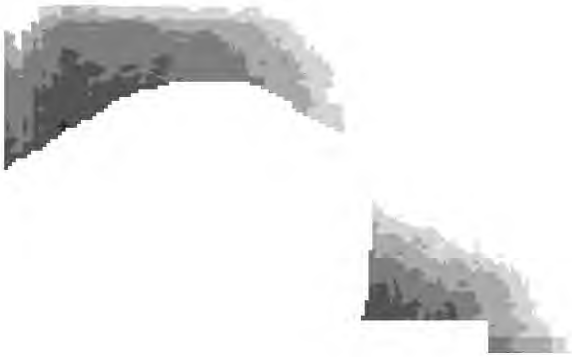

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

A CHAPERON.

VOL. I.

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RECOLLECTIONS

OF

A CHAPERON.

EDITED BY LADY DACRE.

NEW EDITION.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN.)
1833.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

I WAS left a widow with seven daughters. I have married them all, or rather, I have let them marry themselves; for I never took any active measures towards bringing about a result which I own to be a desirable one in a family consisting of seven daughters and one son.

I have seen manœuvring mothers succeed; but I have as often seen them fail in their matrimonial speculations. I have seen dignified mothers with modest daughters, pass year after year, unnoticed and unsought; but I have also seen the unobtrusive daughters of retiring mothers form splendid alliances; and at the very beginning of my career as a Chaperon, I came to the conclusion that, as there

was no rule which could ensure success, it was safer and more respectable to do too little than to do too much; better simply to fail, than to fail and to be ridiculous at the same time.

Accordingly, when I had mounted my feathered hat and black velvet gown, or my white satin gown and flowered cap, as the occasion might require, and patiently taken my station upon the chair, seat, or bench which I could most conveniently appropriate to myself, I beguiled the weary hours by studying those around me, trusting for the rest to chance, and to the principles which I had endeavoured to impress upon the minds of my girls; viz. not to flirt so as to attract attention,—not to think too highly of their own pretensions,—and above all, not to be betrayed into laughing at any man before they knew him, by which means more than one girl of my acquaintance has been obliged, for consistency's sake, to repulse a person whom, upon further acquaintance, she might have sincerely preferred.

My daughters were not beautiful enough,

nor did they marry brilliantly enough, to excite the jealousy of other mothers. I had brought them up to avoid a fault odious in all, but especially so in the young, that of being more ready to perceive the failings than the merits of their companions: we were, therefore, a popular family. I had myself the happy knack of being interested in the concerns and distresses of others, and I listened with pleasure to details however trifling: I had consequently many intimate friends.

As people never were afraid of me, transient emotions, and harmless weaknesses, which would have been concealed from a sterner, cleverer, or more important personage, were confessed, or, at all events, permitted to escape in a *tête-à-tête* with the good-natured, quiet, inoffensive Mrs. ——. But what am I doing? I wish to preserve my incog, and only hope I have not already betrayed myself by the mention of my white satin, and my black velvet gowns.

I will write no more, lest some unguarded expression should give a clue to my name: I will simply add, that my last daughter hav-

ing been comfortably established a year ago, "Othello's occupation is gone;" and my purse being somewhat drained by the purchase of so many *trousseaux*, I have occupied my leisure, and, I trust, shall recruit my finances, by pourtraying characters and feelings which I believe are true to nature, although under circumstances and in situations not founded on fact.

THE SINGLE WOMAN

OR

A CERTAIN AGE.

THE SINGLE WOMAN

OF

A CERTAIN AGE.

CHAPTER I.

Duke.—And what 's her history?
Viola.—A blank, my lord.

WHY is it that the bustling matron, who (having, without preference or selection, married the first man who proposed to her,) has spent her days in the unsentimental details of a household, a nursery, and a school-room, merely considering her partner as the medium through which these several departments are provided for?—why is it that the languid beauty, who has sold herself to age or folly for an opera-box, an equipage, a title?—why is it that the scold, who has jangled

through a wedded life of broils and disputes—and the buxom widow, whose gay and blooming face gives the lie to her mourning garments?—why is it that they all cast a pitying glance of contempt on the "single woman of a certain age" who ventures an opinion on the subject of love? Why do they all look as if it were impossible she could ever have felt its influence?

On the contrary, the very fact of singleness affords in itself presumptive evidence of the power of some strong and unfortunate predilection. Few women pass through life without having had some opportunities of what is commonly called "settling;" therefore the chances are, that betrayed affections, an unrequited attachment, or an early prepossession, has called forth the sentiment of which they are supposed incapable—and called it forth, too, in a mind of too much delicacy to admit the idea of marriage from any other motive than that of love.

The following story, which is ushered into the world by so unattractive a title, might afford an example, that a life which appears

"a blank" in the history of events, may be far from "a blank" in the history of feelings.

By the death of her father, Lord T——, Isabella St. Clair found herself, at the age of nineteen, an orphan possessed of a considerable fortune, of great personal attractions, and of all the accomplishments which, in these days of education and refinement, are expected to grace young ladies of fashion. Her brother, the young Lord T——, was not of an age to serve as her protector, and accordingly she removed to the house of her uncle and guardian, Sir Edward Elmsley.

Sir Edward and Lady Elmsley were of that respectable class of English gentry who, by not attempting to move in a more elevated circle than that in which they are naturally placed, command the esteem and respect of those above, as well as of those below them. Their daughter Fanny, although of the same age as her cousin Isabella, had not yet been initiated into the pleasures and the pains of a London campaign.

Isabella, who had been accustomed to a life of excitement, was not sorry at the ex-

piration of her mourning for her father, to join in whatever gaiety was going forward, and to exercise once more the power of that beauty which, even in London, had attracted its full share of admiration.

In the country, where beauty, rank, fashion, fortune, and accomplishments are not so common, of course the brilliant Miss St. Clair was the star of every ball; and all the young men of any pretensions in the country, vied with each other in obtaining a word, a smile, a look from the lovely Isabella.

Nor did the charms with which she was really endowed lose any thing from want of skill in the possessor. She had the art of keeping an indefinite number of persons occupied with her alone; she had left her shawl in the next room, and, with a thousand graceful apologies, she asked one person to fetch it for her, at the same time holding her cup in a helpless manner, and casting a beseeching glance around her, which brought a hundred eager hands to set it down. Then she looked timidly confused at having given so much trouble. Presently she had a messsage to send

to her cousin Fanny, with which she despatched one admirer, while she hinted in a low voice to another, who was pressing her to stand up in the next quadrille, that she did not like to do so while Fanny was sitting still. The devoted youth flew to dance with Fanny, claiming as his reward the hand of Isabella for the ensuing waltz. She knew how to pique and to excite the vanity of each: to one she implied she had heard something of him which certainly had very much surprised her; to another that she understood he had been abusing her horridly; she playfully scolded a third for not admiring Fanny half as much as he ought, and wondered how he could be so blind. She assured a fourth that he and all the world had quite mistaken her disposition; indeed, that scarcely any one did understand her; implying there was depth of character and feeling beyond the reach of the multitude, and thereby piquing and interesting the sentimental youth to discover these hidden treasures.

Fanny, meanwhile, placid and contented, enjoyed what she met with that was agree-

able, without its ever crossing her imagination to feel envy or jealousy of her cousin. She was not mortified; for she saw her so beautiful, so brilliant, that all rivalry seemed out of the question. They were happy and affectionate with each other. Isabella, constitutionally gay, good-humoured, and joyous, was never crossed or thwarted by Fanny, and, although an acute observer might discover in her fondness for her cousin, a tone of superiority, a protecting kindness, Fanny so completely acquiesced in that superiority, that it never for a moment wounded her self-love.

About a year after Isabella's arrival at Elmsley Priory, the society of that neighbourhood received a very animating addition in the young Lord Delaford, who, soon after his return from his travels, established himself at his beautiful Castle of Fordborough. He joined to the most prepossessing appearance and manners, an excellent character, considerable talents, and extensive possessions. He paid a visit to Sir Edward Elmsley, and of course Isabella counted upon him as her de-

voted slave, and thought such a conquest was not to be neglected.

She was rather surprised that he handed the quiet Fanny to dinner, but she satisfactorily accounted for this circumstance by supposing he considered it a courtesy to which the young lady of the house was entitled. But when, in the course of the evening, he voluntarily seated himself by Fanny, and appeared interested by her conversation, she certainly was very much astonished, and not much pleased.

To Lord Delaford, who had lately come into the country, wearied and disgusted with the dissipation of Paris and the turmoil of London, the style, the vivacity, and even the beauty of Isabella, were too much what he had been in the habit of seeing every day to possess any peculiar attractions for him; while the calm brow, the placid air, the perfect innocence and unconsciousness of Fanny's manner, appeared to him as soothing and refreshing as the green trees and verdant meadows after the glare and confusion of the streets. In conversation he found her modest and well-informed; and he sought her society the next

day and the next. By degrees his manner assumed a tone of admiration, which, to a person accustomed as she was to be placed in the shade, had more than the usual effect attributed to admiration—that of enhancing the charms by which it was first excited.

Those who imagine they do not please, often neglect the means by which they might do so; whereas, if they once become aware that all they say and do finds favour in the sight of others, they are no longer ashamed of being charming or afraid to be agreeable.

People in general were astonished at the wonderful improvement in Fanny; but her mother remarked that, when Lord Delaford entered the room, her soft brown eyes shone with a lustrous consciousness; that if he addressed her, the colour mounted in her pale and delicate complexion; and she understood full well the cause of this improvement.

If Lord Delaford had been originally attracted by the unruffled placidity of her expression, he was infinitely more so by finding that his presence had the power of disturbing that placidity. Though he could not doubt

that he possessed many qualities which might make him an object of preference to young ladies, and every adventitious qualification to make him approved of by the old; though he must have known he had been sighed for by daughters, and sought by mammas; still he was not one of those men who are piqued by coldness, and inflamed by the difficulty of winning the object. On the contrary, there was a natural diffidence about him which made him vulnerable to the attentions of women, and easily daunted by any appearance of disinclination.

Fanny was too amiable and too humble ever to have felt jealous of her cousin, but she was not insensible to the pleasure of finding herself suddenly preferred by the one person whose favour all were desirous to gain. Every thing seemed to prosper to the utmost of her's or her parent's wishes. *Lord Delaford* became every day more serious in his attentions, and there appeared to be no reason why Fanny should not yield to the engrossing fascinations of a passion which, if felt for the first time at the age of twenty, combines with the

freshness of a first love, the depth and strength of which the more formed character is susceptible.

In the mean time Isabella no longer found the same gratification in the insipid crowd of common-place admirers, whose suffrages had before elated her. She felt, truly enough, of how much more value were the sincere esteem and affection of one true heart, than all the frivolous admiration of people she did not care for; all her former conquests lost their value in her eyes; she, for the first time, felt herself the forgotten and neglected one. Vanity, like ambition, only becomes the more insatiable by being fed, and, as the single Mordecai, who refused to bow before the pomp of Haman, embittered all the glories of his triumph, so the one person who was proof against her charms, outweighed in her estimation the herd who acknowledged their power.

She had too much tact, too much knowledge of the world, too much spirit, to allow these feelings to be visible to the eyes of common observers. Lord Delaford and Fanny were so completely occupied with each other that

they could not remark anything about Isabella; but Lady Elmsley, with maternal quick-sightedness, perceived her mortification, and with pride, which may perhaps be pardoned in a mother, could not help being pleased that, at length, her daughter's merits should be valued, as they deserved, above those of Isabella.

Occasionally Isabella caught a glance of triumph which escaped from the eyes of Lady Elmsley, and she resolved to let slip no opportunity of gaining the attention of Lord Delaford.

Mortification is but half felt while it is only felt in secret. It is not till we perceive it has been remarked by others, that it becomes one of the most painful sensations to which the weak, the vain, and the worldly, are liable, and one from which the most humble and pure minded can scarcely boast of being entirely free.

CHAPTER II.

Gerarda.—Que todo se aprende hija y no hai cosa mas facil que engañar a los hombres, de que ellos tienen la culpa ; porque como nos han privado el estudio de los ciencios en que pudieramos divertir nuestros ingenios sutiles, solo estudiamos una, que es la de engañarlos, y como no hay mas de un libro, todas lo sabemos de memoria.

Dorotea.—Nunca yo le he visto.

Gerarda.—Pues es excellente letura, y de famosos capitulos.

Dorotea.—Dime los titulos siquiera.

Gerarda.—De fingir amor al rico y no disgustar al pobre.
De desmayarse a su tiempo, y llorar sin causa.
De dar zelos al libre y al colerico satisfacciones.
De mirar dormido, y reir con donayre.
De estudiar vocablos y aprender bailes.

* * * * *

Y de no enamorarse por ningun acontecimiento, porquè todo se va perdido, sin otros muchos capitulos de mayor importancia.

LOPE DE VEGA.

ISABELLA had attentively studied the character of Lord Delaford, and she felt sure that if she could once get him within her

toils, she should be able to keep him there. She had discovered, that although too refined not to be disgusted by any open attempt to attract him, there was a considerable mixture of vanity and of humility in his composition; and she flattered herself she could work upon both these feelings.

She one day happened to sit next him at dinner, and contrived, with a tact for which she was peculiar, to turn the conversation upon himself. She said she never knew any one of whom she was so much afraid: to which he replied,

"That is very odd! I have always been reckoned a good-natured sort of fellow."

"Oh, yes!" she answered; "I am sure you are good-natured; but your very good-nature helps to frighten me. You are so unlike other people; and I feel so awed when you are present."

"Well, that is strange! I don't think I ever awed any body before. Do I look so cross?"

"Oh! it is not that; but you are so good;

and you always say just what you should say, and no more. I should be afraid to utter, or to do any thing foolish before you."

"Well, I should be as useful to you as Prince Cheri's ring in the fairy tale. It is a pity I am not always by your side!"

"Oh! but then I should always be in a fright; not that I mean it is a disagreeable sort of fright." And she turned the conversation, fearful of showing any design of attracting him.

In the evening, he, as usual, turned over the leaves of Fanny's music-book, while she was singing, or forgot to turn them over, while gazing with delight upon those melting, yet innocent eyes, which met his so kindly and so trustingly—eyes, that looked as if there lurked in the heart beneath, depths of unawakened and unexplored feelings, which only waited to be excited.

But when he was alone, the remarks of Isabella recurred to his recollection, and he wondered what in him could have struck her as being so singular and so reserved. The

next day, when they were riding, he found himself near her, and reverted to the conversation of the preceding day.

"I have been quite uneasy, Miss St. Clair, at finding I am so disagreeable as I must be, if I am the precise, formal, measured person, you describe me to be."

A certain step is gained, when, instead of starting a new and indifferent subject, the topic of the preceding conversation is resumed. Most coquettes know, by intuition, that the best mode of accomplishing this, is to talk to persons of themselves. Isabella's heart beat quicker, at finding how well she had succeeded in awakening his curiosity; but assuming a nonchalant manner, she answered,

"Disagreeable! Surely I never could have said any thing half so uncivil?"

"Oh, certainly you did not tell me in so many words that I was disagreeable; but you implied it."

"No, no! Indeed, I think I said every thing most flattering—that you were so very good."

"Well, I suppose if I am so very good,

I must not consider being good, and being disagreeable, as synonymous terms; and yet you made it appear yesterday as if they were?"

"Oh, Lord Delaford! how can you accuse me of saying any thing so shocking? I only declared you were so good, so superior, I was afraid of you."

"But a person who makes you fear him, must be disagreeable to you."

"No, indeed: I like to be awed. I am fond of an organ in a cathedral; and I admire lofty mountains, and beautiful stormy skies, and every thing that is grand and sublime in art and in nature! Could one bear to hear one's own feeble voice mingle itself with the pealing reverberations of the organ in the glorious pile of St. Peter's? And does one not feel one's own nothingness, when among the mountains, the torrents, the precipices, the peaks, the glaciers of the stupendous Alps? Yet surely these are pleasurable emotions! With me, at least, awe and pleasure are very compatible sensations."

As she spoke, her large and brilliant eye

glanced upwards for a moment, with an expression of lofty enthusiasm.

Lord Delaford gazed upon her, and mentally exclaimed, "That girl has a soul!" Presently, relaxing into a smile, as if ashamed of her own eagerness, she added, "I believe Doctor Spurzheim would discover in me the bump of veneration;" and putting her horse into a canter, the whole party became united together, and she addressed herself to some one else. Lord Delaford mechanically found himself by the side of Fanny, but it was some time before they became engaged in anything that deserved the name of conversation.

By degrees, however, the unobtrusive gentleness of Fanny had its usual effect upon him; and they discoursed calmly and agreeably, upon subjects of literature, or the immediate events of the neighbourhood. But that day there were none of those flattering turns of phrase, that deferential manner of listening, which, not appearing in the common-place form of compliment, have the effect of flattery, without putting one on one's guard against it.

Fanny returned from her ride less exhilarated than usual. She thought the wind was rather cold, and her beautiful, thorough-bred horse, not quite agreeable.

At dinner Lord Delaford sat between Isabella and herself, and his attention was, to say the least, divided between the cousins. Isabella was in high spirits. She was animated by the desire and the hope of pleasing. She caught an uneasy look from Lady Elmsley, and she could not suppress an emotion of gratified pique. She had too much the tone of good society ever to run the risk of being noisy; her flow of spirits only showed itself by being exceedingly droll and lively; and though perhaps she amused in some degree at the expense of the absent, her dancing dark eyes glanced with such brilliancy, such merriment, such a look of gay archness, that no one could suspect her of harbouring a feeling of ill-nature towards any one. Nor in truth did she harbour any such feeling. She only wished to amuse; and there are few people who have not occasionally been led by the intoxicating pleasure of causing a laugh, into ridiculing

persons towards whom they felt no ill-will. Lord Delaford was entertained, and laughed incessantly at her quaint ideas. He wondered why Fanny did not seem more to enjoy sallies which appeared to him so full of talent and of wit. He thought it argued a want of imagination, which disappointed him. Fanny meanwhile was depressed, she knew not why; but when she retired to rest, in the stillness of her chamber, she made a discovery as painful as it was humiliating.

Surprised to find herself so very serious, when others were so much amused, in doubt and trembling she looked into her own heart, and she found it to be nearly engrossed by one overwhelming passion. She had always intended to keep herself "fancy free" till she could devote her whole soul, her pure unhacknied affections, to one only object for ever. From the easy footing of society in a country-house, her intercourse with Lord Delaford had been free and unconstrained; his attentions, although constant, were not marked, and nothing had occurred to call her mind to the effect they were gradually, but surely, pro-

ducing. It was not till the fear came over her that he did not care for her, that she discovered she had ever believed in his preference; it was not till she felt how inexpressibly painful was that fear, that she discovered her affections were fixed on one only object for ever.

She was suddenly aroused from her fancied security, and found within the heart which she had imagined fresh and uncontaminated, love, — unrequited love, and jealousy, — jealousy of her dearest friend. She thought herself degraded. She was miserable. But she did not allow her mortification to swallow up all other feelings. Maidenly pride remained, and she determined he should never perceive the power she had allowed him to acquire over her.

Lord Delaford, on his part, reflected upon the increased attractions of Isabella, and upon the want of vivacity of Fanny. Though no coxcomb, he thought it possible Fanny might entertain for him feelings which, his conscience told him, would have been wounded by the unusual degree in which he had been occupied with Isabella. His good-natured heart smote

him at the idea of giving pain to so gentle and lovely a being, and he joined the breakfast-party the next morning full of kindness and interest for Fanny, flattered by the interpretation he had himself given to her coldness, and well prepared to return any indications of preference which he might perceive in her manner towards him.

Fanny had schooled her heart, and the more she was really agitated, the more was she resolved to wear a calm exterior; the more she knew there was a sentiment within her bosom which could not be confessed, the more was she resolved no human eye should discover it. She was aware that sudden coolness might be construed into pique, and she determined to be merely careless and indifferent. She did not remember that she might, by this means, lose what most she wished to gain. She did not calculate. The abstract idea that any woman should love any man better than he loved her—that any woman should be won un-wooed, roused her pride for the sex in general; and that she herself should be one of

these poor, weak, infatuated creatures, gave her a sense of humiliation against which her very soul rebelled.

Lord Delaford watched for some indications of the sentiments he had in his own mind attributed to her; but he found her as she intended to appear,—gay, careless, cold. He did not perceive any affectation in her gaiety, or any thing studied in her carelessness.

Lady Elmsley precisely read the state of her heart, and put the right construction upon the trifles which constitute encouragement or repulse, and which denote preference or indifference; but Lord Delaford was quite puzzled, and somewhat mortified.

It is said there is an instinct which teaches every one to read their fellow-creatures where love is concerned. This is true of all indifferent spectators, who can decipher emotions, often not acknowledged by the individuals to themselves. Not so the persons most interested. Sometimes they twist appearances to suit their hopes or fears. Sometimes, being aware that their judgment is likely to be prejudiced, they dare not trust to their natural impressions.

Lord Delaford watched the countenance, the eyes, the expression, the words of Fanny for a day or two, and he became each day more convinced his own self-conceit must have misled him. He had studiously avoided such attentions as might commit him, and he now took care to divide them equally between the two cousins. To Fanny, who had been accustomed to his exclusive devotion, this was a virtual withdrawal of them; and she set a more strict watch than ever over all her words and looks. Isabella, who was exhilarated at receiving half, when she had been accustomed to none, was *pétillante de graces*. The more Fanny was aware of Isabella's attractions, and the more she perceived that Lord Delaford became aware of them, so much the more she wrapped herself up in impenetrable, but good-humoured reserve. Her manner lost that confiding, innocent gaiety, which a short time before had been one of her greatest charms, without regaining the bashful ingenuousness, which had at first attracted him from its novelty. She laboured hard to appear calm, and unfortu-

nately succeeded but too well in her endeavours. Lord Delaford was half provoked with himself, for having been so ready to fancy he was irresistible; and half provoked with Fanny, for having given rise to his dissatisfaction with himself.

He was in this frame of mind, when an accident occurred, which confirmed him in his opinion of her coldness. He was mounted on a restive horse, which he alone had succeeded in subduing, and which he thought was so completely tamed, that he might venture to ride it with the ladies. Isabella admired a flower in the hedge, and he turned his horse round to gather it for her. The animal, who had proceeded quietly by the side of the others, did not like being separated from its companions; and rearing suddenly, fell backwards with its rider.

Isabella was close to him at the moment of the accident, and was naturally dreadfully frightened. He had contrived to slip off on one side, and was not hurt; but there was a moment, when horse and rider appeared as if they would be crushed together.

Fanny was some yards in advance, and only turned round in time to see him as he was getting up from the ground, and was therefore spared the first alarm. She was not a nervous, hysterical person; and although she turned pale, and trembled, she did not fall from her horse, or do any thing that attracted attention to herself. Isabella, really agitated, and really nervous, (as indulged and flattered people are very apt to be,) shrieked aloud, and burst into tears — real tears—for she affected nothing; she only gave way to what she felt, from the consciousness that she was charming, and that her emotions would not appear disagreeable and uninteresting.

She was lifted off her horse, in a fainting state. Lord Delaford was supporting her. Every one was busy about her. In the confusion her hat fell off, and all her ringlets were floating on the wind; her eyes were half closed; and the long lashes looked beautifully dark on her cheek, which was really pale. Fanny thought she never saw any one look so lovely! Lord Delaford watched her

revival with an expression of intense interest; and Fanny sat still on her horse, unnoticed and unregarded, with feelings of hardness and bitterness which never before had been the inmates of her gentle bosom. This protracted exhibition of sensibility appeared to her perfectly unnecessary; and she could not help thinking that Isabella might have recovered much sooner; that she might have twisted up her own hair, and tucked it under her hat, without any assistance from Lord Delaford; and that there was no occasion for several ringlets to be allowed to escape, and to stray over her face and shoulders.

Such were her thoughts when the party remounted, and proceeded homewards; and she "hoped Lord Delaford was not the least hurt," in a guarded, constrained, and scarcely soft voice, which grated on his ear, after the languid accents of the fainting Isabella. He turned away from Fanny, and devoted himself entirely to her cousin, whose interest in his safety gave her a sort of right to his care and solicitude.

As soon as they reached home, Fanny

rushed to her room, and there paced the apartment in an agony of mind which frightened herself. She envied Isabella the interest she had excited, while she felt she would rather have died than have betrayed such emotion: yet she was angry with herself for having appeared cold and unfeeling. Presently she heard footsteps approaching her door; and hastily composing her looks, she seized a book, and appeared buried in its contents. It was Lady Elmsley, who came to tell her there was some company expected at dinner. She longed to open her heart to her mother, who, she was sure, by the increased tenderness of her manner, had read the state of her feelings: but Lady Elmsley never sought or encouraged confidence upon the subject. She saw that Isabella had superseded her Fanny in Lord Delaford's heart, and that her child's hopes were blighted; she knew that an acknowledged preference was far more difficult to eradicate than one which had never been confessed; that pride, and constancy, and consistency, had induced many a girl to persevere in a devotion, which, if it

had never been avowed, would have died away; and she judged of Fanny by the rest of the world.

The end of this day passed off as many succeeding ones did—in sad and bitter calmness on the part of Fanny—in flattered vanity and growing love on the part of Isabella—in gratitude, admiration, amusement, and pique, which were fast ripening into love, on the part of Lord Delaford.

CHAPTER III.

Though Marian's frolic mirth so gay
  The sultry hay-field cheer,
Say, when the short, cold, sunless day
  Shall close the parting year,

Will her gay smile then beam as bright,
  And beam for only thee?
Will winter's toils to her seem light
  As they had seem'd to me?

Say, will she trim thy evening hearth?
  Duteous thy meal prepare?
Nor know, nor dream, a bliss on earth,
  Save but to see thee there?

Unpublished Poems.

At length the decisive moment came; Lord Delaford made his proposals to Isabella, and was accepted. Isabella herself, in all the flush and agitation of the event which decided her fate for life, came to Fanny's room and told her what had happened,—not to triumph over

her. No: she had of late been so completely occupied by her own feelings, that she had almost forgotten those she had suspected in Fanny, and she came simply in the fulness of her heart, to give vent to all the mingled emotions which every woman must experience on such an occasion. Fanny had for some time prepared herself for this termination to all her hopes and fears; yet when the fact was certain, when she heard it with her own ears, it came upon her like a thunderbolt. She turned deadly pale; she thought that she was going to faint; but the recollection that she should be committed, not only to her successful rival, but through her to Lord Delaford himself, again restored her self-possession, and after a momentary struggle, which, thanks to the dim light of the embers over which they were sitting, and to the engrossing nature of Isabella's own thoughts, escaped observation, she was able to say, "God grant you may both be as happy as from the bottom of my heart I wish you both to be!"

She spoke with earnestness and solemnity; and Isabella gazed on her for a moment with

surprise. The tone was not exactly that in which young ladies usually converse upon such subjects, and Isabella's former suspicions flashed across her mind. But she looked at Fanny's tearless eyes, and satisfied herself that it was only "Fanny's way. Her cousin always had a more serious turn of mind than most girls."

Perhaps she was as willing not to see, as Fanny was anxious to conceal, the true state of the case; for though her thirst of admiration might lead her to do that which was most painful to another, she was not more unfeeling than a coquette must necessarily be. Moreover, prosperous love opens and softens the heart, and for the time at least produces an amiable disposition of mind. Though consideration for Fanny could not have prevented her attempting to gain Lord Delaford, yet now that she had succeeded in her object, it would have been exceedingly distressing to her to know the pangs under which her gentle cousin was at this moment writhing.

The half-hour bell rang. Isabella hurried away, and Fanny was left alone with her

dreary, desolate, mortified, crushed, hopeless heart.

At dinner the engaged couple did not sit next each other. As there were strangers among the company, Lord Delaford thought it more delicate towards Isabella not to bring observation upon her. As a safe person he offered his arm to Fanny, and consequently sat next to her. Totally unsuspicious of her preference, and feeling on the contrary that her coldness had nipped in the bud the affection he had at first been inclined to entertain for her, he spoke to her of his happiness with the frankness of a friend. He expatiated on the perfections of Isabella, on the beautiful union of liveliness and of gaiety with that depth of feeling, which, though people in general might not suspect it, formed the true basis of her character.

Lovers always invest the object of their love with such merits as they have settled in their own minds to be indispensable qualifications.

There is also something particularly fascinating in the idea that one has discovered

hidden treasures of mind that have escaped the observation of the common herd.

Every word that Lord Delaford uttered was a several infliction on Fanny. All he said of Isabella's liveliness and gaiety she felt was an unflattering contrast to what her manner, of late at least, had been. All he said of Isabella's sensibility she knew to be far from true; and she, who was wrestling with a thousand conflicting feelings, was treated by implication, as a calm, cold, philosophical automaton, by the very person who was torturing them almost past endurance. Every word that he spoke of hope and happiness, was answered by an internal groan of hopelessness and misery.

But her countenance was unchanged; and her eyes, which were habitually downcast, only remained the more firmly riveted to the table-cloth, for fear they should allow any of the emotions that were working within, to shine through them.

When the ladies retired, the mammas congratulated Lady Elmsley in audible whispers upon the brilliant prospects which they per-

ceived were opening before her daughter, and the daughters looked arch when they asked Fanny what sort of a person their new neighbour Lord Delaford was.

The fire and earnestness of his manner at dinner, and the downcast reserve of Fanny's, coupled with the reports which had previously been abroad, in consequence of Lord Delaford's frequent and protracted visits to Elmsley Priory, had been misconstrued by them all, and they fancied the case so clear, that it was fair to congratulate and to quiz.

In vain Fanny repelled all their insinuations with something approaching annoyance and peevishness. Isabella cast a meaning glance of amusement, and of mutual understanding, which only confirmed the young ladies in their preconceived notion; and when the gentlemen came into the room, they contrived to leave a place vacant by Fanny, while they crowded round Isabella at the piano forte, to look at a new song, and be rapturous over a new *galop*. Lord Delaford, who thought he had done his duty in avoiding Isabella at dinner, was only intent upon gaining a place

next her, and did not even perceive Fanny, who had been detained from joining the young set by an old lady, who was very particular in ascertaining the stitch of Fanny's work. By the time Fanny had completely explained the mysteries of the stitch, Lord Delaford was among the youthful party, and she then felt it utterly impossible to get up, and to walk across the room to that side of it where he was.

She saw Lord Delaford's devoted manner to Isabella; she felt herself deserted! She knew by intuition, that all the people who had just been complimenting, congratulating, and quizzing, were in the act of becoming aware that she was not the object of his attention, that she was not the attraction to Elmsley Priory.

Such trifles as these, when the blighted prospects of a life are in question, seem to an observer, and to the person concerned, when once they are past, as not deserving of a thought, yet, at the moment, they add not a little to the bitter feelings of an already crushed spirit. Singing became the order of the evening, and Fanny was of course called

upon. She had had time to reflect upon her present position, and also to resolve it should ever remain unknown to others; she roused all her energies, and the unusual excitement brought colour into her cheeks and animation into her eyes. There were other gentlemen in the room, and they were enthusiastic in their admiration of the power, sweetness, pathos of Miss Elmsley's voice. But what were these praises to her? They fell cold and sickening on her heart; Lord Delaford had been in low and earnest conversation with Isabella in the embrasure of the window, and scarcely knew that she had been singing. When the music was over, however, they left their retirement, and both were struck with the fire, the gleam of worked-up resolution in Fanny's eyes; and Lord Delaford whispered to Isabella, "How brilliant your cousin looks to-night!" These few words made her heart beat with a joy at which she was herself shocked; and when she retired for the night, she looked courageously into her own feelings, and severely reproved herself for having felt plea-

sure in exciting a look of admiration in the betrothed of her cousin. She determined no longer to give way to sad retrospection — to dwell no more on blighted hopes, but to further, as far as in her lay, their future prospects of happiness. She knew Isabella's character thoroughly, and could not but be aware there were many points in it which were not calculated to make a happy *ménage*. Love of admiration, a consciousness of power, and a delight in exercising that power, were among the most conspicuous. She also thought Lord Delaford was a man likely to be much influenced by those he loved, and lived with — and she resolved, if possible, to lead Isabella's mind towards using her influence over him for none but good purposes.

She came down to breakfast the next morning placid, and even cheerful. Isabella, whose mind had been quite relieved from the lurking apprehension of having cut out her gentle and unpresuming cousin, by the brilliancy and animation of Fanny the preceding evening, and had settled that she could not care about

Lord Delaford, as she was so evidently elated by the admiration of the other gentlemen, was completely confirmed in this notion by her cheerfulness at breakfast, and by the manner in which she opened the conversation upon Isabella's marriage when they were alone.

In vain did Fanny try to inspire her with the same notions of devotion and self-sacrifice which she herself entertained. Isabella was in love with Lord Delaford — that is to say, she preferred him to all others, and exceedingly liked his love of her; but as for considering his happiness, his pleasure, his advantage, his interests, before her own, the idea seemed to her an idle romantic dream.

Weeks elapsed, and the settlements were arranged; the wedding clothes prepared.

Lord Delaford had returned, after a fortnight's absence, for the few days preceding the marriage, which was to take place in the village church of Elmsley Priory. Fanny was glad that the ceremony was to be performed in the church, for she thought that the solemnity of the scene, and the holiness of the place, would more completely eradicate

from her bosom the feelings which she feared were rather smothered, than destroyed.

It was, indeed, a day of trial, almost beyond the strength of even her chastened spirit to endure, without betraying the struggle. She was bridesmaid, and she had to stand unmoved during the whole of a ceremony which, to the least interested, is touching and affecting. She heard him utter the solemn vow which separated him for ever from her – she saw their plighted hands—she heard the priest's benediction on the youthful couple as they knelt before him. She did not shed a tear, she scarcely trembled, when Isabella, half-fainting, leaned on her for support. She sustained her graceful bending form, she whispered her words of encouragement, till, at the close, the bridegroom proudly led his wedded wife from the altar.

They returned to Elmsley Priory that the bride might change her dress; Fanny, of course, assisted her friend to take off the wedding garments, the Brussells lace veil, the orange flowers, &c. which were to be replaced by a more quiet travelling costume, and ac-

companied her to the room in which breakfast was prepared, and the intimate friends and relations, who had been collected for the occasion, were assembled.

Isabella flushed, agitated, happy, blushing, looked all one could wish a lovely bride to look. Fanny was calm, deadly calm.

At length the travelling carriage came to the door; the packages were all arranged, the servants were on the box, and Lord and Lady Delaford took leave of the family party. The parting kiss went round—Lord Delaford, as one of the family, dutifully embraced his new uncle, his new aunt, his new relations. Fanny saw her turn would come, and she thought she could bear any coldness rather than this kindness; she felt her heart beat as he drew near the side of the room where she stood, she was almost inclined to slip away; but pride got the better; she resolved to do nothing that could look like emotion, or might possibly attract attention, and she stood her ground. When he took her hand and approached his lips to her cheek, she felt a cold shudder run through her, and she

became, if possible, paler than before. He scarcely touched her cheek; she looked so coldly, purely immovable that he instinctively durst not give to her the kindly kiss which, in the joy and warmth of his heart, he had given to the elder branches of his new family.

They hurried through the hall, and, in a moment, the sound of their carriage-wheels was heard rolling by the windows. All rushed to take a last look at them, and Fanny remained, as it were, petrified, fixed on the spot where she had parted from him.

All the visions of her days of hope crowded on her memory; every sign of affection, every flattering attention he had ever shown her, appeared at one and the same moment present to her mind—all that had subsequently passed seemed like a dream; she felt for an instant as if she had been robbed of her betrothed; she had to rouse herself and to look round at the signs of the wedding feast, the cake, the ices, the fruits, and to assure herself of the sad reality. Fortunately, before the attention of the guests was withdrawn from the window, she had recovered her self-possession, had

sent back all the feelings which she now considered as positively criminal, back to the depths of her heart, till she had leisure to drag them forth once more to the light, to examine into them, and to expel them resolutely from their fastnesses.

Her head bewildered with all the thoughts she would not think, and all the feelings she would not feel, she mixed among the guests, and was again the kind, the gentle, the well-bred Fanny, attentive to the wants and wishes of every one; and although she did once help a good old aunt to jelly, when she asked for chicken, and gave ice to a cousin, who wanted champagne—though she did put a black satin cloak on the shoulders of a worthy old clergyman who was taking his leave, still, in the confusion, these inadvertences escaped all remark, and the only observation made was, that Fanny was a sweet, amiable creature, but she had not much feeling—they never saw a girl so unmoved during the ceremony, which generally made people cry, and she did not show any sorrow at parting from her charm-

ing friend and cousin, who must be such a loss to her.

"Well," added a maiden friend, "there's no use in such a deal of sensibility. Fanny has just enough — enough to make her amiable and kind, and not enough to make her unhappy."

There was one heart which had read poor Fanny's — one person who had watched her during the few moments when she had stood transfixed — who had remarked the trifling mistakes she had made in her civilities; and a keen observer might have read Fanny's secret by the devoted attention which her mother showed her; if he had not already discovered it by the coldness with which Lady Elmsley returned the affectionate embrace of the bride and bridegroom. Time does not stand still, though it sometimes moves but slowly, and at length the company dispersed.

The pieces of bride-cake were all directed by Fanny, till her hand was weary of writing "With Lord and Lady Delaford's com-

pliments," or "love," or "kind regards," according as the degree of intimacy might require.

The dinner succeeded, a large family dinner, very formal, consisting of the Dowager Lady Delaford, an old Admiral, uncle to Lord Delaford, — his wife, and a very missish daughter, who thought it odd her cousin should have overlooked her charms when he was thinking of a wife;—Lord T——, the bride's brother, a youth at college, — two schoolboys, Fanny's brothers, — the clergyman who performed the ceremony, who had been Lord Delaford's tutor, and was a total stranger to the inhabitants of Elmsley Priory,—and the lawyer, an old friend of the family, whose eternal flow of prosy anecdotes concerning people whom no one knew by name, proved, for the first time, invaluable—they prevented the clatter of knives and forks, and the creeking of footmen's shoes, from falling so sharp on the ear as they would have done, if they had had no accompaniment except the low, gentle voice of Fanny, who was imparting to the worthy clergyman all the details he wished to

know concerning the charity-school in the village. When the cloth was removed, the health of the bride and bridegroom was drunk, and the garrulous old lawyer, who had not forgotten in his quirks and quibbles his original taste for beauty, expatiated, till the tears stood in his pale glassy eyes, upon the virtues, the discretion, the gentleness of the bride, all which hidden qualities had been made manifest to him by the rosy lips, the blooming cheeks, the dark eyebrows, the white forehead, the glossy ringlets which had dazzled his eyes the preceding evening when she had signed the settlements. Inspired by the subject, warmed by the generous wine, the happy lawyer, directing his eyes across the table to Fanny, begged leave to propose another toast — that before six months were over, he might again find himself at Sir Edward's hospitable board on as pleasing an errand; and he hoped the bridegroom might be just like Lord Delaford—he could not wish his young hostess a more charming husband! All eyes turned to Fanny—her brothers, with a loud "Ha! ha! Fanny!—catch your fish, Fanny!"—Miss Melfort, the

admiral's daughter, with a suppressed giggle; and Lady Elmsley with a face full of anxiety and fear lest her child might betray herself. Fanny, who had never deviated from the calm and collected manner she had resolved to maintain throughout the whole of this trying day, upon finding herself suddenly the object of remark, felt the colour rush over her forehead, her neck, her arms; she scarcely knew what they were wishing her; she thought he was wishing her married to Lord Delaford. Everything became confused — her eyes grew dim; when Lady Elmsley, pretending that she was overcome by the heat, made the signal for departure, and the ladies left the dining-room. Fanny's trials were not yet over: Miss Melfort, naturally curious upon such subjects, wished to hear all about the whole affair—how it began—how long they had suspected it — whether he fell in love at first sight — whether he or she was most in love—whether he proposed for her to Sir Edward, or whether he spoke first to Isabella herself; and then, as she was dying that Fanny should wonder how he could have been insensible

to her attractions, she began to wonder how it was, that he should have preferred Miss St. Clair, to Fanny; that, for her part, she did not admire such tall people, nor did she admire such very long ringlets. She was little herself, and her hair was exceedingly *crépé*.

There is an end to all things: at length the wine and water came, and every one retired to rest, and Fanny found herself alone in her own room, and she sat down to indulge in all the luxury of grief. Yes, there is "a joy in grief:"—she revelled in letting her tears flow, and her sobs succeeded one another without interruption, till, exhausted and spent with weeping, she fell asleep the moment she laid her head on the pillow, and never woke till morning.

She was not a person whose eyes betrayed that she had been weeping; and she went down to breakfast, with no outward traces of all she had suffered, but inwardly feeling guilty in having allowed herself to shed such bitter tears for the husband of another. They were, however, to be the last. She saw

that her mother read her heart, and
grieved, and she would not throw a glo
over the declining years of the parent
adored, and whose health, always delica
had of late become more so. She stifled
vain repinings; she was cheerful, and
of occupation. Her hand did shake wh
she opened her first letter from Lady De
ford, and her heart sickened when she sa
her signature for the first time; and it too
a long time to write her first answer, and
perhaps, when finished, it was somewha
measured and cold; but all such letters are
more or less constrained, and Fanny was not
démonstrative, and it all passed off very well.

Lord and Lady Delaford went abroad soon after their marriage, and she was not put to the trial of a meeting.

CHAPTER IV.

Surtout les femmes nourries dans la mollesse l'abondance et l'oisiveté, sont indolentes et dédaigneuses pour tout ce détail. Elles ne font pas grande difference entre la vie champêtre et celle des sauvages de Canada: si vous leur parlez de bled, de cultures de terres, de differentes natures de revenus, de la levée de rentes, et des autres droits seigneuriaux, de la meilleure manière de faire des fermes ou d'établir des receveurs, elles croyent que vous voulez les réduire à des occupations indignes d'elles. Ce n'est pourtant que par ignorance qu'on méprise cette science de l'économie.

FENELON.

POOR Fanny's thoughts were soon called off to real and actual sorrow, in which all other griefs were absorbed; and she almost wondered how she ever could have felt so much about any thing that did not concern her mother. Lady Elmsley's health declined rapidly; and the whole family repaired to Clifton, in hopes that she might derive bene-

fit from the springs. In vain! Fanny
doomed to endure that sorrow, to which,
being in the due course of nature, some
the mind reconciles itself with more calmn
than to many others. But notwithstand
all the arguments of cool philosophy, the l
of a parent is one of the most acute a
lasting griefs to which human nature is liab
It often befals the young, and the prosperou
and coming upon them in the midst of healt
strength, and happiness, finds their minds un
prepared and unchastened by any previou
suffering. Moreover, it is a loss, absolutely
irremediable, which, though time may soften,
can in no length of time, ever, ever be replaced.

During the whole of her mother's illness, Fanny was so occupied in her anxious attendance upon her, that every other thought was banished from her mind. When Lady Elmsley once, and once only, alluded to the state of Fanny's affections, and spoke favourably of an amiable young man, of excellent connexions, and fair prospects, whose attentions had been unequivocal, she was able to assure

her mother, with truth, "That although Mr. Lisford had not succeeded in making himself agreeable to her, all prepossession for another was quite over."

It is vain to dwell on the melancholy details of gradual decay. Suffice it to say, that Fanny watched, with agonized feelings, the last moments of a beloved parent; and only conquered her own emotions, to alleviate those of her father.

After the funeral, they returned to their desolate home. Their hearts sank within them as they drove along the well-known avenue, which led straight to the front of the house, on which the hatchment met their eyes, for the last half-mile of their approach.

Fanny supported her father into the drawing-room, where every object which met their eyes was but a renewal of grief. The easy chair, with cushions of every shape, to procure ease to a frame wearied and worn out—the invalid sofa table, the footstool, just where Lady Elmsley had last used it—the portable book-case, containing her favourite authors, stood on the table as usual—the large basket

of carpet-work, which was deemed too cumbrous to be taken to Clifton—the glass vase, which Fanny always kept replenished with the choicest flowers, and which the gardener had now filled with care, that the room might look cheerful, and which the housemaid had placed on the accustomed spot, all combined to make their return more painful, if possible, than they had anticipated.

The next morning, when, before her father left his room, Fanny altered the disposition of the furniture, and removed the things which so forcibly reminded them of her for whom they mourned, she felt it almost a sacrilegious act to touch them.

Time, however, rolled on, and Sir Edward became calm and resigned; but Fanny's spirits did not rally. She had fervently loved her mother; she missed her in every occupation, in every duty, in every amusement. Strange to say, her thoughts, which during her mother's illness had been so completely weaned from the subject of her own disappointment, in her present quiet and solitude would revert to former scenes.

She did not recur to the happy days of delusion, when she believed herself the object of Lord Delaford's preference; she felt that would have been a sin: but she fancied that by dwelling only on recollections, in which the images of Lord Delaford and of Isabella were blended together, she was accustoming herself to the idea of their union, and preparing her mind for seeing them, as man and wife, when, on their return from the Continent, they were to pay their promised visit to the Priory. She forgot that,

> "En songeant qu'il faut l'oublier,
> Elle s'en souvient."

As she wandered about her lonely flower-garden, she at one time remembered how Lord Delaford had gathered some of the beautiful double dahlias, and had called Isabella's attention to the rich blending of their various hues; how Isabella had laughingly twisted them into her hair: and how surpassingly beautiful she had looked when bending over the marble basin, (she had used it, as nymphs of old, for her looking-glass,) while the evening sun just tipped her dark brown curls with

a golden hue, and tinged her downy mantling cheek with a more mellow bloom. Fanny could almost fancy she again saw the eyes of rapturous admiration with which he watched her graceful action.

At another time, if she were training the straggling honeysuckles over the treillage, she recollected how her hopes had received their death-blow, when, on entering the drawing-room before dinner, she found Lord Delaford and Isabella in their morning dress, still occupied in reducing the unruly tendrils to obedience; and how Isabella blushed to find it so late, and Lord Delaford insisted it must be Fanny who had mistaken the hour. In recollecting these circumstances, she again experienced the same painful feelings of mortification and despondency; she did not thus acquire forgetfulness, or indifference.

After an absence of about a year, Lord and Lady Delaford announced their return to England, and their intention of finding themselves very shortly at the Priory. Fanny believed herself rejoiced at the intelligence, and began setting every thing in order for their arrival.

She was agitated when they actually came, but at that moment the recollection of her mother, and of the sad change that had taken place in her home, was uppermost in her mind, and almost all the tears she shed, were from a pure and holy source.

Isabella was truly sorry for the loss of her aunt: Lord Delaford was all kindness, although the sort of restraint which exists between the dearest and most intimate friends, when they meet after any severe misfortune, prevented their at first deriving much pleasure from each other's society. The persons least interested do not feel sure how far they may venture to allude to the sad event, how far they may venture to be cheerful, and their fear of not exactly falling in with the tone of feeling of the mourners, imparts to their manner a want of ease which is infectious, and prevents a free and unconstrained flow of confidence.

This, however, did not last long. Fanny soon poured forth into Isabella's ear every melancholy detail of the last moments of her beloved parent, and found her heart warm to-

wards the person to whom she could dwell upon the subject.

When nothing occurred to call forth her love of admiration, her love of power, or her love of the world, her naturally good heart, and her constitutional good temper, rendered Isabella as loveable as she was lovely. Her faults had been fostered by her early education, while her good qualities had not been cultivated.

Since her marriage, the devotion of her husband had rendered her fully aware of her unbounded influence over him; while at the same time, the society with which she had mixed on the Continent, and the unsettled life of travellers, had been peculiarly unfavourable to the acquirement of domestic habits.

When Fanny, in return, inquired into the manner which Isabella had passed her time abroad, preparing her mind for a picture of conjugal bliss, and resolving to rejoice in the happiness of two people for whom she felt so sincere a friendship, her feelings were put to a very different trial from that which she an-

ticipated. All Isabella's descriptions were of the gay parties at Florence; the delightful riding parties from Rome; the agreeable Dukes, and Princes, and Cardinals, and Monsignores, they had met with: the brilliant fancy balls, the entertaining masquerades, the gorgeous fêtes, the select soirées, the exclusive *petits soupers*, and Fanny wondered that Lord Delaford should be grown so fond of dissipation. Yet she remarked that when he spoke of foreign scenes, he seldom dwelt on those which alone had formed the subject of Isabella's descriptions. He frequently spoke of home and of rural occupations as delightful, and conversed with Sir Edward on the state of the agricultural interest, and that of the poor. On such occasions Isabella would laughingly interrupt him, and beg the gentlemen to be more gallant, and not to discuss subjects which could be of no possible interest to them. Fanny, who had been accustomed to consider attention to the humbler classes as one of the duties of the rich, could not help one day saying to her, when the gentlemen left the room,

"But, don't you think, Isabella, it is rather

interesting to us, who live in the country, to learn how one may do good, and not run the risk of doing mischief, when one wishes to be useful to one's fellow creatures?"

"But my dear, you don't imagine I am going to be buried in the country all my life, enacting the part of a Lady Bountiful at Fordborough Castle. I have no objection to supplying the money, but, as to staying to distribute it, I leave that to the clergyman's wife, whose business it is to attend to that kind of thing."

"But Lord Delaford is so fond of the country, and he always talks of what he means to do at his own place. Depend upon it he means to live in the country a great part of the year; I have heard him say he thought it right."

"Oh, yes! You know it is never worth while to argue a point. I hold it out of the question for a man and wife to dispute; but I have not the least idea of letting him put these golden age, romantic notions in practice. Not that I have the least objection to the country at Christmas, or at Easter, or occa-

sionally in the autumn, in a reasonable way; but, as for taking up my abode at Fordborough Castle, I shall not do it."

"But every thing is prepared for you now. He has had the drawing-room and saloon new furnished, and your own boudoir is made lovely!"

"Oh, you know it could not be left as it was in my good mother-in-law's time, with straight-backed chairs, and pembroke tables; but I shan't live there, you will see if I do."

"But, Isabella, I am convinced Lord Delaford wishes it."

"Oh! he fancies it would be vastly agreeable; but, in fact, he would be moped to death there, and so should I."

"Well, I don't understand being moped to death with a husband one loves," and she felt a slight blush rise to her cheek, which she attributed to the little rebuke implied in her answer; and she added half-smiling, "you know, you do like him very much, Isabella!"

"*Like* him! to be sure I do. He is the best creature in the world, and after all, nobody looks so like a gentleman. He was

generally the best-looking man in the room, except Count Pfaffenstoffen, and he was so foolish that one was ashamed to be seen talking to him, though one endured his conversation for the sake of his waltzing. He is the most becoming waltzer! He is just the right height, and he does not bend too forward, nor too far back, and he holds his arm just right. What a pity it is he should be so silly!"

Soon after this conversation Lord and Lady Delaford went to their own place, where they established themselves very comfortably. Fanny spent a day with them. She began to flatter herself that Isabella's worldly notions were only to be found in her conversation, and not in her actions. She left her, very busy, and apparently happy, in making discoveries of curious old China, and arranging it in the drawing-room. While these, and similar occupations lasted, she was amused and contented, and her husband was delighted to see her, as he thought, acquiring a taste for the country.

One short week afterwards, Fanny received a note from her, written as she was setting off for London, to meet her dear friend Lady B——, who was only in town for a few days, in her way from Paris to Ireland.

She soon again heard from her, that she was very unwell, and that Doctor S—— had ordered her warm sea-baths, and that she was, therefore, obliged to go to Brighton.

There they remained till Christmas, when they returned to Fordborough Castle, and brought with them a large party of friends. Fanny was to join them, at the particular wish of Sir Edward, who lamented that she did not regain her natural spirits.

She found Lord Delaford looking harassed and oppressed. His company was not of his own choosing, and wearied him. Of his wife he saw but little, and he had no time for his own occupations.

One day he had to do the honours of the place to a party of particular friends, for whom he did not care a straw; another, to provide shooting for a set of young men, who thought

it a very bad day's sport if the birds did not get up as fast as two *gardes de chasse* could load their guns.

There is nothing more agreeable than the exercise of hospitality towards those whom you like, and who like you in return; but when every point in which the accommodation and luxuries of your house fall short of those at such a hall or such a castle,—where every amusement you may be able to provide, merely provokes a comparison between the sport Lord so and so, and the Duke of so and so, gives his friends, the delightful and poetical rites of hospitality become a tiresome tax upon the time and patience of the luckless possessor of an ancient mansion and an extensive domain.

This fashionable, but most unsatisfactory, party dispersed, and Lord and Lady Delaford were on the point of going to town for the meeting of Parliament, when they obtained a promise from Sir Edward that Fanny should pay them a visit in London after Easter. To do Isabella justice, she felt real affection for Fanny, and sincerely regretted seeing her so

joyless, and conscientiously believed that the pleasures of London would prove a balm for every sorrow.

Fanny was unwilling to leave her father, and had a vague dread of being so entirely domesticated under Lord Delaford's roof. Had her mother been still living, she would have interfered to prevent her child's feelings and principles being put to so unusual, and so needless a trial; she would have taken care that the peace of mind she had striven so hard to regain should run no risk of being disturbed; but Sir Edward would not hear of her dutiful regrets at leaving him; and if she harboured any other thought in her mind, it was one which could not be hinted at,—one she scarcely dared own to her secret soul, without implying a mistrust of herself.

To London, therefore, she went. She found Lady Delaford in the full vortex of dissipation. She possessed beauty, rank, talents, and riches. Many women who might boast of these advantages, are not the fashion. But Lady Delaford added to them all, the wish, and the determination to be a leading person

in society. What wonder, then, if she instantly accomplished her object, when, without any of the qualifications before enumerated, it is often attained by simple, strong volition.

CHAPTER V.

Nae mair of that, dear Jenny: to be free,
There 's some men constanter in love than we.
They 'll reason caumly, and with kindness smile,
When our short passions wad our peace beguile:
Sae, whensoe'er they slight their maiks at hame,
'Tis ten to ane their wives are maist to blame.

GENTLE SHEPHERD.

LORD DELAFORD, though considerably occupied with politics, was not entirely engrossed by them, and he wished extremely for the quiet enjoyment of domestic life. When he returned from the House, he would fain have been greeted by his wife, or at least he would have been glad to know where he might join her; but among the many engagements for each night, he did not know where to find her; and after having once or twice followed

her through the whole list of parties, he gave up the point, and went to bed, jaded and out of spirits.

She seldom came down-stairs till so late, that he had long breakfasted, and was on the point of going out to some committee. Sometimes, being free from business, he determined to remain at home, and to devote the morning to the society of his young and lovely wife. On these occasions he usually found her so beset till two o'clock by her maid, by milliners, by tradesmen, by innumerable notes to answer, and arrangements to make, that she could only answer him with an absent air, her thoughts evidently intent on the organizing of some plan of amusement for that or the ensuing day. After two o'clock, her drawing-room was of course crowded with dandies whipping their boots—with sage politicians, a race who peculiarly enjoy the *délassement* of a pretty woman's society,—and with litterati, a tribe who are very apt to find peculiar gratification from the favourable suffrage of the lovely and titled, though upon the most dry and abstruse work, into which

the fair critic had never looked, and which, if she had looked into it, she could not possibly have understood. This select crowd (for none but the most distinguished of each genus was admitted) did not disperse till the carriage had been long announced, and the hour of some appointment was long past, when hurrying away from the admiring throng, she drove from her own door without having given a moment of her attention to her husband.

Lord Delaford's anticipated morning of conjugal felicity generally ended in his seizing his hat and stick, and marching forth at a quick pace, and in no very enviable frame of mind.

Fanny was at first bewildered by this mode of life, but she accompanied her friend through the whole routine, till she found that neither her spirits nor her health could stand such constant wear and tear: she was obliged occasionally to remain at home, while Isabella continued her giddy round of pleasures; and she could not avoid perceiving that Lord Delaford was a man formed for all the charities of life, and that Isabella was

throwing away happiness such as seldom falls to the lot of woman.

The gradual decline of wedded happiness is a melancholy subject of contemplation to the most indifferent bystander; how much more so to one deeply interested in the welfare of both parties! She felt justified in her dejection. Perhaps, if she had witnessed the unrestrained flow of confidence, the fulness of mutual devotion, she might not have found the sight so exhilarating as she sincerely believed it would have been. However that might be, re-assured by her sorrow at not seeing her wishes for their happiness fulfilled—that her joy, if they were fulfilled, would be as great, she reposed in fancied security that the interest she took in his welfare was that of simple friendship, and she did not think it necessary to avoid him if he found her alone in the drawing-room, where he in vain sought the wife of whom he was still deeply enamoured.

He would sometimes sigh to find her still absent, and would occasionally express his desire of a more domestic life: he even con-

fessed feelings of discontent and dissatisfaction — he wished his wife would give him more of her society—he wished her disposition was more like Fanny's.

These words fell on her ear with a sensation she scarcely knew how to define. Was it pleasure?—was it pain?

It is a dangerous situation for any young woman to be the confidante of any young man's sorrows especially if they proceed from blighted affections and deceived hopes; but to Fanny, how tenfold dangerous!

The world is scarcely sufficiently indulgent to those who are deprived of the tender vigilance of a mother; nor are the young who enjoy such a blessing sufficiently thankful for possessing it. Had Lady Elmsley lived, Fanny would never have been placed in the position of confidante to the domestic sorrows of the man who had won her young affections, as the lover approved of and courted by her parents. Was it in nature that she should not think, "If I had been his choice, the happiness of which he so feelingly deplores the loss, might then

'Have blest his home, and crown'd our wedded loves.'"

Another circumstance occurred, which roused her from the security into which she had lulled herself.

Among the multitudes of young men who frequented Lady Delaford's house, some were sensible to the unpresuming charms of Fanny, and especially Lord John Ashville became seriously attached to her. There was no possible objection to him, and Isabella flattered herself she should have the pleasure of announcing to Sir Edward that, under her auspices, Fanny had made a brilliant match. Both she and Lord Delaford were astonished when he was rejected, and Fanny herself was grieved to find she could not love him, as she thought it her bounden duty to love the person to whom she should swear eternal constancy. She would have been glad to prove to herself that former impressions were completely obliterated, but she could not succeed in persuading herself that she preferred him to all others.

Nothing is more common than that a person under the influence of mortification and disappointment should rush headlong into a

fresh engagement; but this most frequently occurs when the mortification is one of which others are aware, and such a measure, it is hoped, will be a virtual disproval of the fact. Though a dangerous experiment, it is one which succeeds oftener than might be expected from so desperate a remedy. Fanny's sense of right and wrong, however, could not reconcile itself to the plain fact of solemnly vowing an untruth, and she already found the duty of watching over her secret affections sufficiently difficult, not to venture to impose upon herself the additional one of loving where she was not inclined to do so.

Perhaps time and perseverance might have conquered her objections, but a proposal once made, and once rejected, an opportunity is seldom afforded for further acquaintance.

This event had an unfavourable effect upon her mind. It proved to her that her heart was not free, that she had combated in vain.

She was one day looking back upon her wayward fate, and reproaching herself for her weakness, when Lord Delaford entered the room, and inquired for Isabella.

Fanny told him "She was walking in Kensington Gardens with the Miss Merfields."

"And when do you expect her home?"

"Lady B—— takes her from Kensington Gardens to Grosvenor Place, where they dine together; and she accompanies her to the French play in her morning dress, so I am afraid she will not be at home till she returns to prepare for the balls."

"Balls! why how many is she going to to-night!"

"Oh, there are five on the list, but she is only going to two."

"And what becomes of you?"

"I dine with my father's old friend, Mrs. Burley, and then I shall go quietly to bed; for I was at the Duchess's ball last night, you know."

"So, I suppose, I must dine at my club, for I hate a solitary dinner in my own house. If I cannot have the comforts of a home, I will play at the independence of a bachelor. Well, when I married, this was not the life to which I looked forward. But how comes it you are so quiet? Why do you not run the same

course? Why are you not at all in the ring? You can endure the sight of your own fireside. You can find time for conversation, for reading. Your mind is not in a perpertual whirl."

"Oh, but you know I am not very strong; I could not do so much."

"But have you, then, the inclination?"

"Why, not quite; I like it very much in its way; nobody can enjoy society more, I am sure, only ——"

"Only you have room in your heart for other things; you are not wholly engrossed by that all-devouring passion for the world. Ah, Fanny, if you had been able to like me when first we were acquainted, I should have been a happier man."

"Lord Delaford!" exclaimed Fanny, in a voice of doubt and fear.

"Why you know, when first I went to Elmsley Priory, you were the person I should naturally have liked, only you did not care for me, and Isabella did. Kind and affectionate as you are in other respects, you seem to have no room in your heart for love, as poor Lord

John has experienced also. But Isabella! she then seemed made up of feeling!"

Fanny dared not speak, breathe, move, for fear of betraying her agitation. Did she hear from his own lips that he had loved her? Did she hear him accuse her of coldness, while her brain was dizzy, and her heart throbbing with feelings, which, for two long years, she had attempted (she now felt how vainly attempted) to quell? And must she sit still and allow him to think her insensible and heartless? Yes! religion, principle, and duty, forbade her betraying, by word or look, emotions which might have invested her in his eyes with the only charm in which he fancied her deficient. Impossible to let him ever guess she could harbour an unlawful preference for the husband of another, that other her kind and unsuspecting cousin. The very idea made her recoil with horror from herself. A pause ensued. She longed to break it—could she trust her voice to speak? What would Lord Delaford think of her silence? But, if he should perceive that her voice trembled!

She was relieved from her difficulty by his exclaiming,

"No! it could not have been my own infatuation! Isabella was then all I believed her to be!"

Fanny perceived he was not thinking of her, and she had time to compose herself. The love to which he had so calmly alluded had left not a trace behind, unless the confidence he felt in her now, might owe its origin to the esteem he had then imbibed for her character.

Following the course of his own thoughts, he continued to compare what Isabella once was, to what she was now become. He regretted their tour on the Continent, and attributed her present dissipation to the habits acquired in Italy and at Paris.

Fanny was able to utter common-place hopes that her cousin would soon be weary of this useless life, and assurances that her heart was still true and warm.

When she was alone, Fanny found herself fearfully happy. A load seemed taken off

her mind. Painful as it might be to know that, by her own pride, (false pride, perhaps,) she had lost the happiness of her life; the joy of finding that she had not let herself be won unsought; that she had not wasted the whole affections of her young pure heart upon a person to whom they had always been a matter of perfect indifference; that her love had not been wholly unrequited, relieved her from that humiliation which had constantly sunk her to the earth.

She was, however, convinced, that a longer residence under Lord Delaford's roof would not be conducive either to the peace or the purity of her mind. She had been considering what excuse she should make for wishing to return to Elmsley Priory, when, in the course of conversation, Lord Delaford one day spoke of her presence, her example, her advice, as the pillar on which he rested his hope of reclaiming Isabella to the quiet duties of a wife, and he entreated her to use all her influence over her cousin towards the accomplishment of this object.

This request gave a new current to her

thoughts. If it was true that she had influence over Isabella, that she might reclaim her from the worldly course she seemed likely to run, would she be justified in leaving her friend at this moment? If she could be the means of causing his happiness, though through another, would she refuse to attempt it?

People often argue themselves into believing it their duty to do what their inclination prompts. In this case, however, Fanny really wished to find herself once more under her father's roof. She trembled at the undertaking before her—she felt a salutary fear and doubt of her own heart, which she had found so weak, and she humbly strengthened herself for the task imposed upon her. She looked with satisfaction to the prospect of being really useful to others, and she thought that next to being the object of his love, the most enviable situation was to be the object of his gratitude.

Modest and unpresuming, she had never ventured to remonstrate seriously with Isabella upon her mode of life; indeed, she had always experienced a degree of shyness in alluding

to Lord Delaford, and to the feelings of a wife, which had prevented her saying what she might naturally have done. She had also an instinctive horror of interfering between man and wife — on most occasions, a praiseworthy fear; but which, in complying with Lord Delaford's wishes, she thought it right to overcome.

But how to introduce the subject?

Common and trite observations upon the duties of matrimony, she knew would only excite Isabella's raillery upon her antiquated notions; but perhaps, by alarming her fears, she might have some chance of arresting her attention.

Fanny was so little accustomed to having any plan, any ulterior object in her communications with her fellow creatures, that her heart beat, and she felt almost guilty, as she seized the first opportunity when they were alone, to say,

"I wonder, Isabella, you are not afraid of quite losing Lord Delaford's affections."

"Quite lose his affections, Fanny! What can you mean? I certainly do not anticipate any such misfortune," she answered, smiling;

and her eye glanced complacently over the mirror, at which she was trying on the hat which she was to wear that evening at a *bal costumé*.

"Why, my dear Isabella, you must be aware he is not what he was—that your indifference is beginning to have a corresponding effect upon him."

"Nonsense, Fanny, you are joking!" But she took off the beautiful hat, and sat arranging and re-arranging the feathers, though in a manner which would have been far from satisfactory to the artiste, who had hit off that particular disposition of feathers, in a fortunate moment of inspiration.

Instinct had served Fanny on this occasion, as well as a deeper knowledge of the world; for vanity and affection can both take alarm at the idea of losing the devotion they have been accustomed to. She now remained silent, simply because she did not know what she had best say; but her silence had the effect of piquing Lady Delaford. After a pause of several minutes, Isabella added:

"Lady B—— and Mrs. Clairville tell

me they never saw any husband so devoted as mine; they wish I would impart my secret, that they might profit by it."

"They mean he is kind, and lets you have your own way; that he is the least selfish of human beings; but you must know, and feel, that he is not the contented, cheerful person, he once was; that his countenance does not brighten when he sees you, as it once did; that he is silent, abstracted. You cannot be happy, Isabella, and see your husband—and such a husband!—gradually weaning himself from your society, his confidence lessening, his affections cooling! Did I say he was indifferent? No, not indifferent! But he is hurt—wounded! he is shutting up his heart from you! Oh, Isabella! and can you let such a heart close itself to you? you, who might have all the treasures of that noble mind, that manly understanding, that warm generous soul, poured out at your feet—can you throw away such happiness?—you, who might be the happiest woman in the whole world!"

Her voice faltered—a tear trembled in her eye—she dared not trust herself to speak

another word. Isabella was struck by Fanny's manner, though she jestingly replied:

"One would think I was the worst wife in the world! Now, I could name you a dozen, much worse, among our most intimate acquaintances."

"But, Isabella, are you satisfied with not being a bad wife? Don't you wish to be a good one?"

"Well, I do not see what harm I do. I am never cross; I never worry him; I do not run in debt; and I am very civil to all his friends, whenever he asks them to dinner however great bores they may be: and it is not every wife who can say as much for herself!"

"But, Isabella, of what comfort are you to him? If he has any annoyance, does he find you ready to sympathize with him? If he has any joy, are you there to share it with him? When do you communicate your thoughts, opinions, pleasures, pains, to each other? You do order dinner for him; but really I cannot see what other advantage he derives from having a house, a home, a wife."

"Well, I see what you are driving at, all this time; I will make breakfast for him to-morrow morning—that will be quite right and wife-like."

At this moment, the servant entered to say that the box at the French play, which her Ladyship had wished to have, had been given up, and that it was at her service for that evening.

"Oh, Fanny, that is charming! We can go there for the two first pieces, and come home to dress."

"But Lord Delaford was to dine at home, and he will dine alone if we go."

"Oh! he does not mind that."

"Doesn't he?" said Fanny, in a low marked tone.

Lady Delaford desired the servant to let the man wait; and Fanny felt she had gained something.

"Now, I don't think he will care a pin whether we are at home or not; and he goes back to the House afterwards."

"Not till ten o'clock, he said."

"Married people should not see too much of each other. *Toujours perdrix* is insipid!"

"How much have you seen of him to-day?"

"Why, let me see! he looked in, did he not, just as we had done breakfast, about one?"

"Yes; and your Italian improvisatore came two minutes afterwards, whose energetic rhapsodies of gratitude for your patronage, and admiration of your talents, were delivered in so stentorian a voice, that he took his departure, to prevent the drums of his ears from being broken: And yesterday—what did we see of him yesterday?"

"Why, he dined out, you know, at a political man-dinner—that was not my fault—and in the morning we were at Lady F.'s breakfast."

"And the day before?"

"Oh! that was the day of our water-party to Greenwich! and that occupied the whole day. Well, I see how it is—but you will make me spoil him; and then, when he is

quite unmanageable and untractable, I shall reproach you !"

"Well, dearest Isabella, I give you full leave to do so—then !"

Lady Delaford rang the bell, and sent back the tickets.

"Now how bored we shall all three of us be to-day at dinner. I shall be thinking all the time of that dear little Mademoiselle Hyacinthe."

"No ! no ! you won't, dear Isabella. You will be your own gay, agreeable self."

Lord Delaford came home to dinner, and seemed pleased to find so small a party. Isabella told him, with an arch glance at Fanny, that he was very near finding a still smaller one; that the tickets for the best box at the French play had been sent to them after all."

"And why did you not go ?" asked Lord Delaford.

Isabella did not like to take all the credit, when she felt she deserved but little, and she answered: "Why, I believe Fanny suspects

you of having a bad conscience; at least she thought you would not like to be alone."

Lord Delaford cast a glance of gratitude towards Fanny, which made her heart beat with a joy, for which she had no occasion to reproach herself. He thanked them both for their attention to him, and was more gay and communicative than he had been for some time. The dinner was agreeable. Isabella was pleased to feel she was doing right, although she did not know that was the reason she was in spirits. Lord Delaford was gratified, and full of hope that more domestic days were about to dawn upon him. Fanny was animated; but there was a flutter in her animation, she scarcely knew wherefore.

CHAPTER VI.

Trepideva pur anche per quel pudore che non nasce dalla triste scienza del male, per quel pudore che ignora se stesso somigliante alla paura del fanciullo che trema nelle tenebre senza saper di che.

I Promessi Sposi.

THE next morning Isabella did come down to breakfast; but it was a great effort, and she soon relaxed into her former habits. Engagements previously formed, could not be broken through, and one engagement led to another. Occasionally, however, Fanny persuaded her to give up one or two of the many evening-parties, and she succeeded in making her rather more quiet in the morning, so that her husband sometimes found her at liberty, and he could sit down and converse upon the passing events.

When he was alone with Fanny he almost invariably talked over his future prospects, and attributed to her every symptom of improvement in his wife. Though these thanks and praises fell on her ear as the most delightful music, still she felt rather uneasy at the kind of understanding that existed between them. Though the subject was one so wholly unconnected with herself, and so conducive to his future conjugal felicity, she could not help feeling a guilty consciousness, when, upon the entrance of Isabella, they changed the topic of their conversation. She resolved, when once she had accomplished the grand object of persuading Isabella to take up her abode at Fordborough Castle, she would rescue herself from her trying situation, return to her father's house, and devote herself with redoubled energy to being the consolation and solace of his widowed home.

London was growing thin. Balls became more rare; water-parties more frequent; well-laden carriages, awfully encumbered with wells, imperials, boots, trunks, and bonnet-boxes, &c. were constantly seen whirling along

the streets. One day they happened, all three, to be standing at the window debating whether the weather was sufficiently settled for Mrs. Clairville's rural fête to take place, when they were amused by watching the immense number of nurses, children, boxes, and bundles, which were crammed into an immense coach, one of the three carriages which were getting under weigh at the opposite door. Lord Delaford thought this would be a good moment to enter on the subject, by asking, in an easy tone, but well aware of the difficulties he was going to encounter,

"And when shall we go to Fordborough Castle, Isabella?"

"Heavens, Lord Delaford! London is just beginning to be agreeable. All the bores are gone, or going, and society is becoming really select, and every thing on an easy, sensible, pleasant footing. The sight we see opposite, gives one a delightful promise of what London will be! Don't you hear that sound?" as the three carriages were set in motion, and rumbled heavily along the street. "Society will be as light and elastic when

cleared of such heavy component parts, as the air after a thunder-storm !"

"And have you not had enough of society yet! I am almost sick of my fellow-creatures' faces, and yet I am no misanthrope! Do you not long to see green fields and trees, and flowers, and to smell the sweet smells of the country ?"

"That is just the reason why I like water-parties, and excursions into the country, and Mrs. Clairville's breakfasts so much! How lovely the evening was as we rowed down the river from Richmond! and as for flowers, where can you see any half so beautiful as at Lady P——'s enchanting villa? You can have no taste, no refinement, if you do not doubly enjoy all the beauties of nature, in the society of the most polished, the most gifted, in short, of the master spirits of the age! to say nothing of all the prettiest women."

"I do not wish to see all the pretty women;" and he added with some bitterness, "I only wish to see one woman, who if she was as perfect in mind, as she is in person, would be all-sufficient for my happiness; though," and

his tone changed to one of deep mortification, "I see how little I am so to her's," and he left the room.

Isabella was somewhat startled. Fanny looked at her with a beseeching face of woe, and eyes full of tears.

"You are playing a dangerous game, Isabella. Heaven grant you may not repent it! You have nearly destroyed the happiness of one of the most perfect of human beings. Heaven grant you may not alter his nature too! Heaven grant that may remain unchanged! To see his kindly temper soured, his manly character degraded into the mere obsequious husband of a London fine lady,—I beg your pardon, Isabella, but it would indeed be a melancholy sight!"

"You seem to take a very lively interest in his welfare," answered Isabella, a little frightened at the effect she had produced on her husband, and consequently half inclined to be pettish.

Fanny rejoined with warmth.

"Who can see one woman wilfully cast from her a fate which would be the summit

of happiness to almost every other, and not feel warmly ?"

"Why, Fanny, I never saw you so animated; I believe you have fallen in love with him yourself, and are envying me this same fate of mine."

Fanny's face became suddenly crimson. She had been carried away by her feelings—she had forgotten her own secret, she was so moved at seeing him mortified, and wounded, that she thought only of him.

Isabella's half-joking speech recalled it all to her; she felt betrayed, discovered, and her confusion knew no bounds. Isabella, surprised at the effect she had produced, in a moment recollected the suspicions she had once entertained, but she was just smarting under the mortification of finding she had over-calculated her complete influence over her husband, of finding that Fanny was right in her advice, and of feeling she deserved her rebuke, and she exclaimed,

"Well, I never saw such a guilty face."

Fanny was thunder-struck, bewildered—she

burst into tears, and hiding her face with her hands, she exclaimed—

"Spare me, Isabella! spare me! if you have discovered my secret, spare me!" and, throwing herself on her knees, she hid her face in Isabella's lap. "Yes, I have loved your husband, but I loved him before you thought of him, and I have struggled and fought to subdue my feelings, indeed I have. And I have loved him with a holy love," and she lifted up her tearful face with an expression of solemn grief and earnestness which was almost sublime: "Yes! I call Heaven to witness, never, for a moment, have I ceased to wish for your happiness, to pray for it, to use every endeavour to forward it. Is it not true? Isabella, I appeal to yourself?"

"Get up, my dear Fanny! For Heaven's sake! I had not an idea—I did not mean—" and Isabella burst into tears also. She remembered, what she had almost forgotten, how she had once believed him attached to Fanny; she remembered, what she had often persuaded

herself was not so, how she had used every art in her power to wean him from her, and she felt almost as guilty as Fanny did.

She had never intended to inflict such keen anguish on any one, and she was grieved to see what she had done. Had there been anything to excite jealousy, or that might have touched her vanity, perhaps she would not have felt so amiably; but she was perfectly certain poor Fanny's love was unrequited, and there was nothing mortifying in her husband's having inspired so deep and fervent an attachment. Moreover, an uncontrolled burst of feeling, in a person habitually placid and reserved, is in itself almost an awful sight.

The two friends stood mutually abashed before each other, when Fanny exclaimed,

"Do not utterly despise me, Isabella. Oh, if you knew half what I feel at this moment you would pity me. And I have been venturing to lecture you, to teach you your duty! But, indeed, I spoke from pure motives, indeed — though — I have — loved him —" and she again blushed crimson, her cheeks, her

temples, her neck, at hearing herself speak words which, till that day, had never found utterance from her lips, "it was for your sake, as well as for his——"

"Dearest Fanny," interrupted Isabella, "do you think I doubt your motives? No! they are pure and excellent as your own innocent heart. I spoke in jest—you so entirely succeeded in concealing your feelings——"

"But do you not utterly despise me now? Me, whom you once thought retiring and dignified, to have been so lavish of my affections as to love one who is devoted to another, to pass my life nurturing a hopeless and an unlawful preference! Oh, that thought almost maddens me sometimes. You must look down upon me as a poor, abject, weak, and wicked creature."

"Fanny, don't speak so of yourself, you make me miserable—it is I who ought to beg your forgiveness—it is I who have been guilty towards you—my foolish, selfish vanity could not bear to see him prefer you, and I did all I could to take him away from you; but I had no idea you really cared about him so

much; I only meant to try my own power; and then, if you had seemed unhappy, I would have desisted,—at least I thought I would. But you appeared so cool, so indifferent, and then I liked him myself, and then I thought, if you cared so little, why there was no reason why I should give up so brilliant a *parti*, and then—I forgot all about you, and thought only of myself."

"You do think, then, he did like me once?"

"It was that which piqued me so much; but, if I had known what you were feeling, dear Fanny——"

"Oh, Isabella, this is ridiculous! You are, as it were, defending yourself to me—to me who stand here self-betrayed — self-accused. Oh! it is all wrong; this must not be; we must forget all this—bury it in oblivion—let it be as though it had never been. Only make him happy, dearest Isabella, for your own sake—for his sake, and a little for my sake too. Make him happy, and I shall rejoice in the fate that has made you his wife — make him happy, as you value your own happiness and his in this world and the next. But I forget

myself again. It is not for me to guide others —weak, erring, sinful creature that I am."

She sank on the sofa, and pressing her hands upon her eyes, and resting her head on the arm of the sofa, she strove to command and to subdue herself.

Isabella stood motionless beside her, in thought as deep and as painful. A mist seemed to have fallen from her sight. She looked on life with different eyes from what she had done an hour before.

The broken-hearted quivering form before her, read her a lecture upon the effects of worldliness, which she had never thought of before. She saw, for the first time, what havoc blighted affections might cause. She thought of her husband, and she said to herself, "Shall I, through my own wilful folly, cause the misery of two good and amiable beings? I have already blasted the prospects of one, shall I throw a blight over those of the other, and that other, the being I have sworn to love as long as I have life? Shall I have robbed poor Fanny of what would have made her

happiness, and shall I not value the prize myself?"

A flood of tender and self-reproachful feelings rushed over her soul. Fanny's grief cut her to the heart—she gazed upon her till she felt herself cruel and odious. She pictured to herself what sufferings she must have inflicted upon her during the days of her courtship, on her wedding-day, on a thousand other occasions; she remembered her unfailing, uncomplaining gentleness; she thought of the good advice she had given her at various times, and felt how generous and how judicious it had been.

Seating herself by her side, she gently lifted her head from the sofa—she kissed her—she wept with her—she used every tender and endearing epithet—she implored her to be comforted.

"I am weeping for my own degradation," she replied, "that the secret I scarcely dared own to myself should be uttered in positive words, and to you, to his wife!—and you will betray me to him, you will tell him, I am sure you will. Oh! that I should have

come to this! -- I, who hoped to have passed through life with a fair, untarnished name, though my wretched heart might break! Oh, Isabella! in pity keep my secret—spare me this last bitter drop in the cup of life! He respects me now, and I think it would kill me to be despised by him."

Her broken voice was choked by sobs — she again hid her face in her hands — she seemed to shrink into herself.

"Dearest Fanny! what shall I say, what shall I do? If you knew how your anguish harrows my very soul!—I will promise anything, I will do anything that can relieve your mind."

"Will you indeed do anything that I ask?" said Fanny, looking up from her tears with a face in which beamed a high and lofty hope: "Then, all I ask of you is, to be happy: and to be truly so, you must place all your happiness in him; you must let no other feelings interfere with what is conducive to his welfare, his respectability. Promise this, Isabella, and I ask no more."

"I promise you, dearest Fanny!" and

kneeling at her feet, her hands clasped and laid on Fanny's knees, Isabella solemnly repeated, "I promise you that, for your sake, as well as for his own, I will love, cherish, and obey him, in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, in poverty or in wealth: I will strive to be unto him a loving, dutiful, and virtuous wife."

"Thank you, my own Isabella!" exclaimed Fanny, and throwing themselves into each other's arms, they mingled tears and embraces. At length Fanny added, "It is a weight off my mind that I have no longer anything concealed from you, Isabella; and if I could but feel sure that you, and you only, should know my weakness——"

"Shall I promise?"

"Do, dearest Isabella; let me hear a vow of secrecy pass your lips, and I think it will go farther towards eradicating every vestige of former folly than anything else can do."

"I promise you that no one word of this day's conversation shall pass my lips; and I promise that, except by my future con-

duct, you shall never be reminded of it. Will that satisfy you ?"

"Oh, yes, generous, kind, good Isabella. You are only too good, too kind, and make me feel so inferior to you."

"But, Fanny, we must make haste and go into the country. How soon can we go? I wish we could set out to-morrow; I long to begin my new career; I am so afraid of growing worldly again in London,—I mean worldly in my inclinations; my actions I can controul, and my vow is sacred. But how shall I set about opening the subject to my husband? He was really angry to-day."

"What so easy, dearest Isabella? Go at once to him, and say you saw he was annoyed, and that you are sorry he was so, and that rather than annoy him, you are ready to go whenever he wishes."

"He will think a very sudden change has come over me: however, I will try."

That evening Fanny pleaded a headache, and went to bed. She was totally unfitted for society, and could not have ventured

into Lord Delaford's presence; so that, when he came in, he found Iabella alone.

For the first time, he wished for company; he felt a *tête-à-tête* with his wife awkward and unpleasant. He was displeased and disappointed: it was evident to him he was not loved as he loved, and he was not yet worked up to the point of accomplishing by authority what he fain would have accomplished by affection: his manner was cold and abstracted.

Isabella perceived that Fanny's advice was not given before it was needed.

After a silence of some minutes, during which she had twisted a note into every variety of form of which a note is capable, and he had turned over the leaves of a very old Review, in which there was not one entertaining article, she resolved to break the ice at once. Shaking back her long locks, she looked up in his face, and holding out her hand to him, she said—

"I want to make friends, Henry." Then, smiling with a frankness of manner, which,

when combined with any thing of emotion, was in her almost irresistible—"I don't want to lose your affections by being obstinate and wilful, and I am ready to go into the country whenever you please."

"Are you in earnest, Isabella, or am I dreaming?"

"I am in real good earnest; and you had better take me in earnest, for fear my good resolutions should evaporate. I do really wish to go into the country, and to be very good; as good as Fanny."

"But can you be happy with only me?"

"Why, I mean to try;" and she gave him a glance, such as a pretty woman can give when she feels she has regained her power, but means to use it in the most agreeable manner.

"Then I am the happiest of men!" said and thought Lord Delaford.

Reconciliations, joy, and peace of mind are totally uninteresting; therefore, the sooner the present story is brought to a close, the better. Lord and Lady Delaford went almost immediately to Fordborough Castle; Fanny

returned to her Father. She experienced real pleasure in finding herself again at home, and in ministering to the comforts of her kind parent.

By some odd turn of the human mind, the avowal of her secret feelings to the very person towards whom they were an injury, went farther towards eradicating them than all her own reflections and resolutions. Her conscience felt lighter; she looked back upon them as a matter of history; and her affection for Isabella had warmed into a real and ardent friendship. We all love a person whom we have served, essentially served; and we all love a person over whose conduct we feel we have great influence.

One morning, Lord Delaford having rode over to Elmsley Priory, took an opportunity of telling Fanny that he was the happiest of men, and that he was aware he owed all this happiness to her. Then did Fanny enjoy pure and unalloyed satisfaction! She felt she had not lived in vain; she had been of service to her fellow-creatures, and she felt raised in her own estimation.

Isabella, meanwhile, laboured hard to put in practice all the good advice she had received from Fanny. The happiness she found she had the power of bestowing, repaid her for her self-denial in relinquishing the exciting pleasures of the great world; and before she had time to weary of her domesticity, she found herself in a situation which called forth other, and as tender feelings.

While she was in Italy, a premature confinement had prevented her knowing the engrossing affection of a mother, and had allowed her to plunge again into the vortex of dissipation.

A growing family is an excellent nostrum for keeping down an active, restless spirit. Time, health, and thoughts must be, in a great measure, devoted to their children by those mothers who do not utterly neglect their duty; and the constant intercourse with such a mind as Lord Delaford's, and the frequent visits which, after a time, Fanny paid at Fordborough Castle, gradually produced in her character a reformation of all that was reprehensible.

Fanny found new objects of interest in Isabella's children: she was full of occupation at home; she was her father's darling. Her life was a retired one, especially when Lord and Lady Delaford were in London in the spring; and as there are not many very charming *partis* in the immediate neighbourhood of Elmsley Priory, and as she would doubtless be somewhat difficult in her choice, and as she is no longer quite as young or as blooming as she has been, it is more than probable she may become a "single woman of a certain age."

Though such should be her fate, may she not be allowed to have an opinion, should "affairs of the heart" be discussed in her presence?

MILLY AND LUCY.

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CHAPTER I.

Affection true and strong, and simpleness
His goods and chattels, and her bridal dower!
Riches more sure two wedded hearts to bless
Than Fortune's proudest gifts in partial hour:
Unknowing to define by words the power
That held their spirits in that blissful thrall
Pride cannot chill nor jealous anger sour,
Each other's wish they evermore forestall,
And of Love's darts and flames they never talk at all.

Manuscript Poems.

"WELL, nurse, a wedding is not a merry thing, after all. I could not help crying bitterly to-day when my sisters were married; and yet it is what we have all been wishing for so much. I am sure papa and mamma were in the greatest of frights when they thought

Captain Langley would sail without proposing to Lizzy: and when Sir Charles spoke out to papa, after we were all gone to bed, I never shall forget what a banging of doors there was, mamma popping into all our rooms to tell us the good news!"

"Ah, poor young ladies!" said Nurse Roberts, as she was undressing the blooming Lucy, the evening of the day on which two of her sisters had been safely disposed of to two gentlemen, the connexion with whom gave great satisfaction to Colonel and Mrs. Heckfield.

"Poor young ladies!" repeated Lucy in a tone of surprise: "why do you pity my sisters, nurse?"

"La, Miss, I don't justly know; but somehow 'tisn't the sort of wedding as I likes."

"Why, what sort of wedding do you like?"

"Ah, Miss Lucy, I am an old woman, and I have old-fashioned notions; but I likes to see young people marry, as has a respect for one another."

"Why, nurse, I am sure Captain Langley and Sir Charles were quite respectful. What can you mean?"

"There wasn't no time, Miss, no time for them to get to have a respect for one another. I have heard talk of love at first sight, to be sure, but to my mind there wasn't no love at all; and that's the truth of it. 'Tis my belief the Captain he wanted to take a wife to India, because, as I've heard say, ladies are scarce there, and here there's more of a choice; and Sir Charles he wanted a lady to sit at t'other end of the table, and be civil and genteel to the gentlefolks when they comes a visiting to him; and as for poor Miss Sophy and Miss Lizzy, I don't see that they liked these two gentlemen a bit better than twenty other gentlemen as have been here at one time or another."

"Well! I never should have guessed you were so romantic, nurse. Do you know this is really the true spirit of romance?"

"No! no! 'Tan't romance, nor book-nonsense as I'm talking about. But when a woman's once married, she may have many

trials and troubles. There's Miss Lizzy going into foreign parts, and there's no knowing what a wife may have to go through for her husband, first or last, whether at home or abroad; and if she has not a spirit in her that she does not care where she goes, nor what she does, as long as it's for his sake, why, sometimes 'tis hard to bear."

"But when people marry, they marry to be happy, not to go through trials and troubles."

"And do you think, Miss, unless Miss Lizzy loves Captain Langley dearly, she will be happy when she is a thousand and a thousand miles away from her friends, and in a strange country? No! no! I knows what 'tis to be alone among strangers, and I knows 'twould have been hard to bear, if it had not been for poor John's sake!"

"Were you very much in love then, nurse?" and Lucy's eye twinkled with an arch glance of amusement as she asked the question, for at the moment she saw reflected in the glass her own blooming cheeks, rounded chin, rosy lips, and flowing locks, and the withered

face, thin lips, grey hair, and close-crimped cap of the old woman. "Were you very much in love?" she repeated in rather a drawling sentimental tone.

"I don't know about that, Miss; but he was true to me, from the time I was quite a slip of a girl, and it would have been hard if I had been the one to change. I told him I never would; and I kept my word."

"And did he keep his?"

"That he did, poor soul! There was not a better, nor a truer-hearted man anywhere, than my poor John was. And though I had known some trouble before, I never knew what 'twas really to grieve till I lost him!" The poor old woman gave a deep sigh, and Lucy said in a kind and feeling tone of voice:

"Was it in America, you lost your poor husband? I know you once were there."

"Ah! sure enough was it, my dear young lady; and not a friend nor a relation (besides my two fatherless babes) had I that side of the water, when I saw my poor John put into the ground. 'Tis that makes me think so

much about Miss Lizzy. I am old, Miss, and I have known troubles and crosses; and I can't help looking forward to what may happen."

"But Captain Langley, you know, has friends and relations in India; and every body says Lizzy will have so many people to wait on her, and beautiful jewels, and all kinds of things! How could you, dear nurse, go into a foreign land, if you had no friends and relations there?"

"Oh, Miss Lucy! 'tis a long story; and you had better go to bed, and go to sleep."

"Now do tell me to-night, nurse? I can't go to sleep, I am sure; and I do feel so interested about you and your poor John."

The old woman's heart warmed at hearing her husband's name spoken so kindly; and she was nothing loth to begin her story.

"Why, you see, Miss, John and I, we were neighbours' children, and we used to come home from school by the same path; and we often went nutting, and gathering blackberries together, and he was always a civil, good-tempered boy, and the folks used to call us

the little sweethearts; and so, when we grew bigger, we wished to get married: but father, he said, 'No, by no means! he would not hear of it!'"

"But why did your father object to such a respectable young man?"

"Why, you see, Miss, he was a ropemaker, and was in a good way of business, and had got above the world; and John, he was only under-gardener at the Squire's. He was a handy, sharp young man; but he had not any thing but just what he earned from week to week; and father said he would not hear of no such nonsense, and we must leave off courting. We both saw that father was right not to agree to our marrying then; but we thought it hard that we were not to speak to each other any more. My own mother was dead; and my father's second wife she aggravated him against us, and said, if we saw each other as usual, we should be sure to marry, and then he would have to keep us off the parish; and that I was a likely, fresh-coloured girl, and might do better for myself, and might get somebody who would be a help

instead of a hindrance to the family. So I told John I would not marry without father's leave, for I knew that would be wrong; but that I would never have anybody but him if it was ever so.

"My stepmother, she never let me out of her sight, and always kept me to my work at home; and I never saw John to speak to him. Of a Sunday, when we came out of church, he always stood near the hand-gate, and sometimes, if there was only father, he opened it for us; and as long as he did that, I was sure he was true to me.

"One morning, about a year after my father had said he would not hear no more of John Roberts, and that his girl should marry somebody as had a house to take her to, and enough to keep her when he had got her there; 'twas a Monday-morning, and I had washed up the tea-things, and swept up the hearth, and was just holding a bit of wood-embers in the tongs for father to light his pipe by before he went to his work, when what should I see but John's face, as he went by the window to the door. I was like to let

the tongs fall, it came upon me so sudden! John knocked at the door, and I shook *all* over as if I had got the ague; for I thought, to be sure, father would be in a towering passion. Father, he never turned round; but he kept drawing in his breath to make the pipe light, and he said, 'Why don't you go and open the door, girl?' So I went to the door, and opened it, and in stepped John; and he said never a word to me; he only just gave me a look, and he went straight up to father, and said:

"'Mr. Ansell, don't take it amiss if I am come to say a few plain words to you. You won't let me have your daughter; you think we shall come into trouble, and be a burthen upon you; and you think Milly can do better for herself?'

"'Yes!' said my father; 'you speak right enough.'

"'But Milly has told me she 'll never have nobody but me; and you know, Mr. Ansell, she 's a girl of her word; and you know you could not get her to marry Mr. Simpkins, the tailor: no, nor you won't be able to get her to

marry no other lover, if she should have a dozen—I know you won't; and I won't have no other girl! But that's neither here nor there; what I've got to say is this—I have just had sent me a letter from my brother as is in Canada; and he tells me, if I want to make my fortune, I have only to take ship at Liverpool, and come to him at Halifax; and there, he says, any man as knows a little of gardening, and such like, has no more to do but to get as much land as he likes, to set to work, and he will have a good market for his vegetables, and he can be made a man of in no time. He sends me money enough to pay my expenses out, and he says he will see that I want for nothing till I get into a regular way of business; and now, Mr. Ansell, if Milly an't afraid to venture over the seas with me, I think we shall be able to shift for ourselves; and we need never be no burthen to you, nor none of our friends. And if she won't go,—why, I'll go by myself; and I'll try to make my fortune alone, and come back and marry her some day or another, please God to spare me!'"

"What did your father say to this, nurse?"

"Why, father seemed very angry when first John began to speak. I looked at him, and my heart sank within me; then I looked at John, and his face was flushed like, and his eyes seemed quite bright, he was so full of hope, and I thought I could never bear to disappoint him. My stepmother had come in when she heard John's voice, and so father turned to her, and said,—

"'Well, Sarah, what do you think of this young chap's notion? I don't much like to have my Milly go away from me altogether, and beyond seas too: though she has been a little testy or so about John, I don't half like it!'

"I felt so I did not know what to do, and I began to cry and to sob; and John said to me then:—

"'Milly,' said he, 'speak your mind. Do you think you could venture across the water, all the way to America with me? You know I'll work hard for you, and I'll be as tender of you as if you were a babe; and whichever way it is, I'll be true to you, if so be I live.'

"Then father said—'Milly, if you an't willing to go along with him, why there 's an end of it at once, and so speak out.'

"I looked at John again, and the longest day I have to live, I never shall forget his face that minute. He was as pale as ashes, and his two eyes were fixed on me with such a beseeching look! I thought I could do any thing, and bear any thing, sooner than have him go quite away by himself, and so I said—

"'Father, I am ready to go anywhere that John takes me to: I know he will always be kind to me. I an't afraid with him.'

"Poor John! To be sure, how his face did change! his colour came again, and he looked up so proud and so kind like! I thought nothing would be a trouble to me for his sake then.

"Father did not half like what I answered, but his wife was very good-natured, and said, that perhaps we should do very well in America; she had a cousin once that made a great fortune somewhere beyond seas; and that it was very true what John said, we should be

no burthen to our friends when we were so far off."

"She was evidently very glad to get rid of you," interrupted Lucy.

"Maybe 'twas so, for sometimes father and she had words about me. Father never could bear to see me put upon; however that was, she was very kind now, and by degrees we brought father to think about it. And then John, he had to tell him we must get married out of hand; for the ship was to sail in a week, and we had to go to Liverpool, and to buy the things as were wanted on board ship."

"Only a week! That was very short notice indeed!"

"Yes, Miss, and father flew out sadly at first; but there was no help for it, if I went at all. So John went to the minister, and talked to him about it, and the minister helped him how to get a licence; and on the Tuesday John walked to the town, seven miles off, and he bought a licence, and a deal of money he paid for it, but his sister gave him something towards it; and he bought the wedding-ring;

and he came to me Tuesday evening, and showed them both to me, and I thought to be sure it was a dream. Next morning I was to be married, and I dressed myself as neat as I could."

"Ah, by the by, what did you do for wedding-clothes?"

"Why, I had a light-coloured gown as good as new, and the minister's daughter gave me a new straw bonnet, and my stepmother gave me her second-best shawl; and we went to church, and my little sister was bridesmaid, and all the girls round about as I knew came to the wedding. Poor father, how he did cry! and the minister, he was obliged to stop once, and put down the book to wipe his eyes. He said it was awful to see two such young things going out into the wide world, so left to themselves like—but he was not against it, for all that; and John, he cried too. The Rector told father he had never seen so many people crying at a wedding in all his ministry. Well, it was a sad day to us all! now that I was married to John, and was sure I was not going to lose him,

it almost broke my heart to see father take on so, and to look round at the chairs and tables, and the dresser I had cleaned so many times, and the plates, and jugs, and cups I took such pride to set in order, and the strings of birds' eggs as I had hung over the chimney-piece, with two peacock's feathers John and I had picked up in the Squire's park, and the sweet-brier we had planted when we were children, and which grew up quite tall by the house. Ah, sure, it seems all as plain before me as if it was yesterday! Father sat with his hands on the top of his stick, and his chin resting on his hands, looking at the fire, and he took little notice of any of us. My step-mother, she was bustling about, and seemed to wish to do all she could for us the last day.

"Next morning, Thursday, we parted from father, and brothers, and sisters, and all, and we got on the top of the coach, and we went off so fast, it made me quite dizzy as it were. We got to Liverpool, Friday evening; I seemed as though I was lost in that great busy place; but whenever John saw me begin to look sad or frightened, he thanked me so for

coming along with him, that I felt I cared for nothing as long as he was contented.

"On the Saturday we got all the things they said we must take in the ship with us, for there are shops as sell every thing ready to hand. And Sunday we went to church for the first time together as man and wife, and for the last time together in our own country. As we came out of the church-door, John said to me, 'Milly, I am glad we have been able to go to church together once more in Old England; we don't know what places of worship there may be in this new country. But we can read our Bible wherever we go.'

"The vessel was to sail Monday, just one week from the day John surprised us so as I was making our own little kitchen tidy at home. We were all on board ship early in the morning. To be sure, how frightened I was; but I had made up my mind not to be down-hearted, and I bore up against it all. We had a good passage, and as soon as we had got our little matters safe on shore, we set out to look for John's brother, who kept

a shop for seeds and such like; we soon found the shop, but it was a sad time for us when we got there. But la! Miss, there's the clock striking twelve, and you not in bed. What will your mamma say to me for keeping you awake with my old woman's tales? But it is not often I talk of by-gone days, and when once I begin, I hardly know how to stop."

CHAPTER II.

What spirit e'er so gentle shall be found,
So softly reared in humble privacy;
What form so fragile on wide earth's vast round,
Shrinking from every blast beneath the sky,
That will not brave severest destiny,
Bear uncomplaining, want and cruel wrong,
And look on danger with unblenching eye,
If love have made that gentle spirit strong,
Love, pure, approved by Heav'n, lead that frail form along.

Manuscript Poems.

LUCY would not hear of going to bed till she had heard the rest of Milly's adventures.

"You must go on, nurse. I cannot let you stop—you know I love any story, and you know I love you, and so you may guess how much I must be interested."

"You are very good, Miss, to say so. Mine's a very plain homely tale, but you

always was a kind young lady; and somehow, when I have got over the first talking about my poor husband, and all our troubles, I can't say but there is a kind of pleasure, like, in going over it all again."

"Now, there's a good nurse, mind you tell me every thing. What had happened when you got to your brother-in-law's?"

"Ah! poor man! he was dead—dead, and buried. He died just three weeks after he wrote to John; and, though the widow kept on the shop, she could not do for us as he would have done. Poor soul! she was left with five young children, and she was almost beside herself with care and trouble. However, she took us in, and told us we should not have to pay for lodging while we stayed there, but she could not afford to keep us. She told John who was the proper person to apply to, to get what they call a grant of land; and he went next day to see about it, for he was loth to be a burthen to the poor widow.

"He found he could not get any garden, nor any land near the town, but he must go a

great way off to the back woods, where there were new settlers, and where he must cut down the trees, and dig up the soil fresh for himself. This was a great disappointment, and he lost a deal of time trying if he could not get something that would suit better. But you see, ma'am, every thing goes by interest in one country just like another; and now his brother was gone he had nobody to put in a good word for him, and he found there was no use in haggling on any longer. So he set about buying the goods, and the tools which they said were quite necessary for a new settler, and by the time he had got his grant of land, and had bought his things, all our money was pretty well gone, and I was not in a way to be much of a help to him. Poor John! He said he would not have me begin a long journey in this condition, and when I got to the end of it have no roof over my head, and be in a lonesome place with nobody to do for me when the time of my trouble came. My sister-in-law was very good, and she promised to take care of me. She got me needlework, and I could earn enough for my

own keep; and so John set off all alone to this land that was to be his. He was to get the trees felled, and a log-house built, and some ground trenched, and every thing quite comfortable in a manner; and he was to come back for me in the spring. I did not half like this. As long as I was with him I felt as if I could do any thing; but when he was gone, I don't know how it was, but I had no spirit to any thing. But he would not let me go. He said, 'No! he had told father I should be treated tenderly, and he would never let me be worse off than the very gipsies in Old England.'

"The autumn seemed very long to me; but I worked hard, and earned enough to get every thing nice for my baby, and to have a few household things ready to take with me when the spring came. After my child was born, I began to grow quite happy with thinking how pleased John would be to see it. I had got together all my little goods, and had packed them up, and I was waiting every day for him to come. I thought every step I heard at the door might be him; for there was

no post in those outlandish parts, and I had only heard from him twice by a private hand since he went. One day I was startled by hearing a strange voice ask for me. It was not John, I knew well enough; and there came such a fright over me I could not answer, nor I could not go to the door. Though I was always wishing John would come, and wondering he did not, yet it never before came into my head to be frightened, I felt so sure he would come at last; but I don't know how it was, I thought now there was something bad in store for me.

"My sister-in-law went to the door, and she brought me up a letter. It was in his own hand-writing. But when I had got it, I could hardly read it, I was in such a hurry, and all over in such a tremble. However, it told me he had been very ill; he had had a bad rheumatic fever, and was not able to come for me yet; but he was getting better, and hoped to be able to set off before summer came. I made up my mind directly what I would do—to set off the next day as ever came, and go to him. So I went down-stairs to the man as brought

me the letter, and I asked him which was the road, and what were the names of the places I had to go through, and how I was to find out his settlement. I was a pretty middling scholar, so I wrote it all down from his mouth. That night I packed up my bundle, and I sold the linen and things I had bought, for I could not carry them, and I knew I should want the money. My sister-in-law lent me a little she was able to spare, and next morning I set out. I reckoned I could walk fifteen miles a-day, and that as it was three hundred miles up the country, it would take me about three weeks to get to him. I was very tired the first day, for I had to carry my bundle on my back, and my child in my arms; but I did not care. I thought so of getting to John, I hardly knew that I was tired. I found a decent little inn, and a civil woman, who made me pretty comfortable that night, and I had nothing to complain of for several days more; but after a week or thereabouts, the country was very bare, and there were but few houses to be seen. One day I had to walk better than twenty miles before I could get taken in, and after all

the place was a miserable hovel, and the woman as kept it was so old, and dirty, and smoky, and she spoke so short to me, and looked at me so sharp, that I felt frightened, and almost sorry, when, after a little haggling, she let me into the hut. It seemed to belong to her; but some men who came in after me, ordered her about as if they were masters of her and all she had; and she did not think of refusing them any thing, and they swore at her terribly, and made themselves quite at home. I had got away into the inner-room when I saw them coming, and I never went back into the kitchen. The old woman seemed no ways anxious that I should. I begged her to let me lie down, and she said I might do as I would; so I tried to get some rest; but I could see these men through the chinks of the logs, and I could hear most of what they said. They drank, and they sang, and by their way of talking, I think they led a rough sort of robber-like life; but I could not half understand what they said. At last they rolled themselves up on the floor, and went to sleep, and I went to sleep too. All my little stock of money, which

was getting very low, but which was my only dependence for reaching my poor husband. was under my pillow, and I resolved I would not part with it if I could help it. In the middle of the night my child began to cry; I felt sure these strange men would wake and rob me, and perhaps murder me too. I heard one move, and I could see him sit up, rub his eyes, stretch himself, and he wondered what the noise could be; but I managed to pacify the child, and he settled himself again. To be sure, I was glad when I heard him breathe quite hard! I did not sleep any more that night, and by day-break, the hunters (for they had guns, and powder-pouches, and bags—so I suppose they were hunters,) were astir, and left the hut. I asked the old woman who they were, and which way they were likely to take; but she did not like being questioned, and so, when I thought they had been gone about an hour, I set out again on my lonesome journey.

"That day the road lay through a great forest of very tall trees, taller than any trees we have here. I never did feel so lonesome

before; there was not a creature to be seen anywhere, and the tall trees made the road so dreary, and it was all dark and hollow each side; for in those great woods the trees stand clear of each other, and there is no underwood, nor bushes, nor briers, but the boles go up straight, and the branches meet at top, and one may go miles and miles, and never see the blue sky over one's head. There was no telling what might come out from those dismal hollows, and I kept looking round every minute, and trying to see into them, but 'twas impossible. I could see the trunks of the trees for a little way, and then 'twas all as black as night. It made one feel so alone, and yet one did not know what might be near one; and I thought what would become of me if I was benighted in this dreary place, and I thought of the wild Indians, and of the bears, and of my poor innocent babe; but then I thought again of my husband on his sick-bed, and I took courage.

"It was past the middle of the day, and the sun had sunk some way below those tall dark trees, when I sat down to rest myself, and

to drink from a clear stream by the roadside. I was wondering how much farther it could be to the end of the forest, where I had been told I should find something of a decent hut, when I was startled at hearing voices and the report of a gun; and presently three of the men who had passed the night in the old woman's hovel came out from among the gloomy trees on the other side.

"They looked surprised to see me, and came straight up to me. I don't know how it was, but when the time came I did not seem so timid as I thought I should. I remembered how poor I was, and it could not be no object to anybody to rob me, and I knew I was doing my duty in going to my husband, and I thought God would protect me. I sat quite still, and did not tremble nor shake. One of them asked me how I came there? so I told him the truth, and spoke quite civil, and yet, as it were, bold and steady, that I was walking from Halifax to my husband at the far settlement. So another of the men said, quite sharp—'If

you have got a husband, he had better keep a sharper look-out after such a tight lass as you are.'

"The first man said—'You have got a long journey before you, my girl.'

"And I answered, 'Yes, Sir; but I have got safe through more than half of it, and I hope, with the blessing of God, to get safe throught the rest of it to my husband, to nurse him in his illness.'

"'Oh! he's ill, that's it,' said the second.

"'Well, you can't be travelling all this way without money,' says the third, who had not spoken yet.

"'Come, come, poor girl,' interrupted the first, and gave a wink to the last speaker, 'we won't hinder your journey any longer: you had better push on, or you 'll be in the dark.' And he took the other by the arm, and he seemed to persuade them both to go away; and when I saw them go off into the woods again, I thanked God for his goodness, and thought he was indeed a father to the fatherless, and that he never did desert them

as put their trust in Him in the time of their need.

"I hugged my baby close, and quite forgot how tired I had been a little while before, and walked and ran till it was nearly dark, when the trees grew thinner, and I thought I could see lights glimmer in the distance. I made all the haste I could, and at last I got to a small settlement of half a dozen log-houses. I stopped at the first door, and I never felt so happy as when I saw a light, and a fire, and a woman's face again. She had a child in her arms too, and I felt quite safe.

"Next day I was very tired, and the woman at the little inn wished me to stay all day, and rest myself; but when I was walking and toiling, I did not feel so much about John: the moment I was still, I thought how ill he might be, and I could not bear to keep quiet. Besides, the woman's husband was going part of the same road, to make a bargain about some furs; so he kept me company through the rest of the forest, and he begged the fur-merchants, as he came to

speak to, that they would see me safe to the village where I was to stop that night. This day my baby began to grow fretful, and no wonder, for, though I did the best I could for it, 'twas next to impossible to get anything fit for a baby at the places I stopped at, and I lived so hard myself that I made but a poor nurse.

"My shoes were quite worn out, and my feet were so sore, I thought I must afford myself a pair of shoes, as I should not have another opportunity. They were very dear, for everything was brought from Halifax. I was sorry afterwards I did not make shift without them. Next morning my baby was so ill I went to the doctor, for there was a doctor there, and they said he was the only real doctor anywhere for miles and miles. He gave me something as quieted the child, but, when I had paid for this too, my purse was so low, I began to fear I should not have enough to buy me any thing to eat after the two next days; and as for begging,—I had never been brought up to think of such a thing. I touched nothing but the coarsest and cheapest food

I could get, and drank nothing but cold water, and I walked farther each day, to get sooner to the end of my journey. I was almost worn out, and, (as I reckoned,) I had still three days' travelling between me and my husband when I paid away my last farthing. I scarcely hoped ever to reach him, but I walked on till I got to a small settlement, and then I sat down by the way-side, and thought what should I do?

"I could not help crying, and thinking what would father say if he could see me then; and it hurt me so! for I knew he would feel angry with John, and fancy it was through him his child was brought into such trouble, and forced to beg her bread—for there was no help for it—if I wished to see my husband, and not to let my baby die, I must that night ask charity of strangers. So I knocked at the nearest door, and I told my story, and asked for food and lodging. I have often thought a mother, with her infant in her arms, has something which goes to the hearts of their fellow-creatures, if they have any kindness left in them. I 'm sure I never

see a poor beggar-woman with a baby, at the door, but I think of myself that weary night, and I never have the heart to send them away without some little trifle, though, maybe, I 'm often imposed upon.

"Well! the man as opened the door took pity upon us directly, and bade me come in and sit by the fire. His daughter, a nice girl of fourteen, brought us some potatoes and some milk, and let me share her bed. They would have given me enough to pay my way for the next two days, if they had had it to give; but I was forced to ask charity again that night, but it did not seem to give me such a choking in the throat as it did the first time; and I thought how soon we lose our spirit when we get low in the world, and how easy it is to go on from bad to worse! The next night I hoped to get to my husband. They told me to keep along the banks of a great river on my left, where there was something of a path, but 'twas so overgrown with the long rank grass, 'twas not easy to find. The new settlement was near the river-side, for the trees, which the

settlers cut some way higher up, drifted down the river till they came to this place, where the ground was particular rich, and then they pulled them ashore, and built themselves log houses. There were about seven families together, as they told me, and my husband's house was the farthest but one. How my poor heart did beat all the way I went; I longed so to get there, and I dreaded it so too. I walked on and on, and still I saw no people, nor no huts, nor no fields, and I began to think I must have come wrong, for, though it was all open and flat, I could not see very far before me, for the grass was long, and the rushes very tall, sometimes, by the river-side. Of all the day's journeys I had come, this did seem to me the longest; but I suppose 'twas only because I was so impatient to get to the end of it. I looked at the sun, and it was not above half way down. Just then there was a rise in the road, and I could see some smoke, and the roofs of some low huts, and some little patches of ground that were cultivated, and I strained my eyes to try and make out the last but one; I don't know

how I got over the ground, but I soon did reach the first house, and I saw a child at play, and I asked him which was John Roberts's. I could hardly breathe while he answered, 'He lives out yonder.' He lives! and when I heard him say that, I first knew I had been afraid of never seeing John again.

"I ran as well as I could to the hut. It looked wretched and half-finished; the door was ajar—I pushed it open—there was nobody in the kitchen — I heard no noise—I listened—I did not dare step on. Just then my child cried, and a voice from within said, in a hollow tone, 'Who 's there?' I ran into the bed-room, and there lay my husband, sick, pale, and weak, but it was my husband alive, and all seemed well."

"Oh, nurse," exclaimed Lucy, "I never heard any thing half so interesting in my life. Poor souls! and how was your husband? He got well?"

"Yes, Miss, he did get well after a time. He fretted so much to think he could not go for me, that it had kept him back, and he had nobody to make him any thing nice, nor

to do for him; leastways not to do for him as I could, though the neighbours looked in now and then and made his bed, and boiled his potatoes for him, and such like. Sure! how overjoyed he was to see me, and how pleased he was to see the babe. He soon began to mend, and then he was so vexed to think he had not been able to get the place to rights a bit before I came.

"The fence outside was all broken down, and the garden was only half-planted; but I had not been there a fortnight before I got it all to look quite different. I cleaned up the house, and settled the few things he had got in it, and I helped him to mend the fence, and he was soon able to dig again, and the things grow very quick in that rich soil, and our house and garden were quite decent, and we were so glad to be together again, that we did not see no faults in any thing.

"In the winter-time John had been lucky in shooting, and had sold some furs for enough to buy him a cow, and some chickens; and then, being a pretty middling gardener, he had

helped his neighbours, and put them in the way to crop their gardens as they should be; and most of them gave him a trifle, some one thing and some another, so that now he was pretty well, and I was there to keep matters tidy, we were very comfortable. The winter was cold and long, and in the spring he had another touch of that nasty fever, as was so common in them low swampy grounds. In the summer I had my Betsy—you know my Betsy, as is married to Farmer Crofts?—some of the neighbours were very kind to me, and I got over it pretty well. Of a Sunday we used to read our Bible together, and think how true John's saying was, when we came out of church at Liverpool, that there was no knowing what places of worship we might find where we were going to. But John often said all places might be made places of worship if one had but the mind to it, whether it was a real church, or the tall, dark, still woods, or the damp wide savannah, or our own log-hut; and so, I hope, when we read our prayers there, it

did us as much good as if there had been a minister and a pulpit, and all as it should be.

"I believe I was too happy then for it to last. With the spring came the rheumatic fever again, and my poor husband was quite laid up. He could not do any thing, and he fretted so to think his land was not trenched, nor any thing seen to! and, what with the children, and the house, and the cow, and the things out of doors, and poor John to nurse, I had more than one pair of hands could well do. This would not have signified if John had but mended when the summer came, but he got worse and worse. He was so weak, and he suffered a deal of pain, and there was no doctor. Then I did wish we had never left England, and I thought it would have been better we should both have worked and laboured in our own country, till we had got old, and earned enough to marry upon. But we did for the best; and if John was so set upon coming, even without me, why, then, it was best I came too, for

he had some one to do for him. It was all written, I suppose; and perhaps 'twas for our good—but this was hard, very hard to bear.

"One evening I had got the children off to sleep, and I had taken my bit of work, and was sitting by John's bedside, when he said to me—

"'Milly, you must not stay here when I am gone. If you sell all the little matters we have got together here, you 'll have enough to pay your journey to Halifax, and your passage home too, as I reckon. Your father will be good to you, I think—I hope. Tell him I meant for the best when I persuaded you to come.'

"Oh, Miss Lucy, I never thought to see that day: I had always hoped I should have been the first to go. But it pleased God otherwise."

The poor old woman sat with her apron to her eyes, in quiet, silent tears. Lucy took one of her withered hands, and pressing it between her own, told her, with tears in her eyes, how much she felt for her, and how much she admired her husband's kind and

manly character. She found this was the chord to which, after so many years, the old nurse's heart still vibrated.

"Yes, Miss Lucy, and her faded eyes flashed with almost youthful brightness: "He was the kindest-hearted, the truest-hearted, and the bravest-hearted man as ever lived. He feared nothing, but to do wrong, and to part with me. His thoughts were always on me; and when he was taken, the last words he ever spoke were, 'my own Milly,' and the last look he ever gave was for me, and my hand felt the last pressure his ever gave."

Lucy's tears flowed fast. She had read many novels, but the fictitious woes of their heroines did not seem to her half so touching as her old nurse's plain story.

"Well, Miss Lucy, I buried him there: he lies by the banks of that great river, and there's the roaring sea, and miles and miles of dreary land between me and my poor John; and, what's more, when I die, we shan't be near each other; that frets me sadly sometimes; but he told me to come home, and

so, Miss, I could not do no other. I thought when I turned my back on the log-hut, where we had passed some such happy days together, and when I passed by the place where he was buried, at the other end of the settlement, I thought my heart must have broke; and, if it had not been for the children, I should have thought it a mercy if it had.

"There was some people going to Halifax, and I travelled with them. I fancied myself in trouble when I went that road before, but now I thought how happy I was then, for I was going to see my husband's face again. But God is very merciful, he never gives us more than we can bear. I bore it all, and I got to Halifax, and I went to my sister-in-law. She was a kind woman, and she was sorry for me, for she knew what it was to be a widow. I took my passage on board a vessel for England, and I and my two children left America. Though my husband's grave was so far up the country, I felt, when I left the land, as if I was more parted from him than ever. But 'twas on board a ship that I learned to be thankful

to God for what was left, and not to grieve too much for any of his creatures. My little boy sickened and died, and he was not buried, decently buried in the earth, but my poor child was thrown into the sea. I could not get over that for a long time. It did seem so unnatural like. But I learned then never to think myself so low, but what God might afflict me more, and I learned to be grateful for my Betsy. And she has been a blessing to me—a kind and a dutiful girl—and one as will never let her old mother come to want, as she gets in years."

"My poor, dear nurse," exclaimed Lucy, "I can't bear to think I should ever have been a naughty pettish child, and have plagued and worried you when I was little, and you, with all these heavy afflictions on your mind."

"Lord bless your sweet heart! you never plagued me; and, as for your little vagaries, I believe they made me love you all the better."

CHAPTER III.

Il faut très peu de fond pour la politesse dans les manières : il en faut beaucoup pour celle de l'esprit.

La Bruyere.

THIS simple history of such interesting feelings made Lucy reflect a good deal. She looked back on her sisters' courtships and weddings, and could not persuade herself they had either felt or inspired sentiments half so noble, or so disinterested, as John's and Milly's; and she resolved, in her own mind, she would never marry unless she was really in love—very much in love.

It seldom happens that people, on the subject of matrimony, act according to the plan they have proposed to themselves. The girl who settles she will marry a tall dark

man, is sure to marry a little fair man; the man who resolves he will have a meek and gentle wife, is caught by some wild coquette, to whom he tamely submits for the sake of a quiet life. So the young lady who has made up her mind that love is folly, and that, if she repents, it shall be in a coach and six, runs away with a pennyless Captain; and Lucy, though extremely anxious to emulate Milly, never found the object to which she could thus devote herself, and ended by repenting in a coach and six.

In the empty dandies and lounging officers who frequented L——, the watering-place near which Colonel Heckfield's small property was situated, she saw nothing superior to Captain Langley, or to Sir Charles Selcourt; and Nurse Roberts had decidedly not thought Sophy or Lizzy in love with either. But she was very young, and she had plenty of time to look about her. Her three elder sisters were married; her two younger ones had not yet emerged from the school-room; her numerous brothers looked on her as the pet and the beauty of the family, and they all

reckoned she was to captivate something brilliant in the way of a *parti*. There was a floating wish in her mind to be heroically devoted, as, through her homely language, she perceived Milly Roberts had been, and yet a desire not to disappoint the expectations of father, mother, brothers, sisters, and governess.

All their acquaintances exclaimed at the good fortune of the Heckfield.

"They did not know how Mrs. Heckfield managed it, but her daughters no sooner appeared than they were snapped up—they were pretty, certainly. Harriet, the eldest, was a fine rosy girl, but she never had an air of fashion. Lizzy had pretty eyes and fine teeth, but her features were decidedly bad. Sophy had a beautiful figure, but she was so pale!" (Sir Charless Selcourt thought that a little rouge would make her look exceedingly well at the head of his table.) Lucy was the beauty, so they supposed she looked very high.

About this time Lord Montreville came to the watering-place of L——. He had but lately succeeded to the title of his elder bro-

ther; having passed through the career of a gallant gay Lothario, with the reputation of being the most irresistible, and the most discreet, but the most general of lovers.

As the charming, but half-ruined Lord Arthur Stansfeld, he had been safe from the machinations of mammas; but the hearts of the daughters had not been safe from his. Secure in the impossibility of his being considered as an eligible match for the very lovely and high-born beauties who alone could attract his notice, he had not feared to pay such attentions as generally excited a preference on the part of the young ladies. As to the married women, whose names had been coupled with his, in a manner more gratifying to his vanity than to their honour, the list would be painfully long. Still he had avoided any *éclat*, and no one could accuse him of betraying, by a word or a look, any consciousness of his own powers of attraction. On the contrary, he preserved enough of the tone of the *vieille cour* to make his manner respectful and devoted, and he had acquired enough of the ease of the present day to pre-

vent its being the least formal. He had arrived at that age when, if he had not been so good looking, so attentive to his dress, so lively in society, he would have been called by the young an old man; but, as it was, he was only called an agreeable man, without any reference being made to the number of years that had passed over his head. Having now succeeded to the family title and estates, he began for the first time to think seriously of marriage. But every charm which had formerly proved attractive to him now filled him with alarm. He had had every opportunity of becoming acquainted with the foibles and the faults of ladies of fashion, and none of estimating their good qualities. He regarded with suspicion manner, vivacity, talents, grace; and he resolved to choose some young, unsophisticated creature whom he could mould according to his own views, and who should be as unlike as possible to all those with whom he had had any former connexion.

He was accidently introduced to Lucy, and she appeared to him precisely the thing of which he was in search. She was decidedly

very pretty, and lacked nothing but what a week's tuition would give, to have *un air distingué*. Her head was small—it was naturally well put on. Her figure was slender, her foot was not large; and, though her hands were a little red, they were well-shaped. Some almond-paste, the best shoemaker, and Mademoiselle Angélique, would set all quite right. He thought he should not alter the style of her coëffure. The back of her head was so Grecian in its contour, she might venture upon her own simple twist and long ringlets.

Having thus made up his mind, he proceeded to ingratiate himself with the family. There was a public ball at the concert-rooms, and thither he went.

He never danced: he knew he was too old, and he never affected youth. But, when Lucy was dancing, she often found his large, intelligent, expressive eyes fixed on her from beneath the very dark eyebrows which shaded them, without giving them any look of harshness. She felt flattered, without being distressed, for the expression was that of kindly pleasure in seeing a lovely young woman in-

nocently gay. The gaze expressed that he did think her lovely, though it contained nothing that could alarm the most shrinking modesty.

In the course of the evening he conversed a good deal with Mrs. Heckfield, in whose common-place remarks he seemed to find much pith and substance.

Between the dances, when Lucy returned to her mother, he rose to give her his seat, not as if he was merely doing an act of common courtesy, but as if it afforded him real heart-felt pleasure to be of any possible use to her, and it was with kindliness, rather than gallantry, that he flew to fetch her some tea, or some lemonade.

He handed Mrs. Heckfield to supper, and sat between her and Lucy, who found her partner quite dull and stupid, in comparison with this very agreeable new acquaintance. He did not talk much; he said nothing which she could afterwards remember as being either clever or amusing. But he had a manner of listening with a deferential air, his eyes fixed with attention on the speaker, while

his countenance seemed to say, the remark made was new and luminous, something which had never struck him before, so that people believed themselves delighted with him, while, in truth, they were delighted with themselves.

In a cabinet-council, Colonel and Mrs. Heckfield agreed that, as he appeared to find so much pleasure in their society, they might venture to ask Lord Montreville to dinner. But who to invite to meet him? That was a question of much consideration. The Bexleighs were agreeable, but they were so numerous, that it would make the party dull to have so many of one family. It is dreadful if members of the same household get near each other; they cannot seize that moment for talking of family affairs, neither can they make conversation like strangers.

"Let us have the Thomsons, my dear," said the Colonel.

"La! Colonel Heckfield! Mrs. Thompson! so fat and vulgar, and Mr. Thompson, so silent, unless you talk of stocks or Consols."

"Well, then, Colonel Denby and his daughter."

"They will do pretty well; but I was thinking of Mrs. Haughtville, who, you know, has always lived in the first circles."

"What! that deaf old woman? I can't see of what use she can be."

"Why, my dear, it won't do to ask just common-place country neighbours. We must get somebody Lord Montreville is likely to know."

"Very true! And then my friend Dolby, he knows every body, and can talk thirteen to the dozen."

"He knows every body who has been in India, but I very much suspect he does not know any body that Lord Montreville would think any body," answered the lady, who never could endure her husband's jolly friend, who certainly did eat, drink, talk, and laugh, thirteen to the dozen, but who, she not unwisely thought, would be a very bad ingredient in this refined party;—"Surely Sir James Ashgrove, the member for the county, would be a

better person; we can give him a bed, you know."

"Very well! Ashgrove is a good fellow, and a sensible fellow; but he never gives you much of his conversation, unless you talk of the last division in Parliament, and then he will tell you which way every member voted, and the reasons of his vote into the bargain."

"But he is a man of good birth and good connexions, and quite a friend of the family besides; James's godfather and all."

"Then, if we ask our good parson and his two daughters, we shall have quite enough. I don't like a great let-off; it is much best to take matters quietly."

"Good heavens! Colonel Heckfield, you cannot be in earnest. What! that old proser, who makes a comma between every word, and a full-stop nowhere! and those two Misses, one as old as the hills, and the other as giggling a girl as ever I saw. Besides, Lucy and she will get laughing and gossiping together, and Lucy never appears to advantage when Bell Stopford is with her."

"Whom had we best have then, my love?" responded the Colonel, who began to be weary of the discussion.

"Why first of all, Mrs. Haughtville," answered Mrs. Heckfield, who had long ago prepared her list in her mind, "and Sir James Ashgrove (as *you* wish), and young Mr. Lyon, Lord Petersfield's nephew, and Sir Alan Byway, the great traveller, and Miss Pennefeather, who wrote those sweet novels; she is quite the lion of these parts, and people of fashion like to meet a genius; and then, my dear, I thought of asking Lord and Lady Bodlington."

"Mercy upon us, wife! why I don't know them by sight."

"But I do, Colonel Heckfield, and a sweet woman she is. I was introduced to her at the ball the other night, and it would be but civil to ask them to dinner."

"I think it would be much better to have Mr. Denby and his nice daughter. But it is all the same to me; I don't like running after fine folks, who care not a rush for us, that's all."

"Well, if Lord and Lady Bodlington cannot come, then we will ask the Denbys. But I really am half pledged to ask them; for Lady Bodlington said the other night she heard I had the prettiest green-house in the world, and I said I hoped to have the pleasure of showing it to her."

"But we do not dine in the green-house?"

"I assure you, my love, I understand these little matters better than you do, and it would seem quite marked if we did not ask the Bodlingtons."

Colonel Heckfield did not quite understand what would seem marked, but he acquiesced.

The distinguished personages mentioned by Mrs. Heckfield proved propitious, with the exception of Sir Alan Byway, whose place was filled, though most inadequately filled, by a young shy lordling, who was at a private tutor's in the neighbourhood. Mrs. Heckfield preferred him on account of his name, to the Indian friend Dolby, whom Colonel Heckfield, on the secession of the loquacious traveller, made another attempt to insert.

The eventful day arrived. Mrs. Heckfield,

in her secret soul, was in a great fuss, though she maintained a tolerably placid exterior; she was so afraid, after all her pains to exclude any unworthy guests, that the party might prove dull, or not *bien assorti*. Colonel Heckfield was really composed and easy: he did not like seeing great people, but if they fell in his way, they did not annoy him. The place, though small, was pretty; the house was *bien montée;* there was nothing to be ashamed of, and he did not see how it could much signify whether one, out of the many pleasant, cheerful dinners which had taken place under his hospitable roof, proved, or did not prove, the quintessence of perfection.

Not so Mrs. Heckfield. She had settled that, on the impression made that day, depended the future fate of Lucy. When she let herself alone, she was a pleasing, popular woman; but on this occasion she wished to be more elegant and well-bred than usual. Mrs. Haughtville being rather deaf, could not hear a word she said; and as Mrs. Heckfield would not commit the vulgarity of speaking loud, every word they addressed to each

other, might have figured very well in the game of cross questions and crooked answers. Lady Bodlington was a good-humoured very insipid little woman! Lord Bodlington the most common-place man imaginable. Mr. Lyon was an empty dandy, and he was unfortunately seated next to Miss Pennefeather, whom he regarded with horror, fear, detestation, and contempt, as a blue—and, worse than all, a country blue! Miss Pennefeather in a yellow toque and red gown, sate up, waiting to be drawn out—but—she waited in vain. The fashionably low tone of voice in which the mistress of the mansion spoke, and her studied desire to be perfectly well-bred, communicated a *gêne* and formality to the whole party, which, re-acting upon the suffering hostess, would have made the evening one of unmitigated pain to herself, and of unmitigated bore to her company, if Lord Montreville's tact and good-breeding had not come to the relief of all parties.

He asked Miss Pennefeather some questions upon modern literature, which gave her an opportunity of pouring forth her stores of in-

formation into the ears of the loathing dandy. He made a remark concerning the number of members who had paired off upon the last important division in the last session of Parliament, and Sir James Ashgrove was in his element. He informed Lady Bodlington what was the proper name for that species of sable of which her boa was composed, and she became eloquent to prove that, whatever its name, it was of the most approved sort—in Paris at least—whatever it might be in Russia. He told young Lord Slenderdale, he ought to look at Captain Charles Heckfield's brown mare, for she was the cleverest hack he had seen for a long time; and the two young men soon found themselves able to speak. He complimented Colonel Heckfield on his wines, and Mrs. Heckfield on the beautiful china of which the dinner-service was composed: and he told her in a friendly confidential manner, the only place where such rare china could be matched. By degrees the conversation became general, and then he listened to each, so as to make each person—

each lady at least, believe herself an object of interest and attention to him.

Mrs. Heckfield felt quite at her ease concerning the fate of her dinner, and perfectly intimate with Lord Montreville, but not quite happy about Lucy; who, since the first awful silence had given way to a comfortable universal clatter, had grown so merry with her brother and Lord Slenderdale, that Mrs. Heckfield felt convinced Lord Montreville would set her down in his mind as a missish hoyden, and entirely dismiss her from his thoughts. In vain were sundry maternal glances levelled at poor Lucy—knittings of the eyebrows (suddenly smoothed and converted into sweet smiles if any one looked her way), all were wasted on the unconscious girl, who, in the gaiety of her heart, continued to laugh and to talk till she was on the verge of laughing a little too loud, and, as Mrs. Heckfield thought, of losing a Marquisate.

But she was mistaken. Lord Montreville knew the sex well, and he saw that it was an innocent, gay, natural laugh—that there

was neither freedom nor coquetry in her merriment; he knew how quickly women catch the tone of good society, and he still thought she would do.

Mrs. Heckfield hastened the signal for the departure of the ladies, in consequence of Lucy's ill-timed mirth, and they all sailed out, Lady Bodlington first, the Honourable Mrs. Haughtville next, Miss Pennefeather followed after, and Mrs. Heckfield was able quietly, but angrily, to whisper to Lucy, "that she giggled just as if Bell Stopford had been with her."

CHAPTER IV.

Il n'est pas bien honnête, et pour beaucoup de causes,
Qu'une femme étudie et sache tant de choses.
Former aux bonnes mœurs l'esprit de ses enfans,
Faire aller son ménage, avoir l'œil sur ses gens,
Et régler la dépense avec économie,
Doit être son étude et sa philosophie.
Nos pères sur ce point étaient gens bien sensés,
Qui disaient qu'une femme en sait toujours assez
Quand la capacité de son esprit se hausse
À connaitre un pourpoint d'avec un haut de chausse.
Les leurs ne lisaient point, mais elles vivaient bien,
Leurs ménages étaient tout leur docte entretien ;
Et leurs livres, un dé, du fil, et des aiguilles,
Dont elles travaillaient au trousseau de leurs filles.
Les femmes d'à present sont bien loin de ces mœurs,
Elles veulent écrire, et devenir auteurs. MOLIERE.

THERE is no moment more trying to the mistress of a house than that in which the ladies first gather round the fire when they leave the dining-room. If a silence ensues,

or if the conversation is begun in too low a tone of voice, that voiceless utterance which denotes and produces shyness, the die is cast—the character of the evening is stamped!

Unfortunately Mrs. Heckfield, in her anxiety to be attentive, just as the ladies were crowding round the fire, asked them if they would not "take a seat," and was sufficiently wanting in tact to allow them to settle themselves, in something very nearly approaching a circle, and a circle some way removed from the fire.

In vain were the sofas stuffed with cushions, in vain were the ottomans as low as possible, and the arm-chairs so deep that no one under seven feet high could reach the back of them; in vain were all the tables so orthodoxly covered with snuff-boxes under glass-cases, miniatures in beautiful frames, French souvenirs with liliputian artificial flowers, annuals in every variety of binding—prose albums—poetry albums—drawing albums—china cups, and Sevres vases—Dresden ink-stands, and mother-of-pearl letter-pressers, till it was impossible to find a spot on which a cup could

be safely deposited; all these appliances and means to boot will not produce ease if it is wanting in the mind of the hostess. From which, by the by, might be deduced the superiority of mind over matter.

Mrs. Haughtville was a fine lady, and was anxious Lady Bodlington should not labour under the erroneous impression that she was in her element with Miss Pennefeather and the Heckfields. She, therefore, took an early opportunity of asking Lady Bodlington how many Miss Heckfields there were, and whether this Miss Heckfield was older or younger than Lady Selcourt. Lady Bodlington answered truly and simply, that she did not know, as she had only met them once before at the ball. Mrs. Haughtville did not hear, and Lady Bodlington who was straightforward and good-humoured, and did not wish to be uncivil, was quite distressed to know how to answer. Mrs. Haughtville continued to ask questions about the people present, forgetting that though she asked in a whisper, she could not hear the whispered answer.

Mrs. Heckfield, who thought if Miss Pen-

nefeather would talk, every one must be delighted with her cleverness, was occupied in leading her to subjects on which she fancied she would shine and edify her audience; but Miss Pennefeather, who had found the dandy very unsatisfactory, and was not much pleased with the *insouciance* of the ladies of fashion, and who thought herself privileged to have the sensitive pride of genius, was not so easily drawn out. Lucy, who had been daunted by her mother's remark as they left the dining-room, was meek and silent.

It was up-hill work for Mrs. Heckfield. At length she thought of some Italian views, which had lately been sent to her by her eldest son, who was on his travels.

"Have you seen these prints, Miss Pennefeather, that Henry has sent me? They are quite in your way, such an Italian scholar as you are!"

Miss Pennefeather revived; she piqued herself on her pronunciation of Italian. She looked at them with interest, read the names of each with great emphasis, scrupulously called Leghorn, Livorno, and Florence, Firenze;

and expatiated on the beauties of each place, as if she had lived there all her life.

"I thought you had never been abroad, Miss Pennefeather?" said Lucy, timidly and simply.

"No! I have never been abroad, exactly," replied Miss Pennefeather, with a slight embarrassment; but instantly recovering, she added with enthusiasm, "but I have heard and read so much of these hallowed spots, I feel as if I knew them perfectly; as if I had roved with Il Petrarca, through the shady groves and by the purling streams of Valchiusa; as if I had accompanied the great author of the Divina Commedia in his wanderings; and I can almost fancy I had made one of that party of congenial souls in the enchanted skiff with Guido and Lappo,

> E Monna Vanna, e Monna Bice poi,
> E quella sotto 'l numer delle trenta!

I never see a print of La bella Firenze without thinking of her exiled poet, and," she added with a sigh, and an upward glance, which was intended to speak volumes, "feeling with him—

Come sa di sale
Lo pan altrui, com'è duro calle,
Lo scender, e'l salir per l'altrui scale."

Miss Pennefeather was poor, and her friends were extremely kind in frequently inviting her to stay at their houses, where she appeared to enjoy herself exceedingly, and gave no signs of sympathising with Dante.

"What did she say?" asked Mrs. Haughtville.

"Something about salt bread, and its being very hard to go up and down stairs," answered the good-humoured Lady Bodlington.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Haughtville.

Miss Pennefeather cast a glance of contempt at the high-born pair, and relapsed into a dignified silence. Coffee came: that was a real blessing. Tea succeeded, which was some comfort. Mrs. Heckfield's eyes turned frequently and more frequently towards the door: still the gentlemen came not. In her despair she bade Lucy give them a little music.

"You are fond of music, I believe, Lady Bodlington?"

"Oh, yes! passionately fond of music!"

answered Lady Bodlington, with a suppressed yawn, and poor Lucy seated herself at the piano-forte.

She had a pretty voice, but she was very much frightened. Miss Pennefeather was a critic, and Mrs. Haughtville looked as that Lady Bodlington she did not mind—she seemed good-natured; and the circumstance of her being a Viscountess, had not the same effect on Lucy's nerves as on her mother's.

She did her best, and Lady Bodlington, with a sweet smile, thanked her for that pretty Spanish air.

"It is German!" said Lucy with the *naïveté* of youth; and both felt uncomfortable Lady Bodlington, at having made a wrong hit; Lucy, at not having pronounced her words more distinctly. Lady Bodlington should have known better than to utter any phrase of commendation which committed her, as to the language in which a young lady's song is couched. Lucy should have known better than to set her right, when she had made the mistake.

"If Miss Pennefeather would favour us!"

humbly suggested Mrs. Heckfield: "One of your own unique compositions, my dear Miss Pennefeather. Miss Pennefeather composes words, and music, and all, Mrs. Haughtville; and they are the sweetest things!"

This account of Miss Pennefeather's multifarious talents excited a slight emotion of curiosity in Mrs. Haughtville's mind, and she accordingly begged Miss Pennefeather to grant their request. Lady Bodlington was very anxious indeed; and the poetess, whose pride, though easily wounded, was, through the medium of her vanity, as easily soothed, found the two fine ladies were more intellectual, and consequently more worthy of the efforts of her genius, than she had at first imagined.

After a little bashful reluctance, she seated herself upon the round stool. She was short and thick, with a very small waist and a very full gown; and she sat extremely stiff and upright. Her arms were short, and when she meant to play *staccato*, she caught up her hands as high as her shoulders, and then she pounced down again on the affrighted notes

as a kite upon a brood of chickens. The "sweet thing" she selected for the occasion was in a German style. A love-lorn damsel who sold herself to the spirit of darkness, that she might rejoin her murdered lover's ghost in another, but not a better, world. Miss Pennefeather's nose was small, and somewhat *retroussé;* her eyes were large, black, and round (they were her beauty); her mouth would not have been ugly, but that it was difficult to decide where her chin ended and her throat began, so that, during the vehement and energetic passages which the nature of the subject called forth, when the head was thrown back, and the black eyes were darting their beams towards the ceiling, the double chin protruded rather beyond the natural and original one.

The gentleman entered just as the maiden was torn away to the realms below by the infernal crew, and, having repented her of her unholy compact, was invoking beings of the upper air to her rescue. The poor pianoforte reeled under the astounding accompaniment, in its lowest bass to the deep-toned

exultation of the demons, and to the shrieks of the maiden in its highest treble; the Sappho's cheeks were suffused with the excitement of the moment, the feathers in her yellow toque were waving as rapidly as the plume of a hero in the thickest of the fight. The sight, the sounds, were awful!

The dandy reached the door — he saw — he heard — and he fled. He retreated to the hall, and hastily seizing a hat (which, by the by, happened to be Lord Montreville's instead of his own), and throwing around him his military cloak, he boldly sallied forth in a drizzling wet night to walk two miles to his lodgings.

> "He'd brave the raging of the skies,
> But not"—Miss Pennefeather.

The other gentlemen were less easily intimidated, and made good their entrance. Lord Montreville seated himself by the side of Lucy, and, without speaking enough to be uncivil towards the performer, he contrived to make Lucy perfectly understand that he preferred her conversation to Miss Pennefeather's singing, although he was passionately fond of

music, and should like of all things to hear her sing.

When the performance was concluded, he assured the Corinne of the evening that her composition was one which could be heard with indifference by no one. Miss Pennefeather was charmed, and asked if his Lordship was an admirer of the new style of English music, which had been introduced since the "Captive Knight" and "The Treasures of the Deep" had made such a sensation.

"Of course you know 'The Treasures of the Deep?' They tell me I have caught something of the inspired authoress's expression." Lord Montreville really trembled. He had heard it sung by the inspired authoress, and he hastened to avert the sacrilegious attempt, by begging for another of her own composition.

Charmed and flattered, Miss Pennefeather again burst forth in a perfectly original piece, under cover of which Lord Montreville entered into a most agreeable conversation with Lucy. His dark, lively, expressive eyes looked at her with so much consciousness of being understood, that she immediately felt quite

intimate, and perfectly satisfied that he was as much amused as she was by Miss Pennefeather's exhibition. These looks of mutual intelligence and amusement prevented her feeling any awe of his age or his rank, while his very age made her feel perfectly safe and innocent in immediately giving in to the intimacy which so suddenly sprang up between them. Their communication did not confine itself to a little good-humoured ridicule of the self-constituted Corinne; he had the happy knack of leading the conversation to topics interesting to the individuals with whom he conversed; and Mrs. Heckfield overheard Lucy, in the fulness of her heart, giving a detailed account of the death of a Newfoundland puppy, which was supposed to have been bitten by a mad dog!

Mrs. Heckfield was in agonies: she looked unutterable things; but her looks were utterly thrown away. Lucy's heart and soul were in her subject, and her eyes were sufficiently tearful to look very bright and melting. Lord Montreville thought this extremely countrified simplicity charming, though

he did not intend it should last for ever. He was himself a professed lover of animals, and he gave her, in return, an account of a horse who neighed when he came into the stable, and would put his nose into his pocket to find the bread he was in the habit of feeding him with.

Lucy thought him the nicest, best-natured creature she had ever met with; and Mrs. Heckfield saw her, in the midst of his story, draw her chair nearer to him, her whole mind intent upon the sensible horse. Mrs. Heckfield thought, "How improper! how forward! how vulgar! What can ail Lucy to-night?"

When the company dispersed, what was her horror to see Lucy put out her hand towards Lord Montreville, and shake hands with him cordially, heartily, and frankly; but her horror was mixed with astonishment, when Lord Montreville begged permission to call the next morning, as Miss Heckfield had promised to show him some beautiful puppies, and to allow him to select one, as he was a great dog-fancier.

"What can be the meaning of this!"

thought she, "he must be disgusted with Lucy's manners to-day! They could not have been worse if Bell Stopford had been here!"

When the last carriage had driven from the door, Mrs. Heckfield threw herself into a chair.

"Well, Lucy! I think you have done it to-day! When you knew I wished you to behave like a girl of fashion. When we had all the best company within ten miles round assembled here, just this one day, to giggle and laugh all dinner-time, and then to entertain a man of Lord Montreville's refinement and taste with your dog's death, and your puppies' birth! He must think you have been brought up in the stables, rather than in the drawing-room."

"Oh, dear mamma! I assure you he asked me all about poor dear Hector's death!"

"Asked you about Hector's death! How could he have known such a dog as Hector ever existed, if you had not begun about your own dog and your own affairs? Don't you know that egotism should be avoided in every way,

and that it is the most ill-bred thing in the world to talk of yourself and your concerns?"

"So it is, mamma;—very true. I did not mean to talk of myself, and I am sure I do not know how I fell into it: but you don't know how interested he seemed. I do not think he was bored, really: he says he is so fond of animals—just like me."

"Pooh, child!—he is a very well-bred man, and was too polite to let you feel you bored him. You must learn not to be led into pouring your own histories into people's ears."

Mrs. Heckfield forgot that at dinner she had given Lord Montreville a very long account of the manner in which she had become possessed of the china he had admired.

CHAPTER V.

Enfin ils me mettaient à mon aise : et moi qui m'imaginais qu'il y avait tant de mystère dans la politesse des gens du monde, et qui l'avais regardé comme une science qui m'était totalement inconnue, et dont je n'avais nul principe, j'étais bien surprise de voir qu'il n'y avait rien de si particulier dans la leur, rien qui me fût si étranger ; mais seulement quelque chose de liant, d'obligeant, et d'aimable.

MARIVAUX.

LUCY went to bed uneasy at having had such bad manners, and yet not altogether mortified ; for, though she implicitly believed all her mother said of her behaviour, she did not think it had quite produced the effect she imagined upon Lord Montreville, " for mamma did not know how good-natured he was."

She generally chatted with Milly, as she was undressing ; and Milly, who was aware that the party of that day was one which had excited some anxiety in her mistress's bosom,

inquired of Miss Lucy "how the gentlefolks had been pleased, and whether everything was right at table."

"We were all pretty well placed, I believe: only mamma says I am not to sit so near Charles again, for, if we get near each other we make too much noise; and Mr. Lyon did not like Miss Pennefeather at all."

"I am sorry for that, Miss; but I meant how the cross-corners did, for poor Mrs. Fussicome was in such a way! The jelly would not stand, and it looked so shocking bad when it was in the dish, that what did we do but beat up some raspberry-cream in no time, and sent it in instead; but, then, it made two reds at the cross-corners; but I should hope nobody noticed it."

"I am sure I did not, nurse, and I don't think mamma did; at least, she said nothing about it. Everything looked very nice, tell Mrs. Fussicome."

"Yes, Miss, that I will, for she has been quite put out about it; she said she could not enjoy her supper a bit, and she thought the soufflet was not quite right."

"Mamma did not say anything about it.

indeed, she saw no faults in the dinner—they were all in me. How I do wish I had not such spirits.—I mean to be so quiet and demure, and as soon as the people begin to talk to me, I forget. I do really believe Lord Montreville is very good-natured, and will not think the worse of me."

"La! Miss, I'm sure your mamma can't think there is any harm in talking and laughing with such an old gentleman."

"He is not so very old, Milly," answered Lucy, though, if Milly had not said so, she might have been the first to say it herself.

About one o'clock the next morning, Lord Montreville arrived at Rose Hill Lodge, and was surprised to find Lucy shy, reserved, timid and rather awkward. Mrs. Heckfield, anxious to efface from Lord Montreville's mind all impressions concerning the kennel, and the stables, and the dog-hutches, led his attention to the flower-garden, which was remarkably pretty, and to her small conservatory, which was in excellent order; at the same time taking care to let him know that the disposition of the flower-beds was accord-

ing to Lucy's taste—that Lucy had arranged the vases in the manner which excited his admiration—that the training of the creepers in festoons from one tree to another was Lucy's fancy. She pointed out a beautiful new geranium which had been named after her little "madcap Lucy," for madcap as she is, Lucy Montreville, she has a decided taste for beauty and that kind of young," added Mrs. Heckfield, with a sweet smile at Lucy, who certainly that morning had not deserved the name of "madcap."

Lord Montreville immediately understood the state of the case, and was well pleased to thereby perceived that Lucy was docile, easily subdued, and easily managed. However, as his present object was to win her confidence, preparatory to attempting her heart, he alluded to Miss Heckfield's promise of a puppy of their beautiful breed of setters, and he begged to be taken to the kennel, as he was to be allowed to choose for himself. Mrs. Heckfield intreated Lord Montreville would allow her to send for the dogs—Lord Montreville insisted on not giving so much trouble;

when the servant was seen issuing from the drawing-room windows, showing the way to Lord and Lady Bodlington, who had called to see the conservatory. Mrs. Heckfield had a fresh demand on her politeness; and, after the proper greetings, Lord Montreville whispered Lucy that she must not allow him to be cheated of his puppy—that he had quite set his heart upon seeing the whole family, and intreated her to lead the way. She was at first somewhat confused, and looked uneasily towards her mother, who was some way in advance; but she did not know how to refuse: so they proceeded through the back-yard, by the coal-hole, and the bottle-rack—through the drying-ground—past the pig-sties, to a range of out-houses, where Lufra and all her family were shut up.

The moment Lucy opened the door, up jumped Lufra, to the great detriment of the pretty muslin gown which that day made its first appearance.

"Oh, my best new gown!" exclaimed Lucy, "Oh dear! Why would mamma make me put it on?"

She had scarcely uttered the words, when it flashed across her why mamma had wished her to be smart and to look well — she stopped short, and blushed up to the eyes.

"This is too *naïf*," thought Lord Montreville; "but *naïveté* soon dies away if it is not encouraged. Her mother wishes to catch me, I know; but the girl has no plan: I shall be able to mould her to my liking."

A young man would have flown off upon perceiving the mother's views; but Lord Montreville had seen them plainly from the very beginning, and it did not affect his opinion as to whether Lucy *était son fait*, or not. Because Mrs. Heckfield wished to catch him, there was no reason he should be caught; and he continued his observations of Lucy, and his calculations whether she would easily become the sort of wife he wished to have.

After a long discussion concerning the several merits and beauties of the several puppies, in which Lucy found Lord Montreville's taste in dogs perfectly coincided with her own, the puppy was selected, and Lucy's heart had again opened, her reserve had vanished, she

had made up her mind that, for once, mamma was wrong and she was right; that her's had been the most correct estimate of Lord Montreville's character. She asked him if he admired young donkeys. He confessed, that if he had a weakness, it was for a little baby donkey, with a shaggy forehead, and a pointed nose. Lucy's eyes sparkled at such a proof of sympathy in her companion. She proposed to show him her pet. He eagerly assented, and they proceeded through the chicken-yard to the paddock where the donkeys were grazing. The chickens expected to be fed, and all gathered round Lucy's feet; the donkeys instantly set up a most sonorous braying, and galloped to her with their uplifted heads. Lucy was amused and began to laugh, and to pat, and stroke, and pinch the dear sensible creatures, when a turn in the shrubbery walk brought Mrs. Heckfield, Lord and Lady Bodlington, and Mr. Lyon to the opposite side of the paddock, which commanded a view of Lucy and Lord Montreville. Lucy felt her cheeks glow, and her mirth subside. Her mother, who could not but know through what ignoble

paths she must have led Lord Montreville, would be more displeased than ever. She was sobered in an instant. Lord Montreville perceived the blush, and the change in her countenance, and flattered himself there was something gratifying to himself in her emotions. They retraced their steps, but Lucy was silent and abashed, and looked heartily ashamed of herself when they rejoined the party.

Lord Montreville immediately addressed Mrs. Heckfield; informed her that "Miss Heckfield, at his earnest request, had allowed him to inspect the puppies, and to select the one he fancied; and that he had a childish passion for young donkeys, which she had also most kindly indulged."

Mrs. Heckfield saw that no harm was done, and she was soothed. Lucy thought him more good-natured than ever in thus averting the storm she saw impending, and gratitude was added to cement the union of their congenial souls.

He now became a frequent visiter at Rosehill Lodge, and his manner gradually assumed more the tone of gallantry. Reports arose.

Lucy was rallied by her young friends, and began to look into her feelings.

She had seen his beautiful equipage, his four blood bays; she had seen engravings of his magnificent seat in Staffordshire, of his lovely villa near London, of his ancient castle in Wales. She was proof against the splendour of Ashdale Park, and the elegances of Beausejour, but the castle had a decided effect upon her heart. The walls were nine feet thick; there was a donjon keep, at the top of a tower nine hundred and forty-one years old; and Lord Montreville's teeth were extremely good—almost as good as Captain Langley's. From the vaults under the Caërwhwyddwth Castle subterraneous passages, to the end of which no one within the memory of man had penetrated, were supposed to extend to the ruined monastery of Caërmerwhysteddwhstgen; and then Lord Montreville was quite thin — not the least inclined to corpulency. He was older than Sir Charles Selcourt, but he was much more agreeable,—he was certainly a great deal older than Captain Langley, but then Captain Langley was not the least clever. All their

tastes agreed exactly. He was enthusiastic upon the self-same subjects,—puppies, donkeys, goslings, and Lord Byron.

Her mind was in a wavering state, when the following conversation took place between herself and Milly.

"This is poor Miss Lizzy's birth-day, Miss, and we have all been drinking her health and happiness to-night at supper. She is twenty-two this very day."

"And I shall be nineteen next birthday, Milly. We are all growing very old. It is almost time I should be married. How old were you when you married?"

"Nineteen, Miss Lucy."

"Just about my age. And how old was John?"

"In his twenty-one, Miss."

"Dear! I don't think that was difference enough. A man ought to be a good deal older than his wife, that he may advise her, and guide her, and all that, as mamma says, when she is out of sight of her mother."

"I can't say, Miss. The Bible says, 'I will make an help meet for him;' so I sup-

pose the woman is to help the man, as well as the man to help the woman; and if they are to help one another, why I reckon they should be something of an age."

"Perhaps that may be best, nurse, where they both have to work, and where the man should be young and strong to labour for his family; but in another line, nurse,—among richer people, you know,—where there is no occasion to be strong and to work hard, it is such a thing for a giddy young girl to have a steady sensible man, who can tell her all she ought to do—a man much cleverer than herself, a person she can quite look up to."

"Maybe it is, Miss."

"And then, as mamma says, a married woman, if she is not quite ugly, is liable, you know, to have men — young men — talk to her,—talk to her a good deal,—more than they should; and then it is such a thing to have a husband who can tell her exactly whom she should talk to, and whom she should not talk to."

"But sure, Miss, I should think every woman, married or single, might know when

a gentleman said any thing as was not becoming for her to listen to."

"Yes, certainly; but mamma says that in the great world a young woman might get herself talked about just for talking about nothing at all, to one of those fashionable dandies, and that if she has a husband who knows the world well, he will tell her just how far she may listen to such people."

"Well, my dear Miss Lucy, we poor folks don't understand about talking, and being talked about, and listening, and not listening. For my part, for as long as I have lived in this wicked world—and a wicked world it is in some ways—I never knew a young woman as was married to a young man as was the man of her heart, as ever lost her good name for all she might be affable and pleasant like with her neighbours. But the gentlefolks knows best, to be sure."

Milly was unsatisfactory: she saw what was going on in the family, and she could not like it: it was no business of her's, and she would never think of stepping out of her place. Lucy was uncomfortable. She loved Milly,

and, moreover, she had settled in her own mind to love like Milly. She longed to know what she thought of Lord Montreville, and at length she plunged into the subject.

"Don't you think Lord Montreville is a very pleasing-looking man, Milly?"

"Yes, Miss; he looks very well for his years."

"He is so clever you can't think."

"Is he, Miss?"

"And so very good-natured!"

"That is a good thing for all his servants, I am sure, Miss."

"And for every one else who is connected with him."

"Yes, certainly, Miss."

"He is the most agreeable person, and loves all sorts of animals, and seems to like to have every thing about him happy."

"Sure, Miss."

"Do you know, Milly, I should not be very much surprised if you might some day have an opportunity of trying whether he made those around him happy or not."

"Indeed, Miss!"

"Mamma says she is convinced he likes me very much;" and she added, in a coaxing manner, "now what shall we do, you and I, Milly?"

"I am sure, Miss, it is just as you please."

"Yes, I know that well enough," answered Lucy, with a shade of pettishness in her tone; "I can say no as well as anybody, if I please, and mamma says she would not influence my choice for the world; but it certainly is very true what mamma says, that I am so giddy I should always be getting into scrapes if I was to marry anybody as young and as giddy as myself. It was only yesterday she was talking about it, after Lord Montreville had brought me that beautiful bouquet of orange-flowers; and she asked me whether I had any objection in the world to him, and whether I did not think him clever, and agreeable, and good-natured, and whether there was anybody else I thought more clever, or more agreeable, or more good-natured, and I am sure I can't think of anybody just now. Lord Slenderdale and Mr. Desmond are handsomer, to be sure; but mamma would be shocked to hear me talk about beauty

in that kind of way. It does not sound well in a girl, you know." Then, after a pause, she added. "Did you think John handsome?"

"I believe other folks called him a fine young man, but I am sure I never thought nothing at all about his looks."

"Oh!" thought Lucy, "mamma is quite right; girls should not set any value on the exterior—one should only think of the mind. Besides, Lord Montreville is still very good-looking." Presently she continued, "Did you think John very clever, Milly?"

"La! Miss, I don't know, I'm sure. The schoolmaster never said no other than that he was a very good boy at his book, but I never thought about his scholarship. That was no business of mine."

"Was John agreeable, and pleasant, amusing, you know, to talk to?"

"He was always pleasant to me, I'm sure; he never gave me a bad word, nor an unkind look in his life, and he was always very agreeable to any thing I wished; and, as to being amusing, why we always had other things to

think of, than amusing ourselves, so I can't justly say."

"Oh," thought Lucy, "he was a good creature, but evidently very stupid and dull: and Lord Montreville is so lively and agreeable!"

The result of this conversation was, that Lucy went to bed, pleased with Lord Montreville, and not quite pleased with Milly. She went to sleep and dreamed she was the Marchioness of Montreville, chaperoning her sister Emma to Almack's. People cannot prevent their dreams. "In vino veritas." Likewise, in dreams, there is truth. Many a weakness, many a secret preference, which the waking thoughts would not be guilty of harbouring, have been revealed to the dreamer in visions over which he, or she, had no controul. The emulator of Milly's pure, disinterested, uncompromising, uncalculating affection, would never wittingly have allowed the idea of worldly vanities and splendours to have influenced her mind; but I fear we should lower our heroine too much in the opinion of the young and ro-

mantic reader, were we to inquire too deeply into the degree in which they did influence her view of the subject.

The next morning she jokingly repeated her dream to Emma.

"Oh, Lucy!" exclaimed Emma, "what a charming dream! And you know mamma says, if you marry, I may come out at seventeen, and, if you don't I must stay in this poky school-room till I am eighteen. You never can refuse Lord Montreville."

CHAPTER VI.

À l'age où j'étais on n'a pas le courage de résister à tout le monde, je crus ce qu'on me disait tant par docilité que par persuasion ; je me laissai entraîner, je fis ce qu'on me disait, j'étais dans une émotion qui avait arrêté toutes mes pensées ; les autres decidèrent de mon sort, et je ne fus moi-même qu'une spectatrice stupide de l'engagement éternel que je pris.

MARIVAUX.

WHAT with the jests of others and her mother's counsels, both open and implied, Lucy had no doubt of Lord Montreville's intentions. The whole affair seemed only to depend upon herself. What was her surprise when at seven o'clock, instead of Lord Montreville, a note arrived, apologizing for his absence, on the plea that he had been summoned away upon business. Lucy thought lovers were to be devoted things, who were to have no business but that of gaining their lady's favour.

There was a party that day, and she saw people looked surprised at hearing Lord Montreville was gone away so suddenly, and she felt a little mortified. "I am certainly in love," she thought, "for every thing seems dull to-day. Yes, it is all a blank now he is gone; (how much is implied by the simple pronoun *he* or *she;*) just as Milly said when John was gone to the back-woods, and she was left at Halifax."

The resemblance between her situation and feelings and those of Milly, would not have been so evident to others.

Several days elapsed, and nothing was heard of Lord Montreville. His saddle-horses were seen to pass towards London with their horse-cloths packed upon their saddles, in travelling costume. Lucy thought he was certainly gone quite away, without proposing, and she felt acute pangs of mortification and disappointment. She was ready to cut out her tongue for having, of her own accord, spoken to Milly of her prospects in life, when those prospects were evidently mere conjurings of her own self-conceit; she could have beat herself for having

repeated her foolish dream to Emma, who had repeated it to Mary, who had repeated it to the governess, who had made Lucy blush more than once by her allusions to it,—she could cry at thinking how faintly she had rebutted Bell Stopford's innuendoes,—and she worked herself up to a state of soreness and agitation, not unlike that which might be produced by the tender passion itself.

It is not easy to distinguish how much of the emotions on such occasions proceeds from real preference, and how much from gratified or mortified vanity. I believe it does not often fall to the lot of any one to feel the real, pure, passion of love to the highest degree of which their nature is capable; but the combination of other, less noble passions, will produce considerable pains, pleasures, blushings, and flushings; hearts will beat, cheeks turn pale, hands shake, knees even will knock a little together, and the symptoms pass muster very well, as love, true love. If the affair ends in marriage, and the parties suit, it does as well as love, and often ends in becoming love itself. If, on the contrary, the flirtation ends,

as many flirtations do, these symptoms are mentally laughed at and forgotten, as having only been passing ebullitions of gratified vanity or indignant pride; the heart is supposed, and really is, free, and ready for a real true passion, whenever it may be called forth.

Lucy passed a restless and uncomfortable week—annoyed, when they were asked where Lord Montreville was gone—annoyed, when they were obliged to answer they did not know—annoyed, when they were asked when he returned—annoyed, at being again obliged to reply they could not tell—annoyed, when people looked surprised at their answers—annoyed, when they looked wise and cunning, and treated these answers as discreet evasions.

At length, on the tenth day from Lord Montreville's departure, his servant was seen riding up the coach-road, towards the back-door. Lucy's heart beat very quick, and she thought it quite abominable of John not to bring the note up-stairs immediately. She would fain have told her mother that she had seen the servant arrive, and that John was evidently waiting to finish his dinner, and

to prepare the luncheon, before he brought the note; but she was ashamed to show her impatience, and she resolutely continued to copy music.

John, it is presumed, had a good appetite that day, at least the time appeared unaccountably long. At length, however, luncheon was announced, and the note delivered, with the information that Lord Montreville's servant was to wait for an answer.

"It must be the proposal! and the servant is not to return without the answer," thought Lucy, and her eyes felt dizzy. She glanced at the exterior of the note—it was three-cornered!—It could not be a proposal.—No! —never did a proposal come in the shape of a three-cornered note! It was very short; announcing his return, and begging, if Mrs. Heckfield had finished the third volume of some novel which he had lent her, that she would return it, as he was sending back a box of books to the library.

Lucy durst not ask what were the contents of the note; but her mother threw it to her, bidding her look for the book. She read the

momentous communication, the withholding of which by John had so excited her internal wrath, and she thought it the shortest, oddest note, she ever read !—so abrupt !—evidently written in such a hurry ! There could be no doubt, however, what it meant to convey—a complete breaking-off of the intimacy with their family: —even sending for his book in such haste !

Meanwhile, she hunted for the volume, and she packed it up; resolving in her own mind to beware of the base deceiver, man, and feeling herself a slighted damsel.

Lord Montreville's absence had been caused by business connected with the intentions he entertained towards Lucy; but if he had acted upon a plan, he could not have shown more consummate policy. Every one values more highly whatever they have lost, or believe themselves on the point of losing; and when, in the course of that very day, he himself called at Rosehill Lodge, Lucy felt very happy, and greeted him with a blushing cheek and conscious face, which made him think he had really inspired the young thing with the tenderest interest; and Lucy, when she felt her

heart beat, said to herself, "This is love—it can be nothing else."

They were prepared for their walk, when Lord Montreville called; and he begged leave to accompany them. Mrs. Heckfield stopped to give some directions to the gardener, Lord Montreville proceeded along the shrubbery-path with Lucy, and Mrs. Heckfield was not so swift of foot as to overtake them without exerting herself more than she thought there was any occasion to do. The three-cornered note had not appeared to her such decisive evidence of a wish to withdraw from their acquaintance.

Lord Montreville expressed his pleasure at returning to Lyneton,—not that he liked Lyneton—he thought it an odious place; but he was so glad to find himself once more in the neighbourhood of Rosehill Lodge: but great as was the pleasure he felt, he could hardly flatter himself his return could give any corresponding pleasure; if he could suppose so, he should indeed esteem himself fortunate.

"It is coming," thought Lucy; and she now felt as much afraid he should propose, as

she had before felt afraid he would not. Her whole wish was to avert the momentous explanation.

"Oh, yes," she answered, "mamma is always very glad to see you. Where is mamma? perhaps she has missed us; we had better find her;" and she turned and mended her pace.

"May I not hope to detain you one moment, Miss Heckfield?" asked Lord Montreville, in a voice of earnest persuasion.

"Oh! it is as good as come!" thought Lucy; "what shall I do?—Oh yes, certainly," she answered; but walked on faster than ever.

"If you would allow me a few moments' conversation, Miss Heckfield, I have much to say that interests me deeply."

"Where can mamma be?" rejoined Lucy, in a tone of fear and trepidation.

"For a few moments you must listen to me!" &c. &c. &c.

Suffice it to say, Lord Montreville then proposed. The words of a proposal are horridly stupid to the ears of all but the parties concerned; and in what precise terms Lord

Montreville couched the offer of his hand, heart, fortune, and titles, has remained, and will ever remain unknown. A terrified "Oh dear!" uttered by Lucy when he began to unfold his mind, were the only words which escaped her lips. When he pressed for an answer, she did not say "No!" but she still walked on, her pace increasing every second, her close garden-bonnet well pulled over her face, which was rigidly directed on the gravel-walk before her, so that no one who was not immediately opposite had a chance of catching a glimpse of her countenance. Even Lord Montreville began to feel a little awkward. He had made love often enough, but he had proposed but once before; and that was in his early youth, to a very rich heiress, who had soon after married a Duke. Fortunately for the nerves of both, they came upon Mrs. Heckfield at a turn in the walk. She saw with a glance that something decisive had taken place, and she hastened to relieve Lucy, and also to clench the matter.

Lucy slipped her arm within Mrs. Heckfield's, and feeling comparatively easy and

secure, now she had interposed her mother between herself and her suitor, she walked on in silence, carefully contriving to make each step so exactly keep time, that the somewhat rounded form of the matron should completely eclipse the slender form of the girl.

Lord Montreville explained himself in becoming and graceful terms; and Mrs. Heckfield, in a rapture of scarcely concealed joy, declared with what pleasure she should communicate Lord Montreville's flattering declaration to Colonel Heckfield.

"But, my dear Mrs. Heckfield, I have not yet been allowed to hope. Your daughter has not given me one word, one look of encouragement, and I need your kind influence to induce her——"

"Lucy, my dear, you have not been so uncivil as to—My dear child, don't be so silly. You must excuse her, my dear Lord Montreville, she is so young, and so little used to these agitating scenes. *I* know what her feelings are, and although she is not at this moment able to speak for herself, I think I may answer for it you need not despair. Perhaps,

if you were to leave her for a short time to compose herself, she would be more able to enjoy your society by dinner-time."

"Must I then depart without hearing my fate! But I would not distress Miss Heckfield on any consideration, and I had rather pass some hours of suspense and wretchedness myself than that she should feel one moment's annoyance. I trust she will allow me to prove by my future life that such are my sentiments." He took her unresisting hand, and pressing it between his own with an air of gallantry, he took his departure with very little doubt or suspense as to the result of the family colloquy. But he wished not only to be accepted, but to be preferred. He was himself totally incapable of again feeling the passion of love, if indeed any of the *liaisons* and flirtations in which he had been engaged deserved such a name; but he wished to excite it, and it was to him an amusing and a gratifying study, to watch the flutter and the trepidations of the young thing who was apparently now experiencing them for the first time.

As soon as he was fairly out of sight, Lucy

burst into tears, and threw herself upon her mother's shoulder, saying, "Oh, mamma, I am as good as married!"

"Well, my love, and do you wish to live single all your life?"

"Oh no, mamma!"

"And do you dislike Lord Montreville?"

"Oh no, mamma!"

"You seemed to me very uneasy and restless when he went away without proposing."

"Yes, mamma, so I was, certainly."

"And you looked very happy when he called just now. Were you not glad to see him?"

"Yes, mamma, I certainly was."

"Well, my dear, if you were sorry he went away without proposing, you must be glad he has come back, and has proposed."

"Yes, I suppose I am, but I do not feel as if I was."

"Do you wish me, then, to refuse him? I would never force any girl's inclinations, as I have always told you, and I am ready to take the whole thing upon myself if you please; for really, after the encouragement you have given

him, I do not see how you can consistently say he is not agreeable to you."

"Have I encouraged him so very much?"

"I do know, my love; but you allowed him to take your hand just now, and you always appeared to have neither eyes nor ears for any one else when he was present."

"He always had so much the most to say."

"Well, you know best: I can say no more than that if you dislike him, I am ready to refuse him for you. Do you wish me to do so?"

"Oh, no! not that—"

"Then you wish me to accept him, in your name?"

"Oh, not quite that, mamma."

"My dear, girls must say Yes or No. As I have always told you, I will not put any force on your inclinations."

Nothing persuades people so much, as saying you would not persuade them,—nothing constrains them so much, as saying you would put no constraint upon them. This Mrs. Heckfield felt from female tact. It was from intuition, not by design, that she used these expressions,

while at the same time she thereby re-assured herself that she was not hurrying Lucy into a worldly marriage.

"Do you wish me to tell Lord Montreville that, although you may have seemed to prefer his society to that of others, you do not in fact prefer him, and that therefore you must decline the offer he is so flattering as to make you. Shall I say so?"

"No, mamma; I should be very sorry, I am sure."

"Then you wish me to say yes?"

"I suppose I do, mamma."

"Well, my love, I think you have decided very wisely for yourself, and no girl ever had more reason to be delighted with her prospects. You have been selected from all the rest of your sex by a man who has been universally reckoned most fascinating and irresistible, and whom all the ladies were in love with, when he was only a younger brother; and now that he has a noble fortune, and high rank, and might choose from all the first beauties in the land, he picks out my little Lucy, who is crying like a child, at having got—just the very thing she

was ready to cry because she thought she should not get, for I saw your face this morning when the note came."

Lucy smiled through her tears; the picture of the conquest she had made was agreeable to her self-love, and the picture of her inconsistency was undeniably true.

Mrs. Heckfield kissed her, and hastened to Colonel Heckfield to communicate the important intelligence.

CHAPTER VII.

Oh, never may the hope that lights thine eyes,
  Sweet maid, be changed to disappointment's gloom ;
Never, th' ingenuous frolic laugh I prize
  To the forced smile that care must oft assume ;
But may the blissful dream of thy young heart,—
  That dream from which so many wake too late,—
Of joys that love requited shall impart,
  Be realized in thy approaching fate !

Unpublished Poems.

COLONEL HECKFIELD was a quiet, easy, amiable man, whom everybody loved. He was in the habit of thinking his wife understood such matters better than he did, and that, as she had hitherto married all his girls extremely well, there was no need of his interference. He always considered the affair as appertaining to Mrs. Heckfield, and never felt as if his daughters had any other share in the whole transaction, than that of being the in-

struments employed by Mrs. Heckfield's master-hand. So much did he look upon her as the principal, that he was once heard to say, "when my wife married Sir Charles Selcourt—"

The happy mother proceeded to inform Mademoiselle Hirondelle of the high honours which awaited her pupil.

"Ah, Madame, I thought well when Miss Lucy had such bad headache yesterday *que c'était l'objet.* Miss Lucy was in anger with me, but I had reason. I know myself what it is *de se consumer dans l'absence.*"

Mrs. Heckfield dreaded the history of Mademoiselle's faithless lover, the bookseller at Caen, who had not written to her for three years, seven months, and three weeks, and she hastened to tell Emma that she might now look forward to coming out very soon.

"And I shall go to Almack's with Lucy, after all, mamma!"

Neither did Mrs. Heckfield fail to tell Milly of the lofty station to which her nursling would be raised.

"Sure, Ma'am! and so Miss Lucy is going to leave us?" said Milly, with a calm and

stoical manner, very unlike that she usually had when any thing most remotely affecting one of the "dear children" was in question.

"Yes, nurse; and I do think I am the most fortunate of mothers."

"La! Ma'am, to have all your children leave you so soon? Sure, you will be very lonesome when they are all married and gone?"

"Oh, nurse, we mothers are never selfish. We wish for nothing but our children's advantage."

How many parents sacrifice the happiness, under the firm conviction they are promoting the welfare of the children for whom they would themselves be ready to endure every privation.

Lucy had received her father's cordial blessing, Mademoiselle's Frenchified embrace, her sister's thoughtless, merry congratulations, and Milly's thoughtful, serious good wishes. She came down to dinner with a cheek flushed by vague emotions, and conscious eyes, which durst not rest on any one. She looked really lovely!

Lord Montreville was received by Mrs. Heckfield with unfeigned joy; by Colonel

Heckfield with heartiness; by Lucy, with a pleased tremor, which was perfectly satisfactory. A look from Mrs. Heckfield, and he seated himself by Lucy's side.

"You will, then, allow me to prove by my future life, as I did this morning, when I sacrificed my own wishes to your's, that I prefer your gratification to my own?"

"Indeed, you are very good — I hope always . . . ."

Dinner was announced. Lord Montreville offered his arm to Lucy as the accepted lover, instead of to Mrs. Heckfield, as merely the visitor of highest rank.

There was no retreating after this, even supposing she had wished to do so; for the Denbys and several others were present. He was more than usually amiable! His attentions were not too marked; his manners were so frank, and so polite to every one, there was nothing that could make her shy or uncomfortable; so that she felt quite grateful to him for putting her so much more at her ease, than under the circumstances she could have thought possible.

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In the course of the evening, Mrs. Heckfield

communicated the great event of the day to her friend Mrs. Denby, under a strict promise of secrecy, to which Mrs. Denby rigidly adhered; notwithstanding which, the small town of Lyneton, and the adjoining village of Purley, and half the country-houses in the neighbourhood, were apprised of the fact before the next sun sank into the Western ocean. The propagation of a secret is a mystery; every body promises, and nobody breaks their promise; and yet the propagation of the secret is rapid in proportion to the strictness of the promise — I cannot, and therefore will not attempt to explain this paradox.

That night, when Milly was attending Lucy, her countenance was unusually serious, and Lucy felt uncomfortable in her presence. She knew not what to say; and yet she was so much in the habit of making Milly a party to all the innocent pains and pleasures of her short life, that she felt awkward in not discussing this most momentous occurrence.

"Nurse, I hope you will like Lord Montreville!"

"I am sure, my dear Miss Lucy, I shall

like any gentleman that makes you a good husband."

"He told me, to-day, he had rather be wretched himself than give me one moment's annoyance."

"Sure, Miss! No gentleman can't speak no fairer than that."

"I suppose that is what all lovers say, though. I suppose John said that kind of thing to you?"

"Lord save your sweet heart, Miss! John never said such fine things to me. He was but a plain-spoken young man; though he was always for saving me any trouble that he could, poor fellow! and nobody could work no harder for his family, while he had health to do it."

"Won't it be nice having Emma to stay with me, and taking her out to the great balls? And then mamma has been longing to give Mary a good singing-master. I can have her with me, you know, in London, where there are all the best masters; and poor Mademoiselle would be so glad to see her sister; and I will have such a charming school

for poor children—(By the by, they shan't have brown frocks, I like green so much better,)—and I shall be sure to have a beautiful horse, for all the ladies ride in the Park now! Oh! and I can give Dame Notter the new red cloak I have so long wanted to get her, only my pocket-money was so low. Do you know the Montreville diamonds are supposed to be the finest in England after the Duchess of P——'s! And when I am in London, where you know I must be while Lord Montreville is attending Parliament, I shall see Harriet every day, and all those dear children! I wonder how far St. James's Square is from Upper Baker Street?"

"I can't say for certain, Miss; but I think 'tis a good step."

"Well, it does not signify; for of course I shall have carriages; and I can send for them constantly when I do not go to Baker Street."

"Ah! you are a kind-hearted young lady; and good night, and God bless you, and may you be as happy as you expect to be, and as you deserve to be!"

Milly sighed to think how much the notion of grandeur and of fine things of this world had taken possession of her young lady's mind; "Though, to be sure, 'twas all in the way of being kind and good to others."

The next few days passed off agreeably enough. When among the rest of the family, Lord Montreville was so generally pleasing, that she felt happy and contented; but whenever they were alone, she felt unaccountably shy, and, if possible, she either left the room with her mother, or detained her sister by her side. The kind, protecting, almost parental manner, which had at first so won upon her confidence, while at the same time it flattered her vanity, was exchanged for something more of the lover; and the ease she had felt in his society was gradually diminishing, at the very moment it was most desirable it should increase. Moreover, she occasionally found that it was not impossible for her to do amiss in his eyes. Her inordinate passion for animals, which he had appeared to think so very *naïf* and fascinating, did not always meet with the same looks of amused admiration,

which had, unknown to herself, encouraged her in her avowed fondness for them. He frequently remonstrated with her upon running out without her bonnet, and upon taking off her gloves when she was arranging the flowers, by which means she dirtied, and occasionally even scratched her fingers. He was dreadfully particular about shoes!

These were trifles; but it seemed to her odd, that the very things he had appeared to think natural charms, "snatching a grace beyond the reach of art," should now be the very points he wished altered.

She was not aware how often the fault which excites disapprobation, allures, while it is condemned; — how often, also, the virtue which charms, is most perseveringly undermined by the person who peculiarly feels its attraction.

Mrs. Heckfield insisted upon going to London to procure the wedding-clothes. Poor Lucy! Many people have a distinct abstract love of dress;—happy is it for them!—for as there is no doubt that a tolerably good-looking woman, very well dressed, will, in these days, eclipse a much handsomer one who is ill-

dressed, surely it is a fortunate thing for those who can thus amuse, and embellish themselves at the same time. But this was not Lucy's case. She was glad to look as well as she could, but the means of doing so were to her irksome; and she would fain have trusted the whole affair to mamma and to Mademoiselle. But no! Lord Montreville was exceedingly particular and anxious upon the subject. He especially recommended the only shoemaker who, to his mind, had an idea of making a shoe; and Lucy had at least half-a-dozen pair made, fitted, and descanted upon, before he was satisfied that they did justice to the shape of her foot, which proved extremely good when it was properly *chaussé*. She was half angry at his numerous criticisms and remarks upon the make of her gowns, and considerably bored at the number of times he wished to have them altered; still he did it all in so kind and so good-humoured a manner, she could not do otherwise than submit. But when he recommended his own dentist, and various tinctures, and tooth-powders, she felt half insulted. With the full consciousness

about her of youth, and health, and ivory teeth, she thought, though he might have occasion for dentists and dentrifices, she needed not such things, and she felt for a moment the full difference of their ages. It was but for a moment — she was his plighted wife — her young affections were vowed to him; and she would have fancied herself guilty, to wish him other than he was.

There were moments when her spirits were somewhat depressed; but at others, she was dazzled and excited by the beautiful presents that arrived every day. The diamonds, the Montreville diamonds, which were now her's. The large pearl, which had belonged to Henrietta Maria, and which had been given by her to an ancestress of Lord Montreville's; a diamond ring, placed by Charles II. on the taper finger of the beautiful wife of a Sir Ralph Montreville, a short time previous to his elevation to the Peerage; an antique aigrette, presented by Queen Anne, on occasion of a royal *fête!* Ornaments of more modern date were showered upon her; but the heir-looms which assorted so well with the Welsh Castle,

with its unpronounceable name, its donjon-keep, its subterranean passages, and its massive walls, were much more suited to her taste.

Lord Montreville had neither father, mother, brother, nor sister, to whom he need introduce his bride elect; and as all his cousins and other relatives were out of town at this season of the year, he lived entirely with his future family, without being called upon to introduce them to any of his own circle. This was precisely what he wished. Little did Lucy imagine, when, in the warmth of her heart, she was anticipating the kind things she would do to brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins, how little Lord Montreville intended to marry the whole family. Want of knowledge of the world, or rather of *l'usage du monde*, was *naïveté* in the blooming youthful Lucy, but not so in the middle-aged parents, or the hoyden younger misses. Lord Montreville was not much of a politician; he was not a man of deep reading, though his mind was sufficiently cultivated to give grace, if not depth, to his observations: he was not witty, though he was often droll,

and consequently it was on living people and passing events that his conversation chiefly turned. Any one who knows every one worth knowing, and can talk of them and their concerns with some tact, and not much ill-nature, is reckoned agreeable; but he felt that his anecdotes lost half their piquancy from the ignorance of his audience respecting the persons alluded to. Though it had amused him to enchant the whole family, especially while he had an ulterior object in view,—that object once gained, he found their society insipid, and in London he became peculiarly sensible how inexpedient it would be to transplant them into his own circle. Mrs. Bentley, the eldest daughter, and the dear children of whom poor Lucy meant to see so much, were wholly out of the question.

Country gentlefolks not of the first water of fashion, (for the Heckfields were not vulgar — their dress, their house, their equipage were all perfectly presentable,) are infinitely less objectionable to the very refined, than London gentility not of the first class. Mrs

Bentley was very rich, and her house in Upper Baker Street was a very good one, and she dressed in the extreme of the fashion; but she wanted the air *distingué* which was natural to Lucy. Though handsome, she was inclined to be large and red, and withal, she was a little languishing, and she was especially languishing for Lord Montreville. She looked as strong as a horse, but she complained of nerves; she was a good woman, and loved her children, but she talked as if she could not bear to have them with her, and declared that their noise distracted her; and, in short, she took every possible pains to make herself appear as little amiable, and as unlike what she really was, as possible.

Sir Charles and Lady Selcourt came to attend the wedding, and Lord Montreville soon perceived that Lady Selcourt was an unexceptionable person for Lady Montreville, or any other lady, to appear with in public; but he doubted whether her society at home would be as advantageous for any newly-married young woman. Her figure, which was always beautiful, was

dressed in the most perfect taste; her eyes, which were very large and very dark, became lustrous from the addition of rouge, which, as we anticipated, she now habitually wore; and in the evening her skin, which by daylight was yellowish, became brilliantly white. There was not a fault to be found in her own manner; but Lord Montreville soon perceived by Sir Charles's that she had proved not the weaker, but the stronger vessel.

The morning after Lady Selcourt's arrival in London, the sisters went shopping together; and after tossing over various silks and gauzes, they both fixed upon one which they pronounced to be quite lovely; when Lucy suddenly checked herself saying—

"Oh, no, I won't have it though, for Lord Montreville does not like pink!"

"Well, but he is not going to wear it himself," answered Lady Selcourt.

"But I mean, he does not like that I should wear pink."

"My dear Lucy, you are not going to yield to all his fancies in this manner? You will entirely spoil him; you will make a ty-

rant of him. It would not do with a young man!"

"It would not do with a young man," grated rather unpleasantly on Lucy's ears. However, when they were once more seated in the carriage, she resumed.

"But, my dear Sophy, one must please one's husband, you know; and though you would have that pink gauze sent with the others we are to look at by candle-light, I do not mean to buy it. Surely it is not worth while to annoy any one, for the colour of a gown."

"My dear Lucy, you are very young; you do not know what you are about; of course, in marrying, your idea is not to be merely an old,—a middle-aged man's, play-thing. You owe it to yourself, to the station you will hold in society, I may almost add to Lord Montreville himself, not to be a mere cipher, but to be an independent and a reasonable person—a free agent. And depend upon it, if you begin in this manner, you will never be able to rescue yourself from any thraldom in which he may wish to keep you. Every thing depends on the first start—I know it—and

so did Sir Charles's old French valet, for when we got into our carriage on the wedding-day, I had my beautiful in-laid India work-box, which you know is rather large, and I overheard old Le Clerc whisper to his master, 'Sire Charles, Sire Charles — you band-box to-day, you band-box all your life!' Sir Charles accordingly complained of the size of the box, and begged me to let the servant take care of it behind, but I felt, if I yielded then, I was undone. I explained to him the value I had for this particular box, and that it would break my heart to have it spoiled: and he saw I was so hurt at the idea of its being scratched or injured, that he gave up the point. Indeed, I must say, I have always found him very reasonable, and it is quite impossible for two people to go on better together. I never think of opposing his wishes when I am indifferent upon a subject. He knows, therefore, my anxiety to oblige him, and so he never thwarts me when he sees I am determined on any thing. Depend upon it, Lucy, if you begin in this manner before

marriage you will be no better than a slave after marriage."

Sophy always had such a flow of words, and such a multitude of good arguments to adduce, that Lucy knew it was useless to dispute with her; besides, she was older, and she was a married woman, and she always was the cleverest; and Lucy was more than half persuaded there was a good deal of truth in what she said. Accordingly, she showed Milly the gauzes as she was dressing for dinner, and promulgated her intention of having a gown of the pink one.

"La, Miss!" said Milly, "I thought my Lord did not like pink, and that he made you send back the pink hat."

"Yes, but do you not think it is great nonsense to let one's husband interfere about such trifles? What can it signify to him whether I wear pink or blue?"

"I don't know, Miss, as it can signify much to anybody; but I should think it signified more to him than to anybody else."

"But this is to be a smart gown to wear in company, and not at home with him."

"But sure, Miss Lucy, you don't want to look well in anybody's eyes more than in your own husband's."

"That is very true," thought Lucy; "it would be very wrong to wish to be admired by other people, and not by one's husband."

In the evening the gauzes were spread out, and Sophy expatiated on the beauties of the pink one. Lucy timidly admired it, and cast a glance towards Lord Montreville; she was half ashamed of appearing afraid to buy it, and was acquiescing in its merits, when Lord Montreville said,

"I suppose you are afraid of my admiring you too much, as you are bent upon the only colour which I do not think becoming to you."

"Do you really dislike pink so much?" asked Lucy.

"The colour is a pretty colour, but you know I think you look prettier in any other. Perhaps other people may admire you in it."

"I am sure I do not want other people to admire me. It would be very wrong if I did, now. Do you like that *vapeur*, Lord Mon-

treville, or this white one? The white is the prettiest after all. Yes, I do like the white best, Sophy, and the white I will have."

And she put a resolute tone into the last sentence, that her submission should not look like submission in Sophy's eyes. Why is it many amiable people are as much ashamed of appearing amiable, as many unamiable ones are of appearing unamiable?

CHAPTER VIII.

Calantha.—To court, good brother, ere her bloom of mind
Be set for fruit? Oh, take her not to court,
Where we be slaves to petty circumstance
Of empty form and fashion. Where the laugh
Pealed merrily from the joy-freighted heart,
Gives place to measured smiles still worn by all,
As 'twere a thing of custom, and alike
Lavished on friend and foe; where your fair child,
For coronals of buttercups and hare-bells,
Must prank her youth in gorgeous robes of state,
And where sweet nature's impulses must all
Be curbed, suppressed. *Manuscript Poems.*

At length the awful day arrived. Lucy was married, and the Marquess and Marchioness of Montreville drove from St. George's Church in the neatest of dark-green chariots, with four grey horses, leaving Colonel Heckfield sad, but satisfied, Mrs. Heckfield joyful, but dissolved in tears, Emma full

of delight, wonderment, and awe, at her sister Lucy being actually a Marchioness, Mademoiselle feeling herself the person most peculiarly concerned, inasmuch as it must have been entirely owing to the superior education she had given her pupil that she had been deemed worthy to be raised to so lofty a station in the peerage. Milly watched the carriage till it was out of sight, with tearful eyes, and left the window with a foreboding shake of the head.

The bride and bridegroom spent the honeymoon at Ashdale Park, and Lucy was much edified by the grandeur of the place. The park was extensive, the pleasure-grounds immense, the gardens perfect. She had nothing to do but to enjoy all she saw. She went round the pictures several times, till she thought there was no pleasure in making her neck ache with looking up, and her eyes ache with peering through Claude Lorraine glasses; she repeatedly walked about the gardens, but she dreaded the sight of the gardener; he used such hard names, and he was such a gentleman, that she scarcely ventured to ask him the

name of a flower, much less to suggest any fancy of her own. The house was completely *montée*. The *maître d'hôtel* sent in the bill of fare, but she could never have presumed to propose any alteration in the repast. She had heard that Ashdale Park was famous for bantams, and she one day expressed a wish to see them. Lord Montreville ordered the pony phaeton to drive her to the poultry establishment."

"Oh, let us walk, dear Lord Montreville; I had much rather walk."

"It has been just raining, my dear Lucy, and your shoes are thin."

"But I can put on thick one's in a moment."

"I hate to see a woman's foot look like a man's. Nothing so ugly as great coarse shoes upon a pretty woman's little foot."

"Oh! but nobody will see me."

"Yes, I shall see you," answered Lord Montreville; and Lucy felt frightened lest he should think she could have meant he was nobody. So the pony phaeton was ordered. In about three quarters of an hour it ap-

peared, and a groom on another beautiful little long-tailed pony to follow; and Lucy's wadded cloaks, and Lord Montreville's fur cloak, and the boa, and the parasol, and the umbrella, and the reticule, &c. were all duly packed and arranged, and they entered the carriage, and drove about a mile to the end of the park.

Having summoned the poultryman, Lady Montreville was introduced to all the different yards and coops, the winter roosting-place, and the summer roosting-place, and the coops for early chickens, and the places for fatting; and Lucy soon felt that the poulterer, who did the honours of the establishment, was much more the master of the whole concern than she could ever be; so, having bestowed the requisite portion of approbation and admiration, she was departing without any particular desire to revisit the scene, when a young gosling waddled past her feet. She stooped to pick it up—it escaped her—she ran after it—she succeeded in catching it—she brought the pretty little yellow thing back to Lord Montreville in great delight at

having secured it, and fully expecting that he would sympathise in her feelings.

"Look at the pretty creature! Is it not a love?—dear little thing!"

"My dear Lady Montreville, it will dirty you all over—its feathers are coming off; I beg, I entreat you will put it down!" added Lord Montreville in a tone of annoyance.

Lucy let the gosling go, and followed Lord Montreville to the carriage. When they had remounted, and again arranged the cloaks and shawls, Lord Montreville said—

"My dear Lucy, you must remember that now you are a married woman, and my wife: these are little girlish ways that do not sit well upon you. I am sure your own good sense will point out to you that there ought to be something more *posé* in manner for your present situation."

Lucy acquiesced, and resolved not to catch goslings any more.

They lived in the most perfect retirement. Lord Montreville did not mean to enter the world till he had tutored his wife into being precisely the thing he wished.

She found the time hang rather heavy on her hands; she read, but she could not read all day; she wrote to her mother and sisters, but she had not much to say, and a bride's letters are always very dull. No part of the household required her superintendence: she did not work much, for where was the use of working when she had plenty of money, and could buy everything so much better than she could make it? She always hated torturing a piece of muslin, till the muslin was dirty and the pattern out of fashion. She played and sang a little; but Lord Montreville liked Italian music, and she sang English ballads. She liked long walks; but Lord Montreville always thought she would get tanned if the sun shone, and red if the wind blew, and wet if it had been raining, or was likely to rain. Then there were so many rooms, she never found anything at the moment she wished for it: when she was at luncheon in the ante-room, she missed her reticule, which was left in the library, where she passed the morning; when she retired to her boudoir after her drive, she found

she had left her letters in the saloon, where they breakfasted: in the evening, when they sat in the great drawing-room, she wanted her work, and the work-box was in the library. Lord Montreville rang the bell, and a servant was despatched to bring the work-box. He returned, but the one skein of silk of the right shade was missing, and it ended by her lighting a candle and going to look for it herself. In the morning, after hunting all over the library for the book she was reading, she remembered she had left it the preceding evening in the drawing-room; and she sometimes thought it would be vastly comfortable to live in one snug room, where one had all one's things about one.

Lord Montreville had so far tamed her, that she did not think of setting out to trudge alone beyond the precincts of the shrubbery: she had learned not to pat every dog she met, or to kiss a donkey's nose; and she was as steady from a gosling or duckling as a good fox-hound from a hare. When she wanted anything at the other end of the room, she did not run, neither did she ever

jump over the footstool, and she carried a candle perpendicularly, instead of horizontally. Lord Montreville thought it was time to ascertain a little what her manners would be in society, before he ventured to ask any of his own set to his house; and they sent forth a regular invitation to Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Delafield, Major and Mrs. Smith, and Mrs. Smith's sister, Miss Brown.

Lucy was a little appalled at the prospect of making the signal after dinner. Every woman must have felt that the first time of making this little mysterious bow is an epoch in her life. Lucy was sure she should stay too long or too short a time. Then, to which of the ladies was the sign to be made? Lord Montreville told her that when the conversation took the turn of horses, hunting, dogs, or partridges, which it invariably did somewhere between twenty minutes and half an hour after the servants had left the apartment, all women with any tact or discretion took advantage of the first pause to depart; and that the lady whom he should hand in to

dinner would almost invariably prove the one towards whom she should direct her eyes.

The dinner went off very well. Lucy's manners were perfect. She never was awkward, and her thoughts were sufficiently occupied with the idea of making the dreaded signal at the right moment, to render her rather shy, and to prevent her spirits running away with her. She watched narrowly every thing that was said after dinner: and upon Major Smith asking her if she was fond of riding, she cast a glance towards Lord Montreville, to see if that was near enough the mark for her to rise; but, upon the whole, she thought not, as the question was addressed to herself. This occurred precisely eighteen minutes after the last servant had changed the last plate on which there had been ice; and sure enough it led the way to the usual turn of gentlemen's conversation before twenty-two minutes had expired.

Lucy had answered "Yes, but Lord Montreville had not yet found a horse he thought fit for her."

Mr. Johnson remarked, that "Nothing was so difficult to procure as a good lady's horse."

"Except a good hunter for a heavy weight," said Mr. Delafield.

"I can scarcely agree with you, Delafield," rejoined Mr. Johnson: "for a lady's horse should be so very safe, and all horses will stumble sometimes, and temper and mouth are so indispensable, besides action and ease."

"Temper is as necessary for a good hunter," interrupted Mr. Delafield, "or they knock themselves to pieces; and I know that a heavy man like me can't afford to have a horse take too much out of himself at first."

The moment was decidedly come, and Lucy, with a slight palpitation of the heart, looked at Mrs. Johnson. But Mrs. Johnson did not give a responsive glance. She was talking to Miss Brown. Lucy looked again, Mrs. Johnson was putting on her gloves, and did not raise her eyes. The conversation became every moment more sporting, and Lucy felt that if she had any tact or discretion, she ought to depart. Her heart positively beat,

but she could not venture to say any thing out loud, and she kept looking and looking, when Major Smith again addressed her, and she was obliged to answer him. He rejoined, and she found herself entangled in a fresh discourse. The half hour — more than the half hour must have elapsed! She answered with an absent air, still glancing uneasy glances, till at length Miss Brown nudged Mrs. Johnson, and Mrs. Johnson looked up, and Lucy hastily rose from her chair, in the middle of Major Smith's sentence.

Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Delafield made a great ceremony at the door, during which time the gentlemen stood bolt upright, with their napkins in their hands, waiting with exemplary patience while the ladies gave each other *le pas*. At length they marched out arm-in-arm, with a slight laugh to carry off their uncertainties. Lady Montreville, in her shyness, slipped her arm within Miss Brown's, and thanked her for making Mrs. Johnson look round.

"Why could I not catch her eye before?"

"Oh, don't you know? She is only the

wife of a younger son of a Baronet, and Mrs. Delafield is the wife of the eldest son of a Knight, so you know she was afraid of putting herself forward."

This was a new light to Lucy, who had never before been aware of these niceties.

Miss Brown was rather pretty, with gay laughing eyes, and a lively countenance, and Lucy was so glad to meet with a person of her own age, and who looked as if she could be merry, that she forgot it was her duty to attend to the married ladies.

She had shown Miss Brown all her diamonds and trinkets, and the wedding-gown, Miss Brown had half confessed she should soon be in want of such an article herself, Lady Montreville was in the act of trying to find out who was to be the happy man; they were in deep, interesting, and rather giggling conversation, somewhat apart, while, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Johnson, and Mrs. Delafield were sitting up quite prim, when the gentlemen entered. Lord Montreville was not pleased. Lucy, who was accustomed to her

mother's countenance when Bell Stopford was in question, instantly recognised the expression, and was frightened out of her wits. She was conscience-stricken; she broke off her discourse with Miss Brown, she came forward to the other ladies, and began talking to them with all her might.

If people are easily offended by any want of attention from the great, in return they are easily soothed. The consciousness of being slighted is so unpleasant to the *amour propre*, that if the intention to be civil is made manifest, they readily accept the will for the deed, and they soon forgave the lovely young Marchioness when they found there was no intentional neglect.

The evening passed much like other evenings after a dinner in the country. There were no new people whom Lord Montreville wished to charm, they were old country neighbours, with whom there was no object to gain, and he let things take their course. He had merely wished to accustom Lucy to sit at the head of her table.

When the company had all departed, he thus addressed his wife—

"Lucy, my dear, what did I hear you saying to Miss Brown about Monday?"

"I only asked her to come here. She is such a nice girl—is she not? I said I would send for her, that was all."

And Lucy began to fear that "all" was a great deal. It seemed so natural to ask Miss Brown to her own house at the moment she did so, but now that she told Lord Montreville what she had done, it did not seem so natural.

"This will never do, my dear Lucy: Miss Brown is not at all the sort of person I wish you to be intimate with,—not at all the sort of person with whom I wish my wife to appear in public, and, if you are intimate in private, you must be the same in public. I hold it out of the question to begin intimacies you cannot keep up;—it exposes people to being accused of caprice and finery, which are very different things from the proper pride and self-respect which should make them move in their own

sphere, and associate with persons in their own station. You understand me, my dear Lucy? —and you will remember what I say:—and now let us see what can be done. Her coming here is wholly out of the question. If she is the first person who visits you after your marriage it is proclaiming her your friend. I want to see my lawyer some time soon, and instead of sending for him here, we will go to St. James's Square for a few days, and you can write a very civil note,—mind, a very civil note,—(I never affronted any body in my life,) and tell her we are obliged to go to town on particular business."

All this was said in the sweetest and kindest tone imaginable, but Lucy was confounded and stupified when she found her having invited Miss Brown to her house for a day had brought on this complete *déménagement*. She felt herself a cipher; she felt herself perfectly helpless. But the tone was so kind, and at the same time so decided, that she had not a word to say. Lord Montreville turned to other subjects,—told her he had seen her distress after dinner, laughed with her at the rival dig-

nities of the lady of the Baronet's youngest son, and the lady of the Knight's eldest son, and was most gay and agreeable.

Lucy did not quite like so entirely giving up her point without a struggle. If he had spoken a little longer, if he had harped upon the subject, she would have rallied, and said something; but before she had recovered her first surprise, the whole affair was settled and done, and she did not know how to recur to it.

The next morning, after breakfast, Lord Montreville said, "Lucy, my love, write your note, and as I am going to the stables, I will order a groom to be ready to take it to Miss Brown.

He left the room. There was no time to remonstrate. Lucy thought of Lady Selcourt, —she thought of her mother. Lady Selcourt would simply not have written the note; her mother would have had a thousand arguments before Colonel Heckfield had finished half his first sentence. She had not cool courage for the first line of conduct, nor had she had presence of mind for the latter. There was nothing left for her to do but to submit; so she

wrote the note, (not without three foul copies,) sealed it very neatly, rang the bell, and gave it to the servant with a heavy heart; not that she cared for Miss Brown, but she felt herself imprisoned and enthralled.

CHAPTER IX.

Une belle femme est aimable dans son naturel, elle ne perd rien à être negligée, et sans autre parure que celle qu'elle tire de sa beauté et de sa jeunesse. Une grace naïve éclate sur son visage, anime ses moindres actions : il y aurait moins de péril à la voir avec tout l'attirail de l'ajustement et de la mode.

La Bruyere.

To London they went on Monday. Lucy was languid and out of spirits during the first part of the journey, but the rapid motion of the swinging vehicle and the four horses revived her young spirits, and the busy streets of London roused her, and the first sight of her house in London pleased her. The excitement, however, did not last. The hall was grand, the stair-case noble, the rooms were vast, but they were not set out in order, as the family were not to take up their abode in London till the meeting of Parliament.

The magnificent lustres were in canvass bags, the sofas in brown holland covers, the carpets only put down in the dining-room and the smaller back drawing-room. One day, while Lord Montreville was occupied with his lawyer, Lucy, from real *désœuvrement*, perambulated the desolate apartments, and uncovered the end of a sofa and the corner of an ottoman. She found them beautiful,—she longed to see the effect; she set to work, removed canvass bags, and paper coverings, &c. Her blood began to flow, and her spirits to rise, at being actively employed: she took care not to send for the housemaid; she was quite glad to work hard. She was in the act of dragging forth a beautiful *chaise-longue*, her bonnet tossed aside, her hair all out of curl, her gloves as gloves must be that have come in contact with London furniture, her shawl having slipped off her shoulders on the floor, her fine embroidered handkerchief covered with dirt and dust off some delicate little ornaments on the chimney-piece, the room spread with all the different envelopes she had abstracted from the furniture, when Lord Montreville entered, and,

with him, a very handsome, very well-dressed very pleasing-looking young man.

Lucy stopped short in her employent, and no little boy caught by his schoolmaster in the act of stealing apples ever looked more shame-faced, more confused, more guilty. Worse and worse. Lord Montreville introduced the stranger as his cousin, Lionel Delville. Lucy knew he was the oracle of the world of fashion, and the person for whose opinion Lord Montreville had more deference than for any other person's living. She stammered, blushed, and stood abashed.

Lord Montreville, however, showed no outward signs of annoyance; but, with a smiling countenance and easy manner, he said:

"You seem to have been very busy! Well! I dare say you will settle the rooms with much more taste than ever they were arranged before: women have ten times more tact in making a house look inhabited, than any man—always excepting my cousin Lionel. You must take him into your counsels, Lucy, if you wish your suite of apartments to be perfect;" and Lord Montreville led the way back into the boudoir.

Lucy was comforted at Lord Montreville appearing to take her *équippeé* so quietly, and she in some measure recovered her self-possession.

She looked exceedingly pretty in her dishevelled state, and Lionel Delville thought his cousin, the untutored, rustic Marchioness, a most piquante creature. But though Lord Montreville himself had been originally attracted by this same manner, it was not the manner by which he intended that his wife should charm; and when Mr. Delville took his leave, the lecture which Lucy flattered herself had passed away, arrived with accumulated seriousness.

His wrath was not disarmed by the degree in which he had seen Lionel pleased. He wished him to approve; but he did not at all wish to see him attracted. When he advised Lucy to take him into her counsels, it was from the fear Mr. Delville should read how little he wished she should do so.

Lucy quaked at the tone in which he addressed her.

"Do you think, Lucy, I have had reason

to be pleased at the mode in which I have been obliged to present my wife to the first of my relations who has seen her? Do you think your appearance and your occupation were calculated to make a favourable impression upon my family!"

"I am so sorry, dear Lord Montreville! but I did so long to see those pretty things!"

"Could you not send for the housemaid?"

"Yes; to be sure I might; but I had nothing to do; and I only meant to take one peep, and I never thought of anybody calling; I thought there was not a soul in London; and then, I know so few people—I never thought of being caught!"

"You forget that I have a very large acquaintance, and that you are my wife; and you also forget one thing, which I have often tried to impress upon your mind—that a woman should never be unfit to be seen—that she should never be *caught*, as you term it, employed in any manner unsuited to her rank and station in life—that your pleasures should be such as befit the situation in which I have placed you; and that my wife should always

act as if the eyes of the world were upon her. Let me hear no more of being *caught* — the expression is worthy of a school-miss in her teens."

Lucy blushed rosy red. She blushed for shame; for she felt there was something undignified in the expression: but she blushed more from anger at being treated as a missish girl—at being, in fact, accused of vulgarity. She was on the point of crying, but the servant entered with the tickets for the play; and he put on coals, and swept up the ashes, and lighted the lamps, and shut the shutters. Lucy had time to recover herself, and Lord Montreville to reflect that he should not do wisely to frighten her too much; that his own annoyance had perhaps caused him to speak more angrily than the thing deserved

It was, therefore, in a gay and good-humoured tone, that he bade her make haste and dress; though, at the same time he gave her a hint to be simple in her costume, as it was not good *ton* to be too smart at the play.

They dined alone; but Lionel Delville and a friend joined them late in the evening. If

he thought her pretty in the morning, he thought her lovely in her present quiet, but most *soigné* and fashionable attire.

He seated himself by her side, and gave her very little opportunity of enjoying the drollery of the afterpiece. But he did not, he could not, flirt with her. There was a complete simplicity—a straight-forward frankness in her manner, which rendered it impossible to know how to begin. Moreover, she believed herself in love with her husband; and besides, being dutifully and religiously devoted, she was particularly anxious to give him satisfaction after her errors of the morning; and her real thoughts and attention were on him and for him alone. He could not but be pleased; knowing women to their heart's core, as he did, he saw the genuine innocence of her manner, and he felt assured that it must take a long apprenticeship to the world to contaminate the purity of her mind. He resolved to watch attentively over it.

The kindness of his manner towards her the next day gratified her. He presented her with a magnificent real Cashmere; and the

next day with a beautiful guard-ring. She thought him very kind, and she determined to do everything to please him, which was, in fact, never to do anything except to dress well, sit on the sofa buried among cushions, (not bolt upright engaged in any employment,) and especially to fling herself back into the corner of her carriage with an elegant *abandon* when she went out airing.

Her efforts to do nothing were crowned with success: he thought her extremely improved; but this *dolce far niente* to her was not *dolce*, especially when they returned into the country, and she could not go shopping every day—an occupation to which he had no objection, as her pin-money was so ample that she could not easily be distressed.

He now thought he might venture to gather some of his own friends and relations around him, and before Christmas there arrived a large party, all people of the very highest fashion, pleasing and agreeable. They, like their host, seemed in their conversation to have adopted the motto of "*Glissez mortels, mais n'appuyez pas;*" and though the

hours might fly swiftly and pleasantly in their society, there was nothing about them sufficiently original or individual to deserve recording.

Lucy behaved exceedingly well; she had been properly drilled before their arrival: she was in an interesting state, which, assisted by the lectures of the apothecary, and the constant solicitude of Lord Montreville, and the ennui occasioned by being headed, as a sportsman would term it, whenever she attempted to stir hand or foot, gave to her whole carriage and deportment a most excellent languor. She no longer felt any flutter when she made the signal after dinner, and, upon the whole, Lord Montreville thought the result all he could wish, except that he would fain have had her join a little more in general conversation, if he could have been quite sure of no exuberance of spirits.

Was she happy in the midst of her splendour? Her husband exceedingly attentive, and the most agreeable society collected around her. No: she was bored—from morning till night constantly suffering from ennui. She

was grateful for her husband's attentions, but they invariably prevented her doing the thing she wished to do; and she sometimes wondered how so many little chubby children were running about the village in health and safety, who were not heirs to titles and properties.

The society of her husband's friends did not amuse her; they were all the intimates of one clique; and, notwithstanding their habitual good-breeding, she could not help often being unable to understand, or, at all events, to join in their conversation. A slight tone of persiflage and of quizzing in their mode of treating all subjects, also made her feel less at her ease, than she would otherwise have done after ten days' residence under the same roof; and she often longed for a hearty laugh with Bell Stopford, a long scrambling walk with Emma and Mary, or a quiet chat with the dear, honest, affectionate Milly.

Lucy occasionally suggested how glad she should be to see her parents; but the house was always filled with a succession of visiters. The Duke and Duchess of Altonworth an-

nounced their intention of taking Ashdale Park in their way to London, and Lord Montreville inadvertently exclaimed, "Whom shall we get to meet them, for this party disperses on Wednesday?"

"Oh, then, now we can have papa and mamma, and Emma and Mary!—that will be nice!"

Lord Montreville's countenance fell — he looked blank and dismayed. Lucy saw she was wrong, but she could not imagine that papa and mamma were not fit company for any duke or duchess in the land; so she awaited the result, blank and dismayed in her turn, but wholly at a loss to guess what was the matter. Lord Montreville soon rallied.

"I do not think that would quite do, my dear Lucy: a family party is always a dull thing, and the Duchess is very clever, and altogether —— My dear Lucy, I am sure you perfectly understand me."

This time, however, Lucy could not and would not understand.

"But it will not be a family party to the

Duchess, and I am sure mamma is clever too: some people call her blue."

"Very true, my love; but the Duchess is clever and not blue, and she is a person who is very exclusive; she has retired habits, and does not like new acquaintances; and, in short, we must either get somebody whom she would decidedly like to meet, or we had better have nobody."

"But we are going to town in a fortnight, and mamma has not been here yet," said Lucy with more pertinacity, and even humeur, than she had ever yet shown.

"We shall be here again at Easter, and in the summer certainly, and then you shall have them all, Emma and Mary, and your old friend Milly too, if you like it;" and Lord Montreville resolved he would do it once for all, well and thoroughly.

Lucy acquiesced, though she did not exactly see why Ashdale Park should be open to so many slight acquaintances, and yet that a visit from her parents should be so difficult of accomplishment. She was also

somewhat appalled at the idea of this clever, exclusive Duchess, whom she should have to entertain herself, for no one whom Lord Montreville thought worthy of meeting her could be found on such short notice. Lucy was sure she should dislike her; she was angry with her for, as she thought, keeping away her own family, and she determined to bear patiently the infliction of her presence for the few days she remained, and never to seek her any more. She was free from the vulgar awe which simple rank inspires to the *parvenu*, though she was not free from the *gêne* which most people feel when in company with persons who are wedded to their own set, and who do not give themselves any trouble to please those who are not of it.

The day arrived, and Lucy who was not constitutionally shy, and had now become perfectly at her ease, in the discharge of her every-day hostess duties, awaited with composure the entry of the disagreeable Duchess.

She was rather surprised when a little quiet, middle-aged woman, in a close bonnet,

and a black cloak, slid into the room, followed by a large, gaunt, lordly-looking man. Lord Montreville was not present. Lucy rose to receive them; the Duchess introduced herself and the Duke, in a gentle, kind, frank manner.

They sat down, and the Duchess being very cold drew her chair close to the fire, put her feet upon the fender, and dropped out little natural sentences, which half amused, half pleased Lucy, and before they went to dress for dinner she felt more intimate with the dreaded Duchess, than with any of the other people who had yet been her inmates at Ashdale Park.

At dinner Lord Montreville was in his most agreeable vein: the Duchess was charming, so unaffected, so straight-forward, and, withal, there was something singular and original in her turn of thought, with a graceful *bonhommie* which was peculiar to herself. The Duke was a sensible, hard-headed, high-minded man, silent in large society, but conversable enough in small ones. Lucy was interested and amused all the time, and would have

talked more than she did, but that she liked to listen to the Duchess, and to watch the pleasing expression of her countenance, and the wonderful manner in which, without youth, features, or complexion, it lighted up into something more attractive than beauty.

Upon further acquaintance she found her as good as she was fascinating. She spoke of her married daughters, of her grand-children, of her home, her garden, her son, and his wife and children, who lived at Altonworth, when in the country; of her school, of the poor people, and Lucy perceived that, in fact, her heart was so completely filled with the near and dear charities of life, that it was not strange she had no inclination to seek for other objects in the world.

Lucy's genuine feelings thawed to her immediately; and the Duchess was also pleased with the innocence and simplicity of her young hostess. Lucy was more delighted and flattered at the hope of being admitted into her intimacy, than she had been since the ball, at which she had first met Lord

Montreville, when he had first made her feel herself a person altogether superior to the common run of girls.

Lucy and the Duchess parted with a mutual wish to meet again; on the part of one, amounting to a passionate desire, on the part of the other to a kindly inclination.

CHAPTER X.

Kingdomes are bote cares,
State ys devoyd of staie,
Ryches are ready snares
And hasten to decaie.
HENRY VI. *King of England.*

WHEN in London, Lucy, although in perfect health, and peculiarly active and alert, was not permitted to go out. She was chained to the sofa, till she almost longed to be a little ill to give her some occupation. She did muster a little attack of nerves, and an occasional whim, which, unfortunately for her, served to justify Lord Montreville in the continuance of his precautions.

Lord Montreville was often at the House of Lords, and as the season advanced he was more and more absent from home. Lucy

thought the peers really worked very hard, and sacrificed a great deal of time to the good of their country. However, it was so right and praiseworthy to do so, that she could not complain.

Numberless persons left their cards with her, and she sent her's in return; but, as she was not allowed to keep late hours, she did not go out of an evening, and her circle of acquaintance did not increase as rapidly as she expected. Lord Montreville did not allow her to admit gentlemen of a morning, and he did not encourage her seeing much of Mrs. Bentley and her "sweet children;" so that, except the visits of the Duchess of Altonworth and her daughters, with whom she soon became intimate, and the drives into the country, which she sometimes took with them, nothing could exceed the monotony of her life.

She heartily wished the spring over, and her confinement over, and another spring come, that she might revel in the anticipated delights of a good London season.

In the course of time the spring was over; they returned to the country, and Lucy re-

minded Lord Montreville that he had promised her parents should then pay them a visit. The invitation was despatched, and they arrived, father, mother, sisters, and Milly.

Lucy's situation afforded an excuse for not seeing much company, which suited Lord Montreville very well, but not so well Mrs. Heckfield, who had passed four days in London, on her way to Ashdale Park, for the purpose of providing herself and daughters with apparel fit for the succession of distinguished company which she there expected to meet.

Neither did it suit Emma and Mary, whose hearts palpitated at the prospect of wearing their new wardrobe, and at the effect it was to produce. Vague images of Barons, Viscounts, Earls, Marquesses, and even Dukes, were floating in their minds, and Mademoiselle had certainly intimated she did not see why if one of her young people had married so brilliantly, the others should not do as well, especially as Mademoiselle Emma played with much more execution than Madame la Marquise, and Mademoiselle Marie had begun learning German.

One and all were woefully disappointed when day after day elapsed, and the family party received no addition, unless it might be the clergyman of the parish, Lord Montreville's solicitor from the county town, once his agent from Lancashire, and once the Delafields.

Mrs. Heckfield appeared in perfect caps from Devi's, in the last new Parisian hat from Carson's; Emma and Mary in the crispest of white muslins, over the cleanest of white satins. In vain!—Neither Duke, Marquess, Earl, Viscount, Baron, or even Baronet, made his appearance. A fortnight had already slipped away,—the time for departure was approaching, when Mrs. Heckfield one day said to her daughter,—

"Well, my dear Lucy, I hope when your confinement is over, you will lead a gayer life. I fancied you had your house always full of company. Your letters constantly contained a list of visiters as long as my arm, and I am sure since we have been here, scarcely a soul has crossed your threshold. We have ten times as much society at Rose Hill Lodge."

"Lord Montreville takes too much care of me, and that is the reason we have been so dull. I was afraid Emma and Mary would be disappointed, but whenever I propose asking people to come, Lord Montreville seemed so afraid of my being ill. I am sure I am well enough, if he would but think so."

"Well, my dear, it is quite right that husbands should be attentive, and I cannot but rejoice that your's is so peculiarly so. Certainly your father never took half so much care of me. However, I hope the next time we pay you a visit we may find you well, and strong, and able to have your house full, and that I shall have the pleasure of seeing my Lucy the life of a brilliant society."

Lucy sighed, for she had begun to understand Lord Montreville's dislike to introducing her friends to his friends, and she feared it would be long before she had them all around her again. It was not that their visit gave her all the pleasure she had anticipated from it: she felt that her husband was bored; she was aware that he avoided his own set; she was in an agony if any of her family did any of the

things which he thought out of the question; and her sisters, who were not "come out," although they "dined down," as they termed it, often made her uncomfortable.

One day her mother asked a gentleman opposite if he would "take" some of the dish before her, and Lucy looked timidly towards Lord Montreville to see if he had caught the sound of a word which was peculiarly obnoxious to his ears. Emma, on another occasion, exclaimed, what a "delicious" trifle, and she felt a chill run through her, for she knew he had a particular aversion to an epithet, which to him seemed expressive of gluttony.

Mary, (who had never dined down before,) was so delighted with the variety of excellent dishes before her, that she was much inclined to go the round of the second course, and needed many admonitory nods and frowns from her mother. She also frequently tipped her chair on its two fore-legs while she was writing or working, and this Lucy knew was an unpardonable sin.

Both girls were gay and wild, and had, as most sisters have, till they have been a little

schooled in the world, the habit of talking over each other, and sometimes of interrupting the person speaking in their eagerness to rejoin. On such occasions Lord Montreville stopped short, and betook himself to a silence which was most painful to Lucy, although it was entirely unperceived by the culprits.

Lucy occasionally attempted to give them gentle hints upon these subjects, but they only seemed to think she was grown quite fine, and very difficult to please, and they could not conceal their disappointment at the retirement in which she lived.

The result was, that at the end of three weeks, when the large coach which contained them all drove from the door, a sensation of relief mingled itself with the sorrow she felt at parting from them

Milly remained at Ashdale Park, and Lucy looked forward with unmixed pleasure to the prospect of having always about her a person so thoroughly attached, and in whom she had such perfect confidence.

In the autumn the long-expected event took place,—Lord Montreville was made happy by

the birth of a son, and Lucy was delighted to think she should soon be a free agent again.

They had removed to London for the occasion. Lord Montreville was a great deal from home, and, as there were very few people in town, the time hung heavy with Lucy; for she was so impatient to leave her sick room and her sofa, that she did not find every thought and feeling wholly absorbed in the new-born babe. She was very young in years, and still more so in character: she had by no means had enough of youth and gaiety, and was not yet ripe for the tender affections and dull details of maternity. She was charmed with her baby, and was very unhappy if it cried, but it did not suffice her for amusement to watch it all day long. She wished Lord Montreville would stay at home, and read to her, or would bring her home some news, or that somebody would come, or something happen.

Milly was her comfort. She sometimes conversed with her for hours, and listened with sympathy to the details of her life in America, and with interest to her unsophisticated view

of things in general. She thought that after all there was nothing half so good or so sensible as Milly, except the Duchess of Altonworth; — indeed she fancied she perceived a considerable resemblance between their characters.

They returned to the country. When the first excitement was over, of bells being rung and oxen being roasted—when the servants, the tenants, the neighbours, had all looked at the wonderful child, and pronounced it to be the very finest they had ever seen, Lucy relapsed into her former state of ennui. She began to think she must be ill.

"Milly, I do not think I am well," she one day promulgated to Milly, as she was sitting in the nursery.

"La, my Lady! I am sure you look the very picture of health! Whatever is the matter?"

"I do not know, exactly."

"You have not the head-ache, sure?"

"No! my head never aches."

"Perhaps, my Lady, you feel tired if you walk too far."

"No! I do not think I ever feel tired with walking, but I feel very tired if I do not walk."

"Sure, my Lady!—that's comical too!"

"I never feel merry as I used to do; and I think it must be my state of health that prevents my being so. I have thought of consulting Dr. Bolusville, only I do not know what to say to him. I have no symptom that I know of—only I ought to be so very happy. I possess every thing that a person can sit down and wish for, and yet I feel low. I sometimes think, if I had more occupation, I should be better; but Lord Montreville is so kind, he will not let me take any trouble about any thing. Now, I dare say you did not feel low when you were in your log-hut, on the banks of your swampy river—did you?"

"No, my Lady! I never did, certainly; —when poor John was middling well, that is."

"Ah, yes, for you had plenty to do! that must have been the reason. When I was a child, I always worked harder in my garden than my sisters; and the old bailiff once gave

me a silver knife, because he said I had earned it haymaking. How I do wish Lord Montreville would let me help him to manage the house, and that he would consult me, and talk with me; but you see he never has any thing to say to me, except a kind word now and then, just as he has to the child. I should like to go hand-in-hand with my husband, as you and John did, and ride about his woods, and his park, and his farm with him, as the Duchess of Altonworth does with the Duke; and I should like to have a school, and to be useful. But he would not let me go to the school—especially now—he is so afraid of my bringing back the measles, or any complaint to the child."

"Well, my Lady, the baby will soon be business enough for you. What a sweet fellow he grows! Look! he knows you already!" and Milly tried to turn her attention to the child; for she thought all the mischief lay in Lord Montreville's being so very little like John Roberts; and as that evil was without a remedy, the less it was dwelt upon the better.

The wished-for spring came, and Lucy was at once launched into the circle, which, to those who are not admitted, appears far to exceed in glory and delights Dante's "*paradiso.*"

Lord Montreville did not approve of her going out quite every evening, nor did he like her being seen at four or five parties the same night; but he allowed her a fair proportion of dissipation. He generally accompanied her himself; and without appearing to watch her, he contrived to know exactly what she was doing: but he did not make a point of never letting her stir without him: he took care to do nothing that should make her feel herself doubted, or that should cause either her or himself to appear ridiculous in the eyes of others. His proceedings were, as usual, dictated by the head, rather than by the heart; and were, as usual, framed with reference to the effect to be produced on the world, rather than to any abstract notion of right and wrong. In this instance, however, morality and expediency pointed out the same line of conduct.

Lucy was charmed with all she saw, and she was also delighted at finding herself considered charming: but her gaiety was as frank and natural as ever, although more subdued than in her girlish days. She ventured to talk more in society, and there was still enough left of the madcap Lucy, to give a certain raciness and originality to what she uttered. Speeches which in themselves were nothing, pleased, from being so like herself.

Lord Montreville had now sufficient confidence in her tact, not to fear any outbreak which could offend the most fastidious; and he rendered justice to the perfect innocence of her manner, in which there was so complete an absence of prudery, or of coquetry, that no one presumed to pay her any marked attention.

This was the happiest period of her wedded life. The charms of London society had not yet palled on her, and, although her head was not turned with it, still she could not be insensible to the *éclat* of her present position. She gradually became quite reconciled to seeing less of Mrs. Bentley and her children than

she had at first wished, and she was not so much annoyed as she thought she should have been, at not having Emma with her at Almack's.

The Duchess of Altonworth was most kind, and she passed many agreeable evenings with small parties at her house.

Upon the whole, time no longer hung heavy. Lord Montreville now had seldom occasion to set her right on any point of etiquette, and when she saw him in private, he appeared pleased and satisfied with her. But, although she did not always see his name in the House of Lords, still he was frequently absent of an evening, except when they were engaged to some pleasant party, in which case he almost always accompanied her.

The season drew to a close. They left London, and, to her great delight, removed to the Welsh castle, to pass some of the summer weeks among the wild beauties of nature.

All she had heard or imagined of the awful glories of the castle were more than realized. It was as vast, as dark, as gloomy, as massive, as uncomfortable, and as *ghosty* as heart

could wish; and when first she arrived with all the spirits which the London season had infused into her, she was enchanted with the small windows in the thick walls, and the delightful look-out into the square court-yard.

There is no saying how long she would have found amusement in wandering about the oaken passages, and the winding-stairs, and in finding likenesses for her boy among the grim warriors and furred judges, whose portraits adorned the sides of the gallery; or how soon she would have longed for some of her friends to explore and to admire with her, for, soon after their arrival at Caër-whwyddwth Castle an event occurred which gave a completely new current to her thoughts and feelings.

Lord Montreville, who had been out on horseback with his agent to inspect some improvements that were making on the property, was one evening brought home senseless. In descending a narrow footpath to examine the foundations of a new bridge, the horse slipped. He was precipitated down a considerable de-

clivity, and a blow on the head produced a concussion of the brain, from which the most serious consequences might be apprehended.

Lucy's horror and grief were such as might be expected. The doctor from the nearest town arrived as soon as possible. His report of the patient's state was most alarming, although he gave hopes of ultimate recovery. All the usual remedies of bleeding, blistering, and extreme quiet were recommended, and Lucy sat night and day by his bed-side, watching with intense anxiety for the symptoms of returning consciousness.

The doubt had sometimes crossed her mind whether she did love her husband as she had wished, and intended to do, and as Milly had loved John. But now, in his present helpless and suffering state, she felt herself so capable of doing any thing for him, of enduring any thing for him, she felt that on his recovery all her future happiness so completely depended, that she was quite reassured as to the extent of her affection. She reflected with gratitude on his having selected her from all the world; she forgot his little particularities,

she thought only of his kindnesses, and she nursed him with all the devotion and forgetfulness of self, with which Milly could have nursed her John.

Weeks elapsed and he did not recover his memory, nor did he seem to recognise those about him.

In the mean time agents, servants, stewards, all required orders and directions. There were law affairs pending. Lord Montreville's letters had been carefully set aside in his study *till* he himself might be well enough to open them, when Lucy received a formal epistle from the agent, informing her that among these letters there were some, containing papers which it was absolutely necessary should be returned for signature. Lucy made up her mind that she must open the letters.

Before she went to Lord Montreville's study to proceed with the necessary routine, she looked into the sick room, to see that all was quiet and comfortable.

She was again closing the curtains, when she was almost overcome with joy at hearing him utter, in feeble accents, "Lucy, do not leave me!"

CHAPTER XI.

Se a ciascuno l'interno affanno
Si leggesse in fronte scritto,
Quanti mai che invidia fanno
Ci farebbero pietà. METASTASIO.

LUCY could scarcely command herself so as to answer her husband, without betraying a degree of emotion which might have been prejudicial to him in his present state of weakness. He thanked her for her attention to him; he told her he had often been aware of her presence though he had not had the power to show it. She bathed his hand with tears of joy and gratitude, and at that moment, when he was endeared to her by long watching and by deep anxiety, she felt as if Milly's love for John could not have exceeded her's for

her husband, her guide, her protector, the father of her child.

The doctor came and pronounced the patient convalescent, but prescribed the most perfect quiet, and the avoidance of every thing which might in any way arouse his feelings. Lucy told him of the letter she had received from the agent, and asked his opinion and advice upon the subject.

He declared it out of the question that Lord Montreville should be allowed to attend to matters of business for weeks, nay, perhaps months.

Under these circumstances Lucy resumed her intention of opening Lord Montreville's letters, and of acting according to the best of her judgment. Several were most uninteresting and unimportant communications, which required neither comment nor answer; some were letters of correspondence, which she laid aside as soon as she found they did not contain the papers of which she was in search. At length she came to one written in a delicate female hand, beginning, "Dearest Montreville," and signed "Your Alicia Mowbray."

"Alicia Mowbray!" she thought; "I never heard of her," and her eye glanced upon words which filled her with astonishment and horror; "cruel absence," and "consuming grief," "counting the moments," and "happy meeting," and "sad parting," and "distress for money," and "necessary expenses," winding up with an urgent request for a fresh supply of a hundred pounds.

Could this be intended for Lord Montreville! She looked again at the direction, at the beginning of the letter. There could be no mistake: it was most assuredly addressed to her husband, — to the husband whom in health she had so dutifully studied to please, whom in sickness she had nursed with such unwearied attention, from whom, though exposed to all the fascinations and allurements of a London life, she had never for one moment allowed her thoughts to wander! That he, whom she had always looked upon as the appointed guardian of her honour and her morals, should have been habitually, deliberately, breaking his nuptial vow, preferring to

her pure and true affection the hired caresses of a mistress, and above all exposing her to the eyes of the world as the neglected wife of an old profligate, old enough to be her father! The letter fell from her hand; her brain went round with the multitudinous thoughts that rushed almost simultaneously through it; but rage, indignation, and disgust, superseded for some moments all more tender emotions.

Then came pity for herself, who had thus wasted the bloom of her early feelings, and she wept bitter tears over her blighted youth, her worthless beauty; for at this moment she suddenly became aware that she was one of the most lovely and most admired of women,—admired by all around her, except her husband,—lovely in all eyes but his!

Lucy had married almost from the schoolroom; Lord Montreville had drawn a veil over his own former career; he had studiously avoided initiating her into the frailties of fashionable life; he had wished to preserve the purity he found, so that she still retained that freshness of mind which refuses itself to the

conviction of the existence of vice, but which, when once unwillingly convinced, sees it in all its natural deformity.

From long acquaintance with the world, the imagination becomes familiarised with what at first inspired horror; or from experience of the weakness of human nature, the temptations to which it is exposed, and the gradations by which one error often leads on to guilt, the charitable learn to pity the sinner, while they condemn the sin. But Lucy's perceptions of right and wrong were not blunted by habitual intercourse with the faulty, nor softened by the consideration of their temptations or their repentance. She saw but the broad distinction between virtue and vice, and she looked on the latter with the indignant horror of youth. Charity is not the characteristic virtue of the young.

While she was absorbed in such new and painful reflections, there came a tap at the door, and her maid informed her that Lord Montreville was awake, and was incessantly asking for her. She started at the interrup-

tion, and quickly dismissing the maid, stood for a few moments paralysed.

She had looked with loathing at the letter, till her tears had all retreated to their cells. She roused herself, and hastily pushing the other papers into an escrutoire, she stopped to pick up the fatal epistle.

At that moment the servant entered. She instinctively crammed it into her bosom, but as instantly pulled it forth again, as if its very touch was contamination.

Lord Montreville was so impatient for her return, that a second messenger had been despatched to hasten her. She rushed to her own apartment, where she placed the letter under lock and key, and then was obliged, with what composure she could muster, to repair to the bedside of her husband.

He greeted her with a pleased smile,— he extended his pale and emaciated hand to take her's. "Dearest Lucy," he said, "it seems an age since you left me; it does me good to know my kindest and best nurse is near me. I cannot bear to feel that what I love best is absent from me."

Her hand lay passively in his; her soul recoiled from him. She could not return the pressure of his hand, she could not meet his eyes. "Falsehood upon his lips," she thought, "when scarcely snatched from the jaws of death, when still trembling on the verge of the grave."

She made an effort to speak, and, assuring him the doctor forbade all excitement or emotion, she begged him to compose himself to sleep.

"You will not leave me then?"

She promised she would not, and she seated herself by the bedside. All was quiet; he gradually dozed off into a light slumber; and there she sat bewildered, confused, fancying all that had occurred must be a dream! Could he speak so kindly, so tenderly, and yet be false? Could he address her as the being he loved best, while he preferred to her this Alicia? Could he, with death staring him in the face, thus add a deliberate lie to all his other sins? Yet there existed the letter—the letter which expressed implicit reliance on his affections!

She gazed on him as he slept, and looked back to the moment when he had first recognized her, and thought was it possible one little hour could have worked such a wondrous revolution in her mind?

The truth was, that Alicia had been a mistress of former days, on whom he had settled a handsome annuity at the very time when his absence from Lyneton had excited such surprise in the inhabitants of Rose Hill Lodge, and from whom he had then parted, as he intended for ever, but who had once more succeeded in getting him within her toils.

For some time after his marriage he had neither heard nor seen anything of her; but when he came to London in the spring, he received from her a letter, stating that she had been robbed of the money he allowed her—that she was deeply in debt, and was threatened with an execution in her house, and with the prospect of being sent to prison. He could not do otherwise than ascertain the truth of this history, and interfere to save her from such wretchedness. She was still very handsome, in deep grief, and

in great agitation at again seeing him. He relieved her immediate wants, and occasionally visited her, for which visits she expressed the greatest gratitude, and from which she contrived to extract considerable additions to her allowance. He did not thoroughly believe in her passionate devotion to him, but he could not be cruel to a person who had acquired the sort of hold over him which is obtained by long habit.

He did not consider that this renewal of his former acquaintance at all interfered with his making an excellent husband, for he treated his wife with all possible respect and attention; she had everything that an unlimited command of money could procure her, and he imagined that the whole guilt of infidelity, consisted in its coming to the knowledge, and consequently hurting the feelings, of the wife.

If he had been obliged to make his election between them, he would not have hesitated for a moment; but there was nothing, to his mind, incompatible in the two connexions.

In fact, his sentiments for Lucy had of late rather increased than diminished in warmth; for he could not but respect the singleness of heart with which she passed through the ordeal of a London season, so dangerous to a young and lovely married woman of high rank, and especially to one who was the fashion. As the mother of his son and heir, she had an additional claim on his affections that no other woman had ever possessed; and the attention with which she had nursed him, had now awakened in his bosom, stronger emotions of tenderness than he had thought himself capable of feeling.

The expressions which fell from his lips came straight from his heart, although, at that moment, they appeared to Lucy to be an insulting refinement of deceit.

During the hour which she passed watching his slumbers, she seemed to live a long life of bitter and confused thoughts, and she was unutterably relieved when the entrance of the physician enabled her to make her escape, and to lock herself into her room, there to meditate on the past, the present, and the future.

On looking back she remembered a thousand circumstances which to her unsuspicious mind had seemed of no import at the time, but which now proved to her that this connexion was one of some standing. She remembered having heard persons allude to debates in the House of Lords, at which he had been obliged to confess he had not been present, although he had been absent from her all the evening. She remembered how little she had seen of him during her confinement; she looked at the fatal letter, and felt certain she had often seen notes in the same handwriting, and she became more and more indignant to think she had long been a neglected, an injured, and a duped wife. She recollected the rigid notions of female propriety which he professed; she thought the care he had taken of her morals, the censorship which he exercissed over the books she read, an insulting mockery. She could almost smile in bitterness at his having forbidden her reading Delphine, and made her return Adam Blair to the library,—and at the remark he made to some one who wondered she had never yet

read *La Nouvelle Heloise* — that he was surprised at any woman who had read the first three lines of the introduction owning she had read any further.

"And I was grateful to him," she thought, "for thus watching over me. I fancied it argued affection for me, and a love of virtue in himself, while he was thus treating me like a fool, and laughing at his childish dupe! No wonder he wished to preserve the ignorance which was so convenient to him. This taste for purity in which I so rejoiced, was but the veil to conceal his own vice. And I am bound for life to this man. I must drag on a weary existence, forced, Heaven knows how unwillingly, to break my marriage vow; for how can I love, how can I honour, what I despise and condemn?"

Floods of tears came to the relief of her bursting heart and bursting head. She wept, till she was once more calm, and could look with some degree of composure upon the actual position in which she was placed.

In the first instance she resolved, although she could never again find pleasure in the

performance of her duty, that she would rigidly adhere to it, that she would command all outward expression of her emotions, and that she would continue to nurse Lord Montreville, if possible, with the same devotion as before. She made up her mind that when she had succeeded in finding the papers for which the lawyer had written, she would lock up all the letters together, and when Lord Montreville was well enough to attend to his own affairs again, she would explain the circumstances under which she had been obliged to search for these papers, and give him the key of the escrutoire without any farther remark.

When she had despatched the papers, and safely deposited the letters according to her intention, she felt somewhat relieved, and was enabled to return once more to the sick room, and take her station there as usual.

Fortunately he spoke but little, and she was spared any fresh ebullitions of tenderness on his part. In the evening she repaired to the nursery, where Milly was rapturous in her

congratulations upon his Lordship's wonderful improvement.

"Well, my Lady, your good nursing has its reward at last! La! when first he called you by your name, and spoke so kind and tender like, Mrs. Gauzelee told me she never saw such a moving sight. And to see you, my Lady, take his hand and kiss it, and my Lord calling you his 'own Lucy.' Well! it does my old heart good to think you have known such a blessed moment; for I remember as I pushed open the bed-room door of our log-hut, when my poor John said, 'Why, Milly, t'an't you,' I thought the joy of hearing my husband's voice speak my name again, would have quite got the better of me.

Few people like to be told they felt this or that, on such or such an occasion; still more disagreeable is it when, although they cannot disclaim the emotions attributed to them, they are conscious of experiencing those the most diametrically opposite.

Lucy held her child in her arms. She con-

trived to bury her face in its little bosom, and to remain bending over it, till her voice and her countenance were sufficiently under controul to venture an answer: "The doctor seems to think that, with perfect quiet, Lord Montreville may soon be quite himself again."

Milly was surprised at the cool and measured reply. Lucy's devotion had been such, that she could not doubt the love she bore to her husband. Her lady looked ill. She thought, perhaps, she had harassed herself too much, and she entreated her to go to bed early. But no! she was resolved to watch as before.

"My actions," she said to herself, "shall be under command, though my feelings may not be so. I will do the same I did before;" and she took her station in his darkened room, where, by the glimmer of one shaded candle, she usually passed a great part of the night in reading.

That night her eyes in vain glanced over the words, they conveyed no corresponding ideas to her mind. She imagined long conversations and explanations; she fancied reproaches, ex-

cuses, she pictured penitence and sorrow. She convinced herself that, when Lord Montreville examined his letters, and found this one opened, he would be overwhelmed with shame and self-reproach, and that he would throw himself on her mercy. She considered how it would then be her duty to act; she consulted her own heart whether she should then be able to restore him to the same place in her affections. She tried to lower her standard of manly excellence; she tried to frame to herself a less exalted scale of morals. Alas! is not this but too likely an error to fall into, as the frailties and follies of human nature open upon the young and gentle, to whom it is painful to condemn and despise their fellow-creatures?

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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MILLY AND LUCY.

(CONTINUED.)

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CHAPTER XII.

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MARIVAUX.

LORD MONTREVILLE recovered slowly, but satisfactorily. The doctor, the servants, Milly, all on different occasions, and in different manners, conveyed to his mind an impression of Lucy's unceasing attention to him during his illness. Indeed, the old doctor had manifested such an enthusiastic admiration for Lady Montreville's unpresuming, frank, and affectionate character, that he could scarcely speak of her without tears in his eyes.

Lord Montreville found his gratitude daily increase his affection; and when she brought him his child, whose caresses and opening intelligence awakened in him emotions from as yet unexplored recesses of his heart, his love for his wife assumed a new character, and he felt for her as he had never yet felt for woman. He had hitherto seldom considered any one of them but in the light of a mistress, a plaything, a necessary appendage to a large house and an establishment, or an object of conquest, either gained or to be gained. He had thought absence of harm, their highest recommendation. In Lucy he had first discovered that strong affections, strength of mind, patience, and perseverance could be perfectly compatible with almost childish candour, and singleness of heart.

While this revolution had taken place in Lord Montreville's feelings, what were Lucy's? The increased tenderness of his manner perplexed and confounded her. At moments, especially when her husband was playing with her boy, and watching with delight his attempts to walk, marking his recognition of familiar

objects, and listening to the first half-uttered lispings of infancy, she almost yielded to her longing desire to be happy and affectionate, when the thought of Alicia Mowbray shot through her heart, and chilled the kindly smile on her lip, the soft expression of her eye, the tender intonation of her voice.

One day the child was playing on Lord Montreville's sofa, when he beckoned her to sit there likewise. He passed his fingers through the curls of the boy's fair hair, and looking at him with tenderness remarked, "I never knew before what engaging creatures children were! that clear white forehead, and those blue eyes, with such shady eyelashes, are just like yours, Lucy, and I do not love him the less for that."

She thought how delightful such expressions would have been to her, could she have trusted them, and yet she felt almost guilty at receiving them so coldly. He passed his arm round her waist as he spoke. She dared not repel the caress, but she burst into tears, and suddenly rising, she said, "I must not be so foolish and nervous. I believe I want a little

fresh air, for I have not been out these two days. I will go and take a turn in the park this lovely evening."

She hastened to quit the room, leaving Lord Montreville surprised, and yet pleased, for he could not attribute this agitation to any cause except love for himself.

She sought the most retired part of the park. The sun was getting low, and lighted up the grey rough boles of the old oaks, while the slant beams tipped every object in the landscape with gold, and increased the rich variety of foliage, of form, and of colouring. The distant mountains were purple, the nearer ones adorned with every hue and tint, which blended most softly into the other. The young fawns were skipping and sporting on the smooth glades, between the tufts of trees, while the belling of the deer among the fern mingled with the hum of bees, the chirp of birds, and the summer sounds of evening.

She gazed around and thought, "How lovely, how beautiful is nature! How calm and cheerful every thing looks! It is more painful to feel unhappy while every thing seems so gay

around one, than if all was as dreary and desolate as one's own heart. Oh! how I do long to be happy!" and she began to think that perhaps she tormented herself foolishly; that there might be some excuse for her husband, of which she was not aware: that it was impossible any one could seem so affectionate as Lord Montreville, without feeling what he showed: she yielded to the genial influence of the scene around her, and vaguely hoped that all would yet come right.

"He will soon be well enough to read his letters," she thought, "and as I am sure he is very fond of me now, whatever he may have been hitherto, he will be miserable when he finds the letter from that shocking woman; and he will be humble and penitent, and tell me the whole truth, and then I will forgive him, and then he must love me a great deal better than ever, for being so very kind."

With the exception perhaps of a few singular persons who seem to enjoy being miserable, there is so strong a desire of happiness in the youthful mind, and something so painful in a continued state of depression, that the spirits

will spring up, unless new causes of unhappiness arise; and Lucy returned from her walk with an elastic step, and a sensation as if a weight had been taken off her mind, although nothing had occurred which in the slightest degree altered her situation.

Lord Montreville was now able to bear the full light, and to move into the next room. He became anxious to see his letters. He asked for the key of the escrutoire, in which they were locked up. The moment was come when she had to impart to him that she had ventured to break the seal of some of them. With a beating heart, and trembling hand, she showed him that she had received from the agent, and told him how she had in consequence been obliged to open some of his letters, to find the papers required.

Lord Montreville's colour changed. He repeated his request for the key, and without making any farther remark, he rang the bell for his own man, and taking his arm, walked into his morning-room. He dismissed the servant, and Lucy heard him lock the door, as if to preclude all chance of interruption.

She sat with a palpitating heart, counting and calculating the time it would take him to read through the mass of papers which had accumulated, and wondering when he would rush to her feet to crave mercy and forgiveness. It was evident by the change in his countenance, by his silence, by his ringing for his servant, instead of asking for her supporting arm, that he expected letters from this woman. She remained hoping, doubting, fearing.

Dinner-time arrived. Lord Montreville was not yet well enough to dine with her, so she ate, or rather could not eat, her solitary morsel.

They generally drank tea together. She wondered whether she should find him in the drawing-room as usual. She wondered how he would receive her. She did find him there as usual, but with him the nurse and child.

That evening their boy first toddled alone from the father's sofa to the mother's knee, and Lucy caught him up, and devoured him with kisses, in a transport of delight and pride, that mothers, and mothers only, can comprehend. "Oh!" she thought, "he will own all

to me to-night, and I shall forgive him for the sake of that dear child."

The boy went to bed — the candles came — Lucy took her work, and sat down with her back rather turned towards Lord Montreville, wondering when the moment would arrive. "He is waiting till tea is over — the servants will be coming in and out."

Tea did come. It was generally with them a meal, as Lord Montreville dined at two o'clock. It was however a meal, to which neither of them, that evening, did justice. At length urn, toast, butter, bread, and cakes, were removed, and Lucy's heart might almost have been heard to beat, when the last servant shut the door.

"He must speak now," she thought. But the silence continued unbroken, and she determined not to be the first to break it. She sat, imagining in what words he would open the subject, till the first sound of his voice made her almost start from her seat. He asked her to put the shade over the candles a little lower down. He had to repeat the request, before she could collect her thoughts so as to comply

with it. "He is ashamed I should see his countenance, when he speaks of this disgraceful connexion," she thought; and she remained again in expectation.

Another silence succeeded. For very awkwardness Lucy wished to say something, but she could think of nothing that did not either lead away from the subject uppermost in both their minds, or else indirectly lead to it. Every sentence she planned, sounded either too formal, or too tender. At length she fell back upon the never-failing resource of the bankrupt in conversation; and after ten minutes' reflection and consideration, she promulgated "It is very hot to-night!" He agreed, and begged her to look at Moore's Almanack, to see what weather was there predicted. He continued to say a vast deal upon the subject, to which she replied in absent monosyllables.

There was no more to be extracted from this topic. Lord Montreville had foretold drought, and rain, wind and heat, storm and sunshine, and Lucy had assented to the probability of each in succession, when another silence ensued. She began to feel angry at being treated

with such coldness, and such contempt, that he did not even deem any apology or explanation due to her; as if he imagined her only fit to be a nurse, only capable of talking about the weather. Her heart, which had been yearning towards the father of her child, became suddenly chilled and shut up.

Her wrongs rose before her eyes in fearful array against him; and if he had then entered upon the subject, he would have found her in a very different frame of mind from that in which she had been at the commencement of their tête-à-tête. She made a variety of the most insipid common-place remarks, in the most dry and indifferent tone of voice. Never was dialogue kept up between two strangers in a more constrained tone, than between this couple, who really entertained a great affection for each other, and on the evening of the day on which their first child had first walked alone.

The fact is, that Lord Montreville was thunderstruck when he found his letters had been opened; though, under the circumstances, he confessed to himself there had been no other course for Lucy to pursue. He was still more

horrified, when he found the fatal letter among the number of those of which the seal had been broken. Even according to his own idea of morality, such a proceeding became wrong when it reached the wife's knowledge; and his attachment to that wife had latterly so much increased, that he found his opinions upon the duties of matrimony vastly more strict than before his illness. The liaison which had appeared to him a matter of such trifling importance while he believed her ignorant of it, suddenly assumed, even in his eyes, the character of a sin of the first magnitude when he felt it known to a being so innocent, so conscientious as the young wife whom he had now learned to respect as well as to love. He half persuaded himself it was impossible she could have read, or at least have comprehended, the purport of the letter, or she could never have nursed him with such unremitting attention, without ever speaking, implying, or looking a reproach.

He also had awaited the evening meeting with dread and agitation, half expecting that he must go through a scene of tears and explanation. As she alluded not to the subject, he

half hoped at first that she had not read the letter. He had instinctively availed himself of the weather to attempt a conversation on indifferent subjects; but, adept as he was at giving what turn he pleased to conversation in society, he was unequal to the task now. She did not assist him, and he became nearly convinced by her taciturnity that she knew all, and then his spirit felt abashed before her's.

He mentally resolved to break off entirely with Alicia, and for the future to be the most exemplary of husbands; but he had not the nobleness of character to be able willingly to own his fault, and to throw himself on her mercy for forgiveness. Indeed, though he could not choose but admire her conduct, supposing she was acquainted with his errors, still the admiration he felt did not attract him. On the contrary, the consciousness of inferiority, from which he could not defend himself, *vis-à-vis* of a woman, and of one whom he had raised from comparative obscurity, chilled the love which had been gradually increasing in his heart, with the growth of his newly-awakened parental affection. This evening, and many

succeeding evenings and mornings, passed off in restraint and coldness.

Lucy's generous impulse of forgiveness had changed to a feeling of disgust for his unblushing immorality, contempt for what she thought was hypocrisy in his tender expressions towards herself, and indignation at the insult offered to her as a wife, a mother, and a young and lovely woman. She wrapt herself up in cool reserve.

If at first Lord Montreville could not work himself up to a full confession in all contrition and humility, still less could he do so, when the soft, the mild, the timid Lucy, had assumed a certain calm, composed, and self-possessed manner, which repelled, rather than invited confidence.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mais ne savez vous pas que notre ame est encore plus superbe que vertueuse, plus glorieuse qu'honnête, et par consequent plus delicate sur les interêts de sa vanité que sur ceux de son veritable honneur.—MARIVAUX.

IN the mean time, Lord Montreville had completely recovered his health. They left Caërwhwyddwth Castle, and established them selves at Ashdale Park for the winter. Their house was soon full, and Lucy tried to drown all sense of her cares in the succession of company, with which she was as desirous as Lord Montreville could be, to keep their house constantly replenished. They both equally dreaded finding themselves alone with the other.

The breakfast hour was late; before luncheon the excursion for the day was organized; after luncheon the pre-concerted ride or drive

took place; the company was constantly changing, and Lady Montreville's presence was frequently required in the drawing-room, to speed the parting, or to greet the coming guest. It was only in the nursery that the face which in society she had learned to dress in smiles, relaxed into an expression of languor and joylessness, which astonished and distressed the faithful Milly. When the child's gambols and caresses called forth a smile, it was so melancholy a one, that Milly's eyes would often fill with tears as she looked upon her lady.

One day, when among the foolish questions with which poor little children are tormented, Lucy said to him, "Charlie loves mama, does not he?" He answered, "Me love papa." The boy meant nothing, but the words fell on Lucy's heart, as if they doomed her to utter lonelessness and lovelessness! as if her own child cared not for her! and she burst into a passionate flood of tears, which alarmed and confounded Milly.

"La, my Lady! sure you are not crying for that? Why you would not but have the dear babe love his own papa?"

"I do not believe any body or any thing loves me in this world — except you, Milly;" and Lucy's sobs redoubled.

"Oh, my Lady! how can you speak so? And to think of my Lord, how he used to be asking and calling for you when he was so ill, and that's the time when people call for them as they really love best; and 'twas then my Lord could not bear you out of his sight, though may be, now he is well, he takes pleasure in the other gentlefolks too."

Lucy had pride and dignity enough not to open the secrets of her domestic wrongs, even to Milly; and exerting all her self-controul, she dried her tears, and tried to smile at her silly maternal jealousy. But Milly was not so deceived. Simple as she was, the warmth of her own feelings rendered her quick-sighted in all that regarded those of others. She was sure that her lady's lowness of spirits had some deeper source than the child's little speech, though she was quite at a loss to divine what the cause might be. She had been so well satisfied with Lord Montreville's love for her, when first he recovered his recollection, that

she did not suspect it could be occasioned by any unkindness on his part.

At this period of our story, Sir Charles and Lady Selcourt arrived at Ashdale Park. Lucy was overjoyed to see a face that reminded her of the happy days of her childhood, a person who was bound to her by ties of blood, who distinctly belonged to herself. Although not perhaps the one whose character was most congenial to her own, still she was her sister; they had played the same plays, wandered about the same fields, studied in the same school-room, had shared the same parental cares, and in the present desolate state of her feelings, her heart went forth towards Sophy with warmth.

Lady Selcourt was a worldly woman, and a coquette, but she was not a common-place coquette. She never made any advances towards men; she never apparently sought them; but she dressed herself quite beautifully, and sat still with an expression of conscious charms, combined with strict propriety, which seldom failed to bring all the men in the room hovering round the sofa on which she sat.

She was not witty, or learned, or talkative,

but she looked very soft, and occasionally very arch; and when she did speak, implied a great deal more than she said. All girls hated her, for she occupied the gentlemen, without being so openly a flirt, that they could console themselves by thinking "any body can gain the attention of men, who will go such lengths to obtain it," for she went no lengths. Yet most men, and all women, knew it was not simply by superior charms that she did attract them.

Pretty as Lucy was, pleasing as were her good-humour and her simplicity, much as all men admired her in speaking of her, it was round Lady Selcourt that they congregated; her dress was the subject of conversation; it was to give her their arm that they rushed when dinner was announced; it was upon her cards at *écarté* that all were anxious to bet.

As the sisters were sitting one day in her boudoir, Lady Montreville remarked to Sophy that she almost wondered Sir Charles should like to see so many men fluttering around his wife, while she appeared so much more occupied with others than with him. "For Sir

Charles is very fond of you, Sophy," she added, with a sigh.

" To be sure he is, and he would not be half so fond of me, if others did not flutter around me, as you call it. Nothing keeps a man up to the mark so well, as seeing that his wife is valued by others. Do you not invariably see dawdling devoted wives, with careless indifferent husbands?"

" Indeed I am not sure that devotion is the way to fix one's husband," rejoined Lucy, in a desponding tone.

" It only spoils the men, Lucy. Husbands are things that ought to be kept in hot water, if one wishes to preserve one's influence over them, which every woman of sense must perceive is one of her first duties. And I own I should not like to be considered as a domestic drudge, who have fulfilled the end of my existence when I have provided heirs to the estate, can keep my husband's shirts mended, and know precisely when the kettle boils. Women have souls, and they have hearts," (so they have! thought Lucy) " and understandings—

sometimes the best of the two—and it always makes my blood boil to see them treated as beings of an inferior order! People do not judge for themselves. If you are overlooked by others, your husband thinks nothing of you; if others admire and seek your society, he is proud that so *recherchée* a person is his wife. Of course I would not have any woman commit herself by word or deed. As you know, I would not walk across the room for any man that breathes: no one ever saw me do any one thing derogatory to the dignity of our sex; but there is no reason why one should not dress well, and make one's-self agreeable. *On vaut ce qu'on veut valoir*, especially in one's husband's eyes."

Lucy began to think it was as much the bounden duty of every married woman to flirt, as to love, honour, and obey.

"I think," added Lucy, "very submissive wives often have faithless husbands."

"It stands to reason they should. Men have had flirtations, and liaisons, and love affairs of all kinds, up to the time they marry. They have been accustomed to excitement, and they

can never sit down contented with a hum-drum wife, always hemming and stitching quietly at home. Unless a woman has something in her, the husband will seek for amusement abroad."

"This is rather hard upon some women though, who have never had all these flirtations, and who do not want to flirt, but would fain give their whole hearts to their husbands; at best they can only hope to be last of many loves."

"Why you could never have expected to be your husband's first love, my dear! Really! Lucy, you are the oddest mixture of romance and worldly wisdom, that ever I met with. One would think you had married all for love, or the world well lost. Yours is the most sentimental mode of making a good *parti* I ever knew."

"I was not alluding to myself," Lucy hastily interrupted; for she dreaded to have her secret annoyances laid bare to the eyes of any one, especially to those of Sophy.

"Why I suppose not; for if you had wished to be your husband's first love, you would have chosen a youth certainly not past

nineteen. But sometimes you have such a melancholy, sentimental expression in your face, I scarcely know what to make of you."

"You have such spirits, Sophy! I think you have ten times the spirits you had when you were a girl, which is so odd!" and she thought of the halcyon days of donkeys and puppy dogs.

"Not at all odd! When one is a girl, one does not know what one's fate is to be; and though one has some pleasant and agreeable hours, one has mortifications also; but when one's fortune is made, when one has a husband who is proud of one, and (though it sounds vain to say so,) when one feels that one is admired and courted by others, I do not see why one should not be in spirits."

Lady Selcourt had been gratified that morning by a noble dandy's compliance with her request to prolong his stay at Ashdale Park, in order to join in some charades which were proposed for the evening's amusement, when he had resisted the general solicitations of the rest of the party. If Lucy had seen her at Sir Charles's seat in Oxfordshire, with her hus-

band and her children around her, in the bosom of her family, she would not have thought her flow of spirits so enviable.

Arguments, the unsoundness and sophistry of which would be apparent enough at other times, appear conclusive and convincing when they are in accordance with the feelings of the moment. Lucy was thoroughly discontented with her husband, and her own manner of life; her mind was unsettled—she was in a state of mortification, while at the same time she thought more highly of her own charms than she had ever done before. She saw Sophy with half her personal beauty, but with an adoring husband (for she had succeeded in making Sir Charles admire, as well as fear her; she had enthralled him, and he dared not even struggle in his shackles, but appeared to look on them as precious ornaments); and she also saw her receiving the incense of that conventional complimentary manner which all women can command, if they choose to require it.

If she had been happy at home, she would have despised and condemned such unmeaning homage; but as it was, she did not like to be

altogether eclipsed by Sophy, and her manner instinctively assumed a tone which encouraged men to talk to her. There was a characteristic simplicity in her view of subjects, and in her mode of expressing herself, which amused, as being peculiar to herself. She ventured to be droll. She was pleased at success, her spirits rose, and she began to think that, after all, one might make oneself very tolerably happy without the romantic affection which Milly's story had taught her to sigh after.

Another spring arrived, and Lady Montreville went to London with the full intention of shining as the most attractive of women, and of having a train of admirers — humble admirers, who should be kept at a most respectful distance, but who might show her husband what others thought of her.

She had little difficulty in succeeding in her object. With rank and beauty, a lively manner, and a husband so much older than herself, the difficulty was to keep them off, not to attract them. Lionel Delville became a frequent visiter in St. James's Square. He no longer found it impossible to pay her a compli-

ment, although, as yet, he dared go no farther. Captain Lyon claimed acquaintance as an old friend. Although he had scarcely found out she was alive as the fourth daughter of Colonel Heckfield, he proclaimed her the most fascinating of her sex, as the Marchioness of Montreville. Indeed, he insinuated that he had been the first to discover these fascinations, and to point them out to Lord Montreville. He affected to patronize her to all his friends.

Statesmen, warriors, poets, were to be found in her train. Among others, Lord Thorcaster, a deep politician, who was particularly strong on political economy, the bullion question, the poor laws, and free trade. She was quite pretty enough to be exceedingly agreeable to this man of deep reading and comprehensive mind. He did not make love — no: he talked politics; but her eyes were so blue, and her teeth so white, that he thought her political *aperçus* astonishingly luminous; especially when one day that the question of free trade was discussed, she exclaimed in her simple manner,

"Why can they not let it all alone, and then every body, and every country, will

naturally manufacture what they can do best, and what they are most fitted for; and everybody will buy, where they can get the best things for the least money. That must be good for all parties, and there would be an end of all this fuss about duties on imports and exports."

"My dear Lady Montreville, you have in one sentence condensed all the arguments that it has taken the two houses of Parliament years to discuss. I have urged this very train of reasoning myself. If our legislators were but endowed with the clear and powerful understanding of a certain young and beautiful woman, it would be well for our poor country! But it is not every mind that can thus grapple with a subject, divest it of all the false colouring thrown over it by sophistry, and at once seize the real point at issue."

"Dear me! have I done all this? It seemed very natural to say what I said."

"Very natural to persons of decision, who can shake themselves free from the trammels of prejudice."

"But I never thought upon the subject before, so I had no prejudices to shake off; I merely said what struck me as plain and obvious."

"Indeed! astonishing you should at once seize all the bearings of the case."

Lucy felt a little like M. Jourdain, when he discovered that he had been speaking prose all his life; and was rather elated at finding she was so clever. She had heard she was pretty, and had perceived she was attractive, and had sometimes felt that she amused, but she had never before been told she was clever.

Lord Thorcaster was a man who stood high with a certain set; his suffrage was decidedly worth having, for he was reckoned very fastidious; and Lucy was much exalted in her own estimation by his opinion of her talents. She now listened with attention to political discussions; fancied she greatly preferred such subjects to the frivolous conversation of women; she occasionally retailed the arguments she heard adduced by others, and sometimes hazarded an opinion of her own. Lord Thorcaster

was charmed; but as he was neither young nor handsome, the degree in which he frequented St. James's Square, gave no umbrage to Lord Montreville, nor ground for scandal to the world.

CHAPTER XIV.

J'ai vu une jolie femme dont la conversation passoit pour un enchantement, personne au monde ne s'exprimoit comme elle, c'étoit la vivacité, c'étoit la finesse même qui parlait : les connoisseurs n'y pouvaient tenir de plaisir. La petite vérole lui vint, elle en resta extrèmement marquée, quand la pauvre femme reparut, ce n'étoit plus qu'une babillarde incommode.

MARIVAUX.

ALTHOUGH no consequences attended Lord Thorcaster's admiration of Lady Montreville, as far as he himself was concerned, it had a visible effect upon her manners. People are always more vulnerable to flattery with regard to the merit for which they are least remarkable, than with regard to that on which they themselves are not in doubt. Lord Thorcaster's compliments upon the strength of her understanding, caused her to set up for a superior woman, *une tête forte*, and she sometimes astonished those who knew her best, by having a

decided opinion upon some subject of which women are seldom supposed competent judges.

This little fit of pretension, if it did not add to her attractions, tended very much to increase the number of persons attracted. It was evident there must be vanity, when a new character was assumed for the purpose of shining; and this conviction gave courage and audacity to the herd of aspirers to her favour, who had hitherto been kept at bay by the candour and openness of her manner. The back of Lady Montreville's opera box was always thronged with men. The door was constantly opened, and quickly shut again, by persons who could not find standing-room, and woe to the neighbours on each side, if by any chance they loved music, and wished to listen to the sweet sounds they had paid their money to hear.

Lionel Delville, who from the first had been exceedingly favourable to Lucy, now found his cousin's house the most agreeable in London; and took advantage of the privileges of relationship, to be always in attendance. It seemed to be a settled thing, that he was her most ob-

sequious slave. Open conventional gallantry, and cousinly intimacy, were so skilfully blended, that it was difficult to ascertain when and where real gallantry commenced. She was proud of the admiration of the oracle of statesmen, and pleased with the devotion of the oracle of fashion. She was the life of society; she became a great talker, and her spirits rose with the exertion. Her voice was by nature so sweetly modulated, that no one could be tired of hearing it; her countenance was so soft, that although she occasionally sported the most decided opinions, they did not seem *tranchant*, when delivered by her.

If success in the great world could constitute the whole happiness of any person with naturally good feelings, she might now have been happy. But was she so? No.

She had not been brought up without some attention to religious subjects. She always went to church, and would have felt uneasy if she had omitted to do so; she had a general desire and resolution to do what was right, and a horror of doing what was wrong. Her own domestic discontents, Sophy's arguments and

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ed, and a groom on another beautiful le long-tailed pony to follow; and Lucy's added cloaks, and Lord Montreville's fur ok, and the box, and the parcel, and the ibrella, and the reticule, &c. were all duly cked and arranged, and they entered the rriage, and drove about a mile to the end f the park.

Having summoned the poultryman, Lady ontreville was introduced to all the different ds and coops, the winter roosting-place, the summer roosting-place, and the coops early chickens, and the place for fatting. Lucy soon felt that the poultryman, the the houses of the establishment, [illegible] more the master of the whole concern she could ever be; so, having ved the requisite portion of approbation admiration, she was departing, when particular desire to secure the [illegible] as a young [illegible] stooped to pick it up [illegible] ran after it—the [illegible] she brought the poor [illegible] it to Lord Montreville [illegible]

example, the natural desire after happiness inherent in our nature, and the vanity which is lurking at the bottom of most hearts, had combined to lead her thus far on the road to wrong; but she could not be happy, unless she felt satisfied with herself.

She often thought, "How cheerful the Duchess of Altonworth is! How placid she looks! Nothing ever worries her, and every thing worries me. It makes me unhappy and discontented with myself to see her;" and the result was, that she frequented her quiet and select *soirées* less and less; for when not in a whirl of engagements, she invariably felt weary and listless. Though the constant tribute paid to her charms afforded her but little pleasure, she felt the want of it, if by any chance it was withheld. Then she became fastidious upon the subject. She despised the homage of common-place empty youngsters; she ridiculed the *doux yeux* of old men; she was disgusted with fulsome compliments; but Lionel Delville knew how to flatter, without appearing to do so; he had learned in his cousin's school, and Lord

Montreville saw his own arts practised upon his wife.

He had taken no notice of the tribe of general admirers, for, feeling himself not immaculate, he instinctively avoided what might lead to recrimination. He had not heeded Lord Thorcaster's attentions, for he was nearly as old as himself, and much less good-looking;—but the increased devotion of Lionel Delville gave him serious uneasiness. From the beginning he had felt a dread of his particular friend, and had sought his company as little as possible, since he married. Until now, Lucy's manner had been such, that she might safely have bid defiance to the most malicious; but the revolution which the last few weeks had effected in her, rendered him serious and thoughtful. He was uncertain what line to take, and in the mean time he was not particularly good-humoured, and frequently spoke of the frivolity and the vanity of women, in a manner which sounded harshly in Lucy's ears, when she thought of the immorality and the hypocrisy of men.

Often would she lament having ever seen the fatal letter; often did she wish herself once more deceived; often did she look back, as to a happy time, to that when she sought only to please her husband. She almost wished to be again ruled, and thwarted in all her everyday pursuits; for she now thought these petty annoyances were more than compensated by the satisfactory sensation of fulfilling the duties of a good wife, and the hope of securing the affections of her husband. It was with sorrow and regret that she reverted to the days when she did so sincerely wish to secure them. Those days were gone—gone, never to return!

The respect she had felt for him, as her wedded husband, as her guide, her superior in understanding, and in knowledge—was gone, and with it the halo she had willingly thrown around his age. She now looked upon him as a *passé* profligate, to whom in a moment of infatuation she had linked her youth; one whom his own inconstancy had exonerated her from loving, and to whom she only owed the bare duties of obedience and fidelity, in compliance with her marriage vow.

She no longer felt bound to sacrifice her own tastes to his; and she adopted an independent tone, which was by no means agreeable to Lord Montreville, although, by having slackened the reins when first he feared his own aberrations were discovered, he found it somewhat difficult to again tighten them.

He had kept his resolution of breaking off all connexion with his former mistress; and he began to look upon himself as the most exemplary of husbands, to forget Lucy's devotion and forbearance, and his own errors, and to feel that the blame lay all on her side.

He was seldom absent from home; and he acquired the habit of constantly coming in and out of the drawing-room during the morning. Lucy felt watched and suspected — unjustly suspected by him. Her spirit rebelled at the unfairness of mankind. Though meek, while she was anxious to please the husband she looked up to, the sense of injury had aroused in her a spirit which had heretofore lain dormant; and strong in the consciousness that she did nothing wrong, she did not alter her mode of proceeding, but continued to admit morning visiters,

and to allow Lionel Delville to lounge away many an hour in St. James's Square, before she went out in the carriage.

He had frequently of late presented her with bouquets of the most rare and beautiful flowers, which he professed to bring with him from his sister's villa at Roehampton; and Lucy had no scruple in accepting the nosegay which her husband's cousin brought from the country.

It so happened that Lord Montreville one day accompanied some ladies to Colville's nursery garden, and they there admired a row of beautiful nosegays, which were delicately tied up, and arranged in order. They wished to purchase one of them, when the nurseryman begged to cut some fresh flowers, as these were all bespoken by Lord so and so, for Mrs. so and so; and by Sir something somebody, for Lady such a thing; and by Mr. Delville, for Lady Montreville. The other names were all notoriously coupled together; and that his wife's should be mixed up with such, was enough to irritate any husband. Lord Montreville changed colour, and bit his lips. No more

passed. Fresh flowers were procured, and the party proceeded on their ride.

Lord Montreville returned home at dressing time, and came up-stairs in no very placid frame of mind. He knew so much of the vice of the world, that if roused to suspect at all, he suspected a great deal. While Lucy was the simple unsophisticated creature she once was, he rendered justice to her purity; but with him there could be no medium. He could respect perfect innocence, but the first bloom of that innocence passed away, he made no allowances for the foibles of human nature, but fancied it either already plunged, or on the point of plunging, into reckless vice.

When he entered the apartment, the first sight which greeted his eyes, was Lionel Delville assisting Lucy to put the identical nosegay in water, that it might be fresh for the evening's ball.

Lord Montreville could scarcely command himself. His blood boiled to his fingers' ends. But, stronger than insulted pride, than love, than jealousy, was in the man of the world, the

fear of appearing ridiculous in the eyes of another man of the world.

To an indifferent observer, his greeting would have appeared perfectly calm; his manner to Lionel cordial; that to his wife kind; but they all three knew the world, and none was deceived. Lionel saw his cousin's feelings, and was annoyed, for it would be vexatious to have his pleasant morning visits disturbed, and quite a pity that Lady Montreville's home should be rendered uncomfortable. Lucy, who had learned more of the workings of the human mind in the last year than in all her previous life, also perceived Lord Montreville's inward irritation; and, although she had nothing really to reproach herself with, her conscience led her to guess pretty accurately what caused the storm she saw impending.

Lionel felt his situation as third distressing, and did not linger long after Lord Montreville's entrance. He took a gay and sportive leave; Lucy bade him remember to get the new march from his military band; Lord Montreville added, "Mind, you dine with us tomorrow, my good fellow!"—the door closed.

Lord Montreville patiently awaited while he heard the clank of his boots as he hurried down the stone stairs; he waited till he heard the porter close the street door upon him, and then turning to Lucy, he said, in a tone of choking calmness:—

"Lady Montreville, this will not do. I must put an immediate stop to your present mode of life."

Lucy could not help feeling frightened out of her wits, but she remembered Alicia Mowbray, and she remembered that Lionel Delville had never spoken a word of love to her, and she roused herself to the onset with a feeling of desperation, and of contempt for her monitor.

"What will not do, Lord Montreville? What do you mean to put a stop to?"

"I mean to say that it is not my intention that the house of Montreville should be disgraced while I am its head; and that I shall take every precaution in my power to prevent such being the case."

"Indeed, Lord Montreville! I approve of your resolution, and agree with you, that all

who bear so noble a name, should be *sans peur, et sans reproche.*"

"Madam!" and for a moment he looked fiercely upon her: "Whatever you may mean by that insinuation, you may remember that bravery is the virtue indispensable in men, while in women it is—chastity; and I tell you fairly, that I shall not be the convenient husband of a wife who flirts with half London, and keeps her favoured lover tame about the house."

"Heavens! Lord Montreville, do you say such things to me? Do you dare say such things?" Her momentary pride was gone; she burst into a flood of tears, and clasping her hands, exclaimed: "Fool that I was, I mistook polished manners for real refinement, and fancied those coarse and vulgar, who would never have insulted me as you have done!"

"It is certainly a pity you did not choose some one more suited to your unambitious taste; but as you did marry me, and as I have the honour of being your husband, I may be allowed some controul over your actions; and I

therefore repeat it, I expect you will conduct yourself in such a manner, as is consistent with your reputation and my own."

Lord Montreville left the room with coolness and dignity in his air, but with rage and indignation in his heart. Indignant at having been reproached by the creature he had raised to her present brilliant situation, and whose conduct latterly had destroyed the *prestige* which her behaviour to him in his illness had thrown around her.

Lucy remained in an agony of shame and anger, such as had never yet overpowered her. She rushed to her own room, and was found by Milly, who looked in to ask if she would like to have the child, rocking herself backwards and forwards in her chair, with her face buried in her hands, and sobbing audibly.

Milly exclaimed in terror, "Oh, la! my Lady, what ever is the matter? My dear young Lady, my sweet Miss Lucy, what has happened? Do speak, my dear Miss Lucy! what has happened to any of the dear family?"

"Milly, I am miserable! I am the most miserable wretch in the world!"

Oh! my Lady, don't say so! I can't bear to hear you talk in that way!"

"Did I not give him my first affections? Have I not been as truly devoted to him, as if he had loved me with the fervour of youth? Did I not yield to all his old bachelor fancies? I ask you, Milly, could I have nursed him with more tenderness, if he had been as dear to me, as John was to you? And he was almost as dear; yes, it was with my whole heart that I gave myself up to my attendance upon him. And what do you think has been the return I have met with? That he should prefer to me a mistress! a horrible, wicked, abandoned woman, whose very vice constitutes her charm!"

"Sure, sure, my Lady, somebody has told you false tales. This can never be true."

"It is too true, Milly, I know it! Would I could have any doubt upon the subject. While I was shut up here, not allowed to enjoy myself in society, but passing long tiresome days of seclusion and dullness, and thinking he was attending to his duties, his parliamentary duties, the good of the nation, the welfare of his country, he was carrying on this shameful

affair. During my confinement, when I was ill and suffering, he was amusing himself in the company of this woman. Oh! it makes me sick to think of! I have borne it all—I have done my duty—I have not complained—I have not reproached him—I have sat up with him night after night in his illness—I have not murmured! And now it is he who reproaches me, for at length trying to make myself happy without his affections, when he chooses to lavish them upon a shameless creature! He is angry with me, because everybody does not think me as little agreeable, and as little charming as he does! He would wish me to be odious and ugly, to justify himself!"

"I am sure, my Lady, nobody that knows you, can think you odious or ugly."

"It is not my fault, if people will think me otherwise."

"Certainly, my Lady; one could not expect that gentlefolks should not think you a good, kind, pleasant lady, as you are; nor one would not wish them not to think so; but——"

"But what, Milly?"

"Why, my Lady, though my Lord may have

done what he should not have done, still my Lady you are a married woman."

"I know that, Milly; and I would rather die than ever be led to forget it. If I had allowed the dandies to make love to me—if I had given any one of them reason to imagine I had the least preference for him—if I had in any way deserved such treatment——"

"And do you think, my Lady, you would be any the happier if you felt you did deserve it?"

CHAPTER XV.

So as there is as much difference between the counsel that a friend giveth, and that a man giveth himself, as there is between the counsel of a friend and of a flatterer; for there is no such flatterer as a man's self, and there is no such remedy against flattery of a man's self, as the liberty of a friend.

LORD BACON'S ESSAYS.

LUCY stopped short. There was something in this simple answer of Milly's that overthrew all the chain of argument with which she was going to bewilder herself. She looked back, and was obliged to confess to herself how little real enjoyment she had felt from all the dissipation of the last season.

"Happiness, Milly! I have done with happiness for ever. All I can now look for is amusement."

"Oh, my Lady, depend upon it, a good conscience is all in all. If any body has every blessing this world can afford, it is of no use,

as long as their conscience tells them they have not done what is right; and if it so happens that they are in trouble, why a good conscience is the only happiness they have left. It is not balls, nor plays, nor such like, that can cure trouble. I beg your pardon, my Lady, for talking so to you; but indeed, I do believe that if God sees any of us poor frail creatures fighting against our sorrow with a pious heart, He will help us to bear up against it, and we shall feel something nearer happiness than we ever shall by amusing ourselves with the pleasures of the world. I am sure I ought to be ashamed to speak so to a lady like you, but I am an old woman, and I love you, Miss Lucy; I love you as if you were my own child!"

"Dear Milly, you are my only comfort, and I do not know what would become of me if I had not you, to whom I could open my heart. You are quite right, and I am sure I would not do any thing wrong that I know of."

"I am sure you would not, my Lady; but I have sometimes thought of what you once said to me before ever you was married, about gentle-

men talking to ladies, and ladies being talked of, I did not rightly understand you at the time."

"What can you mean, Milly?"

"Why, my Lady, I scarce know how to tell you; but since you have let me make so bold as to speak to you, I did hear some of the servants ——"

"The servants, Milly! what on earth could the servants say?"

"Why servants will talk, my Lady, and there's no use in thinking of hindering them; and the truth is, I heard John say to Thomas, 'So my Lady has taken up with a lover at last!'"

"Impossible! Milly."

"Yes, my Lady, it is true enough: and Thomas made answer, 'I thought how 'twould be—many ladies make a show of being better than their neighbours at first, but they all will run their rig.'"

"Oh, horrid! horrid! But they did not mention any name?"

"Why, yes, they did indeed; for John answered, 'He supposed my Lord would not mind it, as 'twas all in the family.' 'Not

mind it?' says Thomas,; 'It 's my belief my lord will kick Mr. Delville out of the house one of these fine days.'"

"Stop! stop! Milly, I cannot bear to hear another word. Oh that I should live to be so spoken of by my own servants! I cannot bear it! I will turn them all away, the impertinent wretches!"

"'Tis shocking, to be sure; but them London footmen, they stick at nothing. And servants will talk, my Lady! there 's no help for it—they will talk, if there is any thing to talk about."

"But there is nothing to talk about. Oh! what shall I do? What shall I do? If I change suddenly, and break off with Lord Montreville's cousin, it will seem so odd; it will justify these dreadful suspicions; and besides, he is the only person whose society is the least agreeable to me."

"Oh, la! my Lady! Then I am sure it is time you should not have so much of his company."

"But, Milly, he never pays me half as many compliments as other people do; and he never said a word like being in love with me;

and he never spoke a word against Lord Montreville; and he never told me I was too young or too pretty for him—he never said any of the things I have been put on my guard against, as being the first advances of a man who wishes to flirt with a married woman; for I have sometimes watched to see whether he did, for fear he should be making love before I was aware."

"You know best, my Lady; but I should think you would not have been on the look-out for it, if he had no such thing in his head."

"Why, Milly, you are as bad as all the rest of the world! But what shall I do? My husband says I must not go on as I have done; and then he has asked Mr. Delville to dinner to-morrow—and what can I do? What can I say? How am I to behave to him?"

"Sure, my Lady, just be civil and pleasant."

"That is all I have ever been, Milly! O dear! O dear! If I had but married some good young man who had loved me truly, and whom I could have loved and respected, as I would fain love and respect my husband, how easy it would have been to do my duty, if he had been ever so poor and humble!"

"Now don't you be fretting in this way, my Lady. Some has one trial, and some another; and people always think their own trial the hardest to bear. I thought mine were very hard to bear; but in all my troubles I had one comfort—my duty always lay straight before me—I always knew what I ought to do, though 'twas a hard matter sometimes to do it without murmuring."

"I will not go to the ball to-night! Yet perhaps Mr. Delville may guess why—I had better go. By the by, this is the Duchess of Altonworth's evening for being at home. I will go there. It will not seem so odd as not going out at all, and Mr. Delville is very seldom at her parties. Besides, I shall have an opportunity of asking the Duchess if she will receive me early to-morrow. She is good, kind, and judicious, and she knows the world well, too. I will tell her what an uncomfortable state I am in, and she will advise me."

Lord Montreville dined out at a political dinner, and they met no more in the course of the evening.

To the Duchess of Altonworth's Lucy went,

filled with a desire to do what was right, but at the same time with a strong conviction of her own wrongs, and in consequence a feeling of martyrdom.

The first person she saw, as she entered the Duchess's, was Lionel Delville. She was not prepared for this, and it annoyed her considerably. She was forced into his society before she had by any means decided on the line of conduct, or rather the tone of manner, (for the whole question was an affair of manner,) which she meant to adopt. He instantly greeted her with a serious air of tender interest and concern, and ventured to look in her eyes with an enquiring expression, as if he expected to ascertain how her tête-à-tête with Lord Montreville had gone off. His eyes disconcerted her. She was distressed at meeting them. She looked in every other direction; but although she might avoid seeing them upon her, she could not avoid feeling them upon her. She made careless, indifferent, insipid remarks, in rather a higher pitched voice than was common to her.

Lionel saw that she had been lectured, perceived that she was no longer at her ease, and

took courage from her evident *gêne*. He expressed his happiness at meeting her again "so soon;" said he had come to the Duchess's because he had imagined it likely she might prefer a quiet party to a ball "that evening," and enquired whether he might call "as usual." His whole air had in it something confidential, as if there existed between them a mystery, which both understood, without any need of explanation. In vain Lucy tried to be easy, and to laugh—to be any thing but mysterious. She answered, "Oh, yes!" or "to be sure," and "I suppose so," in an affectedly loud and unconcerned tone, to all the half-whispered expressions of solicitude which he was pouring into her ear. Whatever subject she started, he contrived to throw a shade of sentiment over it. She thought herself safe in dashing into the last speech of Lord Thorcaster, and loudly declared her admiration of his eloquence, for she had passed the preceding night with her head through the ventilator of the House of Commons. This led to a discussion upon eloquence, and Lionel said he could imagine circumstances in which there might be more elo-

quence in three short words, than in all the flowing sentences, the rounded periods, the flowers of rhetoric, employed by sages and senators since the world began."

"Eloquence in three words? What can they be?"

He kept his face looking straight forward, but uttered, in a low, clear, musical voice, which reached her ear, and her's alone, "What think you of the three words 'I love you?'"

Lucy felt hot all over; but she rejoined, with what calmness she could command, "I should say those three words conveyed an agreeable,—or, perhaps, a disagreeable fact, in the plainest and simplest manner, and had nothing to do with eloquence."

Lionel saw he had gone too far. "When your little boy first lisps, 'Mama, I love you!' I think you will agree with me, that there can be eloquence in the words."

Lucy felt it certainly would be delightful to hear them from his lips; and an air of tenderness succeeded to her confusion; she became conscious that to all lookers-on the appearance was that of a desperate flirtation. She

felt her cheeks flush; she felt her eyes gleam with excited emotions of all kinds, and she was afraid to raise them from the ground. Lionel thought her eyelashes quite beautiful, as they almost swept her cheek, while they evidently only veiled the brightness beneath: he thought her confusion bewitching, and he was irresistibly attracted.

The Duchess was surprised, and grieved, at the change which she feared had come over Lady Montreville, during the last few weeks. Lucy caught her eyes upon her, and read in them an expression of pity, and of blame. She could not bear that look. Jumping up from her seat, she exclaimed, "I have something particular to say to the Duchess; I beg you ten thousand pardons," and she left him in the middle of a tirade, upon the folly of those who, by groundless suspicions, justify what they dread.

He remained *planté*, and bit his lips in pique and provocation. Lucy meantime passed her arm within the Duchess's, and saying she must arrange with her some plan for seeing the Dulwich Gallery, she led her aside and sat down by

her. "Do not look at me with that expression of countenance, my dear Duchess. I cannot bear it. I have enough to annoy me, and I cannot have you look so coldly and unkindly upon me."

"If my looks expressed coldness or unkindness, they belied me. I feel any thing but indifference, I can assure you."

"Let me come to you to-morrow morning, and promise to listen to a long history, in which, if I am to blame, I am more sinned against than sinning — indeed, till to-night, I thought myself a pattern of discretion; but I begin to think I may have been a little imprudent."

"Well, we cannot discuss that point just now," answered the Duchess, smiling. "Come to-morrow morning, and I will not be at home to any one else."

Lucy kept close to the Duchess the rest of the evening, and did not give Mr. Delville any opportunity of speaking to her again. The next morning she breakfasted in her dressing-room, and at twelve o'clock she went to the Duchess, resolved to tell her her whole history,

to ask her advice, and, if possible, to follow it. She did not feel as if there would be any great difficulty in giving up the attentions of others, but she felt she could not accomplish being the affectionate wife she once was, if that should be the thing required of her.

When she found herself alone with the Duchess, she told her her tale of woe and injury. "Now what can I do? What shall I do? I am ready to confess that last night Mr. Delville did seem inclined to make love, though just when I thought it was really coming, he turned the conversation, and talked about my child. However, I am not at this moment so indignant as I was yesterday, when I thought the suspicion ridiculous and insulting. I am ready to do any thing that shall be calculated to prevent him, or any one else, flirting with me; but what have I done, or said, to encourage them?"

"It is very odd that last year, though you were as pretty as you are now, you had no difficulty of this kind, had you?"

"No, none at all. I went out a great deal, but no one paid me particular attention; and I

did not feel afraid of any constructions put upon this thing and that thing; and yet I am sure I was not half so attentive to appearances, and did not think half as much about them."

"I should think then there must be some change in yourself."

"Yes; that there is! I thought my husband loved me then, and my study was to please him."

"That is the thing! Men have such tact in finding out when a woman is discontented at home."

"And how can I be contented? That does not depend upon me."

"Not exactly. But do you not think that from having been mortified at home, perhaps you have sought for gratification to your vanity abroad, that you have wished to be re-assured concerning your own attractions?"

"Why, perhaps I may. It is so mortifying, you know, to be married to a man old enough to be one's father, and then that he should neglect and despise one. I just did want to ascertain that the fault was not in me, but that it was all owing to his bad taste. Oh

dear! why was I dazzled with rank and fashion, polished manners, and good breeding. I was at the play the other night, and I was so struck with those lines of Anne Boleyn's, that I came home and learned them by heart.

> I swear 'tis better to be lowly born,
> And range with humble livers in content,
> Than to be perked up in a glistering grief
> And wear a golden sorrow.

If I had but married an honest, true-hearted man, with ardent affections; one to whom I had been all the world, as he would have been to me, I could have buffeted cheerily through the storms of life, hand in hand with him."

"And how many of your acquaintance are blessed with the fate (which I grant you is the happiest in the world) for which you so frequently sigh?"

"You are."

"So I am! but do not fancy I have not had my share of sorrow, though I am cheerful,—more than cheerful,—and most grateful for my very large share of happiness. But remember I lost a son, my first-born, in the full vigour of

youth and intellect; one who was all that a mother's love or pride could wish or dream. God grant you may be spared that trial, my dearest Lady Montreville!"—her voice faltered as she spoke. "Depend upon it all others are light in comparison. Not that I murmur. Heaven knows that I bow in submission, and acknowledge myself still a person to be envied; but you need not envy me so very much,"—and a tear glistened in her eye.

Lucy thought of her boy, and trembled. She confessed to herself she had not sufficiently prized the blessing vouchsafed to her. She thought also that what Milly had said to her was very true,—"Some have one trial, some another."

"You will not find many more so fortunate in their marriage as I am," added the Duchess.

"Lord and Lady John Ashton."

"They have been married four months and a half!"

"Well then, Mr. and Mrs. Stanton."

"Yes, they are very happy now. He married her from pique, because my niece Jemima

refused him. But it has turned out particularly well, and Mrs. Stanton suits him ten times better than Jemima would have done."

"Oh I should not like to have been married out of pique! Well then! those dear old souls the Hartleys. It is a pleasure to see them toddling so cozily down the hill together. He is charming, and so fond of her!"

"So he is! But the greater part of his youth was spent in devotion to other women. However, her gentleness and patience have their reward at last. He loves her now as she deserves."

"Oh! I cannot emulate her there. I cannot wish to win back the affections of a person I have left off respecting; but indeed I wish to do my duty. I have the most ardent desire to be a virtuous wife, if I cannot be a loving one."

"Well now! to begin, you must constantly and invariably repress vanity. Vanity is the stumbling block of most women. Vanity has led more women astray, than feeling, or vice, or any thing else. You must give up showing your husband you can charm others."

"Sophy told me that was the way in the

world to keep one's husband! Not that I did it exactly with the view of keeping him, for I had given up that point, but I did wish to show him what he had lost."

"My dear Lady Montreville, you have been playing a dangerous game. By your own confession then, vanity has been the true mainspring of your actions of late!"

"Oh, not quite! only a little; but, after all, what can be done without a little bit of vanity? As Sophy says, every body would sit still, and do nothing; people would not try to be pleasing and clever; heroes would not fight; legislators would not legislate; there would be no arts, or sciences, or improvements in the world. Sophy says vanity is as necessary in the economy of the mind, as fire in the economy of the world. That without it all things would stagnate."

"Very true! But like fire, if once allowed to get beyond your controul, it rages, destroys, and devours every thing. Like fire, it is the best of servants, the worst of masters."

"Oh, so it is! If I could but have thought of that when Sophy and I have been talking!

but as I could not answer her, I thought her arguments were unanswerable. Well then, I will not give way to vanity any more. I always was taught that it was wrong to do so, till Sophy persuaded me one ought to try to be agreeable, that it was a duty one owed to society. Still, how shall I get through our dinner to-day? My husband so angry! and Mr. Delville to be one of the party!"

"Shall I tell you what to do? Go home to Lord Montreville, and ask him how he wishes you to behave to his cousin, and assure him you are ready to follow his directions in all respects."

"What! quite humble myself before him, as if I was an erring wife, and he an immaculate angel? Oh, my dear Duchess, I scarcely think I can do that! Think of Alicia!"

"But your husband having failed in his duties, is no reason you should not perform yours. Your vow was not conditional. Your duties remain the same. Moreover, asking Lord Montreville how he wishes you to conduct yourself, is not expressing any approbation of his conduct. In short, it is the right thing

to do, and you will find yourself happier, if you do what is right, simply because it is right, than you can be in any other way."

"That is just what Milly said!" exclaimed Lucy. "And if you and Milly both say so, it must be true. I will drive home as fast as I can, and catch him before he goes out."

Lucy rang for her carriage, and kissing the Duchess with heartfelt gratitude for her sympathy and good advice, she hurried away, and went straight into Lord Montreville's morning-room, without giving her pride time to rise up again within her bosom.

CHAPTER XVI.

When all is done and said,
  In the end, this shall you find,
He most of all doth bathe in bliss
  That hath a quiet mind.

Our wealth leaves us at death,
  Our kinsmen at the grave;
But virtues of the mind unto
  The Heavens with us we have.

THOMAS LORD VAUX, 1521.

Il n'y a rien qui rafraîchisse le sang comme avoir sû éviter de faire une sottise.—LA BRUYERE.

LORD MONTREVILLE was sitting before a table, covered with papers and books, with a novel open before him, of which he had not turned over a leaf for at least thirty-six minutes. He was thinking how innocent Lucy had been when first he had married her; he was lamenting the total change which he believed had taken place in her; he was wondering how far she had become acquainted with

his connexion with Alicia Mowbray, and he confessed to himself that he could date the alteration which he had perceived in her, from the period when she had an opportunity of perceiving that fatal letter. That she had read it, was now evident, from her taunting allusion the preceding day. He was persuading himself that pique and jealousy might have driven her to flirtation, and he did not feel so chilled, so awed, so daunted, as when her measured, cold, though dutiful behaviour had made him painfully aware of his own errors, and of her merits. Neither was he so indignant, as when, in his anger, he attributed the whole change to mere indifference to himself, and love of the admiration of others.

As Lucy approached him, her cheek was slightly flushed; her clear blue eyes looked full at him, with a gentle but determined expression which seemed to say, I have no thought which shuns the light, enquire, and my heart shall be laid open before you.

"Lord Montreville," she said, "you were angry with me yesterday for seeing so much of your cousin Mr. Delville. You have asked him

to dine here to-day, and I want to know how you would wish me to conduct myself towards him. I wish to be guided by you. I wish to see those whom you approve, and I wish to see no more of them than you approve. I value my own good name as much as you can do; and although I yesterday felt very angry at the manner in which you took me to task, my anger has subsided, and I only want to do what is right. You will find me willing and anxious to follow your directions, whatever they may be."

Lord Montreville was taken by surprise. He could not look in her face and refuse to believe in the perfect candour and sincerity of her address to him. Her manner was neither humble, as if she had any thing to be forgiven; nor was it bold, as if she meant to brave him. The train of his own thoughts had rather tended to soften than to inflame him, and simple truth generally carries conviction with it.

"Lucy! I own I was angry yesterday, and can you assure me I had no cause for being so?"

"None that I know of."

"Answer me honestly, — Has not Lionel Delville made love to you?"

"I have no wish but to answer honestly. Yesterday morning I should have said, never; and even now I can scarcely say he has, though yesterday evening, when I met him at the Duchess's, his manner was changed. I think that if I had given him any encouragement, he would have made love to me; and it is in consequence of finding you were so far justified in your suspicions, that I now come to you, and beg you will direct my conduct. My wish is to fulfill my duties. I am convinced that by so doing alone one can know happiness,—or rather contentment,—(for she felt at that moment that life presented but a blank and cheerless prospect to her,) happiness I have long ceased to look for."

"Lucy! this is not kind, or flattering to me."

"I am very sorry for it, but it is the fact!" She sat down, half overcome by her feelings of determined duty, and of self-commiseration.

"Lucy, why should you not be happy?"

"Can *you* ask, Lord Montreville?" and she gave him a glance, in which the flash of indig-

nation was tempered by a reproachful tear, which swam in her eye.

"Oh, Lucy! do you allude to that—that letter—which you so unfortunately——?"

"Yes, I do allude to that letter, which I so unfortunately saw; and to that woman, that shameless woman, whom you prefer to me. But I do not wish to reproach you—the time is gone by. I have made up my mind to being the neglected wife of a faithless husband. But I wish to do my duty for my own sake, for the sake of my conscience. Tell me what to do, and I will do it!"

"Lucy, I never preferred that woman to you. I have never seen her since we left Wales, and I never will see her again as long as I live."

"I am very glad for your own sake to hear you say so. For whatever you, and other fashionable men may think, you may rest assured it is a great sin—though I have latterly been so bewildered about right and wrong, and I have tried so to find excuses for those around me, that I believe, if it had not been for the

Duchess, and for Milly, I should scarcely have known which was which."

Lord Montreville, though not a strict moralist, could not help being struck with these few words, which so forcibly expressed the mode, by which the most amiable become contaminated by bad examples. He felt he had been the cause of her thus trying to reconcile morality to practice, instead of practice to morality.

A pause ensued. Had Lucy been in love with her husband, most likely her heart would have entirely softened towards him; and though she would have poured forth a much more vehement torrent of reproaches, she would have been more ready to restore him to his former place in her affections. As it was, she heard his assurance with satisfaction, but with calmness. It did not produce any instantaneous revulsion in her feelings. It did not now affect her as it would have done on the evening at Caërwhwyddwth Castle, when his silence had so seared her heart. Since then she had had leisure to look back upon her marriage, and to

decypher what her feelings had then been, and to become convinced how little of real love there was in her preference of him. She now knew how easily we can deceive ourselves. The spell was broken! The halo her own imagination had thrown around him was dispersed.

Although with a mind so naturally well disposed as her's, if his conduct had always been such as to ensure her respect, the spell would never have been broken, the halo never dispersed, still it was not at her option again to conjure up the one, or to invest him with the other. She saw him as he was; but he was the father of her child, and she rejoiced that the silence and reserve which had so long been maintained between them, was at length broken through. She did not wish it should ever be resumed, and she continued —

"I hope we now both wish to perform our duties, and I really need your instructions with respect to my behaviour to Mr. Delville."

At this moment Lord Montreville felt his own errors had been so much more serious than her's, that he was grateful to her for expressing herself as if they each had something to

forget and to forgive, and his jealous feelings had vanished into thin air before her candour and sincerity, in a manner which surprised himself.

"Lucy," he said, "I trust to you; there can be no deceit under that open brow. I have known many women, but none so free from guile—so single-hearted as yourself. You are now aware that Lionel's attentions to you have given me uneasiness, and I feel convinced you will conduct yourself as you ought to do. I only wish you felt the same confidence in me."

"Indeed, Lord Montreville, if you assure me you have broken off all connexion with that woman, I implicitly believe what you say. But to tell the honest truth, I cannot get over your having ever done any thing so wicked. I may be able to forgive the insult to myself; but how can I look up to you as I once did, when I know you have been led into such wickedness?"

"Dear Lucy, you do not know with what free notions men are educated; you do not know how difficult it is for a man to shake off a woman who has once acquired power over

him, and who tries to get him back into her toils, even although the inclination he has once felt for her has long, long passed away."

"Then it was not since your marriage that you first became acquainted with her?"

"No! When I married, I meant never to see her again. It was her distress, and mere pity for her wants and miseries, that ever led me back to her. I did not then know what you really were. I thought you beautiful and gentle; but it was not till later that I learned to honour you as a being of a holier, higher nature, than any I had yet met with. At the very time when you shut up your heart from me, mine was filled with admiration, respect, and affection for you. Half the jealousy I felt was, I believe, sorrow to see the first and only being in whose unsullied purity I had firmly believed, on the point of becoming contaminated by collision with the world."

Lucy was touched by this homage to the rectitude of her intentions, and she thought there would be something satisfactory in redeeming her whole sex in his estimation. She also thought if she could lead him to see the

real guilt of those errors which he had hitherto looked upon as so venial, she should be promoting his welfare in this world and the next. With these feelings she answered smilingly, "I am glad you entertain such a good opinion of me, and I should be very, very sorry to forfeit it. You shall continue to respect me."

"And to love you, dearest Lucy. Though I could not have reached the age at which I married, without having been in love before, still, to love you as I never loved any woman but you—"

"Thank you," answered Lucy, and she sighed to think that his tenderness awakened no corresponding emotion in her bosom; that it was forgiveness, satisfaction, kindness, that she felt—but no responsive love.

On the contrary, the word rather chilled her, for she felt it impossible to return the sentiment expressed, and she hastily added, "Well, good b'ye, I see your horses in the street, and I am going to take the child to play with the Duchess of Altonworth's grandchildren."

They parted in kindness, and they met again before dinner in the same frame of mind.

Lionel Delville, who had calculated upon finding Lucy alone, as Lord Montreville was apt to be late for dinner, entered the apartment before any of the rest of the company had arrived. At first, he thought the old fellow must be very jealous to have made so unusual an exertion; but he soon perceived that a perfect understanding subsisted between them, and that Lord Montreville's countenance no longer betrayed any sign of uneasiness at his approach.

He sat, as usual, by Lady Montreville at dinner, and he again found the open straightforward manner which, when first he met her, had so completely baffled him. The *gêne* and shyness which were the consequence of feeling herself suspected, had completely vanished. She knew that her husband now had perfect confidence in her; she knew that he did justice to the purity of her intentions; and she mentally resolved he should never, never have cause to doubt them.

Lord Montreville's knowledge of the sex, which rendered him jealous and umbrageous when there was any, the remotest cause for being so, also enabled him to understand and

to appreciate her behaviour on the present occasion. Lionel saw the game was up, and had the tact to slip back into the open conventional gallantry, from which he had been gradually advancing into serious gallantry.

Lucy that night retired to her room, satisfied with herself, thoroughly convinced that every effort made in the cause of virtue produces its own reward, resolved to be thankful for the blessings she possessed, and strong in the determination to do her duty in that state of life in which she was placed; while at the same time she could not deny to herself, that the duties of those who are united to a person suited to them in age, disposition, and pursuits, are the most easy to fulfil.

Lord and Lady Montreville have lived many years in comfort and good fellowship. Lady Montreville is the best of mothers, and finds in the sportive tenderness of her children, happiness far beyond the contentment which at one time was all to which she dared aspire. Yet sometimes, as she watches the innocent gambols of her two lovely little girls, she sighs to think those halcyon days of youth, which to herself

were days of such unalloyed joyousness, cannot last for ever; and that the time must assuredly come, when they too will think of love and marriage.

Such reflections were passing through her mind, when she one day exclaimed to Milly, "Nurse, how sorry I shall be when those children grow up, and one has to go through for them all the agitations attendant upon lovers, and going to be married. Marriage is such a lottery, you know!"

"Ah, well! I shall be dead and buried before ever that time comes; but whatever you do, my Lady, be sure they choose gentlemen that have the fear of God before their eyes. Ah! bless their little hearts!" she added, as she followed their light graceful forms with eyes of pride and tenderness, "they may grow up ever so pretty—as pretty as yourself, my Lady, and they can't be much prettier; but it's a poor hold a woman has over a man, if it's only the hold her own beautiful face, sweet manners, and gentle temper can have. It is to the man's good principles a woman must look, to keep her husband constant and true to her."

WARENNE;

OR,

THE PIPING TIMES OF PEACE.

WARENNE;

OR,

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CHAPTER I.

So I, by vent'rous friendship led,
. . . . .
Would fain thy dauntless valour sing,
Resistless as the tempest's wing
That wave on wave does dashing fling
Upon the shore,
Yet mild thy soul as breath of spring
When war is o'er.

Unpublished Poems.

ONE evening in the winter of 182—, a large party of the officers of the —— dragoons were dining together in the best room of the Green Dragon, the principal inn of ——, on the southern coast of Ireland. The district around was under military law, but though occasional outrages marked the wild and turbulent spirit which

reigned, since their arrival in their present quarters no disturbances had taken place of sufficient magnitude to cause them serious alarm; and it appeared probable that, notwithstanding the efforts of the agitators to excite tumult, men's passions would subside, and affairs resume their wonted, if not happy, current. To men under such circumstances, without danger to animate, or occupations to interest them, dinner is a meal of much importance, and the young cornets or captains were busily employed in dispelling their *ennui* according to the received rules of social indulgence.

Some two or three of the neighbouring gentry had been invited to join the mess, and as the generous wine passed quickly round, many a loud laugh and many a light jest told the gay and unconstrained merriment of the festive meeting. There was, however, one individual at the table, who, though he apparently shared in their mirth, and though no trace of uneasiness on his brow betrayed the working of the mind within, looked upon the proceedings of his young friends and their guests with feelings of an anxious nature. Their commanding-

officer Lieutenant-Colonel Warenne, feared that he could perceive, amid the joyousness of their good-humoured revelry, impending discord and confusion.

Warenne, though young in years, was a gallant and very distinguished officer. He had entered the army a boy, at the commencement of the Peninsular war, and was entirely employed from that time till its close. Promotion came quickly to the survivors in those days of perilous glory, and he had successively risen step after step, until he found himself in the spring of 1814 first major of his old regiment, the —— dragoons. At Waterloo his Lieutenant-Colonel was killed, and Warenne obtained the high rank he held at the moment of which we are writing. Thus, after several years of peace, he was not quite thirty-four. Daring, cool, and firm, with quick perception, great knowledge of his profession, and much general information, he was looked upon by his seniors as one who, if opportunity should be given him, could not fail to raise himself to the highest honours of his profession; kind of heart, and gentle in manner, he was the idol of the soldiery.

His form and his features coincided with the character of his mind. Tall and muscular, but spare and active, his broad chest and clean limbs showed at once strength, and capability of continued exertion. His dark and piercing eye bespoke quick comprehension, while his mouth, beautifully formed, and expressing as its natural characteristics, benignity, and perhaps humour, when through agitation it became compressed, bore the stamp of decision.

On the night in question a bystander might have detected somewhat of Warenne's anxiety to keep up a tone of conversation throughout the party rather higher than that which usually graces a mess-table, but otherwise no outward signs denoted his anticipations. He had learnt by accident, in the course of the day, that one of the gentlemen, whom he had invited to dinner, was closely connected with the agitating party, and he every instant expected to hear him break out into some abuse of existing powers, which might not be brooked at a table of his Majesty's officers. He watched therefore the increasing effects of the wine upon his guests with a melancholy foreboding, and was on the

alert to put a stop to any discussion that seemed likely to terminate angrily. He turned his keen eye round on all his young subalterns in succession, to see if the colour was yet mounting to their cheeks, or if their knit brows showed symptoms of provocation. More especially did he observe the bearing of two at the table. For the first he was interested by the tie of blood; the second had been committed to his care, a few months previously, by one whom he was strongly disposed to think the handsomest and most charming of her sex.

Frank Warenne was the lieutenant-colonel's only brother, about six years the younger, a gay, dashing, intelligent puppy, very handsome, and a good deal spoilt, that is to say, as far as a disposition, by nature incorruptibly good, could be deteriorated by the admiration of women, and the good-nature of friends. The affectionate kindness of Colonel Warenne himself, had perhaps contributed, as much as any other cause, to render Frank what he was.

Their father, a younger son of the noble house of Warenne, had died when his eldest boy Gerald was only thirteen years old, having,

shortly before his death, vested his small property in land. His widow had hoped to be able, with the income arising from this, to educate her two children well, and she had placed Gerald at Eton. Before a year had passed, she too was gathered to the tomb. Mr. Warenne had bequeathed the estate in fee to his wife, trusting to her to divide it between her two sons as she might deem best for their future interests.

She died however without a will, and it devolved on Gerald as sole heir. From that moment, Gerald, with the decision and nobleness which formed so prominent a part of his after character, determined, not only to take charge of the instruction and support of Frank during his minority, by making over for that purpose a portion of the allowance given him by Chancery, but, on his coming of age, to divide his inheritance equally with him — a resolution which he carried into practice, shortly after his return to England from the army of occupation, in the winter of 1815.

He obtained for Frank a commission in the same regiment with himself, as soon as he was old enough to hold it, and the young cornet

fought his first battle at Waterloo under his auspices.

In this manner, under his brother's fostering eye, Frank had grown up to his present age of manhood, in perfect freedom from care, in the enjoyment of as much money as he needed, with the advantages of birth, of friends, (for his brother's friends were his,) and of personal beauty; a pleasant introduction into life, but not one to bring to maturity the seeds of good implanted by nature. The consequence of this was, that though Captain Warenne was an excellent officer, and a gay agreeable companion, he wanted that vigour of mind and intellectual superiority which Colonel Warenne himself possessed.

The other object of anxiety to Warenne, on this evening, Henry Marston, was a wild, thoughtless, impetuous boy, with high and generous feelings, undisciplined by education. When he joined the regiment, only a few months before, he first quitted the paternal roof beneath which he had been brought up under a private tutor, who had consulted his own ease, more than his pupil's advancement, and had never attempted to teach him the necessity of self-

command, or even of concession to the prejudices and opinions of others. From him therefore Warenne momentarily expected some burst of temper, or some passionate interruption of his Irish guests, which must lead to a quarrel. His fears were not without reason;—by degrees the little softening remarks which he from time to time threw in were less attended to, while the agitator grew more violent and seditious in his language, louder in tone, and more offensive in his gesticulations. By degrees Henry passed from a state of good-humoured amusement to a feeling of intense provocation, which hardly permitted him to observe the usual courtesies of society; and the former at last venturing to declare in a threatening manner, that "England, if she chose still to continue her galling oppression of Ireland, should remember that Irishmen had hearts and hands, and that she did it at her peril," he angrily demanded,—

"Peril! of what?"

"Do you ask of what?" rejoined the indignant orator. "Of war, war to the knife. Ireland cannot — will not — longer be the slave of

England. We bid her, and her blood-thirsty myrmidons defiance."

In an instant, more than one young officer started from his seat, and together with Henry, who was thoroughly exasperated, loudly took him to task for his ill-timed and ill-placed tirade against their country. At this moment the well-known voice of their Lieutenant-Colonel was heard.

"Mr. Marston, Mr. Kennedy, Captain Warenne; I beg of you to remain quiet."

The clear stern tone in which these few simple words were uttered, permitted not any hesitation. The young soldiers reseated themselves, and a general silence ensued.

"Gentlemen," continued he, speaking slowly and calmly, "this for the present is my table, these gentlemen my guests." Then addressing himself to the unlucky cause of the disturbance, "Mr. O'Neil, as the countenances of my young friends do not seem to promise much more agreeable conversation, perhaps we had better retire."

He rose from his chair as he concluded, and

bowing, led the way to the door. The Irishman followed him, and they all left the room. Colonel Warenne quietly walked before them from the door to the court-yard of the inn, courteously shewing the way; as soon, however, as he had reached a spot where he could not be overheard, he turned round and said,

"After what has passed, Mr. O'Neil, you must be aware that you and I cannot again meet as friends without some explanation; I must therefore wish you good-night. To-morrow morning, perhaps, your present feelings of excitement will have passed away, and you will be sorry for the intemperate language you have used. I shall be happy to find that such is the case, when I send my friend Major Stuart to wait on you."

O'Neil seemed struck by the collected and business-like tone of this address, but made no answer, and departed with his companions.

As soon as they were gone, Warenne sought Major Stuart's apartment, and placed the matter in his hands. He then retraced his steps to the mess-room, revolving in his mind many various schemes for preventing all inquiry, on

the part of his young friends, into the measures he had taken, or was about to take, when, fortunately for him, an orderly rode into the yard with orders from General Unwin, who commanded the district, to move the regiment the next day to ——. With the dispatch in his hand, he re-entered the dining-room, where, during his absence, his conduct had been canvassed. The younger officers were strongly disposed to think that he had treated the impertinent stranger with too much consideration; and, as he returned, Henry Marston was in the act of saying to Frank, that he was inclined to quarrel with his brother for not allowing him to kick the rascal out. He quickly, however, silenced their incipient questionings, by occupying their attention with the change of station to be effected on the morrow, with the line of route, &c.; and soon afterwards, breaking up the party, dismissed them to their rooms in utter forgetfulness of the mischance which had thrown them into such disagreeable confusion.

CHAPTER II.

When honour is a support to virtuous principles, and runs parallel with the laws of God and our country, it cannot be too much cherished and encouraged; but when the dictates of honour are contrary to those of religion and equity, they are the greatest depravations of human nature, by giving wrong, ambitious, and false ideas of what is good and laudable, and should therefore be exploded by every good government, and driven out as the bane and plague of human society. ADDISON.

FRANK WARENNE alone was not deceived, and could not doubt that his brother would resent the insult which he had received. He knew too well Warenne's delicate sense of honour; and, recognising in the tranquillity of his demeanour the settled calmness of decision, he intuitively guessed the truth. Want of fraternal affection was not one of Frank's failings, and he sought his chamber in a state of serious disquietude. He saw no means by which a rencontre could be prevented, nor any, by which he might transfer to his own person

the danger that threatened him he loved so dearly. He felt that honour, according to military custom, demanded from Warenne himself that he should require an apology from O'Neil; that in all probability O'Neil would not apologize; and they must therefore necessarily meet each other. He could not rest—he did not even attempt to lie down, but paced his room in restless anxiety hour after hour, forming a thousand different schemes to ensure his brother's safety, yet unable to find one which should not compromise his fame. At last, about five o'clock, resolving to ascertain whether his fears were well founded, he stole across the passage to the door of Warenne's room, and gently opened it. Warenne was writing, but started up at Frank's entrance.

"Is it you, Frank!" he exclaimed.

"Forgive me, Gerald," rejoined Frank, "but I am certain you are going to fight that scoundrel O'Neil, and I am wretched about it. I have passed the whole night in utter misery. Gerald! this may be our last meeting," and as he spoke, he flung himself upon his brother's neck.

"Do not unman me," said Warenne; "just at this moment I have need of all my firmness, for I will not deny your conclusion with respect to O'Neil. Would that I could! for I abhor duelling from my soul. I cannot disguise from myself that it is a wicked and abominable practice, expressly contrary to the law of Him, in whom, notwithstanding the irregularities of my soldier's life, I most sincerely trust,—if I may dare to say so in such an hour as this; neither can I forget that I am perhaps about to appear before him with the crime of murder, in intention at least, upon my soul. Still I have not the moral courage to break through custom, when the alternative is disgrace,—but I must not think of these matters now. Let us talk of something else, Frank.—I had just finished a letter to you, as you came in, which I meant should be delivered to you in case I fell;—put it in your pocket, and return it to me, if all goes well,—nay do not read it. It contains only a few words of advice from your old Mentor, who would fain have you do justice to his instructions, and to yourself."

As he proceeded, Warenne regained his habitual self-command, and Frank, his mind unconsciously imbibing a portion of his brother's calmness, became more tranquil. They talked on with composure, and even cheerfulness, of the future prospects of the latter. It was now six o'clock, and Warenne begged Frank to leave him to a few minutes repose. The sad conviction that this might be their last interview once more forced itself on the mind of the latter, and he would have relieved his bursting heart by tears, had he not feared to give pain to one he loved better than himself. He lingered for a while on his brother's neck, pressed him yet closer to his heart, then invoking every blessing upon his head, and receiving from him a fond but solemn benediction in return, he rushed to his own chamber, where he threw himself on his bed, and, after a few minutes, fairly sobbed himself to sleep.

About a quarter before seven Stuart knocked at Warenne's door, with the intelligence that O'Neil would not apologize. Nothing remained therefore to be done but to proceed to the

meeting, and in a few minutes the two friends were on the road to a sequestered spot a short distance from the town, which Stuart, and O'Neil's second had selected. It is not necessary to relate the particulars of a duel; suffice it to say, that the affair was properly conducted, and that O'Neil fell at the first fire, severely, but not dangerously wounded; while Warenne received his antagonist's ball in the fleshy part of his right arm, just above the elbow. As soon as the latter saw the effect of his fire, he ran up to O'Neil, and endeavoured as well as he could to raise him up, with a feeling of anguish he alone can estimate who finds himself with blood upon his hand, shed, not under excitement, nor in a moment of passion, but coolly and unnecessarily, in compliance with the customs of the world. Nor was his distress alleviated, when as he waited with impatience the opinion of the surgeon on the nature and extent of the injury he had inflicted, the wounded man took his hand and said,—

"If I die, I forgive you; my own folly has been the cause of my death."

He could have cursed himself for his crime. His suspense, however, lasted not long. The surgeon, after an accurate examination into the direction of the ball, pronounced that no vital part was injured, and that "Mr. O'Neil would be as sound a man as ever in three months."

Never did sounds of sweetest melody fall so pleasantly on Warenne's ear, as the oracular dictum of his old fellow campaigner, Mr. Morris, the regimental Æsculapius. There seemed to be a weight taken from his breast, which he felt it would have been impossible for him to sustain.

"Thank Heaven!" murmured he to himself, "I am not a murderer!" Then turning to O'Neil, he said aloud, "We part friends, I hope, not the less that you are to live."

O'Neil smiled faintly, and once again held out his hand. Warenne shook it warmly, and immediately proceeded on his return to ——, that he might procure further assistance, and the means of conveyance for his former foe.

As he turned to leave him, he laid his hand, as he supposed, on Stuart's arm for support—it

was Frank's! Poor Frank had slept but for an instant, and on awaking, had sought his brother's apartment. Finding that he was gone out, he had immediately run down, through the court-yard of the inn, to a spot in the high road from whence he could command a view over the adjacent country, where catching a glimpse of two figures, about a mile from him, quitting the beaten track, he had rightly conjectured they were Stuart and his principal. He followed as fast as he was able, and arrived on the ground just in time to see O'Neil fall. He had then stolen up during the interval of confusion which ensued, and behind his brother had awaited the surgeon's decision.

Warenne recognized Frank, but simply pressed his arm with affection. His heart was too full for utterance, and the silence was not broken, until the latter exclaimed, "Thank God! Gerald, you are yet spared to us!"

"Thank God, indeed!" replied the other. The deep but subdued tone of his voice expressing the sincerity with which he acknowledged the mercy of that Being, not only

in preserving his life from destruction, but his conscience from a horrible crime.

Stuart soon afterwards joined them. "Warenne," said he, "I congratulate you on being so well out of this business; for the wound in your arm is a trifle. Of all life's disagreeable accidents, in my opinion, there is nothing so unpleasant as a duel; nothing so unsatisfactory; nothing—I beg your pardon—so foolish."

"Do not beg my pardon," replied Warenne; "all you say is true; and if the encounter ends in the death of either party, nothing so dreadful, both with regard to him who is hurried from the very act of sin, into the presence of his Maker, and to him who survives, to wear out a melancholy existence in unavailing remorse."

Such weak and unstable creatures are we! Knowing the better line of conduct, but preferring the worse; afraid of the breath of our own species, who can only hurt the body, yet scrupling not to incur the anger of Him who can destroy both body and soul.

Warenne, a man of excellent principles, of

commanding talents, and in the habit of controuling his passions, though he acknowledged the heinousness of the offence he was about to commit, and though he avowed his obligations to obey the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill!" could not subdue his worldly pride, but shrank from the danger of disgrace.

A quarter of an hour's walk brought the party to their quarters; and Warenne, having thanked his old friend Stuart for the kind fulfilment of the disagreeable office which had devolved upon him, retired with Frank to his apartment.

When the two brothers were again alone in that room in which, not much more than two hours before, they had parted from each other with such painful emotions, Warenne, who could not reconcile to his conscience the steps which he had taken, though he had wilfully blinded himself to their inconsistency with his duty as a Christian, and was, moreover, much agitated with his narrow escape from more serious and irretrievable guilt, gave way to his feelings, and hastily saying, "Frank, you must

pray for forgiveness for me!" threw himself on his knees by his bedside, and earnestly intreated pardon of his offended Creator.

Frank silently placed himself beside him, and for a few minutes both were absorbed in their devotions; those of the latter, perhaps, assuming the tone of grateful thanksgiving, rather than of anxious supplication. Warenne then rose composed and calm, and looking affectionately on his brother, whose tearful countenance betrayed the sincerity of the feeling in which he had prayed, bade him hasten to prepare for their march. How lightly, how gladly did Frank now obey him!

In an hour the bugles sounded, and the busy scene of departure commenced. The street was alive with men and horses, as the small parties came up from their different billets, and respectively fell into their places. Warenne had taken advantage of the interval to have his wound examined and dressed, and walked down the ranks to assume the command of his regiment with his cloak drawn over his bandaged arm, a little paler, perhaps, and graver than

usual, but collected and self-possessed. A glance at his men showed him, that in the short time which had elapsed, the particulars of the duel had transpired. They were standing by their horses ready to mount; and as he passed along their front, one or two of the old veterans, who had fought through the peninsular campaigns with him, and considered him almost to belong to them, ventured to murmur reproachfully,—

"Surely, sir, *you* need not have gone to show your courage; if any thing had happened to you, what would have become of us? It 's a'most too bad of you." And in a second more Henry Marston came up with a flushed face, and asked him how he could think of putting his life in danger to cover his foolish disputes with the Irish guests.

"Why," said he earnestly, "did you not let some one of us young ones fight O'Neil?"

Warenne's pale cheek received a slight tinge of colour, as he heard the affectionate remonstrances of his old soldiers; but he answered them only with a look of kind acknowledgment; to Henry, however, he replied smilingly,

"Never mind now, Henry, I promise you that you shall shoot the next man who behaves ill at our mess; in the mean time I 'll try if I cannot occupy you more profitably." Then hastening to mount his horse, he gave the signal for immediate departure.

CHAPTER III.

I think thee all that e'er was tenanted
Of noblest worth in loveliest female form.
JOANNA BAILLIE'S *Constantine Palæologus.*

His countenance was troubled, and his speech
Like that of one whose tongue to light discourse
At fits constrained, betrays a heart disturbed.
SOUTHEY'S *Roderick.*

DURING the whole of that winter, the —— dragoons were kept on constant duty in the district in which they were quartered; thanks however to the unceasing activity of their commanding officer, his easy and kind manners to the people; his ready perception of their humour; his strict observance of justice and open-handed generosity, which made them deem him a "raal" gentleman — it passed without bloodshed or disturbance. In the following spring the regiment was ordered to England, and se-

veral of the officers, of whom Henry Marston was one, obtained leave of absence.

Warenne himself only waited till he should have placed his men in their new quarters at Calbury, to proceed to town for a few weeks, leaving Frank behind him, to amuse himself with the pleasures and occupations of a country town in the summer months. A few hours sufficed to bring Henry to his paternal home in Charles Street, and to the arms of those he loved best in the world, his father and his sister.

Lord Framlingham was a good-natured man, much attached to his children, devoted to politics, and almost wholly engrossed with the cares of an office of some importance, which he held under the ministry of the day. He had ever been a fond parent to Henry, and Henry repaid his love with true filial affection. His sister was his earliest friend, the sharer of his boyish hopes and fears; and now that he had grown to manhood, the object of his fraternal pride. In truth Adelaide Marston was a sister of whom any man might justly be proud. She was at the present time in her

twenty-fourth year, the eldest of the three sisters and brother who composed Lord Framlingham's family. Tall and beautifully made, her head sprang from her neck, as that of a Grecian statue of old. Her brow was marble itself; her nose thin and sharp cut; her large dark lustrous eyes teemed with expression; and her mouth, perhaps, after all, the most remarkable feature in her countenance, gave a character of loveliness to the whole. Whether she stood before you in silent thought, with her raven hair quietly shading her brow, or shook back her locks in innocent mirth, her bright teeth positively flashing on you as she smiled, she was altogether as glorious an object as eye could look upon. The charms of her mind, though perhaps really as great, were not so evident as those of her person. Her manners were in public rather cold and reserved, and in the eyes of many who did not know her bore the semblance of pride. Never, however, did there exist a breast in which pride was less an inmate. The truth was, she was shy from too great humility.

She had never been a favourite with her

mother, who was a foolish woman, and disappointed that her first-born was a daughter, and she had been from infancy subjected to all those checkings and thwartings which unwise mothers are apt to exercise injudiciously. She had found her sisters constantly preferred to her; and not the less, after they had grown up and made brilliant matches. These circumstances, which, with a disposition less innately good, would probably have produced a soreness of temper, and a disdainful disregard of the opinions of others, in her occasioned only a degree of reserve in general conversation.

Thus, with greater personal attractions than her sisters, and more excellent qualities of mind, she yet remained Adelaide Marston, while they were ennobled matrons. Could the world have seen beneath the surface, how differently would it have judged her—it would have found there strong affections, and kind and gentle feelings, united to a nobleness of spirit, an enthusiastic generosity, and a love of truth, which, while they caused her to render scrupulously unto every one their due,

made her scorn to receive credit to which she did not conceive herself justly entitled. Shrinking and retiring on common occasions almost beyond feminine timidity, when called upon for exertion, she was frank, straightforward, decided, and uncompromising. She was altogether a person whom an inferior mind could not estimate, but whom a superior one could never sufficiently admire.

Her mother was now dead, and she lived with her father, his sole companion. To her, therefore, Henry's return was a source of more than ordinary joy, and the sister and the brother met as if they had been separated for years instead of months.

A day or two after his return, as Henry was relating to Adelaide the adventures of his *début* as a soldier, he naturally came to the mention of Warenne's name.

"Adelaide," said he, "what a man that is! it is worth something to know him, if only to have the benefit of his example, and he has been the kindest friend to me possible. You do not know how much I owe you for recommending me to his care."

Adelaide listened, unconsciously perhaps, with encreased attention; and Henry, thus encouraged, gave the reins to the generous feelings of his warm heart, and did ample justice to Warenne's merits. He detailed all he knew himself of the object of his praise, both with regard to his character and to his life; and all he had gleaned from his brother officers, and from the old soldiers, with whom some of Warenne's early and more dashing exploits were a favourite topic of conversation; especially, dilating upon his conduct in the duel with O'Neil, which Henry was conscious he had himself principally provoked.

"Your friend is a perfect *heros de roman*," exclaimed Adelaide, smiling, as he concluded. "Is he so entirely without fault?"

"Without fault!" replied Henry, half angrily; "of course he has faults: every one has. I do not wish to make him out 'a faultless monster, which the world ne'er knew;' but he has better qualities than any other man I ever saw. I shall not say person, because I think you as near perfection as he is, though your question is enough to provoke one; but

you shall judge for yourself, and see whether I have said too much. He will be in town in a few days, and I hope my father will make him consider this house as a second home. He has been, I am sure, a brother and a father to me, since I have been with him. I do not believe that I should stand here alive now but for him. I was for ever getting into scrapes when I first joined, owing to my home education, which prevented my learning how to command my temper, and I should never have extricated myself from them without his assistance."

"Indeed, Henry, I did not mean to be provoking," replied Adelaide. "I have every disposition to admire one you love so much; but why give yourself a bad character? Praise your friend, but do not abuse yourself."

"I do not think I deserve much commendation," said Henry, smiling in his turn, "when I can fire up at an innocent expression from you, my actions would belie my words."

Had Henry been able to read Adelaide's heart, he would not have suspected her of a

wish to treat Warenne's good qualities with lightness. She had been impressed with a very favourable idea of him during the three weeks she had passed in his society at Norton Chenies, and was sufficiently disposed to admire a character, in many respects congenial with her own. Not that she had, what is commonly called, fallen in love with him, but that she had been pleased with his spirit, his superior intelligence, and his high-minded chivalrous tone of sentiment. He had also appeared to appreciate her from the first moment of their acquaintance, and she was grateful to him for his discernment. When Henry left her, she could not help reflecting upon what had formed the principal topic of their conversation, and she certainly did not find her esteem for Warenne decreased by Henry's commendation. She thought over, one by one, the little incidents which had been mentioned, with a secret feeling of satisfaction at his strict observance of her request to him; and though she did not yet think of love, Warenne, it may not be denied, would have been gratified, had

he known how much his image occupied her mind: to him the three weeks at Norton Chenies had been the bright epoch of his life.

In a few days Warenne came to town; and after notifying his arrival at the Horse Guards, &c. &c. was brought by Henry to his father's. Lord Framlingham received the man who had been so true a friend to his son with marked consideration; and pressed him to come frequently to Charles Street, an invitation which Warenne was not the less disposed to accept, when Adelaide, with extended hand, and radiant looks, welcomed him, and thanked him for his kindness to her brother.

From that time he was a constant visiter at Lord Framlingham's. A club of military men possessed small attractions for one who sought in London a *délassement* from military duty; and the cold civility of Lord Warenne, and of other connexions of his family, did not lead him to desire a greater degree of intimacy with them. Thus he had leisure, as well as inclination, to profit by Lord Framlingham's hospitality, and when the old lord himself appeared to like his society, and to derive pleasure from

conversing with him on the interior policy of the country, its power, its laws, and its sources of wealth (subjects on which he had reflected much, and accumulated much information in his wanderings through the different garrison towns of England); when Henry seemed gratified by his coming; when, above all, Adelaide seemed to meet him with gladness; he, on some pretence or other, found himself almost daily in Charles Street.

His admiration of Adelaide quickly ripened into love, pure, and ardent love, and to hear her speak, and see her smile, became his only wish. He could listen for hours to her sweet voice as she joined in conversation with her father and himself, or with Henry talked over the incidents of the day; and he knew no greater happiness than to trace the high character of her mind, as, in the intimacy of friendship, she gave scope to her generous feelings.

Adelaide, too, had learned to love, and her heart, which had passed unscathed through the gay dawning of her career, throbbed with the tumultuous impulses of imperious passion. She loved, and life to her was now one dream of

pleasurable emotion, for, with a woman's intuitive tact, she could trace the workings of Warenne's heart more plainly than those of her own, and she saw that she there reigned undisputed mistress of his affections. That commanding spirit, which was wont to assert its mastery over the feelings, and to controul and discipline them within the bounds of wisdom, lived on her every look. If he spoke, he turned to discover if she approved; if he did aught, he was not satisfied till he knew she deemed it well done. Conscious thus of her power over him, she for a while drank of the cup of joy which hope presented to her lip, and permitted it not to be embittered by any fear for the future.

Her father perceived what was going on, but gave no outward sign that he should oppose himself to the result to which circumstances were apparently leading. In fact, he had not come to any decision on the subject, for though he was a worldly-minded man, and wished his daughter to make what is termed a good match, he was aware that with her small fortune, she could not command one; and he knew from ex-

perience, that she would never sacrifice her feelings to the prospect of a brilliant establishment. He was not therefore disinclined to her marrying a person of moderate means, for whom she had conceived an affection. Adelaide interpreted silence to mean consent, and feeling complete confidence in Warenne's love for her, gave him in return the full affection of her maiden heart.

What happy and blissful hours were these, when each, though they had not told their love, lived but for the other! They lasted not long. Warenne soon awakened to the real difficulties of his situation, and took himself severely to task for the headlong impetuosity with which he had set at hazard his own, and perhaps another's happiness. Had he a right to ask one who had been from childhood surrounded by every luxury affluence could purchase, to descend, for his sake, to comparative indigence? Could he request her to quit the brilliant circle she adorned, to become the inmate of a barrack-yard? His soul revolted at the thought. What was he, that he should outweigh in her estimation privations such as these? She

would, he doubted not, if she loved him, despise all worldly disadvantages, but should he subject her to them, because she loved him?

For the first time in his life his want of riches galled him; he felt as though he were guilty of presumption in loving Adelaide, and he hesitated to make the avowal which for ever hovered upon his lips. Adelaide perceived his disquietude, and from some expressions he inadvertently let fall, pretty accurately conjectured its cause. At first she was inclined to be angry with him, under the false impression that he conceived her capable of being influenced by a regard for wealth; but she could not retain her anger when she overheard him one day say to Henry, who had been blaming an acquaintance of theirs for not proposing to a lady to whom he was tenderly attached, "Henry, you forget that Compton is a poor man. How can he ask Miss Thornton to leave her comfortable home, and share his poverty?"

There was a bitterness in the tone with which he uttered these words, which betrayed the secret feeling that prompted the reply.

Then she was aware that he considered a woman of any refinement to be singularly misplaced in the midst of the quarters of a regiment, for, in the earlier days of their intimacy, when laughing and talking with her, and her brother, over the *agrémens* and *desagrémens* of a soldier's life, he had often expressed an opinion to this effect.

She reflected on the sentiments which he evidently entertained on these points, and her resentment vanished. She might perhaps deem his delicacy overstrained, but she knew, if he left the army, that he must forfeit, not only his fair hopes of fame and advancement, but also a large proportion of his income; and she could not blame him for being unwilling to subject her to the discomforts of a profession, which he might not, with any degree of prudence, desert. But when she had arrived at this better understanding of Warenne's motives, she was perplexed how to act. Her affections had been given; they could not be recalled — she could not retrace her steps — yet how proceed? She was ready to submit to whatever sacrifices might be necessary for the sake of him she

loved; but till he afforded her an opportunity by first openly declaring his own passion, she could not acquaint him with her determination. She longed to bid him throw aside his scruples, and give her liberty to decide in her own cause; but maidenly reserve prevented this virtual avowal of her preference for him,—reserve, which in her shrinking and timid nature, might be with difficulty overcome, even under happier circumstances. There remained no alternative but to wait for Warenne's proposals, though when he would make them, or whether he would make them at all, seemed a matter of uncertainty. He still lingered on in town, unable to tear himself from her presence, yet fearing to speak; living but for her society, yet far from satisfied in his own mind of the propriety of his continuing to seek it. At length, one morning that he called in Charles Street, to know if he might accompany Adelaide and her brother in their ride, he was so depressed in spirits, that she could not avoid asking him with some appearance of anxiety, if he was unwell.

"I am, indeed, Miss Marston," exclaimed

he, forgetting for a moment his resolutions of prudence in the emotions which the kind manner of her inquiry had conjured up, "but not in body; I am ill in mind, displeased and angry with myself, for wanting the courage, when my duty and inclinations clash, to sacrifice the latter to the former; but I cannot do so,—were my life the forfeit."

He spoke hastily and passionately; Adelaide made no reply, she did not even raise her eyes from the ground. Warenne looked at her earnestly for a moment, then feeling, that as they were at present circumstanced, he had said either too much or too little, he resolved to proceed. He could not, however, utterly controul the contradictory impulses which distracted his mind, and his words appeared to flow from despair, and scorn of his own presumption, rather than from love.

"Tell me," said he, "is not a man unjustifiable who would have another submit to sacrifices for his own welfare?"

He paused for her answer. Adelaide pitied him from her soul; she felt how much mental agony he must have endured, ere he could

thus, on a point where his whole happiness was at stake, so frame his questions as if he wished her to decide against him. She therefore replied timidly and evasively,

"Surely, Colonel Warenne, this must depend very much on the circumstances of the case, on the extent of injury to be inflicted, and the degree of advantage to be obtained."

"True," rejoined he, his voice gradually losing its tone of bitterness and becoming mournfully tender—"true," said he, "and I cannot disguise from myself, that though the benefit to myself would be inexpressibly great—greater far than I have any right to hope for, yet the injury which I should inflict would be certain and considerable. Would to Heaven I could come to a contrary conclusion, but I cannot." He buried his face in his hands on the table which stood before him; a second afterwards, however, he looked up, with a deep flush crimsoning his very brow, and continued in a hurried manner: "I cannot, however, renounce my chance."

Henry's voice at this instant was heard at the door, and Warenne ceased abruptly.

Henry came to tell Adelaide that her aunt was waiting for her below in her carriage. Adelaide obeyed the summons, and with a lighter heart than she had borne for many days, ran down the stairs to her aunt. "He must speak out now," thought she; "he must confess his love:" and in the certainty that an explanation would take place when next they met, she forgave Henry his interruption of their interview.

Warenne departed under the influence of very different feelings. He was ashamed of his own irresolution, and afraid that he had acted dishonourably in betraying the state of his mind to Adelaide. Ere he reached his lodgings, however, the very consciousness of having committed himself relieved his breast of much anxiety. He had not again to weigh the value of the different arguments which love and honour suggested, for the adoption of one line of conduct, or the other. Henceforth he had one only measure to embrace, viz. to lay his fortunes, such as they were, at Miss Marston's feet. He resolved to try his fate on the following morning.

CHAPTER IV.

Est-il point vray, ou si je l'ay songé,
Qu'il m'est besoin m'éloigner ou distraire
De votre amour, et en prendre congé ?
Las ! je le veux, et ne le puis faire—
Que dis-je, veux ! Non, c'est tout le contraire,
Faire le puis, et ne le puis vouloir.

Attributed to François 1er.

The next day accordingly at an early hour, Warenne sought the residence of Lord Framlingham in Charles Street, when, on his knocking at the door, the servant who opened it presented him with a note from Henry, stating, that in the course of the preceding night an express had reached them from Epworth Castle, the seat of Mrs. Honoria Epworth, who was Adelaide's godmother, desiring them to set off immediately if they wished to find her alive, and that his sister and himself were in the act of commencing their journey at the moment at which he wrote.

Poor Warenne, who had hoped to ascertain his future destiny before he again quitted Charles Street, was sadly disappointed at this intelligence. The evil, however, was without remedy, and he was obliged to retrace his steps towards home, there to await the hour of their return in all the misery of suspense. During this period he received the following letter from Frank:

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"Who do you think has just called upon me? Henry Marston. I never was so surprised in my life. He tells me that he came the night before last to Epworth Castle with his sister, to attend the death-bed of poor old Mrs. Honoria Epworth. She died a very few hours after their arrival, and has left every thing she possessed to Miss Marston. Henry says his sister will not have less than ten thousand a year, besides the old castle, which is beautiful;—did you see it when you were here?—it is not more than two miles from this town. What a charming godmother! I wish nevertheless that she had given Henry a slice

of her property, for though he will eventually be Lord Framlingham, and rich, yet he would do great credit to a few thousands a year in the interim. He and his sister remain at the castle till after the funeral, when they return to London. When are we to see you again? Stuart rides in often from Oldham, and gives a good report of the two troops he has there, and I can do the same of the officers and men at Calbury. I command the four troops you left under my orders with a species of sedate authority deserving, though I say it, of much admiration. I have only one little *équippée* to tell of, which is that I have fallen desperately in love, and that my love is returned; do not be frightened, Gerald, *l'objêt* is a blind Irish-woman, who sells cakes and bullseyes on the sort of boulevard there is to this town. She is my delight, but our loves are too long, so God bless you!

"Oh! I have forgotten the most important portion of my letter, which is, that I am making great preparations for the coming hunting season. I have sold Croppie, and bought two clippers, and I want you to let

me be doing something in your stable. I should positively be a happier man if I might rescue your two old horses' tails from their degraded state of switch, and square them a little. Once more, God bless you.

"Your affectionate brother, F. W."

Warenne at first read over this letter from his brother with pleasure, and natural delight at the increased prosperity of his friends, but a second perusal of it filled him with anxiety and doubt. Was there not now an insuperable barrier raised against his pretensions to Adelaide? If indeed he had made known his passion, it were not impossible that a woman with her nobleness of spirit might only regard the addition to her fortune as a means of increasing their mutual happiness. But could he with honour ask her hand for the first time under these changed circumstances? Must he not appear to her, and to the world, a contemptable fortune hunter, who could live in her society for weeks, and find her only worthy of attention when she became an heiress?

"O, Frank!" cried he aloud, as he paced his

room despondingly, " your gay letter is a bitter one to me. I must learn to tread in the dust the bright visions fancy had formed; to crush my aspiring hopes, and with blighted prospects, and a broken heart, to banish myself from that sweet presence in which I would fain have passed my days—but better that, than dishonour. There is no spot as yet on my name, and I will not now sully it. Yes, the die is cast, I will rejoin my regiment."

Though Warenne thus briefly settled the part which it became him to act in this emergency, it cost him many an hour of bitter anguish before he could carry his resolution into effect. He had never really loved before, and he now loved with his whole soul; it seemed to him as if his love was an essential portion of his existence, and that to tear it from his breast, was almost to destroy within him the principle of vitality. He wrote however to Frank, to say, that he should join him in a few days: went to the Horse-Guards to inquire if they projected any alteration in the quarters of his regiment (for Calbury was not a town in which troops were usually stationed), or had any

orders for him with respect to their particular employment, and called on Lord Framlingham to inform him of his determination.

The old Lord received him with much civility, but, as it appeared to Warenne, with less than his usual cordiality. There was also a degree of earnestness in the manner in which he encouraged him to quit town immediately, and assured him that government had received accounts of a very unpleasant spirit pervading the neighbourhood of Calbury.

Warenne could not help perceiving that his absence was desired. In truth, Lord Framlingham immediately upon Adelaide's increase of fortune had begun to renew the views of aggrandisement, which he had reluctantly laid aside; and conceiving that Warenne might very possibly prove an impediment to the success of his schemes, he sincerely wished him out of the way. It was not, perhaps, strictly consonant with the gratitude he professed towards Warenne for his kindness to Henry, to repel attentions which he had hitherto tacitly encouraged; but in his anxiety to accomplish his purposes with respect to Adelaide, he did not

much regard her lover's feelings, and certainly assumed not a delicacy which he did not possess.

Warenne was intensely hurt by Lord Framlingham's manner. Was he already deemed an intruder? It was indeed time for him to depart; he would only see Adelaide once again and bid her farewell for ever.

The travellers returned, and Henry having heard from his father of Warenne's determination to rejoin the regiment, proceeded immediately to his lodgings, to propose their quitting London together, his own leave of absence being on the point of expiring.

After their first greetings were over, and Henry had had time for closer observation, he was much struck with an appearance of ill-health, and with a degree of severity of manner in Warenne; he loved him, however, too sincerely, and respected him too highly, to venture a remark on the change that had occurred. He at once entered upon the object of his visit, and soon concluded an arrangement for their travelling together to Calbury; then thinking it probable Warenne in his present state of

mind would rather be alone, he begged him to call in Charles Street the following morning, to see him and Adelaide, who was not, he said, so afflicted by the loss of her godmother, with whom she had never lived, as to shut the door upon old friends; and with an affectionate pressure of the hand wished him good-b'ye.

Warenne shook the offered hand, accepted the invitation, stood for a moment after his departure with a bewildered air, then hurried forth to occupy his attention with professional avocations, for he durst not give way to the feelings that invitation had awakened, or to reflect in solitude on the impending wretchedness of the morrow.

The morrow came, and about the hour Henry had mentioned as that at which his sister would probably receive him, Warenne found himself in Charles Street. Henry was alone in the drawing-room when he entered, but in a few minutes Adelaide joined them. She had scarcely recovered from the anxiety occasioned by the melancholy scenes she had so lately witnessed, and was pale and languid, but the snowy whiteness of her brow accorded

well with the serious expression of her countenance, and poor Warenne thought he had never seen her look so lovely. She received him kindly, for satisfied that he loved her, she saw no reason for controuling the natural impulse of her heart; and for some little time the whole party conversed on the events which had taken place without hesitation, if not with cheerfulness. After a while, Henry, who shrewdly suspected the state of his sister's and of his friend's affections, found some excuse for quitting the room, and requesting Warenne to await his return, left him with Adelaide. The conversation flagged — presently ceased altogether—Warenne, firm to his purpose, but, much as that purpose had already cost him, knowing not until this instant, the utter misery he was about to entail upon himself, could not bring himself to speak. Adelaide's spirits had not regained their usually cheerful flow, and their depression was increased by his manifest uneasiness. The awkwardness of their situation each moment became greater; at length Warenne, making an effort, in a hurried manner uttered some common-place remark on an

indifferent subject, Adelaide gave the necessary assent, and again there was silence. He made a second and a third attempt, but with no better success. He now grew confused, and spoke at random upon every topic which presented itself to his over-excited mind, until Adelaide, who could not but recollect the very different manner in which their last interview had concluded, knew not what to think. As she looked, however, on his flushed cheek, and unsteady eye that would not meet her's, a suspicion of the truth flashed across her mind. Could it be, that he had formed so unworthy an opinion of her, as to conceive that her affections could be influenced by her accession of fortune? — a moment's reflection assured her that his generous nature would spurn the thought, yet how, since she knew not that her father had almost turned him from his door, was she to interpret his behaviour? She was hurt, and angry with him, and even, as by degrees she obtained a clearer insight into his feelings, could not altogether divest herself of indignation, though she pitied his sufferings. He might, she thought, if he really loved her,

sacrifice for her sake his fantastic notions of honour, for so they then seemed to her, and let her decide for herself whether, or not, she thought his hand worth acceptance. She became colder and more formal, until at length, Warenne, unable to endure any longer her altered looks and his own excessive wretchedness, hastily left the room in the full conviction that he had injured himself in her esteem, and caused her to think ill of him by the very course, which, at the price of his own happiness, he had deemed it his duty to pursue.

A few days afterwards, Henry and Warenne quitted London for Calbury.

CHAPTER V.

How fair thy vales, thy hills how beautiful!
The sun who sheds on thee his parting smiles,
Sees not in all his wide career a scene
Lovelier, nor more exuberantly blessed
By bounteous earth and heaven.
The time has been when happy was their lot,
Who had their birthright here.

SOUTHEY'S *Roderick*.

THE state of the agricultural population around Calbury at the time of the return of the two friends to their regiment, was by no means such, in outward appearance at least, as to justify the apprehensions which, according to Lord Framlingham, were entertained by the government. The greater demand for labour, and the consequent increase of wages, which the summer had occasioned, seemed to have extinguished the stormy passions kindled by cold, hunger, and compulsory idleness.

The country itself looked bright and gay,

and the fields with their rich crops of corn, gave promise of plenty, comfort, and tranquillity. Warenne was tempted to hope that the fear of disturbance was ill-founded, and that the symptoms of insubordination, on which it was grounded, had arisen from a temporary pressure, which was past and would not recur. The first hours after their arrival were dedicated to the inspection of the troops, the order and discipline of which were highly commended, to Frank's infinite delight.

This necessary duty concluded, the two brothers and Henry retired to Warenne's apartments, and Warenne called on Frank to give some account of his proceedings during the time he had held the command of the regiment.

"Why, I have had but a dullish *séjour* in this place, I must say," replied Frank; "my chief occupation has been to preserve my dignity, and if it were not, that once or twice I have been seduced into a smile by the earnest admiration of sundry blue and black eyes which encounter me in my perambulations, I should say I had succeeded admirably. People assert, that the labourers in the neighbourhood

are discontented, but I cannot say that I perceive it. I see them on a Sunday as happy as beer and love can make them. They are not refined, perhaps, in their mode of carrying on the war, and the fastidious might think it unsentimental at least, if not indecorous, in the women, to wait round the doors of the public-houses, and take possession of the men as they come forth red with beer, and reeking with tobacco; but I am above such prejudices, and have no doubt that the rogues enjoy life extremely."

"Have you observed no signs of an evil spirit abroad in other quarters?" interrupted Warenne.

"Faith none," rejoined Frank, "unless you deem such the curious specimens of division of labour which have been displayed here lately by the beggars and trampers. In former times, it was thought that one man might sell, if not make, many bundles of matches. Now, it is no uncommon thing for two men to be occupied in the sale of one bundle; in the same way, generally speaking, there are two to hawk one boot lace, and always two to buy a hare skin

or a rabbit skin. Then, again, there are always two sailors, who have been shipwrecked together, and saved together, and who have preserved from the wreck precisely the same things, viz. a very clean white shirt and white pair of trowsers, and for whom therefore one story serves when they ask your charity. I never in my life saw such a number of these vagabonds as now, and they beg in a tone which, in a bye place, can hardly fail to alarm women, if not men. Seriously speaking, Gerald, though it may to you sound foolish to say so, I do not know what to make of these fellows; I cannot understand how they all exist, unless they have some secret mode of obtaining a livelihood, different from the ostensible one. I don't half like them, and I do not think my better genius, Nanny Rudd, is more pleased with them than I am."

"Who the devil is Nanny Rudd, Frank?" said Henry.

"Not to know Nanny," continued Frank, "argues yourself unknown. She is the most important personage in the town, in the eyes at least of all the little boys and girls who play

about its public walks. She is the queen of heart cakes, and bullseyes, *et l'objêt de mes plus tendres amours.* Do not be frightened, Gerald —she is a dear blind old Irish beggarwoman, the widow of a man of the name of Rudd, whose brother keeps that little ale-house, the Rose and Crown, as you enter the town by the London road.

Rudd was a private in the Guards, and went with them to Egypt under Abercromby, where he was wounded and died. She accompanied him thither, and nursed him till his death. She afterwards herself unfortunately caught the ophthalmia, and lost both her eyes. The officers and men, with whom she was a great favourite, brought her carefully to England, and by her own wish settled her in this place among her husband's relations. She lives now on a small pension, with her brother-in-law, who is very kind to her, and she ekes out her little modicum by the sale of her cakes."

"But what can a blind old woman know of the state of the country, or how does it happen that she is a friend of yours?" interrupted Henry.

"You are so impatient, Henry," replied Frank, "you would know every-thing, and the reasons thereof at once; but I shall not spoil the story of my best adventure during your absence, to satisfy your impetuous curiosity. *Il faut toujours commencer au commencement.* You must hear the narrative of our first introduction, or you close my lips for ever on the subject of Nanny Rudd; for if there is an action in the course of my military career of which I am proud, it is the deed of 'derring do,' as Ivanhoe would have called it, which first won me her esteem."

"Come, be quick then," said Henry, laughing, "when, how, and where did you meet with this wondrous lady?"

"More questions! Henry? you are positively incorrigible! Our first acquaintance was on this wise: a parcel of young urchins were playing on the walk where she usually sits with her basket, and one of them attempted to obtain some of her tartlets, without going through the necessary form of paying for them. Nanny, who hears like a mole, made a dash at the young rogue, just as he had his hand in the basket,

and seizing him with a hand of iron, began to thrash him well with her stick, reproving him at the same time for his misconduct with a considerable flow of military eloquence. The other boys came to the rescue. Nanny kept her hold, and brandished her stick. Their charge however was not to be resisted, they released their companion, gained possession of the basket, from which Nanny had wandered in the struggle, and were retiring triumphant, when I reached the field.

"In an instant I flew to the succour of the discomfited fair, routed her insulting foes, and recovered for her her (empty) basket. Cæsar would have said, *Veni, vidi, vici!* I then led her to her old seat, and having given her half-a-crown, was taking my departure, in order to enjoy in solitude the satisfaction of having exhibited both valour and generosity, when she said to me in her own sweet accents,

"'I 'll sit a bit, your honour, and catch my wind; them little blackguards blowed me; — and then I 'll go home. I 'll never draw a halfpenny the whole day, unless I bait my basket with a cake.' I asked her if I could assist her

on the road. 'No, no; thank you all the same,' continued she; 'but if you'd just tell me who your own self is, that comed in the nick of time to presarve me from them childer, I'd be obliged to you. You are a soldier, by your step, I can tell that as well as if I saw you; and an officer, by the softness of your voice and the delicacy, not to say iligance of your expressions;' mark you that, Henry. I told her my name, rank, &c. and we parted. The next day I came to inquire after her health, and we had a long gossip together about her own dear country, since which I have paid her a visit almost every day, and I flatter myself have entirely won her heart. 'Captain Warenne,' said she to me the other day, 'I like you; you are always very kind to me, and can always find time to spake a word or two to me, which is more than many will do to the like of me. You are a soldier, too. I loves a soldier. I wish you had been *fut*, for *fut's* more natural to me; but all can't be *fut*, and I'll never forget you, if I can do you a good turn.'"

"Your Nanny is charming," interrupted

Henry; "and having heard her opinion of you, I am really anxious to know what she thinks of the beggars who have moved your spleen."

"She entertains little doubt," answered Frank, "that they are the emissaries of some evil-disposed parties in the country, and the medium of communication between different districts and the metropolis; and her conclusions are drawn from the remarks which she has heard fall from the labourers and mechanics in this town, with whom her brother's alehouse is a favourite place of resort."

"Indeed," said Warenne; "and does she think that they are likely to produce a disturbance?"

"She certainly does," replied Frank; "for about three or four days ago, when I paid her a visit, she bade me be cautious not to be seen talking to her. 'I sits,' said she, 'in my brother's chimney-corner of an evening, with my bit duddeen; and because I 'm blind, folks believe I can't hear. There 'll be a row after harvest, or Nanny 's a liar; but your honour shall know in time. A'n't I a soldier's

widow, and bound to keep the peace? I 'll just reconnoitre the ground for you cleverly; but you must not be seen spaking to me daily, or I 'll be suspected. You can drop past me as you go to see your men at the Boot of a morning; and if the coast is clear, say, 'Good morrow, Nanny;' you would go to your men natural like, and then I can asy tell you if I have larnt any news, without putting it into men's heads that I 'm thick at head-quarters.'"

Warenne recommended Frank to keep up his acquaintance with Nanny Rudd, observing that it was only by employing every, even the humblest means in their power of obtaining an insight into the actual condition of the country, that they could hope to preserve tranquillity. His long acquaintance with a disturbed district had taught him, that very frequently a little circumstance would better indicate the real spirit of a population, than their actions, as a feather or a straw thrown into the air will more readily point out the direction of a current of wind, than any more ponderous body.

Warenne now turned his attention to the

magistracy in the town and neighbourhood, and sought every opportunity of mixing in their society; in which endeavour Henry and Frank were both of much use to him; the former, from the position in which he stood as brother to the heiress of Epworth, and the latter, from his having, during the summer, by his gay off-hand manner, and happy disposition, made himself a welcome guest at many houses in the vicinity. To the different persons of influence, he suggested the advantage of arranging a constabulary force, upon the system of a noble lord in a neighbouring county, and the propriety of their previously fixing on some definite plan of action, in case the apprehensions of the government for the repose of the country should be realized.

It is a very difficult thing to give advice, and all people hate it; unless they have decided on their line of conduct, in which case they have, generally speaking, no objection to prove the superiority of their own views on the subject, to those of their advisers. Warenne, however, was so mild, so gentle in manner, so entirely free from all appearance of dictation,

so ready to listen, so well informed on all points, and so practical in his measures, that he succeeded in effecting the preparations he desired. By the time harvest was over, his precautions were completed.

At this period, Adelaide and her father were daily expected at Epworth, and Warenne's heart sunk within him at the thought of being thrown again into her society, now that their relative position was so changed; but he was not permitted to dwell long upon this topic without interruption.

CHAPTER VI.

As there are certain hollow blasts of winds and secret swellings of seas before a tempest, so are there in states.

Ille etiam cæcos instare tumultus
Sæpe monet, fraudesque et operta tumescere bella.

LORD BACON.

THE head-quarters of the —— Dragoons were, as we have seen, at Calbury; two or three troops being stationed in the surrounding villages. An order now arrived from the Horse Guards, directing that one troop should be sent to Fisherton, a town about forty miles distant, near the sea-coast, and that a second should be placed in some situation, as nearly as possible midway between Fisherton and Calbury, in order to preserve a ready communication between these two extreme points.

To delegate to another a duty incumbent on himself, was not consistent with Warenne's

character. He immediately sent forward his servant with horses, and on the following morning himself started at an early hour, to ascertain the best mode of carrying into effect the instructions which he had received. His intentions were to examine the *locale* of Fisherton, and, as far as he could to discover the disposition and pursuits of the surrounding population, so that if any disturbance should arise there, he might be competent to act with decision.

He found Fisherton a large straggling town, with some appearance of wealth, arising from its communication with the seaport of D——, by means of the river Swale, irregularly built, though nearly divided into four equal quarters by the London and coast roads, which crossed each other about its centre. As he entered by the former of these roads, the place presented on either side an imposing row of goodly houses; he could perceive, however, that this fair show was limited to the principal streets. On looking down the smaller streets, or rather passages, for they were passable only by pedestrians, which branched off from the high-

way, he could distinguish nothing beyond the ordinary cottages of labourers and mechanics. On the banks of the river might be seen warehouses and cranes, and other signs of trade, but nowhere else: the rest of the town bore an ambiguous character, and it was difficult to determine whether its prosperity depended on commerce, or agriculture.

Warenne rode into the yard of the principal inn, which occupied one of the angles caused by the junction of the roads, and had large gates opening into each of them, intending to establish himself there for the night. Having put up his horses, he quickly sought an opportunity of conversing with the landlord, in the hope of extracting from him some information relative to the state of society in the immediate environs of Fisherton.

The communications of the worthy Boniface were any thing but satisfactory. He assured Warenne that the labourers in the neighbourhood for ten miles round, were a bad set at the best of times; many of them professional smugglers — all of them occasionally engaged in running goods; and that at the moment

in which he was speaking, they were in a state of great discontent and irritation from the distress incidental to the existing depression of wages.

"I 'm sure, I hope," said mine host, sufficiently animated by the theme, to draw one hand out of his breeches-pocket, and extend it in an emphatic manner, "that they won't break out, for if they do, it will be an awful business. The exciseman what lodges at my house, tells me that they are afraid of nothing, and care for nothing; and then they have such means of letting one another know when any thing is a-foot. Lord bless you, sir, if there 's a smuggling vessel makes a signal off the coast at dusk, by twelve at night there are a thousand people collected near the shore to run the goods, and they laugh at the Preventive Service."

Warenne was inclined to suspect, that the account given by his landlord of the numbers and desperation of the people engaged in these lawless pursuits might be exaggerated. There was, however, evidently enough of truth in the report to make him wish to send another

troop to Fisherton. But his orders were positive; and the officer appointed to the chief command of the district was one from whom he could not expect to obtain an alteration of them. He was a man well known in the army for his wrong-headed obstinacy, and pertinacious regard to the minutiæ of military discipline. It was also said of him, that having been in India during the time of the Peninsular war, and therefore without opportunity of distinguishing himself in any European campaign, he had a mean jealousy of those who had served in Portugal and Spain, and was disposed to treat them with captiousness, when they had the misfortune to be employed under him. Warenne determined, nevertheless, to write to General Mapleton a respectful request to be permitted to increase the force at Fisherton.

He had been walking round the town, and was entering the inn-yard by the London gateway, when almost at the same moment a gentleman, on a remarkably neat well-bred cob, rode in from the coast road. As they encountered each other, the new visiter, who was a

fresh-coloured fair man, of about his own age, dressed in sporting costume, looked at him earnestly. The countenance was familiar to him, but he could not recollect where he had seen it. He was in the act of having recourse to the landlord, for the purpose of ascertaining its owner, when the gentleman himself, having more quickly obtained his master's address from Warenne's servant, came up to him and claimed his acquaintance.

"Warenne, how are you? You forget me, I dare say, for it is a long time since we last met; but I remembered you the moment I saw you, though I could not give you a name without the assistance of John there. Do you not recollect Jack Nicholas, at Dame Twyford's, just over Barn's Pool Bridge, at Eton?"

Warenne immediately recalled to mind a heavy, good-natured boy of that name, who resisted every attempt made by his tutor to instil into his brain any classical lore, but who was an expert fisherman, and not a bad foot-ball player.

Nicholas continued, "What are you doing in this place? You had much better come

over and dine with us. My father lives little more than five miles from the town, and will give you a hearty welcome. Do come, we can give you a bed. Well, certainly, I never thought of meeting you to-day. How lucky it was I rode over to take a look at the fish market! I have got the nicest brill, too."

Warenne replied, that he really should have been happy to accept his invitation, but that his horses were tired with their day's work, and that he was obliged to leave Fisherton at a very early hour on the following morning.

"Oh! I can arrange all these matters," said Nicholas. "You shall have the landlord's own nag, and a very clever one it is, I can tell you — few better. And if you must be off so early to-morrow, you can return here to-night; though if you would stay all night with us, we should like it better, and I would ride over with you in the morning. I shall most probably come here, for to-morrow is the day when our magistrates hold their weekly sessions; and if I have nothing else to do, I usually attend to hear the news. That's a good fellow, you will come, I see. I'll call

for you in ten minutes, as soon as I have seen that our cart takes the brill."

Warenne having obtained a loan of the landlord's horse, was ready to join Nicholas on his return from the fishmarket. They quitted the town by the coast road, which for rather more than a mile proceeded in a south-easterly direction. It then bent more to the southward, when they quitted it, and proceeded along a narrow lane, with high hedges on each side, keeping the same course as the portion of the road over which they had already travelled. There was not here much opportunity for observation; and Warenne, willingly diverting his thoughts from the disagreeable lucubrations to which his landlord's discourse had given rise, entered unreservedly into conversation with his old schoolfellow. He answered Nicholas's questions concerning his different campaigns, and in return sought to extract from him the history of his past and present life.

"You went," said he, "to Oxford, if I recollect rightly, after you left Eton."

"Yes, I did," answered Nicholas, "and I liked it much; it just suited me. I hardly ever attended a lecture; and I kept three very clever hunters in full work — but it was too happy a state to last. The old Dean of Christchurch, when I had been there little more than a year, gave me a hint which I might not misinterpret, that I had better see the world; and my father made me travel through Scotland and Ireland, which was all the world Buonaparte would let a man see in those days, unless he turned soldier and went to Spain. This was dull work, though every now and then I got some good fishing, and once or twice some capital grouse-shooting; so I returned home as quickly as I could, and have been living with my father here at the Plashetts, for that's the name of our place, ever since. I have four as nice hunters as you ever saw, and get plenty of shooting and trout-fishing, without going a yard off his manors, so I make it out pretty well. If it happens any day that I neither hunt, fish, nor shoot, I trot over to Fisherton, to see what fish there is in the market."

Warenne smiled at the complacency with which Nicholas reviewed his useless life. "Are you not a magistrate?" inquired he.

"No," replied his friend, "they wished to make me one, but I have refused myself to every application on the subject. There is no fun in being interrupted at all hours of the day by a pack of greasy fellows, making complaints against each other for assaults in their drunken squabbles overnight; nor in being condemned to sit from eleven o'clock to six one day in every week, to hear the idle blackguards of the neighbouring parishes abuse their overseers. No, thank you, said I, I am not going to be one of your 'glorious unpaid,' with the press firing into me for every little mistake I might make, and never giving me credit for the sacrifice of my time and comfort; I know better."

By this time the character of the road had undergone some change. The hedges had disappeared, and instead of the narrow trough, if I may so term it, in which they had been travelling, wherein their view was limited to the hot sun and clear sky above them, they had now, on either side, a broad strip of waste land,

beyond which, to the north, lay a large extent of wild low brushwood; while to the south there were some newly inclosed fields. Presently all signs of arable cultivation ceased, and they came out on a wide common. Just at this point, the road bent rather more to the southward, and the line of brushwood going off from it nearly at right angles, and then sweeping round to the east, till it joined some large trees, formed a sort of boundary to the waste.

"Mark this corner of the brushwood," said Nicholas, "that you may not miss your way as you return to-night, for we now leave the road, and cross the common to those trees where the brushwood closes in again. The Plashetts lie very nearly due east of Fisherton, and the carriage road is a mile round. From those trees there is an avenue leading directly to the house."

Warenne took due note of the bearings of the ground, and they proceeded. When they had passed over a considerable portion of the common, the turf, which hitherto had been soft and swampy, became firm; and Warenne, whose

powers of observation had been called into play by Nicholas's late caution, remarked that it bore signs of having been much trodden.

"Have you had a fair here, or races?" asked he of Nicholas.

"No," was the reply; "the sheep, I believe, keep unmolested possession of the common from year's end to year's end. But why do ou inquire?"

Warenne simply answered that the grass appeared trampled, and turned the conversation. They soon reached the Plashetts; and Nicholas, the elder, greeted his son's friend with a hearty welcome. He was a cheerful, light-hearted old gentleman, and the evening passed pleasantly, if not gaily.

About ten o'clock Warenne remounted his horse, and at a gentle pace began to retrace his road to Fisherton. The moon was just rising, but it was a cloudy night, and a sharp southwester blew directly in his face. As he entered the avenue, he could not help recalling to mind the state of the grass on the firmer part of the common; his reflections upon it caused him some anxiety. He had never, he

thought, seen ground so trodden, but on places where soldiers were drilled and exercised. Could it be that there was truth in the report which he had heard, that the labourers held nightly meetings for the purpose of training themselves to the use of arms? As the idea presented itself, he hugged the trees to the southward more closely, so as to envelope himself completely in their shade. Presently he fancied that he heard in the wind the sounds of steps and voices. He stopped, and listened with attention, and soon became certain of the fact; they seemed however to proceed from persons at some distance. He advanced slowly, trusting to the wind to drown the noise of his horse's hoofs. Again he stopped, the sounds reached him more plainly. Using now still greater caution, he pushed forward towards the edge of the common, and he there beheld the realization of his worst fears.

By the light of the moon, which fell fully and clearly on the open space, he saw a considerable body of men, marching backwards and forwards, dividing and subdividing themselves, then reuniting again; in a word, going

through a regular system of drill, though not perhaps with military exactness. He watched them for some time, endeavouring to ascertain their number, &c. &c. till he conceived it likely that they would soon disperse.

It then became a question with him, how he himself should proceed. He was unwilling to return to the Plashetts, and alarm its inmates by acquainting them with the true reason of his return. He could not cross the common, for in that case he should have to pass through the very centre of the persons collected; he dared not to await the breaking up of their assemblage, lest some of the men should come upon him in their way to their cottages, which of course lay scattered about in every direction. He did not hesitate long; he remembered that a few hundred yards back he had passed three or four large single trees, which stood out on the broad glade between the two lines of elms which formed the avenue, making, as it were, a gate to the pass. To that point he quickly retraced his steps, and seizing a moment when the moon was obscured, crossed to the opposite side of the avenue; then forcing his horse into

the brushwood, he made his way through it in the direction of the lane he had travelled in the morning, and continued his course, carefully avoiding too near an approach to the exterior of the wood which was lighted up by the moon, until he reached the edge which separated it from the road. There, thinking himself safe, or at all events at too great a distance from the men at exercise to be discovered, he dragged his horse through the fence, and remounting him, galloped as quickly as he could to Fisherton.

CHAPTER VII.

Concerning the materials of sedition, it is a thing well to be considered; for the surest way to prevent seditions (if the times do bear it), is to take away the matter of them; for if there be fuel prepared, it is hard to tell whence the spark shall come that shall set it on fire.

LORD BACON.

THE insight which this adventure gave Colonel Warenne into the real state of the country, induced him to alter his plans. Instead of setting off for Calbury at an early hour the following morning, he determined that it would be more advisable for him to remain at Fisherton for the greater part of the day, in order to see Nicholas, and put him on his guard, and also to obtain through him some acquaintance with the magistrates, who were about to meet there on that day, and who were those to whom he must look for co-operation, in the event of any commotion.

About eleven o'clock the next day, Nicholas rode into Fisherton, and was surprised to find Warenne still at the inn.

"What, not off yet?" said he, "you might as well have slept at the Plashetts; our beds are as well aired as those of mine host here."

Warenne requested him to come to his room, and recounted to him what he had seen on the preceding night. Nicholas was startled, if not alarmed at hearing of such preparations for tumult in his own immediate vicinity.

"What is to be done?" said he, "it is extremely disagreeable! My poor sisters will be frightened out of their wits. Cannot some means be found to put a stop to such proceedings?"

Warenne doubted whether an attempt to prevent the meetings, would not have the effect of setting the people on their guard, without deterring them from their purpose, and was rather inclined to watch them, so as in some measure to discover their intentions, when it might be easy to baffle them.

"If indeed," said he, "we knew what grievances pressed most heavily upon the labourers,

we might, by relieving them, be able to repress the disposition to riot, and escape the necessity of having recourse to coercion."

"One need not go far to find their grievances," interrupted Nicholas; "the poor fellows are not half paid; the farmers only give them wages enough to keep body and soul together, and whatsoever else they require for the maintenance of their families is made up to them by the parish, in proportion to the number of their children. Thus they are, every one of them, made paupers; and the consequence is, they work as paupers. The farmers quarrel with them for their idleness, and the overseers devise schemes for making them earn, as they term it, the pittance they allow them. About a fortnight ago, as I passed through Oathampstead, I saw a man marching fifteen or twenty others up and down the village; and on my inquiring the reason of this proceeding, I was told that the men were out of regular employ, and that the overseer, resolving that they should do something for their money, had given one of them, who was a militia man, a pot of beer to act as corporal over the rest,

and drill them. They will have enough of the drilling system now, I reckon."

"Could you put an end to such fatal mistakes as these," Warenne resumed, "you would do more to quell the turbulent spirit of which I fear we shall soon see some melancholy indications, than if you were to quarter a regiment of soldiers in each village. But now you must give me some information on another point. What magistrate had I better apply to in case of a disturbance in this neighbourhood? Who will be most disposed to act in concert with me, and assist me in repressing it?"

"Oh, I know who is the best man for you," answered Nicholas—"at least in my opinion; Charley Seaforth; but you shall judge for yourself, if you will wait a quarter of an hour. The magistrates meet in the old ball-room of the inn here at twelve; we will get our friend the landlord to admit us first into the gallery where the musicians sit when there is a ball, and make our observations, after which we can descend, and I will introduce you to any or all of the bench, as you please."

Warenne gladly acceded to his friend's pro-

posal, and they were soon seated in the orchestra Nicholas had described, which, though at the opposite end of the room to that at which the magistrates sat, was yet sufficiently near to them to enable its inmates to hear all that was going on. The magistrates recognised Nicholas as one of the intruders upon their deliberations, and did not attempt to drive him from the position he had taken up. The business of the day speedily commenced, to which Warenne gave his most earnest attention. As occasions arose he whispered the result of his observations to Nicholas.

"I like your chairman," said he; "he is a clear-headed, sensible man, but I fear he is too old to take an active part in putting down a riot."

"There is not a better magistrate or man in England," whispered Nicholas in return; "but, as you say, he is past fast work, to say nothing of the gout to which he is a martyr. Make him but fifty again, and he would be with you, I warrant, go where you will, or do what you will; he is out of the question now. You must choose between three I will point

out to you; that fellow, the tall, athletic, handsome man with gray hair, a hook nose, and a sharpish eye, with his chin thrust out so as to give him what he considers to be a look of decision."

"I mark him," interrupted Warenne, "but I do not much fancy him, for he always differs from the chairman in a pompous sort of way, and when asked cannot assign any reasons for his differing, but shakes his head importantly, puts on an air of wisdom, and then coincides with him at last, though so as to make it appear that he is certain he himself is right, and that he yields only for the sake of peace."

"You have not judged your man amiss, Colonel," replied Nicholas; "Mr. Fownall, for that is his name, is a mighty man in his own conceit. You should see him at a county meeting; he will begin his speech with such graces; he will raise himself up, and put on a solemn look of wisdom that would deceive any man who is not aware that he is no conjuror; and then in very strong language accuse the government of profligacy, extravagance, and corruption, taking care to select, when he

comes to his proofs, the only parts of their conduct which are defensible. Oh! he is a bother-headed one."

Warenne thought his companion also a better judge of men, and their capacities, than he had imagined him to be; he had not done Nicholas justice, who, though uneducated, was by no means without natural shrewdness, especially on points on which he was excited, as on country politics, in which he was forced to mix from the position held by his father in the country.

"Mr. Fownall will not do for me," said Warenne, "if I can get another magistrate. Now for your next man, which is Mr Seaforth?"

"I shall show our Charley last," replied Nicholas. "My second subject for your choice is that round fat little man to the right."

"He is a sharp fellow, is he not?" inquired Warenne; "I have seen the chairman refer to him several times."

"Sharp enough," continued Nicholas; "he is a retired lawyer. He has the law at his fingers ends, but he will not suit you, I think."

"Why, is he not firm and resolute?"

"Too firm, too resolute by half; the truth is, he has lived in town the greater part of his life, and he does not know how to manage the poor at all. Though an excellent, well-meaning man, he is hard in his words, and in his ways, and the poor do not like him. He would not conciliate enough for you, though in other respects he would do admirably."

"Bar equitation!" said Warenne smiling. "He can never ride with those round fat legs; and if any tumult does occur, we shall require a magistrate capable of quick locomotion."

"No, no, Mr. Raymond is no rider," rejoined Nicholas; "but now for my friend Charley. Do you see that very quiet-looking, middle-aged, rather pale man, with a remarkably intelligent eye, sitting behind the chairman?"

"He is rather a silent one, is he not?" observed Warenne.

"Silent or not silent," said Nicholas, roused to eagerness in behalf of his favourite, "he is the best magistrate on the bench next to the chairman, and knows as much sessions law as

Raymond. If he has not spoken lately, it is because he agrees in opinion with the chairman. He would speak fast enough, if he differed from him." Just at that moment the chairman leant back to ask Mr. Seaforth a question. "You see, he is ready enough with his answer, when it is wanted. Then he is beloved by all the poor: he is so kind-hearted, and so kindly spoken to them. The very men he sends to prison say, they would rather be convicted and condemned by him, than only tried before another person. He always treats the labourers as *fellow men* in a different station of life, and that is what they like. If you seem by your manner to consider them as an inferior race, they are annoyed and sore at it; but talk to them as man to man, and they will willingly pay you the deference due to your superior rank in life, and listen to you into the bargain. Again, if you want a fellow who can ride, I will match Seaforth against any man you can bring from Melton for the season through, for a hundred."

Warenne smiled at Nicholas's animated description of his friend; but he saw so much

natural shrewdness in him, that he was inclined to place confidence in his opinion.

"Then as for firmness and nerves," continued Nicholas, "you should see him *make* a young horse, though that perhaps has not much to do with the matter in question—it is beautiful to see him put a young raw, five years old, at a fence; seriously speaking, he is the boldest and coolest fellow you ever saw, though you are a soldier. I may say this of him, for he has been tried. Last year there was a dreadful fight between the Preventive Service men and the smugglers, in which the former were driven off, and one or two of them killed. Seaforth, who was the nearest magistrate, took it up, and never rested till he had apprehended the murderers, though he had to go into places where half the men in England would not venture to set foot, and to fight his way through some desperate scuffles. He got Jem Emlett, who has been ringleader in every row, robbery, or smuggling transaction for the last twenty years, and his whole gang; and though Jem broke out of prison the night before the assizes, that was not his fault. Besides, Charley is bred to

be a good one. There have been wild ones of his blood, perhaps, but never any that wanted game."

"Mr. Seaforth is the man for me," said Warenne; "get your friend out of court, and introduce me to him."

Nicholas had not overrated Seaforth. Warenne found him a person of great intelligence, and peculiar animation of character; far more so, indeed, than he had anticipated. The unassuming demeanour of Seaforth amongst his brother magistrates, had led Warenne to consider him a sensible, and Nicholas's panegyric to believe him a brave man; but neither the one nor the other had prepared him for meeting an eager impetuous spirit, ready to devote his whole powers to what he conceived to be his duty, and in whom, mind so far predominated over body as to cause alarm, lest by its restless activity, it should undermine and exhaust the physical strength. But a few minutes had elapsed from the time of their introduction, before Warenne was perfectly satisfied with the choice he had made of a coadjutor.

He recounted to Seaforth what he had seen,

and they were soon deep in consultation. It seemed evident to them, that the nightly meetings originated in an organized combination to resist the law, a combination extending far beyond the immediate neighbourhood of Fisherton.

The agricultural labourers were not persons likely, without some strong external excitement, to sacrifice a night's rest to an employment they hated so sincerely as learning the manœuvres of soldiers; neither were the smugglers, though they were doubtless to a man engaged in the business; and the conclusion to which Warenne and Seaforth came was, that agents from London and Manchester must have lighted up this strong flame of disaffection.

What then was to be done? Could they in any way suppress the meetings? Seaforth proposed to be present at one of them, and to try the effect of expostulation; but this course, though one in which *he*, if anybody, would have succeeded, from the affection borne him by his poorer neighbours, was too dangerous and imprudent to be listened to for an instant, at a time when the smugglers were peculiarly irri-

tated against him for the apprehension, and consequent execution of some of their comrades, only a few months before.

It appeared useless, on the other hand, to attempt to controul the meetings by military or constabulary force, for there could be little doubt that the proceedings of both magistrates and soldiers would be watched, and information so conveyed to the parties assembling, that by the time either of them could reach the ground, there would not be a soul to be seen. All that it seemed possible to do, was, to adopt an intermediate mode of action, viz. to collect a greater number of troops in the neighbourhood, to hold them in readiness, and to take advantage of any opportunity of acting, which might be afforded by the indiscretion of the conspirators; while in order, if possible, to deter the misguided men from plunging hastily into violence, and to prevent unnecessary shedding of blood, Seaforth undertook to watch the conduct of some particular men whom he suspected, and with whom he imagined himself to have some influence. They would thus, it is true, set the rioters more on their guard, but then,

even if they failed in their endeavours to put an end to the chance of disturbance by gentle means, they would escape the responsibility of having tacitly encouraged disaffection up to a certain point, that they might more severely and effectually quell it afterwards.

It was arranged, therefore, that Warenne should endeavour to obtain permission from General Mapleton to send another troop to Fisherton, and that Seaforth should try the effect of private conciliation, either party keeping up a constant communication with the other, and both with Nicholas, who readily promised to give them every assistance in his power. This settled, they separated, and Warenne retook the road to Calbury.

CHAPTER VIII.

Tristes pensamientos,
De alegres memorias.
Spanish Romance.

THE prospect of a protracted stay at Calbury, gave Colonel Warenne no promise of a return to tranquillity of mind. The apprehension of danger past, the routine of military duties usual in country quarters alone demanding his attention, his thoughts naturally recurred to his blighted hopes, and the distressing situation in which fortune had placed him.

Adelaide was at Epworth—only two short miles separated them. Henry and Frank were living more at Epworth than at Calbury. It was necessary, unless he determined to set at defiance the common rules of civility, that he himself should visit those with whom he had so lately lived in intimacy. He must again undergo the torture of meeting her he loved, with the

degree of coldness, consistent with his ideas of duty, and her father's more than hinted opinion of his supposed pretensions. There was no alternative; in ordinary courtesy he was bound to make the attempt, even at the expense of increased wretchedness.

After a delay of some days, during which Warenne persuaded himself that he was detained in Calbury by business, he rode over to Epworth, with a tolerably calm exterior, though with a beating heart. His visit seemed to have been foreseen by Lord Framlingham, for as the servant ushered Warenne into the drawing-room, he entered it by another door; and as his lordship appeared to have correctly calculated the precise moment of Warenne's calling, so did he seem to have determined to ascertain the exact duration of his stay beneath his daughter's roof, for he did not quit the drawing-room until Warenne had departed.

This behaviour on the part of Lord Framlingham, though it rather irritated Warenne at the time, yet served to render his visit less painful than he had expected to find it. There was no temptation in the presence of a third person,

directly opposed to his wishes, to lay aside the measured friendliness of manner which he had adopted.

A second, and a third time, that Warenne called at Epworth, Lord Framlingham observed a similar system of precaution; but at last, either bored with playing the part of a Duenna, or becoming satisfied with Warenne's conduct, he relaxed in his vigilance, and one day that the latter had ridden over to Epworth with Frank and Henry, who wished to arrange some shooting excursion with the gamekeepers, he found himself once again alone with Adelaide. He felt his hour of trial to be at last come. He was now to shew his self-command, to keep down the tumultuous and passionate thoughts, to which he burnt to give utterance. His love had not diminished through the obstacles which fortune had thrown in his path to happiness; on the contrary, it burnt with a stronger and a steadier flame than when he had, without interruption, enjoyed the pleasure of her society in London.

Adelaide, though possessed of every requisite

to grace the most refined circles, appeared yet more lovely in the calmer occupations of the country. In the easy intercourse of her immediate friends her shyness forsook her, and she did justice to the beauty of her character. All he had seen of her, all he had heard of her since she came to Epworth, tended to foster his luckless passion. The poor had already learnt to bless her name. With her wonted enthusiasm she had commenced plans for their improvement, and though her schemes might perhaps be a little visionary, Warenne was not inclined to quarrel with their want of practicability, while they developed the benevolent spirit of their author.

Adelaide also had reasons for feeling distressed at the interview. She had perceived her father's manner to Warenne, and became satisfied that Warenne could not honourably have pursued any other line than that he had chosen; but her conviction on this point, while it took from her the little anger she had conceived against him, made it difficult for her to preserve the coldness of manner which she had

latterly assumed; thus both parties felt awkwardly situated. It is true, that one word might have produced a right understanding between them, but that word, Adelaide could not, and Warenne would not speak. Still the visit could not be passed in silence;—at least so thought Warenne, and acting upon this supposition, in a shy and constrained manner, he asked,

"Have you ridden much, Miss Marston, since your return to the country. I am informed there are beautiful rides in this neighbourhood."

"No! not much; my father is not able to ride far, and Henry is always out shooting. He has promised however to ride with me in a day or two."

"You must make him keep his promise quickly, or the leaves will be off the trees, and they will have lost their autumnal beauty."

"I fear so."

How gladly would Warenne have offered her his escort, had he dared; how gladly would Adelaide have accepted it. But this might not be, and to check the vivid workings of his imagination, he hastily changed the subject.

"I hear we are to have a gay neighbourhood this winter; Frank, who, I believe, has an instinctive knowledge of a ball, as a vulture of a horse that drops in the desert, tells me that the Merivales and Dashworths each mean to have one in the course of the next month."

"I have not the pleasure of knowing them," observed Adelaide, coldly.

"Of course they will call upon you, as an act of civility towards a person newly come into the county."

"Perhaps so, but they have not visited me yet."

Adelaide's manner did not contribute to restore poor Warenne to serenity of mind.

I know, thought he, that I have chosen a very stupid subject for conversation, although perhaps a safe one; but what can I do? if I speak on more interesting topics, I shall betray the state of my affections, and exactly do that which in honour I am bound not to do. He blundered on: "My brother tells me, that Miss Merivale is extremely pretty and dances beautifully."

"Does she?" was the reply, "I shall like to see her if they ask me to their parties."

Warenne could proceed no further with the tiresome subject; he turned therefore to another upon which, though more attractive to both parties than the former, he thought he might yet converse without emotion. "You are devising, I believe, schemes for the improvement of the condition of your poor."

Adelaide's eye brightened.

"If it is not too great a liberty, I should like much to hear what you intend to do."

"Oh! I fear," said Adelaide, smiling, that my views are not quite so practical as they might be. I have not long had the power of playing the Lady Bountiful, but I will tell them to you, and you shall give me your opinion. You have, I know, turned your attention to such matters more than soldiers generally do."

Warenne thought there could be no harm in her explaining to him her plans, or in his assisting her with his advice upon them; and in a few moments they were busily discussing the merit of Penny Banks, Savings' Banks, &c.; but after a while he found his thoughts wandering from

the charities to the founder of them, and that he was on dangerous ground.

As Adelaide gave herself up, with the full warmth of her kind heart, to the developement of her benevolent intentions, and spoke to him again with the freedom of former intimacy (perhaps glad in her inmost soul to have a legitimate reason for resuming it, and perhaps even not without a hope of leading him in turn to throw off restraint,) he became conscious, that should he attempt to speak, his voice would falter, and that his eyes were but too ready to tell the forbidden tale of constant unvarying affection. He dared not trust himself further to temptation; making therefore a violent mental effort, and putting even more than his former coldness into his tone, he hastily concluded the conversation by remarking that her goodness in thus considering the welfare of her poor fellow-creatures was above all praise. Adelaide looked up, almost with astonishment, at this formal approbation of her virtue, but said nothing. He coloured, as he felt her eye glance upon him, yet firm to his purpose, would not recur to the

subject of the charities again. He sat silent and confused; turned over the leaves of a book lying upon the table, hoping to extract from thence matter for the continuance of their conversation, but in vain; his eyes could neither follow the lines, nor his brain take in their purport. In despair he returned again to the beauty of the country and the weather, and once more there was a sound of voices; badly, however, as they had succeeded in conversing before their hearts had in some measure opened to each other, now their attempt was ten times worse, and it was a positive relief to both parties, when Lord Framlingham accidentally came in. Had he arrived a quarter of an hour sooner, he might not have been satisfied with the aspect of affairs, which was decidedly inauspicious to his schemes; as it was, they seemed to prosper, and he was pleased. He spoke to Warenne with more kindness than usual. This filled the cup of poor Warenne's misery. He had looked to Lord Framlingham's marked repulsiveness of manner towards him, as the one circumstance that could give Adelaide a favourable explanation of his own

conduct towards her. Muttering therefore something about seeking his brother and Henry, he hurried away from Epworth, with the determination of never revisiting a spot where he had endured such utter wretchedness.

Whether he would, or could, have executed this resolution, it is impossible to say, for the position in which he was placed was doomed to undergo a change.

CHAPTER IX.

Libels and licentious discourses against the state, when they are frequent and open; and in like sort false news often running up and down to the disadvantage of the state, and hastily embraced, are among the signs of troubles. LORD BACON.

IT is now necessary to relate the march of events up to this period. General Mapleton, in reply to the letter which Warenne had addressed him on his return from Fisherton, requesting that he might be allowed to send an increased force to that place, returned a most dry and positive negative. His answer was to the effect; "that he was very sorry to receive from Colonel Warenne such a proof of the disaffected spirit which prevailed in the district, to the command of which he had been appointed by his Majesty, but that being responsible for the employment of the troops under his orders, he must be permitted to

station them in such manner, and in such numbers, as in his own judgment he considered best for the interests of the country; and that he must desire Colonel Warenne would on no account detach from himself a larger force than that which he had authorized. It was his wish, that Colonel Warenne should send one troop to Fisherton, and another to Charnstead, or some place midway between Fisherton and Calbury, and that at the expiration of every month, the Fisherton troop should return to head quarters of the regiment, and the Charnstead troop move on to Fisherton.—"In conclusion," wrote the General, "I must particularly request that Colonel Warenne will on no account alter these arrangements, nor absent himself from the quarters of his regiment, without leave."

The soreness and readiness to take umbrage evident throughout this letter, gave much disturbance to Warenne, who had written to the General in the fullness of his heart, and with the sincere wish of setting him on his guard against times of peril; but he was too sensible a man, and too zealous an officer to suffer his

uneasiness to be seen even by his most intimate associates. He resolved diligently to conform to the orders he had received, and was really anxious that they might prove effectual. In truth, the General, though the principal motive for his refusal had been a low jealousy of Warenne's European honours, was not without reasons for the negative which he had sent. Much about this time reports came in almost daily from the surrounding villages, that the labourers were using threatening language to the farmers, insisting upon an increase of wages, and upon the demolition of their threshing machines; that they threatened to pull down and burn the machines of those who would not comply with the demands; and that the farmers in consequence were in a state of great alarm. Some had yielded to the demands of the rioters, partly from fear, and partly also from an idea, that they might make their sufferings a plea for a diminution of rent and tithes — others again had resisted them; but the cunning or cowardice of the former had added exasperation to the anger of the peasantry against the latter, so

as to put an end to all feeling of security with regard to life and property. It was said also, that there were assemblages every evening round the alehouse-doors, where orators in clouted shoes and smock frocks, held forth upon the rights of men; while there were not wanting persons, who came from "no one knew where," to inculcate the same doctrines with more force and greater dexterity—men, who from their education were enabled to make the worse appear the better reason, and heighten the evil passions that were abroad. Thanks, however, to the vigilance of the magistrates, who were not afraid to employ the civil power, now that they were backed by a military force, all these evil signs ended without disturbance. There might be a drunken riot or so, but the mobs uniformly dispersed, as the effect of the intoxicating liquors by which they were excited wore off, or, as Nanny Rudd expressed herself to Frank, "as the beer died in them."

About this time also occurred an event, which, though not of immediate importance to the story, is interesting as characteristic of the period. The two brothers and Henry were

engaged to dine at Epworth. Dinner was served, but Frank and Henry did not make their appearance; at last, but not before the party assembled had become exceedingly anxious for their arrival, they came in, heated, and agitated.

"What can make you so late," asked Adelaide, "you must have finished shooting several hours ago?"

Henry did not answer, but Frank said, "We must, I suppose, confess—we have had a row with some poachers."

"Good heavens! you are neither of you hurt, I hope," asked Adelaide again, in alarm.

"Oh no," replied Frank laughing, "not in person at all events, though in honour."

"What has happened, is this," interrupted Henry. "We had been shooting in that large wood of yours which adjoins the road leading to Charnstead, and having given our guns to the keepers, were on our return home, that is to say, were walking back through the wood to the Dolphin to get our horses. We had left our game in one of the rides through which we had to pass; when we arrived at the spot

we found a party of men quietly filling a light cart with it. For a moment we thought they might be some of our beaters, but finding our mistake, we called to them, and ran up to arrest their proceedings; in an instant we were surrounded, thrown to the ground, and kept there until they had finished packing the cart, when, politely thanking us for our good-nature in shooting for them, off they all went into the high road."

"In short," said Frank, "never did two officers in his Majesty's service suffer a worse defeat or greater disgrace."

This incident alarmed not only Adelaide and Lord Framlingham, but also the surrounding neighbours. So gross and deliberate an outrage destroyed all feeling of security, and though every attempt was made to trace its perpetrators, they could not be discovered.

Warenne argued that it had been committed by some of the people who were endeavouring but too successfully to excite disturbances in the country; for that their calmness in the execution of their scheme, betrayed consciousness of power. "If they had threshed you,"

said he to Frank, "and left you half dead, I should have considered the whole as the action of common poachers, determined not to be taken, nor detected."

Frank was thankful that "his friends," as he termed them, were such a superior style of men, considering the disadvantage at which they had Henry and himself,—though doubtless it would have been better for the nation, had it been otherwise. By no party, however, was light ever thrown upon the transaction.

These various signs of the prevailing disaffection among the peasantry occupied much of Warenne's time and attention, and his anxiety was increased by his receiving from Seaforth a fearful account of the state of the neighbourhood of Fisherton. Seaforth had attempted, in conformity to the proposals previously made by him, to converse with those individuals whom he suspected to be implicated in the conspiracy which evidently existed, but they had refused to listen to him, and had even insulted him, giving him to understand that his every movement was closely watched.

Under these circumstances Warenne again

petitioned for an increase of force at Fisherton. Again General Mapleton returned him an answer in the negative — if possible, couched in yet more peremptory language than he had hitherto used. Still no actual riot took place either at the one place or the other, and Warenne began to hope that the winter would pass over without further disturbance. These fallacious expectations lasted but for a day or two. All at once, on every wall throughout Calbury, and the neighbouring villages, appeared chalked up — "Bread or blood," — "Liberty or death," and similar short expositions of the popular feelings.

Nanny Rudd also warned Frank, that some project was on foot, though she could not yet discover the particulars of it. Warenne patiently waited for further information, which at last he obtained through the means of his brother's faithful ally.

"Captain, dear," said Nanny to Frank, as he passed her one morning on his way to the stables, "you may just bid your men stand at ease, if you mean to stay at Calbury, there will be no row here. It 's the

coast you must look to! Last night some strangers came into my brother's with two of the Rusbrook men, who fit agen the 'Stabulary t'other day, and they were talking how they had managed finely, and frightened you all so, that you dare not move a foot from home. Dare not! the blackguards! As if they knew the soul of a jintleman soldier. And then they cast up, that they should have it all their own way where they were going, for that the whole county was ready to join them,—let alone quite a raal army of smugglers. Them 's a bad set, my dear Captain,—particular bad,—they wouldn't drink none, but seemed to think only of killing and plundering; and when my brother came in, they was as hush! They 'd talk afore me, a poor old blind body, as they thought couldn't move off my settle without help, but they wouldn't open their 'tato traps afore him. Publicans must look to their licence, says they! you 'll see that afore long, there will be an outbreak towards the coast. One rascal said roundly, 'We 'll give 'em some bonfires before the fifth of November this year.'"

These indications of the popular feeling were further accompanied by acts of incendiarism. There were frequent alarms of fire at night, which increased in number as the end of the month approached. With regard to these, however, Warenne remarked, that though some had been caused by the private malice of individuals, yet that, generally speaking, it was an haulm stack, or a parcel of straw, or a rick, which lay far from any farm buildings, that was set fire to; from whence he was the rather inclined to give credit to Nanny Rudd's conjectures, that the demonstrations in the neighbourhood of Calbury, were solely with the view of occupying the attention of the military, and diverting it from the real point of danger.

CHAPTER X.

Give good hearing to those that give the first information in business, and rather direct them in the beginning, than interrupt them in the continuance of their speeches; for he that is put out of his own order will go forward and backward, and be more tedious while he waits upon his memory, than he could have been if he had gone on his own course.

LORD BACON.

AFFAIRS remained in this unpleasant state until the evening of the 30th of October, when between seven and eight o'clock, a man on a jaded horse, and covered with mud, galloped up to the door of Warenne's lodging. He hastily ascertained from the servant that his master was within; threw the rein to him, and dashed up the stairs. It was Nicholas.

"Warenne," cried he, as soon as he entered the room, "you must be off, and quickly, if you wish to save Fisherton. It will be attacked to-morrow night by a large body of

men, and sacked and burnt, if you are not there to prevent it."

"When?" asked Warenne, "to-morrow night? for heaven's sake tell me what you have heard."

"I will," replied Nicholas, "all in order; but the upshot is this, that Fisherton will be plundered to-morrow night, and that there are more smugglers engaged in the business, than are sufficient to set your one troop at defiance."

He then proceeded to state, that he had been shooting that very morning on some property of his father's between the Plashetts and the coast, when a woman in great distress had run up to him, and begged him to come and speak with her husband, who was dying. "He wished," she said, "to speak to some clergyman, or magistrate, or to Mr. Nicholas."

Nicholas accordingly accompanied her to her cottage, where he found a poor fellow, to whom his father had behaved with much kindness the previous winter, lying with both his legs broken, and his back severely injured from a fall of ground in a chalk-pit. Clarke,

for that was his name, was in great agony, and evidently could not live many hours. On seeing Nicholas, and receiving his condolences, he said, " My body is bad enough, to be sure, but it is nothing to my mind. I could not die easy till I had seen you, Mr. John. Tell the women to leave the room, sir. I must speak to you; if I die before I make a clean breast, I can never find no mercy. Why don't the women leave the room?" repeated he fiercely. " Now then, they are gone, and no one is here but ourselves. Come nearer to me, if you please, sir. You know, sir, about our nightly meetings. I have been one as has regularly attended them. God forgive me, I wish I had never heard of them. Last night, sir, last night," as he repeated the word he raised himself in his bed, casting his eyes inquiringly about the room, as if he dreaded a witness to his disclosure, and sank his voice to a whisper, " it was agreed that we should make an attack on Fisherton as to-morrow night. The troops are changed to-morrow: the one as is at Fisherton goes to Calbury, and the Charnstead one comes into Fisherton; and we

reckoned that the new men would not know the ground, and having just marched in, would be tired, and off their guard. So we settled to collect together at certain places after dusk, and then, in company with the smugglers, who were to join us there, to enter the town, and set fire to it in several parts, and plunder it in the confusion. That ever I should have agreed to such wickedness! I never should, Mr. John—I never should, if I had not been fool enough to listen to those villains, who persuaded us that we were all deprived of our rights by the rich, and that it was appointed that we should all share and share alike. I see it all quite different now. Do you think, sir, I shall ever be forgiven."

Nicholas, shocked and alarmed, tried to soothe the wretched man—"That is a question I can hardly answer, for I am no divine; but I should think you might be, if you are really sorry for what you were going to do. One thing I am sure of, the best way of making amends for your crime is to confess all you know."

"I know no more," replied the poor fellow. "Our leaders never told us any more than I have just said, that we were to attack the place to-morrow between nine and ten o'clock, by which time we thought people would be beginning to go to bed."

Nicholas having thus ascertained all that could be extracted from the wounded man, considered that between the present hour and the morrow's night, there was but little time for communication with Warenne, on whom the safety of the town depended, and he became anxious to depart; but Clarke, seizing his hand, exclaimed,

"Pray, sir, don't leave me! I am no ways prepared for death."

Nicholas observed to him, "Clarke, if I do not go, I cannot prevent the attack, and your confession will do no good."

"Oh no!" replied Clarke, withdrawing his grasp, "nor me no good neither. I had forgot that—go, sir, go,—but no, stay one moment. Oh, sir, when I am gone, don't give me up—don't let people know as I ever split, they would murder my wife and children. And do

you, Martha — pray, sir, call my wife — Martha, I say, I charge you never, as you value your life, tell a soul as Mr. John has been here to-day." The poor frightened woman promised acquiescence. "Now then go, sir," said he; "God bless you! I will try and pray."

Nicholas immediately made the best of his way to the Plashetts, sent off an express to Seaforth, and himself started for Calbury on the best horse in his stable.

Warenne listened patiently to Nicholas's story, for he knew well that the quickest mode of obtaining the truth from any man, is to let him speak what he has to say in his own manner. At its close he seemed for a moment to be lost in thought, then turning to Nicholas, he asked him if he had seen a magistrate, or could say that he was sent by any magistrate to ask the assistance of the soldiery. Nicholas replied in the negative, and Warenne began to pace up and down the room in deep thought, and apparently under much anxiety. At last he stopped, and exclaimed, "Well then, I must take the responsibility on myself. Communication with head-quarters is impossible.

I must disobey orders, and abide the consequences: I cannot, for any hazard to myself, suffer a town to be burnt, and its inhabitants to be massacred."

He rang the bell and bade his servant send Captain Harris to him, and also his brother, and he resumed his meditative walk, until it flashed across him that he was treating Nicholas with great inhospitality.

"I beg your pardon, Nicholas," said he, "I make you but an ill return for your kindness in bringing me this news yourself in person, but the truth is, I am so awkwardly placed, that I am forced to employ all my wits in considering what will be my best line of conduct."

"Oh never mind me," answered the good-natured fellow; "I shall go and hunt out your cook, and take care of myself. You have plenty on your hands, without attending to the wants of a hungry man."

A few minutes brought Captain Harris to his Colonel's apartment. "Captain Harris," said Warenne, "you will immediately call out your troop, and proceed with it in the direction

of Charnstead, so as to reach that place to-morrow morning, before eight o'clock. Rest there until Captain Paulet moves his troop to Fisherton, and do you then accompany him. You will meet the Fisherton troop between that place and Charnstead, take them back with you. As soon as you arrive at Fisherton, if I am not with you, notify your arrival to Major Stuart. He will probably have quarters ready for you; but whether you see him, or not, do not unbridle, and keep your men standing by their horses."

Captain Harris, who had received many similar orders the previous winter in Ireland, merely bowed and left the room, and in twenty minutes was with his troop in march on the Charnstead road.

Frank came in, as Captain Harris left the room. Warenne briefly explained to him how matters stood. "And now, Frank," said he, "I shall leave you with the remaining troops to take care of this neighbourhood. No, (seeing Frank about to interrupt him,) I cannot take you with me. On the contrary, I must leave you here. I must have some one on this

ground who will value my honour as his own, and I look to you as the person I can best trust on earth. Should a disturbance take place here, and get to a head while I am absent, I am a ruined man. If you love me, you will stay here."

Frank *did* dearly love his brother: he was flattered too by the unlimited confidence reposed in him. He therefore said not a word about going, but simply asked for his orders.

"You are almost as good a soldier as I am," said Warenne, "and must be guided by circumstances. I hardly think that you will be called on to take any very serious measures. It will be well, however, to keep a watchful eye on all that is going forward, and to make as much parade as you can with your soldiers. Never mind harassing them a little, for a day or two, but multiply their numbers as much as possible, by showing them in different parts of the town. Make your one hundred and fifty men appear five hundred, if you can. Should you be required to act, be decisive."

The two brothers then proceeded to arrange

some minor details, when a knock was heard at the door, and a voice saying, in rather a tone of authority, " Colonel, I must come in."

" By all that is sacred, it is Nanny Rudd!" exclaimed Frank, " what can she want here at this hour?" He ran to the door and opened it. " Come in, Nanny; what are your commands to-night?"

" Captain Warenne," answered Nanny, " ye'll give that girl, as come with me, and brought me here, a crown. I promised her the same; and whiles you are taking it out of your purse, I 'll spake a word with your brother. I have business with him."

Warenne came forward, and laying hold of her hand, inquired what she had to say to him.

" Is the Captain," asked Nanny, with emphasis, " giving the girl the crown?"

Frank knew Nanny's ways, and guessed that she wished him to get the girl out of the room. " Here, my good girl," said Frank, stepping into an adjoining room; " here is not a crown, but a guinea for you. You are a kind-hearted lass to lead about a poor blind old woman, who is neither kith nor kin to you."

The girl was delighted both with the guinea, and with Frank, and immediately began telling him how she came to accompany the old lady to Warenne's lodgings.

In the mean while Nanny bade Warenne close the door. "I don't want," said she, "that poor lass to hear what I am saying. She has nothing of the soldier about her, and don't comprehend the necessity of keeping an asy tongue on all occasions, and she might tell tales, and get herself and others into trouble. Colonel," continued she, when she ascertained that the door was shut, "I could not rest on my settle till I got to you to-night. How should I, when I receives the King's money, as I do? There's going to be a row somewhere on the coast. I should guess to-morrow night, but I didn't hear particulars."

"Indeed! Nanny," said Warenne, "what have you heard?"

"I'll tell your honour," answered Nanny. "There's a man been staying at my brother's house these last ten days; a pretty bad one, I reckon. I couldn't make out why he kept staying on so. Well, to-night, just about six

o'clock, he comed into the kitchen,—with Will Sharpe, whom you've heard speak of, I dare say, in this town, as a big thief and vagabond, —as I suppose ready dressed for travelling; for Will says to him,

"'Then you're off now.'—'Yes,' says he, 'in less than five minutes; my job is done, and well done. We've flammed the beaks (that's the magistrates, you know,) finely. I was to stay here till the latest moment I could this evening, to ascertain that the bloody redcoats —them was his words, a nasty blackguard!— was quiet, and nothing suspected, and then to get down—you know where,—in time to make the necessary arrangements for to-morrow.' 'You'll be there,' says Will, 'early to-morrow morning.'—'I'll be on the Plashetts Green by twelve to-night,' answers t'other, 'or I'll know the rights on it.' With that he jumped into his gig or light cart, and went away like a madman. Will Sharpe came back into the kitchen, and had some beer, and I did not dare to move till he was gone; but at last he went, and I stole out into the back-yard, and got my brother's girl to lead me here."

"About six did the man set off?" asked Warenne.

"Yes," answered she, "and I would have been here an hour ago, if that prying divil of his companion had gone away at first, as he ought. I hate a man to sit and drink by himself,—it is not neighbourly."

He was off then, thought Warenne, before the troops had started; so far, so good. Nicholas too came the cross-road, so he did not meet him.

"But now, Colonel," said Nanny, interrupting his calculations, "I must go, or the girl will get into a scrape at home."

Warenne asked her if she wanted anything for herself.

"If you mean pay, for doing my duty as a soldier's widow ought," said Nanny, "I'm above it; but you didn't mean that, I reckon, for I am told you're quite the gentleman, thof I do think an officer in his Majesty's infantry would have had more delicacy; but no, no, I want nothing, we'll talk of that some other day. Where's the wench? Betsy! Betsy!"

Betsy returned with a radiant face at having

had nonsense talked to her, for a quarter of an hour, by a very handsome captain of dragoons.

"Betsy, where are you?" muttered the old woman; "I didn't do right to send that captain out with you. I heard him give you a guinea too. They are all alike, them captains. I hope he has not turned your head; that would be but a bad return for your coming along with me this night."

"Lawk, Nanny!" said Betsy," laughing; "do you think I don't know the value of an officer's talk, and they quartered here for three months?"

"You are a giddy child, Betsy," answered Nanny; "but I'll hope for the best."

Warenne informed Frank of the confirmation given to Nicholas's story by Nanny's intelligence. "We shall be a match for them yet, I trust," continued he; "but now I must to work. I must send of an express to headquarters — tell the adjutant to have one ready for me. The general will not thank me for the step I am about to take, so I must e'en write him as conciliatory a letter as I can.—Good night."

Warenne composed his letter with the greatest care; stated his extreme reluctance to disobey the orders which he had received; hoped that, under the circumstances of the case, he should merely anticipate his general's wishes by the arrangements which he had made to prevent the loss of life and destruction of property, which could not fail to be consequent on the execution of a plot such as he developed, and added the informations of Nicholas, and Nanny Rudd.

This done, for the first time since Nicholas's arrival, he ventured to turn his mind wholly to the difficulties of his situation. To the charge of disobedience, to the risk of disgrace, when so important an object was in view, he had reconciled himself without a struggle; but now that he had leisure to reflect, there was much to appal him in the enterprise which he had undertaken.

He was about to stake his military character on a single cast; to disobey the strict orders of his general; to act upon his own responsibility: wherefore, if he failed, he must expect to be dismissed from the service. He doubted

for a moment, whether it would not have been wiser to adopt the safe line — obey orders, and avoid danger of every sort; — but it was only for a moment; the next, his generous nature spurned the thought. His self-devotion, however, was tasked to the utmost, when he contemplated the effect that might be produced on Adelaide's mind by his being disgraced.

Hope, spite of reason, had hitherto remained an inmate of his breast, and had whispered, that a day might come, when he could venture to declare to her his passion; but can this, he asked himself, ever take place, if I am dishonoured? Can I, with a tarnished reputation, ever ask her to wed me? or can she ever believe my vows, when I now leave this spot, where danger is supposed to threaten, and trust her to the protection of any arm but my own?

These ideas in every variety of form for a time pressed upon Warenne's heated imagination; but wrestling with the rebellious feelings of his heart, he would not suffer his love to unman him. His only hope was in success — a poor hope, perhaps; for even success might not rescue him from censure for pre-

sumption and disregard of discipline. Still it was his only hope; he would not therefore willingly throw it away, by yielding to thoughts which, at the best, could but enervate him.

He forced his mind from the reflections which he had allowed to bewilder him, and tried to compose himself for the night — how well, let those declare who have endured the torments of uncertainty. Certainty, even of the worst, may be borne; the condemned criminal sleeps, who is to rise to execution; but while hope has power to frame visions for the future, which fear shall the next moment dissipate, sleep is chased from the eyelids of the unfortunate, and forgetfulness is a boon which they are not permitted to enjoy.

CHAPTER XI.

A voi parlo, in cui fanno
Si concorde armonia
Onestà, senno, onor, bellezza, e gloria;
A voi spiego il mio affanno
E della pena mia
Narro, e'n parte piangendo, acerba istoria.

TASSO.

BEFORE day-break on the following morning Warenne arose. In his midnight meditations he had persuaded himself that before he started for Fisherton, he should do well to communicate with Lord Framlingham, who possibly might be able to befriend him, should his character be aspersed; who, at all events, would thus have it in his power to inform Adelaide of the truth, and explain to her the difficulties of his position.

Accordingly he bent his course to Epworth, and on being admitted to Lord Framlingham,

he frankly laid before him the circumstances of his case.

The old diplomatist heard Warenne with much attention, praised his zeal, approved his measures, and promised that they should be represented to ministers in their right light; but the moment afterwards, proceeded to qualify his praise, and explain away his promises, with the true refinement of his profession.

"Colonel Warenne must be aware, that he spoke only as an individual; that he must not be considered as authorising Colonel W—— in his undertaking, for that his official power was limited to its peculiar sphere; neither could he hope to influence in any way the opinion which the Commander-in-chief might be pleased to form upon the subject."

Warenne smiled within himself at the wiliness of the politician, and at his own folly in believing that he could induce him to interest himself about one who, according to the rules of probability, might not hereafter be of use to him. Preserving however his external gravity of demeanour, he respectfully bade the noble Lord

good morning, and resolved for the future to depend solely on his own resources.

He was passing through the hall, in order to leave the house, when he met Adelaide. The temptation of once again speaking to her, while yet he remained a *chevalier sans reproche*, was not to be resisted. He followed her into the drawing-room.

She looked upon his care-worn countenance with surprise. "Has anything," she asked hesitatingly, "occurred to harass you? you look fatigued and full of anxiety, as though you had been called out in the night to take measures against some rioters."

"You are not far wrong in your conjectures," answered Warenne; "change but the time, and instead of supposing me to have been engaged with them the past night, think me about to meet them to-night, and you will be right?"

"Are the thoughts then of a rural campaign," demanded Adelaide, more gaily, "sufficient to cloud Colonel Warenne's brow? I thought the spirit of so renowned a warrior would have risen at the approach of danger."

"You would scarcely jest, Miss Marston," replied Warenne, gravely, "if you knew the extent of the danger which I apprehend. Houses burnt, lives lost, and a town sacked, are not matter of merriment."

"Heavens! no," said Adelaide, "but how could I dream of such horrors as these? I thought but of some bloodless disturbance, of the same nature with those we have lately witnessed. Tell me, if I may know, what makes you anticipate such dreadful events."

Warenne thought that he violated no duty if he seized this chance of placing his character in its proper light before Adelaide; he therefore simply related to her the occurrences which had taken place, and the measures which he had determined to adopt.

"I leave," said he, as soon as he had finished his explanation, "three troops still behind me at Calbury, under the command of Frank, so that you will not be destitute of protection."

"Oh, I am not afraid for myself," answered Adelaide; "but have you told me all? I beg your pardon, if I have asked an impertinent

question; do not answer it if I have; but there is a tone of desperation in your manner which alarms me."

At this moment it flashed upon Adelaide's mind that Warenne's feelings might in some way have reference to herself, she therefore hastily added, "Forgive me. I am too inquisitive."

"I know not," replied Warenne, "why I should withhold from you the cause of my uneasiness. You will perceive, that in my present position, I am forced to act upon my own responsibility in opposition to the express, and repeated orders of my commanding officer. Whether I succeed in my undertaking, or whether I fail, I make myself liable to be brought to a court-martial for a breach of military discipline; and I confess that I have not that confidence in General Mapleton, which encourages me to hope that he will overlook an opportunity of establishing his authority over an officer, whom he considers, though God knows without reason, as inclined to treat him with impertinence. I can hardly look forward to anything but disgrace in this affair, view it which way I

will. This is not a pleasing reflection, nor one that reconciles me to the prospect of a bloody affray with some of my misguided countrymen. I have little enough to boast of, but if of anything, it is my fair fame as a soldier — that lost, I am poor indeed; — but forgive me, Miss Marston, I have no right to talk thus of myself to you. There is no limit, it would seem, to my presumption, — yet, as I have said thus much, — let me beg you not to condemn me hastily; — when the world points its finger of scorn at me, and when I am a dishonoured and ruined man, think of the difficulties in which I have been placed, and do not, I beseech you — do not cast me from your remembrance as utterly unworthy of all esteem. I can bear anything but *that* — *that*, (as he spoke he pressed his hands violently upon his eyes, as if to shut out some object of horror) I could not bear. You know not what value — but why do I speak thus to you? I am a fool, a madman! Pardon me — forget that I have dared to express the wild and presumptuous feelings of my heart. I have been wrong in giving utterance to them, but I can assure you, that I

meant not to have spoken, that I did not seek this interview. I will not again betray my folly before you. Whatever I may feel, I will bury it in silence. God's mercy protect you !"

Having rapidly and passionately poured forth these broken sentences, Warenne rushed from the room, long before Adelaide, who, from the tone which had prevailed in their recent meetings, had been little prepared for such an avowal, had time to compose herself sufficiently to answer him. Ere she had regained her presence of mind, he had mounted his horse, and was on his road to Charnstead.

At first Adelaide gave herself up to the happy consciousness of being beloved by him to whom she had surrendered the first affections of her heart. In spite of all his proud resolutions, he had avowed it; and though she knew not when her hopes might be realized, she pictured to herself future years of happiness. After a while these bright visions faded from her mind, and she was tempted to despond; Warenne would not have looked so gloomily upon the case, had he not had reason so to do. Even success, she had

been told, could hardly justify disobedience in military matters, and she herself saw, that no General could be responsible for the operations of an army, if each subaltern under his command claimed the right to dispose of his own immediate force as he pleased. Then she dreaded the effect of disgrace upon Warenne's mind—proud and gallant as he was, he was sensitive on the score of honour, to a degree which his military education alone could explain.

By degrees she drew herself again from this train of thought; fixed her mind upon his unhesitating sacrifice of himself in the fulfilment of his duty; recollected his gallant actions in the Peninsula, which had won him his high name; thought of his calm courage in the hour of danger, and the almost instinctive sagacity with which he was wont to meet it; repeated to herself the many stories to his credit, which Henry and Frank had gleaned from the old soldiers of the regiment; and comforted herself in the hope of his happy return amid the blessings of his rescued countrymen. His military fault would

be pardoned for the zeal he would show, and for the ability with which he would counteract the designs of the conspirators. She would see him return, crowned with fresh laurels, more beloved, more admired, more honoured than before.

CHAPTER XII.

There may be joys
Which to the strange o'erwhelming of the soul
Visit the lover's breast beyond all others;
E'en now, how dearly do I feel there may!
But what of them? they are not made for me,
The hasty flashes of contending steel
Must serve instead of glances of my love.

JOANNA BAILLIE'S *Basil*.

WHILE Adelaide thus soothed her perturbed spirit, Warenne's rose as he approached the scene of danger. His dark eye sparkled, and his noble brow expanded, when he again looked upon his old comrades, with whom he had passed triumphantly through so many fields; he turned his mind from the busy reminiscences of love, and with that power of abstraction, which practical men possess, fixed it on the probable events of the coming evening. Adelaide's form, perhaps, sometimes met his mental eye, when it should have fallen upon the

serried ranks of armed warriors, but he did not suffer even her form to occupy him to the prejudice of his duty. Its only effect was to stimulate him to a desire of fresh honours, that, whether he stood or fell, he might be deserving of her good opinion. He arrived at Charnstead about three o'clock, and found there the troop he had sent forward, and the Charnstead troop, neither of them having yet started on their route to Fisherton. An express had arrived in the morning from Major Stuart, stating that in consequence of information he had received, he should only send the Fisherton troop as far as Swalesford, a place about five miles from Fisherton, and begging Captain Paulet to join them there, in time for them to enter Fisherton in a body shortly after dusk. Warenne immediately proceeded forward with the two troops, and picked up the Fisherton troop at Swalesford; when about a mile from the town, he galloped forward by himself, in order to communicate with Stuart about the disposition of the troops. He found that officer, and Mr. Seaforth, occupying his old quarters at the inn.

"I thought," said his friend Stuart, holding out his hand, "that yours would be the first soldier's face we should see to-night."

"And you would rather have seen any other," answered Warenne laughing. "A senior officer is a sad bore on occasions like this. But what shall we have to do?"

Stuart laid before him the intelligence he had been able to collect since the alarm given by Nicholas, and Seaforth the result of his observations and inquiries, which he had unceasingly continued since their last interview. Both reports agreed in confirming the account of the intended attack upon the town, and stated the force of the insurgent peasantry at from seven to eight hundred, which was to be joined, shortly before entering the place, by a body of smugglers, mounted and well-armed, in number from one hundred and fifty, to two hundred. To assist in the defence of the town, Seaforth had sworn in as special constables all the most respectable inhabitants, and such of the working classes as could be trusted. Warenne, in turn, informed them of the troops he brought with him, and

of the disposition of them which he contemplated. They soon completed their arrangements. The soldiers were to be concentrated in the yard of the Cross Keys inn, which, as has been said, commanded both the entrances into the town. The by-streets, which were not practicable for cavalry, were consigned to the care of the constables, of whom a party was ordered to remove the women and children, from the houses most open to attack. Arrangements were made to receive these poor outcasts in the dwellings of the wealthier towns-people, and in the parish church. Some of the neighbouring gentry who had come in, volunteered to act as scouts, and to give notice of the approach of the enemy. These measures being taken, Warenne placed himself under Seaforth's orders.

"I will not, you may depend upon it, call upon you unnecessarily," said Seaforth in return. "Till the work of devastation is commenced, or is so evidently on the point of commencement as not to be prevented by other means, I would not have you stir. I shall ride to meet the fellows, as soon as we hear of

their approach, and try to deter them from their enterprise; if I fail, I must have recourse to you."

"You will fail," said Warenne, "and you will incur great danger in meeting them."

"Very likely," replied his spirited companion, "but it must be done."

During this time the three troops had arrived, and Warenne placed them for the present in some large farm stables and barns which were at the back of the inn. The horses remained bridled, and the men by them, ready to act on a moment's notice. He and Stuart then walked all over the town, and carefully examined each street, in order to be certain that no barricades were erected in any part, nor preparations made to embarrass the soldiery.

It was now past seven o'clock—the constables had brought in the inhabitants of the houses which they expected to be fired, and all was ready for the reception of the rioters. Eight o'clock struck—nine—ten, and Warenne and Seaforth were beginning to doubt whether the night for the attack had not been changed, when

one of their most advanced scouts returned with the intelligence that all the labouring population, between Fisherton and the coast, seemed to be collecting on the coast road, about three miles from the town.

Soon another, and another scout came with similar reports ; and lastly Nicholas, who had returned from Calbury to the Plashetts at an early hour, and had ridden in to be of service to his friends, brought an account that a large body of mounted men had come up, and that they were marching together on the town. Warenne immediately drew his men out in front of the inn. Seaforth rode gently forward to meet the insurgents. They had halted to drill their ranks, and their leaders were ordering their variously armed forces to their respective places, having brought forward to the front the mounted smugglers, who were all armed with pistols and a cutlass.

Seaforth, with one or two of his friends, cantered up to them. He pulled up short, when within about two horse-lengths of the leading rank, and with a loud voice demanded the

meaning of the present tumultuous assembly, and the cause of their entering Fisherton at such an hour of night.

"I warn you," said he, "that you are breaking the King's peace, and acting contrary to the laws. I am a magistrate, and I charge you in the King's name to disperse immediately."

"We know you well enough, Mr. Seaforth," said a rough voice beside him, which he had heard before in his life, and which recalled unpleasant recollections; "I have reason to know you; take yourself off, or perhaps I shall give you reason to know me."

"Emlett?" exclaimed Seaforth. "Nay then, I fear, I shall do little good, if you are at the head of this business; I know of old that you are not easily shaken from your purpose. Nevertheless, some of these poor misguided men may listen to me;" and raising his voice to the highest pitch, again he warned them to retire, repeating the words of the Riot Act.

"Beware," said Emlett, "we are not to be trifled with," then adding a tremendous execra-

tion, he bade Seaforth "begone, or he would settle old scores with him there as he stood."

"You will do as you please," answered the gallant magistrate. "Disperse, I pray you, my men; we are prepared to receive you—we have a strong body of dragoons just arrived.

"Take this, then, you prattling fool," growled Emlett, exasperated at his undaunted defiance of his threats, and alarmed lest his address should shake his followers; and he fired his pistol at his head. Happily for all who knew, and what was the same thing, valued Seaforth, he missed his aim, and the voice of his intrepid antagonist was again heard—

"Even now, deluded men"—but it was soon drowned in the savage exclamations of Emlett, who, with the most horrible curses at himself for his awkwardness, called out to his comrades—

"Cut him down, kill him, stop his tongue any way you can," at the same time spurring his horse at him, and raising his cutlass to strike him. Seaforth just wheeled his horse round upon his haunches in time to save him-

self, and galloped back at speed into the town. Emlett and his men pursued him a little way, and then returned to the main body. The first person he met was Warenne, who had advanced a short distance in front of his men.

"Colonel Warenne," said he, "I believe I must call on you,—yet wait one moment." The rioters were now within the street.

"Firemen," cried Emlett, "to your work, and do you, my men," speaking to the peasantry, "get possession of the by-streets; we 'll manage the soldiers."

It had been his plan, as was afterwards ascertained, to have entered the town before the inhabitants were aware of his approach; and having surrounded with his men the different public-houses at which the soldiers were billeted, to have disarmed them, or at least prevented their assembling; and then taking possession of the streets, to have systematically plundered the town from one end to the other. Finding the towns people on their guard, and hearing from Seaforth, that the troops were prepared to receive his attack, he gave up the former part of his design. But not be-

lieving that any increase of force had arrived, and calculating, that the troop which in the common course of events would have replaced that previously quartered at Fisherton, would not know the ground, and therefore would be unable to act with decision;—being also himself an outlaw—being recognized by Seaforth—with all to gain, and nothing to lose, he now determined to fall vigorously on the soldiers with his band of smugglers, who he knew would stand by him to the last gasp.

"Comrades!" shouted he, "it is not the first time we've had a brush with the red-coats—forward!" and spurring his horse, with the whole body of his associates at his heels, he galloped up the town. At the same moment a glare of light burst from three or four neighbouring houses, and discovered a party of constables retiring in confusion from the post they had been directed to occupy.

"The police! down with them, cut them down!" was heard at once from an hundred voices, and in an instant the wretched special constables were knocked down, and ridden over by their fierce pursuers.

"Now, Colonel Warenne," said Seaforth,—before he could finish his sentence, Warenne was at the head of his men.

"Stuart, keep one troop in reserve, the other two come on with me—steady my men—forwards, charge." The two bodies of cavalry clashed together. The soldiers had not had time, nor space, to get to their full speed, their charge therefore lost the effect it would have had, if the order had been received a minute sooner. It was sufficient to check the advance of the rioters,—and no more. They had still to conquer their antagonists, who in this sort of encounter, hand to hand, and man to man, were opponents not to be despised. For some minutes the conflict was savagely, and equally, maintained on both sides. The smugglers fought desperately, as men with halters around their necks. After a while, the better horsemanship, and swordsmanship of the dragoons began to prevail, rendered doubly effective by the consciousness of superiority, which habitual use gives a man in the practice of his profession. At first, by the light of the blazing houses, the soldiers, easily dis-

tinguished by their bright shakos from the smugglers, who had fur caps on their heads, seemed completely outnumbered. They clung, however, closely together, and amid all the flashing of swords, and firing of pistols, moved steadily on, a compact, well-disciplined body; by degrees, they appeared more adequate to the other party in point of numbers, and to be pressing their adversaries back; still the conflict raged — the smugglers rallied — for a moment even turned the tide of war in their favour. It was their last effort. Presently one, and then another of them withdrew himself from the *mêlée*, and with frocks stained with gore, galloped out of the town. Soon two or three small parties from the same side, fled hastily in a similar direction.

On this, the soldiers perceiving their advantage, redoubled their efforts, and fairly established their superiority, though some of the most desperate of the smugglers, Emlett among the number, with his head uncovered, and streaming with blood, fought on, without receding an inch; at last he, and his more immediate followers falling, the remainder seemed

to give up all hope at once, and turning their horses' heads endeavoured to save themselves by the rapidity of their flight. The dragoons pursued them without mercy to the end of the street, both parties dashing through the mob of peasantry, who were coming forward to the support of their friends. There, having received orders from Warenne on no account to venture into the open country, the dragoons wheeled round, and returned to clear the town of the foot people. But these last, as soon as they discovered the result of the fight, did not wait to be dispersed. Throwing away their weapons, and plunging into the by-streets, they made the best of their way to the fields, and to darkness.

After the lapse of about an hour from the time that Emlett had fired at Seaforth, the town was restored to comparative quiet, except where the inhabitants were busily engaged in quenching the flames of the burning houses, and where the groans of the dying, and wounded, fell sadly upon the ear.

Above thirty of the smugglers had been killed, and four or five soldiers. The wounded

of the two parties were in an inverse proportion, there being several of the dragoons who had received severe injuries, and not above half a dozen of the smugglers, and these so dreadfully hurt, as to forbid all hope of their living beyond a few hours; all those who had sufficient strength to do so, had dragged themselves out of the town.

Emlett was not quite dead when Warenne and Seaforth went over the field of battle. He survived to throw one look of stern defiance on the latter, and to strike out his arm against him with impotent fury; then with a half-uttered imprecation, he turned his face to the ground, and died. In a few hours more the flames were all suppressed; the wounded removed to a place where they might receive proper attendance, and the soldiery, with the exception of one troop retained on duty for the protection of the town, established in comfortable quarters.

The night passed without disturbance. The following morning Warenne went round the town with Seaforth, took minutes of the devastation it had suffered, inspected the wounded

men, gathered from the smugglers yet alive what information they were inclined to give, and forwarded an exact and detailed account of the whole transaction to head-quarters. After which, leaving the Charnstead and Fisherton troops under Stuart to guard the town, escort prisoners, &c. and directing the other to return as quickly as possible to its former station, he himself hastened back to Calbury, in order that he might be absent as short a time as possible from his command.

CHAPTER XIII.

A soldier's reputation is too fine
To be exposed, e'en to the smallest cloud.
JOANNA BAILLIE'S *Basil.*

IT will be remembered that Warenne, before he left Calbury, had written to General Mapleton a detailed account of the reasons which induced him to break through the repeated orders he had received. Seaforth had also sent to him, as General of the district, a formal request for assistance, as soon as he had been apprised of the outrages in contemplation; through some error of the messenger, this last letter did not reach General Mapleton till the day after the riot had taken place, or it is possible that he might have pursued a different line of conduct. As it was, the receipt of Warenne's letter, unaccompanied by the explanation which that of Seaforth would have

given to it, irritated him beyond all power of endurance.

He was not only thoroughly exasperated at what he deemed Warenne's presumption, but most unjustly imagined that he could trace throughout his proceedings an intention of putting a personal indignity upon him, and of accusing him indirectly of incapacity in his command.

Under this impression, he wrote to the Horse Guards in the strongest possible terms, desiring that Warenne might be immediately brought to a court-martial; and requesting, in case of refusal, that he might be allowed to retire from his appointment. "Colonel Warenne's conduct, he observed, was the most inexcusable and wanton act of disobedience he had ever witnessed in the service. At the very moment when he had, in consequence of particular information received, commanded that officer to concentrate his forces in Calbury, he had chosen, without any requisition from a magistrate, on the evidence of a frightened country gentleman, and a foolish old woman, to leave his post, and set at hazard the safety of the important

town which had been entrusted to his protection. He wrote, he said, before ill success could aggravate, or good success justify the steps which Colonel Warenne had taken; looking merely to the necessity of enforcing obedience in inferiors officers, if their superiors were to be made responsible for the execution of the duties they superintended. He added, that in anticipation of the orders of the Commander-in-chief, he had directed that Colonel Warenne should be placed under arrest the moment he returned to Calbury. In fact, the orderly who had conveyed Warenne's despatch to head-quarters, brought back the order for his arrest; and Frank, in the exercise of the temporary command which had devolved on him, was constrained to execute that order upon his brother.

Warenne arrived late at night. Frank was waiting to receive him. The first few minutes of their interview were occupied with the relation of the transactions at Fisherton; but the time soon arrived, when it was necessary that the latter should fulfil his melancholy task. His brother demanded the General's answer.

It's not for a civilian to impugn the policy
of military arrangements, for one may perhap
be allowed to say, he takes some strong re-
sentment for the suspense, with
which, only the sentence of a court-mar-
tial, the infliction of it is
a mere piece of cruelty. Why should an
accusation of court-martial be confirmed
in either case declared, a
reason had been given for its consider-
ation of the three-guards? In the present
instance intervened before Warenne's fate
was decided, during which his feelings were
grievously tormented in a manner totally in-
consistent with real justice. Not only had he
to contend with his own over-excited suscep-
tibilities of dishonour, and his dread
of being misjudged in the eyes of Adelaide,
but the calumnies of the public
press, part of the public press
which support the cause of the
Crown against the controul of

not to paint the
colours, as to make

infringement of the liberty of the
a massacre which called aloud for
n vain did the juster newspapers
night was not a proper time
eet in great numbers, nor arms
npaniment of such assemblages;
tell of the attempt on the life
of houses in flames before a
lrawn. In vain did they argue
nhabitants of Fisherton had
o dwell in security; a right
ttle property without moles-
protection from the govern-
ntry: these truths would not
f the * * and * * * to sell
therefore refused to listen
the contrary, filled their
rts of what they called the
uman life by the soldiery,
ressed hopes, that Colonel
et with immediate and con-
This was a species of tor-
had not looked for-
him

Frankheld it out to him in mournful silence. Warenne read it.

"Arrest!" said he; "Does he put me under arrest? This is a strong measure, indeed; he might have heard me, surely, before he took so decided a step; it is, of course, preparatory to a court-martial. Well, Frank, there 's my sword; I would sooner yield it up to you than to any other living being:" poor Frank burst into tears. "Nay, do not weep, I would not for worlds have done otherwise than I have done; and though disgrace is hard to bear, it is much less so, when not deserved. I suppose they will hardly put me on my trial for desertion of my post, for that charge will affect life. General Mapleton will be satisfied with less than that. Come what come may, they will not make me out a coward; *au reste*, I must take a soldier's chance."

The next morning Warenne's arrest became generally known; and Henry, anxious that his sister should not be informed of it by an indifferent person, rode over to Epworth with the news. He found her pale and agitated (for since her last interview with Warenne, she had given

fuller indulgence to her feelings, legitimatized as it were, by his avowal of his love for her), eager to learn the success of the troops at Fisherton, and scarcely allowing herself to doubt of its being such, as to call forth approbation upon him who had commanded them; yet dreading, she knew not why, some harsh measure from General Mapleton. Hope had predominated over fear, and she was bitterly disappointed by Henry's intelligence. For a moment she gave way to grief; but recovering herself—

"Henry," said she, "thank you, thank you for coming to me at this moment. I need not now tell you how truly you have read my heart; but I must not be selfish. Think no more of me, but of him on whom the whole weight of the blow has fallen; it will crush him, I fear, he is so sensitive to even the semblance of dishonour." Henry strove to comfort his sister. "His friends must support him," added she; "they must not let that gallant spirit sink."

Her brother promised to do his best. He assured her that she viewed matters too despondingly; that a man was not disgraced by

being put on his trial, but only by the condemnation of the court; that he would see Warenne on his return, and endeavour to speak comfort to him, though he must confess, that as yet his ideas on that head threatened to concentrate themselves in the simple Americanism, "G—d pretty particularly d—n" General Mapleton.

Adelaide smiled amid her tears at Henry's projected mode of consolation; and he, glad to find that his nonsense had succeeded in calling forth a smile, went off with a lightened heart to fulfil his commission; a commission, as he then thought, easy of execution, but which appeared to him in a very different light, when he became aware of the irritated state of Warenne's mind, and his almost morbid apprehensiveness of disgrace.

The interval which elapsed between the arrest and the sitting of the court-martial, was not long. The Commander-in-chief, from a recollection of Warenne's services and character, had acceded to General Mapleton's request with much reluctance, which was increased when he received the despatches from Fisher-

ton, most punctiliously forwarded to the Horse-guards by the General, who, though a weak, was an honourable man. To mitigate the severity of the proceeding, he expedited the necessary arrangements as much as possible. He forthwith sent officers to form a court, and desired General Mapleton to deliver in his charges. It is unnecessary to record the forms, &c. of the court; suffice it to say that General Mapleton made his accusation, limiting it to the act of disobedience without cause; and that Warenne in his defence, admitting the act of disobedience, rested his claim to an acquittal upon the impossibility, under the circumstances of the case, of his acting otherwise, with a due regard to his Majesty's service. He produced at the same time a letter of thanks from the inhabitants of Fisherton, and the testimony of Seaforth and Nicholas, as to the necessity of the line of conduct which he had adopted. The question lay within a small compass, and the court soon finished its sittings. The result, however, of its inquiries was not declared. Warenne was doomed to undergo a period of agonizing uncertainty.

It is not for a civilian to impugn the policy of military arrangements, but one may perhaps be allowed to say, that unless some strong reason can be adduced for the suspense, which an officer awaiting the sentence of a court-martial is forced to suffer, the infliction of it is a needless piece of cruelty. Why should not the sentence of a court-martial be confirmed, or annulled, and in either case declared, as soon as time had been given for its consideration at the Horse-guards? In the present case, weeks intervened before Warenne's fate was decided, during which his feelings were outraged and lacerated in a manner totally inconsistent with real justice. Not only had he to combat with his own over-excited susceptibility on the score of dishonour, and his dread of appearing disgraced in the eyes of Adelaide, but with the abuse and calumnies of the public press, or rather that part of the public press which is ever ready to support the cause of the rebellious and licentious against the controul of the powers that be.

The radical papers failed not to paint the affair at Fisherton in such colours, as to make

it seem an infringement of the liberty of the subject, and a massacre which called aloud for vengeance. In vain did the juster newspapers point out, that night was not a proper time for people to meet in great numbers, nor arms the proper accompaniment of such assemblages; in vain did they tell of the attempt on the life of Seaforth, and of houses in flames before a sword had been drawn. In vain did they argue that the poor inhabitants of Fisherton had rights—a right to dwell in security; a right to enjoy their little property without molestation; a right to protection from the government of their country: these truths would not help the editors of the * * and * * * to sell their papers, they therefore refused to listen to them; and, on the contrary, filled their columns with reports of what they called the profligate waste of human life by the soldiery, and vehemently expressed hopes, that Colonel Warenne might meet with immediate and condign punishment. This was a species of torment to which Warenne had not looked forward. It had been pain to him to hear his actions arraigned in a court of justice; but

his defence followed close upon the accusation, and he had been enabled to bear it with fortitude. To be represented to the people of England as a monster thirsting for the blood of his countrymen, and deserving of universal execration, was almost more than he could endure.

Henry and Frank were unremitting in their endeavours to comfort him; yet no words, or arguments they could use, availed to remove from him a sensation of despair. He acquiesced in all they said, but as one who heard them not, —except indeed when they pressed him to go with them to Epworth, then he spoke readily and positively. "I will not show myself to Miss Marston a dishonoured man." In vain did they urge that he was not, could not be disgraced, until condemned by the sentence of the court, which had sat in judgment on his conduct. He would answer,—"I will admit that I am not disgraced by the word of authority, but do you think it nothing to have one's name called in question? to be made the sport of the papers—no, not their sport, but their execration? Venal they may be—wicked they

may be; still they are read by many—believed by many." If they argued, that no one who knew him would credit any report injurious to his character upon the assumptions of a newspaper, he would thank them for their kind opinions, but refused to be persuaded that he could ever resume the place he had formerly held in public estimation, or that his character could ever be restored to its primitive purity.

One only circumstance seemed to alleviate the anguish of his wounded feelings, and this was, the conduct of the soldiers of his regiment. On the return of the troop which had been engaged at Fisherton, the men had naturally expatiated on their Colonel's activity and gallantry before their comrades; consequently, when his arrest was made known, and the recompense he received, was seen in immediate and strong contrast with the services he had rendered, one feeling of indignation and resentment pervaded the whole regiment; threatening for a moment to manifest itself in some mode, inconsistent with military discipline.

Luckily for their reputation, and for his,

Frank's bawman, an old campaigner, gave his master some intimation of their intentions, and Frank desired him to tell his friends that they would best show their regard for his brother, and most effectually gratify him, if they proved the high state of discipline to which they had been brought under his command, by performing their several duties, with, if possible, increased zeal and patience, during his temporary suspension from authority. The soldiers listened readily to advice emanating from such a source, and the consequence was, that never from Warenne's first joining the regiment had there existed so little room for censure, or such cheerful and exact compliance with every order, as from the time of his arrest, to the promulgation of the sentence of the court-martial. This proof of the affection of his soldiers, was to Warenne a real comfort and support.

CHAPTER XIV.

There 's a thanklessness
In our fallen nature that too lightly holds
The good too lightly won. Fortune's minion,
Whose pamper'd sense the luscious banquet courts
Ere he can say " I hunger," coldly thanks
The bounteous Giver for his daily bread;
And hearts that have not unrequited, loved,
Feel not the bliss of loving, loved again.
'Tis Cupid's wanton fashion still to vex
His dearest vot'ries, that they may exalt
His tyrant godhead by a truer worship,
More pure, more holy, sober, strong, and lasting.

Unedited Poem.

ABOUT a month after the termination of the court-martial, Henry, finding that all endeavours were fruitless to restore Warenne to cheerfulness, and that his unceasing anxiety was wearing out at once his body and mind, determined again to communicate with Adelaide. He rode over to Epworth, and told her his firm conviction, that unless some means

were discovered of diverting Warenne's thoughts from the channel in which they were running, his life, or his reason would be endangered. He had besought him to come to Epworth, but he would not hear of it.

Adelaide was not wholly unprepared for this intelligence; she so thoroughly understood Warenne's character, that in some measure she expected it, and she felt that the time was come when she must herself make an effort, or permit the happiness of both parties to be sacrificed. She asked Henry if he thought Warenne would come to Epworth at *her* request. Her brother said, that with her permission he would make the trial. She authorized him to do so.

Henry departed. Not a word fell from her lips to stay him, for she wished not to unsay that which she had spoken. Yet when he was gone, she remained transfixed to the spot where he had left her, alarmed at her own boldness; confounded at the change one short moment had made in her fortunes. The tramp of Henry's horse galloping down the avenue, recalled her to self-possession, and she soon taught

herself to rejoice in the step she had taken. The world, thought the generous girl, might blame me, if it knew of my request, but he will not,—for he loves me. Love will plead my cause, if I have been to forward. Love, which I should ill deserve, did I permit a fear of the world, or my own false pride to close my lips, when as I believe, and trust, and hope, one word from them can cheer his gallant spirit, and win him back to happiness.

Henry found Warenne brooding over his misfortunes, sad and dispirited as usual, but his dark eye lighted up, and the blood crimsoned his cheek, as he listened to Adelaide's message.

"Your sister wish me to go to Epworth? Impossible!" said he.

Henry assured him of the fact. A request from her was not to be refused, and though Warenne had determined not to quit his apartment while yet a cloud should remain upon his reputation, he at once made ready to depart.

A few minutes before, and he would instinctively have shrunk from the broad glare of day, but now he passed unheeding beneath the sun's meridian splendour, for his heart was full of

feelings he could not utterly suppress, and his head busied with surmises as to Adelaide's motives in urging her request. Could it be, that she was interested in his fate? he dared not cherish the hope. Yet why should she wish to see him? Alas, Henry had informed her of his wretchedness, and in the kindness of her nature, and because she felt that her kindness would not now be misinterpreted, she sought to amuse him, and divert him from his sorrows. This latter idea predominated when he reached Epworth.

He found Adelaide alone. She was prepared for the task she had imposed upon herself, and though her heart beat quickly as she heard his well-known step, she advanced to welcome him with an unfaltering voice and apparent composure.

"Will you pardon me, Colonel Warenne," said she, "for the liberty I have taken in requesting you to come and see me."

"Miss Marston need not ask Colonel Warenne's pardon for her kindness to him," was his formal and measured reply; for he feared to be thought capable of presuming upon the kindness which he thus acknowledged.

Adelaide hesitated before she spoke again; the melancholy tone of his voice unnerved her; forcing herself however to proceed, after a pause she resumed,

"My brother tells me, that you will not listen to reason, but torment yourself with visions of disgrace impending over you from this court-martial. Will you let me chide you for your folly?"

"Folly!" ejaculated Warenne, keeping his eyes on the ground.

"Yes," repeated Adelaide, "folly; you cannot think it wisdom to imagine disaster, and suffer under its pressure, when in all probability the evil you anticipate will never reach you, and even if it should arrive, cannot injure you in the manner you apprehend. Whatever may be the sentence of the court, every fair, every humane person must approve of your conduct."

"Heaven bless you for these words of kindness!" replied Warenne, despondingly, "but you say what you wish me to believe, rather than what you believe yourself."

"No," said Adelaide, with much animation, "I speak as I think—as I feel."

Warenne raised his eyes from the ground, and looking sadly on her, continued; "I once told you in a moment of forgetfulness, which I trust you have pardoned, that there is no person whose good opinion I so much wish for. I am deeply sensible of your goodness."

"When you first spoke the words you have just repeated," said Adelaide, reproachfully, "you did not speak with the cold formality you now do."

The colour rushed to Warenne's face, but he restrained his feelings. "I spoke in passion then," said he, "and I speak coldly now, because I dare not trust myself to use the language my heart would dictate; besides, I am not what I was. I had then an unsullied character."

"Must I repeat," rejoined Adelaide, "that in my estimation your character stands as high as ever?—but"—she paused for an instant, and then continued, "you must pardon my boldness,—but I cannot help doubting, whether your grief is solely caused by your apprehension of disgrace."

Warenne would not deny the truth, and he could not acknowledge it, without in some mea-

sure trespassing, as he conceived, upon the kindness of one, who to soothe his sorrows had perhaps overstepped the strict bounds of prudence; he preserved therefore silence, and she proceeded:

"Your hesitation confirms me in my opinion, and now I recall to mind, (as she spoke, her heart beat almost audibly, and the eloquent blood mantled her very brows, at the outrage she forced herself to inflict upon her maiden modesty) that some weeks ago, long before this present business occupied your thoughts, when I asked you if you were ill, you replied, that you were 'ill in mind, and harassed, because you could not determine to pursue a certain line of conduct you were anxious to adopt, lest in the attempt to acquire your own individual happiness, which you confessed to be at stake, you should injure another person;'—perhaps you are still undecided?"

Again she paused, but not as before, overpowered by the struggle within her breast. The Rubicon was passed,—and she sat before Warenne, calm and pale, with her head proudly thrown back, and her dark eye glancing with

the consciousness of single-minded innocence, as though she dared the world to look into her heart, or question its purity.

He turned a wondering and admiring gaze upon the beautiful being who thus questioned him, as it were with authority, and answered slowly; "No, I have no indecision now to torture me, my path is clear before me, and a joyless one it is."

"I had guessed as much," resumed Adelaide, "from your compressed lips, and sterner manner, even had you not acknowledged it. Am I equally right in my further surmise that you have decided against yourself, and that, not because you are convinced of its being your duty so to do under the circumstances of the case, but because the circumstances themselves have changed—because, though the benefit to yourself, in the world's opinion at least, may be greater, you consider that you have less right to ask it of the person?"

Warenne interposed. "Miss Marston, you cannot know—you cannot understand—yet you assuredly speak the truth."

Adelaide continued. "Have you forgotten

your conversation with me the last time we met? Might not that help me to read the riddle of your thoughts? and now (a deep blush again resuming the empire of her cheek, as she in a clear low tone, but with rapid utterance, made the demand) — that person, is it not myself?— that purpose, was it not to ask my hand?"

Warenne flung himself at her feet. "Pardon, pardon my presumption," said he, "I had indeed such aspiring hopes, before fortune raised you far above me, and before your father by his manner implied his disapprobation of my pretensions; but I have endeavoured to check and conceal them, as in honour I felt bound to do, and since this late unhappy affair, more than ever. You now force me to speak. You must therefore hear me, though the next moment you drive me from your presence. I have loved you, almost from the first hour that we met. I love you now, fervently, fondly, passionately. I honour you as one of the noblest of living beings. I would peril every earthly thing I possess, to know that I hold a place in your affections. As I hope for mercy, the bitterness of my present sorrows arises, I will not say,

solely, for honour is ever the soldier's idol, but principally, from the consciousness that henceforth I may not dare to think of you; pardon my presumptuous words, you have wrung them from me."

"I will pardon you, now that you have spoken," replied Adelaide, with a faltering voice, and relapsing into her wonted timidity of manner, "though perhaps, had you remained silent, (a sweet smile of reproach strove with the tears which trembled in her dark eyelashes,) I should not have forgiven you. You do not deserve forgiveness, for you would have sacrificed" — she hesitated — "your happiness to your vanity."

Warenne seized the hand she tremblingly held out to him.

"Will you then listen to me?" asked he impetuously; "but no, I dream—it cannot be!"

"Must all the assurances come from me?" rejoined Adelaide, fixing her tearful eyes upon the ground.

"Oh, pardon me, the transition from despair to hope is so sudden that I can scarce believe

it—but," said he inquiringly, "you said you would listen to me. Will you—can you?"

"I have not actually said so," replied Adelaide timidly, "but I can—I will."

Warenne doubted no longer, but gave himself up to the full certainty of his happiness, while again and again he told Adelaide the tale she knew full well, but was nothing loth to hear.

From that moment fortune seemed to smile on Warenne. He had hardly reached his quarters when a letter arrived from the Secretary to the Commander-in-chief, informing him, that the King's decision was forwarded to the commanding officer of the regiment; and that he hoped Colonel Warenne would be gratified with its purport. It was to the effect, that, though the act of disobedience was proved, (as indeed, it had been admitted by Colonel Warenne himself,) yet, in consideration of the peculiar circumstances of the case, and the great zeal and ability manifested by Colonel Warenne, his Majesty deemed it right (carefully guarding against such a construction of

his sentence as might tend to the commission of similar breaches of discipline for the future,) to omit the penalty by course of law devolving upon him for the act of disobedience; and further ordered, that his thanks might be publicly expressed to him, by the officer in present command of the regiment, in proof of his approbation of Colonel Warenne's endeavours to preserve the peace of his subjects.

Warenne's heart bounded lightly as he read the welcome note:—"Thank Heaven!" he exclaimed, "I can now honourably ask Adelaide to be mine;" and hastily inclosing it to her, with a few lines expressive of his own happy feelings, he despatched it without delay to Epworth.

The night was passed in a state of bewildered excitement, amid the congratulations of friends and delightful anticipations of the future. On the morrow the regiment was formed in square in the market-place. Thousands of people soon collected around the soldiery, and every window and house-roof that overlooked the scene became thronged; for Warenne's activity in the protection of the people

of Fisherton, and mild conduct in command of his regiment at Calbury, had interested all hearts in his favour.

Frank, as the officer in command, came forward with his brother into the centre of the square; instantly the hum of the voices around was hushed, and a silence pervaded the whole assembly, so still, and perfect, that every syllable of the despatches, which Frank immediatly proceeded to read in a clear though occasionally faltering voice, was distinctly heard by the surrounding multitudes. At the former part of them, wherein it was recited that Colonel Warenne was proved guilty of an act of disobedience, there appeared a look of anxiety upon the countenances of some of the bystanders, who feared lest they had been misinformed as to the true purport of the sentence; but by degrees all brows cleared. Frank declared his Majesty's approval of his brother's conduct, and restored to him his sword. Then (but not till then) was the attention of the assembly interrupted. The blacksmith of the regiment, who was the father of the corps, and its pride for his various exploits,

was seen to raise his hand, and in an instant there arose one loud, heart-given cheer from every soldier in the regiment. This was too much for Warenne — he burst into tears — he soon, however, recovered his self-possession, and thanked his brother officers, and brother soldiers, for the kind interest they had taken in his fate; then resuming his command of the regiment, he hastened to dismiss it, that he might fly on the wings of love to Epworth. At his door he found Lord Framlingham's carriage; in his lodgings Lord Framlingham and Adelaide. Her fond and faithful eye had witnessed his restoration to honour.

It need hardly be said, that Lord Framlingham's consent was not withheld, when he found that Adelaide's affections were fixed on Warenne, nor that their marriage took place in the proper course of time. No accident occurred to prevent their happiness, and they are now continuing to enjoy it in as great, or perhaps greater perfection than when they were first united. Warenne has resigned the Lieutenant-Colonelcy of his regiment, though he is ready to take the field should war again

break out. Stuart has succeeded to the Lieutenant-Colonelcy. Frank to the Majority vacant by Stuart's promotion. Henry is in Parliament, a liberal politician, but abstaining from the full expression of his sentiments from regard to his father, who is opposed to every sort of change. Seaforth and Warenne are become intimate friends, and Nicholas not unfrequently drops in at Epworth, when the best preserves are shot, or favourite fox-coverts drawn in the neighbourhood, or when a severe south-wester prevents the usual supply of fish at Fisherton market; while last, but we trust not least in the affection of our reader, Nanny Rudd is — not united to Frank, as might be presumed from the long flirtation which existed between them, but quietly established in the lodge at Epworth, with Betsy to wait on her. Her greatest pleasure to talk a little soldiering with Warenne, Frank, or Henry, whenever they can listen to her, and to explain to them the superiority of (Ruddicè) "the fut over the os;" (Anglicè,) of the infantry over the cavalry.

AN OLD TALE,

AND OFTEN TOLD.

AN OLD TALE,

AND OFTEN TOLD.

CHAPTER I.

Amor che a null' amato, amar perdona
Mi prese del costui piacer si forte,
Che, come vedi, ancor non m'abandona.

DANTE.

OF late years education has become a subject of general care and attention. But there may be excess even in so amiable a feeling as the devotion of a parent to a child; that very devotion may be productive of mischief to its object. No pains are spared in cultivating talents, in giving grace, accomplishments, useful information, deep learning; but it may be a question whether the wholesome training of the

AN OLD TALE,

AND OFTEN TOLD.

CHAPTER I.

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DANTE.

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feelings, is as judiciously attended to as that of the understanding. May not the very importance attached to all concerning the young, lead them to think too much of themselves? Unless they are early taught to consider the feelings of others, is not one strong motive for controuling their own (that most difficult and most necessary of all lessons,) utterly neglected? May not the excessive care taken to preserve the purity of the weaker sex, sometimes lead to consequences the most opposite?

When the follies, the frailties, the weaknesses, of their nature are so carefully concealed from them, how can they acquire the habit of regulating feelings, the very existence of which they have never learned, and against the errors of which therefore, they can never have been cautioned?

"'Tis an old tale, and often told," yet, perhaps, the frequent occurrence of such events as are related in the following story, may induce one to look back to the possible causes of their frequency.

Colonel FitzEustace was a person peculiarly calculated to inspire an enthusiastic passion to

a warm-hearted, and devoted girl. He was a soldier, and had but lately returned from the seat of war. The fame of his exploits had preceded his arrival, and in the social circle to which the young Eleanor Morton was admitted as she emerged from girlhood to womanhood, he was received as one of the brave defenders of his native land, to whom England owed her eminent position in the scale of nations.

Although military glory is in itself almost a passport to the female heart, its effect is certainly enhanced when the outward appearance is correspondingly heroic — and Colonel Fitz-Eustace looked like a hero. The commanding step, the lofty brow, the dark flashing eye, which might almost gaze on the sun without being dazzled; the deep clear sonorous voice, the rapid, yet distinct utterance, which seemed as if it could make its commands heard and obeyed, through the roar of cannon and the din of battle, combined to form the beau ideal of a warrior. And if that flashing eye should invariably beam with every softer expression, when it dwelt on one favoured object, if that clear deep voice should suddenly become mo-

dulated to the low thrilling tone of tenderness when it addressed one person, what marvel if the bewildered girl yielded up her whole soul to the new and engrossing feeling which stole upon her, under the mask of admiration and gratitude!

If ever love, fervent, pure, intense, found its shrine in the heart of woman, it did in that of Eleanor Morton. But Colonel FitzEustace was poor, and it was not till after many years of constancy on both sides, that her parents consented to their union. She had passed long months of absence, long days of sickening hope, long nights of watching, when by the death of a distant relation Colonel FitzEustace became heir presumptive to the earldom of Sotheron, and in the mean time the possessor of a competency which enabled their marriage to take place.

Alas! It was not for Eleanor to know unmixed happiness. Climate, and severe service had undermined her husband's constitution, and although they both fancied that the life of untroubled serenity they had before them, would restore him to health, she had the mortification to see him daily become weaker, paler, thinner.

She could not blind herself to his illness, but she fancied in the autumn, that the clear fresh air of winter would brace his feeble frame; in the winter, that the mildness of spring would give him renewed vigour; in the spring, that more settled weather would confirm his health; in summer, that autumn would bring the desired change.

When, however, that autumn came, she had really to sit by his sick bed, to smooth his pillow, to watch his waning strength, and at length to hear him in distinct audible words, speak of their approaching separation. She had never, even in her imagination, admitted such an idea, far less ever embodied it in actual language. When first he spoke, she tried to smile;—a faint incredulous smile. But no! She looked on his haggard cheek, and the appalling truth was there too visibly written. She sat motionless, speechless. Nor did tears come to her relief till he alluded to the prospect of her becoming a mother—then the floodgates were opened—she sobbed convulsively, she covered his emaciated hand with kisses—she hid her head.

From that moment she never left his room; she scarcely ever took her eyes off him. She would not allow any of her family to be summoned, for she seemed to dread the participation of another in her attendance; she would have been jealous of his receiving attention, or service from any hand but her own. She wished to catch every sound of his voice, to hoard up each word, each look, in her memory, as a treasure for after years. The moment came—he died, and she survived.

Three months afterwards she became the widowed mother of a boy. That moment of rapture when a mother's eyes are blessed with a sight of her first-born, was to her a moment of agony. Then her loss seemed to burst upon her with redoubled force. She thought of the happiness she had anticipated, of the tenderness with which her husband would have hailed the intelligence of her safety, of the pride with which he would have looked upon his boy, and she almost turned away in anguish.

This was but a passing feeling. The next instant she clasped the infant to her bosom, she felt as if the beloved of her soul was not

wholly torn from her, she had something still to live for, something to which her existence was necessary, and the whole affections of that loving and blighted heart were poured forth upon the unconscious infant. She recovered slowly, but she did recover.

Time wore away. She was still young, and might have hoped for happiness in a second marriage—but her's was no common love. It had taken root in early life, it had been nurtured in sorrow, almost in hopelessness,—it had for many long years been her thought by day, her dream by night, it was so interwoven with her existence, that it could not be destroyed but with herself. Devotion to her child, to *his* child, alone afforded relief to her sorrow and her love. She remembered all the treasured words of him who was gone, she thought over all the plans they had together formed for her little Walter's education, and she considered no sacrifice too great that might by possibility be conducive to his health, or to his advantage. Alas! by so doing, perhaps, she only fostered feelings which, in after life, led to most unfortunate results.

In the common acceptation of the word, she did not spoil her boy. She never gave him the plaything he cried for; she never yielded to his entreaties in allowing him what she imagined could be hurtful either to his body or his mind; but every action of her own, and of every one belonging to her, had reference to him alone.

The best room in the house was his sleeping-apartment, as being the most airy and wholesome; the largest sitting-room was appointed for his playing nursery; if he looked pale, an air of consternation pervaded the whole household; if he was naughty, the wretchedness of his mother was reflected in the serious faces of his attendants; if he was good, every one appeared revived; and rewards and pleasures were provided, however inconvenient it might be to gratify his fancy of the moment.

Those who were interested for his mother, and wished to gratify her feelings, knew that she was only accessible to pleasurable emotions through her boy, and they vied with each other in attentions and kindness to him.

Nothing could be more natural, more ami-

able, than the widowed mother's devotion to her only child; and she fancied that she was training his mind to all that was right and virtuous, for these indulgences were rewards for good behaviour. Alas! in her anxious tenderness one great lesson was neglected. She forgot to impress upon his mind that he was only one of many creatures, all equal in the sight of their Creator. Walter necessarily felt that the universe was formed for him alone, and that every thing ought to be subservient to his welfare.

He was a beautiful and an intelligent boy, with all his mother's depth and tenderness of feeling; with all his father's energy in accomplishing his purpose; but being accustomed to find those vehement feelings, those energies, the ruling principle of the little world around him, he early learned to rule over that little world with the most despotic sway. He loved his mother; but he loved her as tyrants love that which ministers to their pleasure. She did not dive so deeply into his childish heart, satisfied with feeling herself necessary to his happiness. Her gentle and habitually melancholy countenance, could be lighted up with joy at any

proof of affection on his part; and she looked round with proud exultation when he cried, and wept aloud, at the prospect of her leaving him to pass a few days with a friend. She did not leave him. She yielded to this passionate expression of his ungoverned feelings, and by so doing confirmed him in the habitual indulgence of them.

The period came when it was deemed proper that he should go to school. This was a severe trial; but here her duty was plain before her. She knew that it would be sacrificing her boy's welfare to her own gratification, if she persisted in keeping him at home.

At ten years old he went to Eton; and here his natural talents, and his animated disposition, soon made him a favourite with his master and with his companions. Now for almost the first time, Eleanor tasted unalloyed happiness. She was proud of her son; she heard him praised by his superiors; she knew he was loved by his comrades; and when he returned for the holidays, she looked on him with a thrill of rapture, such as she had never expected to feel again. Of course no indulgence

could be too great for her good, her clever boy, Every wish was gratified, every request forestalled. For some years she was comparatively a happy woman.

Walter increased in health and strength, and beauty and talents. He was impetuous, but that was natural in youth; he could not bear to be thwarted, but then his wishes were generally the offspring of some amiable feeling. If he saw distress, his was the open hand to relieve it. Though he might perhaps give a guinea to a ragged impostor, and have not a sixpence left to bestow on a starving and industrious family, this was only the excess of a generous impulse. How could he be blamed for yielding to it?

He left Eton with the character of an excellent scholar, and of a fine fellow. He passed through his career at Oxford with more than common credit, and his friends augured that he might one day make a figure in public life. His future prospects were brilliant, and he was in possession of a fortune which rendered him independent of any profession, but which was not sufficient to stand in lieu of a profes-

sion. A large landed property, well attended to, and well administered, is occupation in itself, and affords scope for great utility; but there is a certain medium which prevents exertion, and enables a person to pass a life of most complete idleness.

Such was Walter FitzEustace's situation, when at twenty-one he plunged into the vortex of London dissipation, with an ardent imagination, impetuous temper, amiable, but ill-regulated feelings, and a strong determined will, which had never been controuled, and would never brook controul. These were faults which might lead to much mischief, but which could not make him less beloved by a doting mother. This was a disposition to make him fearfully the slave of love, should it once gain dominion over him. However, he returned to his adoring mother in the summer with heart as light, and eyes as gay and careless, as when he left her. She was overjoyed to have him once more by her side; once more to lean on his arm when she took her evening stroll, and to look up in his beaming face, and trace in those noble features, the forms, the expression of his father's;

to listen to his animated accounts of debates in Parliament; to see his cheek glow, and his eye flash fire as he talked of liberty, of justice; and to anticipate the moment when the talents, of which there seemed to be so rich a promise, might excite admiration in the senate.

CHAPTER II.

Nous, qui sommes bornées en tout, comment le sommes nous si peu quand il s'agit de souffrir?

MARIVAUX.

THE following spring FitzEustace again passed the season in London. He had been disappointed in his hopes of being returned for a borough; the scenes of dissipation which had completely occupied him the first year, had lost their power to interest, and his animated nature was beginning to feel the want of some fresh excitement, when he became acquainted with Lady Ellersville.

She had been married about three years to a dull, proud, cold, handsome man, whom she neither liked, nor disliked. Let it not be imagined that her character was therefore necessarily cold and heartless. She had been brought

up in the seclusion of her school-room. She had not been allowed to associate with other girls, for fear of contamination; she had read no books, that had not been previously perused with care by her mother or her governess. Her time had been divided between her masters, and the proper exercise for her health; but in these walks she had never visited the cottages of the poor, lest she might be exposed to infection, or hear tales of woe that might be injurious to the innocence of her pure unsullied mind.

The school-room was apart from the rest of the house, and she had never been permitted to leave it except at stated and appointed times. Nor were any visiters admitted within the sacred precincts to interrupt the course of her studies. When with her parents, she was treated with all kindness and affection, but she had nothing in common with them. She knew not their objects of interest, their friends were almost unknown to her except by sight, she could not enter into the subjects of their conversation, and when she came forth into the world, she had learned as many languages, read as much history, ac-

quired as many accomplishments, as any young lady of her age, and had reflected as little upon any subject that has to do with real life. She imagined, as many girls do, that marriage was as much the object of being brought out, as dancing is the object of going to a ball, and looking well, the object of dressing for that ball.

When, therefore, Lord Ellersville proposed to her, and was considered by her parents as an unexceptionable *parti*, young, handsome, rich, she accepted him calmly, dutifully, and without hesitation. She meant to love him, knowing it was right so to do, and she persuaded herself that she really did like him very much. In high life, romance is not the besetting sin of very young ladies. Their characters do not unfold, like Ondine, they do not find out they have a soul until it is sometimes too late. Matches, apparently the most worldly and heartless, are occasionally formed by those, in the recesses of whose hearts the warmest affections, the most disinterested feelings, are lying dormant. Often, very often, their minds are well regulated, their principles strong, and these affections, if they cannot find vent in love for their husbands, con-

centrate themselves on their children. But alas! too often also they lead to the most lamentable results.

Lord Ellersville unfortunately was not formed to attach such a woman as Maria. He was devoted to field sports. In August he repaired to the moors to shoot grouse, from whence he only returned when partridge shooting commenced, and later in the season he went to Melton with a perfect stud of horses. This was not flattering to a young and lovely woman. Her vanity was mortified. In the spring he attended the House of Lords regularly, although he never spoke, and his vote merely served to strengthen the government majorities. Women are alive to fame of all kinds, and if her husband had distinguished himself, Lady Ellersville was one of those who would have lived upon his glories, for there was a fund of loftiness in her nature which would have enabled her to make pride in her husband, supply the place of love for him. When with her, he was careless and indifferent, for having married at the instigation of his mother, in order that the honours of Ellersville might not become extinct, her principal

claim upon his affection, or rather his consideration, ceased, when the young heir was snatched by death from its doting mother.

There is something in maternity that opens the heart to all kindly emotions of every sort, and it was not till she lost her child, that Lady Ellersville first felt what a blank and cheerless existence was that, of the unloved wife, of an unloved husband. She then first owned to herself that she did not, could not, love the man to whom her fate was united, but that there did exist within her, warm and ardent feelings which now must never be called forth.

A fearful barrier is broken down when such a confession is made in the secret soul. Pride, however, was one ruling principle in her nature, and she resolved that no one should perceive that she imagined herself neglected, or that she felt mortified. She mixed in the world. She wished to show her husband that she had charms for others, and she gloried in the train of admirers, that the fascination of her person and manners attracted around her. She thought pride must ever secure her against any weak-

ness. Alas! pride is a poor substitute for principle. Walter had heard of her as the admired Lady Ellersville, who piqued herself upon her indifference, and upon her powers of attracting, without courting, the homage of the other sex.

He soon became one of her train, and almost as soon, tired of being only one among many, on whom she lavished the varied charms of her conversation. He could not endure to be thus confounded among the crowd. He wished to ascertain that she considered him as superior to the common herd of empty young men, and to do so he naturally put forth all his powers of pleasing. His eye was more animated, his jest more pointed, his political opinions expressed with more eloquence, when she was present.

Had any one said to him, you are leading a virtuous woman from the path of duty, he would have denied the imputation with horror. Yet such was indeed the fact. Scarcely a day elapsed in which they did not see each other, though without any preconcerted plan on either side; and the ball, the assembly seemed dull and

insipid at which he did not meet the lively, the agreeable, the lovely Lady Ellersville. He began to feel indignant that the man who was united to such a woman should appear so little aware of the treasure he possessed. He then wondered whether she had ever loved him, whether she had ever preferred anybody; whether, if circumstances had not prevented her indulging such a feeling, she could ever have liked him.

His thoughts became wholly engrossed by her; when she was present he had no eyes, no ears for any one else; and although he never breathed a word which could alarm the most rigid virtue, the tact with which all human beings are endowed upon that subject, gave her heart the delightful consciousness of being loved, though nothing was said which forced such a conviction upon her understanding.

The refinements of polished life threw a halo round the first approaches of vice. Of vice, which if it appeared in its own form would be recognised as such, and avoided with loathing; but it assumes the mask of all that is

harmless and engaging—innocent conversation, gay sociability, and does not throw off the disguise, till it has already made deep inroads on the peace and on the morals.

To the fallen and degraded, whom distress, misfortune, friendlessness may have driven to a life from which their conscience and their feelings often revolt, how wilfully, how wantonly criminal must the pampered minion of luxury appear, who errs in the midst of plenty, pleasure, honour! Alas! it is that very profusion, which gives leisure for the heart and the imagination to go astray. The lowly know not the dangers to which the great are exposed. Still less can the great estimate the temptations to which the poor and friendless are liable. Let each be lenient to their erring sisters! Nor let those who, united to the object of their choice are happy in the interchange of mutual affection, exult too proudly in their irreproachable character and untarnished reputation. Rather let them thankfully and humbly acknowledge the mercy, that has cast their lot where their inclination and their duty coincide;

which has spared them the misery of warm feelings sent back upon the ardent heart which gave them birth, and the temptation of meeting with kindness, where it would be sinful to indulge the emotions such kindness is calculated to excite.

Why should I trace the progress of events unfortunately of too common occurrence? Walter was the first whose eyes were opened to the nature of his own feelings; but Lady Ellersville, whose heart, under her guarded exterior, was teeming with all the affections which are doomed to form the joy and respectability, or the misery and degradation of, woman, at length made the fatal confession to herself. She would have avoided him, and sought safety in flight, but Walter was too little in the habit of self-denial quietly to relinquish the society he found necessary to his happiness. Had Mrs. FitzEustace been aware what were the dangers to which her son's morals and his welfare were exposed, how little would she have rejoiced in his accession to the Earldom of Sotheron, an event which occurred

about this period, and which promised to afford scope for those talents which were his mother's pride. She had scarcely allowed her heart to dilate with the pleasurable emotions from which even her chastened spirit could not defend itself, when she was doomed to a new and unlooked-for sorrow.

The assumed coldness of Lady Ellersville only excited and increased the ardour of Walter's passion, for he loved her with the uncontrouled vehemence which characterised all his feelings.

The sequel may easily be guessed! The moment came, when the confession locked in the secret bosom of each, was made to the other. Lord Ellersville at length became jealous and umbrageous. Her proud spirit could not endure to quail under the glance of a man she despised. To avoid suspicion, she plunged into actual guilt.

Oh! if those who headlong follow their own impulses could pause to contemplate the misery they inflict! What were the past sorrows of Eleanor FitzEustace to the agony she now en-

dured when her son, the consolation of her widowhood, the pride of heart, to whose future career she looked forward with high aspirations after fame and honour, whose name, when it was mentioned, made her faded countenance light up with a gleam of exultation, became a degraded and sinful man; that name avoided by her acquaintance, and only mentioned by her friends in a low, subdued, mysterious voice!

Those only who have felt the delightful, trembling, hopes of a parent, who have witnessed the gradual unfolding of the infant mind, watched the ripening intellect, revelled in the anticipation of future excellence, can estimate the full measure of wretchedness which now overwhelmed the unfortunate Eleanor.

Meanwhile were the erring pair happy? No! after the first wild tumult of mingled emotions had subsided, Lord Sotheron attempted to write to his mother. But many days elapsed before he could bring himself to finish a letter which he felt it possible to send to his virtuous, his devoted, his broken-hearted parent. From that moment began the punishment of their misconduct. He was not accustomed to con-

ceal his feelings, in order to spare those of another. Restless and agitated himself, he tore the unfinished scrawls to pieces; he paced the apartment with hasty strides, not remembering that every sign of uneasiness in him was a several pang through Maria's heart.

Fearful of being recognised, shrinking from the eye of her very menials, Lady Ellersville experienced all the tortures that persons naturally proud and susceptible, yes, and naturally virtuous, must endure, when conscious that every one has a right to look down upon them.

Under a feigned name they resided at an obscure watering-place, anxiously expecting the moment when the divorce should pass, and hoping that she might at least become the wife of Lord Sotheron before the birth of a child, whose illegitimacy would be a lasting reproach to them. Unfortunately, by some unlooked-for circumstances, the divorce did not pass till the following session, and a boy was born, in whose unconscious face its mother could not look, without a feeling of guilt towards the innocent child.

Lord Sotheron meanwhile was listless and unoccupied; he was never unkind, but his mode of life was little suited to an animated young man in the very flower of manhood, and he could not, indeed he did not often attempt, to veil his ennui. She was bowed down with humiliation; she could not exert herself. Where were all her brilliancy, her wit, the variety, the grace, of her conversation, which had so enchanted all around? She felt she was dull, and that he on whom her every hope depended would be driven to other society for amusement. She strove to be entertaining, but how different was that forced pleasantry from the gaiety of a mind at ease, inspired by the consciousness of success and admiration. He guessed her motive, and for a moment exerted himself to appear amused. But how different also was that forced laugh, from the admiring glance which once beamed applause at her every word, which unconsciously followed her every movement.

In wedded life there are a thousand common subjects of interest, little domestic concerns to be discussed; preparations for the receptions of friends to be arranged; there are a thousand

pleasing recollections of past scenes of enjoyment, and anticipations of the prospects of their children, which prevent the tête-à-tête from wearying those whose characters and tempers are really in unison. But Walter and Lady Ellersville had no friends to prepare for, none to talk of, in all the unrestrained confidence of intimacy — they could not revert to past scenes without recalling those from whom she was for ever divided; they could not retrace the first dawnings of their mutual affection, without reviving the recollection of errors over which they would gladly draw a veil; and then — they dared not allude to the future lot of their child, for that was a subject of unmingled pain to both.

CHAPTER III.

And is this eye with tears o'erfraught,
  To thine no longer known ?
This eye that read the tender thought
  Erewhile soft trembling in thine own ;
By thee, alas ! to weep since taught,
  And all its lustre flown ?

Unpublished Poems.

At length the divorce passed, and Maria became the wife of him whom she loved with increasing tenderness, for all she had given up for his sake only endeared him the more to her. Man, on the contrary, though he may feel kindness, pity, gratitude, to woman, for the sacrifices she has made to him, considers her as in some measure responsible for those he has made to her.

Maria was now for the first time to see Lord Sotheron's mother. Mrs. FitzEustace, though bowed down by this last heavy affliction, was

too gentle to be soured by it. She promised to receive her, when once she was really her daughter-in-law. She only wished to contribute, as far as in her lay, to the welfare or the comfort of the beloved son, who, though no longer the pride and joy of her heart, was still to her the most precious thing on earth.

What were Maria's feelings as she drew near the abode of that devoted mother, whose fate, already sad, she had so utterly blasted? when she thought of presenting to her a grandchild who might not bear the name to which the eldest son of Lord Sotheron ought to have been entitled? No village bells were ringing to greet their arrival, no old and faithful servants crowding the door to welcome their master's bride. She thought of her reception at Ellersville Castle. The approach was thronged with villagers, the air resounded with the chimes of the neighbouring parishes, the castle terrace was surrounded with the tenantry, the great steps were lined with servants, all eager to show attention to their new lady. She was then happy, thoughtless, innocent, she could then look back into herself without remorse

or shame, and she felt, as the carriage drew up at Mrs. FitzEustace's door, and as they waited till the servant answered the bell, that not all the fervour and depth of her devotion to Walter could compensate, even in this world, for the loss of self-esteem, and of respectability in the eyes of others.

They were ushered into the drawing-room by a grey-headed man, who greeted Walter with respectful but serious affection. He said he would let his mistress know. They heard doors open and shut rapidly, hurried steps in the passage, the whispering of subdued female voices, still Mrs. FitzEustace did not appear; and they felt that his mother had need to summon all her courage for the dreaded interview. At length she entered, and her subdued, mild, broken-hearted countenance, went more to Maria's heart than all she had hitherto experienced.

Mrs. FitzEustace embraced her son with the tenderest affection; she kissed Maria, she took her grandchild in her arms, she did every thing that kindness could prompt, but they saw the quivering lip, they heard the unsteady

voice, and Maria's shame and remorse nearly overpowered her. Mrs. FitzEustace asked some indifferent questions about the weather and the journey, and Maria answered it was hot or cold, the journey long or short, without knowing what she uttered. Lord Sotheron, anxious to escape from a position that was so unpleasant to him, left the room, and they remained alone. A few more attempts were made to keep up a languishing conversation, Maria longed to throw herself at the feet of Walter's mother, and there to breathe forth all her agony of self-accusation, and to implore her pardon, for the sorrow she had brought upon her grey hairs, but there was a gentle reserve about the grief of Eleanor that awed, while it touched, that repressed all outpourings of the heart, while it deeply interested, and Maria took refuge in busying herself over the baby till Mrs. FitzEustace proposed to show her her room.

When Maria at length found herself alone, she gave way to tears that were perhaps more bitter than any she had hitherto shed. She had wept for herself, she had wept her fault, she

had wept her degradation, but never did she feel that degradation so acutely as at this moment. Her sorrows appeared to her such guilty ones, that they revolted her; while Eleanor's, on the contrary, wore a character of holiness, of sanctity. And that she should have filled the measure of her bitter cup, that she should have crushed the broken spirit! oh! it was almost too much for endurance.

The dressing-bell rang. It is wonderful how much those who have lived in the world, and whose feelings may be least under the salutary controul of principle, mechanically submit to that of *les convenances* of society. She repressed her tears, she calmed her sobs, dressed herself, and went down to dinner with a composed voice and tranquil manner. The dinner was as uncomfortable as one might expect it to be, under the existing circumstances; the succeeding days were passed in the same restraint. The moment never came in which they alluded to past events, and although they all felt kindly towards each other, there was not the free interchange of thought which alone renders a domestic circle truly happy.

It was not till they had resided for some months under the same roof that the barrier of reserve between them was broken down.

Soon after the birth of a second boy, Maria was lying on her sofa, while the young Edward was playing on the floor. Eleanor caught the expression of anguish with which Maria gazed on the eldest; their eyes met, and that glance revealed to each all that was passing in the mind of the other. At that moment all coldness, all reserve, were broken through. Throwing herself at the feet of her mother-in-law, and hiding her face in her hands, Maria sobbed out, "Forgive me! oh, forgive me! pardon the ruin I have brought on your son, the disgrace I have brought on your grandchild! No—no! it is impossible! kind and gentle as you are, you must — you must hate me, as well as despise me."

Touched, and alarmed at this agony, Mrs. FitzEustace raised her, soothed her, bade her be composed. But having once opened upon the subject, she poured forth all the pent up feelings of remorse and shame, that had so long been consuming her. They mingled their tears,

and Eleanor's gentle words of compassion, and forgiveness, restored her to something like composure.

From this time, there was no thought of her soul hidden from her mother-in-law, and Mrs. FitzEustace's maternal partiality saw in the irresistible attractions of her son, an excuse for Maria's fault, which made pity almost usurp the place of blame. It became the mother's task to console her who had blighted all the prospects of that beloved son; for Maria saw and felt too well that the life of aimless, listless idleness, that Lord Sotheron led, was affecting his spirits, his temper, and his character; she knew and felt to her heart's core that her eldest boy would always have to struggle against the flaw in his birth.

By Eleanor's advice they resolved to pass some time on the continent, till the painful notoriety at present attached to their name had in some measure subsided, and it was not till after the lapse of two or three years, that they took possession of their magnificent mansion of Stonebury.

Many were the family discussions to which the arrival of Lord and Lady Sotheron gave rise. The gay wished to participate in the

society which they thought would probably be assembled at Stonebury; the easy and good-natured understood that Lady Sotheron had conducted herself with the greatest propriety since her present marriage, and were inclined to forget any past misconduct; the vulgar enjoyed the opportunity of protecting a person of rank and fortune. On the other hand, the rigid urged the unanswerable argument, that unless a decided line be drawn between virtue and vice, there must be an utter end of all morality in the land. They naturally were shocked that the woman who had abandoned all her duties, should be at the head of society, enjoying rank, fortune, and even respectability.

Alas! If they could have read the heart of her whose worldly prosperity thus excited their virtuous indignation, they would have found her as much an object of pity, as those who have erred should ever be, to those who need not shrink from the reproaches of conscience or the judgment of their fellow creatures. Not one of these visits passed without some occurrence, which, to a sensitive mind, gave exquisite pain.

Children are usually a great resource during

the formal quarter of an hour which precedes a dinner in the country, and on one of these occasions, a young lady in talking to the eldest boy called him Lord Stonebury. This touched Maria where she was most vulnerable, when the young lady's mother immediately addressing the younger boy by the title of Lord Stonebury, covered her with tenfold confusion. It proved that her story was all known, and all remembered, and she, who was once the high-bred, the self-possessed Lady Ellersville, whose manner of receiving her company had been the admiration of the most polished society, was awkward, hurried; she addressed people by wrong names, did not hear when she was spoken to; there was a restlessness in her eye, and a rapidity in her utterance, very unlike the careless grace with which, without appearing to do anything, she once contrived to put every one at their ease. She feared she was not civil enough, and a sensation of humility prompted her to change her seat for the purpose of addressing some one to whom she had not already spoken, — then a movement of pride made her spirit rebel at so courting vulgar people, who

would once have thought themselves honoured by a passing acknowledgment from her. This gave her manner an air of constraint. There was something out of keeping, and many wondered where was the charm of address which had been reckoned so bewitching.

On another occasion the conversation happened to turn on the comparative beauty of the Lady D——s. One person remarked, that she "had always thought poor Lady Anne's countenance the most attractive of all." "I never saw her," observed another, who had lately taken a place in the neighbourhood. "Oh, no! She married unfortunately, poor thing! and ran away with Captain B——. It was a sad business."

Maria's burning face betrayed her confusion. The lady had scarcely uttered the unfortunate words, when she recollected before whom she was speaking. She stopped short, and a dead silence prevailed. She tried hastily to speak on some other subject, but every one felt awkward, and her unassisted efforts again subsided into silence. Lady Sotheron, distressed at the allusion, was confounded at its being seized by

others, and the whole evening was to her one of painful endurance. At other times she suffered almost equally from the studious avoidance of topics that might in any way be applicable to herself. In solitude her reflections were all bitter, and in society something constantly occurred which brought her situation more painfully to her recollection.

Walter meantime found his home disagreeable. He was beset by people not of his own selection, and who were not in any way suited to him. He determined to repair to London, to attend the House of Lords, and to seek interest and excitement in the line, which he had often been told he was formed to pursue with success. Maria was delighted at this resolution. She felt that if he could fulfill an honourable political career, she should not be so guilty of having blasted his fate; his mother might once more be proud of her only child, instead of mourning in secret over his blighted prospects.

They went to London, and Lord Sotheron again mixed in the society he at once liked and adorned. His spirits revived, his eager temper

was on fire, and he gave himself up to politics with an ardour the more vehement from the state of indolent vacuity in which he had latterly passed his time. She was rejoiced to see those eyes again beam with animation, to perceive energy in every movement, instead of the listless languor she had so often deplored. She scarcely remarked that she passed hours, days, alone, so engrossed was she in his interests; and when he made a brilliant and successful maiden speech, she felt proud, nay, almost happy, and wrote to his mother with more confidence than she had ever done before.

Lord Sotheron soon became a person of some importance, and he was invited to all the political dinners of the party to which he had attached himself. He thought it necessary to give dinners in return—and now arose discussions which made Maria's situation more galling to her than ever. The wives of these great personages did not visit her, and how awkward to preside at one of these grand entertainments with no ladies to support her, except the two, or three, who from family connexions associated with her, but who were in no wise connected

with the persons whom Walter wished to cultivate. Her sensitive mind recoiled from the whole discussion.

She intreated him to give only men dinners; not to struggle after that which they could not accomplish, and she assured him she had rather remain in her own room, than go through the mortifications, and difficulties, that must attend her making one of the party. He but faintly opposed her resolution, for in fact, ambition had taken possession of his soul, and he blindly followed its impulses. His time was completely occupied with debates, committees, dinners, which became more and more frequent, and Maria sat in her boudoir, eating her solitary morsel, and hearing the bustle of the servants waiting upon the party feasting below. Still she would not let herself repine at his having at length found scope for his talents. She would not wish it otherwise, but she could not help feeling miserable.

She attended still more to her children. They were always with her, and in their infantine prattle she often found pleasure; but even from that source she occasionally drank

the bitter draught of shame. One day they had just returned from a walk in the square, where they had been playing with some young companions, when Edward said to her, "Mamma, why don't they call me Lord? That little boy in blue says, he is called Lord, because he is the eldest. Now, I am the eldest, and yet Charles and Emily are called Lord and Lady, and I am not."

This was more than she could endure. She tried to murmur something, but her lips refused to move, her tongue to utter. She blushed, she quailed under the innocent enquiring eye of her child. She hid her face in his curly locks, she drew him closer to her, she smothered him with kisses, she wept over him, she sobbed, till the child, frightened at the violent emotions he had so unconsciously excited, felt there was a mystery, and ever after avoided the subject with that precocious tact which children so often evince.

Another time he was reading a childish History of England, and when he came to a passage that treated of hereditary succession, he said, "Yes — the kingdom descends to the

king's eldest son, as papa's land will descend to me;" anxious, as children always are, to illustrate by some familiar example. She thrilled through every nerve, but she thought it would be too cruel to bring him up in this error, from which he must one day be painfully undeceived. She summoned up all her courage, and without daring to reflect on what might be his next question, she forced herself to utter, "My dear! you will not inherit your father's lands." There was a constrained solemnity in the tone which awed the boy. He felt he was on forbidden ground, and he said no more.

CHAPTER IV.

For I have drunk the cup of bitterness,
And having drunk therein of heavenly grace,
I must not put away the cup of shame.

SOUTHEY.

YEARS rolled on. Lord Sotheron was more and more engrossed in public affairs, and the time at length arrived when Maria regretted those days when he was unknown, and unnoticed, but when she at least enjoyed the society of him for whom she had sacrificed every thing.

Her boys went to a public school. It was not till they had been there for some time, that Maria remarked there was a great change in Edward. His spirits, which had been constantly and exuberantly gay, were now only occasionally elevated. His temper, formerly mild and even, was now sometimes stern and

morose; if his brother thwarted him, he yielded immediately, but it was with a sort of proud humility. Instead of asking the servants to mend any of the implements of his boyish amusements, and applying to them for all the various little services so often asked, and so willingly performed, he would pass whole days mending his own tools; he would walk off to the village to get his knife sharpened, and scrupulously pay for it; in short, there seemed to pervade every action, a desire not to put himself under an obligation to any one. He was tender to his mother, fond of his sister, kind to his brother; still there was something unsatisfactory in his manner.

His pursuits were solitary; he did not want the companionship of his brother; and Charles, in his turn, would say, "Oh! Edward goes his own way, so I shall go mine. "It sometimes occurred that both could not ride, or that both could not shoot, or that there was only one place in the carriage, on some excursion of pleasure. On such occasions, Edward invariably said he preferred staying at home. At length the feeling that was rankling in the

bosom of the elder boy was inadvertently betrayed.

Edward had seated himself next to his mother at dinner, when Charles said laughingly, "This is too bad, Edward; you sat by mamma yesterday; it is not fair play. Come, turn out!"

With a flushed cheek, and an angry eye, the colour mounting to his very temples, he exclaimed in a tone but little justified by the occasion:—

"I won't! I have as good a right as you to sit by my mother at least. From *this* place you shall not turn me out."

Charles answered, "Why, Edward, you are grown so crabbed, I don't know what is come to you; however, I shall have merrier playfellows than you, when I get back to school."

Maria more than suspected that Edward had learned the history of his own birth; and she also perceived that the indignant sense of honour, and the independent spirit, which if properly directed, might lead to all that is most brilliant and admirable, were likely, in Edward's unfortunate circumstances, to spoil a disposition naturally amiable and noble.

Oh! how painfully did it then strike her, that her fault was thus visited upon her children! She saw the probability of disunion between the brothers, and it was only by true and cordial affection that their relative situations could be sweetened to either of them. She reflected deeply and bitterly upon the subject. Profiting perhaps by the errors in her own education, she had long come to the conclusion that the best mode of fitting human creatures for the world in which they are to live, and the station they are to fill in that world, is to tell them the truth upon all subjects, and to make them acquainted with the feelings and interests of their parents.

On all other topics she had done so, as much as possible; but in this instance, could she herself be the person to lay bare her own, and their father's errors? And yet if Edward already knew the fact of his illegitimacy, it were better he should learn to view his mother with pity, than with contempt; better he should know how truly she repented her fault, than imagine she was hardened in guilt; better that Charles should learn his own superior pro-

spects in a manner that should open and soften his heart towards his brother. And then her daughter Emily! Would it not be cruel to leave her in ignorance of her mother's situation till she came out into the world, when the painful truth must be forced upon her in the most humiliating manner, by a thousand inevitable circumstances?

She confided her mental struggles to Mrs. FitzEustace, who almost constantly resided at Stonebury, and from whom she had now no hidden thought.

Eleanor kindly offered to spare her the painful task; but she recalled to her the restraint that had chilled their intercourse, while the one subject of strong and mutual interest had been avoided; and she also reminded her, how, from the moment they had poured out their hearts to each other, all coldness, all reserve, had vanished for ever.

"How necessary is it, then, that I, and my children, should understand each other's hearts! Yes, whatever it may cost me, I will tell them all; and if by suffering, guilt may be atoned, I shall thus, in some degree, expiate my offence,

for Heaven alone can judge how keenly I shall suffer!"

Lord Sotheron had been for some time absent, nor was he likely to return. His party had lately come into power, and he was eagerly desirous of a public situation of trust, for which his talents particularly fitted him. His absences were become so frequent, and of such long duration, that Maria had lost the habit of referring her every action to him.

Emily was thirteen, and Edward fifteen; when Maria one morning summoned them all three to her dressing-room. Her cheek was pale, her eye, though sad, was resolved. She called each to her side, and she imprinted upon each smooth open brow, a fervent kiss. Then clasping her hands, she uttered:—

"May God bless you, my children, and strengthen you and preserve you in that innocence which is the only thing to be truly and earnestly prayed for! May He in his mercy bless you! My children, the blessing of a mother is good for the souls of her children, let that mother's errors be what they may. Come nearer, dears. Let me hold your hands;

and you must promise you will still love me. I am going to confess to you, my children, the error; — yes, I will utter the word — the crime of my youth. I was a married woman when I first knew your father. But he to whom I was married did not care for me; perhaps it was my fault he did not — I will not throw any blame on him. My heart was desolate! Your father saw me unhappy, and he pitied me — he loved me. I forgot my duties, forgot the vow I had breathed at the altar, in the sight of God; I left the husband I had sworn to love, and gave the love which was his due, to another. This is a dreadful, a heinous sin, my children, and this sin did your mother commit! But you have been early taught to read your Bible, and you have there learned that there is more joy in Heaven over one repentant sinner, than over ninety and nine just men who need no repentance. Oh, blessed words! How many thousand thousand times have I read, and re-read ye! Ye alone have preserved me from sinking under the load of my guilt. Yes, my children, I have repented; deeply, earnestly, bitterly, unceasingly. I may truly say, my

sin is ever before me. Oh! if repentance can find mercy at the throne of Heaven, let it find mercy at your hands, my children! Pardon, pardon your erring mother!" and worked up beyond her powers of endurance, she threw herself on her knees at their feet.

They rushed to her, they kissed her, they raised her to the sofa, they soothed her, they wept over her, they lavished on her every most touching expression of affection, they assured her of their love, their respect, their veneration.

"Stop! stop! beloved ones. Do not let your tenderness to me blind you to the reality of my sin. Love me! Yes love me still, but I must not let that love confound in your young minds the distinctions between virtue and vice. I am not yet come to the end. I have to tell you how the errors of the fathers are visited upon the children.

"Even you, my Emily, know that unless parents are solemnly married according to the law of the land, the children do not inherit their name or their property, and alas! alas! you Edward, came into this weary world, before my former marriage was cancelled. Upon

your head are my sins visited. Yes! and upon your's Charles, and your's Emily, for you have a mother, whom you must not honour, for whom you must blush before the world."

"Oh, mamma, mamma," they cried at once, "we love you, we honour you! Oh! that we could prove how much we love you, — better than ever!"

"Thanks, thanks! my own dear, innocent, good children! And would you really do all you can to soothe my anguish, to lessen the keenness of my remorse?"

Edward exclaimed, "Oh, mother, don't talk so—anything—every thing!"

"Then listen, Edward! I have remarked your altered manner. I felt certain that at school you had heard some of the circumstances of your birth, and I resolved that from my lips you should all learn the truth, the whole truth. It was, if possible, more painful to imagine you hearing your mother scornfully spoken of, than to be my own accuser. Oh! my boy! if you knew the agony of self-accusation that racked me, when I saw you thus reserved and melancholy, you would have thrown off your gloom.

I know you would! Oh! Edward, in pity to your penitent parent, be once more your gay, ingenuous self. You know how dear you are to every one in this house. You need not wrap yourself up in solitary pride. If my children should not love each other, then am I punished indeed!" And she pressed her hands tight over her eyes as if to shut out the horrid picture.

Edward burst into tears, threw his arms round Charles, and gave him a warm, and heart-felt fraternal kiss.

"And you, Charles, who have bright prospects before you, as far as worldly prosperity tends to happiness, think whose fault deprives your brother of these advantages, and for my sake, love him, Charles, more dearly than brother ever loved brother."

"That I will indeed, mamma," cried Charles.

"My Emily! If you would honour your mother, prove to the world that she could guide your mind to the strictest virtue. Let your conduct be such as in some measure to redeem my fame!"

The effect of this scene upon her children was such as to repay Maria for all it had cost her.

The brothers were inseparable. Edward became cheerful, and he willingly accepted all the little kindnesses that Charles omitted no opportunity of offering him. In Charles, there was a tone of deference to his elder brother, which was very winning, and which went straight to the generous heart of Edward.

One fine winter's morning Mrs. FitzEustace and Maria were watching the two noble boys, as with keepers, dogs, and guns, they were before the windows preparing for a shooting expedition. They were talking and laughing joyously with each other, and Maria turning to Mrs. FitzEustace, with tearful, but beaming eyes, exclaimed, "I was right, dearest mother, was I not, to tell them everything? Painful as it was, it has had the desired effect. Oh! how can parents who have nothing to blush for, maintain a causeless and mysterious reserve towards their children! Perhaps, many a prodigal might have been prudent and thoughtful, if he had known how, for his sake, his parents were struggling to keep up a decent appearance in the world. Confidence produces confidence, and children would have the habit of communicating

each feeling as it arose, and while it was yet capable of being checked, or guided aright." And as she spoke, she thought if she had felt that tender, fearless, confidence in her parents, perhaps her mother might have read the guilty secret of her heart, and have guarded her against its fatal consequences.

The office which Lord Sotheron had so eagerly sought, was given to another, and there appeared in the papers a paragraph alluding to the disappointed hopes of a certain noble Earl, and the necessity that morality should be upheld by the private, as well as the public, character of those in high official situations.

This paragraph met the eye of the two persons to whom it could give the most acute pain. It crushed, it humbled Maria to the very dust. She felt she was, in truth, a blight upon her husband's prospects, and she sunk under the painful conviction.

Lord Sotheron returned to his home, humbled also, but soured and embittered. He was angry with himself for having condescended to solicit, indignant with ministers for having refused, and estranged from Maria, whom he looked upon as

the clog which must ever prevent his rising in the career for which he felt himself formed. Hitherto, although neglectful, he had never been unkind; indeed, on any occasion of illness or distress, he had been attentive and devoted; she had flattered herself that although often dormant, his affection for her was still all there. But ambition, like the love of gambling, when once it possesses the mind, gradually swallows up all other feelings, and he was now captious, sullen, he spoke sharply to her, seemed bored with what she said, and occasionally implied that she could know nothing of what was going on in the world. She suffered in silence. This was not a case in which open communication would be of any avail. When did a discussion ever call back to life extinct affection? Affection once extinct, what material had she to work upon? There were moments when she thought it hard *he* should be the person, in manner, if not in words, to reproach her for her error. At least that error was mutual, and she remembered the arguments, the entreaties, the vows, the oaths he had employed to lead her to the very step, for which he now despised her. But

oftener, far oftener, she found excuses for him in that heart where he was so dearly cherished; she reflected how galling it must be to a proud and eager temper to have sued in vain; she looked back with tenderness and gratitude to the many proofs of affection he had given her in former times, and she pitied, rather than resented his present irritation.

Mrs. FitzEustace remarked with sorrow the altered temper of her son, but her health, which had been of late declining, had in some measure communicated its languor to her mind. She was gradually fading away, but so gradually, that it was not till she was very near her end, that her son began to take alarm.

Extreme in every thing, he was angry with her for not having warned him of the state of her health. He reproached her for having allowed her sickness to creep on, without calling their attention to the alarming symptoms of which she was herself aware. She gently smiled, and told him death had no terrors for one, for whom life had no charms.

"If I had seen you happy—" she added, "but as it is, I look forward almost with im-

patience, to the moment of re-union with him from whom my heart has never for one moment been severed."

As Walter and Maria knelt by their mother's death-bed, as she blessed them both with her faint sweet voice, their hearts once more opened to each other, and they mingled tears of sorrow which to Maria were not wholly devoid of sweetness.

As she gazed on the marble brow, and the closed lids of that placid countenance, she envied the spirit that was at rest, the heart that was not torn by a thousand conflicting feelings, and she longed to be laid in the quiet grave beside her. Alas! she had not yet exhausted the varied sufferings awaiting one

> "Who, loving virtue, but by passion driven
> To worst extremes, must never, never more
> Honour herself—"

Yet Maria had been more fortunate than many under the same circumstances. She had not been deserted by him for whom she had sacrificed everything; on the contrary, he had made every reparation in his power. She had been kindly received by his family, she enjoyed

rank and riches, her children were dutiful and affectionate, no adventitious circumstances aggravated her wretchedness.

The miseries described in the preceding narrative, are simply those to which every erring woman is liable.

CHAPTER V.

"But guilt,
And all our sufferings?" said the Count.
The Goth replied, "Repentance taketh sin away,
Death remedies the rest."

SOUTHEY.

EMILY was nearly eighteen, and she was to appear in the world as became the daughter of Lord Sotheron. They went to London. Maria made up her mind never to accompany her daughter, even to the few places where she might be kindly received. She thought there was more dignity in voluntarily retiring, than in appearing occasionally at some houses, and consequently proving, that she was not seen elsewhere because she would not be admitted.

Invitations for Lord Sotheron, and Lady Emily FitzEustace flocked to the house, and Maria received the cards from the porter's hand

with a tightness of heart, a difficulty of breathing, at which she was herself surprised.—"Can I," she thought, "who have endured such real sorrow, be so moved by a contemptible invitation to a foolish ball?" But she blushed crimson, as she felt her daughter's eye glance over the card on which her mother's name was omitted.

However, she rejoiced that Emily knew the truth; that she had not now to learn it. The evening came, when the lovely Lady Emily FitzEustace was to make her *début* in the great world. Her mother presided at her toilet. She smoothed every curl, she arranged every fold. Her hands trembled, her eye was haggard, her voice was unsteady, but she fought hard, not to allow her emotion to be visible. She would not cloud the innocent young creature's anticipated joys.

Lord Sotheron was waiting below, and before they entered the carriage Maria wished to know, if he approved of his daughter's dress and appearance. As she held a candle that he might examine some ornaments he had just given her, he was forcibly struck by the contrast between

the glowing cheek, the sparkling eye, the fresh *parure* of the blooming young girl, and the neglected dress, the homely morning cap, and above all, the fearful expression of countenance of the mother. A pang of remorse shot through him, and he inquired if she felt ill, in a tone of unusual tenderness.

"I am quite well," she answered, hurriedly, and they went down stairs. She remained suspended till she heard their carriage drive away, when her over strung nerves gave way, and she flung herself on the sofa in an agony of tears. She could not go to bed. She felt it impossible to try to sleep while thus constrained to desert the natural duty of a mother. Sick at heart, she sat expecting her daughter's return, and listening to the eternal carriages rolling in endless succession to scenes where she could not be admitted to watch over her child.

At length she heard the growing sound of approaching wheels, and the clatter of the horses' feet stopping at the door. Emily was surprised to find her still up, but was hastening to describe all the brilliant scene she had witnessed, when her attention was arrested by

the woe-worn countenance, and swollen eyes of her mother.

"Mamma," she said, "I will never go out again. I see it makes you unhappy. These foolish flowers, these fine necklaces — how you must have suffered while you were decking me out in them! And I! giddy thing, only thought of the unknown wonders I was going to see. Oh, mamma! how cruel, how unfeeling of me!"

"My child, my child," interrupted Maria; "it is true I have acutely felt seeing you launched on the dangerous and stormy sea of life without my watchful eye to guard you. I should deceive you if I attempted to disguise my pangs of mortified affection, of mortified pride; but believe me, I should suffer far, far more, if I thought my fault condemned my innocent child to a life of seclusion. If I thought she was to be cut out from all society, because I have forfeited my own place in it. I am not so selfish! Mix with the world, dearest Emily, and trust me, that to see you and your brothers good and happy, can now alone give this aching heart one throb of pleasure;" and she pressed her hand to her left side, where she

had of late felt considerable pain and uneasiness; "and now, good night, my love, I do not feel quite well."

Habit did not deaden the keenness of her mortification. Every night when Emily returned home, Maria underwent the same ever new sufferings. To her sensitive feelings, which were morbidly alive to every the most indifferent circumstance, scarcely a day or an hour passed in which something did not occur which wounded them.

If in ordering a dress for Emily, the milliner made use of those expressions so common in the mouth of every *marchande de modes.* "On ne le porte plus." — "C'est la mode passée;" she shrunk into herself, and thought "Even the milliner is aware I am excluded from society, and thinks I can know nothing that is going forward in the world."

One morning a young friend of Emily's called on her at the moment when Lord Sotheron was leaving London to pass a few days in the country, and she thoughtlessly exclaimed, "Oh! what will you do, Lady Emily? You must go to the Spanish Ambassador's ball

to-morrow night, and who can you get to chaperon you?"

Maria could scarcely command sufficient composure to remain in the room, and to appear engrossed with the book which she had been reading.

It often happened that in some morning excursion, Emily was joined by one or two of the young men with whom she had become acquainted. On such occasions the duty of introducing them to her mother devolved on Emily, and she performed the necessary little ceremony with grace and modesty, but with a certain air of shyness and distress. Maria felt that in her case the usual order of things was reversed. She felt that Emily's acquaintance would look her over with curiosity; she felt that if any one was a serious admirer, his intentions towards the daughter might be influenced, by the disgrace of the mother being thus forced upon his recollection; she felt that Emily was shy, and she fancied she must feel ashamed of her.

In this manner all the mortifications of

the first years after her divorce were renewed with ten-fold bitterness. Perhaps the constant state of painful excitement in which she lived, combined with late hours (for she invariably sat up till Emily's return,) might have aggravated a disorder that soon after assumed a more serious character. Before the London season was over, she became so ill that Emily could no longer be induced to mix in society, but devoted herself to soothing her mother's hours of sickness. She had a constant difficulty of respiration, a gasping for breath, a palpitation at the heart, for which the physicians recommended quiet of mind and body. When they had left her one day after a long consultation, she smiled, and looking up at Emily, said,

"They cannot minister to a mind diseased. It is here, my child, here!" pressing her hand to her heart. "The canker has long been consuming me, and now it will soon have done its work. I wish your brothers were in London, for my end may perhaps be sudden, and I would not pass away without giving them my

blessing." Poor Emily communicated her mother's wish to Lord Sotheron, and Charles and Edward were summoned from college.

Lord Sotheron was constant in his attentions, and spared no pains to soften and alleviate Maria's sufferings. He had once truly loved her; and when he felt assured he was about to lose this devoted being, she rose before his imagination, beautiful, and brilliant, the cynosure of all hearts and eyes, as when he had first known her, and his conscience told him, he had himself blasted all he had so passionately admired.

One day Maria was much exhausted by a more than usually severe attack of palpitation, and they had moved her towards an open window. They were all anxiously attending upon her, and she gazed round upon the group with tenderness and thankfulness.

"I am better now," she said, "so do not look so much frightened, dear children. It is going off for this time. Still there is no use in our deceiving ourselves and each other. I have long felt pain and oppression, which I thought would one day prove fatal. But I bless a mer-

ciful Providence who has granted me time for repentance and for preparation, and now I bless that Providence who will soon release me from my life of penance.

"I trust that the time allowed me, has not been allowed me in vain. Each bitter pang that I have endured, I have considered as part of my atonement, and I have offered it up to offended Heaven. There is one pain I have been spared! one joy I have tasted! you have been all a mother's heart could wish — continue as you are. Be good, my blessed children—be good, and trust to Providence for the rest. Walter, in virtue alone there is true happiness! Is it not so? Dearly as I have loved you, and how dearly even you yourself can scarcely know, — Heaven alone, who knows how I have wrestled with my love, can know — dearly, devotedly as I have loved you, not for one moment, even when you seemed to love me with affection equal to my own, have I known happiness — happiness — that is only for the guiltless."

"*Seemed* to love you, Maria!" whispered Lord Sotheron in a half reproachful tone.

"I did not mean to say that, dearest Walter. Thank you for your past affection, thank you for your present tenderness. Oh! it is all here, Walter! that love of many years, is all here, in this breaking, this bursting heart, but I hope sanctified by our long union. If it is sinful to feel it on the threshold of the grave, Heaven be merciful to me!" and she clasped her hands. "Pray for me, my children, now, and pray for me when I am gone. Your innocent prayers will win me mercy! Pray for me! pray for me!" and she sank back exhausted. The state of excitement into which her feelings had been worked, brought on a fresh attack of palpitation more severe than the former, which was followed by a fainting fit. From this time she spoke but little, and before the close of the following day, her spirit, we will hope her purified spirit, passed from its earthly tenement.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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RECOLLECTIONS

OF

A CHAPERON.

VOL. III.

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RECOLLECTIONS

OF

A CHAPERON.

EDITED BY LADY DACRE.

NEW EDITION.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN.)
1833.

ELLEN WAREHAM.

Calantha.—Away, away, call not such passion love!
A man so loves his horse, his hound, his hawk,
For that these things to 's pleasure minister;
He 's proud to boast such peerless beauty his—
Does gloat upon it—would have others gaze,
And pine with envy. What 's this but self-love?
Now mark, Antenor! He who loves indeed,
With his whole soul! His study but to honour
His lady's name an hundred thousand ways!
His sole joy, her contentment; and sole sorrow,
Her disquiet. He with true devotion
Approaches her, as something pure and holy,
His bright incentive to high deeds. The beacon
To light his path to virtue and to fame!

Old Manuscript Play.

ELLEN WAREHAM.

CHAPTER I.

Ten amor el arco quedo
Que soy niña y tengo miedo.

Spanish Romance.

In a small but neat drawing-room, in the principal town of ——shire, Captain Wareham and his family were assembled at breakfast. Captain Wareham himself was sitting with the newspaper in his hand, his back half-turned to the breakfast-table, and his feet resting on the fender; Caroline, his eldest daughter, was presiding over the tea-pot; Ellen, the second, was patiently waiting till the tea *had brewed;* the two elder boys were

kicking at each other's legs under the table; the youngest daughter was strumming away at a most unmusical piano-forte; and the youngest boy was amusing himself by adorning the slate, on which he was supposed to be doing a sum, with specimens of the graphic art, in the shape of helmeted knights and galloping war-horses.

"Caroline," said Captain Wareham, "do not give me water bewitched, by way of tea, this morning, I entreat!"

"I hope it will be good, papa; the water does boil to-day."

Captain Wareham took his tea, and having added the cream and sugar, tasted it.

"Caroline, you have let the tea stand too long! You know I hate it when it gets that rough disagreeable taste."

"Shall I put in a little water, papa? It is very easy to make it weaker.

"No! there is no use in doing that. If the tea is once too strong, you cannot make it right by adding water.—Give me the toast."

Ellen handed him the toast.

"It is all cold and tough. I cannot eat it!"

"It has been here so long, dear papa; but you were so busy with the newspaper, I did not like to interrupt you."

"You know I hate cold toast!"

"Shall I ring, and ask for some more?"

"Ask for more! I never can teach any of my children, that people who are poor must conform to their means. One would think I was made of gold, to hear the wasteful manner in which you talk!"

"Shall I toast it afresh, papa?" interrupted Ellen; "that will make it almost as good as ever again."

"No, no! be quiet, child. How you pester me! Do you not see I am reading the newspaper? There is no possibility of understanding a word one reads, you all keep up such a clatter!"

George, who all this time had continued his attempts to reach Henry's feet, as they sat at opposite ends of the table, at length gave it a tremendous shake.

"Do be quiet, boys!" exclaimed Captain

Wareham, in a voice of thunder; "and do stop that eternal strumming at the piano-forte —give one some peace, Matilda!"

Matilda, delighted to be released, jumped up from her half-finished tune, and ran to assist James in his labours at the slate.

"Caroline, why do you set Matilda to practise just at breakfast-time?"

"Why, papa, you said Miss Patterson was to come at ten o'clock for the future; and you said Matilda should practise an hour before she came; so I did not very well know how to help it."

"Nonsense! You always contrive to do the disagreeable thing."

He turned round, and was again absorbed in the important intelligence contained in the newspaper; for at that time Buonaparte had just returned from Egypt, and the proceedings in France were watched by all Europe with intense anxiety and interest. The second dish of tea remained by his side, untasted.

After about a quarter of an hour, he turned angrily to Caroline, saying:

"Why on earth do you not send away the breakfast things? Nothing shortens the day so much, as letting the breakfast remain late upon the table—this is another thing I can never teach you!"

"I thought you might wish to drink your tea, papa," answered Caroline, timidly.

"I do not want any more; it is so horridly bad!" he replied. "And now, I suppose, we must have the weekly bills, and I must give you some money!"

Caroline's spirit sank within her. The first Monday in every month was to her a weary day; and she anticipated that this would indeed be black Monday, as papa did not seem to be quite well.

The apparatus for the morning repast was removed. Caroline brought the household book, and the bills, and presented them, one by one, to her father, who was horrified at the amount of each.

"Why, here is beef again!—there is no occasion to feed the whole family on beef! If the servants have their beef on Sunday, surely that is enough. You know, Caroline,

I can scarcely afford to live as I do, and yet it seems you become every day more expensive in your housekeeping."

"I am very sorry, papa, but you told me to have some luncheon in case the Jenkinsons called last Wednesday; and you have often said you hated cold mutton, and that it was painful to you that any one should imagine you were inhospitable; and I thought it did not make much difference, and there would be the cold beef, which always looks handsome."

"So, I suppose you mean to imply it is my fault that the bills are high. I am sure no man can spend less upon himself than I do! I wish you would tell me where to get the money, that is all!"

The entrance of Miss Patterson, a prim, middle-aged lady, who came for a few hours every day to superintend Matilda's education, put an end to the discussion. Captain Wareham paid the money without another word, took his hat and stick, and sallied forth to avoid the infliction of Miss Patterson, the music, &c.

Captain Wareham was a half-pay officer,

with a broken constitution, and a very limited income. He had taken up his abode in the county town, that his eldest daughter might have the advantage of going to the winter balls; his second, that of receiving some finishing lessons in singing from the organist of the Cathedral; his third, that of having a day-governess; and his youngest boy that of attending an excellent school, as a day scholar.

He was a dignified-looking man, very tall and thin, with a high pale forehead, light eyes and hair, and there was altogether something melancholy and gentlemanlike in his appearance. His connexions were good, his conduct irreproachable, and he maintained an uncomplaining reserve upon the subject of his pecuniary embarrassments, which gained him the respect and consideration of the surrounding squirearchy. Whether his difficulties on the score of money might not be the true cause of the captious temper which rendered his home any thing but a happy one, either to himself or to his family, is another question. In society he was courteous and polished, his daughters

were gentle and dutiful, and although among the gossip of a country town an unauthenticated rumour now and then prevailed that Captain Wareham was a tyrant at home, he upon the whole bore the character of an exemplary man.

Mrs. Wareham had died just as her eldest daughter had attained the age of womanhood, and upon her death the care of the younger children devolved upon Caroline. Caroline was by nature indolent and sweet-tempered. It was to her a most wearisome duty to inspect the bills, and to see that the lessons were prepared by the time the day governess arrived. She was pretty, and her very indolence gave her something fashionable in manner, — at least it prevented any thing approaching a bustling fussiness, which is in itself essentially vulgar. She was much admired by the beaux of the neighbourhood, though there is a vast difference between admiring, and proposing to, a pretty pennyless girl.

As she considered marriage the one and only means of escaping from a home and mode of life exceedingly distasteful to her, she did not discourage the admiration of those who paid

her any attention. Several had appeared to be deeply smitten, but still the magic words upon which her future fate rested, had never passed their lips, and she was gradually becoming hopeless and distrustful. Her second sister, Ellen, was now seventeen, and was to make her appearance at the next county ball.

On the morning after our opening scene, Captain Wareham was returning from his usual stroll, when, as he mounted the steps, a neat little damsel, with a milliner's wicker basket on her arm, tripped lightly down them: dropping a graceful coquettish curtsey as she passed. Captain Wareham wore a discontented aspect as he entered the drawing-room. "Caroline, was not that Miss Simperkin's girl whom I met at the door?"

"Yes, papa, she has been trying on Ellen's ball-dress for to-morrow night."

"And so you run me up bills at the milliner's, do you?"

"This is Ellen's first ball, papa," answered Caroline, in a deprecating tone, "and you know you are always annoyed if I do not look as nice as other girls, and so I thought you would

wish Ellen to make a favourable impression at first. I have the beautiful gauze my aunt gave me, and I felt sure you would not like to see Ellen less well-dressed than me."

"Ah, well! I suppose it cannot be helped. I do not wish people to pity you for being shabbily dressed. I hate to be pitied."

At this moment a carriage and four drove up to the door. Ellen ran to the window.

"Oh, Caroline! it is Lady Besville and her daughters: run and take off that black apron. Dear me! the room is all in confusion with Matilda's lesson-books. There, put away the slate, and the back-board."

Ellen inherited something of her father's sensitiveness to the *qu'en dira-t-on* of the world.

"I wish it was summer," whispered Caroline, "or that papa could afford us two fires."

The room was rendered tolerably tidy for the reception of Lady Besville, who always paid an annual visit to the Wareham family, although she was not in the habit of visiting the other country town gentry. It was a sort of tribute to the respectability of their conduct, and of their connexions.

Lady Besville was duly astonished at Matilda's growth, she admired the stoutness of James, asked Ellen if she enjoyed the thoughts of her first ball, and said all the sweet little nothings which are civilities and attentions, from the great to the little.

Captain Wareham pressed some luncheon upon her Ladyship;—she owned she was very hungry, having had a long drive. Captain Wareham rang the bell with a vigorous pull, as if he felt assured a sumptuous repast only waited to be sent for, and, in an easy and confident tone, desired the one footman, (who, if it had not been for his plush breeches and white stockings, would have been a foot-boy,) to bring the luncheon.

Caroline knew the servants had just devoured the last morsel of cold meat: she saw the look of blank dismay with which her father's order was received by John, and she sat uneasily in her chair wondering what would happen. She could not leave the room,—it would look so odd; and she scarcely knew whether to rejoice, or to grieve, when she saw her father depart, ostensibly in search of a pamphlet on the times,

which he particularly recommended to Lord Besville's perusal, but in fact, as Caroline believed, to take some energetic measures upon the subject of luncheon. She dreaded his coming to the knowledge of the unprovided state of the larder, and, on the other hand, she equally dreaded having her housekeeping brought to utter shame before strangers. Poor Caroline! she was not by nature a manager. She was meek and gentle, and, perhaps, if she had not been frightened, might have succeeded as well as her neighbours, but she always felt she should do wrong, and never ventured to do right. There is a certain portion of decision necessary even in the ordering of dinner, and choosing between a leg of mutton and a shoulder.

Captain Wareham, after a small delay, returned with the pamphlet, and he conversed with fluency and eagerness upon its contents. Ellen, meanwhile, had become tolerably intimate with Lady Harriet, who was also to make her first appearance at the approaching ball; and Caroline listened with a face expressive of much interest to the discussion upon the fates of nations, while she secretly

resolved in her mind what would be the cook's resource in this unforeseen exigency. The half hour which thus elapsed seemed to her interminable: she thought Lady Besville would be quite tired of waiting, and she saw her begin to fidget on her chair, and to look towards the window.

At this critical juncture Caroline heard the jingle of one glass against another, as John mounted the stairs. This delightful promise of a forthcoming repast of some sort or another, was to her ears as the horn of a German post-boy, when he approaches the town, to the benighted traveller, or as the tinkling of the camel-bells of a caravan to a solitary pilgrim in the desert.

The door opened — the tray entered — Caroline cast a trembling, furtive glance: to her delight and astonishment, she beheld a tongue, a fowl, a dish of puffs, some cakes, some fruit, and wine. She breathed more freely, and performed her part of hostess with ease and quietness. The Besvilles did ample justice to the meal, and departed impressed with the comfortable and respectable

manner in which Captain Wareham lived, the good-breeding of Caroline, and the good-humour and liveliness of her father.

But Caroline's troubles were to come. Captain Wareham reproached her for having no cold meat, and told her how he had been obliged to send, in one direction, to the eating-house to buy a cold fowl at twice its value — to the pastry-cook for some puffs — to the fruiterer's for some fruit, to conceal her bad housekeeping. "You would not have people go away from one's house hungry, would you? Though I am poor, I cannot submit to that."

Caroline knew that to remind him of what he had said the day before, would only increase his wrath, and she bore it in unreplying meekness, while she secretly wondered whether Mr. Weston was likely to be more serious in his attentions than Major Barton had proved.

The momentous evening arrived: Captain Wareham looked with paternal pride at his two daughters as he led them into the ball-

room — the fair and delicate Caroline, with her small but beautifully-rounded form, her regular features, and her alabaster skin,—and the tall and sylph-like Ellen, whose beauty was of a loftier character. Her straight and clearly-defined eyebrows, her broad white forehead, and her noble cast of countenance, were softened and subdued by a pensive grace, which rendered her appearance as interesting as it was striking. The full, white eyelids were fringed with long and black eyelashes, which almost swept her cheeks; and when she raised those eyes, there was a liquid lustre in the depth of their dark blue, which might have found its way to the coldest heart.

Mr. Cresford, a young and wealthy London merchant, was not one whose coldness rendered him proof against these same eyes. On the contrary, he was an impassioned and impetuous youth, who fell in love with Ellen at first sight, danced with her all night, sat by her at supper, and never left her side till he had handed her to her carriage.

The next morning, the sisters were pre-

paring to take their accustomed exercise, and Ellen had put on her common straw-bonnet, when Caroline remonstrated.

"It is quite fine—you may just as well wear your Sunday-bonnet to-day."

"This will do very well for the garden. I promised Will Pollard to help him to pot the geraniums for the winter."

"Surely, Ellen, you are not going to poke about in our little confined garden. Do let us walk into the town. There are all the people we met at the ball last night; we shall be sure to see some of them."

"But I promised the gardener to help him. You know papa cannot afford to have him more than three days in the week, and if we do not assist him a little, the garden can never look nice."

"Any other day will do just as well for your gardening. Now do, dear Ellen, let us take a good long walk; it will refresh us after the ball. I never knew you unwilling to oblige anybody before. Besides, I must go to the shop to buy some things for George, before he

returns to school; and I want you to help me. It is so difficult to give poor papa satisfaction. I am sure I do my very best, but I do get so wearied, and so worried at home, what with the housekeeping, and the lessons, and having to keep the boys' things in order, and never being able to do any thing right, that I want a little relaxation."

Ellen yielded, for she often pitied Caroline, who was decidedly not made for the lot which had befallen her. She put on her best bonnet, and the three sisters sallied forth. From the shop they walked along the river side, under the shade of some spreading elms, which made this terrace the favourite resort of the inhabitants of ——. They had not long been there before Mr. Cresford joined them.

He walked by Ellen's side, and any acute observer might have perceived, by the obsequious air, the flushed cheek, and the agitation of his whole demeanour, that his was not a common-place flirtation to kill an idle morning, but that his feelings were deeply interested. Ellen was shy and reserved, but

her reserve only increased the ardour of the passion which had so suddenly been awakened in his breast.

The next day Ellen could not be persuaded to extend their walk beyond their own garden.

"When Mr. Cresford is gone away, Caroline, we will walk wherever you please, but I do not like appearing to seek him."

"Why do you dislike him?" He is evidently smitten with you."

"I do not dislike him particularly, but I think I am more comfortable and happy, gardening with Will Pollard; and if I liked to meet him ever so much, I had rather die than appear to seek him, or anybody else."

"So would I, Ellen!" cried little Matilda, "when I grow up, I will be so proud! it shall never be said that I care for anybody."

"I am sure I should be sorry to do any thing forward," answered Caroline, "only one must take the air sometimes. Perhaps, however, you are both right, and I am sure I would not have any girl care for any man, till she is quite sure of him, and it is very difficult to know when they are in earnest."

CHAPTER II.

Cleanthes.—She 'll be a castaway—my life upon't.
Hermione.—Man argues from his fiercer will, nor knows
True virtue's quality in woman's breast.
My daughter, Sir, is virtuous, and virtue
Will to herself subdue e'en rebel Nature.
Had she been linked in love with one her choice,
She had been all soul, following her wedded lord
Through life's worst perils, frankly, fearlessly;
But matched, ere yet her young heart spoke, with one
She cannot love, she'll give her love to duty,
And cheerful, although passionless, perform it
Calmly, contentedly, nor ever dream
Of joys she must not know, and so pass on
Into the quiet grave. *Old Manuscript Play.*

MR. CRESFORD soon found some excuse for calling upon Captain Wareham, and in the course of his visit contrived to give himself a commission to execute, which justified another visit, another and another.

Captain Wareham thought the symptoms

were auspicious, and entertained some hope of honourably disposing of one daughter in marriage, but Caroline, profiting by her own experience, warned Ellen not to place any reliance on these signs of preference.

"You do not know the world yet, Ellen," she said; "you do not know how often the same sort of thing has happened to me. Remember Major Barton last winter, and poor Mr. Astell (however, I do think he would have proposed if he had lived). Talk to Mr. Cresford as much as you please, for, as my aunt says, 'nothing can come of nothing,' but do not let yourself like him, till he has actually proposed. Remember what I have already told you, a woman cannot guess whether a man is in earnest or not, till he does propose."

Ellen thought her sister was very prudent and sensible, and she resolved to follow her advice. Nor did she find the task a difficult one.

Mr. Cresford, although handsome, was not pleasing, and the very vehemence of his love rather alarmed and confused the young Ellen.

This was the season of gaiety at ——, and there were frequent dinners and parties among the canons and prebendaries. Caroline regularly asked Ellen every night, whether Mr. Cresford had proposed, and for ten days Ellen answered, "No, not quite." Caroline continued her warnings, and Ellen her watch over her heart.

At length Mr. Cresford waited one morning upon Captain Wareham, and in good set terms asked him for his daughter's hand. Captain Wareham accepted his proposal, and informed Ellen of the event.

There did not seem to exist a doubt in any of their minds as to what her answer would be. The whole question had been from the beginning, whether or not he would come to the point, and the lady's privilege of saying no, seemed in that family to be utterly forgotten. Ellen was too young and too timid to discover it for herself, and she found herself the affianced wife of a man, whom a fortnight before she had never seen, and whom, during that fortnight, she had been taking care not to prefer.

The affair was decided. The lover was all rapture — Captain Wareham all satisfaction—Caroline all surprise that Mr. Cresford should have behaved in so gentlemanlike a manner, not keeping her sister in any uncertainty, but setting her mind at ease at once. She was too good-natured and too affectionate, to feel any thing like envy, but she wished Major Barton had behaved in the same noble manner to her.

Ellen was surprised not to find herself happier on so quickly arriving at that result, which had been the object of her sister's wishes for six years and a half. But she was afraid of Mr. Cresford. He was easily hurt, easily offended, he was expecting, and jealous; he would not allow her to go to any more of the balls; he scarcely liked to see her acknowledge, much less shake hands with, any of her former acquaintance. Ellen was subdued, rather than elated, by her approaching nuptials. Caroline one day remarked upon her unusual seriousness and asked her if she and Mr. Cresford had not had a lovers' quarrel.

" Oh, no," replied Ellen, " but it is difficult

you know, sister, to love a person all at once, particularly when one has been trying not to like him at all. However, I dare say I shall soon, when I am more accustomed to him. It is not easy to do just right, for a girl is not to like a man till he proposes, and then she ought to love him very much as soon as ever she is going to be married to him."

Mr. Cresford was the only son of wealthy parents, and was accustomed to find his wishes laws to those around him. His father had died when he was barely twenty-one, and had left him at the head of a thriving mercantile house.

He fell in love with Ellen at first sight,—he proposed at once, had been accepted, and, following the course of his own impetuous passions, was now eager that the wedding-day should be fixed. Captain Wareham had no wish to postpone it, and in three weeks more Ellen left the paternal roof as the wife of Mr. Cresford.

She was astounded and confused at the whole thing; she had not been allowed time to become attached to him, even if he had been all a maiden's imagination could picture in its

happiest day-dream. But there was a want of refinement in the headlong course of his love, a want of consideration; in fact, there was a selfishness, which did not win its way to the heart of a very modest, very young, and very sensitive girl.

In London she found herself surrounded by all the luxuries of life. She had an excellent house, a handsome equipage. He showered presents upon her—jewels and trinkets without number,—each new ornament daily invented to satisfy the caprice of the idle and the wealthy. His delight was to see his lovely bride's beauty set off to the utmost advantage. But she must be decked out for him alone; he was annoyed if any other eyes seemed to dwell with gratification upon the loveliness which he had taken such pleasure in adorning.

Cresford had a large circle of acquaintance, not, perhaps, in the first style of fashion, but among gentlemanlike and agreeable people. Persons with intellects as well cultivated, minds as refined, manners as essentially well-bred, as can be found in the highest coteries, though perhaps one of the initiated might per-

ceive the want of that nameless grace which more than compensates for a certain coldness frequently pervading the most select *réunions*. The very fashionable are exceedingly afraid of each other. They may sometimes have been accused of insolence towards those whom they consider a degree below themselves, but their worst enemies cannot say they do not stand in awe of each other. There was in Ellen a gentle dignity, which, combined with her extraordinary beauty, would have caused her to be distinguished in any society: of course, therefore, in this she could not but excite notice and admiration. Yet proud as Cresford was of her, anxious as he was to show to the world how lovely was the bride he had chosen for himself, he never returned from a party or an assembly without a cloud on his brow, and something restless and suspicious in his manner.

She began to fear he was constitutionally jealous. Others came to the same conclusion. Young men in all ranks of life find peculiar pleasure in tormenting a jealous husband; and not all the shrinking modesty of Ellen's manners could prevent their openly showing the

admiration they felt. She hoped, by the extreme quietness of her behaviour, to give him no cause for disquiet; but though she might avoid affording him any opportunity of blaming her, she could not prevent his being irritable and violent whenever they had mixed in any society.

She would gladly have led a very retired life, she would fain have dressed herself in a homely and unpretending style,—her whole object was to escape notice: but such was the nature of his love for her, that he was not satisfied unless her charms were set off by every ornament; and his fear of being laughed at was such, that he would not give occasion for saying he shut up his beautiful wife. Ellen was consequently obliged to mix in the world, and she learned to set a strict watch over her very looks, and to be tremblingly alive to the *on dits* of society. She, as well as her sister Caroline, was timid in her nature; she was, moreover, shy and reserved upon all subjects connected with the feelings, and she dreaded lest his jealous fancies should ever openly burst forth, and bring blame or ridicule on

either of them. She had at times stood in awe of her father, but the fear she felt of her husband was more constant and unceasing.

Still she had been accustomed to humour and to yield to a captious temper, and she considered that it was the lot of women to bear with the caprices of men. She frequently reminded herself of the gratitude she was bound to feel towards him, for having taken her portionless from her father, and for the unbounded command of money which he allowed her. She excused his jealousy on account of the passionate love he evinced for her, and she concluded the two feelings were necessarily inseparable.

His generosity on the subject of money afforded her one great pleasure, that of making various presents to her sisters, and of assisting her family in divers manners. He took her eldest brother into his mercantile establishment, and she rejoiced in having thus been the means of relieving her father from one care which pressed heavily upon his mind.

They had been married about four years, and Ellen was the mother of two lovely chil-

dren, when the peace concluded between France and England, at the period when Buonaparte was First Consul, enabled the English to flock abroad. To Mr. Cresford it was a matter of great importance to conclude some arrangement with foreign merchants. For this purpose he made up his mind to leave his wife for a month or two.

It was, however, most unwillingly that he tore himself away: it seemed as if some presentiment warned him not to depart. He postponed his journey from day to day, from week to week. At length his correspondents became impatient, and the day was fixed. He took Ellen and his children to reside with Captain Wareham during his absence, and she willingly promised to live in the strictest seclusion till his return; but it was with a melancholy foreboding that he bade her adieu, and he returned again and again to take one more last lingering look at her beautiful face, as though he felt he might never again thus gaze on it.

CHAPTER III.

—— Love's sooner felt than seen :
Oft in a voice he creeps down through the ear ;
Oft from a blushing cheek he lights his fire ;
Oft shrouds his golden flame in likest hair ;
Oft in a soft, smooth cheek doth close retire ;
Oft in a smile, oft in a silent tear ;
And if all fail, yet virtue's self will lure !

PHINEAS FLETCHER.

CAROLINE was now seven-and-twenty, and she had many histories to pour into Ellen's ear of the deceitful conduct of sundry naval or military heroes, and briefless barristers. One old nabob had laid his fortune at her feet, but he was too disagreeable, and she preferred even the eternal household bills, and the last finish of Matilda's education, and the in-

creased peevishness of her father's temper, to being the wife of Mr. Pierson.

But there was a person — a most amiable man — a clergyman, who had long appeared to prefer her — who did not pay her compliments, but who often visited them in their quiet home, and who admired her for qualities which had never attracted the notice of the captains nor the majors — her patience, her sweet temper, and her absence of selfishness. She owned to Ellen that, if circumstances ever enabled him to come forward, she should rejoice in the chances which had prevented her marrying earlier.

In the course of a short time Ellen had an opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with Mr. Allenham, and she thought her sister would indeed be a fortunate woman if she should ever become his wife.

To Ellen his intentions seemed manifest; but Caroline, who had so often been deceived, scarcely ventured to believe what she so much wished: all pleasure in the society of others was, however, completely gone, and she sighed to fix the affections which had so long

been without a resting-place, upon a person for whom she could feel entire respect, and in whom she could place complete reliance. Caroline was now as little inclined to mix in the world as Ellen, and Mr. Cresford would have been satisfied, if he could have witnessed the retirement in which they lived.

He had not been gone more than a month, when the sudden renewal of hostilities gave rise to the greatest alarm among those who had friends upon the Continent. Still, no one was prepared for that gross violation of all the usual courtesies between civilized nations, of all the charities of human life, which astounded the European world, when Buonaparte detained the harmless traveller, the peaceable merchant, and doomed them to drag out the best years of their lives in weary, unprofitable imprisonment at Verdun, or in the fortress of La Bitche.

At first, no one could believe that this would last; they all looked to a speedy termination of their captivity. Ellen received letters from her husband, who was among the *deténus* at Verdun, which filled her with pity and alarm. His jealousy, which could not

be completely lulled when his virtuous and modest wife was constantly under his own eye, now raged like a devouring flame. He threatened to commit some crime which could only be atoned by his life, rather than endure the living death which consumed him. He braved the authorities — he would not accept his parole — he would not preclude himself from attempting every means in his power to again see the wife whom he adored. His letters were written in a state of mind bordering on distraction. In vain Ellen described to him her quiet mode of existence, entreated him to wait with patience till he could return in health and safety to his family, and promised faithfully to continue in the seclusion which he had prescribed. She communicated to him her intention of taking a cottage near her father and sisters, where the children might have the benefit of country air, and where she might be in some measure under the protection of her father, without joining in the society of the town.

The other partners in Mr. Cresford's house were now obliged to transact the business.

All that could be done was to await the events which time might bring forth, and meanwhile to take every opportunity of transmitting to him funds which might enable him to exist in such comfort as might be found within the walls of a prison.

Ellen never deviated from the line of conduct which she had marked out for herself. She felt perfectly confident that her husband would soon return, and she so dreaded what might be his anger if he heard of her having joined in any, the most innocent amusement, that she never left her home except to visit her father, and she never received any one except her own immediate relations. She shrank from the appearance, or the suspicion of the slightest impropriety, with as much sensitive horror as many would from any actual breach of decorum.

The even tenor of Ellen's monotonous life was one day most agreeably broken in upon by the entrance of Caroline, who, with a face of joyous mystery, made her appearance at her sister's cottage immediately after breakfast.

"I have such news for you, Ellen. You

have been right all along, and Mr. Allenham has proposed. He came to dinner yesterday, and told papa that his uncle's friend, Lord Coverdale, had presented him to the living of Longbury, and that he might now look forward to possessing a competency, and that he had long been attached to me; and then he says that the house is a very nice one, and that he is to remove to it from his curacy in about six months.

"But you do not tell me what answer you have given him," replied Ellen, smiling.

"Oh, Ellen, do not laugh at me; it would be affectation in me to pretend I am not very, very happy at the prospect before me. You know well enough that I have long preferred him to any one, but you cannot guess how ardently I wish I had never before fancied myself in love. All that has gone before seems to me now like a dream. My former likings have been nothing compared to this. Still I would give the world that my heart was quite, quite fresh and pure; that I could have given it to him wholly and solely. I envy you, Ellen,

having married so early that your feelings had never been tampered with, as mine have been."

Ellen was surprised at the warmth with which Caroline spoke, and thought in her heart that she had never felt all this for Mr. Cresford. Caroline resumed,

"I wonder how a being so good, so superior, so excellent as Mr. Allenham, can have ever found any thing to please him, in such a poor weak frivolous creature as I am! I do feel so grateful to him! And I am sure if the devotion of my life can render me worthy of him, I may deserve him in that manner, though I can in no other."

Ellen was astonished at this burst of feeling in her sister. She had seen her, as she believed, in love before, that is to say, she had seen her pleased and flattered by the attentions of men; she had seen her ardently desiring to get away from her home, and she had seen her unhappy when a flirtation ended in nothing; but she had never before seen her love, with all the devotion of which an affectionate heart is capable. A real true attach-

ment exalts and refines the mind, and Mr. Allenham was a person with whom no one could associate without becoming better.

The meekness and forbearance with which Caroline bore the eternal worry of her father's temper, the asperity of which had increased with years, first attracted him; he admired her beauty, (for a woman of seven-and-twenty, provided she enjoys good health, is as pretty as ever she was,) and her evident pleasure in his preference, which, when it is accompanied with modesty, proves an almost irresistible charm to most men, combined to fix his affections. Her kind manner to all inferiors, and her gentle attention to any of the poor with whom she was brought in contact, satisfied his reason that she would make the best of wives for a clergyman. Nor was he mistaken in his expectation.

But Captain Wareham, whose disposition inclined him to look on the dark side of every picture, now felt somewhat unhappy at the thoughts of losing the daughter who had been so long accustomed to his ways; although he had often been bitterly disappointed at Caro-

line's failing to make a good establishment; a disappointment which he had been at no pains to conceal, and which did not contribute to make her own, fall more lightly upon the poor girl.

"I suppose you must marry Mr. Allenham, Caroline! but what is to become of me?" he one day said, in a desponding tone. "How can a man see to all the details of a household, and the boys, and every thing?"

"Why, papa, you always said I was but a bad housekeeper," replied Caroline, who, in her new-born happiness, and brightened prospects, had found a certain degree of courage, and sometimes ventured to reply half playfully to her father's lamentations—"You will do all the better without me, I dare say."

"No, no! I shan't! You have been a good girl, Caroline; and I shall not be able to do at all well without you. You will all marry, and I shall be left alone in my old age."

"Why, papa," interrupted Matilda, "I have heard you regret a hundred times that Caroline did not marry; and say that it preyed upon your mind to think that we were unpro-

vided for; and that if we were but married, you should be quite happy."

"In the mean time, my dear papa," said Caroline, "Matilda can take my place. She is seventeen now, and I was not older when my poor mother died."

"Ah! but she is not so steady as you were! I cannot manage you, Matilda, as I can Caroline," answered Captain Wareham, in whose estimation Caroline had risen wonderfully, now he was going to lose her.

"Well, then, I will manage you, papa, and that will be much best," replied the blunt and light-hearted Matilda, who was not easily either daunted, or vexed. "I am so glad Caroline is going to marry that dear, good Mr. Allenham, that I shall not mind casting up those abominable bills. But I will tell you what, papa, you must not scold me as you do Caroline—I shall never bear it as she has done."

Caroline looked at Matilda, and tried to silence her, but without effect. And strange to say, Captain Wareham would bear from Matilda jokes, and even lectures, which he would never have endured from her elder

sisters. The fact was, that Matilda had a high spirit. She meant no harm; she did not mind a sharp word; and she gradually obtained a sort of mastery over her father.

The marriage was not to take place till Mr. Allenham was settled at Longbury, but all things proceeded placidly and cheerfully with the Wareham family, except that the letters which Ellen received from Mr. Cresford were more and more distressing. They were written in a state of dreadfully low spirits. He complained of mental and bodily miseries. Still she was little prepared for the shock which awaited her, when one morning she read in the papers an official return from the depôt at Verdun, and among the deaths she saw the name of Charles Cresford, Esq.!

CHAPTER IV.

And such the colouring fancy gave
To a young, warm, and dauntless chief,—
And as a lover hails the dawn
  Of a first smile, so welcomed he
The sparkle of the first sword drawn
  For vengeance and for liberty.

LALLA ROOKH.

Buscas en Roma a Roma o peregrino
  Y en Roma misma a Roma no la hallas,
  Cadaver son las que ostentò murallas
  Y tumba de sì propio el Aventino.

SONATA DE QUEVEDO.

THE shriek which Ellen involuntarily uttered brought her maid to her assistance. Her father and sister were sent for, and soon arrived to support and to console her.

Though she had never been able to return the passionate love which her husband had evinced for her; though she had never loved him as she was capable of loving, still she was

dutifully attached to him, and she mourned for him with sincerity and truth. She expected to receive some parting word, some last injunctions, from one who had been so fervently devoted to her. But nothing of the kind ever reached her. She had no friends among the *detenus* to whom she could write, and she was obliged to rest contented with no farther details of the melancholy event, than the report of Colonel Eversham, who had been one of those who followed his remains to the grave, and who had soon afterwards effected his own return to England. He told her that Cresford had made various and desperate attempts to escape, which had all failed, and that his friends attributed his illness to mental agitation, as he did not seem to labour under any particular or positive complaint.

She heard with some satisfaction, that his remains had been decently deposited in the Protestant burying-ground without the town, and that a considerable number of the most respectable of his fellow prisoners had attended his funeral.

She grieved sincerely for his untimely fate,

and she felt it the more from the belief that his passion for her, and the jealous feelings which he could not master, had, in all probability, hastened his end.

By her marriage settlements she was entitled to a handsome jointure, for poor Cresford was noble and generous with regard to money, and did not dole out the jointure of the wife according to the fortune she brought, but proportioned it to his capabilities of providing for her. The partners preserved a share in the business for her son, and her daughter was also amply portioned.

Ellen continued to live in the pretty cottage in which she had for some time resided. After a short delay the marriage of Caroline and Mr. Allenham took place, and all things resumed the even tenor of their course. Ellen found pleasure in the society of her children, whose opening intelligence rendered them each day more capable of becoming her companions, and she devoted herself to the pleasing task of leading their young hearts and minds in the right way.

At the end of the first six months of her

widowhood she paid a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Allenham, and it was a cordial to her heart to see poor Caroline, who had always been frightened and subdued at home, the joyous creature she now was. Her adoration of her husband knew no bounds: she thought him the best, the cleverest, the wisest of human beings. Her loving heart had at length found its proper resting-place, and her humble service and devotion would have made any man, except Mr. Allenham, appear in the light of a tyrant. But he was so gentle, and so kind, he smiled so gratefully at the little attentions which she incessantly paid him, he so habitually preserved towards her the sort of polished deference with which a man should always treat a woman, (in manner, at least, though he need not the more yield to her in deeds and actions,) that Ellen began to think it was possible for matrimony to be a much happier state than she had found it.

It was not long after her arrival at Longbury, that she was one day walking with her sister and her children in a retired green lane, which was nearly bowered over by the trees on

each side, when a gentleman on horseback approached. A widow in her weeds is always an object of some interest, and the horseman was wondering who that graceful creature could be, —he was watching the sportive boundings of her children, without attending to his own path, when a bough knocked off his hat just as he was about to pass, and was trying to ascertain whether the face corresponded with the form he admired. The little boy ran to pick it up, and advanced fearlessly towards the horse. Ellen turned round, half-alarmed for her child. The stranger leaped to the ground to receive the hat, saying at the same time, "Thank you, my fine fellow; you are a brave boy."

Ellen looked up with a pleased smile at the commendation of her darling George, and the stranger thought he had never in his life seen so beautiful a vision as that of the young widow with her close cap, her marble forehead, her straight-marked eyebrows, and those lustrous eyes, which gleamed so softly from beneath the hanging crape of her widow's bonnet.

He bowed with profound respect, remounted his horse, and rode on.

He longed to look back, but there was something so serenely pure and holy in the expression of her countenance, that he felt it would be almost sacrilege to betray even common admiration.

Caroline, whose career as a country-town beauty had made her somewhat alive to the glances of passers-by, could not help saying to Ellen, "That gentleman seemed quite struck when you turned round: I saw him give a start of surprise, and the colour came into his face."

"Oh, Caroline, how can you talk in that manner? There is something horrid in the notion of a widow exciting any feeling but pity." Ellen's delicacy shrank from such an idea, and they proceeded on their way in silence.

The stranger was a visiter at Lord Coverdale's, and at dinner he mentioned having seen this lovely widow in the green lane. "Oh, it must have been Mrs. Cresford," said Lady Coverdale: "she is our clergyman's sister-in-law, and they say she is very handsome. I

am dying to see her, but she never appears when I call on Mrs. Allenham. Her husband was one of the *deténus*, and the poor man died six or seven months ago in France."

Mr. Hamilton left Coverdale Park the next day, but

> "Those eyes of deep and most expressive blue,"

came between him and his midnight dreams

> "Oftener than any other eyes he ever knew."

Ellen returned to her cottage, where she still continued to reside, devoting great part of her liberal jointure to the assistance of her father, and to the advancement of her brothers in their various professions. The eldest was active and industrious, and was, through her means, enabled to become a partner, though but to a small amount, in the concern.

The first year of Ellen's widowhood had more than expired, and she again visited her sister and Mr. Allenham. She had changed her mourning, and etiquette no longer required that she should persevere in her seclusion.

She now accompanied the Allenhams when they dined at Coverdale Park, and all who met her were struck by her beauty and at-

tracted by her manners. Though her countenance still retained its habitually pensive expression, a smile would now occasionally light up her features, and he must have been a cold critic who could perceive any fault in the perfection of her loveliness.

One day when they arrived at Coverdale Park, Ellen found herself greeted with a bow of profound respect, and a smile of recognition, by a tall, distinguished-looking man, of whom she had not the slightest recollection. She acknowledged his salutation in the polite, half-doubting manner which is usual on such an occasion. Lady Coverdale immediately introduced him as Mr. Hamilton, and added, that he had returned from a solitary ride last year, quite enchanted with her noble boy, who had so fearlessly brought him his hat, under the very feet of his horse.

Ellen remembered the circumstance, and the name of Hamilton fell on her ear as being connected with a romantic history, not common in these unchivalrous days.

Mr. Hamilton, when scarcely twenty, had taken his only sister to Naples for the recovery

of her health. After having watched her gradual decline with tender and almost feminine attention, he had committed to the grave the remains of his only near relation, and found himself, without any tie, alone in a foreign land, at the moment when Buonaparte's invasion of Italy had awakened the love of liberty, which, though slumbering, was not totally extinguished in the souls of a few of her sons. With the true English spirit, which considers as brethren those engaged in the struggle for freedom, he felt warmly for that lovely land—

> Italia a cui feo la sorte
> Dono infelice di beltà !

On several occasions he fought as a volunteer among the Italians, whom, in the enthusiasm of youth, he venerated as the descendants of the ancient Romans, passing over in his imagination the many centuries during which the national character had been degraded by submission to foreign powers. He forgot that the natives of the soil had for ages past allowed themselves to be mastered and controuled by hireling troops of strangers, and hoped

that if once restored to independence, they would rise regenerate from their ashes.

He had formed an ardent friendship with a young Italian, Count Adolfo Melandrini, who was in command of a small squadron of troops. He acted as a sort of aide-de-camp to his friend, and fought by his side with all the generous impetuosity of his character. The star of Buonaparte, however, was in the ascendant: neither Melandrini's nor young Hamilton's heroism could do more than rouse the spirit of those immediately around them.

Many of the states had been compelled to purchase an armistice by the sacrifice of their treasures of art. Melandrini's indignation knew no bounds. His national pride was touched in the tenderest point, and in a skirmish which occurred shortly afterwards between his squadron and the advanced guard of the French, in which his dispirited men were on the point of yielding, he dashed with headlong desperation into the midst of the enemy's troops.

Hamilton, who loved his friend with pas-

sionate devotion, and regarded him as the one being in whom the spirit of the olden time still survived, watched over his safety with almost religious veneration.

They both performed prodigies of valour; but at length Melandrini sank covered with wounds, and faint from the loss of blood. Hamilton stood over the body of his friend, defending it with the energy of despair, and firmly resolved that while he retained life, it should never fall into the hands of the foe. The troops in the mean time rallied, and, returning to the charge, drove back the enemy. Hamilton was found still protecting the almost lifeless form of the Italian chief, which he never quitted for a moment, but bore in his own arms back to the entrenchments. His efforts to save his friend were, however, unavailing: Melandrini had found the death he sought, and only survived long enough to express his gratitude to Hamilton, whose gallant feat was soon noised abroad, and reached the ears of many who were not personally acquainted with him.

The surrender of Mantua put an end to all

idea of further resistance. Italy allowed herself quietly to be plundered of all her most precious and holy ornaments, even including the famous image of our Lady of Loretto; and Hamilton in disgust abandoning the wretched land, returned to his own free and happy country. His paternal estates were considerable, and he resolved to devote himself in private to the welfare of those who were dependant upon him, and in public to the preservation of that liberty which he believed to be the basis of all that ennobles man. He distinguished himself in Parliament, at first, perhaps, by too great vehemence, on the liberal side; but his own clear head and maturer judgment soon tempered what might have been extravagant in his enthusiasm, and at the age of nine-and-twenty he was as practically useful a member of society, as he had originally been a romantic advocate of liberty.

Ellen, who long ago had accidentally heard the history of his achievements, looked on him with a certain degree of respect, as the hero who, to her girlish imagination, had realized the stories of Paladins of old. It was with plea-

sure, therefore, that she found herself seated by him at dinner.

His appearance and his address did not disappoint her. His flashing eye seemed formed "to threaten and command;" his athletic form might well, single-handed, have kept at bay a host of common men! while she could imagine that from those expressive lips might flow streams of eloquence to sway the listening senate. Still he was peculiarly simple and straight-forward: with all his fame about him he had a frank manner, as though what was said by him, carried with it no more weight than if it had been uttered by the most undistinguished individual in the room. Yet every thing he said was well said; all showed reflection, reading, sound judgment, and refined taste. He was, in all respects, so superior to any one with whom Ellen had ever yet been thrown, that he appeared to her a being of another order.

The enthusiasm which we have described as being a leading feature of his character, although tempered by judgment in political

matters, was still all there; and the impression produced by the first sight of Ellen in her weeds, was not weakened by further acquaintance. The lightning of her smile, when usurping the place of her usually pensive expression, reminded him of the days of youthful romance, when he and his friend Melandrini used to study Petrarch together, and reading of the "lampeggiar del angelico riso," would picture to themselves what must have been that Laura, who could render the poet,

> Si da se stesso diviso
> E fatto singolar da l'altra gente.

He now thought, if she had resembled Ellen, there was nothing to marvel at in the poet's long and hopeless devotion.

During the two years which she had passed in retirement, she had read a great deal; and the education which she had thus given herself, had tended more to cultivate her mind than all the accomplishments with which governesses cram the common run of young ladies. The more he saw of her, the more he became con-

vinced that the qualities of her head and heart fully corresponded with the loveliness of her person.

Lord and Lady Coverdale found their most agreeable friend, Mr. Hamilton, vastly more willing to prolong his visit than usual. He seemed much struck with the excellence of Mr. Allenham's opinions upon the subject of the poor-laws, and he frequently walked to the Parsonage, to discuss the subject with him.

The eagerness with which Mr. Hamilton accepted their invitation to repeat his visit, made them begin to suspect that the youthful widow had more to say to the attractions of the Parsonage, than Mr. Allenham and the poor-laws. Still, though he evidently admired Mrs. Cresford, there was nothing which could justify any reports. He was so afraid of alarming her by any indiscreet avowal of his preference, that he continued merely to seek the society of the family in general.

Caroline, however, who was not so very delicate upon such subjects as her sister, could refrain no longer.

"Well, Ellen! I suppose now you have been seven months out of your weeds, I may venture to say that Mr. Hamilton admires you? and it is my belief, though I am not apt to place much reliance on men in general, it is my belief, he intends to propose to you."

"Oh no, Caroline! he has never said any thing like it." But Ellen's heart beat quicker, and the colour mounted in her cheeks.

"Yes, yes! you think so too! You are blushing ten times more than when poor Mr. Cresford proposed." (Caroline always disliked Mr. Cresford, for she was exceedingly afraid of him!)

"Hush, Caroline! Do not speak so of my poor husband! He was very fond of me; and nothing in the world should ever induce me to do any thing that was the least disrespectful towards his memory."

"Well, but you are not bound to remain a widow from the age of three-and-twenty, for evermore!"

"I am not out of mourning yet, Caroline."

No more passed; but this conversation made Ellen appear more conscious, and less at her

ease in Mr. Hamilton's presence, than she had previously done. From this sign he gathered hope.

The remarks of friends, the quizzing of acquaintances, the reports of the world, greatly accelerate matters when there already exists a real preference, though they often completely nip a slight one in its bud. There is a particular moment at which they fan the flame, and a previous one at which they blow it out.

CHAPTER V.

What voice is this, thou evening gale,
That mingles with thy rising wail,
And as it passes sadly seems
The faint return of youthful dreams.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

MR. HAMILTON'S manner became more and more marked, and before the expiration of his second visit to Lord Coverdale's, he one day took courage and spoke his sentiments to Ellen.

She received his avowal with all the confusion of a girl who, for the first time, hears expressions of love addressed to her. It was that now, for the first time, she felt the passion herself. She could not deny her preference, and he was made happy by hearing from her

own lips that she esteemed him, that she believed she could be happy as his wife.

But she persisted in a resolution to see him no more till the two years of her widowhood had expired, and till then not even to correspond with him. He thought her delicacy rather overstrained — he thought her almost prudish — but a man does not love or value a woman the less for erring on the side of decorum, especially when he is confident he has undivided possession of her heart; and the speaking eyes, the trembling hand, the faltering voice, all assured him that such was the case.

She made him promise to confide to no one their engagement, and he tore himself away, to get through the four months which intervened, as best he might. He almost repented having spoken to her at all, and at moments doubted whether the delightful certainty of being loved, quite compensated for the loss of her society.

She, on her part, half repented of her decision in banishing him, and quite repented of her prohibition to correspond. Her affec-

tion for him increased rapidly in absence. This is frequently the case with women. When in the presence of the person they love, reserve and modesty prevent their freely giving way to what they feel, but in absence they dwell without fear on every word and look, and the imagination supplies food to the feelings.

Ellen consulted with herself whether she should impart what had occurred, to her sister, and, upon the whole, she thought it best to do so. It seemed unkind to conceal such an important circumstance from one who took so tender an interest in all that concerned her, and, moreover, she should have some one to whom she could expatiate upon the perfections of Mr. Hamilton.

Caroline was half angry at not having been at once let into the secret, but she was so pleased at the prospect of her sister's enjoying such happiness as she now knew, that she soon got over her little vexation.

As Ellen expected, she proved an invaluable confidante in one respect; she listened with delight to any tale of love; but in another respect she rendered the task she had imposed

upon herself more difficult, as she was constantly arguing with Ellen upon the overstrained delicacy of sending Mr. Hamilton away for the next few months. But the more Ellen longed to break it, the more firmly she adhered to her determination. She accused herself of ingratitude towards him who was the father of her children, in feeling so very happy as she did, and she resolved to pay this tribute of respect to his memory.

The four months elapsed. Ellen had remained all this time with her sister, and it was to Longbury that Mr. Hamilton returned, when the time of his probation was over.

If Ellen's passion had increased in absence, Mr. Hamilton's had not cooled, and never were two people more thoroughly attached, more romantically in love, and what, in the long run, conduces still more to lasting happiness, more entirely suited in disposition, than Ellen and her future husband.

Their approaching marriage was now declared, and Lady Coverdale rallied Mr. Hamilton upon his thirst for information concerning the poor-laws.

Captain Wareham, who was an affectionate father, although an irritable man, rejoiced in the bright prospects of his daughter, and he was much gratified by the connexion. Mr. Hamilton's situation in life was such as to render his alliance eligible to any one, in however high a station; and to a man who had been reduced by poverty below his original position in the scale of society, it was peculiarly satisfactory.

The marriage was to take place at Longbury, and after the delays necessary for settlements, &c. the day was fixed. Mr. Allenham performed the ceremony. Her father gave her away. There was no pomp; Ellen wished to have the whole quiet and unostentatious. Deeply as she was attached to Mr. Hamilton — confident as she was in his love for her, much as her reason, as well as her heart, approved of the step she was about to take, a vague dread came over her as the day approached. Sounds as of other days were ringing in her ears. At times she almost fancied she heard the cathedral bells

of her native place, the chime of the Minster clock striking the quarters.

Who has not, without any concatenation of ideas which he can trace, when dropping asleep perhaps, or when plunged in a dreamy reverie, felt as it were the vibration of well-known sounds, and with effort roused himself to the recollection that he was far away from the home which was thus brought to his mind?

On the eventful morning, the full deep swell of the cathedral bells, which rang out so sonorously on the morning of her first marriage, seemed to make themselves heard through the merry peal of the three or four tinkling bells which were all the boast of Longbury church.

As Mr. Allenham pronounced the words, "Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," that sound again rang in her ears—a mist came over her eyes—she fancied it was Mr. Cresford's hand in which her's was placed, and she fainted in her husband's arms.

CHAPTER VI.

For contemplation he, and valour formed ;
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace ;
He for God only, she for God in him.

MILTON.

THE last few words of the ceremony were quickly hurried over. Ellen was supported into the vestry, where she quickly recovered ; and the circumstance of a bride's fainting was not an event of such rare occurrence as to excite much surprise.

Mr. Hamilton's place was situated in a lovely country on the borders of Sussex and Surrey. Hanging woods, extensive oak copses mixed with birch, sandy lanes, hedges which are enlivened by large hollies with their glossy leaves and their red berries — wild patches of heath, studded with juniper bushes

—fern and innumerable wild flowers in the shaws and dingles—banks blue with violets, and dells yellow with primroses, are the characteristics of that most enjoyable part of England.

Belhanger, which was the name of his place, was in the Elizabethan style. A spacious hall, in which was an immense fire-place, surmounted by the antlers of some patriarchal stag, communicated with a large low oak dining-room, and through some smaller apartments to a drawing-room, which was hung with tapestry, and adorned with beautiful oak carving; the crossings of the beams in the ceiling were ornamented with wooden rosettes, in the most antique taste, while the rest of the room was provided with all the essentials requisite for modern comfort. A broad and massive staircase of black oak led, as is usual with buildings of that period, to a gallery on the upper floor, which extended the whole length of the south front, and which, with its two fire-places, and its innumerable windows of all shapes and sizes, admitting every ray of sun, was one

of the most delightful winter apartments imaginable.

The exterior of the mansion was as irregular as the most ardent lover of the picturesque could desire. It was built of grey-stone, and composed of gable-ends of every possible angle. As its name indicated, it was built upon the side of a hill, which had originally been covered with hanging woods. The woods had been partially cleared away near the house, and a sloping lawn led down to the small but romantic deer-park in the valley.

Ellen thought Belhanger the very *beau ideal* of an English manorial house, and, if she had not been too much in love, and too happy in the affections of such a man as Mr. Hamilton, to find room in her heart for emotions that were not connected with him, she would have thought the possession of such a place as Belhanger an additional pleasure.

The poor people, too, were a more primæval race than those who have not lived in that part of the world would expect to find at so short a distance from the metropolis. The bright

blue smock-frocks which are there the common dress of the men, and the red cloaks which the women still wear, gave a picturesque appearance to the peasant congregation as they trooped out of church, and wound down the steep road, by the beech-crowned knoll.

Ellen was charmed with all she saw, but perhaps she would have been equally charmed had her home been less perfect in itself, for she had that within, which would have made a cottage appear to her a palace—a desert a paradise.

The judicious kindness of Mr. Hamilton to her children, the eldest of whom was now six years old, gave him still another claim on her affections and her gratitude. He counselled with her on the best course of education, the proper method of training a boy's mind, and entered into the subject with all a father's eagerness and anxiety. Ellen rejoiced that she had given her son such a protector, and looked forward to his making, under such guidance, a useful and an exemplary member of society.

Mr. Hamilton found in Ellen new charms,

new virtues, each succeeding day. She was one of those shrinking and sensitive creatures who cannot put forth half their powers of pleasing except in the intimacy of domestic life, and under the fostering hand of kindness. Before her first marriage she had been but a child, a timid frightened child — while the wife of Mr. Cresford, although adored by himself, he had been so fearful of her appearing too attractive in the eyes of others, that she had acquired the habit of trying to glide through life unobserved, in order to avoid any ebullitions of jealousy on his part, rather than of attempting to shine as an agreeable person. She was astonished and delighted when she saw her husband's expressive eyes follow her as she spoke, and gleam on her with kindly pride when others seemed to admire her.

Life was to her a new state of existence: not that she had hitherto been an unhappy person; she had always repeated to herself how much cause she had for gratitude: but the inward dancing of the heart she had never before experienced, and she often said to her husband, "Algernon, you make me too happy.

This cannot last; something must happen: I do not deserve to be so blessed above the rest of womankind."

He would reply with a smile, "Do you fancy, Ellen, you are the only woman whose husband loves her?"

"No, but I am the only woman in the world who am loved by you. Am I not?" she added, with a playful glance of entire confidence in his devotion.

When Parliament met, they repaired to London, and she then moved in a sphere vastly more elevated than that to which she had been introduced as Mrs. Cresford. But she had so much native grace and dignity, that she did not appear to be transplanted into a new soil, but rather to be now restored to that which was natural and congenial to her.

She had the rapture of hearing her husband spoken of with respect, and of seeing him treated with deference, by every one. By his own party he was looked up to as one of its most influential members, more from the weight of his personal character than from that of his

property and situation, although they also were of considerable importance. By his opponents he was considered as the one fair man, who, though decided in his own opinions, was ready to render justice to the uprightness of those who differed from him. There can be no condition of life happier than that of Ellen at this moment, none more respectable in the scale of human beings, than that of the wife of an Englishman of unblemished reputation, who holds a distinguished position in the Senate of that nation whose laws and constitution have been the admiration, and the model, of nearly every civilized country in both hemispheres.

Ellen again became a mother, and the birth of a little girl, if possible, cemented more strongly the bond of union between herself, her husband, and her children.

Nearly two years had now elapsed since she had become the happy wife of Mr. Hamilton; and he had for nearly two years enjoyed the society of the lovely and devoted woman for whom his affection daily increased, as her valuable qualities continually opened upon him.

She was adored by all around. The poor showered blessings upon her name whenever it was mentioned,—their richer neighbours had nothing but acts and words of kindness to record of her. Her eldest brother took every opportunity that his avocations allowed him, to run down to Belhanger. Her father, when with Mr. Hamilton, seemed to lose his captiousness; for there is a magic in very high breeding which renders any ebullition of temper almost impracticable. Matilda, who was become a fine showy girl, often passed some time with her sister Ellen, and had profited much by her example and advice.

Mr. and Mrs. Allenham were at this moment in the house; Lord and Lady Coverdale, and their daughter, had just arrived, and some other persons, political friends of Mr. Hamilton's.

Lady Coverdale had been telling Ellen she thought her the most fortunate woman in the world; she had been speaking of Mr. Hamilton, whom she had known from his infancy, in terms which even Ellen thought worthy of the theme, and had been saying how happy

she should esteem herself if she could ever see her daughter blessed with such a husband, and possessed of such a home; Algernon's friends had been gaily complimenting him upon his good taste, and his good fortune, and declaring they had sufficient discrimination to appreciate such a woman, if they could only have the good fortune to meet with any one at all resembling Mrs. Hamilton, when, one morning at breakfast, Ellen received a letter from her brother, enclosing one directed to her as Mrs. Cresford, and addressed to the house in London which she had formerly inhabited.

The post-mark was foreign, and there was something in a letter addressed to her by that name, which struck her as being so strange, that she did not open it; but, folding it again in her brother's envelope, she waited till she could retire to peruse its contents. She continued to perform her part of hostess at the breakfast-table, and told herself it must be a begging-letter,—from some one, perhaps, who had known Mr. Cresford at Verdun.

Still the letter haunted her, and she could

scarcely smile at the gay jests which passed round the breakfast-table, or listen to the news and gossip contained in the correspondence of the other members of the society. The outside was so covered with post-marks, and various directions, that she had not remarked in what sort of hand the name was written; and she quietly took it out of the envelope, just to see if it did look like a begging letter. Her former name always made her shudder, she could not tell why; and she had often reproached herself for the feeling, as an unkind and ungrateful one towards the memory of him who was gone. It was that strange instinct which had made her so quickly put this letter aside, and it was with an unaccountable trepidation that she again drew it forth to examine the hand-writing. She looked and looked again, till her eyes swam. It was very like the writing which was only too familiar to her. It was,—it must be his writing,—she could not be mistaken; only it was impossible,—quite impossible. Yet it might contain his last behests, which had, from some cause, never been delivered before. She could not

open it. She hastily concealed it, and turning deadly pale, she sat, scarcely conscious of what passed around her, till the last person had been helped to his last cup of tea.

She longed to know the contents, but there came a sickness over her heart, which made her postpone the dreaded moment. At length the company rose one by one, and straggled towards the windows. She summoned all her might and walked steadily to the door —she sought her own boudoir, and seating herself upon the sofa, she again unfolded the envelope,—she again gazed on the outside — she had not yet courage to break the seal.

There was something dreadful in thus receiving the dying injunctions of one husband, one who had loved her, too, so passionately,— in reading the ebullitions of his vehement affection, when she was the adoring wife of another. She felt as though he were about to speak to her from the grave.

She looked at the post-marks. There were upon it, in various coloured inks, Gratz, Vienna, Dresden, Magdeburg, Hamburgh. No

Verdun postmark! How strange! Wonder, terror, conquered all other feelings—she tore open the seal—it was indeed his own handwriting!—the date, Gratz, June 1808.—What could it mean? She looked at the end—it was his own, very own name!—it was addressed to her! It began, "My beloved wife, my own Ellen!" She could read no more; the letter dropped from her hand, and she fainted on the floor.

She was in this state, when Mr. Hamilton, alarmed by her paleness at breakfast, sought her in her boudoir. He raised her from the ground, and calling her maid, soon succeeded in restoring her to herself—To herself? No! She could never again be what she had been!

She gazed around with wild and haggard eyes; then motioning the maid to leave the room, and watching, with agonized fear, till the double doors were both closed, she screamed rather than said,

"He is alive! he is alive! I am not your wife, Algernon! I am not yours!" and she threw herself into his arms—she clung to him—she clasped her arms around his neck, with

desperate energy, as if she thought thus to rivet the tie she felt was severed.

"Ellen! dearest Ellen! my own gentle Ellen, are you raving? You must be ill! What is the matter? You really frighten me!" he added, attempting to smile.

"Look there, Algernon! there it lies! I have only read the first line, and would to Heaven I had died! Oh! if I could but die now, with my head on your bosom, — your arms around me, — my eyes fixed on your's! Dearest, dearest Algernon! I love you better than any thing else in the whole world — better, ten thousand times better, than myself! Words cannot express the thousandth part of the agonizing love I feel for you! and it is all a crime! Look there!—read that!" and she pressed her hands against her eyeballs, as if to exclude light and consciousness.

This burst of passion was so unlike his retiring Ellen, whose affection, though evinced by every action of her life, implied by all she said, had still seemed frightened back into her heart, if in any moment of tenderness she was called upon to couch it in actual language,

that Mr. Hamilton was lost in astonishment! In dread and wonder he took the letter in his hand—he saw the beginning—he looked at the date—he staggered to a chair, and exclaiming, "Merciful Heaven!" he, too, remained stupified, unable to utter, and scarcely to think, or to comprehend the extent of the misfortune which had befallen them.

At length reason in some measure resumed its sway, and he suggested, "May it not be a forgery? Are you sure it is his hand?" A momentary light flashed athwart her mind; she seized the paper, and they sat down together to the perusal of that letter, on which their fates so completely hung!

CHAPTER VII.

Son ilusion mis dichas
Son realidad mis penas.

It was with difficulty that Algernon and Ellen could fix their eyes upon the paper: every thing swam before them. They read in silence the following letter—with what feelings may be better imagined, than described.

My beloved wife, my own Ellen,

"You must have been astonished at not hearing from me the result of the desperate attempt to escape from Verdun, of which I informed you. It succeeded! so far, at least, as getting safe out of that horrible dungeon, disguised as one of the mourners at my own funeral, according to the plan I hinted at in

my letter by Maitland, and which he promised to describe to you more fully when he reached England. I made my way across the Rhine into Germany; but I found the examinations so very strict, and the officers at the custom-houses so exceedingly suspicious, that I fancied I should be safer if I advanced farther into Germany, and tried to work my way to Hamburgh.

"I was, however, almost immediately seized as a spy. My ignorance of the language was supposed to be a feint, and I was passed on, from authority to authority, from governor to governor, till I believe they began to think me a person of great importance.

"I was at length cast into a prison at this place, and here I have now languished more than four years.

"I did not venture to write to you while wandering in France. All letters being opened, they might have led to my being traced and identified; and from the moment I was in the power of the Germans, I was not allowed the use of pen and paper, lest there might be some

hidden meaning in any thing I might despatch to England.

"I have now endured four years of mental anguish, such as man has seldom survived. There hangs a mist over some of the horrible years spent in this abode of misery. The wretches who drove me to desperation, treated me as a madman for resenting their cruelty, and I found myself, at one time, pinioned in a straight-waistcoat!

"Was it not enough to madden a cooler head than mine,—to gall a calmer heart than mine, to be thus severed from the creature one adores,—to know one's lovely wife, left lonely and unprotected, in the bloom of youth, amid all the temptations of this corrupt world? Oh, Ellen! I shall go mad if I think of that! But you are virtuous, Ellen!—Yes, yes—If there is virtue in woman, it is in you. And yet—Five long years of absence! Oh! you will have forgotten me. You cannot have loved me, and me alone, in all these years! Oh God! if you should have loved another! My brain goes round! Be faithful to me, Ellen, as you

value my reason, and your own welfare here and hereafter.

"But I am altered, fearfully altered. I am grown grey; I am twenty years older than when we parted. But I love you, Ellen; I love you with more ardour, more burning, maddening fervour, than when first I bore you, in your maiden bloom, from the home of your childhood.

"Write to me, my love, my wife, my own, own blessed wife! Your letter will reach me in safety, if you inclose it to the new governor, who is a kind-hearted man, and has given me permission to bid you do so. He pities me. He will stand my friend. He promises to forward a petition, which I am now drawing up, direct to the Emperor, and a ray of hope has dawned upon me. I may yet return to you, my Ellen, and to my children—

"In life and in death,

"Your adoring husband,

"CHARLES CRESFORD."

Ellen and Algernon spoke not—moved not. They sat transfixed—they did not venture to

raise their eyes to each other. Neither could entertain any doubt of the authenticity of the letter. It would be folly, worse than folly, to utter what neither could believe. They who had been all the world to each other—they, whose love had been so pure, that angels might have looked down from heaven, and smiled upon it—what were they now? They dared not think.

At length Ellen murmured, in a low and almost choked voice—

"Is he my husband, Algernon? Does the law say he is my husband?"

"Ellen, do not make me speak my own doom."

"It is enough!" she said, "and my child is—" she paused for a moment, and, after a short struggle, continued,—"is illegitimate!"

He was silent.

"Oh, merciful Heaven!" she screamed, "it cannot be true!" and she started from her seat with a wild look of hope. "It is a dream! Tell me so, Algernon, my own Algernon, my husband, tell me so. Speak to me!" and she threw herself on her knees at his feet, with

clasped hands, and beseeching eyes, looking up in his face.

He lifted her from the ground, and whispered,—" We can fly, Ellen. There are other lands than this. There are countries where we may be beyond the reach of British laws; where we may have the clear blue sky of heaven above us; where Nature pours forth her treasures to man with a bounteous hand; where we may live in freedom from the trammels of human institutions, but bound by the most sacred ties—Our own vows of eternal constancy, which surely have been registered above."

" Live with you, as your mistress! No, never, Algernon!" and she drew up her slender form to its full height, and stood the very personification of female purity and dignity. " Never, Algernon! Any thing would be more tolerable than to have you cease to respect me."

She seemed to have regained her self-command. An almost supernatural strength for a moment inspired her.

" Now what is to be done? What is it our

duty to do? But oh! the shame, the dreadful shame, of being exposed to the world as having lived for two years in sin."

At this moment the voices of the children were heard in the passage; they flung open the door, and came bounding joyously into the room with the wild flowers they had gathered in their walk. The sight of them softened and overcame the mother,—she burst into a flood of tears.

"They are his children," she exclaimed, "and he will take them from me. I know he will—Whichever way I turn, fresh horrors surround me!"

The poor little things, astonished at their reception, stood aghast. Mr. Hamilton hastily bade them leave their mother, told them she was not well, and hurried them out of the room.

"Ellen, dearest Ellen," he said, and approached her. He took her hand, when she started away.

"You must not touch me, Algernon! It is a crime. You say yourself I am his wife, and he is coming home. Algernon," she said, in a clear low sepulchral voice, speaking very slowly,

"I cannot be forced to live with him again. No law can compel me to do that. Tell me the law,—let me know the truth."

"I cannot say exactly: we will inquire. Compose yourself: let us do nothing rashly. Perhaps he may never return,—perhaps he may not live to return: we do not know."

"But I am not your wife?"

"This letter may still be a forgery."

"No, no, it is too true! and I am not your wife," she repeated, with the accent of utter hopelessness.

He stood in silence: he could not say she was. He endured agony equal to her's, except that he did not feel the guilt and the remorse which were added to all her other sufferings. They remained silent till she could endure it no longer. "Algernon, no law can be so cruel as to separate us: it is impossible. After all, we were lawfully married in a church: no one forbade the banns,—no one answered the awful adjuration, 'Let him now speak, or ever after hold his peace.' Yes, it must be that we are lawfully married. We are, are we not? Say so, my own Algernon, my husband?" and she

wound herself round him, and looked up in his face with all the winning tenderness she could put into those melting eyes. "I am your wife, your wedded wife, am I not, dearest?" and she tried to smile, a sweet, sad, heart-rending smile.

This was too much for poor Hamilton. He took her in his arms, he pressed her to his bosom. "You are my own Ellen, my life, my love, the joy of my heart; without you life would be intolerable."

"I am your wife, dearest; say so,—in pity say so!"

"Yes, yes, you are! In spite of ordinances, human and divine, you are; you shall be my wife!"

"No," she said, slowly shaking her head; "No! if you speak so, then I am not your wife."

She gradually relaxed her hold, her arms dropped by her side, and she sank into a chair.

He looked on her for a few moments with a fixed gaze of despair, then striking his forehead he rushed out of the room, darted down

the stairs, out of the house, and plunge the most retired part of the park, where wildly paced the ground, beating his bosom and almost dashing his head against the trees.

When Ellen saw him hurry from her presence she gave one shriek.

"He is gone!" she cried; "gone, I have lost him for ever!"

In the mean time the maid, who had heard her master quit the apartment, came to inquire how her mistress felt after her attack of faintness. She was terrified when she saw her countenance. However, her entrance had in some measure the effect of forcing Ellen to rouse herself. She begged her maid to leave her, assuring her she was quite recovered. She rose, and staggered to the window to prevent meeting the eyes of the faithful Stanmore, who had lived with her from the time she first married.

Stanmore respectfully retired, but she was so much alarmed at the state in which she found her mistress, that she went to Mrs. Al-

lenham's room, to tell her that she feared Mrs. Hamilton was seriously indisposed.

Caroline hastened to her sister, and found her dissolved in tears, which at length flowed copiously. To all Caroline's questions she answered only by continued weeping, and sobs which succeeded each other so quickly that she could not have uttered, if she had wished to do so.

The fresh air had in some measure restored Mr. Hamilton. He had recovered the powers of his mind. He had reflected that many unforeseen accidents might still prevent the return of Mr. Cresford; that the idea of his being alive, if once noised abroad, would throw a shade over their future lives, even should it eventually prove an unfounded notion. He persuaded himself once more it might be a trick for the purpose of extorting money upon the supposition that he would attempt to bribe the first husband to silence. He was not acquainted with Mr. Cresford's handwriting, and his hopes revived. At all events, the report once circulated could not be crushed, and he

hastened back to the house, if possible, to calm Ellen, and to bind her to secrecy.

He entered her boudoir just as Mrs. Allenham was trying to extract from her the cause of her distress, when Ellen, springing from her seat, rushed into Algernon's arms, exclaiming,

"You are not gone for ever. Thank God, I see you again!"

Mrs. Allenham looked on in surprise. Could it be that Ellen and her husband had quarrelled? They whose conjugal felicity had become almost proverbial? Such scenes never occurred between herself and Mr. Allenham! Ellen was as good-tempered as she was; and though Mr. Hamilton was a more high-flown romantic sort of man than Mr. Allenham—not so religious perhaps—not so much in the habit of regulating his feelings by the exact measure of duty, still he was an excellent man, and a good-tempered man. What could it all mean?

However, she felt she could be of little service, and that as Ellen had some one with

her who would take care of her, should she again feel unwell, she left them together.

"Compose yourself, dearest Ellen," Mr. Hamilton said, in a soothing tone; "I have much to say, and you must listen attentively to my arguments."

"Any thing to hear your voice—to still look upon you," and she seated herself opposite to him, and fixed her eyes upon him, as if she would drink in every word which fell from his lips, and indelibly fix in her mind every lineament of that face which she was soon no more to see.

"Listen to me. There is a possibility that this letter may not be authentic."

She shook her head sorrowfully. He continued,

"All things are possible. Then there is more than a possibility, that, if alive, he whose name I cannot bring myself to speak, may never reach England. His health seems to be impaired,—he may sink under his sufferings. If he should never return, why should we have wilfully proclaimed to the world our disgrace,

—for disgrace it will be in the eyes of the world, though no guilt is ours?"

"But we should be guilty now, knowing what we do know."

"We are not quite sure: let us wait for confirmation before we breathe one word concerning this letter to any living being. Remember, that if we were to learn the next day that the poor prisoner had fallen a victim to his miseries, that he was at rest, though we might then be lawfully united, our child, our innocent child, would, by our own imprudence, be proved illegitimate."

Ellen's countenance changed: she listened with a persuaded air. Mr. Hamilton resumed,

"We must, for her sake, hide for the present all we feel; we must, if possible, assume a calm exterior, and trust to Providence for the issue."

"I wish I knew what was right. And yet what you tell me must be so. But I cannot,—I cannot show my face to-day; I am sure if I did, I should betray all." After a pause, she added, "I will tell you what you must do, Algernon, though it breaks my heart to say

so;—you must either allow me to pay my father a visit, or you must yourself go away for a time,—make a tour,—visit the lakes,—go to Scotland. We must not live together, till this dreadful mystery is cleared up, till our fate is ascertained one way or another."

"What! leave the company we have staying in the house? Impossible, without exciting such observations."

"They will be gone in three days, and then —then—Yes, it is better to be miserable only, than to be miserable and guilty also!"

"If it is your wish, Ellen, I will leave you. It is best I should be the one to go: if you were to quit this roof it would feel more like a real and final separation."

"My fainting fit will be an excuse for my not appearing to-day. Indeed I do feel so ill I could not bear my part in society. To-morrow I will try to do as you wish. I will strive, for the sake of my poor little Agnes."

The whole of that day was spent by the wretched Ellen in a state of stupefaction. The misfortune which had befallen her was too great and too overwhelming to be completely com-

remended. Her overstrained nerves could bear no more, and she sat in a state of comparative calmness. She expressed no wish to see her children, no desire for any thing, and Mrs. Allenham bade the maid remain in the adjoining apartment.

She returned to the company herself, and informed them of her sister's sudden indisposition. She tried, with all the tact of which she was mistress, to extract from Lady Coverdale whether Mr. Hamilton had ever been subject to starts of temper, but she elicited nothing from her, but a recapitulation of his virtues.

CHAPTER VIII.

We that did nothing study but the way
To love each other, with which thoughts the day
Rose with delight to us, and with them set,
Must learn the cruel art how to forget.
——————————Like turtle doves
Dislodged from their haunts, we must in tears
Unwind a love knit up in many years.
Now turn we each from each—so fare our hearts,
As the divorced soul from its body parts.

The Surrender.

MR. HAMILTON had half succeeded in persuading himself the whole thing was a cunning forgery. The story seemed so improbable. No letter had ever arrived from Cresford—no Maitland had ever brought any intelligence of this attempt to escape. Colonel Eversham had seen him carried to the grave—the funeral had taken place at night, by Mr. Cresford's dying request, he said. How unlikely, what-

ever might subsequently have been the difficulties of his situation, that, if alive, he should really have allowed so much time to elapse without writing to the wife with whom he was so madly in love! These reflections all presented themselves to his mind, and by dinner-time he was able to take his accustomed seat, and to do the honours of his table with tolerable self-possession.

Towards evening Mrs. Allenham was alarmed by a recurrence of Ellen's faintness: it was immediately after her children had been brought in to wish her good night.

Mrs. Allenham was urgent that a physician should be sent for. Ellen appeared to revive, to express her vehement desire that no one should be summoned. She only wished that her maid should sleep on a sofa in her room, in case she should be worse in the night. Mrs. Allenham thought Mr. Hamilton rather remiss in not sending for medical advice.

"Mr. Allenham," she thought, "though he does not make such a fuss about his love for me, would never let me be as ill as Ellen is, without sending for all the doctors in the

neighbourhood; but different men have different ways, and one must take people as one finds them."

One thing, however, she resolved upon, that if Ellen was not better the next morning, she would speak her mind openly to Mr. Hamilton, and insist on his having the very best advice.

Ellen was no sooner in her bed, than she dropped into a profound slumber, from which she awoke early the next morning, refreshed in body, and with only a vague recollection of the tremendous change which had taken place in her fate. By degrees her actual situation opened upon her.

How dreadful is the waking from a real sound sleep of forgetfulness, after any severe misfortune has befallen us! The temporary oblivion of our sorrows, scarcely compensates for the agony of recollection.

She was, however, aware of the necessity of concealing what she felt, if she wished to preserve the illegitimacy of her child from becoming public, while there was yet a hope of its remaining unknown. She passed some

time in humble prayer, imploring guidance from above, judgment to know what was right, and strength to execute it.

She rose from prayer in a calmer frame of mind—she felt herself fortified for the task before her—she thought that if Algernon left her at Belhanger alone, there could be no crime in delaying the promulgation of the dreadful secret, for the chance of saving herself and her child from unmerited disgrace.

She went down to breakfast, and she made an attempt to smile in return to the salutations and inquiries of her friends. She was in the act of assuring them she was quite well, when Mr. Hamilton entered the apartment. She started as she heard his well-known turn of the lock, she faltered in her speech as he entered, her paleness was replaced by a vivid glow, which overspread her face, but she turned not her eyes upon him; she studiously avoided meeting his; the first sound of his voice thrilled through her very being.

She took her station at the breakfast-table,

upon the same spot where yesterday she had received that fatal intelligence which had so completely broken up her happiness. She took her station as mistress of the mansion to which she had no longer any right. She felt she was an impostor.

Mr. Hamilton, who had, the preceding day, buoyed himself up with something more of hope than she had done, had passed a night of anxious restlessness. Sleep had not for one moment weighed down his eyelids; and when at length Ellen ventured almost by stealth to take one look at that beloved countenance, her heart was pierced to see it so wan, so haggard.

Their object was to avoid exciting remark. A plan was proposed, and acceded to, of driving to see a fine castle in the neighbourhood, in which was a collection of pictures. Ellen accompanied the ladies in an open carriage, and Mr. Hamilton took the gentlemen across the country, on horseback.

While others were engaged in admiring some of the master-pieces of art, Ellen found herself near Mr. Hamilton.

"Algernon, you look very ill," she said: "it breaks my heart to see you!"

"Can it be otherwise, Ellen? Even you can scarcely know the tortures I endure."

"We must not speak to each other. I shall lose the self-command I have so struggled to obtain. But I have behaved well, Algernon. I have conducted myself according to your wishes?"

"Yes! yes! May God bless you, dearest and best! I cannot trust myself to say another word."

He hastened away, and went to the stables, as though to see for the horses and the barouche. Ellen busied herself in examining a picture, of which she did not see one form, and drove back her bursting tears, and stilled the tumult of her soul.

On their way home, Lady Coverdale was eloquent on the beauties of this part of the world, on the charms of Belhanger, and discussed with much interest the plan for the flower-garden which Ellen was making along the terrace in front of the house.

"When your shrubs have grown, and the creepers cover that bowered walk to the left, it will be quite beautiful. Are you not always very impatient at the slow growth of plants? One has to wait so long before one sees any result produced. I think it is a great objection to gardening. However, you are very young, and you may look forward to many years of enjoying your improvements."

These simple words shot like daggers through Ellen's heart. She could not reply, and notwithstanding all her efforts to appear at her ease, the conversation flagged. Caroline had seen Ellen speak in a low voice to Mr. Hamilton, while others were engaged with the paintings; she had seen him suddenly leave the room, and perceiving how oppressed Ellen's spirits were, became thoroughly convinced some serious disagreement had occurred.

"Well," she thought, "I suppose it will all come right again. Every body cannot go on so smoothly as dear Mr. Allenham and I do!"

When they returned from their excursion,

Ellen retired to her room. She had not the heart, as usual, to repair to the nursery, or the school-room. The sight of her two elder children harrowed her soul, from the fear that she possessed them only for a time, that they would be torn from her, just when their opening intelligence, their amiable dispositions had superadded to the instinctive love of a mother, the affection produced by their own good qualities. The sight of her little girl was scarcely less agonizing, from the conviction that she must soon be a nameless outcast!

She had again recourse to prayer, and she again rose from her devotions, strengthened and resigned.

At that moment a gentle tap at the door was heard, and Algernon entered.

"I must see you, I must speak to you, Ellen! Human nature cannot endure this continued state of effort. Let us unbend for a few short moments. Tell me you love me, and that, let our fate be what it may, your heart, your whole heart, is mine."

"Oh, Algernon! I have just been praying for strength and resignation, and I thought I

had obtained my prayer. Do not speak to me in those tender tones. They melt away my whole soul, and I will, I will be firm. I must no longer allow myself to use such expressions; but I cannot even try not to feel all, and more than I ever felt before. Spare my weakness, Algernon, and remember that dearly as I prize your love, I prize your good opinion still more. That is the one thought which enables me to exist, I believe."

He looked on her with admiration, almost amounting to awe.

"My good opinion! You are as much superior to me, or to any other living being, as the angels of Heaven are to the common run of mortals. I adore you, I venerate you, as one of them." He knelt at her feet. "Speak, and I will obey you. I place myself under your guidance. I will regulate my actions by what you deem calculated to ensure your own peace of mind. I will prove to you that I can equal you at least in self-devotion; though my heart my break, I will not yield to you in that!"

"Get up, Algernon. Do not kneel at my

feet. I cannot bear to hear you speak in such a manner. These scenes must not recur. We only agonize each other, and render ourselves unfit for our task. Leave me, dearest; leave me to compose myself!"

"You bid me leave you, and I will do so. But will you not give me your hand? That dear hand which, after all, was pledged to me at the altar!" He took her unresisting hand. "It was I who placed that ring upon your finger, Ellen; you then swore to me eternal fidelity, you swore to love me 'till death us did part.' Can any thing cancel that vow?" And he drew her gently towards him.

"O God! nothing, nothing!" She dashed his hand from her, and rushed to the opposite corner of the room. She glared wildly upon him. — "Nothing, nothing can cancel that first dreadful vow! Oh! do not remind me of those words. It was then the vision came over me! He who you tell me is my husband, seemed to rise up between us, Algernon! It was a forewarning of what was to happen! I ought to have obeyed the warn-

ing — I should have stopped before" — her voice faltered, but she continued in a tone of unutterable sweetness—" before those words made me the happiest woman in the whole world!" She hid her face with her hands, and burst into tears.

" Bless you for what you have just said, my own Ellen!"

" Do not call me your own Ellen; I am not — can never be! In mercy leave me — this agony is not to be endured!"

Slowly and reluctantly he withdrew: he stood for a few moments at the door, and then he closed it, and she remained alone.

She had prayed for strength, and she found it. She did not weep, but meekly sat, patient and uncomplaining. The hour for dressing arrived, and she mechanically proceeded with her toilet. Her maid had prepared the dress, the ornaments she thought she would wear. Mechanically she sate before the looking-glass, mechanically she arranged her ringlets round her face: she placed in her hair the ornamental comb her maid presented to her,

fastened her ear-rings, held out her arm to have her bracelets clasped, and, when she was dressed, wondered at herself for having tricked herself out in all these gewgaws.

"How strange," she thought, "that I should have been able thus to deck this wretched form!" But such is the force of habit: it does not come into anybody's head to leave off the feathers, the diamonds, the flowers with which they are in the habit of adorning themselves, though the heart beneath may be breaking—and yet it seems a mockery!

Before dinner Lady Coverdale begged that the children might be sent for, and little Agnes appeared in a beautiful cap which Miss Coverdale had embroidered for her. The beauty of the child's eyes was discussed.

"If Agnes grows up according to this promise, Mrs. Hamilton"—(Ellen started at the name)—"you will have a pleasant task in acting as her chaperon."

Ellen almost sank at the prospect which was thus brought before her. She could not an-

swer, but, hastily turning away, stirred the fire with great energy, at the same time exclaiming how hot it was.

They went to dinner; she was seated at the head of the table, opposite to Mr. Hamilton. She felt a sort of melancholy pleasure in being, as it were, forced to appear as his wife; but never did two such bursting hearts pass calmly through an evening of society.

Another day succeeded, and it was spent in the same struggle. On the third the Coverdales departed, thinking that, for so happy a couple, they were the most fashionably cool they had ever seen; the Allenhams, fearing that Mr. Hamilton, charming as he was, must have an odd corner of temper, for, as to Ellen, they knew her too well to imagine for a moment that she could be in fault.

They all drove from the door, and the wretched couple were left alone with their love and their misery.

"And now *you* must leave me, Algernon: we must not remain here alone, and I even doubt whether I ought to remain under your roof."

"Oh, Ellen! one would think you wished

to believe we were severed, for ever severed! There is still hope."

"None for me! I know that hand-writing too well."

"Must I go to-day?"

"To-day, if you value my peace, and the little remnant of honour I may yet hope to preserve."

"This is hard, this is cruel; but you shall have an approving conscience, my own Ellen; and if your conscience will be easier when I am gone, I will not linger: I will order everything for my journey, and I will go at dusk to-night. Till then, you will let me be with you; till then, I may look on your face—I may listen to your voice—I may breathe the same air with you!"

He flew to order his departure, and in another instant was by her side.

There was a melancholy satisfaction in being together, and yet, when they were so, they could not speak: what could they say that was not fraught with wretchedness?

"I must see our children, Ellen."

He had been in the habit of calling all the children "our;" but the little word, which from the force of habit escaped him, struck daggers to the hearts of both. The two elder were his children who might soon be at home to claim them.

They all three came, and poor Hamilton devoured them with kisses. The little Agnes was just old enough to know him, and to hold out her arms to him with a smile of joy. They could neither of them endure this long; they could not talk to the children — they could not play with them — they could not listen to their prattle, and they were soon sent away.

Strange to say, these last few hours, whose flight they so much dreaded, hung heavy. They wished to arrest the course of time, and yet they knew not how to pass it. They strolled into the garden: everything there spoke of hope and promise; everything within their own bosoms boded unheard-of wretchedness.

They had several times paced in silence round the sheltered parterre, when Ellen turn-

ed deadly pale, and stopped for a few moments.

"You must lean on me, Ellen! You must take my arm."

Her feebleness compelled her to do so, and once more he had the happiness of feeling that lovely form rest on him for support.

Neither spoke again. Both hearts were too full for utterance. In silence they bent their course homeward. They again returned to the drawing-room. They once more sat down there together. They could not bring themselves to quit each other for a moment, — to lose one instant of these few precious hours; and yet to each, the presence of the other was oppressive. This state of misery and *gêne* was worse than that occasioned by the presence of others.

They could not, at such a moment, speak on indifferent subjects; and if they alluded to their own situation, it must lead to passionate burst of feeling, which she considered as criminal, and which he also dreaded for her sake.

At length the hour of departure came. The

carriage was announced—and he went up-stairs alone once more to give his parting blessing to the children. He returned to her.

"I think we may correspond," she said, "there can be nothing wrong in that, till our fate is quite decided."

"Oh yes, yes; you must write every day," he replied. "I shall find out some retired spot in Wales, and I shall remain there in utter seclusion till your mind is made easy by hearing no more. In three months you will conclude it was only a forgery?"

She shook her head. "I know the writing."

"In six months? In a year, you will—name some time—set some term to my banishment!"

"We will write—I am not capable of knowing or understanding what is right in your presence. You must leave me, Algernon, or I think I shall die, now, at your feet!"

"And are we to part thus?"

She stood like a marble statue, as cold, as pale, as motionless.

"Are we to part thus? Impossible!" and he snatched her to his bosom, and imprinted

on her lips one kiss of deep, fervent, unalterable love.

He tore himself away, and plunging into the carriage, in a few moments was borne far from the scene of all his happiness.

When she heard the sound of the wheels, she made a desperate rush to the window, and remained fixed there to listen for their sound, and to fancy she still heard it, long after it was possible to do so.

CHAPTER IX.

From our own paths, our love's attesting bowers,
I am not gone,
In the deep hush of midnight's whispering hours
Thou art not lone!
Not lone when by the haunted stream thou weepest,
That stream whose tone
Murmurs of thoughts the holiest and the deepest
We two have known.

MRS. HEMANS.

HE was gone—quite gone—and slowly and wearily she dragged herself back to the sofa, and gave free vent to all the agony which had been eating away her very being.

She was thus drowned in tears, when the footman entered the room upon some pretence of closing the shutters or of making up the fire. The servants could not but perceive that something unusual was going on, and

their curiosity was excited by the mysterious looks of their master and mistress, and by the sudden departure of the former. Ellen, to avoid the inquiring gaze of the footman, hastily retired to her boudoir, whither she had no sooner retreated than her anxious maid peeped in to see if she might want any thing.

Pleading a violent head-ache, she bade her say she should not require any dinner, and assured her that nothing but entire quiet could relieve the pain under which she was suffering. The faithful creature would prescribe all the nostrums that ever were invented for head-aches, and poor Ellen thought she never should be allowed to weep in peace. At length she was relieved from the troublesome attentions both of the inquisitive, and of the kind-hearted, and was left to her own sad thoughts.

She accused herself of not having sufficiently valued the one last morning she had passed with him. She remembered a thousand things she meant to say—a thousand things she ought to have said. She thought she had been cold, she thought she had been unkind, and yet she reproached herself for having allowed him

to take that one farewell kiss; for she felt and knew she was not his wife. She could not deceive herself into a momentary belief that the letter was an imposture. She knew that her lawful husband was alive, and that every feeling of her soul was therefore criminal. Still, though she scarcely indulged a hope of ever being re-united to Algernon, she had not the courage to declare the truth. She wished, if possible, to preserve her reputation, and her child's position in the world.

She now had leisure to reflect upon the line of conduct it behoved her to adopt, and she came to the conclusion, that, provided she received no further communication from Mr. Cresford, and that there seemed no fear of open exposure, the only mode of preserving her fair name, and her virtue at the same time, was to induce Mr. Hamilton to consent to an amicable separation on the score of incompatibility of temper.

This was her best hope! How dreadful the other alternative! to be claimed by the indignant Cresford, to be held up to the eyes of the world as a base culprit, guilty of the crime

of bigamy! It was almost too degrading to contemplate.

Some days had now elapsed; she had every morning received the letters with a sickening dread which almost paralyzed her. With fear and horror she had hastily turned over the exterior of every letter, and, with inexpressible relief, she had found none that bore the dreaded foreign post-mark. Each morning brought a long epistle from Algernon, written in the spirit of the highest, purest, most devoted affection.

These were some balm to her heart. These were treasured up and perused over and over again. But she was an altered creature—all around wondered at the change. The children found that mamma could only kiss them, and weep over them, and they became thoughtful and subdued in her presence. The poor people wondered their bounteous lady no longer came among them. She could not do so. She dreaded the eyes of her fellow-creatures — their very blessings were painful to her—she felt as if she had obtained them under false pretences. All that had given her pleasure in this lovely place,

this delightful country, now only filled her with regret, when she thought that the next day might find her an exile from this Paradise. Every walk, every tree, every view, every spot she visited, reminded her of him whom she no longer ventured to call husband, and with whom she had no hope of ever seeing them again.

Two or three weeks had now slowly dragged their weary length away, and no fresh intelligence had arrived. It was nearly a month since she had received the first, and she almost began to think he found it impossible to make his escape. The friendly Governor might be removed. The mental aberration might, from over-excitement, have returned. She felt wicked in, for a moment, anticipating such a circumstance with any thing approaching to satisfaction; and yet the horror of another, and still more appalling, solution of the difficulty, that he had succeeded in his petition, and that he was on his way home, filled her with dismay which almost bewildered her senses.

One morning when she, as usual, received with trembling hands the packet of letters,

she perceived one from her brother with an enclosure. With dizzy eyes she tore open the cover, and within found another, with the same dreaded post-mark of Gratz. Despair gave her courage to open it. It was indeed from Cresford, and he there told her the Governor had proved his kindest friend; that the Emperor had listened favourably to his petition, and that he had every prospect of being able to commence his journey to England in a few days, —that as the time approached he felt ten thousand fears pass through his bosom. How much might have happened since he left his home. His Ellen, to whom he was now writing in the fulness of his heart, might possibly be gathered to the dead. His children! were they still in existence? "Oh, my dearest wife," he continued, "you can form no conception of the distracted and confused state of my mind when I think of the changes that may have taken place among you. Of one thing I believe I may rest assured, though my own wayward disposition has sometimes been prone to unreasonable bursts of—jealousy, shall I say?—no, rather sensitiveness,—for you will do me

the justice to confess I never was jealous of any individual,—of one thing I may rest assured, that I shall find you pure, true, and virtuous as I left you. The knowledge of your virtue has been my only consolation,—that conviction alone has supported me through all my misfortunes. In one short month I shall be at home, my Ellen, never, never again to part from you."

This confirmation of what she most dreaded came upon her with almost as great a shock as the first announcement of her misery. Yet she felt ungrateful at making such a return for all the affection expressed by Cresford, affection which had stood the test of time, which had been his guiding principle in absence, imprisonment, even in madness.

The next moment she fancied that by such emotions she wronged Algernon, her own adored Algernon, who was, for ever, torn from her, and doomed to sufferings equal to her own.

In another month Cresford said he should be at home. The time had nearly elapsed: he might arrive any day. There was not a moment to be lost!

In her distraction she almost forgot to open the daily letter of Mr. Hamilton. It breathed of hope! He had always been more sanguine than herself, and in this he pleaded strongly to be allowed to return. He argued that the protracted silence almost proved, beyond a doubt, that the whole had been a false alarm.

She placed the dear letter next her heart, and, hastily gathering together the rest of her correspondence which had been cast aside, was preparing to arrange all things for her instant departure, when her attention was arrested by a second epistle from her brother Henry. She knew the worst; she had no more to fear, and she perused it with a desperate calmness.

Henry began by saying that he, and all the other partners, had been much distressed by a communication they had received of so strange a character that he scarcely liked to disturb her mind by reporting it; that yet, as he had forwarded to her by the same post a letter which appeared to come from the same quarter as the one they had received, and as, if he mistook not, he had some time ago sent her another with a similar direction and post-mark,

perhaps she might be prepared for what he was going to tell her.

The fact was they had received a letter purporting to come from Mr. Cresford, and full of incomprehensible allusions to an escape from Verdun, and to a mock funeral; that they scarcely knew whether to consider it a forgery or not; that he grieved to say those who were most conversant with his hand-writing seemed most persuaded of its authenticity; that they were all in the greatest perplexity, but, upon the whole, agreed it was best to keep the circumstance secret for the present.

He dreaded to think what her feelings must be; that for himself, he was firmly convinced it was an imposture from first to last,—that he remembered how circumstantial had been Colonel Eversham's account of the funeral of poor Cresford, performed by torch-light, according to his own particular request, and attended by Colonel Eversham himself, by Captain Morton, and several more of the *détenus* who were on parole. "And do you not remember his dwelling upon the awful circumstance, that in one short week from the time Captain Morton had

acted as chief mourner at Cresford's interment, he was himself committed to the grave? Do not worry yourself, therefore, my dearest sister. Depend upon it, it is a trick, with the view of extorting money; but I thought it would not be right to leave you in ignorance of the unpleasant doubt.

"I should have been myself the bearer of this strange despatch, but I am unavoidably detained in town to-day by business. I will be with you soon after you receive this."

"It is all true," she thought to herself, "and it is all known. It must now be published abroad; there is no escape!" and she looked wildly around her. This was no moment for deliberation or indecision.

She commanded post horses to be instantly sent for; she summoned her maid; she desired the nurses, the children, the *bonne*, to prepare instantly for a sudden journey, and she sate down to write the appalling news to Algernon, to dash all the hopes which he had fostered, to doom him also to a future as blank and cheerless as her own.

She began, "I have scarcely the power to

write what I am now compelled to impart to you. In a few more hours I shall have left this beloved home; in a few more hours I shall be an outcast from this blessed place, where I have lived as your most happy, and your honoured wife. Thank you, Algernon, for the unutterable happiness I have for two years enjoyed; thank you for all your love, all your tenderness.

"I am going to my father. Poor man! he little knows the shame and misery which await the decline of his life; he who so valued the opinion of the world! Oh, Algernon, I am doomed to bring a curse on all who are connected with me! I shall bring his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave; I have cast a blight over the dignified and prosperous career which awaited you; I have been the bane of that unhappy man whose ungoverned, ill-fated love for me led him to practise the deceit which has worked us all so much woe. My name will be a lasting disgrace to my children,—all of them!

"Algernon! when I think of you, my heart is near breaking; when I think of your

return to your desolate home, when I know how you will miss me,—for I judge too well from my own, what your feelings will be,—when I think how you will miss the children, too! Heavens, I have just ordered the nurse to prepare herself and Agnes for our sad journey!—But what right have I to do so? She is your child, Algernon, and shall I deprive you of that one consolation? Shall I deprive her of an honourable station to drag her with me into shame and degradation? No! my wretchedness can scarcely know increase, and you shall be greeted on your return by her smiles, her out-stretched arms, her lovely attempts to prattle. I leave you that precious legacy. She will remind you of her who loves you still with tenfold fervour, though it is now a crime to do so.

"There is a sort of pleasure in sacrificing something to you: you shall keep her and cherish her. I expect my brother every moment: he and the other members of the house have likewise received communications from Gratz. I cannot add another word—I cannot sign myself,—for, oh! what name do I now bear?"

She hastily sealed her letter, and, without giving herself time to retract, she flew upstairs, and told the nurse that she and Agnes were to remain at Belhanger — that only George and Caroline were to accompany her. The nurse was astonished at the sudden change; but her mistress looked so ghastly and so wild, she did not venture any question or any remark. Ellen snatched her child to her heart—kissed it with such vehemence that the terrified creature screamed—then, almost thrusting it again into the nurse's arms, she rushed out of the room, not daring to trust herself another moment in its sight.

She now hastened into her own apartments, and, without allowing herself time for tender emotions or reminiscences, she began to pack up her papers, her letters, a few favourite books of devotion, some of the many tokens of affection she had received from Algernon, and above all, his picture—that picture which she gazed upon every day, ten times every day, during his absence.

While thus employed, she saw her maid arranging her diamonds, and other jewels, for the journey.

"Do not put up those," she said in a clear, calm voice; "they must be left here."

"Dear ma'am, we always take them with us wherever we go; I always think they are safest when they are under my own eye."

"They must remain, Stanmore," answered Ellen almost sternly.

"Just as you please, ma'am, certainly," replied the abigail, whose feelings on the subject of the diamonds were so acute that she could not look with indifference upon anything that concerned them, although she saw something had certainly happened which greatly discomposed her mistress, and was really tenderly attached to her.

"Would you please to leave all the trinkets, ma'am?" she added with rather a mortified, injured accent.

"No, Stanmore; I must take these rings, these bracelets, all these things—they were all given to me by dear friends."

"I am sure, ma'am, I should have thought you might have wished what Mr. Hamilton had given you to go along with us."

"Say no more, Stanmore; I cannot bear

it. — Only make haste,—all possible haste!— I must go to my father to-day."

"Dear me! I beg your pardon, ma'am; but is Captain Wareham ill?"

"No—Yes—I am not sure—I believe he is pretty well."

Ellen left the room, having secured the few articles she much valued; and having told Stanmore to carry the diamonds to the housekeeper, and bid her give them to Mr. Hamilton when he returned.

"How strange!" said Mrs. Stanmore to herself. "Master and Mistress must have quarrelled desperately, somehow or another. And to think how loving they did seem to be till just at last! Well, they say such violent love is too hot to hold. I shall think of that when next Mr. Perkins says a civil word to me, and give him a civil word in return, for all he is not the man of my heart; for it's my belief all the love should be on the man's side. How well my poor Mistress and Mr. Cresford went on, though he was so queer; and now she has got a husband she loves, this is the end of it all! Ah! it does

not do to make too much of the men. If one has a man one does not care for, one has one's wits about one, to know how to manage him."

While Mrs. Stanmore was making these sage reflections, (in which there is much deserving attention from the young and inexperienced,) Ellen, who could not sit still, and who was afraid to trust herself with her child, wandered like an unquiet spirit about the house, longing to visit every well-known room, and to bid each a sad adieu; but she met servants in every direction carrying trunks and imperials in all the bustle of departure.

She took refuge in her boudoir, from which the few things she meant to take with her were already removed. She looked round in silence and in calmness. There was not an object which did not remind her of some act of kindness of Algernon's. A tap at the door startled her from the abstraction in which she stood.

Mrs. Topham, the stately housekeeper, made her appearance.

"If you please, ma'am, I am come for orders

during your absence. If you thought, ma'am, you should be away some little time, the furniture in the chintz-room wants washing sadly, and perhaps, ma'am, it would be a good opportunity to get it calendered."

"Do just as you please, Mrs. Topham. I cannot attend to those things at this moment."

"Certainly, ma'am, I would not trouble you for the world; but Miss Mason wished to know whether you would have them go on with master's neckcloths, or whether you wished the table-linen to be put in hand immediately at the school."

"Oh yes, Mrs. Topham."

"What, the table-linen? or the neckcloths, did you mean, ma'am?"

"Either: it matters little! Mr. Hamilton will be at home in a few days, and he will tell you. I am very ill, Mrs. Topham. I cannot —I cannot answer you." And tears for the first time that morning flowed from her eyes.

There is nothing so strange as the causes which open the flood-gates of woe. The vexation of being troubled with these trifles, and

the feeling that she had no longer a right to regulate them, that it would no longer be her care to see to all these little household details, melted her to tears, when all the deep and overwhelming bearings of the case had not produced an inclination to weep.

Mrs. Topham departed, surprised, grieved, and a little offended.

"She never knew her mistress in such a way before. She had always behaved so considerate to her, and spoken in such a kind and feeling way, she was sure there was something wrong, and that her mistress had something upon her mind."

Ellen now thought she would once more see his study. She should there be safe from intrusion, and she would look at every thing, and fix it so firmly in her memory, that it should serve as a sort of picture to which her mind's eye might at any time recur. She marked every chair and table, the very pattern of the cornice, the mouldings on the bookcases, the carving of the chimney-piece. She touched all the papers, the parliamentary re-

ports which crowded the table, and which might have been touched by him.

At this moment a chaise drove up to the door, and her brother Henry leaped out of it. In another moment Ellen was in his arms, and clinging to him in the full abandonment of long pent-up sorrow, which at length is allowed free vent. There was a degree of relief in the presence of one to whom she might unburthen her whole soul, from whom she need have no secrets, and with whom she need be under no restraint.

This weakness, however, was not of long duration. She quickly shook it off, and rousing herself, she uttered in a firm though hurrying manner:

"We must be gone directly, Henry. You will take me to my father's; you will go with me, dear brother, will you not?"

"Where is Hamilton?" he answered.

"He has not been here since I received the first packet you enclosed me. We parted then!" She pressed her hand for a moment tightly upon her eye-balls.

"Do you then consider the case so hopeless, my poor dear sister?"

"Alas! I have from the very first, although he would scarcely believe me."

"Oh, dreadful! dreadful! What is to be done?"

"I mast go to my father, and I must leave the rest to Providence. I have not wittingly done wrong, so I hope God will assist me to bear that with which it is his pleasure to visit me!"

"My poor, poor Ellen!"

"Do not pity me, Henry! I have prayed for strength, and hitherto I have been mercifully supported. Do not pity me, or I shall not be able to go through what must be done this day.

"Ellen! By Heavens you are the most high-minded, courageous, and noble, as well as the gentlest and loveliest creature I ever saw! Whatever the result may be, you are certainly doing what is right. I am ready to accompany you."

"Every thing is prepared, Henry. I have

only one task left, that of bidding adieu to my baby—my little Agnes!"

"Do you leave her behind you?"

"I cannot rob Algernon of that which will remind him of me, and yet give him pleasure, instead of pain. Neither will I heap more shame and disgrace on my child's head than is unavoidable."

Ellen left him, and with a slow and heavy step, she for the last time mounted the oak staircase. She went to the nursery, and solemnly taking the child away, she carried it into the room which was her own. Bolting all the doors, she knelt as she held the infant in her arms, and offered up for it prayers as fervent and as pure as ever ascended to the throne of grace. Then kissing its eyes, its forehead, its lips,

"May the God of mercy bless thee, my babe! may he bless thee with virtue, principle, rectitude: whatever may be thy fate in this world, may He bring thee to that place where the wicked cease from troubling, where the weary are at rest!"

She rose from her knees, and carried the child back to the nurse. In a calm and steady voice, she bade her, as she valued her peace of mind here and hereafter, to do her duty by the infant; and begging God to bless them both, she steadily went down the stairs, and without looking to the right, or to the left, passed through the hall. When she reached the door, she paused, and turning round, she saw the servants who, half wonder, half sympathy, had collected at the different doors, and were pressing forward. She tried to speak—her voice failed her; she made another effort, and at length uttered,

"You have all done your duties by me, and may God reward you for it!"

A burst of tears and sobs, they scarcely themselves knew wherefore, was all the answer they could make.

Henry supported her into the carriage. Her elder children and their attendants entered the other, and she was rapidly conveyed from a spot, where she had endured the two extremes of mortal bliss, and mortal woe.

CHAPTER X.

En songe, souhaid, et pensée,
  Vous voye chacun jour de sepmaine
  Combien qu'estes de moi loingtaine
Belle très loyaument amée.

Du tout vous ay m'amour donnée;
  Vous en povez être certaine,
  Ma seule dame souveraine,
De mon las cœur moult desirée
En songe, souhaid, et pensée.

CHARLES DUC D'ORLEANS, A. D. 1446.

How did poor Hamilton meanwhile pass the time of his weary exile? It would have been wretchedness to him to have been recognized, to have been obliged to answer the usual inquiries after his wife and children, with which a married man is invariably greeted; to endure all the common courtesies of life. Yet his acquaintance was so general, his name so

well known, from having on many occasions borne a prominent part in politics, and from having lived much in the world, that he could scarcely find a spot where he would not be exposed to them.

He therefore, under an assumed name, retired to the most desolate fishing village he could find in the neighbourhood of M——, and passed his days wandering upon the shore, and mixing with none but the fishers, who plied their dangerous trade upon the wild Welsh coast.

Every morning he walked into the town, and claimed his letters at the post-office, then hurried to the shore, there to feast upon the lines traced by his beloved Ellen's hand. The enthusiastic turn of mind, which we at first described him as possessing, enabled him, better perhaps than another man, to endure the life of abnegation of self which he here led. His passion was of so pure, so refined a character, that in sober truth, he had rather sit alone on a sea-girt rock, and think of her whom he worshipped with so holy a love, than be in

the society of any other living being, however lovely, however fascinating.

Weeks however elapsed, and even his highly wrought nature was beginning to tire of this protracted uncertainty. He formed a thousand desperate plans; he nearly convinced himself that they were both sacrificing their happiness to a frivolous punctilio; that Mr. Cresford never would return—that if he did, still in the eye of Heaven she was his, not Cresford's wife, and that there would be no guilt in their flying to the uttermost parts of the earth, and there existing for each other alone.

But although he might think such thoughts, he never ventured to commit them to paper, when writing to her. He never again proposed their living together, if their union was not sanctioned by the laws. There was a spotless lofty purity about her that he dared not outrage by word, or look. He knew also, that even supposing he should succeed in persuading her to fly with him, still, that with her disposition, her religious principles, she could never find happiness in his devotion, if remorse

was an inmate of her bosom. He had courage to endure all ills, rather than to meet her reproachful eye;—to feel he had caused that innocent heart to know the pangs of a wounded conscience;—to feel that her religion, which was now her only source of consolation, had, through his means, been converted into a source of terror. The romantic adventures and feelings of his own early life, did not lead to his experiencing the same orthodox scruples himself, but the enthusiastic devotedness of his disposition made him respect them, even while he thought them overstrained.

His despair, therefore, when he received Ellen's last communication, knew no bounds. It destroyed his only hope. He paced the shore. It was a stormy morning, as if in accordance with his feelings: the sea-gull, with its wide-spread wings, gleaming white against the lead-coloured clouds, screamed as it passed over his head. The surf was wildly beating against the beach. The fisher vessels which had been out all night, were striving to regain the land, before the threatening storm burst upon them. He looked upon the little

boats as they neared the shore with an emotion of envy.—" Perhaps," he thought, " perhaps the next few waves may swallow up the brave fellows, who are there exerting themselves to preserve life. They know not for what a miserable possession they are struggling. They know not what may await them if they escape the present danger! Blighted affections, ruined hopes, the torture of losing those they love, or of seeing them exist in wretchedness, may bring them to regret they had not now sunk, secure from experiencing any more of the sufferings human nature is heir to. Would I were in one of those boats! It would be no sin of mine if the waves were to close over it."

The wives and mothers of the fishermen, who were inured to the venturous life of their relatives, proceeded with their ordinary toil. They had so often seen them weather a storm in safety, that they felt little alarm at what would have struck others as awful. One young woman, however, stole forth alone; her loose cloak shivered in the wind; the wild gust brought with it the spray

and dashed it in her face, but still her eyes were strained to catch a glimpse of one frail bark. She knew not that her bonnet was blown back, that her dishevelled hair streamed upon the blast. She gradually drew nearer to the spot where Algernon stood in his desperate musing.

She was a stranger: a girl from the midland counties, who had married one of the hardy young fishermen of this secluded village, and she was not yet accustomed to let the blast howl unheeded round her dwelling, while he she loved was on the wide salt sea.

She approached Algernon. In her loneliness she felt safer when near a fellow-creature.

"Do you think there is any danger, sir?" she said in a hesitating voice.

"The storm seems to be gathering," he answered; "but most likely you have more experience than I have."

"I have not been here long," she said, "and those great waves, with foamy tops, always terrify me sadly."

"Are you anxious for any one at sea, my good girl?"

"My husband, sir, is in one of those boats."

"And does he love you? Do you love him, and are you lawfully married?"

"Oh, sir! to be sure we are!" and she drew back abashed, and half angry.

"Then—then you are not to be pitied. In life or in death you are his. You are bound together by the ties of love and of duty, of religion and of law! He will return to you, my girl. See, the boats are getting nearer every moment. They will beat the storm—you will be reunited. You need not weep."

He darted away among the rocks, and sought the little room in the single ale-house, which had been his home for the last month.

His first impulse was to return to Belhanger—to revisit the spot which breathed of her, and having once more beheld the precious child which she had left there as a pledge of her affection for him, to send her with the nurse to rejoin her mother at Captain Wareham's. His resolution was no sooner taken than it was executed.

Ellen and her brother had ere this arrived at the end of their journey. They reached Captain Wareham's just as he, Matilda, and the Allenhams, who were at this moment paying him their annual visit, were seated at their dessert. They were surprised at hearing an unusual bustle in the house, and still more so when Ellen, leaning on her brother, entered the apartment. They all pressed round to greet her. Matilda, with youthful delight at this agreeable surprise—Caroline and her husband with kindness—Captain Wareham with some kindness, but more annoyance, which annoyance was, however, in some degree tempered by the respect he had felt for Ellen, ever since she had made so good a marriage as he considered that to Mr. Hamilton.

"Well, my dear Ellen, this is really very good of you to take us so by surprise, but you certainly do take us by surprise. I do not know how in the world we are to lodge you, and the dinner is just gone. And you, too, Henry?" (annoyance was rapidly preponderating,) "I do not know what we can do with you. And I suppose Hamilton is of

the party; you might have given one a line. I should have thought, Ellen, you must have remembered how inconvenient this kind of thing is, in a small establishment."

By this time Ellen had sunk in a chair, and Caroline began to be alarmed at her paleness, and at the altered expression of her countenance. The children had just landed from their vehicle, and their voices were heard in the passage.

"Mercy on us! and the children, too!" exclaimed poor Captain Wareham, in a tone of despair, annoyance having thoroughly mastered the vague respect inspired by the superior style of all which surrounded the Hamiltons. "Well, this certainly is rather inconsiderate, Ellen; but when people make great matches, they grow fine, and you seem quite to forget your poor old father's means are not quite so ample as Mr. Hamilton's."

He turned round, but started at the ghastly appearance of Ellen. Henry had suffered agonies for his sister, and had tried to lead his father aside, that he might briefly explain to him the case, without proclaiming it to the

whole household. Ellen answered with the composure of despair.

"You must let me stay in this house, father, —I do not care where—only I must have the shelter of your paternal roof."

"I can go to the inn perfectly well, dear father," added Henry.

"And Ellen can have her old room," interrupted Matilda; "little Caroline can sleep with me, and George can sleep on the sofa in Mr. Allenham's dressing-room; and now it is all arranged, so don't you be cross, papa. Ellen looks quite ill, and I dare say she is faint for want of something to eat, so leave it all to me, and don't make a fuss, that's all, papa," and she gave her father a playful tap on the cheek. She was a high-spirited, warm-hearted, ingenuous girl, in many respects the precise opposite of her sisters. If her father was cross, her spirit rose; and she consequently possessed that sort of controul over him, which the most decided, positive, and wilful, generally obtains over the less resolute temper, whatever may be their relative positions. She was also an excellent manager, always had cold meat in the

house, and was never at a loss for an expedient on any emergency.

Caroline was exceedingly uneasy at the appearance of Ellen, and remembered her fainting fits when she had been last at Belhanger. Her look of settled grief, coupled with the absence of Mr. Hamilton, made her fear that, notwithstanding the affection which had formerly subsisted between them, their quarrel must have been a serious one, and that her unannounced arrival must mean that they were separated. She found, also, that only the two Cresford children accompanied her; and this served to confirm her fears.

Even Captain Wareham began to be alarmed at the subdued yet resolute manner of Ellen; and looked from one to the other, perplexed, amazed, and annoyed.

"I suppose you want something to eat, Ellen?"

"No, father! I could not touch any thing."

"And the children must have supper."

"Matilda, you will give them some tea, poor little things?" she answered, turning towards Matilda.

"I could not eat a mouthful either," said Henry, "so do not get any thing for me, father. I wish you would just step this way, I want to consult you about the inn I had best go to."

"My dear boy, it is very chilly to-night, and you may just as well consult me here by the fire."

"Ellen," added Henry, "would you not be better up-stairs on the sofa? Ellen is not well, father, and we must take great care of her."

"You do not seem well, indeed, Ellen. Why you look ten years older, girl, than when I saw you last!"

Ellen had risen from her seat, and was mechanically obeying Henry in walking up-stairs, when he said,

"Do give Ellen your arm, Allenham, she is faint and weak. I have some things to arrange, and will follow you presently."

Captain Wareham, whose parental tenderness had been awakened by the expression of suffering in Ellen's face, was following also, when Henry laid his hand upon his arm,

and forcibly detained him. He closed the door after them. Captain Wareham turned round.

"What does all this mean, Henry? Really it is very disagreeable, and you quite frighten me; I wish you would not be so odd and mysterious."

"Listen to me, father. I scarcely know how to break to you the news I have to impart."

"Speak, for Heaven's sake. I always hate being kept in suspense."

"Cresford is alive! alive, and coming home, as he thinks, to the arms of his beloved wife!"

"Impossible, Henry! you are jesting;" and Captain Wareham attempted to smile; but he dropped powerless into his chair, and clasped his hands, adding, "If this is a jest, it is a cruel one!"

Henry then, in a few words, gave him an outline of the case, and told him that Ellen and he had agreed, that until Cresford arrived, and that the truth was past all hope of concealment, it was best to treat it as an amicable separation on the score of temper. Henry had advised Ellen not even to confide the truth

to Mrs. Allenham; for amiable and kind-hearted as she was, still she was not free from an inclination to gossip, and she would never be able to prevent such a secret from escaping her lips, to some of her old and dear friends in her native place.

Captain Wareham, whose good heart and high feeling of honour rendered him, in fact, an estimable man, approved of all that his unfortunate daughter had done; and was cut to the soul when he looked forward to the miserable fate which probably awaited her.

"And when Cresford does return, Henry, how will he conduct himself? I dread his violence!"

"I dare say he will make her a liberal allowance," answered Henry; "for he was always noble about money; but at the same time I cannot help fearing that he will take the children from her. In common justice, he cannot visit upon her, farther than that, the consequences of his own rash imposture."

"I hope not; but you were too young when he went to France, to know the full

violence of his character — the vehemence of his ungoverned passions. But we must go to my poor, poor unhappy child."

Her sisters had been all kindness to Ellen, though Matilda, in her thoughtless fondness, had asked a thousand painful questions concerning Mr. Hamilton, her pet Agnes, &c.; but Caroline, who was quite persuaded she understood the whole case perfectly, discreetly avoided every thing that led to such subjects, till Matilda went to see to her hospitable arrangements for their accommodation, and they were left alone.

"Dearest Ellen!" Caroline then said, "I was afraid it would come to this, when I left you a month ago. Who would ever have thought that Mr. Hamilton could have turned out so ill, for I am sure you could never have been the one to blame: nobody ever saw you out of temper in your life."

Ellen looked up.

"Breathe not a word against him, Caroline: he is the most perfect, the most faultless of human beings! I always thought my

happiness was too great to last, and it has proved so. May Heaven, in its mercy, protect and bless him !"

" Ah, you always were a gentle, forgiving creature !" answered Mrs. Allenham.

CHAPTER XI.

See the poor captive from his dungeon break,
  Where long he pined, and hail the light of day,
With eyes that in the broad effulgence ache,
  With smiles that 'mid deep lines of anguish play!
How eagerly he meets the morning gale
  With lab'ring lungs that each sweet breath would seize!
How fondly views the hill, the plain, the vale,
  Green meadows, brooks, fields, flow'rs, and waving trees!
And, "Gods!" he cries, "how dear is liberty!
  Is there in Heaven's large gift a boon beside?
The world is mine, and all the good I see!"
  But soon, too soon, his raptures will subside,
And sighing sad, "Not Freedom's self to me
  Is sweet," he cries, "if one to share it be denied."

Unpublished Poems.

THE next day Henry was obliged to return to London: indeed, he wished to be upon the spot, in case of Mr. Cresford's arrival; and Ellen was, on the same account, equally anxious he should depart.

Mrs. Allenham made several attempts to learn from Ellen the particulars of her separation; but Ellen assured her the subject was at present to painful too dwell upon; and they remained together in melancholy calmness not unmixed with *gêne*, for Caroline was somewhat hurt at Ellen's reserve.

She had one conversation with her father, in which he was all kindness and sympathy, and she now sat down to a task which she deemed one of absolute necessity, although of the utmost difficulty, namely, to write to Mr. Cresford a letter which should meet him on his arrival in London, and convey to him the dreadful intelligence, which sooner or later, must reach him.

It was as follows:—

"I know not how to address you, and I dread lest you should have heard from some other quarter all that has occurred, and may cast aside the letter of one whom you deem untrue to you, without reading her own statement of the facts.

"Believe me, when I swear by everything we

hold most sacred, that the first communication I received from you, from the time I read the official account of your death in the public newspapers, was the letter I received last month, dated from Gratz. I had then for two years believed myself the wife of Mr. Hamilton.

"As I write these words, my spirit quails at the effect I know they must produce on you — my heart bleeds for the pain I am inflicting on you; for, indeed, I do justice to the strength of your affection for me, and I grieve to be thus the cause of anguish to one who loves me! It is a cruel return for all the fidelity you have preserved to me; but you must know the truth, and I had rather you should learn it from me, than from common report, — from the busy tongue of slander.

"Mr. Maitland never brought me the letter to which you allude. I have never seen any of your companions in misfortune, except Colonel Eversham, who told me how he followed your remains to the grave, and I have yet to learn by what means you effected your

escape from Verdun. For two years I mourned you in sincerity and truth. During all that time I regulated my conduct by what I supposed would have been your wishes, if you had been able to express them to me before your supposed death.

"Some months after the expiration of my two years' mourning, I accepted the hand of Mr. Hamilton. You must feel, that, although this second marriage is null and void, and that in the eye of the law I am your wife, an eternal barrier is placed between yourself and me.

"Upon the reception of your first letter, Mr. Hamilton left me, and I have not seen him since. Upon the confirmation of this first letter, (in the authenticity of which we scarcely believed,) I removed with—the—two children to my father's." [She had at first written "*your* two children;" but she felt as if by that word she were tacitly yielding them up to him, and she substituted *our*. This she feared might imply that their re-union was not impossible, and she wrote *the*.] "Indeed, indeed, my conscience acquits me of having

wilfully done anything wrong, though I am aware I have cast a blight over the fate of all those whose happiness I would gladly die to secure. Would I could die! But it is our duty to suffer and submit. Misfortune has, I hope, taught you likewise the duty of resignation. Pray, as I do, for strength to fulfil our pilgrimage here on earth in unrepining patience and humility, so that we may hereafter be deemed worthy of our Maker's promised blessings to those who do his will in this world. Our misfortunes have not originated in guilt: in that reflection let us find a supporting hope; and rest assured that, had I known you to be living, no length of absence, no human power, no imaginable circumstances, should have shaken my adherence to my maiden vow of constancy: you should have found me as you left me—

"Your faithful wife,

"ELLEN CRESFORD."

With what unutterable anguish did she write that name! For some minutes she held the pen suspended before she summoned cou-

rage to trace the dreaded characters. Yet why, when her whole letter avowed herself his wife, why fear to write the word? She forced herself to do so; but as she wrote, she felt guilty towards Algernon. She had been so completely in the habit of doing every thing with reference to him, of being guided by him, of acting as if his eye was always upon her, that she thought what would be his emotions, if he saw her thus deliberately deny him! Yet this was indeed her name, and if she avoided it, she might irritate him who was in very truth her husband; him, who had a right at any moment to tear her children from her! She would no longer hesitate — she would not give herself the opportunity of altering the signature; she sealed the letter, she directed it, she enclosed it to her brother, and when all was done, she felt her separation from him she loved more complete than ever. A gush of tenderness came over her soul. If Algernon had at that moment been at her feet, there is no knowing whether she might not have consented to fly with him to the wilds of

America, or to any spot on earth where human institutions could not reach.

When Algernon arrived at Belhanger, a few days after Ellen's departure, he lost no time in sending little Agnes to rejoin her mother. He thought the presence of her child,—his child,—might afford her the sensation nearest approaching to pleasure of any thing she was now capable of experiencing. It was not without many a bitter pang that he brought himself to part from the only object that remained to him, of all that a few short weeks ago had made him the happiest man alive. But in addition to his anxiety to lessen by any means within his power the bitterness of her fate, it is possible that a lingering hope mingled itself, that she could not refuse to let him occasionally see his child, and that he might perhaps thus obtain an interview with herself.

His home was now utterly desolate. He wandered as she had done before, like an unquiet spirit, from room to room. He pictured to himself what must have been her feelings

when she tore herself from them. He longed to know how she had passed that last sad month; he wished for every trifling detail concerning her occupations, her looks, and yet he did not like to question the servants. He saw in their faces an expression of wonder and dismay; they moved about with stealthy steps, and spoke with subdued voices, while in the part of the house which he inhabited; or else, as he passed by the offices, he heard the loud laugh proceeding from the servants'-hall, or the blithe carol of the laundry-maids over their wash-tub, which jarred his feelings, and he was tempted to exclaim mentally against the heartlessness of menials. Their curiosity, and their want of sympathy, both checked the inclination to question them concerning Ellen, which his restlessness caused frequently to arise in his bosom. Moreover, he scarcely knew in what terms to speak of her.

Mrs. Topham, however, spared him the trouble of deciding for himself. A few days after his return, she made her appearance to receive his orders about the furniture of the

chintz room, saying that Mrs. Hamilton had desired her to ask him what he wished to have done, and also to inquire his pleasure concerning the neck-cloths. He begged her to use her own discretion on those subjects, but still detained her in conversation, hoping she would, of her own accord, allude to Ellen.

Finding that Mrs. Topham's discourse was strictly confined to her business, he ventured at length to say,

"I am afraid your mistress was not quite well when she left Belhanger?"

"Why certainly, sir, Mrs Hamilton did not look so well as she used to do. There was not a servant in the house that did not remark it. But it was very lonesome for her here by herself, and we thought perhaps that was the reason she appeared so low. I am sure, sir, we all heartily wished for you back again, if it was only for our poor mistress's sake."

Mrs. Topham, whose curiosity had only been repressed by her respectful discretion, had no mind to lose this opportunity of ascertaining whether her master and mistress

were really parted or not, and of satisfactorily clearing up the mystery of their late proceedings.

"I suppose, sir," she continued, "my mistress will be coming back soon; — do you not think it would be a good thing to get the muslin curtains in the boudoir washed before her return?"

Poor Hamilton had wished to lead the conversation to Ellen, and now he had succeeded in doing so, he writhed under the questions,— he thought it better not to hear her name mentioned at all, than to be subject to them, and hastily bidding Mrs. Topham see to all those things in her own department, he hurried out to mount his horse, and to gallop like a maniac over the country, as if he could thus escape from the corroding care, which followed faster than he could fly.

When in violent exercise alone, did he experience temporary relief from misery. At home every thing breathed of Ellen, and though it was agonizing to him to see traces of her on all sides, he could not tear himself from the spot; he would pass whole hours in

her morning room, looking over her books, turning over the leaves of the blotting book, in which were notes, memorandums, various little matters which belonged to her. He would gaze for several minutes upon any half-bound book, which had "Ellen Hamilton," written in her hand on the outside. Those two words contained for his heart a world of passionate and blasted feelings. The very household accounts were not without a charm in his eyes — for they perpetuated the memory of a time when she was his wife.

There is no need to dwell upon the emotions of Ellen when the nurse brought her child. The smiles of the infant and the letter which accompanied it, were a momentary balm to her heart. Algernon expressed his conviction that whatever their own fates might be, he could in no way so effectually secure the ultimate and eternal welfare of their child, as by causing its young mind to be trained to all that was virtuous, under Ellen's own immediate eye. She could not but be gratified by his opinion of her, and grateful for his kindness.

It was about a fortnight from the period of

their final separation, when Henry Wareham was one day called out of his office to speak to a gentleman who awaited him in a private apartment. Henry's heart misgave him. His worst fears were on the point of being realized. It must be Cresford.

The room was dark. Henry's eyes were dizzy with intense anxiety; he thought he did not recognise his face; but it was Cresford's voice which asked,

"Are you Henry Wareham?"

"Heavens! Cresford. Is it indeed yourself?"

"Where is my wife?" uttered Cresford in a choked tone of defiance.

"Ellen is with her father," stammered Henry.

"Why was she not here to receive her husband?" continued Cresford.

"Here is a letter, Cresford, which she desired me to give you, and which will explain all."

"Then what I have heard is true!" exclaimed Cresford in a burst of uncontroulable

passion. "Your virtuous sister thought I was safe in an Austrian dungeon, and she has given the loose to her profligate fancies, under the specious veil of marriage! Well done, your sanctified hypocrite! The mourning widow of Ephesus with a vengeance!" And he laughed an appalling, withering laugh, which made Henry shudder. His eyes glared with the fire of madness. Henry almost shrank with the involuntary terror from which the bravest cannot defend themselves if they suspect mental aberration in a fellow-creature.

"Cresford, read this letter, and I think you will not make use of such hard expressions. Though you may be miserable, you will not be so angry."

"So, because I have loved her with mad idolatry, because my passion for her has driven me to acts of desperation,—has driven me to set at nought my life—my safety, you think I am such a besotted fool, that three lines traced by her hand, are to turn the whole current of my feelings; that she can persuade me quietly to yield her to the arms of my rival." He

paused, then added in a deep and thrilling voice, "You neither of you know me. You know not half I have gone through."

"Cresford, all I implore is that you will read my sister's letter. We all believed you dead. The partners in the firm all believed it."

"It was their interest—it was your interest to do so," he answered with a bitter smile.

However, he took the letter.

"Oh, how I have longed to see any thing belonging to her. And now—"

A tear gathered in his eye. Henry augured well of that omen, and stood in silence, somewhat apart.

He had leisure to remark the havoc which time, and suffering, and as he began to fear, madness, had worked in the fine features of his brother-in-law. They were sharper, his nose more prominent, his lips thinner, and more compressed. His brow low on his eye, which glanced quickly and suspiciously from beneath it. Although still young, for Cresford was not yet thirty, his hair was considerably mixed with grey.

Henry watched the varying expression of his countenance as he proceeded with poor Ellen's letter, and he sincerely commiserated the wretched man, who was now a prey to the most agonizing passions of our nature—blasted hope—indignant jealousy.

When he came to the part in which she spoke of having for two years believed herself the wife of Mr. Hamilton, he stamped upon the floor, and crushing the paper in his clenched hand, Henry thought would have destroyed it, in the paroxysm of his rage. However, he proceeded, and a softer shade stole over his face when he read of her grief at making such a return for all his kindness and affection. A tear trickled down his cheek as he came to the part where she described her strict adherence to his wishes; and when she mentioned her having parted from Mr. Hamilton upon the reception of his first letter, he vehemently laid his hand on Henry's arm.

"Is this true?" he said. "Did she part from that man at once?"

"Indeed she did, and has not seen him since."

"Henry, did she love him?—answer me that."

Henry hesitated—"They seemed to live comfortably together, whenever I have seen them."

"Madness! distraction! Did they love each other?"

"I saw but little of them, for I was always in the office," replied Henry evasively.

"I must see her,—I must see her herself; I must know the truth!" He resumed the letter, but hastily passing over that part which spoke of resignation, "There is no use in preaching resignation to me! She might as well attempt to chain the ocean!" He glanced at the signature. "Oh, merciful Heaven! that I could forget all that has gone before; that I could annihilate the preceding words, and preserve nothing but the last, 'Your faithful wife, Ellen Cresford!'"

He gazed in rapturous tenderness upon the words; his tears flowed fast; he kissed the name again and again. Then hastily turning to Henry, he added, "I must see her once again,

and then—God knows what will become of me!"

He rushed out of the house, and before many minutes had elapsed was on his road to Captain Wareham's residence.

CHAPTER XII.

Shall then, in earnest truth,
  My careful eyes observe her?
Shall I consume my youth,
  And short my time to serve her?

Shall I, beyond my strength,
  Let passion's torments prove me,
To hear her say at length
  "Away,—I cannot love thee!"

GEORGE WITHER.—A.D. 1588.

ELLEN was one morning quietly seated in the back drawing-room which had been given up to her and her children; the elder ones were employed, George in reading to his mother, and Caroline in working, seated on a stool at her feet, while the little Agnes was playing on the floor. Ellen heard a knock at the door. Every sound made her start. She heard a loud voice in the passage! A voice! His

voice! Yes, it was his voice whom she had so long believed in the grave, uttering in loud and stern accents, "Show me to Mrs. Cresford,—I must instantly see her," and he darted by the servant up the stairs.

"Not into the front room, sir," the servant called out; "there is company in the front room! the back room, sir, if you please."

Cresford burst open the door, and stood before her, pale and haggard. She did not faint, she did not scream: she had risen from her seat, and she stood transfixed!

She was as beautiful as ever. Sorrow could but dim her brilliancy, — the finely chiselled features, the marble brow, the angelic expression, the feminine dignity, were all there. Cresford gazed in agonized admiration.

"How I have longed for this moment!—this moment, which proves one of torture! Ellen, Ellen, you never loved me, or you could not have done what you have done. But I was resolved to see you again.—Yes, if Heaven and hell had conspired against me, I would have gazed upon that face again." She hid her face with her hands. "No," he said, and

forcibly removed them, "I will look upon those features. It was the recollection of those eyes, of that brow, those lips, which made me cling to life, while they induced me to hazard it a thousand times to gain another sight of them; it was to gaze on them that I practised the imposture by which I escaped from my prison; it was to gaze on them that I preserved my life, though treated as a spy, a prisoner, and a maniac!"

Ellen shook from head to foot. Fear, simple, deadly fear, absorbed every other feeling. She spoke not, she struggled not.

"Ellen, do you love me still? Have you thought of me in absence? Have you wept for me? Is your heart faithful?"

A horrible surmise crossed her. Surely he could not contemplate the idea of taking her back.—"Do you love me, Ellen?" he repeated, and he still held her hands.

"I pity you from the bottom of my heart."

"Do you love me?" and he dashed her hands from him.

"No!" she exclaimed, clasping them ear-

nestly, "No! my whole heart, soul, and affections are Algernon's," and she sank on the floor.

"And do I live to hear you avow your guilt? Shameless, abandoned creature! You, whom I so worshipped! now, now,—in truth my brain will madden!" He struck his forehead with his clenched hands. Then looking round, "These are my children, are they not? —I believed them mine. Yes, yes, they are mine, and mine they shall be! Come with me, children; you shall not remain to be contaminated by the example of a creature who glories in her shame. And this," he added, and lifted the little Agnes from the floor, "this, this is *his* child! Take it,—take it, before I commit any crime I may repent of!" Ellen rushed to it, tore it from him, and hugged it to her bosom. "But these are mine!" he continued, and "these are mine, by every law of nature and of man!" He seized one in each hand. She flew to him, —she clung round his feet. He looked down on her in triumph.

"Oh, spare my children! Oh, Charles, have mercy upon me," and she desperately held the children who clung round her.

At this moment Captain Wareham, who had heard the tumult, entered.

"Captain Wareham, you see a man who claims his children—his children—by the law of the land, his! I conclude you will not interfere with the exercise of my rights as a free-born Englishman."

Ellen had sunk exhausted and sobbing on the floor, feeling that her father would protect her, and preserve her children.

"Surely, Mr. Cresford, this is not the manner in which an Englishman, and a gentleman, would enforce his rights."

"I have been taunted by that woman with her love for another man, and I cannot leave my children in her keeping. They must be delivered up to me."

"They shall — they shall, Mr. Cresford. I pledge myself that before evening they shall be sent to you, at any place you may appoint."

"I am at the hotel opposite, sir, and there I await them within the next two hours."

He darted down the stairs, and out of the house.

The terrified children hung round their mother; Captain Wareham supported her; Caroline—Matilda rushed in. Concealment was no longer practicable — despair and consternation prevailed through the whole house. The two Miss Parkses, who had been "the company in the front drawing-room," discreetly took their departure, but not before they had seen and heard enough to be perfectly *au fait* as to the cause of the confusion, and, in a quarter-of-an-hour, the fact of Mrs. Hamilton's first husband's return was known in every house in the Close, and in half-an-hour more throughout the whole town. But one feeling, however, prevailed — sincere sorrow for the unfortunate Ellen!

Her manners were so gentle, she had not an enemy — her conduct so irreproachable that even the slander of a country-town coterie had never approached her name. Every one felt

disposed to be angry with Mr. Cresford for being alive, and many parents made use of the event to impress upon the minds of their children the dreadful consequences of a deviation from truth, under any circumstances whatsoever.

Why should we return to the scene where Ellen is helplessly kissing her two elder children, while they are as helplessly hanging around her? The idea of resistance never for a moment crossed her. The strong arm of the law she knew could wrest them from her—there was no hope of touching Cresford's heart. Ellen thought this was the bitterest drop of all, in her cup of woe. To be parted from the beings over whose welfare, bodily and mental, she had so carefully watched; in whom she had with tender, and patient care, sown the seeds of good, which she now saw every day bearing fruit according to her most sanguine wishes! The instinctive bond between mother and child may be equally strong at all ages; but when, in addition to the natural pang at such a tie being severed, there is the sorrowful and disappointing prospect of seeing

your labour of love all wasted, and the grief of seeing your sorrow shared by the innocent sufferers, there can be no anguish more poignant, more hopeless.

In man there may exist a preference towards the children of the woman he loves, over those of the woman he has not loved—not so in the gentler sex. It frequently happens that maternal affection is the more powerful principle in those who have been disappointed in their hopes of conjugal happiness. The heart whose tenderness has been repelled in one quarter, expands and fixes itself in the one other lawful direction, and Ellen's love for her elder children fully equalled that she felt for the child of Algernon.

She has taken her last kiss of them; she has for the last time wrapped the handkerchiefs close round their throats to defend them from the chill of the evening; she has for the thousandth time bade them be good children, and implored them to remember all she has told them concerning their duty to God, and to their fellow-creatures. Above all, she made them both promise never to forget to say their

prayers, and added, "never forget to pray for me, my children."

"No, no, mamma; but we shall see you again soon."

"We will hope so, my loves—we shall, I trust, meet again, here, or elsewhere," and her eyes sought that Heaven to which her spirit longed to flee, and be at rest.

"We are not always to remain with that pale dark stranger?"

"He is your father, my children. You owe to him the same duty you owe to me." But she could not bid them love him, obey him, watch his every look, and attend to his every word, as they did to her's, for alas! she remembered but too well what was his violent uncertain temper in happier days, and she trembled to think to what guardianship their helpless innocence was committed.

"If strangers," she added, "should speak slightingly of me, darlings,—my own dear, good children, will not believe them. I know they will not."

Once more they were locked in a long and close embrace—gradually she relaxed her hold.

Matilda, Caroline, Captain Wareham gently unwound them from her. The awe-struck children let themselves be quietly withdrawn, and, when Ellen recovered from her swoon, they were with their father some miles on the road to London.

What were Cresford's emotions?—Such was the tumult of his soul they could scarcely be defined. The circumstances under which the children had been introduced to their father were not such as to inspire them with filial affection; and, notwithstanding their mother's parting injunction, they looked upon him with fear and horror, as the stranger who had made mamma so unhappy, and had taken them away from her in such a hurry. They could not the least comprehend what was meant by this man's being their father, for they remembered wearing black frocks for a long, long time, because their father was dead.

Cresford saw the instinctive terror with which, when he kissed them, and bade them love him, they shrank from his caresses. With increased bitterness he exclaimed, "She has taught them to hate me! My own chil-

dren hate me,—my wife disowns me! I am an outcast on the face of the earth! It had been better, a thousand times better for me to have consumed away the remnant of my existence in my dungeon! There I had hope!—I could think of my Ellen,—of my children! and fancy the time might come when I should once more know happiness with them. Oh! for those visionary days of fancied bliss!—how much better than this horrible waking certainty of endless misery! But I will be revenged! If I am miserable, those who have made me so shall not be happy!" And at that moment he took the resolution of availing himself of every power which the law placed in his hands, of bringing her, who had caused him to be the wretch he was, to open and public shame.

The rest of the journey was performed in silence. His heart had been too long seared by suffering, to open to parental affection. His children showed none for him; he was not in a state of mind to attempt to win it by patient kindness, and he felt injured as a father, as well as a husband. In truth, a calmer, gentler disposition than his, might have had all the

milk of human kindness turned to gall, in his situation. He had most truly loved his wife, and his case was as pitiable, and as hopeless a one, as can well be imagined. The mental aberration to which he had slightly alluded, and which had prevented him for some years from even attempting to make his imprisonment in Austria known, either to his friends or to the Government, had been brought on by the vehement and ungoverned nature of his passions; which, as might be expected, did not meet with the soothing treatment calculated to allay them, but, on the contrary, with every thing tending most to inflame and irritate them. The reason which might have controuled them remained, in some degree, weakened, while the passions themselves were in full force.

Upon his arrival in London he deposited his children at an hotel, and sallied forth in search of a lawyer. He walked to Lincoln's Inn, and knocked at the first door that presented itself. He was admitted, and was shown up to a middle-aged, quiet little man, with spectacles upon his nose.

CHAPTER XIII.

Gomez.—And wouldst thou bare thy bosom's grief to one,
A dull mechanic, who but stares on thee
With cold unmeaning wonder? I had rather
The secret pang should rankle at the core,
And eat my life away, than my dear thoughts
Be made thus stale and common. Hast no friend,
No tried companion, whose unwearied ear
Would ease thy o'ercharged breast?
Pedro.— . . . . . Not one—not one!
I am alone, with such a sum of ills
As o'erturns reason.

Manuscript Tragedy.

"SIR," said Cresford to the lawyer, "I come to you for justice. You see before you a man who has been deeply injured in his honour, his affections, and his rights as a man, a husband, and a father."

Mr. M'Leod pointed to a chair, and begged the gentleman to be seated—professed his willingness to lend any assistance in his power to

a person who appeared to be suffering under such injuries, and begged him calmly to detail to him the circumstances of the case, that he might judge in what mode he could best render this assistance.

"I am calm, sir: if you knew all, you would wonder at my calmness. During the year of peace in 1802, I was called to France on mercantile business. I left a wife I adored—Oh, sir! she was the loveliest creature that ever walked this earth!—she seemed as pure as she was lovely. I worshipped her as the Persians of old, worshipped the sun. She was every thing to me! I scarcely suffered the wind to blow on her. The gaze of another man appeared to me almost pollution to a creature so sacred. I left her with her father, as I thought, in honour and in safety, and with her, my two children.

"Every one knows the fate of those who were found in France upon the declaration of hostilities. I was one of the *détenus*, and at Verdun I was condemned to drag out many, many weary months, in absence from her I so madly adored. A vague jealousy, a fear of

what might occur in my absence, racked my brain almost to madness. I would not accept my parole; the severity of my imprisonment was nothing to me. Of what avail was the liberty of wandering a few miles from the town, to one whose whole soul was in another land? It mattered little to me where I was detained, if I was far from her, and I would be bound by no ties of honour from attempting every thing in my power to make my escape. Several times I had nearly accomplished it, but each time the vigilance of my jailers overtook me.

"At length I thought of a plan which proved successful. I wrote a letter to my wife, informing her that I intended to counterfeit illness,—on my feigned death-bed, to obtain permission to be buried by torch-light in the Protestant burying-ground out of the town, and with the assistance of my friend and only confidant, Morton, to follow my own funeral procession, at night, wrapt in a military cloak, as one of the mourners. Every thing succeeded to my wishes. I was considered as falling a victim to my mental sufferings, and my fate

excited pity. I obtained the permission required. Morton administered a strong sleeping draught, and as he was my constant attendant, he pronounced me dead. I was placed in my coffin, and on the evening of my funeral, which was the next succeeding my supposed death, he begged to be allowed to weep in private over the bier of his best friend, and took that opportunity of opening the coffin, dressing me in the clothes which he had conveyed into the room, filling the coffin with some billets of wood which had been brought to make up the fire, and of concealing me in an adjoining closet till the moment arrived for the procession to move on. I then mixed among the mourners, and by favour of the darkness, escaped detection. As most of the other officers were on parole, there was no difficulty made as to the number who passed the gates, and with a palpitating heart, I found myself, unfettered by any pledge of honour, beyond the walls of Verdun.

"It was not till all present were occupied in actually lowering the coffin into the ground, that I ventured to absent myself. I took that

moment to steal away, and plunging into a neighbouring thicket, I remained there closely concealed, till they had all wound their way back into the town.

"Morton had placed for me a peasant's dress, a bag of provisions, and some money, in a hollow tree, the situation of which he had so accurately described to me, that I found it without much loss of time, and having changed my dress, and carefully concealed my military costume, I dashed right onwards, and before morning, had cleared three leagues. I need not tell you how I made my way from day to day—how I crossed the Rhine in an open boat, which in my wanderings I found moored to the shore; how I was, in Germany, immediately seized as a spy, and how for four years, I was enabled still to endure the tortures of an Austrian dungeon, by the distant hope of some day being restored to my Ellen, —*my* Ellen! I thought her *mine* then! I have escaped from my dungeon—I have returned! I came to my home—no one knew me—I asked for my wife—I received no answer—I inquired for my children—they were

at Mr. Hamilton's!—for that is his name—that is the name of the man who has robbed me of my wife—my wedded, lawful wife!—for she is my wife! By the law of the land, she is my wife, sir? There is justice for me in this land of law, of liberty, of impartial justice, is there not? She can be prosecuted for bigamy, sir. She must be found guilty. I come to you to learn how to proceed—Do you advise me, guide me. Oh! my brain is confused and maddened! I cannot, cannot think!"

Cresford paced the apartment in violent agitation. The quiet lawyer looked up from his spectacles, and half wondered whether his would-be client was quite in his right senses. Cresford had not paused for a moment. There was a relief in thus disburthening himself of all that had long been pent up in his soul. He had found those who were nearest and dearest to him, severed, eternally severed from him. All other ties and affections were as nothing before those which had been thus rudely rent asunder, and having once begun to speak to this stranger, he poured forth all his tale as

to his best friend. He might also be prompted to indulge in this confidence by a feeling unknown to himself, that a person totally unacquainted with Ellen, would be more likely to listen with complete sympathy to his wrongs, than any one who had known, or even seen her.

Mr. M'Leod answered,

"Indeed, sir, your case appears to be a very hard one. You wrote, you say, to your wife, to inform her of the plan you meant to adopt?"

"I wrote to her explaining the whole thing, and sent the letter by my friend Maitland, who succeeded in making his escape a month before I put my plan in execution. I waited to make sure he got off in safety. He wrote to me the evening before he sailed in a fishing-vessel for England."

"And you are confident she received this letter?"

"She says she did not—but she had fallen in love with Hamilton! She never loved me, I am now sure she never loved me," he re-

peated in a tone of deep despondency, but he continued with more bitterness: "It was very convenient to her to believe in my death; convenient to my partners in trade, to divide the profits of the business — very convenient for her brother to be admitted to a share. Ha, ha, ha! they have all revelled in my spoils — they thought me safe in my dungeon! But I am here — I am alive — they cannot prove me dead. I will wrest my wife, my children, my property, from the spoiler's grasp!" and he laughed a wild laugh of desperation.

It had been Mr. M'Leod's fate frequently to see people under a state of great excitement, so that, although he feared his visiter's mind might be somewhat warped by his misfortunes, he did not doubt there was ground for all he stated, and he now enquired methodically into his name, his connexions, his residence.

He remembered the name as one of considerable note in the mercantile world, and he had some recollection of having heard his death mentioned, as one of the melancholy con-

sequences of the cruel and unjustifiable act of arbitrary power, which must always be a disgrace on the name of Napoleon.

"Indeed, Mr. Cresford," rejoined M'Leod, "I pity you most sincerely—whether your wife may be to blame or not."

"Whether my wife may be to blame or not? And do I hear an Englishman, whose profession it is, to right the injured, to procure justice for all indifferently — do I hear him advocate the cause of the faithless wife? then, indeed, have I little chance of redress!"

"My good sir, you misunderstand me entirely. I do not mean to advocate her cause, or anybody's cause. I merely mean to say, that I am very sorry for you, whether your wife did ever receive the letter you wrote to her, or whether she did not."

"She did receive it—she must have received it; and, if she did not, she should have waited for some more positive, and certain information of my death, than common report!"

"Very true, Mr. Cresford — quite true, sir; yet, if you had been dead, it would not have been easy for you to write her word you were

dead, though she might have expected to hear from you that you were alive."

"Is there justice for me in the laws of my country, or is there not?" repeated Cresford, sternly.

"Certainly, sir. In this country there is justice for everybody."

"Then how am I to seek redress? In what court?"

"Why, if by redress you mean revenge, that is to be obtained by prosecuting your wife for bigamy, in which case the trial would take place at the assizes of the county in which the marriage ceremony was performed: but, under the circumstances of the case under which the crime of bigamy was committed, I conclude, that if she quits the roof of her second husband——"

"He is not her husband, sir; I am her husband, and I will prove it. She, the immaculate — the refined — who seemed to shrink from my love as too impassioned — she shall be proved to have been living in sin with another man!"

"Does she still reside with Mr.—— I beg

your pardon, what was the name you mentioned?"

"Hamilton — Hamilton is his name — and curses on it!" exclaimed Cresford, goaded to madness by the cool and methodical manner of the lawyer, who, though a lawyer, was an honest straight-forward man, with plain manners and a good heart.

"Does she still reside with Mr. Hamilton?"

"No! she is with her father. She had not the face to live on with Hamilton when she knew I was alive, and on my way home."

"And your children, sir, does she make any difficulty about sending them to you?"

"No! I brought them away with me yesterday."

"Then I do not exactly understand what redress you seek, at the arm of the law."

The clear head, and the kind heart of the lawyer, made him begin to see that, although a most singular and lamentable case, it was one in which all parties were more deserving of pity, than of blame, and it seemed to him that the poor woman had acted as well as she could under the unfortunate circumstances.

"Have you and Mrs. Cresford had an interview since your return, and in what manner did she comport herself?"

"I saw her yesterday. I saw her in all her loveliness — I could almost have forgotten every thing — for the moment it was such rapture to gaze on her again; when she told me, in so many words, that her whole heart and soul were his—my rival's."

"Poor woman!" ejaculated Mr. M'Leod.

"And is it she, whom you pity? Am I doomed to be scorned and persecuted by the whole human race? To be hated by all who are bound to me by the nearest and dearest ties? Are even strangers to take part against me? But I will have revenge, if I cannot have sympathy. I will be feared if I cannot be loved. I would fain be loved; it was my nature to love, and to wish for love in return." His voice softened, and the tears swam in his eyes, "But I have never been loved — no, she never did love me! He had her first affections — her whole affections! Oh, how those words ring in my ears!"

Mr. M'Leod was moved by his expressions

of wretchedness, and rising from his seat, he took his hand kindly,

"Though I am a stranger to you, sir, I pity you most sincerely," he said, "and I wish I could persuade you to look more calmly on the case."

"Can you—will you assist me?"

"Explain to me in what mode you wish for my assistance."

"Will you undertake the prosecution of Ellen Cresford for bigamy?"

"Why, I must consider a little about it. I am an odd sort of fellow, and though I am a lawyer, I have a corner of conscience," and Mr. M'Leod smiled. Cresford hated him for being able to smile. "I do not engage in any thing till I know a little more about the matter. I am very well off in the world, and I do not want to make money, by causing my fellow-creatures to be more unhappy than they need be. I can't tell what I might do, if I was poor; but thank God I can afford to dismiss a client, if I think that no good can come of gaining his cause."

"Then you dismiss me, Mr. M'Leod?"

"I do not justly say that; but I should like to know how truly your wife believed you were dead and buried, and whether she had got acquainted with the other gentleman, before she heard the news of your death, and a few more such questions; for it runs in my head, that though your case is a hard one, her's may be a hard one too, and that the best thing you could both do, would be to let each other alone, and bear your misfortunes as well as you can."

"It is easy enough to preach forbearance, and patience, and submission, and resignation. You would not find them quite so easy to practise. I did not come to you, Mr. M'Leod, for ghostly counsel. I came to you for professional advice. Thus much I have ascertained, that the offence will be tried at the county assizes, and the punishment ——?"

"Mercy upon me, sir! You do not really wish your wife to be transported, when you deceived her with a false report of your death. I will have nothing to say to the matter, Mr. Cresford. You may find another solicitor, who is sharper set for a job than I am."

Cresford seized his hat, and muttering between his teeth, "Friend and foe, stranger and the wife of my bosom,—all leagued against me!" he made a slight bow to the honest lawyer, and again found himself jostled in the busy throng of London.

One thing, however, he had ascertained, that the prosecution would take place at her native town, and he felt a certain pleasure in the idea that she would be held up to disgrace there, among the very people who knew he was the betrayed and the detested husband. Those who were aware of the humiliating situation in which he was placed, would be witnesses of his revenge.

CHAPTER XIV.

And sudden hurricanes sweep all around,
That strip the tender leaves, and whirl amain,
While dread convulsions heave the shuddering ground,
And rocks, and caves, with hollow moan complain;
For ANGER hight, the lord of this domain,
Who when he fondly deems the ruin brought
On others' fame and fortunes, his dear gain,
Finds that his own destruction he hath wrought,
And on himself hath wreaked the vengeance that he sought.

Manuscript Poem.

ONE other mode of vengeance Cresford was determined to pursue, namely, to call out Mr. Hamilton. He returned to the hotel, and there he sat down to write a challenge, couched in language such as he thought must goad any man to give him the satisfaction for which he pined.

Having from the red-book ascertained the

direction to Mr. Hamilton's place, he sent it by the post, for there was no one to whom he could apply on this emergency. He had not yet communicated with any of the partners of his house; he had seen no one except Henry Wareham; he felt that all living beings were his foes, and he therefore could not bring himself to have recourse to any of those who formerly called themselves his friends. He fancied he should only thereby expose himself to meeting with fresh unkindness, and want of sympathy.

When he had despatched his letter to Hamilton, he sent for his children into the room where he was sitting. They came pale and frightened. He tried to talk to them. He strove to adapt his conversation to their age. He asked them how they liked London, whether they had walked in the streets, and told them they should go to Kensington Gardens; but his eye was wild, his manner fierce and hurried, and they scarcely ventured to answer him. He soon sent them back to their attendant, his feelings rather embittered than softened by the interview.

When he was able to fix his mind to the consideration of any subject, he became aware that he ought to arrange something more proper and more advantageous for them than their present mode of life, and he resolved, provided he did not fall by the hand of Hamilton, to take a small house in the immediate vicinity of London, where they might reside with their *bonne*, who had been with them for some time, and where they might also have the advantage of masters.

He impatiently awaited Hamilton's answer. It came; and in the first rage of disappointment he tore it into a thousand fragments. Hamilton distinctly and positively refused to meet Mr. Cresford, and told him that no taunts, no insults, should ever induce him to do so.

Cresford threw himself into a chaise, and in half an hour was on the Portsmouth road. When he arrived within sight of Belhanger, he gave a second letter to a messenger, and desired it to be instantly delivered to Mr. Hamilton. In this he branded him with the name of coward, and he flattered himself it

was such as must secure to him the revenge he coveted.

Dismissing his chaise, he approached the scene of Ellen's former happiness, and prowled around the precincts with redoubled feelings of jealousy. The loveliness of the place excited his envy — the venerable-looking manor house, the old oaks, the deer! Yet from these things he gleaned a momentary consolation. Perhaps it was the splendour of the connexion that tempted her! But, oh no! the expression of her countenance, when she said her whole heart, soul, and affections, were Algernon's! Those words sounded again in his ears, and he longed to find himself in mortal struggle, with the man of whom she could so speak.

He hurried back to the inn, hoping his last letter must have provoked an answer consonant to his wishes. He found an envelope, containing his own despatch unopened.

There was no further redress to be sought; and he had but to retrace his steps to London, if possible more infuriated than before.

Algernon had not trusted himself to read this second letter. He had resolved that no earthly power should tempt him to lift his hand against her husband: he was determined to commit no act that would place a barrier between himself and Ellen, which neither time, nor change of circumstances, could remove. Cresford was mortal, as well as himself, or Ellen; and if, although he might wait till extreme old age, there was a possibility of their ever being reunited, no act of his should have rendered their reunion impracticable.

Cresford returned to London, and he quickly put into execution the plan for the establishment of his children. It was necessary to enter into something like an arrangement with his partners. As yet he had taken no measures towards resuming his place among them; he had made himself known to none of his old acquaintances; he had communicated with no one, except those we have already mentioned.

But money now became necessary to him. He revisited the house, and begged he might be immediately put in possession of his share

of the receipts. His place of residence became known, and many left their names for him at the hotel; but even with the few whom he occasionally saw, he preserved a moody silence — to none did he speak of his misfortunes, or of his intentions.

The only person whose house he frequented, was an old bachelor who had been a friend of the family, who was his godfather, and who had taken advantage of that sort of connexion to lecture him, and to find fault with him, when he was a boy. He had always disliked him, and why he should now be the only person whose society he selected, was one of the strange and unaccountable freaks of a mind ill at ease with itself, to which the spectacle of content and cheerfulness is irksome, while it finds a kind of relief in the contemplation of another equally joyless.

Sir Stephenson Smith had in his youth esteemed himself a man of gallantry. He had never been handsome, but he had thought himself insinuating; and he had been made a fool of by many a fair one of his day. He

had always professed to be on his guard against the machinations of the sex; and as he fancied, had preserved his liberty up to the present day; — that is to say, he had been by turns the tyrant and the slave of any woman who had art and vice enough to think it worth her while to dupe him. His conversation chiefly turned upon the coldness and the heartlessness of women. To most others it would have been a shocking sight; but Cresford found a strange satisfaction in watching the blind and helpless old man, as he sat in his arm-chair, surrounded by all the luxuries, which to him were of no avail, and receiving, with querulous impatience, the attentions of a bustling nurse, who, through evil report and good report, whether he was cross or not, conscientiously did her duty by him, and quietly performed the offices for which she was hired.

Cresford was one day paying Sir Stephenson his diurnal visit. He had sat for some time in silence; his two hands rested upon his two knees, his eyes looked vacantly, but fixedly,

into the fire, when his meditations were broken in upon by the peevish lamentations of the old man.

"There! that tiresome woman has not given me my snuff-box!" and his feeble, palsied hands, strayed over the table in search of the snuff-box which was in his pocket. "She has no feeling for me! she does not care whether I am comfortable or uncomfortable, as long as she gets her money and her perquisites — that is the way of women! Talk of their kindliness! They care for nothing but themselves. They can pretend to care for one, when one is young and handsome — and when one has plenty of money in one's pocket too; but I never knew one of them who had a grain of feeling! I have been a pretty fellow in my youth, and have had as many women make love to me as my neighbours, but hang me, if any one of them ever loved me for myself. There is this Sarah Purbeck, she cares no more for me!——"

"What an infatuation it is," exclaimed Cresford, "which can make us worship such

fickle, heartless creatures! as variable as the weathercock, which changes with every wind that blows! But that time is past — I have awoke from my day-dream — I know what their love is worth now!"

"Ay! and so do I, my boy. I never thought it worth much; and now I know it is worth — nothing at all! However, if I have not given them much of a heart-ache," he added, laughing a feeble, old, cracked laugh, "they have not given me much of a heart-ache either!"

"Do you think they are capable of loving truly and sincerely? Do you think they can love, though you and I may have lived unloved?"

"Yes; they can love themselves and their clothes, and their opera-boxes, and, sometimes, some man they ought not to love."

Cresford bit his lips, and knit his brows, and his fist lay clenched upon the table. A long silence ensued. At length the old man fidgeted about, rang the bell, and asked for his chocolate. He struck his watch: it was

five minutes past the hour. He scolded Mrs. Purbeck for her inattention, and when she left the room, he said in a dejected tone—

"It is a sad thing to have nobody to care for one: that woman does not love me. Perhaps, after all, if I had married, I might, in a wife, have found an affectionate nurse."

"Affection!" exclaimed Cresford—"Affection in a wife! Have not I a wife?—and have I met with affection?" He several times paced up and down the apartment, and then hastily took his leave.

These visits did not tend to put him in good humour with human nature, or with womankind: they still more soured and embittered his temper; and when he had put his affairs in train, had resumed his situation as partner, and measures had been taken for Henry Wareham's withdrawal from a concern in which he found himself frequently and painfully brought in contact with Cresford, he left London, his mind fully made up to pursue his unfortunate wife according to the rigour of the law.

He had ascertained from Mr. M'Leod that the trial would take place at the assizes of the county in which the second marriage had been celebrated, the very one in which she at present resided. He took up his abode in a neighbouring village. His first care was to obtain the certificate of his own marriage at the cathedral church of ——. He proceeded to procure that of the second marriage at Longbury, for which purpose he sent to the minister of that place, a regular application for the extract from the parish register.

Mr. Allenham had no option — he was obliged to comply; but he was inexpressibly alarmed at the application, and lost no time in informing Captain Wareham of the circumstances, while Caroline wearied herself in conjectures, and hopes, and fears as to what Cresford might meditate.

This communication did not render Captain Wareham more easy and comfortable in his mind; and although the kindness of his heart prompted him to conceal his fears from Ellen, the additional weight of care

rendered him more than usually difficult to be pleased. The Allenhams had returned to their own home soon after Ellen's arrival, and her two poor elder children having been removed, the last few weeks had been passed in melancholy quiet. Still Matilda found her task more than usually difficult, and she was so subdued herself by the misfortunes of her sister, that she had no longer the buoyancy of spirit which enabled her, half gaily, half resolutely, to bear up against the daily worries of her father's temper. To Ellen he never, on any occasion, spoke with captiousness; but he often appeared annoyed with the little Agnes, who was old enough to toddle about the room, to pull away grandpapa's toast, to stumble over his foot as it was extended towards the fire, to frighten him lest she might fall against the fender, and to do the hundred things which are charming and attractive to those whose hearts are light, and who can give themselves up to watching the graceful awkwardnesses, the winning *espiégleries* of infancy, but which

are inexpressibly wearisome when the mind is oppressed with deep and serious care.

Ellen saw that her child, her only remaining child, was often troublesome to her father, and she kept it out of the room as much as possible. He was then vexed that the child should not be with them, and his good-nature made him fear he might have hurt Ellen's feelings.

Cresford having obtained the two certificates, now waited upon Mr. Turnbull, a country gentleman and a magistrate, and producing the two documents, informed him that he wished to indict his wife, Ellen Cresford, for bigamy, and required him to issue a warrant for her apprehension.

Mr. Turnbull, although not personally acquainted with the parties, knew the respectability of their situations, and had heard under what circumstances the second marriage had been contracted. He attempted to dissuade Mr. Cresford from carrying matters to such an extremity; to which Cresford sternly replied, as he had previously done to Mr. M'Leod's

remonstrances, that he did not apply to him for advice, that he simply waited upon him to demand the performance of his duty as a magistrate—that the case was clearly made out before him, and he was not to counsel, but to act.

Mr. Turnbull, although he did so most unwillingly, had no choice but to grant the desired warrant. It was with a feeling of triumph that Cresford seized the paper, and, bowing to Mr. Turnbull, abruptly quitted him, before he had time to adduce any arguments in favour of delay.

Cresford proceeded to the county town, and delivering the warrant to the constable, desired him to perform his duty.

It so happened, that the constable to whom he addressed himself, was the very Will Pollard who had once lived as gardener with Captain Wareham, and who had known Ellen from her childhood. He had inherited a little money, and had set up for himself, as Nurseryman and Seedsman. He stood aghast when the paper was placed in his hand, and declared in round terms, that nothing should induce

him to be the bearer of such a thing, "to Miss Ellen that was."

"Take back your paper, sir! If you are for taking the law of her, sir, you must find somebody else—I 'll have nothing to say to it," and he shoved the paper back to Cresford in no very civil manner.

"You cannot help yourself," Cresford replied with an exulting calmness. "You must execute a magistrate's warrant—you cannot help yourself."

"I a'n't bound to do such a thing as this?" asked Pollard the gardener, of Simpson the shoemaker, who happened to be present.

"I don't know what right you have to refuse," answered Simpson, who was a man of wisdom, and read all the newspapers.

Pollard hesitated. He had not long been established in a concern of his own, he was new in office, and he looked up to Simpson for advice and guidance: after having scratched his head, brushed his hat with his sleeve, and pruned a thriving young shrub considerably more than it required, he said,

"Maybe if 'tis to be done, I may be able

to speak kinder to her than another, and she always was partial to me from a child." So he took the paper, and held it doubtingly and distrustfully in his hand. "No," he said, again scratching his head, "I don't half like the job; you had better get Mr. Clarke, the carpenter, on the left-hand side, to do it for you, sir. He is a constable as well as me."

"Mr. Pollard, the law must have its course. You know that, as well as I do. You had better take the warrant I have now given you, and bring the person therein mentioned, before the magistrate, as the law directs."

"Well," said Pollard, "what must be, must be, and it don't signify argufying. And when is it to be served?"

"To-day, sir! Now!" answered Cresford, in a stentorian voice. "I expect to meet you at Mr. Turnbull's with — with — the person specified in that warrant, in your custody. In three hours I shall be there."

Cresford departed, leaving poor Pollard perplexed and confounded. It went against him sadly, to do what was required of him. He turned in his head how he might open the bu-

siness to Miss Ellen "just easy like, without putting her in a fluster," and in the first place he resolved to change his dress. "He wasn't no ways tidy to appear before Captain Wareham and his family. He would look clean and decent at least. He would do nothing as was not respectful by the family." So Pollard retired to repair his toilette, feeling that he thereby softened the blow which was hanging over poor Ellen.

His wife was surprised to see him all in his Sunday's best.

"Why, what merry-making are you ever going to, Will?" said she: "is it your club day?"

"No, 'tan't my club day, woman; you know well enough, that a'n't till next week?"

"Why, in the name of fortune, where are you going to, then? You are not going to Tharford fair, sure!"

"No! I a'n't going to no fair, nor no merry-making," and he stood brushing his hat round and round with the sleeve of his coat; "I am going where I have no mind to go."

"Why, Will, you quite fright me! You can't have done any thing wrong?"

"No! But I've got a warrant to sarve."

"Why, Lord bless us, this is not the first warrant you have had to sarve! But I never knew you dress yourself out so fine to sarve a warrant before," and Peggy smiled.

"You would not laugh, if you knew who that warrant was made out for — It's for my Miss Ellen as you have heard me talk of, many and many's the time. She's the one as I've often told you, was as quick up the ladder as I was myself—and such a one as she was to sow seeds! and she could make cuttings almost as well as I could myself! Miss Caroline, she was always for walking in the streets, and looking out for the beaux, but Miss Ellen, she would hoe and rake for me all her play-time, if they would let her."

"A warrant for her, Will? You are dreaming."

"No, I a'n't! But hold your tongue, and mind your business. There's no good in prating—we must all do what is appointed us."

Will marched out at the door with a tear

called up by his own eloquence gathering in his eye.

He proceeded to Captain Wareham's. He knocked at the door.—

"If you please, James," said he, "if you please, I want to have a word with Mrs. Hamilton—that is—Mrs. Cres—Miss Ellen that was—my Miss Ellen."

"Step in, Master Pollard, I 'll tell her directly."

Pollard stood twirling his hat, and debating within himself how he was to open his business, when James came back, and bade him walk up.

"Mrs. Cresford is alone—she bids us all say Mrs. Cresford now," he whispered; "she says there 's no use in standing out about a name,—and yet she takes her letters every morning as if she did not half like to touch them."

Pollard entered the room where Ellen sat, meek and dejected, with little Agnes in her lap playing at the table—she looked up with a faint smile.

"I have not seen you a long time, Pollard;

I hear you are become a married man since you left my father."

"Yes, ma'am, so I am, an't please you."

"I hope you are quite comfortable; I should have been to call on you, but I have not been out lately."

"Thank you, ma'am, all the same for thinking of me. 'Twould be a pride and a pleasure to me, to show you how nice and comfortable I've got every thing about me—but—

"Speak out, Pollard; you are a very old friend: you were a great play-mate of mine in my childhood. If you have any little favour to ask of me, I shall be glad to do my best, though I am not quite so rich now as I once was." Her eyes dropped, and a paler hue stole over her cheek.

"No, 'tisn't that, bless your kind heart, 'tisn't that. I had rather by half ask a favour of you, for I know 'twould be a pleasure to you to grant it. But I've got a bit of paper here, ma'am. You see, ma'am, I'm a constable, and they have put this upon me. They say as I must give you this here bit of paper, and I scarce know what will come of it."

Ellen received the paper from Pollard's trembling hand, while with the back of the other he brushed off a tear. She still thought some misfortune had befallen his family,—that most likely it was a petition, and it took her some moments to collect her thoughts so as to comprehend the full purport of the warrant.

The idea that she could be prosecuted for bigamy had never before crossed her imagination. The misfortune of no longer being the wife of Algernon, and the disgrace and shame of having lived with him for two years, had completely occupied her whole soul. She had not been able to imagine any misery beyond this. No one had ever hinted at such a possibility, nor indeed had any one believed that Cresford, however keenly he might himself suffer from the consequences of his own imprudence, would have wreaked his useless vengeance upon his unfortunate wife.

Ellen was thunder-struck! The poor constable begged her pardon, entreated her to believe it was no fault of his; that he was bound to obey the law. "We can't help ourselves, ma'am; we must do what the law di-

rects,—them as have to execute the laws, and them as have to obey them,—'tis all one for us both."

Poor Ellen begged him to find her father, and to bid him come to her. She was scared, frightened. She could not be more completely separated from Algernon,—her children were already torn from her. She was, therefore, simply, vaguely frightened.

Captain Wareham came. She gave him the paper. He guessed the purport but too well, and turned deadly pale: "When is this summons to be attended, Pollard?"

"Why, sir, Mr. Cresford said we must meet him at Squire Turnbull's, in three hours from the time he was at my house, and that was at two o'clock, just as I had done dinner."

"Meet him! Am I to meet Mr. Cresford? Oh, father! any thing but that!"

"Dearest child, there is no avoiding it. You must exert all your strength of mind: you must not give way. Mr. Turnbull is a good sort of man, and there will be no one else present. Cresford is a brute, an unmanly brute! If you could feel half as angry with

him as I do, your anger would give you strength to go through the interview."

"I am too miserable to feel angry, father. Besides, I am sorry for him:—I have made him very unhappy. I know what pain it is to be separated from what one loves, even when one knows one is loved in return. What am I to do, father?" she meekly added.

"The sooner we get this unpleasant business over, the better, my dearest child. Go and put on your things; I will order a chaise immediately." He hurried Ellen out of the room; he longed to be for a moment freed from her presence; he knew that this summons was the prelude to a prosecution; he knew that the punishment of bigamy might be transportation. Though he had no idea matters would ever be brought to such an extremity, he felt awed and nervous in the extreme, and he paced the apartment in the greatest agitation. Pollard stood still, perplexed and grieved. "Get along, Pollard," exclaimed Captain Wareham, angrily; "can't you wait down-stairs? Why do you stand here watching me?" He rang the bell vio-

lently, and ordered the hack chaise to be instantly procured.

Captain Wareham kept no carriage. Ellen had strictly conformed to her father's mode of life: she would not consent to live in splendour upon the money Mr. Hamilton would fain have forced upon her.

The hack chaise came to the door. The lovely, the graceful Ellen, who, as the wife of Mr. Cresford, had been used to all the luxuries of life, and, as the wife of Algernon Hamilton, to all its refinements, ascended the jingling steps, and, rustling through the straw, seated herself at the farther corner of the narrow seat, while the constable of the parish, mounted on the bar before, conveyed her like a common culprit before the magistrate.

CHAPTER XV.

Cosmus, Duke of Florence, had a desperate saying against perfidious or neglecting friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable. "You shall read," saith he, "that we are commanded to forgive our enemies, but you never read that we are commanded to forgive our friends." But yet the spirit of Job was in a better tune: "Shall we," saith he, "take good at God's hands, and not be content to take evil also?" and so of friends in proportion. This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge, keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal and do well. LORD BACON.

Redeemer, heal his heart! It is the grief
Which festers there that hath bewildered him.
SOUTHEY'S *Roderick*.

THE events of the morning had been so sudden and so bewildering, that Ellen scarcely comprehended what was happening. The knowledge that she was again to be brought into the presence of Cresford, was the one idea that possessed her mind. "What does he want me for? What am I to say to him, father? What is this to lead to?"

"I scarcely know, my child. You have nothing to do but to answer the truth. Your conduct has been irreproachable. You have nothing to blush for."

"Oh, how I dread meeting those eyes again! Keep close to me, father."

They arrived. Ellen, pale and trembling, was supported by her father into the hall. They were instantly shown into Mr. Turnbull's study, where he waited to receive them. He offered Ellen a seat. There was a dignity in her timidity that awed, while it excited compassion; and Mr. Turnbull, though a plain matter-of-fact man, treated her with more polite deference than usually appeared in his manner towards women.

"I believe," he said, "I must now summon Mr. Cresford, that he may go through the form of his deposition."

Ellen bowed assent, and trembled through every limb. But she kept her eyes on the ground, and moved not. Cresford entered,—she did not stir.

As he approached the table, he gazed on her, though it was rather in triumph than in

love; but her veil was down, her bonnet tied close, her form enveloped in a cloak. The oath was administered. Mr. Turnbull said:

"I believe, Madam, you must for a moment remove your veil, that the complainant may identify you."

Ellen drew it aside, and turned on him her pale, sad face; but still she raised not her eyes. Cresford advanced a step towards the table, to take the Bible, and to swear that the prisoner was Ellen Cresford, his wife. She instinctively seized her father's arm, and sheltered herself behind him.

Cresford showed his marriage certificate. The servant who had formerly lived with him, and the clerk of * * * *, were present to prove the celebration of the marriage. He then produced the extract from the Longbury register.

Mr. Turnbull asked Ellen what she had to say in reply. In a faint voice, she answered "Nothing!" She had but one absorbing feeling — that of bringing this painful interview to a close. But Captain Wareham interposed.

"I cannot allow this cruel and unjust state-

ment to be made, without simply mentioning the circumstances under which my daughter's second marriage was contracted. Mr. Cresford chose to publish an account of his own death — he chose to enact his own funeral — his friends and relations mourned him as dead. Two years and two months after the receipt of the paper containing this account of his decease, my daughter contracted a second marriage. Should any man in justice, in honour, prosecute such a case?"

"Certainly not," was Mr. Turnbull's concise reply. He looked at Cresford: "Do you wish me, sir, to proceed? — it is yet time to pause. You will no longer be at liberty to retract. If I make out the commitment, you are bound over to prosecute."

"I know it, sir! It is my intention so to do."

"Madam, my duty is a painful one, but I must proceed according to the provisions of the Act!" and Mr. Turnbull drew out the warrant of commitment; at the same time he informed the constable that he would himself attend that evening with a brother magis-

trate, to admit her to bail; and that he authorized him to conduct her back to her own house, there to await his arrival, rather than at the county gaol."

"Father, father! I am not to be taken to prison! Impossible! He cannot mean to bring such disgrace upon the mother of his children?"

"My dear Madam, I will attend you at your own house: as the presence of two magistrates is necessary, I will bring Sir John Staples with me. Captain Wareham can then give us bail for your appearance at the ensuing assizes."

"The assizes! Oh! he cannot be in earnest! This is too, too cruel! Drag me before the eyes of the whole county! blazon our misery, and our shame to the world! bring upon us the mockery of the coarse and the unfeeling mob! Oh, Charles! what have I done to deserve this?" She burst into an agony of tears.

"What have you done? Have you not blasted my happiness, broken my heart, and maddened my brain?—and she asks what she

has done!" he added, turning round to those present, with a wild and fearful laugh.

Mr. Turnbull hastened to bring the scene to a close, and lost no time in leading poor Ellen back to her hack chaise. He almost turned Cresford from the door, and instantly galloped off himself in search of Sir John Staples, to proceed with him to Captain Wareham's house, and there to admit Ellen to bail, that, at least, she might thus be spared one painful and ignominious part of what she was doomed to endure.

Ellen threw herself, sobbing and weeping, into the corner of the carriage.

"So I am to be tried, father — tried for bigamy, I suppose! Oh! have mercy Heaven! tried like a common malefactor! placed at the bar, with all the lawyers to look at me; and the dirty mob to laugh, and bandy jests upon me! Oh! I never, never thought of this! And must it be? Is there no escape?"

"Alas! alas! my poor Ellen, I know of none. There is no chance of bringing Cresford to reason; every attempt to do so seems but to incense him. I really think his intel-

lects are affected,—he is scarcely in his right senses."

"I have done that!" she said, in a dejected tone. "It is not for me to be too hard upon him." After a pause of some length, she added, "And, father—the punishment?"

"Oh, my child! do not think of that! no jury on earth can find you guilty."

"But I am guilty, father!—it is true I have committed the crime! I am guilty of bigamy—though it is not my fault."

"They will not condemn you."

"But if they should? I should like to know the worst."

"Why, under aggravated circumstances, the punishment may be transportation for seven years, but they will never pass such a sentence, so think no more of that."

"I had rather it had been death," she replied, in a quiet tone of despair. After another pause, she asked, "If I were to be transported, would that annul my marriage? Should I be free?"

"No, my love, even that would not annul your marriage."

"Perhaps it is best so. I am glad it would not: I would not mar his glorious and honourable career in his own country. It is enough to have the ruin of one fellow-creature on one's conscience." She spoke no more.

They arrived at home. In less than an hour Mr. Turnbull and Sir John Staples arrived, and with them Lord Besville, whom Mr. Turnbull also called upon, and who became bail with Captain Wareham, for her appearance at the assizes.

The constable was dismissed; poor Will Pollard! Never had the law of the land a more unwilling assistant in its execution. When he returned to his cottage late in the evening, he threw down his hat on the table.

"Well," he muttered to himself, "this has been the worst day's job that ever I had to do. I would not have such another, no—not to be justice of the peace, and a squire to boot. Why," he exclaimed in a louder voice, and striking his fist on the table, "why, that fellow had no more business to come back alive, after having sent word he was dead, than

I have to bring in my bills twice over! Shame upon him!"

It was some time before Peggy got at the rights of the case.

"So, 'tis her second husband as is her true love. Poor soul! Well, 'tis very hard. Why 'tis almost worse than if it was her husband's ghost come to haunt her—not that I should any ways like to see the ghost of my first lover Tom Hartrop, as was drowned off Ushant."

Peggy had been a beauty, and was rather fond of talking of her first, her second, her third, and her tenth lover. Will Pollard was in no mood to listen, and, with a manner unusually surly, bade her, "hold her jaw, and make haste with his supper."

It was a sorrowful evening at Captain Wareham's. Ellen retired early to rest, or rather to weep. Captain Wareham sat up late perambulating the small drawing-room, while the measured creaking of his shoes, and periodical stamp of his foot, were heard by Ellen in her apartment above, and by Matilda in hers, as they each passed the greater part of the night in painful watching.

Ellen sat down to write to Algernon for the first time since she had quitted his roof, and resumed the name of Cresford. To him she now looked for succour. The cruelty of Cresford seemed to have widened the breach between them, and to draw her irresistibly towards one whose conduct throughout had been dictated by the very spirit of honour, generosity, and tenderness.

She detailed to him all which had that day taken place. She told him she was to be tried, publicly tried; that she must, in vindication of her own fame, produce every proof that they had received the most authentic accounts of Cresford's death. She begged him to take every means towards finding a copy of the newspaper containing the official return of the deaths at Verdun. She begged him to enquire for Colonel Eversham, and, if possible, to discover what had been the fate of young Maitland, to whom Cresford had entrusted the letter which was to apprize her of his plan.

"I write to you, Algernon," she continued, "because I know you will leave nothing unattempted to serve me, and to rescue me from

the only one additional misery which can now be heaped upon me—that of being supposed to have sinned knowingly. Perhaps I may always have been too much alive to the opinion of the world. Perhaps one ought to be satisfied with knowing one's intentions to have been innocent, and it may be nobler to despise the idle gossip of those one neither loves nor esteems; but my error, if it is one, is the safest for woman, and you, who know that I would neither see you, nor correspond with you, till I fancied the two years of my widowhood expired, can alone guess what I feel at thus having my miserable history dragged before the public. I have been stunned, annihilated by the blow. The idea of such a consummation to my earthly woes never crossed my mind before. But now my one only hope is at least to prove I sincerely believed myself free when I gave myself to you, that I did not wittingly involve you in the misery which attends all in any way connected with me.

"You must secure for me the best lawyer. In short, I trust every thing to you. This will be expensive; it has not been pride, but

my deference for that world before whom I am doomed to be degraded, which has hitherto prevented my allowing you to contribute to my support. I know full well that all you have, might be mine; I know from my own what your feelings are, and for this cause, for the cause of my honour, I am ready to let you incur whatever expense may be necessary. I write to you at once that not a moment may be lost. The assizes are to be held the 20th of next month. If possible, discover the fate of Maitland — Adieu! I write no more—but you may communicate with my father. May Heaven preserve you to be a blessing to all who are allowed the happiness of belonging to you!

"Our child—oh, there is still one link which binds us together! Our child is well, and lovely.

"ELLEN."

Algernon, upon the receipt of this letter, was nearly frantic with rage and indignation. If Cresford longed to find himself, hand to hand, engaged with his rival, not less did Algernon

burn to meet him in mortal strife; but still Cresford would have been safe with him in a desert, so closely did he cling to some distant hope of reunion with Ellen.

Though he was wild with indignation at Cresford's unmanly and cruel revenge, there was a sense of relief to him in having a definite object to pursue. He had hitherto remained in utter seclusion and inactivity. He feared to injure or to distress her, by any measure he could take, and he had lived the life of an anchorite, wandering among his own woods, far from public business, useless alike to himself and to others. At length he was roused to exertion, and horrified as he was at the image of his lovely, refined, delicate, shrinking Ellen being exposed to the gaze of a public court, there was a comfort in being actively employed in her behoof. He threw himself into his carriage to fly to London, and there to begin the necessary enquiries.

He first drove to the house of the most eminent lawyer of the day, to secure him as counsel. Cresford had been there before him. He had retained him; and although he was so

engaged that he did not attend this circuit, he was effectually prevented from affording Algernon any assistance. He proceeded to another, whose name stood high as a man of overpowering eloquence, when he had justice on his side, although not perhaps equally skilled in making the worse, appear the better cause. He found him free, and he was instantly retained.

He next repaired to the newspaper offices, and there having stated the date and the title of the paper in which he was in want, they gave him every hope of soon procuring it.

And now to find Colonel Eversham! He looked in the army-list. He found the name. He proceeded to the Horse Guards. He there learned that Colonel Eversham was with his regiment in Spain, having joined the army under the command of Sir John Moore. He instantly applied to the adjutant-general. He wrote to the military secretary of the commander-in-chief. He explained the case, and implored that leave of absence might be despatched to Colonel Eversham to quit his regi-

ment, and if possible to return to England before the 20th of the ensuing month.

The most difficult point remained. Maitland! He had no clue whereby to discover who, or what Maitland was. The army-lists and navy-lists, for the years 1801, 1802, 1803, were turned over and over again. No one appeared whom he could make out to have been a *détenu*.

At length he thought of applying to the Court Guide, and of personally calling at every house in London inhabited by any one of the name of Maitland. He might by chance discover whether any relative had been a *détenu*, and thus ascertain his fate.

CHAPTER XVI.

For peace is with the dead, and piety
Bringeth a patient hope to those who mourn
O'er the departed.

SOUTHEY'S *Roderick.*

WITH the guide-book in his hand, Algernon proceeded in his search. It was the time of year when London was very empty, and at many houses he found the family were out of town. On such occasions he ascertained the address of the master of the house, resolving to write his inquiries should other means fail. At one large mercantile house in the city, he found a portly old man, who said a brother of his, had a natural son, who had been abroad some years ago, and was now in India, he believed; but "he had been a wild chap, and he

did not rightly know what had become of him." This sounded as if he might be the person in question; but if so, the prospect was most unsatisfactory. Still Algernon was not disheartened. The next house at which he continued his inquiries was that of a widowed lady, in Upper Quebec-street. He knocked at the door. He asked for Mrs. Maitland. He was shown up-stairs into a small, two-windowed drawing-room, very tidy, very clean, and very formal. Not a chair was out of its place; the sofa was against the wall. At one side of the table, with her knitting, sate an oldish lady, very neatly dressed, and with a sweet but melancholy expression of countenance. On the other sate a younger person, evidently her daughter; but pale and faded, and decidedly past the bloom of youth. She was engaged in needlework.

They both rose on the entrance of the stranger, and the elder lady begged him to be seated, with a gentle formality, while she and her daughter resumed their seats, and mildly awaited what he had to say. Their calmness and their politeness made him experience a sen-

sation more akin to awkwardness, than was usual to a person so accustomed to the world, and so gifted with a prepossessing manner. Moreover, a sort of intuitive conviction came over him, that he spoke to a widow who had lost her son, whether or no, she might be the parent of him of whom he was in search.

It was with a certain degree of hesitation that he opened his story, and explained, that for reasons which were of the most vital importance to himself and others in whom he was deeply interested, he was anxious to know what had become of a young Mr. Maitland, who had been a *détenu* at Verdun, and had effected his escape thence in the beginning of the year 1804. He saw the daughter look anxiously at the mother, and drop her work. He saw the mother's hands shake as she knitted two or three more stitches before she spoke.

His kind heart grieved for the pain he had evidently given, but yet he felt a throb of pleasure as he hoped he had succeeded in discovering the object of his search. Mrs. Maitland laid down her knitting, and taking off her spectacles, replied in a calm voice,—

"My only son was a *détenu*, sir, and he never returned to me. He was lost in an open boat, off the coast between Blanckenbergh and Ostend."

The mother slightly clasped her two hands, as they fell quietly on her knee, in the attitude of a person who is meek, and resigned, and accustomed to her sorrow.

He turned to the daughter.

"It gives me infinite pain, madam, to continue to ask questions upon a subject which must be so trying to your mother's feelings, but if you knew how much the peace and respectability of the person on earth most dear to me is implicated in the replies to my questions, you would pardon me for persisting."

He then briefly stated his, and Ellen's story, to Mrs. and Miss Maitland They listened with kindness and attention, and told him in return, that young Maitland had been travelling in France for pleasure, and to see the world; that in a year he would have been of age, when he would have come into a large property which was strictly entailed upon him. That he would then have placed his mother and

sister in a situation of comfort and affluence. But the war broke out. He became a *détenu*. She said that he had often mentioned Mr. Cresford's name in his letters, and had alluded to the impatience with which he bore his imprisonment. That they had never heard from him, from the time of his making his escape, but that from all they could learn, he had reached the neighbourhood of Ostend in safety. That he had there waited for some time in hopes of being able to row to some English vessels which were cruising off the coast. That at length he and some companions had one night made a desperate attempt to do so. But the weather was too tempestuous for the small fishing-boat which they had succeeded in unmooring from the shore, especially as it was manned by young men who were not accustomed to the perils of the sea. That only two, out of the five, had survived, having been picked up by the English vessels when the daylight dawned.

The young man having thus perished before he came of age, the mother and sister had continued to live in poverty and seclusion. Care had long since impaired the bloom of his sister,

who it seems was some years older than the youth, who had been the hope, the joy, the darling of them both.

The parties had become mutually interested for each other, and Hamilton easily obtained from them a promise of committing to paper their statement of young Maitland's death, and allowing it to be produced upon the trial. If possible, he would spare them the unpleasantness of being subpœnaed to appear in person.

They parted in kindness, and Algernon returned home, anxiously expecting his answer from the Horse Guards. He was informed that Colonel Eversham's leave would be granted; that he should be allowed to return to attend at the assizes, and wind and weather permitting, there was every prospect he would arrive in time. He despatched a letter to Colonel Eversham to inform him of the purpose for which his presence was so necessary, and entreated him to use all diligence in reaching England.

In the course of time, the newspaper was found which contained the account of Cres-

ford's death, and Algernon felt some satisfaction in reflecting that every thing was now in a fair way to clear his Ellen from any suspicion, or shade of blame. He obeyed her injunctions by communicating only with Captain Wareham. His whole soul was bent as devotedly as her's could be, to the object of making her innocence shine forth untarnished.

The report of the trial which was to take place soon became public, and excited the greatest sensation, and interest, in the whole neighbourhood. Every one felt for Ellen, and all were anxious to prove their pity, and their personal respect for her. Captain Wareham's humble door was literally besieged with carriages and inquirers. All persons of any note in the vicinity, left their names, as a sort of homage to her character.

Lord Besville, who had so kindly come forward at the first moment, offered his carriage to conduct her to the court, when the awful day arrived, and his offer was accepted with thankfulness.

These tokens of approbation, and the support of all around, were some consolation to

poor Ellen. She hated notoriety; she had rather have retired into obscurity, and, hoping that her fate was unnoticed and undiscussed, have hid her head in peace and humility: but, if she must be brought before the world, these testimonies of the esteem of her friends and neighbours, in some measure soothed her feelings. People are seldom so wretched, that the proofs of sympathy in their fellow-creatures are not agreeable to them. The list of the inquirers is read with interest and gratification, by the sick, and by the mourner. No feeling more bitter than that your sufferings, whether mental or bodily, are uncared for.

Ellen had written her wishes to Algernon. She knew that every measure which human zeal and foresight could pursue to clear her fame, would be adopted: upon that subject, therefore, she rested in security, and she passed her time schooling her mind to bear the worst, and seeking strength and assistance from the one only unfailing source of consolation, under misfortunes such as hers.

She believed her father, when he told her it was next to impossible that, supposing

the sentence of transportation should pass, it would be carried into execution; and yet she thought it would be wiser to accustom her mind in some degree to such a possibility, than to allow herself to be so completely taken by surprise as she had been, when first the idea of undergoing a trial had opened upon her. Visions of the hulks, of foreign lands, of being associated with horrible criminals, a thousand half-defined, ill-understood horrors would visit her. In her dreams she fancied herself torn from her remaining child, a stranger, and an outcast, at Botany Bay, and though, when she awoke, and shook off the images conjured up by sleep, she assured herself that such a result was most improbable, she could not be certain that such was impossible. She knew not what farther evidence Cresford might adduce of his having duly warned her of his intentions: her proofs were all negative; and sometimes the anticipations of what might be her future fate, were so appalling, that her ardent desire to exercise the virtue of resignation, and her fear of increasing the misery of others, were

not strong enough to save her from paroxysms of terror, and despondency.

Mrs. Allenham had, upon the first intelligence of what was to take place, hastened to her sister. Captain Wareham was so full of care, and so unhappy, that he rejoiced in the presence of some one who should spare him the task of giving hopes, which, from the despondency of his own nature, he was far from feeling. Ellen would weep by the hour together, with the sympathizing Caroline, who, as usual, was all kindness and gentleness. Matilda, who was younger, and scarcely able to enter into the full and complicated miseries of the case, attempted to inspire Ellen with a proud feeling of disdain for her unjust accusations, and a confident expectation of an honourable acquittal. The three sisters were one day sitting together, and Ellen was bidding Caroline watch tenderly over her little Agnes if their worst anticipations should be fulfilled, when Caroline could not help saying—

"But, Ellen, if you really believe there is a chance of anything so dreadful, I almost

think, if I were you, I would fly the country with Mr. Hamilton, and your child. You were married to him too, after all."

"Caroline, I resisted Algernon when he pleaded. If Algernon's voice, if Algernon's beseeching countenance, if Algernon's eyes, failed to persuade me, fear will not! No; my fair fame shall be tarnished by no wilful act of my own."

"That is right, Ellen!" exclaimed Matilda; "I would die sooner! Respected as you are by everybody now, I would die sooner than be looked down upon!"

"Well, you are quite right; it was very wrong of me to have thought of such a thing. And I, a clergyman's wife too! But, I am afraid, if Mr. Allenham was to try and persuade me, I should not be so firm as you are."

"But he is your husband, Caroline."

"Yes, quite true; and then if he said it, it must be right, whatever it might be."

Time stole away. Hamilton watched with anxious eyes the vane of the neighbouring church, the smoke of each chimney of the

houses opposite. He had arranged every thing with Ellen's counsel, and a fortnight before the day fixed for the trial he went to Falmouth, there to look out for the arrival of every packet, every transport, every fishing-vessel, that he might be sure not to miss Colonel Eversham.

The wind had been favourable for conveying the despatches which contained Colonel Eversham's leave of absence, but it continued in the East, long after Algernon had wished it to veer round. Steam-vessels were not then in use, and every thing depended on the elements.

The morning of the 18th arrived. Colonel Eversham had not yet appeared—Algernon was in despair—but leaving his servant to watch for him, he could no longer remain absent from the spot where his beloved Ellen's fate was to be decided, and he hastened to——. On the evening of the 19th he had an interview with Captain Wareham, and was obliged to tell him that Eversham had not yet landed, but that he had Mrs. Maitland's account of her son's death, and that their counsel was confident of

success. Mrs. Maitland was in the town, that in case her statement was not considered sufficient, she, if necessary, might be called into court.

Hamilton was so painfully interested, and so occupied with business, that it was not till the busy streets were quiet, the tumult of the well-filled hotel hushed, and midnight approaching, that he had time to reflect how short a space divided him from Ellen and from his child.

How his heart yearned towards them! how he longed to be allowed to see them! but he determined to do nothing, till the eventful morrow was passed. Her counsel should be able to aver, with truth, that they had never met from the time they heard that Cresford was living. He would not even indulge himself by walking before the house, and looking at the exterior of the dwelling which contained his soul's treasures, lest any one might recognize him, and might fancy he had visited her clandestinely. He passed the night, however, in restless sleeplessness. He sat at the window of his bed-room, and having thrown open

the sash, he gazed out upon the clear, deep blue, quiet heavens: the busy hum of men had subsided; the streets were deserted; the lights one by one had been extinguished; not a sound was to be heard but the monotonous call of the watchman, pacing his rounds. A gentle breeze just whispered through the poplar trees of a neighbouring garden, and brought with it the refreshing smell which the dews of evening extract from them. It was a season for gentle and holy musings.

"And yet," he reflected, "how many beings are now enduring the utmost pangs of human anxiety! The culprits in the gaol — their relatives — my poor Ellen — her father, and myself — Cresford too — the wretch whose very name makes my blood boil; he—even he, must suffer! He must feel remorse, repentance— he must have been hurried into this act of unreasonable, useless cruelty, by a sudden impulse of passion. I pity the unfortunate man! Yes, I pity him — for he has lost her! Is not that enough to madden him? Oh! what will the morrow bring to us all? What will be our fate?" His eyes glanced to the

Heavens; "Whatsoever may be our fates on earth, that placid Heaven, those innumerable stars, those signs of Omnipotence, speak to us of another world, in which happiness must assuredly be my Ellen's portion, and where I may humbly hope to share in that heavenly joy, which we cannot conceive nor comprehend, but in the truth of which we may firmly place our trust!"

Ellen, meanwhile, was in some measure spared the overwhelming anxiety of that night, by another source of disquiet. Agnes was feverish and unwell: perhaps it was a fortunate occurrence for her, that such was the case; under any circumstances she could not have slept. While sitting by the sick bed of her little girl, her thoughts were drawn away from her own miseries; and when, at length, the child dropped off into a calm and easy sleep, the sense of relief almost resembled joy. But to this succeeded the dreadful thought,

"If I should be torn from her! If this should be my last night of watching over her! If she should be worse to-morrow, and I far

away! Imprisoned! alone! and my sick child away from me! It is possible—very possible! and I shall survive this; for I have survived being torn from Algernon, and from my poor George and Caroline!"

CHAPTER XVII.

> For thyself
> Thou hast had thy fill of vengeance, and perhaps
> The cup was sweet; but it hath left behind
> A bitter relish. SOUTHEY'S *Roderick*.

LITTLE Agnes was better in the morning. Ellen's name was not the first on the list; a common case of burglary was nearly disposed of when she was summoned.

Lord Besville's carriage, as previously arranged, conveyed her to the Court-house. The curious mob gave way, with an expression of pity, as Ellen, assisted by her father, and by Lord Besville, and accompanied by Mr. Turnbull, alighted from the carriage. She was supported through the crowd of black, shabby-genteel, greasy-looking attendants, who are to be found about the purlieus of a court of

justice. She had to wait some minutes in the passage, till the thief who had preceded her at the bar was removed. She was then led in, and placed where he had stood.

There was an universal whisper and commotion throughout the assembly, as her graceful form took the place of the coarse, vulgar, brutal figures, which had usually occupied that spot.

A silence of a moment succeeded. She held by the iron bar before her, as if to sustain herself. A request for a chair was heard from every quarter, and in a few seconds she was enabled to seat herself. There was another pause—Mr. Cresford's lawyer then rose. He felt he had the sense of the court against him —that all instinctive and human feelings must be in favour of the delicate and shrinking creature before them.

She sat shrouded in a wrapping black cloak, her face concealed by a close bonnet, and a thick veil. Scarcely any thing was visible except the slender, rounded, swan-like throat, and one white hand which occasionally clutched the iron bar.

Though one of the ablest men in his profession, he had scarcely his usual self-possession when he began ; but he soon warmed with his subject. The fact of bigamy was clearly to be proved ; and he expatiated upon the feelings of the adoring and deserted husband, and made use of the very interest excited by her appearance, as an argument for the sympathy he deserved, an enhancement of the injury he received.

Hamilton had, unobserved, crept into a retired corner. He had heard the eloquent appeal. Accustomed to read the effect produced upon his fellow-creatures by public speaking, he had perceived that the able counsel had affected his audience; that in truth the very interest excited by Ellen did tell against her. He could not bear the situation any longer. He rushed into the street, and paced it up and down in agonized perturbation. He longed to madness that Colonel Eversham should arrive. His evidence was material. He had continued to hope against all reason that he would appear, and he now felt ready

to accuse him and the Government, the winds and the waves, of cruelty.

At the close of the case for the prosecution, Ellen for the first time raised her eyes, and saw the large round green table, surrounded by the youthful faces of the lawyers in their powdered wigs. She took one fearful glance at their countenances, to see if, accustomed as they were to make their harvest of the woes and the crimes of their fellow-men, there might not be a lurking expression of levity or mirth among them. She ventured one look at the judge. He was a firm, but a venerable and mild-looking man; and she hoped for justice, tempered with mercy, at his hands. One other look towards the jury. She thought she recognized some faces she remembered in her youth.

"Ah! they will have pity on me," she thought.

The certificates of the two marriages had been produced—the witnesses were called. At this moment a voice was heard in a loud whisper addressing one of the counsel,

"Colonel Eversham is come!"

Ellen looked up. She saw on the right of the judge's seat, at the door by which the lawyers, the high sheriff, &c. had free ingress and egress, Algernon's eager beaming face!

It was the first time she had seen it since they had parted at Belhanger. She gave a faint scream, and uttering his name, fell back in her chair. The assistants who were near at hand quickly lifted up her veil; they took off her bonnet, and in their awkward attentions, they loosened her comb, and her long black hair fell in showers around her. The marble brow, the fringed lids, the pencilled eyebrows, the oval face, the graceful form, caused a sensation of enthusiastic admiration, and pity, and tears fell fast from the eyes of the few ladies who had had nerves to attend the trial. They handed smelling-bottles, and drops, and in a few moments she revived. Her father was close at hand, and he supported her drooping head, while the tear-drops coursed one another rapidly down his pallid cheeks.

Cresford stood apart, stern and immovable. He had seen the cause of her agitation; he had

watched the direction of her eye, and the fiend of jealousy possessed his soul, and seared every softer emotion.

The case for the prosecution was quickly closed. Ellen's counsel rose, relieved by finding there was no further evidence produced against his client, than what he was fully prepared to meet, and inspirited by the comfortable assurance that Colonel Eversham was at hand.

Of course he did not attempt to disprove the fact of the two marriages; but in a clear and circumstantial manner he stated the events with which the reader is already well acquainted, and wound up the whole with so touching a description of the sufferings and virtues of the "exemplary lady then writhing under the unmerited disgrace of being placed in the situation in which they beheld her," that most people present agreed with Will Pollard, that Cresford had no business to be alive. Making a forcible appeal to their feelings, he continued:

"And when we contemplate such unmerited sufferings, does not every thing that is human

in us array itself in her defence? Do we not feel ourselves rather called upon to minister relief, than to inflict punishment? Good God, gentlemen, when we see this blameless lady, the victim of an imposture, (for although perhaps an excusable one, still it was an imposture, an enacted lie,) — when we find her, in consequence of this imposture, deprived of the name to which she was an honour, of the station in society of which she was so bright an ornament,—when we see her torn from her children, and her children bereft of a mother's watchful care, — when we see her thus doubly widowed, severed from the man to whom in innocence and purity of thought she had given her affections at the altar, — from the man who so well deserves and still possesses those affections, of which, gentlemen, we have even now witnessed such affecting evidence, — can we, can we, I say, contemplate such accumulation of unprecedented distress, and call it guilt? Forbid it reason! Forbid it justice! Forbid it truth! And what, in her sorrows, her privations, her bereavement, what does this injured lady ask? But to live in virtuous singleness and seclusion

—to devote her days to her aged father, to her innocent child — the babe from whose bed of sickness she has this day been dragged before you ?"

But one feeling prevailed throughout the court. Captain Wareham, Hamilton, Henry Wareham, all felt confident of the result. Every thing that had been stated in favour of Ellen was amply borne out by the newspaper, the account of Maitland's death, and the evidence of Colonel Eversham, who distinctly detailed each particular concerning the supposed death of Cresford, and also declared he had reported every detail to Mrs. Cresford upon his own return to England, which he effected a short time afterwards.

The judge clearly and concisely summed up the evidence, and told the jury it was for them to decide whether the prisoner was, or was not, guilty of the crime with which she was charged.

The jury retired for a few minutes. To Ellen they appeared an age. The whispered hopes and consolations of those around, fell on her ear, without entering into her mind. She

had suffered so much, that she durst not give way to hope.

The jury could not do otherwise than bring in the verdict "guilty" of the crime, though at the same time they recommended the prisoner to mercy. She heard but the first word. A mist came over her eyes, a rushing noise sounded in her ears; she fainted before she had time to hear the sentence of the judge.

He premised that bigamy came under the head of felony, which, by the statute 35th of George III. rendered persons liable to the same punishments, pains, and penalties, as those who are convicted of grand, or petit larceny. Under aggravated circumstances, therefore, the punishment might be transportation for seven years; — but under those of the present case, he commanded the prisoner to be fined one shilling, and to be forthwith discharged.

Though unseen himself, Hamilton's eyes had been riveted upon her. He instantly darted to her side when he saw her fall. The impulse was uncontroulable. The sentence had passed, and before he had time to think,

to feel, to reflect, to calculate, he had taken her from Captain Wareham's trembling arms, and had carried her into the lobby. She was still insensible, but he supported that beloved form, and the moment was one of rapture!

She faintly opened her eyes, and it was from his voice that she first heard, "You are free, Ellen, you are free!"

"Free?" and she gazed wildly around her. "Free, from him? May I become lawfully your wife?"

Her scattered senses were not yet collected —she scarcely knew what had passed, or where she was. The words "you are free," sounded in her ear as if the fatal tie was dissolved. He had not the courage to undeceive her, while, under this impression, she leaned weakly, and trustingly on his arm.

Captain Wareham was preparing to explain the meaning of his words, when Cresford rushed forward. His eyes flashed fire, and hastily pushing aside all around, he forced his way by her father, he seized her helpless form, and sternly fixing his hand against Algernon's breast, he forcibly repelled him.

"The law of the land has just pronounced this woman to be my wife, and you — her paramour."

"Unmanly wretch!" and Hamilton's dark eye flashed on him with as infuriated a glance as his own, his lip quivered with rage, but he restrained himself. "Say what you will—insult me — strike me — to me you are sacred." Hamilton drew himself up to his full height, and looked with proud contempt upon Cresford.

Ellen had strength enough to struggle from Cresford's grasp, and to fling herself into her father's arms, who implored him to have pity upon his poor worn-out child, and not to make her the subject of a common brawl, in the public sight.

Angry as Cresford was, he felt that he was only exposing himself to the ridicule, as well as to the blame of all around, and turning to Captain Wareham, he said,

"In your hands—in the hands of her father I am content to leave her. But I owe it to myself, that she should be preserved from one who is avowedly nothing to her. I trust my

wife's honour in your hands, Captain Wareham. When I have seen you and your daughter safely placed in the carriage, which awaits you, I shall depart."

Sternly folding his arms, and placing himself between Hamilton and Ellen, he watched them into Lord Besville's carriage.

Hamilton, ever fearful of adding to Ellen's sufferings, commanded himself, restrained his feelings, and saw her dear form depart, without making a movement to follow or to assist. When the carriage had driven away, Cresford and Hamilton, for one short minute, gazed fixedly on each other; each seemed to wish to look the other dead, but neither spoke. Cresford was not so deprived of all sense of reason, and honour, as to farther insult a man who would not raise his hand against him. Hamilton still maintained his resolution that no provocation should urge him to place an impassable barrier between himself and Ellen.

Each turned on his heel and walked away, with a storm of turbulent and angry passions raging in his bosom. They returned to their respective hotels.

Did Cresford feel the happier for having accomplished his revenge? No! he only felt, if possible, more injured, more miserable, than ever. It is true he had increased the wretchedness of Ellen, but had that afforded his own any alleviation? He had merely given her the occasion of proving how innocently she had contracted her second marriage, and how exemplary had been her conduct, how conscientious and considerate that of his rival, since they had discovered that he was still in existence. He had merely given the world an opportunity of knowing how little share he had in her affections, how dear to her was Hamilton.

Algernon's mind was scarcely less agitated. The sight of Ellen had distracted him. How were they to drag on their weary lives in hopeless absence? The blank and cheerless prospect before them, never struck him so forcibly as now. The excitement of the last six weeks had kept up his spirits. There was something to be done, something to look to, something to hope, something to fear. He felt it impossible to seek again his solitary home;

impossible to pursue any regular fixed course of life, to which there seemed no period, no end, except in the grave. His child, too! his only child was ill. He had a father's longing to see it; he knew not what to do, or how to act. He would not expose Ellen to another outbreak of Cresford's passion, and he at length made up his mind, that if the next day his child was going on well, he would leave the neighbourhood, but that, when Cresford had also departed, he would arrange with Captain Wareham that he should occasionally see his little Agnes.

Poor Ellen had reached her home. Exhausted by the overwhelming emotions of the day, she had scarcely feeling left, to comprehend any thing beyond being restored to her child. Caroline, to whose care she had committed her, and Matilda, whom her father had not allowed to attend the trial, received her in their arms, and almost carried her to her child's bedside.

Little Agnes was better, and Ellen sat close by her, with a vague weak feeling of gratitude to Heaven for re-uniting them. They per-

suaded her to lay herself on the bed by her side, and in a very few moments she was wrapped in slumber, as calm, as placid as the child's.

It was late in the evening before she awoke. Caroline and Matilda were both in the room. She started up. "Is it over?" she cried; "is the trial over? or did I only dream it?"

"It is over, all well over, dearest sister, and you are restored to us."

"Thank you, dear creatures. And my child, she is better; she is sleeping nicely, and quite close to me. Oh, the relief of finding myself among you all, without the fear of those dreadful hulks! Where is my father, my poor father! He has gone through a great deal to-day."

"He has just stolen out of the room. He has been here, looking at you and Agnes, as you both slept, till the tears streamed down his face."

"Oh, let me go to him!" She hastened down-stairs, and poor Captain Wareham felt almost happy when he saw a smile, though it was a troubled and an unquiet one, upon Ellen's lips.

"Oh, father, I scarcely thought I should ever again feel any thing so near akin to joy as this. If you knew how the horrible idea of transportation preyed upon my mind! I did not like to own how much I thought of it. At least, I can look round and feel that from all of *you* I need not now be parted. Yet mixed with this sensation of joy, which is so strange to me, there comes such a yearning for George and Caroline, my poor dear children, whom I must not see. Oh! if I could kiss them once, if I could look upon them, if I could know they were well! My poor dear innocent children!" She sat down and wept freely, weakly, gently, as a person utterly worn out, body and mind.

Latterly she had not spoken much of her elder children; her mind had been bent to the one point, and the fear of another, still more dreadful misfortune, had prevented her dwelling so much on their absence. But now that her heart, for the first time, gave way to this unwonted feeling of happiness, she longed for their presence with a passionate desire.

She breathed not Algernon's name. But

when they all retired to rest, and she found herself alone in her chamber, she seated herself in an arm-chair, and covering her eyes with her hands, she yielded herself up to a sort of dreamy but delightful consciousness that she had seen him, heard him; that her eye had met his, that her head had rested on his shoulder, that his voice had sounded in her ear. She dreaded to move, and to rouse herself to the sad prospect that she was to see him no more—that days, months, years, must roll on, and she must meet those eyes, and hear that voice no more!

But this weakness was not to be indulged; she shook it off, and calmed and refreshed her soul with humble and grateful prayer.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Cher petiot, bel amy, tendre fils que j'adore,
Cher enfançon, mon soulcy, mon amour,
Te voy, mon fils, te voy, et veux te veoir encore,
Pour ce trop brief me semblent nuict et jour.
CLOTILDE DE SURVILLE, 13TH CENTURY.

THE next morning Captain Wareham, at Ellen's request, wrote a note to Algernon to tell him she was well, and that little Agnes was rapidly recovering, and also to assure him that Ellen's mind was comparatively at ease. In his answer to Captain Wareham he told him that having heard so satisfactory an account of those in whose welfare his every feeling was centered, he should quit * * *, as he feared his presence in the town might occasion Cresford's also remaining there, in jealous irritation; but that he trusted, when every thing was

quiet, and Cresford, (as he flattered himself he would,) had resumed his habits of business, he might be allowed to visit his child; that he likewise claimed some pity, and that a father's heart yearned towards his only child. He said no more. He wished to accustom her to the idea that he must, that he ought to see Agnes, and he hoped by degrees to persuade Ellen to allow him an interview herself.

Cresford, as Hamilton had anticipated, left * * * when he had ascertained his rival's departure, and he returned to London. He then entered with ardour into the concerns of the house,—peremptorily insisted upon the speedy adjustment of the affairs, which had been rendered perplexed by his return, and resolved that he would make himself a name as the first and greatest of English merchants. If, in private life, he stood in the contemptible position of the discarded, the deserted husband, in the world he would be respected as one of the most leading men in the city. But his mind, weakened, excited, and unsettled by what he had undergone, was not equal to accomplishing all he undertook. His schemes were wild and

visionary, and neither added to the stability, nor to the consideration of the house.

Henry Wareham, who had lost no time in withdrawing himself, had found little difficulty in gaining admittance into another establishment of equal, if not greater note: his capital, which, though not large, had increased during the time he had formed one in the Cresford partnership, his character for steadiness and industry, and his clear practical head, making him an acquisition in any concern, while the cause of his retirement from his present business, excited an interest in his favour.

There is no want of generous and kind feeling in this country. A case of undeserved misfortune, if once known and understood, rarely fails to create friends, and protectors.

Ellen's ardent desire to see her elder children increased, rather than diminished, with time. The savage wildness of Cresford's eye and manner, filled her with uneasiness for their fate. Henry had ascertained that he had taken for them a small house at Brompton, and that he visited them once or twice a week. The *bonne*, whom she had placed about them,

she knew to be a good creature, although not possessed of much information, nor by any means the person to whom she would willingly have entrusted the complete guidance of their minds and characters. Still she was grateful that he left them under her care, and she rejoiced that he did not habitually live with them, and that consequently they were not exposed to the starts of passion which, even in better days, had been formidable.

She thought if she could once see them, unknown to themselves,—merely see them as they passed by, and ascertain that they looked healthy and happy, that she should feel more contented.

She opened this idea one day to Captain Wareham, who treated it as fanciful and romantic. The irritability of temper, which, during the time of great and serious distress completely subsided, had gradually again grown into a habit. He was too old to alter, and although his heart was most kind, his feelings for Ellen tender, yet in the every-day intercourse of life she could not avoid sometimes perceiving that she brought much trouble,

and discomfort upon him, in the decline of life.

She proposed a visit to Caroline and to Mr. Allenham, who had urged her completing the cure of little Agnes by trying change of air. She knew that the kind-hearted Caroline would willingly agree to any plan which might promise her a moment's comfort, and if Mr. Allenham would give his consent, she could not have more respectable sanction and assistance.

Caroline, as she expected, was all good-nature, nor did Mr. Allenham disapprove of the idea. He saw that she was in so restless a state, that she was so possessed with the notion that if her children were sick, she would not be apprized of their illness, that they might be dying, and she remain in ignorance,—that he really thought it desirable her mind should be relieved upon this subject. One thing he premised,—that she should not make herself known to them. If it ever came to Cresford's ears, he might secrete them where she would have no means of hearing or knowing about them; and at all events it would be wrong to excite curiosity, useless regrets, or premature

sensibilities in the children; still more so to accustom them to mystery and concealment. She saw the reason of his arguments: all she begged was to be allowed to disguise herself in the dress of a common maid-servant, and to walk in the street near which they lived, till she could once see them pass along, healthy and cheerful.

In compliance with her wishes, they all three repaired to London. Ellen and Caroline dressed themselves in the most homely apparel, and Ellen solemnly promised Mr. Allenham to do nothing which might cause herself to be recognised. They entered a shop nearly opposite the dwelling which contained her children. Mrs. Allenham busied herself bargaining for threads, tapes, and ribbons, while Ellen stood near the door, half out of sight, watching with a palpitating heart, and eyes which were almost blinded with intense gazing, the windows, the doors of the house.

After some time the sash was thrown up, and she saw her own little Caroline run into the balcony. The child looked well and blooming; her fair hair hanging down her back in

glossy ringlets, her laughing eyes sparkling with gaiety, her cheeks glowing with health! Those ringlets which she had so often fondly twisted through her fingers, those eyes she had so often kissed, those cheeks which had so often been pillowed to rest upon her bosom!

She had pledged herself to do nothing to attract attention, — and she kept her word. But a fearful chill ran through her. Where was George? Why was not he playing with his sister? Was he ill? She could no longer watch every graceful movement of Caroline, so agonizingly did she look for her boy. George, the playful, the high-spirited George, what could keep him within? The suspense was almost too much to endure without betraying herself. She had nearly made up her mind to ask the shop people, in as unconcerned a tone as she could command, whether they had lately seen the little boy who lived opposite. She had approached Mrs. Allenham, and had grasped her arm in almost speechless tremor, when she saw George appear for one moment at the window, and beckon his sister in. She breathed again, and, seating

herself for a few moments, recovered her self-possession. Mrs. Allenham had turned round with an anxious look of inquiry.

"It is nothing," whispered Ellen, "it is all right now!"

"Are you ready to go," rejoined Caroline.

"Yes,—oh, no, wait a few minutes longer." She returned to the door to look once more. All was quiet—no one was to be seen at the window. At length Caroline could devise no fresh articles to purchase, and they left the shop. At that moment the door opened, and bounding down the steps, she saw both children with rosy cheeks, and active forms, and radiant faces.

She stopped, trembling, and gazed till they were out of sight. They passed on, unconscious and contented, each holding a hand of the good old *bonne*, and jumping as they went with the light-hearted merriment of childhood. She faithfully made no sign, nor movement that should attract attention, and turned her steps towards their temporary domicile, satisfied and relieved; but, such is the inconsistency of the human heart, that, anxious as she

was to know them happy, a painful feeling shot through her to think how joyous they were without her. While she—yet she wished them to be joyous, though it was bitter to think her children should grow up without any love for her, any recollection of her.

If such thoughts did cross her mind, they found not utterance in words. She professed herself satisfied, and they returned to Longbury. She loved Longbury; it was there she had first seen Algernon. It was there he had first breathed his vows of love; it was there she had, as she then fancied, bound herself to him by ties, which death only was to sever.

Since the trial, Cresford insisted upon her receiving alimony from him. It was painful to her to do so; but he would have been furious at the idea of her receiving anything from Hamilton. Her father, though he had the will, had not the means of supporting her; and feeling also that her miseries tended rather to depress him, and to throw a gloom over the youth of Matilda, she retired to a very small cottage in the outskirts of the town,

and there resided in the deepest retirement, seeking consolation in the performance of the few duties which remained to her to fulfil,—devotion to her child, and attention to the poor around her; her only amusement, the cultivation of her tiny flower-garden.

The neighbouring peasants soon learned to look upon her as their friend, and applied to her in all cases of distress. She had heard Algernon's opinions upon the mischief produced by indiscriminate charity, and she tried so to regulate her's, as not to reward the idle and complaining, while the frugal, industrious, and contented, were unnoticed, and unassisted. She felt, while making this her study, that she was in some measure executing his wishes. How well she succeeded in doing real good, is another question. The task is one of great difficulty; but she succeeded in making herself loved by all the best of her poor neighbours, though she might occasionally be imposed upon by some of the worst.

Her gentle words, her good advice, her attempts to convert the wicked, and to console the suffering, could do no harm, even when they failed of effecting good.

CHAPTER XIX.

Las ! Si j'avois pouvoir d'oublier
Sa beauté, sa beauté, son bien dire,
Et son tant doux, tant doux regarder,
Finiroit mon martire.
Mais, Las ! Mon cœur je n'en puis ôter ;
Et grand affollage
M'est d'esperer,
Mais tel servage
Donne courage
À tout endurer.
Et puis comment, comment oublier
Sa beauté, sa beauté, son bien dire,
Et son tant doux, tant doux regarder ?
Mieux aime mon martire.

—*Complainte à la Reine Blanche, par Thibeaut.*

SOME months had now elapsed. Algernon ventured to write to Ellen herself, describing to her his life of loneliness. He assured her that if he might look forward to the prospect of seeing her and his child at stated periods,

however rare, however distant, he might again be able to exert himself, and strive to be an active and an useful member of society. That at present his existence appeared so aimless, so hopeless, that he could not rouse himself to attend to public, any more than to private affairs.

These arguments were to her irresistible. She knew too well what were the yearnings of a parent for his child, and she would not inflict upon Algernon what she herself endured.

His fame too! His position in the world! His utility to his fellow-creatures! Her pride in his fame, was second only to her love for himself, and though she would not have consented to that which was wrong in itself, even for his sake, she thought she might promise to see him once in every six months, and in the presence of her father, without compromising herself.

Having consulted Captain Wareham, and obtained his consent to this plan, she wrote Algernon word, that she agreed to his proposition, but that he must give her due warning of his coming, and that she would not see him

except in the presence of her father. That she would meet him as a dear and valued friend, but they must not indulge in vain repinings, or in useless or sinful hopes.

Her letter was calm, it cost her much to make it so — but it was calm.

Such as it was, it infused new life into Algernon. He doubted not her love. He respected her scruples. He was so happy at having gained that much, that he did not quarrel with the measured style. He should see her again! He should again hear the music of her voice! And his eye beamed once more with hope — he moved with a more elastic step.

The very servants observed the altered aspect of their master, and Mrs. Topham remarked, as he walked by the windows of the housekeeper's room to the stables, that she "had not heard her master tread so light and quick, since her poor mistress went away;" she wondered "what ever had come to him!"

He appointed the day following that on which Ellen should receive his answer — the hour one o'clock. And meanwhile he was in a

restless state of joyful expectancy, which allowed him to fix his mind to nothing.

He thought a hack chaise was the most unobtrusive mode of conveyance, and that which was least likely to excite observation, and he departed on his journey alone.

With what feelings did Ellen await his arrival? She strove to preserve the even composure of her mind, but in vain!

"Algernon will find me sadly altered," she thought, as she arranged her dress with more attention to what was becoming than she had done for many months. "This mode of dressing my hair makes me look ten years older, and my cheeks are grown so thin!" She checked herself for the vain thought, "What business have I to wish to look well in his eyes now? I ought not to think of such things." But we will not pledge ourselves that she might not pass rather more time at her toilette that morning, than she had usually done; perhaps she was almost sorry she had adopted the habit of wearing her hair smoothly parted on her brow, instead of in the luxuriant ringlets which used

to fall in showers on her cheeks. Yet had she nothing to regret. The touching, holy, Madonna-like expression of her countenance at present, fully compensated for what she might have lost in brilliancy.

To Agnes's appearance, however, she devoted herself, without any fear of doing wrong, and the blooming little creature amply repaid her cares. She was now able to lisp a few words, and Ellen had taught her to say Papa, and bade her be sure so to call the gentleman who was coming, as soon as she saw him. Captain Wareham had walked down early to Ellen's cottage, and they remained waiting in perturbed expectation. Ellen felt confused. Her situation was so strange — so new. There was no precedent by which to shape her conduct. But she had the best of guides: her guileless heart, her innate purity.

Exactly as the clock struck one, a post-chaise drove to the door. In one second Algernon sprang from it: in another, he was in the drawing-room.

Ellen's heart beat, till she thought her

bosom would burst. Algernon rushed towards her—but she extended her hand to him before he approached her, and he merely pressed it to his lips in speechless agitation.

"Look at your child, Algernon," she said, as soon as she could command utterance; "she looks quite well now."

"I will, I will—but at this moment I can see nothing but you."

Ellen withdrew her hand, and seated herself in an arm-chair.

"You have not spoken to my father," she added.

Algernon brushed his hand across his eyes, and turning to Captain Wareham, he pressed his in silence.

Little Agnes whispered,

"Mamma, is that the gentleman I am to call Papa?"

"Yes, my love, go to him!" and the obedient child timidly advanced a few steps. Algernon caught her in his arms, and devoured her with kisses, while the tears flowed fast down his manly cheeks.

The tears of a man are always powerfully affecting. What must the tears which Algernon shed over their child, have been to Ellen? She did not weep. She had worked herself up to be firm, and not to allow this interview to lead to any out-pourings of the heart, to any expressions of feelings, for which she might afterwards reproach herself.

At length Algernon spoke.

"Our child, Ellen, is not like you," and he looked from one to the other with eyes of such melting tenderness, that it would have been difficult to say, to which, at that moment, his heart went forth most.

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed, "thank Heaven, she is like you!" but she presently added in a more composed manner: "She has quite recovered her looks, and her strength now."

She loved to hear Algernon say *our* child. And yet how strange to see the father of her child, clasp it to his bosom, shed tears of love over it, and to be obliged to keep up a calm, company, conversation.

Captain Wareham now inquired which road

Algernon had taken, whether the rain had not made it very bad travelling, and a few more such interesting questions.

"Did you come straight from Belhanger?" asked Ellen in a low and tremulous voice.

"I left it yesterday afternoon."

"It must look very pretty, now the spring is come; and is my—is the garden very nice?" One silent tear stole down Ellen's cheek as she spoke.

"*Your* garden is lovely! It might be a paradise! but to me, it is a place of torment."

"Oh do not say that! Algernon. But you do not look well. You have come a great way this morning; you must be hungry; will you not have some luncheon?"

"Hungry!" he said, and gave her a half reproachful glance; "thank you, I could not eat!"

Captain Wareham now inquired what Hamilton's political friends thought of the Spanish war, and whether the Spaniards were sincerely attached to the cause of liberty.

"I do not know, my dear sir. I never com-

municate with my political friends. I know nothing about them."

Ellen's heart smote her, that she should be the cause of his abandoning a career for which he was so well fitted.

"This must not be," she said; "you ought to exert yourself, Algernon. Indeed this is not right!"

"But tell me, Ellen, how do you pass your time? What occupations have you?"

"I will tell you what she does, Mr. Hamilton," interrupted Captain Wareham, "she goes about doing good, and there is not a poor distressed creature within miles, that does not know her and bless her."

Algernon at first felt vexed with Captain Wareham for taking up the answer to his question, for he longed to hear the music of Ellen's voice; but he no longer regretted it was her father who had spoken, for the report of her good deeds was equally sweet in his ear.

"God will bless you also, Ellen!"

"I wish to remember all you have told me about the management of the poor, and I hope

I do not encourage the idle; but I have no influence here, and I cannot give them good cottages, and gardens, as you have done, and have thus enabled them to live comfortably, without charity. Are the cottages as nice as ever?"

"I believe they are. Yes, they look very neat as I ride by."

"And how is poor old Amy Underwood?"

"Dead — poor old soul! She died last winter."

"Poor Amy! So she is at rest! Who takes care of her little grand-daughter?— She made me promise I would always be a friend to her when she was gone. Algernon, you will see that the child is religiously and virtuously brought up. I cannot,—you know."

"Yes, yes! that I will! Can you think of nothing else for me to do? Tell me more protégés of your's, that I may attend to them. Express your wishes, give me your orders. You will invest anew Belhanger with interest in my eyes. You will give me something to live for."

Ellen smiled faintly, and gratefully.

"Have pretty Jane Earle and her husband got a cottage yet? If they had a tidy cottage to themselves, it might confirm him in his reformation; now he has such a pretty wife too."

In this manner Ellen endeavoured to lead him to again interest himself in his peasantry, while to herself there was a certain melancholy pleasure in uttering the names, and picturing the spots, once so familiar to her.

Agnes meantime had nestled herself comfortably into his arms. Perhaps she had some indistinct recollection of him; perhaps it was merely the caprice which sometimes makes children immediately attach themselves to one person, while they take an antipathy to another, but from the first moment she seemed attracted by him. Ellen looked at them, and thought how happy were those, who might in peace and honour, gaze every day of their lives upon their child, and the father of their child.

The hour for departure approached. At four o'clock the chaise was again to be at the

door. Captain Wareham's dinner-hour was five, and he had to walk back into the town.

In a clear and gentle voice Ellen addressed Algernon—

"One thing I wished to ask you, Algernon, before you went. Should you not like to have Agnes pay you a visit at Belhanger?"

"Not for worlds, Ellen, would I rob you of her for a moment!" It was true that he would not have robbed her for a moment of that which was her only pleasure; but he also wished to put an end to such an idea, as it would deprive him of his one excuse for seeing Ellen. "And are we not to meet again for six months, Ellen?" he added, after a pause.

She exerted all her might, and answered—

"Not for six months."

"I may write to you?"

"No; we must not correspond. If Agnes should be ill, of course I will let you know; and if you should be ill, you must write to me. For God's sake, write if any thing should be the matter!" she repeated with an expres-

sion of terror from the image she had herself conjured up.

The chaise had been some time announced. Captain Wareham, though from the bottom of his heart he pitied them both, thought there was no use in prolonging this distressing interview—to himself doubly so, for he felt himself a third; and yet Ellen had made him promise to give her the support of his presence. She thought, if the interview should not remain unknown, (and what does remain unknown in the present civilized state of society?) her fair name could not suffer if it was conducted under the sanction of her father.

Algernon had kissed his child; he had wrung Captain Wareham's hand; Ellen had risen from her seat, and again held forth her hand to him.

"May Heaven bless you, my dear and valued friend!" she said.

"Ellen! my own Ellen!"

"You had better go now," she gently replied. "My father is not so young as he

was, and we must not make him too late for his dinner. This day six months we meet again!"

Algernon replied not. Slowly and reluctantly he left the room: he dared not remonstrate; he knew her firmness to do what she deemed right, and he feared by word or deed to lose the grace he had obtained: he threw himself into his carriage, and drove away.

Captain Wareham walked home to dinner, and Ellen at length gave way to the tumult of feelings which she had resolutely subdued.

It would be impossible to say whether joy at having seen him, or sorrow at having parted from him, preponderated: she certainly found it more difficult to resume the occupations to which she had accustomed herself; but still she had a point to look to, a bright speck in the distant horizon, to lead her on through the cheerless desert of life.

Algernon religiously executed all Ellen's innocent behests, and, for her sake, did resume in some measure his former habits of

practical utility: he attended Parliament — he was put upon committees—his eye once more flashed with fire—his countenance recovered its animation, his manner its energy.

His re-appearance in the world was hailed with joy by all who knew, and consequently loved and respected him. Though there was still a corroding care within—though there was still a cheerless void in his heart, yet when once he began again to mix with his fellow men, and to enter into public affairs, there were so many objects to interest and occupy a man, that the next six months were not to him so immeasurably long as to Ellen.

At the appointed day and hour he was again at the cottage, and claimed her approving smile for his obedience to her wishes. She had carefully spelled every newspaper, waded through columns of parliamentary debates on subjects she could not comprehend, for fear of missing, or not properly appreciating, some short reply of his; but it had been with joy she had seen his name frequently among the

speakers, and her approving smile was not wanting to reward him.

When his parliamentary duties were over, he found his lone and loveless home so cheerless, that he again became a frequent visiter at Coverdale Park, and Ellen often heard of him when there, through Caroline. It was a consolation to him to see Ellen's sister, and to talk to her of past happiness. Lord and Lady Coverdale were friendly people, and Miss Coverdale was a gentle, pleasing girl, who loved Ellen with the enthusiastic warmth of admiration, which girls often feel for a young married woman a few years older than themselves.

The consciousness that she did full justice to his beloved Ellen, that she had tact and discrimination enough to perceive her superiority to other people, formed a bond of union between them, and the Coverdales were almost the only family of his former acquaintance, from whose society Algernon appeared to derive any pleasure.

From his frequent visits, and from the in-

timacy which subsisted between him and Miss Coverdale, reports arose which immediately came to the ears of Mrs. Allenham. Some people have the faculty of always hearing news, and Caroline was one of those.

She knew how totally groundless was such an idea; but she thought if such gossip should reach * * *, it might be very unpleasant to Ellen, and that she should do well to warn her against giving any credit to it. In short, to prevent her hearing it, she immediately wrote her word of it.

She told her "It was quite a foolish notion of some meddlesome neighbours; that Algernon's pleasure in the society at Coverdale, was principally on account of their all knowing Ellen so well, and because Coverdale was so near Longbury;" and she bade her "not fret herself at all, if she did hear such silly things said."

The very possibility that Algernon should think of any other wife, or that people should imagine he could think of any one else, was almost agonizing to Ellen. She instantly

drove the suspicion from her mind. She felt too certain of his unceasing affection for her. Yet when she had done so, she reproached herself for selfishness, in wishing to doom him to a life of singleness—him so formed for every domestic affection. She told herself she ought rather to wish he should find happiness with another, as she was for ever precluded from contributing to it.

"But I am sure," she thought, "quite sure, there is no truth in the report. I know him too well!"

Still the rumour having ever arisen was disagreeable. Implicit as was her reliance on his devotion, it proved how completely he was looked upon in the world, as a free man. How entirely null and void, the world considered her marriage to him. She knew it. The fact had been too painfully proved and ascertained! but she experienced a sense of humiliation, that it was so decided by the law of opinion, as well as by the law of the land.

CHAPTER XX.

God doth not leave the unhappy soul, without
An inward monitor, and till the grave
Open, the gate of mercy is not closed.

SOUTHEY'S *Roderick.*

CRESFORD, as we have before mentioned, had given his mind to business; but his visionary schemes of aggrandizement had not proved successful. He had, on the contrary, involved the concern in considerable embarrassments, and to retrieve all, he ventured on a still bolder speculation,—which failed!

In a few words, the house broke.

He had gone through much during the time that these difficulties had been thickening around him, and when at last the storm, which had been long gathering, broke upon his head, it found him totally unequal to bearing up

against it,—in impotent anger against himself, and every one else.

It was galling to his spirit, to find that by his rashness and imprudence he had reduced from affluence to a state of indigence, men who had been honestly labouring all their lives. For himself, if he could not make himself a name, as one of the richest merchants of the great emporium of commerce, he cared not if he were the poorest. But he felt for his children. He loved them, though it was not with a tender love. He meant his son should be as great a man as any in the kingdom; he intended that his daughter should be the most accomplished of girls; he would have spared nothing for their education.

Ellen first learned the failure of his house from the public papers, and she mourned over the altered fortunes of her children. She grieved too for the unfortunate man who seemed doomed to have his hopes blasted in this world, while his earthly sorrows had not as yet softened or prepared his heart for happiness in another.

Her brother Henry soon wrote her word of some further particulars, and informed her that

the firm would be able to pay a good dividend in the pound ; so that, although a bankruptcy, it would not be a disgraceful one. He had called to inquire about Cresford, and the answer was that he had been ill, but was now better, though not well enough to receive visiters. Henry could not ascertain what prospects there were for his future provision ; but promised to let her know when he could learn any thing farther.

Pity swallowed up all other feelings, and she anxiously awaited the result. Henry again wrote to her. He had called a second time, and was refused admittance. The servant shook his head, and said " He feared his master was very ill. The doctors said they could do nothing for him unless his mind was kept quiet, and as for keeping his mind quiet that was impossible. He was night and day poring over papers, and the lawyers were with him two or three times a day; if they did not come, he kept sending for them, so there was no use in telling them not to trouble him till he got a little better." The servant added, he thought " it would be a good thing if he

would go to Brompton, and be with his children for a while; but it made him worse to talk of that. He said he could not bear to think of his poor ruined children, much less to see them."

Ellen's heart bled for him. She sometimes considered within herself whether duty did not call her to him in his present miserable state. But perhaps her presence might only irritate him; and even if he did wish for it, could she bring herself to attend his summons? She scarcely thought she could do so. She begged Henry to discover whether he ever mentioned her name. It would be a relief to know he did not think of her.

Henry, the next time he called, sounded the servant, who was an old acquaintance of his, as he had been porter at the time when Henry belonged to the house. He could not find that Cresford ever alluded to his wife. Once, when he was very ill, he had said, "If I get worse let her be written to!" without mentioning any name.

Ellen's mind was set at ease upon this subject. She had nothing to do but patiently to wait the event.

It was some time before she heard again, and then it was from Henry, to say he had seen Cresford. That, having learned he was considerably worse, he had again called, and had ventured to send up word that he was there. That Cresford had admitted him, and that he had been shocked at the havoc which a few months had made in his appearance. That he was certainly very ill, but he thought it was the mind which preyed upon the body—the sword consuming the scabbard; his face was haggard—his eye was restless—his voice feeble and hollow. There seemed to be no positive complaint, except a slight but frequent cough. He spoke much of his affairs—said he did not care for himself, but he lamented the fate of his children. That, perhaps, his schemes had been imprudent, but that his partners hampered him. They would not enter into his views, and their timid prudence prevented his projects being carried on, in the only manner which could lead to a successful termination, boldly and gallantly as they had been conceived.

"God knows," he added, "what remnant of fortune may be saved from the wreck, or whe-

ther I may have anything to allow—your sister. That thought torments me past all others. She will be supported by Hamilton after all !"

Henry added that he had done all he could to tranquillize his mind—had told him how few her wants were; that he and Captain Wareham would do their utmost to supply them—in short, said all the soothing things he could. He had left him with the promise of calling again in a few days.

Before these few days had elapsed, Ellen received an express from Henry, imploring her to come forthwith to London—that a change for the worse had taken place, and that the physicians thought Cresford could not survive many days, perhaps not many hours. That, upon being made aware of their opinion, he had expressed a passionate desire to see her, and that he thought she ought to lose no time in acceding to it.

In two hours from the moment she received Henry's letter, Ellen was on her way to London, having left little Agnes with her father and Matilda. Captain Wareham was not well, and was quite unequal to so sudden a journey.

The journey was long. She had time to think, and to think of every thing: of every probability, of every possibility. But there was one on which she dared not allow her mind to rest.

What was to happen if Cresford died? She felt it criminal to look forward to what would then ensue. If he recovered, what then? Would her visit to his bed of sickness be a reconciliation? Could he wish to take her back, when he knew her whole heart was another's? What would, what could happen? She strove not to look forward beyond the present moment. She had but one course to pursue. She could not refuse such an appeal from a dying man, and that man her lawful husband. The path of duty was clear; for the rest, she must trust to Providence for guidance and support.

She first drove to her brother's lodgings: she found him there. His countenance betrayed anxiety, his brow was care-worn.

"He is yet alive," he said; "I sat up with him all night. In your absence he will scarcely allow me to leave him."

"Oh, Henry, this is an awful meeting!

How will he receive me? Does he feel kindly towards me? Or must I endure his reproaches from his death-bed?"

"He is entirely changed; he is gentle and forgiving now; all his former love for you seems to have revived."

"That is almost worse! Poor Charles! His love has ever been a source of woe to both of us."

Henry lost no time in conveying her to Cresford's house, which was attached to the office, and, although not in the most fashionable part of London, was roomy and commodious, and was usually inhabited by the head-partner of the concern. In that house, she had passed four years as his wife.

It was with painful recollections, and painful anticipations that she traversed the stone-hall, and mounted the broad, but dismal oak staircase, once so familiar to her.

Henry left her in the drawing-room, while he went up-stairs to prepare Cresford for her arrival. She looked round; there were the curtains which she had chosen, the carpet, the sofas, of her selection — now dirty and dingy with years of London wear.

Henry returned. He said the physicians were at that moment visiting their patient, and that when they left the room, he would apprize him of her arrival. She had still to wait. When once the mind is worked up to the performance, or the endurance of any thing disagreeable, or painful, a few additional moments of suspense are almost agonizing.

She mechanically took the hand-skreen off the chimney-piece. It was one she had herself ornamented with wafer cameos, and little scraps of verses. The gold paper was all tarnished, the cameos broken, the writing half effaced, but she could still distinguish some lines, which carried her back to the feelings of former days, and the emotions under which they had been selected, till the flood of recollections which crowded upon her almost bewildered her.

In the course of ten minutes, the physicians entered. Ellen felt awkward and confused. They must think her presence so odd! She knew not what tone to take, and it was with timidity and shyness that she ventured to ask what was their opinion of Mr. Cresford.

The taller, a pale, slender man, with a sweet

countenance, and soft manner, informed her, "That he could not venture to say the symptoms had improved; that the lungs, and the heart both seemed to be affected, and that although he might linger some time, or indeed, might ultimately recover, still a fatal termination might take place in a few hours—that it was a case in which medicine could do little or nothing!" and having delivered this most conclusive, and luminous opinion, he sat himself down to a table, and there wrote prescriptions for some draughts, some pills, an aromatic mixture, a liniment, and a warm plaister for the chest, and prepared to take his leave.

The second physician, who was a short, thick man, with a bob-wig, stood quietly by, while there played around his mouth something approaching a smile, at the inutility of all these measures at the present stage of the disorder.

Ellen ventured to turn to him with an inquiring countenance.

"Madam," he said, "if you wish to know my opinion, it is that he cannot recover. He is too far gone for that. But we do not justly

know what his complaint is, so we may prove wrong, and while there is life there is hope. So I wish you a good morning!" and away he trudged, having made a short, abrupt bow to Ellen.

When they were gone, she sat down for a few moments, and tried to collect her thoughts for the interview which approached.

She heard Henry's step on the stairs; her heart felt sick within her — his hand was on the lock of the door.

"Now, Ellen!" he said, "Cresford is tolerably composed. But how pale you are! Shall I get you any thing?—a glass of water?"

"Nothing! thank you; I am quite well now."

She took Henry's arm, and he led her up stairs. He gently opened the door — the apartment was darkened. As they entered, the nurse discreetly slipped past them out of the room.

Coming from the full light, Ellen could scarcely see. She approached the bed; he was propped up with pillows, and cushions, almost

in a sitting posture. She could distinguish that he looked ghastly; she shook from head to foot, and leaned heavily on Henry's arm.

"Ellen! are you come at last? I was afraid you would not have arrived in time. I am ill—very ill—and I wished to see you once more; you will soon be free of me, and then—but I wished to see you, and to forgive you for all I have suffered on your account, and to ask your forgiveness for having made you miserable too. I ought not to have brought you to a trial;—it was a bad feeling of revenge which drove me to it, and I repent it now; but I was maddened—goaded to desperation. Ellen! I have loved you fearfully! I have loved you unto death—for I am dying of a broken heart! The doctors do not know my complaint—I can tell it them!"

Ellen had sunk on her knees by the bedside. She sobbed audibly."

"Tell me you are sorry for me," he continued; "and tell me that you forgive me, as truly as I forgive you."

"Oh, Charles! you know I do pity you, and I have from the beginning. I have not

wilfully done any thing to increase your wretchedness. As for forgiving you, that I do, indeed, from the bottom of my heart."

"Well, I have your pity!—and your forgiveness! your love I never had!"

There was a mixture of dejection and of hardness in the tone in which the last few words were uttered. Ellen could not reply. It would have been a glaring falsehood, to say it was true love she had ever felt for him; an impious, and an useless falsehood, to lie to one on the verge of eternity.

Turning to Henry, he inquired,

"Are the children come yet? I wanted to bless them, and to bless my wife too; for you are still my wife, Ellen!—as long as I am alive, you are my wife—I am your husband!"

There was a shade of his former stern, and violent manner, which made Ellen shudder to her inmost soul.

"Are my children coming?" she faintly asked.

"Yes! I sent for them hours ago. Why do they not come, Henry Wareham?" he inquired, in a peremptory and authoritative voice.

"I expect them every moment," replied Henry.

"Ellen, come nearer!" She drew nearer. He extended his thin, and bony hand. "Give me your hand — no! the other!" He took her left hand, and looking solemnly in her face, "Who put that ring on your finger?" he said. She could not reply. She had never had the heart to take off the ring Algernon had placed there; and in all the agitation of the last day, she had not remembered any thing concerning the rings. "Is that the ring I placed upon that finger?" and he held her hand with a firmness that appalled her: "answer me, and answer me truly!"

"No!" she faintly replied.

He dashed the hand he held away from him, with a strength of which all who had seen him for the last few days, would have deemed him utterly incapable.

She tremblingly drew off the ring, and offered it to him, as a token of submission, and recognition of her duty to him.

"Take it away! — destroy it! — I cannot look on it!" He turned away his head, and

spoke with a vehemence which alarmed them. "Throw it into the fire—let me know it is consuming."

In humble penitence for having, by her inadvertence, so embittered the last moments of the unhappy man's life, she walked to the fire, and, as he bade, committed the treasured ring to the flames. As she was doing so, she felt her soul die away within her.

He had raised himself up with the unnatural strength of great excitement to witness the execution of his behest, and he fell back exhausted and faint. He gasped for breath. Henry and Ellen hastened to him. They thought his last moment was approaching; but he rallied. "Where is the ring I placed upon your finger?"

"It is at home: I put it carefully away when—"

"Speak on; finish your sentence."

"When—the other—was placed there."

"You have kept it, then? You did not cast it away?"

"Indeed I preserved it religiously. Are you not the father of my children?" she added in a gentle deprecating tone. "Oh,

Charles, do not thus agitate yourself! Be calm, be patient. We are all weak, frail, erring creatures; we should mutually forgive, as we hope to be forgiven. Your children will soon be here, and let them not see their father thus perturbed and restless." She paused.

"Speak on; your voice does soothe my perturbed and restless spirit; speak on, Ellen,—and come here to the light. Open the curtains, Henry; let me look on her face while my eyes can yet see."

She stood trembling beneath his fixed and melancholy gaze. "Oh, Ellen, how I have loved you! I am too near the grave to curse any one, or else I could breathe forth a malediction on that tyrant, who, in his unmanly, deliberate, and useless vengeance, has blighted the prospects, ruined the characters, and blasted the hopes, both in this world and the next, of hundreds of unoffending fellow-creatures. I am not his only victim! Mine is not the only ruin of body and mind for which he is answerable! But I will forgive, as I hope to be forgiven. Ellen, repeat the Lord's prayer to me; I think from your voice it will do me good."

Ellen and Henry knelt by the bed-side, and Ellen, reverently and humbly, obeyed him. As she spoke, his eyes gradually closed, and soon after he fell into a short but refreshing slumber.

When he awoke, the nurse stole in, to inform them that the children were come. He bade them enter.

It was now more than a year since they had been parted from their mother, and when they unexpectedly saw her, they ran to her arms in silent joy. They made no exclamation, for the subdued voices of all the attendants, the darkened room, the vague awe of a death-bed, overpowered their young minds, and prevented any burst of delight. They clung round her, and she folded them to her bosom, with mingled emotions, in which pleasure bore no inconsiderable part.

" Children," said Cresford in a gentle tone.

" Your father speaks," Ellen hastily whispered; " go to him, my loves."

" My children," he continued, " kneel here by my bed-side: I wish to give you my blessing, my parting blessing. Be good, and never

let your passions get the better of you. Mind what your mother says, for she is an excellent and a conscientious woman, and she will teach you your duties. Ellen, I give you my blessing, too; may you be happy!"

Ellen was on her knees. She seized his pale hand as it lay feebly on the bed, and covered it with tears and kisses. He smiled faintly and gratefully upon her, and pressed her hand. He soon again dropped off to sleep.

The children were removed, but Ellen remained. She had an earnest wish to do her duty by him to the last.

In the evening, when the physicians came, they found him considerably better; the sleep he had enjoyed had refreshed him. His pulse was steadier, he was able to take some nourishment, and they appeared almost to imagine permanent improvement might take place.

These words fell strangely on Ellen's ear She could not but rejoice in his amendment. Dreadful as was the prospect for herself, it was not in the nature of any thing so gentle, so feminine, so forgiving as Ellen, to watch the painful breathing, the feeble smile, the hectic

cough, and not wish the breathing less painful, the cough less frequent.

The comparative tranquillity of his mind had a wonderful effect upon his frame, and for two whole days, it almost seemed as if the natural vigour of his constitution would conquer. On the third, however, a violent fit of coughing caused the rupture of a blood-vessel, and there was no doubt but that a few hours must close his sad existence.

The effusion of blood could not be stopped. He gradually became weaker and weaker. As his strength declined, his tenderness towards Ellen increased, and all angry feelings vanished. From her hand alone would he receive either food or medicine. She watched over him with unwearied attention, and when at last his spirit quietly departed, so calmly, so gently, that the by-standers could scarcely ascertain the moment when he drew his last breath, it was her hand that closed his eyes, and she imprinted on his cold forehead, clammy with the dew of death, one pious kiss of duty and affection.

CONCLUSION.

Methinks if ye would know
How visitations of calamity
Affect the pious soul, 'tis shown ye there!
Look yonder at that cloud, which through the sky,
Sailing alone, doth cross in her career
The rolling moon! I watch'd it as it came,
And dream'd the deep opake would blot her beams;
But, melting as a wreath of snow, it hangs
In folds of wavy silver round, and clothes
The orb with richer beauties than her own,
Then passing, leaves her in her light serene.

SOUTHEY'S *Roderick*.

ELLEN remained in the house till the last duties had been performed. The funeral of poor Cresford was conducted without pomp or show, and she then returned, with her restored George and Caroline, to her own cottage.

She put his children in the deepest mourning. For herself, she also wore deep mourning; but she did not dress herself in weeds: she felt, under all the circumstances, that it would be a mockery.

She had not written to Algernon, to inform him of Cresford's death. She had felt a superstitious horror when his wedding-ring was committed to the flames; and the last parting scenes with Cresford had to her feelings sanctioned and confirmed anew her first union, so that at the moment when she was free to give herself for ever to Algernon, she felt herself more severed from him than she had ever yet done.

She knew not where he was; she had not allowed him to correspond with her; and though she felt it was scarcely kind not to be the first to inform him of the event, she had not courage to write to tell him she was free. She had never believed the rumours which had arisen from his frequent visits to Coverdale Park: she had been so sure of his devotion, that she would have felt guilty of ingratitude towards him, if she had allowed them to give her any uneasiness: yet now, for the first time, the recollection of the report would recur to her mind. It was possible, just possible, there might have been some foundation for it. She had heard, she had read a thousand times, that while there was hope, man might remain faithful; but that it was

woman, and woman only, who could live a life of hopeless devotion. She should have no right to complain, if he had at length looked elsewhere for domestic bliss. He would still have been true and kind to her, beyond what she had any right to expect.

As she did not write at first, from a feeling of delicacy towards the memory of Cresford, she now felt unwilling to do so from the shrinking sensitiveness which had always formed a leading feature in her character.

She was not long, however, kept in suspense. Algernon had been in Scotland at the time, and more than a week elapsed before he learned the event. He instantly returned to London. He there found that Ellen was at her cottage, and he followed as fast as four horses could carry him.

She was startled from a reverie of much hope, mixed with a little fear and wonder, by the clatter of a carriage at her door. Her heart leaped within her; she doubted not who it was; and in two seconds she found herself pressed to Algernon's bosom.

She did not, this time, insist upon two years

of widowhood; but consented, at the end of one month, to be privately re-married.

They agreed to renew those vows, to which their hearts had so strictly adhered, at Longbury Church, and to Mr. Allenham's they speedily removed; Captain Wareham and Matilda followed, and Henry arrived from London.

It was late in the month of October. The party had gathered round a cheerful, blazing fire, on the evening preceding the ceremony. It was long since they had met together with feelings of peace and happiness, such as they now experienced, although in some of the party it was happiness chastened, and subdued, by all they had previously endured.

Algernon's eyes were fixed on Ellen with an expression of holy love, which bordered on veneration. Matilda remarked upon his steady gaze, and told him he would put Ellen quite out of countenance.

"I was thinking," he replied, "that if she had not been as virtuous as she is beautiful, as pure as she is kind, as firm as she is affectionate, if she had listened to me, when I wished to fly to America, we should never have known this hour of unalloyed happiness."

"Well," answered the lively Matilda, "those thoughts were very respectful, and respectable thoughts. I cannot find any fault with them!"

Ellen smiled through the tears of virtuous gratification which Algernon's words had called forth.

"It is quite a comfort to see you smile, Ellen," said Caroline; "I thought I should never have seen those white teeth again! And when do you mean to curl your hair? I long to see your glossy black ringlets! Do not you, Mr. Hamilton? Do not you miss the ringlets very much?"

"I miss nothing!" replied Algernon; "Ellen is once more my Ellen. I have scarcely looked to see how she dressed herself."

"Now that is what I call true love," exclaimed Matilda; "Algernon does not look at Ellen's beauty. Ellen is Ellen, and that is enough for him. You all call me proud, and difficult, but when any man like Algernon, loves me as Algernon loves Ellen, then I will love him as Ellen loves Algernon."

"Do you give this as a proof you are not difficult, Matilda?" replied Ellen, smiling al-

most gaily: "there are not Algernons to be met with every day!"

"Then I will stay and take care of you, papa. You know you would not manage at all well without me! you would have nobody to scold! and what is more, there would be nobody to scold you," she added, playfully tapping her father on the cheek.

"I will tell you what, Matilda," replied Captain Wareham, who was too happy to be angry, "you must keep down this same spirit of your's, or nobody will put you to the trial."

Matilda looked archly at Caroline, as if Caroline and she knew something that disproved Captain Wareham's prognostics.

The marriage was to take place early in the morning, as they meant to reach Belhanger the same day. The children had been already sent there, that they might be ready to greet them on their arrival.

Before eight o'clock, the whole party walked quietly up the hill to the church.

There Mr. Allenham again pronounced over them the nuptial benediction. They both repeated after him, clearly, distinctly, and fer-

vently, each word of their vow, and with a delightful, but sober certainty of waking bliss, of assured happiness, the small party wound their way down again to the parsonage.

It was a fine October morning, and the sun was quickly dispersing the vapours which still hung in the low grounds.

The valley had, half an hour before, appeared almost like a lake, as they looked down on the mist below. The trees, the spires, the knolls of higher ground were gradually emerging, and in a few minutes all was clear and joyous, dancing in the morning sunshine. The robin redbreast sung cheerily from the dewy hedges, which were still bright in their rich autumn livery.

"All Nature smiles upon us, Ellen," whispered Algernon: "So the clouds of our early life are dispersed! All before us is bright and serene."

THE END.

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