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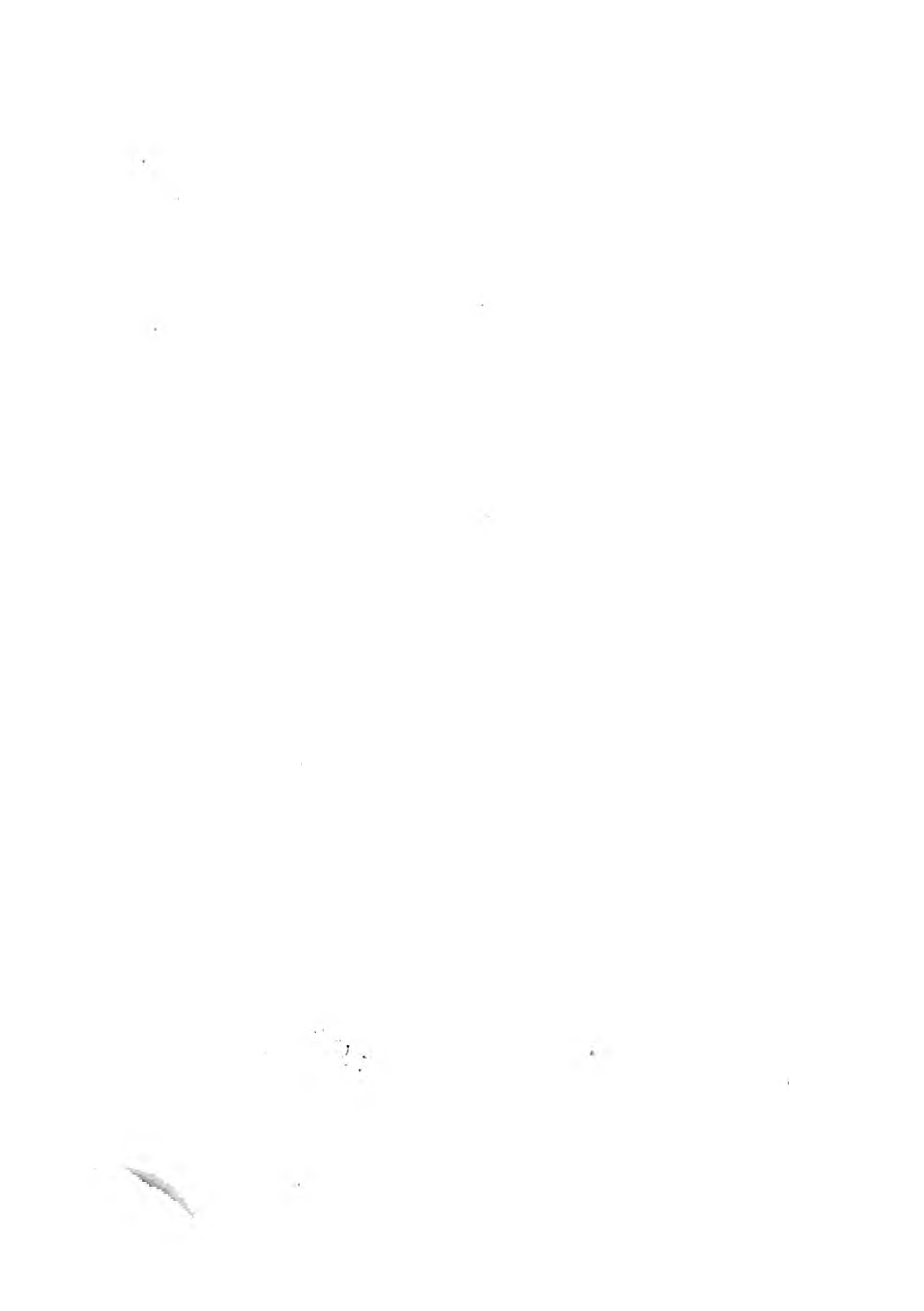
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DOMESTIC TALES;

CONTAINING

THE MERCHANT'S WIFE

AND

HER SISTER.

BY MARY JOHNSTON,

AUTHOR OF "THE LAIRDS OF GLENFERN;
OR, HIGHLANDERS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY."

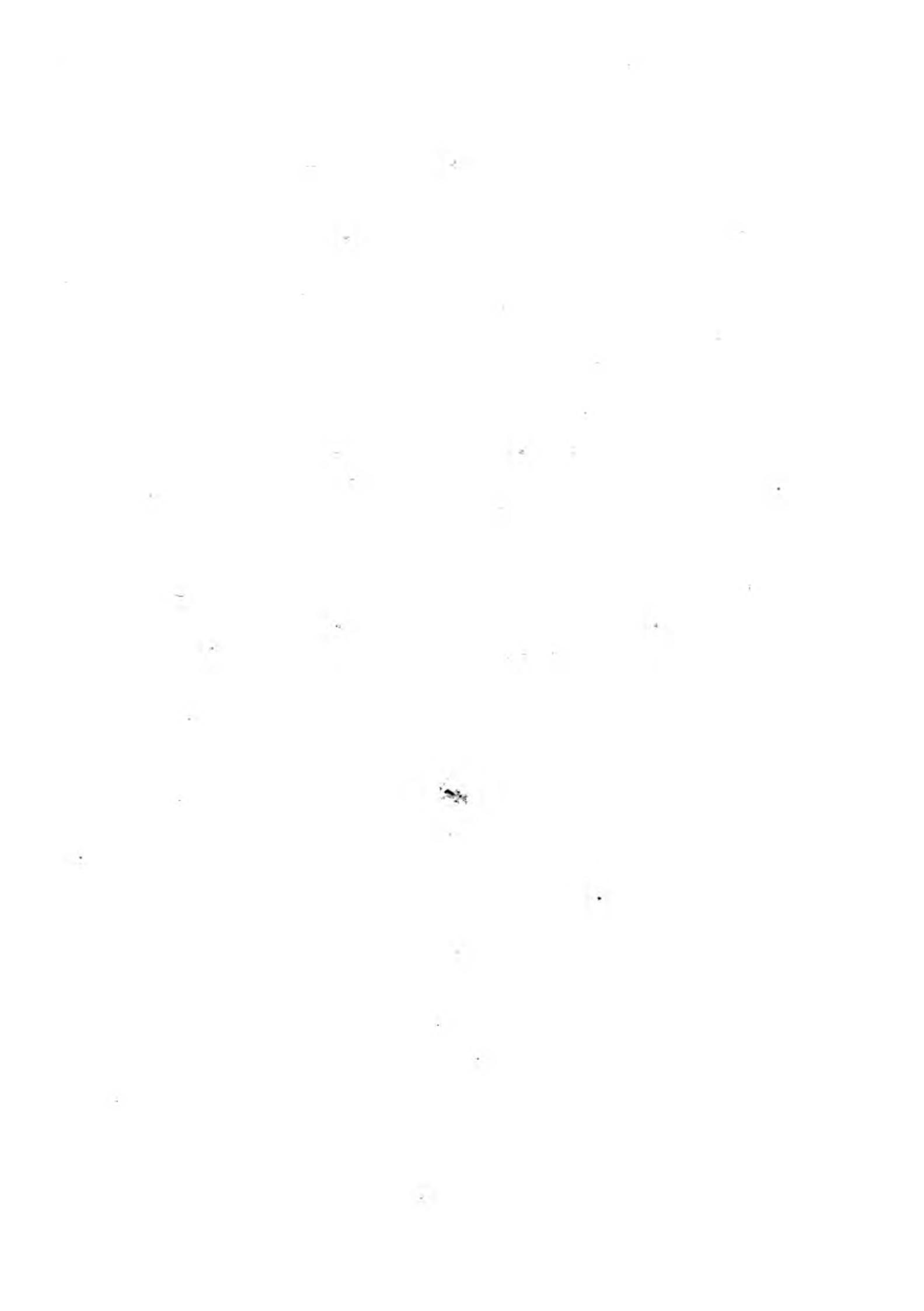
If wisdom has her miseries to mourn,
How can poor folly lead a happy life?
YOUNG.

London :

G. AND W. B. WHITTAKER, AVE-MARIA LANE.

1822.





TO

LIEUT. COLONEL GORDON,

OF CLUNY, &c. &c.

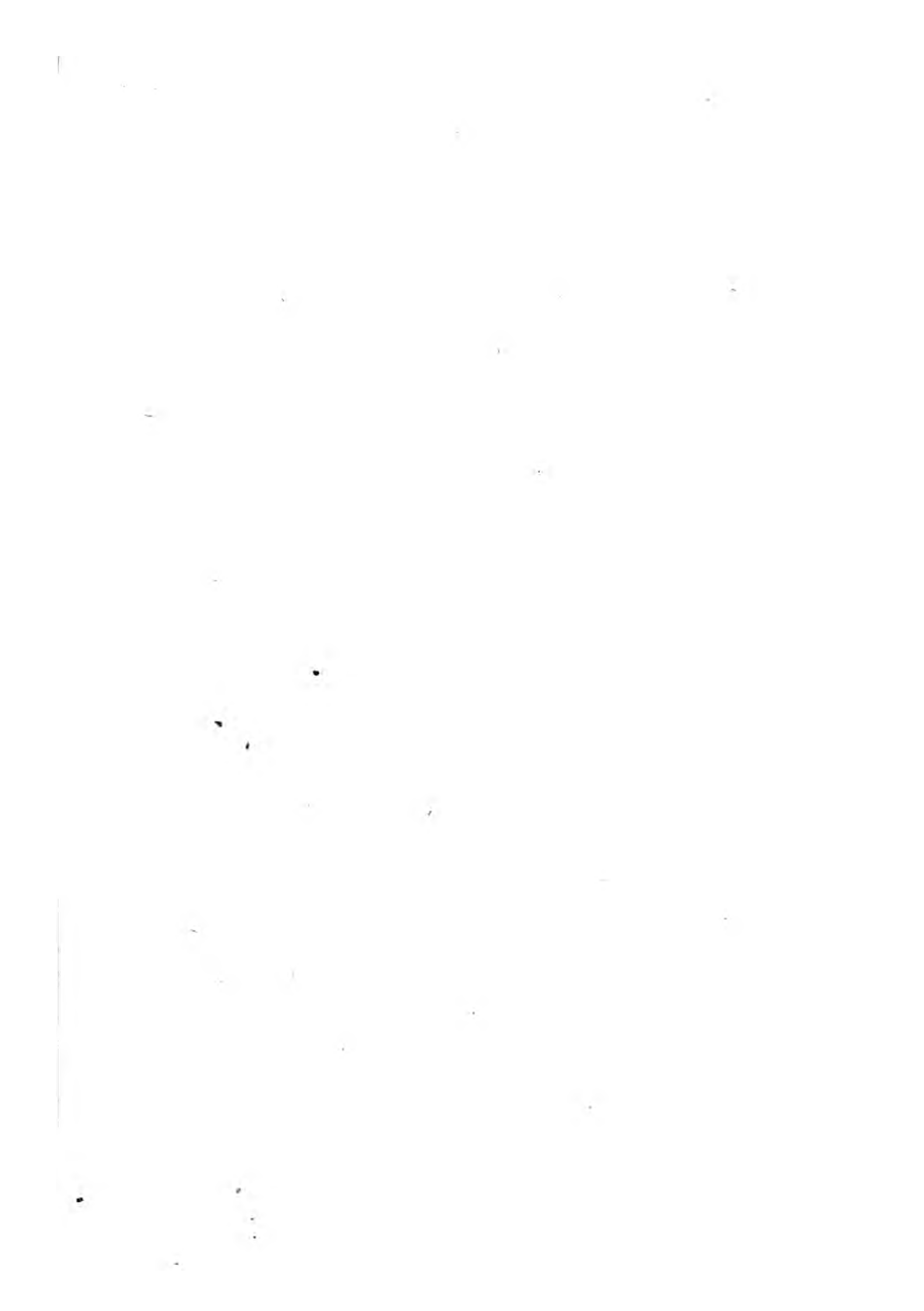
THIS TALE IS INSCRIBED,

AS A TESTIMONY OF

GRATITUDE AND RESPECT,

BY HIS OBLIGED HUMBLE SERVANT,

M. JOHNSTON.



DOMESTIC TALES.

CHAPTER I.

“**T**HAT is a heavy sigh, aunt,” said Catharine Ormsby to her aunt, Mrs. Elrington, “I hope mamma’s letter does not contain bad news.”

“No, my dear,” replied she, then after a short pause, she resumed, “Your sister is going to be married,”—“And does that make you sigh and look so grave, aunt?” said Catharine, “to be sure she is very young, but”—

“I sighed,” said Mrs. Elrington, “to find that twenty years of severe suffering have made so little change in your mother; in speaking of the foibles of a parent to a

child, it is impossible, in general, to use too much delicacy, but your mother wishes that you should be present at your sister's marriage, I think it proper that you should, and were I to suffer you to go unwarned, the influence which the example and precepts of a mother must have, may erase all that I have laboured to implant in your mind, and you may be tempted to pursue the same labyrinth of folly that she has trodden."

Catharine threw herself into her aunt's arms, exclaiming, "I will not leave you, my mother and sister may be very amiable, but I scarcely recollect them, I will not leave you, who have been so kind to me, when you are in declining health, and require those attentions which it is both my pleasure and my duty to pay you."

"You are a very good girl," said Mrs. Elrington, disengaging herself from Catharine's embrace, whose emotion had brought tears into her aunt's eyes, as well as her own, "but I see Doctor Selwyn

coming across the park; so go into the garden and compose yourself, and when I want you, I will send for you."

Doctor Selwyn was Mrs. Elrington's physician and her friend, to him she was accustomed to apply for consolation and advice in all her afflictions, mental and bodily, and the Doctor was ever ready to bestow both.

He was a man of excellent understanding and sound judgment, to which was added that knowledge of the world which may be acquired more readily in his profession than almost any other, by the opportunities which it affords, of admission into the interior of families, and a hilarity of disposition, which peculiarly fitted him for that profession, where a cheerful voice and countenance, and an encouraging manner, is frequently of more use than all the prescriptions in the *materia medica*.

After some desultory conversation, Mrs. Elrington said, "I have had a letter this morning from my sister to inform me that Louisa is going to be married."

"I am not surprised at that," replied the Doctor, "for most of Mrs. Ormsby's letters have contained accounts of her extraordinary beauty, and I am sorry to say for my own sex, too many of them look no further than personal appearance, in their choice of a companion on whom so material a part of their happiness is in future to depend."

"May not that in a great measure proceed, Doctor," said Mrs. Elrington, "from that magic power which is ascribed to beauty of blinding the lover, and causing him, though perhaps not void of discernment in other cases, to attribute to the lady that he admires, qualities which she does not possess?"

"The power of beauty," said the Doctor, "I am no wise inclined to dispute against all the poets and romance writers

who have ever written, but I do believe, from the observations that I have made in life, that many men think of nothing further than beauty, and perhaps good nature, in making their election; but who is to be blessed with Miss Ormsby?"

"A Mr. Durnford," replied Mrs. Elrington, "my sister tells me no particulars about him, but that he is a *rich* merchant; of his principles, dispositions, or habits, she says nothing, and I will venture to say, has never thought; but she adds, that he is tolerably good-looking."

"Durnford," said the Doctor, "that was the name of the merchant in W——, to whom my nephew Henry was bound; he bore a very high character for probity and honour, and behaved with great generosity towards Henry—if this gentleman is his son, I trust he resembles him."

"I hope he does," replied Mrs. Elrington, "there is at least the appearance of generosity in his marrying a girl so entirely without fortune as Louisa; and as she

6 THE MERCHANT'S WIFE

is so young, if he is of a prudent, steady character, he may do much to remedy the education that she has had, but from what we know of her mother, we can scarcely hope that she will prove a good wife."

"That does not always follow," said the Doctor, "we have frequently seen very foolish mothers bring up children who have turned out well, but I confess the chances are against it."

"I wish, however," said Mrs. Elrington, "I could have flattered myself, that my sister was grown more prudent before I entrusted her with my dear Catharine, which I have some thoughts of doing, if you do not very much disapprove of it." She then gave him Mrs. Ormsby's letter, which was as follows:—

W—, April 18, —.

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"I have the pleasure to tell you that Louisa's charms have made a conquest of Mr. Durnford, a young mer-

chant of this city, and they are to be married immediately; his father died lately, and has left him a large fortune and a good business. He is not very handsome, but well enough for a man. I intend Louisa to be married in a white satin dress, with a lace drapery, and a beautiful lace veil.— Now I hope, if you are not well enough to come to the wedding yourself, that you will let Catharine come, and as she must be a great girl now, for she is near seventeen, perhaps she may meet with as good a match as her sister, who is not nineteen till her birth-day—to be sure Catharine did not promise, when she left me, to be so handsome as her sister, but I have known plain girls marry very well. I am so busy with the bridal finery, that I have not time to add any more, but Louisa's love to yourself and Catharine, and that I am

“ Your affectionate sister,

“ CATHARINE ORMSBY.”

“ P. S. Mr. Durnford is furnishing his house most elegantly, entirely by my taste

and Louisa's, if you let Catharine come, give her something smart, for I do not know how I shall get Louisa's clothes paid for."

"I have not shewn that letter to Catharine," said Mrs. Elrington, when the Doctor had finished perusing it, "I do not wish to make her mother ridiculous in her eyes, though I am desirous of giving her such an impression of her follies as may deter her from copying them; for I think she ought to go to this marriage, I know not how soon they may be her only friends, and she ought to be acquainted with them, that in addition to the shock which my death, whenever it occurs, will be to her, she may not have the painful feeling of having to reside with those who have always been entire strangers to her."

The Doctor was aware that Mrs. Elrington laboured under a disease which was

likely to prove mortal, he could not therefore say, that her fears were totally unfounded; but he said what he hoped, that her life might be prolonged for many years. —“ But,” continued he, “ I do not disapprove of Catharine going to W——, it is time that she should see a little of the world, for which, however, I have always told you, that you were making her very unfit.”

“ My dear Doctor,” said Mrs. Elrington, “ that is one of the very few subjects on which we have always differed in opinion, and therefore I have generally avoided discussing it with you, as I did not think it likely that either of us would convert the other to our own way of thinking.

“ I have acted upon the persuasion that much of the misery, perhaps also some of the happiness of women, proceeds from their feelings, and imagination having the predominance over their reasoning faculties; and I thought that in Catharine, they were even more lively than ordinary,

I have therefore done every thing in my power to strengthen her reason, by the course of reading that we have pursued; from which I have banished, as much as possible, poetry, and what are called works of taste, which I think, in general to females, particularly in early youth, have the effect of stimulating the fancy, before the judgment has gained strength to counterbalance it, and by giving very erroneous ideas of life, must unfit them for the parts they may be called upon to act in it”

“Your reasoning would be good,” replied the Doctor, “were they likely to be called upon to be heroes or legislators, but you would not deprive of taste and imagination, those who are to be the grace, the ornament of society, and I doubt, whether nipping the blossoms, is the way to produce the fruit that you expect.”

“I would not destroy them entirely,” replied Mrs. Elrington, “I would, if possible, only restrain their too great luxuriance, and there is much for women to do

in life as well as to ornament it, they are to sooth, to console, to instruct, and how will all this be performed by a being who is the dupe of imagination, and the victim of unrestrained sensibility?"

"Well, my good lady," said the Doctor, "I will argue the point no longer with you at present, but I think, that fortified as my little friend Catharine is by precept and example, there can be no danger in your permitting her to go to this marriage, except, perhaps her getting a taste for satin gowns, with lace drapery, of which, we will soon cure her, when we get her back here; had my professional duties permitted, I should have been glad to have accompanied her, as I have not seen my brother's widow and family since his death, but I fear I must deny myself that pleasure."

"It would have relieved me of half my fears for her, could she have had such an escort," said Mrs. Elrington, "dear girl, she knows not my anxiety about her."

After Catharine had got over the emotions excited by the idea of leaving her aunt, she thought, with the pleasure natural to her age, of seeing her mother and sister, and a world, of which she knew so little ; and she was soon occupied in preparations for her journey, the greatest event which had yet taken place in her life.

Mrs. Elrington was many years older than her sister, Mrs. Ormsby, who, the child of her father's declining years, had been indulged from her infancy, in a manner that perverted the intellectual faculties which nature had bestowed upon her, from all useful purposes ; at his death she came to reside with Mrs. Elrington, who had been several years married to a gentleman of considerable landed property in the county of B——.

Mrs. Elrington found it impossible to counteract the inclination that she had to

every species of folly and self-indulgence, and at length, contrary to her advice, she married Mr. Ormsby, a young man of genteel family, but of most dissipated habits.

They soon spent his patrimony, which, however, lasted as long as his constitution; he died of old age at little more than thirty, leaving her, with two children, entirely dependent upon the bounty of his relations, who had never regarded her with kindness, but, on the contrary, considered her as being more blameable than her husband, for the imprudent style in which they had lived after their marriage; but they agreed to give her a small annuity—stipulating that she should continue to reside in W——, where Mr. Ormsby had died, as they were desirous of keeping her at a distance from them.

Mrs. Elrington had become a widow some time before, and had retired to a

small house, in the cottage style, which Mr. Elrington had built for her at the verge of his park, where she lived upon a small jointure, which was all that he had in his power to settle upon her, his estate being entailed upon the son of a former marriage.

As soon as she was acquainted with Mrs. Ormsby's destitute situation, she offered to take one of her children, and adopt it as her own, which offer was readily accepted, and the youngest, a plain, spoilt child of five years old, was consigned to her care.

Mrs. Elrington who had suffered much from depression of spirits, after the death of her husband, had now a motive for exertion, that was of infinite service to her; she devoted herself entirely to the improvement of the little Catharine, and found an ample reward in her docility and affection; the ill effects of the treatment that she had received in infancy were soon

removed, and the progress that she made in the earlier branches of education, evinced a considerable degree of talent; but Mrs. Elrington soon observed that extreme degree of sensibility with which it is generally associated, and she used every precaution not to counteract nature, but, like a skilful horticulturist, to guide her in the safest and most eligible paths; she was desirous of giving her such a taste for literature as might imbue her mind with just and elevated sentiments, and afford her such resources as no other pursuit can bestow, but above all, she wished her to have such impressions of religion, as might defend her from all the evils and temptations of life; Mrs. Elrington had felt in prosperity how its precious balms soften the heart, and secure it from becoming selfish and unfeeling, and in adversity she daily experienced its consolations; hers was not a theology of forms and controversy, from early habit she preferred the mode of worship used in the Church of

England. and she was sensible of all the merit of its most excellent liturgy ; but she did not suppose that all piety was confined to those of her own communion, on the contrary, she believed, that all who use their best endeavours to practise the precepts given by their Divine Master, will have a share in the benefits purchased by his death ; and she thought the excellence of those precepts the best proof of their heavenly origin, for what human legislator ever before him, pointed at the seat of corruption in the heart, and admonished to make that clean, before the actions proceeding from it can be so ?

Such were the lessons that she inculcated in the ductile mind of her pupil ; with what success, the following pages are intended to shew.

CHAPTER II.



THE day having arrived, that was appointed for Catharine's setting out on her journey, Doctor Selwyn accompanied her to the nearest post town, and saw her safely seated in the mail; he promised to see her aunt every day, and should any thing occur to make her return before the end of the time that had been proposed for her stay desirable, to acquaint her with it.

His promise relieved her from much of the anxiety that she had felt, and enabled her to enjoy her journey, with all the natural zest of youth, and never did the soft green of spring, the painted blossoms of the fruit trees, or the gay carol of the birds, just "waked to life and love," ex-

cite more lively feelings of delight than in her unsophisticated heart, where all was pure and attuned to joy.

Her *compagnons de voyage* had changed several times, and she had travelled two stages alone, when at the next town to W——, a person habited as a Quaker entered the coach, Catharine had never seen one of that sect before, and was somewhat surprised at the peculiarities of his dress and language; but there was a benevolence in his countenance and demeanour, which reconciled her to his appearance.

They travelled for some miles in almost total silence, the Quaker appearing wrapt in meditation, which Catharine was too diffident to break in upon, when the coach was stopped by a servant in a handsome livery, who came out of a porter's lodge, that appeared to belong to a very handsome house at a little distance from the

road ; he carried a small portmanteau, and was followed by a gentleman who seemed upwards of sixty, but was of most portly and commanding appearance.

The Quaker and he mutually recognised each other, " Mr. Symmonds, how do you do?" " Friend Howard, I am glad to meet with thee, I hope thy wife is well?" " She is complaining as usual," replied he in no very sympathizing tone of voice ; " poor woman," said the Quaker, " she doth enjoy little of the blessings of health, when didst thou hear of thy son?"

" Not very lately," replied Mr. Howard, " the last time that we heard was from Smyrna, and he said that he had not determined, whether he would proceed from Syria into Persia, or endeavour to make his way into Egypt."

" He is an adventurous young man," said the Quaker.

" Yes," replied Mr. Howard, " the present state of the Continent precludes

young men from making the tour that used to be customary, and there is much that is worthy of notice to be seen in the East, he is ardent in the pursuit of knowledge, and we do not wish our fears to deter him."

"The desire is laudable," said the Quaker, but in a tone, in which Catharine thought there was something of mental reservation; in his usual manner, he continued—"I sometimes hear of him from his young friend Henry Selwyn."

"Henry is a fine young man," said Mr. Howard, "I must not forget to see him, and ask him to come out to Barnton, if Mr. Durnford can spare him, for a few days; by the bye, I hear Mr. Durnford is going to be married."

"Such was the report when I left W——," replied the Quaker.

"And what sort of match is he going to make? I hope a good one for his father's sake," enquired Mr. Howard.

"The damsel is fair, and well to look

upon," replied his companion, "but I fear, she hath not had the kind of education that would have fitted her for William Durnford's wife."

"Why, I suppose she has learned to dance, and sing, and so on, which you will not approve of," said Mr. Howard.

"No," replied the Quaker, with a placid smile, "I should not object so much, to these vanities, which are now become so common, that William Durnford would not easily have met with a wife who had not these accomplishments, I think thou wouldst call them; but I have noticed more than ordinary levity, both in the damsel, and her mother, and William Durnford, though a worthy young man will be but too easily led into folly."

"His father," said Mr. Howard, "was a respectable man, and I think, was supposed to die rich."

"Old William Durnford," replied the Quaker, "was of a very speculative disposition, I do not think he left so much

money as was said, but his son has a good business, and if he is prudent, must do well."

Catharine had been anxious during the whole of this conversation, to tell the gentlemen that she was Mrs. Ormsby's daughter, as she thought it unhandsome to listen to what she was sure, they would not have said had they known her, but before she could muster courage to announce herself, they were engaged in discussing some other subject.

It was late in the evening before the travellers reached the city of W——; when the coach arrived at the inn, she found her mother, sister, and Mr. Durnford, waiting for her; who gave her a very kind reception, being all just then, too well pleased with themselves to be uncivil to others; Mrs. Ormsby expressed her surprise at her having turned out so good looking, "you were one of the plainest

little things," said she, "when you left me that ever I saw, and so fretful, I was very glad to get quit of you."

Catharine smiled and said, "she hoped she was cured of that fault." "I dare say you are," returned her mother, "my sister Elrington always took a great deal of pains with children, I dare say she has made you very clever, and all that; but I hope you are not a blue stocking; for if you are, I will not be able to get you a husband, the gentlemen do not like blue stockings; do they Mr. Durnford?"

Mr. Durnford replied, as he was in duty bound, "that the gentlemen must like a daughter of Mrs. Ormsby's." This edifying conversation brought them to that lady's house, where Catharine being much fatigued soon retired to bed.

Next day was spent in displaying all the bride's finery, and the elegant presents of jewels, which Mr. Durnford had made to her; Mrs. Elrington had sent her sister

a sum of money, which was very acceptable, and she expressed herself very well satisfied with Catharine's wardrobe.

The day after was that appointed for the marriage; Catharine accompanied her sister to church, and witnessed her taking vows, the import of which she had never once considered, or any circumstance relating to them, but that they were to be the introduction to the wealth and splendour, which she had always been taught to covet. Mr. Durnford's house did every credit to the taste of his wife, her mother, and the upholsterer; the good substantial mahogany and moreen furniture, which had accommodated his parents, was all discarded, and their places occupied, by rosewood tables, gilt chairs, chintz curtains, with French draperies, and all the requisites of modern elegance.

All the fashionables in W—— thronged to visit the beautiful Mrs. Durnford, and

all admitted that she had shewn great taste in the decorations of her house and person; some prudent people observed, "that Mr. Durnford had set out in great style, and that they wished it might last." But they did not object to partaking of the entertainments, which he gave most liberally; for, to exhibit his beautiful wife, and to gratify her taste for amusement, and shew, appeared to him, the summit of happiness; in fact, his vanity was nearly as great as hers, nor was his knowledge of life much greater, except in mercantile transactions: his father having confined him almost entirely to the counting house from the period of his leaving school, till his death; he then formed an attachment to Miss Ormsby, and had sought little other company.

Poor Catharine was nearly overlooked in all the splendour and gaiety that crowded her sister's mansion: some people enquired, "who that little dark eyed girl in white was?" and when they were told, a

sister of Mrs. Durnford's, they concluded, that it could not be worth while to attempt to draw her from the corner or side table, where she generally took refuge; but fortunately Doctor Selwyn had given her an introduction to his brother's widow, who resided in W——; and in her daughter, Catharine found a companion more congenial to her taste than any of her sister's fashionable visitors.

Mr. Selwyn had been curate of Barn-ton, and tutor to Mr. Howard's only son. At his death, Mr. Howard had been liberal in his professions of what he *meant* to do, for Henry Selwyn, the playfellow and fellow student of his heir; but as these professions, like many others that gentleman had made, (it is probable he learnt the habit when canvassing the freeholders of the county, for the honour of representing them in parliament,) were never realized, Henry was obliged to forsake his beloved studies, and betake himself to the

drudgery of a counting house, which was however much ameliorated to him by the liberality of his master.

Maria Selwyn's education had been conducted on a very different plan from Catharine's, and her mind was naturally of a firmer tone, and had received very different impressions from her having gone through the same course of studies that her brother and George Howard had; and since her father's death, Mrs. Selwyn had procured instructions in the most fashionable accomplishments for her, with a view to their enabling her to procure an independence; but notwithstanding these advantages, she did not assume any superiority over her new friend, whose amiable qualities she soon discerned through the veil her diffidence threw over them, and the intimacy promised to be of mutual advantage, though it had as yet gone no farther than morning calls.

On the Sunday after the marriage, the

bridal party appeared in the parish church, where they occasioned a very great *sensation*; and it was generally thought attracted more attention than the preacher, as it was observed, that every lady who had been in church could give a very exact account of the bride's dress, while some, even of those most advanced in life, were at a loss about the text.

Mrs. Selwyn understanding from Catharine, that she had never been in a cathedral, had asked her to accompany her there, in the afternoon; to which she gladly acceded, on learning that the service would be over before her sister's dinner hour.

She was charmed on entering the broad aisle, with the majesty of the Gothic or Anglo Saxon architecture, which mocks at all the feeble imitations of modern taste, displaying in its massy piles the grandeur and munificence of an age, which

notwithstanding these incontrovertible proofs to the contrary, we are but too willing to indulge our self-admiration, by scoffing at as barbarous. Shall we leave to posterity proofs of our progress in the arts, to supersede these noble relics of our ancestors?

The service had just commenced, and the delight with which she had viewed the church was suspended, by the "concord of sweet sounds;" it was the twenty-eighth evening of the month, and as she listened to the full toned organ, and the voices of the white-robed choir, sounding the praises of Him, "whose mercy endureth for ever," she could almost have believed that she heard a chorus of the Angelic host; and when they suddenly changed to the low, pathetic notes of that beautiful psalm, "By the waters of Babylon, we sat down, and wept, when we remembered thee, O! Sion," she could not restrain her tears, for the long past sorrows of the exiled Israelites.

The anthem was Handel's "Comfort ye my people," and the sweet silvery tones of the boy, who sung the Solo, would have awakened the feelings of those, much less susceptible of the powers of music than Catharine, who thought, she could never thank Mrs. Selwyn sufficiently, for having procured her such an exquisite enjoyment; and she was not a little surprised to hear that the service was performed twice every day, and that scarcely ten people in W—— thought it worth going to hear.

When she returned home, her mother and sister were highly amused by the account she gave of the pleasure that she had experienced.

"The girl is a Methodist! an absolute Methodist!" exclaimed Mrs. Ormsby.

"Pray mamma, what is a Methodist?" enquired Catharine, "Oh! a person who talks of nothing but angels, and preaching, and praying, like you."

Catharine found she was not likely to obtain much information from her mother, and as she understood that company was expected at dinner, she asked if she might accept an invitation which Mrs. Selwyn had given her, to tea; but to this request her mother returned a decided refusal.

“No indeed,” said she, “your head is full enough of nonsense already, Mrs. Selwyn and her learned daughter, will make you worse if possible, and instead of making a good match like your sister, you will be throwing yourself away on some of these Quakers, or Methodist people, that they will introduce you to.” Mrs. Durnford’s entering her sister’s chamber in all her splendour, diverted the torrent of her mother’s eloquence from poor Catharine, whose astonishment, at discovering that her mother seemed to think, there was nothing in life worth aiming at, but to get well married, is not to be described. It had never once formed a subject for discus-

sion with her aunt, but whenever her mother found leisure to address her, it formed her chief theme, though the only effect it produced was the disgust of her auditor, whose sensitive mind was shocked beyond endurance, to hear what she had been accustomed to consider, a sacred bond of the finer sympathies of the soul, spoken of as a mere mercenary contract.

On learning the subject in dispute, Mrs. Durnford said, "Oh! let her go, they are only some of Durnford's old-fashioned acquaintances, that are coming to dinner, there is nothing so vulgar and citizen-like as a Sunday dinner party, she will be quite as well at Mrs. Selwyn's."

Mrs. Ormsby, who could deny her darling nothing that she asked, gave an ungracious consent, and Catharine felt much obliged to the vulgarity of Mr. Durnford's Sunday visitors, and as soon as she could leave the dinner table, hastened to Mrs.

Selwyn's, whose hours of refreshment did not accord with those that her sister had chosen to adopt, whose sole aim in every thing, was to be, what she considered *genteel* and fashionable.

Here Catharine thought, she might venture to expatiate upon the pleasure that she had derived from the Cathedral service, without fearing such animadversions as her mother and sister had made, Mrs. Selwyn did not, however, altogether sympathise in her enthusiasm.

“ If you are so easily affected through the medium of your senses, Miss Ormsby,” said she, “ you might become an easy convert to the Romish Religion, were you to witness the imposing ceremonies of that church, in Catholic countries, nay, I am not sure whether the mere reading of Dr. Eustace's fascinating description of their rites, would not go a great way towards it.”

Catharine blushed : “ I fear you think

me childish," said she, "but I am so very fond of music, and have had so few opportunities of gratifying my taste, that, perhaps, I go too far in expressing my delight."

"Far from it my dear," replied Mrs. Selwyn, "I only wished from what I witnessed of your emotion in church, to warn you of a mistake too common in dispositions such as I am induced to think yours, that an imagination of great sensibility, excited by music united to a form of worship, is in reality devotional fervour, when nothing can be further from the fact"

"Would you then banish music from our form of worship, as I am told they have done in Scotland?" enquired Catharine."

"No," replied Mrs. Selwyn, "I admire our Cathedral service as beautiful in itself, and as a relic of the ancient splendour of our church, which I should be sorry to see it deprived of. Poetry and music, as well as every other gift bestowed upon

man, can never be so well employed as in the service of the bestower, and may to a certain degree elevate the mind; but he who is a Spirit must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, with the understanding and heart, in a well governed and steady frame of mind, not with the irregular fervours of a wandering unguided imagination."

Catharine acquiesced in Mrs. Selwyn's reasoning, and mentally resolved to profit by her remarks.

Mrs. Selwyn informed her that she expected her fellow traveller, Benjamin Symmons and his wife, to drink tea, "he was rather shocked" said she, "when I mentioned your having met with him in the coach, as he was afraid that something which passed between him and Mr. Howard, might have hurt your feelings."

Catharine smiled, and said, "that she considered herself as an involuntary listener

to a conversation which was not intended for her to hear, and, therefore, was neither hurt nor offended by it."

"He is," said Mrs. Selwyn, "a most excellent man, and his wife, though rather more bigotted to the forms of their sect, is in her conduct, a pattern of what a Christian ought to be, her life is spent in visiting the sick and poor, in raising subscriptions for them, and aiding their necessities in every possible way, and it is astonishing, what, by her single exertions she has effected, how many cases of pining want she has discovered and alleviated, where the sufferers were too modest, or too high spirited, to make their wants known, but silently gave up their claims upon the sympathies of their fellow-creatures, to the clamorous and obtrusive, who too often exact the boon of charity, when it might be much better bestowed."

"They both speak in their meeting," continued Mrs. Selwyn, "and occasionally travel for the purpose of preaching; Benja-

min was on his return from one of these excursions, when you met with him ; they are my near neighbours, and friends in every sense of the word."

While Mrs. Selwyn was speaking, the quaker and his wife were announced.

"Where is thy son?" enquired he, as soon as the first salutations were over. "He is gone to Barnton," replied Mrs. Selwyn, "he has never been there, since we came here to reside, he had a great wish to revisit the haunts of his childhood, and Mr. Durnford kindly permitted him to accept of Mr. Howard's invitation to spend a few days at the hall."

Mrs. Selwyn then ordered tea, which the quaker said "would be very acceptable, as Rachael had spoken very long that afternoon in the meeting."

"What was the subject?" enquired Mrs. Selwyn.

"On the vanity of worldly pursuits," re-

plied he, "Is it not marvellous to behold, as we daily do, multitudes of poor perishing mortals, eagerly pursuing a feather, or a straw, for what is the highest earthly aim better? perhaps after all their efforts the bauble eludes their grasp, or just as they think they have attained it, they themselves sink and are seen no more."

"Your observations are just," replied Mrs. Selwyn, "but while we are in this sublunary state, we must make provision for its necessities, and that strong instinct which prompts us to do so, was certainly not given, but to be of use."

"True," replied the Quaker, "but is there not another principle in the soul, which prompts us to look towards Him, who feedeth the ravens and clotheth the lilies; and to provide for the future destiny of our immortal spirits; yet, while man is the only creature that moves erect, and looks upward to heaven, he is as eagerly engaged in sensual pursuits as the beasts which are capable of no higher enjoyment."

“ But,” said Mrs. Selwyn, “ those words of scripture are not to be taken literally, which direct us to take no thought for tomorrow, for from the very constitution of our minds that is impossible, they are only meant to warn us against too excessive an anxiety.”

“ Assuredly,” replied the Quaker, “ but thou knowest by thine own experience how small a space of time will suffice to perform the duties to which I allude, and how unwilling the majority of men are so to employ that space; alas! an eternity will come, when the choice will be no longer theirs.”

Here the Quaker was interrupted by the entrance of Henry Selwyn, who was affectionately received by his mother, sister, and the Quakers, and introduced to Catharine.

“ How didst thou leave thy friends at Barnton?” said Mr. Symmons.

“ Much as usual,” replied Henry, “ Mrs. Howard complaining, and Mr. Howard quarrelling with all around him, and then wondering that George will not stay at home.”

“ Ah !” rejoined the Quaker, “ friend Howard’s is but the courtesy of the world, ’tis a thin veil, and serves but ill to conceal the harshness of his disposition, does George still sojourn in the east ?”

“ The last accounts that have been received of him,” replied Henry, “ were from Smyrna, from whence he proposed going into Syria and visiting Jerusalem, and whatever else is worth seeing in the Holy Land ; his letters to his mother are most interesting, and his reflections on the state of the countries he has visited are very striking, indeed the phenomena that they present to a mind of a reflective turn, such as his, could not be otherwise. Once models of the republican forms of government, the seat of philosophy, the school of the arts, where the human mind appeared to have

attained the zenith of perfection, now crushed under the most horrible despotism, the simoom of the desert seems to have passed over them and to have left nothing but the relics of what they once were; yet I know nothing I envy the man of literature and taste more than surveying these relics, there is I believe more pleasure in the melancholy feeling with which we survey the remains of former days, than we should feel in beholding them in their pristine splendour; it is one of these mysterious movements of the human mind which is not easily traced to its source."

"Thou dost not recollect, friend Henry," said Mrs. Symmons, "why the simoom, as thou callest it, passed over that fair land. Christianity, by far the purest and even the most philosophical form of religion, that ever was presented to mankind, (inasmuch as it goes into the depths of the human mind and points out the seat of our guilt and misery,) was "to the Greeks foolishness," and amidst all these splendid tem-

ples with the remnants of which, thou art so much delighted, there was but one small altar to the "unknown God;" nor is that form of worship which is now called the Greek church, much better than a relic of paganism, in which "they fall down and worship idols of wood and stone the work of men's hands," which have not even the merit of workmanship, which the images of the heathen Gods and Goddesses had to recommend them."*

"There is truth in thy remarks Rachel," said her husband, "yet I can pardon Henry's enthusiasm in favour of the Greeks, they were a wonderful people, and some of

* This is I believe not exactly correct in reference to the Greek form of worship in the Turkish dominions, they have, however, pictures in their churches, in the execution of which there is certainly no breach committed of the second commandment, but in Russia every peasant is said to have his household gods, and the image which was brought forth during the French invasion, must be fresh in the memory of every one.

their sages appear even to have had glimpses vouchsafed to them of that light which was to shine forth on the darkness of paganism, and they are endeared to the classical scholar, by being associated with his first draughts from the fountain of knowledge."

"Yes," said Henry, "and to me they have another charm of association, for my first impressions of their greatness came from the lips of my beloved parent and instructor."

"Did you visit the Rectory, Henry?" said his mother, whose eyes, this allusion to her lamented husband, had filled with tears.

"I did," he replied, "but could scarcely trace any remains of our old abode, the present Curate has seven children, who do not appear to possess much taste for gardening, for our seringas and laburnams have all fallen beneath their revels, they have not even spared the climbing rose which Maria trained over the little sum-

mer house ; Mrs. Howard says she always orders the coachman, when she drives out, to go another way, for she cannot bear to pass it."

"Probably," said the Quaker, "the destruction of thy shrubs, has afforded the little romps, as much pleasure as the rearing of them did thee ; thou shouldest not lament after such trifles, all things are changing—what so quickly as thyself?"

The rest of the evening was spent in desultory conversation, and Catharine returned to her Sister's, much pleased with her new friends.

During the remainder of her stay in W—, she spent much of her time with them, notwithstanding the sneers of her mother and sister at her taste for low company, as she was much happier in their society than in the splendid routs and parties to which she accompanied Mrs. Durnford,

who shone a first rate star in these gay circles, and admired, flattered, and envied, thought herself at the summit of human felicity.

CHAPTER III.



DOCTOR SELWYN was so much pleased with the accounts which Catharine transmitted to her aunt, of his brother's family, that he wrote to Mrs. Selwyn, requesting that she would permit her daughter to accompany Miss Ormsby on her return home, to which she willingly assented, and when the period of Catharine's visit had elapsed, Henry escorted the young ladies on their journey, and remained a few days with his uncle, who was delighted with his talents and information, and regretted that his circumstances would not permit him, to enable him to pursue his studies for the church, to which his inclination still tended, but as his wishes could not be indulged, he braced his mind to the situation in

which he was placed, and on leaving Crossford, the village in which Doctor Selwyn resided, pursued his rout to Scotland, on commercial business of Mr. Durnford's.

“ Crossford was at so short a distance from Elrington Park, that the young ladies spent most of their time together, much to Mrs. Elrington's satisfaction, who thought Catharine particularly fortunate in having gained such a friend as Maria, who, to the happy spirits and bounding vivacity of youth, added a solidity of judgment, much beyond her years.

Mrs. Elrington had occasional communication with her son-in-law, who had resided during his minority with General Heygarth, a brother of his mother's; he had been of age for some time, and now announced his intention of coming down to take possession of his estate, and to put his cousin Mr. Heygarth in possession of

the living, which had been kept vacant for him, till Mr. Elrington had it in his power to present it to him, and till he was of a proper age to take orders.

“ Now girls,” cried Doctor Selwyn, one morning entering the breakfast room, where they were at work, “ sew, sewing for ever, what a pair of old fashioned little misses you are, go along, curl your hair, wash your faces, and put on your best looks, for there is Frederick Elrington arrived at the hall, with tandems, and hunters, and servants, enough to carry off all the girls in the country.”

“ Our hair is curled,” said Catharine, “ and our faces washed, I will answer for myself, and I think, I may for Maria, also, that we have no desire to be carried off in Frederick Elrington’s tandem.

“ Likely, likely,” said the Doctor, “ are the grapes sour Miss Catharine?”

“ Perhaps they may,” returned she, “ but I assure you I shall never aim at them.”

“ Well, well, miss,” said the Doctor, “ you may do worse, three thousand a year is no cast-away, and if he is a little wild, as he is said to be, I know nothing so likely to tame him as a good wife. His cousin, Miss Heygarth is not so fastidious as you, at least it is understood that the General and his lady give him every encouragement, and they know what the world savours of.”

While the Doctor was speaking, Frederick himself appeared at the little gate, which opened from the park, into the garden of the cottage; he was a genteel fashionable looking young man, and entered the room with the air of one who knows he will be well received, he shook hands with the Doctor, and bowed to the ladies; then looking at them a second time, he exclaimed, “ why Catharine, is that you? it is impossible, you were one of the ugliest, dark, strange looking, little things, I ever saw in my life; and I declare by some

magic, you are turned into a very handsome girl; how has it been brought about?"

Catharine, with a heightened complexion, which added very much to the beauty he commended, said, "she was happy to see him, and introduced Miss Selwyn."

"What a foolish girl you are," cried the tormenting Doctor, "nobody now-a-days thinks of introducing their friends, particularly such friends as Maria:" "come Maria," giving her one of his sly looks, which, however, he took care that Frederick should not see, "you may as well be going home with me."

"Where is Mrs. Elrington?" continued Frederick, after he had bestowed a stare, and a sort of bow upon Maria, "my uncle, and aunt Heygarth, Miss Heygarth, and my cousin Tom, are all at the park, and I want Mrs. Elrington to come over and do the honours for me."

"I fear," said Catharine, "that my aunt will be unable to comply with your

request, from her state of health, and advanced period of life; she has declined going into company for some time, and she is particularly unwell at present."

"I am sorry for her being unwell," said Frederick, "as to her time of life, nobody grows old now; but if she cannot come, Mrs. Heygarth must do the honours herself, to which she will make no great objection, and you must all come over and dine; Doctor, you'll come?"

"No: thank ye," replied the Doctor, "Maria and I are just going to Crossford."

"To Crossford!" said Frederick, "poh! what to do there? I'm sure I have enough of General Heygarth's long stories, his Lady's whims, Miss' music, and Tom's books; if you will not come, they may dine by themselves for me, that's flat."

"That will be very hospitable of you, young man," said the Doctor, "pray, did you invite your friends to your house, with the intention of leaving them to amuse themselves?"

“ I invite them,” cried he, “ I invited none of them but Tom, who in spite of his learning, is a very good sort of fellow; and as I suppose you must have a parson, he will do as well as another; the rest professed the visit, though I told them that I did not believe the old housekeeper could make up beds for them all, which was going as far as I could to decline the honour; but they said they would take their chance for that, and so here they all are; but it won't do, I see the hook too well to take the bait.”

“ Don't be too sure of that,” said the Doctor, “ I have heard many a man make as stout professions, and be caught after all.”

Frederick laughed, and shook his head, “ pigs may whistle,” said he, “ but their mouths are very ill made for it.” Then seeing one of his dogs, which had been left outside of the garden, making a point at something in the park, he darted out of the room, exclaiming, “ Well, if you won't

come and dine with me, I'll come and dine here, and you'll likely have the whole *squad* after me; so mind, I give you warning."

"Hum," said the Doctor, "it is a pretty bold step to be sure; but it may succeed with Frederick, as I told him, for no doubt the General is an old enough tactician to know his weak side; he is, I see, the same thoughtless rattle that he was when a boy, I think there will be some sport in seeing the manœuvres of his besiegers, so I will go and dine with him, and will call for you at a quarter before five, which I suppose will be as early as these fine folks will chuse to dine."

The young ladies went in the course of the forenoon to call on Mrs. and Miss Heygarth; but they did not meet with them, as they had walked out to see the grounds; they therefore left a message, saying, that they would accept Mr. Elrington's invitation to dinner, lest he should

put his threat of dining at the cottage in execution.

The Doctor did not fail to come in time to escort his young friends through the park, where they did not appear very welcome guests to any one but the master. The General was, as the Doctor had foretold, a skilful tactician; he had made his way in life by means of an admirable address, and considerable talents, particularly that most useful science, a knowledge of mankind; and no feeling or principle to prevent his turning the foibles he was adroit enough to discover, to his own advantage.

In early life, by the aid of his specious manners, a good person, and shewy regimentals, he had practised on the easy credulity of women, and had gratified his cold-hearted vanity, by exciting emotions in the bosom of many a fond fair one, in which he was much too selfish to participate, and had given rise to expectations which he

never had the slightest intention of fulfilling. A woman of fortune was his object, but he met with a lady, who by the assistance of friends, as skilful in the arts of deception as her professed admirer, fairly outwitted him in his matrimonial speculation, and persuaded him that she was possessed of thrice the amount of her real fortune.

Once secured by the bonds of matrimony, there was no escaping; and Mrs. Heygarth fully revenged the injuries that her sex had received from him; by dint of an overbearing perseverance of disposition, she ruled completely, and her government was not by any means of a gentle description; still, she was willing to lend her assistance to any schemes for his further aggrandizement, and was the means of bringing about a match between his portionless sister and Mr. Elrington.

Mrs. Elrington died soon after Frede-

rick's birth; but they still contrived to maintain such an influence over Mr. Elrington, as to get the General appointed sole guardian of his son, and to lengthen his minority to the age of twenty-five; it had been their unceasing study to acquire a dominion over him by the most pernicious indulgences, and they had so far succeeded as to govern his actions, though they were far from possessing his good opinion.

By far too worldly to have any just views of religion, they did not hesitate to dedicate their son to the church, because Frederick had a living of £800. per annum in his gift; and they were now bending all their energies to secure their daughter a good settlement, by bringing about a match between her and her cousin.

She was their favourite child, and had received a most expensive education; but as she did not by any means possess the abilities of either of her parents, it had

only helped to encourage the growth of vanity and affectation.

Her harp and piano forte, had arrived at the park, sometime before the family; and she was prevailed upon, when the ladies left the dining room, to favour them with some specimens of her musical powers: her execution, on both instruments was most brilliant; but as she possessed neither taste, nor feeling, there was but little pleasure to be derived from the performance, except to those amateurs who prefer the overcoming of mechanical difficulties to the gratification of those pure sensibilities, which are combined with music.

Maria Selwyn without having received half the instruction which had been bestowed on Miss Heygarth, far excelled her in the pleasing part of the science; and had Mrs. Heygarth not been well aware that music, was by no means one of the avenues to Frederick's heart, her demean-

our towards her, would, from bare civility have become downright rudeness; as it was, she treated Catharine with rather more kindness, as she did not boast of any thing shewy, either in person or accomplishments; and upon the whole, though the day was more agreeably spent than the young ladies had anticipated, they did not feel any regret when the hour for returning to the cottage arrived.

It was a fine autumnal evening, and the young men, with the Doctor, attended them across the park, but parted with them at the gate of the cottage.

Mrs. Elrington, who entered with cheerfulness into all their feelings and amusements, had requested that Maria might spend the night with her friend; she enquired how they had passed the day, and what they thought of the strangers, for they were almost strangers to her, as they had been abroad on service, during the

greatest part of the time that she was Mr. Elrington's wife. "Must we say the best or the worst that we think of them?" said Maria.

"Oh, the best, certainly first," replied Mrs. Elrington.

"Well then," returned she, "I thought the General very polite and well bred, Mrs. Heygarth very well dressed, Miss very accomplished, as to the young Clergyman, I do not know what to say of him, he has very fine features."

"Now Catharine," said the old lady, "tell us the worst that you think of them, and then we may strike a balance between your opinions, as few people are either so good, or so bad, as they are called."

Catharine smiled, "I do not think," said she, "that we can fairly decide on the characters of people, with whom, we have been only a few hours acquainted; or, I should say, the General is a bit of a hypocrite, Mrs. Heygarth not very good tempered, Miss not very clever, and Mr. Heygarth

rather singular in his manners; but" turning to Maria, "what a beautiful smile he has."

"And what a tremendous frown," returned Maria, "I could scarcely have believed, had I never seen Mr. Heygarth, that one countenance was capable of such an extraordinary variation of expression; if it be the index of the mind, what a versatility of feeling he must possess! He is certainly handsome, and were I a disciple of Lavater,* I should say, that in his ample forehead and deep set hazle eyes, there is much intellect; but I fear the thin, compressed lips, do not indicate favourably of the disposition."

"What inference," said Catharine, "would you draw from his fine teeth and aquiline nose?"

* Had this conversation been supposed to have taken place a few years later, Miss Selwyn would probably have quoted Gall and Spurzheim instead of Lavater.

“ Oh! I have forgotten,” replied Maria, “ what Lavater says of them ; but though they may have their effect in the expression of the face, they cannot, I think, have any connexion with the mind ; now with equally fine features, Miss Heygarth has not, by any means, so interesting a face as her brother ; because there is no expression in her countenance, except occasionally a silly kind of pettishness : but” continued she, turning to Mrs. Elrington, “ you will have an opportunity of judging of the ladies for yourself, as Mrs. Heygarth signified that she intends to do you the honour of a morning call to-morrow.” Mrs. Elrington smiled, and Maria, who was in high spirits, notwithstanding the *hauteur* with which Mrs. Heygarth had treated her, continued to talk—

“ The young Clergyman,” said she, “ appears to have a good deal of learning, which I think will be about as well estimated in the present circle he is in, as it would be

by the Esquimaux: I did not sport any of my stock of Latin and Greek, for it never gains one any credit with these lords of the creation, who would always, I think, keep us poor women to our samplers and cross stitch."

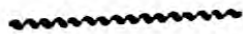
"You did right, my dear," said Mrs. Elrington, "to keep it out of sight; it is to the display of what is called learning, in women, that men object; the shallowest streams, you know, run with most noise; and except in some of those extraordinary instances, such as Mrs. Carter, or Elizabeth Smith, who may almost be termed *lusus nature*, the learning of women is seldom deep: in solidity and profundity of intellect, we must, in general, yield to those, who are born to "rule over us;" and we will act wisely to do so without murmuring. I have scarcely ever met with a man of good sense, who would object to our having all the enjoyments consequent on the cultivation of a taste for polite literature."

"Indeed," said Maria, "I have George

Howard to thank, principally for my classic lore; for he always preferred being at the Rectory at Barnton, to being at home. Mr. Howard is so ill tempered, and he had no companions, I used to hear him all his tasks before he went to say them to my father, by which means I learned them myself; and when my father discovered that, he gave me farther instruction."

"I do not mean, my dear," said Mrs. Elrington, "to object to young ladies learning Latin, or any other branch of study, that they may have a taste for; all that I mean to urge, is, that they should not obtrude that, or any other acquirement on their friends: the main purpose of gaining knowledge, is, to learn to be better and more agreeable, not to excite vanity, which must always have a contrary effect."

CHAPTER IV.



ON the return of Frederick and Tom Heygarth to Ford Hall, they found the ladies there, equally engaged in criticising Miss Ormsby and her friend.

“ I think these are two very vulgar girls, that you have introduced to us, Mr. Elrington,” said Mrs. Heygarth.

“ Vulgar! madam,” said Frederick, “ pray, what do you mean?”

“ Oh! they have no style, or fashion about them whatever. General Heygarth says that they are both handsome; for my part, I think Miss Selwyn, I believe you call her, looks like an actress just ready to perform one of her tip top parts; and Miss

Ormsby like a school girl, who has got a long task to learn."

"Do you, madam?" said Frederick, dryly, "then I am sure you look like her cross governess, who is just going to whip her; but one good thing is, I dare say, they do not care what you think of them; and neither do I."

"Nay, mother," exclaimed Tom, "I really think that you have formed a very hasty judgment of the young ladies; I think Miss Selwyn a fine looking girl, and uncommonly well informed; and Miss Ormsby has all that sweet softness, about her, which is attributed to the German ladies: I think I never saw such an amiable expression in dark eyes in my life as in hers."

"I believe," cried Mrs. Heygarth, forgetting her usual politic guard over herself, "that you are both inspired by the spirit of contradiction, to admire two such unformed dowdies; as to Mr. Frederick Elrington, he becomes ruder every day."

Frederick was just going to speak ; and it was evident from his manner, that what he was going to say, would by no means have the effect of conciliating the angry lady, when the General interposed.

“ My dear Frederick,” said he, “ you ought not to be so rude to your aunt.”

“ Then,” said Frederick, “ my aunt ought not to speak, in the way she has done, of my friends.”

“ I do not think,” returned the General, “ that Mrs. Heygarth meant what she said ; at all events, I am certain that she did not intend to offend you.”

Having by this skilful mediation between the belligerent powers, obtained a truce, the General took care to maintain it, by directing the conversation to less hazardous subjects, during the remainder of the evening ; and next morning the young men went out immediately after breakfast, with their guns : and as Mrs. and Miss

Heygarth saw that an intercourse with the inhabitants of the cottage was unavoidable, while they continued Mr. Elrington's inmates, by the General's advice, who had gone a shooting with his son and nephew, they walked across the park.

They found the young ladies in the garden, employed in tying up some autumnal flowers, that yet lingered amidst the fading foliage; Mrs. Heygarth condescended to admire the taste with which the little spot was laid out, and the neatness with which it appeared to be kept: she then proceeded with much stateliness into the breakfast room, where Mrs. Elrington was sitting.

The conversation, as usual, between those, in whose taste there is little sympathy, turned on the weather; and was a little relieved by some beautiful exotic plants, which stood in the circular window. Miss Heygarth was surprised to hear, that

Catharine neither drew, nor played on any instrument; and wondered how she spent her time in the country.

Mrs. Elrington, who heard the young lady's exclamation of surprise, smiled, and said, "that with books and work, they never found the time heavy;" and then, continued she, "Catharine instructs a few children, that come over from the village, whose parents are too poor to afford them any education."

Miss Heygarth put up her pretty lip in contempt of such occupations; and began to talk of a *fete*, which Frederick proposed giving to his tenants, on his having come of age; and she enquired, whether there were any families in the neighbourhood, who would be likely to call upon Mr. Elrington, as she wished much to have a ball given on the occasion.

Catharine mentioned several genteel fa-

milies, who had formerly been in the habit of visiting at the park; and with some of whom, notwithstanding her retired habits, her aunt still kept up an intercourse.

This intelligence had a happy effect on the young lady's spirits; and her mother and she returned to the park, determined to try their influence with Frederick, to persuade him to give a dance, as soon as the neighbouring gentlemen should have made the expected overtures towards an acquaintance.

Just as the ladies were leaving the cottage, a large packet arrived for Maria from her brother, which Doctor Selwyn had sent over from Crossford. Henry had promised to send her an account of any thing which he might meet with during his Scottish tour, which he thought would be interesting to her; and after saying that he had written a narrative of his progress through the North of England, to his mother, which

Maria would see when she returned home ; he continued as follows :—

“ We entered Scotland by crossing the limpid River Tweed, at Coldstream bridge; the lays of the *mighty minstrel* have conferred an indescribable interest on all this tract of country ; Norham castle, the scene of the first canto of Marmion, is a few miles lower down the river, I regretted that my time would not permit me to visit it ; I am told it is considerably dilapidated. We passed the remains of Wark castle, which you may recollect as being mentioned in the notes to the poem, as one of the strong holds in which the English kept a garrison for the protection of the Southern border ; it is hastening fast to decay. During the whole of this part of our journey, I could think of nothing but the moss-troopers and armed knights, that the magic pen of the poet has conjured from the dust ; and I almost expected to see some of them riding over the lovely green hills.

“ Kelso, a very pretty little town, is sweetly situated at the confluence of the rivers Tweed and Teviot; its vicinity is devoid of those grand features, which we are taught to expect in Scottish scenery; but it possesses all those soft pastoral beauties, which inspired the ballads you admire so much. By the favour of a young gentleman, a native of Kelso, who has caught the falling mantle of these bards of ancient days; I enclose you some lines on the ruins of “ Roxburgh castle,” which lie a little way from the town.

Oh, why should I wander alane,
By Roxburgh's auld castle wa',
When the bright blush o' simmer is gane,
And the leaves are beginning to fa'?

All crumbled and low are its towers,
Frae the pride and the splendour they've seen;
And the ivy is twin'd round the bowers,
Where the bravest and fairest have been.

O'er the wreck o' the days that are fled,
I canna' but drap the sad tear:
And lightly I tread on the hero's bed,
Whose ashes are mouldering here.

“ While our horses rested, we walked to Ednam, the birth place of Thomson, the poet of the Seasons. It is a neat village; the Eden, a picturesque stream, runs past it: you cannot have forgotten Burns's beautiful address to the shade of Thomson, commencing, “ When virgin spring, by Eden's flood,” I felt that I trod on classic ground; and it was not, without regret, that I left these inspiring scenes. Our business carried us next to Dalkeith, where I saw nothing to admire but the Duke of Buccleugh's noble park, in which there is a variety of nick-nack summer houses, grottos, &c.: in one of them, there are some fantastic chairs, composed of roots of trees in their natural state, which are rather curious. An old eagle, chained in a poultry house, attracted my attention; nei-

ther age nor captivity had quenched the fire in the eye of the noble bird of Jove.

“ One of my companions had some business to transact with the agent for prisoners of war, at Valleyfield ; and understanding that his ride lay through some fine scenery, I agreed to accompany him.

“ We passed the castle and chapel of Roslin, immortalized rather by the ballad of Rosabelle, than by their historical interest ; and we did not omit visiting them, or “ Dryden’s groves of oak and caverned Hawthornden,” all of which amply repaid our trouble ; but what I saw at the prison, made so great an impression on my senses, that I am now unable to describe any other objects.

“ Descending, what in England we would term a steep hill, we came in sight of two large buildings, originally occupied as cotton mills, but now by the revolutions in commerce, transformed into barracks for soldiers ; each building has a little Chinese turret on the top of it, which, with

the surrounding scenery, has an uncommonly striking effect; the Eske, but not that Eske which "young Lochinvar" swam, one of Scotia's "clear winding streams," runs close below the barrack; the bank on the opposite side is higher than the buildings, and is wooded to the top; interspersed amongst the trees, are little rustic cottages, built by the soldiers, for the accommodation of their families, which I am sorry to observe, is the only addition they have made to the picturesque effect of the scene, where I longed to have seen the quiet cotton spinners, its former industrious occupants, who would have harmonized much better with it, than the red-coated heroes who were strutting about, in all the "pomp and circumstance of war."

"Ascending another hill, we came to the village of Pennycuick, beneath which the depot is situated. The prison consists of a number of houses, built of wood, and covered with a coat of tar; each house stands in a space of ground for the prisoners to

walk in, &c.; and the whole is surrounded by a wooden paling, called a stockade; outside of which, at certain distances, are placed centinels; we viewed it from the edge of a precipice, which overhangs it; and it conveyed to me something of the idea that I should form of looking down on a foreign city, during a carnival. Many of the prisoners wore parts of their regimentals; others, an entire dress of bright yellow, given them by our government, and marked in various places with the broad arrow: on their heads, were caps of all shapes and dimensions, generally placed *a la François* on one side; for even in a prison, a Frenchman retains something *degagée*: one house and square of airing ground, is used as an hospital; and the convalescents were walking about, like so many descendants of Mahomet, in green dresses and white caps. But who shall describe the din of sounds which rose from this Babel, where five thousand French, Dutch, Italians, Spaniards, Poles, Prus-

sians, Germans, and Greeks, for so many nations are at present armed under one head, against this little island, were transacting all the business of life, in this small space, each in his own dialect.

“ After gazing at them for some time, we descended the hill, and went into the market place, which is the only part of the prison that strangers are permitted to enter; here they sell those toys of straw and bone, which you have seen, some of which are of very ingenious workmanship: only the most respectable of the prisoners are permitted to engage in this traffic. I purchased some little articles of one of them, whose countenance and demeanour pleased me; to the little bill which he made out for me, he signed the name of Charles Douglas! I enquired his history, but all that I could learn was, that he had been born in France, of Scottish parents, probably emigrants of 1715 or 45, and had been taken in arms against the country of his forefathers. Of the state of morals in the prison, we received a

most wretched account; deprived of all other stimulus, many of these unhappy men give way to such a passion for gaming, that they will stake their food, their clothes, and bedding, thus depriving themselves of every necessary of life. These unhappy beings, many of whom, I am told, scarcely retain the appearance of humanity, are enclosed in a square by themselves, and a guard placed over them, to oblige them to eat their victuals, which would otherwise be conveyed to their creditors, who are merciless in exacting their debts; yet, in several parts of the prison, we saw through the stockade, others engaged in the same infatuating pursuit, with such countenances, Oh! Maria, I am glad that you never could have had an opportunity of seeing the passions so expressed in the face of man.

“ Of religious impressions, as far as can be judged from outward appearances, there is not a vestige amongst them. Sunday, at least, as we are accustomed to regard it,

“shines no sabbath day for them,” it is, as indeed with most Roman Catholics on the Continent, principally spent in singing, dancing, &c. Some kind people send them French Testaments, and religious tracts, which, I am told, they invariably destroy : alas ! that immortal beings should thus reject the bread of life.

“While we were there, a party of prisoners arrived from Leith, under a military escort, who had been taken in a late battle. They were conscripts, drawn out two years before the allotted time, youths under sixteen, who, on entering this den of wretchedness, appeared to feel much as I should do, on a party of pleasure ; they were laughing, singing scraps of French songs, in praise of *Le grand Napoleon*, and by the execrations which they occasionally poured on their guards, and each other, appeared to have been initiated in all the profanity of a camp ; unhappy youths ! I could not help thinking, how different would have been their habits,

if left amidst their native "vine covered hills."

"But what were my feelings, when I saw the soldiers, lifting from some spring waggons, which had followed the party on foot, a number of wounded prisoners, who were entirely incapable of assisting themselves; this then, thought I, is the price at which victories are bought; we rejoiced lately on gaining the battle which caused these dreadful sufferings, and of which, had they not been thus brought under my eye, I should probably never have thought; several of them died during the night. I shall never again read or hear of a battle, without thinking of the bandaged limbs, wan, sunken countenances, and dying groans of these victims of ambition, which still sound in my ears.

"It is but justice to our government to say, that every possible alleviation of their sufferings was procured, and indeed, no hardships that can, consistently with their

safety, be avoided, are inflicted on any of the captives.

“ I can indulge in no further descriptions, but shall give you accounts of my further progress in Scotland, when we meet, and I have got quit of the horrible impression, which this prison has left on my mind.”

Maria read this part of Henry's dispatch to her friends, who moralized for some time, on the horrors of war, and the unaccountable tendency towards it, that seems to exist in the world, whether in a barbarous or a civilized state; still the iron scourge is “ ever and anon” brandished over the fair creation, making the smiling champaign, a desert filled with the groans of widows and orphans. When will the time come, that the rulers of men, God's vicegerents on earth, will see their own true interest, and that of their species, and by cultivating the arts of peace, truly fulfil the ends for which they are appointed

The neighbouring gentry having heard of the arrival of Mr. Elrington and his friends, did not fail to pay their compliments to them, and in due time invitations were issued for a *fete*, which went off much like other things of the kind; an ox was roasted whole in the park for the tenantry, which they washed down with floods of strong ale; and all the delicacies of the season were provided for their superiors, within doors, the usual quantity of negus, lemonade, orgeat, and confectionary, was consumed; the ladies all looked as well as their milliners and dress-makers could make them, and received as many unmeaning compliments, as are customarily paid on such occasions.

Catharine and Maria came in for their full share of admiration; indeed, Maria, whose beauty was much more shewy than that of her friend, was considered the handsomest girl in the room; Catharine being too timid and retiring in her disposition, to

shew off, and Miss Heygarth too inanimate, to make a figure in a ball room; the other young ladies were of a common-place description, and had, besides, been all seen, and criticised by the neighbouring beaux before; dancing was kept up to a late hour; and every thing went off in the best style. Frederick was very attentive to his guests, and General and Mrs. Heygarth were well calculated to shine in mixed society, by their polished hypocrisy, and the easy suavity of manners which they could both assume.

When the topics of conversation which the dance gave rise to, were about exhausted, Mr. Heygarth's *debut* as a preacher, took its place; he was a young man of a studious disposition, but his taste lay much more towards poetry, and the *belles lettres*, than musty divinity; the church would never have been his choice as a profession, had not his father held forth to him, the advantages of the living in his cousin's

gift, and he had not principle enough to reject, what he ought to have known he was unfit for; indeed, it was one of the anomalies in human nature, that a mind so susceptible as his, of truth and beauty, should not have beheld the beauties and the truth, of the wondrous system of christianity; as it was, he had gone through a course of theological studies, as he would have taken a quantity of necessary, but disagreeable medicine, yet he was no sceptic, his mind was merely occupied by other pursuits, and he had never considered the importance of the office he was about to take upon him.

One morning the young ladies were seated at work, when Frederick opened the window, and threw in a piece of written paper; "there," said he, "I took this for Tom's sermon that he is to give us on Sunday, but I found I was mistaken, so, as I believe all girls like rhymes, I brought it off to you."

Maria opened the paper, and read as follows:—

Autumn.

Some bards strike high the lofty lyre
 In strains that Winter's glooms inspire,
 When Phœbus shorter journies takes,
 And not a winged songster wakes,
 When the red torrent's whelming force,
 Spreads devastation in its course ;
 The light snow flies before the breeze,
 And glittering frost-work clothes the trees,
 As fairy hands had dressed the bowers,
 And turned the icicles to flowers ;
 Like those in eastern tales that blaze,
 Bright with clustered jewels' rays.

Some may in tuneful numbers sing,
 The blooming charms of graceful Spring ;
 When bursting from their folds are seen,
 The op'ning leaves of softest green ;
 The primrose and the violet peep
 Tim'rously, from their wintry sleep ;
 And daisies on the dewy lawn,
 Drink the pure nectar of the dawn.

Others in strains more rich and warm,
 Tell over each maturer charm,

Of sultry summer's fervid heat—
Delightful then, the calm retreat,
At the oppressive noontide hour,
Of some retired shady bower,
Which woodbine decks with fragrant bloom,
And starry jessamines perfume.

And some in smooth harmonious verse,
The charms of Autumn may rehearse ;
With these I'd join my feeble lays,
In that still soothing season's praise ;
When the silky gossamer may seem
To float in the air like a poet's dream ;
As soft and pure its varying hue,
And if as fair as fragile too.
And when the withering tints of the grove
Are like some fair one's blighted love,
That still clings fondly to the heart,
Unwilling even in death to part.
When the harvest moon sheds her lovely light,
O'er all the shadowy realms of night ;
And the golden treasures of the plain,
Fall low before the toiling swain ;
When the star of eve with glimmering ray,
Gilds the cool hour of parting day—
That is the hour in which I love,
In some sequestered path to rove ;

For then the days of other years,
Shine Iris-hued through falling tears,
When mem'ry tells of those I've loved,
Who now far from me are removed ;
Or of those who in the tomb repose,
Cold to their own or others' woes ;
And of all the visions of happy youth,
That were like any thing but truth :
As the Morgana's fairy show,
Where the rich landscape seems to glow, }
Bright on the purple mountain's brow, }
But while we gaze on the wondrous scene,
'Tis vanished, and as it had never been ;
So fades imagination's dream,
Before maturer reason's beam.

Maria said, that " she thought Mr. Heygarth would have been much better employed in writing a sermon, than in scribbling indifferent verses," but Catharine suggested, that it was possible he might find time for both, and that if he found amusement in rhyming, it was, at least, a harmless employment, though she hoped, that when the spiritual concerns of the parish devolved upon him, he would give it up.

Mrs. Elrington shook her head, and said, "she feared he was but ill qualified for so serious a charge."

On Sunday, however, they all proceeded to the village church, to receive their young pastor's instructions; and, doubtless, he felt some additional palpitations from their presence; as he was well aware, that their critical powers were superior to those of any other part of his congregation: he got through the service very well; and by the aid of a fine sonorous voice, and some knowledge of elocution, read the prayers almost as well as if he had felt the devotional spirit, which breathes in those matchless compositions; he then gave them a most excellent moral essay, with which an assemblage of heathens, might have been edified and charmed; but for any allusion that it contained to the Christian dispensation, his hearers might have searched in vain; had they been of Scottish extraction, they might have exclaimed with

Andrew Fairservice, "Clauts o' cauld parritch;" but their faint expressions of approbation were not observed by any of the family from the park, General and Mrs. Heygarth being well satisfied with the success of their schemes for the establishment of their son; Miss, too insensible to care about the matter; and Frederick, occupied in endeavouring to persuade them to go over with him to spend the remainder of the day; all his pleasures were to be found in society, or in the sports of the field, for he had no intellectual resources, and any thing that would relieve him from the *ennui* of himself and his family circle, was welcome; yet there were good points in his character, and had he been brought up with a little more restraint, he might have been an estimable man.

CHAPTER V.

WINTER was now rapidly approaching, and Mrs. Heygarth having finished her ostensible business at Crossford, of furnishing the rectory, and seeing Tom comfortably settled, was now earnest in her endeavours to persuade Frederick to accompany them to London, as she was much afraid of leaving him under the influence of the charms of the fair ladies at the cottage, of whom, however, her apprehensions were most unfounded, as both Catharine and Maria were too intellectual for his taste; he would, indeed, have probably preferred Miss Heygarth to any one else, had he not seen, that it was the wish of his uncle and aunt, that his choice should fall upon her, and his apparent desire to linger at the

park, proceeded from nothing but the same spirit of contradiction; but the General was perfectly adequate to managing his wayward spirit; he received intelligence of a trotting match, to take place in the neighbourhood of London, and the whole family set off immediately.

A few days after their departure, Henry Selwyn came to escort his sister home, and had not the young clergyman been left, Mrs. Elrington and Catharine would have felt so much the more solitary, from having tasted the pleasures of society, but he was constant in his attentions—no weather detained him from the cottage; he had either a new publication to bring them, an effusion of his muse to submit to their criticism, or some such apology for his frequent visits.

But it was soon evident to Mrs. Elrington, that Catharine was the magnet which attracted him, and that she was far from

being insensible to the charms of his conversation and manners which were very attractive.

This was a circumstance which had never occurred to Mrs. Heygarth. In her great anxiety about Frederick's affections, she had quite overlooked the danger to which her son's might be exposed, as it would have been far from gratifying to her, that he should have married where there was so little advantage, either in fortune or connexions: neither did Mrs. Elrington look on the affair with favorable eyes, though her objections were of a nature somewhat different.

The defects in the young Rector's temper, which Maria Selwyn had presaged from his countenance, on a further acquaintance, became evident, he could not even as a lover, conceal them: and Mrs. Elrington considered it her duty, to give Catharine her advice on the subject.

“ However anxious I may be, my dear girl,” said she, “ from the very slender provision that I shall have it in my power to make for you, to see you happily married, I could not have that prospect in your union with Mr. Heygarth. In so intimate a connexion, next to good principles, the most essential thing is good temper; you are by no means aware of the thousand trials of domestic life, or the many rankling thorns which a bad temper can inflict, whether it proceeds from neglected childhood, or from the disappointments of life operating on too susceptible a temperament, it is alike misery to the possessor, and must be vented somewhere, too often that will be at home, for strangers will not submit to it; I shudder but to think of the effects which such struggles might produce on your own sanguine disposition: too well can I anticipate what the consequence would be, of your finding too late, that your attachment had been ill placed, for, believe me, whatever veil the

lively imagination of youth, and the delusions of passion, may throw over the object by which they are excited, nothing but goodness of hearts and dispositions, joined to good principles, can ever sustain such an affection, as will bear up against all the changes and chances of a married life,"

Catharine was sensible of the justice of her aunt's observations, and she exerted all her strength of mind, to overcome the predilection which she was disposed to feel for Mr. Heygarth, but it was not without a severe conflict with herself, that she finally dismissed him as a lover; Mrs. Elrington herself joined in regretting his society.

The young divine did not, by any means, bear his disappointment with christian meekness, he insisted that he had been very ill treated, and appealed to Mrs. Elrington.

yond all bounds of discretion, "I will not take such a refusal, I will see Miss Ormsby again, and tell her what I think."

"You had much better not, Mr. Heygarth," said Mrs. Elrington, "I am certain that nothing which you can urge, will have any effect in altering Catharine's resolution on the subject, therefore, you had much better refrain from harassing her feelings, and exposing yourself to further mortification."

"I do not believe," he exclaimed, as he flung out of the room, "that either of you possess any feeling whatever."

He enquired for Miss Ormsby, of the servant who waited to open the door for him, but was told she was out.

In a few hours she received a most passionate letter from him, adjuring her to make use of her own excellent judgment, in an affair of so much importance to herself, and not to be guided by Mrs. Elring-

ton's prejudices, to doom him to misery, which, with all the ardour that belonged to his character, he alleged, could only cease with his life.

Catharine replied, that she would never take any important step in life without the counsel of her aunt, and in firm, yet mild language, assured him, that the refusal she had given him was decisive, and entreated, that he would cease from a pursuit which could yield nothing but pain to both.

Next morning they had the satisfaction of hearing that he had left Crossford; and in a short time a respectable man arrived to perform his duty as Curate, from which it appeared, that he did not propose returning, until he had got the better of his disappointment.

This had been a severe trial to Catharine, but she sustained it heroically. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," saith

the wisest of men ; there are a thousand shades of feeling in every breast, of which perhaps no other can partake, and this applies particularly to females of delicate sensibility, in what relates to the tender passion : they are generally exposed to its inroads, before reason attains strength to combat against it ; and frequently pride, delicacy, and the wise restraints of society, alike forbid its indulgence ; the same motives prevent their seeking counsel from the experience of others, they struggle silently and unaided, and if victoriously, the merit of the conquest is their own.

A few days after these circumstances had taken place, Catharine brought a large packet of papers to her aunt, which she begged her to keep, or destroy, as she thought best ; they were effusions of Mr. Heygarth's muse ; many of them addressed to her in the infancy of his passion ; for poetry is not the language of feeling.

when at its *acmè*, it is in general, the result either of recollection or of anticipation.

Mrs. Elrington readily took charge of the packet, rejoicing in the resolution with which her pupil rose above the weakness of youth; Catharine had retained only one little imitation of a Spanish madrigal, which Maria Selwyn had admired, and she proposed sending it to her; she thought it contained no allusion to herself, and she read as follows, to her aunt for her opinion.

Morning.

Bright on the orange blossoms lie
The crystal drops of weeping morn,
Her rosy blushes tinge the sky :
The goat-herd winds his shrill-breathed horn.

His sportive flock skip o'er the hill,
Leaping the rocks in wanton play,
And lightly bound yon little rill,
Which murmurs welcome to the day.

The nightingale, that from yon brake,
Sung to the moon her plaintive lays,
Is hushed, and other songsters wake—
Hark ! to the choral hymn they raise.

100 THE MERCHANT'S WIFE

All nature hails the genial hour ;
Why lingers then my dark-eyed love ?
Why solitary is the bower
That I for her so fondly wove ?

Lo ! she comes graceful o'er the lawn,
Her light step scarce the herbage bends,
Fairer than the transparent dawn,
New lustre to the morn she lends.

Mrs. Elrington thought, that as Maria had seen the lines before, Catharine would not unnecessarily expose Mr. Heygarth's passion by sending them to her, and that writing to her might help to change the current of her ideas, as she would from motives of delicacy, refrain from mentioning the subject on which her thoughts were too likely to be employed.

CHAPTER VI.



THE first letter which Catharine had received from Maria after her return to W—— had announced, that Mrs. Durnford had given birth to a son; and that Mrs. Ormsby had been too much engaged in procuring fine caps for the baby, to find time to communicate its arrival to her friends at Crossford.

There was no change, she said, in the habits of the family; and in subsequent letters she mentioned, that Mrs. Durnford did not nurse, was gayer than ever, and more admired. She spoke of her neighbours, the Symmons's as being well, and continuing to dedicate their time and for-

tune to the service of their fellow-creatures; they frequently enquired for Catharine, who was, she said "a favourite with both."

No material event, worthy of recording, occurred for two years; Catharine gradually recovered from her *penchant* for the Rector, and found employment for her thoughts in watching the progress of her aunt's illness, which, though almost imperceptible, Doctor Selwyn had found it necessary to inform her, was beyond the reach of medical aid, and must, ere long, terminate her existence; of this Mrs. Elrington had long been aware, and her mind was prepared for the conflict with "the last enemy." She had not been without those shrinkings incidental to human nature, in contemplating the awful event; but she looked by the eye of faith, with a humble trust in the promises of scripture, beyond the coffin and the shroud, to those happy regions, where the soul, freed from

its cottage of clay, shall enjoy an eternity of ineffable bliss.

She desired that Mrs. Ormsby might be sent for; both because she thought it wrong that Catharine should be left with only domestics about her, in the first moments of her affliction, and that she was desirous of making a final effort to fix some serious impressions on her sister's light mind; but before she arrived, Mrs. Elrington had become so weak as to be unable to utter more than a few words at a time. While she retained her faculties, she gave every testimony of being in that comfortable state of mind, which precedes the death of the righteous, and she expired without a groan.

Poor Catharine felt as if left alone in a desolate wilderness; her aunt had been to her a kind parent, a patient instructor, and an affectionate friend. Such a loss could never be supplied; and with all the na-

tural impatience of youth, under a first affliction, she wished that she had died with her.

On the evening of Mrs. Elrington's interment, she stood weeping at a window, which looked towards the church yard, where she had often stood, with her departed aunt, and heard her moralize on the end of all earthly cares. It was a bright, clear, frosty evening, all around was white with snow; all appeared to her to partake of the uninterrupted stillness of the grave, not a sound was heard on earth, not a breeze disturbed the calmness of the air; but as she lifted up her eyes and beheld those bright unknown worlds, which sparkled on high, her thoughts ascended to that still brighter, to which she whom she lamented was gone; the spirit of her aunt seemed to smile through the clear blue firmament, and to whisper consolation.

She retired to bed in a more composed state of mind than she had been in, since her loss, for the first time from the death of her aunt found relief in sleep, and she rose next morning more able to endure her mother's trifling folly.

Mrs. Ormsby had felt considerably shocked by the sight of death; but hers was a mind on which it was impossible to make any lasting impression; she observed that Mrs. Elrington was considerably older than she, and besides was always delicate; that as she had been very religious, and all that, she was very fit to die: and she hoped had left Catharine something handsome; but without waiting to ascertain that point, she ordered the most elegant mourning, both for herself and Catharine, that the nearest town could afford.

Mrs. Elrington had bequeathed to the child of her adoption every thing which she had been able to save, after what she

considered the just demands of the poor of her neighbourhood. "I shall leave you," she used to say to Catharine, by whose hands her bounty had been latterly dispensed, "a better legacy in the prayers and blessing of those poor people than thousands of gold and silver." Excepting those humble friends and good Doctor Selwyn, Catharine had no ties left to Crossford, yet it was with depressed spirits that she prepared to leave all the inanimate objects of her affection, and to accompany her mother, whose vain, frivolous mind, she felt every day to be more uncongenial to her own.

Many were the dissensions which arose between them; but whenever the matters in dispute were not essential, she yielded to her mother, finding how much that meekness of temper, which her aunt had assiduously cultivated, added to her own happiness.

Maria Selwyn hastened to welcome her friend to W——, she was the only person there who could sympathize in her sorrow for her aunt, for she had known and appreciated her worth. Benjamin Symmons too and his wife were glad to see her again, and “hoped that she would often come to their dwelling, though they did not visit at William Durnford’s;” and poor Catharine was glad to profit by their kind invitations; for it was only in their house, or in Mrs. Selwyn’s that she found any thing like comfort for her wounded spirit.

Mrs. Durnford, now the mother of three children, two girls and a boy, was still immersed in dissipation, every thing in the household bore the most evident marks of neglect; the master and mistress were continually engaged with company, and the servants considered themselves as privileged to take their amusement in the way they liked best.

Catharine resided with her mother; but as her house was very near her sister's, she was frequently there; and as she was very fond of the children, who were naturally interesting, notwithstanding all the disadvantages under which they laboured, she endeavoured to exert herself for the improvement of the two elder, to which Mrs. Durnford did not object. She was fond of her children, but ill brought up, as she had been herself, she was incapable of treating them with propriety. She found that her sister did not derive any pleasure from her favourite modes of spending time, and she soon perceived the benefit, which not only the children, but the whole household derived from her superintendence.

The servants did not indeed submit willingly to her authority, particularly a stately personage, who had been accustomed to bear rule in the nursery, and whose imagination was much more fertile in tales of terror, than that of *Monk Lewis*, or any

of his fraternity. On this head Catharine remonstrated in vain; for she was also *prima donna* at her mistress's toilet, and dressed hair most becomingly; she was therefore not to be interfered with, and continued to tyrannize in her department: but in every other part of the household, the improvement was evident, not only to Mrs. Durnford, but to Henry Selwyn, who was a frequent guest at Mr. Durnford's table.

Catharine had not attracted his attention on her first visit to her sister, further than as a pretty modest looking girl; but during their journey to Crossford and his subsequent visit there, her amiable disposition had become more obvious to him: his sister Maria was warm in the praise of her friend; and he could not help being struck with the quiet, unostentatious manner in which she had brought about the reformation in Mr. Durnford's household, and the good order and economy which she had

substituted in place of the uncomfortable and wasteful manner in which they had lived, before she became a resident in W——.

Most of Catharine's evenings were spent at Mrs. Selwyn's, as her mother and sister were constantly engaged in circles, in which she would have found no pleasure, even had she considered it consistent with propriety, to go into mixed society, so soon after the death of her aunt: and Henry found their family party so much enlivened by her conversation, that he soon learned to wish she might form the ornament and comfort of it for life, and that he could fix her there, by calling her his own. But that, he felt with no little pain, must be, if ever realized, a distant prospect, for he was still a clerk; and although Mr. Durnford had in consequence of his faithful services given him a promise of admitting him into the firm as a junior partner, he considered his first duty to be, when he might attain inde-

pendence, before he encumbered himself with the cares of a family, to make his mother's old age comfortable, and to recompense her for many privations, to which he knew she had submitted for his, and his sister's benefit.

This, though apparently a cold calculating species of love, was in reality the most generous and disinterested affection. He who is not a good son, will never be a good husband; and no one will be consistently kind to any relative, who does not consider and balance his duties to all.

Henry's whole life, from the period of his father's death, had been a course of self-denial: his early youth had been passed in studies, which were intended to fit him for the church; and the picture of happiness that was impressed on his imagination, was the dignified retirement of a country clergyman, whose employment a "little lower" than that of "angels," is to serve

his Creator, to spend his appointed time on earth, in praying to, and praising Him, and to minister to the spiritual necessities of his fellow creatures; but circumstances obliged him to stoop from this high aim, and he did so, if not cheerfully, at least without giving way to murmurs, which could only have added to the grief which already oppressed his mother.

He applied himself with as much assiduity to the profession which it was found convenient for him to follow, as if it had been that of his choice; yet while he paid in every instance the strictest attention to his master's business, he found some leisure hours to dedicate to his beloved studies; and he was not without a vague hope, that he might some time or other obtain the object of his wishes; and now in his visions of fancy he pourtrayed Catharine as his pious and affectionate companion, in some venerable parsonage house; his reveries always led to the

conclusion, that she was every way calculated for such a situation, and he would turn from his ledger with something like disgust: yet a little reflection did not fail to shew him the folly of indulging in such day-dreams, though it must be confessed that there was a considerable portion of romantic enthusiasm in his disposition, no unusual trait in the minds of young men, whose time has been spent more with books than in society; and his attachment to Catharine was in some measure to be attributed to a sympathy in that turn of their minds, as well as to the steady and noble virtues which both possessed.

He had hitherto most honorably refrained from communicating his sentiments to her, as he could not reconcile it to his ideas of justice to lead her into the cares and fears of a hopeless attachment; or to induce her to form an engagement, which he had so distant a prospect of being able to fulfil; yet she could not but see that his

attentions were bestowed in a manner more ardent than those of a friend. His mother and sister spoke of him as the most amiable of human beings, Mr. Durnford as a young man of the greatest integrity and industry, that had ever come to his knowledge, and she found him a most instructive and agreeable companion.

Catharine's heart was not formed to resist such a combination of engaging qualities.

It has been said, that the passion of love always partakes of the nature of the object by which it is inspired; that which she felt for Henry was therefore of a species as much exalted above the girlish regard that she had indulged towards Tom Heygarth, as his character was superior to that of the young Rector of Crossford. It had been awakened by gratitude, and perhaps a little spark of vanity, excited by the pointed attentions of a pleasing young man: but that which she

now felt was founded on esteem for the virtues which Henry possessed, and nourished by the sympathy which existed in their way of thinking on most subjects.

Mrs. Selwyn could not avoid observing the state of her son's affections; but she considered an attachment of that nature to be a safeguard to the purity of a young man's heart, and she would willingly have given up those claims which he considered her as having upon him, to have secured to him so estimable a wife, as she thought Catharine likely to be.

But the foundation on which all their future prospects were built, began to totter. Mr. Durnford's business had always been of a speculative nature, and would in the fluctuating state of political events, have required all the attention which a man of deep thought, sound judgment, and great experience could have given to it; and he was constantly occupied with company and

amusements, which even from pecuniary considerations, a man in business ought not to have indulged in, more particularly as they did not fail to divert his mind from the subjects on which it ought to have been employed. He was frequently absent from home, on parties of pleasure for several weeks, when every thing depended upon the steadiness and attention of Henry Selwyn, whose youth and inexperience precluded him from possessing the knowledge that would have been requisite to guide such concerns.

Mr. Durnford felt the consequences of his own rash speculations and imprudent conduct; but instead of acknowledging the true cause, and endeavouring to remedy it, like many other unfortunate men, he became disaffected to the government of his country, blamed the ministry for events, over which they could have exercised no power, and without reckoning on the various impediments which clog the wheels of

state, he accused those at the helm of the grossest misconduct.

In this mode of reasoning he found too many to concur with him ; and arguments to strengthen their opinions flowed daily from that degraded part of the press, which ministers to the base passions of the people.

America was the trans-atlantic Utopia of these deluded men ; the favourite subject of their theoretical ravings : no king ! no ministers ! no titles ! no taxes ! in this Columbian paradise. No restraints upon commerce ! fine estates to be had for two dollars an acre ! and no game laws ! liberty and equality, for which you might search the definitions in your dictionary here, were there practically understood, where every man did as he liked and *guessed* what he chose.

Mr. Durnford listened to these orators with the most credulous attention, and

never once ventured to doubt the certainty of the facts which they stated ; he had no counsellor to counteract the pernicious effects of these harangues : for all prudent men had foreseen the consequences of the career which he had run. His father's old friends finding all their attempts to advise him were made in vain, had withdrawn their countenance from him ; and his wife, had she even been capable of comprehending his arguments, was too much occupied by her own pursuits, to attend to those of her husband.

Henry Selwyn frequently talked to Catharine of his master's habits and notions with regret, but he was by no means aware of the length to which they went, and neither Catharine nor he could venture to oppose them.

In order to support his waning credit, Mr. Durnford had shipped a very large consignment of goods to South America ; no tidings

of them arrived for a length of time, at length it was ascertained that the agent upon whom the sale depended was dead. It was feared that they might have fallen into dishonest hands, and nothing could ward off the impending bankruptcy but Henry's going out to South America, and endeavouring to recover and dispose of the goods, for so highly did Mr. Durnford's creditors think of his activity and integrity, that they considered it the only chance which they had of recovering any part of the property.

Mrs. Selwyn was extremely averse to his undertaking so long and hazardous a voyage, but she was at length brought to consent to it, by the consideration of the important effect which it might have on his own future establishment, and the representations which were made to her of Mr. Durnford's total ruin, being the certain consequence of his declining to make the voyage.

Henry wrote to his uncle Doctor Selwyn, requesting his advice before he would finally resolve on leaving England on so precarious a mission.

The good Doctor, after thanking him for the compliment which he paid him by consulting him, and stating his ignorance of commercial transactions, said, that in a moral point of view he thought he ought to go, as he owed a large debt of gratitude to Mr. Durnford for the kind and generous way in which he had treated him during his clerkship; and that if his voyage was successful, it might by recommending him to Mr. Durnford's creditors, be of essential benefit to his own future prospects as a merchant. Having thus dismissed the serious part of his letter, he proceeded:—

“ Tell Maria and my dear little Catharine, that although they would never admit of my possessing the gift of prophecy, I have more confidence in my own *second*

sight than ever ; for Frederick Elrington and his bride *ci-devant* Miss Heygarth drove past my window since I began to write, with white favors and every other accompaniment of nuptial *splendour*, I was going to have said happiness, but that remains to be proved. I think I hear the girls saying, ah ! that is so like a splenetic old bachelor.

“ I knew that the General and his *aid de camp*, alias his wife, would be too many for poor Frederick. Our Rector has been several times here since Miss Kate carried her black eyes to W—— ; he has got a fellowship at Oxford, and is very stern and stately ; I fancy he has given over writing woeful sonnets to “ his mistress’s eye brow,” since a certain conflagration, to which some valuable manuscripts of that sort were condemned. By the way, friend Henry, I have been told that you were once a worshipper of these most capricious fair ones, the Muses. Do not trust Catharine with any of your offering at their

shrine, lest the sly gipsey should think fit to make another *auto de fe* of them."

The young ladies were considerably amused by the Doctor's account of General and Mrs. Heygarth's triumph over Frederick's avowed dislike to their daughter, as they were not sufficiently acquainted with the world to know how often such antipathies have been overcome by persevering artifice.

To Maria's questions about the *auto de fe* of the Rector's poetry, Catharine only replied, that she believed her aunt had burnt some of his verses, leaving her friend to form her own conjectures as to her motives, but all other subjects now ceased to be interesting, when put in competition with Henry's approaching voyage. He could no longer refrain from making his attachment to Catharine known to her; and he received every comfort that a knowledge of its being reciprocal could give him; it was

no time for laying plans for future happiness, when they were just about to separate, perhaps never again to meet in this life. Henry vainly endeavoured to impart some of his own sanguine hopes, she could only reply by tears, which were mingled with those of his mother and Maria.

But as both joy and sorrow is greatly magnified by anticipation, when the parting was over, and he had actually embarked, their spirits became more composed, and they began to talk of his return.

It is a happy faculty in our nature, that thus occasionally annihilates time and space in favour of a beloved object; but the delusion seldom lasts, and their fears would frequently recur.

CHAPTER VII.

DURING all these agitations, Mrs. Durnford and Mrs. Ormsby were perfectly composed; Mrs. Durnford indeed sometimes observed, that "it was very odd how cross Durnford was grown about money, that whenever she asked him for any, instead of giving it to her at once, as he used to do, he either began to swear, or to tell her some long story about business, which she had no time to listen to."

Mrs. Ormsby agreed, "that it certainly was very odd!" but said, "that she understood Henry Selwyn was going somewhere for money, and that she hoped he would not stay long, particularly as she had some

idea that he might on his return marry Catharine, who was grown much stupider since he went away, and she did not believe would ever make a better match."

Henry's marrying Catharine did not appear to Mrs. Durnford so agreeable a consequence of his voyage, as his bringing Durnford money, because she said, "he would probably in that case require some of it himself, and Catharine was so very useful to her that she thought she had much better not marry: at all events it would be very silly of her to marry Henry, who was not at all handsome, never paid any compliments, even to the prettiest women in W——, and was not at all likely ever to be rich."

Mrs. Ormsby was not in the habit of controverting Mrs. Durnford's opinions, and the subject was for that time dropped, though they frequently reverted to it, when Mr. Durnford's embarrassments induced

them to wish for Henry's return, as to making any reduction in their expenditure, that they never thought of.

Mrs. Durnford had still credit with her trades people, her milliner and dress-maker were accustomed to her having long bills with them; and as she never objected to their charges, they did not hurry her for payment, and they still continued to tell her that she must have such and such expensive things, as they were so very becoming, to which she was always willing to accede; her intellects being of that class, which can never be taught to look much beyond the present moment.

The vessel on board of which Henry had embarked, did not by any means proceed with the celerity that he himself or his friends could have desired; and notwithstanding the various resources of his well cultivated mind, and an ample supply

of books, and other materials for study, he could not always ward off that languor, which only those, who have been at sea during a long period, of what sailors call a dead calm can appreciate. To divert the tedium he had recourse to rhyming, a species of scribbling, which youths of any literary task generally try at an early period of their lives, and as generally drop, as soon as their judgment is sufficiently matured to discern how far their attempts fall short of standard poetry. If ever such a mode of spending time is pardonable, it must be when it is of as little value as Henry's was when he addressed to Catharine

A Calm.

Old ocean's loud resounding waves
Are hushed within their coral caves.
The sun beams glitter on his breast,
And pure and tranquil is his rest.

The breezes in the æther sleep :
 Our ship hangs ling'ring on the deep,
 As though unwilling to pursue
 The course that leads from home and you.

The pilgrim birds stoop from their flight,
 And weary'd on our deck alight ;
 For England, if their way they wing,
 My faithful heart would with them spring.

Ah! could the wanderers convey
 My wishes through their trackless way,
 They'd in their tuneful accents tell
 With thee my fondest hopes still dwell.

Whether Henry's lays had offended the musical taste of some listening mermaid, cannot be known, until we are better acquainted with the habits of these coy damsels, but a storm, which the sailors had been presaging for some days, arose, in which the vessel was driven far out of her course, and they were for several days and nights in the most imminent danger of pe-

rishing. Had Henry's muse ever soared to the sublime, he might have stored up an ample supply of materials for her future strains, in these awful hours; but in this elemental conflict he felt the insignificance of man, and of all that relates to him, of the very imperfections of his language, when he attempts to describe such scenes as these; the dark sulphureous clouds appeared mingled with the infuriated waters, the loudest peals of thunder could scarcely be distinguished from the tumultuous roaring of the waves; forked lightning quivered down their mast, illumining the darkness with horrible gleams, or sheets of blue liquid flame, shewed the vessel now elevated on the giddy pinnacle of a foaming wave, now sinking in a yawning gulph, that seemed prepared to swallow her up, leaving no traces of her having ever existed.

The strong excitement of a field of battle is said to overcome the natural fear

of death, but in a storm, no other passion is called forth, each man prepared to meet his fate, some with that habitual carelessness and levity of heart, with which they had lived, others, amongst whom was Henry, endeavoured to attain a frame of mind more fitted to so solemn a season.

More days on earth were, however, to be theirs, the storm gradually abated, their vessel rode it out, and in due time arrived at her destined port.

Henry's friends in England were happily spared the knowledge of his sufferings until they had been long passed. George Howard had arrived at Barnton a few days after Henry left W——, he found no change for the better in his father's temper; the joy which he felt on seeing an only son return after so long an absence, could only counteract his selfish overbearing disposition for a short time, and George had

been his own master too long, to submit to his caprice.

Mrs. Selwyn was, as in the time of his school-boy distresses, his sympathising confidant, and there were but few days in which he did not ride over to W——, whether, because Mrs. Selwyn gave him such good advice respecting his conduct towards his father, or that his old playmate Maria, listened with delight to his tales of his travels, cannot well be ascertained; much of the time that he spent at Mrs. Selwyn's must have been occupied in that way, as it was soon observed, that Maria was perfectly acquainted with the state of ancient Greece, could give a very good account of the Turks and Albanians, and almost as animated a description of Jerusalem, and its most interesting vicinity, as Monsieur Chateaubriand himself.

Catharine was amongst the first people to notice her friend's aptness in acquir-

ing this knowledge, as she had been present at many of the conversations from which Maria had derived so much information, and found, she had not, by any means, so exact a recollection of the particulars related as her friend, and with the natural *tact* of her sex, she discovered before Maria did herself, that it was the predilection which she felt for the narrator, that caused the narration to make so strong an impression, nor was it long before Mrs. Selwyn made observations of the same sort, and felt the necessity of putting a stop to the intercourse before Maria's peace of mind should be seriously injured.

George soon perceived the change in her manner, and he saved her the pain of telling him her sentiments, by frankly disclosing his passion for Maria, whose image, he said, "in all the innocent beauty of early youth, had accompanied him in all his wanderings, and nothing but her society had detained him so long at Barnton,

where every thing was so repugnant to his feelings. That he thought his mother required some female as a companion, to be constantly with her, and that he had extracted permission from his father, to make proposals to Mrs. Selwyn, to permit Maria to reside at Barnton, to which if she would accede, he would immediately put a project, which had dwelt on his mind for some time, of joining the army in Spain, in execution : that he would fetter Maria by no promises, nor even correspond with her, without her mother's consent, for being entirely dependent upon his father in pecuniary matters, he could make no proposals to her, with any present hopes of fulfilling them."

Mrs. Selwyn reasoned with him on the impropriety of this romantic project in vain.

There was no happiness in England, he said, for him ; he was little or no com-

fort to his mother in her low state of health and spirits, and his father's temper made him miserable: that Spain was a country which he had long wished to visit, and that he could never do so, under more favourable auspices than now, when he might have a share, however small, in the glory which his brave countrymen were reaping in her fields.

Mrs Selwyn likewise saw many objections to his plan for Maria's residing with his mother, all of which he eagerly combated, and she was at length brought to consent to it, by his representations of the benefit which his mother, for whom Mrs. Selwyn had a very sincere regard, would derive from her society, and his voluntary promises of refraining from all attempts to solicit her returning his passion, until he could make open and honorable proposals to her.

This, Mrs. Selwyn did not fail to represent to Maria, might possibly never occur,

but a lover without hope is a phenomenon which seldom exists, and George thought that many contingencies might occur to pay his addresses to her, and he said, that he should leave England with a mind much tranquillised, from knowing that she was with his mother.

Catharine viewed this arrangement with no pleasurable emotions; she feared that her friend was about to be placed in a very trying situation, and she felt that she would be deprived of the solace of her conversation, which was becoming every day more necessary to her, as her home, from the state of Mr. Durnford's affairs, and the irregularity of his habits, became more uncomfortable, and her anxiety about Henry increased, from the length of time that had elapsed since he sailed, without their having heard from him, and when Maria's strong mind and buoyant spirits were no longer at hand to combat her fears, she knew not where she should look for com-

fort, as Mrs. Selwyn proposed as soon as her daughter should be settled at Barnton, going to Crossford, on a visit which she had long promised making, to Doctor Selwyn.

The worthy Quakers, Benjamin and Rachael Symmons, treated her with the greatest kindness, and were ever ready to point out the consolations which christianity offers for every species of grief, but the difference of their time of life precluded her entering into the same confidential intercourse with them in which she had indulged with Maria.

The only solace that she could hope for, was in a correspondence with her, which, from the vicinity of Barnton to W——, might be as frequent as they chose.

George had not put his plan of making a campaign in Spain in execution, without experiencing much opposition from

both Mr. and Mrs. Howard, but as they found him steady in his determination, they were at length obliged, however unwillingly, to yield; he did not propose attaching himself to any regiment, but merely to accompany the army when convenient to him, making use of their protection to enable him to extend his observations on the country, while, if he met with any occasion where he could be of use, he carried recommendations to the commander-in-chief, who might permit him to act as a volunteer.

Maria found her situation more comfortable than she had expected, Mrs. Howard, though a querulous invalid, nervous, and low spirited, had been fond of her from her infancy, and treated her with the most indulgent kindness.

Mr. Howard was too well bred to treat her with the capricious haughtiness which he indulged towards his family and domes-

tics, and her majestic person, and dignified, yet mild manners, counteracted the effect which her dependent situation might have produced; he felt as if hers was the master spirit, and he dared not give way to his stormy passions in her presence.

Nor though they had, in consequence of Mrs. Howard's ill health, and Mr. Howard's temper, but little change of society, did she feel her hours pass heavily; they had an excellent library where she found an inexhaustible source of pleasure and improvement, in holding converse with the illustrious dead, or the no less highly gifted living; her musical talents enlivened many of Mrs. Howard's hours of langour, and she had a perpetual fund of enjoyment in drawing from nature, in which she excelled.

Speaking of this employment in one of her letters to Catharine, she said, "I often regret that you cannot partake of the pleasure which I find in drawing, and I think

Mrs. Elrington did not consult her usually correct judgment in not having procured instruction for you in this delightful pursuit, which is by no means liable to the objections that she made to the sister arts, of music and poetry; it at once fills, soothes, and elevates the mind, while it does not weaken it by that stimulus which music is said to give to the passions, and poetry to the imagination, but rather by the various faculties which it calls into action, gives strength to all."

George's letters to his mother, instead of classical allusions to the ancient state of the countries which he visited, or lamentations over the savage despotism under which they now groan, which those he wrote from the East used to contain, were filled with accounts of British heroism, of the patience with which his countrymen bore the toils and privations of war, and the ardour with which they won the blood-stained trophies of victory.

“ I feel,” said he, “ prouder of being an Englishman since I have associated with these noble warriors, and when I view those relics of Roman magnificence which are scattered over this fine country, I glory in the idea that we do not come like these mighty conquerors of old, to spoil and to oppress, but to combat and to expel the invading foe ; yet when I see these brave youths falling around me, “ Like leaves in wintry weather,” and moistening this foreign soil with their blood, when I think of the affliction which the fall of each must cause, I am sometimes tempted to ask whether the triumph is not too dearly bought.”

He did not think that he was guilty of any breach of the promise which he had made to Mrs. Selwyn, by sending a few words of remembrance to Maria, in these letters to his mother ; and if Mrs. Howard suspected that there was any thing warmer than friendship in the interest which they

appeared to take in each other, she loved them both too fondly to disapprove of their affection, or to betray her suspicions to Mr. Howard, of what would not have failed to have given him unpardonable offence.

Mrs. Selwyn finding matters going on so well at Barnton, would not delay any longer her visit to Crossford, where she found the good Doctor sometimes laughing, at others, mourning over the extravagance and folly which reigned at Elrington Park.

Frederick and his wife appeared to have married with the determination of spending their time in any company rather than that of each other, and their money in any pursuits but those of virtue or knowledge.

“Were his estate,” said the Doctor, “thirty instead of three thousand a year, these hounds and hunters, black-legs and jockies, and needy ladies of fashion, are

enough to devour it ; the last evening that I was there, I saw that foolish woman, whom it grieves me to call Mrs. Elrington, playing guinea whist, betting on the odd trick, and trumping her partner's best cards, they have a fine pigeon in her ; her adversary put twenty guineas into her card purse with as much composure as I would pocket a fee ; the Rector, who ought to make some exertion to restrain these excesses is buried amongst his books ; and when he strays over to the park seems scarcely conscious of what they are about. Were General and Mrs. Heygarth here, perhaps from their knowledge of the consequences to which this extravagance must lead, they might endeavour to check its progress ; but the ideas which they have instilled into these young people could produce nothing better, the world is the idol which they have been taught to worship, their sacrifices have been all paid at the shrine of fashion, and Frederick's guests are only priests and priestesses of the temple."

Tidings from Henry Selwyn at length arrived at W——, but of no favourable nature; the market to which Mr. Durnford's goods had been sent, was glutted with European produce, and no sales could be effected, but at a great disadvantage. He was about to carry them to another port, but he could not hold forth any hopes of disposing of them to advantage.

When this was made known to Mr. Durnford's creditors, as they could no longer hope for any advantage resulting from delay, they proceeded to make him a bankrupt; and Mrs. Elrington's legacy having been placed in his hands, Catharine was involved in the ruin which overwhelmed the unfortunate family.

Nothing worse than carelessness of his affairs, and bold speculation, being laid to Mr. Durnford's charge, his creditors, in compassion to the helpless females who were dependent upon him, presented him

with a sum of money, with which he determined to proceed to America, nor could any representations prevail upon him to leave Mrs. Durnford and her family in England, until he should have provided in some way for their comfort. He said that she had by her extravagance so great a share in causing his distress, that he was determined she should fully partake of the consequences.

His misfortunes had caused a material alteration in his temper, and he had long ceased to be a kind husband ; for an attachment merely founded on personal charms, unless there are qualities united to them to excite esteem, when passion subsides, will seldom bear out against the trials of life. While Mrs. Durnford could flutter in the gay crowd, she regarded but little the sentiments of her husband, and to quit the delights of that society, and go to America, appeared to her the most dreadful

trial which she could be called upon to sustain.

Mrs. Ormsby, whose attachment to her daughter was the most amiable feature in her character, resolved to accompany her across the Atlantic. She readily obtained a promise from those relatives of her husband from whom her income was derived, to remit it to her in America, and Catharine had no other resource but to go with them.

With the sanguine hopes of youth she flattered herself that Mr. Durnford would get into business in America, that Henry Selwyn would join them, and that they might all do much better there than they had done at home.

Mrs. Selwyn and Maria, to whom she communicated her views of the subject, mourned over the unstable basis of her dreams of prosperity; but they knew not

what to suggest that might be better, as she possessed none of those shewy accomplishments which might have enabled her to maintain herself; and if she had, the path of her duty appeared to be to accompany her mother.

CHAPTER VIII.



MARIA SELWYN came in to W—— to take leave of her friend. They seemed for once to have exchanged characters, Catharine who had long been fluctuating between hope and despair, now thought the worst over, and was willing to persuade herself that fairer prospects beamed beyond the Atlantic; not that she was not sincerely attached to Maria, but a mind that has long been anticipating misfortune finds astonishing relief in supposing the worst of it to be past.

Maria on the contrary could hope nothing, she saw an accumulation of sorrow in store for her friend, and she feared that

they would never meet again in this world, where we often seem to form attachments, only to have them torn asunder by uncontrollable events; they parted with mutual tears, and the unfortunate family were soon on the bosom of the vast ocean.

Sea sickness for several days kept them insensible to all other evils; they had a small cabin to themselves, as there were no other female passengers of respectability, though there were several women in the steerage, who were accompanying their husbands to this new land of promise, one of whom they procured to attend on them.

In a few days Catharine was able to leave her bed, but she found little pleasure in the society of the gentlemen passengers, who consisted of several persons, that like Mr. Durnford, were unfit to live in their own country, and therefore reviled its excellent government and laws, comparing them with those of that to which they were

bound, without considering the different circumstances in which an infant state is placed, from one advanced to maturity, and surrounded by neighbours equally jealous and ambitious.

Their conversation was entirely in this strain; their manners were in general rude and vulgar, and their attentions to Catharine were such as she was glad to escape from.

Durnford, except when under the influence of liquor, of which he eagerly partook, was immersed in gloomy abstraction, and paid little attention to the unhappy females who accompanied him.

Mrs. Ormsby and Mrs. Durnford fretful and wretched, seldom left their cabin, even when relieved from the nausea that had oppressed them; and Catharine considered herself happy in having the children to at-

tend to, as a relief from all these uncomfortable circumstances.

William and Louisa, the eldest boy and girl, were seven and eight years old; they were fine intelligent children, and were as far advanced in their education as their age admitted. Elizabeth, the third, was five; she was a delicate child, but did not appear deficient in abilities. Catharine, the fourth, was an infant, just beginning to speak, and for her intellectual part, little as yet could be done; but for the others Catharine had laboured with unremitting patience, and they gave every promise of rewarding her toil.

Proceeding on the principles on which she had herself been educated, she confined their reading to the works of Mrs. Trimmer and others, who have prepared portions of real history for juvenile minds.

Natural history, which of all other species

of knowledge appears in general most interesting to young people; and such parts of scripture as they were capable with her explanation of comprehending.

She excluded from their library those popular works of an eminent female writer, which have been on account of their moral tendency, put generally into the hands of the rising generation, as she considered them as little better than novels for the nursery; and if there were no more serious objection to them, likely to implant a taste for light reading, where it is so desirable to excite a wish for more profitable studies: but she considered their morality having no religious foundation, or shadow of allusion to the subject, as being a most unstable structure.

It was her constant endeavour to fix principles of religion on the minds of her pupils, and to lead their young ideas "from

nature up to nature's God." How pure are the first emanations of devotional feeling in the unspotted mind of a child! how little of earth's mould in the first prayers that issue from its stainless lips! surely they must be more acceptable at the throne of their Creator than the finest and most elaborate of human compositions; and we have the positive assurance of Him whose words must not be profaned in this light page, that they are acceptable there.*

She would frequently after having put her little charges to bed, and the gentlemen were engaged at their bacchanalian orgies in their cabin, walk the deck alone, or bending over its side watch that beautiful phenomenon of light, which appears to

* Matth. xix. 14.

be caused by the motion of the vessel through the waves.

“ The endless sound
“ Of flowing waters soothed *her*, and the stars
“ Which in the brightest moonlight well nigh
 quenched
“ Scarce visible, as in the utmost depth
“ Of yonder sapphire infinite are seen,
“ Draw on with elevating influence
“ Towards eternity ; th’ attemper’d mind
“ Musing on worlds beyond the grave *she stood.*”

Southey's Last of the Goths.

Their tedious voyage at length came to an end, and they landed on the shores of Columbia ; but here nothing but disappointment awaited them. Mr. Durnford found that he could not engage with any prospect of advantage in the mercantile speculation, which he had anticipated. He was disappointed in the ideas that he had formed of the habits and manners of the people ; and in a fit of spleen, in which he determined to relinquish all human society,

but that of the unhappy beings to whom he was bound by what ought to have been the tenderest of ties, he purchased a lot of land in the North West, which was said in the terms of sale to be cleared, and to have a log house upon it. This was an unlooked for aggravation of their misery. American society might be bad enough, for as they had formed no acquaintances, they could not tell what it was; but if they remained in a town they thought they must form some, and to live in a wilderness was dreadful: but Mr. Durnford would listen to no arguments on the subject, and without attendants, or any sort of comfort whatever, they set out on a journey of three thousand miles in an unknown land.

Catharine's hopes now began to fail; she had written twice to Henry, and of his constancy she did not entertain a doubt: but how was he to discover them in the trackless desert whither they were about to go? For the sake of her young charge,

however, she made an effort to rally her spirits; and in spite of the discomforts of travelling in an American stage waggon, and of the shocking accommodations of the inns, which distressed her mother and sister to the greatest degree, she felt all the enthusiasm of a mind feelingly alive to the beauties of nature, roused by the magnificent scenery of the new world; the rivers which seemed to carry the waters of ten thousand tributary streams towards the ocean, the interminable forests of gigantic trees, were features of the landscape, which no other part of the globe presents. Nature here appears to have luxuriated in space, and scarcely to have known where to bound her productions; nor were the beauties with which they were surrounded all derived from the sublime; a profusion of flowers of every hue, covered the ground and waved on the shrubs, from which every breeze wafted the most fragrant perfumes. Beautiful birds flitted through the trees, green woodpeckers and nimble squirrels ran

up their trunks, and little humming birds of a thousand glittering dyes, darted past the travellers, to the great delight of the children, who when their journey was prolonged after night fall, gazed with astonishment on the scintillations of the fire flies, which were seen in every direction.

But no enthusiasm or philosophy could ward off the misery to which they were exposed when they reached their destined habitation; the clearing of the ground consisted only in the trees being felled, the stumps still remained, and were to be rooted out before it could be cultivated. Labourers were not to be procured but with considerable difficulty and great expense; and Mr. Durnford's own habits were as remote as possible from those of manual labour.

Their habitation was in every respect perfectly uncomfortable, open to every wind of Heaven, and no exertion which

Catharine could make could give it the smallest appearance of neatness.

Their nearest neighbours were descendants of some French emigrants from Canada, who had intermarried with the native Indian tribes, and had adopted their modes of life; they however retained some of the feelings of civilization, and were willing to assist the unfortunate strangers.

From them they procured skins of wild animals for beds, and various articles for domestic purposes, of their coarse manufacture, and a young girl of the tribe as a servant. She was as wild as a young roe, but kind-hearted and affectionate; like Caliban, she

“ Showed them the best springs; plucked them berries, and brought them wood enough.”

She snared wild animals, brought in

esculent roots, and herbs of which they made tea, and they bought maple sugar from the French Indians.

Catharine gave Attina, their hand maiden, a little instruction, for which she was most grateful. The religion of the tribe was corrupted Roman Catholicism; they *worshipped* a crucifix, and had some confused ideas of the Virgin Mary.

Catharine did not attempt to make a Protestant of Attina; but she endeavoured to make her sensible of the spiritual nature of the object to whom worship was to be paid, and she read to her from her Bible, which was her only comfort, together with the consciousness of performing her duty. She felt equally under the protection of that great Being who had called her into existence in the depth of an American forest, as she had done in a crowded city; and she doubted not his power to make all these untoward circumstances combine for

her ultimate good. From these reflections she always rose strengthened for new trials, and she had the unspeakable pleasure of seeing her sister reading the Bible, and becoming sensible to its comforts. She was still at times fretful, for it was not an instantaneous change that was to be wrought in her; long standing habits of vanity and folly were to be eradicated, and new principles and motives for action to be implanted in their place; and their situation was one that would have drawn forth complaints from one originally patient and forbearing.

The good work was however slowly proceeding; she endured the hardships to which they were exposed with fewer murmurs, and assisted Catharine with more alacrity in the domestic duties, which their circumstances rendered unavoidable.

Mrs. Ormsby was still discontented, tor-

menting to herself, and adding to the sorrows of her companions.

Wondering why Mr. Durnford had brought them to that vile place? why he did not take them back? wishing that she could see a living creature like those she used to see, instead of those horrid savages, looking like wild beasts in their furs and blankets, with these dreadful knives hanging at their sides.

But of all the party Durnford himself was the most to be pitied; he found too late the error into which his rash purchase had brought him; that, and the expenses of travelling, had exhausted most of the money which his creditors had given him. He sent immediate directions to the person who had sold him the land to endeavour to dispose of it again, even at a loss: but a purchaser for a place so remote might not easily be found, and he sunk deeper and deeper in gloomy despondency, wandering

whole days alone in the wilderness, and when he returned to his wretched home, scarcely lifting his head, and preserving a silence more dreadful than the most heart-rending complaints would have been.

Meanwhile the Autumn advanced, and he was attacked by a fever common at that season, in low swampy situations; his constitution had been originally good, but had been injured by the dissipated habits to which he had given way before he left England, and still more by the irritation of mind that he had undergone.

A sage from the Indian village attended him, and administered such preparations of herbs as they were in the habit of using, but with little effect.

• Catharine and his wife would have given him such religious consolation as they were capable of; but alas! the bed of sickness, at least of such sickness as his, is not

the place to commence a course of religious instruction, when every faculty mental and bodily is suffering, and every idea is dimmed and confused. If it is in such a situation as this that we are first awakened to a sense of having neglected our duty to our Creator, what can we feel but dismay and despair! but delirium soon suspended all hope, all fear, and so died William Durnford.

“ What art thou spirit undefined,
“ That passest with man’s breath away,
“ That givest him feeling, sense, and mind,
“ And leavest him cold unconscious clay?”

J. M. Diarmid.

In the outset of life he had been good natured, willing to do a kindness when in his power, and upon the whole what we are accustomed to call an estimable character; but he had no fixed principles, the hour of adversity came, and he had no refuge, his

mind and body gave way under the self-sustained conflict.

The Indians buried him according to their own rites of sepulture, a short distance from the house, and erected a sort of rude wooden cross at the head of the grave.

Scarcely was he interred, when Mrs. Durnford and Catharine were both attacked by the same disease, and in a few days afterwards all the children were seized; the eldest and youngest girl, their mother and Catharine, by the aid of the Indian's prescriptions, youth and good constitutions, recovered slowly; but the boy and the second girl Elizabeth, were laid beside their father.

Mrs. Ormsby had gone about wringing her hands during their illness in the most helpless affliction, exclaiming, "What would become of her, she would be left alone to die amongst these savage people,

whose very looks were enough to destroy her ;” and had it not been for their charitable exertions, she would probably have been left alone, as she was utterly incapable of giving any aid to the sufferers. Attina nursed them with the greatest attention, and others of the Indian women came over occasionally to relieve her.

Winter was coming rapidly on before they could be said to be out of danger ; the forests had changed their verdant livery for the brightest shades of red, orange, and yellow ; and their inhabitants were beginning to seek shelter from the approaching rigours of the season.

An Indian youth, who appeared to be an admirer of Attina’s, as he frequently visited her ; (for the gallantry of the nation from which their forefathers had sprung was by no means extinct amongst them,) brought a store of dried grass, with which Attina closed up the chinks of their abode ;

and he also stored them with roots for provision. Their stock of money was nearly exhausted; but what they had they gave, together with all the little ornaments that they possessed to the friendly Indians, and received in exchange provisions for the winter, as it was impossible for them to think of leaving the spot where they were, even had their health permitted, till the return of Spring. They all continued very weak, particularly Mrs. Durnford, whose mental affliction was very great; she had a cough, pain in her side, and other bad symptoms, all of which Mrs. Ormsby persisted in saying would cease whenever they could get to a more healthy situation.

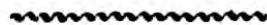
Catharine would willingly have hoped the same, but with a more discriminating eye she saw that her sister's complaints were more deeply seated than her mother imagined. In the the clear frosty days of an American winter, she would frequently insist on going sometimes alone, at others

she would allow Catharine, at her earnest solicitation to accompany her to the tombs of her husband and children; and she never failed to return from these melancholy excursions with aggravated symptoms of her complaints. Catharine often visited the lowly beds alone, and returned rather soothed from the contemplation.

“ There is a kindly mood of melancholy,
That wings the soul and points her to the skies;
When tribulation clothes the child of man,
* * * * *
'Tis sweetly soothing sympathy to pain,
A gently waking call to health and ease.”

Dyer.

CHAPTER IX.



So wore away the season of gloom, when spring, not with the slow progress of European change of season, but as with one elastic bound sprung from the covert of hoary winter, and, as if by magic, the trees recovered their verdure, flowers gave forth their odours, and spread an enamelled carpet all around, the voices of the mocking-bird, and the Virginia nightingale, almost the only vocal harmonists of America, were heard in the forests, the wood-pigeons began to build their nests, and send forth their pathetic murmurs, every thing gave notice to the isolated family that they might set out on their progress towards the haunts of civilized society.

It was now nearly a year and a half since they had left Europe, and they had not received the slightest intelligence from thence; but they supposed that letters from their friends, together with Mrs. Ormsby's remittances, must be in the hands of their agent, at the port where they had landed, who had not found means of transmitting them to their dreary abode.

Destitute of money they could only rely on the aid of their friendly neighbours, and they scarcely knew how to ask assistance from them, to whom they had already incurred such large debts of obligation.

Catharine went to the village to consult with the sage who had acted as their physician, and who, from his age and knowledge, was considered as a sort of chief. On entering his hut where she had never been before, she shuddered on beholding a string of human scalps—trophies of that shocking system of hostilities which was

encouraged in the war which terminated in 1783.

Sick and trembling, she proceeded with hesitation to disclose her errand, for from Attina she had become sufficiently acquainted with the *patois* in which they used to hold converse with them.

Notwithstanding the dreadful ornaments of his dwelling, which were probably not of his own acquisition, the chief was not devoid of humanity, and in something between the lofty language of his maternal ancestors, and the gallantry of his fathers, he replied to the suppliant :

“ Daughter of affliction, stricken by sorrow, as a young maple scathed by the arrowy lightning, think not that because we dwell in the depth of a forest, and live by the chase, that we are devoid of the feelings of humanity ; our ancestors came like you over the great waters, they chose to

remain here, but if you desire to return to your kindred, go! and peace be with you! one of our brethren shall attend you to the shores of this land, we will give you part of our stores, and some money, if you can repay us, we know that you will, if not, we have only done as we ought to do."

Catharine returned home relieved of half her cares by this assurance of assistance from the Indians. Their nearest route would have been to have made their way into Canada, but it was essential that they should return to the port where they had landed, and where Durnford had made his unfortunate purchase, as they might dispose of it; and if there were letters or remittances for them from Europe, it was there that they were likely to be.

She found that the young Indian who was Attina's lover was appointed by the tribe to attend them, and she felt some repugnance to taking him so great a dis-

tance from his home; but accustomed to fatigue he thought less of three thousand miles than a European of the same age would have thought of fifty; and the only chance which they had of ever repaying their friends what they must be indebted to them, was, that one of the tribe should accompany them.

An Indian of more experience at Catharine's suggestion, went to the nearest town and bought a couple of horses; they then constructed a rude machine, in which the family could be conveyed to a place where they might meet with a stage waggon, such as they had performed their first journey in.

She dreaded the effect which this mode of travelling might have on Mrs. Durnford's wasted frame; but there was no alternative. The day before they set out on their journey, the chief and several of the Indian women, who had waited on

them in their illness, came over to take leave of them. He put a sum of money into Catharine's hand, and said,

“Farewell, daughter of a far distant land, may thy journey be prosperous; when thou shalt be with thy friends, and they turn on thee the eye of kindness, forget not the dwellers of the elk's retreat, who, when thou wert helpless as the new born young of a deer, whose mother has fallen beneath the spear of a hunter, pitied thee, and aided thy distress.”

When the Indians were gone, they went to take a last look at the lowly bed, where Durnford and his children slept; the grass was springing green over them, the sky was soft and clear, the last rays of the declining sun fell on the graves, but the dead saw them not. It was with difficulty that Catharine tore Mrs. Durnford from the spot, and she spent the night in weeping.

Early in the morning they set out on their toilsome journey, Attina went with them as far as she could, to return home before nightfall, and she would have gone farther if they would have permitted her. They did not part with the affectionate girl without many tears on both sides; the grief of the children who had become much attached to their copper coloured friend, was particularly great, and it was long before they could be pacified.

Mrs. Durnford's weakness obliged them to proceed very slowly, but they at length reached the end of their journey, and found as they had expected, letters and money in the hands of the person who had undertaken to forward them, and who was now waiting an opportunity of doing so.

Having rewarded their companion rather according to their inclinations than their finances, they found that they had not money enough left to carry them to Eng-

land; and indeed the state of Mrs. Durnford's health was such, as to make it very unlikely that she would survive the voyage, which she was yet desirous with the restlessness common in her complaint of undertaking, and Mrs. Ormsby still persisted that it would restore her.

Catharine's heart was often wrung by her mother's remarks on the beauty of Louisa's complexion, which originated in the hectic that was consuming her, and tears would roll down her cheeks when she gazed on her once faultless form now shrunk, and attenuated by disease, and thought how soon her children would be orphans, left helpless without any friend but herself, or any dependence but Mrs. Ormsby's income, which her relatives might not prolong beyond the period of her life.

They took a small lodging near the verge of the town, there to wait further

remittances, and the event of Mrs. Durnford's illness.

The only intelligence which their letters brought from England was, that of Henry Selwyn's expected return; those from himself were of an old date, and Catharine was in daily hopes of hearing of his arrival there. "He had, he said, nearly disposed of his merchandise, and to a better account than he had hoped." He had not heard of Catharine's voyage, but addressed her as in England.

There were several large packets from Maria, who relieved the monotony of her life at Barnton, by detailing all the little events of it to her absent friend. She described herself as enjoying every happiness which she could taste, when deprived of the society of so many of those whom she loved; but Mrs. Howard procured every indulgence for her that was in her power, and although it was painful to witness the

storms of passion to which Mr. Howard occasionally gave way, he had never exceeded the bounds of good breeding in his conduct towards her.

Mrs. Selwyn, she said, was still with the Doctor at Crossford, where no remarkable changes had taken place: the Rector spent most of his time at college, but as his curate was a truly pious man, he was not at all missed.

Frederick and his lady carried their burthen of folly and *ennui* from one place of fashionable resort to another, seldom visiting the country, but when the diminished state of their finances obliged them to seek obscurity, till the tardy supply of rent-day enabled them to glitter again amongst the other ephemera of the hour.

But the greatest part of her dispatches related to George Howard, concerning whom, she said, they had for several months

suffered the greatest anxiety, not having received any letters either from himself, or in answer to those which Mr. and Mrs. Howard had addressed to friends who were with the army in Spain, requesting that they would inform them of the cause of George's silence.

At length they were relieved from the agonies of suspense by learning from himself that, having been tempted by his antiquarian researches to wander some miles distant from the main body of the English army, he had been surprised and made prisoner by a reconnoitring party of French troops, and retaken by a small Spanish guerilla corps, which they had encountered in a mountain pass.

George Howard having been wounded in the skirmish, was conducted by the guerilla chieftain to his castle, which was situated near the spot where the affair had taken place.

There he had been treated with the greatest hospitality and kindness, and his wound was healed by the surgical skill of a monk from a neighbouring convent; but from the distracted state of the country he could find no means of communicating his situation either to his friends at home, or to those who were with the army, and they forbore writing to Mr. or Mrs. Howard until they could ascertain the fate of their son.

He seemed, continued Maria, "to have been much interested by his host Don Garcias Diego de Xaril, who appeared he said, to be between fifty and sixty years of age, of a fine commanding person and noble countenance; to more than even the customary gravity of a Spaniard, he united a degree of gentleness, as if his demeanour arose rather from melancholy than pride.

He seemed to be equally loved and respected by his household, which was nu-

merous although he was unmarried; and had resided in his mountain-fastness in the most profound seclusion, until the ambitious and unprincipled invasion of his country by the French, had called forth his patriotic energies; when arming his vassals, he had placed himself at their head, heroically resolving to conquer or die with them in defence of their ancient laws and establishments.

And a glorious death was his meed; a short time after he had rescued George from the hands of the enemy, he proceeded again with his brave troop in pursuit of the same party, which he had learnt was hovering amongst the mountains in order to intercept some supplies of ammunition which he expected.

On taking leave of his guest before he set out, he said to him with a faint smile,

“Something whispers me that this is the

last sun which I shall behold rising on the abode of my ancestors. Be it so, the crimes and misfortunes of my parents must be expiated by the blood of their child, and it can never be shed in a better cause than that of my country. My life has been spent in submitting to the discipline which our holy church inflicted upon me; I am weary of it, and shall rejoice to be at rest: you, young stranger will probably see the tomb closed over one to whom in the possession of what are reckoned the best gifts of fortune, the world has been a wilderness of pain and sorrow."

His anticipations were fulfilled; he was brought back amidst the heartfelt lamentations of the small number of his faithful vassals, who survived a desperate encounter, wrapt in the banner of his ancient family, which was steeped in the blood of the last of their race.

His immense property was all bequeath-

ed to the church, and George witnessed his interment beneath the marble monument of his parents, whose tragical history he learnt from the monk who had dressed his wound. I have amused an idle hour by turning it into rhyme, and as you may have heard twenty stories of Spanish jealousy resembling it, perhaps you may prefer it in that form.

Donna Clara.

Swiftly the evening's fleecy cloud
Flew o'er the lurid sky,
And autumn's breeze now soft, now loud,
Did through the forest sigh.

When Donna Clara fondly hung
With a mother's tenderest care,
Over her babe, and sweetly sung
To a low and plaintive air.

“ Peaceful sleeps my darling boy,
His mother's only earthly joy.
In my chilled heart no pleasure springs,
But what my lovely baby brings.

182 THE MERCHANT'S WIFE

Stern and cold is his lofty sire,
Fear, not love, does his frown inspire.
He cares not for his infant's smiles,
He joys not in his little wiles.

Yet peaceful sleeps my lovely boy,
His mother's comfort, hope, and joy :
For my chill'd heart no pleasure knows,
But what springs from my op'ning rose."

Too true the tale the lady told
In her simple artless lay :
She was young, and her husband old,
And he ruled with haughty sway.

Her father stern and proud as he,
Had forced the maid to yield
Her hand for the pomp of heraldry,
That graced Diego's shield.

He had not sought young Clara's hand,
Though 'twas both soft and fair,
For ought but the castle and the land,
Of which she was the heir.

And but a few short months she'd been
A noble weeping bride,
When her father sought another scene,
And broken-hearted died.

* * * * *

Now ringing through the castle courts
The tramp of steeds she hears,
And she deems her lord comes from his sports
With hawks and hunting spears.

Loud Don Diego's voice in wrath
Sounds through the castle proud,
And they tell the lady that he hath
Met robbers in the wood.

His train have seiz'd one of the band,
Who lies bound in the hall ;
He shall to-morrow morn be hang'd
Before the castle wall.

Then down does lovely Clara speed
To meet her haughty lord ;
But when she sees the robber bleed,
And bound with many a cord,

184 THE MERCHANT'S WIFE

With a loud shriek, she fainting falls
Into her maiden's hands.

" 'Tis Clara !" hark, the robber calls,
And struggles in his bands.

Diego hears in jealous scorn,
His heart with vengeance swells;
The outlaw's to a dungeon borne,
Where gloomy horror dwells.

And Clara on her pillow weeps,
Pale fear her sorrow hides ;
But when she thinks her husband sleeps,
Where's keys are laid she glides.

Then soft and trembling does she creep
Down the steep winding stairs ;
To find the robber's dungeon deep,
A glimmering lamp she bears.

" Fly !" she cries, " Velasco fly,"
As she loosed his heavy chains ;
Or at the morning's dawn thou'lt die,
" No hope for thee remains."

But as they pass the dungeon door,
A dagger meets her side,—
And down she sinks on the stony floor,
That with her blood is dyed.

And scarcely could she faintly moan,
Farewell my brother dear,
When she heard Velasco's dying groan,
Come heavy on her ear.

The raging husband o'er them stands,
His dagger gave the wounds :
He threw it from his gory hands,
When he heard these mournful sounds.

* * * * *

The youth had fled long years ago,
For crimes that he had done :
Oh ! who shall speak his father's woe ?
So lost his only son.

Velasco joined the robber band,
That in the green-wood stayed ;
He pillaged o'er his native land,
And on the traveller preyed.



A monk does in that convent stay,
Who heavy penance bears:
He hopes that he may wash away
The blood, he shed with tears.

And yon pale sculpter'd marble tells
Of the hapless pair consign'd,
Untimely to the grave's dark cells,
By passions fierce and blind.

That weeping boy who o'er it stands,
Is Clara's orphan fair:
No father guards his wide spread lands.
He knows no mother's care.



And now the mourner rests with those he mourned,
No more their sins and sufferings he weeps;
All but th' immortal part is here in-urned,
For with the clay all earth-born sorrow sleeps.

CHAPTER X.


NEAR Mrs. Durnford's lodging stood a very handsome house, surrounded by a garden, which they were told was inhabited by a Dutch lady, whom no person recollected ever to have seen. An old manservant dressed in an antiquated Dutch costume procured all the necessaries of life, and whatever members the rest of the household consisted of, they were never seen.

The old man's dress afforded the children much amusement, and they never failed to give notice when he passed. The only walk which Mrs. Durnford was able to take, passed the front of the gar-

den; it contained a number of rare and beautiful shrubs and flowers, which loaded the air with their perfumes. The poor invalid took it into her head that to be permitted to walk in that garden would certainly be of great service to her; or if that was unattainable, if she could only get some of these delightful flowers.

She teased Catharine so often on the subject, that at last rather to please her than with any hopes of success, she addressed a note to Madam Vandersluys, requesting a few flowers, and apologizing for the liberty, as being caused by the whim of a sick person.

The messenger was long in returning, and said, that there appeared to have been great confusion in the house; that the old Dutchman had left her in the hall, and appeared to take the note to his mistress; that he soon came out again, vociferating something in a language which she did not un-

derstand, and that two females who seemed the counterparts of himself had crossed the hall several times, as if they were exerting as much speed as they were able; and after some time the old man went out, brought her a large bunch of flowers, and dismissed her.

Early next morning the Dutchman brought a note for Catharine to the following purport:—

“ If Miss Ormsby is a descendant of the Ormsbys, of Bellport, in Devonshire, Madam Vandersluys will be obliged to her if she will favor her with a call as soon as convenient.”

Catharine knew nothing of her father's family, but she thought Bellport something like the name of the place to which her mother had addressed the letter, in which she had applied for the transmission of her income to America.

She immediately applied to Mrs. Ormsby for information, whose curiosity was greatly excited by the note.

“ Dear me,” said she, “ how should this old Dutchwoman know any thing of the Ormsbys of Bellport, to be sure your father was the youngest son, if he had been the eldest, you know he would have had the fortune himself; they never asked me to come there, but I have heard your father say, it was a very pretty place.”

Catharine wrote a polite note, saying, that she was the daughter of Mr. Heneage Ormsby of Bellport, and that she would wait upon Madam Vandersluys in a few hours.

Having assisted Mrs. Durnford to rise, and performed her usual morning duties, she set out on her visit, not without some curiosity as to its result.

She had not told Mrs. Durnford any thing of the message, as she knew that her imagination was easily excited, and that she would build a thousand fancies upon it, which might all end in disappointment, and she had warned her mother to the same effect.

She was ushered into a room very handsomely furnished, though not at all in the modern taste; the furniture was in the ponderous style, in which our ancestors delighted; the shining mahogany tables looked as if the wood of a whole tree had been consumed in each; the chairs stuffed both in the seats and backs, appeared as if it would require two able bodied men to lift each of them, and their feet were the claws of animals, which seemed painfully extended over a ball; every thing in the room was scrupulously neat, and reminded her of Lady Mary Wortley Montague's description of Dutch cleanliness. While she was occupied in examining these cu-

riosity of antiquity, the lady of the house entered.

She was a tall, thin woman, dressed in black; she wore a white muslin apron, and handkerchief crossed in front; her waist was long and stiff, and she seemed to have on a small hoop; on her head was an immense flat black hat, which standing up behind, and down in front, nearly concealed her face; she wore high heeled shoes, and in her hand she carried a tall cane.

She addressed Catharine in very good English, and although there was an appearance of restraint and embarrassment in her manner, she was evidently a person of good breeding; she apologized for having given her the trouble of calling, saying with a sigh, that she had not been out for many years.

Then stopping short, she gazed earnestly at Catharine, and exclaimed, "Yes!

I see you are an Ormsby, these eyes, that smile"—and tears fell from under the large hat on the unsullied handkerchief.

Catharine felt more and more surprised, at last she ventured to say, "Did you know my father, madam?"

"No—yes," said the agitated old lady, "yes, I knew him when he was a boy; whom did he marry? where is he? where is your mother? have you any brothers and sisters?"

To this string of questions Catharine replied, by stating her mother's name, her father's death, and that her mother and only sister were with her.

Madam Vandersluys then asked a number of broken irregular questions, about their motives for coming to America, their circumstances, &c.: she then apologized for the liberty which she took, saying, that she felt unequal to explaining her

motives for taking an interest in her family that day, but that if Catharine would return to-morrow, that she would make them known to her.

She then summoned her attendant of innumerable under garments, who brought in some rich old malmsey wine and cakes upon a massy silver salver, which might, from its appearance, have graced the board of the Emperor Charles V. when he visited the low countries. Every thing was of a piece, the mistress, her attendant, her furniture and appurtenances appeared all to have belonged to an age of which they presented the only vestiges, as if they had remained on earth by the force of some miraculous interference.

Soon after Catharine had partaken of the refreshments which were offered, she took her leave, promising to return next day.

She found on her return that her mother had not preserved the silence which she had enjoined; both she and Mrs. Durnford teased her with questions to which she was unable to give any satisfactory answers.

She described the lady and her mansion, and they spent the rest of the day in conjecturing what her connexion with the family of Ormsby might be.

In the evening Mrs. Durnford was taken alarmingly ill, the physician whom they had employed for her since their arrival in town, had never given Catharine the slightest hope of her recovery. On being summoned, he said, he did not think her dying then, but that a repetition of such attacks must be fatal.

Mrs. Ormsby, who said, that American doctors could not know any thing, still flattered herself with vain hopes; but the poor patient herself was for the first time

sensible of her situation: she was perfectly calm and resigned to the will of her Creator. Sensible how much she had mispent the portion of time that had been lent to her, she said she could have wished to have lived a few years with better feelings and aims, but that as she knew not how far she might have been able to have resisted the temptations of the world, had she come in contact with them, that it might be better for her to die while in her present state of mind.

She adjured Catharine never to lose sight of her children till they were capable of guiding themselves. "Poor little orphans," said she, "God for their sakes will send a blessing upon you."

Catharine readily made her the promise that she required, and had it not been made, yet she would never have deserted these dear unfortunate children.

Towards morning Mrs. Ormsby sunk into rest, and they all sought repose for their exhausted strength and spirits.

These circumstances prevented Catharine from visiting Madam Vandersluys so early as that lady had expected her, and the old Dutchman came to enquire what had detained her; he could make himself perfectly intelligible in English, though with a foreign accent.

Catharine promised to wait upon his mistress as soon as she could, stating the reason of her delay, and he hobbled home again.

Madam Vandersluys was anxiously waiting her arrival in the room where she had received her the day before.

“I was afraid,” said she, “that you would not return, perhaps you thought

me a mad woman, but I am not mad, I sometimes wish I was."

Catharine, in apology, stated her sister's illness.

"Poor thing," said the old lady, "dying in a foreign land, and leaving two children, it is very melancholy, and you are all dependant on your mother's small income, you say."

Catharine replied in the affirmative.

"Well," continued Madam Vandersluys, as if in a soliloquy, "since I have determined on telling such a tale as mine, I must not be stopped by trifles." She then rose and walked about the room; "it will relieve me to tell it, yes! it will relieve me;" then as if she had formed her resolution, she sat down.

"I think you say your mother never

was at Bellport," "no madam," said Catharine, "nor ever saw any of your father's family."

The reply was again in the negative.

"Nor ever heard him speak of his eldest sister, no!" she replied to herself as if with a burst of agony, "my very name was disgraceful, they would never repeat it."

"I am," she continued, "that unhappy sister, born with violent passions which I was never taught to restrain. I married at an early age from motives entirely mercenary; my husband, whose name was Elton, was nearly as old as my father, but he kept me a carriage, and I had an elegant house in London, with every appurtenance which wealth could purchase.

"I soon, however, discovered how short a way all these luxuries would go towards procuring happiness. Mr. Elton was cer-

tainly not of a conciliating disposition, and between youth and age there can never be that sympathy of tastes which create affection.

“His nephew, a young man of an agreeable person and engaging manners, was our constant guest, I was then said to be handsome,” and as she spoke Madam Vandersluys raised her large hat, “behold,” said she “the effects of age, and remorse on cheeks of the lily and the rose, and eyes which were once as bright as your own.”

Catharine almost shuddered when she saw in the wan spectre-like face the very features of her dying sister; though the expression of Mrs. Durnford's beautiful countenance, illumined as it now was by the hectic of disease, differed materially from the sunk and withered face before her, yet the resemblance was striking.

“Robert Elton” continued Madam Vander-

sluys, “addressed me in the language of passion, which I had not firmness or principle enough to repress; I had never been accustomed to restrain any emotion which I felt, I soon hated my husband, and I loved Robert with all the ardour of which I was capable; little did I apprehend the baseness of his heart, or the lengths to which a guilty passion would carry him. We talked of his uncle’s death till we wished it would take place, and with him at least the interval was short to contriving it. My first child, a daughter, was about six weeks old, and I had retired with her one evening early, as she was a little indisposed; the household had been some time quiet, when I was roused from sleep by something touching my arm, on raising myself I saw Robert standing at my bedside, pale as I beheld him, when his last agony was over, “what” I exclaimed, “brings you here?” “Rise!” he replied, “if you wish to save yourself or me from an ignominious death, it is done.” “What is done?” I cried,

but I needed not to have enquired, for I knew too well what it must be. "Come, come," he cried impatiently, "there is no time to lose, my uncle sleeps," sleeps he repeated with a sort of delirious laugh, "when will he awake. A ship will sail for America in an hour, I have engaged a passage, rise, rise, and let us be gone." Such was the influence which he possessed over me, that I instantly arose, and while he waited in an adjoining apartment, with trembling hands I dressed myself and my baby, and hastily snatching up some valuable trinkets, which happened to be near, I joined him. He made some objections to taking the babe, but bad as I was, the voice of nature was not quite extinct in my bosom; I would not leave her, and he was obliged to consent to my taking her. We stole from the house like guilty things as we were, and hurried to a stand of coaches at some distance, where we procured one, which conveyed us within a street or two of the place where we were

to embark. The wind was fair down the Thames, and before morning we were in the wide sea, and safe from all pursuit, if any was ever made after us. There I learned that Robert had administered a powerful dose of laudanum to his unsuspecting uncle, in some wine and water which they had drunk after supper, and that he had previously contrived to get possession of a large sum of money which Mr. Elton had in the funds; and to prevent that circumstance from being discovered, had been his principal motive for murdering his uncle, as he might have carried me to America without much danger of being pursued; but he thought that should the robbery be discovered, no steps would be omitted to follow him to his retreat. Dearly, dearly, had the wages of his iniquity been earned; never did the horrors of a guilty conscience permit him to rest, all day he walked the deck in miserable abstraction, and when he retired to bed, it was not to repose, twenty times in

the night would he start up, exclaiming, there he is! oh! uncle, take her back, take your money; oh! leave me, leave me, and then he would awake in indescribable agony. My own sufferings were almost equal to his; the form of my injured husband swam continually before my sight; though I had not actually participated in the murder, I considered myself as having been the primary cause of it, and I would have given worlds, had I possessed them, to have been restored to the situation which a few days before I had considered the summit of wretchedness, but I knew not then what actual guilt was. My infant's complaint had been increased by her having been exposed to the night air, she languished for a week or two, and then expired; though I felt her loss with all a mother's fondness, yet I envied her, for she had died innocent and pure as when she first saw the light of heaven, and she could never be exposed to the pangs which I felt. Robert's constitution soon gave

way to the dreadful remorse by which he was haunted; he was seized with a brain fever, oh! what dreadful things he uttered: our fellow passengers supposed them to be the ravings of delirium, I alone knew from whence they originated; after nine days of struggles too horrible to think of, he died.

“I know little of what occurred between that event and our landing in America; a happy stupor seized me, oh! that it could have lasted for ever; when we came on shore, every new face which I saw, threw me into agonies of fear, I thought every one knew my guilt, and was ready to deliver me up to condign punishment.

“Mynheer Vandersluys, a Dutch merchant, was the most respectable of the passengers in the vessel which bore our freight of misery; it had never occurred to me that there was any thing particular in the attentions which he had paid me, but when I

knew him better, I found that they had been much beyond what he was in the habit of bestowing on any one; he now offered to procure me a comfortable dwelling, which I gladly accepted; he continued his visits and services, and when my husband, as he imagined Robert to have been, had been dead a year, he offered me his hand and fortune; I was in no circumstances to be fastidious; alone in a foreign land, exposed to the greatest inconveniences and the most dreadful apprehensions, I did not hesitate to sink all remembrance of Mrs. Elton and her crimes, in Madam Vanderluys; the only stipulation which I made was, that I should never be exposed to seeing strangers, to which my new husband readily agreed; as his pleasures were not sought in society, they were all of a tranquil domestic nature. We lived together in this very spot five and thirty years, in all which space of time, he never suspected that I had any other cause for my mode of life, than grief for the loss my first husband

and child; I endeavoured as much as I could to conceal my sufferings from him, and he had too much of the phlegm of his native country, ever to disturb himself about the matter; he was uniformly kind and indulgent, and at his death bequeathed to me the whole of his large property, without any restriction whatever.

“ Before I married him I had contrived to remit by a circuitous conveyance, the money which Robert had brought from England, to Mr. Elton’s heir-at-law; alas! it was all the reparation I could make. I had adopted when I became Madam Vandersluys, the costume in which you behold me, as I thought it might disguise me more effectually, but it is now nearly fifty years since I have beheld any human countenance but those of my servants, whom I have never changed, nor will I now ever leave this abode. When I received your note, the name of Ormsby roused all my long dormant affections, I fainted

and alarmed my domestics exceedingly ; on my recovery I determined to learn whether you were of my own family, and when I saw your mild expressive countenance, I resolved on making you my confidant, and to disclose my tale of guilt and sorrow to you ; I think I have not done wrong, but I must warn you against repeating my history to any one ; is your mother a prudent woman ?”

Catharine was silent ; “ You cannot say that she is, well then do not trust her, say that I am a relative of your father’s family, and that for reasons of my own, I choose to lead this secluded life.”

Catharine promised to preserve the silence which she desired, and then apologised for being impatient to be home, by her anxiety about her sister.

Madam Vandersluys said, she had hoped that she would have dined with her, but that she would not detain her from her

sister, and desired that she would come every day at whatever hour her sister could best spare her, and that at her next visit she would bring Mrs. Durnford's children; she asked her to take some refreshment, which Catharine declined, took her leave, and returned home to meditate on the strange story which she had heard, on the certain misery that follows the indulgence of guilty passions, and the scorpions which vice even when successful bears in her bosom.

In conformity to her promise she told her mother and sister just what Madam Vandersluys had directed her, and they continued to wonder at the strangeness of her choosing such a mode of living.

Mrs. Durnford was rather better, and continued to fluctuate in that way for several weeks, still flattering herself with being able to use the permission which Madam Vandersluys had given her, to walk

in her delightful gardens, but never gaining the least degree of strength.

Catharine saw the old lady every day, and advanced daily in her favour, she gave her a number of most valuable trinkets, and made the children, who sometimes accompanied her, a handsome present of money.

In this way things went on, until Mrs. Durnford's appointed hour came; she expired in a violent fit of coughing in Catharine's arms; this was a heavy blow to Mrs. Ormsby, who would never listen to any one's opinion of her danger, and who was therefore quite unprepared for the death of her favourite child. Mrs. Ormsby's constitution had suffered exceedingly from the journies which they had performed, and the uncomfortable winter that they had passed in the log-house, and she now became so ill, that Catharine feared she must lose her also.

Her spirits were at the lowest ebb, when a ray of comfort appeared in the shape of Henry Selwyn; accounts had reached him before he left South America, of the voyage of Mr. Durnford and his family, when, instead of sailing for England direct, he transmitted his accounts to his employers, and embarked for the United States, to ascertain the fate and prospects of his friends, and when he found his beloved Catharine in these melancholy circumstances, he blessed the fortunate chance which had directed him to console her.

When Madam Vandersluys learned his arrival, she said to Catharine, "well I imagine this Mr. Selwyn is your lover, why are you not married? I suppose you are going to tell me you were too poor, I will obviate that difficulty, will he be willing to remain in America?"

Catharine said she feared not, as he had that morning told her he must return to

England, and had urged her to accompany him, as soon as Mrs. Ormsby's health, who appeared to be recovering, would permit their departure.

“Perhaps,” said the old lady, “it is well for me that I have enjoyed so little of your company, yet losing you will add not a little to the severity of my penance, I will see your intended husband, at your next visit bring him with you.”

Catharine did so, and she expressed herself well pleased with her niece's choice; when all was ready for their departure, she presented Catharine with bills to the amount of ten thousand pounds, and a settlement which she had caused to be drawn up, of a hundred a-year, to each of the young Durnford's; “this” said she, “will maintain you in comfort, and young people are not the better of being too rich.”

Catharine would have objected to the

magnitude of the gift. "I have," said Madam Vandersluys, "a great deal more than I can ever enjoy, in any possible way, and I have been indebted to you for the only ray of comfort that has visited this closed heart since I left the English shore; write to me often, but, I intreat as a favor, that should you ever meet with any of your relatives you will never disclose my existence to them."

It was not without some feelings of regret that Catharine left her new found aunt, whose penitence went a great way in her eyes, to expiate the errors of her youth, and for whose generosity towards herself and the children, she felt most grateful.

From the time of their embarkation Mrs. Ormsby grew daily worse, Catharine and Henry Selwyn, waited on her with the utmost attention, and bore her querulous complaints with the greatest patience,

they were soon to hear them no more, she died in the third week of their voyage.

A funeral on land is a solemn sight; when we behold the earth thrown on the remains, even of an indifferent person, and hear the words, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," they strike cold on the heart, and go home to our self-love, for we know the hour must come when the lot shall be our own, and this pampered body, for whose sake we too often risk the immortal soul, shall become the tenant of that narrow habitation; but to see a body committed to the deep and entombed amidst the mighty waters, is yet more awful.

Catharine, who would not be prevented from going on deck during the solemnity, thought years after, that she heard the sullen plunge of her mother's corpse, and saw the dark waters close over it.

This rapid succession of the deaths of her relatives, had a powerful effect on her spirits, it required all Henry's exertions and influence over her mind, to keep her from sinking into a state of dejection ; but favorable gales wafted them homeward, and the ardent affection with which Maria Selwyn hastened to receive her friend and her beloved brother, was an exhilarating cordial to her.

A great change had taken place in Maria's prospects, Mr. Howard had broken a blood vessel in a furious contest with a neighbouring gentleman, about some very trifling subject, at a public meeting, and had only survived the accident a few hours.

George had returned home immediately, and they now only waited the termination of the period of mourning for a man whom no one regretted, to be united.

Mrs Selwyn was still with the Doctor,

who was now become unable to practise, he had realised a sum of money which he proposed to sink for an annuity, that might render his last years independent, and he had taken a small house in the neighbourhood of Barnton, that Mrs. Selwyn might continue to live with him, and be near her daughter.

George Howard, who knew Henry's predilection for the church, offered him the living of Barnton, which was vacant, if he chose to give the necessary time to study at one of the Universities, to which Henry readily acceded, for to be the spiritual guide of the parish where his father had filled that office with so much dignity and propriety, had ever been the summit of his wishes; he might have been ordained as a *Literati*, but he preferred going through the regular course of study, and Catharine would not hear of being married till her mother had been a year dead; she threw off her mourning for a few days

to be Maria's bride-maid ; there had seldom been a happier party, Doctor and Mrs. Selwyn arrived a few days before, and Mrs. Howard appeared to have got entirely quit of all her nerves and ailments.

Frederick and Mrs. Elrington having embarrassed their fortune as much as they could, were gone to France to recruit their shattered finances ; General and Mrs. Heygarth, and the Rector of Crossford, had also directed their course toward that land of delight.

“ This country,” said Doctor Selwyn, “ would be well quit of such people, if they left their money behind them, but for Frederick's children, I am really sorry they can imbibe nothing but vice and frivolity in that nation of fiddlers and free-thinkers ; and when I hear of the shoals of people who are going there to educate their families, I tremble for my country.

“ The writings of French philosophers have done comparatively little harm here, because there was a fund of good sense in this country, which resisted their shallow delusions, but children brought up amongst them cannot but inhale the poison, and the plague spot will spread: our superiority in religion and virtue is a prouder pre-eminence than that which our arms has attained, but farewell to it for ever, when our children shall be trained in the crude speculations of these short sighted reasoners, a deluge of infidelity will overspread this fair land, and our virtue, our freedom, and our greatness shall be no more.”*

* “ As we are at war with the power, it were well if we were at war with the manners of France. A land of *levity* is a land of *guilt*.”

Young's Night Thoughts.

Preface to the 7th Night, published 1751.

In due time Henry was appointed Vicar of Barnton, and Catharine became his wife; they restored the vicarage to the blooming beauty in which it had smiled during the occupation of Henry's father, Mrs. Durnford's children continued to reside with them, and never felt the loss of their parents.

Madam Vandersluys, with whom they had kept up a correspondence, died a few years after they were married, and left them all her possessions, with the exception of a legacy to each of her aged domestics, and five thousand pounds to each of the Miss Durnford's; they were thus enabled to follow the dictates of their benevolent hearts, and to be the benefactors of all around them who stood in need of assistance.

Benjamin and Rachel Symmons had been amongst the first to welcome the re-

turn of their friends, and to rejoice in their change of circumstances, they were frequent guests at Barnton Hall, and at the Vicarage, "where love, and all the virtues met, and smiled in harmony and joy."

F I N I S.

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H. Richardson, Printer, Berwick.













