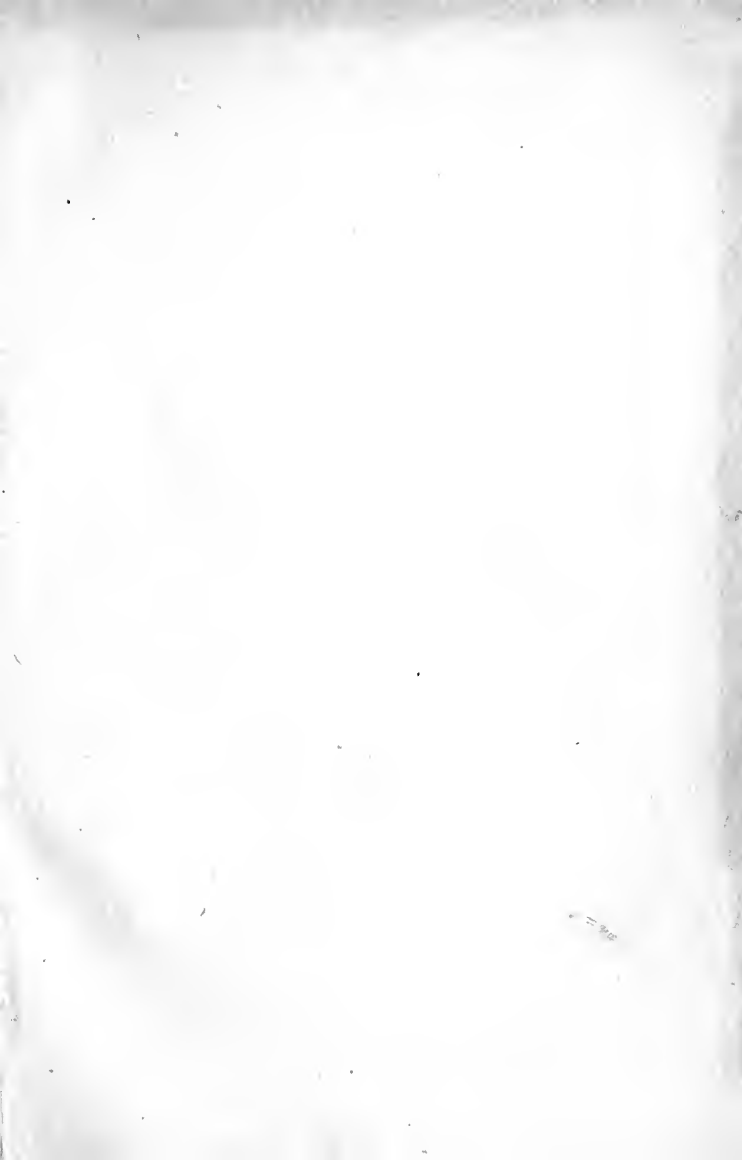




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THE GIRLHOOD

OF

SHAKESPEARE'S HEROINES

IN

A SERIES OF TALES

BY

MARY COWDEN CLARKE

Author of the Concordance to Shakespeare

✓ 101.4
*

WITH A NEW PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR

New York

A. C. ARMSTRONG AND SON

51 EAST 10th ST., NEAR BROADWAY

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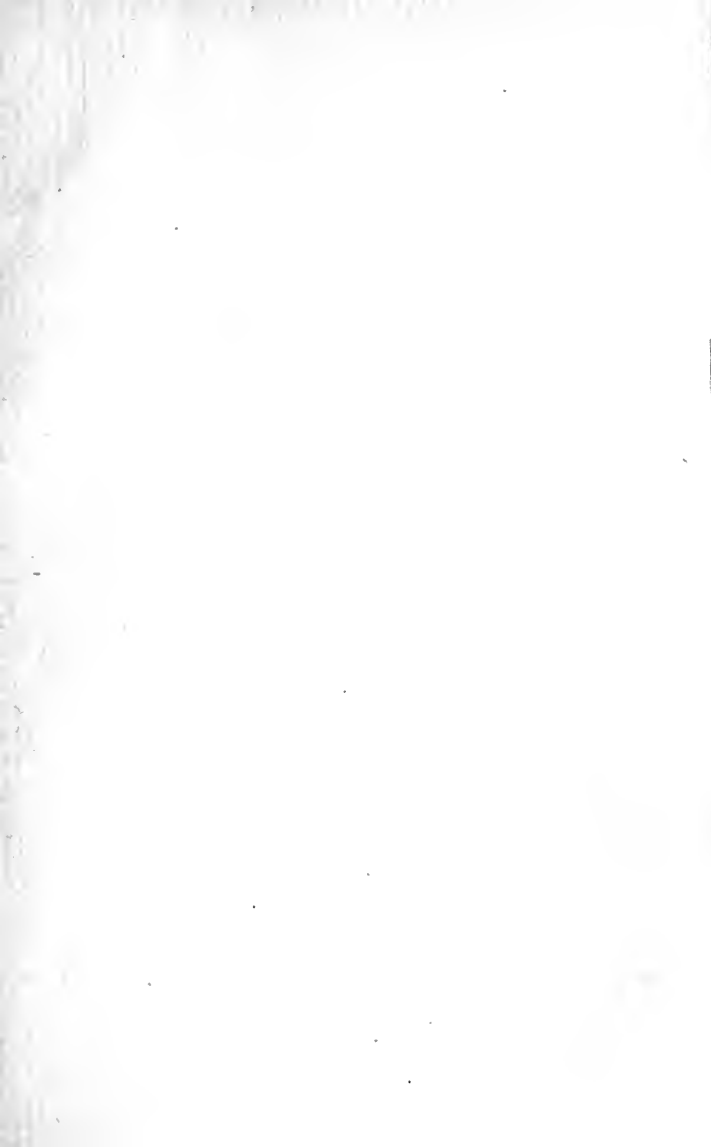
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PUBLISHERS' NOTE TO NEW EDITION.

THE continued demand for this Standard Work has induced the Publishers to have prepared, under the Author's supervision, this new edition, with the addition of a *Third Series*, never before published in this country.

The graceful illustrations in this work were selected by Mrs. Mary Cowden Clarke, from her edition of Shakespeare's works, published by Messrs. D. Appleton & Co., who have kindly consented to their reproduction.





PREFACE TO NEW EDITION.

Forty years ago, these Tales were written in all the glow of having finished the sixteen years' labor in completing the "Concordance to Shakespeare," of having seen it published and already accepted into public favor.

In entire contrast with the strictly verbal work thus effected, these stories of pure imagination and sentiment presented themselves to their author's thought as an attempt likely to further her desire of still promoting the study and enjoyment of our great Poet Teacher, and prove one of the many incentives thereto which have produced so remarkable and so general an increase of love and reverence for his genius during the last half century.

This increase, with added comprehension of the full extent of that genius, and of its infinite suggestions, has elicited a desire for a New Edition of "The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines," a desire which gives its Author liveliest satisfaction, in the thought that now a fresh generation will read these Tales and—she hopes—will feel something of the pleased interest she felt while inventing and penning them.

The word "Girlhood," in their title, may perhaps have induced some idea that these are juvenile tales; whereas, it is the grown reader who will be even more

likely to find attraction in tracing the careful development of character, in observing the minute pains taken to render each accordant with the dramatist's perfect delineation, while possessing maturer knowledge of the vital human questions therein necessarily involved than the youthful reader, who chiefly notes "the story" when perusing a book.

With a heart full of gratitude for having been permitted to live to see the present renewed call for the book written when half through her now advanced age, its author gladly again signs herself her readers'

Faithful and devoted Shakespearian servant,

MARY COWDEN-CLARKE.

VILLA NOVELLO, GENOA, May, 1891.





PREFACE.

If ever Preface were especially needful, it is surely so in the present instance, to state an explanatory word concerning the design of the work, and an exculpatory word touching the choice of its subject.

The design has been, to trace the probable antecedents in the history of some of Shakespeare's women ; to imagine the possible circumstances and influences of scene, event, and associate, surrounding the infant life of his heroines, which might have conduced to originate and foster those germs of character recognized in their maturity, as by him developed ; to conjecture what might have been the first imperfect dawns of that which he has shown us in the meridian blaze of perfection : and it was believed that such a design would combine much matter of interesting speculation, afford scope for pleasant fancy, and be productive of entertainment in the various narratives.

Although little or no attempt will be found in these tales to give pictures of the times in which their chief actors may be supposed to have lived, yet it is hoped that no gross violation of probability in period, scene, or custom, has been committed. The development of character, not of history, has been the intention. In the case of the early historic personage who figures in these biographic tales—Lady Ma beth—names and facts have been used ; but with as little regard to their strict place in history, as was paid by the poet himself, who took the story from the old chronicles, and modelled it after his own fashion.

If it be borne in mind that all *climax* in incident and sentiment was to be carefully avoided throughout these

stories,—inasmuch as they are merely preliminaries to catastrophes already ordained,—the obstacles in the way of giving them startling features of romance will be understood. The aim has been to invent such adventures as might be supposed to color the future lives; to place the heroines in such situations as should naturally lead up to, and account for, the known conclusion of their subsequent confirmed character and after-fate; in short, to invest each story with consistent and *appropriate* interest.

I would also remind my indulgent readers (and may mine be such!), when they find me venturing to make Shakespeare's people act and speak, that here, his women are in their *girlhood*,—these are their "sallet days," when they are "green in judgment,"—immature,—but the opening buds of the future "bright consummate flowers" which he has given to us in immortal bloom.

My exculpatory word—my word in extenuation—is this. I beseech my readers to believe that love, not presumption, prompted the subject of this series of stories :—

Not mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire ;
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will.

" *In Memoriam.*"

Shakespeare himself is my voucher that

Never any thing can be amiss
When simpleness and duty tender it.;

* * * * *

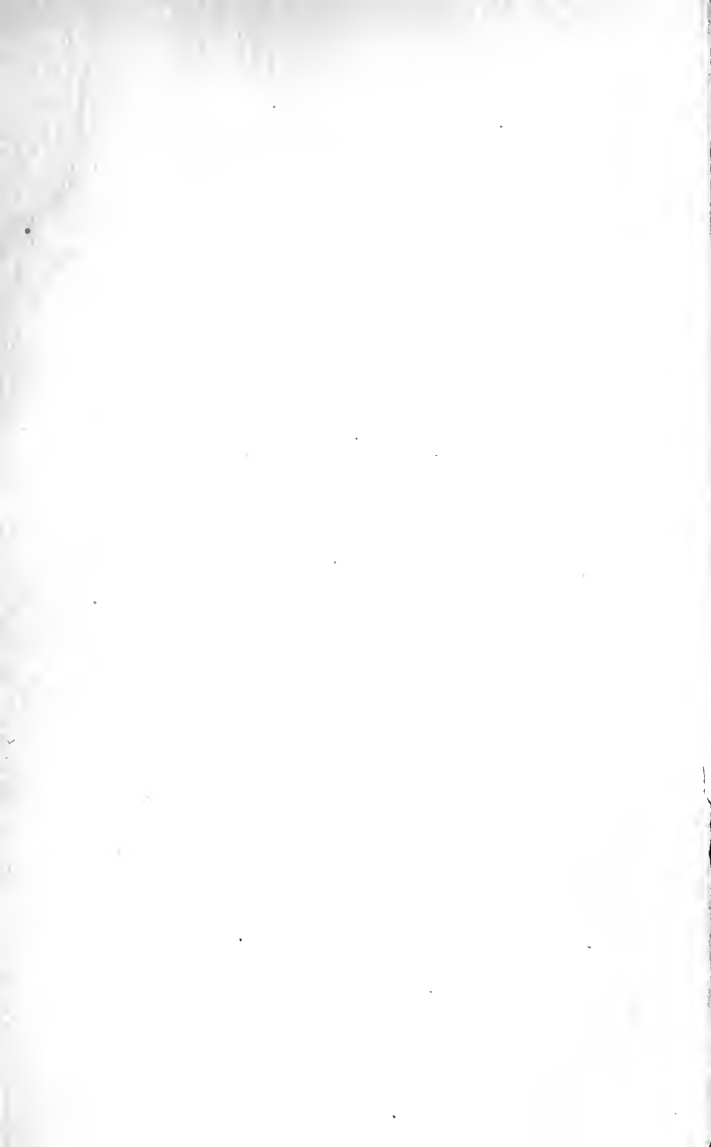
And what poor duty cannot do,
Noble respect takes it in might, not merit.



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PORTIA ; THE HEIRESS OF BELMONT.





TALE I.

PORTIA ; THE HEIRESS OF BELMONT.

“ If two gods should play some heavenly match,
And on the wager lay two earthly women,
And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawn'd with the other ; for the poor world
Hath not her fellow.”

Merchant of Venice.

IN the University of Padua were, once upon a time, two fellow-students, who entertained for each other a more than usually lively regard. This regard seemed to grow out of a peculiar sympathy of feeling, which sometimes exists between two lads of like age, though of dissimilar conditions ; for one of these students was lively, ardent, and prosperous, while the other was calm, reserved, and very poor. But though Guido di Belmonte revelled in every good gift of fortune,—was the son of a rich Italian Count, and the indulged heir of a fond father, yet his prosperity, instead of injuring his nature and rendering him imperious and selfish, did but make him frank and generous, with a strong capability of enjoyment ; while Bellario, the other student, the less favored of fortune,—being the child of a retired officer, possessed of little but his honorably acquired wounds and an unblemished name,—found cheerfulness in a sedate, reflective habit of mind, hope in the thought of achieving renown in the future employment of his talents, and enjoyment in the present epoch of study and intellectual

culture. Thus it came that these two young men, each earnest in his enjoyment of student-life, found sympathy exist between them, attachment arise and strengthen, and a warmth of friendship ensue, which burnt with a steady and kindly glow while life endured.

During this youthful period of his life, there was one point on which Bellario's well-ordered mind and careful study did not lead him to a true wisdom. They might have taught him that poverty was no shame, that the practice of frugality and self-denial was a virtue rather than a blemish in a young man's conduct, and that it was due to the nobility of friendship to have no reserves upon such matters ; but the sensitive pride of the young collegian shrank from the avowal of his slender means, and the secrets of his penurious dwelling were coyly guarded from all eyes.

His friend Guido, in the plenitude of his own resources, had no suspicion of the real motive that held his fellow-student silent upon all that referred to home topics, and domestic relations ; and it was rather from a desire to enjoy Bellario's society during the present season of holiday and relaxation, that he always invited him to spend the vacations at his father's seat at Belmont, than from any idea that he was thus procuring his friend an indulgence in luxury and refined entertainment, which he could never otherwise have an opportunity of enjoying. Delightful were the intervals thus spent together by the two young men. The sense of entire leisure, rendered doubly grateful by previous labor ; the freedom of action and open-air sports, after a long course of sedentary pursuits ; the repose of mind in contrast with its late strained exertion,—all these enjoyed amidst a scene of rural beauty, voluptuous retirement, and tasteful magnificence, pervading the domain and household of a wealthy nobleman, conspired to make these vacations seasons of unalloyed gratification to our two students. Arm-in-arm they would saunter up and down the avenue of lordly Belmont, whiling many an hour in eager converse. Here, be-

neath the cool umbrage of those thick-spreading trees, secure from the noontide blaze of even an Italian sun, they would discourse pleasantly of their books, their courses of study past and to come, their treasured lore, their increasing thirst for knowledge with every freshly-acquired draught, their present zest in seeking, their future hope of profit. Here, too, in the scarce less radiant splendor of an Italian moonlight, would they speak confidently of heart-aspirations, of high-reaching schemes for distinguished manhood, virtuous life, rational happiness, and trusted immortality. The young Count, Guido, would dilate, in all the gay tenderness of an uncorrupted heart, upon the pure joys he proposed to himself, when he should at some future day bring a fair bride to share with him the beauties of his broad domain ; when he should dwell in loving communion with a womanly heart ; when he should emulate her in fostering kindness to the neighboring poor ; when they should partake in the gentle duties of tending the helpless infancy, and implanting goodly principles in the youthful breasts of their offspring ; and when together they should live and die in sweet mutual help.

And in his turn, Bellario would playfully declare that he would live and die a bachelor, wooing and wedding no other bride than Justice, who was his professed mistress. That he meant to win honor and renown at the bar, and that he intended to make his name famous among the lawyers of his time. That such a celebrity as he aimed at, was only to be attained by the devotion of a life-long assiduity to his task, and that he therefore must early resolve upon excluding all claims of love upon his thoughts, dedicating them wholly and undividedly to ambition.

Time wore on ; the old Count of Belmont died, and young Guido inherited the paternal estate. Yet still he lingered at the University, unwilling to quit the sweets of study, and the associations of boyhood, or to curtail the season of youth by assuming the prerog-

ative of manhood. In the academic shades of learned Padua he still tarried, well pleased to remain constantly with his friend Bellario, who studied unremittingly to qualify himself for his intended profession.

Shortly after the time when Guido di Belmonte wore mourning for his father, Bellario's suit bore sable marks that he also had to deplore the loss of some relation ; but as he alluded in no way to the nature of his bereavement, so no allusion to the subject was ever made by his fellow-students ; not even by his friend, who was accustomed to observe silence on those points on which Bellario did not speak first. There was frank communion between the young men upon most themes of pleasant converse ; but, as before remarked, personal concerns and home relations were never referred to by the young law-student, being matter of his most scrupulous and proud reserve.

At length a season of vacation occurred, when, upon the young Count's usual invitation to Bellario, that he should accompany him to Belmont, the friend refused ; without, however, alleging any reason for this refusal beyond the bare fact of its being out of his power to indulge himself with the pleasure of going, on this occasion.

“ But why not, caro mio ? ” urged Guido ; “ you have surely no engagements so imperative as to interfere with the one so long understood between us,—that you should spend every vacation at Belmont, beautiful Belmont ; now all my own, but which will scarce seem so without my friend to share its beauties with me.”

Bellario wrung his hand gratefully, for all reply, merely repeating—“ I cannot ; do not urge me.”

“ But I must, I will. How is it that I, the lord of Belmont, am to be thwarted in my dearest wish ? Come, good Signor Avvocato, give me an infinity of reasons *why* you ‘ cannot.’ Let us have some of your special pleading here, to satisfy me. I know not *why* I should be contented with your sovereign ‘ cannot’

without further explanation, any more than *why* you are prevented from coming to Belmont when we both wish it. Or do we indeed both wish it?" added he, smiling in his friend's face; "are you tired of Belmont? Confess, if you are; and we will exchange the shady avenue and solitary terrace of our country life, for the gay revelry of Venice—her masques, her feastings, her torch-light merry-making."

Bellarion met his friend's look with one as frank as his own;—"Belmont is to me, as it has ever been—the scene of my best enjoyment. The disappointment is as great to me—nay, far greater—than it can be to you, my generous friend; be assured, I need no urging, when my own desire to be with you pleads so powerfully; but in this case, you yourself would be the first to——" then checking himself, he briefly added, "once more, I repeat; believe me, I cannot."

"In *this* case?" quickly repeated Guido; in his eagerness forgetting how nearly he was transgressing the bounds of discretion in thus catechising his friend beyond what even such friendship as theirs might warrant:—"In *this* case? It is a point of honor, then! A quarrel? A duel?" But seeing Bellario shake his head, with a smile at his ardent questioning, he ran on with:—"No, no, of course not; had it been so, you would have had me for your second—but how then? No friend has so good a right as myself to engross your company, and to no friend will I yield you—mind, to no—— But stay;" added he, interrupting himself, as a sudden thought struck him: "though to no friend, no man, can I give you up, yet it may be that——"

He stopped; and laying his hand on his friend's sleeve, laughed out—"Ah! ah! Signor Avvocato, fairly caught! So then the stern anchorite, the bachelor student, the devoted bridegroom of the law, the destined spouse of Justice, is actually the thrall of some fair lady; and it is a mortal woman, after all, who has these claims upon your time, and prevents your

going with me to Belmont. I cry you mercy, caro mio !”

Bellario's face flushed crimson to his very brow. He no longer met his friend's look as before, yet he still smiled, though gravely ; and he grasped Guido's hand in a firm conclusive manner, as if he would close all further discussion. “ Be satisfied, dear friend ; it may not be.”

Guido di Belmonte warmly returned the pressure ; and his generous, frank nature permitted no wounded feeling at his friend's reserve, to mingle with the regret with which he now withdrew his suit, and bade him adieu until they should meet again next college term. But on the following morning, while pursuing his solitary way towards Belmont, accompanied solely by a faithful attendant, who followed him on horseback, he could not help giving way to a feeling of mortification akin to anger, at being deprived of the company of his beloved friend Bellario on a journey which had hitherto been so fruitful a source of delight to them both.

“ It is some whim, some fancied necessity, that thus detains him,” murmured the young Count to himself, as he rode onward ; “ Bellario is so scrupulous when he conceives some point of right to be in question, that he is ever ready to sacrifice inclination to duty. I know his unselfish heart, and I'll be bound it is some vexatious claim or other upon his time and aid, which is thus permitted to interfere with our pleasant holiday ! For after all, though he did change color at my words, I do not believe it was a woman that he stays for. Had he yielded his thoughts to love, and forsworn law, he could not have kept so great a revolution in his heart a secret from his friend Guido. No, he is still constant to his old adoration for musty precedents, yellow shrivelled parchments, and time-honored precepts of legislation, over which he will sit wrapt in enamored contemplation, hour by hour, forgetful of all this bright world contains. I'll wager

now, that it is in order to waste no hour apart from the prosecution of this bewitching pursuit, that he has thought it right to deny himself and me this holiday. He dropped some words, not long since, to the effect that his progress did not keep pace with his desires. How came I to forget this, when I besought him yesterday? I did not urge him with sufficient warmth. I have a great mind to turn back, and see if I cannot plead with better effect. He must not, ought not to shut himself up during this charming time. He will be ill, or moped to death, with his absurd scruples and notions. Duty, indeed! It is his duty to enjoy his holiday—to come and pay seasonable homage to all-bounteous nature, to revel in her beauteous gifts, to inhale the pure free air, to bask in the glorious sunshine, to ride forth joyously—to come with me to Belmont, in short!—I will return and entreat him once more to do himself and me that right!”

As he concluded his reverie, Guido turned his horse's head in the direction whence he had just come; but he now proceeded at a very different pace from the one which he had previously allowed the steed to take. Then it had been slow, and accordant with the rider's mind, all unwilling to pursue his solitary journey; now it was alert, eager, and bounding forward on the way to Padua—to his friend Bellario.

On reaching the University, he hastily dismounted, throwing the rein to his attendant, bidding him wait, while he went to seek one of the heads of the college, who might inform him where to seek his fellow-student, who by this time he knew would have returned home. The professor mused a moment, when the young nobleman made the inquiry; but presently said:—“Bellario has always made a secret of his abode, praying me not to let it be generally known; but this prohibition could not be meant to extend to you, Count Guido, who are, I know, his bosom friend. It is in the Strada del Popolo,” added he, indicating a mean suburban street, leading out of the city, and

describing accurately the house where Bellario dwelt. The young man paid little heed to the former portion of the professor's speech, in his eagerness to learn the main point, the direction of his friend's dwelling-place ; having obtained which, he took a hasty leave, and set forth on his search, bidding his attendant, Balthazar, saddle another horse, and bring it round with his own, to a certain spot where he would meet him, and proceed thence to Belmont once more, in company with his friend, whose acquiescence in the plan he now felt confident he should gain. So sanguine is youth ; so ardent in affection was Guido di Belmonte.

He readily found his way to the Strada del Popolo, and as readily distinguished the house indicated to him by the professor. He was slightly struck by its lowly appearance, but no otherwise than as unworthy to contain so noble a being as his friend, and merely as an additional reason for inducing him to exchange its unattractive precincts for a more congenial sojourn with himself at Belmont. He stepped forward to put aside the dark heavy curtain, which hung in the doorway, according to Italian custom, to exclude the noon-tide heat ; but he paused on the threshold, struck with what he beheld. He saw his friend seated at a table strewn with books and papers, one of which he held in his hand, while over the back of his chair leaned a young girl of exquisite beauty ; who, with one arm around Bellario's neck, in the other hand held a pen, with the feather of which she traced the lines on the paper he held, while her cheek closely touched that of the young law-student, as they together scanned the document. So engrossed were they with its perusal, that no idea of Guido's presence reached them ; and so absorbed was he in the contemplation of this unexpected vision, that he allowed some minutes to elapse ere he became conscious of his intrusion, or made any movement to announce his being there. Many conflicting feelings rushed through his heart as he stood gazing ; the par-

amount one of which was admiration for the surpassing loveliness of the young girl whom he found in such close companionship with his friend. The arm which lay across Bellario's shoulders, was white and polished, with a rounded grace of outline that would have charmed a sculptor; the slender waist and bended figure were so harmoniously proportioned, that the garment of humblest stuff which she wore could no-wise conceal their native elegance of beauty; the head was classically shaped, and compactly braided with smooth raven tresses, surmounting a brow lustrous with simple purity and intellectual dignity; while the face that so lovingly neighbored that of Bellario, could boast not only delicately-formed features, but an expression radiant with gentle goodness.

Amid the confusion of thoughts which held the young Count motionless, was one which prompted him to wonder how those downcast eyes,—now veiled with their rich lashes as they remained bent upon the paper,—would look when they were raised; and to speculate upon the appeal those lips would make when parted in speech, even now so eloquent in their rosy silence.

He was startled from his contemplation by the fulfilment of his wish. The eyes were suddenly raised; but he scarcely beheld their soft beauty, ere the look of surprise they wore recalled him to a sense of his embarrassing position as an unwarranted intruder.

The slight ejaculation of amazement that escaped her lips as she beheld the stranger, caused Bellario to look up also, and in another instant the fellow-students stood confronting each other with mutual confusion and embarrassment.

Bellario's cheek glowed partly from surprise, partly from the stings of his old proud sensitiveness on the score of his poverty, now so completely and unexpectedly betrayed to the eyes of his friend, and he stood without power to utter a word; while Guido, in the perplexity of contending emotions, muttered a

few half-articulate expressions of having returned to ask for some book he had forgotten, a few more of apology for having unwittingly infringed their privacy, and then hastily withdrew.

He hurried to the spot where he had appointed Balthazar to meet him ; and flinging himself on horseback, he pursued his way to Belmont in a perturbation of mind he had rarely before experienced.

His ardent nature suffered much beneath the check its affections had received. His generosity would not suffer him to reflect upon his friend for having withheld this secret from him ; but a sense of disappointment and chilled hope keenly beset him, and a painful surmise of his own unworthiness to inspire Bellario with as strong an attachment as his own, agitated his mind, and took the place of the blessed unmistrustful serenity of friendship which had till now formed his chief happiness.

“ He is so infinitely my superior,” thought Guido, in the more than candor of a generous heart, ever ready to exalt the beloved object even at the expense of self-humiliation and blame, “ that it is perhaps presumptuous to hope he could share his every thought with me, as I would with him. Entire confidence subsists between congenial minds—and I know well how unequal ours are in native power and intellectual wealth. But a loving appreciation of his high qualities might have substituted my own deficiency in the like endowments ; and my zeal should have supplied my lack of merit. Had he but frankly told me that he was married ! That he could not have his new-made wife to come with me to Belmont ! How readily would my sympathy for him have admitted the plea ! How ungrudgingly should I then have yielded his society ! How my interest in his happiness would have prompted me to rejoice in this addition to his felicity—to congratulate him on this new joy ! Had he but told me that he was married !”

This last aspiration was still the burthen of his

thought. It haunted him with its perpetual recurrence, as he wandered along beneath the trees of that avenue where he had spent so many happy hours with his friend. Until at length the oft-recurring idea was followed by another—a question—that smote upon his heart strangely. “Had he indeed told me that he was married to that fair creature!—How then? Would this intelligence have really given me content? Could I have yielded my friend joyfully to her—she to him? Did not rather the few moments in which I beheld her, serve but to fill me with unwonted emotion, to the nigh forgetfulness of my friend, and my errand to him? Might not the too frequent contemplation of her beauty, and a near acquaintance with the gentle qualities that doubtless consort with such outward perfection, end by inspiring me with feelings no less treacherous to friendship, than destructive to my own peace? Perhaps after all I should rejoice rather than regret that Bellario did not impart to me the existence of this tie, or own that wedded love had had power to win him from his old vows of lawyerly celibacy and devoted friendship. So that his happiness is secured, why should I repine?”

In such unselfish thoughts as these, did Guido di Belmonte seek to console himself for the interruption his course of friendship had sustained; and it is not to be doubted but that he derived better comfort from such a train of reflection, than he could have done from an indulgence in resentment or unworthy suspicion. A noble heart finds no relief in reproach; no solace in distrust or injurious belief of those it loves. And thus the impulses of a generous mind act in liberal reversion; like the earth’s moisture distilled by genial warmth, they redescend in wholesome showers, invigorating and refreshing the soil whence they originally emanate.

Not many hours had elapsed since the young Count’s arrival at Belmont; and he was still lingering in the avenue, wooing a sense of returning calm, that was

beginning to steal over him, in place of his late agitation, when he was awakened from his reverie by a hasty footstep, and in a few moments more he found himself clasped in the arms of his friend.

“Bellario !” he exclaimed in amazement.

“Yes, Bellario ;” returned the young law-student, “Bellario, your unworthy friend, come to avow his error, and to solicit indulgence.”

He then made confession of his weakness. He owned how he had always shrunk from a betrayal of his poverty ; the foolish pride this had engendered ; the habit of reserve it had induced, so unjust to warmth of friendship such as theirs ; and the apparent unkindness it had beguiled him into, by the late refusal to accompany his friend to Belmont during the vacation.

“Any other but yourself, my dear Guido, might have taken offence at so pertinacious a refusal from so unexplained a cause. But knowing your generosity of character, I was sure that you yourself would be the first to yield the pleasure of our proposed holiday together, if you were aware that I gave up the indulgence, in order not to leave Portia in solitude. I overlook the circumstance, that the total ignorance of my home interests in which my own habitual reserve had suffered you to remain, did not admit of your sympathizing with the desire I have felt, ever since my father’s death, of spending as much time as possible with her. It is lonely enough, poor thing, when I am at college ; but my first vacation since his loss, I resolved should be devoted to her.”

“You shall return to her at once ! A horse shall be saddled to take you back to Padua immediately ! I will not keep you another hour, my friend ;” said the impetuous Guido.

“I knew this would be your feeling,” replied Bellario ; “and yet my own folly might have occasioned me to lose the pleasure of hearing you express it. However, it is to Portia herself that I owe the present happiness of explanation. Her surprise this morning

at your sudden appearance on our poor threshold, drew from me immediately after your so abrupt departure, a full account of yourself, of the friendship that subsists between us, and the probable cause of your seeking me there. Her interest in the relation, her sympathy for your disappointment, and her admiration of your generosity in returning to seek the friend who by his want of frankness had risked offending you, opened my eyes to the disingenuousness of my own conduct, and to the injustice into which I had been betrayed by the mere desire to keep a secret, which, after all, involved no shame or disgrace. Besides, the sudden revelation of a secret which we have long sedulously preserved, will sometimes at the same moment reveal to ourselves the real worthlessness of its tenure, and lead us to wonder how we could ever have attached importance to its preservation. And thus it was with me ; I found myself amazed to think that I should have doubted for a moment whether the knowledge of our poverty could possibly diminish the warmth of your regard. I felt, too, that by the indulgence of my selfish pride in veiling from your view the penury in which I lived, I at the same time withheld from you the pleasure of learning the sources of better happiness which that home has lately contained ; and that, while I concealed from you the scantily-furnished dwelling, I also debarred you from knowing one who can make a palace of a hovel, a bower of bliss of a poor student's chamber—my dear and gentle Portia !”

“Return to her, my friend ; return to your lovely——” Poor Guido could not articulate the word wife, but he echoed her name—“your Portia !”

“But not till I can take back with me the assurance that I have not forfeited my friend's esteem. As I told you, it was Portia who occasioned my coming hither, for she would not let me rest until I had sought you, and expiated my past reserve by a full confession. She is tenacious of her brother's honor,

I can tell you, and will not consent to Bellario's suffering an abatement of regard, even though his own conduct to his friend may have deserved so severe a penalty."

"Your sister!" were the only words Guido could utter, in his amazement at finding the true identity of the beautiful girl whom he had taken for granted was his friend's bride.

"Portia—my sister. Let me return to her with the assurance that you have forgiven whatever pain my unexplained refusal may have given you; that you still hold me worthy of your esteem; that though you are content to give her my company, yet that we are as fast friends as ever."

"For ever!" exclaimed Guido, ardently, as he threw himself into the arms of Bellario. "I will take you back to her myself! We return to Padua together!"

Then, springing up the steps of the terrace, which lay in front of the house, at the end of the avenue, he led his friend into the dining-saloon, where refreshment had been awaiting untouched and unthought of during the late tumult of the young Count's mind. Now, however, in his sudden joy, he felt the desire for food, and as he pledged his friend in wine, and urged him to eat, after his late journey, and before his coming one, he manifested by his own enjoyment of the good cheer before them how many hours had elapsed in fasting and inquietude.

Bellario felt the full force of this betrayal of his friend's previous suffering, and he inwardly resolved that no future reserve of his, should ever be permitted to risk estrangement, or to mar so perfect an attachment; while he gave himself up to the present delight of watching Guido's joy, and tasting with him the happiness of reconciliation.

The young Count's spirits rose high; he seemed incapable of remaining still, now and then starting up from table, giving orders to his attendants, and pacing up and

down the apartment, as if action were a necessary relief to the ebullition of feeling within.

“Come, Bellario, one more cup to the health of the gentle being who has restored us to each other,” he at length exclaimed, “and then we will set forth to Padua. I am impatient to be gone, impatient to be equal with her in the magnanimity of yielding you; impatient to relieve her sisterly suspense. Come, we shall find the coach awaiting us at the park gate, at the lower end of the avenue.”

“Do we not ride as usual?” inquired Bellario.

“I have told them to prepare the coach, instead of saddling our horses,” replied Guido; “for I have allowed myself to entertain a hope that we shall not have to stay long in Padua—that we shall even return to-night, and not alone.”

“How mean you?” asked Bellario, smiling at the animated eagerness that shone in each feature of his friend’s face; that danced in his eyes, and played in the flexure of his mouth.

“I mean, that I have formed the hope that your sister will be prevailed upon to accompany us back to Belmont, caro mio; and you must promise me to join your persuasion with mine to effect this. I shall think but poorly of il Signor Avvocato’s eloquence in pleading, if we do not succeed.”

“We will hear what the Counsel has to say on the other side;” answered Bellario. “Perhaps her prudence may suggest some obstacle to so sudden a scheme.”

“But I do not admit her as Counsel against us,” said Guido; “she shall be judge in this case.”

“Then you consent to abide by her decision?” asked Bellario.

“Gladly;” rejoined the young Count. “I have no hesitation in placing my cause in the hands of one, who——”

“You forget that you are now changing her character again from a Judge to that of an Ad-

vocate ;” interrupted the young law-student, laughing.

“ Well then,—I willingly refer my sentence to the judgment of one who has already given so generous an instance of consideration in my behalf, by sending me my friend,” replied Guido.

“ In betraying that there was originally a favorable leaning to one side, you impugn the strict uprightness which ought to characterize a Judge,” rejoined Bellario, “ and thus invalidate the impartiality of the verdict you hope ultimately to obtain.”

“ So that the verdict be what I desire, I will commute for any amount of partiality to which it may be owing,” said the young Count gayly ; adding with a tender depth in his voice, which the gayety but half concealed, “ the more I owe to the favor of my Judge, the more welcome will my hoped-for sentence be.”

In such playful conversation did our two friends pass the time, until they reached the lowly dwelling in the Strada del Popolo. From its casement, the light of a lamp streamed forth, and showed Bellario that his sister was beguiling the time of his absence in copying for him. On alighting from the coach and entering the apartment, they accordingly found Portia seated at a table, busily engaged in writing ; and as the rays of the lamp shed their reflection upon her glossy hair, and gently-inclined head, Guido thought she looked like the picture of some inspired sibyl irradiated by an intellectual glory, or halo of light.

The moment she perceived her brother, she arose, and flung herself into his arms to welcome him home. “ Dear Bellario !” she exclaimed ; then, perceiving his companion, she added in some surprise :—“ Count Guido, too !” After a moment’s modest pause, she thanked him in her own simple frank manner for thus proving how heartily he forgave the selfish brother and sister who wished to be together, regardless of the claims of friendship. “ By permitting you to return

to me so soon, my Bellario, and by accompanying you home himself, your kind friend has indeed shown how nobly he can pardon an interference with his proposed pleasure," concluded she, turning to her brother.

"But I may still enjoy my proposed pleasure;" eagerly rejoined the young Count. "My holiday may yet be spent with far greater delight than even I had pictured to myself, when first I asked Bellario to share it with me."

He then, with his characteristic ardor, poured forth his petition that Portia would crown her former kindness in behalf of the friendship that subsisted between her brother and himself, by consenting to accompany them back to Belmont; that thus they need neither of them relinquish the society of Bellario, but, on the contrary, might enhance their respective pleasure by enjoying it in common. And when Portia, half yielding to his seductive arguments, offered a faint resistance by saying she ought to finish copying the paper she had in hand, he instantly overruled that plea with the reminder that her brother could now copy it for himself; that they could tumble whatever books and papers Bellario required into the coach, and take them to Belmont to be used at leisure.

Smiling at his impetuosity, and finding it more and more difficult to withstand his warmth of urgency, she looked appealingly at her brother, and said:—"If you do not think it too late, dear Bellario——"

Guido immediately burst in with a torrent of assurances that the evening was not far advanced—that the moonlight was as brilliant as noonday—that it was infinitely more agreeable travelling by night than in the heat of the sun—that it was but a two hours' drive to Belmont—that it was the pleasantest road in all Italy—that he had set his heart upon this little journey—that he was sure his friends would enjoy it as much as he should, and that he trusted they would not refuse so great a pleasure as it would be to them all.

The hearts of the brother and sister received almost

as much delight in complying, as he felt in their compliance ; and the three friends set forth in all the happiness of youth and elastic spirits. These will derive pleasure from even every-day incidents, and commonplace occurrences ; and truly, a moonlight drive, through a beautiful country, to a charming house, in the company of those we love best, at any period of life might be capable of inspiring enthusiastic enjoyment. What wonder, then, that Guido, Bellario, and Portia, thought they had never passed two hours so enchantingly, as those in the coach that took them to Belmont.

On arriving, they were received by an old lady, who acted somewhat in the capacity of housekeeper, but who had been no less a personage than companion, or duenna, to the late Countess di Belmonte, Guido's mother. This Madame Ursula was a most stately dame, who wore the stiffest of silks, held herself in the stiffest of attitudes, and entertained the stiffest of dragonian opinions. She was the ruling rigidity of the house—the tight hand over Casa Balmonte. From the late Countess, whose unaffected gentleness and easy suavity she chid as want of due regard to the dignity of her station, down to the female servants, whose sins of carelessness, idleness, boldness, or unthrift, she visited with the severest reprehension, all submitted to her sway, all trembled at her frown.

Strictly correct, even to austerity, in her own conduct, Madame Ursula could make no allowance for difference of temperament, admit of no excuse for a dereliction from duty. In her estimation, a fault was a sin ; an error, a crime. She was sensitively alive to indecorum ; and seemed almost to court impropriety, so anticipatively did she discern the very shadow of its approach. With her, the sight of smiles conveyed something of moral offence ; gayety of speech was akin to depravity ; and light-hearted merriment little short of abomination and wickedness. High spirits were, in her eyes, a heinous excess ; laughter, an odious levity ;

and the mere fact of youth, a sort of vice in itself.

Madame Ursula was well-born, though the decayed fortunes of her family, and the sudden death of her parents, compelled her early to become a dependant. This circumstance she could never forget ; and while it operated with the Count and Countess di Belmonte to make them treat her with the extreme of kindness, it urged her to take advantage of their toleration by indulging her pride of virtue and self-importance, until she became the imperious personage here described.

There was one individual, however, in this household, over whom the frowns of Madame Ursula failed in exercising their usual supremacy. The young Count Guido treated her with consideration, for the sake of her age, her misfortunes, her former attachment to his mother, and the services she had rendered, and still continued to render, in the family ; for she was as conscientious in the discharge of her own duties, as she was exacting with regard to those of others : but he plainly showed that he thought the deference with which her opinions had been regarded was excessive, and that he was not inclined to observe the same obedience himself. He did not evince this by opposition, or the slightest discourtesy of any kind ; he only let it be tacitly understood that his smiles were not to be controlled, his gayety not to be checked by any forbidding looks on her part, and she soon learned to curb all expression of reprobation, with the exception of a slight compression of the lips, and a little shrill hem, caught back, stifled, and swallowed up, as it were, ere it could reach his ears.

On the evening in question, when the young Count returned to Belmont, bringing with him Bellario and his sister, Madame Ursula received the young people with a lofty coldness intended to mark the disapprobation she felt at such a wild expedition as the moonlight drive, which wore rather the aspect of a juvenile frolic, than of a staid visit ; but the pleasure and the

novelty of the adventure occupied them wholly, and prevented their noting the old lady's frigid looks.

Neither did they perceive the supercilious glance she bestowed upon the plain attire of the young Count's guests, for it was almost immediately followed by a look of complacency at her own brocade, and a comforting reflection that she herself would never have dreamed of inviting persons to Belmont, whose dress bespoke their humble fortune, and whose gentle birth was no otherwise indicated than by their grace of person and elegance of demeanor.

"The Signorina Portia will doubtless like to retire early, after her journey;" said Guido, when they had partaken of a supper to which gayety and pleasant conversation had given the air of a feast. "You, of course, took care to order the preparation of the chamber which I appointed for the lady's reception, Madame Ursula?"

"The blue chamber has been prepared, according to my lord's wishes," replied the stately dame. Then turning to one of the attendants, she added—"Rico, bid Lisetta come hither, that she may show the Signorina to her apartment."

The young Count, who had evidently expected that Madame Ursula herself would have paid his guest the respect of attending her to her room, rose hastily from his seat, saying:—"The Signorina's kind heart will excuse Madame from accompanying her; years claim the privilege of rest. I will myself show you and your sister whereabouts the rooms lie, Bellario."

Thus saying, Guido led his friends out, preceded by an attendant bearing a branch of wax-lights; leaving Madame Ursula with the vexatious consciousness that she had been the means of heightening the honor of Portia's escort, while her sense of propriety was outraged by the young Count wilfully playing groom of the chambers to guests of such evidently humble rank—one of them a female, too!

Her discomfiture vented itself in a shriller hem than

usual, that quavered down into a groan, as she heard the gay voices of the trio echoing along the gallery that led from the saloon where she sat.

“That ungovernable young man will be more wild than ever, now he has those two foolish young persons to abet him in his ridiculous sallies of mirth,” muttered the dame, as she sat starchedly in her chair, still at the supper-table. “Very sad, very sad,” added she, helping herself to a bumper of *Lachryma Christi*; “and the worst of these thoughtless gigglers, who chatter and laugh the whole of meal-time, is, that they totally neglect the duties of the table, and forget to see that one has one’s glass filled as often as needful. The Count never perceived that I wished for more *Montepulciano* to-night at supper; I may as well take some now it is my favorite wine. Ah, very sad, very sad!” repeated she, touching the back of her chair with her perpendicular spine, which was the nearest approach to lounging in which she ever permitted herself to indulge. “Sad indeed!” she ejaculated once more, with a virtuous sigh, as she set down the second empty glass, and looked again reprehensively towards the door through which the young Count and his friends had disappeared.

This kind of tacit superintendence and mute reproof maintained by Madame Ursula, during the visit of the young Count’s guests, possessed a double advantage; it solaced her own conscientious notions of duennaship, and nowise interfered with the enjoyment of the young people.

Never had holiday been so full of delight for Guido as the present one; never had the period of vacation been so thoroughly enjoyed, or appeared to fleet away so rapidly. To the known and valued charms of *Bellario’s* society, were now added the excitement and joy of each day discovering those contained in the character and person of his friend’s sister. To mark her artless unspoiled simplicity, her native good sense, her warmth of heart, her modest

deference to her brother's opinions, her high appreciation of his merits, her maidenly gentleness, yet unaffected ease, all united to a face and person of extreme beauty, now formed a daily source of study to the young nobleman, as new as it was interesting. Each unfolded page of Portia's mind revealed fresh wonders ; he gazed on the attractive volume, and perused every lineament of this fair book, until its varied excellences seemed to comprise all the intelligence, all the fascination of his entire previous reading. What science could vie with a knowledge of those gentle thoughts ? What learning outweigh the speaking earnestness of those persuasive eyes ? What scholastic arguments exceed in eloquence the music of that soft voice ? What erudition could exert so refining an influence as one of those appealing smiles ? Or what store of acquirement be worthy of so zealous a toil and confer so glorious an empire, as the gain of that tender heart ? There was a witchcraft in the present subject of the young student's contemplations, which seemed to absorb him wholly, and to cast into comparative disregard all other study, past or to come. He was like a man suddenly impressed with the belief that he has discovered a clue to the secret of transmuting metals ; the absorbing pursuit withdraws him from all others, and henceforth alchemy is his engrossing thought, his sole study.

With characteristic ardor did Guido di Belmonte give himself up to the magic that enthralled him ; and the only discretion his enthusiasm knew, was in the refraining from any overt expression of his feelings, lest their too early or too eager avowal should dissolve the spell. He would not risk seeing the present ingenuous ease of her manner exchanged for conscious timidity. Portia now treated him as the intimate and cherished friend of her brother, and in that character, almost with the freedom and unrestraint of a second brother ; so Guido was well contented for the present to enjoy all the charm of frank communion which such

a mode of treatment established between them. As a third in this pleasant friendship, therefore, the young girl joined in all their rambles through the park, visited their favorite haunts, beheld their most admired views, lingered in their choicest nooks and recesses, and not only accompanied them in their excursions, but showed by her active sympathy and earnest intelligence, that she enjoyed their conversation, shared in their aspirations, and partook of their enthusiasm. While the presence of Portia thus doubled and trebled all the previous delight that the two students had derived from these scenes, she herself tasted a pleasure she had never before known, and for the first time in her life, this hitherto solitary young creature might be said to learn the true happiness of existence. She had till lately lived in complete seclusion beneath her sole surviving parent's roof at Verona; and it was only since the recent period of their father's death, that Bellario had brought her to Padua to share his humble dwelling.

Day after day the three friends wandered amid the woods and lawns of Belmont; and unwitting time crept on.

One afternoon they had set forth to visit some ruins on a beautiful spot at the extreme verge of the estate, and the distance being farther than Guido had estimated, in his eagerness to take his friends thither, it came, that, on returning homeward, the shades of evening overtook them, ere they reached even the avenue that led to the house. The sudden darkness that succeeds to day, beneath an Italian sky, where there is short interval of deepening twilight, prevented the two young men from noting the pallor that stole over the cheek of their companion, and betrayed the fatigue that so long a walk had occasioned to a frame less calculated for exertion than theirs. Her bravery of heart, and ambition to prove herself a not unfitting companion, as well as a dread of the implied reproach to them if they discovered her fatigue, made her anxiously endeavor to conceal her lassitude by an effort

to maintain her share in the animated conversation, which was as usual going on between them ; but at length she involuntarily yielded to an overwhelming sense of weariness, and permitted herself to lapse into silence. Suddenly this was observed by Guido, who interrupted himself with an abrupt exclamation of self-reproach at the want of thought which had thus subjected his fair guest to so undue an exertion.

“ We have been very thoughtless, I fear, Bellario ;” said he ; “ or rather I have been culpably selfish to urge an expedition so far too long for her ! No time allowed for repose, either ! We were seated scarcely half an hour among the ruins ! So long since our early meal, too ! I neglected to bid Madame Ursula provide us with refreshment, though I ought to have known we should be detained beyond our usual hour of return ! Unpardonable folly ! You are ill, carina ! You are pale, you tremble !”

The moon had now risen, and revealed to the young Count the gentle white face that leaned for a few moments against Bellario’s shoulder ; but her brother’s affectionate support, and cheering words of encouragement, with, still more, the torrent of reproaches which Guido continued to pour forth upon his own heedlessness, enabled her to rally, and she assured them she was quite recovered, and equal to proceed.

“ There is only the avenue to pass, and the terrace, and then you will have thorough rest, cara mia,” said her brother ; “ you shall have the couch wheeled over to the supper-table, Guido and I will let you queen it as much as you please, the whole evening. Come, lean well upon my arm, and we shall soon reach Belmont !”

“ Lean upon mine too ; we will support you between us,” said Guido : and thus linked in kindness, the three friends passed together beneath the shadow of the stately trees that formed the avenue to Belmont.

They had often walked arm-in-arm thus before,

Portia between her brother and his friend, during their wanderings through the grounds ; and yet how was it, that now, the familiarity and closeness of the proximity which it occasioned between them, struck her with a significance which it had never assumed before ? Was it that the low soft tones of Guido's voice, which only at intervals interrupted the cheerful strain of the remarks with which Bellario sought to divert her, addressed her with more tender solicitude than usual ? Was it that the arm of Guido, upon which hers rested, occasionally pressed the hand it sustained, against a heart that throbbed in unison with the tenderness of the speaker's tone, and gave eloquent meaning to his few murmured words ? Was it that though the deep shadow of the over-arching trees permitted her not to see his eyes, yet she felt those eyes to be bent upon her, as if they would fain pierce the gloom, and ascertain that the healthful color of her cheek was restored ?

Certain it is, that her recent pallor was now replaced by a rich carnation hue ; as certain that her heart had learnt responsive throbs from the one which vibrated against her hand ; and still, as certain that the languor of her frame was forgotten in the delicious thrill which crept over her senses. It seemed that she could have walked on ever, through that dim avenue, as if in a voluptuous dream, gliding onward without action or volition.

And thus they reached the end of the avenue ; and there, on the marble terrace, in the broad clear moonlight, stood the stiff figure of Madame Ursula, willing to show the young people, by her coming thus far to meet them, that they had considerably outstaid their usual period of return.

The length of time which had elapsed since the due hour of supper, and the protracted sufferings of her importunate appetite, had in all probability tended to sharpen her habitual acerbity, and to exasperate the dame's rigid observance of etiquette ; for she no

sooner beheld Portia approach thus supported, than she cast a piercing glance of reproof upon the fair arm that hung with such unseemly confidence upon the young Count's, and hemmed so piercingly, that the terrace rang, as if a night-owl had suddenly shrieked.

The glance and the hem awakened the young girl from the trance in which her senses had been steeped, and she involuntarily quitted her hold of Guido's arm, and clung solely to that of her brother; while the young Count, biting his lip, hastily seized the pointed elbow of Madame Ursula, and placing Portia's hand upon the stately dame's arm, exclaimed:—"Ay, good Ursula; you assist the Signorina into the house, while I hasten to the saloon, and arrange a couch for her. We have overtired her with too long a walk." So saying, he sprang through one of the windows that opened on the terrace, and bade them follow at a pace suited to Portia's fatigue.

In their subsequent rambles, Guido found that by some strange chance, their old mode of progression was never resumed. They walked arm-in-arm, it is true, as they strolled through the grounds, or along the avenue; but it so happened that the young Count could never contrive to have Portia between her brother and himself. She invariably possessed herself of that arm of Bellario which was on the side farthest from Guido; and though he at first endeavored to frustrate this arrangement, yet when he found himself more than once foiled in his attempt to return to their old position, and regain her arm within his, he wanted courage to insist upon a point from which she seemed averse.

His want of courage arose from a doubt. He could not resolve the question he frequently asked himself; whether Portia herself shrank from a renewed avowal of that tenderness which his manner had betrayed on the evening when she had last permitted her arm to rest upon his, or whether it was merely a confused consciousness of Madame Ursula's rebuking glance,

and the implied censure it conveyed, that caused the timid girl to withdraw from this sweet familiar contact.

When he was inclined to attribute the change to this latter cause, he could scarcely forbear visiting upon the stiff dame the chagrin and mortification he felt, and putting an end to it at once by a candid avowal of his love ; but when he fancied that it arose from Portia's own coldness to his suit, and from an anxiety on her part to extinguish hope on his, without a more explicit declaration of their mutual feelings, which might only serve to disturb the serenity of the friendship which now united the three, he felt his courage fail, and he submitted to see her maintain her station on the other side of her brother.

One morning they were threading the intricacies of a neighboring wood, where, deep in its recesses, a briery dell led to the foot of a waterfall. The inequality of the path they were pursuing, made the offer of his aid but a mere common courtesy, yet she evaded his proffered arm, though tacitly, and as if not perceiving his intention, in the eagerness of conversation. Even when Bellario interrupted himself to say :—“ You had better take Guido's arm as well as mine, Portia ; you will stumble, if you do not, this path is so rugged and steep,” she still paid no attention to the proposal, but chatted on as before.

So marked a rejection, could scarcely pass unnoticed ; and Guido in a half-hurt tone said :—“ Your sister is resolved to owe assistance to none but a brother's care.”

He had no sooner given way to this momentary pique, than he repented ; but he could not judge of the effect his effusion might have upon Portia, as her downcast eyes and averted countenance were partially hidden from him by Bellario, who was again between them. As for the latter, he did not perceive the vexation which embittered his friend's tone, and he merely simply replied :—“ She well knows how entirely she

may trust that care, and with what fondness it will be devoted to her through life."

The sister for an instant raised her loving eyes to meet those of the brother, which were bent proudly upon the beautiful young creature beside him ; and Guido, as he looked upon them, felt as if the love that aspired to assert its superior claim to that which existed between the two orphans, must needs be a presumption foredoomed to disappointment.

The profound feeling of regret and desolation of spirit into which such a reflection plunged the young Count, revealed to himself how far he had permitted his heart to indulge the hope of one day inducing Portia to own a preference even paramount to her affection for Bellario ; and he returned but mechanical answers to the animated dissertation upon some favorite topic, in which his friend was indulging. While the young law student eagerly pursued his theme, he perceived not the silence of his companions, and they emerged from the wood on their return, and had reached the avenue, without an idea having crossed his mind, that he had for some time been the sole speaker.

At length Guido was roused from his reverie, by a pause in his friend's speech, and by some remark that fell from him a moment after, touching the superlative beauty of Belmont, and his regret that this delicious holiday was drawing to a close. "But three days more," added he, "and we must return to Padua ; to relinquish the delights of Belmont, for study, college discipline, and recluse assiduity. Farewell, beautiful Belmont !"

At this instant, Guido's ear caught the sound of a deep sigh from Portia's lips, as she murmured in echo of her brother's words :—"Farewell, beautiful Belmont, where we have all been so happy !"

The sigh, the mournful cadence of the voice, gave the young Count the encouragement that lovers invariably gather from a betrayal of emotion in the object beloved. Strength strangely generated of weak-

ness ! A look, too, a timid, hasty, involuntary look, met his eyes for one second, as they wandered for the hundredth time that morning towards the gentle face that had still bent droopingly on the other side of Bellario, despite of all his vigilant endeavors to win a single responsive glance.

Now, however, in the look that met his, although it flashed upon him but instantaneously, he read a mute confession as ample as it was brief, as impassioned as it was modest, as unreserved as it was involuntary, and the blissful conviction that it carried in a tumultuous rush to his heart, sprang into words with all the impetuosity of his nature :—“ We must not part ! We will never leave Belmont ! Give her to me, Bellario ! Give me your sister for my wife ! ”

The young law-student paused in utter amazement. It seemed as if such an idea as the possibility of love growing out of friendship, had never suggested itself to his mind. He stood still, regarding them both with an air of perplexity that might have amused Guido upon any other occasion. At present, however, he did not even see it ; his whole soul was in his eyes, and they were riveted upon Portia only, who remained rooted to the spot, and covered with innocent blushes.

At length Bellario said, smiling, as he beheld the truth in that crimson cheek :—“ What does my sister herself say ? ”

His sister said nothing ; but after a moment's pause, she drew her hand softly from the brotherly arm to which she had hitherto clung, and creeping round to his other side, she again placed one arm within his, and held forth the other with a faltering motion, as if it sought to resume its former resting-place upon that of Guido. The young Count needed no words to bid him construe aright her gentle action, so eloquent in its confiding sweetness, but as he caught the bounteous hand with transport to his lips, he repeated ;—“ What does fairest Portia say ? Will she give herself to me ? ”

“ Her brother shall answer for her ;” said Bellario. “ My own affection for the friend of my heart teaches me how surely his noble qualities have won my Portia’s love ; and I ought perhaps to rejoice that an earlier suspicion of the truth did not awaken scruples which false delicacy might have suggested. Had I sooner surmised this, I might have thought it due to our own honor to avoid the seeming attempt to secure an alliance so far above our station ; but Portia’s heart is now yours, and knowing (though but lately, in its full extent) the value of the treasure you have gained, no unworthy pride of mine shall withhold it from your possession. To show you how my friend’s generosity, and my sister’s simple integrity of mind, have wrought their due effect in eradicating my former prejudices, I will not say one word of the portionless condition of the bride you have chosen. I resign my Portia to your care, with the conviction that you will cherish her with no less regard than had she brought you millions for her dower ; and for her, I place her in your arms, with as proud a joy, as if she were descended from a throne.”

As Bellario concluded, he gently withdrew the trembling palm that clung to him, and placing it in that of his friend, who still retained the one she had first bestowed fast locked in his other hand, he left them together, that they might tell each other their full hearts.

The fond brother wandered apart for awhile, that, in devout thanksgiving, he might unburthen his own of the tide of gratitude that swelled it, for the blissful lot which was thus secured to his orphan sister, and for the increased happiness this union promised, not only to his beloved friend, but to them all. After some time spent thus in grateful reflection, he was ascending the terrace by another approach than the flight of steps leading from the avenue, in order that he might still leave the lovers undisturbed, when he met Madame Ursula, just as she was emerging from

one of the windows that opened down to the ground on to the terrace.

“Alone, Signor Bellario! Where is your sister? Where is Count Guido?” exclaimed the dame, aghast at this instance of what she thought the young law-student’s plebeian ignorance of propriety. “Misericordia, I think I see them yonder in the avenue together! Is it possible you can permit—— Santa Diana! If my eyes do not deceive me, his arm is round her waist! Santissima Madonna! He stoops his face towards hers—I do believe——”

She paused and gasped.

“I should not wonder,” said Bellario with malicious calmness, “if Guido is actually giving my sister a kiss.”

“Hold, Signor!” shrieked the Duenna, “don’t utter the filthy word!” So saying, she hurried down the marble steps with all the speed the stiffness of her dignity would allow, and bustled along the avenue like an enraged goose, fluttering, and sputtering, and screaming.

When she reached the lovers, who, seeing and hearing this discordant approach, came towards her, to discover its meaning, she could scarcely articulate a word, but panted out:—“I am surprised, Signorina, that——” “Stay, Madame Ursula;” interrupted Guido, smiling. “Give me leave to surprise you still more, by informing you that henceforth you are to address this lady as Countess di Belmonte.”

The return to Padua was of course deferred; Bellario remaining at Belmont to behold the happiness of his friend and sister confirmed in marriage. But after the wedding, the young law-student pleaded his anxiety to resume those labors that were to insure him future independence and renown.

When the young Count would fain have urged him to stay with them ever saying how little need there was now to endure the pain of separation, since his possessions sufficed for a purse in common between

them, Bellario ingenuously acknowledged that even could the generosity of his friend reconcile him to such a proposal, his own ambition to create for himself a name among the eminent lawyers of his country, would not permit him to exchange so proud a hope for a life of inaction and inutility.

Guido yielded to this argument with involuntary approval and esteem, that counterbalanced the regret he felt in parting with his old fellow-student ; and the two friends separated with the understanding that all Bellario's vacation-time was in future to be devoted to Belmont.

Years thus happily rolled on. The young student spent his time in alternate labor at learned Padua, and relaxation at lovely Belmont ; until he rose to the attainment of the position in society, which had so long been the object of his ambition. While still young, he was old in fame and reputed ability ; and few lawyers of the time ranked in public estimation with the learned Doctor Bellario.

Count Guido and his fair wife dwelt in uninterrupted happiness on their estate, carrying out the youthful visions of the former, by a life of peaceful virtue and benevolent utility. The only drawback to their felicity, was their remaining unblest by offspring ; but after they had been married twelve years, and had relinquished all hope of beholding a child of their own, Portia confided to her husband the prospect she had of presenting him with an heir.

When Bellario next visited Belmont, he was apprised by the happy parents of their new cause of joy, and he, with them, awaited the advent of the expected stranger with scarcely less delight than their own. He did not fail to rally his sister on the confirmed manner with which she always spoke of the expected little one as a boy ; and bade her remember, that as Guido and himself would both prefer to possess a miniature copy of herself, there were two to one in favor of the accomplishment of their wish instead of hers. In the

midst of their gay anticipations, came an express from Padua to summon Bellario thither, as his presence was required during the decision of an important case that was about to be tried.

As he mounted his horse to depart, he waved his hand to Guido and Portia, who stood on the terrace to bid him farewell. "God bless you, my sister!" he cried. "No son, mind! Give Belmont an heiress, as you value my brotherly love!"

He rode off hastily, lest he might not be able to preserve the cheerful tone he had assumed in addressing her; for he felt reluctant to quit this beloved sister ere her hour of peril had passed. Still, no foreboding whispered that the farewell had been for ever; no thought that he had looked upon her face for the last time; and he was totally unprepared for the blow that smote him some days after, in receiving this terrible letter:—

"Our angel is now an angel indeed. Come and behold what lives to prove her earthly sojourn. An infant Portia is all that is left of our lost one, whose image alone rests in the heart of her miserable husband. The most unhappy

"GUIDO."

The almost equally-afflicted Bellario lost no time in hastening to his friend; but when he arrived at Belmont, he found even the sad hope of bringing comfort by his presence was denied. As Madame Ursula placed the infant Portia in his arms, she informed him that since the hour when the remains of the Countess had been consigned to the grave, her unhappy husband had been seen by no one. He seemed suddenly to have vanished from the face of the earth with her whom he mourned. How or when he had disappeared was a mystery, and Bellario could hardly doubt that he had for ever lost a brother as well as a sister. The last person who had beheld him, was his faithful attendant, Balthazar, who told Bellario, that

on the evening of his lady's funeral, he was crossed in the avenue by a dark figure, which had at first startled him with its muffled spectral appearance ; but that on taking courage to look at it again, he was almost convinced it was his poor master. This belief made him turn, and follow it ; but it fled faster than he could pursue, and soon vanished entirely among the trees in the distance.

There was one slight circumstance, which alone permitted Bellario to hope that his friend had not madly destroyed himself. In Guido's study, he found a fragment of a paper, apparently addressed to himself, though it was incoherent, abrupt, and written in evident distraction.

* * * " She will be your care, I know. All I have is hers—your justice and tenderness will be her best safeguard—should I ever return, she may——" * * *

It was on these few last words, that Bellario founded his hope. They were all that remained to dispel his apprehensions that his infant charge might be wholly orphaned ; and he took a solemn vow as he bent over the sleeping babe, that he would devote himself to her welfare, in the fervent trust that he might one day be permitted to replace her in the arms of a living father. Meanwhile, having learned of Madame Ursula in as explicit terms as her prudish lips could muster, that a healthful wet-nurse had been provided in the person of one of the Belmont tenantry ; and having ascertained that the affairs of the estate were placed in an advantageous condition for the future benefit of the infant heiress ; he returned to the duties of his profession at Padua, until such time as she could profit by his presence and immediate superintendence.

Letters from Madame Ursula brought him continued intelligence of the babe's thriving, and he would frequently steal a day from his labors to ride over to Belmont, that he might indulge himself with a sight of the child. For in the small unformed features, and

diminutive limbs, the force of affection taught him to find traces of his lost sister and friend ; in the mite of a nose, and the wondering eyes, he thought he could read the animation and intelligent fire of Guido's expression ; in the little dimpled hands, he fancied he discovered the slender fingers of Portia ; and even in the fair golden curls of the little one, he dreamed he beheld the raven tresses of her mother. So whimsical is the sweet blindness of love ! Such tricks of imagination were the senses of the bachelor lawyer accustomed to play, while, spell-bound by loving memories, he held the child in his arms, and pored over its baby lineaments.

Soon, it learned to know the face that hung so tenderly over its own ; and almost its first look of intelligence was given to him. It would crow and coo in answer to his caresses ; it would learn to hold up its fairy finger while hearkening to the sound of his horse's feet, and clap its hands when it saw him approach.

Once, as he was galloping up the avenue, he saw the nurse and her charge playing on the grass ; and suddenly, to his great delight, he beheld the little creature bundle itself up from its squatting position on the turf, and come toddling toward him ; it had learned to run alone, since his last visit !

Then—in a visit or two after that one—a new pleasure ; the child could welcome him with a few prattling words ; and as she sat on his knee, she could beguile his solitary breakfast with her pretty voice, and lisp out her newly-mastered phrases.

In the course of some months more, a period of vacation occurred, and the bachelor-uncle looked forward with absolute pleasure to the thought of spending some time with a mere child ; the grave lawyer had learned to love nothing in the world so well as his little Portia. She was now not merely the child of his sister and friend, she had become a joy in herself.

And the little creature repaid his love with a fondness singularly intense in one so young. She seemed

to have inherited her father's ardor of disposition, with much of her mother's gentle sweetness. She never tired of being with him ; and even showed none of the usual restlessness of children, when his serious occupations demanded his attention. She would sit quietly on the ground, amusing herself with the pictures or toys that he had given her ; and seemed to be aware that by silence she preserved the privilege of remaining in the room with him. When Madame Ursula would appear at the door of the library, where he usually sat, and offer to take away the child lest she should disturb il Signore Dottore, little Portia would cast beseeching eyes up to her uncle's face, and say :—" I'll be so good, if you'll let me stay." And she always kept her word ; sitting sometimes for hours on the floor, and only varying her position by creeping like a little mouse to a low drawer which was considered hers, where her toys were stored, or by kneeling before a chair upon which she might range her pictures side by side.

Once Bellario observed her put her finger on her lip and glance timidly towards him, as she checked herself in some little nursery-tune which she was unconsciously beginning to murmur to herself. " I mustn't sing," he heard her whisper. " Yes you may, if you sing very softly," said her uncle ; and thenceforth he accustomed himself to hear the little under-song going on while he was writing, till at length, had it ceased, he would have well-nigh missed the pretty music of its humming.

But these hours of needful stillness, were delightfully compensated by the games of romps, the races on the greensward of the avenue, the rides on the shoulder, and the scampers on horseback, that the fond uncle indulged her with, when he had concluded his day's avocations. Indeed, it is a question whether the indulgence was not as great on one side as the other ; whether, in fact, the learned man did not as fully enjoy these innocent gambols as much as the frolicsome child

did. To judge by the facility with which he accommodated himself to her infantine ways, the unreserve with which he abandoned himself to her disposal, and the happy ease of his manner while devoting himself to sport with her, this companionship was now his chief delight, as it evidently was hers.

A look more bright than any that had beamed in his eyes since his sister's death, would dwell there now as he tossed her baby-daughter high in his arms towards the ceiling of the saloon, and watched the ecstasy with which she found herself so near its glittering gilded fret-work; a gentle smile would play round the grave lawyer's lips, as he suffered himself to be harnessed and driven along the avenue as the little girl's mimic steed; but some of their happiest times of all, were when he placed her on horseback before him, and rode through the glades, and shadowy woodlands, telling her many a pleasant tale of wonder and delight. Sometimes the learned head, so well stored with weighty precedents, that directed senates with its judgment, and swayed princes with its counsel, would rack its memory for fairy legends or gay stories for the sole delight of a little girl; at others, the lips that poured forth eloquence and erudition commanding the plaudits of his fellow-men, and influencing the destinies of the human race, would frame simple precepts of goodness and loveliness fitted for the comprehension of the fair-haired child that sat upon his saddle-bow. But in this single, childish audistress, a world of sympathy, intelligence, and sensibility had their being, which found expression in the absorbed and enchanted gaze with which she fixed her eyes intently on his face while he spoke.

A favorite theme with them both, was the excellence of the parents she had lost. He was never tired of telling, or she of hearing, about the beautiful gentle mother who was now an angel in heaven; who dwelt in the clear blue sky, and watched her little girl when the stars were shining, and the moon was peeping in

at her chamber-window, while she was fast asleep ; who loved to see her little Portia good and happy ; and hoped to have her one day in the blue and glorious heaven with her. And then he told her of the kind handsome father ; of the loving friend he had been ; of how dear they had been to each other ; of how he had grieved to lose the beautiful mother, who had gone to be an angel ; and how, in impatience that he could not yet go with her to be one also, he had wandered away no one knew whither, but might perhaps one day return to see his little Portia if she continued good and gentle.

And then the child would put up her rosy mouth for a kiss, and tell her uncle she “meant to be so good—O, so good—and always good.” And then they would ride home cheerfully and happily ; and patting the horse’s neck, would think no time so pleasant as that spent on his back, when he carried them far and wide through the broad domains of Belmont.

One morning, after breakfast, there happened to be fewer law papers than usual to examine, and Bellario told his little Portia that if she would be quite quiet for an hour, he would then be ready to take her out for a long, long ride ; and he asked Madame Ursula to be so good as to let them have a little basket with something nice to eat while they were out, in case they were away some hours.

The dame made a curtsy of acquiescence ; then turning to the child she added :—“ Now, Contessina, come with me.”

The little girl arose, and followed her half-way towards the door, then stopped.

Madame Ursula looked back, and seeing the fixed attitude in which the child stood, in the middle of the room, frowned heavily, saying :—“ Did your hear me ? Come !”

Bellario quietly watched this scene, though his head was bent over his papers ; and he observed an obstinate inflexibility take possession of the little girl’s face

and figure, as she replied :—“ Not unless you promise that I shall come back in time for the ride.”

“ I shall promise nothing. Come this instant !” said Madame Ursula ; then, glancing at Bellario, and seeing, as she thought, that he was absorbed in his occupation, she added in a stern low tone :—“ Remember !”

Portia’s face flashed scarlet, and she moved forwards a step or two ; but presently she stopped again, and said :—“ No, if you beat me, I don’t care ; I won’t go till you promise.”

Bellario was just going to exclaim :—“ Beat !” but he checked himself, resolved to satisfy himself further, while they still thought themselves unobserved.

“ Promise a chit like you, indeed ! A fine pass things have come to, truly !” exclaimed Madame Ursula. “ I insist upon your coming to your tasks, when I bid you.”

“ But I’m not a chit—I’m heiress of Belmont—Lisetta told me so ; and she said I needn’t learn my letters if I didn’t like—and I don’t like. Besides, I want to ride with cugino mio ; and I won’t say my letters till you promise I shall have done in time to come back for my ride. Nasty letters ! I hate them.” And the child uttered the last words with flashing eyes, and an insolent lip.

Madame Ursula stalked back, and seized the little rebel whom her own injudicious unrelenting had created. As she clutched Portia’s wrist, the child uttered a piercing scream ; but the next instant she seemed to remember her promise not to disturb Bellario, for she looked towards him hastily, and then, checking herself, writhed and struggled mutely in the housekeeper’s grasp.

Bellario now thought it time to interfere. “ Madame Ursula,” said he, “ why do you wish the Contessina Portia to go with you ? May she not stay here, as usual ?”

“ I need hardly tell il Signore Dottore,” replied

the dame, "that it would be disgraceful for a young lady of the Contessina's distinguished station to be brought up in ignorance. I have therefore thought it my duty to teach her her letters, that she may one day know how to read. I presume so illustrious and learned a gentleman as yourself knows the importance of early tuition?"

"But did I not hear something about 'beating,' Madame? Surely that is not a part of your system?" said Bellario.

"Oh, a birch-rod, merely hung up in my room by way of a threat, Signor. We all know that a threat is sometimes as effectual as a punishment," replied she; "and the Contessina's pride makes her dread the shame of a whipping, as much as the rod itself."

"Do you know, I am not a great advocate for either shame, or the rod, Madame, in teaching." Bellario saw the scarlet mount to the child's brow again, at the mention of the birch-rod; but he saw also a look of triumph, as if she understood that Madame was being rebuked instead of herself. He was vexed at being thus compelled to discuss the matter in her presence at all, but as it was hardly to be avoided after what had passed, he added:—"If you please, we will for the present allow this little lady to go on in her ignorance. She will one day find what a pleasure it is to read, and will wish to learn, and be grateful to those who will take the trouble to teach her. Allow me to thank you for that which you have already taken, Madame Ursula; although I request you will indulge me by letting the lessons cease, until Portia is wise enough to wish for them herself."

Madame Ursula curtsied stiffly, and withdrew; muttering to herself that the illustrissime Dottore was a fine person, forsooth, to be a judge; when he did not know how to manage a little child better than by letting her have her own way.

The ride that day was not so pleasant as usual. Portia, young as she was, could understand that what

had made her uncle ride on so thoughtfully and so silently, was the scene that had taken place that morning. After peering up in his face several times in the vain hope of meeting the fond smile that generally answered hers, she felt the rebuke contained in that sad abstracted look, and at length said :—" Are you angry with me, cugino mio ?"

" I am sorry, very sorry, that my little Portia was so naughty, this morning ; I do not like to see her so unlike the little girl I love."

" I'll say my letters, if you'll love me still ; I'll never be naughty about reading again."

" It was not your naughtiness about saying your letters, that made me sorry, carina ; it was to see my little girl behave so rudely to Madame—to see her look so insolent and proud—and to hear her talk of being heiress of Belmont, as a reason for not learning to read."

" Lisetta said so—she said I should be a great lady by and by, and need only do what I like ; and needn't take any trouble to learn."

" Lisetta should have told you that a great lady would never like to be ignorant ; that you would be more to be pitied if you were a countess who did not know how to read, than if you were a poor peasant ; and that the heiress of Belmont ought to be gentle and kind, not wilful and rude, if she ever expects to be respected and obeyed in her turn. Besides, though you will one day be lady of Belmont, you are now only a poor little weak child, who ought to be very thankful and obedient to those who are so good as to take care of you, and do many things for you which you are not able to do for yourself."

The child laid her head meekly against his breast, and whispered :—" I'll try and be good, if cugino will love me." And when his arms softly pressed round her, she felt that she was forgiven ; and they could again enjoy the beauty of the ride, and laugh and chat, as gaily and happily as ever.

Next morning after breakfast, the papers and law-books were again speedily despatched, and Portia started up from her toys, expecting to be summoned for a ride ; but she saw her uncle take down a book from one of the shelves of the library (which was the room in which they usually sat), and placing it upon a low desk by the side of his easy-chair he lolled back, and began to read.

Now Portia, though so young a child, had already found out the difference between business-reading and pleasure-reading ; for she knew that when her uncle was leaning over those yellow papers, crackling parchments, and plain-looking books, while his eyes were intently fixed, and his pen occasionally dipped in the ink, and he wrote a few words, and his lips looked grave and unmoved,—he was on no account to be disturbed, and that was the time for her to remain perfectly still ; but when she saw him draw the reading-desk to the side of his easy-chair, and stretch his legs carelessly out, and lean back comfortably, and place his elbow on the arm of his chair, and prop his chin with his closed hand, and look at his book with happy eyes and smiling mouth, she knew then that she might creep to his side, scramble on to one of his knees, nestle her check against his bosom, and thus sit on his lap and play with her doll without interrupting him. Nay, at such times of idle reading, she might feel that she was welcome ; for the arm that supported her on his knee, would now and then give her a hug, or the head that bent over hers would press its lips upon her hair, when the leaf of the book wanted turning over.

She looked at him now, as he sat there reading, and wondered that he preferred sitting still, and gazing at those lines, and turning page after page, and reading on and on, instead of going out for a ride, or a race in the avenue, or a frolic on the lawn, or some other pleasant amusement. “ I suppose he finds reading very pleasant too ; I suppose he likes reading as well as I like playing.” Some such thoughts as these

doubtless passed through little Portia's mind ; she went close up to Bellario, and leaned her two elbows on his knee, and gazed steadily up into the face that was looking as steadily into the open book ; and she presently said abruptly :—" I wish you would teach me my letters ; I want to read with *cugino mio*."

Her uncle, —or cousin as she called him, —caught her up in his arms with delight at finding that his hope was fulfilled ; the sight of the pleasure derived from reading, had inspired the voluntary desire to taste that pleasure ; of her own accord she wished to learn.

From that time forth, the hours devoted to pleasure-reading were partly spent in pointing out the big letters in each page to the little girl upon his knee. First their forms were pointed out, and pretty stories were invented, to fix their different shapes and names in the child's memory ; then came the amusement of finding out the shortest words in each line, that the little one might spell them, and find out the sound the letters made, when put together in words. For this purpose, any book that happened to lie upon the desk to charm the grave lawyer in his hours of poetic recreation, would serve equally well to display the alphabetic symbols, and mere first syllables, to the infant student. To him, the magic page might often conjure up visions of the proud *Æneas*, and forsaken *Dido* ; of meek-hearted *Griselda*, or wandering *Constance* ; of the pale pair of lovers, swept upon the whirlwind of the hell-storm ; of the docile giant *Morgante* ; of *Orlando*, *Rinaldo*, handsome *Astolfo*, the daring Englishman, mounted on his hippogriff, and the lovely *Angelica*, with her beauteous boy-lover, *Medoro* ; of the noble amazon, *Clorinda*, with her dying face irradiated by immortal hope ; of all these poetic images might Bellario in turn behold traces in the opened page, while to his neophyte it merely bore elemental figures and hieroglyphic shapes—but in which nevertheless lay a hidden world of future intelligence and beauty. To endow his tender scholar with the power

to seek this enchanted region, to render her worthy of its attainment, and to gift her with the right of participation in its happy possession, became Bellario's chief delight; and in order that he might devote as much time as possible to his little Portia, he thenceforth had all writings and papers brought over to Belmont, and contrived to conduct every case, and to transact all business there, that did not absolutely require his presence in Padua, Venice, or elsewhere.

Thus they became closer companions than ever; and while Bellario beheld the happy looks, and gay smiles of the little creature, he could scarcely regret that she had no fitter playmate than a grave bachelor-uncle,—a learned doctor of law.

From the day when she had besought him to teach her, Portia had learned to love her lessons as much as she had formerly dreaded them. They were never after that time called "nasty letters"—but were "pretty letters," and "dear pretty books," and now no longer thought of as a dreary task, but as a pleasant play—nearly the pleasantest play she had. Now, she would follow the pointer with unwearied interest as it traced the curves of the letters, and indicated their combination and succession in the formation of syllables and words; sometimes she would guide her own baby finger along the line in pointing mimicry, sometimes she would pat with her spread hands upon the lower part of the page, as in childish impatience, or in sportive concealment of what was to come, and sometimes she would lean her folded chubby arms upon the ledge of the desk that supported the book, and listen earnestly to the recited story, or gaze at the wondrous picture.

There was one picture, an especial favorite. It was very large, and folded up into a book, that it belonged to, in several folds. As these folds were successively and carefully undone, and spread forth (for Portia was taught to respect books, and to handle their leaves very gently lest they should be injured),

she loved to watch the gradual appearance of the different portions of the curious scene, which, though she knew so well, she was never tired of looking at. There was a wild mountainous district towards one end of the long picture ; and here she beheld a singular building, that looked half like a house and half like a ship, near which stood a venerable old man, and two or three younger ones, with some women, who were watching the approach of a vast train of animals, that walked two and two, and formed a strange procession, extending and diminishing away into the distance, where might be seen a tumult of troubled waters, and the dark clouds of a threatening storm.

It was these numberless animals that riveted the attention of the little picture-gazer ; and she would coax from her indulgent teacher an endless repetition of histories descriptive of the tawny lion, with his majestic roar that echoes through the forests as he stalks along ; of the velvet-striped tiger, with his cruel eyes ; of the stately elephant ; the swift and noble horse ; the faithful dog ; the graceful stag ; and the nimble squirrel. He would tell her of the humble little mouse, whose gratitude lent it patience and perseverance to nibble through the bonds that held captive the king of beasts ; of the fox that used its cunning wits to get out of the well, at the expense of the silly credulous goat ; and of the wise young kid, who, in remembering her mother's advice to keep the door fast, saved herself from being eaten up by the treacherous wolf. He would tell her how the eagle's strong eyes can boldly stare into the sun, his powerful beak can cleave the skull-bone of his prey, and his firm wing upbear him towards the sky ; how the bee-like humming-bird can creep into the cup of a flower ; and how the winged creatures of the air, from the crested vulture to the diminutive wren, know how to construct their curious nests, and build them warm, snug, close, and cleverly, of mere bits of twig, and straw, and moss.

While these things were telling, the rides and out-of-door pastimes would be well-nigh forgotten ; but the prudent monitor would let neither his pupil's eagerness nor his own, detain them too long from the pure breath of heaven, or the due exchange of mental exertion for physical exercise ; and so the books were laid aside, and out the two would sally, through the window that opened on to the terrace, and down the steps (Portia clinging to her cousin's hand, as she tottered from one marble stair to the other, bringing each foot safely down at a time), till they reached the shady avenue, the scene of most of their open-air sports.

But though the child and the bachelor-lawyer sufficed thus for each other's happy companionship, there were times when Bellario thought it might have been better, could his little Portia have had the society of other children. As it was, she was too much the object of exclusive attention to people all older than herself, and this tended to foster the idea that she was a personage of vast importance, which, her position in life, as well as the remarks of injudicious dependents, were calculated to engender. He thought that, had she some young associate, this impression might be weakened by the equality that naturally establishes itself between children, who know little of forms and observances, and are apt to play together, asserting their individual opinions and wishes, regardless of difference in rank or station. He thought, too, that with one younger than herself, the sense of power, almost inseparable from her condition, might assume the form of benevolence and kindness ; and that in lieu of the imperious insolence which too often accompanies the command of those older than the mistress herself, she might learn to rule with bounteous consideration, and affectionate protective care. He wished that the future lady of Belmont should be beloved, as well as obeyed, by her dependents.

An opportunity offered shortly after, for carrying out his desired experiment. Madame Ursula confided

to him a grievous trouble respecting a sister of hers, who had some time since degraded herself, and committed the honor of her family, by marrying a small tradesman in Venice. "The miserable girl too late found out her mistake," said the dame; "for I can in no other way account for her death, which happened soon after giving birth to a little girl. As for the poor wretch, who dared to marry her, he doubtless awoke to a sense of his presumption, although, also, too late; for he is just dead, and has left his child without a single bagattino* to bless herself with. She must go into service, of course; but she must wait till she is grown up, for that. Though I took Bianca's folly deeply to heart, and vowed never to forgive the injury she had done our family, yet I hope I know my duty better than to let her wretched offspring starve. I thought, therefore, I would consult you, Signore Dottore, upon the propriety of letting the child come here and stay at Belmont, until she is old enough to become cameriera to the Contessina Portia. I will promise that the miserable little creature shall be kept strictly within the precincts of the housekeeper's apartments, and shall not be permitted to intrude upon the presence of either yourself or the Contessina."

"Let her come to Belmont by all means, Madame;" answered Bellario; "and pray do not restrict the children from playing together as much as they please. Your little darling will make a charming companion for mine, I doubt not."

"My 'little darling,' Signor! She is none of mine! Nerissa is none of my child!" exclaimed Madame Ursula with a chaste shiver; "but as my sister's child, I thank you for the permission that she may come here."

The faithful Balthazar was dispatched to Venice to fetch the little Nerissa to her future home; and Bellario told Portia of the new playfellow who was coming

* A small copper coin, formerly current in Venice.

to be with her at Belmont. She answered that she wanted no one to play with her but her own cugino ; nevertheless, he could perceive that as the time drew near for the expected arrival, Portia's eyes were often directed towards the door of the saloon, where they were dining ; Madame, as usual, presiding at the head of the table.

At length they heard a horse's feet coming up the avenue, and Portia slid down from her chair, to peep out of the window at the new-comer. Presently, they heard a child's voice, and then a peal of joyous laughter ; the door opened, and Balthazar, who had used his best exertions to entertain his young fellow-traveller during their journey, brought the child in, in his arms, while she was still shouting with merriment at some droll story he had been telling her.

This indecorous entry scandalized Madame, and she frowned appallingly.

The little Nerissa, placed suddenly upon her feet in the midst of strangers, stood transfixed, gazing at them ; and as she scanned these new faces, the smiles faded from her lips, which she began to pull poutingly with one finger, eyeing the group askance.

"Take your fingers out of your mouth, do, child ; and come here," said Madame Ursula.

It seemed that the uninviting tone had more force than the words, for the child said shortly :—"No."

"Come here when I bid you ; come to me ;" repeated Madame with a still more forbidding look and tone than before.

"No ;" again replied the little one. Then, turning to Balthazar, and clutching his skirts, she added :—"I'll come to you ; take me on the horse again."

Bellarion had purposely said nothing, that he might see what Portia would do of her own accord. She now took a cake and some sweetmeats off the dinner-table and went towards the little stranger, holding them out to her, and said :—"Won't you have some ?"

Nerissa looked at Portia for a moment, then took

one of the offered sweets, and next held out her rosy mouth, as she had been taught to do, that she might kiss her thanks ; but she still maintained her grasp of Balthazar's skirt.

Portia went back to the table for a nectarine, and returning again, stuffed that also into the child's hand, then holding out her own, she said :—" Won't you come with me to *cugino* ?"

The little hand dropped its hold of the attendant's coat, and was given confidently to this new friend, who led her in a sort of triumph to Bellario.

The acquaintance thus begun, went on prosperously. Nerissa looked up to Portia as her abettor and protectress in all her encounters with her awful aunt ; while the encouragement and patronage which the little lady of Belmont accorded to her new playmate, was accompanied by a gentle feeling of care and tenderness for one younger and more helpless than herself.

It is true that there was but a year's difference between them ; but at their age a few months make a prodigious disparity ; besides, the little lady had not only constantly associated with her grave cousin, but was of a naturally intelligent reflective mind, whereas the humble damsel was one of the most thoughtless, gay, giggling, sportive, merry little rogues in the whole world.

This temperament of Nerissa's caused Bellario to rejoice more than ever at the fortunate chance which had brought the two children together ; for he felt that it acted as an antidote to the too grave society in which his beloved Portia would otherwise have exclusively passed her youth. Now, he had the delight of hearing the two merry voices constantly echoing through the halls and woods of Belmont in sportive gladness ; and the laugh of Nerissa herself could scarcely ring more clearly and happily than that of his gifted but cheerful-hearted Portia. In playing together, the two children seemed animated by one spirit ;

equally buoyant, active, mirthful, nay wild in their gayety of heart while sporting about ; but in one point they differed materially. Nerissa was the veriest little dunce that ever was ; neither frowns and threats from dame Ursula, nor coaxings and rallyings, and pettings and teasings from Portia, could induce the little damsel ever to look into a volume ; whilst, on the contrary, Portia's chief delight continued to be the hours she spent with Bellario and his books. She was gay with Nerissa, but she was happy with him.

It was perhaps fortunate for Portia that her young companion was thus indifferent to study ; it made the hours spent with her, the more completely a relaxation, and by forming a wholesome contrast, invigorated and refreshed her mind for new culture. With the giddy little madcap Nerissa, the freedom and elation of spirit which characterized Portia, no less than her mental endowments and superiority of intellect, found full scope ; and childhood sped merrily away.

Even the austere supervision of Madame Ursula was withdrawn ; for not many months after Nerissa's introduction to Belmont, the housekeeper died. The stern dame was stricken into the eternal rigidity of death ; and the waiting-woman Lisetta was heard to observe in her hard way, that " the old lady looked scarcely more stiff, as a corpse, than she had done when alive."

As years went on, Bellario's hope of beholding his friend, grew fainter and fainter ; and yet, in proportion as his hope waned, his desire increased. Besides the yearning wish to look upon his face, he longed for Guido's return with strengthening intensity, as he beheld the still-improving graces of the daughter so rashly quitted. He longed to show him the worth of the treasure he had relinquished ; to unfold to him the sources of consolation he had abandoned, in the person of this dear being, so worthy a representative of the sainted angel they had lost. As he dwelt with rapture on the beautiful form and face of his darling, and

watched the expanding of her noble nature and capacious mind, he pined to share so dear a privilege with the friend of his heart—the being in the world best fitted to receive and enjoy delight from such a source. Still Guido returned not ; and Bellario was fain to beguile himself with the fancy that he cherished even a remote hope of the reward he had once proposed to himself for his devotion to his friend's child. Had he allowed himself honestly to question his reason, he would have found how little faith he had left, that the delight of ever placing Portia in a father's arms was yet in store for him ; but he continued his zealous culture of her moral and mental excellences, as if to strengthen the delusion he hugged the closer for its very instability.

Relieved, by the companionship of Nerissa, from any dread that Portia might become too exclusively absorbed in serious strains of thought, he could now freely permit her to indulge their mutual and increasing taste for study together ; and he would often laughingly tell her, that though she had no regular schooling, no masters, no accomplishments, no womanly teaching,—no set education in short, yet that he should in time make her an excellent scholar, and a most capital lawyer.

Bellario was an enthusiast in his profession ; and Portia loved to hear him dwell at length upon its attributes, its privileges, its powers, and its value. He would descant upon his favorite theme ; and she, well pleased to listen, would often introduce the subject, and urge and induce him to continue its disquisition.

Then would he tell her of the divine origin of Law ; and dilate upon its universal existence and influence. "It is an emulation of God's own wisdom," he would say, "who appointed laws unto himself as Creator of the universe. The system of planets, the courses of stars, the processes of vegetation and reproduction are all so many applications of force and power, and ordained forms and measures of carrying

out His will—and are His manifest laws. The obedience of these Natural agents to the laws of the Creator, set a sublime lesson to us voluntary agents, that we may meekly conform to those Human Laws which have been the inspiration of His Wisdom, and are the instruments of His Will upon earth. Law acts as a perpetual memorial to man ; Divine and Natural laws remind him of his duty to God ; Moral laws of his duty to himself ; and Human laws of his duty to his fellow-creatures. See," he continued, "how the heathens themselves exalted Law—naming her Themis, and deriving her from both heaven and earth, by making her the daughter of Cœlus and Terra ; one of their historians declaring her to be 'queen of gods and men.' Law unites mankind in a universal bond of fellowship, gathering the human brotherhood beneath its wings ; teaching them the wisdom of mutual regard and support, instead of leaving them to wander in primeval and savage individuality of interest—each man's hand against his brother. Men, by agreeing to conform to appointed laws, yield individual judgment to the matured wisdom of the many ; and by consenting to abide by such decrees, show that they prefer the common good to a private indulgence—general order to single satisfaction."

"By taking the law in our own hands, we but perpetuate evil in the world ; dealing a private revenge, instead of awarding a publicly sanctioned punishment. Constituted law revenges not ; it chastises. Law, after its first universal love for the good of the human race, abjures passion ; and rewards or punishes, knowing neither love nor hate. Law shows tenderness, only in the protection it affords to the weak against the strong ; when it substitutes justice for the right of might."

"Law ascertains men's dues by no capricious standard ; it acts from virtuous principle, not from impulse. It promotes social order, and diffuses harmonious concord. Men who will not act equitably and

in accordance with duty at a friend's suggestion, will often submit to the same intimation from the Law, which they know to be indifferent, impartial, and no-wise personal in its dictates ; and inasmuch as Reason is insufficient to bind some men, Law was instituted to constrain and enforce universal obedience. Would men but live honestly, hurt nobody, and render to every one his due, the necessity of Law would cease, for in those three precepts are contained the essence of what Law exacts. Law but seeks to establish man's true and substantial happiness. It sets forth man's duties, and the penalties of transgressing them, for his timely instruction and warning. Laws are the result of public approbation and consent ; the act of the whole body politic, and not the edict of one despotic mind. Law is one of the monuments of man's accumulated wisdom ; like a vast intellectual temple, its range of columns stretch through successive ages, ever receiving renewal and addition, without destruction to the harmony of the universal edifice."

At another time he would tell her that Human Law, like all mortal systems, was subject to error, both in its ordinance and dispensation. "But law," said Bellario, "should ever err rather on the side of leniency and mildness, than severity. Where laws are enacted of too stringent a nature, and where the penalties inflicted are too rigorous in proportion with the transgression they retaliate, an evasion of the due action of the law frequently ensues, and thus the ends of justice are frustrated, by an escape of punishment altogether. The object of correction is reform ; and the penalty enforced should be so appropriate to the crime committed, as to excite universal acquiescence in its award. In passing sentence clemency should ever take the precedence ; for better that many guilty should escape, than one innocent suffer. A culprit may be reclaimed ; but what too-tardy justice, however ample, may redress an undeserved condemnation ? Mercy in all her aspects is the fairest sister of Justice.

She bestows on the crown its dearest prerogative—a privilege akin to that of Heaven itself—when she reserves to the king the power of reversing doom, and granting ultimate pardon.”

“The practice of Law,” he would say, “induces magnanimity. It teaches us tolerance towards the infirmities of our fellow-beings ; seeing how the best natures may be warped by unkindness, ingratitude, or injury. It engenders compassion for human frailty ; forbearance on account of man’s prejudices, mistakes, and ignorance ; pity for his imperfections, and desire for his enlightenment. It inculcates benevolence, patience, consideration. It bids us grieve over the evil we discover, and wonder at the good we find hidden beneath rage, neglect, and destitution. It helps us to mature and chasten our judgment. It instructs us to command our temper, and guard against the heat of feeling, to moderate suspicion, and to avoid misconstruction. It reminds us that to be just we must be calm, and that the faculties should be held clear, collected, and alert. We should be ready to consider not only facts, but the times and circumstances of facts. We should cultivate a retentive memory, a patient and attentive habit of listening, acuteness of penetration in observing, and an appreciation of physiognomy, expression, and character. We should aim at general acquisition, as well as at peculiar study ; and endeavor to enlarge the mind upon various subjects, rather than narrow it by a too exclusive store of mere cases and precedents, so as to be enabled to decide in matters that befall otherwise than consistently with recorded experience, and so as not to be taken wholly by surprise when a totally new and original set of circumstances arise and invest a case. Accomplishment in oratory as well as soundness of judgment is essentially valuable, that you may not only carry conviction by the train of your reasoning, and the strength of your arguments, but that you may secure the attention, and win the favor of the more

superficial among your auditors, so as at once to prepossess them in favor of your cause."

"Might not we women make good advocates, then, cugino mio?" Portia would playfully ask; "you know we are apt to speak eloquently when our hearts are in a cause, and when we desire to win favor in its decision."

"It is because your hearts generally take too active a part in any cause you desire to win, that your sex would make but poor lawyers, carina. Besides, women, though shrewd and quick judging, are apt to jump too rapidly at conclusions, and mar the power of their understanding by its too vivacious action. They are liable to decide upon delusive inferences, and to arrive at false convictions. In the exercise of their discernment, they will frequently triumph too early in the discovery of an advantage; and it is the part of a clever lawyer not to betray his own strength and his adversary's weakness too soon. To skilfully treasure up each point successively gained, and by a tardy unmasking of your own plan of action, to lead your opponent on to other and more sure committals of himself, is more consonant with the operation of a man's mind, than suited to the eager, impulsive nature of woman. Her wit is more keen, than her understanding is sedate."

"Well, one day or other you may be brought to acknowledge that I could make a profound lawyer," replied the smiling Portia; "am I not your disciple? and must not the pupil of the learned Doctor Bellario needs become so if she choose?"

"My Portia will become quite as proficient as I could wish her, if she know enough of law to manage worthily and justly her own estate by and by," answered he; "and it is with the thought that she will hereafter be called upon as lady of Belmont, to rule her tenantry, to adjust their rights, to settle their differences, to decide their claims, and to secure their welfare, that I allow her to cross-question me upon the

mysteries of law as she has done. And so now, that I may not make an absolute pedant of you, a juriconsult in petticoats, a lawyer in a girl's white dress instead of a sober silk gown, go call Nerissa to have a game of ball with you in the avenue, till I come and join you, that we may take a long walk together."

And still time crept on; and the young girl grew almost into the beautiful woman. Her slight childish figure had rounded into graceful proportions; her deportment had assumed more high-bred ease and polish; her countenance shone with brighter intelligence; and her voice and manner, without losing their native sweetness, had acquired a tone of command and dignity well suited to the lady of Belmont. But the profusion of golden locks which waved upon her shoulders, and the unclouded spirits that bounded in her elastic step, and sparkled in her lips and eyes, bespoke her youth, and her happy innocent nature. She looked still the child, in some things.

It was the morning on which she completed her seventeenth year. She entered the library where Belario sat, and as she stepped forward to present him with a rare old volume of poetry and a heap of blushing dew-covered flowers which she had just gathered as a birthday token, she looked so radiant with happiness and beauty, that he involuntarily gazed at her as he would have done at a beautiful vision—an impersonation of childhood on the verge of womanhood. Her fair hair, partly disordered by the eagerness with which she had collected her flowers regardless of thorns, spray, drooping leaves, or sweeping branches; her cheeks glowing with morning air and exercise; her April eyes, bright with mingled smiles and tears, as she greeted him who had been father and brother both in one to her infancy and girlhood; her tender looks, her gentle sweetness, her loving manner, half lavish, half timid, while contending with all the strong emotion that filled her heart towards him, as she knelt upon the cushion at his feet, and laid her head caress-

ingly upon his knee, all made him fancy her a little fondling child again. But when, some minutes after, she stood at his side, discussing with enthusiasm the beauties of the poet whose richly-emblazoned volume she held in her hand ; when her eyes beamed with intelligence, her figure dilated with the energy of her appreciation of lofty sentiment and daring imagination, her tone thrilled with admiration and awe, and her whole appearance was instinct with elevation and sublimity of thought, Bellario felt that he gazed upon a sentient, high-minded woman—one capable of bearing her part in the great drama of life, and of influencing the destinies of others by her intellect, her sentiment, her actions.

In acknowledging her birthday-gift, Bellario told Portia that he had chosen this occasion for the fulfilment of a desire she had expressed, that a band of household musicians might be added to the retainers of Belmont. He said, they had been appointed to come from Venice on this very day, in honor of the event, and he felt somewhat surprised that they had not already arrived.

“ But we will contrive to spend the day happily, notwithstanding,” added he ; “ we will forego the pleasure of music for one day more ; and meantime we will order the horses and take one of our long rambles together. You cannot remember the time, my Portia, when one horse served well for us both, and you needed no other seat than my saddle-bow ?”

“ It seems as though that, and all other particulars of the season when your arms were my only support, even from the very moment when I first was placed a mere infant within them, lived in my memory, as truly as it does in my heart’s core,” replied she.

They rode that day, far and wide through the domains of Belmont. They visited the waterfall, deep in the recesses of the wood, and as they guided their horses down the steep path of the briery dell, and listened to the soft rustling of the leaves, the warbled

song of birds, the hum of insects, and the murmur of the cascade, Bellario's voice would subduedly chime in with those sounds of Nature, telling her of the growth of her parents' love, of their noble qualities, of their worthiness of each other, and of the happy pride with which he himself had shared in the friendship which united the three.

They lingered beneath the group of ruins, which had once formed the object of a memorable walk, and Bellario told her of the unselfish fortitude with which her mother had sought to conceal her fatigue, of her generous impetuous father, of the feelings which he had since detected were lingering in the hearts of each, and of his own complete blindness to the lovers' increasing passion for each other.

"I have often wondered since, how I could have failed to note what was passing beneath my very eyes, so closely concerning two beings whom I loved so well," said Bellario; "and two beings, also, who were singularly transparent and unreserved. My sister's nature was pure, ingenuous, and simple, and her every thought seemed unveiled, as you looked into her clear eyes; your father's ardent sensibility glowed in every expression of his look and voice, and perfect candor dwelt upon his brow. Every emotion of that noble heart seemed written in his countenance; and never had generous impulses fairer and truer transcript than in the manly beauty of my friend's face."

"I feel as if I should know that face, meet it how or where I might," said Portia, in a low voice.

"God grant that we may one day behold it," replied Bellario; "but it must needs be strangely changed. Suffering, grief, wanderings, years of absence;—perhaps even I might not now know my Guido."

That evening, while the two cousins were pacing the moonlit avenue together, Nerissa's blithe voice was heard from the terrace, announcing the arrival of the expected musicians.

“Come in, madam,” cried she in high glee, “come in quickly, for the love of laughter! If these same players have as ill-favored fingers as features, if their instruments yield a sound as coarse as their suits, if they have no better sets of tunes than teeth, or no tones less sharp than their noses, we are like to have but sorry music. But come and see them, and tell me if you have ever seen a more wry-necked, ill-dressed, ugly set of grotesque figures than your ladyship’s musicians elect. There is one fellow’s crooked nose, puckered eyes, puffed cheeks, and pinched lips, that make him look for all the world like a head on the rainspout of a church.”

The girl hurried back, as she spoke; and Bellario leading Portia to the terrace-steps, kissed her hand, and told her he would join her in a few moments to try whether they might not forget the plain persons of the musicians in the music they played. Meanwhile, he paced the avenue, full of a thought which had that day pressed heavily upon him. His first perception that now his charge was no longer a child, his conviction that she had actually grown into a lovely woman, was accompanied with the thought that he had no right to detain her in solitude, apart from that world where she might shine, imparting and receiving a more extended happiness. He felt that he ought not to confine her sphere of existence to so limited a range as that which had hitherto formed the boundaries of Portia’s experience. He knew that the heiress of Belmont should now be introduced into a wider circle than she had hitherto known, that she might form her judgment of mankind itself, while she matured and enlarged the store of knowledge she had hitherto reaped from books alone.

“Were her father but here to aid me with his counsel,” thought he. “Who so qualified to decide a daughter’s conduct? Who so proper to lead her among her fit associates? Who so meet to assist her in their selection, and to guide her in a still more im-

portant choice? For she will marry—she ought—she must;—so fair, so gifted a creature will one day bless and be blest by a man worthy of her. But how to discover him?”

In a deep reverie, Bellario threw himself upon a low grassy bank that swelled from the turf of the avenue. The bank itself was in the full light of the moon; but it was near to the trees, which cast a deep shadow within a few yards of where he sat.

As the thought of his beloved friend again vibrated through his heart with a passionate yearning, he almost articulated the name of Guido in the deep sigh he breathed.

A sigh still more profound responded to his own. He started up in surprise, that any one should be so near; when a figure emerged from the dark shadow of the trees, and stood mutely before him. Bellario gazed strangely upon the countenance he beheld; for in no lineament of that pale, haggard face,—neither in the flattened temple, the sunken cheek, the contracted mouth, or in the dull and wistful eyes, could he trace any memorial of the youthful image that dwelt in his heart's remembrance.

But when the stranger staggered forward, and putting one hand upon his shoulder, muttered huskily “Bellario!” the voice revealed all; and with the rapturous conviction that it was Guido indeed returned, he strained his long-lost friend in his arms, and felt the terrible thirst of years appeased.

A few hasty words sufficed to tell the story of his absence; for Guido cared not to dwell upon the circumstances of that dark period of exile and anguish. In the transports of his despair, he had fled from the scenes of his buried happiness, and wandering away to the coast, had embarked and set sail for the East, where, amid rocky deserts and sandy plains, he had dragged on a weary existence, in ascetic solitude, unable to endure the sight of his fellow-men. In latter years the first torture of his grief had yielded to a

craving desire to behold the child, whom he still could not help regarding in the light of one who had been the destruction of his earthly happiness—of one whose birth had caused the death of her whom he loved better than life. And still his anxiety to look upon this innocent murderer grew stronger and stronger; and at length it arose to a strange fascination, and had determined him to endure all,—to brave the torment of revived sorrows, that he might satisfy this burning wish.

“I long, yet dread to see this child,” he concluded, with a wild sadness in his manner, which had something almost fierce in its eagerness; “show it to me, give it me, Bellario! I will not injure it, I will not harm a hair of its young head! Though it killed her, yet it is her child! Where is it, Bellario?”

“She left me but now,” replied Bellario calmly, trying to soothe his friend’s perturbation; “you think of her as a child, forgetful that seventeen years have elapsed. She is now a beautiful woman; she quitted me but a few moments before I beheld you.”

“That fair creature whom you led to the terrace, then, was—— Gracious heaven! I have seen her! My child! I fancied that fair being by your side was your own, your wife! A second such delusion! And are you indeed destined to bestow upon me another Portia?”

A strain of music arose at this moment. Solemn, sweet, and exquisitely tender was the melody that came wafted towards them upon the night air; it seemed vouchsafed, consolingly ministrant to the wounded spirit of Guido, that his long-pent heart might find relief in the tears which flowed responsive to these appealing sounds.

Bellarrio hailed the benign influence; but suddenly he laid his hand upon his friend’s arm, and pointing towards the terrace, he whispered;—“She comes; control your own agitation, my friend, that you may spare hers.”

Guido gazed in the direction indicated ; he beheld one of the windows that opened on to the ground, thrown back, and a flood of light from the saloon, together with a swelling burst of the harmony, accompanied forth a radiant figure that stepped out upon the terrace, and took its way towards them. The white raiment, the floating golden hair, the graceful mien, the spiritual look, as she approached bathed in the full glory of the moonbeams, made her seem a seraph sent by pitying Heaven, and Guido stretched forth his arms, as towards a celestial harbinger of happiness.

As she reached the spot where they stood, Bellario took her hand, and said in his calm impressive voice : —“ Remember your words of this morning, my Portia. Does your heart tell you whose is the face you look upon ?”

“ My father !” she exclaimed ; and the parent and child savored the ineffable transport of a first embrace.

Guido thus restored to them, the happiness of Portia and Bellario seemed now complete ; while the Count, in discovering the fruitful source of comfort and joy existing for him in the person of his child, wondered how he could have voluntarily remained dead to its enjoyment during that long and dreary period of self-imposed banishment. Thus blindly does mortal judgment err in its choice of what may constitute its own felicity ; casting forth its trust in Providential care, forsaking appointed consolation, and dully embracing woe for its portion. But now, his eagerness to duly estimate the treasure he possessed, partook of all the characteristic ardor of his nature. His love for this new-found daughter amounted to idolatry ; and in the passionate desire he felt to retain her ever in his sight, it seemed as though he sought to indemnify himself for the years of separation already suffered to elapse. In his craving wish to behold her unceasingly, to enjoy her presence exclusively, he would fain have engrossed her thoughts as she absorbed his, and he almost jealously beheld her eyes, her words, her attention directed

to any other object but himself. There was a kind of dread, a misgiving that he could not occupy her heart as she did his ; and in the humiliating consciousness that if this were the case, he could alone blame his own rash exile from the child whose love he might have secured, a feverish inquietude mingled with his present happiness, and threatened to embitter its fruition.

Bellario noted the struggle existing in his friend's mind, and well knew how to deal tenderly with such a mood of affection. He could compassionate its sufferings, forgive its involuntary injustice, and minister to its relief. Accordingly he determined to quit them for a time, that the father and daughter might be thrown solely upon each other's resources ; and, by being constantly and uninterruptedly together, they might thus learn to find their mutual happiness in one another alone.

A cause imperatively requiring his personal presence formed sufficient pretext for his absence ; and after confiding to his friend the anxiety he felt respecting Portia's future introduction into more general society, when they should have enjoyed a sufficient period of tranquil seclusion together, Bellario left Belmont, and retired to Padua, where he had always maintained a modest establishment of his own, for the reception of clients, and in transacting the business of his profession ; as well as that he might indulge the old love of independence which had ever characterized him.

Here, he had the delight of learning from Portia the complete success of his scheme. In the frequent correspondence she maintained with her beloved cousin, the restored serenity of her father, the affection that reigned between them, the happiness of their present existence, which knew no abatement to the fulness of its perfection save the want of Bellario's presence, formed the constant theme of her pen, and caused him to rejoice that he had acted as he had done. He knew, too, that this bond of mutual affec-

tion, thus daily knit and strengthened, would cause them only the more to depend upon each other, when they should come to encounter the world, and be surrounded by indifferent people ; and he could now await with security the period of Portia's presentation under a father's auspices.

Meantime, Guido's confidence in the love existing between his daughter and himself had also acquired firmness. He could no longer entertain a misgiving of the fondness that dwelt in every look, that prompted every action, that lent sweetness to every tone, and dictated every word, as she hovered perpetually near him, evidently drawing as much delight from his vicinity as he from hers. He could not doubt the interpretation of the joy that played in her smiles when she saw him approach, the eagerness that impelled her towards him, the beaming eyes that met his in soft response, or the warmth with which his paternal caresses were welcomed, and returned by her filial ones. He felt that his Portia was indeed fully and entirely his own ; and his satisfied heart flowed in rapturous thanksgiving to the Almighty, for so gracious a boon.

As his faith in her love became assured, he called to mind what Bellario had said respecting her introduction in life, and he felt that he had now courage to risk the intrusion of other objects upon her time and attention, secure that he himself was paramount in her regard.

He accordingly consulted with her upon the appointment of a day when he should invite all the families with whom his own had formerly held intercourse and intimacy, to meet at Belmont in celebration of his return, and thus to renew those connections which had been broken by his absence.

“ In presenting my Portia to the noble ladies of the houses of Manfrini and Barberigo ; to the several families of Montenegri, Sforza, Foscari, and others of my friends and kindred, I shall offer my best apology for venturing to ask a renewal of what I forfeited by

my own neglect ; and they will readily accede to a reconciliation with the father for the sake of his daughter, that they may obtain her society."

"If my father flatter his daughter thus," said Portia gayly, "she need fear no spoiling from flatterers abroad. The veriest courtier of them all could scarce find prettier speeches than Count Guido, when he chooses to praise his Portia."

"It is in order that her giddy head may be steadied betimes," replied he in the same tone, "and learn to bear all the flood of nonsense that will be poured into her ears by and by, without being turned ever after."

"And so, to prevent me from wearing my head like a weathercock or a mill-wheel by and by, you'll risk stuffing it with vanity now. This is willing me to be presently vain, lest I become a vane ; and leads me into the sin of vain talking."

"Then leave vain talking, and hearken seriously to a story I have to tell thee touching a member of one of those noble families, whom I mean to be among our guests at our approaching festival. The young Marquis of Montferrat is able to tell a witching tale in a fair lady's ear, I doubt not, like one of those flatterers we spoke of but now ; for he is a likely gallant, handsome, brave, and courteous."

"A good beginning to your story, padre mio ; 'handsome, brave, and courteous !' What follows ? Generous, accomplished, witty, perhaps ? What is your sequel ?"

"This gentleman is the sole surviving representative of the rich and noble house of Montferrat, famed for the splendor of their taste at home, and for the renown of their arms abroad. The young Marquis, some months since, happened to be indulging his Venetian predilection for the Adriatic, by coasting along her shores with some young friends in the pleasure-galley he has for such marine excursions. One day the party had landed to enjoy the beauty of the scenery, and had caused their noontide repast to be

brought from the vessel by their attendants, and spread beneath the shade of some trees that formed a group round a spot of attractive coolness. They drooped over a spring of fresh water, which welled and bubbled forth like Galatea's transformed love, taking its pellucid way in meandering streams across the plains towards the sea, as if it sought to join its white mistress once again and for ever."

"The young gallants had finished their repast," continued Guido, "and had most of them wandered away in different directions amid the neighboring woods in search of sport, or led by curiosity; only two or three attendants remained near the spot to collect the plate and various utensils before returning to the ship. But the fulfilment of this duty was postponed, and the men were indulging in a game of *Mora*, carried on somewhat apart, and in as subdued a key as the excitement of play would permit (gradually arising from *sotto voce* to eager *crescendo* and *sforzando*), under pretence of being unwilling to disturb their young master with the clatter of the glass and silver during his slumber; for the Marquis had fallen back upon the soft grass, and had yielded to the soothing influence of the scene and the combined geniality of the late feast, in a *siesta*."

"At this moment, three or four brigands, belonging to a band that infested this quarter, and had their lurking-place in the adjoining woods, rushed forwards in hope of making an easy spoil of the gold and silver plate which lay spread around, and had doubtless lured them to the spot. The scared domestics fled; and the ruffians were about to make sure of the sleeping nobleman, by stabbing him at once, when a travel-worn stranger suddenly came up, and by opposing the cowardly attack, roused the Marquis, who was thus enabled to draw his sword, and assist the traveller in their joint defence."

"The noise of the affray soon recalled the dispersed company; and as the gentlemen of the party

successively hurried to the spot to the rescue of their friend, the brigands fled before this reinforcement."

"The Marquis and his company now surrounded the traveller, and offered him their thanks for his timely succour, with an earnestness more the result of their own courtesy, than due to the service rendered, which was no more than an act of common christian charity."

"You tell me who was the traveller, in thus underrating the gallantry of his behaviour, padre mio," interrupted Portia; "nobody but Guido di Belmonte himself, would thus talk of the act that saved a man's life."

"The Marquis more than requited the service, in his profuse acknowledgments, his generous treatment of a stranger, and the kindness and zeal with which he sought to promote his wishes when he found that the traveller was eager to proceed on his journey, which had been delayed by an adverse accident that had compelled him to land, a day or two before, from the vessel, in which he had been sailing from the East, and which was bound to Venice. He entreated him to use his galley, to direct its course whithersoever he might desire; and said that he and his company would proudly escort him to his destination. They accordingly set sail for Venice immediately, entertaining him as an honored guest during their course thither; and when they discovered that a profound sorrow which possessed him wholly prevented the stranger from participating in their revelry, these gentlemen discreetly forbore to intrude upon his grief, leaving him to indulge his solitude undisturbed and respected."

"When, however, the galley made the port of Venice, and the stranger and his entertainers were about to take leave, the Marquis begged to know the name of the man to whom he felt himself obliged; and he, in his turn, feeling that a mere cold adieu was but poor requital for the courtesy and kindness he had received

at the hands of the generous young nobleman, confided to him the sorrowful story of his life, and told him that should he ever know a period of restored tranquillity and peace of mind, he would entreat him to come and see if Casa Belmonte could yield as pleasant entertainment and welcome, as he had met with on board the galley 'Aglaiia.' With this compact we parted; and now that I have indeed found greater happiness than I ever dared to hope for again, I mean to invite my noble young friend hither, that he may behold its existence and its source. So good a heart as his, will not fail to rejoice in my joy; so high a taste as his for all that is rare and beautiful, must needs be struck with the cause of that joy—my child, my Portia. I would now, methinks, have all my friends behold her father's treasure; and see how bounteous Heaven, in her, repays him for all sorrows past."

As Guido finished speaking, his faithful servant Balthazar came to apprise him that his steward was awaiting an audience in the library, with some papers relative to the estate, which required inspection and signature.

The Count withdrew to the library, bidding his daughter join him there as soon as the steward should have retired, that they might write the invitations for the approaching festival, and despatch messengers with them to the several families in Venice and elsewhere.

Portia remained bending over her work, lost in thought, but Nerissa, who was seated at the embroidery-frame, assisting her lady, yet maintaining a discreet silence in the presence of the Count, now gave free course to her usual liveliness of speech. The circumstances of their early companionship, the unrestrained intercourse of the South between mistress and attendant, the gay pleasant nature of Nerissa herself, as well as the happy spirits of Portia, all tended to preserve their freedom and ease of intimacy little less than

that which had subsisted between the two, when children together.

“What think you, madam, of your father’s story?”

“That it shows him, as I have known him ever, through my cousin Bellario’s knowledge;” answered Portia. “The facts of the tale showed him to be, what his modesty in the telling would fain have hidden—ardent, brave, and generous.”

“Ay, that is what he would fain have had you believe the Marquis to be,” said Nerissa. “And yet from the story I could find no such thing. The gallant was asleep when he should have been awake, which tells not much for his ardor; he drew his sword, indeed, but we heard not that he used it—or if he did, it was to save his own life when it was hard beset, which is no great argument of his bravery—surely, any common sworder would do as much; then as for his courtesy and generosity, a galley that follows no course but pleasure, has no appointed haven but amusement, its master makes no wonderful sacrifice in letting its sailing-orders be at another man’s bidding; and though my lord the Count talked of the Marquis and his friend’s discretion in respecting his grief by leaving him in solitude, it seems they had no thought of moderating their own gayety and revelry.”

“The hero of the story seems to have won no favor of you, Nerissa,” said her mistress.

“None, lady; and yet I fancy your father intended that his hero should seem one in your eyes, whatever he might in mine. But we shall see what he is like, when the festival brings the Marquis of Montferat, with the rest, to Belmont.”

And now the thought of this approaching festival engaged every member of the household, that due splendor and effect might preside in all its arrangements to do honor to two such interesting occasions, as the return of Count Guido to his patrimony of Belmont, and the presentation of his beautiful daughter to the ancient friends of the family. Bellario was

entreated to be present, that they might have the delight of seeing him lend weight and honor to the reception of the guests, by the illustrious and learned reputation of his name.

It may well be believed that this tender friend himself eagerly seized this occasion of beholding his Portia's first entrance upon the arena of life ; of marking how she should put into practice those maxims he had instilled, how remember those precepts he had inculcated, how act upon those principles he had implanted. He longed to see how her native dignity would support her through such a trial to her modesty as the first introduction to so large an assemblage of distinguished persons would needs be ; he longed to see her courtesy have wide field, her wit free play, her beauty extended admiration, her graces universal acknowledgment.

His love was no less ardent than her father's ; for while Guido's was a sort of rapturous fondness towards this child of affection, Bellario's partook of esteem and regard for those intrinsic qualities which he knew her to possess, and which he had watched and cherished from their earliest germ to their fullest development. It was with almost equal pride and delight therefore, that these two loving guardians beheld the object of their tenderest thoughts fulfil all that even they could have anticipated of excellence in her own person and demeanor, while she won universal homage from those around. The ladies commended her modest dignity and self-possession, expressing their hope that it would not be long ere they drew amongst them so bright an ornament as she would prove to their Venetian circle ; the noblemen, one and all congratulated the happy father of so fair and accomplished a maiden ; and the young gallants vied with each other in adulation, compliments, attentions, and endeavors to attract her regard.

Among these latter, the foremost was the Marquis of Montferrat. He at once placed himself among the

rank of her avowed admirers ; and from the marked courtesy and warmth of the reception with which her father had welcomed him, he seemed to have already gained a priority of claim and advantage above his fellows. Of this superiority he seemed fully conscious, from the air of triumph and assured success that sparkled in his eyes when he addressed her, and which pervaded his manner towards them. It shone insinuatingly and languishingly in his looks to her ; it flashed haughtily and defyingly upon them.

Nerissa, who leaned upon the back of her lady's seat (which was in one of the alcoves in the grounds, and formed a sort of sylvan throne for her to receive her train of admirers, anxious to tender their homage to her charms, and pay their court to her good graces), found early occasion to whisper :—" Your father's report of the handsome looks of the hero of his story, is as false as his estimation of his other qualities. The Marquis is scarce better looking than your ladyship's musicians ; who, like their brethren, the singing-birds, have the plainer the exterior, the better their song."

" Nay," returned Portia in the same tone, " the prejudice you took, even ere you saw the Marquis, lets you render him but scant justice. He is handsome, but he knows it too well. His vanity mars his straight nose, his arrogance blurs his smooth complexion, his conceit puts out his eyes, and I can hardly see his good looks for his assurance."

" There is one among the company, who surpasses him in good looks a hundredfold, to my thinking," said Nerissa ; " the young cavalier in the murrey doublet, yonder, who is listening to something that the Marquis is telling. Do you see him whom I mean, Madam ? Such eyes as those are worthy a lady's look, and the mouth seems as if it could say something worth her hearing ; which I'm sure is more than can be said for my lord Marquis's eyes and mouth."

Portia answered not, but Nerissa could see that her

mistress had distinguished the gentleman, for she was looking steadily upon his face, which was slightly averted, and presented only its profile to her gaze.

Nerissa tripped away from her lady, to try and learn who he was ; and soon heard that he was the Lord Bassanio, one of the friends and associates of the Marquis of Montferrat.

“ They are two foolish young men,” continued her informant, who was a gray-headed old gentleman, one of the guests ; “ they try who can spend their money fastest and least wisely. Even the princely fortune which the Marquis inherited from his worthy father, is speedily dwindling ; and as for the young Lord Bassanio, it is whispered that he must shortly be ruined by such a perpetual round of extravagance as he indulges in, to please this friend of his, whom he emulates in all his follies though not in his vices. Bassanio bears an unblemished reputation for honor and integrity, while the Marquis——”

The old gentleman paused, and Nerissa could extract no further information from him, respecting the objects of her curiosity. But this was now thoroughly roused ; and she determined to spare no pains to satisfy it entirely. The more she saw of the Marquis of Montferrat, the more did she find the prejudice she had originally conceived against him, strengthen and increase ; and the more she saw of the Count di Belmonte’s conduct towards this young nobleman, the more did she feel confirmed in the surmise she had at first formed, that he intended him to win his way to the good graces of Portia, and to become eventually his son-in-law. She resolved to communicate her suspicions to Doctor Bellario, that his wiser counsel might decide.

She found that his observation had led him to much the same conclusions with her own ; but, merely commending her vigilance and prudence, and cautioning her against speaking farther on the matter to any one beside himself, he bade her rely upon him for the nec-

essary inquiries, and for an ultimate satisfactory termination.

Before he quitted Belmont, Bellario took occasion to speak to his friend upon the subject of this new acquaintance, the Marquis of Montferrat.

Guido, with his usual warmth of manner, dwelt upon the many excellencies that distinguished this young gentleman ; repeated the origin of their acquaintance in testimony of the bravery and generosity of his character ; and said that all he had since seen of him confirmed his admiration of his personal qualities.

“ Be quite sure, my dear friend, that these personal qualities are not the only ones that distinguish him ; ” replied Bellario ; “ ascertain that his handsome face and figure be not his only graces ; and that the extent of his worth exists not solely in your generosity of imagination—which has faith for every excellence in others.”

“ And are not you lawyers apt to be too skeptical in the existence of human goodness ? ” asked Guido, smiling. “ Do you not too often imagine every stranger an enemy till you know him ? ”

“ On the contrary, we would have every man believed innocent, till he prove guilty ; ” replied Bellario in the same manner. “ But,” resumed he in his original graver tone, “ for Portia’s sake, be quite sure he is worthy her regard, before you introduce him too frequently or too encouragingly to her notice.”

“ He is to be here again in a few days by my invitation ; ” replied Guido. “ I asked him to spend some time with us. He is the son of a most worthy father, a scion of a most noble and honorable family, and he himself is an accomplished and right gallant gentleman. You surely do him wrong, to misdoubt that he is all he seems ; and if he be all he seems, he would form no unfitting match, even for our Portia.”

“ He must be worthy indeed, who deserves her ; ” was all Bellario’s reply ; for he resolved to say no more, till he could speak with better knowledge. He

therefore bade his friends adieu, and took his departure, determined to lose no time in obtaining accurate information relative to the character and habits of the Marquis of Montferrat.

Belmont had scarcely time to recover its wonted serenity of aspect, after the departure of the bevy of visitors who had attended the late festival, when the young Marquis and his train returned, and by their arrival again thronged its tranquil precincts with gay equipages, horses, hounds, hawks, and troops of liveried attendants.

His retinue was so numerous, and its appointments so costly, that it showed like that of a sovereign prince, rather than that of a private gentleman. But in this profusion, the Count beheld only evidences of a magnificent taste on the part of the Marquis de Montferrat, and an additional instance of the refinement and luxury which directed the expenditure of a rich young nobleman.

On Portia, all this display seemed to produce little effect; any more than the flattering importunities, compliments, and assiduous attentions with which he personally besieged her. She received all his admiring speeches with either a lofty acquiescence, as if homage were a part of her birthright; or with a sportive gayety, as if they were mere idle gallantry and matter of trivial unconcern. She heard all eulogy on her beauty with sovereign indifference, and treated all compliments to her wit, as a challenge to exercise its least merciful powers on the adulator himself. Portia, ever distinguished for courtesy and true dignity, would have treated a less confident suitor with no such haughtiness; but the pertinacity and assurance of this Marquis left her scarcely any other alternative. He seemed determined not to be repelled; while he contrived that it should appear as if the strength of his passion alone induced him to yield such implicit submission to the caprice he deplored.

This was the light in which his behavior appeared

to the Count ; who believed him to have conceived an ardent and sincere love for his Portia.

Not so Nerissa ; who, in witnessing any of these instances of the suitor's paraded deference, would not fail to remark, that where a man accepted with undue passiveness the tyranny of his mistress, he not unfrequently did so with the view of securing a slave in his future wife.

But at length the increasing scorn with which Portia treated the distasteful assiduity of the Marquis, struck her father as being beyond the gay disdain which ladies are sometimes accustomed to affect towards their wooers ; and he was one evening walking in the avenue, his thoughts employed with this subject, when a messenger approached at a smart gallop, and seeing the Count, placed a letter in his hands, and rode on.

Guido read as follows :

“ Dear friend and brother,

I possess undoubted proofs that the Marquis is a notorious and confirmed gambler, and an unscrupulous libertine. Until I can myself bring you these proofs, believe that this accusation is not made lightly, or without sufficient warrant. Suffer not such a presence longer to sully the pure atmosphere of Belmont ; nor let a too late heed of my intelligence injure our Portia to the latest term of her life.

Your faithfully devoted

BELLARIO.

Guido remained for a moment as if stunned ; then recovering himself, he was hastening to the house with the thought of rescuing his child instantly from the contamination of such a guest's presence ; when he heard voices near which convinced him that the Marquis was not then with Portia. There was one department of the gardens of Belmont which ran parallel with the avenue, and which was divided from it only by a thick hedge of myrtle. From immediately the

other side of this hedge the voices proceeded, and the Count at once discovered that they were those of the Marquis and Nerissa.

“Do not detain me, my lord ;” he heard the latter say, “my lady sent me for these roses, and she will be impatient at my delay.”

“Nay, fairest of waiting-maids,” replied the voice of the Marquis, whose accents betrayed that he was flushed with wine, “do not imitate the airs of that dignified piece of frost-work, your mistress, but listen while I tell you how far you transcend her in beauty. By heaven ! were she not heiress of Belmont, she would seem but a paltry weed to you, my flower of loveliness !”

“Good my lord gardener, let both the weed and the flower alone ; they neither of them seek to be your prize-blossoms, I’ll warrant you ;” replied Nerissa, with her usual vivacity ; but the next moment she added in increasing alarm, “let go my hands, my lord !”

“Not till I have gathered some of the flower’s fragrance from its blooming cup,—those rosy lips,” he cried ; “not till I have said——”

“Say what you please, my lord Marquis, but do not hold me ; let me go !”

“Hear me say this, then ;” he suddenly stooped, and whispered in her ear.

“Foul villain lord !” she exclaimed vehemently ; and the next instant uttered a piercing scream.

The Count flung open a small wicket gate that led through the myrtle hedge, and stood before them.

The Marquis quitted his grasp of Nerissa, and made a faint attempt at some laughing excuse ; but he read in the stern countenance of the father, that the gross insult of his behavior was discovered.

“Return to the house, Nerissa,” said the Count after a pause, “and desire the Marquis of Montferrat’s servants to assemble their master’s retinue, and prepare his equipage, as he intends quitting Belmont im-

mediately. Your lordship will excuse this abrupt leave-taking," added he, "when I inform you that I have overheard your late conversation with my daughter's waiting-maid, and that I have good authority for believing that to the arts of a seducer, the Marquis of Montferrat adds other accomplishments equally opposed to the qualifications I require in a friend or guest."

He bowed haughtily, turning on his heel, as he concluded; while the Marquis returned his bow as haughtily, in silence, and, hastening away, in less than half an hour had quitted Belmont for ever.

Count Guido remained in bitter reverie. "So much for my perspicacity," thought he, "in judging of the qualities of the man I chose for a friend, and whom I might have gone on to wish should be my son-in-law,—my Portia's husband! And to a mere trick of fancy, to a poor credulity, which Bellario would fain call generosity, and faith in goodness, because it characterizes me,—to this miserable blindness of mine, might my child have been sacrificed! It was just such blinded judgment that led me to cast away the means of consolation vouchsafed by Heaven, and fly from the fresh well-spring of joy contained in my infant daughter, to bury myself in arid oriental solitude. Little has my own poor judgment bested me in my course through life. Better to refer all things to chance, even things of greatest moment, than decide them by so erring, so worthless a guide, as judgment of mine. Chance once befriended me beyond all the judgment I ever exercised. It was chance that determined my return, and led me to the first beholding of my love, my sainted Portia. And shall not chance prove a better trust than judgment?"

He lingered in such dark thoughts of bitterness and self-reproach, until at length his daughter came to seek him, wooing him to return with her to the house, lest too late wandering beneath the trees in the night air should injure his health, which had never been strong

since the period of his absence. Long fasts, neglect, gnawing sorrow, during his sojourn in the desert ; with, latterly, a restless desire for return thence, had totally undermined his constitution, rendering him the wasted, worn, altered being, whom his friend had failed to recognize on his return home, for the once blooming, animated Guido di Belmonte. The reaction of delight, in discovering his daughter to be so fertile a source of happiness, had at first exercised a salutary effect ; but now his slowly-engendered malady assumed a more decided form, and his health and strength were evidently failing.

He was perfectly aware of his own declining state ; but his chief anxiety was to prevent it from being perceived by his daughter ; he carefully withheld from her his sleepless nights, his unequal pulse, and the constant fever that consumed him. He made ceaseless pretexts to veil his loss of appetite, his varying spirits, his parching thirst, from her observation ; and when he noted her affectionate eye dwelling upon the wan and wasted cheek, when he felt her fresh palm linger inquiringly upon his thin burning hand, or with fond solicitude her look would minutely question the tokens she dared not believe she saw of illness and decay, he would rouse himself to evade her suspicions, to dissipate her fears.

In order the more effectually to do this, he made a strong effort to carry out a resolution he had for some time entertained, of taking her himself to Venice, to introduce her to the several families of distinction, who had urged Portia and himself to return the visit paid to Belmont on the occasion of the festival there. He was desirous that she should form some valuable friendships, which might support her in that sad period when he himself should be compelled to quit her. He knew that she would always possess a father in Bel-lario ; but he was anxious to smooth the way for that generous friend himself, by establishing those relations, which he would best wish her to form in the world.

He felt, too, that this would afford him an opportunity of accomplishing a project which had occurred to him in that self-communing he had lately held with regard to chance and judgment. Impetuous ever, in his nature, his sensitive conscience had lately yielded to feverish promptings and rash fancies, and he now conceived a scheme as eccentric in its aim, as his former exercise of judgment had been hasty and defective.

He determined that while he was in Venice he would order to be constructed three caskets, severally made of gold, silver, and lead ; and that on the choice of these caskets should rest a decision of dearest moment. In one of them he resolved to inclose the portrait of his daughter, and whosoever of her suitors should choose the casket containing her picture, should be her appointed husband. In devising this mode of election, he seemed to give chance the full weight of the decision ; but in the carrying out of his plan, it will hereafter be seen that judgment on the part of him who should choose from the caskets was involved in the election itself.

An early day was appointed for their departure from Belmont. Portia, delighted to find her father in sufficient health and spirits for such a visit, anticipated her introduction to Venice, with all the pleasure and eagerness usual to a young mind about to enter for the first time upon so new and brilliant a scene. Their noble friends vied with each other, who best should contribute to render the welcome of the Count di Belmonte and his daughter gay and attractive ; and all exhibited rival splendor and variety of amusement to entertain such honored guests. Each day some new pastime was proposed ; each day some diversity of sport, some ingenuity of device, some reunion of illustrious people, some gay masking, some daylight excursion, or nightly revelry.

On one occasion, the grand canal presented a scene of unsurpassed brilliancy and animation ; a boat-race

was to take place, a distance was appointed, prizes were instituted, and all Venice thronged to behold the issue of the contention. Boats of all sizes and descriptions crowded hither; craft of every kind pushed and jostled; gondolas glided to and fro; boatmen shouted and called; gayly-dressed ladies and gallants smiled and flirted; draperies of every vivid color depended from windows; balconies were filled with gazers; steps and doorways, like the entrances to beehives, supported their clusters, and swarmed with living creatures.

The appointed boats that were to engage in the race, were of peculiarly small plain construction, well built for making their way over the water, and each occupied by two men only, who impelled them in the manner peculiar to the Venetian boatmen—pushing rather than rowing.

These contesting boats were singularly in contrast with others of a larger size, which were hung with silken festoons, and glittered with gold and silver fringe, waved with crested plumes, and were richly adorned and emblazoned with the arms of the several families to whom they belonged. The rowers or gondoliers in each, varied in number, but were dressed in livery of a superb though singular kind; being of variegated and fantastically assorted colors; oddly fancied stuffs, and forming quaint devices; sometimes a set of husbandmen with straw hats, flowers, floating ribbons, and rustic attire; sometimes a band of green foresters; and sometimes a row of nondescript beings with red arms, yellow bodies, and blue legs.

In some of these decorated vessels (which generally contained the patrons and abettors of the race) might be seen lounging at the prow, extended on cushions, some representative of a noble house, who by his negligent attitude, and affectedly abstracted look, seemed willing to afford others the gratification of contemplating his fine person and studied dress. Many of these gallants indulged in only a furtive glance at the beauty

that surrounded them, and it seemed to be a sort of fashion among them to affect being the admired instead of the admirers on this occasion.

In one of these boats, there reclined a young Venetian, who was remarkable, even among so much surrounding brightness, for the splendor of his dress, the costliness of his boat-decorations, the whimsicality of his men's attire, and the gravity with which he observed the affected fashion alluded to just now. He maintained an air of profound abstraction, as if noways concerned in the busy scene around him, and looked like a recumbent statue rather than a living man. As one in the procession of boats which glided idly backwards and forwards in mid-stream before the race began, his vessel passed and repassed the galley in which the Count di Belmonte and his daughter sat with their friends to behold the pageant; and in the downcast eyes and listless figure of this young gallant, Portia recognized the young gentleman pointed out by Nerissa among the company at the Belmont festival as being so superlatively handsome.

"His affectation would spoil him altogether, but that it seems merely assumed in conformity with the prevailing mode here," thought she. "I will look at him once more, when his vessel comes round again."

She was so intently watching his return, that she paid little heed to an old lady, a member of the house of Manfrini, who had taken a great fancy to her, and who was endeavoring to entertain her with a description of the various persons she recognized. "Yonder is Signor Luigi and his three fair daughters," said the old lady; "they are saluting that grave gentleman in the sober suit, who is no less a personage than Signor Antonio, whom my lord calls the 'royal merchant.' He is as worthy as he is wealthy, and does a world of good with his riches. They say he is very generous to poor struggling tradesmen, and tender to unfortunate debtors. Moreover he has good blood in his veins, and is of gentle birth. There goes that

pleasant scapegrace, Signor Gratiano ; and in the farther boat is young Signor Lorenzo, with two of his friends. Yonder is the galley of his highness the prince of Morocco, who has lately arrived in this city with his train, and who, I understand, is so courteous and pleasant-spoken, that you forget he is black. But for my part, I can't fancy a black man could be so agreeable as a white man ; I own I have prejudices, and that's one of mine,—I hate people of color. Talking of prejudices, there's that detestable old Jew ! How dare he come among us, I should like to know ? But that's one of the drawbacks on such an occasion as this. It allows of so mixed an assemblage. A paltry trafficker may elbow a magnifico, or a Jew usurer associate with us Christians ! They say the villainous dog has a pretty black-eyed daughter whom he keeps shut up in his miserable den of a house, instead of bringing the poor thing out to have a peep at such a sight as this ! Ah, here comes young Lord Bassanio again ; he is a true gentleman ; and my lord says, a brave soldier, and an excellent scholar, for all he is playing off such coxcombical airs to-day. I am sorry to hear that he is ruining his fortune with the extravagant course he is running. — Why, the equipment of that vessel, I should say, never cost him less than——”

What the gossip-loving old lady might have gone on farther to say, Portia knew not, for at this moment, her father leaned forward to accost the young gentleman, who, starting from his abstracted condition, and seeing who spoke to him, recognized the Count with a respectful earnestness and a lively warmth of manner that offered a remarkable contrast with his previous apathy. As the young man stood there with his hat courteously removed, and his attitude full of grace and deference, replying to her father's salutation, Portia thought Nerissa's estimate was certainly correct ; and when, a moment after, the young Venetian happened to raise his eyes to hers, he found them fixed upon

him with the complacency inspired by such a thought. Several times again in the course of the day he met that look ; and when, at the conclusion of the race, he retired from the contention as one of the losers, he felt consoled by the sympathetic glance of interest that once more flashed upon him from those expressive eyes. A thought for the first time thrilled through the heart of Bassanio, that had he not injured his fortune by a hitherto idle and spendthrift course, he might have aspired to obtain a far more glorious prize than the one awarded to the winning boat.

“ What if I consult with my friend and kinsman, Antonio, upon the means of repairing my fortunes ? ” thought he. “ Even were I to entreat of his generosity to bestow upon me a fitting sum to equip me for entering the lists that I might contend for her favor—his kindness hath that extent, I am certain. I will think of it ; meantime, I vow to undertake a pilgrimage to Belmont, at some not very distant day. ”

After a gay and pleasant interval spent at Venice, the father and daughter prepared to return ; and Portia had the satisfaction of remarking, that instead of the injurious effects which might perhaps have been dreaded from such unusual excitement and exertion upon the weakened frame of her father, the change seemed, on the contrary, to have been beneficial. As they proceeded homewards in their coach, which met them on the mainland, after ferrying across, the Count spoke playfully with his daughter of their late scenes of gayety ; and in his sprightly tone and cheerful glance, Portia read more healthful symptoms than she had noted for many a day.

“ And of all those stores of splendor, of all those bright gayeties, I have brought you away no richer token than this slight bauble, ” said he, placing a ruby ring upon her finger, “ but it will serve to remind my Portia of a pleasant holiday with her loving father ; and such thoughts I know she prizes above jewels the most rare and precious that might be found in all Venice. ”

His daughter kissed it fondly, as well as the hand that placed it on hers, and said :—“ It shall never quit my finger, dear father.”

“ Nay, you shall give it some day to him, who shall possess the hand itself—to your husband, my Portia.” And the father unconsciously sighed.

Portia looked brightly in his face, and said, till she met with one she could love and honor as she did her father and cousin, she cared not to behold the man who was to claim the ring ; but that as it was not likely she should ever encounter such a being, she might safely engage to endow him with the ring, with herself, and with all she possessed whenever so superlative a knight should appear.

Her father pressed the hand that lay in his, and looked proudly into the beaming countenance that was raised to his own. He seemed about to say something earnestly to her, when he perceived that the carriage was approaching a group of ruins which lay on the confines of the Belmont domain, and he leaned from the window to regard them. Portia, observing the look, called softly to the attendants to pause ; and they remained a few moments in contemplation of a scene as lovely as it was replete with gentle memories for those two who now gazed upon its beauty.

The spot was bathed in the gorgeous light of the setting sun, and the stillness of the evening was so profound that the beating of their hearts might almost have been heard, as the father and daughter sat there in silent yet perfect sympathy.

Suddenly, a groan, as of one in pain, reached their ear. They listened. Another ; and then another. “ Open the door, Stephano !” called the voice of Portia to one of the attendants. “ Let me get out of the coach. I will see who this sufferer is, dear father, and return to you immediately,” added she ; and scarcely waiting for his reply, she bounded from the carriage-step.

“ Follow your young mistress, Stephano ; and you,

Rico ;” said the Count. “ Balthazar, and the rest, may remain here.” And he watched the light figure of his child, as Portia, intent upon her charitable quest, pressed eagerly forward in the direction whence the sound had seemed to proceed.

At the foot of an aged tree that cast its broad shadows among the broken columns and fractured arches of the ruins, which formed the remains of some antique temple, and lay scattered in classic fragments around, she found a man stretched upon the grass, apparently in the last stage of exhaustion. He wore the coarse and travel-stained garb of a pilgrim ; and by his side lay the staff, and hat sewn with cockleshells, that bespoke his being one of those pious wayfarers.

Portia addressed herself to the succor of this unfortunate ; bidding one of the attendants, who had been sent after her, return quickly that he might relieve her father’s suspense, and bring back some of the restoratives that had been placed in the coach for the Count’s use. She then desired Stephano to place himself beside the apparently dying man, and to raise his head upon his knee, while she herself fanned the sufferer’s brow, and chafed his horny sun-burnt hands with her own delicate palms.

As she gazed upon the wan lips, closed eyes, and contracted brow of this poor creature, she could not but call to mind the sufferings of her own father, when he too had been an unhappy wanderer upon the earth ; and her charitable anxiety to restore him became even more strenuous. Presently Rico arrived, bearing with him such remedies, as were not long in restoring the pilgrim to himself ; for it appeared that he had fainted from want, fatigue, and exhaustion ; but was so far from being in a dying state, that, with the aid of the two attendants, he was shortly able to raise himself, and pour forth fervent thanks to the fair being who had bestowed such timely succor.

“ Do not exhaust yourself with speaking, good

father," said Portia, "but lean upon Rico and Stephano, and they will support you as far as my coach, which will carry us to Belmont, where we shall find food and repose."

In this manner they contrived to reach the spot where she had left the Count; who, assisting his daughter to place her charge within the carriage, bade the attendants proceed at a pace accommodated to the wanderer's aching limbs. In the course of the drive home, they learned that he was a poor pilgrim, returning from the Holy Land; that he had been endeavoring to reach a neighboring monastery, which lay two miles from Belmont, where he might obtain hospitality, but had travelled so far in the heat during that and the preceding day, without having been able to procure food, that he had at length sunk fainting upon the grass beneath the ruins, where he might have perished, but for Portia's seasonable aid.

"And now, methinks, I could ask no better fate of Heaven, than to spend the remainder of my days on that spot where my opening eyes beheld that ministering angel of bounty;" concluded the pilgrim. "In such a hermitage, I might calmly and peacefully pass the remnant of my life in heavenly contemplation, in lauding His mercy who sent her thither, and in beseeching Him to grant her the happiness she so richly merits."

"And you will let me plan this hermitage, and provide all the arrangements of the cell, will you not, padre mio?" asked Portia, with all the elation of a young heart enjoying the pleasure of a kindly deed,—and which elation of spirit was peculiarly hers. "You will allow me to install this holy man in the spot he has himself chosen for his pious retirement, will you not, my dear father?"

"My Portia knows I can refuse her nothing," replied the Count; "more especially when she seeks to secure for us so holy a neighbor as yourself, good father."

Accordingly, when a day or two had elapsed, and the worthy pilgrim had sufficiently recovered his strength, he removed to the hermit's cell, which was provided for him among the ruins by the permission of the Count, and under the immediate superintendence of his daughter ; and so eagerly, so indefatigably, did Portia work at these arrangements, that Nerissa bantered her upon all this zeal and ardor in behalf of a poor old hermit and his cell, when she had not found time for one single hour's gossip, to tell her about Venice, its revelries, its gallants, its rival beauties, its braveries of attire, its thousand attractions, or the millions of broken-hearted suitors, whom she must have left with no other resource than to throw themselves headlong into the lagune.

But Portia's ardor was not of that kind which burns itself out in the first glow of emotion, upon the performance of a good deed ; she was as steady as she was warm-hearted, as firm and consistent as gentle and benign. She not only established this venerable man in his chosen retreat ; but she ceased not to cheer and delight its solitude by her occasional visits and kindly presence, receiving in return pious instruction, and interesting narratives of his former wandering life, in his own person furnishing meek and consoling example of patience, faith, and peace.

Soon, she had need indeed of consolation. One morning, she was sitting by her father's side in the library, reading to him from one of his favorite volumes, when she suddenly felt his hand, in which hers was locked, twitch convulsively, while his head, a moment afterwards, dropped powerless upon the back of the chair in which he sat. She leaned towards him—he was speechless ; but he gave her one of those mute yet eloquent looks, in which the soul speaks through the eyes.

“ My dear, dear father ! ” With her disengaged hand, she hastily bared his throat, drew his hair back from his temples, and bathed them with some essence

which happened to stand upon the library-table within reach.

Her first anxiety was to still the fears that throbbed at her heart, lest they might agitate her father, and render herself less capable of commanding thought and energy for his assistance ; her next, that she might be able to reach the bell to summon help, for she found she could not withdraw her hand from her father's strict grasp, which seemed rigid and involuntary.

After one cautious effort, without being able to succeed in stretching her disengaged arm so far, she leaned towards his ear, and said in a low voice, which she endeavored to render steady and calm :—" I am about to call aloud, dear father ; do not be alarmed at the noise." And then she called in a clear ringing tone :—" Balthazar ! Balthazar !" But at this period of the morning, few of the servants were in that portion of the house ; most of them being busy in the offices, and dispersed elsewhere, knowing that this was the hour when the Count and his daughter usually sat quietly reading in the library, not requiring their attendance.

All this passed through Portia's brain, in a strange reasoning kind of calmness, as she stood there, vainly endeavoring to make her voice bring other response than its own echoes. Between every call, she held her breath, that she might catch the most distant sound of approaching help ; but nothing could she hear, save these vain echoes as they travelled fruitlessly through the long galleries, alternated by the fearful pauses, and the beating of her own heart.

Her father seemed to comprehend her position, for he continued to cast those expressive looks upon her ; though he could articulate no sound, nor unclasp his fingers from the strict grasp they maintained round those of his daughter.

She gazed into those speaking eyes which seemed striving to convey some injunction to her, that she might try to read their meaning ; and she once saw

him attempt to raise his other hand, as if in the languid endeavor to make some signal, but she could not divine its import.

She whispered words of tenderness, beseeching him not to exhaust his strength by such efforts, while she continued to bathe his temples, and renewed her own attempts to summon help.

At length she heard a sound, at once discordant with her present feelings, and welcome from its assurance of aid—Nerissa's merry laugh! Clearly and imperatively once again Portia called. Nerissa hastened towards her lady's voice; but the mirthful look and tone with which she entered, were stricken into dismay by what she beheld.

Portia, by a steadfast effort, controlled her emotion, while she desired Nerissa to speed for Balthazar and other attendants, to dispatch a messenger for medical assistance, and another to Padua to summon Bel-lario to Belmont.

With the mastery of a well-disciplined mind, and the fortitude of a firm, loving, unselfish heart, she compelled herself to issue these orders in a calm, almost unfaltering tone, and to assist Balthazar in his attempts to alleviate his master's condition. The faithful servitor wished to persuade his master to be supported to his own apartment, but at this proposal for removing him, the features of the Count expressed so visible a repugnance, that Portia would not permit it to be urged.

"If we could but get my lord to lie down, Madam," whispered the weeping Balthazar, "I feel sure that he would be easier. My lord the Count had one of these seizures before—a night or two before you went to Venice; but he would not permit your ladyship to be informed of it, because it went off by the dawn of morning, and he said it was nothing, and you should not be made uneasy about such a trifle."

Portia repressed the bitter words that arose to her lips, with which she felt inclined to reprove Balthazar

for having concealed from her so vital a secret ; but she would not permit herself to give one thought to regret, while she could devote them to the present succor of her father. She knelt by his side, and murmured softly :—“ Will my father try if lying down may relieve him ?”

There was a look of acquiescence.

But when Balthazar and another attendant advanced to support him away, the same expression of denial crossed his features as before.

“ Will you not let us place you in bed, dearest father ?”

The expression remained unchanged.

“ We think if you were reclining, it would be a better position than as you are now, dear father. Will you not try to lie down ?”

His eyes resumed their eager look.

“ I think my father objects to remove from this room, Balthazar, and that he would lie down, if a couch were made for him here.” Portia fixed her eyes upon her father’s, as she uttered these words, and perceived unequivocal tokens that she had interpreted his wishes aright.

The thought that the love between them enabled her thus to read his unspoken desires, caused tears to spring from sudden joy, which had been forbidden to the pangs of grief. A sorrow may sometimes be wrestled with, and denied the indulgence of expression, when a tender transport over-masters resolution and will have vent in sobs.

As his daughter thus hung over him, yielding to the emotions of her heart for the first time since his attack, her father seemed equally clearly to read the interpretation of his Portia’s feelings ; and thus did true and perfect love reveal to each, the silent articulation of their mutual thought.

The attendants speedily arranged one of the library couches for the reception of the Count, and they laid him softly down in a recumbent position ; his daugh-

ter still with her hand fast locked in his, which could not unclench its grasp.

She bade them lower the dark green draperies of the nearest window still more, over the blinds that excluded the glare of the noontide sun, and desired Balthazar alone to remain in the room, as she hoped her father might sleep.

Portia sat gazing upon that beloved face, listening to the low, irregular breathings, and striving to hush the forebodings that appalled her with the thought that she might behold him die there, before the physician and surgeon could arrive.

She struggled hard with the terrible fear, and dropped softly to her knees by her father's side, that she might beseech strength and comfort of her Father in Heaven. As she knelt meekly there, pouring out her soul in prayer to the Almighty Parent in behalf of the earthly one, she felt the hand that still held hers, slightly relax its grasp ; and a moment afterwards, that deep, tender tone she knew so well, and which she had almost despaired of ever hearing again, murmured the words :—" My Portia !"

She arose hastily but quietly, and bent over the couch.

" Are we alone, my Portia ?" he said.

Portia bade Balthazar retire to the ante-room, but to wait within call, and not to fail letting her know when the medical men should arrive.

" We are alone now, dearest father," said she.

" I have no moment to lose," said the Count. " This interval of speech and strength is mercifully lent to me, but it may not last long, and I dread lest I once more behold myself reduced to my late torture of impotency in speech and action, while so much remains to be said and done for the welfare of my Portia."

She strove to tranquillize him ; and besought him not to let anxiety for her, risk fresh exertion, which might occasion relapse.

He regarded not her words, but proceeded with an eagerness that partook of his old spirit :—"Unlock yonder cabinet, my Portia, and bring me the three caskets, with the fold of sealed parchment which you will find beside them."

She obeyed his directions ; fearful lest in endeavoring to dissuade him from the exertion, opposition to his wishes might produce worse effects than submission.

"Tell me what words are engraven upon the lid of each of these caskets, my Portia."

"Upon the golden one is inscribed, 'Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire ;' upon the silver one, 'Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves ;' and upon the leaden one, 'Who chooseth me, must give and hazard all he hath,'" replied she.

"By this parchment deed, which is a will I executed when in Venice, my child, feeling even then convinced that I might shortly expect this fatal summons—I have provided that on the choice of these caskets shall depend your destiny in marriage. In one of these caskets is locked your picture ; you will find the three corresponding keys of gold, silver and lead, in the right-hand drawer of the cabinet. Of these keys take charge yourself ; you will find specified in the will, on what occasions you are to deliver them up. My original aim in devising this scheme, on which I have rested the decision of my Portia's fate, has been somewhat modified ; but my wish is still that she promise to abide by the terms of my will. Yes," continued he, as if to himself, and with a wild earnestness that lighted his fast-dimming eyes, and lent a momentary energy to his half-extinct voice, "I have learned to think that thus chance and judgment may be made to aid each other, and wisely combine to decide what else might never justly be awarded. For who shall deserve her ? Bellario truly said it." He paused an instant ; but meeting the eye of his Portia, and reading there her terror at his wandering

words, he strove to recall what he wished especially to say to her. "'Tis for your sake, my Portia ; 'tis best thus, believe it. Will you give me your promise ? Do you pledge your word to dispose of yourself according to the plan set forth in my will ?"

" I vow solemnly to obey your will in all things, my father ;" exclaimed Portia.

A serene peace dwelt upon his features at her words, and he feebly stretched his arms towards her. She flung herself upon the bed beside him, and tenderly straining him in the embrace he sought, she heard him murmur : " Now happily I go to await with *her* the future coming of our child—our Portia."

When Balthazar came in with the doctors, they found the father and daughter clasped thus in each other's arms ; both profoundly still. But the daughter's was the stillness of a death-like swoon—the father's, that of death itself !

When Portia recovered from the fainting-fit in which her senses lay steeped, during so lengthened a period that it alarmed Nerissa for her life, the first object that met her eyes was Bellario. That dear and tender friend, that devoted cousin, was there watching over her ; to hail the first look of returning consciousness ; to assist in reconciling her to meet the light of existence, now so shorn of its beams for that loving daughter. He was there to temper the first shock which the restored sense of her loss would surely bring ; he was close beside her, to lighten her grief by sharing it, to console her by his sympathy, to strengthen her by his help, and to afford her comfort and hope by his love, his tenderness, his true affection.

Between them there had ever been perfect understanding and intimate knowledge ; and she had scarcely lost a truer father, than the one she possessed in Bellario.

In his society she learned to encounter the blow which had befallen her, to endure the daily sense of her bereavement, and, in time, to convert its remem-

brance into a source of hallowed memories rather than of bitter regrets. For, once again, did this devoted friend make his other duties subservient to the exigencies of his Portia's welfare ; once again, did he dedicate his time and thoughts to Belmont and to her ; once again did he constitute himself a father to this father-left young creature. During the whole time of her mourning, he never quitted her ; consecrating himself entirely to the task of affording comfort and consolation by his presence, and of cheering and strengthening her in that period of seclusion and retirement.

But when more than a twelvemonth had elapsed, and he had beheld sorrow succeed to despondency, resignation to sorrow, and cheerful hope of one day rejoining her parents to resignation, he felt that she ought no longer to indulge in so strict a privacy ; but that the time had now arrived for the fulfilment of her father's will.

The terms of this will, as regarded the heiress of Belmont, were generally known ; and it was only in accordance with the respect due to the period of her mourning, which she desired to pass in complete seclusion, that the host of suitors, attracted by the hope of winning so rich a prize, had hitherto refrained from entering the lists, and seeking to ascertain their fortune by the decision of the fateful caskets. The reputation of her wealth and beauty had extended far and wide ; and Bellario knew that it sufficed but to proclaim the period of Portia's season of mourning and retirement to be at an end, in order that suitors without number would flock to the gates of Belmont. He was well aware of her determination to abide scrupulously by the dictates of her father's will ; and however he might secretly doubt the merits of the prescribed plan, which assigned so important a point of decision to a trial for the most part of chance, he respected the daughter's pious obedience too much, to utter a single word subversive of her resolution.

When therefore Bellario announced to her that he

thought it now behooved her to deny herself a longer indulgence in solitude, and to throw open the gates of Belmont for the advent of visitors, she, with her usual good sense and dignity, sought not to delay an inevitable consequence ; but told him that however she might have of herself desired to live still to themselves, seeking no other companionship, no better friendship, no dearer love, she yet perceived the wisdom of his counsel, and was prepared to conform to his suggestion.

“ And that you may now appear in your true and exclusive right as mistress of Belmont, my Portia,” said he, “ I shall now withdraw myself to my quiet bachelor house at Padua, and leave you to receive these visitors, unsupported, save by your own dignity and noble discretion.” Then seeing her about to remonstrate at losing him just when his presence was most desired, he went on to say :—“ It will be wiser for you to accustom yourself henceforth to rely firmly upon your own conduct, my Portia, and to relinquish the society of one, who, though most dear to you, I know, is yet one to whom you have been habituated to look for counsel and assistance. For these you may still apply, by letter ; we have long had the custom of corresponding with each other. Fail not therefore to inform me of yourself constantly, and above all, to send for my help whenever it may avail you in aught of exigence or emergency ; but in conduct, in action, learn to depend upon yourself, and determine to hazard rather some mistake, so that you may rely upon your own understanding, your own powers. You know, my Portia, that I have never flattered you ; I have even preferred over-sedulous watching and reforming your errors, to remarking upon your merits. But I have discerned those merits none the less clearly from my having noted them silently instead of lauding them ; and it is now an occasion when I may honestly speak of their existence, and tell you that I think their nature and number are such, that they serve to make you one

of the noblest and worthiest of your sex. You have reached an age when a woman is at her brightest, her most attractive period of life. You have youth, beauty, wealth, virtue, native intellect, a cultivated understanding, and a generous, innocent, happy heart. Your attractions, affluence, and rank, will command attention ; your courtesy and dignity will insure respect ; your talents and virtues will win esteem and attachment ; and your loving nature will be a source of happiness to yourself and others. Your generosity and beneficence will prevent your riches from exciting envy ; and it will be only those men who cannot bear that woman should be the bestowing party, who will be mean enough to impute pride to one who has so much in her gift yet who bestows it so liberally. Your intellectual accomplishments will draw the accusation of pedantry and unfeminine pre-eminence, from the ignorant and consciously-inferior alone, among men ; when it is seen how modestly and wisely you exercise your faculties. It is merely because I know that the most perfect of human beings never yet entirely escaped censure, that I point out whence it may reach you ; but with the good, the gifted, the refined and exact in judgment, Portia of Belmont must ever be loved and admired as the exemplar of all that is worthiest in woman. Feeling and knowing this, as I do, your faithful friend and cousin commits you unfeeling to your own guidance, to your own undirected course, secure that it will be one of unblemished beauty, of distinguished excellence. God bless and protect you, my dearest Portia ; omit not to write of all you think, say, or do, to your own true Bellario."

Thus proudly confiding, thus tenderly yet wisely, did Bellario quit her ; and it required all Portia's judgment and prudence, to bid her acquiesce in a measure which deprived her of so beloved a friend—who to his self-denying discretion joined so fond a partiality, so perfect and devoted an attachment.

In less than a week after his departure, Belmont

was once more thronged with visitors. Not only the nobles and magnificos of Venice, with their families, crowded to offer their congratulations to their fair friend, the heiress of Belmont ; but suitors of every country, renowned in fame, and illustrious in birth, poured from all quarters, and sought the adventure of the caskets, contesting for the glorious prize therein at issue.

As the successive competitors tried their fate, and withdrew, one after the other equally unprosperous in their selection, Portia half unconsciously indulged a sanguine thought that the right choice might perhaps be reserved by destiny for one whom she could prefer, and she each day learned less and less to dread the decision, seeing it so often deferred. But she would now and then playfully complain to Nerissa of the waywardness of her fate, which placed her disposal at the mercy of a lottery. Nerissa would laughingly attempt to console her by assurances that she would make her own marriage depend on the same chance.

“ I know,” said she, “ that whenever I may think of a husband, I shall make a quick choice ; I’m very sure I shan’t be long making up my mind whether I could like a man well enough to take him for good and all ; and, who knows ? perhaps when the right suitor to your ladyship shall select the right casket, the right lover for me may present himself at the right same moment, and so the rites of marriage may give both the gallants a right over us at once from that day forward, and every thing may end rightly and happily after all.”

Sometimes, Nerissa would think of that young lord whom she had thought so handsome, so graceful, and so seeming-worthy of her lady at the Belmont festival ; and allowed herself to indulge a secret hope that he might some day or other present himself at Belmont among other suitors, with better success than they.

And in fact, he, like every one else, had heard of

the heiress of Belmont ; of the adventure of the caskets, and of how it was to decide of her disposal in marriage. His former thought recurred, which had lain dormant during the period of her mourning and seclusion ; and he now resolved that he would seek advice and assistance of his friend Antonio, and would try his fate at Belmont, where he would commence his suit to Portia by a frank disclosure of the state of his ruined fortunes, and his desire to owe all things to her bounty and her love—could he once obtain confirmation of his hope that he was not wholly indifferent to her.

Bassanio's spendthrift course had been rather the result of youth, and exuberance of spirits, than arisen from a native tendency to foppery and extravagance. He was possessed of high qualities, as well as of a handsome person. His love for his friend Antonio was warm, sincere, and fervent ; and the sense he entertained of the many benefits he had received at the hands of this munificent kinsman, which in a baser nature might have degenerated into humiliating consciousness and consequent dislike, in Bassanio's took the shape of gratitude, respect, and indestructible attachment. He had also an exalted sense of honor, a refined appreciation of goodness and beauty, and entertained an utter scorn of falsehood in word or deed.

But to return to Belmont—to Portia—to Nerissa.

One day, when there had been as usual a numerous arrival of suitors during the preceding week, and there were then abiding in the house no fewer than six gentlemen,—a Neapolitan prince, a County Palatine, a French lord, an English baron, a Scotch earl, and a German duke's nephew,—all attracted hither by the fame of the rich heiress, Portia and Nerissa sat at their embroidery frame in the library. Portia loved this room for the sake of her father, whom she had here beheld for the last time, and for the sake of Bel-lario, with whom she had here spent some of the

happiest hours of her existence. She made it her own peculiar sitting-room, therefore ; and here she sat on the morning in question, chatting gayly with Nerissa in their usual free, pleasant, light-hearted manner.

And so, in the pretended pouting of a favorite of fortune, Portia said :—“ *By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.*”

What Nerissa answered, we all know—or ought to know. Her words are to be found in the second scene of a certain play ; where “ my master desires to speak with you.”



THE THANE'S DAUGHTER.



TALE II.

THE THANE'S DAUGHTER.

“I would not have such a heart in my bosom, for the dignity of the whole body.”—*Macbeth*.

THE night-wind howled and swept over the heathy plains that surrounded the castle. It drove on shriekingly ; then paused ; and then the sharp lashings of the rain-storm pelted onward before its fierce will. The distant hills were hung with mist ; and when the flashes of lightning darted a momentary glare upon all around, they served but to illumine the dense dank veil that shrouded castle, hill, and valley.

Dismally and wailingly the gust panted on, lamenting ; and but held in its mighty breath to take fresh force for the next burst of rage. Moaning and plaintive, it lulled and halted ; then screaming and hurling wildly on, it poured forth its fury, aloud, abroad, aloft, scattering clouds and mists, wrenching trees from their rooted firmness, dashing the waters of stream, lake, and torrent, and filling the sky with uproar and tempest.

Round the walls and battlements of the castle it beat, and tore, and raved ; the rain whirled its sheeted drifts against the stony security, as if mad with impotent endeavours to penetrate the building, and whelm all beneath its washing inundation ; the lightning darted fiery threats amid turret and tower, in vivid, sudden, quick-succeeding flashes ; while the deep-rolling thunder mingled its awful menaces with

the howls and complainings of the wind. The wrath of nature seemed striving to find voice in the tumult of the vengeful elements ; as these storm-ministers still beat, and tore, and raved round the castle walls.

For within these walls—in one of the upper chambers of the castle—lay one in the pangs of travail ; and that night a child was born into the world, destined to read a world-wide lesson, how unhallowed desires and towering ambition can deface the image of virtue in a human heart, and teach it to spurn and outrage the dictates of nature herself.

The lights in the chamber were screened and dimmed, that they might not disturb the sufferer. The voices of the attendant women were suppressed, as they muttered among themselves ; and their step was cautious, as they occasionally moved about in obedience to the behests of an aged woman, who seemed to preside over the sick-room, officiating as midwife, and directing all things according as her skill prompted, to alleviate her lady's sufferings. Nought was heard in the chamber but the lowered voices of the attendants ; the slight clicking of the wood-embers that lay between the pair of iron dogs upon the hearth ; a few stifled moans from the bed of pain ; a word or two in reply, of support and comfort from the aged nurse-ministrant ; while amidst all these hushed sounds within, mingled the howlings of the storm from without, which still beat, and tore, and raved round the castle walls.

“ It is a wild night, Bethoc, is it not ? ” murmured the sick lady to her faithful nurse.

“ It is, my lady, ” replied old Bethoc. “ But you will think the rays of the blessed sun are shining, when you behold the light of your child's face. Bear ye bravely, my lady, and think of the morning that will dawn upon you then, to console you for the sore dark night ye're passing through. ”

In the hall below there is a meal toward. Tables

are spreading for a second supper ; for the lord of the castle cannot retire to rest while his lady lies in perilous strait ; and as it is many hours since the evening-meal, he orders another, as much that he may have some object which may serve to make the time seem to lag less heavily, as because he feels aught of hunger or thirst. The seeing his attendants bustle to and fro in active preparation, is something too, in that season of suspense ; and the old thane sits half watching them, half gazing into the cheerful fire that roars upon the huge hearth, as his hand rests upon the neck of one of a leash of tall deer-hounds that stand at his knee, while its companions lie at his feet, and regard their master's face with that sagacious look of sympathy with his anxious expression of countenance, which seems akin to rational intelligence.

But through all the setting of tables, and ranging of stools and benches, and jingling of cans, and bringing in of dishes, and wine-flasks and ale-flagons ; and through all the hurry of serving-men, and shuffling of feet, and calling of voices, and opening and shutting of doors—through all, and above all, is heard the howling of the storm from without, that still beats, and tears, and raves round the castle walls.

“ Go, one of you, and enquire how my lady doth now,” said the thane ; “ bid Bethoc send me word how she fares ; and not to fail to let me have good news as soon as may be—of a boy, if it please Heaven ;—for *her* sake !”

There was a parley among the attendants ; a pause, a consultation, as if hesitating who should fulfil the bidding of their master, which spoke a tale of neglectful and too-easy rule, on his part, with correspondent carelessness, and tardiness of obedience on theirs.

“ Let Ivan go—”

“ No, no, let Fergus go—”

“ Indeed, I am not going, just as the meat is serving in ; send young Culen ; let Culen go. Here, Culen, my lad, take a torch, and away with you to my

lady's chamber, and bring my lord word how it fares with her now. If it be your luck to bring back tidings of an heir, who knows but the news may be worth promotion to thee ; for my lord's coffers are too ill provided, I fear, to let him give thee any thing else. Had there been likelihood of a broad piece, now, I might have gone myself."

These words were spoken aside, among the serving-men ; with but half-suppressed chuckling, for the good old thane's well-known slender means, as well as easy disposition, caused him to be held in slight respect by his retainers, whose hireling natures would have paid more servile deference to affluent tyranny.

Ceaseless wars, with their concomitant evils of ruinous exactions, scanty tillage, unproductive harvests, and the impossibility of domestic improvement, had entirely drained this formerly-wealthy thane's resources ; and he was now an impoverished old man, with little beside his patrimonial castle and title, to prevent him from being nominally, as well as actually, a beggar.

The little page, Culen, left the hall as he was bid ; bearing with him a torch to guide him through the long dark galleries and corridors, and winding stairs, and many chambers, which he had to traverse ere he could reach the one where his lady-mistress lay. The lad screened the light he bore, as well as he could, from the strong draughts of air that came streaming through the stone passages, and met him at the opening of doors, and threatened to extinguish the flame of his torch. His heart sank as he thought of being left in darkness all alone in those dreary vaulted spaces, and the boy muttered a pater-noster, as he listened to the roaring of the wind, and fixed his eyes steadily upon the flickering light, scarcely daring to glance round, lest he might see something terrible in the gloom.

"Pshaw, what should I be afraid of?" thought he. "I a soldier (as I hope to be some day), and

afraid ! Still, it is well that good Grym taught me that prayer, which he learned when he used to serve mass when he was himself a little chap, over there at the abbey. '*Fiat voluntas tua.*' I think it must be because I'm sent of this errand to the dark lady at night ; for I ain't at all afraid of her by day-time, any more than I am of these long galleries, then. It's a terrible night ! The wind screams like an owlet ! '*Dimitte nobis debito nostra.*' It's strange that we should call my lady 'the dark lady,' and not by her name. I'll think to ask Grym about that, bytheby. I wonder whether the baby is born !''

At this instant, a peal of thunder so loud and so immediate that it seemed to shake the sturdy walls of the castle, and cause them to vibrate to their very foundation, appalled the heart of the page, Culen, and he sank involuntarily to his knee, with a trembling "*Libera nos a malo !*" Then, during the silence that ensued, the childish voice might be heard steadily and devoutly repeating the beautiful prayer to our Almighty Father. Strengthened and encouraged, the boy arose, and once more proceeded on his way to the chamber of his mistress ; where he knocked at the door, and delivered his message to one of the attendant women, who was sent out to him by old Bethoc, the nurse.

The waiting-woman stepped forth into the ante-room where the page stood, and drawing the door close behind her, she whispered to him that he might tell his lord that my lady was better, and that a little daughter was born.

"Bethoc has not dared to tell my lady yet, that the child is a girl," added the waiting-woman ; "we all know she will be so grieved with the news. She set her heart upon a son ; and if what the dark lady sets her heart upon, come not about, why then——"

She paused ; the page nodded as if he understood what she would say of the violence of their lady's disappointment, and the two attendants parted ; the one

to bear the news back to his master, the other to return to the sick-room.

On her couch lay the dark lady. Her eyes were closed—but she did not sleep. The lids veiled them, and the long jet lashes lay upon the marble cheek ; but beneath the lids the restless eye-balls quivered, and the fringed lashes were not still ; while the pale lips trembled and twitched with emotion that was strong and wakeful.

The new-born babe was on the knee of one of the attendants, close by the fire, where it lay basking and burgeoning, and stretching its limbs towards the welcome glow, like a butterfly fresh-emerged from its chrysalis enfoldings, sunning its wings in the genial warmth of noon.

The waiting-women crept quietly to and fro ; ever and anon coming to kneel softly down, and bend over the newly-born little one, to scan its infant features, and press its fairy feet to their lips, and let it curl its miniature fingers round one of theirs, in caressing womanly wont.

Bethoc hovered near her mistress, mutely sympathising with the thoughts which she knew agitated her heart, and caused those sleepless eyes to quiver and tremble.

The dark eyes open, and meet those of the aged nurse. They are eager, and fraught with solicitude and enquiry of somewhat the lips dare not frame into a question.

The nurse, to evade seeming to comprehend what she understands but too well, affects to be busied with the pillows, and to imagine that their better arrangement is the object of the lady's wish.

A little cry reaches the bed. The eyes flash open once again, in still more peremptory interrogation ; and the dark lady fixing them on Bethoc with a stern resolution not to be withstood, mutters :—" You know what I would ask !"

Bethoc answered :—“ I will bring the babe, and lay her to your breast, my lady.”

“ Dare not to say ‘ *her!* ’ ”

“ Madam, the bairn’s just a lassie ; I’d ha’ told ye of a man-child, if I could.”

A groan burst from the lips of the dark lady ; and the teeth were ground, with what sounded a curse !

The lady Gruoch, descended of one of the noblest Scottish houses, by orphanhood in her minority, became a ward of the crown ; which at that early period in Scotland, had feudal power over the lands and possessions of all minors thus left, together with the disposal of their hand in marriage. Royal expediency saw fit to bestow her as a wife upon Kenneth, thane of Moray ; who, old enough to be her father, had yet not sufficient experience to be able to win the love of the young beauty who had thus become bound to him for life. Not only had the lady no inclination for a man so much her senior, whom she had scarcely ever seen, ere she became indissolubly united to him ; but their dispositions, tempers, opinions, tastes, were so utterly at variance, that it was not to be expected that the original indifference of the bride would ever warm into the affection of a wife—all that could be hoped was, that it might not be converted into repugnance by a constant association with one so entirely opposed to her in thought, word, and deed.

But though the thane of Moray was little calculated to inspire love in her whom he had married, he was almost as little formed to excite so active a feeling as dislike, for he was bland, kind, and gentle to a fault—at least in those times, when hardihood, courage, fortitude, activity, and the austerer virtues more advantageously adorned a man than such qualities as distinguished the mild and benevolent Kenneth.

It was the very excess of these amiable qualities in her lord, which were destructive to the growth of a warmer liking for him in the heart of the lady Gruoch,

and were so peculiarly opposed to her own character. His bland manners she thought misplaced in a man whose station made him the chieftain of a band of men who should be trained to arms and warlike deeds, and disciplined to strict obedience. His kindness and benevolence she thought weakness ; his love of quiet and peaceful occupations, which led him to submit to all exactions rather than engage in contention with his neighbours, or in warfare for his sovereign, unless peremptorily summoned to the field, she looked upon as unmanly lack of spirit, and want of honourable ambition ; his serene temper was a sore trial to hers ; and his gentleness a perpetual thorn in her peace.

For her own heart beat high and proud, as she thought of the renown to be won in the tented field, —of the added glories that might be set beside those descended to her and her husband from a noble race of ancestors,—of the honors that might heighten those already the inheritance of their respective houses. Her own pride of blood, the daring aspiration of her nature, caused her to scorn such qualities as she discovered in her husband, as so many obstacles in the way of her ambition. When first she had married, the high rank of her destined husband, the knowledge that even royal blood ran in his veins, had gone far to reconcile her to the difference of years that existed between them ; for she hoped to find consolation in the grandeur and power of rank and wealth, for the want of that happiness which she expected not to derive from love. But she soon discovered that the thane's rank and descent were counterbalanced by a tranquil nature that cared not to purchase dignity and elevation at the price of happiness and peace ; that his claims would never be supported, if they could only be maintained by strife and bloodshed ; that his possessions were fast dwindling beneath the demands of an exacting and despotic monarchy, which extorted fines and levied contributions from such of its subjects as preferred the sacrifice of their revenues to seditious resist-

ance, and a settlement of mutual claims in the open field ; and that, in short, her ambition had as little prospect of satisfaction from wedlock, as her affections.

After the first disappointment of her hopes, they had suddenly revived at the prospect of a son. A year after her marriage, she had given birth to a boy, and in this son she soon learned to centre all those yearnings of ambition, those daring aspirations which she had just taught herself to fear must be for ever crushed.

But scarcely had she permitted herself to indulge this fond renewal of hope, before it was suddenly withdrawn. The child lived but a few months, and in its little grave was buried all that remained of cheer to its mother. It was soon after the death of this child, that the title by which the lady Gruoch was best known, became confirmed in use among the retainers of her husband's household. When the thane had first brought her a bride to his castle, the raven hue of her hair, the intense depth of her beautiful eyes, the jet of those pencilled brows, and the long black silken lashes that fringed the lids, and rested upon the pale cheek, altogether formed so strikingly-singular a contrast with the generality of the fair-haired beauties who are the dwellers in that Northern land, that she became, by common consent, known as the dark lady of Moray. And after the loss of her son, the habitual gloom that settled upon her brow, the concentrated mood in which she was wont to nurse her disappointed fancy, the lofty pride that held her reserved and aloof in bearing, with the increased pallor of her complexion, which heightened the effect of her raven tresses, and of those deep, mysterious, self-communing eyes, combined to render the title more and more appropriate ; and from that time forth she was always named "the dark lady."

Years of brooding discontent had lapsed wearily away, when the unexpected prospect of again becoming a mother, had reawakened in the dark lady the hope of beholding a son. How that hope was once more blighted, has been seen.

The storm had subsided ; and for many hours the sky had been clear and bright. It was high morning. The dark lady had been placed by her attendants in a half-recumbent position, within the influence of the cheerful rays that streamed in at the chamber-window ; and thus propped and supported by cushions, with her back to the light, and leaning one cheek on her hand, she sat abstracted and silent, waiting the approach of her husband, who had sent word that he was coming to thank and bless her for the welcome gift with which she had presented him.

The old thane came ; and bending over her in a transport of honest tenderness, he kissed her forehead, and whispered his joy to see her safe, his proud delight at the thought of the child she had brought him—his thanks—his happiness.

The dark lady turned those large full eyes upon him, with a look of wonder.

“ Do you know it is a girl ? ” she asked.

“ Surely ; ” replied her husband. “ Dear little creature, she is sent by Heaven to make my age happy, and to comfort her mother when she has laid her old Kenneth in the grave. You might perhaps have had a partner better suited to you than myself, dear wife,” added the thane, “ but you could hardly have had one who loved you more fondly ; when you lose your old husband, you will miss him more than you perhaps think, and I am glad to know you will have this little one to love you in my stead.”

“ I shall not survive you,” said the dark lady.

“ Nay, now you are playing the young wife, indeed ; and would fain make me believe that you have no thought of some day or other playing the gay widow,” said the thane merrily.

“ I shall never be one,” replied the dark lady.

Her husband did not understand her ; and, as was usual with him, in her cold abstracted moods, made no attempt to fathom her reserve. Besides, at this moment, his attention was wholly engrossed with his

baby daughter, who was placed in his arms by Bethoc, the faithful old nurse.

The thane pressed the little creature to his bosom ; he looked into the sleeping face, and listened to the soft even breathings, and a world of emotions filled his heart at the thought of this new morsel of vitality, this fresh-comer into existence, this atom on the thresholds of the past and present, this strange bit of opening life, this mystery of commencement, this tender blossom, this human bud awaiting with yet half-closed petals its future development ; and the father raised his eyes reverently to the Creator, from whose presence the newly-born one seemed but recently come, and prayed that maturity might not sully the pristine whiteness of its innocence.

The rays of the morning sun fell full upon his silver hairs, and glistened in his tearful eyes, as the venerable thane uttered a devout thanksgiving for the child that had been vouchsafed to his old age.

The dark lady sat coldly gazing on this picture of patriarchal gratitude ; and when the words of thanksgiving breathed from her husband's lips, the same look of scornful wonder dwelt in her eyes as before.

“ But surely the bairn's a comfort to you, madam ;” said old Bethoc to her mistress, when the dark lady was once more alone with her women. “ Ye would not wish the babe unborn, would ye ?”

“ As well unborn, as born a girl ;” she bitterly replied. “ This is not the child I hoped ! This is not the son who should have inherited his mother's spirit—have carried her heart into the field—have enacted with his brave arm what her soul inspired—have reaped glory and renown—have contended for, and won back, the rightful possessions and honors of two noble houses, lapsed into penury and decay through slothful ease, and tame submission. O where is the son might have done this !”

“ Patience, patience, lady ; who knows but the

brave boy may still be yours? Who knows what another year may bring?" said the old nurse.

The dark lady's eyes flashed disdainfully.

"Did you note that snow-white head? Is that a man to be again a father, think you? One child accorded to doting age such as that, was a boon past expectation of Heaven's bounty; but that one child being a puny girl, Heaven's gift is scarce better than an affliction."

"Talk not so wildly, madam;" said the aged Bethoc. "Ye can hardly have savoured true affliction, to speak of it in the same breath with a newborn innocent like this," said she, placing the little one in the arms of its mother, that in and with the act of bestowing nourishment from her own bosom, gentler thoughts might flow towards the guiltless offender. "And as for its being 'a puny girl,' a bonnier babe, or one more like to thrive, it has never been my fortune to behold. Ye might have complained, indeed, had it been your fate, my lady, to have been brought to bed of some monster, such as I have heard of before now. I remember once, in the time of the last great dearth, there was a gentlewoman gave birth to a poor unfortunate, with neither hands nor feet, and it was blind, deaf, and dumb; you might have talked of affliction, then, indeed; or have looked upon Heaven's gift as a grief, had you brought forth the deformity I heard tell of, that was born to an unhappy woman in Angus. It was a creature frightful to behold, with a head like that of a swine, a pigeon-breast, and distorted back and shoulders; it was web-footed like a goose, and its legs were curved and set with bristles, so that it looked like an animal, strange and ghastly, and horribly ill-favored. And then, too, there was that wretched lady in Galloway, who bore a double-child, with four arms and two heads; and which as it grew up, fought and brawled with its own other self, in a manner terrible to the beholders. For it possessed in its double body, two separate sets of wills

and inclinations, that were ever at variance among themselves, so that the chiding and quarrelling was incessant and grievous. As when one body a-hungred, the other would gladly fast ; and when one longed for sleep, the other was wakeful and desirous of sport ; and these warring desires so plagued and tormented them, that the four arms would be rending and tearing in piteous fashion with their nails. But the worst was, when sickness at length attacked one of these miserable bodies, so that it dwindled and pined, and gradually languished till it died ; and the other twin body, unable to support the nausea of its kindred corruption, sickened and died also."

Thus ran on the aged crone with her nurse's tales, in hope to beguile her lady ; and lead her to think more well-favoredly of the babe, whose only blemish was her being a daughter, by these legends of prodigious birth, monstrosity and marvel.

But the dark lady heeded not her nurse's loquacity. She was watching the infant at her breast ; and as it drew its life-sustaining streams thence, she half grudged to bestow them on this girl, this non-boy, this embodied disappointment, this mortification, this perplexity, this child that was no child,—to her.

Her imagination pictured to her the pride and joy with which she should have beheld a son and heir drawing from her bosom sustenance and strength to grow into youth and manhood by her side ; a son into whom she might infuse her ambitious spirit, into whose mind she might instil her aspiring hopes, whom she might nurture in high enthusiasm, and train to courageous deeds, and whom she might one day see fulfil and attain in person all her long-hoarded desires.

The indulgence of her fancy in what might have been, served to convert the reality before her into a torture instead of a blessing ; and so the mother looked almost with aversion upon her own infant. Mother's regards were well-nigh scowls ; mother's smiles were all but disdain, not pitiful tenderness ; mother's breast

heaved repiningly in lieu of yielding its balmy treasures lavishly and lovingly ; and thus the babe gazed wondering up into those dark unfathomable eyes with naught of maternity in their irresponsive depths ; and thus the babe sucked bitterness, perverted feeling, unholy regret, and vain aspiration, with every milky draught imbibed.

But whatever of baneful influence and mysterious harm to that infant soul might mingle with the sources of nourishment thus conveyed, the little body waxed strong and healthful ; its limbs gained firmness and vigor ; it daily increased in force, activity and intelligence ; and as the mother beheld its thriving beauty, she thought how well that beauty might have become a boy. As she viewed the healthful frame, and felt the energy and power which strained every muscle, and struggled in every movement of the robust little being that kicked and stretched, and strove, and fought within her arms, the dark lady sighed to think such a frame and such powers were wasted on a girl. The canker of fruitless repining was fast destroying the parent-blossom, even while watching the promising growth of her fair opening bud ; and while the babe increased and strengthened, the mother drooped and decayed. She had truly felt, that the disappointment she had sustained was her death-blow ; and, as she had predicted to her old husband, she was destined not to survive it, or to outlive him.

She sat day after day, and week after week, never leaving her chamber, or seeming to take interest in a single object animate or inanimate. She remained, for the most part, in one listless attitude ; rarely speaking, and scarcely looking at anything, or regarding any person. She seemed shrouded in discontent, yet uttering no syllable of complaint. She claimed no sympathy, and sought no relief to the monotony of inward despondency, but folded herself within an impenetrable veil of outward apathy, and heavy dull im-

mobility. Ever proud and reserved, she seemed now doubly unapproachable, muffled and shut in with her mute regrets.

At first, her husband had endeavoured to withdraw her from her solitude, and to win her from the stupor of disappointment which held her sitting there day after day, in the unmoved position which was fast becoming habitual ; but his efforts were repulsed with indifference, coldness, and silence. The old thane, with his wonted passiveness, soon ceased to oppose her apparent disinclination to leave her chamber ; and it was not long ere he learned to acquiesce altogether in her seeming preference for seclusion, by leaving her to herself.

Her increasing silence and reserve made even her women refrain from addressing her ; they acquired the habit of creeping to and fro noiselessly while in her immediate presence, and receiving their orders exclusively from Bethoc, who supplied the place of her mistress by thinking for her, speaking for her, superintending the welfare of the infant, and giving the necessary directions to the female attendants.

And there, week after week, and month after month, sat the dark lady, like a living statue, mute and immutable ; the only perceptible alteration in her attitude being a gradual sinking and collapsing of the frame, which brought her low, bent, and drooping, like a withered plant. Each day, and from day to day, the change could scarcely be traced ; but when she first assumed that seat, and that fixed position, her body was erect, haughty, energetic, and defiant ;—before a twelvemonth had elapsed, the muscles were flaccid, the flesh was shrunk and wasted, the cheek was worn and hollow, the form was feeble, and the whole figure sat heaped together languidly, as if devoid of vitality.

The eyes alone retained their spirit. These still were haughty, energetic, defiant as ever. For as she sat there enwrap in stony stillness, she would watch the shifting clouds, now careering in fleecy whiteness

across the spring æther, now dappling lightly the summer blue, now hurrying athwart the murky grey, or driving wildly along upon the storm-blast ; but through all the countless varieties of form, and hue, and motion, in cloudland, those dark eyes flashed ever toward the sky proud defiance, accusation, and resentment of hopes defeated. None the less a rebel to Heaven's will, for her voiceless inward chafing ; it seemed as if the unrest of her soul fought all the more fiercely for the marble quiescence of her body.

One bright noon, even in that Northern region, the sun shone with powerful rays, and cast their broad light full into the chamber, where the dark lady sat, as usual dumb and motionless, surrounded by her silent women.

Bethoc, the aged nurse, held the child in her arms, as it struggled, and strained, and held out its hands towards the sunbeams, that shed their radiance in such bright alluring streams just within its reach. The crowing joy and glad shrill tones of the little one sounded strangely in that silent room, as the babe shouted its imperfect utterances of delight, at the gay dancing notes it beheld in the sunbeams ; and still it leaped and bounded in the nurse's arms, and clutched at the brilliant atoms it strove to grasp.

The mother's attention was arrested ; and she gazed upon the infant's eagerness with a look of interest that her face had not worn for many a month.

Then vexation succeeded to delight, as the phantom brightness still eluded pursuit. The baby hands clenched angrily, and struck and buffeted at the golden rays they could not seize.

The dark lady noted the rage that sprang from opposition with a keen satisfied glance.

Frowns succeeded to smiles. Tears sparkled in the childish eyes. Short shrieks, and cries of baffled will, took the place of former joyful crowings ; until in at the window flew a small silver-winged moth, that took its place with the notes in the sunbeams, dancing, and

floating, and playing up and down in the flood of light.

This tangible object of interest and pursuit pacified the babe ; and all its clutchings and strivings were renewed and concentrated upon this pretty buoyant spark of brightness. The old nurse drew back with her charge. " Let it alone, my darling ; ye'll kill the bonny wee thing ; ye'll crush the poor little beastie."

" Let her, so that she gets it !" exclaimed the dark lady abruptly.

The unwonted sound of her lady's voice made Bethoc start. The child made one more plunge, and by chance, caught the silvery moth.

The next instant, the little fingers were unclosed ; to one of them stuck the mangled insect, crushed even by so slight a touch. But as the child held up the victim of her success in baby triumph, and as her eyes sparkled and glistened now with smiles as well as tears in token of joyful conquest, the mother exclaimed exultingly :—

" Resolute in achievement ! Firm of purpose even unto death ! That should be a masculine spirit ! Bethoc, bring the little Amazon to me !"

But as she uttered the words, a sharp sudden shiver passed over her frame ; a spasm convulsed the face, and before the women could reach her, or Bethoc could place her child within her arms, the dark lady sank back,—a corpse.

The death of her mother made little difference in the course of the child's daily existence. The dark lady's seat was unoccupied now ; but the babe, unaccustomed to be fondled, or prattled to, or even noticed, by the cold stationary figure that had so long filled it, seemed scarcely affected by the change.

Once, indeed, when the little one was helping itself along by the stools and chairs round the room, and learning to totter from one to the other, by aid of its arms and hands, it stopped in front of this seat—which

was still called "the dark lady's," and never used by any one since her death ;—and then the child gazed wistfully upwards, as if half calling to mind some object that it had been accustomed to behold there.

Who shall say what limits there are to infant memory ? Who may tell what vague impressions of the pale cold figure that was wont to abide there, and which was the only shadowy semblance of maternity that had ever floated before the child's vision, might not at that moment have wandered into its brain, and inspired one natural yearning to behold even that faint shadow once again in its earthly form ?

The attendant women observed the child's pause, and thoughtful look, and one to another said :—" Poor bairn, she's minded of her mother !"

" Maybe, she sees the dark lady's wraith ;" was the rejoinder, whispered in an awe-stricken tone.

The old nurse Bethoc went softly to the side of her charge, and hung over her, telling her pretty tales to amuse her, to draw off her attention from the dark lady's seat, from which she gently led her away, and began crooning an old nursery rhyme, that she might lull her to sleep, and so efface the recollection which she thought might have disturbed the child.

For some time the little Gruoch remained thus almost entirely in the suite of apartments that had been her mother's ; tended by her women, and fondled, and petted, and indulged by them and the faithful old nurse, Bethoc.

The means of air and exercise were supplied by a platform, or rampart, of the castle, which closely neighboured this suite of rooms, and on which it was the custom for the women, each in turn, to carry the child up and down, whenever the weather permitted them to go forth.

By degrees, as the little limbs gained strength and skill in walking, Gruoch would run about here herself ; and at length, it was a triumph with Bethoc to carry the child down into the hall, or the courtyard, or on

the battlements, or wherever the lord of Moray might be, that the father should have the joy of beholding how well his little girl throve, and that the child might have the pleasure of seeing and playing with her gentle old father.

The thane loved to have her brought to him, and to look upon the growing beauty of his little daughter : but he had so long accustomed himself to see that his presence gave no joy, and to believe that he did not possess the requisite qualifications to render himself beloved by womankind, that he seldom detained her with him above a few minutes, but gave her back to the nurse's care and women's tendance, as to society more genial than his own could be.

With a doting nurse, and ministering attendants, the little Gruoch's wishes were of course paramount ; and it soon befell, that the indulgence of her will, the right of command, the custom of seeing herself obeyed in all things, became habitual to her at her earliest age. She could scarcely speak, ere her voice assumed the tone of authority ; and long before she could reckon half a dozen years, she was mistress of the entire household.

Her father yielded to her, from his native disposition, and from affectionate tenderness towards the child of his old age. Bethoc indulged her as the darling nursling of her advanced years, and as all that was left to her of one to whom she had been attached in youth, and whom she regretted dead—for Bethoc was one of the few who had truly and devotedly loved “ the dark lady.” The waiting-women, one and all, petted and spoiled the little girl, as the only object that presented itself on which to indulge their feminine propensities for fostering and cherishing all that is young and helpless. The few retainers and men-at-arms that the thane's impoverished fortunes enabled him to maintain, all worshipped the little Gruoch as an image of grace and beauty and infantine loveliness, magnified all the more by contrast with their own roughness and uncouth-

ness, and with the bare unpolished plainness of all that surrounded her.

For in those remote times, in those periods of semi-barbarism, a thane's castle was no fairy-bower, no haunt of elegance and refinement ; but scantily-tapestried walls, strewed floors, rudely-covered tables, turret-chambers, and rough-hewn battlements, were the only environments that the highest Scottish lady could then boast.

But amid such a scene, the little lady Gruoch was gay and happy ; for she was sovereign mistress of all she beheld,—rule and sovereignty being the dominant desire of her nature. Short-sighted aim ! that sees not how absolutely such worship enthralles the soul ! making slaves of these would-be sovereigns ! bidding them for ever bow before a self-created idol ! and cheating them with the perpetual mockery of supreme sway, while enforcing perpetuity of homage from themselves !

As soon as she was able to run about by herself, the little girl found means of evading the nurse's wish to retain her constantly within her own supervision ; and she would stray from the women's range of apartments, finding her way all over the castle in the spirit of inquisitiveness, and childish love of investigation, and thirst for novelty.

Sometimes she would seek out her father, and take pleasure in seeing the pleasure that always lighted up his venerable face at the sight of hers—so beaming, so bright in its youthful beauty. She would linger near him, and watch him fondle his dogs, three or four of which, of the tall Scotch breed, always accompanied his steps, or surrounded his seat. She would listen to the quiet tones of his voice as they spoke encouragement to his favourites, or uttered kindly praise and affectionate admiration towards herself ; she would stand close to him, that he might see how tall she grew, and expatiate on the strange variation there was between her beauty and that of her mother—the one so dark, the other so fair—the one with ebon tresses, the

other with locks like the golden beams of morning—the one with those full flashing orbs of sombre depth, the other with eyes the colour of the azure lake when it reflects the serene expanse of a summer sky.

And yet there was a latent expression, a something antagonistic, in the clear beauty of that fair child. Surpassingly handsome she was ; but yet a look there was in those blue eyes, that marred their loveliness of shape and colour, and seemed sinisterly to contradict their attractive power. In the mouth, too, round those full and rubious lips, and amid those exquisite dimples, there played certain lines that presented indications of a startling contrast of will and unfeminine inflexibility with so much charm of feature, which might have produced sensations of repulsive surmise to one accustomed to seek charm in expression rather than in linear beauty.

But among those by whom she was surrounded, there were no such scrutinizers—no such fastidious analyzers. Her fond father dwelt with rapture, and almost wonder, upon the face of his little girl, and found naught there but loveliness ; and she, gratified with praise, would often come to him that she might enjoy that which he so constantly and profusely lavished upon her. But sated with adulation, and accustomed to indulgence, she soon tired of so monotonous an amusement, and she lingered less and less by her old father's side, and strayed farther and oftener in search of more congenial entertainment, than his quiet voice, and approving looks could afford.

She was fond of peering into the armoury, and watching the man who had the charge of the arms, perform his duties of cleaning, burnishing, and arranging them, and keeping them in order, ready for use in case of need ; as there was no knowing in those turbulent times, when a sudden emergency might arise for the lord of a castle to put his men under arms for defence. Here she would loiter, asking a thousand questions about battle-axe, pike, dagger, lance, sword, and

cross-bow ; and as the armourer polished helmet, morion, cuirass, corselet, habergeon, and breastplate, she would enquire the shape and meaning of each several piece of coat-of-mail, and learn curiously the use of every separate weapon that she saw.

She loved too, to watch the men-at-arms in the court-yard, practising their management of these different weapons, and she would note with unwearied interest the dexterity and skill of the retainers in these warlike sports and exercises.

There was a nook behind one of the buttresses, where the little girl would often ensconce herself, whence she could see the feats of the men-at-arms during their hours of exercise on the sward adjoining the court-yard of the castle. Here she would lurk, and watch, unseen ; for she had one day found her way out of the lower apartments of the castle by a small dismantled window, or narrow outlet, through which she had crept to see the sword exercise, the pike-tossing, and the cross-bow shooting.

There was one man she remarked who was peculiarly skilful in the handling of all sorts of weapons. He was a tall, stalwart fellow, singularly uncouth and ugly, with wild shaggy hair, and a ferocious look. His name was Grym. But he uniformly surpassed all his companions in adroitness, bold daring, activity, expertness, and success in his feats of arms. So to this large, ungainly, ill-favored, but triumphant giant, did the child take a strong fancy, and he became a sort of hero, a personification of conquest and success, a favorite rallying point for all her wishes and interest in the scene of contention.

Once, when there arose a dispute as to which arrow had flown the best, and hit the nearest to the centre of the target, several voices contending clamorously for the rival claims of the two most successful bowmen, —Grym and Ivan,—the little girl suddenly sprang forward from her nook, and joined the group of disputants, loudly and eagerly declaring that Grym was the victor.

“Don't you see ! Don't you see !” she exclaimed, pointing up to the mark, which was high above her head ; “That's his shaft ! Right in the clout !”

“I'll lift you up, my young lady,” said one of the men ; “and you'll then see that Ivan's arrow is just a point nighest.”

“Let Grym lift me up ! Here Grym ! Take me up ! Hold me fast ! Here, don't you see, all of you,” shouted the child in all the excitement of proving her words, and awarding the victory to her hero ; while with one hand she clung round the neck of the savage-looking archer, and with the other pointed triumphantly to the spot where his arrow rested : “Don't you all see that Grym's is the best shaft ?”

The child's excitement communicated itself to the men, and they one and all shouted—Ivan and his partisans as eagerly as any—“Grym's is the best ! Grym is conqueror !”

From that day Grym was the avowed favorite and playmate of the little lady Gruoch ; and his fellows were prevented from feeling any jealousy at this preference, in the oddity of the association ; for it was strange to see the fair child, a thing of smiles, and beauty, and grace, take a fancy to that grisly man-at-arms, and cling round his great bull-neck, and nestle within his huge stalwart arms, and make him carry her about from place to place to show her all the curiosities of drawbridge, portcullis, and moat, donjon-keep, and fortalice, tower and battlement, platform and rampart, embrasure and loop-hole, outwork, barbican, postern-gate, turret, and buttressed wall ; all the curious places, and out-of-the-way nooks and corners about a strongly defended castle, that possessed so wondrous an interest for an inquisitive and restless child.

Bethoc would try to win her from this whimsical preference, and sought to detain her within the women's apartments by tales and legends that she thought might amuse her fancy, and prevent her seeking enter-

tainment from companionship and pursuits that the old nurse could not but think unseemly for her charge.

She would tell her of her mother ; of her lofty nature, of her high birth, of her ambitious hopes ; of her regret at the passive disposition of her lord ; of her yearning for a son who might inherit the united honors of the noble houses from which he sprang, and who might win renown and added glory by his deeds of arms. She would tell her many a romantic tradition of her ancestors, of their heroic achievements, of their martial feats on the battle-field, of their noble alliances, of the mingling of even royal blood in their veins, of the proud assertion of their rights, of their daring exploits in maintenance of their claims, of their keen sense of honor, and of their deadly resentment of injury. There was one story that Bethoc especially loved to tell, for it would always win Gruoch's deep attention, and enchain her to the old nurse's side while she related its dark terrors.

It was of how Fanella, the lady of Fettercairn, had vowed a fatal revenge upon the reigning king, for having caused the death of her son Cruthlint. Of how she had been sleepless in devising means for the compassing of her vengeance. Of how she had caused a goodly tower, adorned with copper finely engraved with divers flowers and images, to be built adjoining her own castle. Withinside, it was hung about with rich arras cloth, wrought costlywise in gold and silver. Behind this arras were cross-bows set ready bent with sharp quarrels in them. In the midst was placed a fine brazen image, in likeness of the king himself, holding, in the one hand, a fair golden apple set full of precious stones, devised with such art and cunning, that so soon as it should be seized, or removed never so small a space, the cross-bows would immediately discharge their quarrels with great force and violence.

Fanella, knowing the king had a taste for comely buildings, entreated him in seeming loyalty, that he would honor her poor house by coming to see this

goodly tower that she had caused to be erected ; and when he came to her castle of Fettercairn, she entertained him in sumptuous manner, and after meat she led the king to behold the chamber within the tower. Her royal guest commended much the costly taste of the hangings and furniture, and marvelled greatly at the image that stood in the centre, surveying it attentively, and asking what it might signify. The lady Fenella told him that it was made to represent his own royal person, and that the golden apple crusted so rich with emeralds, sapphires, topazes, rubies, and turquoises, had been provided by herself as a gift for him. This she besought him to accept in good part, though not in value worthy to be offered unto his princely honor and high dignity, and though it in so slight measure carried with it the sentiments of her heart towards his kingly person.

“ It carried hatred and death with it to the murderer of her son,” Gruoch would mutter, as she kept her eyes fastened on Bethoc, devouring each word that fell from the nurse’s lips.

Bethoc would shake her aged head, and speak of leaving vengeance in the hands of Heaven : but the story went on to say, that the lady Fenella framed some excuse to withdraw from the king’s side, feigning to search for something in a chest or coffer that stood in an adjoining closet. Then the king, taking much delight in viewing the gems and orient stones, and wishing the nearer to inspect their rare beauty, stretched forth his hand to remove the apple, which he had no sooner done, than incontinently the cross-bows discharged their quarrels so directly upon him, that he fell to the ground, pierced in sundry places, and there lay stark dead. Meantime, the king’s servants still waited in the outer chamber, awaiting the coming forth of their royal master, with his fair hostess. But after long abiding, and they found that he came not back, they knocked first softly at the door ; then more loudly ; then rapped hard and clamorously ;

and lastly, misdoubting that somewhat had happened, they broke open door after door, until at length they came into the chamber where the king lay cold dead upon the floor. Then the cry and alarm was raised by his attendants, and the lady of Fettercairn was cursed and sought for everywhere, all men accusing her of having committed this heinous and wicked deed.

“And Fenella?” eagerly whispered the young auditress.

When she beheld the king drop dead, she tarried not a moment, but fled secretly away by a postern door into a wood hard by, where she had appointed horses to wait ready for her, so that she escaped all danger of pursuit, ere the king's death was discovered. Fenella was safe, but she was compelled to fly her country; she took refuge in Ireland, where she was fain to abide in exile and concealment.

“But she gained her end!” was Gruoch's comment at the conclusion of the tale.

There was a wood in the vicinity of the castle of Moray, where the little lady Gruoch loved to wander, and fancy it like the one which had favored the escape of Fenella from her castle of Fettercairn. She would make Grym carry her thither, of a bright spring or summer morning; and here she would play about, attended only by her gaunt favorite, and the young page, Culen, who, with a boy's sagacity in finding out what he liked, and in securing it when found out, always contrived to be of the party, when he saw Grym, with the little lady in his arms, take the path to the wood. Culen soon ingratiated himself with his young lady-mistress by a thousand ingenious devices. Now he would bring her a rustic crown and sceptre, woven skilfully of rushes from the margin of the lake; anon, heaps of wild flowers to adorn her mossy throne in the wood; another time, feathers from the eagle's wing, or the jay's, which he would deftly form into a sylvan fan for her; and sometimes he would thread scarlet

berries into chains and bracelets to hang around her neck and arms, and twine amid her bright gold hair.

These boyish offerings were graciously accepted by the little lady, who received them as a sort of homage due. She even grew to take pleasure in seeing the page constantly form one in the association that had grown between herself and Grym—but she always treated Culen as a vassal and an inferior, while to Grym she behaved familiarly and almost fondly, as one in whom she recognized that which she could admire and respect.

And truly there was that in the uncouth Grym which might command both admiration and respect. Not only was there the power of conquest, and the assurance of success in his stalwart proportions, which had originally won the young Gruoch's regard, by appealing forcibly to her ruling passion for supremacy and sovereignty in the abstract, and to her unconscious tendency to attach herself to their external images wherever they might present themselves,—not only was there this symbol of power in Grym, but there was a kind heart, much right feeling, and good sense, beneath the rough exterior of this huge man-at-arms.

He had a gruff voice, and an abrupt mode of speaking ; but he had just sentiments, and benevolent feelings. He was spare and curt in words ; but his heart overflowed with honest good-meaning. His bearing was ungain, his features were harsh, and his countenance was forbidding ; but he would not have hurt a fly, and he was incapable of an ungenerous thought or mean action.

He was keenly sensible of the fancy the beautiful child, Gruoch, had taken to him, ugly as he was ; and his attachment towards his young mistress was profound and devoted. It was unexpressed, save in action, but it was none the less ardent for its smothered light. It burned steadily though silently, within the recesses of his own heart.

It was like a potent spell, the hold which the young

beauty had upon the affections of those around her. The old thane, her father ; Bethoc, the aged nurse ; Grym, the brave man-at-arms ; Culen, the young page ; all doted upon her very footsteps, and yielded implicitly to the fascination which she exercised over their feelings. It seemed impossible to behold the fair brilliant being, and not worship the image of triumphant beauty she presented. Her very habit of command seemed to heighten her charms, and imperatively to claim homage, admiration, and regard.

She was one day straying in the wood, attended only by Grym,—Culen having gone to seek for some water-lilies, that he had noted on the shores of the lake, and intended to weave into a garland for her,—when suddenly, on approaching the rustic seat of moss which she was accustomed to occupy as her sylvan throne when she rested in the wood, Gruoch perceived a figure seated there, in a half-reclining attitude. It was that of a Highlander. He seemed faint and way-worn, and drooped his head forward upon his hands, so that his face was hidden from them as they approached. At first Gruoch bade Grym go and bid the man retire from the seat which was hers—her throne ; but the next moment, noting his weary and dejected attitude, she added :—“ Stay, the man seems tired ; let him come to the castle for rest and refreshment.”

The Highlander raised his head slowly. “ There is death at the castle !” he exclaimed solemnly.

Then steadily regarding the lady Gruoch for a few seconds, he added :—“ What is it I trace on that fair young brow ! But such weird shall not be read by me for one that has just proffered rest and refreshment.” And he sank into his former attitude.

“ Go, Grym, and assist him to rise ;” said the little girl. “ What does he mean ? Is he sick ?”

Grym shook his head, and looked round for Culen, that he might send for aid to the castle ; for he was resolved not to quit his young lady's side.

The page came up at the moment, and Grym de-

spatched him for some of his fellows, that they might come to the stranger's assistance, and support him to the castle.

"Take me home, Grym," whispered little Gruoch. "Take me up in your arms, I want to hold by you. I don't like him! Take me away!"

Grym felt the child tremble, as he lifted her up in his arms, and bore her from the spot; for she had thought upon what the Highlander had said; and, as will sometimes happen with sounds unnoted at the moment of utterance, their sense recurring afterwards, his words now conveyed an import to her mind that they had failed in doing at the time.

"What did he mean by 'death in the castle,' Grym?" whispered she, after they had proceeded some paces.

Grym only shook his head again.

"Speak, Grym—you must speak—I want to hear your voice," said the child, grasping his shaggy hair, and pulling his face round towards her own. "Look at me, and tell me, Grym!"

"God grant it be not second-sight! Some of these Highlanders have the gift," muttered Grym.

"What do you mean? 'Second-sight!' I don't know what you mean, now, Grym. Speak, speak!" And the little lady tugged and pulled at the shaggy locks, in the vehemence of her eagerness to urge the taciturn Grym to explain.

"We shall know soon enough, when we reach the castle;" said he.

Gruoch said no more, for she had fallen into a fit of thought. She could not help dreading that something fatal had happened to her father. Many indistinct feelings came upon her of kindness toward that gentle old man, who had never thwarted her, never spoken harsh words to her, never crossed or chidden her, but was all indulgence, and praise, and fond admiration for her. She had an imperfect sense of having neglected him, of having disregarded his wish to have

her near him, of having almost despised his partiality for her, and felt his fondling to be insipid, wearisome, and distasteful. All these thoughts were vague, and dimly felt by her ; but still they flitted athwart the little girl's fancy, and added a sting to the pain and grief which she began to fear might await her. She was still a mere child, but she was old enough to feel what remorse might be, added to the tidings of a father's death, even though she could not have given a name to the feeling itself.

She had scarcely crossed the drawbridge and courtyard of the castle, than she threw herself out of Grym's arms, sprang to the ground, and rushed into the hall where her father usually sat, surrounded by his dogs, near the hearth. There, in his wonted place, she found him ; and with a warmth of gratitude and love that had never before swelled her heart, she flung herself into his arms, weeping and sobbing upon his breast, while she hugged him passionately and repeatedly.

Surprised and alarmed at the violence of her emotion, the old thane enquired what had happened to grieve and terrify his darling.

Grym stepping forward to relate the encounter in the wood, and her father dreading that to hear it repeated, would only increase the agitation of his child, desired some one to go and fetch Bethoc, that she might soothe and comfort her young mistress ; then bethinking himself, he added :—" No, no, not Bethoc ! Let some one go and bid Eoda and Lula come for their young lady."

And thus this kind-meaning, but weak parent missed the occasion of himself ministering to the mind's health of his daughter ; and delegated to others the charge of bestowing sympathy and solace, which should have been his own care in the hour of grief, alarm, and awakened conscience.

Soon after Gruoch had been led away by her women, she learned that the reason Bethoc had not been sum-

moned to her aid, was, that the poor old nurse had been seized with sudden paralysis that morning, and had expired not half an hour before her young mistress returned to the castle.

“Then hers was the death predicted!” thought Gruoch. And in the relief of finding it was not her father’s, that of the aged and faithful Bethoc was comparatively unfelt.

When those of the household who had been summoned by Culen to the assistance of the Highlander, reached the wood, they found no trace of him. He had departed,—vanished, from the spot; and had not Grym and the page both seen him, the men would have believed that his having been there at all was a mere fancy of their young mistress’s. As it was, his sudden appearance and disappearance, joined to the circumstance of Bethoc’s death taking place precisely when the stranger’s mysterious words had foretold the event, caused the matter to be adverted to in whispers only, and there were few among the retainers of the castle of Moray who did not shudder when the Highlander of the wood was mentioned. But in course of time, the circumstance faded from their thoughts, and it was not only no more spoken of among them, but no more remembered.

A year or two passed away; and for some while after Bethoc’s death, Gruoch’s interest and attention were drawn towards her old father in a degree that they had never been before. She would hang about his chair, and watch his face, and speak dutifully to him, and try to minister to his little daily comforts, and seek to enjoy his presence, and to give him more of hers; but there was something essentially unsympathetic in their natures that did not harmonize, or render their companionship a comfort or a joy to either of them. Never demonstrative or affectionate in her manner, she felt awkward and ill at ease in the presence of one whose gentleness and soft manners

seemed to call for some corresponding suavity on her part. There was a perverse interchange in their respective positions, as it were. The father, from his submissive, easy disposition, shrinking from authority, which he neither exercised himself, nor resisted from others ; the daughter, wilful, imperious, accustomed to dictate,—they seemed unfitly associated as parent and child. Their relations seemed reversed, and produced an untoward assimilation.

She would sit at her father's feet, and gaze up into his face, and think upon these things ; and wonder how it should be, that with the sincere and strong attachment which she felt for him,—an attachment that had caused her to start with terror from the possibility of losing him,—still that there should be withal so little of happiness or delight in their being together. And yet that mild face ! That snow-white hair ! Those bland eyes and mouth ! Surely she felt very fondly, very pitifully towards so much meekness and softness ? Yes, she did. But it was that very pity, that very mingling of something akin to compassion which pervaded all her feelings towards him, that prevented the fulness of a daughter's love—the joy that such love should create.

Not pity and compassion, but respect and reverence, are the true guiding lights that should direct a child's gaze to its parent, and that should shed a glory and a crowning beauty around a parent's brow ;—and it was the lack of these natural rays that darkened and abated the joy of love which should have arisen from Gruoch's affection for her father.

One evening as she sat there, on a low stool at his feet, gazing as usual into his face, and thinking of what Bethoc had told her of her mother's regret that there should have been so little of martial ardour, of aspiring in his nature, so total an absence of ambition, of thirst for preferment or advancement of any kind, Gruoch thought how ardently she longed to pour some of her own spirit into that placid nature ; how she

would willingly infuse some of her own youth and vitality into his veins, where the blood flowed so tamely and sluggishly ; how eagerly she would part with some of her own vigour and strength, to impart energy and impulse to those aged limbs, those supine and flaccid muscles.

Her pity for such infirmity almost assumed the poignancy of contempt. "Where sufferings are so passive," thought she, "what wonder that the heel of the tyrant crushes? Patience encourages oppression. Submission courts fresh wrong. Contentment beneath such injuries shows like crime. Would that the old man possessed my sense of inflicting evil, my spirit to resist it, my youth and activity to avenge and redress!" She thought upon the shame of seeing the wealth of a noble house mulcted to feed the royal avarice (for Malcolm II, the then reigning king, had grown covetous and grasping in his old age, and oppressed his nobles with incessant severity); she thought upon the wrong and bitter degradation of claims unmaintained, of extortions tamely submitted to, of honors unsought, of injustice unresisted and unresented, until her eyes sparkled and her cheeks glowed with the burning thoughts that possessed her. Her father happened to look upon her upturned face at this moment, and started at the images he beheld of the brooding wrath and vengeance that rankled at her heart, and cast their reflex upon her countenance.

There was something so appalling in this antagonistic expression, which animated features of such exquisite beauty, that even her unobservant father could not but perceive its effects, and he exclaimed:—"What's the matter, my darling? You look as Fenella of Fettercairn might have looked, child, when she led my royal ancestor to the fatal tower-chamber. Don't look in that way, darling. And the old thane passed his hand over his child's beautiful face, as if to remove the terrible look that marred its loveliness.

"And who was Fenella?" asked Gruoch.

“O, she was an ancestress of your mother’s ; but don’t let us think about Fenella—it’s a dark story—and not fit for my bright beauty—my innocent child.” He patted her fair head, and smoothed down her long golden locks ; and with the fatal weakness which was a part of his exceeding gentleness, he evaded present perplexity, instead of seizing the occasion to administer wholesome instruction,—to inculcate salutary admonition and precept.

Gruoch held down her head, and thought within herself that Bethoc had already told her the story, so that she need not care for her father’s evasion. She felt that he had put her off with this slight answer, and she therefore indulged the triumph of knowing that his intention was foiled by her previous acquaintance with the tale he would have concealed.

“He does not care to tell me anything,” thought she. “He does not care to talk to me. He is contented to sit there quietly, hardly looking at me, with his hand upon my head.” She half withdrew it from beneath his touch, at the moment, with a suppressed sound of annoyance. “He strokes my hair, and pats my head, just as he caresses his hounds. I wonder whether he loves me better than one of those dogs.”

After a time, when the train of her reflections had a little softened, and were somewhat less bitter, she looked up again towards her father’s face. It was serene and calm as usual, and the eyes were closed. He had fallen asleep quietly, with his hand upon his child’s fair head ; there was a look of deep repose, and an almost holy benignity in his aspect, which touched her, as the thought crossed her mind that it was mercifully sleep, and not death, which she gazed upon.

“Kind old father !” she muttered. “He *does* love me ; and I love him !”

And Gruoch stepped softly on to the little stool from which she had risen, and leaned over him, and kissed the face of her father as he slept.

But gradually the old restlessness returned ; and Gruoch found the constant companionship of her parent as irksome as ever. She loved him (as has been said), and felt dutifully towards him ; more affectionately, perhaps, since the emotion of anxiety she had experienced for his life ; but after a time, she stayed with him but a brief portion of the day. She resumed her old haunts, renewed her association with Grym, sought her former pursuits, and learned to add new and other amusements to those she had formerly found in company with her ungain favorite, and the young page, Culen.

The latter had now grown a tall stripling ; but his devotion to his young lady-mistress bore full proportion to his growth. It increased with his height ; which is not always the case with the liking of boys, at his age. A boy will often feel a strong attachment to a little girl, while they are both so young, as to make them mere children together ; but when he starts up into a tall lad, a youthful man, he is apt to acquire notions of importance and superiority, that make him treat the little girl as a child still, while he considers himself a man.

Not only, however, did the authoritative manner, and commanding style of beauty, that distinguished the young lady Gruoch, tend to preserve her influence over the lad's feelings ; but her superior rank, and relative position with himself, served to maintain respect and admiration on his part towards her. Her commanding mien has been more than once alluded to, but this arose from no advantage of height. Her figure was small and slight, her stature diminutive, her complexion delicately fair, which gave her the appearance of being younger than she really was ; but the effect of her personal charms upon all those within the sphere of her influence was potent, impressive, and irresistible. Many little women have been known to possess this ascendancy over mankind.

But she was still a very young girl, when once, she

and Grym happened to be practising with bow and arrows at a mark, that had been set up at one end of the long platform on the ramparts of the castle, which has before been alluded to as adjoining the women's range of apartments. This was a favorite pastime with her, and she had attained some skill under the teaching of the veteran man-at-arms. She was just in the act of fixing a fresh shaft, and preparing to take aim again, when her eye caught sight of the page, who approached along the range of platform, tossing lightly up and down something which he held in his hand, and which was gay and parti-coloured.

"What is that, Culen? A ball! And how light, and how well made! Is it for me?"

"Yes, my lady, it is for you. I made it, hoping you would like to have it."

"It is very handsome! Thank you, Culen; I like it very much. How well you have made it! How bright the colours are! And how well it flies!"

The young lady tossed the ball high in the air, and watched it with her upturned face, and sprang forward to catch it as it fell.

"Throw it straight up, or you'll pitch it over into the court-yard below, my lady," said Grym, as he walked to the other end of the platform, to collect the arrows from the target, ready for his young mistress when she might choose to resume the sport, after tiring of her new plaything.

She continued for some minutes tossing up the ball, and watching the flying gay colours; while the page stood by, to look upon the bright beautiful face, the graceful form that bounded to and fro in agile pursuit.

When she ceased for a moment, panting, smiling, and out of breath, Culen said;—"I have something else to show you, that I think will please your ladyship; I found it out yesterday. There are plenty about the castle heights; but this one is so near that you can see right into it, and watch the birds."

The page stepped upon a stone ledge which formed

a kind of seat in a recess of the battlemented outer wall that skirted the platform ; and signed to his young mistress that she should silently follow his example, and peep over. She climbed up by his side ; and looked over the ridge of the wall, in the direction of his finger. Upon a slight jutting point,—a timeworn inequality of the wall, a pair of martlets had built their nest ; and from the spot where the young lady and the page stood, they could see the callow nestlings with their gaping mouths ; they could watch the parent birds take short wheeling flights, and return to hover at the opening of the nest, and supply their young ones with food.

For some time Gruoch continued to watch this pretty sight with interest ; then she stepped down from the stone seat, and began to toss her ball again. Suddenly it swerved in its upward flight, and fell just beyond the wall.

The page sprang to the spot he had just quitted, and exclaimed :—“ I see it ! It has lodged just below the nest ! Look ! On that frieze, that range of fretwork just beneath !”

“ I see it ! I see it !” cried Gruoch, who had stepped up again by his side. “ It looks quite near ! What a pity we can't reach it ! O my beautiful ball !”

“ If I had but a ledge ever so small to set my foot upon, I could get it ; I know I could !” exclaimed Culen. “ It's quite close, I could be over in a moment !”

“ Would you venture ?” said his young mistress, looking at him approvingly.

“ That I would ! I could get it in an instant, if I had but a spot to step my foot upon—ever such a point would do ! If the martlet's nest were not there, now, that would be quite room enough !”

“ But we can soon dislodge the nest, if that's all !” exclaimed Gruoch. “ Here's one of Grym's long shafts—that'll do exactly to poke it off with.”

“ Oh no !” said the page hastily.

"Are you afraid?" said she, looking at him abruptly.

"No, not that; but I don't like—I can't push the nest off," said Culen.

"Then I will! Give me the arrow!" she exclaimed.

Gruoch leaned over the edge; fixed the point of the arrow into the caked mud and earth which fastened the nest to the jutting point; loosened it; raised it; and in another moment, the martlet's home with its unfledged tenants, spun whirling through the air, and was scattered to pieces, striking against the buttresses and rough-hewn walls. She stayed not to note its career, but turned to the page.

"Now, Culen! It was a brave offer! Have you courage? I will hold your hand firm! Give it me."

The page seized the beautiful little hand that was held out to him, and taking the arrow in the other, that he might reach and secure the soft ball with it, he climbed over the edge of the outer wall, which was narrower there, on account of the deep recess that was made in its thickness, and formed the ledge on which they stood.

But when he set his foot upon the jutting point which had lately held the nest, and then planted the other foot on the same spot, and after that, carefully stooped down, and stretched his arm out, so as to stick the arrow into the ball, that he might raise it, and convey it to the top of the wall,—he had no sooner effected this, than he suddenly felt his head reel, and his eyes swim at the unaccustomed height over which he hung suspended, merely sustained by that frail support.

He closed his eyes for an instant, and struggled to nerve himself boldly against the thought of the small point on which he stood, and to shut out the view of the depth beneath him.

Gruoch felt the spasmodic twitch that these sensations communicated to the hand she grasped.

“Keep firm, Culen! Hold fast my hand! I have yours tight!” And the small hand never trembled, or wavered, but clutched close, like a vice.

Her voice did him good; her tone of resolution inspired him, her steady grasp encouraged him; and he was enabled to recall his dizzied senses.

He looked up, and as he beheld that exquisite face leaning over towards him, anxiety and interest in each lineament, and wish for his success beaming in every feature, he flung up the ball from the point of the arrow, and strove to regain the top of the wall.

But on raising his arm to the edge, he found he should not be able to obtain sufficient purchase,—even when he should gain the assistance of the other hand which was now held by Gruoch,—to enable him to draw himself up that height. The point upon which he stood afforded too little space, the weight of his body was too great, to allow of his climbing up again unassisted.

The page cast one look of mute dismay towards his young mistress.

She perceived his peril.

“Keep a brave heart, Culen! Hold my hand steadily! You are safe, fear not!” she exclaimed. “Here, Grym! Grym! Come here; make haste. Help, Grym!—help!”

The whole scene has occupied some time to relate; but it had in fact passed so rapidly, that by no means a long time had elapsed since Grym had retreated to the other end of the platform to fetch the arrows. While occupied in collecting them, he had not perceived what had been going on at that distance; but he now hastened to the spot, on hearing his young lady's call for assistance.

He soon perceived the emergency; and hardly giving utterance to his thought:—“What have these children been about?” he leaned over the top of the wall, and seizing Culen's hand from Gruoch in his own herculean grip, he drew him carefully, but readily, from his perilous position.

The first impulse of the kind-hearted bow-man, was to hug the lad in his arms, and to enquire whether he was hurt ; the next was to shake him by the scuff of his neck, and to ask him gruffly, " What d'ye mean by playing such fool's tricks, master page ? Don't you see how you've frightened my young lady, here ? "

And as they both looked at Gruoch, they saw her turn pale ; she staggered forward, and would have fallen to the ground, had not Grym caught her in his arms.

" Poor lamb ! " he muttered, as he bore her gently to her own apartments, to recover ; " She's as tender-hearted as she's beautiful. "

" And she feels thus for me ! " whispered Culen's heart, as he stood rooted to the spot, his cheek flushed, and his chest heaving, at the thought.

They were wrong. Neither the page nor the man-at-arms guessed that her swoon was the effect of mere physical sympathy ; a sickening sense of danger past ; a reaction of the nerves,—braced for the moment by strength of will, with an object in view,—but suddenly relaxed from their tension, by the native weakness of a frame less powerful than her spirit.

Years passed on. The handsome girl became a confirmed beauty ; the wilful child became the determined woman ; for with such a character as hers, youth early acquires the self-possession and decision which in softer natures belongs only to a more advanced maturity : and Gruoch, still in her non-age, and in person singularly delicate, was yet in spirit, in bearing, in formed opinion, a woman.

Her affection for her father was the tenderest sentiment she felt ; but it was the tenderness of pity, of protection. Her partiality for Grym was the most active preference she had ; and this displayed itself in familiar treatment, esteem for his good qualities, confidence, companionship, and mutual ease of intercourse. Her liking for the page partook of kindly tolerance ;

and she accepted his services, and his devotion to her every wish, as those of a faithful serf, or of an attached and favorite spaniel. She had ever been accustomed to regard him in the light of entire inferiority, so that he scarcely presented himself to her mind as one of the same race with herself, and she would as soon have dreamed of one of her father's hounds conceiving a passion for her, as have entertained the most remote suspicion of the one which glowed in the heart of the brave and handsome Culen.

His very personal advantages were unnoted by her as belonging to manly beauty. He seemed scarce a man, to her ; he was a page, a retainer, a servant—no more.

The constant sense of his subordinate state, rendered her blind to the traces of feeling in him, as to the traits which exteriorly distinguished him ; she was as far from guessing the love that lurked in his heart, as she was from perceiving the graces that adorned his person ; and she as little noted the evidences of the passion that burned within, as the eyes themselves, which shot forth such ardent expression. The altered voice, the changed colour, the checked respiration, the agitated frame, at her unexpected approach, or her sudden address, no more struck her than did the well-favored countenance, the handsome figure, or the comely bearing of the young man. Had he possessed the brilliant advantages of nobility, or even gentle blood, it might have lent her light to discern his native merits,—but wanting this grace, the rest were as naught in her eyes. She was not even aware of their existence.

One evening she had been pacing the castle platform, enjoying the purity of the mountain air, and the pleasant warmth of the sun, which shed a glowing beauty upon all around,—valley, lake, and hill lying steeped in the golden light, ere the setting glory should depart. She was attended as usual by Grym and Culen, with the former of whom she was discussing the incidents

and success of a falcon match that they had flown together the day before. From hawking, they went on to talk of other sports, and the lady Gruoch took occasion to acknowledge the obligations her skill owed to Grym's tuition. In alluding to archery, she was reminded of her childish exploits with the bow, and of the scene which had taken place while they were practising on the very rampart where they now stood.

"I have hardly looked over there, since that time," said she, stopping at the recess in the battlemented wall. "Here's the very spot! Do you remember, Culen? where you climbed over for my ball; and where you turned so giddy at the moment, and I so faint afterwards? Give me your hand; I'll look over now."

"She stepped up, on to the stone ledge, as she spoke; Grym supporting her on one side, Culen holding her hand, as she bade him, on the other. But he was fain to rest his elbow on the ridge of the wall, for the purpose of steadying the hand which held hers, that she might not perceive it tremble. She spoke to Grym on the singular power of height; of the involuntary submission of the nerves to its influence; of the physical effect it has been known to have upon the stoutest hearts; upon the ability to resist this effect; of the possibility of subduing it by practice, and by habituating the frame to such trials. She spoke of endurance, fortitude, bravery, and of her admiration and emulation of such virtues. Of strength, and of courage, and of how she marvelled that any one could rank softness and sweetness by their side.

"Of what use are these so-called virtues?" said she. "Do they gain anything? Do they serve to win one high object? One single end worthy of attainment? Softness, sweetness, meekness, gentleness, and a whole tribe of these washy goodnesses, were only styled virtues by knaves who sought to take advantage of the easy prey which such a creed would produce them in its professors."

“Then you, my lady, would not give your vote for our new king Duncan, if monarchy went by election,” said Grym.

“Not I, in faith,” answered the lady. “He seems to be too like his predecessor; who built churches, when he should have erected fortifications against the Danish inroads; gave his people public prayers to say, when he should have filled their hungry mouths; sent forth his book of *Regia Majestas* under pretence of wisely establishing laws and ordinances for the government of his realm, when he might have advanced their honor and glory by conquest and worthy achievement; and so got the name of sanctity, while he outraged all godliness by his avarice and his selfishness. Out upon such carpet virtues, which might show well enough in a clerkly monk, but beseem not a monarch, a Scottish sovereign! And when, pray, is this gracious meekness, this new-inflicted suavety, this milk-and-water amiability to be crowned?”

“This day sennight is appointed for the convocation of nobles at Scone, my lady;” replied Grym. “The coronation is to be celebrated with great magnificence, they say.”

“And how do the people stand affected to the new sovereign?” asked his mistress. “Does report say whether he be popular? Though all new monarchs are popular, as a matter of course.”

“Public opinion hath two voices just now;” said Grym. “Though most men are loud in their praises of the good king Duncan, there are not wanting those who say his cousin Macbeth would have better filled the throne. He is a right valiant gentleman, and hath well-nigh as close claims to the monarchy as the king himself, being descended in the like right line; for Macbeth is the son of the one daughter of our late Malcolm II, as Duncan is the other.”

“Then why not have chosen the valiant knight, instead of the carpet knight? Why not Macbeth, rather than Duncan, if they possess equal claims?” asked Gruoch.

“ Because Duncan’s mother was the elder of the two sisters ;” replied Grym. “ Besides, it is whispered that the valour of Macbeth partakes of somewhat more than hardihood and bravery, and that to what his partizans call courage, his enemies might give the harsher name of cruelty.”

“ The bold and daring never want for enemies among the weak and timid, who are legion ;” said lady Gruoch ; “ and who stigmatize that which they cannot hope to emulate.”

While she thus conversed, she had remained half sitting, half kneeling, in the recess, and had been leaning upon the ridge of the wall, or rather upon the arm of the page ; who perceiving that she still rested upon the stone ledge, and wishing to preserve her shoulder from its hard contact, had placed his arm so that she might have its intervention.

She leaned upon it as she would have done upon a cushion, or upon his cloak, had he folded it into one for the purpose ; totally unconscious that the support she used was human in its sense of her touch, or that there was human sympathy, human affection, human passion, beating at the heart close beside her.

Every pulse, every fibre of the arm upon which she leaned, thrilled with the consciousness of its contact with the fair body that it upheld ; but it might have been a mere mat, for aught she knew of the sensations with which it was instinct.

“ If it were not that all the world is sunk into apathy, and infatuated with seeming virtues and inglorious love of ease,” continued the lady, “ public opinion could have had but one voice, and that voice would have been for valiant Macbeth, instead of the poor-spirited Duncan. Were all men of my mind, better befits a sceptre be wielded with harshness and glory, than with infructuous mildness. These are no times for milk-sop kings ! All men should be soldiers—and kings, most of all men !”

“ All men should be soldiers ?” echoed Culen half unconsciously.

“ Ay, master page. Though I thank you for your pains to save my shoulder from the hard edge of this stone wall ; yet methinks I could better like to see your good right arm strike a firm blow in Scotland's cause, than benumb itself into a cushion for a lady's back, though the back be mine own.”

“ And have I your ladyship's leave to seek service in the field ?” asked Culen, his eyes sparkling at the thought of winning favor in hers. “ If my lord, your father, and yourself, sanction my leaving the castle of Moray, I ask no better fortune than the chance of showing my lady that the arm has been nerved to achievement, not 'numbed to inaction, by having had the honor to serve her for a cushion.”

“ Well said, Culen ;” said the lady Gruoch, looking at him with a smile of approval ; “ I will myself obtain my father's consent to your quitting our inglorious castle of ease : to your exchanging this dull, stagnant, slothful vegetation, for a life of action, of glory, honor, and renown. Would my mother's wish had been accomplished ! Would I were a man to go forth with you ! You should be my trusty squire, and Grym, my faithful man-at-arms ;—and so should the knight of Moray set forth to the field doughtily equipped ! Would I had indeed been born a man !”

The lady Gruoch arose thoughtfully ; and quitted the ramparts, that she might seek her father, and inform him of Culen's suit ; which, strengthened by her own representation, could not fail of success, for she was never refused a single point she desired to carry with her fond old parent.

Culen watched the retiring form of his beautiful lady, and as it receded from his view, a shadow fell upon him ; for he remembered that his desire to take arms, would involve his banishment from her presence, in which, till now, his existence had been spent. But the thought of her bright smile, when he had proclaimed

his desire to become a soldier, shed its light once more upon his spirit, and he eagerly entered into consultation with Grym, how best he might carry out his desire of winning advancement abroad ; with which he secretly hoped some day to return home, that he might lay its trophies at the feet of his mistress. A lurking, half-defined sense there was, that he should thus raise himself more nearly to her own level ; a successful soldier of fortune approaching a poor thane's daughter less hopelessly, than a humble page,—a retainer of her father's ; at any rate, he knew that to be a soldier at all, was one step in her regard, and that sufficed to inspire him with hope and courage for the present.

At first he thought of seeking service under this very Macbeth, the "right valiant gentleman" of whom they had just been speaking ; but Grym told him, that he thought he could obtain (through means of one of the monks whom he had formerly known, when a lad, at the nearest abbey) a recommendation to Banquo, the thane of Lochaber, a worthy leader, and a renowned warrior ; who, if he would let Culen fight beneath his banners, his training as a soldier, and his subsequent success in arms was secured. And thus it was concluded upon. And in a few days, Culen, no longer a page, left the castle of Moray, to seek his fortune as a soldier. In parting with him, the gentle old Kenneth had bestowed a kindly benison on him ; Grym had growled him some rough but sensible advice ; and the lady Gruoch had given him her hand to kiss ; which favor he had knelt to receive, and which had done much to console him for the sacrifice he made in leaving her. No thought reached her of the emotion that filled his heart, as he knelt before her, and vowed to win all his honors in the name of her who had sent him forth, and to ascribe to her inspiration all the glory he trusted to achieve. She was proud to behold the champion whom her ardour had animated, but no surmise that his own passion, no less than her words,

had been the animating cause of his championship, crossed her mind for an instant.

For some time after Culen's departure, the castle of Moray seemed to sink into more than the usual state of dullness and stagnation, of which its young mistress had complained.

But one day its inhabitants were thrown into a state of unwonted excitement and interest, by the arrival of two strangers at the gates, who entreated to speak with Kenneth, thane of Moray, and his fair daughter, the lady Gruoch.

One of these strangers was a Highlander, habited of course in the costume of his mountain home ; the other, a young damsel, who was closely shrouded in her tartan plaid, which she wore over her head and shoulders ; but who, from the glimpse the attendants caught of her countenance, as they ushered the strangers into the presence of their lord and lady, they pronounced to be " bonnie beyond ordinar."

But no sooner had the lady Gruoch looked upon the strangers, than she recognized in the man, the Highlander she had some years before encountered in the wood. She was about to utter some exclamation of surprise, but she checked herself, and listened to what he was saying in reply to a question her father had asked, as to what had brought them to the castle.

The Highlander said that he was travelling in search of employment for his only child, his daughter Doda ; that she played the harp passing well ; that the monks at the neighbouring abbey had told him that she would most likely find entertainment and favor at the castle of Moray with the lady Gruoch, who probably loved music. That he would fain have kept his child at home in his mountain hut, but that the nipping of hard times had left no other alternative than that of employing her talent, or starving together. That he hoped that the lord of Moray and his fair daughter would give Doda leave to let them hear her skill on the instrument she bore beneath her plaid ; then signing to the

damsel, she threw back her tartan screen, and disclosing a face of great loveliness, amid a profusion of golden hair, she began to play.

The sounds she drew from the instrument were sweet and full ; but when she accompanied them with her voice, pouring forth strains of purity, and beauty, and chanting songs full of variety, now of pathos, now of animation, the venerable Kenneth listened entranced, and sat rapt by the delicious music, with which the young damsel's harp and voice filled the hall.

The lady Gruoch listened too, but it was musingly ; and as if her thoughts were not entirely engrossed by the strains she heard. She looked upon the beautiful face of the damsel, but now and then her glance was directed towards the Highlander, who leaned upon his staff, and watched his daughter with eyes of affectionate admiration.

He raised them with gratitude towards the old thane, when he declared that he had never heard anything like the charm of the damsel's harping and singing, and that her music and her beauty were those of an angel.

While her father was occupied with the Highlander and his daughter, the lady Gruoch had noted Grym enter the hall, who, with his fellows, had crept in, to hear the stranger's music.

She beckoned the man-at-arms to her side, and by a glance indicating the Highlander, she whispered :—
“ Is it not he ? ”

“ It is the same, sure enough, ” replied Grym. “ I knew him again the moment I cast my eyes on him, and I wondered, would your ladyship do so too. Shall I bid him begone, my lady ? Do you dislike his presence ? ” added he.

“ No, no ; I do not fear him now. I was a child then, and dreaded every shadow, I suppose. I will speak to him ; I only wished to be sure that my recollection served me aright. ”

The lady Gruoch moved to rejoin her father ; who was still intent upon Doada and her music. He had promised that she should remain as a companion to his daughter at the castle of Moray, and delight them with her marvellous skill, saying that he should be well pleased to add to his retainers a damsel of such merit.

Her Highland father seemed gladdened by the promise, and by the prospect of such a home was secured for his child. He only entreated that she might be permitted to come and see her old mountain home every few months or so, and rejoice the heart of her fond father with the sight of her bonny face, and with the assurance that she was well and happy. "That thought will keep me company, and serve to make the solitary hut, over beyond the hills, blithe and cheery," said the Highlander in conclusion ; "and I can now return there with a light heart, though alone. Bless thee, my child, bless thee, my Doada !"

His daughter clung to him, and he embraced her fervently. Then repeating his thanks to Kenneth for the protection he afforded, and bowing lowly to the thane's daughter, the Highlander was turning to depart, when the lady Gruoch looked him steadily in the face, and arrested his steps by that look, as well as by saying :—

"The death you foretold, befell ; and now I would fain hear the other weird you were about to read that morning. Speak !"

The Highlander passed his hand across his brow, muttering, as he gazed at the lady Gruoch :—

"I remember now ! The castle of Moray ! Ay, there was death there, then ! Somewhat else there was, I dimly saw, but cared not to read, to one who had offered help. My hour was then upon me. My hour of darkness and of light. Darkness to the soul, light to the vision. When my hour is upon me, I see more than is given to ordinary human ken."

"And is not your hour upon you now ? Speak, old man ! Read my weird now !" said lady Gruoch.

The Highlander still gazed upon her ; but he shook his head, and laid his finger upon his lip.

“ How came it you were no longer in the wood, when assistance was sent to you ? Who are you ? What are you ? ” asked she hurriedly.

“ I am a poor Highlander, my lady. I had wandered across the hills to these parts, on an errand to the abbey near here, where I knew I should find help. I saw your ladyship, that morning,—I now recollect,—in the wood, where I had set me down to rest. In the kindly impulse of youth, you offered me aid, but when you withdrew, I knew not that you had gone to seek it, and send it me. When you left the spot, I arose and resumed my path to the abbey, where I found that I sought, and returned forthwith to my mountain home, whence I have never since strayed, till compelled to do so for my child's sake. I could have borne want myself, but cannot look upon her starvation.”

“ She shall find a home here,” said lady Gruoch graciously ; “ the pleasure her melody gives to my father, would alone make her a welcome inmate to his daughter. She shall dwell with us.”

“ And you will let her father's eyes behold her occasionally ? ” asked the Highlander, after renewing his thanks.

“ I will myself send her to see you, safely escorted ; ” said Gruoch. “ Meantime, among my maidens, she shall be nearest to my person, in token of the favor in which her skill is held.”

She turned to speak some words of encouragement to the timid Doda ; and the Highlander, blessing heaven for the auspicious prospects of his child, once more embraced her, bowed lowly, and withdrew.

The presence of the fair young damsel, and her passing excellence in song, served well to enliven the monotony of existence in the castle of Moray ; and she soon became a universal favorite. Even with the

waiting-women, who shared her attendance upon the lady Gruoch, she was looked upon with no envy or suspicion, when it was found that she made no attempt to supersede them in the good graces of their mistress. She was modest, retiring, and unassuming even to timidity ; and devoted herself almost wholly to entertaining the old thane's solitary hours with her music. She seemed never to weary of singing and playing to him, while the venerable Kenneth was equally unwearied in deriving pleasure from the exercise of her gift.

Gruoch seemed well-pleased that there should be this source of gratification added to the few that existed for her quiet old father, and treated the Highland girl with consideration for his sake ; else there was little intercourse between the lady of the castle and her timid handmaiden, Doad. To the lady Gruoch herself, the still-life of the castle seemed as unbroken, dull, and irksome as ever.

However, soon there came tidings of an event that promised to supply food for curiosity and interest to all within the walls of the castle.

A horseman rode up to the gates, bringing a missive to the lord of Moray from a former companion-in-arms, Sinel, thane of Glamis ; who informed his old friend, that his son, Macbeth, was abroad on a martial expedition, which would take him through that part of the country ; that his son, therefore, craved leave to call upon the venerable friend of his father, and pay his respects to the lord of Moray, and to his fair daughter, the lady Gruoch, of whose charms, fame had spread report, even so far as to his castle of Inverness.

“ Gladly indeed, shall I welcome the brave son of my brave old comrade. And how far hence is thy lord, good fellow ?” said Kenneth to the messenger. “ When may we expect the approach of valiant Macbeth ?”

“ My lord will be here to-night ;” replied the man. “ I outrode his company but a few hours. He sent

me on to bring your lordship intelligence of his arrival, with his father's letter."

The news spread of the expected approach of the renowned visitor ; and all was anticipation among the inhabitants of the castle. Every one desired to behold the illustrious chieftain, one of the first soldiers of the age, a military hero, a noble of blood-royal, a cousin of the king himself. Hasty preparations were made to receive the honored guest with due hospitality ; and all that could be done in the small space of time that intervened, was done, that a well-spread board and fitting apartments might be prepared for the feasting and accommodation of Macbeth and his company.

In those rude times, the bare necessaries of life—mere beef and bread, were to be had in abundance, at a small cost, when no season of dearth occurred ; and though they were but scantily cooked, and roughly set forth, yet the appetites of men inured to hardships of the battlefield, were not likely to be fastidious, any more than their limbs were disdainful of repose found in ill-furnished chambers ; and thus, food and a roof, such only as the old thane's resources could command, would be no unwelcome hospitality to a warrior and his company of soldiers after a day's march.

Macbeth arrives. The old thane receives him warmly, as a worthy representative of Sinel, his father, whom Kenneth remembers a prodigy of valour, when his own less daring spirit yet generously bade him take pride in the deeds of his friend. The handsome warrior receives courteously the commendations of his father's friend, and adds farther greetings to those contained in the letter. The lady Gruoch joins her welcome to that of her parent ; and while the gracious words flow from her lips, Macbeth looks upon her surpassing beauty, and his heart owns he has never beheld charms of equal potency with those of the thane's daughter. There is something in those azure eyes that compels and enthrals his gaze ; their fascination is only rivalled by the brilliancy of her complexion, by the

lustre of her golden hair, and above all, by the magic of a commanding presence, which asserts the claim of such a combination of beauty to homage and admiration. Nothing unwilling, the chieftain yields himself more and more to the spell ; he cannot withdraw his gaze, nor does he desire so to do. He is content to submit his senses to this new and intoxicating influence ; content also to find that his gaze nowise seems to distress or oppress the object of his fixed regard. She is animated, self-possessed, radiant in conscious charms, performing the duties of hostess, and presiding at the festal supper-table with ease and grace. Her retired life has induced no bashful embarrassment, no rustic awkwardness ; she seems born a queen, and her seclusion from society appears only to have allowed free field for the growth of her natural refinement and elevation of demeanour. She converses with freedom, discovering intelligence and decision of opinion. Her bearing is majestic, yet affable ; lofty, yet courteous ; dignified, yet attractive. Her eyes beam with spirit and fire, yet possess alluring beauty in their blue depths ; the rich carnation of the lips has voluptuous softness in its pouting fullness ; and though there lurks cruelty and unrelenting in those deeply indented corners, yet dimples, and seductive smiles play around, and help to conceal the sinister inflexibility.

By degrees, he discovers yet a new charm amidst so much beauty. He sees a something of answering admiration in the manner in which the bright flashes of those azure eyes met his. The handsome person of the chieftain, the ardour of his manner, the spirit of his converse, all coming to confirm the impression which his previous reputation had created upon her imagination, leads her to regard him with scarcely less admiration than he does her ; and their mutual looks and discourse grow more and more animated, and reveal more and more how each is struck and enchanted with the other. The gentle remarks and kindly speeches of the old thane fall almost totally disregard-

ed, while the attention of the young people becomes every instant more exclusively devoted to each other.

Suddenly the sound of music is heard. At a signal from the lord of Moray, the Highland maiden has been sent for into the supper-hall, and now strikes a few chords on her harp by way of a prelude to the song he has requested.

“Doada will sing to us, my lord ;” said Kenneth to his guest. “Her music is worthy your ear, I can assure you.”

“What name did you say ? How called you the maiden ?” said Macbeth, abruptly regarding her.

The damsel blushed, at the sudden gaze of one so illustrious, till the blood flew over neck and brow, and her fair skin showed the suffusion so apparently, that a lily seemed suddenly transformed to a rose.

Gruoch's face flashed scarlet too.

Kenneth repeated Doada's name to his guest ; and then bade her play and sing one of his favorite airs.

The damsel obeyed. But though the strain was plaintively sweet, the guest soon forgot to give it his attention, in resuming his conversation with the lady Gruoch. They talked in a half-whisper out of deference to the old thane's love of music, but they did not share his enthusiasm, scarcely affecting to note the song or the singer. Indeed, it was evident that the fair hostess preferred engrossing his attention herself, and he appeared to pursue her inclination with no unwillingness.

But when the music came to a close, Kenneth canvassed applause for his favorite Doada ; and he drew his guest's attention to her again by asking if they did not possess minstrelsy in their poor castle of Moray worthy even of royal hearing.

“Ay, by my faith ;” replied Macbeth. “And the damsel is as fair as she is gifted. I scarce ever beheld hair so beautiful. Golden locks such as are found in the castle of Moray, are rather of heaven than of earth. They are what we fancy beaming around angelic heads.”

The chieftain's look rested again upon the lady Gruoch as he spoke ; and the scarlet flush which had once more sprung up in her cheek, had scarcely faded away, when he thus resumed his gaze, and found her in heightened colour looking more bright, more beautiful, than ever.

Before the company retired for the night, Macbeth bade his aged host farewell, saying that he and his retinue would in all probability have left the castle before the old thane would be stirring. He asked his leave to depart thus abruptly, as it behoved him to be at some miles' distance from the castle of Moray before noon on the following day. When his host expressed regret at parting with him so soon, the chieftain told him that he had hopes of being able to return in a day or two,—it might be on the very morrow of his departure ; and, therefore, if he would let him do so, he should return to the castle of Moray, and lengthen his visit to his father's friend, and improve his own acquaintance with the venerable thane and his daughter. This prospect was eagerly greeted both by Kenneth and the lady Gruoch, whose sanction had been included by a beseeching glance in the leave which Macbeth had asked of her father for this renewal of his visit. With mutual interest and liking on all sides, they parted ; and in a short time, all within the castle seemed slumber and repose.

Yet within the chamber of the lady Gruoch there was neither. Her heart knew no peace, her frame no rest. Agitated as she had never been before, she paced her room for many a long hour through the night. It seemed as if in action alone she could meet and contend with the busy tide of thoughts and emotions that pressed, and heaved, and whelmed around her.

Paramount above all, was the image of Macbeth. His martial bearing, his handsome person, his ardour of admiration for herself, all claimed her woman's preference, and won him her regard, her individual liking.

His illustrious birth, his military renown, his distinguished position, were so many accumulated appeals to her ambitious nature, and fulfilled the highest requisitions of her aspiring fancy as to what that man should be with whom she would desire to link her fate.

In every respect he embodied the ideal she had conceived of a hero whom she could love, whom she could seek to win ; and this very hero she dared to believe she already saw won, at her feet, at her disposal, to accept, or to reject.

Was it indeed so ? Might she believe that he was as much enthralled as his eyes had declared ? Might she believe that her beauty had sufficed to secure so important a conquest ? Was he indeed so surely won, so entirely hers ?

And then came the thought that had flashed into scarlet witness upon her cheek, when it had first crossed her mind, as she beheld the glance he gave towards Doada, when he heard her name. Again she felt the pang that darted athwart her heart, as she heard him praise the Highland maiden's golden hair ; and though the praise was followed closely by words that directed the compliment as much to herself—yet the mere thought of sharing his admiration with another was not to be endured, and she muttered with clenched teeth and hands :—

“ She shall go. She shall be here no longer to meet his eye when he returns. On the morrow of the day which is now dawning, he said his return might be. Before this day's sun sets, she shall be far on her way to her mountain home. No minstrel girl,—be her name never so soft, her hair never so bright,—shall come between me and my hope ! She goes !”

No sooner had Macbeth and his train departed, after an early morning meal, than the lady Gruoch told the Highland maiden, Doada, that she intended to allow her to go and pay the visit to her father which had been promised when he left her at the castle ; and that as well-nigh three months had elapsed since his

departure, they would doubtless be happy to meet and spend some time together. She gave her leave to remain for a stated period, adding many gracious words as to the loss that the want of her music would prove to the lord of Moray and herself, and bestowing upon her several useful and handsome presents to her father, together with some gifts and tokens of approbation for herself.

The damsel blushed her gratitude and thanks ; but when the lady Gruoch spoke of her immediate departure, Doado ventured timidly to say that she feared nightfall would set in, ere she could reach the hut among the mountains ; as, when her father and she had come hither, they had quitted their home by day-break, and that it was late now to set forth.

“ But I have provided that you shall have safe escort ;” said her mistress. “ Grym is to accompany you, maiden ; and he will protect you from all harm, be it by day or by night, and place you safely within the arms of your father, with whom I wish you all happiness. Farewell !”

The lady Gruoch paced the castle platform, watching the departure of the Highland maid with the faithful man-at-arms, as their retreating figures threaded the path which led by the shores of the lake, and branched off upwards among the hills. As they diminished gradually, and faded away in the blue distance, Gruoch felt her heart lighten of the load which had pressed upon it, so long as the maiden remained in the castle. Now she could give herself up to unmingled satisfaction in looking forward to the return of Macbeth. Now no anxiety need she feel, lest his eye, his attention should be withdrawn an instant from herself ; and she could indulge her fancy with picturing how exclusively she might hope to enjoy his society, how best seek to win his regard, how most happily secure his love, and give him assurance of her own. At the thought, her heart swelled with a sense of triumph, and her eye

dilated, as she raised it in proud exultation skywards.

The sky was suddenly overcast. It had been a bright forenoon. The opening year had somewhat advanced, and some symptoms of early spring had smiled upon the landscape. But the breath of winter still prevailed, and occasionally returned to resume its empire in all tyrannous severity.

The lady Gruoch had lingered on the ramparts to enjoy the clear morning air, and to indulge the sense of relief that possessed her while watching the departure of Doda ; but now, as she gazed into the sky, she beheld the sullen veil that was drawn athwart the blue heavens, and obscured all trace of that brightness which till then had irradiated the face of nature.

She was sensible, too, of the increasing bitterness of the cold, now that the sun had withdrawn his rays ; and with a shudder, partly of chill, partly of misgiving, she drew her mantle more closely about her, and prepared to quit the platform.

One more glance she threw northwards, in the direction of the hills. A shrewd blast of wind swept from that quarter, and a moment or two after, a few flakes of snow fluttered through the keen air ;—white, feathery, pure, subtle, light, insidious snow.

During the long hours of afternoon and eventide, the lady Gruoch heard the murmurs of regret which her old father could not repress, for the loss of Doda and her sweet music.

“ Why was she sent away ? ” he asked at first.

“ My lady sent her to see her father ; ” was the reply of his attendants.

The old thane did not answer ; but sighed, and caressed the head of his favorite hound in silence.

When his daughter joined him, after quitting the ramparts, he repeated his question to her.

Her reply was nearly the same as the one he had received before.

“ I sent her to visit her father in their mountain

home ; you know it was so promised, when he left her with us."

"But why should she have gone to-day ? Besides, it is foul weather. Is not that snow, I see yonder, through the oriel window ? She will starve with cold, poor thing !"

"It was fine when they set forth. I sent Grym with her."

"But why send her to-day ?" reiterated the old thane, whom vexation at the loss of his wonted recreation, and uneasiness for the safety of the minstrel maiden, rendered unusually querulous.

"It was needful she should go ;" replied Gruoch in the peremptory tone she knew was always sufficient to decide a question with her father. "It is well-nigh three months since she has been with us, and her Highland father will be wearying to see his child."

Kenneth submitted to the tone which he knew so well, and which generally closed all points at issue between them. He merely sighed, and resigned himself to his accustomed patting of the dogs' heads, seeming to take refuge in their mute tokens of sympathy and attachment, and to find solace in their looks of dumb affection.

The lady Gruoch roused herself to attempt the entertainment of her old parent, that she might supply to him as well as she could, the loss of the music he so much missed ; and she began to speak to him of the expected return of their guest, to extol his various accomplishments, to dwell upon the manner in which his personal merits kept pace with the reputation and renown he had acquired, and took pains to discover whether her father's sentiments of Macbeth's excellence agreed with her own.

She soon found, by the interest he took in the theme, how entirely the chieftain had won her father's regard, not only as the son of his old companion-in-arms, but in his own individual capacity ; and so well pleased did he seem with the subject, that while it was

being discussed with animation by them both, the old thane forgot to repeat his regrets for the loss of his favorite Doada and her music.

With so facile, so gentle-spirited a father, what might not an affectionate daughter have done to make his life one of happiness, instead of one of monotony, neglect, and almost solitude,—save for the society of his dumb favorites, the hounds.

While with her father, in the hall, striving to amuse him, and at the same time indulging her own train of thought by speaking upon the theme which most engrossed it, the lady Gruoch had felt her animation return, her exultation revive, her spirits restored to the proud and hopeful tone which they had assumed that morning as she watched the departure of Doada.

But when she bade her father good night, on quitting the hall, and retired to her own apartment, the same sense of shuddering chill and foreboding crept over her, and she made excuses to detain her attendant women about her person somewhat later than usual.

“Make up the fire well upon the hearth, Eoda; draw the logs together, that the blaze may last;” said she. “Have you made fast the door which leads on to the platform, Lula? The chamber seems unusually cold. Draw the hangings close before the window. So; you may leave me. But let the door of the ante-room remain only slightly closed, that I may call you, if need be.”

When the women had withdrawn, the lady seated herself beside the blaze, and strove to derive cheer from its influence. She sought to reassemble those bright thoughts of hope, of love, of ambition, which had danced before her eyes, while dwelling upon the image of Macbeth. She tried to recall his looks, his words, his ardent manner, with the happy conviction they had engendered, and the joyful feelings they had awakened. But nothing of joy or of happiness could

she summon to bear a part in her musings, to shed a glow on her spirits, and lighten the gloom which made her feel the solitude of her chamber insupportable.

After a time, she stole lightly to the door of communication between her own room and that where the attendant women slept. She pushed the half-closed door ; it yielded, and she could perceive that they were already at rest, and all asleep. She revoked her thought of summoning one of them, and drawing the door to again, she remained a moment or two, fixed in thought, in the centre of her apartment. The tapestry that hung around the walls, shook and heaved with the bleak gusts that made their way into the chamber. The hangings round the mullion window, though they were of heavy woollen arras, waved, rose, and sank with the night-wind that forced itself through the crevices and rough stone-work of the deep embrasure. By a sudden and seemingly irresistible impulse, the lady Gruoch moved hastily across the room, and drawing aside the curtain, gazed forth into the night.

The snow had continued falling fast and thick ever since she had noted those few first flakes ; and now it lay in one wide sheet of white, bespreading castle, hill, and valley. The glare of its surface distinctly indicated the objects it shrouded, displaying and tracing that which it covered. The ridges and ledges of the castle walls were clearly defined, around and beneath, on all sides within view of the window ; and from the foot of the building stretched away the valley, with the neighboring wood and lake, towards the hills, alike sheeted with white. The window overlooked the platform, which has been so often alluded to, and to which there was access from this range of apartments through a small door, opening from the lady Gruoch's own chamber. For awhile she gazed forth upon the blank desolation.

“ If he should not come to-morrow,” muttered she, “ it will have been needless. But he will come ; I

know he will ; and whatever befall, she must not be here. I would have her away ; why then should I repent that she is away ? The fact crowns my desire, and all is as it should be."

She closed the curtain, and flung herself but half undressed on the bed. The red embers of the dying fire cast a lurid and a fitful light through the apartment. The lady Gruoch closed her eyes and slept ; but her sleep brought no peace, her slumber no repose, her dormant thoughts no rest. Her frame was for a time extended on the couch, her limbs lay stretched in inaction, but the mind was still tossing to and fro in a sea of agitation. The soul was wakefully fighting, while the body lay drowsed and prostrate ; but presently the struggle of the soul communicated itself to the body, and compelled that to act in concert with the strong contention maintained within. The waking soul roused the sleeping body and constrained it, still sleeping as it was, to perform the deeds of waking. The volition of the spirit made the passive body involuntarily fulfil its promptings, and move mechanically obedient to interior impulse. Consciousness and unconsciousness had equal possession of her frame, and dictated alike its motion. Asleep in body, yet awake in spirit, the form of the lady Gruoch arose from the bed, and, traversing the apartment, halted near the door, which led from her room on to the castle platform. Some idea of recalling Doda, of concealing her within the castle from the sight of Macbeth, instead of sending her forth into the snow-storm, had taken possession of her soul, and in the strength of its impress, this thought now led her into the open air in the dead of the night, with her thinly-clad slumbering body, and her fighting spirit. The door was unbarred, unclosed, and the lady stepped forth.

" You are cold, Doda—come back. You shall not perish ;" she muttered. " Abide in this retired chamber—it is but for awhile—till he is gone. Do as I bid you, maiden, I will have it so ! How cold you

are ! Come in, I tell you ! The snow will starve you—and my father will be grieved ! Cold—white—dead !”

The lady Gruoch had crossed the platform ; and as she concluded her muttered words, she laid her hand on the stone wall that skirted the rampart. The sharp cold of its touch had startled her senses into consciousness, and she awoke to find herself wandering alone in the inclement air at dead of night, half clothed, half asleep, and shivering with cold and awe. She shrank back to her chamber, hastily refastened the door, cowered beneath the bed-clothes, and summoned the attendants to renew the fire, and watch beside her couch till morning.

With the light of day her courage returned. Her spirits revived, and she could teach herself to look back upon the tumult of the past night unmoved. She persuaded herself that Doda was safe, and that she had permitted an exaggerated idea to alarm her, that any danger could exist for the maiden while under the protection of Grym. She remembered that Macbeth was possibly to return that day to the castle, and that it behoved her to meet him with smiles and a serene brow, unruffled by traces of the emotions of the past night. She struggled to recover her tranquillity, to smooth her haggard looks, and to resume the charm and majesty of her native mien.

The thought of his near approach, and of the probable result of his return, helped to wreath her lip with smiles, give a glow to her cheek, and light her eyes with a glance of fire ; and by the hour when the chief and his retinue reached the castle of Moray, its mistress shone forth with all her accustomed radiance of beauty.

After an interchange of courtesy with the old thane, her father, Macbeth soon contrived to lead the lady Gruoch apart, and renew the animated strain of conversation in which they had both found so much pleasure the first evening they had met.

They leaned, talking together, in the recess of the oriel window of the hall ; and while the old thane noted them as they stood a little apart thus, he thought how handsome they both looked, how happy they seemed, how accordant their beauty and bearing, and how well fitted for each other they were , and then the thought ensued, of how goodly-assorted a couple his daughter and the son of his friend would make in marriage.

As the father mused thus, Macbeth allowed the ardour of his manner to assume less and less reserve, and the warmth of his admiration to be less and less concealed ; and at length his words and looks were so unequivocal, that the lady Gruoch could entertain no doubt of the conquest she had gained.

Something he had said in allusion to the lustre of her charms, and in avowal of the power they had exercised over his hitherto untouched heart, entreating her permission to speak of his passion to her father ; to which she had gaily replied that she would hear him plead farther herself, before she sanctioned his carrying his suit to any other umpire of his fate.

“ But I own no eloquence in speech, lady,” said he. “ I am a rough soldier ; my arguments have hitherto been deeds not words, and I have learned no arts of peace in the battle-field. I can wield a claymore, but have no skill in poesy or song, or in aught of such things that may help a knight to win fair lady. The belief that I behold that in you which disdains such silken accomplishments, it is, which gives me courage to sue in behalf of the rough soldier ; at the same time that it ought perhaps to bid me despair of ever calling such superiority in mind and beauty mine own.”

“ I care little for poesy and song, it is true ;” said Gruoch.

“ By the way, where is the minstrel maiden, that sang to us the other evening, I do not see her to-day ?”

“ Do you desire to see her ?” asked the lady abruptly, with a sudden flash of her deep blue eyes.

“Not I;” replied the chieftain; “I only felt an interest in her for the sake of my mother, whose name she bears; and for the sake of one,” he added, lowering his voice to a tone of passionate admiration, “whose golden hair is even brighter than hers, which attracted my regard for an instant as I compared it in thought, though unjustly, as I now find by closer inspection, to these lustrous tresses that transcend all others.”

As the handsome chieftain hung over her, raising one of the golden curls gallantly to his lips as he spoke, and thus, by a few simple words, explained the origin of the passing interest he had evinced for the Highland maid, the lady Gruoch looked forth from the oriel window amid the snow-tracks and frozen distance of the drear wintry landscape, and a shadow of regret clouded her brow, for having so hastily sent the damsel forth. But the cloud was transient; the shade passed from her thought, as she turned beaming and gracious to the suitor at her side.

And soon, no doubt of mutual preference remained to mar the joy of either Macbeth or the lady Gruoch. She found that the chieftain thought but of her; he discovered that he had succeeded in winning her regard. Their attachment was avowed to her father; and it was agreed that Macbeth should but return to Inverness to impart to his own father his successful suit; and that as soon as preparation could be made to receive his bride, he should return to the castle of Moray to claim her, and to celebrate his nuptials, that he might carry her to her new home.

The lady Gruoch had scarcely bidden farewell to her new-trothed lord, when Gryn returned. He entered the court-yard of the castle, as she was retiring from it, on her way to her own apartment. There was that in the face of the man-at-arms, beside its usual ugliness,—more ghastly than its wonted look, that arrested her steps, and made her pause to hear what he might have to say.

“ I performed your bidding, Madam ;” said he.
“ I took her to her home.”

“ Well done, good Grym ; faithful to thy trust ;” replied his lady. “ You placed the maid within her father’s arms. ’Tis well.”

“ I did, Madam ; but——”

The man-at-arms faltered ; there was that in his eye and voice that belied his rough exterior.

The lady cast a searching look upon his face. She read a terrible meaning there ; but she said with her firm steady voice :—“ You did ? ’Tis enough ; thanks, good Grym.” Then staying to hear no more, she resumed her way to her own apartments.

But not so summary was the inquiry of the old thane with regard to the disappearance of his favorite Doda. He questioned Grym closely concerning the incidents of their journey ; and from the sparing curt speech of the man-at-arms he at length gathered the particulars of her fate.

On the afternoon of their departure from the castle of Moray, they had not reached far among the uplands that stretched away from the shores of the lake, when they were overtaken with the snow, which at first fell lightly and scantily, then thicker and faster, and at length profusely and incessantly.

At first, Grym would have persuaded the maiden to return, and defer her journey to the hills until a fairer season. But by this time the thought of shortly beholding her father, joined to that of having to encounter the stern cold looks of the lady Gruoch, should she return when bidden forth by her, gained sufficient empire over the Highland girl to urge her to proceed. Soon, it became as difficult to make their way back, as to continue on ; and Doda, her spirits rising with the prospect of approaching each step they took, more nearly to her home, cheerily toiled upwards and onwards with the elastic happy step of hope, and chatted with the light heart of youth and anticipation.

“ It will be such a gay surprise for my dear father !”

said she. "He little thinks every moment is bringing his child closer to his arms. And he loves me so dearly, good Grym. You don't know what a kind father he is. He never would have parted with his Doad, but that he could not bear to see Hunger and Death each day approach nearer and more near to our threshold to snatch his child from him. And now she returns, to carry him joy, and comfort, and wealth. See, good Grym, what my lady has given me for him. My lady may seem cold and grand, and awful to look at, or to speak to ;—nay, when I am in her presence, I scarce like to raise my eyes to hers, and tremble like a leaf, simpleton that I am, when I have to carry any message to her,—yet she is as kind as she is handsome. She must be, to think of sending these to my father."

"You are sure you know your way?" said Grym abruptly.

"Of course I do. Straight on ; we can't miss it. This is the path we are in,—skirting these rocks," answered the maiden.

"Yes, but the snow sets deeper and deeper ; the track of the path shows less and less," said Grym.

"And it is getting dark ;" said Doad, looking up ; "the night is coming on. But I know my way—oh yes, I know my way surely. There is the stunted thorn ; farther on we come to the black cavern ; then the deep pool in the hollow ; and after that the clump of firs on the hill-side—beyond that, the eagle's glen ; and then it is but a little way up farther to our hut by the burn-side. The bonny burn springs up close at hand, near to our door—and it's merry to watch its leap, and dance, and frolic, and bound away over rock and fell, in a bright spring day. If it's not frozen over by to-morrow morn, you shall have a cup of its sparkling waters, Grym, and maybe something stronger, to temper it into warmth and comfort after this cold night. How bitter it is ! and how keen the wind whistles ! Sharp from the North ! But no matter, Northward lies home—and home warms the heart full well !"

Long after this, the girl strove to maintain her cheery tone, and her hopeful step. But the darkness crept on and on ; the snow fell thicker and thicker ; the night-wind blew, piercing them through and through ; the path was obscured, and the white glare on all around served but ill to trace even well-known objects to eyes that began to droop and drowse beneath the influence of the intense cold and growing fatigue.

Yet still she struggled onwards, now wavering and uncertain in her course, now more assured, when some familiar object was recognized as marking the path they ought to take ; now she would lag dispirited and doubtful, now again endeavour to resume her hopeful tone and her assured step. Several times they wandered from the track, which with much difficulty was regained, and still the night hours crept on, and still the girl staggered blindly forwards. By this time, Grym had assumed the task of guide, trying to trace the objects Doda had named as marking the course they were to pursue ; and by this time, it was he who maintained the cheerful tone of comforter, endeavouring to inspirit and encourage the weary girl. But her limbs dragged more and more heavily along ; her slight frame clung even more helplessly against the side of the huge man-at-arms ; her head flagged, as a flower snapped in its stem ; and her senses yielded to the lethargy that pressed its sullen weight upon body and spirit alike. " Let me rest, good Grym ; let me rest here for a few minutes ;" she murmured, " I shall be able to go on better afterwards, if you let me rest a little."

Grym attempted to rouse her, telling her that the dawn would soon break,—that they could not now be far from the hut,—that if she could but hold on for a short time yet, they would soon reach home where she might fully rest. But the imperative summons was not to be withstood :—" I cannot, good Grym ; let me rest here,—I shall rise refreshed,—and then we will go to my father." And with this, the maiden

sank down, totally overpowered, in a stupor of frozen slumber.

Her rough-seeming companion screened her as well as he could, in the craggy nook where she had dropped ; drawing her tartan plaid closely round her and adding his own, which he took off for the purpose, to shelter her as well as might be from the falling snow, and cutting wind. Then, carefully marking the spot, he left her thus couched, while he endeavoured to find his way on to the hut, to fetch help.

But in darkness, and ignorance of the track, he only wandered farther and farther from the right direction ; and he was compelled to return to the nook in the glen, after a fruitless search, determining to await here the dawn of day, which he thought could not be far distant.

With the first glimmer of light, he renewed his attempt to discover their way ; and found that they were, in fact, within sight,—not hearing (for the frost had arrested its flow, and smitten it into silence) of the burn or brook which Doda had described as having its source near to the mountain hut of her father. Cheered by this token that they were closer to their journey's end than he had dared to hope, Grym endeavoured gently to arouse the Highland maiden. But no efforts of his could awaken her. The man-at-arms was startled, as he raised the tartan screen from the white still face, and the stricken form that lay there, but he would not allow to himself that what he looked upon was death. He would not listen for her breathing, but held his head erect, apart, as if determined not to ascertain what he would not allow himself to doubt. “The father will know best what will restore the lassie,” he muttered, as he raised her tenderly in his arms ; “let me but find him.”

And he strode on with his burthen, which was scarcely such to his brawny strength, until he came to the door of the shieling, or hut.

The door was barely fastened ; with one stroke of

his foot, the man-at-arms made it yield, and he entered, bearing Doada into her native mountain home.

On the hearth stood the Highlander. Grym went up to him, and placed the daughter within the father's arms. In a few words the events of the past day and night were explained ; the departure from the castle ; the snow-storm ; the sleep ; the home-return ; the hope that a father's embrace would restore warmth and life.

But one glance of the father's eye sufficed. It revealed to him the fatal truth. It told him that his child, whom he had left but a few short months since blooming, well, and happy, was returned to him, inanimate, cold, dead ! He received within his arms, in lieu of his living daughter a frozen corse !

The lady Gruoch reached her own chamber. Thence, she stepped out upon the platform ; the freedom of the open air braced and confirmed her mood of thought. She paced to and fro for awhile, and resolutely shunned the remembrance of Grym's face, which seemed to suggest more than she cared to know. And thus she mused.

“ The girl is gone. She is out of my path. If she cross it no more—the better. Ten such minions removed whence they might breed mischief—what matters it how they be removed ? I am not one to abide the ire of an irritated imagination. It is but brainsickness to consider too deeply of things that are past and done ; a disease of thought to ponder on the means which have already helped us to our wish. I have mine in her removal ; the sum of her image shall henceforth be that to me.”

As the lady Gruoch turned in her walk, at one end of the platform, she beheld at a few paces from her, the Highlander, standing immediately in her path.

“ How camest thou hither, good man ?” she asked ; surprised to see one so suddenly and so near, whom she had thought at a distance. “ How found you this part of the castle ? What has brought you to me ?”

“ I am come to read thee thy weird at last ! ” said the Highlander. “ When first I looked upon thee, I beheld a crown spanning the fair young brow—but I beheld it through a red mist, and would not reveal the fearful secret to one who proffered aid. ”

“ A crown ?—a crown, said'st thou ? ” exclaimed the lady.

“ Ay, a crown, a royal crown—the golden badge of sovereignty ! I would not then foretell so dread, so fatal a vision. But thou hast sent me my child through the snow-storm, and I read thee thy weird through the red mist. A crown is thy weird ; the red mist is blood ! ”

“ What matters, so that the weird be a crown ! ” cried the lady Gruoch. “ Methinks to gain that, I could stem torrents of blood ; scarcely heeding though some of my own were shed to mingle with the stream. ”

“ Thine own ? ” echoed the Highlander, with a scoffing laugh ; “ That were too gentle a sentence. ”

“ What mean'st thou ? Speak farther ! ” The lady advanced, as she spoke, towards the spot where the figure of the Highlander stood with folded arms and derisive lips. “ Speak, man ! ” she continued. “ Tell me thy knowledge. I will have it ! ”

In her eagerness, she still advanced, and would have laid her hand upon the folded arms. She touched no substance. She saw the mocking features, and beheld distinctly the chequered colors of the tartan plaid in which his figure was enveloped,—but she felt nothing. No tangible matter met her grasp, and with horror and awe unspeakable she recoiled ;—then plunging desperately forward, she passed through the vivid shadow as if it had been a rainbow !

An instant—and the whole thing had vanished ; and when, some time after, her women sought their mistress, they found her extended on the ground, senseless.

Messengers bring tidings of Macbeth. They bear a

letter to the lady Gruoch, in which the chieftain tells her that the country is infested with a scum of Gallowglasses, disaffected rebels, and turbulent marauding Kernes ; against whom he is employed, seeking to quell and exterminate them from the land. That this duty calls him to the field, and detains him from the hope with which he left her, of preparing all things at the castle of Inverness for the reception of his bride. He adds, that this active service in which he is engaged, not only interferes thus with the fulfilment of his own wishes, but it likewise employs all his available men, so that he fears he shall scarce be able to send messengers to her so frequently as he desires ; but he concludes by beseeching her to believe him, through all lets to their continued intercourse, to be her true and faithful knight, devoted to her beauty solely, in the hope of speedily calling it his own for ever.

Upon this letter, and the attachment it breathes, the lady Gruoch lives for awhile. But soon her thirst for farther tidings of her betrothed lord rises to a feverish longing, which must be satisfied.

She resolves to send Grym to the camp of Macbeth ; though she knows the remainder of the men-at-arms who will then be left at the castle of Moray will afford but insufficient protection for her old father and herself, in case of any hostile attempt to invade their quiet from the insurgent marauders. For the faithful and experienced soldier, Grym, is a host in himself ; and now, for the first time since his departure, Culen is thought of with esteem and regret. But the anxiety to obtain news of Macbeth is paramount, and the lady Gruoch dispatches Grym.

During his absence, the inhabitants of the castle hear frequent rumours of parties of wandering Kernes, who demolish crops, spoil husbandry, oppress the neighbouring poor, and commit other depredations in the vicinity ; but no actual hostility threatens the thane of Moray's own possessions.

Grym has been gone long enough to warrant expec-

tation of his return. The lady Gruoch begins to look impatiently for it, and to tax him, in thought, with strange lack of zeal in her service, when suddenly there is an unwonted stir in the court-yard of the castle. The portcullis has been raised ; an armed horseman has been admitted across the drawbridge, who leads his steed by the bridle through the gates ; the charger bears a wounded man upon his back, who is supported in the saddle by the armed knight that walks by his side, leading the horse.

In the armed knight, who wears his visor raised, the men-at-arms of the castle of Moray have recognized their former companion, Culen ; in the wounded man, they have beheld their fellow-retainer, Grym.

The lifting their comrade from the horse's back, the placing him upon a heap of plaids hastily spread upon the ground for his reception, the murmured expressions of wonder, sympathy, and inquiry from the other men-at-arms, all crowding around Grym, and endeavouring to assist and relieve him, caused the unusual stir in the court-yard which attracted the attention of the lady Gruoch, as she sat in the hall, and which brought her forth to see who the wounded man might be.

"It's Grym, our Grym, madam," whispered the men, as they made way for their lady to come near. "He is wounded ; and it seems mortally. For he stirs not ; and speaks not."

"Grym ! my faithful Grym !" exclaimed the lady Gruoch, as she approached, and bent towards the bleeding soldier. "What, rouse thee, man ; art thou indeed so sorely hurt ?" The dying man raised his eyes by an effort. "That's well ; cheerly, good Grym. And what news, my trusty Grym ? Hast thou the packet ? Hast thou no letter for me ?" she added.

There was a visible struggle. The faithful man-at-arms strove to speak ; the blood gushed from his lips instead of words ; and he could only faintly attempt to lift his hand toward the breast of his buff doublet.

The lady at a glance understood the movement, and eagerly withdrew the desired packet from the place he had indicated, to bring which to her in safety he had forfeited his life-blood. Some of this same life-blood soiled the fair hands that were searching the bosom of the dying servitor for that which he had died to preserve for her.

“Faithful unto death !” she cried, as she transferred the precious packet from his bosom to her own. “But must thou indeed die, my faithful Grym ? Can no leech save thee ? Half my possessions I would gladly give to him who might restore thee to life, to thy mistress. Who may I ever hope to attach to me, as thou hast been devoted to me ? Devoted unto death ; my faithful Grym !”

The dying man's eyes looked fondly at her as she uttered these expressions of regret at his loss. To him they conveyed no particle of the self-consideration that was betrayed in every word. To his partial affection they were all he could have desired in requital of the life devoted to her service,—of the death incurred in her behalf. His face wore the satisfied look that an indulgent parent might have cast upon a favorite child, in whom he can perceive no fault, and who satisfies all that his yearning love could wish.

He expired with the belief that his mistress held him as dearly-valued, as sufficed to reward him to the utmost for all he had done,—and he died contented, proud, happy in the conviction of her regard.

The lady Gruoch looked upon the uncouth visage of the dead man with sincere (because selfish) regret. Then she withdrew from his side, that the attendants might remove the body of their comrade ; and she heaved one deep sigh, while a voice near her said :—“I could find it in my heart to envy Grym, to be so mourned !”

The lady turned to look upon him who spoke ; and she then perceived, for the first time, that the armed figure beside her was Culen. But Culen so changed

in bulk and stature—so altered in look and bearing ; no wonder she failed to recognize him, while she scarcely noted his presence, during the absorbing scene that had just occurred.

The slight figure of the youth she once knew had now acquired both breadth and height. His wide chest and shoulders displayed stalwart proportions beneath his cuirass and breast-plate of burnished steel. His handsome features showed manlier, and bore a more confirmed expression beneath the visor and head-piece of his helm. The light flaxen curls which had formerly been allowed to revel in luxuriance around the page's countenance, and had given it an effeminate beauty, were now close-trimmed and shorn, and showed little or none beside the beard and moustache that gave additional vigour to the knightly face.

“It is to your prowess I owe the rescue of my faithful Grym, I doubt not, sir knight,” said the lady Gruoch. “It is to you I owe the sad pleasure of witnessing his last moments, and mourning the loss of his trusty worth, while I received the last pledge of his devotion, and acknowledged it with thanks and approval that consoled him in death. Tell me how it was that you came to his aid.”

“I was on my way to the castle through yonder wood ;” replied Culen, “when hearing the noise of an affray, I pricked my horse forward, and found Grym hard pressed by numbers. He was surrounded by a party of Kernes, with whom he was fighting desperately, spite of their superior force. I rushed to his aid ; but it was too late. The villains fled at my approach, but they had wounded Grym so severely, that he could but reach the castle in time to render his breath at the feet of his lady. Happy at least in that one circumstance of his fate.”

“Fulfilment of purpose is the great end of life ;” said the lady thoughtfully, placing her crimson-smirched hand upon the letter within her bosom. “And Grym fulfilled his ; worthily, faithfully !”

“ And you have fulfilled yours, sir Culen ;” resumed she after a pause. “ I see you have won your spurs ; you have achieved knighthood ; you have gained prowess in arms. Let me see the device you have adopted for your shield ;” said she, raising the buckler to inspect the emblazonment and motto which it bore. They were, a silken cushion turning back the point of an arrow aimed against it, with the words “ *ex otio repugnantia.*”

The allusion was too pointed to be forgotten. The smile of the lady Gruoch showed that she remembered the incident, and that she appreciated the homage to her will indicated in the device he had chosen.

“ The arm that you redeemed from a service of luxurious ease,” said Culen, elated by her smile, “ has learned strength, and the power of resistance ; only too proud if it may return to devote its allegiance in the same behalf. Use the power, as you formerly deigned to avail yourself of the ease, afforded by the arm. Let me still serve my lady, but as her knight now,—not as her page.”

“ A trusty squire of dames sir Culen will ever be, I doubt not,” replied Gruoch. “ But let him not think I esteem his companionship lightly, when I enlist it henceforth in behalf of my father rather than myself. I trust to you, good Culen, to comfort him, and be to him as a son, when his daughter leaves him. Meanwhile receive my earnest thanks for your valorous assistance to my lost Grym.”

The lady turned to quit the court-yard as she spoke ; and in the act of retiring, her hand was once more raised to her bosom, to clutch the secured letter.

“ When his daughter leaves him !” unconsciously repeated Culen half aloud, in echo of those words of hers which had so perplexed him.

“ Ay, master Culen,” replied one of the retainers, who, returning to the spot, happened to overhear him. “ Have you been abroad in the world, and have not heard that our young lady is to wed the valiant Mac-

beth? Why, that was the letter of her betrothed husband, that she seized so eagerly from Grym's bloody doublet. A lady's impatience regards not bedabbling its dainty fingers, when a lover's letter is in view, I warrant me; and yet I doubt if the omen be canny."

Culen remained an instant in mute despair at what he had heard, confirmed by that which he had seen. Then, exclaiming:—"Farewell ambition, fame, hope, life itself!" he flung himself into the saddle, turned his steed's head from the court-yard, urged the horse across the drawbridge, and galloped full speed away from the castle of Moray for ever.

The letter from Macbeth brought welcome tidings indeed. His active measures against the insurgents had been effectual in dispersing them, and he was actually about to quit the field for Inverness when he wrote. Very shortly after, he looked to set forth for the castle of Moray; and by the time that the letter reached the hands of the lady Gruoch, she might daily expect his approach.

The chieftain and his retinue arrive. The venerable thane greets the betrothed husband of his daughter with affectionate welcome. That which the lady Gruoch extends to her expected lord is no less warm. Proudly, exultingly, she prepares to unite herself with this noble warrior, this king-descended hero. A new existence is opening for her; a life of hope, of glory, of ambition—of ambition satisfied, in the martial successes he has already achieved; of ambition expectant, in the rank and royal favour he may still attain. A life of hope, glory, and ambition, to be shared in acquirement and fulfilment with the man of her preference. One with whom she may feel alike in ardour, activity of spirit, and daring aspiration; one with whom she may happily reap the fruition of their joint exertion and hope.

In her, Macbeth beholds imperial beauty. In her there is that which at once captivates his senses, and

commands his admiration and esteem. There is a plenitude of feminine charm in the delicate features and figure that satisfies his inclination for that which is in contrast with his own manhood of strength and vigorous proportion ; while in the marked decision, self-possessed manner, and confirmed opinion, that distinguish her character, there is that which he feels supplies well the defects in his own nature of which he is perhaps half conscious. He sees in her that which will spur his ambition, invigorate his will, give constancy and energy to his purposes, steadiness to his aims, firmness, solidity, and consistency to all his views, enabling him to pursue them to a successful issue. He sees precisely the qualities in her which will best give stability to those points in his own character which most need fortifying. His faith in her excellence is entire ; his subjugation to her charms is complete ; but it is with no unwillingness that he yields to the empire she exercises over his fancy. He is proud to call such beauty his own ; proud to submit himself to its influence ; proud to share with her his hopes, his life,—to make her the partner of his greatness. Proud were they of and in each other ; and joyfully did they link their lives in one, accepting a joint fate from that time forth.

The nuptial ceremony was performed. The bridal train left the castle-chapel. The horses ready caparisoned for the journey, trampled and champed their bits in the court-yard ; and the cavalcade awaited but the bride and bridegroom, who were to join them to proceed at once to the castle of Inverness.

The bridegroom led his bride to the hall, where they had left her father, that she might receive his blessing as a new-made wife, ere she quitted the paternal roof. There sat the old thane, Kenneth, in his accustomed seat by the hearth. He was leaning back ; his eyes were shut ; while the tears crept from beneath the closed lids, and coursed down the aged cheeks ; his hand rested on the head of one of his favorite hounds,

that had laid its muzzle on the arm of the chair, and kept snuffing and whining uneasily, as it fixed its eyes upon its master's sorrowing face.

His daughter knelt at her father's feet, and spoke some words of comfort in her own calm and self-possessed way.

Her husband joined his expressions of kindness to hers. The gentle old man roused himself feebly, blessed them both, and bade them believe that his sadness at parting with them was outweighed by his happiness in having thus assured that of his daughter. Once again he blessed them ; and struggled to utter the word "farewell !"

Lady Macbeth arose—reverently smoothed the snow-white hairs on either side of the furrowed cheeks—kissed the venerable forehead—exclaimed :—"Farewell, my father !" Then, turning to her husband, she said firmly :—"I am ready, my lord ! Lead me forth. I am yours now."

The existence of the newly-married chieftain and his lady, in their castle of Inverness, fulfilled the anticipations which the prospect of their union had excited in each. They found their mutual satisfaction as ample and complete as they had hoped. In all her husband's pursuits, schemes, and views, lady Macbeth demonstrated an eager and intelligent participation.

In his wife's dominant beauty, Macbeth's passionate admiration found full content ; whilst in her high-reaching undaunted spirit his own felt support, encouragement, incitement, strength. His natural valour seemed to gain fresh impetus ; his bravery new vigour ; his deeds additional daring, with such an incentive by his side to urge him to exertion, and with so lustrous an object to gratify by his triumphs.

Achievement followed achievement ; promotion ensued to promotion ; fresh honors and renewed instances of royal favor were heaped upon the chieftain, near to his sovereign, both by blood and by ties of

affection. For the meek-spirited Duncan loved to rely upon the sterner counsels and more active measures suggested by his kinsman, for escape from public censure, which not unfrequently accused him of feebleness and slothfulness in the administration of justice.

Negligence in the due punishment of offenders ; connivance at misrule among the civic rulers, and at contumacy among the ruled ; a general want of strictness, and a perilous lenity ; all combined to make king Duncan's mild sway regarded rather as weakness, than as paternal indulgence. It encouraged faction and insubordination, and offended those who sought protection from order and judicious government. To preserve peace for the peaceful, and to secure safety from the turbulent, the services of Macbeth were put in constant requisition by his royal master.

To his kinsman, the favorite general, the king looked for aid and support in every emergency of sedition and insurrection ; Macbeth's tactics and rigour of discipline rendering him no less valuable as a statesman, in the cabinet, than his military skill and personal courage made him all-powerful in the field.

To the extended influence which accrued to him from his large share of royal favor, was added increase of rank ; for, not long after his marriage, Macbeth, by the death of his father, Sinel, became thane of Glamis.

These rapid and accumulated circumstances in the rise of Macbeth's fortunes and position, made the long-hoarded secret hope of his own and wife's ambition assume a palpable form ; it presented itself no longer as a distant improbability—only just barely possible. Macbeth could not but remember that his own mother was no less nearly descended from the late king, than she through whom the reigning monarch derived his royal seat. They had been sisters ; and though the son of the elder now ruled in Scotland, yet should he cease to live, his cousin Macbeth, from kindred, as well as from popular favor, stood nearest in

probable succession to the throne. It is true that Duncan had sons—but they were quite young ; and until the elder should have been created Prince of Cumberland, he was not the royal heir-apparent. Meanwhile, each fresh step in Macbeth's rank and power, raised him still more securely within grasp of the secret object of his wishes ; and as each grade became his, he and his wife to themselves exulted. She could not but sometimes allow her fancy to muse on that predicted circumstance in her fate, which afforded confirmation of all that now seemed ripening to a fulfilment—a reality.

To inherit their present growing dignities,—and that crowning one which might be in store for them, a son was born to them ; and Macbeth beheld the beauty of his mother, while she beheld the representative of his father's honors, in the infant Cormac, who thus enhanced the joy of both parents.

A secret faction arose. A party of the insurgents had the hardihood to plan an attack upon the castle of Macbeth, thinking the thane himself to be absent on state affairs. But he had returned suddenly to Inverness from Fores, and he was unexpectedly on the spot to sally forth and repel the invaders.

The encounter raged fiercely for some time on the plain before the castle walls, for the besiegers had assembled in great numbers, and fought with desperation, knowing they had nought to expect from Macbeth's rigour should they fall prisoners into his hands.

Lady Macbeth, anxious for her husband's safety, ascended to the battlements with her infant son in her arms, that she might watch the fight. She endeavoured to distinguish her lord's figure among the combatants, to mark his bravery in the strife, to follow his progress, to note the issue of his death-dealing strokes, and to be the first to hail his success.

Her solicitude for his safety, soon yielded to admiration at his valour ; she quenched all inquietude as to the result of the encounter, in the certainty of conquest

which such valour seemed to ensure. She felt that this assault was already quelled ; she saw these rebels already defeated.

She smiled as she surveyed the scene of contest, with a sense of prospective victory. She heeded not the danger of her own position, in the satisfaction of observing the bravery of her husband ; she saw not the peril that surrounded both himself and her, in the thought of their approaching triumph.

For the portion of the battlements where she stood, was not entirely sheltered from the flying arrows of the besiegers ; and at any moment one of these missiles might reach her, as she stood there with the child in her arms, marking the progress of the skirmish.

But close beside her—watching her, as intently as she was watching the field,—crouched a queer, shambling, rough, bent figure, that kept its eyes undeviatingly fixed upon her, as she stood there, near the outer wall. It was that of a poor dumb creature, a strange, distorted, stooping, half-wild being, who had sought service among the underling retainers of the household, and who had shown a singular hankering after the presence of the lady of the castle, and an especial fondness for her baby son, Cormac.

He would haunt the passages and galleries where the women attendants were accustomed to pass with their infant charge. He would crouch and hang about the portions of the castle which lady Macbeth was in the habit of frequenting. He was shy, and shrank from notice, particularly from that of the lord of the castle, who knew not of his being there at all,—and was incognizant of the very existence of so insignificant a member of his household. But even when the dumb slouching Indulph sought the vicinity of his idols, he never courted their regard, but slunk about their footsteps, contented, as it seemed, to behold them distantly, and hover in their neighbourhood.

As for the lady herself, after the first inquiry with regard to who he was, and how he came to be about

the castle, she had never thought more of him, but became accustomed to see him creeping and slinking here and there, without bestowing farther heed to his presence. She only knew that he was a dumb, harmless, kind of savage, who appeared to take a peculiar pleasure in looking through his fell of thick red hair, at her beautiful babe and herself.

And there, at that time, he lay, stooped and crouching, close to the ground, a yard or two from the portion of the battlemented wall where she stood. Upon her and the child he keeps his eyes fixed, gleaming from amidst the shaggy elf-locks of ochrey red that hung about his face, and left but little of his features to be distinguished, save those eager wild eyes that never strayed from the objects of their regard.

Still the lady looks from the battlements, watching the scene in which her lord is engaged ; and still the crouching Indulph stares upward, watching her and the babe in her arms.

The little Cormac is restless, and cares not to be kept so long in one position. The dumb attendant creeps nearer and more near, until at length he is so close, that the lady in her eagerness of noting the fight, unconsciously lets her child's feet rest upon the shoulder of the crouching savage, who stoops there mutely, and steadily supporting the little creature, though he maintains the same earnest watch upon its mother and itself.

The child plays with the red fell of hair, and pats and clutches among the thick locks, and sees no repulsive ugliness in the being who has always looked fondly upon him.

The mother's gaze is for a moment withdrawn from the object of her attention, to look towards her child, who strains more and more from her arms, as he becomes more and more occupied with his new plaything.

She sees him dallying and tugging with the ochre hair,—she sees him sporting with kindly hideousness, and there is something in the sight that brings Grym

and her own infancy to her thought ; she finds that his feet are resting upon the ready patient shoulder, and the image of Culen and his cushion-arm comes into her mind for one instant.

For one instant—but for one passing instant, does the recollection of these by-gone things flit across her memory ; the next moment she is again absorbed in noting the scene that is acting beneath the castle walls.

The child climbs back into its mother's arms ; the battle rages on, more fiercely and more near, and in her increased interest in the contest, lady Macbeth receives her little son half unconsciously, clasping him to her bosom, without withdrawing her eyes from the fight.

The combatants press more closely. The besiegers rally ; they rush forwards, and make a desperate attempt to force a breach through a portion of the defending party that seems less strong than elsewhere. A shower of arrows is discharged, and a few of them flying higher than the rest, reach the battlements over which the lady is leaning.

Indulph springs from his lair. He makes wild and vehement gesticulations to his lady that she should retire from the dangerous station she is occupying. But she is intent upon the affray, and heeds him not.

An arrow alights near the spot. Then another. In despair at her peril, Indulph exclaims :—

“ For your boy's sake, if not your own, stand back, madam ! ”

The lady starts, and looks round in amazement.

“ Indulph ! Can the dumb speak ! And with that voice, too ! I surely know that voice ! ”

She fixes her eyes upon the stooping, crouching, dumb savage, now erect, alert, energetic, eager, imploring her to withdraw from her perilous situation.

In another instant, he darts forward, covers her son and herself with his interposed body, while the threatening arrow pierces his own throat, and he falls at her feet.

The locks of red hair are scattered back from the dying face, and lady Macbeth recognizes without a doubt, the features of Culen.

She bends over him, and utters his name with wonder and pity.

“I no longer envy Grym ;” he murmurs.

“But how came you hither? What means this disguise?” she said, after a pause.

“I could not live without beholding you. I had lost all hope—I relinquished fame as worthless. I crept hither, hiding stature, features, voice, beneath the stoop, the stained hair, and the eternal silence of the dumb crouching Indulph, in the single thought of again living in your presence—and it might be, of dying in your service. I am blest that it is thus.”

The secret lay revealed before her. Love for her—a passionate devotion to herself, had then inspired this heart, that was fast ebbing forth its last tide at her feet. But the thought of how this would appear to Macbeth, were he to come to a knowledge of this passion, beset her with a sense of annoyance and vexation. She felt mortified rather than exalted by the discovery of this fervent attachment; and a stern look settled upon her face, as she watched the blood that oozed from the death-wound.

Footsteps approach. Macbeth is seeking her, and hurries towards the spot where she stands, that he may tell her all is well over—that their enemies are defeated—that the day is their own.

“But how comes this wounded man here?” said her lord, when he had received her proud congratulations. “A stranger! Perhaps a traitor!” added he. “Do you know who or what he is, dearest chuck?”

The dying eyes mutely entreat her, that he may have the bliss of hearing her acknowledge his lifelong faithful attachment. But hers are averted—she will not meet his look—she will not *see* his last request.

“It is Indulph, the dumb helper, my lord,” said

one of the by-standing attendants. "He is wounded in the throat—mortally, I think."

"He saved our boy's life, by the loyal intervention of his person, my lord," said lady Macbeth; "thank him for us both."

"It is too late; the brave fellow's dead;" said Macbeth, looking at the expiring throe with a soldier's experienced eye, and with the indifference to death proper to one bred amid scenes of slaughter. "Come, my dearest love, let you and I, in to the castle; and rejoice at our success. A feast shall be held in honor of our victory; and this young hero's escape shall be celebrated in flowing wine-cups. You breed our boy well, sweet wife, in teaching him thus to look upon a battle-field betimes. Thou art truly fit to be mother to a race of heroes!"

Not long after Macbeth thus felicitated his wife and himself on the salvation of their son, the child's life was threatened by sickness. His mother nursed him like a mother; while her anxiety was shared by her husband, who passionately loved them both.

But fate has decreed that the boy shall not live; the little Cornac yields to the disease, and is carried off in his infancy.

In the midst of her fierce pang for the loss of her offspring, lady Macbeth receives tidings of her old father's death; but she bears both strokes with her stern composure, that she may stimulate her more impressive husband, whose duty calls him from Inverness.

She firmly urges him to obey the mandate which summons him to Fores; where his presence is required by his sovereign, king Duncan, that he may aid in repelling a threatened invasion from Norway; and in quelling an insurrection that has arisen in the Western Isles.

This latter is headed by Macdonwald, one of the chief among those traitors most disaffected to the pres-

ent dynasty. He has been heard to utter railing taunts against king Duncan, declaring him to be a 'chicken-heart, more fit to preside over a brotherhood of idle monks in a cloister, than to have the government of such valiant and hardy men of war as the Scots.'

Lady Macbeth fails not to remind her lord of how closely his own interest is concerned in preserving the throne from assailants ; its present occupant being of his own line, and scarcely retaining tenure by a nearer claim of blood than that which he himself possesses. Between the husband and wife, the question of this equally near claim, and its possible results, has been discussed ; but with scarce-uttered, scarce-conceived intentions ; neither season nor opportunity offering for the removal of the one obstacle to their wishes. Their imaginations are fired with the same thought ; but they hardly permit its burning image to be visible to each other. Dimly, luridly, it lurks latent, fed with foul vapours of unhallowed desire ; only vaguely, dare they permit themselves to shape its existence in words ;—but they know and feel, that a crown,—even though it be gemmed with bloody drops,—is, in fact, that one glowing thought.

The thane departs.

Lady Macbeth receives tidings of her husband's progress from time to time ; for he has no dearer thought than that of sharing his successes with her.

He sends messengers with letters to her ; informing her of his gracious reception by the king, of the confidence expressed in the succour he can afford to the state, of the entire reliance upon his counsels and prowess. He tells her that he has responded to the monarch's wishes, by undertaking the whole direction of the royal forces ; upon condition that no misplaced leniency shall interfere with his proceedings, and that the unreserved controul and appointment of the war shall be placed in the hands of himself, and of Banquo, thane of Lochaber, to conduct as they list, and as best

shall seem to them. Under their combined generalship, thus unrestricted, he has undertaken, that the rebels shall be shortly vanquished and put down.

Exultingly expectant, lady Macbeth abides in the castle of Inverness ; and each fresh letter that she receives, confirms by its prosperous intelligence, the fulfilment of her aspiring hopes.

News reaches her of the successful issue of the combat between her lord and the rebel Macdonwald, whose traitor head is fixed upon the royalist battlements.

Close upon the heels of that messenger arrives another, who brings word of the encounter at Fife, wherein the invading army of Sweno, the Norway king, is put to the rout and defeated, and the victory secured, by Macbeth, who is to be invested immediately with the forfeited title and estates of the thane of Cawdor ; he having disloyally fought beneath the Norwegian banner.

Scarcely has lady Macbeth welcomed these tidings, when a letter is placed in her hands by a trusty envoy from her lord, wherein she reads words of wondrous import, that kindle into flame the smouldering fire of her thought.

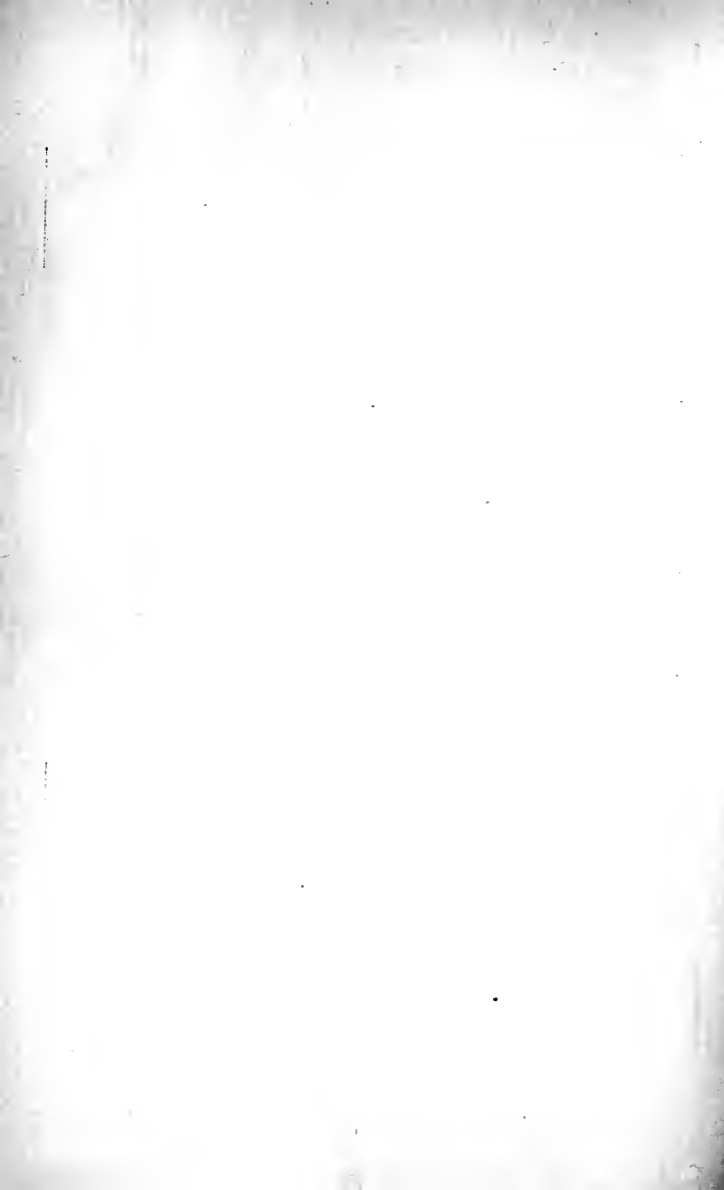
Her self-communing upon this perusal, begins in these words of apostrophe to her lord :—

“ *Glamis thou art, and Cawdor ; and shalt be
What thou art promis'd.*”

But that ‘ our will become the servant to defect,’ the above should be ‘ prologue to the swelling act of the imperial theme.’



HELENA; THE PHYSICIAN'S ORPHAN.





TALE III.

HELENA ; THE PHYSICIAN'S ORPHAN.

“She derives her honesty, and achieves her goodness.”
All's well that ends well.

“WELL met !” said the chevalier de Vaumond, to his friend, Gautier Gerard, as the two young men encountered each other in one of the principal streets of Perpignan, on a certain fine summer morning. “And pray whither may you be bound, my good fellow ? On some scheme of pleasure, I trust. Do, for once in a way, consent to omit attendance upon that very worthy, but unquestionably prosy Professor of yours, and leave him to lecture to the few steady stolidities, your brother-students, who may be absurd enough to hold it their duty not to play truant, when such a morning as this bids them keep outside of College walls.”

Gerard answered with a smile.

“You will not call it a scheme of pleasure, perhaps, de Vaumond. Your taste has no relish for rural enjoyment. For my part, I long for a pure breeze, a stout walk, the broad expanse of sky, and the open, honest face of Nature. I have been studying hard ; and had determined to give myself a holiday this morning ; and so took my way forth early, resolved not to set foot again within the gates of Perpignan, for many a pleasant hour of freedom, fresh air, and exercise.”

“And what says Papa Gerard to such a spell of lib-

erty as that?" asked his friend. "Can he let you absent yourself so long from the Temple of Mammon, the cavern of golden ingots, the precious storehouse of wealth, the beloved Banking-house? But I forget, good Papa Gerard wills that his son and heir shall redeem the bourgeois stain, erase the roturier stigma from the family name, and raise the dignity of his house, by eschewing the clerkly stool and mercantile desk for the higher honors of the medical chair. Well, did the young doctor obtain the paternal sanction for this long holiday?"

The chevalier glanced somewhat maliciously into his friend's face, as he made this broad allusion to the merchant-banker's well-known strict maintenance of patriarchal authority. But young Gerard, though he colored slightly, only said with a good-humoured laugh, "Oh yes, I have leave of absence; so let us be off! That is, if you care to go."

"If I do, you must promise not to keep up such a striding pace, my good fellow!" said the chevalier in a languid tone, and suddenly coming to a halt. "Recollect, the breezes won't float away, or the sky fade beyond your ken, or the fields run from you. So you needn't pursue them at that Atlantean rate. And besides abjuring this foot-race speed," continued he, when they had resumed their walk at a more moderate pace, "you must promise not to let your proposed long walk detain me beyond a reasonable hour of return this evening. I have an appointment in the Rue Grenoble, after sunset, that I would not miss for all the rural landscapes that ever were beheld."

"I wish you would give up those meetings in the Rue Grenoble, my dear Etienne," said Gerard earnestly. "You waste your health, your fortune, and your best energies, by devoting them to so worthless a pursuit as gambling. Shutting yourself up night after night, as you do, in that stifling saloon, breathing only its impure air, scorched by wax-lights, reeking with fevered breath, poisonous with unwholesome murmurs

and imprecations ; and this you prefer to the balm of evening air, the glow of sunset, and the tranquillity of a country scene !”

“ I never could see the vaunted charm of rural delights, for my part,” said Etienne de Vaumond peevishly. “ They seem to me to consist in dusty roads, vicious cows, wallowing hogs, stupid-faced baaing sheep, ill-victualled larders, infamously-cooked dinners, milk-pans for wine-flasks—or vinegar, by courtesy called wine,—louts of men, and thick-ankled, red-handed, sun-burned women.”

“ Do you find no charm in such a spot as this ?” asked Gerard, as the two young men turned at this moment out of the high road, along which they had been proceeding hitherto, and entered a small wicket-gate which opened into a broad-spreading meadow. “ Do you see nothing pleasant in this green-sward beneath our feet—those waving corn-fields yonder, those stretching uplands—that wooded descent on the left, combining the bright green of chestnuts, the sombre silveriness of olives, the walnut, and tufted mulberry—that clear mill-stream below—those trailing vines on the right, flaunting and twining in profuse festoons from tree to tree—these shadowing oaks above our heads, with their rugged branches, and clusters of leaves so richly defined against the blue sky beyond—the smell of the earth, of the fresh air, mingled with the wafted fragrance of blossoms, of weeds, and odorous breath of kine ? Is there nothing in these shapes and scents of Nature that stirs a sense of enjoyment within you, and rouses an emotion of gladness and gratitude ?”

The chevalier looked at his friend with a sort of wonder, and a light laugh, as his only reply to an enthusiasm which he could not understand. Gerard felt, at the first moment, that kind of bashfulness common to ingenuous youth when it finds itself suddenly betrayed into the expression of a deep feeling, which has been long allowed to dwell secretly within. The sur-

prise mirrored in a commonplace countenance checks the sentiment's utterance as something misplaced and absurd ; but an honest heart will recover soon from this first misgiving, and, with faith in its own true feeling, will only cherish it more deeply than ever, though learning to guard it henceforth more sacredly from unsympathetic observation.

The two young men walked on a few paces in silence : then fell into a lively talk about some of their mutual friends and companions ; of a fencing-match that was in prospect ; of the chevalier's determination to enjoy to the utmost the independence which had lately fallen to him by the death of his father ; hints of the commiseration he felt for his friend, less favored by fortune in this respect than himself, seeing that Gerard was still subject to parental domination.

“ My father loves to see me yield with a good grace to his will, it is true ;” said Gerard with his former half-blush and smile ; and sometimes he seems to forget that I have trebled six years, for he still talks to me as if I were a child of that age, and questions me of college studies as he used then to do of my baby lessons and good behaviour. But it is only the partial fondness of a father for his only son, that makes him unwilling to give up this tone, and I should be churlish indeed if I resented as interference, what is only affectionate anxiety for my good.”

“ As long as his notions of what may be your good, and your notions of your own good, chance to accord, this may be all well and good, my good fellow, and so far so good ;” retorted de Vaumond ; “ but depend on't, when difference of opinion shall arise between you upon this point,—as it must and will, some day or other—you may find Papa Gerard's solicitude for your welfare a little troublesome, *mon cher*.”

“ Well, till that day arrives, I am contented to remember only that his paternal ordering of my affairs has hitherto been productive of nothing but benefit to me ;” said Gerard. “ He has given me a liberal

education, a liberal allowance, and destines me for a liberal profession—for all which I am heartily grateful, and think the least return I can make for so much liberality on his part, is generosity in construing his kindness, and a dutiful observance of his wishes on mine.”

“ Which observance includes entire submission of your will to his ;” muttered the chevalier ; “ appropriation of your time according to his disposal ; shaping your goings and comings solely by his good leave ; taking your meals at his appointed hours ; responsible to him in all things ; your thoughts, opinions, feelings, scarce your own ;—for depend on it, such tyranny grows by indulgence, and your penalty will be slavery complete. You have had your profession chosen for you with a view to helping the family honor a step up in the world—from the rotourier wealth of the banker, to the hoped-for renown of the physician ; and next, you will have your wife chosen for you, as a means of obtaining another grade in society. I should not wonder if some demoiselle of gentle blood is even now in Papa Gerard’s eyes, who shall link his name with nobility.”

Gerard laughed out. “ You have indeed drawn a formidable picture, de Vaumond ; and I must add, an exaggerated one. But however that may be, as there is no chance of so serious a controul being exercised over my inclinations as marrying me against my will, yet, let us enjoy the holiday vouchsafed to me at present. Hark, what music is that ? There seems to be a village festival going on here.”

As Gerard finished speaking, he and his companion emerged from the wood through which they had taken their way after crossing the meadow, and they suddenly came upon a scene animated and gay, that formed a striking contrast with the solitude and quiet amid which they had previously wandered.

There was a large assembly of peasants, who had gathered from several neighbouring villages to celebrate

the festival of the patron saint of the vicinity. All were in their holiday array ; all was sport, feasting, and sylvan revelry.

The spot was a village green. Several cottages were sprinkled around, forming a not very considerable hamlet ; and farther on, might be seen the tower of the rustic church, with its few grassy tombs beneath, surmounted by their sparkling gilt crosses, hung with garlands, and bespread with scattered flowers. But flowers and garlands prevailed everywhere in the scene that presented itself to the eyes of the two young men. Heaps of flowers decorated every window ; festoons of flowers hung from door to door, looped and fastened with gay-colored ribands ; long chains of flowers were suspended in all directions from the spreading tree that stood in the centre of the green sward ; nosegays of flowers were in all hands ; coronals of flowers decked all heads ; bunches of flowers were set out upon all the tables ; and some favorite flower adorned the vest of each of the lads, and the bodice of each of the lasses.

In one corner sat the group that furnished the music for the occasion. Homely were the pipes that blew, and slightly skilled might be the bow, which scraped those sounds of mirth, but well they sufficed for timing the gay footing of the dancers, who with native vivacity and grace were bounding away in joyous light-some measure, while some brandished tambourines high above their heads, and thrummed and jingled to aid the music, and swell the merry uproar.

Cordially rang the laughing voices, sprightly were the glances, cheerful the hearts, swift the steps, whisking the petticoats, rapid the heads, sudden the arms, pliant the waists, twinkling the feet, bright the colors of the holiday garbs, as the peasant youths and maidens darted to and fro in their mad-cap sport, and hand-in-hand dance.

The turf seemed alive with bright coloured beings, on the spot where the dancing was at its height. But

spreading in all directions, were animated groups of gaily-clothed peasants ; some two and two, with bent heads and low earnest tones, engaged in rural courtship. Others lolling on the grass, toying, and chatting, and frolicking, in games where some half dozen were occupied together ; a gaping crowd farther on, collected round the wonder-rife table of an escamoteur ; another grinning at the humours of a charlatan, holding forth in extolment of his wares ; another staring wide-mouthed and nez-en-l'air at the marvellous leaps and bounds of a voltigeur ; at the tables sat a knot of village-politicians, listening to some favorite orator, or a set of jolly fellows drinking, or another set deep in the interest of dominoes ; and on benches around, sat groups of elders, proud mothers, gray-headed fathers, discreet aunts, indulgent uncles, gossip lovers, talkers, and lookers-on of all sorts.

“ I suppose you feel no inclination to sue for one of those red hands, as partner in the dance, de Vau-
mond ;” said Gerard, smiling. “ Those damsels are all too thick-ankled or too sun-burned for your worship's fastidious town-taste, of course ? And yet, do you know, they look so gay and good-humoured, and I can, methinks, even at this distance, discern many a trim foot and slender waist among them, that would be quite comely enough for my turn, if one of their pretty owners would indulge me with her hand, for a dance or two. I am still quite boy enough to feel my blood tingle to make one in such a merry dance as that yonder. Come, what say you to one dance among them ? Let's be worthy Frenchmen, and find a dance irresistible, when a pleasant one offers ! Come !”

“ I care little for dancing,” answered the chevalier ; “ but a tumbler of cool wine, now, after our long walk, will not be amiss. Perhaps some of the swains may be willing to bestow one, in good fellowship with a gentleman. We'll see.”

“ What if you can get a draught of milk only ; or

a vinegar potation ?” said Gerard, as the two young men approached the busy scene ; “ you know, dairies are the only cellars in the country,—and milk-pans the only wine-flasks ; unless you consent to drink vinegar under the name of *vin du pays*. ”

The chevalier made his way to one of the tables, where he soon made himself at home with its occupants ; gravely bantering the politicians, by engaging them in mock disputes, telling them marvellous news, and inventing strange rumours ; winking humourously at the by-standers, making them parties to his jokes upon the sages, winning their personal liking by easy chat, familiar convivial manner, and sociable enjoyment of the wine-cup that was passing freely round.

Meanwhile, Gerard lingered near the dancers, watching their movements, and looking upon the many pretty faces and comely shapes ; trying to make up his mind which of them he should ask to be his partner, when the dance should break up and another should be formed.

While he was thus engaged, a remarkably sweet-speaking voice struck his ear. He turned, but could see no one near, to whom the voice seemed to belong.

It is singular to notice how rapidly the mind decides, under such circumstances, in appropriating particular voices to particular casts of countenance ; a glance suffices, at a strange face, to ascertain whether the sound just heard by chance, has proceeded from that person or not.

Again the soft feminine tone reached Gerard’s ear, and though he could not distinguish the words it uttered, he felt irresistibly attracted to discover and look upon the speaker. He was leaning against the fine large tree that formed the centre of the village-green, and he fancied that the sound proceeded from the other side of the aged trunk, which was so large in the circumference of its bole, that it might well screen several persons from his view. He moved round the tree, and saw a group of persons who were

seated beneath its shade on the opposite side. A grey-headed man, whose garb at once proclaimed him to be the venerable Curé of the village, sat on a wooden chair with his back toward Gerard, whilst opposite to him was seated a white-capped, gold-earringed, smooth-aproned, wrinkle-cheeked, but quick-eyed old dame, who seemed to be his Bonne. She was knitting diligently, but her keen eyes were not required for her work ; her practised hands plied the needles with twinkling rapidity, and allowed her sharp glances to be wholly absorbed by another object.

Over the back of the Curé's chair leaned the figure of a young peasant girl. She had drooped over the shoulder of the old man, so that her face rested nearly on his bosom, whence it looked up at the Bonne, and was indeed the object upon which her keen eyes rested.

By the young girl's position, her face was entirely hidden from Gerard's sight, but as soon as that bending figure met his eye, Gerard felt no hesitation in at once ascribing the voice he heard, to herself. There was something harmonious in the flexible grace of the outline that seemed to claim affinity with the gentle tones ; something of beauty, purity, and attractive charm that rendered both naturally akin.

"But your father should not have allowed you to come alone !" retorted the Bonne with a tone as sharp as her eyes, to something the sweet voice had just said.

"I did not come alone ;" it replied. "My father sent Petit Pierre with me."

"Bah ! Petit Pierre, indeed !" was the tart exclamation of the Bonne, with a cutting flash of her eyes, and a smart snap of her knitting-needles—"Petit Pierre, forsooth ! A pretty person to take care of you ! A cow-boy ! An urchin of ten years old ! A scape-grace that can't take care of himself, much less of any body else ! What could your father be thinking of ?"

"My father was thinking of indulging me, as usual ;" replied the soft voice. "You know every-

body says he spoils his Gabrielle ; and as he found she was intent upon going, and as nobody could be spared from the farm so well as Petit Pierre, my father sent him with me."

"I can't think why you were so intent upon coming, for my part," said the old lady, darting another piercing glance, and sticking one of her needles with a sudden stab into her apron-string ; "I don't mind your coming over quietly, as you do at other times, to read, and write, and study, and to talk, and confess, to Monsieur le Curé. That is all very right and proper, and what he approves, I approve, of course ; but why you should take it into your foolish little head to come to the fête is what I can't fathom, and can't approve ; it's not at all the thing for you, Mademoiselle Gabrielle, to come here, with only a cow-urchin to take care of you, among a parcel of strangers, and a crowd of nobody-knows-who from the other villages."

Here the old lady snatched out the knitting-needle again, and darted it into her work with a poignant thrust, and began another row, without so much as suffering her eyes for an instant to withdraw from the succession of pointed interrogatories they were aiming with such relentless acuteness into the face that looked up into hers. Be it remarked, by the bye, that this excellent old Bonne only whetted the edge of her vigilance upon the young girl from excess of affection towards her, and from a sense of her own duty towards one she loved so well. There are many worthy Bonnes like this old lady, whose feelings are more kindly than their manner ; and whom to judge by their sharp eyes and tones, you would guess to be possessed of hearts made of steel or stone, and not of such soft stuff as they really are.

"I believe we mustn't quarrel with anything that brings her to us, my good Jeanneton," said the old Curé, patting the head that rested upon his breast, and pressing it against him ; "we are too glad to have Gabrielle with us upon any terms, are we not ?"

Madame Jeanneton only shook her head sharply, and muttered something about "spoiled on all hands ; spoiled by her own father, and spoiled by her reverend father, who ought to know better."

"It is our fault if she be spoiled, certainly, Madame Jeanneton, you are right enough there ;" said Monsieur le Curé ; "for who can help indulging Gabrielle ? Besides, I don't find that she is spoiled, for my part ; I think she's very pleasant and good. 'Gentille-etsage' I call her, don't I, Gabrielle ? And Gentille-etsage you'll continue to be spite of the indulgence of your two old fathers, won't you, my child ? After all, there's a great difference between spoiling and indulgence, you know," added the old Curé, as if to disarm his Bonne by placing his weakness on the high ground of principle ; "I think that indulgence does people good, makes them better-behaved, and more pleasant—at least, sensible people ; and our Gabrielle is very sensible, is she not ?"

"And I wished so very, very much to see the fête you cannot think ;" said the girl, with that sweet voice of hers, so childlike in its simple earnestness, so girlish in its innocent gaiety, so womanly in its deep tenderness. "I had never seen the famous feast of SS. Pierre et Paul, though I have heard of it ever since I can remember ; so I could not help coming over this time."

"But as you are come to the fête you would like to dance, would you not, my child ?" asked Monsieur. "Your young feet would fain be skipping about, I dare say ; wouldn't they ?"

"No, mon père ;" replied the girl ; "I did not come to dance, I came to see the fête ; to look on with you."

Gerard had for some little time past, been determining that this was the partner he should best like to obtain for the dance he had proposed to enjoy ; and had determined to step forward and ask her hand, when there should be a pause in the conversation. But these few last words discouraged him.

As he stood irresolute, the girl slightly changed her position ; and in raising her head to look again toward the dancers, Gerard caught a full view of her face. It was not strikingly handsome, but it beamed with good-humour, good-sense, candour, and a bewitching look of sweetness that was almost better than absolute beauty.

At least, so thought Gerard, as he felt how entirely the face harmonised with the figure and the voice he had already found so attractive.

His hesitation in addressing her, grew in proportion with his increased desire to obtain her for a partner in the dance ; he wished for some incident which might offer a medium for what seemed an abruptness, and almost a presumption in one so wholly a stranger to her.

He had scarcely formed the wish, ere it was gratified. Monsieur le Curé happened to drop his stick, which had rested against his knee ; and Gerard, alertly stepping forward, and restoring it to the old gentleman with a respectful look and a few pleasant words, at once gained the means of introduction he had desired.

His frank, pleasant bearing soon ingratiated him with the little party. He told Monsieur le Curé his name, and of his having left Perpignan that morning, with a companion, in the hope of enjoying a walk and a country holiday ; he said how pleasantly fulfilled his hope had been by coming unexpectedly upon their village festival ; he spoke of his desire to partake in the sports and dancing ; and when he reached this point, he found courage to conclude, by expressing a hope that Mademoiselle would indulge him with her hand for the next dance.

“ Mademoiselle Gabrielle did not come with the intention of dancing ;” said the Bonne. It was not that the good lady disapproved of the young stranger ; on the contrary, she thought he was a very eligible partner for their favorite Gabrielle ; but it was simply from her habit of officiously settling the affairs of others, that led her to say this.

But Gabrielle, accustomed by indulgence to decide for herself, said simply :—“ I *did* not intend to dance ; but I think I should like to dance now, if you do not object, mon père ?”

“ I object ? Certainly not, my dear. Go, and have a dance, my child ; I am glad you have changed your mind. Go, Gentille-et-sage, and dance with monsieur ; what can be more natural than for young people to enjoy dancing ?”

Gerard and Gabrielle amply confirmed the truth of the old gentleman's concluding proposition ; for they joined with untiring spirit in all the successive dances that took place on the green-sward that day. It seemed to be the mode here that there should be no restriction in the matter of changing or retaining partners ; each couple seemed to be at full liberty to form new selections, or to remain constant to their original choice. Gerard availed himself of this license, by keeping exclusive possession of the hand of ‘ Gentille-et-sage ;’ nor did she seem averse from the arrangement. Hour after hour passed gaily away, unheeded by either.

In the afternoon, Monsieur le Curé asked Gerard to bring his partner to his house hard by, where he said a humble entertainment awaited them. The old man politely included in the invitation the gentleman whom he understood had accompanied Gerard from town. But the chevalier de Vaumond was deeply engaged in a game of dominoes ; and protesting he had already dined sumptuously with his excellent new acquaintance (the clown with whom he was now playing), bade Gerard not trouble himself farther about him, but hasten to attend his fair partner, as they had both evidently discovered congenial friends and pursuits. Gerard did not altogether like the tone in which this was said ; but the thought was soon banished from his mind, when he rejoined the Curé, Gabrielle, and the Bonne.

A cheerful apartment opening into a garden, where

roses, pinks, pot-herbs, gilliflowers, myrtles, cabbages, oleanders, fig-trees, geraniums, orange-trees, honeysuckle, cherries, sweet-briar, apples, lettuces, lilies, mulberry-trees, vines, and carnations flourished in amicable confusion together, mingling their blended scents in one delicious combination of fragrance to greet the senses of the diners ; a neatly-spread table, a kindly host, a sweet-voiced woman, happy spirits, gay looks, mirthful conversation, all contributed to render the repast one of the most exquisite Gerard had ever tasted.

A vision of some of the grand banquets given by his father to divers of his wealthy connections,—banquets where every species of costly delicacy, and rare wine, and massive plate had laden the board, which was surrounded only by corpulent Millionaires and rubicund Rentiers and dull Douairières,—came over Gerard with a sense of suffocation, as the contrast forced itself upon him passingly ; the contrast which such gorgeous feasts formed with the simple meal before him.

Another merit presented by the simple lightness of the meal of which they had just partaken, was, that it offered no impediment to the resumption of dancing as soon as they pleased.

The old Curé accordingly proposed their adjournment forthwith to the village-green ; leaving the Bonne to superintend those household matters which might require rearrangement after the important meal of the day. Nor was it perceptible that her secession caused any diminution of comfort to the party.

More dances were enjoyed together ; more hours sped unheeded away. But when the sloping rays of the sun slanted so low and so level with the earth, that Gentille-et-sage could no longer disregard their warning of passing time, she said, “ I must return. It is evening ; and I must go home.”

There was just enough of regret, in the sweet cadence of her voice, as Gabrielle uttered these few words, to console Gerard for their import. He yielded

to the motion with which she turned in the direction where they had left the old man seated, that she might bid the Curé farewell, but he availed himself of the usage, which permitted him, as her partner, to keep her hand in his.

“ You are going, my child,” said the Curé, as they approached, and she took her leave of him. “ Well, you are right ; your father will be expecting you. I must not detain you. But how wrong this is of Petit Pierre, not to be here ready to go back with you !”

“ I am not afraid to go home alone, mon père, you know I do it often, when I come over to see you,” said she.

“ I hope Mademoiselle Gabrielle will allow me the pleasure of being her companion, as Monsieur Petit Pierre has not thought fit to make his appearance ;” said Gerard.

“ Well, if you are not unwilling to go so far out of your way, mon bon Monsieur Gerard,” said the old Curé, “ that will be a very good plan. The farm does certainly lie a little round about ; somewhat off the straight road to Perpignan, but to young legs like yours I dare say that won't much matter, even after a day's dancing. Besides, perhaps you may meet Petit Pierre on the road, you know, and then he can save Monsieur the trouble, can't he, Gentille-et-sage ? If he should make his appearance soon, I will be sure and hasten him after you, my dear.”

The old Curé said all this with so much simplicity and unconscious good faith, that it seemed a pity to offer any new view of the affair ; and Gerard forbore to explain that he regarded the circumstance of Monsieur Petit Pierre's defection as peculiarly fortunate. Contenting himself, therefore, with taking a cordial leave of the good old man, thanking him for the share he had had in making his holiday one of the most delightful he had ever spent, and expressing a hope that he would permit him to come and renew his acquaintance ere long, they parted ; the venerable Curé return-

ing to his own house, Gerard and Gabrielle taking the direction of the wood, through which the young man had passed just before coming upon the scene of the village festival that morning.

“ I do not repeat what I said about not being afraid of going home alone, because it will be as if I asked you to assure me that you think it a pleasure, and no trouble, to go out of your way ;” said Gentille-et-sage ; “ so I will only thank you for your good company.”

“ If you wish to be very generous in your thanks, tell me that you prefer it to your own ;” he replied.

“ I prefer it even to Petit Pierre’s ;” said she archly.

“ And pray how came this Monsieur Petit Pierre to indulge us with his absence, by leaving you so unceremoniously to find a substitute for his doughty escort ?” asked Gerard.

“ I lost sight of him almost directly after we arrived here, this morning ;” answered Gabrielle ; “ he seemed to think he had fulfilled my father’s wish when he had seen me to Monsieur le Curé’s side, and that he was thenceforth at liberty to follow his own devices for the rest of the day. As indeed he was, for no compact had been made that he should abide by me, or return for me ; and he well knows that I am in the constant habit of going backwards and forwards by myself between our farm and the village.”

“ Well, whatever may have been the seductive Mat de cocagne, or other entertainment which may have proved the irresistible cause of Monsieur Petit Pierre’s truancy, I confess myself beholden to it ;” said Gerard. “ But,” added he, “ I suppose it is the society of that kind and pleasant old man which brings you over so frequently to the village. Monsieur le Curé seems to be worthy of all esteem and affection.”

“ He is indeed !” said Gabrielle warmly. “ You should see him as I have done, praying by the side of the sick and dying, cheering, comforting, sustaining

them. You should hear his holy words, and witness his own virtuous life which brings example as well as precept to the couch of the sufferer. You should know how he quits his snug hearth, his cherished study, his own bed, at all hours, and at all seasons, not only unrepiningly but with kindly eagerness. You should know how he lives scantily, and denies himself the luxury of books—a far harder frugality to him—that he may the better spare the assistance which is never withheld when needed by his poor neighbours. His charity is of the purest kind—for he is generous of his gifts, of his time, of his help, bestowed ungrudgingly from his own store. And his mind is as large as his heart; for though he is singularly simple-mannered and modest, he is very sensible, has read much, and has a fine memory.”

“And he has doubtless afforded you some of the advantages of this love of study of his;” said Gerard. “It is as his pupil, and to read with him, I suppose, that you so frequently come over here from your own home.”

“Yes, he is most kind to me; I love him dearly; we are very happy together; and my father, whose happiness it is to see his Gabrielle happy, lets me be with Monsieur le Curé as often as we both please. So I have spent much of my time in that pleasant little parlour of his, at his side, reading to him, and hearing him talk. For when we come to any passage that reminds Monsieur le Curé of something that he has read in some other book, he tells me about it, or even repeats it to me. He has an excellent memory, as I told you, which is very fortunate; since his charitable heart prevents his buying as many books as he could wish, he has luckily, in this way, a sort of extra shelf of them in his head.”

Gentille-et-sage continued to chat on thus, so gaily and so easily, that Gerard, who was at home accounted a somewhat shy and reserved youth, became, with this young girl, whom he had known only a few hours, equally communicative with herself.

He found himself telling her freely, with the happy egoism induced by cordial companionship, of his mother, whose partiality knew no bounds ; of his father, whose affection showed itself in a stricter exercise of authority, which perhaps only by contrast with her maternal fondness seemed like controul ; of his enthusiasm for his profession, and of his hopes of one day attaining skill and eminence in its pursuit.

A more exquisite flattery can hardly be administered to self-love, or one that better excuses the weakness it appeals to and elicits, than the sympathy of such a companion as Gabrielle ; it at once calls forth, and rewards the candour of revelation. Under such influence, a sensitive heart yields its hoarded treasures of feeling, and is at once happy in its new freedom, and grateful toward its liberator.

Gerard felt this gratitude toward Gabrielle. The encouragement afforded by the intelligence, interest, and response he read in every look of hers ; the simple ease of her manners which set him at equal ease ; the friendly tone thus at once assumed between them ; all made him feel more at home, more familiar, more allied, as it were, with this recent acquaintance, than he had ever felt with any human being.

An incident occurred that tended to heighten this sense of familiarity. The day had been sultry ; the sky now became suddenly overcast ; the gloom was more than the mere closing in of evening ; clouds gathered, a few large drops fell, then more, and faster, and soon a heavy shower pelted down with such violence, that the thick leaves above were insufficient to protect Gabrielle from the rain. Gerard perceived at a little distance an oak-tree, the trunk of which was so time-worn and hollow, as to admit of Gabrielle's ensconcing herself within. They hastened toward the spot, and as she crept into the rugged bole, he laughingly admired her Dryad's nook, and congratulated her on the perfect shelter it afforded from the wet.

“ It is dry certainly,” said she, “ and yet I can't

allow it to be a perfect shelter, since it is not large enough to hold us both. Dryads, I believe, were reputed beneficent, and the least the sylvan goddess could do, would be to share with an unhappy mortal the protection her tree affords ; whereas I am snugly and selfishly screened, and you are getting wet through."

They chatted on about Dryads, woodland deities, sylvan haunts, poets and their poetical fancies, and a thousand pleasant subjects, which served to show that this peasant girl had profited by her reading with the old Curé, in laying up a store of beautiful and gracious ideas, and in obtaining a glimpse of something beyond the usual education of a farmer's daughter.

It was an odd combination—this fact of birth, and this accident of instruction—but it was a pleasant one ; for the country maiden was so natural, so unconscious, so merely valuing the acquirement for its own sake, for the pleasure it afforded her, and the opportunity it gave her of being with her old friend the Curé, that it did not injure her character. Gabrielle was a being, inartificial and graceful, as she was singular.

The shower was persevering. Half an hour, an hour, two hours elapsed, almost unconsciously ; although Gabrielle proposed several times, issuing from her nook, and facing the wet, saying that it was not very far now from the farm, and that it would be better to hurry thither at once, as the rain might last for some time. But Gerard was so urgent in protesting that now it was going to give over very shortly, and now it was much lighter in the wind, and now he was sure that if they waited ten minutes longer, they might go in perfect security, that Gabrielle gave way, and remained within the hollow tree.

The shower ceased as suddenly as it had come on ; but when at length she was able to emerge from shelter, Gabrielle found that a much longer time had elapsed than she had been at all aware of, while chat-

ting away, screened within the recesses of the oak. She hastened on, and expressed some anxiety lest her father might be uneasy at her late return. As long as they remained within the wood, Gabrielle flattered herself that it was the shadow of the trees that made it seem so dark ; but when they reached the open fields beyond, she could no longer help seeing that evening had quite closed in.

“ I hope my father will have fancied that I am staying all night at Monsieur le Curé’s ;” she said, half to pacify her own thought, half aloud to Gerard. “ Then he will have no anxiety about my safety.”

Half a mile more brought them to a lane, close, and bowery, and shut in by thick hedgerows on each side. Some trees grew overarchingly above, so that little of the sky could be seen ; but here and there a star twinkled through the branches, and Gabrielle, perceiving that Gerard’s pace was less assured, as he followed this darkened and unknown track, withdrew her arm from his, and taking him by the hand, led him onwards. He could hear her laughing melodious voice, as she paced quickly along this accustomed path, and spoke in gay, assured, home-returning tones.

Presently she stopped at a little door, which seemed to be made in a garden-wall. Gerard could hear her unlock it ; and then she turned again to him, and said :—“ Give me your hand again ; you will not be able to find your way here, unless I lead you. Now stoop your head ; you are tall, and the doorway is low.”

Gerard could hear the rustle of the branches, and indistinctly see them laden with fruit, as Gabrielle held back the dripping boughs of some cherry and summer-apple trees, that overhung the narrow path, and besprinkled them profusely as they passed beneath.

“ This is almost as bad as the shower in the wood ; but you are already wet through, and a few additional drops won’t signify. I shall soon be able to have your coat properly dried ;” said the pleasant voice. “ O,

take care of that walnut bough—and these rose-bushes—round this way ; now stoop again, under this honeysuckle arch ; there, now up a few steps, and here are we !”

Another door was pushed open ; they entered, and Gerard found himself beneath a roof of some sort, but he could see nothing ; until presently, his conductress quitting hold of his hand, he heard a little gentle bustling to and fro,—a light foot,—a closet opened, and then came the sound of a flint and steel struck smartly ; a spark fell upon the tinder, a flickering vision emerged from the gloom, of a face, irradiated by smiles no less than by the nascent glow, as the lips closed in a rosy circle, puffing gently and coaxingly upon the spreading light ; a match was kindled, and held toward the taper, the flame sprang up, and a pleasant voice exclaimed gleefully as a child might have done :—“ That’s it !” and then gradually, the eyes of Gerard accustoming themselves to the light, after the recent obscurity, informed him that he was in a moderate-sized apartment, strewed with different articles that bespoke womanly occupation. A few books, some pencils, a work-basket, pens and ink, an embroidery frame, a garden-rake, a knitting-box, a portfolio, and some half-finished needle-work lay in that sort of neat negligence, graceful litter, that is found only in a young girl’s own sitting-room.

Before he had time to do more than glance round at the place in which he found himself, Gabrielle had laid her hand upon the sleeve of his soaked doublet ; and begging him to take it off, she stepped into an inner room, unhooked from a peg a thick cloak which hung there, and brought it him, to put on, while she took his wet garment to be dried.

“ Give it me,” she said in her easy manner, “ that I may take it to the kitchen-fire of the farm. The embers are still hot, I dare say. I will not be gone long, but I must just step over, for I am longing to see my father, and tell him I am come back. You

will forgive me, I know. I will be back in five minutes." So saying, she glided out of the door by which she had entered ; and Gerard remained alone.

He had now leisure to examine the spot where he was. It seemed to be a sort of summer-house, or pavilion, such as is frequently found, built out in the garden, away from the house, in many parts of France. It comprised two apartments ; for, beyond the one where Gerard was, he could see another room. They opened from one to the other by a small door, which had been left ajar by Gabrielle, when she had gone in to fetch the cloak. The glimpse afforded through this half-open door showed, by the white hangings which neatly draped an alcove opposite, that this inner one formed a bed-chamber ; while the single snowy pillow and general air of tasteful simplicity that reigned around, proclaimed it to be Gabrielle's own sleeping-room, as incontestably as the scattered work, and other feminine confusion, bespoke the one in which he sat to be her sitting-room.

He could scarcely forbear laughing at his whimsical situation, and at the still more whimsical figure he cut, as he caught a glimpse of himself in a looking-glass which hung near. His youthful head, with its thick hair and coming moustache, peered above the folds of a woman's cloak. It was the dark woollen one, fastened with a silver clasp, worn by Gabrielle, in common with Frenchwomen of her class, in winter ; and seemed as if only a snowy cap, or other feminine head-gear could crown it appropriately. He thought, too, of the unexpected train of circumstances which had grown out of his walk that morning. Here he was in a strange place, awaiting one, who, until that day, had been a stranger to him, but who, henceforth, was to be intimately blended with his every thought. He instinctively felt this, though it did not present itself in so palpable a form to his mind.

Gerard's nature, unconsciously to himself, now for the first time in his life met its kindred spirit. Hith-

erto he had dwelt only with dispositions uncongenial with his own ; for although his filial reverence taught him to construe his mother's weak passiveness into gentleness, and his father's domineering selfishness into paternal guidance, yet the real temperament of his parents, had, till now, been the unfavorable social atmosphere in which the glow of his own feelings had been repressed and subdued. He had been accustomed to check and stifle warmth of expression as something unsuited to the chilling damp that pervaded the home circle ; but now he had met with one, who at once made him feel unconstrained, unreserved, elate, happy.

Gabrielle's manner was so peculiarly unreserved, so full of that frank yet modest ease which sometimes belongs to youth brought up with indulgence, that it inspired ease in him ; the young girl's simple unembarrassed demeanour placed him at once on terms of intimacy ; her tone of sympathy and intelligence won his regard and confidence, and the whole impression produced upon his feelings, was that one of repose, of content, of comfort, of serene joy which belongs to a tried and valued friendship. In this playful ease, this modest yet assured manner of the young country girl, which awakened such welcome novelty of happy feeling in Gerard's heart, lay the secret of her charm for him ; but as yet he knew it not ; he was content to yield himself implicitly to the unanalysed pleasure he felt ; to the joy of having discovered such a being ; to the happiness of her presence, her intercourse, herself.

He sat there, indulging this kind of waking-dream—for it was rather with the shadows and voluptuous impresses of thought, than with the thoughts themselves that his fancy was luxuriating,—until the light footsteps of Gabrielle announced her return.

“It was as I hoped ;” she exclaimed as she entered. “My father had not been uneasy, concluding I staid at Monsieur le Curé's, all night, on account

of the shower. So I found him snug in bed ; where I would have had him remain quietly ; but when he heard that Monsieur had been so good as to see his child safe home, he would needs get up and thank him. So I am come to fetch you to the farm, to my father. It is only at the other end of the garden. This is the old pavilion, which my father has had fitted up, and lets me have for my own little homestead. O, he is very indulgent to his Gabrielle—my kind old father ! Everybody says he spoils her. He lets her have her own whims and fancies—her own way in everything—and that’s so pleasant !”

The moon had risen now ; and as they once more crossed the garden, her broad mild light shone clear upon flower, shrub, and fruit-tree, rendering needless the friendly guiding hand which had before led Gerard along the path.

He was in thought half regretting it, when Gabrielle said :—“ You need no leading now, which is fortunate, or you might have had some difficulty in finding your way back to Perpignan ; but you can scarcely miss it, in this clear moonshine, and the way is not intricate ; if you follow the lane that bends a little to the right, leaving the wood on your left hand, when you have passed the field or two beyond, the road is nearly straight to the town.”

In the kitchen of the farm, they found the old farmer, hospitably intent on spreading a table-cloth, and preparing some homely refreshment, to which he invited his guest in unceremonious but hearty terms. He thanked him for bringing home his child in safety, in the same manner ; and all his speech betokened the rough honest farmer. He spoke a broad country dialect, a strong patois, but his words were kindly, though homely. He was as utterly devoid of polish or refinement, as his daughter was singularly graceful and superior in air and knowledge to her station ; though the one was no less *natural* than the other. But she was simple, he was plain ; she was innocent, he was ig-

norant ; she was candid, he was blunt ; she was intelligent, and had learned the happiness of reading, he was unlettered, and cared for no knowledge beyond the culture of his fields, and the superintendence of his farm. He was the mere rustic, she was the modest country-maid. The contrast was almost as great between this farmer and this farmer's daughter, as if the one had been a duchess and the other a cobbler ; but there were some points in common between these two. Both father and child were perfectly free from assumption of all sorts ; equally artless, equally unaffected, equally sincere, and equally steady in affection for each other.

By the time the hasty supper had been discussed, Gerard's doublet was thoroughly dry ; as he resumed it, and prepared to depart, resigning Gabrielle's cloak which had wrapped him so comfortably in his need, many smiling words were exchanged between them all, of the help, and the shelter, and the kindness that had been mutually interchanged that day.

Gabrielle's father thanked the " *bon jeune homme*" for his care of his daughter ; she thanked Gerard again for his " *good company* ;" and he thanked them both for their care, their good company, and their hospitable kindness ; but in his heart were myriads of thanks that could find no utterance toward her who had that day shed so sudden a flood of light upon his existence. Often thus, lies profound gratitude, concealed beneath light laughing words of courtesy—the bashful subterfuge of a generous hypocrisy, that feigns less than it feels.

These unexpressed emotions served to bear him joyful company back to Perpignan that night ; the way imperceptibly melted before him, as he indulged the thought of how soon he hoped to retrace it ; no idea of the lateness of the hour occurred to him, till he beheld the indignant, drowsy face of the cross old portress, who let him in when he reached his father's porte-cochère.

" *These young people !*" he heard her mutter ;

“ little they think of us old ones at home ! Fine times ! Fine hours ! Fine goings-on ! ”

He whispered some playful words, deprecatory of the ancient Cerberia's wrath ; but the next morning he had to encounter the far more important displeasure of his father.

He met him for a few moments, just as Monsieur Gerard was issuing forth, ready hatted and gloved, to proceed to the Banking-house, which was at a short distance from his residence.

“ You are late down to breakfast this morning, Gerard ; no wonder, if you keep such late hours over-night. I hear it was much past midnight before you returned home. This does not encourage me to give you a holiday again, in a hurry. De Vaumond is a young man of high birth and connections, therefore I approve of your intimacy with him ; but you must not allow his love of the gaming-table to make you forget your proper hours for returning home at night. It is not the few paltry écus you might lose, that I mind,— a lad of spirit, with a rich father, can afford to spend his money as freely as a young nobleman, but I do not choose to have my family hours altered.”

“ I met de Vaumond, it is true, sir,” answered the son, “ but—— ”

“ There, let us have no more words about it, my boy,” interrupted Monsieur Gerard. “ I choose you to be home before midnight, do you hear ? That's my will. Let it be observed. No more words, if you please.”

The banker stalked away ; and Gerard went to his College ; but that day, his study was, for the most part, how he might best contrive time for another visit to the farm.

And another and another visit did he contrive. Monsieur Gerard had no more occasion to complain of late hours, either over-night, or at the breakfast-table. Punctually at nine o'clock, the established hour for the family to assemble at the morning meal, Gerard

made his appearance, looking animated, happy, and with a glow in his cheeks, that bespoke early air and exercise. His parents remarked upon it with pleasure, each after their peculiar fashion. His mother observed, "she was glad to find he had minded what his father said about late hours. Getting up early, and taking a walk, always made the cheeks blooming; and Gerard's were absolutely like a rose."

His father, who was fond of taking his own views of the matter, and assuming them as established facts, believed that his son was eager in the pursuit of herbal botany, and had chosen these early hours for his rambles, that he might not interfere with time devoted to other branches of medical study.

Besides, he had signified his desire that early hours should be observed; and Monsieur Gerard was one of those authoritative persons who consider the announcement of their will as tantamount to its execution.

"The boy is quite right, Helena;" said Monsieur Gerard in reply to his wife's observation touching their son's improved looks. "He acts in conformity with the advice of those who know what's best for him; and he finds his account in it, don't you, Gerard, my boy?"

"I certainly find my delight in these early walks," answered he; "for I have found——"

"O spare us the description of every weed and every blade of grass you may have discovered, my good fellow;" interrupted Monsieur Gerard. "They are all rare specimens, I dare say, and may possess the most inestimable virtues of the combined Pharmacopeia, for aught I know; but I'm content to take your word for it. Helena, my dear, pass me that pigeon-pie; I find more entertainment in exploring its contents, monsieur le docteur, than in all your wild flowers that ever were distilled to cure or poison mankind!" And Monsieur Gerard accordingly began to dig into the bowels of the pasty, selecting the choicest morsels for his own plate, in his own important style.

For the banker always helped himself, as if fully conscious what was due to the rich merchant, goldsmith, and banker of Perpignan, the father of a family, and the master of his own house. He helped himself as if the chief anxiety of all present, were bound up, with his own, in the fact of his securing those morsels best suited to his palate ; and as if what he might reject was sure to be good enough for others. Monsieur Gerard, in helping himself from a dish, always gave you the idea that those portions which he left, became scraps—orts—mere refuse—unworthy of his notice—though they might serve for those who came after him. When he partook of an omelet he would cut the browned edges off with so choice a hand, and deposit them on his plate with so nice an egoism of discrimination and care, that the middle piece which remained lay there on the dish, a mere unpleasant block of insipidity, for any one who chose to take up with it ; but had he preferred the less done section, it would have been just the same ; for then the solicitude with which he would have lifted out the centre spoonful, and conveyed it with a steady hand, a watchful eye, and suspended breath, to its destination for his own peculiar discussion, would have converted the crisper edges into cindry chips, parings, despised remnants, pushed aside, rejected and abandoned, for any one that chose to collect them.

The confident unmisgiving air with which all this epicurean purveyancing was carried on, imparted a solemnity and dignity to Monsieur Gerard's eating, and Monsieur Gerard's taste, and Monsieur Gerard's selection, which deprived it of any appearance of selfishness—at least, neither his wife nor son was ever struck with it in that light ; for they had been so accustomed to see him sniff at, and closely inspect, and pish-and-shaw at the dishes, and to hear him say :—“ I'll try a bit of this, I think”—or, “ Let me see if I can manage one of these”—or, “ Perhaps I may fancy some of your dish, Helena, my dear, send

it round to me ;" that they had come to consider him as rather an ill-used gentleman on the score of appetite, and one whom it was providential if anything could be found to tempt and coax into eating at all.

In small matters, as well as in great ones, Monsieur Gerard was emphatically 'master in his own house ;' and he liked to have his family think, as well as act, according to his sovereign will and pleasure. If he pitied and patronised his own appetite, as a poor one, and one that required pampering and indulgence, it was the duty of those around him to adopt his view of the matter—which they implicitly did. Monsieur Gerard had hitherto enjoyed supreme and unquestioned domestic sway.

His son, Gerard, had no intention of concealing the real object of his morning excursions from his parents ; on the contrary, his naturally frank temper would have led him to confide to them the new source of joy he possessed in the discovery of Gabrielle ; he would have described to them her graces of simplicity, candour, and intelligence ; he would have dwelt with delight upon the charm her character possessed for him, upon the feeling of amity and affectionate interest with which she inspired him ; but the manner in which everything had been taken for granted, and the total absence of all expressed sympathy, in leading him to expatiate upon his new-found source of happiness, chilled and discouraged him into silence. This had ever been the social existence of Gerard ; till of an open disposition, it had well-nigh created a reserved one.

But now, whatever might be the lack of sympathy in his home-circle, none was wanting to make his hours spent at the farm those of unalloyed happiness. There, he was always received with the same cordiality, the same frank ease, the same friendly intimacy as that which had marked the epoch of his first acquaintance with Gabrielle and her father.

Calm and delicious were those pure summer morn-

ings ! Secure that however early might be the hour at which he could reach the farm, its inhabitants would surely be stirring, he would rise from his bed with the dawn, glide through the silent streets of the town, emerge into the open country, traverse the dewy fields, behold the rising sun in his glory, hail the face of gracious Nature in her fair beaming freshness, whilst his heart, cheerful and devout, offered silent homage to the Creator of all.

Then came the arrival ; the welcome ; the good-humoured hearty farmer ; the honest labourers, exchanging a grinning bon-jour, for the young man's touch of the hat, or slap on the shoulder ; the lowing kine, with their fragrant breath steaming forth into the morning air, standing patiently to be milked, before going to pasture ; the busy clamour of poultry, hurrying to be fed ; the hum of bees ; the scent of hay ; the clattering of milk-pans ; the rustle of straw in the yard, amongst which roused and grunted, in swinish luxury, some pigs, with their upturned twinkling eyes ; the creaking and flapping of huge barn-doors, disclosing glimpses of scattered straw, piled logs, trusses of hay, grain, and high cross-rafters, among which sparrows flew in and out, perching and twittering ; the neighing of sleek plough-horses ; the cheerful barking of dogs ; the swinging-to of gates ; the many sights, and smells, and sounds that make a farm so pleasant a spot to the townsman, all greeted Gerard's senses with an impression of delight and enjoyment.

Then, above all, came the meeting *her*. She would come hurrying out from the porch, all smiles, and welcome, and beaming cordiality, looking by far the most fresh, and bright, and sunny object in those fresh, bright, sunny mornings. And then they would loiter about the farm-yard together, watching the farmer give his instructions to the men, congratulating him upon the flourishing condition of his farm, listening to his proposed improvements, giving their occasional opinion, and interesting themselves in all that

was going forward without doors. Then they would stroll through the garden, and linger near the beehives, and debate the probability of an approaching swarm, or stay and peep at some sitting mother-bird who had built her nest in the close hedge near the harbour ; or note the growth of some newly-set favorite of Gabrielle's planting ; or watch the cool green shadows play and ripple on the surface of the small pond, while they idled on the brink side-by-side, and Gerard saw mirrored in the cheeks of his companion the dimples on the water, in her eyes its liquid brightness, in her soul its transparency, its clearness, and its purity. Then came half an hour in the pleasant sitting-room of the pavilion. Gerard would here give Gabrielle the book or print he generally brought for her ; he would hear of the pleasure she had had in reading the last ; or of something Monsieur le Curé had told her, when reading it to him ; or he would look at the progress she had made, since the morning before, in her drawing, and would perhaps add a touch or two, and suggest a few more.

But however pleasantly the time might speed, Gerard never permitted himself to forget its lapse, so as to trench upon the appointed hour for his return. He told Gabrielle that he trusted to her for turning him out of doors when the sun should have reached the warning height ; and so, when its rays had travelled round a certain space in the chamber, and, resting in a certain angle, proclaimed that it was time to depart, the pleasant voice said :—" See ! the sun beckons you to be going—or you will not reach home in time to welcome your mother down-stairs, and lead her to the breakfast-table."

Morning after morning thus passed away, in scenes so peaceful, in thoughts so tranquil, in intercourse so calm, that Gerard had no suspicion of the change which had been wrought within himself ; he surmised not that this blissful sense of awakened existence, this powerful impression of happiness which he hugged

close to his heart as a deeply-treasured possession, a newly-acquired gift, was the result of a complete revolution which had taken place in his own moral being. He knew not that love had taken possession of his soul ; he knew not that love it was which played in every breeze, which lured him forth to find fresh beauties in Nature herself, which filled his heart with joy, his spirits with exultation, and which lent a new zest to every thought and every act. He knew not that it was love which shed its radiance upon the image of Gabrielle, and which fraught every idea of her with beauty and delight. He believed that joys so pure and placid as those he savoured during the hours of morning, could originate with no emotion so powerful as love ; he could not imagine that the contentment and serenity of mutual understanding which subsisted between himself and that young country maiden, owed its existence to so imperious a feeling as love. He had heard love described as turbulent, restless, exacting ; could he therefore suspect that uneasy passion to have aught to do with the deep and plenary satisfaction of her presence ?

But though unconscious of his own secret, it was soon to be discovered to him in all its force, by means less pleasant, though no less potent than the promptings of his happy heart. A word of slight towards her he loved, revealed to him the whole strength and truth of that love.

One morning on his return from the farm he found his mother in tears, and his father in a towering passion.

His entrance was the signal for a torrent of reproaches.

“ O Gerard, how could you ? ”—sobbed his mother.

“ Listen to me, sirrah ; ” said his father, almost inarticulate with rage. “ I find you have been deceiving me,—deceiving me, you young mauvais sujet ! Know, that I happen to have seen the chevalier de Vaumond ; that I have learned from him your idle

low haunts, and your trumpery companions. Not content with a vagabondizing walk, and loitering about with boors and clowns, but you must needs fall to dancing and romping with the peasant wenches."

"Fie, Gerard! How could you?" again sobbed his mother.

"I never deceived you, sir;" said Gerard, his eyes flashing at the accusation of duplicity, and still more at the opprobrious terms in which allusion had been made to his acquaintance with Gabrielle. "I never sought to mislead you as to the manner in which I spent that day. You yourself assumed that I had passed it wholly with de Vaumond; and stopped me when I would have explained the truth."

"The truth, boy, the truth! Don't tell me of the truth! I say you have not told me the truth all along; for I'll be bound that's not the only time you have been to this low village. De Vaumond told me you seemed mightily taken with one of these wenches, some curate's niece, or something of the kind—and I shouldn't wonder if you have been to take a peep at her again! Your morning walks, sirrah, your morning walks! Confess that they were to this same village, and that your botanizing was all a pretence, all a sham!"

"I never pretended that botany was my motive for early rising;" replied Gerard. "Had you cared to know, sir, I should have told you that my morning walks were to the farm, to see Gabrielle."

Gerard had spoken firmly though respectfully; but his voice faltered a little, as he concluded, with the reluctance natural to the utterance of a beloved name in the presence of those we know to be prejudiced against its possessor; besides, he was just beginning to discover how dear that possessor was to his own heart.

There was something in the young man's manner which made the father pause, and consider him attentively. There was an air of manly resolution taking

the place of old boyish submission, which Monsieur Gerard had never before observed ; there was no filial deference wanting in the tone, but it was mingled with an earnestness of meaning, a decision of purpose that bespoke the existence of a strong internal motive. The father felt instinctively that will was there to meet his own, and that it was a man's will and not a child's will. Had his son grown from boyhood to manhood at a single hour's growth, Monsieur Gerard could scarcely more palpably have seen the alteration, than he read the one which had taken place in his son's mind from ductile youth to maturity. He recognized the origin of the change and the evil, for such he felt it to be, and resolved to deal with it at once. In the first place, he assumed a tone of more condescending equality with his son, than he had ever permitted himself to use before.

“ And so Gabrielle is the name of this rustic charmer of yours, is it ? ” said Monsieur Gerard, drawing a long breath at the conclusion of his scrutiny. “ And it was to see her that you could get out of bed so early, and walk abroad a-mornings ! Upon my word ! I don't know, though, that we ought to be angry with her, if she's the cause of such a reformation in our young mauvais sujet's habits. ”

“ Be assured, all her influences upon me are good—like herself ; ” said Gerard, eagerly.

“ But the better she is, my dear Gerard, ” interrupted his mother, “ the more considerate you ought to be for her ; the acquaintance of a young man like yourself cannot but compromise her. You cannot marry her, you know, and—— ”

“ Madame Gerard ! ” thundered her husband, “ what folly is this ? Leave the room, if you cannot talk more to the purpose. When we are by ourselves, Gerard and I shall soon come to an understanding about this matter. ”

She prepared to obey, with a fresh burst of tears ; but as she passed her son, she repeated her sobbing :—

“O Gerard! How could you? Tell your father you are very sorry—and are prepared to give up any acquaintance he dislikes.”

“Mother, I cannot say I am sorry for what makes the happiness of my life.”

“Did you hear me speak, Madame Gerard?” again stormed the banker. “Leave us!”

“Now boy,” resumed he, when his wife had closed the door behind her; “let us hear all about this peasant girl. What sort of looking wench is she? But of course, a paragon of beauty—all young men’s first flames are Venuses!”

“She is no flame of mine;” said Gerard hastily.

“No? Morbleu, I’m glad to hear that! By your manner, I feared that you were entangled past all hope—shot through and through the heart—over head and ears in love. Too absurd in a boy like you! Allons,” continued Monsieur Gerard, “this is some comfort, however, to find that you have only had a passing fancy for picking up low acquaintances:—but mind, it’s a bad habit, and one that grows upon you, and I want you to rise in the world, Gerard, my boy, and you won’t do that by associating with poor country curates and their hoyden nieces.”

“I forgive your speaking in injurious terms of one you do not know, sir;” said Gerard. “But from what I said just now in hasty refutation of your light manner of speaking of Gabrielle, you may be misled into the belief that I do not love her. I would not have you deceived for an instant, father; I do love her, but I did not know until to-day how entirely she possesses my love. Now that I know my own heart, I open it to you. I do not ask you to sanction my affection until you know its object—but, once you have seen my Gabrielle, you will help your son to obtain her, as the best blessing life can afford.”

“Ay, ay, we’ll see this pretty rustic, and try what we can do to induce her to be kind;” said the French banker. “But mind, Gerard, if I indulge you, in

permitting you to choose your own acquaintances for passing your idle toying hours, I expect you to conform to my wishes in material points. The chevalier de Vaumond is a man whom I approve of as your friend ; and I hope shortly to introduce you to a young lady, the daughter of a very old friend of mine, the Baron de Montigny, who has been residing many years in Italy ;—and this young lady I should wish you to make your best friend—your wife, Gerard.”

“ My wife, sir !” exclaimed Gerard. “ I have been telling you myself, of the only woman whom I can ever make my wife.”

“ Pooh, pooh, my dear fellow ; peasant wenches are not women to make wives of ;” said Monsieur Gerard. “ Understand me ; I insist upon it, that if I comply with your whim of keeping up the acquaintance of these villagers, you shall comply with my desire of seeing you married to Mademoiselle de Montigny. It is a match upon which I have determined, from your birth ; and I will be obeyed.”

“ Then I have plainly to declare, that this is a point in which I cannot obey you, sir ;” said Gerard. “ I never will marry any woman who has not my whole heart ; and it is already given to Gabrielle.”

His father again read, in the firm calm tone, and in the look which met his own with unflinching regard, that his son was no longer a boy.

“ I’ll tell you what, Gerard ;” said he. “ You know that I am a man accustomed to declare my will, and to see it accomplished. You know, too, that I am a man of my word. Now, I give you my word of honor, that if you don’t marry according to my will, I’ll strip you of every farthing of allowance, withdraw you from college, ruin your prospects in life, and reduce you to beggary, in short. So mark me, young man, I give you four-and-twenty hours to decide between marriage to please me, and your father’s favor ; or marriage to please yourself, and beggary,—with

outlawry from home for ever, for I'll have no disobedience in my house !”

And with this, the banker stalked out, leaving his son to consider his words ; who, however, did not remain long in reflection, for he snatched up his hat, and went out also.

“ The decision must rest with her ;” thought Gerard, as he took his way to the farm. “ If she does not fear beggary, why should I ? Besides, beggary need not of necessity be our portion. Disinheritance does not deprive us of our limbs, our faculties ; I can work, I can earn bread, I can pursue my profession. With her—for her—what toil would be painful ? Cheered by her presence, secure of her possession, as a motive and a reward for exertion, how glorious then will be the pursuit of an art so noble,—a profession so worthy ?”

“ What was it he said ?” he continued to muse, while a crimson spot burned upon his cheek, as he recalled his father's words—“ ‘ peasant girls are not women to make wives of ! ’ Monsieur Gerard did not display his usual amount of worldly prudence in calculating the advantages of bargaining for such a woman as Gabrielle on fair terms. In the clear mind of such a wife, a man secures aid in forming his own judgments ; in the natural good sense of such a woman, a man finds support and encouragement in taking enlarged views of life ; he rises superior to petty evils ; he gains strength of mind, and moral courage ; he learns to eschew prejudice, to avoid enmities, to conquer difficulties, to achieve fame, to win honor and consideration, to earn independence ; she at once induces and graces his advancement. In such a bosom-friend—such a wife,—a man obtains the crown of his existence ; and it is such a friend as this that a selfishness, as mistaken as it is sordid, would degrade into a plaything for idle moments, a toy to be cast aside when sullied and destroyed. It is the life-long amity and attachment of such a woman as this, that a liber-

tine would exchange for the mere caresses of a passing hour. A sensualist cheats himself, as well as his victim. He robs himself of a treasure, in seeking to filch a sparkling trinket. In seeking to make such a woman as Gabrielle a wife instead of a mistress, a man consults his own interest (which methinks might weigh with the Perpignan banker) as well as his glory, his honor, and his happiness."

"But I picture her to myself as a wife, and do I even know that she loves me? When I parted from her this morning, I knew not what was passing in my own heart, and I perceived nothing in her manner that should give me hope aught existed within hers, akin to my own feeling. We were both happy friends—nothing more; she brought me my hat, and helped me to look for my gloves, and bade me hasten on my way home, with the easy smiling air with which a sister might send a brother forth, secure of seeing him again in a few hours. And so she thought to see me, to-morrow; but in still fewer hours I am returning. She will not expect me. Shall I find her at the farm? She may be gone over to see Monsieur le Curé."

He hastened on, impatient at the thought of her possible absence; and as if he would have detained her on the spot where he hoped to find her. He thought he could tell her all he felt and all he hoped, best in that quiet pleasant sitting-room of hers, in the pavilion; as he thought of all he had to speak, to entreat, he wished he might find her there, in that retired spot, secure from interruption, till he had poured forth all his heart to her.

In such fancies did the young lover indulge, as he sped along the well-known path; when just as he reached an angle, where it turned off abruptly into the wood, he saw, sitting under the trees, at a little distance, Gabrielle herself.

The sight of her, thus unexpectedly, and with the thought of all that he had discovered of his own feelings toward her, since he had last parted, in the calm-

ness of friendship, held him for a second, endeavouring to check the tumult of his heart, which now beat high with its newly-conscious emotion.

From the spot where he first perceived her, he could see her without being seen ; and, in the pause of a second that he made, he witnessed that which held him breathless for some seconds longer. He saw Gabrielle put softly to her lips some object that she held in her hand, fondle it to her cheek, press it between her palms, and then kiss it again and again tenderly—nay, passionately. He was burning to ascertain what this object of her caresses could be, when in smoothing it out upon her knee, and drawing it on to her own little hand, he discerned it to be one of his gloves, which had been mislaid that morning, and which was nowhere to be found when he was about to return home.

He was just springing forward, when his steps were arrested by hearing others approach hurriedly through the trees, in the direction of the farm.

In another moment, Petit Pierre came brushing and rustling through the underwood, bawling Gabrielle's name, panting and out of breath. But before the lad came up, Gerard had beheld the glove hastily, though securely, concealed in Gabrielle's bosom.

“ O I'm so glad you hadn't got far, Mademoiselle, ” said the cowboy. “ Your father guessed you had set out upon your way to Monsieur le Curé's, and bade me run after you, and see if I couldn't overtake you and bring you back ; he wants to speak to you about those rose-bushes that he is going to have removed from before the dairy-window ; he says they're in the way there, and he wishes to know where you'd best like to have them transplanted. ”

“ I'll come back with you directly, Pierre ; ” said Gabrielle, rising from her grassy seat. As she did so, she perceived Gerard, who advanced to meet her. With her usual frank grace she congratulated herself and him upon his having been able so soon to return,

imagining that some college holiday permitted this excursion.

“ And I hope you have the whole day to spare us ;” said she. “ We will return with Petit Pierre, to see what my father proposes, and to settle with him the best new place for the rose-trees ; and then, if you please, we’ll go over to Monsieur le Curé’s together. I was on my way to show him this beautiful ‘ Clotilde de Surville ’ which you brought me yesterday.”

The hearty farmer seemed as well pleased as his daughter to see the ‘ bon jeune homme ’ so soon among them again. Gerard had become a great favorite with the old man ; he liked his sincere straightforward manners, and his unaffected cordiality ; while the warm interest which he took in all matters that related to the farm and its inhabitants, and the liking he displayed for simple rural pleasures, pleased the countryman, and won his regard.

The affair of the removal of Gabrielle’s rose-trees was soon arranged to the mutual satisfaction of the assembled trihominat ; and then, while the farmer went off to his barns, Gerard and Gabrielle sauntered through the garden toward the pavilion.

“ I have told Babette to take some strawberries and cream there for us,” said Gentille-et-sage ; “ I thought you would like to sit in the shade and eat some fruit before we set out for Monsieur le Curé’s. I think I will pop a little pot of cream in a basket for the dear old man ; and we’ll carry it to him. And I think I can find room for a fowl and some new-laid eggs, and we’ll ask him to give us some dinner, shall we ?”

“ With all my heart ; and yet——” Gerard paused.

Gabrielle asked him archly if his hesitation proceeded from the weight of the basket he would have to bear ; “ for I give you warning,” said she, “ that I mean to let you carry it by far the greater part of the way.”

“ I willingly engage to let you carry it no step of the way yourself ;” said he. “ It was not the basket

that weighed upon my mind ; but I feel some scruples of conscience, I own, in accepting a second feast at the hands of Monsieur le Curé, when I have it in my hope to ask of his bounty a boon of surpassing worth."

"Indeed!" said Gabrielle. "This sounds like a secret. You must promise to tell me what it is that you are going to ask of Monsieur le Curé,—I long to know. In the first place, I never had any secrets, either of my own or anybody else's, to keep—and there must be something very grand and very pleasant in having a secret ; and in the next place, I can perhaps help you in obtaining this favor from him ; though he is such a kind old darling, he never can find it in his heart to refuse anybody anything."

"And yet this is a very, very great favor—the most valuable of all gifts. Still, you promise me your help—and your help is everything—nay, unless you, Gabrielle, grant me the boon first, I cannot ask it of Monsieur le Curé."

"Tell me, tell me ; I am all impatience," said she, "to learn this secret ; tell me what is the gift you mean to ask of Monsieur le Curé."

"I want him to give me a wife ;" said Gerard.

A rapid succession of emotions was visible upon the clear artless face of the country girl. First there was the sudden wonder at so new an idea presenting itself to her, as Gerard's marriage ; then the pallor which the thought of his loss occasioned, was replaced by a flood of rosy color which suffused her cheeks, brow, and neck, with the dawning consciousness of who was really the woman he desired for the wife he sought of the Curé.

"You may have failed to discover my love—I learned not its depth myself, until to-day, my Gabrielle," said the young man, pouring forth his words in hurried passionate accents ; "still, you cannot but have perceived how my happiness has grown since I have known you, how my soul has knit itself to yours, how my grateful heart has exulted in the regard you

have accorded me, in the gentle interest you have shown, in the affectionate tone you have permitted to subsist between us. You may have mistaken these tokens of my feelings for those of esteem, of friendship merely—till my father's words opened my eyes this morning, I mistook them for such myself—but O, Gabrielle, believe that the esteem, the friendship I feel for you have all the warmth of love—of love only—and it is as the partner of my existence—as the crown of all my hopes—as my wife, that I beseech you to give me yours in return.”

Gabrielle drooped her head, instead of replying to her lover's passionate appeal, and for the first time since she had known Gerard, her looks failed to respond to his. She seemed to be struggling for courage to strengthen herself against his pleading.

“Your father's words !” she faltered ; “then he refuses to sanction your love.”

“His prejudices are worldly—he is unjust—he does not know your worth, my Gabrielle,” said her lover.

“A father's prejudices deserve consideration ;” said the low voice of Gentille-et-sage.

“But not to the destruction of a son's happiness ;” said Gerard. “Not when they interfere to sever those that love each other. My Gabrielle would not have me abide by a parent's prejudices when they bid me marry where I cannot love. Surely, mutual love has sacred claims of its own ?”

“Ay, mutual love ;” murmured Gentille-et-sage, persevering with what she conceived to be the duty of refusing one who sought her against his father's will, she strove to resume her old tone of archness and easy gaiety, “you speak of mutual love ; but though you have told me of your own, I have not told you of mine. Pray who told you that I have any love for you ?”

“My own eyes ;” said Gerard. “Although my Gabrielle will not tell me that her heart has understood mine, that she has read its depth of affection beneath the smiling ease of our late happy friendship, although

she will not generously own that her love exists as truly as mine, still I do not despair."

"And where is your hope, audacious?" asked the blushing and smiling Gabrielle, who could not resist the happy confidence of Gerard's eyes.

"Here;" said he, drawing his odd glove from his pocket. "I have found my missing glove—the fellow to this one. I know where it is, at this instant."

The hand of Gentille-et-sage stole toward the convicted bodice, which fluttered and heaved with the consciousness of harbouring abstracted goods. For a moment she sat thus, the picture of innocent guilt, covered with blushes of mingled modesty, gladness, confusion, and happy love revealed; then without raising her eyes, she drew the detected glove forth from its concealment, took its fellow from her lover, and folding them one in the other, replaced them thus both together in the same sweet hiding-place.

Gerard was not slow to read this mute troth-pledge, and confession of her love; but, with a lover's true avarice, which exacts fresh indulgence with each new evidence of affection, he rested not until he had obtained a spoken avowal, which Gabrielle gave him in her own simple ingenuous manner.

He, in return, frankly told her that he had no wealth to offer her, save his resolve to earn independence, by unremitting industry in the acquirement and pursuit of his profession; but if she would share in his early struggle, and become at once his incentive and reward, he doubted not of success. He did not conceal from her the alternative offered by his father's severity; but he knew enough of Gabrielle, to feel secure that the loss of present fortune consequent upon incurring Monsieur Gerard's displeasure, caused no part of her hesitation—which had proceeded solely from dread of inducing a son's disobedience. Gerard did not falsely calculate the motives and principles of her he loved.

Nor was it long before he succeeded in vanquishing her scruples on his father's account ; in persuading her that she owed more consideration toward one she knew and loved, than towards one she had never seen ; in pleading his cause, with love's own casuistry, so well, in short, that he gained her leave to ask her of her father at once, and, if he should sanction their union, her promise to resume the former plan of going over to Monsieur le Curé's that very morning.

The hearty farmer, when he found the object with which the young people sought him, only said :—
“ Ask Gabrielle, mon bon jeune homme, ask her ; if she be pleased, I am pleased. If she can be happy with you for a husband, I shall be happy to have you for a son-in-law.”

And soon the lovers were on their way to the village where Monsieur le Curé lived ; nor were the fowl, the eggs, nor the cream forgotten, though there was happiness enough to have made it very excusable, even had the basket been left behind.

“ And now to ask you of your second father, my Gabrielle ;” said Gerard. “ We must obtain his consent to bestow you upon me at once ; for I am resolved not to return home till I am able to tell my father not only my irrevocable decision, but that my happiness in life is as irrevocably decided as my choice.”

“ Heaven send that it may be indeed your happiness which is thus decided by your choice,” said Gentille-et-sage ; “ but you must promise me to return home straight from Monsieur le Curé's, instead of seeing me back to the farm ; it will be only just to your father to tell him of your decision at once.”

“ The farm is my home now,” said Gerard. “ I know my father too well, not to be quite sure that he will abide by the alternative he has fixed.”

“ Still it is your duty to inform him which alternative you have chosen ;” said Gabrielle.

“ You are right ;” said her lover. “ It is only honest to let him know which marriage I have chosen ;

it is for him to say whether he will not remit the other part of the sentence."

"Ay, he may think better of it, and change outlawry into forgiveness and welcome ;" said Gabrielle, with the sanguine hope of youth, and of one who had never known other than indulgence from her own parent.

Gerard shook his head. "You do not know my father—I do. However, I will go ; he shall, at any rate, have the option of a kinder fiat. But remember, ma mie, should it prove a harsh one, you must prepare to receive an outcast at the pavilion this evening. Whether my sentence be amnesty or banishment, I shall return to the farm directly it has been pronounced."

"Where you shall find either gratulation or comfort ;" said Gentille-et-sage, with one of her sweet frank smiles.

When they reached Monsieur le Curé's cottage, they found the old man in his garden ; a jug of fresh spring-water was in his hand, from which he was preparing to fill a shallow vessel, that he always kept supplied for the accommodation of the birds.

"I love to bring them about me," said he ; "and plenty of water for them to drink and bathe in, is as welcome to them in summer, as strewed crumbs are in the winter ; so, as I have not a pond in my garden, as you have in yours, Gentille-et-sage, I have bethought me of this plan for letting them dip their dainty beaks, and plunge, and flounce, and flutter their wings and feathers to their hearts' content. I am glad to see you, mon cher monsieur. What is that you have in your basket, Gentille-et-sage ? Something very nice, as usual, for the old man's dinner. I thought so, you little rogue ! Well, we must get Jeanneton to make us a fricandeau and an omelet, out of these good things ; and we shall have quite a feast, shan't we ?"

"And I am sure Madame Jeanneton will exert her best skill, Monsieur le Curé," said Gerard, "when she knows it is to be a wedding-dinner."

The old man looked at him ; then at the dimpling blushing face of Gentille-et-sage ; and said :—“ Ah, ha, is it even so ? I thought as much, I declare, when I used to see this little rogue turn her head away every time I asked her whether she had seen that good young Monsieur Gerard lately. Ah, ha ! the old man is very cunning—he knows Gentille-et-sage cannot tell an untruth, and so he used to ask her this on purpose to see her look down and own that the jeune monsieur had been to the farm that morning. ‘ And yesterday ? ’ ‘ Yes, mon père. ’ ‘ And the day before ? ’ ‘ Yes, mon père. ’ Ah, ha ! I thought what all these ‘ yes, mon pères, ’ and all these visits would end in. Ah, ha ! the old man is very sly, and can see many things that Gentille-et-sage fancies she keeps very snug, sage as she is ! And what say your parents to this marriage, my children ? What says your father, Gabrielle ? What says yours, mon cher jeune monsieur ? ”

The whole state of affairs was candidly stated to the good priest ; and his simplicity could not find any objection to offer against consenting to join two young people who loved each other, and who availed themselves of a granted alternative between poverty and separation.

He united their hands ; and a few hours after Gerard and Gabrielle had been made man and wife, they took their respective paths to Perpignan, and to the farm, consoling themselves for this temporary parting, in the thought of the duty that demanded it, in the reflection that they were now beyond the power of fate to divide them, and in the hope of meeting again ere close of day.

Not thus speedily, however, was their hope fulfilled. When the young man reached his father’s house, Monsieur Gerard had not returned from the banking-house. As the best means of controlling his impatience, Gerard betook himself to his own room, and endeavoured to fix his attention upon a medical treatise

which he had been diligently studying of late. But now the pages failed to convey any meaning to him ; his brain refused to receive any definite impression from the sentences he read ; the lines waved and swam before his eyes, the words danced hither and thither, and formed themselves into fantastic images of Gabrielle's eyes, her hair, her mouth, her smile, every varied look of her countenance, every movement of her graceful figure. But he was not long detained thus. He heard his father's step in the corridor,—which led to Monsieur Gerard's room as well as his own,—and stepping forwards, thus addressed him. “Father, you accorded me twenty-four hours to decide on the alternative you offered me this morning. But as my mind is made up, I would not an instant defer the avowal of my choice.”

“Then it is your choice, and not mine, that you determine to abide by, is it ?” said Monsieur Gerard, in his usual mode of forming his own conclusions. “But I will take good care you shall have no opportunity of carrying out your absurd determination.”

So saying, the banker furiously slammed-to the door of his son's apartment, and turned the key in the lock, while Gerard hastily exclaimed :—“Father, I am already married !” But Monsieur Gerard made far too much noise in his enraged departure, to hear the exclamation ; and his son could hear him repeating, as he strode along the corridor :—“No, no ; no, no ; I'll take good care you shan't carry out your fool's intention, sirrah !”

Gerard sprang to the door, and shook it ; but it was too surely fastened. He threw up the window—but there were too many feet between it and the ground, for even his eagerness to venture the leap.

He paused and listened ; he heard the family assembling for the evening meal—he heard the opening and shutting of the dining-room door—he heard the domestics moving to and fro—and he determined to rein his impatience until one of them should be sent

with his allotted portion, if it was indeed intended that he should be treated in all respects like a prisoner. But possibly Monsieur Gerard thought that a little wholesome fasting might not be amiss in helping a refractory spirit to due submission ; for hour after hour passed, and no one came near the delinquent's chamber. Evening closed in ; nightfall came—and still Gerard remained in solitude and darkness, pacing his room like a caged lion, his spirit fretting against this tyrannous confinement, while his thoughts, emancipating themselves as his body would fain have done, winged their way towards the pavilion of the farm, where he knew sat one watching through the starlit night for his coming. Morning dawned. “Patience,” murmured the prisoner to himself ; “he will not let me starve, and when he sends me food, I will make an appeal to my gaoler, whoever it may be whom he has appointed to the office.”

But noon came before food was sent. It was bread and water ; and was brought by one of the lackeys of his father's household.

“Jerome,” said Gerard, “tell my father that I——”

The lackey shook his head, and hastily withdrew, leaving a small note on his young master's table.

The note was from Monsieur Gerard, and contained these words :—

“GERARD,

When you are prepared to conform in all things to my pleasure, you may signify as much to me in writing—but till then, I forbid your tampering with my domestics, by addressing them under pretence of sending messages to me. Jerome has orders to bring you your daily meal in silence.

“Your offended father,

“ANTOINE GERARD.”

“My daily meal ! So then I shall not see Jerome again till noon to-morrow !” thought Gerard. “This is starving me out with a vengeance ! Hoping to re-

duce strength of will and strength of body upon bread and water! Prudent discipline! And this is how my father thinks to compel obedience! Is this how he thinks to exact compliance? Rebellion, contumacy, unnatural disaffection may rather be generated by such means, than filial reverence and submission."

As the afternoon wore away, Gerard was sitting in another hopeless attempt to chain his attention to the study of his treatise, when a slight noise, near the entrance of his room, attracted his notice, and upon looking in that direction, he descried a paper packet, which was gradually making its way beneath the door, thrust by some furtive hand. He seized the paper, which he found contained an iron nail, and these words:—

"Monsieur desired me not to speak or to listen to you—but he did not forbid me to write (which I luckily can do), or to give you the means of pushing back the lock of your door. I don't like to see my young master shut up and forced to live upon bread and water—I like liberty and good eating myself—a man hasn't a fair chance or a free choice without 'em.

"JEROME."

Gerard hastily secreted this welcome paper, and availed himself of the means of escape. He soon found himself outside in the corridor, along which he glided with noiseless steps, down the great staircase, into the hall, where he was startled by hearing his father's voice. But it proceeded from the saloon, where Monsieur Gerard was entertaining a party of guests. At that moment, Gerard caught sight of Jerome, who was beckoning to him with one hand, while with the other he held his fingers to his lips. Gerard followed him in silence; and Jerome, leading him hastily through a passage that communicated with the servants' offices, darted into a small closet near the larder, emerged again with a basket in his hand, went on toward a deserted yard in the rear of the house, across which he preceded Gerard at a rapid

pace, until he reached a little cobwebbed, unused door, that opened into a back street. Here he paused, and thrusting the basket into Gerard's hand, unlocked the door, pointed through it, and enforced his meaning, by taking his young master by the shoulder, and amicably turning him out.

Gerard, hardly able to help laughing at the man's whimsical adherence to the letter of his master's orders while he thus zealously infringed their spirit, lost no time in hurrying along the unfrequented back street, from which he made his way out of the town, and was speedily on the road to the farm.

In the basket, Gerard found substantial evidence of Jerome's opinion that a man needs better fare than bread and water ; and as he walked briskly along, he had an opportunity of enjoying that worthy domestic's favorite combination of liberty and good eating.

The short twilight that succeeds a southern sunset had yielded to the shades of evening by the time Gerard reached the farm. He threaded the bowery lane which skirted the premises, in the hope that the little door in the garden-wall might have been left unfastened for his access. It was as he hoped. " I am expected ;" he thought, as the door yielded to his hand. He pushed through the clustering bushes and fruit-trees, that hung their boughs athwart the narrow garden-path. He sprang up the steps that led into the pavilion. It was empty—she was not there. But the intermediate door that led into the inner room was partly open ; and as Gerard's eye caught sight of the *two* pillows, which now peered among the neat white draperies of the alcove, his heart again whispered—" I am expected."

The stars shone clear in the blue arch of heaven ; in at the open casement stole the soft breeze of evening, rich with the perfume of fruit and flower ; no sound broke the stillness ; and purity and peace seemed to hover with their angel wings around this sequestered spot.

Gerard hears a light footstep ; he can discern a coming figure ; he leans from the window, and as she approaches beneath, he drops his glove with true aim. Gabrielle instinctively retains it, recognizes the tokens of his presence, looks up, sees him,—at a bound is on the top step, and the next instant is clasped in her husband's arms.

For a few happy weeks did Gerard permit himself to linger in this quiet pavilion, making it his dwelling-place, and the scene of his wedded joys ; but with his characteristic honesty, he would not allow himself to lose sight of the strict course of duty he had marked out for himself, by yielding to the too-seductive idleness of such a retirement. Accordingly, he roused himself from his blissful dream of existence, and imparted to his wife a plan he had conceived for commencing a more active life, and one which should be the means of fulfilling his hope of earning independence and fame.

At Narbonne there lived an old doctor, who was Gerard's godfather. Much deference had formerly been paid to this old doctor's opinions by the Perpignan banker ; for Doctor Dubrusc was esteemed wealthy, and in the hope of gratifying a rich godfather, as well as that his son might be brought up to a profession instead of trade, Monsieur Gerard had sent his son to college, to study with an ultimate view to a doctor's degree. But in course of time, it came to be discovered, or rather Monsieur Gerard came to one of his conclusions upon the subject, that the reputation which Doctor Dubrusc had gained for being a man of wealth, was merely founded upon his eccentricity,—his peremptory manner, his repulsive brevity, his indifference to the opinion of others, his reserve, his solitary habits, his wilfulness—all which traits had been considered indicative of the conscious possessor of wealth, as it was supposed that a poor man would not have dared to indulge in such unproductive whims of conduct. Circumstances arose which occasioned

Monsieur Gerard to adopt his new view of the matter, and to believe that, after all, Doctor Dubrusc was one of those absurd beings who consent to resign all worldly advantage, for the one delight of carrying out their own humour, and who, in consequence, remained paupers to the end of their days. When once Monsieur Gerard had made up his mind that this was the case, the connection with the old Narbonne Doctor had been gradually but decidedly dropped.

The last time that Gerard had seen his godfather was at the college at Perpignan, on the day when he had completed his twelfth year. The boy had been summoned to see a visitor, and found Doctor Dubrusc standing in the room appropriated to guests.

Gerard showed sincere delight at seeing thus unexpectedly one whom he remembered as a child ; but when he pulled a chair for the old man, who stood there stock still and begged him to sit down, Doctor Dubrusc only mumbled :—" Not tired ;" proceeded to look his godson steadily in the face for a minute or two, ending his scrutiny with an emphatic " Humph !"

" You will go with me to my father's, sir ; I can obtain leave to go with you, directly, I know," said Gerard. " He will be glad to see you."

" Don't want to see him ; shan't call ;" said Doctor Dubrusc. " Did want to see *you*—have seen you—that's all !" And the old man turned on his heel, and was going straight out of the room.

" O don't go ! Don't go ! I've seen nothing of *you* yet ! Don't go, doctor !" said Gerard.

" Want to see me,—come !" said the doctor without turning back ; and in another moment he was gone.

Gerard had often thought of this singular visitation of his godfather ; and had as often begged his father's permission to go to Narbonne to see one whom he had always liked, spite of his oddity.

But Monsieur Gerard had no notion of sending his son so far merely to comply with a boy's wishes, and

with those of a dictatorial old man, who had no right of opulence to entitle him to indulgence ; so year after year had passed away without Gerard having seen any more of his godfather, though he frequently regretted this abrupt termination of their intercourse.

Now he related to Gabrielle the circumstances concerning this godfather ; and he told her he thought that if this eccentric old doctor would consent to take him as a pupil, and conclude what had been well commenced at college, he should shortly be in a condition to commence practice as a physician.

“ It is asking a sacrifice at your hands, my Gabrielle,” said her husband, “ to propose your leaving your father, your friend and second father, the Curé, and your native home, to go and settle in a strange place ; but in Narbonne, with Doctor Dubrusc’s instruction and counsel, I feel sure of a career which must bring us independence. Who knows ? I may one day see you the wife of a famous physician. One day I may win a surname that shall serve to reconcile my father to his denounced son. Should I live to be called Doctor Gerard de Narbonne, it will replace the family name, which, if my father still retain his ire, he may wish me to resign ; in any case, it cannot fail to please him, and would gratify his pride. I have courage to ask this sacrifice of my Gabrielle ; for I have good hope that honor and wealth await us in Narbonne.”

Gabrielle for an instant thought how willingly she could resign any prospect of worldly advantage, so that she might still abide in this peaceful spot, the scene of her childhood sports, her indulged youth, her happy bridal hours ; but she felt that it might be otherwise with her husband, whose energy and talent required a broader field—and whose honest spirit naturally sought self-earned support. She felt that though she could be well content to owe all to a parent’s bounty, yet Gerard’s sense of probity might shrink from trespassing farther on the generosity with

which her father had hitherto accorded them a home—a home which his own exertions might obtain. She felt that she had no right to repress his honorable ambition, by the utterance of her own limited wishes, and she said :

“ Then let us go to Narbonne, dear Gerard.”

Gerard accordingly wrote to Doctor Dubrusc, stating the fact of his rupture with his father in consequence of his marriage ; and asking his godfather if he would consent to aid a disinherited son (who had committed no crime but availing himself of an offered alternative) to acquire honest competence for his wife and himself.

Gerard also wrote to his father, stating his marriage, and expressing his hope that he might one day achieve distinction, which should restore him to favor, and obliterate the remembrance of his having attempted this achievement in a manner opposed to his father's views ; but no notice was taken of his letter, then, or ever.

To the former application, Gerard received the following concise epistle in reply :—

“ Told you before—‘ Want to see me—come ! ’ ”

“ BLAISE DUBRUSC.”

Gabrielle could not help thinking this a little unpromising ; but seeing her husband look disconcerted, she said cheerfully, “ Well, we can go and see him, at any rate ; he may take a kinder interest in us, when we are there, than his words seem to infer.”

After many an affectionate leave-taking had been exchanged between the young couple and their two kind old fathers, Monsieur le Curé, and the farmer, Gerard and Gabrielle set out for Narbonne. Arrived there, the young man lost no time in hunting out the obscure lodging in which it pleased Doctor Dubrusc to abide.

He found him, after toiling up six flights of stairs, in a dilapidated old mansarde, where he sat environed with musty volumes, cobwebs, dust, dirt, and snuff.

“Humph! There; are you?” was his remark, as he raised his head from his book, on Gerard’s entrance and salutation.

Having given the youth one finger, dry, dusty, and colourless as a bit of touchwood, which was his way of shaking hands, he jerked his head toward a chair, and said “Sit down!”

Gerard complied, by lifting several tomes on to the floor from one of the only two chairs, that were in the room besides Doctor Dubrusc’s, drawing it forward, and seating himself. These two chairs had been long unaccustomed to support any other weight than that of books; and this one, beneath its unwonted human deposit, creaked resentfully and ominously, as if it intended to snap, give way, and come down, with a malicious fracture.

No such catastrophe occurred, however, and Doctor Dubrusc interrupted something Gerard was saying in acknowledgment of his permission to come and see him, and in explanation of his having been unable to do so before, by saying:—“Tell me your story.”

Gerard faithfully related all that had happened from the time he had last seen Doctor Dubrusc at Perpignan, on his birthday, to the present moment of his arrival at Narbonne.

“What d’ye intend to do? What d’ye want me to do?” were the doctor’s next words.

Gerard explained his views, his wishes, his hopes; to all of which Doctor Dubrusc listened, and when the young man concluded, said:—“Humph!” and turned round from him, and stared blankly at the opposite wall.

“Will you help me, sir? Will you advise me? Will you let me study under you, and commence practice under your direction?” said Gerard.

“Yes. Come to-morrow. Go now.” And Doctor Dubrusc resumed the perusal of the book over which he had been leaning when Gerard came in.

Next morning, Gerard returned early to Doctor Dubrusc, who had sketched out a course of study for

his godson, and set his pupil down to commence its pursuit at one end of the dusty table, while he himself hung over his book at the other.

Before the young man settled down to his work, he was beginning to say something of his first impression of the town of Narbonne, and of the quarter he had chosen in seeking a lodging for Gabrielle and himself, when Doctor Dubruse, without raising his eyes from his own book, but pointing to those which lay before Gerard, stopped him with :—“ Don't talk. Learn.”

For some hours Gerard worked diligently, and in obedient silence. Then the old doctor looked up and said :—“ Go now. Come to-morrow.”

His godson rose, and was withdrawing, when he returned to the writing-table, and said :—“ I am anxious to present my wife to you, sir, that she may add her thanks to mine, for your kind help.”

“ Wife ? Pshaw ! What's the use of a wife ? But go now. Come to-morrow.”

Having entertained his wife with an account of the old doctor's eccentric ways, Gerard agreed with her, that the benefit of his aid more than compensated for the strange style in which it was extended, and that his instruction was far too valuable a gift to be received without gratitude ; so they resolved that Gabrielle should venture to accompany Gerard to his godfather's den on the morrow.

When she entered the room, the old doctor started, and rose from the arm-chair in which he always sat, at the table.

He advanced to the middle of the room, where he stood stock still, staring at her, while she, in simple graceful words, and with a blushing face, where smiles played in both eyes and mouth, uttered her thanks for his goodness to them both. She could not help these smiles, at the recollection of all she had heard of the old doctor's oddity ; which, confirmed by his present reception of herself, rendered a decorous gravity impossible.

But Doctor Dubrusc, after continuing to stare at her for a few minutes longer, suddenly said :—“Humph ! Good and pretty !” Then advancing a step or two nearer, said :—“Very !” Then abruptly turning on his heel, he made his way back to his seat at the table, over which, looking, as if from a safe intrenchment, he said :—“No women here ! Go away !”

Gabrielle left the room ; and Doctor Dubrusc, looking at his godson, added :—“Can't study with 'em. Send her away !”

Gerard hastened out after his wife, and found her sitting on the stair, at the bottom of the first flight. As he caught sight of her drooping head, he thought she might have been disconcerted, perhaps chagrined, at this unpropitious reception and summary dismissal, but on coming close to her, he found she was only indulging in a hearty fit of laughing ; of which she was endeavouring to suppress the sound, lest it might reach the queer old man's ears.

“He is so droll, Gerard ;” whispered she, with eyes brimming in mirthful tears. “He is so very odd !” How do you ever manage to keep your countenance, while you are studying with him—or to learn anything of so strange a creature ? How does he manage to teach you, with such sparing speech ?”

And in truth it was marvellous how Gerard contrived to acquire so much, or his godfather to impart so much of knowledge, as they both did in the course of the months which followed the young couple's arrival in Narbonne. But certain it is, that though scarcely more than a dozen words were ever exchanged between master and pupil in the course of their daily studies, yet before a twelvemonth had elapsed, Gerard was more proficient in his art than many physicians who have practised for a series of years. Perhaps there are not wanting sly sceptics in the merits of the generality of medical professors who will think this is saying but little in favor of the young doctor's skill ;

but the fact was, that Gerard became within the space of time stated, not only master of a large amount of theoretical learning, but he had gained some practical experience in his profession, for he was already consulted and esteemed by a circle of patients.

These were mostly poor people, it is true, who could not afford large fees ; so that Gerard and his wife still occupied the humble lodging they had taken on their first arrival in Narbonne ; but they were happy in each other, and the size or grandeur of their household formed no part of their consideration.

Yet although a larger house, finer furniture, or a better-supplied table had no share in Gabrielle's estimate of what might be wanting to complete her comfort, she could not but sometimes feel that incompleteness to exist.

Carefully she strove to conceal this feeling from her husband ; she strove even to conceal it from herself ; but there were moments when the thought of bygone times—when she had dwelt at the farm, of those few happy weeks when she and her husband had all the world to themselves in the pleasant old pavilion—would come upon her with a fond retrospection that partook of regret.

It was not so much the altered existence, as the change which this new existence had wrought in Gerard himself, which occasioned her involuntary sigh when she recalled past days.

When they had first come to settle in Narbonne, her young husband would each day return to her after his long morning study with Doctor Dubrusc, like a released schoolboy. He would come laughing, and shouting, and bounding into the room, declaring that he must indulge himself with some noise and active motion after so still a sitting. He would snatch the needle-work or book out of her hand, whisk her round the room, give her half a dozen kisses, bid her put her bonnet on, and come out with him that instant for a long walk in the fields, that he might give his voice

and his legs relaxation. He declared that his jaws and his limbs became cramped with the inaction to which they had been subjected for so many hours ; that his eyes ached with looking upon the stern immobility of Doctor Dubruse's countenance, or the eternal monotony of the read or written page instead of the bright sunny smiles of his Gabrielle ; that his ears would become deaf with the silence of that dull old mansarde, and with longing for the cheerful sound of his wife's voice. And then he would make her chatter to him, as they walked along ; telling him of all that had happened in his absence—of the neighbours she had seen—of the work she had planned—of the drawing she had done—of the arrangements she had made in their little household.

But gradually this boyish gaiety subsided ; Gerard's youthful spirit was not proof against the diurnal dullness of those long forenoons. Insensibly, the silence became infectious, the sedentary position habitual ; and he would return home spent and weary, and disinclined to talk, as he was for exertion. The afternoon walks ceased to be proposed ; Gerard would hang over his wife's chair, and watch her needle as it took stitch after stitch, without asking her to throw it aside ; and the conversation languished, when only she was the talker. The change was so gradual, and *Gentille-et-sage* was so slow to perceive anything amiss in the manner of one she loved so well, and likewise so little accustomed to urge what she found to be distasteful, that she yielded to his preference for remaining at home, and his growing disinclination to talk ; never discovering that he was altering, until the change had actually taken place. There was no change in his affection towards her. He loved her as passionately, as devotedly as ever ; his love seemed only intensified by his greater sobriety of manner ; but he had altered from the light-hearted youth to the staid man—from the ardent student to the grave doctor. He was as kind as ever, but he was less gay ; he was

thoughtful rather than hopeful ; he was reflective, instead of demonstrative.

His love for her remaining the same, Gabrielle would neither have noted nor regretted the transformation of the boy-lover into the attached husband ; but when she became aware of the shadow which had thus by degrees fallen upon his once bright young spirit, she could not but sigh when she remembered their joyful existence at the farm.

She would now have ventured to urge him to take more air and exercise, and would have endeavoured to lead him into lively conversation, instead of indulging him in the fits of silence into which he constantly fell ; but she herself was no longer so capable of exertion as she had been. She could no longer walk so far, or chatter away in so continuous a strain as formerly. She almost felt tempted to repine at the cause of her incapability for much walking or talking, now that both might possibly conduce to rouse her husband into greater cheerfulness, but she could not bring herself to resign the hope of which her present state was the signal. She contented herself, therefore, with looking forward to the time when the baby she expected should be born ; in the trust that its existence would be a source of new joy and interest to Gerard, inspiring him afresh, and restoring him to his native gaiety and animation.

The happy moment arrives. A little girl is born. Gabrielle places the infant in her husband's arms, and as Gerard blesses his child, and fondly traces its mother's face in those shapeless features that bear no impress to any other than a parent's eye, she murmurs :—" Like me, Gerard ! No ; the portrait of yourself ! I thought of our favorite Clotilde's words :—true, as they are tender and beautiful !

'Voilà ses traicts—son ayr ! voilà tout ce que j'aime !
 Feu de sou œil, et roses de son teynt :
 D'où vient m'en esbahyr ? aultre qu'en tout luy-mesme,
 Peut-il jamais esclore de mon seyn ?'

That morning, the young father is scarcely able to settle tranquilly to his study. Though his transports, which would fain have found vent in communicating to his godfather their cause, met with a check when he had first announced the tidings.

"Give me joy, sir!" said Gerard, as he entered the mansarde. "I am a father! Gabrielle has brought me a little girl this morning! I have a baby born!"

"A baby? Pshaw! What's the use of a baby?" muttered Doctor Dubrusc; "Don't talk stuff! Write!"

Gerard tried to obey, and to work steadily; but just as a little hand, with its fairy nails, joints, fingers, and thumb, all in mimic miniature was shaping itself in fancy upon the page before him, the apparition of a bony, shrivelled, dry hand, grimy with snuff, and shiny with unwashed use, spread itself on the leaf, seeming gigantic in its proportions, after the baby image it replaced.

"Know as much as I do now! Needn't come any more! Can't teach you much more! Practice better than reading or writing now! Practise! Find patients!"

"I have some patients already, sir;" said Gerard. "After leaving you of a day, I go my rounds; and they are fast increasing."

"All the better! Practise! Learn more than by coming here! Needn't come!"

"But I hope you will let me come and see you often, still, godfather. I can never thank you sufficiently for all you have done for me. Though you have taught me so much, and so untiringly, yet I must still come and intrude upon your time; I must still come to see you."

"Want to see me,—Come!" And Doctor Dubrusc resumed the perusal of his book, precisely as he had done about a year before, on Gerard's first arrival in Narbonne.

His pupil and godson now pursued his medical career in good earnest. His practice increased, his patients grew more and more numerous ; he gave unremitting attention to their cases, by devoting his thoughts to the consideration of symptoms, and devising means of cure, when he was absent, as well as by the care, patience, and kindness, which he bestowed while attending the bedside of the sufferers.

Gerard was an enthusiast in his profession. He believed the art of healing to be a science divine. He regarded the privilege of cure as something partaking of godlike power. He looked upon his patients as sacred deposits in his hands, alike blessed in a vouchsafed recovery, and conferring a blessing on him who was the instrument of Providence for their rescue. The exalted light in which he viewed the functions of his calling, led him to discharge its duties conscientiously, reverently ; he labored with scarcely less piety and devotion of spirit, than he might have done, had his ministry been a religious one,—for holy did he feel a physician's vocation to be. Its skill puts in requisition the highest faculties of the human intellect, as its administration calls forth the tenderest sympathies of the human heart. The able and the kind physician is a human benefactor. He garners up his treasures of learning and experience, that he may dispense them again to his suffering brethren. He comes with his timely succour, cheering both body and spirit with the single boon of health. He raises the sick man from his couch of pain, and sends him forth elate and vigorous for fresh enjoyment of existence. He restores the ailing, and rejoices their despondent friends. He gives new life to the sick, and revives the hopes of those who depend on the sick man's recovery for subsistence. He banishes illness, and holds death at bay.

Conceiving such to be a physician's privileges and duties, Gerard felt how especially they called him to their exercise among the poor and helpless. He ac-

cordingly devoted himself almost exclusively to the care of this forlorn class of sufferers, and sought rather those who needed his aid without the means of paying for it, than those who could summon and remunerate its services.

His skill, his tenderness, his charitable care, made him renowned among the destitute population of Narbonne ; although he had as yet obtained little fame or employment among its wealthier inhabitants. But his time was so fully occupied with attendance upon his patients—as numerous as they were (pecuniarily) unprofitable, that he had now less and less opportunity of leisure at home with Gabrielle than ever.

His personal vigilance of the cases he had in hand was unwearied ; and when he was not engaged in visiting a patient's sick room, his thoughts were anxiously engaged with the circumstances of the disorder ; with its origin, with its progress, with the means it admitted of relief, with the hope of its ultimate cure.

It was therefore fortunate for Gentille-et-sage that the birth of her little girl afforded herself a great resource from the solitude to which the incessant pre-occupation of her husband would otherwise have condemned her. In its smiles, in its cooings, in its first recognition, in its growing love, in ministering to its comforts, and in developing its faculties, the heart of the mother found full content. To Gerard, also, at first, his infant daughter had been an object of great interest ; he had called her by his mother's name—Helena ; and had taken great delight in watching her baby beauty, and dawning intelligence. The child had thus fulfilled the hope which Gabrielle had conceived from the prospect of her advent ; but not long did the influence last ; soon the father's thoughts were again absorbed in his vocation ; and though Gerard's love was firmly and entirely fixed upon his wife and child, they possessed but little of his society or attention.

There was one demand upon his time and thought,

however, which no preoccupation ever led him to disregard. However busy, however anxious, Gerard never failed to find a moment for calling upon Doctor Dubrusc. Three or four days never elapsed without his visiting the old mansarde. Though his godfather's brevity of speech promised but little gratification to either party from conversation, yet Gerard never neglected to go and see the old man, to tell him the news, to sit with him a few minutes ; to let him see, in short, that he was not unmindful of what he owed to his instruction, and that he felt both gratefully and affectionately toward him, spite of the eccentricity which might choose to repulse the expression of such feelings.

On the occasion of one of these visits to the old mansarde, when the little Helena had attained to an age, which placed her beyond that state of babyhood which was avowedly objectionable to Doctor Dubrusc, when she could trot about, and speak plain, and understand every thing that was said, when she had become, in fact, a very pretty, lively, amusing child, Gerard thought he would take his little girl with him to see his old friend.

It happened to be the doctor's birthday, or saint's-day ; and in observance of a national custom, Gerard stopped in the market-place, and bought a bouquet of flowers, which he might take with him to present to his godfather, when he wished him joy.

He gave the nosegay to Helena, while he carried her up the six flights of steep stairs which led to the doctor's attic dwelling. He set her on her feet, when they reached the door of the mansarde, and opening it, bade her take in the flowers, and souhaiter le bon jour à Monsieur.

The child obeyed ; running across the room, looking up in the old man's face, and presenting the birthday offering, with pretty smiling looks, and tolerably articulate words ; for Helena was not at all shy with strangers.

“What do you want here, child? Who are you?”

“She is my little daughter;” said Gerard. “I thought you’d like to see her, sir, now she’s no longer a baby. Helena, sir; my child.”

“Child! What’s the use of a child? Go away, child;” said Doctor Dubrusc.

Helena did not move, but stood there, staring at the old man, as he did at her.

“Do you hear me, child? Go away!” repeated the doctor; but in a less gruff tone than before.

Still Helena did not move. She gave a short little nod; then another. “Ess; I hear you;” said she.

“What are you nodding at child?” said the doctor.

“At you;” she replied.

“What d’ye stand nodding at me for? Go!” said the old man.

“Ess, I’m going;” said Helena, with a succession of rapid little nods, as she turned towards the door; then suddenly coming back, she went close to the old doctor, leaned against his knee, held up her mouth towards him, and said:—“Kiss Nenna ’fore she goes.”

“Kiss ye, child! Get along with you!” But though the old man said this with much surprise, there was no harshness in his voice, nor did he draw back from her as he uttered the words.

The little girl, judging, as most children do, rather from manner than words, and finding no very formidable repulse in the former, proceeded to clamber on to his knee, repeating: “Kiss Nenna ’fore she goes! Well, then, kiss Nenna ’fore she goes!”

The old doctor gave a little stealthy bashful glance at Gerard; and seeing him apparently absorbed in the contemplation of a map that hung against one of the dusty walls, he ventured to let his face stoop towards that of the child; who, hugging him round the neck, and giving him a hearty kiss on his wrinkled cheek, slid down from his knee, saying:—“Not angry with Nenna; she go now.” She went to her father, put

her hand in his, and led him towards the door, looking back at the old man with a repetition of her series of short nods, as she said :—“ Good-bye, good-bye !” And then she and her father, who repeated her salutation, quitted the mansarde, leaving Doctor Dubrusc staring silently after them.

Next morning, nothing would suit Helena, but her father must give her some sous. Gerard was going out to his usual round of patients ; and he could not stay to listen to what his little girl asked. “ I don’t know what she is talking about, Gabrielle ;” said he to his wife. “ Make out what she says, and give her what she wants. I think she is asking for money ; though what such a child as that can want money for, is more than I can comprehend,” added he, as he left the house.

“ Is it money you are asking for, Nenna mine ?” said her mother.

“ Ess, chère maman ; give Nenna four sous, please ;” said the child.

“ What do you want them for, my Helena ? Are they for the poor sick fruitière yonder ?”

Little Helena shook her head ; but continued to hold out her hand for the money.

“ Not for her ?” said Gabrielle.

“ No ; papa takes care of her ; she don’t want any more than he gives her ;” said Helena, with a little knowing look ; “ he never lets poor people want money—I’ve heard you, mamma, say so. He’s a good kind papa. But Nenna wants you to give her four sous for her own self, chère maman.”

“ Little coaxer !” said her mother, giving Helena the money ; which the child had no sooner obtained, than she put up her mouth with her usual little speech :—“ Kiss Nenna ’fore she goes !” and her valedictory nod, and “ Good-bye !” and then trotted demurely out of the house-door, which, as is usual in southern places, stood wide open all day.

Gabrielle,—accustomed to see her little daughter

step across the door-sill whenever it pleased her to go and play with the neighbours, who loved the child's innocent prattle and its pretty face, and who encouraged her to come and linger about with them,—said no word to prevent Helena's departure, imagining that she was only bent upon some ordinary expedition, a door or two off.

The little girl, however, went in a very grave and orderly manner straight down the street ; then, at an equally determined pace, she turned the corner ; and so on, until she came to the market-place ; where she made her way to the flower-stall, at which she had observed her father make his purchase on the previous day.

She made her selection with a very discreet air, resting her chin upon the ledge of the board, and peering carefully over all the heaps it displayed ; and when she had fixed upon the brightest and gayest bunch there, she pointed it out to the presiding *marchande de fleurs*, requested her to reach it down to her, and delivering the *prix-fixe*,—the requisite four sous, she trotted off again with a sobriety of pride in her bargain that would have done honor to a grown lady returning from market.

Not very long after this transaction, as Doctor Dubrusc was sitting as usual in his solitary *mansarde*, poring over his book, he heard a stamp,—creak,—stamp ; stamp,—creak,—stamp ; coming up his crazy stairs, as if some foot approached, that was only satisfied when its fellow foot was planted safely on each stair, as it was gained, at a time. He listened ; then he heard a pattering to and fro on the landing-place outside his room-door, as if a pair of little feet were trotting about in some uncertainty. A pause ; then came a dubious pat, as of a small open hand ; then the spread fingers were closed, and a more assured thump, as of a little clenched fist, made itself heard.

“ Come in ! ” said Doctor Dubrusc.

Nobody came in, and nobody answered ; but a dull,

though somewhat heavier thump than before, was to be distinguished on one of the lower panels, as if some short individual had applied the most ponderous portion it could find about its person in a still more vigorous appeal against the door.

“Come in, I tell you !” repeated Doctor Dubrusc.

“I can’t !” said a childish voice ; “I can’t reach the lock ! Come and open it for me !”

In astonishment more than in hesitation, the old doctor remained seated where he was ; while he heard the dull thumps renewed ; lumping and bumping between every word, as if the short individual were determined to push its way in, and take no denial.

“Come—and open—the door ! Come (thump), and open (lump), the door (bump) !”

Then followed a series of sullen, silent, resolute thump-lump-bumps, that threatened to effect a breach in the worm-eaten door that guarded the entrance to Doctor Dubrusc’s den, spite of the diminutive size of the battering-ram that was now applied so unrelentingly against the crazy portal.

“I do believe it’s that persevering toad of a child !” exclaimed the old doctor ; beguiled by wonder into a longer speech than he had uttered for years.

But though Doctor Dubrusc said this amidst a torrent of pishes and pshaws, it was remarkable that his face glowed with a look that it had not worn for many a day ; and his furrowed cheeks, lean and sallow with hours of solitary study and brooding disappointment, were lit up with an expression that made them look almost smooth and comely.

He arose from his chair, with this look beaming in his eyes, while on his lips lingered :—“Hark how she keeps on ! She’ll have the door down ! She’ll burst it in ! And then the brat’ll fall through, and hurt herself !”

It was curious that this idea did not appear to afford the old doctor so much pleasure, as, to judge by his mode of speaking of her, it might have done ; on the

contrary, he hastened his steps towards the door, though he continued to murmur, "I never met with so persevering an animal as this child is, in the whole course of my life!"

Considering that Doctor Dubrusc had met with few children in the course of his life, and even among those few, had been slow to form any acquaintance with their dispositions and habits, it was not wonderful that he had never happened to encounter one so persevering as his godson's little daughter.

But in truth, Helena was singularly given to persist in any point that she had once resolved upon; and without being either obstinate or wilful, she was remarkable for perseverance, and unswerving pursuit of that upon which she had once set her heart.

And so, day after day, did this little creature come trotting out to bring the old man (to whom she seemed to have taken a strange fancy) a nosegay from the market; day after day, she would come tramping up the old creaking stairs; day after day, she bumped at the door until Doctor Dubrusc came grumbling to open it for her, when she would toddle in, give him the flowers, hold up her mouth, saying:—"Kiss Nenna 'fore she goes," and then toddle out again, nodding and bidding good-bye.

Whether it was that this brevity of speech and visit on her part, appealed to the doctor's own taste for limited intercourse, it is impossible to say; but certain it is that these interviews took place, to the mutual satisfaction of the old man and the child, without intermission from the day her father had first introduced Helena there, until the one when the meetings came to an unavoidable close,—as sad, as it was abrupt.

One morning, when the little girl, having been able to obtain no answer to her repeated calling and thumping, had succeeded in bunching the door open, she went towards her old friend the doctor, whom she found seated in his usual place by the table; but

instead of leaning forward over his book, he was resting against the back of his chair, his head drooping upon one shoulder. She spoke to him, offering him her flowers ; but he neither answered, nor looked toward her, nor stirred at all.

She thought he was asleep ; but finding she could not wake him by calling to him, or plucking him by the skirts, she went and got some big books, which she piled up by his side, until she had made a heap high enough to let her get up and reach his face. When she touched it, she found it cold as the marble brink of the fountain in the market-place, and then she knew that he was dead !

Helena's screams soon brought the people who occupied the remainder of the house into the mansarde of their fellow-lodger ; and they were speedily engaged in endeavours to restore the old man, who, they hoped, had only fainted. One of them hurried for medical assistance, and soon returned bringing Helena's father, Gerard. He immediately pronounced that life had been for some time extinct ; and, appointing some one to watch the body, until the proper authorities could be informed of the sudden death of Doctor Dubruse, in order that steps might be taken for the funeral, Gerard took his little girl home in his arms.

On looking over the papers of his deceased friend, Gerard found, within a leaf of the book that lay open before Doctor Dubruse at the time of his death, one which proved to be a will, the body of which was regularly and formally drawn up, signed, and attested.

It appeared, by its date, to have been executed soon after the doctor's last visit to Perpignan. It spoke in some bitterness of Monsieur Gerard's cooled friendship ; of its truly surmised cause ; of the probability that his godson would follow in the steps of his father, and never seek nor require his aid ; and then the will went on to bequeath the whole of his property, which was of large value, to the foundation of a school of medicine in his native town, Narbonne.

In a codicil, also regularly executed, and dated immediately subsequent to Gerard's arrival in Narbonne, he rescinded his original bequest, in his godson's favor, making him his sole heir and legatee. After that, lower down, and seeming to have been added when his pupil had gained a numerous circle of patients,—which the old man supposed would prove only the commencement of so large a practice that there was every prospect of his godson's accumulating a large fortune of his own,—was written, in form of a codicil, but unsigned, and unwitnessed, this sentence :—“ Gerard won't want it. Let it be for the school of medicine.” Still lower, on the parchment, appeared, in unsteady characters, the words :—“ If Helena, Gerard's daughter, should——”

The pen seemed to have been flung aside, or dropped, here, as if the writer had felt unequal to the task of penning more at the time ; and Gerard could not help thinking that it was in the act of inscribing these very words, that his old friend had been seized with the attack of illness which had ended in death.

Gerard, with his characteristic probity, resolved that the wealth of Dr. Dubruse should be devoted to the purpose originally stated in the body of the will ; taking no advantage, which perhaps might have been legally claimed,—or at any rate, litigated, on the strength of the first codicil, which was formal in all respects. He could not have felt honestly happy in availing himself of the kind intention of his godfather, while a doubt existed as to whether that intention had been altered. Whether the alteration might not have been made under a false representation of Gerard's circumstances, seemed to him a question nowise affecting the case ; that his godfather's wishes in the disposal of his money should be strictly and exclusively fulfilled, was his sole consideration.

He accordingly set zealously to work to promote the foundation of a school of medicine from the funds which his friend's property produced ; and in discov-

ering how large a sum this really was, he could not refrain from a bitter smile at the thought of the mistaken worldliness which had actuated the Perpignan banker in his secession from amity with the eccentric old doctor.

But while Gerard's sense of honesty thus bade him yield all claim upon his godfather's legacy, and taught him to ensure its appropriation elsewhere, he was at that very time so far from not needing it himself, that there was no period of his life when its possession would have been more useful to him. So little prospect was there of his making a large fortune, that his income was next to nothing from his custom of giving his chief attention to the maladies of the poor. By constant devotion of his time to them, instead of seeking richer patients, he had contrived to be but a poor man himself, though increasing rapidly in experience and ability.

For Gabrielle and himself this was enough ; neither he nor Gentille-et-sage caring for more than mere competence. But just at this period an object presented itself more and more strongly to their wishes, which rendered a sum of money indispensable.

Gerard and his wife had once in each year indulged themselves with a visit to the farm—to the village where Monsieur le Curé lived—to all their favorite haunts thereabouts. They had often agreed how pleasant a thing it would be, if ever they should be able to return and make this spot—the scene of their youthful happiness—the home of their old age.

Of late, this scheme had won still more upon their fancy ; and they longed to see their vision of retirement realized, while they were still of an age to enjoy it fully.

To enable him to carry out this plan at once, Dr. Dubruse's legacy offered itself in opportune temptation ; but Gerard's principles of honor were not of that kind to be affected by a chance, however opportune, however tempting. He had no sophistry that

might sanction ill-doing, either from a conviction of expediency, or from a pretence of pure motive. With him right was simply right ; wrong, simply wrong. He therefore renounced all thought of Dr. Dubrusc's money, as if there had never been any question of its by possibility accruing to him ; and only began to consider whether he might not manage to earn some of his own, without infringing on the claims which his poor patients had on his time and skill.

He was earnest in this desire, on Gabrielle's account, as he saw how much pleasure the plan afforded her, and he omitted no exertion which might tend to the object in view ; but, just then, the wealthier inhabitants of Narbonne happened to enjoy provokingly good health ; besides, though he had obtained an extensive renown among the pauper population of the town, and though his name was high in those quarters where squalor, filth, poor diet, and want of fresh air, made disease rife, and had demanded and received his best skill, yet his fame had not spread much beyond such precincts, and hitherto, the principal people in Narbonne knew little of the clever physician who dwelt among them. However, Gerard strenuously pursued his aim, and worked harder than ever in his profession, with the hope of earning enough to maintain his wife, his child, and himself, at no very distant day, in the old pavilion of the farm, as their pleasant home ever after.

There was a spacious public garden a little way out of the town of Narbonne, where Gentille-et-sage, with little Helena by her side, often spent a large portion of the day. Here, with a view to her child's health, and her own (which had for some time banefully felt a slow but sure effect from the banishment from native and pure country air, as well as the constant confinement within the walls of a town lodging), would Gabrielle and her little girl sit ; the mother working, or hearing Helena say her lessons. Sometimes the child would clamber about the back and sides of the

seat—which was a sort of long wooden chair with arms, that might have accommodated half-a-dozen persons ; sometimes, a game of ball, or battledore, or bilboquet, would engage the attention, and exercise the limbs of the little Helena ; while the mother watched her active happy child, her fingers employed in knitting some winter comfort for its father.

One afternoon, when Gabrielle and Helena had stationed themselves in their favorite nook—one particular corner of the long wooden seat, which was shadily situated under a tree,—a Bonne and her charge, a fine little boy about a year or two older than Helena, approached the spot, and sat down near them.

Gabrielle's basket, knitting-ball, and one or two other articles belonging to her, lay on the seat beside her. She would have drawn them towards her, to make room for the strangers, but as there was plenty of space beyond, she left all still.

Presently the little boy collected a quantity of pebbles from the gravel-path, and came towards the bench with his treasure in his arms. He deposited the heap on the seat, and then commenced clearing a space farther on, by brushing away Gabrielle's basket, ball, &c., with his arm, taking no heed that the articles were suddenly tumbled on to the ground by this unceremonious proceeding on his part.

For some time, little Helena contented herself with silently remedying the mischief, by picking up her mother's scattered property, and replacing it on the seat ; but after repeating this process once or twice, and finding that it by no means mended matters, as the boy invariably brushed them down again, she said :—“ Take care, little boy ; mamma's basket will be broken.”

“ I want room to build a castle ;” replied the boy, giving another clearing nudge. Gabrielle removed the basket to the other side of her, and put the knitting-ball into her apron-pocket, without speaking, that she might observe the children.

“What pretty hair you’ve got!” said Helena next; after having looked with admiration at the boy’s curls, which hung down, glossy, dark, and thick, upon his shoulders. “How bright, and how long, and how soft it is!” added the little girl, touching it, and smoothing it down with her fingers.

“Don’t! you’ll tangle it;” said the boy, drawing away his head.

“Fie, master Bertram!” exclaimed his Bonne; “let the little girl admire your beautiful hair!”

“I shan’t! Let it alone!” replied master Bertram.

After a pause, during which Helena had shrunk to a little distance, whence she tried to peer at what he was doing, she said:—“Are you building a castle?”

“Yes; don’t you see I am?”

“I can’t well see so far off; may I come nearer?” asked she.

“Take care you don’t jog, then;” said the boy.

Helena comes a little closer; gets a better view of his operations; becomes greatly interested in the tottering fortalice, which with much careful piling together of pebble-stones is gradually rearing its walls beneath the boy’s hands. She leans forward, watching breathlessly; when, being a little too near for master Bertram’s convenience, his sturdy little elbow is suddenly stuck in her chest, to remind her to keep farther back.

She obeys the warning for an instant; but forgetting caution in her eagerness to watch the progress of the castle, she leans too forward, and again receives a hint in her chest that she is in master Bertram’s way. The blow this time is directed with such unmistakable earnestness of reproof, that the little girl reels back, falls, and bruises her arm. The Bonne exclaims; Helena’s mother picks her up and asks her if she’s hurt.

“No, he didn’t mean it; did you, little boy? Here, kiss it, and make it well!” said she, holding

out her arm, where the skin, soiled and grazed by the gravel, bore sufficient evidence of her hurt.

“It’s bloody and dirty ; indeed I shan’t kiss it,” said the boy, turning away to finish building his castle.

Again the Bonne said :—“Fie, master Bertram !” And again she was satisfied with saying it, and with the slight effect it produced upon master Bertram himself. For presently, Bertram was as busily engaged as ever in the erection of the pebble stronghold, and Helena was again leaning over him, forgetful of the late consequences of her vicinity to the sturdy little elbow. It made one or two lunges at her, from which she had the presence of mind to withdraw in time ; but as she always had the hardihood to return to her post of observation, the boy at length said :—“Don’t worry, little girl. Don’t you see the wall of my castle is nearly built up to the top ? Don’t jog so. Go and pick up some more stones for me. I shan’t have half enough for the high tower I mean to build here.”

And accordingly, for some time after that, Helena patiently trotted to and fro collecting stones in the skirt of her frock, and bringing them in heaps to Bertram, who went on with his edifice now, in peace, and much faster ; and he signified his approval of this state of things by graciously accepting her contributions, bidding her deposit them on the bench ready to his hand, and then to go for more.

The two children went on thus for some time, until the castle was completed to master Bertram’s satisfaction ; when Helena’s proposal to cut out some paper dolls with her mother’s scissors, and to place them inside the pebble fortress as its Baron and Baroness, and suite of retainers, was negatived by master Bertram’s “No, no ; that’s stupid work ; dolls are only fit for girls ! What’s this ?”

“That’s my bilboquet ; you can have it, if you like, to play with. And here’s a ball ; or here’s a battle-dore and shuttlecock ; if you like them better.” Master Bertram seized the offered toys ; and became

amicable with his new acquaintance ; letting her be his playfellow, by permitting the little girl to run and fetch his ball when he tossed it up high, and it fell at an inconvenient distance ; or to pick up the shuttlecock, when it dropped upon the ground in consequence of his failing to hit it, and by other such little sociabilities, and condescending equalities which he established between them in the games they had together.

Meantime, while familiarity was growing between the two children, the Bonne seated herself rather nearer, on the long bench, to the corner where Gabrielle sat, and entered into conversation with her.

The Bonne began with the theme always most agreeable to a mother's ear ; one, in which she rarely discerns hyperbole.

“ Ah, madame,” said she, “ what an amiable child is your little daughter ! What grace ! What sprightliness ! And what beauty ! An absolute nymph ! And what goodness ! What sweetness ! What patience and forgiveness of pain and injury ! An absolute angel ! Ah, madame ! How fortunate you are, to possess so much loveliness, and so much virtue united in the person of that seraph, your child ! How rare is such a union ! There is master Bertram, for instance. He is beautiful as the day, but his temper is deplorable. He has the adorable grace and loveliness of Cupid himself, but he has not that gentleness, that softness which inspires love. Alas, no ! he is rough and selfish !”

“ He has been spoiled, perhaps—indulged too much ?” said Gentille-et-sage ; “ and yet,” added she with a little sigh, “ indulgence ought not to spoil a grateful disposition.”

“ You are right, dear madame ;” said the Bonne. “ A good heart is not spoiled by having its own way. But where every kindness is received as a right—where attention and affectionate service are claimed only as feudal dues—when faithful domestics are treated like slaves—ah, madame—then, indeed, too

much power entrusted to childish hands is injudiciously fostering native haughtiness, caprice, and selfishness, and encouraging tyranny.”

The sentimental and sententious Bonne went on to explain to Gabrielle, that her charge, master Bertram, was sole heir of an ancient family, and only child of the count and countess of Rousillon. That he was inordinately indulged, and that, in consequence his natural defects—those of pride, self-will, want of generosity, and disdain of those beneath him in birth—had been enhanced rather than repressed. She spoke of his mother, the countess, as a virtuous gentlewoman ; and of his father, the count, as a noble gentleman, a brave soldier, and one in high honor at court, possessing the confidence and friendship of the king himself. She told Gabrielle that his lordship, the count of Rousillon, was at present suffering from a disorder which had originated in a severe wound in the chest that he had received on his first battle-field, some years since ; and that he had quitted his chateau in Rousillon to sojourn for a time at Narbonne, in the hope that he might receive benefit from the change of air, which had been recommended to him. The count had been accompanied hither by his countess, who was a devoted wife and mother, and by his little son, from whom his parents could not bear to be separated.

Many times, after that day, Gabrielle and Helena met the Bonne and her charge in the public garden ; and, Gabrielle's pleasant manners soon winning the good graces of the Bonne, as little Helena's good-humour rendered her an agreeable play-fellow to master Bertram, it came to pass that the countess, ere long, heard a good deal from her son of the little girl he had found in the gardens, and from her Bonne of the little girl's mother, who seemed to be quite a superior kind of person—quite a lady, indeed, though only a poor physician's wife, as she had by chance discovered her to be.

The countess of Rousillon, whom anxiety for her

husband's recovery, made eager to seize any chance of cure, was struck by hearing that the stranger's husband was a physician ; and she was just thinking of joining her little son in his visit to the public garden that day, to learn more concerning this unknown doctor, when her thought was confirmed into a determination to seek him, by a singular chance.

It happened that the countess, in her charitable kindness, having afforded relief to a poor woman who begged of her in the street, learned that the sick husband of the mendicant had been attended in his illness by a certain good young doctor, who, in consideration of the destitute state of his patient, would take no fee. "Ce bon monsieur Gerard would have given us money, instead of taking any from us," said the woman ; "but I pretended we didn't want it—for I know he does—almost as much as we—having a wife and child to support, and not earning a great deal to support them with. No, no, he's too generous and good to the poor, to have made any thing of a purse ; so, rather than take from him, I said we had enough to go on with—(may le bon Dieu forgive me for lying !)—and I came out into the streets to beg, when you, madame, kindly gave me this."

By a little questioning, the countess soon discovered that this good young doctor, with a wife and child to support, was no other than the husband of the interesting stranger whom her Bonne had mentioned to her ; and farther, the poor woman went on to say so much, of her own accord, respecting the skill, and care, and attention, which this good young doctor had bestowed, and the wonderful relief his treatment had yielded her suffering husband, that the countess resolved to lose no time in applying to him in behalf of her own.

Gerard, upon being consulted on the count of Rousillon's case, with his usual integrity, gave it as his opinion, that from the nature of the wound itself, and partly from the injudicious treatment it had hith-

erto received, he could not hope to perform a complete cure ; that his lordship would in all probability be subject to relapses during the remainder of his life, even should he survive the present crisis ; but, he modestly added, if the count would consent to place himself in the hands of an obscure practitioner, he thought he could undertake to relieve suffering, and avert immediate danger.

The result was the fulfilment of his promise ; and the count, restored to more robust health than he had ever dared to hope might again be his, was enabled, at the end of a few months' sojourn at Narbonne, to return with his wife and child to their estate at Rousillon.

The noble family, on taking leave, testified their gratitude to their benefactor, by loading him with affectionate proffers of friendship, and assurances of gratitude ; by an earnestly-expressed hope of seeing him at no very remote period, as a guest at the chateau de Rousillon, and by a handsome sum of money, proportionate to their estimation of the benefit they had received at his hands.

The chateau de Rousillon being situated at no very great distance from Gabrielle's native home, Gerard imparted to his new acquaintances the hope he had of accumulating sufficient to come and reside permanently in their vicinity ; and, in the anticipation of one day becoming neighbours and friends, they parted mutually pleased with each other.

Time wore on, and still Gerard was working hard with his cherished object in view. Like many men who propose to themselves the acquisition of competence, of retirement with independence, they leave undefined what is in reality to form this competence, this independence. They assign no limit to the yearly income which is to suffice for all their wishes ; they vaguely speak of waiting until they shall have earned enough to live upon, without previously calculating what annual amount will supply means of subsistence,

or computing the sum requisite to produce such annual amount ; they talk of moderate desires, simple tastes, inexpensive pleasures, without reckoning costs, or asking themselves what is, in fact, the style of living which will fulfil their ideal of enjoyment in existence.

And thus went on Gerard year after year ; without perceiving that life itself was passing in the acquirement and prospect of a living. His was a probation—an awaiting of some expected future, some visionary period—rather than an actuality, a positive state of being. In that anticipated epoch he dwelt, not in the present lapse of time ; he noted not that the cheek of his wife grew ever paler and more attenuated with abiding in a pent town, while he contemplated her ultimate removal to her native country air and home ; and Gentile-et-sage was just the unselfish being to forbear urging her own condition upon his notice, whilst he himself was well and contented. For in the vision of this ultimate retirement with his beloved Gabrielle, in the present work of attaining this proposed future good by the prosecution of his profession, in the daily thought and occupation it afforded him, and in the sight of the daily benefit it effected, he was both well and contented.

The sum he had gained by his attendance on the count Rousillon, was the foundation of his fortune ; the care of so illustrious a patient brought him patronage from others of equally high rank ; while the wealthy but untitled herd, followed in the track, where nobles had been their precursors. The young doctor became the rage—the fashion ; he became as noted as he had been neglected ; and at length the very title was awarded to him, which he had once dreamed might be his ; for he became known as the eminent physician—the famous Gerard de Narbonne.

Alas, for poor short-sighted human nature ! It sacrifices its best years in struggling for that which when obtained, time has rendered valueless ! It

neglects the enjoyment of daily life, toiling to achieve a remote existence, which is poisoned in its approach !

Gerard now possessed a surname which might grace the wife for whose sake alone he prized its honors ; he had amassed a fortune large enough to empower him to establish her in ease and even luxury wherever they might choose to fix their abode ; but in the very moment of his awakening to a consciousness that he had attained both these desired objects, he became aware that she, for whom he had coveted their possession, could no more hope to share them long with him.

Gerard had given instructions that the pavilion should be prepared temporarily for their reception, as he meant to defer refitting, enlargements, and all other improvements, until they themselves should be on the spot to decide upon the necessary alterations. He was in all the delight of prospectively enjoying the happiness which such a plan opened to them both ; when, on proposing an early day for their departure to take possession of their old new home, he found that Gabrielle was compelled reluctantly to acknowledge that she was too weak to undertake a journey just then. She spoke cheerfully of shortly being better able to bear the fatigue ; but Gerard, once his attention drawn to the subject of her health, perceived with alarm many symptoms which had never struck him till now. His observation had been so concentrated upon the cases of his patients ; his thoughts had been so much occupied elsewhere, that he had failed to perceive the illness which made its approach beneath his very eyes, and lurked insidiously beside his own hearth.

Gabrielle had always concealed her growing failure of strength under a sprightly demeanour, and as much activity of carriage as she could assume ; while her natural ease of manner, simplicity, and gaiety of heart, had seconded her innocent deceit. Her husband, looking into that smiling face, and within hearing of that cheerful sweet voice, did not surmise the lassitude

of limb, and debility of frame, that in secret oppressed her. We all know, how the countenance of those we daily see, let them be loved as intensely as they may, —nay, the rather for that intensity of love—fails to strike us as changing in appearance, as long as affection is still its prevailing expression. The fading lustre of the eye is unnoticed, while love lends its own light to the look which meets ours ; the lines that draw and contract the mouth are unseen, when smiles play around lips uttering nothing but kindness and cordiality. We forget to look for traces of indisposition, where all bespeaks something far more welcome to our sight ; and our own natural shrinking from aught sinister to them, refuses to acknowledge the approach of danger, helping to mislead us into a fatal confidence. Comfort and assurance of heart dwell in the gaze of those we love ; and thus it comes, that those who are nearest and dearest to each other, are not unfrequently the last to perceive what it most concerns them to know—threatened ill health.

Totally unaware of the blow about to be dealt him, until the very moment of its stunning fall, Gerard had hardly been aroused to perceive the approach of the foe ; he had scarcely, with shuddering acknowledged the presence of peril, when he was smitten with the full force of its consummation. Gabrielle's declining symptoms were abruptly aggravated by an attack of fever ; and she died on the very day of their proposed return to their native home.

Her husband sank prostrate under this unexpected stroke of fate. His usual strength of mind utterly forsook him. He yielded, without a struggle to his grief, and lay overwhelmed and unresisting, struck to the earth by a misery so sudden and so complete. He felt alone in the world. She, who had alone, of all the world, understood and entirely responded to his nature ; she, whose image had blended so completely with his every thought, that (with the paradoxical mood of intimate affection) he had come to pay her as

little outward attention as he did to his own semblance ; she, who had become so integrally a part of himself that he gave her no more external regard than he did himself, was now torn away for ever. What wonder that the poor remainder, the writhing wounded other self, should lie there in anguish as acute as if actually severed, disrupted, and rent asunder—henceforth a bleeding mangled fragment of being ?

He had cast himself upon the ground close beside the bed, upon which she had breathed her last, and from that moment had never raised his head. He had not swooned ; he did not shed a tear, or utter a sob ; but there he seemed flung, a broken desolate man, bereft of that which had given him heart and vitality. He had no consciousness of time, of aught existing. The poor neighbours whom the young couple had attached by their kindliness, and gentle courtesy, and unostentatious benevolence, offered some respectful attempts at consolation and sympathy ; but his apathy of misery awed them, and they pursued in whispers and with noiseless steps their offices about the dead, while, after their first unsuccessful proffer, they only from time to time ventured stealthy glances of compassion towards the prostrate sufferer.

Little Helena crept towards him, and sought to relieve his grief and her own, by sharing its pain together ; but he took as little notice of her as he had done of the neighbours, and the thought of his child seemed to be lost in that of the wife who had been snatched from him. He actually was, as he felt, thenceforward alone in the world.

The neighbours feared, that when he should see them, in accordance with their national custom, ere twenty-four hours had elapsed, withdraw the body for interment—he would be moved to some violent demonstration of despair ; but no, in beholding her death, he had felt the full sting of her loss, and the mere corporeal form, the earthly remains of her he loved, seemed no longer to him to be Gabrielle—that creature

whom he had worshipped—that being who had been a part of his own.

When night came, he still remained there, a heap of silent sorrow—for he had somehow formed a fierce determination never to occupy a bed more. They had placed food by him—for they had not dared to urge it upon one who had mutely refused, with the sullen, incapable look of a young bird in bondage. They had left him at length alone, to deal as he best might with his strange misery ; his little girl only, crouched in one corner of the room, watching him in hopeless ignorance of how to offer aid, yet unable to abandon him, and instinctively lingering near him, as if her very presence could help to guard him from farther evil. She watched until her strained eyes became stiff and weary ; and then the childish lids gave way, drooped, and closed in sleep—profound as it was involuntary. She had thought that sorrow for her dead mother, and anxiety for her unhappy father, would have surely kept her awake ; but to youthful sorrow and anxiety it is mercifully granted that they shall be powerless against drowsiness, and they have thus the boon of promoting their own remedy.

Through the watches of the night thus remained Gerard and his young daughter ; the one wrapped in a deep slumber, the other in his profounder grief. A lamp lent its feeble rays to the chamber, which seemed a sepulchre—so lately had it held the dead, so completely did it bury the hopes of its principal occupant. The drooping figures of the father and child looked like sculptured mourners, monumental images of grief, so mute, so motionless were they.

Day dawned, and found them still thus. But as the sun arose in his majesty, and poured his cheering beams into that desolate chamber, Gerard's brain seemed suddenly to acquire activity and perception in estimating the circumstances of his loss. He uttered a sharp groan as the painful process of resuscitation took place in his hitherto spell-bound thought. The

events of his life presented themselves in strange distinctness before his mind. He beheld as in a vision the whole train of incidents which had marked his intercourse with his wife from their first meeting to their recent separation. He involuntarily retraced scenes, words, looks, long passed away, but which had unconsciously engraven themselves upon his memory, now to be recalled unbidden, yet with singular vividness. As they passed in review before him, many a pang of remorse seized him, as some fancied negligence, or some occasion of omitted kindness on his own part, smote him. With the sensitive self-accusation which always accompanies reflection upon our conduct in connection with a beloved object lost to us for ever, a thousand of such instances arose in all the torture of unavailing regret to goad his heart. Above all, he reproached himself bitterly for the blindness with which he had suffered the tokens of her declining health to escape his observation, while engrossed with the sole pursuit of what should secure her repose, enjoyment, and prolonged life. He felt that in absorbed prosecution of a visionary scheme, he had lost sight of actual happiness, and that he had sacrificed substance to shadow.

From the depth of his remorse arose two clear resolves, as expiatory offerings to his troubled conscience. He determined that he would rouse himself from the selfish lethargy of grief, and by devoting himself with more fervour of zeal than ever to the cause of the poor, render tardy homage to the angel nature which might be supposed to rejoice in such a consecration of his energies ; and the other resolve was, that the wealth, which had been amassed with an aim so frustrated in its accomplishment, should be scrupulously dedicated to the use of the same suffering class—the neglected of men, the pitied of God and his angels.

With the courage which a new-formed resolution imparts to the soul of man, Gerard arose from the

ground. With the same intense thought of *herself*, which had not permitted her husband to regard the remains of Gabrielle as the being he had loved, he glanced not toward the spot where the body had so lately lain, but looked straight up into the blue heavens, where it seemed to him she now was. But with the engrossing impression that he was now alone, and completely alone in existence, neither did he once glance towards his child, or perceive that she was there, or for an instant recollect that there was such a being in the world. Gerard was constitutionally a man of strong feeling, and by habit a man of concentrated feeling. He was at present wholly absorbed in his solitude, his bereavement, and in the train of thought, emotion, and resolve it had engendered; with the abstraction of one thus immersed, therefore, he went forth from the chamber, bent solely upon his new-conceived purpose, and totally unmindful of another duty which still more imperatively claimed fulfilment at his hands.

The little girl awoke as her father quitted the room. She shivered with the chill of the morning air, with the cramped unrestful position in which she had sat for some hours, and with a sense of utter abandonment and desolation. She staggered to her feet, and called feebly after him, but no voice answered. She listened to his retreating steps, but no sound reached her. She thought of attempting to follow him, but she knew not where he was gone. She wrung her hands, and looking helplessly round, she saw the bed upon which her mother had so lately lain cold and dead, and then she flung herself down headlong upon it, sobbing, "O, Mother! Mother! Mother!"

Very desolate and forlorn was the condition of this poor young girl. Accustomed to the warmest evidences of affection from earliest infancy, her childhood had, till now, been an uninterrupted course of happy existence. She had never known what it was to lack sympathy, or encouragement, or endearment

from her mother, who was as tender as she was cheerful.

Gabrielle was one of those beautifully-constituted beings, whose sprightliness detract no jot from their sweetness. She was as gentle as she was gay ; she was as loving as she was light-hearted. She had been a fond, an indulgent friend to her little Helena, as she had been her play-mate and companion. The young mother and daughter had frolicked together as if they had been of the same age ; and the child, though an only one, had thus never known want of fellowship. Now she was as much alone as her unhappy father ; for he saw not how a consideration of her feelings, an inquiry into her sorrow, might serve to alleviate his own, and promote the consolation of both her and himself.

Gerard devoted himself with all the energy of his nature to his self-appointed task, in which alone he believed he could find solace. The greater part of every day he was absent from home, indefatigable in administering the resources of his art ; the few hours he was in his own house being passed in study, shut up by himself in a small room which contained his books. His mode of life was ascetic. He slept upon the floor, and made his sparing meal upon scarcely more than a crust. The only indulgence he permitted himself was coffee, which was brought to him daily, towards the dusk of the evening, by Helena. There was a homely peasant woman who had been their servant ever since Gerard and his wife had settled there ; and she still remained, preparing such meals as he would take, and contriving that his child should carry in the only thing for which he showed any preference. He continued to drink coffee, as it enabled him to work late into the night ; and Nicole had taken it into her worthy head, that by sending his little daughter into his room with the coffee, he might be won to notice her.

But day after day she stood there, with her patient

eyes, and in timid silence, unobserved by her father, who would remain absorbed in his work, until some stray waft of the steaming berry-scented beverage, or some pause in his writing, or some slight noise of the spoon against the cup and saucer she held, would induce him to stretch forth his hand, and take the coffee from her, but without so much as lifting his eyes from the book or paper before him. Helena had always been taught, by her mother's example no less than by her precept, never to disturb her father when he was studying. She had, therefore, frequently before waited upon him thus in silence, standing by him until he should become aware of her presence, and take from her that which she had brought ; but never before had she felt so painfully his abstraction. He would formerly say no more than he did now, it is true ; but he would give her a little silent nod, or a pat on the shoulder, or a touch under the chin, even if he did not smile, or look toward her. Now, however, neither nod, nor touch, nor smile, nor look ever reached her ; no signal that she was even known to be there was given ; no token that her presence was perceived, save the final stretching forth of the hand to take the cup from hers.

She would stand there watching that grave profile, almost stern in its absorbed downward gaze, and ache with longing to see it change its expression, and turn toward her. She would stand holding the coffee, fearing lest it should get cold, before he thought of taking it ; she would watch the curling steam, and note each diminishing upward curl of vapour, as the liquid gradually lost its heat. She would stand there with all sorts of strange fears and fancies crossing her mind. She would wonder whether her father ever meant to look at her or speak to her again. She would at one time follow his hand with her eyes along the paper, and thrill with impatience to see it stretched out toward the coffee that she might be released ; at another, she would think so closely and so anxiously

about the time when the hand should approach her to take the cup, that her heart beat with expectation, and she would start violently when the instant arrived. Sometimes she thought of setting down the coffee on the table, and leaving it there ; but besides the fear that it might remain there untouched, and that he should thus miss the only thing he cared to take, there was another undefined dread mingling with as vague a hope, which whispered her not to put the cup down, but to tarry till his hand received it. At others, she thought she would summon courage to speak to him ; and when she was away she thought she would surely do so the next time she went to him ; but the next time came, and she stood there as patiently, as silently, as ever ; until at length it grew worse by delay, and it became impossible even to think of addressing him. At last so many nervous terrors beset her as she stood there motionless beside him, that the hour for taking in her father's coffee came to be looked forward to with almost as much dread, as it had formerly been wished for.

But though Helena would tremble and become very pale, when she went to Nicole to fetch the cup, still she never ceased punctually and constantly to go to the kitchen when she knew the coffee was ready, take it steadily in her hand, and proceed straight to her father's room. The good-hearted servant-wench, when she observed the little girl's agitation, asked her if she should take it in for her. But she said :—
“ No, no ; give it me, Nicole ; I'll take it myself ; ”
and though her tremor every day increased rather than diminished, nothing could persuade her to relinquish the task she had undertaken.

“ I'll tell you what, ma'amselle, ” said Nicole one day abruptly to Helena, as she was preparing to take in the coffee, “ if you don't speak to monsieur, I shall. I can't see you going on in that way, shaking, and looking as white as a sheet. We shall have you getting ill, or dropping the coffee-cup, and smashing

it all to bits, or some mischief or another. So mind, if you don't speak to him, I shall ; and tell him a piece of my mind too !”

“ No, no, Nicole ; you mustn't disturb him—you mustn't speak to him—promise me, Nicole ;” said Helena eagerly.

“ Well then you just do—or I shall ; mind that !” said Nicole ; and as Helena said something promissory, going in with the coffee, the kind-meaning servant-wench added, as she followed her with her eyes : —“ I can't see what's the good of learning, for my part, if it an't to teach people the use of their senses. Here's a man poking over his books, and can't see what's just under his nose ; a pretty doctor ! ferreting out how to cure everybody's disorders, and never finds that his wife was dying, and his child's dwindling away, for want of a kind word, and a look, and a helping hand, in time. I should like to know how my pot-au-feu would get on, if I was to be readin' and studyin' about it, instead of putting the beef in, and paring and cutting the carrots and turnips. Precious soup we should get, if we were to depend on learning, for it ; pardi !”

Meanwhile, Helena had gone into her father's little study, and was standing there as usual at his elbow with the cup of coffee. She tried not to listen to the beating of her heart, and to muster enough voice to speak ; but still she stood there mute and motionless. Her eyes were fixed upon her father's high temple, which was barer than usual, from the hair having been somewhat pushed back when he leaned his head upon his hand just before. A line or two of silver threaded among the dark clusters of hair that were raised from the brow ; and as the eyes of his young daughter traced the course of those heralds of thought, and care, and premature age, she unconsciously uttered a deep sigh.

It was at this very moment, that her father reached out his hand for his coffee. The sound caught his ear ; he started, and raised his eyes to her face.

It was colourless ; and two dark rings surrounded those meek patient eyes that were fixed upon his with a look which childhood should never wear ; the lips were wan, and quivered a little, as they stood apart in timid yet eager expectation.

“ Helena ! my child ! ” exclaimed Gerard, with a look as if he had awakened from a dream. “ Where have you been ? ”

“ Here, papa ! ” said she.

Her father passed his hand across his forehead ; and seemed as if for a moment he fancied she had been standing there ever since he had last beheld her, with that enduring perseverance, that dumb unapproachable constancy, which spoke its involuntary appeal to his heart in those beseeching eyes, those pale cheeks, and tremulous lips.

He drew her towards him, and pressed her head against his bosom. “ My child ! My dear Helena ! ” were all the words he could find to express what he felt towards his forgotten daughter ; his self-reproach, his reawakened interest, his comprehension of her patience, his admiration, his love. But what need was there of words, where so much of tenderness was expressed in his looks, in his voice, in his gesture ? Helena, as she lay within his arms, wept gentle tears of comfort, and joy, and satisfied affection.

Gerard now understood something of what had been his little girl’s sufferings, whilst he had been absorbed in his own ; he saw that her solitary grief had preyed on her health ; and in alarm lest another victim should be the consequence of his neglect, he hastened to devise means for removing his child from a position which he perceived was utterly unfit, and which might be productive of fatal consequences. He wrote to his friend and patroness the countess of Rousillon, enlisting her sympathy in behalf of his motherless girl, and entreating her counsel and aid. He begged that she would extend her former kind intention toward himself to Helena, by receiving her for a time, at the

chateau de Rousillon, that change of scene might efface the sad impression which had been made on her young mind, and rescue her from a situation so perilous to her health and happiness as association with a broken-hearted man, lost in his own eternal regrets. "I have now but one solitary aim on earth ;" thus the letter concluded. "It is that I may render myself worthy of joining her who is now in Heaven, by self-denial, humility, and faithful labour ; and by a life dedicated to the relief of my poor fellow-sufferers on earth. A man thus devoted to a sacred task, is not a meet guide for youth. The two duties cannot co-exist. The requirements of the one infringe on the exigencies of the other. Let your charitable heart, therefore, dear lady, prompt you in behalf of my innocent child ; lost, if you do not step to her aid. My only plea in asking this boon at your hands, is her own desert, which will, I know, requite your goodness as it should be requited. The grateful devotion and affection of a young true heart will be yours. To these are added the prayers and blessings of

Your ladyship's unhappy servant and friend,

GAUTIER GERARD."

The countess's reply was a warm compliance, brought to Narbonne by Rinaldo, her steward, who was charged to escort Helena back to the chateau de Rousillon. On the arrival of her young guest, the countess could not avoid being struck with the change that had taken place. The lively, chubby, rosy child of but a few years old, had grown into the pale quiet girl—fast-growing, hollow-eyed, and lank. Traces of premature care and suffering sat upon the young face, and the effect of her white cheeks, and thin arms, was touchingly heightened by the contrast with the mourning frock she wore.

The lady of Rousillon received the poor motherless girl with a gentleness and pity that went straight to Helena's heart, so sore with its late unhappiness ; and the young girl was still hovering near her kind new

friend, when Bertram entered the room. He had been out in the park, with his dogs, one or two of which followed him into the saloon where his mother sat.

He was now a fine tall lad ; and swung into the room glowing with exercise, in high spirits and good humour, flinging his hat off, and discovering a face sparkling with animation, features regular and commanding, and hair bright, thick, and curling.

As his mother's eye rested upon her handsome son, —a picture of healthful beauty, her heart swelled with happy pride ; she thought of the contrast he presented with the poor little pale thin creature at her side, and she drew her kindly towards her.

“ Come here, Bertram ;” said his mother. “ See who is here. Do you not remember your acquaintance of the Narbonne gardens, little Helena ?”

“ Is that little Helena !” said Bertram. “ I never should have known her !”

“ Did you remember me ? Did you think about whether you should have known me ?” said Helena.

“ I was absurd enough to think of you just the same as you were ;” answered he. “ I somehow fancied, when I heard you were coming to Rousillon, that I should see just the same rosy dumpling of a child that you were then, forgetting that we had both grown bigger since, and that of course you would be altered, as I am.”

“ I don't think you're altered ; I should have known you any where ;” said she. “ I remember your hair exactly ; and the high eyebrows—and the color of your eyes, just as I recollect them, when you used to be watching the shuttlecock fly into the air.”

Helena, in looking at Bertram, and tracing her recollection of his features, was hardly aware of what made her wince, and shrink, as the two large dogs which had accompanied him into the room, were now sniffing and snuffing and trying to make acquaintance with the strange little girl, by poking their cold noses

against her bare arms, and pushing their rough snouts up to her chin, and other slight amenities, somewhat startling to a child of her age, unaccustomed to the proximity of large hounds almost as big as herself.

“Bertram, my dear,” said his mother, “hadn’t you better send these dogs out of the room, or call them off, for I think they’re annoying our petite amie here.”

“Here, Nero ; come here, sir ; lie down, Juba ;” said Bertram, slightly whistling to his favorites. “Are you afraid of dogs ? An’t you fond of ’em ?” added he to Helena.

“Are you ?” said she.

“Fond of them ? O yes ! I like to have them always with me. That’s why I like to be out in the park, because there nobody minds ’em ; the saloon isn’t thought their fit place, is it, mother ? I know you only allow them to be here, because you love to please me, more than you care about the dogs, like a good kind mother as you are. Don’t you ?”

His mother smiled ; but after a little lounging about, Bertram swung out of the room again, whistling his dogs after him ; and Helena sat reproaching herself with having driven him away, by her folly in being unable to help starting when the dogs touched her. She resolved to break herself of such a stupid trick, and to try and make friends with the noble animals on the first opportunity.

The count Rousillon was absent from the chateau at this period. He was at Paris, in attendance on the king, who esteemed him highly, and was fond of his society. A few days after Helena’s arrival, a messenger came to Rousillon from the count, bearing letters and greetings to his countess, with a present to his son of a handsome fishing-tackle, which had often been the object of Bertram’s wishes.

There was a fine piece of water which adjoined the chateau, and which in one part of its stream formed the moat that surrounded the turreted irregular walls.

Bertram had frequently expatiated to his father on the capabilities afforded for angling in this spot ; and the indulgent parent now remembering, in absence, his son's desire, sent him the means of its gratification.

When Helena learned what the packet from Paris probably contained, she begged of the countess that she might have the privilege of carrying it at once to Bertram, who was out in the park.

“ My page shall take it to him ;” said the countess.

“ Do let me take it, madam ;” urged the little girl.

“ I know it will give your son so much pleasure, and would give me so much, if I might be the bearer.”

*The countess nodded and smiled ; and away went Helena.

“ See what I have here for you !” she cried from a distance, as she perceived Bertram among the trees. “ My lord, your father, has sent Baptiste from Paris with this box for you ! And we think it must contain the fishing rod and flies you wished for so much ; and my lady allowed me to bring it to you, that you might open it at once, and you see what it is.”

“ Set it down on the grass, and undo the fastenings ;” said Bertram. “ I hope it really is the rod ! Oh yes ! And what a capital one ! And what a good line !”

“ And look at these curious flies !” exclaimed Helena.

“ I'll put one on the line directly,” said Bertram. “ I must have a throw. I know there must be millions of trout here. Hush, don't make a noise ; don't talk. Hush, Helena.”

A moment after, he himself loudly exclaimed at his dogs, who were snuffing to and fro, taking a busy interest in all that was going on, and at length uttered the sharp bark of excitement and sympathy with their master's new pursuit, which had provoked his ire at the interruption to his sport.

“ Confound those dogs !” he exclaimed ; “ I wish

they were hanged or drowned out of the way. It's impossible to fish, while they're yelping about one."

"Mightn't they be put out of the way, without hanging or drowning?" asked Helena, with a smile; "you may want them to-morrow, you know, when you're tired of angling; and then you would rather find them safe in their kennel, wouldn't you?"

"How you talk, Helena;" said he. "If they're to be taken to their kennel now, I must go with 'em, and leave my fishing; for they won't mind any body but me; and they won't leave me for any body else's bidding."

"Won't they?" said she; "let's try."

The young girl uttered a little melodious whistle which she had practised in imitation of the one she heard Bertram use with such good effect in calling his dogs. Then she went a short distance, slapping her frock as she had seen him do upon his knee, and mimicking as well as she could the imperative "Here, Juba, here! Hie along, Nero!" with which Bertram was accustomed to enforce their obedience. Finding that they still lingered round their master, she drew from her pocket a piece of rye-cake which she had found effectual during her late assiduous training of the dogs and herself to a mutual good understanding. In the present instance, the lure proved successful; for wagging their tails, and following Helena with wistful eyes, they drew off the field, leaving Bertram in peaceful possession of the banks of the stream.

Here she found him, on her return, engrossed in the pursuit of his new pleasure. And during the whole afternoon, and for many following days, he still eagerly enjoyed the sport; Helena lingering by his side, helping him to fix his flies, to watch the bites, to land the fish, to carry home the basket, and in a thousand ways rendering herself an acceptable companion.

One morning, they had just succeeded in hooking and landing a fine trout, that had enhanced the pleasure of his capture by making it a matter of difficult

achievement ; now starting away as if he would snap the line, now darting through some tangled sedges where he might twist it, now floating teasingly near, now giving them a run of several yards along the bank, now waving slyly down by the weedy bottom, now glancing recklessly close to the crystal surface, and in short keeping his foes in all that breathless suspense, and dubiousness of ultimate triumph, which constitutes the charm of the pursuit,—so bewitching to an angler, so incomprehensible to other people.

Helena had secured the flapping victim in the basket, and was anticipating the pleasure of Bertram's displaying this prize to his mother ; when, having adjusted a fresh bait, and thrown his line again across the stream, he suddenly uttered an exclamation, which caused his companion to look round. She found that the end of the rod, with its appended line, had snapped off, and was now floating away toward a plot of rushes and river-weeds that grew in the water near to the opposite bank, at a considerable distance from the spot where they stood.

“ O it will be lost ! ” exclaimed Helena. “ Your rod will be spoiled, and useless, without the top. Let us try and get it back. How can we manage ? What had we best do ? ”

“ It's gone—it's hopeless ! ” said Bertram. “ It will be quite floated away, by the time we can get round to the opposite shore ; or lost among those flags and weeds. Provoking ! ”

“ We can but try ; ” said Helena. “ I'll run round through the wood over the bridge, while you remain here to watch it, and to point it out to me, when I get to the opposite side. ”

“ No, no ; it's almost out of sight now—it's of no use. I must give it up. ”

“ We can but give it up, when we have done all we can ; ” said Helena, and she was just running off, when Bertram said :—

“ I tell you, it's of no use, Helena ; I can't stay

here watching all day for a thing that's already out of sight. I shouldn't so much mind the loss, for I've had almost enough of angling ; but I shall be sorry to have to own the rod's spoilt, when my father comes home. Provoking !" muttered he again, as he looked in vain towards the weeds near which the broken rod and line were fast disappearing.

"The count's kind gift ! His beautiful present !" said Helena, with her eyes fixed in the same direction.

"Well, it can't be helped, at any rate," said Bertram, as he walked away, adding :—"I'll go and take Nero and Juba out for a good long walk. I haven't had a ramble with them this many a day ; ever since I've been looking after the trout."

Helena remained for a few minutes longer, still looking intently across the stream, which spread broad and far just there, forming a small lake among the grounds of the chateau ; then she suddenly turned, and walked fast along the bank, beneath the trees, till she came to some broken ground, which adjoined the more level park, and where the stream dashed and foamed among the underwood, from some rocks that rose abruptly there about. This tumbling torrent was crossed by a rustic bridge at its foot. Over the bridge Helena passed swiftly ; and, tripping along the briery pathway on the opposite side of the stream, made her way with a rapid step.

On reaching the bank, near to which the plot of rushes grew, she peered carefully about, in the hope of descrying the object of her search, but no vestige of rod or line was there to be seen. "If I could but get among those weeds—close to them, I could look better ;" thought she. "If I could but swim !" A moment after, she exclaimed, half aloud :—"The boat ! how came I not to think of it ?"

She retraced her way as speedily as she had come ; and then hastened on to a spot in the park, where she knew a small pleasure-boat was moored. She soon succeeded in undoing the fastenings, and in paddling

herself across the stream, back to the plot of rushes. Here she spent some time in searching minutely among the flags, and at length she became unwillingly convinced that the missing rod was not there.

She was reluctantly turning the head of the boat to recross the stream, when its current drew her attention to the fact that the rod had probably floated on farther, quite away from this spot. "The stream flows from the torrent in the dell, across this broad piece of water, toward the moat ;" thought she. "I'll follow the course of the stream ; perhaps I may find Bertram's rod still."

She pushed the boat on in that direction, peeping into all the sedgy nooks, and grassy crevices, along the shore, in vain ; until she entered the moat which washed the walls of the chateau, entirely surrounding them. These walls were built irregularly ; forming all sorts of odd angles, and crannies, and close recesses. In one of these, floated by the current, and washed far inwards, lying in a tangled heap, Helena spied the lost line, with the fragment of rod. She steadied the boat as well as she could across the narrow inlet, which was formed by two meeting angles of the edifice ; for the space thus left between the walls that rose sheer from the water, was too small to admit the head of the vessel. Helena stretched herself as far over the side, as possible ; but she could not nearly reach the floating object, even with the tips of her fingers. How tantalizing it was, to see it lie there, within a few feet of her, but as much out of her power, as when out of sight !

She seized the oar, with which she had paddled herself thither ; but she not only nearly lost her balance, trying to wield so heavy an object, but she had the mortification to perceive that instead of gaining any hold of the line with the unmanageable end of the oar, she only succeeded in pushing it farther than ever beyond her reach, until it washed away right up to the extreme end of the recess, where it lay bobbing and

floating in coy retirement,—obvious, yet unattainable.

Helena felt so frustrated and baffled in the very view of success, that she could have shed tears of vexation ; but recollecting just in time for the honor of her childish wisdom, that such a proceeding would advance her no jot,—at the very same fortunate moment popped into her head another idea no less sagacious. This was, that she would try and make one of the dogs swim across the moat and fetch the line out of the recess. Then remembering that she could hardly make the dog comprehend what he was to seek, she determined to row back and bring the dog with her in the boat to the spot, where she might point out to him the precise object she wanted him to fetch.

Her experiment was crowned with complete success. She returned, accompanied by Fanchon, one of the smaller dogs, Bertram having taken with him his two favorites ; and, with its help, she succeeded at length in securing the top of the fishing-rod and line. Her first impulse was to take them to their owner, in the hope of pleasing him by the news of their recovery ; but remembering that his zest for angling had suffered an abatement, she resolved to keep them quietly for the present.

Another letter arrives from the count, stating that he is still detained from rejoining his family, by the wishes of the king, whose gracious desire for his longer stay is not to be withstood. The count speaks of a valued friend of his, the lord Lafeu, who has been desired by his royal master to prepare for a diplomatic mission to some neighbouring state. This friend being anxious, during his absence, to obtain honorable protection for his daughter Maudlin, who lost her mother when an infant, the count has invited the young lady to pass a few weeks at the chateau de Rousillon, on a visit to his countess.

Mademoiselle Lafeu arrives ; and is greeted with all distinction and affectionate welcome. She proves to

be a lively girl, with an air of decision and court-bred ease about her manners that bespeak her to be an inhabitant of the capital.

French words best describe the distinguishing characteristics of this young French girl. She was *insouciant*, in her gaiety of spirits ; *nonchalante*, in her indifference to the opinions of others ; she was *assez spirituelle* ; *tant soit peu espiègle* ; and had much *aplomb* in her tastes, her judgment, her convictions, or rather in her mode of answering them all three, whenever, however, and with whomsoever she might choose to assert them.

She formed a striking contrast with the provincial-bred Helena, who was quiet, retiring, and undemonstrative in speech. The one was accustomed to utter every thought aloud the instant it was formed ; nay, sometimes, before she had thought at all upon a subject, she would express very decided sentiments regarding it ; while the other would speak no word upon matters which had not only engaged her serious consideration, but upon which she was prepared to act with energy, firmness, and pertinacious constancy.

Maudlin Lafeu would eagerly discuss veriest trifles as if her whole soul were wrapt up in them, and the next hour, prove by her actions, that she cared no iota for any one of the things for which she had been so earnestly arguing ; Helena was chary of alluding to her own views, even upon topics on which her mind was made up with a consistency and steadiness hardly to be expected from a girl of her age. Maudlin was sparkling, animated, and full of vivacity ; Helena was tranquil, and somewhat reserved, though not shy, or awkwardly bashful. She had timidity, though no want of resolution. A diffidence of self, combined with remarkable self-confidence. A mistrust of her own merit, with a consciousness of moral power. An unassured belief of intrinsic worth, with a strong faith in her own principle of right. A humility that taught her to assign blame to herself rather than to

others, combined with a high internal sense of her true claim to regard.

In externals there was the same dissimilarity between the two young girls. Maudlin was brilliant in complexion, had eyes bright and restless, with lips wreathed in smiles ; while Helena was pale, her eyes were soft and thoughtful, with a look of steadfastness in resolve, and her mouth was sedate, though the lips were full, and so coral and red, that they afforded the point of colour, in which her face would otherwise have been deficient.

To complete the contrast, Maudlin was dressed in the height of the then Parisian fashion, a rich father's liberality enabling her to indulge in every extravagance of adornment ; while Helena, a poor country physician's daughter, wore a simple black frock of the plainest make, and of the least costly material.

On the morning after Mademoiselle Lafeu's arrival at Rousillon, the countess, having done the honours of the house, by showing her young guest over the chateau, deputed her son to escort her through the park and the rest of the domain, which was extensive, and very beautiful.

With more eagerness of manner than he usually displayed, when the gratification of any other than himself was in question, Bertram complied. He led the way, talking animatedly with the young lady, who, interrupting him in the midst of something he was saying, turned to Helena, with :—" Will not you come with us ?"

" Go, ma petite ;" said the countess, in answer to the mute enquiry of Helena's eyes.

They had crossed the drawbridge over the moat, and were just entering the park, Bertram dwelling with much complacency upon the noble growth of the trees, upon the valuable timber they would yield, upon the beautiful site of the chateau, its picturesque structure, its best points of view, and upon the territorial grandeur of the estate generally, when he turned

slightly to Helena, and said : " I should like the dogs to be with us."

Helena replying, " Ay, they would enjoy this ramble," tripped back to fetch them.

" Where is she gone to?" asked Mademoiselle Lafeu.

" Gone to fetch Nero and Juba, my dogs, they are such fine fellows ; I should like you to see them ;" answered he.

" Should you? But I am sorry Mademoiselle Helena should have the trouble of returning for them," said Maudlin.

" O, she don't mind it ; and the dogs are very fond of her ;" replied Bertram.

Mademoiselle Lafeu seemed about to say something more, but was prevented by Helena's running up, with the dogs leaping and bounding each side of her.

They walked on again ; Bertram by the side of Maudlin Lafeu, talking and laughing in high spirits, and using his best efforts to entertain her. Helena followed a little in the rear, with the dogs still frolicking, and gambolling, and jumping about her ; while the young lady frequently turned to address some remark to her, as if wishing her to take part in the conversation that was going forward.

Presently, as they emerged from the shade of the trees, Helena perceived that the glare of the sun seemed oppressive to Mademoiselle Lafeu, who had only the small flat hat or cap worn by French ladies of the period, and which afforded little protection to the eyes or the complexion.

" You feel the rays too hot and too bright for you, Mademoiselle ;" said Helena. " Will you use my broad straw hat, which makes a good screen for the eyes?"

" Do ;" said Bertram.

But Maudlin declared she would not deprive Helena of it, who would then be as badly off as herself.

" But you must not risk such tanning as this ;"

said Bertram. "Helena will go and fetch you a veil, or a fan, from the chateau."

"Yes, that will be the best;" said Helena, as she darted off in quest of them; while Bertram added some gallant speeches about the brilliancy of the complexion that Mademoiselle Lafeu was so ruthlessly exposing to injury, which she interrupted by saying:—

"Is this your country good-breeding, Monsieur Bertram? You pay a few fiddle-faddle compliments to one young lady, while you permit another to run about on your errands—or what ought to be yours,—for why could not you go yourself for the fan or veil which you think I ought to have?"

"O, Helena don't mind it;" repeated Bertram, laughing.

"Perhaps not; but *you* ought. If you pretend to be a gentleman, as I suppose you do, how comes it that you let a young lady wait upon you?"

"She's not a young lady;" said Bertram, hastily. "She's only a poor girl, a protégée of my mother's. A country doctor's daughter that my good mother took a fancy to, because the father happened to cure mine, a long time ago,—for which service he was well paid, by the bye,—and because the girl herself has lately lost her mother."

"Tolerably good claims, too, to consideration;" said Mademoiselle Lafeu. "But whatever may be her birth, she deserves politeness from a young gentleman, one would think, from the mere fact of her being a pretty girl."

"Pretty!" said Bertram;—"what, with that pale face? She was pretty as a little child; but she's quite altered—an absolute fright now, with her white cheeks, and those dark rings round her eyes."

"Poor girl! Perhaps she lost her good looks with grieving for her dead mother. For good looks she has, depend upon it; I can perceive them through all that sorrowful one; and some day or other, you'll see, she'll prove my words, and come out a beauty."

“ Not my sort of beauty ;” said Bertram, fixing his eyes with an admiring look upon Maudlin’s brilliant countenance, but with a boy’s bashfulness soon withdrawing his gaze, and stammering out :—“ I don’t see any beauty in linen cheeks for my part ; give me lovely red and white, and a pair of bright happy eyes. Such as, I trust, some day or other, to see in perfection among you Parisian Belles.”

“ The sieur Bertram tells me he is dying to see Paris ;” said Maudlin to Helena, who now returned with the veil and fan. “ Why does he not persuade his father to bring him the next time he comes thither ? You must help him to gain the permission, I believe, by pleading his cause with his mother, who will plead it again with his father, and then the affair will be settled.”

“ It’s of no use any one pleading ;” said Bertram testily. “ My mother would long ago have given me my wish, but my father is obstinately bent upon my not visiting the capital yet. He has violent prejudices against Paris as an abiding place for youth. Thinks ill of the young men there as examples, and I know not what of scruples and strictnesses, which surely are old-fashioned, over-rigid, and misplaced, now-a-days.”

“ This is so beautiful a place, I can hardly fancy sighing to leave it, even for dear delightful Paris !” said Mademoiselle Lafeu. “ And you must have plenty of amusement here, too, to compensate for the court gaieties, and the society of the capital. What a fine place for a gallop on horse-back, a row on the lake, a falcon match, a trial with the bow and arrows, or for hunting or fishing, or the thousand enjoyments which you country gentlemen can command. There must be capital fishing in that piece of water. Do you know, I’m a bit of an angler myself ? When I have been en campagne with my father, at our house at Marly, he has taught me to bait a hook and throw a line, so that I should scarcely be afraid to challenge such proficientes as you and Mademoiselle Helena doubtless are.”

“ You like angling ?” said Bertram. “ How vexatious that I should have no rod to offer you. Mine is broken—but—how I wish I had it now !”

“ I have it safely for you, I’ll fetch it ;” said Helena eagerly. “ I got it back—it’s mended ; I’ll bring it to you directly.”

“ Do, do, Helena ! But how on earth do you mean ? How did you get it back ?” said he.

In a few words, she explained her recovery of the detached portion of his rod and line, and then hurried away to fetch them.

Highly pleased, he began to question Mademoiselle Lafeu on her knowledge of the sport, and to express his delight at the prospect of enjoying it with her. She answered by dwelling upon Helena’s having taken such pains to gratify him, and by reproaching him for the slender gratitude he had shown for her friendly zeal.

“ If you go on praising it so, you’ll make me detest it, instead of teaching me to feel grateful for it ;” said he. “ I hate things or people that are belauded and cried up by every one. My mother tells me so much of Helena’s good behaviour that I’m rather sick of it ; and now you are doing the same, and giving me a downright surfeit of her merits. She’s well enough, but she’s no such paragon as you’d all make her out to be.”

“ You are a spoilt young man, and have your own way too much, and are too little contradicted, I see ;” said Mademoiselle Lafeu. “ If I were to take you in hand, I would soon effect a reform.”

“ I think I am very well as I am, and want no reform ;” said Bertram laughing ; “ but still, you may take me in hand, if you like ; I don’t know that I should object to that ; especially when the hand that is to take me in it, is so white and so soft,” said he, with another boyish struggle between admiration and embarrassment, as he took her hand and attempted to kiss it.

“ One of the first things I should expect you to alter, would be your conduct to women,” said Mademoiselle Lafeu, with the little air of superiority which girls of her age allow themselves to lads of his ; “ you should be less forward to me, and more polite to Helena ; I would have more deference, more fitting attention to each. See, where she comes, with your fishing-tackle ; and yet you do not hasten to meet her, and relieve her of the burthen. You a cavalier fit for a Paris circle, and so insensible to a woman’s due !”

“ On the contrary,” said Bertram, with his careless laugh ; “ I’m quite sensible of her peculiar excellence ; I’m thankful to her, as I am to my dogs, for what they do for me ; I’m bound to acknowledge her ministry, as I am to my hounds for their attachment, and their faithful fetching and carrying. I’m a judge of dogs, you know—and she’s a good spaniel.”

During the visit of Maudlin Lafeu, Bertram heard a good many truths with respect to his haughty conduct, told him with no sparing of his self-love by the young Parisian ; but they served little else than to pique him into extra admiration of herself ; while they rather increased than diminished his contempt of Helena, whose modest zeal showed like servility against Maudlin’s freedoms ; and where humility seemed only conscious inferiority both of beauty and station, when seen in contrast with Mademoiselle Lafeu’s high-bred ease, court manners, and various graces of person and demeanour.

Bertram was a spoiled child by birth, by fortune, and by circumstance ; and like many spoiled people, he felt little preference for those who spoiled him. It seems an instinct, teaching the humoured person to disregard those who work this evil, at the very time that he avails himself of their indulgence. He uses and abuses the ministrants to his will, while he feels an involuntary respect for those who inconveniently yet boldly oppose its tyrannous dictates. He disdains and tramples on those whose value he acknowledges by

accepting their service, while he courts and renders homage to those who treat him with indifference, and whose sole claim to superiority may be their own assumption.

Time passes on. Bertram's boyish desire to visit Paris is yet unfulfilled ; for his father, firm in his conviction that a court is an unfit school for youth, as the capital is an unfit asylum, until his son's principles shall be more formed, and his studies farther advanced, has sent him to college for a few years.

The king still frequently detains his favourite by his side ; and the count, anxious to secure for his wife affectionate companionship in her solitude at Rousillon, undertakes the entire charge of Helena. He writes to her father, entreating him to commit her to the countess's and his own care, engaging to provide her with masters and all requisites for a solid education.

Gerard, strictly observant of that moral devotion, in which alone he finds peace for his wounded spirit, and consecrating the whole of his earnings—accumulated and present—to the needs of his poor patients, reserves to himself the mere pittance requisite in his self-imposed asceticism, and is, in fact, bare of all, save renown in skill, and the attachment of grateful hearts. Thus destitute of resources, a voluntary pauper—a devotee to penury in his own person, as in his tribute to the exigencies of a sacred cause—Gerard willingly consents to a plan that secures for his child an education and a home, which he himself has no means of giving her.

Helena accordingly remains at the chateau de Rousillon, growing in knowledge accomplishment, and virtue, while the improvement in her health, spirits, and mental culture, brings corresponding increase of beauty ; and, on the verge of womanhood, she possesses as many attractions of worth and excellence, as she presents those of person and matured loveliness, which her early childhood promised:

She has courage, prudence, constancy in an eminent

degree. She is stable in resolve ; faithful in duty ; invincible in attachment ; and she is as full of womanly sweetness and gentleness, as if her character were not compounded of such firm elements. True strength of mind is less inconsistent with softness of heart than is generally or willingly allowed, by those who injudiciously or interestedly persuade the sex that weakness—moral, mental, and physical, is their most winning characteristic. Feeble-mindedness, indecision, vacillation, cowardice, want of solid principle, lack of energy, infirmity of purpose, supineness of limb, debility of muscle, enervation of frame, and the thousand foibles of soul and body that are supposed amiable, will often lead to a selfish hardness, and an inflexibility of egoism any thing but womanly ; while a loving nature will not unfrequently inspire the most heroic acts of fortitude, dictate the highest deeds of bravery—bravery in achievement—no less than in endurance, and yet detract no particle from the sweet grace of feminine reserve, nor abate one blush of sensitive modesty.

Such was Helena's nature ; full of the gentlest strength of love ; the most unflinching capability of sacrifice ; the deepest tenderness, and the bravest courage, the maidenliest diffidence, with the most lavish generosity ; the truest and most steadfast affection, with the most passionate warmth.

But as yet, little occasion for the development of these qualities in Helena presented itself. Till such occasion should arrive, she seemed a quiet, earnest, obliging girl, faithfully attached to the countess, who ever treated her with well-nigh a mother's regard.

The count Rousillon, when able to be at the chateau, was kind and paternal in his manner to Helena, and esteemed her highly for her own merits, for the credit her accomplishments did to his having charged himself with her breeding, and for the sake of the pleasure which her society and affection afforded to his countess.

Bertram, on the recurrence of his vacations, spent

them, by his parents' wish, at Rousillon ; and on each of these occasions he failed not to call upon Helena for her sympathy with his own indignation at being compelled still to defer repairing to Paris, where he might spend his holidays so much more to his liking.

True to her friendship, at the expense of her growing love, Helena failed not to condole with him on these repeated disappointments, and even to help him all she could to obtain the desired permission, although it would destroy her own fondest prospect,—that of seeing him at Rousillon. For the intervals when he was absent, were occupied in thoughts of his last visit, of what he had said, of how he had looked, of what he had chiefly liked ; or in dreams of his next-approaching one, of what he would say, of how he would look, and of what he might like, that she might prepare it for him against his coming.

At length a period arrives when she is able to greet him with something that she knows will please him. She is so eager to give him this gratification, that she watches by the park-gates for his arrival during the whole morning that he is expected at the chateau. The welcome sound of his horse's feet reaches her ear ; she springs forward, when the abruptness of her appearance startles the mettled animal, who rears, and plunges, and it requires all Bertram's good horsemanship to keep himself firm in his seat.

The sight of his danger, the fear that he will be thrown, makes Helena turn deadly pale ; but she does not utter a single shriek ; only, after an instant's dismayed pause, she throws herself before the horse's head, regardless of her own imminent peril, and endeavours to seize the bridle.

“ Stand out of the way ! Stand back ! You will be trampled down ! ” shouts Bertram. “ Leave him to me ; let him alone ; I'll manage him ! So then, so then, Charlemagne ! So then ! ”

When he had succeeded in reining in the steed,

and reducing him to quietude, Bertram had leisure to observe who it was that had thus crossed his path.

“Is that you, Helena? How could you be so absurd as to start out in that sudden way just before him? Any horse would have shied at such a thing, especially a skittish high-blooded creature like this. So then, so then, my beauty!” said he, patting the arching neck of his favorite, that still quivered and throbbled in every one of its swelling veins.

“I had some tidings for you, that I knew would please you—and I could not help coming out here to be the first person to tell them to you. It was very rash and foolish of me, to rush out so unawares upon poor Charlemagne. Poor fellow! Poor fellow!” And she patted the horse on the same spot where his master’s hand had so lately been.

“Well, but what are your tidings, Helena? You don’t tell them to me, after all;” said he, as he rode on slowly, she walking by his side.

“My lord the count arrived here from Paris, yesterday, and——”

“My father at Rousillon!” exclaimed Bertram; “why didn’t you say so before, Helena?” And the young man was about to ride on impetuously.

But Helena called to him that he had not yet heard what she had to tell; and with a muttered “pshaw,” he checked his horse, until she should come up with him.

I heard the count tell my lady yesterday, that he had lately made the acquaintance of two young men, whom he thought would make admirable friends for his son. They are brothers of the name of Dumain, have just obtained commissions in the army, and are in high favor with his majesty. He said that their excellent qualities made him take all measures to secure their intimacy for you, against you go with him to Paris; and from what more fell from him on the subject, I cannot help thinking, my lord means to remove you from college, and introduce you at court, the very next time he returns to attend the king.”

“Do you really think so, Helena?” said Bertram, with sparkling eyes and heightened colour. “This is indeed good news! I long to see my father, and learn if it be true.”

He flung himself off his horse, as he approached the chateau, and throwing the bridle to Helena, said:—“Just lead Charlemagne round to the stable for me; I cannot lose a moment in seeing my father.”

Bertram hurried away; while Helena kept her eyes fixed upon his handsome agile figure as long as it was in sight, and wondered at the blank that seemed to fall upon her spirit as he disappeared.

“Why am I so unhappy, when he is so elated?” thought she; “Ought I not to rejoice that he is pleased? What delight shone in his eyes as he bent their hawk glance upon me while I spoke the words. And what eyes they are!” She threw her arm over the saddle where he had lately sat, and looked up as if she could still see the eyes dancing and sparkling with joy at her tidings. “He is happy to go; how selfish of me then, not to feel glad that he is going. Glad that he is going! Glad at his absence! Ah, how can I? Glad!” she repeated in a soft sad murmur, as she hid her burning cheek against the neck of the horse.

The noble animal turned its head towards the young girl, as if in dumb sympathy with the low sobs she uttered, and the tears she could not repress, which trickled down the glossy skin of its throat.

She spoke fond words, caressing and patting the intelligent creature; bidding it bear safely him whom they both worshipped as their ruler, their guide, their dear master; and whispering many a gentle entreaty that it might not be long ere the good steed should bring back his lord to Rousillon, where loving hearts awaited him, that bore him stronger and more constant affection than all the friends in Paris, young or old, man or woman.

The countess's page at this instant came running

towards Helena, bidding her hasten in to his lady, who was in sad distress at a sudden attack of illness which had seized the count Rousillon, only a few minutes after his son's arrival.

Giving Charlemagne's rein to the page, while she hastily dried her eyes, and endeavoured to assume as much calmness as might be, that she should be the fitter to support and assist the countess, Helena hurried to the saloon of the chateau, where she found the late tranquillity in which she had left it, exchanged for a scene of the greatest confusion and anxiety.

On a couch lay extended the count of Rousillon, his eyelids closed, his features convulsed and distorted, and his head supported on the bosom of his wife, who, with her usual composure, the result of a placid temperament and a well-disciplined mind, was administering restoratives ; although her trembling hand and pallid cheek betrayed the inward agony she was suffering. Beside the couch, and holding his father's hand, knelt Bertram, while behind it stood Isbel, the countess's woman, who was holding the essences and remedies with which she supplied her mistress from time to time. Close by, stood Rinaldo, the steward, who was receiving his mistress's low-voiced orders to despatch messengers post-haste to Narbonne, to fetch Gerard, while others were sent elsewhere in the meantime for medical assistance nearer at hand. In one corner of the room was Lavatch, the clown, lustily crying and sobbing in the sincerity of his heart, for his master, to whom he was fondly attached.

Helena joined the anxious group, and was soon busily engaged in her own quiet steady manner, assisting, relieving each in their several duties, and doing much by her judicious suggestions, and calm activity, to contribute to the ease of the sufferer.

Her father, Gerard's arrival was looked for with the greatest solicitude, as the harbinger of safety to the count. They all, the countess especially, had such

faith in his ability, it seemed as if his mere presence could avert danger, as if his fiat could assure life.

At length he came. For a time, his skill, together with the powerful remedies he brought with him from Narbonne, as best suited to the nature of the seizure which he learned to have been the count's, served to restore the lord of Rousillon to something of his former health. But he soon relapsed, languished, and remained for several weeks in a state between life and death. During this period, he was assiduously nursed by his countess and Helena, dutifully attended by his son Bertram, and treated with the utmost of Gerard's care and skill.

Indeed, only resources of art such as were known to this eminent physician could have preserved him so long alive. Like a lamp spent of oil, his flame of existence flickered from day to day, only held suspended by the cherishing hand of friendly care, zealous to screen from rude approach—to protect from extinction.

Each day brought messengers from the court, charged with assurances of sympathy and solicitude from the king, towards his esteemed and faithful servant. Relatives and allies in Paris sent frequent despatches indicative of their interest in the progress of the count's disorder, and their hopes of his recovery. But royal kindness, friendly demonstrations of attachment, conjugal and filial attention, his physician's zeal and ability, were ineffectual to rescue or to save; after a protracted languishment, the count Rousillon expired, surrounded by those he loved, and respected by all who knew him.

Gerard, who had a suite of apartments devoted to his use during his sojourn at Rousillon, now talked of retiring to his duties at Narbonne. The countess, much as she would have desired to retain so valued a friend near her, could not withstand the plea that his poor patients would have already missed him, and needed his presence. But as it was fixed that when

the period of mourning for his father should have expired, Bertram should go to Paris and pay his respects to the king, under the auspices of the count's old friend, the lord Lafeu, the countess made it her entreaty to Gerard, that he would still indulge her with the society of his daughter Helena.

He could not withhold his consent to the bereaved countess in her sorrow; although he had learned to perceive the solace which his daughter's companionship would now afford to himself. In his late renewed intercourse with her, he had had opportunity of becoming acquainted with her true worth. In the sobered and time-softened grief of his own heart, in the comparative leisure of thought which his situation recently permitted, he had been able to estimate the many excellencies of heart and mind which distinguished his Helena, and he had now felt that her presence would be as great a comfort as it had formerly been an increased distress to him. But Gerard was not the being to allow a selfish motive, however powerful, to influence him, where the happiness of a fellow-creature was involved in any sacrifice he could make; therefore, with a suitable acknowledgment to his patroness for her friendship towards him and his, he prepared to return alone to Narbonne.

On the eve of the day fixed for his departure, he sought Rinaldo, the steward, and bade him make his excuses to the lady of Rousillon, or her son, should either of them enquire for him when the family assembled to dinner, and to say that he had private business a league or two from the chateau, which might probably defer his return until eventide. When Rinaldo gave this message to his mistress, Helena happened to be within hearing; and on questioning the steward farther respecting her father, she learned that which made her feel involuntary disquietude respecting his sudden and unannounced absence. Rinaldo, who was a faithful and attached servitor, and a remarkably discreet, observant man, owned to Helena that he had

remarked tokens of agitation in the countenance of her parent, and that his voice was perturbed, although both face and tone seemed to be held in restraint, as if he would fain have assumed a calm demeanour.

Helena, with earnest thanks to Rinaldo, besought him to add to his kindness, by telling her in which direction her father had taken his way through the park that morning ; for, perceiving the countess and her son engaged together in conversation, she knew she could be spared, and determined to await in the path by which he should come back, the return of her father, that she might the sooner satisfy her anxiety respecting him.

The afternoon was lovely. As Helena crossed the drawbridge, the stream, which supplied the moat, spread widening through the landscape, and its waters, sparkling and glistening in the rays of the sun, gave movement and brilliancy to the scene. Beneath the lofty trees of the park, the slanting beams shed golden light, diffusing a rich glow upon the velvet turf beneath, making the green freshness more apparent, whilst it cast twinkling shadows, and shone in ruddy patches upon bark, and branch, and bole. Beneath the shade, stood herds of deer,—the late count having been at some pains to introduce the breed upon his estate ;—some were standing at gaze, with their soft yet lustrous eyes reflecting the brightness of some straggling sun-beam ; others reclining their dappled bodies on the grassy sward ; some with their patient mouths, ruminating ; all whisking and vibrating their never-wearied tails, in ceaseless rebuke of the flies, that hummed, and floated, and glanced, and darted in the sunny air.

With the mottled denizens of the park, as with all the animals about the domain, Helena was on excellent terms ; the lordly stag would scarce withdraw his branching antlers from her reach, or the timid doe start from her side, when she approached their haunts, and stood among them, with some tempting morsel in

her hand for them, or a gentle caress, or a coaxing word of salute.

But now she tarried not to fondle the deer, but kept still on, hoping to meet her father soon.

But the golden sun-rays ever slanted more and more ; the rich haze on the landscape faded ; the glory settled downward, toward the horizon ; the sky paled its azure hue ; the trees wore a veil of purple ; the grass was bespread with dewy sheen ; and the still breath of evening crept over all.

By and bye a star twinkled forth ; then another ; and again more ; and then the moon arose ; and yet Helena was seeking her father ; and yet he came not.

She had reached the extremity of the park, and was hesitating whether she might not miss him, by passing through the gate, and proceeding farther, when she perceived approaching at a distance a figure that she at once recognized to be his.

She hastened towards him uttering his name.

He did not answer ; his face was rigid and deathly white ; for an instant he looked wildly in her face ; then suddenly he caught her in his arms, and burst into a passion of tears.

To behold the weeping of a man is always terrible ; to behold that of a father, to feel his frame torn and shaken by the strength of an irresistible emotion, to find herself clasped to his bosom convulsed and swollen with the fierce strife between anguish and the desire to control its expression,—how overwhelming to a daughter, a being like Helena !

She strove to compose him, to control her own agitation that she might the better soothe his. At length he found voice to say :—

“ Be not alarmed, my Helena ! Forgive me, my child ! It was beyond my power, or you should not have witnessed this ! But it has saved your father, Helena ; it has relieved his bursting heart, which else must have broken ; and you will pardon your own pain, that it has assuaged his.”

As they returned together, she gathered from his broken words that he had been drawn by an invincible desire, to visit once more the old pavilion (the farm itself had long since passed into other hands, on the death of Gabrielle's father), before he quitted, probably for ever, the vicinity of a spot so hallowed to his remembrance. The scene itself, however, had awakened so many tender memories, so many bitter regrets, had reopened such cruel wounds, that Gerard had been thrown into a kind of swoon, from which he had only recovered to stagger forth in renewed misery from a place that was fraught with so much anguish of recollection. He had made his way back somehow, scarcely restored from that fainting-fit, when the sight of his child and *hers*, had mercifully brought forth the gush of tears which had in all probability preserved him from delirium or death.

But the blow had been dealt; the sentence had passed. Although the timely advent of his daughter had averted the immediate result, yet Gerard had in reality received his mortal stroke in that old pavilion-chamber. On reaching the chateau, he withdrew immediately to his apartment, and would not permit his daughter to remain by his bedside, though she entreated him long and urgently to let her stay with him.

On the next day, which had been fixed for his return to Narbonne, he was compelled to acknowledge that he was unable to attempt the journey, being too ill, indeed, to rise from his bed. Helena hung over him, and besought him to tell her what might be devised for his relief.

“There is no medicine now that can give me life;” said he. “One there is, indeed, which might relieve this oppression—but it is no matter, it cannot avail to baffle death—it could only postpone his coming; his summons is already issued. Grieve not, my child, my Helena; it carries no terrors with it to me. The grave to me has long been a wished-for haven, a peaceful refuge, where I may hope to rejoin my lost

one, and with her to abide evermore in that joyful realm beyond.

Helena by every winning persuasion, by every gentle art, taught her by her loving perseverance of nature, strove to discover what and where this medicine was, that she might seek it, to lighten, if not destroy, his disease ; and at length Gerard told her, by way of putting a stop entirely to her anxiety on the subject, that it was in a certain medicine-chest in his little book-room at Narbonne.

Far from ending her solicitude on the point, this intelligence only awakened an invincible desire to obtain the medicine, and she inwardly resolved to set out for Narbonne herself in quest of it. She no sooner beheld her father sink into a doze, than she stationed Isabel by his bedside, with an injunction to watch, while she herself went to the countess of Rousillon and implored her permission to depart at once in search of the medicine-chest her father had mentioned.

The countess applauded her pious resolve, but showing her that her duty claimed her attendance by her father's side, even more than her journey in quest of the remedy, promised Helena that she would send her steward, Rinaldo, to Narbonne for the medicine-chest.

Upon her knees, Helena thanked the good countess for her sympathy and help in a daughter's distress ; and once more repaired to her father's bedside.

During that day, and part of the next, Gerard remained in a sort of stupor. From this he awakened somewhat better, and spoke to his daughter in a cheerful strain of hope and comfort. He bade her regard his approaching death as he did, as a removal from suffering, as a period to grief, and as a commencement of future joy. He told her that her promising virtues and many excellencies gave him assurance that their present separation would be but for a time. He spoke to her candidly of the good he perceived in her, taught her how best to cultivate and increase her

natural tendencies towards it, and admonished her how best to avoid those points where her virtues might lead to error.

“ You possess firmness, steadiness, constancy, my child,” said he ; “ beware that they become not hardness, unrelentingness, obstinacy. You have perseverance, indefatigable and indomitable courage, in pursuing an object that you conceive to be right ; be well assured that the object you seek is right, lest your perseverance involve you in evil, and your courage be but rash encounter of peril and ultimate wrong. Your spirit of persistence may be productive of the highest good, so that you let it not degenerate into obstinacy, wilfulness, or headstrong, irrational inflexibility. Be sure that your motives are pure, your means innocent, and your aim a hallowed one, and then give full scope to your native disposition ; then let nothing abate your courage, then pursue the dictates of your own resolved heart unswervingly, unflinchingly, invincibly. I have that faith in your nature,—which is essentially loving and generous, as well as persistive,—that gives me confidence, you will secure your own welfare, win your own happiness.”

“ Would that you might live to witness it ! To behold the result of your own instructions, my father !” said Helena. “ Why cannot you survive to see the maturing of your child’s destiny, to give her fresh precepts for making it a blest one ?”

“ That I might help towards such a consummation,” said he, “ I could have wished my strength prolonged ; but it is not to be. My breath is failing, and the revived speech that has been granted me, is nearly exhausted.”

“ That remedy, that medicine, dear father, which you spoke of,——”

“ Ay, it might have lent me strength to speak longer to thee, my child ; and for that it had been welcome. But it is at Narbonne ; and it is but spent breath to sigh for that which is far away. I, who must hus-

band every moment's breathing now, for thy dear sake, my Helena," said her father, with a faint smile, "will not waste a single gasp in vain aspiration."

Helena returned his smile with a gay and hopeful one, as she whispered:—"What if instead of being far away at Narbonne, that medicine-chest,—which contains, I trust, health, and strength, and life for my father,—were now on its way hither? Actually coming?"

"Is it so, my Helena?" said her father, as if his effort at cheer for her sake, and the prospect of aid in his attempt, gave him renewed energy. "Is it indeed so?"

"Ay, my father; this is one of the instances of your Helena's perseverance, which I hope may deserve your approval, in spite of its having been maintained against, or rather without, your authority. I was so determined to obtain it, that I would have risked abandoning your sick-bed, rather than not have it here; but my dear lady, the countess, in compassion for my anxiety, and in eagerness to secure aught that might avail you, has sent Rinaldo to Narbonne for the medicine-chest; they expect him here every hour."

A glow of satisfaction dwelt upon Gerard's features as his daughter said this; and for some time after she had spoken, he lay silent, with the same expression of content upon his face. He seemed to be endeavouring to gain strength by rest and silence that he might speak farther without exhausting himself entirely. He held out his hand to Helena for hers, and laid it upon the pillow, beneath his cheek. After a time he said:—

"Besides the boon of respite to myself, which that medicine-chest contains—a respite now welcome to me on thy account—it holds other things which make its coming a satisfaction to me. In that box lie many valuable secrets, the hoarded sum of many years' experience and practice. Recipes of various kinds for various disorders, jotted down at divers times by my-

self ; several rare unguents, drugs, and carefully-extracted essences ; some subtle mixtures, distillations, and condensed spirits ; together with explicit declaration of their curious qualities and sovereign effects ; and also the mode of using these recondite medicaments. Besides this, my own words, should they be permitted, shall explain to you the healing properties and peculiar nature of the several contents of this chest, which I bequeath to you, my Helena. It is the fitting inheritance of a poor physician's child ; may it prove a legacy eventually prosperous to her, as it has been hitherto advantageous to her father. The abstruse calculations, the profound research requisite in their formation, with the active duty and beneficial results attendant upon their application and administration have been a solace to him in periods of misery, when no less engrossing a pursuit would have sufficed. My art and its ministry have been a refuge to me, when all else upon earth failed me. May its bequeathed treasures, the sole ones I have to bestow upon her, prove the basis of good fortune and the source of felicity to my Helena !”

Rinaldo soon returned to Rousillon, bearing with him the precious medicine-chest. The remedy, from which Gerard augured relief, is efficacious. His death is deferred until he has fulfilled his desire of acquainting his daughter with the contents of the box, and of making her mistress of the numerous valuable secrets belonging to each. It seems as if life were but lent him until this task is effected, and as if life were valuable to him but so long as it may serve this end ; his purpose once accomplished, he resigns life as a burthen, and his parting breath exhales with the satisfaction of having devoted it as he could desire. To his daughter—to the daughter of his Gabrielle—he dedicates his last sigh ; and he bids her farewell in the hope of future and eternal reunion with those two sole objects of his earthly affection.

The countess of Rousillon, practised in equanimity

by past griefs, not by want of sensibility, consoles the orphan by more maternal kindness than ever. To her care and protection Helena has been consigned, with a dying father's blessing on the long course of benevolence which has already attended his child, and with his full confidence in its gracious continuance. The countess and Helena support each other under their respective losses, by mutual sympathy, tenderness, and affection.

The period of mourning passes in acts of charity and kindness towards those without the walls of the chateau, and in gentle words and deeds among each other, the surviving home-circle withinside.

The months creep by, and the time approaches for the departure of Bertram. Helena's sorrow is twofold ; but although grief for her father's loss serves to screen that which she feels prospectively, yet conscious love bids her hide the tears which have so natural and so obvious a source, lest their double origin be suspected. She dares not trust herself now with Bertram ; and though she feels every moment's absence will be bitterly regretted hereafter, when a compelled separation will prolong the present voluntary one, yet she shuns his presence, and inflicts this additional pain on herself, partly to inure herself to the coming one, partly to hide the secret which she instinctively feels is ever ready to betray its existence.

She seeks every pretext for keeping her chamber ; or wanders away solitarily through the park, where she may indulge her melancholy with unobserved sighs and tears, and unheard plaints at her lowly fate, which forbids the hope of linking it with one so far above her.

“ And were I not so humble of degree,” she would murmur, “ yet still I am surely unworthy of him in this selfish passion which would detain him here to waste his youth and nobleness in obscurity. Spirit like his, pines for broader range than the tame sports of the chase ; rank and wealth such as he owns, demand a wider field of benevolence and influence than a

country estate ; and why should the personal graces which adorn him be denied to the court of his sovereign, and be doomed to rust here unseen ? Not unseen ? ah, not unbeheld, unnoted, ungloried in ! Only too dearly prized—too fondly worshipped ! And if but by one sole worshipper, yet the plenitude of her idolatry might replace a train of less adoring devotees. How shall I bear his absence ? How do I even now advance its season, by stealing from him, and abstaining from the joint pain and delight of watching his face while yet it is near me ! The time will come when I shall vainly wish to look upon the well-known features ; and when, though pictured faithfully in memory, I shall pine to trace them in their living beauty. Is it that I know my unhappy love is painted on my own face that I fear to trust it within his ken ? Traitor to its mistress, it denies her the only joy she knows, by revealing the too great depth of that joy. Unworthy face ! that lacks beauty in itself, and betrays the suffrage it yields to his ; yet denying by its treachery, the view of the very beauty and sweet favor whose superiority it avows. And when the daily presence of that sweet favor is withdrawn, shall I not feel like some benighted traveller who has neglected the waning hours of light, and now wanders on in chill and darkness, bereft of the blessed sun, who sheds his rays, and dispenses warmth, and light, and comfort elsewhere ?”

Helena was strolling in the park while thus she mused, lamenting ; the deer gathered round her, in expectation of their accustomed notice ; but she paid little heed to them now, so occupied were her thoughts.

Presently she heard approaching footsteps ; and on raising her head, she was aware of an extraordinary figure that made its way towards her, bowing, and congeeing, and recommending itself to her notice.

It was that of a personage equipped in the most extravagant fashion. His suit was of saffron-colored taffeta, snipped and slashed, and guarded with showy

gilt lace, and hung with a profusion of glittering buttons and gaudy scarfs. A pair of bright red hose garnished his legs, which, with his arms, were bound with fluttering bows and ends of ribbon, that made all his limbs seem gartered alike. By his side hung a long sword ; in his belt stuck a dagger ; and he wore a plumed hat very much on one side, with a spruce defiant air, as if announcing the reckless, roystering, bold soldado.

“ Madam,” said he, raising his hat, and advancing towards the spot where Helena stood ; but cautiously and dubiously, with an eye cast upon the stags and their towering antlers, which plainly indicated the source of his hesitation. “ May I beseech of your ladyship’s goodness to inform me whether this be, as I suppose it is, the chateau and domain of count Rousillon ?”

“ It is, monsieur ;” answered she.

“ And may I crave farther to know of your fair grace, whether his lordship, the count Rousillon, be at present at the chateau ?”

Helena was about to reply, by mentioning the count’s death ; but bethinking her that Bertram was now count of Rousillon, she answered :—“ Unless the count has ridden forth, since I left the chateau, he is probably at home now ;—but if you proceed to the gates, sir, the servants will inform you whether his lordship is able to receive you.”

“ I am charged with a letter to him from a dear college friend of his, madam, introducing to his acquaintance my poor self, whom you are to know by name as Parolles, and by profession as a soldier. Of appertaining accomplishments which may claim your ladyship’s favor, I shall say nothing, as I trust to time for their discovery, or of deeds, as I think fame may one day blow their record hither ; but I will rest my present hope of a gracious reception, on your ladyship’s own indulgence, of which I behold assurance in that fair form and benignant aspect.”

Helena bowed somewhat loftily to this flourish.

“ I would crave permission to tender my homage at once on your ladyship's fair hand,” said monsieur Parolles, “ but that I cannot reach you, surrounded as you are by those antlered deer, in manner of Diana, the huntress-goddess. My warfare has hitherto been with man, and not with stags ; with ramparted fortalices, not with embattled antlers ; otherwise I would make my way to you, through these living defences, with my own good sword.”

“ You might not be permitted to assault the inoffensive herd, monsieur ;” said she. “ The deer are held protected at Rousillon.”

“ I crave your ladyship's pardon ;—but—which way lies the chateau ?” said he, with another furtive glance at the deer.

“ Yonder, monsieur ;” replied she. Then, observing his dismay at finding that she pointed in a direction where a large troop of stags stood immediately in the path, she added, when she had uttered a clear ringing sound of call, to which the deer were accustomed as a signal to gather close round her :—“ You may pass on, monsieur, there is nothing to fear !”

“ Fear, madam !” exclaimed Parolles, as he hastily picked his way forwards ; “ fear ! But I shall find meeter opportunity, I trust, of convincing you that fear and I are unacquainted, save as I inspire it to my foes.”

“ I have a notion that monsieur is less to be dreaded as a foe than as a friend ;” thought Helena, as the soldado disappeared. “ It is not the friendship of such a man as that, or I'm greatly mistaken, that the count would have sought for his son.”

Monsieur Parolles, having recovered greater dignity of step, after he had lost sight of the deer, lounged on until he came to the drawbridge, against a side-post of which leaned a tall, gangling lad, eating grapes with great voracity, and chucking their stalks into the moat ; while near to him stood a bright-eyed, cherry-cheeked damsel, who was holding the basket of fruit which supplied the lad's enjoyment.

“ Now rest thee content, Isbel,” he said, while he slightly varied his occupation of chucking the grape-stalks away, by chucking the damsel under the chin ; “ be not impatient ; I have promised to ask my lady’s good leave ; and it shall not be my fault, if I do not shortly marry thee !”

The damsel was about to reply, but looking up suddenly, and seeing Parolles approach, she tripped away abruptly, while the grape-eater turned to see the cause of her startled withdrawal.

“ Save you, fair sir ;” said he to the advancing stranger.

“ Save you, good fellow ;” replied Parolles.

“ None of mine, sir ;” said the tall lad. “ I hope I know my place better than to claim fellowship with such a sober-suited gentleman. My bauble and coxcomb would sort but ill with such apparel as that ;” said he, pointing to the frippery which decorated the person of Parolles ; who replied :—

“ I see, friend, now ; thou’rt the fool here.”

“ Ay, sir ;” said Lavatch ; “ and no great argument of your wit that you found not that out before. It is the part of wit to find out its counterpart in others, giving it honor, where it exists ; as well as readily, though pityingly, to discover its lack, where it exists not. I warrant me now, the fool could sooner track out what amount of folly lies in the gallant soldier, than you, the gallant soldier, can perceive folly where it dwells openly,—in the fool.”

“ Go to, thou’rt privileged ;” was Parolles’ only answer.

“ Marry, sir, and the privilege of a jester is like to have good scope when such visitors approach the chateau ;” returned the clown. “ We have been dull enough of late ; mourning the dead is no season for jesting. When good men die, and sincerity mourns, light-hearted folly hangs its head for lack of employment, and takes to weeping for company.”

“ And so, my lord, the late count, was sincerely

lamented, was he, knave? Think'st thou, in truth, no gleam of satisfaction lightened the heir's regret, eh? No redeeming solace in the fact that the young lord was now the old lord's substitute,—that the late count's title devolved upon the present count?"

"Faith, sir, I cannot tell; the long-deferred hopes of heirship may have such freaks of gladness; jolly survivorship, that comes unexpectedly into the property, may wink, from his place as chief-mourner, at grave-faced sympathy, watching the funeral train. Inheritance is a sore test of truth. The legatee-expectant tears his hair and beats his breast, till the will be read; then adieu to lamentation, and curses ensue. Railing at dead men's wills is rifer than thanks; and few people leave testaments that please all friends. He who would live well with his relations after his decease, should make no disposal of his goods. Let him, if he would have posthumous peace, leave his survivors to fight out their respective claims, and battle among themselves their administration to his unbequeathed chattels. If he settle their dispute beforehand by a will, they assault his memory, and abuse him, instead of each other."

"I met one pale face in the park, that bespoke true sadness at heart, matching the outer garb;" said monsieur Parolles. "It was that of a young lady. Daughter or niece to the late lord Rousillon, I take it? Though I never heard that the young count mentioned a sister. He spoke but of a mother."

"Marry, sir, the lady you met was no relation of our house. She claims no title to the name of Rousillon. All her having is, that she's good and fair; all her descent is, poverty and an honest name; all her title is, Helena, the doctor's daughter."

"Poor! A doctor's daughter!" exclaimed Parolles; "truly, she gave herself as many airs as though she had been Cræsus' heiress; and could not have spoken more haughtily, had she owned, not only the whole herd of those confounded horned beasts—

those outlandish branch-headed animals—but the park where they range. She pointed to the chateau with as magnificent a gesture as if she had been its sovereign lady-mistress.”

“It’s strange what lofty style modest merit will oftentimes use, when repressing presumption ;” said the clown. “Besides, timid virgins gain confidence from Valour’s presence ; and it might have been that your worship’s soldierly aspect inspired ma’amselle Helena with courage more than ordinary—with enough to confront even audacity itself.”

“My address had nothing in it of presumption or audacity either, sir knave ;” retorted Parolles. “I accosted her with only too much respect, I find, now that I learn what her claims really are.”

“By my troth, sir,” said Lavatch, “simple worth, poor honesty, native goodness, fair innocence, and such like claims to regard, are none with those who know what is due to wealth, rank, and station. We men of the world hold them at their true value. We use them both as they ought to be used. Honesty and innocence, joined to poverty and beauty, we make our prey ; while wealth and high birth we adulate, and contrive that its bounty shall requite our fawning. Is’t not so, monsieur ?”

“I have not time to stay dallying here with thee, fool ;” said Parolles. “I will find fitter time to argue conclusions with thee. For the present, I shall desire thee to convey this letter to thy young master, count Bertram of Rousillon ; and to inform him that its bearer is monsieur Parolles, a gentleman, and a soldier ; and one, moreover, that is known unto a mutual friend—the writer of that epistle.”

“I will send the letter by the page to my young lord ;” said the clown. “A fool’s office is to find occasion for mirth, and to furnish matter for entertainment from his own poor mother-wit, not to bandy to and fro the conceits of strangers, and play the go-between to other folks’ brains. Though the paper

may be the work of folly, as well as the herald and harbinger of folly, it shall not be the work of the fool to carry it to my lord."

Monsieur Parolles' letter of introduction,—which set him forth as a valiant and experienced soldier, a man of great knowledge, versed in several languages, and a generally accomplished person,—was favorably received by the young count; who welcomed his visitor with warmth accordingly, retaining him at Roussillon as his friend and companion, until his departure for Paris, and inviting him to go thither also.

After Helena's first meeting with the new visitor at the chateau, she was a little surprised at the alteration in his mode of accosting her, which was subsequently as impertinently familiar, as it had then been observant and deferential; but divining the true source of the change, she was as much amused as surprised.

The countess had just left the saloon, leaning on the arm of her son, whom she was about to present with a valued memorial of his late father. It was a ring, an heir-loom in the family, which she had hitherto preserved in a casket in her own private chamber, whither she now led the way, with Bertram, that she might give him some loving counsel at the same time that she bestowed the jewel.

Helena was busied in arranging some carnations and myrtle in a vase near the seat which was usually occupied by her benefactress, who was fond of flowers; and Parolles was lounging in a window-seat close by, occupied in no more serious employment than tapping his fingers with the point of his sheathed dagger.

"The young count will be glad to be absolved from attendance on the maternal apron-string, though his present fealty is touching to behold;" said monsieur Parolles. "We shall both be glad of enfranchisement from women's society—which hath its charms, doubtless—but which is apt to be insipid after a time, to us who pant for congenial intercourse with masculine minds, for manly pursuits, and stirring scenes,

and ambition, and wars, and active life. The only drawback I shall feel, will be commiseration for the regret we shall leave behind us ; the gap which our loss will create in the circle here."

"Monsieur Parolles hath the compassionate tenderness which best assorts with bravery ;" said Helena. "Valour such as his, must always be pitiful."

"It is as remorseful to its victims, as it is fearful to its opponents ;" said he.

"Fearful, certainly, with them ; who else ?" rejoined Helena. "Courage such as yours, monsieur, fears none so surely, as those who show it a bold face at first."

"Poor devils ! they fear what they might trust, if they knew its chivalrous consideration for the fallen ;" said Parolles.

"They might safely confide in its forbearance, I've no doubt ;" said she.

"You show some acquaintance with true valour, my princess of gentlewomen, and deserve its commendation in return ; I can tell thee, I approve thy perspicacity exceedingly."

"I hope it will always serve me to distinguish true valour from its counterfeit, monsieur Parolles ;" said she, curtsying to him.

Some days elapsed ; and then the lord Lafeu arrived, bringing with him a gracious mandate from the king, containing his majesty's desire to see the young count Bertram of Rousillon at court.

The countess receives the valued friend of her husband with highest tokens of respect and cordiality, although he is come with the express purpose of taking away her son, so doubly dear to her now, since she has lost his father, whose image he is in shape and feature.

Previous to their setting forth, the whole company assembles in the saloon at Rousillon. The countess presents her favorite Helena to the excellent old lord Lafeu, who speaks kindly and encouragingly to the maiden.

For poor Helena is endeavouring to master her emotion, to conceal her overwhelming grief. Now that the time is actually come, for parting with the object of her secret passion, she knows not how to suppress her sobs and tears ; and is relieved when the countess's timely allusion to her father's loss, affords a pretext for allowing them to flow unrestrainedly.

She weeps, and says :—

“ *I do affect a sorrow, indeed, and yet I have it too.*”

The rest of Helena's fortunes is set forth where ‘ still the fine's the crown.’





Page 105,
line 6. "So is the will of a living daughter curb'd
by the will of a dead father."—*Idem*, Act i.,
s. 3.

Page 107,
line 26. "Take this same letter,
And use thou all the endeavour of a man,
In speed to Padua ; see thou render this
Into my cousin's hand, doctor Bellario."
Idem, Act iii., s. 4.

TALE II.

Page 148,
line 38. "Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't."
MACBETH, Act ii., s. 2.

Page 179,
line 2. There is historical authority for the name of
Macbeth's mother being Doda ; that of his
wife, Gruoch ; and that of his son, Cormac.

Page 195,
line 3. "We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest, Malcolm ; whom we name hereafter
The prince of Cumberland."
MACBETH, Act i., s. 4.

Page 200,
line 34. "The Norweyan lord, surveying vantage,
With furbish'd arms and new supplies of men,
Began a fresh assault."—*Idem*, Act i., s. 2.

Page 200,
line 37. "The merciless Macdonwald
(Worthy to be a rebel ; for, to that,
The multiplying villanies of nature
Do swarm upon him) from the western isles
Of Kernes and Gallowglasses is supplied."
Idem, Act i., s. 2.

Page 201,
line 15. "What beast was it then,
That made you break this enterprise to me ?
When you durst do it, then you were a man ;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. *Nor time, nor place,*
Did then adhere, and yet you would make them
both :
They have made themselves, and that their fit-
ness now
Does unmake you."—*Idem*, Act i., s. 7.

TALE III.

Page 282, *King.* "I would I had that corporal sound-
line 15. ness now,
As when thy father, and myself, in friendship
First tried our soldiership! He did look far
Into the service of the time, and was
Discipl'd of the bravest."

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, Act i., s. 2.

Page 285, "He was famous, sir, in his profession, and
line 36. it was his great right to be so: Gerard de Nar-
bonne."—*Idem*, Act i., s. 1.

Page 297, The countess Rousillon addresses her steward
line 25. as "Rinaldo."—*Idem*, Act iii., s. 4.

Page 298, "His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls,
line 30. * * * * * heart too capable
Of every line and trick of his sweet favour."
Idem, Act i., s. 1.

Page 305, "You remember
line 21. *The daughter of this lord?*

Bertram. Admiringly, my liege: at first
I stuck my choice upon her, ere my heart
Durst make too bold a herald of my tongue:
Where the impression of mine eye infixing,
Contempt his scornful perspective did lend me,
Which warp'd the line of every other favour;
Scorn'd a fair colour, or express'd it stol'n;
Extended or contracted all proportions,
To a most hideous object: Thence it came,
That she, whom all men prais'd, and whom
myself,
Since I have lost, have lov'd, was in mine eye,
The dust that did offend it.

King. Well excused:

* * * * *
Send forth your amorous token for fair *Maud-
lin.*"—*Idem*, Act v., s. 3.

Page 313, The king, quoting his friend, the late count
line 7. Rousillon's opinion of young fellows at court,
says he called them:—

“ Younger spirits whose apprehensive senses
All but new things disdain ; whose judgments
are
More fathers of their garments ; whose con-
stances
Expire before their fashions.”

Idem, Act i., s. 2.

Page 313,
line 16. Bertram disdainfully and ungenerously says,
when refusing to take the poor physician's
daughter for his wife :—

“ She had her breeding at my father's charge.”

Idem, Act ii., s. 3.

Page 313,
line 31. “ Whose beauty did astonish the survey
Of richest eyes ; whose words all ears took cap-
tive ;
Whose dear perfection, hearts that scorn'd to
serve,
Humbly call'd mistress.”—*Idem*, Act v., s. 3.

Page 316,
line 31. *Vide* the scene in the fourth act, where the
soldiers are cross-questioning the blindfolded
Parolles. They are there called by their names
of “ Dumain ;” but among the Dramatis Per-
sonæ, they are styled “ young French lords,
that serve with Bertram in the Florentine
wars ;” and in the scenes where they appear,
the prefix to their several speeches merely
stands thus :—1 Lord, 2 Lord. Their moral
excellence is best proved in the conversation
they hold together ‘ respecting Bertram ’ at the
beginning of this scene. It is 1 Lord, the elder
captain Dumain, who utters the celebrated sen-
tence :—“ The web of our life is of a mingled
yarn, good and ill together : our virtues would
be proud, if our faults whipped them not ; and
our crimes would despair, if they were not
cherished by our virtues.”

Page 318,
line 29. Parolles, on his return to Rousillon after his
disgrace, addressing the clown, says :—“ Good
monsieur *Lavatch*, give my lord Lafeu this let-
ter.”—ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, Act v.,
s. 2.

Page 324,
line 14. *Hel.* “ Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,
Which we ascribe to Heaven : the fated sky

Gives us free scope ; only, doth backward pull
Our slow designs, when we ourselves are dull.

* * * * *

Impossible be strange attempts, to those
That weigh their pains in sense : and do suppose

What hath been cannot be.”—*Idem*, Act i., s. 3.

Page 326,
line 36.

“ My father left me some prescriptions
Of rare and prov'd effects, such as his reading,
And manifest experience, had collected
For general sovereignty ; and that he willed me
In heedfullest reservation to bestow them,
As notes, whose faculties inclusive were,
More than they were in note : amongst the rest,
There is a remedy approv'd, set down,
To cure the desperate languishes whereof
The king is render'd lost.”—*Idem*, Act i., s. 3.

Page 327,
line 27.

King. “ How long is't, count,
Since the physician at your father's died ?
He was much fam'd.

Ber. “ Some six months since,
my lord.”—*Idem*, Act i., s. 2.

Page 328,
line 3.

Countess. “ Her father bequeathed her to me :
and she herself, without other advantage, may
lawfully make title to as much love as she
finds : there is more owing her, than is paid ;
and more shall be paid her, than she'll demand.”—*Idem*, Act i., s. 3.

Page 329,
line 37.

Lafeu asks Parolles (Act ii., s. 3) “ Why
dost thou *garter up thy arms* o' this fashion ?
dost make hose of thy sleeves ?” And in the
fifth scene of the fourth act, the old lord tells
the countess :—“ No, no, no, your son was mis-
led with a *snipt-taffata* fellow there ; whose
villanous *saffron* would have made all the un-
baked and doughy youth of a nation in his col-
our : your daughter-in-law had been alive at
this hour ; and your son here at home more
advanced by the king, than by that *red-tailed*
humble-bee I speak of.”

Page 332,
line 5.

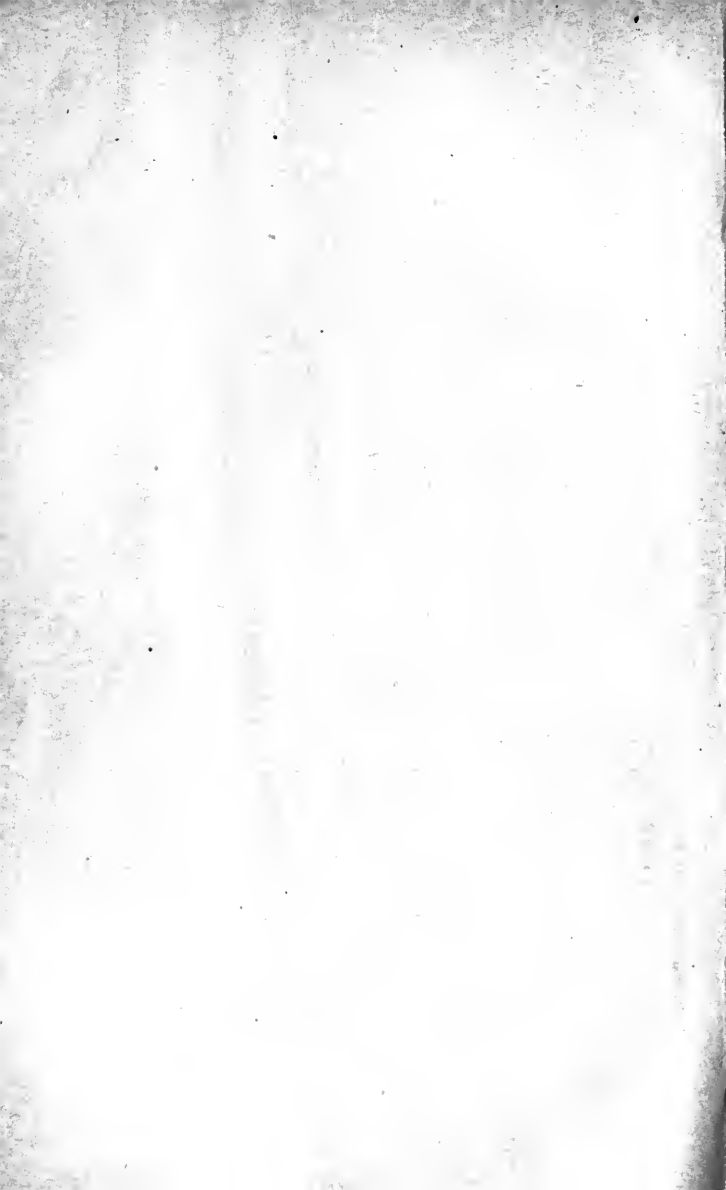
The clown says to his mistress, the countess,
“ If I may have your ladyship's good will to go

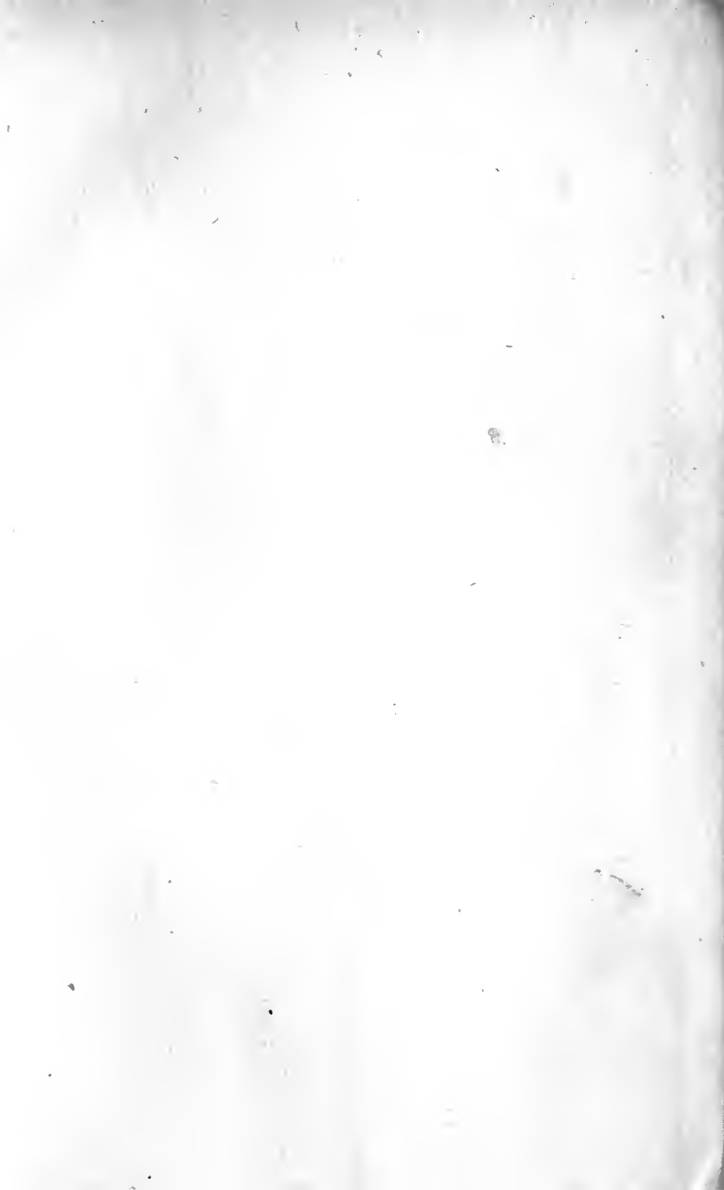
to the world," [said to be a cant phrase, meaning, 'to be married,'] "Isbel the woman and I will do as we may."—ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, Act i., s. 3.

Page 335,
line 5. "This is your devoted friend, sir, the manifold linguist, and the armipotent soldier."—*Idem*, Act iv., s. 3.

Page 335,
line 20. "Of six preceding ancestors, that gem Conferr'd by testament to the sequent issue, Hath it been own'd, and worn."
Idem, Act v., s. 3.









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