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ISABEL ST ALBE:

OR

VICE AND VIRTUE.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY MISS CRUMPE.

VOL. III.

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1823.



ISABEL ST ALBE.

CHAPTER I.

WHILE Lord Belville and his lovely charge are proceeding on their journey homewards, we shall reveal those circumstances, the relation of which will account for his Lordship's appearance, and timely rescue of our afflicted heroine. Having witnessed the nuptials of his daughter, Lord Belville had determined to return to his hotel ; but, after parting with the gay wedding train, the fineness of the weather had induced him to alter his intention, and he extended his drive to St Denis, resolving to visit the celebrated cathedral of that town. So many hours were spent in exploring

those subterranean chapels which contain the ashes of departed greatness, that Lord Belville, with surprise, perceived that the morning had nearly elapsed, and that it was quite time to return to Paris. He instantly ordered his carriage, but had the mortification to discover that an accident having happened to one of the wheels, it was necessary to abandon the idea of reaching the capital to dinner, as the repairs could not be completed till towards evening. Resigning himself to what was inevitable, Lord Belville partook of a slight repast at St Denis; but, in consequence of so much delay, he did not arrive in Paris until a very late hour. On ringing for his valet, Lord Belville was informed that Charles had left the house late in the day, and had never since returned. Surprised at such conduct, his Lordship desired, that, as soon as the man made his appearance, he should be told his services were required.

The bell of Notre Dame tolled eleven as a gentle knock at the door of Lord Belville's

chamber demanded admission, which being granted, his Lordship's valet entered.

The fluttered manner and agitated countenance of the man denoted a degree of emotion which astonished Lord Belville, as he hastily demanded,—“Where have you been, Charles? What is the matter?”

“My Lord, I have been—that is, I know not how to ——,” stammered the servant, in confusion.

“Speak. What means this hesitation?—What excuse are you framing for your negligence? Or say, has any misfortune happened?”

“Not yet, I trust, my Lord;—but,”—again he stopped.

“Proceed, fool, or leave my presence,” said Lord Belville, angrily.

“Then, my Lord, I will at once reveal what chance discovered. Late last night, as I passed the coachman's room, I heard John say, in a surly voice,—‘But what reward am I to have? for, faith, 'tis a strong bribe will

make me betray that lovely lady.' My curiosity excited, I could not help listening to what followed; and I then heard John's companion offer him, in Lord Langrave's name, an immense sum of money, provided he would consent to have your Lordship's barouche at Lady Dashton's door at twelve o'clock this night; and agree, as soon as Miss St Albe was entrapped into the carriage, to drive off with the devil's speed to a farm-house in the neighbourhood of Coignières, where fresh horses were to be ready, and from whence they were to go to Chartres." Lord Belville started; but, motioning to his valet to proceed, Charles continued his narration.

"John, I must say, for some time obstinately refused, until his tempter insinuated that he need not fear my Lady's anger, and reckoned (I heard the sound) a quantity of coin upon the table. The bribe, I suppose, was so large, that poor John could no longer resist; for I distinctly heard him say,—'In Old Nick's name, then, I consent.'

“ Fearful of detection, I immediately stole away, anxiously hoping that opportunity would allow me to discover the whole plot to your Lordship. I found, however, that that was impossible last night ; and, owing to the presence of my assistant valet this morning, it was equally impracticable. I therefore determined to wait your Lordship’s return from the Ambassador’s chapel, and then to disclose my important secret ; but judge, my Lord, how great was my consternation on finding almost the entire morning pass without my expectation being fulfilled. Towards evening I went to the Ambassador’s, resolving to inquire whether your Lordship had proceeded to Versailles with the wedding party. I was told your carriage had taken the road to St Germain. Immediately I went thither, and, after a twelve miles ride, found, on my arrival, I had been misinformed.

“ Without delay I galloped homewards, and this moment have dismounted from my horse.”

“ Perfidious Langrave !” passionately cried Lord Belville. “ Charles, no time is to be lost ; order my carriage—provide an armed escort—Yet how can we hope to prevent the scheme, when the very hour for its completion is now nearly arrived ?” In violent agitation, Lord Belville paused an instant ; then quickly added,—“ Our only plan is to pursue the road that Langrave means to take ; but, setting off in a different direction, we shall meet, not chase the villain, (who to surprise by other means would be impossible,) and rescue my niece from his detested power. As to the wretch who dared to insinuate that Lady Belville co-operated in the nefarious plot, he shall be brought to justice. Charles, you do not believe aught against your Lady’s honour ?”

“ No ! no, my Lord ! It was a base falsehood, invented to induce compliance.”

“ Enough. Then repeat it not, I charge you—away, delay not !”—Charles bowed acquiescence to his master’s orders, as he left the room to follow his other directions.

Lord Belville was not sincere in the conviction he had expressed of his wife's innocence. He knew her character sufficiently well, to believe her capable of almost any action to which self-interest impelled; and though he did not absolutely comprehend the motive which could have induced her present proceeding, yet, from many little coincidences that now arose to memory, he felt convinced she was privy to the intended elopement. That love, however, which, notwithstanding Lady Belville's depravity, yet existed in the heart of her infatuated husband, compelled him earnestly to desire that her guilt should be concealed, not only from the mind of his valet, but from all the world beside. With agitated pleasure, therefore, he cherished the idea, that it would still be possible to secrete from Isabel the knowledge of her aunt's participation in Lord Langrave's iniquitous scheme; for, by giving due warning to Lady Belville, he trusted she would affect such extraordinary rapture on Isabel's restoration,

and depict in such vivid colours the alarm and anxiety she had suffered during her absence, that a doubt of her sincerity would never arise in the mind of our heroine. Langrave was the only person who could disprove the truth of her Ladyship's protestations; but Lord Belville hoped some efficient measure could be yet devised to compel his silence.

At that moment Lord Belville's thoughts were too flurried to admit of further arrangement; therefore, snatching a pen, he scrawled a few incoherent lines to Lady Belville, in which he informed her of the discovery of her perfidy, of his own desire to screen her from detection, and also his firm intention, at all risks, to rescue Isabel from Langrave. A hint, Lord Belville knew, would be sufficient to induce his wife to wear the mask of dissimulation; and, being aware how admirably she could play the actress's part as occasion required, he dismissed all fears on the subject of her real character being betrayed.

Immediately after having given his letter to a confidential servant, with strict orders to deliver it into his Lady's own hands, on her arrival from Versailles, Lord Belville proceeded with the utmost haste to execute his benevolent intentions, with what success has been already related. To avoid further explanations, it may be here necessary to state, that the infamous design of our heroine's *enlèvement* was indeed the united plot of Lady Belville and Lord Langrave.

Irritated at Isabel's rejection of his suit, maddened by her coldness and evident dislike, Langrave, in conjunction with his unprincipled coadjutor, had conceived the diabolical design of lowering the angelic purity of Isabel, by reducing her character to a level with that of the most miserable of her sex; while, so powerful was the desire of revenge in his Lordship's breast, that every other passion bowed subservient to its impetuous dictates. Love, interest, ambition, all were swallowed up in an insatiate desire for vengeance,

deep and deadly, on the woman who had dared refuse the hand he deigned to offer ; and so shrouded was his natural reason, by the tyrant influence of one predominant feeling, that he could not calculate the dangers of his daring attempt, nor estimate the risk he ran of being ultimately involved in signal misery ; for, desperate from disappointment, and infuriated by despair, he cared not how deep was the abyss down which he plunged, how precipitous the fall, or how awful the punishment he might incur, if Isabel, the matchless Isabel, was hurled from her glorious sphere, engulfed in his destruction,—the partner of his ruin !

As to Lady Belville, she felt no “ compunctious visitings of nature ” to deter her from acceding to the plot proposed by Langrave, for self-interest induced compliance, as, in case success attended the execution of the unjustifiable project, Lord Langrave had bound himself to restore to Lady Belville the important document, to obtain which their former agreement had been entered into ; and

to ensure the performance of his promise, her Ladyship had retained in pledge certain legal papers of vital consequence to Langrave, which, it was stipulated, she should return when her accomplice's part in their mutual contract was successfully fulfilled. In the mean time, it was arranged, that their villainous purpose should be veiled

“ In deep dissimulation's darkest night,”

while their innocent victim should be disarmed of all suspicion, by the wary prudence of her vindictive enemies. But how often are the designs of the wicked subverted by the intervention of that power, who regards the puerile designs of mankind but as the childish efforts of “ reason blindfold !” Never was the interposition of Providence more visible, than in the unexpected deliverance of our heroine from the thralldom into which she had been seduced. What circumstances followed her fortunate release, we shall proceed to communicate in the ensuing chapter.

CHAPTER II.

ISABEL did not long continue insensible to the attentions of Lord Belville. She soon revived to the pleasing sense of her personal safety, and a grateful recollection of his Lordship's kindness in effecting her rescue.

“ My dear, dear uncle ! ” she exclaimed, “ how much, under Providence, do I owe you ! Tell, Oh tell me, how were you informed of my dreadful situation ? ” she demanded, tears nearly choking utterance, as she strongly grasped his hand, and gazed on his countenance with an expression of the tenderest affection.

“ Do not renew agitation by discussing the subject. Suffice it to say, that chance discovered to me your distress, which, of course, I

instantly flew to relieve ; but do not thank me, Isabel, I cannot bear your gratitude," his Lordship quickly added in suppressed emotion.

" Think on what you have released me from, and no longer will you wonder at the intensity of my feelings ; and, Oh ! what will be my father's gratefulness when informed of your noble conduct !"

" For Heaven's sake forbear—I beseech—I conjure you—revile—condemn—do any thing but thank me !" with vehemence cried Lord Belville, as he hastily covered his face with his handkerchief. The idea of that temporary aberration of mind to which Lady Belville had, more than once, insinuated her Lord was subject, now flashed on Isabel's remembrance, as she gently took her uncle's hand and said,—

" Then I will not attempt to express all my heart so truly feels. Yet, my dearest Lord, I trust you will not suffer from exertions which, I fear, you have not strength to bear."

“ No, no ! I shall be quite well presently, but I gasp for air,” convulsively sighed his Lordship, letting down the glass.

Isabel did not attempt to interrupt the silence that ensued, and Lord Belville, for some time, continued to look earnestly out of the carriage window, apparently wrapped in the deepest meditation. At length he turned round and said,—

“ With what anxiety Lady Belville now watches our return ! how horror-struck she must have been on discovering that you were missing !”

“ Great, indeed, must have been her consternation. How well managed was the whole treacherous plot, for that creature (who I cannot bear to think on) looked so like my aunt. —Oh ! infamous Langrave,” cried Isabel shuddering, as she recollected all she had escaped, and seeming to revolt from even a recital of particulars.

“ We are both too much fatigued for conversation, my love,” said Lord Belville, kindly

throwing a mantle round our heroine, as he affectionately added, "Try and repose a little; sleep will infinitely benefit your harassed spirits; it is a solace innocence never asks in vain," said Belville with a deep-drawn sigh.

In compliance with her uncle's wishes, Isabel rested her aching head against the side of the carriage, and, exhausted in mind and body, she soon fell into a profound slumber, while Lord Belville continued to gaze intently on her lovely sleeping countenance, and to indulge his own sombre thoughts, which left him

"Room for meditation, e'en to madness."

As the carriage stopped at the auberge of a little country village within a few miles of Paris, Isabel awoke. "How refreshed I feel," she said with a smile of angelic sweetness. "Have you had any rest, my Lord?"

"No, I do not often sleep," he replied, with an expression of peculiar bitterness.

“ I need not have asked the question, for your blood-shot eye and pallid cheek eloquently betray all you have suffered on my account,” said Isabel with alarm, as she regarded the languid haggard appearance of her uncle.

“ My dear Lord, let me entreat you to stop at this place for some hours—a messenger can be dispatched to Lady Belville with an assurance of our safety,” she added imploringly.

“ I believe you are right ; it shall be so, for I am scarcely equal to proceeding further without some little rest. Charles, you must ride on to town, and inform your lady that she may expect to see us about nine o’clock to-night,” said Lord Belville, who, having seen his valet depart, and having ordered every refreshment and attendance that our heroine required, immediately retired to another apartment.

It was late in the evening ere Isabel’s solitude was disturbed. She regretted to perceive that, although somewhat more composed and convalescent in appearance, Lord Belville still evinced symptoms of extreme indisposition.

“ I trust you are better, uncle ?” affectionately said our heroine.

“ Thanks—I do feel easier ; and you, Isabel, have you recovered your alarm and fatigue ?”

“ Yes, considerably ; I wish you were equally restored.”

“ Oh ! I am as well as I usually am, or ought to be,” said Lord Belville smiling pensively ; “ and now, Isabel, we must commence our drive to Paris.”

“ I am quite ready,” she cheerfully replied, as, accepting her uncle’s assistance, she stepped into his chariot. Lord Belville seemed more than ever inclined to taciturnity, which his niece perceiving, she delicately forbore any attempt at conversation.

It was completely dark when the travellers arrived at the end of their journey, and it was long before the summons at the *porte cochère* was answered. At length Charles appeared ; his pale and agitated countenance struck a chill to Isabel’s heart ; and, as he assisted her to

descend, she involuntarily said, in a low key, "Has any thing unpleasant occurred?" A glance was the answer she received, but that glance so unequivocally spoke the assurance of distress, that she felt more than ever convinced that some misfortune had arisen. Meanwhile they had, in silence, ascended to the drawing-room, which being totally deserted, Lord Belville turned round and said, "Charles, where is your lady? 'Tis strange she is not here."

"I will go in search of her," rejoined Isabel hastily; for, judging from the agitated demeanour of the servant, that some dreadful accident had occurred, she wished to prevent a sudden communication of calamitous tidings.

"I will accompany you—or stay, I am tired—so will wait in Allanby's apartment," said Lord Belville, moving towards the door that led to his son's room.

"Oh! my Lord, in mercy do not go there," cried Charles in extreme perturbation, and extending his hand to prevent Lord Belville from proceeding further.

“Why not?—Is my son ill?—or—Oh! Heaven, what has happened?” exclaimed the agitated father, attempting to rush past the mournful domestics, who now, in crowds, collected round him, while instantaneously the door of Allanby’s chamber burst open, and Lady Belville (her hair dishevelled, and her whole appearance denoting the disorder of frantic distress) distractedly sprang forward, and, as convulsively she caught her husband’s arm, with the air of a maniac she wildly cried,—

“Prepare to hear the worst! Our honours are crushed—humbled—gone for ever—Allanby, the heir of our house, is ——.”

“Dead!”—burst from the tortured Belville, as pale, staggering, he reeled against the wall, and would have fallen, but for the timely support of Isabel; who, in agonized accents, exclaimed,—

“Was there no kindly lip to break this tale of sorrow? O, Lady Belville, how cruel! how abrupt!”—She could say no more; for her unhappy uncle broke from her grasp with

the transient strength of frenzy, and ere prevention could be effected, was in the chamber of Lord Allanby.

A violent scream the next instant pierced the ear of Isabel, who, springing to the room, followed by the frightened servants, beheld the figure of Lord Belville deluged in blood, thrown on the corpse of his son, and apparently bereft of life and motion!

Though almost palsied with terror, Isabel retained admirable presence of mind as she darted forward and raised the still insensible form of her uncle, while the gory torrent yet copiously streamed from his lips, and stained her garments with its sanguine hue.

“Fly! fly for assistance!—He has burst a blood-vessel!”—she gaspingly exclaimed, as several domestics rushed to execute her orders, while Lady Belville, paralyzed with horror, frantically shrieked,—

“Is he, too, gone?—Then you—you are avenged!” she wildly screamed, as, bursting into an hysterical laugh, she pointed at Isabel, and then sunk senseless on the floor.

“ Remove your Lady quickly—carefully,” cried our heroine, who alone seemed gifted with self-possession during the awful scene, and who, though pale as the corpse of Allanby that lay extended before her, yet gave every necessary direction with decision and fortitude; but her’s were not the feelings which in trivial, delicate distress, can affect the becoming attire of sympathy, but in the hour of real calamity, and of danger, betray the coldness of selfishness, striving to cloak its own callosity in the assumed garb of exaggerated sentiment, which ever shrinks from alleviating or participating in the misfortunes of humanity.

Never was the disinterested elevation and firm fortitude of our heroine more nobly evinced, than in the trying scene she was now called upon to witness. It was her bosom that supported the inanimate blood-stained form of her uncle; it was her tongue that roused the stupified attendants to a sense of the exertions that were demanded, and the assistance that was required.

Medical aid speedily arrived ; restoratives were immediately applied, and the exhausted Lord Belville was gently removed to his own apartment.

The physicians pronounced his Lordship in a most precarious state. Recovery, they added, was not impossible, though extremely uncertain ; for the blood-vessel which had burst was large, and dangerously situated. Lady Belville continued alarmingly indisposed, and occasionally delirious ; but it was imagined that a little care and attention would soon restore her to comparative convalescence.

After having received such bulletins, Isabel changed her disfigured attire, and, at length, had leisure to ask Charles what accident had occasioned Lord Allanby's demise. She was informed, that a fall from his horse had caused a concussion of the brain, and that almost instant death had followed. " When I arrived here, Ma'am," continued Charles, " the whole house was in the greatest confusion ; the remains of his Lordship had only just

reached Paris. My Lady was in the most dreadful agitation, for, even before the sad tidings of her son's death were known, I understand Lady Belville was considerably alarmed about your fate, Ma'am ; though a letter my Lord had left she said in some degree relieved her fears. There was also much disturbance about our poor young Lord's return ; for, owing to that villain, Lord Langrave, having drove off the barouche, as if it was his own, forsooth ! my Lady was obliged to come back to Paris, in Lady Dashton's carriage, and the unfortunate Lord Allanby having left Versailles before your absence was discovered, he did not accompany my Lady home, nor did she know what had become of him, till the mangled body of her son was brought here, under the direction of his own servant."

" Dreadful !" exclaimed Isabel, shuddering at such a recital.

" You have not yet heard all, Ma'am," continued the valet ; " for about an hour before the fatal account of Lord Allanby's death

was known, an express had arrived from Versailles, with a letter for my Lady from Lady Julia St Albe, which contained the distressing intelligence of her Ladyship's marriage with a hireling artist, whom she has been in the habit of constantly meeting in the Louvre. The union, it seems, had been solemnized some days since, but the elopement took place last night from Lady Dashton's, while the company were in the act of retiring to their respective homes."

"Married!—Julia married! and to an artist!" reiterated Isabel, whose faculties surprise and agitation had hitherto enchained. "Good heavens!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears, "what accumulated misfortunes combine at once to overwhelm this family in affliction! I no longer wonder at the incoherency and distraction of Lady Belville. And Oh, my poor uncle!—But this is not a time to indulge unavailing sorrow," she added, checking the grief to which she had involuntarily yielded.—"Charles, let me not detain you

from your suffering Lord ; as soon as he will permit my attendance, I shall take my station in his sick-room. Meanwhile, I shall visit my unhappy aunt, who, I trust, is now a little more composed.”

“ And will you not take rest yourself, Madam ? ”

“ Oh yes, presently,” replied Isabel, as, regardless of individual sufferings, she left the apartment to pursue her benevolent intentions. She found Lady Belville considerably indisposed, but calmer in spirits, and perfectly sane in mind. Her Ladyship attempted a few words of congratulation on our heroine’s escape from the peril to which she had been exposed ; but Isabel, knowing that conversation had been strictly prohibited by the physicians, gently entreated silence,—a request to which the invalid instantly and willingly acceded, as with a deep-drawn sigh she extended her hand with a letter that lay beside her, and by a sign intimated a wish to have its contents perused, as well as a desire to be left alone.

Released from further exertions, Isabel at length retired to her apartment, almost totally overcome by the efforts she had made, and the eventful scenes she had witnessed. The epistle which she glanced over, ere she attempted to rest, was from her imprudent cousin, announcing the intelligence which Charles had previously communicated. It was written in the literary Julia's usual style of bombastic declamation, and contained the following elaborate rhapsody, in favour of love and starvation!—

TO LADY BELVILLE.

“ The excitation of immaterialized sensibilities, which involves my spirit in one general empyrosis, admits not of analytical solution or chymical decomposition. Anagogetical feelings antagonize in my soul, and lachrymation nearly obliterates calligraphy, even when I proclaim myself felicitously endenized from the repudiated state of unparticipated vitality; for, an

antepast of the conclamation and vituperation, which will be subsecutive to my avowsal I antedate. But regression is impracticable, consequentially any zetetic proceeding on your side would be injudicable and superfluous, as my fate is everlastingly conjugated with that of the *arbiter elegantiarum* of the *cognoscenti*, (Il Signor d' Armarelli,) who, albeit not co-ordinately my equal, yet, in intelligential rank and affluentness, he justly claims equipollence, if not preponderation. His is not the *corpus sine pectore*! No, the congerousness of our souls incontestably demonstrates the conglomeration of our sentiments, which delectably suffragate in the exsusitating axiom of the sublimated Horace :

“ Quae virtus et quanta boni
Sit vivere parvo !”

Multiplicious winged *Amoretti* perch on my pen, and flutter like papilios o'er my page, as

I subscribe myself in subitaneous precipitation,

“ Thine, though in the act of evolation,

“ JULIA D’ARMARELLI.”

CHAPTER III.

THE splendid pageantry of woe, which the funeral processions of the great generally exhibit, attended the obsequies of Don Diego. After having lain in all the pomp of state for the period which custom prescribed; after the necessary number of masses for the repose of the soul of the departed had been performed, the numerous retinue, the imposing cavalcade, which accompanied the remains of Don Diego to their last home, commenced a slow and ostentatious journey to the grave. The pealing organ swept its rolling notes along the vaulted roof, which echoed back the sounds; the solemn anthem breathed a requiem for the dead! Entombed in the sanctuary, which contained the

ashes of his illustrious ancestors,—consigned to his “pride of place,” a sumptuous mausoleum received the body of Don Diego de Video. A high-sounding epitaph blazoned forth those virtues which had really adorned his character, and added many fictitious ones to the monumental detail, for the edification of posterity, and to endeavour to immortalize the memory of a man, who, otherwise, would soon have been forgotten, and whose name even the panegyric of insculptured flattery probably failed to perpetuate.

On opening the will of the Senhor, it was discovered that Tyrconnell was sole heir to his immense wealth. Unrestricted by any proviso whatsoever, Albert found himself master of a fortune sufficiently large to satisfy the utmost cravings of ambition, but to take legal possession of such opulence, various forms and procedures were obliged to be gone through, and Tyrconnell was compelled to submit to detention, for, however strongly inclination prompted a return to Paris, necessity unavoidably postponed it to an indefinite period.

With fondness often Albert's thoughts would turn to her who was "the morning star of memory." Time and absence seemed to have meliorated those suspicions which appearances had justified with respect to Isabel, for as remoteness softens imperfections, and shadows off defects in the natural world, so, in the moral, every speck which spots the character of those we love is gradually effaced from the heart's reminiscence, or else is lost in the long perspective of distance and of separation. Affection draws the curtain of oblivion over the faults of a cherished object, or throws a dazzling cloud around its errors, which forbids the cold inquisitorial glance of criticism,—while virtues are tenderly thought on, charms and graces are recollected with all the pride, the enthusiasm of friendship; but when love, too, yields its powerful influence, in banishing every weed from the fairy land of fond remembrance, and assists in rearing every *fleur de pensée* that blooms in the magic domain of feeling—where is the being

who can resist its omnipotence, or deny its mediation?

Albert, at least, was not one of those frigid insensibles who delight in pausing on the defects, rather than in lingering on the beauties which adorn, or the virtues that embellish human nature. With anxious expectation, therefore, he anticipated the moment when fate would permit him once more to enter Isabel's immediate sphere, and with impatience he attempted to calculate that period—but vainly—for each day seemed to present some new obstacle to the attainment of his wishes, so endless were the labyrinthian intricacies of the law. The generous conduct of Tyrconnell, however, had given universal satisfaction. Every ancient servitor in his grandfather's household Albert had nobly pensioned, which, united to the general urbanity of his manners, rendered him a popular favourite.

Without success, he had endeavoured to ascertain in what way he best could study the comforts or divine the wishes of Father Eu-

genio. That excellent man invariably declined every liberal proposal, which had his own immediate welfare for its object. Tyrconnell, therefore, soon perceived that the channel of others' felicity was the only course through which Eugenio's could flow; in consequence of which, he munificently endowed the convent to which the holy monk belonged, and had the satisfaction to discover that he had pursued the most effectual method to ensure Eugenio's approbation, as well as the most certain means to promote his happiness. From disposing of the splendid mansion which for ages had been the residence of his ancestors, Albert revolted. He deemed it a sort of sacrilegious act to sell his birth-right, and, therefore, he determined to leave every article that time had hallowed, and feeling consecrated, in that state in which they had so long continued unprofaned by the modern hand of fashion. But, being totally uncertain as to his future plans, Tyrconnell was unable to reply to the many solicitations urged by his

Spanish dependants to prevail on him to reside amongst them ; for an indefinite kind of sentiment yet assured Albert that Isabel St Albe would ever continue to influence his destiny, as with irritated anxiety he endured a thousand vicissitudes of feeling, and looked forward, sometimes with the disquietude of apprehension, but more frequently with the ardour of enthusiasm, to the moment when he should again behold her whose memory shed an "unseen light" that unconsciously brightened the future, notwithstanding the many darkening images which occasionally rose to banish the delightful suggestions of Hope.

CHAPTER IV.

SINCE the evening on which so many accumulated misfortunes had conspired to afflict the family of Lord Belville, to humble its honours, and to blast its prospects, our heroine had continued the most assiduous and unremitting attention to the invalids. Lord Belville remained much in the same state, except that every hour seemed to increase the weakness of indisposition, and, as Isabel gazed on his sunken eye, and emaciated frame, she scarcely dared to flatter herself with the hope of his ultimate recovery.

Though seldom equal to the exertion of conversation, his Lordship uniformly testified the greatest anxiety to enjoy the presence of

his niece. Formerly he had rather shunned than courted her society, but now, he would sometimes for hours retain her hand in his feeble grasp, and fix his speaking glance with perturbed interest on the countenance of his lovely nurse; who, with that delicate tact which so peculiarly distinguishes the attentions of woman in the hour of sickness and of sorrow, anticipated every wish, and alleviated every pang by those constant, yet unobtrusive attentions, those nameless services of the heart which she ever freely offers in the season of distress. To solace the afflicted—to smooth the pillow of suffering—to cheer the sinking spirit—to dispel each gloomy fear—to brighten the dreary passage to another world, by the pure steady light of love displayed in this, is woman's pride!—for her ray of truth beams more lucid, burns more unbroken, and sparkles with more brilliant touching lustre through the long dark night of despondency, than in the glittering sunshine of prosperity's most garish day. Isabel was seldom disturbed

from the devotion of those attentions which her heart spontaneously yielded to her uncle ; for Lady Belville usually repulsed every overture which our heroine made to divide her services between the chambers of the invalids.

Her Ladship did not, however, invariably decline Isabel's society ; on the contrary, at times she would capriciously declare that she was jealous of the attentions bestowed upon her Lord, that she did not approve of her niece dedicating so large a portion of her time to the ministration of his comforts,—while the next instant Lady Belville would peevishly request our heroine not to intrude upon her solitude, or attempt to study her wishes. Isabel generously pardoned a petulance which she chiefly attributed to the influence of indisposition, and kindly tried by every means in her power to prevent all reasonable ground for complaint. She perceived, indeed, that her aunt's character seemed to have undergone a complete revolution. The former winning urbanity of her manners had fled, and a sullen

moroseness,—an irritated violence of feeling, usurped its place. At times her mind appeared lost in gloomy wanderings, and she would then abruptly utter incoherent expressions, and unmeaning ejaculations, though, afterwards, she would hysterically laugh at her own inconsistency.

The physicians had strictly prohibited her from visiting the chamber of Lord Belville, as the slightest agitation might prove fatal to him, and equally injurious to herself. Such a restriction seemed particularly to annoy Lady Belville. She would often commence letters to her husband which she knew would never be delivered, and as quickly afterwards destroy them. At other times she would look earnestly at her watch, ask how long Miss St Albe had been with her uncle, and when informed, she would anxiously summon our heroine to her own apartment, and closely question as to the subjects of her conversation with Lord Belville. From all those circumstances, Isabel dreaded that the sudden shock

of a concatenation of misfortunes had tended slightly to unsettle reason, and that her aunt's proud and haughty spirit, however, it disdained to yield, yet might be forced to bend before the storm of affliction, wrecked on the breakers of misery !

On communicating her suspicions to the medical attendants, Isabel was confirmed in her apprehensions ; for they acknowledged it to be their opinion that Lady Belville's nervous affections nearly amounted to temporary insanity, nor did they conceal their fears, that if every precaution was not adopted, and every direction implicitly obeyed, the most fatal termination might be dreaded as the probable result of her Ladyship's alarming indisposition.

Without any very material change having occurred in the situation of the invalids, Time rolled on his arbitrary course, and many a tedious day had passed, yet no crisis had taken place with respect to either Lord or Lady Belville.

A pompous funeral had attended the re-

mains of the ill-fated Allanby to the last abode of wretched mortality, as, followed by a numerous train, the plumed hearse conveyed his body to the silent mansion of the dead. Isabel at times felt almost sinking beneath the constant anxiety she endured, yet she continued with unabated zeal the exertions of duty and of friendship. She had written to the Parsonage an account of the dreadful events that had occurred in Lord Belville's family; but wishing to spare her valued relatives all possible uneasiness, she had preserved an absolute silence with respect to the villanous project to which she had herself so nearly fallen a victim. A reply to her letter Isabel had not yet received; yet she thought it more than probable, that if, within the scale of possibilities, Mr St Albe would endeavour to answer its contents in person; for, though ignorant of Lord Langrave's conduct, and consequently unapprehensive of any danger to his beloved child, she yet felt assured, that, as soon as aware of her unhappy situation, St Albe would

fly to mitigate her distress by his presence and his counsel. That hope often supported our heroine in the midst of suffering, and cheered her fainting spirits.

The painful task of communicating to Lady Emily Pettito the misfortunes which had happened subsequent to her marriage, had also devolved on Isabel. The gay careless bride had written a letter of condolence in return, wherein she affected to lament her inability to visit Paris, or to assist her cousin in the duty of nurse tending. She excused herself from participating in such cares, on the plea of obedience to her husband's wishes, who, Lady Emily declared, would not allow her to risk her precious health by close attendance in the confinement of a sick room; and her Ladyship added, that, owing to the shock her nerves had received from the sudden intelligence of her brother's death, Sir Felix had insisted on travelling further into the interior of Switzerland, to try the effects of change of scene, hoping it would restore her agitated

spirits to their original tone. As Isabel concluded the heartless epistle, with a sigh she lamented the total absence of every good and natural feeling which it evinced, and internally acknowledged, that, where frivolity and levity unite in character, not only childish insipience, but chilling selfishness and disgusting egotism generally prevail.

Our heroine was spared the necessity of correspondence with Lady Julia ; for, as the scientific bride had left no clue whereby to discover the route she had pursued, her address was unknown. Like the generality of the world's " velvet friends," Lady Dashton had contented herself with occasionally dispatching her courier with a formal inquiry for the health of Lord and Lady Belville. One epistle she had, indeed, addressed to the latter ; in which infinite pains had been taken to assure her dear friend, that in no way whatever had she been privy to the elopement of Lady Julia. The trite composition proceeded, in hackneyed phraseology, to pourtray the lovely sen-

sibilities of the writer, who sympathized, in all the cant of fashionable sentiment, by affecting the sincerest condolence and regret, that the elegant, the distinguished Lady Belville, should be compelled to acknowledge so degrading a title, yet so close an affinity as mother-in-law to an itinerant artist ! The friendly billet concluded by a parade of exquisite feelings, which ill concealed the hateful malignity of Lady Dashton ; as, with evident exultation, she triumphed in the partial downfall of a rival she so long had envied, but never had eclipsed, and to mortify whom, in the hour of adversity, afforded to her perverted mind all those surpassing delights of gratified spleen, which none but the hollow-hearted votaries of dissipation can fully appreciate, and positively enjoy.

An interval of three weeks had elapsed since the day of Isabel's deliverance from the dangers with which she had been menaced, yet never had she heard the slightest intimation with respect to Langrave. She was conse-

quently induced to hope, that, finding himself baffled in all his plans, his Lordship had prudently determined to abandon any further schemes. With self-congratulation, therefore, Isabel concluded, that he had probably retreated to another country, where his infamous conduct being unknown, the ignoble Langrave might escape that contempt and universal reprobation which his proceedings so justly deserved.

CHAPTER V.

To prevent her mind and constitution from absolutely sinking beneath the oppressive weight of constant anxiety, Isabel occasionally stole from the pillow of her uncle, during those periods when opiates procured him temporary rest, to walk for a time in the garden, and generally found air and exercise of essential benefit in calming the tumult of her agitated spirits, and invigorating her declining frame.

She was one morning thus employed, when Charles advanced and said,—

“ Miss St Albe, my Lord requests to see you without delay.”

“ Is he worse ?” — she breathlessly inquired.

“ No, Ma'am ; for several days my Lord has not seemed so well as this morning.”

“ Thank Heaven !” fervently responded Isabel, as with quickened step she hastened to her uncle's apartment. On entering she found that Charles's report was partly correct ; for Lord Belville did not appear as languid as usual, yet the fire that glared from his sunken eye seemed of fearful brightness, and the hectic spot which illumed his cheek with a feverish glow, Isabel thought spoke rather the strong excitement of powerful feeling, than the flattering hue of returning health.

“ My dearest uncle ! I rejoice to hear that you are better,” she affectionately whispered as she approached his bed-side.

Lord Belville's lips distended into a ghastly smile as he grasped Isabel's hand, and, in a low hurried voice, replied,—

“ I am, at least shall soon, I trust, be well.” He paused—and, wiping off the cold damp moisture from his forehead, he added, in a voice of assumed cheerfulness,—“ Charles,

that cordial you just have given me I feel of infinite service. I am almost myself again ; go, then, and purchase those commissions of which I have already spoken. Miss St Albe will remain with me during your absence."

Charles bowed acquiescence, but Lord Belville stopped him another moment, as he said,—

" Do not return until I ring ; and—is there any danger of my being annoyed by intruders ?"

" Not the slightest, my Lord ;—none of the servants ever enter this room, except when particularly summoned, and the physicians will not be here till evening."

Lord Belville impatiently waved a dismissal ; and his valet instantly retired.

With apprehensive tenderness Isabel watched the incessant fluctuations of colour, the many transitions of expression her uncle's countenance underwent during the few moments of silence that ensued.

Some powerful internal contest, some spirit,

good or evil, seemed to wrestle with his inmost thoughts. A combat, strong as that betwixt life and death, appeared to struggle in his soul, yet could not find a tone to express its agony.

“ My uncle, you are ill !—This cordial will revive,” exclaimed Isabel as, with tremulous haste, she presented the draught to Lord Belville’s white parched lips. With eagerness he quaffed it,—his exhausted frame seemed to acquire new strength, and his faculties re-existence, as his mortal paleness vanished, and the ebbing blood flowed back again, and dyed his cheeks in tints of deepest crimson.

“ Away, ye fears !—The time is come—I’ll speak,” gasped forth Lord Belville, with convulsive energy. “ Isabel, the vial of iniquity was poured on my lost soul, but has not quenched its powers. The charm is broke !—My spirit is delivered from the awful spell, which long, too long, hath chained it in the gulf of guilt—of misery unfathomed !—Conscience stands accuser—I the accused—Thou the

wronged innocent!—Nay, start not, for before you lies a wretch, usurper of thy rights, and those of him to thee most dear—thy father!—Father!—Oh! what imperishable pangs that word doth conjure up to torture my scorched brain, and make it ache to frenzy!”

He paused, and struck his forehead—then added, in a low quick voice,—

“ I, too, had once a father ; by his dying-bed I swore to do thee justice. I was the child of love, unsanctioned by religious rites—St Albe, the lawful heir of title, fortune – all. The ministering spirits round a parent’s dying-couch witnessed my oath. Demons leagued to drag me to perdition ! That solemn vow was never fulfilled. For shadowy shadows, in a life like this, I bartered my own soul !”

In agony of remorse, the wretched Belville sunk upon his pillow, while Isabel, trembling with agitation, seized his clay-cold hand, and cried, in strong emotion,—

“ You may have touched upon the shoals of guilt, but say not you are wrecked, or lost for ever! Beyond the fretful stream of life the ocean of eternity lies, vast, deep, and boundless; yet as boundless is the love of Him who never refuses pardon to the broken spirit, to the contrite heart. Oh! let me pour the balm of consolation on thy wounded soul, and point your hopes to rest upon ‘ the Rock of Ages!’ ”

“ And will they anchor there for ever and for ever?—And is it thou who bids me not despair, and tells me that I yet may commune with the blest?—Oh, Isabel! thy mercy to a wretched sinner makes him doubly feel his debt of crime;—yet, if deep-rooted sorrow, if remorse unspeakable, if the wrung tears of bitterness, and grievous aspirations of the soul, too keen for mortal sufferance, prove repentance,—I repent,—have long repented!—Sweet soother of my griefs!—dear comforter who calms my parting hours, and frees my guilty soul of half its terrors, I will obey the

holy dictates you enjoin.—My spirit ebbs apace. I have grossly erred, yet humbly dare to hope that mercy in a higher sphere, which upon earth has been vouchsafed by thee !”

The kindling ardour of devotion a moment shone in the upraised eyes of Lord Belville, the next instant they turned full on Isabel.

“ My uncle ! what would you wish ?” she gently asked in a tone of heart-moving pathos, as her countenance, radiant with unearthly feelings, beamed a touching expression of pious joy on the repentant sinner.

“ To be at rest,—and there !” he fervently replied, as he slowly raised his emaciated hand, and pointed to heaven. “ Yet, ere I go, Isabel, receive these papers. They contain the full account of all my perfidy, and all your wrongs.—Guard them with vigilance.—Place them about your person.—There they will be safe.—Years have elapsed since first I penned the important record, not until now delivered.—But, Isabel, a death-bed is not the scene where perjury and falsehood love to dwell ;

and yet I swear to thee, that even had Allanby, my only son, been spared, I would have done to thee this act of justice.—My resolve was fixed, immutable, though the exact period of atonement my coward heart had not made certain.—But where have you placed the packet?—Is it safe?” in sudden alarm demanded Lord Belville.

“ ’Tis here,” said Isabel, meekly folding her hands on her bosom. “ And, Oh! forbear again to touch on the distressing theme, my uncle!”

“ Yet a few words.—Keep safe those treasured papers, till delivered to thy much wronged father.—Beware the villain Langrave, for he is implicated in the long tale of treachery they relate.—One, too, I will not name, is therein involved.—But,—’tis enough,”—exclaimed Lord Belville, in a faltering voice, as he dashed away the tear of agony, which started to his eye on memory’s suggestion. “ Be thou my angel pleader with St Albe,” he added in a firmer tone. “ And, Oh! may Heaven,

in its mercy, grant pardon and peace to my poor harassed guilty soul, and speedy justice unto thee and thine!"

"Justice!" screamed Lady Belville, as she rushed from behind the screen, at the door of her Lord's apartment, in all the frantic violence of insanity. "Who talks of justice, or of heaven, while here,—here,—here—hell burns, rages, whelms my lost soul, in rolling torrents of volcanic fire, nor will not let me pillow on its ashes!" she exclaimed, striking her bared bosom, and tearing her flowing hair, with all the distracted fury of a maniac.

"Oh, Henrietta! once so well beloved!" groaned, in anguish, the agonized Belville.

"Ha!—art there?—thou too, my virtuous Lord?—And art not thou predestined to perdition?—What bright robed seraph stands beside thy couch, to waft, on silvery wings of softest down, thy spirit to the realms above?—while mine will howl, and rave, and rage, in the black, boiling, fathomless abyss of flames infernal, or ride upon the lightning's flash, to blast the innocent, and crush the blessed!"

Isabel, at first motionless with horror, now darted forward, and, as she extended her palsied arm between Lord and Lady Belville, exclaimed in the wildest accents,—

“ Oh ! in mercy go !—You will destroy,—will murder him !”

“ And who art thou, who dares command o’er Henrietta Belville ?” she haughtily demanded, with all her former arrogance.

“ Isabel !” feebly gasped her uncle. She flew to support his fainting form, while the unfortunate maniac screamed reiterated echoes of the name ; and, as she flung her distracted figure on her husband’s couch, and strongly grasped his hand, she wildly shrieked,—

“ The furies tear me limb from limb, lashed on by Langrave !—Take,—Oh ! take me with you, and Heaven have mercy on our souls !”

“ Amen !” burst from Lord Belville’s dying lips.—It was a last effort.—A moment passed ; his spirit fled for ever !

CHAPTER VI.

To describe the tumult of consternation which followed the discovery of Lady Belville's stolen visit to the chamber of her Lord, and the knowledge of the melancholy event of his death, which had consequently ensued, would be impossible. Roused by the penetrating cries of the unhappy maniac, the frightened domestics rushed into the apartment, and there beheld a sight sufficiently appalling to daunt the strongest mind, and quell the proudest courage. Isabel had fainted, while the corse of Lord Belville no longer reclined on her bosom, but was dandled in the arms of his wretched wife, who, laughing with all the horror-striking glee of madness, held up the

breathless body, and, as she fancifully wreathed a handkerchief round the ghastly forehead, she wildly screamed,—“ I have found him, the heir of all my honours.—See ye not the coronet upon his brow?—’Tis not Isabel’s—’Tis mine,—’tis mine!—purchased with soul and body, mind and spirit!”

By the force of manual exertion, the terrified attendants at length succeeded in separating Lady Belville from the body, to which she clung with fearful violence, while cries of frantic agony rent the air, as some of the domestics bore their Lady to her own apartment, and others removed the fainting Isabel to the study; for the proximity of her former chamber to that of the infuriated Lady Belville, induced the servants to bear our heroine to the remotest part of the mansion, rather than to any of the rooms contiguous to the scene of horror.

The blessing of insensibility was not long allowed to Isabel. She soon recovered to a full consciousness of all the miseries of her si-

tuation ; but tears in abundance fell, and eased her burdened spirit. Knowing that she could be of no possible service, in trying to quell the ravings of insanity, Isabel did not attempt to visit Lady Belville ; and after satisfying herself, that medical aid had been administered to her wretched aunt, and that Charles had seen every necessary duty performed to the remains of the departed Lord Belville, she signified her desire to be left in solitude, wishing, by pious meditation, to endeavour to recover in some degree her usual fortitude, which the dreadful scenes, it had lately been her fate to witness, had partially annihilated.

After some hours spent in communion with that Being whose ear is ever open to the prayer of the unfortunate, and in strenuous contest with every feeling which rebelled against the trials it had pleased Him to ordain, Isabel, restored to comparative composure, with fervent gratitude thanked her Creator that the keen arrow of affliction had not been winged

against the breasts of those dear relatives whose happiness was vitally connected with, and valued far beyond her own.

“ Oh ! merciful Power ! ” she involuntarily exclaimed, “ ever bless them with thy favour, and guard them with thy shield ! ”

The course of her solemn thoughts was interrupted by the entrance of a servant with a letter, which having delivered, he respectfully retired.

As Isabel glanced at the superscription, she perceived it was from Mrs Eleanor. A mixed feeling of joy and disappointment pervaded her mind, as, tearing open the epistle, she involuntarily exclaimed,—“ Then my father will not come ! ”

But what pen, however eloquent,—what language, however powerful,—could depict the sudden transition of feeling which the next instant created ?

As if by the potent touch of an enchanter, the breathing figure of Isabel seemed transformed to stone !—Her eye no longer glistened,—her

lip no longer moved,—her bosom's palpitations heaved no more!—each joint seemed stiffened and cold;—petrified as a statue, she sat immovable—her glassy gaze fixed on the letter.

A hurried step advanced,—she did not rise,—a voice accosted,—but she did not hear,—Tyrconnell stood before her,—yet she did not feel!

“Pitying Heaven!” he exclaimed, “what thunder-bolt has fallen to crush each sense, and deaden every power? Isabel, my Isabel! Oh! in mercy, speak!—one word!” in suffocated accents burst from Albert, as distractedly he flung himself at her feet, and in suspense too great for mortal sufferance, fixed his anxious gaze upon her marbled features. A slight contortion passed across them at his agonized appeal; and a smile of bitterest misery writhed her lip, as, drawing a long deep breath, she faintly gasped,—

“There, there, 'tis there!” and extended the fatal letter which she yet crushed in her anguished grasp to Tyrconnell.

He seized it,—he read it,—custom, form then prevailed not. “ Summoned to trial!—St Albe suspected of forgery! Merciful powers,—what villany!” he exclaimed in violent emotion, as he finished the rapid perusal. “ But, Isabel, fear not! ’tis false as Heaven is true!” He paused an instant, then added, in the hurried tone of mental agitation,—

“ A light breaks on me, and dispels this darkness.—It is,—it must be so.—I go to clear the mystery,—we soon shall meet again. Loved of my soul! farewell!” and in a tumult of feeling which prevented his recollecting the danger of leaving Isabel alone in such a dreadful tempest of internal wretchedness, Tyrconnell departed.

With that kind of cunning sagacity which grief so frequently adopts, Isabel, as the door closed, looked cautiously round the chamber, and listened with breathless anxiety to the last receding sounds of Albert’s steps. Then drawing a bonnet close over her face, and shrouding her figure in the folds of a veil which lay beside

her, with wary haste and tip-toe foot-fall she glided through the court, and, unseen by the porter, gained the street. When there, she breathed more freely, as, with rapid speed, she bounded forward,—every idea,—every feeling then absorbed in one condensing wish—to fly to her father! Unimpeded by the crowd of passengers, or the gaze of strangers, onward she sprang with airy lightness. At length, a carriage crossing her path, obliged a moment's pause. Impatient at the obstacle, Isabel raised her eyes in wild remonstrance; the velocity with which it flew then touched a minor chord of reason, and she felt the carriage moved with speed beyond her utmost efforts. Again she gazed. It was a *voiture publique*, and stopped to admit a passenger. The word Calais, emblazoned on the panels, struck her eye; she had just reflection enough to feel, that that town was on her route to England. To act on the momentary conviction was the work of an instant. The door of the carriage opened, with hurried step Isabel flew forward,

and without a question sprang inside. The *conducteur* advanced to claim the customary fare,—with difficulty she comprehended his meaning, while with eager haste she searched for and produced her purse. More than was required she freely gave, the rest the man with honesty refunded ; who, concluding she was a foreigner, ignorant of the language or the customs of the country, and being already possessed of that universal panacea which softens every difficulty, and purchases every service, made no further objection, but with a significant shake of the head, gave orders for the carriage to proceed, which never conveyed a more distracted mind, or agonized feelings, than those which accompanied our heroine at the commencement of her long and perilous journey.

CHAPTER VII.

HOWEVER powerful the sight of Isabel's distress might have proved over Tyrconnell's feelings, yet that reflection and prudence, which so eminently characterized his strong and well regulated mind, would probably have suggested the necessary precautions, which ought to have been observed before his departure from Lord Belville's mansion, but for the recurrence of a recollection, which effectually superseded every other. To read the account of Mr St Albe's imprisonment under suspicion of forgery, and to connect in close association with such a circumstance Lord Langrave, and the confederate with whom, it will be remembered, Tyrconnell,

previous to his journey to Spain, had surprised his Lordship in deep conference, were almost concomitant ideas ; for, instantaneously, the phrase then overheard, and which ever since had tortured the mind of Albert with suspicion and fear, recurred in potent force, to point out the projectors of a plot, which he felt convinced had originated in the diabolical machinations of Lord Langrave, and his infamous coadjutor.

Another recollection, of equal magnitude, had yet more powerfully impelled Albert to abruptly quit the presence of Isabel. On entering Paris that very morning, he had accidentally encountered Langrave's confidant, whom he immediately recognized ; for Darwent's name and appearance, from their conjunction with the idea of Mr St Albe and his daughter, were so indelibly impressed on Tyrconnell's memory, that nothing short of magical power could have erased their remembrance. He had observed, that Darwent evidently wished to avoid scrutiny, and

that, on perceiving his approach, he had hastily retreated into the house, at whose entrance he had been standing when Albert first perceived his vicinity. A chaise and four, with the travelling appendages of a portmanteau and trunks, Tyrconnell also recollected, stood at the gateway ; on noticing which, he had been nearly tempted to dismount from his horse, and demand an interview, more particularly, as Albert thought the equipage might possibly intimate Darwent's intended departure from Paris ; but the intense anxiety which Tyrconnell felt to meet again his fondly loved Isabel, was so ardent, so overpowering, that although her interest was intimately connected with the purport of the discourse he desired to hold with Darwent, yet he abandoned the idea of demanding an instant conference, not being able to endure the thought of postponing one moment longer than was absolutely necessary the felicity of beholding her, who, to his impassioned fancy, was

———“ So lovely fair,
That what seem'd fair in all the world seem'd now
Mean, or in her summ'd up, in her contain'd.”

In the prospect of an immediate reunion with Isabel, all those errors to which appearances had induced belief, and which, in cooler moments, his judgment had admitted and condemned, were absolutely forgotten, whelm'd in the flood of joy—the raptur'd tide of feeling, which flow'd unrestrainedly on his full soul, as he anticipated the surpassing delight; the bliss of once more hearing the music of that voice, whose tones of dulcet softness memory had oftimes recalled to his ear, in the stillness of solitude. In a delirium of fancy, he loved to assure himself, that shortly he would see that form, which imagination so frequently had pictured, during those glowing creations of the brain,—those delightful, though delusive visions, which occasionally blessed his slumbers with the image of his cherished Isabel;—visions which, transient and fleeting like those unsubstantial

shadows, human joys, ever fled too soon, and left his "waking soul more lonely!"

"But this—this is no dream!" Tyrconnell had involuntarily cried, as with quickened speed he advanced towards Lord Belville's.

No porter had appeared to answer his summons, and impatient of delay, Albert had sprung from his horse, and owing to the unwanted state of confusion, in which so many calamitous events had thrown the domestics, he had crossed the hall, and reached the study, without meeting any interruption, or encountering any person, from whom he could have obtained intelligence of the manifold misfortunes, which had combined to distract a family, whom Albert left towering in all the pride of pomp, enjoying every earthly distinction, courted by the noble and the affluent, envied by the poor and lowly, but whose honours his return found humbled to the dust, laid prostrate by the unsparing hand of death.

Those who have ever experienced the utter demolition of the soul's dearest joys, those

who have found the sweet zephyr's breath of Hope's atmosphere, succeeded by the rude storm of Adversity, may conceive the nature of Tyrconnell's feelings, when he beheld her whom his fancy had pourtrayed sparkling in beauty, and radiant in happiness, suddenly appear before him, like a darkened sun strangely eclipsed ! A powerful tempest shook his inmost soul during the few awful moments that followed his entrance ; but when Isabel, with convulsive effort, had given him the important letter, when he glanced over the dread account of all he wished, yet feared to know, a ray celestial seemed to pierce the surrounding gloom, to light into publicity the audacious defamers of innocence and virtue, as Langrave and Darwent instantaneously rose to the mind and recollection of Tyrconnell. Not a moment he felt was to be lost ; a second's delay might be fatal. Therefore, without bestowing a thought on any minor consideration, Albert, with the rapidity of an arrow, had flown from the house, mounted his horse, and

in as short a time as the length of distance would permit, he arrived at Darwent's dwelling. The carriage yet was at the door!—What a consolation to the agitated mind of Albert—him of whom he was in search had not then yet departed. Breathless from anxiety, and panting from exertion, Albert threw himself from his horse, and for a moment leaned against the wall, and endeavoured to arrange his scattered thoughts; a sudden noise roused attention; Tyrconnell started, turned round, and beheld Darwent hastily retreating, as if to screen his person from detection.

“Villain, stop! Attempt not to escape!” vehemently cried Albert, springing forward, and bounding into the chamber, the door of which Darwent had not had time to close. It was quickly secured by Tyrconnell; who added, in a more collected and dignified tone,—

“I will not condescend to upbraid. Suffice it now to say, I know your guilt. Branded with shame, entangled in the intricate net of

crime, your very mien proclaims you what you are, the liveried slave, the purchased tool of Langrave's base designs.

“To prevaricate is useless. Your infamy it is in my power to blazon to mankind ; signal punishment would follow ; one only way remains to elude the vengeance of offended justice. Consent forthwith to fly with me to Ireland. There promise to reveal the black details of hellish guilt, whereby the arch-fiend thy master Langrave has contrived to throw aspersion on St Albe's most honoured name, and I will pledge myself to obtain for you full, free, and ample pardon. Gold, too, that paltry lure, and bane to thousands, shall be your's.—Speak—aye or no!”

During Tyrconnell's rapid speech the countenance of the wretched Darwent had undergone various changes of expression. At first, a daring bold defiance sat on his curled lip, and seemed to brave the dangers of investigation. Then, as the penalties of the law were threatened, the villain's swarthy brow assumed a

deeper shade ; his cheek a ghastlier hue ; while a sudden sulky gloom lowered on his distorted features ; but, at the name of St Albe, conviction flowed on Darwent's mind, that Albert was indeed acquainted with his iniquitous career ; and, at that conviction, his limbs, trembling with terror, tottered beneath his weight. Cold agonized drops stood on his forehead ; and in torture of spirit, in prostration of mind, he breathlessly awaited what he yet might hear. In such a state, the offer of pardon seemed to his alarmed conscience like

—————“ A distant strain,
Sweet to the soul, and tasting strong of Heaven,
Soft wafted on celestial Pity's plume.”

Darwent was not even proudly eminent in guilt. He was a mean cowardly villain, whose services were ever to be purchased. The love of gold, his master passion's spring, Albert had lastly touched. Of Tyrconnell's recent accession to wealth incalculable, and conse-

quently of his power to fulfil his offer, Darwent was aware. Yielding, therefore, to the united temptations of promised pardon and independence, with frantic gesture he threw himself upon his knees, and, in a fawning tone of servile humility, exclaimed,—

“ I consent to what you have proposed.— Yet, ere I raise myself from this my proper station, when in the presence of the noblest of mankind, it is fitting that I should relate the means by which Lord Langrave gained his views, and cast suspicion on St Albe !”

“ Rise, paltry wretch ! and feign not what you do not feel. I cannot wait one instant. Is your’s the carriage at the door ?”

Darwent bowed an affirmative.

“ Then straightway it must bear us to Lord Belville’s; after, with the speed of lightning on our destined route,” exclaimed Tyrconnell, as he seized the arm of his companion, and hurried him into the carriage. Then, in the vehement tone of mental agitation, Albert gave directions to the driver, leaped into the

chaise, and, as it furiously drove off, he passionately cried,—

“ Now, minion, give your base detail, but in few words, and quickly.”

“ I will.—My services were purchased by Lord Langrave. Enraged at Miss St Albe’s rejection of his hand, he formed the vile design of compassing her ruin. For that purpose, seconded by her base aunt, he attempted a forced elopement. It was prevented by Lord Belville. Langrave, it would seem, had felt prophetic warning that his plot would not succeed ; for, on the day you found us deep in conference, he informed me of that black scheme ; but, fearing failure, in case of non-performance, another stratagem, of equal crime, was planned between us ; after which, instantly I went to Ireland, and there in secret stopped in wait for further orders. Soon they were received. A letter came. It was from Lord Langrave, and inclosed me one from Miss St Albe unto her father, obtained, by bribery, from Lord Belville’s servant ; that

was to prove my passport to St Albe. I waited on him, told a specious tale, and gave his daughter's letter. It was sufficient to insure my welcome; attentions manifold were the result. At length, according to directions, I pretended illness, and requested the attendance of St Albe. It was quickly granted. So well my part was played, the worthy man conceived me dying. With matchless art I feigned to think myself gone, past recovery; one only grief, I said, preyed on my parting spirit. Kindly St Albe besought disclosure, promising alleviation. With seeming reluctance I acknowledged that I had contracted debts, which, to discharge myself, would ease my mind of all anxiety. Then, with artful tears, most earnestly I prayed St Albe to take to the bank a bill on credit for one hundred pounds. Need I say the names indorsed were both fictitious? But noble himself, treachery in others my destined victim thought not of suspecting. He listened, and complied with my request, went to the bank, himself presented the forged

paper, and being well known to the clerks as a most upright honourable man, the sum was paid into St Albe's own hands, who straight returned, and remitted it to mine.

“ Overjoyed at such success, yet fearful of raising quick surmises, I resolved to defer to the last moment my departure ; for, had I fled on the instant, St Albe, I thought, might then have stopped the bill, hindered its presentment at the Bank of Dublin, and so have foiled my plot of rendering him suspected of the act of forgery. But fortune seemed to favour ; for on the morrow I received a note from Mrs Eleanor Fitzroy, which informed me that a sudden, though not dangerous, indisposition, having seized her brother, he would unavoidably be prevented waiting on me for some days.

“ Apparently secured against detection for the wished-for period, all alarm vanished. I escaped, and quickly sped to Paris. What followed since I know not ; but, of course, when sent for acceptance, the bill was instant-

ly protested, and suspicion must immediately have fixed, as we intended, on Lord Langrave."

"Name not the perfidious monster!" passionately cried Tyrconnell, in whom excess of indignation and anxiety had hitherto prevented utterance. "What hell-fire demon prompted the foul deed?" in a suffocated tone ejaculated Albert, as, choked with emotion, he leaned his throbbing temples against the carriage.

"Revenge, which dictates crimes of blackest dye!—The paltry sum was nothing to Lord Langrave; that, with much more, was mine as wages for my services; but, to drench the pointed arrow in a parent's blood, ere it could reach a daughter's breast, was sure and mortal vengeance, worthy Langrave; besides, he thought that then,——"

"No more! no more!—The bare idea fills my soul with torture; and must I then suspend my rage, nor wreak it instant on the infernal wretch's head?" in anguish groaned

Tyrconnell. A moment's silence followed. Then, in a stifled voice, he said,—“ It must be so—St Albe shall first be saved. My prisoned thirst for retribution then shall be allayed.” As Albert unconsciously uttered those words the carriage stopped at Lord Belville's. The consternation depicted in the mien of the old porter struck Tyrconnell with alarm, as with flurried perturbation he attempted to open the door of the chaise.

“ Whom do you wish to see, Sir ?” mournfully asked the man.

“ Miss St Albe—detain me not, I”——

“ Miss St Albe !—Alas ! she too is gone !—Not dead ; but strangely left her uncle's house this very day,” said the aged domestic, bursting into tears.

“ Gone ! Isabel gone !—Then it is to her father !” wildly cried Tyrconnell. “ The road to Calais—hundreds shall reward your speed !” exclaimed the agitated Albert to the postillion, who, urged by the prospect of future gain, violently lashed his steeds, and with frightful

velocity pursued that route which the wretched Isabel, a few hours before, had also traversed.

CHAPTER VIII.

WITH as much celerity as her mode of travelling would permit, meanwhile our heroine had pursued her anxious journey. The frenzied distraction of mind under which it was commenced had gradually subsided into the sullen, moody gloom of feelings, nearly allied to those of actual despair; and except for the convulsive shudderings, which now and then visibly crept through her frame, and the gleams of transient brightness which sometimes wildly shot from her uplifted eye, every sense was so benumbed and stupified, that she looked as if petrified by the very spirit of desolation, and rather resembled a lifeless creature than a mortal breathing being, as mute, almost im-

movable, she sat in a corner of the carriage, and closely wrapped her veil across her shivering bosom; for "the iron had entered into her soul," and the light of reason was partially darkened by the overwhelming influence of internal anguish. The companions of her journey had vainly tried to animate her to conversation; their questions were unheeded, their presence unobserved. At length they had relinquished unsuccessful efforts, conceiving that she was either totally ignorant of the language of their country, or else that she suffered from a slight alienation of mind. The latter idea at first created apprehension, but the torpid stillness of her general demeanour was such, that the travellers' fears were soon calmed, and, with the volatility which characterizes the French nation, they soon ceased to regard our heroine with prying inquisitiveness, and subsequently would nearly have forgotten her presence altogether, but for the long, deep, labouring sighs that sometimes burst from her aching heart, and the distracted impatience

which lightened her usually frozen glance into a blaze of preternatural lustre, when the slightest needless impediment occurred to retard, for an instant's space, her rapid journey. Yet Isabel felt that some delays must necessarily occur: and on those occasions when the passengers alighted to take refreshment, she mechanically followed their example, and forced herself to swallow the sustenance which exhausted nature required.

Fortunately, on the very morning that our heroine had received the fatal account, which thus filled her soul with agony, she had, previous to her visit to Lord Belville, been sent a remittance from her banker, which, on being informed of her uncle's desire quickly to see her, she had hastily consigned to her purse, owing to which circumstance she was happily provided with money, that most valued essential in this calculating age, for which

“ Men homage pay to men.”

Indeed, considering the innumerable perils to

which, as a young, lovely, and unprotected woman, Isabel was exposed, during her lone filial pilgrimage, it was accomplished with an astonishing security and freedom from those unpleasant attendants which human foresight might reasonably have anticipated; but the “weary wandering steps” of the Christian pilgrim are ever guided by the hand of Omnipotence. *He* who called us forth from nothing into existence will not disdain to lead a confiding spirit through

“The checker’d paths of joy and woe.”

The soul oppressed, though steeped in misery, yet receives support and guidance from that all-merciful Father, who compassionates the frailties of his children, who “tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,” and smiles approval even on the humblest efforts of his creatures, to tread, with resignation to his will Divine, the thorny way of life! It was the protecting *Ægis* of Heaven which defended Isabel from danger, and, “as a guard angelic plac’d,”

preserved her from all harm. Safe she arrived on Britain's shore ; swift as possibility allowed pursued the remnant of her journey, soon landed on her native isle, and late on the day on which she trod its soil, faintly visible through the mist of distance, Isabel's anxious penetrating gaze espied that spot, to which so oft her thoughts in absence had reverted, scene once of her childish joys, now pole-star to her hopes and fears,—her home—the Parsonage ! Evening had closed in as she approached it nearer. The dark-blue vault of heaven shone with innumerable lights, while the lovely orb of night, floating in cloudless ether, silvered the waving foliage with her mild and chastened radiance. Gemmed with the dews of eve, gently the branches played and sparkled in the moon-beams ; the grass assumed a livelier green, touched by their streaming rays, and glittering with “ the tears of day.” The waters were hushed, and scarcely murmured ; the birds had sung themselves to rest, and not a sound disturbed the stilly calmness of reposing

nature, save the music of the lightly wafted boughs, and the dripping fall of a neighbouring fountain. It was a beauteous scene ; but Isabel felt not its power, or only felt it mocked her misery. The night spoke not peace to her agonized spirit, it lulled not her anguish, it dispelled not her grief, its freshness cooled not the fever of her burning brain ! Panting with agitation, suffocating with emotion, as the carriage stopped at the entrance to the Parsonage, Isabel flew out. The well-known lock yielded to her hand ; with rapid step she fled through the hall, and reached her father's study. All was silent ! St Albe's great chair stood in its usual place ; a book was open on the table, beside it lay his spectacles—yet no friendly form appeared. “ Father, aunt, where are ye ? ” asked Isabel's sinking heart, though, had worlds been offered, her parched tongue and quivering lip could not have urged the question.

Breathless she threw herself into her father's chair, and wildly pressed her beating

temples, while each fibre of her brain felt aching into madness. In that one instant, ages of torture seemed combined, the mental chords were strained too tight, and on the point of breaking! A loud shrill cry recalled her wandering senses; starting, with almost supernatural velocity, Isabel bounded through the door-way, and quickly overtook the frightened servant, from whose lips the scream had broke. Strongly she grasped his arm, while an imperfect sound guggled in her choking throat, and vainly strove for utterance. Palied with terror, the quivering domestic first recovered speech, as he almost inarticulately cried,—

“ Spirit of my loved mistress, what would you with me?”

“ My father!” shrieked the anguished Isabel, in a long piercing note, on which her very soul appeared to issue.

“ He lives!” cried the trembling servant, catching the convulsed form of Isabel, whose tone of mortal agony had dispelled his superstitious fears.

“ And where ?”

“ In the county town, and in the ——”

“ Prison !” groaned Isabel.

The melancholy countenance of her informer confirmed apprehension. She waited not for farther proof, but sprung like an arrow from the bow into the carriage, which still waited. William, her faithful old domestic, leaped behind, and under his directions, the chaise rapidly drove off to the unsuitable abode of one of the most excellent and injured of mankind.

CHAPTER IX.

IN a chaos of undefinable feelings, of ideas confused, distracted; living, yet scarcely breathing; conscious of the horrors of her fate, yet void of power to reason or to pray, Isabel arrived at her fearful goal, but, owing to the length of distance which she was compelled to travel, she did not reach the termination of her agitating journey, until day-break the following morning.

A strange faint light, of something kin to joy, glimmered on her full soul, as all her many thoughts condensed in one, that on the instant she would see her father! Wildly she rushed to his prison gate. The bolted entrance checked her progress. With an im-

ploring look of bitterest misery, she raised her starting eyes to heaven, then clung with anguished grasp to the strong iron bars, as if, when there, content to die!

“ She is his daughter! my master’s child! Can you refuse admittance?” sobbed William, pointing out the prostrate Isabel to the jailor who appeared inside, while tears rolled freely down the furrowed cheek of the domestic.

“ I have already admitted a visitor, early as it is—I cannot act against rule a second time,” sulkily replied the man of authority, with all “ the insolence of office.”

“ You shall be well rewarded; take this as earnest,” whispered William, slipping some silver into the jailor’s hand. At sight of the money his countenance brightened.

“ Well, come, Brian Johnson is not the man to see a woman in distress, without trying to relieve her,” said the converted jailor, as he cheerfully unbarred the gate, while Isabel seemed to cleave the air, so swiftly she bounded through the court into the prison.

“ Stop, not so fast,” cried Johnson, who had with difficulty overtaken her. “ This door leads to Mr St Albe’s apartment,” as, unlocking it, he added, “ Yonder is his room, you’ll find it open ; William and I’ll stay here.” Isabel heard not his concluding words. Quick as a meteor’s flash she flew, and ere an instant sped, sunk at her father’s feet ! Her bonnet fallen ; her head distractedly thrown back ; her hair flowing in wild disorder over her death-like features ; her tearless eyes dilated to their full extent ; her clay-cold lips glued to the hands she frantically had clasped ; there, silently she lay !

“ Father of mercies ! Is it ?—It is my child ! My Isabel !” in broken accents burst from the agitated St Albe, while every limb tottered with emotion, as tremblingly he bent over her faded form in deep, though voiceless solicitude. At length, in a low faltering tone, he cried,—

“ My God, I thank thee ! Then we meet once more. Oh ! let me press thee to my heart, my own, my treasured Isabel !”

The well remembered voice went straight to her soul, and dissolved its icy chillness ; the hectic of a moment stained her pallid cheek ; tears gushed to her eyes ; one slowly trickled down ; even that relieved intensity of pain, as with convulsive effort she rose to St Albe's embrace, sunk in the extended arms of a parent, and faintly murmuring—Father ! drooped her head upon his bosom, and on that sacred pillow senseless fell !

Almost equally lifeless, St Albe had scarcely strength to support his lovely burden. He staggered beneath the weight, and would have fallen, but for the timely assistance of his true and constant friend, Sir Hugh Tyrconnell, (the visitor to whom the jailor had alluded,) and who now, with kindest sympathy, gently disengaged the fainting Isabel from the arms of her father, and resigned her to those of the worthy Mrs Eleanor Fitzroy, who, bathed in floods of tears, had witnessed the affecting scene, but who, too delicate to interrupt the solemn reunion of her brother with his only

cherished child, had, with the most admirable self-possession, struggled to subdue her own tumultuous feelings, with almost more than mortal fortitude.

Yet her venerable countenance portrayed the most piteous distress, as trembling, nerveless, she attempted to restore animation to the unconscious Isabel, while Sir Hugh, all his tide of noble feeling in full force, directed his attention to the exhausted, but still eminently great St Albe, who, as he regarded the livid ashy paleness of his beloved daughter, and her recumbent lifeless form, ejaculated with temporary enthusiasm, as he raised his eyes in resignation to his Maker,—

“Thy will, not mine, be done! Oh! if thou hast called unto thyself my child! my darling! ’tis in mercy! I would not stay her glorious flight. She will be spared the anguish of——. We soon shall meet again!” in a subdued and altered voice, inarticulately cried St Albe, as human passions, gaining preponderance, he turned away his head from Sir

Hugh's anxious gaze, and covering his face with his handkerchief, yielded to "nature's soft persuasion;" to the melting influence of a father's feelings.

At that instant, a sudden noise was heard; the chamber-door flew open. Tyrconnell, his manly form breathing hope, his countenance radiant with emotion, like the Spirit of Mercy, appeared!

"Acquittal! Justice!" broke from his trembling lips, as he extended his arm towards the recreant Darwent. The words, the look, the action, all explained.

In pious, speechless gratitude, instantly kneeled St Albe. Beside him sunk his Isabel, whom Heaven restored to sense, to share a parent's joy. Around their prostrate figures stood the remnant of the groupe, while, from each sympathetic eye,

"Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth!"

CHAPTER X.

WE shall draw a veil over the scene that immediately followed the arrival of Tyrconnell. It would be difficult, nay, perhaps impossible, adequately to describe the sudden revulsion of feeling, the ecstatic transition from the depth of despair to the pinnacle of hope and bliss, which agitated the little party, whom Albert had so unexpectedly restored to a happiness, yet too recent to be felt without the strongest commingled emotions; for, to use the words of Ossian, "Joy, covering a sigh, dwelt in every breast; it was like the faint beam of the moon spread on a cloud in Heaven." Abrupt questions, broken replies, and looks still more eloquent, for some time form-

ed the overflowings of their souls ; but, by degrees, the tide of bliss rolled less tumultuously, the flurry of excitement gradually subsided. Lulled by the whispered soothing of Hope, each timid fear was calmed to rest, and Tyrconnell was then enabled to account for his sudden and unlooked-for appearance. In a few words he detailed those circumstances, with which the reader is already acquainted ; and proceeded to state, that, owing to the expeditious mode of travelling which he had pursued, his arrival would necessarily have preceded that of Isabel, but for the overturn of his post-chaise, which accident had happened a few miles distant from Paris, and the shock had been so violent as to cause a very long insensibility to Darwent, which event, united to the arrangements attendant on a change of equipage, had considerably retarded Albert's journey. As Tyrconnell concluded his rapid narration, (in which modesty had so perfectly prevailed, self had had so little share, that the name of him, to whom Isabel and her father

owed so much, had never once been mentioned.) Mr St Albe, his eyes glistening with sensibility, turned his beaming countenance full on Albert, whose hand he strongly grasped, as flatteringly he said,—

“ My heart most warmly feels, but vainly strives to speak its gratitude ; yet, tell me, Oh my preserver ! your name—your —— ”

“ Tyrconnell ! ” breathlessly interrupted Isabel, as hastily she hid her lately pallid cheek, now mantled in glowing blushes on her father’s shoulder.

“ Tyrconnell ! ” in quivering accents echoed Sir Hugh, as his venerable countenance became almost convulsed with feeling, and a flood of tears gushed down his aged cheek.

“ Your uncle ! ” cried St Albe, flying to support his friend, while Albert, in speechless agitation, threw himself at the Baronet’s feet.

It was a moment fraught with unutterable emotion to both. Slowly Sir Hugh raised his streaming eyes to Heaven, and extended his nerveless hands over the prostrate figure of his

nephew, as, his voice growing very faint, he feebly sobbed,—

“ Oh! may this unexpected meeting be sanctified to my poor erring heart, which long, too long, has closed against its best, its noblest feelings—Elvira—Edmund!”

He could no more. Hastily Tyrconnell rose,—as quickly St Albe resigned to his arms the trembling Baronet, who, stifled with the tide of recollections that whelmed his labouring bosom, buried his agitated features on his nephew's breast, as the varied lights and shades, the storms and the sunshine of days long past, crowded on memory's view. With the tender delicacy of genuine sensibility, Albert gently led his uncle to the door of the apartment, from whence he cast one look of ineffable affection on Isabel, and an expression of reverential respect on her beloved relatives, as he softly whispered, “ Soon we shall meet again,” and then, with filial attention and solicitude, supported the tottering steps of Sir Hugh to the Baronet's carriage, which waited

at the prison gate. A glance from its owner was sufficient to determine Albert to accept a seat within, and as he placed himself beside his uncle, uttered the words "Tyrconnell Castle," and quickly drew up the blinds, he felt his bosom throb with a thousand mingled sensations, amidst which those of hope and happiness certainly preponderated in a degree, to which the heart of Albert Tyrconnell had hitherto been a comparative stranger.

In unison with the pious St Albe, Mrs Eleanor and Isabel, after Sir Hugh's departure, once more poured forth to Heaven the ardent thanksgivings of their souls; after which, our heroine briefly, though in much agitation, related the death of Lord Belville, and the melancholy situation of his widow. The account considerably affected Mr St Albe, who, though almost a stranger to his brother, yet deeply sympathized in the sad detail of his many griefs and cares; at the same time, he agreed with his daughter, in considering Lord Belville's decease a happy reprieve from sorrow and anxiety.

“ And did not my poor brother leave me one assurance of friendship, one remembrance of fraternal love ?” in a half reproachful tone demanded St Albe, at the conclusion of the dismal narrative. The question, with electric force, brought to Isabel’s mind the imperfect confession of Lord Belville, and the papers he had committed to her charge, which the dreadful scene that had subsequently taken place in the chamber of the invalid, the death of her uncle, and, more than all, the intense anxiety she had afterwards suffered for her parent’s fate, had, until that instant, totally obliterated from recollection.

“ Oh yes, my father !” (Isabel exclaimed in reply to his demand, and as her uncle’s dying words recurred to memory,) “ with his last breath, Lord Belville named you, and implored forgiveness.”

“ Forgiveness—Isabel, for what ?”

“ I scarcely can remember,—all is still disorder here,” she added with a faint smile, as she slightly touched her forehead, and a mo-

ment paused ; then quickly drawing from her bosom the sealed packet, in a hurried voice she said,—“ Lord Belville, when expiring, gave to my care these papers—some incoherent words escaped his dying lips, they spoke of—I dare not say of what—my brain is still too much bewildered—but here I resign my charge.”

“ And I accept the trust,” returned St Albe, as from his daughter’s hands he received the important packet ; “ but until, in some degree, restored to comparative tranquillity, we shall not attempt perusal. My Isabel, your whole appearance denotes extreme fatigue ; let me conjure you to dismiss all anxieties from your harassed mind, and take that repose your exhausted frame requires !” exclaimed St Albe in sudden alarm, as he regarded the wan cheek and dimmed eye of his beloved daughter.

“ My fears are now all calmed,” said Isabel faintly smiling, as she affectionately pressed her father’s hand ; “ but rest, I confess, I need.”

“ You do, my dearest girl ; come then with me and endeavour to obtain it,” cried Mrs Eleanor in a tone of apprehensive solicitude, as she tenderly supported her niece into an inner room, where, at her aunt’s urgent request, Isabel forbore any further attempts at conversation, and throwing herself on the humble pallet, which had served as couch to the worthy Mrs Eleanor Fitzroy since her brother’s imprisonment, our heroine quickly fell into a profound slumber.

Many days and nights had passed since she had tasted the blessing of undisturbed repose, and so sweet was its balmy influence to her wearied frame and spirits, that several hours elapsed ere she awoke from a deep and refreshing sleep. At length, starting to consciousness, she half raised her figure and looked round her little grated chamber, almost imagining that she still was under the delusion of Fancy’s mimic visions. The angelic smile that beamed from the benevolent countenance of Mrs Eleanor, as she bent over the

pillow of her beloved niece, and fervently imprinted the fond kiss of affection on her cheek, blissfully assured Isabel that no deceptive dream now cheated imagination ; and as late events rushed to recollection, with joyous gratitude she remembered her father's promised acquittal, her own restoration to her family, and with such delightful emotions closely linked the cherished thought that it was Tyrconnell who had freed her adored parent from the horrors of a prison, and what was infinitely dearer, had wiped aspersion from her father's honoured name, and restored his noble spirit from the suspicion of guilt and infamy, to fame, and life, and happiness. As the last idea flitted across her mind, the "eloquent blood" brightly flushed her cheek, and her eyes rekindled to even more than their usual lustre. She rose from her recumbent posture, and with all affection's ardour, pressed Mrs Eleanor to a heart now throbbing with the most sacred feelings.

" I have too long slept from so much joy,"

said Isabel in a tone of thrilling sweetness, as again she repeated her fond embrace.

“ My darling child, you have long slumbered ; the day is far advanced, and all has been arranged for our return to the once more happy Parsonage.”

“ Already ! and is my dearest father fully, fully acquitted—and has Mr ——,” Isabel stopped and blushed.

“ Tyrconnell been here ?” rejoined Mrs Eleanor finishing the sentence, without appearing to notice her niece’s confusion. “ Yes, my love, he brought the joyous tidings of permission for our immediate removal from hence. Darwent, having turned King’s evidence, made the necessary depositions before the legal authorities a few hours since, and so clear has been his testimony, that not a shadow of suspicion rests on my brother’s honour. The assizes of this town are at present holding. This very morning was the day appointed for your father’s trial, but, thanks be to Heaven, it is now unnecessary, as the atrocious guilt of Lord

Langrave is unquestionably confirmed by his own letters, produced in court by his vile agent Darwent, which contain the whole account of the infamous transaction, with his Lordship's instructions for conducting the iniquitous scheme to ultimate execution. Those proofs, together with Mr Tyrconnell's and my brother's statement, united to the evidence of the people with whom Darwent lodged, as to his abrupt and mysterious departure, have been quite sufficient to acquit your noble father, and to satisfy the judges of his upright integrity and perfect innocence. Every exertion will be made to discover the villain Langrave, and to bring him speedily to justice, and for that purpose, legal emissaries to the Continent will, this evening, be dispatched."

"Almighty Providence, receive my humble thanks!" said Isabel in a solemn and fervent voice; "and now let me tell my earthly parent all my joy," eagerly she cried, as with elastic step she crossed her little chamber, bounded into the anti-room, and fell upon her father's neck.

Happiness is a potent restorative, an effectual cosmetic, to call back again the blooming roses to the faded cheek, which the touch of sorrow may have banished thence. Isabel, glowing with pleasure, and animated by the purest feelings, had never, perhaps, looked so interestingly lovely, as in that moment of soft emotion, when nature spoke in every line of her expressive countenance. An instant passed in filial tenderness; Isabel then raised her humid eyes, which quickly sought the ground, as they encountered the enraptured, yet agitated glance of Tyrconnell; eloquently it told the sentiments of his heart,—powerfully responsive were those of Isabel. In beautiful disorder, deeply colouring, she stammered out some incoherent words. The very effort to conceal confusion rendered it but more distressingly apparent.

“All is now arranged for our departure; are you ready, love?” affectionately asked St Albe, as playfully he touched his daughter’s cheek.

“ Oh yes, quite ready !” she replied, hastily shading her glowing face in the friendly screen of a large bonnet, then drawing her father’s arm within her own, Isabel proceeded to the carriage which waited, followed by Mrs Eleanor and Tyrconnell. As the happy trio entered the chaise, Mr St Albe gratefully extended his hand to Albert ; it was warmly grasped by the latter, whose countenance suddenly assumed an expression of anguish, as wringing the hand he held, Tyrconnell emphatically pronounced the word, “ Farewell !”

“ What mean you ?” anxiously demanded Mrs Eleanor with friendly eagerness. “ Surely we shall see you soon ?”

“ I hope so,” said Tyrconnell in a suppressed voice, as the carriage drove off. Mrs Eleanor bent her head from the window, and perceived Tyrconnell as if rooted to the spot on which he stood. She affectionately waved her hand ; with a hurried air he returned the signal ; the next instant, a turning in the road precluded further observation.

CHAPTER XI.

ISABEL scarcely noticed what had passed, for she was wrapped in meditations, which continued so completely to absorb her thoughts, that she seldom spoke during her long drive to the Parsonage, nor did she once mention Tyrconnell's name, though his image was uppermost in her thoughts ; for the one expressive look he had that morning given was fondly remembered, while an indistinct recollection of the love he had avowed on that memorable day, when together they had met in terror and distress, (notwithstanding the suggestions of prudence,) would arise to Isabel's memory, like the feeble outlines of a picture, which, she feared, imagination only sketched ;

yet the few impassioned words Tyrconnell had uttered in that hour of agony, though they then fell powerless on Isabel's ear—unheeded, hardly understood,—now, that every fear had vanished, vividly they recurred to fancy, and induced a train of indistinct and visionary images, delightful to enjoy, though difficult to analyze. The longer Isabel pondered on the subject, the more averse she felt to speak of Albert. In vain she attempted to account for her reluctance; it was strong, but indefinable.

Every object was clad in the dusky grey of evening's shade, as the travellers entered the avenue which led to their once more happy dwelling. Crowds of rejoicing parishioners assembled at its gate, and hailed the return of their beloved pastor with the warmest sincerity. As the carriage stopped, some thronged round the door, and with tears and sobs of delight, besought St Albe's benediction; while others, in the energetic language of enthusiasm, expressed sincerest thanks to their

Creator for his restoration, and invoked the choicest blessings on his head.

The simple tribute of feeling strongly affected St Albe. His noble countenance, radiant with benevolence, beamed a sacred pleasure, a pious joy, as the many voices of his little flock rose, as if spontaneously, to Heaven, in one fervent strain of gratitude for his deliverance. Far sweeter to his ear was such a strain than the soft lay of the nightingale, or the liquid notes of the syren's song! With tears of holy gratulation, St Albe returned the ardent greetings of his attached parishioners. Not the meanest individual escaped his notice, or departed without some token of his parental love; and as he presented to the assembled group his more than ever beloved Isabel, and with pardonable pride recounted the heroic exertions she had made to fly to his prison, to alleviate his sufferings, and to soothe the horrors of his fate, St Albe's eye sparkled with the lustre of feelings which belong not to this world, but which have their source in an-

other, and a better ; for it was the sunshine of Heaven, the mild light of religious joy, that streamed a tide of flowing and purified emotions on his grateful soul, and kindled every spiritual feeling into celestial life and beauty, as he stood in dignified simplicity amidst the children of his love, his every action invested with the chastened splendour of unearthly elevation !

As Isabel supported her father, and witnessed the touching enthusiasm which insensibly stole through his heart, and spoke in his expressive features, how truly did she sympathize in her parent's feelings, her own, drawn from the same heavenly fount of inexhaustible sweetness ! Regardless of the homage she herself received, for an instant she fondly gazed with tenderness on her father, and with him enjoyed the unmixed felicity of the passing moment ; then with a smile of angelic softness, she affectionately waved her hand to the little group, and followed by Mrs Eleanor, gently led her loved parent into the interior

of his home, where, flinging her arms round two beings inseparably connected in her soul by the closest ties, Isabel gave loose to the exuberance of uncontrollable emotion, and wept for very happiness. Then, ashamed of betraying the unrestrained feelings of her swelling heart, with laughing, though tearful eyes, she sportively led her father and aunt to their apartments ; with playful tenderness wished to each “ a fair good night ;” and retired to her own pillow, where joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, were speedily lost in the oblivious influence of that power which lies far from the guilty and the wretched, but sheds repose, and waves his downy wings in lulling softness over the couch of innocence and peace.

CHAPTER XII.

THE idea of an immediate separation from those he held most dear, it will be readily conjectured, was the cause of the mysterious agitation which Albert Tyrconnell evinced in his parting words to Mrs Eleanor Fitzroy; and the reader will also easily imagine that nothing short of imperative necessity could have induced him to leave Ireland at the precise moment, when circumstances most seemed to favour the encouragement of that love which so long had been his prevailing passion, and to which every pulse of his heart beat responsive, as he bade adieu to the land which contained within its magic realm his all of earthly happiness! Uncertain whether fate would

ever fulfil those brilliant hopes in which his fancy late had revelled, Tyrconnell felt an almost womanish softness imperceptibly steal on his senses, as he recollected that hitherto the dreams of imagination had, like the shadowy glories of the rainbow, seemed but prelude to darker skies and gloomier storms; and, as he looked through the hazy distance at the receding shores of Erin, and leaning on the stern of the vessel in which he had recently embarked, despondingly sighed, Farewell, to what then appeared but as a speck of earth resting on the expansive bosom of the blue ocean; he shuddered, as a superstitious presentiment pervaded his mind, that his was a last farewell!

Determined to conquer such weakness, Albert roused to action the triumphant aid of reason, and soon his vigorous mind awoke to the exercise of every great and manly feeling, and kindled into even more than usual ardour as the inspiring thought arose, that it was for Isabel's sake he now returned to France, to

join his efforts to those of the messengers of justice in endeavouring to discover the villain Langrave, whose long array of treacheries waxed strongly in the imagination of Albert, as the commingled fire of ill suspended passions flashed through his veins, while panting to assert the high prerogatives of virtue, he impatiently attempted to calculate every instant that must intervene until his arrival in Paris would permit him to release his all-powerful indignation from the fetters of restraint. Previous to Tyrconnell's departure, he had left a letter for his uncle, in which he had concisely stated that indispensable business obliged him reluctantly to leave the society of those he most valued ; that a short time must elapse before he could return, but that he fondly trusted he would soon be enabled to enjoy that happiness which, for the present, his evil destiny compelled him to forego. Disinclined for society, Albert had remained on deck ever since his embarkation, and was in fancy picturing the reception his epistle would meet

with from Sir Hugh ; when his reverie was interrupted by a voice, which cheerfully said,—

“ Well, Captain, we shall quickly be on shore, shall we not ? at least I thought so, else I should not have quitted my snug birth down stairs.” At the sound of that well known voice, Tyrconnell turned hastily round, and beheld General Montford, whose surprise and delight fully equalled his friend’s, as, seizing Albert’s hand with the warm pressure of affection, Montford exclaimed,—

“ My dear Tyrconnell, to what happy chance am I indebted for this meeting ?”

“ Whatever it may be, most fervently I thank it. ‘ Fairies, black, grey, green, or white,’ accept my gratitude, for truly it must be the elvish art that has procured me such an unexpected pleasure,” said Albert gaily, as cordially he shook the hand he still retained.

“ And whither are you bound ?” demanded Montford, as he seated himself beside his youthful friend.

“ To France, on the wing of expedition.”

“ But surely you will stop with me in London? You know you are in my debt a visit. I have not forgot the unwarrantable haste with which you cheated me of my just dues when last we met.”

“ Impossible. Most particular business requires my presence in Paris without an instant’s delay. I believe it is ever fated that I must deny myself the gratification of accepting your hospitable invitations, my dear General.”

“ Nothing but your own wayward fancies oblige such a decision,” said Montford impatiently. “ There is but one earthly cause to whose lawful influence I will submit, and that is one to whose enthrallment, heroes, sages, idiots, statesmen, poets, women, school-boys, all have yielded since creation. I mean too powerful love! Plead me that excuse and I will grant it.”

“ Provoke me not to perjury,” said Albert, colouring crimson, yet playfully endeavouring to parry the General’s attack, as he added,—

“ By all the sighs and tears that Cupid claims,
I vow the Gallic shores contain no gentle
nymph to whose kind willing ear I dare or
wish to

‘ Tune my distresses, and record my woes.’ ”

“ Nay, then, for once I am mistaken, for by
your moon-struck air, your wreathed arms, and
lover-like abandonment, I could have sworn
some female paragon of excellence engrossed
your thoughts, until my unlucky interrup-
tion dispelled the dear illusion.”

“ And made me ‘ leave off discourse of
disability’ to enjoy the more substantial one
of friendship,” rejoined Tyrconnell, sportive-
ly. “ But, in the name of wonder, General,
what brought you to Ireland ?”

“ A most attractive magnet,—one more
powerful than any which the magazine of the
sly urchin boasts—money.—A veteran rela-
tive, whom I had never seen, was summoned
to the shades a short time since, and having
no better heir, left me the gold to spend,

which, to amass in life, had been his only pleasure. The estate lies in the north of Ireland, and I am now returning, after being recognized its lawful lord."

"And never could it find a worthier," said Albert with enthusiasm, as his eye sparkled with pleasure, on hearing of his friend's good fortune. "Long may you live to enjoy what few could use so well! When least expected, how often do the smiles of the blindfold goddess favour! Her intercession, General, has also been exerted towards me, vile varlet that I am! My late grandfather has left me master of wealth beyond my most ambitious wishes."

"Now, now indeed, I do rejoice!" cried the General, grasping Albert's arm with joyful surprise. "I knew, I always said you would be happy—virtue, honour such as your's, heaven's justice ever must reward. My dear young friend, my heart congratulates you.—Well, well! spite of that good-for-nothing fellow, Sir Hugh Tyrconnell, you will yet be great as you deserve to be."

“ Oh breathe not a word against my uncle !” said Albert with energy. He has seen, has acknowledged me ; and has proved himself a man that even Montford’s generous spirit must applaud.”

“ Joys, like sorrows, come sometimes in battalions !” rejoined the General sportively, though the tear of affection dimmed for a moment the lustre of his speaking eye, as attempting to conceal, beneath affected gaiety, the ardour of feelings which did him so much honour, he exclaimed, “ Now then, my noble Troubadour, you may tempt the vestal novice to abjure her virgin vows, and if my prescience has not played me false, methinks you cannot have forgot the lovely Isabel.—Eh, my brave Albert ?”

As the General uttered the last words, a universal bustle denoted the termination of the passage. Tyrconnell, with unusual earnestness, occupied himself in giving a hundred immaterial directions, which saved him the necessity of replying to his friend’s ques-

tion, and pleading extraordinary hurry, as an excuse for abruptly leaving Montford, after an affectionate, though hasty parting, Albert threw himself into a chaise, and without a moment's delay, pursued the road to Dover with the utmost expedition.

CHAPTER XIII.

UNDER the superintendence of Isabel, the domestic *ménage* of the Parsonage had resumed its wonted regularity, and the elastic spirit of happiness had nearly restored the minds of Mr St Albe and his worthy sister to their original tone. Our heroine, too, seemed placidly gay and contented. We say seemed, for truth obliges us to confess, that the intelligence of Tyrconnell's sudden departure (which a letter from Sir Hugh had announced to Mr St Albe) did not essentially contribute towards the re-establishment of her former health and spirits. However, notwithstanding a slight depression, both were gradually recovering the shock that recent

events had occasioned, for Isabel's ideas of human bliss were so closely associated with the best affections of the soul, she was so habituated to receive her own gratifications through the felicity of others, and benevolence diffused its benign influence so beautifully throughout her character, that, while she beheld the smile of pleasure sit on the lip of those she dearly loved, her heart could not selfishly repine at its own peculiar regrets, or presumptuously deem the accomplishment of every hope absolutely necessary to the perfection of sublunary happiness. With gratitude and thanksgiving, she thanked her Creator for those sources of comfort she enjoyed, and never willingly allowed herself to murmur, because the mysterious wisdom of Omniscience refused to accord some particular objects of specific interest. Two days had elapsed since Mr St Albe's return to the Parsonage, every moment of which had been so occupied by the discharge of various duties, that he had not found sufficient leisure to

commence the perusal of Lord Belville's papers, feeling unwilling to begin the important task until secure of being uninterrupted ; but on the third morning, as Isabel was leaving the breakfast-room, she was stopped by Mrs Eleanor, who informed her, that her father requested their immediate attendance, as he intended to read in their presence her late uncle's packet, the contents of which were yet unknown. Isabel instantly accompanied her aunt to the study, where, seating himself between his sister and daughter, St Albe, with a sigh, opened the envelope, and commenced reading the papers, which were penned at many different intervals, and bore various dates of time.

Mr St Albe's perusal was often suspended by his own painful surprise, and the strong emotion of his auditors. We shall, however, proceed to communicate the substance of the enclosure, in the unhappy writer's words, and in as unbroken a manner as the disjointed style of the memorial will permit.—

TO LORD BELVILLE.

“ How shall I commence the black detail of perjury, of falsehood, and injustice, which these papers will reveal? How unrol the catalogue of errors that have marked my progress through life’s little day, and Oh! have stained the fame of one far dearer to my soul than self, my still loved Henrietta! To paint *her* faults my shuddering heart recoils; yet conscience guides my pen, and will be heard. Why then attempt to excuse the inexcusable? I will not.

‘ Tired dissimulation drops her mask,
Through life’s grimace the mistress of the scene.’

Let me then at once unwind the web ambition wove around my steps, which led me to become the being that I am! But on idle words no more I’ll linger; my trembling hand shall now draw back deception’s curtain, and, emerging from its thick dark folds, I will my-

self appear my own accuser, thine avenger !

* * * * *

Conscience no longer slumbers ; her siren tones lull not to rest, but speak in awful accents to my wakened soul, urging disclosure ; and although I know not whether this sad record of my faults may ever meet thine eyes, yet will I write, for it relieves my anguished spirit ; and perhaps the time will come when thou wilt read, and drop, perchance, a tear of pity !

“ To tell the errors which I have myself committed is not my only task ; others are involved in the detail, even those beings to whom I owe existence, whose frailties I must, Oh how unwillingly, relate ! before my own apostacy from honour claims recital.

“ Our father, at an early age his own master, passed many years abroad. While in the bloom of manhood, at that dangerous epoch when too often passion usurps the reins of reason, he became acquainted with a German female, exquisitely beautiful, in mind and man-

ners cultivated, but in virtue frail ! Enthralled by her bewitching fascinations, the late Lord Belville yielded his soul a willing captive to her powerful charms. I was the only pledge of their unhallowed love, and unhappily cemented, in a great degree, a criminal attachment, which otherwise would probably have been as evanescent as those attachments generally are which honour and religion do not consecrate ; but, in the instance of the late Lord Belville, time seemed to shed new lustre on my mother's beauty, and permanently to fix her influence. Immediately after my birth, Lord Belville, with his fair enslaver, left Germany, and adjourned to Italy, where he purchased a country villa, in which he lived in the utmost retirement with his lovely companion, whom he permitted to assume his title ; and even when his noble relatives interrogated him by letter on the subject of his conduct, the infatuated Belville allowed his family to think that my unfortunate mother had a lawful right to claim the sacred name

of wife, while so irreproachable seemed her life, and so respectable my father's, that the legitimacy of their connection the world never questioned. I had just entered my tenth year when the guilty union was dissolved by death. Naturally of a delicate constitution, my mother, owing to her constant attentions on Lord Belville during the course of a tedious and dangerous illness, caught the fever to which he had been a victim. It soon terminated her existence. To his Lordship's sensitive mind, the idea of having, even unintentionally, caused her death, was insupportable. In frenzied distraction, he accused himself of being her murderer, as, in a state of feeling, that sometimes bordered on insanity, he unremittingly attended her whom he adored. On the evening which released my ill-fated parent from her many sufferings, as the miserable Belville sat beside her couch, the lovely invalid fixed on him her dying eyes, as impressively she said, ' One promise yet is in your power to make, which I confess would comfort my de-

parting soul.' Vehemently Lord Belville prayed to hear her wishes. Almost inarticulately she implored him never to reveal the nature of their connection ; fervently she besought him to allow me to pass as his legitimate offspring, and even, in case of marriage, most earnestly she entreated him to permit me to enjoy those honours which the nature of my birth precluded me from claiming as my lawful heritage. The prayer was scarcely breathed when Heaven, as if to mark its reprobation, called the spirit of the suffering suppliant to another world.

“ No reply had issued from the lips of my distracted father, yet the remembrance of that moment of agony, and the recollection of the last petition, then warmly urged, long afterwards reigned paramount to every other feeling, and continued so powerfully to influence his conduct, that moral justice and propriety were consequently violated ; for, by the sophistry of perverted sentiment, Lord Belville conceived himself pledged to perform the dying

wishes of the woman he had so fondly loved, and who, he imagined, had given so many unequivocal proofs of the most devoted attachment, as in honour bound him to acknowledge me as his legitimate child. How fatal were the effects of such fallacious feelings !

“ For a length of time subsequent to my mother’s death, Lord Belville was a martyr to the keenest affliction ; his only consolation seemed to exist in superintending my studies, and in ministering to my happiness. As soon as the intensity of his grief had in some degree abated, we proceeded to England. No expence was there spared to complete my education on the same expensive plan on which it had been conducted whilst in Italy, and I was presented to, and received by, Lord Belville’s family, as his lawful son and heir-apparent. And here let me solemnly assert, that, until the period of my father’s death, I remained in the most utter ignorance of my illegitimacy, and consequent usurpation of another’s rights ; for never having suspected the nature

of the connection which had subsisted between my parents, how could I guess the fatal truth? Oh! never should I have surmised its existence, had not the terrors of a death-bed impelled my father to reveal the circumstances I have already mentioned, and to——but I must not anticipate. To return then to my sad history. Time, which insensibly moderates the severest sorrow, gradually tempered that of Lord Belville; and you are aware that, about four years after our return to England, the unwearied arguments of his friends to induce him to enter the married state at length prevailed. At the period of Lord Belville's union with your Lordship's mother, I was fourteen years of age, and at Eton with my tutor; how well I remember the letter I received, when first the marriage was in contemplation; how imprinted on my mind is the melancholy tone of my father's epistle, the mysterious contest of feeling it betrayed, which I have attributed to his lingering attachment to my departed parent's memory,

but which I now believe was principally occasioned by the remorse he felt at the deception he practised in espousing your Lordship's mother without revealing his prior misconduct, and in imposing me on his illustrious family as his legitimate heir. It was the suggestions of an inward monitor which darkened the happiness that Lord Belville might otherwise have experienced from his union with an amiable female, and which almost lightened his mind when the death of his wife dissolved this marriage a twelvemonth after it had been solemnized. You are aware, my Lord, how completely we were mutually estranged for the many years subsequent to that event. Mistaken management!—Never were we permitted to meet until you had attained the age of manhood, and I was on the point of uniting my destiny with that of Henrietta Trelawland. Infatuating woman! Great as was my adoration, powerful as was thy influence, it would, perhaps, have failed when unjustifiably exerted, had I associated with and learn-

ed to reverence the virtue and the worth of him whose rights I have so long usurped ; but retrospection now is useless ! * * * *

* * * * I married. My father did not even then reveal the secret of my birth, but accompanied me, and my lovely bride, on a tour of pleasure through Great Britain. Dear, though erring parent !—how soon wert thou compelled to leave us !—Oh memory, deprive me not of strength to finish my sad detail ! * * * *

* * * * A pulmonary complaint had long partially affected Lord Belville ; gradually it assumed a very serious appearance, and the northern air of Scotland being by his physicians deemed too bleak, he was ordered to try the salutary atmosphere of Devonshire. Thither he repaired. In vain we prayed for permission to accompany him ; obstinately he refused compliance, and insisted that we should pursue our destined tour, and visit Henrietta's family ere we adjourned to Exeter.

“Not conceiving Lord Belville in the slightest degree of danger, we yielded to his wishes. The letters we continued to receive for some time after his departure were of the most favourable nature, and appearances justified their tenor ; but, alas ! appearances only, for the invalid was fast advancing on his journey to the grave ! An alarming change suddenly took place, and his subsequent decline was one of the most rapid that can possibly be conceived. We were in the north of Scotland when the fatal tidings reached us, that my father’s life was in the utmost peril.

“ Without losing a moment, and in the greatest agitation, accompanied by Henrietta, I commenced my painful journey to Exeter. Soon we arrived, and found my poor father sane in mind, but on the eve of death, his dying bed attended by the late Lord Langrave, who was a man of principles as infamous, of mind as vitiated, and of morals as impure, as those which now disgrace his son ; but, hypocritical in villany, he, too, disguised

the flagrancy of vice beneath the artificial veil of polished refinement, and a fascinating address, that scarcely ever failed to conceal depravity, and to win upon the feelings of mankind. My father was among the number of his dupes, for never having met his Lordship except in mixed society, he was utterly ignorant of his real character, and, therefore, from the period of Lord Belville's residence in Devonshire, he scrupled not to admit the wily Langrave to a close degree of intimacy, more particularly, as he chanced to be the only person in the immediate neighbourhood of Exeter with whom my father was acquainted during his indisposition, or at the moment when his alarmed physicians suddenly pronounced his life in danger. But I can write no more. The recollection of what followed tortures me to madness. * * *

“ Again I seize my pen. With his expiring breath, my unhappy parent disclosed to me the secret of my birth, and those particulars I have already told. With shame I heard the

tale, as anxiously I asked, whether it was known to any mortal in existence but ourselves? Never, never, shall I forget my father's anxious gaze, as his glassy eye, already covered with the film of death, was fixed upon me; nor his last injunctions, every word of which memory has traced with caustic characters indelible upon my brain! His very action I remember, as, stretching out his withered trembling hands, in the dread hollow tone of expiring nature, he exclaimed,—

“ ‘Tortured by the imperishable stings of conscience, which goad with tenfold venom, as the lamp of life wanes fastly! Fearful that Heaven would not permit me to behold thee, ere it called away my spirit to another sphere, I confided to Lord Langrave the nature of thy birth, with the deception which so long had been practised, and in his presence, and that of a legal person whom, at my request, he did procure, I drew a will, in which the heads of my confession are briefly detailed, and in which I left thee ample independence ;

but, Oh my son!—by every hope on which the soul immortal loves to mount the skies,—by fear of those infernal punishments which, even to dream of, daunts the bravest spirit,—and by the dread of a father’s everlasting malediction, breathed from the confines of another world, I did adjure thee publicly to avow my errors, and the stigma they had cast upon thy name, and to Lord Langrave did entrust my will, who bound himself by oath to give it unto thee, and further to disclose what my Creator, in his mercy, has permitted me to now reveal.

“‘Life, my son, ebbs fastly ; yet, ere I clasp thee in a last embrace, swear, Oh swear, thou wilt fulfil my dying wishes, and restore his birth-right to thy injured brother.’

“Solemnly I did swear ! The awful vow was scarcely breathed ere my father’s parting spirit winged its flight immortal !

“Oh ! what a scene ensued !—A while I pause, ere I attempt to paint it. * * *

“And do I shrink from telling thee what followed ?—’Tis useless—my coward heart,

concentrate all thy powers, for confess my
guilt I will! * * * * *

“ In a tumult of opposing feelings I flew to Henrietta’s chamber. I found her deep in conference with Lord Langrave. I heeded not his presence, but falling on my knees before my wife, revealed in agony intense the secret of my birth. With smiles of softest love she raised me from my humble posture, and half assuaged my grief, as, in the language of devoted tenderness, she told me I was dearer to her soul than ever, and that to be the wife of England’s proudest peer, she would not yet forego the bliss of being mine !

“ I will not try to paint the ecstasy which such assurance gave to my fond doating heart, as, with affection’s fervour, I clasped my Henrietta to my throbbing breast, while I exclaimed,—

“ ‘ Oh that a way remained by which I still could prove the ardour of my love, my everlasting gratitude !’

“ ‘ There is one medium yet, my Theodore,

my husband!—but I dare not name it,' she replied in gentlest accents.

“ ‘ Fear not. Whatever it may be, I swear compliance!’ burst from my trembling lips. At such a promise the blood rushed and crimsoned Henrietta’s cheek, as abetted by Lord Langrave, with sophistry the subtlest, with argument the most ingenious, cautiously she did confess the nature of the conference which I had interrupted, slowly unfolded the design of their previous machinations, and the infamous plot which they together had arranged. Did I wish to palliate my guilt, I might here describe the dangerous temptations, the threatened punishments, which love and which ambition unitedly held forth to overcome my staggering virtue, to pervert my judgment, and to induce me to become the abject tool of vice, an outcast from the good to all eternity; but to attempt extenuation of my crime were only to increase its depth of dye. Suffice it, then, to say, that it was concerted midst the guilty trio to suppress my father’s will, and to

forge another in its stead, by which I still should seem his lawful heir, and, consequently, exclude you, my Lord, from all your just prerogatives, though, to save appearances, it was agreed a moderate patrimony should be to you therein bequeathed.

“ The iniquitous scheme was instantly executed ; for Darwent (the venal wretch who had drawn my parent’s genuine will) was a creature of Lord Langrave ; and, therefore, easily was bribed to secrecy, and induced to pen a false one,—a copy of which was forthwith transmitted to your Lordship.

“ To account for that part in the guilty drama which Lord Langrave played, I here must state, that, owing to the dissipated and extravagant life he had ever led, his finances were so completely exhausted, that beggary and ruin had nearly whelmed him in disgrace, at the period when my father went to Devonshire.

“ Without any definite object in view, insensibly the wily Langrave insinuated himself in-

to Lord Belville's confidence, and when (despairing of my arrival) the dying invalid reposed in him his last momentous trust, it was with the greatest difficulty that the hypocrite concealed his exultation, as at once all the advantages to be derived from the possession of such a secret rose to his imagination. How fully he availed himself of the prospects it afforded I shall now relate.

“On the execution of the forged will, Langrave received a *douceur* of L. 12,000 ; but, before that sum was paid, I stipulated that it must be the last he should demand ; that he and his agent Darwent should swear eternal secrecy, and that the original testament should be immediately destroyed, which I imagined, beyond all doubt, was done, as what I thought the genuine will was burned in my own presence. Two years afterwards Lord Langrave died. Released from our principal dread of future disclosure, exultingly we enjoyed comparative security ; for Darwent's silence, I knew, an annual stipend would secure. Judge,

then, my Lord, how blasted were our prospects, how annihilated all our hopes, when, immediately after Lord Langrave's demise, his son, a youth in age, though a veteran in iniquity, wrote to demand an instant audience, which being granted, with the triumphant malice of successful treachery, he produced the real record of my father's dying wishes, (a record witnessed by his physicians, who, however ignorant of the document's contents, could swear to their individual signatures;) and when, further, the youthful peer informed me, that the scroll, whose destruction I had witnessed, the late Lord Langrave, in conjunction with the attorney Darwent, had copied from the authentic will, before my arrival in Devonshire, and had retained in their own possession the genuine testament, calculating on our subsequent credulity for the ultimate accomplishment of their projects; thus proving, that the whole scheme had been planned immediately after my father's confession to Lord Langrave, and that Henrietta

and myself had been the credulous dupes of the most atrocious baseness, and had fallen victims in that very net which we ourselves had villanously joined to weave.

“ Vain were the most splendid bribes to induce the youthful Langrave to resign the important document ; for, aware that it was presented to him by his father, as a succedaneum for the total embezzlement of his personal property, he knew full well that it was the only means whereby that loss could be compensated ; therefore, decidedly and peremptorily he refused to destroy the only source of wealth which fate had granted.

“ My own implication in his parent’s guilt effectually precluded any effort to obtain the rights of justice. My lips were sealed to silence, and for the last seventeen years, I have been compelled, from time to time, to give such sums of money to the present Lord, as (great as is my fortune) has impaired it most considerably ; but I dare not refuse to comply with any demand in reason, for if I venture

so to do, his Lordship tauntingly threatens to strip me of my borrowed lustre, and to publish to the world the history of my shame; which he could effect without much individual risk, as his father, not himself, was guilty of the act of forgery; besides, the hypocrite could easily pretend to have by accident discovered the whole transaction, which plausible assertion might certainly be credited, as Langrave ever refused to grant acknowledgments for the sums he has received, lest, at a future day, they might incontestably rise in judgment against him. Thus we are much more in his power than he in our's. Awful retribution!—The offspring of the being by whose aid unlawfully I scaled the ladder of ambition, now proves the torturing fiend that mocks my elevation, and who self-interest alone restrains from branding me with the broad mark of infamy eternal! * * * * *

* * * *

“ Years have rolled on, and yet I have not courage to be just. Oh! my father, how well

I now conceive the mental pangs that rent thy breast!—But thy sins were venial when compared with mine; for thou didst never break a solemn oath, pledged to a God and to parent!

* * * * *

“Henrietta writes me her intent to wed my son with Isabel St Albe; that she is in London, and will come to France. Powers of mercy, how shall I support the meeting!

* * * *

“I have seen her!—What daggers to my soul her sweetest smiles! Charming as she is, she never can love Allanby!—She shall not fall a sacrifice to Lady Belville’s politic designs. I swear she shall not; for, ere Isabel leaves France, I will disclose to her the tale of guilt which long has weighed upon my burdened soul. It will relieve its agonies, and, perhaps, appease the wrathful spirit of that father, whose curses from another world pursue his perjured child in this!

* * * *

“As from a dream of horror I awake!—Prophetic were the words my pen last traced!—Allanby, my son, is dead!—My wife—my Henrietta!—her for whom I bartered all my chance of Heaven, deserts me in this awful hour!—Yet my dying bed a visitant celestial cheers!—Isabel attends my couch; she prays, she comforts, and she blesses there!

“Dare I trust the hopes her pious mind suggests, which brightly pierce the gloom of darkness, and the flood of consolation to my broken spirit which her tongue proclaims?

“She tells me seraphs strike their golden harps, and hymn a universal joy, when man repents!—Oh! injured Belville! canst thou, too, in mercy pardon? And Isabel, dear lovely being! thou who poured one drop of nectar in my bitter cup of life, and cheered my passage to another sphere with the mild radiance of religious light, when to-morrow’s dawn gives to thine eyes these papers, wilt thou also pity and forgive the contrite

“THEODORE?”

Our heroine was breathless with emotion as her father (whom we must henceforth term Lord Belville) finished the sad memorial of the errors and the sufferings of the humble penitent, whose genuine repentance softened the recollection of his previous guilt in the minds of his merciful judges, and in a great degree atoned for its committal. Lord Belville was too much affected by the perusal he had with difficulty accomplished to offer any comment, as, with trembling hands, he tied up the momentous papers. Willingly he would have concealed from all the world their contents ; but he felt imperatively that moral justice ought to be satisfied, and therefore instantly dispatched a few hurried lines to the legal personage in whose custody Darwent yet remained, stating briefly those circumstances which rendered his further detention indispensable ; and appointing an early day for the prosecution of the important business in which his Lordship found himself so unexpectedly involved. Meanwhile Isabel and

Mrs Eleanor had gladly retired to indulge in solitude those feelings which the affecting confession of the unhappy Theodore had so vividly excited.

CHAPTER XIV.

WITHOUT meeting any obstacle, Tyrconnell reached the French metropolis, and so speedily had his journey been accomplished, that his arrival preceded that of the legal emissaries whom he expected to join at an appointed place of rendezvous in Paris. Resolved not to admit a moment's unnecessary delay in the prosecution of inquiries respecting Langrave, Albert proceeded to the mansion of the *pseudo* Lord Belville. His summons at the gateway was answered by Thomas, the old family porter, whom, on a former occasion, we have introduced to the acquaintance of the reader. Surprise and pleasure spoke in his venerable countenance, while he profound-

ly bowed and welcomed Tyrconnell, saying,—
“ Dear Sir, how little I thought to see you here ; for every earthly good seemed to have flown with that angel, Miss St Albe, of whom doubtless you have since had some account.”

“ I have,” replied Tyrconnell. Thank Heaven, she is well, and with her father.”

“ Praised be Providence !” rejoined the old man devoutly. “ And, truly, she deserves all happiness, for never did my aged eyes light on so good, so fair a lady. Oh ! Sir, you know not half her worth. It is the poor, the sick, the helpless, who best can tell her value, and if the prayers and blessings of the orphan, the widow, and the friendless, can avail on high, then surely Miss St Albe will be ‘ most favoured amongst women !’ ”

“ I believe you,” said Tyrconnell with an energy that marked the warmth and sincerity with which he acquiesced in the simple eloquence of Thomas’s feelings ; then, as if afraid to trust himself, he turned the subject, by adding, “ How is Lady Belville ?”

“ Alas ! Sir, in a wretched way. She has had some few intervals of reason, but the doctors seem to say she never will recover her right mind. Charles went this day to try and find out Lady Julia, hoping she would come to see my Lady ; but I fear his present errand will be quite as fruitless as his search for my Lord Langrave.”

“ Ha ! you know not then his residence ?”

“ No, Sir. The day after Miss St Albe left Paris, Lord Langrave called here, and seemed furious on hearing of my late Lord’s death. He then insisted on seeing Lady Belville, but, when I told him her Ladyship had lost her reason, he was for all the world like a frantic man himself ; and when further (to turn his attention) I mentioned the flight of Miss St Albe, no one knew whither ; and also informed him, that on the same day you had left this country with another gentleman, I thought he fairly would have gone distracted. He just stopped to ask me a few questions about your companion, Sir, which I answered, and

to which he made no reply, except to say, (striking violently his forehead at the same time,) ‘It is then as I suspected;’ after which, Sir, he rushed like a madman out of the gateway. We have never seen him since, and, although Charles (wishing to consult his Lordship about the discovery of Lady Julia) tried to find out where Lord Langrave lived, he has not succeeded, for the people of the hotel at which he always stopped cannot, or will not, give the slightest information. Dear, dear! I little thought, when leaving good Old England, that such misfortunes would attend this noble family!”

“Well, Thomas, we must only hope the best. I cannot delay longer. Good bye for the present,” said Tyrconnell, slipping some silver into the old man’s hand, after which he quickly returned to the hotel, where he hoped to find the legal officers. His expectation was not disappointed; but the inquiries they had made had been as ineffectual as those of Albert. It was therefore finally arranged, that

different routes should be taken in pursuit of Langrave, and that, at a particular hour, the party should reassemble where they then separated.

Every possible medium of intelligence was subsequently tried by Tyrconnell, but without success; and after having vainly walked through a considerable part of Paris, he was, towards the close of evening, returning homewards, when, at some distance, he espied a man coming out of a house, and, although his figure was much muffled in a large cloak, and his face nearly concealed by the shade of a slouched hat, yet, in the personage before him, Tyrconnell thought he recognized Langrave's valet.

Without a moment's delay, he moved quickly onward; but the figure suddenly turned an abrupt angle, and by the time Tyrconnell reached the point, the object of his pursuit had disappeared. Though exceedingly annoyed at the circumstance, he knew that further search would only be a waste of labour; for,

owing to the many intersected and narrow streets with which that part of the French capital abounded, it was utterly impossible to determine, with any degree of certitude, which way the man had taken. Yet, however baffled in one respect, Albert resolved not to allow his patience to be vanquished, and having at the time distinctly noted the house from whence the person issued, he retraced his steps, and soon arrived at the entrance.

The mansion was one of those antiquated buildings, which, fast falling to decay, equally proclaim the magnificence of the original proprietors, and the comparative poverty of the modern inhabitants.

The open staircase permitted an easy access to Tyrconnell, as with speed he mounted the oaken boards, and ventured to knock at the door of the apartments on the first floor. His summons was answered by a respectable looking old man, who civilly inquired his wishes. Scarcely knowing how to intimate them, Albert hesitated, as, glancing round the

room, he said, " I beg pardon. I am in search of an acquaintance, but I believe he is not here."

" No, Sir. I am the only occupier of this suite of rooms, and there is no other lodger in the house except a person who lives in the upper story ; perhaps he may be the one you want."

Tyrconnell expressed his thanks as he retired, resolving to commence another trial.

When he gained the top of the staircase, he perceived a door ajar at the further end of a short passage, and the view which the interior of the chamber presented was so striking, that, great as was Tyrconnell's anxiety, for a moment he paused, as it forcibly arrested his attention.

The room was spacious, and hung with faded tapestry, part of which fell in tattered negligence on the lofty walls. The furniture was scanty, but spoke of former greatness. On a black marble slab burned a single taper, which flared a strong light on the objects

within its immediate vicinity, but left the rest of the apartment in gloomy darkness.

A large antique mirror distinctly reflected a figure which sat at the table. It was Langrave! He was in a loose dressing-gown, his throat was bared, and frightfully displayed the workings of the swelling veins. His matted hair hung in disorder on his bloodless cheek,—his eyes were fixed, yet glared a horrible brightness,—his lips were perfectly colourless, while his heaving breast, and the convulsive startings of his limbs, invested his figure with a strange and awful interest. Before him was a packet which he seemed to have just sealed, and close beside it lay an unsheathed sword, and a brace of pistols.

A smile of dreadful meaning curled his haughty lip, as, vehemently dashing aside the papers, he scornfully said,—“My task is done; and now, my trusty blade, let’s see—canst do thy duty?”

While he asked the question, his countenance totally changed; the mantling blood flush-

ed his cheek to crimson; his distorted features spoke the maniac defiance of despair, and his sparkling eye lit into a blaze of lustre, as, having first cautiously tried the edge of the weapon, he exclaimed, with the laugh of a demon,—

“Most gloriously it will do the deed!”— His impious hand upraised the gleaming steel—Tyrconnell rushed and grasped it ere it fell; while, in a voice of superhuman strength, he uttered the word “Stop!”

Rage, scorn, hatred, and surprise, struggled for mastery in Langrave, as, unable to articulate a syllable, he wrestled violently to regain the blade, which brightly flashed between the combatants; but vengeance seemed to nerve the arm of Langrave, as, with one fierce gesture, he wildly snatched the sword from his antagonist, and, aiming a last desperate blow, dyed the glittering sabre in Tyrconnell's blood!

It was but a moment's triumph. The undaunted Albert, with calm disdain and giant

strength, wrenched the gory weapon from his foe; while all the hero's soul flashing from his eye, he shivered the blade into a thousand pieces, and, as he flung aside the shattered fragments, and cast a quelling glance of haughty pride upon the vanquished Langrave, he exclaimed, in the stern and exalted voice of one more born to command than to obey,—

“ I scorn to triumph over a conquered and an unarmed foe! Base wretch, thy country's laws shall claim a life which I disdain to take!”

A venomed shaft of deadliest power seemed to have scathed the heart of Langrave. His eyes started with agony—his teeth gnashed in fury—his nostrils were dilated with the breath of hatred—but his tongue and limbs refused to do their office; while, as if in the presence of a superior being, he stood an instant motionless, gazing with the stupefaction of despair on the majestic Albert! A sound of coming steps dispelled the momentary trance. The officers of justice rushed into the

room. The rage of an infernal deity again involved the figure of Langrave, as, comprehending all his danger, clenching his hands, and wildly stretching his arms towards the group, in infuriated accents, he exclaimed,—

“Ye blood-hounds, have ye tracked the lion to his den? Behold, then, how he dies!”—while, snatching a pistol from the table, with the rapidity of lightning, he discharged a fatal bullet through his brain!—The aim was true; an instant launched the spirit of the daring Langrave into the boundless empire of eternity!

Horror for a few moments paralyzed the spectators. Tyrconnell was the first to think and act. He raised the senseless form of Langrave; with agitated haste he chafed his gory temples; but the vital spark was quite extinct; no gasping struggle quivered on the lip; no heaving throb spoke the rending anguish of expiring nature; all was still, and cold, and motionless!—The drooping head hung lifeless; an ashy hue spread over the now passionless

features of the once fascinating Langrave ; and his dim and glassy eye, its brilliant light for ever quenched, lay shrouded in the shades of death !

Inexpressibly shocked, Albert covered the body with his cloak, and turned aside to conceal his emotion.

One of the officers of justice then advanced and said,—“ This is an awful business, Sir. It is fortunate so many persons witnessed the fatal deed, as no unpleasant conjecture can possibly arise. By the simplest accident the guide who accompanied us recognized in the street the servant of the unfortunate deceased, whom by force we compelled to discover his master’s retreat. We little thought that such a scene would follow!—But, Sir, you seem fatigued. Good Heavens! you are wounded!” in sudden alarm cried the man, as he perceived the gushing blood which streamed from Albert’s arm. “ It is a mere scratch,” said Tyrconnell faintly, as he vainly attempted to twist a handkerchief round his

bleeding arm. The effort was too much ; he staggered, and fell !—Assistance was officiously rendered, and in a few moments, Albert recovered from the temporary insensibility which extraordinary agitation and loss of blood had occasioned. Several gentlemen whom the affair had collected to the spot then insisted on his retiring, assuring him that every necessary duty should be paid to the remains of Lord Langrave.

As Albert was going to comply with the request, his eye glanced on the sealed packet, which he perceived was addressed to Mr St Albe. Immediately conceiving that it might contain papers of the most important consequence, in the presence of the group he took charge of the parcel, holding himself responsible for its safe and speedy delivery ; and although extremely exhausted in mind and body, yet so great was his anxiety in any transaction which, in the remotest degree, concerned Isabel, that, on arriving at his hotel, he ordered his carriage to be in readiness at six o'clock the fol-

lowing morning ; and after having had his wound dressed, (which, on examination, proved but slight,) Albert Tyrconnell retired to rest, and, at the appointed hour the next day, commenced his journey to Ireland, with nearly as much rapidity as had previously attended his continental expedition.

CHAPTER XV.

IT has been finely remarked by Addison, that "the social virtues may give employment to the most industrious temper, and find a man in business more than the most active station of life. To advise the ignorant, relieve the needy, comfort the afflicted, are duties that fall in our way almost every day of our lives."

The truth of such an observation Isabel admirably exemplified in the disposition of her pursuits, and the mode she adopted for the occupation of her time.

Accompanied by the excellent Mrs Eleanor, she delighted in visiting the cottages of her father's parishioners, where her presence

seldom failed to animate the industrious, to incite to diligence the discontented or the idle, and to diffuse throughout their humble dwellings some portion of that heavenly temperament, which, notwithstanding the secret and peculiar feelings of her heart, filled her well-regulated mind with a soothing calm, which, equally removed from the exuberance of gaiety, and the depression of despondency, gladdened, with the steady light of chastened serenity, all within its immediate influence. Nearly a month had elapsed since the departure of Albert Tyrconnell, but Isabel never willingly allowed herself to calculate the hours that had passed since she had seen him, nor would she indulge herself in visionary computations of the many days, weeks, or years, that yet might glide away ere they again met—if ever.

By a sort of tacit compact, her aunt and father seemed little inclined to talk of Albert; his name was therefore seldom mentioned, except when introduced by Sir Hugh,

who sometimes vented peevish complaints at his own abandonment, and at other moments would triumphantly declare his perfect conviction that his nephew was too just, too noble, and too generous, not to fulfil his promise of returning to Tyrconnell Castle, as soon as circumstances would permit. Meanwhile Lord Belville's title had been recognized, and fully established, for, even had the unhappy Theodore possessed a right to the honours he had usurped, yet, dying without a son, St Albe, at his brother's demise, would have been heir-at-law to the Belville title, as well as to a considerable part of the estate, the entire of which, in consequence of Theodore's illegitimacy, now descended unencumbered to the present Earl. But though his claims to the peerage were unquestionable, yet a shade of mystery hung over the whole affair, which nothing but the individual testimony of Lord Langrave could satisfactorily explain. His evidence was also requisite in Darwent's case, whose final sentence was

postponed until the return of the emissaries from Paris, who, it was generally hoped, would succeed in discovering Langrave, and in obliging his Lordship's reappearance in his native country. Their arrival was therefore anxiously expected by Lord Belville, whose every moment was now occupied in legal investigations. Isabel and her aunt, as we have already observed, were far differently engaged. Their time was generally devoted, either to the pursuits of elegant literature, to the discharge of domestic duties, or to the service of their suffering fellow-creatures.

They were one morning pursuing their road to the abodes of poverty, when an interesting conversation on the state of the indigent tenantry of Ireland was interrupted by Sir Hugh Tyrconnell, who appeared hobbling after them at a little distance, and exclaiming—"Izzy, child! I say, Izzy—wait for me, I am going to join you." She instantly ran back, and affectionately presented an arm to her old friend, who gratefully accepted the offered support, as he added,—

“ I have just been at the Parsonage, where, by the bye, your father has persuaded me to remain a guest, until all the noise and bustle of those plaguy masons and carpenters, whom I have employed at the Castle, is at an end. But I do not wish to commence my visit by playing the part of an intruder, and as I found Belville immersed in parchments, I resolved on acting the more delightful character of antique gallant to the *Lady Isabel St Albe*,” said the Baronet with mock solemnity, laying a playful emphasis on her newly acknowledged title.

“ Have you not promised that I should always be your own Izzy, and nothing else?— Faithless Knight ! like all mankind, you prove yourself—

‘ Plus inconstante que l’onde,
Plus dur que le roc, plus souple que l’osier,’ ”

replied Isabel sportively, placing her hand on Sir Hugh’s shoulder.

“ Nay, Mrs Eleanor, I apply to your

judgment.—Has not this saucy girl drawn the portrait of her own sex, when endeavouring to epitomize mine?”

“By no means. I think the frailties of poor human nature are very equally divided between the sexes; and it has always appeared to me a mistaken idea, to imagine that certain vices or follies are peculiarly characteristic of either gender, individually; for, the seeds of evil are, if I mistake not, implanted by nature in the breasts of both, and that some particular failings are more practically evinced in the actions of the one sex than the other is, I fancy, rather owing to the force of habit, education, and the numerous nice dependencies and gradations of society, than to any original and distinctive organization.”

“My dear Mrs Eleanor, I never attempt to argue with you,” said the Baronet with a significant shake of the head. “What I mean to say is simply this, that I never yet knew a frolic, a misfortune, or a plot, that plaguy

woman was not at the bottom of it all. Now, for example, I would lay ten thousand wagers, that my nephew would have staid here quietly with me, if some giddy-brained female had not turned his head with the farce of love, matrimony, and so forth!—Eh, Izzy?—Don't you think that Rose Monteith is the main cause of his abrupt departure? I dare swear at this very moment, some complacent Vulcan is forging the galling fetters of wedlock for the silly pair, and that the next post will bring me an account of their intention to come and bill and coo amongst the romantic shades of Tyrconnell Castle; for, as an experienced gamester allows his destined victim astonishing success in the beginning of his career, resolving on the *amende déshonorable* afterwards, so a fair politic bride will blush and simper, and sweetly flatter her enamoured spouse during the honey-moon, for which humiliation, she will, when that fleeting season is past, gloriously play the Zantippe for many a long year, *selon l'usage des femmes*—Eh, Izzy?"

Isabel seemed at the moment too busily employed in plucking a flower to answer Sir Hugh's question, to which Mrs Eleanor replied with unwonted quickness, saying,—

“Truly, my good friend, you appear to forget that neither of us have ever passed the Rubicon of folly; in other words, the goal of Hymen, consequently, experience does not authorize our opinion on the subject.”

“Well, well! I dare say Izzy will not be wise enough to preserve her freedom as you have done, Mistress Eleanor; but, tell me, if Albert's wife does come to disturb my imperial solitude, will you receive the bride, Izzy, and save me the trouble of inventing a thousand fables on connubial bliss, by kindly whispering all the pretty nothings which womanish imagination always does suggest on those occasions?”

“I shall ever feel happy in obliging you, dear Sir Hugh,” said Isabel in a constrained voice, while, unconsciously, she quickened her step, as if wishing to fly from further conversation.

“ Hey-day ! why, what the plague ails the girl ? ” said the Baronet peevishly. “ I protest she runs like a very Atalanta in chace for the golden apple, with the true inconsiderateness of her sex, never recollecting that a veteran of seventy years is leaning on her arm— Oh ! there is Robert with my garden chair ; truly, Izzy, for once in my life, I’m glad to leave you, child.”

“ Ungrateful man, how dar’st thou say so ? ” cried Isabel, playfully kissing Sir Hugh’s hand, as she settled him comfortably in his garden chair, and inquired whither it should be steered.

“ Back to the Parsonage,” replied the Baronet ; “ for, if I mistake not, the day is going to change ; we shall have heavy rain, you had better both return with me.”

“ I think it will be but a passing shower,” said Mrs Eleanor ; “ we shall, therefore, proceed on our walk, and join you at dinner.”

“ Very well, very well, like all the women in the world, you will have your own way, so

abide the consequences," rejoined Sir Hugh with a sapient nod, significantly holding up his fore finger, as he wheeled round his chair, and pursued the road to the Parsonage, while the ladies continued their ramble in an opposite direction.

Mrs Eleanor was unusually talkative, as she recommenced the conversation which Sir Hugh had interrupted, and, at some length, attempted to prove that, as political causes almost entirely modify national character, no insuperable or natural impediment existed to preclude the civilization or improvement of any particular country or people.

Interested in the disquisition, Isabel soon recovered from the slight embarrassment which Sir Hugh's remarks had occasioned, and was, with peculiar animation, discussing the subject of national education, when she suddenly perceived her aunt's countenance change, and observed that her frame trembled exceedingly, while she convulsively caught her arm, as a sheeted flash of lightning darted across their

path, and was succeeded by a tremendous clap of thunder. The black and stormy clouds rolled heavily along; the Majesty of Heaven seemed to issue forth its terrors; while the electric fire of the elements now flared in a zig-zag train of brilliant light, and, at other times, with inconceivable velocity cleaved the opening clouds, when instantly the rushing thunder roared in long and bellowing reverberations, which seemed to rock the earth to its foundation.

With awful interest Isabel watched the progress of the tempest, as she supported Mrs Eleanor, and gently attempted to sooth her fears, which, though not verbally expressed, yet powerfully agitated her frame to a degree which equally surprised and frightened Isabel.

They were seated beneath a wall, no other shelter being within a considerable distance; it was, therefore, with feelings of the liveliest joy and gratitude that our heroine perceived the storm gradually abate. A longer period intervened between the claps of thunder. The

lightning sprang less vividly from cloud to cloud, and, after a violent shower, the gloomy darkness was dispersed, as the sun, in all his glory, suddenly burst forth, the heavens became serene, and nature seemed revived to brighter verdure and to fresher life.

“ My dearest aunt, all danger now is past,” said Isabel, affectionately pressing her companion’s hand ; “ look up and see how beautiful is the sky, how calm the atmosphere.”

“ Yes, my love, the war of elements is over,” replied Mrs Eleanor, raising her pale cheek from the shoulder of her niece, where it had hitherto rested, and displaying a countenance which unequivocally revealed that the contest of the mind had lately stormed within, as she meekly said,—

“ I have been most weak and foolish, Isabel ! I cannot now explain the peculiar reason, but to-morrow I will relate to you some past events, which may, perhaps, in some degree, excuse my want of common fortitude.”

“ Do not now distress yourself by any con-

versation, my beloved aunt," said Isabel tenderly, as she supported Mrs Eleanor's feeble steps towards the Parsonage, which they soon reached in perfect safety, and were met at the door by the anxious Lord Belville, who had sent several messengers in search of the fugitives, and who, drenched in rain, was himself but just returned from a fruitless search. He would not hear a word of explanation, insisting that his daughter and sister should instantly take off their wet garments, a request with which they complied without demur.

Mrs Eleanor, on plea of indisposition, remained in her own room, but Isabel, after having changed her dress, presided at the dinner table, where, with the sweetest temper, she endured a triumphant harangue from Sir Hugh Tyrconnell, on the evils of female obstinacy and self-will; an harangue that seemed as interminable to his auditors as delightful to himself, but which the events of the morning, in some degree, unfortunately justified.

CHAPTER XVI.

A COLD and a slight degree of fever confined Mrs Eleanor Fitzroy to her room for some days, subsequent to that on which she had been so much alarmed by the thunder-storm. Isabel had been her constant nurse, and taking advantage of one of the principal privileges of the character, that of giving advice, she had resolutely prohibited her aunt from any exertion which might, in the remotest degree, increase indisposition. Owing to such judicious management, in the course of a short time, she had the happiness of seeing every unpleasant symptom vanish, and her valued relative enabled to take her accustomed station amongst the family group at breakfast. After that so-

cial meal was ended, the ladies, according to their usual custom, retired to the little reading-room, which was appropriated to their joint use. Isabel, with affectionate delight, arranged the working-table, set the books in order, and placed a footstool for Mrs Eleanor, who smiled gratefully on her lovely niece as she said,—

“ How shall I reward my dearest child for all her kind attentions ? ”

“ By taking care of your precious health in future, and not endangering its safety by pedestrian expeditions with a giddy girl like myself,” said Isabel gaily.

“ Nay, I was the only person to blame in not complying with Sir Hugh’s advice ; but I believe there is an unconquerable obstinacy in my natural disposition, of which I am now going to give a further proof ; for, notwithstanding all your watchful solicitations, Isabel, I have contrived to pen a hasty record of those circumstances, whose relation will, I think, apologize, in some degree, for the weakness I have lately manifested, and which has

caused such anxiety and trouble to my faithful little nurse."

"My dearest aunt," said Isabel, as she took the offered paper, "I really am displeased at your having made an exertion so unnecessary, and, if I may judge by your present emotion, one so painful."

"At my age few persons can cast a retrospective view on past events, without meeting many afflicting recollections. My fate has not been exempted from the trials of mortality, but neither has it been denied the consolation of blessings numerous and undeserved. That paper alludes to the most painful era of my life; one to which an unaccountable reserve has hitherto prevented me from mentioning even to you." Mrs Eleanor turned aside an instant, then, in a tone of ill-assumed gaiety, she quickly added, "To the generality of persons, the confessions of an antiquated spinster would afford a subject of ridicule rather than of interest; but I know my Isabel will too deeply sympathize in the recital of

misfortunes, which, though long since passed, can never be forgotten!"

A tear floated in the mild blue eye of Mrs Eleanor as she uttered the last words, and vainly attempted to conceal her feelings. With the tact of genuine delicacy, Isabel, comprehending them, immediately left the room, and no sooner had she reached her own apartment, than she eagerly opened the paper which her aunt had given; for affection and interest equally combined to awaken curiosity as to the cause which had produced a degree of agitation and timidity so very unusual in a mind firm and well regulated as that of Mrs Eleanor Fitzroy. The hurried lines evidently betrayed the emotions of the writer, and the acuteness of those sensibilities, that even the all-powerful influence of time had failed to eradicate from a heart which had been the unfortunate theatre of their destructive desolation. The paper contained the following words:—

“ My little story shall be briefly told. I

will not harrow the feelings of my Isabel, by lingering in selfish indulgence on remembrances and associations, that, however connected with sad and gloomy images, yet awaken an indescribable train of recollections, in which pain and pleasure strangely mingle!—At your age, my child, I was no longer mistress of my own affections. I loved, and was beloved, with all the romance of early passion, and all the generous stability of permanent attachment. Everard Delmont was my equal in birth—my superior in mind—my companion in childhood—my lover in maturer life. Deficiency of fortune was the only bar to happiness.

“ To youthful hearts that obstacle seemed light as a feather in the scale of future bliss ; but, in the estimation of experienced judgment, it presented one so formidable, that our union was resolutely opposed by our mutual friends, whose arguments were so unquestionably prudential, that even the delusive sophistry of love was vainly exerted to controvert or to convince. •

“Obliged to submit, we yet were not unhappy; for, over all the fears, the trials of our fate, the witchcraft of boundless confidence and sympathy flung a magic veil, which nearly banished despondency, or, if ever the unwelcome guest did venture to intrude, with generous tenderness we concealed our individual feelings, and fondly we indulged in glowing dreams of future joys, whose colours were only caught from the illusive tints of creative imagination.

“One road to fortune and to fame lay open. Everard’s family had considerable political influence, and his uncle, Sir John Delmont, got him appointed to a diplomatic situation in India, which promised certain and speedy emolument. I shall not attempt to describe the pangs I suffered, or the violence I did to my own heart, in urging the acceptance of his uncle’s favour. Character, I think, will rise with circumstances, and true love, instead of enervating the feelings, expands them into life and energy, and developes every latent power

of the mind. At least I found it so; for, with astonishing fortitude, I was enabled to sustain the shock of separation from him I loved, Oh, how sincerely!—We parted. Delmont went to India. Fortune seemed to wait upon his steps, success to crown his every action. Letters, breathing affection, and announcing the happiest tidings, reached me from time to time.

“ Years elapsed, but their silent course augmented rather than diminished the devotion of our love. At length the transporting news arrived, that all the withering doubts, the wretched agonies of absence, would soon end. Wealth beyond our wishes was secured. What intervened between our meeting? But a few short days. Delmont’s letter was dated from Plymouth. It was briefly written; but, had a folio been penned, it could not have revealed more unequivocally the overflowings of a heart whose every pulse throbbed with rapturous delight—with fond affection.

“ “ Dead or alive, I shall be with you, my be-

loved, on the 10th of August.' Such were the concluding words of Everard's letter. Oh, Isabel, how wildly did my bosom beat when I perused them! how ardently I wished to annihilate the passing moments, or to condense them into one short instant!—My friends, anxious to relieve my impetuous anxiety, proposed to adjourn to the place where Everard mentioned he should disembark.

“ Delighted with the scheme, I eagerly acceded to the project. The 10th of August came!—At day-break I stationed myself at the window, my strained sight observing cautiously each sail that glittered in the distance, as impatiently I chided the tedious hours, which seemed to creep with lagging slowness. The morning rose in glorious brightness, and the vast expanse of water sparkled in the beams of the sun, as the tiny waves in endless succession rolled gently to the pebbled shore. Oh! how the minutest circumstance of that fatal day is stamped on memory!—Gradually the scene changed. The surface of the

ocean wore a roughened aspect ; the howling wind lashed the foaming billows into fury, as mountains high they seemed upborne to the skies.

“ Evening came. In frantic agitation I wildly faced the shore. Deaf to entreaty and remonstrance there I remained, watching, in speechless anxiety, the progress of the tempest. All was gloom and darkness. Oh, Isabel, in that moment of terror and of agony, a vessel, labouring in the storm, appeared. Nearer and nearer it was whirled onward—a boat was manned—gallantly it struggled against the fury of the storm, as now it was tossed aloft on the heaving billows, and the next instant seemed engulfed within the yawning fathomless abyss of ocean. One wave of giant force dashed the boat on shore. My starting eyes descried the form of Everard—a piercing cry escaped my lips, as with extended arms I stood transfixed and motionless. Delmont saw and recognized me. He flew to clasp me to his heart. Horror of horrors!—A

flash of forked and livid lightning laid him at my feet a breathless corpse !” * * * *

With strongly excited emotions Isabel concluded the little narrative of Mrs Eleanor. No longer she wondered at the extraordinary agitation which she had evinced, yet deeply Isabel regretted that any circumstance should have induced her aunt to undertake a recital which only served to renew the poignant anguish of those well remembered sorrows, those phantoms of the mind which still haunted the ruin they had made—the heart which they had riven!—After having endeavoured to subdue the traces of powerful sensibility, Isabel returned to her aunt’s apartment ; she found the excellent Mrs Eleanor seated at a table, on which lay open the Holy Scriptures.

“ This book, my Isabel, contains the only sure defence against the vicissitudes of human life ; for its precepts pour the precious balm of comfort on the broken heart. This book is the only guide infallible through time, the only refuge in misfortune. It is the lamp divine which lights us to eternal rest ! Oh, Isabel,

I have found its power. I have bowed, though not without repugnance, to the chastening rod of my Creator ; but tears of joy and gratitude now fill my eyes, instead of tears of anguish, and, with the Psalmist of old, I may truly say, ‘ It is good for me that I was afflicted !’ added Mrs Eleanor impressively, as she raised her fine and glistening eyes to Heaven, and laid her hand with pious thanksgiving on the sacred volume. The fervour of humble devotion diffused an expression almost seraphic on her speaking countenance. Isabel gazed with silent admiration and respect on her beloved aunt, as internally she acknowledged the blessed influences of that Spirit of holiness which can bring strength out of weakness, and joy out of sorrow !—Yet she felt as if her presence, in such a moment of elevated enthusiasm, might be deemed intrusive. She, therefore, gently laid on the table the paper she held ; and having only testified her sympathy by an emphatic pressure of the hand, Isabel left the room.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE feelings of our heroine had been so deeply touched by the perusal of Mrs Eleanor's simple story, that sleep had only visited her pillow in transient starts of disturbed repose, and finding herself rather injured than benefited by such unrefreshing slumbers, she rose with the lark the following morning, and resolving to banish the depression of her spirits, descended to the garden of the Parsonage, wishing to enjoy the freshness and the fragrance of the early day. The glorious sun had just arisen, and stretching along the east, his gorgeous mantle coloured the fleecy clouds with orient gold. Creation woke, and poured her varied tribute to the skies. The flow-

ers bathed in morning's dew, breathed floating perfumes, and nature's songsters cleaving the genial air on soaring wings, warbled harmonious joy, while the jocund sound of humbler choristers, the bleating of the flocks, and hum of busy insects, swelled the general anthem of a waking world, and proclaimed its great Creator's praise!

As Isabel surveyed the splendid scene, her heart throbbed with liveliest emotion, and involuntarily paid a silent, yet a grateful tribute unto Him, whose

—————“ Temple is all space,
Whose altar, earth, sea, skies.”

After a few moments passed in devotional enthusiasm, she proceeded on her walk. Exhilarated by the cool invigorating breezes of the morning, the traces of dejection nearly vanished, and Isabel's step resumed some portion of its wonted lightness, as she pursued the path which led to a favourite retreat, and advanced nearer the sequestered spot to

which she hied "in maiden meditation fancy free," and looked the guardian spirit of the sylvan scene.

With added haste, onward she sprung, as the entrance to her little bower peeped forth from clustering shrubs, which, in unpruned profusion, trailed along the ground, while plants of varied hues crept across the path, fettered in flowery bondage. With cheek almost as blooming as the rose she stooped to wreath, Isabel entered the rural arbour, where, in the dawn of life, so many tranquil hours had passed;—her smile spoke softened tenderness, as she recognized each shrub her hand had planted, which breathed a language fully understood, telling a tale of days and pleasures gone for ever! And as she bent over the fragrant treasures half veiled beneath their verdant foliage, and wreathed the odorous branches into graceful forms, she seemed to flourish midst a wilderness of sweets, the brightest blossom,

"A flower of Paradise as yet unforfeit."

Isabel seldom allowed herself the dangerous delight of indulging those bewitching but unprofitable reveries which effeminate the judgment, and unnerve the mind; yet our heroine was but a mortal, and a woman, and vainly did she attempt resistance to the influence of memory and imagination, as they exerted their united powers, commingling sensations of past griefs, joys, and portraying magic dreams of what futurity might bring, which filled her bosom with the delusive shadows of creative fancy.

Absorbed in such seducing visions of the brain, Isabel carelessly pursued her rural task, as, half reclining on the ground, she pruned the boughs and twined the drooping flowers. What waked her from the luxury of thought? —a voice, whose melody her heart too well remembered! Never did love mistake the tone of love! —'Twas he—Tyrconnell!

Surprised, confused, Isabel started from the earth;—her eye was raised an instant, the next it downcast fell, while the flushing blood

dyed her cheeks in crimsoned tints, which quickly flitted by, and left her pale as monumental marble, when, stealing a second glance at Albert, with all the jealous apprehensiveness of love, she marked his altered mien, while, casting one anxious look on his slinged arm, with the bewitching eloquence of artless tenderness, she almost unconsciously exclaimed, "Oh, heavens! you are ill—have been in danger—wounded!"——"But to hear those blessed sounds, who would not proudly court extremity of peril? Isabel, forgive! I know not what I say. Your soothing kindness has perhaps undone me—has awakened an aspiring, a presumptuous hope; I scarcely dare to breathe! Say will you crush or bid it live?"—in rapid agitated accents whispered Albert, as, breathless with emotion, he sunk beside her on a rustic seat, and pressed the trembling hand he held with transport to his throbbing heart. Suffused again in virgin blushes, her face averted from Tyrconnell's gaze,—timidly she shrunk abashed. Lost in

confusion, a moment passed, one of those brilliant instants, when joy's subtile essence flashes electric through the clouds of fate, like summer's lightning, bright, though evanescent!

That moment broke the fetters of restraint. Tyrconnell's love, too potent longer to conceal, burst forth avowed, and fell in melting accents on the ear of Isabel, as, in affection's purest tones, he fondly told the secret of his soul. The blush that mantled on the cheek, the tear that glittered in the eye, betrayed a mute response, more eloquent than words.

Enraptured, Albert watched the varying dye which soft emotion sent, to spare a maiden's modesty, the shame of telling that which woman's sighs and blushes only may reveal.

“Am I forgiven? Isabel, my soul's long cherished treasure! does thy heart now beat in unison with mine, and may I construe into sweet consent thy tears, thy silence?” passionately cried Tyrconnell.

One rapid ray of dangerous softness stole

from Isabel's dark eye, whose touching beam an instant met the flashing light of Albert's glance. 'Twas blest assurance. Tyrconnell asked no more ; yet still he saw, or fancied, that some feeling unexpressed laboured in the mind of his beloved. Sportively he feigned reproach and urged disclosure. With timid bashfulness Isabel refused. At length, half playfully, she plucked a rose, and, with the winning grace of mingled gaiety and feeling, held up the flower as she softly said,—

“Does this recall no ‘light of other days?’” Her tone of subdued reproof,—her expressive look and tearful eye, surprised and agitated Albert, as, in warmest accents, he exclaimed,—

“My life, my love, it tells no tale which I need blush to own.—What would you say? Oh ! speak.”

“The letter—Rose Monteith !” sighed Isabel, scarce audibly, as she endeavoured to conceal her glowing face from Albert's anxious penetrating gaze.

“ Rose Monteith ! she is the widow of my father’s earliest friend,” vehemently cried Tyrconnell. He paused an instant ; then, as the nature of Isabel’s suspicions flashed across her mind, he impatiently exclaimed,—

“ And did you hear that childish rumour ? and did it gain your credit ? and think you I would dare profane thine ear by vows once offered at another’s shrine ?—No, best beloved, I would not !” said Albert in a stifled and reproachful voice, as hastily he produced Rose’s letter, and presented it to Isabel, although his very brow was crimsoned, when he remembered the detail that letter would unfold.

“ I will not read—I feel, I know, I wronged you. Forgive me, Oh ! forgive !” cried Isabel with a beseeching look, as, superior to the affectation of assumed modesty, with enchanting tenderness she returned the letter, and, in love’s softest breath, pronounced the name of “ Albert.” What music to Tyrconnell was its sound, when coming from the lips of her whom he adored ! With trembling joy

he looked the bliss he could not speak ; then, as the exquisite thrill of silent emotion gradually lessened, in strain of playful softness, he told the doubts he had endured, the maddening tales which he had heard, the dread and the suspicion which had nearly poisoned all his after life.

With smiles of love and bashful sweetness, Isabel dispelled all fears, explained all mysteries, and tuned each feeling in Tyrconnell's soul to perfect harmony. Albert, in return, accounted for his abrupt departure from the Castle, and related those circumstances with which the reader is already acquainted, suppressing, as much as possible, the imminent personal danger he had escaped, and the fatigues of mind and body which he had endured. Thus employed, time fled imperceptibly. The lovers heeded not its progress. Absorbed in the bliss of mutual sympathy, probably a longer period would have passed unnoticed, but for the appearance of Mrs Eleanor, Lord Belville, and Sir Hugh, whom Isabel perceived at

some distance approaching the bower. In confused haste she abruptly rose and ran towards the party, saying with a fluttered voice, as she returned the morning's salutation,—

“ I fear I have been a sad truant, and have kept you all waiting breakfast.”

“ Yes, indeed, my love ; I never knew you so forgetful of your friends,” gravely replied Mrs Eleanor ; “ Sir Hugh has been down this full hour past.”

“ Then I must endeavour to atone for my neglectful absence,” said Isabel, flying with the speed of the light-footed antelope towards the house ; while, to the astonishment of the group, Albert Tyrconnell, at the same instant, issued from the arbour.

“ Hey-day—why, bless me, there's my nephew !” exclaimed Sir Hugh in delighted surprise ; as, with almost youthful enthusiasm, he hobbled forward and wrung the hand of Albert, saying exultingly,—

“ I knew—I said—you would return. Yet where hast been ? and where's your bride ?—

Fighting for the plaguy jade, I see, has hurt your arm—broken limbs, or broken hearts, are all we ever get by woman! But where the deuce is Izzy? Oh! there's the saucy gipsy; how she trips across the lawn, i'faith, for all the world like a startled fawn! Izzy, I say, come back here, child, Izzy!" roared the Baronet. Then turning round, he peevishly said, "True to her sex, she only flies because she is pursued—but, nephew, have you seen her, eh?"

"My dear Sir, I shall presently endeavour to reply to all your questions; though, truly, they contain rather a formidable chain of queries," said Albert laughing, as he warmly returned his uncle's cordial greeting; "but first allow me to accost my other friends," he added, advancing to Lord Belville and his sister, whom he addressed with that affectionate respect which springs from the heart. Meanwhile Sir Hugh remained lost in meditation, mumbling to himself a few incoherent words, then restless, curious, and impatient, his coun-

tenance assumed the shrewd expression of a person in whose breast a new-born suspicion has but just arisen, as, after fixing his eye intently upon Albert, compressing his lips, and striking his gold-headed cane with violence against the ground, he suddenly exclaimed,—

“ But, nephew, what the devil brought you here instead of to the house ? ”

“ I have been to the Parsonage this morning, but the servant told me Lady Isabel was in the garden, and—and—I followed ! ” said Tyrconnell with some degree of hesitation.

“ You followed !—and what, in the name of fortune, did you want to say to Izzy, eh ? ”

“ The subject let me now reveal, ” said Albert with an elated and triumphant look of happiness, that scarcely needed an interpreter, as his previous embarrassment vanished, and he attempted to lead the party into the interior of the bower.

Sir Hugh stopped an instant at the entrance ; his face betrayed the strangest compound of comical simplicity, archness, affec-

tion, and exuberant delight, as, nodding his head and snapping his fingers, he gave one long significant “Phe—u!” and followed Lord Belville, Mrs Eleanor, and Albert, into the arbour, where an interesting conversation immediately took place, in which the particulars of Lord Langrave’s death were detailed, and other circumstances, which we presume our reader’s ingenuity will readily divine, without further intimation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A CONSIDERABLE time elapsed before the Parsonage breakfast-room was filled by its expected guests. At length they entered. Mrs Eleanor descanting, with unusual volubility, on the charming serenity of the morning, Tyrconnell smiling an affirmative to her remarks, and Lord Belville endeavouring, by every means in his power, to engage Sir Hugh in a discussion on the best means of farming an adjoining field, which he pointed out with more than his accustomed energy.

Meanwhile, Isabel was busily employed as “priestess of the tea-table;” and though she escaped the dire calamities of pouring the cream into the sugar-basin, or the tea into the

ewer, (misfortunes which have befallen many heroines under similar circumstances,) yet she did experience an unusual degree of flurry and confusion. Her hand was not perfectly steady, nor her manners absolutely unembarrassed, as she attempted to perform her deputed office with a facility which was not increased, when, accidentally raising her eyes a moment, she encountered the expressive glance of Sir Hugh Tyrconnell. Playful irony, tender affection, heart-felt delight, and a certain indescribable air of joyous mystery, much resembling that of a school-boy, when resolutely trying to suppress the disclosure of a secret, for the proper concealment of which he has been promised the enticing reward of apples and sugar-plumbs, spoke in that glance. The Baronet's efforts at forbearance were in truth as unsuccessful as those of the veriest urchin.

“Izzy! my darling Izzy!—I cannot behave well—indeed, I cannot!”—he impetuously cried, as he pushed aside his untasted breakfast, threw his arms round the blushing girl's neck,

and, with affection's ardour, kissed her crimsoned cheek.—“ And will you be my own, my loveliest niece? And shall the first, the dearest, wish of this old heart be granted? And will you wed the generous Albert, who never loved that Rose Monteith? No, no—he did not!—It was but the coinage of this crazy brain of mine that could not comprehend the greatness of my nephew's mind, who nobly gave his all to save the widow of his father's friend from penury and ruin!”

“ My uncle!—Oh forbear!”—vehemently cried Tyrconnell.

“ I will, I will—yet, why should I forbear? for, Oh, your praises must be music to the ear of her whom you adore. The only pure and faultless woman in creation! my pride and my joy! my admirable Izzy!” exclaimed the worthy Baronet, in ecstatic transport, as he folded to his heart our agitated heroine, and dashed away the tears of happiness which fell in quick succession down his venerable cheek.

“ Dear, kind Sir Hugh!” inarticulately

murmured Isabel, as, overwhelmed with confusion, she involuntarily sunk upon his knees, and hid her glowing face. Tyrconnell flew to support her agitated form ; while the unexpected action of Isabel so strongly affected Sir Hugh, that every trace of previous gaiety quickly vanished ; his former eccentricity of manner fled, and devotion's influence spoke in every tone of his expressive voice, as he meekly raised his eyes to Heaven, and in broken accents cried,—

“ My God, I thank thee. Elvira—Edmund ! from your high estate, do ye not sympathize with human feelings in this sacred hour, which more than pays in joy the griefs that I have suffered ? Children of my heart !” he added, joining the prostrate lovers' hands, “ May no rude storms disturb your future peace ! Such as—but it is enough—merciful Providence—bless, Oh, bless my Albert and my Isabel !”—exclaimed Sir Hugh, in powerful emotion, as he sunk into a seat and wept !

“ Almighty Father, grant that prayer,” fer-

vently responded Lord Belville, extending his arms towards Isabel and Albert, whom, enfolded in one fond embrace, he raised, and clasped to his paternal bosom; while, with streaming eyes, Mrs Eleanor, almost unconsciously, reiterated the affecting benediction.

“Eleanor—dear Eleanor!” said Lord Belville, emphatically, as, with a look that spoke volumes, he consigned the trembling Isabel to his sister’s care.

“My brother, I speak not, but I feel!”—she expressively replied, as smiles and tears seemed to contend for empire in her benevolent countenance. Then fondly drawing her niece’s arm within her own, accompanied by Isabel, she left the room, and retired to another apartment, where, after the strong excitement of reciprocal emotion had insensibly subsided to a calmer tone, a long conversation took place between our heroine and her beloved aunt, to whom, with the confidential warmth of friendship, Isabel disclosed her every thought without disguise. Past feelings

were revealed ; future joys anticipated ; and present happiness was gratefully acknowledged, with all the ardour of a mind accustomed to trace in earthly blessings the designs of that Divine and Infinite Wisdom, that eternal source of life and bliss, from whence “ every good and perfect gift” proceeds.

In such delightful interchange of mind, swiftly the hours fled ; yet Isabel and Mrs Eleanor were still engaged in that sweet converse of the heart, which lends to the passing moments a bewitching charm, that nearly annihilates the consciousness of their flight, when a gentle tap at the chamber-door arrested their attention.

“ Pardon my intrusion,” said Lord Belville, as Isabel answered this summons—“ I fear I disturb your *tête-à-tête* ; but Tyrconnell has just given me the late Lord Langrave’s letter ; and as it probably contains tidings of importance, I cannot defer the perusal, at which I wish to have you and my sister present.”

The desire was no sooner intimated than complied with, for Isabel and her aunt instantly adjourned to the study, where they found Sir Hugh and Albert already seated. As Lord Belville broke the seal of Langrave's epistle, (which inclosed a parchment scroll,) a flush of scarlet dye passed across his brow, that slightly was contracted, as, in an agitated tone, he said,—“ The wretched Langrave is no more ! We, therefore, ought to pity and forgive his errors and his crimes !—Yet a father's feelings will not leave me calm ; I cannot read ; Eleanor, you will,” hastily exclaimed his Lordship, handing the letter to his sister, which she took, and, in a trembling voice, read aloud as follows:—

TO LORD BELVILLE.

“ Think not, my Lord, that that mean paltry feeling, which men call remorse, now urges me to write ! No, no !—A nobler incitation guides the pen of Langrave. Great in iniquity—undaunted even on the brink of ruin,

his last act shall be magnificent revenge!—
Yet not magnificent, for it is wreaked on whom?
On a poor crawling reptile, whom to crush al-
most degrades the dignity of vengeance!

“ But the lion and the tiger sometimes stoop
to humble prey, and so doth Langrave, when
he condescends to gorge his thirst, insatiate
for revenge, with the plebeian blood of Dar-
went!—Yes, it is he—the recreant villain,
who dared betray me to that being whom
alone, of all the vulgar herd of men, I ever
distinguished with my envy; and whom, of
base humanity’s cursed crew, I hate the most;
him on whose devoted head may all the powers
infernal launch their desolation—hurl their
rage!—Tyrconnell! I see, I know, the dan-
gers which encompass me with nameless hor-
rors, but I do defy them!—Darwent has told
his specious tale, and baffled my ambition to
destroy my destined victims, even thou, my
gentle Lord, and thy fair daughter!—She who
was my world!—She whose memory, even on
the verge of ruin, clings to my crushed heart,

the only link of feeling's claim that's yet unbroken!—She who, over my master-spirit, held such empire, that, to obtain her love, my life's blood I would have spilt, and held the purchase cheap!—Yet, heavens and earth!—such love she dared despise and reject!—The passion of my soul is turned to deadly hatred—yet some fatal spell—some witchcraft of the mind—some power invisible—restrains my hand, and will not let me curse her!—but, on Darwent I exhale the flaming breath of vengeance. It will scorch him into ashes, yet will light thee on to riches, rank, and power!—Oh! may such damned gifts eventually stain thy name, dash thee headlong from the pinnacle of virtue, and prove as baneful to thy spirit as they have been to mine! Yet my pen restrain awhile thy flowing gall, and give connectedly thy last detail.

“ In league with him to whom I owe my greatest curse, existence, Darwent drew a will fictitious, instead of that entrusted on his death-bed by your father unto mine, which I herein

inclose, and whose perusal will to you reveal all which I now have neither time nor inclination to relate. The two physicians are alive whose signatures are thereunto affixed; and, should further proofs be wanting, search amongst Darwent's papers, 'confirmation strong' will there be found.—And now my task is done. I have heaped confusion, death, dishonour, on the abject slave who dared betray me! and have imprecated maledictions direful on the heads of those whose worldly elevation never shall blast my vision; for, in a few brief moments, did mankind combine, they could not injure Langrave! Empurpled in the sanguine flood of life he will breathless lie, no longer subject to the whirls of fate!

“Yet shall the ethereal spark divine die with this clod of earth? or shall it live eternally in quenchless flames?—There's frenzy in the thought! What means this chafing of my spirit? Why do I quake and tremble? Wherefore doth my curdling blood congeal, and creeping slowly through my veins in icy coldness freeze?—My palsied soul recoils! from

what?—from daring to create my destiny!—
 Avaunt, fantastic fears! ye shall not shackle
 Langrave!—Why should I live to be the prey
 of foul mortality, when my own hand can
 shield me from its scorn? Like Milton's glo-
 rious hero, then, I cry,—

—————‘ Hail, horrors! hail,
 Infernal world! and thou profoundest hell,
 Receive thy new possessor, one who brings
 A mind not to be changed by time or fate.’

Demons howl my summons!—I obey!

“ No more ‘ last words’—from

“ LANGRAVE!”

CONCLUSION.

OUR readers will readily imagine what feelings filled the breast of Mrs Eleanor Fitzroy and her auditors, as she concluded the epistle of the unfortunate Langrave. The dreadful idea of such a being having dared to raise an impious hand in self-destruction, having presumed, "with all his imperfections on his head," to rush into the awful presence of an offended Deity, struck their minds with horror and dismay.

Lord Belville heaved a deep-drawn sigh, as he mourned the total dereliction of Langrave's character, the absolute perversion of those superior talents and intellectual powers with which he had been gifted, and which, had

they been properly directed, would have rendered him a bright and noble ornament to human nature, instead of a foul disgrace ! a blemish in creation ! a miserable wretch ! whose joys and fears were bounded to the narrow circuit of an hour ; a being who, fettered by the slavery of sin, wrapt in the infernal cloak of crime, passed here a life of senseless pleasure !

“ Sad prelude of eternity in pain ;”

and in the pride of manhood, in the zenith of existence, fell a victim to those passions, whose headstrong tyranny had led him to a labyrinth of guilt and ruin, where his immortal soul was quickly lost to hope, to reason, and to virtue.

Gradual at first had been his progress in destruction's crowded road, but latterly, the turbulent course of unforeseen events had hurried him onward in the career of vice with impetuous force, and had ultimately plunged his proud and haughty spirit into the midnight darkness

of despair ; for, on discovering Darwent's departure with Tyrconnell, all the dangers that surrounded him rose, at once, to the terrified imagination of Langrave ; but, when he further heard of Theodore's demise, and his wife's insanity, and consequently knew that the bank on which he had so long and largely trespassed was for ever closed, — when he reflected that his numerous debts remained unpaid, and that, even could he elude the justice of his country's laws, the horrors of a prison must hereafter be his portion, — the wretched Langrave felt he had attained the crisis of his fate, and, maddened to distraction, he then had formed the fatal resolution that he communicated in his last letter to Lord Belville, but which he had not summoned courage to execute, until the very moment when Tyrconnell had surprised him in attempting the direful crime of self-destruction ; for the same indefinable dread of futurity, that his epistle betrayed, and which, notwithstanding the flimsy sophistry of infidelity, daunted even Langrave ;

had, from day to day, so strongly influenced his feelings, that the all-pervading power of conscience had restrained him from committing suicide, till, at length, in a delirium of frenzy and of desperation, he ventured that tremendous act, which sent his guilty soul, unsummoned, to the realms of an unknown world!

His Lordship's coadjutor in iniquity, the miserable Darwent, when the long array of damning proofs appeared beyond all doubt established, dared not prevaricate, or attempt denial of the charges brought against him. He avowed his crime, but such an acknowledgment could not, a second time, avail to save him from the condign punishment the law decreed. The evidence of the legal emissaries—the confessions of Theodore and Langrave—the restitution of Lord Belville's genuine will, together with the fear-extorted testimony of the culprit himself, were quite sufficient proofs to convict Darwent of the capital offence of forgery. No further delay

being, therefore, considered necessary, the villain met that fate his many iniquitous actions so truly deserved. Darwent was publicly executed—by a remarkable coincidence suffering for that very crime with which, in conjunction with Langrave, he had endeavoured to defame the character of the excellent Lord Belville, who, to the last moment, attended the miserable delinquent in his clerical capacity, endeavouring strongly to awaken his slumbering conscience, and to inspire those religious feelings which, in the wretched criminal's awful situation, were so peculiarly requisite. But, alas! vain were his Lordship's Christian efforts—Darwent died as he had lived, a hardened villain.

With that magnanimity of character, which so peculiarly distinguished Lord Belville, as soon as circumstances permitted, he wrote to the faithful domestic Charles, to make inquiries respecting his unfortunate mistress and her imprudent daughter.

In a short time his Lordship received a re-

ply from the attached domestic, informing him that the *pseudo* Lady Belville continued nearly in the same state, except that she had frequently lucid intervals, during which periods the agony of her mind was so tremendous, that the return of insanity was always hailed by those around her as the greatest blessing. Charles proceeded further to state, that, after repeated efforts, he had, at length, discovered the inconsiderate Julia, residing in one of the meanest suburbs of Paris, and in an abode which evidently betrayed the poverty and distress of the inhabitants.

On receiving such intelligence, Lord Belville immediately presented the *soi disant* Lady Julia with L. 10,000—bestowed a handsome independence on the upright Charles, and settled an annuity on the widow of Theodore, sufficient to maintain her with the utmost comfort in the first private asylum for lunatics in France, where she afterwards remained, either a martyr to all the fury of outrageous madness, or else a victim to the

still more torturing returns of temporary sanity, when her proud and mortified spirit recognized its bitter humiliation, enduring the complicated miseries, and torn by the conflicting passions of envy, hatred, and despair.

From the melancholy contemplation of pride, impiety, and injustice, we shall now, with pleasure, turn to brighter scenes, and proceed to communicate to our readers the fate of other personages, who have figured in the preceding pages.

The *ci-devant* Lady Julia (whom the magnificent donation of Lord Belville reprieved from the classical situation of literary pauperism) continues, with undaunted assiduity, her petty inroads on "the celestial empire" of the Dilettanti, and though without a ray of genius to light her to the Temple of Immortality, yet she courageously perseveres in her philosophical career, heroically mangling the belles lettres; traducing the muses; exploring the mysteries of the bathos; manufacturing spurious spawn for Helicon; murdering common sense; and, with an indefatigable

zeal, worthy the imitation of every scientific Blue in Christendom, endeavouring to attain the ultimatum of perfection in the fine arts, under the directions of the ingenious and enlightened preceptor, whom she had sagely chosen to direct her footsteps in the thorny path that leads to attic fame.

Fearful, doubtless, lest such a distinguished ornament to the Illuminati might possibly degenerate into the homespun character of a domestic and attached mother, the Fates decreed that the scientific pursuits of the erudite Julia should be undisturbed by the clamorous vociferations of cradled impertinence. Those little scions of domestic bliss, called children, were, therefore, not allowed

‘ To loose the links that gall’d mankind before !’

Far from repining at such a dispensation, the Signora d’Armarelli rejoiced that, instead of “olive branches round her table,” the hallowed bays of poetical renown should grace her festive board, and unequivocally to evince her

gratitude, she inflicted on the world a voluminous epic, in which, in cranioscopical language, she devoutly thanked Heaven, that she had not been gifted with philoprogenitiveness.

The Signora's sister, Lady Pettito, as steadily pursues her vocation, assisted by a sapient spouse. Her Ladyship's devotional exercises at the shrine of Folly are constant, sincere, and successful. Sir Felix continues the envy of fops, and the best dressed idiot in his Majesty's dominions, while his gentle partner,

“ The dupe of every blockhead's praise,”

performs, to admiration, the illustrious part of Prima Donna in the hemisphere of fashionable absurdity, enjoying the ecstatic delight of

“ Shining robes, rich jewels, beds of state,
And, to complete her bliss—a fool for mate.”

Mrs Fogarty was so fortunate as to dispose of one of her all-accomplished daughters to an Irish fortune-hunter. The sentimental Hed-

wina still remains for sale, notwithstanding the indefatigable efforts of her industrious mamma, who hawks her luckless offspring to every notorious market in the united kingdoms, but has not yet received a single offer for her cheap and precious bargain.

The amiable Rose Monteith is, at length, released from her many sufferings. Before her death, she had the satisfaction of being acquainted with the brilliant prospects which awaited her generous friend, Tyrconnell, and one of her last acts was to address a few lines to Albert, in which she affectingly expressed her dying wishes, and fervent prayers for his temporal and eternal happiness.

Lady Dashton pursues the same empty round of insipid pleasures; a prey to the same tormenting jealousies and envious fears which, perpetually haunting her in private, and torturing her in public, leave no other refuge against the disease of a malevolent mind and corrupted feelings, than flying eternally to resorts of folly and scenes of dissipation, in which she yet shines that

“ Vain, unquiet, glittering, wretched thing !”

a selfish, mean, and heartless woman of fashion.

Moliere, speaking of the manner in which the incidents of a novel ought to be conducted, says,—“ *Le mariage ne doit jamais arriver qu’après les autres aventures.*” Bowing submissively to such high authority, we have until the present moment deferred any allusion to the nuptials of our heroine and Albert Tyrconnell. Did we live in those enlightened days, when, according to *La Pluche*, the bride and bridegroom were attended by “troops of friends,” strewing flowers, bearing lamps and torches, and loudly crying, *Hu ! Humeneh !* we might be induced to attempt an account of the matrimonial procession ; but in the present age, the votaries of Hymen perform their pilgrimage to his sacred temple in a manner so uniform, so unobtrusive, and so unostentatious, as totally to preclude either novelty of descriptions, or brilliancy of representation. We shall, therefore,

not intrude a minute detail of the equipages that attended, the dresses that adorned, or the personages who formed, the bridal-train which escorted Lady Isabel St Albe and her favoured lover to the little village church, whose pointed spire rose conspicuously above the tufted groves of the Parsonage. We trust it will gratify our fair readers' curiosity sufficiently to inform them, that, about two months subsequent to the events we have related, the hands of Isabel and Albert were joined by Lord Belville in the holy tie of marriage, and that, on the wedding-day, Sir Hugh Tyrconnell nobly resigned to his nephew his extensive and beautiful estate, which Albert only consented to accept under the *proviso* that the worthy Baronet should continue to reside at the Castle, to which proposal Sir Hugh consented, as he laughingly stipulated that his favourite retreat, "the ivy-clad tower," should be allowed to remain in *statu quo*, a chosen retreat, to which he could unmolested fly whenever the gay, or, as the Baronet termed it, the worthless world of fashion,

were invited to Tyrconnell Castle. General Montford, at Albert's earnest request, was present at his nuptials, when in delight scarcely inferior to that of Sir Hugh, with mock gravity, he complimented the lovely novice on her strict adherence to her monastic vows, and threatened the Troubadour with excommunication from the Vatican, for having induced a holy vestal to abandon her vocation. Spain being the country most favourable for the fulmination of an ecclesiastical interdict, or the execution of an *auto da fè*, it was arranged that Montford should accompany Isabel and Albert to that country in the following spring, when they intended to visit Madrid, where the General declared he would positively play the sublime character of Grand Inquisitor, instead of his former part of Hero to Polito's celebrated menagerie.

“ A thousand blushing apparitions” starting to her cheek, our heroine never looked more bewitchingly lovely than at the moment she approached the sacred altar, and, tremblingly, pronounced the irrevocable vow, which for

ever united her fate to that of the noble and generous Tyrconnell.

With pious confidence, Lord Belville committed the future happiness of his only child to the care and keeping of him who so long had been the secret object of her heart's election, and who had proved himself so truly worthy of her love.

With agitated joy, the excellent Mrs Eleanor hailed the bright prospects, which, as far as human prescience could judge, presented such an unclouded futurity of bliss to her beloved Isabel ; while Sir Hugh Tyrconnell, his every feature glowing with delight, scarcely could restrain his rapture, even during the solemnization of the sacred ceremony ; indeed, its last syllable had hardly issued from the lips of Lord Belville, ere the happy Baronet, as a reward for previous silence, snatched in his arms his lovely niece, exclaiming, with honest warmth and triumphant joy, " Let me be the first to kiss the Lady Isabel Tyrconnell—the *rara avis* of her sex—the only faultless woman in creation !"

Although, by such a proceeding, Sir Hugh was guilty of a serious breach against Hymeneal etiquette, yet, as almost instantly he resigned the blooming Isabel, Albert forgave the innovation, and, as he called his blushing bride his own, and felt the blessed certainty that nothing earthly ever could separate their destinies, his bosom owned so pure, so exquisite a bliss, that he felt as if every sparkle of human happiness irradiated that one instant.

The past was not remembered, the future not anticipated, every sentiment was blended in the glorious present, for Isabel and Albert knew the mystic tie which bound their souls was then eternally cemented. They felt that death itself could not dissolve the union of their immortal spirits. Theirs was not the cold compact which subtle interest and ambition twine, nor yet the capricious fancy kindled by rash and momentary passion. No! their attachment was a perfect affection of the heart, founded on esteem, hallowed by congeniality of sentiment, by sympathy of tastes and feelings, sanctioned by virtue, and approv-

ed by Heaven! That rational piety which formed so strong a feature in the mutual characters of our hero and heroine, continued the active leading principle of their conduct. Under its influential guidance, they were enabled, in after life, to endure, with fortitude and resignation, those trials from which the brightest fate is not exempt. Unmixed felicity ought not to be expected in this sublunary state of discipline and probation, yet Providence seldom yields to mortals happiness so pure, so perfect, as that which blessed the union of Isabel and Albert.

They reside principally at Tyrconnell Castle, while Lord Belville and Mrs Eleanor still continue at the Parsonage, which abode, endeared by a thousand associations, they would not exchange for the most splendid palace;—more particularly as its vicinity to the Castle enables Lord Belville and his amiable sister to enjoy almost uninterruptedly the society of its valued inmates.

Shortly after their marriage, Albert and his charming bride adjourned to London, where,

with all the pride of happy love, he presented Lady Isabel Tyrconnell to an admiring circle, in whose polished sphere she moved the brightest example, and the loveliest ornament.

Unblemished in her conduct, dignified in her demeanour, and consistent in her principles, she promoted the best interests of society, by an undeviating adherence to the Christian duties. Supported by the countenance and approbation of her excellent husband, she dared to evince a decided and resolute reprehension of those vices and follies, which, however palliated or disguised by the tolerating sophistry of modern manners, do exist; disgracing, by their practice, the higher classes of the fashionable world, and polluting, by their pernicious contagion, the inferior orders of society. Such infringements on public morals, it is to be deplored, the powerful influence of woman is not more universally exerted to condemn and to depress.

Talent, however brilliant—manners, however fascinating—birth, however elevated,

when unallied to the sterling accompaniments of genuine virtue, failed as passports to the intimate acquaintance of Isabel and Albert. For the characters who were admitted to their domestic circle were persons distinguished by integrity, rank, and worth, as well as by natural and cultivated abilities. Such regulations in the selection of associates necessarily confined the sphere of their society; but the obvious advantages more than atoned for the limitation of the scale. Many a child of genius, who would have lived unknown, and died unlamented, was drawn, by the discriminating patronage of Isabel and Albert, from the shades of obscurity to bask in the splendid light of immortal fame. Many a child of sorrow forgot peculiar griefs to bless the fostering hand that rescued her from the stern gripe of indigence, oppression, and, perhaps, of guilt! Of those amusements which delicacy and propriety sanctioned, Lady Isabel Tyrconnell partook with a moderation that prevented satiety to her tastes, corruption to her

feelings, or injury to her heart. Our heroine was no gloomy bigot ; she enjoyed the pleasures of life, but was not their devoted slave, for she estimated the allurements of the world only in proportion to their intrinsic value. She thought them agreeable as occasional recreations, but vapid and uninteresting when placed in comparison with those higher pursuits which elevate and improve the understanding, and judged them absolutely criminal when indulged to an excess which deadens the affections, and disqualifies the soul for the discharge of its most important duties.

The broad line of demarcation between "Vice and Virtue" was not only never entrenched upon in the conduct of Isabel and Albert, but all those transverse ones that ultimately lead to the same point of moral turpitude were with equal care avoided.

Such being "the spirit of their minds," it was without a sigh that Lady Isabel and her admirable husband bade adieu to the witcheries of fashion, and returned to the retirement of Tyrconnell Castle, where their im-

mense fortune enables them to dispense comfort and happiness to their suffering fellow-creatures, and where they continue to enjoy the highest domestic bliss, benefiting by their example, befriending by their aid and counsel, and practically illustrating the precepts which their lips enjoin, by the exercise of those sublime virtues which best refine and exalt our fallen nature,

“ And evidence our title to the skies !”

THE END.

ERRATA.

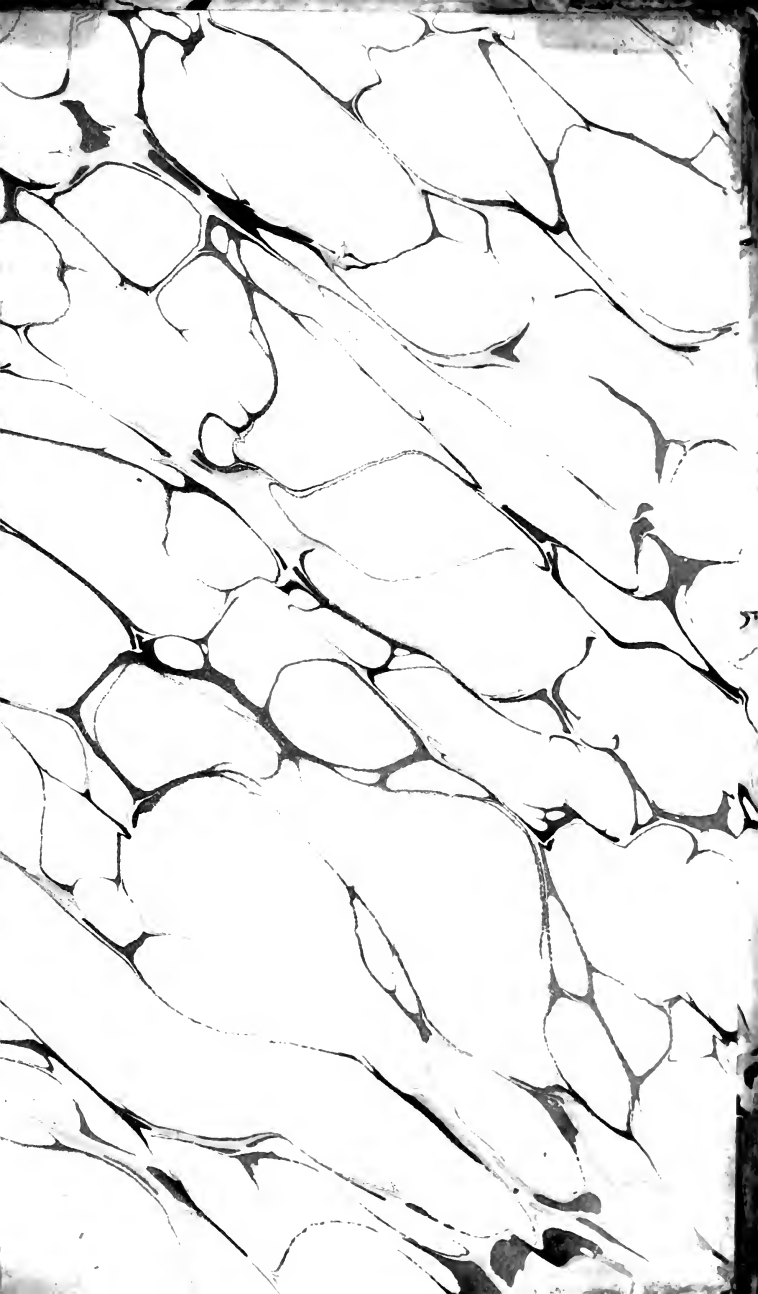
VOL. 3.

- Page 3, line 5—For ‘afflicted’—read ‘affrighted’
73, do. 2—For ‘sudden’—read ‘sullen’
78, do. 2—For ‘intended on Lord Langrave’—read
‘intended—Lord Langrave’
79, do. 18—For ‘it is’—read ‘’tis’
97, do. 5—For ‘flatteringly’—read ‘expressively’
112, do. 13—For ‘lies’—read ‘hies’
184, do. 6—For ‘faced’—read ‘paced’
207, do. 9—For ‘it is’—read ‘tis’
Do. do. 11—For ‘ever’—read ‘e’er’
208, do. 1—For ‘claim’—read chain’
Do. do. 2—For ‘over’—read ‘o’er’
Do. do. 4—For ‘I would’—read ‘I’d’
Do. do. 6—For ‘despise and regret’—read ‘despise
—regret’
209, do. 12—For ‘never’—read ‘ne’er’
Do. do. 15—For ‘he will’—read ‘he’ll’



16
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