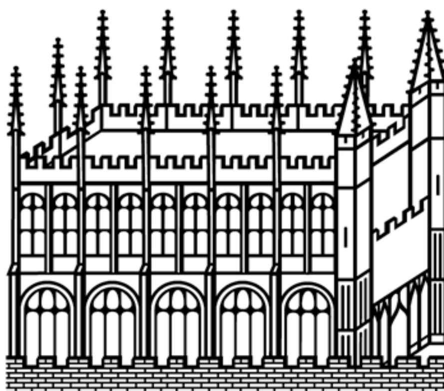
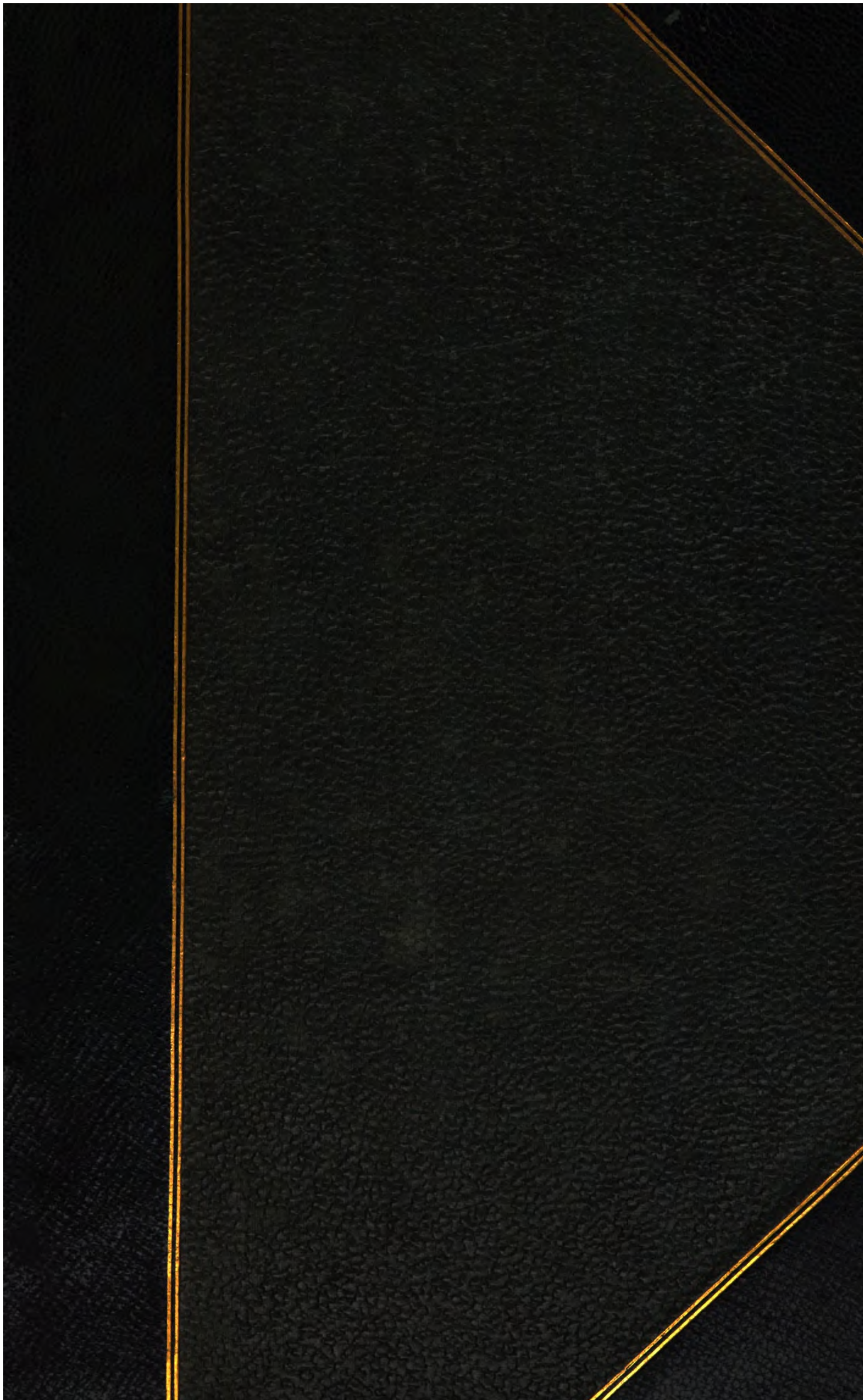


This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

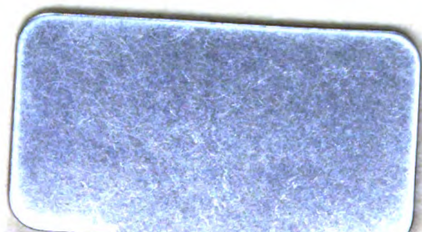
For more information see:

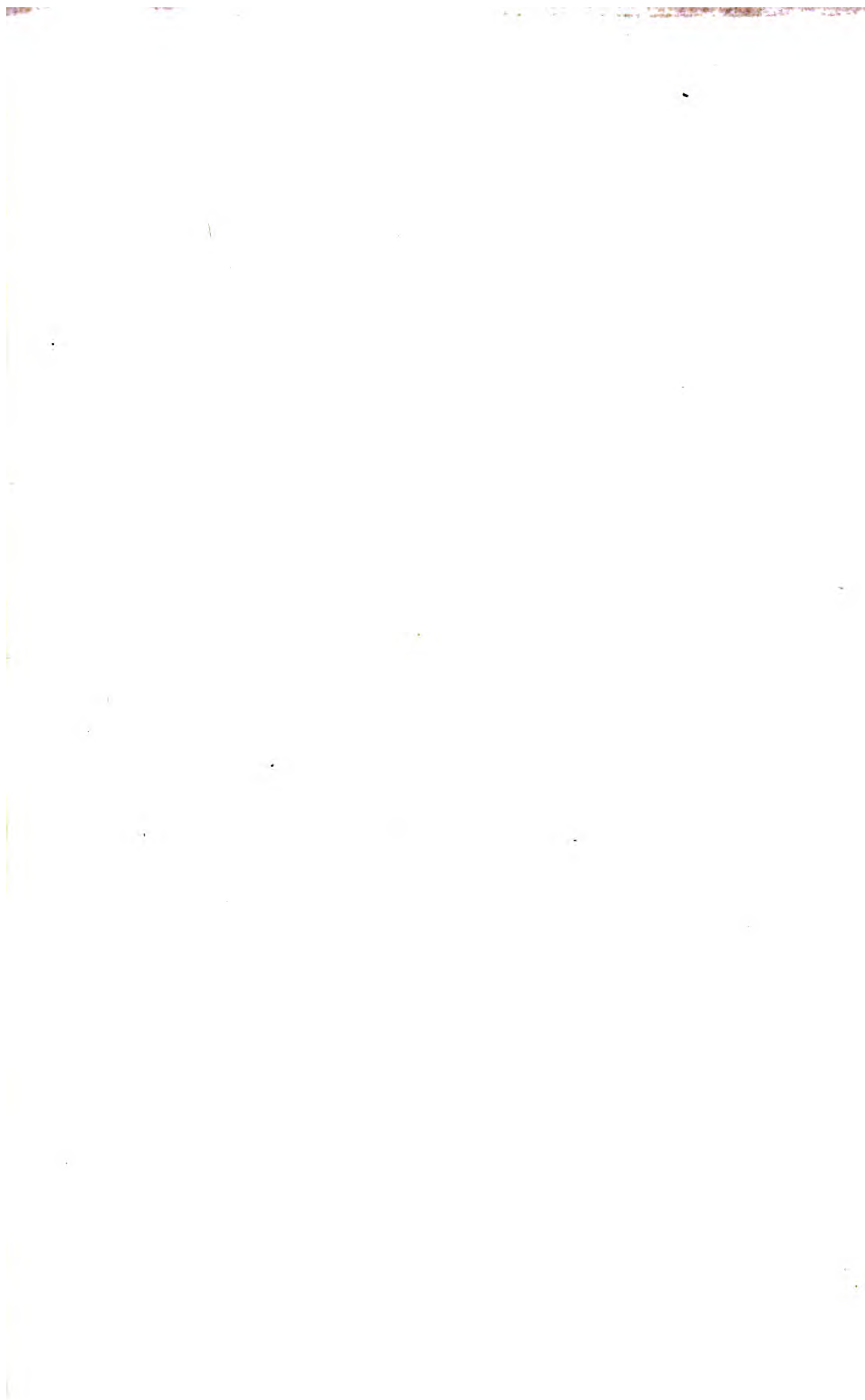
http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks

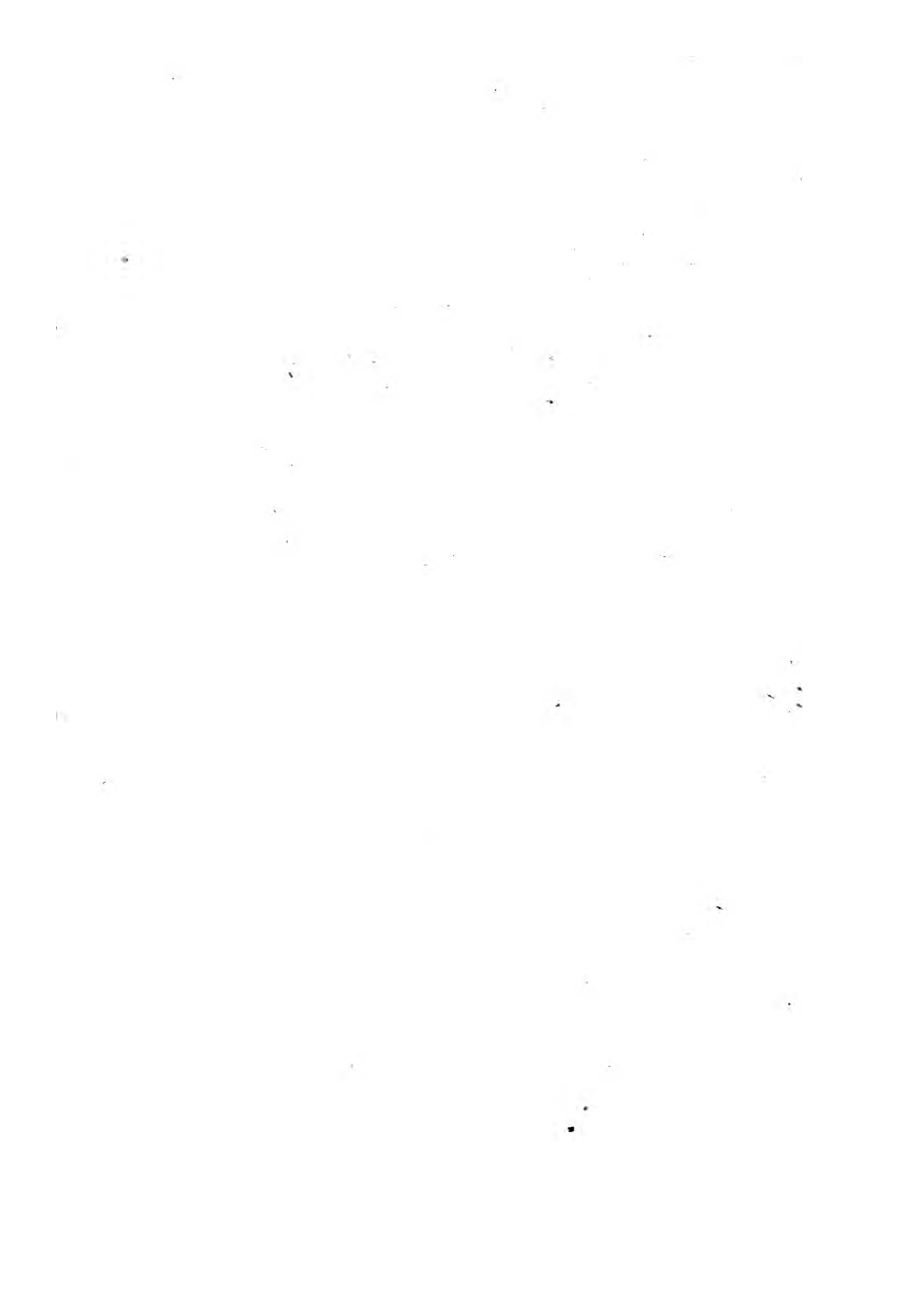
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.

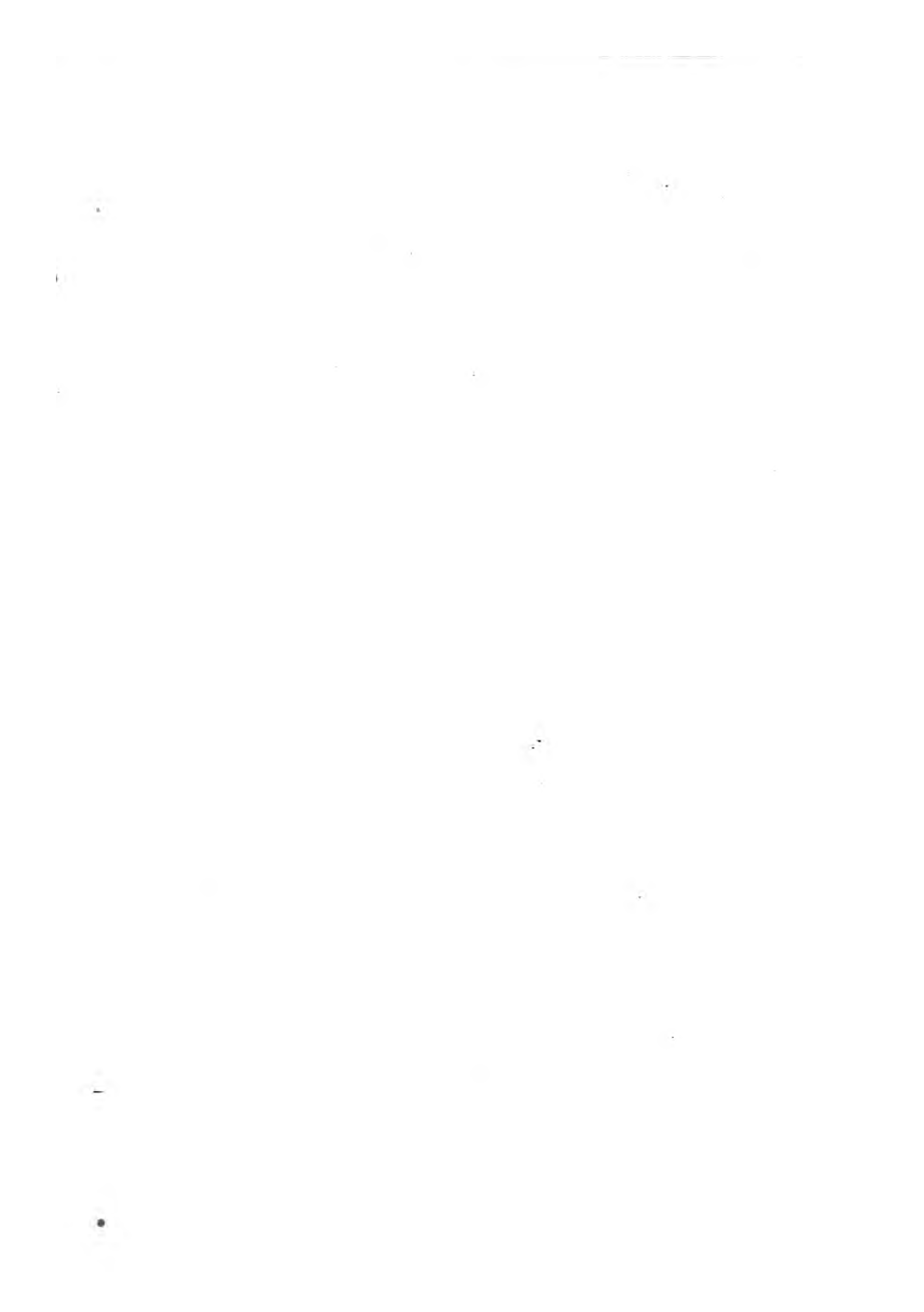


Per. 2107 d. 8/1833









Published for the Proprietor, by Longman & C° Paternoster Row

LONDON PUBLISHED FOR THE PROPRIETOR, BY
LONGMAN & C° PATERNOSTER ROW

HEATH'S

BOOK OF BEAUTY.

M.DCCC.XXXIII.

WITH

NINETEEN BEAUTIFULLY FINISHED ENGRAVINGS,

FROM

DRAWINGS BY THE FIRST ARTISTS.

BY

L. E. L.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMAN,
PATERNOSTER ROW;
RITTNER & GOUPIL, PARIS; AND C. JÜGEL, FRANKFORT.

LONDON:
J. MOYES, CASTLE STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.

DEDICATION.

TO

MRS. EDWARD LYTTON BULWER.

DEAR MRS. BULWER,

May I hope that the sincere feeling of admiration and attachment which makes me wish to offer you this slight tribute, will also render it an acceptable one?

Your affectionate

L. E. LANDON.

ADDRESS.

There is one page in every work, which, to me at least, is replete with anxiety and embarrassment. Whether to affect an indifference I cannot feel, or to express a hope on which I do not rely — whether to deprecate censure which is not to be deprecated, or to excite a sympathy not to be excited, — I never know what to say in my preface. To authors experience must rather bring distrust than confidence: they are no judges of their own efforts; the portion whereon they believe their utmost exertion has been bestowed, and of which they anticipate that the result will be most favourable, may prove a complete failure. In the following tales I have carefully endeavoured to concentrate the interest of the story, and to shun digression. How far

I have succeeded, it is impossible for me to decide. There are few "partial friends" now-a-days, whose previous praise or advice gives you a foretaste of the critical futurity that awaits you: your manuscript goes from the desk to the press, and from the press to the public, to stand or fall by a judgment which "casts no shadows before." I only venture to hope for a continuance of the kindness which has hitherto been my encouragement and reward. I have often trespassed upon it, but for that I do not apologise; the public can scarcely be displeased that my industry and imagination are exerted to the utmost in its service.

I feel it almost an impertinence to speak of the beautiful embellishments of the present Work: the novelty of the design, the taste and splendour of the execution, may well be left to plead their own cause; and I am selfish enough to trust that their merits may, in some measure, atone for the imperfections of their illustrations.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

THE ENCHANTRESS 1

THE MASK 51

LEONORA 54

THE TALISMAN 55

THE CHOICE 111

MADELINE 114

THE KNIFE 117

BELINDA; OR, THE LOVE-LETTER 149

GULNARE 151

THERESA 155

MEDITATION 176

GERALDINE 180

REBECCA 182

EXPERIMENTS; OR, THE LOVER FROM ENNUI 222

SONG 246

AN EVENING OF LUCY ASHTON'S 247

THE LAST OF THE ST. AUBYNS 259

LIST OF PLATES.

PAGE

THE ENCHANTRESS .... *Frontispiece.*

VIGNETTE TITLE 1

MEDORA * 24

LOLAH * 34

THE MASK 51

LEONORA 54

LAURA * 92

DONNA JULIA * 111

MADELINE 114

THE ORPHAN 117

BELINDA 149

GULNARE * 151

THERESA 158

MEDITATION 176

GERALDINE 180

REBECCA ‡ 209

THE BRIDE 244

LUCY ASHTON ‡ 247

GRACE ST. AUBYN 262

The Plates marked * illustrate Lord Byron's Poems.

Those marked ‡ illustrate Sir Walter Scott.

THE

BOOK OF BEAUTY.

THE ENCHANTRESS.

WATER—the mighty, the pure, the beautiful, the unfathomable—where is thy element so glorious as it is in thine own domain, the deep seas? What an infinity of power is in the far Atlantic, the boundary of two separate worlds, apart like those of memory and of hope! or in the bright Pacific, whose tides are turned to gold by a southern sun, and in whose bosom sleep a thousand isles, each covered with the verdure, the flowers, and the fruit of Eden! But, amid all thy hereditary kingdoms, to which hast thou given beauty, as a birthright, lavishly as thou hast to thy favourite Mediterranean? The silence of a summer night is now sleeping on its bosom, where the bright stars are mirrored, as if in its depths they had another home and another heaven. A spirit, cleaving air midway between the two, might have paused to ask which was sea, and which was sky. The shadows of earth and earthly things, resting omen-like upon the waters, alone shewed

which was the home and which the mirror of the celestial host.

But the distant planets were not the only lights reflected from the sea; an illuminated villa, upon the extreme point of a small rising on the coast, flung down a flood of radiance from a thousand lamps. From the terrace came the breath of the orange-plants, whose white flowers were turned to silver in the light which fell on them from the windows. Within the halls were assembled the fairest and noblest of Sicily.

Every one, they say, has a genius for something—that of Count Arezzi was for festivals. A king, or more, the Athenian Pericles, might have welcomed his most favoured guests in such a chamber. The walls were painted in fresco, as artists paint whose present is a dream of beauty, and whose future is an immortality. Each fresco was a scene in Arcadia; and the nymphs, who were there gathering their harvest of roses, were only less lovely than the Sicilian maidens that flitted past. Among these was one much darker than her companions; her Eastern mother had bequeathed to her her black hair and her olive skin; in her eye was that brightness, and on her cheek was that freshness, which belong only to the earliest hour of youth—the blush had been too fleeting to burn, the smile too clear to cast that shadow which even light flings as it lengthens. But to-night the colour was heightened, the eyes wore a deeper shade, for the hue of

the downcast lash was upon them, and the sweet half-opened mouth was too earnest for a smile.

Lolah was listening to those charmed words which change the girl at once into the woman—we step not over the threshold of childhood till led by Love. Alas, this knowledge is almost always heralded by a sorrow! That morning had Lolah heard from her stern uncle, that the love she bore to her cousin Leoni di Montefiore was a childish toy, and as such was to be put away; and all her happiness had been destroyed by having to reflect upon it. Poor Lolah! how hard it is to teach the young that life is made up of many parts; and that wealth, rank, power, are more to be desired than affection! To-night she was listening to Leoni—and who ever thought of the future when the present has first taught us we love and are beloved?—still, her eyes were filled with tears, and her heart beat heavier than usual. Leoni spoke of hope; but is not hope only a more gentle word for fear? And yet, with that mysterious contradiction which makes the fever of human existence, neither would have renounced the certainty of the other's affection for the careless content of yesterday. Strange, that ignorance should be our best happiness in this life, and yet be the one we are ever striving to destroy!

Leoni and his cousin stood in one of the deep windows; she leaning as if to inhale the fragrance of an Indian rose, and mark a flower which, brought from a far land, seemed more delicate than its

bright companion. A pedestal of the green malachite stood beside, and on it a vase carved with the sacrifice of Iphigenia; these shut them out from the rest of the dancers.

"My father," exclaimed Leoni, "gave his daughter to her father;"—then a bitter thought of the wasted heritage, which had made his noble name a fetter rather than an aid, for a moment caused the lover to pause.

"Holy Mother!—but my uncle has just entered the room; let me go, ere he finds me talking to you."

Lolah waited not for an answer; another moment, and she had passed her slender arm through that of one of her companions, and was lost in the crowd. It was so sudden, Leoni scarcely believed she was gone: surely her sweet low sigh was on the air—no! it was but the breath of the Bengal rose. His eye wandered round; it fell on the sculptured vase, and there stood the Grecian father, a witness to the sacrifice of his youngest and loveliest child.

"Even so, my gentle Lolah, will the altar be thy tomb."

Leoni started, for a figure now stepped from the shade of the column: not only his last words, but their whole conversation must have been heard.

"Yes, Don Leoni," said the intruder, replying rather to his thoughts and look, "I have heard your discourse; pardon me when I say it was wilfully overheard. It is long since I have hearkened to the eager and happy words of young affection,

and I listened as if to music; and, like music, they have died in hearing."

Leoni thought he would as soon that the dialogue had not been quite so attractive—strange, that it should be so to the cold and proud Donna Medora!

Again his companion answered to his thoughts— "You marvel at my speech; I could wonder myself at this still lingering sympathy with the base lot of humanity: but mortal breath and mortal frame cannot quite break away from mortal ties. Don Leoni, I pity you—I wish to serve you: I know not, if in giving you wealth I give you happiness; but wealth I can give. This is not the place for such words as mine must be. Breathe not in living ear what I have said: my power to serve you depends on your silence. Come to-morrow to our palazzo."

Medora turned from him, and descended the terrace. The weakness of our nature—how soon any strong emotion masters it! Leoni stood breathless with surprise and hope; he had once or twice before seen Donna Medora, and he had heard much of her. Young—she had seen but three-and-twenty summers deepen into autumn; beautiful—for it was as if Heaven had set its seal on her perfect face,—her life was one of sadness and solitude. The cathedral where she knelt, the poor whom she aided, the sick-room of her aged father, and her own lonely chamber—these were the haunts of Medora. When about

seventeen, a severe illness had stricken her even unto death; almost by a miracle she was restored to life, but never to youth—the shadow of the grave, to which she had so nearly approached, seemed to rest upon her. Her glad laugh never again made the air musical as with the singing of a bird in spring; her light step forgot the dance; and her lute was given to another. The sympathy she once had for joy was now kept entire for sorrow; but the mother who died in her arms, the father whose long and sickly age she soothed and supported, thought her nature had, in so nearly approaching heaven, caught something of its elements. And Lolah, who, as a distant relative, sometimes visited Don Manfredi's chamber, said that Medora was almost an angel; and added—"I should think her quite one, but that I do not fear her, and that she seems unhappy."

It was reported that love and religion had held a bitter conflict in her heart. Before her illness she had been betrothed to a young cavalier; on her recovery she refused to fulfil her engagement, alleging that the instability of life had taught her the vanity of human ties: all she now asked, was to devote what remained of existence to her aged parents. Remonstrances, prayers, were alike unavailing; and the young Count Rivoli became one of the Knights of Malta. Some years had since passed; and in the gay and hurrying circle of Palermo, Medora's name was rarely mentioned.

Leoni dwelt upon her promise of assistance;

but the more he reflected, the more hopeless it seemed. How could she give wealth, the daughter of one of Sicily's poorest nobles?

Our young Sicilian was naturally of a daring and reckless temper; and resolving to hope, without analysing why or wherefore, he re-entered the saloon. He danced no more with Lolah; yet he had the satisfaction of seeing her look sad and languid while dancing with another. But how restless was the night that followed! Hope is feverish enough at all times; what must it be when stimulated by curiosity!

The first blush of morning awakened Leoni from his light slumbers: he looked out; the hue of the sky was that too of the sea; the waves of the Mediterranean floated on as if freighted with roses; yet how Leoni wished they were glittering with the clear colourless light of noon! Never say that time is of equal length: the movement of the hours is as irregular as the beating of the heart which measures them. A year of ordinary life, if counted by hopes, fears, and fancies, was in that lingering morning. At length, noon sounded from many a turret; and, regardless of the heat, the young Count hurried to the palazzo.

When he reached the pier, a crowd of boatmen offered their services.

"What, ho! Michele and Stefano! I have tried the swiftness of the Santa Catharina before now. Remember, I am as impatient as . . . ."

" Your lordship always is," replied Stefano, who, having an answer always ready, always answered.

Leoni jumped into the boat, whose celerity shewed that the wax taper her pious rowers offered to Santa Catherina yearly on the day of her fête, was not thrown away; though, perhaps, the activity of the brothers who rowed did as much as their piety towards sending the little vessel swiftly through the waters.

" You want to land," said Michele, " at San Marco's steps?" turning the head of the boat to the accustomed landing-place.

The steps to which San Marco lent his name had been worth many a sequin to them; for the winding path to the left led to Lolah's villa.

" No, no," replied Leoni; " to the Nymph's Cove."

" Signor," returned Michele, " those steps lead only to Count Manfredi's garden."

" And it is thither I am going."

The boatmen exchanged looks of astonishment bordering on dismay, which was not diminished by the silence of the usually gay cavalier. Montefiore leant back in the boat: as the interview drew nigh, a feeling of fear—not fear, that was what none of his house had ever yet known—but of awe, stole over him. Many a mood had that morning passed through his mind; disbelief—but surely the sad seriousness of such a one as Donna Medora could never stoop to mockery!—then hope, like a sweet summer-

shower, when dark clouds break away into sudden light—till all his thoughts fixed on one mysterious circumstance—that he was the only person who had seen her the preceding evening. The Count d'Arezzi himself was not aware that she had been among his guests.

While musing on the singularity of this, they arrived at the landing-place, and found the Senora's page in waiting. Dumb from his birth, the boy Julio had been brought up in the Manfredi family, where his weak frame and want of language had exempted him from all but the lightest tasks.

"What would the Senora Lolah say to this visit?" cried Stefano, the moment his master was out of hearing. "The lady Medora is beautiful as an angel; I marvel we never rowed cavalier hither before."

"*We* never have; but *I* have, and in an evil hour. Well had it been for my first master if he had never looked on a face so fair and so false. I remember when I was wont of an evening to row the Count Rivoli to this very spot. We used to see a white veil waving among the trees—it was the Senora watching his approach: they were very happy then. But I know not how it was, unless it be the inconstancy of women; for change is as natural to them as it is to the sea. The lady Medora was taken dangerously ill: during her fearful sickness, never was truer lover than my master; the shrine of Our Lady was laden with gifts; and

night after night he paced beneath the window of her room,—till she who lay dying above, could scarcely look paler than he who watched below. And yet, on her recovery she refused to wed him. She declared, that, in her danger, she had made a vow not to marry. They say the young Count knelt at her feet, but in vain; and for her sake he forswore the face of woman and his native country. Count Rivoli is now a Knight of Malta. What has the Senora Medora to do with another lover?"

"Well, yonder gallant's step is not much like a lover's," replied Stefano, as a bend in the path enabled them to see the slow and thoughtful pace at which Leoni followed his guide.

The boy who led the way walked feebly and languidly, and Montefiore hurried him not. The gloom of the neglected garden added to that on his spirits; and the wild eyes and pale face of his dumb attendant seemed to fix his attention painfully. It was a countenance whose unhappiness was catching; for Leoni thought how terrible was his lot, debarred from that noblest privilege of humanity, interchange of thought, and its sweetest interchange of feelings! The boy stopped suddenly at the door of a summer-house, so hidden by the dark branches of the pine-trees around, that the stranger might have passed it by unnoticed. They entered together; the page approached his mistress, pointed to the visitor, and then left the room.

Without rising from her own seat, Medora

signed to Leoni to take the one opposite. At first she seemed so absorbed in thought, that even his entrance was insufficient to rouse her; she evidently hesitated to speak, as if she had not yet resolved on the purport of her words. Her young and impetuous companion found the silence very oppressive; but even his impetuosity was subdued by the gloom around him.

Panelled with the scarce woods of other lands, whose cornices were carved in quaint wreaths of flowers, mingled with crosses of divers shapes and the family arms, it was obvious that a rich though barbarous taste had here once lavished its wealth. But Time had, as usual, laughed the works of man to scorn; and pomp amidst its decay sickened over its vanity. The colours were all merged in the heavy black of age; the gildings were tarnished; and the cornices broken and defaced. The temple, of which but a few fallen columns remain—the mighty city, whose stately fragments are strewed in the desert—are solemn, not sorrowful. But the desolation of yesterday comes home to every man's heart—to-morrow its portion may be his own; and the faded tapestry, the discoloured floor, and the mouldering painting, speak of sorrow which still exists, and poverty which is still endured.

Leoni gazed round the gloomy banquet-room, and remembered a festival which had been given there; he was a child at the time, and perhaps his memory lent something of its own gaiety to the

scene. But he was roused from his reverie by Medora's voice.

"My silence, Count," said she, "must seem strange; but when you have heard the story I am about to reveal, you will not marvel that I hesitate to speak words which are even as those of Fate. You love, and you are beloved; surely you might be happy. There is but one obstacle, that of wealth. Leoni, I can make you rich—rich as the fabled kings, who poured forth gold like water: dare you accept the offer?"

"On what conditions?" exclaimed Leoni, almost unconsciously clasping the cross of the order which hung at his neck.

"On none," returned his companion. "Fear not my conditions, but your own use of the wealth I can bestow. Dare you take your destiny into your own hands? But I will place my life before you, and then judge for yourself."

Medora rose from her seat.

"Not here, where the uncharmed air might bear away my words, dare I tell my history. Count Leoni, you have heard of wondrous and fearful secrets, whose spell is over stars and over spirits; you have heard of mortals to whom immortal power is given—such power is mine. You deem you are speaking to your cousin—would that you were! I have but the borrowed likeness of her whose life long since reached its appointed boundary. Give me your hand, and in a few minutes we shall be in

my own dwelling, amid those immeasurable deserts where only my story may be communicated. Do you consent to accompany me?"

Leoni answered by taking the hand extended towards him. Even as he touched it, a dense vapour filled the room; he felt himself raised with a sudden and dizzy velocity; he leant back; the cloud was as the wave on which a swimmer floats, borne by no effort of his own; and a pleasant sensation of sleep came over him. He was roused by the light touch of his companion, and startled into consciousness. They were standing on the top of a mighty tower; one of those, whose height, seen from below, seems to reach even unto the heavens—but the summit once gained, we only find what an immeasureable upward distance remains. A hot bright noon filled the air with light, but not with fertility; for far as the eye could reach—and the clear colourless atmosphere seemed to extend the sight even to infinity—spread an arid desert, as if sand were an element, and only shared its empire with the sky. But immediately around the tower lay the giant ruins of a once glorious city; one of those built when the world was in the strength of its youth, and reared buildings which were the work of centuries, and yet but the work of a life: the cradle and the grave were then far apart. Now the shadow of the last rests upon the first, and all life groans beneath the weight and darkness thereof. Then the marble of the quarry and the gold of the mine lay on the

surface; the fertile soil of the East yielded forth its abundance; and the labour, which was in man's destiny, needed not to be all given to that sad and perpetual strife with hunger which belongs to our worn-out and weary age.

It seemed, however, as if Time had long paused in his work of destruction; the vast masses of carved granite, the broken columns, the shattered walls where once four chariots drove abreast, all remained as they had done for ages. Year after year the burning sunshine forbade the rain to fall, and speedily dried up the dews of night; no green moss, no creeping plant, as in his native Italy, hid the ruin which they were aiding: the bare white marble shone distinct from the sands.

Leoni turned to his companion; her face and garb were wholly changed: she stood upon her native tower, and had resumed her native shape. As Medora, she had been so like his own Lolah—a slight, low figure, whose grace was that of child-hood; the same sweet pleading eyes; alike, save that hope gave its gladness to the face of Leila, while that of Medora had all the mournfulness of memory. But the glorious beauty of the being at his side, though it wore the shape, had scarce the semblance of mortality. The face had that high and ideal cast of beauty which made the divinities of Greece divine; for the mind was embodied in the features. The large blue eyes were of the colour of the noon, when heaven is full of light; they looked

upon you like the far-off shining of some vast and lonely planet. Her garb and turban had an Oriental splendour ; a silver veil mingled with her rich profusion of hair, which was bound by strings of costly pearls. Round her arm was rolled a band of gold, and on her hand she bore a signet of some strange clear stone, covered with mystic characters. Her height and step were like a queen's, such as might have beseemed the young Empress of Palmyra, ere she walked in the triumph of the Roman conqueror.

" I may not enter," said she, " the hall of my father's tomb but in mine own shape : follow me."

Casting the golden sandals from her feet, she led the way down a flight of black marble steps. They paused at the foot of the tower; two enormous doors flew open, and though it was the bright light of noon he had left behind, Leoni stood dazzled at the glory of the hall. The crystal roof was traversed by a shining zodiac, lit by a pale unearthly flame; the black marble floor was covered with inscriptions in gold, but they were in unknown ciphers: Leoni observed, however, that they were similar to those on the girdle and the border of his companion's robe. The gigantic pillars which supported the vast dome were also of black marble, covered, in like manner, with golden hieroglyphics. Between them were immense vases, each one a varying mosaic of precious stones, and filled with the same pale flame which lighted the zodiac

above. In the centre of the hall stood a huge crystal globe, and upon its summit a funeral urn of the purest alabaster, on which neither figure nor sign was graven. Around were placed seven silver tripods, whereon were burning odoriferous woods, which filled the air with their perfumes.

"In yonder urn," said Medora, "lie the ashes of my father. I have obtained that gift in search of which his life was spent; and yet I would that our mingled ashes were strewn on those elements we have mastered, and in vain."

She now seated herself on a radiant throne opposite, and Leoni leant on the lion's skin at her feet. We have said that Leoni was of a race to whom fear was unknown, yet he felt his heart beat quicker than ordinary, and his glance quailed before the melancholy and spiritual beauty of the eyes now shining upon him.

"You see in me," said his mysterious companion, "the only living descendant of those Eastern Magi to whom the stars revealed their mysteries, and spirits gave their power. Age after age did sages add to that knowledge which, by bequeathing to their posterity, they trusted would in time combat to conquer their mortality. But the glorious race perished from the earth, till only my father was left, and I his orphan child. Marvels and knowledge paid his life of fasting and study. All the spirits of the elements bowed down before him; but the future was still hidden from his eyes, and Death was

omnipotent. His power of working evil had no bounds, but his power of good was limited; and yet it was good that he desired. How dared he put in motion those mighty changes, which seemed to promise such happiness on earth, while he was ignorant of what their results might be? and of what avail was the joy he might pour out on life, over whose next hour the grave might close, and only make the parting breath more bitter from the blessings which it was leaving behind?

"I was no unworthy daughter of such a sire; I advanced in these divine studies even to his wish, and looked to the future with a hope which many years had deadened in himself, but from which I caught an omen of ultimate success. Alas! he mastered not his destiny: I have said before, his ashes are in yonder urn. A few unwholesome dews on a summer night were mightier than all his science. For a time I struggled not with despair; but youth is buoyant, and habit is strong. Again I pored over the mystic scroll—again I called on the spirits with spell and with sign. Many a mystery was revealed, many a wonder grew familiar; but still Death remained at the end of all things, as before. One night I was on the terrace of my tower. Above me was the deep blue sky, with its stars—worlds filled, perchance, with the intelligence which I sought. On the desert below was the phantasm of a great city. I looked on its small and miserable streets, where hunger and cold reigned paramount, and

man was as wretched as if flung but yesterday on the earth, and there had been as yet no time for art to yield its assistance, or labour to bring forth its fruit. I gazed next on scenes of festivity, but they were not glad; for I looked from the wreath into the head it encircled, and from the carcanet of gems to the heart which beat beneath—and I saw envy, and hate, and repining, and remorse. I turned my last glance on the palace within its walls; but there the purple was spread as a pall, and the voice of sorrow and the cry of pain were loud on the air. I bade the shadows roll away upon the winds, and rose depressed and in sorrow. I was not alone: one of those glorious Spirits, whose sphere was far beyond the power of our science, whose existence we rather surmised than knew, stood beside me.

" From that hour a new existence opened before me. I loved, and I was beloved—love, to which imagination gave poetry, and mind gave strength, was the new element added to my being. Alas! how little do the miserable race to which I belong know of such a feeling! They blend a moment's vanity, a moment's gratification, into a temporary excitement, and they call it love. Such are the many, and the many make the wretchedness of earth. And yet your own heart, Leoni, and that of my gentle cousin, may witness for my words, there are such things as truth, and tenderness, and devotion in the world; and such redeem the darkness and degradation of its lot. Nay, more—if ever the mystery of

our destiny be unravelled, and happiness be wrought out of wisdom, it will be the work of Love.

"It matters little to tell you of my blessedness; but my very heart was filled with the light of those radiant eyes, which were to me what the sun is to the world. Yet one dark shadow rested on my soul, beyond even their influence. Death had been the awful conqueror with whom my race had so often struggled, and to whom they had so often yielded. A mortal, I loved an immortal, and the fear of separation was ever before me; yet a long and a happy time passed away before my fear found words.

"It was one evening we were floating over the earth, and the crimson cloud on which we lay was the one where the sun's last look had rested. Its gleam fell on a small nook, while all around was fast melting into shade. Still, it was a sad spot which was thus brightened—it was a new-made grave. Over the others the long grass grew luxuriantly, and speckled, too, by many small and fragrant flowers; but on this, the dark-brown earth had been freshly turned up, and the red worm writhed restlessly about its disturbed habitation. Some roses had been scattered, but they were withered; their sweet leaves were already damp and discoloured. All wore the present and outward signs of our eternal doom—to perish in corruption.

"The shadows of the evening fell, deepening the gloom into darkness—the one last bright ray had long been past, when a youth came from the adjacent

valley. That grave but yesterday received one who was to have been his bride—his betrothed from childhood, for whose sake he had been to far lands and gathered much wealth, but who had pined in his absence and died. He flung himself on the loathsome place, and the night-wind bore around the ravings of his despair. Woe for that selfishness which belonged to my mortality! I felt at that moment more of terror than of pity. I thought of myself: Thus must I, with all my power, my science, and loved by one into whose sphere Death comes not, even thus must I perish! True, the rich spices, the perfumed woods, the fragrant oils, which would feed the sacred fire of my funeral pyre, would save my mortal remains from that corruption which makes the disgust of death even worse than its dread. A few odoriferous ashes alone would be left for my urn. Yet not the less must I share the common doom of my race,—I must die!

"'Nay, my beautiful!' said the voice, which was to me as the fiat of life and of death, so utterly did it fill my existence; 'why should we thus yield to a vague terror? Listen, my beloved! I know where the waters of the fountains of life roll their eternal waves—I know I can bear you thither and bid you drink from their source, and over lips so hallowed Death hath no longer dominion. But, alas! I know not what may be the punishment. Like yourselves, the knowledge of our race goes on increasing, and our experience, like your own, hath its

agonies. None have dared what I am about to dare, and the future of my deed is even to me a secret. But what may not be borne for that draught which makes my loved one as immortal as my love!'

"I gazed on the glorious hope which lighted up his radiant brow, and I said to him, 'Give me an immortality which must be thine.' Worlds rolling on worlds lay beneath our feet when we stood beside the waters of life. A joyful pride swelled in my heart. I, the last and the weakest of my race, had won that prize which its heroes and its sages had found too mighty for their grasp. A sound as of a storm rushing over ocean startled me when I stooped to drink, the troubled waves rose into tumultuous eddies, their fiery billows parted, and from amid them appeared the dark and terrible Spirit of Necessity. The cloud of his awful face grew deeper as it turned on me. 'Child of a sinful and a fallen kind!' said he, and he spoke the language most familiar to my ear, which yet sounded like that of another world, 'who have ever measured by their own small wisdom that which is infinite—drink, and be immortal! Be immortal, without the wisdom or the power belonging unto immortality. Drink!'

"I shrank from the starry waters as they rose to my lip, but a power stronger than my will compelled me to their taste. The draught ran through my veins like ice. Slowly I turned to where my once-worshipped lover was leaning. The same change had passed over both. Our eyes met, and

each looked into the other's heart, and there dwelt hate—bitter, loathing, and eternal hate. I had changed my nature; I was no longer the gentle, up-looking mortal he had loved. I had changed my nature; he was no longer to me the one glorious and adored being. We gazed on each other with fear and abhorrence. The dark power, whose awful brow was fixed upon us like Fate, again was shrouded in the kindling waters. By an impulse neither could control, the Spirit and I flung ourselves down the steep blue air, but apart, and each muttering, 'Never! never!' And that word 'never' told our destiny. Never could either feel again that sweet deceit of happiness, which, if it be a lie, is worth all truth. Never more could each heart be the world of the other.

"Our feelings are as little in our power as the bodily structure they animate. My love had been sudden, uncontrollable, and born not of my own will —and such was my hate. As little could I master the sick shudder his image now called up, as I could the passionate beating of the heart it had once excited. I stood alone in my solitary hall—I gazed on the eternal fire burning over the tomb of my father, and I wished it were burning over mine. For the first time I felt the limitations of humanity. The desire of my race was in me accomplished—I was immortal; and what was this immortality? A dark and measureless future. Alas, we had mistaken life for felicity! What was my knowledge? it only

served to shew its own vanity; what was my power, when its exercise only served to work out the decrees of an inexorable necessity? I had parted myself from my kind, but I had not acquired the nature of a spirit. I had lost of humanity but its illusions, and they alone are what render it supportable. The mystic scrolls over which I had once pored with such intenseness, were now flung aside; what could they teach me? Time was to me but one great vacancy; how could I fill it up, who had neither labour nor excitement? I sat me down mournfully, and thought of the past. Why, when love is perished, should its memory remain? I had said to myself, So long as I have life, one deep feeling must absorb my existence. A change—and that too of my own earnest seeking—had passed over my being; and the past, which had been so precious, was now as a frightful phantasm. The love which alters, in its inconstancy may set up a new idol, and worship again with a pleasant blindness; but the love which leaves the heart with a full knowledge of its own vanity and nothingness,—which saith, The object of my passion still remains, but it is worthless in my sight—never more can I renew my early feeling—I marvel how I ever could have loved—I loathe, I disdain the weakness of my former self;—ah, the end of such love is indeed despair!

" Do you mark yonder black marble slab, which is spread as over a tomb? It covers the most silvery fountain that ever mirrored the golden light

of noon, or caught the fall of the evening dew, in an element bright as themselves. The radiant likeness of a Spirit rests on those waters. I bade him give duration to the shadow he flung upon the wave, that I might gaze on it during his absence. The first act of my immortality was to shut it from my sight. There must that black marble rest for ever.

"Why need I tell you of the desolation with which centuries have passed over my head? At length I resolved to leave my solitude, to visit earth; to seek, if I could not recall, my humanity; to interest myself in my species, and help even while I despised them. The thousand hues of sunset were deepening into the rich purple of twilight, when I paused over a Sicilian palace. Lemon and orange trees crowded the terrace, and their odours floated upwards towards an apartment where every casement was flung open for the sake of air. One emaciated hand stretched out on the purple silk coverlet, the other extended towards an aged female beside, reclined a young and beautiful girl; she was dying. A week of fever had done the work of years; life had burnt fiercely out; and the fragile tenement, wasted and worn away, lay in that languid repose which is the harbinger of death. The long black hair hung in pall-like masses; it had been loosened in the restlessness of pain. Her mother kept bathing the sunken temples with aromatics, but they throbbed no longer, and the sufferer motioned to her to desist. She now asked rest rather than relief; but life yet

Drawn by H. Corbould. Engraved by J. Hopwood.

MEDORA.

Printed by M'Queen

put forth its last energy in affection, and clasping her mother's hand, she turned her large soft eyes to her father. He stood watching her, as though, while he watched, life could not escape. Suddenly, a slight convulsion passed over the face of the dying girl; she gasped as if for air, and raised herself on her pillow without assistance, but sank back with the effort;—she was dead. A wild scream broke from the mother, and she fell senseless by the bed. The father caught the lifeless hands of his child, and, mad with despair, implored her not to leave him. Loud sobs came from the further part of the chamber: there was now no one to disturb by that passion of sorrow.

" Human misery is an awful sight. The old nurse approached the corse; she smoothed the long dark hair,—she placed a chaplet of roses on the brow, and a few fresh flowers in the lifeless hand. The rich light from the open casement fell on the white dress, and still whiter face, with a mocking cheerfulness. The aged creature could restrain her grief no longer; she rushed to a darker part of the room, and wept. A thought struck me: over the departed I had no power; but I could spare the agony of the living. Yes, I would take upon myself human relations, would bind myself by human ties, —I would be to them even as a daughter. The next moment I had assumed the shape of their child.

" Far in an unfrequented track of the southern

seas lies a small island; there are aged trees and early blossoms; and amid them myriads of shining insects and bright-winged birds make the solitude glad with life; but they are its sole inhabitants. Once, driven away by a tempest from its ordinary course, a ship discovered the little isle. The Spaniards landed; they took possession in the name of the Madonna, and with pieces of grey rock piled up a cross. Human eye has never since dwelt on that lovely and lonely shore; but beneath the shadow of that cross lie the mortal remains of your cousin Medora.—Gradually I allowed some sign of returning life to appear; the old nurse, who was bending over the body, was the first to exclaim, 'Bring a looking-glass, for there is breath within those lips.' The slight cloud left on the mirror was as the very atmosphere of hope; eyes dim with weeping, cheeks pale with watching, were lighted up on the instant.

"I felt a new and keen happiness in the happiness I had given. It needs not to tell how I gradually recovered, and how the parents, whose very life seemed bound up in their child's, were never weary of gazing on their recovered treasure. But a grief of which I had not dreamt awaited me. Medora had been betrothed to a young Sicilian nobleman. The moment an interview was permitted, the lover was at my feet, full of that hope and that joy he was never to know again. You are aware how the marriage was broken off, on the plea of a vow to the Virgin made

in the extremity of danger; but you know not the agony I inflicted, or that I endured, in listening to the passionate despair of Rivoli; and when he said, 'Your death I might have borne—it was the will of God, and life would have lived on a hope beyond the grave; but thus to find you changed to me, to think that you can hold our love an offence in the sight of Heaven, and that I, who have loved, and who do love you so unutterably, that I should be the first sacrifice you offer up,—this, Medora, is more than I can bear!'

"In listening thus, how I repented me of my rash interference with the course of human life! If I had given joy, I had also caused more sorrow; and, worse, I had reason to question whether the grief of the marriage thus broken off did not embitter, despite of all my care, the brief period of Donna Maria's life.

"I have now little more to say of myself. The last few years have been devoted to Don Manfredi's declining age; wearisome has the task been, and still I have clung to it. I own, yet shun, the fatal truth, that my lot is but an awful solitude, without duties or affections—those ties and blessings of humanity.—And now for the wealth I offer you: I know not of its consequences, but I know those consequences can be but in your own acts. I do no more than a mere mortal might. On this interview there is imposed the condition—secrecy; on the possession of riches there is none.

The spirits of riches are the first and the meanest which yield to science : it shall be my care that they reach you in simple and ordinary channels. Speak !"

"Give me," exclaimed Leoni, "give me wealth ; give me Lolah !"

A purple cloud filled the glorious hall; again stupor overwhelmed him; again he awakened, and there he was in the lonely summer-room, and Medora, with her pale child-like face and black garments, at his side; but he met the large dark eyes filled with a strange wild light, and he knew it was no dream.

"Leave me now," said Medora; "but on your life be silent. Life and secrecy are one. Farewell!"

Dizzy with expectation, Leoni returned to the boat. The clock of San Francisco's abbey struck; he had been away but one hour. Pallid and abstracted, there was something in his look that effectually silenced the boatmen; nay, they remained in gloomy stillness after he had left them.

"He has met with a refusal," at length said Stefano.

"Rather say, that there is evil in yon dreary palazzo and that pale girl, and that their influence is on him. The lady Medora is kind and generous, but there is a curse follows her ; and when did ever gift of hers turn to good?"

"The notary Signor Grazie awaits your plea-

sure," said a domestic, on Leoni's entrance to his palace.

The notary's business was soon told. The Marchese Ravenna, a distant relative of the young Count, had made him his heir; and boundless was the wealth the aged miser left behind him. That evening saw Leoni a welcome guest at his uncle's; and but a few weeks fled past, ere orange-flowers bound the bridal tresses of his gentle cousin. The same day died Count Manfredi; and, as if her life were one with his, Donna Medora breathed her last at the very moment of her father's death.

"One, two, three; so late, so very late," exclaimed the Countess di Montefiore, "and Leoni still from home; there was a time when I dreamed not of keeping these solitary vigils."

Wearily Lolah arose from the velvet ottoman, and again the hour was struck by one of their own clocks, a few minutes later than the Abbey; it was succeeded (for the time-piece was a rare device of a skilful artist) by a sweet and lively air — one of those Neapolitan barcarolles which, like the glad music of Memnon's lyre, seemed inspired by the morning sunshine.

"Mockery," sighed the youthful watcher, "for the flight of time to be told in music!"

She began to pace the room,—that common resource of extreme lassitude, when sleep, to which the will consents not, hangs heavy on the eyelids.

Truly night was made for sleep; since to its wakeful hours belongs an oppression unknown to the very dreariest hours of day. The stillness is so deep, the solitude so unbroken, the fever brought on by want of rest so weakens the nerves, that the imagination exercises despotic and unwholesome power, till, if the heart have a fear or a sorrow, up it arises in all the force and terror of gigantic exaggeration.

The Countess had long since dismissed her attendants; yet the pearls still braided her hair, which hung nearly to her feet, in two large plaits; and a white silk robe, carelessly fastened at the waist, shrouding her whole figure in its loose folds, gave her something of that ghost-like appearance with which our fancy invests the habitants of another world. And truly, with her pale cheek and melancholy eyes, she looked like a spirit wandering mournfully around the scene of former pleasures. Yet what luxury was there not gathered in that gorgeous room? The purple silk curtains excluded the night-dews, while they allowed the air to enter freighted with odours from the orange-trees on the terrace below. The nuns of the Convent of St. Valerie, so celebrated for their skill in embroidery, had exerted their finest art in transferring all the flowers of spring to the white velvet ottomans: you might have asked, which was real—the rose on the cushion, or that which hung from the crystal vase? The jewels lavished on the toys scattered round, had been held a noble dower by the fairest maiden

in Sicily. On the walls were pictures, each one a world of thought and of beauty. The Grecian landscapes of Gaspar Poussin, who delighted in the graceful nymph, and the marble fane which recalled a mythology all poetry, as if in his dreams he had dwelt in Thessaly. The rugged scenes which Salvator Rosa loved to delineate—the forest, dark with impenetrable depths; the bare and jagged rock, rough as if Nature had forgotten it; the aged pine riven by the lightning, and beside it some bandit, desolate and stricken as the tree by which he stood, but with a cruel defiance in his looks, as though he longed to resent on all the injuries he had received from a few. Near at hand hung one of the glad earths and sunny skies in which the more buoyant spirit of Claude Lorraine revelled, as if its native element were sunshine. There were portraits too, the noble and the beautiful of her race; faces which told a whole history—and yet Lolah marked them not.

But one twelvemonth had she been a bride, and her husband's presence was unfamiliar to his home. Day after day did some unkind friend—for when do friends not delight in the sorrow of the prosperous?—come to her with tales how the Count's wealth was lavished on others less lovely than herself. And even that very evening had her father been with her, telling her that no wealth could hold out against Leoni's reckless prodigality—against his mad passion for gaming. In pity to the gentle creature, who could only lean on his bosom and weep, he

might not tell her that the husband of her love was an object of universal suspicion, and that sorcery and the once stainless name of Montefiore were coupled together. He left her with those words of fondness which are never, and those words of comfort which ever are, said in vain. Wretched she had long been, but not till to-night had she owned the truth even to herself—owned that all her dreams of happiness, all the fairy creations of her fancy, had melted away, like the gardens and palaces she had seen painted on the air in the Bay of Naples.

Weak, selfish, and vain, Leoni's was the very nature which wealth corrupts; he looked upon it but as the source of self-gratification. He forgot that the power with which the rich man is endued, is a sacred duty, whose neglect brings its own punishment; and that he who seeks pleasure with reference to himself, not others, will ever find that pleasure is only another name for discontent. At first Lolah was the idol of his heart—she became his bride—and a few happy weeks were passed in retirement and bliss; but Leoni soon looked beyond the small circle of the heart. They went to Palermo, and there he took delight in magnificence; his vanity exulted in glittering display, it was gratified by envy and wonder. Fête succeeded fête, till he himself grew weary of his prodigal hospitality: he craved for variety; and Lolah's timid and gentle temper was ill fitted to be the check he needed. Gambling soon became a habit; his enormous losses were an excitement; he

knew he could repair them with a wish—he cared not, therefore, for the money he lost; but he desired to conquer fortune, and held success to be the triumph of skill. In the early part of his career, that evil and grudging feeling with which people regard great and sudden wealth, exhausted itself in prophecies of the certain ruin to which the young spendthrift Count was hastening; and when those prophecies were not fulfilled, their utterers were disappointed; they viewed it as a sin that he had proved their omens untrue. In sad truth, half our forebodings of our neighbours are but our own wishes, which we are ashamed to utter in any other form.

Gradually, the crowds at the Montefiore palace grew less noble; those whose consequence was diminished by its splendour, were the first to turn away; their example was followed by those who had nothing to gain; then went those who are ever led by example;—till the palace only gathered the dissipated and the dishonoured; the needy, who made want their plea, for even they needed an excuse; and the gamester, who was reckless whither he went, so that he indulged his passion. Old friends one after another became cold, and new friends were insolent and familiar. All this cut deep, and Leoni plunged still more madly into every possible excess; and when all other aids to forgetfulness failed, the red wine-cup was drained for oblivion.

Pale and sad the young Countess passed the weary hours in her splendid solitude; she felt the

loss of friends less than Leoni, for had she not lost her husband? That evening had, however, been spent from home; it was the time of the Carnival—she had been to a masque as an Indian maiden; and now sat up for Leoni's return, half in girlish vanity, half because she could not bear the day to close without seeing him: she knew that he would let himself in by a private portal, which he had had expressly made, and that he must cross that chamber on his way to his own. Chilly and fatigued, she again drew the rich flower-wrought cashmere around her; for a moment she sat, her cheek resting on her hand; at length she leaned back on the ottoman, and sunk into disturbed and half-conscious slumber. She was roused by a noise—and starting up to meet Leoni, saw a stranger in the act of putting aside the curtains of the window through which he was entering. Excess of terror made her speechless for a moment; when the man, who was in the garb of a boatman, said,

"For the love of the saints, be calm, lady! I would lay down my life in your service; just hear me."

Lolah now recognised Stefano, who had before their marriage brought her many a note and flower from Leoni.

"Is the Count within?" asked he anxiously.

"I expect him every instant; but tell me your business at this strange hour."

Stefano hesitated.

Painted by W. Boxall. Engraved by W. H. Mote.

LOLAH.

Printed by Perkins & Bacon

London, Published for the Proprietor, by Longman & Co. Paternoster Row.

"Perhaps it were best I should, and yet—do you know where I could find his Excellency?"

Lolah shook her head mournfully.

"Lady, I must then tell you all;" and he looked aside, and spoke hastily, as if unwilling to watch the misery his words must cause. "Lady, to-morrow this palace will be seized by the officers of the Inquisition, the Count—now St. Rosalie punish his enemies!—is accused of sorcery—to-morrow he will be arrested. My brother is one of their servants; but the Count is our old patron—he gave me a hint—I rowed hither—by means of a fishing-hook I fastened a rope to the balcony, and sprung up: I know every room of the palace, and thought to take my chance of meeting the Count Leoni; my boat lies below—a ship will sail from the bay at the break of day—they need sail fast, for they have better wine aboard than they would wish to have known in Palermo."

"Holy Virgin! if my husband should not return!" exclaimed Lolah, wringing her hands in an agony. Stefano had not a word of comfort for such an emergency. Suddenly the Countess rose from her seat: "I will trust in the blessed saints for his return: what is the latest period that we can escape?"

"It will not be light this half hour, and I will answer for his safe pilotage while dark; but if the day once break, the fishermen will be abroad, and there will not be a chance of escape."

Lolah sank on her knees, and remained for a few moments with her face hidden between her hands in earnest prayer. Rising from the ground, she hastily addressed Stefano.

"Will you remain here and wait as long as you dare for the Count's arrival? I will return in a few minutes; I only go to make some brief preparation for our flight."

"*Your* flight?" ejaculated the boatman, "you are in no danger."

"It matters not," answered she passionately; "I will not leave my husband's side."

Ten minutes had scarcely elapsed, when she reappeared in a plain dark travelling dress, and dragging with her a large horseman's cloak.

"This will conceal him, as he must stay for no change of apparel. But can it be so long? why, it is a quarter of an hour since you told me we had but half a one;" and the gay and fairy chime of the time-piece told four o'clock.

"It is very dark still," said she, looking from the window.

"Yes, lady, it is very dark, the moon set an hour ago; but do not you lean out, the night-dew is falling heavily."

Again Lolah turned to the time-piece, the hand marked that five minutes more had passed away; she looked to Stefano, but he only shook his head and muttered some indistinct sound. A little rosary of coral and of the many-coloured lavas of Vesuvius

hung at her waist—she prized it, for it was her dead mother's gift to her in her earliest childhood, and it was linked with the hope and affection of other years: her hand trembled so that she could not count the beads, but she repeated the prayers, at first audibly, and then the words died away in faint murmurs; at length she herself knew not what she was uttering. Her cheek, which had been pale as the funereal marble, burned with crimson, her lips were white and apart—the fever of her mind had communicated itself to her frame. With an unsteady step she again approached the balcony—"Tell me," said she, faintly, "is there a grey streak amid those clouds? I cannot see."

"Lady, it is still dark; hist!" at this moment, a distant step was heard in the corridor; nothing but hearing made intense by anxiety could have caught it.

"Mother of God! I thank thee, it is Leoni!"

She sprang forward; but her head grew dizzy, and she leant for a moment against the table for support. Leoni entered the room, haggard with his excited vigil, his cloak disordered, his rich vest left open at the throat, as if in the agitation of the gaming-table he had loosened it to give himself air; a contraction, seemingly habitual, darkened his forehead; he was young still, but the expression and colours of youth were gone. He advanced moodily and abstractedly, when his eye was caught by the appearance of Stefano, who had lost not

a moment in fastening the coils of the rope to the balcony.

"Robber!" shouted he; but the hand which sought his sword was arrested by Lolah's light touch on his arm.

"Be still, for your sweet life's sake," said she, in an earnest whisper, that fixed his attention at once; "yonder faithful creature has risked his for your's; we must fly, or to-morrow dawns for you in the dungeons of the Inquisition; all is ready for flight, only come."

Leoni turned still paler; then rallying with the high courage of his race, exclaimed, "Who dares accuse me? and what is my crime?"

"That matters not," said Stefano; "my brother gave me the hint; you fly to-night, or are a prisoner in the morning. In the name of the good St. Rosalie, don't stand talking; you have lost time enough already; we have settled every thing while waiting for you;—as if any good Christian ever kept such hours!" but these last words were muttered in an under-tone.

"Come, my husband, there will be opportunity enough for explanation; fling this cloak round you, and follow me," said the Countess, stepping onwards.

"Never, Lolah," rejoined Montefiore, startled by the danger, which a conscious feeling in his own heart foreboded was true; "never shall you be exposed to the hardship and danger of such a flight, for me, so worthless, so neglectful!" But she was already at the foot of the ladder.

"Come, Signor; ten minutes more, and we are lost!"

Leoni followed, though almost unconsciously; and in an instant more, Stefano was steering his boat into the bay.

"Lolah, why are you here?" burst from him in the bitter accents of self-reproach, as he felt her head sink on his shoulder.

"Nay, my Leoni," said the low sweet voice on which he once hung with such passionate love, "where should I be but where rests all my earthly happiness? with my head on your heart, Leoni, love mine, I am very, very happy!"

Gently his arm enfolded the confiding and child-like form that rested upon him, and all the memory of their early tenderness gushed into his thoughts; while she, with a woman's engrossing devotedness, forgot every thing but that her husband was once more her own.

"You must just pass for two runaways," said Stefano, "who have bribed me to row you beyond a powerful noble's reach, and who mean to stay from Palermo, till, for the daughter's sake, the lover is forgiven."

"Whither are we going?" asked Montefiore.

"On board yonder vessel, which bears a smuggling cargo; and pray you, at the port where she stops, lose no time in embarking for another. Do you remember the Marchese di Gonzarga?"

"Ay, the stripling! the sweeping away of

whose ducats is the only instance of luck that ever awaited me at that accursed rouge-et-noir table."

"I doubt you owe something of your present plight to him; he is nephew to the Grand Inquisitor."

"And my husband is then the victim of his vile revenge!" cried the Countess, in a tone of delight.

Stefano made no answer: the next moment they were close to the ship, and he, fastening the boat to its side by a rope, sprung on board, to be spokesman for the party. Lolah trembled as the fragile bark rocked to and fro beneath the dark stern of the vessel, from which hung a lantern, whose dim light shewed what she deemed their perilous position. Leoni might have felt the beating of the heart pillowed on his own; but he had himself been so long the sole object of his thoughts, that his wife's fear, not being shared by himself, never entered his mind.

"How provoking it is that I should have lost my last rouleau! I have not a ducat; and you hurried me so, that I had no time to bring away any thing!" exclaimed he, peevishly. "What the devil terms shall we come to with these rascals, without money?"

"I have here three rouleaux," said the Countess; "I should have brought away more gold, but for its weight—I therefore preferred my diamonds, as to their sale we must look for our future support."

A smile passed over Montefiore's face; dearly

did Lolah love his smile; but now rather, a thousand times rather would she have met his darkest frown.

"All is settled; you are to give the Captain fifty crowns on arriving in port; for the sake of his own pretty Agata, he said he would not be hard upon two young lovers:—I thought," added Stefano, in a whisper, "I might so promise, as I knew my lady had brought jewels away with her."

"Give me the rouleaux," said the Count, "and do you take them, Stefano; and when I return I will increase them a hundredfold."

"Keep your money, good your Excellency; what I have done was in honour and love for your noble house. Keep your gold; it would little benefit me, I trow!"

Leoni rose in anger, and began hastily to ascend the side of the ship. Stefano helped the Countess, who, as with his aid she climbed the knotted ropes, whispered,

"Take the gold, and lay it out in masses at the shrine of St. Rosalie, and this ring—my father gave it me; he will thankfully redeem it, and bless you, as his child does now."

"Come, come, Stefano, here's what will furnish you with many a merry night;" and Montefiore again pressed the money into Stefano's hand, who did not now reject it: the voice in which he muttered his good wishes was inaudible; and as he sprung into his boat, the tears of a three-year-old child

stood in the eyes of the hardy rower. The Captain civilly shewed the fugitives into a small cabin; and a fresh breeze filling the sails, bore them rapidly from Sicily.

Next morning, all was astonishment and consternation in Palermo; there was the palace with its splendid ornaments, its almost regal train of servants; there were the gorgeous dresses, there were the golden caskets filled with jewels and perfumes; but where were the Count and Countess? The domestics searched every room in dismay; not only were they gone, but not a vestige remained of their flight. A strange suspicion rose in every mind, pale and affrighted they crowded together, and then surmise found speech. What if the demon, for whose wealth their lord had bartered his immortal soul—what if he had exacted, at length, his fearful tribute: had he carried off his victim bodily? But then the Countess, their gentle and pious mistress, could she be involved in such awful doom?—A loud knocking at the portal broke off their discourse; every one hurried to the door—to admit the officers of the Inquisition. All search was fruitless, all inquiry vain. The palace was confiscated, and its rich furniture sold; the Marchese di Montefiore was summoned to appear on a charge of sorcery; he came not to answer the accusation, and sentence of outlawry was passed against him. A thousand wild rumours were afloat, which finally merged in one—that unearthly retribution had

been exacted for unearthly riches. Yet there were two in Palermo who knew the truth; the father of Lolah, who died shortly after, a lonely and broken-hearted man; and Stefano—but he kept the secret as one of life and death; and when he perished in a storm at sea, it was buried with him in the deep and fathomless waters.

But now to return to our fugitives. At the first port they touched, they re-embarked, and finally landed at Marseilles; a small but lovely cottage on the sea-shore received them, an olive plantation encircled the house, and the Provence rose looked in at the casements. The far plains were covered with heath and thyme on one side, and on the other was the sea, where the rich vessels of the merchants seemed to sail to and fro for ever. Fear and fatigue had severely tried a frame so frail as that of Lolah; and her husband's apprehension on her account for a time recalled his love:—perhaps they are more inseparable than we are ready to admit. Leoni felt that he was the only link between Lolah and life—his care the barrier between her and death: at length his gentle watchfulness was rewarded by the smile returning to her lip, and the rose to her cheek. Lolah thought she was very happy; in truth, from her birth, nature and fortune had been at variance: her delicate health unfitted her for either crowds or late hours—a constitutional timidity made her shrink from strangers—she had neither the talents which require, nor the spirits which enjoy an enlarged sphere of action: the

affectionate monotony of her present life was just suited to her.

Not so to her husband, who soon desired more activity, more variety, more excitement: a thousand times did he ask himself of what avail was his boundless wealth, if he made it not the minister of pleasure? Every evening that he marked the sea redden beneath the setting sun, he vowed it should be the last. At length he resolved on leaving their cottage; and, after travelling for a few days, they settled in a superb château near Lyons. Lolah trembled at the magnificence which again surrounded them. Once she ventured to remonstrate on their lavish expenditure; but Leoni only laughed, and said, "You will not find here the miserable superstition of the Sicilians; and great part of my wealth was placed abroad. First we will dazzle these provincials, and then proceed to Paris."

In fact, Leoni feared yet to enter that most caravanserai-like capital; he wished to be somewhat forgotten of his countrymen, before he risked meeting with them. Half Lyons was soon collected at the château: what was splendour to Leoni, unless it were envied and admired? Perhaps the secret of his character was, that he was a very vain man, and yet had nothing in himself whereby that vanity was gratified; this forced him upon external resources. Again he delighted in bewildering by his magnificence, and astonishing by its extent. But in this

enjoyment Lolah took no part; in this new display of riches, she saw but a confirmation of the suspicions which had driven them from Palermo: and Leoni—to whom, in spite of his selfishness, her devotion, her uncomplaining abandonment of home, friends, name, for his sake, had endeared her more and more, and who felt that Lolah was his only link with the past, the sole remembrance of his early and happy youth—Leoni felt bitterly the barrier that doubt drew between his wife and himself. He was mortified to think that his very power degraded him in her eyes; that she confounded him with the alchymists and sorcerers, whom he despised as they were despised in that military and feudal age. A thousand times he was on the point of revealing his secret, and then again the memory of the secrecy so mysteriously enjoined arose within him. A visitor at their fêtes, a passer-by on the road, who caught sight of the youthful couple, would have envied their happiness; but whosoever could have looked within on the hidden depths of their troubled minds, would have seen fear, discontent, sorrow for the past, and misgiving for the future.

One night there was a superb entertainment; the Countess presided, pale and melancholy; the Count, weary of himself, and therefore of his guests, secretly compared them with the brilliant groups that had assembled in his palazzo at Palermo, and thought how little his provincial set were worthy of the cost and taste bestowed upon them.

In reality, display had lost its novelty, and consequently its charm in his eyes. The evening had not half passed away, when Lolah was astonished by his coming up to her and whispering, "For Heaven's sake, find some excuse for dismissing these people! Illness will do; for I am sure you look pale enough."

She might have re-echoed her husband's words, for he himself looked wild and haggard. Still, it was near midnight when their guests dispersed; and Leoni—on returning from conducting la Presidente de Lanville, always the latest of the late, to her huge family coach—silently approached one of the windows, and stepping out upon the terrace, stood as if absorbed in the lovely view—and lovely indeed it was. Below, was a smooth turf, which sloped down to a lake, whose surface reflected the moonshine broken and tremulous; the moon herself was rising on the other side of the château, and so was invisible; but her light lay silvery on the grass, and lent a softness, sweeter even than colour, to many-shaped beds, which were filled with flowers. In the middle of the garden was a fountain; to a certain height the water shot up in a bright and straight column, suddenly the stream divided and came down in a glittering shower to the marble basin below, and the falling of this fountain was the only sound that broke the perfect stillness. A quiet step approached, a soft hand was laid on his arm, and Lolah whispered, "Is it not beautiful?" How often will the

lips frame some indifferent question, when the heart is full of the most important!

"Will you then regret to leave it?" said Leoni, as they wandered through the maze of odoriferous flower-pots, "for we must go to-morrow."

Lolah gazed upon his face, but words died on her lips.

"That wearisome Madame de Lanville," continued he, "entertained me this evening with her delight that she should soon have a worthy guest to introduce to me; for that in a week's time the Count Gonzaga, the nephew of the great cardinal, would spend a few days at her house, on his way to the south of France; and she was so sure I should find him a charming acquaintance. Plague on the old simpleton, and the Count too! what cursed chance brings him here?"

"My Leoni, why should you fear him?" murmured Lolah.

"Fear him, nonsense! But it would be very disagreeable to have the old and foolish story which banished us from Palermo, set abroad in Lyons:" and, lost in gloomy meditation, he sank on a carved stone seat by the lake. For a moment the Countess stood irresolute by his side—suddenly dropping on one knee, she leant her beautiful head on his arm, and watching his countenance with those eloquent eyes which had never looked upon him but in love, said, in a low pleading voice,

"Leoni mine, my heart has never had one

thought hidden from you, how can you bear to shut yours so utterly from me?"

He made her no answer except by kissing her eyes, as if he might not see and resist their eloquent pleading: but his young wife had gained courage—the worst was over—and her very fondness, which made his anger such a thing of fear, now urged her to endeavour to persuade, if she could not convince. She implored him to say what was the secret of his wealth; to justify its possession, if possible—if not, to fling it from him: what lot could there be in life which she would not be ready to share with him? Had his wealth made him happy? oh, no! it had sown division between them; it had exiled him from his own land; it was now about to force him to become a wanderer again.

"I tell you, my beloved husband, this secret is to me even as death; I kneel to the Madonna, and my thoughts are not with prayer; in society I shrink from every eye with a vague but ever-present fear—a word, a look, sends the colour from my cheek, and curdles the life-blood at my heart; and yet I know not what I dread: and sleep, oh, sleep is very terrible! for then, Leoni, you tell me what it is death to hear, and I start from my pillow—but when I waken I disbelieve your guilt:—you guilty, Leoni? oh, no! no!" and again her head sank, while the moonlight fell on her pale cheek, and eyes glistening with earnestness and tears.

Weak and self-indulgent, accustomed to yield in

all things to the impulse of the moment, Leoni was a very unfit person to be intrusted with a mystery and a secret: he sufficed not to himself; he felt weary of his unshared thoughts; and at this moment he was irresolute—he would even have wished to throw all the responsibility of decision on the fragile and gentle creature by his side.

In the deep stillness of that moonlit midnight he told her all; his voice died in silence, which was interrupted by a faint shriek from his wife; she pointed to the lake, but strong terror made her speechless—a faint silvery outline of a form was seen in the distant air; it came nearer, and the shadow fell dark upon the wave; a stately and lovely female slowly advanced across the water, which yielded not beneath her shining feet. The flashing of her radiant eyes fell upon the culprit—she raised her hand, whereon shone the starry talisman as it shone when she bade the spirits give him wealth unbounded and at a wish. She beckoned Leoni. A power was on him which forced him to obey—he sprang towards the lake—he sank below the surface—twice he emerged from the bright waves, again they closed over his head, and the moon shone upon one unbroken line of light. The strange and beautiful being gazed on the spot with a look of horror; she wrung her hands as if in the helplessness of despair—a low cry came upon the wind, and its mysterious utterer had disappeared. An influence stronger than even fear or

love had riveted Lolah like a statue to the place; but as that figure melted into air, a terrible life returned to her—she rushed towards the lake, and with one wild shriek plunged into its depths.

Next morning, the birds were singing among the boughs, the bees were gathering their early honey amid the flowers, the sun had turned the lake into a sheet of gold—when the servants were drawn to the spot by a light-blue scarf floating on the waters; they knew it was what their mistress had worn the night before. The silver flowers embroidered on it, glittering in the sunshine, first caught the eye; assistance was procured, and the bodies were soon found. The wreath of white lilies yet bound the raven tresses of Lolah, some of whose lengths had become entangled round the neck of her husband. They parted them not, but carried them to the château. Ere noon, every inhabitant of Lyons had mourned over their youthful, but marble-like beauty. None knew their history; none ever solved the mystery of their fate—but there were many affectionate hearts that grew sorrowful for their sake—and kind hands buried them together in the same grave.

One morning a marble urn was found upon their tomb, though none could tell who placed it there. On it was exquisitely carved a veiled female figure, with hands clasped as if in prayer, and head bowed down as if weeping; she was kneeling at the foot of the Cross: a scroll below was graven with one single word—Submission!

Painted by Harper. Engraved by H. Cook.

he Proprietor, b

THE MASK.

UNVEIL'D, unmask'd ! not so, not so !
Ah ! thine are closer worn
Than those which, in light mockery,
One evening thou hast borne.
The mask and veil which thou dost wear
Are of thyself a part ;
No mask can ever hide thy face
As that conceals thy heart.
Thy smiles, they sparkle o'er thy brow,
Like sunbeams to and fro ;
But no one in their light can read
The depths that lurk below.
The tears, how beautiful they shine
Within thy large dark eyes !
But who can tell what is the cause
From which those tears arise ?
E'en as thy curls are train'd to fall
Around thy angel face,
So every look thy features wear
Is tutor'd in its grace.
No eager impulses ere fling
Their warmth upon thy cheek ;

No varying hues, from red to pale,
  Thy inward feelings speak.
Thine atmosphere is festival;
  Thy hand is on the lute;
And lightest in the midnight dance
  We see thy fairy foot.
The many deem this happiness—
  I see it is a task;
Young without youth, gay without mirth,
  Thine is the veil and mask.
I mark thy constant restlessness,
  Thy eagerness for change;
I know it is the wretched one
  Who thus desires to range.
And thou dost flee from solitude
  As if a fiend were there,
And communing with thine own thoughts
  Were more than thou couldst bear.
Slight are the signs by which I put
  Thy mask and veil aside,
And look upon thy wounded love,
  And on thy wounded pride.
'Tis not for one, proud, fair, like thee
  To perish or to pine;
A higher lot is cast for thee—
  A higher will is thine!
Oh! misery to keep the heart
  Lone, like some sacred fane,
And when it owns its deity,
  Find it was own'd in vain!

Yet, far worse misery to know
  Our faith no veiled thing:
Methinks that we can bear the pain,
  If we can hide the sting.
But, out upon consoling friends!
  The anguish one may brook;
But not officious sympathy—
  The soothing word or look.
Pity from all the common herd,
  Whom most we must despise—
Perish the sigh upon the lips,
  The tear within the eyes!
Alas! what depths of wretchedness
  The human soul can know!
How bitterly the waters taste,
  Which seem in light to flow!
For love and hope, those leaves which give
  Their sweetness to the wave,
Flung with no blessing, lose their charm,
  And find the stream their grave!
Ah! even as at coming night
  The careful flowers close—
So should our heart call in its hopes,
  And on itself repose.
But let it not be lull'd by dreams,
  That weep whene'er they wake—
For every heart that lives by love,
  A thousand beat and break!

LI

[illegible]

FAREWELL! [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]
Then, [illegible]
And [illegible]

Drawn by T. A. Woolnoth. Engraved by T. Woolnoth.

LEONORA.

THE TALISMAN.

"THE other side—the other side is where foot-passengers pay."

Charles mechanically obeyed the direction.

"One penny, sir!"

He was roused at once from his abstraction; for it was a question to himself whether he had even that in his pocket. Sixpence was, however, discovered; he paid the toll, and passed on. But the impetus of his resolution was gone: out on the certainty of human resolve! Charles had meditated weeks on the act he was about to commit; his reasonings had brought conviction both of the necessity and of the right of suicide; he stood ruined in fortune, desperate, and, as he believed, determined; yet the fact of having had to pay a penny on his road to destruction made him pause. He stayed to recover the excitement of his imagination in one of the recesses of the bridge; involuntarily, as he leaned over the balustrade, his eye became attracted by surrounding objects: he was startled to perceive how light it was.

"Pleasant," thought he, "when the fearful plunge has been taken, and the last struggle is over, to find yourself roused from that stupor which had been even as death, by bottles of hot water at your feet, a stomach-pump in your mouth, an old woman rubbing you down with flannel, and a respectable member of the Humane Society watching the first moment of returning consciousness, in order to point out the horror of your crime! No, no; not now, with witnesses and succour at hand; but in the dark night, when the stars alone behold what their shining records may long since have prophesied, then shall the waters, gloomy as the life they close, give me that repose—death."

Content with this determination, he gladly allowed his attention to fix on the scene before him. No where are the many contrasts in the appearance of our metropolis more strikingly assembled than in the view from Waterloo Bridge. As yet the sunshine, which produces the deep shadows deeper for its own brightness, was only prophesied by the clear gray light that brought out every object in the same dim but distinct atmosphere. The large pale lamps were not yet extinguished; but they gave no light, save to the dark arches of Somerset House, whose depths they seemed vainly striving to penetrate.

Somerset House conveys the idea of a Venetian palace; its Corinthian pillars, its walls rising from the waters, its deep arches, fitting harbours for the

black gondola, the lion sculptured in the carved arms—all realises the picture which the mind has of those marble homes where the Foscarini and the Donati dwelt, in those days when Venice was at her height of mystery and magnificence. The other side is, on the contrary, just the image of a Dutch town; the masses of floating planks, the low tile-covered buildings, the crowded warehouses—mean, dingy, but full of wealth and industry—are the exact semblance of the towns which, like those of the haughty bride of the Adriatic, rose from the very bosom of the deep—Amsterdam and Venice. The history of the Italians is picturesque and chivalric; but that of the Dutch has always seemed to me the *beau-idéal* of honourable industry, rational exertion, generally enjoyed liberty, and all strong in more than one brave defence. He does not deserve to read history, who does not enjoy the gallant manner in which they beat back Louis XIV.

"The two banks of the river embody the English nation," thought Charles; "there is its magnificence and its poetry, its terraces, its pillars, and its carved emblazonings; and on the other is its trade, its industry, its warehouses, and their many signs of skill and toil. Ah! the sun is rising over them, as if in encouragement: I here take the last lesson of my destiny. I have chosen the wrong side of the river—forced upon exertion, what had I to do with the poetry of life?"

The river became at every instant more beau-

tiful; long lines of crimson light trembled in the stream; fifty pointed spires glittered in the bright air, each marking one of those sacred fanes where the dead find a hallowed rest, and the living a hallowed hope. In the midst arose the giant dome of St. Paul's—a mighty shrine, fit for the thanksgiving of a mighty people. As yet, the many houses around lay in unbroken repose; the gardens of the Temple looked green and quiet, as if far away in some lonely valley; and the few solitary trees scattered among the houses seemed to drink the fresh morning air and rejoice.

"How strong is the love of the country in all indwellers of towns!" exclaimed Charles. "How many creepers, shutting out the dark wall, can I see from this spot! how many pots of bright-coloured and sweet-scented plants are carefully nursed in windows, which, but for them, would be dreary indeed! And yet even here is that wretched inequality in which fate delights alike in the animate and inanimate world. What have those miserable trees and shrubs done, that they should thus be surrounded by an unnatural world of brick—the air, which is their life, close and poisoned, and the very rain, which should refresh them, but washing down the soot and dust from the roofs above; and all this, when so many of their race flourish in the glad and open fields, their free branches spreading to the morning dews and the summer showers, while the earliest growth of violets springs beneath their shade?"

He turned discontentedly to the other side of the bridge.

"Beautiful!" was his involuntary ejaculation.

The waves were freighted as if with Tyrian purple, so rich was the sky which they mirrored; the graceful arches of Westminster Bridge stretched lightly across, and, shining like alabaster, rose the carved walls of the fine old Abbey, where sleep the noblest of England's dead. Honour to the glorious past!—how it honoured us! Once we were the future, and how much was done for our sake!—The contrast between above and below the bridge is very striking. Below, all seems for use, except Somerset House—and even that, when we think, is but a superb office—and the Temple gardens: all is crowded, dingy, and commercial. Above, wealth has arrived at luxury; and the grounds behind Whitehall, the large and ornamental houses, have all the outward signs of rank and riches.

Charles turned sullenly from them, and watched the boats now floating with the tide. As yet few were in motion; the huge barges rested by the banks, but two or three colliers came on with their large black sails, and darkened the glistening river as they passed. At this moment, the sweet chimes of St. Bride struck five, and the sound was immediately repeated by the many clocks on every side: for an instant the air was filled with music.

"Curious it is," murmured our hero, "that every hour of our day is repeated from myriad

chimes; and yet how rarely do we attend to the clock striking! Alas! how emblematic is this of the way in which we neglect the many signs of time! How terrible, when we think of what time may achieve, is the manner in which we waste it! At the end of every man's life, at least three-quarters of the mighty element of which that life was composed will be found void—lost—nay, utterly forgotten! And yet that time, laboured and husbanded, might have built palaces, gathered wealth, and, still greater, made an imperishable name."

He was awakened from a long but common meditation on what he might have done, and what he had not done, by a grumbling voice.

"How dirty the Thames is! they say the gas kills every fish in the river; yet I suppose it is thought good enough for Christians. Well, well, every thing changes for the worse; I am sure the water was clear enough in my young days. But we shall never get on, if we stay chattering here: do make haste, child!"

So saying, an old woman hurried on, bending beneath a heavy basket; and at her side ran one of those wan, under-sized children, ragged, dirty, and meagre, among the most sorrowful spectacles of sorrowful humanity. Poverty is a terrible thing when it bows to the very ground the pride of the strong man—a terrible thing when it leaves old age destitute: still, the strong man may yet redeem his

fortunes, and that old age may have had enjoyment while it was capable of enjoying. But a child, with the step slow from weakness, which from its age should be so buoyant; a cheek thin and white from hunger, at a period which especially cares for food (for all children are greedy); a form shrivelled with cold; a growth stopped by work too laborious for such tender years; a spirit broken by toil, want, and harshness;—is not such a child poverty's most miserable spectacle? It is, however, a common one.

Off they went, the old woman and her grandson; she scolding the poor boy because the Thames was muddy; and he shrinking fearfully, lest anger might find blows more availing than words. Yet that aged creature's irritation was a sort of kindness: it was for his sake that she laboured out her last strength; and while the tones were shrill and cross, she was thinking how she could best procure food for the sickly child.

Charles's meditations were effectually disturbed; he left his seat in the recess, and hurried indignantly forward.

"And suffering like this!" thought he—"suffering that crushes alike youth and age, from which the innocence of childhood is not protected, and against which the experience of age cannot guard! —exists in our mighty, our magnificent city, whose very will is dominion on the earth. Look how she ministers to her pleasures!"

Just then his eye fell upon the two enormous buildings, our national theatres.

"Look at those vast edifices, so vast where space is such an object! There, while weeping for sorrows which are not, laughing at the light jest or the ludicrous misadventure, how little is remembered of the want which makes fear the only bond that binds the living to life!"

This current of reproach was, however, interrupted by the recollection, that, after all, this very relaxation gave support to many; and that, in the case of the majority who enjoyed it, it had been fairly earned by toil, which, like the bow, needed to be unbent. His imagination, too, warmed with the thought of what glorious triumphs those roofs had witnessed—the passionate creation of the poet, the living personification of the actor: he remembered the eloquent words that stir the noblest fountains of our being, and decided on the general right to enjoy such generous pleasure.

"Good and evil! good and evil!" thought he; "ye are mingled inextricably in the web of our being; and who may unthread the darker yarn?"

He was here jostled at once from his reverie and his side of the pavement. He had wandered through many streets, and now found himself under one of the piazzas of Covent Garden: it was no place for an idle person; all were hurrying to and fro; all was employment and business. On he went into the market. How fresh, how sweet every thing, and

how industrious every body looked! There were the stalls of the vegetables, with their pure and wholesome smell of the freshly turned-up earth; others with fruit—the delicate crimson strawberries, each spotted with gold; the cherries, with their rich varieties of hues—the deep ruby, almost black—or coral, as if the moisture of the wave yet lingered upon it—and amber, with one trickling stain of red, so fancifully denominated the "bleeding heart." Further on was a stall of foreign fruits: the pale cool lemon; the red gold of the orange; the pine—with its yellow carved globe, and its coronal of silvery green—the architectural pine, so rich and so massive. But most beautiful of all, shewing the deep delight the heart takes in loveliness, were the stands of many flowers. There they crowded in fragrant multitudes, each kind tied up in separate bunches; the yellow lupin, like "a clump of shining spears;" pinks, each with the dark central spot, like the purple and painted stain round the eye of an eastern sultana; the light branches of the small saffron flowers, of that deep blue so rare among "the painted populace," which seem to delight in gayer dyes; the sweet pea, with its wings of the butterfly, its colours of the rainbow; and roses, in all their infinite variety—the white, like driven snow; the soft pink, almost as lovely as the maiden's blush which gives it its name; the parti-coloured damask, the chivalric and historic rose, recalling the fierce combats of York and Lancaster; and the moss, so

beautiful in the bud,—all lay heaped together, as if Summer had been conquered, and here were gathered its spoils.

While Charles loitered to and fro, he was forcibly reminded that he was in the way; every train of thought was broken in upon by some hurried passer-by; and yet how orderly, how quiet, was all this bustle! How many of the stalls hung out fragile glass globes, filled with gold and silver fish! But they were in the ordinary run of business—he was not. A long and dreary day was yet before him; how was it to be passed? If he returned to his lodgings, he must invent some plausible plea for his reappearance, after having taken his farewell as for a long journey. Impossible! his spirits were too heavy for invention. Spend the day at a coffee-house? he had now only five pence in the world. Call on some friend, and be expected to sympathise in their sorrow, or share in their mirth, while his own thoughts were numbering the hours, each of which brought him nearer to the grave? No; he would wander about the city, and watch those processes of humanity in which he had no longer a share.

At that moment, a human want was uppermost in his mind—he was hungry. Seated on a little wooden stool, his boiler supported by a three-legged trivet, over a small pan of burning charcoal, on one side, and a basket covered with a white cloth on the other, an old man was selling rolls and coffee to the

market-people. The fresh air of the morning had had the same effect upon Charles as on the peasantry. The old man never looked at his customer; prince or ploughman it was all the same to him, so that he sold his rolls and coffee. Charles had finished his breakfast before he recollected what folly it was to sustain that life which was so soon to terminate. A single penny remained of his sixpence; he gave it to a beggar at hand, as much from thoughtlessness as from charity, and yet the woman bade God bless him!

Life was now fully astir in the city; morning — which is so beautiful in the country, with its long shadows, its lucid sunshine, and its glittering dew — in town is the meanest part of the day, seemingly devoted to cleanliness and hunger. Carpets are being shaken from the windows, the steps are being washed, and the butcher with his tray, the baker with his basket, the grocer, and the milkman, hurry from door to door; and day, like life, has first its necessaries, and then its luxuries. Charles wandered on among the hurrying throng, referring them only to himself.

" How little," thought he, " do these people— thus busy in the many preparations of existence— how little do they deem, that among them walks one who is with them, not of them; one consecrated by death!"

Strange that this idea carried with it something of exultation! so much does the pride of man rejoice

in aught that marks him from his fellows, and little does it seem to matter whether that mark be for good or for evil. There must be some deep-rooted anti-social principle in every man's nature, so dearly does he love aught that separates him from his kind; or is it but one of the many shapes taken by that mental kaleidoscope, vanity, the varying and the glittering, the desire of distinction, sinking into that of notice? Charles's was just an exciting consciousness; and he paced the streets, sometimes roused into disdain of the busy and thoughtless crowd around, but oftener lost in gloomy dreams of that futurity whose depths he was so soon to explore. Suddenly the air was filled with fragrance, which came from a balcony where the heliotrope was growing in great luxuriance. He started at its well-known perfume; he stood by the very door he had sworn never to re-enter—by the dwelling of the cold, the beautiful Laura Herbert.

What an atmosphere of luxury was around the house! The balustrades of the balcony were of white, and carved, whose vacant spaces were filled with the rarest exotics; an entablature of antique figures ran below the roof. Could the ancient temple they first adorned have shrined a fairer divinity? He saw the amber silk curtains wave to and fro: the middle window was open; in it stood a pillar of lapis lazuli, which supported an alabaster figure, Canova's Dansatrice. And there she dwelt, who might have given him wealth, love, and life;

but who left him to penury, despair, and death. She—for whose sake he had abandoned all the pursuits that once made his hope and his happiness; who had turned his course of contented study into a delirious fever; who was the cause that he now stood on the threshold of the grave—why should she have freedom and wealth, while he was consumed by passion, and weighed down by poverty?

A carriage drove up to the door; well he knew the crimson window-blinds, which had so often shed their rich colour on her cheek. Charles rushed away; he could not have borne to see that fairy foot descend the steps, or have met, though only for a moment, those bewildering eyes. But the thread of his reverie was broken; the image of death no longer filled his mind. He thought of life, its enjoyments, its desires, all from which he was cut off in his youth: he thought of the poor, and he loathed them; of the rich, and he hated them.

"Accursed destiny!" he muttered; "so young, so capable of happiness, and yet without the means! Why have I talents to which I can never do justice? Why have I tastes I can never gratify? Why do I pant for that luxury my penury denies? Why am I refined in my habits? Why have I thoughts and feelings entirely at variance with my condition? Why have not my birth, my education, and my estate gone together, instead of being so utterly opposed? Why at this moment am I friendless, penniless, and hopeless? Alas! with the delight

I have lost the power of exertion. Well, Death finishes this weary struggle. Death! mighty, glorious, and triumphant Death! if thou hadst not existed before, I must have invented thee as a resource."

But in vain Charles sought to regain his gloomy tranquillity. He then endeavoured to fix his attention on outward objects; they could only give food to his discontent: the splendid equipages hurrying past, the glittering shops, the gay crowd now beginning to appear, brought with them the images of ungratified wishes and painful contrasts. He turned into a by street, where a stall of old books caught his eye; mechanically he opened them one after another, till at last his attention became riveted on an almost worn-out volume of ancient ballads. Of itself, it opened at Chevy Chase—

> "The stout Earl of Northumberland
> A vow to God did make,
> His pleasure in the Scottish woods
> Three summer days to take."

"How perfectly," thought he, "does this set forth the whole spirit of the age—its love of war and of the chase, and its superstition! The feudal chieftain is not content with the chase unless it be in an enemy's ground, and actually believes in his own mind that he hallows this act of aggression by calling God to witness his resolve. How characteristic is the meeting between the two earls, and the inter-

ference of the squire, who protests against their followers standing by as mere pacific spectators!

> 'I would not have it told
> To Henry, our king, for shame.'

A brief dialogue between the two combatants embodies the whole spirit of chivalry:

> 'Yield thee, Lord Percy, Douglas said—
> Thy ransom I will freely give,
> And thus report of thee—
> Thou art the most courageous knight
> That ever I did see.
> No, Douglas, quoth Earl Percy then,
> Thy proffer I do scorne;
> I will not yeilde to any Scot
> That ever yet was borne.'

Again, when Earl Douglas has received 'his deepe and deadlye blow,' death is nothing compared with his bitter consciousness that 'Earl Percy sees me fall.' Homer, they say, always favoured the Grecians, as being his countrymen. The heroic minstrel of Chevy Chase is equally national; for when the tidings of Earl Douglas's death arrive in Scotland—

> 'O heavy news! King James did say;
> Scotland can witnes bee,
> I have not any captaine more
> Of such account as hee.'

In London, the case is quite different:

> 'Now, God be with him! said our king,
> Sith 'twill not better bee;
> I trust I have within my realm
> Five hundred good as hee.' "

Suddenly he flung the book down, and walked hurriedly away. "What folly," he inwardly exclaimed, "is that hope which is at once the cause and the reward of poetry! The author of this brief epic has done all that poet could do: he has given immortality to all that was held precious in his time; its chivalric daring, its true faith, its loyalty; he has duly exalted the supremacy of his native land,—and yet he is forgotten! The song remains, but the memory of the singer has passed away. Who pauses to think in what poverty, in what obscurity, in what wretchedness, the writer of that noble ballad may have wasted a desolate and a disappointed existence? Did he die young, poisoned by the first draught of life and its sorrows? or did he drag on a weary old age, whose hope had long since perished? Who knows? and, alas! who cares? We take our pleasure, and we think not of gratitude. Out upon the accursed and selfish race to which I belong! Even so have I laboured, and even so shall I be rewarded. Fool that I have been! to toil hour after hour in giving others — what? — an hour's gratification, which they will take thanklessly, and even reproachfully, full of their own petty cavillings and distastes. The peasant boy, who followed the coloured track of the rainbow, hoping to find the blue and charmed

flower which springs where the arch touches earth, is wiser far than one who gives youth, genius, and time to literature. Half the exertion, and a tithe of the talent, would, if directed to another pursuit, win for him, if not 'golden opinions,' yet gold in reality; and what can make life endurable in this world but wealth?"

In the next street the doors of an auction-room stood open, where the articles were on view previous to the morrow's sale; there he resolved to seek amusement. As he entered the clock struck two.

"It will be lonely and dark on the Thames by ten; so I have just eight hours more to live."

The room was filled with all that ingenuity could invent, or luxury wish—all that taste could select, or wealth purchase. The spoils of a palace built and furnished by the most magnificent of misanthropes—the collection of a life—were being dispersed in the caprice of a day. There was the alabaster vase, carved in snow, to which some spell had given stability; small precious cups of onyx and agate, such as might have stood at the right hand of the King and Queen of the Fairies when they had bidden their court to a moonlight banquet. Near was a table of maple-wood, veined like a wrist, but smooth and coloured as pale yellow satin. On it lay an Indian rosary of strung pearls; the fingers of the lovely Brahmin to whom it had once belonged, had left their fragrance on the string. There was a silver salver, over whose shining surface Cellini's

delicate graver had scattered Spring: spiritual indeed were the small and graceful figures, whose minute outlines were yet perfect in their proportions; while the wreathe of flowers that encircled them seemed too fine to be the work of mortal hand. On the other side was placed a round table of Sevre china; a large medallion, representing the head of an angel—and an angel it surely was, if there be aught angelic in beauty—so pure, so placid was that lovely head! On it was set a basket of silver filigree, delicate as the threads of the morning gossamer: it must have been a skilful workman that wrought those fragile threads into their present intricate grace. Near it stood two small bronze figures of Voltaire and Rousseau. There was something singularly characteristic in the manner in which these philosophers grasped their canes: he of Ferney held his lightly, as if a touch could brush away any impediment from his path; but he of Geneva had his grasped with might and main, and driven into the earth, as if prepared to crush all that might rouse his fierce indignation. What a mistake rage is! anger should never go beyond a sneer, if it really desires revenge.

But a picture by Murillo fixed Charles's attention—one of those boys whose embrowned cheek glows with health, and whose dark eyes are filled with happiness—one of those pictures in which the Spanish artist concentrates so much of life's earlier existence—calling back that glad and buoyant

frankness, whose loss is experience's first lesson. Near it hung a landscape by Salvator Rosa; a sky, every cloud of which was heavy with thunder; a lake, the troubled mirror of a troubled heaven; bleak rocks, that seemed to reverse the law of nature, and say, "Here life comes not—life which, in an animal or vegetable shape, teems on all other parts of the globe; but to us clings not one blade of grass;" and black woods, where the wild beast had its lair, or wilder man, who, casting off all social ties, lived but to war upon his kind. Close beside was a lovely valley by Claude Lorraine. From this Charles turned away: what sympathy had he with sunshine?—The genius of Salvator and of Byron alike asked immortality of pain. To the majority of mankind misery is a familiar thing: the dark colour and the mournful word find a home and an echo in every human heart.—Beneath stood a table made of mosaic from Pompeii. How many would admire the intricate blending of its varied colours, without giving a thought to the scene of mortal destruction and desolation from which it came! On it was a model in ivory of that most perfect specimen of Hindoo architecture, the stately temple which Jehanghire built as a tomb for his loved sultana; the mighty dome, the many minarets, the hundred steps, the lofty walls, were all exquisitely wrought in miniature.

"I like," said Charles, "this monumental magnificence; it is a superb mockery. The marble is

brought from a distant quarry; hundreds of slaves are employed to cut and polish it; and human talent taxes its invention to give it graceful proportion. The dome towers in the blue air, the noble columns rise above the funereal cypresses around; and for what?—to keep a handful of dust from being scattered by the winds, and to preserve a memory for which no one living cares."

A thousand splendid trifles lay glittering on a large table near:—flasks of crystal, redolent of eastern perfumes, some of which, spotted with gold, enclosed a whole summer of roses from Damietta—toys wrought in mother-of-pearl and amber, heaped up with the profusion of a mistress of some geni, who knows that the sylphs of the air and the gnomes of the mines toil to work her pleasure. Placed on a richly chased gold stand was a *déjeûner* of Sevre china, the cups painted with medallions of the beauties of Louis the Fourteenth's reign. Charles took up the one that bore the likeness of the lovely and ill-fated La Valliere.

"And is it possible," he asked, "that a face like this, so sweet and so touching, could ever become a familiar, even a tiresome thing—that a cup so precious as this could ever be put to the common uses of the table? There is a strange similarity in the fate of the china and of the face wrought in its colours. Both guarded for a time as favourite toys, grown weary of, neglected, and left to the many chances of destruction—till heart and cup are alike broken!"

Close by stood a couch, covered with a spotted leopard's skin, and supported by claws of bronze. Charles threw himself upon it; how its luxurious softness mocked its material! The shadowy reveries of the dim future, to which he again yielded himself, were broken by some one speaking at his side:

"Perhaps, as you appear so much engaged in contemplation of our collection, you may be disposed to become an immediate purchaser? I am authorised to treat by private contract."

"And who are you?" exclaimed Charles.

"The person employed to sell this property; very happy to treat with you, sir."

Assuredly there was nothing in the face of the auctioneer to induce confidence, particularly when that confidence related to the feelings. He was a spare, meagre man, who looked as if he saved even in himself; with the light hair and sallow skin which distinguish the Portuguese Jew especially, and the high nose and elevated eyebrow which mark the Jew all over the world:—a man who divided the human race into two classes, buyers and sellers; whose atmosphere was trade, the real of whose life was gain, and the ideal, wealth. Yet to this incarnation of the pence-table did Charles resolve to unfold his cause of loitering. Charles was vain and imaginative; vanity led him to be egotistical, and his imagination threw its grace over the confession, half of which it colours, if it does not create. He therefore stated to the auctioneer his desire of

killing time, till he killed himself. At first the man looked aghast, then afraid, and at last suspicious that his visitor might intend to rob, nay, murder him. He drew back, and placed his hand upon the bell-rope; and having also ascertained that he was himself next the door, prepared to listen to the remainder with a keen suspicious look, which said, as plainly as look could, "You need not think to rob me; I'm up to a thing or two." Truth, however, carries its own conviction; and the auctioneer was under the necessity of believing that a person was before him who meditated destroying himself. Suddenly his features sharpened; something appeared to flash across his mind, or rather his memory.

"You are the very man!" said he, thinking aloud in his hurry.

A few words will explain this ejaculation.

Among the great riches and many curiosities which the gorgeous merchant had gathered, and now wished to disperse, was one that had been thus consigned to the agent:—"Sell it for any thing—nothing—give it away; only, get rid of it."

It was a square piece of shagreen, on which were inscribed some Hebrew characters.

"Sell it!" thought the auctioneer; "why, nobody would give him a farthing for it!"

Still, giving it away was against his principles; and principles, like facts, are stubborn things when

founded on interest. One day, however, a Jew, with whom he had occasional dealings, threw a new light on the subject, by translating the inscription, which was as follows:

"In possessing me, you possess every thing: but your life will be mine. Wish, and your wishes will be accomplished; but at every wish I shall diminish, as will your days. Regulate your wishes by your life, which will be in me. Wilt thou have me? Take me; and the Lord God have mercy upon you! Amen."

The shagreen skin was a talisman. The auctioneer felt exceedingly uncomfortable: the devil was the only individual with whom he desired to have no dealings. He was himself a man who, since his conversion, feared God and honoured the king, went to church on a Sunday, and never bought or sold stock on a Friday. All his transactions with the superb merchant, whose glittering spoils he was to bring to the hammer, had been quite out of the ordinary way of business. He had been summoned express from London: late in the evening he saw the moon rise over the shadowy turrets of the stately dwelling, whose interior was as much a mystery as its master. Before him stood the gigantic tower, built by torchlight; and of which it was said in the village, that in the course of a year all the workmen employed in its building had perished. The moaning of the wind in the gloomy branches was the only sound, save his horse's steps, in the yew-tree avenue which

led to the house. He arrived: black slaves, silent as the grave, received him; and a white but hideous dwarf led him through the huge and lonely apartments, lighted by four mute flambeau-bearers. The signs of wealth scattered around so profusely, forced from him exclamations of surprise and admiration; but no reply was elicited, and no sound of human voice was heard in any of the sumptuous rooms through which he was conducted. Sign of food or firing there was none. At length they reached a chamber hung with tapestry: its half-faded colours made more ghastly the scene it represented—souls suffering in purgatory. The sheets of blue flame, the spectral figures which writhed in every attitude of pain, the wan and distorted faces, took a strange reality of horror from the high wind that shook the arras, and the flickering light flung over it by the waving torches.

In the midst of these pleasant objects of contemplation, at a little table, on which lay a large folio printed in unknown character, sat the master of the house—he who, it was said, shunned society, to dwell in unbroken and splendid solitude; whose light shone at midnight from the vast and lonely tower, but of whose pursuits all were ignorant. He was rather past the middle age, intellectual in face, and stately in figure; but the face was pale and care-worn, and the figure bent, as if from physical weakness. The loose black gown in which he was wrapped, gave him the appearance of an invalid, or

of a recluse, to whom dress was matter of indifference.

"You have seen the baubles I destine for the fools who may fancy them; they shall all be sent to the city in the course of to-morrow: prepare your rooms for their reception, and attend to the sale."

The low, deep, sweet voice strongly contrasted with the fierce and abrupt manner; for the words were scarcely said, before, resting his head again upon his hands, he was immersed in his open volume. The dwarf motioned to the surprised auctioneer to leave the room, reconducted him through the costly but melancholy apartments, and left him to remount his horse in the yew-tree avenue, without offering either rest or refreshment, though the night was considerably advanced.

The bewildered auctioneer hurried on, divided by mingled fears of ghosts and thieves; the large and dismal branches of the yews, as they swung to and fro in the wind, causing him innumerable alarms. Every noise was taken for a robber, and every shadow for an apparition. However, he arrived in safety at the village inn, where as many marvels were related of the solitary owner of the mansion as mystery always creates. The whole secret was settled, by deciding that "he had something on his conscience;" and murder, that favourite sin of the vulgar, was fixed upon. What uncharitable things inferences and conclusions are! But the man who, whether in his habits or his actions, in great things

or in small, separates himself from his kind, seems to set every evil and envious feeling of our nature in array against him. Distinction is purchased at the expense of sympathy.

The following day the treasures of the mysterious tower came pouring in: pictures, statues, gems, shells, china, stuffed beasts and birds, tables, vases, petrifactions, arms, mandarins, &c. &c.; and among them the shagreen skin, with the injunction, "Sell it for any thing—nothing—give it away; only, get rid of it."

Who would buy it? or, indeed, who would take it, with the denunciation attached to its possession? The auctioneer became sincerely distressed; a cricket that had sung at his parlour-hearth for ten years suddenly departed; the black cat was missing; a strange dog howled at his steps for two successive nights; his wife had dreamt of gold and running water, the most unlucky things in the world; and then the times were so bad—the stocks were falling—the cholera coming—the sooner the shagreen skin was out of his house the better. Charles seemed, as he afterwards said, sent by Providence.

He forthwith mentioned the wonderful charm in his custody, dwelt upon its merits till he grew quite eloquent, and finally desired the youth to follow him to the inner room, where it hung. It was a small dark chamber, crowded with articles for sale; but, whether from accident or design, the curiosities were all of a wild and ghastly kind. In the middle

was a cast of the Laocoon, the wretched father and his children writhing in the folds of the terrible serpents: cruel must have been the eye and heart of the sculptor who thus made agony his triumph. Against the wall leant an Egyptian mummy; part of the yellow linen had been unrolled, and a spectral likeness of humanity glared from between the bandages. Near it was one of the frightful idols of the Mexicans—a many-headed snake, whose crimson jaws seemed yet red with their human sacrifice: and in a corner stood some quivers of poisoned Indian arrows, and a gigantic battle-axe. To the left were terrific-looking engines, labelled as models of the instruments of torture found in the Inquisition.

Charles was allowed little time to gaze by the impatient auctioneer, who pointed at once to the shagreen skin, which lay on a black oak table. He read the inscription; and a strange feeling of vague belief, and desire for its possession, entered his heart. One wish for wealth, and then every enjoyment was at his feet; and truly, a few years of life were a slight sacrifice, considering that they would be taken from his old age. Not that he believed in any such nonsense — still, he should like to try. The auctioneer had been watching his eager look, as one accustomed to drive a hard bargain eyes his customer: his whole plan of action was arranged. A plum being his own ultimatum of fortune and felicity, he supposed that would also be the aim of his visitor: twenty per cent was in

his opinion fair profit—he must not expect too much from such a mere speculation.

"You see, sir," turning to Charles, "desperate diseases require desperate remedies—you cannot be worse off, and you may be better. Sign this bond for twenty thousand pounds; if the skin answers, it is a bargain; if not, being, as you say, a beggar, the agreement is void—there can be no levy where there are no effects: and though I have heard of skinning a flint, I never yet could learn how it was managed."

Charles signed the bond, and seizing the shagreen skin, rushed away, exclaiming, "Now give me wealth — hundreds, thousands, millions!"

"Millions!" almost shrieked the auctioneer, aghast — "taken in, cheated, robbed — stop thief!" but his customer was lost in the darkness which had by this time set in. Again Charles wandered through the streets, with that indifference as to what direction which spoke the pre-occupied mind; while the hurried step no less marked the tumult of his thoughts. The lamps glittering in the water, which lay below like a dark mirror, recalled him to himself—he was on the very bridge he had crossed in the morning. He was on it, too, alone; not a step broke the silence but his own, and the depths of the shadow which rested on the river, vast and impenetrable, were even as the eternity into which one moment would plunge him. But the skin had taken hold of his imagination.

"It is but another four-and-twenty hours, and the experiment will have been fairly tried. We allow to a sick man the indulgence of a whim, why not to a dying one that of his folly?"

So saying, he turned to the lodging of a young friend, whose hospitality he resolved to ask for the night. Scott was at home, and hesitating between a wish for amusement and a fit of idleness — that pleasant idleness which follows indisposition. Never was companion more acceptable: a good fire and a good dinner are very exhilarating — so the two friends were as gay as if there had been no such things as study and suicide in the world. But Charles's spirits were too much those of feverish excitement to last. The jest died upon his lips; Scott's questions were first unanswered, and then unheard: he was only roused from contemplation by confidence.

We again repeat, that there is no temper so communicative as an imaginative one. The poet seems under a necessity of sharing with others the thoughts he has half-created and half-coloured—and among the most reserved of us, who has not experienced, at some time or other, that words had all the relief of tears? One feeling leads to another, in conversation as in every thing else; and Charles soon found himself cracking almonds, flinging the shells into the fire, and narrating the whole history of his life.

We shall pass over his childhood more briefly

than he did himself—(it is curious how an uncommon position exaggerates our importance in our own eyes)—and take up the thread of the narrative when, at the death of his father, he became "lord of himself, that heritage of wo;"—without money, without a profession, and with relatives on whom he had no claim but kindness—as if that were a claim ever acknowledged by a relative! Not that we would detract one iota from the benevolence which does exist in humanity; there is both more gratitude and more cause for gratitude than it is the fashion now-a-days to admit: but this we do say, that the obligation is never from those on whom we have a claim. Kindness is always unexpected; and "overcomes us like a summer cloud," exciting our "special wonder" as well as thankfulness. In the present state of society, a noble name, without its better part—a noble fortune, is only an encumbrance to its owner. A merely well-born and well-educated young man is the most helpless object in nature. False shame is in him a principle, and the privation of poverty is nothing to its mortification. His habits are opposed to one means of maintenance, his feelings to a second, and his pride to a third. "Dig he cannot, and to beg he is ashamed."

But Charles Smythe had an energy that only required to be thrown upon its own resources, in order to find them. He had literary tastes, and, still more, literary talents; and of all others, these

are most conscious of their existence and power. A few weeks saw him established in an upper room in one of those small gloomy streets made for the poor, and in which every city abounds, devoting himself to study and composition, with all the energy of hope, and the delight of present occupation. What a falsehood it is to say that genius and industry are incompatible! Does one work of genius exist that has not also been a work of labour?

"And yet," said Charles, "I cannot describe to you how my heart sunk within me when I first entered the gloomy attic, henceforth destined to be my home, my study, and where so much of my life was to pass. I gazed upon the low ceiling, which seemed to press the air down upon me; a slip of looking-glass, cracked and coarse-grained enough to make you discontented with even yourself, stuck in the plaster; the white-washed walls; the small stove, like that in the cabin of a ship; the wretched little wash-hand stand; the common check furniture of the bed; the parapet before the window—oh, that parapet! I learned afterwards to do justice to the cleanliness of the room—I am not sure, when, in cold weather, I have gone to the extravagance of a handful of fire, whether I have not even thought it comfortable; but to the parapet my eye never became reconciled. In winter the glaring snow lay so piled up on its ledge; in summer it reflected the hot sun like an oven; in rainy weather there the damp seemed to linger:—I do loathe the sight of a parapet!

True, that in my father's house there had been, of late years, want of money, confusion, and distress; but still there were the large handsome rooms, there were the servants; and if our guests were few, they had the same speech, dress, and feelings as ourselves. Now I found myself in another world, with which I could not have a word, a hope, an idea, in common.

" Still, I should deceive you, if I told you that after the first week I was miserable. No, my time was fully occupied; I took an intense delight in my pursuits — I was encouraged by small successes — I felt the future was before me: and believe me when I say, that, hopeless, ruined as I am, it is neither the past nor the present which I regret, but the future — that glorious future, to which I once devoted myself — that noblest sacrifice of our nature. I have flung away the immortality of my mind. But remorse is of all feelings the one on which 'vanity of vanities' is written.

" Well, I pursued this course of life for nearly two years; my works had begun to attract some attention; and my relatives, finding I wanted nothing from them, and that I was rather a distinction to them, began to seek me out.

" Going into company purely as a relaxation, I enjoyed it, — to enjoy yourself is the easy method to give enjoyment to others; hence I became popular. My imagination, always on the alert to seek in real life materials for its solitude, flung its interest over

every object. I was also lively. What a mistake it is to confound conversational vivacity with good spirits! Few persons who mix in society on the reputation of talent, but feel, or fancy, that there is a necessity for sustaining such reputation: the only method of accomplishing this is by saying something clever, or at least amusing. You know that the many go into the world on the strength of rank or wealth—they have performed their part when they have shewn themselves, their diamonds, or their cashmeres; but you seem to have contracted a debt by your mere admission—and we are all naturally anxious to return an obligation. Soon this exertion for the amusement of others grows a habit—vanity as usual steps in, and then popularity becomes a passion. The worst of it is, the want of moral courage it engenders; you seek too much to say the agreeable instead of the true. Still, this is an excusable fault. Opinion is an author's destiny; what marvel that he should strive by every effort to conciliate an influence so terrible? A despotic power makes slaves.

"This was the pleasantest part of my life. Society relieved without interrupting my studies. I rejoiced in my independence, and was careless about my poverty. I rather disdained than coveted the luxuries I saw: alas! we desire riches more for others than ourselves. What a precious thing would choice be to life! why have we not the sorrowful privilege of rejection? Why, when Laura wished

to be introduced to me, did not some interior voice warn me of approaching misery?

"I accompanied to her box the friend who sought me. We entered softly, while Sontag was in the midst of her most popular song, and Mrs. Herbert at first did not perceive us. I stood behind her, admiring the small head, placed so exquisitely on the shoulders; suddenly she turned—I cannot tell you the charm I found in her gentle and somewhat cold manner—the importance of the effect you produced was so much increased by the difficulty there was in discovering its amount. Singularly pale, the marble whiteness of her complexion was strongly contrasted by the black hair, the black dress, and the black drooping feathers of her hat. She well knew the romantic style of her beauty; it was the imagination she sought to interest: hence the young, the enthusiastic, were the victims she selected.

"She said nothing to me of my writings; and I enjoyed the thought that my vanity, at least, had not been enlisted in her favour: I forgot the sweet low voice that so often asked my opinion, the knowledge so unconsciously displayed of my pursuits, and the large black eyes whose every look was a flattery. I have often wondered why she willed to number me among her conquests: but, though I could not give rank or wealth, I could give a name; and, as we always tire of what we do possess, she might desire to exchange the present for the future; the poetry she could not feel, she

wished to inspire. Or perhaps, to put it more simply—vanity, like all social vices, craves for novelty; and I had at least the merit of being a stranger. Yet I could not have written a line about her for the world; we write from the memory of love, not its presence. How could I have borne to embody in her image the sorrows which give interest to poetry? If I had been Petrarch, Laura would never have been immortalised in my verse—I should have hated the very glory I myself had created: what, lay my heart bare for the general remark, the common pity! No; the statue I should raise to Love would be like that of Harpocrates, with his finger on his lip.

"In a few days what a gulf opened between my former and present self! I had been content, industrious, devoted to that literature which was at once my hope and my honour. Now, I was idle, restless; I wrote — the pen fell from my hand; I read — the book dropped by my side, and I was lost in some reverie, in which her image was paramount—all my former occupations were at an end; I seemed not to have an idea in the world that did not centre in her.

"All the morning was merged in the moment when, after a thousand of those small disappointments with which 'Circumstance, that unspiritual god,' delights to mock our plans, I perhaps handed her from her carriage to some shop. Every evening was devoted to the chance of meeting her; and, alas! whether I did or did not see her, I re-

turned home with the same sinking of the heart, the same utter depression of spirits.

" For the first time I felt the wide difference between my circumstances and myself. Now, how I coveted riches — how I envied, ay hated, their possessors! Now, how I contrasted the splendid scenes in which I moved with the wretched home where I lived! Now, how worthless seemed all the former landmarks of my ambition!

" God in heaven, how I loved her! I would sit for hours, dreaming all those brilliant impossibilities by which fate might unite our destinies. I placed myself in situations of the most varied interest at her side, and then woke from my phantasy in an agony of shame and regret. The mere mention of her name would make my heart beat even to pain; and yet, with all this inward violence, I was outwardly calm:—true love is like religion, it hath its silence and its sanctity. I felt myself worthy of her, even while I was in reality becoming less so; for the fever of my heart preyed upon my mind, and every hour I was conscious that the power and the glory were departing from me.

" Poetry had been the passion that love now was; but poetry brought forth its fruit in due season: love made all a desert except itself. And yet how slight were the chains that bound me as in fetters of iron! A look, a word, a smile, were the hieroglyphics of the heart, as dazzling to decipher as the characters on Caliph Vathek's Damascus sabres;

and I was blinded like him—indifference and interest were so nicely blended. Now I was chilled by careless coldness — now transported by some slight mark of preference, so slight that only passion could have interpreted it into hope. The very ruin in which my love was involving me, only made it more intense: and ruin, indeed, to me was its engrossment and its idleness.

" Utterly dependent on my own mental exertions, what could I do with my mind such a chaos? Day after day I was importuned to fulfil engagements I had no longer the power of completing. My thoughts, like rebel subjects, disowned my authority—I could concentrate my attention only on one object — Laura. Perhaps the desperation of my circumstances communicated itself to my feelings —I believe Mrs. Herbert feared the passion she had inspired. She shrank from the explanation sudden coldness might have brought on, and tried raillery. Constancy, romance, or enthusiasm, were the recurring objects of her sarcasm.

" One evening, when the large party met at her house had diminished to a small and somewhat confidential group, I remember her saying, as she flung down, disdainfully, a little engraving from a gem — a bird clinging to a leafless bough, with its well-known motto, ' Faithful even unto death'— ' Well, fine words are like fine clothes, they make a great deal out of nothing. I often think' (turning to me) ' of the profane speech of the Cardinal, who

exclaimed, when he saw the gold and jewels offered at Rome in such profusion by the pious, 'Holy Saints! how profitable has this fable of Christianity been to us!' You poets may well exclaim, 'How profitable has this fable of love been to us!'

"'Ah, madam, you have never loved!' replied a young gentleman, who, like many others of his kind, delighted in talking of what he knew nothing about.

"'Love!' replied she; 'as far as my own experience goes, I do not understand the word: I have never loved. A lover is the personification of weariness; to see the same face, to hear the voice, to separate variety from amusement, in order to centre it all in one—to find a single suffrage sufficient for your vanity. Ah! to love, is in reality the verb the Prussian prince conjugated at Potsdam;' and she sank back on her seat, as if fatigued by the mere recapitulation.

"Notwithstanding her art, Laura was wrong in her calculation. Of all she said I retained only the one delicious phrase, 'I have never loved.' Instead of her indifference, I recalled her beauty, as she leant back on the sofa, one delicate hand balancing her cup, while her perfect figure was half-hidden — only to be more gracefully displayed — in a large cloak, which she had drawn round her with the prettiest shiver possible. Day by day my situation became more wretched; one resource alone was left me,— the gaming table; and there a transient success added suspense to my other miseries.

Painted by J. W. Wright. Engraved by E. Scriven

LAURA.

London, Published for the Proprietor, by Longman & Co. Paternoster Row.

" The desire of mortifying a fancied rival, one evening threw unusual softness into Laura's manner; she took my arm, and chance leading us into a small adjacent room, had seated herself on one of the divans before she perceived we were alone. I saw her turn pale and avoid my look; but it was too late,—my heart had found utterance. Scott, I need tell you only her last words,—'And if I did marry, do you think it would be a fortune-hunter?'

" I rose from her feet, and my resolution was taken. I had already sacrificed to Laura my hopes, my principles, my ambition, my fortune; one only sacrifice remained, and that was my life. Still, some remnant of my ancient integrity bade me desire to leave enough behind me to pay my debts. Again I had recourse to the gaming-table; but the fortune which had aided me to evil, deserted me for good: I left the room with a single shilling in my pocket.

" It was long after midnight when I sought my lodgings. The pale, weary look of the girl who opened the door reproached me with my selfish thoughtlessness, in thus, on a cold raw night early in spring, detaining the poor from their needful rest. The mother was by her side, and she appeared far more worn out than the daughter. I have been too engrossed, or I might before have told you of the kindliness of the one, and the surpassing beauty of the other. Now that the image of Ellen Cameron

rises before me in all its childish and innocent beauty; when I think of the thousand little acts of kindness — I could almost say tenderness — that escaped from her so unconsciously, I wonder that my heart never took her for its object of imagination and passion. But there is a destiny in all things, and in none more than in love.

"'I shall not detain you long,' said I, as I entered their little parlour. Will you believe me when I say, the uppermost feeling in my mind was distaste at its poor and wretched appearance? The grate smoked, and the thick air was bitter and oppressive to breathe. Drawing the broken china inkstand towards me, I wrote on the back of a letter the assignment of my property (my property !), to Mrs. Cameron. I gave her the paper, and told her that important business forced me to leave London at once; that I could not pay the rent now due, but that the sale of even my few effects would satisfy her claims.

"'You are not going to leave us?' said the woman, on whose memory one or two small services I had rendered her had made a deeper impression than the fear of losing by a lodger so poor as myself. I gave a briefer reply than should have met such kindness, and hurried from the door. As I went down the street, I looked back; Ellen was standing on the steps watching me: she met my eye, and instantly retreated. I caught the last glance of that young and fair face, and felt as if my good angel had

deserted me. I passed hastily through the close and narrow streets around my home. Dizzy, confused with the excitement of despair, I was startled by the hour striking one, two, three, four. I was standing before the illuminated clock of St. Bride's. Mockery, thus to trace the progress of time in light! mark it rather by shadows dark and heavy as its own. Half an hour would bring me to Waterloo Bridge, and there I could offer up the fearful sacrifice Fate demanded from Necessity."

From this period we already know the story, and need not follow Charles in his narrative of the small causes which had deterred him from the act, to the wild hope, or rather curiosity, which now induced him to wait for the morrow.

"I have no choice," said he at last; "between myself and the past there is a wide gulf; I cannot again unite quiet industry and enthusiastic energy; I can no longer merge the actual present in the imagined future. A bitter feeling of envy rankles within me. I do not say that there is nothing worth living for, but that there is nothing within my reach. I am weary of this life of literary drudgery, whose toil is so incessant, and whose reward is so distant. I am stung to the very soul by the criticisms on what I have already done. The praise does not gratify me, because it is that of kindness, or of motive, instead of appreciation; the censure mortifies me,—even while I deny its truth; but I say, what is opinion, when the smallest pique against

myself, or even my friends — when envy or pure stupidity will turn the balance against me, and withhold from me my so anxiously-sought, my just meed of praise? Again, I feel that youth is rapidly passing, and with it that happiness which youth only can enjoy. What will it avail me, even if future years bring me pleasures for which I no longer care, — pleasures which, if I could command them now, would send the blood through my pulses as if it bore a thousand lives? It is easy to tell me that every lot has its annoyances. I believe nothing which I have not known. Give me the wealth you say has its cares and its vexations; let me try them; let me at least choose my destiny, and then take my chance. Why should I wear out a dreary life in poverty and obscurity, while I loathe the one and despise the other? There are who may talk of calm content, of gliding unnoticed through the road of life: let those who like such ignoble path follow it. Did I make myself? did I wish to enter on this mortal struggle? did I give myself feelings, ideas, or wishes? did I create this difference between myself and my situation? In what am I to blame? Can I help being most unutterably wretched? Tell me not of the benevolence shewn in the organisation of this world; in every part pain and sorrow reign triumphant. True, we are promised a reward hereafter; but that is to depend upon conduct, which it is always difficult, sometimes impossible, to control. My futurity

rests upon my belief, as if I could believe what I chose. This is a bad, miserable state,—so bad, that any change must be for the better, at least to me. I cannot go back upon the past; I delude myself no longer. Why should I slave to leave behind me a rich legacy of thought for the careless or ungrateful? A year ago I would not have bartered the world of fame for the world of enjoyment; both are equally beyond me, but I pine now for the latter; and, wanting that, for the calm and the quiet of the cold dark grave. The terrible passion of death is upon me; I long for that eternity which, whether of torture, of annihilation, or of a higher existence, will free me from the intolerable burden of life."

"Two gentlemen to Mr. Smythe," said a servant, opening the door. In one of them Charles recognised the auctioneer. "Ha, ha! young gentleman, come to claim the payment of my bond; this worthy man will soon shew you it is due."

The other, whose solemnity was in singular contrast with the flurry of his companion, now announced himself as Mr. Greaves, solicitor, of Chancery Lane, in whose custody was placed the will of the late Charles Smythe, Esq.

"He was the richest man on 'Change, sir—it's lucky for you that your name is spelt with a *y* and an *e*—he made you his heir because you are his namesake: but I have a copy of the will with me, if you please to hear it read."

Charles sat bewildered; but his friend Scott, as he was not the heir, retained his senses, and begging them to be seated, poured out a couple of glasses of claret; whereupon the lawyer, after draining one of them, began to read the will, which stated, that "I, Charles Smythe, being of sound mind and body, &c. &c. &c., do will and bequeath to Charles Smythe, my namesake, and, I believe, distant relation (our names being spelt alike), son of, &c. &c., all the property I possess at the time of my decease."

And then followed such a list of estates here, and estates there, mortgages in every county in England, and money vested in the stocks of every known capital — English, French, Russian, and American — that Scott began to think the late Henry Smythe must have been the possessor of Fortunatus's purse. The will was ended, and the little auctioneer could contain himself no longer.

"The luckiest thing in the world that we met to-day! I was in such a fright lest you should have drowned yourself; but I had you watched safe in here — and my boy saw a pie come in; so I thought you'd be sure to live till after dinner. Mr. Greaves has been out hunting for you all day. Lord love you! they're taking on so about you at your lodgings; and Mr. Greaves was afraid you had come to a bad end. Well, he was fagged out when he called on me; and quite down in the mouth to think that a young man should make away with himself just as he came in to such a fine fortune:

but I soon heartened him up. We had a beef-steak together, and then came off here: glad to find you alive and merry."

Scott could not restrain his laughter; but Charles sat gloomily folding and unfolding the skin of shagreen, which he had taken from his pocket.

"I must say good night," said the solicitor, who had just finished the last glass of claret; "I keep regular hours—always at home by twelve, and have a long way to go. I will call on you to-morrow—ten o'clock precisely—Mr. Smythe: we have not a little business to settle. Good night!"

"And good night, gentlemen," added the auctioneer; and then, addressing Charles more particularly, "I have a large amount to make up by the 15th of this month, so hope you won't forget our little account. I am sure you won't grudge the money, considering the luck the skin has brought you. Wish you joy of your good fortune!"

"And I wish," exclaimed Charles, "that you may break your neck going down stairs."

This kind farewell was, however, lost on its object, who had just closed the door.

"What a lucky fellow you are! I congratulate you from my heart," said Scott.

"This accursed skin!" exclaimed Charles.

"Why, you are not silly enough to think that has any thing to do with it! By the by, how shamefully that rascally auctioneer has taken you in! He knew of the will beforehand, and has

played nicely upon your excited state of mind. I hope you mean to dispute the payment of the bond?"

A loud noise in the passage interrupted their conversation.

They say gravity is the centre of attraction; I rather think that noise is. Nothing so soon assembles the inhabitants of a house as a loud and sudden noise: it did so in the present instance.

"For the love of God, run for a surgeon; he is quite senseless!" And the first thing the friends saw was Mr. Greaves and the servant raising the body of the auctioneer.

Charles, faint and trembling, grasped the bannisters: Scott sprang forward.

"The whole College of Physicians can do him no good: he has broken his neck!"

"Do you now doubt," exclaimed Charles, "my fatal power? Behold how, within the last minute, the skin has shrunk!"

"Your good luck has turned your brain. I advise you to go home, and be bled and blistered," said Scott. "The broken neck of the auctioneer is just an unlucky coincidence."

"It is my terrible destiny!" cried Charles Smythe.

Wealth, wealth unbounded, and which every day some lucky chance served to increase, was now in Charles Smythe's possession — he had all of pleasure, all of luxury, excepting their enjoyment; for the weight was on his spirits, and the worm at his

heart. His slightest wish was invariably accomplished; but at every wish the skin of shagreen diminished, and with it he felt his health and strength decline. He found he had but one reserve —to desire nothing. Gradually his splendid abode became a solitude, and his habits those of an ascetic. He ate before he was hungry, lest he should wish for food; he slept with his night-draught drugged with laudanum, lest he should crave repose.

Once, and once only, he met Laura. He turned from her with loathing: was not she the cause of his present doom? Mrs. Herbert marked his avoidance with a sweet laugh and a stinging jest:—" So much for a romantic attachment! My poet-lover has not a guinea in the world, and he vows eternal constancy *aux beaux yeux de ma cassette.* He becomes a *millionaire,* and *nous avons changé tout cela*—the passionate and the elevated degenerates into the indifferent and the calculating. Never tell me of disinterested love!"

There was perhaps some bitterness in this; but when was a woman ever witty without being bitter? Think for a moment how her feelings must have been frozen before they could sparkle, and how their edge must have been ground down before they became so keen: brilliant and caustic words are but the outward type of that which is within.

" I will consult a physician to-morrow," said Charles Smythe one night, after he had spent about an hour in gazing alternately on his pale

and altered face in the glass, and then on the skin of shagreen now most wofully diminished.

Next morning saw his carriage at Dr. Thomson's door. He was shewn into a back room, fitted up as a study. Large and learned volumes lined the sides; above the fire-place stood a row of glass phials, each containing a snake, a frog, or a lizard, preserved in spirits of wine; and on the table lay open a huge portfolio of ghastly-looking prints. Somehow or other, it was a room that gave you great confidence in your doctor:—you thought, what a clever man he must be! The patient now entered on his history. At its finish, the physician no longer restrained his reassuring smile—"I will give you my advice, though I very much doubt your taking it: enlist for six months in any marching regiment you can find, and permit me to throw this piece of shagreen behind the fire."

So saying, he took up the talisman, and was about to suit the action to the word, when Charles snatched it from him with a piercing cry, and rushed out of the house. He then directed his coachman to drive to Sir Henry Halford's. He was shewn into an elegant drawing-room; a large glass reflected the crimson colour flung on his countenance by the curtains: it was a very reviving shade. Again the patient began his narrative, which was listened to this time with the most touching attention. Sir Henry took his hand with an air of almost affectionate interest—said something about over-excitement,

nerves, and genius—wrote a prescription—advised quiet and country air. "Take some pretty place, quite retired, but near enough to town for a morning's drive to bring you to London; for I must see you again—not often, I hope;—not often, I am sure!" muttered the physician, as his patient withdrew.

Charles Smythe now resolved on taking a place in the country; but he equally resolved on wishing nothing about it. He would drive a few miles out of town, and take the first place to let that he liked. The horses baited at a small country inn; he had lunched; and then, for fear he might get weary, and wish for a stroll, he wandered out. It was an unusually hot day, in an unusually forward spring; but the sunshine was cheerful, and the heat was softened by the wide and leafy branches of the elm-trees whose boughs met overhead. The hedges were covered with May, in the fragile and fragrant luxuriance of its short-lived blossom. On each side were meadows of deep grass, now of a dark and shadowy, now of a bright and glittering green, as the sunbeam or the cloud passed alternately over them. A low but pleasant murmur, the whisper of leaves, the chirrup of the birds, the stir of insect wings, was on the air; and as the invalid wound down the green lane, he forgot for a while how rich and how wretched he was. His thoughts wandered in as desultory a manner as he did himself, fixing rather on objects without than within. He was roused from his reverie by that sudden rustling

among the boughs which tells the approach of a summer shower. The light branches of the ash were tossed aside by the wind, and a few heavy drops fell almost one by one. A large black cloud darkened the sky, and a burst of distant thunder rolled upon the air.

"To be caught in the rain will give me my death of cold," exclaimed Charles, almost unconsciously hurrying forward. For a moment he hesitated whether he should not wish the rain to cease; but the remedy was worse than the disease — so on he went. Luckily, a sudden turn in the lane shewed him a place of shelter; he soon reached the stone porch of a small cottage, and paused there, gaining breath and resolution to ask admission. Built in a heavy Gothic style of architecture, the cottage looked as if it had formerly been the lodge of some park. In one of the windows sat a girl: her head was bent on her hand, and her fair hair, simply parted on the forehead, was covered by a square cap, or rather coif. Surely he knew her face! She looked up, and their eyes met; another instant, and the door stood open;—it was Ellen Cameron! Such a smile and such a blush, such a beautiful agitation as that with which he was welcomed! She recognised him at the first glance, as he did her at the second.

"My mother will be so glad to see you!" was her exclamation; and he was shewn into the prettiest little room that ever was crowded with

flowers, or opened into a garden whose roses looked in at the window. There her mother was sitting; and Charles was touched (how could he be otherwise?) by the earnest and simple delight of his welcome.

Their history was soon told. Mrs. Cameron's lawsuit had been decided in her favour, and their present competency was rendered more delicious by past poverty. They had immediately left London; and this accounted for Charles's not having been able to find them out when he made the endeavour, which, in justice to his gratitude, we ought to mention he had done.

"Your books are quite safe," said Mrs. Cameron, "and so is your writing-table; but they are in Ellen's room, for she is a great reader."

Ellen blushed to the temples. Their visitor smiled when he remembered how little his learned and ponderous tomes were likely to interest the young and fair creature who had them in her care.

Charles Smythe was pressed to stay dinner. He consented; and the day passed pleasantly enough to make him say, towards evening, "I wish I could find a house to suit me." The words "I wish" struck upon his heart with a cold chill, which was forgotten as he thought how very lovely the flush of delight made Ellen's always beautiful face.

We will omit the love-making, as it must be personal to be pleasant; and come to the conclusion, which every reader can by this time foresee, viz.

matrimony. The bright and buoyant month of June, the brightest of all our year, witnessed Charles Smythe's marriage. The bells were yet ringing a joyous peal, softened by the distance into music, as he stood with a folded paper in his hand by a small ebon escritoire. "Why," said he, "should I be weak enough to allow a vain delusion to prey upon my spirits and wear away my health? No doubt being exposed to the open air shrinks up the skin: for three months I will not look at it." He locked the drawer, and turned to meet his beautiful bride, whose light step now entered the room.

To use the established phrase, three months of uninterrupted happiness glided away—a phrase, though in frequent use, whose accuracy I greatly doubt; there being no such thing as uninterrupted happiness any how or any where. But one morning, while wandering through the shadowy walks with which his gardens abounded, he heard the voices of his wife and her mother. He looked through the boughs, for one moment, on the fair and young face whose beauty was so precious in his eyes—so precious, for he felt how entirely it was his own. There was something at once womanly and childish in Ellen's love for her husband—womanly in its devotion, childish in its implicit reliance—one of those worshipping, exaggerating, uplooking attachments which it is so satisfactory to man's vanity to inspire. But an expression of strong anxiety was on her face, and her cheek was very pale.

Charles was just about to step forward and kiss it into colour, when the sound of his own name arrested his advance.

"I would not, dearest, alarm you unnecessarily," said Mrs. Cameron; "but you must make Charles have medical advice: he looks wretchedly ill, and grows worse every day."

He saw Ellen start, as if first awakened to the terrible consciousness of her husband's ill health—he saw her bow her face on her hands in an agony of tears; but he staid not to console her—his heart was hardened by the fear of death. "I have been married three months to-day; I will go and look at the skin of shagreen." While unlocking the writing-case in which it lay, he caught sight of his shadow in a glass opposite: he beheld, as it were, the spectre of himself. Shuddering, he hurriedly opened the drawer. "The skin of shagreen is not here!" exclaimed he—and sank on the sofa breathless with delight. The fatal skin had disappeared, and yet he lived! "Fool, fool that I have been, to allow a nameless dread to poison my food, to fever my sleep! Ellen, my sweet Ellen, we shall be happy yet!" The remembrance of her sorrow rose to his mind.

No longer stern and selfish with a gloomy dread, he opened the window; to cross the turf would bring him to her side immediately. The wind swept through the casement, and blew the papers, &c. to his feet. He turned pale, his eyes swam;

every other object was indistinct, for uppermost of all lay the skin of shagreen; but so small, no wonder he had overlooked it — it was the size of a willow-leaf, fragile and withered as they are with the first frost! How prodigal of life had the last three months been!—not the slightest wish of Ellen's but had found an echo in his! Why, the mere hope that a summer-day would not bring premature destruction to a half-blown rose — even such light words were those of the grave! What was Ellen's self but a beautiful death?

Again every faculty was absorbed in a passionate longing for life — life under any circumstances. He left his home on the instant; wrote from London, that pressing business took him abroad for some time; and in the course of a week he was settled in a solitary cottage at Clifton. Here his days passed in a melancholy monotony; he rose at the same hour, took a long walk, dined, walked again, and then slept. He read no books, he saw no friends, he had no wish but for life; and night after night he examined the frail remnant of shagreen, and as often found it undiminished. At this rate he might live for years—and his heart leaped for joy at the thought of this dull and unnatural existence. Youth, wealth, fame, love, had all merged in the dread of death.

It was a fine soft evening in September, when he leant, as was his wont, in an arm-chair by the window, watching with fixed but languid gaze

the deep shadows of the trees, while every open space was silver with the light of the moon—the hunter's moon, as the large bright orb of that month is called. The garden was close to the road, and the step and voice of the few passers-by were distinctly heard. Suddenly one went along singing: it was a young voice, but both air and words were sad. Charles caught the first verse:—

> O leave me to my sorrow,
> For my heart is oppress'd to-day!
> O leave me, and to-morrow
> Dark clouds will have pass'd away!

The song died in the distance; not so in the heart of the recluse. "I may," said the miserable slave of himself, "be left to my sorrow; but when will my dark clouds pass away? Never till they deepen into the night of death! Buoyant and reckless spirit of my youth, all ye thousand hopes that bore me up as with the wings of an eagle, where are ye now? The knowledge I acquired, the fame for which I burned, the wealth I so coveted—all mine, yet not mine! And must all that makes life desirable be purchased but by the loss of life? Is this the secret of existence? At what a price of wretchedness must even this miserable and monotonous life be bought! My poor Ellen, what must my absence seem to her!"

As the image of his young and deserted wife rose before him in all its gentle beauty, a gush of

tenderness softened him for the moment. "My sweet Ellen!" exclaimed he, almost unconsciously, "would to God you were here!"

"Ah, now I dare speak to you!" whispered a sweet low voice.

Love was mightier than fear; and happy as herself, he kissed away the tears that fell thick and fast from the sweet eyes raised so timidly to his own.

"How could you leave me? who would watch over you with affection like mine?"

At these words he started from his seat, and snatched the skin of shagreen—it was reduced to a mere shred. "Ellen," exclaimed he, grasping her arm, "do you see this accursed thing? it is my life; one other wish is my death-warrant!"

He looked on the ghastly terror which marked his wife's features; his heart misgave him for her agony; and again, almost unwittingly, he wished her fear might cease! A deadly pain rushed over him, his eyes closed even on that beloved countenance; he strove to speak, the words died in an inarticulate murmur; a frightful convulsion distorted his face as it sank on Ellen's shoulder;—his last breath and the skin of shagreen had passed away together!

The hint for such a talisman is taken from M. de Balzac's *Peau de Chagrin*. I have not read the tale itself, but saw a notice of it in *Le Globe*.

Drawn by F. Stone. Engraved by H. Robinson.

DONNA JULIA.

Printed by Perkins & B.

London, Published for the Proprietor, by Longman & C° Paternoster Row.

THE CHOICE.

THE Spanish lady sat alone within her [illegible] bower,
And, sooth to say, her thoughts were [illegible] suited with the hour,
For, shining on the myrtle-leaves [illegible] they [illegible] again,
The moonlight fell amid the boughs [illegible] light and glittering rain.

The ground was strewn with earth's flowers, the fragile and the fair —
Fit emblems of our early hopes — so [illegible] they are;
The jasmine made a starry roof [illegible] hall;
And sweet there floated on the air [illegible] tain's fall.

She leant her head upon her hand [illegible] which to choose —
Alas! whichever choice [illegible] lose.

Engraved by H. Robinson.

London, Published for the Proprietor, by Longman & C° Paternoster Row.

THE CHOICE.

THE Spanish lady sat alone within her evening bower,
And, sooth to say, her thoughts were such as suited well the hour;
For, shining on the myrtle-leaves until they shone again,
The moonlight fell amid the boughs like light and glittering rain.

The ground was strewn with cactus flowers, the fragile and the fair—
Fit emblems of our early hopes—so perishing they are;
The jasmine made a starry roof, like some Arabian hall;
And sweet there floated on the air a distant fountain's fall.

She leant her head upon her hand: "I know not which to choose—
Alas! whichever choice I make, the other I must lose.

They say my eyes are like the stars; and if they are
so bright,
Methinks they should be as those stars, and shed
o'er all their light.

"Don Felix rides the boldest steed, and bears the
stoutest lance,
And gallantly above his helm his white plumes
wave and dance:
But then Don Guzman—when the night and dews
are falling round,
How sweet beneath my lattice comes his lute's soft
numbers' sound!

"Don Felix has in triumph borne my colours round
the ring;
Three courses, for my beauty's sake, he rode before
the King.
Don Guzman he has breathed in song a lover's
gentle care—
And many who know not my face, yet know that it
is fair."

The inconstant moon, now bright, now veil'd, shone
o'er the changing tide;
The wind shook down the flowers, but still new
flowers their place supplied;
And echo'd by some far-off song, the lady's voice
was heard—
"Alas! I know not which to choose!" was aye her
latest word.

Yet, ere that moon was old, we saw the Donna Julia
ride
Gay on her snowy palfrey, as Don Alonzo's bride.
The bride was young and beautiful, the bridegroom
stern and old,—
But the silken rein was hung with pearls, the
housings bright with gold.

MADELINE.

I PRAY thee leave me not; my heart
So passionately clings to thee;
Oh, give me time, I'll try to part
With life—for love is life to me.
A little while—I cannot bear
The presence of my great despair;
Though changed your voice, and cold your eye,
You would not wish to see me die.

The wretch who on the scaffold stands
Has some brief time allow'd
For parting grasp of kindly hands,
For farewell to the crowd:
And even as gradual let me learn
My thoughts and hopes from thee to turn;
To grow accustom'd to thy brow,
Strange, chilling as it meets me now!

But, no; I dare not, cannot look
Upon thy alter'd face:

MADELINE.

I [illegible] love me not; my heart
  So [illegible]onately clings to thee;
Oh, [illegible] time, I'll try to part
  With [illegible] is life to me.
[illegible] not bear
[illegible] despair;
[illegible]ence, and cold your eye,
[illegible] me die.

[illegible] scaffold stands
  Has some [illegible] allow'd
For parting grasp of [illegible] hands,
  For farewell to the crowd:
And even as gradual let me learn
My thoughts and hopes from thee to turn;
To grow accustom'd to thy [illegible],
Strange, chilling as it meets me now!

But, no; I dare not, cannot look
  Upon thy alter'd face;

Drawn by E. Stone. Engraved by H. Cook.

MADELINE.

Methinks that I could better brook
  To have but memory's trace,
And I may cheat myself awhile
With many a treasured gaze and smile.
Yes, leave me—'tis less pain to brood
Over the past in solitude.

Oh, vanity of speech! no word
  Can make thee mine again;
The eloquent would be unheard,
  The tender would be vain.
Since gentle cares and spotless truth—
The deep devotion of my youth—
Since these are written on the air,
Wilt thou be moved by vow or prayer?

Yet how entire has been my love!
  The flower that to the sun
Raises its golden eyes above,
  Droops when the day is done:
But I for hours have watch'd a spot—
Although it longer held thee not;
It gave a magic to the scene
To think that there thy steps had been.

But I must now forget the past—
  Say, rather, 'tis my all;
Henceforth a veil o'er life is cast—
  I live but to recall.

I have no future—could I bear
To dream a dream you do not share?
It is hope makes futurity—
What, now, has hope to do with me?

Amid the ruins of my heart
  I'll sit and weep alone;
Mourn for the idols that depart,
  The altars overthrown,
With faded cheek and weary eyes,
Till life be thy last sacrifice.
Alas for youth, and hope, and bloom!
Alas for my forgotten tomb!

Drawn by Miss L. Sharpe.

Engraved by H. T. Ryall.

THE ORPHAN.

Printed by Mc Queen

London Published for the Proprietor, by Longman & Co Paternoster Row.

Engraved by H. T. Ryall.

London Published for the Proprietor, by Longman & C° Paternoster Row.

THE KNIFE.

WHAT a pretty, fair, delicate-looking girl was Harriet Lynn! how well I remember her, with her small black silk bonnet, casting a deeper shadow on the light-brown hair that escaped in waves rather than curls from the bondage of her cap; the neat white handkerchief, the dark stuff dress, the full sleeves a little turned back from the slender wrist, and hands whose softness had been uninjured by their ordinary employment—that of plaiting the finest straw. Many a summer's evening have I seen her stand at the gate of the cottage-garden, over which hung a cherry-tree, the pride of her uncle; indeed, rather a source of congratulation to the village at large, so much was its size and fertility admired by strangers—so beautiful in spring, with its avalanche of white blossom—so rich in summer, with its multitude of crimson berries. There would Harriet stand, the shining straws passing with rapidity

through her slight fingers; with a gentle smile and a kind word for all those passers-by whom she knew, and a deep blush and sudden attention to her work for all whom she knew not. Harriet was not a native of our part of the country; her parents' death had thrown her on the kindness of an uncle and aunt, who, having no child of their own, were happy to adopt her. Some little roughness in that course which is said never to run smooth—very true love—would seem to be the worst history that could be connected with the pretty peasant. But not so: her arrival in our county was attended by one of those terrible incidents which make humanity shudder at itself, and which are awful in proportion to their rareness. It is taking nature in the worst possible point of view, to think that custom reconciles even to crime.

It was a sad morning when Harriet Lynn left her native village: she rose long before the appointed time. When at the stile by the beech-tree, she was to be taken up by John Dodd the carrier, who often gave a neighbour a lift to the next town. This stile was at the entrance of the churchyard—a sorrowful resting-place to one whose nearest and dearest were yet scarce cold in their tomb. Ever and anon did she enter and seek the far corner, where, beneath the shadow of an old yew-tree, was a grave: it held two tenants—they were her father and her mother, and she looked now on their place of rest for the last time. There

is a strange mixture in our feelings; perhaps the consciousness that all her earnings had gone towards erecting the stone whose white surface bore the names of her parents, mingled a little satisfaction with her grief: and why should it not? The discharge of a duty from affection is the best solace for sorrow.

At length the cart appeared at some distance on the winding road; and in a few minutes Harriet Lynn began a journey, of whose length and difficulties she had the usually exaggerated notion of all young travellers. The gallantry of an English peasant rarely expands into words. John Dodd received her with a good-natured grin, and pushed on his way — for he was carrier of Donnington and some dozen parishes round; at each of which he duly deposited at least a score of packages or messages. His first pause was at a small shop situated on the east side of Donnington moor.

"None so deaf as those who won't hear. Now this plaguy old woman will keep me bawling for an hour; it's always so when I'm in a hurry."

Sure enough his vociferations obtained no answer; so, asking his companion to hold the reins, while he went to see if Dame Bird were dead or asleep, he jumped out of the cart, taking with him sundry square brown-paper parcels, from whose contents the various odours of tea, sugar, and tallow exhaled. The little garden gate was, as usual, open; and the first thing that struck the carrier

was a quantity of currants trampled upon the brick walk.

" Somebody's pudding will be none the better for this; but it's a wonder the old woman has not been out broom in hand. I say, Dame Bird! you might sell your currants over again — none the worse for a little clean dirt."

At this moment he started back, with open eyes and gaping mouth: — what an odd thing it is, that the indications of terror are usually ludicrous! A narrow crimson line, like the wriggling of a red snake, wound slowly towards him: it was blood! For the first time in his life, John Dodd dropped a parcel from his hand, and ran into the shop. The narrow line widened; large red spots grew frequent; the crimson pool splashed beneath his feet — it evidently flowed from behind the counter; and there lay the poor old woman, her face uppermost, and her throat literally cut from ear to ear.

" Murder! thieves! Harriet Lynn, help!" cried the terrified carrier, rushing back to his cart and companion, as if even the girl and his horse were some security.

Harriet Lynn, who had heard his voice, was at the gate as soon as himself.

" What is the matter?"

" Come away; we shall be murdered!" was the answer, made almost inaudible by dread.

There is no denying the fact, that in all sudden emergencies a woman has ten times the presence of

mind, or, to use the common expression, her wits more about her than a man. Harriet Lynn turned white as the ghastly idea suggested itself; but she proceeded to the shop, followed by her companion, who thought that as she went, he must go too. The sight was too fearful; and for a moment she walked again into the garden, till the fresh air restored her from her feeling of deadly sickness. Perhaps the distinction between the two witnesses was, that in the girl horror was the predominant sensation, while in the man it was terror.

"There is no likelihood of the murderer having hidden himself here; however, we must see." And she resolutely returned to the house.

Fright had quite paralysed John Dodd's faculties, and he went after her mechanically. The cottage was only one story high, and the small room behind the shop was where the old woman slept. Marks of violence were visible in every part; a cupboard had been forced open, and the contents of a chest of drawers were scattered about the room. The shop bore even more evident signs of spoliation —that reckless wastefulness which seems the constant companion of cruelty; but little of the grocery appeared to have been touched, excepting the sweet things.

"We must go," said Harriet, "and get assistance as fast as we can. Is Mr. March still our justice?"

The proposal of leaving was very welcome to

the carrier, who expected every minute to be murdered too. Yet, Harriet would not leave till the shutters were barred and the door locked: the large key hung as usual behind it, and that she took with her. "No one can now get either in or out."

They drove with all possible speed to Mr. March's, where they had instant admission. John Dodd had not yet recovered his senses; but his companion's account was equally brief and clear. A messenger was forthwith despatched to the coroner, then at Newcastle, where the assizes were holding, about five miles distant: and Mr. March proceeded to the cottage, of which Harriet Lynn gave him the key. Being on horseback, he, and two neighbours who accompanied him, arrived at the place long before their train of curious and horror-stricken followers. They found every thing as had been described. The body was in a frightful state; the hands and arms of the poor old creature were covered with gashes; and a violent blow on the temple had probably occasioned her fall and stunned her, for the throat was cut with a degree of neatness and precision, which shewed that then at least the victim could not have struggled. Close to the corpse was found a small tortoise-shell penknife clotted with blood, evidently the instrument by which the wound had been inflicted. Neighbours now came hurrying in, and one after another missed some trifling article of property which the deceased was known to have possessed. There were three

thin spoons, real silver, on which she greatly prided herself; they were gone. A large silver watch, together with a red silk shawl and a Bandana handkerchief, very regular parts of her Sunday attire, were also not to be found.

After the first burst of dismay was over, two subjects were universally started as topics of conversation; first, how every one had predicted that "a poor lone woman" was sure to be murdered; and, secondly, as to "who was the murderer?" Here there was an unusual coincidence of opinion. A gipsy and his wife had for the last week been in the neighbourhood, and their presence had been testified by innumerable small thefts. The man was dogged and sullen, apparently without occupation or motive for staying among them; the woman pretty, active, and with a great gift of fortune-telling. Many recollected seeing them both prowling about the little shop; and some, who came in last, stated that their encampment by the nut-tree wood was deserted. After the coroner's inquest, suspicion was sufficiently roused for a warrant to be issued for the apprehension of the prisoners. They were overtaken in a by-lane some miles distant, and brought to Newcastle, vehemently protesting their innocence.

The female was first examined. She evidently required to have the questions put to her in the simplest form, otherwise, from her imperfect knowledge of the English tongue, she could not com-

prehend them. All her replies were as simple as they were straight-forward. She was powerfully affected when the magistrate spoke to her of the cruelty of the deed; but it was, or seemed to be, a natural and womanly horror of so shocking a crime. Nothing could be elicited from her that excited suspicion; on the contrary, the effect she produced was a very favourable one.

It now came to the gipsy's own turn. Fierceness, defiance, and a shrewd and bold speech, characterised his answers. He was asked why he came into that part of the country?

" Because it is one of the very few places where there is a patch of green grass and an old tree whose shelter may be had without payment."

He was then interrogated—" Why, having such an advantage, he had abandoned it?"

" Because my habits are not as your habits. You dwell in houses, as if you were like the stock or the stone with which they are built; I wander as free and as far as the wind. Look ye! our faces are not as your faces, our speech is not as your speech; we have come from a distant country, over seas and mountains, over rough paths and smooth roads; we have numbered more miles than your whole island contains; and yet you ask us why we left one little village! I left it because it was my will to do so."

The pack which each carried was examined; and though convincing proofs of divers small thefts

appeared, nothing was found that had been Mrs. Bird's property. Still, the general feeling was so strong against them, that they were committed for trial, which took place the following week.

Death never excites such sympathy as it does when it assumes the shape of murder. In a few days the little garden was stripped of every plant, rosemary, rue, currant, and gooseberry bush, potato and cabbage,—all that their possessors might have some relic of "the horrible murder;" and every one planted the spoil in the most conspicuous part of their own garden. The poor old woman had been universally liked; she had kept that shop forty years; nothing had induced her to leave it, though the original motive for settling there had long passed away. The "Great House," as it was wont to be called, where she had lived servant, and which had once been scarcely twice a stone's throw from her home, had since been pulled down. Mrs. Bird had for many years been the sole chronicler of the glories of "the old family;" and her former connexion with it gave her still something of consequence in the eyes of her neighbours. The most scrupulous honesty, a cheerful temper, and a great love for children (a singularly popular quality), a regular attendance at church (on fine Sundays in the bright red shawl, on wet ones in a less bright red cloak), and a naturally good understanding, made her beloved, and her advice often both asked and taken. Many complained of the

distance of her shop, but no one thought of going to another. All respected the feeling that made the old woman cling to the spot which had witnessed her youth, her marriage, and her old age. She had wedded, early in life, one of the gardeners of the "Great House," who, to use that common but most expressive phrase, had turned out "no better than he should do." Luckily, going home one night in a state of intoxication, he broke his neck—an event Mrs. Bird deplored much more than her neighbours thought necessary. However, it was not that sort of grief which requires consolation; and the widow was not tempted to forget the miseries of her first marriage in the happiness of a second. She never gave hope that triumph over experience, which Dr. Johnson so ungallantly declares a second wedding to be. Years after years rolled away, and Mrs. Bird and her shop seemed as much part of the moor as the stunted furze-bushes. No one dreamt of change till the morning of the murder, and then, as we have said, every body had foreseen what the old woman's living by herself, in such an out-of-the-way place, would come to.

Human nature is accused of much more selfishness than it really has; a thousand kindly emotions break in upon and redeem our daily and interested life. As Wordsworth beautifully says—

> "The poorest poor
> Long for some moments in a weary life,
> When they can know and feel that they have been

> Themselves the fathers and the dealers out
> Of some small blessings — have been kind to such
> As needed kindness; for this single cause,
> That we have all of us one human heart."

And this old and solitary woman had been the rallying point for much good feeling, evinced in numerous little acts of common service. Many a young girl would give an hour's time to the sewing and darning to which Mrs. Bird's eyes were no longer equal — many a neighbour rose somewhat earlier to help her in her garden; and not a creature went to or from market without pausing for a few minutes with the "poor soul who must be so lonely." Nor was the old dame without her kindness and her favours to bestow in return. She had more than once accommodated a friend with a humble, but most serviceable loan; and would rather give very dubious credit for sugar and raisins at Christmas, than "that the poor children should go without their bit of plum-pudding once a-year." She was learned in decocting all kinds of herb-tea, infallible in curing burns, sprains, and scalds; and not a few pennyworths of gingerbread and paradise (for the latter she was very famous) went among her young customers, for which the till was never the richer. No wonder, therefore, that her most barbarous murder exasperated the peasantry almost to frenzy against the supposed criminals.

On the examination of the gipsies, nothing had been elicited from either in the slightest degree cor-

roborative of the charge against them. The man was at first furious, struggled with the officers, boldly declared his innocence, and finally settled down into sullen silence. The woman was quiet and gentle, watching only her husband's eye, and confirming all his assertions. The prisoners attracted great attention; they were both singular and superior, evidently very different from the ignorant and simple villagers among whom they ordinarily moved. Rachel (such was the female's name) was perfectly beautiful, though in the peculiar style which belongs to her race: delicately made, with a mild and mournful cast of countenance, she seemed the last person in the world to have engaged in an act of violence; indeed, the most distant allusion to the murder drove the colour from her dark cheek, and convulsed her slight frame with a shudder of fear and loathing. There was something very remarkable in her devotion to her husband; it was a mixture of deference, tenderness, and submission. Her age appeared to be about twenty; and a general and strong sympathy was excited for a creature so young, so lovely, and so meek.

The man was obviously turned of forty; his black hair was mixed with gray, and the fine outline of his features was harsh with time and exposure to all weathers. He was tall, and his gait even commanding; his hands and feet were of that small and fine mould we are accustomed to attribute to gentle blood; the expression of his face was one

which spoke both intellect and courage, though still more ferocity: he seemed to belong to some other time than the present, when human life was held but lightly, and when a shrewder wit or a stronger arm made man a chief among his fellow-savages.

We have seen that nothing was elicited on their examination. Still, taking all that could be discovered into consideration — first, that they had been observed speaking to the old woman the day before; secondly, the approximation of their encampment to the shop — for their tent was pitched in a small hazel-wood copse not a quarter of a mile distant from the place; thirdly, their abrupt departure; and, fourthly, that not a shadow of suspicion could attach to any but themselves: — on these grounds, as already mentioned, they had been ordered to be committed for trial to the county gaol. It was not till the female found she was to be parted from her husband (for each was, of course, to be confined in a separate cell) that she uttered a cry, or made a gesture of resistance: then, even the gaolers were touched by the passionate despair with which she clung to his knees, and implored him to let her remain, as if it depended solely on his will. His only answer consisted in holding out to her his manacled hands. It became necessary to separate them by force. Just as they bore her to the threshold, the gipsy suddenly asked permission to bid her farewell: he advanced towards her, and said something in a low voice and in a foreign

tongue. Her struggles ceased; she made a brief reply in the same language, raised her hands with a very peculiar gesture above her head, and then pressed them to her heart. A look passed between them, and she was led quietly from the room.

During the week of her imprisonment, her humble and sad bearing won upon the hearts of all. The elderly clergyman exerted even more than his usual anxious care; but the holy eloquence which had subdued so many a sinner to repentance, and worked good out of evil, here utterly failed. The blessed truths of the Christian faith were poured fruitlessly into ears that evidently heard them for the first time, and were lost upon one whose belief was already given to the wild superstitions taught in childhood and youth. It was equally vain to question her about the crime for which they were committed to prison; her constant reply was, "He said he was innocent: why do you doubt him?"

Once and once only did she ask after her companion, and then instantly checked herself; more, it seemed, from a fear of giving him offence, than out of any regard to those around her. There was a singular character about the love she manifested towards him; it united the passionate devotedness of the mistress, the entire union of interests felt by the wife, the submission of the child, and something of the awe and homage paid by the vassal to his master. The gipsy's own conduct had been very different; he had contrived to make himself an

object of fear and hate to every one who had approached him. But his fierce, sullen temper, and his great natural gifts, combined with a degree of knowledge surprising in his station, were principally called forth in his interviews with the clergyman, whose arguments were met either by ingenious sophistries and turned aside from their real meaning, or by vindictive reproaches and keen and bitter sneers. With regard to the crime, he never swerved from his assertion of innocence.

At length the day of trial arrived. Assuredly the English trial for murder is an awful assembling; the vague look of serious horror, which would be ludicrous under any other circumstances, is here redeemed by its fearful source. The grave costume of the bar, the dignified solemnity of the judge, the long robes, all differing from the ordinary apparel of daily life, have their full effect on at least two-thirds of the spectators. Some may be too thoughtful, others too thoughtless, to have their imagination affected by all this "pomp of circumstance;" but this is far from being the feeling of the generality.

The court was crowded at an unusually early hour. Gradually the dense and silent mass gave way before the slow approach of the judge: he took his seat; the twelve jurymen followed—there was a slight stir as each one settled in his place, and then all was quiet as the grave.

There is a deep impression of awe produced by

such a vast but silent crowd; we are at once conscious that the cause is terrible which can induce the unusual stillness. The issue of a trial on which hangs life or death, is indeed an appalling thing. We know that men are about to take away that which they cannot give—that a few words of human breath will deprive of breath one of the number for ever; and though we acknowledge that in this evil world punishment is the only security against crime, and that blood for blood has been a necessity from the beginning of time; still, we feel that the necessity is a dreadful one. A low murmur of execration —something like the dull sound of the sea, when the waves prophesy, as it were, of the coming storm —ran through the court as the prisoners were brought in.

"Order!" said the judge, in a clear, calm voice; and again the deepest stillness prevailed. The female came first, so wrapped in her cloak that both her face and figure were quite concealed. The gipsy himself advanced with as much indifference, and casting as careless glances around, as if he were but walking over a wild heath on a summer morning. He was dressed in a loose great-coat, fastened about his waist with a leathern belt, and wore round his throat a dingy crimson handkerchief; yet, in spite of his dress, he had that air of dignity which personal advantages always confer when attended by entire freedom and self-possession. His height, his firm step, his handsome features, attracted every

one; but not an eye met his without shrinking from its keen and ferocious expression: — not a single individual present thought him innocent.

Both were placed at the bar; and on a sign from the judge, the officer at her side removed the muffling from the female prisoner's face: she appeared scarcely conscious of the action. The long black hair, utterly unconfined, fell down in a mass of dark ringlets, strongly contrasted by the bright red cloak; they hung back off the countenance, whose sweet and childish beauty was thus fully displayed. She had the small smooth features, the fresh colour, the unconscious smile, which belongs only to very early youth, and those large, soft, beseeching eyes with which we almost unawares connect the idea of helplessness and innocence. It was like sacrilege to Nature to suspect of crime a creature so lovely. Those opposite could observe that her whole attention was fixed on a beautiful nosegay placed on the bench near the judge. The season was too far advanced for the gardens to boast much bloom; and the rich bunch of purple and crimson flowers was from the hot-house of a gentleman noted for his rare collection of tropical plants. Her eyes filled with tears — was it possible that the spicy perfume and magnificent dyes of the bouquet before her recalled the associations of her childhood?

The prisoners were now required to plead guilty or not guilty.

"Not guilty!" replied the gipsy, with an air of mingled confidence and defiance.

His wife had not till that moment been aware of his presence. At the first tone of his voice, she sprang forward with a cry and look of intense delight, and throwing herself at his feet, embraced his knees, while joy and affection found vent in a passionate burst of tears. The gipsy seemed the least moved of any by the touching love of his wife; he rather suffered than returned her caresses, receiving them more as homage is accepted, than as fondness is requited.

How incomprehensible is woman's love! — it is not kindness that wins it, nor return that insures it; we daily see the most devoted attachment lavished on those who seem to us singularly unworthy. The Spectator shewed his usual knowledge of human nature, when, in speaking on this subject, he relates, that in a town besieged by the enemy, on the women being allowed to depart with whatever they held most precious, only one among them carried off her husband, — a man notorious for his tyrannical temper, and who had, moreover, a bad — or, as it turned out, a good — habit of beating his wife every morning. Well, all governments are maintained by fear — fear being our great principle of action; and fear, we are tempted to believe, heightens and strengthens the love of woman.

For a minute, even the judge interfered not with a display of emotion so earnest and so affecting;

and before the officers approached to separate the prisoners, Rachel arose at her husband's bidding, and stood quietly and meekly at his side.

John Dodd, the first witness examined, contrived to throw into his story the confusion of his own ideas. Harriet Lynn came next, and was just as remarkable for the simplicity and clearness of her answers. Still, their evidence only proved the fact of the murder, not by whom it had been committed.

The fearless make their own way—and the male prisoner's bold bearing was not without its effect. The tide of opinion turned rapidly in his favour; people began to think that a man might have a profusion of black elf-like locks and a ferocious expression of countenance, and yet not be an actual murderer.

But we must go back to a period a little previous to the trial.

Among the barristers who went the northern circuit was a Mr. Harvey, as shrewd a counsel as had ever merged a life-time in law, save a few youthful reminiscences, which his compeers called folly, but to which, nevertheless, they themselves turned with great satisfaction. Mr. Harvey's birthplace was within a few miles of Newcastle, where he always arrived one day before the assizes commenced; which day was as invariably spent in riding about the country, visiting all his boyish haunts, and ended by a dinner with two or three old friends, at the same inn, where he had now regularly dined

for the last twenty years. It was one of those beautiful days with which October abounds more than any other month; a soft west-wind expanded the few late flowers that yet made glad the more sheltered nooks; the oaks, beeches, and chestnuts (for the country was densely wooded), still wore their richest and darkest green; while the limes and sycamores contrasted them strongly with their bright red and vivid yellow. Haymaking and harvest had long been over; so that little of rustic employment remained in the fields, whose stillness was almost unbroken.

Now and then, as Mr. Harvey rode slowly along scenes so familiar to him, he was startled from his reverie by the sudden rise of a covey of birds in an adjacent field; or, in passing a secluded copse, the glossy plumage of the pheasant caught his eye, while the air was stirring with the sound of its loud and peculiar flight; and sometimes, faint and echoing in the distance, came the report of the solitary sportsman's gun, "few and far between."

It was in a little lonely lane, girded on one side by a thick wood almost entirely composed of young oaks, and on the other by a grass-field and then a garden, both belonging to a small farm-house. There was an aspect of comfort and neatness, which spoke well for the inhabitants; a pear-tree covered the front that faced the road, and the porch was overgrown with Chinese roses, so deli-

cate-looking, yet so hardy. Two children were standing close to the hedge, and their conversation accidentally caught Mr. Harvey's attention, who was riding along at that sauntering pace for which a green and shadowy lane seems especially made.

"Ah! grandfather will never bring you any thing again; I've got his scissors quite safe."

So saying, the little girl held up, with a great air of triumph, a shining pair of those feminine weapons, dangling by a piece of blue riband to her waist.

"I'll tell him all about it; and I shall be the favourite then, and not you, Master Jem."

"I'm sure, Mary," said the boy, "you need'nt talk; didn't I give you the string of birds' eggs I got for it?"

"Well, well," replied his tormentor, who seemed about nine—a year older than her brother, "a knife cuts love, they say; and your grandfather won't love you no more, now you've sold the knife he gave you. I've got my scissors—I've got my scissors! and you've sold your penknife—your pretty tortoise-shell penknife!"

And the girl ran down the garden, singing her last words over and over, her brother following, with a look half of remorse and half of anger.

"Born with them—born with them: all alike! No pleasure equal to the pleasure of tormenting, to a woman. Well, my little maiden, some ten years

hence your brother will not be the only person you'll plague."

So saying, the lawyer pushed his horse into a sort of discontented trot.

A brisk ride, however, was exceedingly beneficial; and both he and his friends did full justice to the fresh trout and small mutton, which, for a score of years, the same landlord had prepared, and the same guests partaken of, at the White Hart. After dinner they gathered round the large, bright coal fire, whose one neatly-cut log emitted a shower of sparkles at every touch of the poker, — talked of former times, — sipped some fine old port, with a cobweb dress as fragile and more precious than any blonde veil Chantilly ever produced, — and felt more and more convinced, that though the world was a very bad one, yet there were some few things in it worth living for.

All recollection of the children and of their conversation had faded from Mr. Harvey's memory; but when a small tortoise-shell penknife was produced on the trial, — with that cultivated acuteness which formed so large a part both of his natural and acquired character, the coincidence instantly struck him. He was not engaged on either side; so, leaving the court, he drove with all rapidity to the farm in the green and lonely lane. It was about five miles distant. The farmer was at home, and the barrister soon explained both his business and his plan.

The child was sent for—a little, frank, bold-looking boy, of eight years old.

"So, my fine fellow," said Mr. Harvey, "you sold your grandfather's penknife?"

Poor James had been very unhappy about this knife, and, on hearing the stranger's question, naturally concluded his grandfather had sent him; he therefore only replied by a violent burst of tears.

"Should you like to get the knife again?"

The boy's face cleared up instantly, and he rushed out of the room; but speedily returned with a wooden box, having a small slit in the top, ingeniously contrived for the admission though not for the egress of money. He rattled its contents.

"All my own, sir; all I have saved for Christmas. I will give it all to the man, if he will let me have my poor grandfather's knife back."

"What man?" asked the barrister.

"Oh, the gipsy: he gave me a string of birds' eggs for it."

"Should you know the man now?"

"Oh, yes," said the boy; "he was so tall and black-looking."

"Well, if you will come with me, I think we may get your knife again."

The child looked wistfully at his father.

"May I go?" Of course permission was given. The farmer said he would accompany them; and a few minutes saw them driving at full speed back to the town.

Leaving his young witness outside, Mr. Harvey re-entered the court.

"How does the trial go on?" asked he of a friend.

"All in favour of the prisoners: there is no doubt of their innocence and of their acquittal."

At this moment, the counsel for the prosecution stated that he had new facts to communicate, and important evidence to examine; and Mr. Harvey entered the witness-box.

We have already narrated what he had to tell.

The child was next called, evidently all surprise at the crowd and the scene; and, when first questioned, apparently too much abashed to reply. But he was naturally a fearless little fellow, and soon gave the most simple and straight-forward answers. On being asked if he understood the difference between truth and falsehood, he said—

"Yes, he knew it was very wicked to tell stories, but that he never did it."

The knife was then shewn him, which he recognised with a cry of delight; and stated, in the most artless and positive manner, how he came to sell it. He had been peeling a hazel twig, which he had taken from the copse adjoining the gipsy's tent—had cut his finger, which made him angry with the knife — at that moment the gipsy had come out of his tent, and offered him a string of birds' eggs for it — and he had accordingly made the exchange on the spot.

The next question was, "Would he know the man with whom he made the exchange?"

To this he gave the same answer as he had before given to Mr. Harvey.

Unknown to the boy, who continued to look wistfully on the knife, though he made not the slightest attempt to take it, the gipsy had been so placed in court among others, as to be distinct, but not conspicuous. Little James was told to see if he could discover in the crowd the man with whom he bartered his knife.

At first he looked in the wrong direction; but the moment he turned, his eye fell upon the gipsy.

"There he is!" said he, pointing the prisoner out; and his whole frame trembling with eagerness, he clasped Mr. Harvey's hand, and exclaimed, "Oh, sir, you said I should perhaps get back my grandfather's knife: he may have all my money."

So saying, he produced his little box, which he had brought with him.

Not one in the court but marked the change of the gipsy's face when he caught sight of the child standing with the knife in his hand. He turned pale as death, and a shudder passed from head to foot. Whatever might be his feeling, it was checked and concealed almost instantly; and the look of terror was succeeded by one of such ferocity, fixed on the child, that he clung to Mr.

Harvey, crying, "I do not want to have my knife again without paying."

On the female, the appearance of the child produced no effect. The testimony of James's father proved that the exchange had taken place the very day before the murder.

The chain of evidence was now complete, and the counsel for the prosecution stated that he had no more questions to put.

The prisoner was then asked whether he had aught to say in his defence, and especially in explanation of the remarkable fact so providentially brought to light? He sullenly owned to having bought the knife, but said he had dropped it out of his pocket the same day.

All were persuaded of the guilt of the man; but a strong feeling of the innocence of the woman prevailed: when suddenly the gipsy turned to his companion, and in a low voice said something in the unknown language he had before used. The effect of the words on the woman was fearful; her loud, long, heart-broken shriek rang through the court, and she sank on her knees, half, it seemed, in an attitude of supplication, half from inability to support herself. She stretched forth her arms towards the prisoner, whose face, for the first time, wore an expression of tenderness, as he gazed upon her and spoke in a singularly sweet and softly modulated tone. She rose from her knees; and whatever the last sentence was, it restored her to tranquillity. All this passed

in a moment, for the prisoners were immediately surrounded, and all further communication cut off between them.

A breathless silence prevailed as the judge gave his charge to the jury. He spoke but briefly of the enormity of the crime — this murder of the aged, the defenceless, and the poor: the general horror which pervaded every one present shewed that amplification was unnecessary. The very brevity had its effect; it was as if the deed were too terrible to be dwelt upon in human hearing. He enlarged more on the folly of guilt, which is so frequently, and was in the present instance so unexpectedly awakened from its blind security, not by the chance of discovery against which it had successfully and yet vainly guarded, but by some little circumstance whose effects had never been feared. He then summed up the various facts which brought the murder home to the gipsy—the vicinity of his encampment—his hurried departure —the purchase of the knife—the clearness with which the child gave his account, and identified the prisoner—the singular carelessness which left the knife behind, as if fated that a discovery should be made — all was conclusive of the real criminal.

The guilt of the female was perhaps less indubitably proved; but when her entire subjection to her husband was taken into consideration—the impossibility of his having committed the murder without her knowledge—the secret speech which, even in

the very hearing of the court, had been carried on between them—all these brought conviction of her knowledge of, if not participation in the bloody deed. If any doubt rested on the jury's mind in favour of the prisoners, it was their duty to give the suspected the full benefit of that doubt.

The jury retired; their deliberation was brief, but fatal; and a verdict of guilty was returned against both. The judge recorded the sentence, and pronounced the penalty — death.

"Death!" shrieked the female prisoner, and would have fallen with her face to the earth, but for the arm of the officer at her side. The gipsy himself burst into a torrent of blasphemies and revilings, amid which he was forced from the court.

A low moaning wind, a small sad rain, and a heavy louring sky, were meet accompaniments to the morning of execution. Slowly through the streets wound the gloomy procession; the windows, the pavement, the road, alike crowded with spectators: all the ordinary tasks of day were suspended—life pausing to gaze on death.

Her head bowed on her shoulder, as if it lacked strength to bear up its length of black hair; every shade of colour faded from both lip and cheek, till the face had the fixed and cold rigidity of a corpse, though still beautiful in feature; and the large dark eyes dilated with that look of bewildered terror you see in childhood,—the female seemed stupified and powerless from excess of dread.

The gipsy sat erect in the miserable cart, and every now and then his dark ferocious eye would single out some individual for a piercing and malignant gaze: that night many a pillow was haunted by his peculiar and evil look. He evidently enjoyed the terror of his victims; and but for his fetters, none would have guessed him to be the criminal whom but one short hour separated from eternity.

The gibbet had been erected within fifty yards of Mrs. Bird's shop, and a long and dreary way there was before the murderer could reach the place of his crime and of its punishment. The usually lonely moor was covered with people; and to the left the gallows, dimly seen through the thick fog, stood out every moment more distinctly, as the mist melted into rain. The prisoners were placed upon the scaffold, and their fetters knocked off: so great was the stillness, that almost every ear heard the clank of the chains as they fell to the ground.

Again the clergyman pressed forward to offer the holy, the only hope that can visit such an hour. The gipsy pushed him aside, and actually turned towards the hangman, who, silent and unmoved, waited to perform his dreadful duty.

Suddenly roused from the state of stupefaction to which fear had reduced her, the female filled the air with shrieks. Disengaging herself from the officers, and rushing towards her husband, she clung

with all her strength to his arm, imploring him, with frantic violence, not to let them kill her. He led, or rather dragged her to the front of the scaffold.

At this moment, the wind, which had been rising for some time, broke away the thick clouds behind into a line of cold clear light, which threw out the forms of the prisoners into gigantic proportions; while, blowing in the face of the people, it carried every sound forwards with singular distinctness.

Supporting the shuddering, but now speechless creature, the gipsy held her forth to the crowd.

" May the curse," said he, in a wild, shrill voice —so shrill, it was more like a scream—" May the curse of the innocent blood ye will this day shed, rest among you for ever!"

Whispering something, in a tone so low as to be only audible to her, he gave his wife, without one caress or look, to the officer. She stretched her arms towards her husband, but sank back fainting.

The hangman approached.

" Her first," exclaimed the gipsy,—the only touch of human feeling he had shewn.

While the rope was putting round her long slender neck she was quite passive; but her dying struggles were terrible. A suppressed cry of sympathy, a strange low moan—only loud from being so general—rose from the spectators: it sank into silence as the executioner turned to the gipsy. He raised his hand with a fierce gesture of menace to

the crowd below, then, allowing the rope to be adjusted with utter carelessness, was launched into the air, and died seemingly without a struggle.

The black cloud, which had been sailing on, now burst, the rain came down in torrents, the crowd rapidly dispersed; and in half an hour, the moor, which had been like a vast plain of human faces, was silent and solitary—there remained only the dark gibbet high in mid-air, and the two bodies swung violently to and fro by the fierce wind.

Towards evening the fitful gleam of the lantern, and the red glare of the torch, fell upon a small, sullen-looking group of the law's officials: the hangman was among them, and his harsh, malignant face given fully to view. Hastily they dug a hole, and at the foot of the gallows buried the wretched woman; but the body of the man was made fast in chains, and left for the scorching sun, the withering wind, and the birds of prey, to preserve or to destroy. The torches were extinguished; a flickering light from the lantern shone for a while over the scene—gradually diminishing, till it finally disappeared. Long was it before human step ventured across the dismal and deserted moor.

About a week after the execution, two circumstances occurred which tended greatly to criminate the man and exculpate his wife. All the missing articles of Mrs. Bird's property were found in a hollow tree, deep in the hazel thicket, tied up in an old yellow handkerchief, which the villagers re-

membered seeing the gipsy wear. One fact went far to prove Rachel's innocence. Some months after, a girl, who was in service, and had come home for a few days to be present at her sister's wedding, mentioned that she had the very morning of the murder set off early for the town of A . . . . ., where she was to meet the waggon—that she had had her fortune told by the woman, and had hurried away on seeing the husband approaching from the hazel thicket, she having always feared and disliked him. This was between seven and eight o'clock, just the time when the murder must have been committed; for John Dodd, the carrier, was there about half-past eight, and the body was then warm with recent life.

The belief in the innocence of the woman gave even a deeper horror to the moor: the shop went to ruins, the path was deserted, and even now, when the gallows-tree and the body have alike gone to decay, the tradition haunts the place fresh and fearful as ever. One trace remains of the little cottage-garden. In the midst of the bare or furze-covered moor are two or three stunted gooseberry bushes: it is years since they have borne fruit, or more than a few leaves on the grey and knotted boughs; but they are still pointed out as having grown in Mrs. Bird's garden.

Painted by Miss Elisa Sharpe. Engraved by H. Robinson.

BELINDA.

London Published for the Proprietor by Longman & Co. Paternoster Row.

[illegible]

[illegible]

An[illegible]
F[illegible]
Wha[illegible]
A[illegible]
I kn[illegible]
T[illegible]
"Th[illegible] you alone can [illegible]—
So [illegible]"

There, [illegible] fortune on the [illegible]
Ah, [illegible] breeze has [illegible]
(As if [illegible] were [illegible])
The fragments I ha[illegible]
So let the vows they [illegible]
Vows fugitive and [illegible]
I should as soon expect the [illegible]
My image to retain.

Painted by Miss Eliza Sharpe. Engraved by H. [illegible]

London. Published for the Proprietor by Longman & C° Paternoster Row.

BELINDA;

OR,

THE LOVE-LETTER.

ANOTHER soft and scented page,
Fill'd with more honied words!
What motives to a pilgrimage
A shrine like mine affords!
I know, before I break the seal,
The words that I shall find:—
" The wound which you alone can heal—
So fair, yet so unkind!"

There, take your fortune on the wind!
Ah, how the breeze has borne
(As if our malice were combined)
The fragments I have torn!
So let the vows they offer pass —
Vows fugitive and vain;
I should as soon expect the glass
My image to retain.

I care not for a heart whose youth
Is gone before its years,
Which makes a mockery of truth,
Which finds a boast in tears.
That is not love, when idleness
Would fill a listless hour —
'Tis vanity, which prizes less
The passion than the power.

I hold *that* love which can be kept
As silent as the grave,
And pure as dews by evening wept
Upon the heaving wave —
Embodying all life's poetry,
Its highest, dearest part:
And till such love my own may be,
I bear a charmed heart.

Painted by Miss L. Sharpe. Engraved by H. T. Ryall.

GULNARE.

London Published for the Proprietor by Longman & Co. Paternoster Row.

[illegible] the Proprietor by Long[illegible] Paternoster Row

GULNARE.

Oh, never more the flowers will stoop
  Beneath her fairy feet;
The myrtle with its bloom may droop,
  But not above her seat;
And no more will that fountain glass
  The image of Gulnare —
How softly would that shadow pass
  When noon was shining there!

How well the echoes used to know
  The music of her lute!
The wind amid the leaves may blow,
  But those sweet tones are mute.
The place is now an alter'd place,
  And not what it has been;—
It was the beauty of her face
  Gave beauty to the scene.

Why did her eye in pity dwell
  Upon that English knight,
The prisoner of the buried cell
  Where day forgot its light?
It is a weary thing to lie
  With weak and fetter'd hand,
While youth's brave time is passing by,
  And rust creeps o'er the brand.

'Twas in the still night's silent hours,
  The captive dreaming lay
Of his own old ancestral towers,
  His mother far away.
He heard a step—a low, hush'd breath—
  A sweet brow o'er him shone,
As even by the bed of death
  Might shine an angel one.

She bound his wounds, she gave him food,
  With odours and red wine;
And from a dreary solitude
  That cell became a shrine.
She came there once—she came there twice—
  The third time he was free:
She listen'd not her heart's advice,
  Though weak that heart might be:

But to the lover's gentle prayer
  Her pale lip still replied,
"I may not, for a stranger's care,
  Forsake my father's side."

Her hair hung down below her knee,
  Though loop'd with orient pearl;
He pray'd her of her courtesy
  To give him one dark curl.

"Mid friend and foe, mid weal and wo,
  This soft braid I'll retain;
And lady's favour, for thy sake,
  I'll never wear again."
She would not let him see her tears—
  A time would come to weep:
Alas for young and wasted years
  That one remembrance keep!

Ah! soon grief wears away the rose
  From any youthful cheek,
And soon the weary eyes will close
  Which hope not what they seek:
When dreams bring that loved face by night
  We never see by day,
Then the heart sickens at the light,
  And the look turns away.

There are some roses droop and die,
  While others bloom so fair—
Gone with their first and sweetest sigh:
  So was it with Gulnare.
Alas! the Earth hides many flowers
  Within her silent breast;
But could she not have spared us ours—
  Our dearest and our best?

Within the City of the Dead
  The maiden hath her home;
There are the dews of evening shed,
  And there the night-winds come.
Oh, Cypress! whose dark column waves,
  Nursed by the mourner's tear,
Thy shadow falls on many graves,
  But not on one so dear!

THERESA.

"THERE are individuals doomed to misfortune, and such is my destiny. There must be, among the general ill-luck, some one who is the unluckiest of them all: I am that one. To be banished from Vienna before the new ballet, and simply for being absent from my quarters without leave—what I have done fifty times before with impunity! And now for Colonel Rasaki—as though he had hoarded all the malice of his life for a moment—to hold forth on the necessity of strict discipline; and to awaken me from the prettiest allegory of the West-wind suddenly being personified by Madlle. Angeline, with an order from the Emperor to try the air of this old castle—as if I were a ghost or a rat, and could possibly be the better for dust, rust, damp, and darkness!"

Count Adalbert walked up and down the gloomy chamber which had been hurriedly prepared for his reception. The high and narrow windows had been built as if quite unconscious of their proper destina-

tion, and excluded the light and air as much as possible; still, many of the panes having been broken, little streams of the rain now beating against them came driving in; and a variety of small zephyrs, in the shape of draughts, did any thing but add to the Count's comfort. Half a tree would not have sufficed to fill the ample hearth, on which could just be perceived a flickering flame, almost lost in the immense volumes of smoke that rolled into the room, like waves on a beach; till Adalbert rushed in despair into the outward hall, which was inhabited by the one or two antique servitors who still remained in the large but ruinous building.

The sight of the old woman, whose wrinkled visage had driven him away in the first instance, might be shut out; now the smoke could not. Down he sat on a wooden stool, which must have been the first attempt ever made at a seat, so irregular were its shape and movements. This he drew to a table, whereon a most disconsolate supper was spread: twice the visitor looked down, to see whether he was cutting the meat or the wooden trencher.

Like most other young men, Count Adalbert had relations who conceived they knew better what was good for him than he did himself; and his uncle—whose experience was certainly very efficacious as a warning, and who believed that an error was easier to be prevented than remedied—on perceiving the young Count's predilection for the pret-

tiest dancer that had ever illuminated the horizon of Vienna, deemed that some *rouleaux*, and even a diamond necklace, would be saved by his nephew's being introduced to the historical records of his family, in which the old Castle of Aremberg occupied a distinguished place. Advantage was accordingly taken of a slight breach of military observance, and the delinquent forced to leave Vienna at a quarter of an hour's notice — quite unsuspicious how active his uncle had been for his good. Had Adalbert been aware of this most fatherly act, it is probable his guardian would have more than shared the execrations which the exile lavished in his inmost heart on fate, Colonel Rasaki, nay even on the august person of the Emperor.

A long ride had completely fatigued him, and he resolved to postpone his discontents.

" I shall have time enough to grumble," thought he, as he followed the lighted pine-splinter — the only taper the place afforded — to the state chamber. The moths flew out of the tapestry as he entered — they had half devoured the court of Solomon, no more "in all his glory;" the green velvet hangings of the enormous bed had shared the same fate; and Adalbert was again driven to the hall, where he fell asleep thinking of suicide, and awoke dreaming of Angeline, whose image, however, instantly took flight before the melancholy reality of the old castle.

Yet, a week had not elapsed before Adalbert thought the said castle very well for a change, and

the [illegible] delights. The truth is, he had [illegible] as pleasant a method of passing [illegible] country as any young gentleman could [illegible]

[illegible] in search of the beauties of Nature [illegible] who have nothing else to do, become [illegible] met with one of [illegible], the loveliest peasant girl that [illegible] in a shady place." A scarlet [illegible] with fur, partly covered [illegible] which was parted on the soft [illegible] bright and natural ringlets on [illegible] dress was of grey serge, and short [illegible] a foot and ancle such as not even [illegible] shoes could disguise; her cheek [illegible] crimson of early youth and [illegible] and her deep blue eyes shone [illegible] uncurbed gaiety and unbroken [illegible] bearing a willow basket [illegible] wild blossoms, with a dancing [illegible] song on her lips, singing in the very gladness of [illegible] heart.

[illegible] acquaintance — [illegible] and Theresa (for such was her [illegible] she [illegible] her fruit with the [illegible] the best upon him, in all the [illegible] nature of a child. She was [illegible] accustomed to meet [illegible] to be bashful.

[illegible] cottage, where Theresa's

Drawn by F. Stone.

Engraved by J. Thomson.

THERESA.

London Published for the Proprietor by Longman & Co. Paternoster Row

mother made Adalbert as welcome as herself; and in a few days, whether seated by her side as she turned her spinning-wheel of an evening, or with her when wandering in search of wild flowers and fruit, the contented exile and the beautiful peasant were constantly together. The dame was exceedingly quick in observing their love, which she seemed to consider quite natural. Though very ignorant, she had seen something of society beyond their own valley and its peasantry, and at once discovered that the Count was their superior: but the goodness and loveliness of her child entitled her, in the old woman's eyes, to be a princess at least.

Theresa was the most guileless creature, and had never dreamt of love till she felt it; the world to her was bounded by the wild moor and deep wood which surrounded their cottage. The only human beings she had ever beheld were the ancient domestics at the Castle, and a few of the peasants far poorer than themselves; for they had many comforts, which their neighbours eyed with much suspicion and some envy. Learning she had none, for neither mother nor daughter could read; but knowledge she had acquired. She knew all the legends and ballads of the country by heart; these gave their poetry to her naturally vivid imagination; and the imagination refines both feeling and manner. Having lived in absolute seclusion, she had nothing of that coarseness caught from familiar intercourse unrestrained by the delicacies of

polished life. Her companions had been the bird and the blossom, her songs, and her thoughts; and if the poet's dream of unsophisticated, yet refined nature, was ever realised, it was in that sweet and innocent maiden. Her love for Adalbert was a singular blending of childishness and romance: now her inward delight would find vent in buoyant laughter, and the playfulness of a young fawn bounding along the sunny glades of a forest: but oftener would she sink into a deep and tender silence—as if conscious that a new and even fearful existence had opened upon her—and gaze in his face, till her eyes were averted to conceal the large tears that had insensibly gathered in them. They had been acquainted with each other one whole fortnight, when the old priest at Hartzburg was called upon to marry the handsomest couple that had ever stood before the image of the Madonna!

If we did but know how we rush into one evil while seeking to avoid another, we should have no resolution to shun any thing. Could Count von Hermanstadt have anticipated that the fascinating dancer was far less dangerous than the then unknown peasant, his nephew would never have been ordered to the Castle of Aremberg. Little either could he dream, that the incognito he had himself enjoined, would have been found so useful and agreeable by his nephew. For Count von Hermanstadt, though very willing that Adalbert should take the Emperor's displeasure for granted, was not

desirous that others of a court where the sovereign's favour was every thing, should likewise take it for granted.

The first three weeks of Adalbert's married life passed very delightfully away, his position was one of such complete novelty: the cottage really was pleasanter than the castle; and if Theresa's beauty might have been a model for the painter, as the sweet colours flitted over her face, in like manner the many emotions that now disturbed the calm of a mind hitherto so tranquil and so glad, might have been a study for the philosopher. But Adalbert's previous habits had been ill-fitted to make their present state one of security—nay, his very youth was an obstacle; for in youth it seems so natural to love and be beloved, that we know not how to value as we ought the first devotion of the entire and trusting heart. Moreover, he had lived in a world of sarcasm; and Theresa's ignorance, which, now they were by themselves, was but a source of amusement, would, as he was aware, have been fertile matter of ridicule in society—ridicule, too, which must have reflected on him. Besides, all the prejudices of ancestry had, from infancy, been grafted on his mind—and he would as soon have thought of throwing his companion into the river on whose waters they were gazing, each on the mirrored face of the other, as of presenting her at Vienna. And yet that would have been the more merciful course. What was life whose affections were

wounded, and whose hopes were destroyed? And such was the life to which Adalbert was about to leave her. It came at last.

Mademoiselle Angeline's engagement had now drawn to its close: the manager offered to have the stage paved with ducats, if she would but give him one night more — the tenth muse was inexorable; and the day she departed for Paris, Adalbert received his recall to Vienna. To say he felt no regret, would be doing him scant justice — to say he felt much, would be more than the truth. Once or twice he thought of taking Theresa with him; but from this step he shrank for many reasons, not the least of which was, that a lingering impulse of good forbade his transplanting the pure and beautiful flower to wither and die in the thick and blighting atmosphere of the city: besides, he should often be able to visit Aremberg. He told them of important business — of a speedy return — and said all that has been so often and so vainly said in the hour of parting. He threw his horse's bridle over his arm, and Theresa walked with him along the little forest path which led to the road.

Adalbert was almost angry that she shewed none of the passionate despair, whose complaints he had nerved himself to meet: pale, silent, she clasped his hand a little more tenderly, she gazed on his face even more intently, than usual; and yet these tokens of sorrow she seemed trying to suppress. It never entered her imagination that

any entreaty of hers could alter their position—that any prayer could have prolonged Adalbert's stay for an hour; but every effort was directed to conceal her own grief: she felt so acutely the least sign of his suffering, that she only wished to spare him the sight of hers. At last he mounted his horse—once he looked back—Theresa was leaning against the old oak-tree for support, watching his progress—she caught his look, and as she interpreted it into an intention of returning, she held out her hands, and he could see the light come again to her eye and the colour to her cheek, while she sprang forward breathless with expectation; he, however, averted his head, and spurred his steed to its utmost swiftness: he did not see her sink on the earth—the strength which had sustained her had gone with her husband.

Youth's first acquaintance with sorrow is a terrible thing—before time has taught, what it will surely teach, that grief is our natural portion, at once transitory and eternal. But the first lesson is the severest—we have not then looked among our fellows, and seen that suffering is general; and we feel as if marked out by fate for misery that has no parallel. Theresa felt more acutely every hour, how wide a gulf had opened between her present and past existence: her girlhood had passed for ever; she took no pleasure in any of her former pursuits; she had put away childish things; and nothing had arisen to supply their place, save one

memory haunted but by one image. Days, weeks elapsed, and Adalbert returned not — her sleep was broken by a thousand fanciful terrors; but one fear had taken possession of her mother Ursaline's mind — that the stranger was false; and bitterly did she lament that she had ever intrusted him with the happiness of her precious child.

"And yet I did it for the best!" she would piteously exclaim, whenever her eye fell on the pale cheek of her daughter.

"He is come, my mother!" exclaimed Theresa, bounding one evening into the cottage with a long-unaccustomed lightness of heart and step. Though eager to spring down the path and meet him, yet, amid all the forgetfulness of joy, she had bethought her of her aged parent, and returned that she too might share the happiness of their meeting. They hurried out, and three horsemen were riding up the valley — one much in advance of the others.

"Mother, it is a stranger!" with difficulty articulated Theresa, and, sick at heart, clung to her arm for support.

The rider was full in sight, when, with a shriek that roused her daughter, Ursaline exclaimed, "Now the blessed saints be good unto us, but it is my old master — I should know him amid a thousand!"

The words were scarcely uttered, when the horseman dismounted at a rough part of the road, and, flinging his bridle to his attendants, approached alone. He was a tall, stately, and austere-looking

man, seemingly about fifty, and one who apparently knew the place well. Ursaline dropped on her knee; he raised her kindly, and, following the direction of her look, turned and clasped Theresa in his arms.

"My child! my sweet child!" and he gazed long and earnestly on her beautiful face.

"Your father, the Baron von Haitzinger," murmured Ursaline.

But as our explanation will be more brief than one broken in upon by words of wonder, regret, and affection, we will proceed to it; holding that explanation, like advice, should be of all convenient shortness. So much good luck had the Baron von Haitzinger had during the first thirty years of his life, that fortune seemed under the necessity of crowding an inordinate portion of evil into a small space, in order to make up for lost time. The same day brought him intelligence of his wife's desertion, and of his attaintment as a traitor; and, further, that this accusation had been chiefly brought about by the intrigues of his former partner. A price being set on a man's head, usually makes him very speedy in his movements; and the Baron fled from his castle with the rapidity of life and death, but not unaccompanied. Wrapt in his mantle he bore with him their only child, a little girl of two years old. As boys, he and the Count von Hermanstadt had often hunted in the forests around Aremberg; his own foster-sister had married one of the dependants of the family; and to the care of Ursaline, now a

widow, he resolved to intrust his Theresa. Never should she owe her nurture to her mother — no, she should grow up pure and unsophisticated as the wild flowers on the heath beside her dwelling. Ursaline gave the required oath of secrecy, and took the charge.

Years and years of exile had passed over the Baron's head; his wife died—that was some comfort; and at length, a new emperor, together with the indefatigable efforts of his friend, Von Hermanstadt, procured the establishment of his innocence, the repeal of his banishment, and the restoration of his estate. His first act was to throw himself at the feet of his gracious sovereign, his second to depart in search of his child.

We have stated, it was the Baron's wish that Theresa should be brought up in ignorance and simplicity; but, as usually happens when our wishes are fulfilled, he was disappointed and somewhat dismayed on finding that she could not even read; and that instead of French, now the only language tolerated at Vienna, and which alone he had spoken for years — his exile having been alleviated by a constant residence at Paris — his child was unable to greet him save in the gutturals of her native German. Aghast at the ridicule the result of his experiment might entail upon him, he hurried to his family estate: here, having engaged a French governess and a professor of singing, he resolved to keep Theresa in perfect seclusion for

two years longer. Somewhat reluctantly, Ursaline accompanied them ; for her dread of their secret being discovered almost overcame her distress at the bare thought of her foster-child.

"The Baron will kill us if he hears of your marriage—and yet I did it for the best: I thought he must be dead, and I knew you ought to marry none but a noble. Who could have thought Count Adalbert would have proved so false-hearted?"

Such were the constant lamentations of the old nurse whenever they were alone: but the secret she had to keep was too much for her; and six weeks after leaving their cottage, Ursaline was safe from Von Haitzinger's anger in the grave.

Theresa wept for her long and bitterly: many sorrows took the semblance of one. Treated as a child, offered the amusements and the rewards of a child, when her heart was full of the grief and care of a woman—hourly she was more and more thrown upon herself. Her father, who considered every moment lost which was not given to the pursuit of education, debarred himself from her society. It was a sacrifice, but to Theresa it appeared choice; and he thus repelled the confidence which kindness and familiar intercourse might have encouraged. She soon took an interest in the employments selected for her—they served to divert her attention from a remembrance that grew continually more painful. Every step she gained in knowledge, every experience brought by reading or conversa-

tion, but served to shew her more fully the difficulty of her position.

Love is the destiny of a woman's life, and hers had been sealed on the threshold of existence: it was too late now to change the colour of or alter the past. Theresa's greatest enjoyment was to wander through the lonely gardens: though the leaf and the flower could never more be to her the companions they had been, still, when alone, they aided her in recalling the days when they were mute witnesses to vows which had the common fate of being kept but by one. The difference between herself and those of her own age consisted in this, that they looked to the future, she dwelt upon the past; they hoped, she only remembered.

The young Countess's instructors were loud in their praises of her docility and progress; the French governess remarking, "*Mademoiselle est pleine des talens et des graces; mais elle est si triste et si silencieuse.*"

The two years passed, and Theresa was to accompany her father to Vienna. The Baron von Haitzinger, who had never quite recovered the shock of finding that his daughter could only speak German, and could neither read nor write, was utterly unprepared for the sensation she produced on her introduction into society. Theresa at twenty more than realised the promise of seventeen; yet it is singular how much the character of her beauty was changed. She had been a glad, bright, buoyant

creature, with a cheek like a rose, a mouth radiant with smiles, and the golden curls dancing in sunny profusion over the blushes they shaded. Now her hair and eyes were much darker, her cheek was pale, and the general cast of her face melancholy and thoughtful; her step was still light, but slow—it was urged on no longer by inward buoyancy: and if a painter, three years before, would have chosen her as a model for the youngest of the Graces, he would now have selected her for the loveliest of the Muses—so ethereal, so intellectual was that sad and expressive countenance. Her father was charmed with the ease and self-possession of her manner—the perfection of beautiful repose: true, it was broken in upon by none of the flatterings of girlish vanity, none of the slight yet keen excitements of a season given to gaiety.

The Countess was wholly indifferent to the scene that surrounded her—to its pleasure and its triumph; she had a standard of her own by which she measured enjoyment, and found what was here deemed pleasure by others, to be vapid and worthless; and now, more than ever, the image of Adalbert rose present to her mind. She compared him with the many cavaliers about her; and the comparison was, as it ever is, in favour of the heart's earliest idol. Even when unconsciously yielding to the influence exercised by light, music, and a glittering crowd, Theresa would start back, and muse on what might be the fate of Adalbert at that

very moment; for, with a confidence belonging to youth and woman, she admitted any suggestion rather than the obvious one of his inconstancy. Two or three brilliant conquests cost her a sleepless night and a pale cheek; but as her father always acquiesced in a prompt refusal, she gradually became happy in the belief that he did not desire her marriage.

One evening all Vienna was assembled at a *réunion* given by the French Ambassador. Dazzling with jewels, and looking her very loveliest, Theresa was seated beside the lady who accompanied her, when her eye suddenly rested on Adalbert. A dense crowd was between them, but the platform on which he was standing enabled him to see over their heads; and he was evidently gazing on her. With a faint cry, she half started from her seat—fortunately she was unobserved; and again sinking back in her chair, she endeavoured to collect her scattered spirits from their first confusion of surprise and delight. Her astonishment had yet to be increased. The Baron appeared on the scene, greeted the stranger most cordially, and arm in arm they descended among the throng. At intervals she caught sight of his splendid uniform; it came nearer and nearer: at last they emerged from a very ocean of velvet and plumes, and her father addressed her—

"Theresa, my love! I am most anxious to present to you the nephew of my oldest friend, Prince Ernest von Hermanstadt."

Adalbert, or Ernest, bowed most admiringly it is true, but without the slightest token of recognition. Faint, breathless, Theresa sought in vain to speak.

"You look pale, my child," said her father; "the heat is too much for you. Do, Ernest, try to make your way with her to the window, and I will get a glass of water."

Theresa felt her hand drawn lightly through the arm to which she had so often clung, and the Prince with some difficulty conveyed her to the window. There they stood alone for some minutes, before the Baron could rejoin them; yet not by word or sign did her companion imply a previous knowledge. His manner was most gentle, most attentive; but it was that of a perfect stranger.

Theresa drank the glass of water, and, by a strong effort, recalled her presence of mind. She looked in Prince Ernest's face—it was no mistake; every feature of that noble and striking countenance was too deeply treasured for forgetfulness. Her father, by continually addressing her, shewed how anxious he was for her to join in the conversation. At last she trusted her voice with a few brief words; the Prince listened to them eagerly, but, it was evident, only with present admiration.

They remained together the rest of the evening, and the Prince von Hermanstadt handed her to the Baron's carriage.

"What do you think of my young favourite?"

asked her father, as they entered their abode. "But I hate unnecessary mysteries, so shall tell you at once, that in Prince Ernest you see your destined husband: you have been betrothed from your birth. This, however, is no time to talk over family matters, for you look fatigued to death."

Theresa retired to her chamber, her head dizzy with surprise and sorrow. She had gleaned enough from the conversation to discover that Ernest's absence from his country had been entirely voluntary — that she had known him under a feigned name — therefore, from the very first he had been deceiving her. Strange that till this moment her heart had never admitted the belief of his falsehood! As she paced her room, she caught sight of her whole-length figure in the glass: then rose upon her memory her own reflection as she had seen it shadowed in the river near her early home, and the change in herself struck her forcibly.

"I marvel that he knew me not?—it were far greater marvel had he known me."

She looked long and earnestly in the mirror; a rich colour rose to her cheek, and the light flashed from her eyes —

"What if I could make him love me now? and then let him feel only the faintest part of what I have felt!" But the last words were so softly uttered, that they sounded like any thing rather than a denunciation of revenge.

The next day and the next saw Ernest a con-

stant visitor; and Theresa in vain sought to hide from herself the truth, that she felt a keen pleasure in observing how much more suitable her new self was to her former lover. Then they had nothing, now they had so much in common with each other; they read together, they talked together; and Hermanstadt was delighted with the melancholy and thoughtful style of her conversation.

The summer was now advancing, and Haitzinger proposed visiting the Castle. Thither the whole party adjourned; the two elder Barons — for Ernest's uncle had now joined them—leaving the young people almost entirely to themselves. Here Theresa could not but perceive that Ernest grew daily depressed; sometimes he would leave her abruptly, and she would afterwards learn that for hours he had been wandering alone.

One evening, while walking in the old picture-gallery, Theresa turned to the window to admire the luxuriant growth of a parasitic plant, whose drooping white flowers hung in numberless fragrant clusters. Ernest approached to her side, and they leant from the casement — both mute with the same emotion, though from different causes. Suddenly he broke silence, and Theresa again listened to the avowal of his love. But now the voice was low and broken, and he spoke mournfully and hopelessly; for in the same hour in which he owned his passion for the Countess, he also acknowledged to her his marriage with the peasant.

Ernest had, in truth, been spoilt by circumstances; his conquests had been too easy, and he had mistaken vanity and interest for love. But a deep and true feeling elevates and purifies the heart into which it enters. His passion for Theresa brought back his better nature; and he now bitterly deplored the misery he must have caused the young and forsaken creature, whose happiness he had destroyed by such thoughtless cruelty. "The sacrifice I now make may well be held an atonement."

He turned to leave the gallery as he spoke, but Theresa's voice arrested his steps.

"I have long known your history, Prince Ernest—long looked for this confession. Your wife is now in the Castle; I will prepare her for an interview—from her you must seek your pardon."

She was gone before Von Hermanstadt recovered his breath. It would be vain to say what were his thoughts during the succeeding minutes; shame, surprise—something, too, of pity blended with regret. He had not moved from the spot, when the Countess's page put a note into his hand.

"I do not wish to let my father know all yet: join us at the end of the acacia wood—your wife there awaits your arrival.—THERESA."

The Prince obeyed the summons mechanically—as in dreams we obey some strange power. A sharp angle in the walk brought him, before he was aware, to the place; and there, as though he had but just parted from her, stood his wife, leaning for support

against the old oak. She wore the scarlet cap broidered with fur, the grey stuff dress, and the plaited apron: her beautiful profile was half turned towards him.

"Theresa!" he whispered; when, starting at the face, which was now completely given to view, he exclaimed, "Is it possible?" for he saw instantly that it was the Countess before him.

"Yes, Adalbert—or Ernest—by which name shall I claim you?" And the next moment she was in his arms.

Confession and forgiveness followed of course; though the Baron von Haitzinger resolved that he would give no encouragement to his grand-daughters being brought up in unsophisticated seclusion, as it rarely happens that two experiments of the same kind turn out well. Still, it is but justice to state, that Theresa never had any further occasion to regret that her husband's heart was once lost and twice won.

MEDITATION.

A sweet and melancholy face, that seems
Haunted with earnest thought; the dark midnight
Has given its raven softness to her hair;
And evening, starry eve, half clouds, half light,
Is in the shadowy beauty of her eyes.

How quietly has Night come down,
Quiet as the sweet sleep she yields!
A purple shadow marks yon town,
A silvery hue the moonlit fields;
And one or two white turrets rise
Glittering beneath the highest ray—
As conscious of the distant skies,
To which they teach and point the way.

The river in the lustre gleams,
Where hang the blossomed shrubs above—
The flushed and drooping rose, whose dreams
Must be of summer and of love.
The pale acacia's fragrant bough
Is heavy with its weight of dew;
And every flower and leaf have now
A sweeter sigh, a deeper hue.

Painted by W. Boxall. Engraved by J. Thomson.

MEDITATION.

London, Published for the Proprietor by Longman & Co. Paternoster Row

There breathes no song, there stirs no wing—
  Mute is the bird, and still the bee;
Only the wind is wandering—
  Wild Wind, is there no rest for thee?
Oh, wanderer over many flowers,
  Have none of them for thee repose?
Go sleep amid the lime-tree bowers,
  Go rest by yon white gelder-rose.

What! restless still? methinks thou art
  Fated for aye to bear along
The beating of the poet's heart,
  The sorrow of the poet's song.
Or has thy voice before been heard,
  The language of another sphere,
And every tone is but a word
  Mournful, because forgotten here?

Some memory, or some sympathy,
  Is surely in thy murmur brought:
Ah, all in vain the search must be,
  To pierce these mysteries of thought!
They say that, hung in ancient halls,
  At midnight from the silent lute
A melancholy music falls
  From chords which were by daylight mute.

And so the human heart by night
  Is touched by some inspired tone,
Harmonious in the deep delight,
  By day it knew not was its own.

Those stars upon the clear blue heaven —
  Those stars we never see by day —
Have in their hour of beauty given
  A deeper influence to their sway —

Felt on the mind and on the soul—
  For is it not in such an hour
The spirit spurns the clay's control,
  And genius knows its glorious power ? —
All that the head may e'er command,
  All that the heart can ever feel,
The tuneful lip, the gifted hand,
  Such hours inspire, such hours reveal.

The morrow comes with noise and toil,
  The meaner cares, the hurried crowd,
The culture of the barren soil,
  And gain the only wish avowed:
The loftier vision is gone by—
  The hope which then in light had birth,
The flushing cheek, the kindling eye,
  Are with the common things of earth.

Yet all their influence is not gone:
  Perchance in that creative time
Some high attraction first was known,
  Some aim and energy sublime.
In such an hour doth sculptor know
  What shapes within the marble sleep;
His Sun-god lifts the radiant bow,
  His Venus rises from the deep.

And imaged on the azure air
  The painter marks his shadows rise —
A face than mortal face more fair,
  And colours which are of the skies.
The hero sees the field his own,
  The banners sweep o'er glittering spears,
And in the purple and the throne
  Forgets their cost of blood and tears.

And he who gave to Europe's sight
  Her sister world, till then unseen,
How long to his inspired night
  Familiar must that world have been!
All Genius ever yet combined,
  In its first hour could only *seem*,
And rose embodied in the mind
  From some imaginative dream.

O beauty of the midnight skies!
  O mystery of each distant star!
O dreaming hours, whose magic lies
  In rest and calm, with Day afar!
Thanks for the higher moods that wake
  Our thoughtful and immortal part!—
Out on our life, could we not make
  A spiritual temple of the heart!

GERALDINE.

LONELY and deep as the fountain when springing
From its earliest birthplace beneath the dark pines,
When first mid the wild flowers around it goes singing,
When first on its waters the red morning shines:

So lonely, so deep, is the love which is cherish'd,
Silent and sacred, Earl Surrey, for thee;
All lighter and meaner affections have perish'd—
Life now has only but one love for me.

I share with thee every thought that delights me—
I read, it is only to tell thee again:
I have not a feeling on earth but unites me
To thee, be it intellect, pleasure, or pain.

I lean o'er the rose when the night-dews are weeping,
And deem its leaves written with sweet words of
thine;
I see thy bold falcon through mid-heaven sweeping,
And wish it could bear thee a message of mine.

Drawn by F. Stone. Engraved by J. Thomson.

GERALDINE.

London, Published for the Proprietor, by Longman & Co. Paternoster Row.

And yet I am mournful—I think of our morrow,
And my heart fills with nameless and shadowy fears:
The heart has its omens, and mine are of sorrow—
I know that our future has anguish and tears.

I see the clouds pass o'er the stars, and my spirit
Grows dark as the terrors which round it are thrown:
Ah, Surrey! whatever my lot may inherit,
I care not, so suffering but reach me alone.

REBECCA.

How beautiful, buoyant, and glad is morning! The first sunshine on the leaves; the first wind, laden with the first breath of the flowers—that deep sigh with which they seem to waken from sleep; the first dew, untouched even by the light foot of the early hare; the first chirping of the rousing birds, as if eager to begin song and flight: all is redolent of the strength given by rest, and the joy of conscious life.

Rebecca Clinton, though pale with the long vigil of an anxious night—such as is spent by a sick bed-side—felt the revigorating influence. She opened the lattice of her little chamber, and it shook from the rose-tree, with which it was overgrown, a shower of dew-drops and leaves. So close that it must have been hidden amid the foliage of a huge old horse-chestnut tree, though not a leaf stirred, a cuckoo was singing—the only bird whose chant was yet complete. Rebecca leant listening to the soft but mournful reiteration, with the tears fast rushing into her eyes. Sound peculiarly appeals to memory. On

awakening from her brief but heavy slumber, she had almost unconsciously thrown open the window; the fresh air, the clear atmosphere, gave for a moment their own joyfulness to her spirits: but that song broke the spell. She turned away, and, with the common exaggeration of much sorrow, reproached the bright and unsympathising morning; while the two sad and still-repeated notes seemed the very echo of her thoughts.

At length she rose, and with a light step sought the adjacent apartment. Hung with old, worm-eaten tapestry, and massy curtains that excluded the light, a floor dark from age, and the ancient chairs and bureau formed of the black walnut-tree wood, —it seemed indeed the chamber of death. Rebecca could scarcely penetrate the obscurity; gradually her sight became accustomed to the darkness, and surrounding objects stood forth dimly visible.

"I have slept more than an hour," thought she, as her eye fell upon the glass, whose sands had run out; and it comforted her to observe that the cup of herb-tea was untouched.

Noiselessly she drew near the bed, and, with careful hand removing one of the thick folds of the curtains, was able to gaze on the visage of the sleeper, which was turned directly towards her. She started, as if the face had not been a familiar one; but now, that no expression illumined the countenance, no affection spoke in the closed eyes —now she could see the ravages of disease. Every

feature was sharp, the forehead was sunken, and the cheek was so white that it was undistinguishable from the pillow on which it lay. Even in sleep the cold damp stood on the brow, and the breath was drawn with an effort. She let the curtain fall, but softly; and left the room for her own. There she gave way; and the wrung hand, the deep sob, betrayed without relieving the passion of grief.

Rebecca was an only and an orphan child, and her father had idolised her with a twofold fondness. He loved in her both her mother and herself; and the love was the deeper, because that on it rested the tenderness of the grave. Each felt they had the place of another to supply.

Clinton was of an old but decayed family; he had lost the wreck of his property by fighting for the Stuarts, and the Restoration brought only those unfulfilled hopes which seem sent but to make disappointment more bitter. To an aged servant, who had lived beneath his roof in better days, he owed his present asylum; she had been left housekeeper at the manor while its proprietor was abroad, and three rooms were made serviceable to her old master and his daughter. Rebecca was now about twenty; and from her mother, a converted Jewess, she inherited that Oriental style of beauty which enables us to comprehend the similes of the Eastern poets. Truly had she the dark full eye of the gazelle, the grace of the young cedar, and a blush coloured from the earliest rose in Sharon. She was impetuous

and imaginative; the impetuosity had been little called forth by the solitude in which they lived, but the imagination had been strongly nourished. Their small shelf held a few volumes—some early romances and works of the later dramatists gave their own poetry to the ideal world which filled all her lonely hours. Her affection for her father was entire and engrossing: it must be owned, that its unity had never been endangered; for, from the verge of girlhood, their seclusion had been unbroken save by a single visitor; and he was little calculated to attract a romantic and youthful female.

Richard Vernon was one of those religious enthusiasts with which the period abounded. Naturally stern and harsh in temper as in feature, he delighted in sacrifice: from it he drew an inward consolation of superiority, and rejoiced in the scorn he cast on the pleasures and pursuits of other men. His mind was strong, but narrow; and his enthusiasm had never known but one vent. Embittered by the consciousness of unappreciated talent, spiritual pride had become a tower of refuge: believing himself to be the chosen of the Lord, accounted for and sanctified the neglect of men: was not the curse of blindness on all but the elect? — "Seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive; and hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand."

Of an iron constitution, he had never known those bodily weaknesses which so often affect the feelings; and nothing teaches like sickness the value

of patience and sympathy. He had been left an orphan at an early age — too early for memory — and had forced his own hard way in a hard world: love had never made the excitement of his youth, nor the relaxation of his manhood. In short, he had passed through life without having experienced one softening influence. From sickness he never learnt the worth of kindness, nor had death ever taught him how sacred and how bitter is the thought of the beloved and of the dead. He had belonged to the church, from which, however, he had been ejected for non-conformity.

The loss of his benefice was small to him, in comparison with many of his brethren; for death succeeding death had put him in possession of much property belonging to distant relatives. Not such was the indignation with which he beheld the obedience exacted, and the authority exercised by the episcopal church. The dark and mysterious passages of Scripture became more than ever his constant study; and applying every denunciation to his own time, he firmly believed that judgment was at hand, and only waited some crowning iniquity to call down God's vengeance on a guilty land.

It is a humbling thing to human pride to observe that strength of mind does not preserve its possessor from indulging any favourite delusion; but that this very strength gives its own force to the belief. In the eyes of Richard Vernon all the

pleasures and employments of his fellow-men were abomination and vanity; business was a heaping up of worthless dross; intellect, a stumbling-block; poetry, painting, and music, devices of the enemy; affection, sinful weakness: indeed, all worldly pursuits were foolishness, if not sin, in those who were now warned to "flee from the wrath to come." Still, even while he deemed himself most secure, the softest yet most powerful of earthly feelings had taken a firm hold of his heart.

No two men could be of more opposite dispositions and habits than Vernon and Clinton; the latter had delicate health and a gentle temper—was at once humble and rational in his piety—and had all the elegant and refined tastes which the other despised. Still, since their residence in the same neighbourhood, their intercourse had been constant. Clinton was fond of society, though now compelled by circumstances to renounce it. The very fact of having to support his opinions was an excitement; and the often fiery eloquence of the fierce Calvinist had for him all the enjoyment of poetry. Vernon liked the meek and kind-hearted invalid more than he would himself have admitted; but the link that bound them together was the innocent and lovely Rebecca.

In the high, haughty temper of the young and queen-like beauty, Vernon recognised a similar spirit to his own, but which he was too conscious of his powers to fear, as a weaker-minded man might

have done. One lesson from early experience—one touch of more delicate feeling—and Rebecca's heart might have been his. Though his age doubled hers, and his personal appearance was harsh even to forbiddingness, she might have loved him.

It is the mistake of a coxcomb, whose experience of affection is all to come—if it ever comes—to say that women are won by mere good looks. Though it does not owe its birth to them, Gratitude and Vanity are the nurses that rock the cradle of Love. Neither of these did Vernon deign to conciliate. Angry at a feeling with which he nevertheless struggled in vain, the conflict gave even additional harshness to his manner; and he contradicted Rebecca's opinions, reproached her likings, disdained her pursuits, and dealt out condemnation on all her favourite volumes, as if not allowing his external demeanour to be affected were some excuse for his internal preference.

About a month before the period of which we are now speaking, he had openly offered himself as suitor to Rebecca Clinton. One evening, when his temper had been softened by the patient suffering of her father—from which the conversation had taken an unusually subdued tone—the invalid was led, from alluding to his illness, to touch upon its consequences; and for a few minutes the image of his orphan girl destroyed all the firmness of his philosophy, all the resignation of religion. He was startled by Richard Vernon rising, and, with words

vehement to fierceness, demanding his daughter Rebecca to wife.

Clinton was taken completely by surprise. Like most of those who daily see a child growing up before them, he had not calculated her years, and had never yet thought of Rebecca as of a woman. Though often, in some vague futurity, he had indulged in romance about her fortunes, better justified by her grace and loveliness than by the circumstances under which they were expanding; yet, certainly, the future he had imagined for her was not as the bride of Richard Vernon.

To balance these dreams there arose, on the instant, the many advantages of the proposal — her forlorn and desolate situation — and the high character of the man who now offered heart and home. Clinton gasped for breath, and gave a thankful consent.

At this moment Rebecca entered; but, alas! the proposal received a surprised, almost disdainful, refusal. As yet she knew too little of the worth of worldly advantages to estimate his disinterestedness at its value. Vernon left the house indignant and disappointed, but with less of anger and more of hope than Rebecca suspected. The truth is, he pitied her as a silly child, whose head was filled with old romances, and laid all the blame on her father's weak indulgence — an error he purposed to remedy with all convenient speed.

A sudden access of illness in Mr. Clinton made an

excuse for calling, after a brief interval had elapsed; and his visits soon fell again into their usual train. Vernon was obstinate; and the refusal—which would have decided the refined, or discouraged the timid—was to him merely an obstacle to be subdued. Looking upon women as infinitely inferior to men, he was provoked to think that the whim of a foolish girl should interfere with his settled purpose. His first plan, that of calling in paternal authority to his assistance, was disappointed by Clinton's instant and decided declaration, that, even if he had the will, he did not consider he had the right to force the inclination of his daughter: his approbation and his preference were all he could give.

Vernon was more angry and discontented than disheartened, and more stubborn in his pursuit than ever, though he left its issue to circumstances, and perhaps his rebukes took even a severer tone. He deceived his own mind, and soothed his own pride, by the belief that he was only actuated by a desire for her temporal and spiritual benefit;—he knew he could save her from poverty; he equally presumed he could from perdition. A lamb rescued from the slaughter, a brand snatched from the fire, was the constant phraseology of his very thoughts.

Weakened by illness, worn by vague anxiety—the worst form anxiety can take—looking at all life's hopes and wishes through the shadows flung by coming death, Clinton dwelt upon his friend's offer till his strong wish grew, as wishes usually do,

into a conviction that Rebecca would finally add her consent to his own.

Such was the state of the dwellers at the old house at the time when our tale commences.

Clinton, the morning his daughter bent over his feverish slumber, slept longer than usual, and was proportionably refreshed; and when Rebecca tempted him, in the afternoon, to the rustic seat beneath the sycamore — the pleasant shade around them, the bright sunshine elsewhere, the hum of the bees in the honied branches over-head, the chirping of the numerous birds, the gay colours of the flowers, almost unconsciously exerted a cheering influence; and their thoughts, though not glad, were at least placid and soothing. The lawn, — if lawn it could still be called, which had long lost the pristine smoothness of the once velvet turf, and was now covered with a multitude of daisies — signs, they say, of a poor soil, though it is, at all events, a cheerful poverty, — commanded a view of the adjacent country; and the road, varied by many a gentle undulation, wound through the hedge-girdled fields, some green with grass, others shining with the first yellow of the corn, and here and there an unenclosed nook where grew two or three stately elms.

Suddenly Rebecca's quick eye caught sight of a dark figure on one of the heights in the distance.

"How vexatious!" was her hasty exclamation; "here is Mr. Vernon coming to interrupt us!"

"I would, my child," replied Clinton mourn-

fully, "you did more justice to the good qualities of a man who has the merit of appreciating yours. Rebecca! the time may, nay must come, when your only earthly resource will be the attachment of Richard Vernon. Do not interrupt me, dearest; if I pain you, it is for your good: but can you believe that your future desolate situation is ever absent from my mind? So young, so beautiful, and so unprotected—Rebecca, I could die in peace if you were the wife of Richard Vernon."

Rebecca rose from her seat on the grass, and, kneeling at her father's side, gazed for a few moments earnestly in his face before she replied.

"And would it content you, my father, to know that you had joined those whom nature hath sundered, O how utterly!—to know that your child was grown old even in her youth?—that she had thoughts she might not utter, hopes she herself must destroy?—that her daily words must be either mean with hypocrisy, or bitter with contention? A home! Is that a home by whose hearth sits coldness, and beneath whose roof is discontent? My father, I cannot love Richard Vernon! and that not for vain dislike to outward look or bearing, but because we have not one opinion, wish, or feeling in common. Even my weak judgment sees the fallacy of that morality which makes sins of innocent pleasures and of harmless employment; which renders the path of duty too rough and too narrow for human foot; and which wastes on vain trifles

the salutary horror we intuitively feel of vice. I shudder at his religion. In the fierce damnation in which he delights, in the mystic revealments in which he exults, what trace is there of the meek and humble faith you have taught me should be my daily guide, extending its charity to all men? My father! you know that at your word I would wed Richard Vernon; but can you say that word?"

The only answer was a slight caress — it was enough; and Rebecca turned to re-enter the house. Glancing at the winding road, she saw that Vernon had yet a considerable space to cross before he could join them, and added cheerfully, "Fear not for me, my father; other fear"—and the rich colour mounted even to her crimsoned forehead — "other fear than that of want and privation befalling me, you cannot have. But I am strong in youth and in hope; I am skilful in many things; and it were strange, as well as hard, if I could not gain for myself the little I require."

What a visionary thing is the independence of youth! how full of projects, which take the shape of certainties! How much of rugged and stern experience it requires to convince the young and the eager, that the efforts of an individual unaided by connexion or circumstance, are the true reading of the allegory of the Danaides: — industry and skill, alas, how often are they but water drawn with labour into a bucket full of holes!

Clinton sat lost in thought, till he was roused by

Vernon, who wore a gloomier brow, and spoke in even severer tones than usual.

" So, I find you alone! To be sure," said he, looking round, "you can see from hence the approach of any one, and any one can see your movements too."

Clinton replied but by asking his companion to sit down on the bench beside him; and in so doing, he displaced a small volume, whose worn black calf binding shewed it was a favourite. It fell open at the very play he and Rebecca had been reading, "The Merchant of Venice;" and the unfortunate book immediately suggested a new vent to Vernon's spleen.

" And this, forsooth, is the study of your noon! I marvel not that your daughter's head is so turned by vanities and fancies. Verily, poetry is a device of the evil one, which has served him in good sort!"

" A somewhat harsh judgment," returned Clinton, smiling, " to be pronounced on those who beguile many a weary hour, and to whom we owe many a delicate enjoyment."

" Now, out upon such toys! Were my power equal to my will, I would soon purify the land, even with fire, of each vain and lying tome that but distracts the mind from the one sacred volume, on which alone it should be fixed, and on which alone thought should meditate."

" Your pardon, friend," replied Clinton; " I do not believe that the heart is turned from the Creator by enjoying his works. Of what avail is the sweet

breath of the rose, the morning song of the lark? The pleasure they impart is not matter of necessity, and yet we delight in both. The soul of the poet is as much His gift as the fragrance of the flower, or the lay of the bird; and the page where inspired words record heroic deed, touching sorrow, or natural loveliness, is one of those pleasures for which we should be thankful. I, for my part, believe most devoutly in the Almighty mercy, when I see how much that is beautiful and gladdening has been scattered over our pilgrimage here."

Vernon's attention had been diverted by a shadow flung on one of the windows. He watched, and could see that it was Rebecca; she was seated at work, with her back to the garden, which she seemed to have no design of visiting.

"I appear to have frightened away your daughter," exclaimed he, angrily.

"Most of our household occupations devolve on Rebecca," was her father's reply.

"I see how it is, and I weary of this childishness," retorted Vernon. "Reginald Clinton, for the last time I offer you the name and home of an honest man for your daughter. Perhaps, after the fashion of those vain romances in which you indulge, you deem that Rebecca has but to go forth, like some wandering princess, to find earl and knight ready to lay lance in rest '*pour l'amour de ses beaux yeux;*' and that the coronet and the castle wait for their mistress. I warn you, this

is not the reading of real life! Rebecca will enter the cold and cruel world, homeless, friendless, moneyless! Her refined nature will soon revolt at the meanness more than at the privation of poverty. Then will her beauty — for she is fair, very fair — catch the eye of some young cavalier (troth, and but our king trains them in goodly practices!): first there will be refusal and reserve; then pity and relief, and the woman's heart will be caught by some woman's toy; folly will succeed to fancy; and a few soft words will disperse in air all that her father and her Bible have taught.

"Nay, let me finish the picture," he continued, upon a somewhat impatient gesture of his friend. "After vanity comes disappointment — the lover tires, or she herself may change; the same tale is told by another, and the same sequel ensues — save that the love is not so deep, and the faith not so true. A few years, and her face is not fair as it was in youth — sin and sorrow have left on it their traces; the cheek has a bloom not its own, the hair is dashed with grey, the lip is thin, and the brow haggard. The lover turns away; and death comes on, heralded by poverty and neglect; then the child of your heart goes down to the grave unwept, her memory cursed by many whom she led to evil, to disobedience, and to waste. And what think you becomes of the immortal soul, base, polluted, and hardened in its guilt? Deem you that the gates of death will not be to such a one the gates of hell?"

" I thank you for your kindly prophecy," said a low but firm voice beside him.

Rebecca, having caught the raised tones of Vernon, and fearing lest aught of discussion might weary her enfeebled father, had hurried to the spot; thus becoming the auditor of what was not meant for her hearing. She stood, the colour deepened into scarlet on her cheek, her lip curved with scorn, and, her dark eyebrows almost meeting in their indignation, while her large eyes flashed as if the pupil were indeed an orb turned by the soul to light, she continued: "I thank you; but now listen to my words, even as I have done to yours. Rather would I bear the doom your kindness has poured into the ear of a dying father, than be your wife!"

She said no more, but walked hastily away; and in another moment Vernon was seen hurrying along the winding road.

Clinton retired to rest sooner than usual; and his daughter took her accustomed seat, to watch during the earlier part of the night. He had slept, or seemed to sleep, for more than two hours, when suddenly he rose in his bed.

" Give me to drink, my child," he murmured almost inaudibly, yet with seeming effort.

She took the cup, and raised it to his mouth; but scarcely could her trembling hand replace it on the table, for she started to see the alteration in her father's face.

" Open the window, love — the air is stifling."

Rebecca felt cold with the chill midnight, but she opened the heavy curtains and the casement, when a flood of dazzling moonlight poured into the dim room, and put the faint lamp to shame. A large branch of a chestnut-tree waved to and fro, whose leaves seemed filled with music ; a sweet breeze came from the garden below, but sweet as it was, Clinton inspired it with difficulty. By a strong effort he put his hand beneath the pillow, and drew thence a small black book with silver clasps.

" Take it, my child; till this hour it has been my constant companion. Rebecca, it is your mother's Bible!"

Even as he spoke, his head sank on his daughter's shoulder; she moved not till the cheek pressed to hers grew like ice. One fearful shriek, and the living sank insensible by the side of the dead.

A week afterwards, a funeral train was seen slowly winding through the wreathing honey-suckle and drooping ash which formed the green and glad road. There were only the coffin-bearers and two mourners — an aged woman and a young one. the housekeeper and Rebecca were following Reginald Clinton to his last resting-place; and ever and anon, as the coffin passed and brushed the boughs, heavy with their luxuriant foliage, a shower of fragrant leaves fell,—as if Summer wept over the sorrowful procession.

Rebecca uncovered not her face till they reached the newly dug grave; she then cast one shuddering look, and again closed her veil. The service commenced, and a slight start spoke other emotion than grief, when she heard the voice of Richard Vernon begin the solemn ritual. It ended, and Rebecca remained motionless on her knee till her attention was awakened by that fearful and peculiar sound — a sound to which earth has no parallel — the rattle of the falling gravel on the coffin. She sprang forward. "Let me — let me gaze on him once again!"

She saw nothing but the black, damp mould, and sank back, unresisting, on the arm of Richard Vernon.

"My house is close at hand," said he, inquiringly to her aged companion.

"For the love of God, take her thither!" was the reply. "There is neither water nor aught else here; and she looks like one of the stone figures on the graves around us."

Rebecca was carried, still insensible, into the little parlour; and, with a tenderness that seemed foreign to his nature, Vernon placed her in a large antique settle, which he drew towards the window, fetched water, and left her and the good woman alone. Even when Rebecca revived, it was only for a while, to give way to bursts of passionate weeping. Old Hannah's affectionate soothing having at length calmed her, on rising to depart, she said

to the bewildered girl, "We must thank Mr. Vernon before we go."

"This Mr. Vernon's house?" exclaimed Rebecca, turning yet paler.

"It is my house; and where could you be more welcome?" said its master.

Rebecca rose and thanked him for his kindness; and, touched by his obvious sympathy, as well as reassured by his reserved and unusually gentle manner, she did not refuse his request, that Hannah at least should take some refreshment before their departure. One common-place remark after another had sunk into silence, when Vernon somewhat abruptly asked, "If she knew that orders had been given to fit up the old house for the reception of its owner?"

"I have known it for some days," was the reply.

"It will no more be a home suited for a youthful female."

"Certainly not; neither have I the slightest intention of remaining."

"Have you, then, fixed on any future plan?"

"Yes."

"You intend, I suppose, continuing in this neighbourhood?"

Rebecca hesitated. Vernon's hasty temper could no longer bear the curb.

"I might have guessed you would stay: Aubrey de Vere is young and unmarried—no bad chance for an errant princess!"

"Stay, Mr. Vernon," interrupted his guest; "do not say what you will soon regret—I am about to depart."

"And whither do you purpose going?"

"To London."

Vernon started from his seat in astonishment—"To London?—to the city of destruction—to the Babylon of the earth—to the sinful and the accursed—where the devil walks abroad, seeking whom he may devour? So young, so friendless, and so fair—you are mad, maiden! mad with sorrow—or pride!"

"I answer to myself—London is the only place where my poor skill in embroidery may find employment; and Hannah has a sister there, with whom we mean to reside."

Vernon walked up and down the room impatiently; at last he stopped before Rebecca, and said, in a voice whose firmness was only preserved by an effort—"Maiden, when I bore you insensible to my house, I thought within myself, that neither by word nor look would I give you cause of annoyance—that I would forbear to urge upon the sacredness of sorrow a suit which that very sorrow makes more earnest. But I cannot, were it only as the daughter of my friend, I cannot see you take a step so rash, so fraught with fatal consequences. Pause, Rebecca, before you depart from my roof. I may not be what your fancy figures; but I love you deeply and truly, and for your sake would

change many a habit, perhaps many a fault. I may have been rude, ay harsh, in my speech, but my meaning has been kind. Save your youth from the rough chances of friendlessness and poverty: I offer you an honest name, competence, and an entire heart. We will both make allowances; there will be room in yonder arbour even for your lute; I will study my speech, and watch your look—till our hopes are together, and mutual affection has made our house thrice blessed."

Rebecca felt that the tears were in her eyes, and that her voice was inarticulate; she paused a moment, from a reluctance to give Richard Vernon pain, and she left her hand in his as she spoke. "It may not be, my kind, my only friend: I must alter my very nature ere I could be happy as your wife. Vernon, I dare not marry you."

He flung her hand from him as he caught her words; the long-subdued passion burst at last.

"Accursed be the hour that ever the weakness of my nature led my soul into this folly! Go, and bear with you the bitterness you have infused into my cup; may you know poverty, guilt, sorrow, and shame—may you live to mourn, in sackcloth and ashes, the day you left this roof, never to re-enter it more!—Nay, forgive me!" but Rebecca had quitted the parlour. He made one step to follow her—the next moment he had thrown himself into the huge oaken settle, with his back to the light. The day after, he went to the old house—it was

deserted; and he learnt that Rebecca and Hannah had that morning departed for London.

* * * * *

* * * *

Three years had passed away since Rebecca saw the turrets of the old house recede in the gray mist of early morning; while the drizzling rain, and a low moaning wind, which, even in summer, shook the leaves from the bough, gave to inanimate objects the appearance of a sad farewell. Three years had passed away since Rebecca first watched the shades of evening close on what was but a mockery of daylight — the daylight of a small narrow street in London; and she felt thankful for the obscurity which admitted of a free course to her tears.

I do firmly believe that the Londoner is as contented with his city home as the dweller in the fairest valley among the Appennines; and that habit brings its usual indifference as to place. But to one who has lived all his life in the country, whose path has been through the green field, and bounded only by the green hedge — to whom nothing in the town is endeared by association, and nothing softened by custom, how dreary is the aspect! The confined street, the close air, the dusky atmosphere, the hurrying passengers, the eager and busy yet indifferent faces — all press upon the stranger with an equal sense of discomfort and desolation.

Rebecca's heart died within her as she entered

the little dark shop, on her way to the still smaller and darker back-parlour. Three years had been spent in solitude, in poverty, in toil — in all that hardens the heart, and imprints sternness on the brow. Out upon the folly which, in estimating human misery, allows aught to bear comparison with the agony of the poor! I use the word poor relatively; I call not those poor to whom honesty brings self-respect, whose habits and whose means have gone together, and whose industry is its own support. But those are the poor whose exertion supplies not their wants — to whom cold, hunger, and weariness, are common feelings; who have known better days — to whom the past furnishes contrast, and the future fear. The grave may close over the dear and the departed; but in faith there is solace, and in time forgetfulness. The lover may be false to his vow, whose happiness was to have been, like its truth, eternal; yet, after all, the sorrow is purely imaginary, and grief is a luxury in indulgence.

Day by day Rebecca stooped over her embroidery; she debarred herself from rest and food, nay at last encroached even on the Sabbath, which had been held so sacred. The monotony of her existence was only broken in upon by anxiety; she rose early in the morning, and lay down late; still, though bought at the expense of time, youth, and hope, the pittance she could earn was insufficient for their daily wants. In this emergency, it was decided that the two rooms over the shop should be

let; though, remote and obscure as was their street, it seemed much easier to decide on letting, than to let these apartments. It so chanced, however, that they succeeded immediately.

Their new resident was a man on whose age it would have been difficult to determine; you might have guessed any period between twenty and thirty; for his slender and almost boyish figure was bent with what might have been either time or infirmity. His hair, of a singularly bright golden hue, was thin, and left exposed a high and strongly marked forehead; his originally fine features were worn to emaciation; and the mouth was sunken and colourless. His large eyes were of the palest blue, and seemed with the least emotion to fill, as it were, with light — like the flashing and restless brilliancy of sunshine upon water. More richly dressed than suited his circumstances — apparently without a connexion, for none ever came near him — scarcely stirring from home — keeping lonely vigils, that sometimes lasted through the night, — there was obviously a mystery about him; yet it was difficult to hear his sweet low voice, mark his wan and wasted countenance, and believe that the mystery could be in aught evil.

Gradually his gentle and quiet habits led to acquaintance, and acquaintance to confidence. One evening, when Rebecca was sitting working in the little back-parlour, he entered, and turning over the few volumes on her solitary book-shelf, opened

one in which was Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream, filled with notes on favourite passages: for before poverty had pressed so heavily, it was Rebecca's delight to write on the margin all she could remember of her father's remarks.

"Ah, this indeed is fame!" exclaimed their visitor, unconsciously soliloquising aloud: "I care not to be bound in scented leather, clasped with the arms of my owner wrought in silver, and to be kept one among many in the ancient library, a thing of show, not of use—a part of the furniture. No; give me the obscure corner and the frequent reading; be mine the few minutes snatched from toil—the one remembered passage which keeps alive the seeds of poetry sown in every heart—the thought that rises remembered in a contemplative hour—the words in which the lover clothes his own love. Ah! the poet hath no true hope, who doth not place it in the many, and in the feeling of the common multitude."

Rebecca now learnt, for the first time, that it was Lee the dramatist who inhabited their dwelling. In a fit of disgust at society, and the excitement produced by the idea of a new work, he had buried himself in entire seclusion, to finish his "Rival Queens."

"I must be by myself when I write," was his frequent observation. "The indifference of my fellow-creatures chills me to the very soul; I feel my own nothingness too severely; I see the selfishness,

the vanity, which encircles me, and distrust my own power to animate or to interest: I deeply feel that the people surrounding me are inferior to myself, and I despise their suffrages — I grow vain and mean myself, and am involuntarily actuated by hopes and desires apart from what should be the one sole aim of my existence. I lose my power: I am like a magician who has forgotten the spell by which he once governed the spiritual world. What has the poet to do with the present? Suddenly I feel the shame and misery of such a life; I fly to solitude—I cast the shackles from my hands, the dust from my feet; I think my own thoughts—I dream my own dreams: again the future is to me a great and glorious reward; the feeling rushes to my heart, my lips overflow with music — again the beautiful and the true rise visible before me, and I am happy, very, very happy!"

From that evening he delighted in the society of Rebecca, to whom it was a source of true enjoyment; it was so long since speech had been to her more than the expression of daily regrets and wants —it was as if the higher faculties of her being had lain dormant for a protracted season, and now awoke, as the blossoms on the bough awaken beneath the soft spring rains. Still, she saw with regret that the fiery temper, the excited mind of her companion preyed on his health — the cheek grew paler, the shining eye more restless, every day; and sleep forsook the pillow haunted by fantastic creations.

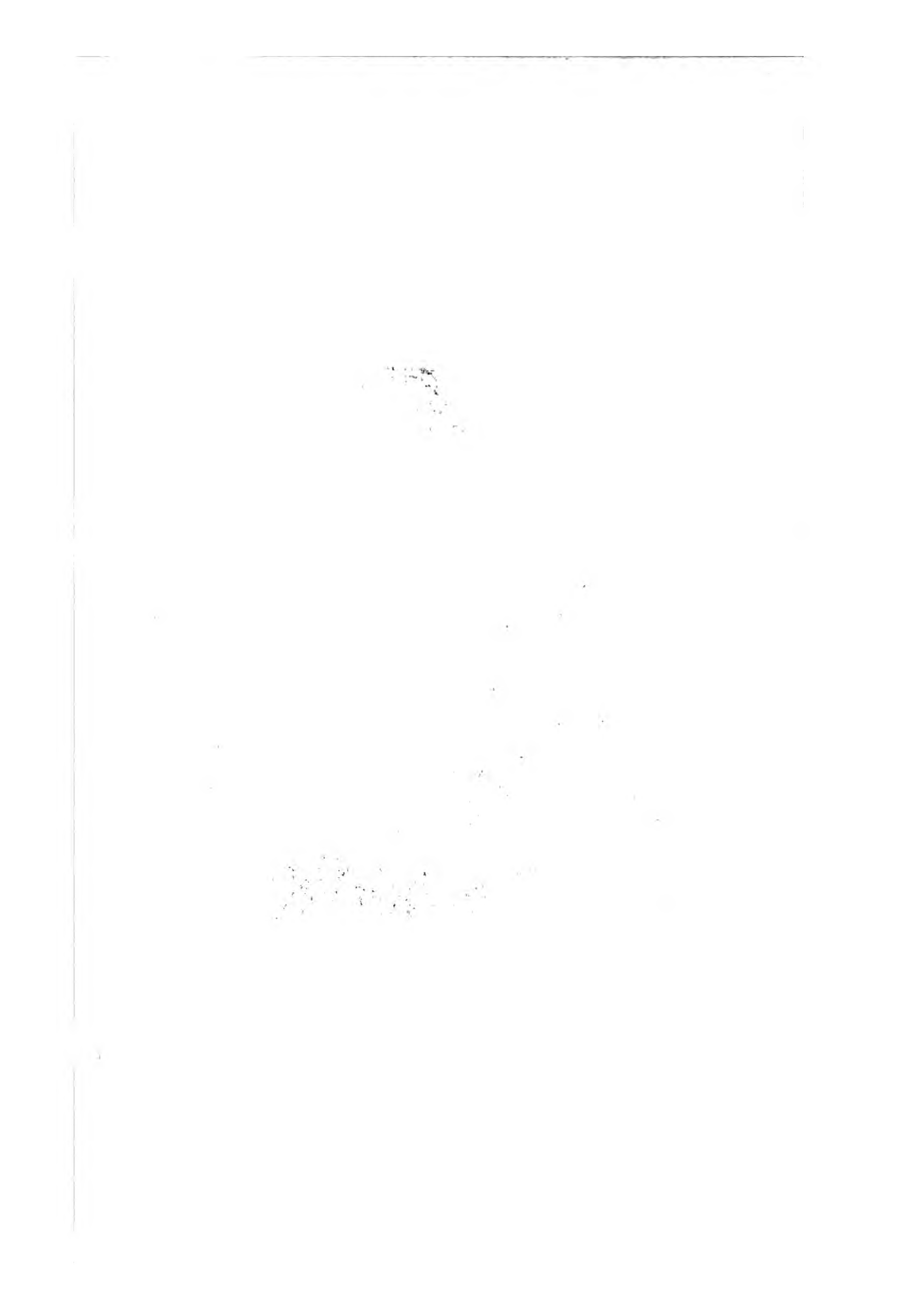
" I know it," he would reply ; " and is it a worthy sacrifice that I offer? I believe that the mind may make its own immortality: thought is the spiritual part of existence; and so long as my mind influences others, so long as my thoughts remain behind, so long shall my spirit be conscious and immortal. The body may perish—not so the essence which survives in the living and lasting page."

Sometimes, when weary and desponding,—for who does not despond over even their highest efforts, and feel how little they can paint the beauty and the passion within?—he would come to Rebecca, and ask her to read aloud to him. Her rich sweet voice, her grace of expression, would recall his enthusiasm, and again the " Rival Queens" was resumed with hope and animation. When the task drew near its completion, he told Rebecca that she must insure its success. She looked up inquiringly.

" You must play Roxana."

It little needs to detail the surprise, the various emotions of doubt, hope, and inclination, which were elicited by this remark. Rebecca had that consciousness of talent which must always attend its possession; and she bitterly felt how completely it was now wasted.

Lee's enthusiasm was, as enthusiasm always is, contagious; and when, in his own peculiar manner, he read to her the finished play, the fear of failure



Drawn by Miss L. Sharpe. Engraved by H. T. Ryall.

REBECCA.

London Published for the Proprietor, by L[illegible]

became her only fear. [illegible] presented to Rich, then the manager [illegible] London theatre; and both [illegible] encouraging approval.

Rebecca entered on her new [illegible] ardour and all the charm which the [illegible] to its object. Strongly [illegible] in her situation [illegible] the eventful night [illegible] stept upon the boards, [illegible] able reception of his [illegible] suited well her proud [illegible] turban was folded round [illegible] the plume of that [illegible] —both in strong [illegible] which fell in profusion [illegible] embroidered robe [illegible] though only the [illegible] uncovered; and a veil [illegible] concealed her profile. [illegible] When the first dizzy [illegible] excitement of her [illegible] fied with her [illegible] nothing could be [illegible] than her revenge; [illegible] agony of her desertion.

I am persuaded to [illegible] one achieved on the st[illegible] and so home: you [illegible] human beings whose sympathies [illegible]

London, Published for the Proprietor, by Longman & Co. Paternoster Row.

became her only fear. Tragedy and actress were presented to Rich, then the manager of the principal London theatre; and both alike met with the most encouraging approval.

Rebecca entered on her new pursuit with all the ardour and all the charm which the imagination lends to its object. Strongly moved and absorbed, she saw in her situation nothing but its poetry. At length the eventful night arrived, and as soon as his heroine stept upon the boards, Lee felt certain of the favourable reception of his drama. The Oriental dress suited well her proud, dark beauty: a crimson turban was folded round her head, ornamented with the plume of that strange bird they call of paradise—both in strong contrast to the raven ringlets which fell in profusion on her flushed cheek. An embroidered robe shewed her exquisite figure, though only the delicate throat and wrist were uncovered; and a veil of silvery tissue partially concealed her profile. Her success was complete. When the first dizzy confusion was merged in the excitement of her part, even Lee himself was satisfied with her conception and execution of it: nothing could be more passionate, more superb, than her revenge; nothing more terrible than the agony of her desertion.

I am persuaded there is no triumph equal to one achieved on the stage—it comes so immediate and so home: you have before you the mass of human beings whose sympathies are at your will;

you witness the emotions which you raise, you see the tears which you command: the poet has erected the statue, but it is for you to give it life—the words must find their music on your lips—the generous sentiment, the exalted hope, the touches of deep feeling, ask their expression from you: surely such influence is among the triumphs of the mind, ay and a great and noble triumph. But in this world every thing has its evil; the dust is on the wheels of the conqueror's chariot—the silken-wrought tapestry covers the mouldering wall; and Rebecca soon found that her position was one which often jarred on her imaginative temper. But we make our own path, and fling our own shadow upon it. Never was the lofty purity of her nature more conspicuous than now, when surrounded by so much to which it was utterly opposed.

It was about three months after her first appearance, that two young cavaliers were walking, arm-in-arm, up the Strand, engaged in earnest conversation.

"I tell you," said the youngest, "that it is hopeless."

"I never," replied his companion, "heard of any thing so selfish; it is what women always are, but I must say this goes beyond the common allowance—and so our pretty Roxana expects you to marry her! Wealth, rank—and you are not so bad-looking either, De Vere—pretty well for the Rival Queen!"

"Indeed, Buckingham, you are mistaken; I never saw a creature more unworldly, more disinterested."

"Oh, of course; but it is really too much to have your scruples in addition to hers. However, I pique myself on the impossible. It is matter of conscience, it seems, with your Roxana: well, the chapel in the Savoy is much at your service—I will have it dusted on purpose—and the equerry I recommended has other talents than those of horse-breaking. He lived in my good father-in-law's family to some purpose; his conventicle-drawl is perfection—he will make an excellent priest; and I will give away the bride myself—very generous, when I think how pretty she is!"

A few scruples and a little passing remorse on one side, a sneer and a jest on the other, and the whole affair was arranged.

"You have seen my Roxana for the last time," said Rebecca, about a week after this, to Lee; "you have been too kind a friend to be excluded from my confidence. You will rejoice in my happiness, for happy I must be as the wife of Aubrey de Vere."

"The wife of Aubrey de Vere! you, Rebecca, about to be married?"

He rose from his seat, threw open the lattice, and leant from the window, while his companion stood astonished at the excess of his emotion. Suddenly he turned towards her, while his large shining

and melancholy eyes seemed to look into her very heart, and his melodious voice sank on her ear like sad music.

"Rebecca, I have deceived myself—I deemed my heart had but one idol, and my life but one aim; alas, I now find I have one object yet dearer! Alas, my very happiness has blinded me! I have grown so accustomed to see you, to hear you, to refer my èvery thought to you, that, like the blessed light and air, you have become part of my existence: I cannot, I dare not think of a future without you. Rebecca, you know how earnestly I have laboured for one end — how high, how glorious, I have deemed the poet's calling. Rebecca, there is no honour my ambition could covet that I would not renounce for one smile of yours."

He paused for a moment, and hid his face on the window-sill, while Rebecca stood breathless with distress and surprise. Lee recovered the power of utterance first.

"De Vere—he will be Earl of Oxford—but no—you would not wed only for interest: yet, Rebecca, could we change places, would you still marry him?"

She stood for a moment blushing and irresolute; at length she said in a low but firm voice, "I love himself."

Lee gazed on her earnestly; and to her death Rebecca remembered the wild despair painted on his face. Gently he approached her, and took her

hand; his touch was like marble, and contrasted strangely with his flushed and burning cheek.

"Farewell," said he, "last dream of an existence that has been all dreams! I never loved before — I shall never love again. I have often tried to be happy, but in vain; now I have not even an illusion left. Farewell to hope, to honour, to exertion, to poetry — I bid them all farewell, when I say farewell to you."

He dropped the hand which he held — and turned to the door, but languidly, like one who walks in his sleep. Rebecca saw him again, from the window, still moving at the same slow, sad pace. She never beheld him more; and when she next heard of him, it was to learn that he was the inmate of a solitary cell—his fine mind bowed and broken by madness. Awful to know that your soul may depart before yourself!

A cold east wind brought back upon London the smoke of its thousand chimneys. A thick vapour filled the chapel, which the waxen tapers, lighted though it was noon, served rather to shew than to dispel; and Rebecca felt her heart sink within her as she took the offered hand of the Duke of Buckingham, who led her towards the altar. She thought on her extreme isolation from all the ordinary ties of life: others had parents, friends, and relatives; she had none. How utter must be her dependence on Aubrey's love!

His manner, embarrassed and constrained, had

nothing in it to reassure her; while Buckingham's gaiety jarred upon her ear, and his jest and flattery were equally unacceptable.

"I have been at merrier funerals," said the Duke of Buckingham, as he turned from the bridal party: "if the mere semblance of the fetters be so melancholy, the Lord have mercy upon those who endure them in reality!"

It was with a mixture of pleasure and pain that Rebecca re-entered the home she had left under such different circumstances; for De Vere had fixed on the old mansion-house for their future dwelling.

"For the present, love, we will live in complete retirement: I care little, while the wonder of our marriage," and he hesitated, "is fresh in men's minds, to endure the questions of the curious, or the comment of the envious."

Rebecca pressed closer to her heart the arm on which she hung; and her silence was more eloquent of happiness than any words. I have ever remarked, that when Fate has any great misfortune in store, it is always preceded by a brief period of calm and sunshine—as if to add bitterness of contrast to all other misery. It is for the happy to tremble—it is over their heads that the thunderbolt is about to burst.

Rebecca lived for a few months in all the deep content of love—every look watched, every thought partaken, her heart was filled with thankfulness and affection.

De Vere would sometimes start when he remembered the uncertain tenure of their present state; but conscience, like a child, is soon lulled to sleep; and habit is our idea of eternity. Yet every hour Rebecca became dearer to him; and his few and short absences only brought him to her side with more perfect appreciation and more apprehensive tenderness.

He had now been away for nearly a week, but was expected home that very evening. Who does not know the restlessness of an anticipated arrival? Rebecca wandered from room to room; till at last not even the ingenuity of affection could devise any arrangement or alteration further, that might catch the eye or please the taste of De Vere. It was a lovely afternoon, one of those when autumn atones for the brevity of its days by their beauty; and she walked out, sometimes absorbed in her own thoughts, then again gazing, with a pleasure which half arose from herself, on the country round. Some of the trees yet retained the deep green of their foliage, others wore the brown, purple, and yellow, which, like the bright-hued banners of an army, are the heralds of destruction. A few late flowers were still seen, but their blossoms were fragile and scentless; yet the eye dwelt tenderly upon them — they were the last. Rebecca had proceeded farther than she had proposed, but the sight of a clump of old yews drew her on — they grew beside her father's grave. More

than once she had visited it; and it had cost De Vere his worst pang of remorse, when she pointed out the low grass mound, and said she prayed that her parent's spirit might be gladdened by the knowledge of how happy and how beloved was the child he had left a friendless orphan. It may be a superstition, but it is a grateful and a kindly one, which deems that the righteous dead watch over those they cherished in their pilgrimage on earth. Rebecca knelt beside the grave, but shrunk back — for at that instant a dark shadow fell upon it; she looked up, and saw the harsh and haggard face of Richard Vernon.

"Back, lost and guilty one!" said he, pushing her aside with no gentle hand; "pollute not with your wretched presence the churchyard of your God, and the grave of your father. You mocked at my words when I prophesied of shame, and, lo! it has come upon you. Away! — as the servant of Him whom you have forgotten, I forbid you to remain in this sacred place!"

Rebecca turned towards him with anger, which even her pity could not subdue.

"I know not," said she coldly, "by what right you forbid the wife of a De Vere to approach the church his fathers built; but I leave it; for I would not further unkindness should pass between us."

"Verily, this audacity passeth belief! I know, Rebecca, how you have mingled with the light and the profane; I know how, of your own will, you

cast in your lot with the ungodly; I heard too, only three days ago, in yonder accursed Babylon, how Aubrey de Vere had carried off the fair actress to be his paramour;—and yet you dare speak across your father's grave with a lie in your mouth! Wretched girl, kneel—but in sackcloth and ashes—for the sake of him whose dust is at your feet—repent, Rebecca Clinton!"

"Nay," interrupted his auditor, "call me not by a name which I no longer bear. Were it only mine own credit that was touched, I might patiently abide your words; but I may not stay to hear such slander cast upon a true and honourable gentleman, upon my husband."

Before he could reply, she had passed on. His first impulse was to follow her; but as he marked her rapid steps, he desisted, and remained gazing on her lessening figure till lost in the distance, with an expression in which bitterness and sorrow were singularly blended. Rebecca had scarcely reached home, when she received an urgent petition from one of the servants, that she would visit what the doctor, who awaited her arrival, said was his death-bed. She was somewhat surprised at the vehement terms in which the request was couched, for the man declared he could not die in peace till he had seen his mistress.

"Perhaps," thought she, "he leaves one behind him friendless, helpless, even as my father left me—such desolation shall fall on none that I can aid."

She entered the large airy room which she had herself ordered to be prepared for him when first seized with sickness; and dismissing the nurse, took her place by the pillow of the dying man. It was the equerry who had personated the clergyman at her marriage! Short and terrible was the narrative to which she had to listen: she spoke not, she moved not—but, pale and cold, sank back in the arm-chair.

"Great God, I have killed her!" shrieked the penitent.

His voice recalled her to herself. She rose, and turning to the bed, stretched her hand towards the emaciated creature who lay there in all but the agonies of death: "I forgive you, and pray God to forgive you too; make your peace with Heaven. May the pardon I yield to you be extended also to myself!"

She went down stairs directly to the laboratory, where De Vere sometimes amused a leisure hour with chemical experiments, and taking from one of the shelves a small phial, hid it in her bosom, and proceeded to her chamber.

"I am going to be fanciful in my dress to-night," said she to her attendant. Her long dark hair was loosened from its braids into a profusion of drooping ringlets; she bound the crimson shawl around her temples; and again assumed the embroidered robe in which De Vere had first seen her. The toilette finished, she flung herself on a pile of

rich cushions in the library, to await his arrival; and at that instant he entered—having come through the garden on purpose to surprise her.

"My beautiful masquerader, I must leave you often," said he, tenderly, "if you are to grow so much more lovely in my absence."

And lovely indeed did she look at that moment. We have before remarked that the Oriental style of dress was peculiarly well adapted to the character of her face and figure, and the passionate flush of her cheek gave even more than their usual brightness to her radiant eyes. Aubrey deemed it was delight at his return, and hastened to heap before her the many precious gifts he had brought.

"I did not forget my sweet friend in the hurry of London. Your throat is the whitest, dear one," said he, as he hung round her neck a string of precious pearls.

Supper was now brought in, and Aubrey smiled to see how carefully his favourite dishes had been provided.

"I am not hungry," said Rebecca; "but I will not talk to you now;" and taking up her lute, she began to play, and sang a few simple notes rather than words.

"You have been librarian too," exclaimed Aubrey: "I see all my scattered volumes have been collected: why, what should I do without you?"

"You would miss me?" and laying aside the lute, she came and rested her head on his shoulder,

at the same time taking the phial and drinking its contents.

"Miss you, dearest!—how wretched, how inexpressibly wretched should I be without you!"

"I am glad of it!" she cried, springing from her kneeling and caressing attitude, and flinging down the phial, which broke into atoms. "Do you see that? its contents were poison, and I have drank it—drank it even in your very arms! I know all, De Vere—your false marriage, your mock priest. You thought it but a jest to dishonour and to destroy one who trusted you so fondly, so utterly. Go find another to love you as I have done! You planned inconstancy from the first, when I most believed in your love. Well, a little while, and you are free!"

She fell back in a paroxysm of bodily agony, and hid her face in the cushions, but De Vere saw her frame writhe with torture. Suddenly she started up—"I cannot bear it—give me water, for the love of Heaven!"

Her exquisite features were distorted, the blue veins were swollen on her forehead, and her livid lips were covered with froth: again she dashed herself on the ground, and her screams, though smothered, were still audible.

De Vere hung over her in anguish scarce inferior to her own; his call for assistance brought the attendants, and with them the physician, who had just left the chamber of death above.

" It is hopeless!" said he, in answer to Aubrey's frantic questions; "no skill on earth could counteract a poison so deadly, and taken, too, in such quantity."

Gradually the convulsions became less violent, and De Vere bore her in his arms to a sofa by the open window. The cool air seemed to soothe her, and she lay for a few moments perfectly passive: the work of years had been wrought upon her sunk and ghastly features. Slowly she raised her head, and put back the thick tresses that pressed upon her brow; she drank the wine the doctor offered, and her recollection returned.

" Aubrey," whispered she, and suffered her head to rest upon his bosom, " my own, my only love, forgive me,"—but her voice failed as she spoke: again a frightful change passed over her face—De Vere held a corse in his arms.

EXPERIMENTS;

OR,

THE LOVER FROM ENNUI.

CECIL FORRESTER was heir to many misfortunes, being handsome, rich, high-born, and clever. His father said it was a shame such a fine fellow should be coddled—took him out to hunt, and gave him port-wine after dinner: his mother said it was a pity such a sweet boy should be spoilt—heaped cushions on his favourite sofa, and perfumed for him a cambric handkerchief with *l'esprit de mille fleurs*. His father died—his mother was inconsolable for six months, and then married again. Cecil was sent to Eton, where, instead of others indulging him, he indulged himself.

His education was finished by terms at college and seasons in London; and his twenty-second year found him without a pleasure, and without a guinea. The next spring he lived on *ennui* and credit. He

disliked trouble, because he never took it; and he said things and people were tiresome and bores, till he firmly believed it. His feelings were never called forth, his talents never exercised; his natural superiority only served to make him discontented. He saw the waste of his life, but he lacked motive for change: his early habits were those of indolence; and being neither poor nor vain, he had no stimulus to alter them. He did a great many foolish things, regretted them, and did them over again.

One day, after driving in the Park, and wondering why so many people drove there, he turned homewards to dress for a late dinner at the Clarendon. Giving his boy the reins, he resigned himself to meditation,—how unpleasant it was for the pedestrians of Piccadilly to hurry through the mud!—when he was interrupted by the boy's, "Sir, if you please," said in a tone of self-exertion, as if a great deal of mental energy had been collected for its utterance; then, in a deprecatory whisper, "you won't collar me and throw me out of the cab before I've said half, will you?"

"No, I will not," said Cecil.

To make our story shorter than the miniature groom's, he learnt that his own property in himself was in danger; and that, if the patriot's definition of liberty be true—"it is like the air we breathe, without it we die"—his life was near its termination. A writ was issued against him; and, thanks to a douceur to his valet, two professional

gentlemen, as he left his toilet, would deprive his friends at the Clarendon of his company.

"I wish I had spoken to my uncle sooner; but, hang it! it is so unpleasant speaking: I'll write."

Forrester was just now in that part of Piccadilly where the White Horse of our Saxon ancestors has degenerated from the banner of a sea-king to the sign of a cellar for taking places and parcels. Still, even as of yore, it hangs over a most migratory multitude. "For Putney, ma'am?" "For Richmond, sir?" One coachman snatches up a child for Turnham Green, while another pops its mamma off to Camberwell. On one side, lemons are selling for a shilling a dozen; on the other, oranges for sixpence. One man blows a horn in your ear, and offers you the Standard; another exerts his lungs, and shews you the Courier. Pencils are to be had for a penny; and penknives, with from three to six blades each, for eighteen pence a-dozen. A fellow with a trunk turns its corner on your temples; another deposits a box, with the grocery of a family — sugar, soap, candles, and all — on your toes. A gigantic gentleman nearly knocks you down in his hurry; and an elderly Jew slips past you so neatly, that you tumble over him before you are aware. Every body is always too late, and therefore every body is in a bustle. Two policemen keep the peace; and half-a-dozen individuals, whose notions on the law of property are at variance with established principles or prejudices, attend for the purpose of

breaking it. Add to these some females with shawls and sharp elbows; and pattens, whose iron rings are for the benefit of foot-passengers. Such is the White Horse Cellar, and the pavement from Dover Street to Albemarle Street.

Several coaches seemed to be just setting off.

"I will leave London at once," said Forrester. "Do you drive home — you know nothing about me. You are a fine little fellow; I shall not forget you."

So saying, he threw him two or three sovereigns, and got into the first coach. The boy took the money, drove the cabriolet to the stable, and ate and drank himself into a fever, out of which his mother had to nurse him.

Cecil opened his eyes on the grey sea-mist of a Brighton morning. Summer and Brighton!—the vicinity was dangerous. In all probability his tailor would be taking twopenny worth of pleasure on the pier; and if, like John Gilpin's wife, "though on pleasure he was bent," he should also "have a frugal mind," and keep an eye to business, that eye would inevitably fall on him. However, a temporary stay was necessary, for all the personal property he possessed was a handkerchief. Money supplies every want, and he had drawn his last from the banker's the day before. He did not mean to have stirred from his room, but seeing an acquaintance from the window, he resolved to ask him to dinner.

He knew Ravensdale was in love, therefore stu-

pid; still, any company was better than his own. They dined together; and, as a companion is generally the straw that decides an idle man, he set out with him that evening for Hastings. There Mr. Ravensdale expected to meet "the beauteous arbiter who held his fate;" but some slight cause of delay had prevented, and would prevent for a short time, her family's arrival. Cecil quite envied the lover his disappointment — it so entirely occupied him.

A week passed away while he was making up his mind what he should say to his uncle, whose heir he was, and whose kindness he believed would be very likely to assist him; but long before the week was finished, he was quite convinced that Hastings was the most tiresome place on the whole sea-coast. *Oh, la peine forte et dure* of idleness! Blessed is the banker's clerk, who on a November morning takes his nine-o'clock walk to business under a green umbrella, digesting the memory of his buttered roll and the anticipation of his desk! Blessed is the fag of fashions and fancies, who unrolls ribands from morn till night at Dyde's and Scribe's! Blessed is Mr. Martin, when, transgressing his own act, he urges along the heavy animal on which he perambulates in pursuit of an overladen donkey! Blessed were all these in comparison with Cecil Forrester, "lord of himself, that heritage of wo!"

It was a wet morning, and he loitered at the breakfast-table, though he had long finished both

meal and appetite. At length he rose, took two or three turns up and down the room, opened a book, then threw it aside:—(by the by, parents have a great deal to answer for who do not early give their children a taste for reading—novels.) He next approached the window, and proposed to his companion, who was letter-writing, to bet on the progress of two rain-drops. Not having been heard, he proceeded with his cane to trace his name on the damp glass; and at last, in desperation, exclaimed, "How devilish lucky you are, Ravensdale, to be in love! Nothing like love-letters for filling up a rainy morning. A mistress gives a man such an interest in himself! You cannot run your fingers through your hair, without a vision of the locket wherein one of your curls reposes on the fairest neck in the world. An east-wind only conjures up a host of "sweet anxieties;" and if the worst comes to the worst, you can sit down and write sonnets to your inamorata's eyebrow. I have made up my mind—I will try and fall in love. Well, who is there here?"

"Lady de Morne, doing dolorous and disconsolate—only walks in her garden; to be sure, it overlooks the high-road."

"What, a widow! warm or cold, which you will, from the kiss of a dead man! I should taste clay upon her lips!"

"Miss Acton, then, the heiress—*utile et dulce.*"

"No; she belongs to the romantic school, and

expects you to rise in the morning to bring her violets with the dew on them; takes country rambles, which would spoil my complexion; and moonlight walks, which would give me cold. Charles Ellis told me that, in a fit of despair occasioned by a run of ill-luck at *écarté*, he entered into her service for three weeks. He, however, soon found himself feverish — lost his appetite — had a hectic cough — and the fourth week retired on a consumption. I do not feel equal to the exertion."

"Mrs. Ellerby's two daughters."

"Yes, and never know which is which! I hate people cut out by a pattern. Besides, the only papers in the family are pedigrees; and I am not rich enough to keep a cook, a confectioner, and a wife. Moreover, Mrs. Ellerby, being what is called serious, would expect my attentions and intentions to be as serious as every thing else in the house. No; I want to find some unsophisticated being whose hair curls naturally."

"Now, in pity spare me the description of that never-to-be-discovered perfection, an ideal mistress! Be sure you will fall in love with the very opposite."

"I don't care, so long as I could fall in love. But the rain is over: you will not ride, will you?"

Cecil Forrester rode along the beach by himself. Most earnestly did he wish that some of the young ladies who were sketching "that beautiful effect of light on the grey rocks," would tumble into the water.

He might have rushed to the rescue, and so lost his heart in the most approved fashion. Gradually he turned into the very road which he had taken every day, only because he had taken it first. There, as usual, he overtook the same respectable brown coat and horse, and their no less respectable proprietor, whom he regularly encountered. A sudden shower drove them simultaneously under an oak.

English people, as a foreign traveller mentions in his diary, never speak, excepting in cases of fire or murder, unless they are introduced. The old oak did this kind office for the riders.

" The country wanted rain, sir," observed the elderly gentleman.

Forrester felt that his companion had violated every rule of civilised society in thus addressing him ; still, he was good-natured, and, moreover, was tired of himself. He therefore replied — " And we are likely to have enough now."

" Ay, ay ; it never rains but it pours. I must say I have great faith in Moore's Almanac ; it said we should have rain a week ago."

It is needless to detail how acquaintance deepened into intimacy. Silence maketh many friends. The old gentleman took quite a fancy to Cecil, pronounced him such a steady young man, and asked him to dinner.

Forrester went ; his host had two daughters — one rather pretty and pensive, the other very pretty and lively.

The next week was quite endurable as to length: Cecil copied verses into the eldest Miss Temple's album, and held some green silk for the younger to wind.

The Saturday following his introduction it was a beautiful moonlight evening, and Miss Temple was walking up and down the lawn; she really looked very well, and Cecil was about to join her, when a light step, close beside him, announced her sister.

"'The moon is bright on Helle's wave,
As on that night of stormy water,
When Love, who sent, forgot to save
The young, the beautiful, the brave.'

Even as Love forgot the lover, I have forgot the poet—not a line more can I remember; but I would wager the purse whose green silk I am knitting, and which you helped me to wind, against its weight in green grass, that those very lines are in Mary's head at this minute."

"Why those lines especially?"

"Oh, dear! now, cannot you guess?—why, every body knows!"

"But as I am not every body, I shall not know till you tell me."

"Oh, but really I shan't tell you!"

"Oh, but really you must!"

"To be sure, there is not a neighbour but is aware that she is engaged to such an interesting young man now in Greece. But, dear, dear! you

must have noticed how she coloured up when you talked about a turban's suiting her style of face. And did you observe my father's laugh at dinner, to-day, when he asked her if she liked Turkey ?"

"And so Miss Temple has got a lover — and I need not ask if you have one also."

"Not I indeed — dear, if I had a lover one week, I should forget him the next!"

Somehow or other the dialogue ended in one or two pretty speeches — the last things in the world to particularise. And Forrester went home quite convinced that Elizabeth was far the prettiest of the two, and bound by promise to accompany them the next night to a fancy ball in the neighbourhood.

Now, a fancy ball is bad enough in London, where milliners are many, and where theatres have costumes that may be borrowed or copied; but in the country, where people are left to their own devices — truly to them may be applied the old poet's account of murderers, "their fancies are all frightful." Miss Temple, we need scarcely observe, wore a turban, and looked as Oriental, at least as un-English, as possible. Elizabeth preferred going back upon the taste of her grandmothers; and when Cecil first saw her standing in the window, with the loose hanging sleeves of former days, and floating draperies of an antique striped silk — her pretty arms just bare to the elbow, and her fair hair in half-dishevelled curls, — he decided, that if you

are very young and pretty, extravagance in costume carries its own excuse.

To the dance they went: the dancing was bad, the music worse, and instead of ice, sago was handed round to keep the young people from taking cold. Yet Cecil had passed worse evenings. We talk of unsophisticated nature — I should like to know where it is to be found. Elizabeth Temple's hair did curl naturally — she made her own dresses — and for accomplishments, played on her grandmother's spinnet by ear, knitted purses, and took the housekeeping alternate weeks with her sister; — yet had she talents for flirtation at least equal to those of any young lady whose dress and accomplishments are the perfection of milliners and May Fair. Cecil was her partner the most of the evening; and, by a few ingenious and invidious parallels, implied not expressed, between him and the other cavaliers, — that preference of attention, the best of feminine flattery, — and a deference to his opinion, nicely blended with a self-consciousness of prettiness, Elizabeth contrived to keep him rather pleasantly awake. Mr. Temple's house lay in his way home; and though he had already ate supper enough for six months, his friends would make him go in for another. On his departure, Elizabeth gave him some trifling commission at Hastings; and while she was writing it down, Forrester, with that universal habit of the idle, took up whatever happened to be near, in the laudable intention of

twisting it to pieces. It was the little green silk purse, and he looked on it with a remembrance of the slender fingers he had seen employed in its making. Could he be mistaken? no, he saw the letters distinctly, C. F. worked in light brown hair —his own initials; and he now recollected that Miss Temple had asked him the other morning what was his Christian name; on hearing which, she made the usual remark of young ladies in such cases, "Dear, what a beautiful name!"

Elizabeth, turning round at this minute, saw the purse in his hand, and also which of the stitches had fixed his attention. Blushing even deeper than the occasion required, she said in a low but hurried voice, "I really cannot have my work spoilt; give me the purse, Mr. Forrester."

"Never!" said Cecil, in what was for him a very energetic tone.

"Oh, but I must and will have it!" making an attempt to snatch it from him — to which his only answer was to catch her hand and kiss it.

"Elizabeth, my dear, Mr. Forrester must be tired; do not detain him with your foolish commissions," said her father, who advanced, and himself accompanied his guest to the hall, taking leave of him with a mysterious look of mingled cordiality and compassion.

The young gentleman rode home, too tired for any thing but sleep; and when he arose the next morning, it was with a conviction that light brown

hair was "an excellent thing in a woman." True, in a fit of absence, while debating whether or not he should write to his uncle before he rode out, he dropped the purse into the fire; nevertheless his vexation at the incident was sufficiently flattering to its maker. As soon as he had decided that he would put off writing till the next day, he ordered his horse and rode to Mr. Temple's. In the hall he caught a flying glance of Elizabeth, whose fair face was evidently much disfigured with recent crying. Lord Byron says,

> "So sweet the tear in beauty's eye,
> Love half regrets to kiss it dry."

Now we, on the contrary, hold that a good fit of crying would, for the time, spoil any beauty in the world.

Cecil entered the parlour somewhat abruptly; Mrs. Temple was saying, "I do so pity the poor young man." On what account the "poor young man" was pitied, Forrester's entrance prevented his learning, for she instantly broke off her speech in great confusion.

Mr. Temple paced up and down the room, as if he thought exercise a great relief to anger. Both received their visiter with even more than their usual kindness, but with obvious and painful embarrassment. Husband and wife interchanged looks when the topic of the weather was exhausted, each seemingly expecting the other to speak. A few

minutes passed in silence — at length Mr. Temple began.

" I am truly sorry —"

" My dear," interrupted his wife.

" I am sure you will be very glad —"

" Nay," again rejoined the lady, "it is presuming too much on Mr. Forrester's kindness to suppose that he will take an interest in our affairs."

Mr. Forrester hastened to assure her he took the very warmest.

" My daughter Elizabeth," said the old gentleman.

" Good heavens!" thought Cecil, " he is not going to ask me what my intentions are! I am sure I can't tell him."

" My daughter Elizabeth,"— how the words were bolted out! — " is going to be married."

" My dear, how could you be so abrupt?" ejaculated the lady.

As if to give his visiter time to recover the shock, Mr. Temple went on rapidly, " To a son of a very old friend of mine — Charles Forsyth — you saw him last night — very fine young man; he made her an offer this very morning, before breakfast."

" My love, you need not be so particular."

Forrester, who, to tell the truth, had no stronger feeling on the subject than surprise — perhaps a little mortification — now offered his congratulations. Not being very desirous of encountering the fair fabricator of the deceiving initials, the betrothed of

Mr. Charles Forsyth, he took the first opportunity of making his bow and his exit.

"Poor young man, how well he has behaved!" said the mother.

"I knew he would'nt take it much to heart," answered the father.

As Cecil passed through the hall, he heard Elizabeth's voice tuned to rather a petulant key.

"In spite of all mamma says about feeling, and papa about principle, and you with your devoted affection to one object, I can't see the great harm of a little innocent flirtation — Mr. Forrester won't break his heart for passing an evening more pleasantly than he would otherwise have done; and if I had not flirted with him, Charles Forsyth, though he is the son of my father's old friend, would not have made his offer these six months — and one cannot wait for ever, you know."

"Very true," muttered Cecil Forrester, as the hall-door was closed after him. That evening he wrote to his uncle; and passed the intermediate time in cutting his name on the table, and wondering what would be the reply. He received an answer by return of post — angry and yet kind, requesting his immediate presence in town. He made a farewell call at Mr. Temple's — saw Elizabeth and Mr. Charles Forsyth in an arbour at the end of the garden, making love — thought they would soon be very tired — and bade the rest of the family goodbye, who thought he looked pale. Mrs. Temple for

a fortnight afterwards read every article headed "Interesting Suicide," in the newspapers; and though they were all "interesting," they did not interest her. Cecil arrived at his uncle's, who commenced the conversation by declaring he would cut him off with a shilling, and ended by paying his debts and making him an allowance. The next week saw two different announcements in the Morning Post — one was the marriage of Elizabeth Temple to Charles Forsyth, Esq.; the other the departure of Mr. Cecil Forrester for Naples.

A friend had offered to take him thither in his yacht, and for that reason only he had gone. Of course he ascended Vesuvius — visited churches, pictures, statues, &c.; but, alas! these are tastes which require cultivation — and at present they appeared to Cecil in the light of duties. Not speaking the language of the country, he was excluded from all enjoyment of Italian society, and English he had entered an inward protest against. Two friends had refused to cash a draft for him: one because he could not, the other because he would not — one from inability, having no money to spare; the other from principle, as he made it a rule never to lend. A lady, with whom he had been quite *l'ami de famille*, with four pretty daughters, had actually avoided seeing him in the Park before it was known that his uncle intended arranging his affairs. Cecil was therefore persuaded of the heartlessness of artificial society. Still, he had no innocent beliefs

in rural unsophistication — Elizabeth Temple had cured him of any such vain fancies: he retained a predilection for the natural — only he decided that it was not to be discovered in any civilised country. He used to sit on the sea-shore, and spend the evening poring over some volumes of Lord Byron he had found by accident, and in throwing pebbles into the sea. A beautiful dream of a Circassian had been floating on his mind, when the arrival of the Dey of Algiers with his harem at Naples changed his reverie to absolute reality.

One fine morning, a whole array of palanquins, the forms within them shrouded from human eye, passed him on his ride — the next day the same — the third the curtains of one slightly moved, a sprig of jasmine was thrown out, and the day following one of myrtle. That night Cecil read Lord Byron —the Giaour and the Corsair were only interrupted by Lalla Rookh. He went to bed, and dreamt of the maids

> "Who blushed behind the gallery's silken shades."

The next day he began to study Arabic, and to endeavour to find some means of conversing with this unknown Houri. To be sure, there were curtains, locks, bolts, bars, and cimeters; still,

> "Love will find its way
> Through paths where wolves would fear to prey;
> And if it dares enough, 'twere hard
> If passion met not some reward:"

and Cecil succeeded in establishing an intercourse with this Haidee of his fancy, by means of a petty officer in the Dey's retinue, who contrived to bribe one of the slaves in immediate attendance on the harem, from whom he learnt that she was the last and loveliest purchase of his lord. The progress of love-affairs is usually very rapid, and this was no exception to the general rule. A plan of escape was soon organised; her especial guardian agreed to facilitate her remaining after dusk in the garden, which was bounded by a river; a few planks would form an easy communication with the water; a boat might be stationed there; and four good rowers would convey them in half an hour to a little villa, which Cecil, in a week's whim for solitude, had rented: once there, no trace would be left of their flight, and no fear remain of discovery. The night fixed on found them punctual to their appointment — so were the slave and the beautiful Georgian. The zeal of Sidi Mustapha, the first agent, was quite wonderful; he sprang up the boards to aid the lady's descent, and would scarcely allow Cecil to give himself any trouble in the matter, till it was evident she could not get down without help from both. After some effort, she and her drapery — the quantity of which seemed enormous — were deposited in the boat. They arrived in silence and safety at the villa: Sidi and Forrester supported their prize into the saloon, fear seeming to have deprived her of the power of motion; and the Algerine hastened

to discharge the boatmen with all possible caution. Every thing had been prepared; the table was covered with the richest sweetmeats, the rarest perfumes, the most aromatic coffee. Cecil's impatience was now at its height.

"Gulnare!" — but she replied not: — "dear Gulnare!"

Suddenly he recollected that she might perhaps not understand Arabic — at all events, his Arabic. Still, till his interpreter returned, it would be but civil to help her off with the large blue veil, or mantle, which entirely covered her. Politely proffering his assistance, he removed her veil, and flung it on a chair near.

The scream which followed this act astonished him far less than the discovery to which it led. The lovely Georgian was so fat, that it was with the greatest difficulty she could stand; and an exquisitely tattooed wreath of hyacinths, of a fine blue, began at her chin, meandered over her cheeks, and covered her forehead.

"Oh!" ejaculated Cecil, "if I had but profited by my reading! Why did I not sooner remember the traveller I studied in the days of my youth, who said that in the East a beauty was a load for a camel!"

At this moment Mustapha re-entered the saloon.

"O Allah, how beautiful! By the head of the Prophet, she is a rose — a full moon!"

Cecil sprang forward, with the true Englishman's

impulse, to knock him down. Ill-timed admiration is enough to enrage a saint. The shrill cries of the lady, however, diverted his attention.

"Unless you wish me to be deafened outright, do learn the cause of her horrible clamour."

"Your highness has taken off her veil."

"Which, for my own sake, I shall return as speedily as possible."

Without a moment's delay he restored the screen and quiet at the same time; and with the aid of Mustapha supported the fair slave to a pile of crimson satin cushions, which had been collected for her especial use.

"And now, in the name of the devil, what shall I do with her?"

Sidi seemed a little surprised at the question, and forthwith began a string of Arabic verses about this star of the morning, this pearl of the world, this rose of a hundred leaves, which the stranger was fortunate enough to possess. Well, to make the best of a bad bargain, and short of a long story, he married the Georgian to Sidi Mustapha.

After all, Englishmen *are* patriotic with partridges before their eyes; and this little adventure gave Cecil an excuse for returning to England before September. What is the reason that we find it so satisfactory to make excuses to ourselves — the only persons in the world to whom they must be altogether needless?

It was the last week in August when he reached

the Abbey, his uncle's seat. How advantageously did the luxurious foliage of the thickly leaved woods, as yet untouched by one tint of autumn, and the bright green grass of the fields, contrast with the parched and sultry aspect of the southern summer he had left behind! It was long — in youth, every thing seems long — since he had felt a sensation of pleasure so keen as he experienced when the tall oaks of the avenue closed over his head. The rooks were gathering to their rest, as noisily as children; but the old and familiar are ever soothing sounds. In the distance he could see the slim and mottled deer sauntering lazily along in the full enjoyment of security; and the last red flush of evening was reflected in a large piece of water, which glittered through the dense branches.

At length he arrived in the court, where half-a-dozen gray-headed serving-men came out to meet "Master Cecil," as they persisted in calling him. It is very agreeable to have people glad to see you, even if there be no better reason for their joy than that they knew you as a child. A spaniel now put its nose into his hand: but the dog's memory was more faithful than that of its master; for the visitor had some difficulty in recognising, in the heavy and feeble creature that claimed his notice, the once slight and agile partner of his boyish amusements.

"My poor Dido! can this be you?"

"All my young mistress's care," said one of the servants.

At this moment the young mistress herself appeared, and Cecil found that he had forgotten her as much as his dog. He had left her a pale, sickly, even plain child: she had sprung up into a bright, blushing, and most lovely girl. Her flaxen hair had darkened into a rich chestnut; and the only trace of "little Edith" was in the large blue eyes, which remained the same. Cecil was quite surprised that she so instantly remembered him; but five years after twenty do not make the difference they do before that age.

Sir Hugh was as glad to see his nephew as a gentleman of the old school always is on the stage; and in half an hour the trio were comfortably situated in the library — some dinner ordered for Cecil — an extra bottle of port for the old gentleman — and Edith, seated on a low stool at her father's knee, was quite delighted when the conversation went back to their childish sports, and what a pet the poor little delicate child used to be of her cousin's.

The next month flew away imperceptibly. Cecil listened patiently to the politics of the Morning Post — for Edith read them aloud to her father. He also found that he could read at his young hostess's work-table; then he was so very useful in the flower-garden, which was especially hers; there were, besides, visits to the gold and silver pheasants, long rides over the heath, long walks through the forest, and long evenings, when Sir Hugh sat by the fire-side and slept, and Edith sung sweet old

ballads to her harp. The result of all this was inevitable: had it been in a melodrame, the young people could not have fallen more desperately in love. Let others talk of the miseries of the tender passion, Cecil was eloquent on its comforts: he had never been so occupied or so amused before.

On the 1st of October, a bright clear morning, when the few flowers that still linger on sunny terrace or southern nook are in all that glow of gorgeous colouring which so peculiarly belongs to autumn, the young lady of the Abbey stept out on the balustrade to pluck the last buds of the Provence rose. A few late geraniums and myrtles were yet beautiful and green; but suddenly Edith turned and gathered from a luxuriant plant its only cluster of orange flowers. They suited well her array, for Edith was that day garbed as a bride. The glossy brown hair — that golden brown which shines on the pheasant's wing — fell in large curls from her white wreath, half-hidden by the long veil; the white satin dress had no ornament—not a gem marred its rich simplicity. She leant pensively on a corner of the marble pilaster: for she stood now on the threshold of youth; she was about to put away childish things, to take upon her higher duties; and her destiny was given — how utterly! — into the hands of another. Already the shadow of love deepened the seriousness of that graceful brow. Still, she was only leaving the home of her childhood for a time, not as the young bride often leaves that home — for

rietor, by Longman &

Drawn by A. E. Chalon, R. A. Engraved by J. Cochran.

THE BRIDE.

London, Published for the Proprietor, by Longman & C° Paternoster Row.

ever. To wed with Cecil was but giving Sir Hugh another child.

"Come, Edith mine!" said a sweet voice at her side; and the lover led her to her father.

In another half-hour the bells were ringing cheerfully on the air; and during the many years that the old Abbey was gladdened with their mutual happiness, Cecil never felt inclined to go to Hastings from *ennui*, or to Naples as an experiment; but found ample employment and content around his own home, and by his own hearth.

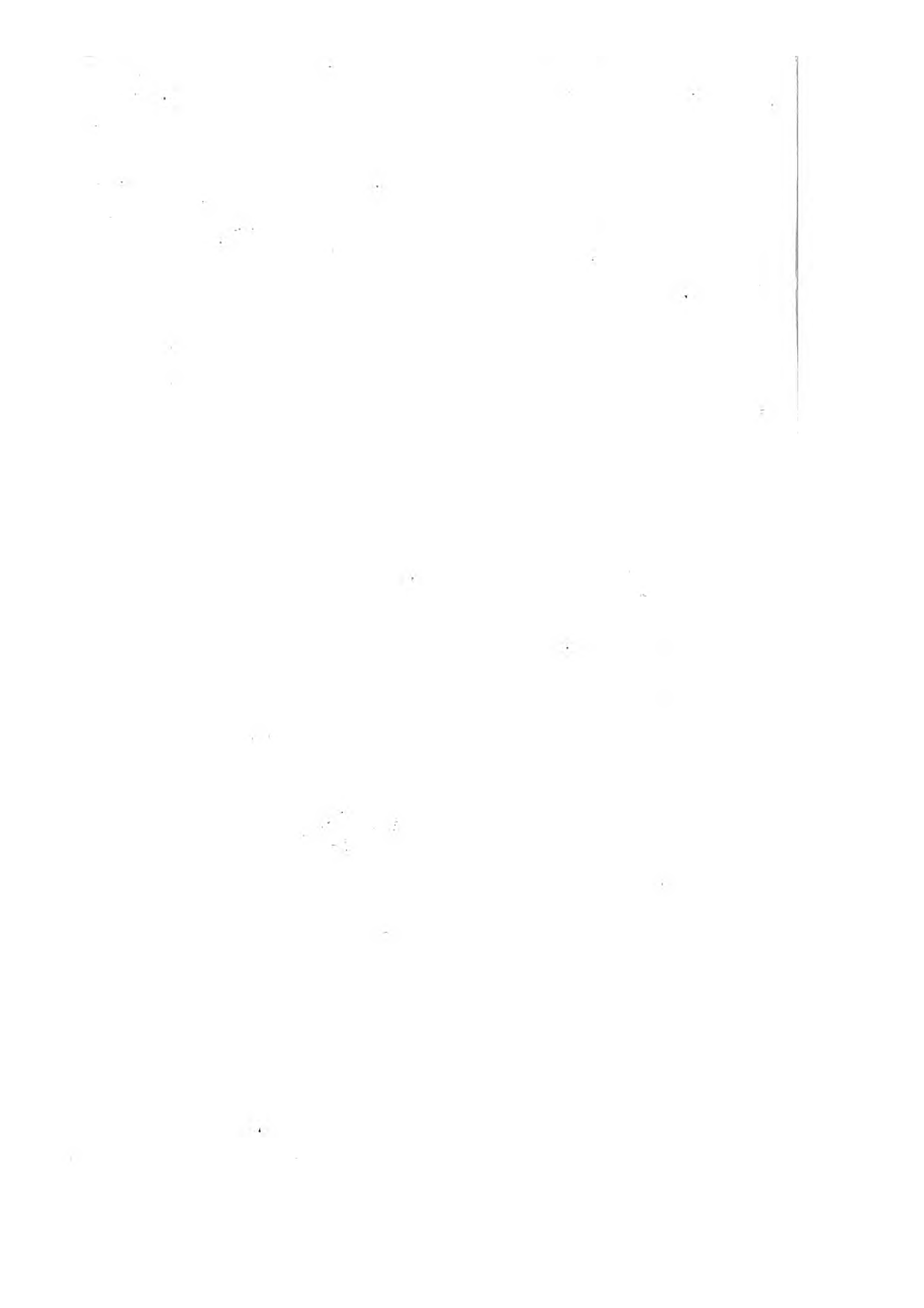
SONG.

Our early years — our early years,
  Recall them not again;
The memory of former joy,
  The pang of former pain.

Where is our childhood? Where are they
  The playmates of the heart,
Whose first sweet lesson was to love,
  Whose second was to part?

The Dead are with the past; for them
  How fruitless our despair!
Unkindness, anger, fondness, grief,
  Alike are buried there.

Alas! such thoughts can only weep
  The heart's most bitter rain:
Our early years — our early years,
  Recall them not again.



Drawn by J. Wright. Engraved by T. A. Dean.

LUCY ASHTON.

the Proprietor by Long

the Proprietor by Longt

AN EVENING OF LUCY ASHTON'S.

THE autumn wind swung the branches of the old trees in the avenue heavily to and fro, and howled amid the battlements — now with a low moan, like that of deep grief; now with a shrill shriek, like that of the sufferer whose frame is wrenched by sudden agony. It was one of those dreary gales which bring thoughts of shipwreck, — telling of the tall vessel, with her brave crew, tossed on the midnight sea, her masts fallen, her sails riven, her guns thrown overboard, and the sailors holding a fierce revel, to shut out the presence of Death riding the black waves around them; — or of a desolate cottage on some lone sea-beach, a drifted boat on the rocks, and the bereaved widow weeping over the dead.

Lucy Ashton turned shivering from the casement. She had watched the stars one by one sink beneath the heavy cloud which, pall-like, had spread over the sky till it quenched even that last and

lovely one with which, in a moment of maiden fantasy, she had linked her fate.

" For signs and for seasons are they," said the youthful watcher, as she closed the lattice. " My light will soon be hidden, my little hour soon past."

She threw herself into the arm-chair beside the hearth, and the lamp fell upon her beautiful but delicate face, from which the rose had long since departed; the blue veins were singularly distinct on the clear temples, and in the eye was that uncertain brightness which owes not its lustre to health. Her pale golden hair was drawn up in a knot at the top of her small and graceful head, and the rich mass shone as we fancy shine the bright tresses of an angel. The room was large, lofty, and comfortless, with cornices of black carved oak; in the midst stood a huge purple velvet bed, having a heavy bunch of hearse-like feathers at each corner; the walls were old; and the tapestry shook with every current of passing air, while the motion gave a mockery of life to its gaunt and faded group. The subject was mythological — the sacrifice of Niobe's children. There were the many shapes of death, from the young warrior to the laughing child; but all struck by the same inexorable fate. One figure in particular caught Lucy's eye; it was a youthful female, and she thought it resembled herself: the outline of the face certainly did, though " the gloss had dropped from the golden hair" of the pictured sufferer.

" And yet," murmured Lucy, " far happier than I! The shaft which struck her in youth did its work at once; but I bear the arrow in my heart that destroys me not. Well, well, its time will come!"

The flickering light of the enormous chimney, whose hearth was piled with turf and wood, now flung its long and variable shadows round the chamber; and the figures on the tapestry seemed animate with strange and ghastly life. Lucy felt their eyes fix upon her, and the thought of death came cold and terrible. Ay; be resigned, be hopeful, be brave as we will, death is an awful thing! The nailing down in that close black coffin — the lowering into the darksome grave—the damp mould, with its fearful dwellers, the slimy worm and the loathsome reptile, to be trampled upon you — these are the realities of dread and disgust! And then to die in youth—life unknown, unenjoyed; no time to satiate of its pleasures, to weary of its troubles, to learn its wretchedness—to feel that you wish to live a little longer — that you could be happy!

" And," added the miserable girl, " to know that he loves me — that he will kneel in the agony of a last despair by my grave! But no, no; they say he is vowed to another — a tall, dark, stately beauty: — what am I, that he should be true to me?"

She wrung her hands, but the paroxysm was transitory; and fixing her eyes on the burning log,

she sat listlessly watching the dancing flames that kept struggling through the smoke.

"May I come in, Miss Ashton?" said a voice at the door; and, without waiting for an answer, an old crone entered. She approached the hearth, placed in a warm nook a tankard of mulled wine and a plate of spiced apples, drew a low and cushioned settle forwards, seated herself, and whispered in a subdued, yet hissing tone, "I thought you would be lonely, so I came up for half an hour's chat: it is the very night for some of your favourite stories."

Lucy started from her recumbent position, cast a frightened glance around, and seemed for the first time sensible of her companion's presence.

"Ah! is it you, Dame Alison? sooth it is but a dreary evening, and I am glad of a companion — these old rooms are so gloomy."

"You may well say so, for they have many a gloomy memory; the wife has wept for her husband, and the mother for her child; and the hand of the son has been against his father, and that of the father against his son. Why, look at yonder wainscot; see you no dark stains there? In this very room —"

"Not of this room; tell me nothing of this room," half screamed the girl, as she turned from the direction in which the nurse pointed. "I sleep here; I should see it every night: — tell me of something far, far away."

"Well, well, dear; it is only to amuse you. It

shall not be of this room, nor of this house, nor even of this country; will that please you?"

Lucy gave a slight inclination of the head, and again fixed her gaze steadily on the bright and sparkling fire; meantime the old woman took a deep draught from the tankard, disposed herself comfortably in her seat, and began her story in that harsh and hissing voice which rivets the hearing whereon it yet grates.

THE OLD WOMAN'S STORY.

"Many, many years ago there was a fair peasant—so fair, that from her childhood all her friends prophesied it could lead to no good. When she came to sixteen, the Count Ludolf thought it was a pity such beauty should be wasted, and therefore took possession of it: better that the lovely should pine in a castle than flourish in a cottage. Her mother died broken-hearted; and her father left the neighbourhood, with a curse on the disobedient girl who had brought desolation to his hearth, and shame to his old age. It needs little to tell that such a passion grew cold—it were a long tale that accounted for the fancies of a young, rich, and reckless cavalier; and, after all, nothing changes so soon as love."

"Love!" murmured Lucy, in a low voice, as if unconscious of the interruption: "Love, which is our fate, like Fate must be immutable: how can the heart forget its young religion?"

"Many," pursued the sibyl, "can forget, and do and will forget. As for the Count, his heart was cruel with prosperity, and selfish with good fortune; he had never known sickness which softens—sorrow which brings all to its own level—poverty which, however it may at last harden the heart, at first teaches us our helplessness. What was it to him that Bertha had left the home which could never receive her again? What, that for his sake she had submitted to the appearance of disgrace which was not in reality her's?—for the peasant-girl was proud as the Baron; and when she stept over her father's threshold, it was as his wife.

"Well, well, he wearied, as men ever weary of woman's complaining, however bitter may be the injury which has wrung reproach from the unwilling lip. Many a sad hour did she spend weeping in the lonely tower, which had once seemed to her like a palace; for then the radiance of love was around it—and love, forsooth, is something like the fairies in our own land; for a time it can make all that is base and worthless seem most glittering and precious. Once, every night brought the ringing horn and eager step of the noble hunter; now the nights passed away too often in dreary and unbroken splendour. Yet the shining steel of the shield in the hall, and the fair current of the mountain spring, shewed her that her face was lovely as ever.

"One evening he came to visit her, and his manner was soft and his voice was low, as in the

days of old. Alas! of late she had been accustomed to the unkind look and the harsh word.

" 'It is a lovely twilight, my Bertha,' said he; 'help me to unmoor our little bark, and we will sail down the river.'

" With a light step, and yet lighter heart, she descended the rocky stairs, and reached the boat before her companion. The white sail was soon spread; they sprang in; and the slight vessel went rapidly through the stream. At first the waves were crimson, as if freighted with rubies, the last love-gifts of the dying Sun—for they were sailing on direct to the west, which was one flush, like a sea of blushing wine. Gradually the tints became paler; shades of soft pink just tinged the far-off clouds, and a delicate lilac fell on the waters. A star or two shone pure and bright in the sky, and the only shadows were flung by a few wild rose-trees that sprang from the clefts of the rocks. By degrees the drooping flowers disappeared; the stream grew narrower, and the sky became darker; a few soft clouds soon gathered into a storm: but Bertha heeded them not; she was too earnestly engaged in entreating her husband that he would acknowledge their secret marriage. She spoke of the dreary solitude to which she was condemned; of her wasted youth, worn by the fever of continual anxiety. Suddenly she stopped in fear—it was so gloomy around; the steep banks nearly closed overhead, and the boughs of the old pines which stood in some of the tempest-cleft hollows met

in the air, and cast a darkness like that of night upon the rapid waters, which hurried on as if they distrusted their gloomy passage.

At this moment Bertha's eye caught the ghastly paleness of her husband's face, terribly distinct: she thought that he feared the rough torrent, and for her sake; tenderly she leant towards him — his arm grasped her waist, but not in love; he seized the wretched girl and flung her overboard, with the very name of God upon her lips, and appealing, too, for his sake! Twice her bright head — Bertha had ever gloried in her sunny curls, which now fell in wild profusion on her shoulders — twice did it emerge from the wave; her faint hands were spread abroad for help; he shrunk from the last glare of her despairing eyes; then a low moan; a few bubbles of foam rose on the stream; and all was still — but it was the stillness of death. An instant after, the thunder-cloud burst above, the peal reverberated from cliff to cliff, the lightning clave the black depths of the stream, the billows rose in tumultuous eddies; but Count Ludolf's boat cut its way through, and the vessel arrived at the open river. No trace was there of storm; the dewy wild flowers filled the air with their fragrance; and the Moon shone over them pure and clear, as if her light had no sympathy with human sorrow, and shuddered not at human crime. And why should she? We might judge her by ourselves; what care we for crime in which we are not involved, and for suffering in which we have no part?

" The red wine-cup was drained deep and long in Count Ludolf's castle that night; and soon after, its master travelled afar into other lands—there was not pleasure enough for him at home. He found that bright eyes could gladden even the ruins of Rome—but Venice became his chosen city. It was as if revelry delighted in the contrast which the dark robe, the gloomy canal, and the death-black gondola, offered to the orgies which made joyous her midnights."

" And did he feel no remorse?" asked Lucy.

" Remorse!" said the crone, with a scornful laugh; "remorse is the word for a child, or for a fool—the unpunished crime is never regretted. We weep over the consequence, not over the fault. Count Ludolf soon found another love. This time his passion was kindled by a picture, but one of a most strange and thrilling beauty—a portrait, the only unfaded one in a deserted palace situate in the eastern lagune. Day after day he went to gaze on the exquisite face and the large black eyes, till they seemed to answer to his own. But the festival of San Marco was no time for idle fantasies; and the Count was among the gayest of the revellers. Amid the many masks which he followed, was one that finally rivetted his attention. Her light step seemed scarcely to touch the ground, and every now and then a dark curl or two of raven softness escaped the veil; at last the mask itself slipped aside, and he saw the countenance of his beautiful incognita. He ad-

dressed her; and her answers, if brief, were at least encouraging; he followed her to a gondola, which they entered together. It stopped at the steps of the palace he had supposed deserted.

" 'Will you come with me?' said she, in a voice whose melancholy was as the lute when the night-wind wakens its music; and as she stood by the sculptured lions which kept the entrance, the moonlight fell on her lovely face—lovely as if Titian had painted it.

" 'Could you doubt?' said Ludolf, as he caught the extended hand; 'neither heaven nor hell should keep me from your side!'

" And here I cannot choose but laugh at the exaggerated phrases of lovers: why, a stone wall or a steel chain might have kept him away at that very moment! They passed through many a gloomy room, dimly seen in the moonshine, till they came to the picture-gallery, which was splendidly illuminated — and, strange contrast to its usual desolation, there was spread a magnificent banquet. The waxen tapers burned in their golden candlesticks, the lamps were fed with perfumed oil, and many a crystal vase was filled with rare flowers, till the atmosphere was heavy with fragrance. Piled up, in mother-of-pearl baskets, the purple grapes had yet the morning dew upon them; and the carved pine reared its emerald crest beside peaches, like topazes in a sunset. The Count and the lady seated themselves on a crimson ottoman; one white arm, leant

negligently, contrasted with the warm colour of the velvet; but extending the other towards the table, she took a glass; at her sign the Count filled it with wine.

" 'Will you pledge me?' said she, touching the cup with her lips, and passing it to him. He drank it — for wine and air seemed alike freighted with the odour of her sigh.

" 'My beauty!' exclaimed Ludolf, detaining the ivory hand.

" 'Nay, Count,' returned the stranger, in that sweet and peculiar voice, more like music than language — 'I know how lightly you hold the lover's vow!'

" 'I never loved till now!' exclaimed he, impatiently; 'name, rank, fortune, life, soul, are your own.'

" She drew a ring from her hand, and placed it on his, leaving her's in his clasp. 'What will you give me in exchange, — this?' — and she took the diamond cross of an order which he wore.

" 'Ay, and by my knightly faith will I, and redeem it at your pleasure.'

" It was her hand which now grasped his; a change passed over her face: 'I thank you, my sister-in-death, for your likeness,' said she, in an altered voice, turning to where the portrait had hung. For the first time, the Count observed that the frame was empty. Her grasp tightened upon him — it was the bony hand of a skeleton. The beauty

vanished; the face grew a familiar one — it was that of Bertha! The floor became unstable, like water; he felt himself sinking rapidly; again he rose to the surface — he knew the gloomy pine-trees overhead; the grasp on his hand loosened; he saw the fair head of Bertha gasp in its death-agony amid the waters; the blue eyes met his; the stream flung her towards him; her arms closed round his neck with a deadly weight; down they sank beneath the dark river together — and to eternity."

THE LAST OF THE ST. AUBYNS.

AND here they met:—where should Love's meeting
be—
Love passionate, and spiritual, and deep—
Where, but in such a haunted solitude—
A green and natural temple—fitting shrine
For vows the stars remember? Much the heart
Is govern'd by such outward impulses.
The love whose birth has been in lighted halls,
That lives on festival and flattery,
Like them is vain and selfish; but the love
Whose voice has caught from twilight winds their tone,
And gazed alternately on the deep blue
Of heaven, and that in one dear maiden's eyes,
Is e'en as those divinities of old,
Whose beauty was a dream of early flowers,
Of lonely fountains, and of summer nights—
Poetry and religion blent in one.
In a fair garden did these lovers meet;
The elm made leafy arches overhead,
And every sudden breeze that moved the boughs

Flung down a shower of gold, the alchemy
Of shining June, whose sunlight fill'd the air.
Luxuriant as a vine, the honeysuckle
Grew, till the foliage almost hid the flowers,
Whose breath betray'd them. There the sunflower
stood,
The golden cornfield of the bee, whose wings
Sounded like waters near—a lulling sound,
Soft as the nurse's chant of some old rhyme
Seems to the weary child; and by its side
The white althea grew, whose slender sprays
Are strung with seed-pearl. Up climb'd the sweet pea,
The butterfly of flowers:—I love it not,
Though every hue—and it has many tints—
Are dyed as if the sunset evening clouds
Had fallen to the earth in sudden rain,
And left their colours: purple, delicate pink,
And snowy white, are on thy wing-like leaves;
But thou art all too forward in thy bloom;
Thy blossoms are the sun's, and cling to all
That can support them into open day:
And then they die, leaving no root behind,
The hope and promise of another spring;
And no perfume, whose lingering gratitude
Remains round what upheld its summer's life.
Beautiful parasite! thou who dost win
A place with the fair flattery of thy flowers,
Whose death has nought of memory or of hope,
How many likenesses there are for thee
Mid the false loves and friendships of this world!

Beyond the wooded park spread, where the deer
Slept 'neath old trees ; and on a glittering lake—
The willows grew around it—was the home
Of stately swans. The lady of my tale
Was of an ancient ancestry, and wooed,
Half for her wealth and half for her sweet self,
By the land's chivalry ; but him she loved
Was not of her degree. Ah ! what cares Love
For all the poor distinctions wherewith pomp
Invests its nothingness ? And still he hath
Scutcheon and herald in the beating heart.
They loved—they parted ; he to win a name
Mid the red wars. Great Heaven ! what vain beliefs
Have stirred the pulse and led the hopes of man !
As if that honour could be bought by blood,
And that the fierce right hand was better worth
Than the fine mind, and high and generous heart !—
Blame not the lovers—'twas their age's fault ;
And even that I were full loath to blame.
Perchance our own, which now, quick-sighted, sees
The many faults and follies of the past,
Has a successor in the wheel of time
To which our errors will be just as clear.
'Twas pity that they parted. But one week,
And the stern father died ; none save his child—
'Twas a child's duty, and she wept for him—
Sorrowed above the harsh and cold one's grave :
A monument was all his memory.
The gentle lady was now free to choose,
And faithfully she kept to her first love.

Painted by E. T. Parris. Engraved by H. T. Ryall.

GRACE St AUBYN.

Published for the Proprietors ... Paternoster Row

Alike in vain. She faded from that hour.
Quiet and voiceless in her grief, 'twas like
A bird that perishes, the cause unknown;—
We see the plumage fade, the bright crest droop,
But reck not of the secret wound within.
No more they saw her, at the evening hour,
Along the terrace wandering mid the flowers,
The fair exotic favourites shelter'd there;
No more her step rejoiced the aged ear,
And made the music of the lonely hearth;
And soon closed windows, shutting out the day,
Told there was death within that ancient house.
She died with one last wish upon her lips:
It was accomplished. Never more the vault
Where her forefathers slept received its dead;
For she, the last of that old line, slept not
Within the sculptured chapel of her race.
They buried her beneath the glad green earth;
The sunshine, like a blessing, falling round,
And kissing off the tears which night had wept.
Those stately walls are levelled with the ground;
The yellow corn waves o'er them; that fair park
Is covered now with cottages and fields.
But in a lonely nook of forest land
Her grave remains: there is a mound of grass;
A broken cross, grey and with moss o'ergrown;
A little open space is fill'd with flowers—
Wilding ones, growing amid furze and fern;
A brook runs through, which, like a natural hymn,

Sings to the dead: then close the forest-trees
In many and impenetrable brakes.
Few find the path which winds around the tomb
Where sleeps the last and loveliest of her line.

THE END.

LONDON:
J. MOYES, CASTLE STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.