





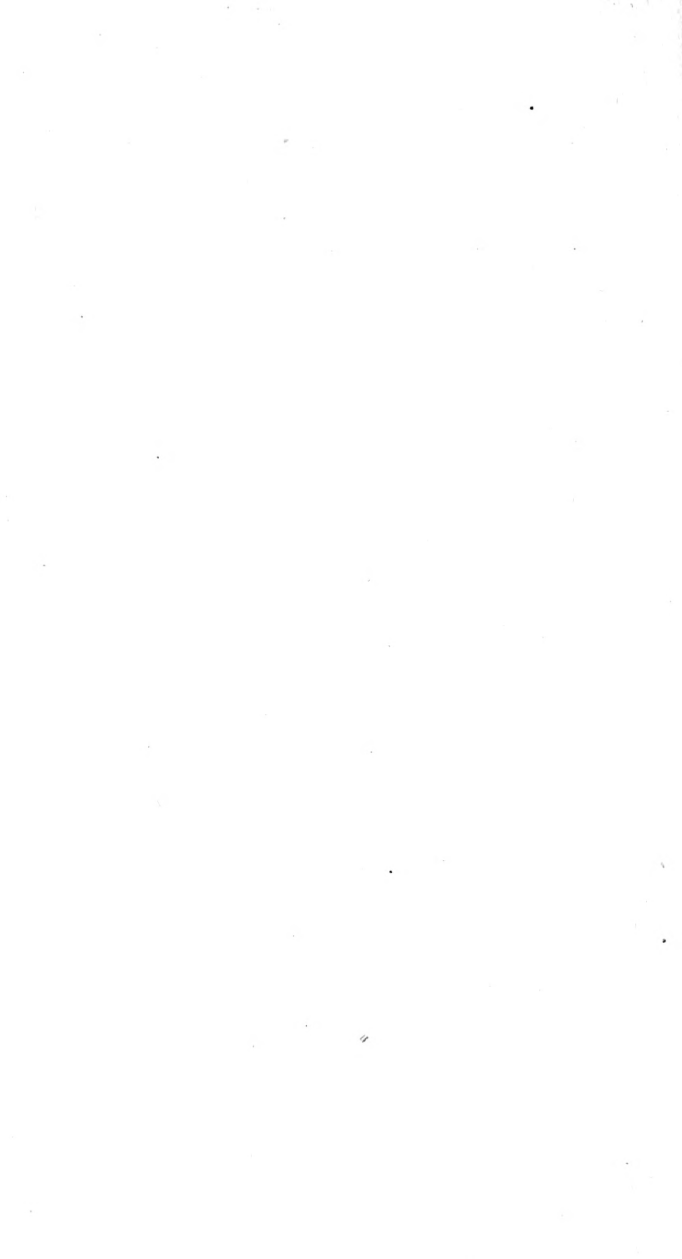
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SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR,

What?

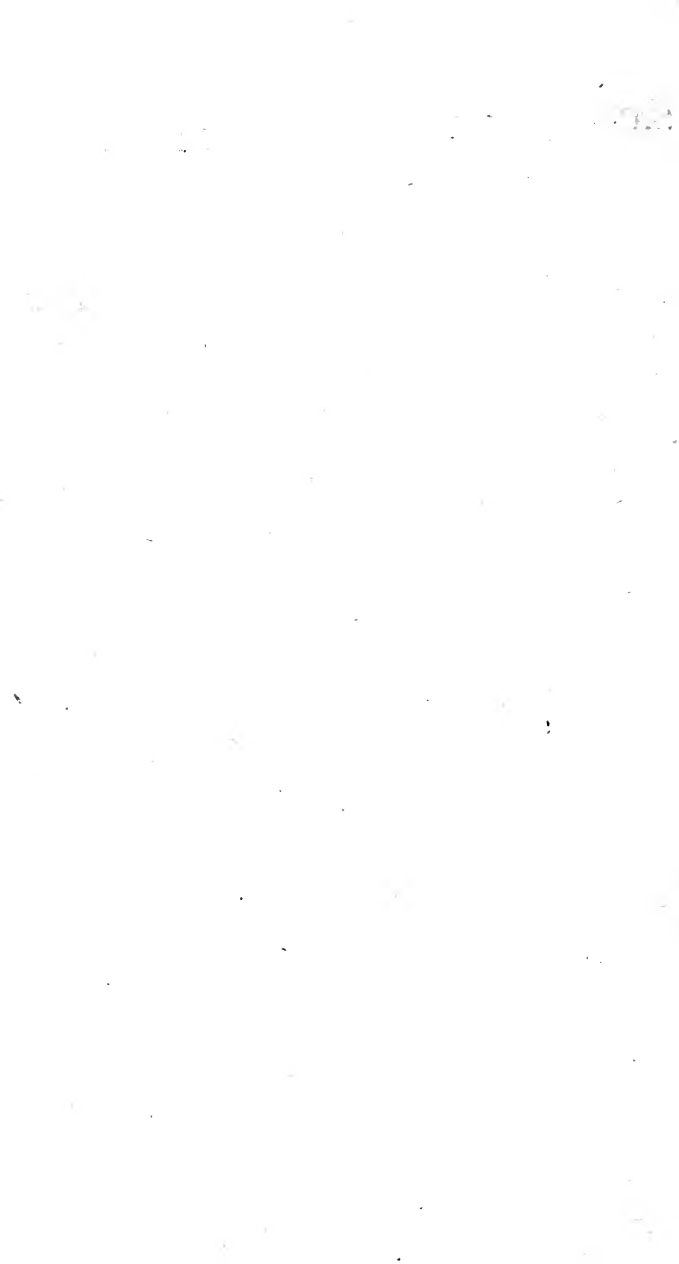
—○○○○○—
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

—○○○○○—
BY
AN OLD-FASHIONED ENGLISHMAN.

—
—
Oh! still be mine the gen'rous wish—to bless
And wipe the streaming tear from pale Distress,
Make keen-ey'd Malice hide her guilty head,
O'er the dim mind bright Truth her lustre shed,
Celestial Freedom ev'ry charm unfold,
And firm Integrity the Fair uphold.

—
VOL. IV.

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Says She to her Neighbour, What?

CHAP. I.

Of men

The happiest he, who far from public life,
Deep in the vale, with a choice few retir'd,
Drinks the pure pleasures of the rural life.

THOMSON.

AT the time when colonel Eldricke formed the acquaintance I mentioned as taking place at the house of Mrs. Montgomery, few circumstances could have occurred, equally agreeable to that gentleman's views, with the interview and its results. The colonel was, in the language of the ladies, a *divine* creature; but he was, nevertheless, a very sinful one, for he was an unprin-

ciplined libertine, a systematic gambler, a man who every day professed love he was incapable of feeling, and incurred debts he knew himself to be incapable of paying; but it could not be doubted that he was a man of honour, since he could offer the satisfaction of a gentleman to any person who disputed his claims; or, where it was more convenient, he could insinuate that “the world had been unjust to him; that his errors were not of the *heart*; that he had been careless in *some* cases, and tempted in *others*, but that it was impossible for him to be base in *any*; and that it would be easy for him to remove whatever might appear suspicious in his character, if the pride of integrity would allow him to do so.” Under these colours he presented himself to the unsuspecting eye of Charles, who, too conscious that the most innocent, and even virtuous conduct, could not secure a man from detraction, was induced thus to pity the man he ought to have despised, and to receive that friendship with

avidity, he would at one period have shrunk from with disgust.

The heart ever finds ready excuses for the misconduct of those it loves, so long as that misconduct is not directed against our own immediate comforts; it was not possible for Charles to be blind to the errors of his new friend; but he saw, or fancied he saw, a thousand amiable qualities so blended with these errors, and such a decided partiality for himself, such a particular desire to “raze out the written troubles of *his* brain,” and prepare “some sweet oblivious antidote to *his* sorrows,” in every scheme of pleasure that was proposed, that it would have been ungenerous to stigmatize that conduct with the name of vice, which had for its basis a virtuous friendship. The ideas of good and evil, thus blended and confounded, became yet more obscured, from the observation, that every where colonel Eldricke was received by the ladies with the most pointed attention; and the kind glances with which *he*

had been favoured by many, previous to his intimacy, were now directed with a surer, sweeter aim, as if he were rendered much more interesting by his attachment to a man so universally admired.

Lady Llanberry loved high play and fashionable parties; she would much rather have had only respectable, *very* respectable people at them; but *fashionable* people were not always such, and they must be *had*; therefore, though rumour whispered that colonel Eldricke was endeavouring to seduce her married daughter, at the very time he was making love to her friend Mrs. Montgomery, and picking the pocket of her relation, Mr. Beau-marris, whom she chose to consider the future husband of her younger daughter, yet the colonel, as a man of fashion, became her constant guest.

In fact, at this time the colonel was as much in love with Mrs. Wallingford as a man of his description could be; and he had affected friendship for the husband, in the hope that gratitude in the lady, aided

by the indifference which he well knew succeeded the first fervours of what are called "love matches," would aid his designs; he had undoubtedly some interest, for his family was noble, and on the right side for obtaining promotion; but it was not his design to go beyond the *appearance* of being interested, since that might serve to awaken the feelings of the lady in his behalf, without adding to her personal accommodation; and he well knew that a want of accustomed conveniences is very apt to lead the mind to consider the person who has caused the privation in no pleasant point of view, however innocent he may be, and too great complacency towards the *amiable* being who is seeking to restore them.

When the generosity of Charles, in determining to purchase a majority for captain Wallingford, occurred, the colonel determined to change his battery, and was enabled to do so very successfully, from the earnest desire Beaumarris expressed for secrecy. The colonel presented the

promotion as from his own hand, and received those smiles and thanks which he deemed the earnest of future favours; and he had the happiness of lulling all suspicion in the lady for the present, by adding, that—"He had the pleasure of saying, that Miss Beaumarris had promised him to visit her sister that very morning;" and he spoke of the young lady in terms which, though not directly expressive of love, indicated some kind of interest in her, either with regard to her personal merits, or connexion with some one very dear to him.

It so happened that Mrs. Wallingford, though the poorest branch of her family, was possessed of one property; the rest, as far as I have seen of them, could not boast—she had a *heart*; had the affections of this heart been cultivated by either parent, friend, or sister, it is most probable she would have listened to the suggestions of any one dear to her, and have resisted the allurements of love, in the speaking glances of a poor subaltern; but this had

not been her happy case—her heart therefore found its first employment in the exercise of a passion ever dangerous, but rendered doubly so when opposed by no other affection; and there is no doubt but she would have surrendered much sooner to the prevailing propensity, if the object of her love had not happily possessed that higher regard for her, which led him to postpone his happiness till his advancement enabled him at least to shield her from poverty; in the interim, he had been engaged in actual service; he had likewise seen much of the world, and he had risen from an amiable, to a sensible and worthy man; so that at the time when colonel Eldricke commenced his attack, Mrs. Wallingford was under a guardianship he was not aware of, a *penetrating* and *attached* husband; his intercourse with life had shown him many husbands whose own conduct had given them an insight into his designs, which they were careless to counteract, from want of love to their wives;

and, on the other hand, he had seen tender and confiding husbands, whose honest hearts rendered them as unsuspecting as they were guileless. To meet with a man who united the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove, and that too in a man of approved courage, was extremely inconvenient; but as noble natures are ever won by noble actions, the colonel had hoped that an effusion of gratitude would warm the heart of Wallingford on the present occasion, and give him confidence, which, either sooner or later, would open his house and his heart, in such a manner as to afford him access to his lady, which vanity, and success in other cases, conspired to tell him was all he wanted.

The captain did not, however, receive his promotion with any rapturous thanks; his behaviour was collected, manly, and guarded; and said, as plain as manners could say it—"I know you too well, colonel, to believe you have made me a dis-

interested gift ; and whilst my love accepts it, for the sake of my wife, I shall learn to guard that wife with double diligence."

Just as the colonel was translating the collected looks of the new major into this language, Harriet entered, and gave him a full opportunity of wiping away suspicion, by his attentions to her, and by his attending her home : and in order both effectually to lull the fears of Wallingford, and to gain frequent access to Mrs. Montgomery, he became, as I have already mentioned, a perpetual visitor, from this time, at lord Llanberry's, in company with my brother, whom he introduced into every fashionable party which was yet new to him ; he became a member of all the great clubs, a candidate for Newmarket fame, and, what was more than all, the decided favourite of the countess of Ripondale.

Our blooming cousin, the bride of lord William Graham, first made her appearance in London this spring, and Charles

was first seen at her house by the countess, who pronounced him monstrous handsome, but prodigiously stupid; she saw him a month after, and declared him wonderfully improved; two months after this, her ladyship undertook to polish him herself; and as she was allowed to be the most skilful lapidary now moving in the hemisphere of taste, it was not surprising, that with such a diamond to work upon, something very brilliant should be produced, and that “the Beaumarris” should become the “very pink and mirror” of the day, “the observed of all observers.”

At the time when my father went to London, he had prescribed himself merely time for his parliamentary duties; and as there was really much business in the house, he was not able to see much of Charles; he found him living in a style suited to his fortune, but not equal to his income; and he rejoiced to see his health and spirits considerably restored. Whenever they were together, he pressed upon him the adviseableness of purchasing an estate, and

thought it would be desirable to spend the summer months in looking round for one; in which search, he said, I could accompany him, as it would be of use to my health, about which he entertained many fears: he expressed constant expectations of hearing from Mrs. Danvers by some of the homeward-bound ships, and a wish to remain in London till such arrived; but said that no consideration could prevent him from visiting the Park in May, as he should be of age, and he considered his presence necessary.

My father hoped that Charles would have proposed visiting us on that occasion; but he forbore to press him, feeling that he alone could judge how far he was enabled to endure the recollections such a visit could not fail to awaken. The fact was *not* precisely as my father had formed it in his own mind, for Charles had made his first engagement at Newmarket at that very time, my birthday having slipped his memory, amongst the multitude of engage-

ments now upon his hands, and which were so numerous, that if his health had not been thoroughly restored, he could not have endured the fatigue to which they exposed him.

In the few parties my father was enabled to enter this winter, he saw Charles attract universal admiration; but he had more than once the bitter mortification of seeing whispers follow the looks of pleasure he had excited; and perceived that some kind of tale was going round, which bespoke the spreading of that poison he had fondly hoped was confined to Fairborough, where it had now ceased to operate: on his naming this to lord Llanberry, his lordship, with an affectation of great concern, said—"That there was doubtless a general prejudice against the morals of his dear kinsman; but that he trusted time, and the support of his friends, especially that of the house whose name he bore, would enable him to overcome it."

"Surely," said my father, "his un-

spotted honour, his virtuous life, his unsullied integrity, will, in the eyes of every *reflecting* person——”

“ My dear sir Frederic, those who nod away characters, and wink away reputations, are seldom *reflecting* persons; but when they are, depend upon it there is no withstanding their malignity.”

There was no denying this; and my father assented with a sigh.

“ If,” continued the nobleman, “ Mr. Beaumarris will get into parliament, as I trust he will, I can have no doubt but, with the talents he possesses, and the interest he will have, that the lustre of his political career will quickly efface the memory of these juvenile indiscretions, which——”

“ But my son committed *no* indiscretion, was guilty of *no* error—crime is ever amenable at the bar of public censure; and however I might mourn over his error, I should justify his punishment in such a case; but Charles is *innocent*.”

“ I have no doubt of it; slander is a burr that sticks quite as firmly to innocence

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as guilt ; and generally attaches there much sooner, from the want of adroitness in the parties to ward it off. When, however, our worthy young friend is *married* and settled in the world, to a person of rank and connexion, I have not the slightest doubt but all will blow over."

My father went to Charles, and informed him, that although he did not approve such very early marriages in general, yet under *his* circumstances, he thought that if colonel Danvers and his family should arrive in the spring Indiamen, now daily expected, it would be desirable that he should fulfil what he had long known to be the wishes of his heart, by making Emma an offer immediately ; and he particularly entreated him so to conduct himself in lord Llanberry's family, as to avoid giving them any reason to expect that he could engage himself to Harriet Beaumarris—an injunction Charles had no difficulty in obeying, having never felt the slightest *penchant* for Harriet, beyond the acquaintance of an hour : but had my father *extended* his in-

quiries, he would have found that there were places in which poor Charles had become more vulnerable: he, however, departed, happy in the persuasion that his son *deserved* well of the world, at least; and that he was countenanced by a numerous, and, in general, a respectable circle of friends; and, he trusted, would bear the ordeal to which young men of fortune cannot fail to be exposed, better than he would have done if this unhappy accident had not befallen him. With this happy persuasion he returned to the Park.

As my health was still accounted delicate, my father proposed that we should make the tour of the Highlands, to which we all joyfully assented. Our party comprehended Mr. Eltringham, lady Borrowdale, colonel Harvey, his son, and two daughters: we provided every thing necessary for an expedition of this nature, and determined to enjoy our excursion in the true predatory style. Mr. Eltringham's infant son, and our little Emily, were once more committed to the care of the good

aunt ; and we set out in the beginning of July, intending to take in our way, or at our return, the nearer beauties of lake scenery, exhibited in our own country ; and to walk or ride, as might best suit the places through which we were to pass.

On arriving at Keswick, the second evening of our journey, we found the inn full of company, as the judges were passing through the town, on their return from the spring circuit ; but we were told, that beds might be procured for several of us in the town ; and it was accordingly agreed that the servants and single men should be sent out. By good fortune, colonel Harvey was sent to a house where an artist of great talents, and most agreeable manners, had been lodging for some weeks ; and when the colonel arose in the morning, he found him taking sketches from the door of the house where he lodged. The colonel was much devoted to the arts, and possessed considerable talent himself ; he therefore immediately introduced himself to Mr. H. who was naturally much pleased with meet-

ing with a gentleman who could appreciate his powers, and gladly accepted his invitation to breakfast with us. To this lucky circumstance we owed much of the pleasure we experienced during our journey; the artist conducted us to every spot in this enchanting neighbourhood most worthy of remark; and being himself on a tour to the Highlands, agreed to follow us to Edinburgh, and become one of our party. My father, ever attached to genius in every form, was pleased with every thing he observed in this young man, whose mind was strong, and imagination fertile; he possessed great sensibility, and more general information than could have been expected from a man devoted to a study which requires incessant thought, and time beyond the life of man. The young ladies were pleased with the opportunity this afforded them of encreasing their knowledge of drawing, an opportunity seldom afforded to those who reside constantly in the country, and I was equally desirous to profit by it; so that we constantly formed

sketching parties, while young Harvey, Mr. Eltringham, and the baronet, amused themselves with fishing. The colonel sometimes joined *us*, and sometimes assisted my aunt and mother in their mineralogical researches; so that we were all employed, and appeared all so happy, that although when I set out I felt as if I were about to drag, at each remove, a lengthening chain, yet I found a species of pleasure arise from witnessing it in others, which, though far removed from happiness, was, nevertheless, a very desirable substitute; and one very dear enjoyment was afforded me in perfection; this was, the perfect restoration of my father's health and spirits, which, through this journey, bounded with more than their usual elasticity, proportioned to their late depression. He was amused with the national character of the people amongst whom he sojourned; and his active mind, in retracing their history, their antiquities, and superstitions, every where found food for the mind and flowers for the fancy; and by connecting names high

in the historic page, or dear to the lovers of song, he added a local interest to every scene which charmed us; we gave a sigh to the memory of Smollett, as we trod the banks of the Leven, and paid our tribute of regret to the dwelling of the "twa bonnie lassies" of Allan Ramsay, as we passed the spot

"Where they had bigg'd a cannie bower,
And cover'd it o'er wi' rashes."

With Burns in our hands, we felt a new charm from every wimpling rill that trickled through the glen, from which he might have caught an idea, and taught it to run in his wild, beauteous, and "immortal verse."

But my father had found a charm in this journey, beyond even that which is given to sublime conception, as it arises from the contemplation of nature in her loftiest walks, or the powers of imagination, as they expand in mental excellence; this was the power of continually exercising, in one way or other, that benevolence,

whose exertion appeared as necessary to the existence of his mind, as that of respiration to his body; and to the pining inhabitant of many a cheerless hut, to the hapless wanderer, the widowed mourner; and the unprotected orphan, his ready hand gave the means of "being warmed and filled;" not with the empty ostentation the apostle so feelingly condemns, nor with the idle profusion which throws away money to get rid of troublesome sensations, but with that prudence which corrects sensibility, and that sensibility which warms and invigorates prudence.

When my father had no immediate claimants for the lesser gifts of charity pressing on his memory, his generous heart, with a delicacy equal to its munificence, was revolving the means of benefiting the person to whose genius and taste we all felt ourselves so highly indebted, and yet whose wants of the goods of fortune were most probably equally great with the riches with which nature had stored him; and these wants were likely to be

more cruelly felt, since it was evident that the refinements of education had contributed to render his feelings doubly acute; and that proud spirit of independence, ever the concomitant of conscious powers, kept him aloof from obligations—"These are the men," my father would say, "who should be nourished by the *state*; for private bounty distresses whom it serves; but from the hand of a grateful nation, genius can accept support without a blush, and patronage without servility."

Yet this conclusion did not prevent my father from contriving to produce the same happy effects, when assistance could flow from his own hand, and his contrivances were seldom in vain.

We had made the tour of the Highlands, returned to Edinburgh, and again dropt the tear of regret over the ill-fated Mary, that wonderful woman, whom we either acquit or condemn, with feelings in which pity absorbs condemnation, or demands love, and had only heard from Charles twice; in these letters we found he had

been spending part of the summer at Cheltenham, with lady Llanberry, and part at Tunbridge; but we now received a letter to inform us, that he found colonel Danvers and his family were arrived in England; and he heard, that immediately on landing at Portsmouth, they had made the best of their way to London, as sir Thomas Atwood was exceedingly ill, and little hopes entertained of his recovery. Charles added, that he should, of course, attend to the movements of the family, and inform us of his proceedings.

My impatience to proceed southward may be conceived by those who, like me, languished under the pains of an absence, contracted under circumstances of such peculiar infelicity, and unenlivened by any correspondence which could soften the distress. My mother-in-law proposed immediately writing to Mrs. Danvers, to inform her of the letter she had received; but this my father opposed, thinking, that had it been in the lady's power, she ought to have written again on her arrival at Lisbon,

as she must be well aware of the anxiety we must all have felt—he would not, he said, condemn her for this omission; but, under present circumstances, he wished to wait the event of a few days at least.

I must own I was greatly deficient in my father's stock of philosophy, and could not help wishing, for once, that my mother-in-law had possessed sufficient of the vixen in her composition to disobey him; for I saw that, like me, she had ventured to think for herself, and felt as if a warm greeting to her native shore would have been not less acceptable to her friend, than becoming to herself; but she, according to her not illaudable custom, "obsequious heard his pleaded reason," and the affair at present stood still; but I felt not the less anxious to get home.

When arrived there, our first inquiry was for letters, and one, which had arrived that very day, was put into my father's hands from Charles—it was written evidently in great perturbation of mind, and certainly conveyed not less than it evinced,

as it stated, that he had written to colonel Danvers, making an offer of his hand to Emma, and had met with a decisive, and even insolent refusal, which appeared to have provoked him beyond all bounds, especially at Emma, whose conduct, he said, was inexplicable and unjustifiable to the last degree; but who, with the proud nabob her father, should never be intruded on by *him* in any shape again.

“Nor by *you*, I trust,” said my father, with an air of more haughtiness than I had ever seen him assume, and my spirit at that moment rose with his own; but in a few minutes I was cold and sick at heart, and I felt that the supports of pride and anger are very treacherous.

In about a week after this, we read that sir Thomas Atwood was dead, being succeeded in his title and estates by his brother, now colonel sir Edward Atwood, bart. whose daughters were coheiresses to his noble fortune.

CHAP. II.

————— She who thus loves,
 Goes out to sea upon a shatter'd vessel,
 And puts her trust in miracles for safety. OTWAY.

As Miss Beaumarris most obligingly took upon herself the task of advising Mrs. Montgomery what dress to wear, what cards to play, and what entertainments to give, she took the trouble of advising her to go to Weymouth, and, when there, to cut such a dash, that it was generally rumoured she had about three times as large a fortune as was the case; and as it was really found she paid for all she bought, a circumstance much more easily ascertained there than in the metropolis, this rumour was credited by those who were interested in the fact, and who had the best of reasons for making inquiries; and the fair widow was besieged, from morning till night, with *billet-doux*, sighs, stares, and

shrugs of indifference, a new and much-admired way of saying—"I mean to pique you till I catch you;" but which being in use only "among folks of the very first world," was not precisely the way to the heart of a woman who was too *new* in the world to understand it; so that when colonel Eldricke arrived at Weymouth, and paid a different homage at the fair shrine, he completely distanced all his competitors, brought back the first reveries of the heart, and the last dreams of the imagination; and united all the dreams of the scarlet coat which charmed the *girl*, with those bewitching reveries of sentimental rhapsody which had misled the *woman*.

The attention which the colonel paid to Harriet, equally with Mrs. Montgomery, had induced the latter to believe that he was in love with her young friend, and only complimentary to herself for that friend's sake; for she was too truly modest to suppose, without strong proof, that a fine, dashing young man, not seven-and-twenty, could really prefer herself, though

a fine woman, to a lovely girl of nineteen; the difference in their fortune did not strike her; for she admired the colonel, and concluded, of course, that he was the most generous of men; besides, she had heard of his kindness to the Wallingfords, so that she had some excuse for her confidence; and therefore when the colonel did indeed confess his flame, poor Ellen felt her heart beat with something very like gratitude for his preference; but with a voice of great trepidation, she uttered something like a renunciation of him, for the sake of her dear young friend.

The colonel "had always understood, from the Wallingfords, that Miss Beaumarris was engaged to Mr. Beaumarris, which had occasioned him to treat her with more freedom than he should have thought it proper to use; but his heart disdained dissimulation; he would fly, and remove every obstacle to the entire confidence of his adored Ellen."

"*Adored Ellen!*" could any thing be

sweeter? *beloved* Ellen had been the extent of what the old gentleman had ever been able to say—what years of happiness had she not lost! but life was yet before her, and she was determined to make the most of it, by *loving* with all “her heart, her soul, and her strength;” for she had already discovered, that splendour and admiration were not the kind of toys which nature had designed her to play with; and the more dear, tormenting mysteries of cards, to which lady Llanberry had introduced her, at a considerable expence, were as hateful as the others were vapid; Ellen was born to love.

While these things were passing her mind, the colonel had joined a party to the library, where Miss Beaumarris was happy to be singled out by the dasher of the day, though for the express purpose of drawing her aside, and informing her of his engagement; adding, with a kind of yawn—“In these cases, one must do the best they can: matrimony is a pill all sensible men, and *women* too, take care shall

be well gilded. To you, my dear friend, I speak with frankness, assured there is a most delectable union in our sentiments, 'beyond the coarser tie of human laws,' which will enable *you* to read my soul—in plain English, my dear Harriet, I am poor, cursedly poor: was I blest with the fortune of your envied, *thrice* envied Beaumarris, I then durst dispute the *richer* prize with him, which my eyes are now condemned to close upon for ever."

Harriet was by turns piqued, soothed, and flattered with this speech; she attempted to assure the colonel, that she had no engagement with Mr. Beaumarris, which he well knew to be true, but which he insisted upon was *false*; and talked upon so long, that he at length took the liberty of a friend, to assure her, should that be the case, she had acted unwisely, in not securing a man whose fortune was desirable, and who could hardly fail to advance in life. She told him all she had learned of Charles's passion for another, and he ridiculed the idea; at the same time, he pro-

tested that nothing less than the cruel necessity of the case could drive him even to venture at a step, which, "by a double bar, shut out his own hopes of happiness:" and he said this with so profound a sigh, that Harriet was bound to believe; and the way in which it was re-echoed in her breast, induced the colonel to push his attack so far, as to induce her to bind him to everlasting gratitude, by promising to forward his suit with her friend; whilst, on *his* part, he bound himself to forward whatever could conduce to her happiness.

In the first moments of Harriet's vexation at the effrontery of this declaration, she had determined to warn her friend against colonel Eldricke; she now determined, with more pertinacity, to espouse his cause; she believed he loved her, she knew he could not marry, and yet she resolved to attach him to herself—into such strange inconsistencies does vanity often mislead those who have no fixed principles of action; but this young lady had another motive of action—she loved the colonel,

and rather than not be loved again, she consented to hold a heart which could only offer a guilty passion; and "who was to be the sufferer in this loss?" a worthy and amiable woman, from whom she was every day receiving marks of kindness; and who, even while her ingenuous heart confessed affection, had hesitated for her sake to accept the offer of the colonel's hand.

After the ladies had once met, the matter went on perfectly smooth; for though Mrs. Montgomery informed her brothers, yet of course she did not ask their consent, or deem their approbation necessary for her peace; but there were some little things which Ellen said must be done; and as the gentleman could induce his creditors to wait a short time longer, he consented to bridle his impatience.

The little things in question was a gift of five hundred pounds each to two children, who were born since the death of Mr. Montgomery, to a person who was very distantly related to him, but whom,

she was certain, he would have remembered in his will, had he been aware of the marriage of their mother, to whom he had left a small annuity, considering her as past a marrying age. Mrs. Montgomery had mentioned to her attorney an intention of presenting these sums to the children in question, and as she had likewise told him of her intended marriage, he had advised her to do it before that event took place, well knowing that if she did not, it would hardly be done after; but not displaying the suspicion he felt, the widow agreed to the proposal, and settled the particulars; but when the good lawyer proceeded to advise her to have certain lands and tenements secured on herself, repeating the old proverb of "safe bind, safe find," she became very indignant, and protested that all the value she could ever find in wealth was the pleasure of bestowing it on him she loved.

"It is said, madam, that the colonel, as a younger brother, is very slenderly provided for."

“ Then be it my consolation to make up the deficiencies of fortune, and raise him, in this respect, to an equality with the elder.”

“ But they say he is in debt, madam.”

“ Then I will pay his debts ; his generous spirit shall no longer bend under the oppressive load of pecuniary obligation.”

“ Your fortune is a very fine fortune, madam, but it may be found unequal to *all* the claims made upon it.”

“ Then I can cheerfully return to the cottage from whence I came, satisfied that Heaven, in its temporary gift, has permitted me the highest gratification riches can bestow. Freely did I receive, and freely will I give, Hanway ; so let us say no more about it, for I have made up my mind on the subject.”

Hanway had no right to pass any comments, to be sure ; he knew that to *return* to a cottage was sooner said than done ; but as it did not enter his mind that such a thing could take place literally,

he only gave a short sigh, hoped for the best, and took his leave till the night before the marriage, when he returned to bring a sum of money, which had been taken out of the funds, and to receive his orders as to the disposal of the said thousand pounds.

The colonel and Harriet were sitting with the bride-elect when Hanway was announced.

“ Oh, he has brought me some money ; may I admit him ? ”

“ By all means,” said the lover, rejoiced to hear of the mission.

When Hanway had paid down the whole sum, he received back the two bills, and departed, saying—“ He was not accustomed to be an almoner, but should prove a faithful one in this case, he would assure her.”

“ What does the old man mean ? ” said the colonel.

Ellen related the transaction with her usual candour.

“ And have you really given that old

scoundrel a thousand pounds? a *thousand pounds* that you were not *obliged* to pay?" said the colonel, in the raised tone and gesture of passion.

Mrs. Montgomery was astonished, almost terrified; she looked like a person who scarcely durst believe their own senses; yet as her countenance recovered its usual form, an air of severity and decision appeared to come over it, seen by Harriet though not by the colonel, whose vexation had put him off his guard; she instantly trod on his toe, and by a glance of the eye, directed him to the face of Mrs. Montgomery; a single look showed him that another word, and all would be over for ever. He started, burst into a well-dissembled fit of laughter, and clasping Ellen in his arms, declared—"That was the way he should act the husband, whenever she bought diamonds, or played at hazard."

"I beg you wont do so again, even in jest," said she faintly, "for though I am not nervous, you really made me tremble."

“ Well, my dear creature, don't look pale, or you will return the compliment, by making *me* tremble in very sober earnest. I shall wish the old man and his trash at the devil, if I see you look in this way, my Ellen.”

Ellen was soothed, consoled, married, and undone.

It was not long after this that Charles learnt the arrival of the Danvers family had taken place. The marriage of the colonel, by taking him for a short time from his accustomed society, led Charles to reflect more on Emma than he had done for some time; he remembered too my father's advice; and having discovered likewise, that a life of pleasure defeats itself, and that he could not look back with one pleasant feeling, nor forward with one hope, while he continued in his present situation, he began to fancy that as all his happiness had fled with Emma, so it might return with her; and though he no longer felt that passion which would have impelled him to her feet, he yet found that

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she only could command the respect, and awaken the tenderness of his heart.

Conceiving that under the present situation of the family, there would be no impropriety in presenting himself personally; during the illness of the baronet, he wrote to colonel Danvers in the most open and handsome manner, offering himself and fortune to the disposal of his daughter Emma; and lamenting the long separation which had unavoidably taken place between two families, whose reciprocal regard had, he flattered himself, rendered them necessary for each others happiness.

In this letter, the colonel (now sir Edward Atwood) replied in a very laconic manner, declining the honour of Mr. Beaumarris's visits to his daughter; but adding, it was with great pain he was obliged to relinquish the acquaintance of any branch of sir Frederic Sedgewood's family; and begged to assure him that Emma perfectly acquiesced in the painful necessity, which urged him to relinquish a

connexion, which at *one* period would have been an honour to *her*, and happiness to her family.

From this it appeared, that the very people who had caused the only stain poor Charles's name had ever known, took advantage of it to cast him off; the effect was such as almost to drive him back to madness; but, alas! the keen pangs of thought were no longer his refuge; he flew to wine, to women, to hazard, to a faithless friend, a deceitful mistress, to all which a good father must reject, and a virtuous woman ought to fly from: thus was the prediction of lady Frances verified, and Charles Beaumarris led to seek refuge in society he once would have loathed, and to inflict real wounds on his conscience, in consequence of false ones on his character.

When Harriet Beaumarris had seen the knot actually tied between her two dear friends, and found that Charles did not, as she expected, visit the young heiresses, she began to conceive that he really had

some serious intentions towards *her*; and on her return to London, she determined to lay close siege to his heart, for real passion towards one man had taught her how to feign it towards another; and she was convinced, that pity and kindness were so inherent in the nature of her handsome cousin, that it would be long before the world could so harden his heart, as to render him callous to their claims.

But Charles was now sighing more intently than ever in the chains of the countess of Ripondale; this lady had laid siege to him the winter before; but although Charles did not imagine her to be any thing more than a very amusing coquette, he could not bring himself at that time to be a dangler in the suite of a married woman; but alas! he had passed a whole year of folly since then, and he now gloried in his chains, and paid for the honour of jingling them, by losing his money as freely as her ladyship could wish.

When a man *loses much, he seldom gives*

much ; but Charles did both ; he was profuse from folly, but he was generous from nature and principle ; so that while he spent lavishly, he did not therefore deny meanly, or promise what he never meant to perform, even in this mournful period of his history ; traits of the beautiful original might be traced, streaming like meteors through the gloomy hemisphere, where they shone with bright but temporary lustre.

In this state of mind was Charles when my father arrived in London during the Christmas vacation ; he did not see his son on the night of his arrival, as he had expected ; and when he had breakfasted the next morning, he sallied out in pursuit of him, and, with some surprise, learnt he was still in bed ; my father sent up his name, and took up the morning papers. In a few minutes he made his appearance, looking pale, but evidently vexed with himself ; my father felt that his Charles was no longer the same, but he could not bear to infringe on the pleasures of a first

meeting, by any painful remark ; so, after some general conversation, he again took up the newspapers, while Charles breakfasted, and with great surprise read the following paragraph :—

“ Married, this morning, at Hanover-square Chapel, captain Campbell, eldest son of general sir John Campbell, to Emma, daughter and co-heiress of colonel sir Edward Atwood, baronet.”

My father laid down the newspaper so softly, and with an air of so much fear and alarm, that Charles immediately inquired if there were any newspaper squibs in it about him, as nothing could be more likely, as he had lately purchased a new horse, which he knew had excited envy, and would therefore probably occasion remark.

“ This is not a squib, nor I apprehend a cracker, but I am afraid, my dear fellow, you will find it a home shot ; but I hope you will receive it like a man, for all that.” He then read the paragraph.

There was for some moments a wild va-

cancy in Charles's eye, that alarmed my father exceedingly; he knew not that eye was turned inwards, and was saying—"I have deserved even this;" but he saw that the expression was that of silent suffering, and he trembled at the remembrance it awakened: to force him into conversation, he inquired—"if he had ever seen any of the Danvers family since the rejection of his suit?"

"Never; they have not been into public since the baronet's death; they will now come out, and be buzzing every where, I suppose."

"If you like to run down to Bath, I will write to Theodore to meet you there; he is coming up to London, but will doubtless prefer avoiding a rencontre equally painful to both of you."

"An excellent thought," said Charles; "I will not lose an hour;" and accordingly in a few minutes he was on the road to Bath.

My father dined at lord Llanberry's, and observing that his sons were going to meet

each other at Bath, her ladyship said she should like a run down there herself, and would propose the plan to Mrs. Eldricke; it was talked over in the evening, and agreed on, to my father's satisfaction, as he could not forbear feeling some uneasiness respecting Charles, and knew that it must be yet a week or ten days before I could possibly join him there. Lady Sedgewood being much indisposed, had not accompanied him to town this winter, but had promised, if she found herself better, to follow with me; but this the baronet did not wish, for though her complaint was not dangerous, he was aware that travelling would expose her to a degree of suffering, which he wished to save her from.

The vexation I had endured from Charles's rejection, and the subsequent conduct my father appeared to expect from *me*, and which my own ideas of proper dignity equally exacted, had injured my spirits very much, and it was some time before I could prevail on myself to visit London this winter, although my father,

agreeable to that generosity ever eminent in his character, had rendered me independent in my circumstances, and enabled me either to offer myself as a candidate for the hand of Adelaide, or to run the round of dissipation young men of fortune and connexions think themselves entitled to run at this period of their existence.

When my father's letter arrived, inviting me to meet Charles at Bath, and mentioning the cause, I felt as if I too might every moment expect a similar deathblow to my long-cherished hopes; and I now found, more than ever, these hopes, in spite of absence and obstacles, had so "grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength," that they were become necessary to my existence; that I had imbibed what Charles designated the Sedgewood constancy; and that, like my unhappy grandfather, all the best years of my life were fated to bow under the corrosive influence of hopeless passion.

To lady Sedgewood I spoke freely of all that passed in my mind, and received from her so much consolatory encouragement, that I could not help pressing her to accompany me to Bath; she answered me jestingly—"Though Bath is a place to which I am extremely partial, yet it is the last I wish to visit; for you must know I have a great-aunt living there who played the part of duenna to me so effectually in my youth, that I believe the idea of meeting her would even now make me tremble; my father, in releasing me from this bondage, which took place on my mother's death, offended the old lady, and she renounced us all, with such sincerity of hatred, that no circumstance shall ever induce me to trouble her again; in fact, I have not heard of her for many years, nor expect to do it, till her executors inform me that I am left heiress to a *shilling*, as the last memento of her wrath."

CHAP. III.

There are few minds sufficiently firm to be trusted in the hands of chance. He that has escaped into port, ought to make some improvements in the chart of life, by marking the rocks on which he has been dashed, and the shallows in which he has been stranded.

RAMBLER.

WHEN I arrived within sight of Bath, my heart forgot every emotion but that of delight, in the expectation of seeing my brother; we (who for the first twenty years of life had never been parted as many hours) had not seen each other for above a year, and in that year such a gradual change had taken place in our correspondence, that although my heart spurned the idea of Charles's degradation, yet I was forced to adopt that of believing him much altered.

My father had appointed our meeting at the York Hotel, and thither I hastened; it was about two o'clock; I had come from

Gloucester. On inquiring for Mr. Beaumarris, I was told that he was at breakfast with one or two friends.—“ Shew me his room,” said I impatiently.

“ Would you be so good as to wait till I can see Mr. Jones, sir, for you to speak to *him*? I know, that is, I believe Mr. Beaumarris has some very *particular* friends with him just at this moment; and I really don't know, sir, that he will be able to see *you*, sir.”

“ Shew me his room,” said I, authoritatively.

The man having took measure of me with his eye, proceeded, and opening the door of a handsome apartment (where several people were all talking at once, but amongst whom I did not discern the voice of my brother), he said—“ Sir, there's a person here, a *gentleman* I mean, sir, that insists on coming in.”

Charles was stretched on a sofa; he slowly raised himself, till gaining a glance of my person, he sprang up, exclaiming, with all his wonted affection—“ My bro-

ther, my dear Theodore, I could not expect you so early ;” then advancing to the breakfast-table he introduced me to “ colonel Eldricke, lord viscount Clatter, and Mr.— Mr.— really, my lord, I have forgot your friend’s name.”

“ That’s queer enuff ; my name be pretty well known,” said a vulgar-looking man, dressed in the style of a hackney-coachman, who was just helping himself to some cold tongue, and spoke with his mouth full.—“ That be queer enuff ; most folks knows Bob Shillet az knows any thing ;” then turning to the peer, he added, with a nod towards me, “ Thizn be not o the right zort, I take it, hey, my lud ? dan’t ye zee the young on flinches ? I thout he’d na bottom frae th’ first ; what zay ye, colonel, hey ?”

The colonel said—“ He had never had the honour of seeing Mr. Sedgewood before ;” and the colonel’s features said—“ he would rather not have had that honour *now* ;” for though tolerably schooled, they were more honest than his tongue.

I sat down, and was beginning to take some refreshment, though I felt all the awkwardness of breaking into a party where I was not wished for; and still more, the pain of beholding Charles himself ashamed of being caught with a person, whose admission to such society indicated some species of degradation, when I caught the words—"Ask him, Bob, ask him," from lord Clatter, addressed to his *protegée*.

"I allis doez the best I can for ye all, gemmen, damn me if I doezn't; and if you'll be down with the ready, I'll provide ye with the nate thing, or my name ben't Bob Shillet; zo as we were zaying before this here gemman came in, if we can scape old proser, we'll do't at Devizes; if *not*, Malbro's the please; for three hundred, and a purse of fifty, I'll engage to find two, up to fifteen rounds, or thereabouts."

I turned my eyes on the speaker, with the air of a man who has made a dis-

covery, and probably with that of one who does not feel himself perfectly easy in his seat.

“ You *doan't* spar, sir,” said the fellow, with a nod of contempt. The peer chuckled, as if he had gained what he wanted.

“ You are mistaken,” said I firmly ; “ I *do* spar, at least I *can* spar, if I was under a necessity of doing so, for I learnt that part of the science of self-defence, (as did my brother), along with the use of the small-sword, that we might be equally safe from the attacks of low blackguards and high ones.”

“ I have heard your brother make frequent mention of your powers,” said the colonel, “ so as greatly to excite my curiosity.”

“ Then, sir, I hopes no offence,” said the fellow, dropping the impertinent look he had assumed ; “ but you must know az how I be ater getting a little thing up in that line for these here gemmen, an if zo be az how you'd like to join us, bein

az it war an hammatewer, zoa much the better."

Recollecting that my friend H——, the artist, had dubbed me an amateur in Scotland, when with him I had gazed on the last tints of the setting sun, as they sunk beneath the mountains of the Trossacks, and exclaimed, in the poetic phrenzy of the moment—

This is a scene of such true majesty,
 And yet so beauteous, and so meek withal,
 Methinks the sun doth pause, as lothe to leave
 Such hallow'd spot, and casts a parting gleam
 Of softer radiance, and more lucid fire,

I could not find association in these ideas, with those awakened by the proposal of my new acquaintance; and knowing the first to be pleasurable, I did not choose to relinquish them for the additional honours of the other, being well convinced there was no principle of assimilation; I therefore coolly observed—
 "That I could not have the pleasure of

attending the amusement, unless the waters of Bath, like those of Lethe, should induce me to forget some things which I wished to remember."

"What things be they, sir?" said the man, with an air of surprise and curiosity.

"Trifling recollections, that never can have oppressed *you*, Mr. Shillet, and have *ceased* to affect your friends, so we will say nothing about them."

"Aye, sir," said the man, having, as he thought, caught my meaning; "repeat noa grievances; but, howsoever, if you likes to try your luck, here's a fine opening for you; and if so be as you be this her gemman's brother, though I takes it, not bein o his name, you're a brother under the rose like, yet I takes it he's not the man to grudge ye a score o shiners to begin the world again with."

This curious consolatory harangue awakened the risibility of all except Charles, who peevishly said—"Pshaw! my brother, Mr. Sedgewood, means that he cannot for-

get he *is* a Sedgewood, which in Yorkshire is English for gentleman, that's all, Shillet; I was once a Sedgewood myself, but have the misfortune to be a younger brother, and a richer."

An air of cruel embarrassment mixed with the playful manner assumed by Charles as he said this, and touched my very heart. The peer and the boxer rose to depart, and I perceived a look of malice pass between them, which had me for its object, but which I had scarcely time to regard, as the colonel exclaimed—"Apropos of forgetting; I fancy *both* you gentlemen will have need of all old Bladud's waters next week, if they possess Lethean powers, for hither come the bridal party of the beauteous Emma, and of course her sister is in the train: by the way, I hear that the son of a very great man is her professed admirer—such is the news of the day."

"I will not move an inch farther, by Jove," cried Charles, reddening.

“ You are in the right,” said the colonel.

And so said I; but my heart beat so violently, that I believe my words were scarcely articulate; but I could not help fancying that the pain I felt gave pleasure to the colonel. I was loth to believe this of a man to whom my brother had attached himself, and who professed to be at Bath for the purpose of administering to his pleasures; but the impression remained in despite of my reason: I however agreed to accompany Charles to his house to dinner, being told that I should meet lady Elnberry and her daughter there; and I then, with a heavy heart, left the friends together, being anxious to write to my father, and reassure him as to his fears of Charles, on whom I could not look without remembering the many dreadful days and sleepless nights I had passed with him, when we were last together.

I found Mrs. Eldricke very pleasant and agreeable in her manners, though

too youthful and fashionable in her dress to please the simplicity of my taste: a short time served to show me, that although she wore rouge on her face, the world had not yet taught her to lay it on her heart, where sorrow was already kindled, and frequently broke out in sighs she could ill suppress, and looks that forgot to smile; every moment the stimulating glance of the colonel, which *commanded* her to be cheerful, was withdrawn; my heart ached for this innocent victim to affection; and I could not help lamenting that Charles could have attached himself to such a man; but my cares for her were withdrawn, by remarking the attention Charles was paying to Harriet Beaumarris, who returned his kindness with so much interest, that I was shocked to perceive a beautiful young woman draw upon herself the pointed regards of a large circle, by a devotion to a man who had not yet sought to engage her in any serious way, and who, whilst he attended to her, did

it rather with the air of a brother who pitied, than a friend who adored her.

We adjourned from Marlborough-buildings, where the colonel had engaged a house for a month, to the new rooms, it being the night of the cotillion ball. I was amused here, with the great variety of faces I saw, but did not engage in dancing, as I had travelled a long way the day before, and felt somewhat fatigued. I was likewise hurt to see the fondness of Harriet for Charles displayed still more fully in public; and could scarcely help noticing it to her mother, who was so much engaged by her cards, that she attended to nothing else. Finding all my party engaged in one way or other, I told Charles, who either felt or affected extraordinary spirits this evening, that I should go home; and after making my adieus to Mrs. Eldricke and lady Llanberry, I set out unattended, as I found it was but a step from thence to York House, where I had fortunately been able to procure lodgings.

In passing down the narrow alley which leads from the upper rooms to George-street, I perceived myself followed by two men, who passed me, and would not have attracted my attention, if a chair had not been coming from Wilson-street corner at the same time; as it passed near the lamp, the light fell full upon an old lady with a dog in her lap; and being aided likewise by the light of her flambeau, carried by a young lad, produced an effect that struck the men as well as myself, for one of them bawled out—"How much do you get for carrying that old cat out for a show?"

"Only sixpence," said the chairmen.

"She'll give you a shilling to-night though," cried one, "or I'll ride to hell on a broomstick."

At these words he sprang forwards, and first extinguishing the light, and knocking down the footboy, he smashed his arm through the glass, and ordered the lady, with many frightful oaths, to pay the chairmen handsomely.

The lady screamed in great terror, and I ran to her assistance, when the chairmen, who were lusty fellows, and might have got off, stopping to comment on their broken windows, the offenders, with equal violence, turned the chair topsy-turvy: at this moment a window was thrown open, and I appealed to the humanity of the person to send somebody to assist the lady, who was my first care, though I was determined to punish the miscreants who had ill-treated her; but my appeal was answered by a loud laugh. The footboy, with more success, knocked at a shop door, where the inhabitants soon appeared. As I had just extricated the poor old woman from her perilous situation, and as she was little heavier than her own lap-dog, I took both her and it in my arms altogether; and whilst carrying her into the house in this situation, the scoundrel struck me a violent blow, which, glancing past my neck, where it was aimed, struck full on the cheek of my helpless burthen, who redoubled her screams.

I instantly entered the house, laid her on a sofa, and flew back to the wretch, who had not moved as I expected, and as I was about to seize him, I heard the other cry—"Why, Dick, thee wan't flinch frae that Jack-a-dandy?" and at the same time I was saluted with a blow, which assured me I was in the hands of some of those scientific gentlemen belonging to viscount Clatter, and his friend Bob Shillet; nor had I any doubt but that the whole affair was of that person's planning; this discovery did me good—it recalled my knowledge, and I gave my first opposer good reason to consider it sterling; but the other joining him, I should have found myself in a very awkward situation, if a party of gentlemen had not been quitting the rooms at this time, and seeing the unequal fray, had so far interposed, as to insist on fair play; and as the first villain had now had as many blows as his right honourable employer or employers would pay him for, he gladly withdrew; and I was left to contend with the second, of whose skill I had every rea-

son to be convinced; but I was now completely master of myself: the gentlemen assembled round me had learned the merits of the case, and I was praised on every side for an exertion which it was hoped would rid the city of two pests, who had been, for several days, infesting the public passages, and insulting all they came near. Lights were now brought, and many ladies, going home in their chairs, were passing, and knew me, disfigured as I was; their eager inquiries were directed to the lady I had protected at so much hazard and expence.—“Who was she?” “Who could she possibly be?” and their footmen were ordered to stop and make inquiries.

My opponent had, by many manœuvres, sought to draw me further into the street, in order, as I imagined, to throw me into the main road, while the carriages were passing; this vexed me, at length, more than I intended; and watching the moment when none appeared in the streets, I turned his own arms upon him; and finding myself nearly exhausted, collected all my

power, and by one desperate and dexterous blow, hurled him into the street, where he fell apparently lifeless, and bleeding profusely.

Being, like the Romans at Pharsalia, anxious to save my face from the honours of this warfare, I had exposed my person too much, and had received several severe blows about my breast. Directing the people about to take care of the man, and offering money to a chairman to do it, I stept into the house where I had taken the lady, and whose worthy master had wisely robbed me of my watch and purse, in the first onset of the fray, for the sake of securing them. Himself, wife, and servant, were most anxiously employed in every means of assistance, by stripping off what clothes remained on me, in order to apply some kind of emollient to my wounds, when the lady I had rescued, rising from the sofa, begged them, for God's sake, to remove either her or the poor murdered gentleman somewhere, as she

should certainly die on the spot, if she saw any more of his naked body.

“Why, for sure, madam, my lady, it is a sight, but not for any body to die at—save and except for pity, as one may say,” said the mistress of the house.

“Take me away, woman!” said the lady, majestically.

The woman complied by calling a chair, and directing her shopman to see the lady safe home; and she went, muttering a kind of thanks to me, which bespoke her modesty more outraged than her gratitude excited; yet she gave a softened glance at parting.

Inquiries were every moment making at the door for my safety; and a medical gentleman had appeared to inspect the state of my contusions; but I declined positively to speak with him, till he had examined the last man I had fought with, being convinced that he must be severely wounded. Whilst this was doing, and the good woman was rubbing my breast with

an emollient of her own composing, while her maid applied a roller to my bleeding arm, a loud rap was heard, and my doctress exclaimed—"Run, my dear, run—the lady is come home: oh Gemini! Nancy, go and light her candles; if she should turn in here, we shall all be ruined, that's certain."

I had been vexed at the old woman's want of humanity, but the idea of exposing myself to a person of a different description, was quite as painful to *me* as it could be to the shopkeeper's wife; and turning from her hastily to take my shirt, I heard the lady discharge the chairmen in the passage, saying—"A sad thing, Mr. Logan, as you say;" and at the same moment, notwithstanding his "pray, madam, stop here," and Nancy's standing bobbing with "your candles is lit, ma'am," and "indeed, ma'am, you can't go in—its quite unproper, ma'am," the lady flounced in, and desired Mrs. Logan would inform her of any milliner who would make her a dress for the following Thursday, without fail, as she spoke, eyeing me with an air of the most

perfect *nonchalance*, and repeating her inquiries to Mrs. Logan with an air of the most unembarrassed coolness.

The crimson mantle of Mrs. Grogram had, when I first heard the step of this unknown lady, enwrapt me in a vest as warm as the original satin; but her *sang froid* restored mine; I ventured to look up, and beheld one of the handsomest women I had ever seen; she appeared about twenty-six, was elegantly dressed, and had the air of fashion in her appearance, which never fails to convey the idea of a person of vivacity and ability.

When her eyes met mine, she seemed somewhat confused, and turning hastily around, followed the maid, saying, as she tripped off—"That boxing man is a prodigious handsome creature."

"Boxing man!" screamed Nancy; "boxing man, madam! why he's no such thing; he's a barrownite, or a barrownite's son, and quite a fine gentleman, though he's been used like a Turk, and is the most noblest, valiantest, fair-skinned

——” I lost the sound of Nancy’s voice for some time; but when she returned, she brought me a message from Mrs. Bellington, requesting, that if there was any thing in which she could contribute to my comfort, I would command her; and lamenting that the peculiarity of my case prevented her from offering personal assistance.

Nancy delivered her message verbatim; and her mistress very sagaciously observed, that ladies could say one thing with their eyes, and another with their tongues; but added—“It does not become tradespeople to speak, though if seeing’s believing, I am sure Mrs. Bellington cannot say as how she was afeard of looking at the gentleman, howsomdever.”

The surgeon returning with an assurance that he had left his patient out of danger, though safely housed for a month to come, I proceeded with him to York House, having made due acknowledgments to my first practitioner, whom I found a very good one. On arriving at home, I was blooded, and went to bed immediately,

finding my brother was not returned. I discharged my servant soon; and having taken a narcotic draught, hoped that I should have been able to sleep; but although I was stupified for a few moments, the intolerable pain I was in soon awakened me, and I found that somebody was talking very near, and Charles's voice, in a low tone, struck on my ear. I leaned forward as well as I was able, and put aside the curtain, under the idea that he was conversing with my man respecting the events of the night; but on seeing no one, I recollected that the room I was in joined to Charles's sitting-room, and that it was probable that I was divided from him only by a slight partition, such removals being frequently used in large houses; and this idea was quickly confirmed, by hearing him again speak, and say to the person he addressed — "But where can I attend you now? for Heaven's sake, consider what is to be done!"

To my extreme confusion and distress, a woman's voice, which, though low, I

knew to be Harriet Beaumarris's, answered —“ I can go safely to colonel Eldricke's; my mother thinks I am there now; I told her I would sleep there.”

Soon after I heard them leave the room, and descend the stairs together, I closed my eyes, and would have persuaded myself it was a dream, or the wanderings of my imagination, caused by my laudanum draught; but, alas! the impression remained vivid, and contributed, with my bruises, to induce a considerable degree of fever; so that on the arrival of the surgeon, he sent for a physician, who sent for an apothecary, and one ordered rest, the other administered medicines, and between both, I was confined very effectually to my apartment for some days.

When Charles visited me, he lamented, with the truest sympathy, not unblent with shame, the occasion of my sufferings—descanted on the folly and brutality of gentlemen encouraging a parcel of wretches, who were the very dregs of society, to tear one another to pieces for their

amusement; and by acquiring a species of skill in their employment, to which they are encouraged in the hope of gain, become enabled to insult every person they come near: he added, that all Bath had prepared laurels for my victory; and that lord Clatter, afraid of the obloquy which attached to him, as a known supporter of these pests, had returned to London, in a still greater hurry than he left it.

“This man, of whom you speak so contemptuously, was sitting with you as a *friend* yesterday morning.”

“True; one cannot live in the world, and help associating with its knaves and fools,” said Charles, sorrowfully. “I met with the viscount at Newmarket, and had the ill luck to lose a trifle, which I could not immediately pay; and that brought him after me here, in the hopes of making it larger.”

“My dear fellow, do not owe such a man a farthing—reach me my pocket-book.”

Charles smiled—“Who is the rich man now, Theodore?”

“ I am not *rich*, Charles, but if I can relieve you——”

“ Thank you. I know your heart, and would not scruple to use your purse; but I was uncommonly lucky last night, after you left me, and I have repaid this beggarly lord this morning, and he is gone off, with Bob Shillet, not ten minutes ago.”

“ Last night was an *eventful* night,” said I, *earnestly*.

“ Very *eventful*,” returned Charles, *confusedly*.

CHAP. IV.

Of those that by precipitate conclusions involve themselves in calamities without guilt, however they may reproach themselves, very few can be certain that other measures would have been more successful. RAMBLER.

ON the third day of my confinement, just as my brother had wished me a good-night, being engaged to the dress-ball at

the low rooms, his valet appeared to say, that lord Llanberry had that moment arrived in Bath, and requested to see him for ten minutes, on an affair of the utmost importance.

The confusion of Charles, at this juncture, would have convinced me, if nothing else had done it, that my unfortunate discovery had been no dream: he escaped from my anxious and pitying eye, by hastening to lord Llanberry's carriage, which waited for him.

I saw very clearly, that, by some means, Harriet's absence had been discovered on the night of my rencounter; and that her lady mother had, in a state of very natural alarm, sent for her lord, who was doubtless come to demand of Charles *l'amende honorable* for his daughter; and would, I had no doubt, have full credentials from *my* father, to induce him to comply with a requisition he had so much right to demand.

But though I called this justice, my

heart bled for Charles: the words he had uttered indicated more care for the lady's reputation than she had herself evinced. I knew not how far that care might not have extended to her person, and I could not help wishing to save him from marrying a person he could not esteem, and whom, however lovely, *he* did not appear to love. I regretted much that I was at such a distance from my father; and felt every moment ready to run after Charles, and beg of him to make no rash promises: but when I reflected on the consequences which might arise to a respectable family, the many remarks to which a later separation might lay all parties open, and the evident unsettled and dissipated course of life Charles was pursuing, and which I trusted would be altered and amended by his marriage with a woman, whose entire devotedness to him might tend to sooth and console his sorrows; and restore his virtues, I felt I had no right to offer any bar to an affair, which, on a nearer view, appeared more

favourable ; and I endeavoured to reconcile myself to it.

Whilst these thoughts were revolving in my mind, Charles was meeting a father, who, informed by his daughter that she had, in a fit of folly, gone to Charles's lodgings, one night, of her own accord, and was well aware that she had been *seen* there, could not pretend to do more than throw himself on the mercy of a young man, whose mind, he well knew, was stung with vexation for the loss of her he loved — was softened by the insinuations of his daughter, and whose heart was not yet hardened by the course of dissipation he was pursuing. His lordship made use of very little argument in this case ; he said simply — “ Reputation is invaluable. Harriet's innocence will be of no avail in the eyes of the world ; and in her own, it will only encourage vexation, instead of repentance ; and continually harrass her mind with the idea, that she has not deserved the wretchedness she must assuredly feel.”

As lord Llanberry uttered these words, he covered his face with his hands, and Charles saw, or *thought* he saw, the same pangs which had once agitated *his* father's breast, now rend that of the ambitious politician;—he could not bear it; he walked towards the window to hide his agitation, and at the very moment saw two travelling carriages pass, in one of which he plainly perceived lady Atwood.

Enraged by the memory of all those evils he now laid to the account of Emma Danvers, with more pertinacity than ever, he instantly turned to lord Llanberry, and in a firm voice, but with a frame agitated in every nerve, declared that he would, if it were possible, lead Harriet to the altar to-morrow.

Lord Llanberry most fervently prayed for a blessing on his head; lady Llanberry, who had been in tears, or *said* she had, all day, declared her happiness and gratitude; and Harriet said a thousand tender things; and it is but justice to say, she was indeed

thankful to Charles, for she was at this time truly *sorry* for the indiscretion she had been guilty of; and as the humility of a proud person renders their condescension more endearing, so Harriet had never appeared to so much advantage as on the present evening; and the long harrassed heart of Charles, for a few hours, once more tasted that sweet repose which is the natural result of generous conduct; but in the course of it, he found such a disposition to relapse into musing, that he took more wine than he was ever known to do before; and he returned home, at a late hour, in a state of complete intoxication.

In the course of three days, Charles was the husband of Harriet Beaumarris, and removed, for a few weeks, into a large house in Laura Place, where the bride saw company in very great style; and the bridegroom strove to persuade himself that he might yet be as happy as other men of fashion; and that, at least, he should prove to the Atwoods, that their proud and ungenerous rejection, as he deemed it, had

not the power of extending the anathema, since he had obtained a bride more nobly born, at *least* as handsome, and much more admired in the circles of fashion than Emma could be: this was the consolation of *words*, by which the mind seeks to mould the heart. It was Charles's misery to know, that his wife was not Emma Danvers, as *he* had known her; but he was desirous of persuading himself, that from the time she had known Campbell, she had ceased to be *his* Emma; and conscious of the change which had taken place in himself, he was willing to ascribe equal mutability of excellence in her—a very common way of deceiving ourselves.

In about a week after the marriage, I found myself able to go into public; and being desirous of showing every attention to my new sister, (whom, at this time, I considered most fondly attached to Charles, and whom, I hoped, would prove the means of restoring him to peace, and that conscious respectability he no longer en-

joyed,) I proposed attending her to the next dress ball at the upper rooms, which was expected to be crowded with persons of the first fashion; and where——Oh what a thought was that! we should, doubtless, once more meet Adelaide and Emma, but, alas! no longer ours.

I observed in Charles an attention to his wife's dress and appearance, almost amounting to fretfulness, on this evening, and readily entered into those feelings which induced him to wish for a triumph, -because he could not get a better thing; but I read sufficient misery in that wish, to determine *me* never to give my hand, whilst my heart remained dubious as to its preference. In my father's case, I had witnessed much happiness, where there was, on *his* side, perhaps, but little love; but then there was *that* to which, perhaps, all married love must come at last, a perfect friendship, exalted esteem, tender and reciprocal confidence, and similarity of taste, habit, and pursuit, together with equality of virtue and religion; but I had my

doubts how far these things could unite in the couple under my immediate consideration.

In the press and bustle of a crowded night at a Bath ball, it is not easy for even a tall man to distinguish the objects of his search; and my eyes wandered round, "seeking rest, and finding none," till I found myself an object of even more attraction than the two beauteous and rival brides: the principal injury I had received on the night of my engagement with the ruffians, had been in the tendon of my left arm, and which I had therefore worn in a sling since then, and this pointed me out in the rooms. As I was turning round to the door, intending to get my servant to divest me of this medium to notoriety, I heard the voice of that Mrs. Bellington who had seen me as I have mentioned, say—"There he goes; but, Heavens! how pale he looks! how different from the moment when I first beheld him, like the Dardan boy, fresh from the fight, and glowing with the bloom of Mars!"

“ Who is he ? ” said a voice that thrilled through every vein, and told me, ere I met her eye, it could be only Adelaide.

For a moment I stood root-bound to the spot, vexed and surprised to find myself deprived, at one single look, of all that courage I had been vainly mustering so long : but against whom had I been mustering it ? the mild, the virtuous, the gentle Adelaide—*she* who had equal claims on my honour and my love ; she whose breast was the abode of every benignant feeling, and who had a right to expect the renewal of those addresses her lips had only flatteringly postponed till the return of her father.

These thoughts shot like lightning through my mind, and propelled my steps towards her : just as I had begun, in hurried accents, to pay the common compliments, a genteel young man claimed the promised honour of her hand, and I was thus called to recollect my own situation. I collected myself, and returned to my sister, who was fanning herself violently, and

complaining of the heat: as the youngest bride, she took precedence of Mrs. Campbell, and, of course, I led her to the top; and I observed my brother, for a moment, glance over both, as if he felt confident that Harriet would attract more admiration; and his conclusion was just, for Emma had not been sufficiently inured to the gaze of the multitude, to enjoy the self-possession requisite for doing her graces justice; she did not smile as she was wont; and the matron air she assumed could not sit easy on so young a bride.

Charles danced with lady Lucy Seymour, a fine girl, with whom I had felt some desire to flirt, and all reasonable encouragement to it; but whenever I looked at Charles, and witnessed the real sorrow struggling with the affected cheerfulness of his countenance, I learned to restrain this desire, lest it should lead to consequences which I was convinced would have been fatal to my peace. But I am likewise convinced, that if I had discerned, in one look or action of Adelaide's, the least

disposition to coquetry, I should, at all hazards, have returned the same treatment, and, in spite of my reason and resolution, have been led into the very snare which, of all others, I dreaded—such is the weakness of youth.

The second dance called, was one in which each lady is, by turns, led down the dance by two gentlemen, a considerable way; when Emma took the hand of Charles and her own partner, for this purpose, she was evidently exceedingly affected, and I was almost afraid she would faint, whilst the trepidation I witnessed in Charles absolutely shocked me; but my mind was recalled from noticing them, by a faint sigh from Harriet, who sunk lifeless against the person nearest her in the dance; but I sprung forward in time to prevent her reaching the ground.

Though such accidents are by no means uncommon in these crowded rooms, yet noticing, as I had done, the emotions of two people, once so dear to each other, and now divided by the most awful of all

barriers, I could not have the slightest doubt, but that the unhappy bride had made the same distressing, and, to her, heart-rending observation; and my heart was penetrated with the sincerest pity, and I felt, that if I could ever hope to win so tender a regard, she who felt it could not fail to be dear to me; and I must do Charles the justice to observe, that whatever might have been his sensations during the minutes when he held the hand of his once-idolized Emma, his expressions of alarm and tenderness for Harriet did no less honour to his sense of quick propriety, than to the feelings of his heart. He evidently thought with me, that the accident was owing, at least, as much to mental inquietude, as to the heat to which it was attributed; and determined not to expose either her to farther sufferings, or himself to distress, he insisted on accompanying her home, though she assured him, the moment she was able, that she would return into the room. I encouraged him, by

my looks, to persist in this resolution ; and had the satisfaction, at length, to place Harriet in his arms, and see them drive home together—and my heart whispered a hope, that my brother might yet be blest, in the restoration of virtue and peace.

An officer, who had been near us in the dance, and had paid great attention to Mrs. Beaumarris when she fainted, having drawn off her gloves, held them in his hand, but had not found an opportunity of presenting them till she was in the carriage, when he offered them to *me*, along with a smelling-bottle his servant had procured ; when they had driven off, I turned round to express anew my sense of his humane courtesy, to which he replied, by saying—“ Captain Campbell cannot be more gratefully employed, than in offering any service to a friend of Mr. Sedgewood’s.”

Brave, generous, and excellent young man, under any other name, how would my heart have expanded to have met the offered friendship, which illumined thy open countenance ! but, alas ! my heart

shrunk from him who had robbed my brother of his bride; and in doing that, had apparently shut out all hopes of happiness for myself, since every feeling of honest pride revolted from the idea of enabling sir Edward Atwood to refuse two branches of the same family.

I am persuaded, that in the short and hurried acknowledgments I made to captain Campbell, my countenance wore more of sorrow than of anger, from the look of painful sympathy with which he regarded me: we returned to the room, but I was ill able to sport on the light fantastic toe; and lady Lucy, with great justice, complained that I made her a duller partner than the new-made benedict had been; for, alas! I had not learnt, like Charles, to disguise my feelings or stifle emotions, and nature spoke her sufferings in my features—to be near Adelaide, to pass her in the dance, to see her surrounded by many admirers, and know her singled out by a man of rank, of pleasing person, and who had the sanction of those parents who had

already succeeded in weaning her sister's affections from a young man whom I had ever considered in the light of a being it was impossible to rival, presented such an assemblage of confused and distressing ideas, that it was impossible to counteract their pressure; and I was almost glad that I was enabled to complain of the pain in my arm, as a reason for the contraction of my features.

Lady Lucy, with most officious zeal, insisted upon doing something that should contribute to my comfort; and whilst standing in the tea-room with her, I happened to cast my eyes towards the door, on the entrance of a party, and encountered the eyes of Adelaide, cast upon me with a glance of such tender compassion, I could almost have said, such *melting fondness*, that my whole bosom, for a moment, glowed with ecstatic delight, and scarcely could I refrain from bursting through every impediment, and throwing myself at her feet—"She pities me," cried I internally; "dear angel, she is still the same tender,

amiable being she was; still my own, my faithful Adelaide; and whatever may be the tyranny of her parental bondage, her heart yet lingers after those dear remembered scenes which linked our fates irrevocably together."

Alas! while my soul, beaming through my eyes, blest the beautiful vision, which had in a moment changed the colour of my fate, it vanished from my sight, and I was again left to the wretched turmoil of acting pleasure. To my great consolation, the ball was over, and I flew to my pillow, to dream of Adelaide, and catch again the beam which had rekindled hope in my bosom.

CHAP. V.

THE result of my reflections became a determination to quit Bath immediately, to throw all the feelings of my heart before

my father, and entreat him to aid me in obtaining a woman whom I felt to be so necessary for my happiness, and whom I flattered myself did not regard me with indifference; but who might be lost to me for ever, if I longer omitted to pay her those devoirs which, as an individual, she had a right to expect from me, however blamable the conduct of her family had been towards my brother.

Agreeably with this resolution, I joined my new sister at her breakfast-table, where I found Mrs. Eldricke had arrived before me, and was listening to a long detail from Mrs. Beaumarris, respecting her establishment in London, while Charles looked over the morning papers. Numbers of inquiries were made, during our meal, after the health of the lady; and after it was over, Mrs. Beaumarris went to her boudoir, to answer a note or two from the most anxious of her friends; at the same time requesting Mrs. Eldricke would inspect her dress for the next ball. When the ladies had left the room, I observed—

“That Mrs. Beaumarris’s ideas of her London establishment were on a very extensive scale, I thought.”

“Yes,” said Charles, with a motion between a yawn and a sigh, “she is inclined to be cursedly extravagant; but I have nothing else to *give* her, you know; Theodore.”

My heart ached for them both, for I felt how poorly such complacency could reconcile the heart of a tender wife to the want of those proofs of love *love* only can supply; and I grieved for the husband likewise, who was obliged to make this tacit compromise with his conscience, for the deficiencies of his affection: still I saw propriety of conduct equally necessary to both in such a case; and I ventured to point out to Charles, that the very circumstance he hinted at should induce him to be more particularly anxious to secure every blessing within his reach to his wife, of which *security of property* was the greatest, and this I apprehended was easily in his power, as she was so fondly attached

to him, that I was certain any intimation of his wishes would secure him every attention he wanted in this respect.

Charles shook his head, saying—"This was not the case with fashionable wives."

"Are you talking treason?" said Mrs. Eldricke, returning as he uttered the last words, with a smile that ill concealed the pang beneath; "remember it is high treason for the sons of Hymen to tell school tales."

"My dear madam, he has scarcely yet arrived at 'three weeks after marriage,' and cannot have had one dispute as to the diamond and club trump; so you may be assured he tells no tales, for the best of all reasons, having none to tell."

"A great deal may, nevertheless, be told in three weeks, three *little* weeks," said Mrs. Eldricke, with ill-suppressed agony, for the tears actually glistened in her eyes; but she rallied her spirits, and said, she had been desired, by the colonel, to plant herself in that room; for as he knew major and Mrs. Wallingford were coming,

to Bath, and would most probably call on Mrs. Beaumarris, he wished *her* to be present, that she might form an acquaintance with the lady, as he hoped that her influence, in conjunction with the bride's, might induce lady Llanberry to receive her daughter Wallingford into favour.

I expressed my sincere wishes that this benevolent design might take effect, and gave the colonel great credit for his intentions. Whilst I was speaking, Mrs. Eldricke was sent for by Harriet, to give her opinion on a set of pearls she was trying on; as she left the room, I inquired of Charles if he had any acquaintance with the Wallingfords?

“None,” he replied; adding carelessly, “but 'tis my comfort to know, that I added to theirs, by promoting him: if Harriet would have given the money she is, at this moment, throwing away on baubles she cannot want, to their little boy, she would have pleased me much better. But I have no right to the privilege of preaching; my own follies have deprived me of

it. Come, will you go to the rooms? I wish to match you, at billiards, against Willmot, and your unlucky bruising-match has hitherto prevented me."

"I will attend you, but cannot promise to play."

As I spoke, my servant entered with a note, very curiously folded, and said the lady ordered her footman not to return without an answer.

"Ha! ha! my sentimental brother," cried Charles, with a forced laugh, "where are you caught tripping?"

"If I *were* caught, Charles, would you laugh?"

"No, by my soul, Theodore!" cried he, rushing out of the room with an expression of horror in his features.

My heart pursued him with a bitter sigh—"This," said I, "is the interior declaration of a man of fashion. Alas! that it should ever become that of my brother! of him who——" but I dared not contemplate; so I opened my note, and read—

“ SIR,

“ As I find you were at the ball last night, I feel impatient to pay you my personal acknowledgments; but being prevented doing it, both by propriety, (you being a single man,) and likewise from remaining indisposition, I beg the favour of you to call upon *me*; and that you will give a line to the bearer, saying when I may expect that pleasure.

I am your truly obliged servant,

M. MONTAGUE.

Circus, Tuesday morning.”

“ Montague! *Montague!*” said I, “surely this is lady Sedgewood’s relation; but why she should clap her claws on me, I know not, unless it be for the pleasure of scratching me, according to family usage. I will, however, call on her in the way to the rooms:” so leaving a message to my brother, purporting that I would meet him there, and ordering my man to be prepared for a sudden journey, I walked out

with the note in my hand, and, in a few moments, found myself in Mrs. Montague's parlour, if such the menagerie I entered could be deemed; for the moment I obtruded, my ears were stunned with the outrageous barking of two Italian greyhounds, the chatterings of a monkey, the violent vociferations of an offended parrot, and, what was almost equally discordant in such an ill-sorted combination, the singing of two large cages of canaries. Absolutely stunned, and severely repenting my complaisance, I stepped back into the passage, and should certainly have made a speedy retreat, if the lady herself had not entered the same moment, and, in her lean and withered form, and a huge patch on her eye, exhibited the very person I had rescued from the demolished chair. I remembered, that the morning after that adventure, my man told me, the "*old lady* had sent to inquire after me, and that *I* had inquired how *she* was; to which he answered, rather better; and that, after this, he had took upon himself to settle

the ceremonial of messages; and not thinking the cards of an ancient maiden worth saving, had committed them to the only flames they were ever likely to raise;" so that I had nearly left the place without seeing a person of whom I had scarcely any recollection, except what was occasioned by the ridiculous terror she exhibited of seeing me undressed.

I was, in my own mind, thoroughly convinced, that the poor woman owed her share of the accident to *me*, as the villains had nearly confessed as much; and in reply to her professions of gratitude, I told her what I believed to be the truth; but she was determined to believe, "the villains had assaulted her for the *worst* of purposes," she said; "and that I was a *hero*, sent by Heaven for her deliverance;" and as she was very deaf, I did not dispute either the purpose or the mission any further, and only bowed to the compliment.

A tall, stately figure of a maid, fit companion for a vestal mistress, entered at the

moment I retrod the parlour-threshold, and with amazing celerity, threw dark cloths over the birds cages, biscuits to the monkey, sugar to the parrot, and sweetbread to the dogs; and silence being thus speedily restored, I ventured for a moment to take a seat, though the favourites still eyed me with malice, as an intruder, and formed a phalanx round their mistress, which would have effectually secured her from all the attempts which I might have been tempted to make; and I could scarcely refrain from reassuring them, that

“ Whatever my wishes might be for the flesh,
I was not very partial to bones.”

But to this very moment, I must do the whole tribe, not omitting the Guinea-pigs under my chair, nor the nest of white mice in the corner, the justice to say, that their enmity was well founded, since it is a fact, that I *did* see such looks of admiration, such smiles of delight, pass between the lady and her maid, as they glanced upon me, that in despite of all my modes-

ty, (and I hope, my dear madam, you will not dispute my claims to more than most handsome young fellows at two-and-twenty,) I was compelled to believe I had made a conquest; and therefore it would have been in my power, during the *first* blush of the affair, to have put every surrounding rival to flight; however endeared by long friendship, or similarity of disposition, as it is well known that love is a terrible disorder in an old subject.

Having fully assured myself, from the language of the eyes, which, in all love cases, are allowed to be the best interpreters of the heart, that, like the great Cæsar, I had seen and conquered the icy heart of Mrs. Margaret Montague, I did not stop to consider, whether it was by my politeness in offering assistance to her, or my valour in avenging her; whether I was indebted to my silk stockings, my whiskers, or the unfortunate stripping, which added Humphrey Clinker's charms to the rest of my claims, but fairly considered how to

make the greatest advantage of my good fortune, a case too common to all men.

To effect this purpose, I spoke of my mother-in-law, and her charming little daughter, whose society I declared paramount to that of any other of the sweet little animals around us: but though the old lady acknowledged her relationship, and expressed some pleasure that Emily Montague had married so well, I found her all ice as to the charming *little* Emily: she observed, that children were well enough when they were not spoiled; but that lady Sedgewood had herself been wretchedly indulged by her poor, weak father, and was a mere romping rattle when she knew her, with more tricks than the monkey, and more talk than the parrot; and there was little hope that her child should be better than herself—that her brother had offended her, by throwing away her birthday gift on the turn of a dice; and since then she had determined to have nothing to do with any of the Montagues, a reso-

lution she was not likely to change, for her dislikes were as unchangeable as her affections.

Vexed to find my power in melting the flinty heart of this ancient maiden was much less than I supposed, I rose to depart; but she overwhelmed me with so many professions of regard, and told me, with a look so languishingly sweet, that she rejoiced her niece had changed a name she no longer loved, into one for which she had the *truest* regard, that my hopes revived; and I left her, with an assurance that I would not visit Bath again without seeing her.

When I joined Charles at the rooms, he was engaged in play, so that it was some minutes before I could speak to him; and when I told him that I was going to set out for London, it appeared to awake so many distressing recollections in him, that I agreed to postpone my journey, at least till the morrow, clearly perceiving, that if I left him in his present frame of mind,

he would plunge more fully into the destructive amusement in which he was engaged; and that, to a certain degree, my presence restrained not only him, but several around him; and I thought the sacrifice of my own desire cheaply purchased by so excellent an end—perhaps, too, a certain pleasure, inseparable from the idea of being *near* Adelaide, added to the ease with which I acquiesced in the decision.

I dined on this day with lord Llanberry, who was going to leave Bath in the morning, and had a party of gentlemen, most of whom were strangers to me. The conversation frequently turned upon sir Edward Atwood and his family; and I felt a degree of mortification, at hearing him spoken of in the very highest terms, as a man of urbanity, liberal, polite, and of unsullied honour. To which one speaker added, that the licentiousness of his late brother's conduct had, *to be sure*, made him very particular in the choice of all with whom he associated; his own early marriage with a most amiable woman,

whom he ever fondly loved, had likewise contributed to render him somewhat unbending in his notions of morality; so that, as the world went, he might be considered too fastidious; but this was the only fault he had, if it could be called one.

This, however painfully, accounted to me for the rejection of Charles; and I was glad that I had remained in Bath, long enough to obtain an elucidation which I thought could not fail to prove satisfactory to my father, in one sense, though it would oblige him, on the other, to make inquiries into the conduct of Charles, and learn from thence what those errors had been, which led the prudent father of Emma to reject him. The thought of what he would have suffered, had he found the pugilistic procurer at his son's breakfast-table, had he known the circumstance which drove that son to marry Harriet Beaumaris, his intimate friendship with a man of notorious libertinism, and, above all, the

whisper which, in various channels, had reached my ear, of a supposed affair of gallantry with the countess of Ripondale, all crowded on my mind; and with all the racking solicitude I felt, I found it impossible so to plead my own cause, as to tear open my father's heart, by exposing the errors of his son; and I determined to wait a little time longer in Bath, to cultivate, were it again offered, some acquaintance with captain Campbell, and, by occasionally shewing myself to Adelaide, keep alive the memory of our acquaintance in her heart; but, above all other things, I flattered myself that some chance would bring me into the presence of lady Atwood, who, I hoped, must still feel some regard for every branch of a family who had treated her with so much tenderness, and enlivened her solitude by every attention ingenious affection could devise; but her silence still lay heavy at my heart, and I was convinced had done quite as much towards irritating my father, as even the letter which had rejected Charles—a

rejection which, he observed, might have been couched differently, without offending truth; as the marriage of Emma followed so soon after, there could be little doubt but she was engaged at the time; and, of course, there was as little necessity as humanity in glancing at any other motive for refusal.

Although I thus resolved to watch my soul's treasure with the eyes of Argus, yet my dread of seeing her in conversation with another, or of exposing my weakness to the gaze of the multitude, almost deprived me of the power I enjoyed to feast my eyes to aching, on that form so dear, and so long refused to their ardent and supplicating glance; and such were my tremors, that the moment I saw her enter any public walk, I was obliged to leave it; and when I heard their party was at a ball, I declined going; and such was the effect this state of incertitude and restlessness had upon my health, that Charles now repented that he had persuaded me to stay, and proposed we should all return to London,

a measure in which his lady readily concurred, as she had exhausted the little world of Bath, and was impatient to exhibit herself in the metropolis, under all the advantages of bridal paraphernalia.

CHAP. VI.

Deem'st thou I tremble for my life?

Sir Childe, I am not so weak,

But thinking on an absent wife,

Will blanch a faithful cheek.

LORD BYRON.

THE last evening we spent in Bath, I remained in my lodgings, intending to write to lady Sedgewood, with a box of toys I had purchased for Emily, and having finished my little arrangement, was preparing for bed, when Wilson informed me that a gentleman had just alighted from a post-chaise, who requested to speak with me, saying he was a stranger, and, there-

fore, did not send his name, but his business was of importance.

I immediately returned to my sitting-room, where a person in a travelling dress was walking hastily backward and forward, with the air of one much agitated; he stopt at my entrance, saying—"Sir, my name is Wallingford; I am called instantly to join my regiment for the Peninsula; I have not an hour to lose, for happening to be down here, I lost twenty hours in receiving my orders, and every one is now of the last importance."

He stopped; I was at a loss to comprehend his meaning, but I believe my looks sufficiently explained my wishes, for grasping my hand with fervency, he cried—"My wife, sir, is a young and beautiful woman, without friends; for *I* have no female relation, and her own have deserted her."

"Pardon me, major Wallingford; the distress of the moment has made you forget my sister and *hers*, Mrs. Beaumarris."

"No, no," said he, mournfully shak-

ing his head, “ Harriet is no protectress for Eliza ; the house where Eldricke may enter, my wife must *never* see : in short, sir, I am come to cast this treasure of my soul on you ; stranger as I am to you personally, I yet know you *well*—*Can you—will you* accept the awful deposit ? ”

“ I *can*, and I *will* do any thing you desire me ; nay, more, I *dare* charge myself with the care of my lovely cousin : but you are not aware that some lady’s eye must ”—

Again he grasped my hand, and the tears coursed freely down his manly cheek ; shaking them off, he exclaimed—
“ A British soldier will find moments even for *these* intruders, when he leaves a wife and child surrounded by the evils I have reason to apprehend ; but he is not less a soldier for that, be assured—this is an hour of no common suffering. I am come to you a stranger, to claim the greatest act of kindness old and long-tried friendship could bestow ; it *is* that you will yourself take Eliza into the country, and place her

somewhere under the eye of your parents; but do not lose sight of her till she is so placed. I could not thus presume, if I had not the strongest reason for the requisition."

His agitation amounted to agony at these words.

"Then, sir, on the honour of a Sedgewood, be assured that I will instantly convey your charge to the care of my aunt, Mrs. Barbara Sedgewood, in case the health of my mother-in-law should render *her* unable to receive her; and be assured, that between our house and the other, your treasure shall be preserved, I trust, as free from reproach, as safe from pollution; but alas! the misfortunes of one very dear to me is a fatal proof that the 'purest may not escape calumny.'"

"Your promise is enough," said the husband emphatically; "and may God bless you for the relief you have administered!"

"May *he* so deal with me as I shall deal

with those pledges of your trust!" said I, devoutly.

"But, major," continued I, "you must excuse *me*, in turn, taking the liberty of an old friend; I have made you an offer of my heart, my help, and as my uncle Toby says, 'a brother officer should have the offer of a *purse* too;' I hope you will pardon my taking the liberty of intreating you to use mine."

"Thank you; I have no need of it, or I would not hesitate to intrude upon you; it is my consolation to owe no man a shilling, and to have left my Eliza sufficient for her immediate expences; but I have one bitter recollection on money matters—to Eldricke (whose motives even at the time I suspected), to Eldricke, against whom I have sought your protection for my wife, I owe that promotion which has enabled me to support Eliza like a gentlewoman; that is *now* the only gail that mingles with my parting sorrows."

"Then be that removed," said I eagerly, "for it was my brother who furnished the

means; though Eldricke might probably appear in it, for I fear he has too much to do in all his concerns."

"I fear so too," said major Wallingford; "but you have removed a mountain from my breast. I must now fly to Eliza—I must bid her taste this drop of honey in our draught of gall."

In a quarter of an hour I followed the major to his lodgings. Never shall I forget the sorrow and the noble confidence blended in his face, when he placed his wife and son beneath my care; but he was unable to speak, and rushing out of the house, he threw himself into a chaise and four, and was out of sight in a moment.

"Consolation," says Sterne, "ever comes too soon or too late;" and I felt it impossible to bestow any that could tend to sooth the agony of such a moment as this; for little as I had seen of captain Wallingford, I was convinced the woman who was attached to him at all, must feel that attachment very strongly; there was an air of manly tenderness, of affectionate sup-

port in him, that realized all we look for in the protector of feeble and dependent woman ; and to part with such a husband, on such a fatal errand, was indeed a trial of no common magnitude. Feeling as I did, I thought it was better to leave nature to her own course, unrestrained by my presence, and was silently departing, when Mrs. Wallingford commanded herself sufficiently to inform me—" That as she was utterly unable to go to bed, she wished to depart at a very early hour, in the morning, it being the express desire of her dear Wallingford, that she should not, if possible, remain behind him an hour."

I then recollected the extreme earnestness with which major Wallingford had requested me never to lose sight of his wife ; and after giving due praise to her for the exertion, I told her that in two hours I would be with her again, with two post-chaises, but besought her to consider what was due to her own health, and that of her infant son ; and, in the mean time,

I begged she would endeavour to compose herself, and provide every comfort necessary to travelling in such an inclement season, remembering that in preserving herself and her child, she proved most effectually her love for him she lamented.

She promised obedience, but it was with a fresh flood of tears; and I withdrew to expedite my journey, and write to my brother and father, whom it was still my intention to see in town as soon as possible. As I went out of the house, I perceived a man wrapped in a horseman's coat, whom I was persuaded had been listening at the window; I kept my eye upon him, and finding he dogged me, I turned down a different street, and then running quick, reached my lodgings unseen by him: this circumstance, however, taught me caution; and having wrote to Charles, &c. I sent Wilson in the first chaise for Mrs. Wallingford, with a note, informing her I would take charge of her maid and his nurse for the first stage, and begging her to lose no time in taking

Wilson's protection, as he was well armed. He was at least as old as her father, and though a truly worthy man, was marked by nature with a most unfortunate set of features; so that I conceived scandal herself could not impute blame to my fair cousin, with such a cecisbeo; and I congratulated myself on my caution, for when the chaise in which I called stopped at the door, the maid being quite ready, stepped in unattended by any one, further than the door, and said to the postboy, with somewhat of a discontented air—“Soh, I see its fare ye well, and thank ye, when peeples paid; its all over with civility; every body com'd to the door wi mistress, but nobody comes wi I; and even that curoosity man as stood in the streets all the time peepin about be gon now.”

Having nothing else to do, the babe that slept quietly by me naturally brought into my mind the hour when I set out with poor little Emily, to give a proof of ready obedience to the wishes of my Adclaide—

mine! alas, not mine! yet, why not mine? she was not another's yet; surely that pitying eye had told me she would not be another's. "Oh, how long will it be," thought I, "ere I throw myself at my father's feet, and intreat him to remove the barrier between us!" it was true, he had not positively forbade my addressing Adelaide—he had not interdicted my correspondence with *her* father; and there was undoubtedly something in the manners of captain Campbell, which communicated the idea of my personal interest in the family: but then, could I unite with those who rejected Charles, who had silently and coldly withdrawn from a family, who had never known a pang so severe as they had inflicted, nor a misfortune like that they had caused? Could I add to the mortification my father had received in one son, the possibility of its being renewed in another? the thing was *impossible*—but to resign Adelaide was a pang beyond even that.

Thus reasoning, it will be readily con-

ceived that my journey was a melancholy one on both sides; but I hope the ladies will do me the justice to believe I did my utmost to render it tolerable to the unhappy wife, who only allowed herself to sleep one night upon the road.

I preceded her to the Park, where, to my great concern, I found lady Sedgewood much worse than I had left her, being afflicted with a low nervous complaint, which had reduced her exceedingly; and although I perceived she wanted the society of my father or myself, I was aware that the introduction of a stranger would be distressing to her; I therefore flew to aunt Barbara's, and found her much as usual at this season of the year, an invalid, but enjoying her usual unbroken spirits and temper, and able to give orders for the reception of her guests, when conducted to her; and had the satisfaction to observe, in a short time, that Mrs. Wallingford found herself much happier than she had dared to expect; and that the sorrow she had felt at parting from her hus-

band had been aided much from the idea of being banished into Yorkshire, to be immured with an old maid, or shut up with a country gentlewoman.

Instead of flying to London as I had proposed, I now found it my duty to wait my father's return at home, for as I did not understand lady Sedgewood's complaint, I could not see her suffer so much, without believing it was dangerous; I therefore wrote to the baronet, intreating his return; and endeavoured to beguile the intervening time, by dividing it between my mother-in-law and the stranger.

The season of the year almost excluded my aunt Barbara's accustomed visitants, and she was always so much an invalid in winter, as to keep her room the greatest part of the day; so that in common charity I was led to spend many of those hours with my fair cousin, who having no other person to whom she could complain, very naturally watched for my coming with anxiety, and parted from me with regret. The first subjects of conversation

were the probable length of time that must elapse ere she could receive a letter from Wallingford, *his* probable route, *his* dangers, and *his* success; from these subjects we got to more general ones; *my* brother and *her* sister were discussed—colonel Eldricke and his lady. We then talked on books, music, the pleasures of the country in spring, which I pourtrayed with the fluency of an enthusiast. Altogether our chit-chat became agreeable, and even necessary to both; for if any caller interrupted my usual visit, I certainly found myself disappointed and uncomfortable, and remarked an air of great vexation, or pale regret, shade the fine features of Mrs. Wallingford, when I made my appearance after those delays, which necessarily curtailed my stay: in fact, though we were both sorrowful, we were not so wretched as we had been; such is ever the effect of intercourse between minds suffering under congenial sorrows; but it might perhaps be better in many cases for people to keep their troubles, than

to part with them under certain circumstances.

When major Wallingford, in the most awful and confiding manner, placed his wife beneath my care, I really felt at the moment so much more concern for *him* than *her*, that it was rather from a regard for him than her that I undertook a trust, which appeared to be one of trouble and delicacy, as far as regarded me, and of infinite importance to *him*; but did not connect the most distant idea of danger, as far as regarded myself, wrapt, as I felt myself, not only in the panoply of honour, but of love; and had any little sylph whispered in my ear at that moment—"Though your heart cannot wander, nor your principles swerve, yet it is necessary to *remember* the senses will stray, when the temptation is strong," my indignant spirit would have answered this little sylph in the language of Hazael—"Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" and yet it came to pass that I looked, and looked, till I found out that Mrs. Wallingford was the

finest woman I had ever seen ; that her hand was of all others the softest and whitest I had ever touched ; and that the expression of her eyes was at some moments irresistibly fascinating ; and, altogether, though her mind had less cultivation and less native energy than some I had been acquainted with, yet her company in the country, in the month of February, was amazing soothing to a love-sick mind.

“ Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall,” was the wise suggestion of the most enlightened of all our teachers, save his divine master ; and I would have young men, situated as I was, above all things avoid pluming themselves on the strength of being wiser and better than I was, lest they should err further than I did.

My father finding from lady Sedgewood’s own account, that he might safely stay a short time longer in London, delayed his return during the agitation of a material question in the House ; that *done*,

he hastened down; and had the satisfaction of finding lady Sedgewood slowly regaining strength, and expecting much from the advancing spring; and his son in better spirits, on the whole, than he had enjoyed for nearly two years.

As soon as possible, my father paid his respects to Mrs. Wallingford; we found her reading a letter from the major, who felicitated himself much on finding she was under the honourable protection of Mrs. Sedgewood, where, he observed, even calumny could not reach her. I saw my father smile; and on her concluding the paragraph, I begged to know what occasioned him to look so droll? he replied, by putting part of an old newspaper in my hand, which he had preserved in his pocket-book, and in which he had marked the following article:—

“ We are confidently informed, that the wife of a gallant officer, who joined the late embarkation, scarcely allowed the tear which bedewed her cheek at parting to be dry, ere she deserted her only child,

by eloping in a chaise-and-four with a hoary seducer, as unlovely in his person as depraved in his conduct : what adds to the unhappy notoriety of the case is this circumstance, that the lady is the daughter of a nobleman high in office, and married for love eighteen months ago the man she has now forsaken. *O tempora, O mores !*"

I could not possibly help laughing at the cruel epithets given to poor Wilson, and now perfectly recollected the man whom I had seen listening, and perceived he was determined not to be quite robbed of his prey ; but I could not help thinking he was only the agent of another ; for though daily papers, by undertaking to cram the insatiate maw of the public, do necessarily engage to make, invent, and propagate many positive lies, and still more mutilated and improved truths, which are, in fact, the worst of *all lies*, yet I could not suppose they kept regular eaves-droppers in pay for the purpose ; besides, I knew it was the London method of "saying things to one's neighbours,"

and I thought it was possible that revenge had suggested this method of distressing the parties alluded to ; for I no longer doubted but that major Wallingford had the best reasons for that suspicion which preyed upon his mind at parting, since I could conceive it but too possible, that a libertine might form designs upon that beauty which a moralist found somewhat too potent ; for though it was the ornament of a *virtuous* woman, in the common acceptation of the term, yet Mrs. Wallingford's virtue was not armed with the severity of wisdom, or the firm purity which springs from religion, and the arduous situation in which she was placed called for every assistance ; so that it was indeed necessary that a wife so bereaved should be supported on every side.

My father would have intreated lord Llanberry to have received a daughter, whose choice, though against his wishes, could not be deemed a great degradation ; but in his late residence, he had discovered that his lordship had effected all he had

long been desiring in our family; and was, therefore, little likely to attend to his entreaty, or submit to his remonstrance.

The ridiculous extravagance and bombastic parade of Mrs. Beaumarris, on arriving in London, had disgusted my father so much, that he could not forbear expressing his feelings to lady Llanberry on the subject; and the reception she had given his paternal fears was such, as to assure him, that the follies of her daughter would be rather supported than repressed by *her*, a conduct which naturally disgusted him.

My father, in relating this circumstance, added, that he had forced himself to visit Charles's house in every leisure moment he could find, with a view of impressing on his mind the propriety of purchasing an estate, on which he might reside for a considerable period of the year—a plan he had suggested from the first period of his attaining his fortune, but that he could not yet say whether his suggestion would

be attended to: he expressed himself surprised at the remarks I had made in my letters from Bath, respecting the extreme attachment I had witnessed in Harriet for her husband; declaring that he had watched her, not only with the anxiety a father must feel for the happiness of his son, but with the predisposition to believe her love, which I had inspired, but yet was not able to perceive any symptom of it. "On the contrary," he said, "I saw two instances which manifested such decided deficiency of affection, not to say unkindness, that I cannot allow myself to believe that Charles has found any thing in his wife but a *fine woman*, which is a thing that will never bind a man of sentiment long. The first was, that when he had got so bad a cold as really to confine him to his room, and lay so much in his head and eyes, that he could neither read, nor any way amuse himself, Harriet not only mustered a large party, and went to the opera, but brought home a mob of people to

supper; thus destroying his hour of rest, after refusing him consolation. The other occasion was this:—I went there one evening, when they told me they should have a very small party, and found indeed only twenty people; they were all at cards. Harriet lost, and was extremely angry; Charles, hurt with her petulance, yet disguised his vexation, and supplied her liberally with money: she *lost* again; and the winning party breaking up to go home, she stood with me and several others round Charles's table; he was unfortunate, and paid a considerable sum to colonel Eldricke. On rising, he addressed her in playful condolence on their mutual ill-fortune, and she replied, in a tone of triumph, and a look, which said more than words, and proved that she rejoiced in his ill-luck. Ah, Thé, I know something of women; different characters have different ways of evincing tenderness; but depend upon it, our poor Charles does not meet it in *any* way: either Harriet cannot love at *all*, or she has not found the

object yet; and that boy, who, to his mother's matchless beauty, adds all the finer susceptibilities of her nature, 'wastes his love upon the desert air.' God forbid that *your* heart should be thus cast desolate; I think it would almost break my own to see it, Theodore."

These words were uttered in a tone so mournful, that although it seemed the very moment when I could have best pleaded my own cause with respect to Adelaide, I could not bear to mention a subject which could lead to a mortifying one, and I therefore sought only to console him, and repeated what I had observed of Harriet's fainting at the ball.

"Alas, Thé!" said my father, with a languid smile, "your observation only goes to confirm my own fears. Harriet was overcome by the heat, and *other* causes. I thought the marriage came on suddenly at last, but naturally imputed it to that of Emma having taken place. God knows how it is, but I cannot help fearing there was another cause less honourable to

the parties; and I have often thought of poor Charles's exposition of love some years ago, when he said it was 'like a fever followed by a consumption,' for that seems precisely the way in which his lady took the disorder; I fear he has not caught the infection from her, and I am certain she does not take the way to inoculate him, poor fellow."

My father walked away as he spoke, with an air of such melancholy expression in his face, that my heart was deeply penetrated with sorrow, both for him and the object of his solicitude; and I determined that I would not intrude my cares upon him till he had began to taste the sweets of domestic comfort again, and in the recovered looks of his lady, and the prattle of his youngest child, regained such a degree of comfort, as would enable him to talk over my affairs with composure.

"But are you certain, sir, that you did not owe your patience to Mrs. Wallingford?"

Upon my word, madam, I do not believe, in the present instance, that I *did*, for the moment my father came home, he alone seemed to claim my first cares, to occupy my first and *dearest* attentions; besides, I had heard a letter read from the captain, in which he *thanked* me, and I had seen those fascinating orbs, which had so impertinently glanced through my veins, for no purpose but to dance 'the devil among the pulses,' swimming in delight as they traced the well-remembered characters of her wedded and beloved lord; and you may depend upon it, that the sight of my father, who was virtue embodied in the noblest form that you or I ever beheld it in, (I don't say the most beautiful mind), and the sight of her eyes so worthily employed was quite equal to restoring my feelings to their proper current, for they never run far enough out of the right line to make me sensible of their error, till after their restoration; nor would it have been necessary to have mentioned this retrograde motion, if I had

not been determined, from the moment we sat down together, to show all the inside of my heart, with the simplicity of a child, and the humility of a Christian, to you. But now the ice was broke—the sun shone—the baronet was come back—his lady was something better; and all the Fairborough world was set moving, and “what did she say to her neighbour?”

“The baronet is prodigiously *set up*, poor man, to be sure, with this wedding of Charles’s to lord Llanberry’s daughter; but, dear heart, as far as I can find, the honourable Miss Beaumarris has not any fortune at all; and this sister of hers, who is come to Mrs. Barbara’s, they say is as poor as Job; she’s monstrous handsome, to be sure, but beauty’s only skin deep; and if it *was*, what’s the use to a married couple, I wonder?” says Mrs. Parley.

“Poor creature,” said Mrs. Maxwell, “I’m sure my heart aches for her; ’tis a sad thing for a woman to have nothing in her pocket, if she’s ever so handsome, and it answers no end to her but getting her

ill spoke of; she's much to be pitied."

"Much to be blamed, more like," said Mrs. Dornton, drawing up her long throat; "I've no kind of patience with married women showing off in such a style to young fellows, indeed; I'm sure if I were sir Thé, I would send my son to the Antipodes, before I would let him live in the neighbourhood of such a syren; I consider her another Circe; and from all I can hear, poor Mrs. Barbara's house is become an enchanting spell to Mr. Sedgewood, elegant, unfortunate creature that he is!"

"Ridiculous!" said the younger lady Stickerton; "how can you bring yourself, Mrs. Dornton, to pity the *men* in such cases? for my part, I've no pity at all for *them* naughty creatures!"

"I condemn the bad of both sexes; and, dear heart, there are too many in the world, my lady, both men and women, that deserve no pity from your ladyship; but still there is a difference."

"A difference! aye, to be sure, and

that difference runs against the *men*; they are *positively* wicked; while the women, poor creatures, from the weakness of their frames, and the mildness of their dispositions, are only *negative* sinners at most."

Mrs. Dornton, with a sneer, and a long toss, confessed herself unable to comprehend her ladyship's distinction; whilst lady Frances Stickerton applied to Miss Julietta Robertson, to know what the beautiful Mrs. Wallingford had done amiss? adding—"I have never seen this new Circe in muslin yet."

"Oh, my lady, your ladyship has had no loss, I assure you; Mrs. Wallingford is by no means a beauty to my taste; she has great dark rolling eyes, an aquiline nose, which I think hideous, 'tis so masculine; as to her colour, one says nothing of *that*, of course, because she undoubtedly brought it from London; and most likely her lips are daubed with some similar beautifier, for they are so perfectly scarlet, as to be quite unnatural, and their form is

shocking : and as to her *hair*—Dear me, Mr. Elland, you look at me as if I said *wrong* ; I apprehend, as a married man and a clergyman, you don't make the *lips* and *hair* of a woman a matter of study ; if you *do*, of all things I should like to hear your opinion, for I think it must be quite unique."

" On the contrary, ma'am, it will be nearly the echo of the country, for it will say that Mrs. Wallingford is the handsomest woman we have seen at Fairborough the last twenty years, except the late lady Sedgewood."

" Dearsir, you forgot Mrs. Danvers and her daughters."

" Not so fast, young lady ; though a clergyman and a *married* man, you will find I have an eye and a memory for beauty, without making it a positive study ; now I maintain Mrs. Danvers was past the zenith of beauty, her daughters had not arrived at it, and the lady in question is precisely *in it*. Then as to her lips, I answer—"

“ Oh, sir, you need not enter into particulars; you are evidently partial, and I can't pretend to argue with a person of your learning; I never enter into abstruse disquisitions.”

“ But, my dear young lady, you enter into *hasty condemnations*, which are much worse things, and if I am evidently *partial*, you are by the same rule as evidently *prejudiccd*; it is therefore fair, that as lady Frances's judgment has been warped by your assertion, it should be straightened by mine, if we are at equal liberty.”

“ Undoubtedly I must hear you,” said lady Frances; “ and am the more inclined to do it, because I never listened to you on the same subject before.”

“ Well then, my lady, I maintain, that Mrs. Wallingford's mouth is formed on the finest model, as it has been transmitted to us from the ancients, the upper lip being short, the under lip pouting, protunded, and divided in the middle like a cherry; according to the idea of Sacharissa's lip, as given us by Waller, “ as if a

bee had newly stung it ;” and then as to her hair, my lady, I believe it cannot be better described than in one strong line of the late Christopher Smart’s, who, though a clergyman and a married man, speaking of a lady’s locks, says—

’Twas the hair of the ancients, ’twas classical hair;”

which conveys to my idea those flowing tresses and braided locks, which are now so happily combined in modern costume; as the ladies in that respect copy the Greeks, as their artists have transmitted them, and of which Miss Julietta’s *own* head affords a very beautiful specimen.”

“ Dear Mr. Elland, I had no idea you understood so much about heads, and beauty, and all that; I declare you have as fine a taste in them things as in books, and who would have thought it?”

“ Any body, my dear young lady, that took the trouble of looking at my wife, and judging from what she *is* now, what she *was* when her health was good seven years ago.”

This unfortunate disquisition checked the torrent that was going to overflow on the subject of Mrs. Wallingford and myself, who might have been convicted of sundry offences, such as walking arm-in-arm to church during the frost—of riding in the same carriage when the thaw came—of playing drafts and singing duets together; but at this very moment the two culprits, little Emma, and the baronet, alighted at the gates, and the whole party became all eyes, as they viewed the elegant appearance and fashionable dress of the honourable Mrs. Wallingford; but those eyes became converted to all *ears*, when lady Frances exclaimed—“ Ah! now’s my time to strike the traitor dumb! look at that young wretch, as he comes down the avenue, caressing the very child he sought to murder; now’s the very time to bring out the whole story, especially as lady Sedgewood is not here; for it would be too affecting for her to hear.”

All the *ears* now in an instant became *tongues*, and intreaties, requests, and de-

precations, flew about the room like wild-fire, till at length the good lady suffered herself to be appeased, but not till we had actually entered the house, when the party resembled an ocean, tossed about in such agitation, that it was long before the billows could subside; and it was not till the continued suavity of my father's discourse had flowed for some time, like oil poured on the tempestuous waves, that peace was restored to the undulating bosoms of the amiable assembly.

CHAP. VII.

Whenever we pretend to the prerogative of foresight, we shall be mortified with new conviction of the shortness of our views.

RAMBLER.

THE next morning, as we were relating the occurrences of the visit to lady Sedgewood, our letters were brought in; and to our astonishment, one appeared for her,

in the hand of lady Atwood, which she instantly tore open, and read as follows—

“ MY DEAR MADAM,

“ When I consider that my last was little more than a string of apologies for not writing during my long absence, I am compelled to think that your silence proceeds from not admitting them. When I recollect the high degree of affection you ever evinced for Mr. Beaumarris, I am induced to suppose that you cannot pardon the rejection sir Edward was compelled, from a regard to Emma’s happiness, to give him. Whatever may be the motive of your silence, and however it has afflicted me, I cannot again leave the kingdom without bidding you adieu, and repeating those professions of sincere attachment which I can never cease to feel for you.

“ Captain Campbell is ordered to join his regiment in Guernsey, from whence he is likely to be sent, in a very short time, to

the Peninsula; and as the health of our dear Adelaide is extremely delicate, we flatter ourselves that a warmer climate, during the three following months, will be of use to her, and therefore take the advantage of accompanying him to that island: indeed, every moment of time we pass with this excellent young man is precious, when we consider the nature of the service to which he is destined, since it unites all the worst evils of a state which abounds with many.

“That Heaven may protect you, and all most dear to you, will be ever the ardent prayer of her who must ever deem herself your obliged, as affectionate friend,

E. A. ARWOOD.
Southampton, March 1, 1808.”

To describe my emotions, as my mother read this, is impossible; Adelaide *ill*—gone out of the kingdom, and yet again presented to my view in the very way I had so long desired, was, altogether, more than

my brain could comprehend with ease, I suppose, for I clapped both my hands on my head the first moment, and ran to the window the second, to get more light on the subject.

My father took a better method, for he rung the bell, and desired Wilson, who happened to answer it, to examine separately every servant in the house, and find, if it were possible, whether any letters had been received during our absence in Scotland, which were not properly forwarded.

To this end, a general assembly was convened in the hall, where I attended; for though I should have been glad to have rode on the lightning to Southampton, and from thence breasted the billow to Guernsey, like Leander, yet I thirsted for more knowledge, and eagerly listened to Wilson's inquisition.

The groom, who brought the letters from Fairborough, swore roundly to giving them all to the cook, who undertook to give them to Mrs. Robinson; the cook declared she always either took them into

the housekeeper's room the moment she received them, or sent some of the maids with them; the maids declared they laid them on the housekeeper's table, to be re-directed; and the housekeeper declared she *did* redirect all she had received, except for the last three mornings, when the baronet had ordered them to wait, being unable to give an exact address, and expecting to reach home sooner than he did. —“ Well,” said a pert little wench, who was housemaid, “ thanks be praised, I nivver tuch'd but one sins I com'd, and that was the verry mornin his honor came frae the Islands; so I be's seafe.”

“ But did you give it him?” said I.

“ Oh dear, no, sir! 'tish't for me to gif letters to his honor: besides, we was all bussy loike; so thinks I to myself, thinks I, I'll take care o this; for it was a famos gret on; so I goes into the library, an I sticks it into a great book wi' a red cover.”

“ What book? for Heaven's sake tell me!”

“ Oh, sir, I nivver reads margents, nor

any thing else, for matter o that, being as how I nivver larn'd ; but I'll take my bibel-oath I put it seafe, if there's a hunderd pound in't ; so it's there yet, I does hope, if this'n be *it*."

Hastily following to the library, I was in a few moments in possession of the letter so long wished for—a letter which might have saved me hours of agony, and months of gloom ; which, by opening a correspondence sooner, might probably have entirely changed the fate of my brother ; and all this misery had arisen from an incident so ridiculous and so provoking, and so perfectly in character with ignorance and simplicity, and so like what at one time or other befalls every body in their lives, and is among the cross incidents nobody thinks of guarding against sufficiently, unless they have been taught to smart by some very similar accident, that, altogether, it was enough to make a man mad ; yet the relief of finding the letter rendered it impossible to be as angry as you felt you had a right to be : it was one of those

circumstances which afford you relief for an hour, but, from combination, produce regret for an age.

In this letter Mrs. Danvers informed lady Sedgewood, that she was summoned to meet the colonel, in consequence of an accident which had befallen him at the Cape of Good Hope, where he had the misfortune to break his leg, and might have lost his life, but for the courage of captain Campbell, who, proceeding with the vessel, had promised to see his family safe to Lisbon. She said, that at the time she left England, she had but too much reason to fear that the colonel would not long survive the accident; but that, through the unequalled attention, and friendly exertions of the young friend, who had devoted himself to the service of the colonel and his family, she had been enabled to endure the sufferings and fatigue to which she had been subjected, better than those who knew her could have expected; and had found the colonel at the Madeiras, but in so poor a state of health, that she had

been obliged to watch over him, with a solicitude that baffled every other care, in consequence of which she had lost the only opportunity which occurred during her stay in the island, of writing to those dear friends, whom she well knew would be anxious to know what had become of her.

She added, that captain Campbell had attached himself to her daughter Emma, with an ardour which was only too strongly seconded by the colonel, who loved him as a son; but Emma had hitherto resisted their entreaties with no common firmness, though she confessed the highest esteem for the captain, and declared she had no engagement, which sometimes interrupted the family harmony; but which she could comprehend more easily than the colonel, who thought the perfections of Heaven were united in his own favourite.

She concluded by saying, they were at present assembled round the sickbed of the colonel's brother, for whom he had ever felt a sincere regard, but whose conduct had cost him many a bitter hour; and

earnestly entreated lady Sedgewood to write to her immediately; begging, by name, kind messages from herself, and daughters, to each individual of her family.

“Now,” said lady Sedgewood playfully, as she finished this letter, “had you allowed *me*, sir Fred, to take my own way, and follow the impulse of the moment, when I was going to write to lady Atwood, all this never could have happened—do you see this?”

“*Perfectly* so; go on; I feel all you can say.”

“I have got to the end of my lecture.”

“It was short, and not sharp, Emily; yet I think it contained the only symptom of reproach that ever passed your lips since the day of our marriage.”

“*Reproach*, my love! do not call it by so harsh a name, or it will occasion *down-right reproach* to myself.”

“Fie! my Emily, you spoil me: look at Thé, and remember he is going this very moment to run across the island to

fetch a wife, and you ought not to mislead him on a subject of so much importance, lest he should rebel, when he receives lessons to establish the ‘rights of wives.’”

“Never fear him; he has *suffered* for Adelaide, and (if I may say so, without making him too vain) *she* has suffered for *him*; depend upon it, my dear, their whole lives will be the happier and better for this privation; we seldom, especially in youth, esteem, as we ought, those blessings which ‘unsought are won,’ or obtained by easy means. He who has sighed after a long-absent mistress, or one so nearly lost to him as to reduce hope to its lowest ebb, (without extinguishing it,) will be more likely to cherish his treasure when gained, than *him* who, however fondly attached in the outset of his passion, has never been crossed by intervening obstacles, and taught to feel the sorrows of parting, the pangs of jealousy, and that forlornness which hangs upon the bereaved bosom, and is the most corroding, though the least violent, of the many painful emo-

tions to which the 'life of a lover' is subject."

"My dear Emily, you are very learned on this subject, I find."

"Oh yes; I have learnt to 'live whole ages on a smile;' and know how to estimate the bliss which arises from contrasting present enjoyment with past solicitude."

"I shan't dispute the general truth of your doctrine; but I *can* and *will* maintain, that there are cases when the *superior worth* of the object induces very *high* estimation, very *tender* regard, though there might not be *all* the difficulties of attainment you suppose necessary for enhancing the value of the prize."

"That is a point *I* will not gainsay; but let us think for Theodore; *our* courting scene does not forward *his*, you know."

"Suppose," said my father, turning to me, "as I see our horses are coming to the door, suppose we make the best of our way to Tadcaster, Theodore, and you there take the mail for London; we shall just

have time to dine together before it passes through; you will get better forwards that way than any other; for I suppose 'twould be in vain to talk of sleeping on the road."

"It will be *far* the best. Wilson can follow you with linen, &c. and as I find myself tolerably well, I will surprise our good aunt and Mrs. Wallingford, by popping on their dinner hour," said lady Sedgewood, who, by this method of providing for her own comforts, knew she enabled her affectionate husband to feel himself more at ease during his absence. Whilst I spoke to Wilson, she wrote a short but affectionate note to lady Atwood, and made up a little package of trinkets, as friendly memorials to the young ladies, and then kindly hastened our departure.

My father had, from his earliest infancy, been used to ride much on horseback: I have most probably mentioned, that my grandfather made it a point to teach him every species of equestrian exercise he had himself learnt amongst the Tartars, du-

ring his long residence with them; and that, in consequence, he was so singularly elegant, and so perfectly at ease in his use of this noble animal, that he retained all his earliest predilection in its favour. I had purchased a horse in Bath, which I had not rode since his return, but which was now brought for me, and very naturally attracted his admiration; and lady Sedgewood, who never could remain uninterested in any thing that engaged *him*, wrapping her shawl round her head, came to the door to look at him, just as my father had said—"I approve of your purchase exceedingly, and should like to ride him this morning:" on seeing her figure, the animal started; and I observed, it was easily frightened, and must be rode with a careful hand.

"*Don't* ride it, my dear," said lady Sedgewood; "it is fitter for Theodore than you: you are heavier than you used to be, remember."

"This fine fellow," said my father, pat-

ting his neck, "is more than equal to my weight; and," added he, smiling roguishly, with a mixture of pardonable vanity in his countenance, "though I *am* on the high road for becoming a grandfather, Emily, yet I am not likely to yield in the management of a horse to Theodore, or any other boy—*my* father, at seventy-five, used to lead the country in that respect, though otherways an invalid. We are of the race of Nimrod, you know, altogether."

As my father spoke, he vaulted into his seat with the grace of one who "could 'witch the world with noble horsemanship;" but observed that lady Sedgewood, as she pronounced "good morning," had done it tremulously, and immediately turned into the house. I had already given her and Emily a parting kiss, received her kind wishes, and, like him, was mounted, and my countenance doubtless bespoke the impatience of my heart; but the baronet checked it for a single moment, by dismounting, and seizing his lady, tenderly

kissed her, and said he would call with me to bid aunt Barbara adieu, and send our fair cousin to conduct her thither. She assented with a smile, that chased away the tear that was gathering in her eye; and we rode away together, performing our intention of stopping for a few minutes at Mrs. Barbara Sedgewood's, and engaging Mrs. Wallingford to pay particular attention to lady Sedgewood, who was still very delicate, from her late nervous attack.

Oh, Thou! who strengthenest the feeble hands, and bindest the bleeding hearts of thy frail and suffering creatures, who sayest to the floods of rising agony which visit the soul of man, as to the mighty ocean in a storm, "Hitherto shalt thou go, but no farther; and *here* shall thy waves be stayed," Oh do *Thou* speak peace to the awakening tempest in my heart, and go with me on my way.

CHAP. VIII.

'Could there have been a word, a look,
 That softly said, " We part in peace,"
 Had taught my bosom how to brook,
 With fainter sighs, thy soul's release;
 But since in worlds more blest than this,
 Thy virtues seek a fitter sphere,
 Impart some portion of thy bliss,
 To wean me from my anguish here.

LORD BYRON.

As we rode from my aunt's door, my father observed that we had lost time, and must make the best of our way, for the skies portended a storm; and accordingly we went forward at a brisk trot for about three miles, when it began to grow extremely dark, and a few hailstones fell; as we were now ascending a long hill, we rode slowly; my father said there was distant thunder, he thought, which, though uncommon in March, generally speaking, was not unlikely to be the case at present,

for the weather had lately been very sultry, and reminded him of an ode addressed to this month three years ago, which, when he read it at the time, pleased and affected him much, and began thus—

“ Tempestuous month, by nature wild,
 Terrific, comfortless, forlorn,
 What mean these breezes, soft and mild,
 That usher in thy morn?”*

“ I remember it,” said I; “ the writer laments her husband, who fell by the lingering hand of consumption in the month of March, and says the chill air of this month is

“ More fatal to the weaken’d frame,
 Than India’s beams of scorching flame.”

As I spoke this, my voice trembled, for I thought on the delicate health of Adelaide; but my father did not notice it, for he proceeded to say—“ That of all other evils, the lingering horrors of consump-

* See Poems by B. Hoole.

tion were, indeed, the most deplorable; as the patient might be said to 'die daily;' and those who surrounded his couch, 'to die a thousand deaths in fearing one," thus encreasing and protracting that stroke, which bends alike those who are taken and those who are left; since it may be truly said, in all the near connexions of life,

"When such friends part, 'tis the survivor dies."

"I remember," he added, "a passage in another part of the same volume where I read the ode, some lines, which struck me as the true description of feelings awakened by this disease, and which so strongly reminded me of those times when I used to watch the sickbed of your excellent grandmother, Mrs. Dermot, that I have never forgotten them—

"Day after day, and hour succeeding hour,
The secret, silent fire, that feeds on life,
Still urges, still delays, the dreadful stroke;
While dearer still the patient sufferer winds
New bonds of love around the bleeding breast,

And nearer as the approaching blow descends,
The spouse, the parent cries, 'we cannot part.'

"But true as this may be, my dear sir, it does not seem to me quite so terrible as *sudden death*."

"I thought so, Theodore, when I was writhing under the blow that crushed *me*; but laying aside that feeling, which is apt to make us all say, in the hour of chastening, 'Surely there is no sorrow like unto *my* sorrow, with which the Lord afflicteth *me*,' I am convinced that the attenuated sufferings of slow disease are infinitely more terrible to be borne, in *most* cases, than even the most sudden death; for the wretchedness of anticipation adds to our torments, and weakens us by preparation; at least such is my conception of the case, formed by observation rather than experience, I grant; but this relates only to *survivors*; to the party *themselves*, it has ever appeared to me so great an advantage, that I never could unite in that part of our liturgy which prays against '*sudden death*;' and though very little inclined to

innovation, I *do* wish that word was altered to 'unprepared,' as I think it far better."

"But, my dear sir, to be called in a *moment* to the tribunal of Heaven, 'no reckoning made, but sent to our account with all our imperfections on our heads,' is surely a matter of such awful import, that we ought rather to desire 'a little space to consider,' before we 'go hence, and are no more seen.'"

"But, alas!" said my father, "how seldom do we find, that in the space so given we *do* consider, or, in *fact*, *can* consider, our important destination; the hour of bodily languor, even when not accompanied by actual pain, is not the season for reflecting on the past, or anticipating the future; and in that disease, which of all others leaves the most time for mental exercise, we find the most decided inclination for confiding in the hopes of a cure, which appears, in fact, a species of physical lenitive, administered with the disease itself, as if in *mercy* to the weakness which could not bear for so long a period the

contemplation of its end. Different men, and equally *good men*, will be found to agree with us both; I merely speak my *own* perceptions of the case, humbly trusting, that if I should be called to experience the tedium of a long sickness, terrible as I conceive such a state, that, resting on the support of my unfailing friend, my strength would be equal to my wants; and, on the *other* hand, if, 'like favoured man, by touch ethereal slain,' I am suddenly claimed, the language of my heart may be, 'Behold thy servant; be it unto me according to thy will.'

Our conversations were wont to shift from "grave to gay, from lively to severe;" but it is probable that we both felt more than usually led to this, from the dark clouds that rolled over us, and the heavy atmosphere that oppressed both ourselves and our horses as we mounted the hill, and which portended such a storm, that we meant to gallop over the plain; but on arriving at the top, we were so

struck with the magnificent assemblage of dark thunder clouds, and the faint beams of the sun struggling through the mighty mass, and tinging with partial light the tender green, now thrown on the light herbage, that we stopped for a moment to behold it, and my father, after wishing our friend H——, the artist, could have enjoyed it with us, observed, that the road was now an awkward descent, and told me to take care of the mare, for she was not very sure-footed. As he spoke, a peal of thunder broke from the clouds, and the servant who attended us said to the baronet—

“Your honour must take care of that new horse, for he goes mad if he sees a light.”

“Thank you, Thomas,” said my father, tightening his rein; “we ought all to caution and help one another.” Then turning to me, he added briskly, “Your errand, Thé, is one in which young men, generally speaking, need the most care, and use the least; but I have such a re-

liance on *you*, and such a thorough regard for Adelaide, that if I were to travel with you the whole journey, I should only say, *may God bless you both!*"

At this moment, a vivid flash of lightning cut the atmosphere directly over us, instantly followed by a tremendous peal of thunder; my horse reared a little, but that on which my father rode plunged, reared, and foamed, in all the rage of terror. The road at this moment was close to an old stone quarry, and the animal backed so near to the brink as to frighten me excessively, notwithstanding my confidence in my father's skill; and what added to the confusion of the moment, was perceiving, at this instant, the horse on which the servant rode run away with him. At this time large hailstones falling on the stones, and in the eyes of the terrified animal, added to his fears, and I saw that my father could not manage him: leaping from my horse, I caught his bridle with so firm a grasp, that for a moment I extricated him from the immediate peril—with breathless,

gasping anxiety, I was just endeavouring to seize the moment to assist him to dismount, when another flash, more terrible than the first, broke upon us—the horse flung back with such a jerk, as instantly to break my arm, which fell nerveless from his grasp, and in another moment himself and rider were precipitated into the quarry. One single blow—one horrid crash, and *all was over*. On a point of the projected rock my father was struck, just above the temples, at the moment of his dreadful descent, and fell lifeless to the bottom.

My head swims—my hand trembles—big tears roll on the paper—spare me, in mercy, spare me, oh, Memory! the tenfold horrors of that moment.

The terrible clap of thunder which succeeded that flash which was the last beam of light which illumined the eyes of my father, was dreadful; and aided by the loud groans of the expiring horse, mangled by the jutting stones, together with the sight of the fall, for a moment de-

prived me of reason; but a single spark of hope surviving, enabled me to scramble down the declivity—to seize my father—to raise him—to lay his head on my bosom——

The elements raged on—I heard them not; the sharp hail in huge stones poured on my bare head—I felt it not; hope was extinct in my heart—Heaven and earth, what a shock was mine!—my father's head was crushed—the most terrible sight that the human form can present to shuddering sense, was given to *me* in the person of my father——

Such a father—such a man too——

I did not lose my senses quite: God was merciful to me. I know not how it was exactly, but affection can do that which common sensation shrinks from in disgust; all I remember *now* is, that I kissed the lips of my father, and in that kiss regained the reason that had fled; and terrible as was the sense of sorrows it presented, I felt it as the gift of Heaven. I then endeavoured

to use my right arm, but found it impossible, and the pain I thus gave myself doubtless contributed to restore my senses; I then took off my cravat, and with my left hand contrived so to bind up the head of my father, as to save all other eyes the sight which had blasted my own; feeling as if it were a sacrilege to gaze on that disfigured face, which was so late the seat of every manly grace, the throne of intellect, and the mirror of benevolence.

A post-chaise came by much at the same time that my servant Wilson, who had followed me, arrived at the top of the hill; he perceived my horse grazing, and took hold of him, which attracting the notice of the passengers, they stopped to inquire: the storm was now cleared away, and the sun shining, they humanely alighted, being both gentlemen, and looked round to see the owner: first they found my hat, which I had lost at the first moment of seizing the horse, and then my father's, which had probably been thrown off during his strug-

gles with the horse: Wilson became excessively alarmed; he rent the air with his cries—I hear, but cannot answer him.

In a few moments he has flown round the road, to that part of the quarry which is open to it—he perceives the horse bloody and dead; trembling he steps forward, and sees his master, pale, wet, and maimed, seated on the ground, and the lifeless body of sir Theodore, with its head wrapped in bloody cloths, resting on his lap.

Poor Wilson staggered, and had nearly fallen at the sight; but the strangers were near, and they wisely urged him to exertion, by pointing out the extreme distress evident in my countenance; they assisted him in placing us both in the chaise, and whilst thus employed, they were joined by our servant, whose horse having crossed the plain with him more than two miles, had at length thrown him, but with little injury, except from the dirt, which he had gone into a farm-house to divest himself of, expecting every minute to see us come

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up ; but at length fearing he had mistaken our route, he had returned to seek us.

This man had lived with my father nineteen years : he came to him a boy, from a state of beggary, and he had ever considered him in a light approaching to idolatry. When he beheld the body of his master, and comprehended in a moment all the dreadful event, he became for a time completely frantic, so that the gentlemen were obliged to commit him to the care of the postboy, who held him with great difficulty, as he clung round the body, and swore he would never be parted from it more ; when at length it had been placed in the chaise, they came to me, and producing a penknife, ripped open my coat, formed a kind of sling for my arm, and led me towards the chaise.

There was no dry eye in this sad arrangement but mine, and Heaven, in mercy, opened the sluices of sorrow even to me.

When poor Thomas, who was struggling with the postboy, and calling ten thousand imprecations alternately on *his* head,

and that of the horse who had killed his master, and on which he would have wreaked all the vengeance of his rage, had it not been already past suffering, beheld me come forward, leaning on Wilson, with despair in my countenance, the violent passion which possessed him seemed to sink beneath the intenser woe he beheld me endure; and bursting from the grasp of the man, he flew towards me, as the only being who was his superior in the dreadful right of suffering, and who demanded pity, even from *him*; his torn soul felt the hand of the great leveller was on us both; but that which had sunk me to sorrow, had ennobled me, from its severity, in the eyes of this son of native feeling: in his first motion he stretched out his arms, as if he had been about to clasp me to his heart, in the next he threw himself on the ground—he embraced my knees—he kissed my feet—he wept upon them—he bathed them with his tears,

Man was indeed not born to live alone; and so long as he exercises the sympathies

of his nature, he shall partake the blessing he communicates. The sight of poor Thomas roused me from the appalling sense of horror, which I had hitherto endured, to the softer sense of sorrow: I stood still; I suffered nature to relieve herself, and would not allow those around to disturb him; the sight of his tears seemed to allay the parched and fever-feeding anguish that brooded on my brain; and while I bent over him, and endeavoured to speak consolation to him, the kindly drops gathered in my own eyes, and fell profusely on the mourning suppliant.

When I became somewhat more calm, the sense of that care due to my poor step-mother, that long-adoring lover, that tender wife, who, but a few hours before, had shrunk with fond presentiment, had taken the last kiss from those lips she must behold no more, and perhaps at this very moment was counting the hours till his return, struck on my heart with a kind of new and indescribable emotion; for whilst it opened a source of the bitterest sorrows,

it forbade me the indulgence of a passion, which unfitted me for the arduous task she had a right to expect from me.

I concerted a plan with Wilson, and he instantly set out; lady Sedgewood was at my aunt Barbara's—she was informed that I was extremely injured by a fall from my horse, and that the baronet remained with me.

Agreeable to the general excellence of her character, she insisted on being taken to me directly, a plan earnestly opposed by the ladies, who thought her health unequal to the task, and in the looks of Wilson read something farther than yet had met her ear or theirs.

Wilson informed her truly that my arm was now setting at a farm-house about a mile off, where an old tenant resided, who had it in his power to render me every assistance; and that the idea of accommodating *her* would distress the poor people more than her presence could benefit me.

“ Did the *baronet* forbid me to come?”

said her ladyship, looking earnestly at Wilson.

The poor man burst into tears.

Fearful that my mission could not be executed as it ought, the moment my arm was set, I followed in a post-chaise, and at this moment alighted at the door; as I entered the parlour, Wilson was turning from the deep and alarmed gaze of the trembling wife, who, turning her eyes from him, fixed them on me—"My son," said she, "why would you come home, after such an accident?—how could sir Frederic let you? but where is *he*?"

"Alas! he was worse hurt than I was."

"Then why did you *leave* him? let me fly to him this instant. Why did not Wilson tell me this? I ought not to have been deceived, for it has delayed me."

She was flying from the door, but I motioned them to stop her; and commanding myself, said, that it was utterly impossible for her to see the baronet, as he was under a surgical examination.

“Where is he hurt? tell me all the truth, I conjure you!”

“His skull is fractured: you say you cannot *bear deceit*; but, alas! how, my dear mother, can you bear a truth like this?”

“Better, *better*,” she would have said, but the word died on her lips; and she sunk in a deep swoon on the breast of Mrs. Wallingford, who was herself little able to support her.

Sensible of the dreadful anguish in store for her, I could not regret this partial insensibility, and almost grieved to use the means for restoration, though the length of time she continued in this suspended state became alarming. During this period the family were informed of the fact; her maid was sent for, and the medical attendants of the family, who, by ordering her to bed, and remaining in the house, enabled us to break the truth to her by degrees: her extreme sorrow must be left to the imagination of those who can conceive so vast an agony; she desired to be left

alone, and I insisted that she should be obeyed:—such a sufferer has but *one* friend.

For three or four days, though lady Sedgewood often desired to see me, yet when I appeared, she was so overwhelmed with sorrow, in which I fully participated, that we were utterly unable to exchange a word, and we parted from complete inability to relieve each other: at length she said—“ Pray, Theodore, tell me the *truth*; was your father sensible ?”

I replied by shaking my head.

“ I feared as much: do you think he suffered much pain ?”

“ I hope as *little* as possible.”

“ Was he many hours in that dreadful state ?”

“ My dear mother, I will now tell you *all* the truth, and I trust, terrible as it is, you will reap one source of consolation from it;—know, then, that he suffered but the pang of a moment.”

She clasped her hands devoutly on her breast, and as she turned her streaming

eyes to heaven, she meekly bowed her head, saying—"For *this*, oh God, I thank thee!"

On the evening of this day, at her own request, lady Sedgewood accompanied me to the Park, where the body of my father now lay. Wilson had prudently dispatched poor Thomas, with the melancholy intelligence, to Charles, thinking that the necessity of exerting himself would tend to restore him to tranquillity; and that at least, it would keep him from adding to the sorrows of his lady, who was surrounded by such a house of mourners, of which poor little Emily, if not the deepest, was the most affecting, that the wise and affectionate servant justly judged that every one who tended more particularly to irritate her grief should be kept far from her. Alas! he felt that nature could ill bear a stimulant to sorrow awakened by such a cause.

Mr. Eltringham and our dear aunt flew to us, the moment they heard, to mix their tears with ours; but, alas! the companion

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of my first sorrows appeared to be the only one to which my heart could look for participation and relief, and I seldom left the coffin of my father, except to inquire if my brother was yet arrived.

CHAP. IX.

What is the worst of foes that wait on age?

What stamps the wrinkle deeper on the brow?

To view each lov'd one blotted from life's page,

And feel alone on earth, as I do now. LORD BYRON.

ON the evening of the sixth day, Thomas returned alone. I sent for him instantly to my room, and eagerly inquired if my brother were on the road to Fairborough?

“When I got to London, sir—*your honour*, I found him gone down to Newmarket, and so, sir, I axed to see his lady, being, as one may say, a family grief; and God, knows it be a country grief *here*,” said Thomas, again relapsing into sorrow.

“ You did right, Thomas; I hope they will come together.”

“ God forbid, sir, that ever any son of his honour’s should darken these doors along with such a b—h as she ! I ax your honour’s pardon, sir, *sir Theodore*, but I am sure, if *you* had heard what she had said, you’d never have forgiven it, any more than myself; for she says, says she—‘ A pretty piece of work truly ! I shall have to wear mourning these three months !’ these were all the words as ever she uttered, and she said um to a fal-de-ral naked sort of a countess who was sitting with her ; and never one word of comfort to me, good or bad, your honour.”

“ She is an unfeeling wretch !” exclaimed I, traversing the room with great warmth.

“ Thank God ! I knew your honour would think as I think, so I gave it her pretty handsome.—‘ You mought be ashamed,’ said I, ‘ to call yourself a lady, with no bowels of compassion in you to-

wards your own husband, who never noed sin nor shame till he came to this cursed London, and married a woman wi never a heart in her bosom, and who has lost the best father that ever existed on the yearth."

"Have you seen Mr. Beaumarris, Thomas?"

"Why, sir, seeing there was no good to be done there, and that all the sarvants abused me worse than a pickpocket, I was goin to set off to Newmarket directly, but her ladyship Beaumarris came to a bit; and she said as how if I would give her sir Theodore's note, she would send a confidant servant with it to Newmarket herself; and so if he choosed to come over to Sedgewood Park, to be present when his late honour's will was read, why so be he would get there before Monday."

My heart, sick and dissatisfied, turned for comfort to the lifeless clay which appeared now to be the relics of my last friend: alas! there was no comfort there, and I could not bear to lay the new load of my grief which wounded me on the

weakened frame and wounded spirits of the widow, and to every other human being, it was too sacred to be revealed. The conduct of Mrs. Beaumarris afforded another proof of my father's penetration, and made me feel still more sensibly how irreparable was the loss of such a counsellor and guide.

The last words, last accents, and last looks of a dear departed friend, are treasures to the memory; and my faithful records of the last hours of my father will be forgiven, for the sake of the feeling which has preserved them; for every good and tender heart has got similar registers on the tablet of affection; such too will forgive me if I entreat their sympathy for the increased grief which fell over my sad heart, when I tell them that Monday, Tuesday, and even Wednesday appeared, and brought no brother to console me.

The world was now doubly a blank; and it was perhaps well for me that a heart so deeply wounded had not leisure to indulge

in reflection on the bitterness and extent of its disappointments.

On Wednesday, concluding all hopes of receiving the melancholy support I had looked for were over, I obeyed the suggestions of my friends, and performed the last duties to my beloved, my revered parent.

One voice, one *universal* voice was now heard through the land. "She" spoke not now of little errors, of venial faults, false conjecture, and slanderous anecdotes—no! there was a cry in the land of *unmixed* sorrow; the father, the friend, the benefactor, the patron, was no more! cut off in the very zenith of his days, in the prime of his usefulness, ere age had enfeebled his energies, or infirmity benumbed his benevolence—when life was endued with apparent stability, and its blessings realized in many points, and promised in more; and his character established beyond the reach of enmity, or the breath of scandal.

I followed the corpse *alone*, for Charles was not with me; but though *chief*, I was

not a solitary mourner—poor Eltringham, how did he mourn his friend, his brother! how did colonel Harvey and poor sir Samuel lament their long-valued neighbour! but 'tis vain to mention names—who did not lament him? amidst the immense concourse assembled round his bier, not one heart was found unmoved—not one eye that fell tearless on the awful spectacle.

When the last scene was closed—when the half-suffocated voice of my earliest tutor no longer sounded in my ear, and the loud sob and long-drawn sigh no longer were heard, I slowly raised my head from the last long gaze, which seemed to carry my very soul along with it, and saw that I was nearly alone, for even my dearest friends felt their presence might restrain me; and from the delicacy of just feelings, had left to me the sacred rights of pre-eminent distress: yet I was *not* alone; a venerable form, bent by sorrow and by time, leaned over the awful chasm, while his white locks, falling o'er his face, enveloped his features. On looking nearer, I

perceived it was our good old steward, and I felt such pity for the stroke his old age had thus sustained, as, for a moment, to yield to him the palm of superior suffering; I advanced to him, and taking his arm, drew him gently from the object of his contemplation; he felt the motion, but even whilst he yielded to it, withdrew not his strained and tearless eyes from the grave; but, as if excusing his weakness, he cried—"I nursed him when he was a boy—I gloried in him when he was a man! for three and forty years he has been as the sun to my eyes, and I trusted that he would shine many a year after I was gone down, but I must see him no more! Oh, sir, he was as *great* as a prince, and as *meek* as an infant!"

How much was comprised in this closing eulogy! surely it contains the essence of the best elegy that ever was written, for it had an echo in the heart, and mine gave fresh proofs of its justice.

The old man looked up, and saw whose arm was drawing his, to take the support

necessary to sustain his enfeebled steps ; as he gazed on me, a few scanty drops rolled down his furrowed cheek ; yet a mild and chastened sorrow stealing o'er his features, displaced the look of bitter anguish they had so lately assumed ; he gently disengaged his arm, and giving one more glance to the grave, with the action of a last adieu, he clasped his trembling hands together, and turning towards me, while his eyes looked towards that heaven he addressed, he said, in a voice whose deep pathetic tears yet vibrate on my ear —“ Son of the son of my *beloved* master, may that God who now beholds us bless thee with the virtues of thy father, and the length of days which crowned thy grand-sire.”

He continued some moments wrapt in the devout contemplation, thus awfully inspired ; and then, as if sensible that his faithful supplication was heard at the Throne of Grace, he took my offered arm, and we slowly and solemnly withdrew together.

The benefit of example is always most felt when the heart is softened by the impressions of sorrow; whilst we were all overcome with affliction, we yet were desirous of acting as *he* would have acted under similar impressions; and in consequence, we resolved, that although the funeral had been uncommonly delayed, our appearance in the house of God should partake the spirit of him we mourned, rather than our feelings, or the fashion of the times; and we therefore all summoned fortitude to go to church, except the widow, whom I strenuously insisted upon still leaving to the dictates of her own feelings and most excellent judgment, but whose health was not in a situation to bear the shock which I was aware must accompany her first entrance into that sacred place.

“Unto whom should I go, but unto Thee, oh Lord?” is the language of every bereaved heart; and the properly-instructed and humble soul will seek for consolation both in public and private exercises

of devotion ; and it is to be feared that those whose plea of extreme sensibility prevents them from complying with the custom of their forefathers, in using the first, are not amongst those who adopt the *last*, whatever they may wish us to believe ; but great allowance ought doubtless to be made for female sensibility, and she who “ is a widow indeed,” should be spared from every sight and sentiment, which though consolatory to her affection at an after-period, tends to “ wake the nerve where agony is born,” in that early season of sorrow, when the heart, oppressed to breaking, is incapable of bearing any additional pang.

It was a comfort to me that lady Sedgewood was spared the solemn scene, which soothed my aching heart, while it awakened all the channels of fond remembrance, and showed the extent of my loss. On every side I beheld sorrow—every breath was loaded with a sigh—every creature that could afford it, through the whole congregation, was in mourning ; all our

own tenantry wore the habit of sons and daughters, and the cottagers had been clothed thus by my orders; the gentry, and even the manufacturers, partook the general feeling—all mourned, all wept together.

The scene was too much for lady Borrowdale; she sobbed aloud at one time in convulsive agony—at another she was nearly fainting. My good aunt Barbara, with great pity, assisted her; and by the placid composure of her own countenance, shewed that she fully felt the force of David's reasoning—"I shall go to him, but he shall not come to me." The words struck me as I looked at the change visible in her pale and shrunken features; but I was still more sensible of it, when Mr. Elland chose these words for his text, as I perceived a gleam of pure satisfaction light up her benignant face, and give earnest that her days of sojourn were nearly ended, and she was looking to the land where many a friend, gathered and lost through her long pil-

grimace, should be restored to part no more.

The honest exultation of my heart was mingled with my sorrows, as leaving the consecrated spot, now endeared still more as the resting-place of *both* my parents, I again witnessed that honest tribute so fully and universally paid to the memory of my father; deep respect—that delicacy which ever accompanies genuine sympathy, not only kept every person at a distance from us, but as they all wished to cast an eye towards the grave which contained his beloved ashes, they remained in their seats till it was known that the family had left the church; on understanding this, I cast one glance, one single glance around; I saw the face of honest Dornton swoln with tears—poor Manby was sat in a corner of his pew dissolved in grief—young Mrs. Turnwell was weeping in the arms of her husband, whose father, leaning on Mr. Briggs, seemed recounting all the kindness of him they had lost, to one unable to reply; I could see no more—little Emily

took hold of my hand—"Look, look," said she, "how all the poor people in the aisles are crying for papa—surely I may cry when they do, now mamma does not see me;" sobbing as she spoke.

I pressed the dear child's hand, and led her to the coach; she threw herself on my knee, she hid her head on my bosom—at this moment, a general sound of sorrow, a chorus as of groans, broke on our ear—we drove slowly off—the sound was lost, but its impression shall never be erased, nor the muffled peal which succeeded it.

The coach stopped at the Park door, and the weeping child still clung round my neck; lady Borrowdale, as she alighted, pointed out my situation to Wilson, who said, shaking his head—"Ah, my lady, she is so fond of sir Theodore, that I am sure she will not leave the baronet for any thing I can say."

Sir Theodore I had heard before, but to find myself become *the baronet*—oh, it was a melancholy sound! it was another string

toned to the funeral dirge, a new sound in the voice of lamentation.

I sought my own room ; I reflected on my own responsibility ; the high character my father had sustained taught me to tremble at the task before me, while it urged me to perfect his excellence, by proving that he had brought up his son in the paths of virtue. I remembered, that although there were several other men of equal rank in the neighbourhood, and two of superior, yet my father was always styled emphatically *the baronet*, by all who wanted help of every kind : *the baronet* protected the poor, advised the rich, consoled the sorrowful, enlightened the ignorant, patronised the learned, and relieved the distressed ;—to all was *the baronet* endeared by his kindness, or beloved for his beneficence, and revered for his example.

The baronet was my father.—

Again my heart reverted to Charles ; again I felt alone in the world, under the sense of having a right in the most tender friendship that man could feel for man ;

and the sense of unkindness and injustice gave me a pang more severe than even death could bestow. When the king of Israel, as a punishment for his sin, had the choice of three afflictions given him, he desired to fall into the hands of God, and not into those of man; in this choice he shewed how well he had read the human heart, for it is certain that although death is in itself the most terrible of all privations, since it precludes hope, so far as it concerns our earthly blessings, yet it is not necessarily productive of that species of soul-harrowing grief produced by the unworthiness or unkindness of those to whom we are tenderly attached; since that sorrow, even in the best-regulated minds, must inevitably be accompanied by resentment, and by the consciousness of being treated with ingratitude—a sensation we cannot possibly feel when our arrows have been winged by the Almighty Hand, however terrible the wound they give, and which is in its nature the most galling and lacerating sensation that can rankle in the human bosom,

and has been justly termed by our great poet, "sharper than the serpent's tooth."

With these observations on the reader's mind, I beg him to consider what were my feelings, when the incident occurred which I must defer till the next chapter, closing the present with observing that Mr. Eltringham and his lady were obliged to leave us, to receive lady William Graham, who, with her worthy partner, now came to visit and condole with my aunt; and that lady Sedgewood still kept her dressing-room, where she seldom saw any one but myself, though her whole conduct proved that she was most conscientiously struggling to show that she was not only an afflicted widow, but a sincere Christian, desirous of yielding even that being (to him who had resumed his gift) who was so close twisted with the fibres of her heart, that parting with him was a pang to which the loss of life, when compared with it, appeared a petty sacrifice.

CHAP. X.

ON Wednesday morning, a week after my father's funeral, as I sat with lady Sedgewood, who had herself inspected my arm, and applied the necessary bandage, a letter was brought to me with the London post-mark, and which I flattered myself was the long-expected letter from Charles; I tore it open impatiently—it was not his hand—I feared lest illness had prevented him from writing—I recollected his sufferings on a former occasion, and dreaded lest the news had been broken to him too suddenly. Lady Sedgewood perceived my agitation, and intreated me to read the letter; I did so, and found as follows:—

“ SIR,

“ I am instructed by my client, Charles Beaumarris, Esq. to request information from you, or your agent, as to the will of the late sir Frederic Sedgewood.

wood, Bart. (if any), and particularly so far as may relate to any legacy, or other monies, become due to said client, by testament or otherwise, through death of said testator.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your humble servant,

“ JAMES JARVIS.

No. 117, *Chancery-lane,*
March 30, 1808.”

The torrent of grief and indignation which overwhelmed my soul, for a moment suspended my faculties, the letter fell from my nerveless hand, and I stood not less the image of despair than when bending over the corpse of my father. Lady Sedgewood in great alarm took up the fatal paper; a single glance at the accursed scrawl awakened kindred feelings—“ Cruel, degenerate Charles,” she exclaimed, dashing the paper from her hand, and bursting into a passion of tears.

Her voice, her agony, recalled my

senses, and following the impulse thus awakened, I indulged in a torrent of invective, less against Charles than every creature with whom he was connected, whom by turns I accused of his ruin, for ruin of the most terrible kind this degradation appeared to me; and I was about to conclude this terrible apostrophe by an eternal renunciation of my unworthy brother, when lady Sedgewood, conquering, by a strong effort, her own emotion, conjured me to stop to hear *her*; but passion is deaf, and I was wound up to a pitch of anger, which, till now, though by nature impetuous, I had never exhibited.

“ In the name of your father, that dear name you reverence so much, hear me; I beseech you, hear me.”

The spell which commanded me was obeyed.

“ Recollect yourself, my dear Theodore, and do not condemn Charles too rashly; depend upon it, that however terribly we were struck by this letter, and

however naturally we condemned it, yet it is possible that it may have been written by the orders of his wife, of this colonel, whom he calls his *friend*, or even lord Llanberry, who is a very likely man to have extorted from him a permission to employ his attorney thus; we ought not to admit the horrid inference it conveys, without being *certain*, beyond all possibility of doubt, that he was so far capable of tearing from his heart all the bonds of nature, and even the claims of common decency; how much had he not already suffered from Slander building her monstrous fabrications on the basis of unfortunate fabrications of incident; and therefore it ill becomes *us* to add even a mite to his troubles, much less a mountain like this."

"It is all too true; but why does he not write? why did he not come to the funeral? it is too plain that he received the fatal information—his silence proclaims his guilt."

"Alas! sir Theodore, you have suffer-

ed enough from the delay and prevention of letters already, to know that personal intercourse is the only sure way of judging; go then to your brother, with this letter in your hand; see him yourself, and if it be possible, do not reproach him; relate the manner of your father's death; if he has yet a heart, the story told, not less by your pale haggard countenance and fractured limb, than by a tongue attuned to the eloquence of grief, will make him feel, and may be the means of restoring you a *brother*; if it fails, which Heaven forbid, you then can pay him the legacy he seeks, and leave him to a future hour of penitence. You never, never must renounce him; is he not the son of your *father*? did not *your* mother bear him?"

Ever wise, excellent, and kind, the words of this valuable woman sunk deep upon my heart; and though ill able, both from the state of my arm (which having been neglected in the first instance, had become difficult of cure), and the men-

tal sickness I still sustained, to undertake the journey, I gave orders to Wilson to prepare for it in the morning; and as Charles had *forced* the subject upon me, I sent for Robertson the steward, and Manby the attorney, desiring they would inform me where my father kept his will, as I remembered his having made a new one after the death of my little sister; and likewise that he had mentioned the necessity of altering it when Emily was born, saying—"He must provide for her and her mother;" from which circumstance I first learnt that lady Sedgewood had no jointure, having refused to hear him talk on the subject, at the time he made proposals to her.

Mr. Manby, in return to my inquiries, informed me, that he had at different periods witnessed several testaments of my father's, which were all written by his own hand, and of course he could not speak as to their contents; but he had very good reason for believing there was no will at present, as the baronet had told

him, that when Mr. Beaumarris took possession of his fortune, he had importuned him till he had promised solemnly to leave *his* share of paternal inheritance to his eldest son ; in consequence, sir Frederic had, on his return home, burnt the will he had by him, and had repeatedly said thus (since then) to Mr. Manby, when speaking of his affairs :—“ I believe I ought to make another will, Manby, but I cannot bring myself to leaving Charles out of it, and yet I have promised to do so ; and I feel it my duty to do so, seeing he got all his mother’s property ; so I keep putting the matter off, being easy on the subject, because my reliance on Theodore is perfect.”

Mr. Manby’s account of this was confirmed by the steward’s ; and after a diligent search, no vestige of a will was found. I intreated them both to observe the strictest silence on the subject till my return ; but felt, that after such a decisive proof of the instability of life as that I had just witnessed, it would be inexcusable in me

to leave home without providing against contingencies; I therefore detained the attorney till he had made a hasty settlement of my worldly affairs, in which I did not allow the feelings of the morning to bias my sense of justice, or obscure the tenderness of my fraternal feelings.

I set out too early to bid lady Sedgewood adieu; and only resting a few hours on the road, I arrived in London about six o'clock on Saturday morning. As I was well aware none of the family in my brother's house would be stirring for some hours, I ordered the postillions to drive to the Albany; in doing this we passed his residence; and Thomas, whom I had brought with me instead of Wilson (whose superior abilities made him necessary to the poor old steward), observed—"That the door was open, and there were people in the house; he rather thought madam had been having one of her routs."

Again the sense of injury fired my breast; I ordered him to stop the carriage, and alighted, sending him forwards. As I

entered the house, I took the letter of the attorney in my hand, as if it gave me a right to demand vengeance ; and I strode forward, with an air of authority and defiance, not deigning to reply to the questions of the drowsy porter.

In the hall I found two men half asleep, who had not the appearance of gentlemen's servants, and were the persons Thomas had noticed as standing at the windows ; I passed them, and went up stairs, where all was silent ; the superb appearance of the furniture surprised me ; I had not seen any thing equal to it in the most luxurious dwellings of the first nobility ; and the evident carelessness with which it was treated provoked my indignation.—“ It is,” cried I, “ for such fooleries as these that money must be procured, though the ashes of my father be insulted, and the hearts of those who love him bleed at every pore.”

I descended the stairs hastily ; one of the men rose at my entrance, and I asked him if he belonged to the family, and

could tell me when Mr. Beaumarris would be stirring?

“ I ax your pardon; I took you for *he*, seeing you be tall, and a good deal such sort of a person; but as you be not *he*, I suppose he ben't comed back.”

“ Are you his servant?”

“ No, sir, I be no servant of his'n, I be werry sure; we two as be here be keepers, that's all.”

“ *Keepers!* I don't understand it; keepers of what?”

“ I thought the gemman looked raw,” said the other fellow, yawning; “ why, sir, we be here to keep things together, as it were; that is, to keep the goods from dancing off at any suit but ours.”

“ Suit, *suit!* you don't belong to a bailiff?”

“ The devil we don't! if you stays long in town, you may chance to know whether we does or not.”

At this moment a bustle was heard at the door, which was thrown violently

open, and Jones rushed in, fixed his eyes upon me, and with a look of unutterable anguish, exclaimed—"Oh, sir, why did you not come an hour ago? a single hour would have saved him."

At this moment entered two men, bearing my brother between them on a kind of litter; he was covered with blood, and his countenance pale and ghastly—his eyes rolled wistfully round—they fixed on me—he uttered a faint cry of horror, and raising his disabled hands, covered his face, and closed his eyes, as if totally unequal to encountering mine.

"Charles, my *ever dear* Charles! my brother, look on me," I cried, as I cast myself on my knees beside him.

"My father, my lost, my murdered father!" faintly murmured he, while the blood streaming from a wound in his shoulder, to my terrified imagination presented death again in all its horrors.

The entrance of the surgeon recalled my scattered senses; I assisted in conveying him to a chamber—his wound was ex-

examined—a ball was found lodged below the collar bone, and was safely extracted; but the loss of blood was immense, and the patient fainted repeatedly: during the operation I sustained him in my arms, and re-assured him, by every suggestion that could console his deeply-wounded heart, content to remain in profound ignorance of what had happened, rather than awake any idea which might add to his affliction.

Absolute quiet was recommended by the skilful surgeon who attended him, as paramount to every other medicine; and he particularly requested that Jones and myself might be the only persons admitted to his room; when the patient was laid in bed, he administered an opiate; but Charles emphatically said—“If my brother forgive me, I need no other lenitive.”

Oh! with what earnestness did I repeat my forgiveness! how often did I beseech Heaven to restore me the man I had so lately and so rashly dared almost to execrate!

After many anxious hours were passed, I had at length the satisfaction of observing slumber close his eyes; but as if fearful that I should quit him, he had held my hand till he dropped asleep, and it was some time before I could disengage it, and be enabled to learn from Jones the dreadful circumstances which had led to this afflicting situation.

It appeared that when Mrs. Beaumarris took my note from poor Thomas, it was with an intention of sending it at such a time as it would best suit her to make the affair public; and not supposing that the affair of a country gentleman's death would immediately engage the attention of the fashionable world, she determined to fulfil the engagements which more immediately lay before her, and then to adopt the most becoming mourning, and circulate a report of some immense legacy, which had fallen to her husband by the death of his father.

Pursuant to this plan, she drove Thomas from the house, who being grieved for

his master's loss, and offended with her, fulfilled her wishes by not revealing his errand to the servants; so that the countess of Rippondale was her only confidant in the business, and as *she* suggested the plan, she was supposed likely to keep the secret.

The countess was at this time stripping Harriet, and was interested in keeping her a few nights longer out of sables, being aware, that at the return of Beau-marris, he must necessarily interfere to save his lady from the snares which surrounded her, in the elegant coterie to which she had been introduced. Harriet knew that there was *one* whose will was much more a law to her than that of her husband, who would not forgive her the sums she had already lost, and she was the more anxious to play again, in the hopes of retrieving them; under these circumstances, the note was placed in her own writing-desk; she went out as if nothing had happened, lost more money, spent the next morning in making excuses to duns, and

contrivances about her dress; spent the evening again at hazard, with even worse luck than before; and in the vexation which followed, now actually forgot the note.

Charles returned from Newmarket much poorer than he went; for though he had not lost much himself, he had been foolishly led to join in a bond with colonel Eldricke, who had been completely pillaged: they came to London together, and went to the colonel's house, for he *could* go upon such an occasion even to the woman he had ruined; but Beaumaris could *not* with ease meet the woman who was now doing all in her power to *ruin* him; conscious as he was that he had injured their mutual fortune, in an attempt to save one, whom he had now but too much reason to believe an unprincipled and ruined gamester.

Mrs. Eldricke was at home, and alone; she was wretched, but uncomplaining; the colonel spoke of his ill luck in general terms, and she sighed; he told her he had

sold his estate in Glamorganshire, and she wept, but reproach passed not her lip.

Charles was cut to the heart, and he essayed to comfort her; whilst the colonel took equal pains to amuse a favourite greyhound, which at last he left the room to feed.

When he was gone, Mrs. Eldricke spoke —“ The loss of one’s property is a sad thing, to be sure; but the heart that *loves* may endure worse pangs than this; mine has borne many such, Mr. Beaumarris, and, doubtless, so has yours.”

Charles did not understand her allusion, but he recollected that she had made many such of late; and he was about to beg she would be more explicit, when the colonel re-entered; and after spending an hour in constrained spirits, he went home, and finding Harriet at the countess of Rippondale’s, he retired to his chamber.

On seeing him the next morning, the memory of the note, and of my father’s death, flashed full upon her mind; she perceived that his spirits were affected,

and concluded that he had heard something of her losses; and though naturally unfeeling, and habitually confident, she shrunk from the just anger which she was sensible of inviting; and went to her new friend, the countess, to consult with her on the possibility of doing so; previous to her setting out, Charles gave her some particulars of his ill run at Newmarket, and mentioned that of his friend Eldricke's also.

Harriet left the room as he was speaking, with a countenance disfigured by extreme vexation; Charles was grieved that he had spoken any thing which could pain her, though he had long since ceased to believe himself so fondly beloved as he *had flattered* himself; yet he was led to impute much of her coldness and occasional petulance to her situation; and he felt so much pity for the ailments of pregnancy, that he fancied he could never do enough to relieve them; and the consciousness of not loving her, induced him to pay her more attention, and bear her fret-

ful humours and extravagancies with more temper, than many a husband does who loves his wife with the sincerest affection.

Under this feeling he followed her to her dressing-room; she was sealing a note, he thought; but the moment he entered, she locked the desk, and hastened to her carriage.

Charles sauntered to Brookes's, from thence to the picture auction, took a ride in the Park, met with lord Somerton, and agreed to dine with him; when he went home to dress, and mentioned this engagement, his lady said she was glad of it, as she should dine with Mrs. Eldricke.

All the time Charles sat at dinner, he saw the eyes of two gentlemen fixed upon him, with an expression he could not define; he had seen it before in the course of the day, but imputed it to his adventures at Newmarket; he determined to meet their inquiring glances by speaking of the affair. In the meantime, they had informed lord Somerton what they meant;

and *he*, fully persuaded that Charles was ignorant of a statement they had read in the York Herald that morning, drew him aside, and with great kindness and due-sympathy, revealed my father's death, but not the manner of it.

“It is impossible, utterly *impossible!*” cried Charles; yet he darted out of the house like lightning, and flying home, inquired of the porter what letters or messengers had been at his house during his absence? the man said the letters were all forwarded to him; that a man came from the Park one day, but he never told him his business, further than saying he had left a note with his lady.

“A note!” cried Charles; and the note he had seen in the hands of Mrs. Beaumarris, and which she had shut up with such precipitation, instantly occurred to him; he flew to her dressing-room, seized her writing-case, which was a Tunbridge-toy, and breaking it against the fire-place, several papers flew out, and, amongst the rest, one sealed, but without a direction,

and which appeared from its shape to be the one concealed from him; he had no longer any doubt of the fatal truth; he saw in the undirected note the agitation of my mind; and unable to read it, he rung the bell, and when Jones appeared, he put it into his hand, repeating what he had heard, and begged him to read it instantly.

Jones opened it, and found these words:

“ How could you be so mad as to sell the Glamorganshire estate, when you knew it was the only place where I could retire with safety, and make up the accident that is to account for my *accouchement* in June? You have deranged my plans entirely. I cannot send you the bills I promised, having lost them to the countess, and can get no more out of him. The old fellow at the Park is dead. I am impatient to talk with you on many subjects.

H. B.”

Jones examining the note, found it had been sealed by a wet wafer, and was scarcely injured; he placed it amongst the other papers, which had fallen from the writing-box, and retired to watch the event, after spreading the sad news of sir Frederic's death through the house.

When Harriet's maid met her with the tidings, and described the broken box and scattered papers, she flew to the place, with every mark of guilty trepidation in her countenance; but having secured her own note, which she instantly burnt without examining it, her composure returned, and the sorrows of her heart-stricken husband awoke not a single sigh.

Jones now concerted a plan with his master, which, by employing his mind, saved him from the cruel reflections which every instant increased upon him. According to this plan, they set out the next day as for Sedgewood Park, but returned to London in the night, concealed themselves, and watched for the colonel; they did not perceive him the first night, but

the second enabled the dishonoured husband to expose the infamy of the vile pair to every part of his family.

Charles challenged the colonel, who dared to add murder to the list of his transgressions; and being a well practised shot, had little doubt of his own success, opposed to a young unskilful man, agitated by almost every species of grief that could unnerve the arm and tear the heart of man. They both fired, and both fell at the same moment. On examination, it was found that Charles had received a ball in the shoulder, and had lodged one in the hip of his antagonist, which having carried part of his clothing along with it, proved difficult to extract, and for many days the colonel was considered in great danger; he escaped with life, but must experience to the end of his days, perpetual and painful lameness.

Mrs. Beaumarris, as soon as she was informed of the fate of the duel, fled to the countess of Rippondale's; the countess refused to admit her; she went to her fa-

ther's mansion ; but it was likewise shut ; so she came back again in real distress ; for as Grey says—" the unfeeling for his own" sorrow has sense enough.

" She told her neighbour," through private chit-chat, public conversation, and the daily prints, that Mr. Beaumarris was mortally wounded, in consequence of which all his creditors, of every description, crowded round the house : foremost in the rank were noblemen and other gentlemen of the turf, for debts of honour ; and amongst these, the very first was the person who held the bond given on the colonel's account.

When I reflect on this business, my patience fails ; such an insight into the worst side of human nature was presented to my view, in the transactions I was now condemned to have with the world, that my heart turned loathing from my own species, and I blushed to find myself bearing the same form with the harpies that had preyed upon my brother, and who now brought forward such claims, that all which

remained of his noble fortune shrunk beneath them to a comparative trifle.

But of all the vampires which had fastened on the unhappy Charles, no blood-sucker was found equal to the rapacious wife, who had not only been in the habit of continually getting money from him, and extravagant presents, but had actually appropriated to her own use all those sums which he had given her to liquidate the tradesmens' bills for furnishing their extravagant house, it being completely out of Charles's system of errors to suffer a tradesman to wait; but the people employed by Mrs. Beaumarris, knowing her character, had reckoned on not receiving their money for some time, and their bills bore a proportionate charge.

Being vested with full powers by the self-reproaching sufferer, I collected all his debts, and in the first place paid all his tradespeople, a mode of conduct which surprised them so much, that in many instances, considerable deductions from their charges were voluntarily made; which

proved that they would not be dishonest, if they were not driven to it by a neglect of justice in their employers. I then discharged the accursed bond, and every other vestige of debt; at the end of which time, finding my brother, though extremely weak, capable of being removed, I procured lodgings for him at Kensington, and accompanied him thither.

The great loss of blood had left Beaumarrisso extremely languid, that a decline was exceedingly apprehended by his medical attendants, and his spirits and strength seemed fled together; he seldom spoke one word more than was necessary, but his eyes never met mine without either indicating pleasure at my return, or a deep sense of shame for the embarrassing business in which I was engaged; but from the moment he left his house, he appeared to feel as if a burthen was removed from him, that had retarded his recovery; and this gave me new spirits in prosecuting the arduous task before me.

CHAP. XI.

A shameless woman is the worst of men. YOUNG.

I NOW informed lord Llanberry, who had hitherto, either from shame or political engagement, kept aloof, that, at my brother's request, I was about to dispose of his house and furniture in Berkeley-square, and requested that he would advise with his daughter how to dispose of herself.

Lord Llanberry appointed a meeting, from which my heart shrunk, for it bled for the dishonoured father: he, however, sustained it with a firmness which enabled me to lay before him not only those proofs of his daughter's criminality, on which a law process was now founding for the establishment of a divorce, but those documents which proved how far she had robbed her husband, for the purpose of supporting Eldricke, and paying her own gaming debts, besides various douceurs

which it appeared lady Llanberry had condescended to accept from her daughter.

Lord Llanberry replied to all this, by requesting to know what settlement Mr. Beaumarris intended to make on his wife?

“ My brother received no fortune whatever with the lady.”

“ True ; but his own fortune was large, and the law, he *believed*, that is, he *fancied*, the law would provide for even repudiated wives ; it was a most distressing circumstance ; he was the father of five younger children than Harriet, of whom three were growing fine young women ; he could not take her home to them : and the scanty provision he would be enabled to make her, especially when she became a mother, condemned him to throw himself on the generosity of Mr. Beaumarris, whom, as he understood to be a dying man, would, he trusted, not carry his resentments beyond the grave.”

“ Whether my brother lives or dies,” said I, shrinking from the contaminating

coldness of this bartering politician, “ I must tell you, my lord, that this conversation for ever closes all intercourse and connexion between Charles and Harriet Beaumarris; on *his* behalf I now offer and guarantee the interest of five thousand pounds to your daughter for life; it is the only offer I shall make, except saying, that the child of which she is now pregnant, (and doubtless was so six weeks before her marriage, at which period my brother was far distant from her,) shall, on its attaining the age of twenty-one years, receive half that sum, its illegitimacy being previously proved.”

Lord Llanberry observed—“ It was very little for a gentlewoman to live upon.”

“ True, my lord; but it is surely sufficient for an unchaste daughter, and an adulterous wife, since Mrs. Wallingford, who is the virtuous spouse of a worthy husband, has nothing more at present.”

It may be supposed by my fair readers, that during this time the disgraced wife was wringing her hands in utter despair,

since we generally find, that ladies so situated in novels die broken-hearted, or poison themselves, or fall into premature child-birth, when both themselves and infants perish; and all these cases are, indeed, very natural terminations of those criminal, but sometimes pitiable beings, who have been misled by the susceptibility of their natures, and the seduction of wicked men: but Harriet was not of this description; she was fond of the colonel, from the similarity of their characters, and the eclat which she thought his attentions gave her; but he could not be said to seduce her, since she did not sin with him till he had been many weeks the husband of her friend; *she*, by his advice, inveigled Charles into marriage, by the affectation of a passion for him, which, outstepping the boundaries of prudence, though not of chastity, subjected her to that loss of reputation, which she well knew was a misfortune most calculated to move *his* pity. The same arts she practised on Charles, were likewise exerted on Mrs. Eldricke,

whom she cajoled a considerable time; but love like *hers* was more quick-sighted than indifference like Charles's; and whilst she agreed to pay Harriet the tenderest attentions of a friend, she did it more from the fear of her husband's violence, than blindness to the connexion. In fact, after Charles's marriage, Eldricke, who had only sought Harriet's person as a species of substitute for her sister, for whom alone he really "felt, not feigned, a flame," would have dropt the connexion, either sated with a prize too easily won, or feeling some compunctious visitings of conscience towards the man whose generous affection, and unsuspecting confidence, must awaken such sensations at times, in the very heart of a demon: but it so happened, that the eldest brother of Eldricke caught a severe cold in the winter, which falling on his lungs, soon became confirmed consumption, under which he was still lingering; and as this opened a direct prospect of a coronet for Eldricke's brow, Harriet, whose ambitious heart had ever aspired to one,

determined to share it with him; and by supplying him with all the cash she could drain from her husband, she purchased the continuance of a connexion, which sometime, though not yet, she hoped to turn to her own account.

It may be said that Mrs. Eldricke was in the way. Yes; but the wicked judge of others by themselves; and Harriet concluded that a despised, insulted, neglected, and injured woman, who was attractive in her manners, and agreeable in her person, need not be long in the world without obtaining that kind of revenge which would liberate the colonel. The deep grief, the retired manners, the submissive virtues of Mrs. Eldricke, when she found that the world she had so lately entered had given only fairy visions to her eyes, and a viper to her bosom, assured Mrs. Beaumarris that she was mistaken in this respect; but still lothe to resign the promised prospect, she adopted, with equal facility, the idea, that the wife would break her heart with sorrow, long before the time when it was

probable that a coronet should await her brow.

In *this* respect her judgment was as fallible as the other: wives ever continue very pertinaciously to live, when their deaths are wished for; and grief may torture the heart for many a year without breaking it; the constitution may droop, and the rose fade, and yet life may continue, and even health revive, after a long, long series of suffering, where that suffering is unmixed with the corroding pang of remorse, and the turmoil of violent and contending passions.

After this exhibition of my sister-in-law, it will not be thought surprising, that she continued not only to live, but to eat, drink, and sleep, notwithstanding all that happened; it is true, she was humbled, mortified, and grieved exceedingly; but pity for her situation kept all personal insult far from her, and continued to her the comforts of that luxury to which she was habituated; and as she was constantly

determined to share it with him; and by supplying him with all the cash she could drain from her husband, she purchased the continuance of a connexion, which sometime, though not yet, she hoped to turn to her own account.

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informed that the colonel was doing well, and his brother growing worse, and that Mrs. Eldricke was weeping by the sickbed of her husband both day and night, she contrived to make up a subject of hope, which enabled her to endure a disgrace so complete, a degradation so unequivocal, as rarely happens, even to the fallen.

I had written various short letters to my mother-in-law during this period, and had received several from my aunt Barbara, who, notwithstanding her weakness, had exerted herself to write to lady Atwood, who had answered her letter from Guernsey, sincerely condoling with the family on this afflicting event; saying in conclusion, that they were on the point of leaving the island, having parted with captain Campbell for Spain, and not finding it by any means the situation which could benefit their dear Adelaide; adding some remarks on the uncertainty of life, which appeared less to arise from the ideas suggested from the former part of the letter, than the contemplation of Adelaide's sickness; as she ob-

served they should continue to travel with her during the succeeding summer; and she would write again on their landing in England, to inform her dear friends at the Park how to address letters to them.

This precious packet was forwarded to me, just as I was closing the long and distressing business in which I was engaged, and it affected me with so many fears for Adelaide, that I would have set out immediately for the coast, if I had not perceived by the date of the letter, that there was no chance of meeting her there, and that my only certain measure would be waiting till I could hear further. Alas! my heart had been so wrung with severer passions, that gentle Love appeared to have withdrawn his softer claims on my feelings; but he now returned, and with him the memory of my father; the fatal morning rose again on my bewildered view, with all its train of horrors; and I scarcely could conceive how it was possible that, under such accumulated anguish, I had been enabled to

exert myself now many weeks, in the manner I had done, dividing my time between the cares of a nurse and the exertions of a steward, not considering, that such is the elastic nature of man's mind, and such the help which is accorded from above to those who seek it, that our energies rise in proportion to our necessities, and there is no bounding either the power of suffering or the progress of exertion.

At length I had satisfied every creditor, disposed of every superfluity, reduced the remaining property to a certain sum, and ascertained its regular income; and conscious that my presence was greatly needed at home, and that although our movements must be slow, yet it was possible to convey my brother with safety, I therefore proposed to him, that he should accompany me to Sedgewood Park, as the native air he would enjoy there was more likely to benefit him than any thing I knew of.

“ You need not trouble yourself, my dear Theodore, to find reasons,” said he, with a languid smile, “ for I am perfectly

willing to set out. I once hated Fairborough, for I thought it had wronged me; but I have found since then, that cruelty and wrong exist every where; and I likewise trust some good may be found every where; but men who have been brought up on our own soil, like you and me, will be more likely to find it in the country than in London, and henceforth I will seek it there."

I congratulated him warmly, on having overcome the antipathy he had formerly expressed for the inhabitants of Fairborough, whom I assured him, with great truth—"Gave us all a lash by turns; but had long ago ceased to mention his name in any other language but that of respect."

"Ah!" said he, with a sigh, "when I was innocent, they called me guilty; and stung with undeserved censure, I plunged into the world, and became the very thing I despised, (though not so base as they reported me); and now I *merit* reproof, I may escape it, for the world rarely bestows

her stripes in the right place. But whatever may have been my past sensations towards my native place, I now renounce all bitterness towards her—the people of Fairborough have atoned for their transgression towards me; they have done that which *I* have *not* done—that which my full heart yearns to do. Oh, Theodore! the lowest peasant on our grounds, more blest than me, has wept over the grave of my father.”

Charles is *restored*, said my gladdened soul; and the tears of grateful rapture mingled with those of painful recollection.

CHAP. XII.

Should I lash you in general fiction,

Is't I apply, or self-conviction?

GAY.

It was now June, and the days being long and warm, I thought we might reach Hatfield that evening; and giving the neces-

sary orders to Jones and Thomas, I went into London, for the purpose of getting a draft exchanged at Hammersley's, and bidding a final adieu to Mr. Heavysides, who was the only person with whom I had held any friendly or intimate intercourse during this distressing period of my residence in London.

My heart was lighter, with the thoughts of flying from this scene of bitter mortification and severe suffering, than it had felt for many weeks; and, for the first time, I allowed my eyes to look for the momentary amusement the streets of our wonderful metropolis can always present to a disengaged mind; in doing this, I was led to remark, that the British Gallery was open, and I was tempted in, less by a general desire of seeing the pictures, than by a recollection that I might hear something of the artist whose society had enlivened my northern tour, and who had mentioned his intention of exhibiting pictures in this place, from views of the mountain scenery which we had examined together.

On entering, I found myself insensibly and delightfully engaged, especially when I found a pair of pictures by H——, which had been sketched under my own eye, and that of my father's, who had pointed out their beauties; the moment this crossed my mind, I sought the keeper of the gallery, intending to purchase them. On inquiring the price, I was literally shocked to be asked only seventy guineas for them both; and I repeated the words with surprise, which the keeper mistaking, said—

“It is so little, sir, that it would be painful for me to ask the young artist who painted them to take less; but if you will leave your name and address, I will tell him to write you on the subject.”

I laid down my card, and a hundred pound bill, saying I could not think of giving less for the pictures.

The gentleman finding himself agreeably mistaken, attended me round the room, to point out some other things to my attention, leaving my card on the table; I soon after saw a stylish-looking woman

take it up, and, after reading it, cast her eyes round the room with great solicitude. I fancied those eyes were familiar to me, but did not immediately recollect the owner; so turned to the picture recommended to my notice, going from thence to see a plaster figure of Antoninus.

“That is fine, very fine,” said a gentleman behind me to his companion; “what a pity it is we see no such men in these degenerate days!”

“I do not agree with you, my lord,” replied a female voice; “I have seen a person so like this, that I almost am tempted to believe the statuary took him for his model.”

The voice now put me in mind of Mrs. Bellington, as the lady who had seen my card, and believing she referred to my naked appearance at Bath, I felt lothe to turn my head, and meet the compliment; yet having seen her at the rooms with Adelaide, I felt, too, an irresistible propensity

to address her; whilst I stood awkwardly hesitating, the gentleman replied—

“ Since ladies have turned historic artists, there is no pretending to say what they may say or *see*; it has never been my good fortune to meet with Grecian figures yet, either in pantaloons or petticoats; 'tis the province of your sex to claim the privilege of painters, and strip them of both; but not being one of the initiated, I keep at all due distance from sacred mysteries, doubtless to my great loss.”

“ Lord Byreland's severity seldom is at a loss for a subject; his tongue, like his pen, has a point that can cut, and a feather that can tickle; now, in the name of beauty, my lord, give the higher pursuits of the sex the feather, and you will be the better able to spare the point to wound their follies; surely painting must be classed with *our best* pursuits?”

“ Undoubtedly; for a fine taste, a brilliant imagination, patient attention, and

delicate investigation, are among the first qualities of the female mind, and they are all required in this divine art."

" Sing Io pæans ! I triumph ; if women paint, they must have the requisite models ; living figures are allowed to be the best, and therefore from *living* figures we must draw."

" Fair lady, fair lady, be not so bold,' as the old song says ; though I spoke of painting in general, as a charming study for your sex, I did not speak of the labours of the historic muse in particular ; there is a line to be drawn in this, as in all other cases : when I see one of your sex tending the sickbed of her parent or friend, or even feeding him and shaking his pillows, I say she is properly and amiably employed ; but if I saw the same hands employed in amputating his limb, or reducing his fracture, I should shrink from the sight, whatever might be the skill and address of the fair practitioner."

" Oh horrible, my lord ! how came you by such a beastly idea ? You cer-

tainly did not find *that* in the regions of Parnassus?"

"No; but I picked it up in the dwelling of common sense, a place poets frequently visit, though they may not often reside there; and I will maintain that the *beastliness* of the thing, (a term I should certainly think too strong in either case,) is not comparable to that of seeing a young woman drawing the naked figure from a full-grown woman, under the direction of a *man*, whose province it is to point out and vary the attitudes and beauties of the model; because, in *one* case, a work of benevolence and utility is actually performed, of acknowledged consequence; in the *other*, manners are introduced, customs reversed, and the finer feelings of the sex violated, on the very distant chance, the paradoxical possibility, of a woman making an historical painter."

"*Paradoxical!* my lord, you forget Angelica Kauffman."

"No; I *remember* her—she had great taste, great talents too; but all her men

are women; from which I infer, that she confined her studies to her own sex; and I forgive the error of the painter, for the more amiable timidity of the woman. But *one* Angelica makes poor amends for a race of daubing misses, who, professing themselves to be *her* disciples, lose the talents they might really render efficient, if applied to miniature, fruit, flowers, or even landscape painting."

"But surely, my lord, you will not contend so far on the^d side of vulgar prejudice, as to condemn the *innocence* of the pursuit. You cannot call a woman *immodest*, for examining one production of nature any more than another; an animal or vegetable production, a man or a tree, a girl or a rose, are alike objects of admiration to the enlightened and investigating mind, the vivid and awakened imagination."

"True; but they are not objects of *only equal* interest to any being, till it is become *entirely intellectual* or *habitually abstracted*; an artist *may*, and *does*, become the last; but with all my respect for the

fair, I fear that his female pupil will not be found to be the first; but allowing her to be as much of an angel as may suit her own convenience, yet her conduct holds out an example that never can accord with my ideas of propriety; and if you will allow me to quote the Bible, I would say—“All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient:” the ladies who do these things are innocent, in the *common* acceptance of the term, and doubtless very chaste (so shall they ever remain for *me*;) but how far they are modest, is another affair.”

“Fie, my lord! I am sure I know *several* who are—but what do you mean by modesty?”

“I mean that intuitive delicacy, heightened by education and habit, which leads the truly feminine to shrink not only from guilt, but its faintest shadow, and to tremble at every species of sexual allusion, by a sense of impropriety more subtle than reason, more rapid than reflection; more animating than prudence, yet combining

the essence of them *all*; in short, it is to the mind what your veil is to your face, a thing many people conceive you could do without, because you have a handsome set of features under it, and which the purblind condemn, because they cannot see through it, but which every *finer* eye delights in; as the medium which adds loveliness to beauty, and softness to brilliance. In fact, this bewitching charm has so meliorating a power, that I can assure you, I have known many men who would prefer a woman who kept her veil, after she had lost her chastity, to one who retained her innocence, but had read away, talked away, or painted away all pretensions to this spell-binding veil."

"But is that possible, lord Byreland?"

"Look at that pretty amateur, not seventeen, I dare say, who is examining the sea-nymph, painted by another amateur; she has made that young officer blush, you perceive; now can you conceive that this fair girl wears such a veil as Adelaide At-

wood's *purser* mind would exhibit in a moment like this?"

I started, and turned round; the lady moved to me, and lord Byreland, to whom I had been introduced in the winter, immediately accosted me with great frankness, while Mrs. Bellington struggled for a blush with all her might, and succeeded as well as those do who "call spirits from the vasty deep;" but after a few ineffectual efforts, she apologized for the liberty she took in inquiring after her dear friend, Mrs. Wallingford, whom she understood resided somewhere in my neighbourhood, and whose retirement she was extremely anxious to share?

To this I answered—"That the lady was well, I believed; but very painful circumstances had precluded me from the pleasure of seeing her for more than two months."

"Our situation is similar," said Mrs. Bellington, endeavouring to squeeze a tear, which, like the preceding blush, re-

fused to be prest into her service ; “ we are alike bereft of our bosom lords ; but mine has been far longer parted from me than the major from her ; and though our intimacy is but a slight one at present, yet I have felt an ardent desire to associate with a mind, whose congenial sorrows might tend to congenial intercourse. May I ask if you, sir Theodore, would enable me to participate the retirement of your friend ? ”

Had the question been less positive, I might have hesitated in my answer ; but I had no difficulty in saying, that—“ Mrs. Wallingford resided with an elderly lady, who was in so infirm a state of health, that I was afraid it was impossible for her to receive any stranger.”

The blush of anger visited that cheek which shame had deserted ; and as I did not really wish to part with her till I had made some further inquiries, I added, that it was very possible Mrs. Wallingford might alter her plans in the course of the sum-

mer, in which case Mrs. Bellington's society would add much to her comfort.

The lady softened—"I have heard lady Atwood," said she, "speak much of a rural retirement, called the Castle House, which I wish much to occupy, if it were possible."

"Nothing is impossible to such a glance," cried his lordship, sportively quoting,

"Alike her silence and her pleadings move,
Whose voice is music, and whose looks are love."

"The house you speak of, madam," said I, feeling the long-forgotten mantle of Mrs. Grogan wrap my face, "is most dreadfully out of repair; but I will—I will——"

"Put it in order for *me*—ten thousand thanks."

Never, whispered every feeling, *never* shall the abode of Adelaide be polluted by coquetry or——

The lady interrupted me by words that

instantly annihilated every other feeling—

“ I suppose you know, sir Theodore, that it is all over with poor Adelaide Atwood ? ”

“ *Over!* madam—what can you mean ? ”

“ *Mean!* my good sir Theodore, I mean that the poor girl is in a confirmed consumption; they brought her, a few days ago, from Guernsey to Southampton, and fancying that the sea agreed with her, the baronet has engaged a coasting vessel, and they are gone down to the Highlands and the Hebrides, and the Lord knows where; but I am quite certain 'tis all nonsense; for though lady Atwood insists upon it, that as she had neither cough nor fever, she may get better, yet it is my misfortune to *know* she cannot.”

Here the lady thought it necessary to sigh; for I am persuaded my face assumed a very ghastly hue, and she was determined to sympathize with all *my* feelings; in fact, I should have immediately escaped,

had I not lingered in that forlorn kind of hope, which arises from doubt in the veracity of the informer: as my tongue clove to my mouth, and all reply or observation was impossible, I felt relieved when lord Byreland exclaimed—

“ My dear Mrs. Bellington, your fears mislead you. Ah! lovely Adelaide,

Thou art not form'd for living here,
 For thou art kindred with the sky;
 Yet, yet we hold thee all so dear,
 We think thou wert not form'd to die.”

“ Had I the poetical talents of lord Byreland,” said the lady, sneeringly, “ I would neither be indebted to the formal poets of the last day, nor the loose ones of the present, for a complimentary verse; but, perhaps, your lordship reserves your powers till the fatal hour comes, as *come it will*, when Miss Atwood shall call for an elegy instead of a love-song.”

“ No!” replied he emphatically, “ I will never write Adelaide's, for sorrow like

mine would never measure rhimes in such a case; but since you dare me to make verses upon her—

I'll say—"Those orbs of melting blue,
The dewy fragrance of that lip,
Were given for angel bands to view,
And seraph forms of light to sip."

I'll say--"That sweet and spotless soul,
Unmeet to wed and linger here,
Escap'd from weeping earth's controul,
May mingle in a brighter sphere.

Yet not to cold and vulgar death,
E'en then the beauteous boon is given;
Some cherub shall exhale her breath,
And waft it on his lyre to Heaven."

The lady praised this impromptu; but I felt it; and hastily wringing the poet's hand, while I bowed to her, I withdrew, deeply affected, and almost repenting that I had entered the place.

Our journey to Sedgewood Park was necessarily tedious; but we accomplished it safely, and found lady Sedgewood anxiously awaiting our arrival, and prepared with

every thing which could in any way contribute to the comfort to the invalid. Charles was severely affected on entering the paternal mansion; he felt himself as the prodigal son returning to his father's house; but, alas! there was no father to whose tenderness he could appeal: the voice of joy was no longer heard in the dwelling—the pale features and shrunken form of lady Sedgewood, in her widow's garb, and the want which the eye had of *him*, who was ever the life of his family, was sensibly felt in every moment; and while they awoke more lively sensations of sorrow in Beaumarris, and greatly tended to retard his recovery, my spirits gradually sunk into the lethargy of grief—I had ceased to act for others, and I now began to feel for myself; and in proportion as I became released from external troubles, I became the prey of internal anguish, which slowly preyed upon my health, and sapped the springs of life and the powers of happiness together.

CHAP. XIII.

Hour follows hour, day follows day, and year
 (If I may last so long) will follow year,
 Like drops that through some cavern'd hermit's cell
 The cold spring filters, glancing on his eye,
 At measur'd intervals, but moving not
 His fix'd unvarying notice. MISS BAILLIE.

“It is a very odd thing,” said *she* to her neighbour; “what can be the matter with sir Theodore? it is now several months since he lost his father, and time, they say, softens all sorrows; and it seems strange that a fine young man, not three-and-twenty, in possession of an ancient title, and a large unincumbered estate, and beloved by all around him, should pine away, as it were, and spend his time in wandering about in solitary places.”

“He must have more on his mind than any body knows about,” returned the neighbour, “if one may judge from appearances; though we have always thought

him so *good*, there is something on his conscience of some kind, depend upon it. Alas! there are no more sir Frederics, even in the Sedgewood family;—no, *his* like we shall not look on again.”

But surely there are, among my readers, who can account for the deep melancholy which stole over my mind at this period, without referring the matter to my conscience. My father, he who had inspired my hopes, supported my resolutions, and invigorated my virtues, was *gone*; my brother, that darling being, who had given life its highest zest, and ambition its dearest stimulant, was now a withered plant, faded ere it had met the meridian ray—blighted in the very morning of youth, and presenting an object for “Scorn to point his slow unmoving finger to,” at the period when natural expectation looked to see him advanced in situation, and dignified by the union of a person, education, talents, and fortune, every way calculated to awake rational hope, and gratify unbounded affection—all, *all* was fallen.

And where was Adelaide? where was the promise of my early love? those hopes awakened but to be crushed, renewed in the dream of an hour,

“That I might more intensely know
The bitterness of waking woe?”

Sometimes, as this subject pressed more immediately on my mind, I felt myself inclined to set out immediately in search of her, but the horrible recollection of what had befallen me on the same occasion, completely overcame me; and though I could not remain sitting in the place where I was, yet I had not courage to venture on a search, which might blast me with a spectacle even more terrible than the last. I would then arise, and fly to the most obscure glens or the remotest woods in the neighbourhood, and traverse them with a rapidity in unison with the feverish restlessness and unprofitable toil which harrassed my heart. I became melancholy and superstitious; my mind con-

tinually dwelt on the last conversation I had ever held with my father, and instead of rejoicing in it, as I certainly ought, since it afforded me the consolation of knowing that he was taken from this world to a better, in the way agreeable to his own wishes on the subject, I conceived that every word he had uttered arose from a presentiment of what was about to befall me, and that he had, in speaking of sudden death, foretold his own ; and in descanting on the greater misery attending wasting disease, had forewarned me of the fate of Adelaide, and probably of Charles likewise.

From continually revolving this subject in my mind, I obtained a terrible familiarity with it ; and as the jealous man ever seeks for the food which he feels to be poison, so my mind, weakened by suffering, sought food to feed its sorrows, and apologize for their indulgence ; and as the kind hand of her who once snatched me from despondency was now unable to rouse me, and had no longer the same motive for her own exertion, I went on my

own way—either sunk in the listlessness of apathy, or the grief of despair.

Charles, in the mean time, slowly recovered his strength, and the rose of health faintly tinged his cheek; when lady Sedgewood pointed this out to me as a comfort, my jaundiced mind instantly converted it into a source of sorrow; and I applied Mrs. Opie's lines to the case—

“ For health I saw in Henry's bloom,
Nor knew it mark'd him for the tomb;”

and from this time every indication he gave of health, I attributed to sickness; and by a parity of reasoning, I concluded that Adelaide was undoubtedly affected precisely in the same way; and that if ever her wanderings ceased, and I was permitted once more to cast my eyes on her lovely form, it would be merely to witness the same terrible beauty which lighted up the sunken eye, and painted the cheeks of those lovely victims which had so often

awakened my compassion at the Hot-wells of Bristol.

Under these reflections, my days were consumed with regret, my nights a prey to anguish; and I glided round my paternal domains, rather like the ghost of some former possessor revisiting them, than the actual incumbent, called upon to fulfil important duties, and occupy the place of *the baronet*. I wandered about, reckless of all things, save some gloomy spot, where I might sit down, and ponder unmolested on all I felt, and all I feared; rejoicing only that advancing autumn promised me an increase of that gloom most congenial to my feelings.

During this period, I one day received a letter from Mrs. Bellington, saying that she had expected to hear from me some time, informing her that the castle-house was ready for her reception, and requesting an immediate answer.

I laid the letter on the table with a deep sigh, saying, I wished Charles would tell Wilson to answer it, by some proper ex-

cuse, as I did not choose to let the castle-house.

Having settled this business, I went to the library as usual, when I did not ramble in the woods, but soon after sent for the key of the house, determining I would go thither ; and surprised that I had never indulged myself by feeding that sensation, which, in its earliest stage, had shrunk from beholding the spot I now sought.

In the course of a few days, I became so fond of the castle-house, that I ordered a bed to be prepared for me there, and professed a determination of spending the autumn in a place where its beauties were peculiarly seen, and might be enjoyed. My friends did not oppose my wishes, under the idea that any change would amuse me, and none could make me worse. I therefore arranged a few books and drawing materials, though little likely either to read or sketch ; and ordering my dinner to be sent at a given hour every day, prepared to depart to my hermitage the next morning.

Letters of various kinds had been given to Charles, who was, at this time, prosecuting his suit against colonel Eldricke, and who, having written himself to Mrs. Bellington, apologizing for my neglect, now observed she had written an answer, which, with a mournful air, he placed in my step-mother's hand.

Not caring for *that* or any *other* thing, I was leaving the room, when lady Sedgewood's observation roused me.

“ I do not believe it: the letters which lady Atwood has been enabled to send me, as they have gone in at different parts, have all spoken of the *amendment* of her daughter.”

“ Is Adelaide dead ?” said I, with a composure that astonished them.

“ Mrs. Bellington laments her as such; but I am fully persuaded she is mistaken, and I will give you my reasons.”

But hope was *dead* in my heart, and I would not hear any reasons which could reanimate her; waving my hand, I bade them adieu, casting a look of piercing sor-

row towards poor Charles, whom I conceived to be the next victim of the insatiate archer; and I then flew to hide myself in those shades which had, for many a century, contained the sorrows or enhanced the joys of my fathers.

When the gloom of October settled on the shaking turrets, and involved them in a deeper shade—while the humid breeze sighed through the falling leaves, or shook the mouldering battlements, I wandered round the ruins, and listened, with pensive delight, that rose to awe and led to anguish; then busy memory opened all her stores of suffering; and whatever I had honoured or loved in human nature, passed before me, in sad array, clothed in forms more fair, and virtues more angelic, than humanity could ever boast, and awakening lamentation, that only subsided from the inability of enduring continued agony.

When the moon, pale and misty, shone through a murky atmosphere, or contended with black clouds, imperfectly glancing on the grey stone or the silvery ash, again

the spirits of the departed stood around me. I beheld the blue eyes of my sainted mother, caught in the long vista of memory straining for its object—the playful arms of Arabella again twined round my neck, in the days of boyhood—whilst Adelaide and my father, awful and beauteous visions of a nearer day, held o'er my heart a solemn influence, more dear, as more immediate.

One morning I arose late, having rambled in the woods, by this impulse, till my nocturnal luminary had faded into daylight; and finding the morn so mild and beautiful, that,

“ All trick'd and flounc'd, as she were wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,”

I felt disgusted with her brilliance; and though I threw open the door which led to the little lawn, I did not step beyond it. I looked round the room, as if for something on which my eye might rest for an individual object of mourning; it was full of Adelaide—the books had been arranged

by her hand, the vases made with her assistance; *her* sketches were on the wall—these I took down, and laid them on the table before me, fixing my eyes upon them, and recalling every circumstance, every look which passed between us whilst these were drawing. I then said—“The hands that drew ye are now cold in death—that eye is now closed for ever;” and shutting my own, I clapped my hands upon my forehead, and almost felt as if the long, long sigh which followed would waft my own soul to that world of spirits where only it could find repose.

I know not how long I had continued thus—I know only that all the powers of my soul were absorbed in the contemplation of another world, while it turned revolting and sickening from all other things, and with trembling but aspiring foot, trod on the confines of a new existence, anxious to lift the awful veil of variation, and steal a glance of the departed, when a voice of more than mortal sweetness cried—“Theodore!”

I started, but again covered my face; the voice was Adelaide's. I was convinced no human being was near me, for Wilson, my only attendant, was gone: surely Heaven, in mercy to my sorrows, had permitted me to hear this voice, as a warning that I *too* was called to the invisible world, where all I loved was gone before me.

“Theodore—*dear* Theodore!”

I sprung upon my feet; the vision of Adelaide was indeed before me, and exhibited a form of ethereal yet palpable beauty—the sun shone upon her—she was fair and blooming; pity suffused her eye with a tear, yet joy dimpled round her beautiful mouth, as it was wont in the days of our infant loves; she held out her hand—I seized it—I covered it with kisses—I bathed it with tears.

“Forgive me!” cried I, “Father of Mercies, forgive me that I have dared to *despair*—that I have presumed to doubt thy goodness—and to waste, by sinful despondency, the time and talents thy mercy still had spared me! But Adelaide, dear, gene-

rous Adelaide ! how came you here ? what pitying angel thus snatched me from destruction ?”

“ I brought her here,” exclaimed Charles, exultingly springing from the door, where he had stood unseen by me ; “ I sought and found her, as *you* might have done, for she was only at Scarborough ; but I rejoice that you did *not*, since it enabled me to peep on this forbidden ground, with a good excuse in my hand.”

I looked at Charles, and perceived that he looked better than he had done for two years ; I rejoiced to see such an improvement in the last ten days.

“ I am sorry,” returned he, “ that I cannot return the compliment, though it is possible you may be looking well, if one could see through your beard ; and that noble crop of uncombed hair ; but, however, Miss Atwood, if you are satisfied with what you have seen, we will return—for I assure you, this wild man of the woods, though he looks very tame at present, is subject to

great irritation, if you thwart his solitary moods."

"Oh Adelaide, can you leave me?"

"We will walk home *together*, sir Theodore."

"Then I wish you good morning," said Beaumarris, bowing, "for I have really no ambition to be seen in such company."

Did Adelaide, the pure, the virtuous Adelaide, do wrong in suffering me to lead her to a seat for a *single minute*, which was lengthened into two of the most delicious hours ever granted to existence? Surely not; for they were hours not only sanctified by love, but even sorrow;—how much had we both to weep over! how much to relate! and surely if there ever was a moment when Adelaide was supereminently *dear*, it was when her tears flowed *most* freely for my father, and her lips were *most* eloquent in his praise.

We spoke of Emma, who remained at Southampton, having formed an agreeable acquaintance there; she spoke of captain Campbell as a man whom it was impossible

to know without esteeming ; but added—
“ Yet you must be aware that with all his virtues, he would not have been Emma’s choice, had your brother made her an earlier offer ; but unfortunately, during our stay in Madeira, we heard him mentioned as a man whose character was not without a *stain*, and, from that time, my father gave every sanction in his power to the addresses of captain Campbell, whom Emma treated with the frankness of a sister, owning that she had a great regard for Mr. Beaumarris, but that he had never made her an offer, which she imputed to his extreme youth, and not his want of love, since she was certain he entertained very tender sentiments for her. Campbell, on the other hand, conceived that, had he loved with sincerity, being independent, he would not have failed to make her an offer ; and under the idea that he was unworthy of her, persisted in a suit his delicacy would otherways have led him to decline ; and the fervency of his attachment, his unremitting attention, and the opportunities

he had of hourly rendering himself agreeable to Emma during our voyage, undoubtedly tended to give her a tender predilection in his favour; she told him every feeling of her heart, as it arose, with all her native simplicity and frankness; and said that as soon as she found herself sufficiently weaned from her former preference, she would not hesitate to bestow her hand on one who already possessed her unbounded esteem, and a considerable portion of her tenderness.

“ On our arrival in London, the news of the day gave your brother to us as the companion of a dissolute man, the professed admirer of a married woman, and the associate of those, who, having lost all pretensions to honest fame, were content to varnish their characters by a pretence to Fashion, and prostitute their talents in her service. My father shrunk from connecting such girls as we were with men of this description, and especially Emma, whose native gaiety, though perfectly innocent now, might subject her to great inconve-

nience hereafter; and he frequently pointed out to her, in strong terms, the misery brought on my uncle and his family by similar conduct; and Emma declared, that she was so convinced of the justice of his observations, that were it proved that Beaumarris were indeed such a man, she would renounce him in the most decided manner.

“Alas! she was too soon convinced. A lady of respectability, whom we have since found was an innocent tool in the hands of lady Llanberry and her daughter, confirmed the impression my father had already imbibed; and your brother’s character, thus ruined in our eyes, you cannot be surprised at his rejection, and the marriage of Emma followed of course.

“When the conduct of Mrs. Beaumarris was laid open to the world, the particulars of her treachery towards your brother led the lady in question to recollect how far *she* had been accessory to his injury; she had been instructed, to maintain his en-

gagement with Harriet, and even to lament it at the time she first spoke: she now saw through the whole, and wrote to my father, lamenting her own credulity; the letter only reached us about a fortnight ago, owing to the wandering life we have lately led. My father, who is as generous as he is fastidious, was extremely grieved; his heart was warmed towards the man he felt to be injured; he determined to indulge the wishes of my mother, in visiting lady Sedgewood, *en passant*; and we landed at Scarborough, where we found your brother, who had just arrived from Burlington, and whose urgent intreaties led us hither without farther delay; but it was late ere we arrived."

"Late! you did not sleep at the Park?"

"Indeed we *did*, though the master of the house would not welcome us."

"Cruel Adelaide! how could you delay my happiness?"

"You were *not* to be found any where."

"But this morning!"

“ You were in bed ; Charles and me saw you come down ; we had been walking above an hour when I entered.”

“ Then you must have seen me take down the sketches—you beheld my tears flow over them. Ah, Adelaide ! you saw how fondly you were beloved ; did you not see *all* ?”

She blushed, and would have turned from my ardent gaze ; but my eyes pursued the question, and recovering, she said—

“ If I had not seen *all*, you surely cannot suppose I would have accosted you as I *did*, Theodore ; though it is but justice to your brother’s eloquence to say, that never man bestowed so much upon a woman as he did to bring me hither, making converts previously of both my parents—but, indeed, our whole journey has been of as much importance to him as it can be even to you, I apprehend, for it seems to have given him a new being ; and since dear lady Sedgewood has revealed his sufferings to us, as occasioned by poor Em-

ma's mischance, we feel equally desirous of contributing to *his* comfort; and I am persuaded my father would not now deny him his daughter, though he did in the zenith of his fortune."

"Surely your father will be equally compassionate to *me*?"

"I shall go home, sir Theodore, directly; I am sure you will not have time to dress for dinner—but I had forgot, perhaps you will dine here?"

The saucy vixen ran out of the house, and I was forced to follow.

"I thought, Adelaide, you had been very *ill*; how is it that you can run, when I was taught to believe you could scarcely walk?"

"Oh I am *better*; not quite well though; but I have been gradually mending since April, and am better since landing."

"And so am I since *breakfast*," thought I; and it was really surprising to see how wonderfully different every thing looked at the Park; even the widow appeared

cheerful, though her smiles were mingled with tears; and the servants flew about with an alacrity that spoke the gladness of their hearts; whilst poor Charles was evidently contending with an emotion of bitter regret, which he was determined should not conquer present enjoyment; and in the sense of my renewed happiness, he was determined to find his own; he was *my* Charles again.

I found lady Atwood the same kind, amiable, and elegant being I had ever known her; sir Edward retained the manners of the old school, enforced by a long residence in the East; but his countenance was open, manly, and engaging, his heart evidently good, and the peculiar softness of his address to Charles, proved how much he felt drawn towards him; he frequently surveyed us both with looks of deep interest, and would say to his lady—" 'Tis all very true, Adelaide; I have only to regret the time I have lost;" from which I inferred, that our dear neighbour, like

ourselves, lamented that she had been unable to bring us together sooner.

There was, indeed, only one person in this happy company who could be said to enjoy the present, without sighing for the past, and feeling solicitude for the future; this was little Emily, who ran from one to another, caressing and caressed, but closing with me, whom she called her very *best* brother, saying—"That it was a good thing to come back at *all*, as Charles had done at last, but better to come back *soon*, as Thé did—not," said the arch rogue, "that *he* would have come, if Adelaide had not fetched him, nor do I think he will stay if she goes; so do stay, Adelaide, will you? for *ever* I mean."

"Show me your baby-house," said Adelaide, rising.

"But will you stay if I show it you? If you will, I dare say Theodore will give *you* the whole Park for a baby-house, though I have but one little corner for mine."

I spared the blushes of my angelic maid, by addressing lady Sedgewood; and in doing this, perceived that the child's words, a "little corner for *mine*," had caught her ear above the rest, and that she fancied I had remarked them, for she instantly placed her hand in mine, with a look of explicit confidence, saying—"I well know my dear Theodore will find *us* a corner somewhere."

"Of what have I been thinking?" said my heart; my overflowing eyes said more; and lady Sedgewood, laying her fingers on her lip, took the arm of lady Atwood, and followed the light steps of her fairy daughter.

CHAP. XIV.

Round Love's deserted bowers,
 Tremendous rocks arise,
 Cold mildews blight the flowers,
 Tornados rend the skies. MONTGOMERY.

I do not wish to say any more against Time than other people, my obligations to him being as great as my neighbours, yet he *did* move with such amazing celerity, during the week that Adelaide and her worthy parents remained with us, that I cannot reflect upon it even now without owing him a grudge.

Perhaps I should have lamented this privation still more, if I had not secured a right to a regular correspondence with Adelaide herself, and a promise of being received at the colonel's town-house whenever it suited my convenience; added to which, I had no time for lamentation, for before my heart had time to recover from the pulsation occasioned by the carriage

that tore away the best part of it, I was assailed with—"Now your honour may be spoken with, I must beg you to inspect the leases that want signing, and give orders for what is to be done with John Bateman's farm, and widow Dalton's children; and if your honour will repair the parish school, and subscribe to the dispensary alterations, and desire Mr. Saxton to drop his prosecution; and give Mr. Cogitate's son a character to the printer, and advise lady Lister concerning the common rights."

"Shut, shut the door, good Wilson, and I will do it all."

"Your honour knows, I suppose, you are returned to Parliament, and they mean to make you high sheriff for the county next March. A great many things must be seen about 'twixt now and then."

"Patience, Wilson, *patience*; it is a long time since I was a man of business, and you bring too much on me at once."

"His honour, sir Frederic, used to say, when a man has much to do, he will do

much; when *little*, he will do nothing; and he was always right, you used to say, when that case was your honour's."

But I had made a convention with my own heart, so before I complied with one of Wilson's requisitions, I stepped into my good mother's dressing-room, and shutting the door with the air of one who is going to speak on money matters, which, by the bye, is generally a *constrained* air, I said—"My dear madam, I am come to talk with you on a subject, which, though painful, is necessary, and which it was my duty to have mentioned before."

"Your leisure, my dear sir Theodore, was the best time."

"By the will of our inestimable baronet, I find you are entitled to——"

"*Your protection*, my good friend; do not endeavour to deceive me, for I *know* sir Frederic left no will; he told me if I could be easy, he should die without one, unless I had more children; and my answer was, *I could be easy.*"

"Ah, my dear mother, you little

thought of what would happen then, any more than myself."

"True; but I *did* think on whom I dared to rely, and I should have made the same answer, could I have foreseen. I know you well enough to be assured there can be only one strife between us; but the sooner it is settled the better: you must recollect that I brought your father no fortune."

"God forbid that I should not recollect you brought him a dowry above all price, a faithful, tender, and virtuous heart; and that you made him not only much happier than he was before your marriage, but much happier than he ever expected to be in this world, or knew himself capable of being. This gift in my hand is for fifteen hundred per annum; will it do?"

"It will *not* do; I shall receive eight hundred only; less it would not become your father's widow to spend, and more is unnecessary, especially as I am aware

you will do something for Charles, and of course you will portion Emily."

We contended the point warmly, but agreed to meet on the subject; so one thousand per annum remained settled, and I promised Emily ten thousand pounds, knowing that would have been the portion of Arabella had she lived. I then inquired if she had ever heard my father say what he would have given Charles, in case he had not been so nobly provided for?

"Yes; on the day of his birth he left him twenty thousand pounds, which will he destroyed when Mr. Beaumarris's appeared; he afterwards left him ten, but this will was burnt by Charles's own hand."

"Then I will give him *twenty*, and that, with the thirty he has left from the remains of his own wasted fortune, will, I hope, make him a happier man, and a richer too, than he ever was before."

"But, my dear Theodore, can you do this safely? remember, though your father

never was extravagant, he was always liberal, and his establishment expensive."

"To which you may add, his expences were so well regulated, and his accounts so regular, that an hour's application to business sufficed to show his son exactly what was in his power, and that a little management would enable him to fulfil the wishes of his heart; but he cannot take leave of the subject without saying, that this assurance will, he trusts, enable you freely to command him, when any additional comfort is wanting in your household."

Lady Sedgewood thanked me by a look, which told me all her heart felt towards the living and the dead. I returned to Wilson, and dispatched the various and multiplying claims upon me; and as soon as I had adjusted these affairs, I prepared to revisit the metropolis, for every hour in which I had leisure hung heavily on my hands, except those only which were employed in writing to Adelaide, or the

more inestimable moments spent in reading her delightful letters, which breathed the language of the most pure and constant attachment, and hesitated not to shew me all that had ever passed in her heart respecting me, since our earliest acquaintance; and I will appeal to any true lover, whether these communications were not the most *endearing*, and the most valuable of all earthly treasures.

But the letters of Adelaide were not only the communications of love, but of taste and information, and still more of subjects connected with compassion and benevolence; knowing that I felt interested in the fate of poor Mrs. Eldricke, she had the goodness to make the most particular inquiries, and from her letters I obtained the following facts:—

When colonel Eldricke was carried home apparently in a dying state, his compassionate, though injured wife, attended to him herself, with such unremitting care and skilful attention, that there was no doubt but he owed his life to her good

nursing, a circumstance which awoke as much gratitude in his heart as it was capable of feeling, and more remorse for his past conduct towards her, and the general errors of his conduct, than could have been expected; this was principally exemplified in a change of manners towards *her*, and the most marked disgust and thorough contempt for Mrs. Beaumarris, with whom he refused every species of association. His creditors, like Charles's, crowded around him; the principal was the person who held the bond; and he finding that when all the colonel's property was equally shared amongst his creditors, there would be a considerable loss, sought redress from the bondsman, and obtained it as already mentioned; the rest being vexed at the idea of his obtaining more than them, refused to enter into any compromise; and various executions were served in the house, and the colonel repeatedly arrested even in his bed; and after going through every possible indignity, was at length sent to a spunging-house,

from whence lord Perceval, his father, released him, but would not see him, or take any further concern for him; his eldest son, still languishing on the bed of sickness, interfered with the father, to prevail on him to send him a small sum for his present expences; and with this the ungrateful husband absconded, leaving his remaining creditors to make the best of his remaining effects, and trusting that his absence would soften the heart of his father towards him; leaving the unhappy Ellen stripped of every thing, and without a friend in the wide world, as he had never introduced her to his family, to whom she had been represented as a low-born extravagant woman, whose fortune ought not to atone for the degradation their son had committed in marrying her.

The sense of the colonel's cruelty in deserting her would have completely overpowered this unhappy woman, if she had not soothed herself, by recollecting some little glimmerings of tenderness, and even pity, in his manners previous to leaving

her; and the sense of being beloved was still so very, very precious to her affectionate heart, that it seemed to be the balm that now prevented it from breaking: collecting the clothes and few trinkets she had left, she raised a little money; and after paying exorbitantly out of that for her wretched accommodations at the spunging-house, she took the stage-coach which conveyed to the town nearest to Glynferrin, and once more re-entered the village where she was born, which had seen her for ten years the greatest lady in the place, and now beheld her return the veriest wretch that crept beneath its humblest cabin.

But Ellen had a friend even here, such a friend as she had never known in the regions of fashion; the wife of the present pastor was that distant relation of Mr. Montgomery, for whose children his widow had provided on the eve of her ill-fated marriage. One of these children was since dead, and as the mother was too

far advanced in life to expect more, both she and the pastor, her husband, thought it their duty to receive their benefactress, instead of the child they had lost; and thus Ellen literally returned to the cottage from whence she sprung, and returned still poorer than she left it.

Happily for her, her mildness, good humour, and benevolence, had made friends in the day of prosperity; and among the simple and compassionate people to whom she returned, there was a sense of intrinsic delicacy which saved her from reflections on her imprudence, or references to her fallen state; and though surrounded by inconveniencies now doubly felt, and disgusts now first conceived, she would have submitted to her fate, thankful for even this asylum, from the far more distressing scenes she had witnessed in London, if she had not discovered that she was pregnant, a circumstance that filled her heart with dismay, in her present forlorn and hopeless situation, though there had

been many periods in her life when it would have been the answer to her most ardent prayers.

The friend with whom she resided encouraged and soothed her; but the unhappy Ellen, in despite of her anxious endeavours to look forward with comfort, was sinking every day into the most hopeless despondency, when a very unlooked for occurrence changed once more the colour of her fate.

This occurrence brings me back to our own history, which was fatally connected with this unhappy woman. Just as I was preparing to set out for London, in the month of November, Charles came into my library, saying—"So, the jury, it seems, have ordered that wretch, Eldricke, to pay three thousand pounds for his connexion with Harriet, thinking it right to make some amends for the many threes I have lost by him; however, poor as she has made me I will never touch this money; so I wish you to receive it for me,

for I understand lord Perceval pays it, in order, that by keeping him out of a jail, he may preserve his commission. Will you do this for me, and settle it as I wish?"

“ Undoubtedly, when I know your wishes.”

“ I would have the money settled irrevocably on Mrs. Eldricke, and funded for her use, the interest to be paid to her in quarterly payments, and the principal at her disposal after her death, but not capable of being touched before.”

This was the very first thing I transacted in London; and I had the satisfaction, not only of thus relieving the distresses of an imprudent, but truly pitiable and amiable woman, but of proving to lord Perceval, the real motives of the law process Charles had adopted, was not to soil his fingers with the wages of his wife's prostitution, but to ground a divorce from her; and to assure him indirectly, that the woman his son had deserted, and he had left to starve, was worthy the protection of both.

Lord Perceval was neither cold-hearted

nor ungenerous; but he had suffered so much from the conduct of his youngest son, that time must pass ere he could bear to think on any thing connected with him; his eldest son was amiable and dutious, and his declining state rendered him doubly dear; so that the unhappy father was now to be pitied, both for the son he lost and the son he retained; but I had the satisfaction of leaving him better disposed towards his daughter-in-law, than he had ever been before, though not so much as I wished.

“ So,” says she to her neighbour, “ sir Theodore Sedgewood is gone to London at last; he is now his own master, to all intents and purposes, and we shall see whether he will act with any more propriety than poor Mr. Beaumarris has done; for my part, I never saw such an excellent creature in my life as I take Beaumarris to be, and I wish the young baronet may do no worse; what if he has spent his fortune and fought a duel? there’s not much

in that, as times go : I wish the other may prove no worse ; I'm sure sometimes he used to be as great a rattle as ever I knew in my life."

" Yes, yes, sir Thé. ' can be every thing by turns, and nothing long ;' but if he gets married, he may settle and do well ; they say that poor creature, Miss Atwood, has been pining to death after him ; but he took no notice at all of her ; for it is whispered, that since Mrs. Wallingford resisted his overtures, he has made love to another officer's lady, whom he wanted to bring down to the Castle House ; but Mr. Beaumarris put a stop to it ; but it may be an idle tale altogether, only I know for certain that *he* did write to her, and that it was on his brother's account, and that the Castle House was *named* ; so altogether it has a very suspicious look ; we know that young men do these things, and we have no right to think him better than his neighbours. As to what poor lady Sedgewood says, there can be no relying

on *that*, you know, because she is dependent on him for every farthing she has, so she is forced to praise him, you know."

"Aye, very true, I always liked Charles the best from a child, and never could for a moment believe the silly lies that were told of him; I only wish the eldest brother may turn out as well; for with al his faults, Charles has a most excellent *heart*; indeed, one need only look in his face to see what he *is*; 'tis a letter of recommendation every where."

Thus fluctuating and capricious were our neighbours.

CHAP. XV.

Round Love's Elysian bowers,
The softest prospects rise ;
There bloom the sweetest flowers,
There shine the purest skies.

MONTGOMERY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the many amiable conjectures of some of my neighbours, for I beg that I may be understood as always possessing the warm hearts of many of them, and those too the best worth having, it is a certain fact, that I kept the even tenor of my way just as well in London as in the country, committing only one act which avarice could call extravagance, and apathy deem unnecessary.

Surely, my dear madam, you are already aware what that was; you have felt how fondly the heart attaches itself to all that perpetuates the memory of its best sensibilities, and records the worth of their beloved object; and surely, if ever man had a right to indulge his feelings by this

species of solemn enjoyment, it was myself.

Adelaide, the tender and affectionate, mingled her tears with mine as we watched the progress of my father's monument, which was executed by Chautrey, with his accustomed skill, and was ornamented with a bust, which was a striking likeness of sir Frederic, being executed partly from a picture of him by Lawrence, and partly from my own head, which, in point of form, precisely resembled his; the inscription was in plain English, for it was meant only for the eye of those whose hearts would echo its honest assertions, and whose faithful sorrows had already said far more than even my inscription (though the language of a son), when pointing out the grave of sir Frederic to the inquisitive stranger, they had said—"Here lies *the baronet.*"

Every conversation I had enjoyed with Adelaide, every circumstance which unfolded her character, only tended to confirm the perfect esteem, the tender regard,

I felt for her; but I believe I should not have ventured to press for our immediate marriage, if I had not been urged to do it by my mother-in-law, who informed me *she* wished me no longer to delay an union, which had the sanction of my father, and would doubtless make me blest; and I was convinced, that her sentiments would carry such weight with Adelaide, that she would not charge me with impropriety when I had such an advocate; I therefore ventured to place lady Sedgewood's letter in her hand.

Whenever Adelaide's blushes rose too tumultuously to her cheek, she was accustomed to run away, and was playing me her old trick, when her father met her at the door, and perceiving a letter in her hand, a glow on her face, and a tear in her eye, yet not a vestige of either anger or sorrow in her ingenuous countenance, he half-guessed the cause; and leading her back, he requested to know what mighty secret was in agitation, and whether he might be permitted to share it, sitting

down as he spoke, and taking the sweet trembler on his knee.

Adelaide tendered him the letter, which he looked over, but not without emotion, for who ever read any letter of my father's widow, without feeling the worth of the mourned, and the mourner? returning it to me, with a tremulous voice, but affectionate look, he said—"My dear sir Theodore, I am precisely of lady Sedgewood's opinion, and sincerely add my full sanction, and sincere wishes, for your union with Adelaide, which I think ought to take place now, rather than in the spring, for obvious reasons; and notwithstanding her inclination to leave you," added he, smiling, "I think it is possible to make her consent; if not, otherwise, in the manner our jurors are taught to agree, by depriving them of food, fire, and candle, till they have made up their minds, and give agreeable verdicts."

"I have no taste for dark closets," said Adelaide, half offering her hand; "but I wish—I mean, I *must* see my sister."

I offered to set out for Mrs. Campbell immediately.

“ Hold !” said the colonel; “ dearly as you love each other, Adelaide, and natural as it undoubtedly is that you should wish for her society at such a time as this, yet it is my particular request that you would forego; it and blest as you are with that of your invaluable mother, I trust you will not find it difficult to submit to my decision. I do not wish to enter into my reasons for this prohibition, because I could not do it without pain, and I wish no alloy to mingle in the feelings of this happy moment; but as my pleasures are only half felt till they are communicated to *my* Adelaide, I will now seek her, in the hope, sir Theodore, that some twenty years hence, you may have equal pleasure in confidential intercourse with *yours*.”

The matter went very smoothly on, my dear ladies, I assure you, and on the following Tuesday —

“ But the settlements, the jewels, the dress, sir Theodore !”

Oh, the colonel, sir Edward, and me arranged the first very soon indeed; the second came off rather shabbily, for self-evident reasons; the cash was not forthcoming, for I had insisted on paying Charles his twenty thousand pounds, and I had placed little Emily's ten thousand in the stocks, and I had paid (no matter what) to the sculptor.

“But, my dear sir, they could all have waited.”

True, madam, but *I* could not wait; in paying Charles, I enabled him to purchase a very desirable estate in Mr. Eltringham's immediate neighbourhood, and within thirty miles of the Park; in funding Emily's money, I set my own heart at ease, and doubtless added to her mother's comfort, since independence is ever a blessing; and in paying the artist promptly, I did no more than *common justice*, which, if you recollect, I told you, four volumes ago, was the custom of the Sedgewoods time immemorial; it was likewise the habit of the Danvers family; and during the

long period when the colonel, now sir Edward, was only captain Danvers, and had a large family, he paid every body most conscientiously, squaring his expences to his income, assisted by a wife who contracted her wishes as her wants encreased; the late possessor of that large fortune which devolved to him with the name of Atwood, had, on the contrary, lived at an immense expence, and contracted many debts, which it was the first care of sir Edward to pay; so that, although Adelaide was sure of bringing a very fine fortune, yet neither the colonel nor myself, though perfectly at ease in our circumstances, were precisely so situated as to throw away superfluous cash at the time of my marriage.

“ What a pity !”

Excuse me, madam; I think it was remarkably lucky; for if I had *had* it, such was the pride and delight with which I gazed on my affianced bride, that I might have been tempted to draw the eyes of the world upon her by some mode of novel

extravagance; but as I had it *not*, and it was altogether impossible that sir Frederic Sedgewood's son could spend that which he did *not* possess, by injuring that which he *did*, the consequence was, my escaping from a habit of expenditure it would have been difficult and painful to curtail, and which would have been repugnant to my ideas of domestic happiness and virtue.

“So, after all, your beautiful Adelaide cut no figure at all, I find? you may conceive your reasons very good ones, sir Theodore, but, depend upon it, every young lady who reads your book will be disappointed.”

“When I (says Sterne) looked a little grave, as my dear Jenny was cheapening a silk of twenty-five shillings a-yard, she apologized to the shopkeeper, and bought a tenpenny stuff instead.”—Now, my good lady, you are precisely in the humour with poor Mrs. Sterne; because you cannot, in the goodness and kindness of your heart, and in the fullness of your fashionable knowledge and splendid taste, decorate my

sweet Adelaide in the habiliments becoming a duchess, your fertile imagination is busily employed in degrading her dress to that of a dairy-maid, and of course you are ten times further from the truth than you were before—this is ever the way with the *ladies*!

“There is no occasion to be abusive, as well as mean, sir.”

True, my pretty girl, nor, in your opinion, to be rational, as well as charming; but let us make peace with each other, for I really cannot bear even a distant quarrel with a lady; and by way of making my peace, I declare, that instead of merely telling you, in the summary way men generally do, “that my bride looked divinely,” or, “that she was dressed in white, I believed,” I will, albeit unused to such investigations, inform you what she wore, that you may regulate your own bridal trappings accordingly, the mode being, in fact, little altered for the last three years; you must excuse blunders, you know.

A rich white satin gown was covered all

over with muslin, as fine as a cobweb, intersected with beautiful lace, which surrounded the skirts of the dress, and finished with points of the same delicate material, which likewise rose round the bosom, where they were met by the pendant points of a little lace tippet; so that between the two one could scarcely discern——

“ Oh, ridiculous! the lace tippet might be very well dispensed with.”

My dear girl, *I* could not have dispensed with a bit of it; nay, there were moments when I wished the flowers of that lace would have thickened; and when she put on the white satin one, trimmed with swansdown, over it, I felt as happy as the miser who has turned his key upon his treasure.

“ Another proof of your niggardly disposition, sir Thé.”

True, my pretty accuser; the man who is not a miser in love never deserved his riches; and the woman who is prodigal of her beauties has none worth the hoarding

of a lover like me ; but if we go on disputing in this way, we shall never get through the dress ; so now for a rapid effort.

Her shoes were of white kid, so were her gloves—pshaw, she had the prettiest hands and feet I ever saw, ma'am.

“ But her head, sir Theodore ? ”

Oh, that was truly *a la Grecque*, in general costume, but not with straight bands plastered down to the forehead, as some of you wear it ; no, there were curls and bands too, and a most beautiful and magnificent bouquet of pearl flowers in the front, and a pearl comb behind, the gifts of my dear Charles, and as such, ten times more valuable in my eyes, and those of the lovely wearer.

Now, my dear lady, are you satisfied ? if not, you shall go with us to court, where Adelaide was presented, amidst the admiring gaze of those who understood such things, and who declared her dress was the union of simplicity and splendour ; and this they called elegance ; and sure enough, I thought she looked very hand-

some; she then wore my mother's diamonds, with several additional ones, the gifts of her own; and the best judge in the kingdom said she was *beautiful*—very *beautiful*, but not so *dear* as now, my Adelaide.

In the beginning of May, that sweet month, so justly called the mother of love, I conducted my now blooming Adelaide to my native mansion; we found Charles and lady Sedgewood waiting our arrival; and with sincere joy I perceived that the former had now in a great measure regained that strength and hardihood which I had once too justly feared were fled for ever; he spoke of the purchase of his estate with pleasure; and informed me that lady Sedgewood had promised to become his guest for some months at least, and he meant to prevail on her to be such during the life of our aunt Barbara, saying *that* house would most probably be her eventual residence, as it had ever been the jointure house of the family; but he

trusted she would not inhabit it yet awhile, both for the sake of the good woman who lived there, and because he should feel lost without her.

As Charles said this, I perceived that the loves of his youth had returned to his heart, as a part of his country avocations, and mine ached for his disappointments; and when in the course of a few days he proposed setting out to his new mansion, I did not oppose him, for it was perceived, both by myself and my stepmother, that notwithstanding the sincere pleasure with which he participated in my happiness, yet in despite of his wishes, his spirits sunk in contemplating it, and that he sought to hide the emotions he could not conquer.

The dowager lady Sedgewood had, during the whole winter, so sedulously applied herself to the perfect re-establishment of his health, the renewal of his taste for country pleasures and country avocations, that she had renewed in him that spring of life which, had his lapse from

virtue, and its pure enjoyments, happened at a latter period of existence, could never have returned ; for though a man may repent and reform at any age, he can only be *restored* to the power of virtuous bliss at a very early one.

In thus devoting the whole powers of her benevolent nature and expansive mind to the son of her beloved lord, lady Sedgewood not only proved the superiority of active love over passive feeling, but in the result of her exertions found the reward she so highly merited ; her own grief was robbed of its bitterness, the talents she possessed were recalled to action, and her maternal feelings, sweetly, beneficially exercised, from a finer sense of duty towards him, and love for his deceased parent, continued their action towards her own child, whose dawning reason now called for their forming hand.

It may be easily conceived, that our return set the whole country in motion, and that the frequent parties now given at the

Park, made the politics of sir Theodore, and the dress and accomplishments of his lady, the theme of every tongue. To every one was Adelaide so affectionately polite, so meekly dignified, that it was very difficult to find where her faults lay; but at length Mrs Dornton found out that she had *no* spirit—Mrs. Parley, that she was too fond of her husband—and the junior lady Stickerton, that there was a fault in her shape, which was the worse, because it increased every time she saw it.

My dear aunt Barbara revived at the sight which offended the other maiden, and asserted very roundly her hopes of giving a parting blessing to that expected being, who should crown the bliss of a couple so dear to her. My Adelaide was never more happy than in the time she gave to this aged relative, from whom she learned all the progress of my passion; the good old aunt showed her many a time the fragments of my precious letters from Cambridge, and brought to her remembrance all the proofs she had formerly

given of her duennaship, as she called it, never failing to inquire how many lovers, "high-titled and great," Adelaide had refused for my sake; and never failing to assure her that in so doing, she had acted with the profoundest wisdom.

Scarcely had we been settled a month, and poor Mrs. Wallingford begun to form that affection for lady Sedgewood which those have ever felt who' knew her, when the major returned to claim her. Their meeting, like their parting, was truly affecting, and was rendered still more pathetic, when the child, whom the major had parted with a mere babe, threw its arms round his neck, and called him "Fader;" it was a lovely boy; and when I saw its little cheek moistened with the delicious tear that coursed down the sunburnt face of the gallant soldier, my moistened eye first told my conscious Adelaide it was possible to *add* to my happiness.

It was not possible to retain the major long, for he was about to be presented to his sovereign, and to receive marks of

national gratitude for proofs of distinguished valour; and he had received advances from lord Llanberry, which he conceived it his duty to meet, likewise from some relatives of his own; so that he was impatient to convey his lady and son to the friends who would now receive with becoming kindness those they had once viewed at a chilling distance, a mode of conduct which having once proved he could despise and resent, was now no longer remembered by the generous major, who was, in fact, too happy to feel anger towards any human being, and who far over-rated the protection we had been so happy as to afford those so dear to him. He listened to the melancholy detail of my brother's affairs, with the most lively interest, appearing to think that the ruin of Harriet had entirely arisen from the prudent reserve of her more beautiful sister, added to the protection his awakened suspicion and more vigilant eye afforded her; and he therefore felt more than common sympathy for Beaumarris, a sympathy

exceeding mine ; since now the affair was over, I really thought such a woman as Mrs. Beaumarris was happily parted with on any terms, though I was convinced that the wounds inflicted by her and her vile coadjutor on the heart of Charles, were as irreparable as those on his purse, and that although they might cease to bleed, could never cease to rankle in his bosom.

On the very morning when we had exchanged final adieus with this interesting couple, and their blooming boy, with whom good aunt Barbara parted with extreme regret, a courier arrived from Bath, requesting me to attend the death-bed of Mrs. Margaret Montague, who finding her end approaching, and having made *me* her executor, was desirous, if possible, to commit all her worldly affairs into my hands.

Nothing could come more *mal-a-propos* than the old lady's departure at such a time, and how she came to fix on me for an executor, any further than as it concerned my stepmother, I could not ima-

gine; for that lady's sake, however, I felt it my duty to comply with her injunctions, though extremely mortified at leaving home just now, as we were in hourly expectation of lord and lady William Graham, my lively cousin being impatient to renew her acquaintance with my Adelaide; it was, however, my consolation that I should leave her with society she loved; so, after conducting her to Mrs. Barbara Sedgewood's, where I knew Caroline would pay her first respects, I parted from her, for the *first* time, in a more lover-like manner than many people would think natural at the end of six months.

Fops and rakes, beings without hearts, or with bad ones, will never read my "round unvarnished tale," so I need not apologize to them for the declaration, that "I dragged at each remove a lengthening chain;" and that if I had conceived I should have felt so much at leaving my wife as I really did, I should, at all hazards, have sent Wilson as my substitute. Formerly I had found writing to Adelaide a very sweet employment;

it was now far more; it was necessary to me; I could not live without telling her, again and again, that it was death to tear myself from her, and that I could not know a happy hour, till I again folded her to a heart that only breathed for her.

I did not send these epistles from every stage, only at night and noon, I assure you.

Mrs. Margaret had paid the debt we all must pay, the day before my arrival, and might be truly said to leave a mourning family; for although the greatest number of her favourites had departed before her, yet a sufficient number remained to give decided proof of sorrow, if one might judge by the loud lamentations reverberating through the house; for as Mrs. Betty, though so old a fellow-servant, and now fellow-sufferer, did not exactly know the way in which either herself or said claimants were provided for, she prudently resolved to measure her attentions according to the rule of her late mistress's legacies, and not accord honour, till she was assured

that honour was due ; and accordingly she had forborn her accustomed visits to the family in the parlour.

The cook and the housemaid followed her example, and the footboy did not presume to interfere ; so that the late pampered favourites were, on my arrival, each in their own peculiar intonation, as Mr. Thelwall would call it, demanding their food ; and a kind of Irish howl rang so dismally in my ears on first entering the house, that I had no doubt of the event which had taken place, and desired immediately to see Mrs. Betty, whose countenance exhibited such rueful emotion, accompanied with such an expression of delight on seeing me, that it was a practical illustration of that faculty, called laughing on one side, and crying on the other.

“ These animals make a dreadful noise.”

“ Oh yes, sir, they be quite sensible of what has happened, I dares for to say ; and I be quite sure, if poor dear madam have done as she always said she shuld, there be no occasion for they to take on at this rate

neither, being she always promised to provide for all the doamsticks of her family."

"But have you fed them to-day, Mrs. Betty?"

"Me! oh no, sir! I has had something else to think of indeed, except poor Tabby; I fed her, because I was in a manner sure she has twenty pounds a-year; but I doesn't know how it be with the rest."

"Well, but *feed* them at all events till after the funeral, and then I will inform you further."

Taking Mrs. Betty's directions to Mr. Jeffery the attorney, I procured the will, in which, to my utter surprise, I found myself named as the sole heir of this eccentric spinster, who declared me thus selected, out of gratitude for delivering her from a misfortune *worse* than death; she named various small legacies, which, though devised by her, she left at my option to pay or not, observing, that from the present state of her family, it was probable, weak as she was, several of them would prove lapsed legacies; and Mr. Jeffery's clerk

observed, he knew *that was* the case in two instances, for the annuitant monkey died soon after the will was signed, and an old lap-dog was buried about a week ago.

On inquiry, I found the lady's property consisted of the house in which she lived, which was in the Circus, with a beautiful garden leading to the Terrace, and about seventeen thousand pounds in the funds; her original fortune having been ten thousand, which had, by her own care, accumulated so far, as her expences had been wholly confined to her animal family, for whom alone she had ever shewn that the milk of human kindness could flow through her heart.

Amongst her recommendatory legacies, were fifty pounds per annum to Betty for life, and the canaries; twenty pounds per annum for Tabby; five for the dormice; ten for a Dutch mastiff; and a warm recommendation of all the rest to my bounty and protection, recommending a cottage on the Bristol road as a suitable residence for Betty, if she took the animals to board,

as it would enable them to walk in the Crescent-fields as they used to do.

With all these requisitions I regularly complied, to the great satisfaction of Betty, who, understanding from Mr. Jeffery that the board of the animals would cease on their death, had her kindness to them insured by the best of all ties. Immediately after the funeral, she removed to her new habitation, which I permitted her to furnish from that part of the house usually inhabited by her mistress; the rest of the servants I discharged, finding they were all new ones, Betty not chusing any sisters near the throne, making them handsome presents; and I then returned on the wings of love to Adelaide and home.

I was greeted by a circle of all who were dear to me; but I confess that for some minutes at least I saw only one; she looked pale and languid—I fancied she had mourned my absence; again I gazed upon her, thought she looked like my mother; oh! what an arrow for a moment shot through my heart!—"No!" said I, inwardly trem-

bling, “*no!* a thousand children could not repay me.” Ah! how many tender heart-aches that endear the object which awakens them, do husbands feel, who feel as I have done!

My good stepmother read my heart; she drew me aside, and comforted me with the assurance that Adelaide was not worse than she ought to be, and warned me against a sensibility that might be injurious to her; she then rallied me on the conquest of her ancient relative; and I, in return, insisted that the property ought to belong to her; she refused all share in it, save the house, which I insisted upon her accepting, and had in fact given orders for its being refitted, in a manner suitable for her reception, being glad that I was thus enabled to offer a place, which might occasionally afford her the gratification of receiving *us*, in a city to which I knew Adelaide was very partial.

Mixed and uncertain are all sublunary joys, and ours received a severe shock soon after this time; for at the battle of Talave-

ra fell the brave, the worthy Campbell, one of the many gallant souls which fled from that field of blood, and left their bereaved country to mourn a victory too dearly bought.

At the time this dreadful news arrived in England, sir Edward Atwood and his lady were, with their daughter Emma, on the south coast, awaiting letters from the British army, and it was the lot of him to receive it, who deplored it the most; and such was the effect it took upon the mind of the colonel, that he was many days before his lady could in any way restore him to composure, though the widowed Emma united her efforts: he best knew the virtues of him they had lost, for he had known him far the longest; as he had been his most intimate associate, and his chief consolation in India, during that period which had bereft him of the society of his wife, and from *him* he had experienced all the attachment of a son, and the tenderness of a daughter.

When, at the warm intreaties of his weep-

ing wife, and her afflicted child, he at length roused himself from that stupor of grief, so many were doomed to participate from the horrors of Talavera, he said to them—

“ I have yet a son—lead me to Theodore.”

And to Theodore and his Adelaide they *all* came, and met with that consolation affection and sympathy only can bestow.

CHAP. XVI.

The touch of kindred too, and love he feels,
 The modest eye, whose beams on his alone
 Ecstatic shine!—the little, strong embrace
 Of prattling children, twin'd around his neck,
 And emulous to please him, call him forth,
 The fond, parental soul.

THOMSON.

LOTHE to leave you, my dear madam, under the painful impression awakened by my last, I begin *one* more chapter, to inform you, that during the time our good friends remained with us, my dear Adelaide pre-

sented me with a lovely boy, whom we baptized Frederic Edward, and who is, at this moment, prattling to his mother, as he runs beside her on the lawn; and is, at least in my eyes, (and I do think I am very impartial) the very loveliest boy that ever was born, though his little blue-eyed sister has lately made various attempts to rival him in my eyes, and if she could speak as plain, would, I believe, become a very successful pleader in her own favour.

I have sometimes felt surprised that people could be so very fond of children, and remember feeling so much surprise that Mr. Eltringham could find the amusement he did in the society of his little boy; but I am no longer troubled with any other wonder on the subject, but what arises from seeing the preference country gentlemen give to their dogs and horses, and town gentlemen to any other thing; for though I could not spend any *long* time in my nursery, yet I am convinced that some of the *sweetest* moments of my existence are frequently found there.

I will now take leave of you, ladies, with a brief survey of the present situation of our friends and neighbours ; the principal part of whom met at the Park to dine on the fourth of June (last week), and appeared as well able to dissect a character as a chicken ; and a *faux pas* stood no more chance for escape from their lips than a head of asparagus. As, however, it is well known that the present baronet dislikes scandal as much as the last, and that his lady is so insipid in her taste, as to prefer the simplest conversation to the best-seasoned, there was very little of that enlivening chit-chat stirring amongst us, which I have designated as *second-sight* ; and though Mr. Dornton was “wastly pleased,” yet I fear, from certain motions in his lady’s thorax, that she was less happy ; my good friend lady Frances appeared delighted, which atoned for the spleen with which her sister surveyed our brats. Mr. and Mrs. Parley were both in high health and spirits, for they had quarrelled all the way to the Park, and for nearly half an hour after their

arrival—an exercise they doubtless found particularly delightful and exhilarating, as they both ate their dinners with excellent appetite, and took the first opportunity of challenging each other to renewed combat—a decisive proof, I apprehend, that the next best thing to *loving* with all ones heart, is *hating* with all ones heart, since it certainly prevents people from falling into that state of stupor, which many falsely attribute to wedlock.

My brother has been married to Mrs. Campbell about a year, and is, like myself, blest with a boy, and, I believe, as happy a man as any in the county, except myself: and would be perfectly so, if his new situation as a father did not lead him to reflect, with some compunction, on the manner in which he threw away so considerable a portion of his inheritance; but he has attained such a general system of propriety in the management of his affairs, that I trust, in a few years, he will cease to regret even this, and those past, with the only alloy to his happiness; as he is

now respected and beloved by all around him; and in the perfect affection of his lovely consort, enjoys that felicity his mild and amiable nature peculiarly adapts him to appreciate; and whose sweet and unaffected vivacity is well calculated to sooth the pangs of memory, and brighten the prospects of future life.

The dowager lady Sedgewood at present resides at Bath, for the advantage of Emily's education, who is a very lovely and promising girl; the happiest intercourse subsists between us, and we look forward to the pleasure of seeing her soon, as one of the dearest we can enjoy; her house is at present occupied by sir Edward and lady Atwood, who are delighted with the situation in which their lovely twins are now placed, and enjoy that calm felicity calculated to bless declining life; the colonel is, at this time, as much attached to Beaumarris, as he once was to the excellent but ill-fated Campbell; and cannot fail to contemplate his daughter's situation, with more satisfaction than he could feel in her first

connexion, from the consciousness that Charles was ever dearest to her heart; though her estimation of the man he chose might save her from misery, yet it could not confer that happiness she now eminently possesses.

Our dear aunt Barbara resigned her spotless soul into the hands of her Redeemer, without a single groan, last winter but one, bequeathing one-half of her fortune to me, and the other to various good purposes; a more excellent and amiable woman never existed; her heart was that of the friend, the mother, the benefactress of all who knew her; and her character alone would redeem a whole race of old maids, from the opprobrium so unjustly thrown upon the sisterhood, *as such*; it is not producing a child that endues woman with the virtues, or entitles her to the reverence of a mother; nor does existing in a single state render her necessarily unsocial, cold-hearted, or fantastical; though where her nature is prone to these, the facility of indulgence in such a situation, may probably increase

them. I must own, the sarcasms thrown on widows and old maids ever provoke my spleen, especially when given, as they generally are, by young ladies, who evidently think husbands are the very best things in the world, and yet most cruelly blame the unhappy being who never enjoyed this good, or the *more* unhappy one, that has lost it. How they reconcile such satire to their compassion, or to their delicacy, I must own myself at a loss to conceive.

Mrs. Beaumarris, the repudiated wife of my brother, when she found all hopes of regaining colonel Eldricke at an end, endeavoured to attach a young nobleman, whose friends, alarmed for his future happiness, interfered with lord Llanberry, in such a way as to induce him to receive her into his family, but under restrictions so galling to her pride, as she could not have been induced to accept, had not the death of lord Perceval's eldest son, once more opened her eyes to the distant view of a coronet, which she knew could not otherwise be purchased, even from the wicked

colonel, than by a strict return to that path from which she had deviated with him; and still flattering herself that poor Mrs. Eldricke was pining away in obscurity, she resolved to lead that sober, retired life, fitted to her circumstances, in the hopes that lord Perceval, who was accounted an upright man, might be led to adjudge his son to make this reparation to the honour of a family equal to his own.

While Harriet thus played the penitent in appearance, though her heart continued the same callous thing it had ever been, the partner of her guilt was ordered abroad; and as his health was now considerably restored, and his finances as bad as ever, his father still continuing inexorable, he prepared himself, notwithstanding the painful decrepitude he experienced, and had taken his departure for Portsmouth, to embark there, when the following circumstance prevented his design.

Lord and lady Perceval, after the death of their eldest son, had passed from one watering-place to another, with the design

of flying, if it were possible, from the melancholy which every where pursued them ; ever keeping an eye upon the son who dishonoured them, in such a way as to save him from positive want, but deny him the indulgence of fortune he had abused ; they had never known to what an extent he was injured by the duel, and were therefore not averse to permitting him to make a campaign, which might enable him to regain his character in the world, by covering his former errors with future laurels ; and by effectually breaking him from all his connexions, enable him to begin life on a new footing, if he were really inclined to profit by his past experience. Under these circumstances they set off to Swansea, (as being almost the only place they had not visited, of this description,) about a twelvemonth ago ; for though it was too early to meet amusement from the company there, yet it suited them the better, as they merely sought for change of scene, and were anxious to make some inquiries respecting Mrs. Eldricke, in passing through

the county on their return, as they went there by water, for the sake of variety, that eternal claim of the heart opprest by the monotony of grief, the dejection of disappointment.

Lady Perceval had, from her bed-room window, which looked to the sea, remarked a lady in mourning, accompanied by a Welsh peasant girl, go down to the water to bathe her child; the extreme tenderness of the mother, who herself inspected every minutia that could be beneficial to her darling, interested one who had so lately been employed in tender offices, and she called his lordship to partake her sensation. In a remote situation of this kind, when inanimate nature has once been surveyed attentively, we eagerly return to objects of our own species, as food for the heart, or the imagination; it was therefore natural that lord and lady Perceval should look again for the mother and her child: whilst they were doing this one morning, the mistress of their lodgings passed under the

window, and his lordship inquired of her, if she knew who the person was?

“ I have heard her name, my lord, but I’ve forgot it; she is the widow of an officer, I *believe*, and that is her only child; it is a sweet little fellow, to be sure—no one can wonder at her making a bit of a fuss with him, poor lamb.”

“ Has the child been ill ?” said her ladyship.

“ No, my lady, I fancy not; but I think, I understood she told somebody his father’s family was consumptive; so she wants to guard him against that complaint in his infancy; but, dear heart, most likely he’ll go into the army, and then a sword or a cannon-ball will save him from dying by inches, you know, my lady.”

What an image for the mind of a mother, so situated, to contemplate ! lady Perceval, pale and ready to faint, retired from the window, and her lord half-resolved to recall, if possible, their *only* son. When he perceived her ladyship’s full heart was somewhat relieved by tears, he proposed

taking a short walk, to which she assented, as the morning was particularly beautiful, and many vessels were taking the advantage of a rising breeze, and presented an enlivening spectacle, which promised amusement.

The stranger and her little boy were now returning from their salutary excursion; the lively child, blooming as a cherub, had just been rewarded with a pottle of strawberries, for having submitted quietly to his immersion, and, as he passed the strangers, he showed his prize to them exultingly; he was turned of two years old, and a fine grown boy, with a beautiful face, in which the bright black eyes of Cambrian beauty shone conspicuous.

“Will you give me one of those strawberries, my little man?” said lord Percival.

“Is, I give oo tenty,” said the good-natured child, presenting the basket.

“What is your name, my sweet fellow? can you tell me?”

“ Eddard sometimes, and mudder’s tomfort sometimes.”

“ *Comfort*, indeed!” said lady Perceval, looking towards the mother, who, pale and trembling, unable to advance, yet unwilling to recede, was, at this moment, obliged to lean on the red arm of her astonished attendant.

The tender concern expressed in the countenances of the strangers reassured her—she advanced, and taking the hand of the child, she said tremulously—

“ Edward, my lord, is your name, and the name of the son you have lost—oh that you could permit this innocent to replace him in your heart, for he too is *Edward Eldricke!*”

Lord Perceval raised the child to his lips—to his heart; but as he turned to present the astonished babe to his lady, she dropt, overwhelmed and lifeless, on the sands; and poor Mrs. Eldricke was called on to subdue her own emotions, for the sake of one, whose feelings were yet more acutely exercised.

In performing this serviceable act of humanity, Ellen displayed all the genuine benevolence of her heart, and made a rapid progress in the affections of her father-in-law, with whom she necessarily returned to his lodgings, which were so near, that lady Perceval, on her recovery, said she should be able to walk there, with the assistance of Mrs. Eldricke and her maid—his lordship preceded them; and when they arrived at the house, having some steps to ascend, he took the child in his arms, and went into the house, desiring the assistance of the mistress of it in procuring a couch for his lady.

The good woman, instead of answering, stared full at the child.

“ You must assist lady Perceval’s woman in laying her on the sofa,” repeated my lord.

“ Well, for sure I will do any thing; but really that child is so exact like your lordship about his mouth and chin, with that little dimple like, that he seems quite a

little moral of you, as one may say, that I can't tend to nothin else."

His lordship looked more earnestly; the child was very like his own father, but still more like his departed uncle, for sickness restores, in consumptive cases, the delicacy of infantine complexions; and to this similarity was principally owing the emotion which had overcome lady Perceval, in addition to the train of thought which had previously affected her: she was now much better, and, with the utmost cordiality, welcomed the long-deserted Ellen, and kissed and wept over the beauteous, but bewildered boy, who, unconscious of the change this eventful hour had produced in his destiny, only rejoiced in the permission of riding round the room on his grand-papa's gold-headed cane, who, in his every action, saw so much to admire and delight in, that life, and pleasure, seemed renovated as he gazed; while the tearful eyes of lady Perceval evinced a pleasure more calm in its expression, but more poignant

in its enjoyment, a pleasure which was almost too much for her debilitated frame to endure.

When Edward was laid on her ladyship's sofa for his accustomed nap, (for he was already too precious to be parted with,) lord Perceval requested to know when Mrs. Eldricke had heard from his son the colonel? the deserted wife drew from her bosom one single memorial of his remembrance, written about a year before, informing her, that he was, at that moment, in pressing distress, and could not immediately apply to his father, as his brother then lay dead in the house; and begged, that if it was in her power to assist him, she would not fail to remit it by the bearer, who was, as she knew, his confidential servant. He concluded by saying, "if my boy still lives, give him a kiss for me; may God make him a better man than his father, and a greater comfort to you than I can ever be,

GEORGE ELDRICKE."

Over the concluding words Ellen had wept so much, as to render them scarcely

legible; and though now extremely affected, she commanded herself so far as to repeat the words, with that pathetic emphasis, which proved she deemed them the earnest of returning virtue; and both the parents saw how much their wandering prodigal was still beloved.

“Did you, I mean, *could* you send George any thing?” said the anxious mother.

“All I had in the world did not amount to fifty pounds; I sent him, along with it, a diamond broach, which was the only thing I had of value; my respect for the donor had kept it sacred till then; but I could not refuse it to a letter, which gave me the sweet hopes of returning virtue in my husband.”

“But he has not written since?”

“No!” said Ellen, with a sigh, which comprised a volume of sad thoughts.

“Worthless as my son has proved himself to you,” said lord Perceval, after a long struggle, “I apprehend you could not wish his present destination to be

changed; it is the same to you, whether he remains on this island or goes abroad, being alike lost to your society."

"Ah, no!" said Ellen, with vivacity, "it is far from being the *same*, since I have ever nourished the hope that some happy chance would lead him to a father's eye; and I am convinced if you once beheld him suffering, as he still must, the incurable penalty of his vice, your heart, however justly incensed, would relent; you would perceive how unfit he was for the service in which he is engaged, and you would so arrange his affairs, as to enable him to remain in some situation, which, though below his rank as your *heir*, was yet not unworthy of it; and, thus situated, who knows but he might recall to his mind the wife, who soothed his bed of sickness, and fanned the expiring spark of struggling life, and whose tenderness might yet console the pain it could not obliterate, and communicate a pleasure in the society of this engaging infant, which might awake

virtuous affections, and thence lead to virtuous actions; oh! my lord, these have been long the day-dreams which have consoled my solitary hours, and the objects of my constant prayers, and you must perceive that I now *lose* them all."

"Most excellent woman, if it be yet in *my* power, you shall *realize* them all."

"May God grant it!" said Ellen, falling on her knees, and for a moment bending in the attitude of profound devotion; then rising, as if unwilling to lose the sense of tenderness she had awakened; she seized the hands of both parents, saying, "Oh, let us fly to save poor George! it is not yet too late."

Lady Perceval arose with renewed strength; in an hour they had crossed the Channel; they travelled all night; they felt not fatigue, for their anxiety increased in proportion as they had advanced; and they trembled lest the breeze, which had facilitated their little voyage, should have filled the sails which bore him (for whom their hearts now yearned), far from that native

shore he never might retrace; conscious likewise that if he had proceeded to embarkation, a sense of honour would forbid his return, however they might urge it.

The colonel had found the bustle of preparation bring on the complaint in his hip so much worse, that there appeared no prospect of his embarking with his troops, and it was now so near the time, that there was a positive necessity for supplying his place by some efficient officer, and the general urged him to dispose of his commission. Wearied with life, and yet afraid to die, anxious to mix in the throng of battles, that he might escape from galling reflection, and yet sighing for that quiet, so necessary to those who are actually suffering under acute bodily pain, the unhappy man now felt even keener woes than any he had ever inflicted; he looked round for comfort on every side, but it was denied to him; conscious of the severity of his sufferings, he felt that they ought, in the eyes of his parents, to atone for his guilt; and he arraigned, as *cruelty*, that conduct which, till

now, he believed only justice to his demerits; and under this impression, terrible as his situation was, he could not bring himself to sue to them for mercy, and he resolved to go on board at all events. Of all the numerous train who had once admired his talents, or attached themselves to his person, the friend he had robbed and dishonoured, the wife he had injured and forsaken, alone presented themselves to his mind, as the beings who would pity, and eventually forgive him; and under the firm impression (naturally arising from his sufferings), that he should see neither of them again, his subdued spirit induced him to sit down and write an eternal farewell to each.

His letter to Charles acknowledged, in the fullest manner, the worthlessness of his own conduct towards him, and most warmly and gratefully thanked him for the support which he had accorded to his wife; and beseeching him, after his death, to extend such a degree of protection to the son she had brought him, as might effectually re-

commend him to the protection of his grandfather, on whose cruelty to himself he slightly touched; and ended, by fervently wishing him to enjoy that happiness in future life which *he* had destroyed in the past.

This letter was written and dispatched, but that to his wife was begun; and begun again, without making any progress; the memory of all she had endured at his hands, in return for unbounded confidence and persevering love, rose, step by step, upon his view, and paralysed his hand; her wasted fortune, her despised, though lovely person, her uncomplaining forbearance, her wearisome attendance, her cruel desertion, herself abandoned, and her child unowned, and, last of all, her generous present, which robbed her of the last vestige of her honoured lord (being Montgomery's wedding gift), unacknowledged even by a tender line, all rose to his mind, and made him sensible of being so much an object of her just abhorrence, that he

felt it impossible that she could forgive the enormous load of his offences against her.

Yet when he reflected on the tenderness of her nature, and the peculiar intenseness of that love she had felt for him, and which, seizing her mind at a period of life when love has expended its first fires, appeared to concentrate all the glow of youth with the constancy of maturity, and combined the fondness of passion with the purity of affection, he felt assured that she would forgive him; and that she would so educate her son, as that whilst he avoided his father's errors, he would not despise his father's name; and to this idea that father clung, as one that soothed the asperity of his remorse, and meliorated the harsher sense of his despair; and again he grasped the pen, and sought to move the heart which could never be steeled against him.

After writing a few sentences, which tore open every vein which conscience and feeling yet possessed, the colonel, unable to proceed, dashed his pen upon the ground;

and started from his chair in agony; the violence of the motion awoke the pain in his hip still more acutely, and the sense of what he must endure, from the tossing of the vessel, again appalled him; and he was standing, thus oppressed with both bodily and mental anguish of every kind, when the door opened, and his father entered.

Sorrow for the death of one son, and bitter mortification for the misconduct of another son, had stamped many wrinkles on the fine brow of Lord Perceval, within the last three years; and the colonel, in this moment of remorseful anguish, felt their cause too surely, to retain the anger he had endeavoured to nourish; his heart shook, his eye fell before his father.

But what were the emotions of that father, when he beheld the shrunken form and haggard looks of that son, whose fine person, when last it met his eye, had shone the "mirror of fashion, th' observ'd of all observers?" had he not come the immediate messenger of peace, and believed that the powers of healing were in his hands,

he would have sunk under the heart-appalling view of such an alteration.

Full of this idea, he exclaimed, as if to deprecate reproach—"I have settled everything, George—*honourably*, I assure you—your creditors are all satisfied—we must forget the past—you must return with your mother and me;" then gasping and overpowered, he sunk down on the nearest chair.

The colonel seized his father's hands; he led them to his lips, his heart—the tears of the penitent gushed out—he fell at the feet of his father, opprest and speechless.

Lord Perceval gave a faint cry; his lady, Ellen, and the child, rushed into the room; their mingled cries sounded strangely in the ears of the invalid, their forms flitted obscurely before his eyes, his head sunk on the lap of his father, and the paleness of death spread over his features.

"He faints! he faints!" cried lord Perceval; "throw open the window—call his servant."

The man came, and tearing off his cra-

vat, and opening his waistcoat, reassured the distressed group, by saying, "his master would soon be better, as he had been so many times since their arrival in Portsmouth." Ellen drew near to chafe his temples; she fixed her eye upon his breast; she started back, wild with joy, crying—

"Yes, it is *my* broach! my own broach that he wears! Oh look, look at that broach! at length he *pities*, he *loves* me!"

The broach poor Ellen had sent him, though robbed of its diamonds, had indeed occupied an honourable place, though an invisible one, in the colonel's dress ever since; and her idea that it was a proof of *growing* affection for her, was really a just one; for ever since, he had felt that his conduct, in never acknowledging her last, though least gift, must have totally alienated her affections; he had contemplated her as one who was not only entitled to them by her virtues, but capable of exciting them by her personal and mental attractions; so that when he was sufficiently revived, she found her happy presentiment

in a great measure verified, by the warmth with which he pressed her to his bosom; but when she presented her blooming boy, on whom his eyes had never shone before, and in the language of poor Leah, said—“Surely my husband will now love me, seeing I have brought him a son,” her hopes were more decidedly fulfilled, and in the expression of *his* delight, *her* joy arose to rapture.

When this reunited family returned to London, measures were taken for the final arrangement of the colonel's affairs; but so truly are lord and lady Perceval attached to their daughter-in-law, and her cherub boy, that the families have not yet parted, a circumstance extremely desirable to Mrs. Eldricke, as it preserves to her that respect and attention (which she so justly merits), as the relative of lord Perceval, which she might not meet with in a separate establishment; her husband is much an invalid, and subject to all those evils which never fail to attend hours of languor, embittered by remorse; but it is the consola-

tion of his faithful wife, to perceive that every revolving day brings her nearer to his heart, and renders her more necessary to his comfort.

Thus has Mrs. Beaumarris the mortification of seeing the only true claimant every day draw nearer to the possession of that coronet, to which she ambitiously and wickedly aspired, and which despair of obtaining, and consciousness of the true light in which Eldricke himself has long beheld her, seems to have affected her health and spirits exceedingly, as I am told that she is become intolerably fretful, capricious, and ill-humoured, the effect of which is very perceptible in her person, which appears lean and withered, as if pining beneath the hand of envy, or the scourge of remorse.

Mrs. Bellington is at this moment a lady of the first consequence in the circles of wit and fashion, having wisely concluded, since her disappointment of the castle-house, that solitude was not so well calculated for the display of her beauties, as the politer circles of London and Bath, between

which she divides her time. There was a time when this lady, for reasons best known to herself, honoured me with much partiality, but this partiality I had the misfortune to forfeit, from not admitting her as my neighbour; in consequence of which, she took ample revenge by insinuating the death of Adelaide, at a time when my active imagination, and perturbed judgment, favoured the deception; having emptied her quiver, we now meet occasionally very amicably, and I am always happy to do so, as she never fails to amuse me with a variety of anecdotes, respecting all the interesting subjects of the day, whether blue-stockings, pugilists, authors, four-in-hand clubbers, hazard-players, ministers, smashers, quack-doctors, or duellists; from her I learn the merits of the last new pantomime, and those of our parliamentary debates, the glorious exertions of lord Wellington, and the energies displayed by Deshayes or D'Egville; the abilities shewn by the elephants and horses in Covent-Garden, and the royal academicians at Somerset-House, a trial

at Newgate; or a new poem, a fashionable intrigue, a new hoax, or a Hottentot Venus, at one time furnish her subjects; a bankruptcy, a fine picture, or a terrible murder, another; so that it is impossible to meet with the lady without being amused, and that being the general end very charming ladies have in view, I hope she will be satisfied with this acknowledgment of her talents.

To you, my dear, patient, amiable readers, who have travelled with me through four long volumes, begun in the dreary reign of winter, but finished under the cheering rays of June, I would beg leave to say, "that the powers of conversation admit of *higher* praise than the communications I have just stated, but sink infinitely *lower*, when they degenerate into the malignant remarks, the far-fetched conclusions, the ungenerous suppositions, and the unwarrantable propagations, which form the common basis of what "she says to her neighbour."

In the simple history I have given you

of myself and my family, you will not find one marvellous circumstance, or uncommon combination of incident, nothing to awaken astonishment by its novelty, or excite doubt by its singularity; our joys and our sorrows have been the joys and sorrows of thousands around us; but if it is considered how large a portion of the latter arose from the habit of idle scandal in our neighbours (who are, I will maintain it, by no means worse than *their* neighbours), it will perhaps furnish no useless lesson to consider how much of human misery might be prevented, from paying due attention to the regulation of our conversation in this respect, since I have every reason to conclude, that few families have enjoyed a greater portion of the good-will of their neighbours than the Sedgewoods, notwithstanding all that has befallen us.

“The tongue is a little member, yet it setteth the whole body on fire,” says an inspired author; and another declares, “I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue;” and surely it is the

part of those who profess to take the word of God for their guide, to remember we are expressly told, that for "every *idle* word we are to give an account;" how much *more then*, for every malicious interpretation! every unkind comment on the actions of our neighbours!

Farewell, my dear ladies! be assured, that although I may be often grave, yet I never mean to be morose; and that I should not advise you, with so much earnestness, to purify your conversation from all error, if I did not know, from the delightful experience of every hour, that your sex has the power of charming the fancy, expanding the intellect, and improving the hearts of all around them, without having recourse to the unworthy and puerile topics, which are the resource of tale-bearers of *either* sex, and who, in exercising their talents of *second-sight*, too frequently spread a mental film over their mind's eye, which effectually retards the progress of real knowledge, and those innocent and agreeable flights of the imagination, which form the

sweetest varieties of existence ; we shall rarely find a poet, a painter, or a musician, still less a philosopher, among the tribe of babblers, or splenetic neighbours, who are subject to this unhappy propensity.

Farewell—remember *me*; do not forget my worthy grandfather ; but, above all, bear in your mind *the baronet*. I have sketched him faithfully, though with a weak, imperfect hand, from his cradle to his grave ; and humbly hope, that notwithstanding the numerous errors and deficiencies which appear throughout these pages, it will not be found that I have presumed to offer an unworthy work to my neighbour.

THE END.



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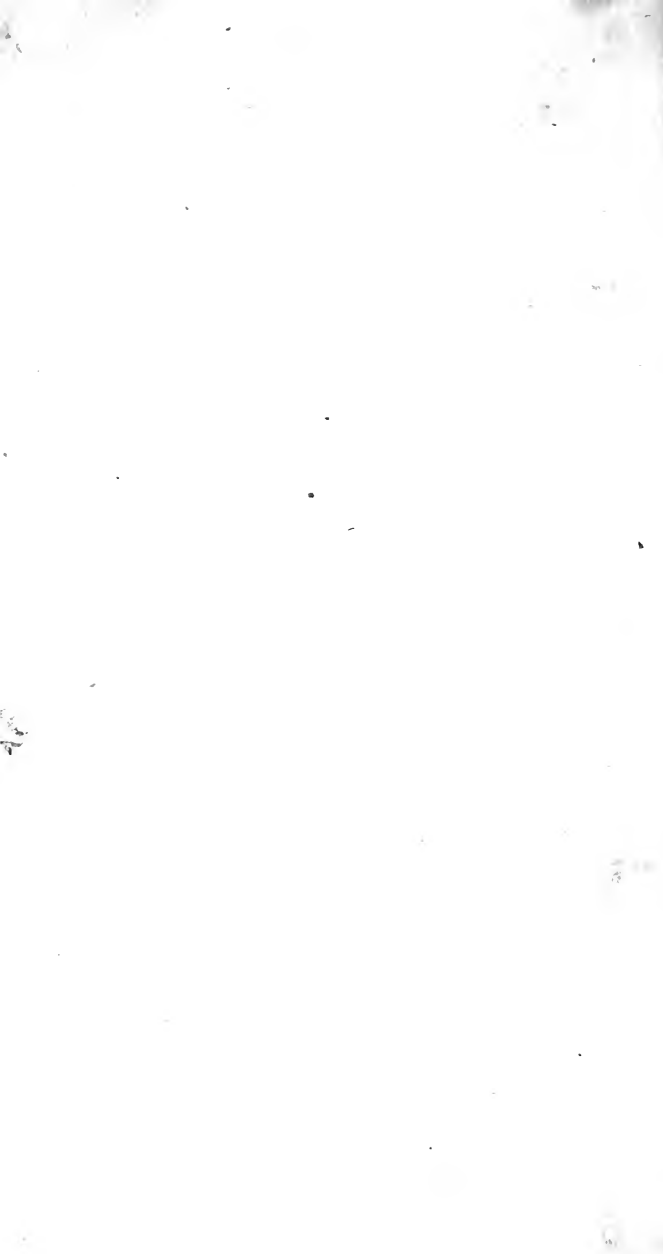
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