met at the altar. They had just come in sight of Lady Mansel's residence, when Emily assented to this request, and the spot being a retired one, and Lord Dunkeld deeming that they were unseen, he could not resist the impulse of pressing her hand to his lips. On the balcony of her house was seated Lady Mansel, with a telescope on a stand before her, through which she was looking, and as they approached it, it became evident that she regarded them with glances in which dissatisfaction was strongly portrayed. Lord Dunkeld left Emily at the door, declaring his intention of calling on her mother next day, and Emily proceeded to the drawing-room, where she found Lady Mansel red with anger, and not disposed to repress its exhibition.

"Emily, I am shocked," said she, "at seeing you, on whose prudence I had such implicit reliance, permit an unknown adventurer to escort you—nay, more, to allow him to use familiarities of the most indecent, the most flagrant kind."

Emily was petrified with astonishment, for truth to say, the pressure of her hand to her lover's lips had been forgotten in the declaration that preceded it.

"Yes, Emily, you may well look ashamed," resumed her mother, "to be seen giving such open encouragement to some nameless adventurer. Why has not the brilliant position of your sister excited a laudable ambition in your mind, to be equally well married? But of one thing be assured, you shall never have *my* consent to admit the attentions of persons, who, if they had been presentable, would long since have been known by me; and now I insist on being made acquainted with the name of the *ignoble* looking individual who escorted you to the door, and had the audacity to kiss your

hand; a disgusting freedom, which I witnessed by means of the telescope, and which shocked me so much, that I could have broken it with pleasure."

It now occurred to Emily, that Henry Wilmot had never been presented to her mother, and that his accession of rank was totally unknown to the old lady; Emily having an unaccountable shyness in naming it to her, from thinking that she might attribute the frequency of her visits to the widowed marchioness, to some matrimonial view on her cousin, for Lady Mansel was one of those over-nice ladies who saw motives in others, that never existed but in her own fertile imaginations.

"I insist on knowing his name, and instantly," said Lady Mansel; "I am persuaded it is a vulgar one, for his appearance denotes it."

Now be it known to our readers, that Lord Dunkeld was not only an extremely handsome man; but remarkable for possessing *l'air noble et distingué*, so that Emily felt vexed at her mother's wilful injustice to his personal attractions, and this piqued her for the first time of her life to disobey her commands, by withholding the name of the unknown.

"I tell you, Emily, that I am determined on knowing his name," repeated she, her anger increasing.

"He will call on you to-morrow, and tell it to you himself," answered Emily, repressing a smile.

"Oh! then I suppose he is coming to demand your hand?" said Lady Mansel, now worked up to a positive rage.

"Yes, mother," was the reply.

"Was there ever such coolness, such audacity?" exclaimed Lady Mansel; "tell me, I command you instantly, tell me his name."

"The Marquis of Dunkeld," answered Emily, quietly.

A fit of tears came to the now joyful mother's relief.

"Come to me, my dear Emily, my sweet child, that I may embrace you! Oh! how happy I feel; and so that very handsome, noble-looking man, is the Marquis of Dunkeld! I thought he must be a person of distinction (quite forgetting all that she had recently asserted to convey her belief of the reverse); and, so to-morrow he is to come and ask my consent, the dear man! I am sure I shall like him excessively (so she did all marquises). Ah! Emily, you are more close than I imagined, for now all your consolatory visits to the widowed marchioness are explained."

Emily's cheeks burned at the indelicacy and injustice of this suspicion. "Well," resumed Lady Mansel, "the old saying is a true one—it's an ill wind that blows nobody good; for had not that poor paralytic marquis died, and the boy been killed, you might never have been a marchioness after all." Shocked and wounded as Emily felt, she knew it would be useless to explain her sentiments to her mother, who would not, or could not, understand them, and who continued from time to time to exclaim—"Ah! Emily! you are very sly, and more close than I took you to be."

The next day Lord Dunkeld was presented in due form to his future *belle-mère*, who graciously accepted his proposals, and the succeeding three days were passed by Lady Mansel in writing letters to all her friends, announcing the brilliant prospects of her daughter. "I have every reason (wrote she to one lady, who had more than once implied her doubts of the wisdom of the system adopted by Lady Mansel in bringing up her daughters) to be satisfied with the result of my system—two more brilliant illustrations of its success could not be looked for, than are found in the Countess of Westonville and the future Marchioness of Dunkeld."

Emily was led to the hymeneal altar, nothing loth, four months after her lover's accession to his title, and is now the happy mother of two boys, and as many girls, who she has decided shall never be brought up on Lady Mansel's system; and Lady Westonville has become an agreeable and rational companion to a kind husband, and an affectionate and judicious mother to a boy and two girls, who enjoy all the blessings of a careful cultivation, without the drudgery and confinement to which her childhood had been exposed.

THE ANTIDOTE TO LOVE.

—————"Oh! we do all offend—
 There's not a day of wedded life, if we
 Count at its close the little, bitter sum
 Of thoughts, and words, and looks unkind and forward,
 Silence that chides, and woundings of the eye—
 But prostrate at each other's feet, we should
 Each night forgiveness ask."

"AND this is no dream, and we are at length in Naples!" said a very lovely woman to her companion, a tall, handsome man of about twenty-eight years of age, and evidently not less than ten years her senior, on whose arm she leant, as they ascended the stairs of the "Grande Bretagne," on the Chiaja, marshalled by the landlord of that excellent hotel, and escorted by their courier.

"Yes, Ellen, here we are at last! Are you satisfied with the *premier coup d'œil*?—does it really answer your expectations?"

"Satisfied! Oh! Henry, what a word!—*Satisfied!*—I am delighted. What an inexpressive face mine must have been not to have told you so fifty times, while we have been descending the hill whence we first caught a view of Naples! The beauty of the buildings, the strange *mélange* of architecture grouped together, the exuberant animation and gaiety of the people, the oriental aspect of many of those we have met, all—all, have delighted me; and the more so, that it is unlike anything that I have ever seen, though not unlike what I had imagined. The people look as if their blood was heated by the burning lava that bursts from Vesuvius; so flashing are their eyes and so glowing their faces."

The attentions of the host of the "Grande Bretagne" interrupted the animated description of the Lady Ellen Meredith. He led her and her husband through the suite of comfortable rooms selected for them by their courier, a couple of hours before; dwelt with due emphasis on their *agrémens*, and only retired to urge the cook to serve quickly the light, but *recherché* supper prepared for them. A small room, divided from the saloon by a glass door, attracted the attention of Lady Ellen Meredith. It contained an ottoman, that surrounded it, with a table in the centre, and commanded an extensive view of the beautiful bay.

"What a delightful little boudoir!" exclaimed Lady Ellen. "It positively looks as if formed for the purpose of transcribing some of the countless romantic histories connected with this place!"

"How like you, Ellen, to have thought so," replied *il marito*, placing his arm round her slender waist. "You always fancy a romance in every place that looks a little more inviting than ordinary, for the scene of an adventure."

"I have no patience with you, Henry; you are really as matter-of-fact and prosaic as my good uncle Mortimer, who can see nothing out of the common in the most romantic incident, and who laughs at even the most touching story founded on *la belle passion*."

"'He jests at scars who never felt a wound,' Ellen; for uncle Mortimer, it is asserted by his contemporaries, never experienced a preference but once in his life, and that was not *pour les beaux yeux de la dame de ses pensées, mais pour sa rente de dix mille livres par an*."

"Poor uncle Mortimer! I remember that when mamma once reproached him with this little episode in his life, he defended himself by quoting the lines,

'What dust we dote on when 'tis man we love!'

'If man be dust,' said he, 'woman being part and parcel of him, must be similarly composed; and gold dust being more to my fancy than any other sort of dust, am I to be blamed for my preference for it?'

"He is not the only one who has a similar taste, though he is perhaps one of the very few who would acknowledge the fact."

"But to resume, Henry; you really grow callous."

"I deny it, Ellen; give me a single proof in support of your assertion."

"I could give you innumerable ones, Henry, but will confine myself to the last instance—your accusation of my fancying a romance in every place that holds out an inviting aspect for being the scene of one. Time was, and that not more than six short months ago, when *you* were as much disposed to believe in romance as I am, Henry; but marriage is a sad enemy to such belief, and when we return to England, I shall not be surprised to see you ensconced in a corner with, and joining in the dry laugh of, uncle Mortimer, when he chuckles over some tale that has excited the mournful sympathy of all the rest of the family circle."

“As you are so severe on *me*, Ellen, I may be permitted to predict that while I am laughing with uncle Mortimer, you are listening, for the hundredth time, to aunt Beauchamp’s narrative of the death of her husband; which, though it occurred a quarter of a century ago, is repeated with all the demonstrations of sorrow that a recent calamity of that nature is calculated to produce.”

“How can you indulge in *plaisanteries* on such a subject, Henry?”

“And how can you listen with dewy eyes and pensive brow to her lamentations?”

“You pain me by exhibiting this want of sensibility. You may smile, and look incredulous, but you really do.”

“Well, she *shall* not be vexed, there’s a good child, and so let us kiss and be friends;” and suiting the action to the words, Mr. Meredith drew his beautiful wife towards him, and pressed his lips to her fair cheek.

The pair thus introduced to our readers had been married only six months, five of which had been passed on the Continent. Theirs had been what is called a love match, and had been preceded by a passion of more than a year and a half; the family of the Lady Ellen having for several months rejected the addresses of Mr. Meredith, on the plea that neither his station nor fortune entitled him to her hand. During this period of doubt and trial, Mr. Meredith displayed every symptom of a devoted attachment. He followed the Lady Ellen like her shadow, in spite of the angry looks of *Madame sa mère*, and the cold ones of *Monsieur son père*. He might be seen every day hovering near her, as she rode, escorted by her brother, through St. James’s Park, looking defiance at every young man who presumed to ride by her side; and at every scene where the *élite* of fashion congregate, there might he be met, his eyes ever fixed on her face, as if unconscious that any other woman was in the room. Nor was the lovely Lady Ellen regardless of his devotion to her charms. Her eyes were often turned towards him; and it was observed that she replied only by monosyllables to the animated remarks of the beaux who flocked round her; a peculiarity which served as an indubitable proof of her preference for Meredith, when the politeness that induces young ladies to converse readily with every young man who shows them attention, is taken into consideration.

Various were the modes adopted by the Lady Ellen to testify her sympathy with the attachment she inspired in the breast of Mr. Meredith. A flower from her bouquet was often seen to drop as he stood near her, and nearly at the same moment, by some strange chance, he was seen to let fall his glove at the same spot. At operas and concerts they looked unutterable things during the progress of any passionate words wedded to sweet music. Many were the suitors rejected by the Lady Ellen, nearly as much to the discomfiture of the earl and countess, her papa and mamma, as of theirs. She had been talked to, and talked *at*, in the home depart-

ment; had been reminded of the folly of refusing a coronet with strawberry-leaves, and an offer of pin-money to the tune of one thousand a year; yet still she persisted in declaring she would marry only Mr. Meredith.

The earl affirmed she was a fool, and the countess denounced her as an unnatural daughter, not to sacrifice her own absurd predilection, for the reasonable one indulged in by herself for a coronet. Uncle Mortimer laughed more than ever, and swore it was all sheer obstinacy on the girl's part; while aunt Beauchamp wiped her eyes, and said her dear Ellen's attachment reminded her of her own to her poor lost Sir Evelyn, whose death she should never cease to deplore.

"Nor I neither, I can assure you, sister," replied Mr. Mortimer.

"I was not aware of your sympathy, brother; but though tardy, I am nevertheless grateful for it."

"Oh! hearing the same lamentations for five-and-twenty years *must* create an impression; and hang me, sister, if I would not prefer to have Beauchamp alive, and quarrel with him every day, as I used to do, rather than have to listen to your regrets for his loss. Why, there is your poor friend, Mrs. Effingham, how much more to be pitied she is!"

"Pitied, brother! *She* who has her husband—the lover of her youth—the—"

"Yes, sister, the indifferent, neglectful husband of her maturity, and the hater of her old age!"

"Old age, brother! Why Mrs. Effingham is only *my* age."

"I thought she was a year or two younger."

"Really, brother, I must say that you have very extraordinary notions."

"But to resume, sister, how glad poor Mrs. Effingham would be to change places with you, and to have only the fictitious sorrow founded on an erroneous reminiscence of a dead husband's qualities, in the place of a real one—based on the daily experience of a living one's defects!"

"How can you imagine that the dear departed Sir Evelyn would ever have behaved unkindly to me? *He* who was all love, all tenderness—who lived but in my smiles;" and here the good lady drew forth her cambric handkerchief, and wiped the tears that dimmed her eyes.

"But remember, he was a husband only two months, sister; the honeymoon was scarcely over when he died. It was too soon to show his temper, or to engage in those discussions, from which, I believe, no *ménage* is exempt."

"Spare my feelings, brother. *He* had the most faultless temper; *he* never would have entered into discussions, and *I—I*—loved him too well ever to have contradicted him. Even now his dear face is as well remembered as if the eyes that have so long wept his loss, had beheld him yesterday; and the tones of his dear voice still live in my memory. Oh! why was I doomed to lose him, or why have I outlived him?"

Here Lady Beauchamp wept afresh, and her brother turned up his eyes, and twisted his mouth in a very comical fashion, as if to suppress a smile, or an ejaculation.

"Beauchamp would now have been sixty-two, had he lived," said Mr. Mortimer, "and would have been a very infirm old man."

"Sixty-two, brother! why, what *can* you be thinking of?"

"Was he not thirty-seven when he died, sister? and is not that twenty-five years ago last April? Thirty-seven and twenty-five, by all the rules of arithmetic, make sixty-two."

The lady assented with a sigh, and a shake of the head, and murmured that "Some people had a surprising memory about ages."

"Beauchamp would have been a martyr to the gout," resumed Mr. Mortimer, "for he had several attacks before his marriage."

"You mistake, I assure you, for he repeatedly informed me that his physician had erred in entertaining this opinion."

"I think he had also a strong tendency to erysipelas in the face, for I remember it used to look very red."

"Good heavens, brother! how little you can remember him!"

"He was getting bald, and his hair was already gray when he died," pursued Mr. Mortimer.

"*He* bald! *he* gray! oh! I see you do not retain the least recollection of him. Here, look at this," and she drew from her bosom a gold medallion, which she opened, and held a miniature of Sir Evelyn Beauchamp to her brother.

"This picture never *could* have been like him, and must have been painted when he was only twenty. By the by, I now remember its having been done as a gift for that girl with whom he was so desperately in love, and who jilted him. Let me recollect what her name was;—El—Elrington, so it was. Maria Elrington, who eloped with a man in the guards, and died the year after."

"*This* miniature, brother, was painted for *me*, and never was in any hands but mine; and you labour under a great mistake, a *very* great mistake, in thinking it was painted for Miss Elrington, with whom my ever-to-be-lamented Evelyn had but a very slight acquaintance.—Often has he told me that he never entertained a passion for any woman but me; nay more, that he had determined on never marrying, before he saw me."

"And *you* were fool enough to believe him, sister! Why all men tell the same story during the honeymoon, notwithstanding they had been refused and jilted by half the women in London."

"*He* never was refused, I *know*, for he was not a man that any woman with disengaged affections could resist—nor was he a person to propose marriage, unless he was truly, passionately in love, as was the case when he asked for *my* hand."

"*Whew!*" said Mr. Mortimer, in something resembling a whistle, "what gulls you women are! you will believe anything that flatters your vanity. You little dream how many women

rejected poor Evelyn before you took pity on him. Why he was known by the name of the solicitor-general. Indeed, I always thought it was this very cause that led him to ask your hand, and that the circumstance of your having somewhat outstood your market—for you were past five-and-twenty when you married—led to your acceptance of it.”

“I was no such thing, brother; you will allow me to know my own age, I hope?”

“Not if you persist in asserting that you were *not* past twenty-five when you married. I can show you your age, day and date, marked down in the family bible, sister; so it's no use disputing about that point.”

“You are always entering into disagreeable discussions, brother, I must say.”

“And you, sister, induce, if not compel them, by your strange notions. What can be the object of trying to take off a year or two from your age? After you have turned fifty, of what importance can it be?”

“Really, brother, your rudeness is unbearable.”

“Speaking truth, then, and rudeness, are it seems synonymous. But women always accuse a person of rudeness who happens to speak of their age. Why it was only the other day, when that poor Mrs. Effingham was relating her sufferings, from the bad temper and gross selfishness of her spouse, that I chanced to say, ‘Why you ought to be used to them, for you have now been six-and-twenty years enduring them,’ that she absolutely got red with anger, and endeavoured to persuade me that she was only three-and-twenty years married. Ah, sister! *you* are a lucky woman, you may depend on it, to have passed the last quarter of a century in peace and quiet, instead of being harassed as that unhappy Mrs. Effingham has been; for depend on it, had Beauchamp lived, he would have led you a sad life.”

“And what has my life been since I lost him? A continued scene of grief; my only source of consolation consisting in the hope of being united to him in another world. Yes, I shall see his dear face again, and readily shall I recognise it, for no day has elapsed since he was snatched from me, that I have not kissed this portrait twenty times, and dwelt with a melancholy pleasure on its lineaments.”

“But has it never occurred to you, sister, that, as you have grown twenty-five years older since he saw you last, *he* may find some difficulty in recognising *you*? You are terribly altered, I do assure you; much more so than you imagine.”

“Not more so than you are, brother, I can tell you.”

Such were the discussions continually passing between Lady Beauchamp and Mr. Mortimer, discussions in which the pensive widow always suffered the most; for, being of a morbidly sensitive nature, she acutely felt the sarcasms of her brother, whilst he, shielded by his callosity, was proof against her weak reprisals.

Lady Ellen was the declared favourite of her aunt, who fancied that her niece resembled her exceedingly; and gratified by this resemblance, which existed only in her own brain, lavished on her not only attentions and presents, but warmly espoused her interests in the *affaire de cœur* with Mr. Meredith, who, she asserted, forcibly reminded her of her dear departed Evelyn. Of a soft disposition, and naturally prone to romantic notions, it is not to be wondered at that Lady Ellen imbibed from her aunt a love of the imaginative and unreal, not a little calculated to influence her happiness in after life. This tendency had been increased by the prohibited attachment of Meredith, until it had grown into a most unhealthy state of mind; leading this fair and youthful creature to behold in every man and woman under forty, whom she encountered, a victim to the tender passion, which she believed to be the sole end and aim of existence.

Lady Beauchamp avowed her intention of bequeathing the whole of her fortune to the Lady Ellen; believing that this announcement would induce her parents to consent to her union with the object of her choice, as it removed the obstacle of a want of sufficient fortune for the young people. But this very circumstance only added to the reluctance of the Earl and Countess of Delafield to consent to the union; as they said that, with such a fortune as Lady Beauchamp intended to bequeath her, their daughter ought to make one of the most brilliant marriages in England. The sneers and laughter of Mr. Mortimer tended not a little to strengthen the dislike of Lady Ellen's parents to her marriage. He declared that love was a mere infatuation, the existence of which depended wholly on weakness of mind; adding, that a marriage with Mr. Meredith would cure the disease, it was true, but would leave his niece at liberty to discover the error she had committed in contracting such a mis-alliance, and that her reflections under this discovery would be attended with more pain than a disappointment of the heart could ever have occasioned her.

It was so long since Lord or Lady Delafield had experienced any emotions connected with the heart, that they had forgotten its influence on human happiness, and adopted the opinions of Mr. Mortimer, not perhaps the less readily that he had a large unentailed estate to bequeath, and had let drop sundry insinuations that his favourite sister, Lady Delafield, would be his heiress, provided he had reason to be satisfied with her prudence. The fair Lady Ellen resisted every effort used to induce her to give up Mr. Meredith. Her aunt and herself prided themselves not a little on this constancy, yet there were not wanting those who maintained that self-will and obstinacy had more to say in the pertinacity of her attachment than real affection. Among these ill-natured people was Mr. Mortimer.

"You believe, forsooth," he used to say, "that Love, all-mighty Love, as fools term it, is *pour quelque chose* in this affair, but you egregiously mistake, and had you consulted *me* in the commence-

ment of the business, I would have convinced you of the truth of my assertions. I would have advised you to have told this silly girl—'You are at perfect liberty to marry Mr. Meredith, and become a nonentity in the world of fashion;' and you would have seen how soon she would have abandoned the silly project. But your injudiciously displayed opposition has fostered her imaginary passion into a confirmed obstinacy; for this, be assured, is the secret cause of all the love-matches that take place."

While matters remained in this state, a relative of Mr. Meredith's died, and bequeathed him a very large fortune; an event which produced a great alteration in the feelings of Lord and Lady Delafield. They now discovered that their daughter's happiness depended on her union with Mr. Meredith; a discovery they were so little prepared to make a few days previously to his accession of fortune, that they pointedly prohibited the Lady Ellen from speaking to him whenever they met in society. He was now pronounced to be a very eligible *parti*, and a very superior man. He was received with every demonstration of cordiality in Hanover-square, and permitted to lavish those *petits soins* peculiar to an *inamorato* on the object of his affection during the time occupied by the lawyers in examining title-deeds and drawing up the marriage settlements. An acute observer might have remarked, and uncle Mortimer failed not to do so, that there was less ardour in Mr. Meredith's manner since he had been received as the acknowledged suitor of the Lady Ellen, than when his attentions were prohibited. It is true, he came every day to see her; sat whole hours with her; occupied the chair next her at dinner most days, and brought her the rarest flowers and most costly gifts; yet having no longer any obstacles opposed to his happiness, he sank, from an anxious and jealous lover, into a very enjoyable state of affectionate composure, and at last received her hand at the altar with a sober satisfaction that, six weeks previously, he would have deemed it impossible he should have experienced on an occasion, the bare idea of which had made his pulse throb with emotion. The Lady Ellen, he confessed to himself, was not less lovely than before, nor less devoted to him; but there was something more flattering to his vanity, in receiving prohibited marks of attachment, that exposed her to the risk of incurring the displeasure of her father and mother, than in being the object of those open proofs of affection, sanctioned by their approval. The Lady Ellen was too young and inexperienced to notice the change in her lover, or even if she had observed it, to have analysed the cause. Happy beyond measure herself, the somewhat indolent complacency of his manner, was deemed to be symptomatic of the fulness of content, and though she had occasionally felt something like surprise at detecting a scarcely suppressed yawn on the face of her betrothed, she banished the recollection by recalling to her mind instances of his past anxiety and ardour. Love has already lost something of its bloom and freshness, when the memory of the past is referred to as a solace for the present; and to this

solace the Lady Ellen found herself not unfrequently recurring. She had yet to learn that lesson, reserved for all her sex, namely, that more ardour is exhibited by lovers in the pursuit, than is evinced in the attainment of the object of their affections; and that many a passion which resisted innumerable obstacles, has sunk into indifference when they were conquered.

The novelty and excitement attending this, her first visit to the Continent, kept her spirits in a state of activity and cheerfulness, that prevented her from noticing the want of those indescribable attentions, lavished by bridegrooms during the honeymoon. Perhaps, too, the premature adoption of a most husband-like mode of good-humoured indolence from the period of his reception as an acknowledged suitor, until that of their nuptials, had prepared her for the unlover-like conduct now pursued. But at length, and she sighed as the discovery forced itself on her mind, she became painfully conscious that he indulged more frequently in the luxury of a *siesta* than was consistent with politeness; that he yawned without even an attempt to conceal his weariness; and seemed more intent on the enjoyment of the delicacies of the table, than desirous of the more refined one of conversation. These alterations had gradually been developed, and on their arrival at Naples, where our story opens, the Lady Ellen Meredith, who had for some time owned with sadness to herself, that it is possible to feel disappointment in a marriage with the cherished object of affection, was now disposed to hint the discovery to her *caro sposo*. If there be a place on earth more calculated than any other to engender indolence in those previously exempt from it, or to force it into luxuriance when its germ has been planted, Naples, soft, effeminate Naples, is the spot; its genial climate superinducing the indulgence of the *dolce far niente*, as enervating to the mind as it is to the body. Yes, Parthenope, the siren of old, who selected this enchanting shore for her abode, still exercises a power over its visitors, charming them into a state of dreamy but pleasurable lassitude.

The day after the arrival of the Merediths, Lady Ellen had her books unpacked, her drawing implements arranged, and after breakfast, seated herself at a window, to enjoy the beautiful prospect it commanded. The sky was blue and cloudless, and the sea azure, calm, and unruffled as the heavens it mirrored. The vivid green plants in the Villa Reale, refreshed the eye, fatigued by the too dazzling brightness of all around, as a glowing sun shed its beams on the scene. Innumerable white sails were scattered over the bay, sparkling like huge pearls on a bed of sapphire, and Capri looked as if placed as a couch for the giant genius to whom the protection of this lovely city was confided.

"Do come here, dear Henry," said Lady Ellen, "and participate with me in the delight of beholding what I now see! I feel, whilst looking at the prospect spread out before me, the want described by Zimmerman as being experienced in solitude, of having some one to whom I can say, how lovely it is."

"I looked from the window, a full half-hour before breakfast, love, and agree with you that the view is very pleasant; but I have had enough of it for the present, and confess I prefer, just now, a lounge on this sofa, which is not so ill-stuffed as are most of those to be found in Italian inns."

The lady sighed, but urged him no more, and was soon lost in a delicious reverie, inspired by the scene she was gazing on, when the snoring of her husband, who had fallen asleep, interrupted it. Now, be it known to our readers, that few noises are more disagreeable to female ears than that of snoring. Whether this be owing to its reminding them of the indifference that permits the indulgence of sleep in their presence, in hours not appropriated to slumber, a conviction so mortifying to vanity, or whether it proceeds from the fact, that in no position does a man appear to such disadvantage, as when stretched on a sofa, he draws attention, by this noise, to the incivility of which he is guilty, we cannot presume to say: but we never met a woman whose temper, however placid it might naturally have been, was not ruffled by hearing a man snore in her presence. Lady Ellen Meredith experienced this emotion now, as she murmured, "Eternally lounging on sofas, and as eternally falling asleep! I could forgive the sleeping, bad as it is, in a person who six months ago I could not have believed was subject to this infirmity; but really the snoring is *too* annoying. If any one had told me, before I married, that Henry *could* snore, I would have refused to credit it. How like a large Newfoundland dog he looks, squatted on the sofa; his black curly locks too, that I have so often admired, at this moment, add to the resemblance. Heigh-ho! what different beings lovers and husbands are! I really can endure this noise no longer. Henry, Henry!" and she approached the sofa and woke him.

"What is the matter, love?" asked he, half opening his eyes, stretching his arms, and yawning.

"You snore so dreadfully that I cannot bear it."

"Do I, love?—how odd!"

He extended his arm to a table, near the sofa, took up a book, and began reading, while Lady Ellen occupied herself with Sir William Gell's Pompeii. But she was not long permitted to enjoy it, for in less than ten minutes *il marito* was again fast asleep, and snoring still more loudly than before. She felt ashamed when the *laquais-de-place* entered, to inquire at what hour the carriage would be required for a *giro*, that even *he* should witness what pained her; and having hastily dismissed him from the apartment, she endeavoured, but in vain, to banish her sense of the discordant sounds that assailed her ears, by fixing her attention on her book.

While the snoring continued, so loudly as to be audible in the ante-room, the door of the *salon* was thrown open, and the Marquis of Windermere entered, following on the heels of the servant who announced him. Neither the noise of his entrance, nor the

salutation which took place, awoke the sleeper, who still continued to snore loudly, and the Lady Ellen felt the blush of shame dye her cheek, as she marked the glance of astonishment which the marquis cast on the sofa, and its noisy occupant. Lord Windermere was the very last person that she wished to see at such a moment, for his was the strawberry-leaved coronet which she rejected for the husband, whose snores told a tale of ill-breeding and neglect, that she shrunk from being witnessed by any one, and least of all, by him who had only a few months before sought her hand.

She awoke her husband, who rubbed his eyes, yawned, and stretched his person on the sofa, with as much freedom from ceremonious constraint as if he imagined himself alone, and then muttered something about being disturbed. But when Lady Ellen said, "Lord Windermere is here," her *caro sposo* quickly arose from his recumbent posture, had the grace to look somewhat ashamed of himself, and made an awkward excuse, in which the heat of the weather was cited as the cause of his drowsiness.

The Marquis of Windermere was universally considered to be one of the best-looking young men about London. Peculiarly well-dressed, and scrupulously polite to women, he was so general a favourite that the Lady Ellen's rejection of him was a matter of surprise to their mutual acquaintance, and, when her marriage took place, many were the observations to which it gave rise; people wondering "how she could prefer Mr. Meredith, to one so infinitely his superior in every respect as the Marquis of Windermere." This question she now for the first time asked herself, as her eye glanced from one to the other; the well-dressed *ci-devant* admirer's well-brushed coat, unrumpled cravat, and nicely arranged hair, forming a striking contrast to the deranged toilet and person of her husband. But if the dress and appearance offered an unfavourable contrast, how much more so did the manner! That of the marquis uniting the refined good-breeding of the best society, shaded by a pensiveness always attractive to women, but particularly so to her who knew herself to be its cause.

"How could I have been so blind as to accord the preference to Henry?" thought Lady Ellen to herself. "Lord Windermere would not pass half his time in sleeping on sofas, or in picking his teeth in easy chairs, leaving me to amuse myself as best I may." This reflection was followed by a deep sigh, which, though it escaped the ears of *il marito*, was heard by the marquis, whose voice always soft, and whose manner ever gentle, became still more so when he addressed Lady Ellen.

Lord Windermere had been some days at Naples, and had taken up his abode at the Grande Bretagne, where the Merediths arrived the previous evening. Having seen their names in the list of new guests, he lost no time in paying them a visit, anxious to avoid the appearance of pique, often attributed to discarded admirers. He had anticipated to find his fortunate rival still enacting the

part of a happy lover, showering attentions and *petits soins* on Lady Ellen, and experienced something like a feeling of envy at the idea of witnessing them. His surprise, therefore, was not light, when he beheld the scene that presented itself on his entering the apartment, one glance of which had revealed the exact state of the case.

On discovering that Lord Windermere inhabited the same hotel, Mr. Meredith expressed a hope that they should see as much of each other as possible, requested him to dine with them that day, and proposed that he should accompany them in their *giro* of sight-seeing.

The proposal was agreed to, and, before the evening had closed in, a habit of cordiality seemed established between the parties, that it would have required a ten days' contact in an English country-house to have formed. The facility with which youthful husbands sanction, nay invite, habits of daily and familiar intercourse, in the bosoms of their families, with young men, permitting them to lounge in the boudoirs of their wives half the mornings, to wander from *salon* to *salon* like tame lap-dogs, and to make one of every riding-party, excursion to Greenwich, and drive to Richmond, has often furnished subject of surprise to sober-minded people, and more often topics of scandal to censorious ones. Whether this unthinking folly proceeds from the *ennui* experienced by the youthful Benedicts in their *ménages*, and which leads them to seek relief in the society of an *habitué de maison*, or whether it owes its origin to the still more blamable, but not less frequent, folly of wishing to see their wives admired, we will not pause to inquire; but a habit more pregnant with danger to young and inexperienced women never was devised, nor more fraught with baneful consequences to those of a matured age.

The eagerness with which Mr. Meredith sought the society of Lord Windermere piqued Ellen.

"He is already tired of our uninterrupted *têtes-à-têtes*," thought she. "I might have known this by the undisguised symptoms of weariness I have so frequently detected in him; but I confess I was not prepared for seeing him thus seize with such avidity the society of the first slight acquaintance of his that chance has thrown in our way, and with a person, too, who once wished to stand in so near a relation to *me*. He is not disposed to be jealous at all events," and she sighed while making the reflection. "He does not love me enough now to be so. Time was that I could scarcely appease his unfounded jealousy, or silence his unreasonable suspicions."

Women who are the least prone to give cause for jealousy, are precisely those who are most pleased at exciting it, as they invariably receive it as an incontestable proof of affection; while those, whose levity and imprudence are calculated to excite the baneful passion, deprecate or resent every symptom of it. The Lady Ellen would not have been sorry to discover some indication of an inci-

pient jealousy in her husband towards her former suitor, and marked the absence of any such infirmity, as presumptive evidence of his indifference.

"What a very agreeable man Windermere is!" said Mr. Meredith; "and how flattered I ought to feel, Ellen, at your according me the preference over him."

"I was just thinking so," replied Lady Ellen, and a malicious smile played about her rosy lips.

"I am sorry that *you* thought so, Ellen, though it was natural that *I* should," and Mr. Meredith looked a little uneasy.

"Why to say the truth, Henry, you give me so much time for reflection, that it is not to be wondered at that I indulge in it."

"I, Ellen, what do you mean? Why, I never leave you!"

"Very true; but you forget that much of your time when near me is passed in slumber. What is the difference whether you are absent or present in person, if you are absent in spirit? I would prefer to know that you were amusing yourself, or taking healthful exercise, away from me, than to be assured of your presence only by hearing you snore."

This reproach, slight as it was, pleased not Mr. Meredith; for he was one of the many men, who erroneously believe that there is no necessity for being ceremonious with one's wife, and who are prone to resent any insinuation that she is of an opposite opinion, as an insult.

"You make no allowance, Ellen, for the effect of this warm climate, and the idle life, to which I have been so unused, and which I have led since we left England."

"It is your own fault that you have led an idle life; for half the time wasted in *siestas* on the sofa in every hotel in which we have been sojourning, might have been agreeably and profitably employed in investigating, instead of superficially viewing the museums and antiquities in which Italy is so rich."

"But you forget that these things are new to me, and that I have not yet acquired the tastes and pursuits of a *virtuoso*, or an antiquarian."

"That they are new to you, is in my opinion a *raison de plus* for being interested in them, if the charge made against all your sex be true, that novelty in all things is a great attraction to them."

This first specimen of a matrimonial discussion, which, like all similar ones, produced no favourable result in the feelings of those engaged in it, was interrupted by the presence of Lord Windermere, who came to escort them in their *giro* to view the beautiful environs of Naples.

His arrival was a relief to Lady Ellen and Mr. Meredith; for both felt, now that once the ice was broken, the possibility, if not the inclination, of expressing sentiments much less agreeable than either had ever previously indulged in; and were glad of being saved from what they considered a dangerous position.

As long as the restraint induced by good breeding is not thrown aside, the harmony of conjugal life is safe, even though a dissimilarity of opinions may exist between the parties; but the first sally of recrimination rends the veil of illusion, and all the bloom and delicacy of affection is for ever impaired.

While driving over the Strada Nuova, the beauty of the scenery of which drew forth exclamations of delight from Lady Ellen, Mr. Meredith questioned Lord Windermere relative to the hunting at Melton the previous season—spoke of capital hacks for riding to cover, and first-rate hunters—instituted comparisons between different packs of hounds, and evinced a much more lively interest about the field-sports in England, than relative to the exciting scenery around them. Lord Windermere pointed out the objects most worthy of attention as they drove along, participated in the gratification experienced by the Lady Ellen, and turned the conversation as much as good breeding permits, from those topics to which her husband was disposed wholly to confine them.

Many were the symptoms of petulance involuntarily exhibited by Lady Ellen during the drive, as her husband *would* interrupt some animated description of Lord Windermere's, by a question, or reference to the chase; and though they escaped the observation of Mr. Meredith, they were noted by the marquis, who failed not to remark the want of harmony between the youthful couple. The contrast offered by the assiduity of manner, and highly-cultivated taste of Lord Windermere, and *il marito*, was not lost on the young wife; who found herself frequently wondering at the blindness that could have induced her to reject the one, and accept the other.

When a wife institutes comparisons injurious to him whom she has vowed at the altar to love, honour, and obey, she has already profaned the sanctity of marriage; and when the indulgence of selfishness, and negligence towards his wife, on the part of the husband, have provoked such, he must be accounted guilty of having led to the crime. Lord Windermere was neither a vicious nor a designing man. He had not sought the society of the Merediths with any intention of endeavouring to disturb their conjugal felicity; but being a vain man, his visit was paid from a motive of showing them that the Lady Ellen's rejection of his suit had not rendered him inconsolable, which he imagined they might be led to think, had he refrained from immediately renewing his acquaintance with them.

Vanity often tends to produce as lamentable results as vice, if it find the mind of its possessor unsupported by strict principles. We have said that Lord Windermere was a vain man: his vanity had been wounded by the preference accorded by Lady Ellen Meredith to his rival; and now that he witnessed indications of her consciousness of having discovered her error in her choice, he instantly determined on leaving no effort untried to render her still more sensible of her mistake. Observing the taste for the *romantic*

in which she indulged, and the equally visible predilection for the *common-place* entertained by her husband, he artfully adopted a line of conduct the most calculated to induce her to believe, that *he* and *he* alone comprehended her feelings, participated in her tastes, and was constituted to secure her happiness. This determination was formed the very first day of their encounter at Naples. The success with which he doubted not it would be crowned, offered a salve for his wounded vanity, too tempting to be refused, and an occupation to fill up the vacant hours that lately had fallen heavy on his hands, too agreeable to be rejected.

He now made a constant companion in all the excursions taken by the Merediths, and a constant guest at their table; divided his box at the San Carlo with them; got up delicious luncheons in the environs, served when least expected; serenades on the moonlit bay; and, in short, found means to render the *séjour* of the husband and wife so pleasant at Naples, that neither thought of leaving it, or contemplated quitting the society of him who rendered it so delightful.

Lord Windermere now filled the dangerous position of an *ami de maison*, a position fraught with temptation to do wrong, and opportunity to effect it; and which, if not followed by actual evil, is sure to incur the worst suspicions of it, in those who witness the reprehensible familiarity to which it leads. Mr. Meredith, now freed from the reproach of leaving Lady Ellen alone, while he indulged in his noon-day or evening *siestas*, abandoned himself to both *sans gêne*; often lulled into them by the sweet voice of his wife, or the sonorous one of Lord Windermere, as they sang duets together, or read the Italian poets aloud. When some fine passage in an author elicited the commendation of the Lady Ellen, Lord Windermere would lay down the book, and express his sympathy in her opinion, with an earnestness that left no doubt of its genuineness, and with an expression of countenance that would have banished doubt, had any such suspicion existed in her mind. At such moments, a loud snore from Mr. Meredith, would remind them that they were not alone, and an involuntary look of horror from his sensitive wife, would meet with such a glance of sympathising pity from Lord Windermere, as sent the red blush to her cheek. Those were dangerous moments, and both felt them to be so, as a suppressed sigh heaved the bosom of the lady, and an unrestrained one agitated that of the gentleman.

Mr. Meredith did not understand Italian, a circumstance which offered an excuse of which he daily, hourly availed himself of slumbering whilst they spoke, sang, or read in that mellifluous language. Nor was he sorry for being furnished with so good an excuse for indulging in this his favourite propensity, which had now gained on him so much, that he would have found it difficult to resist its impulses were he so disposed, which was far from being the case. Mr. Meredith was one of the many men who pass through life with much enjoyment and little pain, for he was

naturally healthy, good-tempered, and had as little sensibility as imagination. Possessed of what is in general parlance termed a good heart, but which might more aptly be denominated a good stomach, his humour was equal and free from any tendency to ill-nature. Devoted to the pleasures of a good table, a luxurious couch, an easy carriage, and what he called a quiet life—which meant the absence of all exciting conversation or grave reflection—he was as happy as possible, and as little disposed to interrupt the enjoyments of those who found them in other sources.

Such are often the men most prone to marry, and are the least likely to promote the happiness of a wife, unless, like themselves, she is disposed to find contentment in the gratification of the same unrefined propensities that constitute theirs. Such men seek a wife as they do a good dinner, and trouble themselves as little about the result, unless when reminded by some domestic misfortune or intestine feud.

Mr. Meredith beheld the growing intimacy between his wife and friend without the slightest alarm. Satisfied with the constant recollection that Lady Ellen had rejected the marquis to accept him—a fact which it gratified his *amour propre* to remember—he never reflected that *when* she had done so, she had as little knowledge of him as of her other suitor, and moreover, had been urged into obstinacy by the objections of her family against himself, and their as injudicious eagerness to induce her to accept his rival. His poverty, too, when first he attached himself to her, had great weight with a romantic girl like Lady Ellen. She thought it praiseworthy and heroic to be constant to a *poor* admirer and to refuse a *rich*, and the unwise counsel of her aunt, Lady Beauchamp, encouraged her in this error. Now that she experienced the difference between him, who, from having been at first an ardent lover, had degenerated into a good natured but careless husband, and the ever-attentive and cultivated companion permitted to be her constant associate, she was not slow to discover the superiority of Lord Windermere; and, as if anxious to make amends for the injustice of which she had been guilty in preferring Mr. Meredith, she now endowed the former with all the qualities which romantic women are prone to think they find in their admirers, many, if not all of which, exist only in their own excited imaginations. There is no surer method for rendering persons desirous to seem possessed of certain qualities than by attributing them to them. “You are so full of imagination;” “You have so much feeling;” and that greatest of all compliments, “You are so different from other men,” frequently and involuntarily repeated by Lady Ellen to Lord Windermere whenever a generous sentiment escaped his lips, had worked miracles in him; for he each day became more prone to indulge in such, and certainly more devoted in his attentions to her who praised him.

Wholly unconscious of her danger—without a friend to warn,

or a husband to guard—she yielded to the fascination of a flatterer, who might, had she accepted his proffered hand some few months before, have become as negligent of the gift as him on whom she had bestowed it; but who, piqued into assiduities by the stimulus of wounded vanity, enacted the lover's part so well as to deceive her to whom his attentions were devoted into a belief that he passionately, truly loved her.

Men have a thousand ways of conveying this conviction to a woman's mind without expressing it by a formal declaration, a step which a man of the world will carefully eschew, unless he encounters a woman ignorant of what is due to *les convenances de la société*.

The Marquis of Windermere knew that to risk an avowal of his flame, would be to put the object of it on her guard against him; consequently, he avoided this measure, and adopted the less open, but no less effectual mode of paying his court by an uninterrupted series of attentions, too delicate to give offence, yet too marked to be mistaken by her to whom they were offered. The Lady Ellen Meredith implicitly believed that she was tenderly beloved by Lord Windermere, nay, was gratified by the belief, though, had she been questioned as to the proofs which led to this conviction, she could only have been able to refer to impassioned looks, deep sighs, broken sentences, and unremitting assiduity. While her admirer abstained from an open declaration of his passion, she did not consider herself blamable in permitting innumerable other demonstrations of it; and, while she received these demonstrations with complacency, he saw no reason to despair of ultimately triumphing over her virtue. Matters stood in this state, when several new English arrivals at Naples soon became initiated in the *liaison* supposed to exist between Lady Ellen Meredith and the Marquis of Windermere.

“How blind must Meredith be!” said one.

“What a deucedly cool hand Windermere must be!” exclaimed a second.

“And what a shameless woman *she* must be?” observed a third.

“Oh! they were old lovers,” said another, “and

‘On en revient toujours à ses premiers amours,’

as the old song says.”

“Meredith is not such a fool as people imagine,” cried one of his old acquaintances. “He has had enough of matrimony, and will not be sorry to get rid of his chains.”

While these charitable comments were indulged in by their compatriots, two, at least, of the persons who excited them were little conscious of their existence. Mr. Meredith was as sure that he was still preferred to Lord Windemere by his pretty wife, as he was on the day she had rejected his rival for him; and yet all his acquaintances at Naples, at least the portion of them composed of

his countrymen, proclaimed him either the dupe or the accomplice of Lord Windermere. If Lady Ellen reflected at all on the impression likely to be entertained of her, which is rather doubtful, she would have stated her belief to have been that all the people, with whom they associated, *must* see how devotedly attached to her Lord Windermere was, yet how pure and free from impropriety the attachment was. Lady Ellen was not singular in indulging this infatuation with regard to her position, or the notion that would be likely to be entertained of it by others; for most women free from actual guilt, or even the intention of it, deceive themselves into the false belief that they will escape the suspicion.

Lord Windermere was the only one of the three persons implicated in the affair who had an idea of what was likely to be said or thought of the business; and, truth to say, was deterred by no honourable feeling, from pursuing a line of conduct but too well calculated to confirm the evil suspicions entertained by so many of his acquaintance.

Lady Ellen Meredith's reputation became the by-word, the jest of all Naples, while those who reviled, received her with the demonstrations of as much respect as if her virtue had never been questioned.

"As long as she is countenanced by her husband," said they, "we can have no excuse for not behaving to her as usual." A mode of reasoning, founded on a system of immorality highly prejudicial to the true interests of society; offering as it were a premium for the successful duplicity of the wife, who adding artifice to vice, first wrongs, and then dupes her husband; or to the dishonourable connivance or supine negligence of the husband, who sanctions the sins, or is ignorant of the shame entailed on him by her whose honour he should have defended as his dearest possession.

At this period, the uncle of Lady Ellen Meredith, Mr. Mortimer, arrived at Naples, and soon became *au fait* of the reports in circulation against his niece, and sensible of the dangerous position in which she was placed.

"The Marquis of Windermere lives altogether with you, I observe," said he to Lady Ellen, two or three days after his arrival.

"We see a good deal of him," was her reply.

"And I am sure you now agree with me, that he is a very pleasant person."

"Yes; indeed, uncle, I have often thought since we have been here, how judicious your commendations of him were."

"You have—have you? what a pity it is you did not find this out some eight or nine months ago! But do you know, niece, I do *not* think my commendations were judicious?"

"How! have you changed your opinion of him, uncle?"

"In some respects, perhaps, I have; but the reason that I think my commendations were not judicious is, that I am persuaded that had I *dispraised* him, and applauded Meredith, Lord Windermere might have been this day your husband."

Lady Ellen sighed deeply, but unconsciously, and the sigh was not unremarked by her uncle.

"Nevertheless," resumed he, "although I approved Lord Windermere for the *husband* of my niece, I do *not* approve him as her admirer, now that she is the wife of another."

Lady Ellen Meredith's cheeks became tinged with the brightest red. "You are so—so odd—so strange in your notions," murmured she.

"No, not so odd, nor so strange neither; for I dare say most uncles have, like me, an objection to their nieces having an admirer, unless it be *les Curés*, who are said to sanction their nieces having one, at least; but charity begins at home."

"I really do not know what you mean, uncle."

"Then you must be less quick of apprehension than usual, Ellen, or else your signoras in Italy have accustomed you to the fashion of married ladies having *cavalieri serventi*; for what I mean is, that Lord Windermere appears to occupy that place with you, and all the English at Naples are commenting on it in a very spiteful manner."

"Good heavens! is it possible that people can be so very ill-natured, so very unjust, as to find cause for censure in a woman's receiving common civilities of a man who is the friend of her husband?"

"And are you so very inexperienced, niece, as to think that a young and pretty woman can have a man following her about all day, and sitting by her all the evening, without people thinking that a more than ordinary or tolerated attachment exists between them?"

"But surely when a woman's husband, her lawful protector sees nothing to condemn in such attentions, no one else has a right to question the propriety of her conduct?"

"But her husband may be a knave or a fool, and in either case he is unfit to be her protector; and people, though they may have no right, will, nevertheless, take the liberty without it, of passing very severe comments."

"Comments which those who know their own honour and integrity can despise," and Lady Ellen looked the indignation she felt.

"And what will they gain by despising popular opinion, niece?"

"They will gain their own self-respect by asserting their independence."

"A sentiment worthy of your aunt Beauchamp, Ellen."

Now, as Lady Ellen knew that Mr. Mortimer held her aunt Beauchamp's opinions in utter contempt, nothing could be better calculated to offend her than the allusion made by him to the resemblance between the sentiment she had just expressed, and those of that lady, and consequently nothing could more indispose her to respect his advice, or to adopt it. People seldom reflect on the

necessity of avoiding everything that can wound or offend, when they bestow counsel; for, however well-meant may be the motive of giving it, the receiver rarely accepts it with the satisfaction with which it is given; and a sense of superiority implied by the adviser, predisposes the advised, even though convinced of the value of the unpalatable potion, to reject it. The truth of this assertion was now proved by the mode in which Lady Ellen replied to her uncle.

"I hope," said she, bridling up as people call it, when a person holds up his or her head in a more elevated position than usual,— "I hope that my sentiments may always be worthy of my aunt Beauchamp, and then I shall have nothing to reproach myself with;" and she walked out of the room with an air of offended dignity, that would not have disgraced the *prima donna* of St. Carlo, in her grandest rôle.

"Whew!" muttered Mr. Mortimer. "So, so, *madame ma nièce*, you are angry, are you? then the affair is more grave than I imagined; for when a woman gets angry, *not* with herself for giving cause for scandal, but with those who draw natural, though not perhaps kind inferences from her conduct, it is a certain sign she is in danger. I have alarmed her, however, and that may do some good. What fools women are, to be sure!" continued he, thinking aloud. "Here is this silly girl quarrelling with me because, forsooth, I disapprove of her flirtation with Lord Windermere, when only a few months ago she was ready to wage war with me, because I wished her to marry him. Give a woman her head, and she will be sure to run against a post. Here is this niece of mine—who, less than a year ago, fancied she could not live unless wedded to Meredith—now as tired of his drowsy habits, and selfish indulgence in the creature comforts, as ever she was of a worn-out robe or a faded ribbon; and I'll be bound fancying herself as much smitten with Windermere, as she before believed herself to be with Meredith. But I must keep her from falling into a scrape after all, even though it be against her will."

That evening, Mr. Mortimer made one of the party at dinner with the Merediths; and as usual, Mr. Meredith, soon after coffee, extended himself on a sofa, and resigned himself to the influence of sleep. Mr. Mortimer felt that he was *de trop* in the room, and Lord Windermere and Lady Ellen looked as if they were equally convinced of this fact. The lady walked into the balcony (balconies, *par parenthèse*, are useful resources on such occasions), and bent her head over the fragrant flowers placed there. Lord Windermere was not slow in following her; and Mr. Mortimer heard them converse on the softening effect of moonlight on the feelings, in tones so sentimental, as to convince him that theirs owned the influence of it, at that moment. Now Mr. Mortimer, be it known to my readers, was, like many other sexagenarians, subject to attacks of pain in his face and ears, that rendered him very fearful of exposing himself to the night air, even in the mild and genial

climate of Naples ; consequently, though most desirous to interrupt the *tête-à-tête* on the balcony, he dared not venture out on it. Finding, however, that Lady Ellen and Lord Windermere seemed determined to remain there and enjoy their privacy, he left the room, and putting on his great-coat and cloak, and tying a silk handkerchief over his ears, under his hat, he returned ; and, to the surprise and dissatisfaction of the occupants of the balcony, took his station there beside them. The ludicrous figure he represented, might have provoked the laughter of even the most serious ; and, as he held a handkerchief to his mouth to exclude the air, he offered one of the most rueful objects imaginable. But neither his niece nor her admirer were disposed for mirth. They had been indulging in sentimental rhapsodies on sympathy of soul and unison of tastes, until they had worked themselves up into the belief, that they stood apart from the generality of human beings, and were by far too refined, and too spiritualised, to be understood, except by each other.

They ceased speaking when Mr. Mortimer joined them, but their looks were eloquent. The moonbeams at that moment fell on the beautiful face of Lady Ellen, giving to her finely-chiselled forehead the snowy tint of a marble statue. Her luxuriant tresses bound round her small head, and her white dress falling in folds to her feet, added to the resemblance. Lord Windermere's eyes were fixed on her face with an expression of such undisguised and passionate admiration, as could leave no doubt of his sentiments on whoever chanced to behold him ; and Lady Ellen's eyes were turned to the heavens as if to search in the misty disk of the moon, the secrets of futurity.

"I think I heard you both speaking of the softening effect of moonlight on the feelings," said he, with a rueful glance at the luminary. "Now, for *my* part, I think it hardens the feelings confoundedly ; for hang me, if ever I felt less softened than at this very moment. And as to the pleasantry of this scene, which you have been enjoying for the last hour, why, it is enough to give anybody the chronic rheumatism, or a fit of the ague."

So saying, he entered the saloon, removed his wrappings, and comfortably took possession of the second sofa, precisely *vis-à-vis* to the one occupied by Mr. Meredith.

The Marquis of Windermere and Lady Ellen soon after left the balcony, looked at each sofa, tenanted by a noisy sleeper, and then at each other with glances of tender commiseration.

"Will you read to me?" asked lady Ellen.

"If you wish it. You know *your* wishes are laws to me. Shall it be Dante?"

"If you please ; I am sad to-night, and disposed to hear something grave."

"You are sad ! Oh ! Lady Ellen, do not indulge in sadness, it would make you too—*too* dangerous."

Lady Ellen blushed, and averted her eyes from the impassioned

gaze of her admirer, and he took up a volume of Dante, and having looked over a few of its pages, commenced reading the beautiful episode of Francesca da Rimini. As the soft melodious voice of Lord Windermere pronounced the following passage, Mr. Mortimer, who only feigned sleep, and perfectly understood Italian, thought it not a little analogous to the position of the reader and Lady Ellen.

“Ma s'a conoscer la prima radice
Del nostro amor tu hai cotanto affeto,
Farò, come colui, che piange, e dice.

Noi leggiavamo un giorno, per diletto,
Di Lancilotto, come amor lo strinse
Soli eravamo, e senza alcun sospetto.
Per più fiate gli occhi ci sospinse

Quella lettura, e scolorocci 'l viso:
Ma solo un punto fu quel, che si vinse.
Quando legemmo il disiato riso

Esser baciato da contanto amante,
Questi, che mai, da me non fia diviso
La bocca mi bacciò tutto tremante:”

* * * * *

Here Mortimer, no less alarmed by the tremulous tone of Lord Windermere's reading, than by the visible emotion of Lady Ellen, lest a similar *dénouement* to that which the marquis was reading, might occur, yawned aloud, rose from the sofa, and pronounced the concluding line of the poem—

“Quel giorno più non vi legemmo avante,”

in a mock heroic style, ludicrously contrasted by the sentimental one of Lord Windermere.

Lady Ellen looked and felt embarrassed; and the marquis, though he endeavoured to conceal his displeasure at the interruption, betrayed it by his heightened colour and flashing eyes. The book was laid down, and a pointed reference to the lateness of the hour from Mr. Mortimer, led to Lord Windermere's taking leave. Lady Ellen, who dreading a lecture from her uncle, also withdrew, leaving him alone with her sleeping *caro sposo*. Mr. Mortimer looked at him as he lay supinely stretched on the sofa, giving proof of his proximity only by occasional snores.

“You are a pleasant fellow!” ejaculated he; “a nice guardian to a handsome young wife, with as strong a spice of coquetry in her nature, as in that of any of her troublesome sex. Yes, you resemble a sleeping partner in a bank. You take no trouble, but trust your credit and your property at the discretion of others. 'Twould serve you right, you indolent blockhead, were you to meet with the fate of so many Benedicts, who leave creatures only just out of their nurseries in positions fraught with danger, and are then surprised at what follows.”

He approached the sleeper; called him several times, but in vain; and at length was compelled to shake him by the shoulder.

"What's the matter?—where are Ellen and Windermere?—why have you awakened me?"

"I have awakened you that we might have some serious conversation together."

"Well, let it be short, 'dear Nunky, if thou lovest me,' for I am half asleep, and well disposed to seek my pillow, for that sofa is somewhat of the hardest."

"The subject, Mr. Meredith, on which I consider it my duty to speak to you, is one of such grave import to you, and of such dear interest to me, that it cannot be discussed quickly."

"Why, what then can it be about? Any bad news from England?"

"No!"

"Then I am sure I cannot even guess what the subject can be."

"Your blindness, your infatuation surprise me. Can it be possible that, unmindful of the danger to which you expose her, you leave your young and inexperienced wife in the daily, hourly society of Lord Windermere, heedless of the censorious observations made on her and you, until her reputation and your honour have become the topic for scandal in every English circle at Naples?"

"What! Lady Ellen's reputation, my honour called in question? You astonish, you confound me; but you must surely be in jest, you cannot be serious."

"This is no subject for jesting; what I have told you is the fact."

"Only let me know the man who has presumed to question either her honour or mine, and I will——"

"Call him out, I suppose. This is the usual mode of silencing reports; but I never knew it to answer."

"How is it possible such a calumny could have been circulated? We who are so fondly attached to each other, who have been so few months married, and who are inseparable, for you must observe that I never leave her."

"It would perhaps be better if you did sometimes, rather than to remain whole hours—yes, Mr. Meredith, whole hours—fast asleep in her presence; leaving her to enjoy the dangerous contrast afforded by the attentions and conversation of an agreeable man who keeps himself wide awake."

"But it is known to every one that my wife refused Windermere because she preferred *me*. This fact should surely disarm malice, and silence slander. Had she preferred him, she might have married him; but having preferred *me*, is it at all likely that she would now, when morality, virtue, everything forbid it; but, above all, her attachment to me,—is it likely, I ask, that she could now be suspected of loving *him*?"

"When she accorded the preference to you, Mr. Meredith, you

forget that she knew little of you except through the casual intercourse afforded by a ball, a concert, or the crush-room at the opera, and of Lord Windermere she knew rather less. The injudicious, because angrily expressed opposition to *your* suit, which her parents offered, and the secret encouragement she met with from my poor foolish sister, Lady Beauchamp, excited a girlish fancy for you, who were her first declared admirer, in my niece's breast, into a flame which, like a fire of straw, would have quickly died away, had not such fuel been added to it. The efforts and recommendations of her family to induce her to accept Windermere produced precisely the contrary effect which they intended: so that her marriage with you can no more be attributed to a real *bonâ fide* affection on her part, than her rejection of him can be traced to any personal dislike."

"Allow me to——"

"I will allow nothing until you have heard me. Well, then, to resume. She carries her point; marries you; comes abroad; and you, instead of being her cheerful companion, her attentive husband, and her watchful guardian, become, if not indifferent, careless; and if not unkind, negligent. You sleep whole hours, leaving her either totally alone to reflect on the difference of a lover and a husband; or in the still more dangerous position of a *tête-à-tête* with a very fine young man, to grow even more fully aware of the contrast."

"Good heavens! you do not mean to say that Lord Windermere has forgotten—has violated the rights of hospitality?"

"If he has not, *you* have not been the obstacle, for you have certainly given him every opportunity."

"But my wife—Lady Ellen—surely *she* never would—never could——"

"Why are you to expect my niece to be 'that faultless monster that the world ne'er saw?' Like all young women, she prizes admiration, attention, and an agreeable companion. You have ceased to offer to her any of these *agrémens*; and have negligently, unwisely, permitted another to supply them."

"How could I think, how could I dream that she who preferred me could ever bestow a thought on another; and that other, one whom she had rejected for me?"

"Yet most men *might* have thought of this possibility, Mr. Meredith, and even those who slept not half so much as you might have dreamt of it. The fact is, your vanity led you into the error you have committed; fortunately, it is not too late to be retrieved."

"What shall I—what *can I* do?"

"Follow my advice, and all will yet be well."

"I will leave Naples to-morrow; take her away from the society of Windermere."

"And by so doing commit a greater folly than the previous one. To tear her away thus abruptly from the society of one with whom

you have permitted her to live on habits of constant intercourse, would not only be sure to excite a livelier interest for him in her mind, but would confirm every evil report in circulation here on the subject."

"What then *is* to be done? I am wretched—I am miserable."

"You might in a short time have been rendered both; but at present I see no cause for despair. Abandon the habit of sleeping on sofas and chairs; show the same attention to your own young and pretty wife that you would imagine it necessary to show to the young and pretty wife of any of your acquaintance. In short, behave towards her as Lord Windermere does. You cannot have a better model for delicate attentions on which to form yourself."

Meredith writhed under this sarcasm: but Mr. Mortimer was not a man to spare the feelings of another.

"Betray no symptom of suspicion, and never forget that as yet your wife is innocent of anything, except an almost unconscious flirtation, into which your folly has led her; and that Windermere is only culpable of a weakness in yielding to a temptation that few could resist—to love, or to fancy he loves, a woman whose constant society you have left him to enjoy. You must enter the lists with him to win again the preference once allotted to you over him by my niece, and I must endeavour to find the means of conquering any predilection she may be disposed to entertain for him."

"If you can accomplish this, how happy, how grateful you will make me!"

"What strange animals men are, Meredith! Half an hour ago you slept, careless and contented, ignorant that danger menaced! now you begin to know the value of the possession you then appreciated so little that you disdained to guard it."

"I see, I feel my error, and if indeed I have not irretrievably lost Ellen's affection—oh! there is bitterness in the thought—I will——"

"Be more attentive, *n'est-ce pas?* *En attendant*, follow my instructions. Instead of sleeping on your sofa to-morrow, let us play a *parti* of *écarté*. This will keep *you* awake, keep my niece and Lord Windermere from sentimentalising on the balcony, and prevent *me* from catching a cold by enacting the *triste rôle* of a Marplot on the said balcony. These points are something gained. Leave the rest to chance."

"You surely jest! What, propose cards to a man whose feelings are tortured as mine are! Never was there so puerile, so (permit me to say) ridiculous a project, and never was there any one less disposed to follow it than I am, under the present excitement of my mind."

"Do not be obstinate, follow my counsel in this point, and I venture to pronounce that you will have no cause to repent it."

"Well, for this once I yield to your advice, though I confess I cannot comprehend its advantage."

Mr. Meredith sought his pillow that night with a heavy heart:

and was rejoiced to find that Lady Ellen was asleep, as he dreaded exposing to her the state of his mind. Long did he brood over the communication made to him by Mr. Mortimer; and bitterly did he accuse himself for having, by his supineness, exposed his wife not only to censure, but to positive danger. It required no slight exertion of his self-control, to conceal, the next day, the anxiety and agitation that reigned in his breast; for now that his eyes were opened, he remarked with many a jealous pang, the assiduities of Lord Windermere, and the complacency with which they were received, and felt astonished that they had hitherto escaped his observation. He ceased not, during the many hours, which he fancied interminable, to observe every incident, however trivial, that tended to confirm the suspicions now excited, and was frequently on the point of betraying the anger to which they gave birth.

Evening at length came; and when Mr. Meredith, from habit, moved towards the sofa, where he had been wont to enjoy his *siesta*, and Lady Ellen and her admirer looked sentimentally towards the balcony, Mr. Mortimer said—

“Come, come, Meredith, let us have a game of cards. It is much better than sleeping on the sofa, or catching cold on the balcony, as I did last night.”

Lord Windermere looked as if he wished the proposer of cards a thousand miles off, and Lady Ellen declared that she did not know a single game. Meredith half yawning uttered something expressive of his indifference about play, but his willingness to do any thing agreeable to Mr. Mortimer, who declared that he would instruct his niece in *macao*, a game so easily and quickly acquired, that even a child could learn it in five minutes. The reluctance of Lord Windermere and Lady Ellen was overruled by the pertinacity with which the uncle of the latter adhered to his desire; and the party sat down to cards. Guinea stakes were proposed by Mr. Mortimer, and assented to by the other two gentlemen, while the lady, perfectly ignorant of the game, was placed under the guidance of her uncle. At first she paid little attention to the play, nor did Lord Windermere enter into it with much more animation; but when, after a few rounds, *he* became the dealer, with a small pile of gold before him, Mr. Mortimer with pleasure remarked, that instead of, as hitherto, keeping his eyes constantly fixed on the beautiful face of Lady Ellen, they were employed in looking at the cards. She too, when having three successive times been dealt an eight, and consequently been paid twice the amount of her stake by the dealer, began to take much more interest in the game, and evinced with childish joy her satisfaction at having been so successful. A nine was now dealt to her, and her gaiety increased; she impatiently held out her small white hand to receive the trifling amount of the sum she had risked, her eyes sparkling, and her cheeks blushing with the gratification of the new passion which had been awakened in her mind; and, as the uncle marked the added beauty given by the unwonted excitement to her face, and

glanced at Lord Windermere, to notice whether *he* also observed it, he detected an expression of dissatisfaction almost amounting to dislike in his countenance, as his eyes were turned on her face. He continued to lose, and evinced such evident symptoms of discomposure at his ill-luck, as to render him perfectly unamiable, in spite of his efforts to master his ill-humour. It became apparent that Lady Ellen remarked the change effected by play on her admirer; for she looked at him from time to time, as his cheek flushed, and he bit his nether lip, with no less astonishment than disapprobation.

At length fortune changed, and the pyramid of gold which Lady Ellen had won, and to which she had frequently pointed with childish exultation, began to crumble away; as dealing the cards she enriched all the others, and impoverished herself. She now began to exhibit certain evidences of anger, and then became much incensed, when Lord Windermere, forgetful in the excitement of gambling, of the *bienséance* of *un homme comme il faut*, and the rôle of an admirer, evinced more desire to receive his winnings from the fair loser, than did even Mr. Mortimer.

Mr. Meredith was the only one of the three men who did not remind her that he had won from her, and she remarked this with something like a feeling of gratitude. But how did this feeling increase when, towards the close of the evening, having lost not only the large sum she had previously won, but all the money she possessed, her husband uttering a well-timed compliment, that one so favoured by Nature, could not expect to be equally so by Fortune, who, being blind, could not see her whom she persecuted, placed before her all the gold from his pile, and afterwards declined accepting payment when he won from her. She contrasted the conduct of Mr. Meredith with that of Lord Windermere, glanced from the countenance of the one to the other, and observed, that while that of the former exhibited good temper and serenity, that of the latter was flushed by excitement, and lighted up by avarice. She asked herself whether this could be the same face that only a few hours previously had beamed with softness and sentiment? and turned from the contemplation, perfectly cured of her growing predilection for its owner.

But determined that her cure should be complete, Mr. Mortimer increased the stakes, which consequently added to the excitement of Lord Windermere, until he displayed such an ill-bred exultation when his avarice was gratified by winning, and such ill-humour when it was defeated, that totally unconscious that she herself had exhibited the same defect, though in a less degree, she conceived a positive dislike to him, which became so evident, that her uncle gave sundry glances of satisfaction to Mr. Meredith.

The marquis as he undressed at a late hour, to seek his pillow, confessed to himself, that although Lady Ellen was very beautiful, *he* should never again think her so, after having seen her un-

feminine passion for play, her odious love of money, and the *mauvaise manière* with which she lost or won.

"No," said he to himself, "the illusion is over. I am glad she is not *my* wife—I never could fancy her again, and so *allons* to Palermo."

The Lady Ellen Meredith heard of his departure the next day without regret; and reflecting on the change in her sentiments towards him, whispered to herself, "If play can render a person so disagreeable as it made him, it ought to be avoided. No, I will never gamble again."

A resolution to which she steadily adhered.

The English at Naples wondered for three whole days, why Lord Windermere departed so abruptly. They were during that period divided into conjectures whether any disagreeable detection had been made, or whether, discovering his passion to be hopeless, the lover had fled in despair. The greater number adopted the first supposition, and this was strengthened by the unusual attention of Mr. Meredith to his wife, which they charitably pronounced to be exhibited expressly to prevent suspicion.

Mr. Meredith was never afterwards known to sleep out of bed, or his wife to sentimentalise.

THE OLD IRISH GENTLEMAN.

IN the suburbs of the village of Comery might be seen two cottages, not more than a quarter of a mile apart, both of the same dimensions, but widely different in appearance. One had been newly thatched and white-washed; the glass windows shone brightly, and a few flower-pots, in which were some hardy geraniums, graced them. Some parasitic plants were creeping against the white walls; and in front, was a small but neat garden, well filled with simple and blooming flowers, around which were hovering innumerable bees, whose hives, ranged along the southern wall of the cottage, added to the air of comfort and cheerfulness of the rural picture.

The other dwelling offered a very striking contrast. The walls of the cottage were stained with mud and patches of green damp, and the thatch in many parts had disappeared, or was overgrown by weeds. The windows had many more panes broken than whole; and through the broken ones protruded various unseemly articles of wearing apparel, thrust in to supply the place of the glass. A huge heap of dung raised its unshapely mass against one side of the house; and on the other, a pool of stagnant water, verdant from the accumulation of indescribable vegetable matter that half filled it, sent forth most unsavoury exhalations. Some ducks were floating merrily on the bosom of this opaque pond, or *lough*, as the owner of the dwelling would have called it; and sundry long-legged pigs were supinely wallowing along its filthy banks. The mingled

noises of cocks, hens, turkeys, and geese, stunned the ears of all who approached, as these domestic favourites were in turn assailed by four or five curly-headed, ragged urchins, whose rosy cheeks and sturdy limbs bore evidence of the nutritious qualities of potatoes, and whose activity in chasing the frightened birds kept these last in constant exercise. Two or three dogs, who occasionally joined in the warfare, barked, or growled a deep bass to the treble of the birds and the shrill laugh of the children; only interrupted for a few minutes when the loud voice of an old man, who sat smoking his short pipe at the door of the house, commanded them to "hould their whisht, and not to be bothering the brains out of him, and the sowls out of the poor creathures of fowls."

In a porch in front of the first-mentioned of the two cottages, which in tidiness and beauty might have lost nothing by comparison with the neatest of those in England, sat two women, busily employed. The elder one, far advanced in the vale of years, was knitting stockings; and the other, a comely matron of middle age, was sewing a garment of linen, white as the snowy pigeons that were revolving in airy flight over her head, or sometimes descending to pick up the buck-wheat dispensed with a liberal hand in the farm-yard adjoining the garden.

"Well, then, sure it's myself, Mary, dear, that's come up to have an hour's talk with you, this fine day," said the old woman, in accents that could leave no doubt of her country. "And see, I've brought my knitting," resumed she, "that you shouldn't be scoulding me for being idle, as you always do when I'm not at work."

"Why, I think people may as well work while they are talking," said the other, with a half smile; "and it saves time."

"Ogh! Mary, it's yourself that's always talking of the value of time. Sure a body might think it was gould, by the fuss you make about it."

"I wish, Katty, my dear, I could make you and our neighbours understand that time *is* as valuable as gold, for then you would not perhaps waste it so much."

"Well, Mary, if the mother that bore ye—and a dacent woman she was, as ever stepped in shoe-leather—was to hear you, she wouldn't believe you were her child, when you're always finding fault with our Irish ways. Ah! she was a fine *flough houragh** housekeeper, that she was, though I say it that oughtn't to say it, bekase as how she was my aunt."

"I only find fault because I wish to see my country people as industrious and as economical of time as the English are, among whom I've spent so many years of my life."

"Well, you needn't be regretting 'em so much; for I don't think, Mary Magee, that you'd be afther finding a more elegant house in all England, grand as it is, than this same house of yours, here. Why, it's too fine to live in; and everything about it is so

* Profuse.

clane, that I'm always afraid to dirt the place when I come to see you! What an elegant porch this is; flowers growing up against it, too, quite genteelly! Why, I've seen Micky, your husband, as busy as the bees that are buzzing around us, getting everything ready for your coming over, just for all the world as if he was preparing to receive a born gentlewoman. 'She's been so many years used to have everything tidy and nate about her house, in England, says he, 'that she'd be miserable if I hadn't this place a little dacent for her.' And sure he thried all he could to get me and my ould man to take pathern by him, and to do up our tiniment; but we're too ould to change our ways, or to be bothering ourselves with alterations. Besides, it's a great comfort not to be afraid of spoiling things by dirting 'em; and with us, childer, pigs, dogs, and fowls, enjoy themselves, man and baste, as we say, without ever being put out of the way. But whihst, look down at the road, Mary—there he goes, and may God bless him while he lives, and the heavens be his bed when he takes the last sleep! Look at the fine face of him, *ma vourneen*,* with the eyes as blue as the heavens over his head, and the white locks that are streaming down his fresh-coloured cheeks as pure as the snow on the *Slieve-ne-Man* mountains! Sure, it does the heart of me good to see him."

"But why is he made so much of by all the neighbours?" asked the younger woman.

"Why? Ah, then, sure it's aisy to see you must be a stranger in these parts to ask the question. Isn't it himself that spent oceans of money, and, when that was gone, coined thousands of green acres into gold, to give to those that wanted it; and kept a house, the smoke of whose chimneys, burning night and day, went up to the sky to tell God how well he fed the hungry? Why, the smoke of his kitchen chimney might be seen twenty miles off; and the smell of the meat, roasting and boiling, frying and broiling, drew every one who wanted a good dinner to the big-house, where plenty and *cead mille falthough houghs*† always awaited them."

"Why did he leave the big house, then, neighbour?"

"Arragh, bekase them beasts of bailiffs wouldn't let him stay in it any longer; bad luck to 'em night and day for driving him away from us! for it was a sore day for Comery when he left it."

"How could the bailiff's drive him away, if he had a right to stay?"

"If he had a right to stay! 'Pon my soul, Mary Magee, you make the heart of me beat quicker, and the anger get into my head, by your foolish questions."

"I'm very sorry, Katty, honey, for that same; for Him above knows I had no thought to vex you. But I don't quite understand how a gentleman is to be driven from his house and home by bailiffs, if he has done nothing against the law."

"Against the law!—bad luck to the law! isn't it the ruin of us all? Don't tell me of law which has beggared more than one—

* My dear.

† A thousand welcomes.

half the parish, and will never stop till it has beggared the other! Law, indeed! Isn't it another name for the devil?—God forgive me for saying such a word. The very sound of it makes me angry, and good cause I have for that same."

"But you have not told me, Katty dear, how the bailiffs had power to turn away Mr. O'Donoughough from the big-house."

"Power!—sure haven't they power to do whatever they like when the law tells 'em?"

"Did he do anything against the law, then?"

"He!—never. But bekase he couldn't pay the wine-merchant for all the port, and sherry, and claret that used to be floating about the dining-room enough to swim a big ship, the spalpeen of the world put a pross* into the house; after that a latitat, then fiery faces,† and then them blackguards of bailiffs, who, if a gentleman owes a thrifle of money, have no more respect for him than if he was nothing at all, came and took possession."

"What's a pross, Katty, dear, and a latitat? The fiery faces, I guess, must be the two red-nosed bailiffs that the garsoons always pelt with stones when they go through the village."

"Why, God help you, you creathure of the world! Arragh, sure, as I said before, it's aisy enough to see you're a stranger in these parts, not to know what a pross, a latitat, and fiery faces main! You'll not be long here, I can tell you, before you know 'em better; for there's not a brat of a boy, no, nor a girl neither, in all the bhoreens‡ that isn't cute enough to know that much."

"Well, but tell me, Katty, why Mr. O'Donoughough was forced away from the big house?"

"Why, *cuishla-ma-chree*, when the people found out that the bailiffs were in the house, the butcher said, 'I'd never be the first man to put an execution into the house,' says he; 'but as Mr. Hooper, the great wine-merchant from Dubiin, has put one in, I may as well thry and get my money.' So he up, and gets a detainer. Thin comes the grocer, with a bill as long as the pedigree of the O'Donoughoughs, and sure there ain't a longer in all Ireland, and he says, 'I must be paid for my tay, and sugar, and coffee, and spices.' Ogh, the vagabone of the world!—when I think that there wasn't a poor woman within ten miles that was ever allowed to want a cup of bohay—ay, be me soul, nor a dhrop of wine if she was sick or sorry, and cinnamont, cloves, and sugar to put into it! Sure it's no wondher that the bill for spices was a long one, any way. Afther that comes the miller for his flour. 'Well, sure,' says the ould masher, 'I can't owe Barney Donovan much for flour; for hasn't he had every shafe of whate that has grown on my farm for the last twenty years, and I never took a shilling of money from him for that same?' But Barney up, and tould him that, though the whate on the farm might find flour enough for one large family, it couldn't supply all the poor in the neighbourhood who got bread from the big house. Ogh, Mary

* Process. † Fieri Facias. ‡ Suburbs of a town, or village.

Magee, there never was such another customer in the whole world as the ould masther! He never left anything on the hands of the thrades people *that* he didn't! The chandler thin takes the law for the soap and candles sent to the big house for many a long year, and a terrible bill it was; and no wondher, for the ould gentleman couldn't bear to see a dirty child in the whole parish; and well the poor neighbours knew it: for when they wanted a supply of soap, faith, they'd turn out the childer with dirty faces into the road whin the masther was coming that way, and whin he scoulded 'em for having them so black, they'd say they hadn't a bit of soap to wash 'em, and he'd ordher a stone of it to be sent to 'em next day. Thin, the ould women were always begging for rush-lights for the long nights whin they were sick, and snuff and tobacco for wakes, and they never were denied; so how could the ould gentleman help owing a power of money to the chandler? The tailor was the next, and his bill for frize coats alone, for the poor ould men and cloaks for the ould women of the parish, was a terrible one, let alone for the masther's clothes and the liveries.

"The blacksmith was the last who took the law. He had shod the horses for years and years, and a blessed number of thim there was in the stables. He was the dacentest of all thim that sarved the masther for generations, and he cried down salt tears whin he tould me that, if he only got the money due to him for forcing open doors, picking locks, and making new keys every year at the big house, his childer would be rich people now. Well, Mary, one afther another they put in executions. The boys in the neighbourhood wanted to go up, and mhurdher the bailiffs; and the ould women, and, to tell the truth, myself among 'em, advised the garsoons not to lave a bone in their bodies unbroken, but Mr. O'Donoughough, suspecting that the love of the people would lade 'em to show their respect for him in this manner, sent down a line to say that, if a single hair of the heads of any of the bailiffs was touched, he'd never forgive whoever did it. Thin the boys wanted to smash the windows of thim that put in the executions—ay, be me throth, and to bait 'em too—but the masther ordhered thim not to break the law, and the spalpeens of the world were allowed to go unpunished—more 's the pity! Think, Mary Magee, what it was to have executions for thousands and thousands of pounds put into that house, where for years and years there was nothing known but feasting and rejoicing—where the poor were clothed and fed—and where the door was as open as the heart of the owner. *Ogh, chone,* ma vourneen!* that was a sore day for poor Comery; and there were more dhry throats than dhry eyes there thin any way. I'll never forgit, when we were all bemoaning over the fire in the Widow Macgrath's little houlding, Padheen Murdoch said, 'Why, isn't it a big shame for us to sit *un-kenthahaing* † here, instead of making thim bailiffs cry that did the mischief? Sure, the masther only tould us not to hurt a hair of their heads, and,

* Alas! woe is me

† Lamenting.

as most of them wear wigs, we may bait 'em right well without touching their hair!' Poor Padheen was always a dacent and cute boy, God rest his soul! He wasn't like those that sarved the house for years, the ungrateful varmint! afther all the good he, the masther, I main, had done 'em, thinking he never could give 'em enough work to do, or buy too much from them. Sure, the butcher himself allows that the big house took so much mate, that all the cows and sheep sould to him from the farm on the estate wouldn't half pay his bill; and sure, no wonder, when half the parish—ay, be me soul, and more than half—never had occasion to buy a joint three times in the year, as all that could have esquire clapped to their names dined most days of the week in the great oak-hall at the big house; and the days they did not dine there were passed in thrying to recover from the effects of the too good dinners eaten, and the too much good wine dhrank there. Sure, didn't three parsons, Kirivan, Morrison, and him that came afther him, Parson O'Driscol, die, one of hoppoplexy,* t'other of hindi-gesty,† and the last from a narrow sipilas,‡ from eating too much at the big house? And no less than four doctors, one afther another, died from the same cause. I didn't much pity the doctors, any way; for they are all for starving their patients, and cramming themselves, for all the world like the fowls sint up for the English officers to the Dublin market. And while the gentry were fed in the oak-hall, be me soul, the tradesmen and hangers on, and all who were on the *shough-a-raun*, were as well fed in the sarvants' hall; the only difference in life being, that the oak-hall company had first cuts of the joints, and the sarvants and their friends the second. Then came the *bocoughs* ¶ to the scullery door—lame, blind, and the *mhoodauns* § into the bargain, and lashings they got to eat and to carry away. Niver was such eating and dhrinking in this world! no, nor never will be in the next, for all the people tells us of the blessings that will be there. Beer and cider flowed like the sea, and whisky was as plenty as the water in the river Suir, and as clear and bright, but more nourishing."

"Then it seems the old gentleman paid for little of this extravagance?"

"Paid, indeed! faith he was too much of a gintleman to bother his head about paying. It is not what he had been used to; no, nor his father before him. From generation to generation they had gone on feeding rich and poor, and clothing as well as feeding those that wanted it; and, let me tell you, that whin a gintleman has to be ordering grand dinners in the morning, to be eating 'em in the evening, and to be thrying to sleep off the effects of 'em in the night, not to talk of shooting and hunting, he can find but little time to be *thinking* of bills, let alone paying 'em."

"Well but, Katty, dear, that's what I call very wrong. People

* Apoplexy.

† Indigestion.

‡ Erysipelas.

¶ Beggarmen.

§ Fools.

should be just before they are generous ; and pay their debts before they give away money or food that isn't theirs."

"That isn't theirs! What do you mean by that, Mrs. Magee? I'd like to know? Why, wasn't it his own the moment he bought it, woman?"

"No, Katty, not till he paid for it."

"Ogh, mhurder! mhurder! was there ever sich nonsense? Sure, if nobody thought a thing their own, until they paid for it, by me conscience, there's few people would have much property to boast of. But you're a quare crathur, Mary Magee, that's the truth of it; and you picked up all them mean notions when you were across the herring-pond, and can't get 'em out of your head. I'm sorry for you, troth I am; for I see you can't understand how a real Milesian gintleman ought to live; and you think that he ought to be putting his hand in his pocket to pay for things, just for all the world like that poor mean fellow Mr. Herbert."

"Mean fellow! Oh, Katty, how can you call him so? He that does so much good, that employs the poor all the year round, finding some occupation for every one!"

"And more shame for him to be working the poor crathurs off their legs! If he gave 'em a thrifle for nothing, then, indeed, I'd say something of him; but doesn't he get hard work for his wages?"

"Katty, Katty, how can you forget all the good he has done since he came amongst you?"

"Good, indeed!—Is it him? He wants people to work like niggers—ay, faith, and makes 'em too; and where's the compliment, or the great goodness in paying 'em for their hard labour? If, as I said before, he gave 'em the money for doing nothing, that would be goodness."

"No, Katty, that would be folly, and an encouragement to idleness; whereas Mr. Herbert provides work, and pays for it liberally, teaching those who are willing to labour to depend on it for their support, instead of eating the bread of idleness given to them through mistaken charity."

"Ogh! and don't be telling me of your Mr. Herbert! 'tis little I think of him and the likes of him: give me the ould masther, Mr. O'Donoughough, the *real* gintleman from top to toe."

"But this real gentleman has ruined all those who supplied his house."

"Is it him? Not he, indeed!—quite the conthrary. Did *he* ever huxter, and dispute, and bait down the price of anything? Not like Mr. Herbert, who will only pay the market prices."

"Yes, Katty, but remember Mr. Herbert *does* pay."

"And no thanks to him either, when he's making money every day, planting, dhraining, and getting railroads carried."

"It will be long before he derives any profit from these works, which require so large an expenditure. But look at the constant employment, winter and summer, he finds for the poor; those that used to be months out of work, with their families starving."

"No! Misthis Magee, there was no one *allowed* to starve while the masther was at the big-house, and that I'd have you to know. Starve, indeed!"

"Well, but, Katty, is it not better to have the means of supporting one's family honestly by one's own labour, than to be obliged to depend on charity?"

"Whin there's no charity to be had people *must* labour, Misthis Magee; but if the ould masther was at the big house no one need work."

"And so much the worse; but you don't, surely, mean to say that Mr. Herbert ever refuses charity where it is really required?"

"Didn't he refuse Tom Macguire t'other day?"

"Because Tom is well able to work, and wouldn't."

"Tom hasn't been accustomed to it, poor boy! He used to earn lashings of money, as did many more in the masther's time, going out baiting the covers for the gintlemen that used to be out shooting from the big house. Many's the tinpinny he used to get; and when, by any lucky accident, he got shot in the legs, they'd give him a piece of gould, and he'd be off to the fairs and pathrens in the neighbourhood until every farthing of it was gone. Often have I seen Tom Macguire and some more of the boys picking the shot out of their legs with knitting-needles, and heard 'em hoping they'd soon have more of the same good luck, it brought 'em so much money. Ogh! times are sadly changed with poor Tom, and it's no wondher he has taken to the dhrink to comfort him. Little did I think he'd ever be reduced to ax a *Sassenagh** for charity."

"Nor ought he to ask *any one*, Katty dear, when he has health to work."

"But I tell you he is not used to it."

"And I know Mr. Herbert isn't used to give charity to those that *can* earn, and *won't*."

"Ogh! I see, Mary Magee, that you're entirely changed into an Englishwoman by the many long years you spent in England, and nursing them English childer; and you have such quare notions, that it's no use talking to you. Faith, you, an Irishwoman bred and born, ought to be ashamed to disparage your own counthry, and to set up another above it."

"You wrong me, indeed, Katty, honey, for I love Ireland dearly; and it's because I do, that I would wish to see my countrymen taking pattern from Englishmen, and learning to value their time, and to depend on their labour. But you have not told me what became of Mr. O'Donoughough after all the executions were put in the house?"

"Sure, thin a *cant*† was called; and as none of the ginty of the neighbourhood would attend it for fear of hurting the ould masther's feelings, the things sould for little or nothing to the little-blackguard brokers from Waterford, Carrick-on-Suir, and Clonmel. Ogh! 'twas they that carried off the lob ‡ any way. The

* A stranger.

† An Auction.

‡ Treasure.

estate was sould out and out ; for, unluckily, 'twas'nt tailed on Miss Grace."

"Who was Miss Grace?"

"The masther's only daughter, to be sure,—the biggest beauty and the greatest darlintg that ever was born. No, Mary Magee, you may believe me when I tell you, that there isn't the match for Miss Grace O'Donoughough in all Ireland. Ogh! 'twas enough to melt the hardest heart to see her whin the bailiffs came and took all; yet she did not shed a tear, only looked so pale, and she minded nothing but thrying to comfort the ould masther.

"'My child, my own Grace,' said he, '*can* you forgive me for letting it come to this? How unpardonable has my conduct been!' And the tears came rolling down his cheeks, and she put her arms around his neck, and kissed him until his tears were all shining on her dark ringlets just for all the world like the dew on the leaves of the lauristina; and her young fair cheek, pressed against his ruddy one, looked like a lily near a damask rose; while his white locks were mixed with her shining black ones, just as one sees the snow hanging in wreaths from the branches of the larch. I saw it all through the glass door of the study, whin I was thrying to condole with my sister-in-law, Anstey O'Donnel, the nurse of Miss Grace, who never left her since she was born; no, nor never will till she—Anstey, I main—is carried feet foremost to the church-yard. 'Come, my dear father!' says Miss Grace. 'Where would you have me go, my child?' says he. 'To Clonea, where I have secured such a pretty cottage, and prepared everything for your reception.' 'Then you have long foreseen what would, what *must* have been the fruit of my folly, while I——' And here the big tears came down so fast he couldn't finish what he was saying. And she *had* foreseen, sure enough, as her mother before her had, that the noble-hearted ould gintleman was spending thousands where he ought not to have spent hundreds; and this grieved the daughter as it had grieved the mother, who, many people said, died of a broken heart from the dread that her child would be reduced to want."

"And wouldn't the gentleman listen to his wife or his daughter, and for their sakes leave off his extravagance?"

"How could he, poor gintleman? Sure often and often he promised the misthis he would turn over a new leaf: but then would come some company, invited months before, for the shooting, or the hunting, or the fishing; and, as he used to say, there was no good in thrying to save in the winther, bekase ould friends would be coming. Then in the summer, there was the races at one place and another, all within an aisy distance of the big house; and people would think it so quare, and so they would, faith, if the house wasn't filled with company as it always was for generations and generations. So you see, Mary, he could never find the time to turn over the new leaf, either in winter or summer; so 'twasn't his fault, poor dear gintleman! as you see, and, indeed, many a one has

tould me, 'tis a mighty hard matter to do it, for one never knows where or how to begin. Well, but I was telling you he cried; and 'tis a terrible thing, Mary, to see a man, and, above all, *such* a man, shed tears. 'You may forgive me, my own Grace,' says he, 'but I never can forgive myself. *She*, who is in heaven, warned me of what must happen.' 'Oh, my dear father, be comforted, I pray you,' said Miss Grace, the tears streaming down her cheeks; and again and again she kissed his forehead. With that poor Anstey began sobbing, and so did I too, for I couldn't help it, and so we stole out of the room that the masther and Miss Grace mightn't know we were there. They went off to Clonea the next morning, followed by the blessings of the poor and the good wishes of the rich; and they live in a little bit of a cottage that you might steal out of the hall of the big house without its being missed; but it's so neat and so tidy, and so sweet, that it's a pleasure to look at it; and then Miss Grace is from morning till night thinking of nothing but how to please her father. And the farmers around are always sending 'em chickens, and butter, and eggs, and everything they think they would like, though Miss Grace does all she can to prevent 'em; and isn't it herself that has refused great offers of marriage bekase she wouldn't leave her father, and never will?"

"But how has Miss Grace been able to do all this for her father?" asked Mary Magee, wiping her eyes which had been moistened by Katty's story.

"Ogh! thin, did I forget to tell you that her godfather took more care of her worldly prospects than her real father did; and, having died a year before the break-up of the big house, left Miss Grace two hundred pounds a year for her life, out of which she makes not only the ould masther happy, but conthrives to do a power of good to the poor into the bargain? The masther comes here now and then, just to see the ould place and the ould faces, and proud and glad are we to see him. God bless him, and long may he live!"

It was about three months after this conversation, that Katty and Mary Magee were again seated in front of the latter's dwelling, the one, as formerly, engaged in needlework, while the other was knitting stockings.

"Well, thin, sure Mary Magee, 'tis yourself that was sly enough, any way, never to have tould us a word of the courtship until the wedding-day was fixed, when you must have known from your husband long ago that his masther was going to be married to Miss Grace O'Donoughough."

"Why, to tell you the truth, Katty, I did not think it right to speak about the courtship of my husband's master, until I knew that the young lady had accepted him."

"Ogh! by me soul, Mary, you're almost an Englishwoman in all your ways; and only that the mother of you was my own aunt, which makes you me cousin-garmint, I'd never believe you had the true ould Irish blood in your veins, you're so square. And so Mr. Herbert has bought the big house, and all the estate along with it,

and Miss Grace will be misthis of the house she was born and bred in after all, praise and glory be to His name who settles everything for the best! Well, the heart of me warmed to Mr. Herbert, which is more than ever I thought it would do to a Sassenagh, and above all to one as makes people work like niggers, whin I heard how he sent round everywhere to buy up all the ould family pictures that belonged to the big house, and paid six times as much for 'em as they were formerly sould for at the cant."

"When you know Mr. Herbert as well as I do, Katty, your heart *will* warm to him, I can tell you; for, though he is not a gentleman who makes professions of kindness, never was there so considerate a person, or so just a one."

"Always barring the ould masther, Mary; for I can never allow any one to be put before him. I am tould that nothing can equal the elegant furniture that is putting into the big house, and that the ould masther's own rooms are doing up for him as if he was a king."

"Yes, indeed, Katty, every attention is paid to his comfort; and Mr. Herbert behaves to him just as if he was his own father—so respectful, and so affectionate, my husband tells me."

"And why not, pray? Isn't it a great honour for Mr. Herbert, or the like of him, to marry into such an ould ancient family, with a pedigree as long as the bleaching-green?"

"But Mr. Herbert is of a very old family himself, Katty."

"Why, didn't people tell me that his father was only a banker?"

"It is very true that his father, the Honourable Mr. Herbert, own brother to an earl, was a banker."

"Arragh! let us alone, Mary Magee, and don't be afther telling us that a real lord's brother would keep a bank, just like Jimmy Devereux, at Carrick-on-Suir, that keeps the bank and the cloth-shop!"

"Bankers in London, Katty, are quite different from those in small towns in Ireland; and many of the younger branches of noble families are partners in banking-houses."

"Well, that beats out Banahger and Balinasloe too! Who'd ever believe that lords' brothers and sons would come to such a pitch!—But thim English lords aint to be compared with Irish; they haven't the true Milesian blood in their veins afther all, or, if they had, they'd rather be without a shoe to their feet, a coat to their backs, or a morsel in their stomachs, than take to business: so it's well for Mr. Herbert, rich as he is—and they say he is as rich as the Irish king *Crayshoes**—that his childer, whenever they come, will have a drop of the right sort in 'em. Ogh! you may smile if you like, Mary Magee, but blood isn't wather, I can tell you."

Twelve months after the conversation above recorded, between Katty O'Shaghnessy and Mary Magee, a general rejoicing at Comery marked the birth of a son and heir at the big house. Great was the alteration effected during that short period in the

appearance of the village, and the habits and feelings of its inhabitants, on whom the example and protection of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert had produced the most salutary change. It is true, a few of the old people like Katty O'Shaghnessy remained in some particulars wedded to their prejudices; nevertheless, they all entertained a lively sentiment of gratitude towards Mr. Herbert, and an affection bordering on adoration for his wife, who, now blessed with ample means, left nothing undone that could tend to their improvement and comfort.

M A D E L I N A :

A ROMAN STORY.

“ I COMMAND you to see that graceless varlet, Joseppa, no more; no good can come to him; he has been a disobedient son, and is the talk of the whole village, for his idleness and his insolence.”

This was the prohibition of Giovanni Vitelli, one of the most affluent farmers in the neighbourhood of Albano, to his only child, Madelina, the pride and darling of his old age. Tears and imploring looks were the only answer given to the stern mandate, by the gentle Madelina; but they produced more effect on the heart of her loving father, than the most eloquent appeal could have done. He pressed her to his breast, and, “ My poor child !” broke from his lips, as he affectionately patted her glossy raven locks.

“ Do not think that I would willingly pain you, my girl,” said Giovanni. “ The Madonna knows how much it costs me to see these tears, and these poor pallid cheeks; but Joseppa is indeed unworthy of you, and a union with him can be productive only of misery and disgrace.”

“ Oh! my father, surely you judge him too severely,” replied the weeping maiden; “ idle and unthinking he may be, but his heart is not bad, and he may yet be reclaimed.”

“ Do not anger me, Madelina, by this weak defence. It is thus ever with you women; you fancy a man is never irreclaimable, as long as he affects to love you; and ye think, simpletons as ye are, that the heart cannot be a bad one, wherein ye fancy yourselves treasured. Would a good heart have allowed its owner to indulge in follies—nay, worse than follies—crimes, until his ill conduct brought his poor mother to her grave?”

“ But Joseppa repents his evil doings, indeed he does, dear father.”

“ And shows his repentance,” interrupted Giovanni, “ by a total neglect of his little farm, and continual wanderings among the mountains, where, if rumour is to be believed, he has formed some most discreditable and dangerous alliances. Even our good pastor told me——”

“ Oh! what did he say, my father? he who is so good, so

merciful!" said Madelina, her cheeks becoming deadly pale. "Has he too pronounced against Joseppa?"

"He has warned me that this reckless youth is pursuing desperate courses, that he has been seen holding stealthy converse with men of whom nothing but evil is known; and that he is out night after night, no one *knows* exactly where, but every one *suspects* for no honest purpose."

Little did the father or the daughter imagine, that he who was the subject of their conversation, was a listener to it, or the thirst for vengeance which it awakened in his breast. Joseppa had been hovering round the cottage, to see Madelina, and through the open window had heard the whole discourse. Some days elapsed, during which Madelina saw or heard nothing of Joseppa, and she formed the resolution of adopting the advice of her father, to whom she was fondly attached. But though she could not even entertain the idea of ultimately giving up Joseppa, without tears of anguish, and heartfelt pangs, still she resolved never to destroy the happiness of her only parent, by persevering in encouraging a suitor, whom he so much disapproved.

"No, my father," would the affectionate girl ejaculate to herself, when alone, "your Madelina will never desert you, nor leave your hearth lonely; you have lost the dear partner who made your life, and mine too, happy, and your child will never cause you a pang."

Every recurrence to her mother, whom she had followed to the grave, two years before, softened the heart of Madelina, and rendered her more devoted to her remaining parent; yet her passion for Joseppa was still unsubdued, for the poor girl thought, with the sophistry of youthful minds, that, so long as she refused to join her fate with Joseppa's, she could injure no one by allowing his image to retain its place in her heart. She carefully avoided all the haunts where she had been accustomed to meet her lover, though the effort cost her many a sigh, and many a longing, lingering glance did she cast from the door of the cottage to see if he was hovering nigh.

Ten nights after the prohibition of her father to see Joseppa, she was awakened from her slumber by a gentle tap at her window. How did the heart of Madelina palpitate at the well-known sound! Yet her good resolution of not seeing him was remembered, and she moved not. The tap was now repeated more loudly, and fearful that her father might also hear it, she arose and opened the casement.

"Cruel Madelina," said Joseppa, "how many days have I lingered about the cottage in the hope of seeing you! I am a fool to love you thus, when you, ungrateful that you are, love me no longer."

"Oh, Joseppa! how can you say so? you know how dear you are to me, and what sorrow it gives me not to see you; but my father has forbidden it, and even in speaking to you now, I am disobeying his commands."

“And know you not *why* he has used this tyranny?” asked the lover, with a scornful smile.

“Alas! too well,” was the answer. “Your neglect of your farm, your recklessness, your frequent wanderings in the mountains, and worse than all, oh Joseppa! the intimacy you are said to have formed with wicked men, whom all dread. These are the reasons why my father separates us.”

“You are his dupe, I tell you,” said the wily Joseppa. “All that he asserts is untrue, and only invented as an excuse to prejudice you against me, that he may accomplish his project of marrying you to the rich dotard, Thomaso.”

“What do I hear?” uttered the alarmed Madelina; but no—it is impossible; my father could not be so cruel—no, Joseppa, I cannot believe it.”

“I knew you would not,” replied he, with a scornful smile; “no, it is only of *me* that you are disposed to believe evil, and no tale is too improbable for your credulity. You will never credit your father’s plans until he has commanded you to receive the disgusting dotard as your husband, and then you are, forsooth, too dutiful a daughter to dispute his orders. But I waste time in attempting to remove the bandage from your eyes. Adieu, faithless Madelina! May you be happy, while I——” and he moved away, as if overpowered by his emotions.

“Stay, in pity stay, dear Joseppa! you wrong me, indeed you do! I love you as truly as ever, and the Madonna knows how much I have suffered in obeying my father, and avoiding your presence.”

“Can you forget,” resumed Joseppa, “how many times you have vowed to be mine? how often, when I have brought chaplets of flowers to hang on your window, have you flown to this casement, which to-night you opened so reluctantly, and allowed me to intertwine your pretty fingers with flowers from the chaplet; but I see you are changed, Madelina.”

“No, no,” replied the poor girl, softened by his appeal to past hours; “I still love you!”

“Well then, prove it to me,” said Joseppa, “by letting me come here to-morrow. Your father is going to Rome to sell some sheep, he will be absent all day, and we shall be able to converse without interruption, perhaps for the last time. Your future husband goes with him to Rome, to arrange everything for your marriage: for I saw them last evening in deep consultation with the pastor, and I am sure all is settled.”

A noise in the chamber drew the alarmed Madelina’s attention, and she shrank with superstitious dread, when she saw the lamp that burned before the Madonna, flaring with such force against the glass of the picture that it cracked it in many pieces.

“Behold!” said the affrighted girl; “what an unlucky omen—the gift of my poor dear mother, offered up at my birth, is destroyed! Oh! Joseppa, this misfortune arises in my disobedience towards my father,” and tears chased each other down her cheeks.

"See you not," said Joseppa, "that the picture was destroyed exactly at the moment I was telling you that they were arranging your marriage with Thomaso? The Madonna then gave you this intimation that she would abandon you if you consent to form that hateful alliance. Depend on it, this is the real meaning of the omen, which can have no evil consequences if you remain true to your vows with me. But I must away; to-morrow, when they are gone, I shall be here. Until then, *adio Madelina mia!*" and he was out of sight ere she could utter the refusal she meant to give to receiving his visit.

Madelina passed a sleepless night; the consciousness of having disobeyed her father filled her with remorse, but the idea of even a marriage with Thomaso alarmed her beyond measure.

When she met her father next morning, she for the first time dared scarcely lift her eyes to his. Her embarrassment, added to her pale cheeks and heavy eyes, led Giovanni to believe that she was unwell, and drew from him many expressions of affection and endearment as he pressed her to his breast, and blessed her as his sole comfort. She was ready to throw herself at her father's feet, and avow her disobedience, when the voice of old Thomaso, calling out to know if he was ready, prevented the movement, and Giovanni again blessing her, with even more than his accustomed fondness, hurried away to join his friend.

She stood at the door, and watched the receding figure of her father, his white locks floated round his ruddy face, and thrice as he turned to look back at Madelina, and waved his hand affectionately to her, she was tempted to call him back, and thus avert the meeting with Joseppa. She left not the door until her parent's figure was lost in distance, and when she entered the cottage she wept as if her parting with him was to be one of long duration, instead of, as she imagined, a few brief hours.

Joseppa came not until noon, and, when he entered, seemed agitated and alarmed. He accounted for it by stating that he had ascertained the certainty of the plan of Madelina's being immediately forced into a marriage with Thomaso, and, by his wily representations, persuaded the simple girl that her only chance of escape rested on eloping with him. His passionate remonstrances and entreaties won on her gentle nature; but it was not until he had repeatedly assured her that, when they should be married, her father would relent, and receive them back with all his former affection, that she consented to fly with him.

While she was making the few necessary preparations, her unprincipled lover was not idle. He, by the assistance of an instrument with which he had provided himself, forced the lock of the coffer in which Giovanni kept his money, and took possession of its contents, carefully concealing his turpitude from his innocent and hapless dupe. He had prepared a horse, on which he placed Madelina behind him, who left the happy home of her infancy with many tears, and blessings breathed for the father she

was deserting. Their route led by the churchyard, where the mother of the weeping girl was interred, and her tears streamed afresh as she beheld the white cross with its chaplet of faded flowers, that marked the humble grave.

"Let us stop, dear Joseppa, for never have I hitherto passed this spot without offering up my prayers for the repose of the soul of her who was so dear to me—of her who is, perhaps, now looking down with sorrow on her unworthy child."

"No! it is impossible for us to stop," replied Joseppa, "soon, very soon, dear Madelina, we shall return here after we are united at the altar, and then we will invoke a blessing on our union from the spirit of the departed. To remain now would be to expose ourselves to the observation and evil tongues of all who might see us; therefore we must advance."

So saying, Joseppa urged forward his horse, while the trembling and weeping girl clung to him, her heart divided by feelings that absorbed every other—regret and remorse at deserting her parent, and love, passionate love, for him with whom she was flying.

"When my father returns, and finds no Madelina to welcome and embrace him," would she say to her lover, "how bitter will be his disappointment!"

"And when the dotard Thomaso finds no young bride awaiting him, how angry will he be!" would Joseppa reply, well aware that only by sustaining this hateful image in her mind, he could silence the remorse that was already inflicting its pangs on her heart; for, fondly as she loved Joseppa, never would she have fled with him, had he not taught her to believe that her father was determined on forcing her to wed old Thomaso—an idea that, it is scarcely necessary to say, had never once entered into her parent's head.

They stopped not until they had reached Velletri, where the marriage ceremony was performed, and whence Madelina proposed that they should despatch a messenger to announce the event to her father, and demand his permission to return. This wish being complied with, she fondly resigned herself to the happiness of the present, and to the sanguine anticipations of the future.

The affectionate bride now gave expression to all those terms of endearment that maiden modesty had hitherto restrained, and as she drew her fingers through the dark curly locks of her husband, and looked with eyes beaming with love in his face, she whispered that the presence only of her father was necessary to render her the happiest creature on earth. She observed with a chagrin that threw a damp over her spirits, that every allusion to her parent seemed to displease Joseppa; and having gently reproached him for it, he told her that he was jealous at finding that she thought so much more frequently of another than of him, and that *his* presence could not suffice to make her happy.

This excuse reassured her, and pressing his hands within hers, she replied, "Oh, Joseppa, when with my father, how often did I

reproach myself for being insensible to his affection, and thinking only of you! and now that you are mine, that nothing but death can separate us, forgive me, that his dear image is so continually present to my imagination. But we shall soon be with him, and then this heart will have only place for happiness; for with a husband so loved, and so dear a father, I cannot experience a care."

Could Madelina have known what was passing through the mind of her husband during such conversations, how would she have shrunk from his embraces, and recoiled with horror from the hands she now pressed to her heart, with all the fondness of an adoring bride!

The next day the messenger returned from Albano, bringing the fearful intelligence that Madelina no longer had a father. He, and old Thomaso, who had accompanied him on the route to Rome, to dispose of the product of their joint farms, had been robbed and murdered on the road; and the soldiers were sent into the mountains in search of the brigands, who were supposed to have committed the deed.

To describe the anguish of the unfortunate Madelina would be impossible. She accused herself in bitter terms, as having caused this misfortune by abandoning her home; and drew forth sullen reproaches from her husband, when his representations, that whether she was in the cottage near Albano, or on the route to Velletri, the murder would equally have been committed, had failed to convince her that her flight had nothing to do with the fatal event. She insisted on returning immediately, that she might see all that remained to her of her parent; and urged it with such passionate entreaties, that Joseppa yielded an unwilling assent, evidently actuated by the suspicious looks of the persons around, who seemed to regard his unwillingness with surprise. The violence of Madelina's grief drew forth more of sullenness than of sympathy from her unfeeling husband.

"Do you not still possess me?" would he say, but in a tone that expressed more of reproach than consolation, while the wretched woman could think only of the father she had lost, and who died by an assassin's dagger.

"I was happy and smiling, while they murdered him!" she continued to exclaim. "Oh, father! dear father! little did I think when you thrice turned to look at me, as I stood at the cottage-door, that I should never see you again! Had they no pity for your gray hairs? those dear venerable locks that I have so often kissed."

The sternness of Joseppa repelled his unhappy wife from weeping on his breast, or seeking his sympathy; and now, for the first time, came the painful conviction that never should she find in him, one who would fondly share and strive to alleviate any of the afflictions of life that might befall her.

"If," she exclaimed, "while only a few hours his bride, he can

thus see my anguish unmoved, nor partake my sorrow for the dearest, best of parents, he can have no heart! Oh! my father, you warned me, but I was deaf to your counsel—the last you ever gave your miserable child!”

Before Madelina and her husband had arrived at the cottage near Albano, the bodies of her father and Thomaso had been interred. This event, which increased her grief, as she had counted on once more beholding the venerable face she was now doomed to see no more on earth, seemed to gratify Joseppa, who made some unfeeling reflections on the inutility of giving way to sorrow, or on desiring to view an object that must shock her already agitated mind. The neighbours flocked round to try and speak comfort to the poor girl, and their soothing kindness formed such a contrast to the sullenness of Joseppa, that it became doubly painful to her. All the wealth that the father of Madelina left was now Joseppa's; and thus put into possession of the means of a comfortable subsistence, for a short time he seemed inclined to attend to rural occupations, and to busy himself in plans for improving his farm. During this brief period, the passionate grief of his wife subsided into a settled melancholy; but her affection for him became still more deep. It was true she saw, and marked with anguish, his selfishness, his utter recklessness of all but his own gratification, yet still she clung to him with a fondness and devotion resulting from the genuine affection of her nature, which lavished the pure treasure of its feelings on this, the first object that awakened them into life. Yet the intensity of her attachment rendered her more feelingly alive to his want of the qualities that would have insured her a return of her sentiments, and secured the happiness that was still a stranger to her breast, which yearned for sympathy and companionship.

No tidings had yet been received of any discovery of the assassins of her parent, though the papal government had offered large rewards for their apprehension, and soldiers were continually sent into the mountains in search of them. Month after month rolled away, and Madelina was now likely to be soon a mother; this circumstance, which she fondly expected would have led to an increased kindness on the part of her husband, seemed to displease rather than to gratify him, and all the woman and the wife was wounded by his rude observations on the subject.

About this period she awoke one night, and found with alarm that her husband was no longer by her side. She arose, and having wrapped herself in a cloak, advanced to the door in time to discern the receding figures of two men muffled up in mantles, parting from Joseppa, who was approaching the house. When he saw her, he became transported with rage, and exclaimed, “What! can I not leave the house even for a few minutes without your pursuing me as a spy? I command you never again to follow me; for I repeat, I will not be watched!”

The heart of poor Madelina trembled at the stern unkindness

of her husband, and she shrunk back alarmed from the severity of his glance. A new cause for uneasiness was now furnished to this unhappy woman, by observing that her neighbours no longer sought her cottage as formerly, to chat away an evening hour. When they met her, unaccompanied by her husband, they were as kind and friendly as in past times; nay, she even fancied there was an air of pity in their manner towards her, which led her to conclude that they were aware of Joseppa's harshness.

But when *he* was with her, they passed rapidly on, merely exchanging a word or smile of recognition, and seeming nervously anxious to avoid him. He, too, observed this repugnance, and many were the half-uttered menaces with which he marked his sense of it.

He now frequently disappeared for whole days, and such was the sternness of his looks and manner, that Madelina dared not question him on the subject.

At length she became the mother of a male infant, and not only did she feel towards the babe all the tenderness that was peculiar to her affectionate heart, but its birth seemed to increase the enthusiastic fondness she bore towards its father; while *he* scarcely noticed the infant, and to Madelina's repeated appeals to him as to its beauty, sullenly replied, that for his part he "saw nothing remarkable in it, and thought it was like all other infants, very plain, and much given to crying." How did the heart of the youthful mother feel wounded at such moments! And yet all this unkindness failed to alienate her love from her unworthy husband.

The curé of Albano sent one day to desire Joseppa to go to him. The message evidently produced considerable agitation in him, and he seemed most reluctant to comply with it. After some hesitation he went; and, on his return, Madelina observed that his brow wore a more threatening aspect than ever, and that some evil passion was struggling in his heart. He muttered broken sentences to himself, clenched his teeth, while his eyes shot forth gleams of ungovernable fury; and to her request to be informed of what the curé wanted with him, he imperiously replied by a command to question him no more.

On that night a tap at the window caught the attention of Madelina, as she lay on her sleepless couch, revolving in her mind what could be the subject of the curé's interview with her husband. He, too, heard it, and arose gently from the bed, casting a look at her, as if to be assured that she slept. He left the house with noiseless steps, and returned not until day was already dawning. He passed the greater part of the day in bed, saying that he was indisposed, and when the shades of night fell over the earth, he left his home, telling his wife, that he should be absent for a day or two. The second day of his absence, Madelina was no less surprised than alarmed, by a band of soldiers entering her cottage, and searching it minutely in pursuit of Joseppa.

"Of what—oh! of what is he accused?" asked the trembling

wife ; a fearful presentiment of his having committed some crime, having connected itself in her mind with his secret interviews with the strange men at night, and his frequent absence.

" Know you not that the good curé of Albano was murdered yesterday ?" replied one of the soldiers, " and that your husband is——"

" Hush !" said the commander of the party, " we are not here to answer questions, or to explain the motives of our visit. Prepare yourself to accompany us to Rome, for we must convey you to prison."

" To prison ! Oh, Mother of God ! what have I done ?" shrieked the unfortunate Madelina. " I am innocent, indeed I am innocent !" and she threw herself at the feet of the soldiers. At this moment some of the neighbours came in, and taking pity on her misery, entreated the soldiers to let her remain in the cottage.

" She is good, and simple," said they, " and never did anything wrong, except in marrying her wicked husband."

The soldiers having no orders to arrest her, consented to let her remain, and set out in pursuit of Joseppa and his accomplices. One or two of the most kind and charitable of her neighbours offered to stay with her during the night ; but she declined their offer, under the plea that she was so fatigued and exhausted, that she required rest, and would immediately retire to her couch.

When they had all left the cottage, the unfortunate Madelina determined to go into the mountains in search of her husband, to apprise him of the pursuit of which he was the object. In which direction to go, she knew not, and must trust to Providence for directing her steps to him. In the cottage she could not stay, while his danger was every moment presenting itself to her imagination in the most terrific forms. No ! she would seek him out, and warn him of the peril that menaced him, even though death should be her fate. She looked around at the little room, in which the happy days of her childhood had been passed. Each homely article of furniture, endeared to her by long use, was identified with the memory of her lost parents. There stood the old arm-chair, in which her father had been wont to recline after the labours of the day ; and the rosary of her mother, which she had so often seen her pray with, hung on the same hook that supported the Madonna, before which its accustomed lamp was burning. She fancied that the picture looked at her with a countenance of pity, and she threw herself on her knees before it in supplication.

" Harshness—neglect—all, all I could have borne without a murmur," sobbed Madelina, " for I felt I deserved it, for violating the commands of my father ; but that the breast on which this head has lain, should be the abode of crime, and the hands these lips have kissed, be stained with blood, oh ! it is too, too terrible, and chills me with horror ! But no, I will not believe it ; my child, my child," looking at her infant, who was calmly sleeping, " thy father cannot be an assassin !"

She wrapped her babe carefully in a warm shawl, and securing it on her back, threw a cloak over her, and with noiseless step stole from the cottage, and pursued a wild path that led to Monte Cavo, the most steep of the neighbouring mountains. Every noise alarmed her, and every shadow startled; yet she advanced rapidly, the hope of saving her husband giving fleetness to her steps, and courage to her trembling heart. The moon rose in unclouded majesty, tinging all around with its silvery light, and as she gained the acclivity of the mountain, the country for a vast extent stood exposed to her view. There was a calmness in the air, and the scene, that offered a marked contrast to the tumultuous agitation of her feelings; and as she paused to rest her weary limbs, and supply her infant with the genial nourishment which, with feeble cries it had been demanding for the last half-hour, a deep melancholy seemed to replace the terrors of the previous moment. But who can picture the despair of the wretched mother, when she found that no longer could her bosom furnish sustenance to the parched lips of her infant, whose cries penetrated to her very soul? The terror and agitation of the last few hours had produced this effect, and her courage failed before it. She arose from the bank on which she had seated herself, and with trembling limbs pursued her course, endeavouring to stop the cries of her child, by pressing her lips to its, while her burning tears fell on its innocent face.

She was nearly sinking to the earth, from fatigue, when her eyes fell on some glistening object, moving in a copse of wood, at some distance; and before she had time to ascertain what it was, she found herself surrounded by four men, whose dress and arms too well explained their profession, to leave her in doubt. One of them shook her rudely by the arm, demanded her name, and why she was there; while another made some coarse remark on her personal attractions, adding that she would be a desirable acquisition for their cavern.

Her terror almost deprived her of speech, and her child, who had been awakened from the slumber into which exhaustion had thrown it, soon began to cry, its wail increasing the agony of its wretched mother.

A whistle was now heard from a distance, which being answered by one of the brigands who surrounded Madelina, two more of the party joined them, and in one of the new-comers the unhappy woman discovered her guilty husband, in a brigand's dress. He seemed for a moment confused at being thus detected; but quickly recovering himself, he sternly demanded why she had presumed to follow him? A few hurried words had hardly told him of his danger, when another brigand ran up to the group in breathless haste, and informed them, that a formidable party of soldiers were advancing, to whom, from their great superiority of numbers, resistance would be vain, and that immediate flight or concealment among the underwood, was the only chance of escape that remained. The brigands dispersed, and fled in different direc-

tions; Joseppa throwing a dark cloak over his shoulders, desired Madelina to follow his steps, while he rapidly sought a tangled maze of shrubs in the forest, where they might evade the search of their pursuers. They reached the spot, and he, with his gun, separated the branches, beneath which he concealed himself and his wife, commanding her not to move.

The voices of the soldiers were now heard in the distance, and she clung to the side of Joseppa in breathless terror, feeling only alive to his danger, and totally regardless of her own. At this moment, while the footsteps of the soldiers were heard approaching nearer and nearer, the hapless child resumed its cries. Madelina felt the hand of her husband grasp the child, its wailing ceased in one instant; and their pursuers, led to the spot by the cries of the infant, were in the next, beating the bushes with their bayonets. One of them inflicted a deep wound in the arm of Madelina, but no cry, no murmur escaped her, her child was only pressed closer to her breast, as her warm blood flowed over it. A second bayonet wounded Joseppa, and his involuntary movement discovered them. They were dragged forth amidst the shouts and execrations of the soldiers; but their violence was less appalling to Madelina, than the maledictions with which Joseppa greeted her; when with eyes glowing with fury and malice, he fiercely accused her of being the sole cause of his detection. Some hard blows from the soldiers, who were manacled his arms, betrayed their sense of his barbarity; but she threw herself between them and him, and implored them not injure him.

And now it was that Madelina turned her eyes on her child;—but, oh, heaven! who can paint her despair and horror, when the moonbeams falling on its face, showed her its countenance, blackened and distorted, and she felt that she held a corpse in her arms! The savage and unnatural father, to silence its cries—had strangled it!

Joseppa was conveyed a prisoner to Rome, where, being convicted of the murder of the curé, and also of having assassinated the father of his wife, and old Thomaso, he paid the penalty of his guilt, with his life. Madelina's reason never recovered the fearful shock it had sustained on discovering the death of her child; and she has ever since been the inmate of a madhouse, whence her gentleness, and uncomplaining melancholy, have won the pity of all.

ANNETTE; OR, THE GALERIEN:

A TALE.

ANNETTE MORAN was the prettiest girl at a village in the department of the Isère, famed for the beauty of its female inhabitants. She was the only person who doubted this fact; and her evident freedom from vanity, joined to the unpretending simplicity and

mildness of her nature, rendered her beloved, even by those of her own sex, who might have felt inclined to contest charms less meekly borne by their possessor. Among the many candidates for the hand of Annette, Jules Dejean was the one who had won her heart. Their marriage had been long agreed on, and they only waited to have a sufficient sum laid by, the fruits of their earnings and economy, to enable them to commence their little *ménage*. Annette might be seen every evening, busily engaged in spinning the yarn that was destined for the linen of her future establishment, while Jules sat by her, reading aloud, or indulging with delight in anticipations of their marriage. How often did he endeavour, during the period of their probation, to persuade his Annette, that they already had sufficient funds to commence housekeeping. Charles Vilman and his Marie, with many other notable examples, were produced to prove that a couple might marry and be happy with less than five hundred francs, and Annette, half convinced, stole a timid look at her mother, who answered it by shaking her head, and saying, "Ah! that's all very well, because Charles and Marie have no children as yet, so that they are as free to work as if they were single. But people are not always so fortunate as to be married three years without having a family; and when a young woman has one child in her arms, and another beginning to walk, she can attend but little to her work."

This reasoning never appeared quite conclusive to the comprehension of the lovers, though it brought a brighter tint to the cheeks of Annette, and a roguish smile to the lips of Jules; and neither seemed to think it was peculiarly fortunate, for married persons who loved each other, not to have children, though they did not dispute the point with *la bonne mère* Moran.

About this period the curé of the village died, and his place was supplied by a young clergyman, who came from a distant part. The regret felt by all his flock for the good old pastor, was not lightened by seeing in his successor a man whose youth excluded the hope that his advice or experience could replace that of him they had lost. Nevertheless, the urbanity and kindness of Le Père Laungard soon reconciled them to him, and he became popular. Le Père Laungard was a young man of prepossessing appearance, and some natural abilities; but with passions so violent and irregular, that they rendered him most unfit for the holy profession he had adopted. Like pent-up fires, they raged but with the more violence because they were unrevealed; and hypocrisy and artifice were called in to assist him in hiding feelings that he took more pains to conceal than to suppress. Some irregularities had marked his conduct at the *cure* he had left, and these had been represented to the bishop of his diocese, but that prelate refused credence to any statements against the young priest, and looked on him as a persecuted son of the church, whom he was called upon to protect against its enemies. Le Père Laungard had no sooner seen Annette than he became enamoured of her, and it required all his powers of

duplicity and affected sanctity to veil his passion; while in his heart he cursed the profession that rendered this duplicity necessary. When he became acquainted with the affection and engagement of Annette and Jules, the most ungovernable jealousy was added to the stings of unlawful passion; he abandoned himself to plots for breaking off the marriage, and a thousand fearful and horrid thoughts passed through his ill-regulated mind.

At times, actuated by the stings of conscience, he would throw himself on the earth, and with burning tears bewail his wretched fate; and having humbled himself to the dust, he would pray for power to conquer this fatal and unhallowed love; but some innocent proof of affection given by the lovers in his presence would soon excite afresh all the evil in his nature, and he would look on them as did the serpent in paradise, envying the happiness of our first parents, until overpowered by the feelings that consumed him, he would rush into solitude, and abandon himself to all the violence of his disposition.

He used every effort in his power to insinuate himself into the good graces of Annette, and, by the softness and impassioned earnestness of his manner, he succeeded in exciting an interest in her mind—the more readily accorded, that her whole heart being engrossed, and the passion that filled it being fully reciprocated, left her disposed to think well of, and feel kindly towards, all the world. Often did Annette, in the innocence of her mind, and with that complacency which a mutual affection engenders, observe to Jules, what a pity it was that *Le Père Laungard*, a good-looking, amiable young man, with so much sensibility, should be for ever excluded the pale of conjugal ties. “To live without loving,” said the pure Annette, “appears to me to be impossible; and though he may like all his flock, as I do my friends and companions, still that is so different, so cold, and unsatisfying a feeling in comparison with that which you, dear Jules, have awakened in my breast, that I cannot but pity all who are shut out from entertaining a similar one.” Jules felt none of this pity or sympathy for *Le Père Laungard*, for with the instinctive perception of quick-sighted love, he had observed the furtive glances of the young priest directed to Annette, his disordered air, and changing countenance, his agitation and tremulous voice, when addressing her; and he liked not the flashing of *Laungard*’s eye, whenever, as the affianced husband of Annette, he availed himself of the privileges that character gave him, of holding her hand in his, or encircling her small and yielding waist with his arm. The purity and reserve of Annette imposed a restraint on *Le Père Laungard*, that but increased the violence of his passion, and as the time approached for her nuptials, it became more ungovernable.

According to the usages of the Roman Catholic religion, persons about to be united, confess to their priest the night previous to the marriage ceremony, and receive the sacrament the next morning, prior to its celebration.

Annette went to the church, which was about two miles from her home, accompanied by a female neighbour; and on arriving, was told that Le Père Laungard could not receive her confession until a later hour in the evening. Her companion becoming impatient to return to her home, quitted Annette, who informed her that Jules would come to conduct her back to her mother. Her friend left her in the twilight, in the church, reposing on a bench, and met Jules on the road, whom she advised not to interrupt the devotions of his *fiancée*, as it would be some time ere she would have finished. He loitered about, and at length becoming impatient, proceeded to the church; where not finding Annette, and concluding that she had returned by another route, he hastened to the house of her mother. She had not arrived there, however, and the most fearful apprehensions filled his mind. He returned again to the church, and knocking loudly at the house of Le Père Laungard, which joined it, demanded when Annette had left the sacred edifice. The priest replied, through the window, that she had left the confessional at nine o'clock, and that was all he knew. Agonised by the wildest fears and suspicions, Jules aroused all his friends in the village, and they proceeded in every direction, calling aloud on Annette; and the night was passed in vain searches for the luckless maiden.

Morning, that morning which was to have crowned his happiness for ever, by making Annette his own, saw Jules, pale and haggard, distraction gleaming in his eyes, and drops of cold perspiration bursting from his forehead, approach with his friends the bank of the river, which they proposed to draw with nets, as being the only place as yet unexplored.

While we leave them employed in this melancholy office, we must return to the female friend who had left Annette at the church. She sought an interview with the servant of the priest, whom she closely questioned, as she maintained that the unhappy girl had decided on returning by a certain route, and had she done so, she could not have failed to meet Jules, and consequently suspicions of foul play were excited in her mind.

The servant stated that Le Père Laungard had given her a commission to execute at the village the evening before, and had told her she might remain there until twelve o'clock. This unsolicited permission struck her as something extraordinary, and she did not avail herself of it to the full extent. She returned about nine o'clock, and having let herself in, was eating her supper, when she heard a violent struggle in the room above that where she was sitting, and a sound of stifled groans. She ran up stairs, and finding her master's door fastened, she demanded if he was ill, as she had been alarmed by hearing a noise. He answered that he had merely fallen over a chair; but there was a trepidation in his voice which announced that he was agitated.

This was all that the servant could state: but it was enough to point the suspicions already excited still more strongly to the priest.

The river was drawn, and close to its bank was found the corse of the beautiful and ill-fated Annette. Her dishevelled hair, and torn garments, bore evidence to the personal violence she had sustained ere she had been consigned to a watery grave, and the livid mark of fingers on her throat, induced a belief that her death had been caused by strangulation, ere she had been plunged into the river. Fragments of her dress, found attached to the briers, and locks of her beautiful hair caught in them, gave indications of the route by which her corse had been evidently dragged along, and were traced even to the door of the priest's house; but when the servant came forth, with a fragment of the kerchief Annette had worn, and which she had found in the ashes where the rest had been consumed, there was no longer a doubt left in the minds of the spectators, of who was the perpetrator of the horrible deed.

The murderer fled, pursued by the villagers; but having rushed into the river, he gained the opposite side in safety ere they arrived to see him again resume his flight. He passed the frontier, entered Piedmont, and there overcome with the sense of his guilt, and nearly dead with fatigue, he gave himself up to the civil authorities.

He was soon after claimed by the French, tried, and condemned to the galleys for life; where he still drags on a miserable existence, not daring to lift his eyes from the ground, lest he should meet the glance of horror his presence never fails to excite in all who see him, and know his crime.

Jules, no longer able to remain in a spot now rendered insupportable to him, gave up his little fortune to the mother of his Annette; enlisted at Grenoble, and soon after met his death, gallantly fighting at Algiers.

The house of Le Père Laungard has been razed to the ground by the inhabitants of the village; and a monument has been erected to the memory of the lovely but unfortunate Annette.

THE YOUNG MOTHER.

"I HAVE ordered the curricule to be at the door at four; and I hope you will not disappoint me again, Emily, as you have so frequently done of late, for I have set my heart on driving you to-day."

"You know, dear Algernon, what pleasure I always have in being with you."

"Why, so you say; but really, Emily, I begin to doubt your assertion on this point; for you have always some excuse for not riding or driving with me, when I ask you."

"Now this reproach is unkind, Algernon."

"Yet, nevertheless, it is true."

"But you know, dearest, the fault has not been mine; the poor dear baby really *has* been looking pale of late; and I, consequently, am uneasy when he is out of my sight."

"You bear my being out of your sight, however, Emily, with great equanimity; more so, indeed, than is flattering to my vanity; but the truth is, since you have become a mother, you seem to have forgotten that you are a wife."

"How can you make so unjust an assertion, knowing, as you do, that never did a wife more fondly love a husband than I love you?—cruel, unkind Algernon!"

"I do not wish to give you pain; nay, do not weep, Emily, but hear me patiently. Have I, ever since our boy was born, now some three months ago, been able to enjoy a tranquil hour of your society? When you are not in the nursery, from which you are seldom absent an hour, your whole thoughts and conversation are occupied on the baby. If the poor little fellow looks rather more red in the face than usual, you think him feverish and flushed; if pale, then you pronounce him to be suffering. At one moment you fancy him cutting his teeth; and, at the next, you tremble at the idea of some one of the hundred maladies incidental to infants, and which you imagine him to be labouring under."

"I did not expect, Algernon, that you would have the harshness to blame me for loving our child; I did not think——"

"Now, Emily, you really provoke me! Is there no medium in a mother's love? Are her whole thoughts and time to be surrendered to this one egotistical passion, while all other duties are neglected or forgotten?"

"I was not aware that I neglected any duties; and the maternal one I have been led to consider the most sacred of all."

"I am willing to admit its claims, but not to the total oblivion of all other obligations. As a husband, have I not a right to your society? As a master of a house, am I not privileged to demand the devotion of some portion of it for the duties of hospitality? Yet do you not daily leave me alone whole hours, while you sit in the nursery, and find some pretext against receiving company every time I propose it? If I read to you, you start up in the most interesting passage, thinking you hear the child cry, though it would require the lungs of a Stentor to be heard from his nursery in the library. If I tell you some piece of news, that would formerly have amused you, you look *distraine*, or ask me some question that has a reference to the child. With every disposition to make allowance for the natural fondness of a young mother for her first-born, and to indulge my paternal affection, I really feel my domestic comfort so much impaired, that I am sometimes fearful I shall view the *cause* of this change in you with some portion of the dissatisfaction that the *effect* produces in my mind."

"Good heavens, Algernon! how can you blame me for loving this cherub? Who could resist the darling's smiles?"

"I can judge little of his smiles, Emily, for the urchin has been generally screaming when I have happened to see him."

A paroxysm of tears was the only reply the young mother vouchsafed to make to this remark; but no answer could so elo-

quently appeal to the father's feelings. He wiped the tears from her fair cheeks, nay, kissed the lids on which they still trembled; while she, casting an imploring look at him, uttered, between rising sobs—"Do not, oh, do not, Algernon, say that my darling is cross! Mrs. Spencer, the month-nurse, my maid, and his nurse too, declare *they* never—never saw such a dear angelic babe in their lives, so quiet and sweet-tempered."

"And so, I dare be sworn, good fussy Mrs. Spencer has told every mother of every child she has given pap to for the last thirty years. The evidence of your *femme-de-chambre*, and our boy's nurse, is equally liable to suspicion."

"Now, Algernon, you are so incredulous, and, I must say, so ill-natured!"

"Well, my own Emily, if it be any comfort to you, I am quite ready to admit that our little fellow is *not* more addicted to crying than children of his age in general are, but then you must concede one point to me, and that is, that his lungs are more powerful."

"Thank God that they are so; for I tremble when I hear Lady Melthorpe's poor little boy cry; his tones are so feeble as to indicate weakness of the chest; while ours——"

"Screams like a boatswain, you would say; *n'est ce pas?*"

"No, I would say no such thing; I would say that his voice is so sonorous, so manly, as to prove his strength and pulmonary force."

"Well, Emily, will you, or will you not, leave him for the enormous space of two or three hours to the care of his nurse and her *suivantes*, and drive with me?"

"Yes, Algernon, you may count on me."

"Now you are my own good Emily of other days. Adieu, dearest! I shall be at the door in the curricule precisely at four. *Au revoir!*" and he kissed his wife's fair brow with as much fondness as in his first bridal days.

Punctually at four he was at the door, when, instead of seeing her arrive, a little twisted billet was handed to him by his wife's footman. He had so often received similar missives of late, always conveying excuses for appointments broken, or party deranged, that he disliked the very sight of one; and he tore this open with no little impatience and vexation.

As usual, it contained her regrets for not being able to accompany him—"But, really, the poor dear baby seemed so restless and uneasy, that she had thought it necessary to send for Dr. Wilbraham, and could not bring herself to leave the suffering angel."

While he perused this note, Dr. Wilbraham himself was seen descending the steps of the door, and to the questions of the father, replied—

"Pooh, pooh! my lord, the child has nothing whatever the matter with him; you must really prevent her ladyship from sending off for me when there is not the slightest occasion for my presence, for it interferes extremely with my engagements. The

child is a healthy child, my lord ; but he will render his mother anything but healthy, if you do not prevent her tormenting herself all day, and every day, with some fancy about him."

Lord Mordaunt stepped from the curricle, bounded lightly up the stairs, and, as he expected, found his wife in the nursery, seated by the side of the cot in which their infant was sleeping. The nurse, with a face of alarm, was bending over, and her assistant looking as stupidly frightened as she thought the circumstances of the case required. Lady Mordaunt's pale face formed a contrast to the rosy one of the slumbering child, and her beautiful eyes bore traces of recent tears. Lord Mordaunt might have pitied her, had it not been for the communication of Dr. Wilbraham ; but with *that* still fresh in his mind, and the irritation of the disappointment, he felt more disposed to reprehend than commiserate her anxiety.

"I have seen Dr. Wilbraham, Emily," said he, "and he has confirmed my foregone conclusion, that nothing is the matter with the child."

"Dr. Wilbraham is an unfeeling man!" replied Lady Mordaunt, with a degree of asperity very unusual to her ; "and I am convinced my sweet boy *is* unwell : only look how flushed he is."

"He will become less flushed," said the father, "if the free current of air that ought to circulate around his cot, is not impeded by three persons standing so close to it."

At this hint, the nurse and her assistant withdrew to the far side of the chamber ; but Lady Mordaunt still bent over the cot.

"Look, Algernon," she whispered, "see how he smiles ; it is asserted, that infants are generally suffering when they smile in their sleep."

"And so you say they are when they cry," interrupted Lord Mordaunt ; "and then I am disposed to agree with you in opinion. You look far more unwell than that little chubby fellow ; so let me counsel you to leave him to finish his slumber, and enjoy his dreams which are evidently pleasant, and come with me a few miles into the country, that you may breathe a little fresh air."

This time, Lady Mordaunt yielded to the wishes of her lord, for she perceived symptoms of impatience and dissatisfaction in his countenance and manner, that rendered her unwilling to still further excite his displeasure. In driving through the streets, they passed a baby linen warehouse ; and the fond mother, who had been, hitherto, silent and abstracted, exclaimed, "Oh ! what beautiful caps ! what an exquisite robe ! Do, dear Algernon, let me stop and buy it for our darling !"

"Really, Emily, you must excuse me ; you know I hate shopping, and a curricle is not a carriage the best suited for such occupations. You can come in the chariot, and without me, another day."

In the next street, a silversmith's shop attracted her attention ; and forgetful of her husband's declared dislike to shopping, she eagerly expressed her desire to stop, that he might assist her in the

selection of a coral and bells for their dear boy. She was "sure that the flushing of the cheeks of the dear little fellow, arose from dentition having commenced, and she wished to lose no time in giving him a coral and bells."

Again Lord Mordaunt declined complying with her wishes; and, perhaps, in doing so, betrayed indications of petulance: however that might have been, she became silent and abstracted, until he, piqued by her taciturnity, said, "What can you be thinking of, Emily?"

"I was thinking," she said, with a sweet and artless smile, which at once disarmed his impatience, "that, in four years from this time, I shall be asking you to give our boy a Shetland pony, like that which Lord Hawthorndale has bought for his son."

There was no resisting this *naïve* avowal of her thoughts, and her husband more than smiled, while he demanded "Whether she had not yet thought of the boy's departure for Eton, and future entrance at Christ Church?"

"Thought of it!" repeated Lady Mordaunt, pensively; "ah, Algernon! you little imagine how often I have thought of it—nay, dreamed of it—and the anticipation fills me with chagrin; but I trust, that by accustoming myself to reflect on it, I shall become more reconciled to the inevitable separation when it arrives."

Lady Mordaunt was so gentle and sweet-tempered, that her husband, though piqued by her devoting the whole of her time and thoughts to their child, could not persevere in censuring her weakness, when he saw that his reflections on it gave her pain; but, finding that he could no longer look for companionship with his wife, unless he consented to enact the part of second nurse, he took to frequenting the clubs, which, since his marriage, he had seldom entered; and went into female society, where, though he was at first only amused, he soon afterwards became interested.

This new career very naturally led to the establishment of a flirtation with a lady who devoted so little of her time or her thoughts to her children, as to have no inconsiderable portion of both at the service of any man of fashion who administered to her vanity by his attentions. Lady Mordaunt, happy in being left unmolested by the complaints or sarcasms of her husband, to pass the whole of her hours with her child, never suspected that she owed this indulgence to his having found consolation elsewhere for the loss of her society. When they met, which was now but seldom, she had a thousand particulars to relate to him of "dear little Algernon."

"He could crow; yes, positively, he could crow!"

"And what the deuce does that mean?" asked Lord Mordaunt; "enlighten me, Emily, for I am not particularly well skilled in nursery phraseology."

"Oh, crowing is the dearest, sweetest sound in the world! something between speaking and laughing; and while Algy crows, he chuckles and——"

"Don't say he chuckles, I beseech you, Emily; it is a horrid word and a horrid action. Why, Lord Mappleton is always chuckling, and that abominable fat Sir John Meadowway, and half the other disagreeable people that one knows, are everlastingly chuckling."

"But our boy's chuckling is quite another thing! oh, you should see him! you should hear him, Algernon; do let me bring him to you!"

And away glided the young mother, who quickly returned, bearing in her arms a fine fat rosy-cheeked boy, who grasped the silken ringlets of her hair in his dimpled fingers, and laughed in her face as he strained them still more vigorously.

It was a beautiful picture to see that young and lovely creature, herself scarcely yet arrived at woman's age, looking with love-beaming eyes at her child, and exultingly showing him to his father; and Lord Mordaunt felt the beauty of the picture, and drew mother and child within his arms, and pressed them to his heart, with a livelier sense of affection than he had for many months experienced; but, unfortunately, the child, who was not accustomed to see his father, or to be embraced except by his mother or nurse, burst into a loud and piercing cry, and bedewed his mother's robe and bosom with his tears.

"Take him away! take him away!" exclaimed Lord Mordaunt, piqued at being treated as a stranger by his child; "I hate cross children!"

"Indeed, Algernon, he is *not* a cross child; he only cries because he sees you so seldom, and——"

"You do well to reproach me, Emily! you, who drove me from my home, by allowing that little screaming urchin to engross all your time and thoughts; in fact, to convert you into an upper nurse!"

"Reproach you! Oh, Algernon, how can you be so unjust, so cruel as to say so?" And here Lady Mordaunt's tears mingled with those of her child.

Her husband left the room, a prey to that ill-humour which never fails to result from the consciousness of error. He would have been glad to have found an excuse for its indulgence in the reproaches of his wife, which he felt aware he had merited; but her gentleness and uncomplaining sweetness angered him, by aggravating the sense of his own misconduct. Still, her beautiful face, bathed in tears, and her appeal against the injustice and cruelty of his accusation of having reproached him, dwelt in his mind, and more than once was he tempted to return to the room he had so abruptly left, and seek a reconciliation with her.

It was under the influence of such feelings that, in passing through Grosvenor-square, he encountered the carriage of the lady who had lately engrossed so much of his time. The check-string was quickly pulled; and the prancing steeds were nearly thrown on their haunches by the alacrity with which the coachman obeyed the somewhat impatient signal of his mistress; two tall footmen

rapidly presented themselves at the door of the carriage at the same moment that Lord Mordaunt approached it. They quickly fell back, while he, in no very good humour, listened to a torrent of queries and reproaches, for not having come at his usual hour to pay his diurnal visit.

The contrast between this imperious and querulous woman, and the gentle yet sensitive one, whose tears he had so lately caused to flow, and had left, without uttering even a word of affection to soothe, never struck him so forcibly before; and, as if to render the contrast still more complete, the lady, having exhausted her complaints of his negligence and rudeness, commenced a history of her domestic annoyances.

"I have been bored to extinction," said she, "ever since I saw you last. One of the children has been taken ill with some one of the innumerable diseases to which these little animals are subject; and their wise father, who enacts the rôle of head-nurse, has taken it into his head to fancy it a very serious illness. We have had no less than three physicians called in, and they, of course, pronounce the malady to be of a dangerous nature, as they always do on such occasions, to enhance the merit of the cure."

Lord Mordaunt felt a sentiment approaching to loathing, as he looked at the handsome woman before him, and listened to her expressions of unnatural indifference to her child, and remembered the doting mother, whose excessive affection for her offspring he had so often censured.

"There is nothing so tiresome as those little creatures," resumed Lady Dorrington, "with their never-ceasing maladies, except it be their father, who turns the house into an hospital whenever they get ill. It is so very trying to my nerves, particularly"—and she looked languishingly at him—"as I have not been well of late; Lord Dorrington wants me to put off my ball for to-morrow night, as if that could cure the tiresome child; but really I cannot, now that all the preparations are completed."

It was with difficulty he could conceal the disgust that every word she uttered excited in his mind; and he pleaded business for abridging the monologue of her grievances. And this was the woman he had preferred to his fair and gentle wife! How did her gross egotism and selfishness disgust him! And how did he blame his own weakness, which led him to accord her the preference!

While this scene was passing in Grosvenor-square, one of a different nature was taking place at his own house. Mrs. Percival, the aunt of Lady Mordaunt, had surprised that lady in tears, a few minutes after her husband had so abruptly quitted her; and believing her agitation to have been caused by a discovery of the entanglement of Lord Mordaunt with Lady Dorrington, which had now become a subject of animadversion in the circle in which they moved, she incautiously used some expressions that revealed to Lady Mordaunt the painful fact, that her husband had found consolation abroad for the loss of her society at home.

“You may well weep, Emily,” said her well-meaning, but not sensitive aunt; “for be assured it was your own unreasonable conduct, in permitting yourself to be so wholly engrossed by your child, that drove Lord Mordaunt to seek female society in any other house than his own. The experiment is a dangerous one; but, perhaps, it is not yet too late to remedy its result. Tears are inefficacious; smiles, though difficult to be worn on such trials, are more likely to win back the truant to his home; and therefore, I earnestly advise their adoption. It is, at all times, the duty of a wife, by gentleness and patience, to lead her husband to a return to the path of duty; but it becomes still more imperiously so, when an error on her part has occasioned his transgression.”

Bitterly did Lady Mordaunt now deplore her own unthinking conduct, in having alienated her husband from his home. Well did she remember the representations he had unavailingly made on her infatuation; and, as jealousy, for the first time, sent its envenomed pangs through her hitherto unsuspecting heart, she felt that her love for her boy was not so passionate as that which now agonised her for his father. But though grieved, deeply grieved, by the discovery she had made, there was no anger in her sorrow. Hers was a nature more prone to suffer acutely from wounded affection, than to resent the injury. Now did she recall to memory the anger with which her conscious husband accused her of reproaching him, when she simply meant to explain why the child cried; and fervently did she determine never to utter a word that could offend him; and henceforth, if she should be so fortunate as to lure him back to his home, to devote only those hours to her child which Lord Mordaunt's avocations left at her disposal.

She wondered, at present, that the veil was from her eyes, how she could have been so unthinking, as not to have reflected on the danger to which she was exposing her happiness in disgusting so fastidious a man as her husband with his own domestic circle. But she remembered also, and the recollection sent a thrill of pleasure through her heart, that he had fondly drawn herself and his child to his breast only that very morning, and there was so much tenderness in the action, and in the manner of it, that she felt his heart was not irretrievably gone from her.

Her aunt left her, satisfied that her advice would be attended to, and indulged no slight portion of self-complacency on its forethought and prudence, and the good result it was likely to produce.

Lady Mordaunt, deeply penetrated with a sense of her own imprudence, and most anxious to atone for it, greeted her husband, when she next saw him, with a contrite tenderness, that might have led an observer to imagine that she had a much stronger motive for self-reproach than the one that actuated her present conduct; while he, conscious that his fault, though the natural effect of hers, was of a much deeper dye than the error that occasioned it, was sensibly touched by the gentleness and affection of her reception.

“How is our boy, my own Emily?” asked Lord Mordaunt. “Do let me see the dear little fellow, for I am determined to give him frequent opportunities of getting accustomed to my face—ay, and to my embraces, too, that he may no more be alarmed at either.”

“And I, dearest Algernon,” replied the delighted wife, “am determined to be always ready to go with you, where and when you will, if, indeed, you can overlook my folly in having, ever since our boy was born, ceased to be your companion, or to render your home as happy as it ought to be.”

She was clasped in her fond husband's arms before she had concluded the sentence, and from that day he ceased to maintain any other correspondence with Lady Dorrington than the mere ceremonious one of occasionally leaving a card at her door.

Thenceforward, too, Lady Mordaunt, while fulfilling with judicious attention all the duties of a fond mother, never ceased to remember and to discharge those of a wife.

THE CHALET IN THE ALPS:

A TALE OF HUMBLE LIFE.

IN a secluded spot, in the wild and desolate regions of the Alps, dwelt two families, the only inhabitants of the place. The two chalets occupied by them, and a few patches of land laboured into fertility by hardy and incessant toil, with a herd of goats, which sought their scanty food wherever the rare and stunted herbage appeared, were the only symptoms of human habitation visible for some miles. A more dreary spot can hardly be imagined than that where the chalets stood. Winter reigned there with despotic force during nine months of the year, and the approach of summer was hailed with a delight known only to those who have languished for its presence through many a long and cheerless day, surrounded by the dreary attributes of the gloomy season.

Mountain rising over mountain, covered with eternal snow, and divided by yawning chasms, whose depths none had ever ventured to penetrate, met the eye at every side, the intermediate prospect only broken by the presence of a few hardy tannen and pine trees, whose dark-green foliage formed a striking contrast to the snowy mantle, which, like the funeral pall of dead nature, covered the earth for nearly three parts of the year.

The first symptom of vegetation was welcomed in this wild spot, as the first-born is by a mother who has long pined for offspring; and as the rays of the sun melted the frozen surface of the mountains, and sent a thousand sparkling streams rushing down their sides, falling with a pleasant sound into the deep glens beneath, the hearts of the inhabitants of the chalets became filled with cheerfulness, and the rigours and sufferings of winter were forgotten.

Martin Vignolles, with his wife and two daughters, occupied

one of the rude and comfortless residences in this solitary spot; and the widow Bauvais and her son, the other. The husband of the widow had been one of the most bold and adventurous chamois-hunters in the Alps; and lost his life in the chase of one of those wild animals, leaving his wife and son, then an infant, wholly dependent on the kindness of their sole friend, Martin Vignolles. Nor did this friend fail them in the hour of need. He became as a brother to the bereaved wife, and a father to the fatherless; sharing with them his scanty subsistence, and cultivating the patch of land which the deceased had laboured into fertility.

Years passed away, and the widow's son had now grown into manhood, while Annette Vignolles had just completed her sixteenth year, and Fanchon her sister, her twelfth. The young man was light, agile, and hardy, like most of the children nurtured in the wild regions where he had been born, and where activity of person and firmness of mind are continually called into exercise by the danger and difficulty with which the means of existence are procured. The melancholy of his widowed mother, who had never ceased to lament the husband of her youth, had tinged the mind of her son with a softness, and disposed it to a susceptibility, which though it impaired not his animal courage in the hour of danger, exercised a powerful influence over his affections, rendering him almost a slave to their empire.

Annette Vignolles was a creature of remarkable beauty and quickness of feeling. She had been from her childhood as a daughter to the widow, and had never known a thought, a wish, nor a hope in which the widow's son had not been included.

It was soon after Annette had reached her sixteenth year that her father, in endeavouring to extricate one of his goats, which had fallen from a cliff, missed his footing, and was hurled into an abyss, nearly filled with snow, where a certain but lingering death awaited him, had he not been rescued by the intrepidity of Michel Bauvais, who, at the risk of his life, descended where no human foot had ever before dared to tread, and saved Martin Vignolles from his perilous position.

This accident was followed by the total loss of the use of Vignolles' limbs; who, from that day, became unable to afford the least assistance towards the maintenance of his family. Then it was that the widow and her son endeavoured to repay the debt of gratitude due to their neighbours. Michel laboured for them with unremitting toil and alacrity, and suffered them to experience no diminution of the few comforts—if comforts the strict necessities of life might be called—to which they had hitherto been accustomed. Anxiously, but unavailingly, had the widow tried to prevent Michel from pursuing the hazardous profession of his lost father. In all other respects the most docile and obedient of sons, he evinced in this a wilfulness that often filled her heart with the most gloomy forebodings—forebodings which infected the mind of Annette with fearful apprehensions, whenever he was absent on those dangerous

enterprises. Yet, when he returned home, bending under the weight of his spoil, and made light of the fears of his mother, or silenced them by his caresses, the whole circle collected in the chalet of Martin Vignolles felt too happy to chide him; though all never sought their humble couches without offering up fervent prayers for his safety. Often would the widow dwell on the past, not less with a view of warning her son, than from that yearning of the heart towards the dear departed, felt by all who have known the misfortune of losing the partner of their youth.

"It was just such a night as this," would she say, "that I expected my poor Claude for the last time. Ah! how well do I remember it! I made up a good fire, prepared his supper, and carefully swept the hearth, for my dear husband always liked to see a blazing fire and a clean hearth. Michel slept in his cradle, and smiled in his sleep, poor innocent, little dreaming of the dreadful misfortune that hung over us. I tried to work; but the needle slipped from my fingers, they trembled so. I opened the door, and stood on the ledge of the rock near it to listen for his step—that step I was never again to hear. The moon was shining, as now, like silver, and the frozen tops of the mountains were sparkling with light, except when a cloud passed over her bright face, and then a dark shadow fell on them. I knew not why it was, but a cold tremor shook my limbs, and my heart trembled; the branches of the pine creaked discordantly, and the wind, which a minute before had been still, sighed mournfully through the leaves. I looked around, but all appeared so cold and bright, so unfeeling-like to my fears, that I turned from the view, as one turns from a selfish, heartless person, who has no pity for our misfortunes, and I came back to the house to seek comfort in looking again at my sleeping child. Oh! what a long night was that! I thought it was the most miserable I ever should pass; but I have passed many a more wretched one since, for then I *had hope*. I remembered through the weary hours how he looked, and what he said. He stood on the threshold he was never more to pass, looking back on us with a smile, which I, at the moment, thought too gay a one when leaving us; but which, when I recalled it to my memory in that night, seemed sadder than a smile ever was before. How often have I thought of that smile since! I followed him a few steps, and kissed him again—woe is me! it was for the last time—and he chided me because the tears started into my eyes. But his chiding was gentle—so it ever was; and when he got to the last pine-tree, he turned round and waved his hat to me. Ah! neighbours, who could have thought that I was never more to see him!"

Tears interrupted the widow's melancholy reminiscences, nor did they flow alone; for Annette's, too, coursed each other down her cheeks; not so much, the truth must be owned, from sorrow for poor Claude Bauvais, whom she could not remember, as from the dread of the possibility of a similar fate awaiting his son.

Annette and Michel loved with no common passion. Their

attachment had grown with their growth, and strengthened with their strength. All their notions of the past and the future were identified with each other; and the possibility of separation never occurred to either, save when the widow related the melancholy parting with her husband, which, though often repeated, never failed to excite the tears of Annette, and the seriousness of her lover. Love, at all times so engrossing a sentiment when felt for the first time in youthful hearts, was all-powerful with these simple children of nature, whose thoughts, wishes, and hopes were centred in their own narrow circle. Their parents witnessed the affection of their children with satisfaction. They had, from the birth of both, arranged their marriage, and never doubted that the attachment which *they* desired should spring up between them, would prove as warm and ardent as it really was. Motives of prudence had induced them to defer the marriage of the young people, until Michel had attained his twenty-first year; and the misfortune that had befallen the father of Annette, by leaving him and his family dependent on the exertions of the young man, rendered the resolution of procrastinating the marriage still more necessary.

It was on a cold night in the early part of autumn, when winter had anticipated its visit by many weeks, that Michel Bauvais, returning to his home through a narrow pass in the mountains, was attracted by the barking of a dog; and, on approaching the spot whence the sounds came, discovered a man nearly in a state of insensibility, over whom the faithful animal was uttering his melancholy cries. It was not without considerable difficulty that he succeeded in restoring suspended animation to the stranger, and then he slowly led him to the humble chalet, where his mother assisted him in his exertions to render the visit of their unexpected guest as comfortable as their limited means permitted. The warmth of a good fire, and some boiled goat's-milk, had such a salutary effect on the invalid, that he was shortly able to thank his preserver, and to inform him that he was an artist, who, in his search of the picturesque and sublime scenery which he wished to delineate, having advanced farther into the mountains than prudence warranted, had lost his way; and, after many hours passed in fruitlessly endeavouring to regain it, had at last sunk exhausted into a slumber, whence in all human probability he might, from the intense cold to which he was exposed, have never awakened, had he not been rescued by Michel Bauvais.

The young artist was pressed by his poor but hospitable hosts, to continue with them a day or two, until he had recovered sufficient strength to insure a safe return to his home. He opened his portfolio, and delighted their inexperienced eyes with sketches that might well have claimed approbation from those accustomed to see the finest drawings. Annette was called to share in the gratification their display afforded, and her beauty and artless grace excited so much interest in the young artist, that he immediately made a portrait of her, which filled her lover with joy and gratitude.

The vicinity of the wild spot inhabited by the two families, possessed such attractive scenery, that the painter prolonged his stay several days for the purpose of sketching the different views. Annette would hang with delight over his drawings, and listen with scarcely less pleasure to the songs he would sing her while making them. She would loiter at night an hour or two after the usual hour of seeking repose, to hear the young artist's description of the towns and their inhabitants in which he had dwelt; and had a thousand questions to ask relative to scenes of which hitherto she had been in perfect ignorance.

At first, Michel shared in the interest which was awakened in her mind; but soon a jealous feeling, occasioned by witnessing how much of her time and attention was engrossed by the stranger, took possession of his mind. He became moody, captious, and harsh to her towards whom he had never previously evinced a symptom of ill-humour. This sudden, and to Annette, unaccountable change in his temper, only aggravated the cause that led to it; and the poor simple girl, repulsed by her lover each time that she sought to address him with her wonted and affectionate familiarity, took refuge in the mild and amusing conversation of the young painter. When Michel was compelled to be absent from the chalet in search of fuel, or to lead home the goats, it was evident that his moodiness increased; and when he returned, it was excited almost to frenzy, by finding Annette seated by the stranger, listening with unconcealed delight to his songs, or the stories he related to her.

The whole character of Michel became changed. No longer the gay youth, whose cheerfulness had been the life of the chalets, his ill-humour was now a source of chagrin to all its inhabitants, none of whom, owing to their simplicity, suspected its cause. Often in the moodiness of his spirits, when stung into anger by some innocent familiarity exhibited towards the stranger by Annette, he almost cursed the hour when he saved him from death, and led him to the chalet to fascinate her who hitherto had never lent her eyes or ears with pleasure to aught save himself alone.

Sketches of Annette multiplied every hour. The artist found her figure so graceful and picturesque, and it gave such a charm to his drawings, that he was never tired of copying it; and sooth to say, Annette, with all her simplicity, had enough of woman's vanity in her heart, to be pleased, if not proud of the artist's evident admiration of her.

At this time, too, the young painter, who sometimes amused himself in the composition of simple songs, addressed the following one to Annette, and this piece of rustic gallantry excited the jealousy of her lover into still greater violence.

“ Beautiful maiden, as pure as the snow
On thine own native mountains, wherever I go,
I'll think of thee, artless and fair as thou art,—
Though soon, ah! too soon, I from thee must depart.

I'll think of thee beaming as now with a smile,
 And thy innocent converse that oft did beguile
 The long hours of evening, and of thy sweet song
 That the wild mountain-echoes so love to prolong.

Beautiful maiden, oh! blest be thy lot
 With the youth who has won thee; though I be forgot,
 My prayer shall ascend to the Heavens for thee,
 When distant thy sweet face no more can I see."

One evening when Michel returned to the chalet, he found the stranger plaiting the long tresses of Annette, who was innocently laughing at the awkwardness with which he performed the operation. Michel had, from her infancy, always reserved this task as a labour of love for himself; and his feelings could not have been more wounded had he discovered her in the arms of the stranger.

"How, faithless girl!" exclaimed he, "and is it come to this? Is all shame gone, that you let a stranger touch those tresses, that *my* hands alone have heretofore pressed? And you, ungrateful man! is it thus you repay me for having saved your life? But I will fly from you both for ever!" And so saying, he rushed from the chalet with the frantic haste of a maniac.

The stranger, alarmed by his violence and impetuosity, the cause of which he for the first time clearly discerned, and deeply pained that he should have furnished the occasion for the development of a passion which now raged with such fury, fled in pursuit of Michel, leaving Annette overwhelmed with surprise and grief. Dreadful were the sufferings of the poor girl, as hour after hour elapsed, bringing with them no tidings of her lover or his pursuer. At early dawn, after a night of such wretchedness as she had ever previously been a stranger to, she stood in front of the chalet, straining her eyes in the hope of discerning her lover; when her young sister descried a figure in the distance, and pointed it out to her. The most fearful apprehensions filled her breast, for there was but *one* figure to be seen, and that with the quick sight of love she discerned was not his.

Alas! the fears of Annette were but too well founded. Durand, the young artist, only returned to prepare for the reception of the corse of the ill-fated Michel, which, after a long search, was discovered, owing to the barking of his dog, in the very spot whence, but a few days before, he had rescued him who was the innocent cause of the groundless jealousy that led to his own destruction. Whether the unhappy youth had wilfully precipitated himself into the yawning gulf, or that in the rapidity of his flight he had overlooked his vicinity to it, and so had accidentally fallen in, was never ascertained. The charitable-minded of the few persons collected from the neighbouring hamlets, were disposed to adopt the latter supposition, while those less good-natured, declared their conviction that the deceased, driven to madness by jealousy, had thrown himself into the chasm, where his mutilated remains were found—a belief in which they were strengthened by the frantic self-accusa-

tions of the wretched Annette, who, with piercing cries, declared herself to be the cause of all. Fearful was the picture presented at the two chalets, so lately the scene of peace and content. The poor old mother of Michel Bauvais, rendered nearly insane by this last terrible affliction, sat by the corse of her son, and gazing fondly on the pale face, murmured from time to time, "Yes, there he lies, as his father did before him, twenty years ago. Gone from me, without a parting word—a single embrace. These cold lips, that never uttered a word of unkindness to me, cannot return the kiss that I imprint on them. Ah, my son! never before did they receive the touch of mine without returning the pressure. How often in my dreams have I seen you as you now lie, cold, speechless, without life, and I have awoke in agony, to bless God that it was but a dream! But now! oh! my son, my son, who will close the weary eyes of your wretched mother, who will lay her in the grave! The wicked spirits of these dreary mountains first envied me the possession of my poor Claude, and snatched him from me, and now they have torn away my son. Often have I seen a light too bright for mortal ken, shine into his room when he slept, as if the moon itself had entered his casement, and cast all its beams around his head, just as it used to do around that of his poor father. I ought to have known it boded no good, but I dared not think that my child would be taken from me. I have heard such sighs and whispers, too, in the night, when the wind has shook the chalet, and the snow has been drifted against the windows with a violence that has dashed them to pieces. Ah! I ought to have known that even then the evil spirits that haunt these wild mountains were planning his destruction!"

So raved the poor woman, in all the incoherence of a grief that unsettled her reason, until some of the inhabitants of the nearest hamlet came to remove the corse for interment, when, uttering a piercing shriek, and clasping it in her arms, she fell senseless on the coffin; and when raised, was found to be dead. Annette had lost all consciousness of the misery around her, in a brain fever, which kept her hovering between life and death during many days. When health once more began to tinge her pale cheek, it was discovered with sorrow by Durand, who had watched over her with unceasing solicitude and unwearying care, that reason reassumed not its empire in her brain. Perfectly harmless and gentle, she did all that she was told to do, with the docility of the most obedient child, but was utterly incapable of the least reflection, or of self-government. Durand, considering that he was the cause, though the innocent one, of the afflictions that had befallen these poor families, insisted on becoming their support for the future. He prevailed on the helpless old Martin Vignolles to accompany him, with his two daughters, to Paris, where, having established them in his home, he left nothing undone to promote their comfort. Fortune, too, favoured the worthy young man who so religiously fulfilled his self-imposed duties; for his pictures, justly admired, produced such

high prices, that, after a few years, he secured a handsome competence, and became the happy husband of the pretty Fanchon, the sister of poor Annette, to whom he had given an education that rendered her in every way suitable to be the companion of a person with a cultivated mind. Old Martin Vignolles lived to see the marriage of his Fanchon, and died blessing his children.

Poor Annette still survives, innocent, gentle, and fondly beloved by her sister and Durand, with whose little children she delights to play, offering subjects for his pencil, the representation of which often draw crowds of admirers round them in the gallery of the Louvre.

REMORSE :

A FRAGMENT.

“No weapon can such deadly wounds impart
As conscience, roused, inflicts upon the heart.”

“POSTILLION,” cried a feeble but sweet voice, “turn to your right when you have ascended the hill, and stop, as I intend to walk up the lane.”

The postillion obeyed the command, and, with more gentleness than is often to be met with in his station, opened the chaise-door, and having first given his hand to her female attendant to alight, assisted a pale and languid but still eminently beautiful woman, whose trembling limbs seemed scarcely equal to the task of supporting her attenuated frame.

“Be so good as to remain here until I return,” said the lady, who, leaning on the arm of her attendant, proceeded through the leafy lane, the branches of whose verdant boundaries were animated by a thousand warbling birds sending forth notes of joy. But ill did those gay sounds accord with the feelings of her who traced this rural walk, every turn of which recalled bitter remembrances.

On reaching the gate that opened into the pleasure grounds of Clairville, the stranger was obliged to pause and take breath in order to gain some degree of composure before she could enter it. There are some objects and incidents, which, though comparatively trifling, have a powerful effect on the feelings, and this the unknown experienced when, pressing the secret spring of the gate which readily yielded to her touch, with a hurried but tottering pace she entered the grounds. Here, feeling the presence of her attendant a restraint—who, though an Italian utterly ignorant of English, as also of the early history of her mistress, was yet observant of her visible emotion and affectionately anxious to sooth it—she desired her to remain at the gate until her return. In vain Francesca urged that the languid frame of her dear lady was unequal to support the exertion of walking without the assistance

of her arm, for, with a firm but kind manner, her mistress declared her intention of proceeding alone.

It was ten years since the feet of the wanderer had pressed the velvet turf, over which they now slowly bent their course. She was then glowing with youth and health—happy, and dispensing happiness around; but, alas! love, gentle love, spread his bandage over her eyes, blinded her to the fatal realities of the abyss into which he was about to plunge her, and, in honied accents, whispered in her infatuated ear a thousand bland promises of bliss to come. How were those promises performed? and what was she now? She returned to this once cherished spot, with a mind torn by remorse and a form bowed down by disease. She returned, with the internal conviction that death had laid his icy grasp on her heart, and a few days at most, if not a few hours, must terminate her existence. But this conviction, far from giving her pain, was regarded by her as a source of consolation; and this last earthly indulgence—that of viewing the abode of her children—she did not feel herself worthy of enjoying, until conscious that her hours were numbered.

She proceeded through the beautiful grounds, every mazy path and graceful bend of which was familiar to her as if seen the day before. Many of the improvements suggested by her taste, and still preserved with care, brought back heart-sickening recollections of love and confidence, repaid with deception and ingratitude; and though supported by the consolations of religion, which led her humbly to hope that her remorse and penitence had been accepted by *Him* who has promised mercy to the repentant sinner, yet her heart shrunk within her as memory presented her with the review of her transgressions, and she almost feared to hope for pardon.

When she had reached a point of the grounds that commanded a prospect of the house, how were her feelings excited by a view of that well-known, well-remembered scene! Everything wore the same appearance as when that mansion owned her for its mistress; the house had still the same aspect of substantial grandeur and repose, the level lawn the same velvet texture, and the trees, shrubs, and flowers the same blooming freshness as when she daily beheld their beauties. She, she alone was changed. Time was that those doors would have been opened wide to receive her, and that her presence would have dispensed joy and pleasure to every individual beneath that roof, while now her very name would excite only painful emotions, and its sound must be there heard no more. Another bore the title she once was proud to bear, supplying the place she had abandoned, and worthily discharging the duties she had left unperformed.

She gazed on the windows of the apartment in which she first became a mother, and all the tide of tenderness that then burst on her heart now came back to her, poisoned with the bitter consciousness of how she had fulfilled a mother's part. Those children, dearer to her than the life-drops that throbbed in her veins, were

now beneath that roof, receiving from another that affection and instruction, that it should have been her blissful task to have given them, and never, never must she hope to clasp them to her agonised heart.

At this moment she saw the door of the house open, and a lady, leaning on the arm of a gentleman, crossed the lawn; he pressed the hand that reposed on his arm gently between his, and raised it to his lips, while his fair companion placed her other hand on his with all the tender confidence of affection. In this apparently happy couple, the agonised unknown recognised him whom she once joyed to call husband, the father of her children, the partner whom she had betrayed and deserted, and her, whom he had chosen for her successor, who now bore the name she once answered to, and who was now discharging the duties she had violated. Religion and repentance had in her so conquered the selfishness of human nature, that after the first pang—and it was a bitter one—had passed away, she returned thanks, with heartfelt fervour, to the Author of all good, that it was permitted her to see him whose repose she had feared she had for ever destroyed, enjoying that happiness he so well merited; and ardent was the prayer she offered up, that a long continuance of it might be his lot, and that his present partner might repay him for all the pain caused by her misconduct.

She now turned into a shady walk, anxious to regain the support of her attendant's arm, which she felt her exhausted frame required, when the sounds of approaching voices warned her to conceal herself. Scarcely had she retired behind the shade of a luxuriant mass of laurels, when a youthful group drew near; the very sight of whom agitated her almost to fainting, and sent the blood back to her heart with a violence that threatened instant annihilation.

The group consisted of two lovely girls, their governess, and a blooming youth, on whom the two girls leant. Every turn of their beautiful countenances was expressive of joy and health; and their elastic and buoyant steps seemed scarcely to touch the turf as, arm linked in arm, they passed along. The youngest, a rosy-cheeked girl of eleven years old, begged her companions to pause while she examined a bird's-nest, which she said she feared the parent-bird had forsaken; and this gave the heart-stricken, for those were the children of the unknown, an opportunity of regarding the treasures her soul yearned to embrace. How did her bosom throb at beholding those dear faces—faces so often presented to her in troubled dreams! Alas! they were now near her—she might, by extending her hand, touch them—she could almost feel their balmy breaths fan her feverish cheek, and yet it was denied her to approach them. All the pangs of maternal affection struck on her heart; her brain grew giddy, her respiration became oppressed, and urged by all the frenzy of a distracted mind, she was on the point of rushing from concealment, and prostrating herself before her children.

But this natural, though selfish, impulse was quickly subdued, when a moment's reflection whispered to her, will you purchase your own temporary gratification at the expense of those dear beings whom you have so deeply injured? Will you plant in their innocent breasts, an impression bitter and indelible? The mother triumphed over the woman; and trembling with emotion, she prayed that those cherished objects might pass from her view, while yet she had strength and courage to enable her to persevere in her self-denial.

At this moment the little girl exclaimed, "Ah! my fears were too true, the cruel bird has deserted her nest, and here are the poor little ones nearly dead! What shall we do with them?"

"Let us carry them to our dear mamma," said the elder girl; "she will be sure to take care of them, as she says we should always pity and protect the helpless and forsaken."

The words of the children struck daggers to the heart of their wretched mother. For a moment she struggled against the blow, and, making a last effort, tried to reach the spot where she had left her attendant; but nature was exhausted, and she had only tottered a few paces, when uttering a groan of anguish, she fell to the earth bereft of life; just as Francesca arrived to see her unhappy mistress breathe her last sigh.

THOUGHTS ON LORD BYRON,

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE REPRESENTING HIS CONTEMPLATION
OF THE COLISEUM.

"Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,
Collecting the chief trophies of her line,
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,
Her Coliseum stands; the moonbeams shine
As 'twere in natural torches, for divine
Should be the light which streams here, to illumine
This long explored but still exhaustless mine
Of contemplation; and the azure gloom
Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume
Hues which have words, and speak to ye of Heaven,
Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,
And shadows forth its glory. There is given
Unto the things of earth, which Time hath sent,
A spirit's feeling, and where he hath lent
His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power
And magic in the ruined battlement,
For which the palace of the present hour
Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are its dower."

THERE was not, perhaps, in the brief but troubled life of Lord Byron, a period in which his mind rose to so high an elevation, as during his short residence in the "Eternal City." Emancipated, by satiety, from the thralldom of the passions, to whose inglorious empire he had at Venice previously resigned himself, the view of

the "Noble of Nations" awakened associations that stirred the dormant enthusiasm of his slumbering genius, which never took a nobler flight than from Rome.

He was wont to dwell with unusual complacency on the powerful influence exercised over his feelings by its ruins, which spoke more eloquently to him than aught that had ever before appealed to his imagination. Not only did they excite his genius, but they softened the acute sense of injury, real or imagined, under which he writhed, by reminding him of the transitoriness of life and the vanity of human grandeur. Ever prone to egotism, he identified his own ruined hopes with the wrecks of ages around him; and thought with less bitterness, if he could not only wholly forget the wrongs inflicted on him, while beholding the once proud monuments of antiquity, on which greater injuries had been heaped, crumbling fast into decay. Byron's feelings, which were intense, were the true source of his inspiration. They acted on his imagination, which, as he often avowed, could by no other means be impelled into action. A smiling landscape, or a modern palace or temple, however beautiful, would have created only painful emotions in his mind, because he would have contrasted them with his own blighted existence; but grand and imposing ruins, and all that spoke to him of desolation, touched a chord in his heart that vibrated, and in his sympathy with inanimate objects he half forgot his own griefs. How often has it been urged by those unacquainted with the extreme sensitiveness of a highly poetical temperament, that Byron's feelings were imaginary. Such persons are ever ready to believe that those richly endowed with the adventitious gifts of rank, fortune, and great personal attractions, can have no cause for unhappiness, because they, being deprived of them, imagine that the possession of such advantages would insure felicity. Such minds, and they are too many, are more disposed to reproach than pity sufferings which, however produced by too great susceptibility of feelings, inflict, not imaginary, but real misery on their possessor. As not even the most philanthropic observer, who ever studied the natural history of the oyster, has been known to pity it for the malady to which the pearl, so generally prized, owes its birth; so not even the most ardent admirer of the productions of genius has been known to lament the price at which their author wrought them, though that price were health and happiness; both of which blessings are endangered, if not precluded, by the temperament, which, if not constituting the possession, is at least peculiar to genius.

There are some fortunate exceptions to the common lot of poets; men, who, in the bosoms of their families, living far away from the busy world, have never had their susceptibilities excited into unhealthy action, by the thousand nameless vexations incidental to a contact with general society. Such men, surrounded by affectionate friends, and partial admirers, solace themselves after the fever of composition, in the commendations and soothing attentions of

their domestic circle, and may well be thankful for their exemption from the maladies of their less favoured brethren of the craft ; but let those who would triumphantly cite them as instances of the compatibility of genius and happiness, reflect, that they owe their safety to a prudent retreat from the world, and not to a conquest over it.

The fourth canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," offers irrefragable proof of the powerful and salutary influence exercised over Byron's mind by the view of Rome. Who can peruse that portion of it suggested by a moonlight visit to the Coliseum, without feeling that the poet was there in his proper element ; and that his genius, touched by the sublime scene, gushed forth in all its grandeur, identifying for ever his name with the monument he has immortalised ? The third act of "Manfred" was also written at Rome ; for Byron, dissatisfied with the one written at Venice, prohibited the publication until he should find his mind in a mood to render justice to the subject. Often have I stood on the spot where Byron reclined when drinking in inspiration at the Coliseum, and mentally repeated the lines—

"Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made a shrine
And temple more divinely desolate,
Among thy mightier offerings here are mine,
Ruins of years—though few, yet full of fate ;—
If thou hast ever seen me too elate,
Hear me not : but if calmly I have borne
Good, and reserved my pride against the hate
Which shall not whelm me, let me not have worn
This iron in my soul in vain—shall they not mourn ?"

At Rome Byron was brought into contact with several of his compatriots, and the conduct of many of them towards him—characterised, as it too often is, by an ill-bred and unrepressed exhibition of curiosity, which seeks its own gratification, heedless of the annoyance inflicted on the object that excites it—stung him to the soul. He had so often experienced the rudeness of being followed and looked at, as if he were some curious animal, that he confounded the gaze of admiration for the *poet* which was not unfrequently bestowed on him, with the stare of malevolence meant for the *man*, which he had sometimes detected ; till, disgusted and irritated, he shrank from social intercourse with the English, and retired to the solitude that he could people with the bright creations of his imagination—"the beings not of clay," in apostrophising which he expended those fine sympathies which were repelled by his fellow-men.

Well can I picture him to myself rushing irate from a circle, where the impertinence of some individual, assuming the garb of prudery, had insulted him by a marked avoidance, or a supercilious recognition ; impertinences, which though contemptible, were sure to produce pain and irritation to his too susceptible feelings. Can it then be wondered at, that, under such inflictions,

the finest aspirations of his genius were mingled with bitterness? or that he turned with dislike from the generality of his countrymen? A Persian proverb says, that "the arrows of contempt will pierce even the shell of the tortoise;" how then must they have lacerated the thin epidermis of that most sensitive of all human beings, a poet? who, in the agony of the wounds, forgot the unworthiness of the inflictors.

"APROPOS OF BORES."

RELATED BY THE LATE JOSEPH JEKYLL, ESQ., TO THE
COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

APROPOS of bores! how frequently is the pleasure of society injured, if not destroyed, by the bores who infest it! and how seldom can we recall a single day, the enjoyment of which has not been deteriorated by their intervention!

One of the annoying peculiarities of bores is, to select the moment for relating some stupid anecdote, or for asking some silly question, when a witty, instructive, or interesting conversation is going on, to which one is desirous of listening. A particular instance of this vexatious propensity once annoyed me excessively; it occurred at a dinner given by my late worthy friend, Sir William Garrow.

"Pray tell us," said he to a man who sat near him, "that adventure of yours in the wine vaults of Lincoln's Inn, of which I heard a garbled account the other day."

I, who always like an adventure, pricked up my ears at the sound; and the individual thus questioned commenced the following story:—

"A friend of mine went to Madeira in an official situation some years ago. He speculated largely in wine, and sent home several pipes, to be kept until his return. He wrote to request me to find them a safe cellarage; and I, in consequence, applied to a friend, a barrister, to procure me permission to lodge the wine in the vast cellars of Lincoln's Inn Square. I was furnished with a key, that I might have ingress and egress to this sombre spot when I liked; and having, one day, a vacant hour in my chambers, it suddenly entered my head that I would go and inspect the wine *depôt* of my absent friend.

"Armed with the key I sallied forth, and engaged the first porter I met to procure a candle, and accompany me to the cellar. You are not, perhaps, aware that these vast vaults are twenty feet beneath the square, and the entrance of them many feet, I believe one hundred and fifty, removed from any dwelling, or populous resort.

"We entered the gloomy cavern, and locked the door on the

inside, to prevent any idle person, who might by chance pass that way, from taking cognisance of the treasure it concealed. So great was the extent of the vault, that our feeble light scarcely enabled us to grope our way through its murky regions; but at length we reached the spot where I knew that the wine of my friend was deposited, and had the satisfaction of finding the pipes were in perfect condition. We were preparing to return, when the porter, who held the candle, made a false step, and was precipitated to the earth, extinguishing the light in his fall. Never shall I forget the sensation which I experienced at that moment! for the extent and tortuous windings of the vault impressed me with a rapid conviction of the difficulty, if not impossibility of discovering the door. The alarmed porter declared, in terror, that we were lost, inevitably lost, that he should never see his wife and children more, and cursed the hour he left the light of day to explore the fearful cave, that would now become his tomb, on which no fond eye could dwell, and he cried aloud in an agony of despair at this gloomy contemplation. I urged him to restrain his useless lamentations, and seek to grope our way in the direction of the door, and, after having occupied full two hours in fruitlessly wandering through as many various and devious turnings, as if in a labyrinth, we at length discovered the object of our search.

“‘O God be thanked, God be thanked!’ exclaimed the porter, with frantic joy; ‘then I shall again see my wife, my little ones!’ and he seized the key, which was in the lock, and turned it with such force, that it snapped, the head remaining inextricably secured in the wards.

“‘Now, now we are indeed lost!’ throwing himself on the ground; ‘all hope is at an end, for we might knock and scream here for ever without being heard. Why—why did I come with you? It is plain you are an unlucky man, whoever you are, and your ill-fortune falls on me.’

“I tried to comfort him, though seriously alarmed myself; but he became angry, telling me I could be no father or husband, to talk coolly at such a moment, and with a certain prospect of death by famine staring us in the face.

“‘Oh, Lord! oh, Lord!’ cried he, starting up in terror, ‘the rats are gathering round; they will devour us before hunger has done its work!’

“I have all my life had a peculiar antipathy to these animals, and confess that, when I found them stumbling over my feet, and heard them running at every side, an increased shudder of horror and fear chilled my blood.

“‘Let us stave in one of the pipes of Madeira,’ said my companion, ‘that we may forget in the excitement of wine the horrible death that awaits us. Yes, let us get drunk.’

“I refused to adopt this project; and my refusal again drew forth reproaches on my being an unlucky man, and his conviction that I had no heart in my body, as he expressed it, or no wife and

little ones expecting me at home, or I would not take matters so easy.

“How many thoughts did I give to the dear objects to whom he referred, as I now dwelt with anguish on the fearful probability of my never again beholding them! We searched in vain for a stone or any other implement with which to wrench the lock or force the hinges, both of which resisted all our efforts. Hours after hours passed away. How interminably long appeared the flight! the silence only broken by the mingled reproaches and lamentations of my companion, and the increased noise of the rain which now, becoming more courageous, assailed our feet. Each hour strengthened my conviction of our inevitable death in this horrible subterranean place, where probably our mortal remains would not be discovered until every trace of identity was destroyed by the ravenous animals around us. My blood ran cold at the reflection, and my heart melted at the thought of those who were doubtless at that moment anxiously counting the hours of my unusual absence. I seized the arm of my companion and——”

Here one of the company, proverbial for his obtuseness, and who had repeatedly attempted to interrupt the narrative, seized the button, and in a loud voice said, “How do you think, Jekyll, should have got out?”

“You would have *bored* your way out, to be sure,” answered the impatient at the interruption, and the more so, as, at this instant the butler announced that the ladies were waiting tea for us.

I ascended to the drawing-room, fully intending to request the sequel to the story, but a succession of airs on the piano, accompanied by the voices of the ladies, precluded the possibility of conversation. In a few days after, I met some of the party, and questioned them respecting the conclusion. One declared that he had forgotten all about the story, another said it had set him off to sleep, and so he missed the *dénouement*, a third avowed that, being deaf in the left ear, he had not heard more than a few words, and a fourth told me, that a tiresome bore next him took that opportunity of giving him the particulars of a county meeting as detailed in the morning papers, not omitting a single line.

Consequently, to this hour, I am ignorant how the gentleman and porter escaped from the vault.

THE BAY OF NAPLES,

IN THE SUMMER OF 1824.

A SKETCH.

It is evening, and scarcely a breeze ruffles the calm bosom of the beautiful bay, which resembles a vast lake, reflecting on its glassy surface the bright sky above, and the thousand stars with which it is studded. Naples, with its white colonnades, seen amidst the

dark foliage of its terraced gardens, rises like an amphitheatre; lights stream from the windows and fall on the sea beneath like columns of gold. The Castle of St. Elmo crowning the centre; Vesuvius, like a sleeping giant in grim repose, whose awakening all dread, is to the left; and on the right are the vine-crowned heights of the beautiful Vomero, with their palaces and villas peeping forth from the groves that surrounded them; while rising above it, the Convent of Camaldoli lifts its head to the skies.

Resina, Portici, Castel-a-Mare, and the lonely shores of Sorrento, reach out from Vesuvius as if they tried to embrace the Isle of Capri, which forms the central object; and Pausilipo and Misenum, which, in the distance, seemed joined to Procida and Ischia, advance to meet the beautiful island on the right. The air, as it leaves the shore, is laden with fragrance from the orange-trees and jasmine, so abundant round Naples; and the soft music of the guitar, or lively sound of the tambourine, marking the brisk movements of the tarantella, steals on the ear. But hark! a rich stream of music, silencing all other, is heard, and a golden barge advances; the oars keep time to the music, and each stroke of them sends forth a silvery light; numerous lamps attached to the boat, give it, at a little distance, the appearance of a vast shell of topaz, floating on a sea of sapphire. Nearer and nearer draws this splendid pageant; the music falls more distinctly on the charmed ear, and one sees that its dulcet sounds are produced by a band of glittering musicians, clothed in royal liveries.

This illuminated barge is followed by another, with a silken canopy overhead, and the curtains drawn back to admit the balmy air. Cleopatra, when she sailed down the Cyndus, boasted not a more beautiful vessel; and as it glides over the sea, it seems impelled by the music that precedes it, so perfectly does it keep time to its enchanting sounds, leaving a bright trace behind, like the memory of departed happiness. But who is he that guides this beauteous bark? His tall and slight figure is curved, and his snowy locks, falling over ruddy cheeks, show that age has bent but not broken him: he looks like one born to command—a hoary Neptune, steering over his native element;—all eyes are fixed, but his follow the glittering barge that precedes him. And who is she that has the seat of honour at his side? Her fair, large, and unmeaning face wears a placid smile; and those light and blue eyes and fair ringlets, speak her of another land; her lips too want the fine chiselling which marks those of the sunny clime of Italy; and the expression of her countenance has in it more of earth than heaven. Innumerable boats filled with lords and ladies, follow, but intrude not on the privacy of this royal bark, which passes before us like the visions in a dream.

He who steered, was Ferdinand, King of the Sicilies; and she who sat beside him was Maria Louisa, ex-Empress of France.

THE PARVENUE.

"PRAY don't ask the Nicksons;—indeed, it will NOT do to have them to meet the Duke of Netherby, and the other smart people whom we have invited for the twenty-third of next month."

"What! not invite my own sister, Mrs. Winterton? really you surprise me!"

"Well, I see nothing at all surprising in the matter; and if I don't ask either *my* sister or brother to our smart parties, I don't know why you should invite yours."

"More shame for you, Mrs. Winterton, *not* to ask them; but that's *your* affair, *they* know it is not my fault, for I am not a man to be ashamed of my relations because they happen to be less prosperous than myself; but you may do as you like with regard to *your* relations, *mine*, I insist on being invited."

"How can you be so obstinate, Mr. Winterton? you not know the injury it may be to your children."

"In what way, my dear?"

"In what way? how strange to ask such a question! Do you not know that the whole study of my life is to get ourselves and our children into good company?"

"I ought to know it, my dear, for I hear of little else than the schemes you lay to accomplish this measure."

"*A la bonheur*, Mr. Winterton."

"Do let me, I entreat you, Martha, once more for all, make you sensible how ridiculous you render yourself by interlarding your conversation with French words."

"And let me tell you, Mr. Winterton, that it is worse than ridiculous in you, to wish me to speak otherwise than as all people of fashion do. But I see plainly that you make a point of contradicting and opposing my wishes in all things," and here a flood of tears stopped the utterance of Mrs. Winterton, and brought her good-natured husband to her side.

"Now don't cry, Martha, you know I can't bear to see you in tears. There's a good little soul, don't cry any more!" and the uxorious Mr. Winterton kissed the inflamed cheek of his wife, which, bathed in tears, looked like a red peony after a shower of rain.

"Well, then, my own dear Richard," sobbed the lady, allowing herself to be mollified, and determined to carry the point with her good-natured husband, "I hope you will not ask me to invite the Nicksons for the twenty-third of next month? Only think how ill it would look, to see in the *Morning Post* their vulgar names coming after those of the Duke of Netherby, the Marquis and Marchioness of Ardcastle, the Earl and Countess of Beltonville, the

Viscount and Viscountess of Underweston, Lord George Meredith, and Lord Henry Wentworth Mordaunt."

"Why not omit the names of the Nicksons, if you find them so objectionable? That, surely, is a simple mode of avoiding the annoyance. And as we are on the subject, Martha, I wish you would be guided by my advice, and never more send the list of our company to the newspapers. It is, in my opinion, an unbecoming and ostentatious display of our hospitality."

"What, then, would be the use of giving dinners, Mr. Winterton, I should like to know?"

"The use, my dear! why the pleasure, for you seem to think it one, of having lords and ladies around your table."

"Really, Richard, I am sorry, very sorry, to be compelled to say that you are as ignorant of the ways of the world—that is the fashionable world—as a babe."

"And let me tell you, Martha, I do not think I have any great loss in this same ignorance; and what is more, Martha, that the knowledge you have acquired of it has not made you a happier or a better woman."

"With regard to being happier, Mr. Winterton, you must permit me to be the best judge of my own feelings, *chaque une a son gout*."

"And if I have an occasional fit of the gout, Martha, I bear it, as I do other trials, that is, as a man should, but I do not think it kind of you to remind me of it."

"Was there ever such a man! what in the name of wonder has your gout to do with the subject on which we were conversing?"

"Didn't I hear you say *goute*? I did not understand the other words in your French phrase, but I'll swear to the word *goute*, for you said it as plain as it ever was pronounced."

"If you knew the French language, Mr. Winterton, you would be aware that *gout* means taste, and that I merely observed 'every one to his taste.'"

"But as I do *not* know the French language, and that you are aware of my ignorance of it, I do not think it over well-bred of you to speak it when we are alone. I have managed to make a large fortune, Martha, and with a fair and honest name too, without knowing a word of any language but my own. A man who can make a plum may do without French."

"How often have I begged of you to leave off talking of plums!"

"And how often have I been compelled to remind you, Martha, that my plums have sweetened your cup of life."

"Really, Mr. Winterton, you are growing personal; and to hear you talk, one would imagine you were an *épicier*."

"A what?"

"A grocer."

"And couldn't you say so at once, without calling it an *epee sir*?"

"Was there ever so provoking a man?"

"I have business to attend, Martha, and cannot stay here, losing my time, and my temper too; but mind you, I *will* have the Nicksons here on the twenty-third," and so saying Mr. Winterton quitted the library, leaving his wife in a very ill humour, which she was well disposed to vent on whoever came in her way.

She rung the bell, and ordered the servant who answered it, to inform Miss Winterton that she desired her presence, and in a few minutes a very lovely and lady-like looking girl, of about nineteen, entered the room.

"I sent for you, Emma, to consult how I can get out of the scrape in which the obstinacy of your father will place me. Only fancy, he insists on having the Nicksons to dine here on the twenty-third of next month, when the Duke of Netherby, and many other people of fashion, are to be here."

"I do not see how it is to be avoided, mother, if my father has decided on it."

"Do you not think it would be possible to make Mrs. Nickson understand that I would prefer her *not* dining here on that day, without giving her room to complain to your father?"

"I do not know how this is to be effected; but I am quite sure my aunt Nickson would never complain to my father."

"Have I not told you, a hundred times, to leave off saying my aunt Nickson? There is nothing so vulgar. People of fashion never say my aunt: can you not say Mrs. Nickson?"

"Aunt looked surprised and hurt when I did so, the last time she was here; and she is so mighty kind and affectionate."

"Stuff!—nonsense! I will not have you call her aunt, so there's an end of it. But as she is so mighty *kind* and *affectionate*, could you not give her a hint that our table only holds a certain number,—that I have already filled up the list, and that, consequently—though I think it right to engage her, and should like to do so—I fear the room will be so crowded and so hot, that I shall not have room, and that I should not be sorry if even some of the present number of guests sent excuses. You are a favourite with her, and can easily, by the practice of a little tact, make her understand that I don't wish them to come."

"Really, my dear mother, I don't——"

"For mercy sake! spare my poor nerves the fatigue of another debate; I have had sufficient annoyance this morning, already, by your father's obstinacy, without your tormenting me; but there never was a woman so harassed by her family as I am, or so crossed in my efforts to establish them in fashionable society."

"I am very sorry——"

"Oh! so you all say, when you have determined to take your own way; but if you were really sorry, how easy it would be to meet my wishes, and assist me in carrying them into effect. But I am not the dupe of your pretended regrets; no, I am well aware that your vulgar relations——"

"Mr. William Nickson has called, madam, and requests you will see him," said a servant, on opening the door of the library.

"Why did you say I was at home? Did I not give orders to say not at home to any visitors this morning?"

"I thought, madam——"

"I don't want you to think; I pay you to obey instructions, and not to think."

"Dear mother, my cousin William is waiting all this time."

"Let him wait; who sent for him? Remember, once for all, that when I say not at home, *no one* is to be admitted. You may tell Mr. William Nickson to come in."

"I fear I have disturbed you, aunt," said a fine young man, who entered the library.

"Why, I must confess I was occupied; but even when not so, I have a great dislike to being broken in upon of a morning," and Mrs. Winterton looked as ungracious as her speech.

The handsome nephew appeared abashed for a moment, but after an effort, recovering his self-possession, extended his hand to take that of his stately aunt, who merely deigned to give him the point of her fat and fussy fingers. Not so did his gentle cousin greet William Nickson, for her cheeks became suffused with blushes, as her hand was clasped in his, and a close observer might have discovered the pleasure beaming in her intelligent countenance as she met his glance. Mrs. Winterton all this time maintained a cold and haughty demeanour, as if she awaited an explanation of the cause of the visit of her nephew, while Emma questioned him about the health of his mother and sister, with an earnestness that denoted the interest she felt in the subject.

"My mother wished me to call, in order that you should name a day for coming to dine with us, aunt."

"At this season, I fear it is totally out of the question. I have not a day, or indeed an hour to myself. My engagements are so numerous, that I cannot find time to fulfil even one-half of those I form; judge, then, whether I can devote a whole evening to family connections?"

"I am very sorry; but perhaps my uncle and my cousins could manage to come?"

"Mr. Winterton can do as he pleases; but for my daughters, and Reginald, it is wholly out of the question."

"My mother will be greatly disappointed," said William Nickson, and he and his fair cousin looked the disappointment he declared his mother would experience.

"I have not seen Reginald for a long time," observed the young man.

"I suppose not," answered Mrs. Winterton; "he has been hunting in Leicestershire, and going a round of visits in country-houses, whenever the first permitted his absence from Melton. He has only just arrived in town, and has not a moment to himself.

poor fellow! Emma, I want you to write some notes for me, to Lady Ardcastle and Lady Beltonville."

Emma looked distressed at this palpable hint for the abridgement of the visit of her cousin, and then approached the writing table.

"I hoped to meet you last night, at Lady Ardcastle's musical party," said William Nickson.

"Were you there?" asked his aunt, with an air of undisguised surprise. "How long have you known the Ardcastle's?" continued she.

"Since last season," replied William Nickson, calmly. "The music was not super-excellent last night, but the *petit souper* after was very agreeable."

"Who was there?" asked Mrs. Winterton, her cheeks becoming flushed with anger.

"The usual set. The Netherbys, Derbyshires, Beltonvilles, &c. But I will not interrupt you any longer;" and, again touching the tips of his aunt's fingers, and pressing the whole of the delicate, though plump and dimpled hand of his cousin Emma, William Nickson left the room.

"Look over the fashionable intelligence in the *Morning Post*, Emma, and see if there is any notice of the musical *soirée* at Lady Ardcastle's, or whether Mr. Nickson's name is in the list of the guests. Is it not extraordinary that we should have been left out a second time?"

"Lady Ardcastle has a numerous acquaintance, mother, and cannot invite all for the same evening."

"That is so like you, Emma, always discovering an excuse for every one I find fault with. But you have no feeling, no pride; none of my family have, I am sorry to say."

"Here is the list of the company, mother," and Emma read aloud a long catalogue of more than half the peerage, while her angry mother groaned in spirit, as she listened to the recapitulation of dukes and duchesses, marquises and marchionesses, earls and countesses, &c., who formed the party.

"Is William Nickson's name in the list?" asked Mrs. Winterton.

"Yes, here it is," answered Emma.

"Well, this does surprise me. What they can see in *him*, and why *we* should be omitted, is really unaccountable. Here have I been asking the Ardcastles, the Beltonvilles, and the Underwestons to dinner over and over again, and they never invite us more than once during the season; and when they do, never have any of the people to meet us, that I want to become acquainted with. Is it not too provoking?"

"If I may be allowed to give an opinion, mother, I should say, that in your place I would either not invite them at all, or at least, invite them much less frequently."

"Then you would act very foolishly, I can tell you, young lady.

Do you suppose I ask them because their society gives me any pleasure? Not at all; for, in spite of all I used to think *before* I knew lords and ladies, their company is less amusing than that of the people we used to have when we lived in Russell-square."

"Ah, mother! those were indeed pleasant days, when aunt Lindsay, uncle Tomkinson, and aunt and uncle Nickson used to dine with us so often. We have had no such agreeable dinners since we have been in Grosvenor-square."

"Agreeable dinners, indeed! I wonder, Emma, that you can have profited so little by the expensive education I have bestowed on you, as to think such dull, humdrum family parties agreeable. But to resume, mind you do not forget to make Mrs. Nickson understand, that it will be quite as well that she does not dine here on the twenty-third; but let this be done without committing *me*, and drawing down your father's anger, for as he is so absurdly tenacious about the Nicksons being invited, he would resent my interference in defeating his wishes. And now, Emma, there is another subject on which I think it my duty to speak to you: I have observed that you receive with marked coldness the attentions of Lord Haversham."

"As I entertain no preference for him, I have thought it right to discourage his attentions as much as possible."

"And may I inquire what objections you can possibly urge against him?"

"Neither his appearance nor manner please me."

"Then you must be very difficult to be pleased, for I know not a more good-looking or agreeable man. His title is one of the oldest in the peerage, and his seat is one of the most admired in England. Do not play the fool, Emma; a coronet is not to be had every day in the week, I can tell you, and you may never again have such a chance of wearing one."

"But surely, mother, if I feel no preference for him who owns it—if, on the contrary, my sentiments towards him are much more nearly akin to dislike, you would not have me encourage his addresses?"

"Stuff!—nonsense! I would have you a countess, the envy of all your female friends, taking a distinguished lead in the fashionable world, instead of, as at present, being merely tolerated in it."

"Indeed, mother, I am unfitted for fashionable life!"

"Fiddle-de-dee!—don't tell me any such thing. What have I been sacrificing such vast sums of money for, ever since your infancy, except to fit you for fashionable life? and now, forsooth, you tell me you are unsuited for it! I expect that you will henceforth receive the attentions of Lord Haversham with the favour they merit, or——"

"Hear me, mother! indeed I——"

"I will hear nothing, Emma; you now know my wishes, and if you refuse obedience to them, you must not expect the kindness and indulgence to which you have hitherto been accustomed."

"On all subjects, but the one on which the happiness of my future life depends, you may always, dear mother, count on my obedience; but on that I cannot—dare not yield it."

"But what can be your objection to Lord Haversham?"

"His reputation, his manner."

"His reputation, forsooth! Why, where can a daughter of mine have acquired such notions? So, because his lordship has been a little wild in his youth, and is a little free in his manner, he is found to be objectionable? Do you not know that reformed rakes are said to make the best husbands?"

"What woman of delicacy, mother, would trust her happiness to the keeping of such a man? What woman, with a pure mind, could condescend to be the companion of a man whose days have been passed among the dissolute of his own sex, and the degraded of ours?"

"Look at Lady Augusta Falconbridge, who bestowed herself and her fifty thousand pounds on Lord Warrendale, who was considered one of the wildest *roués* about town, and yet she is a very happy woman."

"She chose him, mother; and the woman capable of making such a choice, has no right to complain."

"And no reason, either, for he is a most good-natured and indulgent husband."

"But if Lady Warrendale possessed the pride and delicacy that a well educated young woman ought to have, could she be happy with a man who has not one rational pursuit, or one refined sentiment?"

"He only does what half the noblemen of his time do. They all race, hunt, game, and give themselves up to pleasure."

"I could not be happy, mother, with a man who lived this sort of life, and should for ever reproach myself, were I to unite my destiny with such a one."

"Then you are indeed unreasonable, Emma. What, not be happy when mistress of a fine seat in the country, a splendid mansion in town, rich equipages with your coronet emblazoned on them, an *entrée* to the most courtly circles, and the right of precedence over all of inferior rank? If you knew the world as well as I do, you would not hesitate to accept the offer of one who could insure you these advantages—advantages that so many of your sex would be transported with joy to have placed within their reach. Look at my position, Emma,—one fraught with so much pain and humiliation to me, that the wealth of your father, by placing all luxuries and appliances of fortune in my power, only serves to render more tantalising. Had I but rank, joined to the wealth we possess, I should command an *entrée* to every circle, instead of being, as now, excluded from the select, and only admitted when a crowd is received. I should not be compelled to submit to the humiliations so often endured from the insolence of capricious women of rank, who condescend to partake of our luxurious

dinners, only because your father lends liberal assistance to the wants of their spendthrift lords. Yes, I should be happy if I possessed but rank; and yet this great, this dazzling advantage, you foolishly, and I must say, wickedly decline, although you know your acceptance of Lord Haversham would render me so happy."

"But has it never occurred to you, my dear mother, that the advantages you have enumerated cannot confer happiness? Be assured, that those whose birth bestow them, have little enjoyment in the sense of their possession; and that even you, were they accorded to you, would soon lose all pleasure in them, and desire some other imaginary good."

"All your reasoning may be very fine, Emma, but it does not carry conviction to my mind. Far from it; and if you wish to prove your affection for me, you will accept the proposals of Lord Haversham, and give me the satisfaction of seeing my daughter wear a coronet, though I must not hope to possess one myself."

"Would that you tasked my obedience and affection on any other point than this, and gladly would I obey you, but——"

"I will have no buts, Emma;—you will marry Lord Haversham, or I disclaim you for my child!" and so saying Mrs. Winterton left the room, angrily slapping to the door as she withdrew, and leaving her daughter to weep at her unkindness. While she yet indulged in "the luxury of woe," which, however, was no luxury to Emma, her father entered the library, and observing her deep emotion, requested to be made acquainted with the cause. When informed of it, he good-nauredly told her that she might calm her fears, for that she never should be compelled to a marriage repugnant to her feelings.

"But how is it, my dear Emma, that I have been deceived on this point?" asked Mr. Winterton. "Your mother assured me that you had no objection to marry Lord Haversham, and when I made some animadversions on his past conduct, which alarmed me for your future happiness, I was told that you were satisfied on that head,—an assertion which, I confess, somewhat surprised me. I am mortified at this deception, and did not look for it."

"Do not, my dear father, I entreat you, suffer it to cause any misunderstanding between my mother and you. I should never forgive myself were I to be the cause."

"You are a good girl, Emma—ay, a very good girl!" and the affectionate father kissed his daughter's cheek; "and I must take care," continued he, "that your happiness is not compromised."

Mrs. Winterton had hitherto been so successful in carrying every point on which she had set her mind with her uxorious husband, that she was by no means disposed to abandon her project of compelling her daughter to wed Lord Haversham, however that daughter's feelings were opposed to the measure; and when Mr. Winterton, with more energy and firmness than he was wont to exercise in any discussion with her, declared that no coercion should be practised towards his child in a matter in which the

happiness of her future life was at stake, her anger knew no bounds. She accused both father and daughter of having conspired to defeat the plan she had proposed to ennoble the family, and uttered the severest reproaches against the mild and unoffending Emma, who, in the warmth of her anger, she declared had endeavoured to sow the seeds of dissension between her and her husband.

The anger of his wife Mr. Winterton could resist, but her tears had hitherto found him vulnerable. Their efficacy were now tried, and his presence in her chamber, to which she had pertinaciously confined herself, was the signal for a flood of tears, which ceased not while he remained in it.

The attempts of Emma to show the dutiful attention which her heart prompted to her mother, were rejected with anger and disdain, and if not wholly prohibited from entering her chamber, her presence there evidently displeased instead of conciliating her parent. The indulgence of her wrath, and the penance of confinement which she inflicted on herself, at length really produced the illness which she had previously counterfeited on Mr. Winterton, and now the anxiety of her kind-hearted husband knew no bounds. If he did not by words implore his daughter to sacrifice her own happiness, in order to gratify the unreasonable wishes of her mother, his alarm, his wretchedness, and remorse, for having, however inadvertently, occasioned (as he persisted in thinking he had done) the illness of his wife, were so many appeals to Emma's feelings to consent to her mother's wishes.

It was in vain that the physicians—and there were no less than three called in to attend Mrs. Winterton—assured him that her indisposition was not of a dangerous nature, and that a few days would restore her to health, her husband listening more to her own reiterated declaration of her sufferings than to his opinions, gave way to an alarm and anxiety that greatly impaired his own health, never robust, and which had latterly often been interrupted by a tendency to attack of blood to the head. Four days after the physicians had been called in to Mrs. Winterton, her husband was found dead in his chair, having been seized with a fit of apoplexy while writing a letter on business.

Heavily did this affliction fall on Emma, who, fondly attached to her father, found even the deep sense of religion, which dictated resignation to the Divine will, insufficient during the first days of her sorrow to enable her to submit to this severe privation. Her mother's grief was loud and clamorous; but, like all violent passions, it soon exhausted itself, and when, on the will being opened, it was discovered that she was left sole executrix, with a jointure of no less than six thousand a year, and a sum of fifty thousand pounds solely at her own disposal, with the house in Grosvenor-square, with all its contents, and carriages, horses, &c., it was observed that, although she talked incessantly of the generosity and unbounded love of her dear departed husband—the best, the kindest of men—

her tears flowed much less frequently, and she quickly began to take a lively interest in those mundane affairs in which, during the first weeks of widowhood, few women who have lost a fond husband interfere.

Mrs. Winterton had used her influence over her too easy spouse, to induce him to leave his son and daughter dependent on her to a certain degree. The son, to whom he bequeathed two hundred and fifty thousand pounds, and the reversion of his mother's jointure of six thousand a year, was not to have possession of his fortune until he reached his thirtieth year, and until that period, was to receive only an allowance of two thousand pounds yearly. Emma was left fifty thousand pounds, to be paid on her marriage, provided it was contracted with her mother's consent, but if otherwise, the sum was to be invested in the hands of trustees, to accumulate for her offspring when arrived at maturity, and a yearly allowance of five hundred a year only was to be allowed for her use.

Triumphantly did Mrs. Winterton dwell on this proof of confidence reposed in her by "the dear departed," by leaving his children so wholly in her power. "Yes, poor dear Mr. Winterton well knew who to trust in, and she would strictly carry into effect his last wishes."

Mr. and Mrs. Nickson, and their son, came to the house of mourning to offer the consolation of which Emma stood so much in need on this melancholy occasion. Loving her as a daughter, they affectionately pledged themselves to fill the place of the father she had lost, while William Nickson, if he asked her not to consider him as a brother, showed those unobtrusive but soothing attentions that mark the existence of even a more tender sentiment than brotherly regard.

The presence of Mr. and Mrs. Nickson, never acceptable to Mrs. Winterton, was now less than ever so; and, as the death of her husband removed the necessity of concealing her dislike to his worthy sister and her husband, she soon allowed them to perceive how unpalatable their society was to her. She declared that she preferred the solitude of her own *boudoir*, where she might, free from interruption, indulge in the grief she professed to experience; so they, nothing loth, devoted the hours of their daily visits to Emma, who derived comfort and consolation from their presence. Grief, that softener even of stubborn hearts, had peculiarly disposed the gentle one of Emma Winterton to the softer affections.

William Nickson not only soothed her sorrow, but did more, he shared it. Sincerely attached to his late uncle, he was a real mourner for his death; and fully appreciating the selfish character of his widow, and suspicious of the evil use she was capable of making of the powers he had intrusted her with over the destinies of his children, he trembled for their happiness. Young Winterton, a well-disposed but rather spoilt young man, had always been his mother's favourite, and as he possessed considerable influence over her, William Nickson felt less anxiety about him; but Emma, the

beautiful and gentle Emma, was, he feared, but ill able to resist the tyranny of her self-willed and imperious mother, and these reflections, originating in his deep interest about her, rendered him more than ever assiduous and kind to her.

Pity is a dangerous sentiment to indulge in, and particularly when its object is a beautiful young girl. William Nickson soon experienced this fact, for he was far gone in love with his fair cousin before he was aware of the extent of his devotion to her. But if pity is a dangerous guest in youthful hearts, gratitude is not less so, and Emma, soothed and charmed by the sympathy she found in her cousin's heart, had given him hers before he asked for the gift, though certainly not before he had been taught to consider it the most precious donation that could be bestowed on mortal.

Each discovered the secret of his and her heart nearly at the same time. Now the difficulty of keeping secrets has long been known, and although women are pronounced to experience this same difficulty much more than men, nevertheless, in the present instance, we must accord to the lady the merit of having guarded *hers* much more carefully than William Nickson did his, for he had revealed it to her before he even suspected that she had any secret to disclose. In short, they had pledged their troths amid sighs and tears, and they felt as if their affection was sanctified by the regret they experienced for him who, had he lived, would have approved and rewarded it, as, next to his own children, his only sister's son was the object nearest and dearest to the heart of the deceased Mr. Winterton. Yet, while plighting their vows, both felt conscious that never would Mrs. Winterton consent to their ratification; but William Nickson consoled himself, and his beloved Emma too, by dwelling on the circumstances that rendered the opposition of that lady of less importance, namely, the ample provision his father could, and would, make for him, and the power this gave him of proving even to Mrs. Winterton the disinterestedness of his attachment to her fair daughter.

Ere two months from the death of her good father had elapsed, Emma Winterton again found herself assailed by the renewal of her mother's persuasions to induce her to wed Lord Haversham; and no longer did they come in even so mild a form as in the lifetime of her parent; for now, relying on the extent of her power over the fortune of her daughter, Mrs. Winterton assumed a tone of command when she found persuasions unavailing, to enforce obedience to her wishes. Emma's home now became every day more irksome to her. The coldness of the reception afforded to the Nickson family by her mother, was such as to preclude the frequent visits they would gladly have paid in Grosvenor-square, and the encouragement given to those of Lord Haversham was so marked, that it was but too plain that Mrs. Winterton, so far from abandoning her intention of having his lordship for a son-in-law, however averse her daughter was to the project, remain unchanged.

It was in vain that Emma, by the most decided coldness of manner, endeavoured to discourage his oppressive assiduities; he persevered in them with as much pertinacity as if they were acceptable to their object, and as he was a constant guest at the dinner-table, and a daily morning visitor in Grosvenor-square, opportunities for annoying her were not denied him.

At length it occurred to Emma, that as her mother would not listen to her firm refusal of never becoming the wife of Lord Haversham, it would be best, at the first occasion furnished to her, to explicitly state her unalterable resolution to himself. In pursuance with this plan, when, a few days after, Mrs. Winterton had purposely left her daughter alone with Lord Haversham, and his lordship was reiterating protestations of *dévouement*, Emma, in a tone which could leave no doubt of her firmness, told her *soi-disant* admirer that the continuation of his attentions were as unavailing as they were disagreeable to her.

"And may I inquire what your objections to me are?" asked Lord Haversham, his face red with wounded vanity.

"I see no necessity for entering farther on the point," said Emma; "let it suffice that my determination is definite, and that, as you are now aware of it, I expect that I may be spared from any further reference to this subject," and so saying she quitted the room, leaving the noble lord a prey to angry emotions. He rang the bell, and requested to see Mrs. Winterton, who soon made her appearance, and when he had related to her his discomfiture, evinced so deep a sympathy in his feelings, that her anger exceeded his.

"A thousand thanks, my dear madam, for your kindness," said the wily lord, "but I fear all exercise of it on the present occasion will be useless. I have long thought that your daughter was but little disposed to listen to my suit, and I only persevered in it because you advised it."

"And I *still* advise it," replied Mrs. Winterton; "she will not, cannot, be such a fool as to run counter to my wishes, and she shall be your wife, for I am not a person to be trifled with, I can assure you."

"Why, really, my dear madam, it is rather a disagreeable thing to have a lady forced, as it were, to accept addresses that I believe I might, without vanity, say that many women, yes, very many women, would be proud to receive."

"I can well understand your feelings, Lord Haversham, and cannot blame them. Emma is a fool, and perfectly blind to her own interest, or she would not have declined the honour you were ready to confer on her. I am more hurt by her undutiful conduct than I can express, for she knows how desirous I am for the alliance. I am really to be pitied, Lord Haversham—yes, deeply to be pitied," and here tears came to the relief of Mrs. Winterton, and coursed each other down her red cheeks.

"It is not enough to have lost the best, the kindest husband

and in such a dreadful way too, but to be left with two such undutiful children, so unfeeling, so self-willed, and so deaf to my advice—yes, Lord Haversham, mine is a cruel position,” and the lady’s voluminous bust heaved with the sobs that were audible. “What avails the noble fortune bequeathed me by the dear departed, if my life is to be embittered by those who ought to have yielded implicit obedience to my wishes, even at the total sacrifice of their own? Dreadful is the situation of a poor lone woman! and keenly do I feel it,” and the tears flowed afresh.

During the last ten minutes, a thought, originating in the complaints of Mrs. Winterton, flashed through the brain of Lord Haversham, ever prolific in expedients when money became the subject of their cogitations. “What,” thought he to himself, “if, as the daughter won’t have me, I propose to the mother instead? Yet, hang her, she is an ugly red-faced old creature, and a bit of a shrew into the bargain. Her six thousand a year, too, dies with her,” and he bit his lip, “but her fifty thousand pounds are in her own power—they would be devilish useful to me just now;—and this house, too,” and he looked around him at the splendidly furnished apartment, and the fine pictures by the best old masters glowing on the walls, and reflected in the immense mirrors; “yes, this is one of the very best houses in the square, and decidedly the best fitted up. Then the old girl has lots of diamonds, heaps of plate, a capital cellar of choice wines, as auctioneers say. By Jove! the speculation would not be a bad one; the mother is, after all, a better bargain than the daughter in every point except looks, and what do they signify after one gets used to them? I wonder the thought never occurred to me before. The son, too, I can easily get an influence over him, and turn it to account. Yes, by all that is lovely, and unlike my Niobe widow, I will become her consoler for the best of husbands, the dear departed as she calls him, and the step-father of the pretty Emma. To be sure, the fellows at the clubs will laugh, and hoax me a bit at first, but they may laugh who win, and when I am at the head of six thousand a year, and fifty thousand shiners in my possession, and master of this well-appointed mansion, where I can give them *recherché* dinners, the laugh will be in my favour.”

These thoughts rushed rapidly through the mind of Lord Haversham, while the widow continued to weep. He approached, took her hand, and pressed it to his lips, and entreated her not to impair her health by giving way to grief.

“My h-e-a-l-th i-is of n-o co-n-se—consequence to any one now!” sobbed the lady.

“Don’t say so,” replied Lord Haversham. “It is of consequence to *one* person, I can answer for it.”

“You think, then, that my son loves me?” demanded the lady, believing that Lord Haversham referred to him.

“He must be a brute if he does not,” was the answer; “but I was not thinking of him,” continued he.

"Who then were you thinking of?" asked Mrs. Winterton, raising her head, and removing from her face the cambric handkerchief that had shaded her eyes.

"Can't you guess?" replied the peer.

"No, indeed," said the lady.

"Is it possible, loveliest of women, that you have never discovered the passion with which you have so long inspired me?" demanded Lord Haversham, falling on one knee before the widow, and seizing her hand. "Why did I seek your daughter—that pale and imperfect copy of your charming self—except for an excuse to see you—be near you? Why pursue my addresses to her, except that I might have an excuse for penetrating into your seclusion, and for soothing your grief? You look surprised—incredulous;—but do not doubt me, nor doubt your own charms, which well might melt colder hearts than mine. I have long sighed for this hour, when—throwing off all deception—I might avow my flame, and place at your feet my coronet and fortune."

"Do I dream, Lord Haversham? I am quite confounded! What, you have never loved Emma?—and you——"

"Love you to madness, my dear creature!" said Haversham, half astonished at his own effrontery. "Forgive me, if I confess to you that, from the first moment I saw you—yes, even before it was not a sin to love—I indulged a passion that not even my esteem for your late excellent husband, nor my knowledge of the severity of your principles, could subdue. You know not what terrible struggles I had—the sleepless nights, the miserable days."

"No, indeed," murmured the widow, evidently much softened.

"Say you pity me,—that you will not drive me to despair!" said Haversham, pressing her hand again to his lips.

"I entreat you will rise, my lord. If any one should enter."

"Never—never will I rise, until you tell me that you will be mine!—that this precious hand shall appertain to me."

"I am so—so agitated!—I really—you must——"

"Only say, dearest of women, that you pardon me—that you do not quite forbid me to hope."

"Only think, Lord Haversham. The delicacy of my position. The recentness of my terrible loss."

"I can think of nothing but you, loveliest of creatures!"

"What will the world say? O! I dare not contemplate it!"

"Think not of the world, my angel! think only of your adoring, your faithful Haversham. Never will he know a moment's peace until he has placed his coronet on this fair brow," and the *roué* peer pressed his lips to the forehead of Mrs. Winterton.

"When a year has passed, perhaps I might be induced——"

"A year! talk not of it, unless you would drive me mad. A year is an eternity to one who loves as I do. But I see you hate me."

"Perhaps it were better I did," murmured the lady, casting down her eyes with affected modesty, but not withdrawing her

hand from the grasp of her *soi-disant* admirer, who encouraged by her *minauderie*, attempted to inclose her in his arms, but they reached not above half round her huge waist, a circumstance that escaped not his observation, as he bit his lip to prevent the smile that rose to it.

"You must not—really you must not!" whispered the widow, gently disengaging herself from her lover's arms.

"Promise me then that you will be mine, and I will control my passion—will do all and everything that you wish. If it agitates you too much, dearest, to say so aloud, whisper it in my ear, or let me seal our engagement on your lips."

"I will be yours; but you must not—indeed you must not, press for an early day: I should be blamed. People would only say—heaven knows not what!"

"They would only say, what every action of my life shall prove—that I love you so madly, that I pressed you to abridge my misery, for, in misery I shall be until you are Countess of Haversham."

This sounding title reminded Mrs. Winterton of all her past yearnings for one, when she little dreamt of ever possessing it, and finally triumphed over her remaining scruples. Before Lord Haversham left the room, she pledged herself to be his wife at the expiration of the third month of her widowhood, two of which had already elapsed, and they parted mutually pleased with the result of their interview.

"Who would have thought," said the lady to herself, "that this good-looking and agreeable nobleman was so desperately in love with me, and for so long a time too? Little did poor Mr. Winterton imagine it. He, poor man, fancied me quite an old woman, and would not have believed that a fashionable nobleman, not above thirty-five, could be so much attached to me. It is true Lord Haversham is some twenty years younger than I am, but what of that? If *he* overlooks the disparity, why should I find it an obstacle? Besides, who knows whether he is aware of it?" and she approached a mirror, and contemplated her own image with more than ordinary complacency.

"Emily is right; I certainly don't look above forty, and I dare say Lord Haversham does not take me to be any more. Poor dear Mr. Winterton was always reminding me of my age. Heigh-ho! He was an excellent man, but not to be compared to Lord Haversham, who is so enthusiastic. He reminded me to-day of the time that poor Mr. Winterton was paying his addresses to me,—the same warmth and impatience in urging me to name the happy day. Well, I never thought that I should again be urged with the same degree of passion. Ah! if men could always remain the same as in their courting days! I wonder whether Lord Haversham will. Poor dear Mr. Winterton got over all his enthusiasm about me before we were ten years married, and although he certainly generally complied with my requests, particularly when I shed a few

tears, it was more from a wish for what he called "anything for a quiet life," than from downright love. How pleasant it is to be made a fuss about—to be pressed to name the day—to be obliged to reprove the ardour of a man, instead of having a husband yawning or falling asleep on sofas or easy chairs. Heigh-ho!—I am sure I shall be happy.

"And so, after all, *I* shall be a countess, instead of Emma! This is a piece of good fortune I little anticipated; and how pleasant it will be to be addressed as 'your ladyship,' and to have the Right Hon. Countess of Haversham on all my letters. Yes, it *will* be delightful; and although I may be censured by some for marrying so soon, nevertheless, I know more than one widow who has wedded at the end of three months after the death of her first husband, so why may not I? Few will remember plain Mr. Winterton in the brilliant Countess of Haversham; for brilliant I shall be, if diamonds can make me so."

Such were the thoughts that occupied the mind of Mrs. Winterton for above an hour after Lord Haversham had left her, as seated before her mirror, she complacently gazed on the reflection of a face that no one else could have contemplated with pleasure.

The cogitations of Lord Haversham, as he walked to his club, were of a different nature. "What a fright the widow is!" thought he; "and especially when she looks tender. By Jove! her money will be dearly bought, if I am to keep up the farce of pretending to love her. Women certainly are the greatest fools in the world, and a better proof could not be given of their folly than this old creature's being led to believe that I am smitten with her. I really had the utmost difficulty in refraining from laughing in her face when I saw how she swallowed all the stuff I told her. Men are not such fools: they, when they grow old, become suspicious and guarded. Let any woman try to persuade old Carryston, or Drummondale, that she is in love with him, and either would instantly suspect she has a design on his property. No, old men are not such fools as old women; for these last, though rich as Croesus, and ugly as Hecate, can easily be persuaded, by any passable-looking fellow who will take the trouble, that they are charming, and are loved for themselves, and not for their fortunes, which they are always willing enough to make over to the most flattering *soi-disant* admirer."

From that day forth, Lord Haversham was a constant guest at the dinner-table in Grosvenor-square, and a daily morning visitor in the *boudoir* of Mrs. Winterton. Her *femme-de-chambre* Emily was the first person to whom this lady communicated her engagement, and although the cunning Abigail endeavoured to conceal the astonishment the intelligence gave her, her mistress observed it, and for a moment stood abashed at the tacit reproof it conveyed.

But quickly did Emily compose her looks, as she congratulated her "dear lady on her good fortune." "Indeed, my lord is a charming gentleman—nobleman I ought to say. So handsome!

such a helegant figure! and it will make me so happy to hear you, ma'am, styled her ladyship the countess, instead of Mrs. Winterton. And then *I* shall be treated in quite a different manner now, for the ladies' maids belonging to ladies of titles, always pass before those of plain gentlewomen, and sit above them at table at all the hinns, where hupper servants dine together. I'm sure, ma'am—my lady I shall soon be able to call you—you do not know what I have suffered when we were last season down at Cheltenham, and all the ladies' maids sat above me at table, and were so proud and distant like, because my mistress was not a titled lady. I would not hurt your feelings, ma'am, by telling you how they put on me with their slights and himperdence; but when you are once a countess, I'll teach 'em to know that I am as good as themselves—ay, and better too. Well, I'm sure ma'am, if I was you, I'd have a whole new set of dresses, for a countess ought not to wear what a plain Mrs. wore; besides, his lordship is such a very handsome and helegant gentleman—nobleman, I mean—that to match him, your ladyship ought, when a countess, to be dressed as youthful as himself, or else people will say the countess is older than the hearl."

"You are right, Emily; I will have an entirely new wardrobe, and you shall have the old."

"Thank you, my lady."

"I am not yet my lady, good Emily."

"But you soon will be, please God! and the sooner I begin to learn to call you properly, the better. I hope your ladyship will have as fine a *true sew** as Mrs. Coutts had; not that the sewing was over good, for all they call it true sew."

"Yes, Emily, I mean to indulge my taste on this occasion; but my feelings are really much excited. I cannot keep from thinking of the dear departed," and here the widow's handkerchief was applied to her eyes.

"Lord love your ladyship, don't cry; 'twill only spoil your eyes, and make your nose red; and though poor dear Mr. Winterton was a very good gentleman, he was not to be compared with the Hearl of Haversham; and besides, he was always finding fault, and saying I dressed you too young. In fact, he wanted to make an old lady of you, which was a sin; whereas his lordship, the hearl, would like you to be dressed as youthful as Miss Winterton: and, for the matter of that, when you have a pink satin dress on, and your white tuck,† you look quite as young as Miss, and much handzomer, to my taste."

"You flatter me, Emily."

"Not I, indeed, your ladyship."

"Well, well—she is even a greater fool than I took her to be," said the *femme-de-chambre*, as her mistress left the chamber; "but that's her affair; I know my own interest too well to prevent her committing this folly, even if I could open her eyes, so I must

* Trousseau.

† Toque.

take advantage of it, and make hay while the sun shines. As long as this fancy for believing herself young, and in love, lasts, she will be generous, and being in good humour with herself, she will be in good humour with all the world and me ; but let me tell her that she is bamboozled by this same wild lord, who only wants her money, and who laughs at her in his sleeve, and she will turn restive, and never forgive me as long as she lives. No—I will encourage her in her folly, and reap the fruit of it, and, perhaps, get something from his wicked lordship into the bargain !”

The simplicity and unsuspecting character of Emma Winterton prevented her, for some weeks, from suspecting what was going on in the house. The frequent visits of Lord Haversham led her to believe, that neither he nor her mother had yet abandoned their project of compelling her to wed him ; and, although his lordship’s increased attention to her mother and coldness towards herself struck her, she nevertheless believed it might be assumed for some purpose she could not discover.

It was only the night before the marriage that Mrs. Winterton informed her daughter of the event to take place, and little as that lady was accustomed to indulge in feelings of shame, her cheeks became crimson as she told Emma that next morning she was to become Countess of Haversham. Emma turned pale as marble, and then burst into tears, as she faintly said, “Is it possible ? and with Lord Haversham ! So soon, mother ? Oh ! can it be so soon after my poor dear father’s death ?”

“You might have shown a little more delicacy to my feelings, Emma,” said Mrs. Winterton, “than thus cruelly to remind me of an affliction that has given me so much pain ; but my children have neither affection nor duty for me, and it is their total want of both that has compelled me to seek for the consolation of which I stand so much in need by forming new ties.”

“Oh ! mother, reflect on the step you are about to take, ere it be yet too late—for our sakes, for your own !”

“I am old enough to choose for myself, Emma, and do not wish for your opinion or advice. In taking this step, I am placing not only myself, but you and your brother, in a much more elevated sphere, and should receive your thanks instead of reproaches, were you not lost to all good feeling.”

“Reproaches, mother ! Do not think I would reproach you, although my heart is deeply wounded.”

“Wounded ! and for what, pray ? Is it because I am about to become a peeress ? It is not every woman who would, like you, have had the folly to refuse such an offer as was made to you, and I know too well what is due to myself and to my family to follow so absurd an example. Once for all, Emma, let me tell you that I consider your conduct on this occasion as highly unbecoming and ungrateful, but I do not wish to part from you in anger.”

“Part !” murmured Emma.

“Yes ; Lord Haversham and I will proceed from the church to

his villa, near Windsor, to pass the honeymoon, and you can spend that period with your aunt Nickson, to whom you can break my marriage. Your brother will not return to town for a fortnight, so you cannot remain alone here, therefore you had better stay with your aunt, although, in the elevated sphere in which I shall henceforth move, you must make up your mind to see as little of the Nicksons as possible—you can make them understand this; and so now good night, Emma, God bless you, my dear girl," and the heartless mother kissed the forehead of her weeping daughter, and left the room.

After a sleepless night Emma was just sinking into a feverish slumber, when she was disturbed by persons moving in the house. The unusual noise and bustle alarmed her, and for a few minutes she tried to account for the cause; but when, with resumed consciousness, she remembered that her mother, that mother who had been barely three months a widow, was about to become a bride, and to wed, too, a man so many years younger than herself, and who, but four short weeks before, had sought to be her son-in-law, a feeling of disgust and shame was mingled with her sorrow, and she wept in uncontrollable emotion.

"Could my poor father look from his grave and behold what is passing, how would he repent having intrusted the destinies of his children to her who can so soon forget him," thought Emma, "and who could, ere he was three months dead, give him so unworthy a successor. There is something unnatural and monstrous in this ill-assorted union. Yes, I feel a presentiment that it will render my poor misguided mother miserable when the delusion that now blinds her has passed away."

Emma rose, and having hastily performed the duties of her toilet, and ordered her maid to take a portion of her wardrobe with her, commanded the carriage, and, weeping bitterly, left the house in which she had passed so many happy days, and proceeded to Russell-square to Mr. Nickson's.

The first person she met, on entering that hospitable mansion, was William Nickson, who was filled with alarm and amazement on beholding her, at this early hour, with her pale face and eyes heavy with weeping. His father and mother soon hurried to the library, and, affectionately embracing and welcoming their niece, succeeded in calming her feelings sufficiently to enable her to announce to them the strange tidings of which she was the bearer. How painful is the task to a delicate-minded daughter, to be compelled to reveal intelligence which she knows must lower her mother in the estimation of those whose good opinion she most highly values. Emma felt this, and the perfect astonishment her tidings excited increased her own emotion.

"Was there ever such conduct!" exclaimed Mrs. Nickson: "To marry in three months after the death of my poor dear brother, the most kind and indulgent of husbands," and here tears impeded her utterance.

"And to a man so many years her junior," said Mr. Nickson.

"Pray, dear mother, do not add to Emma's grief," whispered William Nickson, "see how pale, how agitated she is."

"Forgive us, my dear child, for forgetting your feelings in giving way to our own, and be assured that you shall never know the want of a father or mother's love while my husband and I live," said Mrs. Nickson, again tenderly embracing her niece.

"Had your misguided mother consulted me," observed Mr. Nickson, "I could have convinced her that the unworthy man she has married is a ruined gamester, and an acknowledged profligate. Having heard that he aspired to your hand, I made a point of inquiring into his character, and ascertained it to be in every way base. Bitterly will your unhappy and foolish mother expiate her folly, but she will have no one to blame but herself."

The next day the newspapers announced, in flaming paragraphs, a marriage in high life, in nearly the following terms: "On Tuesday, the 10th of May, at St. George's, Hanover-square, by special license, the Right Hon. the Earl of Haversham was united to Mrs. Winterton, of Grosvenor-square, widow to the late Richard Winterton, Esq. The bride is said to be possessed of twelve thousand a year, and half a million in the funds."

A week glided more happily by than Emma dared to anticipate, under the circumstances that led to her becoming a guest in Russell-square, before any intelligence reached her from the bride; but on the tenth day a letter arrived, bearing all the insignia of nobility, and couched in the following words:—

"MY DEAR EMMA,—I should have sooner written to you, but Haversham would not allow me time; and, were he not now occupied in examining some new horses for his phaeton, I could not have written. His attachment to me is unbounded, and consequently I am perfectly happy. *He* has such charming spirits, and tells me such amusing stories about his friends, that I never can feel dull. I had no idea that noblemen could be so entertaining; but this delightful gaiety of my lord is only indulged in our *tête-à-têtes*, for, as you must have observed, in mixed society he is very dignified.

"I believe I forgot to tell you, that Lord Haversham never had the least intention of marrying you; he merely affected to admire you, in order to have an excuse for his visits in Grosvenor-square that he might see me. I told him how very wrong this was, and added, that if his attentions had made a tender impression on your heart, you might have been rendered unhappy for life; but he said that all stratagems were fair in love and in war; and said so many flattering things about my charms justifying anything, that I could not scold him.

"I wish you to order a silver-gilt countess's coronet to be placed on the top of my dressing-glass, and another on my silver-mounted pin-cushion. I wish also to have coronets painted on the

hall chairs, instead of the vulgar red lion rampant they now have; and let the present marks be taken out of all the house linen, and coronets, with the cypher H., be put in their place.

“ Avoid, as much as you can, making any new acquaintances at your present abode, or cultivating the old, as, in the elevated sphere in which I shall move, it will never answer to keep up such intimacies. The Nicksons we must see as little of as we possibly can, and you had better make them understand this. The dressing-room and private study your poor father used, are to be immediately new painted and decorated in the most tasteful and elegant style, for Lord Haversham. Give Newton the necessary instructions, and tell him not to spare expense. Have your father’s picture removed from the dining-room, and the water-colour drawing of him taken down from my dressing-room. The oil picture and drawing you may have if you wish. Adieu, dear Emma. My lord, who has just returned, desires to be kindly remembered to you.

“ Believe me affectionately yours,
“ M. HAVERSHAM.

“ P.S.—Send me, as soon as possible, a seal with a coronet, and my cipher engraved on it,—mind, an *earl’s* coronet.”

The perusal of this epistle cost Emma many tears, and created a sentiment of disgust in her mind that she could not control. She could not, however, bear to expose the folly and want of feeling of her mother, so did not show the letter to her aunt; and this excellent woman, observing the effect it had produced on her niece, abstained from evincing any anxiety on the subject, while she redoubled the kindness and affection which she knew must be so peculiarly soothing to Emma at this crisis.

Ten days more passed without any letter from Lady Haversham, when Mr. Nickson, having returned from the city one afternoon, inquired of Emma whether she had seen or heard from her mother. Being informed that she had not, he looked surprised, and said, “ It is strange, but I certainly saw her this day in the city, and in a job-carriage, with that *roué* her husband. They were evidently wishing to be incognito, for I saw him pull down the blind.”

Two more days elapsed without any intelligence from Lady Haversham, but on the third morning a letter, of which the following is a copy, and bearing the Dover post-mark, arrived:—

“ You will, no doubt, be surprised, my dear Emma, at getting a letter from me from this place; and more so when I tell you that in an hour we shall have embarked for Calais, on our route to Paris. It was quite a sudden thought of my lord’s, and he had so set his heart on putting it into immediate execution, that I had barely time to make the necessary arrangements before we set out. The stupid people in the city were so slow and tiresome, that they took up all my time; and, had it not been for my lord’s man of business, a very clever person, to whom I gave power to act, we could have been detained still longer before I could get my money.

My lord says that the English funds will very soon fall, and therefore we have determined on placing my fifty thousand pounds in the French funds, where he says they will be much safer.

“ You have no idea how well he understands all these matters ; so much so, indeed, that I, who hate business, and have not been used to it, have resigned all the management to him. Never was there so attentive a husband ; he takes off all trouble from me ; orders everything—takes charge of my diamonds himself—and has sent off all my plate from Grosvenor-square to his banker’s, where he says it will be taken better care of. He has persuaded me to have the house in Grosvenor-square, and everything it contains, sold ; for he said he could not bear to live where everything around him remind him that I had once belonged to another husband ; and, though I offered to have everything changed, because I like the house on account of the drawing-rooms being so large for giving parties, he could not bear to live in it, so it will be sold as soon as possible, and he will buy a much finer house.

“ I thought my lord would not have been able to get away from the House of Lords during Parliament, but I find now that he does not belong to the House of Lords, for his is an Irish peerage, which is very strange, he being an Englishman. I wished to have taken you to France with us, but my lord said he could not bear to have a third person to interrupt our *tête-à-tête* during the first six months of our marriage, so I will leave you with your friends in Russell-square until we return. Believe me, my dear Emma, yours affectionately,

“ M. HAVERSHAM.

“ P.S.—I have written to your brother to join us at Paris, where my lord will introduce him into fashionable life.”

The contents of this letter Emma confided to her aunt, and Mr. Nickson soon brought intelligence that explained it more fully. Lord Haversham, having discovered that the fortune of his wife would be inadequate to the settlement of his debts, had decided on flying from England, and leaving his creditors unpaid. His wife’s diamonds and plate he had sold ; the house and furniture he had raised as much money on as he could obtain from the auctioneer to whom he assigned it over ; her fifty thousand pounds he had got possession of, and he had effected an insurance on her life to a large amount, the premium for which he had made her income answerable for.

It required no great share of prescience to foresee what the probable result of the ill-assorted marriage of Lady Haversham must be. To guard against one of its consequences, William Nickson left London, and joined the brother of Emma in time to prevent his going to Paris, according to the scheme laid to entrap him by his *roué beau père*. At the sale, which soon after took place in Grosvenor-square, Mr. Nickson bought the portraits of his late worthy brother-in-law, which he presented to Emma, whose heartless mother had taken no step to preserve.

Before nine months had elapsed, Lord Haversham threw off the mask that had hitherto so successfully imposed on his wife; for, having succeeded in getting her to sign away nearly her whole income to him, he left her, with only a few hundred pounds, and set off to Italy with a *danseuse*, who had, from the first week of his arrival in Paris, engrossed nearly all his attention, while he accounted for his frequent absence by persuading his credulous wife that the investment of her fortune in the French funds occupied all his time.

Lady Haversham returned to England a wiser if not a better woman than she left it; but the disappointment she had experienced, and the regret for her imprudence which embittered her mind, preyed so much on her health, that not all the affectionate attention of her son and daughter, and the kindness of the worthy Nicksons, could alleviate her sufferings.

Having discovered the attachment between Emma and William Nickson, Lady Haversham was the first to propose that they should be united; and, conscious that her days were numbered, pressed to have the nuptial ceremony performed with as little delay as possible. She outlived their marriage but a few weeks; but even during that brief period so many instances of the want of principle, gross selfishness, and inhumanity of her unworthy husband, were brought to light, that her remorse for having become his dupe was increased, and the poignancy of her feeling greatly accelerated the progress of her disease. The ruling passion, strong in death, was never more exemplified than in her last request to her weeping children:—
“Let my funeral be in accordance with the rank which I paid so dearly to attain; and let there be a silver coronet on the coffin, which I wish to be covered with crimson velvet.”

THE END.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be supported by a valid receipt or invoice to ensure transparency and accountability.

2. The second section outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze data. It highlights the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

3. In the third part, the author details the challenges faced during the research process. These include limited access to certain resources and the need for interdisciplinary collaboration to address complex issues.

4. The fourth section presents the findings of the study. It shows that there is a significant correlation between the variables being examined, which supports the initial hypothesis.

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