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GEORGE GEORGE

OTHER

C O U S I N G E O R G E ,

A N D

O T H E R T A L E S .

COUSIN GEORGE,

AND

OTHER TALES.

COMPILED

BY MRS. WALKER.

“ L'on ne doit pas trouver etrange
Que dans ce recueil comme en tout
Le bon ne soit pas sans melange.”

LE FRANC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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1845.

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16/10/51 Ronda

DEDICATED,

BY PERMISSION,

TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE DUCHESS OF KENT.

Presented by 20/5/58

COUSIN GEORGE.

Behold yon gaudy painted flower,
Which opened to the morning rays,
It sprang and blossom'd in an hour,
With night's chill dew its bloom decays ;
Yet simple maidens as they rove
Mistake, and call it flower of love.—
But Love's true flower before it springs
Deep in the breast its fibres shoots ;
It clasps the heart, around it clings,
And fastens by a thousand roots.
Then bids its strengthened blossoms climb,
And brave the chilling power of Time.

AMONG those implicated in the rebellion of 1745, were two faithful friends, George Lord Sardon, and Edward Towneley. They had been educated together in the Seminary of Douay, and there imbibed those jacobinical principles, which

sealed their destiny. Sardon was the most enthusiastic of the two, and it was principally at his suggestion that his friend took the field. His father, the Earl of Lovel, did not refuse his sanction for his son's evincing his loyalty to the last scion of the unfortunate race of Stuart, to whose cause he was firmly attached, but ill health prevented his coming forward himself, and whilst the heir of his house joined the banner of Charles Edward at Derby, he was unwillingly compelled to remain with his younger son at Lovel Castle, in Cumberland, a passive, but not uninterested looker-on.

Lord Sardon and his friend had married two sisters, the co-heiresses of Mr. Wytham, a rich landed proprietor; but no domestic ties could withdraw them from their hostile purposes, to which a high sense of honour was the instigator.

After the fatal battle of Culloden, among the numerous victims of the revengeful spirit of him, who was with justice styled William the Butcher, was the unfortunate Edward Towneley, who was executed for high treason, notwithstanding all the efforts that were made to save him.

A price was put on Sardon's head, but he escaped to France; he was put under attainder and declared an outlaw, but being in possession of no estates, none could be forfeited, and though attempts were made to molest his family, they were fruitless, as nothing could be proved in any manner culpable towards the Government, against his father and his brother.

Lady Sardon with her infant soon followed her banished husband to the Continent, whilst her afflicted sister, the widow of poor Towneley, took up her abode with her father, and for the rest of her life remained in utter retirement, occupied solely with the only comfort she had left, a daughter born a few months after the dreadful calamity which deprived her of her husband.

The Sardons were well received at the French Court, and found themselves better off than the generality of Charles Stuart's followers; for Lord Lovel obtained the means of supplying them with remittances, which enabled them to live in comfort, and without the baneful necessity of applying through their chief to the French

Ministry for assistance and support. They remained at Paris many years.

But happiness could not be the lot of the exiled one. Separation from his friends and country was a trifling evil, compared to the grief which weighed upon his mind, as he considered himself the cause of his loved friend and companion's cruel death; for it was through his persuasions that Towneley had left an adored wife to whom he was but lately united, and plunged into the vortex of rebellion. Every thing he had possessed in landed property was confiscated to Government, and his widow and child became entirely dependant on her father's bounty; a deep and fixed melancholy oppressed Sardon's heart as he brooded over his loss. This constant sorrow and feeling of remorse, long incapacitated him from mixing with the world, and when time had somewhat soothed his grief, he still shrunk from a society which was repugnant to his religious principles and strong ideas of morality; for at that period Paris was the receptacle of self-named philosophers or free-thinkers, who made it their boast to trample upon every

sentiment that most deserved the veneration of the pious and the worthy part of mankind. A reinforcement of wit and genius rendered the temptation of following examples destructive to the happiness of the soul, more dangerous. The Voltaires, the d'Alemberts, the Diderots emitted rays of brilliant lustre, whose fascinations, more powerful than the rattlesnake's, led equally to perdition.

From thence could it be a relief to turn to the precincts of a court, where such a one as Madame de Pompadour reigned the object of universal adulation? Thither the witty and agreeable Marechale de Mirepoise, offered to lead the gentle wife of Lord Sardon, but he opposed that outrage to delicacy, for such he conceived it, and she had no will but his, no wish but to please and comfort him in the gloom which seemed to have become the habitual tenor of his mind.

A small but select society of congenial souls was not, however, impossible to find. Paris still harboured some few uncontaminated by the vice and irreligion surrounding them; and

among those, one more excellent and superior in everything that could make man a treasure to a friend, than any person they met with, was an Englishman and a priest, nay (start not my readers), a Jesuit; his mind was stored with learning, his soul beamed with the deepest sense of religious feeling; yet his conversation charmed with as much wit and vivacity as could be found in the coteries of Madame du Deffand or Madame Geoffrin, devoid of all but what was pure and irreprehensible. The excellent qualities of Lord Sardon won his regard, and the melancholy which corroded his happiness interested him for one who in such an atmosphere of heartless insensibility, harboured feelings honourable to virtue and humanity.

He drew him from his sorrow, and in course of time, through his friendly care, the Exile became happier and more cheerful. Religion, pure and untinged by bigotry, was the basis of their friendship, and he considered the worthy Abbè Derville as an angel of light, without whose society life would be a blank.

About this time, many religious dissensions

and troubles were going on in France; disputes among the Jansenists and their opponents, harassed the country with trivial warfares. The King and the Parliament meddled on each side, and made matters worse. The Jesuits were becoming every day more unpopular; for since the violent conduct and persecutions of Le Tellier, Louis the Fourteenth's confessor, many years before, they had been rendered objects of detestation, and the impolitic despotism exercised by one ambitious man, who had gained the ascendant over an ignorant prince enfeebled by age, caused, in course of time, the ruin of a set of men most useful to society by their learning, their cleverness, and ability, in the instruction of youth.

Abbè Derville, disgusted with the situation of affairs in France, determined to remove to Rome, whither he was pressingly invited by the reigning Pope, Benedict the Fourteenth, to whom he was personally known, and who esteemed his character as much as it deserved. Thither he accordingly went, and Lord Sardon with his family accompanied him to Rome, for he wished

not to remain at Paris after his friend's departure, and to return to England was still impossible, as during George the Second's life, the reversion of his attainder could not be obtained.

The climate of Rome proved injurious to the health of Lady Sardon, who, as they still remained in that town during the month of September, the season considered to be the most pernicious, was seized with an illness in consequence of the malaria, which, ere long, brought her to the grave. Her death was that of a saint; she blessed her husband and her son, and tenderly naming her father and sister, besought Lord Sardon for her sake, to be, if ever necessity required it, a protector to that beloved sister and her child.

Her husband did not survive her many years. On the accession of a new and more liberal King, his attainder was reversed, and he was permitted to return to England; but his health was much impaired, and his father's death, soon after, destroyed the only reason he had for wishing to be in his native country once more, after an absence of sixteen years. He preferred remaining in Italy for the present, and left his

estates and property to the management of his brother, who was an active and careful agent. He made up his mind not to return to them until his son should be some years older, when his education would be further advanced. To that son he gave his utmost care; he was a delicate youth, and his father feared that taking him to a colder climate, ere he had gained sufficient strength to bear the change, might lead him to consumption, which was the reason he gave to his brother for not joining him yet at the family mansion.

Mr. James Lovel had married a niece of Mr. Wytham, and consequently a first cousin of Mrs. Towneley and Lord Lovel's late wife. He was already a widower, with three daughters and a son, and resided with them at Lovel Castle by desire of his brother, until his proposed return, which was intended to take place in the course of two years.

But the resolutions of man are often doomed to be dispersed to the winds like chaff in a hurricane; ere that time elapsed, Lord Lovel had ceased to exist. His son inherited an immense

property, which would still be increased by accumulations during the remainder of his minority; besides which, his maternal grandfather Mr. Wytham, had at his death made him coheir with Mrs. Towneley and her daughter, to all his fortune.

By the will of his father the young man was left to the guardianship of Abbè Derville until he came of age, with restrictions that he should remain with him till that time, nor without his consent return to England. The guardianship of the property was vested in his uncle, with a princely allowance, which admitted of his continuing to reside, during his nephew's minority, at Lovel Castle in the most splendid style. Lord Lovel also stipulated in his will, under certain forfeitures of part of the unentailed property being otherwise bestowed than on his son, who, in case of complying with the conditions stated, would come in for the whole, that the young man should, after he became of age, choose one of his cousins for his wife.

It was not by the advice of Abbè Derville that clause was inserted; he never would have

sanctioned a restraint being thus put on the affections of his pupil : it originated in a strong feeling of regard for his only brother, who had always acted well towards him, and to whom, from his objection to alienating the family property from his son, he would leave no more than a trifling legacy. This clause appeared a compensation, by being the means of raising one of his daughters to a splendid situation in life.

As the time drew nearer, the youth often conversed on the subject with his friend, and always spoke with a becoming firmness.

“ I shall,” said he, “ be anxious and willing to execute the wishes of my father, if upon acquaintance I find there is one among my cousins likely to ensure my happiness ; should that not be the case, no pecuniary consideration shall induce me to sacrifice the comfort of my future days to one who may be frivolous, and devoid of heart or principle.”

“ Among so many,” replied the Abbè, “ it is to be hoped you will find one who will answer your ideas of deserving the name of your wife.

I hear they are all well educated, and brought up with principles of religious and moral rectitude.”

Derville let slip no opportunity of improving the mind of his pupil. During the time he continued under his care, he gave up all other thoughts to attend to him alone, and the tenderest parent could not have been more anxious about an only child. His object was to make him a worthy and distinguished member of society; his heart was already formed to his wish, and his capacity was encouraging to an instructor. They travelled through distant countries, and learnt the laws and customs of nations. A passionate admirer of the arts, the young man roamed with delight among the beautiful specimens of antiquity exhibited to his view at Rome and Florence and the rest of Italy, and his manners were improved by entering into society at the different courts. England alone was unexplored, but there his wishes tended—he longed to see his native land, his paternal domains, the country which his ancestors had illustrated by unblemished worth and valor. He

longed also for the sincere and unsophisticated heart which was to blend with his own, and trusted he might find it among his cousins, and thus be enabled to obey his father's last injunctions; but his eagerness was much damped by the uncertainty of his success in the search, for to vanity and art he was determined never to ally himself.

In consequence of fatigue and cold, occasioned by an excursion among the mountains of Switzerland at a season of the year rather too advanced, he was seized with a serious illness, which alarmed his companion, who attended him long in a miserable state of anxiety on account of the uncertainty of his recovery. Derville reproached himself with imprudence in not having been more careful of his pupil's health, nor suffered him to endanger it by want of caution; but he had of late appeared to be perfectly restored to vigour and strength, from having as a boy been delicate and fragile. The poor Abbè, in his anxiety, wrote a melancholy answer to Mr. James Lovel's regular inquiries on the subject of his nephew, and for a long

period, his letters concerning his convalescence were anything but satisfactory. Mr. Lovel offered to come abroad to them, but to this his nephew strongly objected, earnestly requesting the Abbè would prevent his giving himself that trouble, by the assurance of all danger being over, and that he hoped, ere many months were passed, he might find himself strong enough to prepare for his journey to England, whither his guardian and friend would accompany him ; for under the new king no acts of violence against the ministers of the ancient religion of the country were now to be apprehended. George the Third since his accession, had shewn nothing but a love of mercy to the unfortunate, and it was even suspected by some that he was a Jacobite himself at his heart. It is certain that when soon after his accession it was notified to him that the Pretender had been seen in the metropolis, and that he positively was in the country though disguised, he declared that he knew to the contrary, and nothing could induce him to consent to any measures being taken for his apprehension.

The young Earl of Lovel and his preceptor spent the autumn and winter at Naples, where we will leave him for the re-establishment of his health, and give some account of the inhabitants of Lovel Castle.

Mr. James Lovel was a man of honour and respectability, but not indued with the delicacy of feeling which had been the characteristic of his brother. Constantly residing with his father, and after that father's death, established for a length of time with a handsome allowance at the family mansion, he had never known the want of money, of comforts, or superiority of situation among those with whom he associated. On his nephew's coming of age he would unavoidably lose all the advantages he now possessed, for his fortune, as a younger son, was comparatively small; this he looked forward to with no pleasure, and probably felt no great vexation when the accounts of the young Earl's ill health brought to his mind the possibility of his affluence being increased instead of lessened, by the demise of a relation whom he had never seen since his infancy, and therefore naturally could

not feel much affection for. At all events it was a consoling reflection to him, that should things turn out otherwise, and the youth live, he would, in all probability, on his arrival in England, choose Clarinda Lovel for his wife, for she was the beauty of the country, clever, lively, and accomplished. Clarinda was his eldest daughter, and had been from her childhood the 'darling' of her father. From her natural fascinations she generally gained an ascendant over all with whom she associated; was ambitious and aspiring—disdained the homage of uncivilized country Squires, and entered into her father's ideas and wishes that she should become mistress of the Lovel domains, which would raise her to a situation in life most splendid and affluent.

Having no doubts of the attractions of her beauty, and of her powers of pleasing, she determined to make a conquest of her cousin as soon as he should arrive. Meanwhile offers were not wanting, but not of sufficient worldly advantage to interfere with her plans. One young man of more merit than the rest, the son of Sir Harry Stanley, would, perhaps, have been her choice,

had there been no cousin in the way ; but he was poor, and had no prospects of becoming rich, so could not be thought of.

Her sister Theresa was not so fastidious. She was less handsome than herself, and was tired of hearing their father's assurances that she had no chance of being selected by Lord Lovel as his bride, in preference to Clarinda. She therefore accepted the hand of the first person who proposed to her, and became the wife of a good-natured young man of some property, and took up her station in a neighbouring country house. Bella, the third daughter, was not yet old enough to be put in competition. She was scarcely fourteen, yet promised to be nearly as handsome as her elder sister.

Never had the time appeared to pass so drearily for Clarinda as during this winter. Impressed with the idea of the approaching change in his situation, and depression of his finances by the expected return of his nephew to take possession of his domains, and his own consequent removal to some inferior place of residence, with a reduced establishment, and

small income, her father had grown more sparing in his expenses of late, and less open to hospitality. He saw the necessity of saving money, instead of incurring debts which he could not have the means of paying without recurring to the generosity of a relation, whose inclination to serve his family was as yet unascertained. Few, therefore, and far between, were the invitations now received by the neighbourhood to the mansion of the Lovels, once far-famed for hospitality and splendour. Some old Jacobite friends still kept their stations at his table, but these were not likely to suit the young beauty, who found her only relaxation in occasional visits to her married sister. The halls of the castle seldom now resounded with merriment, and through the long, dark oak galleries the old family pictures seemed to frown on each other in incessant gloom. Even the Christmas festivities had not taken place with their usual glee, though the mummers and sword-dancers could not be refused admittance without creating a rebellion in the establishment.

Clarinda sometimes remonstrated with her

father on the increasing dulness of their existence, after having been used to a succession of visitors at the castle, and a series of gay doings each preceding winter, and he generally answered:—
“ When you are my Lady Lovel, my dear girl, you will be able to have as much company as your heart can wish; for my part, I cannot afford it.”

He had his own recreations of hunting, shooting, and playing chess with his old cronies, therefore left his daughter to amuse herself as well as she could with her sister, and the governess, and an occasional female visitor.

“ Ah ! (she thought) what avails it to be young and fair,
To move with elegance, to dress with care.
When none admire 'tis useless to excel :
Where none are beaux 'tis vain to be a belle !
Let me be seen—could I that wish obtain,
All other wishes my own power would gain.”*

It may, therefore, be judged it was with no small pleasure she learnt that her father was obliged to go to London for a short time about business, and that he intended to take her with

* Lyttelton.

him. Oh! how her heart fluttered when she thought of entering the gay circles of the metropolis! What admiration she would excite—what innumerable conquests she would make! Never mind cousin George, she should find much better than him. Dukes, princes, would be at her feet, and her success would be equal to that of the beautiful Miss Gunnings, whom she had heard so much of; for her glass told her she was as handsome as they could possibly have been; in short, she intended, like Prior's Kitty, to "set the world on fire."

With joy did she then mount into the old lumbering family coach, which with four heavy, long-tailed horses, was to convey her father, herself, and her maid to London; after a week's labour through rugged and almost impassable roads, rendered worse by a thaw which gave hopes of the approach of spring, and had at least the merit of subduing the intenseness of a northern winter's cold.

The last evening of their journey, as it grew dusky, they met with an unpleasant adventure. It was difficult in those days, to pass the dark

heaths in the vicinity of the metropolis late in the evening, without running the risk of being attacked by highwaymen ; and it was so long since Mr. Lovel had been in that part of the world, that he had forgotten this danger, otherwise he would not have thought of entering London at such a late hour, particularly when accompanied by his daughter.

The carriage was suddenly stopped, and a horseman presented a pistol at the window, demanding money, whilst another kept aloof the servant, who was unarmed as well as Mr. Lovel, the latter offered no resistance, and gave his purse containing some guineas.

“ This is not enough,” cried the robber ; “ you must have more, travelling in this style—quick ! your watches, and the lady’s purse, and trinkets, or by G—” for he heard the sound of a horse approaching, and again presented the pistol.

“ Frighten not the lady,” said Mr. Lovel ; “ you shall have every thing you want ;”—and quickly gave his watch ; Clarinda, trembling with fear, added hers, with the gold chain and

cross which hung from her neck, yet the man was not satisfied and continued swearing horrid oaths. At that moment a pistol was fired, which hit the miscreant, and he fell lifeless from his horse—his fellow-highwayman instantly fired on the perpetrator of this act, but fortunately missed him, and galloped away like lightning before he could be seized.

The father and daughter, stunned by the report of the pistol, which they fancied levelled at themselves, were surprised to find themselves uninjured, and the former warmly expressed his thanks to the person who had come to their rescue so opportunely, and saved them by his intrepidity and presence of mind from so violent an assault.

He was a young gentleman, travelling on horseback, with his servant, who carried his portmanteau, (as was the custom in those days,) not ignorant of his chance of being attacked by robbers in the neighbourhood of London, he had provided himself with the means of defence, and judging, at a short distance, through the twilight which still kept off the approaching obscurity of a moonless night, that the danger of

some travellers required prompt assistance, he took advantage of a turn in the road, dismounted, and gave his horse to his servant; then quickly running through an open thicket, which just concealed him from view, he was enabled to come within reach of the robber, at the very moment when the threats of the villain filled those within the coach with dreadful alarm; his servant had followed him speedily, and would have stopped the second robber had he not fled with precipitation. They examined the unfortunate wretch who had fallen, and would have used measures to restore him to existence, but life was quite extinct. The young gentleman sighed to have been the cause of another's death, but could not regret it, for had he missed him, or attacked him in any other way, it is most probable that the travellers would have been the victims, as his pistol they found to be really loaded.

Mr. Lovel was anxious to continue his journey, lest any other impediment should take place on so dangerous a road; his preserver was about to

bid him farewell, when the other stopped him to inquire his name, and to give him his.

“Should you come to London,” said he, “I shall be happy to see you at No. 6, Spring Gardens. My name is the Honourable James Lovel, whom you will be pleased to ask for, and any way in which I can testify to you my gratitude, will be most welcome to me at any time.”

The stranger bowed, and muttered some words which were not heard, as the carriage began to move. He stopped it for a moment to say, that as he was going the same way, being bound to London, he would be their escort; which both Lovel and his daughter were not sorry to hear, for the postilions having so quickly obeyed the robbers in standing still, and their servant testifying nothing but cowardice, they did not feel very comfortable, as they had still some distance to go.

Mr. Lovel was surprised to hear the gentleman was going to London, for he had fancied he was on his way from thence, as he appeared to be meeting them, but concluded he mistook in

that moment of fear and agitation ; for he could not suppose the stranger's good nature would be carried so far as to induce him to change his route, and retrace his steps for the purpose of escorting them.

It was about the middle of March, and the weather had within a few days become warmer and more spring-like. Clarinda could bear to have her window open, from whence she saw by the light of the stars, that the young gentleman and his servant attended them the whole way. They met with no more disastrous adventures, and arrived safely at the residence which had been procured by Mr. Lovel's solicitor and agent. Their escort took leave of them on their entrance into London.

“ Is he not quite a hero of romance ? ” cried the enthusiastic Clarinda to her father ; “ I am sorry we did not hear his name, and I shall be very much vexed if we should never see him again, which I am afraid is most probable.”

“ Perhaps we shall,” replied Mr. Lovel, “ it is possible he may call, at least, if he is not a

regular Whig, and alarmed at the sound of a Jacobite name."

"He seemed young," said she, "and his voice was gentle and melodious, his figure I am sure is good, I could not make out the exact cast of his features, it was getting so dark, but when the man's pistol flashed across him, I saw distinctly that his eyes were fine, and his countenance bright; had that pistol not missed aim what would have become of us!"

"We were already saved by his action," answered Mr. Lovel, "for his servant put the other highwayman to flight, but I thank Heaven that his life was not the sacrifice to his generous interference on our account."

"So do I, most sincerely," said Clarinda, "and I wish we had any means of rewarding him."

"Well, good night, my dear," her father said, as he took up his bed-room candle, "sleep well, get over your fatigue, and dream as little as you can help it, of this young vanquisher of highwaymen."

These injunctions were only in part obeyed. Clarinda awoke next morning, with a thousand

wild thoughts roaming in her head, among which the idea of her preserver was uppermost. She was in London, whither she had longed so much to come; it was a delightful recollection; yet, still she fancied that nothing could please her if the stranger should not call that day. And so it happened,—he did not come; her father's relation, Lady Sutton, took her out shopping in her carriage, and she went almost unwillingly; for she was afraid he would pay his visit during her absence: yet, it was a great disappointment when she heard no news of him on her return.

“Is it not very strange?” said she to her father, “I thought he would have called.”

“Perhaps,” he replied, “he does not imagine his receiving further thanks from me so necessary as you do; indeed, it ought to be my business to call upon him as he saved our lives, but though, I dare say he told me his name and address, when I informed him of mine, they never came to my ears, so it is not in my power.”

That night they went to the Opera, and next morning Clarinda underwent a series of shops,

china sales, and a walk in the Mall; that evening, she was sitting at tea with her father and Mr. Selby, one of his friends, when a gentleman was announced, whom she soon recognized to be their deliverer. The cordiality with which he was received, seemed to gratify the young man, who had entered the room with timidity; he soon recovered his ease, and informed them that his name was Edward Talbot.

A good name, thought Mr. Lovel; by which he meant, one whose owner was likely to have similar opinions to his own.

“From a branch of the Duke of Tyrconnel’s family?” he asked, “or from the English Talbots?”

“From the former, I believe,” he replied, “my family is originally Irish, but settled in Devonshire, on a small inheritance derived through my mother; denied the prerogative of fighting for my own country, I had thoughts of entering the Austrian service, but now that peace is made, I should not, perhaps, find that any advantage in improving my fortunes.”

“Well, Sir,” said Mr. Lovel, “if it should be ever in my power to serve you. you may com-

mand me, but I fear it will be long, if ever before that will be the case, for I am an alien myself to any benefits which may be derived from being an Englishman."

He did not like the young man the less for his being of the same principles as himself, and proceeded to mention that he had expected him the day before, and had regretted his not coming, as he was anxious to repeat his thanks for the service he had rendered to him and his daughter.

"I was occupied," said he, "in giving information concerning the robbery, and the death of the robber, that his body might be removed; and in procuring respectable attestations to my own character, which were necessary on the occasion; my servant and the postilions were also brought forward as witnesses, and you will not object, Sir, if required, to appear likewise for the same purpose."

"Assuredly not," he replied.

The young man continued, "The other highwayman has been taken, who will probably make a confession. I am anxious to find out, if he who died by my hand, (he shuddered as

he spoke), has left a family, that, if in want, I may make them some compensation."

"How astonishing it is," said Mr. Selby, "that the English are so tenacious of their nominal liberty, as not to allow of an armed patrol on the roads, as in other countries, to be a security against the highwaymen and footpads, who infest the country; the people would rather run the risk of being robbed and murdered, than be supposed to be in any way under martial law, nay, they are amused by, and vain of the dexterity and audacity of the thieves, and the accounts given in the newspapers even create an interest for the villains themselves."

"It is true," said Mr. Lovel, "that in the details we read of, the highwaymen appear to be much more gentlemanlike than those we had to deal with, who seemed very much inclined to blow our brains out."

"And so they sometimes were," replied Selby; "a curious adventure of the sort happened in a family with whom I am intimate. Mr. and Mrs. L. Smith reside in Yorkshire, at a country seat a good way from the high road,

and were expecting a friend to arrive from a distance on a visit to them, but the exact time had not been specified in his letter. Mr. Smith was called away upon business to York, and charged his lady, should his friend come during the two or three days of his absence, to receive him courteously, and detain him till his return; this friend Mrs. Smith had never seen, and was a college acquaintance of her husband. The day after his departure arrived the very gentleman, a polite, good-looking, agreeable person, with his servant. Upon learning the absence of the master of the house, who was an old friend whom he had not met since they were at college together, he proposed deferring his visit to another period, and pursuing his journey, but Mrs. Smith's hospitality would not be balked: she assured him his room was in readiness, and that her husband's return might probably take place the next day or the day after: that she was sure Mr. Smith never would forgive her should she suffer him to depart. The gentleman was at last prevailed upon to stay, and dined *en trio* with Mrs. Smith and her sister, a very

pretty young woman, with whom he soon appeared to be fascinated. His manners, his conversation, all pleased the ladies extremely; and when they took leave at night to retire to their slumbers, the young lady lingered in her sister's room for a few minutes before she went to bed, in order to talk over the occurrence of the day, and the pleasant impression made by their visitor.

“ ‘I declare Fanny,’ said Mrs. Smith, ‘he seems quite smitten with you—that ballad you sang to him certainly won his heart; well, it will be a lucky visit if he really takes a fancy to you, for my husband told me that he will have seven thousand a year.’

“ Fanny laughed, and wishing her sister good night, went up stairs to her chamber. Mrs. Smith was accustomed to sit up reading for some time after she was in her room, and then to put herself to bed, seldom requiring the attendance of her maid at night. She was thus occupied when the door was suddenly opened, and her gentlemanlike visitor put a pistol to her head.”

“Heavens!” interrupted Clarinda; “how dreadful! what did she do? what did she say?”

“She said and did nothing, as you may suppose, but was ready to faint. ‘Madam,’ said the robber, ‘I know you have a thousand guineas, or perhaps more, in that bureau, it was paid to your husband some days ago, and given to your care; let me have it directly, and I leave the house without your having further molestation; hesitate but a moment and you are a dead woman.’

“She instantly rose, determined to obey his commands, but trembling to such a degree that she was scarcely aware of what she was about; oppressed with terror she fell back again in her chair; he assisted her to rise, and hurried her to the bureau. She drew the key from her pocket and turned it in the lock: it opened—the money was in different drawers, and almost all in cash; she opened them all, and as she did so, most of it fell scattered on the floor, for in her agitated and terrified state she seemed not to know what she did. The man stooped to pick up the pile of guineas which had fallen

to the ground, and at that lucky moment she escaped to the door, was out in half a second, and doubly turned the key. She flew to the staircase, where she found her man-servant bound and gagged, disengaged him quickly, then rang the alarum bell in a loud manner; by the man's celerity the rest of the servants were released from their bondage, for the robber and his pretended servant had managed to gag them all; the steward and gardener came to the summons from the alarum bell, as well as all the village, and the robber's servant was seized; meanwhile he himself, unable to open the door, (and there was only one to Mrs. Smith's room), forced open the shutters of the window and the window itself, and leaped thence to the ground: it was high, and his ankle was put out by the fall, which rendered him unable to move, by which means he was taken. I have heard Mrs. Smith and her sister were quite miserable on being compelled to appear as witnesses against him, when they were subpœnaed on his trial."

Mr. Lovel and young Talbot were mutually

pleased with each other; the manners of the latter were more than agreeable and gentleman-like, they were captivating; and Clarinda beheld in him a complete specimen of a *heros de roman*; his figure was tall and elegant, his features beautifully regular: and his brilliant dark eyes beamed with a sweet expression of goodness; his fine countenance was flushed by the glow of youth, and when he laughed or smiled, he shewed the most perfect teeth imaginable.

In the course of a few days' acquaintance, Mr. Lovel found him to be well received in several noble houses, in consequence of strong recommendations, and he was a welcome inmate at the tables of the Dukes of Norfolk and Nivernois, then the Ambassador from France.

Charmed with Clarinda as much as she was fascinated by him, he seemed to prefer her society to any other: was her constant attendant at the opera and play, as well as at Ranelagh, and in her morning walks. But to Court he would not go, though Mr. Lovel strongly advised him to divest himself sufficiently of his party spirit for the purpose; but his reasons for

not testifying his allegiance to the present Sovereign, were of a more ignoble kind than were supposed. He candidly confessed that he was poor, and would not be at the expense of a court-dress, which, in silks, embroidery, and point lace, was very likely to take a quarter of his yearly income.

“How handsome he would look in a full court-dress suit,” said Clarinda to her father; but the latter was too near-sighted to pay much attention to beauty in others, and cared not how far his friend might appear to advantage in public, so he was useful to him in enlivening his society at home.

Miss Lovel was presented to the Queen, and felt lost without her usual attendant; but in the admiration she met with, her regret for his absence was soon banished, and though she did not make such rapid conquests as she had expected, she still saw reason for considering herself hailed as a star of the first magnitude. She was invited to a party at Leicester house, and to several other brilliant assemblies; but although much admired and surfeited with com-

pliments, she seemed to have made no lasting impression on the hearts of the courtiers, nor did any noble admirer find his way to her father's house to seek her hand. To be a Jacobite was still a stigma, not yet erased from prejudiced ideas, and in her father's own coterie she saw no one worthy of her.

The only amusement which Mr. Lovel enjoyed in London was the play, for he delighted in Garrick's acting, and one evening went thither with Lady Sutton, Clarinda, and Talbot, to see him perform *Lothario* in the *Fair Penitent*: a pantomime was the after-piece. Between that and the play, a tumult arose in the theatre, and all eyes were directed to the stage-box opposite to them, where Lord Stair, who was just come from Paris, exhibited a muff, which did not please the eyes of the all-domineering English public, who began to greet him with hisses and outrageous hootings. As soon as he learnt the cause of this attack, which the accompanying words of "down with the muff" explained, he put it aside, and bowed to the audience. This brought down applause as violent; and during the com-

motion, a little gentleman in the pit spied Mr. and Miss Lovel; it was the apothecary of their village. Proud of seeing any one he knew, he said to his neighbour:—

“Do you see that gentleman in the laced suit, and that fine young lady near him? It is Mr. Lovel, of Lovel Castle, who lives near us in Cumberland! I know him, but I do not think he recollects me: I am trying to catch his eye, and you will see him bow.”

Mr. Lovel was very near-sighted, and Clarinda had no wish to return bows from the pit. The little man bobbed in vain, but talked so much about it, that some wags amused themselves at his expense, with saying to others, “Do you see that gentleman in the laced suit? it is Mr. Lovel, and this gentleman knows him.” These words went round, and the noise became so great, that at last Mr. Lovel heard his own name, to his great surprise, encored by half the pit below him, and would have been compelled to quit the theatre, had not the rising of the curtain for the pantomime silenced all.

So easy was it in those days to create a riot,

when every petty mob aspired to be considered as a despotic sovereign. The Duke of York was in the royal box that night, and as he passed Clarinda in the lobby, he bowed and spoke to her. Lord Mordaunt who was in his suite, lingered to pay her compliments on her name having resounded in the theatre, which, he told her, he concluded was occasioned by the brilliancy of her beauty; and as she and her party were long detained in waiting for their carriage, he continued near her, and her conversation appeared to have peculiar charms for him. Mr. Lovel now grew impatient at the delay, though his daughter was not. It was occasioned by the stupidity of his Cumberland servant, the same who had shewn so much cowardice at the attack made on them by robbers, on the road to London, and whom he did not dismiss, because he had lived from a boy at Lovel Castle, and was the son of Clarinda's nurse: but his wits were inadequate to all that was required in the land of dissipation. He came, however, at last, and Lord Mordaunt, offering his hand to Clarinda to lead her to the carriage, she accepted it

willingly, and Talbot was superseded by the nobleman, which did not pass unobserved by the tenacious youth, long accustomed to be her escort. But what will not a coronet do? In those days they were much scarcer articles than at present, and, therefore, it is to be supposed, more valued. The next morning Lord Mordaunt called in Spring Gardens; but he was ascertained to be a married man, and had the character of being a profligate, consequently his future visits were not encouraged.

Mr. Lovel was anxious to hear his servant Joey's account of the play, it being the first time of his having witnessed an entertainment of the sort, and as he brought in the rolls for breakfast, he asked him how he liked Garrick's performance.

"Oh, sir! it was wonderfully fine," he answered.

His master, rather surprised at his taste, inquired what part he thought he did best.

"Oh, sir," he replied, holding up his hands in extacy, "it was when he jumped through the hat!"

“ Well,” said Mr. Lovel, highly amused at Harlequin being taken for Garrick, “ and Mrs. Cibber, who was Calista, in the first piece—do you approve of her?”

“ Ah !” said he, “ you will never see her again ; for she stuck herself, and she is dead.”

The time fixed for their stay in London was now elapsed, Mr. Lovel had finished the business he came about, and signified his intention of returning home. Clarinda regretted the gaieties still going on in the capital, and thought with horror of the *ennui* of Lovel Castle, which she should now feel more than ever, having experienced the contrary during the last month. She could not help making some complaints on the subject to Mr. Talbot, adding how sorry she should be to lose his society.

“ If your regret is sincere,” he replied, “ it depends upon you to put an end to it. I am under the obligation of paying some visits in the north, and should you and your father make me welcome, I would willingly spend a short time at your house ; for believe me, I should also lament most truly if we were never to meet again.”

“Never to meet again!” cried Clarinda, “that would be too dreadful to think of.”

She flew to her father, and earnestly requested he would invite Talbot to join them at Lovel Castle, which he was delighted to do, for he had taken a great fancy to that young man, whom he always found attentive and kind to himself, as well as to his daughter. The matter was easily arranged, and Clarinda, on leaving London, though vexed at coming away so soon, and before any brilliant proposal had been made to her, did not feel so much fear of *ennui* and loneliness, since she knew Talbot would shortly be their visitor.

She had a great deal to tell her sisters on her return, and spoke much in favour of their expected guest.

“How!” cried the pert Bella, “is that all you have brought back—a plain Mister? I thought you would have found a Duke, with fifty thousand pounds at least, and a coach and six; and so Cousin George would have to wait for me after all; but I see you have come down in your ideas.”

“ Pshaw !” said Clarinda, “ Mr. Talbot is not a suitor—he is only a friend.”

Mr. Lovel received him with great kindness, and soon found him a most agreeable and useful companion in the country, for he loved shooting, fishing, and hunting, seemed to enjoy every thing at Lovel Castle, like a boy escaped from school; and was expert at backgammon and chess, perhaps, indeed, too much so to please his opponent; he rode and walked with Clarinda, drew caricatures to amuse Bella, made *pantins* and harlequins for Theresa’s baby, which pleased the mother more than the child, and talked politics and county business with her husband and Mr. Lovel’s friends, in short he was *l’ami de la maison*, an universally acknowledged favourite, and every body was in love with him, Clarinda at the head.

Things became more serious; he had already given her hints of his admiration, and had already met with involuntary encouragement—it could be nothing but involuntary, for on reflexion she did not like to think on his very small estate in Devonshire, which was even only his in reversion; however that she liked him there

was no doubt, and had he been sure of inheriting only five thousand a year instead of five hundred, as was the case, she would have owned her love; that is saying a great deal for one with such ambitious expectations.

Whilst this was going on, Mr. Lovel received a letter from his correspondent Abbè Derville, informing him that his nephew would be in England in a couple of months, if his health then allowed of his travelling. This was a sign that the youth was still delicate, and a gentleman in London who had seen him in Italy had mentioned to Mr. Lovel that he was thin and pale, and seemed to be consumptive.

“Well,” said he, to his daughter, after reading the letter aloud, “when your cousin comes, it must be your business to cure him, Clarinda.”

“Oh yes, sir,” said she, nodding her head in reply; then she turned with a sly look to Talbot who was sitting near them.

“I should like to know,” said she playfully, “if we are to be considered as part of the household furniture, or to be sent off from hence as soon as my cousin arrives.”

“ Charms like yours,” said Talbot, looking at her fixedly, but with a melancholy air, “ ought not to be so lightly treated.”

“ Certainly not,” replied Mr. Lovel, “ they will, I trust, be considered as heir-looms.”

Clarinda understood what her father meant, and her gaiety fled, her heart beat quicker, and a painful sensation brought forth a sigh; but she composed herself directly, and attempted to laugh—at that moment Mr. Lovel left the room.

“ Clarinda,” said Talbot, seizing her hand, “ charming Clarinda, your happiness depends upon yourself, suffer me to tell you.”

She interrupted him quickly, and drew away her hand.

“ Tell me nothing,” said she, “ which I must not hear—you well know why.”

Her manner seemed to him severe and proud, as she thus put a stop to his further speech in anticipation of its being a declaration of love, and demand for her hand. Was it contempt? He felt hurt and offended, and drew back with a feeling of anger, covering his contracted brow with his hand. She averted her head in silence,

but felt in her heart how happy she might be, and how powerfully her inclination was attracted towards him. They separated with very different sensations. He fancied himself despised, notwithstanding the regard she had at other times almost confessed, whilst Clarinda, loving him more than ever, was, nevertheless, determined to sacrifice her love to her ambition.

Talbot had been informed by Mr. Lovel of the purport of his brother's will, and that the hand of Clarinda was destined to Lord Lovel. He did not hear this without remonstrating with her father on the subject.

“ If,” said he, “ your daughter should not like him, would you render her unhappy ?”

“ Pooh !” answered Lovel, “ what if she does not ? the possession of a coronet and twenty thousand a year will make her ample amends for the want of love.”

“ Worldly man !” thought the young lover.

The same ideas had been instilled into Clarinda's mind ; when Talbot spoke to her as he did to her father, she answered with a sigh,—

“ Is it not a virtue to submit to one's fate ?”

You that are my friend and well-wisher must agree with me on that point."

"Not when there is a possibility of averting that fate."

"After all," said she, "that fate is not so certain as my father thinks, trusting as he does to my good looks. My cousin George has the choice of two—myself, and his mother's niece, Evelina Towneley; or he may, if he likes, wait for Bella. You colour—you raise your eyes to the skies—what is it has struck you so suddenly?"

"I was thinking of a slave market in the East; in this country I thought such a thing was unheard of. Shaftesbury says every one has his price. Your heart, and your beauty, then, are fixed at your cousin's twenty thousand a year and his coronet."

He turned coldly away as he said this, and left her melancholy and depressed; but she soon recovered her spirits, and began to build castles in the air. She thought of her cousin George's pale looks and declining health, and began to fancy herself in a becoming widow's

dress, with a large jointure. Though half ashamed of her own ideas, she could not help imagining some fortunate chance arising which would settle every thing according to her wishes; but, again, hope deserting her, she relapsed into doubt and melancholy, and at last flew to her father, and opened her whole mind to him in despair.

“ Foolish girl !” he cried, “ you know that I am not rich—nay, far from it; for when I have to make up all the accounts for your cousin on his coming of age, I shall have more to make good than I had anticipated, which may reduce me to some distress;—there will then be little left for my children’s fortunes. Now, if George marries you, all will, of course, go smoothly. If Talbot were rich—you blush at his name; but you may believe me when I say there is no one whom I would sooner wish to have for a son-in-law, and there is nothing which would afford me greater pleasure, my dear child, than to indulge your caprice, and make you happy; but only just consider, Clarinda, what you would be, as the case stands now. Fancy yourself

Mrs. Talbot, in a small house on a petty estate of a few acres, the Lord knows where; between a lady and a farmer's wife, scorned on account of your poverty and insignificance by the surrounding nobility and rich gentry, and having no one to associate with but, perhaps, the agent's wife of the great house nearest to you, or the curate's helpmate; passing your life in the dairy, or at the spinning wheel, or, if you like it better, mending your husband's stockings; and are you credulous enough to believe this dark picture would be illuminated for ever and ever by the transient rays of Love? No, no; be assured, and remember the proverb, that when Poverty comes in at the door, Love flies out of the window. I only ask you, my dear Clarinda, to weigh all this prudently in your own mind; be guided by your reason and sense, which I know to be good, and act accordingly."

Clarinda left him in a gloomy state of mind, and for a day or two her natural gaiety seemed to have entirely abandoned her. She was out of spirits and uncomfortable. Then her thoughts wandering again in the midst of her reveries to

the precarious health of her cousin, whilst she was conversing with Talbot, the mention of her widowhood, if she should marry Lord Lovel, escaped her, she fancied he seemed pleased with the idea, for he smiled, and he had not done so since the rebuff he had received from her a few days before. His sermonizing became more rare. He remonstrated no more, and seemed to let things take their course with apparent indifference. In a short time his vexation had entirely subsided, and he became cheerful and agreeable, as was his natural disposition, when no longer disturbed by unwonted emotions. Delighted with this change, which appeared to her to be caused by his entering into her ideas, Clarinda felt more pleased with him than ever.

In the Abbè's letter to Mr. Lovel, he had mentioned that the first visit of his pupil and himself on their arrival in England would be to Rothsand Abbey, the seat of Lord Lovel's aunt, Mrs. Towneley, it being in their way to Lovel Castle, and there they intended to remain a fortnight. This arrangement did not please Mr. Lovel, who was not free from anxiety; for

although he did not think Evelina Towneley, possessed the luxuriant charms of his daughter nor her cleverness, yet he knew her to be pretty and amiable, and, perhaps, bethought himself of the proverb of "first come first served." Besides, he knew there was a sort of link between those two cousins, which, though perhaps not of much consequence, still might have some effect in attaching them to each other. Their mothers being sisters, and, though separated, always affectionate, had brought up their children in the idea that they would one day be united; and on Lady Sardon's death-bed she had charged her son, with her last blessing, to be the protector and friend, and, if possible, the husband of her loved sister's daughter. She and Mrs. Towneley had been brought up in retirement by pious parents, and she was sure her sister would educate her child in good principles. This circumstance Mrs. Towneley had mentioned to Mr. Lovel the last time she was on a visit at the castle, which was about a year before this time; but he did not pay much regard to the communication, for George was quite a boy at

his mother's death, and Mr. Lovel knew, or fancied he knew, enough of the world to think a parent's death-bed recommendation might influence a son to act directly contrary to it, as he had known happen in two other instances.

The visit to Rothsand intended by his nephew, which alarmed him so much, was put a stop to by a melancholy event—the death of Mrs. Towneley. As she felt her health declining she spoke openly to her daughter of her's and her late sister's wishes.

“Evelina,” she said to her, “remember my heart's wish is, that you should be united to your aunt's son.”

“Dearest mother,” she replied, as she tenderly embraced her, “leave that to Heaven!”

“May it be the will of Heaven!” said her mother. “Do not, my child, attach yourself to another whilst George remains unmarried.”

Evelina sighed, and made the promise. Mr. Lovel was appointed her guardian; it was, therefore, incumbent on him to invite her to take up her abode at Lovel Castle for the present, and at the end of a fortnight after her mother's death she arrived.

As the carriage which brought her drove up to the entrance, Mr. Lovel, with his daughters and Talbot, went out to meet her. There were so many incumbrances in the coach that she found it difficult to get out. In her lap she had a nest with a pair of turtle doves sitting on their eggs, they were the favourite birds of her mother. Near her lay an Italian greyhound, and at one of the windows hung a cage with a canary bird in it, both being the gifts of that loved parent, now no more.

“ You seem to have brought quite a *menagerie*, my dear Evelina,” said Mr. Lovel, as he handed her from the carriage.

“ Pray excuse it, Sir,” she said with timidity, “ it is all I have,”—she hesitated,—“ all that remains to me of my dear mother.”

Having given the nest into the charge of her maid, she threw herself into the arms of Clarinda, and burst into a flood of tears.

“ What think you of my rival?” said Miss Lovel with a smile to Talbot, as soon as they were alone together.

“ I think her a dangerous one,” he answered. “ That sweet pale countenance, saddened, yet embellished by affliction—that innocence which beams in her look—that modest demeanour, makes her very interesting. I speak not of beauty, although she is certainly very regularly handsome, but I am thinking of the mind which gives a charm to beauty.”

“ You are quite poetical,” said Clarinda, piqued at his praise of another, “ such a flow of language is inspired, I conclude, by your sudden admiration of our visitor. You think her, then, superior to me ?”

“ I did not express that,” he replied, colouring a little, “ your cousin, when compared to you, is as the bright moon in a clear mild night, opposed to the joyous summer’s day.”

“ What a cargo of animals she has brought with her !”

“ They are emblematical of what she will be when a wife. The bird encaged signifies a good housewife, the dog is fidelity, and the doves sitting on their eggs a careful mother.”

“ Pshaw ! what a ridiculous and far-fetched idea your imagination has conjured up. She said they were only memorials of her mother.”

When all the party were assembled the next day. Mr. Lovel put many questions to his ward, to which she replied with the most melodious voice, and a stream of beautiful sentiments flowed naturally from her lips. She spoke of her mother, and as she did so tears chased each other down her cheeks ; she also mentioned her mother’s love for her late aunt, and for her cousin George, whom she had never yet seen. She spoke of them with enthusiasm and affection. Her expressions and wish for George’s return to England seemed to betray her inmost hopes, and at the same time testified her candour, and the innocence of her young heart. Her bright, dark blue eyes, fringed with long, black eyelashes, her lovely mouth, fine form and angelic countenance, together with the nest of turtle doves which she held in her lap, gave an idea of Guido’s picture of the Purification at Vienna.

Mr. Lovel observed her with thoughtful

looks, and Clarinda whispered to Talbot that she also was of his opinion concerning her.

When Evelina had been ten days an inmate of the castle, her guardian became still more anxious and full of thought, as he beheld her gentle manners, and never-varying sweetness of temper.

Mr. Fairfax, brother to Mr. Lovel's late wife, arrived on a visit; he was a blunt country Squire, not particularly gifted with the graces of polite society. The precarious state of Lord Lovel's health being mentioned before him, he exclaimed in a tone of surprise:—

“ Who has invented that tale for you, brother? He may have been ill last September, and that I believe he was from what I heard from my son, who met him on his travels; but he cannot be so now, for Robert says in his last letters that he saw him again this winter at Naples, and writes word that he was in the best health in the world, and a fine-looking, noble, handsome youth, who is just the thing to turn the heads of all the damsels he meets with.”

“ Is it possible?” said Mr. Lovel; then in a

lower tone he added:—"Does your son know my projects, and has he given you any opinion concerning them?"

"He spoke with George Lovel on the subject of your brother's will, and the injunctions about his cousins, and he is determined to abide by it, on condition he finds any one of the young ladies possessing what he requires."

"And what is that?" asked the other. "Why, not much, perhaps, you will say; but I think it is a great deal. He wishes to meet with a sincere and faithful heart, and an artless, unsophisticated mind. Beauty is understood of course, and that we may fairly promise him; but he wants such perfect love and truth, that methinks he may search the world over before he finds it. What say you, niece Clarinda?" (for he had not continued the conversation in the low tone in which his brother-in-law had put the question to him.) "Will you have this love in store for him, or at least the appearance of it, for that will do as well for the sentimental youth? There will be a fine prize gained by it!"

Clarinda, disgusted by the bluntness of her uncle, turned her head away without speaking, and cast her eyes on Talbot, who seemed highly vexed, bit his lips, and looking down gloomily, quitted the room, and walked into the garden, whither she soon followed him.

“I shall do best,” said he, “to take my departure; for I saw by your countenance the impression Mr. Fairfax’s description of your cousin made on your mind.”

“Ah!” said she, “you are mistaken; and if I were mistress of my own destiny—”

“And are you not?” he asked with bitterness: “you know you are; one word from yourself would seal your fate——” he hesitated, and waited for her answer; but that word she could not speak, she was silent.

“Clarinda,” said he at last, “I am at all events the ruler of my own; therefore I here say farewell for ever.”

She stopped him:—

“Do not go yet,” she said faintly; “allow me time to form a resolution. Oh Talbot! had you but the fortune of my cousin George!”

These words escaped her, for at that moment she felt how happy she should be to become his wife.

“ My fortune is small,” said he, colouring ; “ but I have enough to live on comfortably and with respectability.”

Clarinda thought not, for she knew what his income was ; and she placed in contrast before her mind’s eye, the splendid Countess of the Lovel domains, exercising her hospitality to the surrounding nobility, or covered with sparkling diamonds, and shining forth the unrivalled beauty of a Court birthnight, with the poor housekeeping drudge, in a remote and small country house, such as her father had once set before her eyes. She ran away from Talbot to meditate on it all, and after a long deliberation found it would be little short of madness to give up her ambitious views.

She confided to the noble-minded youth, that she had decided upon sacrificing herself to her father’s wishes for the good of the family ; but it was not without emotion that she declared her ultimate determination, for tears filled her

eyes. "I feel," said she, "how painful is this duty."

Talbot looked at her for some time in silence, then recovering himself he said :—

"Yours, Miss Lovel, does not seem to be the heart which your cousin George is in search of, as Mr. Fairfax informed us. He says it is love and truth which he requires, and, indeed, that is what every honorable man must wish for in a wife; and were I ten times as rich as the Earl of Lovel, I would consider my treasures as contemptible dust, if put in competition with the possession of a fond and affectionate heart—a heart filled with true love! Ah, Clarinda, you discard, you abandon for the sake of splendor, one whom you own that you prefer! you have discarded *me*."

"And do you then think nothing," said she, deeply colouring with shame and anger, "of the sacrifice I make to the benefit of my family?"

"It is *Truth* which you make the sacrifice of at this moment."

"Can you, then, doubt my words? do you not think me sincere?"

“As sincere as you intend to be to your cousin George.”

Clarinda was enraged at his caustic manner.

“That pious innocent Evelina, as you call her,” said she spitefully, “she also wants to be Countess of Lovel, yet you think that quite natural and right in her.”

“Her case is different; she cares not for her cousin’s riches and title, she thinks only of himself——”

“How can you be sure of that? her loving him is out of the question, for she never saw him.”

“She wishes to fulfil the wishes of her departed mother, and if the Earl were a beggar, she would still welcome him to her heart, which is attached to no other.”

This last remark seemed to make a strong impression on Clarinda, and a day or two after she resumed the conversation.

“I wish,” said she, “you would take the trouble of examining Evelina’s ^{*}sentiments as you do mine, only that you may ascertain how little she really is better than myself.”

“Do you wish that merely out of curiosity?”

he replied, "or is it because you fear a rival? has your father recommended it to you? say but the truth Clarinda, if you wish me to be of use to you;" and he put his finger up playfully.

"I will really, then, tell you the truth, dear Talbot," said she. "My father is uneasy, and wishes that Evelina's affections might be engaged before George arrives; and I——, (she took his hand kindly, with one of her most fascinating smiles;) I have also an interest in it: as we cannot be united, I wish the friend of my heart to become my relation, and to obtain a princely fortune; for Evelina is rich, the Abbey and estate of Rothsand is her property. What say you? will you not see it in that light?"

"I care not for riches," answered Talbot, "my small income suffices to me: but I wish for a heart of love. Do you think Evelina Towneley could have such a heart for me?"

"With your romantic ideas," she replied, "she would probably suit you better than me. She is pious and tranquil, more adapted to the retirement you are fond of, than the gay, worldly Clarinda."

She laughed as she said these words, and slyly awaited his answer.

“ True, Clarinda,” said he, “ you are indeed worldly. Oh ! had you been capable of love, had that been all to you, how I would have cherished you ! and your poor cousin George, who seeks like me a constant and affectionate heart, you are going to do what you can to deceive him !”

She shewed no anger at this speech, and they parted from each other in good humour.

Her plans and wishes had been completely biassed by what Mr. Fairfax had said. She saw there was no chance of her deriving any benefit from an anticipation of widow’s weeds, and determined not to lose the opportunity shortly to be afforded her, of gaining riches and grandeur, by captivating her romantic young cousin, as soon as he should make her acquaintance.

“ Can you the shore inconstant call,
Which still as waves pass by embraces all,
That had as lief the same waves always love,
Did they not from him move ?
Or can you fault with Pilots find,
In changing course, yet never blame the wind.”

COWLEY.

Clarinda had gained her point; from that day Talbot appeared to attach himself to Evelina, and both Mr. Lovel and his eldest daughter managed to let them have plenty of opportunities for conversing together. With surprise and admiration did he become further acquainted with the depth of her angelic soul, as her pure and innocent mind unfolded itself in their increasing intimacy. It seemed to him as the light of dawning day disclosing the earth with its treasures, to eyes restored from blindness. A new world was likewise opened to Evelina, in her intercourse of friendship with Talbot. She fully understood and appreciated his noble sentiments, and sympathized in all his finer feelings. In the affliction which still weighed heavily on her heart, she met with no consolation among her cousins; with them merriment and frivolity was the standing order of the day, and they had no talents for soothing a sorrow, which a little tenderness and attention might have lessened. In Talbot alone she found a friend, willing and capable to afford her comfort; his excellent principles, his well-stored mind, and

sensible conversation, were constant sources of pleasing gratification to the young girl, who, though new to the world, possessed an infinity of natural cleverness, and had received a superior education. Ere a month passed, Talbot had transferred his affections from Clarinda to the fair orphan, and though unaware of it herself, the heart of poor Evelina was for ever bestowed on him whom she considered as the only friend she could boast of in her guardian's mansion. Yet although his society and friendship became every day more dear to her, no untranquil feeling yet disturbed her peaceful mind.

As they sat together on the banks of a rivulet one fine evening in June, watching the last gleam of the sun which was fading from the west, whilst a bright moon rose over the tops of the trees, and their discourse was rational and quiet, like all nature around them, Evelina said—"I feel as if you were my brother, for you converse with me just as my dear mother used to do, when we sat alone together, and had no thought but of each other;—your ideas, your sentiments are hers exactly; and no one de-

served love and esteem more than she did from her child !”

She sighed, and sank into a reverie. After a silence, during which both were occupied with their thoughts, Evelina spoke again of her mother, and mentioned how much she used to talk of her nephew.

“ I wish,” said she, “ he could discourse with me as you do ; I think it would make me happy to see him, for he is the child of my aunt whom my mother loved so dearly.”

“ You will soon see him,” cried Talbot, “ the time of his coming approaches.”

She smiled with a ray of pleasure beaming on her countenance, and their conversation then turned on other subjects.

Mr. Lovel and Clarinda beheld her confidence in Talbot’s friendship, and her regard for him hourly increase, and were delighted at every symptom of her partiality, which gave hopes of saving Clarinda from a formidable rival. Often did they with pleasure observe her wandering from window to window to try and catch a glimpse of him coming from the village or the

opposite hill, and often, long before he was in sight, she would put on her hat and gloves to go and meet him. If the cousins walked out together, Evelina generally spoke of Talbot, praised his sense, and sometimes related to her companion all that he said or felt.

“ I fancy,” said she, “ my cousin George just like him, so mild, so good.”

She seemed to have no greater pleasure, when not with him, than speaking in his praise.

Clarinda told all this to Talbot :

“ This is love downright,” said she, “ you have gained her young heart.”

“ The love of angels,” he replied, “ innocent and celestial; for does she speak or think less of her cousin George ?”

“ Well, suppose after all, she likes this loved cousin better than you ? what will you do ?”

“ Prefer her happiness to my own.”

This tranquillity seemed to Clarinda resulting from indifference. Although he talked to, and looked at Evelina, and seemed attached to her, she was sure his heart was still hers, and that he nourished a hope of obtaining her.

“It is that,” thought she, “which influences his conduct, and till he is cured of that hope, Evelina will still be in my way.”

Alas! poor Clarinda, victim of ambition and self-interest, her heart still beat as she thought of him whom she had given up for worldly motives—there was so much jealous feeling mixed up in her heart, with her interested manœuvring, that she could scarcely understand herself.

“Ah!” she thought, with bitter vexation, “Evelina loves Talbot as much as I do, and like me, she is determined to marry Lord Lovel—we are exactly in the same predicament; but she seems tranquil and happy, and I am miserable!”

She resolved to open her cousin’s eyes to the state of her heart, which the artless girl was quite unconscious of. She had never been used to read novels or romances, therefore thought not of love.

She just then entered the apartment, and a look of happiness seemed to emanate from her beautiful eyes, no longer clouded by the tear of sorrow: for though she still thought of her

mother with regret and tenderness, the affection which Talbot inspired had already taken such hold on her heart, as to leave little room for any other sentiment.

“Evelina,” said Clarinda, “I declare I envy you the tranquillity and calm you always appear to be possessed of.” The passionate and vehement manner of her saying this, surprised and alarmed her young cousin.

“My dear Clarinda,” said she, affectionately embracing her, “what can you have to reproach yourself with? you can have committed no crime that should take away your tranquillity?”

“Crime! committed!” exclaimed the other, “cannot the innocent then be unhappy!”

“You did not say unhappy, but untranquil; and I have heard my mother say, that fate may render one unhappy, but guilt alone can take away one’s peace of mind.”

Clarinda shrank from her embrace, and turned pale. She felt that she was not quite so innocent as Evelina thought, and had no longer the courage necessary to attack the enviable calm of her young companion’s heart.

But the time drew near when Cousin George was to make his appearance; on the 12th of August he would be of age, and must arrive to take possession of his property. His uncle received information concerning him, by which he was represented as a noble-minded, generous young man, free from all vice, and the prototype of manly virtue, with a cultivated mind, and an excellent heart; this was the description given of him by his preceptor, Abbè Derville, who added that his wish was to marry an amiable, pious, and well-educated young person, who could love him as he wished to be loved.

Whilst this letter was read aloud, Clarinda looked at Evelina, who stood calm in her celestial beauty, with innocence beaming in her countenance; never had she thought her so attractive, and she felt sure, that with all those heavenly charms, she was very capable of throwing herself into cousin George's arms, and storming his heart with tender reminiscences of her mother and his.

No time, therefore, was to be lost. She must

delay her intentions no longer, or she would lose the young Earl as well as Talbot : the latter was absent that morning, having gone on a fishing excursion at some distance. She took Evelina's arm, and strolled with her into the park. They talked of Talbot, and lamented his not being with them, with sincerity only on one side.

“And how would you feel,” said Clarinda, “should he not come back at all?”

“Not come back !” she exclaimed with a troubled countenance, “O heavens ! is there a possibility of that, Clarinda ?”

“How pale and frightened you look—yes, yes, he will come back, of course, so you need not be so alarmed ; but indeed, my dear, I think he ought to stay away.”

“Why do you think so ?”

“Why ! nay, I had better ask you that, for I am sure you know as well as me. Poor fellow ! if he were not to see you again, he would certainly die of grief. Oh, Evelina, how passionately he loves you !—if his heart breaks on your account, shall you have no remorse ?”

“What can you mean ?” asked Evelina, in

great emotion ; “ I do not understand your words, Clarinda.”

“ Do you not love him ?”

“ Certainly I do, I could not love a brother more.”

“ A brother ! pshaw—you do not know your own heart nor his : his happiness, his very existence depends on you ; his hope rests on your returning his love ; without you his life will be an eternal mourning ; he never will be happy, Evelina, unless you are his wife.”

Her cousin did not interrupt her ; her face, now deadly pale, sank on her bosom, which seemed pierced with anguish, and tears rolled down her cheeks.

“ You love him also, dear Evelina, is it not so ?” continued her tormentor, “ you will not be happy unless he is your husband ?”

She tried to answer, but could not ; the pang of conscious guilt, which she now felt for the first time in her life, prevented her speaking. She clasped her hands together, and raising her eyes to heaven, said in a soft heart-rending tone, “ Mother ! I have then broken my promise to thee ! I am indeed guilty.”

“Guilty!” cried Clarinda, “what folly! you are as innocent as a baby, if it is wrong to love Talbot, which I cannot understand, for you loved him without knowing it yourself.”

Evelina threw herself into her arms:— “Heaven,” said she, “will grant me courage to do what is right:” and she ran to her room to strengthen her resolution by prayer.

When Talbot returned, Clarinda told him of this conversation, which seemed to annoy him, for he could not bear that Evelina should be made uneasy on his account, and he expressed his disapprobation strongly.

“Have I not made a heart happy?” said Clarinda.

“If you did it from that motive,” he replied, “I would forgive you, but that was not your aim.”

She cared not for his reproofs, and fancied she had done wonders in working upon the feelings of the artless girl, who, like Beatrice in *Much ado about Nothing*, would no doubt fall into her snare.

When all the family were assembled at din-

ner, she was astonished to see Evelina, no longer contented with her usual place by the side of Mr. Talbot, seek another next to the priest of the family, Father Lynch, a venerable old man, whose life had been spent in the Castle, sometimes concealed, and in danger from the penal laws, and always under the necessity of wearing a secular dress. Pious, good, and respected by every one, he was devotedly attached to the Lovel family, and having no other earthly tie, gave all his affections to the members of it. In him Evelina ever found an adviser and a friend, and in him she reposed all her confidence. Now that she was resolved on avoiding all conversation with Talbot, and treating him in some measure as a stranger, this worthy man seemed to her the only person worthy of replacing him.

Talbot appeared in no way vexed by her abandoning him, and when after dinner all removed into another apartment, he made no attempt to recover his intimacy, all Clarinda's suspicions revived. She was now sure that he still reckoned upon her hand, and that Evelina

did not intend to give up the hopes of gaining her cousin George.

“What has occurred,” said she to Talbot, as they walked out on the lawn before the drawing-room windows, “to cause a *brouillerie* between you and Miss Towneley?”

“It is your doing,” he replied, “and proves to you that you did not act so rightly as you supposed.”

“Very likely,” said she, with unusual coldness and disdain in her manner; “but one thing also is proved, which is, that I am not worse than the pious, sanctified Evelina, and if you pretend to think otherwise you are not sincere.”

“I do not comprehend you.”

“Did you not reproach me, that without having any regard for him, I sought to gain my cousin’s hand? She, it appears, wishes the same thing, and at the same time loves another man with the most ardent passion. Who, then, would deceive Lord Lovel most, Evelina or myself?”

“She loved without being conscious of it:—indeed such is the case, as you say; and she

sacrifices her affection for another than her cousin to the memory of her mother; she is incapable of wishing willingly to deceive Lord Lovel."

Clarinda was exasperated, and sought Evelina, who had retired to her room; she taxed her with caprice and coquetry in her conduct towards Talbot. The sorrowful girl answered with candour, that she had resolved to do her duty by fulfilling the desire of her dying mother, which was, that she should not attach herself to any man whilst her cousin George remained unmarried.

"You choose, then," said Clarinda, "to be unhappy for life."

"I may be, perhaps, but not guilty."

"If that is really your wish, I conclude you mean to declare to George the truth, which is, that you love Edward Talbot!"

Evelina was silent, and the other continued.

"George seeks a wife who loves him alone; a heart which has never been attracted by any other but himself;—and would you then deceive him, when he approaches you in confiding trust?"

He claims love, and you will give him nothing but your hand ; he claims a heart responding to his own, and yours cannot, for it beats for Edward Talbot !”

“ You talk of things unlikely to take place,” said Evelina, after a thoughtful pause ; “ it is impossible my cousin should prefer any one to you.”

“ Such a thing might happen,” replied Clarinda, “ and I leave it to your conscience, whether it would be right to deceive him.”

“ Oh Clarinda,” she cried, “ I feel the truth of what you say ; leave me now, I beseech you, that I may compose my thoughts.”

After a few days she appeared restored to her natural tranquillity, having made her determination ; and addressing her guardian, she requested he would, as soon as possible, place her in the convent he most approved of on the Continent, (for at that period none were allowed of in England), where it was her wish to take the veil.

He was much surprised at the request. “ Whence can originate this fancy ?” said he ;

“when you are of age, three years hence, you may do as you like in that respect; but if I consented to it now, I should, being your guardian, be reprehended by all the world.”

Clarinda learnt this extraordinary application to her father.

“Is it possible,” said she to Evelina, “that you thus desire to throw away your happiness? I rejoice that my father refuses to sanction your rash wishes.”

“It is a firm resolution,” she replied, “which I shall abide by as soon as it is in my power; and if I cannot take the veil till I am of age, I may at least be allowed to prepare myself for it by a residence in a convent.”

“Do you, then, wish to break Talbot’s heart?”

“I know his principles, and I am sure he will approve of my determination; he and yourself, Clarinda, shall share my inheritance.”

“Make no rash resolution until you have heard his opinion.”

“I could safely promise to take his advice, for I am aware of his noble sentiments, and am

certain it would only be for my good. If I thought not so highly of him, what danger would there be for me? It is his virtue and his excellence which have imprinted his image on my heart."

Clarinda smiled at her enthusiasm, and hastened to inform Talbot of the strange resolution which the young girl had formed. He seemed to be in great emotion, but did not express any wish to dissuade her from it.

"It is," said he, "the decision of a virtuous heart, and if she has courage enough to bear separation from him she loves, ought I to shew greater weakness?"

Clarinda shrugged up her shoulders, not knowing how to understand his composure and acquiescence, but put them to the account of his pretended love for Evelina being insincere.

Mr. Lovel, who was present at this conference, was not so passive, and thus addressed Talbot.

"If, as it appears from what you say, that you really love Miss Towneley, and if she is willing to accept your hand, what difficulty can there be to be surmounted? You may have my

consent as her guardian, and I make no doubt that matters may be arranged to the satisfaction of all parties. Her going to a convent at this juncture, seems to me totally unnecessary; speak, then, and let me know your wishes."

Talbot replied with quickness and ardour:—

"If she will accept my hand," said he, "I shall consider myself the happiest of human beings!"

His countenance was radiant with emotion and happiness. Clarinda felt a pang cross her heart; for a blessing is sometimes valued at the moment one feels it lost for ever, though slighted before.

"Then I will take care," said Mr. Lovel joyfully, "to arrange all for the best; be it your business to gain Evelina's consent, and it shall be mine to prepare the wedding."

Meanwhile Evelina had opened her mind to her pious friend, Father Lynch, and informed him of her intention to become a nun. She was much surprised to receive from him advice directly contrary to it—nay more, he strenuously recommended to her to encourage the affection

she felt for Edward Talbot, whom he considered worthy to become her husband. His praise of him she loved vibrated on her heart, yet she thought of her promise to her mother, which was in opposition to his arguments. He urged her to hearken to what Talbot himself should say on the subject, and to abide by his advice. To this she consented, for she had the highest opinion of his rectitude; but an opportunity did not immediately occur.

Time drew on, inexorable Time, which cares neither for lovers nor plotters, and is alike deaf to the prayers of beauty, old age, or youth; (which, however, is all for the best; for could he be biassed, it would probably be by those who deserve it the least, as is generally the case). The month of August was begun; Cousin George, the long wished-for, long-dreaded Cousin George, was daily expected, and Evelina made up her mind to tell him the secret of her heart, should he appear inclined to select her as his bride; but she still hoped it would be otherwise, and that Clarinda's beauty, which she consi-

dered more fascinating than her own, would attract his preference.

Sir Harry Stanley, a friend of his late father's, came over from some distance, with his son, to welcome the young Earl on his arrival, and several others were expected for the same purpose.

Evelina learnt that Talbot was on the point of departure. He had been at Lovel Castle above three months, and still lingered on, encouraged to do so by Mr. Lovel and his daughter: but it seemed that he had now determined to go. She was sitting sorrowfully and alone in the garden, when she saw him approaching, and, concluding it was to take leave, her eyes were filled with tears; he took her hand in silence, and sat down beside her.

“You are going!” said she, and her tears flowed; she covered her face with her handkerchief.

“Not if you wish me to stay,” he answered. “I will do exactly as you bid me; I have no thought, no desire, but to please you alone.”

“Do what you yourself think right,” said she, gently returning his pressure of the hand he held.

“And if I go, may I feel assured that you will not forget me; may I trust to your regard—your love!”

His voice faltered as he said the last word, for he felt that his happiness depended on her answer.

“You may,” she softly answered. He pressed her hand passionately to his lips.

“Evelina,” said he, “dearest Evelina, is it true you have promised to abide by the advice I should give you?”

“I have the greatest reliance on your honour and good principle, therefore I feel certain that you will never advise me to act in any way contrary to my ideas of rectitude.”

“Believe so, for it is true. I have your happiness at heart, and never could counsel you to do anything which might put it in doubt. Will you, then, trust to my discretion, to my unalterable affection for you?”

“What do you wish me to do?” said she, looking up surprised.

“Say to your guardian that you consent to be my wife.”

She stared and blushed, but not with displeasure.

“I promised my dear mother,” said she faintly, “to wait till my cousin’s marriage with another—”

“Evelina,” he replied, “do you love me sufficiently to become my wife, in preference to all the world besides, and are you fully determined to give up, for my sake, the chance afforded you of the Lovel domains and coronet? If not, say so, and I am gone !”

“Oh, Talbot !” said she, sinking on his shoulder and pressing his hand to her heart, which palpitated with the sincerest and tenderest affection, “how can you talk to me of domains and coronets ! I have no avarice or ambition, whatever my other faults may be. I am incapable of any other feeling but love, inexpressible love, which I felt for my mother whilst she lived, and which now is centered in you !”

With grateful delight he pressed her to his heart, and found no difficulty in obtaining her

consent to follow the directions he gave her, which were to inform Mr. Lovel, that she was willing, directly if he chose, to give her hand to Talbot.

“ They wish,” said he, “ to hasten our wedding, in order that it may take place before the Earl’s arrival, and I confess to you, dearest love, that I enjoy taking advantage of their desire, for I am as anxious as they can be that my Evelina should be my own, and consequently, that Clarinda should have no competitor.”

She did what he recommended. Mr. Lovel expressed his satisfaction, which he really felt; and Clarinda, whose anticipations of her rich cousin’s arrival drove away all recollection of the love which engrossed her thoughts some months before, assisted willingly in the preparations for the marriage. The day was accordingly fixed for the nuptials; it was Lord Lovel’s birthday. On that day he would be of age, and he was expected to arrive in the afternoon. What a day of delight, of wonder and anxiety! Mr. Lovel and his daughter felt easier than they

otherwise would have been; for Clarinda now stood alone with her captivating powers, and had no longer any fear of a rival. She determined to make use of all her fascinations for conquest, to be very sentimental, and to fall desperately in love with the romantic youth, as soon as probability would allow of it.

The wedding was to take place at an early hour, and to be very private. Only a few friends besides the family were invited; the bride dressed in sweet simplicity looked more lovely than ever, and Clarinda placed the bridal wreath and veil on her head.

‘ Ah!’ thought Evelina, ‘ how happy should I now be were it not for my promise to my mother!’

Led on by circumstances, she still felt a pang of remorse when she thought of her mother’s dying words. How seldom through life is any pleasure unalloyed with pain!

Talbot—the happy Talbot—joined her, and the bridal procession proceeded to the chapel belonging to the castle, where the ceremony was

to take place, previous to attending the parish church. He led the trembling girl to the altar, where officiated the worthy old priest, who, raising his hands to Heaven whilst a tear stole down his furrowed cheek, "I thank thee, All-merciful!" said he, "that I am permitted to see this joyful day,"—then turning to the Bridegroom, he asked his whole name. He answered with a sonorous voice—

"I am George Edward, Earl of Lovel!"—a silence like the stillness of the grave ensued. The old man continued,—

"Evelina Towneley," said he, "thy mother's prayer is granted, thy bridegroom is the noble Lord of this castle."

"Oh! my dear mother!" exclaimed Evelina, falling on her knees before the altar.

The ceremony then took place, and before Mr. Lovel could recover from his consternation, he found himself under the necessity of giving the bride away, as had been arranged; immediately after, all crowded with congratulations round the new lord, vassals, servants, and friends all

felicitating him, and pouring forth vows for his happiness, and that of his beautiful bride.

Mr. Lovel did not know whether to shew displeasure or good-humour—the latter was more difficult to be expressed ; he could not even summon up a laugh, which generally concealed his embarrassment, nor did he approach like the others to offer his congratulations, but his nephew threw himself into his arms.

“ Pardon me, my dear uncle,” said he, “ for having thus taken you by surprise. I have no excuse to make ; I must trust to your mercy to forgive me ; and I have a favour, a very great favour, to ask you.”

“ A favour !” cried his uncle, “ what can that possibly be ?”

“ It is, that you will allow me to act as a brother towards my cousin Clarinda, who has been my best of friends. The want of fortune alone I understand prevented her accepting the hand of Mr. Stanley, who continues to be most truly attached to her. Rothsand Abbey and estate shall be hers ; Evelina joins with me in offering it to her acceptance.”

Clarinda had not yet recovered from the surprise of learning the real name of her friend Talbot. She still looked astonished and trembling. Her cousin brought up to her young Stanley, who took her hand, which she did not withdraw. Her heart beat as he expressed all he felt, and renewed his offers. At length she got the better of her consternation, and her natural good spirits returned ; she gave a favourable answer to Mr. Stanley, and looking up at her cousin, could not help laughing. She shook her head at him with a smile, and held up her finger in reproach : he saw that he was forgiven, and everything went on in cheerfulness and good humour.

Abbè Derville arrived that afternoon ; his delight in witnessing his beloved pupil's prospects of felicity, rewarded him amply for all the trouble he had taken in his education.

Little explanation is needed, as it may easily be conjectured that the young man had obtained his guardian's consent to present himself under another name at the mansion of his fathers, and thereby make the trial necessary for his happi-

ness. Mr. Lovel's defect of sight, prevented any remark he might have made on a family likeness, which certainly existed between him and his father ; but it was not long before the good old priest's suspicions were aroused, and to him the youth confided his secret, secure that it would not be divulged.

Happiness was the lot of the amiable Earl and Countess of Lovel, who passed their days in domestic felicity, and were a blessing to all the country around them.

Soon after their marriage Clarinda became the wife of Mr. Stanley, and in course of time a baronet's lady and the mistress of a beautiful place, which was at all events better than being plain Mrs. Talbot in a small house in Devonshire. She and her husband were very happy together, though disputes sometimes arose about going to London and showing off at the Court balls, which she sometimes succeeded in doing. At the earnest request of his nephew, Mr. Lovel and his children remained at the Castle, where he always kept his station at

the bottom of the table; whilst Evelina, contrary to the regular customs of those days, constantly sat next to her husband at the top. Bella improved much by associating with her, and became an agreeable companion and friend.

TWO DAYS OF THE CARNIVAL.

Ecoutez donc la voix du Sage,
Qui repête ces mots prudens,
“ Ah ! souvent on a fait naufrage,
“ En cherchant à passer le tems.”

SEGUR.

LETTER I.

Turin, January 18th, 1822.

WHEN you see the postmark of this epistle, my good cousin, will you not be envious, and wish you were in my place, here in this great metropolis, in the very height of the Carnival? I guess your uncomfortable feelings at this moment: the whole multitude of gaieties, frolics, and adventures of a brilliant season, are probably passing in your mind, like the standing pictures in a magic-lantern; but restrain your jealous spirit and longing wishes. You will cease to envy me when I tell you that I am

writing from a garret, in the best hotel of the town certainly, but nevertheless an absolute garret. Here I am, cut off from all connexion with the *beau monde*, and can have no conversation but with waiters and porters, indeed from their complaisance alone, am I to expect any enjoyment in my abode here.

Are you not horror-struck? for I make no doubt you imagine I have had great losses at play, or perhaps have been robbed, and am quite in reduced and distressing circumstances. Still, say you, surely his credit and name must be sufficient to obtain him the assistance of the first commercial houses in every town.

Wonder no more. I am in no want of money; that is not the cause which has removed me in so extraordinary a manner from my place in the world; and, not to trouble your poor brain with further surmises, I will tell you that it is a whim, and if you exhausted your imagination ever so much, you would not light upon it.

For several years I have been a sort of bird of passage, drawn every winter to some town or other, without any particular motive but to pass

the Carnival agreeably. Yesterday evening, as I drove hither, the *ennui* of going through the same routine as usual pressed heavily on my mind. The sight of a string of carriages waiting in a long file up to the palace, reminded me of a presentation at court. I fancied myself hemmed in, pushed about, and squeezed up into a corner, where I could see or hear nothing but the continued low whisperings and murmurings of a groaning crowd, amidst heat which allowed one scarcely air to breathe, or liberty to use one's feet, for while standing on one of them, the other must rest in a sort of painful dangling suspension, a position which has often driven me to despair, and quite stupified me before the moment of my presentation came ; then I thought of the unhappy coachman and servants envying every vehicle which passed by them into the side streets ; some heads poked out of the carriages reminded me fully of the impatience with which one counts the number of those in the string before one. The cry of the police officers, the wrangling of coachmen, all brought before my mind's eye the annoyance attending

ceremonies of the sort, and I felt no inclination for similar enjoyments, by which the liberty and repose I could now boast, I might to-morrow be deprived of.

The postilions stopped and inquired whither they should drive ; we were in the middle of an open place, and not far from me was a pedlar under a lamp, with his box of merchandize resting against the pillar of the lamp. He was reckoning up money, probably the gains of his business of the day. The large hotel was lighted up close before us ; an indefinable fancy came across me—I sprang out of the carriage, calling out, as I pointed to the hotel—

“Go in there ;” then turning to my valet de chambre, I beckoned him to me, and ordered him to bespeak two of the best rooms, adding in a whisper—

“You must say I am not yet arrived, and wait quietly for me without shewing any impatience or uneasiness. You may depend upon my not staying long away.”

Without my plans being rightly known to myself, this hotel, the windows of which were

almost all lighted up, presented to my view, in an odd interesting manner, or rather, to my imagination, the picture of a little world, brought together from different countries and situations, and awakened in me a comical desire of accompanying the changing scenes, as well as the actors themselves, on this kind of world's stage, through the medium of some appropriate disguise. The pedlar, who now stood before me, seemed just the means of procuring me one through which my fancy might be gratified.

No sooner thought of than done! I approached the man, who seemed rather a shrewd tidy looking personage of a certain age, and rummaging amongst his bottles, boxes, and cases of all kinds, I inquired the uses of each article, and soon saw that chance could not have conducted me more favourably, for here I found every thing which would be most likely to procure me admittance immediately to both the high and the low, male and female. There were balsamic specifics for the eyes, the teeth, and the skin, soaps, pomatums, superfine cosmetics, and rouge, scented waters, &c. nail

brushes, scissars, spectacles, frizzled toupees and moustachios, writing desks with secret drawers for concealing miniatures or other tender reminiscences, and newly invented memorandum books, tinctures against all nervous attacks, pastilles to take after a day of feasting, and others to take off unpleasant odours; in short, every requisite for the toilette as well as for health, besides necklaces, bracelets, earrings, brooches, pins, &c.

I had remained so long overhauling the man's property, that his patience must have been wearied out, and I make no doubt his surprise was great when I inquired the price of his whole little stock, in a tone which, supported by all the state he had just seen me surrounded by, left him no doubt that I could be in earnest if I chose. He, therefore, did not hesitate in taking advantage of such an unexpected piece of good fortune, and made me pay dear enough for my frolic.

I had, however, gained what my heart wished at that moment, and pursued my way quite satisfied, having bestowed strong injunctions on

my friend not to mention a syllable to any one concerning our bargain ; he put my mind at ease on the subject by assuring me he should immediately leave the town, and return to his own home ten miles off. I hope he will keep his word.

With the assistance of a dark wig, coming low over the eyes, a short frizzy beard and moustachios, grey stockings and coat, all which my complaisant crony procured for me, I succeeded in passing into the interior of the hotel unrecognized by my own servants ; and arriving at the porter's cell, I, by absolute chance, informed him that I had been sent for to No. 21, on the first floor. He replied, with laziness and indifference—

“ You are come too late then, for nobody is at home there, the family is gone to the palace ; but I will let them know you have been here, and you can call again.”

I thanked him very civilly, and petitioned that he would have the goodness to recommend me to the other guests in the house, and drawing out of an under compartment of my box

some printed lists of genuine French perfumery, refined oils, and essences, just imported from Paris, I requested he would be kind enough to take an opportunity of distributing them. A little present accompanied this entreaty to ensure its success.

The master of the hotel passed by several times apparently very busy. He now stopped, and I heard him say to the porter, "Mind that I am instantly apprized as soon as the young Prince Villarosa arrives, his servants and luggage are here, and he is shortly expected."

I intercepted him as he was returning into his apartment, and said in a broken Alsatian French dialect, with a great deal of easy assurance :

"Sir, I see that in your house there is a great concourse of strangers; therefore, partly to benefit myself in the way of business, and partly to be near the nobleman you have just mentioned, whose kindness allows me the honour of considering him, in some measure, as my patron as well as benefactor, I venture to ask if you can spare me some small room in any part of

the hotel that is most suitable to your convenience, at the top of the house, or down below, I am not particular."

During this speech, I had manœuvred successfully in entering his apartment along with him, and, without waiting for his answer, supported my request by offering to pay in advance the highest possible rent he might judge necessary to ask for a week's lodging. He looked hastily at me, and seemed to be fluctuating between a sort of natural politeness, and a suspicion that something lay behind all this; then replied with some hesitation, that he did not think there was a single room vacant. I did not allow him to speak further, but again assuring him of my being easily contented, I pressed the money upon him, and, taking hold of his arm, I begged he would only accompany me about the house, and we should be sure to find a place.

The man could not help laughing at my impudent assurance, and as the money put him in good humour, he soon found a bit of a room or rather closet for me, about eight feet long, and

four in width, with a very small window almost built up, a bit of a worn out carpet, a little diminutive stove with a long oblique tube, a small ill proportioned chest of drawers of walnut wood, jutting out and taking up more room than could be spared to it, a little rotten deal table with a broken looking glass, a mutilated arm-chair, and a bed which took away all hopes of sleeping.

My companion shrugged up his shoulders as he opened the door, from compassion, I suppose, and shewing me the room with his other hand,—

“There, look yourself,” said he.

“It is excellent,” I replied, “this does extremely well;” and I immediately established myself as its master by placing myself in the half broken arm-chair, which, to my surprise, did not fall to pieces on the occasion.

“All’s right then,” he murmured, and he went down stairs again, leaving me in possession.

I remained, in some measure, stupified in the midst of this superlative elegance; a tallow candle in a brass candlestick lighted the piece of broken looking glass, and caused it to reflect

my ludicrous disfigured image. I started with the most comical mixture of vexation and amusement at seeing myself thus. It was impossible for me to remain any longer in this dirty hole, so I took myself out of it without losing a moment, descended the first flight of stairs, and promenaded along the corridors. I had some of my printed bills in my hand, and knocked at one or two of the doors; they all remained closed, but as I came to No. 16, on the first floor, a female, the decided prototype of a waiting maid, brushed by me, saying,—

“Friend, there is nobody within there, they are the apartments taken for Prince Villarosa, whom we are expecting every moment to arrive.” On saying this, she quickly hopped off into No. 21, which number I had accidentally happened to fix upon, and where I had told the porter I was appointed to come.

Ladies, thought I, live at No. 21, and ladies who are expecting Prince Villarosa! Very curious;—who can they be, and who can possibly know him here? Ah! my boasting valet has been chattering already, and I suppose it is only

the waiting maids who are expecting me. One of the waiters just then came up the stairs.

“Be so good as to tell me,” said I to him, “what families live in this row of apartments.” The man answered very crossly and laconically. —“I cannot exactly say. I don’t trouble myself much about the names, but the book will tell you, if you ask the porter for it.” He walked off muttering between his teeth some incivilities, I dare say, but I let him go, for at that moment the little waiting maid appeared again in the passage. I stepped up to her with my handbills, and a conversation ensued, which flourished in a very satisfactory manner for some time.

I related to her wonderful things of my beautifying waters, and remarking a little brown speck in the corner of her right eye, solemnly assured her that a few drops of my tincture in a wineglass of water, would remove any such displeasing blemish; in return for which advice, she gave me an account of herself. I learnt she was called Lisba, and in the service of a Countess Baldelli, from Florence, who is here with

two handsome daughters, the eldest of whom is engaged to be married to a grandee of this Court, very rich, but neither young nor handsome: she shrugged up her shoulders, saying, "poucrina," with a sigh, by which I was led to conclude the match was more to the fancy of the mother, than of the young lady. I inquired about the other daughter.

"Ah!" said she, tossing up her head in a significant manner, "I will answer for her not being long unmarried, for her bridal wreath is as good as won. They have got the bridegroom in their heads at all events, though they have not seen him yet; but I am very sure my young lady will not have him if she does not like him. She has a spirit that will not be crushed like that of her poor sister, and she declares riches and rank would be no compensation to her for having a disagreeable husband. I have often heard her say so."

I asked if she could give me any information concerning the other inhabitants of the hotel.

"There is," said she, "an acquaintance of ours at the end of the gallery, at that dark door; he

did live much with our family, but now we see no more of him."

"How comes that?" I asked, "and who is he?"

She hesitated for a few moments, but could not be silent long, no Prudence came forward to stop her indefatigable tongue from proceeding.

"It is," said she, "the young Count Eugene Lisio, one of the best families here, and the richest formerly, but now things are altered for him, his father and the rest of his relations being implicated in the late conspiracy against Government, in the cause of liberty and constitution, though he was not so himself, being too young to be consulted; they have all been exiled and their property confiscated, so his prospects are no longer what they were, and he is deprived of both fortune and expectations; otherwise"—she hesitated again,—“otherwise things would have turned out differently for La Signora Lavinia.”

"I understand," said I, "he is discarded on account of the misfortunes of his family, notwithstanding his own innocence?"

“Not entirely on account of that,” she answered, “but more so, I believe, because the Marquis Graneri has proposed to marry her ; for that is a match not to be rejected, he has an immense property, both in estates and in money, with great power and with great influence at Court.”

And thus she went on : I believe she would have been chattering still, if I had not managed, though with some difficulty, to disembarass myself of her.

When she was fairly gone, and I had seen her re-enter her lady's apartment, a secret attraction drew me towards the door of the poor young man, whose history she had just unfolded to me ; but previously I hastened back to my room, hung the straps of the pedlar's box over my left shoulder, having fastened all the things in it, and arrived with my paraphernalia before his door. I, however, lingered there a moment, for something seemed to oppose my intention of intruding thus as an impostor upon a stranger ; however, I got the better of my scruples by fancying my motives were good.

I knocked quick and loudly at the door, and a voice called out, "Come in." I opened it, and entered a dark room, where, at the further end, sat a youth, who was writing at a table by a lamp, which gave a very bad light; scarcely any furniture was to be seen, and the apartment could hardly be considered better than the magnificent one which I occupied up-stairs. I was struck with the beauty and melancholy expression of his countenance; he appeared to be very young, and as his eyes turned towards me with a benevolent look, mixed with surprise, they seemed wet with recent tears.

"What do you wish for here?" he asked.

"I carry on my business in the hotel," I answered, shewing him my merchandise, "and take the liberty to recommend myself to all strangers."

He looked at me for a moment with uncertainty, then said, "Are you in want of money?"

"I am no beggar, Sir," I replied rather proudly, then quickly added, "my goods are very cheap." I raised the box to him, and he looked at the little collection carelessly.

“I am sorry,” said he, “I can be of no use to you in becoming a purchaser, but I need nothing of what you have, and have no money to throw away in superfluities.”

The sigh which accompanied these words affected me; as I thought of all I had heard from the waiting maid of his sorrowful fate; the anguish of his feelings, which I read in his looks, quite pressed upon my heart, and my face probably shewed my compassion, for tears stood in my eyes.

He noticed this, and rising, asked if I was in any distress.

“I am not unhappy on my own account,” said I, “but excuse my saying that I know your story, and it is for you I feel!”

“For me!” he cried, “is it possible? alas! you are then the only one who does; but, surely, you cannot be—you were not always a pedlar, as you say you are so well acquainted with my misfortunes.”

He waited for my answer, seemingly in great anxiety. My face was overspread with the glow of shame, in the consciousness of my childish

mimicry, which had been literally caused by *ennui*, with a sort of disgust for the great world from want of variety, and the possession of too many good things in life. I do not know what he thought of my confusion and silence; but he did not repeat his question, and changed the discourse, asking if I had shewn my box to many people.

“Not yet,” said I, creeping towards the door. He called after me good-naturedly, saying, “Come again to-morrow!”

I bowed, and returned to my chamber; where, placing my ink and paper on the half rotten little deal table, I have been laying my confessions before you, my worthy cousin, and now there must be an end of them for to-night; my eyes are closing fast, and little as my bed is inviting, I must throw myself upon it, and seek some repose.

I cannot help thinking this masquerading freak of mine was a foolish one. What am I playing the Hotel ghost for, gliding about secretly through all the chambers? Cui bono? it has not afforded me much amusement as yet,

and the gnomes of coarse food, and a hard couch, begin to plague and pinch me, foolish fellow that I am. Everything went too smoothly for me ! Oh ! discontent inherent in man.—Good night ! I hope I shall be able to sleep.

January 19th.

No, my good cousin, I will not regret my frolic. I have heard say that situation and opportunity supply the place of sentiment, but do they not rather draw it out, and is it not *fair occasion* only which can allow a man to judge of his own heart ?

You will wonder what is about to follow this preface. Come along then, and accompany me in my perambulations, and let me lead you to the door of the Florentine Countess, open it, and shew you a most enchanting little figure perched full length upon a chair before a long Psyche looking glass, admiring the rich trimming of a new Parisian dress, contemplating herself as she raises and lowers her little foot to measure the

width of the petticoat for dancing: but I fancy you telling me to be more intelligible, and to begin by the beginning according to regular narratives. Obedient to your imaginary orders I obey.

After a most uncomfortable night and desperately bad dreams, I woke with no pleasant anticipations of the task I had voluntarily imposed on myself, and trudging with my box of curiosities down stairs, I knocked at the apartment of Lisba's ladies, for her description had made me curious about them, and I effected an entrance there by means of her patronage. Angelica, the second daughter, who is more beautiful than words can express, was so very much occupied with her new dress, as I told you just now, that she took no notice of my coming in, and would scarcely have remarked my approach, had not Lisba arrested her attention by calling out, "Here is the pedlar with all his pretty things;" nay, to make more sensation, she thought fit to let fall a large paper box full of artificial flowers as she sprung to meet me. Angelica jumped lightly down from the chair

and came nearer, honouring me with a smile and agreeable inclination of her head; then began to examine my little treasures.

“How very pretty!” said she in a soft melodious voice, with a childish lisp through her pearly teeth; “how nice!—Mama, come and see the pedlar’s box!”

The mama came at her call at last from another room, of which the door was open, and looked over all the rouge boxes, pommades, and essences, found all exorbitantly dear, and gave me a profusion of words, but no money, for she bought nothing.

Lavinia, the bride, was shewn to me by her maid; she was sitting in a window with some work in her hand, which however she did not appear to be diligent about, and was wrapt in a gloomy reverie.

She had the features and meditative countenance of a Madonna, and had I known nothing of her being crossed in love I should still have thought her the picture of unhappiness, her figure seemed to be noble and dignified.

As soon as the mother had taken possession of

the little bargaining business at my pedlar's box, the light-footed Angelica flew to the window where her sister sat, first left a kiss on Lavinia's white forehead, then peeped through the casement and directly afterwards, going on tiptoe near a side door, shoved away the cover of the key-hole, bent her head, and seemed to be on the look out for something.

“What are you about?” said her mother in a cross voice.

“I do not think he is come yet, mama,” said she laughingly.

Whether it was natural vanity or presentiment I know not, but it certainly came into my mind that it might be myself whom she was expecting.

I recollected what the waiting maid had said when I first met her on that subject, but why I should be expected or thought of I could not possibly divine, for they were total strangers to me.

Angelica returned to her sister, and I heard her say in a half whisper—

“I dare say he is a frightful baboon, and that

is what makes me so curious to see him ; it is impossible anybody who is rich and of high rank can be otherwise than ugly and cross."

"Yet I have heard," said Lavinia, with a sigh, "that Prince Villarosa is handsome."

Angelica patted the window with her pretty fingers.

"And I have heard," said she, "and I dare say my account is the true one, that he is proud, conceited, wild, and impudent."

These pleasing epithets were sounding in my ear when the Countess asked me, with great vivacity and a lurking smile at the corner of her mouth, but with an appearance of indifference, if I had happened to hear in the hotel, whether Prince Villarosa had arrived during the night, or if he was not coming at all.

"Not at all !" I exclaimed, "then should I be poor indeed in my expectations ; if his Excellency does not arrive I shall be ruined, for it is on his account that I am here, he appointed me with some commissions, and—"

"How !" said Angelica, "is it possible you

know him? Oh! then, do tell me, Mr. Pedlar, I beseech you, is it true, as I fancy, that he is ugly, proud, and disagreeable?"

"Stop, young lady," said I, interrupting her, "the Prince is my benefactor, through him do I exist, I must therefore feel all the pain which the report of such an ill-grounded reputation would create in his own bosom."

"She speaks at random," said the gentle Lavinia; "you must not take in earnest what my sister says. Dear Angelica, how can you precipitately judge of one of whom you know nothing? Nay, you have heard him highly spoken of by our brother—"

"Oh, that is no proof in his favour," she replied, "for I dare say Giulio would not mind telling you that the Marquis Graneri is a beauty."

Lavinia was silenced; she continued her work, and I saw a tear dropping down her lovely cheek. Angelica seemed sorry and abashed at having inadvertently hurt her sister's feelings, and throwing her arms round her, she embraced

her tenderly. Just at that moment a young man entered, whom she addressed as her brother.

“I bet anything,” said he, laughing, “that Angelica is talking of the Prince, I never saw her so obstinately occupied about anything or anybody before ; but do you know it is whispered about, that he has been killed in a duel, and is now lying dead in the room next to this—”

All the four females shrieked aloud, and the Countess declared she would quit the house directly.

I had, for very good reasons, turned myself away with my face to the wall, apparently occupied with putting my things to rights in the box ; for, at the entrance of the brother, I recognized at the first glance an acquaintance in the Count Guilio, whom I had met two years ago in my travels, though I then knew him but slightly, and had even forgotten his name ; besides which, I did not dare encounter the scared looks of the women for fear of laughing. The young Count soon tranquillized them by saying in a serious tone, “I assure you I am just come from the rooms

which were engaged for the Prince, and upon my honour they contain nothing but his trunks and travelling cases, nor did I see any dead body, so there is no foundation for that part of the report; it is, however, a very odd circumstance, that nobody knows where he is, or why he does not appear; since yesterday afternoon his servants have been expecting him every hour, and his valet de chambre begins to be in visible uneasiness at his absence: after all," added he, turning to Angelica, with a comical smile of mockery, "perhaps it is nothing but an artifice to make himself interesting to you."

"To me!" cried she, with a pretty indignant mien, "that is indeed nonsense. I beg I may be left out of the play. If Prince Villarosa has met with any accident, I shall be truly sorry; but I do not wish to make his acquaintance, if he is nothing but a puppy."

I here slipped out of the room with a short hasty bow, quite in a fermentation.

"A puppy!" said I to myself, "out of what elements and out of what brain can these ideas and representations of me be drawn? Had there

been any truth in them I should not have felt so annoyed. Who can it be who takes the trouble to invent stories about me?" I was quite in a rage, and at the same time highly amused at the discourse and astonishment created by a room in the hotel remaining one day unoccupied by the person who had engaged it.

Lisba came flying down the stairs after me. "For heaven's sake," said she, in the greatest anxiety, "do not say a word of what you have heard to the Prince."

"Be under no apprehension," I replied; "as sure as that his Excellency did not hear the remarks which were made on him just now, so sure is it that he never will learn them from me."

"I hope you will keep to your promise," said she, "for it would be a dreadful thing if you did not."

"And why so dreadful, sweet one?" said I.

"Oh! because there is a lady of the Court, an aunt of Prince Villarosa, and great friend of my lady the Countess, and they have formed a plan together—good alliances, you know, are not to be found every day—and my lady is much

troubled with a lawsuit that is impending; these lawsuits often go on through the whole life of a person; in short——”

“ I understand, perfectly,” said I, “ and depend upon it I will repeat nothing of what you tell me to his Excellency the Prince.”

I sprang down the flight of stairs, and ran hastily into the air to cool my blood.

“ So there is a plan !” thought I ; “ delicious Lisba, for having betrayed it to me. A suit-of-law is threatening to deprive the family of their goods and chattels, and I am to be their indemnity in case it turns out ill. Fortunate incognito ! blessed pedlar !” I repeated to myself. In great commotion I walked about the town. Calculating views are ever revolting to me every where ; and this fine web which my heart was to be caught in was completely disgusting. It raised my bile. I promised myself never to put my foot into the apartment of the Countess, and to put an end to the childish play altogether by appearing publicly.

As I was returning to the hotel in this disposition of mind, and was about to enter, some-

thing fell upon my shoulder from a window above. It was the peel of an orange. I looked up, and saw Angelica leaning from the window, holding the golden fruit, which she was peeling, between her white fingers. She said to me in French, with great kindness, "Pray forgive me, Sir, I hope it did not hurt you."

The fragrance of the orange, that lovely countenance, her soft pretty voice, and the sense of her words, which seemed singularly suited to my thoughts at that moment, gave me a tremor from my head to my toe. It was as if she had known what pained me, and sought to pour balsam on the wound. As I was entering the hotel, the porter stopped me: "The young Count Lisio," said he, "has sent for you." I recollected that I had promised to pay him another visit that day, and accordingly went to his door, where I knocked gently, but received no answer. I thought he might have left the room, therefore half opened the door to see. He was sleeping, his cheek leaning on his hand, as his arm rested on the table. I came nearer to him; his breast heaved gently, and moved a small

portrait, which hung round his neck by a black ribbon, usually, I suppose, concealed within his dress ; but he had probably been looking at it just before he fell asleep, for it had sprung open. I recognized the lovely image of Lavinia Baldelli.

The sleeper made an uneasy motion with his hand, as if pushing something away.

“Oh !” escaped his lips, and suddenly awaking he met my eyes. “Who is that ?” cried he, hastily.

“It is I,” I replied, “you sent for me.”

“Ah ! yes,” said he, “I recollect. Sleep has taken me by surprise.” He quickly hid the portrait within his vest.

“Your words, my friend, caused me some wonder yesterday, and I wish to learn who you are, and how you came to know any thing about me ?”

“I have heard a great deal,” said I, “within the lapse of a few hours. My business procures me admission to every body, and exposes my feelings every where to the alternating images of opposite impressions. The first thing

which saluted my eyes this morning was a playful, fairy girl, dreaming of dancing, dress, and festivities, with the graces of form, and all that fashion and taste can fancy to improve it. Near her was a perfect contrast in a sorrowing sister, caring for nothing but the sad recollection of a lover, whom she had been forced to abandon by her ambitious parents."

He looked at me inquiringly.

"Your language," said he, "is not that of a pedlar. The carnival, perhaps, admits of disguises. Tell me, I entreat, if you are one or not, and whether I may hail you as a friend? Alas! I am much in want of one."

The blood rushed into my cheeks; I felt unable to retain my masking character.

"No," said I, "I am no pedlar; my fancy or my fate compelled me to adopt some kind of disguise. Call it folly if you please," I continued quickly, to stop his reply, "or perhaps thoughtless arrogance, but I call it the means of breaking through the established mechanical way of acting an every-day life, which allows of my secretly accompanying the changing positions of exist-

ence, and contemplating the human mind through the prism of the various party-coloured shifting scenes of an hotel."

I then related to him, in a few words, what had led me to the harmless frolic; telling him at the same time, that I trusted to his honour to keep my secret for a short time.

"I cannot betray you," said he, with a bitter smile, "for I have no intercourse with any one. But who are you really?"

I gave him my name.

"I have heard of you," he replied. "I passed through your estates. Affection and gratitude speak of you wherever you are mentioned and known. You have a fine reputation, wherefore then, this incognito? You have nothing to hide, your life has been pure and virtuous, by all accounts. Who can be so happy as yourself?"

Then, placing a chair, he invited me to sit down. Our conversation continued in the most friendly style. His pleasing manners and the honourable sentiments he expressed, inspired me with a desire to serve the youth, though how I knew not. I asked him to confide to me his story. It was as Lisba had said, he had been

engaged ten months before, with the consent of his and her parents, to become the husband of Lavinia Baldelli ; but the marriage was not to be celebrated for some time, on account of some family reasons, and shortly after their engagement had taken place, an event occurred which put a stop to it altogether. Part of the Piedmontese Nobles, desirous of obtaining a constitution, and putting an end to the despotism of their Sovereigns, formed a conspiracy for that purpose. Among them was Count Lisio, the father of this young man. It is well known how their plans were frustrated, and that the Prince, under whose auspices and sanction they acted, abandoned them in the hour of danger. Exile ensued, and confiscation of property ; the son, though innocent, was impoverished as well as the father, whom he would have accompanied in his banishment, but his love for Lavinia detained him near her. In vain were attempts made to obtain for him some provision from Government out of his paternal property : he remained a pensioner on the scanty bounty of a distant relation, and as no hopes were entertained of his father's

pardon being obtained, or of any favour being extended to himself, Lavinia's mother began to shew her unwillingness to bestow her daughter upon him, but did not entirely prevent their meeting, until the beautiful girl most unintentionally attracted the admiration of the Marquis Graneri, who ignorant of her engagement made an offer of his hand. Lavinia was ordered to accept his proposal, as well as to dismiss her young lover from her thoughts, and Eugene was no longer permitted to join their society.

“The harshness with which you have been treated,” said I, “and the cruelty of forcing Lavinia to marry another, when her heart and her vows are yours, are both most reprehensible ; but my friend, if poverty is all you could offer to a wife, you must not regret your marriage being broken off, for no love will last long on misery and distress, and I have some reason for thinking the young lady's fortune would not be sufficient to make you amends.”

“I am informed,” said he, “that there is no doubt of my claim being ultimately attended to, and of part of the possessions of my family being

restored to me, as I had nothing to do with the conspiracy, and justice is not discarded from the heart of the present King, but it may be some time first, and if I had one active friend who had influence at Court, my destiny might sooner be ameliorated than I now can hope. Were I certain of the contrary I should not be here now, and would follow my father in his exile ; but I catch at the slender chance which is held out to me of being restored to comfort, if not affluence, and am waiting the event ; indeed, I find it a difficulty, almost amounting to impossibility, to tear myself away from the town, the hotel where *she* is still residing. I love her—oh ! nothing can express how much I love her and how deserving she is of faithful attachment. Her sense of duty prevents her disobeying her parent, but I know, I know her heart is mine !”

As he said this, by an involuntary movement, he caught my hand, which he pressed fervently between his, in silent emotion. I returned the pressure, which seemed to me an appeal to my compassion, and expressed in the warmest terms my sympathy and anxious wish to be of use to him.

He looked at me with gratitude. "Kind person!" said he, "I see you feel for my sorrowful situation; nothing can restore me to peace and happiness if my Lavinia is not given back to me, but alas! of that I have no hopes. If you could in any manner assist me in clearing away the obstacles opposed to our union, you would be a friend indeed. I fear now there are no means of effecting it, for I am told the Marquis has been accepted, and matters are settling for their——"

He could not say the word marriage, but stamped on the floor, and hid his face in his hands.

I calmed him as well as I could, and promised to see what could be done to promote his wishes. In my own mind I thought I had some chance of success; for I know Graneri, and believe him to be a straitforward good sort of man, who would not wish, (however in love he may be with Lavinia's pretty face, and he is too old to be very enthusiastic on that score,) to be the cause of unhappiness to these two young people.

I took my leave of Eugene Lisio, and hastened to put in execution my newly thought of

plan. I went to a shop, where, by means of money, I was allowed a private room, there to deposit my wig, beard, and black moustachios; I then hired a tolerably decent coat, waistcoat and hat, and had a closed caleche ordered to the door, in which I placed myself, and bid the driver take me to the palace of the Marquis Graneri. My only fear would have been meeting Giulio Baldelli; but I knew from Lisba whom I had met as I came out, that he was gone away that morning, and would be absent two or three days.

I luckily found the Marquis at home, and boldly, yet, I flatter myself, with some cleverness and caution, executed my mission, and broached the subject with as much delicacy as I could. I represented to him in the most forcible terms, the misery he would entail on the young lady he was about to marry, and the want of happiness which in consequence might accrue to himself. He was very much surprised, having never had the slightest suspicion of the real case, and thanked me sincerely for my kind interference. From all he said, and from his manners, I felt convinced

that I had succeeded, and that he himself would find a means of breaking off the match. I requested him not to name me, as, for the present, I was here incognito, and nothing but my regard for Eugene and compassion for the young lady, would have induced me to disclose myself to him. He seemed curious to learn my reasons for remaining unknown, and I told him it was a Carnival freak. He informed me that he should be at the festino at night, and if we met there he would talk the business over with me further.

When I left him, I ordered my coachman to drive to the palace of the Minister, where I sent in my name, and was instantly admitted. You know his connection with my family, and therefore will not be surprised at my being well received. I pleaded for poor Lisio in the strongest manner, and represented him as one for whom I was particularly interested, leaving him to suppose he was my intimate friend, instead of being really an acquaintance of a few hours. His Excellency was all kindness, and made me every promise I could desire.

After this I returned to my shop, where I de-

posited my hired articles of dress, and, equipping myself again as a pedlar, came back to the hotel. As I mounted the stairs, a laugh close to me made me turn round, and I beheld Angelica, fugitive and light as thought, passing from Lisba's room to her mother's in a grey mantle and hood, and holding a mask before her face. I heard her calling out within the half-closed door—

“ Do you know me, Signora Lavinia :”—then making a quantity of droll speeches in French, and in a feigned voice,—after which, in her own enchanting one, she said—

“ Is not this dress just the thing for me, Sister ?”

“ She is going, then, to the masked ball,” thought I, “ and this is her dress. Bravo ! I will go thither likewise.”

I have been for these two hours writing to you by fits and starts, between my runnings in and out to smooth my overstretched feelings with new faces and fresh events, but I have met with none that interest me like those I have written to you about. I am now waiting impatiently for night, for I am anxious to be at the

festino, and this evening seems longer than any I ever spent.

January 20th.

Now, dear Cousin, will I give you an account of my further proceedings. I left off writing last night when the time approached for my attending the masked ball, and set out in quest of a dress. Several equipages were standing before the house, and a good many masks were crowded together in the entrance hall; among which I had no difficulty in discovering the Countess Baldelli and her youngest daughter: it seems that her sister had excused herself from going, by pleading a bad head-ach. I waited to see them off before I left the hotel, and cannot explain why I felt indescribably cheerful and happy. Was it the success attending my benevolent visits for the benefit of Eugene, which gave me such a feeling of self-satisfaction? I think not, for that was not paramount in my mind; but

something seemed to presage happiness to myself, and a pleasant finale to my adventures.

I proceeded to the best dress warehouse, and buying there a mask, a domino, a hat and feathers, and every other requisite, I set out for my destination, and was in a few minutes fairly launched in the midst of the crowd and bustle of the masked ball. My little fairy in the grey mantle was not long concealed from my sight. I was instantly at her side. She could have no suspicion of who it was that persecuted her, for I was quite indefatigable in my tormenting discourse and attentions, and at last she seemed so annoyed by them that I ceased for a little while; then re-approaching her, I asked if she had not yet gained any intelligence concerning Prince Villarosa. She was quite startled, and made no answer. I whispered to her—"He is here in the ball-room." She looked round with curiosity. "He is masked," I continued; "you would not know him, though I do. Do you think you could say to himself all that you asserted this morning?"

"Good heavens!" she cried in a vexed tone and manner, "what do you mean?"

I reminded her of everything she had said.—
“Suppose now,” said I, “he were really dead, as you heard this morning, and that his spirit were hovering round you, hearing all the harsh things you are ready to repeat in abuse of him, dare you talk again of him in the irreverent style you made use of some hours ago?”

She looked at me sharply. Her quick sense immediately caught a clue to the truth,—at least she conjectured that the Prince himself was concealed under my mask, and perhaps suspected the faithless pedlar of having betrayed her conversation to him. It was her turn now to tease. We outdid each other in hits and in humour; the hours flew like seconds. She is full of wit, sprightliness, and grace. I was delighted, fascinated, by the little mischievous sprite; and when, towards the close of the ball, she took off her mask, and shewed her beautiful smiling countenance, lighted up with animation, my heart was entirely conquered. I at last led her to the carriage, forgetful of all her mother's plans, and only occupied with my own, which were sketching out several little ordeals for Angelica to un-

dergo, that I might make sure of having gained her heart, as I was certain of pleasing her fancy.

I found, from something she said during the evening, that the marriage of her sister was likely to be broken off—which was a great vexation to her mother, but a source of joy to Lavinia, and consequently to herself. I asked for no particulars, as I concluded I should hear all in time : and was afraid of committing myself, by shewing an interest on the subject.

All might long have been fast asleep in the hotel, whilst I, in my domino, &c. was still wandering about the streets, notwithstanding its being a cold night, for I felt nothing of it—my blood needed cooling. Thus lounging about near the hotel, my eyes were raised to Angelica's window, from whence I had in the morning received her orange-peelings on my head. I started with horror on beholding a dazzling glare of light blazing up in flames within her room ; my breath was stopped ; I was unable to call out, but rushed up the staircase, the most horrible torments assailing me ; I violently pushed her

door open with both feet—pulled the little creature, wrapped in the coverlet, out of bed, and calling loudly for every one to save themselves, flew with her below. Having placed her in safety, I ran upstairs again, and met Eugene, whom my alarm had brought forth, as well as the rest of the inhabitants of the hotel. We succeeded in bringing away the Countess and Lavinia, although the flames kept increasing, and approaching the staircase.

This was all the work of scarcely more than a minute, and the fire continued in a progressive state. The passages and halls below were already filled with people, and it was ludicrous to see the porter, in his sleeping gown, slippers, and night cap, leading the Countess, Angelica and Lisba, both barefooted, holding the fat master of the hotel by the arm, as they all hastened out of the house. Eugene, happy fellow! had his Lavinia under his care, and I make no doubt this fire was a source of delight to them both. The violence of the flames at length was got under, though it was not an easy thing to be effected. I assisted in extinguishing them, in

great measure, and, during our endeavours for that purpose, I beheld amongst the crowd Ternualdo, the lawyer, who, I had heard, was the advocate and counsellor of the Countess in this lawsuit of hers, which was impending. I knew him to be a man of infamous character, renowned for an absolute want of probity, artfully concealed under a hypocritical mask of apparent candour. He seemed to be in great agonies concerning his papers, for, on the alarm of fire, being by nature a great coward, he had at first, forgetful of aught besides saving himself, sprung over the burning balustrade into the hall below. He was striving to return for them, but I promised to fetch them from his room. On arriving there, I hastily collected together his heap of rubbishy papers,—a sort of instinct seemed to lead me on to take that trouble, at the risk of being suffocated;—and then I quickly flew from the place with my parcel. A beneficial shower of rain arriving in this opportune moment, succeeded in putting the fire out completely. I returned to the party below, and delivered my cargo of papers to the lawyer, who had rushed

again upstairs, and whom I met on the landing-place. He seemed quite beside himself, the image of distress and horror: but was relieved when I put the treasures into his hands. One packet I had kept back: he sought furiously to seize it from me. I whispered to him, that one single moment had informed me of the contents of that document. It was a most important one relating to the suit-at-law of Countess Baldelli, which Lisba had so anxiously made mention of to me, and which had been decided in her favour. Yet Signor Ternualdo, gained over by the opposite party, had, it seems, undertaken to cripple the legal sentence, and induce the Countess to agree to a compromise. This dishonorable and knavish piece of business is now put a stop to by the auspicious fire, and by my zeal in the service of Angelica's mother. I delivered the paper to the delighted Countess, and, as my aversion to the wretch whom she had employed was not so great as my indifference, I promised him to animadvert no further on the affair, although he merited punishment.

Every body was collected in a saloon, and one moment was sufficient to make us mutually recognized. The anxiety and attachment of my valet-de-chambre had already betrayed me. All called me their preserver. Angelica pressed my hand within hers, and thanked me a thousand times. I felt in extacy. No longer a pedlar, I abandoned my apartment in the garret, and retired to repose, after my fatigues, in the room which had been destined for me, and which was already the receptacle of my trunks.

I dreamt of Angelica, and thought of nothing else after I awoke.

All further plans and intentions of ordeals, trials, &c. are given up. These two eventful days of the Carnival have decided my fate. Angelica is mine! The Countess, overjoyed at so unexpected a fulfilment of her wishes, without any trouble being taken by herself for the purpose, is all good humour; and Lisio is again received, at my request, as the intended husband of Lavinia; for the Marquis had paved the way for him, by acting in a noble and honourable man-

ner. He gave for his reason, in putting a stop to the match between himself and the young lady, that he understood her affections were otherwise engaged ; but assured her, at the same time, of his esteem and regret.

I have to-day received a letter from my cousin, the Minister, informing me, that on his representation, in consequence of my anxious interference for the welfare of my friend, his Majesty had been graciously pleased to bestow on Eugene Lisio a moiety of his father's property. This will be sufficient to keep him and his pretty wife in affluence and comfort, and enable him also to make a pension to those in banishment, for whose recall from exile no hopes are given.

What say you, my dear cousin ? Is not this a good *finale* to my frolic ? I have crowded more events into these two days of Carnival, than might be thought sufficient to embellish a whole life. A young beauty, released from her engagement with the man she did not fancy, and two lovers made suddenly happy, who were at the point of despair ; and a noble suffering under

the displeasure of his sovereign, restored at once to affluence from poverty and distress ; the arts and villainy of a lawyer revealed, by which a widowed countess is saved from the loss of her property ; and, above all this, a careless, light-hearted, merriment-loving young nobleman, long considering himself the acme of cunning and prudence, with an invulnerable heart, and a thorough detestation of all wiles which might be attempted against his precious liberty,—now, with his eyes open, and through his own free-will, sets his foot designedly into the trap which was intended to be in ambush for his discomfiture !

For my part I shall eternally bless the happy thought which came across me of creeping about as a pedlar. I wish you were here, for it is impossible for me to describe in a letter all the delight which fills my soul. Pleased with my own lot, pleased with all the world, I fear *ennui* no longer, and shall never again be obliged to have recourse to frolics to pass away the time. In short, I am in love, and I suppose that explains every thing. Let no pedlar be sent away

from your door without your buying something of him. I shall make a foundation in the family to support all perambulating merchants. Both nuptials will be celebrated the same day. We only wait for the return of Giulio.

ADIEU !

LOVE AND GENIUS.

“ How oft her gracious smile to me
Brought warmth and radiance, if not balm,
Like moonlight on a troubled sea,
Brightening the storm it could not calm.”

MOORE.

“ Antwerp! since ravaged by the deadly wars
Of rebel Belgians, and of heartless Dutch,
Defaced her beauties by their rival spars,
All signs of splendour gone! Not such
Was Antwerp seen in the Burgundian days,
When vessels from all shores their flags unfurl'd,
Whilst all around rich plenty met the gaze,
She reign'd the Queen of the commercial world.”

At that time Antwerp was in its highest state of flourishing, through its commerce, traffic, arts, and manufactures of all sorts; and all saw with astonishment the many great artists it sent forth, whose works have created admiration in after times as much as in their own; when

improvement hailed the industrious; and above all, the noble art of painting found there her peculiar motherland, from the extraordinary encouragement afforded to it among the inhabitants of the many commercial cities in the provinces.

It was evening, and as the sun declined towards the sea, its rays gilded the pennons of the vessels which had sailed up the wide river Scheldt, under the walls of Antwerp, bringing costly treasures from the distant eastern shores into the warehouses of the rich merchants of that city. Boats and skiffs were gliding by the great ships, and drew glittering furrows on the still waters. On the shore all was active life, noise, stir, and the bustle of the out and in lading. Promenaders wandered here and there, alternately enjoying the sight of vessels coming and going. Signals were heard and answered; and among these busy occupations, the curfew hour sounded in slow strokes from the magnificent tower of the church, the handsome architecture of which long after charmed the Emperor Charles the Fifth at his entry into the town.

At this signal every clock in the other towers of the city began to strike. All busy hands ceased working, and the Ave Maria was prayed. The bustle of the day was over, and the industrious separated to seek repose, refreshment, comfort, or enjoyment.

A swarm of journeymen mechanics of different trades had assembled before they retired to their houses, loudly and merrily chattering by the fountain in the square before the church of our Lady. There was one only who did not partake in the common content; it was a smith's journeyman, a young tall man of a magnificent figure and agreeable mien, whose beauty was not to be discerned in the sooty dress he wore, which was blackened throughout by the smoke of the charcoal, and his features were disfigured by dust and labour.

Several persons, whose business was to work in metals, stood in admiration before the even trellis work which surrounded the fountain, which, with its elegant flowers, and beautifully entwined branches, shewed that the maker of it

must have been a man of real talent, and a thinking man, more than a mere whitesmith.

“By my faith !” exclaimed a workman, who had emigrated from France, and had with his comrades been admiring the design, the clever elevated work, and the variety of the execution : —“this is no common work, and I should like well to know the master who manufactured it.”

“There he stands,” said one near him, pointing to Quintin Messius, who was at no great distance, not attending to their discourse. He was roused by the stranger addressing him with praises of his work.

“Is that all ?” said he, in an absent and dejected manner, like one occupied by other thoughts, “Can the rough metal and the rude work bring joy or pleasure ? just as soon could one raise the human face out of free stone in a wall, as imitate the softness and abundance of leaves and foliage, the delicacy of flowers and the charming variety of colours in the black iron work ! I should like to break the balustrade to pieces, that no one might give another thought to it, or to him who made it.”

“ But I conclude,” said the Frenchman, “ that is what the good people of Antwerp would not readily give their consent to.”

“ Thou hast no reason to be dissatisfied, Quintin,” said one of the others, “ that same railwork has gained thee much honour, and every one who sees and understands it gives praise to its execution.”

“ Though the youngest journeyman,” added another, “ thou wert intrusted with the work because the incorporated magistrates of the place unanimously acknowledged thy design and pattern to be the best.”

Whilst they were discoursing Quintin remained silent and gloomy, till one of the gayest of his companions exclaimed, “ Our precious time is passing—what are we doing here? let us go out by the Crown-gate to Master Vandekard, who has good beer and a handsome daughter ; come Quintin, come with us, and play us a tune on thy lute.”

He shook his head in denial.

“ Leave him,” cried another, “ nothing is to

be done with him.”—“ He is out of spirits,” said the first who spoke, “ and it is a pity, for he is a thorough good fellow, and an excellent musician and singer ; Love has quite altered him.”

“ Love ?” asked the Frenchman.

“ It so happens,” continued the other, “ that the poor devil took it into his head to cast an eye of love on the painter’s beautiful daughter, who lives opposite to his workshop.”

“ What, the rich de Brindt !” cried a third ; “ he will meet with a pretty reception, and be in luck if the father does not knock the soot out of his jacket with his long paint brush.”

These last words, which were said aloud as the merry companions laughing together passed near him, were heard by Quintin, and drove the blood into the pale cheeks of the youth ; he doubled his fist, stamped on the ground, and turned his face round to see who it was that had made use of such offensive expressions ; he advanced several steps, and was hastening after them, but they were already far off, and better reflections gained the upper hand.

“ He is in the right,” said he, “ I am a mad-

man ! a poor mechanic, destined to hammer on his thoughtless days in slavish work on the anvil, never to bring out anything that may afford honour or worldly joy, and lead him nearer to the sole object of his wishes !”

Wrapt in these gloomy thoughts, he wandered beyond the city, where the broad river, and the wide extended plain, lay before him in the departing light of day. Grey and ghost-like willows, with their bushy heads and crooked stems, stood on the hedges ; and along the canal nothing interrupted the solitariness of the plain, but here and there the towers of distant village churches, which arose in the horizon, or the surrounding hamlets in the vicinity, where life was already sunk on the lap of Morpheus.

The obscurity of the country around accorded powerfully with his feelings, and the appearance of nature acted sympathetically on him. He longed to be able to paint what made such a lively impression on his soul ; it seemed as if unknown powers were locked up in his breast, and the feeling of the barrier, which on all sides

compressed him, brought painful ideas of the hopelessness of this world to him.

He seated himself on a stone, by the water-side, and passed over in his imagination the gloomy, poor, and joyless life which he had led since his childhood. Reflecting on the contrary feelings which almost divided him from himself;—his lowly station,—his poverty, which prevented him seeking after other things, because he had to keep his mother out of his daily wages, and her wants and nourishment often threatened to sink him under the pressure of his hard labour; on the other side was his unhappy passion for a girl, who never could be his, and his admiration for a science that he was unable to learn, and could never hope to practise.

In the meanwhile the full moon had risen; its mild soothing light flowed round every object, and though the colour and expression of the scene still had a melancholy appearance, yet this clear illumination, and the open blue space of Heaven, from whence it seemed as if the eternal Providence regarded him with eyes of love,

spread a soft calm over his soul. The Cathedral tower struck slowly the late evening hour. He thought of his mother who would be anxiously expecting his return, and rose to depart towards home. He passed through the gate and solitary streets to the habitation of his poor widowed parent, whom he found waiting for him, in the dark, sitting on the stone before their door.

The matron was plainly, but cleanly dressed, in black woollen cloth, with a tight close boddice, and thickly plaited petticoats; an apron and handkerchief of clear white linen, and a white coif with quilting on her head, the points of which met together under her chin. A pocket and bunch of keys at her side, completed her dress. A melancholy joy lighted up the maternal eyes when she at length beheld her long-wished-for son come up the street, whilst she also remarked the dejection that sat upon his brow. He brought her his scanty weekly pay, for this was a Saturday, nor had he allowed himself to spend any of it before he gave it to her hands. A tear stood in her eye, and a silent prayer ascended to Heaven for the happiness and cure

of her beloved child, for Dame Geltrude considered her son as sick either in body or mind, perhaps both: but it was evident to her that all was not well with him.

Their little supper was soon eaten, and mostly in silence, for Quintin was never very talkative at any time, and was lately become still less so. Sometimes his mother pressed him to eat, and inquired what ailed him, but obtained little satisfactory information; and both of them laid their heads on their pillows, full of sorrowful thoughts. The visible decline of her son, with its unknown cause, kept the anxious mother long awake, whilst his sleep was impeded by the deep grief and painful reflections with which the reader is already acquainted. It is in the still hours of darkness, when no business of life, no movement around intercepts the gloomy course of ideas, that every sorrow and anguish becomes deeper; the hope arising from the feeling of one's own strength is buried and the consolation springing from a just estimation of things during the day then seems to have abandoned and given us up a prey to our enemies. Thus had many nights

passed with poor Quintin since his heart had been filled with his unfortunate passion; that is since the Easter of the preceding spring, when he first entered the workshop of his present master, and so frequently beheld that graceful form which enchanted him, either at the opposite window or in the street.

There, when as morning dawned he dragged himself to his laborious employment, and his dreary life lay before him, endless and hopeless, without project, without joy or pleasure, or even a resting-place of comfort, and only intercepted by deceitful gleams of light, it was then that the opposite window, opening almost every day at the same time, a white hand put the shutters back, and a transcendently lovely face, overshadowed with light brown ringlets, confined in braids behind by a silver pin, leant forward, and her brilliant eyes looked down the street. Then was a Heaven opened to Quintin! All grief, all uneasiness, and hopelessness in the future was forgotten. His eyes were rivetted on the charming figure,—on all her movements, his soul was in his look. Vainly the flames crackled behind

him,—the bellows blowed,—the hammer struck ; —he perceived nothing of it, he only saw the painter's beautiful daughter, and would joyfully have parted with his life to stay only one whole day and gaze upon her. Sometimes he fancied she had seen him,—nay, that she had observed him staring at her, and that a friendly smile played round her delicate mouth.

“ But that is delusion !” said he, to himself ;—“ no, she cannot observe me, or if she did, it would only be to be angry with me for my audacity. Quintin, thou art a madman ! disengage thyself by force and subdue thy passion ! She is of distinguished birth, rich and handsome ; all Antwerp knows that de Brindt will give his daughter only to a painter, and thou art, and must ever remain a poor smith's journeyman.”

Weighed down with these thoughts, his arm sank with the heavy hammer ; he leant upon the anvil, and hid his face in both his hands, whilst tears crept through his folded fingers, down upon the iron, which appeared not harder or more pitiless than his fate. A jest from his companions roused him from his reverie, he looked

towards the window.—She was at hers. She had seen him and his dejection, and he thought—but perhaps it was but his fancy—he thought he discovered traces of compassion in her countenance. She shut the window slowly, her eyes still directed towards the opposite forge, and then disappeared. Quintin's glare of happiness was extinguished for the whole day, the industrious maiden had to attend to her domestic cares, or else to sit at her work-table or lace-pillow, where, like a clever Netherlander, she made beautiful works in her little bedroom, which the cautious father had, since her mother's death, removed to the back part of the house, the windows of it looking on the garden path; and an aged female relative lived with her as a guardian and an assistant in the housekeeping; but every morning, for some time past, she had made it a rule to come into the front room, which served her father for a painting room; there she put all in order, opened the windows to let out the smell of the oil and paint, amusing herself the while with looking down the populous street, and enjoying the bustle of the market, which was there held

for vegetables and fish. In her own little chamber, the rest of the day, she could see nothing. When de Brindt came to his easel, the window was closed, and the scholars arrived, who, according to the custom of the times, were put to board with the celebrated masters for a term of years. The work then began; one rubbed the colours, a second mixed them with the oil, another placed the master's pallet, one made a drawing after a model, another copied the picture which the master placed before him. Modest behaviour, and her father's will, forbid Margaretta's staying in the room, and Quintin had no chance of seeing her any more during the day.

In this manner he had passed the whole of the preceding summer, and a part of the autumn; in unhappy love and martyring cares. He considered himself as the most unfortunate of beings, even his solicitude for something better, and that feeling of love which generally makes every living creature happy, were become Satan's agents to torment him still more sensibly; the lute, on which he played so skilfully, was now almost always at rest, and if he did touch it, or

accompany it with his voice, it was only for melancholy.

Yet Quintin was not, as he in his dejection thought himself to be, completely unremarked : his personal appearance and silent distress had drawn the attention of one being, whose sympathizing interest would have richly indemnified him for all his sorrow. This was no other than Margaretta de Brindt herself, who, as she passed the street, or looked out from her father's window, had observed the active workmen in the neighbouring smith's shop. One of these was remarkable by his sweet voice, when they softened their labours by singing, by his slender yet strong shape, by a natural adroitness in his movements, and a noble expression of countenance. Although his features were shaded by sorrow he had attracted her attention as well as that of her kinswoman, even through her spectacles, and they had in joke given him the name of the handsome smith, or the songster. They particularly noticed him on Sundays, when he met them in the way to the cathedral, attired in a poor but cleanly dress of dark camlet, with a

short cloak and black cap. The old kinswoman never rested till she found out that this youth was the same who had executed the beautiful iron trellis work in the market-place. She heard that he was called Quintin Messius, was the son of a blacksmith ; had good manners and morals, and was a skilful player on the lute, but very poor ; and that he kept his mother with his scanty day's wages ; also that he was generally quiet and downcast. Margareta felt esteem for the young man, and when she met him in the street, she could not help observing him with a feeling of good will, for so good a son and well disposed a person, as she learnt he was, seemed no longer a stranger to her. She would have given anything to know if his sorrow originated in his poverty, or had another cause ; but this could not be fathomed.

About this time, all Antwerp was in active motion, for the Princess Mary, of Burgundy, daughter of the last Duke Charles the Bold, and

heiress of all his lands, came over from Brussels to Antwerp, whither she had convoked the states of Brabant to deliberate with them on her choice of a consort, and the future lord of their rich and beautiful provinces. Her arrival was celebrated by a succession of entertainments and amusements, which gave the lively Antwerpians plenty of opportunities for displaying their love of magnificence, and their sense of the fine arts, and afforded them matter for conversation and pleasure for a long time afterwards.

Among those frolicsome and joyous occupations, Margareta de Brindt had forgotten her handsome neighbour and his sorrow. A public feast took place outside of the town on the opposite bank of the Scheld, where tents were pitched, in which the Princess, with her court, and the grandees of the land banqueted, while the rest enjoyed the pleasures of archery, music and dancing. Among the joyous multitude was Margareta, in festive dress, who leaning on her father's arm, went from one place to another, stopping to look at the different games. Her father, with the eye of an artist, watched the

countenances of the players, their attitudes, the effect of light and shade among the tents or the trees, and collected hints for his easel, while his handsome daughter heard, with not inattentive ears, the praises bestowed on her graceful figure as she passed through the rows of spectators, who looked, with complacent eyes, on the lovely and richly attired maiden. Her dress was a bright crimson, with tight sleeves, which, on the shoulders, at the elbows, and in front of the hands, were slashed and puckered with white satin, and displayed the shape becomingly. She wore a large gold chain round her white throat, and over her bright brown locks a hat of crimson velvet, with abundance of slashes, and white feathers hanging over.

The sound of a lute, very skilfully played, drew them towards a group where the archers had assembled to shoot at a target. The Burghers, in their black Sunday clothes, short mantles, and high hats, stood near a shed decorated with branches of trees, round a young man of fine stature, who had just finished a piece on the lute. It seemed as if it were an interlude between the

shooting exercises. He now again seized the bow, when some other exclaimed: "Oh! Messius, you will take all from us, for you have already won the most."

Messius! thought Margareta, that is the name of the handsome smith; and she directed her looks with greater attention towards the shooting. It was certainly he, and at that moment he likewise saw her. His eyes were fixed upon her as on an apparition,—his hand trembled—he was obliged to put away the bow, and had scarcely power to lay it down, and excuse himself from shooting.

"What is come to you, friend Quintin?" said an elderly man, "you have become quite red, and then pale. Have you a vertigo?"

"Drink a glass of wine," said another, "it will do away with your giddiness."

The youth had now recovered himself: he looked up—it was no dream—the lovely maiden stood still in the same place, and it seemed to him as if a confusion, which he had not before remarked, was painted in her eyes, quickly he seized hold of the bow. She whom he had

honoured in silence like a saint, and whom a fortunate chance had brought so near to him, she should see that the lowly unnoticed youth was not wanting in noble capacity. His looks were conducted from Margareta to the target, he took his aim, and pulled the string, his heart invoking her secretly. The arrow flew—passed to the mark and through the black spot. “Vivat!” they cried, “Quintin Messius has won!”

A crimson glow overspread the features of the youth, the people huzzaed and applauded with clapping of hands. The marker brought the target, with the arrow fixed in it. All the archers praised the shot, and de Brindt joined with them. His daughter stood near, and now, for the first time, the eyes of the young people met ;—a mutual blush gladdened and embarrassed them both at the same moment. De Brindt continued some time conversing with the burghers, and from them learnt that the clever archer was the same person who had distinguished himself by his handy-work in the execution of the famed fountain railing. He

knew the work well, and knew how to value it. Noticing the young man with a friendly salutation, he went away with his daughter to the other groups to look at their games and dancing.

The entertainments were without end, and among the crowd de Brindt met acquaintances with their wives and daughters all decked out in their best attire. They collected themselves together into a society, and sitting down under one of the tents at a table, they feasted, laughed, and chatted till late in the evening. De Brindt thought no more of the young smith, but in Margareta's mind the youth's elegant form, his lute playing, above all his blushing, and the looks with which he had observed her, were strongly impressed. She wondered what cause could have thus confused him, and rendered him at first unable to bend the bow; his masterly shot, when he did so, and a secret voice which sounds in a female's heart, taught her only too well how to interpret the flattering signs.

But a poor journeyman! and she the daughter of the rich and respected painter de Brindt.

One moment's reflection placed before her eyes, all that was opposed to such a connexion, and she exerted herself to drive away the image of the young archer as often as it presented itself to her mind.

The next morning he was missed in the forge, and two mornings more, for his mother was sick, but on the fourth day he appeared again at the anvil, where Margaretta saw him from her father's painting-room.

“ He has certainly a fine figure,” thought she, “ and is very clever in his work; besides, how he plays the lute ! and how skilful in archery—it is a pity one so active should be fixed to such laborious work. If he did but know me enough.” This occurred to her as he looked up sideways at the window, but instantly his eyes were cast down on the iron, and nothing appeared in his behaviour which could explain his embarrassment, or confirm it. Every morning did the lovely girl look out at the forge, and without being conscious of it, was trying to espy signs of attention or disturbance in the deportment of the handsome youth. By degrees they shewed themselves

only too well, and the unhappy passion the young man fostered in his breast, as well as his efforts to conceal it, were developed to her observation. The struggle in his mind gave him greater charms in her eyes, and although she reproached herself for the pleasure with which she perceived his devotion to her, as a madness and a cruelty, she could not bring herself to discontinue her daily observations; and many times by a friendly look, a longer stay at the window, an intentional meeting, or passing by the workshop, she could not resist imparting beams of comfort to the unhappy.

Amidst these observations, these private joys, and deep griefs, the summer was gone by, and autumn arrived without the smallest change in the situation of these two young persons. One day, an elegantly dressed man was seen before the door of Master de Brindt, who knocked for admittance. The smith's workmen, as they noticed him, discoursed about the various knots which decorated his under dress,—his sky-blue coat of uncut velvet,—his gold-coloured mantle, of the finest Brussels cloth, edged with light fur,—his

brown cap, bordered with gold, and ornamented with a falling feather;—and all agreed that he must be a foreigner, probably a painter, and visitor of de Brindt; but evidently a silly person, who was bedecked out with finery, so as to have the appearance of a runaway page. Whilst these remarks were going on, the door opened, and a maid-servant appeared, to whom the stranger delivered a letter, then going into the passage, the smiths saw him putting his dress in order; shaking the dust from the broad open ends of his elegant shoes, put to rights the knots upon them, and upon his knees, then pull up his ruff, and place himself in the best way; soon after the maid returned, the stranger walked up the staircase, the door was shut, and nothing more seen of the visit or its results.

This day, for the first time during six weeks, the window of the painter's house was unopened, no lovely figure bent out from it, and it appeared that de Brindt had received the stranger in that room. For several times Quintin fancied he saw the gold-coloured cloak shining through the cornered panes of glass of the bay window.

He could not get over the unpleasant sensation which the arrival and appearance of this stranger had occasioned to him. The whole day did the impression remain; for had not this visit destroyed his happiness for that day? On the next, the new-comer again shewed himself, and Quintin learnt that it was the celebrated painter of flowers, Lewis de Bos, from Bois le Duc, son to a rich merchant whose vessels sailed up and down the Rhine, and who was in traffic with all the great houses of this city. The son's natural talent, and desire of distinguishing himself, had led him to study painting, and he brought the elegant nature of flowers, their beautiful colours, and delicate enamel to great perfection. Very unwillingly had his father consented to his exchanging the pen for the pencil, and the ledger for the canvas; but as he loved his son, he was easily persuaded to give him a large sum of money, that he might travel comfortably, and perfect himself in the profession he had chosen. He went to Ghent and Bruges, where still many scholars of Eyk lived and taught; he visited Germany, came up the beautiful Rhine, and saw all

the wonders of art at Cologne and Mentz, in the rich chapters and abbeys which surrounded the flourishing bank of that river. He was now returned to the Netherlands after the lapse of several years, much improved in his profession; and having gained himself a brilliant reputation by his works. No painter understood like him how to represent the soft abundance of petals and leaves of flowers, their shady enamel, their lovely tints, the dewy drops that trembled on the leaves, so as to deceive the eye, and move the hand to chase away the insects, so naturally painted, that they seemed to creep over the flowers, or to feed upon the splendid piece which one seeks to free from them.

He brought to de Brindt a very particular letter of recommendation from his father, who had known him formerly; so that he was received in the house of the former, not merely as an artist and a scholar, but as a visitor of the best sort. It is probable the father's letter had also another view, and de Brindt's handsome daughter, sole heiress of his riches, was not likely to be overlooked. De Bos soon became charmed

with her, and what her personal charms had effected in the commencement of their acquaintance, further intimacy completed, by the conviction of her modesty, talents for housewifery, filial duty, and all the virtues which a lover's eye is sure to discern in the object of his admiration. Confiding in his outward attractions, as well as his talents and riches, he thought he might dispense with the trouble of carrying on his suit with timidity and gradual approaches; and in consequence the prime object of his visit was now made evident to both father and daughter.

All this poor Quintin could not know, but to conjecture it was sufficient to depress still more his gloomy soul; his imagination represented to him all the probable results arising from Margareta's acquaintance with a rich young man, and the dread which he felt at this idea agitated him more than perhaps the certainty would have done.

Just about that time, at the approach of winter, his master being desirous of making an advantageous purchase of iron at Cologne, it

was necessary for him to send a person who had sufficient knowledge of the merchandise, as well as ability for purchase, and whose rectitude might be depended upon. There was no one so fit for the commission as Messius, who was thus compelled to quit Antwerp for several weeks, just when he most wished to have watched Margareta's house, and everything going in and out of it

Eternally long and painful did the time seem to him, when he was away ; yet he settled his business, cleverly and quickly, to the master's satisfaction, and returned home at the beginning of the fourth week. It was towards evening, and the joyful mother prepared for him the favourite dish, increased the fire of the stove, poured more oil into the lamp, and did what she possibly could to celebrate the return of her beloved son. She was indefatigable in questions. What had befallen him ? What had he seen and heard ? When he had satisfied her curiosity and maternal solicitude, she related to him all that had occurred during his absence in the quarter of the city which she inhabited, then suddenly said :

“Thou knowest the house of the rich Master de Brindt, thou must look upon it from thy forge.”

Quintin, who till now, seated on his three-legged stool, had taken little share in the conversation, rose up, and stared at his mother; but without replying a word.

“Is it not opposite thy workshop?” she asked, he nodded, and sank down in his place again.

“Then thou knowest the Master’s handsome daughter?”

He shook—it would have been impossible for him to speak.

“Thou must have seen her going in and out, or sitting at her window.”

“Wherefore all this?” said her son at last, “What do you mean by these questions?”

“Well, well, be not angry,” said his mother, as she took up the spindle that danced on the floor with the thread, took off her spectacles, and placed them in the large painted prayer-book, with various coloured letters, which had been the amusement of Quintin in his childhood.

“One only says a word and you fancy it calumny and backbiting; but what I have heard can be affirmed.”

“And what have you heard?” said he with quickness, “name it—say—”

“No, my child, I would sooner be as dumb as a fish for the rest of my days, as say aught that may bring discontent between us, after all, what is it to us what the rich people do? they trouble not themselves about us.”

Quintin sighed deeply.

“If,” continued she, “there is a handsome maiden, heiress to a fine sum of gold, it is very natural that she should find suitors.”

He now stood up, deep crimson overspread his face, and soon again left him to his natural paleness.

“A suitor?” said he at last in a saddened tone—“a wooer!—well, well!”—

“I only think so,” replied she, “and one hears divers things, but it may be only idle gossip.”

“What have you heard, dear mother; is there a wooer for Margareta de Brindt?”

“So they say,” she answered; “but what makes thee seem out of humour? Is it then a crime to have one’s eyes open, and to see what passes? If now, as all their neighbours say, a young man is arrived who hovers round Margareta de Brindt, if he is seen constantly in her house, if it is remarked how courteously the Master receives him, if one hears the man is a fine painter by profession, just what de Brindt requires for his daughter, is rich, handsome, and decorated, and the offspring of respectable parents?—is it then to be wondered at that they have settled he will please both father and daughter, and that the young people will be united? They do say—”

An icy cold perspiration was on Quintin’s forehead.

“I pray you, mother, go on,” said he; “what do they say?”

“That they are to be married upon Shrove Tuesday; the young man has only first to make a journey home, and—but Heavens what ails thee, my boy—my Quintin, what is the matter with thee? Art thou ill?”

All was become dim to Quintin's sight, and he held by the table not to fall from his seat, the alarmed mother flew to him, threw water on his face, and remarked the paleness of his cheek, and the closing of his eyes. She unbuttoned his coat, and opened his collar to give him air, he breathed again, and sighed deeply, but was not in a state to hear any more, or to remain in the room. Internal anguish drove him out in a severe stormy winter's night, while the chilling rain fell, and darkness and cold surrounded him as merciless as his lot; he wandered like one deprived of sensation, he felt not that the rain drenched him through and through, and arrived outside of the city by the river.

The moon shone, but was obscured by the shower of rain that fell; widely flowed the river towards the sea; in the uncertain twilight were seen the masts and sails of the vessels raised aloft, the wind sighed and the rain pattered against the boards and the tackle. He recollected the evening two months before, when unhappy but yet not so hopelessly so as now, he had sat

in the same place, and how all since instead of improving had become worse. He descended to the river, and looked across the smooth walled banks, a painful longing seized his soul. Ah! rest—cried he, and be silent the storm which eternally tears my breast! The wish of putting an end to his misery and the horror of the crime of suicide combated in his heart, then his mother's form seemed to stretch out her arms towards him,—he was seized with a shudder, but it was illusion, the uncertain moon had shewn him a dreadful image in the shades and stems of the willows on the bank; it sufficed, however, to break his wild designs.

What would become of my mother? thought he. No, I will live on for her sake, I will do everything for her; even bear the griefs of my fate.

This resolution gave at first the semblance of peace restored to his mind; and now came the feeling of bodily exhaustion and feebleness. It was with difficulty that he trailed himself home; a light glimmering through the crevices of the door shewed that the tender mother was watch-

ing for his return, filled with anxiety, and glad at last to see him ; she came out to meet him but chided not, for she saw him sink down on the bench before the door, deadly pale and weary. With trembling hands she led him to his bed, prepared for him some restorative, then retired to her own pillow, and, in her disturbed slumbers, often listening to know if he also slept.

Quintin roused himself the next morning. If he did not work, his mother would have nothing to live upon : besides, he must see and hear what had been going on in de Brindt's house, and what was still doing there. His companions, who had not seen him for some time, were shocked at his appearance ;—his features sunk ;—his eyes dimmed ;—and they perceived the efforts which every stroke of the hammer cost him.

The opposite window opened, and Margareta leant from it. Was it reality or illusion ? She also appeared pale and suffering. It even seemed to Quintin as if the traces of tears were round her eyes :—in silent emotion did he regard her, and at that instant all feeling of illness and

fatigue disappeared. His soul was in his eyes, and they were immoveably bent on the beauteous image. She looked towards the forge—their eyes met,—and this time it was no fancy. A bright red suffused her cheek, and an expression of joyful surprise seemed to hover round her lips. But now again sadness shaded her bright hazel eyes, and she turned away, resting her arm on the window-frame. He thought he saw her wipe off a tear. What could this mean! What ailed her? Could his lot create in her an interest? Perhaps she was betrothed, and loved not her bridegroom:—was weeping at the constraint put on her by her father—? He was quite beside himself, and heard nothing more of what his comrades said to him; but their discourse became louder, and the purport of it recalled the dreamer from his world of thoughts.

“Look where he comes,” said one of them, “his appearance is that of a silly fellow; so fine, so dressed out of a morning! he is not a fit bridegroom for that lovely girl;—he is nothing but an affected prig!”

These words, spoken by the oldest of the workmen, went through poor Quintin's heart, he also looked down the street, and beheld the young painter coming up, walking in full state. A bright yellow dress, fitting close, covered him from the breast to the knees; it was edged with four stripes of sky-blue velvet; the narrow shoulder ornaments were also yellow, with puffings of blue; the sleeves belonged to the dark red velvet underdress. His legs and feet were adorned with the same colours, and with black stripes, and lace in the most fashionable way, Round his throat, which the habit only partially covered, his fine shirt was displayed, with a lace ruff, and adorned with embroidered gold stripes, which, like a rich collar, fastened under the ruff. On his head he wore a berette of red velvet, embroidered with black silk, and ornamented with a white feather; under it his artfully-curved locks fell far on his shoulder. At his side hung a broad sword, in such a richly worked scabbard, and with a hilt so finely ornamented, that it was evident the weapon was purposed only for dress. He looked highly

satisfied with himself, and conscious of the advantageous impression which his figure must make.

“ ——— Neat, trimly dressed,
Fresh as a bridegroom, and his chin new reaped,
He was perfumed as a milliner,
And called us untaught knaves, unmannerly
To bring our slovenly unhandsome selves
Betwixt the wind and his nobility.”—SHAKESPEARE.

Quintin's blood boiled at this sight, and he longed to chase the little dressed-up man down the street, in spite of his fine condition. Margareta, on perceiving him, retreated as if frightened, and shut down the window. Was it fear or joy at the arrival of this gay suitor? The storm in Quintin's breast increased. Lewis de Bos had come up to the place where the companions of Messius, perhaps to irritate him, extended their work and tools rather widely into the street, so that he could not easily pass by.

“ Place there !” cried the fop, pushing aside the fellow next to him.

“ Not so hasty,” said the other ; “ just wait one moment.”

“Wait, scoundrel! a man like me to wait;” and he advanced forward.

“Scoundrel!” exclaimed Quintin, springing towards him, with the iron in his hand, “he who said that is one himself, if he carried a hundred swords by his side: now, out with yours, if you have courage!”

The stranger retreated; the menacing form of the strong youth,—his flaming eye,—the long iron in his hand—all alarmed the poor coxcomb.

“Leave that!—leave that iron,” said he, trembling; “I did not mean anything.—Pray, go away!”

And as he spoke, he managed to reach the threshold of de Brindt, and pulled, with all his might, at the bell.

“Coward!” cried Quintin, and threw the iron bar after him, as he slid into the house; it fell clattering on the steps of the door. The workmen laughed heartily; he alone laughed not, for should Margaretta love this foppish ape, or be compelled to be his wife; either terrible to think on. He sank into gloom, and his indis-

position increasing visibly, his companions advised his going home :—but still he lingered—still he tried to do his work.—The hour of noon struck, and the stranger did not reappear ; he was probably de Brindt's guest for the day. Perhaps this day was the day of betrothment—the thought fell as a hundred weight on his heart. The workmen left the forge.

Quintin was scarcely able to hold himself straight, and one of his companions assisted to lead him home to his mother, who beheld, with alarm, the progress of illness in her son's appearance.

In the mean time, de Brindt had received the fop in the most friendly manner, and was astonished at observing in him strong signs of fear and trembling. He inquired if anything unpleasant had occurred, and soon had from him an account of the smith's insolent behaviour, which he said he would have chastised, but on the sight of his drawn sword, he was allowed to pursue his way quietly. De Brindt perceived a smile on the face of his scholars, who had seen the whole transaction through the windows, and de Bos's shaking and paleness did not escape

him. He therefore believed as little as he chose of the story. De Bos drew a roll, tied with a silken thread, from his bosom, and gave it to de Brindt: it was a letter from his father. De Brindt opened it, and looked over the first lines.

“He seems,” said he, “well satisfied with your views.”

“No doubt,” replied the other, “he considers my union with your daughter as a great honour to us both. Her beauty, and elegant grace, have bewitched my heart. I also mentioned to my father the prospect of your guidance to assist me in the way of my art, and his wish is excited to see the event finally settled, which will confer happiness on his son. He leaves all conditions of dower, and such necessary provisions, to the impulse of your paternal decision.”

“Well,” said de Brindt, when he had read over the letter of the old merchant, the contents of which appeared to him both reasonable and agreeable, “all is in pretty order, if Margareta is satisfied. How do you stand with her, Master Lewis?”

“I candidly confess,” replied de Bos, “that the conduct of your daughter is not quite as I could have wished or expected; not that I have any fears of displeasing her, no, Heaven be praised, I can without boast say that I hitherto have been anything but unfortunate with the fair sex. She certainly affects prudery or indifference, when I speak to her of my love and my zeal to serve her. She does not meet me in the way I have been used to, and which I have a right to claim from a maiden to whom I have declared myself.”

De Brindt was silent, and shook his head, but the other took no notice, and continued to enlarge on his own merits, and to express his astonishment at Margareta’s reserve and dissimulation, as he called it.

“Heed it not,” said de Brindt, interrupting his complaints, “it is not the custom with us to let daughters have a will of their own in these things; they in general want both experience and judgment, and I would not advise her to shew a real refractoriness against my commands; to you, young sir, I recommend somewhat less confi-

dence, and to consider how you may make yourself pleasing to the maiden, for I should not like to make use of severity towards my only and hitherto dutiful child."

De Bos laughed and bowed, saying, "I will make use of your advice, most worthy father that is to be!"

Then de Brindt resumed his painting, the young man looked on, and chattered on different subjects, then took himself off; and in going he bribed the maid to let him go through the court and garden which opened into a side street, as he did not wish to return by the forge.

Margaretta learnt this, and having also heard of the scene with Quintin, she disliked her intended more than ever, for no woman fancies a coward; an alteration had for some time past taken place in her humour, of which she herself was perhaps not conscious; and with inward disturbance she waited for the morning, and the quarter of an hour in which she was accustomed to arrange her father's painting room.

But Quintin was no longer to be seen; eight days revolved, and still he appeared not; a violent

anxiety seized Margareta, who at last, through the inquiries of her kinswoman, obtained intelligence that the handsome Messius was lying dangerously ill, deprived of every assistance, every comfort ; not only suffering from his illness, but from anxiety on his poor mother's account, for he was now thoroughly unable to continue his fatiguing manual labour, to procure bread for her and for himself. Margareta heard this account with deep emotion which she gave vent to in tears, the old lady was also much moved, and they consulted together how to assist and procure them relief. To send money was the easiest and simplest way, but Margareta would not agree to that ; so it was resolved to send a trusty old woman named Bridget, who lived in the neighbourhood, and was used to all sorts of little employments in de Brindt's house, to the habitation of the invalid with wholesome and simple food ; she was forbidden to say who sent her, and was to find out what would be most necessary and acceptable to Dame Geltrude in her housekeeping.

Old Bridget engaged to execute her com-

mission faithfully, nor could it have been placed in better hands. She went that evening to Quintin's house with a covered basket on her arm, containing Margareta's charitable contribution; the signs of bitter poverty met her eyes, as she entered the room, yet notwithstanding a want of every comfort, or convenience, the utmost cleanliness prevailed there; the mother marvelled at this visit, but her surprise changed into joy and gratitude as the good woman explained the reason of her coming, emptied her basket, and assured her that she should appear every day, with such like provisions, and that the invalid might have thorough dependence on the assistance of his unknown benefactor.

The poor dame was enraptured, and only regretted her son being too weak for her to make him acquainted with his good fortune, for he had been seized with fever, and deprived of sensation; with tears she thanked the obliging messenger, and in the overflowing of her heart, related everything concerning her son, the occurrences of the last day he was at work, his deep melancholy, and all that Bridget found it necessary to inquire about.

Richly loaded with intelligence and explanations out of which Margaretta's heart might pick and choose, Bridget came the following day to fetch fresh provisions, for the sick youth, and Margaretta with joy imbibed the knowledge which opened a wide field to her imagination. By Bridget's care, all that was wanting for the restoration of the young man was procured, particularly a physician, for Margaretta's kinswoman whom she had managed to engage in the concern, and had wisely given the appearance of being the chief person, induced and paidone to attend him : various things were prepared to make the widow's house comfortable, and all appeared to be done for her. The son was never mentioned but by chance. But Bridget would not have been so shrewd as she really was, had she not seen clear here ; and in order to deserve the young heiress's trust and inclination more and more, she failed not to report through the kinswoman daily, accounts of the poor invalid's melancholy, with the doctor's opinion that a mental disease was the foundation of his illness. She also repeated all the praises lavished on the

youth by his mother, by all who knew him, and even by the doctor.

The widow and her sick son, were now the constant subject of discourse with the two females as they sat together in the long winter evenings. Meanwhile Quintin with proper remedies and good diet began to recover, and after a few weeks was able to quit his bed, and sit up near his mother at the little comfortable meal, and bless the unknown benefactor, to whose goodness they had so long been indebted. In vain had the mother hitherto endeavoured to learn who it was that was interested about them; in vain she sought to find out from the prudent negotiator, or inquired of the neighbours who followed her secretly. Bridget was too sly not to be upon her guard, nor did she suffer the old dame to fall upon a trace; but towards Quintin himself she did not think this strict caution was necessary; it even appeared to her as if Margareta herself would not be displeased if she let a ray of possibility fall on the youth's heart, that the secret cause of his suffering and the benevolent soul who so nobly and salutarily interested her-

self for him, might perhaps be one and the same being.

What were Quintin's feelings when first this delightful idea was excited in him!—and now all the circumstances which he endeavoured to recollect little by little unravelled themselves clearer and clearer, and credibly!—she had then remarked his insane passion for her, and was not irritated; his absence from work, the cause of it, and his sad situation had been made known to her! Oh! how did these inspiriting thoughts excite his soul with the alternations of hope and fear, they operated powerfully on his health, he regained strength, and would remain up all the day, his mind was again capable of taking a part in things beyond him, and by degrees of having a clearer view of his situation; and now the happy feeling that it was Margareta to whom he owed his restored life, made that life precious to him, and brought for the first time lightness to his spirits, yet there were moments when he could have wished it were not her from whom he had received secret support; it seemed as if he stood so deep below the

object of his love by living on her benevolence ! nay, he was more than once inclined to decline receiving further assistance through Bridget, but a look at his mother, the bitter poverty surrounding him on every side, and the conviction that with his wasted strength it would be long before he could return to his manual labour, and procure bread for his mother, conquered these proud thoughts : thus crept on time, and his only occupation was drawing with a red stone on every piece of paper he could procure, and giving vent in rough attempts to the propensity that so powerfully operated in him. In this manner he had with more or less success accomplished various things, when he ventured at last to fix the beloved image which so long had filled his imagination with unvaried liveliness, a hundred attempts were made, none succeeding to his wishes ; at length his ardent efforts met with success, Margaretta's features smiled upon him from the paper. Although rudely sketched and imperfectly executed, yet was the resemblance so strong and so impossible to be mistaken that his mother exclaimed :—

“Why, that is de Brindt’s Margareta ; hast thou done that, Quintin?”

Vexed at being betrayed, he found some plausible pretext for his mother, who would have believed anything rather than that her prudent son should have done so unwise a thing as to fall in love with a damsel, in every respect unattainable for him. He was more cautious afterwards, and removed out of the good dame’s sight the many copies and essays he had made in different attitudes.

For a long time his strength remained too much impaired to admit of his returning to his hard labour, and what else to do he knew not ; for he had learnt nothing in the world but his smith’s trade, which he was not in a condition to practise.

Just then the joyous Carnival arrived to amuse the rich and happy in the wealthy city of Antwerp : public and private amusements, excursions in sledges, skating on the ice, wonderful disguises, and allegorical processions, worldly and spiritual festivities, and solemnities, alternately took place. Among other customs, one was,

that the feeble and the poor who were kept in the numerous hospitals and charitable foundations which the rich inhabitants of the town had established for their helpless fellow-citizens, should in those days of universal joyousness parade through the streets in long procession, having party coloured puppets and other fantastical images, halting before the houses of the rich citizens, singing hymns and presenting to the children who brought them alms, all sorts of images, which they took back to their parents with delight. For this a great provision of little figures was necessary. And a friend of Quintin's, who visited him during his cheerless convalescence, and knew of his pressing distress, seeing one day his essays in drawing, advised him to cut lightly in wood, such little images as were wanted for the procession, and then to paint the figures; promising him good custom and profit for the work.

Half hoping, half incredulous, Quintin took his friend's advice; he had often made experiments in carving, and now he employed himself in good earnest. He succeeded beyond all

expectation; his friend was astonished at the cleverness of his work, and shortly obtained a sum of money for him which surpassed all he had dared to hope for. A ray of undisturbed gladness beamed on his mind—for now, by incessant application, he could drive off distress from his mother and himself; and a field was opened for better things in future. He continued his work, and every succeeding attempt improved upon the foregoing ones; figures and groups crowded in his mind, and abundance of ideas overflowed in his numerous compositions. Ingenious interpretations occurred to him,—lights and shades,—draperies and folds arranged themselves under his creative hand. It was soon generally known that these beautiful figures were carved and illuminated by a poor smith's journeyman, who had never received instruction in drawing or carving.

Want and sorrow were now banished from the abode of Quintin, and the first time Bridget appeared (for she no longer came daily) with her provisions he thanked her from his heart for the trouble she had so long undertaken on his

account ; gave her a handsome compensation, and begged her to give the warmest thanks in his name to the benevolent person who had so graciously felt compassion for him in his greatest need ; the remembrance of whose goodness would be eternal and sacred in his heart. He implored not to have her sympathy and favour withdrawn from him, although he no longer required her support. The goodnatured Bridget was very grateful for his present, assured him that the family from which she was sent would be sorry to do nothing further for him, and promised to call from time to time.

She hastened to Margareta with her commission, which at first awakened dejection in her mind ; but reflecting afterwards on the youth's message, she saw in it so much noble pride, and withal so much respectful love, that she could not resist making inquiries of Bridget, who had to describe every look, every gesture of Messius, till at last the concealed love of the handsome maiden could not be doubted, and was not overlooked by the cunning Bridget ; such a hint was sufficient for a woman like her to act freely upon

in her negotiation. It did not escape her that the rich painter, de Bos, was a suitor favoured only by the father, and that he had a dangerous rival in Quintin. She made Margaretta acquainted with the artistical employment of her *protegè*, and the next day, as soon as the pauper's procession paraded their street, Margaretta contrived, by a rich contribution, to procure several of Quintin's figures, in the corner of which she discovered a Q. M. cut, and taking them to her father, she related the history of the poor smith, whom they had met as an archer at the feast of the last Pentecost, whose beautiful trellis-work her father knew well, and who displayed in these figures an unknown and original talent. She wisely said nothing of the share she had had in his support and recovery from illness, and altogether put sufficient coldness and calm in her narrative to deceive the good de Brindt.

She succeeded less with de Bos, who just then came in, and left not the room, as she generally did, soon after his entrance. She wished to enjoy the triumph of hearing him praise his rival without knowing it; with this view she spread the

figures before him: but he, having probably learnt who had carved these strong but rather rough designs, contemptuously rejected them as an awkward failure. De Brindt, with a feeling of approbation, observed, that the young man had never had any instruction, and that they were strong proofs of natural genius; but de Bos insisted upon its being stupid trumpery. Margaretta angrily left the room, and the vague thought which she had long nourished of never giving her hand to this insolent and most unjust person, was formed from that moment into a fixed determination.

“ Ah!” thought she, and her thoughts took sound as she returned through the dark passage leading from her father’s room to her own little chamber; “ Ah! I would that de Bos were the smith, and Quintin a painter!”

A rustling noise alarmed her, and made her sensible of her imprudence in having thus expressed her secret thoughts aloud; anxiously she looked round to see if anybody had observed her, but she perceived no one, and quietly retired to her own apartment.

Yet the words which she had inconsiderately spoken aloud, had not been unheard—Bridget by chance was in the dark passage as Margareta passed through, but escaped the searching look of the damsel, and found all her surmises confirmed by what now came to her ears. She determined to put things regularly in train, and to make herself useful to both parties, and for this purpose took an early opportunity of visiting Quintin, whom she found considerably better, though still continually sunk down in deep melancholy, which he strove in vain to drive away by his carving occupations. She began a conversation with him, and asked after his health: on his answering that he felt unable to undertake again his wonted labours at the forge, which seemed to him now more difficult and insupportable than ever, and that whichever way he looked he saw only vexation and pain for his future life, she said:—

“It would astonish me, Master Messius, if so clever a young man as you are, could not be able to gain your bread in other ways than that rough helpless work.”

“ I have learnt nothing else,” said he ; “ my father was a smith.”

“ Well, but if you learnt nothing in particular, your happy nature has taught you many things. You are clever at lute playing ; is not that beautiful trellis-work round the fountain, yours ? and have not your little saints’ images put all Antwerp in admiration ? My own ears have heard Master de Brindt declare that they were strong proofs of genius ; and he is a good judge.”

“ De Brindt, say you ?”

Quintin rose suddenly, and a crimson glow spread over his features.

“ Yes indeed, de Brindt himself,” said Bridget. “ His daughter, Madam Margareta, shewed him your works some days ago. She got them from the Hospitaliers, and ran in haste with them to shew her father.”

Quintin’s heart beat, but his eyes were fixed on the ground.

“ Speak on,” said he.

“ Nay, I know no more than that the father liked your work, and the daughter had a dispute with the bridegroom about it.”

“With Master de Bos, about my figures?”

“Or about yourself perhaps, what know I? I heard them disputing in her father’s room, and she came away quite irritated. She did not remark me, for I stood behind the great press, near the staircase door, and the passage is dark; while I was there I heard her say, Ah! I would that de Bos were the smith and Quintin a painter.”

The youth’s cheek glowed, and his eyes flashed fire:—

“Did she say that?” he cried—“A painter! I a painter! Yes, I will, I will be one—Heaven will be propitious to my exertions!”

He was quite beside himself, jumped up to the little press near the wall, took all the ready money out of it that he could find, and pressed it into the hand of the messenger of joy.—Oh happiness! Margareta, the lovely Margareta, had pronounced as her wish, the only condition which could possibly promote the union between them!

The cunning Bridget went away full of gratitude, and determined to serve the young pair as far as lay in her power.

Quintin, full of joyful delight, thought of nothing but how he might put into force the purpose which Margareta's wish had raised like a bright speck in his soul.

Yes ! he must become a painter ! it was that which had so long lain dormant in his mind—now all was clear ; he was certain of himself, he knew what he wished, and was scarcely distressed by the obstacles which might place themselves against such an undertaking. He was neither deterred by his poverty, nor his low degree, nor by the want of instruction and support. He would be a painter ! Margareta had pronounced the sentence, and he himself had long felt it. From this moment he had only this one thought, and saw but one object before him.

With restless efforts and application, he now worked at his little groups of figures. Love and the inspiration of hope, conducted his hand ; they succeeded beyond all expectations, and were paid so well by some encouragers of the arts, that he soon realized a sum not only sufficient to keep him and his mother for some time, but to pay for his instruction, and the necessary jour-

neys and preparations for work which he intended to undertake.

When he came to the point of quitting his native city, and banishing himself for a length of time from Margareta's vicinity, it was then he first considered what mountains of impediments, what probabilities of failure lay betwixt the present moment, and the aim of his wishes; how many years must elapse, in case he should succeed in the art as he wished, before he could attain any perfection; and if he then returned to Antwerp, could he hope to find Margareta still free as now, and still in the same mind?

He would discover himself to her, would speak to her before his departure, confess how ardently he loved her, and tell her the resolution her words had awakened in him, he would swear to her eternal fidelity, and receive her vows in exchange.

But would that be acting justly? Durst he, with such uncertain prospects, decide on the future fate of the maiden? No, he would not fix her to what she might afterwards repent. He would not speak with her—in silence would he

retire to a distance. Through Bridget only should she learn what had become of him, the rest she might guess, and do what her heart sanctioned. This he determined upon after long wavering : then seeking Bridget he disclosed to her his purpose, and named the next day for his departure.

The good woman was alarmed ; she recollected what she had said to him some time before, and his answers, but she had regarded them as lover's speeches ; now all seemed in earnest, and the more she was convinced of the smith's resolution to become a painter, the more she tried to dissuade him from the project. Yet he was free from any exaggerated hopes, and clearly acquainted with the hardships which he should undergo, but at the same time calmly resolved to overcome them all. She hastened to Margareta, and communicated to her this intelligence. Astonishment, joy, admiration, and grief, alternately passed through her breast. She was somehow quite silent, then said :—

“ He goes, and it is I who have driven him away—who knows what may happen to him, and

if I shall ever see him again? I must take leave of him, however. Never have I yet spoken to him in my life."

Bridget looked at her wondering.

"Yes," continued Margaretta, "to-morrow I shall go to early mass, at the Cathedral. Tell him so, and bring him thither—or no, rather appoint him to come, and thou shalt accompany me."

Bridget hastened with this welcome message to Quintin. He at first thought she was jesting; but when she repeatedly told him the place and the hour, he could no longer doubt; and the thought of seeing Margaretta, of daring to speak to her by her own command, plunged him into a sea of transport.

The following morning had scarcely dawned when he was ready dressed and in the street, where Bridget had appointed to meet him. His impatience made him anticipate the time, and the hour seemed long arriving. In the interim the streets began to be animated, the country folk came in with provisions, the shops opened, people approached the market,—when the bell of the Cathedral tower sounded, and Quintin

beheld at the further end of the place where the side streets joined it, an elegant female figure in a black dress, with a white veil over her head, which concealed her forehead and chin, and only left visible the eyes and handsome formed nose. Her garment was confined by a gold girdle, of which one end hung down before, and at her side was fastened an amber rosary. In spite of this close disguise, Quintin recognized her whose image was ever floating before him, whether sleeping or waking. Behind her came Bridget, likewise clad in black, but wrapped in a veil of a dark yellow colour. Now was the moment when the youth should speak. He trembled at the thoughts of what he should say to her, and continued not to stir, but remained modestly in one of the niches at the foot of the interior tower. This she must pass to arrive at the porch which led into the church. She had perceived him from a distance, and drew her veil over her youthful countenance, which was overspread with glowing red. She was timorous too, and half repented her rash step; but now there was nothing more to be done but to walk firmly up the Church.

Quintin stepped forward, scarcely able to salute her with a respectful bow: then Bridget presented her client and introduced the conversation in a proper way.

Margaretta spoke, her voice stealing through her veil into the soul of Messius, like the tone of a flute lightly moved by delicate lips.

“I hear,” said she, “you think of leaving us to devote yourself to the art of painting; my father approves very much of this undertaking, and will be disposed to give you letters of recommendation to his friends and the masters in the art throughout the Burgundian states, which may be of essential service to you.”

Quintin was confounded, enraptured, it was out of his power to reply, but he stammered out at last something of inexpressible gratitude; and Margaretta found more eloquence, and pith, in this confused speech than in the best sermon she had ever heard.

By degrees his presence of mind returned, he became collected as usual, and then tolerably calm he connectedly explained his purpose.

It was soon the time for mass to begin, and

the congregation was assembled. Bridget reminded them that they must separate. Quintin felt like a criminal waiting to receive his death sentence. He was strongly impelled to throw himself at the feet of his adored, and confess his passion. Respect, the recollection of his lowly station, and the place where he stood withheld him. In her eyes stood tears; she was reflecting that it had been her words which drew the youth from his quiet business, from the arms of his parent, from his native city, into an unknown and insecure life. She longed to give him some remembrance of this hour, but she had nothing with her except the rosary, which she took, with its richly carved silver cross, and gave to him, saying:—

“ Think sometimes of me when you think of Antwerp; and include me in your prayers. I will hear the holy mass for your happy journey.”

He tremblingly received her present; his knees bent, and he almost sunk at her feet. His eyes were raised towards her, and in his features were expressed the most ardent love. Hastily and fervently she pressed his hand, and hastened

into the church. Quintin remained rooted to the place, and looked after her as long as he could perceive a fold of her drapery; he would not then have had power to leave the spot, till the crowds of people streaming from the church made known to him that the mass was ended. The blessed possibility of again seeing Margareta occurred to him, but he did not venture to approach her, and stepped back behind one of the pillars of the portico. She came and had with her two respectable looking women; he thought her eyes wandered sideways towards the spot where he stood, and that her pace slackened for a moment. He felt completely happy, and his eyes followed her as he implored blessings on her with ardent fervour from Heaven.

The following day he repaired, as he had been commanded, to Master de Brindt's painting room. De Brindt received him kindly, applauded his purpose, conversed with him concerning his works, and communicated to him many useful hints; he gave him two letters, one to Roger van de Bugde of Brussels, the other to Hugo Vandelgoes in Bruges; he also advised him to

find out the celebrated Master Hans Hamme-link, who dwelt in the free city of Cologne on the Rhine, where he was employed to adorn the costly reliquaries of St. Ursula with miniature paintings. Gratefully and gladly the youth received these letters and advice; and there recognized the careful friendship which had directed all for him, but she herself, the beloved one, he did not see; propriety of conduct, and the manners of the times forbid it; yet as he descended the staircase it seemed as if he saw her standing in the little open passage which led to the court of the house, bending over the balustrade and looking towards the staircase. He could not discern clearly through the iron bars and small panes of the window, if it really were herself, but the possibility of it shed a transport of gladness in his breast; he knelt down, directing his prayer to her as his guardian angel, then returned to his cottage, intoxicated with his happiness. Now had he attained what far exceeded his wishes, and the sooner he commenced his chosen career the better. After settling every-thing for the best at home, provided for his

weeping mother, taken a painful leave of her, and promised as often as possible to let news of him reach Antwerp, he took up his bundle, and the third day after his visit to Master de Brindt, passed through the street where Margareta lived, not without stopping some minutes opposite the window which he had so often beheld her looking from, then proceeding to the Imperial gate, he struck into the road to Brussels, where he had to deliver one of the letters of introduction from de Brindt, and intended to set about the first elements of his instruction.

It cost Margareta bitter tears when Bridget told her he was gone ; having been to visit the poor mother, she related all that the good young man had said and done, how with the strictest denial he had provided for his parent, taking with him just the needful, and how he had entreated Bridget to let him have constant intelligence of his acquaintances and well-wishers in Antwerp, through his mother. Margareta well understood this petition, but she was silent, and treasured deep in her heart all that had passed during the last days.

De Bos was not the best off by this disposition of his wife elect. If she treated him before with indifference, now she became quite cold, and let him remark this so plainly that all his vanity and self-confidence were no longer sufficient to interpret her conduct favourably. He therefore took his anxious complaints to the father. De Brindt had long since lowered his opinion of the innate worth of his intended son-in-law, who, in all his discourses and actions, displayed nothing but folly and conceit. However, the perfection of his art, and his fortune seemed to him to merit consideration; he expressed displeasure to his daughter, and made her some reproaches and representations. Unpleasant scenes ensued, but Margareta remained firm, and de Brindt, who dearly loved her, at last yielded, and comforted himself with the reflexion that with his daughter's beauty and youth, there would be no lack of suitors.

A year had already passed since Quintin Messius quitted Antwerp; Margareta lived

quietly with her father, seeking as much as possible to escape the eyes and wooing of the young men of the place. She still daily continued to put her father's painting-room in order, but she no longer looked from the window, or at the smith's forge opposite; or if she did so, tears stood in her eyes, for *he* was there no more;—his love, his submission, his courageous resolution, his pleasing form, and the expression of his looks during the conference at the church door had left on her heart an indelible impression. She thought of him, wandering about in foreign countries, for her sake, perhaps struggling with want—perhaps sick and helpless:—then came the doubt if she were not bound to reward so much fidelity, and to keep herself free as the prize of his exertions.

His mother also missed in him her comfort, her support, and it appeared but just to Margareta to make what compensation she could to the poor woman, who, through her, had experienced such a loss. Ah! what could compensate to a mother for a son so grateful and excellent as Quintin? She sent Bridget to Dame Geltrude

with little presents, and the promise that during her son's absence she should not be abandoned by a friend of his who wished to remain unknown.

Meanwhile Quintin was dwelling in the Netherland States of Brussels, Ghent, and Bruges, where the most celebrated masters in painting then resided, and formed scholars; and whoever in France or Germany wished to perfect themselves in the art travelled thither for that purpose. There Quintin, availing himself of his genuine promising nature, made incredible progress in painting, was esteemed by his instructors every where, not only for his extraordinary natural talent, but also for his moral character. He went to Cologne, and visited the cities, abbey churches, and castles, on the banks of the Rhine, to see all that was worthy of his observation to copy;—to converse with the German masters,—and thus by degrees, to improve himself. News of him came rarely, but sometimes an opportunity occurred of some travelling merchant taking wares to Antwerp, by whom he sent greetings to his mother and friends, and

to the former occasionally a little assistance, gained by his work.

At the end of the second year praises of his works began to spread here and there, and even penetrated into the painting-room of de Brindt, who rejoiced at it highly, though he little suspected the share his daughter had in forming this new artist. Meanwhile she was badly situated, and had much to suffer on account of her love. During three years, retired as she lived, the rich maiden still met with many suitors, but refused them all, finding something to object to in every one, and at last her father grew seriously angry, for it seemed to him as if she meant to live and die unmarried, and his former love and kindness gave way to a surly peevishness which embittered her days. She, however, bore it all with silent patience, and held firm in fidelity to her beloved; till at last, at the end of the third year, when many months had passed by without bringing any news of the absent one, her hope sank its weary wings, and the thought that he might be dead, or faithless, after the way of men

of which her old kinswoman had often spoken to her, rushed by degrees with bitter pain into her soul, and like a secret worm, gnawed upon the bloom of her youth.

The fourth year since the departure of Quintin was now begun, and several months of it already passed over, when one Sunday, on returning from high mass and the sermon, Master de Brindt learnt from his servant, that a stranger had been there asking for him, and had made himself be conducted to his painting-room, where he waited some time ; but as the master remained away so long he could stay no longer, and had departed, leaving word that he would return later.

Such a visit to the well-known and esteemed de Brindt was so common an occurrence that he gave it no further thought, and retired to his bedroom to exchange his Sunday clothes, and fine velvet cap, for more common ones. He then went to his painting-room, and occupied himself in arranging and removing several of his pictures. On the easel still remained, from the day

before, his half-finished picture, an Annunciation, and the artist could not avoid, as he went by, stopping before it to contemplate the expression he had portrayed in the timid frightened Virgin, the angelic mildness and tranquil exaltation in the features, and the humility in the attitude of crossing the hands over the breast, with which she seemed to pronounce the words: "I am the handmaid of the Lord, be it to me according to His will!—"

He suddenly observed on the finger of the Virgin a ring, which he had not painted. It was a golden one, adorned with bright jewels round the delicate finger; and de Brindt knew not which most to admire, the bold act of an unknown one to paint on the picture of another, or the art with which the jewels and gold were here represented, which in these trifles announced a great artist.

"Who has done this?" he exclaimed, "who has been here?"

This call brought the servant into the room, who underwent a sharp examination. There had

been no one in the painting-room but the above-mentioned stranger.

“And who could that be?—did he give no name—what was he like?”

She described him as a tall, stately man of three or four-and-twenty, with blue eyes, and auburn hair, with agreeable features, and whose expression of countenance had something serene and melancholy. His dress was black, with a dark brown undergarment, and jacket, plain but elegant. On his head he wore a dark-blue velvet Burgundian cap, with a narrow gold border, and round his waist a plain girdle, from which hung a handsome sword, with a polished steel hilt. This description suited none of de Brindt's Antwerp acquaintances. The servant assured him she had never seen the stranger before, and this led him to conjecture it was some foreign master. He anticipated pleasure in becoming acquainted with one who, judging by this slight proof, could be no common painter.

He hastened to the room of his daughter, and found her with her kinswoman. With much

animation he related the incident to them,—described the dress and figure of the visitor, as it was represented by the servant, and invited them to his work-room to look at the ring themselves.

From her father's description, a sudden flash of light had fallen on Margareta's soul, which brought a presentiment concerning this ingenious stranger, who seemed so mysterious, and had left behind him so singular a trace of his presence. She shook with emotion whilst reproving herself for her idle fanciful hope.

They came to the easel ; the kinswoman, taking out her spectacles, placed herself so as to impede Margareta's entire view of the picture, and was long wondering at the beauty of the jewels, declaring that such a ring would not disfigure the hand of a royal bride ; at last she fancied there was something like letters where the stones enclosed the cleverly executed gold work. Margareta could contain herself no longer ; she pushed her relation away, and with a beating heart thought she could see in almost invisible smallness a Q. M. such as had been years before on the little painted images. She

saw through all; the unknown master, his constancy, his wishes. Unable to support herself, she sank down on a seat near the easel. Alarmed at her deadly paleness, her father and kinswoman came to her assistance; the latter loosened her dress, whilst de Brindt opened the casement, thinking that the smell of the oil paint had affected her. Just then the house door bell rang, and a few moments afterwards the servant opened the door of the painting room, and the stranger entered; a tall noble figure in simple but rich attire. He bowed becomingly, but the power or the courage to speak seemed to have failed him. Margaretta recognized him directly; she trembled, and held by the back of the high chair behind which she stood half hid.

De Brindt broke the general silence, and going towards the stranger inquired whom he had the honour of addressing.

“Do you not know me, Master de Brindt,” cried the other, “I am Quintin Messius, the poor journeyman smith, who four years since——”

“Is it possible?” exclaimed de Brindt;

“ Master Messius !” and he clapped his hands together in astonishment.

“ What, Master Messius !” said the kinswoman, coming near, “ our former neighbour ; who would have recognized him again in this fashion ?”

“ Many alterations have occurred with me,” replied he, and a smile played round his mouth “ but one——” and his eyes turned with an expression of the tenderest love on Margaretta— “ *one* thing is not changed in me ; and Heaven grant that I may here also find all as it was four years ago.”

“ Certainly,” whispered Margaretta, moving from her place, “ all that is dear to you will still be found as it was. Your mother is quite well.”

“ Heaven be praised,” he answered ; “ I found her in health, and happier than when I left her. Invisible angels have taken care of her ;” as he glanced at Margaretta, tears of gratitude were in his eyes.

“ How do you explain the alteration in your

appearance and fashion ?” interrupted de Brindt, who was somewhat impatient at the significant discourse of the lovers, which he did not understand.

“ Please to recollect, my honoured master,” said Quintin, “ the last conversation that we had together in this very room, and how you kindly gave me letters of recommendation to your friends, artists of the schools in Brussels and Bruges. I soon became a painter. I have already executed many things, and can say that I dare be satisfied with the success of my works. Now, being returned to my native city, I think of perfecting those things which during my travels in the Netherlands and in the German empire have been bespoken of me, and by the side of an excellent and beloved wife hope to become a happy husband, and the father of a family.”

“ Now that is right and pleases me,” exclaimed the good man, and he shook this unexpected fellow-artist heartily by the hand.

“ And was it you who came to day, and left me there a proof of your talent ?”

“ I pray you, Master de Brindt,” said he, “ to pardon my boldness in venturing to bedaub your beautiful work.”

“ Oh! speak not so. The ring is most masterly painted, and shows what tricks you have learnt.”

“ My initials are on it,” said he.

“ I saw them,” interrupted Margareta, who blushed beneath her curls at her own vivacity; but her father looked at her and at Quintin sharply, and suspicion began to glimmer in his mind. He was silent for a long time, observing them both.

Messius took courage, and approached the old man. “ Master de Brindt,” said he, “ I see you begin to guess the truth. Yes, I love your daughter; her words drew me from the anvil to the easel, and it is for her sake that I am become a painter. You, Master de Brindt, are best able to judge if I understand my profession; for this I am now here, and supplicate you to give me the hand of Margareta, if during all this time her heart has not turned away from the unknown Messius.”

His voice trembled as he pronounced these last words ; his eyes were again fixed on her with an expression of impassioned love. She extended to him her hand—its pressure and her streaming eyes conveyed her answer, for excess of joy deprived her of speech.

De Brindt was very much surprised at all he heard and saw, but he was not the less contented, particularly when by degrees he saw the works of his clever son-in-law, and learnt how much reputation and gain his talents had procured him, and the numerous distinguished commissions for pictures which he had received. Not less than he did the good kinswoman and Dame Bridget rejoice ; both were rewarded generously for the share they had in the happiness of the lovers ; and the bridegroom on the day of his wedding placed on his Margareta's taper finger just such a valuable ring set with various jewels, as he had painted on the hand of the Virgin in de Brindt's picture.

Thus was Quintin transformed from a smith into a painter,—the happy husband of a faithful wife, an esteemed fellow citizen, and one who

long after was named among the most celebrated painters of his time. Many of his works are still in existence, and ornament public and private collections. His native city has honoured his memory by a splendid monument in the Cathedral.

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LEGEND

OF THE

DAYS OF EDWARD THE THIRD.

Difesa miglior ch' Usbergo e scudo
E la santa innocenza in petto ignudo.

TASSO.

THE Umfrevilles came to Britain with the Conqueror, and on them devolved, in gift, an ancient Saxon domain in the north of England, where an old castle, the property of one of the vanquished islanders, was repaired and fortified for the use of the favourite of the usurper. This castle was still flourishing, as appears from the following legend (which is transcribed from an ancient manuscript in the possession of one of the descendants of the Umfreville family) about

the middle of the fourteenth century, but is now crumbling in the dust.

'Twas then a vast and venerable pile,
So old it seemed only not to fall,
Yet strength was pillared in each massy aisle.

BYRON.

In the year of our Lord 1346 it was inhabited by Sir Hugh de Umfreville, a rich knight, possessor of much property in the counties of Durham and Northumberland. He was old, and a widower; his son and grandsons were serving in King Edward's army then invading France, and distinguished themselves in several rencounters with the enemy, particularly at the famous battle of Crecy. Of his daughters, the eldest had married Sir Philip de Chaworth, and had long been dead. Matilda, her only daughter, being greatly attractive by her beauty, had, at fourteen, made a splendid marriage, and was selected for his wife by Henry Earl of Lancaster, whose elder brother perished by the axe. The turbulent spirit of the times compelled him to be often from home, and the situation in which he was placed, as head of the baronial powers, was one

of unceasing toil, unquiet, and danger. A stranger to peace and comfort, he was frequently separated from his wife, who spent her time in seclusion, and devoted herself to the education of her children. Her son was soon taken from her to be reared for warlike deeds of arms; amongst her daughters, one was in early years devoted to the cloister, the others married to puissant barons, all but the youngest, her mother's peculiar care and favourite, whose natural talents exhibited an early genius which was cultivated with maternal solicitude. By the assistance of learned instructors, this young maiden was instructed in accomplishments uncommon to females at that period, although an ardour for study was becoming an universal passion at this time, when the dark ages were beginning to clear away. At the early years of sixteen she might be considered as a prodigy, for she was nearly as well read as the famous Jane Grey in after times,—was conversant in Latin, and could not only read the manuscripts of the days in which she lived, but decyphered currently the ancient Saxon and Norman characters; and a

thirst after knowledge seemed inherent in her nature ; besides which, she had not been allowed to neglect the talents more peculiar to her sex, she was taught to play the lute, to ply her distaff and embroidery needle, and was a pious modest unassuming maiden.

The death of her excellent mother brought the first sorrow to her heart ; her father, to whom the charge of so young a person would have been burthensome in his political and warlike pursuits, and whose married daughters he considered too young for that purpose, besides other reasons he had for not confiding her to their care, placed her with her mother's relations. She resided at first with her great aunt Lady Gray, but her life was there passed in misery, for besides the grief which weighed down her spirits from the loss of a dearly loved parent, she met with ill-treatment and unkindness from her cousins as well as their mother. Her superior talents, and above all her beauty excited their envy ; they ridiculed her love of reading and prevented her from satisfying it by depriving her of her books, whilst they plied her with household cares ; and, notwith-

standing her high descent (for she was of royal blood) they made her a sort of Cinderella in the family, despised where she should have been loved, but always patient, willing and unrepining.

Communication with those at a distance was in those days difficult and rare, the young girl had, therefore, no means of applying to her father to request her removal, and he was self-satisfied in her having been respectably placed by him with near relations, until he should provide for her establishment in life in a manner suitable to his own ambitious views, which led him to hope for her a still more brilliant destiny than that of her sisters,—for he saw in his mind's eye the crown of England hovering over her head.

She had thus no means of escaping from the vexatious life which she now led; but, fortunately, it was soon to end. Her great-grandfather, Sir Hugh, was a jovial, good old gentleman, generous and friendly towards all his kindred, and in return he was beloved and looked up to by all. It had been an established

custom with him for many years that every branch of his family, both lineal and collateral, should assemble together at his castle at Pentecost, his birthday being about that time, to spend three or four jovial weeks, and on their departure he loaded them with presents of all kinds. The old castle was sufficiently capacious to contain them, and Sir Hugh was wealthy enough to entertain them nobly, and shower his gifts on all. He was now in his eighty-third year, still lively and fond of conviviality, pleased with the enjoyments of his numerous host of relations, and partaking of them himself, for which reason the celebration of every festival occurring in the family, christenings, marriages, &c. was reserved for the Whitsuntide holidays, to be kept under the hospitable roof of their common father. And at this great family meeting, youths returning from or joining the army were during that time welcomed by the knight. Many were the alliances that originated in this yearly visit. The old man delighted in seeing the young scions of his ancient stem unite together again; yet he did not oppose other

mariages, and whenever any individual of the family preferred those not belonging to it, the strangers were always cordially welcomed at Umfreville Castle, whether they were of high ancestry or low origin. In the good knight's eyes, virtue joined to a prudent demeanour in the females, and a noble disposition and bravery in the other sex were sufficient recommendations. As the head of the house of Umfreville, he was frequently appealed to from the sentence of severe and ambitious parents, and never in vain.

The longed-for Pentecost arrived. Lady Gray and her daughters would willingly have left her niece behind, for they fancied her good looks and noble lineage, notwithstanding the melancholy which oppressed her, might make her a dangerous rival with the youths of rank and fortune, who were likely to join the hospitable board. They sent a messenger expressly to represent to Sir Hugh that her grief for the loss of her mother was still so poignant that she was unwilling to mix in society, and begged to be left at home ; but the worthy old knight would not hearken to

such a thing ; he insisted upon his young granddaughter's being conducted to the castle, and lest she should be left behind, sent his own horses and escort, although to a great distance, in order to convey her back to him when her aunt and her cousins came. This kind attention on the part of her worthy ancestor, was pleasing to the sorrowful maiden. She had not seen him, since her infancy, but knew him to be kind-hearted and affectionate. Her aunt's mansion, being far distant from Umfreville Castle, Sir Hugh had little communication with her family except at Whitsuntide, when the not joining his patriarchal party would have been considered as an insult, and led to a breach in their friendship. With the Countess of Lancaster it had been different ; the high rank of her husband, and her residence being in a different part of the country, precluded her making the yearly visit at Whitsuntide to her grandfather ; notwithstanding which it had so happened that this her daughter's birth had taken place at Umfreville Castle, at the only time of her visiting it since her marriage, and during the time of Whitsuntide, which gave an

interest for his great-granddaughter in the heart of Sir Hugh. He stood her god-father, at the baptismal font, and gave her the name of Marian, which had a peculiar signification in his ancient family. This trifling circumstance, to which she had involuntarily contributed, rendered her more precious to him than any of her kindred ; he had been pleased to hear that she was under her aunt's protection, as he thought she would like to be with those of her own sex ; but soon after her arrival at his castle, he learnt from her own mouth, that her life was wretched where she had been staying, in consequence of which confidence he determined to keep her with him until her father's will concerning her future destiny should be known.

“ I am very old,” said he, “ and my castle is not always filled with guests. And although I am in no want of a housekeeper, for the concerns of my establishment are sufficiently attended to, yet I am in want of a kind and amiable companion, who will lighten and charm me with her good nature and her conversation, preside at my table, and soothe me in sickness

with sweet music; Marian can do all this, if then she is willing, let her remain under my care."

Willingly did the young Lady Marian consent to remain at the Castle, its seclusion was precious to her in her distress, for she still mourned deeply for her much loved mother, and she might now in solitude, without a fear of being taunted, thwarted, and ridiculed, cultivate the talents she had given her, and improve her mind by study, as she had ever recommended her to do.

It was with satisfaction, therefore, that she commenced her new and uniform course of life :—being only required at the noon and evening repasts to preside at her grandfather's table, where striving to overcome her melancholy, for the sake of the kind old man, she sought to cheer him with constant good humour and amiable attentions,—her time was mostly passed in her own apartment, unless when invited to attend him in his regular walk on the terrace of the Castle; with the management of the establishment, she had no trouble or concern, it being, as Sir Hugh had informed her,

perfectly well conducted and attended to by his own agents, consequently she was not acquainted with half the domestics, and with his visitors still less so; as the table of the hospitable old knight was in great estimation among the neighbours, it frequently happened that he entertained a great deal of company. The footing he was on in the county, and the high consideration in which he was held throughout the kingdom, brought him frequent visits from persons of note and consequence. At such times the timid, retiring Marian was permitted to remain in her apartment, where her meal was brought to her by the serving damsels who were deputed to be in her attendance, and where her time passed quick enough by the aid of her lute, her work, and her books. The apartment she inhabited was a very pleasant one, opening to the south, and overlooking from its casement a beautiful prospect of forest scenery. When Sir Hugh was alone, he sent for her to cheer his solitude; and if he suffered from the gout, she soothed and charmed him with her music, for she was perfect mistress of the lute, and

sang like a nightingale. This recreation was also a relief to herself, when, at times, her spirits were depressed, by the recollection of her beloved parent and friend, now lost to her for ever!

One evening Sir Hugh was engaged with company, and Marian consequently alone in her apartment, in a pensive mood drawing chords from her lute, as her thoughts were bent upon the past, when the presence of a loved and revered companion shed a gleam of placid happiness on her youthful days; now solitary in her retreat, though not friendless, with whom had she to discourse? From whose lips could she now hear sage advice or pleasant anecdotes, and cull precepts of worth and virtue for her future life? Tears flowed from her eyes—and at that moment a light finger tapped at her door. She rose up to open it, and perceiving a lady standing in the passage courteously invited her to come in. This was not the first time Marian had seen her, for often in her lonely rambles through the gardens of the castle, or along the spacious galleries, they had crossed each other, but had

never yet exchanged a word, though whenever they met a courteous salutation had always passed between them. From her clean white dress, and the large bunch of keys hanging at her side, Marian supposed her to be the superintendant of her grandfather's well regulated family.

There was something in this fine old lady's countenance particularly pleasing, the traces of age and a soft melancholy had not entirely effaced the remains of much former beauty. Her dress was simple in the extreme; its fashion and the manner of wearing it extremely antiquated, but apparently belonging to a superior station; and it was not to be supposed that a knight of so much consequence as Sir Hugh would have selected a person from an inferior class to have so great a responsibility as that of superintending and managing his large establishment.

Such was Marian's idea of the unknown female who now was standing at the door of her room, and whom she invited to enter it. The stranger retreated a little, but the young dam-

sel, taking her hand, drew her across the threshold.

“Do not make any ceremony, dear lady,” said she, “may I ask your name?”

“My name, young lady,” replied the other, “is Marian.”

“Is it possible? Are you called Marian as well as me? Come forward, pray, and warm yourself, for your hands are quite cold. Was it my playing that attracted you here? if so, you must not listen to it outside the door, but within my apartment.”

“Whoever knocks seeks admission,” she replied, smiling.

“Then your visit was intentional,” said Marian; “I am glad of it, and you are welcome to me. I hope to see you often. Though accustomed to be alone, and fond of retirement, the company of a worthy lady, such as you appear to be, will be always desirable.”

And the poor girl could not help being pleased that her melancholy solitude was broken in upon, for a natural tendency to cheerfulness and sociability is inherent in early youth.

The old lady thanked her with a smile, and placing herself at the back of a chair, pointed to the lute, which Marian took up again and began to play; but before the air was concluded, the visitor, bowing politely to her young namesake, quitted the room.

Frequently after this she paid her similar broken visits, but very little conversation passed; and sometimes she did not say a word. The lute, which she appeared to enjoy listening to, always occupied her during the great part of her visit, though she rarely staid out a whole piece of music. Marian would have been better pleased had she been rather more talkative; it was evident she was limited to time, and the busy noise of the keys, which always announced her arrival, and was heard long after she took her departure, shewed that she had a great deal to do; therefore Marian was persuaded that her household avocations did not allow her leisure for longer visits, or that Sir Hugh, who had his peculiarities, might possibly object to any of his people having intercourse with his young kinswoman, and therefore these

visits were stolen ones in secret. In consequence of this idea, she never mentioned them to him, or to any one.

By degrees the old lady became so dear to Marian, that she frequently sought by means of the lute to bring her, and even felt vexed and disappointed if she did not arrive, which was often the case. Whenever she came she always placed herself at the back of a chair near the wall. She never sat down, and if Marian interrupted the music to put any questions to her visitor, she was chiefly answered by signs or pantomime, as thus:—

“ It is pleasing to me, good dame, to have the same name as you.”

A motion of the hand, as if to express that it also pleased her.

“ You must have a great deal of business, as I see you so seldom.”

A slight jingling of the keys in acquiescence.

“ It almost seems as if your visits here were by stealth.”

A finger placed on her lips affirmed it.

“ Your countenance is so full of sadness, and

your cheek is so pale, I fear you are not quite happy."

A deep sigh, and looks raised upwards.

Another time the maiden ventured further than she had done.

"Dear Dame," said she, "your air and your manners are so noble, that you cannot possibly belong to an inferior station."

"By birth," she answered, "I am an Umfreville."

"You are, then, my kinswoman!" exclaimed Marian, ardently; "my heart told me so, and I must embrace you."

The matron drew back.

"Oh! good Dame, are you, then, angry with me? You reject the intimacy which, now I know you, I would so willingly offer; and now, since I find you belong to this family, there are so many things that I should like to ask you: for example,—I am told the chronicles of the ancient knights of Umfreville are so singular and curious,—can you tell me anything about them? I have a great idea that

I might learn much concerning them through your help."

The Dame drew near the door, and beckoned to Marian to follow her. Their way led through several echoing galleries and winding stairs to a wing of the castle, quite unknown to the maiden. They came, at last, to a high, massive door, and the old lady searched in the bundle at her side for the key that would open it. She was turning it the third time in the lock, when the castle clock struck twelve. Just then, the light which the maiden carried went out, and they were left in complete darkness.

"How disagreeable an accident!" cried Marian, "what are we to do now? Give me your hand, good dame, for you are better acquainted with this place than I am."

But no helping hand met the extended one of poor Marian, and the distant clattering of keys told her that the dame had left her. She was not a little surprised and indignant at this conduct of her kinswoman, and expressed herself aloud, saying :

“ It is truly uncivil to abandon me here in the dark ; but perhaps she is gone to get a light. Dame Marian ! Dame Marian ! Shall I wait here for you ? ”—She repeated these words several times, as she groped about in the dark ; then she waited a little, having called after her in vain. The echo alone answered. She grew impatient, and a tremor coming over her she endeavoured as well as she could to retrace her steps, and find her own apartment again. The great clock struck one as she at last reached it, and finding the light extinguished which she had left there, she threw herself on the bed, and after her agitation had a little subsided, she asked herself, what could the woman mean by taking me there ? yet, now I recollect having expressed a great curiosity about the old Umfreville Chronicles which I asked her about. My poor mother once told me they were deposited in the library in the south wing of the castle, and without doubt she has the key of that as well as of other apartments ; if it were not for this unlucky accident of the light being extinguished she would have taken me there, and

I should be in the full enjoyment of my wish. However, another time I may have better luck, and if she comes again I will repeat my request.

Marian at last fell asleep, and the whole night long she dreamt of nothing but old manuscripts and wonderful unheard of tales, such as she particularly delighted in. Next morning her mind was full of the idea.—

“ How curiosity gains on the soul,
When its long-hoped-for satisfaction's near ;
How slow the tardy moments seem to roll,
Ere realized th' imagined joys appear.”

That evening, as soon as the hour arrived which always brought the Dame to visit her, she took her lute, and played and sang her best, but all to no purpose. No light taps were heard at her door. No one appeared. For six succeeding days she visited every nook in the gardens, every place in the castle where she had ever met the strange lady, but no one was visible ; and had she not known that no change ever took place in Umfreville Castle, Death only separating the master and his vassals, she might have imagined that he had placed another superintendent over his family ; then the idea came across

her that her friend might be ill. Much as she longed to inquire after her, she was prevented by not knowing whether she might avow an acquaintance with a person whose visits, think what she would, were so full of stealth and mystery. However, she ventured the general question, whether any individual in the castle were ill? and had the satisfaction of being answered in the negative.

Now returned her wish to see the interior of that apartment to the door of which the Dame had conducted her; and she determined, since the old lady did not come back, to apply to her grandfather for permission to visit the library. One day after dinner she began the attack thus:

“Would you believe, dear grandfather, that at times your god child feels the want of some amusement?”

“Very easily, my pretty one,” he replied, “for at thy age, with no other occupation but spinning, needlework and reading, thou wouldst be a phoenix if that dull routine would satisfy and entertain thee always.”

“Besides all my flax is spun out, and my em-

broidery finished, and all my books are read through and through for the twentieth time.”

“ Well, have patience, my darling ; soon will there be a grand festival, at which thou shalt appear, for thou art the only lady of my family here at present, therefore thou shalt do the honours of it ; this will make a little variation in the uniformity of thy life, and——”

“ Oh, no,” she interrupted ; “ I do not care for company, or for festivals ; and I desire to see no one but you.”

“ But these guests will please you, my child, for they are thy old friends—the poor !”

Marian knew that her venerable parent gave an annual dinner to the poor, at which it was the custom for a lady of his family to preside ; and she was pleased and flattered in having that part assigned to her. She thanked Sir Hugh with a low obeisance for the distinguished honour he intended her, but this was not the point on which her thoughts were bent. She ventured to ask for admission to the library, that she might drive away ennui by looking over the old family chronicles. He laughed at her petition, saying :

“It is a pity thou art not a boy! a monk is lost in thee, thou seekest so willingly to encounter the dust of old manuscripts. Here then is the key, for why should I deny thee the satisfaction of knowing all concerning the family from whence thou art sprung? Thou wilt find all in great confusion, as the last time I went thither (and it is many years ago,) to search for some family documents, a slight alarm drove me hastily away, and I shall be much obliged to thee if thou canst convey thy spirit of order among my parchments. One thing I must insist upon, never be there at noon, for thou well knowest that I much dislike having my dinner hour postponed, nor at midnight, for fear of fire. If thou promisest me that, thou mayest in the other hours do what is agreeable to thee.”

Marian willingly promised obedience in these particulars, took the key, and kissing the hand of her grandfather, was hastening away.

“Softly, softly, Marian,” said he calling after her, “thou canst not find the way alone, the library is in a part of the castle, where thou hast never been, take one of my people with you, and

one thing more still, don't go into the south cabinet, near the library, if I am not there myself. I shall take an opportunity of visiting thee during thy learned labours, and seeing how thy work gets on."

Marian curtsayed, and disappeared, but she took no one with her, for having been in that part of the castle already, she was able to reconnoitre the right place by herself. She was surprised at finding the doors through which she had to pass, which had all been open the last time she came, now locked; however Sir Hugh's key opened every one of them, and she arrived at the high massive one, where, some nights before, as the clock struck twelve, her light had gone out, and by her companion's leaving her, the curiosity which brought her thither had been frustrated. She unlocked it, and entered a spacious apartment filled with books and manuscripts arranged round the walls in gilded cases. The curious Marian did not immediately turn her looks towards these vehicles of the wisdom and folly of the times, she hastened to a great table formed of yew wood with twisted columns,

which stood in the middle of the room, on which Sir Hugh had said she would find all that was belonging to his family records heaped together, which according to his desire she was to place in order, and consign to the respective shelves in the book-cases, from whence he had taken them down.

My grandfather must indeed have been in very great haste when he last quitted the apartment, thought Marian, as she picked up a large silver sconce from the floor over which she had stumbled. What disorder! what dust! nobody appears to have been here for ages; and yet the housekeeper has the keys with her, which turn so easily in the locks that I have scarcely been able to open for the rust.

She began to rummage amongst the parchments,—an endless undertaking, which promised her little satisfaction; for, at the beginning, she found only ancient pedigrees, documents, deeds of settlement, with a multitude of other papers, attested proofs of the ancient date and riches of the family, but which were not very interesting to her. She was in search of food for her insa-

tiable curiosity, which was considerably excited by all she had already heard, of the wonderful legends of the old Knights of Umfreville. She longed to learn more, and found herself so much disappointed, that she would have immediately resigned the undertaken office of archivist, if she had not been ashamed of so doing, lest her grandfather should laugh at her. She resolved at last to take them up, piece by piece, and place them in order,—and went eagerly to work. Her occupation lasted six days, for she never remained in the library during the hours forbidden by her grandfather. The good knight frequently inquired how her business went on, and laughed heartily on observing her dissatisfaction.

It was destined for the eighth day to bring her better luck. She had been busily employed for some time, in order to finish her vexatious work. The gilt bookcases were now filled with neatly arranged documents, the table was nearly cleared, when she stumbled upon some closely written manuscripts, containing nothing less than the history of events in the honourable and

ancient family of Umfreville, narrating in great detail, adventures of Crusaders in Palestine, also those occurring in the old family castle ; and so completely by this was the awakened attention of Marian rivetted, that for the first time she forgot the hour, and that she would be expected at dinner.

Twelve o'clock struck ; the door through which she had entered opened, and looking up from her reading, she saw her friend the house-keeper, who had just come in, and who hastily passed by her, crossing the apartment towards the south cabinet.

“ Oh ! Dame Marian ! ” she exclaimed with joy, and sprang up to go to her ; “ do I see you again after so long —— ”

The Dame did not allow her to finish the phrase.

“ It has struck twelve ! ” said she, at the same time pointing to the door.

There was something so imperative in her action, that the young girl instantly obeyed, and making an inclination with her head, left the library by the outward door, as the Dame entered

through the inner one ; at the same moment a gust of wind pulled the massive door out of her hand, and it closed with a tremendous crash.

A little startled, though she knew not why, she hastened on quickly, and arrived almost breathless in the eating room. Her grandfather was standing behind his chair, looking at the smoking dishes with rather a cross mien ; he raised his reproachful finger as Marian entered, and complained of her keeping him waiting for her.

“ Did you meet none of the servants ? ” he asked, “ I already have been sending them for you.”

“ I saw nobody, dear grandfather, but the housekeeper.”

“ The housekeeper !—what housekeeper ?— ”

“ That venerable looking, pleasing old lady with the keys, who says she is an Umfreville. Is she not the housekeeper ? ”

The knight turned very pale, and fidgetted with his spoon upon the plate ; she continued :

“ Ought one who is a relation to be kept in so subservient a place ? and why, dear grand-

father, is she not sitting at this table rather, for surely as an Umfreville she has a right to do so—?”

“Marian, Marian,” cried Sir Hugh, “have you not yet learnt, that things you do not understand should not be talked about?”

She coloured and was silent; she had never known her grandfather so cross to her before, and put it to the account of her having kept him waiting for his dinner. He did not utter a syllable more during the whole repast, and sat meditating in silence till they rose from table, when he demanded the key of the library back again.

“Only a day or two more, dear grandfather,” said she coaxingly, “and then I hope to have it all finished.”

“Girl, girl,” replied he, “thou wilt prolong it, till something which I would not will befall thee!—above all things I beseech thee, beware of the night, if any of the manuscripts should strongly excite thy curiosity, take it to thy room with thee, or where thou wilt, but read it not in the library.”

Marian obeyed him; she took the tremendously long history of the crusades and castle adventures with her into the garden, where she continued the whole evening reading; for Sir Hugh did not ask for her, as he was engaged with some guests, and her supper was placed for her in her own apartment. When she came to the end of the manuscript, she took it back to the library to restore it to its place.

It was at the time of the year when the weather is finest, and the bright moonlight almost rendered the light she held unnecessary; however, she placed it on the large table, where it soon was of use, as in rummaging over the remaining papers, she again found something to arrest her attention, which induced her to light the two large bees-wax torches, which with their sconces she had found on the floor at her first visit to the library, as a security against the increasing obscurity. The papers she had now got hold of completely fascinated her. When first looking over them she had remained standing, with the intention of moving at the conclusion of each leaf; but now to be more comfortable, she seated

herself in the high-backed arm-chair, and read on without stopping, till one constellation after another made its appearance in the horizon, announcing the depth of night, for in her present lecture she found more interest, than in the strange histories or perhaps fictions which had been her lecture during the evening. Notwithstanding the superstition of the age, she had not heard of or read any legends or romances, for her mother kept from her perusal such useless food, for a mind which was formed to soar higher in study, hence was her complete ignorance of the ideal world ; hence, likewise, her fearlessness in all the occurrences she had already witnessed, which in any other but herself might have created reflection and shuddering.

The manuscript now in her hands was the history of the first Norman possessor of the castle, who was himself of an ancient race.

Sir Rowland de Umfreville, had come over with William of Normandy, and distinguished himself much in war ; his wisdom and his valour had been of infinite service to that monarch, by whom he was highly favoured, and as his reward, one of the greatest heiresses of the

country was bestowed on him in marriage. After four years of an union, which was not a happy one, she died in giving birth to a daughter, the little Marian. Her sorrowful legacy did not keep her father at home; he cared for her as little as he had done for her mother, and had no scruples in leaving the tender girl to the care of his castellan, to whom he trusted entirely for her education; but a brother of his, Henry de Umfreville, with his consort, undertook the immediate care of the helpless orphan, and under their protection, she grew up in all those perfections, which subsequently attracted universal admiration towards her, whilst her unlucky destiny soon made her an object of compassion.

This, though a good deal more in detail, was the substance of the first part of the narrative; the damsel had read thus far, when she perceived that the handwriting was altered, and the story was continued in the first person. The characters were so small that to see better she rose from her seat to approach nearer to the light; on looking around her, she perceived that without the blackest night had closed in; the castle

clock struck half-past eleven, and a thought of the old knight's warning, not to tarry there at midnight, came across her mind, but she had not quite seized his meaning, and merely thought he was afraid of her setting the house on fire, there being a danger of it among such hoards of papers, and the caution was necessary in case of her slumbering over her lectures. She took the best measures to provide against such an accident, yet how was it likely she should go to sleep, when the heroine of the story which interested her now, held the pen herself, and told in a moving strain, of sorrows she had felt, and misfortunes she had experienced, which excited Marian's sympathy in an extraordinary manner, although the events had taken place above two hundred years before. She seated herself and resumed the narrative, it was now

“The very witching time of night ;”

but she heeded not the hour, so interested she was in her employment.

Marian, the daughter of Rowland de Umfrville, had taken up the thread of the story just

where her predecessor had left off, in the following manner :—

An object of compassion ! that is a melancholy prerogative for her who, from the plans sketched out by fortune for her at her birth, might have hoped to excite sentiments quite opposite,—the heiress of riches and of rank. I had prospects before me such as few have, and few have been disappointed as I was disappointed. My father fell on the field of battle, and I never had the happiness of embracing him. The king, mindful of his services and of the friendship he had felt for him, declared himself my protector, and summoned my uncle to bring me to his court. Although then very young, my beauty and graces were such, that I made many conquests, or rather the monarch's favour, and the riches I was supposed to inherit, brought me admirers ; he died, and the orphan lost all protection, and even friends, for my good uncle was also no more ; and a rapacious relation, under the sanction of the new sovereign, took possession of my property, which, in lawless times, is an easy

thing to accomplish. One friend I still had, or thought I had. Prince Henry had been one of those whom my great beauty had charmed, for now when these melancholy remains of former attractions are indifferent to me, I may talk of them as of a tale of former times,—he was, however, in no situation to be of service to me, for being involved in wars and troubles in Normandy, he had been there imprisoned by his brother Robert, and even after his liberation was despoiled of all his patrimony and forced to wander about for a long time, with very few attendants, and often in the greatest poverty.

His absence seemed to me the greatest misfortune of any that befell me, for besides the fascination which his engaging manners and handsome person deserved to excite, ambitious thoughts had seized upon my mind, and royalty was not too high for my unlimited expectations. In the mean time my unfeeling relations had reduced me to the obscurity of a gloomy castle in the midst of a forest, where it was daily repeated to me that I was a destitute orphan, and had no alternative but the cloister. I possessed

high buoyant spirits not easy to be crushed, and a natural light-heartedness, but they were blighted by disappointment and misfortune ere they arrived at maturity. The melancholy that surrounded me, the gloomy light in which my fate was continually represented to me, entirely robbed me of all inclination to joyousness, and made me become a dejected visionary. I occupied myself with studies that never were meant for my sex, the dark mysteries of the occult sciences, and the knowledge of languages ; these were the pastimes of my youth, and they completely turned my thoughts from my sad destination. I was fit for nothing but a nunnery, and was preparing to take the veil, when to my joy and satisfaction, Prince Henry returned to Britain. He came to see me, expressed the same regard and admiration as he had formerly done; the latter not being diminished by the lapse of so many years, indeed the tranquil life I led in the country was favourable to the preservation of my freshness and beauty.

My extraordinary improvements in learning and science delighted him, for he was himself a

great scholar, and in some of his literary pursuits he often found me serviceable. He told me he was poor and powerless under the despotic dominion of his brother King William, surnamed Rufus, who was unwilling for him to marry, unless according to his orders; but he offered to make me his wife in secret, on condition I kept our union unknown to any but ourselves and the priest who should join our hands, promising in case his brother died unmarried, to place me on the throne. Both love and ambition induced me to consent. He brought a priest unseen by any one, and we were married. There were no witnesses, and the officiator departed directly after. My husband also was soon obliged to return to his brother's court, whither he dared not take me; and I knowing the injustice which had been shewn me by that monarch, with regard to my property, had no desire to put myself in his way. Short, short days of happiness, followed by years of sorrow!

It was not long after this that William met with his end whilst hunting in the New Forest.

Henry, on receiving the intelligence, hastened to Winchester to possess himself of the royal treasury, by which means he managed, though with some difficulty, to secure the crown. His address, his abilities, and presence of mind, gained all to his side, and he was universally acknowledged as the sovereign, to the detriment of his elder brother, then far distantly engaged as a crusader in the Holy Wars. I had scarcely time to rejoice at the welcome news which left me no doubt of my being destined to wear the royal robes, when a most unexpected visitor appeared on my threshold; it was the person who had united me to the King. He was no priest, but the attendant and confidant of the unprincipled Henry. My marriage was null; but his sovereign liege the King, sent me word that his affection was mine still, and he would always be my friend, although political reasons made it necessary that he should select a Queen of higher birth. To that Queen he was already betrothed; it was Matilda of Scotland, who was of Saxon origin, and by that alliance the native English were to be conciliated.

I need not describe my sorrow and my disappointment. Despair is too mild a term for what I endured. I spurned all thoughts of the base impostor's friendship; and hatred took the place of love. His vile agent hinted to me that I was recommended to take the veil, for luckily no issue had followed this inauspicious union; but the idea that my betrayer wished it, probably lest I should make my complaints of his conduct public, and thus diminish his popularity, was a sufficient reason for me to determine against it, and induced me to accept the addresses of the Earl of Lancaster, one of his bitterest opponents, who had lately sought my hand: he was rich, and a brilliant sphere was opened to me, the pre-eminence and delights of which I was no longer capable of enjoying. Had this good fortune now presented to me, offered itself some years before, I might have been happy—nay, perhaps, I might still have been so, if the thoughts of all I had loved and looked forward to, with all that I had lost, added to the monastic caprices which had dwelt with me in my solitude, and the passion I had im-

bibed for the unhallowed science of astrology, through the means of which I nourished my paramount hope of revenge, corroded every joy, brought nothing but gloom into the family of my husband, and made him wretched as well as myself.

Remorse also assailed me, for I felt I had injured him by my pretence to spotless purity ; but this idea, instead of giving me gentleness and humility, only added to my discontent. Revenge was the only thought which gave me consolation. I urged my husband to join with his brother, the Earl of Shrewsbury, and others of Duke Robert's adherents, to invite that Prince over, that he might take his right as King of England, and hurl the false Henry from the throne. I left no means untried to persuade him to this act. I thought not of his danger, for I loved him not. I thought only of the punishment which through him might await my unfeeling betrayer. Alas ! I at length succeeded, for my power over him was great—it was that of a strong mind over a weak one ; but Henry remained uninjured, for the rebellion was crushed

by his address and activity. My unfortunate husband perished on the scaffold. Aware, when too late, of my motives for thus leading him on to perdition, he spurned me from him on his way to punishment,—cursed me as the cause of his evil fate, and refused to forgive me. The bitterest self-reproach and remorse was my lot, from the day of his death to that of my own.”

Marian was startled at these last words, which she could not comprehend, and fancied there must be some mistake; tears had so filled her eyes that she was unable any longer to decypher the small writing, and rose from her seat to make the lights burn clearer. There, opposite to her, stood Dame Marian, with her arms folded across her breast, and her eyes fixed upon her. The damsel was surprised, but not alarmed, at seeing her so suddenly in her company, and extended her hand to seize hold of hers, saying,

“ Oh, dear Dame, my good kinswoman, what an interesting story I am reading.”

“ What is thy sentence ?” she answered.

“ My sentence ?”

“ Aye ; that history is well known to me.

She was a sufferer; for her thy tears should flow—not for him!”

The old lady raised her eyes upwards.

“I know,” said she, “that over me a judgment is impending.”

“A merciful judgment, I am sure, good Dame,” said Marian, kindly, though scarcely thinking of what she said, for she had again turned to her manuscript. “I must finish this,” said she, “there is very little remaining; so I will read aloud, as you say it interests you.”

Receiving no answer, she took silence as consent, and read as follows:—

“To a contrite and conscience-stricken heart, what mitigation of pain remained but in doing good? On the demise of my rapacious relation my father’s castle and domain became mine once more. I was rich, and was enabled to give free course to my inclination for conferring comfort upon others; I felt I had weighty duties to perform; the orphan son of my good uncle Henry claimed my care; the educating and training him to virtue and happiness was the only joy I experienced in my tearful existence; for him

I enlarged and improved this castle, my vassals assisted me therein, and I instituted for them a feast in commemoration of the completion of the works; which, by a foundation I made for the purpose, their descendants were for ever, in after times, to enjoy annually from my successors. From them I had no maledictions—I heard only blessings from their lips. The good people begged, that in remembrance of that day I would allow my portrait to be taken in the half-mourning dress, which I am accustomed to wear when I go amongst them, to distribute bread and meat. I consented to this wish, and the portrait is on the eastern side of the great southern apartment.”

“Her portrait!” exclaimed Marian, “I shall like to see it—whereabouts is it, good Dame?—but I am alone,” said she, on finding no one there, as she raised her eyes from the manuscript; “how could she go away so softly without my perceiving it?”

She called several times after the old lady, and received no reply; then rising from her seat, that, with the only light which still burnt

she might look about for the object of her curiosity, the portrait of Lady de Lancaster, she said to herself:—

“If this is the great southern apartment, I must find it here. The day begins to dawn through the windows, the light is of no farther use to me.”

The time when day and night separate is, according to old sayings, as favourable to ghosts appearing as the blackest hours of midnight. The fearless damsel, in whose youthful imagination there dwelt no spectral ideas, and who had never had any suspicion instilled into her mind of its being possible for her ever to experience anything likely to justify such common sayings, opened the window shutters, and drew aside the curtains, that in the reflection of the rosy morn, on the wall, she might discover what she sought after; but no picture was to be seen.

She was now standing at the door of the south cabinet, and without recollecting her uncle's prohibition forbidding her to enter that room, she opened it and went in. A rapid glance

shewed her, as she fancied, her good friend the Dame at the furthest end of the apartment. She hastened forward to approach her, but coming nearer, perceived that it was a full-length portrait, as large as life, and the perfect resemblance of Dame Marian.

The young girl, surprised, felt, she knew not why, a shudder come over her at this sight. There are times when, after long ignorance, the soul is illuminated by the full light of truth: the present moment was one of these. Marian's trembling increased, but she had still the courage to go near the portrait of the lady. With very little effort, and recollection of all the possibilities, an innocent mind, such as hers, free from prejudice, might, perhaps, have quickly got the better of what she then felt; but when Dame Marian in person, though more shadow-like than formerly, glided by her,—when a hollow, sepulchral voice resounded these words:—

“Marian Plantagenet,—knowest thou me now?”

All doubts were at an end, The deepest

and most complete feeling of terror seized her, and she sank perfectly senseless on the ground before the portrait of the Countess of Lancaster.

The sun was quite risen. Midday came, and Marian was missed in the castle. Sir Hugh was alarmed to the greatest degree, for he loved the gentle young damsel dearly. Search had already been made for her everywhere before the intelligence of her loss had reached him. What could be imagined? Flight or elopement was out of the question; for with whom could she elope who scarcely had an acquaintance? and why should she fly from the fatherly protection of the good knight?

Suddenly he inquired if they had been in the library. "Impossible," was the reply; for the carefully guarded key of that apartment was in his possession: besides, none of the castle inmates, who believed the ghost of the Ancient Mistress of the castle was accustomed to have her goings in and out there, would voluntarily have ventured thither.

The poor knight, half distracted, figured to himself all kinds of frightful possibilities. Marian, notwithstanding his prohibition, might have tarried there, and something might have befallen her which, it was supposed, had already brought untimely death in days of yore. That she had seen the Castle Spectre without knowing it, he was aware, from the manner of her yesterday's discourse; and what terrible consequences might not have ensued! For tradition said, that those who came in the way of the etherial dame, and through ignorance or ill-humour had in the slightest degree failed towards her, had experienced her vengeance.

He wrung his hands in despair, and wept like a child over the probable fate of his unfortunate grand-daughter. How did he reproach himself for ever having made her an inmate of the castle; and how should he answer to her father and brother, then in distant countries, for not having been more careful to preserve her from danger? To know the truth, and afford her assistance, if not too late, it was requisite to repair to the suspected spot. The

servants of his retinue shuddered at the thought of doing so, and drew back. In truth, the knight himself felt little inclined to visit the place where, many years before, a sudden appearance of the Castle Spectre had driven him away in haste and terror, the traces of which event Marian had already seen; but affection for his lost child surmounted every difficulty. The chaplain of the castle went first, then Sir Hugh followed with the whole household train, armed with weapons; but much more useful to the poor girl would have been strong essences and restoratives, and the surgeon's lancet to recall her to life!

They found her in a state more resembling death than a swoon, stretched out before the terrible picture. How long she had remained there unassisted, or whether she had recovered only to relapse into her frightful state of unconsciousness, could not be conjectured. She was conveyed without any signs of life to her own apartment, and it was late in the evening before the physicians and surgeons succeeded in restoring her to animation, suffi-

ciently to calm her grandfather's fears. She was at length brought to her senses again, but was too feeble to speak or to move. This state of debility was followed by delirium, during which she disclosed much of what had passed the preceding night. Sir Hugh sat by her bedside watching every appearance of improvement with the tenderest anxiety, and soon had the comfort of seeing her more composed.

The first night that she was allowed the privilege of a convalescent sleeping without a nurse to watch by her side, she had a vision which she never communicated to her friends till a short time before her death in after years.

Dame Marian appeared to her just as she used to see her, when she still considered her as a mortal, and said :—

“ Marian, I terrified thee without meaning to do so. How comes it that thou, already familiar with me, shouldst be shaken thus by knowing me fully?—waking thou shalt never see me again. I love thee, and will not endanger thy life ; but never will I cease to hover round thee and guard thee. Thou shalt celebrate the approaching jubilee of the Kairn feast, which I

instituted ; count eight days from that time, and then thou shalt behold thy destined bridegroom."

The damsel awoke ; she felt herself considerably refreshed and strengthened, and had a feeling of satisfaction at the promise made her by the spectre never to appear again before her eyes. The bare thought of once more beholding a supernatural being, with whom she had made herself as familiar as with a mortal, had hitherto caused her great horror, and retarded her recovery. She had looked upon herself as an unfortunate creature, who would in a short time be distinguished among her contemporaries by the title of a dreamer ; and who by her adventures with the world of spirits, would at last be brought to doubt her reason, or to lose it entirely. She was now re-assured and could look forward to the future with some tranquillity. She tried to draw her mind from a recollection of the past, and soon was totally recovered from her weak state. With delight did her grandfather again behold her presiding at his table, fresh, blooming, and cheerful ; for her spirits gradually were returning to their

natural tone, as the time since her mother's demise was lengthened.

Preparations were now making for the ancient instituted festival of the Kairn supper, and the Lady Marian determined to perform becomingly the honourable part assigned to her at it. We have already told the reader something of the origin of this festival ; and will here say a word more respecting it, though every inhabitant of Old England would as well as ourselves be competent to describe a harvest home.

The Lady de Lancaster of the race of Umfreville, whose destiny or some unexpiated crime had made a ghost after her death, had, at the completion of the enlargement and reparations of her paternal castle, given to all her vassals and the poor who had lent her assistance therein, a feast, which she fixed to take place annually on the conclusion of the harvest. The entertainment was costly, and its regular repetition in subsequent times no trifling expenditure for the successors of the Countess. The population increasing every year, it was necessary to be as rich and generous as Sir Hugh not to curtail the

establishment. In honour of his grand-daughter's recovery the feast was this year kept with more splendour and profusion than ever. She went about like an angel of light among her humble guests, who were seated on the green meadow before the castle, distributing donations, which, through the knight's munificence, were much increased this season ; and she also added private gifts from herself.

Congratulations and blessings were showered down upon her from all sides.

The damsel's adventure, although few knew all the circumstances rightly, had widely spread, and made her the universal object of curiosity ; many of the young nobility and gentry of the county, hitherto unacquainted with the Lady Marian, who never appeared among strangers at her grandfather's table, were impatient to see her, and several of them fancied the romantic idea of mixing with the poor fed by her charitable hands, and receiving the first gifts from her. She advanced freely between the close lines of her guests, giving to the right and to the left, without noticing that here and there was a well

curled man, whose looks were the living anti-type of the necessities which her charity alleviated. One of them had the temerity to seize and approach to his lips the white beneficent hand which was presenting the small loaf of bread to him. She was not offended, for in the poor she could pardon a liberty, which, according to the strict notions of the times, would not have been permitted to a Prince.

“What dost thou want, good youth?” she demanded, with a look of compassion, not considering that the possessor of such a mein and figure could be in want of nothing. “Hast thou any grievance to state?”

“Yes, gracious lady,” replied the unknown, to whom the damsel, beautiful as an angel, and embellished at that moment by her charitable acts, appeared divine; “I would give the world to dare to disclose them to you.”

She replied in a friendly tone, “Thou seest that at present I cannot stay long near thee, but thou mayest seek an opportunity of speaking with me at the castle, and if by asking my grandfather, I can obtain what thou

wishest for, I will not neglect to do so." She then gave him a silver piece out of the purse. When she was gone, his companions, who had been watching him attentively, laughed and ridiculed his charity gift.

"Laugh at me as much as you will," said he, "the alms of the charming benefactress are to me a pledge for still greater charity. Did ye not hear the rendezvous at the castle, and the promise of interceding with her grandfather? Can any admirer boast of more favour from his lady love at a first interview?"

They still laughed at him and made their comments on what had passed: but Sir Ralph de Widdrington, who had received the gift, and whose heart was really touched by the young lady's attractions, took things more seriously than the others, and thought of nothing but the means of seeing her again; yet, how was that to be done? When he asked for the audience she had promised him, he was admitted, but found in her stead a venerable almoner deputed by her to hearken to his wants, and his disappointment was great. Should he call on the old

knight? He understood that the Lady Marian was never to be seen when he was engaged with company.

“What person or name,” he asked his friend, “could have weight enough to procure for us a cordial reception and a sight of the damsel?”

Much counsel was held on all this, and at last an expedient was hit upon which promised to assist the wishes of the enamoured youth.

The feast had not been over many days when Sir Hugh received a despatch from Lord Percy, then one of the commanders of the forces stationed under Queen Philippa, who had taken up her residence in the north during the absence of King Edward at Calais (which town he was besieging), that she might guard against a threatened invasion of the Scots. She was now at no great distance from the Knight of Umfreville's castle, and the messenger brought word that, if agreeable to Sir Hugh, the Earl, who was related to his house, would with a very small suite repair to the castle to pay him a visit, with orders, from her gracious liege the Queen, concerning the arming of his vassals around, and

putting the place in a state of defence, should it be found necessary.

Marian, on hearing this, resorted to her own apartment to enjoy its tranquillity, though not in solitude, for since the eventful days above recorded, she had ever kept one of her damsels in attendance, assisting her in her work, or remaining in silent employment whilst she read. Had she paid more attention to what the spectre predicted to her in her dream, she might have calculated that it was exactly the eighth day after the distribution of the Umfreville alms that this visit was announced, and it would have entered her mind that she must for once take part in the company if she was this day to see the person destined to be her husband, but the idea never occurred to her, and she seemed to have forgotten this part of her dream, as she had done her utmost to drive from her thoughts all that related to the spectre. She therefore made a negligent toilet, and was busily engaged with her distaff till dinner time, when her female attendants prepared her table, and while doing so mentioned something respecting the arrival of the handsome

young earl and the four knights, his companions. — Marian made very little reply, and was sitting down to her repast when she heard the gouty step of the old knight in the gallery leading to her chamber, and immediately after saw him enter.

“Heavens! my grandfather!” she exclaimed, rising to meet him; “what can have induced you to quit your guests?”

“The highest necessity, my child, thou must make up thy mind to appear at the table below stairs. I wished to announce it to thee myself, for I am sure thou wouldst not give me a refusal.”

“But my dress!” she cried, as she saw herself in a mirror, “this simple homely white garment,—my hair unarranged without any ornaments!”

“And cannot all that be altered quickly?” he inquired.

“Impossible, dear grandfather, it will at least require half an hour, and during that time your dinner will be cold.”

“ Well, then, come as thou art, the knights will not examine thy dress ; besides the Earl is our kinsman, and the Lord Mowbray, who accompanies him, is thy brother-in-law.”

“ Oh, grandfather ! what a dreadful request. I beseech you to excuse me ; besides, will it be proper for a damsel like me, without any other lady—”

“ It will, it will,” he replied ; “ am I not thy parent and thy present protector ? They begged so much for the pleasure of thy company that I could not say no ; thy father would not gainsay me in such company as that, the chief of thy sovereign’s forces. I have promised to fetch thee, I prythee come, dear Marian.”

The old man was getting fussy and vexed at the delay. She demurred no longer ; her cheeks glowing with shame for her neglected toilet, and inexpressibly charming in her embarrassment, she accompanied her grandfather to the eating room, where she met with a polite welcome from the guests, and they all placed themselves at the table, the Lady Marian officiating as hostess. She spoke not, but saw with

unremitting attention that nothing was neglected for the company, and, while thus occupied, observed not that the eyes of two of the knights were generally fixed on her.

The names of the four knights who accompanied the Earl, were these:—Sir Ralph de Widdrington, Sir Hugh de Lumley, the Lord Mowbray, and Sir John de Coucy, brother to the Earl of Bedford; all noble, all young, and some good-looking, but amongst all none were to be compared to their chief in manly beauty or in courteous manners. He was full of spirit and valour, the prototype of chivalry, which was not then yet worn out, though specimens were rarer now to be seen than in the preceding age; to him his friends had applied to procure for them, through his means, a sight of the young lady, generally named the Invisible Fair, as she never appeared among stranger guests at Sir Hugh's board. This was particularly enforced by Widdrington, he who had made the parley with the damsel at the harvest feast, and raved about her beauty.

Percy, at their request, obtained the Queen's

permission to visit the old knight, upon the plea of inquiring into his state of defence, and the number of his armed vassals, in case of her requiring their assistance; little did he think, whilst humouring the frolic of his friends, how strong an impression the high-born damsel's innocence and charms would make upon his own heart, that heart hitherto invulnerable to love, and only occupied with warlike thoughts; yet so it was, and whether inspired by Marian's natural enchantments, or by those of her spectral namesake, he felt more attracted and fascinated than he had ever been before in the course of his life.

After dinner they adjourned to the garden, where Sir Hugh requested his grand-daughter to accompany the party, and she had one of the knights always by her side; which occasioned the saying among the household of the castle, to whom the sight was unusual, that the bridal wreath was hanging over the maiden's head, and that one of the five knights would surely carry her home, but which, was an important question; however, as every one desired the best luck to the damsel, their wishes were divided between

the Earl and the rich and powerful Knight of Widdrington.

True it is, that the quiet maiden heard this day for the first time of love addressed to herself. The courtiers with whom she became acquainted so suddenly, knew how to express their admiration without offending her modest reserve, and her heart assailed in every polished way, must have been lost, had it been one of the common every-day hearts, which it is only necessary to knock at to gain possession of. She was, however, flattered and pleased by the polite attention she met with this afternoon. Her eyes, which were generally downcast, had once or twice met the ardent gaze of the handsome Percy, and she had blushed in consequence. To one only of the party did she show distance ; it was to poor Widdrington, who thinking to make himself of consequence in her eyes, had confessed that he was the pretended pauper who had spoken to her at the feast ; he ventured to boast of the sweet kiss he had obtained on her white hand, and of the promise she had made him to intercede with Sir Hugh in his

favour. As he grew more encroaching, she became more reserved; she felt horror-struck in the uncomfortable reflexion of having apparently done wrong, for thinking him in distress by what he said. She had innocently appointed him to speak to her at the castle, though she never meant to give him an audience, except by proxy. This gave her a sort of antipathy to him which she scarcely could conceal; perhaps the superior manners and beauty of the young chief, when compared with the levity and unmeaning countenance of the other, may have had some weight in the scale of her preference.

Evening came, and the departure of the strangers left Marian free to return to her solitude; but before she retired, she had to undergo a few smiling reproaches from her grandfather on account of her cold behaviour and reserved treatment of Sir Ralph de Widdrington, who had openly expressed his desire of obtaining her hand; he was a rich and powerful land-owner, and already renowned in the field.

These words reminded her for the first time

of what the spectral dame had announced to her in her dream, namely, that she should see her future bridegroom on the eighth day after the feast; but she felt no pleasure in the thought, if Widdrington was the person thus designated, for she liked him not, and a dreadful pang crossed her heart in imagining a fate so detested as that of being his wife, if it could not be averted.

It is not recorded if the spectre lady was faithful to her promise of never more appearing to Marian when awake, nor if she whispered her intentions in a dream; tradition only tells us that she loved her namesake with great affection, and sought her happiness.

The knights talked much of the beautiful damsel as they rode off from the castle, praised her sweet manners, and Widdrington loudly declared his determination to lose no means of obtaining her hand.

The others laughed at his enthusiasm.

“Thy rank is not high enough to please her proud father,” said De Coucy, “he will try for the Prince of Wales.”

“Pshaw!” replied the aspiring lover, “he is too young for her, scarcely older than herself; besides, Lancaster is no favourite of the King’s, he was long in disgrace, and in prison, and was too much implicated in his father’s misfortunes ever to find favour in his eyes, though it is said, he had nothing to do with that nefarious business.”

“Such things are forgotten,” answered De Coucy, “time rectifies most errors; at all events his son, the gallant Derby, is making amends by his conquests in Gascony.”

During this conversation, Percy alone was silent, his heart had not returned with him from the Castle of Umfreville, and the words of De Coucy addressed to Widdrington, which were warded off by the carelessness of that wild boaster, brought a pang to *him*.

Other thoughts, however, besides those of love, were now to occupy them all, and war, sudden and overpowering, suspended all ideas of the gentle and unassuming Marian Plantagenet.

Rumours of a Scottish invasion had for some

time past alarmed the country, and now the unwelcome news was spread abroad, that David, the King of Scotland, had passed the borders, and was marching into the country with his army. Terror took possession of the inhabitants of Northumberland and Durham, but they were not unprepared for defence, for there was in those troublesome times, and in so dangerous a neighbourhood, a vital necessity to guard against Scotch depredations; every castle was put in a state of defence, the vassals and domestics kept armed, and the drawbridges drawn up.

Sir Hugh de Umfreville was too old himself to superintend the necessary arrangements for repulsing any attack which might be made on his castle by the Scots. The example of Northam and other castles, which had suffered in former occurrences of the sort, shewed there was no safety, even should the road of the insurgents not lie within their reach. A nephew of the knight's, who was a bold, enterprising man, had, therefore, at his uncle's request, taken the entire management of all the warlike preparations;

this was the Squire of Copeland, who, after putting all in readiness, and placing those best suited for the defence under the command of the most trusty and courageous of the vassals, being himself a valorous knight, hastened to offer his services to the Queen as a volunteer.

Of the incursions and ravages of the Scots, under the command of their sovereign, and of the famous battle of Nevil's Cross, (this not being any part of the annals of history), it does not become me to give a description, suffice it to say, that the engagement was severe, and valiantly fought on either side, the English gaining the field, though it cost them dear by the loss of their men; to the valour of Earl Percy and the other leaders, no words could do justice. The King of Scotland was said to be taken prisoner, but no one at first knew by whom, or where he was taken to; this, however, was in a short time ascertained to have been the achievement of the Knight of Copeland, who, as soon as he had captured this royal prize, after a gallant resistance on the part of the unfortunate King, had pushed through the crowd, and quickly,

with eight other companions, rode off, nor stopped till he arrived many miles from the field of battle, at his uncle's castle, which he had himself assisted to fortify and man with armed vassals.

Down went the drawbridge at his call, and to the great wonder of all the inmates of Umfreville Castle, he declared his mighty prize, for the safety and guard of whom he now took the best measures.

It was not long before letters reached him, with orders from the Queen to deliver up his royal prisoner, but he declared his intention of keeping him under his care, until he had informed King Edward himself of his capture, and stipulated with him the terms for his being given up.

In consequence of this determination on his part, he placed the Scottish monarch under a safe guard in which he could confide, and hastened to the King at Calais, where he succeeded so far, as to gain great advantages in the way of money and of honours.

The feelings of Sir Hugh de Umfreville were

too honourable and delicate, to approve of this mercenary conduct; but he had no influence over his rash and hot-headed kinsman, and he had put all his concerns into his power for the present emergencies, therefore had not left himself the means of opposing an action which he certainly disapproved of; all he could do was, as soon as Copeland had taken his departure, to send word to the Queen, that the detaining of the royal prisoner was not done by his connivance, nor by his wish; he also mentioned that from his castle being but slightly fortified, and there being parts of it undefended, it was impossible for him to answer for the safe tenure of the prisoner, attempts having been already made for his escape; he therefore recommended an additional force being stationed in the outskirts of the castle.

This courteous message on the part of the old Knight, received as courteous a reply. The Queen, unwilling to lose sight of the royal prisoner, signified her intention of honouring the Castle of Umfreville with her gracious presence, there to await the return of Copeland, or letters

from the King, signifying what he wished her to do on this extraordinary occasion. Philippa was of an amiable and mild nature, averse to using violent measures when not necessary; although she would have found no difficulty in possessing herself of a prize of such consequence to the nation, as well as to her husband and herself.

Meanwhile the young Marian was, notwithstanding all the bustle which had been going on, leading her wonted tranquil life in her own apartment, undisturbed by aught but the pursuit of Sir Ralph de Widdrington, who, as soon as the business of war was at an end, returned to harass her with love-letters and proposals; nay, several times did he waylay her in the gardens, and she was obliged to complain to her grandfather, to prevent her having further annoyance.

Sir Hugh, won by the young man's prayers, entreated her to pause ere she dismissed him for ever; but she declared firmly that she never would listen to him, and was too young to think of marriage at any rate, especially so short a

time since her mother's death, when grief was still paramount in her heart. This might be true; for who can dive into the deep recesses of a maiden's thoughts? Dissimulation is, they say, allowed to woman; but we believe her heart was no longer wrapped in sorrow; it was impressed with the image of a new object. What damsel that had once seen him, would forget Percy's noble form, his martial air, his radiant eyes? still less when those eyes were fixed on hers, when his voice had addressed her with sentiments of kindness, and perhaps, incipient love

In her solitude did she nourish these ideas, and without distractions of any sort, she involuntarily gave way to them, and soon found herself deeply in love; this, above every other consideration, gave her an insurmountable repugnance to the idea of ever becoming the wife of any other man.

All in the castle were now preparing for the reception of the royal party, and soon a herald announced the approach of the Queen. Sir Hugh, with all his retinue, and as many of his

kindred as he could muster together, was in readiness in the hall to receive his Sovereign Lady. Rich carpets were spread on the steps leading to it from the court, and as she entered his castle, after alighting from her magnificently attired white palfrey, she gave her hand to the venerable knight, who kneeling, raised it respectfully to his lips. She courteously bid him rise, and expressed herself with her wonted affability. Peals of music, on her passing the threshold, sounded from the organ in the castle hall, and a choir of melodious voices chaunted a loud welcome.

Sir Hugh then presented his great-granddaughter, the Lady Marian Plantagenet, who this time had not neglected her attire; a small azure velvet cap with bands of fine pearls encircled her head, and her beautiful hair hung in ringlets on her shoulders. A rich blue dress trimmed with pearls set off the whiteness of her skin, and a brilliant necklace, the gift of her grandfather, with bracelets and ear-drops to correspond, rendered her still more captivating than she had appeared in her simplicity. It was the

first time of her wearing colours since the death of her mother, and the admiration she excited was universal. From the Queen she met with peculiar kindness; she hailed her as a cousin and princess of the royal blood, and condescended to kiss her forehead.

The royal party then moved on under the escort of Sir Hugh, who seemed to be grown younger by this eventful honour done to himself and his house, towards the spacious apartments which had been prepared for the reception of the Queen; her suite was but small, consisting of the ladies of her court and the principal knights: in the largest and most decorated of the rooms was placed a splendidly arranged banquet, ornamented by magnificent vessels of massy gold and silver, with ancient and curiously cut vases, containing the finest flowers that the season could afford. On a raised plank was the seat at the top destined for the Queen, a royal chair of large dimensions with velvet and golden fringe, and over it hung a canopy of the same. When she had taken her place, the knight stood behind to wait upon her, but she insisted on his

being seated by her side ; on her other hand she desired to have the Lady Marian, whose rank made it her proper place, and to her she spoke kindly, mentioning with praise the reports recently promulgated of her gallant brother's feats in arms. Marian scarcely remembered him, for he was considerably older than herself, and had not been at home since his adolescence ; but she was pleased to hear him so well spoken of. The Queen also talked of her father, who was now in the King's councils.

Next to Marian sat Percy, and happy did the maiden feel when he placed himself by her side. Of her attractions he was obviously sensible. He had no eyes but for her, no words to bestow on any other person, and evinced by his deportment that he had neither power nor wish to conceal his feelings towards her.

Widdrington, at the furthest end, beheld with some vexation, the manner in which they were engrossed by each other, but being of a passive disposition, and well aware, notwithstanding the natural vanity inherent in every man, that he could not cope with so accomplished and dis-

tinguished a hero, he resigned himself quickly to his fate, recalled his good humour, and began to think he was better off unmarried.

After several days passed in a similar manner, Percy ventured to declare his love to the beautiful maiden, who referred him to her father for his consent to their union. He previously sought an audience of the Queen, in order to request her interposition with the Earl of Lancaster in his favour; on his mentioning Marian's name, she interrupted him, saying,

“What think ye? Is she not a rose-bud likely to please my noble boy? I have thought of it, and will take her with me to Calais, that the King may see her. Her father has been making overtures on the subject already;—but why look you so pale and sorrowful?”

Percy answered not, but sank on his knees at her feet, and pressed his hand upon his brow.

“I understand you,” said she at last, and ordering him to rise; “nor am I so wanting in discernment, as not to have before now observed your passion. What I said was in jest. It is true that Lancaster has made propositions to

the King for an union to be agreed to between our son and his daughter ; but Edward is yet too young for marriage, and will, when older, choose for himself. That was the King's answer to his noble cousin. If, as I believe, you are a favoured suitor of his lovely daughter, I willingly will break it to the Earl, and request his sanction and consent. Your recent services deserve a reward, and none can be esteemed too great, no, not the hand of a maiden of royal blood, for having ensured the safety of your country by the victory just achieved."

Percy's thanks and gratitude may well be imagined on receiving this gracious answer.

Not long after, the Knight of Copeland returned from Calais, and throwing himself at the feet of the royal Philippa, humbly made excuses for his delay in delivering over his prisoner, according to her orders, which now, by the command of his sovereign lord, the King, he came to do. The Queen expressed herself satisfied, and hastening with her army and the royal prisoner to York, provided for the defence of the more northern counties, and appointed the Lords

Percy and Neville, governors of Northumberland, to take proper measures for the safety of the country. She then removed to London, where the King of Scotland was securely placed in the Tower, and forgot not her promise of conferring with the Earl of Lancaster concerning Lord Percy's union with his daughter. She obtained from him a willing consent, for

“ No heart is so guarded around,
But the fame of a victor will take it ;
No bosom can slumber so sound
But the trumpet of glory will wake it :”—

and shortly after set out for Dover, from whence embarking with a favourable wind, she joined her royal spouse at Calais.

It was scarcely a month after this, that the Earl of Lancaster, with his suite, arrived at the Castle of Umfreville, where he was met by the valiant and noble Earl Percy, and bestowed on him the hand of the amiable heroine of this story. On the nuptials taking place, tradition tells us, that Marian's spectral patroness gave undeniable signs that the alliance was honoured with her approbation. The active old dame was heard rattling the keys in the locks, and no

one could stir on the staircase, or near the southern galleries, without the dread of meeting her ; for though she may have looked pleased, as is to be supposed from things having gone according to her will, yet the sight of her could never have been otherwise than terrific.

The young bride she never encountered, regardless of her promise, nor did she alarm the bridegroom by her visits, which he probably would have disliked much more than an opposing army of intrepid Scotch warriors.

The dame was said to be seen with monstrous sized vessels full of ancient coin, which was supposed to be a present for the bride. But Marian would not have taken all the wealth in the universe, at the price of only once again beholding her former associate ; and her husband, who had as little inclination for encountering ghosts as herself, carried her off to his own mansion, where no castle spectre was likely to molest them.

The records of those times speak of an immense treasure underneath the site of Umfreville Castle ; and it is said, that if any one shall

see the spectral dame come forth in the twilight of evening, like an expanding spirit, on the ruins of the old fortress, and has the courage to follow her along some loose steps still existing, that person will find the treasures, which in former times were destined for her namesake.

END OF VOL. I.

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