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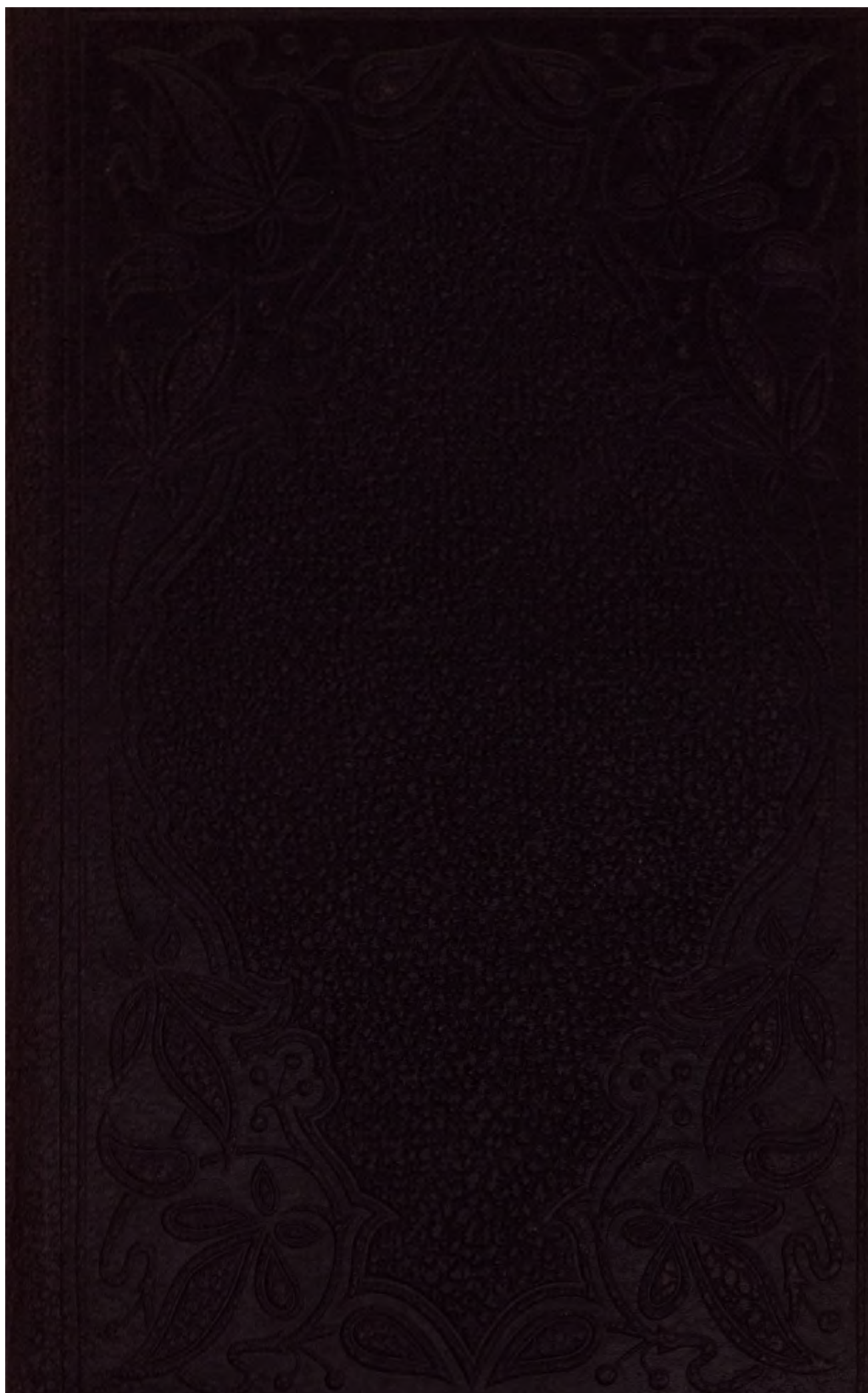
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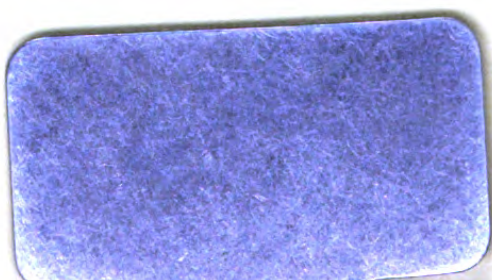


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GORDON OF DUNCAIRN.

A NOVEL

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

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GORDON OF DUNCAIRN.

CHAPTER I.

Thou hast been reared too tenderly,
Beloved too well and long,
Watched by too many a gentle eye :
Now look on life — be strong !

Too quiet seemed thy joys for change,
Too holy and too deep ;
Bright clouds through summer skies that range,
Seem oftentimes thus to sleep.

* * * * *

Thou reed ! o'er which the storm hath passed,
Thou shaken with the wind,
On one, one Friend; thy weakness cast,
There is but one to bind.

MRS. HEMANS.

“ WHAT makes dear Minnie look so grave this morning?” exclaimed a fair girl of about seventeen, as, her hat hanging behind her, she entered the window, where she had been for some moments earnestly watching an elder girl, who, with a pre-occupied air, was busily engaged with the cups and

saucers at the breakfast-table, quite unconscious of the other's presence. The sound of her voice, however, aroused her from her abstraction, and, looking up with a half-start from her employment, she ran to receive the embrace of the pretty Lillas; but her manner was still *distract*.

“ My Minnie must tell me what has happened to cloud this dear brow,” pursued the latter, as she playfully held back the rich braids of dark hair from the forehead of her friend; “ here have I been brushing the early dew from the grass, to the great detriment of my *chaussure*,” looking down at the delicate little feet, “ to say nothing of the dangers my dress has encountered, in making my way through the brushwood in search of these flowers, you have been wishing for so long, and now, when I return with a handful of them, expecting the warmest of welcomes and a torrent of thanks for bringing them in such fine order—see, Minnie, the *Linnæa borealis* in the very perfection of its lovely blossom—I stand for full five seconds unnoticed at the window, and am obliged at last to herald my own coming!”

“ It was indeed dreadful ingratitude, my sweet fairy; but I was in a brown study, so you must forgive me; and now let me admire these elegant

little flowers, and thank my little Ariel for doing her spiriting so gently."

"But tell me, dearest," continued Liliias, after she had displayed her treasures with pride and received the thanks she expected, "tell me why you are so sad."

"Surely there is cause enough for sadness, dearest Lily, when I remember that for only one short month longer I shall be an inmate of this house, so long my happy home!"

"And why should you leave it?" impetuously exclaimed Liliias; "why should you thus break up this happy circle? I only wish papa were at home, for then I am very sure you would never be allowed to go!"

"Hush, sweet Lily!" replied Minnie, as she placed her graceful hand on the pouted lips of her companion, "hush! you must not speak thus; believe me, it has been no easy task to win mama's consent to this plan, which originates solely with myself. Dear Lily, were you in my place you would feel as I do; hitherto I have been, necessarily, wholly dependent on those who have shown themselves more than parents to me; now I am old enough, and able, to do something for myself; what abilities I have must not now be used only for my own

gratification; I owe the education I have received entirely to your father and mother; I had no claim upon them, and they have treated me as one of their own children: it is now my duty to use the powers they have cultivated, and try if I cannot be something more than a useless burden to them."

"Burden indeed!" poutingly replied Liliás, "and show your gratitude by breaking up our pleasant group and destroying all our enjoyment! just at this moment too, when Archie is returned to England, and we may expect him here any day."

A blush suffused Minnie's face as she once more stooped to examine the flowers, then again turning to Lily and twining her arms round her, she replied with a smile:—

"Well, dearest, it is of no use now to discuss a matter that is settled; and indeed I believe it was not altogether that which made me thoughtful, for the Foundling of the Sea has a brave heart, and rather looks forward with excitement to a single-handed encounter with the world;—but I had a dream last night: nay, do not laugh at me! no doubt it was the consequence of our last evening's *causerie*; but it has awakened thoughts which always bring sadness, and, besides, other friends were so oddly mixed up in it. I dreamt I was once more

in that sinking ship, with the wild waters seething and hissing round me, in the middle of wide ocean, with that black and stormy sky overhead. I thought we had been tossing and labouring for days, without a ray of sunshine or of hope to cheer our sad hearts; at last the vessel had become motionless, she was waterlogged and the pumps availed no longer, not a sail was visible as far as the horizon extended, nor a vestige of land, and we knew by the sucking in of the water that the ship was settling down; I felt one of the sailors drag me from dear mama's arms, to whom I had been clinging, and just then a wave, more huge than any which had preceded it, came rolling on towards us, as if to engulf us all. I saw again all the horrors, which, young as I was when the reality occurred, I can never forget; those fearful shrieks, those wild prayers, those horrible and awful blasphemies, seemed once more to ring in my ears. I saw my dear mama clasping my poor little brother to her bosom; but in a moment she seemed to vanish; I tried to spring after her, but the sailor held me tightly, and on looking into the water, I saw her gradually dissolve into the element rather than sink; but the huge wave rolled on like a destiny, and as it rose and curled over, and was in act to break,

it seemed that mama had released my brother, and I saw him and Archie standing upon the crest of the wave, and stretching out their arms to drag me from the waters, which were now tumbling tumultuously around me. Archie grasped me first, but then he too seemed to dissolve as mama had done, and I felt myself sinking back again, lower and lower, when my brother caught me up, and in a moment I found myself on firm ground, standing on this lawn of Fairlands, leaning on Archie's arm, with you all around me: with the sudden change I woke—and now away with dreams to sweet realities, for here comes your dear mama:" and with these words the two girls, breaking from the half-embrace in which they held each other, ran to give the morning welcome to the dignified-looking woman who now entered.

Mrs. Græme was one of those women who, scarcely past the middle age, retain yet all the attractions, without any of the assumption, of youth. Of the ordinary height, her figure had acquired a slight fulness which accorded well with her years, and, though her complexion had lost somewhat of its freshness, and the once golden hair was fast becoming silvered, there were few other marks to indicate the progress of time.

She embraced both the girls with affection, and her entrance was the signal for the small household to assemble for prayers, after which the three ladies sat down to their breakfast; during the discussion of which meal we will look a little into the family history.

CHAPTER II.

Therefore should every man wait;—should bide his time. Not in listlessness,—not in idleness,—not in useless pastime,—not in querulous dejection ; but in constant, steady, cheerful endeavours, always willing, and fulfilling and accomplishing his task, that, when the occasion comes, he may be equal to the occasion.

LONGFELLOW.

FAIRLANDS was situated in one of the most beautiful parts of the western coast of Scotland. The house was an irregular building in the cottage style, long-fronted and low, with a verandah running along the front, and terminating in a small conservatory, which was connected with the drawing-room. It stood nearly at the base of the mountain, the summit of which, bare and rocky, was streaked with silver streamlets, while oak coppice and weeping birch clothed the descent, and formed a rich and picturesque background to the house. There was a little terrace before the house laid out in flower parterres, and a few steps connected it with a wide and smooth lawn, which sloped rather steeply down, towards the sea, from which it was divided by a fringe of evergreens and a low wall, forming a

lower terrace screened by the belt of shrubs below. At some distance above the house the public road ran through the wood, and a rustic lodge admitted to the grounds. The house fronted southwards and commanded a lovely prospect. The eye rested first upon the arm of the sea, which, here narrowed to the dimensions of a lake, is called Loch Tarbet; then wandered over the rich and fertile shore which formed its opposite bank, dotted with villages and country seats, and backed by wild rugged mountains, now stretching away into heathery moorlands, now clothed thickly with coppice, and anon rising into wild and beautiful sublimity. A little wooden jetty at the bottom of the grounds of Fairlands ran out into the sea, and formed a landing-place from the small half-decked boat which lay moored at its extremity. The fishing-town of Tarbet was situated at the upper extremity of the estuary or loch, whose opposite shore formed one side of the Mull of Kintyre. The town, divided into East and West Tarbet, straggled across to the shore of Loch Fine, and the steamers plying between Inverary and Greenock always touched there.

Fairlands was the property of the husband of Mrs. Græme, an officer in the navy, who had recently attained the rank of post-captain, and was,

at the time this story opens, at sea. He had married young, and his own private income, in addition to his pay, enabled his wife to reside comfortably on their small estate, where she occupied herself during his absences, in the education of their family, going occasionally to Edinburgh for the aid of masters.

The family consisted of three children, one son and two daughters. Archie was the eldest, and about four-and-twenty. He resided chiefly in London, making only occasional visits to Fairlands. He was heir to his maternal uncle, who possessed large estates in England, and though he studied the law, and kept his terms in the Temple, it was more with the view of qualifying himself for the position he would eventually occupy, than with any idea of following it as a profession. His vacations were generally spent in travelling, either in his own country or on the continent, and he amused his leisure with writing for various periodicals, which, brilliant and talented as he was, gave him an income independent of his father.

Alice was two years younger than Archie, and was now in England, where she had been for many months, on a visit to her uncle and aunt at Battersden. Lillas, as has been said, was seventeen. Besides these three, there was the orphan Marion

Gray, whom Captain and Mrs. Græme had adopted when a child, and who was about a year older than Liliass.

Marion Gray had been picked up in a boat at sea, about fourteen years before, with several others, passengers and sailors, who had escaped from the wreck of an East Indiaman which had foundered on the homeward passage. The widowed mother, Mrs. Gray, had been returning to England with her two children, Marion, and a boy a few years older. He and his mother were washed off the deck and seen no more; the little Minnie however was put into the long-boat with others, and, after being tossed on the waves for a night and a day, they were seen and taken up by the ship on board of which Mr. Græme was then a lieutenant. He took charge of the little orphan and brought her home, and, being unable to trace her connexions, had finally adopted her into his own family. The sweetness and intelligence of the child, soon won the affection of Mrs. Græme as well as himself, and she had been cherished by both, as their own. As time wore on however, and Minnie's childish attractions ripened into those of girlhood, doubts would occasionally cross the somewhat worldly mind of Mrs. Græme, as to the prudence

of this adoption. She was not blind to the fact, that, even as children, a difference was perceptible between the affection which Archie showed to his sisters and to Minnie Gray. Towards the latter, a something of chivalry mingled in all their childish sports; while on her part there was a kind of clinging dependence towards him, partly occasioned by the difference in their ages, but yet more by a consciousness, that in him she could always find a defender, and a sympathizer in all her troubles. He had now been absent two years, during which period Minnie had been gradually forming into the graceful and intelligent girl, capable of appreciating his cultivated mind, and sharing his intellectual pursuits. It was therefore with some degree of uneasiness that Mrs. Græme anticipated his return. It is true Archie was heir to a large fortune and fine estates, which would make a wealthy wife a matter of indifference, but, independent of Minnie's being portionless, she was also nameless, or at least beyond the mere name of Gray, they had no clue by which to trace her parentage. She was left an orphan when she was too young to know anything of her relations in Scotland, which she had never seen; and when the mother thought of her noble boy, fitted by station and by nature, to match with

the best of the land, she could not bring her mind to contemplate the idea of his union with the poor and unknown orphan, (dear, and loving, and loveable as she was,) with any kind of composure.

She had listened then to Minnie's proposal to seek her own way in the world as a governess, with a secret throb of pleasure, for which she could not help reproaching herself, and, though she had combated the plan long and resolutely, there had been a weakness in the arguments which eventually yielded to those of Minnie, which, with all her affection for her adopted mother, the former could hardly fail to perceive. From the moment, however, when she had painfully become aware of the insincerity of Mrs. Græme's resistance, although unsuspecting of the cause, Minnie's resolution was unalterably taken; and, resisting all the affectionate pleadings and remonstrances of Liliass, she had entered into an engagement with the family of a Glasgow merchant, to whom she was to go in a month.

It was, however, not without many a bitter struggle, that she maintained her resolution and looked out into the future before her. How changed would be the aspect of her life henceforth! The mornings of delightful study with Liliass, the long

rambles together in the afternoon, sometimes on foot, sometimes on their rough shelties; the cheerful sociable meals, the calm sweet evenings, the sketching excursions, her own interest in the village, and the poor people who always welcomed her with blessings—all would be given up; henceforward her time, her talents, all were to be at the disposal of strangers, and she was to become that pariah of society—a governess. That morning, as she had stood at her bedroom window before breakfast, with her mind predisposed to sadness by the dream which cast its shadow upon her soul, all these recollections rushed with peculiar and painful vividness across her. It was only yesterday that the engagement had been concluded, and in a few weeks what a different life would be hers!

It was July; summer was in all its brilliancy; the air was full of fragrance, the blue sea danced and sparkled in the early sunlight; a blue misty haze hung over the landscape on the opposite shore; there was a hum of myriads of insects, and birds warbling their morning song, while some far-off rooks added their voices to the general thanksgiving of nature for the return of light. Beneath the window was heard the sharpening of the gardener's scythe, as he skimmed the lawn glancing with the

dewy gossamer. These and a thousand other sweet sounds filled the air, and brought tears of love and gratitude into Minnie's eyes, mingled with grief, as her imagination involuntarily pictured the close row of houses, instead of this wide landscape, the heavy air of the streets, the absence of flowers, and all the beauties of nature and the sounds to which she now listened with delight, exchanged for the coarse and vulgar noises of the town.

But such are not the thoughts to nerve a mind for the encounter of what it dreads, and so Minnie owned to herself; therefore with a heavy sigh she turned from the window and descended to the dining-room, though the cloud which lay upon her heart still threw its shadow over her face, and produced that air of sadness which had attracted the notice of Lillas on returning from her morning ramble.

CHAPTER III.

Then come, my sister! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress;
And bring no book: for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

WORDSWORTH.

“Ан, there comes the post!” exclaimed Liliás, as, regardless of conventionalities, she darted from the breakfast-table, and ran across the lawn to intercept the gillie, who was making his way up to the house from the village, with the letter-bag across his shoulders. “Here, mama!” she exclaimed, running into the room again with the contents in her hand, “here are two for you, and this one in Archie’s handwriting for me.” Then, after a pause, “Oh, mama, how charming! he comes home this very afternoon to stay some weeks, and wishes us to meet him in the boat at Tarbet, as he is coming from Greenock by the steamer.”

“Gently, my sweet one!” cried Mrs. Græme, looking up from her own letters, “you pour out your news so rapidly, that you leave me no time to read my own.”

“Now, mama dear, do not pretend that you are interested in those letters, which I dare say are nothing but tradesmen’s circulars, when you know your dear old heart is bounding with pleasure at the intelligence I am giving. Let me feel,” she continued, playfully putting her hand on her mother’s side, and then throwing both arms round her neck, “Oh, mammy mine! it is of no use in the world to pretend calmness, so lay by those stupid papers, and listen to my plan;” and the impetuous girl took the letters out of her mother’s passive hands, while running eagerly on: “the steamer, you know, will be at Tarbet about two or three o’clock: we shall have a beautiful sail down; there is a charming breeze, which will waft us there in an hour, and I see old Sandie at this moment in the boat, as if the old man had the gift of second sight this morning, and could already see Archie on his homeward journey. Well, then, at Tarbet we can wait, while Sandie goes to the pier to meet him: you can take your book if you like, and Minnie and I our sketch-books, there will be effects of light and shade enough notwithstanding the mid-day sun; though all these will be mere apologies, for you may be sure we shall make but little use of them. We will take our luncheon with us, and have a day of

enjoyment and idleness for once, real *dolce far niente* won't it be charming, Minnie?" she exclaimed, she turned to where Minnie had been sitting.

But Minnie had risen, and was now standing the window, apparently engrossed in watching the movements of Sandie in the boat; she made no answer, and Liliass, too happy to be very observant ran off to give the needful directions for carrying out her plan.

Mrs. Græme remained awhile in deep thought, her eyes fixed upon Minnie, as she stood with her back towards her; a deep sigh ended her meditation as she said:

"You and Lily were almost children when Archie left, Minnie; two years will have made a great difference in you both. There will naturally be a change too in him; you must expect to find him changed in many respects, you know he is ——"

Minnie waited in vain for the completion of the rather incoherent sentence, and turning round with a smile, she said:

"He will find one of his former pupils and play-mates turned into a sedate governess; I wonder what he will say to that change, mama!"

"Perhaps he may be rather astonished at first, my dear, young people are often inconsiderate in such

matters, but I am sure he will approve of the plan, and applaud the good sense and feeling which dictated it. He will no doubt have acquired now, sufficient knowledge of the world and the requirements of society to see that you have acted judiciously; for you know, dearest, the proposal was wholly your own."

"Quite, mama; I do not repent it indeed: but why should Archie be changed? his letters are as full of home feelings as ever they were, and, if Lily and I are two years older, we are not less his sisters, nor he our brother."

"True, Minnie; but that was not quite my meaning; in fact, I cannot well—it is difficult to explain what I would say: I trust to your own naturally good sense and proper feeling——: but our little Lily will be impatient if we keep her waiting, so run, dearest, and get yourself ready." And giving a kiss to Minnie, Mrs. Græme hastened out of the room. She was not without a secret misgiving as to how Archie would receive the news of Minnie's plans, but the die was cast, and it was satisfactory to think that there was now no receding, though she could not but wish the visit could have been delayed for another month; however, she had given Minnie a few words of warning, which she hoped would not be unheeded.

They were all soon ready and seated in the hall, forming a happy party, notwithstanding the little uncertainty of which both Mrs. Græme and Minnie were conscious. Indistinct as had been the words of the former, Minnie could not but understand the direction of her fears: at first she felt rather disposed to laugh at them, but a light had broken in upon her during the utterance of those few sentences, which not only enabled her to see clearly the cause of Mrs. Græme's insincerity, in her opposition to the governess plan, but, also, to read with more distinctness certain feelings, which had hitherto only lurked in some of the dark corners of her own heart. Till now, she was not aware of having thought of Archie, except as a brother, whom she loved as Lillias did, and whose love to them both was equal. Mrs. Græme had suggested that he might be changed. She could not think that he would love his sisters less; did she mean that he might love one of them more? The thought gave a throb to her heart, and brought a colour to her cheek; she hid her glowing face in her hands, and ran upstairs to prepare for the excursion, with a new feeling in her heart, which she did not care to analyse, but which seemed to have added a fresh charm to her beauty,—as Mrs. Græme could not but

unwillingly acknowledge to herself, as they all took their seats in the boat that morning.

A happy party they were truly; gliding over that gently rippling sea, the sails swelling to the soft breeze that filled them, as the boat cut her way through the waves, proudly dashing the spray from her bows. Perfect happiness it was not, for it lacked peace; but it was a fair specimen of the happiness which ordinarily falls to the lot of mortality,—anticipation, and excitement, and mirth, with anxiety beneath the surface.

When they landed, Sandie was sent across to the pier to meet Archie, while the ladies remained to beguile the interval till his arrival, as best they might.

Lilias, with characteristic restlessness, went in pursuit of flowers and insects; always contriving to keep in the direction of the Tarbet pier, but making many digressions to the right and left, as fresh beauties attracted her from the straight path. Mrs. Græme seated herself under some trees, upon an eminence which commanded a view of the road, and, with her eyes alternately wandering towards the road, or fixed upon the book which lay on her lap, she remained in anxious expectation. Minnie appeared to be the only idle one; without a pretence

of employment, she sometimes reclined on the , at Mrs. Græme's feet, sometimes seated herself on the beach, her hands clasping her knees, and eyes fixed intently on the water, while the work of her face and the changes of her complexion betrayed that, if her body was inactive, her mind was far otherwise.

More than two hours had passed thus, when Mrs. Græme's searching looks along the road were recalled by an arm stealing gently round her waist, while a face looked up into hers with an arch smile, which made her start up with the exclamation,

" Archie ! my own darling boy ! what cloud has dropt you on this spot ? "

" No cloud, dearest mother ! but a ray of most pure sunshine, " was the reply. " Did you suppose I could plod with Sandie and my portmanteau along the dusty road, when he had told me of your whereabouts ? No, I took a short cut, and, favoured by these trees, interrupted your meditations. See, there comes the old man with my worldly goods upon his shoulder. But where are they all ? Where are Minnie and Lily ? "

" Here we are, Archie ! " cried Lily, as, attracted by Mrs. Græme's exclamation, the two girls hastened

to the spot, and Lily rushed into her brother's arms.

“Bright and wild as ever!” he said, as, releasing her from his embrace, he turned to seek Minnie. For the first time in her life Minnie came forward to meet Archie with shyness; Mrs. Græme's words had produced a change in her feelings, that she could not overcome, in spite of her utmost efforts at carelessness; but who ever attained carelessness by the endeavour to assume it? Archie, however, appeared not to notice her embarrassment; indeed there was a something like awkwardness in his own usually unaffected manner, and the blush which mantled on Minnie's fair cheek, as his lips touched it, found a reflection on his own.

The little confusion however was perhaps unnoticed by their companions, as both were eager to claim his attention, and it was not till they were once more seated in the boat, that there was time to think of anything but the inquiries, which he was called upon by his mother and Lily to reply to.

At length silence—the silence of happiness too great for words—fell upon the little party, as they floated gently homeward. Archie was the first to break it:

“Oh the delight of this calm scene!” he said, as

the breeze gradually freshened with the setting sun, and wafted them softly upon its wings. "How often has imagination pictured to me something like this, while travelling through the dusty world, or plunging through the tumult of the London streets. Look at that glorious sunset! does it not remind you, Minnie, of Wordsworth's description?

——— the gleam——

The shadow—and the Peace supreme!

With the addition of these loved ones by my side," pressing his mother's hand, which lay in his, "Oh, who could prefer town life to such a home!"

"Some could, and do," said Lillas, glancing archly across at Minnie, who sat on the other side of Archie. "Taste is very arbitrary," continued the little lady, carefully arranging a bouquet of wild-flowers which she had gathered, "and there are some here who prefer a close street to such a scene as this, and strangers to long-tried friends; is it not so, Minnie?"

"There are some who take pleasure in looking into the reverse side of a lens, Lily, and so have a distorted view of the truth," replied Minnie, with a smile, though she turned her face away, and seemed intently counting the waves as they passed.

Archie turned from the one to the other, with a perplexed look, and then appealed to his mother:

“What does this sharpshooting mean, dear mother? pray explain the meaning of these fair sybils, for I have not the key.”

“I will explain, Archie,” broke in Lillas, with a tone of pique in her voice. “Yonder demure demoiselle by your side, declares that she has lived long enough with us hum-drum people; that Fairlands is no longer supportable; that she must leave us for new friends and new scenes, and so, forsooth, she is going to live with strangers in the busy town of Glasgow.”

“Lillas!” exclaimed her mother, reproachfully; but Lillas had fairly given way to her feelings of irritation, at what she considered overstrained delicacy in Minnie to propose, and unkindness in her mother to accede to; it was not therefore easy to recal her to a sense of her injustice, and, like a spoiled, impetuous child, she refused to listen to her mother’s exclamation, and taking up her flowers again, she fell to examining them carefully one by one, with a pouting expression in her pretty face.

“Minnie, how is this? can this be true?”

asked Archie, in a low tone, bending down to try and get a glimpse of Minnie's averted face.

"True, and not true," was the reply, in an unsteady voice, as she bent her head still lower. For the injustice of Lily's speech and the emotion of the morning, had agitated her feelings more than she could well account for, even to herself, and her tears would not be repressed.

"Dear mother, for pity's sake interpret!" he said, impatiently.

"She is a noble girl," replied Mrs. Græme, assuming an air of candour; "she is indeed going to leave us, but not quite as Lily has rather unkindly put it. She thinks it her duty not to be dependent upon us, and that she ought to earn her own livelihood; so she has engaged herself to a family in Glasgow as governess. You may be sure, Archie, I have done my best to prevent it, though I cannot but admire her generosity of feeling."

"Dear mother, this should never have been permitted! what a sacrifice!"

Mrs. Græme said something deprecatingly about Minnie's firmness. Minnie's head was still averted; Lilies sat struggling with her irritation; angry with herself for what she had said, and half angry with Minnie, for taking her half-jesting words so

earnestly; still busily arranging her flowers. Suddenly Minnie raised her head, and turning to Archie said,

“ Blame nobody but myself, Archie, for being so foolish as to take what Lily laughingly said, *en grand sérieux*, least of all blame dear mama for her inability to bend my headstrong will,—or refute the cogency of my arguments,” she added, smiling. “ Dearest Lily !” she continued, as, her bouquet discarded, the latter stood tearfully before her, “ I will explain all to Archie to-morrow, and make him a convert to my opinion; and you must forgive your foolish Minnie for being so thinskinne, though I can hardly forgive myself.”

The two girls embraced warmly.

“ Lily, you are a spoiled child, as you always were,” said Archie; “ and now see,

You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting
With most admired disorder,

and Minnie is only too good to forgive you so readily: but, mother, Minnie does not leave us yet?”

“ Not for a month yet,” was the reply.

“ Hurrah ! then I am come home in the very moment of time, and for to-day at least we will forget the future,” he exclaimed, as, lightly leaping

from the boat, which now touched the jetty, he handed his mother out, while Lillas, cleverly eluding his outstretched hand, jumped nimbly by him, and passing her arm through her mother's walked with her towards the house. Archie drew Minnie's hand beneath his own arm, and they followed in silence.

The light clouds which had for a moment disturbed the serenity of the party soon passed away, and left them calm and happy, to the enjoyment of the evening.

CHAPTER IV.

You stood before me like a thought,
A dream remembered in a dream.
But when those full eyes first did seem
To tell me, Love within you wrought——
O Greta, dear domestic stream !

Has not, since then, Love's prompture deep,
Has not Love's whisper, evermore
Been ceaseless as thy gentle roar?
Sole voice, when other voices sleep,
Dear undersong in clamor's hour.

COLERIDGE.

It was two years since Archie had left Scotland. They had been spent partly in visiting various parts of the continent, partly in London, where he occupied chambers in the Temple.

Tall and lithe as a young sapling, he seemed made more for agility than strength. He was not handsome, according to the ordinary acceptation of the word, but his face was full of intelligence, and his dark full eyes capable of expressing every emotion. His mouth indicated a combination of much gentleness with great force of will, and his pale complexion and usually serious countenance,

were singularly lighted up by his bright sunny smile. It was as if a sunbeam pierced a cloud.

Lilias, fair and *petite*, was a perfect contrast to her brother, resembling their mother in the delicate roundness of her form, and the golden tint of her hair, which hung in heavy ringlets upon her shoulders, unconfined by band or comb, thus adding to the general childishness of her appearance. Her blue eyes sparkled with mirth and glee, and her complexion was brilliantly fair, while her prettily-formed, though somewhat pouting lips, but rarely closed completely over the tiny row of pearls behind them. She was like a fairy, wanting only the gossamer wings, (which want indeed was almost supplied by the noiseless activity of her movements,) to make the resemblance perfect. Her disposition was gay, impulsive, and full of clinging affection, though impatient of control, and not a little *exigeante*. The paths of inclination and duty had not yet severed for her; she was the pet of the family; thus she could by no means comprehend a difference in her own position and that of Minnie, and rather resented the higher views of the latter as an affectation, and a wilful interruption of their present happiness.

Minnie, on the contrary, gentle, mild, and ap-

parently yielding, possessed in reality a strength of character uncommon in one of her age. The events of her early childhood had made a powerful impression upon her naturally thoughtful mind, and resulted in the formation of a peculiar character. A line of duty once recognised, her course was unerring, though gentle and noiseless; she overcame obstacles rather by avoiding than resisting them, and, while steadily pursuing her path, seemed often as if suffering herself to be led by others, but the end was never lost sight of, and, like the reed bending to the violence of the torrent, it was only that she might remain unbroken. In education, the difference of character between the two girls was seen, by the eagerness with which Lillas would encounter a difficulty, and the want of perseverance which would make her leap over, what she had not power to vanquish, while Minnie seemed to find only greater incitement to exertion, and would never abandon a point till she had mastered it. Her person corresponded to her character; rather above than below the middle height, she was slight, without being fragile—elegance was the word which best described her. Her complexion was of a pale, creamy tint, and her dark violet-blue eyes seemed immeasurable in the depth of

their expression; the pupils dilating when she was interested or excited, so as to appear quite black. Her well-formed lips rested gently on each other, and easily parted in sunny smiles. She wore her hair characteristically, the rich braids drawn back from her face and gathered low down, in a full knot, behind.

The fondest affection existed between the two girls, and, though Liliás often jarred the harmony by her impetuosity, the clinging tenderness of her disposition soon brought her to ask forgiveness, which was easily obtained, and thus her wilfulness gained strength from the gentleness of those around her.

Time passed rapidly with the inmates of Fairlands. The merry tones of Lily's musical voice were heard constantly, and the clear ring of her joyous laugh; Archie was thoroughly enjoying the pleasures of his happy home. He had a hundred schemes to beguile time: now a distant expedition over the mountains, the girls on ponies, and he ever ready and attentive in difficulties; helping Liliás, when her daring hardihood had led her into troubles beyond her own powers of extrication, and fearing for Minnie far more than she feared for herself; now in excursions by sea, visiting the various islands

Nor do I of that isle remember aught
Of prospect more sublime and beautiful
Than Scotia's northern battlement of hills,
Beloved in memory still,
And standard still of rural imagery.
What most resembles them, the fairest seems,
And stirs the eldest sentiments of bliss :
And, pictured on the tablet of my heart,
Their distant shapes eternally remain,
And in my dreams their cloudy tops arise.

Soon after Archie's arrival there was an addition to the circle. Alice returned from Battesden, her uncle's place. He and his wife were going to make a round of visits, and Alice was happy to be allowed to return to her Scotch home, and join the happy group assembled there. She was so much older and steadier than Liliass that Mrs. Græme was glad to have her among them, as she could better trust them on distant excursions where she did not care to accompany them, knowing that Alice's prudence

would be able to curb their wild love of adventure, which sometimes, when they did not return for an hour or two later than usual, kept her in a fever of anxiety.

A little later a friend of Archie's wrote to him from Inverary. He was making a tour in Scotland, and wanted his friend to join him. It was impossible however that Archie could be spared after an absence of two years, and not yet quite a fortnight at home! Liliass would listen to nothing; she stopped her ears and ran out of the room when Archie was going to speak; had she remained she would have been gratified by hearing him declare, that no temptation was strong enough to draw him from Fairlands now, but that, with his mother's permission, he would ask his friend to include Kintyre in his route, and make Fairlands his head-quarters. Mrs. Græme acquiesced in the plan with alacrity, when she had ascertained that Larthon Wentworth was connected with some of the best families in England, and, though a Temple chum of Archie's, was the possessor of a good property: but even this arrangement did not please the wilful little fairy; she did not like their present happy party to be broken in upon; she was sure Mr. Wentworth would try to entice Archie away from them; he kept his yacht and

his hunters, and Archie said he was a lover of all athletic sports; their quiet life would never amuse him; she was quite sure he must be a regular Berserker, and he would try to make Archie one too. It was in vain to adduce that he had not yet succeeded in so doing after many years acquaintance; that was in London, it would be different in the country; a man with such a name could not be other than a Berserker. Larthon! who ever heard of Christian man with such an unchristian name? where could it have been picked up? But as Archie could neither account for the whims of his parents, or satisfy her as to its origin, he was obliged to give up the defence of his name, and only assure her she would find him a very different man to what she anticipated. He could not, however, gain her good will, even by this concession; she pouted the rest of the day, and laid innumerable schemes for making the intruder shorten his stay among them.

A very different person however presented himself, when, on entering the drawing-room before dinner next day, she was introduced to the redoubted Larthon Wentworth. There was little of the berserker or of the athlete in his appearance, except that he was not tall and was rather square built.

He was certainly no Apollo, and his naturally ruddy complexion was heightened by the shy blush, which mounted to the roots of his red hair, as he rather awkwardly returned the very ceremonious acknowledgment, with which it pleased the fair Liliast to accost him. As shyness always brings its own troubles, those of Wentworth were increased by his upsetting a table in his anxiety to place a chair for Lily, and thereby scattering the contents of a workbox which was on it, into every corner of the room, and, while he was endeavouring to recover the various articles, stammering apologies, and refusing to listen to the remonstrances of the others against the trouble he was taking, Liliast stood with the most perfect composure and dignity, as if enjoying his confusion, which was happily ended by the opportune announcement of dinner.

Things went better next day. Wentworth was a passionate admirer of scenery, and entered with zest into all the excursions and amusements. He perfectly understood the management of the boat, as well as the arrangement of pic-nic luncheons and dinners. Liliast softened; she began to think him an acquisition, and, though she still took great delight in placing him in awkward situations, she gave up the berserker idea, and was more gracious to him.

"Do you know, Archie, I begin to like your friend," she said, as they were returning that afternoon, and, leaving Alice with Mr. Wentworth, she overtook Archie and Minnie.

"I doubt if he can return the compliment, Miss Lily. You talk of bersekers, and he has far more reason to class you among them; you are perpetually finding subjects of dispute; he can do nothing right."

"He seems to me to be a superior man," said Minnie.

"You will say so with reason when you know more of him, Minnie; he is considered quite an authority among men of the greatest intellect."

Lily was disposed to agree with her brother in the evening, when they discussed some of their past adventures together, and traits came out, which shewed Wentworth to be a man of honour and a gentleman in the true sense of the word, besides being exceedingly well informed and observant; and when she condescended to play and sing, and found that he was not only an admirer but a connoisseur in music, he rose very considerably in the little lady's opinion.

Their evenings indeed were especially delightful. Archie had spent the last winter in Rome and Naples,

and had brought home drawings and sketches, and specimens of mosaics, and cameos of lava, and shell, and coral. Larthon Wentworth had been there too, and had taken Archie in his yacht along the coast of Calabria. They spoke of expeditions to Sicily, to the Isle of Capri, of the wonders of its blue grotto; of the coral fisheries, and those who followed the trade; of the exquisite productions of the workers in coral. They spoke of art in general; of the buildings of ancient Italy; of her artists, of her people; what they were, and what they are; their beauty, their slavery, their climate and its influence upon character. The music of Italy was not forgotten, and the evenings generally concluded with songs and duets, and trios and quartets, in which the voices of the brother and his sisters and Minnie harmonized deliciously.

It was indeed a very happy time; pity it was that anything should mar such enjoyment; but, for poor Minnie at least, there was always a skeleton behind these pleasures, which revealed itself more and more startlingly as the time of her departure drew on. Never had her home been so lovely and so cherished; she shuddered to contemplate the future which lay beyond. Thoughts too would start into her mind, repelled as soon as perceived, but nevertheless giving

a throb to her heart and a flush to her cheek. Two years of absence had indeed wrought a striking change in Archie, and in their mutual positions. When he left home he was an unformed and inexperienced youth; now his mind was cultivated and enriched by travel. It was plain that Wentworth, clever as he was, considered Archie as at least his equal, and that he was thought highly of in the literary world; his manners too had acquired polish and peculiar refinement, retaining at the same time a simplicity that was singularly attractive. Before, he had been to her as an elder brother, now, he stood in a different position; removed from her in one sense, and drawn closer to her in another. He was no longer her brother, the companion of her amusements, and her boyish protector; he was the sharer of noble thoughts and high feelings; the tender and devoted lover;—for she could not mistake his sentiments towards herself, and, while her heart leapt up wildly at the certainty that one so good, so intellectual, so admirable in every way, should give her his affection, she trembled when she remembered the conversation between Mrs. Græme and herself, on the morning of his arrival.

She tried to avoid his society, to excuse herself from their daily expeditions, to occupy herself so

that she might not join in the evening conversations; but it was but seldom that she could succeed: Liliás would listen to no excuses, and reproached her with selfishness in spoiling their parties, which she said were always dull without her, because Archie did not choose to make himself agreeable to her alone, and as Larthon, despite his bashfulness, and Lily's cruelty, seemed to have constituted himself the attendant of the little fairy, Minnie had no way of avoiding the society of Archie, and could only shelter herself by keeping resolutely with Alice.

It terrified her during these discussions, to notice the disappointment that would overspread Archie's countenance, when she gained the day, and the wild triumph of silent delight that would leap up into his eyes, when Liliás was the victor. Unconsciously almost, she would find herself, at the close of the day, dwelling upon the remembrance of it, and recalling with a thrill of delight a thousand little incidents, imperceptible to others, but full of meaning to her; tones, looks, half-uttered words, those vague and impalpable nothings, which yet speak so powerfully, and bring conviction stronger than spoken words could convey.

“ Avant que le souvenir entre en partage avec l'espérance, avant que les paroles aient exprimé les

sentiments, avant que l'éloquence ait su peindre ce que l'on éprouve:—Il y a dans ces premiers instants, je ne sais quel vague, je ne sais quel mystère d'imagination, plus passager que le bonheur même, mais plus celeste encore que lui.”

Such were the feelings that would steal unbidden into the heart of Minnie. She would remember how his eye had sought hers, during the relation of some tale of thrilling interest, how eagerly he listened for her opinion, how earnestly he turned to her for sympathy in his hopes and plans, how her wishes seemed to be his law. She recalled to mind the excursion of the past day, his care for her comfort, his apprehensions for her safety, his quick comprehension of her wishes, his gentle and tender care for her at all times; how his hand had trembled as he helped her to spring from the saddle or the boat, the peculiar tone of his voice when certain words were spoken, the expression of pain or gladness that circumstances would call into his deep, earnest eyes, the lights and shades that would flit over his countenance; then, suddenly becoming conscious of the direction her thoughts were taking, she would cover her burning face with her hands, as if to hide from herself the crimson flush that rose to her temples, and, springing up as if to fly

from memory, she would sink down upon her knees, her hands wildly clasped above her head, and then dropped before her, and her head bowed down, as she sought and prayed for strength to overcome this trial, and subdue her will to her duty. "Oh that the day of my departure were already come!" she would exclaim. "O Lord, be not thou far from me! Haste thee to help me!" And with the cry would come the help, and, her weakness once more conquered, she would nerve herself again to look at the dreary life before her, and seek for strength to bear the Cross, which the minute before had weighed so heavily upon her.

CHAPTER V.

Faustine.—"O, das ist aber entsetzlich!"

Mario.—"Warum Faustine? Engel, Du liebst mich—"

Faustine.—"Ich!" rief sie, und fuhr mit der flachen Hand über die Stirn; "Ich—Sie?—Sie irren sich seltsam Graf Mengen."

GRÄFIN FAUSTINE.

THE morning so often invoked, so much dreaded, dawned at last. Minnie woke with the heavy feeling at her heart, which told her that some great change, which for the moment she could not realise, was about to occur. She had slept but little till towards morning, and, waking suddenly from the heavy dreamless sleep which had at last overpowered her, it was some minutes before she could sufficiently collect her senses to enable her to understand her position. The aspect of things around her, however, soon recalled all the painful facts to her memory. The sun had not yet risen, but, unwilling to waste the last hours of her stay at Fairlands in bed, she rose hastily, and having already packed her boxes and put all things in order, she dressed, and, stealing quietly down stairs, left the house, that

she might visit once more the spot which went by the name of Minnie's Watch-tower.

It was a lovely morning in the beginning of August; the sun was just rising as she left the house, and the air had that delicious feeling of freshness which tells of the first approach of autumn. The dew hung in large beads upon the gossamer and on the webs of the autumn spider, which enclosed, as in a network of pearls, the shrubs, the flowers, and the grass. The sunbeams, slanting gradually downwards over the landscape, bathed every object on this side of the loch in a golden light, leaving the mountains, behind which it rose, in misty obscurity. Drops like diamonds sparkled on the leaves of the trees; the sea, rippled by the morning breeze, glistened and danced, its blue surface specked with the white glittering sails of the early fishing-boats. The birds begun their morning song of praise, and the lark, soaring aloft, poured down upon the earth, as he rose, his rich stream of melody. The air was all astir with myriads of ephemerae glancing in the golden sunbeams, and now and then a humble-bee boomed heavily along, while the grasshoppers chirped merrily.

The path which Minnie followed ascended through the wood behind the house with many windings

for some distance, gradually inclining westward, till it emerged at length upon the high road, crossing which it plunged again into the woods, still ascending and continually trending to the west, till, at some distance up the mountain, the trees became scattered and interspersed with grey rocks, which cropped up (to use a technical term) among the heather. At last a huge mass of granite seemed to check all further progress upwards, and, turning an angle of this rock, the path terminated in a platform, which had the appearance of having been quarried; some large masses had fallen from the overhanging rock and afforded rude seats. This was a favourite resort of Minnie's; and, as she was almost the only person who frequented it, it had received the name of "Minnie's Watch-tower."

When the angle of the rock was turned, the path which led to it was seen no more; the solitude was perfect, and the scene of the wildest. The eye now ranged over a vast expanse of wild moorland and rugged mountains, sloping steeply down till it ended in abrupt cliffs which beetled over the sea, at a considerable depth below; so steep however was the descent, that it appeared as if one might spring from the platform into the waves below. The view was inexpressibly grand and wild. The blue

mountainous coast of Ireland was discernible in the horizon, while immediately beneath were seen the numerous rocky islands, and the irregular broken shores, which give to the western coast of Scotland that peculiarly ragged and jagged appearance. The shadow of the mountain was thrown far out over the sea, and only the distant line of Irish coast was bathed in bright sunshine. The waves broke with a heavy surge and roar against the cliffs below, or moaned and gurgled in the deep caverns they had worn for themselves; no sound was audible but the plaintive wail of the sea-birds, or the wild cry of the ptarmigan and grouse.

Minnie sat long contemplating the view before her, till by degrees, becoming absorbed in a maze of painful thought, the features of the scene lost their distinctness, and she continued to gaze upon the objects without noting them, while her mind was busy with other memories and ideas, the nature of which might be imagined from the large heavy drops which, apparently unheeded, by herself, rolled at intervals over her lashes and down her cheeks.

Nearly two hours might have passed thus, when a hand laid gently on her shoulder recalled her thoughts, and, though she neither changed her position nor withdrew her eyes from the objects

before her, the light touch caused a start and quiver to run through her whole frame.

There was a moment of silence, and then Archie, for it was he, spoke: "I have been seeking you in many places, Minnie," he said, gaily, "for the servants told me you had left your room: I thought I should find you at last in your watch-tower."

She rose hastily, and at the same time removing the traces of tears, of which she seemed then first to become conscious, she replied in the same tone: "Thank you, Archie, for reminding me of such a sublunary thing as the breakfast hour. I have been so wrapt in thought, and the contemplation of this superb scene, that time has been unheeded."

"It was no such purpose brought me here, Minnie," he said gravely, gently detaining her as she sought to pass him: "It is yet quite early, and two or three hours may pass before you are wanted at home. I came here to speak to you——Minnie!" he exclaimed, as she still endeavoured to get past him, "will you not stay one moment, while I speak some of the burning thoughts that have so long been consuming my heart?"

Suddenly she became passive, her hands fell powerlessly to her side, and she turned, as if to resume the seat she had just quitted; then seeming

to change her intention, she stood for a moment irresolute, her eyes fixed upon his, and her lips parted, as if vainly endeavouring to utter words which seemed to choke her. He seized the moment of indecision, and, taking one of her passive hands between both his own, he went on, in a low, passionate tone: "Minnie, I love you!—deeply, passionately, holily! I have no words to tell the depth of my affection,—the intensity of my love for you!"

Her eyes had sunk to the ground at the first word; a shudder ran quickly through her frame; her lips quivered; the colour faded from her cheek, but she did not withdraw the hand that lay passively in his, and seemed to be summoning all her energies for some desperate struggle.—He continued: "Throughout my childhood I have loved you as a sister, but these last few weeks have taught me another and a stronger love. O Minnie!" he exclaimed, after a moment's pause, as she continued silent, while tears slowly trickled from under her downcast lids, "adored Minnie! tell me that you return my love, that you will be mine! You know," he continued, rapidly, "what my prospects are; that, being my uncle's heir, I am at liberty to choose where I like; let no fear of the worldly judgment of

others come to separate us. I have even now won myself independence by my pen, and some reputation. Minnie! all this is indifferent to me without your love! Promise me this dear hand, and then I care not for name, fame, or fortune, except to lay them at your feet!" He raised her hand passionately, clasped between his own, to his lips, and leant forward eagerly to look into her half-averted face. The movement seemed to rouse her from the rigid stillness which had crept over her: again a tremor violently shook her whole frame, and, without raising her eyes from the ground, she said firmly, though almost inaudibly, "No, Archie! I cannot promise what you ask for; I may never be to you more than what I have always been—a fond sister."

He dropped her hand; it fell heavily to her side; then wildly catching it again, and bending still lower, he said, in a voice trembling with emotion, "Minnie, let me have this decision from your eyes as well as from your lips:—But remember," he added, slowly, "remember, ere you give it, that you are about to pronounce the doom of my future life. Give me the reward I ask, and nothing shall set bounds to the height I will aspire to; refuse it, and my energies are paralysed for ever!"

He bent eagerly forward, his whole figure full of passionate eagerness, his face deadly pale, as slowly, very slowly, she raised her eyes, dimmed with the tears ready to overflow their bounds, to his, and, while every shade of colour forsook even her lips, she repeated clearly, but in so low a tone that he was obliged to bend still lower to catch the sound,

“No, Archie!——”

She seemed struggling to say more, a spasm passed over her face, but the effort of saying even so much had relaxed the tension of her nerves, and for a moment she sunk upon his shoulder and gave way to a torrent of tears. They helped to restore her, and, recovering herself instantly, she gently freed herself from the arm that had encircled her, and standing upright, she continued, her voice at first low and trembling, but gaining strength as she proceeded:

“I cannot give you what you ask, Archie; I cannot recal what I have spoken; but you are too young to suffer this first shadow that has fallen upon your bright life, to darken it for ever. You will rise from this: I would not mock you by asking you to forget the love——” she paused——
“the deep love you have expressed—at least, not at once——. Time will, I trust, enable you to do

this; but I entreat you by that love," she clasped her hands, and looked imploringly in his face, "I entreat you, make me not the cause of grief and disappointment to those to whom I owe so much! You will one day be called to fill a position in the world different to that you now occupy, let the recollection of this sad hour bear some good fruit. Oh! waste not your life in vain regrets, but strengthen yourself to fulfil its duties faithfully, for the welfare of those around you; remember from whence come all the gifts of life, and for what purpose they are sent; exert your energies; and believe this, dear Archie," she continued in a lower tone, as she laid one hand lightly on his shoulder, "though I would fain have you act from a higher motive, yet, if it will help you, oh! believe me, dear brother, that none will watch your future with more intense interest, feel more pleasure in seeing you acting up to the highest standard, or more pain at your falling short of it, than will your sister Minnie."

He had turned slightly away from her while she had been speaking, and now stood with his arms folded, his eyes fixed upon the far distance, while a conflict of strong emotions agitated his pale countenance, and his form shook under the light

touch of her hand as it rested on his shoulder: she stood slightly bending forward, and looking earnestly, beseechingly, into his eyes. Their mutual positions were reversed. Neither spoke or moved for some moments: then she slowly removed her hand, and turned as if to leave him; the movement recalled him to the present; without changing his attitude, he said:

“Minnie, at this moment it seems to me that life contains no farther object:—I cannot promise what you require — I do not think it would be possible for me to keep such a promise — you alone could stimulate me to the performance of the duties you place before me — without you, the future is nothing to me — all seems dark — hope is gone — happiness is gone —” He spoke in broken sentences, as if struggling to subdue his emotion, his eyes still fixed on the distance, his arms still folded:—“I know,” he continued, after a moment’s silence, turning towards her, “I know it has cost you much, thus to dash all hope from me; I know your heart is too gentle not to sympathize with me, even while you inflict the wound; I would fain spare you more pain; — — but oh, Minnie!” he exclaimed with sudden passion, seizing her hand and clasping it between his own, “I love

you so!" and bending over it, hot, scalding tears fell upon it. Recovering himself, he continued: "Forgive me the suffering I know this must have given you! I little thought this morning to have caused or felt such agony!" His voice trembled: "God bless you, my angel——sister!" and with a heavy sob he took both her hands, and covered them with kisses.

She did not seek to prevent it, she laid her forehead for an instant upon his clasped hands, and said, almost inaudibly:

"Farewell, dear Archie, may God in Heaven bless you!"

There was another heavy sob, and then Archie turned hastily, and in another moment the rock had hidden him from her sight. For one instant Minnie stood motionless, then throwing up her arms with a wild cry, she sunk down upon the ground, and laying her throbbing head upon one of the stone seats, she gave vent to her long pent-up feelings, in a torrent of uncontrollable tears.

CHAPTER VI.

But oh! what words can paint the tears,
When from dear friends we sever?
Perhaps to part for months, for years,
Perhaps to part for ever!

SONG.

IN situations such as that described in the last chapter, hours seem as minutes; and how long Minnie remained in the state of almost suspended animation that succeeded her burst of tears, she knew not. Only the aching of her heart told her that agony had passed over it, such as would make every thing she had yet to encounter, seem light in comparison. She rose from the ground on which she had sunk, and gathering together the fibres of her heart, all torn and bleeding as they were, she went down, and into the world again.

But there was cause enough for tearful eyes and heavy lids that morning at Fairlands, and Minnie's wan and languid looks excited no particular observation, when she joined the family to go through the miserable mockery of pretending to eat breakfast. Lilius was almost as pale and heartbroken as her-

self, for Minnie, being nearer her own age than Alice, had been the companion of her studies and sharer of her pleasures, and she felt towards her, more of sisterly affection than towards Alice.

Mrs. Græme was conscious of a mixed feeling. She loved Minnie fondly, but there was a limit to her affection, and the idea of Archie throwing himself away upon the portionless, unknown orphan, was more distasteful to her than ever, since her son's return this time. She had watched Archie during the past month, and her observations had only made her more impatient to shorten even, (if it had been possible,) Minnie's stay. She tried to convince herself that his love for Minnie was the same as he felt towards his own sisters, and that she should yet see him choose a wife from a family worthy to match with the heir of Battesden, but she did not succeed satisfactorily, and could only trust to her skill in avoiding situations, likely to produce any explanation between them. Could she but separate them thus, she determined to be very cautious how they met in future, and she was no great believer in that firmness and constancy, which could resist the flatteries and blandishments, sure to be offered to a young man in Archie's position. As to poor Minnie's feelings, she did not care to examine them

much, contenting herself with the assurance, that Minnie must be aware of her own unfitness to be Archie's wife, and trusting a good deal to what she called her highflown, romantic ideas. So she took but little notice of the pale quivering face beside her, and devoted herself to the task of making conversation, so that Mr. Wentworth might not feel himself *de trop* in the house. She did not succeed very well in gaining his attention, however, for his glances were generally directed to Lily's tearful eyes, and many of Mrs. Græme's observations had to be repeated before they were heard. He seemed not to think himself an intruder, though he sometimes looked as if he rather grudged so much feeling given to Minnie by her friend.

The meal went on, however; Archie's place remained vacant, and Mrs. Græme considered that, had he been a very ardent lover, he would hardly have absented himself from the last meal they were to eat together. The idea rather reassured her, and she thought it safe to bestow a little compassion on the disappointment Minnie must feel, so turning to her, with a smile, she said,

"Archie is not very complimentary, Minnie dear, to shew himself such a sluggard on this morning of all others."

Before Minnie could reply, Lillas exclaimed,

“ Oh! he is no sluggard, mama; he was out at I don’t know what hour this morning. Old Elspie was holding him up to me as a mirror to see my own defects in, when I came down stairs.”

“ The less excusable his being absent from breakfast then, Lily,” said her mother, with a look of satisfaction; but just at this moment a servant entered and handed a note to her: she tore it open hastily, and running her eye over the contents, inquired,

“ Where did this come from, Janet? and who brought it? ”

“ Whar it cam frae, ma’am, I canna justly say, but as to wha brocht it, it war just the ne’er-doweel son o’ the widdy Fairlie, i’ the village.”

“ Send him round to the window, that I may speak to him,” she said, then turning to the others, “ This is a note from Archie,” still turning it round and round, with an air of perplexity, “ he says,

‘ Dearest mother,—I am unexpectedly and most unwillingly obliged to go to Edinburgh this morning. As it is a business admitting of no delay, I had no time to see you before I started. I am sure Minnie will understand that nothing but necessity could have taken me away to-day. Give her my

love and best wishes. It is probable that I may be detained for some days. Make my excuses to Wentworth, who, I hope, will await my return. Do not be uneasy, dearest mother, or expect me till you see me. Love to Alice and Lily.

‘ Your affectionate son, ARCHIE.’

“ It is an extraordinary thing,” she continued. “ Mr. Wentworth, have you any idea what can have taken away him so suddenly ? ” And, with all her wonder, Mrs. Græme could not help congratulating herself on the fact that a parting, that severest of trials to loving hearts, had been avoided !

“ I think I know what has called him away,” was Wentworth’s answer. “ It is nothing that need make you the least uneasy, Mrs. Græme, though I daresay it is a hard trial for poor Græme to go just now.”

Minnie could not make out whether he was in his friend’s confidence, and dared not hazard a look at him. His tone was careless, but his words, to her ear, had a meaning. At this moment the messenger appeared at the window, and Mrs. Græme proceeded to question him.

“ You had better leave the matter in my hands, Mrs. Græme,” said Wentworth, going to the window, “ you know it is my vocation,” and, with a

laugh, he drew the boy out into the verandah. In a few minutes he returned:

"I am afraid there is not much mystery to be made out of the business," he said: "it seems Archie came to his mother's house about eight o'clock, asking for a messenger to take this note directly to the house. There was nothing remarkable in his appearance, that I can find, except that he was in a hurry; he flung the note and a sixpence to the boy, and then, jumping on one of the young ladies' shelties, which he had with him, he was out of sight before this young scapegrace had picked up his ideas and his cap."

"He had some letters this morning, mama, for the post gillie told me that he stopped him at the gate and took out two for himself," put in Alice.

"Well, it is provoking," said Mrs. Græme, somewhat hypocritically, "but at least, Minnie, you may be sure it was something of paramount importance which could make him absent himself this morning."

Minnie murmured her acquiescence in the truth of this, with as much firmness as she could command, at the same time giving Mrs. Græme all the credit her sincerity required, and the party left the table to prepare for Minnie's departure.

It had been arranged that the old nurse, Elspie, should go with her to Glasgow, and return the following day, so as to bring them some account of Minnie's new home. The last tearful embrace then was given on the jetty, and Minnie stepped into the boat, with feelings how different to those with which she had so often seated herself there, with Archie by her side, certain that, happen what might, while he was near her no cloud could obscure her happiness! Where was he now? Separated from her perhaps for ever, and by her own act! believing that in truth he was only thought of as a brother. Oh, if she might but have given him the relief of knowing that his love was returned, his grief shared!—But would that have satisfied him?—No! she felt she had done all she could, consistently with her duty to his mother; she had obeyed her wishes, and, though the sense of having sacrificed inclination to duty did not bring any lively satisfaction at present to her aching heart, and though she sometimes felt a doubt whether she had any right to give such pain as she had witnessed that morning, she felt thankful that her strength had not failed under the trial, and was content to wait for her reward, and to commit Archie to the same care.

She pressed her dear friends to her heart, and tore herself from the clinging arms of the sobbing Liliás. Elspie and the boxes were already on board, and the boatman stood waiting to cast off from the jetty.

It was over! Fairlands was receding from her view; and she was now thrown upon the world to suffer, and struggle, and submit, and perhaps to sink, as so many of that poor misused sisterhood have done before her.

Those she had left did not linger long on the pier, but returned slowly and sadly to the house. Desolate it seemed now; the absence of Minnie and Archie made a sad gap in that cheerful circle. What can be more desolate than the aspect of a house whence a dearly loved friend has just departed?

Larthon Wentworth had very considerably taken himself off for the morning; Mrs. Græme and Alice went to their usual occupations; poor Liliás wandered about the house like a perturbed spirit, unable to apply herself to anything, and finding everywhere something to remind her of what she had lost. In the hall the chairs still remained displaced as they had been to make room for Minnie's boxes; the breakfast things had not been removed

from the dining-room—when would Minnie partake of a meal again in that room? The drawing-room table shewed gaps, where her work-box or her favourite books had been; the canterbury had not been put in order since her music had been taken out of it. Lily sat down and leaned her head listlessly on her hand, as she recalled the happiness of her life, and especially of the past month: all her little petulant ways rose up before her, and Minnie's gentle forbearance: oh, if she could bring back the past, how differently she would use it! She rose, and went up to the deserted bed-room; it remained as Minnie had left it: the disorder caused by the packing, the odds-and-ends scattered about the room and on the dressing-table, the blotting-book with scraps of paper, many of them written upon, and Minnie's own name scribbled in various ways, some rough pen-and-ink sketches and likenesses of different members of the family; the pen was still in the ink-glass, and direction-cards lay on the table; there was the bed as Minnie had left it, and a glove; it was full of sad reminiscences, ghosts seemed to haunt the room; Lily could bear it no longer, she took up the blotting-book and carried it off to her own room. Alice met her on the stairs.

“ I was coming in search of you, my poor little Lily, for this is a sad day for you more especially. I don't think either of us are much disposed for sedentary employments, and a walk will calm our spirits, and cool those red eyes before Mr. Wentworth's return,” she added, with a smile, but poor Lily was unable to join in it, so she continued: “ We will go down to the village, where we shall find sorrow too, for I believe Minnie had more friends there than any of us, and we shall cheer ourselves in consoling them.”

“ She bequeathed two or three of her village friends to my particular care,” said Lillas, as they walked on, “ but I am sure I can never please them as she did; it was something peculiar in her way with them; it was not giving them money or money's worth, for you know she could do little in that way, but they all seemed to consider her as a friend.”

“ We must try to find out her method, Lily; and here comes our good rector, he will help, perhaps, for they were always good friends.”

After the first greetings, and a few words about Minnie, the girls explained their difficulty. Dr. Grant was warm in his praises; there were few like her, he said; for one so young, it was wonderful.

how she could attach the people, and make herself their friend, without ever losing their respect; whether the people belonged to the Scotch or English church, it was all one, they looked upon her as their friend, and went to her in all their troubles. They visited several of the cabins; in all they heard her spoken of with love. "Blessin's on her bonnie face!" said one, "was na it she that put the comfort into my poor heart whan my auld Willie's boat went doon, an' I an' my bairns were left widout any to fend for us? was na hers the voice that bid me look up to find a friend i' Heaven? aye an' mony's the sair heart she's guided and 'friended: it's little siller she gied, but she aye gied wat whar better, an' wharever she gaes, the blessin's o' the puir will follow her, my leddy, an' there's Ane aboon us as will aye guide her, an' fend for her, the dear young lassie!"

"You see how she has gained the hearts of these people," said Dr. Grant: "a little sympathy goes farther with the poor than many believe, and they think more of the kind word, and the friendly counsel, than of a handful of silver: she never indeed, or but very seldom, gave them money, but she used to devise many ways of serving them, and the sick and the deserving never wanted

comforts, or the deserving advice and encouragement."

Lilias sighed; it was a difficult path to follow, and she feared she had neither the power nor the perseverance requisite. Dr. Grant accompanied them home, where they found Wentworth again; so the clergyman was persuaded to join their family dinner-party, and the evening closed more cheerfully than they could have supposed possible. None of the party, however, regretted the approach of night after a day of so much excitement.

The refreshment of sleep strengthens us to bear up under the heaviest sorrow, and even Lilias felt her heart lighter when she awoke the next morning. The sorest trial was past, the parting was over; to-day she would hear news of Minnie, for Elspie would return, perhaps bring a note from her, and now every day would lessen the interval before they could meet again. It takes little to restore elasticity in a youthful heart.

The morning, too, brought news from Archie, who did not forget the anxieties of others, desolate though he might himself be. There was a letter from him, sufficiently cheerful to satisfy his mother, in which he promised to be at home again on the following evening. There was also another

letter for Mrs. Græme, from her sister-in-law Mrs. Sherwood, proposing that Lily should visit them, now that she and Mr. Sherwood had returned to Battesden.

Towards evening Elspie returned. Poor Miss Minnie, she said, had had but a sorrowful journey, though she had borne up and exerted herself more than was good for her. They had reached Glasgow about eight o'clock, and gone directly to Mr. Baillie's. It was a "gran' hoose," she said, in a "braw street." But she supposed they had hardly been expected so soon, for there was a large party at dinner and the house was in confusion, but their rooms were ready, and the servants seemed sonsie and douce. "The young leddies just cam' an' glowred at Miss Minnie in a way that misliked me greatly, but the puir things, may be, knew nae better. Mrs. Baillie had rustled up in her "bravery" for a moment, and by her directions a nice supper-tray was sent up to the "puir bairnie, but when mysel' went up to see her she had but tasted a mouthfu' of bread and drank a cup o' tea; and 'Oh, Elspie!' the dear bairn said, 'I'll e'en go to rest, for I'm aweary, aweary, min' and body!' and troth sae she might weel be, the puir thing! and I was glad she could be her lane that evenin', and I left

her brawly this mornin’,” concluded Elspie, as she handed a note to Mrs. Græme and another to Lillas from Minnie, written cheerfully, and full of love and gratitude to all at “dear Fairlands.”

CHAPTER VII.

Oh ! happy child, in thy fawn-like glee
What is remembrance or thought to thee ?
Fill thy bright locks with the gifts of spring,
O'er thy green pathway their colours fling;
Bind them in chaplet and wild festoon—
What if to drop and perish soon ?
Nature hath mines of such wealth—and thou
Never wilt prize its delights as now.

MRS. HEMANS.

MR. SHERWOOD, the brother of Mrs. Græme, was many years older than his sister, and the possessor of a large property and fine estates in England; the principal of which was Battesden, in one of the midland counties, where he chiefly resided when his parliamentary duties released him from town. His London residence was in Berkeley Square. Mrs. Sherwood was still quite young, for he had married late in life, and his wife was gay, handsome, and fond of society. She cared very little for the quiet of domestic life, and when the season was over in town she had generally so arranged, that a succession of guests should be ready to relieve the

tedium of retirement at Battesden. They had no children; and, failing these, the property was entailed on Archie Græme. Mr. Sherwood was very much like the ordinary run of country gentlemen; not gifted with any very striking abilities, but sufficiently well read to make him an agreeable companion, and pleased to leave the general disposition of the guests with which his wife filled the house, to her, of whom he was very proud; while he was always ready and able to take any *rôle* which she chose to assign to him, or that came naturally in his way, and to do the honours of his preserves and his stud liberally. In London he was much absorbed in his parliamentary duties, and, though always glad to preside hospitably at the numerous and well-ordered dinner-parties for which his house was renowned, he generally eschewed the frivolities of balls, routs, and operas. In the country, farming, with the care of his estate, and country politics, occupied his time.

Alice Græme had spent much of her time with her aunt. Being of a quiet turn of mind and not endowed with much beauty, she had soon found herself eclipsed by the more shining attractions of Mrs. Sherwood, and had rather submitted to follow in her aunt's train than taken any

active pleasure in her life of gaiety. Her gentle and somewhat cold manners did not attract many admirers of the superficial class generally to be found in the atmosphere of London drawing-rooms, where, if gold is not scattered on the surface, there is no time to seek beneath the soil; so, in spite of Mrs. Sherwood's utmost endeavours, two or three London seasons had passed without her having succeeded in obtaining for Alice the brilliant establishment that she expected; for she was by no means free from ambition, though, for want of a wider scope, it was limited to matchmaking; and now, as Liliias was freed from the schoolroom, she thought it a favourable opportunity to make an exchange of the sisters. Mrs. Græme gladly acceded to the proposal; she also hoped to see her pretty little Liliias admired as she deserved to be, and thought the arrival of the proposal particularly opportune at this moment, when the loss of her friend would make change so acceptable to Lily.

“And so I am to go to Battesden, mama!” said Liliias, as, sitting on a low stool at her mother's feet, she looked up suddenly, “and just as I was making such resolutions to follow Minnie's example, and take such an interest in the people.”

“Nonsense, Lily! that kind of thing was all very well for Minnie, and may do for you to play at by-and-bye, but you have another game to play first, darling;” and she stroked the sunny head that was upturned to her.

“I know I have much to do to make myself like Minnie, mama; but why do you speak as if there were a difference—I mean another sort of difference—between Minnie and myself?”

“Minnie is a dear good girl, my child; and I do not mean to disparage her. I hope by-and-bye she will make a prudent and sensible marriage; but my little fairy is made for brighter skies, and I would much rather now have you mixing in the gay society you will meet at Battesden, than poking about the dirty cabins of Fairlands.”

“Oh, mama! if you had only heard what I did yesterday, you would not think it time wasted.”

“I don’t think I called it so, Lily; but I am not going to dispute this point with you; when you return it will be quite time enough for you to adopt all Minnie’s romance; but now we must think of Battesden.”

“The duty that comes first to hand,” said Lily, with a smile, “that’s what Minnie would call it; but I am afraid my aunt will find me dreadfully

home-sick, and not at all the companion Alice was to her."

"I don't think your aunt will care much about companionship, Lily; she likes gaiety, and has plenty of companions round her."

"I wonder if I shall like such a different style of life, mama! Perhaps I shall get too fond of it, and my giddy head will be turned! I wish you or Alice were going with me!" and she sighed.

"It will, indeed, be a totally different style of life to what you have been accustomed, dearest; and you will, perhaps, sometimes want one of us to restrain your too great enjoyment of the pleasures you will enter into; but, with all my Lily's impetuosity, she is not deficient in sense, and it may be good for her to have to rely a little upon herself."

Lily laughed: "That would be a broken reed indeed, mama."

"Well, then, you will have your aunt, who I know will be always ready to guide you, if you will only look to her, as I know you will do; and remember too, my Lily, that she may not always be so indulgent to your petulance as those at home have been; so you must try and subdue this impetuosity."

"I must look to another Friend, mama," said

Lily thoughtfully, and then, as she saw her mother's eyes bent inquiringly on her, she continued, "I will try to remember all you tell me, mammy mine, as well as the kind advice and example of dear Minnie : but you know, mama, I had always rather look to you than my aunt, so I shall write, and tell you all my pleasures and all my failings. Do you think you will ever get through the long letters that will come?" and the delicate arms were thrown caressingly round her mother's waist, as she looked up laughing. "But you will advise me, dear mama, won't you?"

"Shall I begin now, Lily?" replied her mother archly, "and scold you for suffering poor Mr. Wentworth to leave us this morning with such a heavy heart? A few smiles would have brought him to your feet, and he was a salmon worth landing I can tell you; you must not trust too much to bright eyes and sunny smiles, or you may find yourself distanced in the race."

"Now, mama, I care nothing for that sort of thing; and whenever I think of marriage it must come quite in a natural way. Mr. Wentworth is a very clever man, and very pleasant, and all that, and then he is dear Archie's friend, which is a great recommendation; but if he was worth his

weight in gold I should not like him one bit the more, and could never care for a man with such a head and complexion, and such awkward ways," and she laughed at the recollection.

"Beauty or elegance are not necessary in a good husband, Lily; but a well-filled purse, let me tell you, has much to do with happiness."

"Oh, mama! is this the advice you give me? I am afraid you did not quite act up to it yourself," she said, looking archly up.

"I was young and foolish, Lily. I want to warn you from similar breakers; though fortune has befriended us since we married, (upon little but love,) you might not be so lucky; and if you even like Mr. Wentworth, and think highly of him, it is a better beginning than to trust to nothing but love——"

"Oh, mama, pray don't go on; I could not marry any one for mere liking, and besides it is quite time enough to think about it when Mr. Wentworth asks me; and, after all, I think he cared much more for Archie's absence than for what you call my smiles. But I am very glad he is gone nevertheless, for he often worried me, particularly since Minnie and Archie left. When will Archie come back I wonder."

"There was a note from him this morning, dear-

est; and I think it probable we may see him to-day." Lily clapped her hands, but her mother continued thoughtfully: "I don't like his manner of writing, it is unlike himself, and forced. I hope there is nothing wrong. Mr. Wentworth seemed to be in his confidence, and I think I may trust him, or, indeed, my own dear boy, and I must not press for what he does not give willingly. I wish he would think of marrying. I confess I am very anxious to have him choose well."

"Dear mama! what has put so much matrimony into your head this bright August morning?" laughingly exclaimed Lilies, as she sprang up from her low seat to meet Alice, who was coming up the terrace steps; then, stopping as she reached the window, "I know who I wish he would choose, and I'm sure he could not do better. You shake your head, mama; you would rather have red hair and a freckled face! Poor Archie! Well, at all events, I am glad that he will be able to take me to Battenesden, and perhaps stay there a few days; that will be, at least, a little bit of Fairlands;" and the merry girl ran out to meet her sister, and tell her the news of Archie's coming.

Archie came that evening, as he had promised; and, if his letters had made his mother uneasy,

his appearance did not lessen her apprehensions. His countenance looked worn and haggard, and his manner was restless and unnatural; at times he would sit lost in thought, his head on his hand, and his face full of suffering, forgetful of all around him; suddenly he would start into fits of forced gaiety, with a recklessness of manner still more indicative of mental pain; and in the height of this simulated mirth, perhaps some word spoken, or some object attracting his eye, would check his wild merriment, and he would relapse into the attitude of painful thought, regardless of everything. Mrs. Græme was seriously uneasy; but he so effectually parried every attempt which she made to win his confidence, and at the same time seemed so distressed when any allusion was made to the change in his manner, that she forbore at last to notice it, trusting that a return to his ordinary employments would soothe the grief or anxiety which preyed upon him. The idea of Minnie often crossed her mind in connection with the change in Archie; but she could not reconcile the two; she felt sure that no girl in her situation could reject such an advantageous position as Archie could offer, even if there were no love in the case, and she could not think that wanting.

It was true, indeed, that she had given her a sort of warning before Archie's arrival, but that would weigh lightly in the balance against love; Archie was independent, and would not be likely to let such a scruple separate them; and in fact her own worldly mind rendered her incapable of estimating the extent of sacrifice that a girl of Minnie's high principle was able to make. She was ambitious for all her children, and though, as Lillias had hinted, she had herself yielded to the weakness of marrying for love—for the estate of Fairlands had come to them unexpectedly by the death of an elder brother of Captain Græme—she had resolved as far as lay in her power to prevent any of her children committing a like imprudence.

As for Minnie, though she could not help loving her herself, she, like many another worldly parent, blinded herself to the fact that qualities which had won her own affection, could be equally attractive to her son: and, as he had gone out into the world early, and had latterly been only occasionally at Fairlands, she was willing to believe that he might form connections more in accordance with the position of the future possessor of Battersden, than a marriage with the high-minded and pure-hearted, but, alas! poor and unknown, Marion Gray.

Archie rallied Lillas on not having sufficient influence with his friend to keep him at Fairlands till his return: he too had seen the impression she had made, and, admiring and esteeming Larthon as he did, would have been glad to give his sister to one whom he thought worthy of her; but disappointment made him forbearing towards others, and, when he found that his raillery distressed Lily, he was quite ready to take her part, and allow that she was young enough and pretty enough to be allowed a little more time for choice.

“So, Lily dear, clear that grave brow, and we will abandon poor Wentworth, though I am sorry for him; and put on your brightest smiles and gayest dimples, and we will go out in search of fresh game.”

“Be quiet, Archie, and don’t talk such nonsense; I am going to Battesden to enjoy myself, and not to speculate in the matrimonial lottery. Why don’t you set me the example, my good brother? mama is pining to see you turn Benedick.”

“Is she, Lily?” was the answer, in an absent tone; and while his sister ran quickly down the terrace steps to intercept the post-boy, who at that moment came in sight, and see if there was a letter from Minnie, Archie wandered slowly away into the shrubberies.

CHAPTER VIII.

His years but young, but his experience old;
His head unmellow'd, but his judgment ripe;
And in a word (for far behind his worth
Come all the praises that I now bestow),
He is complete in feature and in mind,
With all good grace to grace a gentleman.

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

THE week was over, the farewells were said: and now Archie and Lilius, with mingled feelings of pain and pleasure, were entering the gates of Battenesden Park.

The road wound for a while through the woods, now rejoicing in all the splendour of their summer foliage; then opened upon the park, where groups of deer couched among the tall fern, or browsed upon the uplands; a deep and rapid stream ran through the park, and widened out into a broad sheet of water at the foot of the knoll, the summit of which was crowned by the house, a large irregular mass of building in the Tudor style, the long front opening upon a broad terrace overlooking the park. The approach led to the side of the house,

and passed under a lofty portal, and Liliás felt considerably awed on being received there by a group of stately servants, and ushered into the noble hall, while the humble fly with their luggage subsided quietly into the stable-yard. She clung to Archie's arm, and crossed the hall with as composed a step as she could command, but was not a little relieved, on passing between the marble columns which separated it from the vestibule, to find Cecile, her aunt's maid, and an old acquaintance, waiting at the foot of the grand staircase to conduct her to Mrs. Sherwood's dressing-room, assuring her all the time that she was "*ravie de la voir*," and that "*Madame l'avait attendue pendant toute la journée avec le plus grand empressement.*"

Mrs. Sherwood received her niece with much affection; there were numerous inquiries to be made and answered, as to the journey and those whom Lily had so lately left.

"And so your mama tells me that Minnie Gray is really gone out as a governess! I am glad to hear it; my good brother never did a more foolish thing than bringing her home; she is far too handsome for a piece of household furniture, and Mrs. Græme has acted wisely in getting her out."

"But, aunt, it was not mama's doing at all; the whole thing originated with Minnie, and mama would fain have dissuaded her."

A derisive laugh interrupted Lily's speech—

"My dear child, you don't understand anything about the matter: and now let me look at you," continued Mrs. Sherwood, holding her at arm's length, as if to take a general survey of her little person, and then untying her bonnet and letting down her curls, which fell like a shower of gold over her face and shoulders. The result appeared to be satisfactory; and with another cordial embrace and many assurances of welcome, she committed Lily to the care of Cecile to conduct her to her own apartment, telling her that it wanted but half an hour of dinner, and as they were alone to-day her toilette need not occupy her long, and she would herself come and show her the way to the drawing-room. Then turning to Cecile she desired her to take the superintendence of her niece's toilette.

"*Je serais charmée de m'en charger,*" was the ready reply of the Frenchwoman; "*mais d'abord il faut que mademoiselle me permette de coiffer cette belle chevelure un peu plus à la mode,*" as she lifted admiringly the rich clusters of

golden hair which hung unconfined upon her shoulders.

“*Je me fie à vous, Cecile, entièrement,*” passively replied Liliás as she resigned herself into Cecile’s hands; and the simple toilette was soon accomplished, apparently quite to the satisfaction of Mrs. Sherwood, when, a minute after the second gong had sounded, she came to lead Lily to the drawing-room.

The sight of Archie’s home-like face opposite to her at the dinner-table, was a great relief to Liliás, who felt at present a good deal awed by the state around her. Her thoughts flew back to the simple but pretty dining-room at Fairlands, the elegant bouquet of flowers in the middle of the table, (which here was occupied by the superb plateau,) the dear familiar faces round the table, and Janet waiting. She almost wished there had been more guests at dinner to-day; those four seemed lost in that large room, and she would have been glad of anything to divert the attention of the portly butler and three tall footmen which was so exclusively fixed upon the present small party, as was evident from the supply of a want almost before it was felt. But the dinner came to an end at last, and when the

powdered genii had retired Lily, felt much more comfortable.

“Well, Græme,” said Mr. Sherwood, “I hope you have your gun in order for the week after next; we expect some sportsmen here for the First, and the birds, I hear, are strong and plentiful.”

“Thank you, my dear uncle,” replied Archie, “but my intentions are far more peaceable; I must go to town to-morrow, and only came so far out of my way for the sake of delivering my charge safely into your hands.”

“Impossible!” exclaimed both the hosts, and Liliass sent an imploring glance across the table.

“Why, Archie,” continued Mrs. Sherwood, “your old friend Harry Osborne and his two pretty sisters will be here to-morrow; surely such an attraction should be irresistible. You know Miss Osborne was the belle of the season last spring, and is the best horsewoman in England.”

“I did not find her by any means irresistible the year before, when I was in town,” said Archie, “and I doubt if more experience would enhance her charms; and, as to the other qualification, I am not an admirer of ‘fast’ ladies: there is no advantage to my mind in a young lady’s resembling an Amazon.”

"I rather agree with you there, Græme," said Mr. Sherwood, "though it is the fashion for ladies to emulate our sex in most things. I dare say, Lily, you have no objection to a day with the hounds, and the honours of the brush."

"The opportunity has not yet fallen in my way, uncle, and my horsemanship is limited to riding a sheltie; but there's no saying what I may become."

"Ah! you men are so jealous of our rivalling you in any way. If a woman knows anything beyond working a footstool and reading a novel you all cry out that she is 'blue,' and she is obliged to hide her attainments as carefully as she would the obnoxious stockings. You will not even permit us to rival you in your recreations, without stigmatizing the unlucky wight as 'fast' forsooth."

"For softness she, and sweet attractive grace," repeated Archie with a smile.

"Well, I will abandon the 'fast' attraction then," said Mrs. Sherwood; "but my ammunition is not all expended. On Monday next we expect the lion of the season, the rich young baronet Sir Leslie Gordon; who was the object at which all the chaperones were aiming in town, on account of his handsome person, his brilliant talents, and,

above all, for the immense fortune which so unexpectedly came to him."

"Proof again, my dear aunt! 'What's Hecuba to me?' Not having any daughters to dispose of you see, I am not so alive to the merits of this paragon as I might otherwise be; and, thanks to your chaperonage, Lily will have a capital opportunity of laying her nets for him; that is, if she knows how, of which I am doubtful," Archie replied, with a smile, across the table.

A proud little toss of the golden ringlets, which Cecile had not entirely forbidden to fall as nature bade them, seemed to speak Lily's disclaimer of any intention to adopt so diplomatic a part, and Archie continued:

"The name seems familiar to me; I did hear a good deal about this same Baronet last year, now I recollect, but, for want of the interest I have mentioned, did not pay much attention to the gossip. He is quite young, is he not?"

"About your own age I should think."

"And did he not take the name of Gordon? It strikes me that I heard of its being a part of the fortune bequeathed to him."

"Exactly so," said Mr. Sherwood. "He was a boy of only fourteen or fifteen when the death of

an uncle, whose ward he was, (for I believe he was early left an orphan,) put him in possession of the baronetcy and somewhere about four or five hundred pounds a year, for the property was dreadfully encumbered, and the late Baronet had been obliged to live on the continent for many years. Duncairn is the name of his place, and a princely place I am told it is; but his uncle had never been able to live there. I can't recollect what his name was; your Scotch names always puzzle me, they are many of them so similar; however, that is of little consequence. He continued to live abroad for two or three years after his uncle's death, and at the end of that time returned, or rather came, to Scotland, for he had never lived there before, and resided at Duncairn, trying to nurse the estate, living very quietly and prudently, and yet managing to avoid the stigma of niggardliness. At last, behold one fine morning a letter came from his lawyer, announcing the death of an uncle of his mother's in India, who had amassed a Nabob's fortune, and had bequeathed the whole to her children, if any were living, stipulating that the eldest son (or daughter if there were no son), who was to have the lion's share, should take the name of Gordon, which was his own. If there were no children, then the pro-

perty was to be divided among certain institutions in India and England, which were specified. As Sir Leslie was the only child remaining, of course he had it all, amounting I believe to a million or more, and of course he made no objection to the change of name. But he acted very nobly, for he gave a large sum to each of the institutions which his uncle had wished to benefit. He then paid off all the incumbrances on his paternal uncle's property, and is now possessor of a princely place on the eastern coast of Scotland, not very far from Inverness, with an income to match. He was returned to Parliament last year, and electrified the big-wigs by his maiden speech. Of course my lady wife, who piques herself upon picking up every lion that makes his appearance, could not allow so magnificent an animal to pass scatheless, so the royal beast is to make his first roar in our menagerie on Monday, scattering all smaller deer, and turning the heads of our young ladies, Miss Lily's among the number."

"Such game as that must be far beyond my small knowledge of the sport, uncle," said Lily laughing; "I should think, from what my aunt has said of Miss Osborne, she would be much more likely to hunt him down."

“ Well, it was said in town I think ——”

“ Nonsense, Mr. Sherwood,” interrupted his wife, “ one never minds what people say in town; Miss Osborne no doubt tried with the rest, and that was enough.”

“ I’m dumb, my dear; this is a subject that without dispute belongs to your sex.”

“ For my part, my dear aunt”, said Archie, “ all that I have just heard, shows me that it would be vain for me to take the field with such a formidable rival, so that the necessity for my departure is only made more clear.”

It was in vain that Mrs. Sherwood urged his long absence from England; he was inexorable, even when his uncle added,

“ There are several things I want to consult you about on the estate, my dear boy. There are some farms which Raby proposes to alter, and he tells me some of the timber must be cut down, for it is spoiling. You ought to take a little personal interest, you know, in what will one day be your own, and these fellows will begin to think you nothing but a London fopling, and take advantage of you, if you do not go amongst them. For the sake of the seat in Parliament, too, you should make yourself known in the county.”

“ I am not indifferent to the truth of all you say, Sir, and at another time will be quite at the service of you and Raby too, but just now I must give my attention to something else, and, as I hope and trust it will be very many years before I come into possession, I think you can manage very well without me now.”

Remonstrance was evidently useless, and Mrs. Sherwood and Lily rose; the former thinking, that Archie, with his talents and fine manly beauty, might perhaps be as well out of the reach of the blandishments of Miss Osborne, for, however proof against them in London society, there might be more danger in the familiar intercourse of the country.

The ladies passed through the open window into the terrace garden, where Archie soon joined them, and the evening glided away pleasantly in conversation.

The next morning Archie left for town. Lilius felt very lonely on his departure, but there was much to delight her in the novelty of the place, the gardens and conservatories, which Mrs. Sherwood took great delight in shewing. In the afternoon they took a drive about the park, and on returning to the house found other guests had

arrived; and Lily had the satisfaction at dinner that day to find herself a much less prominent object of attention to the liveried lynxes than on the preceding day. In short before night she felt herself quite at home.

CHAPTER IX.

I have cast a cloud,
The shadows of dark thoughts and ruined fortunes,
O'er thy bright spirit : haply were I gone,
Thou would'st resume thyself, and dwell once more
In the clear sunny light of youth and joy,
E'en as before we met—before we loved.

THE VESPERS OF PALERMO.

FAIRLANDS had now relapsed into more than its former quiet. Mrs. Græme and Alice were its sole occupants, and they had returned to their former domestic habits; the busy mornings, the pleasant stroll in the afternoon, the five o'clock dinner, the book and work in the evening. There had been nothing in the events of the past month, of very stirring interest to either of them: Mrs. Græme felt satisfied in the success of her own schemes, and Alice was happy to find herself at home again, leading a life much more consonant to her placid nature, than the excitement and variety which the life in London or at Battesden afforded. A deep swollen stream of agony had indeed rushed over two young hearts, leaving its ineffaceable track, rooting up all the pleasant verdure and delicate

flowers, and scarring the soil with its deep furrows; outwardly, however, all was fair and serene as before, and neither of those who now sat opposite to each other at the breakfast-table, were capable of looking very deeply below the surface; a letter from Minnie therefore excited no further interest in them, than they would naturally feel in the details of her present home.

After giving some account of her journey, and dwelling upon home recollections, she continued: "You will be glad to learn that here I have every prospect of comfort, not only in outward things, though these are full of promise, but with regard to the hearts of those I am amongst. My pupils are two girls of thirteen and fourteen; they are good, well-intentioned girls, but have hitherto been left chiefly to their own guidance, learning or not learning according to their own inclination, which has not led them to follow study to an injurious degree. They are, in fact, very ignorant, and not much disposed to submit to authority, and gifted, as is common in such cases, with a very satisfactory opinion of themselves; at the same time they are affectionate, and I think capable of being led to better things. Mrs. Baillie is fond of society, and there are frequent evening parties at the house, at

which the two girls have always been accustomed to assist; consequently admiration and dress have chiefly engrossed their minds hitherto. This of course I must set myself to counteract gently and gradually, and am not without hope of winning them over to a different mode of life. Can you fancy me in my new character? I often smile inwardly at myself, and more often shrink with fear before the task I have undertaken, only that I know I have not entered upon it in my own strength, and, having been led to it, I know I shall be enabled to fulfil it.

“ Of Mr. Baillie I have seen little; he is occupied all day, returning to a late dinner; and as I dine in the middle of the day with my pupils, and, when not wanted to amuse the company, pass my evenings alone, our acquaintance does not flourish, which no doubt occasions us equal vexation. His wife is showy and good-natured, and glad to give up the entire management of the girls, which suits me well. There are sons, some at school, some in professions, and one who follows his father’s business, and lives at home generally, though he is absent now. Altogether I think myself very well off, and am especially pleased at not being called upon to join the family much; it gives me so much

time for thought and for reading, and, in short, for following my own devices; so I am as merry as a bird, and you need not waste any pity upon me because I am caged. My imprisonment might have been much more severe, and had you some of that ointment of which I have read in some Eastern tale, which, rubbed on the eyes enables us to see the invisible, you would generally find me occupying my own place in the drawing-room at Fairlands every evening about nine o'clock, for that is the hour when my spirit is most free to visit its former haunts."

Oh, Minnie! did you feel all the cheerfulness you tried to assume? Did no recollections of the happiness of your past years come between you and the present, making it seem as a desert sandy waste spreading out into a dreary interminable future—without one spot of verdure for the weary eye to rest upon, one drop of water to slake the burning thirst of that lonely being who must travel along this vast wilderness alone—alone! with remembrance only of the happy home that might have been hers, the strong arm that would have supported and led her through flowery paths; the draught of delicious water which had been held to her lips, and which her own hand had dashed from

them? Were there no doubts insidiously obtruding themselves, whether you had any right so to destroy the happiness of another, as something whispered you had destroyed that of Archie? Whether it had not been your duty rather to brave the anger of his mother, than to throw him thus rudderless into the world, amidst the many rocks and quicksands of life, without hope or aim to guide, or save him from shipwreck? Oh, many were the heavy hours when such thoughts would press upon poor Minnie, as she sat alone in her room of an evening, removed from all human sympathy, and reminded only the more forcibly of her isolation, as sounds of distant music from the gaily-filled drawing-rooms were wafted to her ears occasionally, when the doors were opened. Often did she sit with her head buried in her hands, her whole frame trembling with emotion, as such thoughts and doubts crowded into her mind, big tears forcing themselves between her graceful fingers, and groaning in the depth of her anguish. How little do we know of what is passing in the hearts of those with whom we are the most intimately associated; a sealed book it is indeed! What did Archie know of the struggles and throes of that heart whose worst suffering he believed to be pity for the agony it

caused, but could not share! How carelessly had Mrs. Græme thrown aside all belief in the possibility of Archie's love for Minnie being more than a boyish fancy; Minnie's more than a sister's affection! How little had she known of the deep consuming passion of one, the Spartan self-sacrifice of the other! And if her eyes had been unable to penetrate beneath the smooth surface, or suspect the fire that glowed in the depths of those hearts in which she was so keenly interested, what wonder if strangers, looking upon Minnie's pale calm brow, and into her deep earnest eyes, should see there nothing beyond the grief, natural to one who had left a beloved home for the first time?

Bitter indeed were the struggles of that suffering heart; fearful its agony! The thought of the joyous day when they had set out in the boat to meet Archie at Tarbet; of the calm happy hours and days that followed; of their rides; of their evenings; what a happiness mere existence had been, as parting at night they looked forward to meeting again on the morrow, with another day of happiness before them; how time's wings had seemed dipped in rainbow hues! Then came the misgivings, the conviction of Archie's love, acknowledged first to herself with a wild throb of gladness, but then

recoiled from as a forbidden thing; the shadow that then crept day by day over her joy: then came that last dreadful morning! Oh, could she ever know joy again? What a cheerless future lay before her! and how young she was! How many years in all human probability she might have to struggle on before death would come, like a gentle nurse, to lay that weary heart asleep!—And Archie—noble, beautiful Archie!—what would be his fate? Would he struggle and cast off this love? Would he think her cold and insensible, and unworthy of that fond heart which he had laid throbbing and bleeding before her? Would his love turn to contempt or aversion? How unfeeling he must think her! Well! perhaps she ought to wish him to think so; it might be better that he should do so; it would enable him to discard her remembrance; to return to life; to take his former interest in other things. But she could not wish this; she could not believe that this would be; she felt that his love was too deep, too earnest, too much like her own, to be so easily changed or abandoned; she feared only that it might make him reckless. She dared not think of this, she could only pray that he might be saved from it;—that, if needful, his love might find another channel:—that she

might even be forgotten! But the idea was too painful, the struggle more than she could well endure; she would start up and walk hurriedly to and fro in her room, with her hands clasped and pressed upon her heart, as if she could so still its aching wearing agony; then tossed wildly up as she would sink down upon the floor, her head bowed down upon her breast, and uttering a cry for strength to bear and to do.

After a time, calmness would gradually steal over her, and, the chain of her thoughts once broken, she would resolutely set herself some task which should prevent her being bound in it again. There was an English church close by where daily prayers were offered, to which she could go every morning to calm her agitated soul, and receive there daily help in the performance of her duties, and power to walk along the narrow path she had chosen.

Her mode of life had not much variety: the schoolroom duties occupied her morning hours till the early dinner-time; then came the afternoon ramble with her pupils, the return to the schoolroom employments, and the prized evenings of solitude closed the day, unless, as sometimes happened, she was wanted to play dance music for the

amusement of others. But she received much kindness and consideration; the two girls became more and more fond of her, and, at their own request, were often allowed to spend an evening with Minnie instead of joining the party in the drawing-room. So by degrees these hours of solitude, valued as they were, had to be given up, not without regret, certainly, though she was willing to yield her own gratification in this as in all other things, and in time the little sacrifice brought its own reward. The society of the two girls warded off many an hour of dreary thought, which she felt it was not healthful to her mind to indulge in, and enabled her to gain more and more their affection. During their walks she endeavoured to interest them in nature. Living on the outskirts of the town, their walks were always in the country; the study of botany made a pleasant object for the ramble, and their evenings were often occupied in classifying and arranging the plants collected in the morning. At other times they worked and read aloud alternately, so that at last it was a rare thing to meet either of the girls in the evening parties assembled at the house.

There was a slight interruption to this quiet routine on the return of Charles Baillie. It was at

one of Mrs. Baillie's numerous soirées that Minnie first became aware of his arrival. She had been accompanying her pupils; when the piece was finished, she noticed, as she rose from the piano, a pair of shadeless light-grey eyes fixed upon her in a most unmitigated stare. For a moment the unexpected vision nearly forced a smile from her; the flashy style of dress, resplendent with studs, chains, and rings, made the absence of all refinement in the person only more conspicuous; she was turning away from the instrument when Helen Baillie, apparently at the youth's suggestion, arrested her by bringing him forward and introducing him as her brother. He appeared on very satisfactory terms with himself, and, imagining probably that Minnie must be overpowered by timidity, he sought to reassure her by a loud whisper to his sister in approbation of the beauty of her governess; great was his astonishment therefore, when, instead of receiving a smile in return for the intended compliment, he saw her quietly arrange the music on the piano, and then retire at once to a distant part of the room, where, sitting down by the side of an old lady, she entered into conversation with her. It was not for long however that she was allowed to remain there; dancing was proposed, and she was summoned from

her quiet corner to play waltzes and polkas. For some little time she was allowed the indulgence of her own thoughts as her fingers mechanically performed their office, but by-and-bye she was startled from her reverie by some one at her elbow, saying in a high-pitched voice and with a strong Scotch accent,

“I declare, Miss Gray, it’s just a shame to mak’ sae mickle grace and elegance into a mere fiddler. Ye maun let some ither leddy tak’ your place, and allow me the great pleasure of a waltz with ye.”

A glance at the speaker showed Minnie her new acquaintance standing beside her: she thanked him, but professed that she never danced, and considered it neither a trouble nor a degradation to contribute to the amusement of those who did. “Ye’ll no dance, Miss Gray? Hech! then, neither will I. ’Pon my saul ’tis just an unwiselike thing to do, and, when a’s dune, its nae ilk a body that’s warth the trouble: sae I’ll just gie mysel’ the extraordinar’ pleasure o’ sittin’ here,” said the youth as he seated himself saddle-fashion across a chair, “an may be I can turn the leaves o’ yer’ buik.”

Once more Minnie thanked him, but declined his services on the plea that she was not playing from the notes before her, and as he persisted in

retaining the seat he had taken, and making complimentary speeches on the beauty of her hands, the nimbleness of her fingers, and so forth, she was obliged at last to request that he would not speak to her, alleging that it was necessary all her attention should be given to the music, so that the dancers might not be disturbed. Finding then after a time that all his delicate compliments were unheeded, and his efforts vain to make her raise her eyes from the piano, he turned his leg lazily over the chair, leaving her at last, to bestow his attentions on those who would prize them more.

But, from this time, he thought proper to persecute poor Minnie with his unwelcome attentions, and though she had succeeded for the moment in freeing herself from the annoyance, it was soon renewed. As her days were spent chiefly in her own apartments, there were few opportunities of his meeting her; but she was much disturbed on finding, a day or two later, that it was his intention to join herself and pupils in their daily walks. This was a serious grievance: she was unwilling to request the interference of Mrs. Baillie, not only from the fear of appearing conceited in attributing his attentions to herself, but also from a sort of instinct which told her that such a proceeding on

her part, by flattering his vanity, would only make him more persevering in his assiduities; she therefore contrived to make such alterations in her daily arrangements, as enabled them to take their walks at an hour less convenient for her admirer to accompany them, and thus succeeded in ridding herself of his attendance, though she had to laugh off many remonstrances on his part.

In the evenings, when obliged to join the party, she had more difficulty in eluding him; but here an unexpected aid came to her relief.

There was an old acquaintance of Mr. Baillie's, who was a frequent guest at the house. Mr. Murdoch was about six-and-thirty: he had spent much of his life in the West Indies, but, becoming independent, and the possessor of a pretty place on the Clyde, by the death of his father, he had returned within the last few years to live among his own connexions, some of whom were however English, his mother having been an Englishwoman. Visiting the Baillie family so often as he did, he could not fail to be struck with Minnie's beauty and charm of manner, or to notice the peculiarly earnest and thoughtful expression of her countenance, at times almost amounting to suffering. Few opportunities had occurred of speaking

to her, but since Charles Baillie's return home he had observed the young man's evident admiration and desire to gain her attention: he had also strictly scrutinized her manner of receiving his attentions, and these observations soon led him to discover that, far from feeling gratified by them, or using any arts of coquetry in seeking to shun them, she was seriously and unequivocally annoyed. Her calm dignity of manner charmed him, the sadness of that young brow attracted him, and he longed to know the secret grief which was so plainly consuming her, and which he felt sure must have a deeper source than the mere dependence of her situation, or even home-sickness. He was very near entering the lists as an admirer himself, but there was a something, which led him to believe that neither he, nor any one else, would be likely to win more than a smile of friendship, so he prudently steeled himself against any warmer feeling, and was content to constitute himself her champion.

Minnie seemed to read his feelings intuitively, and always welcomed him with one of those affectionately tender smiles, which lighted up her countenance so sweetly. She did not indeed know the extent of his kindness towards her, and it was therefore incomprehensible how it happened that

no sooner did her tormentor approach, than, by some inexplicable arrangement, a diversion was made, Mr. Murdoch had somehow slipped into the place, and was conversing calmly and pleasantly, leading away her thoughts from present annoyances, even soothing her into a temporary forgetfulness of the gnawing pain at her heart, till she came at last to look forward to the time which would bring her the companionship of her valued friend, and, as the guests arrived, many an eager glance was directed to the door in expectation of Mr. Murdoch's entrance.

It was the one bright spot in her present life. She needed it, that young heart, struggling alone and bearing its heavy load that was never to be taken off, as the young Atlas struggles and bears up through all time under that weary, weary globe which every day threatens to overwhelm and crush him.

True, Minnie's relief did not come at once; there were many months before her champion succeeded in freeing her from the persecutions of Charles, who considered that his very admiration must be a compliment too great to be resisted, and it was only by slow degrees, that he came to the full understanding of the hopelessness of his pursuit. But we have anticipated the result in order to dispose of the subject.

CHAPTER X.

It haunts me still, though many a year has fled,
Like some wild melody.—ROGERS.

——— Thou whose glance
Doth fix itself on memory, and pursue
Thought like a spirit, haunting its lone hours ——
THE VESPERS OF PALERMO.

MEANTIME life sped gaily on with Liliás: the hours danced round her in a bright circle, and led her on into that gay, beautiful world over the threshold of which she was passing. She was soon comfortable in the pleasantly-toned society of Battesden: several young people were now in the house—the two Miss Osbornes and their brother, Miss Erskine, and Gerard Vivian. Miss Osborne patronized Liliás: her own *rôle* was to be “*fast* ;” she adopted it on the strength of being a good and fearless horsewoman, and totally free from the weakness of timidity in any form. Her sister Fanny belonged to the sentimental school; both were too well assured of their own attractions to fear any rivalry from the pretty fairy, Liliás. Miss Osborne treated her as a child, and affected to consider her infantine in every

thing: and Fanny talked to her of Wallace and Rob Roy, and Scotch history learned from Sir Walter Scott's spirit-stirring tales; and tried to quote Burns, whom, however, she considered as a mere ploughman, declaring it impossible to understand the barbarous jargon he wrote in. Sybilla Erskine, herself Scotch, warmly supported his cause, and would make the gentle Fanny stop her ears and run away, as she repeated some of his most genuine Scotch pieces. Miss Erskine was no longer in her *première jeunesse*, and affected the "blue" style; she held Fanny Osborne's sentiment in supreme contempt, but was very indulgent towards Lily, whose delicately-formed head she thought could boast of no great mental power, so she took great pleasure in exciting that clear, joyous laugh, and seeing the bright sunny curls tossed gaily back. Miss Erskine had no curls herself; the little hair she had was an exact match to the colour of her complexion—an indescribable tint, and her coiffure was in the severe style, as became a votary of Clio. Harry Osborne was remarkable for little beyond his love of field-sports and of himself; and, being on very good terms with that respectable person, he passed generally as goodnatured and agreeable. Gerard Vivian, with far more excuse for

vanity, was totally devoid of it, and bent only on being happy himself and making others so; the latter probably, being but a necessary consequence of the former, or at least very conducive to it, since to be happy oneself is generally the way to diffuse happiness around.

There were others besides those named, but they belonged either to the elderly or sporting cliques, and did not interfere much with Lily and her companions. On the following Monday Sir Leslie Gordon was to join the party, and the younger members were looking for his arrival with various feelings: some anticipating conquests, some with mere curiosity, while the gentlemen expected him with some apprehensions of themselves suffering eclipse.

It was a rainy day, and when luncheon was over, time began to hang rather heavily on the hands of the pleasure-seekers: battledore and billiards had both been pronounced wearisome, and at last Miss Osborne proposed to brave the weather and take a walk: a watery ray of sunshine breaking through the clouds at the moment seemed to second the proposal, and, eager for any variety, the girls equipped themselves so as to defy the weather and set out for a ramble in the park. They followed the

guidance of Jane Osborne, who led them unmercifully through the most wooded parts, enjoying heartily the discomfiture of her companions, as the trees, suddenly shaken by the gusts of wind, poured down heavy showers upon them, to which she was utterly indifferent herself. As they were returning to the house wet and muddy, for the rain which had been falling all day had turned the walks and drives into muddy lanes, they descried a carriage ascending the hill. To meet the new comer in their present toilette was not to be thought of, so, entering by a side-door, they separated to their respective rooms without passing up the grand staircase.

Forgetful of the hour, Liliás, on reaching her room, had merely thrown off her wet clothes, and then set down to finish a letter for home, that it might go by that evening's post. She took little heed of time while busily detailing the progress of her life at Battesden, and when Cecile at last entered, to put the finishing touches to her toilette, she found Lily just closing her letter, without a thought of the necessity for dressing.

"Mais, ma foi, Mademoiselle," exclaimed the alarmed Frenchwoman, "voilà le dernier coup du tambour qui sonne!"

Liliás laughed at the despair of Cecile, while she

assured her that with her aid she should speedily be dressed.

“ Mais, Mademoiselle, vraiment, je suis désolée ! Aujourd’hui, quand vous auriez dû faire une toilette si bien soignée ! Qu’est ce qu’il y a à faire ? ”

It was impossible to help laughing at Cecile’s distress, but, as Lilius had been acting while the Frenchwoman was lamenting, she was soon ready, and as she descended the staircase she heard the party defiling into the dining-room, and falling skilfully into the rear, she subsided quietly into her usual place at the table, much to the surprise of Mr. Osborne, who was her neighbour, and who, missing her in the drawing-room, was perfectly unprepared to find her by his side.

In a few moments she had sufficiently succeeded in assuring her companion that it was really herself in the body, and no ghost, who had glided so imperceptibly into the place beside him, and she turned to notice the arrangement of the other guests. The new arrival was seated at the right hand of Mrs. Sherwood, on the side opposite to herself. The first thing which struck her was the remarkable simplicity of his dress, and the entire absence of the slightest shade of conceit or affectation, giving a peculiar ease and manliness to his manner. He was

in conversation with Mrs. Sherwood when she first observed him, and when this was ended he turned, and, his look wandering down the table, was arrested for a moment by herself. It was but for an instant that his eye rested upon her, and then he turned to Mrs. Sherwood again and seemed to be making inquiries, but in that moment a feeling flashed across her mind that those eyes were familiar to her. There was no very striking beauty in the countenance, which was pale and grave, but sensible and intelligent: but there was a peculiarity of expression in those large, long-cut, velvet-like eyes, a depth, an earnestness, a tenderness, that haunted her, and awakened undefined memories, as if she had seen them in a dream. Her neighbour's voice roused her from the reverie into which she was falling, as, following the direction of her looks, he said in something like a tone of pique,

“ You are but following the rest, Miss Græme: we lesser stars indeed ‘pale our ineffectual fires’ before the appearance of this great luminary.

“ That is then the renowned baronet,” she replied; “ but of course I need not ask, as he is the only stranger. He does not however seem one who is likely to aim at eclipsing any one. I am particularly struck with his simplicity and the absence of self-consciousness.”

"Perhaps so, but you must remember that he receives incense as his due, and there is no need to court what we may command. I suppose you are prepared to fall down and worship the golden idol."

"I must first be convinced that all which glitters is pure gold."

"Oh! he is rich enough, even allowing for a good deal of exaggeration in the amount of his rent-roll," was the matter-of-fact reply; "but I should hardly have thought avarice one of your faults, Miss Græme!"

"I was not exactly applying the same meaning to the word gold as you do," she replied indifferently—then after a pause she added: "He has very remarkable eyes; the expression in them is wonderful!"

"Indeed!" said her neighbour, a good deal piqued, "they seem to me like any other dark-blue eyes; but I see plainly Miss Græme is quite prepared to turn idolatress."

Without noticing the sarcasm, she went on in a kind of soliloquy:

"They affect me as if I had seen them in a dream; a kind of haunting feeling, as if we had met before: if we have though, it must certainly have been in the world of spirits."

“ Ah, you do hold communion then at times with spirit-land; that accounts for your falling so quietly into your place to-day; you had just arrived from the ‘ farre countrie.’ But how do you contrive to fold your wings so invisibly?” he said with a glance at her shoulders.

“ Ah, that is my secret; but you are not far wrong, I took a flight to Scotland after my walk, and nearly forgot the dinner-hour. This baronet too is Scotch, I conclude,” she said.

“ By descent, yes,” he replied, “ but I believe he owes birth and fortune to India; he was born there of Scotch parents.”

She turned to look at him again, and again the deep, earnest eyes met hers, and made her turn away with a blush, the consciousness of which annoyed her excessively.

The ladies rose at last; and the leading topic of the drawing-room conversation was the newly arrived: his wealth, his elegance, his talents, while Lillas mentally recurred to the trait her uncle has incidentally mentioned to Archie, of his giving up a portion of his property to fulfil his uncle’s wishes. It had more effect upon her imagination than all the more palpable advantages he was possessor of.

When the gentlemen joined them, Vivian chal-

lenged Lily to a game at chess, in which she soon became too much absorbed to notice anything that passed around her. Her game proceeded prosperously: a few more moves would decide it: she was about to make an important one, and with her finger on the piece, she raised her eyes thoughtfully to her partner's face, as if in the expression there to read its effect, when her look was irresistibly drawn upward, and she saw those same deep, earnest eyes intently watching her: the suddenness flurried her: she lost her self-possession, and with it the advantage she had gained; her adversary seized it, and she had very soon the mortification of hearing him proclaim triumphantly "Check-mate!"

"What were you about, Miss Græme!" exclaimed several of the spectators immediately: "you had the game in your own hands, and were playing it masterly: Vivian had not a chance;" and then began the usual recapitulation of advantages gained and lost.

How often is the same thing said! "You had the game in your own hands then, and now you have lost it!" in many things besides chess. How few see the true reason of all those advantages being lost in the moment of triumph! Spectators truly

see the most of the game, but it is the players only who know the secret springs of victory or defeat.

Lilias, vexed at her defeat, and the cause of it, and still more annoyed at the comments upon it, leaned listlessly back in her chair and pouted her pretty lips.

"It is incredible how you could lose the game, after all the clever moves you had made, Miss Græme," exclaimed one, more pertinacious than the rest.

"I quite agree with you," replied Lilias, her eyes fixed on a distant object, adding, as she rose from the table, "it will perhaps seem more incredible when I say that a dream was the cause of it;" and leaving the disputants in a state of bewilderment, she flitted across the room to Miss Osborne:

"Do be kind enough to play something," she said, "and harmonize our minds; it is bad enough to know one has done a foolish thing, without having the folly laid bare and dissected before one's eyes."

Much solicitation was not requisite: one fair performer followed another, each rivalling the other in brilliancy of execution, and command of the instrument. At last Mrs. Sherwood requested Lily to play, and, sitting down at once to the piano, all

trace of vexation gradually vanished from her countenance, as, after preluding for a few moments, she struck into the plaintive air of "Ye Banks and Braes," delicately and beautifully arranged, and leading off from one sweet or stirring air to another, till they sunk into the pathetic "Farewell to Lochaber!" It was a style different from all which had been played before; her whole soul was given to the music, and she was soon as completely absorbed in its pathos as she had been a few minutes before in the game of chess. Every thing around her was forgotten, her thoughts were carried back to her own country, and she was once more in imagination among her native hills; it was only as her hands fell on her lap with the last dying notes, that she looked up, and once more met those haunting eyes fixed upon her with a peculiar expression, as Sir Leslie stood opposite with folded arms, apparently lost in enjoyment.

"It is seldom one hears Scotch music so truly interpreted, (as the phrase is,) Miss Græme," he said, with a sigh of delight, as he bent over the instrument, "you have made me feel proud of being a Scotchman; I can understand the famous '*Ed io son' pittore!*' allowing for a free translation of the Italian," he added, smiling: "I am national enough

to think there is no music equal to our own melodies for stirring the spirit or soothing it, but I acknowledge that they are not often so touchingly expressed by the performance."

"I am apt to be carried away by my subject," she replied laughingly, "as sometimes happens to others on graver subjects; but, as Scotch myself, I could not satisfy myself with a mere performance of Scotch melodies; the music speaks too much to my heart, and carries me back to my own mountains."

"Perhaps, Sir Leslie, you are not aware that Miss Græme has spirits at her command," said Vivian: "she owned as much to me at dinner, and moreover, that she had only returned from Scotland on the sound of the dinner gong—she even hinted—"

"Nay, Mr. Vivian," interrupted Lillas, "you have no right to reveal anything I might have communicated from spirit-land! are you not afraid that the elves should avenge me if our laws are infringed?"

"Whatever spirits may obey Miss Græme, they must be bright and good, I am sure," said Sir Leslie, laughing, "at all events they bring sweet inspirations."

"Though they sometimes fail their mistress in

time of need;" added Vivian, "witness our game just now."

"Oh! Mr. Vivian, you are ungenerous to triumph over a vanquished enemy," said Lillas rising, and giving place to another lady who approached the piano: while she glided shyly behind those who were near, and retreating into the next room seated herself by her aunt. Sir Leslie also left the piano, and she saw him soon afterwards in deep conversation with a knot of elderly gentlemen in a distant part of the room.

CHAPTER XI.

He says he is fond of shooting, and sometimes goes out on the first of September.—ETONIAN.

———— Ere long appear'd,
(Their horses full of fire, champing the bit,
For the white foam was dry upon the flank,)
A lady, young and graceful, and a youth.

ROGERS.

In vain did I protest that dancing was my abhorrence : my objections were ascribed to my usual shyness and modesty. On the fatal evening I secured the door of my bedroom, and remained there, strictly resisting all external communication.—ETONIAN.

THE first of September was come ! Great had been the previous preparation : great was the present slaughter. The ladies, finding themselves alone during the morning, were already making plans for their amusement in the afternoon, when Mrs. Sherwood descried one of the sportsmen crossing the terrace, his gun on his shoulder.

“Is it possible, Sir Leslie !” she exclaimed, throwing open the window as he approached, “is it possible that a sportsman can forsake the stubble so soon on this important day ?”

"I am but a recreant, I fear," was the reply, "and no doubt shall be considered utterly unworthy of the title of sportsman, when I acknowledge that at no time do I take more delight in the (so called) sport, than the excitement which the exercise and all its concomitants occasion: when that begins to subside—"

"You think of the flesh-pots of Egypt," interposed Miss Osborne, who with the other ladies had gathered round the window; "in other words, you think it more comfortable to eat your luncheon in the dining-room, than seated on a damp bank."

He raised his hat with ironical politeness as he retorted,

"Your usual perspicacity, Miss Osborne, has carried you a little beyond the truth this time, since you have failed to make any allowance for my preference of the society one meets at the luncheon table, over that of the damp bank."

"We are unprepared for so much gallantry," she replied laughing, "and its unexpectedness has led us into a difficulty about the division of the spoil: are you not afraid of the consequences of throwing such an apple of discord among us?"

"My vanity does not carry me so far: indeed it has received a fatal blow at the outset, for it is evident you have forgotten the desire you expressed

last evening, to try how Zohrab would carry a lady. As his appreciation of the privilege is doubtful, I could not trust your safety to my groom, and hope therefore to be rewarded for any self-denial I may have exercised in the matter of shooting, by being allowed to join the riding party. Miss Græme, I hope you will not be afraid to make one of it on Zoë; she is more to be trusted, I assure you, than a highland pony, and has been well trained for Rotten Row. The groom too had directions to exercise any superfluous spirit out of her this morning."

"Oh! I am by no means timid," replied Lilius with a blush of pleasure, "and there is nothing I delight in more than a canter on the turf."

"Well, Sir Leslie!" said Mrs. Sherwood, "you are at all events a good general, to have enlisted two of the enemy on your side."

He stood leaning carelessly against the wall, looking very handsome in the becoming shooting dress, but evidently quite regardless of effect, and it was quite pardonable if there were others besides Miss Osborne who admired the manly grace and nonchalance of his attitude and manner. He once more raised his hat with a smile, as he said in answer to Mrs. Sherwood, but addressing Miss Osborne:

"Then I may be allowed a seat at the luncheon

table, when I have removed these traces of the Battedden soil?"

"As well as of the excellence of the weed which has beguiled your wanderings," she replied. "Yes, certainly: and in the mean time we will organise our forces."

Mrs. Sherwood had already made arrangements for some of the elder ladies to accompany her in some visits among the neighbourhood. Miss Erskine and Fanny Osborne were bent upon sketching some ruins at a little distance, to which a groom was to drive them in the pony-carriage. Miss Osborne and Lillas were the only equestrians.

They were soon mounted: Sir Leslie paying particular attention to see that Zohrab received his fair burden graciously, and as they started, first walking, and getting gradually into a trot and canter, he kept close beside her, to guard her from any thing which might suddenly startle the animal. A glance at Lillas shewed him that she and Zoë were already on good terms, the creature submitting with docility to her light hand. Gradually, however, he relaxed in his undivided attention to Jane Osborne, and finding her perfectly capable of managing her fiery steed, they fell into a pace which was soon accelerated into a gallop, flying across the

park, horses and riders equally yielding to the excitement. Lillas, however, soon found it beyond her strength to continue, and drawing in Zoë by degrees, she with some difficulty managed to fall back, while at the same time it was plain that Miss Osborne was losing all command of the animal she rode. On they went at a terrific pace, Sir Leslie and the groom keeping as near as they could with prudence, so as to be ready to help, without adding to the excitement of the wild creature. Away, over the uplands of the park,—scattering the deer who trooped aside, and then stood tossing their proud heads, and gazing half in wonder, half in fear, at the vision which flew past them,—now skirting the woodlands. Hold in your breath, Jane Osborne!—preserve your reeling senses! try to guide him away from the trees! Yes! once again the animal turns to the open ground: something among the brushwood has scared him, and given fresh vigour to his limbs! the long black hair of his rider streams out wildly upon the wind: her hat has fallen off: still she sits firmly: but now they descend that slope—the river runs at the bottom, between its steep banks the leap is fearfully wide, and the recent rains have swollen the current! Ride carefully round, Sir Leslie, concealed by that cop-

pice, that you may be at hand to help!—It was well he did so! The infuriated animal came swinging down the hill, and cleared the river with a bound; but the steep bank on the other side is wet and slippery, and affords no footing! They slip, they struggle,—a plunge—and both sink into the turbid water! Sir Leslie is off his horse in a moment, and down the side of the bank; he plunges into the stream just as Miss Osborne rises and is floating away upon the current! Happily she has fallen clear of the saddle; but she is insensible! While Zohrab extricates himself and is caught by the groom, Sir Leslie carries the unconscious girl up the bank and looks around for aid: it is at hand—there comes the pony-carriage as fast as the animals can gallop, with Fanny and the groom! A minute more, and Leslie has laid his senseless burden carefully upon the seat of the carriage, her sister supporting her, while the groom drives rapidly towards the house.

And now Leslie was able to draw breath, and taking his own horse from the groom, he turned eagerly to look for Liliās. She was not in sight, but the man told him that he saw her riding fast towards the ruins, when Zohrab turned down the hill, and believed that it was she who so oppor-

tunely sent the carriage to their relief. "And yonder comes Miss Græme, Sir Leslie," said the man, as Liliass was seen coming through the wood.

Leslie hastened to meet her, and answer her anxious inquiries; assuring her that Miss Osborne was safe, and the effects of the fright and plunge were alone to be dreaded:

"And as, thanks to your kind quickness of thought," he added, as he fixed his full, tender eyes admiringly upon her, "she will so soon be able to receive every necessary attention, I hope no bad consequences will ensue."

"But you give no heed to your own dripping condition, Sir Leslie," exclaimed Liliass, when her first anxiety was allayed, "and as we cannot afford to lose the only cavalier who has been faithful to our service, let us canter quickly home, that you may be able to change your wet clothes."

They were soon at the house, where Mrs. Sherwood met them with assurances that Jane had been laid in bed, and was quite recovered from her fainting fit, though much exhausted. Medical advice had been sent for, and in the mean time the housekeeper had taken charge of her, and it might be hoped that a few day's quiet would perfectly restore

her; and prescribing a warm cordial and immediate change to Sir Leslie, they all separated.

It was thought necessary to keep Miss Osborne secluded from the society for some days. She was not much disposed to be made a heroine of on such conditions, and demurred greatly to the sentence, though Lillas and the other girls did their best to beguile the hours of her imprisonment, but it was plain that their society did not wholly suffice for the purpose.

Meanwhile the riding parties were by no means abandoned: Miss Erskine was very well pleased to canter about the country on one of Mr. Sherwood's quiet cobs, and the good-natured Vivian was quite willing to be her escort, while Lillas was mounted on Zoë, and Leslie rode by her side. Many were the pleasant excursions they made to places in the neighbourhood; it was lovely September weather, the fresh dewy mornings, succeeded by warm brilliant days, as the sun dispersed the early mists. Some of the more tender foliage was already beginning to assume the tints of autumn, making the landscape irresistible to the eye and hand of the artist. Often the grooms were charged with sketching materials. The gun seemed daily to have less and less attraction for Sir Leslie, and if, for the sake

of appearances, he set out with the sportsmen in the morning, he was generally found making for the house towards the afternoon. Many were the banterings he had to submit to from his more eager companions, but it was not easy to divert him from a course he meant to pursue, by means of ridicule, at least, so after a time they were contented to let him take his own way unnoticed. In all their rides it somehow happened constantly that he found himself by the side of Liliass: he seemed to have an intuitive method of reading her thoughts, and anticipating her wishes; whatever she desired was in some quiet and imperceptible manner accomplished, she had only to look up, to see those earnest eyes watching with tender interest the expression of her countenance, and the ready fulfilment of her unuttered thoughts, proved that they knew how to interpret that expression. It was a delightful dream that poor Lily was hushed into, and, without questioning the source of her happiness, or thinking of any thing but the present, she gave herself up to all the sweet delirium.

Miss Osborne chafed and protested, which is not to be wondered at, for Mrs. Sherwood was clearly taking greater precautions than there was any necessity for, but at the same time the latter was

naturally anxious that Jane should run no risk, while under her charge, and the Doctor was resolute in keeping her in her room for a week, and in forbidding horse exercise for a much longer period. Indeed so great was Mrs. Sherwood's care of the invalid, that she would fain have prevailed on the Doctor to prescribe a longer seclusion; against this, however, the young lady protested so vehemently, that it was thought unwise to thwart her wishes to rejoin the party downstairs any longer, and at the end of a week Jane once more made her appearance in the drawing-room.

Her reappearance was the signal for all to gather round her with congratulations on her escape, and inquiries as to her experiences. She would not listen to those who threw blame on Sir Leslie for mounting her on such an animal, and declared her intention of giving the creature another trial ere long, insisting that had she been as reasonable as Lillas was, no harm could have happened; but she could not resist the pleasure of yeilding to the pace, and even when she found it no longer at her own option, she was hardly conscious of fear, till she felt the horse unable to secure a footing on the bank, and then she supposed she had fainted. All were warm in praise of her coolness and courage,

and the admirable way in which she kept her seat. On her part, she caressed "her little Liliass" much, for her presence of mind and promptitude of thought, and, though she was not loud in her expressions towards Sir Leslie, it was very evident she was willing to give as much gratitude as he would be disposed to receive.

The riding parties had been discontinued since Jane came down stairs, as Mrs. Sherwood would not hear of her trying Zohrab at present, but, except in this particular, all went on as before, and drives and walks, equally enjoyable to Lily, though she could hardly tell in what their charm more particularly consisted, were the order of the day.

About ten days afterwards some of the neighbouring families dined at Battesden, and, as there were many young people assembled, dancing was proposed. Sir Leslie was at once claimed by Miss Osborne as her own knight:

"At least for the first quadrille," she said; "after that he might consider himself a free subject." Liliass was dancing too, and as soon as the quadrille was over, a waltz was called for. Liliass hastened to the piano, where her aunt was playing.

"Do let me play, dear aunt!" she exclaimed eagerly, as she saw Leslie approaching to ask her

hand for the dance. Mrs. Sherwood was unwilling to give up to her, but she persisted:

“I’m sure, aunt, you will think me very silly, but indeed I had rather not waltz!—Oh, thank you—!” she continued, quickly taking the place which her aunt but half yielded, and beginning rapidly to play as Leslie came up. Mrs. Sherwood looked at her with astonishment: Sir Leslie spoke:

“Nay, Miss Græme,” he said, “I must protest against this arrangement; I have just received the gracious permission of Miss Osborne to offer my allegiance where I will, and now that I claim to be a subject of Miss Græme, I find her about to abdicate!”

“Pray allow me to play this dance, Sir Leslie!” said Lilius hurriedly, “there are so many dancers that certainly I cannot be wanted:—and ——”

He looked inquiringly at Mrs. Sherwood: she shook her head with a smile, and said,

“Indeed, Sir Leslie, I cannot help you in this case; from what I understand, this foolish child has some old-fashioned prudish notions on the subject of waltzing, which are beyond my comprehension; she must explain them herself.”

The tears stood in Lily’s eyes: she rose, however, and offered her hand to Leslie.

“I am quite ready to waltz, dear aunt.”

He looked at her for a moment, then said:

“No, Miss Græme, I could have no pleasure in inducing you to do what is disagreeable to yourself; if you really wish to play, I will seek another partner, and perhaps you will hold yourself engaged to me for a game at chess afterwards.”

He led her back to her seat; she dared not lift her eyes to those which she felt were looking at her so tenderly, so, bending over the instrument so as to conceal her burning cheeks and bursting tears, with the thick veil of curls which fell over her face, she began silently to play.

“Foolish girl!” whispered her aunt angrily, as Leslie turned away, “you have made yourself ridiculous, and Sir Leslie must think you an affected prude.” Lily could not trust herself to speak; she was vexed at having made anything like a scene, and the idea of being thought affected annoyed her especially. She thought too, that perhaps Leslie was at this moment turning her into ridicule with Miss Erskine, for they seemed to be enjoying some joke, which made both exceedingly merry as they whirled past her. She could bear it no longer, and when the waltz ended, and the dancers were still engaged with their partners, she glided quickly

from the piano, and, passing through the door into the conservatory, made a long circuit so as to avoid the drawing-rooms, and thus gained her own room. She was no sooner there, than the folly of her flight appeared in its full enormity before her. She threw herself into a chair, and hid her burning face in her hands.

“How silly I have been!” she exclaimed, bursting into tears. “How absurd he must have thought me; and how he will ridicule me for what must appear to this man of the world what my aunt calls affected prudery! Oh, dearest Minnie, what would you say to your foolish Lily?” and the thought of Fairlands, and the quiet happiness she had known there, caused a fresh burst of tears. “And then to act upon this second impulse and run away! how silly! When he comes to claim me for the game of chess, so considerately thought of to screen my folly—what will he think of me!” and again her face was buried in her hands. “But perhaps, after all,” she thought, looking up with a scornful toss of the ringlets, “he does not think at all about me; probably he is at this moment waltzing with some one else and not troubling his head about the little Scotch prude.”

But the idea did not seem to please, for, laying

her head on the arm of the sofa, she sobbed more violently than before.

There was a quick step, and before she had time to raise her head her aunt entered.

“What is all this folly, Lily?” she exclaimed angrily, “you make yourself absurd, behave rudely to Sir Leslie Gordon, and when he, kindly making allowance for your childishness, is giving you an opportunity to recover yourself, you run away!”

“Dear aunt, I am thoroughly ashamed of myself: and my only hope was that he would think me too childish to take more trouble about me. Pray forgive your foolish Lily,” she said rising and twining her arms caressingly about her aunt: “I will do any thing you like, but don’t ask me to waltz; I have never waltzed with a stranger; I do not like it; and should be sorry to do it merely to please him.”

“Absurd!” exclaimed Mrs. Sherwood, “however there is no fear of his troubling himself about you any more, so you may be easy on that subject; he is not likely to put himself in a position to be refused again. But these are some of your ridiculous Fairlands notions, which I neither pretend nor wish to understand. At any rate you are not fit to come down again this evening, with those red

eyes, so I will make what excuse I can, that is, if any one should take the trouble to think about you. But remember this, Lily, if you think it your mission to carry on a crusade against waltzing, you must seek another field than Battesden, for I will not support you in it;" and, flinging angrily out of the room, Mrs. Sherwood left poor Lily once more to her doubts, her tears, and her reflections.

CHAPTER XII.

I was almost ashamed to shew myself next morning at the breakfast table. However, I wisely considered that I might as well encounter all the blame or laugh, at once
. . . My father rather defended my conduct, and said he did not see why Mat should dance if he did not like it.

ETONIAN.

. She saw, as she believed,
A smile, a glance at parting given and answered
That turned her blood to gall.

ROGERS.

“How shall I meet them all at breakfast!” was Lily’s first thought as she awoke next morning. The descriptive “all,” be it whispered, *par parenthèse*, meant exclusively Sir Leslie Gordon, for as to the rest of the party they had at that moment but little prominence in her mind. Not that Lily was at all aware of this herself, and therefore as her toilette progressed, and this idea kept revolving in her mind, and gaining additional consistency with each revolution, it would have astonished and displeased her very much to hint the fact, that, could she but hide her blushing face from *one* pair of eyes, she would very readily have encountered all the

remainder of the guests of Battesden without shrinking. However the breakfast-gong had sounded, and as delay only increased the difficulty, it became necessary to take the inevitable step. As she opened the door, then, it was no slight relief to meet Jane Osborne in the gallery, and to be greeted with an embrace, as the latter said,

“So you had a headache, and were obliged to go to bed last night, Mrs. Sherwood told us! What a tender little thing it is. What would have become of you had you been in my place a fortnight ago?—However, I must own you could not have done better if you had been the veriest coquette in the world, for Sir Leslie seemed quite put out; he did not dance again, but sat playing chess all the evening with Mr. Sherwood, and looking like a thunder-cloud. What had you said to him?”

“I?—nothing! indeed I had no intention of coquetting, and least of all with Sir Leslie. I was a simpleton, but he was very kind to me.”

“Take care what you are about, Lillas. I don’t want to quarrel with you, but I will not submit to see you draw Sir Leslie from me: *he is mine*, remember, we have known each other long, and I shall resent any encroachment upon my manor, as

vigorously as your uncle would resent any poaching on his preserves."

"I had no thought of the kind" replied Lillas, a little piqued; "Sir Leslie has been very kind to me; while you were ill——"

"Yes, no doubt he was grateful to you for the service you did me; only, I say beware of him!" She opened the breakfast-room door as she said this, so there was no time for farther explanation; it did not tend however to reassure Lillas: there was a little struggle in her mind; she felt that all Leslie's devotion to her had been merely for the sake of another, that he had thought of her as a child,—had pitied her,—and she felt more than ever angry with herself, for her conduct of the previous evening. But there was not much time for thought: she took her place at the table, by the side of Jane, and though she did not dare to raise her eyes to that part of the table where Leslie was sitting, she felt in some degree relieved: If he thinks me a child, she thought, he will be the less surprised at my childish conduct.

After breakfast the party dispersed: the gentlemen were either engrossed by the papers, or scattered to the stables, or the farm: the ladies were most of them gone to their own rooms; a few of the

younger ones were practising some new music in the drawing-room; Liliast was among them, trying to read, but finding it difficult while music and conversation were going on all around her, she wandered into the conservatory-room, and soon became absorbed in her book.

It was not long however before she was interrupted; a shadow came between her and the light: she looked up and saw Sir Leslie Gordon standing before her. Her first impulse was to rise and return to the drawing-room, but a hand gently laid upon her arm detained her, and, regaining her self-possession, she sat down again.

“ I have to apologize,” she faltered out; he interrupted her,

“ On the contrary, Miss Græme, that part is for me: I came here to tell you that I had no intention of distressing you last evening, and only regret I should have been the means of spoiling any of your pleasure. In return let me assure you that your revenge was complete, for my conscience reproached me unmercifully, and would not even suffer me to beat Mr. Sherwood at chess.” He seated himself beside her as he spoke.

“ Ah! that game which you so kindly proposed to relieve me:—what can I say?”

"Nothing," he replied, "I did but seek to prevent your feeling uncomfortable, or having to refuse another invitation to waltz. So it was only the disappointment. But," he continued, as stooping forward he seemed intent upon tracing the pattern of the carpet with his cane, "if it will not distress you, will you explain to me your reason for refusing to waltz? If you will make me your confident," smiling, "I shall be in a better position to protect you from annoyance."

She blushed and said, hesitatingly,

"You are very good after my childish conduct to take any interest in the motive; but really," she continued with a laugh, and a shake of the sunny curls, "I have no theory to propound. I have often waltzed at home, with my own family, and think it in itself a very pleasant pastime: it would be very presumptuous in me even to imply any censure upon what is such a universal amusement, —— but when I saw a comparative stranger —— this must seem so very silly to you ——"

"Far from it; pray go on: you thought perhaps there was a difference between the arm of a brother round you, and that of a stranger?"

"I suppose so," she replied timidly, "but, as I said before, I have never analysed the thought, if I

thought at all, I acted from the momentary impulse."

"It was a pure and holy impulse," he answered, as he continued absently intent upon the pattern of the carpet. "If all your impulses are equally delicate, as I am sure they must be, you need never fear to act upon them, dear Miss Græme. With respect to this particular one, though I am by no means prepared to adopt a similar course either in practice or theory, I can fully appreciate the refinement that suggested it, and shall be proud to be your champion, if you will deign to accept my service and give me my commission. May I consider myself as enlisted under your banner?" he added, as he raised himself from his stooping posture and turned his eyes earnestly upon her.

"Willingly and thankfully will I accept your offer," she replied, placing her hand in the one he held out, "if you really are not ashamed of such a cause."

"In such a service I would undertake any cause," he replied with a smile; then rising, as he still retained her hand, he added playfully, as slightly bending one knee, he raised her fingers to his lips, "a subject, you know, must always do homage to his liege sovereign, and thus ——"

“Aha, false knight!” exclaimed Miss Osborne, as entering at the moment she caught the last words and action, “is it thus I find you swearing allegiance to another sovereign?”

“Only as a true knight accepts service with a foreign power, without infringing on loyalty to his own sovereign: my loyalty is indeed only made the clearer in this instance, by adopting the cause of one who has done such good service to my liege lady.”

“I am a despot,” replied Miss Osborne, while an expression passed over her face which made Lilius shrink; “and remember, sir knight, that I admit of no divided allegiance—no rival near the throne. But now for a test of your obedience. I came here to say that you must lend me Zohrab once more, and that Lilius must accompany me on Zoë. Fanny and Miss Erskine are anxious to finish the sketch which I so rudely interrupted once, so we have prevailed on Mrs. Sherwood to let us have a pic-nic in the ruins to-day, and, as the carriages will be full, some of the party must ride, and of this party I intend that Lilius and I should be. I know there will be all manner of opposition,”—seeing Leslie about to remonstrate,—“but it is necessary to my reputation as a horsewoman, to prove that

Zohrab is not my master. So now, Liliás, your answer?"

"That I shall be only too glad to have a canter on gentle Zoë," was the prompt reply.

"Single-handed opposition to such authority would be vain," said Leslie laughing. "The foe within, and the foe without, is more than mortal man can be expected to resist. Zohrab is at least not vicious, and as his only fault on the former occasion was too much exhilaration, to which I think his rider must at least plead equally guilty, I have no doubt of a happier result to a second trial. So, while you are gaining the consent of Mrs. Sherwood, I will hold a council with the groom, and together we shall doubtless bring Zohrab to reason."

Miss Osborne pleaded her cause so well, that Mrs. Sherwood was induced to agree to the plan of the riding party, which she did the more readily as there would be several other gentlemen on horseback, thus leaving Leslie at liberty to devote himself to Liliás if he so pleased. She was a little doubtful of the terms on which he stood with Jane Osborne. It was true that they had been continually in each other's society throughout the London season. There had been no engagement

declared, but it seemed tacitly understood; Jane herself, though she never asserted it, gave every countenance to the inference; and on his part Leslie did not deny it, either from indifference, or inability, or simply from ignorance of the rumour. Any way, he seemed pleased to meet her, and no one thought of inviting one without the other. Mrs. Sherwood had carefully concealed all this from Lilius; and was not without hopes that, if no absolute engagement existed, she should have the satisfaction of seeing the attentions of the baronet transferred to her niece. The little scene of the preceding evening had by no means given her the annoyance she affected; she saw that the flight of Lily had disappointed the baronet, and that, instead of consoling himself with Jane, he had not cared to dance again; and even while playing chess he had been so *distracted* as to be easily beaten by an inferior player. She therefore considered Lilius quite capable of undertaking her own cause if only opportunities were given; and in the mean time she trusted to example and the power of ridicule, to overcome any rustic prejudices which might interfere with her schemes. Having, therefore, carefully revolved all these thoughts and many others of a similar tendency in her own mind, she said, turning towards

the riding party, as she placed her foot on the step of the carriage,

“Mr. Vivian, I shall entrust Miss Osborne to your care; Sir Leslie has already proved himself unfit for so responsible a charge.”

“To hear is to obey,” he replied; “Gordon, you are disgraced.” But the baronet did not hear, or affected not to do so; he was carefully mounting Lillas on Zoë, and seeing that the reins and all things were right; he made no reply, therefore, except saying in a low tone to Lillas,

“There can be no disgrace in being permitted to fill a post more coveted. I hope you will not consider me unfit to take charge of Zoë.”

“I must not forget to whom Zoë belongs,” replied Lillas with a merry laugh; “but she is so gentle that she does not require any care,” she added, patting her pretty arched neck.

“Come, Gordon, how long are you going to keep us waiting?” exclaimed an impatient voice, “look at Zohrab and Vivian, how far they are in advance, you will have Miss Osborne run away with again.”

“Oh,” said another, “Gordon is such a *preux chevalier* he would only be too glad of another plunge to rescue the lady.”

“No,” said Leslie laughing as he vaulted lightly

upon his horse, "Mrs. Sherwood has thrown cold water enough upon me this morning, there will be no need of another bath to cool my ardour. Come, Miss Græme, let us canter on and overtake them."

And the party were soon joyously careering over the turf.

CHAPTER XIII.

What a single word can do !
Thrilling all the heart-strings through,
Calling forth fond memories,
Raining round Hopes's melodies,
Steeping all in one bright hue,—
What a single word can do !

What a single word can do !
Making life seem all untrue,
Driving joy and hope away,
Leaving not one cheering ray,
Blighting every flower that grew—
What a single word can do !

ANON.

IT was a day made for enjoyment. The warm beams of the September sun had dissipated the slight dewy frost of the morning. Light, floating clouds of vapour still hung in wreaths upon the wooded hills, but in the plain all was bright and glowing. The sun glinted gaily from the carriages as they followed the winding road by the side of the water. The riding party cantered over the crisped turf, leaving their track in the dew, which still lay in the shade.

The ruins they were bound for were the remains of a priory, a little distance from the park gates. They stood on the bank of the river, backed by gentle hills, whose wooded sides were just beginning to glow with the tints of autumn.

The happiness of Lillas was as unclouded as the day. The slight mists which had obscured the brightness of her morning had vanished like the vapours of earth which the sun had absorbed. The ride was just long enough to excite without fatiguing the spirits; and, as Zohrab seemed to be on his good behaviour, Leslie had resigned the care of Miss Osborne to Vivian with willingness, as it appeared, and given himself up to Lillas,—dangerously for her peace, perhaps.

With an artist's eye, he noticed all the combinations of colour, foreground and distance, and repeatedly drew her into little *détours* to point out special effects, which, like the rarest pleasures of life, lie not on the beaten road, but must be sought out to the right and left. From the scene around, he was led away to speak of other countries, to describe the scenery about Duncairn, to relate legends and histories, which invest the commonest scenes of life with the halo of romance. He drew her on to speak of Western Scotland; and, forget-

ting the shy reserve natural to her, to display some of her own mental treasures; and thus, amid the charms of nature, their minds gradually opened to each other, and each learned to appreciate the other more highly. Ah! Lily, where was the warning Jane Osborne had given you this morning? Forgotten, we fear, as utterly as if it had never been spoken!

Mrs. Sherwood was quite satisfied as she saw Sir Leslie and Liliass approaching the priory at a slow pace, his hand resting on Zoë's mane, as he related apparently some story connected with the ruins, while Lily, her eyes fixed abstractedly on the old walls, was giving her whole attention to her companion, who watched with lively interest the varying expression of her countenance.

There were other eyes too who noticed the pair, with probably less satisfaction than did Mrs. Sherwood, though, like her, Jane Osborne forebore to express her feelings at the time.

The party soon separated into groups, as their several tastes inclined them. Some to wander among the woods and climb the hills, some to sketch, others to sit or lounge on the banks or among the ruins, recalling the legends of the priory, and tracing the lives of its inmates in their imagi-

nation. Some of those perhaps had experienced the hollowness and disappointment of the world which they had renounced, and, as they had sat in meditation by the river side, or wandered through the secluded valley on errands of charity, fulfilled their round of appointed duties in thankfulness and peace. Others, doubtless, longed to go forth into that world whose distant roar penetrated sometimes even through the convent walls; the quiet life and conventual rules chafed and fretted their bolder spirits, and they panted to mix in the stir and tumult from which they were debarred. How many a wily schemer, moving the springs which agitated the world, had knelt in that chapel; how many a worn and bruised spirit had there offered up thanksgivings for the peaceful haven it had reached at last! There was food enough for meditation within those ruined walls, but with the major part assembled there on that bright September afternoon, the craving was possibly for more substantial food. The dinner indeed collected a very different party in the refectory from that holy fraternity who formerly met there, though probably the inner life was composed of similar materials: the garb of the world, like that of the monk, is no index of the spirit it conceals. Dinner over, the pleasure-seekers once more

separated, strolling where fancy or curiosity led them, till the fading light bade them think of preparations for their return. The pace of the equestrians on their homeward way was quicker than it had been in the morning; the evening dew was falling, and in the gloaming there were not many objects to entice them from the road; they rode together in a compact company; only as they were slowly mounting the ascent to the house, Leslie begged Lillas to linger for one moment and look at the glorious effect of the rising moon, which was bathing the whole scene below them in her pale light.

They stood themselves within the shadow of the house, behind which the moon was hidden, throwing the dark mass out far over the park, while to the right the soft beams lay reflected in the smooth sheet of water, as in a mirror, and penetrated partially into the shades of the more distant woods, making the large white trunks of isolated beeches at their entrance, stand out from the blackness beyond in bold relief, like giant sentinels before an enchanted forest. The deer flitted silently along from time to time, uttering occasionally a low bellow, and, except the near chirp of the grasshopper, no other sound broke the silence but that mysterious

whisper of the trees, called forth, as it were, by the moonlight, and resembling the gentle surging of the distant ocean. The rest of the party had turned the corner of the house, Leslie and Lilius were alone. The influence of the scene threw a hush over their own spirits, there was silence for a minute or two; then Leslie said, in a low voice, as he rested his hand on Zoë's mane,

“It is a fit close to a day of exquisite enjoyment: another of the many days of the past month, which will never be effaced from my memory. Dear Miss Græme —— Lilius —— dare I hope that you have shared my happiness —— ? that I may have been associated with your enjoyment of these days?”

He took her hand and held it between his own: she sat for an instant perfectly motionless; a wave of conflicting feelings surged over her heart and made her brain reel. In that instant her heart had spoken, she felt that it was his presence which had made her happiness during the past weeks, that his memory would colour all her future life; and with this feeling came the recollection of the words Jane Osborne had spoken that morning: the very moonbeams seemed to take the form of the letters, and to press in upon her brain the words “He is mine!” A cold shiver ran through her veins, she turned her

face away, and gently releasing her hand from his grasp, while she urged her horse forward, she said falteringly,

“No enjoyment, Sir Leslie, however great, can give happiness, unless associated with truth.”

Before he had time to reply, or even to comprehend her words, she had overtaken the others, who were dismounting at the door. Lillas gave her hand to the groom and springing from her horse, went at once to her own room, sending word to her aunt by Cecile that she was too much fatigued to rejoin the party that evening.

After taking off her habit, and loosening her hair by an almost mechanical action, she hastily threw on her dressing-gown and sat down at the window. Her eyes rested on the scene of beauty to which Leslie had so recently called her attention. But she looked upon it as one sees a thing in a dream. She seemed to be living in a dream: there were no tears in her eyes: there was no definite form in her thoughts: at times words sounded in her ears, and scenes flitted before her imagination, like the sounds one hears in sleep, or sees in a magic lantern: no sigh even escaped her: she sat motionless, her hands clasped convulsively together upon her knees, her eyes following mechanically the

shadows as they gradually lengthened over the landscape: the shadow seemed to have fallen upon her own soul. The light from the drawing-room windows shone out upon the terrace below; passing figures sometimes seemed to cross them; faint sounds of music and voices occasionally floated up through her open window. It was a chilly September night, but she seemed unconscious of the coldness of the air. After a time the moon went slowly down behind the trees, the lights below were extinguished, and darkness closed over the scene, only relieved by the pale, faint light of the stars. Voices and steps were heard along the gallery, 'good-nights' were interchanged, steps approached her own door, there was a whisper "Perhaps she is asleep;" and they passed on, the doors closed one after another, and the darkness seemed to be deepened by the stillness. Still she sat at the window. In the distance she saw a figure moving slowly along the park, it was just discernible in the uncertain starlight; presently it was lost in the shrubberies; it was probably a keeper on his nightly watch. By degrees the stars began to fade; a streak of pale light was visible above the horizon; day was beginning to dawn; the breeze freshened up from the lake and sent a chill through Liliass; it recalled the cold

shiver that Leslie's words and falseness had given her the night before: she rose, and closing the window, threw herself upon the bed. But no relief came to her thoughts, no tears to her eyes. One idea seemed to be beating upon her brain. He was pledged to another, and he had spoken of love to herself! Then as every word and tone and look of the past few weeks came back upon her memory with a vividness which seemed to make them almost palpable, she saw and understood how diligently he had sought her love, and how unconsciously she had yielded to the fascination till her whole heart was his! The words he had spoken last night had lifted the veil from her eyes. The petals of the flower had expanded, they could never reclose, they would only wither and die!

After a time she slept, the heavy sleep of worn-out nature. It was late when she awoke, feverish and nervous. Cecile had come in more than once, but seeing her asleep and half drest upon the bed, had forborne to rouse her, thinking that the fatigue of the previous day had overpowered her. The bright beams of the sun filled her room, as she opened her eyes: how their brilliancy seemed to flout her! As it were a bar of iron pressed upon her heart: she tried to recal her thoughts, and at

once the events of yesterday rushed in upon her like a flood.

She rose slowly, and began languidly to undress and dress herself again: she threw open the window, and the balmy air, loaded with the perfume of trees and flowers, floated in and cooled her throbbing brow. She stood for a minute inhaling the rich breeze, particularly she could detect the scent of the heliotrope and mignonette: those flowers were all her life afterwards associated with the recollection of that terrible morning. The gong sounded and Cecile came in once more:

“Ah, ma pauvre mademoiselle!” exclaimed the French woman, “que vous êtes pâle! que vous avez l’air las et ennuyé! et cependant vous avez apparemment bien dormi!”

“Pas trop bien, ma bonne Cecile, j’ai fait des songes terribles, etsi vifs!” and she pressed her hand upon her forehead with a shudder: but it was necessary to exert all her spirits, and, summoning pride to her aid, she went down to join the party assembling for breakfast.

There were only a few, scattered about the room, when she entered. Miss Osborne stood at the window, and turned as Lily came in; apparently she was not the person expected, and with a haughty

and defiant greeting, she turned again to the window. Mrs. Sherwood kissed her affectionately, said she looked tired and nervous, and had exerted herself too much yesterday, she must keep very quiet to-day, and recover her usual brilliancy before the evening.

By degrees all came down and fell into their accustomed places. Sir Leslie Gordon was the last, and, as he shook hands with Mrs. Sherwood, he turned an eager and anxious look upon Liliás, whose eyes were fixed upon the table. Miss Osborne looked keenly from one to the other, and returned the Baronet's greeting with an offended air. The breakfast went on: Liliás made a show of eating, and was conscious of hearing much raillery directed at Leslie, for his want of appetite and haggard looks. He laughed off the remarks in rather an unnatural tone, and made not very novel remarks on the weariness of too much pleasure. She looked up once, and thought he looked paler than usual, and as if he too had passed a sleepless night. At last the meal ended. The post-bag was brought in, and the letters were distributed. There were none for Lily, and she got up and went to the window which opened upon the terrace. She seemed inclined to open it and go out into the warm sunshine. Leslie followed, and making some re-

mark upon the beauty of the morning, was about to undo the fastening of the window, when Jane Osborne joined them, holding a letter in her hand.

“So your friend Larthon Wentworth comes here next week!” she said abruptly, with her keen, hard eyes fixed upon Liliass.

The suddenness of the speech, the fierceness of Miss Osborne’s manner, and her own nervous feelings combined, sent a sudden and deep flush over her pale face. She felt that Leslie’s eyes fastened upon her in astonishment, she could not meet his look, and her manner became confused. Hardly knowing what she said, she faltered out,

“I did not know you were acquainted with him.”

“I suppose not,” replied Jane with a sneer, “or you would have been more guarded; but I have known him long, he is a great chum of Harry’s. I met him with your brother the last time he came from Fairlands, he looked radiantly happy then: every bristle of his shock head spoke of happiness! I beg your pardon, my dear?” she added laughing, “but you must acknowledge that he is no beauty: however he is rich, so beauty is not wanted — *Vogue la galère!* But by the side of your brother, who really is like a *héros de roman*, Larthon does

not shine. Poor fellow! you must not meet him with these pale cheeks and lustreless eyes though, my dear, or he will think Scotch beauty will not bear to be transplanted, and that would be fatal, you know! But I must be off, Mrs. Sherwood is waiting for me!" and, throwing a glance of triumph at Leslie, she darted out of the room.

Every tinge of colour had forsaken Lily's face, as she listened in breathless astonishment to Jane's speech, uttered with such rapidity, that any attempt to interpose a word was perfectly useless. She stood with her lips apart, and her eyes fixed upon the speaker. There had been nothing really asserted, with regard to Mr. Wentworth and herself, but much insinuated, and she had been utterly incapable of putting in a word. She felt, rather than saw that Leslie's eyes were fixed upon her with a scrutinizing, even a contemptuous gaze. His hand had been on the fastening of the window when Miss Osborne joined them; he had not removed it while she remained; as she left he turned the handle, and stepping out, said, with an inclination of the head,

"I did not fully comprehend the meaning of your words last night, Miss Græme. I understand them now, and hope you will always in future act upon the principle which you avowed then."

Lilias stood as if spell-bound. Pride, anger, shame, and outraged delicacy were struggling in her bosom. She pressed her cold hands upon her throbbing temples, and for a moment thought of justifying herself to Leslie. She even tried to call after him, but it was in so hesitating a voice that the sound did not reach his ears, and before she could speak again, the recollection of what Miss Osborne had told her yesterday morning flashed into her mind, and the conviction of his treachery towards herself sent the words back again into her heart. She rushed upstairs into her own room, and throwing herself upon the sofa, burst into an agony of tears.

There were sounds of departure before the luncheon hour came, but she heard them not, and when her aunt came upstairs to inquire why she had not joined them, she found her shivering in the ague fit of fever.

The petals of the flower had indeed expanded, but only to leave the poor defenceless heart exposed to the biting frosts and the pelting storms.

CHAPTER XIV.

And the lady prayed in heaviness,
That looked not for relief,
But slowly did her succour come,
And a patience for her grief.

Oh! there is never sorrow of heart
That shall lack a timely end,
If but to God we turn, and ask
Of Him to be our friend!

WORDSWORTH.

MRS. GRÆME and Alice were sitting under the verandah at Fairlands, at noon on the same day which had been such an eventful one at Battesden.

Alice was working with busy fingers, while her mother, with her hands resting on her lap, sat gazing abstractedly on the landscape before her, from which it was evident her thoughts were far away. At last, breaking the long silence which had fallen upon them, she said,

“Did you not say that the ‘Diomed’ left Malta about the 26th of last month, Alice?”

“Yes, mama, and as this is the 24th, we may expect to hear of its arrival every day. When shall we set out, mama? I am longing to give the good

news to dearest Lily, and fix the day for our being at Battesden. I don't think she has the slightest idea of papa's being so near home; her letters are so full of her own little troubles and great pleasures, that I suspect she has neither time nor inclination for scanning the papers."

"It is just about that, that I have been thinking, Alice, and am come to the resolution, that we will avoid Battesden on our way down, which I don't think will be a very great disappointment to you, and we can make it on our return. You see, my dear girl, the house is evidently full of gay company now, which would ill suit me, unused as I have been of late to such a life; and besides, I think your good aunt would hardly sympathize in the feelings with which I look forward to your papa's return. So I should like Lily to meet us in London, whither she could go under the care of a servant. Ah, poor Archie! he would not have taken his holiday just now if he could have foreseen the return of the Diomed so soon. But it is useless to lament that now, and I believe this little cruise is the best thing for him."

"Poor fellow!" replied Alice, "yes, it is unlucky that he should be out of England just at this moment; but it was a nice chance for him going

with his friend, so I can hardly wish him home again, as he will not be long absent. Can you form any idea, mama, of the cause of the great alteration there was in him lately? Formerly he was always so full of life and joyousness, and latterly he seemed often so depressed, or else so unnaturally gay, and so reckless of every thing; my uncle complained that he could not even interest him in Battesden. Do you think there is any attachment between Minnie and himself? for she too is not like herself."

"Sometimes I have thought it might be so, Alice, I rather feared it before he came home. I remember too that he absented himself on the day she left, and the change was perceptible from the moment of his return. But such a theory puzzles me only the more, for Minnie was always so fond of him when a child, that I cannot think he would have met with any discouragement from her. Besides, when looking upon the alternative that she has chosen, it seems still more improbable that she would have refused him, even supposing affection had nothing to do with it."

"True, mama, with many; but Minnie was always so noble, so high-hearted, she is just the girl to sacrifice her happiness to a sense of right,

and she would naturally think you and papa would not wish Archie to marry one whose family was unknown, and who was besides utterly dependent on you."

"Alice, you are too absurd to suppose such a thing. No girl placed as Minnie is would have let such ideas come between her and such a match as Archie. No, no, what you say is all very well, and it is true she is romantic in many of her ideas, but put romance and high-heartedness, or whatever you call it, in one scale, and the handsome, brilliant, Archie, with his large fortune, on the other, and I know very well which would have kicked the beam. No! Minnie has romantic ideas on the subject of duty, I own, but she is not such a simpleton as to prefer the life of a governess to being the wife of my noble boy with forty thousand pounds a year. And it is not to be denied that, much as I love her, I should be very sorry if Archie did not look higher for a wife."

Alice sighed: she was not what her mother would have called romantic, but it gave her pain to hear one so dear to her, express sentiments so utterly worldly; she was reminded of her aunt, and secretly wondered if all higher feelings were incompatible with advancing years, and if they were only what

her mother had sneeringly called, romance. From what she had seen of Minnie and her principles, she could not help thinking that she was just the girl to sacrifice everything to a principle, but she was not given to much thought, and was content to leave the question unsettled, so, resuming the conversation from the first point, she said,

“ But you have not named the day when we shall leave home, mama.”

“ In my own mind, my dear, I have fixed the day after to-morrow,” said her mother, “ and, as Battedden is given up, I have a plan for seeing Minnie, by going first to Glasgow, sleeping there, and so getting to town the next evening.”

The plan seemed delightful to Alice, and the two ladies entered the house to communicate their intentions to Minnie and to Liliass, requesting the former to obtain permission to spend the night with them at the hotel, which would enable them to discuss the past, present, and future unrestrainedly.

But “ l’homme propose, mais Dieu dispose:” and on the morning of their departure the post brought the news of Lily’s illness, which greatly altered their arrangements. Mrs. Sherwood did not speak of the indisposition as serious, therefore they would not disappoint Minnie of the pleasure of their visit,

but of course it obliged them to go to Battesden, where they hoped to be, a few hours after the letter which would announce their coming. Slightly however as Mrs. Sherwood had mentioned Lily's illness, which she called a feverish cold, it cast a gloom over the commencement of their journey, which the aspect of nature did not help to dissipate, and to these influences even the least sensitive are at times subject. The melancholy beauty of autumn was beginning to lose its glory, the mountains were enveloped in grey mists, no wind stirred them, and a stillness almost oppressive reigned, only broken by the wintry note of the robin; the fading leaves came slowly floating down, adding to those already lying dank and slippery in the wet pathways. It was not till they were approaching Glasgow that the sun had power to dissipate the vapours, and enable the travellers to look upon the lovely scenery through which they were passing.

Minnie met them on their arrival, and the gloom of the morning, and even the anxiety with regard to Lily, were for the moment dispelled in that happy *réunion*. There was so much to hear and tell on both sides! Minnie was looking thinner and even paler, there was a perceptible cloud upon her, and the intelligence of poor Lily's illness gave

a deeper gloom to the air of fixed sadness which seemed to have become habitual to her; but from time to time something of the old gleam of gaiety would glance out of her deep full eyes, when talking of her home at Fairlands, and all she loved so dearly.

She described her present life; her pupils, her friends, her amusements, and employments. She made them laugh at her account of the conquest she had made, and the quiet discomfiture of her admirer by Mr. Murdoch. That name struck Mrs. Græme: it led to details, and it was soon made certain that Mr. Murdoch must be a distant connection of her own, and an old friend of her husband's. Minnie told them of a projected visit she was to make with the Baillies to Glenrowan, his place on the banks of the Clyde, to which she and the girls were looking forward with much pleasure, and Mrs. Græme drew a picture mentally, with great complacency, of Minnie as the mistress of Glenrowan, and her dear Archie free to carry out the more ambitious views of his mother. Of Archie indeed poor Minnie pined to hear some news, but no one mentioned him; she longed to ask a thousand questions about him, but though the name often trembled on her lips she was afraid to utter it; a choking

sensation checked her speech, and she felt that if she did speak his name she would lose command of her voice, and blurt it out in a way that would astonish her hearers and herself. It was only when they had retired to the bed-room which she shared with Alice, that darkness gave her courage to say,

“And Archie,—Alice? you have not told me anything about him.”

“We know but little,” was the reply. “Very soon after he returned to London, a friend of his who was going out in command of a steam-sloop, proposed to Archie to accompany him. The vessel was on the eve of sailing, so there was no time for hesitation, and by the time we got the letter to say he was going, they had left England. He could not then tell their destination, and we have not heard from him since; but at all events we felt very glad that the opportunity fell in his way; it will be something to rouse his interest, for he is wonderfully changed. His letters since we parted have been written either in the wildest spirits or the deepest gloom. Mama was quite uneasy about him, and the only drawback now is, that he will not be here to receive papa.”

Minnie made no reply; she might have fallen asleep, but after a few minutes of silence, Alice

heard a restless movement and a low moan, as if she were in pain. She made no answer however to the inquiries of Alice, and next morning her pale face wore its usual expression of calm sadness, though perhaps a keen observer might have thought it a shade deeper.

The repressed tears, however, had soon a legitimate cause to flow. The ray of sunlight which had pierced the clouds which overshadowed her life, and had shone for a few hours so brightly on her path, did but deepen the darkness that closed down upon her again, as her friends once more bade her farewell, and she saw them depart. Even in the hearts of the travellers, there was more of sorrow than of gladness as they took leave of Minnie; it might be the sight of her pale tearful face; or it might be one of those unaccountable presentiments, foreboding evil, which sometimes casts its shadow over the mind without any apparent cause, as if to subdue, and insensibly prepare it for approaching misfortune. For Minnie, another drop had been added to her cup of bitterness, already nearly full, by the words of Alice: she knew, not only that she was the cause of Archie's absence from England at this time, but, that it was her image which cast that deep gloom upon his heart, hitherto so gay and

buoyant; it was the disappointment of her love which made him so careless, even reckless of the future: what if she should become the cause of still greater misfortune?—If principle should fail him, and he should be led to forget his sorrows in a life of dissipation and vice?

She found it impossible to return to her usual occupations at once; her mind was “like the troubled sea when it cannot rest.” She left the station as the last curl of the steam vanished from her sight, and wandered, she knew not whither. Her thoughts were busy with the absent, with the past, and the future. Had she not been wrong in depriving Archie of the strong anchor which the knowledge that she returned his love, even without more hope, would have been to him? Had she any right to risk his happiness—more—his welfare, perhaps both here and hereafter, for the sake of gratifying the worldly views of his mother? She knew indeed that his mind was too refined to yield naturally to vicious tendencies, but to what might not the destruction of all his schemes of happiness lead him? Were his principles strong enough to resist the recklessness of despair? Then came a reaction: Was there not still time to repair the error? She would write to him, tell him how dear

he was to her. True, he had left England, but she could write under cover to Mr. Wentworth, who would no doubt be able to forward his letters, for Alice had not even mentioned the name of the ship he was gone out in; it would be at the most but the delay of a few weeks. Then came the recollection of poor Lily's illness. How selfish she felt, to have forgotten her dear Lily's sufferings in her own? But they were but bodily sufferings, and with a mind calm and quiet, she would soon be restored to health. Bodily pain seemed almost enviable; how gladly would she endure it, in exchange for the mental anguish which was eating away her heart! —She walked hurriedly, forgetful of all around her; several of those she passed, turned and looked at the pale troubled face, so unconscious of the interest it excited. She was thinking how she could bring gladness to Archie's soul, revive all his former interest in life, and turn his anguish into joy: she saw nothing else: she felt a feverish anxiety to be at home again, that she might write, and despatch her letter without delay; she could not walk fast enough, every minute seemed such a space of time lost! She turned at length into the street where she lived. Just at that moment the bell for early prayers sounded from the belfry of the

little church close by. It arrested her steps, and stopped the current of her thoughts. What was she about to do? Where was the firmness which had enabled her to put the temptation aside? Where was the principle which had led her to make the sacrifice? Was it indeed mere selfishness? Was it in her own strength that she had acted, and had the sandy foundation already given way? Had she indeed put away their earthly happiness in mere pique, and was she now going to renounce all, for the sake of a few years of the uncertain happiness of this world? Perhaps after all she was even now thinking more of herself than of Archie's welfare. Then, suppose she told him that he was beloved—could she expect that he would be satisfied with the mere fact? Would he not insist upon his right and power to marry whom he pleased? And would he listen to any arguments of her's upon the wishes of his parents?—She felt indeed that she had been on the point of opening the flood-gates to admit the torrent, which would soon have washed down all the feeble barriers that her own hand had erected. She entered the church: humbled and subdued, she cast herself upon her knees: long she remained in that attitude, not so much praying, as feeling how weak she was, and must be

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of herself, and supplicating with tears and groans for strength, and help, and guidance. They came at length,—the calm, elevating service began—she joined in the cry of the Psalmist, “The floods have risen, O Lord; the floods have lift up their voice, the floods lift up their waves;” and she heard the answer, “The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly, but yet the Lord, who dwelleth on high, is mightier.” Peace stole gradually into her soul, lifting it up on the wings of prayer, and teaching it to soar in the beautiful words of the Psalms.

The temptation was over; the storm-clouds rolled away, and the sun shone once more in the clear azure of her calmed soul.

She rose from her knees, strong in a strength not her own; her duty was clear before her; she would go on along the narrow path she had chosen. It might contain many thorns, and but few flowers, but she had already partly realized the truth of what Adams has so beautifully expressed: “The thorns were all magic thorns, and, did she but look upward to the clear blue sky, and tread firmly on them, they would keep changing into flowers.”

The service ended, and she left the church: her spirits composed, her soul elevated, her thoughts once more calmed and regulated: she had laid the

weight of her burden on One who has promised to help the heavy laden, and she could resume her duties with a quiet mind.

A few steps further and she met Mr. Murdoch.

"I am going to invite myself to breakfast at Mr. Baillie's," he said, "for my curiosity has been awakened, and I cannot rest till it is satisfied. I was told last evening when I called, that you were gone to meet a Mrs. Græme, whose husband was returning from sea. Now one of the oldest friends I have was a young midddy of that name, and I am anxious to discover if this Captain Græme can be he."

Minnie told all she knew of the family: Mr. Murdoch's surmises proved correct. He and Captain Græme had known each other as children, though there was a great difference in their ages, as the latter was just going to sea when young Murdoch was first sent to school: but they had met later in life, where Murdoch was in the West Indies, and the lieutenant had been on that station. Græme had also married a connection of his, Mr. Murdoch said, Miss Sherwood, since which event the friends had never met. "Græme had almost passed out of my recollection," he added, "till the name and circumstances recalled him to my mind last evening, and now I shall lose no time in claim-

ing acquaintance with the Captain and cousinship with his fair wife."

And so for the future Minnie might see in her kind friend almost a connexion of her own! It was another ray of comfort beaming upon her path, just now so lone and desolate, and she entered her schoolroom with a lighter heart, and a more springy step, than two hours ago she had thought could ever be her's again.

CHAPTER XV.

“What ails thou, my beloved child?”

The Baron said — his daughter mild

Made answer, “All will yet be well!”

CHRISTABEL.

Look not mournfully into the past. It comes not back again.
Wisely improve the present. It is thine. Go forth to meet the
shadowy future without fear, and with a manly heart.

HYPERION.

THE third day was drawing to a close as Mrs. Harper, the housekeeper at Battesden, sat by Lily's bedside, watching her fevered restlessness. The disease had reached its height, and the continual turnings and tossings, and incoherent wanderings of the poor sufferer, had made it a day of peculiar anxiety and distress to the watchers. Lily had now been asleep for some time, but it was a broken and disturbed slumber, bringing no refreshment. During the last hour, however, Mrs. Harper thought she could perceive a change: the wild tossings were beginning to subside: her breathing to become more composed and regular, the mutterings to cease, and she seemed to be gradually falling into a deep

and quiet repose. Just at this time, a slight stir in the house announced an arrival. It was Mrs. Græme and Alice. Care had been taken to avoid any noise, and, as they were expected, the servants had stood at the door ready to receive the travellers, and usher them into the library, where Mrs. Sherwood awaited them. Unprepared as she had been, Mrs. Græme was greatly distressed on hearing of Lily's danger. It was with difficulty that she was prevented going to the room immediately. Mrs. Harper, however, stoutly resisted any thing which might disturb the favourable change which was evidently taking place, and it was only when she saw her patient firmly locked in a deep calm sleep that she would relinquish her post, or suffer Mrs. Græme to take her place at the bedside.

Long hours passed, however, before Lily awoke from the heavy sleep into which she had fallen, and when at last she opened her languid eyes, the night was over, and the bright sunbeams were struggling to pierce the thick curtains of her window. Her mother's face too was bending over her as she awoke, and feebly stretching out her hands, she exclaimed :

“ Oh, dearest mama ! is that really you ? Then I am at home, and it was all a dream. But

oh, what a fearful dream it was! How tired I am!"

"Never mind, my precious one, it is past now," replied her mother, as she carefully replaced her hands under the bed-covering. "Do not talk now, but rest yourself. Take some of this jelly, and then sleep again."

Lily did as she wished, and then, too weak apparently to question, or even to connect her thoughts, she was soon folded again in a dreamless and refreshing sleep.

The crisis was passed, and she was safe; but as health returned, and her memory cleared, she became conscious that all she had lately gone through was no mere troubled dream, but a sad reality, though, in the weakness and confusion of her mind, she was still unable to separate truth from fancy. Her great desire seemed now, to be away from Battesden. When the windows were opened, and the perfume of the heliotrope and mignonette filled the air, she would turn with a shudder and hide her face in the pillow.

"Take me from this horrid place, dear mama!" she would exclaim, "let me breathe the free pure air of our own dear mountains. They have all been so unkind to your poor Lily."

“Yes, darling, you shall go to Fairlands as soon as you are able to travel; but see, here is your aunt with a lovely bouquet of fresh flowers; you must not be ungrateful, my sweet child.”

“I hate flowers!” petulantly exclaimed Lily, turning away her head, “the scent is too heavy; I want to smell the fresh heather, and feel the soft tufts of moss and thyme under my feet; and, aunt, why did you let Jane Osborne bring Mr. Wentworth into my room? and why did they say such unkind and false things?”

“My dear Lily, you have indeed been dreaming. Mr. Wenworth has not been here; your illness put him off, and every one else left the day after you were taken ill, except Sir Leslie Gordon, and he went soon after breakfast that very day.”

“Ah, Sir Leslie Gordon!” repeated Lily, passing her thin pale hand over her brow; “I recollect, it was he and Miss Osborne——”

“Not in your room, Lily,” said her aunt, “you don’t think they came to see you?”

“No, dear aunt, I remember all about it now; it was a bad dream I had, that seemed so like reality. Forgive me, dear aunt, for being so cross,” she said, raising herself from the sofa on which she was lying, and stretching out her arms to embrace her

aunt; "I was very wrong, I was very wrong to say you were unkind, or dear patient Mrs. Harper either, it is I who have been so troublesome; and thank you very much for the flowers, but they really do make my head ache," she said, as she put them to her face, and then laid the bouquet down on the table.

"You are a spoiled little girl, Lily," replied her aunt smilingly, as she returned her embrace, "but you are weak now, so I must not scold; perhaps the flowers are too much for you at present, so Harper shall put them into the next room; and here comes Cecile with your bonnet; you are going into the garden to enjoy the bright sunshine."

Lily submitted to be dressed and taken out; she was afraid of yielding to her petulance, or being ungrateful; but the terrace garden, to which they led her through that window where she had lately suffered so much, was not very refreshing to her, and, when she returned to her sofa, it was thought the outer air was too exciting for her at present.

Youth, however, in time triumphed over disease, and at the end of a few weeks she was well enough to travel. In the meantime the Diomed had arrived at Portsmouth, and, as Captain Græme could not leave the ship at once, Mrs. Græme had gone down there as soon as she could leave Lily

without anxiety; and now the father and mother had returned to Battedden, and early in November the whole family found themselves at Fairlands again, except Archie and Minnie, the latter of whom, however, came home for a month at Christmas.

Mr Murdoch took an early opportunity of renewing his acquaintance with his old friend; indeed he had gone down to Portsmouth for the purpose, and been cordially received there by both the Captain and Mrs. Græme. After their return he made many visits to Fairlands, where it was soon evident that there was an attraction, stronger even than the companionship of his old friend, and before Christmas came it was known that Alice was to be mistress of Glenrowan in the spring.

By degrees Lily recovered her health and much of her usual vivacity, though a languor often stole over her, and her complexion had not yet regained all its former brilliancy. She rallied Alice a good deal upon choosing a contemporary of her father's for her husband, and, with something of her old petulance, refused to admit that there could be any difference in their ages. 'Douce Davie' was the nickname she gave David Murdoch; but, with all her bantering and raillery, she acknowledged his goodness, and fully appreciated his worth; and

with her, as with all the family, the new member was soon a favourite.

It was a pleasant cheerful circle when Minnie joined it, shortly before Christmas, for her holiday; there was no exuberant mirth, but a peaceful calm sunk down even into those hearts which were most full of anxiety or sadness. Lily had lost much of her childishness and impetuosity, her step had become more sedate, her brow had acquired a more thoughtful look, and the ringing sound of her joyous laugh was less often heard. The change was not unnoticed by Minnie, who saw it with some anxiety, coupled as it was with her pale cheeks and often sad expression. By a sort of sympathetic freemasonry, she felt that there was a cause for the alteration beyond her recent illness, or even the effect of society upon her character; but without seeking to probe a wound, which it seemed Lily's wish to conceal, she set herself to heal it, by leading her to occupy and interest herself in active benevolence, and so to wean her from brooding over her own sorrows, whatever their source might be.

The winter had set in with northern severity: the snow lay thickly on the ground, and weighed down the branches of the trees, till they almost rested upon it. Lily had contracted a habit of

sitting often for long together in a listless attitude, with her eyes fixed on the fire; she seldom cared to move, and was glad to be left unnoticed.

“Come, Lily,” exclaimed Minnie one day, as she noticed her thus, “you have been making pictures in the fire long enough; I am going to the village, and a brisk walk this bright morning will do you much more good.”

“It is a great deal of trouble,” with a sigh, as she rose; “but I believe you are right, Minnie, so I will make the effort.”

They were soon ready, and walked on briskly together till they came to the village: there Minnie had numberless calls to make, sometimes leaving some trifling comfort of her own manufacture at a cottage, adding a few words to lead its inmates to look up from the death of nature around them, to the spring which the Church was celebrating at that time; sometimes to read to the sick or the aged; sometimes to speak to a child, or to have a little kind conversation with the parents.

“I wish I could do like you, Minnie,” exclaimed Lily, as they went from house to house, “I did try when you first went away, but you know I left home soon after, and now——”

“You have got into bad habits, my little Lily,”

interrupted Minnie, laughing; "you have been so long the pet of the drawing-room at Battersden that,

Petted and praised, this plant grew vain,
And she tossed her head with a proud disdain.

Is not that so?"

"I don't know: yes, perhaps," said Lily with a shiver; "but I should like to do better, only I find it difficult sometimes to interest myself: when people are neat, and clean, and industrious, I like well enough to go to them, but amid dirt, and squalor, and all that!"

"It does often require a good deal of resolution, I own," replied Minnie, "and sometimes it is more difficult than at others: still you must remember that it is these very people whom you have described that most want attention, and it is wonderful how it humanizes them to find some one above their own class taking an interest in them; without administering moral lectures on the discomfort of dirt and the advantages of ventilation, your very showing that you think them of the same flesh and blood, and are willing to help them, has the effect of raising their own self-respect."

"Ah, ventilation!" exclaimed Lily with a shudder; "that cabin of old Fairlie's that you sat

down in, as if it had been a drawing-room ! the smell was so intolerable that I was obliged to stand at the door."

" Well, that is one of the worst, now ; but there were many such a few years ago. I confess I do draw my clothes round me when I sit down there, and inhale a deep breath of fresh air when I come out, but I am not without hope of in time seeing a similar improvement there to what I have remarked in others. I don't think I could do it naturally ; but prayer helps me much, and you know it is a duty, and we have the promise of help if we try to do our duty ; and then we must remember what a great privilege we may consider it, when we bear in mind Who it is that has chosen the poor to represent Himself, and has told us that ' inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these ye did it unto Me.' "

" Oh ! Minnie, all these things come naturally to you, and you always know what to say to the people, and they seem so fond of you."

" Well, dear Lily, to begin with the last.—we naturally love those who seem to take an interest in us, whether they have the means of really doing us good or not, don't we ? As to knowing what to say to them—I believe that comes firstly by prayer, secondly, by really feeling an interest in them, and

lastly by habit—but as to its coming naturally to me, it is often as repulsive to me as it is to you; but I undertake it as a duty, and the blessing seems to come.”

The subject was often renewed between the two girls in their walks, till by degrees Lily was led to interest herself more and more in them. Minnie found her less frequently giving way to her habit of listless rumination, and she was sometimes the first to propose a walk to the village. She employed her leisure at home in making many little things which might contribute to the comfort of the cottagers, and took a real pleasure in accompanying Minnie to distribute them: her mind was taking a higher tone, the cabins were less repulsive, when she thought Who had deigned to make the poor His representatives; and as she took pleasure in listening to Minnie's soft low voice in reading, and seeing the welcome she always met, which Lily was beginning to share, she could not but acknowledge that the gratification amply repaid her for the effort it had first cost. Her general character too was improving, cheerfulness was becoming habitual, and she could now own to herself, that, though the first hope of her heart had been crushed, there were yet many other and less selfish ways left her of obtaining happiness.

The two girls had thus been visiting many of the poor cottagers when Christmas was past, and were pursuing their walk along the beaten track of the snowy road; they talked first of those they had been amongst, discussing various plans for alleviating their sufferings and increasing their comforts, so far as their limited means would allow of their doing; and with a good will, and a little management, it is surprising how much may be done in this way with a very small expenditure of actual money. From one subject they went on to another, talking in the desultory manner that people often do on such occasions, till by degrees the conversation came round to Battesden and the people Lily had met there; and at last she found herself, she hardly knew how, giving Minnie the history of her pleasures and sorrows there, with perfect unreserve.

“There, Minnie dear,” she ended, “I have told you at last all that I have long been wishing to confide to you. And now tell me, was it to be wondered at, that, seeking so earnestly as he did to gain my affections, and being what he seemed to me to be, I should have given Sir Leslie my whole heart?”

“I can hardly blame you for that, dearest; it would have been hard to resist one who seemed so

very much in earnest, and who from your description must have much power of fascination: yet, notwithstanding all this, he proved himself to be that most selfish of creatures, whether male or female, called a flirt, and so infinitely incapable of appreciating the beauty of my dearest Lily's pure and loving heart, as to be utterly unworthy of the pain he has caused her. Yes, love, in spite of that pleading look, I must say so, though I do not blame you for yielding to a charm so hard to withstand, while you had no cause to doubt his truth: the only shadow of blame I give you, dearest, is, for having abandoned yourself to the fascination of his society and conversation that last day, after Miss Osborne's warning. You almost courted by that, the insult which you received. Do you not see that, sweet Lily?"

Lily was silent for a few minutes; at last she said,

"I feel that you are right, Minnie, and bitterly have I repented it since; but I had not ventured then to look into my heart; I suppose I did not dare to do so: I wanted the moral courage you would have had perhaps. I did not venture to think whether he preferred me or not; it was such a charm to be passive and receive such homage. I am afraid,

had he spoken before Miss Osborne's warning, I should have clung to him: yes, you may well shake your head, dear Minnie; of course it would have been very wrong, but I don't know that I should have been able to resist him, or rather reject him, if I had only learnt his falseness after that evening. I do not seek to excuse myself, however; I ought to have boldly looked into my own heart when she spoke, and have acted very differently: but that is no excuse for her making me appear so black: and she acted very deceitfully too, for she always seemed anxious that I should be of the party wherever she was, and then Sir Leslie was invariably with us."

"My poor little Lily! I am afraid Miss Osborne was indeed acting very cruelly by you; and could almost doubt the truth of her avowal, but that I should fear to give you the slightest ground for cherishing him in your memory."

"Do not fear, Minnie: I don't say that I can easily, or willingly, forget the exquisite charm of his manner, but I shall struggle against it. Hitherto I fear I have done this but ill; but you have shown me a better way to overcome this trial. I have, I hope, higher views and other objects to occupy my heart, and if I may only remain quietly at Fairlands,

and follow the pleasures you have taught me to like, and not be obliged to go out again into the gay world, where I have made so sorry a beginning, perhaps I may succeed in stifling this feeling, and might be able even to hear of the marriage of these two people with composure. But you will allow, Minnie dear, that Miss Osborne was most unjustifiable in what she said of me."

"It was a poor and unworthy revenge, dearest; but you see she had not sufficient delicacy in her own heart to trust to yours for prompting you as it did. It is better to think as little about it as possible. To such as Sir Leslie, it could signify very little that he was deceived in you, and, for the rest, it is always more satisfactory to be the injured than the injurer, however against our nature at first to think so. Another consoling reflection is the certainty that all these things are appointed for us; they are all parts of the discipline by which we are brought more and more to fix our affections on heavenly things: and, again, as the ocean is restrained from passing the bounds affixed to it, so no one can do one atom more to injure us than he is permitted."

"Ah yes, Minnie, I remember those lines of Wordsworth's, which I have heard you and Archie

both repeat, though I never before felt the full force of them,

One adequate support
For the calamities of mortal life
Exists—one only ; an assured belief
That the procession of our fate, howe'er
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power :
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good."

" Quite true, love; and remember that the ' converting them to good ' He leaves in our own power. But now, dear Lily, we must turn ; the sun is low, and the air getting cold. Thank you a thousand times for the confidence you have given me; in future don't let us avoid the subject. Not that I mean you should be always dwelling on the real or fancied perfections of Sir Leslie, who seems to have quite charms enough to make him dangerous, whether in thought or reality; but there is a difficulty to be conquered; let us look it bravely in the face; and, while acknowledging, let us seek to overcome it, using what counteracting influences we may, and not trusting in our own strength."

" Dear Minnie, one might think you had yourself known such a trial, and learned to overcome it, you set so courageously about the task."

Minnie averted her head to avoid the eyes which scrutinised her face; at the same time suppressing a sigh by a little laugh, which sounded tolerably natural; and the two girls walked on briskly towards home.

The action was like a practical comment on the words Minnie had just spoken.

CHAPTER XVI.

“So, beharren Sie also darin aus Eigensinn, aus Laune, mich fortzuweisen, mich—Ihren treuen erprobten und bewährten Freund?”

“Keine Laune, O Gott!” seufzte Cunigunde, und rang die Hände.

“Nun, liebe Cunigunde, so sprechen Sie nur das Warum aus! So bald ich weiss, was zwischen aus liegt, ich will es ändern, vermeiden, oder auch ganz Sie aufgeben. Nur aber *so* kommt es mir wie ein Geistesbefangenheit, wie eine Krankheit vor, die über Kurz oder lang weichen wird, und der ich unmöglich mein Glück, mein Zukunft, und vielleicht die Ihre—opfern kann.”

GRÄFIN FAUSTINE.

WINTER passed away and spring came; and with it preparations for Alice's wedding, which was fixed for the beginning of April, and for which Archie would be at home. There was quite a gathering at Fairlands the first week in April. Mr. and Mrs. Sherwood and Minnie, with Helen and Mary Baillie, who were all to be bridesmaids, Lily making the fourth. Archie and Larthon Wentworth arrived the day before the wedding. It would have been a curious revelation could an enchanter have laid bare all those hearts, and

displayed the strong and conflicting feelings that agitated some who showed so little outward emotion. It is wonderful how this fleshly covering hinders all communion of spirit with spirit. Probably there are few who could now endure to have their hearts laid bare, even to their most intimate and valued friends; what a change, then, must take place ere one of the greatest enjoyments in a future life will be that intermingling of soul with soul!—no longer seeing through a glass darkly, but face to face; knowing even as we are known!

Of the junior part of that company at Fairlands, perhaps, with the exception of Helen and Mary, the bride herself was the most unmoved. Never having encountered much to ruffle the natural calmness of her disposition, and now happy in the lot that had fallen to her, she could look with steady confidence into the future, and enjoy the present, with the knowledge that the separation from her childhood's home would be little more than nominal. Lilius was struggling energetically to keep down memories which would rise;—words and tones which would keep murmuring in her ears. Wentworth was earnestly watching that young face, and striving to construe its varying expression according to his own wishes. Marion, with her pale

sad face and gentle smile, was steeling herself to undergo with firmness the ordeal of daily and hourly intercourse with Archie, and to adhere strictly to the sisterly character she had adopted; while Archie, now impetuous and eager, now gloomy and preoccupied, was either trying to glean a ray of hope from that steadfast countenance, or giving way to a state of irritable despondency.

Mrs. Græme declared that, except from the two girls and Cecile, she could get no efficient help; in which she was ungrateful, as both Minnie and Lillas were always by her side, and occupying themselves busily in the necessary preparations, though Mrs. Græme insisted they were anything but handy.

The important day dawned at length, with a sky as bright as could satisfy the most *exigeante* bride. The hour for the wedding came. Captain Græme committed the future happiness of his daughter into David's keeping; the names were signed, and the bridal party prepared to leave the little church. Then it was that for the first time Minnie and Archie found themselves together. During the previous day, it had been easy for her so to occupy herself as to avoid being with him, only she could feel those tender, dreamy eyes often so fixed upon

her as to make it difficult to avoid them. Hitherto, on the morning of the wedding, there had been nothing to bring them into immediate contact; but now she must take his arm and walk with him to the gate where the carriages waited. Wistfully he looked down upon that trembling hand which rested on his arm; and, as they left the church porch, he whispered, as he pressed it to his side, "Dearest Minnie, are we ever to meet thus, as strangers only?"

She looked up and read the earnest expression of the eyes which met her's; and as she noticed the wan pallor of his cheek, which contrasted so painfully with the forced gaiety she had observed in his variable manner, it required all her self-command to enable her to reply in the same tone,

"Better so, Archie, till we can meet as *friends* only."

There was no time for reply, he placed her in the carriage, and ere they met again she had regained her self-possession, and her countenance only wore its, now, habitual expression of tender sadness.

The wedding then was over,—the breakfast came to an end,—the partings were exchanged, and when Captain Græme had handed the bride to her carriage, and the group assembled round the door

had seen the last parting recognition of the bride and bridegroom, they turned, with the feeling of blank vacancy which always follows excitement, and, wondering how the rest of the day was to be filled up, they re-entered the rooms, and looked for a moment upon the table still bearing the remains of the feast, on the garlands which yet decorated the apartments; they spoke of the event of the morning, and then they separated, the four elders to their various amusements or occupations, and the younger ones to change their bridal attire for more serviceable wear, and then to meet again for a long ramble which should beguile the remainder of the day.

The two Glasgow girls were in high spirits; such a life of country freedom, amidst such beautiful scenery, was a novelty to them, and still more the pleasure of riding highland ponies. The brisk, invigorating air of the heathery mountains, too, gave something of the old elasticity back to Lily's spirit, and her clear silvery laugh was again heard as formerly, ringing in answer to the merry jests of her companions. For some time the whole party kept together, but as Larthon Wentworth kept urging on the ponies and their joyous riders to races, and various feats of agility, it happened that Marion and

Archie found themselves considerably in the rear. There was now no Alice with whom Minnie could shelter herself from a *tête-à-tête* with Archie, and, seeing that she could no longer keep pace with the young things before her, she wished to return to the house, but Archie flung himself down on the heather upon the hill side, overlooking the blue sea, and entreated her so piteously to remain, that yielding to the gentle force with which he drew her down, and the pleadings of her own heart, she seated herself beside him.

“Do not always fly from me, dear Minnie!” he said, “or fear that I will persecute you with a renewal of the painful subject of our last interview. Must this constraint remain ever between us? If we can never be more than brother and sister, may we not even be that? Must we be utterly divided? Oh, Minnie, I cannot bear life thus estranged from you! It is nothing but a desert to me without your sweet companionship; but the most arid desert has its oases, may not my life also have the refreshment of now and then a blink of those dear eyes, whose light is more to me than is water to the thirsty pilgrim? How often have I cursed the folly which, coxcomb as I was! made me dream that you could love me, and so lost me even that which you

could bestow.—Minnie, forget me as a lover—but accept me once more as a brother; give me at least this interest in life.”

She paused, and a spasm passed over her averted face; then she said, in a calm low tone,

“Have I not already assured you, Archie, that as a brother you would always have my deepest interest?”

The answer did not seem to please, and with a gesture of impatience he turned from her. She continued,

“I hoped that you would learn to satisfy yourself with this; I hoped it would even give you energy and earnestness. I even flattered myself,” she added with a smile, “that for my sake you would try to forget me.”

“To forget you Minnie, would be to forget every spring of action for me——”

“Oh, hush, Archie!” she exclaimed, eagerly interrupting him, “I must not hear you say this: you must learn to lean on yourself; you would not have me think that my strength was necessary to your mind any more than to your body; that would be quite reversing our positions.”

“No, Minnie, I would not have you lose one atom of your own sweet, delicate softness, and I would

have you lean on me, and, could I only have the hope that this might one day be, I would become any and every thing you could wish; but, without an object in life, what is the use of striving?"

"There is a higher object than mere earthly affection," she said in a low voice, "and yet if that would——but no, I must not——I dare not——I——" she stopped confused.

He turned eagerly, exclaiming, as he half rose,

"Minnie! what do you mean? is it merely some fancied obstacle? Is there yet hope for me?"

"No, Archie, no!" she answered, firmly clasping her hands, "not hope as you would fain interpret the word." He shrunk back again listlessly, leaning on his elbow. She went on,

"Happiness is still in your power, believe me. If not exactly in the way that you would choose for yourself, in the way that Providence has chosen for you. A far higher happiness, trust me, may yet be yours.

There was one whom I made my stay,
But Thou didst set him far away,
That I might courage take to lean on Thee!

Don't you see how earthly props are thus often taken away, when we would lean too exclusively on them?"

"True, Minnie, but you would never let me lean exclusively on you, you would teach me to lean on that higher Arm which supports you." She shook her head,

"I don't know, Archie; it might be I should then look no higher than yourself, and we should lean upon each other till we became at last utterly 'of the earth, earthy,'"

"You won't let me say that you have too much of the 'heavenly!'"

"No, certainly not," she said, interrupting him, "I should be quite as likely to be a ground-swallow as yourself, and some day the flood would destroy a nest which lay upon the earth thus."

"Minnie, sometimes your words give me such a strange hope!——dare I think——?"

"Remember the promise you made me when we sat down here, Archie; and recollect that I was only using a simile to shew your own false reasoning. I want you to see that your course in life is marked out for you, that duties are assigned you, and that it is incumbent on you to embrace and fulfil them in the way appointed for you, not in the way that you would make for yourself."

"But we are not forbidden to enjoy happiness here below," he argued.

“Certainly not; we are surrounded with everything that contributes to happiness, and to enjoy the gifts is the surest way of honouring the Giver; but, when we see that, for some cause not understood by us, the particular toy on which we have set our affections is denied us, we are not to break and throw away all our other toys because we can’t have what we want, and what might, and certainly then would, prove a bane to us. I have always thought love,” she continued more gravely, “even earthly, human love, the most ennobling feeling of the soul, the closest link to the heavenly nature, a feeling which purifies and renders its possessor capable of almost any sacrifice.”

“True, Minnie, where it is joined with hope; but what is hopelessness but despair? and what has despair to do with heaven? Give me but a ray of hope, and I will accomplish any task you could set me.”

She smiled as she answered, “Then if I were to give you hope of gaining my affection you would promise to overcome your own? Was that the logic you learned at Oxford?”

He laughed. “You know my meaning, Minnie, though you have made something like a bull out of it. I meant that your love should be the ladder

by which I would climb to heavenly love. But all this is easy for you, Minnie," he continued, despondingly; "to you there would be no struggle in giving up inclination for duty; and besides, you know not what it is to love; to place every hope and aspiration in one frail casket, and then to see that lying shivered at your feet."

She was silent for a few minutes, then she said gently,

"I know, at least, that it is useless arguing upon affection. What I would do is to raise your thoughts to look at life as it is, not as it might be, and to urge you to play the part assigned you nobly. If one heart is denied you, remember that, in your position, you will have the power of influencing many more for good or evil; and of making, or at least conducting, to their happiness materially, here and hereafter. In every sphere of life this is more or less the case, for everyone stands in a circle, and has the power of injuring or benefiting others by example; the more extended our sphere, of course, the greater our power; and all these things are talents for which we shall have to give account; I may have but two talents, but you will have at least five, if you live to succeed Mr. Sherwood. Remember, then, that life is not to be spent in selfish gratifica-

tion, or in vain repining because a fancied happiness is missed, but in hard duties for which we are responsible, and which, if rightly taken up, will at last become pleasures, and form a much more secure happiness than we could have chosen for ourselves."

"Minnie, Minnie! the very words you have now spoken only convince me more and more of the value of what you deny me. With you for my help I could do all you would have me do; without you I feel I shall be nothing, or worse than nothing. With you then it rests whether I remain the useless being I now am, or become all that you urge me to."

"No, Archie, I will not listen to that sophistry. I know you are capable of the noblest energy; you have already proved yourself so. If only for that reason, I would withhold all idea of earthly reward, such as you would claim. With time, I feel sure that your soul will arouse and assert itself. Only do the duty before you and the reward will come. You must meet your present trial boldly and overcome it; you know where to find help to do this. You must put away all lingering hope; and it was for this reason that I said, 'Till we could meet as friends only, it were better not to meet at

all.' You do but half renounce a thing when you keep continually turning back to look at it. Exert your energies, dear Archie; look up; take no earthly stay, and you will soon learn to smile at what appears to you now so great a trial."

Archie sighed. "You put heavy tasks before me, Minnie, and make life a serious affair; and all the while you take away the staff of hope, and refuse to help a poor fellow to walk along this rough path, or even to bind up the wounds which the thorns which you yourself scatter, inflict. It is hard thus to drive me out, and deprive me of everything that would make this path endurable, nay, even delightful. I must repeat—of what use is this life? Nay," he added, as she turned her serious eyes upon him, "dearest Minnie, I did not quite mean that. I acknowledge the truth of what you say; but you must give me a little time. I will promise to think seriously of what you have said. I will apply to the Fount to which you would lead me for aid and for counsel; and, for your sake, I will try and be something better than I now am."

"Not for my sake alone, Archie, you must not make the preacher the idol," she said, smiling; and then added more gravely, "Ask for help,

Archie, earnestly, and you will have better guidance than such a poor weak thing as I am could give; and you will also have power to overcome, be the struggle never so severe."

"At least, promise me one thing, Minnie. When you have driven me into this wood beset with thorns, and one of them, not of your planting, wounds me too severely, you will at least let me turn to you for sympathy, and aid to avoid them in future; and for guidance into a less intricate path."

"That would be undoing all I have been trying to do," she replied gently. "No, I want you to lean on a stronger Arm, Archie; upon a woman's you were never meant to lean. Sympathy—such I promised once before—will always be yours, but for the present it must be unexpressed. Plunge boldly into the wood and you need not fear the thorns, 'Nichts verzagen, nur muthig hoffen.' Remember, though this hope be gone for ever, many a one remains yet in the world. And now, look at that glorious sunset; it should remind us that all the rest will be making towards home, and that we must follow."

She sprung lightly up; he sighed heavily and then rose, and they walked slowly towards the house,

conversing in the same strain. They met their companions on the way and entered together, and, as they separated, Minnie did not refuse to let Archie press her hand to his lips.

CHAPTER XVII.

Je n'ai point encore rencontré d'homme qui n'eut été trompé dans ses rêves de félicité ; point de cœur qui n'entretint une plaie cachée. Le cœur le plus serein en apparence, ressemble au puits naturel de la Savane Alachna. La surface en paroît calme et pure ; mais, quand vous regardez au fond du bassin, vous appercevez un large crocodile que le puits nourrit dans ses eaux.

CHATEAUBRIAND.

CARELESS equally of those who would arrest and of those who would hasten his course, Time rolled steadily onward, changing the moral aspect of the world, as the continual ebb and flow of ocean's tides changes its physical aspect.

The gap in the family circle which the loss of Alice had made, was felt daily less and less ; the separation once over, those she had left began to look forward to her return, and, though she would no longer be an inmate of Fairlands, her future home was within so short a distance, that it seemed only like widening a little the present circle. In the mean time two letters came from herself and David : letters redolent of happiness, and enjoyment of the fresh scenes and objects which they were daily

encountering, and which, for Alice, had all the delicious excitement of novelty. It was her first visit to the continent, and her imagination was forcibly struck by what she saw. She described graphically the scenery of France and Belgium, where they were, contrasting so strongly with all her eye had been accustomed to. The flat, open, unenclosed country; the straight roads, with their interminable, formal bordering of trees; the stillness of the landscape, from the absence of cattle in the fields; so different to the wild, mountainous, or picturesque lake scenery of her native country, and to the sylvan lanes of England, winding between banks, rich in mosses and wild flowers, and overhung with masses of luxuriant foliage, the rich pastures dotted with groups of noble trees and animate with cattle, making the country look like one vast park, diversified here and there with farmhouses, or nests of snug-looking thatched and whitewashed cottages. But the want of beauty in the landscape was amply compensated for, by the interest of the quaint old towns, with their antique and beautiful Hotels de Ville, their magnificent churches, their curious gabled houses, each of which seemed a history in itself, and the variety of costumes crowding the narrow and ill-paved streets:

everything carrying one back to the middle ages, and serving as living illustrations of Froissart's quaint chronicles. Alice was never weary of describing, and her letters were read with keenest interest by those she had left at home.

One of these letters had just been read, and had given rise to some animated discussion among the party assembled in the drawing-room at Fairlands in the evening.

The sun was not yet set, but, even in May, a fire was not unwelcome, and looked cosy and comfortable, and the elders of the party grouped gladly round it; the rest were variously occupied about the room. Helen Baillie and Archie were playing at backgammon; Minnie and Mary Baillie were busy at a small table close to the window, which was littered with wildflowers, in the classification of which they were deeply engaged. Lily's attention seemed riveted upon her work, much to the apparent vexation of Wentworth, who sat beside her, and who, unable to get possession of herself, had monopolized one of her reels of cotton, which in a ruthless manner he was rapidly cutting into small shreds, which would at least give the housemaid a good lesson in patience next morning. Alice's letter had awakened many reminiscences of her

travels in the mind of Mrs. Sherwood, and she frequently appealed to Archie to help her in recalling the details. Captain Græme told many anecdotes of his own adventures by sea and land, and Lily was content to sacrifice her cotton to the destructive propensities of the Berserker Larthon, since it seemed to have a tranquillizing influence upon him, and saved her from persecution which she dreaded more. From the table near the window was heard from time to time a jargon somewhat in this style:

“Perianth with six segments, petaloid. *Asphodeleæ* marg.: leaves radical, flowers forming a corymb.”

“Ah, yes! commonly called, ‘Star of Bethlehem!’”

“What a wonderful discovery!” exclaimed Archie, “is it necessary, pray, to burden your memory with all those barbarous names, merely to describe any thing so simple and graceful as a common wild-flower?”

“Had you been listening, Mr. Græme,” replied Mary, “you would have heard a still greater compound of hard words: is it possible you are ignorant of *quinqueloculars*, *squammiflora*, *monocotyledons*”——

“Cease, cease, in pity!” exclaimed Archie, putting his fingers to his ears; “thank Heaven I am not a botanist, and when I see a star of bethlehem, or a lily of the valley, I can admire it under its own sweet, simple English name.”

“Archie,” cried Mrs. Sherwood, who had been describing a day’s journey in Switzerland, “do you remember the Englishman whom we met with after passing the Righi, who so raised our curiosity that night by the rare politeness with which, at the little chalet, he gave up his bed and all his comforts to me, as a lady, and passed the night himself under the open canopy of Heaven, as we supposed?”

“To be sure I do: could such a singular specimen of an Englishman ever be forgotten? but what of him?”

“I heard his name on my return; indeed, London just then talked of no one else; so I made a point of getting introduced to him, that I might thank him personally for his unselfishness, and ascertain where he learned his politeness.”

“Your aunt would have you believe those were her sole motives for the introduction, Græme, but you remember what I told you at Battesden about Sir Leslie Gordon?”

“Sir Leslie Gordon! Is it possible that he was the *preux chevalier* of the Swiss chalet! you forgot to add this to his list of other virtues, aunt.”

“Sir Leslie Gordon!” exclaimed Wentworth too at the same moment; but it happened just then that the reel of cotton which he had been so assiduously destroying fell to the floor: Lily stooped for it, and a little confusion ensued: at last it was recovered, and when Lily tossed back her curls, and once more devoted herself to her work, the heightening of her colour was naturally accounted for by the search for the dropped reel. Larthon continued:

“I have been staying some weeks with my friend Lennox at Glenbraes, which adjoins Duncairn, Sir Leslie’s place; and my interest has been greatly stirred by him. He is latterly become a perfect misanthrope.”

“Misanthrope?—impossible!” exclaimed Mr. and Mrs. Sherwood.

“Impossible or not, it is quite true,” continued Wentworth; “but I grant you the character is but newly assumed, and has excited no little conjecture as to its cause among his neighbours. Lennox assured me he was naturally the most hospitable of men, but, ever since his return from England in the autumn, his hearthstone has been cold. All invi-

tations whether for dinner or for sporting have been declined; no one has been asked within his doors, and even county business did not bring him among his friends; all this was referred to his old steward Fairburn, who only shook his head and looked mysterious when any questions were asked."

"Well, sporting, I know, was never much in his way," observed Mr. Sherwood; "at Battesden he was more a squire of dames than a sportsman: eh, Lily?"

Minnie darted a quick glance across the room to Lillas, but her head was bent down over her work, and she was spared an answer to her uncle's allusion, for Wentworth went on:

"Well, he has lost that title now, at all events: his hobby now seems to be improving his estate and the condition of his people: it is wonderful the good he does in that way; his name is held in perfect veneration, and old Fairburn, I really believe, worships him."

"There was always a vein of this sort perceptible in him," said Mrs Sherwood; "something different to others; but he certainly used to be fond enough of society."

13 "Was not his name much coupled with that of your friend Miss Osborne in town last spring?" asked Mrs. Græme.

“ Oh yes, he flirted immensely with her,” replied Mrs. Sherwood, “ or rather perhaps she flirted with him, for she is bold enough, and it would be a famous match for her to make. They were always seen together, and it was generally thought they were engaged; she evidently favoured the idea, and certainly never contradicted it, so perhaps it was true: he got the character of being a male flirt, but for my part I always thought he rather tried to avoid her than otherwise, and never looked particularly happy in her suite.”

“ Well,” said Wentworth, “ it may be they are engaged, and he repents his bargain, or it may be the lady is cruel: whatever the cause may be, he is, all agree, an altered man, and has neither life nor spirit for anything but his estate and his people. There is a village belonging to him on the coast, where he has done marvels. It used to be the pest of the country, it was full of smugglers, and all the *mauvais sujets* in the neighbourhood found a refuge there: well, he has cleansed this Augean stable, built alms-houses there, and schools, and a church; placed a Scotch minister and given him a manse and a salary, and forced all the ill-disposed to vacate: it is fast rising into a respectable fishing-village. Shortly before I left, he went up to London to vote

on some question in which he was interested. Perhaps Miss Osborne will find him out, and give another turn to his character, for, without being harsh upon the lady, it's no wonder she should have an eye to Duncairn."

"Even though he be a misanthrope?" said Lily, turning to him with an arch smile.

"Such a misanthrope as you have just described, Mr. Wentworth," said Minnie, "might have more attractions than those of wealth: he seems at least to know how to use it."

"How absent you are, Mr. Græme?" exclaimed Helen, "you have just played my throw!"

"Your pardon!" he returned laughing; "I am afraid my attention was taken off by Wentworth's description of a misanthrope, which, as far as I can understand, seems to be a hater of smugglers and country gentlemen, and a lover of ladies and flirting; attractive, as it appears, to the fair sex generally. So, Wentworth," he added, with an ironical laugh, "if you want a wife, adopt the Timon line, by my advice."

Larthon blushed and looked confused; he ventured a shy look at Lily, who gave him no encouragement; so, running his fingers through his red hair, he gave an awkward little laugh, and fell to his old employment.

No one spoke for a minute or two; at last Captain Græme said,

“Come, girls, give us some music, and, as the character of the Scotch Timon seems beyond our comprehension, we must leave his conversion to Miss Osborne, if she is ambitious of effecting it: we have had gossip enough about them.”

The next morning was the last of Wentworth's stay at Fairlands; he and Archie were to leave the day after, by dawn. There were aching hearts enough, no doubt, as the time drew on, but nature did not seem to participate in their sadness. She had put on her gayest attire to do honour to the farewell.

The sky was cloudless, the birds warbled cheerily, the sea was bright and calm, as if in the height of summer, and the trees were in all the glory and freshness of the spring foliage. The season was forwarder than is usual in Scotland during the month of May, and, after the long dreary winter, a restlessness so naturally comes over all hearts with the return of warmth and sunshine; a wish to partake in the gladness of all around, and to bask in the sun, and enjoy the beauties of nature.

This was felt by the young people at Fairlands on this bright May morning, and the elders had

acceded to their wish to spend the day in one of the loveliest spots in that lovely neighbourhood. It was a sequestered glen, enclosed between rocky declivities, the sides of which were clothed with oak coppice and silver birch; a small, clear, dark-watered river ran through the middle of the defile, now murmuring swiftly over its smooth bed, now fretting against the rocks and boulders which impeded its course, now rushing and dashing and making miniature waterfalls, as it pursued its way to the sea. Fairies were believed to haunt the glen, which in some parts, even at mid-day, was impenetrable by the sun.

Lily and her companions had given themselves up to the full enjoyment of the day, and had derived a malicious pleasure from setting Larthon the most difficult and troublesome tasks, taxing his politeness to the utmost, and finding much amusement, both in the good humour with which he submitted to their caprices, and the awkward manner in which he executed their behests. A smile from Lily seemed a sufficient recompence, and she was more than usually disposed to smile upon him since his advocacy of Leslie the previous evening; there might be a little spirit of coquetry, too, which gratified itself in proving her power over him. Whatever

the cause, Wentworth saw but the smile; it raised his hopes, and emboldened him to take a step which, without that encouragement, he would not have ventured on.

Archie joined with a sort of desperate merriment in all the amusements of the day; though, from time to time, he paused in his simulated mirth, and his eyes wandered dreamily away to Minnie, resting tenderly, almost tearfully, on her pale, wasted cheeks; while she herself was glad to interest herself, or at least feign an interest, in the enjoyment of those around her, that she might avoid the pleading looks which she could not but feel were following her, and from which it required every effort of her self-command to enable her to turn away. Mrs. Græme was not unmindful of either. It was plain that the stay at Fairlands, instead of renovating Minnie's looks, had impaired them. Her cheek had grown paler, her manner more listless, and there was often a hurry and restlessness about her, quite foreign to her nature, and a worn, harassed expression in her usually calm, clear eyes. Mrs. Sherwood too with her keen eyes had not failed to discover the secret of Minnie and Archie, nor to call the attention of her sister-in-law to the state of things, and counsel her to prevent, if possible, a crisis. It would never do to

let Archie sacrifice himself to mere beauty, she urged; he who, with his prospects and personal advantages, might choose where he liked for a wife. Marion Gray was a very sweet girl; talented and good, and highly cultivated. She would be an invaluable wife to Larthon Wentworth; but Archie had a right to look for family and fortune in addition to all she possessed.

"Do but look at him this minute," she added, "leaning against that tree with his arms folded, and his eyes fixed upon the girl as if he would look into her very soul. He sees no one else of us all, and nothing in this whole glen, but Marion Gray. Be sure, as we go home, you take his arm and draw him away; don't, on any account, let him get speech of her this last evening."

Mrs. Græme was not slow to take the advice; and, as they all strolled homeward at the close of the day, she drew Archie from the group, while Minnie, with her hand on Captain Græme's arm, secretly thanked her for sparing her a trial which she had been dreading.

They walked on for some distance almost in silence, Mrs. Græme sometimes dropping a word about the scenery, or Archie's departure, to which

she received little beyond monosyllabic replies. At last she opened the subject nearest her heart:

“Why, Archie, you are become as sad and abstracted this time as if your heart was far away from us all. Is it so, in truth, my dear boy? And are you really thinking of gratifying my fond wishes, and giving me a daughter in the place of Alice? You know how anxious we all are that you should marry.”

“That my heart is occupied I do not deny, dear mother, but that it is far away from you all, I do most earnestly.”

“Ah, yes! that’s all very pretty to pay us the compliment of saying you are sorry to leave, and letting me think that makes you so dull and dispirited; but you are no schoolboy now, and have been knocking about the world too long to let me suppose that home has such powerful charms.”

“I don’t want to deceive you, mother,” he said with an effort, “and am in no mood for *badinage*. It is not, certainly, the leaving home generally which tears my heart, but it is the leaving one person in it which maddens me. I think you must have seen how passionately I love Minnie, my own mother, for I have been at no pains to dissemble a feeling that any one might be proud of; nor could

I, if I would, conceal what has become the one thought of my life——”

“ In pity cease ! Archie. Is it possible you can have so far forgotten what is due to yourself, to the world——”

“ I have forgotten nothing, mother: least of all have I forgotten that the world has no right to come between me and my happiness. I have not forgotten what is due to myself; for, surely, if it be a question of money, I, of all people, need not sacrifice to Mammon; if of family, though ignorant of Minnie's extraction, everything proclaims her to be at least my equal. Nor, mother, have I forgotten what is due to the wishes of my father and yourself, since I have, from childhood, considered your consent as tacitly given to my choice of one who has been my companion from infancy, and beloved by you all.”

“ Yes, Archie, it was a grievous mistake which we both made in adopting Marion Gray into our family; but at that time I could hardly have foreseen this; and we really could hardly do otherwise. And when is this engagement to be proclaimed? for, of course, Minnie is even more anxious than yourself, though she is so sly about it.”

“Never, mother: Minnie has refused me.”

“Refused you, Archie? You cannot surely be serious. No girl in her position would think of refusing such an establishment, putting aside yourself. There must be something more than I understand.”

“Whatever be her reason, the fact is only too true: she will none of me. Not once, but twice she has distinctly refused me; or even to be moved by anything I could urge. It may be personal indifference, or it may be an intuitive knowledge of your sentiments. Any way, she has refused me; my happiness is blighted; and, if I really thought these odious possessions were the only obstacle, I would make myself a beggar so that I might win Minnie Gray!”

“My dear boy, don’t talk so wildly; you are quite young enough to see this ‘blighted happiness’ yet bud forth into a goodly tree; and when a year or two, or perhaps a few months, are past, and Minnie has made a marriage more suitable to her station, you will be able to smile at your present rhapsodies, and acknowledge that the prospect or possession of 40,000*l.* a-year with a high-bred wife is far better than beggary and Marion Gray, with all her beauty.”

“Mother, you cannot know the worth and excellence of her of whom you speak thus lightly. I should grieve to think you incapable of appreciating her, but ambition, and your fondness for me, have blinded you—yet you must know how infinitely above me she is—what an angel—but we will not talk more of this:—enough, she has refused me, and now life seems worthless to me!”

“Well, my dear Archie, as you say, it is useless to discuss a matter, in which I must own Minnie has decided most judiciously. And now my counsel to you, my dear boy, would be, to leave England for a time. It is folly to keep hovering round the light when you have once fairly ascertained that its brightness is your destruction. Spread your wings, therefore, and fly away, before they are more than singed. Go to the East, to America, anywhere to give yourself a new object of interest; absent yourself from us for a year; at the end of that time great changes may have occurred.”

“Your advice, dear mother, happens exactly to chime in with my own plans, so it is more palatable than the commodity usually is. I am anxious to travel in the East, and have now a favourable opportunity of doing so, in company with a friend who is going next month. It will therefore probably

be a year or more at least before you see me again, dear mother," he said, as they stopped at the shrubbery gate, where the voices of others were heard, a little in advance. He twined his arms round her waist as he continued: "Give me your blessing, dearest mother, and promise to love and cherish Minnie as one of your own children: she is worthy of it, and for my sake continue to her what you have hitherto been."

He spoke almost solemnly; Mrs. Græme felt as if he was making a last request; the thought oppressed her; she pressed her son to her heart, and murmured the blessing and promise he demanded, feeling in her inmost self that Minnie was all and more than he had said: and when her changed aspect, and altered, sad manner arose to her mind, she felt certain it was no indifference to her darling boy which had made her reject his heart, but a noble sacrifice of her own happiness and wishes to the views of her adopted parents.

CHAPTER XVIII.

You have already snapped asunder the gossamer threads of as sweet a dream as was ever spun from a poet's brain.—LONGFELLOW.

Mortal, they softly say,
Peace to thy heart !
We too, yes, mortal,
Have been as thou art;
Hope lifted, doubt depressed,
Seeing in part,
Tried, troubled, tempted—
Sustained—as thou art.

MRS. GRÆME was by no means an unfeeling woman; on the contrary, she was tenderly attached to all her children, and loved Marion Gray as fondly as if she had been her own : while Archie, her only son, was the object of her most ardent affection, the being around whom her heartstrings were most closely entwined. Yet she could listen while he spoke of his love and his despair, with a sensation, almost of joy, that he should be unable to discern what was so clear to herself, the fact namely, that Minnie's heart was as wholly his, as his was devoted to her; and, far from the sufferings of these two

young hearts occasioning her any remorse, she thought with satisfaction on the blindness of the one, and the self-sacrifice of the other, as conducing to the accomplishment of her own wishes. Archie's words had unravelled the whole mystery to her: not only his own variable and altered manner, but the great change in Minnie, was fully accounted for; and, while smiling inwardly at the want of coxcombry which had hindered him from rightly interpreting the expression of those averted, sorrowful eyes, and that shrinking manner, she could not but feel the deepest gratitude to Minnie for so resolutely acting up to her wishes, nor could she, when they separated for the night, refrain from saying, as she kissed Minnie's fair forehead, "God bless and reward you, my sweet girl, for all your noble conduct; continue firm, Minnie."

The unexpected words sent a deep and sudden flush over cheek and brow, and filled Minnie's eyes with tears; she could not trust herself to speak, and, hastily entering her room, she closed the door, somewhat unceremoniously, on Lily, who, with a face half of laughter, half of vexation, looked as if she would fain have followed her.

Mrs. Græme had quite tact enough to read Minnie's feelings, and to conjecture that she wished

to be alone, and, seeing that Lily had some important confidence to impart, she called her into her own dressing-room.

“Well, dearest,” she said, as, having closed the door she seated herself on the sofa, and drew Lily down beside her, “this tell-tale countenance prepares me for the revelation I am to hear; so spare your blushes, love, and I will read your secret for you: don’t suppose I was so wholly engrossed with Archie as not to remark a certain other *tête-à-tête* ramble! So Larthon has proposed, as I have long expected he would, and you have dutifully referred him to papa?”

“Oh, no, mama!” eagerly interrupted Lily, “no such thing indeed:—that is, I believe he meant to propose, but——oh mama, you can never suppose that I should accept Mr. Wentworth!” she added, and the recollection of her lover’s shy and awkward manner made her burst into a fit of laughter.

“Not accept him, Lily!” said her mother, “and why not, pray? He may not perhaps come up to your childish and romantic beau ideal of a lover; but let me tell you, Larthon Wentworth is a man that many a girl with greater advantages than yourself would be glad to have at her feet; besides the gifts of fortune to him, which are considerable, he is one of the kindest and best-hearted of men.”

“All very true, no doubt, dear mama,” replied Lily caressingly, “but I should be sorry to stand in the way of girls of better taste; for indeed, romantic or not, if I marry, I must have something better than a long purse and a good heart: though I am willing to go further than you do, mama, and acknowledge that Mr. Wentworth has great cultivation of mind, and excellent principles, and is in every way superior to your silly little Lily, and yet with all that, I—could never love him.”

“Silly—indeed!” returned Mrs. Græme; “time will teach you to set a higher value on such qualities, and to think less of mere personal attractions—”

“Oh, mama, don’t do me that injustice! indeed it is not wholly personal attractions that I think of, though I do confess that such a head of hair,” she continued, laughing, “is not a pretty object to contemplate. There are so many other requisites in a husband—I should like a man that I could be proud of; and, besides, good looks, which, though not indispensable, are secondary to a general air of manliness and *savoir faire*,—I must have one whose mind was richly stored, and who I could feel to be my superior—that I acknowledge Mr. Wentworth is; but, besides all this, he must have principles equally good, and a certain nameless charm, that I have—

that—that is, in fact, indescribable,” she concluded, burying her face on her mother’s shoulder.

“Foolish child! and do you suppose such a paragon is likely to fall in your way? or would look at such a silly little thing as you are, if he did? (Lily sighed.) But I hope, Lily, you have not offended him for ever, or let him see you were laughing at him.”

“Oh no! believe me; no, mama! I would not for the world have hurt his feelings; and indeed at the time I did not in reality feel inclined to laugh at him, for I was earnestly sorry for him, and angry with myself. It is only when the remembrance of his uncouth, awkward ways, comes before me, that I cannot help laughing. I was truly vexed with myself, for having combined with Helen and Mary to teaze and make fun of him to-day, which of course gave him encouragement. In fact I did feel more kindly towards him than usual, though I don’t know why; I have been dreading he would do this for some time, and have been so distant to him till to-day, that I could have cried when I found what I had led him into.”

“But you say, you believe he meant to propose—did he not really do so then?”

“Well, you know, mama, he managed somehow

to draw me away from the rest, upon some stupid pretext, I hardly know what it was—a bird's nest, or a mare's nest—or some folly of that sort, which I was silly enough to attend to, though the moment after I saw the false move I had made. Well, then, in some way or other, he fell into drawing comparisons between our two countries, and asked me if I liked England well enough to live in? I felt miserably uncomfortable, and said England was perhaps the more cultivated and richer country, but that I was too thoroughly Scotch to prefer any country to my own. And I tried to hurry on to overtake the others; so what did he do, but put himself right in my way, and take hold of my hand, and say, 'Oh, Miss Græme, could you not marry an Englishman?' I could not help being very sorry, for he looked very earnest, and, though his face looked painfully red and uninteresting, it had such a troubled expression, that it distressed me to see it; but at the same time I was very angry at having been entrapped, and at the awkward position he had placed me in, so I drew my hand away—he was hurting me terribly—and said very composedly, for his bashfulness gave me boldness, 'With my Scotch prejudices, Mr. Wentworth, that would be an impossibility; I could never marry any one but a Scotch-

man.' He stood aside directly, and said not another word, though he continued to walk by my side all the way home; doing a thousand awkward things, that at any other time would have made me laugh.—treading on Mary's dress and tearing it—switching the brambles in our faces, and making such blunders that the others were in fits of laughter. For my own part I was nearer crying than laughing, and feared I had given him more pain than I need have done; so I was thinking all the way how I could repair it, and, when we parted just now, I held out my hand to him and said,—‘Patriotic as I was, I should always know how to value the *friendship* of an Englishman;’ he shook my hand and wrung it, till pain almost brought the tears into my eyes, and then muttered something about hoping to deserve that friendship, and one day being able to subside into it—or some such nonsense, and so we parted.”

“Well, Lily, I must repeat that you are a silly, romantic girl: you have thrown away a chance which you may not soon have again; and, as to your folly about a Scotchman, what could put such an idea into your head? Of course, he would naturally suppose that you had already seen some *héros de roman*, who combined all those charms you were mentioning to me but now, and who it would be

long enough before you would be likely to find at your feet, as I said before. But it is your own doing; and now go to bed, my love, for you look tired and weary, and if Larthon were to see those merry eyes, glistening with tears as they are now, he might still be disposed to fancy you were but coquetting with him."

Lily threw herself into her mother's arms with a burst of weeping, which the latter thought very disproportioned to the subject they had been speaking of, and for which she could see no good cause; but, attributing it to the fatigue of the day's pleasure, and the over-excitement of her spirits at the end of it, she pressed the weeping girl to her bosom, and kissing her, said,

"Go, dearest, your spirits have been too much tried to-day; go to your room; to-morrow we shall be quiet and alone again. I trust a night's rest will calm your nerves and restore the sunshine to those tearful eyes."

Meanwhile Minnie, on entering her own room after parting from Mrs. Græme, had sunk down upon her knees before the low window, her face buried in her arms, which were crossed upon the sill, and her thoughts trying to penetrate the dark future. She felt like one drowning, when the last frail

plank to which he has been instinctively clinging is torn away from his grasp, and he is left helpless and hopeless amid the wild waste of waters. "Yet not utterly helpless or hopeless," she murmured; "there is One who will not forsake those who walk in the path of duty; and the words that were spoken to-night show that I have rightly understood my duty." But even this brought no comfort; she could not realise the thought; she felt herself cast adrift and left to struggle with the storm. "What have I been unconsciously clinging to?" she asked herself, "What has been said to-night that I did not know before?" It was plain that he had told his mother of his love, and of his rejection. Perhaps some unacknowledged thought had lurked in her heart, that, when his parents knew of their attachment, they would sacrifice their own ambition to their son's happiness. The idea had never before taken a definite form, and she knew of its existence only on beholding its wreck. It was equally plain that Mrs. Græme was no stranger to Minnie's own feelings: well, at all events the secret would be safe in her keeping, which gave some comfort; for, if Archie did but know the traitor lurking within the camp of her own heart, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for her to resist the enemy without.

Happily he was not aware of her weakness; and it was very certain he would never learn it from his mother; that was some comfort. What a perversion of the word! she thought. This, then, was what she had secretly cherished. This ray of light—distant indeed—scarcely more than a speck—but still light—something to fix her eye upon—something to live for—a future—unnamed to herself—unknown—but yet a star to guide her wandering, weary feet through the darkness around her! And this, too, was gone! and the darkness had but fallen the deeper. It was a darkness that was indeed felt; she had fallen down in the obscurity, and had no strength to raise herself, or even to look up. The darkness had closed down so suddenly upon her soul, that her vision was at present unable to contract itself sufficiently to enable her to discern anything. Months of suffering, too, had weakened her frame; she had no power to struggle against the torrent which was overwhelming her; she bowed beneath the last wave, and was unable to lift up herself.

Thus she remained for hours; thought upon thought surged over her prostrate soul without taking any tangible form; an occasional shudder passing over her, or a low moan, were the only in-

dications of life within her. Very gradually, however, she awoke from this torpor. The moon had risen, and threw her cold beams into the room: mechanically Minnie gathered herself up, and seemed to become aware of the necessity of exerting self-control. She threw off her clothes, and, laying her throbbing head upon the pillow, her eyes closed at length in a troubled sleep.

But this did not last very long. She was awoke by a stir in the house: Archie and Wentworth were preparing for their early departure. It was daylight; but the sun was not yet above the horizon. Minnie arose and went to the window, shrouding herself behind the curtain. Presently she saw Wentworth cross the lawn, and go down towards the shore; a minute or two after Archie followed; but, before entering the shrubbery which concealed his friend, he turned towards the window where she stood, and, raising his clasped hands, he extended them towards her, and then raised them to heaven.

She felt that, in bidding her a long farewell, he invoked a blessing upon her. Involuntarily she dropped on her knees murmuring words of farewell and blessing in return: she hid her face in her hands and burst into a flood of tears. Long she wept; and the tears seemed to refresh her heart,

and to restore her powers. The dark pall which had fallen around her was slightly lifted, and she was able to look around and recognise her position.

She remembered in Whose service she was enlisted, and under what banner she had to fight; and she strove once more to lift the heavy cross whose weight had for a time overpowered her, and to bear it in His strength who, she knew, "does not willingly afflict His servants."

Again her heart was uplifted in prayer for the Hand to guide and the Arm to uphold; and when at last she arose from her knees, and once more laid her weary head upon the pillow, a calm and sweet sleep steeped her troubled mind in forgetfulness, and brought refreshment to her aching heart.

CHAPTER XIX.

Marriage is splendour, fashion, life;
A house in town, and villa shady,
Balls, diamonds, bracelets—and “my Lady.”
ANON.

IT WAS the middle of May, and the London season was at its height. Mrs. Sherwood sat in her morning room in Berkeley Square, lingering, with a listless and wearied air, over her late and solitary breakfast. From time to time she cast her eyes over a paragraph in the Morning Post, which lay beside her, while a variety of expressions flitted across her face, all, more or less, of displeasure and annoyance. She had sat musing thus for a considerable time when her husband entered.

“What, still over the breakfast table, lady mine?” he exclaimed. “Oh! what a weary, unhealthy life this London life is! How different to the country!”

“Different enough, truly, Mr. Sherwood; but perhaps we have different opinions as to which life is the more agreeable. But you broke your promise of coming to Lady Ampthill’s last evening, Sir!”

“ Ah, yes indeed; the House sat late; there was an important question before it, and I did not get home till after one o'clock; and you know these things are not in my way. But was it a brilliant ball?”

“ The most brilliant of the season. But you give the right excuse when you say ‘such things are not in your way’—for, as to your being detained by important business at the House—Sir Leslie Gordon could come away from it in time, and therefore so might you.”

“ Well, my dear, Sir Leslie is a young man, and a dancer, and ——”

“ You prefer a dinner to a ball, Mr. Sherwood, that's the truth; better speak it at once,” laughingly interrupted Mrs. Sherwood. “ But there was another reason for Sir Leslie's secession from the care of the country last evening: he and Jane Osborne were there (at Lady Ampthill's) as acknowledged *fiancés* for the first time. They were the lions of the evening, and the gossip about them in the room was wonderful. I believe it had only been settled that morning, and here is the engagement already announced in the Morning Post; so I suppose the wedding will take place before the season is over.”

“Then there ends that romance,” returned Mr. Sherwood, “and you have actually let the baronet slip through your fingers after all! Indeed, Mrs. Sherwood, I think you may give up the business of *chaperone*; for hitherto you have met with poor encouragement. Alice was a signal failure, and Lily has now been beaten in the very first race you entered her for.”

“My genius has not had fair play,” answered the lady. “The veriest matchmaker in London could have done nothing with such a girl as Alice: and as to Lily—she was too provoking. Her absurd prudery and nonsense effectually marred all that her beauty and pretty piquant manner might have done. If she had only shown common sense, she would have had Sir Leslie at her feet, in spite of Miss Osborne’s desperate siege and her advantage of the previous season. He was, plainly, greatly captivated with Lily, and only tolerated the other; but, like all your sex, he was not proof against Jane Osborne’s flattery. She made him believe that she was desperately in love with him, and that he had gone too far to retreat, so she fairly carried the citadel at last. He has been caught by an adventuress!”

“Oh fie! my dear,” returned Mr. Sherwood,

laughing, "you are too hard upon your own sex as well as mine. Now, in my opinion, you took up a wrong position, and showed bad generalship in inviting Miss Osborne to Battesden, if you wanted to give Lilius a fair field."

"Pooh! you men know nothing about these matters, with all your boasted wisdom. Why, don't you see that, but for Lily's prudish folly, a comparison between her and a bold fast girl like Jane, was just the most favourable situation for the former. Miss Osborne would have acted as a foil, to set off the real jewel."

"In my opinion," observed Mr. Sherwood, "a fine jewel requires no foil, it is better set transparent."

"That's all very well, but all are made to look more brilliant by foil. That runaway horse certainly somewhat disconcerted me, though I turned it to the best account I could. And of this I am very sure, that never, from the first moment of their acquaintance, has Sir Leslie admired or loved Jane Osborne. He dangled after her last year, and flirted with her, because she amused him more than any one else, and sought him so eagerly; but I firmly believe he loved Lily. There was some fracas at Battesden, in consequence of Jane's interference

I believe, but I am convinced he has been drawn into this engagement against his will, and from a sense of honour. I watched them last night, and never saw a more unhappy looking pre-occupied lover, or a more triumphant radiant mistress. It was like the triumph of a Roman victor, with the vanquished chained to the chariot-wheels. It was the remark of every one."

"Well, if that be the case, it is a sad prospect for both of them. I think a man loses himself terribly when he descends to flirting (as it is called), so that honour obliges him to marry a woman he does not esteem. It is a mere phantom of honour which requires the sacrifice of truth, and flirting is below the dignity of a man of honour. No union can be blessed under such circumstances, and he forfeits his own happiness without securing hers."

"Oh, as to that!" said Mrs. Sherwood, "to write herself Lady Gordon, mistress of Duncairn and its rent-roll, is happiness enough for Jane Osborne. Believe me she will soon be very indifferent about the master, who, *per se*, I think has little to do with her happiness now; otherwise she could not fail to see his feelings. Besides, there was her old *prétendant*, Lord Charles Lascelles, in close attendance last night. He was always a favoured

one, and was only thrown aside to make room for Sir Leslie, nor was he at all repulsed last night. But for his poverty and the wealth of the other, it is probable this paragraph would have been differently worded."

"Well, now you are descending to scandal, I must leave you," said Mr. Sherwood rising. "Upon my word, you women cut each other up mercilessly when you begin. I am going to the club, and may perhaps drive with you in the afternoon, if you are disposed."

"With all my heart. I have some calls to make, and some shopping to do, and will call for you at the club about six. You remember we dine at the Vernons' to-day. I hope no call of the House will interfere with that engagement, Mr. Sherwood."

"No, no, we Members have too much tact to let the discussion of state affairs interfere with the discussion of a good dinner. I shall be at your service all the afternoon."

Colonel Osborne was a widower, living upon a small income, and in a small house, situated in that border-land of aristocracy, Cadogan Place. His son, a barrister in good practice, was seldom with his family, which consisted of the two sisters whose acquaintance we have already made, and a widowed

sister of Colonel Osborne, who, for the benefit of a home, was content to take the care of his house, and the somewhat onerous charge of his daughters during the London season. By mutual agreement, however, this office had become less responsible than might appear at first sight. Miss Osborne was not a girl to submit to more authority than consisted with her own pleasure, and Mrs. Henley did not care to assume what would require some trouble to maintain. By a kind of tacit compact, therefore, she was always ready to act the chaperone when her nieces required the appendage, but she never took upon herself to question or interfere with their arrangements, or to proffer advice which would not be welcome. As for the Colonel, provided he was not called upon to sacrifice his own time and amusements, he was quite satisfied that the ladies should dispose of themselves according to their own pleasure, and his days and evenings being mostly lounged away at his club, he surrendered the management of his house, and the care of his daughters, entirely to the lady who had undertaken the office. He considered then that she had done her duty to admiration when he received a note from Sir Leslie Gordon, requesting him to name an hour when he might call upon him; and, having acceded

to the request, had consented to bestow the hand of his portionless elder daughter on the rich young Baronet. This had occurred, as Mrs. Sherwood stated, only on the morning of Lady Amphill's ball, and Jane, in the flush of triumph at having at last secured the prize which she had so long coveted, and for which she had been playing rather a desperate game, insisted on parading her conquest that evening at the ball. It was in vain that Sir Leslie had raised some obstacles:—as the lady had no scruples of delicacy, it was not for him to suggest such, nor could he very well allege an objection which he felt, while his engagement was so very new, to present himself before Mrs. Sherwood (who he knew would be there) as the affianced of Miss Osborne.

It was a few days after this event that the young lady on whom Mrs. Sherwood had been commenting so severely, was seated in a corner of the sofa of the drawing-room in Cadogan Place, immersed in reverie. Her sister Fanny sat by the window on a low stool, a book open upon her knees, and her head supported by her hands, which were almost buried in the long dark ringlets that completely veiled her face.

The silence which had lasted for some time was

at last broken by the entrance of a page bearing a note, and a bouquet of choice exotics, both of which he handed to Jane with the information that no answer was required.

At an exclamation between scorn and pleasure, which Jane uttered on opening the note, Fanny raised her languid head, and threw back her ringlets as her sister first held up a ticket and then tossed it towards her, as she said:

“There, my dear, acknowledge the advantage you have, in being

Sister-in-law,
To a very magnificent three-tailed Bashaw.

Here is a box in the dress circle at her Majesty's to-night at my service, and this exquisite bouquet, only coupled with the slight drawback of receiving the gracious donor of both in the box.”

“Drawback!” exclaimed Fanny. “It surprises me, Jane, to hear you jest thus with all that is tender and beautiful.”

“Do you mean the flowers, my dear? I by no means jest with them, I think them a charming reality.”

“Of course I did not mean the flowers, Jane; I was alluding to the delicate incense of Sir Leslie's

love: you, who are his idol, thus to speak of your worshipper as a drawback!"

"My dear Fanny, for a person of imagination, as you profess yourself, you really are most matter-of-fact: of course I feel a proper degree of exultation at the prospect of seeing Leslie this evening, more especially as, being prevented by something or other from keeping his engagement to ride with me, he has the politeness to say that Zohrab and his man shall be at the door at the usual time, for my delectation; so I shall write and propose to the Vivians to join me. As for 'idols' and 'worshippers' and 'incense,' and all that sort of thing, they sound very well in novels, and are very appropriate in a Hindoo temple, but the terms are misplaced in reference to Leslie and myself."

"Jane!" exclaimed her sister with a theatrical air, "you cannot mean to give an empty hand to one who has chosen you from all the world?"

"Indeed, Fanny, the hand is empty enough in more senses than one; if it were not, it might be differently bestowed, and as for choosing me from all the world — ha, ha! my little sister, I hardly know where the choice lay."

"What can you mean, Jane?"

"Why this:—that as long as my 'worshipper'

had a chance of gaining that puling Miss whom we met at Battesden he never thought of me as an 'idol.' With all her innocence, I suspect she was a deep little hussey; but, if I was not deeper, I was at least bolder: I had not kept such a fish on the hook for a year and a half, and played him all that time, to let such a chit as that land my prize at last. No, no, I knew a trick worth two of that, so I just laid him quietly on the bank by a *coup de main*."

"How shockingly cold-hearted!"

"Cold-hearted! not at all; my heart is warm enough I'm sure, perhaps too warm," and she sighed; "but what could I do? I am not meant for a poor man's wife, and it did not suit me to throw away my cards when the game was in my hand. It is very pleasant to be Lady Gordon, with I don't know how much a year; won't it be delightful Fanny? I shall make him do just as I please, and if I am to live at Duncairn, which seems like banishment, I will at least have the house well filled. I would have been content with young Græme, but he is such a muff I never could draw him on to flirt with me, so when this other Scotch planet rose above the horizon I let him drop."

"And what said Lord Charles Lascelles all this time?" demanded her sister with an air of simpli-

city. "You could not at least complain that he was too insensible to be drawn into a flirtation?"

"Ah poor Charles!" returned Jane with a deeper sigh: "Insensible? no; but poor, Fanny, too poor for me. Poverty with a title is the disease in its worst form. Poor fellow! I think though really if he had spoken out I should have given up all my ambitious views; so perhaps it is as well that he did not:—yet I know he cares far more for me than Leslie does.—Ah well!—I have heard it said, 'A full sorrow is easier to bear than an empty one.'"

"Which means ——?" asked Fanny.

"Whatever you like, Mrs. Mentor: and now I must go and apprise our lady duenna that she must hold herself in readiness for the opera to-night, and that we had better make a luncheon dinner, and have coffee before we dress: and then I suppose it will be time to dress for the park, as soon as luncheon is over, for it is now nearly three o'clock.—Who knows?—perhaps Lascelles may be in the park!—Oh! here is Sybilla Vivian's note; they are going to the opera, so will be ready to ride early to-day; that's all right." Saying which she left the room in search of her aunt, while Fanny settled herself again into her former studious attitude.

CHAPTER XX.

The golden chain they round him throw;
He is enticed, and onward led,
To marry Angela, and yet
Is thinking ever of Margaret.

LONGFELLOW.

AND Sir Leslie—was he chafing with lover-like impatience at the obstacle which hindered his keeping the appointment to ride to-day with his affianced bride? It is to be feared not; and, but that we have just seen how Jane Osborne's affections were bestowed more on the possessions than the possessor, we might pity her, as we listen to the low-toned conversation of the two gentlemen, who are talking so earnestly across the table, covered with papers and parchments, in the deep embrasure of that window in the library of the 'Travellers'.

One of them, a man considerably advanced in years, with keen grey eyes peering from under his shaggy eyebrows, was plainly but recently arrived, and had not yet settled, to the full satisfaction of his business-like habits, the deeds and papers which his companion was carelessly tossing over.

“Weel, Duncairn,” he said, as he busied himself in putting all things in order, “it’s lang sin’ I hae taen a journey wie sae mickle pleasure: mony’s the lang year sin’ we hae seen a leddy at the castle. It has been, for generations past, just a neglected place. Your forbears, Duncairn, were aye a witless race; an yer uncle, puir mon! had nae the means to do what was in his hairt. Ye hae redeemed the estate, chreestianeessed the folk, an’ when ye bring the bonnie leddy to live at the castle it ’ll be just a pair-fec’ place. I gie ye the warmest congratulations o’ my auld hairt, lad!” and looking up from his papers, the old man stretched his hand across the table. Gordon took and pressed it warmly, while he answered with a smile and a shake of his head,

“A thousand thanks, my kind old friend, for this and all your goodness to me, ever since I was thrown a friendless orphan upon your hands! It is to your wise counsels, and those of my dear uncle, coming as they did from hearts full of goodness, that I owe the desire to do what was right by the estate and the people, and which God afterwards gave me the means of carrying into practice, though after all I feel I have done it but very imperfectly.”

“Pairfection is nae to be lookit for a’ at ance, Duncairn; ye hae dune a’ that a man can do, wha

has but five-an'-twanty year o'er his head. A' that ye hae dune has been wise-like, an' whan we hae the mistress there, we shall hae a' that's needfu': judgment an' sense, an' twa kind hairts to guide us a'. Ye shuld hae thocht o' a' this yoursel', mon, an' no hae left it for an auld grey-head like mysel to say," and the old man laughed heartily.

"If I did not say it, Fairburn," answered Gordon sadly, "it was because I did not think it. I fear me, when you know the mistress, your congratulations and hopes will be less warm."

Fairburn dropped the parchment which he held, and looked into his companion's face with an expression of almost ludicrous astonishment, dismay, and wonder. Sir Leslie continued:

"This is purely what our neighbours across the channel call, a *mariage de convenance*—"

"Hoot, mon!" interrupted the steward, "what suld gar ye mak' a marriage like that? ye're no covetous, neither do ye want siller."

"Nor shall I get any by this marriage, Fairburn: you forget that I warned you that the lady was portionless, and, as you say, that is a matter of no import to me. No! it is a long and complicated story. I have been wrong, and must pay the penalty."

“Wrang, Duncairn? your father was a guid mon; it canna be that your uncle’s guid advice—”

“And my good old Fairburn’s care, have been thrown away,” interrupted Leslie, taking the old man’s hand. “Well, I should have said foolish, perhaps ‘glaikit,’ as you would say.”

“Glaikit! ay ye were aye a glaikit race,” said the old man, shaking his head.

“That you may understand how all this came about,” continued Leslie, “I will give you a slight sketch of my folly. I came to town last year early, you know; it was in February, and few people were here. I was introduced to this Miss Osborne, and as much out of idleness as anything else I fell into a habit of flirting with her, riding with her, and lounging away the afternoon with her and her sister: I had no where else to go, you see, and hardly knew the full value of these attentions. I had got so used to pass my days in her company, that even when town filled I continued the habit, partly because she amused me, and I saw she liked it, and for a more silly reason, because many others did the same. It is astonishing how much custom and fashion have to do with these things, for I by no means admired her: she belongs to the class of ‘fast’ young ladies, who think themselves privileged to

advance startling opinions, use slang language, affect masculine exercises and dress and habits, and, in trying to imitate our coarser natures, lose the grace and softness of their own. This class never had any real charms for me, nor, I should think, for any man of refinement, but they are amusing enough to chatter with, and one has no trouble to draw on the resources of intellect in their company. When the season was over, I went to stay at the house of some friends in Northamptonshire. There I was thrown into daily intimate intercourse with a niece of my host's, a girl after my own heart; gentle, *piquante*, enthusiastic, and, as I imagined, full of truth, purity, and innocence, and as lovely in mind as in person, moreover, a country-woman of my own. Jane Osborne was there too. I need hardly say how captivated I was by this sweet Scotch girl: and I made no secret of my preference. It ended in my telling my love, but, in the midst of my declaration, she turned from me with the air of a princess, as if I had offered her the deepest insult, and said something about want of truth, quite incomprehensible to me at the time, but, as I afterwards found, in allusion to her own falsehood, for, while she had been receiving my homage with apparent pleasure, she had been all the while engaged, as it came out next

morning. So ended my dream. It would be difficult to tell you the anguish this discovery caused me. I left the house within an hour afterwards, and went strait to Duncairn, where you may remember my hermit life through the winter."

"Ay, Duncairn, ye were just a mystery to me then. But ye seemed to think o' nought else but the guid ye culd do; sae I e'en comforted mysel wi' the thocht that leastwise naething evil had possession o' ye, and when I got your bit letter I said to mysel', Ay this is just the way o' the callants now-a-days, they gae their lane, and sing dool, 'stead o' asking the lassie at ance, as they did i' my day."

"Whatever I did in the way of good last winter, Fairburn, was somehow I believe an inspiration of my fancied paragon. Well, I came to town again by no means cured of my passion, and in fact hoping that something would turn up to exonerate her from the charge of falsehood, and prove the whole to be a misunderstanding. Miss Osborne soon found me out, and seemed so kind, so feeling in her conduct, she spoke so tenderly of all that had past, and altogether appeared in such a new character, that I began to think I had been very unjust towards her, and had behaved as cruelly as

Lilias had to me. But I could not give up the hope that all would be explained yet. Mrs. Sherwood, her aunt, was not yet in town, and, not wishing to be more in Miss Osborne's society than I could help, I avoided all society as much as possible, and devoted myself to my parliamentary duties. At last I was told that Lilias had jilted her former lover, and married some one else: where the news came from I don't know exactly; it was talked of in Cadogan Place as an established fact; still I was incredulous, till one day I met Mrs. Sherwood, who told me she was just come from Scotland, from the wedding of her niece. I heard no more—I left town for a time to try and conquer my misplaced affection, without much success however;—how it happened I cannot tell, but I was given to understand that Miss Osborne was very deeply attached to me, and, anxious to spare her what I suffered, I proposed and was accepted; and then I sent for you, my good old friend, that I might talk over the business part of the affair, for you and the lawyers to arrange."

There was a considerable pause. Fairburn occupied himself with the papers before him, with the air of a man dissatisfied with the state of things, but unable to suggest a remedy. At last Leslie broke the silence by entering upon the business for which

they had met, and detailing all the arrangements he wished to have made; ending with,

“ One thing more, my good old friend: I am no very ardent lover, as you may suppose, and for that reason I shall be glad to put an end to the irksome task of acting the part; so I shall be obliged to you to see that all these necessary preliminaries are got over as quickly as may be, that an early day may be fixed for the wedding. If a thing must be done,” he added with a melancholy smile, “ the sooner it is done the better. I don’t certainly promise myself much happiness in matrimony, but it will be my endeavour to ensure that of my wife, and in hers I must find my own.—And now let us turn to more agreeable subjects. Tell me something about the people of Duncairn, and especially about the Strathmaer colony.”

And the two gentlemen were soon plunged in all the details of the estate.

Zohrab and his attendant meanwhile were at the door in Cadogan Place soon after five, and, accompanied by Miss Vivian and her brother, Jane Osborne entered Rotten Row. It was too early to find the crowd there, but it soon filled, and as they approached the railings the second time Jane espied Lord Charles leaning over them.

“What, Lascelles, not in the ride to-day?” exclaimed Vivian, as they half pulled up in passing.

“My good genius has failed me this time,” he replied; “I did not dream of meeting such a party to-day, so I sent my horses down to Kew.”

“Why don’t you do the heroic and exclaim ‘A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!’”

“It is too hackneyed, and besides would be utterly useless: I might say ‘My mind to me a kingdom is;’ but it is such a poor one, nobody else would care to have it,” he said, with a meaning look at Jane; “and, besides, if I gave up my identity, perhaps I should cease to care for the horse to-day.”

“You are too much in ‘the melancholy Jaques’ mood for me.—

Wherefore do you look
Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there,’

Miss Osborne? — we had better ride on and leave him to his musings.”

“At least you will join us at the opera to-night,” said Jane, looking back; a pleased smile, as he lifted his hat, was the only answer Lord Charles gave to the invitation.

The end of the week came, and once more something had occurred to prevent Leslie accompanying

Jane in the afternoon ride. She was a little in advance of her companion Vivian, who had stopped to speak to an acquaintance, when a voice close beside her exclaimed,

“Miss Osborne once more in the ride without her attendant dragon! I am indeed in luck!” as the rider of the grey horse checked his pace to fall in with that of Zohrab. But there was a cloud on the lady’s brow as she said, with an offended air,

“You forget yourself, Lord Charles; I don’t know what right you have to speak so of Sir Leslie.”

“Right?—alas, none! though you of all the world need not be cruel enough to remind me of that,” returned Lord Charles, with a deep sigh, as he leaned forward to stroke his horse’s neck. “Pardon me, Miss Osborne, I meant no disrespect to Sir Leslie; were I as happy as he is, I fear I should be much more dragonlike.” He bowed and drew in his rein, as if to let her pass on alone.

“You did not come to our box last Tuesday,” she said in a changed tone;—immediately he was at her side again.

“You could not wonder that I did not take advantage of your invitation: I must not say again—your dragon was by your side,” he said, smiling into

her face: "but at least your duenna was there, and you know she is no friend to me. I am too poor, and, obtuse as the good lady is, I sometimes fear she suspects my harmless flirtations with your sister are mere pretence. Besides I felt savage, and dangerous, and in no mood to whisper *fadaises* into the gentle Fanny's ear. So I kept at a distance, though I don't think my eyes were much upon the stage. Where do you go to-night? I am such a miserable dog——"

"Lascelles!" exclaimed Vivian, as he rode up just at the moment, "where do you hide yourself now? I never meet you anywhere."

"That is because you do not seek me in the right place," was the answer, with a glance at Jane. "At least you have found me now." Then in a low voice as he stooped to do something to his stirrup, "What a cursed bore; is he your cavalier?" A rapid affirmative in the same low tone was the answer. He continued aloud,

"The fact is, I have been out of town, Vivian, staying down among the willows by the river side, at my mother's Kew villa. I thought to have met some of my people here, perhaps they are among the crowd at the gardens, I must ride on and look for them. Are you going to the Princess's to-night, Miss Osborne?"

“No, we dine with the Capels, and go to Mrs. Sherwood’s ball afterwards.”

“Ah, so! I have a card for that: perhaps I may look in. I suppose your sister will be there? Beg her to keep herself disengaged for the seventh polka!”

“I will tell her she must either do so or provide a substitute.”

“S’ist mir ganz einerlei,” he replied with a gay laugh, and, lifting his hat as he quickened his horse’s pace, he called back, “Auf baldiges Wiedersehen!” then, threading his way among the equestrians, he was soon out of sight.

“He is an insufferable coxcomb that Lascelles!” exclaimed Vivian, as he rode off: “I hope your sister will make a point of being engaged for the whole evening.”

“Why, Gerard, what ‘riles’ you so? I thought you were above the folly of jealousy of a man’s good looks!”

“Jealousy of Lascelles’ good looks! why no one knows whether he is good-looking or not, you can see no more of his face than the tip of his nose and the top of his cheek-bones!”

“Ah, I forgot that nature has not been so beneficent to you,” replied Jane laughing ironically;

“ but you know I am bound to admire the Edomites, since my future lord and master affects to be a descendant of Esau.”

“ There is a vast difference between his chestnut, ‘hyacinthine clusters,’ and yonder ‘swart Ethiop,’” remarked Vivian, who seemed much discomposed by the cool manner of Lord Charles, for some reason which he did not choose to explain.

“ Pity you are not of the gentler sex, Gerard, your flattery would be so soothing to the object of it; but now let us ride on, there is a little space.”

CHAPTER XXI.

Ich kenne sie, und fürchte nichts. Umsonst
Versuchst du, meine Hoffnungen zu schrecken.

SCHILLER.

GRÄFIN.

O, wende deine Blicke nicht zurück!
Vorwärts in hellre Tage lassuns schauen.

.
Nicht heute erst, ward dir der Freund geraubt :
Als er sich von dir schied, da starb er dir.

WALLENSTEIN.

Verschmerzen werd' ich diesen Schlag, das weiss ich,
Denn was verschmerzte nicht der Mensch ! Vom Höchsten
Wie wem Gemeinsten lernt er sich entwöhnen,
Denn ihn besiegen die gewalt'gen Stunden.
Doch fühl' ich's wohl, was ich in ihm verlor.
Die Blume ist hinweg aus meinem Leben,
Und kalt und farblos seh' ich's vor mir liegen.

.
—Was ich mir ferner auch erstreben mag,
Das Schöne ist doch weg, und kommt nicht wieder.

WALLENSTEIN'S TOD.

“MARRIED! actually married!” ejaculated Lord Charles Lascelles, as, a few weeks after the events of

the preceding chapters, he sat with the newspaper nearly covering the table, his eyes fixed upon the paragraph which announced the marriage of Sir Leslie Gordon and Jane Osborne, and a half-burnt cigar between the fingers of his left hand. "Yes," he said, continuing his soliloquy, "there is no mistake about it. 'By special licence, June 23rd, Sir Leslie Grey Gordon, Bart. of Duncairn, and Boortreeglen, N.B. and M.P. for Inverness, to Jane, eldest daughter of Lt.-Colonel Osborne, of Cadogan Place, and late of the —— Dragoons.' There it is in black and white, sure enough, and I am left high and dry on the bank of bachelorhood. It is the only bank I have much to do with, poor devil that I am, or things might have chanced differently. Poor Jane! she'd no money herself, so she could not have taken such a poor beggar as I am, if I had asked her, which, by-the-bye, I never did. Well, I don't know whether to be glad or sorry! she was a devilish plucky girl; no one like her for a ride in the Row, or a flirtation at a ball. Gods! how she waltzed! I shall never find any one to take her place, that's certain. Heigho!" he continued after a pause and a puff at the cigar, "town will be confoundedly dull now, so I may as well be amiable, and do the dutiful to my 'tender parient' at Kew,

till the shooting season begins.—Ah, the shooting season? there's a new idea, 'to shoot—to grouse!'—by Jove, too, a splendid one! I dare say the Laird of Bluebeard Castle, or whatever he calls his place, has plenty of moors. He's a great muff, and I suspect Mrs. Jane will soon get tired and be glad to see a London face again. He's full of all sorts of crotchets, schools and improvements, and all such twaddle. Ha, ha! I should like to see Jane in a duffle cloak and straw bonnet, playing Goody and Lady Bountiful. How she'd box the children's ears!—By Jove," he went on, after another pause, throwing away the end of his cigar and giving the table a thump that brought his servant into the room, "it's the brightest idea in the world!"

"Did you call, my lord?" said the man, looking astonished.

"Call? no—yes—here, Empson, give me my coat, and get my things together this afternoon; I shall go down to Kew to-morrow. And bid that young scamp Flitters bring my cab round to Mr. Vivian's, Lowndes Street. —Yes," he continued, soliloquising, as the servant left the room, "Vivian's always wanting something to do: I'll persuade him to go to Scotland with me, in search of the pic-

turesque or the beautiful, or — whatever we can pick up.”

In the present instance, however, Lord Charles did not meet with the success he anticipated. His friend Vivian was not willing to leave town at present; Cadogan Place had still an attraction left for him; and, till he had ascertained the disposition of the Osborne family for the autumn, he was not disposed to make any plans of his own. So, his lordship went down to Kew on the following day, revolving a variety of schemes in his brain for gaining admission to Castle Bluebeard; and not, as his sister, Lady Caroline, remarked, by any means in an amiable humour. Dame Fortune, however, in one of her caprices, suddenly turned her looks, or, more properly speaking, her thoughts, upon him, and eventually befriended his wishes in an unexpected manner.

In the mean time, another copy of the paper containing the announcement which formed the text of Lord Charles's late discourse, and had quickened his usually rather dull brains into activity, lay on the table of a prettily-furnished room at Glenrowan, which overlooked the Clyde. The table stood in the recess of a bay-window. Beside it sat a fair young girl, her elbow on the paper, and her

head supported on her hand, which was buried in a shower of golden ringlets, while her eyes were fixed dreamily on the beautiful river which flowed beneath. The pretty infantine features were those of Lily Græme: unchanged from the time we first saw her, though the bright, sunny expression which then lighted them up with such a saucy air, had given place to one of thoughtful sadness; and only gleams of the former *insouciance* broke occasionally through the shade which was now become habitual.

Her present attitude was more than usually pensive and grave; and her abstraction was so complete, that she had not noticed the entrance of Minnie, who had stood for a minute or two beside her without attracting her attention. This unusual preoccupation, and the pained expression of the sweet, grave countenance, struck her, and she turned instinctively to the paper on which her arm rested to discover the cause.

The clue was soon found; as she slightly glanced at the paragraph headed in large type, "Marriage in High Life," and as with a gentle hand she lifted the bright veil of ringlets, she seated herself beside her, and drawing the head tenderly down, till it rested on her own shoulder, she whispered,

“ My poor Lily ! this is but the confirmation of what we have long believed.”

Lily's fair head lay quietly where Minnie had placed it. For some minutes no word was spoken—no sigh uttered—no tear shed—there seemed to be a struggle going on in that young heart too deep for outward expression. It was only by an occasional convulsive pressure of Minnie's hand which lay in hers, that consciousness was shown. At last she spoke gently and quietly :

“ Yes, dear Minnie, I have long known and expected this. I thought I had prepared myself to meet the blow when it should fall; but it is still a blow, and a heavy one. I have been trying to analyse my feelings—to think calmly—to acquiesce in the inevitable. I have been watching the course of that river, flowing ceaselessly, constantly on towards the sea. I have been trying to fancy its course from the source; its small beginnings, its continual dependence on the rains from above for support; the many obstacles it must have encountered, the help that it has found from the junction of other streams seeking the same end, the windings it has been forced to make to avoid what it could not overcome; and now, its full flowing stream gliding on, stronger and more irresistibly, with its

goal in view. I have thought of those beautiful lines:

L'onda dal mar divisa
Bagna la valle e'l monte;
Va passegiera
In fiume,
Va prigioniera
In fonte,
Mormora sempre e geme,
Fin che non torna al mar:
 Al mar dov'ella nacque
Dove acquistò gli umori,
Dove da' lunghi errori
 Spera di reposar !

“ I have noticed the many vessels and boats of all sizes on its bosom ; some gliding quietly onwards with the stream towards the ocean of eternity. Those are the better and higher thoughts, which you, love, have taught me. Some struggling against the current, as if unwilling to be borne onwards ; still yearning after the life that belongs to this earth. Those are my own natural thoughts and wishes, clinging as they do to earth. Then there are others, neither striving to go forwards or backwards, anchored in mid-stream. These are the baser desires, content with the present, and willing to remain where they are. None of these bright things before me have suffered

shipwreck, or I might have found a still more apt illustration of myself just now. Oh! Minnie, you will think me very weak and foolish for allowing my thoughts to linger still round one who has been so false; but—I don't think there would be so much difficulty in submitting—in even rejoicing in this announcement, could I be sure that he really loved her, or that she could make his happiness—”

She paused; and while Minnie passed her hand caressingly over the bright curls which hung over her shoulder, she answered,

“Beware, dearest, how you yield to this suggestion. Pity is a sentiment too dangerous for you to cherish now, love. Do not so much try to think whether he is happy or unhappy, as to put him out of your mind altogether. I know,” she added hastily, as she felt Lily's form tremble, “I know the full difficulty of what I say; it is not that I do not comprehend the full force of the words. What I mean is, do not try to make excuses for him, or to look upon him as a victim; simply endeavour, love, to occupy your mind with other thoughts so as to leave no room for these; if they will intrude, then remember him only as you would the dead. To you, he is dead. He has chosen his own course, do not let his shadow darken your own path, which might be so bright.”

“Dear, good Minnie; you have always been my guardian angel. I will try and reward your kind care. But what is in my heart now I must tell you. He was so refined, so delicate, so almost fastidious, that I cannot believe he could ever love such a girl as Jane Osborne, a mere fashionable worldling; neither is it possible that she should appreciate his character—far less love him. There was such a striking difference in his manner towards us both at the time. To me there was such an air of tender devotion—it hardly struck me at the time—but innumerable, indescribable proofs have since occurred to me—and then the depth and earnestness of look and tone that last evening when he spoke—the trouble and anguish that was in his face next morning—the peculiar expression that came over it at Miss Osborne’s words—Oh, how could I have doubted his truth!—Why did I believe her instead of him!” — And starting up, she covered her face with her hands.

“Hush, darling!” whispered Minnie’s soft voice, as she gently drew her down again, and replaced her head on the shoulder where it had been resting; “these are not the thoughts that you may cherish.”

“There was falsehood somewhere, Minnie, not *with* him, but *towards* him, and towards me: I feel

sure of it: I would have called him back and justified myself that morning, but my foolish voice would not obey me, and he never heard me; you don't know what a girl she was—so unscrupulous! and, if he is miserable, it is my fault. But I know all this is very weak—worse, it is sinful, and I will try, dearest, to bring my thoughts into subjection. Indeed I did not mean to have said so much; I would have said, that, could I but feel sure he was happy, it would be comparatively easy to smother all selfish regrets; but I know he is full of high thoughts and noble feelings which Jane Osborne can never share.”

“ You must forget all this, Lily, darling,” answered Minnie in a graver tone; “ whether suited or unsuited to each other, they are married now, and your own work is clear before you; set resolutely to do the work that is given you, and do not look upon your neighbour's tasks. Hang a thick curtain before that corner of your heart where his image stands, one so thick and heavy that you can neither pierce nor lift its folds. Let it be woven of submission to God's will, and determination, with His help, to apply yourself fixedly to the work and the duty He has marked out for you, not questioning His wisdom or His justice, but acquiescing

humbly, and day by day your path will be made more clear, and your burden lightened, though it may be you will have to wait and pray and struggle first; but remember, that, as the hairs of your head are all numbered, so all the events of your life are appointed, and no one can injure you beyond what is permitted; and as a sparrow does not fall to the ground unnoticed, neither can our thoughts, which ought to fly upward, fall to the earth unmarked by our heavenly Father."

Both remained silent for a time, pursuing the course of thought which Minnie's words had opened. At length, Lily slowly raised her head, and, turning to the table, she took up the newspaper, deliberately folded it up, and placed it in Minnie's hand, as she said,

"Take it away, dearest, that I may never see it again, and, as I put that out of my sight, I will try to banish from my mind all those weak and unwholesome thoughts. I cannot indeed promise to be as if the past had never been: it seems to me as if the sunlight of my life had departed. I will at least endeavour to fill the deep furrow that sorrow has ploughed in my heart with good seed, which I hope will spring up and grow."

Minnie took the paper, and kissed her forehead.

Then after a minute she said, smilingly, "And what fairy do you suppose wafted me to your side just at this moment?"

"A beneficent one I am sure, my sweet Minnie," said Lily, once more throwing her arm round Minnie's neck, and laying her head down on her shoulder. "But I was too much absorbed when you came, to remember that you were not always by my side, and that, in fact, you ought at this moment to be in Glasgow. Tell me what happy circumstance brought you so opportunely."

Minnie soon explained, that, as Mrs. Baillie was going to drive to Glenrowan to make the bridal visit to Alice on her arrival, the thought of offering a vacant place in the carriage to Minnie had suddenly occurred to her, and been gladly accepted. "So while Alice was doing the honours to Mrs. Baillie, and David had carried off the two girls into the garden to load them with flowers and fruit to carry home with them, he told me where you were most likely to be found, and so I followed his directions and came here,—where my reception was certainly not enthusiastic," she added, laughing, and kissing the shining curls.

"I was so wrapt, that I never heard anything of the arrival, nor did I know you were standing by

my side, till I felt your dear hand stealing under my hair, and then it seemed so natural that you should be near me, that I took it all as a matter of course, and it never occurred to me to wonder at your being here, though it does now, to be thankful for your presence."

The two girls sat long at the window, talking sometimes, sometimes silently watching the life on the land and the river. Many schemes for the future were discussed, and many plans arranged for Lily to carry out at Fairlands, before Minnie should return to them for the Christmas holidays. Time passed unheeded, and when at last Alice came to chide them for lingering so long upstairs, and to bid them prepare for the dinner at five, before the Glasgow party returned, Lily had quite recovered her usual smiles, and, except in the paler hue of her cheek, scarcely any trace remained of the agitation of the morning.

CHAPTER XXII.

For either
He never shall find out fit mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake ;
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain
Through her perverseness ;
.
Which infinite calamity shall cause
To human life, and household peace confound.

MILTON.

It was towards the end of August: Sir Leslie and Lady Gordon had been married about two months. They had come almost immediately to Duncairn, where they had remained since, only making one short excursion of about a fortnight to Boortree Glen; an estate Leslie had recently bought, on which he was rebuilding the house; and stopping on the way for a few days in Edinburgh, visiting the places of interest in the neighbourhood, and on the route home. Since their return he had been endeavouring to interest his bride in his various plans and improvements, and especially in the village of Strathmaer, to the civilization and advancement of which he had devoted so much attention. It

was with little effect, however; Jane was not one who cared for any thing beyond her own individual gratification, and, as her main object in marrying Leslie had been to secure herself a life of ease and luxury, she by no means approved of deranging her comfort, and soiling her dress, by going amongst poverty, especially in a fishing village. They spoke such a barbarous lingo, she declared, it was impossible to understand them: the cabins smelt so fearfully of fish and peat-smoke, that Slater said the whole contents of Breidenbach's shop would not suffice to sweeten her clothes afterwards: "And the road, as you must know," she went on, "is strewn with dead fish, enough to poison a Greenlander, and the children come and touch my dress with their filthy fingers. One day, thinking to be very good, while you were on the beach, I put my head into the school-room—faugh!—I very soon drew it back again, and, as I turned round with my handkerchief to my nose, the little ill-bred imps laughed at me, and an old crone who was passing had the impertinence to grin too, and mutter something in her abominable jargon, about 'thae Saxon fine leddies.' For my own part, I don't see what business ladies and gentlemen have poking into such places, and forgetting their own sphere; I have no doubt you

are horridly imposed upon by these people, who only care for what they can get out of you. Take my advice, Leslie, leave them to the servants, who understand them, to the clergyman who is paid to attend to their wants, and to that old fogey Fairburn, whom you are so fond of, and who seems to me fit for nothing else. What's the use of being rich if you can't enjoy life?"

"That depends upon what we consider enjoyment," he answered, in a tone between jest and earnest; "my idea is that making others happy and serving them is the highest enjoyment one can have: and as for riches, do you suppose they were given us to be spent wholly on ourselves? I expect Fairburn, as my steward, to account to me for what I entrust him with; do you think I am not accountable for what is entrusted to me?"

"Oh! if you come to that sort of cant, I know nothing about it," was the reply. "You have plenty of absurd, stupid notions of that sort I believe. As for old Fairburn—of course you hold him accountable, and rightly too, and a pretty strict account I'd make him give, for I dare say the old fellow knows very well how to feather his own nest."

Leslie looked dangerous as he said gravely,

“ Jane, you may say what you please of me, and, if going among these poor people is really so distasteful to you, I will not urge your doing so—but for Fairburn—beware how you speak slightly of him, or you may see a phase of my character of which perhaps at present you are not aware. He has been a faithful steward on the estate for more than one generation. To both my uncle and myself he has proved himself a sincere friend, in weal and woe, and has been, and is, valued accordingly. I prize his honest heart more than I can tell you, and would sooner bear any amount of injustice to myself, than suffer one word to be uttered against him.”

Jane shrugged her shoulders; “ Dear me, Leslie,” she said, “ you need not flame up so violently: I don’t want to disturb your good opinion of the old fellow, though I think him an intense bore, with his Scotch brogue, and his polite contempt of me: and if you have a weakness for dead fish and dirt, why—*chacun à son gout* is all I can say; for my own part, I like more refinement.”

“ But for good old Fairburn, Jane,” pursued Leslie, “ it is probable Duncairn would have gone to another owner in my uncle’s time: and, as for what you call my predilection for dead fish—I know something of what these poor fishermen have

to encounter in their hazardous occupation, and if I can contribute to their comfort in old age and sickness, and give them religious instruction, so as to lift their thoughts to a hereafter, I will readily encounter a few dead fish. I have had a closer acquaintance with the sea and its dangers than you know of: perhaps you never heard that I was once saved from a watery grave by something little short of a miracle. Much if not all of what I have done at Strathmaer has been as a sort of thank-offering for the wonderful preservation of my dear mother and myself from shipwreck, and in memory of a little sister who was unhappily drowned at that time."

"Oh well, you can tell me all about that, if you like, while we are riding; I can't stop now, for Zohrab and Mahmoud will be waiting, so I must go and dress for a good gallop over the turf, this lovely afternoon."

Leslie remained for a few minutes after his wife had left him, in deep thought: his arms resting on the chimney-piece, and his head bowed down upon them. At last he looked up as he soliloquised: "Poor Jane! I must make allowance for her education, and want of a mother's training; in time perhaps she will think and feel differently, for I believe her heart is good, and it is very natural that at first

she should enjoy wealth and all that sort of thing." — Then, after a pause—"No!" he ejaculated, as he started, and walked rapidly to the window — "Away, tempting thoughts!—it was but outside show:—a false jewel in a fair casket:—her sympathy would have been but hypocrisy: she too worshipped Mammon."

"My lady waits, Sir Leslie," said a servant opening the door; and soon the ill-matched pair were careering over the smooth, springy turf of the park, one at least in happy unconsciousness of the wide gulf which separated their individual beings.

Jane Gordon might well be excused for a thorough appreciation of the lot that had fallen to her in life. She was indeed surrounded with everything that could make life bright and enjoyable, and the very absence of all deeper and higher feelings added perhaps to her almost childish delight in the luxury and refinement which surrounded her. The same obtuseness of feeling also prevented her discovering that, notwithstanding all the devotion of her husband, and his eagerness to anticipate her wishes, and shield her from every annoyance, the chord of sympathy between them was wanting. She had not the depth or delicacy of love in her own heart, to enable her to feel the absence of it in Leslie's; she

had thought nothing of companionship in marriage; her object had been the attainment of riches and luxury, and freedom from restraint: having gained all she had proposed to herself, she was content. She had little suspicion of the one deep cavern in Leslie's heart, so closely hidden from every eye; she knew he liked Lily Græme, and would have married her; she too had seen one whom she loved more than Leslie, but she was little able to divine the difference between Leslie's love and her own. To Leslie himself, that spot was as holy ground: no vulgar eye was permitted to wander over it, seldom did he venture into it himself. Only once before his marriage had the veil been partially lifted for a moment, that the faithful Fairburn might obtain a glimpse of what it concealed. It was then dropt more closely before the fair image there enshrined, and, not even to gratify his own eyes, had its folds been voluntarily put aside since that time.

It would have been impossible to wish for any thing more perfect than the residence of Lady Gordon. The park was beautifully situated in the midst of undulating, wooded hills, terminating in abrupt cliffs which overhung the sea. The house stood at the head of a wide valley, heathery hills

opening gently away from it on either side, and crowned with thick wood, while a verdant slope in front descended gradually to the top of the cliff, and admitted an extensive view of the sea, which washed its base. The entrance was on the park side: a flight of steps enclosed by columns led up to the door, on each side of which extended wings, one of which contained the offices and servants apartments, the other the billiard and other rooms. The suite of drawing-rooms occupied the front of the house, at one end of which a small morning-room opened into a conservatory: a long and rather narrow library with deep embrasured windows occupied one angle, and corresponded with the dining-room, and all opened into a large octagon saloon, the doors of which were screened by rich *portières*. At the opposite end of the drawing-room suite, to the conservatory, an oriel window opened into a closely-sheltered flower-garden, which extended in front of the library. Throughout the rooms was a continual supply of a few choice cut flowers all the year round, diffusing a perpetual fragrance of sweetness and summer.

The scenery of the park was varied and beautiful: rich and verdant in the vicinity of the house; colder and more romantic as it receded from it; and

stretching away into miles of moorland and rugged mountain; affording every description of attraction to the lovers of sport; the woods forming coverts for red-deer, and the numerous tarns and pools formed by the mountain streamlets being well stored with fish and wild-fowl. In a sequestered part of the park, just on the confines of the more cultivated scenery, where it began to merge into the wilder nature, a little table-land formed an opening on the side of a pine-clothed mountain. Here was one of the romantic and picturesque Highland burying-grounds, the woods forming its boundaries on three sides, and a precipitous bank overhanging a deep stream, the fourth. Here too stood a small episcopal chapel, in which service was performed every Sunday by a neighbouring clergyman.

There was little indeed left for the most unreasonable to wish for, and for a time it was sufficient happiness for Jane to find herself mistress of such a home. But, the novelty over, the desire for others to see and envy took possession of her mind, and she began to weary of the position of a sovereign without a court. Riding and hunting were the only amusements of the country that she cared much for: she took but little interest in the gardens, and it was a sore mortification to the scientific gardener to

see his greenhouses, and conservatories, and gardens, Italian, English, or rustic, so unheeded by the lady. In fact time was beginning to be felt a burden: she could not share in Leslie's pursuits, nor had the well-stocked library any charms for her, and when she had satiated herself with examining the house and its luxurious furniture, the collection of choice pictures and engravings, and wondering over the lovely specimens of *virtù* which adorned the rooms, *ennui* crept over her, and she wearied for the excitement of society.

It was thus that Leslie found her, a few days after that just spoken of. It was a lovely, glowing September afternoon: she had wandered down to the beach, which was reached by a flight of steps cut in the cliff, and finding no companionship in its dashing waves, and ignorant of 'the wonders of the sea-shore,' she had just returned, and entering through the conservatory, thrown her sombrero aside and flung herself listlessly into a fauteuil.

She looked wearied and melancholy when Sir Leslie entered, and going up to her, he said,

"You have been walking too far, Jane; these long rambles are beyond your strength, and I must forbid them. Why did you not take the pony-chair? another day I shall give orders for it to follow you,

at least. Now let me ring for a glass of wine, and Slater to take your shawl, and then rest yourself on the sofa till dinner-time."

"Pray do no such folly, Leslie," she answered scornfully, "nor confound me with your delicate fine ladies; it is not a walk down to the beach, or double that distance, that would tire me; I am tired of my own company, that's all, and was thinking how dull this place was," and she yawned.

A cloud came over Leslie's brow: he did not answer immediately, but his eyes almost involuntarily glanced from the table, with its bookstand filled with well-selected volumes, to the piano, and thence to the conservatory; after a moment, he said,

"You are right, Jane, we have been living to ourselves too much, and have been very inhospitable. We must remedy this. Our neighbours have been very polite with calls and invitations; we must give some returns, and you will find companions among them."

"Oh, goodness, no!" she exclaimed, "that is not what I mean; I cannot submit to one of those odious affairs. It was bad enough to go to the two or three we did, it will be some time before I give them the opportunity of making me repeat the

penance. Companions indeed!—those stiff old dowagers with their intellectualities, and their snuffling Scotch drawl, and the young misses blushing scarlet when they're even looked at, and afraid to open their lips! Then the outlandish dinners, and those Scotch lairds wrapped up in their dignity, and thinking everything not Celtic unworthy their regard; companions indeed—defend me!”

“Mayhap then ye'll have forgotten that yer ain guid mon's just ane of thae lairds, Jeannie woman,” replied Leslie, playfully assuming the accent and drawl, “wi' as muckle Scotch bluid i' his veins as ilk anither; but,” he continued laughing, “you must mend this, Jane, and take the formality out of them, and draw out those bashful young ladies. When shall we make our first effort?”

“Never! for pity's sake spare me that infliction; it would be as bad or worse than old Fairburn and the smoky cabins. No, that's not my meaning. I should like to have some of my old friends here. Why shouldn't we fill the house? Such a place as this with only two people in it is nothing but splendid misery!”

The thought crossed Leslie, that, had the two been united in heart and sentiments, there would have been a different estimate of things. For a moment

he looked back to the companion of his rides at Battesden last year, and some of their conversations rushed over his memory, but he resolutely turned his thoughts from the seductive recollection, and answered gaily,

“With all my heart, Jane dear. Whatever will make you happy. I am too apt to forget that you are unused to our dull country ways, and cannot learn them all at once. So write to whom you like, love, and let us fill the house, and then we may find a corner now and then for some of our Scotch neighbours without taxing your patience too heavily.”

He kissed her forehead and left her to write her letters, in which employment she soon forgot her weariness and *ennui*.

CHAPTER XXIII.

But human bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colleges and schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them
They make enow themsels to vex them;
And ay the less they hae to sturt them,
In like proportion less will hurt them.

.
But gentlemen, and ladies warst,
Wi' ev'ndown want of wark are cursed;
They loiter, lounging, lank and lazy,
The deil haet ails them, yet uneasy;
The days insipid, dull, and tasteless;
Their nights unquiet, lang, and restless:
And e'en their sports, an' balls, an' races,
Their galloping thro' public places,
There's sic parade, sic pomp an' art,
The joy can scarcely touch the heart.

BURNS.

THE letters had been despatched, the invitations accepted, and the house was now full of guests. All signs of languor had vanished from Jane's brow. She was never tired of displaying her possessions, or listening to the admiration they excited, or rejoicing in the envy they called forth.

Meanwhile Leslie was very well satisfied to be released from continual attendance on his bride, and to have leisure and opportunity to devote himself to employments more congenial to his mind. In the library he was tolerably sure to be free from intrusion, and in one of the deep embrasures of the windows he was generally to be found in the morning: sometimes revelling in the rich treasures of learning within his reach, sometimes busied, discussing with Fairburn plans and projects for future improvements, or considering the result of what had been already done. Occasionally the two friends would be on horseback or on foot all day, visiting remote parts of the demesne; sometimes he would give up an entire morning or afternoon to visiting his pet colony of Strathmaer, carrying out improvements under his own personal superintendence, inspecting the progress of the school, and seeing that the almshouses and their venerable occupants were well cared for, and the rules respected. Many an hour was spent with these old people, in listening to their tales of dangers and narrow escapes, and often gaining from their simple and uncultivated minds a higher knowledge than could be acquired from many who were their superiors in rank and education. He had given a life-boat to the colony,

as the precipitous and dangerous nature of the coast made wrecks not unfrequent there: a few of the younger and bolder spirits had been selected for its crew, and when the sea was running high he often took pleasure in accompanying the gallant little band in their experimental cruises.

Many a day was set apart for cultivating the acquaintance and friendship of his neighbours, joining in county and magisterial business, and occasionally he would accompany his guests in their onslaught on the game of various sorts, though, as has been seen, he was not himself a very keen sportsman, and generally preferred leaving them to the guidance of the keepers. His habits were early, and much of his work was accomplished before his fashionable guests had thought even of beginning the day. Thus, after luncheon, he was often at liberty to join them in any pleasure parties which might be proposed.

And there were few days when something of the kind was not in agitation; for Jane soon wearied of anything that did not bring excitement, and constant novelty was necessary to her happiness. As long, however, as she was surrounded by those whose tastes were more congenial to her own, she willingly acquiesced in the absence of her husband, whose

Quixotic plans and fancies were often the subject of their ridicule when he was not present. Among the first whom Lady Gordon had invited, were Lady Milford and her daughter Lady Caroline Lascelles, and it was not long before Lord Charles, also, joined the party, and was equally ready to join in amusing himself among the preserves or the peculiarities of his host, as Jane led the way. Besides these, there were many others guests at Duncairn; and the solitudes of the park were completely broken up by the irruption of this horde of fashionables.

One morning, as Leslie was retreating to his usual quiet corner in the library, Lady Gordon followed him.

"We are thinking of an excursion to Loch Ness," she said, "as far as the Fall of Foyers; we shall of course be out for some days, and there are many places to be seen *en route*."

"Nothing could be better," he replied; "I know the country thoroughly, and shall be delighted to play the guide on the occasion. Really, Jane, you are an excellent caterer for the amusement of your guests."

Jane's countenance fell considerably as she answered,

"I hardly expected we should be so highly

honoured. Is it possible you can tear yourself for so long from the society of these musty old books, and your fishwives, and especially from the company of your *fidus Achates* Fairburn? for I protest against his being one of the party."

Leslie laughed; and, throwing his arm around her, drew her down on the chair beside him. "Do not fear, my bonnie bride," he said, "my *fidus Achates*, as you call him, is not the least likely to volunteer into a party so wholly out of his way. And as for the good old fishwives, or these pleasant, quiet companions," he continued, laying his hand on the book before him, "you know, or ought to know, birdie mine, that I willingly put them aside to pleasure you, which is always my own greatest pleasure," as he turned her somewhat unwilling face towards him and kissed her cheek. She shook him off rather roughly and turned away again. He went on:

"But how do you propose to go?"

"That was in fact the question that brought me here," she replied. "Of course some of the party will go in carriages, and we shall have the britschka for the elder ladies, and the van for the servants and the luggage; the pony-carriage will take two, and the rest will ride."

“Excellently planned, my Jeannie; but, remember, you must consent to be chiefly of the carriage party. I will not condemn you entirely to the society of the dowagers, but you must be content with the pony-carriage, and I will be your charioteer.”

“Oh! for that matter, Lord Charles is an excellent whip, and you must attend to the other ladies. Pray don’t let us make ourselves observed with these Darby and Joan habits.” Leslie looked as if he was about to speak, but she went on without stopping: “But it was about the horses I wanted to speak to you. Lady Caroline wishes to ride; you know she is a timid horsewoman, and would not mount Zohrab, or any horse of that calibre, for the world. Can she not ride Zoë?”

“Zoë!” he exclaimed with a start, “Lady Caroline ride Zoë? impossible!”

“And why impossible I should like to know? What is to prevent her?”

“My will,” rejoined Leslie in an angry, determined tone; then, recovering himself before Jane had sufficiently overcome her surprise to be able to reply, he went on: “No, no, Jane; I will provide her ladyship with an animal quite as temperate as Zoë, but she is not to be had.”

"I should like to know why, Sir Leslie?" angrily demanded Jane.

"Simply because she has been turned out these many months without her shoes," was the calm reply.

"I don't believe it," exclaimed Jane, rising angrily, and shaking off the arm that still encircled her. "You are only trying to annoy me because you don't like Lady Caroline; but I have told her she shall have Zoë, and have her she shall if it's in my power. I shall go and ask Emsworth."

"Stay, Jane, and listen to what I say. As to liking Lady Caroline, or any of the family, I cannot say I do much, they are not to my taste; but that would be no reason for my wishing to annoy you surely; on the contrary——"

"Oh! nonsense, I don't want any of these long speeches; keep them for better occasions. I know your absurd folly about Cha — Lord Charles I mean——" she hesitated, and then, angry with herself, went on rapidly: "I shall speak to Emsworth, and soon put all this right."

A flush rose for a moment in Leslie's face, and an expression of anger crossed it; but calming himself, he answered,

“Stay one moment, Jane, and be reasonable. It is of no use your going to ask Emsworth, he could but repeat my words. I undertake to mount Lady Caroline quite as well as she could be mounted on Zoë; therefore your promise shall be kept in the spirit, if not in the letter. It will be of little moment whether the animal be called Zoë or Zeta; and I think you ought, at least, to do me the justice of acknowledging that you have never yet had reason to doubt my word. I had good reasons of my own for turning Zoë out; and, as you would never have wished to ride her, I did not think it necessary to consult you. Indeed, it was done before we were married or even engaged.”

“Oh! yes, I understand,” sneered Jane in a low voice. Leslie took no notice of the remark; but approaching, and throwing his arm round her, he said, smiling,

“So now, my little queen, be pacified; trust to me, and do not call the grooms in to decide our disputes. Come, clear the clouds from this brow,” smoothing her hair, “and don’t let the excursion begin with a storm.”

She tossed back her head, and, smiling scornfully, left the room; but not to follow Leslie’s advice, for her steps were at once bent to the stables.

"Emsworth," she exclaimed, as she met the head groom, "where is Zoë? And why is she not to be ridden?"

"Zoë, my lady, is in the large paddock where the loose stable is. It was Sir Leslie's orders she should be turned out as soon as we got home last year. He said we 'd more horses in the stable of that stamp than was wanted, and she should have a run; so her shoes was taken off, my lady, and her feet tipped, and there she's been ever since. It would take some weeks to get her into proper riding condition, my lady."

"Have you another equally docile?" was the quick question.

"Oh yes, several, my lady. If you'll please to wait a minute, I'll bring out one as is every bit as good and as handsome as Zoë. Here, Robert, bring out Gossamer."

The horse was paraded, and the lady satisfied, so she went back to the lawn, where the rest of the party were standing.

"Sir Leslie will not let us have the horse I wanted, Caroline," she said, "but I have just been talking with the groom, who has shown me one quite as handsome, and promises he shall be as good; so I suppose we must submit," she said,

turning with a sigh and a bright glance to Lord Charles, who was fondling a large deerhound.

“Poor Luath!” he said, addressing the dog, but looking at the lady, “I am afraid your master is a tyrant; he doesn’t know your worth, my fine fellow; you must let me steal you:” then suddenly looking up, “Sir Leslie cares nothing about sport, ‘the noble art of venerie’. I wish you would give me this dog, Lady Gordon, you can’t think how I should treasure him.”

“The success I have just met with is such as to induce me to ask another favour of Sir Leslie,” she replied, sarcastically.

“I would gladly rescue all from their bondage to a tyrant, who is incapable of appreciating their worth,” he said, in a low tone, so as to be heard by Jane alone, while he stooped over the dog to caress it.

“If you are ambitious of taking up the *rôle* of knight errant,” she replied, laughing, “you will find wrongs enough to redress; but now we must think of preparing for our excursion; Lady Milford, I shall go with your party in the britschka, and Sir Leslie is at the service of any lady who wishes to be driven in the pony-carriage.”

There is no occasion to follow the party in their

excursion; any handbook of Scotland will enable the reader who is interested in it, to do so. From Inverness they followed the upper side of the loch by Glen Urquhart and Glen Moriston, making their head quarters sometimes at Drumnadochet, sometimes at other places, as convenience or inclination suggested. They had an able pilot in Leslie, who was well acquainted not only with the face of the country, but with its legendary history, and knew well how to select the best and most beautiful spot for the gipsy dinner or the mid-day rest, making an agreeable surprise for the party. Often the servants were sent on in advance, and when the pleasure-seekers reached a spot of peculiar beauty, where the birch-covered sides of the rugged mountains formed the banks of a wild amber-coloured stream, which had worn its deep bed through the rocks, dashing from stone to stone, or lingering in dark still pools through whose clear depths every weed and pebble were visible, to which the overhanging foliage admitted only a green dim light, suggestive of coolness and repose, with the bright waters of the loch gleaming through a vista,—a cloth covered with viands would be discovered, spread, as if by fairies, on the cool mossy turf, the surrounding boulders affording commodious seats,

and the still pools converted into temporary wine-coolers.

Many such a surprise was prepared for the travellers, and, though in the beginning of October the weather is usually in Scotland too cold to admit of such *al fresco* pleasures, it happened that year to be a season of singular warmth, even till far into November, and to many of the party these mid-day bivouacs were not the least pleasurable part of the excursion.

At all events, Jane thought her husband never appeared to better advantage than on this occasion, and, after the first day, she so far relented in her displeasure, as to submit to the matrimonial *tête-à-tête* in the pony-carriage, and though she was horridly bored by his enthusiasm for the scenery, and utterly unable to enter into the charm of its history, she was quite ready to admit that no one understood so well the arrangement of a *fête champêtre*. She would have been glad if he would have played the cavalier a little more devotedly to Lady Caroline, or any other young lady of the party, but, as he now and then permitted her to mount Zohrab for a short distance, she took care to indemnify herself on such occasions for the previous restraint, by choosing the escort she liked best.

It was Saturday evening when they once more assembled round the dinner-table at Duncairn, the complexions of the ladies a little the worse for their late gipsy life, but the spirits of all invigorated by the sweet breath of nature, and not the less able to appreciate with increased zest the refinements and luxuries of the castle.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Les hommes agissent, mais Dieu les mène.

Dank dir für deinen Wink ! Er macht
Mir meine böse Ahnung zur Gewissheit.
So ist's denn wahr ? Wir haben keinen freund
Und keine treue Seele hier—wir haben
Nichts als uns selbst

.
O ! sie sagt wahr ! Nicht frohe Zeichen sind's,
Die diesem Bündniss unsrer Herzen leuchten.
Das ist kein Schauplatz wo die Hoffnung wohnt.

.
Es geht ein finstrer Geist durch unser Haus,
Und schleunig will das Schicksal mit uns enden.

WALLENSTEIN'S LAGER,

CHRISTMAS was come round again; clad outwardly in cold and wintry garb, but inwardly the harbinger of warmth, and light, and love to all. To the lonely watcher by the sick bed: to the desolate mourner over the grave: to those bereft of all earthly ties and endearments, as well as to the happy centre of a group of loving friends and children: and to the poor penitent whose grief it comes to rescue from despair—to rich and poor, to young

and old, the return of Christmas speaks of hope and comfort, "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men." The hearts of the wealthy warm with love and pity for the poor, whose sufferings they are led to look into and alleviate: the hearts of the poor glow with gratitude and love to the rich, whose worldly blessings they are allowed to partake. Both unite in lifting up their hearts to the Giver of all good, the Sun of Righteousness, who rises at this cold dead season, above our dark horizon, with healing on his wings. Joy—deep, holy, elevating joy—is in the hearts of all, as they commemorate the birthday of the Saviour, and, looking on the bright evergreens and scarlet berries which decorate our churches and houses, acknowledge them as symbols of the source and object of our chastened happiness; while the mirth that sparkles round the hearth is but the outward expression of that higher but hidden joy which is kindled within each breast.

In the hearts of most of those assembled round the hearth at Fairlands, this better joy was to be found, though mingled outwardly with many elements of sadness. Captain Græme was once more at sea, and his hearty jovial voice was missed by all. Archie too was absent: it was long since there had been any tidings of him, and many were the conse-

quent anxieties. Early in the month of August a letter had been received, dated from Cairo, where he and his friend had fallen in with a party of scientific travellers, Germans, who were going into the interior of Africa, to which they had joined themselves. With the remembrance of the many valuable lives that had been sacrificed in endeavours to explore that country, came the question to Mrs. Græme's mind, whether, by thwarting him in his love for Minnie, she had not only sacrificed the happiness of her beloved son, but even endangered his life; and occasionally a thought would cross her mind, that there had hitherto been too much worldliness mingled with her affection for all her children.

It might be that the season brought this idea more palpably to view, or perhaps the recollection that she had suggested the very journey which was now causing her so much anxiety. Whatever the cause, she tried earnestly to smother and reason away the feeling, even to throw the blame on to other shoulders, to murmur at the Providence which had brought the little orphan into her family, and to wish that Minnie had shared the fate of her mother and brother :—but a glance at Minnie's pale patient face disarmed her, and made her try to put these hard, wicked thoughts from her, and to wish

that she had been less cruel and selfish in her desires for her son. Yes, in the hearts both of Mrs. Græme and of Minnie were trouble and anxiety, but in that of the latter was also the sense of having resisted a great and strong temptation, and held fast by principle, and that consciousness enabled her to enter into the joy of the season.

Lily was gay and cheerful, though not with the wild gaiety of former years. Young as she was, sorrow had touched her, but the fire through which she had passed, instead of scorching and withering, had refined and purified her heart, while the shade of thought and sadness which sat on her brow, rather added to its beauty by elevating the expression, and made the sparkle of gladness that often shone out, only the more brilliant by contrast.

David and Alice Murdoch were also there, receiving and diffusing a quiet happiness around them; and, when Minnie and Liliass joined their voices in some of Handel's and Mendelssohn's exquisite pieces, there was no want of enjoyment among the little group that occupied that comfortable room at Fairlands, in spite of the vacant places: and there were cabins and cottages in the village where voices were uplifted in praise, which, if not as melodious, was quite as heartfelt. There was many a prayer for the

absent, and many a blessing asked for those two young girls, whose words and hands had brought peace and gladness to many a heart and home there.

Christmas too was kept at Duncairn, but not quite as at Fairlands: the house was full, and the guests were merry; there was no want of gaiety and laughter, but the source of the mirth was not the same. There were bright evergreens and scarlet berries decorating the rooms, for it had always been Leslie's custom to surround himself with the symbols of the season, but besides himself there was no other among that party who recognised the inward meaning of the outward sign. There were feasting and merriment, music and games and dancing, and all the externals of gaiety, but with most the joy was hollow, and with some, bad feelings and passions were at work beneath the smooth surface.

The poor were by no means neglected; but this was Leslie's work, for Jane cared not to participate in their joys, nor indeed thought of them, but as how they might minister to her own comforts. Leslie held a different course; all who were brought into contact in any way with him took away a blessing, not by gifts only, but by kind words and

thoughtful acts all were made to feel his interest in them. And, though his wife refused to participate in his good deeds, there were plenty to aid him; besides old Fairburn, the housekeeper, and many of the servants who had lived there in his uncle's time, were honestly attached to their present master; and all were ready to second and carry out his arrangements in conducing to the welfare and happiness of the dependants and poorer neighbours; and as far as the influence of Duncairn extended there were voices uplifted in calling down blessings on the head of its master. Oh Jane, what a privilege you missed! and what a safeguard you threw away from you!

But all this was done without ostentation, or any interference with the claims of his guests upon his time. Leslie was always ready to join in the mirth and promote their happiness, all the more for the nourishment he had, which they "knew not of." The servants had their ball and their amusements, of which the hosts and their friends did not disdain to partake. The neighbours were invited to the house, and riding, walking, skating, hunting, and shooting, were the morning pastimes, and in the evening the closely-curtained and brilliantly-lighted drawing-rooms, with the cheerful blaze

of the Christmas fire, formed a picture of thorough comfort, while the gentle perfume of the hot-house flowers, floating through the cheery atmosphere, added to the charm of good music, gave a tone of refinement which the group of high-bred fashionables assembled there were well able to appreciate.

But Christmas passed away, and the month of January drew to a close, and with it the party at Duncairn gradually dispersed. There remained now, only Fanny and Harry Osborne. But, though Lady Milford and her daughter had returned to Kew, Lord Charles still lingered, and when he could no longer prolong his visit at Duncairn, he had accepted an invitation from Mr. Lennox, whose property of Glenbrae adjoined Leslie's.

One morning as the small family circle was assembled round the breakfast-table, and the arrival of the letter-bag had busied each of the four in their several despatches, an exclamation from Harry attracted the general attention.

"Well, Harry, what has discomposed you? an unexpected reminder from your tailor?" asked Jane, looking up from her own letters; but, without making any reply to his sister's question, he exclaimed,

“Poor Græme! you know he has been abroad since May last?” Leslie looked up quickly from his letters, and as quickly returned to the study of them.

“Well, what of him?” asked Jane, “is he come to grief? That would be a pity, for, though somewhat of a muff, he is altogether a man, *comme il n’y en a peu*. But what is he doing?”

“That’s exactly the cause of anxiety,” went on Harry, still too much occupied in his news to enter into the lighter view of his sister. “In August he wrote from Cairo that he was joining a party of German savans, who were going into the interior of Africa, and as nothing has since been heard of him or his companions, and nearly six months are gone by, they are naturally uneasy.”

“So they begin to fear he may have been made into a Christmas pie for the delectation of some savage gastronome, or some wild beast: is that it?” asked Jane scornfully.

“Poor Græme!” continued Harry; “he was too fine a fellow for such a fate, and I almost feel inclined to set out in search of him.”

“Nonsense, Harry; don’t talk in that horrid way: what would be the use of your making a fool of yourself because your friend has an amiable

weakness for that *rôle*: but where does your news come from? you don't know his family?"

"Our 'own correspondent,' as the Times says," replied Harry, "is Wentworth. You remember that I told you he was very much in love with that bright little fairy we met at Battesden, and in despair because she would not even give him opportunity to tell his love."

Jane coloured and looked uneasy: she threw a furtive glance down to her husband, who again looked up sharply, glancing from her face to her brother's, and then returned to his letters.

"Ah! I remember something about it," Jane replied, with a forced laugh, and an affectation of indifference; "but, at all events, if he never told his love, it did not prey on his damask cheek."

"Oh! he had not given up the chase when you saw him the year before last. He came to me last April, or May I think it was, with a face long and sorrowful enough. His evil genius had taken him to Fairlands at the time of her sister's wedding: he found her become so pale and pensive, that the same mischievous imp whispered his vanity that he was the cause of the change, so he summoned his forces for the attack; but before he could well begin the assault she gave him so gentle a *congé*, that he

retired in despair, but ten times deeper in love with the little witch than ever."

Harry talked on, unconscious of the uncomfortable restraint which had stolen over all the party. Leslie had once more raised his eyes from his letters, and this time he fixed them searchingly and sternly on his wife: Jane fidgeted and tried to laugh, while the blood rushed violently to her face, and she dared not lift her eyes. At last Harry ceased, and looked in bewilderment from one to the other:—there was a pause—then Leslie spoke in the low tone of suppressed emotion:

"When did you say Miss Græme's sister was married?" he asked Harry.

"When?—oh! early in April I think; don't you remember, Jane, I told you all about it, and about Wentworth's troubles?"

"I don't remember," she said hesitatingly; "I thought you said—I didn't know she had a sister—that is, I thought—I mean, I didn't pay much attention."

"What is her sister's name?" asked Leslie, in the same calm tone, of Harry; taking no notice of his wife's confusion, though his eye was fixed upon her.

"Alice is her name," replied Harry, "and

her husband's name is Murdoch. But what does all this mean? What have I said?—have I done mischief?" he added, looking from one to the other.

"No, Osborne," replied Leslie, "you have only spoken the truth: I wish it were a practice more generally adopted." Then, after a thoughtful pause, he added in the same calm tone, his eyes still fixed upon Jane—"Just so!—I now see and understand it all:"—then with a curl of the lip, "it was only a slight mistake in the name; a trifling perversion of the facts; nothing so coarse as a lie!"

There was another pause; Jane's eyes were fixed upon her plate, and she kept nervously playing with her knife and fork; the colour had fixed in a flush on either cheek.

At last, Leslie gathered up his letters, and rose from the table; then, turning as he opened the door, he said, in a less severe tone,

"It is probable, Jane, that I may have to leave home to-day, for a few weeks; I am wanted at Boortree Glen, and from thence I shall most likely go on to town, for the meeting of parliament. You shall hear before I go; in the meantime I hope your sister at least will remain here and keep you company during my absence. I wish circumstances did not

oblige Osborne to leave to-morrow, as he said yesterday."

The door closed, and Jane throwing herself back in her chair, gave vent to her sobs: her brother and sister hastened to her.

"What have I done, Jane?" exclaimed the former, "I would have bitten my tongue out sooner than speak, could I have foreseen this. But what is this all about?"

"Nothing that a man of sense would care about," she replied, wiping away her tears; "but he has such foolish straitlaced prejudices, and I am as great a fool as he is, to care for them, or for him either. I did in fact alter the truth a little, just to serve myself.—We were so poor, you know, and I wanted to be in a position to do something for you and poor Fan; and you see marriage is all we poor women have in our power. I couldn't get him to the point, and he was so captivated by that little Scotch prude, that I feared to lose him altogether, so it was necessary to do something decided. I'm glad he's going away now: when he comes back, he will have forgotten it: I'll flatter him well by letter, and make him believe it all came of my desperate love for him. There, Harry dear, don't look so straight," she added, kissing him: "I am not

afraid; I have cajoled him once, and it's hard if I cannot do it again."

But Harry continued to look grave, and though he put his arm round his sister, and led her gently into the morning-room, his voice had a serious and sorrowful tone as he placed her on the sofa and said,

"Well, Jane, I will leave you with Fanny now. I am very sorry that you should have even trifled with the truth for any cause, more particularly with a view to serve us: it is bad to do evil that good may come, and sure to produce the contrary effect. You have the best fellow in the world for a husband, beware how you fritter away your happiness. He himself is so full of truth and honour, that any dereliction from either naturally appears a greater crime to him than to many. I hope, as you say, that he may forget the shock that this discovery of your falsehood has given him; but I advise you, instead of trying to cajole him, as you say, to acknowledge your fault at once; it is the better way under all circumstances, but the only one with him."

"Thank you, dear Harry, you mean well, but I know my own affairs best, and how to manage this paragon of virtue and goodness; and now, Fan, you

may finish that novel you were reading to me yesterday; that *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche* has given me a racking headache, and perhaps I shall go to sleep."

CHAPTER XXV.

But whispering tongues can poison truth ;
And constancy lives in realms above ;
And life is thorny, and youth is vain ;
And to be wrath with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain.

CHRISTABEL.

FAIRBURN had been for some time waiting in the library to speak with Sir Leslie, when he saw him enter, pale and haggard.

“ Guid be wi’ us, Duncairn !” he exclaimed as the latter threw himself into a chair, and crossing his arms upon the table, buried his head in them. “ Hech Sirs ! what’s cam til’ ye ?” and the old man laid his hand upon Leslie’s shoulder. “ Is it ony bad news as ye hae gotten ?” he asked, taking the letters out of his passive hands, and endeavouring with trembling eagerness to discover their contents.

“ Bad news enough, old friend !” at length lifting up his face, on which tears were visible. “ Bad news enough ! but you will not find them there, they are nearer home. Oh, Fairburn !” he exclaimed, rising and resting his arm on the old man’s

shoulder, "I have been deceived every way: Lily Græme——."

"That 'll be she as ye loved sae weel," interrupted the old man.

"The same, Fairburn; and she was worthy of all my love; she was good and true, and all the falsehood was in Lady Gordon."

"My leddy! oh, Duncairn, ye mustna gie way to sic idle clavers; wha's been seekin' to put ye agin' your ain wife?"

"Who?" he repeated as he began to walk rapidly up and down the room, "who but Lady Gordon herself, old man! I have been deceived, cajoled, fooled!—and Lillas—what must she have thought?—Her engagement, her marriage, was all falsehood, an invention to entrap me, or rather my wealth."

"'Deed, Duncairn, ye suld na say that! nae dout Leddy Gordon loves ye fondly, and, gin she did clatter a wee, sure it was a' for the loe of ye, an' ye munna be haird upon the puir body."

"I thought once, Fairburn, that she did love me; she made me believe so—it was all a part of her falsehood—I have long put by that delusion—but I did not think so meanly of her, as to believe that she could deliberately invent a lie to win my

fortune—she, who will be the mother of my child—whom I have sworn to cherish. I never loved her—but now I can no longer esteem or respect her—and we must journey on this weary pilgrimage together, mutually disliking and despising one another! Forgive my weakness, Fairburn, but agony such as I feel at this moment would draw tears from a firmer heart than mine.” And, laying his head upon the chimney-piece, he groaned, in the bitterness of his anguish.

“It’s not I that wull blame ye, Duncairn, though my heart’s sair to see ye: it’s a sair trouble!” said the old man, as he dashed a tear from his own eyes. “But tak’ hairt, mon, and dunna be cast doon; ye’ve lost ane as ye loed tenderly, may be, but my leddy’s no sae bad as ye think; she maun loe ye, Duncairn, she canna help but loe ye, and ye sae guid an’ sae kind to her an’ to a’ the world.” The old man ran on, not knowing what to say, wishing to give comfort, but feeling all the time that it was a case past earthly consolation.

They stood for some few minutes motionless and silent, except for a heavy sob or groan that would occasionally burst from Leslie: at last he looked up:

“I know, my old friend, that you will forgive this weakness. You are father, mother, sister to

me. I have no one to comfort me in my sorrow, and you will let me lean on your faithful heart. The blow was heavier than I could well bear up against at first, but it must be endured, and in time I shall learn to accustom myself to my solitude, or worse than solitude —— !” he exclaimed, as he strode across the room to the window. He stood apparently looking into the garden for a time, then turning, he resumed:

“One thing I have resolved upon—to leave Duncairn for a while. I could not meet Lady Gordon now as before, and I should be sorry to do any thing which might give her pain, or degrade her in the eyes of the servants. I trust she may never feel the misery she has caused me. After a time I shall be able to subdue this first agony, and to resume something of our former relations. In the meantime I leave her in your hands, Fairburn, knowing that you will attend carefully to her, and show every kindness to her.”

Fairburn forbore to express the conviction which he nevertheless entertained, and not without reason, that of all people in the world he was the last from whom Lady Gordon would willingly receive kindness or attention. There had been a tacit feud between them from the moment of her arrival at

Duncairn. He had not forgotten the confidence Sir Leslie had made in town, and looked upon her, not only as unworthy to be the wife of one he prized so very highly, but as the supplanter of one who was so much dearer to him; and, without thinking her quite capable of what Leslie had now revealed, he had an intuitive feeling of her falseness which he was too honest to be able perfectly to dissemble. On Jane's part, the very honesty of the old man had prejudiced her against him; she felt a sort of jealousy of Leslie's deep affection and perfect reliance on him; she had not scrupled to turn him into ridicule among her fashionable friends within his hearing, and probably the natural contrast between the moral qualities of the two had placed an antipathy in both their minds. This, however, was of all moments the last when the good old man would have suffered Duncairn to suspect the feeling that they thus mutually though tacitly entertained, so he answered:

“The Lord will bless your kind hairt, Duncairn, an' no suffer ye to be aye unhappy. Ye are recht any way to gae awa the noo; better for ye, an' for my leddy, an' ye may trust in me for seein' she is weel cared for.”

“I know you will be good and considerate, my

friend," said Leslie, wringing the old man's hand: "and now I must try and think of other matters. I shall start this afternoon for Boortree Glen. I cannot see Lady Gordon again before I go, indeed I dare say she would rather avoid an interview; but I will write to her before leaving. I would fain know if she suffers much. Have the kindness to order Emsworth to be ready to drive me to the station; and will you also give directions to my man to prepare for the journey, and send Slater to her lady, that I may know how she is. I know I need not apologize to you, my old friend, for this trouble."

"There's but ane trouble, I ken, Duncairn, and that's just to see ye so sair stricken," answered the old man, as he left the room to execute Duncairn's orders.

Leslie paced for some minutes up and down the long apartment, sometimes stopping to gaze out of the window, though his mind took in nothing of what his eyes rested upon, then resuming his slow walk, and occasionally giving utterance to his thoughts.

"Fool that I was! to suffer my better feelings to be so imposed upon. It was then *my* truth that she doubted! — Her mind had been poisoned like

my own.—Oh, how could I doubt the purity and truth that was written on that fair open brow! — Her look of horror and distress that morning, which I interpreted into shame at the discovery of her falsehood—was all innocence!” — He stood at the window for a time in silence. “Pensive and pale!” he said, resuming his walk. “Could she have thought of me? Had I the power to throw even a momentary shade over that bright spirit? Could she bestow the smallest regard on one whom she must have thought so heartless? But of what avail? Am I not bound for life? Dare I think of any thing so pure? And if she had fostered one spark of love for me in her true heart—has it not been the object of her life since to quench it?— Oh, Jane, Jane! How much happiness you have marred!—May you never know the anguish you have caused!—May your feelings never be what mine now are!” He continued his walk. “Pensive and pale—oh, Lilies—angel! —”

The door opened, and Slater appeared.

“Mr. Fairburn bade me come, Sir Leslie,” she said, “to tell you that my lady is pretty well; she has had a comfortable sleep, and is cheerful. Miss Osborne said she was rather hysterical after breakfast, but she has kept quiet ever since, and

has ordered the carriage for a drive in the afternoon."

"Very well, Slater; I am going from home this afternoon for some weeks; mind that you take every care of your lady, and keep up her spirits."

The woman curtsied and withdrew. Leslie returned to his walk up and down, and at last stopped opposite his usual writing-table.

"Poor Jane!" he exclaimed, "it is plain at least that your feelings are not keen enough to do you any harm. It is well on some accounts that they are so obtuse, and yet I should have been glad to see a glimpse of better feeling. I could have pitied, perhaps even have loved you, had you felt the beauty of truth, or showed some contrition, or even shame, for the falsehood you have practised. Had you come to me and acknowledged your fault, though you had owned that it was not for love of me, but for my wealth, that you had descended to it, I would have taken you to my heart and forgiven all! — Well, well!" he added with a sigh, as he seated himself, "it makes my task the easier." And taking up a pen, he wrote:

"Jane—you have deceived me cruelly—fatally for us both! I could not have believed it possible that you could have deliberately framed such false-

hoods:—still less that you could have stood before God's holy altar with the lie upon your lips, and met me day after day with the poison in your heart. I do not wish to upbraid you more than is unavoidable with the misery you have caused—not the least bitter ingredient of which is the thought, that the wife whom I have trusted—the future mother of my child, could have been guilty of the meanness of even trifling with so holy a thing as truth.

“Were I to meet you now, it might be painful to us both—to me it certainly would; and, as your first impulse has not brought you to seek me, I conclude you would prefer avoiding me for the present. I shall, therefore, as I told you, leave home for a time till I can regain self-command enough to meet you as formerly. Fairburn will take every care of you, as will all the servants, I am sure; and you will write to me yourself, I hope, as you will hear from me frequently.

“As soon as I feel myself able to resume my former behaviour towards you, I shall return; and shall make my absence as short as possible.

“Take care of your health, Jane, for the sake of repairing the injury you have done me, if for no other reason. I have sent to inquire, and Slater

tells me the excitement of the morning has not injured you. Beg your sister to remain with you till my return; and, once more, take every care of your health.

“DUNCAIRN.”

He sat for some time after he had finished writing with his head buried in his hands, till Fairburn re-entered the room; then recalling his mind to present matters, the two talked together long, the one giving, the other receiving, directions as to the management of the estate during Leslie's absence.

At length the servant appeared to announce that all was ready, and the carriage at the door. Leslie grasped old Fairburn's hand; and, giving him the letter for Lady Gordon, he bade him farewell, once more conjuring him to take every care of Jane; and then, taking his seat in the dog-cart, which awaited him, he drove from the door with an aching heart.

CHAPTER XXVI.

By all that from my weary soul thou hast wrung of grief and fear,
Come to me from the ocean's dead ! Awake, arise, appear!

Was it her yearning spirit's dream ?
Or did a pale form rise,
And o'er the hushed wave glide and gleam,
With bright, still, mournful eyes ?
“ Have the depths heard ? They have !
My voice prevails : thou'rt there,
Dim from thy watery grave—— ”

MRS. HEMANS.

It was a leisure afternoon with Marion Gray. The family were all gone out of town to visit some friends, and she was left alone in her own apartments.

A change had come over her latterly; she was no longer the ever-occupied and active Minnie of former days. A languor and listlessness hung upon her, making any exertion of mind or body an effort. She would fall into fits of reverie, and sit for long together, her eyes fixed upon vacancy, her hands clasped and lying on her lap. She had become pale and thin, and her face had a harassed look. The

task of tuition seemed beyond her strength, yet she could not now return to Fairlands to be a burden: she dared no longer call that her home where she had caused so much sorrow; she was perplexed as to her right course, and wanted energy even to carry her load to the foot of the Cross.

It was the middle of February. The black frosts which had bound the earth throughout the months of December and January had been succeeded by a deep snow, clothing the earth in its pure white mantle; bending down the heavily-laden branches of the fir-trees and evergreens till they swept the ground, and enveloping the leafless twigs of the deciduous trees in a thick coating of crisp rime, which the light touch of a bird, or the soft rustle of the breeze, sent in sparkling showers upon the glittering earth.

Towards the middle of the month the snow had in its turn yielded to the reviving warmth of a February sun, the weighed-down branches had regained their elasticity, the earth had thrown off her thick white clothing, and all nature was beginning to rejoice in the return of spring. The sun already shed a warmer and more golden light, and the birds carolled forth their gladness at the departure of the bleak, chill winter.

Even in the town the air felt balmy, and the sky looked bright; and though these cheering symptoms might be but the harbingers of a premature spring, to relapse again into the more dreary season—so many days stolen, as it were, from the coming spring, and to be repaid with interest in the uncompromising month of March, yet the little oasis in the midst of winter's dreary Sahara was welcomed gratefully by all nature.

Minnie then was alone. She had been standing for some time motionless at the window, her forehead pressed against the glass, and her graceful hands hanging down, clasped as usual, before her. She seemed to be looking intently into the street, yet her eyes took in nothing of what was before them. The eyes of her mind alone were open, and these were fixed upon an imaginary spot, far beyond her present horizon. She looked upon a far distant land; in the foreground was a sandy plain; a group of Europeans passed slowly and painfully over it: a few palm-trees raised their crowned heads in the distance, and on one side was a thick jungle; near the palms were signs of a village of savage natives, and the sound of their wild cries and rude instruments was borne upon the sultry air. The travellers moved cautiously, and seemed fearful of

approaching the village, where the inhabitants were apparently performing some religious rites. In the jungle might be seen the forms of wild animals, watching their movements with hungry eyes. The little band paused; they seemed faint and weary, and one or two of them sunk down in the burning sand, as if overpowered by fatigue and weakness; the atmosphere trembled under the scorching rays of the sun. She saw the wild animals glaring with redoubled eagerness, and drawing up their bodies as if to spring. All at once the savages seemed to become aware of the approach of the travellers; they came forward with harsh cries, brandishing their weapons, and shouting their wild war-whoops. The little group was surrounded; they seemed to speak gentle words and offer gifts; the savages made signs of refusal, they pointed with angry gestures to their village, and seemed to cry for blood to appease their insulted deities. The chief seized upon the form of one, who had peculiarly engaged her attention: he had been most earnest in words of encouragement to his companions, and now seemed most eager in endeavours to pacify and conciliate the savages: the chief attacked him, and after a struggle both fell to the ground, the European undermost; the rest closed round in a circle,

shouting and dancing and uttering frightful cries: she could see the weapon of the chief raised in act to strike the death-blow:—then a mist came over her vision, and, when her mental eyes once more resumed their office, the scene had changed its aspect.—She was standing on a wild heathery mountain, which sloped steeply down to the top of an abrupt cliff overhanging the sea; she saw the waters heaving and swelling, and heard them dashing with a heavy sound against the rocky barrier, sending up dense showers of spray, which fell lightly back into their bosom, like kind deeds and words rejected by an ungrateful world: she saw a distant blue line of coast, bathed in bright sunlight, and many rugged and angular masses of rock lying between her and that distant shore. Behind her rose a steep mass of granite; and mingled with the sullen, surging roar of the ever-restless ocean, she heard the plaintive wail of the sea-birds, and the sharp cry of the grouse and ptarmigan. At first she stood there all alone, and then another form was by her side; it was the same which she had been watching with so much interest in the desert. Now words were murmured in her ears, and tones thrilled through her heart, and, as she raised her hands to clasp them over her face, the vision dis-

solved, and she found herself alone, in her own room, and gazing down into the street below.

With a heavy sigh she turned from the window, and, opening a portfolio, she took out sketch after sketch of old familiar scenes, the date upon each recalling some particular day, that stood out from the rest, each with its own peculiar memory. She had come nearly to the last of them, when a folded newspaper dropped from between the boards: she took it up, and recognising it as the one which Lily Græme had given into her hands at Glenrowan, she opened it, in her listless desultory mood, to read the announcement of the wedding which had sealed poor Lily's fate, and which she herself had only slightly glanced at that morning.

The first words arrested her eager attention, and at once dispersed her look of languor and abstraction.

“June 23rd, by special licence, Sir Leslie Gray Gordon, Bart.”——

She read no farther, the paper dropped from her hands, and she fell into the chair behind her. She pressed her hands upon her temples, and covered her eyes as if to shut out all other objects and concentrate her mind: the blood rushed in a torrent

over her brain: after a minute, she raised the paper from the ground, and putting back the hair from her forehead, bent over the table, examining the words, as if to wring the meaning from them. “Leslie Gray—” What did those two names indicate?—“Gray”—that was clearly her own name: “Leslie” was the name of the brother she had lost at sea. But she saw him washed off into the wild waves.—Who then was this Leslie Gray, who had thus risen up as if to mock her? and how came the names linked with that of Gordon?—Gordon had been her mother’s name:—Oh, if she could but still her brain, to think! What had Lily told her about this Sir Leslie Gordon?—Had she not said something about taking an uncle’s name?—What could she do?—Who could help her?—She dared not write to Mrs. Græme, on account of poor Lily—besides how could she help her?—Oh, if Captain Græme were but at home—or—Archie!—and then another thought came rushing into her head. No longer without a family—no longer the nameless orphan!—“Duncairn, and Boortree glen”—she tried to get a meaning out of those names;—but she had been born in India, and knew nothing of what property might have belonged to the family in Scotland.—Could this really be her brother?—

Could he by some extraordinary chance have been saved?—Wonderful escapes were sometimes heard of ; if so—might it not be equally possible that her mother had also been saved?—that she too still lived?—Her mother!—the thought seemed like new life to her. The fond sympathizing love of a mother; a bosom whereon to lay her weary, aching head, and pour out all her griefs and troubles! Her head sunk upon her arms, which lay upon the table: she was once more wandering into the land of dreams; but this time they assumed no palpable shape—indistinct forms of her mother, her brother, and Archie, flitted through her brain like the shadowy figures of the magic-lantern.

She was roused from this state of half unconsciousness by a quick step approaching the door; there was a sharp knock, and before she had time to recal her thoughts David Murdoch had entered the room. He started back as he looked at her : her arms spread out over the paper, from which she had hastily raised her head on his entrance; her hair dishevelled and pushed back from her forehead; her face flushed, and her strained eyes fixed upon him, with a wildness of expression quite new to them.

“I come to announce good tidings, Minnie,” he exclaimed, full of his own happiness. “Dear Alice was confined last night, and I am the father of a little girl, who with her mother is doing well.”

Still Minnie continued to stare at him, her eyes dilated, and her lips apart, unable to take in the meaning of his words, or to bring back her wandering senses.

“Minnie dear, what is the matter?” he said gently, coming towards her, and throwing his arm about her.

The gentle tones seemed to touch her, she turned, and, nestling her face into his bosom, she burst into tears. He held her pressed to his heart for a minute, softly stroking her hair: at last she raised her head, and looking into his face, while she pointed to the paper, she exclaimed,

“Oh David, my mother!”

He followed the direction of her finger, but it gave him no clue to the mystery, and he began to fear that her long wrought up nerves had at last been strained beyond their limit, and that reason had given way. He seated himself gently beside her, and taking her head upon his shoulder, spoke softly and soothingly: he caressed and calmed her, and then going into her bedroom, which adjoined, he

dipped a sponge in water and bathed her forehead, and carried her trembling form to the sofa. Her tears flowed again, but more quietly, and at last laying her head on his shoulder, as he knelt beside her, she said,

“I am very selfish, dear David; you told me of dear Alice’s safety. I am so glad—thank God!”

He took her hand and pressed it warmly between his own, without speaking. After a few minutes she went on:

“David, if you had not come in just then I think I should have gone mad: I hardly know if my senses are not wandering even now.” She looked towards the paper, he drew it from the table, she pointed to the paragraph and bade him read it. He did so, and then, yet unable to trace the connection with her words, turned to her for explanation.

“Leslie Gray!” she said, answering his inquiring look. “It was the name of my brother who was drowned in the Ganges Indiaman, with my mother, when I was saved. It is the same person Lily met at Battesden; he is Gordon now; that was my mother’s name: I remember Lily said he took the name of Gordon at the request of a great-uncle,

who left him a fortune. Can that be my brother himself? People are sometimes wonderfully saved from shipwreck—I was:—they would naturally think that I was drowned. Oh, it must be he—” she went on, more wildly, “and if he live, my mother may also be alive. Oh, mother, mother!” and, clasping her hands over her face, she once more burst into a passion of tears.

David tried to soothe her; he spoke calmly; he admitted the possibility of this baronet’s being her brother—but he endeavoured to make her think it more possible than probable: it was however certain that he belonged to the family: such a combination of names could hardly have occurred, even in Scotland, without some near relationship. He asked if she had any family tokens? She touched the spring of a golden clasp to a bracelet which she wore, and displayed the miniature of her mother: it bore so striking a resemblance to herself, that it might almost have been taken for her own portrait. She had likewise a ring containing the hair of both her parents, with their names at the back, “Eric Leslie and Mary Gray,” with the date of their marriage. He sat long with her, calming her and trying to put out of her mind the idea of there being more than a distant relationship between herself

and the baronet. He bade her leave the matter in his hands, promising to think of the best method of discovering the facts, and to lose no time in doing so. He begged her not to think of writing either to Mrs. Græme or to Lily, undertaking to acquaint them with what she had told him, himself, and to make all the necessary communications to and all arrangements with Mr. and Mrs. Baillie. Then rising and ringing the bell, he desired the maid to prepare Miss Gray's room immediately, and see her into bed at once, while he would go to a chymist's and send in a composing draught for her to take.

Poor Minnie felt that her small stock of strength had indeed been greatly overtasked, and that she was unable to resist his kind prescriptions; she trembled from head to foot, and could hardly support herself.

"Oh, dear David!" she exclaimed, "you have been a kind friend to me from the first moment I knew you." David bent down and kissed her forehead, and as she placed her clasped hands within his she said, smiling up at him: "Commit thy way unto the Lord, and He shall bring it to pass."

David pressed her hands warmly, and pro-

mising to deliver her messages of kindness to Alice, and to see her again soon, he gave her into the care of the servant, with directions to let her remain undisturbed, and hastened back to Glenrowan.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CALENDARO.

Had I been present when you bore this insult,
I must have slain him, or expired myself
In the vain effort to repress my wrath.

ISRAEL BERTUCCIO.

The truly brave are soft of heart and eyes.

.
I have known Bertram long; there doth not breathe
A soul more full of honour.

MARINO FALIERO.

A FEW days after the scene described in the last chapter, Fairburn was sitting before the fire in the steward's room at Duncairn, devouring, with truly masculine appetite, the Times newspaper. He had pretty well mastered all the contents, and was proceeding to give himself up to the digestive process, with the aid of a comfortable doze, when his eye was attracted by an advertisement, headed in large type:

“ 18—. ‘Ganges,’ homeward bound East India-man.”

“Hech, Sirs!” exclaimed the old man, taking off his spectacles and rubbing them bright, “what can be the meanin’ o’ this?” Then taking up the paper again and replacing his glasses, he read:

“If there are any of the name of Gray who survived the loss of the abovenamed ship, which foundered in a gale off the Cape, in March 18—, on her homeward passage, they are earnestly requested to communicate immediately with D. M., office of Messrs Mather and Co. — street, Glasgow. Feb. 24th, 18—.”

“Ganges! Gray!”—muttered the old man, laying the paper on his knee, and looking steadily into the fire, as if that might help him to a solution of the mystery. “Sure enow it wad be the Ganges that Duncairn, wi’ his mither an’ bit sister, were in, when she went doon. Can the lassie hae been pickit up? Hech! but this wad be bonnie news for the laird. Puir lad, he needs it sair! wi’ his leddy wife, wha wadna care ’gin he grippit haud o’ the moon wi’ his hands greased, an’ she had his siller. Didna I say, the Lord wadna suffer his kin’ hairt to be aye sair. But we maun e’en gang cannily to wark; it wadna do to raise his hopes just to dash them doon again: sae I think I’ll e’en gang awa mysel’ to Glasgow the morns mornin’, afore giein’ him a glint o’ the matter,

an' it's bonnie news maybe that I shall hae to gladden his gude hairt wi'!" and he rubbed his hands in an ecstasy of glee.

When Jane was told that Fairburn requested an interview with her in the morning, she demurred at first to seeing him. On hearing, however, his reason, (though he was careful not to tell his object,) she declared that it was quite worth while putting up with the old sycophant's jargon for a few minutes, to be rid of his presence for some days: he was always spying and prying about, she said, and she had no doubt his fool of a master had left him to watch her proceedings.

While he was at Duncairn, therefore, she had thought it necessary to be cautious in her conduct, and, though Lord Charles Lascelles was still at Glenbraes, his visits had been comparatively rare; now however that she was freed from one whom she imagined had been left to watch her, the first use she made of her liberty was to despatch a note to Lord Charles, informing him that, the spy being removed for a few days, he would be welcome to lunch at Duncairn whenever it happened to lie in his rides.

And this happened every day; the hint was not neglected, and the visits were always prolonged till

there was but just time to gallop home to Mr. Lennox's dinner, with a plausible reason for the morning's absence.

Jane considered her sister's presence a sufficient excuse, and he was always the companion of their stroll in the garden, or their drive in the park; indeed but for this little excitement Jane declared she should have died of ennui, mewed up with only her sister in that out-of-the-way place. Leslie was not spared: the cause of his departure was told as a good joke, and many were the laughs of Jane and Lord Charles, over her own cleverness, and her husband's goodnature.

One afternoon, when the balmy spring-like air had tempted them to a longer drive than usual, they found themselves near a spot, where a little way up the mountain, in the pine wood, were some curious Celtic remains. Lord Charles was curious to inspect these, and, as Jane had never seen them, they left the carriage in charge of the servant, and walked into the wood. Lord Charles gave his arm to Lady Gordon, and as the path wound round the mountain, and was not wide enough for more than two abreast, Fanny walked behind. As they ascended it became narrower and narrower, till at last they were obliged to walk singly, there being a precipice above

and a precipice below. Jane led the way, and, just as she turned the angle of a rock, she was confronted by a large stag of the red-deer species, who was descending the hill at a rapid trot. As they mutually became aware of each other's presence, both stopped: the path was too narrow to admit of the stag's passing them, even had Jane possessed sufficient nerve to let him do so. Lord Charles threw his arm round her, but he was sportsman enough to be aware of the danger of seeming to fly, under such circumstances; for a minute therefore the two parties stood opposite each other, and then the stag, finding himself at bay, lowered his horns, and prepared to advance in a threatening attitude. At this moment Jane's courage failed, and she fainted. As Lord Charles was now encumbered by her weight, it is probable they would soon have been gored to death, had not a keeper been near the spot at that time, who, seeing the circumstances in which they were placed, fired, and the noble animal, rolling over the side of the precipice, fell crashing through the woods to the bottom.

With the keeper's assistance, then, Jane was carried back, and placed in the carriage; after some little time, consciousness partly returned, and they lost no time in conveying her back to the house,

where she was immediately placed in bed, and medical assistance summoned.

It was the last luncheon visit that Lord Charles made at Duncairn, though he came once afterwards to inquire for the sufferer; the next day, he left the country.

Meantime, Fairburn proceeded, according to his intention, to Glasgow, and, on calling at the offices of Messrs. Mather, he there learned that the advertiser, Mr. Murdoch, resided about six miles up the river; so, declining the suggestion that he should be sent for, Fairburn returned to the hotel, and ordering a fly, drove at once to Glenrowan.

The interview was a long one: each was anxious to place the identity of his client beyond a doubt. Mrs. Græme, who was in the house, was called in to supply what links she could to the information, on Minnie's part. Except the name of the ship on board of which her husband had then been serving as first lieutenant, and the date of his return, she could add little beyond the fact of his bringing home the child, then about four or five years old, as they supposed. Besides the bracelet clasp, which Minnie had then worn as a locket, and the ring, which was attached to the same chain, there were one or two little things belonging to her, which

Mrs. Græme had put by, with a view to the possibility of their aiding in the discovery of her family. These she promised to send for at once, and, as they could not be received till the following day, it was determined that David should drive the old steward back to Glasgow, for the purpose of hearing the story from Minnie herself, and procuring the miniature and the ring. Meanwhile Fairburn stated, on his side, that when Leslie, who was then about eleven years old, had been with his mother washed from the deck, they had managed to cling to an empty water-cask, which had gone overboard with them, and by the help of which they had been kept afloat till daylight, drifting, of course, at the mercy of the tide: as day dawned, however, they had been descried by a merchantman. A boat was immediately sent to their assistance, and they were taken on board in a state of insensibility, from which it was some time before the care and attention of the captain and crew could recover them. The vessel (the Singapore) was bound for Hobart Town, touching at Swan River.

Mrs. Gray never perfectly rallied from the effect of the shipwreck and long exposure, added to the grief of losing her little girl, and just as they reached Swan River she died. Foreseeing this event,

she had written a letter to her husband's brother, Sir James Gray of Duncairn, detailing the circumstances of their shipwreck, and the loss of her little Minnie, and bequeathing young Leslie to his care. This letter had been carefully preserved, and was now produced by Fairburn.

Leslie had experienced the greatest kindness from the captain of the Singapore, who, on continuing his voyage, left him in the care of the chaplain at Swan River, who undertook to send him to England as soon as an opportunity occurred.

There was not long to wait for this, as two vessels were about to sail within a fortnight of each other, by the first of which the chaplain wrote to Sir James Gray, announcing that his nephew Leslie would follow in the Polynesia, which was to sail fourteen days later.

As Sir James resided abroad, and Fairburn at once concluded that the ship-letter directed to him must relate to his brother's widow and family, who had been long expected, he took upon himself to open the letter; and, much shocked at the news it contained of Leslie's being the only one remaining, he went down at once to Southampton, that he might be in readiness to receive the child on the arrival of the Polynesia.

He was not detained there many days. On the boy's being given up to him, with his mother's letter, he took him directly to his uncle in France, with whom he had continued to reside till the death of the latter put Leslie in possession of the baronetcy and Duncairn.

On calling at Mr. Baillie's, David and Fairburn were told that Minnie was in so exhausted a condition, and at the same time so excited by any allusion to the circumstances of the previous day, that Mrs. Baillie considered it would be very hazardous to enter upon the subject, or even to let her know of their being in the house; particularly as, having thought it necessary to send for medical advice, she had been strictly cautioned to prevent her talking to any one; and, in order to keep her mind composed and quiet, it had been thought necessary to stupify her with opiates. There was not, however, much difficulty in procuring the miniature and ring, which were given into the hands of Fairburn.

It was necessary to apply at the Admiralty for the log of the ship, of which Captain Græme had then been lieutenant; and, as Duncairn was then in town, Fairburn considered that time would be saved by his going there himself, while at the same time he should enjoy the pleasure of communicating the

happy tidings personally to his dear young laird. On the evening, then, of the following day, he took his departure for London; and as soon as Minnie should be considered fit for removal, it was arranged that she should be taken to Glenrowan, where, there was no doubt, they would soon receive a visit from Duncairn.

Circumstances however occurred which deferred the meeting between the brother and sister to a more distant period than was then contemplated.

On arriving in town, Fairburn's first visit was to the Admiralty, where, after some delay, he obtained all the information he thought necessary to establish fully the identity of Minnie Gray with Leslie's lost sister. It was not till the evening of the second day of his stay in town that he had completed this affair, and, not wishing to disturb Sir Leslie's mind till he could bring certain proof, he abstained from making him acquainted with his arrival till he had succeeded.

Now, however, with all his evidence complete, and armed with the miniature and ring, he stepped along the streets with an elastic gait, and stopped at the door of the Travellers' Club. Here his anticipations met with a check: he was told that Sir Leslie had received a telegraphic message the previous

evening; that he had left immediately, and had not been to the club that day. With a more rapid but less springy step Fairburn went on to his hotel; there he learned that, in consequence of some sudden news from Scotland, Sir Leslie and his servant had left for the North by the mail train last night.

Poor Fairburn turned away with a heavy heart. "The de'il's in it! — that I suld say so!" he exclaimed, "an' gin' I had but cam a day suner! Sudden news frae Scotlan'? Nae doot yon thriftless jade has been at some o' her cantrips so sune as my back was turned; and what'll the laird think to fin' me aff my post!" He did not, however, give himself much time for fruitless regrets; but, packing up his treasures quickly, he followed on the steps of his master.

Duncairn had been dining late on the previous evening at the club, when a telegraphic message had been handed to him, acquainting him, with its usual economy of words, that Lady Gordon had that morning been prematurely confined of a still-born son, and that her own life was despaired of. The sudden shock staggered him for a moment, but his first thought was how to get home most expeditiously. His arrangements were soon made; and he found himself steaming away in the train northward be-

fore he had well had time to consider his position.

It would, perhaps, be hardly fair strictly to analyse the feelings and thoughts which chased each other through his mind during that journey. First came grief and disappointment at the loss of his heir; then followed self-reproach for having been absent so long, and anguish at the recollection of the mutual feelings with which he and Jane had parted. This thought left the door ajar to admit another that lurked slyly behind it. If he were free, might he not have it in his power to compensate Lily, by a life of devotion, for all his injustice to her? and might there not be a life of bliss opening out before him? It was a sweet and soothing thought, and had the faculty, torpedo-like, of deadening the better feelings in his heart; so it was suffered to remain for a time undisturbed, and now it spread out its portfolio of pictures, and drew fresh scenes of happy domestic life, with congeniality of mind, and pleasures and occupations shared, and many mutual enjoyments. It was a cunning little elf, too, and moved about so quietly, and brought out its perspective glasses so noiselessly, and with such an air of innocence, that it had very nearly succeeded in chasing out all former occu-

pants, and taking possession of the citadel, when a rude voice shouting "Derby station!" roused up the chatelain suddenly from his dream of bliss, and set him to work vigorously to eject the little sly intruder, and to reproach himself sharply for his momentary, and almost unconscious, infidelity to his poor Jane, suffering — dying — perhaps even now dead!

It was dark when he left the train next evening at the station nearest to Duncairn. There were then seven or eight miles of weary road yet to be traversed before he could reach home, or obtain any information. He threw himself back in the fly, and tried to restrain his anxiety.—In vain!—It seemed as if all his better thoughts and feelings, outraged by the indulgence with which the little contraband sprite had been allowed to establish his sway, had risen *en masse* for revenge. Self-upbraidings for having married with only a divided love for his wife; reproaches for not having been more lenient to her feelings, and not making sufficient allowance for the difference in their early habits; thoughts of how he might have conciliated her more; been more indulgent to her tastes, and less strict in the pursuit of his own; questionings whether on that last morning he had not been unjust towards her?

Whether his anger had arisen so much at her falsehood, as at the glimpse it had given him of what he had missed by it? Whether it might not indeed have been affection which had led her into error? Whether love and jealousy in an imperfectly regulated mind might not have tempted her too strongly? Whether he had any right to resent her fault, even if it had proceeded from less pardonable causes?—Had he been always upright and honest towards her? Had he not reserved a secret corner in his heart into which she had not been permitted to look?— There was a pause at this question, and the former little elf made an attempt to obtain a hearing once more, but the rush of other voices was too strong for him, and, with a sigh, he retreated again behind the veil.

The fly stopped at the park gates. The old woman came out with a lanthorn and fumbled at the lock, and seemed as if she would never succeed in opening it. Leslie put his head out impatiently, and inquired what news of Lady Gordon? The quick question and the sound of the laird's voice bewildered the old dame. She commenced a string of welcomes and apologies, giving up all idea of opening the gates meanwhile. Leslie lost patience, and with an oath drew in his head, and called to

his servant to get down and let him through. He heard the old woman say, "My leddy was as bad as bad could be the mornin', naebody had been that way sinsyne."

They drove on; they came in sight of the house, and Leslie scanned it as well as the obscurity would permit, in the hope that its exterior would give some clue to the secrets within. It presented nothing but a dark mass; no lights were discernible, for Jane's bedroom was on the other side; and, in the momentary pause of the carriage before the door was opened, there was no sound but the distant murmuring plunge of the sea against the steep cliffs.

The door opened; Leslie was already out of the carriage. "Your lady?" he said hurriedly as he entered.

"She is still alive, Sir Leslie," was the hushed reply. Hushed, though at the distance of her room from the hall no voice could have reached her ear.

"Where is Mr. Fairburn?" was the next question.

"He left nearly a week ago, Sir Leslie."

"Where for?" But, before the answer could be given, he was upstairs. He opened the door of

Jane's dressing-room noiselessly. The Doctor sat in an easy chair; his entrance aroused him from a doze.

"How is Lady Gordon? May I go in?" were the rapid questions.

"Yes, Duncairn, you may go in, but my lady will not know you, and it will be better not to speak to her; she has never been conscious since the day before yesterday."

Leslie entered softly, moving on tiptoe over the thick carpet, which betrayed no sound. Indistinct mutterings came from the bed; the nurse was seated by the side of it; Slater leaned over the opposite side. The only light was from a night-light, and the flickering of the fire. Jane lay tossing from side to side, and throwing her arms wildly about. Sometimes murmuring indistinguishable sounds, then, with a start, catching at some object as if for defence. Leslie gently put Slater aside, and, kneeling down by the bedside, he took one of her hands in his. She turned quickly towards him. "Charles!" she said, in a hoarse whisper—"the stag! don't hold me so tight!" The words gave a pang to Leslie, but he subdued it, and kept the hand imprisoned between both his own. Jane looked fixedly at him. "Let me go,

Charles!" she cried. He bent down his head upon the hand that was in his. "Jane," he whispered, "your husband is with you; you are safe." She laughed wildly—"Charles!" she cried, "you will take me from him—See! we shall be killed! —— " The Doctor entered.

"It is better not to speak, Duncairn," he said. "Lady Gordon has had a very severe fright, and it is necessary to keep her very quiet. She is better alone; I was obliged to send Miss Osborne away from her."

Leslie rose from the bedside.

"I will go and change my dress," he said, "and, when I return, you may go to bed, Slater, and leave your lady with us. I shall not leave her room to-night. Can nothing more be done, doctor?"

"Nothing, Duncairn, till we can succeed in inducing sleep. She has never been still for a moment since the accident happened," was the reply.

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